

Melody 451

## **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 451**

Chapter 451: Not Really A Romantic Rival

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The day after Atsuro visited her, where she received word from the school that she ought to talk about what she will do after graduating. Indeed it was already December; in just a few months, she would be graduating high school.

But going into school for a career talk was something she had never done before. After all this entire time, she worked hard to enter the entertainment industry, to be able to sing and make that her living. It was already a silently, acknowledged thing among her past teachers; that was why they never bothered with it.

The situation now is different. Nobody understands whether she wants to return to the entertainment industry for good. Sure she has been helping M5 out and composing songs for them. But she has yet to step onto the stage and sing. She even backs out on talk shows.

Sumire sighed as she slumped on the wall. Sano's office was in sight, but already she felt the strain on her legs. Maybe she ought to keep on using the crutches or wheelchair. It seems walking on her own two feet is still difficult.

The external wounds seem to have healed, but the internal ones haven't, so she still struggles with basic walking. However, Sumire couldn't help but think it was a blessing.

It is a good thing that only her legs got severely hurt. While she did have a head injury, and her arms did not go unaffected, they were less severe. She could still write/compose music. It was one of the first things she checked when she woke up, the state of her hands.

Even if it is hard for her to return to the stage, she doesn't want anything to take away her ability to make music. These emotions that she has suppressed in her heart this entire time.

Her thoughts broke off when somebody extended their hand out. "Are you feeling okay?"

It was a woman with red hair, the same one she saw that time two months ago. But unlike the first time they met, there was something gentle about her appearance.

"I'm just taking a break."

Penelope looked at her legs and nodded. The girl didn't go away and leaned on the wall beside her. "Are you going to see Sano?"

"Mmm."

"I see."

This is awkward. After what happened, then Sumire did a bit of digging around and learned more about this woman. It seems she had a violent temper when it came to the women around Sano, but she was a

kind person other than that. This woman could do what she couldn't when she was dating Sano. She expresses her feelings vocally regarding her feelings about other women.

"About before, I apologize. I just heard a disturbing rumor about you that day, so when you showed up."

Sumire shook her head. "You don't have to explain. Your fiance openly shows he likes another woman, not just any woman but his ex. It is natural for you to feel uncomfortable."

She had a hard time understanding this mindset until she thought of Yuhi. There was another ex she hadn't met yet, Miyazawa Makino. It seems like, unlike Touko, Yuhi cared for her to a certain degree. Whenever she thought of it, it would make her mad, let alone see it in person.

"Girls can turn into a monster when it comes to the one they like. What you did then was display your emotions like a human; nobody can judge you for that."

At those words, Penelope blinked before she burst into laughter. "I didn't think you would say that."

"I didn't say those words for you to laugh."

"Sorry, sorry. But I see; indeed, you are interesting." The girl extended her hand out. "Although it is awkward, I would like to be your friend."

Sumire stared at the girl's hand before she decided. "No."

"Uh."

"I mean, look at it this way, if we became friends, the media would say something like I am getting close to you so I can break off your relationship with Sano. If that happens, something more troublesome will happen." She sighed at the thought.

If something troublesome happens, her dearest will end up troubled again. She doesn't want to continue causing issues for him, especially when it concerns his romantic rivals.

Penelope shrugged. "Ibuki-san, you care for the media too much. With your status, you could crush them like a fly."

Sumire knew what she was implying. This girl isn't talking about her status in the entertainment industry but the underworld.

"Before you ask, I have seen you around. My grandfather works in those circles too. He brought me a few times."

"Your grandfather?"

"In those circles, he calls himself Feng."

Recognition flashed through her eyes after she heard Penelope say those words. So that old man that helped her and her before was Penelope's grandfather?

"The world works in twisted ways," Sumire commented. "I thought you were another stupid heiress."

Penelope's sweat fell. "Ibuki-san, you are harsh."

"I would apologize, but that would mean lying."

"To be honest, I guess there was a time I was like that." Penelope chose her words carefully. "There was a time where I was your typical heiress who didn't care about anything but money, fame, and status. A time where I thought the world belonged to me, and I could get anything I wanted just because I was rich."

"But something changed?"

Penelope nodded. "It was Sano who changed me."

Sumire raised her eyebrows. "Sano, change you." She repeated. She looked at the woman with a questioning gaze, and Penelope's sweat fell.

"Ibuki-san, you should know since you dated him, but he has his good points."

"He does, but it is hard for me to accept that he changed another person, especially with that enlarged ego of his."

Sumire was about to say something else when somebody lifted her off her feet. It was the man she was bad-mouthing just a few seconds ago. He seemed disturbed by her words but placed his hand on her forehead.

"You still have a bit of a fever; you can rest in my office before you go to school."

"Mmm, you knew?"

"They contacted me." He shrugged off his doctor's coat and draped it across her shoulders. "Why are you wearing so little? You're going to catch a cold."

"It was hard to change."

"I will find you something suitable to wear when you go out."

Sumire had an indescribable look in her eyes when she heard those words. He is the typical gentleman type, the complete opposite of Yuhi, a hooligan. But even then, her heart doesn't beat around him.

## **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 452**

Chapter 452: Low EQ

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"Sano," Penelope called out. She extended a bag out. "I got given these as gifts, but I can't eat them all. If you would like."

Sano was about to reject them, judging from his expression, but he suddenly looked at her. "Have you eaten?"

"No-" Sumire stopped her words mid-sentence when she realized what he was about to do. "Sano, it's fine-" but he had already taken the bag from Penelope and passed it to her.

She stared at the obviously handmade pastries with an awkward expression.

"Eat those, for now. I will get you something better later."

Uh, can this guy not read the mood? What given as a gift, these are clearly handmade! Moreover, does he have to behave so sweetly towards her in front of his fiance? Damn his low eq. Penelope suggested that they became friends, but already she must regret saying those words.

Sumire genuinely felt bad for the girl since it seemed like she actually liked Sano. There is such a good girl in front of him, and yet he still chose her? There must be something wrong with his head.

"Then I will get going; it was nice chatting with you, Ibuki-san." With those words, Penelope left, and Sano brought her to his office.

He immediately laid her down on the couch and placed a blanket around her.

"San, did you have to do that?"

Sano didn't turn around as he rummaged through the cabinet. "I had to; otherwise, she won't understand. She has been good to me, however, so I don't want to brutally turn her away."

She understands that point but, "This can also be cruel."

"If you think that way, then as the one responsible, you should take responsibility."

"Responsibility?"

Sano sighed deeply. "Don't talk to her again if you see her."

"She was the one who started talking to me."

"That's, even more, the reason."

She seems like a nice girl, though, so why is Sano behaving oddly? Sumire erased that thought out of her mind when she felt a wincing pain in her right eye. Forget it; right now, she should take on Sano's offer and rest before she headed over to the school. Sumire felt that it wasn't a simple career talk.

She closed her eyes, but it was not easy to fall asleep, so she tossed and turned. After a few minutes, she heard footsteps approaching, Sano was right behind her. He didn't lay next to her, but he simply sat down.

"You know, no matter how you take this, but you're still so defenseless around me."

It's not that she is defenseless but more to do with the fact that she knew she could beat him up whenever she wanted. Still, she could play along with him- Sumire shook her head. No more messing around; she doesn't want her dearest darling to get the wrong idea again.

Even though Yuhi acts tough on the surface, he surprisingly has a weak side. She wants to protect him.

Her thoughts broke off when Sano turned her around. He placed a wet towel on her forehead. "Do you have to go to school?"

"If you talked to them, you should know why I have to go."

"Career plans for the future, huh? Now that I think about it, there was a time where I went through that too."

"So basically, you're admitting your old."

Sano sighed. "You know, back when we dated, I was sensitive about the age gap."

Sumire blinked, surprised at his words. This is the first time she is hearing something like this. It never occurred to her that Sano cared about such a thing.

Sensitive huh? So even this person back then behaved in a way a typical human would. If she reanalyzed their relationship from before then, perhaps she will find more examples. But for now, this was enough.

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At Iro Road High School, a few hours later.

Sumire arrived at a time where there were still lessons ongoing, so the courtyard and hallways were empty. She nervously looked at the staff room nearby and sighed.

The last time she randomly took leave from school like this was last year. Mamoru's illness was becoming worse, and her time to see him after school was so short because of visiting hours. That was why she sacrificed her hours in school so she could be with him longer. At some point, even the day hours became too short for her, so she used her power a little and ended up permitted to stay overnight.

For some reason, she couldn't trust anybody else to take care of him.

Her thoughts broke off when somebody hugged her from the back.

"Take a deep breath, one, two.."

Sumire followed the person's instructions and eventually settled her nerves. She laughed lightly when she felt his lips on her neck. "Did you cut class Yuhi-san?"

"More like I didn't attend at all. I saw you from the rooftop and almost jumped down."

Sumire rolled her eyes. "If you did that, we would have another person in hospital."

"You can't blame me; what is with your outfit?"

She wore an off-shoulder red-colored dress with pale peach-colored transparent sleeves. "Sano's taste?"

"Damn him."

She chuckled, hearing his muttering. "Or maybe I dressed up because I wanted to impress a certain someone?"

"I wonder who that someone is."

Before Yuhi and her could exchange any more words, the doors to the staff room opened, revealing all her teachers. Sumire sweat fell. It seems they rushed out because they heard the commotion, but what is with this odd tension in the air.

The reaction when she took leave last year was awful. They almost expelled her on the spot. If Aki-san didn't pull some strings, surely they would have gone through with that.

So what is the verdict-- her thoughts broke off when the teachers suddenly kneeled on the ground. Some of them had grabbed hold of her hand. Sumire could only stare at them dumbfounded. Why did they all look like zombies? What is with the eyebags?

"Welcome back, Ibuki!"

Uh, what is this? Sumire immediately realized there was something off. Even if they do not dislike her for this, shouldn't they at least scold her? Instead, why are they happy?

"We are so glad you are back," an old lady with grey hair started sobbing into a handkerchief.

They are? While the teachers here are indeed nicer, Sumire wasn't going to let her guard down. She stared at them cautiously.

"Um, what is going on?"

A familiar person stepped out of the staff room. Like the rest of the teachers, he looked exhausted. "Shin?"

Shin looked over at Yuhi. "That is the culprit."

Sumire turned to Yuhi, who was innocently whistling.

"Just because you weren't around this guy made our lives a living hell."

### **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 453**

Chapter 453: Not Mad Anymore

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"I was bored, and you wouldn't let me go see her."

"That's because you have to attend school."

"You all know I have enough credits."

Her sweat fell at this exchange. She could tell what Shin meant by those words alone. Oh Yuhi-san, just because she isn't around doesn't mean he can trouble the teachers. But so that's what it was. She thought he was swarmed with work, and that was why he hadn't been coming to see her. However, it was not like that at all.

"You were attending class?"

Yuhi sighed and rubbed the back of his hair. "Well, you said you like men who are punctual."

Sumire blinked at those words. Indeed she had said something like that, but who would have thought that he would take that so seriously. She wasn't joking with him, but she wasn't too fussed over it. She knew what kind of person Yuhi-san was. He was a different type of genius than Ru, but he got a lot of things done faster than most. That included his studies.

Yuhi pried the teacher, who grabbed hold of her hands away from her. It surprised her when she finally paid attention to who it was. The young teacher Takamura Hayato, he was that odd guy who gave her meal tickets and chased after her when she left class with Aika.

Just now, she didn't realize because she counted him as part of the mob, but now she thought about it. Aika said this guy might have a crush on her.

A crush, huh? Now that she thought about it, last year or the past few years, she was quite oblivious to anybody who apparently liked her. Then again, Yuhi was the only person on her mind. She has to improve her skills quickly and debut so she would have the right to stand on stage with him. After that snowy night, she became even more determined to stand by his side.

"Takamursan, should you really be touching a student?"

"You make it sound so vulgar. I had no such intentions."

"I wonder."

Her sweat fell when she saw the lightning bolts appear between them. It feels like she saw something similar to this not long ago. Yuhi-san is so silly getting jealous over a plain man like this.

"Hey Shin, you look awful. Shouldn't you go to the infirmary?"

"I am fine."

Sumire looked over at Shin and saw him weakly leaning against the wall. She walked over to him. "Then I will take Nakursensei to the infirmary. Can you gather the stuff I need before I return?"

The group of teachers who had been kneeling nodded; they sent all sorts of commands to the other teachers. Her sweat fell when she saw them rushing around. What is with this situation?

Yuhi tapped her shoulder. "I will head back to class for a bit then; call me when you finish?"

"Mm good."

Soon it was only her and Shin left in the corridor. The man kept averting his gaze, and she sighed. "You know I'm not mad anymore."

"You weren't angry, to begin with. I know that much."

The walk to the infirmary was difficult since Shin kept behaving stubbornly. Eventually, he allowed her to help support his walk. But in the end, Shin was the one carrying her on his back.

Sumire laughed. "Aha."

"You should have come with crutches or a wheelchair."

"But if I rely on those things too much, it would be hard for me to use my own feet later on. I feel that I will become lazy."

"Sorry."

"For?"

"I haven't been coming to see you. It's not like I have been busy either."

Her gaze softened at those words. "It is okay; it's not like I don't understand." She said such cruel-sounding things to him the last time they saw each other. It is only natural for her to act cautiously. "I saw Atsuro yesterday."

"He rushed out of a meeting when he realized that you came back. It seems Nagawa did a great job hiding the fact that you were hospitalized."

"Mm, he is good at that stuff."

"And so?"

Sumire laughed again when she heard his short question. "Sometimes it feels like you know me better than myself, Shin-chan."

"Don't call me that." Shin sighed. "You know, the only things I know about you are the problems you end up bottling up. You find it easier to discuss it with me because you have no shred of romantic feelings."

"Correct."

"At least deny it."

"But if I did that, I would be lying, and that is something I want to avoid for at least a while."

While lies are necessary in her journey for the truth, she still wants to avoid it as much as she could.

"Then did you tell Nagawa?"

"Atsuro came over and mentioned it."

"What about Yuhi?"

At that, she laughed awkwardly. "Well, mmm. It will be a bit hard telling Yuhi-san."

"But you're not getting Atsuro to say it; that means your going to do it yourself."

"That's right because Yuhi is different." Yuhi is special, it would hurt him more if she didn't confide in him.

"You know I am starting to pity Nagawa again."

"Really? I think you should worry more about yourself. The second person I spend the most time with is San."



"Well, forget about me for a while." Shin sighed deeply. "I realize I was a bit too hasty. Since Atsuro came, I have been a bit unedged."

"Mm, I know, but you don't have to worry. I was avoiding him because of what you think. It was because of his overprotective behavior. Atsuro is very excessive when it comes to protecting me. Even if I am a target of that organization, I am still the queen of the underworld. It would seem strange having that much protection around me."

"His behavior would expose everything." Shin nodded. "I think I understand, but even then, people will find out. Accidents happen. Why do you think I know?"

"Because you saw Atsuro acting suspiciously, followed him and found the files. I know, if it is meant to be, people will find out eventually. There is no secret that remains a secret forever. Even things hidden from several centuries ago end up revealed. So even this will come out, no matter how well hidden it is."

"When that day comes, you-"

"I will have Yuhi by my side. I will be okay."

But she first has to tell him everything; she has to get over that large hurdle first.

Chapter end

#### **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 454**

Chapter 454: Two Most Important

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She stayed with Shin until he fell asleep before she returned to the teacher's lounge. The weird atmosphere from earlier had vanished, and they were more professional. But it still felt odd to her. In the end, she didn't give them a clear answer.

Does she want to continue being an idol?

They suggested that if she still likes music, she would continue it but work more. She could earn a living from her composing. It wasn't a bad suggestion; it seemed like they did their research.

But it still didn't feel right discussing it with people with whom she didn't feel comfortable. According to Takamursensei, Yuhi had a class in this area. Sumire cautiously peered through the door. He said that the class should have ended an hour ago, but she knew that some students liked to stay after class, especially if there is a gap between the next class.

She scanned the area and didn't find anybody, other than a mop of black hair on the last row, by the window.

Oh, he is sleeping. Sumire made her way over and knelt down. Somehow when he is sleeping like this, he almost looks child-like. She wonders what he is dreaming about.

"-umire.."

Her cheeks colored when she heard her name, and soft laughter passed her lips. It seems there is no defeating Yuhi-san. No matter how much she teases him, he always sees right through her. Sometimes she wonders why it has to be this person. But every time she thought that way, he would erase any doubts she would have.

For her having people love her and accepting other people's kindness is so very difficult. For so long, she lived a life where it was only natural for people to dislike her no matter the reason. It was normal for her to play the villain role.

It was normal for her to be alone with nobody to rely on.

But there are people out there who have proved that she was wrong. She is wanted and loved, the ones who tried their hardest to show her that is Yuhi-san and Ru. For her, these two people will remain the most important.

Even if she can only love one of them, she is sure that her feelings for the other one will remain just as important.

Sumire extended her hand out to play with his hair. He really is handsome. In the past, she didn't care for pretty faces and mainly avoided those who were good-looking. After all, there is a saying that the good-looking ones are the ones with the most corrupted hearts.

Although she is not a saint herself, she didn't want to deal with those types of people.

She brushed her fingers across his hair before pausing at his face again. If she snuck a kiss or two, he wouldn't wake up, right? Sumire knew that Yuhi was a heavy sleeper. It takes a while for him to wake up. If she kisses him, nobody will know, and the walls won't talk.

It seems like there is nobody in this area too.

Sumire quickly decided and was about to lean forward when she felt a familiar hand grab her hand. Sumire, startled, tried to step back, but it was too late.

Yuhi was awake. He was looking at her half-dazed, but that made it worse for her. She felt her heartbeat increase. He looks so defenseless when he is awake.

"Were you about to kiss me?"

"No!" She exclaimed.

Yuhi rolled his eyes. "Your behavior is suspicious."

Sumire averted her gaze. There is no way she can admit that she didn't just plan to kiss him but leave marks- Aaah, what was she even thinking? No matter how bold she is around him, she can't do something inappropriate when the other person is asleep.

Her thoughts broke off when he reached over and patted her hair. Oh, this? Her gaze softened when she realized that he wasn't going to pry. This person is truly foolish, but because he behaves this way, she is still standing here today.

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Yuhi already knew that the girl was planning on kissing him. Otherwise, why else would she have gotten so close? But when he saw how nervous she was, he decided that teasing her wouldn't be good. Besides, he wants to hear her answer.

"Welcome back; how did it go?"

"Awful, they've said I skipped so many classes that I might not graduate."

"That bad, eh."

Sumire sighed. "To think I might be getting held back a year. Yuhi-san that will ruin our marriage plans."

He chuckled softly at her so-called concern. That is what she worried about? Normally people worry about being in a class with younger kids.

"Then I can just get held back with you."

"Yuji-san, you already have to pretend you're the same age as me despite being older."

"You know it doesn't bother me; one year older or two makes no difference. It's just a number."

Besides, he won't have the motivation to attend if she isn't around. Before she came, he seldom attended classes. The only reason he attended when she disappeared for two months is because he recalled what she said to him before. The only thing motivating him is her.

"We can't kiss in the classroom like this if you get held back."

Sumire stepped on his foot.

"Ouch.."

"You ruined the moment."

Were they having a moment?

"Dear, you need to explain more about these moments.."

Sumire rolled her eyes. "Why do I have to explain? You're so hopeless at these things, Yuhi-san."

Hopeless huh?

"It's true I'm bad at romance, but since when were you an expert?"

Didn't she say she was bad at this stuff too?

"Hmmm, Yuhi-san, did you believe me when I said that stuff?"

Despite how confident she looked when she said those words, Yuhi could tell how nervous she was. He leaned forward and kissed her. It was just a light kiss, but her face was so red after he finished.

"Hooligan."

Yuhi laughed. "Why are you acting so bashful? We kiss every day."

"We are in school."

Yuhi raised his eyebrow. He already knows that isn't the reason.

"It's different when I want it."

"So what do I have to make you want it?"

His lips curved to a smile when he saw her close the remaining distance; the girl sat on his lap. She wrapped her arms around his neck and kissed him. It was a different type of kiss than the one he normally gave her. But he liked the feeling of her initiating something intimate, the feeling of her soft petal-like lips on his own.

"Mmmmm." She kisses him for ten minutes before pulling away.

"This is the difference," Sumire mumbled.

So cheeky. Yuhi cupped her cheeks, and the girl turned red. "That was nice, but I will give it a six."

Sumire pouted. "Wait, why is my score so low?"

"Well, I think you could do better."

She pinched his cheek. "Pervert, we're in school. You need to--" Yuhi ran his hands through her back, and a content sigh passed her lips. "-behave."

His wife isn't honest when it comes to these things. Isn't it obvious that she likes it? Then again, that is mainly his fault that she holds this stuff back.

When they first started dating, he told her how his relationships were with his ex-girlfriends. He told her that he didn't want theirs to turn into a sexual one. Initially, he started off as friends with his ex Miyazawa Makino, and they got along well, but their relationship became corrupted.

## **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 455**

Chapter 455: Road To Their Dreams

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With her he wants things to be different. So far so good, but his gaze fell on the girl who buried her face in his neck. She didn't say anything for a few minutes and he knew she was inhaling his scent again.

"I want to graduate together."

"Mmm, don't worry. They talk like that but your grades are good."

"I also want to go to the beach with Yuhi."

"Right we didn't get a chance to go."

"I also want to sing with you." She whispered this part and his gaze softened.

So that's what she decided huh? Sumire probably wasn't able to say it in front of the teachers since she wants to confide in somebody she trusts first.

"Should I ambush your stage with Takashi Yumi?"

"Don't be silly, you know Yumi-senpai isn't singing with me."

"You could have fooled me."

"Besides I think it would be hard for me to sing with her."

Yuhi noticed her trembling shoulders and paused. "You don't have to rush yourself, Sumire. Even if Mamoru is alive, this incident traumatized you heavily. It's true that you're able to live a normal school life, but people shouldn't use that as leverage for you to sing again."

"But I want to sing."

"You do?"

Sumire nodded slowly. "I want to be able to breathe properly again, and to get rid of this suffocated feeling in my heart. There are so many things I want to say."

Right, that's the type of singer she is. It is because she has such beautiful and powerful emotions in her heart that her songs touch the hearts of so many people, including him.

"Then say them."

Sumire laughed and got off his lap as she opened the window. She took a piece of scrap paper from his notebook and started to fold it. Yuhi understood what she was doing and he did the same, both of them made paper airplanes and threw them out of the window.

They watched the airplanes for a few seconds, before one fell on the ground.

"Argh! Why did mine fall right away?"

"It's the way you threw it."

Sumire made another one and he wrapped his arms around her from the back. "Alright, throw."

She did as he said and this time it didn't fall immediately.

"I did it!"

Sometimes she has her childish moments.

"Are you still going to study in France?"

"That is the plan, but I'm going to delay it for awhile."

"You don't have to-"

Yuhi shook his head. "This isn't just about you anymore." He trailed off. "I surprisingly like it, being in a group with those guys. At first I was worried that it would go wrong. After all I knew they all like you, no

matter how accepting they are it would be hard for them to be around me since we convey our feelings through our music."

Sumire's feelings for him pour through even during the debut song, and the other songs afterwards. The girl they like is writing about another guy, it should be hard for them to sing but those guys proved him wrong.

"During the time you weren't here. I thought I would be alone again. Even though I have friends, I don't have anybody who is truly close to me. But it wasn't like that at all, they would casually visit me during the day and accompany me after school even though we didn't have work together. They would come over during lunch even though the music building is on the other side." His gaze softened. "It is the first time for me, meeting people like that."

"I see, mmm I am glad. You know Yuhi I will be honest with you now. I was the one who asked the idol association board to put you as a group."

"You were?"

"You don't seem too surprised?"

Yuhi sighed. "Well even though they were putting pressure on me regarding it I could tell there was something unusual. If they just wanted to put us as a group they could do so easily, but they went through the trouble of asking permission. They considered our feelings and extended the time frame. They waited until we came together on our own."

"So your saying only I can make such considerations?"

"Only you would care about us to this extent." He trailed off. "But how did you do it? Normally you don't interfere in anything associated with the idol association board."

"But I still have a place there. Truthfully at first I didn't intend to force it. Quatro Light was doing fine, they were achieving great sales and breaking records. You were doing the same and internationally too. However during Quatro lights live last year I noticed something off. Coincidentally that day you had a concert too. When I watched the two performances side by side something clicked. I saw something I hadn't seen before." Sumire laughed. "Maybe it was too careless of me just deciding like that."

"It wasn't careless, and besides you turned out to be right didn't you?"

"I am truly glad you are getting along with them Yuhi-san."

Yuhi felt his heart skip a beat when he saw the gentle gaze on her face.

He wondered when did it start? Since when did her smiling face, since when did her acting childish would melt the vicious emotions normally residing in his heart? He wasn't as bad as her but he still had his fair share of skeletons in the closet. Happiness is a foreign thing to him too. But the year he spent with her as a member of the Holy Knights and the present has made him change his mind.

Whether he deserves happiness or not doesn't matter, if he has to be happy, he wants it to be with her.

"I will walk you back."

Yuhi had to refrain himself from asking her to head back with him. For now he has to hold himself back.

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Although he confidently sent her off yesterday. Yuhi didn't get much sleep and in the end he skipped work in the morning. If he is going to skip work he should attend school, but since yesterday he felt very restless.

Yuhi took a deep breath as he approached her room only to hear light laughter. It seems she wasn't alone. He peered through the door to find Nagawa was there.

"The doctor was here earlier, he said that I still have a fever and should rest."

Sano brushed his fingers across her forehead. "You do still seem quite hot."

"I thought you were coming much later."

"Are you going to have visitors? I can go."

"Ah no, I was thinking of reading. Your early because-"

"I had some cancelled appointments."

Even from here Yuhi could tell it was a lie. They must have talked again, because there is something different about Nagawa. Yesterday he refrained from asking too many questions. It was the first time she went out since she became hospitalized, so he didn't want to pressure her too much.

"Don't read for now, lay down for a bit longer. Have you eaten?"

"A little."

"Then have some fruits for now."

Sumire laughed. "Im alright, you don't have to spoil me so much."

If she smiles so innocently like that anybody would want to spoil her. Yuhi took a deep breathe. What is he doing hiding? Its not like there is anything to see. Sumire doesn't care about Nagawa, at least not in the same way she does him.

## **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 456**

Chapter 456: I Really Missed You

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

Yuhi opened the door and strolled in.

Sumire spotted him first, her eyes brightened. "My dearest darling!" She almost jumped out of the bed but Nagawa pushed her back down with a stern gaze. She laughed again and covered her mouth. "Right, I have to behave."

Geez still as energetic as ever huh? He eventually reached her bed, and pulled out the stool on the side.

"I came here to bother you with this." Yuhi held up an envelope. "The others looked through the songs for the concert and gave it the okay. They have already started to practice. But the title track?"

"Ah don't worry! I finished it off after you dropped me yesterday." Sumire pulled out some score sheets from the bedside table and passed it to him, alongside her music player and headphones.

Yuhi accepted it and listened for a few minutes. Yesterday he said it was awkward for those guys to sing songs that expose her feelings for him. But this is way too much. This idiot, even if she loves him this much she is completely exposing herself.

"Uh how is it?" Sumire asked nervously.

"Nagawa can you leave?"

"What?" Sano seemed bothered by that suggestion.

"Uh, you don't have to." Sumire interjected. "What's wrong Yuhi?"

"I have said this to you before. But I am an expert when it comes to reading music."

"Ah-huh." She nodded her head slowly. It seemed like the girl still didn't get it.

"Then you want me to say it when he is in the room?"

She still looked confused so Yuhi took a deep breathe.

"Your feelings for me really pour through when your writing your music-" His sentence fell short when she covered his mouth with her fingers and looked down.

"Are you running away again?"

"Hooligan." She mumbled. "San, I'm sorry can you leave?"

"I see."

Nagawa didnt seem too pleased but he quickly left and slammed the door behind him.

The moment Nagawa left, Yuhi pushed Sumire down into the bed.

"Hooligan."

Yuhi chuckled. "Am I?"

"You're so unreasonable..."

"You're the one who confessed to me just now. I'm just giving you my reply."

'It's fun to tease her. Normally she has her guard up, and teases people.' Besides, he wants to show her again how much he loves her. The last two months it seems she has suppressed her feelings and now it is pouring out again.

The girl was averting her gaze but he felt her fingers on his shirt buttons.

"Sumire." Yuhi said softly. "Will you let me?"



"This is a hospital."

"Nagawa always chases away the staff whenever he wants to see you. Nobody is on this floor right now."

"But--".

Is she worried that he would still be nearby? Yuhi cupped her cheeks. "I really missed you."

"If you put it that way you know I cant say anything."

.....

Yuhi almost forgot how nice it felt holding the girl in his arms. So when he finishes three hours later, he hugs her tightly for a few extra minutes. She is so soft and so warm, he could stay with her like this forever. But he recalled what Nagawa said about a fever and sat up.

He pulled out a cigarette from the bedside and lit his lighter. He didn't know what it was but he has a bad habit of smoking whenever they did it.

"Put something on."

Sumire rolled her eyes. "You're the one who attacked me mister."

"Well thats why," Yuhi looked around. Where did he put her hospital gown?

She laughed and happily took the shirt he discarded earlier. "Alright I will wear this. You have another set of clothes anyway."

Indeed, since he planned to go to a formal gathering after this. Yuhi extended his free hand out and brushed it across her forehead. The heat from earlier seemed to have gone down.

"I think your fever went away."

"Ah is it because we did it?'

"Like hell."

Sumire laughed again. "I'm happy, thank you Yuhi-san."

"You cold? You might need more layers." He doubts that shirt is enough for her.

Sumire pointed to the drawer. "I think San put some new clothes there."

Yuhi frowned. He doesn't like the idea of her wearing something another guy gave her.

"On second thoughts..maybe I can get more of a feel."

She rolled her eyes and pushed his arms away. "Quit it, I'm still a patient."

"A patient huh, those were some sexy sounds--" His sentence fell short when she jabbed his stomach with her elbow.

Yuhi yelped in pain. "Ouch you can still pack a punch?"

"Mmm, of course I'm not the underworld Queen for a reason."

So scary, but Yuhi wrapped his arms around her again. "It's not like I'm nothing."

"Yuhi."

"You're so beautiful."

"Yuhi," she mumbled. A content sigh passed her lips as he placed kisses down her neck line. "This is nice."

"It is, but are you hungry? You missed out on dinner."

He didn't intend for it to take this long. Initially he only visited to grab the song, discuss it and go back so he could show his teammates. But after listening to that, and seeing those lyrics of course he couldn't keep his hands off her.

"Then let's go out! I want to eat out."

It was still fairly early, and this is Tokyo. There are a lot of places open in the middle of the night. Yuhi nodded at her suggestion but paused for a moment.

"Don't you need permission?"

"San gave me a permit. He said even if I have to recover, not getting fresh air isn't good. But ah my dearest, it's still hard for me to walk."

Yuhi rolled his eyes when he heard her suggestive tone. "Want me to princess carry or piggyback you like a child?"

Her cheeks puffed at those words. "I am not a child!!"

"Yeah, yeah."

"I just wanted to cling to your arm. You're the one thinking odd things Yuhi-san."

What a cheeky mouth she has. Yuhi leaned forward and cupped her cheeks, causing her to look away.

"You sure you shouldn't ask Nagawa?"

"He isn't my boyfriend, you are."

"But he--"

Something is different now about him. Is that why he is uneasy?

"Let's go on a date, okay Yuhi?"

Well if she puts it that way he won't reject it. He turned to the drawer, "We are going to go shopping but for now pick something out."

Her eyes brightened at those words. "Ah you're going to pick clothes for me? Then let's go quickly."

What a silly girl. His gaze softened but he recalled something that was inside his bag. He actually came here to give that to her but maybe it is fine for now. Right now she is smiling so brightly, how could he possibly spoil things for her?

## **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 457**

Chapter 457: You Have Me

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

The thing with Ibuki Sumire is, she can transform into any person. Normally she is a cold beauty with a bit of a playful personality. But there are occasions like this where she is childish.

Yuhi didn't mind that side of her; it makes her human, it makes her feel alive. He doesn't know much about the time she isolated herself because of Mamoru's death. But he could imagine what she was like that time. There were moments in the past where she became that way.

He was patiently waiting for her as she lined up to buy some crepes. Initially, he offered to buy them for her, but it somehow ended up this way.

These days she is more cheerful and outgoing. She smiles a lot more. This is what he wanted from her. But now that she has reached this stage, Yuhi knew that she would have to proceed to the next step swiftly.

The one who has been canceling her live appearances is him. He makes sure to talk to her before she goes on stage, and she usually ends up having a breakdown. If he doesn't have those talks with her, would she have sung a long time ago?

Yuhi shook the thought out of his head. He needs to stop having such negative thoughts. Sumire has repeatedly told him how much he had helped her. But sometimes, he can't help it, especially when he sees and hears how Nagawa treats her.

This is bad; he thought that he would stop feeling so awkward after those two had a proper talk. But the situation has only turned worse. Nagawa treats her very well now. Would her feelings waver?

His thoughts broke off when Sumire reappeared with the crepes in her hands. "Yuhi-san? Sorry for taking so long and also tda," She pulled out some boxes of other foods. "People gave me this."

Yuhi raised his eyebrows. He turned in the direction of the crepe stand and saw a bunch of guys looking over with hearts in their eyes. He sighed deeply and lightly hits her forehead.

"Too defenseless."

"But I thought you needed more food. Besides, it was really hard to refuse."

"That I understand. Fans like that are very pushy; since you are trying to maintain your image, it is hard to refuse." He trailed off when he saw the questioning look in her eyes. "Oi, it's not like that."

It wasn't too hard to figure out what she was thinking.

"I've never slept with any of my fans before."

Right despite all those unusual rumors about him, he made a policy before never to cross the line with his fans. The fans are the soul of a person's career; without them, his status is only a display. The same goes vice versa.

He entered the entertainment industry at a young age, so this was something he knew very well. He was always very careful, even though many incidents occurred in the past where something could have happened.

Sumire tilted her head. "Are you sure about that?"

Yuhi stared at her puzzled, and Sumire sighed. "I guess your not the man I slept with in the hospital earlier. Apologies for getting in your way, mister, but I need to find my husband."

Seeing her dramatically walk away, his eyes twitched, annoyed. This girl is doing it again—this bad habit of teasing others where on earth did she get it from. Yuhi appeared behind her and hugged her from the back. He brushed his lips against her ear.

"Husband?"

Sumire laughed softly. "Mmm, my husband is so smart and handsome. He is also a beast, but I think I can take it."

She thinks, huh? Then again, he still isn't sure whether it is wise for him to do that with her. She is already eighteen, and there should be nothing wrong with doing that with her, yet it still felt strange.

Is it because he felt bad? He slept with so many women the past few years. He used many people as a substitute. Now that he finally has the woman he likes, he feels dirty. He wants to touch her all the time, but he is afraid.

Now that he has grasped happiness, he doesn't know what to do.

At some point, he had stopped giving her a back hug and turned her around, gradually decreasing the distance between them.

"What? Uh." Sumire seemed nervous.

"You're cute." Yuhi didn't beat around the bush with his words. She looks very nice today.

Sumire covered her mouth and laughed softly. "You're silly today Yuhi-san, a new strategy?"

No, he just wants to hold her. But maybe he shouldn't go overboard.

"Are you cold?"

"A little." Sumire trailed off as she finally noticed that he was getting closer.

"Yuhi?"

"Hotel."

Sumire laughed again. "Uh, right, but maybe after we go shopping? This is actually the only dress I have."

"Right, let's get you some clothes." Yuhi looked her up and down. Even though this dress is Nagawa's taste, he admits that it does look good on her.

It still doesn't seem right for her to wear clothes gifted by her ex. Yuhi scanned the street they were on, and he leads her to the nearest boutique store.

Even with their disguises, some could tell who they were. Since they came here to try on clothes, Yuhi didn't see the need to keep up with the disguises, so he removed Sumire's hat.

The moment he did that, the store was in an uproar; of course, there had to be fans in this store.

"No way!"

"Is that Ibuki Sumire?"

"Then that must be Terashima."

The girls in the store seemed half excited, half curious. He also heard some resentment.

"Look at her going on a date and slacking from her job."

"Tsk, tsks people like this are the lowest of the low. How shameless of her to claim that she is an idol when all she does is leech off her fans without working."

Yuhi frowned when he heard those words and was about to say something when Sumire tugged on his clothes.

"It's okay."

"Are you sure?" This must be painful for her. Yuhi wrapped his arms around her and leaned down to whisper in her ear. "You have me."

Sumire laughed softly. "So, is this a barrier?"

"I need to shield you from harm."

He can't allow her to hear such negative things. Yuhi is starting to understand why the other guys who like her behave the way they do. If they don't behave that way, then all this negativity would cause her to have another breakdown.

## **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 458**

Chapter 458: Naturally Drawn To Her

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

Despite the occasional sneering from some of those girls, the shopping trip was going fine. Sumire found several pieces of clothing that she liked. Yuhi stayed near her since he knew what would happen if he left her alone. In their line of work, they have to be very cautious when they are in public; there are some crazed fans and some crazed haters. These girls fall into the latter category.

He was right to worry since whenever they moved to a different store area, the girls would coincidentally follow. Yuhi sighed deeply. Why do people feel the need to do such trivial things? It is not like she has done something to harm them.

He does understand why they would feel betrayed. But if that's the case, they could just move onto another idol. They don't have to keep harassing and pressuring her like this.

Yuhi leaned down and stole a kiss from Sumire when she least expected it. At first, she didn't pay much attention to it, but when his kisses gradually became longer, he started to use his tongue more.

"Yuhi-san if you keep kissing me--"

"I can't take it."

He can't stand it; her just standing there is driving him crazy.

Sumire shyly covered her mouth. "You're so silly today. What's wrong?"

Indeed what is wrong with him. Maybe he has gone crazy. Yuhi cupped her cheeks. "I can't wait until you leave the hospital. It is killing me not waking up with you in my arms."

At those words, her gaze softened. "If that is the case, Yuhi-san, you could just stay over at the hospital."

"You know I would love to, but I can't attack you in the hospital."

"Then what do you call what you did earlier?"

Yuhi awkwardly looked away, and she chuckled. "I am joking. I do understand, you know."

"Have you properly discussed things with him?"

"I've said what I had to, and I think he is trying."

"Is that so?"

'Now that Nagawa is putting in actual effort, will she change her mind?' It was something that crossed his mind when they first had this talk. But unfortunately, he was too much of a coward to tell her no.

Yuhi understood how important that talk with Nagawa was. Hino has repeatedly warned him that this situation will gradually get worse. He had to agree there. The relationship the two had with each other wasn't healthy. He knew how difficult it was for Sumire. She tried her hardest this entire time not to dislike Nagawa.

Every time she returned from meeting with him, she would look exhausted. He would find her crouched down in the corner of the room with a dazed expression on her face. She seemed disgusted whenever Nagawa kissed or touched her. She would cling onto him and say she needs disinfection.

But their relationship could not continue that way.

This is why he suggested to her that the two spoke properly. It was his idea, but now he is starting to have regrets.

Yuhi picked up a dress from the rack. "Pick this."

"Mmm, imposing your fetishes on me? But this is cute. I'll get it."

He picked up several other outfits, and Sumire laughed. "I guess I will try these on. Wait for a moment, Yuhi."

Yuhi nodded and watched her disappear behind the changing room doors. Sumire came out with the first outfit, it looked nice on her, but it felt like something was missing. It was like this for the next few outfits, and before he knew it, half an hour had passed.

The girl stepped out again, wearing an off-shoulder white dress with a red ribbon on the waistline and a red-colored denim jacket. Yuhi felt his heartbeat increase. Huh? What is this? It's not like this is the first dress in the pile of clothes he gave her. But the impact on him is too much.

Normally people associate wearing red with seduction and maturity. But there was something innocent looking about her.

"That looks great on you, miss!"

"Right, please try on these heels."

Sumire thanked the staff member as she put the heels on with a defeated expression. "Are you still not satisfied with this Yuhi?"

For a moment, he just blanked out and didn't say anything. Is he satisfied? Oh, he was more than satisfied. If there weren't so many people around, he would have pulled her to a corner and attacked her with kisses. How would it feel touching her when his emotions are like this?

His thoughts broke off when one of the staff members suddenly pushed her. It took Yuhi a moment to realize that the staff member was one of the girls from the group. It took him a moment to realize there was a glass table nearby.

Yuhi quickly rushed over and broke her fall. "That was close." He turned to the actual staff member. "I think you should tell your manager to rethink protocol. If anybody wearing a staff uniform can just sneak in."

He said it in a normal tone, but he was silently criticizing them.

"Sorry, we won't allow this to happen again."

Yuhi looked at the culprit and sighed. "You came to my recent event."

Of course, it was one of his fans. Hino warned him before to be careful when he goes out in public with Sumire, but this has never happened before. He knew how excessive his fans were, so this isn't too surprising, but still.

"As my fan, I wish you would conduct yourself more appropriately." Yuhi knew these words were out of line. But they are already lucky that he is talking and not beating them up.

He felt angry, but even more than that, he felt frustrated. He took her out tonight so she could relax, but why is it like this?

"How could you allow that woman to trick you?"

"That's right, Yuhi-sama, don't you know what kind of person she is." The other girls re-emerged when they saw what had happened to their friend.

His gaze turned cold the more nonsense that escaped their lips. Yuhi was about to say something when he realized that Sumire had left his arms. Instead, the girl was pointing to the glass window.

"Look, Yuhi! It's snowing!"

Yuhi blinked once then twice; the staff member and the guards who came in seemed surprised too. The onlookers were the first to break that tension.

A pair of old ladies approached Sumire.

"Then miss, I think you should put this on."

"That dress choice is good, but the temperature must have dropped."

Sumire's eyes brightened. "I didn't see these before; they are so pretty!"

Of course, she didn't see them; these two must have taken the last pair. His gaze softened at this scene. This isn't the first time this has happened. Whenever Sumire behaves this way, people naturally get pulled into her circle. Some would comment and say that she is pretending to be innocent. But the elderly can tell that she is not pretending. They do say that as a person gets older, they become wiser.

## **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 459**

Chapter 459: Resolve

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Yuhi walked over and slipped the jacket from her shoulders, and replaced it with a poncho. "Wear this."

"En thank you, Yuhi."

He had to look away once he saw the bright smile on her face. This is bad; each action of hers is driving him crazy. This girl most likely has no idea what sort of impact she has on him. But even if she did know, he doubts the situation would change.

"Wear this out." Yuhi grabbed her hand. He didn't want to stay here any longer. The girls had stopped talking, but he could still feel how hostile they were.

"The payment?"

Yuhi turned to the staff. "We will put it on your card, sir."

He didn't want to deal with those girls anymore and quickly left with Sumire. The moment they left, she buried her face in his arms. "Dearest, thank you."

This silly girl must have been nervous this entire time. Yuhi leaned down and kissed her forehead softly. "Mm, anytime. Do you want to go home?"



Pretending to be strong is mentally exhausting. She must be very tired.

After walking for a few minutes, they ended up in the train station area. Due to the weather and time, there were not a lot of people there.

"It's really snowing! How beautiful." Sumire exclaimed as she skipped merrily ahead.

Yuhis gaze fell on the girl, and his gaze softened at her child-like actions. It is easy to forget that she is just a normal high school girl when she has so many burdens to take care of.

"Careful, you might slip."

The snow was still fresh since it just started snowing a few minutes ago. But Sumire's condition still isn't good. Just as she was about to refute him, the girl lost her balance. Yuhi quickly rushed over and reached out for her.

For a moment, neither of them spoke as they looked at each other's eyes. Yuhi felt his heartbeat increase. Huh? What is this feeling again?

The girl is the first one to look away, and she covered her face with her hands. Yuhi remained dazed for a moment longer before he grabbed hold of her hands.

"I feel very weird today."

"Uh, weird?"

"Mm," He leaned down and brushed his lips against her ear. "Weird. What are you doing to me, Sumire? Can you tell me?"

He was teasing her, of course, and did not expect an answer, so when she suddenly replied, it startled him.

"I think it's because your feelings for me are increasing."

"You think?"

Sumire sighed. "I don't want to toot my own horn, but you've been feeling self-conscious since uh." She coughed. "Since you touched me. It was a bit different."

Yuhi blinked when he heard those words. Right now that she mentioned it, there was something different when he touched her. But he thought it was because he hadn't touched her in a while. He never would have thought it was for this reason.

He has always loved her, but he wondered when did he start loving her even more? His feelings for her have evolved since the first time, he still loves her for the same reasons as before, but there is something more now.

It seems she understands that very well.

"Why don't you take responsibility?" Yuhi joked, but Sumire jabbed his chest with her arms. "Ouch, why are you so mad?"

"Earlier, you recognized that girl." She mumbled quietly, but he heard her.

It took him a second to realize what she was saying. Is she talking about that fan? It never occurred to him that would be the reason why she rushed over to the window.

"I find it cute when you get jealous," Yuhi leaned down and slipped her shoes off, replacing them with a pair of boots. "But even then, I get upset when you doubt me."

Then again, it isn't her fault completely. It is because he messed around so much before she came here. Sumire is not the type of person to believe in rumors. But even for her, hearing that stuff every single day must be unsettling.

"Uh, what are you doing, Yuhi-san?"

"Massaging your feet."

She still isn't completely recovered.

"My rehab is going fine Yuhi-san, I can walk at least this much."

It sounded like she was rambling. Yuhi didn't have to look at her face to see how nervous she was. She isn't the only nervous one, after all.

"Say Yuhi?"

"Mmm?"

"I-I was wondering, could you practice with me?"

"For Takashis event?"

She laughed nervously. "I am still a bit scared. But ah don't worry, I feel resolved. I will sing that day. It's just. It will be the first time for me in so long facing so many people. Although it is hard to see the audience's facial expressions from the stage, just the fact that there will be so many."

Yuhi stopped massaging her feet and pulled her into his arms. "You don't have to rush; you know that, right?"

"I know, of course, I do. But like I said, I also want to sing again. It's just a bit frightening. But there will be a rehearsal beforehand and plenty of time before it starts. If I keep practicing on the stage before the event, I should be fine."

It sounds like she is trying to persuade herself. Truly this girl is so foolish at times; she needs to stop pretending to act strong. Yuhi understood why she did it, but at the same time, it has become a habit. She doesn't have to do this in front of him.

It was almost like she understood what was going on in his head since she suddenly apologized.

"I'm sorry, Yuhi."

"Don't mind it; it's not like I don't understand. But," Yuhi pinched her cheeks. "I am mad about something."

"Uh. I thought you-"

"If Nagawa gives you a gift, especially clothes, reject it."

Sumire laughed softly. "Would you rather I walked out in the hospital gown?"

Yuhi looked troubled at her words. He understood why she accepted the clothes, but it still made him feel bad. His gaze fell on the sky as he pulled her away from his embrace.

"A lot of stuff has happened recently. You even had to miss out on school for two months, even though I wanted nothing more than for you to experience a normal high school life."

"And I have, because of you, I actually like going to school. I don't exactly get along with everybody. Many people say bad things about me, but I still like it. The reason I can think that way is no doubt because of you."

### **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 460**

Chapter 460: Thank You

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Yuhi's gaze softened hearing her words. Right, he worked hard for that. He worked hard so she could live a normal life. When she first came here, Yuhi didn't know what to do at first. He knew eventually he would have to say something about the entertainment industry. But before that, he had to do something about her fear towards people.

He even started to attend school for her sake, and even though he hates crowds. He still actively participated in things that he normally wouldn't have just for her sake. It was all for her, all so she could smile again.

All of his efforts paid off since she can now say something like this to him.

Yuhi clasped their hands. "It seems I lack confidence."

"It's not your fault; my behavior would puzzle anybody. But there is no doubt that you are the person who understands me the most."

Understand huh? "You know what happened to that song?"

"Song?"

"Before you disappeared for two months, you would sneak into the abandoned music room in school even though it was the holidays and play the piano."

At those words, her cheeks colored, and he laughed. "It is nothing to be embarrassed about. I have done this too."

Sumire puffed her cheeks. "It was supposed to be a secret; of course, I feel weird getting exposed this way."

"So?"

"Well, I was thinking of performing it for the Tv performance."

"TV?"

"Ah, I forgot to mention this. It was something Sano arranged for me two months ago. You know I don't like using connections, but the offer was too good to resist."

Once he heard the name of the program, Yuhi had to admit he was impressed.

"On the twenty-third?"

Sumire nodded, and his lips curved to a smile. He stopped himself from saying that he would be performing too. It would be better to surprise her.

"I won't be appearing until halfway through the program. They are having two male idol groups compete against each other. Then the second segment, the winner's representative will dance with one of the female artists. Unfortunately, I am a popular choice for that, and it seems like I was accepted as a guest for that purpose. I will be singing during the third segment, but it seems I have to appear for the second one too."

Sumire seemed bothered by this, but Yuhi was delighted.

This girl has no idea that he will be on the program. Naturally, he already knew he would win since the other group was nothing. The group's representative is the center, so it will be him. How surprised will she be when he chooses to dance with her?

Yuhi quickly decided to keep this for himself.

"Yuhi-san, are you busy that day? It feels like I am going to need you more than ever for an energy boost."

"Mmm, you know, normally I would love that, but I actually have work that day."

When he saw her dejected expression, Yuhi struggled not to laugh.

Now he is even more excited to see her expression.

"I guess I have to make do and attack you a lot in the morning instead."

Yuhi blinked when he heard her response. She really has gotten bolder; then again, sometimes it is hard for him to tell whether she likes getting intimate. He knew how bad her social anxiety was. It is hard for her to interact with others, so having a boyfriend and getting close to them might be a challenge for her.

Of course, he considered all of this before he asked her out. But even then, he went through with it, he took the risk, and it paid off since she can say these things.

"Are you sure?"

"Mm, I like being close to Yuhi."

If she puts it that way, then he won't disagree with her. "I cant wait to see you sing again." Yuhi liked spending these peaceful everyday with her and liked seeing her live a normal life.

But occasionally, he would get an image in his head of a girl wearing a bright red dress and singing on stage. Sumire can continue living a normal life. He could do something about the media; initially, he planned to do this. He saw how much she was settling in and decided this would be for the best.

Yet, that image wouldn't disappear.

Yuhi watched as she extended her hand out towards the sky. "I truly like singing, Yuhi."

"I see."

"That's why I have to go back."

Yuhi didn't say anything to that and extended his hand out to pat her hair. No matter what, she decides he will be there for her. Even though she is trembling, right now, her voice has so much conviction.

They exited the train station platform when they saw more people. "By the way, Yuhi-san, I have a question for you."

"A question?"

"A few times since that snowy concert a few years ago. I felt like I saw you around. Was it just my imagination?"

At those words, he immediately averted his gaze. What is with this trap question? Why did she suddenly mention this? Yuhi took one look at her and knew he couldn't get out of this easily.

"Yeah. But you know it was only-" Yuhi's sentence fell short when he saw something odd. The girl's cheeks had turned red all the way to her ears, and she was looking down.

Geez, he really can't win with her. Yuhi cupped her cheeks, halting her in her tracks. Yuhi did a quick scan of their surroundings and didn't see anybody else. The street was oddly quiet. "I have loved you this entire time. Does it surprise you?"

"Well." Sumire laughed. "It does a little. I didn't think you would not only secretly watch over me but also visit me."

"I wanted to approach you numerous times. But I felt that I would get in the way of the bonds you were forming with other people." Indeed, if he showed himself before her, she wouldn't have gotten so close with the guys in Nanairo feather or those girls.

She would have focused solely on him.

"Mm, I understand." She leaned into his palm. "Regardless, I am very happy. You know how I am towards romance Yuhi-san. I don't think I deserve such a beautiful thing, but you showed me that somebody like me could have something like that."

"You deserve the world and so much more."

Sumire chuckled, and her gaze softened as she brushed their forehead against each other.

"What is it?"

"Thank you."

It was just a mere two words, but Yuhi felt her strong conviction again.