

Melody 411

## **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 411**

Chapter 411: Voice

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"Then what if I kill you."

Sano felt his heartbeat increase, his palms turn sweaty, and he felt beads of sweat fall from his face rapidly. The words she said that time echoed in his head like some kind of spell. Not once since that time did a day go by where he did not think of those words. It was the first time he felt fear, and to think it came from the girl he loved.

He felt fear, and at the same time, he wondered. Since when did her gaze become this way? Those blood lust-looking eyes, devoid of any hope and emotion. Since when did she give up on the world?

He thought back to the time they dated. Each time she had them, all those emotional outbursts, he noticed the look in her eyes would change. At some point, it felt like he was arguing with a doll. He became increasingly angrier with her because she looked so emotionless even when they argued.

Why did he not realize then?

She was already losing hope in the world, and he was the last straw. She, who already gave up on everything a long time ago, clung to him, hoping that maybe she could still change her mind. But what on earth did he do?

"Sumire?"

"But hah, right now, I don't have much strength."

"You have no idea how dangerous this position is." He mumbled.

"I do know, but I can't move."

"Kiss me, Sumire."

"It will be weird in this position."

Sano laughed. "Is that your new excuse?"

"Mmm, it is."

Sano extended his hand out and traced her lips. "It's a waste for you to be with Terashima."

"A waste, huh? Than San, are you asking me to be yours?"

"If you understand that-" Sano's sentence fell short when he felt a prick on his arm. He gritted his teeth, realizing. "Sumire don't-"

"Sorry, I will only leave for a few hours. I will return by nightfall, so stay put until then."

Sano wanted to scream and tell her to stop, but whatever she injected in him took his voice away too. He struggled to keep his consciousness intact as he felt her stand up.

Don't go, please you will die-

—

"Tell him, despite all this. The world is still beautiful."

Despite what it looked like, she wasn't a person who believed in fate. She didn't disregard it to a complete degree like some people do by saying it is "make-believe," or a figment of people's imaginations.

But she could not completely believe it. It is something that did not mean anything to her; that is why she could disregard it.

But from the very beginning, she's never held any particular attachment to anything. In the end, the person she has always been from the very beginning has been empty, and that's why she unconsciously finds there to be a wall around her and others.

Sumire reached over and extended her hand out to the sky, even though things are different now than before. Even though she has accepted it to a degree about needing others, she knew that in the end, her core views still hadn't changed. No matter how many times she gets shaken up or amazed by someone's actions. In the end, it will always revolt back to this.

"It's your color," Ru, has she gotten stronger now? Is it truly okay for her to take hold of this power and take another step forward? On days where she is left alone, she often has such thoughts.

Sumire recalled her eyes as she recalled a particular conversation.

"You see, I don't have anything. Things I want to do, things I can do, I don't have any of them. That's why, on the other hand, maybe something like that might actually work or something".

That's right.

Because she never had anything to lose from the beginning. No matter what reckless action she takes. No matter what action she ends up going through since there is nothing to lose. It becomes fine for her to go through with it.

But she wondered at what point did that change? Since when did she start to fear the consequences of her careless actions? Sumire stood on the rooftop as she overlooked the town. The place where she was now was a place near Tokyo. It was not the countryside, but the population in this place is smaller than most.

"It seems you still have a bad habit of climbing on roofs. I thought you were afraid of heights."

"I am, but the view is nicer here."

The man who just appeared sweating is none other than Nakara Shin.

"Did your boss finally let you go?"

Shin sighed. "They thought I tampered with the evidence and changed it so you wouldn't get in trouble. Thanks to that, I have not had the chance to check on Yuhi."

"Yuhi is doing well; San visited him."

Shin looked baffled, and she chuckled. "I wondered what kind of conversation they had; surely it was something interesting?"

"You're messing around again. This time too, sneaking away from Nagawa." Shin pointed to an old man wearing a navy blue colored suit. "That is the face of the guy you wanted to see; he is the mayor of this city. But he is causing problems and trying to make it big in Tokyo. Rumors say he is the one who is causing problems for the delinquent world and idol association board."

"Why the latter?"

The first thing makes sense. Many dislikes anything to do with the underworld.

Shin looked troubled. "It's you."

"I have never met him."

"You sure? When I tried to question him and mentioned you, you should have seen his face."

Sumire tilted her head puzzled. She is sure she has never met this guy before, but he is hostile towards her?

"You know I heard you have better control of your abilities now. If so, cant you just use some mind control on that guy?"

Sumire sighed. "Even if I do that, it is not like the situation will change. It will have the reverse effect. His followers would end up suspicious and investigate. They will learn about my abilities, and it will worsen the situation."

Shin looked doubtful. "Those people aren't smart enough to make that connection."

"Perhaps, but there is still that one percent chance."

"Still, mayors are individuals chosen by the people. I can see why you are reluctant to just directly confront them."

"Is he truly the voice of the people?" Sumire pointed to a tall building. "That orphanage down there is swarmed with debt. They are having a hard time feeding the kids because a rich man swayed them to give the donation money away."

".."

"The people in that shop below this building illegally started their business. Their shop is not licensed; they have to be careful every time there is an inspection."

"Sumire."

"All of this is because these people do not have money. The mayor, if he is the voice of the people, then I wonder why he does not help them?"

If a person has the power to change things but does not use it, they have committed a great sin.

## **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 412**

Chapter 412: Noblesse Oblige

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"Noblesse oblige."

"Is that not the french term for those with great wealth comes great responsibility to give back to those who are less fortunate?"

Sumire nodded. "That is correct. If you can help those in need, it is natural to use it to help those need. But there are many like that man below down there who use the people as a stepping stone. He pretends that he will help them, but he tosses them away like garbage once he obtains what he wants from them. Instead of helping the people, he will selfishly keep the power to himself."

"Then what about those with power but chose to hide it because of fear?"

A painful smile appeared on her face when she heard him say those words. "Did you know about Hino too?"

Shin awkwardly rubbed the back of his neck and nodded. "I suspected something. The care he has towards you and even Yuhi seemed unusual. It only took a quick investigation for me to learn that he was involved in the accident that tore you and Yuhi away when you were younger."

So she did meet Yuhi before, and Hino was even there. How ironic, now that she thought about it that time, she helped Hino in the alleyway. It felt like something similar happened. She unconsciously rushed over to help him.

"Does Yuhi know?"

"It seems he started to regain a few of his memories after you met him in that concert."

"Just me and not Hino?"

Shin nodded. "It is strange, but I can't find many records about Nasaki Hino when he was younger. It is like somebody deliberately tried to erase those records."

For somebody with the power to erase records like that, there can only be one person.

"I can investigate it further for you."

Sumire shook her head. "I know who did it." Only Eli can do something to that scale. "But I will not ask him why."

There is no need for her to do something like that. At the end of the day, the truth will always prevail.

"Even if we don't mess with him, there are those who will, and the situation will worsen, won't it?"

Sumire nodded. "The human mind is a peculiar thing. No matter how much we come together as a society, there will be objections wherever you go. People's hearts cannot be truly at peace since conflicts exist everywhere."

Without darkness, there can be no light, and the same goes vice versa.

How many times has she said those words to others?

"From now on, things will be more dangerous than before. I already knew before I left for Tokyo that I was treading on a thin and dangerous line, ready to snap at any time. Ru knew this and tried to shield me as much as he could, but," She laughed weakly. "In the end, here I am, treading away from the peaceful life he wanted for me."

"Sumire."

"From now on, I will have to rely on you more, Shin, because I know at the very least you will never betray Yuhi."

"You should ask that of Nasaki Hino."

Sumire shook her head. "He lost his chance the moment he didn't reveal the truth to me. If he told me from the start, I would still trust him even if I didn't understand him. But now I cannot."

She closed her eyes as she recalled that time he kissed her and said he would choose Yuhi.

"That person is a fool. If he thinks he can protect Yuhi by concealing the truth from him, then he is greatly mistaken."

Shin sweat fell. "You're bitter about this, aren't you?"

Sumire sighed. "I didn't want to, but when I thought about how many times I went to his house-

At that comment, Shin raised his hand. "Wait a minute, what are you talking about?"

"Huh?"

"You went to his house many times?"

Sumire nodded. "Yes, why do you think we got so close?"

Shin sunk to the ground with a defeated look on his face. "I am not even going to ask why you went to another man's house repeatedly, even after you started dating Yuhi."

"It's only Hino."

"But surely you figured he liked you?"

"I did, but," Sumire trailed off and nodded. "I also knew he would never try anything."

Shin looked at her baffled and shook his head. "You are far too careless. I can see why Hamano watches over you like some kind of parent despite being the same age. I am surprised the media never posted such news."

There were a few occasions where a reporter followed her, but Hino said he would take care of everything. The next day there was no trace of such news, so she assumed that he took care of things.

"Are you that close?"

"Mm, that is why I am angry."

She hates it the most when those dear to her keep important matters a secret just to keep her safe. "I did not obtain this strength for people to treat me like glass and leave me behind."

"Then can you show those people the strength you have now?"

Sumire looked down.

"You don't like showing your hanyou abilities in front of people. Is it because your hanyou state resembles a vampire? Are you afraid people will call you a monster?"

She shook her head. "Even before I learned of this ability, people already called me a monster, so it is not like anything has changed."

"Then--"

"But if people with abnormal strength are monsters, then I wonder how people see vampires? Vampires are not like what myths say; they only drink the blood of their beloved. They wish to be with them even to the point of deprivation; they will lose control and end up hurting innocent people just so they do not hurt their loved ones." She trailed off and stood up.

"Hanyous are the same. No matter what shape or form they take, those who commit evil deeds may do so just so they can become human one day."

"Even if you say that I can never forgive those who break the law for their selfishness."

Sumire appeared before Shin and took his gun from his pocket. She placed it in his hands. "That is why I accepted your help; it is so that one day you can pull that trigger on me."

"Sumire you--!"

"If I ever lose control and commit an act that will break the law. Shin, you must end it."

"How could I do that to you? Also, Yuhi-" Shin shook his head. "I won't be able to."

"You will." Sumire points to the orphanage again. "If I were to go down there and cause mass slaughter and then drink their blood afterward, would you forgive me? No, you won't."

She could see him tremble at the thought. "You will kill me without a second thought because I would become that monster."

At that comment, Shin sunk to the ground again, and she laughed weakly. "I didn't call you out to have this conversation, but it just happened."

Shin mumbled how much of an idiot she was.

"Would you do that for me?" Sumire asked.

"You don't have to ask."

Indeed, she does not have to. This person has a righteous heart. He will never tolerate such injustice from an evil person.

### **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 413**

Chapter 413: Strange Mansion

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

"Do I have to keep my hood on?"

"If you don't, we are returning immediately."

Sumire sighed, knowing it would be futile arguing with him. Then again, Sano did make it sound like if she stepped out of his house, she would die in an instance. If she stepped out of the house without wearing this protective close, would people swarm over her?

The cloak she wore right now conceals her presence. She found it very fascinating. It is not like she is invisible; people can still see her. But even if they do, they will look past her right away since her presence is small.

For the first time in so long, there are no watchful eyes on her; something is refreshing about this.

Sumire, however, underestimated her ability to stray off and wander. She thought she kept a good distance between her and Shin before she went anywhere, but when she next turned around, he was no longer around.

It did not take her long to reach the mansion she intended to investigate. If it is Shin, then surely he would head this way? Sumire did not waste any time before she headed inside.

However, the first thing she spotted was the amount of dust, indicating that nobody has lived here for a while.

The second was the small tent in the center.

The third was the kid inside the tent.

A deep sigh escaped her lips. It seems she won't be able to return tonight. San will get mad.

....

The next three days she spent cleaning the mansion, hoping to find any clues. But she found nothing. That should be a sign to leave, but her gaze fell on the boy with maroon-colored hair with a bandage on his forehead. He looked around nine years old, but she could tell from the bandages on his head and arms that somebody beat him badly.

Sumire crouched in front of the tent. "So I wonder when you will tell me your name and address."

"Old lady, didn't anybody tell you that asking somebody those things make you sound like a stalker or kidnapper?"

Her eyes twitched, annoyed. "A kidnapper? You were already here when I came."

"But staying makes it look like you kidnapped me."

For a nine-year-old brat to act clever like this with her-- Sumire shook her head. She needs to remain calm. "It seems I have the same problem as you. The moment I entered this house, I was unable to leave. All the doors and windows shut, it is impossible to leave. I tried shouting from the rooftop, but there is nothing but forest surrounding this building."

If she thought about it carefully, it was strange that she got separated from Shin that quickly. She was just in town, so how did she arrive in the forest so fast?

The boy looked down. "You are an adult; shouldn't you figure this out?"

"It is not like I haven't tried!" Sumire exclaimed. "But there is just no way out of here."

"Then how is the fridge filled with food?"

"That is what I like to know. The ingredients just magically appear overnight." Sumire trailed off. "The chances are somebody does have access to this place and are keeping the fridge supplied with food and mansion necessities."

There are even women's clothes and facial stuff in the bathroom now. It is strange.

"You know, if we have to be stuck here for a while, you can at least tell me your name."

"Kaito."

Sumire blinked when she heard his reply. "It took me three days to get a name; now, will this also be the day you eat my cooking?"

"How do I know you are not poisoning me?"

She rolled her eyes when she heard those words and sighed. "How can I poison you when I am not preparing the ingredients myself? You have stayed here longer than me, so you should know that."

Well, she understood why the kid was cautious. "If you won't tell me your name." She took out her phone. "I guess I will call my police associates to take you away."

"If you can get a signal on your phone, shouldn't you ask for help!"

Sumire paused. "Well, I did think that, but right now, I am in the middle of my own predicament." It took her at least a day and a half to get her signal working. She promised Sano that she would return that very night. If she returns now, he would most likely be angry.

Moreover, the police are still on the watch out for her, including the pesky media. The effect of that cloak has most likely worn off already. She is basically stuck here until somebody can fetch her.

Somebody who won't freak out on her. Atushi, Sano, and Hino? She can cross those three off. Shin-Sumire recalled the exchange from three days ago and sighed. What on earth was she thinking saying something like that to him? She must have gone crazy.



"You did something bad?"

"That is my line." Sumire pointed to his bandages. "You know if you don't change those soon, the infection will worsen."

".."

"You don't have to tell me your story, but at least let me change your wounds."

Sumire was about to give up when the boy suddenly extended his hand out. Her lips curve to a smile. So he is a good person, after all. She stood up and walked towards the cabinets, and she pulled out a navy blue-colored box.

"Has that always been there?" Kaito wondered.

"It appeared the day after I came here." It appeared at the same time as the female clothes. So whoever is in charge of this mansion learned of her presence.

Did they prepare the medkit because she looked like a weak female? That annoyed her, but it is a good thing. She cannot leave the kids wounds like that.

Sumire walked back over only to find the kid on the couch. She chuckled softly. Indeed he seems to be a good kid after all.

She undid the bandages, and her eyes widened, horrified at the sight of the injury. This isn't a normal wound. She figured he simply got attacked by thugs. But this looks like the work of pros. Still, who would hire experts to injure a kid like this? Sumire tried to think where she may have seen this kid before. He must be an important person if people chased after him, but still, nothing came to mind.

"Are you trying to figure out who did this to me?"

Sumire nodded. "Sorry, but this isn't something I can ignore. I am not a saint and will say I will help you with all your problems. However, this is one of the few things I cannot tolerate."

Her gaze darkened as a memory from the past appeared in her head. In that large house, she was mainly alone, but they would not treat her kindly whenever there was somebody.

"Miss, your very blunt."

Sumire chuckled. "So I hear," She trailed off and clenched his hand with a serious look on her face. "Will you tell me?"

#### **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 414**

Chapter 414: Do you want me to trust you?

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

It took a few seconds only after she asked before the boy told her everything. The long talk must have made him tired since he immediately fell asleep after their conversation ended. Sumire wandered around the mansion for a while before night fell again.

She waited until the right time; when it turned eleven, she sensed a presence in the kitchen next door. Sumire took a deep breath as she stood up and left the couch. Her gaze fell on the little boy fast asleep inside his little tent. He should be fine for a few minutes.

Even before he opened up to her, Sumire carefully watched over the young boy. She knew there were bedrooms in this mansion, but she would not fall asleep in those places.

The moment she entered the kitchen, she immediately spotted the intruder. For a moment, she stood there puzzled before she took a few steps closer. The man wore a hooded cloak, and yet huh? Isn't that the cloak she made for Yuhi? The only person who could have that is Hino.

Hino? Despite the darkness of the room, she could make out some of his features. Sumire recalled what Shin said to her earlier, and her eyes twitched annoyed. So he is going to go this far? If that is the case, Sumire took a deep breath as she called out.

"Intruder."

The man paused and flinched.

"Since I have caught you in the act, do you think I will let you go?" In the next second, she dashes over and punches his face. A series of blows came after that.

"Hey--hey wait Sumire--!"

"The intruder knows my name, so now they have upgraded to a stalker." She increased her attacks, and Hino struggled to keep up. "It seems you are quite strong, sir, intruder, but unfortunately, I have yet to get started."

At that comment, Hino removed his hood and held his hands up. "You know it's me."

Sumire continued to glare, and Hino sighed.

"I know you're mad, but let me explain."

"What is there to explain?"

"The reason why I'm keeping you here and why I lured you away."

Sumire paused before nodding. "I'm listening."

Hino took out an envelope and passed it to her. There were several enlarged photos of her inside Sano's house.

She blinked, surprised at the images. "How?"

"I don't think Sano realized it, but one of the women he slept with last wiretapped and put secret cameras around his house. Recently he said that he wanted to break things off, and she wasn't happy with it. So she checked the footage for blackmail and recognized you immediately."

"So she sold the news to the media?"

It was a typical story about jealous women who fought to get the attention of the men they like. But, she never intended to get so involved with Sano to the point that his old lovers would target her.

"Nor quite, she knew this single apprentice reporter. Luckily this guy is smart; he sent the images to me first and said he would strike a deal as long as I help him."

"So did you?"

Hino nodded. "Yeah."

"I see."

"I know you hate using underhanded methods, but this time around, there was no choice."

"Are you worried that there will be more?"

Hino nodded. "Just until I can safely clear them out, I need you to stay here."

"Is he alright?" Sumire recalled how frantic Sano was the last time they saw each other. "I'm worried."

It was a first for her to admit something like this regarding Sano, but she felt bad.

"His coping methods aren't the best."

"Ah." Sumire immediately understood. "I guess he is sleeping with other women."

"You know him well."

"Mmm."

"You're okay with that?"

"It's not like I have the right to complain."

Hino sighed. "You're still saying that. You know the reason Sano broke off all his other relationships is because of you. You told him that you couldn't take him seriously if he sees other girls."

"I just stated the obvious."

How can he whisper words of love while touching another woman?

"I'll pass on a message since I'm dropping by later."

"No." Sumire shook her head. "I think we need a bit of space away from each other anyway."

"Recently, he is losing control around me. If he likes me that much I can understand it to a certain extent."

Moreover, it's not just him. "I miss Yuhi more than I think. I feel so lonely. I'm afraid that I may end up accepting San's advances due to the loneliness," She laughs sheepishly. "I don't want to do that, but when I end up in that state, I end up doing stupid things."

"Like with Kusaji Atsuro?"

"Yes."

"Like with that desig-" Hino paused in mid-sentence and covered his mouth.

Sumire rolled her eyes and sighed. "You know, for somebody who is supposedly on Yuhi's side, you sure do snoop around me a lot."

Hino looked troubled at her words.

"Am I wrong?"

"No, you are right, but you are way too blunt about this." Hino trailed off and sighed. "Listen, I am not against you or anything. I just—"

"You knew me when we were younger, and now you are trying to play the role of the white knight."

"You are cruel," Hino muttered. "When did you find out?"

"Just a few days ago, Shin mentioned it to me."

"I see."

"Do you know Eli?"

Sumire watched as his gaze dimmed at the mention, and she nodded. "Alright, I get it."

"Sumire, I just want to help you."

Sumire recalled what she told Shin a few days ago. She said that Hino lost his chance and that she could no longer rely on him as much as before. She will not go back on those words, but for now.

"While I am here, I will trust you."

This is all she can do for him, who betrayed her trust once. Trust is an odd thing; some people will trust a stranger over somebody they have known a long time.

When trust breaks, some will brush it off like nothing happened and continue the same manner as they did before with that person. But then there are those like herself who can no longer see bring themselves to trust that person.

"You're too harsh," Hino mumbled again and stood up. He picked up the bag from the ground and walked to the fridge. "I bought some more stuff. I don't know what that kid likes, though."

"Is there a reason why you are keeping the child here too?"

Hino looked away awkwardly. It looked like he didn't want to reveal the kid's identity, but she tapped her fingers against the counter. "You really don't want me to trust you even now? Just so you know, it is easy for me to find the exit."

Contrary to what she said to the young boy earlier, she knew how to get out. The only reason she stayed is because she figured the person who did this would eventually reveal themselves. So she did a stakeout after observing the patterns of when the items appeared. It is easy for her not to sleep for a few nights.

**ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 415**

Chapter 415: A political or entertainment game?

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

Hino sighed again. "My little brother."

Sumire blinked when she heard those words. She did not expect that. So now it made sense, "When I spoke to him earlier, he resembled you."

"I didn't think we would be alike."

"You're acting like you've never met him before—" Sumire paused. "Wait, you've never?"

"My family is weird, Sumire. Or rather, my old man has a bad habit of sleeping with random women and abandoning the child on the streets. However, that boy is the son of his current wife, so he is different from me. It seems he discovered a dangerous secret, and people are chasing him down. My father is searching all over for him."

"He didn't mention his family."

"Well, that makes sense. His father is the prime minister."

"Wait--?"

So that would make Hino— what an odd string of events.

"That old man had the nerve to contact me and ask me to search too."

"You were in touch?"

"It was shortly after I met Yuhi, that guy got in touch with me and told me never to see him again. He gave me hush money, and I used that to build up connections before I made my own money to start up the company. After I became successful, he returned and tried to use me."

So Hino had a background story like that. Now that she thought about it, whenever the prime minister appeared on the news, Yuhi would immediately switch the channel.

"So why did you keep your brother here instead?"

"Father is looking for the kid to silence him. I think he will deliberately give him to the bad guys and let them deal with him. Then he will become the tragic father who lost his son." Hino trailed off. "This game of politics is very messy. I prefer dealing with the entertainment industry; it is a lot easier for me."

Sumire chuckled when she heard those words. "Are you sure about that? The entertainment industry has me."

"Maybe politics is better." Hino jokes.

Sumire stepped on his foot, but Hino continued to laugh. Oh, somehow, they are talking to each other like they normally would. It seems she cannot dislike this person. She indeed felt betrayed that he kept things from her, but she still cannot hate him. The same goes for Sano too, even though he did all that, in the end, she cannot hate him. But she hasn't forgiven him either.

Her mindset is very complex; sometimes, she doesn't understand her own thoughts and beliefs.

"But you know, I think I know why you don't want to see Sano for a while. He left very deep marks on you."

Sumire looked at him, puzzled.

"Your neck."

She rushed over to the mirror by the door and indeed saw the deep markings on her neck. Her eyes twitched, annoyed. So this is why he can keep calm around her during the day. At night once she falls asleep, he must be—just the thought of it disgusted her.

"Don't blame him too much; he has suffered a lot the last few days."

At that comment, Sumire raised her eyebrow. Sometimes she cannot tell what Hino is thinking. Does he want her to get back together with Sano? Most of the time, it looks like he is against them even interacting, and yet there are times like this.

"Give me your phone."

Hino blinked, puzzled but passed her his phone. Sumire took a deep breath before she quickly dialed Sano's number.

That's Sano's voice, isn't it? There is no mistaking it despite the muffled tone due to the panting and grunting sounds. It seems Hino was right about him sleeping with other women. It doesn't bother her, she can calmly listen to this, but somehow there is something strange. It seems she doesn't understand her own emotions regarding him very clearly. Is it because from the very start, she forced herself to like him?

A relationship of convenience that was all she expected from him. She expected them to both use each other and ended things peacefully. But at some point, she does not know when but somebody got attached. Which one of them became attached first? After learning more bits and pieces regarding their past, Sumire wondered if Sano became attached first.

If so, then it must have been painful for him because she could not return his feelings for her.

"It sounds like you are enjoying yourself; if so, then just let me say this. I will come back but cope with me for a while."

She did not criticize him, but she did not brush it off completely.

She hears the girl respond. "Wow, isn't that a girl's voice? Hey, you said Nasaki Hino isn't seeing anybody."

"Hn, he isn't."

"But a girl—"

At that comment, she heard shuffling, and Sano must have taken the phone off the girl. "Sumire?"

"Mm, correct."

"Wh-where are you? Hino found you?" There was a mixture of displeasure and happiness in his tone.

He probably does not like the idea that Hino found her. Even though he was just doing that stuff with another woman moments ago, he is displaying his jealousy right now. He is indeed an unusual man.

"I'm safe; that's all you need to know."

"Can I come see you?"

"No."

There was silence for a moment before Sano mumbled. "I need—I need you to come back, I can't—"

"I already know," Sumire interjected. He is going to say that he cannot live on without her or something along those lines. Whether that was true or not, Sumire didn't care to find out. But right now, she understood this much. In his way, he is changing, and perhaps there are a few things she misunderstood about him.

Does that mean she will forgive him? Unfortunately, the answer is still no. In her heart, no matter how close she becomes to him now, she still cannot forgive him for what happened in the past. For her to forgive him, she first has to uncover the truth. The odd things that occurred while they dated almost like somebody planned it all. Back then, she was suspicious, but ,she couldn't focus on it due to her emotional mindset.

"Let me see your face."

Sumire sighed. "It won't do you any good, and don't switch on your camera either; I don't need to see you fooling around."

"I thought you wouldn't get jealous."

"I'm not, but it's not something you should show other people like it is some kind of trophy."

Sano sighed. "It seems you are okay if you can lecture me."

"Mmm."

"I thought you escaped with Terashima or something. But Terashima is still in his cell in the Hyou4 prison."

At that comment, Sumire panicked. "Did you tell Yuhi I was—"

"Yes."

She looked towards Hino, mumbling abort mission. It is over if Yuhi knows. Yuhi will not stand around in prison for any longer and go look for her.

**ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 416**

Chapter 416: Trigger

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

"You don't have to worry; he remained calm."

That is even scarier!

There is no way Yuhi calmly reacted to the news of her being missing. If he did, then that must mean he plans to do something crazy later on.

"When you come back, tell me."

Sumire rolled her eyes. So can he dispose of the evidence? Like she would do that, she will catch him off guard.

Then again, she doesn't want to see Sano sleeping with another woman, not because she is jealous but something else. She no longer wants to recall the painful memories from back then.

"Take care of yourself." Those were the last words she said before she ended the call.

Hino was looking at her curiously. "You know this might not be the best time, but you two act like a couple."

Sumire glared at him, and Hino shrugged. "I am just saying. Maybe it is a habit from the past."

A habit, huh? It can't be, because back then, they could not speak to each other naturally. There were a lot of moments where they didn't know what to say to each other. During those moments, she would think, ah, what is she even doing? But she would never get a chance to finish that thought since Sano would switch to do something intimate with her.

They did not communicate with words but physically.

So, in other words, a sexual—

Sumire frantically shook her head. It wasn't like that at all, but anybody who heard her thoughts would think so. Make note never to tell anybody- she paused again when she realized something. Yuhi already knows, and his reaction was the normal one.

"Anyhow, do you want to eat? This is fresh." He points to several takeout boxes, and Sumire blinks. "Just so you know, I was planning on revealing myself eventually. It is inconvenient for me to just bring random stuff, so tell me if you specifically want anything."

"Should I get your brother too?"

"No need, he won't eat with me."

So Hino must have at least tried; well, that makes sense. She noticed something was off from just a few days of staying here. That kid has been here longer than her and most likely noticed such things much sooner.



Sumire quickly joined him at the dining table. "Sano told me something odd, Yuhi is voluntarily staying in prison?"

Hino sighed. "Yeah. The transfer to Hyou4 prison was so they could get him out since none of the officers in the normal station could get him to leave. Of course, this news was already released, so nobody is blaming Yuhi and the mess about your involvement-"

"Eli cleared it up." Sumire finished for him.

"Yes. If I knew he was going to do that sooner, I wouldn't have asked Yuhi that favor about convincing you to stay with Sano."

Convince? Yuhi did not have to convince her; she just naturally listened to him and did not question him.

"Is that person dead?"

For the past two weeks, she has not inquired about the person she shot since her mind was not in a good state. But now that she has calmed down, Sumire realized the gravity of the situation. What was she thinking picking up that gun and shooting on the spot? She could have easily dodged that attack and knocked them out, but instead, she picked up that gun.

Hino shook his head. "No, but they may as well be." He took out some documents from his bag. "Here, photos of the victim."

Sumire realized quickly that it was a police report and carefully browsed through it. The moment she saw the images, her eyes widened, horrified. "This-?"

"After you left, somebody else caused life-threatening damage."

But who could have done this in such a short amount of time? It would have to be somebody who was already at sight.

"This is the reason why the whole thing blew up because the victim received wounds other than the gun injury. The media tried to find evidence that you physically hurt and tortured the victim. But when Eli stepped up to assist, he provided forensic evidence that the hands of the person who caused those injuries belong to a man, not a woman."

"Did they also pick up the gun?" Then, Sumire recalled something else Sano told her.

Yuhi could get arrested in the first place because they found a man's handprint on the gun. So when Yuhi said he was at the scene too, they must have assumed that he could have done it.

"Yes, it seems so. Nakara discovered that they tampered with the gun. Flick through the next page."

Sumire did so, and it showed photos of the gun's original state and then the tampered version of the gun. "Doesn't it look the same?"

"Take a closer look."

She did so and still didn't see anything, but the moment she picked up the sheet of paper- she saw black swirls. In the next second dark energy pours out. Hino immediately pulled her back, and she let go of the image. But that didn't matter since the sheet of paper floating in mid-air.

What?

"I didn't think it would react negatively to you like this," Hino mumbled. "When Nakara and I looked at the photo, all it showed was the dark energy around the photo; it didn't do this-"

So it was only with her? How come?

You should know the answer.

A voice echoed in her head. Sumire placed her hands on her eye. What is this voice?

She hears laughter.

How stupid for you not to notice. Hey, it's me-

It's us-

How can our Queen be so stupid?

Hey, I know what we should do-

Hino turned to her. "Hey? What's wrong? you look pale?"

She didn't reply as she felt an intense throbbing pain in her chest. Is it that again? Will her hanyou side go out of control, and she will start lusting for blood again? But no, there is something different about this. Why is the throbbing pain much worse? Her insides felt like they were on fire.

Her throat felt so dry, and her vision is getting blurrier.

Before anything could happen, however, a flash of black appeared in front of her. A man who wore a white lab coat stood there. He looked at her with a pained expression. "Even now, it is too painful for you. When the day comes where you can't hide it anymore, what will happen?"

"Eli." She mumbled weakly.

"For now, you must get some rest."

Despite her blurred vision, she could make out his sad expression. Why does he look so lonely?

## **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 417**

Chapter 417: Destroying the balance of the world

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

She wakes up to an argument between Eli and Hino. But from the sounds of it, it was one-sided. It was mainly Hino arguing with Eli. Sumire waited for a few minutes before she heard the sound of the door slamming. Sumire sighed deeply as she placed her hand on her head.

Nothing good happens when Hino ends up in a bad mood. But with her current state, there is nothing she can do. Moreover, her words may have the opposite effect.

Also, maybe she underestimated him too much. This entire time he showed her such kindness, and she enjoyed his company as a friend. If she thought about it carefully, he would not go that far for a normal friend. He cares a bit too much for her. But as long as he never openly said it, Sumire thought she could carry on as normal. But just now, that anger for her sake and even going this far to protect her. When she sees Yuhi again, she has to talk to him about this.

It will do her no good to think about these things now. There are too many unknown factors involved.

Still, she recalled the exore

"The men who like you are formidable."

Sumire looked at the source of the voice only to find Eli standing at the doorway but with a notably large bruise on his face.

"He hit you?"

Eli laughed. "I wondered when he would snap."

"You edged him on, didn't you?"

Eli walked over and pulled up the chair beside the bed. "How are you feeling now?"

How was she feeling- the moment she woke up, she focused on the contents of their conversation. She placed her hand on her throat. The dryness from earlier was no longer there, nor the burning sensation in her body.

"I feel better."

"I see."

Sumire didn't want to ask what he did to make it stop. Eli is still a scientist.

"Among scholars in the life sciences and general underworld society, there is a rumor going around about a Queen."

"A queen?"

Our Queen is so stupid.

Now that she thought about it, that voice in her head called her a Queen. "Black Alice," Sumire mumbled.

Eli looked at her with a serious gaze. "You figured something out?"

"A while back, I said something to Shin.." Sumire trailed off. But somehow? Why doesn't she remember what she told him? Sure so much time has passed, but her memory is sharp.

"It is unlike you to forget; it seems somebody is interfering."

Somebody? Sumire took a deep breath for a few minutes and did not say a word as she carefully thought back to the events of that day.

Or maybe it's just one Queen. After all, without darkness, there is no light, and the same goes vice versa. --

Bits and pieces slowly came to her. But the words kept breaking.

The followers are divided because they think there are two Queens.

But I wonder how they would react if they realize the Queen they are searching for is just one person?

All their fighting and all their pain. Was it all for nothing?

Despite the broken sentences, Sumire understood. It seems she was getting closer to the truth then, but because somebody interfered like Eli said, she focused on other matters for a while.

"Shin didn't say anything."

"It seems the SF leader has been putting pressure on him, so maybe it was a relief that you started to forget."

It must have been the same for Yuhi too.

Sumire sighed deeply. "It feels like I am causing more problems for people, and I hate it."

"But if you go off on your own and cut people off again, you will make them worry."

At that comment, she recalled one of their earlier meetings and looked away. "Do you have to remind me?"

"It will get dangerous from now."

"I said the same thing to Shin recently."

"But do you truly understand the extent of your words?"

Sumire laughed weakly. "I think both of us know the answer to that question."

"What do you intend to do? You've avoided my messages recently, so I had to come here myself."

"I see. Did you worry that I wouldn't keep my end of the deal?"

Eli shook his head. "No, I know you will."

"I understand that the situation is getting worse. This is no longer a simple investigation of what happened to Ru. The truth behind the accident will lead to many more truths. I will find out more than I am supposed to." Sumire trailed off.

That is right; she figured it out a long time ago, maybe even before she came to Tokyo. What Ru was investigating before his death, the accidents that occurred since her relationship with Sano became

sour. Even back before they dated and she was still with Sano, something was off. Maybe even long before then.

The truth she is searching for will destroy the balance of the world.

"Even if I destroy the balance of the world, I will still continue. I won't stop investigating. I know this isn't a simple matter of settling my emotions or even taking revenge. But as long as that organization continues to exist, I cannot rest."

She will bear the burden, the consequences of her actions much later. But for now, all she can see is the path in front of her, the path to destroy those people.

"I know it won't be easy, but I will cope with all the pain. I will reveal the truth to everybody."

"Even if you hurt others you care for?"

At Eli's words, an image of Yuhi appeared in her head, and she clenched her fist. "Yes."

Eli stood up and rummaged through his bag before he pulled out several a4 folders. "I compiled all the information I found abroad after traveling to many places. The information in these folders are things normal people will not be able to find."

Sumire nodded. "Good work."

"I was reluctant to give you this since you decided to randomly stop our correspondence."

Her sweat fell at those words. "To be honest--"

"You didn't want me to find out what you were doing with Nagawa Sano."

Uh- why does that smile look so scary? "So you knew."

"Just recently, I found out. Do you understand, Sumire? I gave you this leeway because I thought you already knew that Tsueno chose them. But you didn't know about it, so I cannot turn a blind eye." Eli trailed off. "Nagawa Sano was there on the day of the accident."

## **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 418**

Chapter 418: Would there ever be a perfect society?

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

At those words, she felt her body turn cold.

It is not like she didn't suspect it. It was one of the reasons why she spent so much time with him. Sure she intended to use him as a puppet and then throw him away. But even more than that, she wanted to know. The moment she saw that emblem, it felt familiar.

"I think he carried me away."

Those people panicked and called their superior. The superior must have been Sano.

"Did--did he give the order-" Sumire could not find the words.

No matter how much of a jerk he was, she still had some faith in him. A part of her still hoped—what a stupid thought.

Why do these things still surprise her?

Eli nodded. "It was him."

Sumire's gaze darkened, but Eli patted her shoulder. "Sumire, he may have given the order, but there was somebody else who manipulated him. Moreover, it seemed like he gave the order without knowing who the target was."

"But he has always hated Ru! How are you so sure?" Sumire exclaimed.

Ever since the casino incident, she knew that Sano disliked Ru. When she came here to Tokyo, he said some conceding words too. However, that guy always acts uncomfortably when she mentions Ru.

"I should not be the one to answer that question. You should know."

Sumire bit her lip and looked down. "Even if he is kind to me, I still don't know."

"Even after everything he has endured for your sake?"

"But that could just be for show. Who is to say he is not pretending? He already did it once; how can I be certain that he will not do it again?"

"Sumire—"

Sumire shook her head. "Right now, I do not know. That is why I did not discuss things with you."

Eli doesn't say anything, and she laughed. "I know I am destroying our plans a bit. But can you let this slide? Even more so after what you said to me."

"There is more to this than meets the eye, do you get it?"

"I think so."

Sano has been kind to her, while she is not the type to blindly trust like that. Even somebody like her can tell the difference between fake kindness and genuine. As for the kindness, Nagawa Sano has shown her recently.

"He is foolishly sincere."

Eli chuckled. "It seems I was worrying for no reason; you calmed down quickly too."

Indeed the sudden burst of anger from a few minutes ago seemed like a lie now.

"If you can behave this way now, then perhaps you will be fine for this next part too." Then, Eli pulled something out of the lighter-looking envelopes. Sumire's eyes widened when she spotted a familiar book.

Her heart beat increased. "This—"

"It's proof that Tsueno Mamoru is alive."

It took Sumire a few extra minutes to understand what Eli just said. "What are you talking-"

Eli shook his head. "Sumire, didn't you ask me to investigate because you understood?"

"How come, why hasn't he-"

"I will allow you to read the report in your own time. But I suspect that he must have had severe injuries. How he was able to get away and leave a body double, I am unsure. But he managed it."

It is not like she didn't think of this before because she did. She even said this to Yuhi. But now that she has seen this with her own eyes, she doesn't know what to think.

...

Sumire asked Eli to leave afterward, and he surprisingly did so without any more questions. She needed time to think.

For so many years, she lived surrounded by darkness. One of her first memories as a child is the darkness surrounding her.

When she looked out the window, she thought of him. Sumire picked up the box of cigarettes on her bedside table and a small lighter.

She began to light it. After a few minutes, she watched as a smoke trail came from the cigarette. She sighed deeply, "why am I doing this again?"

"I spent so many years alone." This feeling is normal for her.

No matter how many people stood around her, she would feel alone. The loneliness never went away. People often referred to her as a strong, cold, and stoic woman. She also refused help from others even when she needed it.

But despite that behavior of hers, she wanted somebody to notice it. She wanted somebody to notice that she needed somebody to rely on. It is suffocating pretending to be so strong all the time.

She missed times where she was still naive and knew nothing about the world. Those times where she believed that the law would protect the people. A time where she thought the law would root out all the evil. But, it did not take her long to realize how naive that thought was.

Would there ever be a perfect society? A perfect system? She has repeatedly asked that question for so many years, but she has yet to find an answer.

Sumire recalled that night several months ago.

.....

The bed produced several sounds of shaking. Sumire felt like her heart would leap out of her chest.

"This is bad. I said, okay, but do I even know what I am doing?"

She isn't embarrassed but she felt odd. All the girls in school talk about this stuff all the time, and she isn't too misinformed about it. But, this-- Sumire watched as Ru removed his shirt.

He turned to her. "Ki--"

"Gahhhh-!"

Mamoru burst into laughter. "Ki, you're too nervous."

"N--no I--"

He cupped her cheeks and bent down to kiss her again. "I'll calm you down."

Since when did he become so bold? She has never seen him this way before. But he is kissing her so deeply, almost like he knows what he is doing. Sumire paused for a moment. So it can't be that this isn't his first time? No, no, Ru has never looked at another girl.

But why does this feel good? Her head is turning mushy. Sumire felt him interlace his hands with her.

The warmth of his bare body against hers--

"Are you crying?" Mamoru pulled his lips away from hers.

Sumire mumbled idiot, and he chuckled. They kiss again, and this time more intently than the last. She felt his hands on her shirt and trembled.

"Ki," Mamoru said softly. "If you are afraid, just say so, but I won't stop, okay?"

So why would she waste her time on those words? Sumire opened her eyes, and her eyes widened when she saw how happy he looked. Despite the lustful and strange atmosphere, he still wore the same smile on his face.

No, something is different. "Ru--I feel strange."

"Yeah."

"But I like seeing you happy."

For a while, it felt like she had not seen him smile properly. Even though he did not discuss it with her, she knew she was the reason why he lost his smile. Because of her, he is secretly suffering, but even if that is the case, he still looks at her with such an affectionate gaze.

"I love you."

## **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 419**

Chapter 419: Always on my mind

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

Back to the present, she sighed deeply. "What use is there thinking of that stuff now? Ru is no longer here; he left me alone in this cruel world."



Right before she could tell him the words he said to her that day, he left her. A part of her most likely holds a grudge against him for being so selfish. According to Shin, Ru already knew people would chase him. But he still accepted her selfish wish of going to the concert together.

There was no particular reason why she wanted to attend together. But recently, she found his behavior weird; she felt that if they didn't go together, she would no longer be able to see him. The phone call they had on the morning of her concert made her feel strange.

It was because of that odd feeling that

"There is also evidence that says Tsueno Mamoru is alive."

Sumire knew Eli would find something if she asked him. It was a far-fetched theory, and yet Yuhi looked so serious when she brought it up. It was just a theory; she was just lying to make herself feel better. But, there is something.

So he is alive, but he didn't come to see her.

Even though he must know how badly she has suffered.

A part of her felt happy he was alive and somewhere in the world. He didn't die that day. But he must have suffered too.

"I will die without you, Ki."

He often said such cheesy things like that, and yet he never came to see her. It must mean his current circumstances are bad. Is he injured? Just how bad is it that he didn't even leave a sign until now?

This is so confusing for her. No matter how much she thought about Ru, however, his image in her head only lasts for a few seconds now. That's right, the one who occupies her thoughts now is a different man.

"Yuhi-san." She mumbled.

How much time has passed since she last saw him? Ever since she came to Tokyo, she saw Yuhi almost every day. They were not always together. Although he spent a lot of time with her when she first came, later on, he could not push back his schedule as much. She seldom saw him, but without fail, he would make at least a little bit of time for her.

After they started dating, he increased his efforts a bit more. He went to school with her even though he should be elsewhere. In order for her to experience normal school life, they have done so many things together.

That person cares more for her than he does himself, even though she is not used to kindness and has a hard time accepting that somebody cares for her.

Terashima Yuhis persistent attitude is something she cannot ignore. Mamoru was like that too, but it is different with Yuhi. He does not directly say these things and does everything naturally.

Later on, she would hear from their mutual friends and understood something. Terashima Yuhi is a very humble guy; he does not boast about his achievements.

Sumire knew she couldn't fall asleep at this stage, so she left her room. She headed to the bathroom. "A nice relaxing cold bath."

Still, a bath, huh? Ren liked those a lot. He said he preferred taking baths with her than going anywhere else.

Even Yuhi said something similar-- Sumire frantically shook her head. Everything leads back to Yuhi. Why is she always thinking of him she must have gotten crazy. But maybe it is because she allowed him to re-enter her heart easily. Even when she first decided on Tokyo, she did not intend to get close with him again.

It seems their paths will cross no matter what; if she thought about her life the last few months, so much has happened. If it were her in the past, she could not imagine living her current life.

So it seems Yuhi-san has succeeded in something even Ru didn't. No matter how much Ru tried, it was difficult for her to live anything close to a normal life. She would always end up dragged into a fight or back to the underworld society. That is why even though Ru disliked the underworld society, he would still accompany her.

In the underworld society, there is only one rule; those who are strong will rule. That is why there were many who liked Ru. The same went for Yuh-san-- Sumire sighed again.

She must be so fickle. One second she is thinking of Ru, then the next, it is back to Yuhi. But this is not the first time this has happened,

"I must love Yuhi-san more than I think."

"Is that so?" A familiar voice said.

Sumire looked up and saw Yuhi - and laughed softly. "Now I am even hallucinating."

Her thoughts broke off when the Yuhi hallucination grabbed her arm. "You like me that much?"

"The real one?" Sumire mumbled as she stared at him dumbfounded.

"Well yeah."

It took her a few extra minutes to realize it was really him before she pulled herself away. No matter how embarrassed she is, there is something she has to say first.

"Why are you here?"

"You...."

"Why are you here?!" She ignored him, demanding an answer.

"Sumire, there is something I have to do here." He answered her, knowing she was serious."

"What is that?" Sumire said sharply.

At that comment, he pulled her into his arms. It took her a moment to realize he only wore a towel and that he was naked. She glanced at the bathtub and noticed signs of use. He took a bath here so casually.

"You."

Sumire felt her heart beat rapidly.

"But you know I planned to reunite with you more romantically. Maybe in a few more clothes."

Sumire felt her cheeks grow hot. How can they hug when he is naked?

Her thoughts broke off when he cupped her cheeks.

"You're prettier than I remember."

Is he--is he serious?!!! Sumire felt the tears well up in her eyes. Quite some time has passed since she last saw him. Even without much light, she could tell he had gotten thinner.

"Hey, are you going to fry? Look, I'm sorry, but I never actually went to jail. I did for a night, but only that time. This entire time--"

"You were investigating, I know," Sumire interjected. She figured there was something odd about Hino's behavior.

Hino cares so much for Yuhi, but he focused on her safety first.

Yuhi's gaze softened. "Right, I knew you would understand. That is why when I heard Hino managed to get you somewhere safer, I decided to see you myself."

So Hino must have told Yuhi where she was. Is that what he argued with Eli about earlier?

"I see."

"I didn't get a chance to bathe or anything since I was in the forest for a few days. So before I saw you, I wanted to freshen up, knowing you might not let me hug you."

What an idiot, even though there is something more important to talk about. Her gaze softened when she felt him hug her tighter. Indeed he is an idiot.

## **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 420**

Chapter 420: Realize

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

After hugging in the bathroom for a few minutes, she urged Yuhi to change and went down to the kitchen. It only took a few minutes before Yuhi emerged in the doorway.

"You're not going to comment on what I said earlier?"

Yuhi rolled his eyes. "If I do that, you will die of embarrassment and try to escape."

Yuhi-san understands her very well. Indeed she would do exactly that. It is strange how he seems to understand her far better than she does herself. Then again, even before they dated, even before she knew his feelings, she knew the bond they shared was something more.

She was far too attached to him for it to be a normal friendship.

If she respected him, then she would not have felt so devastated when he left her side.

One of the reasons, no, the main reason she rejected him then was because she wasn't sure. After they met at that snowy concert several years ago, she realized that her respect for him wasn't normal. She wanted to see him again so badly, but her thoughts were not normal.

It did not take her long before she realized that she was in love with him. But after she met him again a few years later as a member of the underworld society. Sumire realized that there was more to him than meets the eye. She wanted to make sure first.

As she worked close beside him, Sumire pondered whether her feelings were love after all. Maybe it is just respect, he not only sings well, but whenever they worked together, it felt like he was a real detective. The way he can understand criminal mindsets and solve cases so quickly. That sharp initiative is something she didn't have.

At one point, she became competitive.

Whenever her head felt like exploding, she would light a cigarette and ask Yuhi for guidance on her problems; however, now the problem was him himself.

But on this occasion, it was difficult to do that. After all, her problem now is him being here. What is this? She was able to hug him for so long and scold him a little, but now her entire body felt tense.

It seemed he was having similar thoughts due to his sudden silence. She hasn't seen him at all since last month. But it felt like forever to her; so much has happened in the time she has not seen him.

"I kissed Sano." Sumire immediately confessed. "I asked him if he wanted to--" Her words fell short when Yuhi walked across the room.

She closed her eyes and braced for the impact. He is angry, right? He should be angry. The first few days of staying here made her realize how dangerous it was for her well-being to stay with Sano. Hino is right; it is too toxic to keep meeting each other. If they continue this, one day, something bad will happen.

Sumire recalled her behaviour and sighed. She almost did it too. To her surprise, however, Yuhi didn't hit her; instead, he pushed her against the table. He was close enough that she could smell his familiar tobacco scent but mixed with shampoo.

She extended her hands out and ran her fingers through his wet hair. "You never scold me."

"Because I want you to realize how many people love and care for you. I made it my mission, so why would I hit you and make you feel like a bad person?"

Sumire blinked when she heard those words. "You're the real idiot."

...

For the first time in so long, Sumire could fall asleep easily, so when it came to the following morning, she not only felt refreshed but had an idea. Yuhi and her were browsing through the books in the library when Hino arrived.

"What the--- Yuhi?"

Hino stared in disbelief, and her sweat fell. "Well, this is--"

Yuhi brushed his fingers across her lips. "Just focus."

Hino's eyes twitched, annoyed. "Are you going to act like I am not here?"

"I don't want to hear it from you. You should have told me about Sumire."

"Hey, I was going to--!"

"Are all my old books here?"

Hino nodded. "I brought them all over since you said you didn't want anyone to find them."

"Alright, you heard him; start searching."

Sumire laughed. "Are you sure this is all? I thought you had more."

"You probably have the rest since you said you took my belongings hostage."

Indeed, but among the books he left behind that she took, she didn't see anything significant enough to use for their research. Sumire quickly left his hold and turned to the books on the other shelves, but Yuhi wrapped his arms around her waist and buried his face on her neck.

She rolled her eyes. "Yuhi-san, you're the one who said to start searching."

"I am sleepy." He trailed off. "You're the one who said you recall me putting some information away in a book before, at—" He glanced at the clock. "Four hours ago."

Indeed she did randomly get up at four and woke him up since she recalled something. "Back when we investigated specimen case seven hundred and eighty. We discovered a lab with a large amount of stress care medications and organs. It is similar to the recent hospital case."

"Should I ask why you remember the number?"

Yuhi sighed. "This girl has always had a bad habit of remembering unnecessary things."

"Not true; case files are important. Besides, it is handy during these occasions."

Yuhi quickly steals a kiss from her lips before he casually walks over to the other shelves. "Right, very important."

Sumire stared at him dumbfounded. What on earth did he just- well, no, she does know what he just did. But the question here is, why did he suddenly kiss her like that? Also, why do her cheeks feel hot, and why is her heart beating?

It seems nothing has changed after all. Back when they still worked together as subordinate and master, as a member of the underground organization Holy Knights, she would often steal glances at him.

Back then, I already knew I liked Yuhi. That was why whenever I could, I would stare.

Sumire wondered if Yuhi ever noticed that. Did he ever realize how much she looked at him?

Her thoughts broke off when she heard the sound of the stool pull up next to her. "Hino."

"Sorry about just leaving," Hino mumbled. "I hope the food was enough."

"You missed out on some good curry," Yuhi interjected.

"Are you going to compete over this?"

Sumire sighed when she saw the two arguing. Even though it is only friendly banter, it still feels a bit unusual to her. The incident that occurred when they were younger, both Hino and Yuhi were there with her.

The person who was holding her hand that day, she suspects it was Yuhi and not Ru. That snowy concert, it felt like she had met Yuhi before. When she first became his fan, there was something about him that pulled her in.

His songs seem familiar, his singing, where has she heard it before? After she came home that time she met him for the first time, Sumire realized something. He has one of those, too; in his room, he had an old-looking wristband. Is it just a coincidence, or is there something more to all of this?