

Melody 321

## **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 321**

Chapter 321: The burdens we carry

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

Sumire didn't know how Yuhi knew what to do, but he quickly took her back to his place after he did that. Yes, his place and not the bar, so she already knew he was angry. So when he leads her to the room and asks her if she is okay, it surprises her.

"Slightly. But I should rest for a bit."

"Atushi informed me about your attacks already. He didn't give me enough details, but you're getting them because of your depression, aren't you?" Yuhi said as he sat down on the bed beside her.

"Yes." She trails off. "I'm sorry."

Sorry for making you carry this burden with her.

The truth is that attacks like this have happened before, but she coped with the pain during those times.

"Don't apologize. People these days carry around so much stress. We're in a world in which it's hard to breathe. You're just more delicate than others. It's nothing strange. There's nothing wrong with you."

Ah, of course, he would say it like this. She should have known already. Yuhi always gives her the answers she wants to hear. The words she wants other people to give to her.

"Besides, you're not the only one. The way I am now, I won't be able to defeat Mamoru. I've been saying stuff like stealing you away from him. But a messed-up guy like me who does drugs isn't any better for you. The person I am right now can't do much for you."

Her eyes widened when she heard him say those words.

She did suspect that he was doing that, but she had no evidence. Moreover, even if she did, she would not pry any further. If he does not want to tell her, she will not force him.

He can't do much for her? What a joke. Yuhi has already done more than he needs to.

"Yuhi. . ."

"Why is it like this? Even though my love for you hasn't changed at all. I wonder, when did I become such a cruel person?"

When she saw him hunch over, his hand placed on his head. She held back her tears.

This was the first time she saw him like this, but she immediately understood. This person is in so much pain; just like her, he has a hard time surviving every day. It's not just her with these messed-up emotions. Although he isn't getting any attack like her, he loses himself in those drugs to make himself forget.

He is suffering so much.

Sumire grabs hold of his hands.

"You're not cruel. The longer we live, the more burdens we will have to carry. You can't just do as you like. That's why we need someone to share the burden with to continue walking down this path. Right now, the only one I could consider sharing this burden with is you."

He is hurt, and it is because of her; she should never have left him. In the back of her mind, she was always thinking that. Thinking that she should not have let go of those hands that day. Even though her chest still hurts due to the attack from a few minutes ago.

Sumire pulls him in her hold, and he buries his head in her chest as she gently caresses his hair.

"Sumire."

"Good boy. You are like a kid Yuhi."

"Right back at you. But, I'm comfortable like this. When I'm with you, I'm at ease."

She said something like this before towards Mamoru. "Ru, I wonder why it is that whenever I'm together with you, all my problems vanish."

Back then, she thought she would always be together with him. If it is him, then maybe she would learn to trust the world again. Maybe she could learn to like herself.

Sumire shuts her eyes and briefly opens them. "Me too."

"If you're going to lie, do a better job next time."

"Do you want to be consoled or not?"

"Your tongue is sharp as ever."

"I, love you Yuhi. But I can't live in a world without Ru. Like this, I am just selfish, aren't I?"

"Yeah, that is pretty selfish of you. But didn't you just say it about shouldering burdens? This is your burden, right Sumire? The burden of loving others."

"That's right."

For someone like her who was not supposed to experience happiness, let alone love. Shouldering this burden contradicts everything she has felt before.

"I can only express what I think through my songs. Every time I sing, my feelings of love tend to come pouring out. I like to sing, but if every time I sing, those painful feelings pour out. Then has singing not also become a burden? But right now, singing is all I have."

She wants to be wrapped in those warm arms again, those arms that always made her feel so very safe. But she can't. Right now, she can't see him; all she has is singing. If somebody took this from her, then she would surely break down.

Her thoughts broke off when Yuhi held her hand tightly. "It is true that many people have expectations of you when you sing. I also understand how suffocating something you love can get. But Sumire, you have to remember something, you are no longer alone. So even though it is difficult what you told me just now, tell the others also."

"Didn't you want to monopolize me?"

At that comment, Yuhi laughed. "True. But . . . ." His gaze softened. "I didn't agree to let you go back then without putting up a fight, only for this to happen."

"I don't have anything other than singing now."

Even though her precious singing led to the death of her most precious person, it is still the thing she loves the most.

Yuhi shook his head and lifted his head from her chest as he firmly clasped their already intertwined hands.

"You have us. Sumire, you'll be alright. Were with you now."

Sumire doesn't say anything as she rests her head on his shoulders. If only she could remain with this person forever.

Back when Terashima Yuhi came to find her. She seriously thought that she wouldn't mind dying then because she had always longed for him.

She longed to bask in the same light as him, so she worked to catch up. But just when she reaches the very edge of the staircase, he increases the steps. She has to work hard; otherwise, this person may leave her.

A person like her does not deserve happiness, warmth, or love.

A person as rotten and vile as her does not deserve this person. But even if she understands that, she still wants to selfishly never let go of this hand.

She has to make sure that he does not let go.

## **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 322**

Chapter 322: Is this okay?

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

Sumire woke up to the sound of an alarm clock; to be precise, it was the neighbor's alarm clock. The walls in her room were thin. No matter what Yuhi said about it being soundproof, this is an old building. She could hear each sound from next door very clearly.

Most people would dislike waking up to noise. But she did not mind it.

She disliked silence, and she didn't know when it started. But before she knew it, whenever she hears silence, she would always feel the uncomfortable feeling swell up all over her. There was something

about it that made her feel sick and give her a churning feeling. Every time she closes her eyes, all she can hear is silence.

The last time she heard such silence was then, she shut her eyes as a memory from the past flashed through her head. A place covered with flames, and everything was falling apart. Even seeing the bodies below her, she couldn't find her voice. A pitch and dark world, it suddenly became so much worse than before. Her violet orbs glanced at the room she was in as she sat up.

It took her a moment to realize it was not her room in the bar, and the sounds she heard were different than normal. It did not take her long to recognize where she was, Yuhis room in one of his apartments. Her gaze flickered towards her clothes, and her cheeks reddened when she realized something. Different clothes, to be exact it was one of Yuhis shirts.

"I don't remember doing anything with him, though. My body does not hurt either."

So Yuhi changed her, and that was all? She found it hard to believe. But then again, that guy is too nice. Still, she was supposed to attend extra classes today too. Aren't her grades going to suffer?

Sumire sighs; she already took off so much time during her first year too. If this carries on, she will be held back a year due to poor attendance. Then again, according to Yuhi, she would not fail even if she has poor attendance. As a specialized art school, the key determining factor is the final piece.

Her thoughts broke when her phone started ringing, and the caller ID read Atsuro. Sumire paused for a moment. If he is calling now, then he most likely heard what happened. She knew that Atsuro had people secretly following her around, so it would not surprise her if he heard what happened the other day.

"I'm fine already." Sumire immediately said as she picked up, not giving him a chance to speak first.

The voice at the other end of the line sighs. "I see I'm not even getting a hello. Is that how you treat the person who has been taking care of you?"

"You know I'm grateful. But you're going to start nagging me."

"There is something I want to ask of you. In three days from now, EMMA is going to have a shoot. I want you to come along and greet the other members. Perhaps you can tag along for the rest of the day too."

Sumire blinked. "Eh? Is that..." She immediately understood what he was implying. If she tags along, it would mean officially declaring that she agreed to be their composer.

"What you told Ryou certainly wasn't a lie, I hope."

"No, I get it. But this is sudden, don't you think?" Sumire trails off. "However, it's true. I guess it's better if I judge the remaining members of your group."

"Geh, you can be one scary woman sometimes, you know?"

She chuckles. "I hear that quite a bit." Sumire walks over to the window, and her gaze softens. "Say Atsuro, and you said before that no matter what happens, there will always be some traits of a person that remain the same, right?"

"I did. What about it?"

Sumire was about to say something but recalled Yuhis pained expression from the other day. "It's nothing."

"Sum-" Atsuro's sentence fell short since somebody called his name out angrily.

"Don't make Yamaguchi-san mad." Sumire recognized the owner of the voice.

Atsuro sighed deeply. "Alright. I will send you the details of what I just said. Also, Nagawa Sano, you should check up on him."

Sumire blinked when she heard Atsuro's words. "This is a bit strange. Did you hit your head or something?" Why on earth would Atsuro suggest for her to meet Sano of all people?

Despite the redhead constantly clashing with Yuhi and insulting him. Sumire knew the one Atsuro disliked the most was actually Sano. Perhaps he held a grudge since she asked Sano to be her doctor and not him. Either way, Sumire knew how hostile he was.

Atsuro sighed again, but he immediately said. "I didn't, and also, I don't want you complaining and stressing about it later."

"Why would I?"

"Since you care for him more than you say so. Your actions contradict your words. I don't know if it is regret or revenge anymore. But just sort it out before it becomes a bigger issue."

Once the conversation ended, Sumire pondered on his ending words. "if something else goes wrong," huh? Even though she made that resolution to go here to TOKYO to change something. In the end, it still remains the same. Yes, this was the other reason why she came here.

To change the underworld situation with her own hands and touse this abnormal strength for something other than evil.

"Nay Madam seems thy know."

Sumire wondered if Mamoru also went through a painful process? This painful process where even though she has strength that is far stronger than the average individual. In the end, all she can do is sit by and feel hopeless.

This was the first time in years that she ever felt so useless. Ever since she became a Yankee, Sumire never felt this way. In a sense, it was quite refreshing for her.

She already knew the answer to her question. Of course, he had to endure so much pain. Yet despite that, he never once complained to her; instead, he told her it was okay as long as they remained together.

She felt the tears form from the corner of her eyes.

No, she already promised she wouldn't cry anymore.

Sumire picked up her bag on the side and took out a small box. It was the ring that Mamoru gave her, and she refrained from wearing it when her relationship with Yuhi gradually changed. But occasionally, she would look at it.

Is it okay for her to be happy in a world without him?

"Tell me, Ru, is this what you wanted from me?"

### **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 323**

Chapter 323: I believe in happiness with you.

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

It was the smell of food that lured her away from laying back down. Or maybe it was the sudden desire to see Yuhi, but after the call, she came downstairs.

There is something about Terashima Yuhi cooking that has her feeling nervous and in a daze. She has not moved for the last few minutes and stared at him. "Somehow, this feels like they are married." Him cooking for her like this after she wakes up feeling unwell. Since they moved in together, Sumire noticed these things, but she didn't pay much attention to it until now.

This is very strange.

Why is Yuhi cooking for her like this?

"Hey, love." Yuhi greeted with a bright smile. "Come over here? I haven't finished yet, but I want you to get closer."

Sumire nodded dumbly, and it felt like he used a spell to call her over since she walked over obediently.

The moment she came over, Yuhi stopped cooking and backed her against the counter. He intertwined their hands together.

"So, how do you feel?"

"Better."

She woke up feeling oddly refreshed. It seems talking with Yuhi got rid of the negative feeling.

"That's good. Also, I hope you don't mind that I changed you."

"Why?"

"A fever. You were burning up."

"So it was something like that." Then again, she did come here without anything. So it made sense Yuhi changed her into his clothes. Of course, that is the reason. This man does not have any ulterior motives.

Sumire spotted the book in the corner. "Hamlet?"

"Mm, you like it, right?"

"I do. Shakespeare's tragedies are my favorite."

"Then what about his comedies?"

"I don't dislike it, but I am not fond of them either." She replied honestly.

"Ah, so you don't believe in happy endings?"

For some reason, when Yuhi said that, she sensed something different in his tone. "I don't believe in happiness, to begin with." But Sumire knew better than to reply that way.

She took a deep breath before she answered. "I don't believe in a happy ending without misfortune. Before we can even get our happy endings, we have to experience much hardship and pain first."

"So, your saying true happiness cannot exist without misfortune?"

"There can be no light without darkness."

Yuhi laughed. "That's true. But you know Sumire, I believe in happiness without misfortune."

Sumire already felt like she knew what he was hinting at, but she asked anyway. "You do?"

"I believe in happiness with you."

"Yuh-" Sumire realized that he was just waiting for a chance. She noticed that he was gradually getting closer the more they spoke, but she ignored it. She is in a half-dazed state when Yuhi closed the remaining distance between them and kissed her.

The way he gently held her face and softly called out her name made her feel like crying. Why does he treat her so precious? Why does this man love somebody like her?

It was the usual passionate kiss, and yet the atmosphere did not get heated up. There was something sweet about the way he kissed her. After a few minutes, Yuhi drew back, but he still cupped her face in his hands.

Sometimes whenever Yuhi kissed her, she felt disgusted with herself. How could he touch somebody as vile as her?

He brushed their foreheads together. "Good morning."

"Aha." She laughed softly. This man has the odd ability to make her smile despite feeling so upset moments ago.

"Are you happy?"

"Yes."

She is, she is happy when she is with him.

A pleasant meal, cuddling and playing games after they finished. Then a bit of kissing led to this situation with her on the couch. Her shirt half raised, exposing her stomach.

"Does it hurt?" Yuhi asked.

Yuhi currently had his face buried between her legs. She felt his lips move, and she gasped at his touch. It was an odd feeling, and yet she liked the attention he gave her. It was strangely pleasant.

Sumire shook her head. "No, but uh, it feels good."

Yuhi chuckled. "You're driving me crazy." he kissed her gently. "But are you sure you want to continue? I know your still not feeling well."

"But didn't he want to do something?" Rather, in this situation, how can he think of stopping?

"You know I can control myself. We can stop now."

Holding back must be painful for him, though. She extended her hand out and gently caressed his hair.

"Yuhi, you don't have to stop."

"Mmm, thank you." He kissed her again. "But I won't do much."

"Why is he so careful with me?"

She clenched the sheets tightly when she felt him move inside her.

"Ah--!"

"Damn...wait." Yuhi put a few extra pillows around her. "Sorry, that was too sudden."

He seemed genuinely regretful, so Sumire leaned forward to kiss him. "It's okay, Yuhi."

"You really need to have more awareness. My Sumire."

...

She heard of many tales of after s.ε/ talk from her classmates before, but Yuhi is not the talkative type, and neither is she. After such a passionate moment, Yuhi would normally go out to the balcony and smoke. But he had his moments like today where he would spoil her.

Sumire's gaze fell on the man who was caressing her hair as he spoke on the phone. "Waking up to him caressing me like this is so nice."

"I got it already. But let me spend some more time with her. Cool, I'll fax you the stuff over."

"Oh...he is doing it again, skipping work for me." But Sumire didn't want to let him go. It's okay to be selfish, right? Sumire sat up and wrapped her arms around him, clinging to him tightly.

"You already heard what happened, right? Make sure to take care of it. Yeah, I got it. Later." With those words said, Yuhi closed the phone.

Yuhi turned to her. "Did you sleep well?"

Is he asking that kind of question now? He gently caressed her cheeks again. "Don't act so shy. I know it's hard to adapt to, but I want you to get used to it." Yuhi trailed off. "Or maybe it's unpleasant for you?"

Sumire frantically shook her head, and Yuhi laughed.



"Then that's good."

"Yuhi, uh, can I get some new clothes?" It was awkward asking.

"Right." Yuhi trailed off. "I asked Atushi to get your stuff, but he isn't here yet."

"You have other shirts, though?"

Yuhi blinked before he awkwardly looked away. "That was just a last resort."

A last resort? But she likes wearing his clothes, and it has his scent on it. A scent that she cannot get rid of, something she wants more of. She felt a throbbing pain in her eyes, and she wants this person so much.

Oh, it's this feeling again, a scorching sensation in her throat and her desires. Her thoughts broke off when Yuhi caressed her cheeks again. "It's okay."

Just two words, and in the next second, Sumire pinned him down onto the bed. Her lips at his neck. "This is crazy." She mumbled.

"Crazy, but this is what we are. Don't be afraid, Sumire."

How can she be afraid when he is here next to her? This person underestimates her feelings for him.

#### **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 324**

Chapter 324: Stay close to me

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

"Hey, do you remember what he said to you then?"

"We may grow up, change appearance-wise.

Our hairstyles, body, build everything changes.

We become taller and become wiser due to the knowledge

we've increasingly learned in schools.

Yet, that knowledge is something that others can use as a double-edged sword.

Those who want to use it for good, it usually ends up

having the opposite effect.

Those who want to use it for bad end up using it for good.

In that sense, "Knowledge" can help change people for the better or worst.

But even if they do change, there will always be some

traits that remain the same."

He wasn't supposed to be there and had others found out, and he would have most likely gotten in trouble preventing any chance of them seeing each other again. However, he could no longer take being away from her.

Some traits will remain the same, and for him, the thing that remained the same up until now is his feelings of love.

Back then, he had already fallen for, and even now, that love hasn't changed at all. If it has changed, it's for the better, and it grew stronger.

They spend the rest of those days peacefully. When Sumire got better, she eventually had to go to work again. Strange enough, though, no matter how much work she receives, he never had work with her. He was the first one to arrive today, so he prepared dinner for her. But even after then she didn't show up.

His gaze fell on the clock. "Almost midnight." If she doesn't come back soon, it will be bad for her. Yuhi knew Sumire had been doing her research regarding her ability. However, there is still so much she does not know.

Even if he explained things to her, unless she sees it with her own eyes, it would do no good still as much as he wants to continue spending their days peacefully like this. "There is something I need to do now."

Quatro light, it seems he was not wrong about those guys. They will most likely play a key role. Yuhi didn't have any problems joining them. But, it is awkward to admit that he doesn't know how to join them. He can't just waltz up and ask, right?

Those guys are keeping an eye out on him too, but have made no movements. Perhaps now isn't the time?

Moreover, those guys they all like no love Sumire. He encouraged them during the time of their solo songs, but it did bother him—so many guys like her. But then again, what is not to like?

"Yuhi.."

"Yuhi, it feels so good."

"Don't look at me, I'm embarrassed. I keep making strange sounds."

Yuhi felt his cheeks burn at the memory of the last few days. So much for having self-restraint, but isn't it her fault too? That girl should push him away. She makes that type of face, too, when she is passionate. She is driving him so crazy. What is he going to do with her?

But despite all that, there is a distance. Sumire doesn't know it, but sometimes she cries Mamoru's name after they finish.

He sighs deeply, it's not as though he doesn't understand it. Of course, it's only natural that Mamoru remains important to her. Yuhi knew that even now that she still loves him deeply. It's normal, and he isn't going to criticize her for it.

However, he may just be reaching his limit.

He wants to hold her and touch her more.

He truly wants to become one with her, and yet never once has she touched him back. It has always been him defiling her.

In the end, as long as she keeps Mamoru at the forefront of her heart, she will only ever consider one other person. She won't leave any room for anybody else. He may be important to her, but he doubts that the brunette spent that much time thinking about him.

Yuhi shook the thought out of his mind. He can't think that way. After all, her recent self-conscious behavior towards him has evolved.

Yet, she still won't get too close to him. He sighs deeply; in the end, it isn't going to be simple, huh?

If he knew this would happen, maybe he would have stayed by her side instead of returning to Tokyo. If he stayed by her, then she would not have had to meet Nagawa Sano; she would not have had to suffer.

It bothered him whenever he thought about it. The only reason she went through all that was because he left her. Just as he thought that, he heard a knock on the door. Even though Sumire has privileges as his girlfriend to use her key, she still does this. He stood up and walked over, and the girl slumped in his arms.

The smell of alcohol caught his attention. "Did you have much to drink?" he asks even though he already knew.

"I barely drank." It was a lie; of course, her face was flushed and sweaty all over.

It seems he has to ask Soujiro to watch over her when she attends those gatherings. He looked at her appearance. Sumire wore a gorgeous formal gown. She must have had an elite gathering.

"Liar." He murmurs and brings his lips towards her ear. "You drink a lot when you're stressed and overworked."

While they still had breakfast and dinner together. She often came home later than him these days.

"Yuhi, please don't be unpleasant. And here I thought we were having a moment."

A moment eh? So even in her drunk state, she has such thoughts.

He merely chuckles at the girl's tone. "Relax, I am not going to do anything. Although it's killing me not too...I just want to stay here with you like this." He wonders if she hears that part since he said it quietly.

However, she hears him, her lips curve into a smile, and her eyes are bright with child-like innocence. "Yes, me too."

"Still, as much as I love alcohol. I don't approve if you drink so much."

"Che, stingy." She traced her fingers along his chest before mumbling.

"Say, Yuhi, about the recent case."

When she mentions that, he realizes she didn't actually come here to see him but talk about work.

Yuhi rubbed the back of his neck with his free hand that was not holding onto her. "You know, as much as I appreciate work talk, is this the time for it?"

"That's your fault. You're never around the office when I am."

Since he began to help her with Mamorus case, Yuhi frequently went to the Holy Knights headquarters here in Tokyo.

Yeah, that's because the main branch guys loiter around like hawks there recently. Aside from Aki, he never did get along with anyone else, and even that guy gets on his nerves on more than one occasion.

Yuhi carried her to the bed and gently put her down as he positioned himself beside her.

"Yuhi?" She mumbled.

"Sleep Sumire."

She was on the verge of protesting until he pulled her close to him.

"We can talk about this tomorrow."

Yuhi didn't want to speak about it when somebody is watching. He is talking about the guard Makoto Soujiro put around her.

He noticed it the second she entered his apartment, and that's the reason why he hasn't done anything to her. Though something like that never stopped him before. When it comes to her, he ends up doing things he would not have considered before.

"Stay close to me." He murmurs in her brunette locks.

He knew his actions puzzled her, as a puzzled expression appeared on the girl's face. But they soften almost automatically, almost as though she knew.

"Yes, good night."

## **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 325**

Chapter 325: Hidden fears

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

When he next wakes up, she is no longer beside him.

But he is greeted to the smell of cooking and singing. A gentle and clear voice like the sun, and yet there is something different too.

It reminds him of the moon.

Yuhi saw her in her apron and hair tied up in a high ponytail and cooking, with whatever leftovers he actually has. He's surprised to be presented with an actual meal since it's the first time in a while since he's actually last ate anything decent. Meaning he didn't get a chance to do any shopping at all, so when she serves him a full breakfast of eggs, ham, bacon, and toast.

He has to ask where she gets the ingredients from. Because unless he forgot that he went shopping, or someone else came in here during his absence, then there should have been only scraps of ingredients in the fridge.

"These weren't in my fridge or cupboard."

His girlfriend looks at him with a defeated expression and sighs. "I brought them over last night. I heard from Atushi that you haven't been coming home recently and staying at your apartment. So I figured you wouldn't be eating."

Ah, come to think of it, she was holding those bags last night.

He's tempted to say the words "busy body" and "worry wot," but he knew better than to start anything now. There is something about seeing her in an apron and even waking up to her cooking him breakfast; that makes him smile.

It's almost like their newlyweds, heh. He wonders what kind of expression she would pull if he were to say those words to her out loud.

When she rests his head on his shoulder and intertwines their hands with each other, Yuhi understands that she read him like a book the whole time.

"So what did you investigate exactly?"

He watched as her expression turned dark. She seemed oddly nervous. "The past cases to do with me, right?"

"Yuhi."

"It's fine. I already told you briefly last year anyway. My revenge aside, there are other things I have to do."

"Will you leave my side?"

"No." Yuhi mumbled. "My revenge is important, but from the start, you were more important."

Sumire nodded, but the girl still seemed uneasy to him. "Then maybe I should sing a song?"

Her eyes brightened. It looked like a child's pair of eyes. "You're going to sing Yuhi?"

"Well, I'm working on a new song right now. I would like your input." He pulled out some music sheets from the table.

Even if I don't sleep, dawn will break

As I gaze over it

Title: Yorugaakeru

[Verse 1]

Over the unchanging white wall

The sun shines, and the clock ticks forward

The seasons I had lived in with you  
Become distant to me little by little

[Pre-Chorus]

I wander into the night like this

It's painful

[Chorus]

Even if I don't sleep, dawn will break.

As I gaze over it

Things changing, things ending

Things beginning

I can live without you.

That's sad for me

Look, dawn is nearly breaking.

Dawn is breaking

"These lyrics." Sumire mumbled as she moved her hands slowly on the words. "Who did you think of when you wrote this?"

It seemed like she understood just from looking at it. A deep sigh escaped his lips. "I thought of you."

He thought of her and Tsueno Mamoru. It was odd for him to write a song for them, but all his pent-up feelings led to this.

His thoughts broke off when she traced his lips. "I'm sorry, Yuhi, it must be difficult for you too."

"It's fine; as I said before, you can use me as your shield if you want to."

Yuhi knew she wasn't happy with that answer since she hit him. "How can you be okay with me using you?"

"I wonder why myself." Most people would not stand for it. Then again, he was never normal.

"Yuhi, I don't want to hurt you any more than I already am. So promise me something?"

"That depends what it is."

"If it becomes too suffocating for you, then please leave me."

Yuhi frowned when he heard those words. He doesn't want her to think that way, but he understands her mindset. For Sumire, she already gave everything up. Because she thinks she has nothing to lose anymore.

"I don't want to leave you, ever."

Now that they are together, why would he do that? Unless Mamoru appears or something, he will never give her up.

"What if I cheated on you? Would you leave me then?"

"Sumire you-"

"You know how scared I am, Yuhi. You understand that I am still not over Ru either. I am afraid that one day I will end up hurting you the most because of my actions."

"That-" His sentence fell short when she kissed him deeply. He remained frozen for once and did not do anything.

After a few minutes, Sumire pulled away, and she hits his chest lightly. "Why am I talking about the future? I already know how much I am hurting you, Yuhi. But I understand that without you, I would break even more. The truth is I like this life I have with you, these peaceful days, the mundane conversations and moments. I should let you go so you can find your own happiness. The reason why I don't push Sano away has nothing to do with my past with him. It is because I am hoping that one day you would spite me for being near him. I thought this way you would hate me."

Yuhi clenched his fist when he heard those words. It is not as though he never thought of that possibility before. After all, he was always watching Sumire, even when she was with Sano. This girl has no emotions whenever she is with Nagawa; she may smile or show different expressions. But her gaze seems hollow and dead.

It felt unusual, but now he understood the reason why. It was all an act. She is so foolish; did she think he would hate her for this? The truth is he is afraid too, afraid that if she goes through with that plan properly and cheats on him, he would end up forgiving her.

He is scared that he would forgive her no matter what she does, scared to fall into deeply. It is stupid to even think this way, and he is already too deeply invested. He loves her too much, and even if it makes him a fool, he would forgive her for everything.

## **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 326**

Chapter 326: For you

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

Sumire tried to break free of his hold, but he would not let her go. "You're still as stubborn as you were back then."

"That's uncalled for Yuhi-san." She seemed troubled by his words. "I just don't want you to get hurt."

"And I like seeing your smile when you're by my side. Both of us are fighting to protect our desires."

Her cheeks colored slightly, and she looked down at the ground. "Isn't that sly of you?"

"What are you talking about, dear? These are my honest feelings."

"You're so..."

Yuhi cupped her cheeks. "I'll calm you down. So relax, yeah, Sumire?"

His thoughts broke off when she wrapped her arms around his neck and mumbled. "What are we doing?"

"Whatever you like."

This is not the best coping method, and he advised against it last time. But right now, if he were to leave her alone after this conversation, she will most likely do something reckless.

..

They both took a nap after that, and when he woke up again, she was no longer beside him. She left a note saying she would go out. He found her quickly, though, in the gardens. He watched her for a few minutes tending to medical plants with great care before she spotted him.

"Are you alright? You looked pale earlier."

"Not too exhausted... rather, stressed would be a better word. It's nothing to worry about, though," Yuhi replied.

"You should go rest then..."

He shook his head. His hands trail over the pink heart-shaped flowers that Sumire had been attending to. "Shouldn't you be heading to bed as well?"

"It's these flowers, and they only bloom at night. After researching, I discovered they would be blooming tonight, and I was right. When they bloom, I can harvest them and make them into a nice tea. A tea that relieves and calms a person's tensions. I just thought it would be helpful."

Yuhi blinked at her explanation. Then doesn't that mean something has been worrying her? "Has something been troubling you these days?"

The light blush that crept over her cheeks didn't escape his notice.

"Well, no, but Tanabe-senpai told me that you're quite stressed these days, so I thought of making you some tea. Oh, since you are still up, would you like me to prepare some tea for you? It would help you sleep better."

He was silent for a while, before he felt a warm feeling appear in his chest.

Yuhi held up a hand and covered his eyes, and his lips slowly spread to a slight smile.

Sumire seemed puzzled and asked, "Are you upset with me?"

"No, I'm happy. Thank you Sumire."



A quiet walk back to his apartment from the gardens. The entire time he noticed how distracted she was. Her gaze never left her notebook.

He leads her back inside, knowing that she caught a cold easily. For summer, it was quite cold. Even when they entered the apartment, her gaze remained on the book, but she stopped when they came inside his room.

"Do you like it?"

There was a pot of freshly brewed tea by his bedside. It was something he quickly made before he left to find her.

Yuhi sat on the edge of his bed with a cup in his hands, and Sumire stood close by.

She appeared edgy as if being alone with him in his room was unfamiliar. It wasn't. How many times have they laid in those sheets together?

She often sneaks into his office too. Yuhi, however, felt the strange atmosphere around her. Well, he expected this. It was different when it was the dead of night, and the entire town was asleep.

"You know you can take a seat if you want..."

Sumire shook her head. "N--No it's fine."

She is acting cautiously around him. It's kind of amusing in a way. His lips curved into a smile even if she does belong to someone else. If he can still make her react this way, it is a good sign for him.

From the very start, Yuhi understood that Sumire did not belong to him.

Yuhi sighed. "Sit."

At that comment, Sumire didn't protest anymore and took a seat beside him.

But Yuhi noticed how far away she sat from him. She was tugging at her coat sleeves and fidgeting. Even if it was dark, he saw her red-stained cheeks. She really is cute.

If he wasn't restraining himself, then by now, he would have attacked her.

Yuhi shook the thought out of his mind. No, no, even he was a reasonable person. He has to respect her boundaries. Besides, that promise does hold priority.

"Lately, it seems like you've been in the gardens a lot more."

Sumire carefully lifts the medicine book from her bag.

His eyes went wide. "D--don't get me wrong or anything. I have every intention of carrying on music - and I didn't just make a one-shot debut to let it end like that. I want to keep on writing and creating more beautiful songs for you and the others. However, lately, when I go on jobs, I realized that maybe there's something I can still do."

Yeah, he figured that was it.

Since she is this kind of person, Yuhi understood what her intentions were.

"You can't learn medicine that quickly, you know."

Sumire nodded. "Yeah. But honestly speaking, it's actually been something I've been doing for a long time now. Since he left me the first time," she laughs lightly. "Though most people don't bother with medical plants nowadays. I believe it can still be of use. If I can do something aside from fighting, then I want to do just that."

So that is the reason why she is working hard. She must have sympathized with the patients in the hospital. Do they remind her of Mamoru?

"...also...you."

Eh? Yuhi looked at her, puzzled. Why did she mention him?

Sumire looked away flustered.

"I mean, you always look worn out and exhausted...I figured that managing a company isn't an easy job when you are a celebrity too. There must have been some sort of wager with Hino."

That's spot on, correct. She is sharp; however, this time around, there is no way she could have figured that out on her own.

"I'll kill that stupid bodyguard of mine." Yuhi immediately guessed who told her.

Sumire laughed softly. "Ah, I guess that was no good."

"Geez, I can't believe he spoke to you about something like that. Since when were you two on speaking terms anyway?"

He knew how cautious she was towards strangers.

Sumire pulled a face. "Actually, for some strange reason, he is always in the gardens area during lunch. That's why we ended up talking."

Yuhi doesn't respond, and his eyes twitched in annoyance. That stupid guard of his didn't mention that at all this morning. So that's why he brought her up. Good grief. So those two met? By bodyguard, he means the one Hino assigned him when they met. That person spoke with Sumire, Yuhi frowned slightly. Sumire likes good-looking guys, right? They spent all that time alone in the garden and Yuhi quickly shook his head. There is no need to worry about random guys; in the end, his biggest rival is still Tsueno Mamoru.

## **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 327**

Chapter 327: Not a child

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

"I'm sure you've noticed. But I wouldn't trust that guy."

"I know that full well. Don't worry. Did you think I wouldn't be able to notice?"

Yuhi scratches his face. "Well, that guys, unlike all the others you know? Even if it's you, it's not that simple."

But despite how sneaky and sly his bodyguard - aide was. Yuhi had to admit that he was someone who he could trust.

Suddenly Sumire leaned forward, "You're wearing your glasses today?"

"Because I've had work to do all day."

"Huh. I see, got it."

Come to think of it. The first time she found out he wore glasses, her reaction had been the same too.

Even so, this distance is a tad bit dangerous for his liking. Yuhi was about to shift away when she reached over and removed his glasses from his face.

"Even so, you are not working now, are you? I believe you do not need these right now."

Oi oi! What's with that? Just a few moments ago, she was acting so shy and blushing madly. Now she is acting so bold.

Gee, this girl is doing everything at her own pace. "I didn't think you were so interested."

"Nay seems nay they know."

His eyes went wide.

Sumire smiles. "It seems like you have a strange impression of me?"

"Not just with me."

He recalled the things he hears about her in school. Yuhi understood, though, that despite her brilliant performance, some weren't too pleased with her.

Some people were beginning to disregard her. Since Akatsuki is the student council president, Yuhi knew about it all too well. It looks like they haven't done anything but just made remarks. As long as it doesn't get too out of control, then it should be fine. If it does get too crazy, then he will handle the situation directly.

His thoughts broke off when he saw the girl shiver slightly. "Cold?"

Sumire nodded. "Yeah. This jacket isn't all too warm."

Yuhi reached over to the back of the couch and fiddled around until his fingers laced against a familiar cloth and grabbed hold of it.

He brought about a red blanket and wrapped it around Sumire.

"You are careless. If you knew you were going to be tending to the plants today, then you should have worn something else."

Sumire laughs lightly. "Ah well, I lost my coat and scarf along the way. Straight after lessons ended, I had work to do."

Work huh? "With the guys in Quatro light?"

"No with Yamaguchi-san. Shin hasn't been feeling well as of late. I was planning on taking a few days off, but Atsuro reassured me and all that he will take care of it..." She trails off. "But I'll admit I felt restless; that is why I kept myself busy this entire time."

That's when Yuhi looked at her properly and noticed the bags under her eyes. The circles were rather dark, and her eyes tinted a pale red mixing in with her usual violet ones.

Her complexion seemed a lot paler too. Although it's like her to do something like this, it still doesn't make it okay.

She hasn't changed at all since the first time they met, huh?

Yuhi grabbed hold of her hand and made sure that she laid down on his lap. At this action of his, he noted that her cheeks turned red again.

"W--what are you doing?" Sumire stammered.

"Isn't that obvious? You're tired, so you should sleep."

"B--but why in this position?"

She is cute when she is flustered. Normally she is so calm and composed.

Yuhi shook the thought out of his mind as he constantly reminded himself, self-restraint. Self-restraint huh? A deep sigh escaped his lips. Either way, he supposed a little contact wouldn't do any harm.

Yuhi entangled their hands together. "Uh, Yuhi-san?"

"This is so I can prevent you from escaping."

Sumire didn't respond. But nor did she leave either; instead, he glanced down to see she had turned to face the other way and covered herself with the red blanket.

"Idiot." She muttered ever so quietly. But he heard it loud and clear.

Yeah, he probably was.

But whenever it came to her, everything was different, and that's why it's fine. He edged closer to her, and she immediately turned around. She buried her face in his arms.

"Yuhi, the last few days, thank you for everything."

Why is she thanking him for?

"For?"

"Everything." She leaned forward and kissed him. "I love you, Yuhi."

"I know."

"Let's go out onto the balcony for a bit."

Sumire nodded and stood up. He wrapped his coat around her shoulders. "Alright, let's go."

"What about you?"

"I'm not the one with a shirt only." He joked. It was long enough to be a dress, at least on her.

Sumire rolled her eyes. "Well, somebody won't get my clothes."

"I'll call him again." But he liked how the last few days she only wears his shirt at home.

For the next few minutes, nobody spoke, but Yuhi's gaze remained on her. He knew, based on the fact that she let go of him, that she was going to ask him something serious.

"Kojiro Sakuya. Can we talk about him?"

Yuhi flinched when he heard the name, but his gaze softened. "It seems like she worked hard, huh?"

"When did you find out?"

"Shortly after you left, he caused a disturbance again, and this time we caught him in the act."

"I see."

"Why didn't you tell me directly that he was the one who slaughtered your family?"

"Because at first my memory of it was a blur. But eventually, it made sense the reason I ended up in that forest."

"The real reason?"

She really knows him well.

"If I told you, you would have confronted him."

"You were worried I would get hurt." She nodded, understanding.

"I'm not underestimating you, and it's just I remember it clearly. His cruelty."

Sumire deeply sighed. "You know Yuhi-san, this is your weak point. You're way too kind. Even though you figured it out, you still treated him normal, so you didn't endanger those around you."

Too kind, huh? Perhaps that is what it is. Even though he spoke about revenge, he can't do what needs to be done in the end.

That man was right in front of him, and yet what did he do?

"It's not like I can't sympathize with Yuhi-san. But, by not telling me, I questioned my status as your partner."

"Partner, huh? You were my boss."

"We were partners." Sumire sighed. "Don't tell me that even now you think of yourself as a hunting dog?"

Yuhi didn't answer, and he noticed her expression turn dark. He walked over and pushed her against the railing as he leaned forward. He traced her lips.

"Sumire. Your very pretty."

"Mmm, what are you doing?"

"It's bad, and I keep wanting to attack you."

"Then attack." He brought his lips towards her neck, and he felt her shudder. "Yuhi..."

"I'll stop; this isn't good for you."

"But don't you want to?"

"Yeah." He has some bad thoughts about her. But even more than that. Yuhi brushed their foreheads together. "I would rather you experience a normal relationship."

"I see, but what if I wanted to do those things?"

"Well." His lips curve to a smile at her suggestion. "We can but in moderation."

"Then let's go back inside and be moderate."

Wait, wait--? This girl is seriously messing with him. Why does she even want to...

Yuhi ran his hands through his hair. "Look, Sumire, I know I said some outrageous things at the beginning of this relationship, but I was only--"

"You were only joking?"

"Well, not completely, but--" His sentence fell short when she kissed him softly.

"But nothing. Yuhi-san, you have to stop being so careful around me. I am not a child."

### **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 328**

Chapter 328: Do you believe in the darkness in people's hearts?

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

Star Records, Practice room 5.

Sumire felt irritated as the conversation with Yuhi from last night resurfaced in her mind. "Why did he look at her like that?" Isn't he the one being unfair?

"Hey, isn't this enough?"

Ran was the first to complain. The fact that Ran lasted three hours was amazing enough, and Sumire had to compliment him for this change. However, in the end, he still complained.

"Definitely not! The fact that you guys lost despite being under my guidance is a disgrace! What's more, you didn't even take second place."

Sumire emphasized. She did not mean to say it so bluntly. However, it is something that ought to be said.

"How could Quatro Light lose to two groups?" This is impossible. There is nobody around who is their level. Sumire watched the performance tape, and they did very well. It seems Yuhi giving them advice for the solo songs got rid of their unease. So how come?

It does not help how they will not give her the name of the ones who beat them.

The praise comes later, and she first has to criticize them. Although, she suppose spoiling them once in a while won't hurt either.

"Seeing a little girl train the number one group is something."

Her eyes twitched, annoyed. She doesn't know who said it, but Sumire turned around to hit the person with her fan when that person stopped her in his tracks.

She immediately recognized the owner. "Soujiro!"

"As violent as ever I see."

"I'm sure you didn't come here to say this."

"Your right. Do you mind coming with me for a bit?"

"Eh? Um. .." Sumire said, surprised.

"You don't have to reject me that strongly. "

"N--no that's not it. " She was just slightly startled.

"Is that so? Then will you come along? I actually don't have that much time."

Even if he says that, what does he want her for?

"You can bring one of those guys over there if you're so concerned about me doing something."

Sumire glanced over and spotted that the four stopped doing their exercises and looked over at her and Soujiro with worried glances.

If they have that much energy to worry about her, then they should spare it on their training.

"Were only taking a short walk around the block. I'll be back in a few minutes!"

"What are we going to say when Yuhi-san comes?" Jun called out.

Ah! Right, she arranged to meet with Yuhi this morning. She got so caught up in training the other guys that she almost forgot. What does she do?

"Just tell him the truth, that guy. ..won't get mad or anything," Soujiro answered for her.

Sumire doesn't get a chance to respond since Soujiro grabbed hold of her wrist and pulled her along. Oh, she has seen this back before. Somewhere else, a very long time ago.

....

The two of them found a quiet spot, and Soujiro immediately started to talk. It surprised her how quickly he shifted into business mode. Sumire was still distracted, and her gaze remained on her wrist. Now that she thought it through, he never once held her hand even though he has the right to do so.

She wonders what this man thinks of her.

"First, let's start with talking business. Do you recall the investigation we were conducting at the beginning? Regarding the town that fell due to a mysterious disease? "

In other words, when they've finished speaking about business, he will start talking about personal stuff.

Soujiro is also going to confront things from now on, huh? He must have made his mind up after the fight. No, he may have been thinking about it even before they met again. She's sure that Soujiro never expected to see her again.

In the years he did not see her, he must have come up with an answer.

"I do. We ended up assuming that it was the toxic poison gas due to the traces of darkness we found on the sight."

"Yes, but that was wrong. It was bacteria."

"Bacteria? You mean it wasn't due to the darkness. But more to do with the environment of the place?"

She noticed the foul stench of the area when she visited before with Shin. However, she merely assumed that things were like that due to the mass famine.

Soujiro nodded. "Yes. It had nothing to do with that person."

"But the traces of darkness found there were his." Sumire frowned.

"Right, we can't get rid of that. Let's take this one story at a time, first of the bacteria. It took Ichinose's research team to analyze the stuff found on the site and when they did. They noticed a particular substance on the objects. The bacteria is parasitical and uses humans as hosts. Those who contracted the bacteria suffered from chills and fevers in the initial stage. As time went by, the symptoms changed, and they ended up experiencing violent vomiting, until the point where they would enter a coma."

"I read about the conditions they had to live in. But I assumed that was due to the famine occurring because of that person's reign. The initial symptoms too just seem like a regular cold or stomach bug. " However, now that she thinks about it. Someone had cut off a section of the report. Although she heard about the vomiting, she didn't know that they vomited until they entered a coma.

"That piece of information wasn't available to anyone. How did you know?"

"One question at a time. Anyhow, the infected ones began attacking regular individuals. They did not eat them as a zombie might. But they killed and tortured the innocent for mere entertainment. They treated it like a game." Soujiro said, shifting the screen of his PDA to show several images.



The images Soujiro showed her were completely awful.

"How horrible." She clenched her fist. "I understand they are the victims and if they were conscious they'd never have done it. But doing this isn't human."

"You think so? People have darkness in their hearts, you know. Like that man, Aki always said that there will always be strong darkness if there is a strong light. Similarly, if there was a weak light, the darkness would reflect it. You can't have one lower than the other, and it will always remain equal. In this case, the current generation has people with such an otherworldly vibrant aura and light. It's only natural that darkness reflected is the same."

She understands that logic, and generally looking at it, it is a fair-sounding argument. Since there's a bit of both, there can be harmony. However, for her to start seeing the darkness in all her companions hearts isn't something she can do. She is already struggling with her own darkness.

This person, too, probably had no malice towards her.

He simply prioritized his work over her and couldn't balance a relationship with her.

"Do you believe in the darkness in other people's hearts, too, Soujiro?"

### **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 329**

Chapter 329: Be happy

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

"I do, and perhaps it's because of that belief. I could never truly get close to anyone."

Eh?

"This is the last part of the business."

Oh!

Soujiro continues. "The bacterial disease caused a change in those who were able to wake up from their comas. The patients then saw a dramatic increase in both their intelligence and physical strength. They remembered everything they had seen once as if they had taken a photograph of it. And they would never forget it. But some of these new humans had discovered something else as well.

A certain kind of "noise," something felt for a mere instant and gone the next. Something out of place. Entities appearing in the gaps between reality and illusion, where no one would think to look. Higher intellects who resemble humans pretend to be human and, in doing so, rule humanity. "

Rather than a disease, this is starting to sound like a new form of evolution. However, that last half can only fit the description of certain people.

"These new humans are starting to sniff out the hanyous, aren't they? "

"Yeah, and that's why the hanyou-elite alliance communities have been meeting up often. That's why Terashima is late coming back to, and he, he is bearing a lot of things."

"Correct me if I am wrong, but are you sympathizing with Yuhi?"

A small smile appears on his face. "It's time for the personal questions now, huh?"

Her cheeks colored red. "Sorry, even though you said a lot. I didn't comment much. Rather, I was far too impatient."

"You don't have to apologize. I know full well what kind of person you are, and now it's time for me to confess a few things. Let's start with this. . ." Soujiro pulled up another document, another photograph.

But this one was different, and it had nothing to do with the cases. Eh? It took her a few moments to understand what he was showing her.

"You mean to say you had an agreement with my parents? That's why they pushed me away? Why anyone who asked me out, anyone who proposed."

Sumire couldn't believe what she was hearing. However, now that she knew his real identity. It all makes sense now. He was the boy from before, the one she made a promise to. If it's like that, it's only natural he made such arrangements.

It's natural, and yet, for some reason, she can't accept it.

"Because of that, I thought of myself as a girl who couldn't fall in love with someone properly. Everything fell apart with any guy I dated. I thought of myself as the lowest of humans in the world. Even if I hadn't distinguished my feelings as love, I should not have asked that person out and taken advantage of those circumstances; if you didn't do that, no. ...that's not it."

Even if he hadn't taken such an action, nothing would have changed. The feelings she had for Sano would still have appeared, Ren and that person.

Soujiro reached over and brushed his fingers across her eyes.

"I wanted you to fall in love with me naturally and not restricted by the promise. However, I was slightly irked when you didn't recognize me and treated you coldly for awhile. However, I've always loved you, Sumire. It's far too late to say this now I know. But I want to hear your feelings."

"Indeed, it is late. But even if he said it from the start, the outcome would remain the same."

"I love, Yuhi."

"Yeah, I knew that much too."

Soujiro pulled away from her. "If you take a look and analyze my actions properly, you'll realize that I wasn't trying to take you for myself in the end. But to bring you to the person you've always held dear in your heart."

Wait what? Although she suspected that he formed some sort of resolve, she didn't know how long. Could it be from the very beginning?

Sumire doesn't get a chance to debate about it since Soujiro walked off.

"-Soujiro!"

He continues walking off but halted in his tracks.

"T--thank you very much! I'll try no, I'll be genuinely happy from now onwards."

From now on, she has to make an effort, a proper one, to be happy with Yuhi. After all, this person has sacrificed so much just so she could find her happiness.

"If not, then perhaps I shall make a move." Soujiro suddenly appeared before her. Before she knew it, his lips- Sumire closed her eyes. But after a few minutes, nothing happened.

She opened her eyes and found Soujiro's warm and gentle eyes on her.

"It seems I can't do anything."

"Soujiro-"

"I will cover for you as much as I can. So Sumire, please try from now on."

Thank you so much, Soujiro.

Although she has yet to sort out the pieces properly in her head, how much he has helped her and sacrificed, she only saw the surface layer.

However, for now, she wants to express these heartfelt feelings of gratitude.

....

The market was rather crowded. But that was good for her. She only wore a hat for disguise and had no glasses or anything else. It would be bad if people recognized her.

"Um, do we have everything we need? Were not missing anything?"

To meet with Yuhi right afterward felt somewhat odd. She felt almost guilty. However, Yuhi had assured her that Soujiro had informed him beforehand and quit, " Even if he hadn't. We already spoke about things in detail."

She wonders what sorts of things they spoke about. After all, Yuhi was rather strict about her meeting Soujiro. From the very start,, Yuhi-san was cautious towards Soujiro and not other guys.

"Sumire?"

Sumire responds calmly, despite her thoughts spiraling out of control.

"No, I think we got everything. I can carry this stuff. " She said, noticing that the bag had vanished from her hands and was now in his. He must have taken it away when she was distracted.

"It's okay, and I can hold this and also take something else hostage."

Eh? Yuhi grabbed hold of her hand, and her cheeks turned red.

Gee, he is so foolish. But she tightened her grip on his hand and saw his eyes widen.

Indeed this must be a first for her to take the initiative like this.

Sumire recalled what she promised Soujiro and her gaze softened. Even if it is difficult she has to properly try for the person who sacrificed so for her.

Also, she needs to consider others, for Yuhi, who accepted her and for Tseuno Mamoru, who made all of this possible.

### **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 330**

Chapter 330: A peaceful and happy life

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

"Oh, you, the married couple! Husband and wife need fresh food to live healthy. Come on in! There is some good stuff here."

"This is indeed a market, and the owners don't hesitate to say such things. How do they know who is a couple or not? What if they are siblings or related?" Sumire shook her head. None of that concerns her.

She took a look at the list in her hands. What else do they need?

At that, a bright smile appeared on Yuhi's face.

"Hey, Sumire! He is talking about us!"

Her eyes widened, alarmed. "Wh-what?! We are not married!"

But Yuhi ignores this and swiftly turns to the fish keeper.

"Do you have any recommendations, sir?"

"Everything I sell is of the finest quality, but this is the best!" He points to some large pieces of salmon.

"Hey, you like salmon, right?"

"It costs too much."

"I know you want to save up some money for Huan, but if we have to deny ourselves all the things that make us happy, it's like putting the cart before the horse."

"I suppose so."

Yuhi indeed takes care of most of her daily needs too. She reluctantly nodded.

"Sir, five slices of salmon, please."

Wait five? They don't need that many.

"Coming right up."

Sumire was about to say something when she saw the look on Yuhi's face.

"I guess there is no choice. Yuhi-san, let's cook together."

Even without a proper discussion, it was something that they naturally agreed on. Her daily routine and his consisted of using the main hours of the day to go to work.

His work is more time-consuming, meaning she often had to wait for him. But that did not matter; when he came back, they ate together, relaxed together either by watching movies or cuddling. Then they would kiss a lot and do other things.

On the weekends, they would spend time together shopping and going out like this.

"A nice and peaceful life." But Sumire understood that even now, dangers lurked in the shadows.

Her thoughts broke off when Yuhi looked at her belly.

"Hey there."

Her cheeks burned red at his words. Geez! This guy. "Nobody is home, fool." Sumire pulled out a mini fan from her bag.

Now that she thought about it, he did this before too.

"Ouch."

Yuhi rubbed his head to ease the pain of being punched.

He looked up at the sky. "I used to speak about it a lot with Masaru, about how we wanted happy families. Fun, happy, loving families. How my daily life would consist of waking up with the person I love would be next to me, and when I came home, she would welcome me back."

Her eyes widened when she heard those words.

"I'm so happy right now. That this isn't a dream, that this is reality."

He's become so open. Really, he doesn't make this easier on her at all, does he? "Dear."

She reads out a certain text. A letter that she had memorized from corner to corner.

"I'm sorry I couldn't keep my promise. You know I had a lot of fun working with you. When I first joined just to get close to you, I would never have thought that you would end up being my boss. I joined to get close to you, but at the same time, I wanted to go into a line of work where I could protect people."

"Um, Sumire?"

"Your stubborn spirit and lack of willingness to say your true feelings have caused me many problems. But that was fine for me because you showed me the real you..."

"Wait a minute!" Yuhi finally recognized what she was saying. "When did you read that? And when did you have the time to memorize it?"

"I found it shortly after you left."

She only read it once, but that did not stop her from repeating the words from the letter in her head.

"Are your cheeks red? My, how rare."

"Of course, I am blushing." Yuhi admitted. "Damm it! I thought it would have gotten lost or destroyed."

"Unfortunately for you, it was carefully tucked away, in the back of the drawer."

Yuhi's face turned red from, and his normal composure had vanished.

"You know, when I wrote this, I thought it would be way less embarrassing to write this down rather than say it out loud! That's not the case at all. I'm freaking out here."

Indeed, normally writing things down would be easier than conveying it out loud. But only for normal people. For people like Yuhi-san who use

Sumire laughs softly. Indeed, he looked panicked.

Her gaze softened. "The words that you wrote. Have your feelings changed at all since then?" She asks despite knowing the answer already.

"Nope, nothing has changed."

Sumire paused when she saw the serious look in his eyes. Normally he acts like a fool, but occasionally he would look at her like this.

"I see."

"Speaking of which, I found a random bump on my head when I woke up this morning."

Her eyes widened, alarmed. She was grateful he changed the topic before she made it awkward. But did he have to equally choose a harder one?

"But when I woke up, I didn't think I was in any bad sleeping posture. Maon said some nonsense about it the other day. Do you know anything about it?"

"Well..."

She feels really uncomfortable when he asks her things directly like that.

Yuhi may not have realized that anything happened if everyone behaved normally.

Stupid Kou.

"Hm? What's wrong?"

If she doesn't say anything, she will look suspicious, isn't she? "Last night, Kou-San, Ryou-kun, and I saw you were asleep in the dining hall. The two tried to carry you back, but you ended up hitting your head."

Please fall for this.

He doesn't say anything for a few seconds, and Sumire felt panicked. Is he going to believe her or not? Seconds quickly turned into minutes before Yuhi spoke up/

"I see. Then I suppose I have to thank them."

Phew, he believes her.

"But that doesn't explain what Kou was saying."

Sumire didn't know what Kou told him but judging from his behavior, and it was to do with her.

"I--I don't think you should worry about anything Kou-san says. "

"Well, that's true, that guys always say weird stuff."

This time around, Kou being an idiot saved her.

A relieved sigh escaped her lips, but that relief vanished when somebody poured water over her.

It was water, and yet it felt strange. She wrapped her arms around her. "It feels like ice; is it just my imagination?"

Sumire looked at the source and noticed it came from one of the shops. However, there was nobody by the window.

"Odd..." There is no malice in the air, and yet something seems wrong here.