

Melody 371

ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 371

Chapter 371: The Strings that bind us

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"Then if you fail again, all you have to do is try again."

Eh? That wasn't what she expected. The answer seems so simple, and yet when she hears this person say it, something seems different.

The brown hair girl makes her way over with her arms folded across her chest, "I already challenged you once before to make it to where I am, didn't I?" Yumi said that Sumire gives a light nod in response. "Even if it isn't as an idol, unlike before, you're standing in a higher position than before. Like I once was when I had to choose my future. Staying in that position may mean a lot of hardship..." Her gaze turned serious.

"The second I became a top Idol, I realized how different it was. I realized that I couldn't stop for a single moment. I had to keep aiming higher and higher no matter how suffocating it was for me. Even if I wanted to stop and take a break, I couldn't do that. I had to keep on aiming higher and higher. If I stopped for a moment, then all the hard work I put in this entire time would vanish. By the time I realized what was happening, I could no longer sing the same way as before."

"Yumi-san."

"But thanks to you, I remember the reason I started to sing."

Sumire looked down. "I haven't done anything...even now, even though I have my resolution. I often hesitate."

That's right, even though she has decided. There are those times where ...where she finds herself in that pitch-black world again.

Yumi shook her head and gave her a kind-hearted and warm smile, "That in itself is not wrong. I said it just now didn't I? Even if it is in a different context, you are now standing in the place I once was. Hearing how hard you've been working, hearing how much you had to go through, and yet still kept on going. I could find it again what I had lost, the me who would dream about anything."

Her gaze softened when she heard those words. That's right, this person from the very beginning was anything but perfect, all those incidences and everything she has gone through. The elder party turned it into strength, which always seemed to shine despite being in pain.

It's who she is that is amazing.

Sumire shuts her eyes and opens them again. "I received that dream from you."

Before she could say anything else, she felt somebody drape their coat around her and grab her hand.

Oh, Yuhi? Indeed it was none other than her boyfriend, Terashima Yuhi.

"I will tell her the rest."

Yumi chuckled. "Please do."

Sumire didn't get a chance to say goodbye since Yuhi dragged her away rather quickly. The entire time, however, she kept looking at his back. This isn't the first time he has dragged her away like this. When they went on missions together in the past, he often took her hand in his like this.

Back then, he told her it was because she walked too slowly, and stuff like this way she won't get lost. But she wondered what his reason was now? Why does the image of him holding her hand back then and now overlap in his head?

The circumstances now differ from before, and yet at the same time, there is something similar too.

"Yuhi, why?"

"I was the one who called her over."

Wait, Yuhi has that much power? He can even summon somebody like Yumi-senpai?

"Don't you know what position I have in the entertainment world?"

"Yes, I do, but this--"

"Right, it wasn't easy for me to bring Takahashi Yumi here. But I did."

"What did you sacrifice?" Sumire asked curiously. Even if Yuhi mentioned her, Yumi-senpai isn't an easy person to persuade.

"It's nothing."

"Nothing, huh?"

She watched his expression carefully and laughed softly as something came to mind. She understood Yumi-senpai well; the exchange is most likely performing a few concerts for free.

She clung to his arm, and Yuhi sighed deeply. "Hey, are you trying to bribe me?"

"Says the one grabbed my hand earlier."

Yuhi raised his eyebrow. "Was that a problem?"

"Mmm, you should greet me with a kiss."

At that comment, he grabbed her hand again and pushed her against the wall. "You know, I told you before if you mess with me, what will happen to you, right?"

"I know. I understand it very well."

"So you do this stuff to mess with me."

"No, it's because I want it."

Yuhi leaned forward and brushed his lips against hers. "You're driving me crazy, don't do this to me."

"Then, just go ahead."

The scent of his cologne mixed with the scent of cigarettes, and yet it seems so natural. They kissed for a good few minutes before they hear the sound of a phone ringing.

"Damn," Yuhi mumbled against her lips.

"Is it Hino?" she recognized the separate ringtone by now.

"Yeah, since I bailed."

"That's no good."

"Just another."

Sumire laughed softly. "No, don't be silly, Yuhi-san. You should go to work."

"I am surprised you are not asking me to stay."

"That's because Hino is my friend too. The poor guy is working hard to cover for you; the least you can do for him is to show up when he calls."

Yuhi deeply sighed. "I am sure your mentor told you already."

"Ah, the stuff with the idol association board?"

"It's not just my songs they want to control but the jobs I do. You know I don't like taking many jobs not related to music, even more so modeling jobs."

Sumire blinked, understanding what he was trying to tell her. "Then replace the female model with me?"

Yuhi's lips curve to a smile. "That is called using connections."

"I am sure I will be a better model."

Yuhi laughed at her words. "You're so confident, but that is a good thing." His gaze softened. "Walk me to the end of this street?"

Sumire looked at their surroundings and noticed where they were, and nodded. For a moment, nobody spoke, and she enjoyed the breeze blowing against her face. For September, it was unusually colder. Summer just ended, so she half expected it to remain warmer.

Yuhi let go of her hand and stood in front of her. He reached out and started to button his coat which she had draped around her shoulders.

"Aha."

"Don't laugh. I don't want you to get sick, and the concert is later tonight."

"Mm, don't worry, I know." Her sentence fell short when her phone rang, and she laughed awkwardly.

"I guess the interviewers came."

Yuhi looked confused, but he frowned. "You accepted an interview? Is that okay?"

"It won't take longer than an hour, Yuhi."

"Half it."

Sumire sensed his tone and the concern in his eyes. Her gaze softened. He isn't being unnecessarily possessive of her, and even if he wants her all to himself, he will never restrict her.

"Okay, then twenty minutes?" He appeared satisfied with this answer, so Sumire turned to leave, but Yuhi grabbed her arm, and in the next second, she was in his arms.

"If something happens, I will get them."

"Hey, remember who you are talking to here? Rather than let my cool boyfriend beat them up, I would rather do it myself."

Yuhi laughed. "You're very good at flattery. Here is your reward."

It was just a gentle forehead kiss, but it meant so much more to her.

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Chapter 372: A tragedy and a story of forgiveness

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There was still some time before the concert. Yuhi didn't want to return to the venue right away, so he returned to the bar.

Yuhi found Sumire's "extra" copy of Hamlet, laying down on the ground in his chambers. Thus he slumped down on the couch downstairs the bar as he read through it. It was something he had read once before, but he never bothered to read it for a purpose.

Thus the words he read did not register in his brain; instead, it faded like a firework. However, now it was different; he was going to read it properly.

Although he said that stuff about her acting brave only when she quotes Shakespeare, if he thought about it carefully, perhaps he already identified the meaning then.

"With that mind, perhaps there is no meaningless misfortune".

She truly is a fool; he thought so before. But this t confirms far too much for his liking. At the end between the two of them, is there truly a connection?

Although they had "connected" through the girl's marbles several times, Yuhi noticed they only connected whenever she has nightmares. Such nightmares would leave anyone feeling rather suffocated.

"I can guess what's on your mind."

His thoughts break upon when he spotted Yamaguchi Ryou make his way over. It surprised him when he found EMMAS number two in the bar, but the man was busy speaking to Atushi when he came. He overheard bits and pieces of their conversation and indirectly gave advice.

Yuhi sighed. "Well, it's just a thought, and you might as well mix it up so you would all be able to participate."

Ryou smiles. "Your that thoughtful, huh? How unexpected."

"I suppose."

"But still Hamlet huh? I didn't pin you for the Shakespeare fan."

"I'm not," Yuhi admitted. However, he and Sumire shared many interests, like their favorite books, and read the same material. But on this matter, he would have to disagree. "Sumire left this behind, and she often quotes from it." He tosses another book to the table." She often quotes from this too."

"The Tempest?"

Yuhi raised his eyebrows when he sensed Ryou's confusion. "You don't know this one? The setting is on a remote island, where Prospero, the rightful Duke of Milan, plots to restore his daughter Miranda to her rightful place and skillfully manipulates the situation. He conjures up a storm, the eponymous tempest, to lure his usurping brother Antonio and the complicit King Alonso of Naples to the island.

There, his machinations bring about the revelation of Antonio's lowly nature, the redemption of the King, and the marriage of Miranda to Alonso's son, Ferdinand. It starts as a tragedy but ends peacefully. In the end everything is forgiven, it's forgotten almost as if it was just a passing by memory."

"A tragedy and a story of forgiveness, huh? I see Ibuki-chan has a strange perspective on life."

Even this guy noticed that. He supposes anyone who spends time with Sumire has more likely gotten caught up in her Shakespeare quotes. However, that time he said it. That he wouldn't live his life like a script, he shuts his eyes as he recalls the words he said that day.

"You are doing what you shouldn't have, and aren't doing as you should have. Because you are always relying on someone else's script, you are wrong."

He went ahead and said something brave like that.

But he has not acted on it. Indeed it seems as though, ever since that incident happened. Ever since then, all he could do is stand by her side. When one wants to start something when one wants to change, what is the first thing to do?

The current him is unable to understand what action he should take next without anybody getting hurt. Yuhi briefly closed his eyes and opened them again.

"Hamlet's mistake is that he believed in something like a ghost that doesn't exist." Yuhi took a deep breath.

"By believing in something outside the norm, he already lost any chance of returning to normal society. Those are just delusions imagined by the living. Once you're dead, that's it. The dead don't return, nor

do they hear our wishes. It's all an illusion. The things you forgot to say or say are regrets they desperately want the dead to hear. They regret it to the point they become delusional."

"Do you not believe in ghosts or spirits?" Ryou asked.

"They regret to the point they create images in their mind to the point they start projecting those things into reality."

"No, you make a point there. Because it is something people want since it is something they strongly desire. That's why it becomes real. That in itself isn't exactly wrong, and even if it is a mere illusion to others, it holds meaning. That's what you were trying to get at." Ryou said.

Yuhi doesn't say anything in response and merely rolls to the other side on the couch so that nobody could see his face.

"I think you're able to see it too, Terashima, the same things as she does. If that's so, then perhaps I can help delay Atsuro's request."

Yuhi sighed when he heard those words. "It is up to Sumire. Besides, she said she would accept it, wouldn't she?"

"Only because our leader is very pushy. To be honest, while I admire her skills, right now, I do not think Sumire-chan should compose for us."

Yuhi sat up then. "What do you mean?"

"Did Sumire-chan tell you how she met me last year?"

"No."

"It was during the time Tsueno Mamoru went on a dangerous job. Sumire-chan got a bad feeling and rushed to the place. But the ones who employed him at the time stopped her from assisting. When I found her, she was very restless, but she still tried to force a smile. I knew it was not the right time to approach her about being our composer, so I tried to get to know her instead."

Yuhi felt like he already knew where this story would go. But he didn't stop Yamaguchi from speaking.

"Back then, even though her main priority was Tsueno, I learned what I had to. There is something special about this girl, but she lacks the confidence and love for herself for her to take any proper actions. When Tsueno got injured badly, I saw her break down badly. For the first time, I thought there is somebody I want to help."

"And?"

"The current her cannot handle more than one person's love right now, let alone those who respect her as a musician. That is why Terashima, I will convince Atsuro to back down."

"What is the catch?" Even if Yamaguchi Ryou says all that stuff about Sumire, there is still something wrong with this situation.

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Chapter 373: You just have to trust me
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"Do whatever you want." Yuhi said coldly.

The same things as she does, huh? He wonders if that's truly the case, that person has always done everything at her own pace after all. Just charging in straightforward without thinking much about the consequences.

...

An hour later, XX Street.

One of the places he often went to as a child was Hino's place. He even lived here for a short while because he wanted to escape from everything. He was familiar with everything, the secret entrances, and the staff. While there have been changes over time, it was still the same place.

"Hino, what did you want to t" He stopped mid-sentence when he sensed something odd.

Yuhis gaze fell on the couch where he saw Nagawa Sano, and a strange black aura came from him. No to be precise, it came from the bite markings on his neck. The color drained completely from his face, which is white as a ghost right now.

"You didn't bring Sumire." Hino pointed out.

"Of course not."

"Yuhi-"

"Let me see what is wrong first."

Even though Sumire has gradually learned more about her abilities, she still lacks sufficient knowledge and understanding. It won't do any good calling her over here, and she won't know how to reverse it.

He walked over and pulled up a stool. "Does this guy take any medications or anything?"

"I wouldn't know, but Sumire does. I saw her give him tablets before."

That is not helpful information. Maybe he should call Atsuro over? While he is not unfamiliar with treating injuries like this one, he doesn't want to risk triggering anything. But, Yuhi recalled the exchange he had with Yamaguchi Ryou. This isn't the best time to rely on Atsuro.

Atsuro would use this opportunity to pressure Sumire.

Yuhi examined Nagawa, but after he finished, he picked up his phone. This is no good, and not even he can do anything about this. When Sumire bit him, some of her power leaked out, and she passed it onto Nagawa. But if that was the only issue, then he could fix this. However, Sumire is a hanyou, an extremely strong one.

According to hanyou rules, drinking the blood of someone who is not the significant other can lead to violent side effects. Yuhi recalled a conversation he had with Nagawa not too long ago in the hospital and sighed. It seems this answers his question, and they are not blood compatible. Nagawa Sano is not her destined one.

He took out his phone, but a hand shot out and grabbed it.

"Nagawa?"

"After the concert ends," Sano said sharply.

"There is still time before the concert. Your condition is bad; let Sumire come." Hino interjected.

"Before--before she went to practice, she was severely hurt."

"When I saw her, she only had a few bruises." Yuhi trailed off. "What do you mean severely hurt?"

"She tried to hide it from me. But I think she sustained a serious blow to her head. It was the only thing that didn't heal well when she drank my blood."

Yuhi clenched his fist when he heard that explanation. That is weird; a head injury should be the first to heal.

"Anyway, don't tell her. I will be fine, and I should--"

"Are you crazy?" Hino exclaimed. "You vomited blood earlier. You are not okay."

He vomited blood? This seems more serious than he thought. Calling Atsuro might not help; it would be better to get Sumire here. As Yuhi racked his head for ideas, he felt somebody enter the room and looked up.

"Im here."

Yuhis eyes widened when he saw Sumire by the door. But the girl wasn't alone, and a familiar purple-haired woman was with her. Sumire still wore her practice clothes underneath her jacket, and she didn't even change her shoes.

"Yumi-senpai, if I faint."

"I understand."

Sumire rushed over, and Nagawa tried to sit up, but she laid him back down. "It's okay."

"You have a live."

"You just have to trust me." Yuhi watched her hesitate as she said those words. "You can do that, right?"

In the next second, Yuhi watched as a bright light appeared from Sumires palm. He blinked puzzled and heard a chuckle beside him.

"It seems as though she has secretly practiced."

"I see." Yuhi trailed off. "I should be the one helping her with that."

"But you're busy, aren't you, Terashimkun? Still struggling?"

"Yes."

It was unfortunate that he could not spend as much time with her as he did before. But no matter how late he is, she would always be waiting up for him. This is why he started to hide his schedule from her. Even when he returns home and finds her asleep, she would wake up after five minutes, almost like she knew he was there.

"I understand how you feel. I also dislike doing jobs where I couldn't sing. However, back then, I coped with it because I knew it wasn't the time yet. I have to establish myself first, and then when I am at the very top, I can shape the entertainment industry with my own hands."

"But even you-"

Yumi chuckled. "Indeed, even me. But that is fine. That just means somebody else can shape things."

Yuhi did not miss her gaze, which was on Sumire. "Are you referring to Sumire?" It was a stupid question, of course.

From the moment he knew that Takahashi Yumi was Sumire's mentor, he understood something. The one she wants to pass her legacy and surpass her is her beloved student.

"Don't you have another student?"

"Yes, I do. Two more, but one isn't interested in rankings anymore. She is a carefree spirit."

"And the other?"

"Even without me saying anything, she became interested in Sumire-chan."

Yuhi deeply sighed when he heard those words. "At least tell her not now. Sumire is having a hard time, and while competition will help her grow, I don't think she is too focused on her dreams right now."

"Even I understand that. The accident put a lot of mental strain on her. I am not expecting her to get over things quickly, but Terashimkun, I at least want to prepare her for what she has to face."

He saw the serious expression on her face and frowned. "Is it-"

"I am afraid so, a group of dangerous people has their eyes on Sumire-chan. I am sure you figured that out?"

"We did, as in Atushi and me. But why can I ask? I know she messed with a group of yakuza before, but surely that incident was not a big deal?"

"Terashimkun, what I am about to tell you. Do not tell her."

"I don't like keeping secrets from Sumire."

The older woman sighed and rubbed the temple of her forehead. "Then perhaps I shouldn't say either. It is fine for now since I will be in Tokyo for a while. I can react faster if something happens. Terashimkun, you should continue with what you have been doing this entire time."

What has he been doing this entire time?

Yumi chuckled. "Keep treating Sumire-chan as an ordinary girl. Even though she does not express it very well, I am sure she is grateful."

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Chapter 374: Like looking through glass

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It was the usual, tiresome dream again.

The same dream, it has never once changed.

Even after he met her and his world gradually changed. The only thing that remained the same as before was this.

When will it end?

Will it always remain this way?

Yuhi doesn't know how long he has had these dreams, but it was always like this for as long as he could remember.

He stood in the middle of a burnt wasteland. Crumbled buildings and the smell of fire surrounded him. Yuhi stood alone in the center of it. There wasn't a single person other than him who was alive, or at least that was how it usually is.

"Don't enter my dream," Yuhi commented when he heard a familiar pair of dainty footsteps behind him.

"After yesterday, I became restless." It was Sumire.

The live, huh? After what happened with Nagawa, it was difficult to concentrate. But it succeeded, he performed with Quatro light, and they became Midnight five, M5 for short. The audience received them well, but the only problem was.

"You couldn't sing again." Yuhi commented.

It was exactly like Sano said; she sustained a bad head injury. But it turned out not even Sumire was aware. On the way to the venue, she passed out, and they had to rush her to the hospital.

"But I watched you sing; it was a lot of fun."

Yuhi sighed deeply as he walked over to her and pulled her into his arms. "You even know how to invade my dreams now. How good is your control over your powers."

Sumire laughed softly. "As good as your sleeping habits."

"So not good yet? But you can still do this."

"I can only do this with you, Yuhi."

Yuhi recalled what happened the other day. If she struggles unless it is to do with him, then how could she use that power yesterday?

"I could use my power yesterday because you were there, Yuhi. I knew you wouldn't leave until I finished."

Yuhi blinked and sighed again. "Sorry, it is not like I do not trust you."

"It is okay."

He noticed her tightening grip on him and caressed her hair.

"Yuhi, it is time for school."

...

Since he had a concert yesterday, Hino gracefully allowed him to have the morning off from work so he could walk to school with Sumire. The entire time however his mind wandered.

"It's not the final judgment that's important. What matters is that you come to that decision yourself. That you agonize over it and eventually accept it."

At that time, Sumire sounded grand saying that it was the first time he thought that she was cool. It was probably those words that triggered the change of opinion, even though he didn't understand those words exactly then.

Even though he didn't understand it properly then, there was something he could tell, that this girl has the same look in her eyes as he does. He wonders if that's what made him lose his guard around her, and if so, then...

His thoughts broke when the brown hair girl stopped walking, "What is it?"

She suddenly hides behind him, huh? Yuhi glances in the direction she was looking at, only to find a certain redhead member of EMMA alongside a certain secolored-haired boy. Atsuro and Shin, huh? Which one is she avoiding?

"Which is it?" He whispers.

Sumire fidgets slightly before she murmured. "Atsuro."

Ah, well, of course.

That one was rather obvious; it can't be Shin; Yuhi already observed the relationship between the two of them. There weren't any feelings of love, so they could avoid awkward moments. Atsuro, on the other hand, is a completely different story.

Once the two were no longer in sight, Sumire came out from her hiding spot behind him and sighed.

"Again?" Yuhi realized.

He didn't have to ask about the details anymore; the two of them just always seemed to do this. Go through the same cycle, repeat it all over again.

"Atsuro lectured me again, saying that it was my fault since I went along despite the warning he set out for me. About not traveling long distances until three months after your power stabilized."

"Why did you ignore the warning?"

Sumire clenched her fist. "Because..there was something I had to make sure of. Besides, it's his fault for being so unpleasant about it."

My my, she can be quite stubborn. However, his gaze lands on the expression in her eyes, she's clearly leaving out some details on purpose again. Well, he can't be helped. He can't expect her to tell him everything.

"In the afternoon, there's that big bargain meat sale in the supermarket, isn't there?"

She nodded. The seriousness left her expression. "I will definitely win!"

"It is nice that you are so enthusiastic, but." Yuhi brushed his hands across the bandage across the right side of her head. "You have to remember what happened yesterday. You were only discharged from the hospital so early because Nagawa pulled some strings."

It amazed him that Nagawa still managed to do that when he was not in good condition himself. Then again, if it is for the sake of the person you like, it is easy to take careless actions.

"I know Yuhi, and I will be-" He cuts her off as he parted her bangs and soft laughter passed her lips. "Is this why you decided to come to school today? Are you that worried for me, Yuhi?"

"Of course I am; you are way too careless. If I take my eyes away from you for a single second, you end up doing something dangerous like this. I always have to watch you."

"Ehhh? But this meat is the best!"

"Yes, yes, but it's probably too strong for most people. Besides, instead of thinking about meat, what about actually studying for the exams?"

Even if it is a liberal arts school, they still have to study for exams; then again, he is one to talk about studying. Still, he does not want her to fall behind.

"Uh."

Yuhi sighs. "You haven't studied yet, have you?"

"I just thought something Yuhi you could teach me again like you did before."

Yuhi immediately noted that there was something odd about the girl's words. But he did not question it as he took the magazine from her hands.

"Yo, you two, it seems like you're cheerful this morning." A familiar voice said.

They glanced over and spotted Atushi crossing the street.

Sumire's eyes light up, and she goes up to him, a magazine in her hands. "Look, look Atushi, high-quality meat, for a bargain price!"

Well, it's not an uncommon factor that Sumire is like this. But he had to admit it had been a while since he last saw such a carefree expression on the girl's face. Just yesterday, she seemed very gloomy.

Did she cheer up because of the live yesterday?

He shook his head, can't be. But she seemed strangely happy about it. Even though they took a less crowded path to school, there were still many people discussing the live. So Yuhi knew it was a big success, yet it was difficult for him to focus on it.

Chapter end

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Chapter 375: I just want to be with you

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"Atushi, tell this one to stop thinking of meat for a second and to study for exams."

Sumire pulls a face. "Yuhi doesn't understand that I don't need it. I've already covered the material here."

"Ha? You didn't say that?"

"I did just now."

"Covered the material," she says, that's not what an everyday high schooler would say, you know? But then again, they are members of the elite, and someone of Sumire's status had gone over most material for high schoolers when she was in middle school.

He also did something similar when he had free time before. But now it makes sense why Sumire can skip classes with him easily. Well, he supposes he does

Atushi laughed. "Well, isn't it fine to leave it be? At least she is having fun. You have to enjoy your time in high school, they say."

"Right?" Sumire agreed enthusiastically. "This is what they call high school youth."

"Hamano, you're far too lenient on her."

Atushi reached over and patted Sumire's hair. "Good luck."

The girl's eyes went wide for a second before she shut them and smiled before she responded. "Yes."

Yuhi grabbed hold of Sumire's hand. "We need to go."

Sumire laughed softly. "You're getting jealous; you're so silly, Yuhi-san."

....

Yuhi had to admit that attending school with all that's going on at the moment seemed to be rather pointless. Indeed there are more important matters that he should handle now. It is not like he gains any new knowledge or skills anymore. He has already absorbed everything from this school.

Moreover, he had to part ways with Sumire the very moment they reached the gate. What is with Akatsuki bothering him so early in the morning? Does that guy have nothing better to do with his life than bother him all the time?

The moment he arrived at the classroom, though, he noticed the slightly damaged door.

Hmm? That mark.. Yuhi quickened his pace and found his fellow students chatting away. There was no teacher in sight. How odd, the class should have started by now.

"Oh Yuhi, you're late, but it's fine since sensei isn't-

Aika's words fell on death's ears as he examined the markings from the door and the ground too.

Yuhi immediately recognized the dents. It is from a blast of lightning, quite a powerful one too. He didn't need to bend down to see it, and his abilities allowed him just from a mere glance to understand what it was.

"Ibuki-chan was attacked."

Yuhi's gaze lands on the chirpy ginger head man, and he was not fond of individuals like this person. However, since this matter concerned her, he pushed away his differences.

"Who?"

"Just a few girls in our class. They held up a strange device, but before she could get hurt, Nakara Sensei took the blow for her."

So that's what happened; they are making their moves, huh? Yuhi recalled Takashi Yumi's warning and sighed. Maybe he should have tried to get more out of her. It would be bad if things like this happen daily.

He would have to praise Shin for his actions but knew better than to verbally thank him. Even if he had done nothing, Sumire would most likely have dodged no reflect it. From what he saw yesterday, she has a somewhat basic understanding of her abilities now.

But if one considers that timing, it is almost as though he knew it would happen. Yuhi personally monitored all the group's activities, but he does not keep an eye out on recently formed groups. It seems he should

start doing that, but an attack on this scale was the least of his worries.

He only came to school today to guard her, so even if Hino didn't let him, he would have come anyway.

"Yuhi?"

"Infirmery," Yuhi stated one word to make his intentions clear before turning to walk down the hallway.

"You also look like the boy I cared for and wanted to protect. But in spite of that, I unintentionally hurt him. However, you aren't the same person. He isn't someone who would dance, let alone attend a ball."

Unconsciously he sped walk until he got to the corridor where the infirmary was.

For a moment, Yuhi paused at the door. Her condition is already at a far worse degree than anyone can imagine. There is still a way to save her life, still a way to cure that illness of hers.

Yuhi searched long and hard for it; he searched for many years, even at the cost of leaving her alone for that entire time. Until he finally found the answer when he went to Germany. He found the answer, the reason why it became worse to that degree.

"She has to return, return to a place where there is the same air as her origins. If she spends time there and soak in the same water, food, she will be as good as cured. That girl's life will chip away and shorten to her very last breath if she remains with individuals who think about nothing but warfare".

Atushi could not find any hints when he went abroad because he destroyed the evidence already.

Yuhi took a deep breath as the doors opened, and Shin walked out. He blinked, seeing him but patted his shoulder. "She is okay, don't worry."

"Thank you."

Shin nodded before walking away.

The moment he got inside, Sumire grabbed his hands. "Ah, I knew it! The president asked you to do something unreasonable again!"

"Well yeah, but you-" He scanned her up and down. It does not seem like she got hurt.

Even so, he scans the girl; briefly, she's gotten a lot thinner and paler compared to before. Though she was already slightly on the skinny factor, to begin with, it's become a lot more obvious now than before. She has lost that luster and glow that usually dawns on her completion. Even though she tries to hide it, he can see through it completely.

Once Sumire found the stuff, she put the instruments down on the table beside him and opened it up.

Yuhi spoke up. "Didn't you get thinner?" he said, without hesitation, and voiced out his thoughts.

Sumire flinches yet manages to remain a calm look on her face.

"You know I can report that as sexual harassment. I didn't know you watched me to that extent."

At that comment, he felt his cheeks color slightly; keeping calm is one thing. But insulting him in the process?

He sighed deeply. "Idiot, who would watch you?"

"Hmmm, is that so?"

He had to go ahead and lie. But she can probably see it anyway. A lie like that is obvious. Still, this was better than him admitting his real thoughts.

ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 376

Chapter 376: Petty feelings

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

"Atsuro told me."

It was another white lie. He had to.

After all, if he doesn't, he will not get anywhere with this conversation.

At that comment, Sumire sighed. "It's obvious you're lying, you know. But I guess I'll praise you for lying twice despite how honest you usually are."

Tsk busted. Then again, no lies ever seem to escape her.

"So, will you tell me already?"

"No can do." She pauses. "Ah, I finished with your hands now."

Yuhi glanced down to see the bandages wrapped around his arm. The swelling had died down due to the medicine she applied to. However, there is something odd about the way she put these bandages.

"This is a clumsy way to wrap bandages." He stated, noticing the edges seemed off.

"S--h--ut up. I'm just not used to it, and well, I have to--"

Hmm? Why does she suddenly look even more nervous than before? Though it's quite fun seeing her flustered like this, why is she so.. His thoughts broke off when he felt a swelling pain in his neck.

Ah, so that is why. She does not have to get so worked up over this.

"Go ahead."

"Ehhh..?"

Yuhi looked at her slyly. "Aren't you supposed to treat me?"

At those words, he watched as her cheeks turned red. "That is true, but Yuhi, do you have to be unpleasant about this?"

"Is that so?"

Pfft, she is very nervous, isn't she? He watches as she unbuttons his shirt and averts her gaze as much as possible. Yet from this distance, he saw her struggle. The girl's cheeks burned redder, all the way to her neck.

Red huh? That's her color, despite what her name implies. "You can't apply the medicine if you look away."

"I-- I know that." Sumire stutters.

Despite those words, she averted her gaze.

She is fun to tease. As she applied the medicine on his neck, he felt the burning sensation from her hands.

Her power really is strong, Sumire must have noticed since she backs her hands away slightly.

"Shall I use some cotton instead?" Sumire mutters..

She was about to do so, yet he grabbed hold of her arm with his free one.

"No, there is no need."

"I see."

He liked it, the feeling of the girl's hands on his bare chest. Listen to him; he sounds like a pervert. But there was something about this moment that made him have rather irrational thoughts. Damn, she's cute; why does she have to stutter and stammer like that?

Yuhi shook his head. He must be going crazy. He needs to control himself; otherwise, he will scare her away.

"Yuhi, is your practice with the others going well?"

"Hmm? Why are you asking so suddenly?"

"Uh, that's because they haven't told me anything. I am supposed to be composing your entry song."

Oh, that's true; naturally, she would write their entry song. But she is composing the melody, huh?

This would be the first time he would sing along to a melody she wrote. Though that debut song was from her, she wrote the lyrics, not the melody for those.

He wonders if the scenery would be different.

"If they're not telling you anything, doesn't that mean it's going well?"

"That's true, but Ran is a bit--"

Yuhi noticed the change in her expression, so she is worried about Iwa, huh?

He already knew the two have a close relationship. Atsuro told him bits and pieces, and well when those guys first came here. Iwa Ran is the one who hangs around her the most.

Yuhi closed his eyes and opened them again. "Are you worried about him?"

Sumire looked away. "It is only natural isn't it? Recently he is a bit distant. I understand his situation is bad. He is going through a lot as of this present moment, although he should be thinking more about himself. He always comes over to the bar to check up on me. He has a habit of not eating properly too. You can't just live off energy drinks and nutritious bars."

Come to think of it, whenever they eat, Yuhi noticed that Iwa only has those canned drinks and eats a few bars.

Huh, so it is like that. But normally, Sumire does not notice such things; even if she did, she would ignore it. There is a reason why others call her cold-hearted because she can be.

He should not underestimate Iwa Ran. To get her to be this worried, he is a worthy opponent.

"Iwa"s been doing fine. Kira lectures him on his bad eating habits and forces him to eat with us."

It wasn"t a lie. But they only did that recently. The last thing on his mind was keeping track of everything his team members did, Although yesterday was the first time they performed together. He has hovered and spent some time before then.

He watched as her violet orbs brightened. "I see! That"s good."

For Iwa Ran, she can make that type of face. It sucks. Yuhi understood that he would never measure up to the number of memories the two shared. But when he hears how much she cares and worries about his new team members, it upset him.

Up till now, his main concern was with the fiance, and well, Mamoru. Even before Mamoru passed away, Yuhi saw him as a rival. But it seems like that isn"t the case, huh?

Yuhi extended his free hand out and brushed his fingers across the girl"s lips, causing her to lose her demeanor again. "Yuhi?"

"I think I don"t like it when you pull that sort of expression for Iwa."

"You think... I can"t do anything about that."

"Hmm? I"m sure you can."

It was then where he leaned forward, so his face was inches away from Sumire.

He watched as her face became rather unrecognizable due to the bright shade of red.

"Hold on a second, Yuhi."

No, he doesn"t want to. She really is too cute. He can"t hold back anymore when she"s like this. One has to give him a reward or something for holding out this long, though. However, before he did anything, he heard the sound of something dropping. That alone wouldn"t have stopped him.

Yet he saw a rather bright light on the ground and picked up what she dropped. It was a musical composing book and a single score sticking out. Huh? This is....?

Sumire immediately took the sheet of paper from his hands and hid it away with her own, holding it against her chest. "This is...um...."

Why is she acting so nervous and secretive?

"You don"t have to look so panicked. It"s natural that you don"t have our song ready, I mean, like you just said. We don"t tell you anything about it, nor do we let you go to our practices."

When he saw her look down at her feet, he had to ask again. "That is their song, isn't it?"

"Sorry."

It must be a song for Ichinose Arashi's team. Yuhi sighed deeply. Well, he knew this would happen, he already saw her reaction when she heard that man got hurt. How on earth did Mamoru deal with this without acting petty?

ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 377

Chapter 377: For now I will treasure this

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

"I see; well, they're lucky."

"I-- I'm sorry." Sumire apologized; she had her head bowed down and was completely averting his gaze. "I didn't have any intention of composing them a song despite hearing of their entry. They didn't ask one of me either. But, I met Sei-kun recently, and he told me about what they had been up to.

He told me how hard the three had been working. It may sound superficial. After all, just because someone says something doesn't mean it's real. He could have said that so I could compose them a song. But I knew he wouldn't do that. Sei-kun's words aside. I've kept track of their activities, so I am familiar with everything.

I can see it, and I can almost visualize them working hard. Masato and Masaru are complete opposites, and they always seem to be bickering at each other. Yet, they have a sense of harmony. I can imagine Dai-chan shaking his head every time they fight, and when he interferes, Masaru ends up teasing him—causing both Masato and Dai-chan to be mad at Masaru.

I can visualize their practice, Masaru silently and yet giving people advice while Masato silently admires Dai-chan. I can see how hard they have worked, almost like I am right there beside them... That's why..."

At that, Yuhi reached over and patted her head.

"Yuhi?"

He shuts his eyes; yeah, he already knew. He already knew when he heard of nanairo feathers entry. Yuhi knew that this would happen.

"It's alright. You have equal rights to compose them a song, and besides, it won't be a fair fight if they don't have your song."

"But entering a tournament when you just formed the group, is it fine?"

Yuhi chuckled. "Now you are asking that question?"

Sumire looked away, and he reached over and caressed her cheeks. Yuhi leaned forward and tucked a strand of hair behind her ear. "So just now, why were you messing around?"

"I'm upset that you left me earlier."

Hah, he knew there was something wrong. "You know I can't say no to Akatsuki."

"I know." His thoughts broke off when she extended her hand out.

"What are you doing?"

"Your hair is wet."

It was then he looked at the window and recalled the small rain shower before he came inside.

"Yes and?"

"I can't have your color not showing."

She is a selfish girl, saying it with a monotone voice and a blank look on her face.

Yuhi doesn't bother repeating it. That black isn't an actual color, and between the two of them, she is the one with the brightest color. He made his hair dry with his black flames.

"Yuhi's color is pretty." At that, Sumire rested her head on his shoulders.

This girl goes ahead and does bold things. However, he didn't mind it. Although it's true that his feelings for her hadn't changed, although they remain the same. He didn't know why, but he felt as though. He felt as though that this situation between them was alright.

He is a simple guy; his old friends often said that where he was still around. Simple huh? Indeed he is; after all, anything satisfies him. As long as she was alive, it did not matter if he could not see her- then, as time passed, just her remaining by his side was enough.

That's all he needed. Even now, that hasn't changed as much. As long as she's beside him, he would be okay. Eventually, she would leave him; eventually, she would have to return to that place. To the place she originally belongs but for now. For now, he would treasure this.

Torii, Toma. It seems as though he has become a huge sap, huh? The two names of his close friends who he lost in an accident before.

Those two would laugh if they saw this.

"Aren't you cold?"

"I'm fine. Being beside Yuhi is the warmest place; it's the warmest."

At the end of her sentence, the black hair boy noticed the instant change in the girl's tone. She is quite the foolish one, isn't she? But he really can't leave her alone. Yuhi wraps them around in black light.

He recalled the earlier dream and sighed to dream about them during a time like this. He wonders what sort of meaning it has for the future. Torii and Toma, if those two met this girl, surely those two would also like him.

A completely different person, Yuhi knew what the others in school said about him and Sumire, how it was because he was hanging around her more than before. He knew that it wasn't good for the girl's already bad image, and yet every time, he tries to pull away, at least in school. She would give him that one look that sends any of his efforts and restraints down the drain.

He isn't any match for her.

...

After Sumire fell asleep, Yuhi quietly crept away. He walked down the long hallways till he reached the back staircase. He only just got out his cigarette and lighter when he heard the door behind him open.

"It seems as though you're not quite as a dog as I thought."

"It seems as though you're more than just an evil member of the Yakuza seeking revenge."

The man chuckles at that. "Indeed it was a mere cover-up. Though there are members of the Yakuza after her, one word from me is all it takes for those dogs to remind them of their places."

Yuhi takes a whiff of smoke then, as he sighs. "For a cover-up plan, you certainly caused so much damage. HQ is a complete mess; no thanks to your people and those girls to have deepened their dark fate. You even went ahead and dragged back someone like Maon and Nakara back into this side of the world. For a cover up plan you've caused hell of a lot of problems.

Well it's not as though it was a bad move. With you "Attacking" Sumire, that group couldn't take any action." He trailed off. "However, there is one thing I have to confirm. A lot had happened then, so many things happened at the same time so I couldn't be too sure. Was it your guys who killed that girl?"

"It was not one of mine." A cold and monotone voice, and yet Yuhi understood that this person did not lie.

"I see."

"You are no fool. But do you plan to seek revenge just because the girl was close to her?"

Yuhi shook his head.

"There isn't any need for me to do that. I will relay the message to Maon and Nakara who have been searching for the killer. Sumire cries in her sleep apparently and says "Asahi" the two noticed that and well since then they haven't stopped."

If he wasn't so busy, he would investigate properly too.

ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 378

Chapter 378: Getting closer to the truth

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

He often caught her mentioning the dead redhead girl's name. Her expression filled with pain, and those tears in her eyes

"Yamamoto. Yamamoto Mina shot Kuruga Asahi."

Yuhi raised his eyebrow when he heard the familiar name.

"I had not seen what had happened. However, Mikoto had, Mikoto had brought the redhead to the clearing area so others could find her. I told him that interfering with their struggles was pointless and that I did not permit him to take such an action. However, I stopped scolding when I heard the name of the girl.

Kuruga was indeed a foolish dog like all the others, yet the girl had been quite different in some aspects. Some of the actions she took did help my family and me, so I owed her quite the debt. Mikoto, as one of his long-time friends, knew about it and said, "It was the least we could do. So I even called her comrades over".

Yuhi stopped smoking for a second and sighed deeply as he rubbed the temple of his forehead. "What a pain." He mutters. "Those two are friends."

"Surely it should not surprise you? These individuals will carry on betraying and hurting each other until they are satisfied. Even then, when their selfish desires have been fulfilled, they will keep on repeating this cycle. It is one that does not change at all."

Yuhi didn't say anything, and in the next second, that person was no longer there. He looked up at the skies and exhaled deeply. Even though this world is very twisted, he knew Sumire would still say that this world is beautiful.

After a few minutes, he was about to head back when he felt a familiar pair of arms wrap around his waist. Yuhi gently caressed her hair. "Hey, love."

"How many did you have?" Sumire leaned forward as she pointed to the cigarette.

"Just a few."

"A whole pack?" Yuhi sensed her disapproving tone and chuckled.

She is very cute, even though he knew her concern was normal. He still found her fretting over him as something endearing and beautiful.

"Are we skipping?"

"Mm, but don't change the subject. You can't have too many."

"Are you concerned for me or my voice?"

"Well, of course, it is the second part. I did fall in love with your singing before you so-" His eyes twitched annoyed as he reached over and pinched her cheeks. "Ouch, that hurts."

"Brat, you must be doing this deliberately."

"Well, that is because you left me alone."

"Did you want to speak to him?" Yuhi wondered. The man who just left is a leader of a terrible crime syndicate. He knew Sumire had an odd relationship with him since the man was also a member of the elite circle.

Sumire shook her head. "No, you're right. I would rather avoid him."

"Did you stop dragging Nagawa around to those events?"

"Mm, more like I stopped going to. I have made my presence clear, and that much is enough." She played with the buttons on his shirt. "Yuhi-san, you were also uncomfortable with me going there?" She asks despite already having the answers.

"Yeah."

But even more than that, what bothered him was her taking Sano along with her. Even now, he does understand what she was trying to do. This might be a good time to ask, but he dislikes talking about that man.

His thoughts broke off when he felt a pair of soft lips on his. "What are you doing?"

"I believe I just kissed you, Yuhi-san."

Hah, right, she likes kissing, doesn't she? "I thought you would ask me more questions like what we talked about."

"There is no need for me to do that; after all, I trust you, Yuhi."

She trusts him, huh? This is a good thing, and yet there is something odd whenever she mentions the word trust. It feels wrong somehow. He does not understand the reason for that.

.....

One of the good things about Iro road high school is the large campus and a large number of empty rooms. After cuddling and flirting for a bit outside, they returned inside and used one of the empty libraries.

"Hey, Sumire, sorry that took too lo-" Yuhi paused when he saw her fast asleep on the table.

Yuhi sighed deeply. This girl is falling asleep more than him recently. Then again, he knew how restless she was at home. At night she can only sleep for a few minutes before waking up again. If she was this tired, she ought to have stayed at home instead of attending school.

His thoughts broke off when his phone rang. It was a good thing the volume was low. Yuhi quickly answered it when he saw the caller ID. "Did you find anything?"

"No. But I received orders to go to Tokyo for a while, so I suppose I can continue my investigation there."

The person on the other end of the phone is Kiragi Asuka, one of Sumire's close friends.

Yuhi heard the sound of a ticket gate and blinked. "Are you at the station already?"

"I am on my way. For some reason, it is difficult to get a train today."

Huh? Yuhi blinked, puzzled when he heard her words. What does she mean by that? How is it difficult to get a train? Sure Star Town is far away, but it is not the countryside, there are still multiple trains running every day.

"Asuka, that sounds like-"

"I know. But I will be careful."

Yuhi sighed deeply when he heard her firm tone. "Look, maybe you should find another way. Sumire is still hurt from the last incident with Kuruga Asahi, and then there was that attack on Ichinose. After investigating, I learned there were no clues that linked both attacks other than Sumire. The person who is doing this is trying to send a message, and they want to hurt her and break her down."

But to achieve those goals, they would need something other than attacking her close friends.

"Yuhi, I would be more concerned about you and also Nagawa Sano. What is the news on him lately?"

"Are you saying they will attack Nagawa to get to Sumire?" Yuhi frowned at the thought. Would that not mean that Nagawa is close to Sumire? Would that not mean she cares a lot for him? He does not like the sound of that.

"Yes, I am." Asuka admitted.

"You could have denied that."

"Unlike Sumire, I do not intend to spoil you."

Yuhi sighed. "Well, I can't say no to that, so when will you arrive?"

"A few hours, but I will be busy settling into the base there. Please tell Sumire I will meet with her tomorrow."

"Did you call just for that?"

Yuhi felt that there was something odd with her tone.

"Is it something you can't discuss on the phone?" He immediately understood when she did not reply right away.

"I changed my mind. Meet me in the train station later on."

ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 379

Chapter 379: Complicated thoughts and emotions

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

It was the following day where Sumire regretted falling asleep yesterday in the library. If she was awake, then she would have prepared herself for her current situation better. But even then, her attention was elsewhere. She recalled the nightmare from the previous night and looked at her surroundings.

There it is, that pitch-black color again. Ah, is that what one would call "Darkness?" From the very second she was born, the first color she saw was that murky darkness, it was a single color, yet there was something different about it.

It wasn't bright or sparkly, and it wasn't the first thing one expected a newly born infant to stop. A monotone world, from the very moment - call it fate or whatever.

But maybe there was already something that tied her to that person. If one uses that logic, then she must share a connection with several others. In that case, the concept of destiny vanishes. Even if it was true, she wouldn't believe it.

She would not believe it since it would be illogical.

Sumire closed her eyes. That is right, and it would not make any sense... There is no information to back up the word destiny. One could easily call it an illusion.

It is something others have romanticized in their heads and brought forth due to their desires. It is human nature to want to dramatize a mere thought, that's why it is "normal."

When there are individuals who step outside of what is considered the norm, others immediately shun them. That is a reality she long accepted, that's why it isn't new anymore.

Sumire felt people whispering as they went by, and she sighed deeply. It was natural some people gave her strange looks after that recent test. It was only natural for them to do that, and she doesn't blame them for it at all. If someone who is usually average suddenly turns out to be above average and complemented highly, it would make anybody have unpleasant feelings.

"Look, isn't that Ibuki?"

"Can you believe it? A score like that?"

"Did she cheat?"

"No, apparently, she is a genius girl. I heard the other teachers talk about it."

She really was out of it, and so she did not think straight. Usually, she would work hard to ensure that her answers seemed rather normal. But recently, her thoughts spiral out of control. Before she knew it, she unconsciously used her real ability.

Shin will be very happy when he finds out about this. But this is no good at all.

But Sumire spotted a few girls looking her away. These were girls Yuhi used to fool around with. It seems like they will have more things to gossip about. After the results, Sumire did think she ought to hide, but hiding at this rate would be foolish.

She could imagine what others would say if she held back now, "You're looking down on us, aren't you?"

No, that's not it at all. Those people are wrong. But explaining anything in those circumstances would not be worth her time.

If there are people who see a drastic change in such a short time, it's only normal that they won't accept it. That's why there is no need to explain it.

Since it is something like that, then there's no need for her to bother, correct? Yet she recalled the way Ru looked at her with those eyes as those he understood? What does he understand?

What exactly does he know about her?

What exactly are you trying to get at?

"It's because I know you that I fell in love with you?"

Ha?

They only had brief interactions back then... How could Ru have possibly fallen in love with her? It did not make any sense at all.

But then again, it was the same for her. Sometimes she questioned why she fell in love with Yuhi. What was the trigger for such strong feelings to emerge? Those eyes showed no lies.

Yes, that did not lie. So much time has passed since she entered into a relationship with Yuhi, but she still has such complicated feelings like this.

Ru, in the end, she is still weak.

Even if she has accepted this power and fate, she would occasionally break down. Can a person without any love become a true leader?

Sumire always believed that hesitations are a sin. It is a crime.

This is why whenever she does hesitate, she would quickly bury it away before anybody notices. She buries it away in the furthest corner of her mind. She never cried in front of others because crying is a sign of weakness; this is why she never shed a single tear in front of anyone.

Yes, that is how it was in the past; she did not cry in front of anyone except him.

She recalled the last words he said to her.

The words he last said to her before she thought he died.

"I'll always be watching over you and lending you strength no matter what."

That was the first time.

It was an event that traumatized her. She knew that ever since then, something hadn't been the same. After time went by, she finally deciphered the meaning of those words.

When she came to an answer, she thought that guy is very foolish; he had more idiotic moments for a genius. But it gave her strength, knowing that if she just waited, she would be able to see him again. When she did, though, she didn't expect it to be like that.

Sumire didn't expect to run into his arms and realize that he truly would leave her this time. It was something she noticed from that day onwards.

She recalled the words he said to her before his illness became worse.

"Sorry Ki, I won't be able to show it to you anymore. A world of color."

Now in the present day, she would dream more about him. In those dreams, he would call out to her and say the same thing repeatedly.

"I'm glad. You've found it now, your color."

Ru is wrong, though.

The colors in her world were always there, but she could not see it because of her complicated emotions. But bit by bit, she saw it. Each color has always represented something for her and always had a meaning. It never left her. But it took her so long to notice something that was always there.

In those dreams, he would say those words and wrap her in those arms once more. Even though it was only a dream, his embrace was warm, and yet it was different than before. When she realized why she thought it was unpleasant. But that's why she has to be the one to end this.

No, Sumire shook her head. Even if she doesn't want to get others involved, there's one person that she couldn't involve in this.

After she arrived at the end of the hall, she spotted Yuhi leaning against the door frame. He seemed busy since he was looking at his phone intently, but the moment she appeared, he turned around. His lips curve to a smile.

"Hey, finished with the test?"

Sumire sighed as she slumped into his arms. "Hide my face Yuhi-san, too many people are looking at me."

Yuhi laughed. "I heard that you didn't hold back."

"I was distracted. But what is with this school marking papers that quickly?"

"It is because we are an art school. The teachers do not want to make us waste any time on things other than our craft."

"But even then, there is something unusual about all of this." She trailed off when she felt his lips on her forehead. A content sigh passed her lips. "Well, maybe this isn't a bad situation."

"I know how you feel about this, but let me tell you this. Congratulations, Sumire, you worked hard."

For a moment, she froze when she heard him say those words. How on earth does he do this every single time?

ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 380

Chapter 380: So they ponder about change

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

A few hours later

It did not take long before they arrived at the station. After they arrived at the ticket gates, they arrived at the meeting spot. She stopped, and so did Yuhi.

"In any case, today turned out to be a good learning experience. Thank you very much."

Yuhi spent the last few hours showing her different sculpting techniques.

Sumire bowed, honestly expressing her appreciation. It is rare for any good artist to teach their techniques to others. The truly successful ones keep everything to themselves. Even though he was spartan about it, he still taught her well.

When Aika and Asami heard that Yuhi was teaching her, they looked very surprised. It seems like Yuhi has never taught anybody before, and that was why no new student approaches him. Sumire wondered what the reason was. Many students were younger than them who often hung around the senior classrooms to ask for help, but nobody approached Yuhi.

Sumire looked over at Yuhi's expression and saw his red cheeks.

She lifted her face and laughed in amusement.

"Yuhi, make sure to keep today in mind, okay?"

"Yeah...well, thank you for today." He mumbled.

This is one of the things about Yuhi that does not change. Still, it surprised her when he gave that speech during the end-of-day assembly. It is unlike him to do something like that.

She sulked about it until he offered to take her out. Maybe she is too simple-minded after all. That was clearly a bribe. Sometimes it is difficult for her to tell what Yuhi-san wants from her.

Occasionally there are times where it looked like he wanted more from her. But then there were equally occasions where he would do nothing, and she would be left guessing.

Then again, this is not new. It was the same back when he was still a member of the Holy Knights with her. Back then, she made all sorts of direct moves, and yet he didn't notice at all.

Sumire sighed. "Yuhi, still an idiot." Sumire quietly muttered.

In the end, their relationship has not changed much. The only thing that has changed is now there is a name for their relationship now. But other than that, they still make such clumsy mistakes.

Their relationship hasn't developed at all. Even though she had fun today, it felt like it was only her.

Once again, it felt like she was the only one enjoying herself; it was just like when she was with that person. Sumire shook her head.

No, she needs to stop referring back to her relationship with Sano. Yuhi is different. He truly treasures and cares for her. The only reason it felt one-sided is because Yuhi is not very talkative. He conveys his feelings more with actions rather than words.

"Wait a second, Sumire."

Huh? Her thoughts broke off when he grabbed hold of her wrist suddenly and leaned forward, ehhhh? Wait what's with this development? Is he actually going to do something? Sumire felt her heart speed up when she saw the serious look on his eyes.

But just as she thought so, he brought his hand towards her hair and brushed something away. "You had something in your hair. I got rid of it just now."

Oh... So that's all it was. Sumire felt disappointed and sighed deeply. She supposes this is normal. If she thought about it, Yuhi has never been in a proper relationship before. It is only normal for him not to understand what to do.

"Yuhi minus ten points for touching me without asking."

Yuhi looked at her, surprised.

Sumire laughed weakly. "Better luck next time. Bye-bye." She whispered and rushed off before she heard his response.

She rushed towards the other platform. It did not long before she got further away until he was no longer in sight.

Once she was certain he was further away, a relieved sigh passed her lips.

Yuhi needs work on that department more. You didn't even realize that something was wrong with her. She guessed it was expected, with the way she managed to play tennis earlier. Nobody would expect that she had an injury.

She leaned her head against the pillar as she waited for the train. In the end, she wonders if there is nothing she can do to salvage what is left of this relationship.

When they first started dating, he was the one who made the first move. But after that time, he has held himself back a lot. At first, she realized it was because of her pregnancy, but even after she gave birth, the situation did not change.

Somehow Sumire felt as though he hesitated whenever they talked. Besides, she placed her hand on her hair. He patted her head like that and said, "Got it then. I'll make sure to come back to you" made it seem as though he saw her as a little kid.

Yes, there is an age difference of two years. But in the end, that's not a lot. The majority of her friends are dating university third-years, working adults - some being teachers in their school.

So two years? Two years is nothing in contrast, yet Yuhi still insists on treating her like a little kid. She doesn't understand why he does it, or maybe he is not conscious of it?

Her thoughts broke off once she saw the train, and moved away from the pillar, and rushed over. Yet, there was a sudden appearance of a large crowd causing her to get pushed around. Before she lost her balance, somebody caught her.

At a time like this, it would be nice if it were Yuhi. But no way would that happen. Besides, he told her he would be busy with work, so he sent her ahead to go home.

"Careful, isn't your leg still injured?"

She turned to the direction of the voice to find a man with purple-colored spiky hair. "Hino."

"Right, my bad." Sumire laughed and winked. "That definitely scores highly in my book, though eighty-five points."

his head and sighed, "I'll never get that about you."

Sumire only laughed again.

She thought this before, but any girl who is in love with Hino is lucky. There are many rumors about Hino being cold-hearted and cruel to girls, but Sumire learned the last few months that he was a gentleman. Not the stereotypical type, but how to put it? He is kind without showing too much kindness, and he knows where to draw the line.

This is the reason why she could be friends with him. The reason why she is not afraid.