

Melody 461

## **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 461**

Chapter 461: I Don't Want To Hurt You

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After they walked around for a while, they headed for their next destination. Yuhi, however, didn't take her to his apartment but the bar where his fellow M5 members were. Sumire seemed startled but happily went along with the mini party.

At some point, Hino, Shin, Aika, and Asami also arrived, and Yuhi silently watched over her from his usual couch. This situation is fine, isn't it? Sumire is happy. She is able to smile.

But a part of him wants to know what happened in the last two months. This is one of the main reasons why he hasn't visited her in the hospital every day. The less time he is around her, the less chances he will slip up and ask.

Yuhi knew that if he really wanted to ask, she would give him the answers. She won't hide anything from him, but a part of him worries how she will answer. He doesn't want to hear her speak fondly about Mamoru anymore.

His gaze fell on the girl who was walking over to him with flushed cheeks. Yuhi extended his hand out, and she buried her face in his arms.

"You drank?"

It was a stupid question; he could tell from the way she staggered over.

"You don't like alcohol; why did you drink so much?"

"Isn't it obvious, Yuhi-san?"

He raised his eyebrows. "Obvious?"

She looked up. "It is so you could take advantage of me."

Yuhi pinched her cheeks, and she pouted. "Yuhi-san."

"Atushi get her some wate-" Before Yuhi could finish those words, a certain teal-colored-haired man passed him a cup.

"I was watching Ran-san encourage her to drink for a while now."

"Thanks."

As expected of these guys, they are very attentive when it comes to Sumire. What he said to Sumire isn't a lie; he has come to see these guys as friends and not just team members. But at the same time, he has to keep a certain distance; they are still his biggest rivals when it comes to Sumire.

Yuhi passed the girl the cup, but she pushed it away. "Hey, you need this to feel better."

"But if I feel better, you won't do anything."

He looked over at Jun apologetically, but the teal-colored-haired man didn't seem to mind.

"She tends to turn to things she hates when she has a lot on her mind. You should talk to her about it before she does anything else stupid." Jun commented.

Yuhi felt very conflicted hearing this piece of information. "You know a lot about her, huh?"

He thought he responded normally, but Jun caught him out.

"Nobody plans on taking her away from you."

"That's not-" Yuhi trailed off and sighed. "I can't help but be uneasy; you guys spent two years with her. I only spent a year, or was it shorter? I have known her since we were younger, but the actual amount of time we spent together is very short."

"I don't think the amount of time you spend with someone determines the level of your bonds with them."

"That's-"

"Put it this way, even though you have not spent that much time together. At the end of the day, she still chose you, you not only got her heart, but you obtained her trust too. That is no easy feat."

Indeed that is the case. He wonders how Jun and the others feel about this. The fact that he could do this for her and not them.

His thoughts broke off when Sumire wrapped her arms around his neck. "Take me away."

Geez, how much did she have to drink? Yuhi scooped her up in his arms. "We're going upstairs. Tell the others that she needs to rest early."

Jun nodded, and with a few more words, Yuhi quickly headed upstairs with Sumire. He brings her to his room, knowing that she would kick up a fuss if he left her in hers.

He placed her down on the bed, and the moment he did, she buried her face in his arms. "What's the matter?"

"Uh." Sumire laughed softly. "I'm a bit nervous. Are we going to-"

Yuhi immediately understood what she was trying to say. His gaze is gentle as the sun as he caressed her cheeks. "You know when you get like this, I almost forget how you like to tease people."

"Be quiet."

"Only if you want to. Besides, everybody is here tonight." Yuhi knew her very well. She is not the type of person to publicly display her affections. Moreover, Sumire should know about those guys' feelings for her.

"Mmm, then maybe I should rest." Sumire trailed off. "Lately, I don't have urges anymore."

Despite the sudden shift in topic, Yuhi understood what she was referring to. "Blood urges come and go." The more tolerance she develops, the more it should go away. But even then, it is odd that it went away qui-Yuhi paused in mid-thought as something came to mind.

His gaze dimmed, and he immediately turned to leave, but Sumire sat up and hugged him from the back. "Don't."

"They experimented on you?" Yuhi growled. Just the mere thought of it made him sick.

"They only managed a few blood samples. Of course, they can't do anything to me."

But even as she said such confident-sounding words. Yuhi already sensed that there was something wrong.

"I wasn't going to ask you, but now that it has come to this, you have to tell me what they did to you." He turned around with an angry look on his face. "Sumire, you have to tell me."

The girl, however, remained silent, and Yuhi placed both hands on her shoulders. "Please talk to me. I wasn't going to ask you because I didn't want to hear you speak about Mamoru but now." His sentence fell short when the girl suddenly pushed him down.

Her brown hair fell past her shoulders, but there was something alluring about this sight. "What? Are you going to be stubborn?"

"I also thought the same," Sumire mumbled. "I didn't tell you anything because it would mean talking about Mamoru."

His eyes widened when he heard those words.

"I don't want to hurt you, Yuhi. I knew if you learned what happened there, you would end up more hurt than me."

"Your so foolish."

Sumire buried her face in his neck. "I am, but I am doing all this because I love you."

She really has changed; in the past, she would not have been able to say such a thing to him. Sumire still wore the dress from earlier, but she had loosened it slightly, and now he could clearly see her pretty shoulders.

The fact that they were in this position was not very helpful.

Before he knew it, his hands went around her waist. Sumire raised her face with an innocent expression.

"What are you doing, Yuhi?"

She is asking even though she already knew—what a cheeky woman.

## **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 462**

Chapter 462: His Own Insecurities

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Then again this is one of the many things he loves about her. If someone were to ask him what he loves about Ibuki Sumire, he would not be able to answer. Reporters often made up lies that his relationship with Sumire is fake because of this. But it isn't like that at all. He has too many reasons.

The reasons build up every single day. He finds something new everyday so how could he possibly list it all?

His gaze fell on the girl who was looking at him with half curiosity, and impatience. Yet as he leaned closer he could hear the sound of her beating. She is so silly, even though she is the one who provoked him. Then again it is exactly like her to do something like this.

....

The following morning.

He is the first one to wake up for once.

The sunlight pouring into the room indicated that it was morning. Yuhi looked at the girl buried in his arms and a content sigh passes his lips. He was half tempted to go back to sleep but his gaze fell on the clock. He needs to drop by the company before going to school today, and he promised Nagawa that she would be back.

Sumire doesn't know this but he actually discussed this with Nagawa when she returned. He said that at some point the other guys including him would want to do something for her.

He didn't specify the date but it seems like Nagawa figured it out.

Whenever they do this it ends up this way. Sumire is always boasting about her stamina but he chuckled at the memory of last night. She shouldn't be able to say this now. A part of him has refrained from doing anything with her because he doesn't want their relationship to be based on lust like it was with his ex girlfriend. He refrains from interfering too much with her art because he doesn't want her to think he is controlling her like what happened with Touko.

Yuhi sighed. The one with the bag of insecurities is him isn't it? Sumire always blames herself for everything, and mentions how insecure she is with everything. But she isn't the only one. He needs to get over what happened with those two.

It was a mistake and if he could go back he would make sure he was completely loyal to Sumire. However he kept such thoughts to himself. He doesn't want her to get creeped out and he also knew what she would say.

After all she has repeatedly mentioned how she felt relieved to see him live a normal life and meet new people.

'I would hate if if you remained hung up on me, and that prevented you from escaping the underworld you hated so much.'

He didnt say anything when she said that but he for the first time he felt angry at her. Stupid woman, what is that hung up comment? It was only because of her that he managed to live this way. He got this far because of her.

Yuhi shook his head. He ought to make her some breakfast, she will like that wont she?

He quickly got dressed and walked down the steps.

The moment he reached the bottom he realized how quiet it was. The others must have gone home, they do have a live performance later on. It is better to get some rest. He scanned the bar area and noted that it was unusually clean.

Is Atushi already awake? When he left with Sumire yesterday this place was a mess.

Yuhi turned to the kitchen when he hears the sound of a frying pan and frowned. When he saw Atushi already cooking he sighed.

Atushi was cooking while Jae was leaning against the counter.

"Don't make anything for her."

Atushi points to some ingredients on the corner. "Use that to make something for Sumire. This is for me and Jae."

Yuhi rolled his eyes. "Arent you too prepared?"

"Jae said you would do this."

He looked at the smiling blonde with suspicion and Jae beamed happily.

"King, you understand that the Princess likes your cooking. You also like her expression when she eats your food."

"The details at the end are not needed." Yuhi walked over to the counter.

"So, about what you said Atushi-san. King got in trouble?"

"Shut it."

Yuhi immediately understood what they were talking about.

He really did want them to drop this topic already. Or maybe he should just take it out on Kaji later for spilling the beans.

"You could say it was something like that. Normally Yuhi is so cold hearted to people and doesn't pay them any attention. But he is weak against the fluffy type."

"Fluffy?" Jaes eyes shone brightly. "Another woman?"

Yuhi clicked his tongue annoyed. "It wasn't like that. I just helped her out because I didn't like the attitude of those guys." He cracks open an egg and places it on a bowl, opening a bag of sausages.

"Besides if I ignored her, Sumire wouldn't like it."

"Right right the Princess always says stuff like if you have the power to protect you should use it."

His eyes twitched annoyed. "How come you know that?"

Jae chuckled mischievously. "We spend a lot of time together."

His gaze dimmed and Atushi sighed. "Quit messing with Yuhi. He may act the way he does but he is actually a sensitive guy."

"I know. But if that is the case why are you just ignoring Nagawa Sano? I know you warned him before but it was only one time. "

Yuhi frowned when he heard Jaes direct questions. The others have avoided asking him this, even Atushi. But Jae is not the type of person to hold back once he has noticed something.

Atushi looked towards him and sighed. "You can say it now right? I respected your wishes this entire time. But you know I don't like Nagawa. I don't know if Sumire told you but I was suspicious about him from the very start."

"Atushi-san was suspicious but he was jealous too. So your opinion is invalid." Jae declared.

Yuhi sighed deeply. "I guess I can. Initially I intended to interfere from the start and clearly warn him. If I did he wouldn't have approached her."

He was very confident that he could have gotten Nagawa to stay away.

"But after I observed his behaviour the first time they met again I realized something was wrong. He was saying such cruel words and behaving like a jerk but his eyes told a different story."

"He looked concerned?"

Yuhi shook his head. "There was something more to it. I can't describe it exactly but it lead me to trust him."

## **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 463**

Chapter 463: Relax

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The conversation came to a close after he said that. This is what he liked about Atushi and Jae; they have never pressured him. Atushi gets frustrated with his actions, it shows on his face a lot, but his friend respects his decision and waits until he talks about it. Jae is always smiling and occasionally says straightforward things, but he waits for the right moment.

Sometimes he thinks those two understand him better than himself.

When he came up with the tray of food, he realized that the girl was no longer in bed. But he heard the sound of water from the bathroom, so naturally, he joined her. However, for the last few minutes, the girl kept averting her gaze and covering her body with his arms.

"Why are you freaking out?" Yuhi asked, puzzled.

Why is she behaving like this? It is not like this is the first time. Actually, at the start of their relationship, they frequently took baths together. For her to act shy over this now seems odd. Moreover, she was the one who initiated the other times.

"W-why did you join me?" Sumire seemed mortified as she covered herself with her arms.

Yuhi sighed. "Well, I had to take a bath too."

"You could wait."

"A waste of electricity."

Sumire shook her head. "Your rich; that won't work on me."

Geez, so stubborn. However, his gaze fell on the dark-colored bruises on her body. Even if they didn't succeed in experimenting, they must have beaten her. She is making fast progress recovering, but she shouldn't be out and about as much.

'I knew that but took her out anyway.' He needs to stop doing these stupid things that will only risk her health.

His thoughts broke off when Sumire turned around and wrapped her arms around his neck.

"I already told you, Yuhi-san, I am alright."

"That doesn't make it okay." Frustration seeped into his voice, but that vanished when he felt her warm petal-like lips on his.

"A bribe." He mumbled. "Those don't work on me."

"Mmm, I know Yuhi," She traced his face with her fingers. "I really am sorry. Just bare with me for a bit longer. I will tell you everything without fail."

"Alright."

He isn't happy with that response. Yuhi knew that whatever is holding her back will lead to doing something dangerous first. He ought to make some arrangements.

With the current situation regarding work, he cannot keep skipping out to spend time with her. The entertainment industry can get very ugly. His fans are starting to notice his absence.

It would be bad if they connect the dots and realize he skips out more since Sumire arrived. The media is already harassing her enough.

"Your still nervous?" He noticed her red cheeks as she was struggling to look at something other than his face. "It's not like you haven't seen this before."

"It's different when it's dark."

Yuhi paused at those words. If only she knew the dark made it better for him to see. He wrapped his arms around her waist.

"I'm not going to tease you. I just wanted to relax. We've both been stressed recently."

"This isn't relaxing; it's bad for the heart."

He chuckled at her words. 'Actually, she is right.' He is having a hard time containing himself when she is naked right in front of him.

"How long will you be hospitalized?" Yuhi swiftly changed the topic.

"Mm, at the very least till new year? I am getting better, but it's still hard to move around. They want to monitor my condition more. I don't think this part is necessary, but San keeps interfering."

'San' huh? She seems comfortable enough to use a nickname now. Are they that close? Yuhi recalled what the other two said and sighed. He should really step up his game.

What if she gets stolen?

Yuhi interlocked a strand of her hair in his fingers and kissed it. "Do you need anything?"

"Daily kisses."

He blinked, startled at her words, and she sighed. "It really isn't any good Yuhi-san. I can't sleep well when you aren't around me, so I bother San in his office. But he is too busy working, so I'm bored."

Bothers him in his office? For a moment, Yuhi focused on these words. Is that why they seem close now?

Jealousy is really a monster in disguise.

"I'll try to visit you."

'I can't tell her what's going on at work.' If she finds out people are putting pressure on him because of her, then she will surely do something careless. It's not something he can't resolve, but he just needs a bit of time.

"Try," Sumire repeated his words and sighed. "I suppose that will do."

"Sorry."

"Mmmm, I think I understand. But just remember Yuhi-san. I love you."

So she already knew, huh, that he was worried.

"Was it stupid to think that way?"

"Km, I thought you were smarter than that."

Yuhi leaned forward and placed a soft trail of kisses on her stomach.

"Nnn, Yuhi?"

"I think I have been too patient with you."

"Mmmm, I thought you would attack sooner."



Yuhi chuckled at her words. She knows him very well, huh? Honestly, this is a bit conflicting for him. She is very pretty. He can see better in the dark, but there is something different seeing her bare skin in the day like this.

"Yuhi?"

"Your very pretty today."

Sumire covers her mouth, and soft laughter escaped her lips. "I suppose so."

"If I did something to you, would you mind?"

"Aha, uh no but--" Sumire trailed off. "Didn't you make food for me? It will get cold if we stay here too long."

Indeed, it would be a waste. "Then I'll help finish things off. Have you washed your hair yet?"

Sumire shook her head, and he picked up a bottle of shampoo on the side.

"Say Yuhi."

"Yeah?" He was focusing on her hair.

"Are we really getting married after graduation?"

Yuhi paused for a moment before he continued. "Do you not want to?"

It never occurred to him that he may be moving a bit too fast. It's already a miracle they are dating. He thought the scar Mamoru left her would cause her not to date anyone ever again. That would have been fine, too; his feelings for her would never change regardless.

"I want to," Sumire mumbled. "I think I would be more reassured that way."

Yuhi immediately understood what she was talking about. In her own way, Sumire has held back for his sake. It is hard for them both to express their feelings and desire to stay with each other all the time. When he first brought up marriage, he thought it was just an excuse to keep her beside him, but his feelings have changed.

She must have had similar thoughts to him.

"Then let's discuss it properly after you get discharged."

## **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 464**

### Chapter 464: Take My Hand

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A few hours go by.

Yuhi would never have thought after dropping her off in the hospital that he would see her again so soon. He was on his way from seeing Hino. The situation indeed looked grim. Despite his efforts the past few days, many started to connect his frequent disappearances and missing from his work with Sumire.

A deep sigh passed his lips. This situation has become rather troublesome. If he spoke up, it could have the opposite effect. But a flash of blonde hair appeared in his head.

If he could ask Nagawa to step in, then it would be more credible. Even if people believe his words, there will be those who would blame her. But if a doctor stepped up and explained then- Yuhi sighed again.

In the end, all he can do is rely on Nagawa Sano. Isn't it bad enough that he has to turn a blind eye to this man making moves on his future wife? Yuhi recalled his conversation with Sumire and paused. Maybe she is right. If they get married, then all the pests would vanish. Not even Nagawa would be able to do anything.

But- isn't that man famous for making moves on people who are already in relationships? What a troublesome man. If it were just the likes of Atsuro, then he wouldn't have to worry so much. Speaking of which, that guy is staying way too quiet. Isn't he going to do something?

He decided to take a longer route before heading to school. If he recalled correctly, there are some new buildings near this area. He wanted to check it out since Sumire mentioned buying a house. But after walking in that district for a few minutes, he bumps into Sumire.

She stood on the sidewalk with a dazed look on her face. Before she could lose her footing, however, he immediately catches her. For a split moment, they merely looked into each other's eyes. It was the same as last time, but this time what caught him off guard was hearing the sound of her beating heart.

Sumire immediately pushed him away.

"You are as clumsy as ever, my dear wife."

At that, the girl's cheeks instantly color, " I am not your wife."

Hmph, not yet anyway. Yuhi scans the surroundings for a few minutes before confirming his thoughts.

"I see no guard dog with you today. Could it be that you are alone?"

Usually he would find her fiance's people or Nagawa lurking around her. But today, he sees no trace of them.

He isn't that surprised to see her here. Before she disappeared two months ago, she seemed to be traveling back and forth from his place and here. He had already seen her on more than one occasion, yet he never spoke to her whenever he saw her here.

Yuhi tried to interfere as little as possible whenever she conducted her investigations. They could discuss it all they want at home, but he never actually interfered with things.

Sumire nodded, "There was something I had to investigate." She trails off, "Also, today is the anniversary of my parent's death."

As she said those words, Yuhi watched as her usually lively and bright eyes turn dim.

How very unusual, he had known that the girl had not gotten along with her mother. Yet, she can still show some form of respect; his wife certainly acted like a member of the elite when she wanted to be.

"Then, I shall accompany you."

It would be bad to leave her when she is in this strange mood. Although her recent self-harm attempts are minimal, Nagawa says that she still wakes up screaming.

At that comment, Sumire's eyes widened, "Eh? But Yuhi, don't you have work to do?"

"I was heading to school. I finished my business with Hino. But there is still time before I have to be there."

Despite the bad news, there wasn't much he could do now, so he left after hearing it. They need to devise a good plan. It is almost time for Takahashi's concert. They just have to hold out. The main cause for people's hate towards Sumire is because she hasn't returned to work. The solution is simple she just has to sing again.

But that simple thing is a heavy burden to her. She didn't say anything about it in the morning. Yet, he could tell it was something weighing heavily in her heart.

He suspects that is the main reason why she got so drunk last night. Usually, she isn't the type to drink, but it is because something has happened whenever she does it.

"I see."

When he saw her downcast expression, he could not help but sigh. If she did not involve herself to a degree in this fair, then she would not be causing herself so much pain right now.

His thoughts broke when she suddenly tripped over and landed on his back as she rubbed her nose. "Sorry."

She really is far too clumsy. Yuhi extends his hand out, causing her to glance at it for a few seconds. "Take my hand."

Yet even as he said that she was looking at it still leading to his signature scowl to appear on his face, "Did you not hear what I said, woman? You are too clumsy on your own, walking in those shoes that although they look elegant on your feet. You cannot walk in them".

During his speech, Sumire had already grabbed hold of his hand.

"It's kind of familiar. I wonder why." Sumire mumbled.

Hm? What's this? Could she be in the process of remembering? It would be a lie to say he wanted to talk to her about the past. But it was only recently where he clearly remembered everything. Back then so much happened, so it makes sense why it took him so long,

The events of that time were very traumatizing. It would not surprise him if it caused Sumire emotional damage.

"But, I'm surprised. Yuhi, your hand is really warm."

"We all emit body temperature despite the cold, hanyous especially."

"I see, got it."

Even though he said that right now as their hands clasped against each other. He noticed how unusually cold it was; this girl, will something bad happen? No, it can't be; after all, there are those working hard for her.

He was not one to rely on others. Yuhi certainly understood already that Kusaji Atsuro wouldn't let her die just like that. Then there is Nagawa.

Sumire often talked about how impressed she was with Nagawa taking his doctor career seriously. So that must mean that guy is good.

His thoughts break off when she hums a tune. Even though it was just humming, there was something beautiful about it.

If it is her, she could truly surpass Takashi Yumi, no surpass even the legends that came before her.

### **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 465**

Chapter 465: Your Flaw Is

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"Are you returning to the hospital after-" Yuhi's sentence fell short when they hear a rumbling sound come from the sky? In seconds rain started to fall rapidly. Yuhi looked around for a nearby shelter and found an old bus stop and lead the girl there.

"It just snowed yesterday," Yuhi grumbled. The snow remained overnight, but with this sudden rain shower, it will most likely vanish.

Sumire laughed softly. "I guess the snow isn't stable yet."

Yuhi paused when he heard her laughter. It was only a mere chuckle, and yet her image in his head continues to grow lovelier. He is in a bit of a bid here.

When Asuka first mentioned that Sumire disappeared, he was frantic, but then she calmly replied that the girl most likely went to Tokyo. Yuhi didn't believe it at first. But it seemed like Asuka caught the girl looking at the little letters he slipped into the books he gave her.

So based on her actions, he went to the nightclub that day. He already had a few drinks, so he didn't know exactly when she came in, nor did he recognize her due to the amount of alcohol. His mind was hazy, but when he heard her speak, he knew who she was immediately.

Yuhi didn't think they would end up in the same school. But even then, he didn't have any hope that she would choose the art side. Her love for music runs deeply. So when she re-appeared as his classmate and became his deskmate too, he felt even more troubled.

He only intended to watch over her silently, but fate said so otherwise. Every time he is with her, he can't help but remember clearly all the small reasons he fell for her before. They overlap with the current things he likes about her.

This is a huge problem. If he continues to like her this way, eventually, he will no longer hold back. She is so precious to him; he doesn't want to do anything that would make her dislike him. Yuhi recalled how he was when he was still dating Miyazawa Makino and sighed deeply.

He was not in the best state back then, but why did he do such things? If Sumire knew all the things he did back then, would she leave him? Yuhi shook his head; he already knew that would not happen. She has repeatedly shown him that she is different from those other women.

His gaze fell on the girl who was wiping herself with a napkin and paused. He recognized the piece of cloth immediately and looked away. "I can get you something better."

Sumire shook her head and beamed happily. "No, I like this one."

Is that so? He knew she isn't the type of woman who cared for material possessions. She liked simple and pretty things. He gave her that old napkin during a mission because he noticed that she was sweating a lot.

Naturally, he saw her use it a few times after, but so much time has passed.

Yuhi didn't think that she would keep it this entire time.

"Say Sumire. I want to give you something."

"Eh?" She seemed startled and paused for a moment. "But it isn't my birthday or anything."

Yuhi pulled a small box out of his pocket, and he noticed her looking at it with wide eyes.

"Uh, if you're going to propose Yuhi-san, you should make it more romantic."

Yuhi rolled his eyes. Despite that snarky remark, he could tell how nervous she was. She still has that bad habit of teasing him, but something is different with her now. She is more honest with her feelings.

He took a step forward and opened the box revealing a pair of ruby and gold-colored earrings. "I know you normally don't wear these things. But I think it is a waste since you are so pretty."

She does wear small trinkets occasionally, but nothing too grand. Yuhi intended to get her something like that at first, but he found a small corner shop when he wandered around the shopping district. It sold strange antique-looking items from the window, and he saw these earrings at a glance.

He couldn't help but imagine how she would look in these before he knew it he had bought them.

"There is a necklace and bracelet too. But put these on first." The items were not together, but he noticed that the designs were similar. So he asked the shopkeeper, who confirmed they were a set.

Yuhi saw her looking at him with expectation in his eyes, and he chuckled. She is silly at times, but that makes her even more loveable in his eyes. Yuhi closed the distance between them and took the earrings from the box, and leaned forward.

Normally he is good at this type of thing since he often had to cater to Makino's whims. That girl had

many bad habits; she would wake up late and even then wouldn't be in the mood to move around for a while. He practically did everything for her.

Sumire suddenly stepped on his foot, and Yuhi sighed. "I wasn't thinking of her."

"You can't trick me!"

This girl is too sharp for the strangest things. "I was just thinking how hard this is to put on, and how with my experience, it should be easier," Yuhi admitted. He doesn't want her to misunderstand.

At those words, Sumire chuckled. "So even you have a hard time with something?"

"Hey, what is that supposed to mean."

"Well, I have thought since I came here, but aren't you too perfect, Yuhi-san? You can do anything from cooking to cleaning, drawing, and painting. Well, your grades are good, and you sing well. You are an all-rounder. You also very handsome."

"Are you trying to imply that I have no flaw?"

It was just a simple question, but Sumire suddenly paused. She was only silent for a few minutes, and yet he felt the tension in the air. Did he say something wrong?

Before he could think it through, Sumire suddenly spoke up and said. "You do have a flaw."

"That is?"

"Your flaw is you fell in love with me."

His eyes dimmed when he heard her response. Well, it is not like he doesn't understand where her negativity and insecurity come from. There was a time where he disliked everything about himself and even did stupid things.

He let himself go because why not? It is not like anybody expected anything from him. People portrayed this bad image onto him, and instead of working hard to prove them wrong, he went with it.

It was easier to do that than to struggle. Even if he did the opposite of what those rumors say, there would still be people who doubted him. There was a time where he thought it was hopeless.

But then he joined the Holy Knights and met Sumire again. There she showed him that there is still hope in this cruel world. She showed him that they could still work together as partners no matter what positions they were in. She has faith and an unwavering conviction that things will change.

## **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 466**

Chapter 466: Fragment

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The light and hope in her eyes from that time have vanished. That was one of the first things he noticed from her when she first came here. Part of it is Mamoru's fault, but the main cause is most likely Nagawa Sano.

It seemed they entered a relationship shortly after he left, so Yuhi understood. Sumire was lonely; she didn't want him to go. But to the very last day, she never admitted such things. So she went ahead and randomly got a boyfriend. It didn't have to be Nagawa Sano; she just needed somebody who would help her forget.

The reason why he is having a hard time with Nagawa's case is this. He felt bad about it. Sumire never liked Nagawa Sano that way, and Nagawa must have noticed it. At least whatever feelings she had for him were not romantic, which caused friction in their relationship.

Nagawa must have struggled to win her over. But even after trying so hard, nothing happened. He could relate in a way. When he first joined the Holy Knights, Sumire treated him so coldly.

Yuhi sighed. "Then I could say the same thing."

She looked horrified at his words and was about to counter them when he leaned forward even more. Maybe it was due to the rain. He was having a hard time with the clasp.

"Say Yuhi, when did you get me this?"

"Two months ago. It was a week before you disappeared."

"Why didn't you give it?" She asked curiously.

"I was nervous. I have never done anything like this before." Yuhi admitted. It was the first time for him to pick out a present for the woman he loves.

"What about your exes? Surely you gave them gifts too."

It seemed like his explanation didn't convince her.

"I did give them gifts, but those were things they picked out themselves. Whenever a special occasion happened, they would tell me what to buy."

Or rather, he never understood that logic. If they wanted those items so badly, they could have bought it themselves, but instead, they waited. Then again, those two girls were weird.

Yuhi saw her frown and chuckled. "Don't you get jealous too easily?"

"Isn't that because your thinking of your former women in my presence for longer than a few seconds?"

When he saw her puffy cheeks, Yuhi leaned forward until their foreheads touched, their lips dangerously close. It was then when he finished putting the earrings on her. But he had yet to move away. Yuhi took hold of her pretty hands and brushed his lips against her ear.

"You always say such things. But last night, and earlier too. Did you forget what we did?"

He asked her in a normal voice, but her entire face up to her ears turned red. "Isn't this unfair? You are teasing me."

"Maybe I am a little, but your the one who keeps blaming me for things."

Doesn't she know how loyal he is to her?

Sometimes her doubts upset him even though he understood why she behaved this way. Her distrust towards men is due to Nagawa, but that would also make it his fault. If he didn't leave, she wouldn't end up this way.

Maybe he should have pressed her then. He already suspected that she had a crush on him. If he pushed her just a little, then she would have confessed. But if he did that, he would be no different from those trash who pressure women into dating.

His thoughts broke off when he felt her petal-like lips on his.

"The fact that I love you, Yuhi-san, it seems you still do not understand."

Yuhi is shocked only for a moment when he hears her teasing tone. "You need to stop tricking me."

"I thought you liked me better this way."

He likes everything about her regardless of what she does. Sumire pulled away from him and took out a small pocket mirror from her bag.

Yuhi watched her scrutinize the earrings. "I feel like I have seen these before."

"They aren't new. I got them from an antique shop. It's probably some old relic."

He hesitated at first, giving her this as a gift. If he was going to buy her something, shouldn't it be something new? But he knew at a glance that she would look good in these.

"Ah, I feel that these are similar to the earrings you gave me when we were kids."

Yuhi, for a moment, froze at those words, and Sumire covered her mouth quickly, but it was far too late. She tried to escape, but he ended up backing her against the wall.

"How much do you remember?" Yuhi questioned. If she remembered everything, then her reaction wouldn't be like this. She would have said something a long time ago, and she wouldn't have gone to see Mamoru.

Why would she willingly return to that hell?

"When I was there, I started to recall bits and pieces. I wasn't very sure, and I would forget the things I remember the next day. However, that was when one of the researchers who was friendly with Ru gave me a diary. He said I should write it all out. When I came back, the diary was with me. Sano kept it for a while since he didn't want to emotionally trigger me, but he gave it after our talk. Slowly bits and pieces came to me." Sumire explained.

So it was something like that. Then does that mean the reason she doesn't remember has something to do with that place?

"You don't forget now?"



Sumire nodded. "It is still blurry to me, but there are times where I remember things better. Also, I already learned from Hino-san that we knew each other when we were younger. So it isn't too hard for me to connect the dots."

So most of it is an educated guess with blurred memories, huh? So she still doesn't recall what happened that day. This is a good thing, and yet a part of him felt disappointed.

Yuhi looked at the earrings again and paused. Maybe these are the ones he gave to her? After she left the institution, they must have taken whatever belongings she left behind and sold them off.

Since she lost her memories, she must not have thought to take this with her. She probably looked at it and didn't think it was hers.

He recalled the feelings he had when he first made that for her. It was the first time he made something like that; he didn't think he would do such a good job. When he heard that it was well crafted, Yuhi was very pleased because it meant giving her a nice gift.

The smile on her face when he gave it to her then left a long-lasting impression.

## **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 467**

Chapter 467: Surprising News

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Even after he forgot about her, he often found himself observing other people's expressions. Whenever he saw the happy smiles on his fans' faces, it made him feel happy. But at the same time, it always felt like he was searching for a particular smile among that crowd.

"Regardless," Yuhi mumbled. "Do you like it?"

"Mmm, I do a lot. Thank you, Yuhi."

He wants to ask her more questions, but knowing her, she would not give him this information now. His thoughts broke off hearing a loud rumble in the sky. The rain was getting worse, and he clicked his tongue, annoyed as he typed out a message.

"I will get Nagawa to fetch you."

Sumire nodded. "What about you?"

"I can walk."

"Why don't we just drop you off?"

Yuhi looked at her skeptically. He doesn't want to intervene. Even if the two have had that talk and Nagawa won't cross boundaries easily anymore. He doesn't want to see how they interact with each other. Yuhi was about to say something when he heard the sound of a car approaching.

Nagawa carried an umbrella. "I was nearby."

So, in other words, he followed her?

Yuhi watched as the man draped his coat around her shoulders. "Are you cold?"

"A little, but it's okay."

"You look a bit feverish to me." Yuhi watched as the blonde-haired man placed his hand on her forehead. "Hot, get in the car now."

Sumire looked back at him. "Can Yuhi come too? He needs to go to school."

Yuhi wanted to say he was fine, but he heard a deep sigh. "Alright."

It was only when he got into the car did he understand why Sumire invited him along. There was a woman in the passenger seat. Sumire didn't seem surprised to see her.

This is the one from the hospital that day. Despite how emotional he was then, he could still recognize her. There was something about this woman that resembled Sumire.

"Sorry about this Ibuki-san, I have a function to attend in this area, and I heard Sano was nearby."

"You don't have to explain it to me. He is only my doctor."

Sano's eyes twitched, annoyed. "Then maybe I should take that pass off you?"

"Isn't that an abuse of power?"

Yuhi sighed when he saw them bicker. Then again, it is better than her being upset. She should be lively like this than depressed.

"Ibuki-san, those earrings are nice," Penelope commented.

Yuhi wanted to curse when he heard that harmless-sounding comment. He already knew how this would go.

At that comment, Sumire stopped bickering with Sano. Her cheeks turned red, and she shyly played with her fingers and laughed. "Mm, Yuhi made them for me."

They haven't even confirmed if those are the earrings, but she is already going along with it. But more importantly, Yuhi felt his heartbeat increase when he saw her smile.

Thump, thump, the sound increased more when she turned to him.

"My boyfriend is very talented."

Whatever self-control he had vanished, and he leaned over to kiss her, not caring about the other two. It was a good thing that Nagawa had yet to drive the car; otherwise, there would have been an accident.

Sumire shyly laughed when he parted their lips. "This is why I told you that holding back is no good. You're so silly, Yuhi-san."

Why is her reaction so- this girl is driving him crazy. Why does she keep doing this to him? If she has any idea what is going on in his mind, he wondered how she would react. She blushes over the most simple things, like them holding hands and hugging.

"Sano, I'm driving."

"I will." Sano still insisted, but Yuhi could tell how pale his face was.

The redhead immediately cut him off. "I'm telling my grandmother."

It seemed that did the trick since the two swapped seats. Yuhi cursed in his head after he calmed down. What on earth did he just do there? No matter how cute Sumire is, he should still refrain from doing something like that in front of others, no in front of his rival.

To think he just had a conversation earlier this morning about his considerate behavior towards Nagawa.

Once Penelope started to drive, silence engulfs the car. Yuhi looked over at Sumire, who was oddly quiet, and noticed how red her face still was. She seemed shy after that kiss, and that made him look away. He didn't know why he did something like that, but before he knew it, he lost control of himself.

Somebody switched the radio on, and soon the news replaced the silence.

"Good afternoon, news just in. A surprising statement from the top of the entertainment world Takashi Yumi. In a few days, her world tour is coming to an end. A few months ago, when she planned the location of her tour, she also mentioned that one of her kohai would perform at the event."

"This kohai of hers is surprisingly Ibuki Sumire, who performed her debut song superstar of tomorrow earlier on this year."

"Ibuki Sumire-san has been in a hiatus, and even after fans reconfirmed her appearance, she has not been present at any music events. This has lead to much controversy towards her."

"But surprisingly, this was all so she could prepare for her duet with her senpai."

At that comment, he watched as the dazed girl turned frantic. "Wait-?!"

"Let's listen to the statement from Takashi Yumi, who announced this herself."

"The big surprise? Yes, I suppose it is time I reveal it. But even if I hyped it as a big surprise, it is only a performance between my dear kohai and me."

"Does that mean-"

"The present I have for the people who have supported me is a duet with my dear kohai Ibuki Sumire-chan."

From the looks of her expression, it seemed she had no idea. Yuhi picked up his phone and saw the incoming call from Hino.

"Did you just hear the news--" Hino trailed off. He must have heard Sumire's panicking. "Are you together?"

"Yeah."

In Nagawa's car with the fiancee too. Yuhi, however, didn't bother with such details. This is already a strange enough situation. Yuhi passed Sumire the phone.

"Of course I didn't know; she never mentioned this." Sumire trailed off. "But even if I didn't know, I'm still going to sing."

When Yuhi heard the determination in her voice, he tapped Penelope's shoulder. "Could you drop by my agency?"

"No." Sumire suddenly said. "Go to the stadium."

## **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 468**

Chapter 468: That Fear Has Turned Into Strength

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It seemed like Nagwa didn't want to leave Sumire since he also tagged along. This Phoenix stadium is rumored to have been built solely for Takashi Yumi since all the concert venues in Japan never have enough space. But in an area as large as this one, her fans should be able to fit.

Thankfully the stadium roof was on; otherwise, he would have advised Sumire from going out.

There, on the edge of the large stage, was Takahashi Yumi.

"Yumi-senpai."

The woman turned around and blinked before she burst into laughter.

"Yumi-senpai, this isn't funny!"

Yumi chuckled. "But isn't it? Even my dear one has a hard time finding me, but you're always spot on."

"That's because after announcing something like that, naturally, you would be excited and end up practicing." Sumire trailed off. "It is something I would do too."

"So, did you get excited?"

"Of course!" Sumire exclaimed, but she looked down. "But I am still afraid."

"I understand that, but I told you when I first came here. I like it a lot that etude of radiance. You wrote that song when you were on a break; you have never lost the radiance in your heart. The light from your eyes has never faded. Ibuki Sumire-chan, I am positive if it is, you can achieve something I could never have done."

"Then this stage."

"It is to elevate the new generation, my successor- no the future of the entertainment world. Ibuki Sumire, will you take on my challenge?"

To his surprise, Sumire suddenly dragged him over,

"I understand what you are saying. I will accept this stage, but I can't elevate the entertainment world alone."

Yumi's gaze softened. "Then Sumire-chan, can I borrow Yuhi-kun for a moment?"

Sumire looked at him with suspicion. "Yuhi, you can't flirt with senpai."

Yuhi lightly tapped her forehead. "Quit it with that already."

Sumire laughed. "Then Yuhi-san, I will wait for you."

He leaned down and kissed her forehead, and grabbed hold of her hands. "Yeah, behave."

"Mmm, thank you." With those words said, he watched as she left with Sano. He turned to the purple-haired woman and sighed.

"What did you need from me?"

"Oh my, aren't you sharp? But well, I wanted to test your resolve too." Yumi trailed off. "That girl is amazing, isn't she? She can lift people from their slumps. There was a time frame for you, right? Where you were unable to write any new songs and were in a slump?"

"Yeah."

"The same went for me, and that was when I met her. That girl she didn't have anything. She wore nice clothes, but she seemed very upset, but once she picked up a toy mic somebody threw away and started to sing, she shone so brightly."

"If you just announced that she was your kohai from the start."

Yumi nodded. "I know, I considered it many times. I have had my own share of bad experiences of the media attacking. It is not like I do not understand. However, Sumire-chan she wouldn't want that. It was something my partner Sora Yuuko who also guided her, said. She said that Sumire-chan wouldn't want the misunderstanding to be resolved just because somebody powerful stepped in."

"She would rather find the truth and reveal it." Yuhi finished.

So this is the reason why she behaves that way regarding the investigation. She wants to find out the cause of the accident, not just for her sanity but for her fans.

"Even if the truth comes out, there will always be those who will believe the false theory the media has cooked up the last few months. The chances have increased more since she refused to make any public statements and just vanished. The media could say anything about her, and nobody could counter it. Even if she explains now, the seed of doubt will never fade."

Yumi nodded. "That is exactly why I genuinely considered intervening. But there was no need," she looked at him and patted his shoulder. "A man who works so hard for his woman is very cool, you know?"

Yuhi averted his gaze. It was only natural for Takashi Yumi to know what he has been up to, but it still made him feel embarrassed.

"I don't think she has realized yet; she is so slow when it comes to these things."

"Then do you want me to tell her how you have been fighting the media for her sake? Not just the media but every single artist in the entertainment industry? Should I tell her about your little protests on the streets? Or how about you visiting every person who has a bad opinion of her? Should I mention how you lowered your head and told them to trust her?"

The more Yuhi listened, the more he wanted to escape. Damn, he didn't think she would know that much, especially the last part.

"I don't have to do anything; as long as you are around Sumire-chan, then there is a chance she will return to the stage. But," Takashi sighed deeply. "That other one who was here just now is the main reason why she hasn't gone back."

"Nagawa?"

"Yes. When I first came here a few months ago, I asked Sumire-chan about him, and she seemed to be very fascinated? Well, whatever it was, it was no good. It was interfering. Since her attention was elsewhere, naturally, she wouldn't be able to sing."

"But that isn't directly due to Nagawa; it was because she had something else to do."

"Sumire-chan is the type of person who conveys her feelings through her songs. But she can't do that with him."

Yuhis eyes widened, understanding where she was getting at.

"I don't know what happened, but it seems that she isn't too focused on that stumbling block."

Something came to mind after he heard those words. Could it be because she slowly started to regain her memories? So that means it would be because of him. Does she finally understand her feelings?

Yumi's gaze softened. "Well, I don't need to hear the reason. I am just glad to see she has cheered up."

"Even if she battles against you, she can't enter the idol rankings now."

"I know, the idol board disqualified her. But that is fine; she can forge a new path. She has so many reliable people beside her, so I am sure she can work hard again for next year."

This person is even stranger than Sumire. But now, he is starting to understand why Sumire behaves the way she does. It is because of Takashi Yumi's influence. No, based on what the older woman just said.

"She has even influenced the legend to this extent."

"A former legend."

"Are you that confident?"

Yumi chuckled. "I am surprisingly better at finding talent than actually singing. That girl is fine now. I know she said she is still afraid. But it isn't like that anymore; that fear has already turned into strength. The reason she says she is still afraid is due to the habit. But even you can see it right, Terashimkun?"

Indeed he could see it; he doesn't bring it up often about her returning to stage. But whenever he does, Yuhi sensed that something had changed now. There is an unwavering conviction and strength in her voice.

## **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 469**

Chapter 469: Effort

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But that conviction comes with sacrifices. How much has she sacrificed to get to this point?

"Are you still worried?"

Yuhi sighed deeply. "It is difficult for me not to worry. Sumire behaves the way she does, but there are many things she still hasn't shared with me."

Even though she talks about how communication is the most important thing in a relationship, she still hides a lot from him. That is fine; he doesn't mind. Whatever she is hiding, it must be something painful.

He will accept everything about her no matter what happens. But for Sumire, that might be hard. She still isn't used to people doing things for her because they want to and not for hidden intentions. Over the years, how many people did she trust, only for them to leave her behind and abandon her?

How many of them left her side when she needed them the most?

"People are protagonists in their own story, but Sumire-chan probably doesn't feel that way. She probably thinks she is the villain that is thrown and cast away. No matter what she does, she will always be a side character."

This person understands Sumire far better than he thought. But if that is the case, then why hasn't she helped? Even though they know, why do they not do anything? Yuhi recalled the conversation he had with Atushi a few months back when she first came here. He lectured his friend for not doing anything even though they were right there beside her.

"But even a side character can shine brightly. It doesn't matter what role Sumire-chan has, whether it is the protagonist, a villain, or a side character. At the end of the day, her songs will not lie. People can say all they want about her, but all those negative thoughts will end up buried away."

Yumi turned to him. "The reason she got this far despite the hardship is without a doubt because of you, Terashima Yuhi. Because you were the only one who never gave up on her."

Yuhi's eyes widened when he heard those words.

"I am looking forward to it, the future you two will create."

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Meanwhile, in the dimly lit corridor of the stadium sat two people on one of the benches.

"Why didn't you just head back?" Sano scolded the girl who was resting her head on his shoulder.

Initially, they intended to wait for Terashima in the car; however, she started to get dizzy halfway.

"Mmm, but I wanted to talk to her."

"I could have called her over for you."

Sumire chuckled. "But you know Yumi-senpai doesn't like you."

Sano sighed at those words. "All your friends have a strong dislike towards me."

"I wonder why."

He hated how she just agreed with it, even if it is true. The reason they all dislike him? Others would say that she said bad things about him during their breakup. But even before that, they were not fond of him. Naturally, this didn't stop him from trying to win them over.

"Are you still dizzy?" Sano swiftly changed the topic.

He doesn't want her to see his resentment.

"A little, sorry for borrowing your shoulder like this."

"It's fine."

In fact, he doesn't mind. This is the first time she has willingly gotten close to him without showing disgust. He wonders what others would think if they saw them this way. Would they look like a couple?

"That day, I was the one who carried you to the hospital," Sano mumbled.

"Mmmm."

"When I heard it was you, I rushed over right away."

When he heard it was her, he was horrified. He recalled freezing on the spot, being unable to move for a few seconds, before immediately dashing out of his house.

"I understand."

"Sumire."

"You don't have to blame yourself. I understand very well."

"Is that really what you're thinking?"

Is that explanation really okay with her? Even though he has said everything, shouldn't she want more?

"The truth is at the end of the day, Sano, they used you. From the start, you were not involved but because they learned of our relationship. No, the reason they accepted you was for this purpose."

"It's not like I was important to you."



Actually, a part of him did think that it was because of Sumire. It was a few days shortly after he entered the organization. He went over to discuss the docking of illegal goods in one of the Nagawa family ports. He overheard their conversation.

At those words, Sumire sighed. "Of course you think of it that way. Do you really think they could use somebody I didn't care for? The best way to hurt me and get me to break down is to use somebody important."

"I see, then why didn't you catch on?"

Sano noticed her silence and frowned. "It was Kanagawa?"

"Mmm, he helped me a lot regarding our post-break-up. He was the one who settled things and got my stuff back from you too, remember?"

Right the belongings she left behind. Sano thought that was the day he could get to see her. She had been ignoring his messages and hadn't appeared before him once. But then there was a notice about her belongings. Sano thought that even if she didn't write the message herself, she would fetch her things personally.

"I didn't like that guy."

Sumire chuckled. "Of course you wouldn't; he was the complete opposite to you. But ah, I think I went out with him because he reminded me of Yuhi."

Sano looked at the girl in disbelief; he thought he was used to it already. But isn't she far too blunt? He thought he had a hard time trying to obtain her affections, but it seems there was another one who struggled.

"If you return to being an idol, I won't get a chance to see you as much."

Even though he has invested in the entertainment industry under his parent's orders, he knew that Penelope's grandmother disliked the entertainment industry. If that old woman gets hold of it, then his father will most likely ask him to cancel his investments.

"Is that why you are even more clingy recently?"

"Who knows."

"You never mentioned anything about my return to the entertainment industry. Even though you helped me get those opportunities, you only got them for me because you knew I wouldn't be able to go on stage."

So she understood that much, huh? Indeed he did her those opportunities because he knew she would back down.

The situation now, however, is different. This was the first time seeing her so resolved to do something. Of course, as her boyfriend, he knew she liked to sing; he knew that she liked to draw too. He knew what her hobbies were. After all, in the quest to obtain her heart, he had to learn more about her.

He thought about their age difference all the time. Even if he wanted to ignore it, it was difficult, especially when she had to go to school. It reminded him every time he saw her off. No matter how mature she looks and behaves, she is still younger.

He has never dated anybody younger than him before, so he was confused. Sano knew it wouldn't be easy, and that is why he put in the effort. At first, he worked hard because he didn't want to lose this connection, but that quickly changed. It didn't take long before he started to care for her. He started to care for her and started to work hard because he wanted to be with her.

But he never understood why she liked to sing and draw so much. They weren't things that would get her a good job in the future. Even if she is a good singer, once she gets older, she won't be as popular anymore. Her hobbies will not give her a future.

Now that he thought about it, they argued about that before, didn't they?

"But that wish-washy behavior has come to an end. I will sing, and I will fight to obtain a peaceful future."

Sano's gaze darkened when he heard the last part, but he doesn't want her to fight at all. He wants her to stay away from those people.

## **ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 470**

### Chapter 470: Shadows

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It was the day after Sumire said those words to him. Sano thought about it all night before he made up his mind and headed to the base. The enemy base was in a place one would least expect; it was in the large chapel at the edge of town. While he isn't the religious type to think they would conduct such evil deeds in a place of worship.

There was a figure behind the curtain that sat on a throne-like chair made of spikes. But despite being this close, Sano couldn't see who he was talking to. It's not like the material of these curtains is very thick, but he still couldn't see anything.

"I see; it will be difficult to reach her once she returns to the entertainment industry."

Despite those words, Sano sensed how confident he was.

"She has been staying in your hospital. Have you been giving her that?"

"I have."

"But she still seems normal. I suppose she is tougher to crack than most people."

Sano clenched his fist at those words. He has no choice but to sneak in that stuff into her medicine. At first, he didn't understand how harmful it was but when he learned how bad it was, he started to put it in smaller doses. That may be the reason why she hasn't shown any side effects.

Still, he wants to stop giving it to her altogether—that powder-like medication with an unusual color.

"How does she feel towards you?"

Sano blinked, surprised at the sudden question. "Excuse me?"

The man chuckled. "I was just thinking, haven't you two gotten close? Do you think you will be able to persuade her?"

Sano immediately understood what he meant by persuade.

This man's obsession with Sumire, Sano wondered why he never noticed it before.

"With all due respect, we may seem close, but she does not trust me. She has already learned that I was involved in her accident and has distanced herself from me."

"Is that so? Then just seduce her more openly. It shouldn't be hard on you. She may be strong, but she is still a woman. Moreover, she has weakened greatly recently and is staying in your hospital. As her doctor, you should have more leeway."

Indeed, he also entertained those thoughts not too long ago. Ever since she came to Tokyo, he has been her doctor and often hospitalized. It is his hospital, he can do whatever he wanted with her, and nobody would know. But not once did he cross that line.

After he had that talk with her, the beast he suppressed inside his heart seemed to calm down. Their current relationship isn't bad. Although he cannot act on his own emotions like he did before, she doesn't look at him with disgust, nor does he see that empty look in her eyes.

It is normal for anybody who is after her to take advantage of her weakened state, but he can't do it.

"I am afraid I will have to refuse those orders."

"Oh?" He seemed startled for a moment. "You're going to refuse my order?"

Sano unconsciously took a step back when he saw the figure moving towards him. The other man was still behind the curtain, but Sano sensed the sudden change in atmosphere.

"I am," Sano said confidently.

In that second, a flash of black-looking smoke surrounded only him. The smoke only briefly came in contact with his skin, but he felt his facial features hardening.

Sano briefly took a look at his hand to see his skin turning grey.

"There is no need for a hound who will disobey his master. I shall give you the time you need to think as a frozen statue."

Sano already knew they would punish him, but this isn't funny. If it were the past he would have used his family influence, but now people would only laugh if he uttered such words. He already understood. This man has already gotten whatever he wanted from his family. His family cannot go against him now.

The only use they have now is his connection to Sumire.

But even then, isn't this too much? Ah, what was he thinking trying to do something heroic like this? Even if he refuses the seducing order, he is still giving her poison in the form of medication at the end of the day.

Before he could say anymore, however, a flash of black brushed past him. It was a woman wearing a red hooded cloak; she briefly looked at him. She wore a mask, so it was hard to see her face, but he couldn't mistake her ruby-colored eyes.

She used her sword to cut through the black smoke.

"Oh ho, I see." The man behind the curtain seemed amused by this unexpected development.

He, who was finally free from the smoke, sunk to the ground. He took one look at his hands; the edge of it was still black, and he couldn't feel his fingers.

"I didn't think you would come personally. After all, he just finished explaining how he doesn't think he is important to you."

Sano immediately understood the situation, but he couldn't believe it. Why would she come all the way here to help him? Moreover, just now, she cut through that black smoke like it was nothing. With her current state, it should be impossible for her to move around.

"If that is the case, then both of you are fools."

The cloaked figure didn't admit who she was, but he knew it was her from those words alone.

"Aahaaa, I see. But was it really wise of you to appear before me in your weakened state? Surely you understand that with the way you are now, it will be easy for me to crush you."

"That is true, but I would rather choose a risky situation than lose somebody important to me again."

Sanos' eyes widened when he heard those words. What did she just say? This girl is such a hypocrite. He truly doesn't understand what she is saying. She admitted to using him, and yet why is she saying this now?

"Is that your choice?"

"Yes."

In that second, the shadow from the curtain vanished, and Sano knew the man had left. He turned to the cloaked figure and intended to scold her. What on earth is she doing walking around? Before he could say anything, the girl had bent down and grabbed hold of his hand.

A white light surrounded his palm, and in the next second, his skin had returned to normal.

Sano was about to say anything, but he hears the sound of a frantic person banging on the door when he heard that familiar voice screaming; master Sano sighed deeply.

He pointed to the back door. "Get out that way."

Sano did have some questions for her. But he could ask them another time.

