

Melody 481

ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 481

Chapter 481: Hold Me Tightly

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"I would be lying if I said no, but I can't say yes either."

'She must feel conflicted. Whenever I watch her back like this, I remember all the other times I watched her.'

Back then, even though he was so close to her, he could only watch from a distance. The situation has changed now, though.

Yuhi got closer to her and grabbed hold of her hand.

Sumire's gaze softened, and she laughed softly. "Are you taking my hand hostage again?"

"Yeah."

He wants to say something. But he has no experience with family, so he doesn't want to sound like a hypocrite.

She suddenly turned to him and let go of his hands. For a moment, Yuhi paused, thinking he did something wrong when she pulled on his arms.

"I taught you before, but let me remind you again. During moments like this, you wrap your arms around me."

Yuhi wrapped his arms around her waist and pulled her close. She buried her face in his chest.

"Hold me tightly."

"- and not let you go?" Yuhi finished for her.

Sumire mumbled. "Mm, so you're smart after all."

"As usual, you always try to get the last word in. Aren't you destroying this moment?"

Sumire mumbled. "Mm, so you're smart after all."

"As usual, you always try to get the last words in. Aren't you destroying this moment?"

"Maybe I just want you to punish me."

"I see how devious."

They spend the next half an hour or so just hugging in that single spot. Yuhi, however, didn't let his guard down once. It seems many people dislike Sumire in this place. While there are just as many who respect her, there are those with grudges.

His gaze fell on the girl walking a few steps ahead of him. Her movements still seemed a little clumsy, so he still kept close. But her leg does seem to be getting better now. She should be able to perform in this condition.

Still, it won't hurt to be too careful.

"What about that guy just now?"

"Hmm, I think he took revenge on me for killing his brother." Sumire trailed off. "When I first came here and looked around the gangs. Some were being unreasonable and not very cooperative. That guy's brother being one of them. He used underhanded means, tried to drug and kidnap me. But it backfired on him since I fought back."

Yuhi looked at her startled, and his gaze darkened. From that scenario, it was clear what they were going to do to her.

"So even though they managed to drug me, I still managed to fight them off and get off scot-free."

Yuhi immediately grabbed hold of her hand, and Sumire laughed nervously.

"I thought if I told you casually, you wouldn't react."

"When was this? If they succeeded in drugging you, how did you-" Yuhi paused mid-sentence. "You asked Nagwa for help, right?"

"It was the first favor I asked of him since I saw him again. At the time, we were still on odd terms, so it was a bit risky. But I didn't want to bother you, Yuhi."

He should be flattered that she was so considerate. But Yuhi got a very bad feeling from this. "Did he do anything to you?"

"No."

It was a flat-out no, but Yuhi still sensed that there was something amiss. Unfortunately, it was before they went out with each other, so he can't say much. All that matters is that she made it out safely. Still, she is amazing. He and Atushi already increased the security around her then, but she still managed to slip away.

"You look conflicted, Yuhi-san."

"It's because I can't say anything; we weren't in a relationship then."

Sumire laughed at his words, and Yuhi sighed. "This isn't funny. I am mad about this. But what can I do?"

"For one, maybe you should ask for some details."

"I will pass!" Yuhi exclaimed. He would rather not hear the details. Besides, he could already picture the situation. She managed to escape, but the drugs must have taken effect on her. She must have been in a drugged state when she called Nagawa.

"I was going to call him and ask for help, but before I could do that, I ran into him. He was in the area."

Yuhi frowned at those words. What type of coincidence is that? He shook the thought out of his mind but couldn't help but be suspicious. His gaze fell on the girl looking at him, concerned, and he sighed.

"You have to make it up to me."

Sumire beamed happily as she clung to his arm. "Alright, then I can do that."

For the next few minutes, neither of them spoke, but his gaze remained on the girl clinging to him. What is with her today? Normally she doesn't cling to him like this in public. Then again, maybe she is in a good mood.

"I just realized Yuhi-san, you're probably late to your practice now, aren't you?"

Yuhi looked up at the fading orange skies and then at his watch. It was six pm. He hadn't realized how long they spent in that base. He sensed her cheeky tone.

"Shall we go for dinner?"

"Then I know a good place!"

Her recent bold actions and behavior surprise him recently. It won't hurt to ask now, would it?

Yuhi grabbed hold of her wrist. "Hey, let me ask you something."

"What is it, Yuhi?"

"Do you keep smiling like that because you know it makes me want to pounce on you?"

Sumire laughed nervously. "Uhh, I had no idea."

She didn't, huh? Of course, she didn't know. Sumire is very bad with this stuff. But sometimes, when he is around her innocent self, he loses control. Yuhi didn't say anything and pushed her towards a wall. He trapped her with his arms, and she shyly looked down.

"Yuhi? What are we doing?"

Shouldn't she ask him why he is doing this? Yuhi cupped her cheeks. "Your not afraid of me, Sumire?"

"Of course not."

"You must have heard those rumors. You should know that rumors like that usually start from something."

"I- I understand that you slept around before."

Does she really? Then, why did she accept his confession? If she understood, normally, one wouldn't accept. Or maybe there is something wrong with her?

"Do you like me, Sumire?"

"I-"

"Let me rephrase that." He brushed his lips against hers. "Do you love me?"

At those words, her cheeks colored, and she nervously looked down. But she only looked down for a second before she raised her face.

"I love you, Yuhi."

"Repeat it."

"I love you."

'Am I hearing things? Normally she would- his thoughts broke off when he felt a familiar pair of lips on his.

Sumire was kissing him rather oddly, he chuckled, realizing she was trying to get him to open his mouth. The moment he opened it for her, he immediately took control of the kiss.

Honestly, she is too much. How can she smile so innocently like that in front of him? Doesn't she realize what impact her words and actions have on him?

ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 482

Chapter 482: Something Natural

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This good place Sumire mentioned is a burger joint opened up in the nicer area of downtown. It seemed that it just opened recently, but since she has been hospitalized, she hasn't had a chance to go. He watched as she returned with their order and placed the tray on the table. He offered to go at first, but Sumire insisted that she wanted to treat him.

"Did you tell the others?" Sumire asked.

"They are on their way."

When they got inside, Sumire told him to invite the rest of his group members over. So much for a nice dinner date with her. Then again, this is as romantic as it can get in a place like this.

Sumire doesn't like fancy places; she always complains that food portions are too small. Or how they overdo the menu. Yuhi had many fond memories with her back when they were partners in the underworld organization holy knights. They would end up with unreasonably long missions and end up returning home in the morning.

During those times, the only places open to eat are fast-food chains like this one. He remembers the first time they went out to eat after a job, there was only one fast food joint opened, and it took them a long time to find it. Sumire could no longer walk anymore, so she sat outside, and he went inside to order.

It was a simple meal, but after that, it became a tradition. It didn't have to be a burger joint; it could be anything. But for him, it was one of the best moments of his life.

They always got along better than most people due to their shared interests. They never ran out of topics to talk about, but right at this moment, he didn't know what to say to her.

"You're not going to judge me, Yuhi-san?" Sumire suddenly spoke up.

"For?" He feigned ignorance despite understanding what she was about to say.

"You saw what happened tonight. I don't even have to do anything, and people automatically become hostile."

"What happened with the brother couldn't be helped, and the people from before, you can just ignore them."

Those ones aren't worth mentioning at all.

Sumire laughed at his words. "What a simple answer."

"Do you dislike that?"

Sumire shook her head. "No, I think it is exactly like you."

That means she is okay with it, right? His thoughts broke off when he heard the sound of his phone.

[From Kou:

Calling us over at this unreasonable hour after skipping our practice, only you could be so bold, Yu-yu!

Anyhow, since you skipped already.

We all went off to do our own thing.

Tell Mimi that she can do anything she wants with you tonight.]

Yuhi sighed when he read the message. If only things could progress that far. Then again, it's not just her; he is equally to blame.

"Is something wrong, Yuhi?"

"The others can't come." Yuhi trailed off. "After this, I will drop you off at the hospital."

Sumire paused for a moment before she sighed. "Alright, it seems you really can't get my hint."

Huh? Yuhi blinked, startled at her words. What is she talking about? He wanted to question her some more, but she quickly changed the topic.

Well, he supposes he shouldn't bother her too much. Yuhi slid his fries across the table. "You can have these too."

"Thank you!"

.....

Life without Ibuki Sumire by his side consists of work and training. Two days go by in a blink of an eye, and for those past two days, he hasn't seen her at all.

The reason why he became so close to his group members, strange enough, is due to Sumire's absence.

Yuhi doubted that they would have gotten this close. He wasn't the only one who missed her. To think they came together the way they did all because they missed Sumire.

Yuhi wipes his sweat away with a black towel, "All right, that should do for a warmup. "

For the past four hours, they had been practicing in an open stadium area. Here they would be holding a Christmas concert. It was a good thing that the date didn't clash with Sumire's; otherwise, he would have postponed it. He needs to be there for her just in case something happens.

Of course, it would be nice if nothing happened, but Yuhi isn't too sure. She can sing so carefreely, and yet the moment she stands on stage; it will remind her of the shackles of the industry.

"Not like it's any different this time, but isn't this too intense just for a warmup," Kou said.

"We even have a live concert right after." Ran added.

"Tetsuo always ends up like that after morning exercises," Jun said, pointing to the passed-out earl. It was rare for the secolored-haired man to show signs of weakness. But Yuhi heard before that he always had rather poor health.

"It's exactly because we've got work that we need to get pumped up now." Yuhi reminded them.

"We've got a tough schedule up until our leave date, and I contacted Mako, who told me a long list of events that were signed up for. Drama recordings, magazine interviews, outdoor live events. Our remaining work here is mainly new year's shows, conferences, and a few photoshoots." Ran listed.

Recently they have become a lot more popular. At first, there were many who hesitated about their group; there were those who disapproved. Although the other four are equally skilled, nobody else other than him is internationally famous.

"So it's work all the way till we leave, huh? I wish I could see Mimi," Kou whined.

"Work comes first. We need to continue developing our group's fame and reputation. There are heaps of things left to do. We don't have time for anything else now."

"Says the one who comes home to a pretty wife."

Hey, hey Ran, is that bitterness? Yuhi still felt awkward around Iwa Ran, and they would occasionally get into disputes. But after they worked together to get Sumire that time, things have been slightly better.

"That's not the point here," Yuhi argued.

Besides, doesn't Ran remember how Sumire has been staying in the hospital? He has hardly had any time to see her. Two whole days have passed since he last saw the girl, and Yuhi wanted to see her so badly. Unfortunately, he has not had the time with the sudden rise in popularity.

"Besides, love isn't something you do; it's something you fall into. " Tetsuo spoke up. "It is something that happens naturally."

"Just thinking of her smile or voice makes your heart race. Nothing can replace these feelings." Kou joined in and nodded.

"I haven't got a clue what you're talking about." Yuhi feigned ignorance.

Okay, he does. He understands it. At least when he applies it to Sumire. He can't see himself applying that logic to anyone else but her. But he can't admit that to these guys. No matter how well they get along with one another now. It does not change the fact that these guys like Sumire.

ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 483

Chapter 483: Lesson

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"You agree with me. Right, Jun?" Yuhi directed his question at the member who at the very least kept his emotions in check.

"I am on Kou and Tetsuo's side. According to my analysis, all work and no play leaves you boring and featureless. A person's individuality comes from their outside passions. Romance is one part of that."

"Well yeah I guess."

"Can someone who's never been in love ever touch a person's heart through his performances? I don't think so. "

Indeed he can't argue with that logic. One of the reasons why there are many people who like Sumire's songs is this.

Yuhi deeply sighed when he saw the looks they gave him., "Alright I get it. You guys want me to admit something about Sumire don't you?"

They don't agree with his statement but they don't brush it off completely. He's glad that the huge clock in the center stroke twelve-

"It's time to go."

The power of romance, huh? Rather than embarrassment, it feels strange that such a thing has taken over his life completely. Then again from the moment he met her this was already going to happen.

Before they got on to the bus that was parked in front of the universal studio grounds though. A familiar voice calls out to them.

"Hey !!"

He spots a brunette and two others come out of the gate. Sumire rushes up to him, creating a distance from herself and the other girl.

"Hey, what are your plans for the thirteenth? "

Huh? The others let out a huge 'eh' in surprise.

"Wait, are you...." Tetsuo said surprised.

"Asking Yuhi out for a date?"

Something like a 'date' should be nothing for them now since they are dating. But this will be the first one since she returned. The first date after so long is supposed to be important. It's only natural that the others are surprised by her boldness.

Or maybe it is the way she is asking.

"Well I do but what for?" Yuhi tried to remain calm and Sumire laughed.

"I was thinking we could go somewhere together. Is that no good?"

It took him a moment to realize that she was genuine.

Yuhi spoke up. "Who cares about that?" His companions looked at him completely surprised. "There is no point doing the same thing as everybody else, even if it seems impossible. All you need is motivation."

"And I'm overflowing with it."

"Good luck."

"You too, Yuhi!" Sumire beamed happily.

Gosh, she really is cute isn't she? He wants to touch her. But there in front of all these people; usually that wouldn't stop him. However he just said so the previous night about having self control. To satisfy himself he reaches over and kisses the strand of her brunette locks.

"Also....Yuhi?"

"Hm"

The brunette looked over at the others before looking back at him. "Could you kiss me? "

Yuhi stared at her dumbfounded for a few minutes. He should ask her why she would ask something like that, or rather this isn't the time for that. But then recalls what she asked him not too long ago, about being more motivated if he kissed her before work. Is this what she is referring to?

"I can't?" Sumire asks, noticing his silence. Her expression was filled with dejection.

"I didn't say that.... " Yuhi wrapped his arms around the brunette and turned to the others with a deep piercing glare.

"Yes yes. Were not looking. Asami."

"Ehhh but --"

"Here, a fashion magazine from abroad."

"I'll read."

From the corner of his eye, he watched as . He doesn't hesitate, as he wraps his arms around the brunette and bends down to kiss her.

"What's with that smile?"

"I was just thinking that it really did feel as though I received power. "

"Is that so?" Yuhi leaned forward again.

"Un."

His pretty Sumire, she's always smiling so brightly and making such cute demands. Yuhi nuzzles his head on her neck, inhaling her sweet scent.

"Yuhi?"

"I know you have to go to work. But, I really want to take you away right now. "

"Um, so you want to kidnap me? "

Yuhi nodded. "I suppose you can put it that way. You're okay to go to work?" He quickly realized something.

"It's only an interview. I can't do much in this condition. I also want to show the song to Yumi-senpai, and I will drop by school a bit too."

So that explains why Asami and Aika are with her. Still, he doesn't like the idea of her doing an interview.

"Are you sure? What if they harass you?" Yuhi didn't trust the media one bit. He didn't know what it was but the media had an unusual obsession towards Sumire. Why do they keep harassing her?

It is not like she is that famous, she only had one debut single, a total of three songs released to the public. But for some reason they wouldn't leave her alone. Is it because she is the sole survivor of the Ibuki family? But none of those reporters have mentioned her family background before.

Yuhi tried to look into the matter but he couldn't find anything unusual and yet there must be something wrong with this.

"It's okay! I bribed someone to come with me."

Is it Nagawa again? Before Yuhi could ask, a familiar car slid up and out came Hino.

He looked over with a deep sigh. "Hey, if you're going to flirt, why did I have to come so early?"

"It's just a coincidence that I met my dearest here. Besides Hino you owe me a favour."

'Well if she is with Hino, I don't have to worry' Yuhi looked towards his friend and Hino nodded.

"I understand how you feel but I will carefully watch over her."

"Thanks." Yuhi trailed off when he saw Sumire's pouty cheeks. "What now?"

"Why did you stop paying attention to me?"

Yuhi stared at her speechless. Since she came back she has acted more spoiled. Then again he doesn't dislike it. Yuhi picked her up and she wrapped her arms around his neck.

"I don't want to let go either Yuhi." She mumbled softly.

His gaze turned gentle at her words. "I will finish my concert quickly, and go to you okay?"

"Mm, promise?"

"I promise."

He was very reluctant to let her go, but eventually Sumire got off him. "You have to behave until we see each other again, Yuhi-san."

Behave huh? That should be his line. She always ends up doing such reckless things. He only looks away for a second and she ends up in a bad situation. Then again Hino will be with her so she shouldn't do anything too careless.

ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 484

Chapter 484: Because I Missed You.

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The concert and interviews afterwards went by far too quickly. Yuhi wanted to distract himself and train, but it seemed that the others had plans. Now that he belongs to a group, there isn't much meaning to training alone. He can perfect his skills all he wants, but if he doesn't synchronize with the others, it won't work out very well.

Yuhi returned to his main apartment when he received a text from Hino saying not to come. It took him a single call to realize that Nagawa was in that place too for work, and they ran into each other. He didn't say anything and ended the call. Time seemed to go by so slowly.

He felt very restless and couldn't do anything. He tried to paint, but that leads to the broken canvas scattered across the living room.

He couldn't help but think of Sumire. Recently his feelings towards her have been very strange.

'I already knew that I liked her a lot. It was apparent the moment I met her. Still, recently my feelings seem different. Naturally, since they are dating, he expected that his feelings for the girl would increase but not only have they increased now, he genuinely thinks he cannot live without her.

This almost feels like an obsession. Yuhi wanted to prevent that scenario as much as possible. After all, he saw what obsessive love did to people. But these days, the only thing he thinks about is Ibuki Sumire, from morning to night. The only thing on his mind is her.

Is it because she left for two entire months? There is a saying that absence makes the heart grow stronger, but this is still a bit too much. He can't help it, though. Now that Sumire is more comfortable around him, she shows him many different expressions that he did not see before.

Yuhi believed that he already saw many sides of her when they were partners in the underworld, but now he understood. Back then, as natural as they interacted, she couldn't share many things with him.

He was far too occupied with his thoughts that he didn't hear the sound of somebody unlocking the front door. Yuhi heard faint and yet hurried footsteps, but he was still in a dazed state.

She smiles so brightly, and her eyes sparkle whenever they see him. She still teases him a lot, but more than that - his thoughts break off when he feels a pair of lips on his. Yuhi wrapped his arms around her and pulled her down.

They kiss for a good few minutes before Sumire pulls away with a red-stained face. "Yuhi-san, you're too quick to take advantage of me."

"Because I missed you."

Sumire, however, didn't answer that and picked up the bag on the ground. "I bought some nice ingredients. I was planning on cooking something extravagant for dinner."

"What is the occasion?"

"Our sixth month anniversary!"

Yuhi raised his eyebrow. "I am sure we have dated longer, but-"

"It's because I ran away." Sumire sighed. "When it was six months, I was thinking how much I wanted to see you and run to your arms. You have no idea how difficult it was for me."

Yuhi reached over and pinched her cheeks. "You were the one who left without discussing things with me."

"Ouch, darling, do you have to bully me? I'm already tired, and yet here I am, acting like a loving wife about to make you dinner."

She probably has no idea how triggering the words wife and darling are to him. Even though he sees more of her shy and innocent side, she is still quite bold around him. Yuhi didn't mind that about her; he likes hearing those words leave her mouth.

Sumire must have realized since she beamed happily when he pulled his hands away.

"Just stay right there, Yuhi! I will finish quickly."

It was killing him not to pounce on her, but she seemed tired despite her cheerful face. He supposes he can wait till the next day. She will be discharged in a few days, and he can have her to his self again.

Yuhi nodded and picked up the bags. "Let me carry."

"Mmm, okay!"

The two of them strolled into the kitchen, and he got the supplies out for her. It didn't take long before Sumire started to cook. Yuhi watched her for a few minutes before he hugged her from the back.

A content sigh passed her lips. "This feels comfortable," Sumire commented.

"Are you tired? You don't have to overwork yourself for the concert. Although Takashi said those words, you do realize that the general public don't think much of the showdown."

It was harsh, but the public and media's attention is more on if Sumire will bail or not. Nobody cares if she wins, nobody cares for her skills.

Sumire laughed nervously. "I am actually more nervous about the TV program. I have to do the waltz with the winner," she trailed off and sighed. "I don't think I can waltz Yuhi."

"Huh, but what about the souriees with Soujiro?"

"Soujiro is a good dancer; he can hide my flaws easily. But even if my partner leads me, this will be broadcast on national TV. I won't be able to hide it."

'Your partner will be me, idiot.' Yuhi knew he would win; he wouldn't allow anybody else to dance with her. He could lead her and not let anybody catch any mistakes, even on camera. But she won't know that until the day. He could not say anything and let her worry about it until the day. But Yuhi didn't like seeing her anxious about anything.

"Then should I teach you?"

She turned around slightly with bright eyes. "You will? I almost ended up asking San-"

At that comment, Yuhi frowned, and she laughed nervously, catching his gaze.

"You know I don't like disturbing you."

Yeah, he understood that mindset. After all, he was the same way before. He used to have a huge complex regarding asking others for help.

He felt that he would be getting in their way. He didn't want others to see him as weak and powerless.

He didn't want them to think he was useless not being able to do something simple.

Sumire is most likely the same way. She would rather ask somebody she isn't close with and sacrifice any pride. The only one who fits those requirements right now is, unfortunately, Nagawa Sano.

Recently that guy has been a pain in his side.

The more he ignored and tolerated it; the more Nagawa stepped up his game.

'It seems it has gotten to this point where I have to face it seriously' Yuhi already knew from Hino's tone that it wasn't a coincidence that Nagawa was there in the same building. It was a good thing Sumire brought Hino along with her; otherwise, those two would have been alone again.

Sumire has already had her talk with him. Initially, he intended to wait until she did this before doing anything. But even after Yuhi waited, it seemed that decision was wrong.

ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 485

Chapter 485: I Really Like You

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It was only because he waited that the situation escalated this far.

Sumire's feelings for Nagawa may change. She already no longer hates him despite having so much hate previously.

This situation is dangerous.

Despite his calm demeanor, ever since Nagawa Sano appeared, he has felt very uneasy. He managed to conceal it this entire time, but it took more out of him than he thought. Yuhi gradually felt his mental state weaken, and before he knew it, whenever he heard the words Nagawa and Sumire, an odd pain would appear in his chest.

His thoughts broke off when Sumire switched the stove off. She suddenly grabbed hold of his cheeks and, with a stern expression, said.

"Are you upset that I met with San?"

"Huh?"

Sumire sighed deeply. "I knew that it was you who called Hino. He uses a different ring tone when it comes to you. You overheard Sano calling for me and misunderstood!"

"I'm uneasy when it comes to him," Yuhi admitted.

"You never said anything until now."

Of course, he didn't. He understood that she had some unsettled matters with Nagawa. Even before they started dating, Sumire mentioned it. So naturally, he wanted to respect her wishes. That was why even though Hino warned him, he never interfered.

'I just watched them get closer' Yuhi felt a sudden anger when he thought of it that way. What on earth is he doing? Why did he allow things to escalate this far?

No wonder the others gave him odd looks, and even Asuka said something about giving him some advice next time they met up.

He can't help it; even if it meant sacrificing his own feelings, he wanted her to continue smiling. He didn't want her to dislike him,

Yuhi sensed the hidden meaning in her tone and knew she was mad about it. "Since when were you-"

Sumire sighed deeply. "From the very start! Are you stupid Yuhi-san? How can you watch as the girl you like, later on, your girlfriend act so close with another guy? Sure, I had my plans, but if you told me you were uncomfortable, I would have stopped right away! What is important to me is how you feel!"

Her words and her anger surprised him. Yuhi didn't think she would get this worked up about it. But watching her behave this way melted the unease he felt in his heart. This display of anger shows her frustration towards him- how can he not be happy about it? This is a sign that she cares.

What is important is how he feels, huh? Sumire probably has no idea what type of impact she has on him saying such things. Back then, all he could do was scramble for any pieces of love, even if it were

mere scraps. But now he doesn't have to do anything to get it. He doesn't have to beg or lose his pride over it.

This girl will give it to him naturally. His thoughts broke off when she brushed her forehead lightly against his. She still held a stern gaze on her face as she continued.

"I understand that you were trying to be considerate of me, and I do get what you were trying to do. But I feel you have underestimated this relationship, underestimated me too much."

"I have?"

Sumire nodded. "I know at the beginning I said that it would be difficult and I may not return your affections very well. But even then, surely you must have understood that I already had feelings for you a long time ago. Sure, I could never say anything because there was so much going on, but with the current situation, I don't want you to misunderstand anything."

Misunderstand? What is she talking about?

Does she think he holds a grudge against her for that thing that happened with Sano? Yuhi was about to tell her this when Sumire suddenly took a deep breath.

"I really, really like you, Terashima Yuhi."

Yuhi stared at her, speechless at her sudden confession. How did it come to this? Weren't they talking about how uneasy he regarded her spending time with Nagawa? Then again, she probably thinks the main source of his unease is what happened between them.

So now she is confessing to him like this so he wouldn't get the wrong idea. Yuhi sighed deeply, 'Give me a break already. I already like her so much. If she says stuff like that, how can he possibly let her go?' Yuhi didn't reply immediately and continued.

She wrapped her arms around his neck and mumbled. "You probably don't realize it since I haven't been exactly clear. But I want you to understand something. The only person I have ever liked was you. I like, I love you-" Sumire corrected her words. "I love you so much."

He intended to tease her and say something along the lines of its about time, but how could he do that now? This is the first time hearing such honest words escape her lips.

Yuhi didn't know what to say. What could he say to this? It seems that words are wasted when she is this way.

There is one thing Yuhi understood, though. It must have taken a great toll on her mentally to convey her feelings honestly like this. How much did she ponder and sacrifice for her to say such words?

She doesn't have to do so much for his sake. But even during that snowy concert several years ago, she did the most for him. She was the only fan whose voice he could clearly hear. In the face of despair due to the weather, she was the one who convinced people to stay and believe in him.

With her flushed cheeks and trembling body, Yuhi thought she would collapse. But she remained firm until he got the glass dome around the audience.

Normally it is difficult to see the audience clearly from the stage, but Yuhi could see her. So when he saw her a short while at the end of the concert than at the karaoke bar right after he finished his interviews. 'I thought to myself then that it must be fate.'

He is not the cliché type to believe in love at first sight, but right then, he already knew that his feelings towards the girl were anything but normal. So he took advantage of their meeting and invited her over. Yuhi already knew that the weather forecast was bad; he knew if she didn't get on transport soon, then she wouldn't be able to go home. But he still invited her over.

Taking a random girl home was so risky. Whenever Yuhi thought back to that day though he didn't regret anything, he was right about her. Not once did Sumire take advantage of him, and she even left him that note saying that she would catch up to him. She had plenty of chances to do something, blackmail or even theft. But Sumire didn't do that.

He never regretted bringing her back. Their meeting led to him thinking that maybe there are good people out there. She had such genuine and honest eyes. Moreover, that voice, it seems she defeated him from the very start.

Chapter end

ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 486

Chapter 486: Human Nature

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

She seemed nervous.

'Alone together after so long.'

'In his room.'

Yuhi predicted her current thoughts. She is probably freaking out inside. He didn't waste any time. After drinking a cup of alcohol, he pushed her down.

It was almost like she knew.

"Your mouth is still open; you can speak." Yuhi continued kissing her neck.

"I--I know. But like uh I thought you said."

"I did say I wouldn't." Yuhi agreed. "But tonight, you're prettier than usual, and I can't hold my feelings back. I want to touch you."

"Sumire, I won't harm you."

"I know you won't hurt me; it's just a bit scary sometimes."

"Then, should I stop?"

"I know you can't."

"Then-" Yuhi proceeded to loosen her clothes, but she became frantic.

"Wait, listen to me."

Yuhi sighed. "I'm impatient."

Sumire rolled her eyes. "You can be so unreasonable." She played with a strand of his hair. "I don't dislike this, but you know I don't know what to do."

"Even when you did it with him?"

At those words, Sumire seemed quite upset, and Yuhi averted his gaze, frustrated. "Sorry, it's not like that."

Sumire cupped his cheeks again. "You finally showed your anger. Yuhi, I know this isn't easy for you to accept. But something did happen. Even though we were flirting back then, I still did it with another person. Does that make me dirty? Do you not want me now?"

'Like hell.' Yuhi shook his head. "Don't misunderstand. I don't think you're dirty. What I hate is Nagawa."

"Mm, it's normal for you to resent him."

"He hurt you so much, and yet he still had the nerve to disrespect you further."

She was drugged badly and hurt. Nagawa should have brought her to the hospital, not his home. Or, if he respected her, he would have contacted Atushi or somebody else. He wouldn't have blatantly taken her home and even did that to Sumire.

"It's human nature to feel jealousy."

"Then this next part is human nature too." Yuhi kissed her pretty lips. "Tonight, I'll do my best."

Sumire laughed nervously. "Uh, then me too."

...

When he wakes up and doesn't find her beside him, he stands up, puts his pants on, and walks out of the room—cigarette in hand.

Although recently they have been sharing romantic moments, occasionally he would ponder. The entire time her violet orbs had not left him, she held a gaze that seemed to speak a thousand words.

'They are both going to be so very lonely being apart from each other, and he won't be the only one in danger.'

Yuhi finds her in the kitchen, cooking. But the thing that stood out to him was her appearance. She didn't bother changing to proper clothes and clumsily put on the nightgown he tossed aside the night before.

He watched her from the door frame silently for a few minutes. His gaze fixed on the marks on her beautiful shoulders.

'I bit her too hard; what am I a monster?'

She must have sensed the intensity of his gaze since she turned around. "Ah!" Her gaze brightened. "Good morning Yuhi."

"Mmm, morning." Yuhi put the cigarette away and walked over to her.

"What are you cooking?"

"English breakfast. Lately, I've gotten better at making bacon and hashbrowns."

"I see."

The food was the last thing on his mind, though. His gaze lingering towards her clothes and the apparent marks of the lovemaking from the previous night. 'It is a good thing I didn't bring her back to the bar last night.'

He doesn't want her to carelessly walk around like this.

Yuhi wrapped his arms around her and hugged her from the back, inhaling her sweet scent. But that wasn't enough, so he turned her around and switched off the stove.

"Yuhi? What's the matter?"

He brought his lips to hers and kissed her lightly. "I just thought, I haven't seen you like this in a while."

A sight that became all too common ever since they lived together. Sumire waking up before him and making breakfast.

"Ah, because I keep getting hospitalized. We've both been busy too--" Her sentence fell short when he lightly nibbled on her ear. "Yuhi?"

"Last night, I think I went overboard."

Sumire laughed softly. "You don't have to worry so much. I am getting better. Besides, the live performance with Yumi-senpai is soon, and there is that TV program beforehand. I have to be discharged before then."

"Your discharge it's this week, right?"

"Three days."

There are just three more days of not waking up with her in his arms, three more days of torture. He is already at his limit though, that's why he asked her to stay over last night.

"Yuhi, if you can't wait, though-" He cut her off by kissing her again. "Nngh."

"I can wait," Yuhi mumbled. "I just feel overwhelmed since it's been a while. I didn't think you would agree to my request either."

"Why wouldn't I agree? You are my boyfriend. If you want me, I will come flying," She trailed off and laughed lightly. "Also, I think I've been a bit pent up too."

Yuhi raised his eyebrows at that. He isn't too surprised at her bold behavior anymore, but it still surprises him a little.

Even so, he wants to treasure these moments with her. Soon they will be very busy and won't have much time for one another.

She will have to continue dealing with the aftermath of the recent fight—the pending argument about introducing evolved humans to society.

The new forms of technology are being introduced - advances that are so rapid that one can't even sit down and think of it properly.

To continue radiating brightly as the top of the idol world, the top of the entertainment industry, and continue helping evolve 'idols' - no, to evolve the very meaning of entertainment.

They ate the rest of the meal in silence; it seemed both of them had a lot on their minds. But afterward, Yuhi pulled her down onto the large bean bag, so she sat on his lap.

"Yuhi?"

"Let's play some games and relax."

He did consider bringing her back to the hospital, but it's his rare day off. "You don't have any other plans."

Sumire covered her mouth and laughed. "That's true; then I will be in your care today."

Yuhi switched on the remote, and a random game appeared on the screen. He didn't know which one it was, but he knew there was a game inside the console already.

"You're so impatient. You can touch me again later, you know?"

"But, when you're tired, you're usually drowsy for the rest of the day."

It always feels wrong whenever he tries to do anything then because she's only half awake. A chuckle escaped her lips.

"I like how you're actually thinking of morals now. But you do realize that there's no need for you to think about it deeply, right? I like being held by you, "

ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 487

Chapter 487: I Need To Control Myself

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

Why does she make his desires seem so very beautiful and pure? When they're anything but that? Whenever they make love. He uses coarse language, is rough, possessive, and monstrous touches.

Even if they have the same desires, she's still different from me. 'Being held by you. ' as opposed to his, 'fucking you like crazy. ' "

"Um, Yuhi?"

He needs to control himself. Even if she is his, he doesn't want to break her. Maybe he should start with getting her off his lap. This current position isn't good for either of them.

But even with these thoughts, he pushed her down.

"Sorry, just a little."

"Yuhi."

"This is difficult."

Sumire laughed again, and he sighed. "Are you laughing at my misfortune?"

"You don't have to hold back so much."

Yuhi was going to argue and say that was a bad idea when they hear the echo of a ring sound from the front buzzer in the room. This followed an angry voice and banging the door. He sighed deeply and grumbled.

"Atsuro."

Sumire suddenly got away from him and fixed her appearance. Yuhi knew, however, that she wasn't doing this to impress the redhead. Sure enough, when he said that, Atsuro strolled in the room with a baby in a stroller.

"Picking a lock is illegal," Yuhi commented.

"Quiet, you should have opened the door right away." Atsuro scanned the area and frowned. "If you wanted to fool around, do so another time."

Sumire, however, was too focused on the little boy.

"Ah, my cute Huan!"

'Atsuro's timing, he did this deliberately.' Then again, maybe he should be more considerate. Although the situation between Sumire and Atsuro has improved slightly. The girl still avoids him whenever she could.

Yuhi understood why she was dodging him, but sometimes he would catch her asking Shin if Atsuro was okay. So she cares enough to ask, but there is something stopping her from openly showing that she cares.

He shouldn't think about this too deeply. It is already enough for him to be wary of Nagawa and Soujiro. Lately, he hasn't heard much from the latter, but Yuhi couldn't dismiss the odd threat he felt from it.

Sumire still hasn't annulled the engagement, and this has invited many critics. Although if they follow traditional rules, the engagement between the two is a formality, they are not actually together. But there are many who dismiss those rules now. In normal people's eyes, Sumire has two men. Naturally, they would scorn her for it.

Yuhi lost count of how many times the reporters have tried to sabotage their relationship. How many of them have asked how he felt on this matter? Whenever they ask, Yuhi doesn't say anything.

If he acts defensive about it and stands up for Sumire, it would invite further criticism. If he says it doesn't matter, then they would say he isn't dating her seriously.

A deep sigh passed his lips. No matter what he does, the impact will be bad. So he chose to remain silent. Of course, that also invited critics but not as many.

Sumire sighed when she saw the boy was asleep. "Why is he sleeping?"

"I gave him some medication before coming here, so of course he is sleeping."

Sumire frowned. "Don't overdo it! He is still a child."

"A child with that frightening sonic evolved gene."

"What did you say? My little boy isn't scary!"

Yuhi interjected when he saw the small lightning bolts forming between them. "The sonic power is the strongest ability in the world. Naturally, for a young child, let alone a baby, it is not easy for their body to contain such power. Suppressing it with medication is the only thing that can work, but one has to be careful about the dose."

If he stood up for Sumire here, then Atsuro would cause a fuss. But if he agreed with Atsuro, then Sumire would get upset. This is the best way to appease both sides.

Indeed this was the right move since Atsuro nodded, and Sumire looked at the little boy. "I wonder how long we can keep hiding him."

"Has the media been harassing you more?"

"It's more like I am openly being followed now. In the past, they would have at least hidden, but now they don't hesitate to take pictures. Even if I beat up the reporter, with technological advancement, it is easy to send a photo from the camera directly to another source quickly."

"Then hold a conference after your showdown with Takashi Yumi."

Sumire shook her head. "Even if I do beat Yumi-senpai, it still isn't enough. My current status in the entertainment industry is very bad due to the accident. Sure my debut song was a hit, but even before, I was having issues, so right now, my image isn't very good. If I openly announce that I have a child, it could get messy."

"You said to yourself that image isn't important."

"That's right; true fans will remain no matter what. I can ignore all the critics and hate, but if it endangers this child, then what next? If my career harms my loved ones again, then I will no longer be able to sing."

Yuhi walked over and lightly hugged the girl, and Sumire laughed softly. "It's okay."

"There are some events that can help this image change," Yuhi spoke up. "First is the upcoming program, second the concert, third and this is the most important. For the next two months, Sumire has to compete in as many tournaments as she can and join the finals for the Queen cup in March."

Atsuro looked troubled. "You do realize her points have been reset, right? She won't be able to accumulate that many points for the finals."

Right every year, there is a tournament for the best female and male artists. They accumulate points throughout the year so they can earn a spot in the grand tournament. Sumire was doing very well and had already secured a spot in the grand tournament. However, right before they could announce her as an official candidate, the accident happened.

Yuhi was actually looking forward to seeing her there. He knew that she would make it. But then that happened. He got to see her anyway, and she even moved here, but he still felt it was a waste.

"Actually," Sumire trailed off. "It didn't take me that long to get many points the last time. All I have to do is join three or four large events and win."

Atsuro clicked his tongue, annoyed. "Do you think it is that easy with the public's prejudice against you? Remember, most of the points will come from the public."

"It's okay! At the end of the day, these tournaments will judge based on skill. I won't lose."

Yuhis gaze softened, watching the girl brimming with confidence. She truly is amazing. Even though it wasn't easy for her to reach this level, now that she has gotten to this point, she fully believes in her capabilities.

Atsuro didn't say anything to that and pointed to the couch. "Sit."

"Uh but-"

Yuhi squeezed her hands. "Let Atsuro check it out. You said it yourself. Nagawa only gives you vague explanations. Atsuro will be more honest."

ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 488

Chapter 488: Will You Say It?

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

Besides, there is something else he is suspicious of. Sumire reluctantly agreed and sat down on the couch. Atsuro bent down and pulled out some tools from his bag.

Yuhi stood close by just in case, but Atsuro didn't do anything inappropriate. Atsuro asked a few questions, and Sumire answered. After a while, he pulled away.

"Well, I guess you can fool around since she is fully healed."

"Fully healed?" Yuhi said puzzles. "But-"

"I can see that Nagawa interfered a bit with the treatment. She probably felt pain due to the medication he gave her, but it has nothing to do with her injury."

Yuhi paused. So his suspicion was right after all. He suspected that something was amiss. Sumire moved swiftly without that gang boss noticing. If her leg was in such a bad state, she shouldn't be able to move. Moreover the fact that she doesn't need crutches to walk. There were some days where she stumbled over, but if he thought about it, it would make sense.

Suppose she is cooped up in the hospital for so long. Naturally, one would not be able to use their legs.

"Did you know?"

"Uh.."

Yuhi reached over and pinched her cheeks.

"Ouch, ouch! But I had to wait for a good chance to follow him to the enemy base. Unless I am close and see him every day, it will be hard."

Indeed Nagawa would be on his guard all the time.

Atsuro rolled his eyes. "Do you have to use such extreme methods? Besides, we were close to finding out."

"Your way too slow when it comes to investigating. Shin is too busy watching the SF movements, too, so he had to stop looking into it. I could only do it myself."

"You could have asked me." Yuhi pointed out.

Sumire shook her head. "Like I could do that when my dear is so busy gathering money to spoil his wife for their future."

Yuhi chuckled at his words. "Then shouldn't the wife work hard too?"

"I am," Sumire nodded. "I am working hard getting rid of potential pests."

Atsuro's eyes twitched, annoyed. "You two are bold enough to flirt in front of me, are you?"

"Of course, you're only my doctor, and Yuhi is my dearest."

The two bickers again, and Yuhi silently hums to himself. He likes it when Sumire is open like this. It is better for his wife to kill all his romantic rivals, but he doesn't want her to push herself too hard. Moreover, he has more romantic rivals than the average person.

If this were imperial times, then all these people who, like Sumire, would belong to her harem.

Atsuro suddenly tossed a brown envelope in his direction. Despite his distraction Yuhi caught it. "This is what you want."

Yuhi raised his eyebrows. "This shouldn't be easy to obtain."

"Right, so be damned grateful."

Sumire frowned. "Why did you work so hard for my dearest? Atsuro, you better not have taken a liking to Yuhi."

"Do you really have a death wish?"

Yuhi sighed. "I will take her out; too much time indoors makes people go crazy." Staying cooped up in the hospital for so long must have taken a lot of willpower. How many times did Sumire sneak out?

"Yuhi-san!" Sumire exclaimed.

"First, discuss that." Atsuro pointed to the envelope. He didn't say anything anymore and walked out. But Yuhi did not miss the look on the redhead's face.

It seems the results he wants in this envelope won't be pleasant.

Yuhi thought Sumire would ask him about the envelope right away, but instead, she turned to the sleeping Huan. "Sometimes, I wonder if he really is mine."

"No need to wonder about it. There is no doubt that he is yours."

Besides, only one person has appeared in this decade with that sonic ability. That child is definitely Mamorus, and Mamoru has never been with a girl other than Sumire. So naturally, Sumire is the mother.

"Say Yuhi, do you like children?"

"Why?"

"I was just wondering how many you would want."

For a moment, Yuhi doesn't say anything, stunned at her sudden question. '....she really has no clue what she is getting herself into.'

Isn't asking a question like that provoking him? He already lost control of himself earlier; he doesn't want to do it again.

Then again, it is rare for them to have this opportunity to themselves. The kid is asleep, so it should be fine, right?

"If you're talking about multiple kids, then you have to work hard."

"I have to.." She turned scarlet, realizing the meaning behind his words. "Stupid."

"Not really; you should know what the process of baby-making is.

"Don't be so unreasonable, Yuhi."

"Unreasonable, huh?" Yuhi grabbed hold of her wrist. "I should be the one saying that other than finding out where the enemy base is. Do you have another reason why you stayed in the hospital for so long?"

At that comment, he watched as a nervous look appeared on her face. So there was another reason.

"I think I have been very patient since we started dating. But I have days where I can't hold things back. I don't want to pressure you to admit things. But this time I am going to seriously ask you. Tell me how you feel about Nagawa?"

At one point, Sumire gradually stepped back, and soon her back hit the wall. Yuhi slammed his hands against the wall, trapping the girl. "Will you say it?"

Sumire took a deep breath and exhaled deeply. "It seems I can't escape this one. How do I feel? It's not that I don't hate him, but to say I have feelings for him? That is wrong too. Not once have I ever liked Nagawa Sano."

"But you-"

"Yes, he hurt me a lot. You probably think the reason I got hurt so much is because I cared, but that is wrong. I can say firmly that I have never had feelings for him. The reason I ended up hurt that badly is because I trusted him. I believed in him. I believed he was a good person, and look what ended up happening. If he broke up with me because he cared for another person, I wouldn't have resented him. But the fact is he cheated when we were still together, showing that he didn't respect me at all."

Yuhis eyes widened at her words. So it was that?

Sumire sighed and leaned forward as she buried her face in his chest. "Humans are too cruel; why do they have to do such pointless things? If he showed me he was a bad person from the start, I wouldn't have minded it; at least he was honest. But the fact is he lied and pretended to be good."

This shouldn't surprise him. One of his main goals, when Sumire came here, was not only for her to live a normal life but for her to learn and trust other people. He wanted to show her the good in this world.

ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 489

Chapter 489: Trust Is The Same As Committing A Sin

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For a while, it was rather difficult; she still behaved coldly in front of her classmates. But gradually, as time went by, the situation changed. She hasn't opened up to others aside from him regarding sensitive topics, but she no longer treats people as the enemy. For him, that was already a considerable improvement.

"Back when we were working together. I tried." Yuhi mumbled.

Sumire laughed. "Indeed you did; it almost worked, Yuhi. But you left me."

It pained him just thinking about the time apart from her, let alone hear her mention it.

"For me trusting others is the same as committing a sin. It means giving everything. I gave everything to Sano, such sincere and honest feelings. But in the end, he didn't hesitate to trample over it." She trailed off. "He really was a good person at the start. When I saw that he snuck out of the party, I followed him. I already heard about him from others but what they knew were superficial things. I learned a lot just talking to him for a few seconds. He was a sincere and yet clumsy guy."

"He changed." Yuhi nodded. He had no doubt that her judgment of him was correct.

"Yes, he did," She whispered, her tone filled with regret. "But I can't blame him for that either. If anyone lived in that toxic environment every day, they would change. At the end of the day, it is still human

nature to defend ourselves automatically. The first thing we do when others accuse us is to defend ourselves. San created weapons, a barrier to surround him to save himself. If he didn't do that, they would have swallowed him alive, and he would be nothing but a puppet."

"Even if you analyzed it that much, it still hurts, right?"

"Yes, especially since I knew how kind he was. Perhaps I am still clinging to the past him before he changed. Whenever I am with him now, I still see faint signs of it. Maybe I am only doing this to satisfy my own ego. I already know no matter how many talks we have, he won't return to how he was then."

So now that has cleared everything up. Yuhi could never have figured out it was something like this. He did think that the regrets over the break-up thing were a flimsy excuse. There was even the taking revenge on him and using him as a toy thing.

'I went along with it, but I knew something was strange.' Sumire was not serious about either of those things. There was a time where he suspected that she might be in love with Nagawa, but that thought quickly went away when he became friends with Kou and the others.

When Sumire disappeared for two months, he heard many stories from them. The ones Jun told him were the ones that cleared his doubts. 'She treated everybody the same way; she would smile but have such a hollow look in her eyes.' Later on, Kou admitted that he did sleep with her a few times, but every single time her gaze would look empty.

That statement is the same one as Atsuro.

They were all the same to her, even when she dated Nagawa. She never loved him. The reason she could do those intimate things with them wasn't due to her feelings of love. She could do those things because she herself had already given up on everything.

Initially, he was still worried about that theory, but with this, all his doubts have cleared.

Yuhi scooped her up in his arms, and Sumire wrapped her arms around his neck. "I don't want to lie to you anymore regarding this."

"I don't think that was a lie. Even if you weren't serious about the other reasons, it was still part of it."

"I should have told you sooner."

Yuhi shook his head. "No, I understand why you didn't say it. At the time, I was already working on making you get along with others and accompanying you everywhere due to your fear. You didn't want to burden me any further with something additional."

"That's right, but now that I think of it, that was stupid too. Yuhi, you genuinely care for me. You would never find anything I do a burden. Even if it meant dividing your time further and sacrificing your career, you would have thrown it away easily."

"Yeah, but thinking about it, that would be too careless. I need to provide for my wife to spoil her." Yuhi used the same words that she did earlier.

Sumire laughed nervously. "Then can I ask, where are we going?" At some point, he had carried her away from the living room and brought her upstairs.

"I think if I answer, you would only end up feeling ashamed again."

Sumire sighed. "You truly have no self-restraint. Well, since I have unleashed the beast, I will have to go along with it."

Despite her brave-sounding words, Yuhi sensed how nervous she was. She truly is silly at times. But he recalled the words she said earlier. It seems she has had more things going on than he initially thought. Although he knew it wasn't that simple, he felt regretful that he didn't ask her more.

'If I sincerely asked her before, maybe she will talk to him about it.

But Yuhi knew better than to do that now. He isn't that shameless. Yuhi quickly led her to the room and placed her down on the bed. At first, he didn't do anything, but when Sumire leaned closer and wrapped her around his neck.

"I don't mind if it is you, so please--"

Yuhi cut her sentence short by kissing her passionately. He truly doesn't want to harm her anymore. But if this is what she wants, how could he possibly say no? He parted their lips and looked at the girl whose face was so red.

Even without being close to her, he could hear her rapid heartbeat.

No matter how many times they do this, she always reacts this way. Yuhi grabbed hold of her hand and softly kissed it. "Just trust me like usual."

ETERNAL MELODY Chapter 490

Chapter 490: Patience

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

After a few hours, he finally drew back from her and watched her sleep for a while. But he couldn't stop himself from kissing her in several places, causing her to wake up.

"Are you alright?" Yuhi caressed her cheeks. "Sumire?"

"I think so."

"Sorry, you should sleep some more. I will make some food."

Sumire tugged on his arm. "Stay with me?"

Just three words, but her saying them in this state--it makes him feel strange. Yuhi laid back down beside her, and she buried her face in his arms.

"Mmmm, better."

'Is she not going to comment on why I lost control like that?' Then again, Sumire has always been like this.

"What are you thinking?"

Sumire laughed shyly. "I'm just looking at you Yuhi, I'm not planning or thinking anything weird."

Is that so?

Sumire raised her face from his chest and climbed on top of him. He wrapped his arms around her bareback. "Are you sure you're not planning anything?"

"Maybe I am."

"I'm sorry about just now. I got jealous."

"Do you think I am too soft on him?"

"Well, a little. But I know you have a hard time being harsh around people you care for."

"It's true my urge to mess with him has lessened since that talk. But I'm still not comfortable around him."

"Then what about me?"

Yuhi ran his hands on her back as he said this, and she turned scarlet.

"Yuhi, don't do that."

"How come?"

"Uh, it feels a bit strange."

He knew 'intimate' topics were taboo. Yuhi decided a long time ago that he would wait for her. 'I will be patient.' It doesn't matter how long it takes. He won't rush her with these things.

Still, to think just a bit of caressing led to her reacting this way.

"Do you not like it?" Yuhi referred to what they just did. "I know normally I don't ask you, but-" He trailed off when he saw how red her face was.

"Sumire?"

"Uh, hold on a moment." Sumire covered her face with her hands. "I just need a time out. You are bold today Yuhi-san, I thought you were just teasing me because I made you jealous. I didn't know you were serious."

"I'm always serious about this."

Sumire leaned forward and kissed him. "I'm sorry, don't be mad at me."

"I feel frustrated, but I know better than to lose control. You're so special to me." Yuhi trailed off. "I want to wait until you are ready, but occasionally I have moments like today. I'm sorry if it was too sudden."

"N-not at all. Uhh," Sumire laughed. "It's a bit embarrassing speaking like this. Can I put something on?"

Yuhi reached out for the nightgown he tossed aside earlier. "Raise your arms."

"Thus nightgown."

"Oh, San bought it for me."

"Sumire, this thing is a bit transparent. You haven't worn this in the hospital, right?"

Sumire laughed. "Silly, don't worry. I said I wouldn't wear it unless it's you. He still gave it as a gift, though."

'Nagawa is really bold.'

"You know gifts from men usually have meanings. A transparent gown like this means they have impure thoughts."

"Mmm, I figured. Then what do you call the outfits you give me, Yuhi?"

"Those? 'I want to take them off.'"

Sumire rolled her eyes. "You're a bit too honest there, mister."

Yuhi tugged on her hand. "I can't? I don't want to lie to you."

She turned red and averted her gaze. "Well, it's not like that but-- I don't know how to react, Yuhi."

His gaze softened at her words. Well, this should be enough for now. Yuhi gently caressed her cheeks.

"Why don't you go back to sleep?"

"Oh, I'm not trying to run away--"

Yuhi shook his head. "I don't want to wear you out too much. Although I do want to continue."

"Then, instead of me sleeping, can you cook something for me?"

"Sure."

"Mmm," She wrapped her arms around his neck. "Yuhi, I'm sorry for behaving strangely. You know I love you, and I don't mind those things if I do them with you. But I am still a bit frightened. What if one day that's the only value you see in me?"

"I understand that thought; that's why I restrained. I don't want you thinking I only want you for that."

Yuhi saw her troubled face. "I'll cook you something delicious. Just wait here, okay?"

....

Even when he was making her a meal, Yuhi remained dazed. He needs to stop touching her. Although he cannot avoid it, what else is he supposed to do when they are alone together? Yuhi sighed deeply.

'Do sweet things.' He should take her out on more dates. Yuhi recalled the time Sumire sang carefully in that place she found downtown. Having a moment like that with her is not bad.

Did she fall asleep?

Yuhi paused when he saw the box in front of her.

'Whenever she doesn't wear those, she has a habit of staring at them.' Nagawa did tell him that, but this is the first time he sees it.

Silly girl, does she like it that much?

He initially hesitated with the gift because he knew how Sumire felt about receiving presents. It was due to her relationship with Nagawa. Sumire only told him bits and pieces before. But it seemed when Nagawa started to change; he started to give her loads of gifts. He would send them over whenever he had to cancel their dates.

Sumire always says she is okay as long as she is with him, and he knew how genuine those words were. But at the same time, he felt that he wasn't doing his job as her boyfriend very well. He can at least do some things that were similar, the expensive dinner dates and gifts. He only avoided it because of Nagawa, but sometimes he wants to do those things with her.

His thoughts broke off when the girl woke up. She looked at him dazed, and then her face turned red like she just realized something.

Sumire turned scarlet again and tried to run away, but Yuhi stopped her. "I'm happy you like it."

He wasn't sure about getting her a gift like this, knowing how she rarely wears such things.

His thoughts broke off when she rushed back and buried her face in his arms. Yuhi's gaze was gentle as he looked at the cute bundle in his arms.

He apologized for overdoing things and that she ought to eat to regain her strength with a loving tone.

"Yuhi, you're upset, right?"

"Well, it is hard to say without the details."

"At that time, they drugged me heavily, my memories are very vague, but I have some vague recollections. San isn't a good person. When we first met again, he still behaved like a jerk too."

"Have you ever asked him?" Yuhi questioned.

"I'm afraid," Sumire mumbled. "There are times where I do strange things, Yuhi. My head gets all muddled, and I don't think straight. I don't think it was because of the accident either. There were times before where I would blank out and wake up in a random place."