

Melody 51

Eternal Melody 51 A sudden kiss

She is lucky there is somebody who is looking out for her so much. When Mamoru died, their mutual friends did their best to help her out. But everybody was in pain too. They could not focus their attention on her when they are grieving as well. She cannot expect anybody else to understand the pain she is going through. Atsuro was the only other person who knew Mamoru was sick, but she could not rely on him due to what happened. She was backed into a corner and did not know what to do.

For so long, she was in pain and could not breathe. She spent many days in agony, with pain in her chest. It hurts, it hurts so much.

Ever since she came to Tokyo, Sumire realized she could breathe again. She no longer felt suffocated. The main reason for that is undoubtedly this person who is beside her.

Yuhi picked many outfits for her; some were somewhat questionable. But Sumire could not say anything since it gained everybody's approval. The blonde wig on her head felt heavy; she was not used to it. Whoever made it, made it well, and she could not tell it was fake at all. But the more well-made something is, the more consequences there are.

Yuhi squeezed her hands. "You okay?"

"Im fine."

"Alright." Yuhi did not seem convinced but he did not say anymore. "Just follow my lead for the poses, yeah?"

Sumire nodded and did as he said.

The first few poses were rather simple since the theme was sweet love. But the ones afterwards slowly tested her patience. Yuhi and her were far too close; some of them involved them breaking boundaries that she would not normally. Is this truly for a magazine? Then again, she probably thinks this way because she has never done any modeling before.

Her thoughts broke off when Yuhi brushed his lips against her ear. "You're too stiff." He mumbled. "Calm down."

That is easier said than done. How can anybody calm down in this situation? Sumire took a deep breath. Why doesn't she look at this situation differently? She is only a substitute; it is okay for her to make a mistake. Nobody will blame her, because, in their eyes, she has nothing to do with this industry.

Moreover, if that female model did not get hurt, then that person would be the one doing this with Yuhi right now. The mere thought of that made her feel very strange. How many modeling jobs has Yuhi had since he debuted? How close did he get with other people? Sumire frantically shook her head. If she overthinks it, she won't be able to concentrate.

Her gaze fell on the rest of the crew members. What do they think of this situation? The random girl who came with Yuhi is acting as a sub. Sumire felt very uncomfortable knowing that all these people were watching her. But before she gets an attack, Yuhi would give her hands a reassuring squeeze. Nearly all the poses involved them holding hands; she wondered whether that was a coincidence.

"Sumire." Yuhi suddenly said. "The next pose is a bit difficult, but do not overthink it."

What is he ta— her thoughts broke off when he led her to the prop wall. She took a few steps back, and her back hit the wall. Her eyes widened when he leaned forward. Sumire did not think he would kiss her; it was just a photo shoot, not a movie. So when he did lean forward, she was very surprised.

It was a normal kiss, but she could not process in her head why he was kissing her. The kiss lasted a good five minutes before Yuhi pulled away.

She froze. Why did Yuhi kiss her?

"That was great, you two!"

"Yeah."

Sumire still couldn't believe what just happened there. What on earth was that all about? But she did not get a chance to voice those thoughts out since Yuhi grabbed her hand and told the director they would go on their lunch.

Once they were further away from everybody, Yuhi let go of her hand and bows. "Sorry."

"Was that part of the shoot?" Sumire asked calmly. She does not want to jump to conclusions.

Yuhi looked away. "It was, and it wasn't."

Sumire immediately understood what he was talking about. The director must have requested it after learning they were a couple. It is a good thing that nobody noticed her reaction; otherwise, their cover would be blown by now. She still felt strange about the whole thing. He not only kissed her but in public too. If they were a couple, she would not mind as much. But their current relationship is very vague.

"Next time, warn me," Sumire said.

That was all she told him. It would be wrong of her to say she forgives him when she doesn't. Whenever Yuhi kisses her, she does not feel any emotions. Just now, he caught her off guard a bit, but it is still the same. Ever since Tsueno Mamoru passed away, it feels like she has lost a part of herself. Her gaze fell on Yuhi, who still kept his head low.

"Say, is the cafeteria here any good?"

Yuhi lips curve to a smile. "It is, but it would be a waste not to take advantage of this weather."

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XX Entertainment - Top Floor

The view was very impressive. Sumire has learned by now that Terashima Yuhi knows the best places to go to for a good view. Instead of a proper roof, the ceiling is a huge glass dome. Even though the weather was cold, she could not feel it at all. Well, insulated dome and the red leather seats make this place ideal. Yuhi got them a spot right at the very center, which earned people's attention. Thankfully, not too many people were around; they already attracted enough attention as it is.

Yuhi asks her what she wants, and Sumire randomly points to dishes on the menu. She picked randomly since her thoughts lingered on the kiss from earlier. It was hard for her to forget. Usually, when Yuhi kisses her, she could detach herself from him. But because it was so abrupt, she could not help but think of it.

When he did that, she wonders what was going on in his head. Is it that easy for him to kiss people, or maybe it was just because it was her?

Eternal Melody 52 Listen to my heartbea

Yuhi was not very good at reading people; many have said that he lacks something as a human being. Compassionate and understanding of others. But Yuhi never thought of it to that extreme; after all, he understood Ibuki Sumire very well. Understanding Sumire is enough for him. Right at this moment, he could tell what crazy thoughts were going on in her head. She must be thinking of that kiss...

When the person in charge suggested it, Yuhi did not know how to react. Even if he was okay kissing her, he wants to consider her feelings. He did not get a chance to ask, but if he did, then that kiss wouldn't have happened. Sumire does not look like the type who flaunts her relationship around. Indeed, he learned from their mutual friends that her relationship with Mamoru was very low key.

Sometimes I forgot they were dating.

He heard many people say that and yet at the same time...

The two acted naturally as a couple.

Acted natural, huh? So even if the two did not flaunt their affections or announce their relationship status, it was something people acknowledged.

A relationship like that, he does not understand it. But Yuhi also wants the same type of relationship with Sumire. He wants to walk hand in hand with her naturally and talk to her that way too.

The waitress placed their orders on the table, and he watched Sumire take a bite of the tomato spaghetti. Her eyes lit up like a child as she ate more.

He wants to understand her more.

"Tell me something, Yuhi."

"Huh?"

Sumire laughed. "Uhh, do you not like carrots and green peas?"

Yuhi glanced down at his plate and realized that he was pushing the peas away with his fork, alongside the carrots. Yuhi took great lengths to avoid making any meals with peas and carrots in front of her. A deep sigh passed his lips. "Yeah, I don't."

In that second, he watched as Sumire extended her fork out.

"H--hey, I just said I don't like it."

"Even if you are older than me, Yuhi-san, you're still a kid and need to grow."

A kid? He was eighteen years old already. A troubled look appeared on his face. He knew whenever she got this way; there was no way of him refusing. Maybe if he came up with a reason, then she would let this go.

Yuhi shook his head. He has no reasonable excuse this time; it isn't like the smoking thing like before. He reluctantly bent down and took a bite. It tasted disgusting, and he could barely swallow it down. But when he looked up and saw the expression on her face, he knew he could not say anything.

After a few bites, Yuhi did not want to eat anymore. Sumire laughed. "Uhh, did I overdo it?"

"It's fine."

When he glanced over and saw her gentle expression, Yuhi felt the sound of his heartbeat increase. Though it is rare, Sumire has those moments where she looks at him like that. When she makes that face, Yuhi wonders what she is thinking. She probably does not entertain thoughts regarding him for long, knowing it would lead to awkwardness.

Yuhi does his best every day to ensure that the awkward moments between them do not last long. He wants her to feel comfortable and wants to see her live her life as a normal girl.

A normal girl, huh?

Ibuki Sumire is not a normal girl; he knew that from the very start. From the moment he heard her voice, he knew there was something special about her. But he still wants her to experience life as a normal girl before she pursued stardom. The past few years have not been easy for her, losing her family and home. She has shouldered so many burdens since that time he sang with her.

"The song recording is this afternoon. Do you have something you want to discuss with me before then?"

"Something to discuss?" Sumire repeated.

"You don't have anything to say, Ange?"

At that comment, Sumire dropped the fork. She looked away from him. "I do." She mumbled. "Why on earth did you wait for so long?"

Why huh? "You know we ended up working on that song together. I am the type of guy who does not like taking credit for somebody else work. I was waiting for you to debut, and then I would release the song."

"In this situation..."

"I want to help you clear your name."

"Yuhi, you don't have to do that. I don't think I will be able to sing in front of other people anymore.."

She is making that helpless face again. He did not say this for her to look like that. Yuhi did not hesitate to stand up and take a seat beside her. He wrapped his arms around her shoulders and drew her close. "Listen to my heartbeat and calm down."

"Your he--" Sumire trailed off. "Why is it beating so loudly?"

His lips curved amused at her words. She seemed genuinely curious.

"Why do you think?" Yuhi questioned. "When I am around you, it is always like this."

"How can I calm down if you tell me things like that?" Yuhi laughed, and he watched her cheeks puff into a pout. She has her cute moments, huh? Sumire is more mature than other girls her age; her appearance does not help her either. She would occasionally look very mature, especially when a serious discussion came up—the face of an adult and not a teen.

"Yuhi-san, I believe I should talk to you about this now. Even if you think you have done nothing wrong, I find it strange that you know everything about me."

He raised his eyebrows, amused at her words. Know everything about her, huh?

"I don't know everything, Miss Sumire." Yuhi jokes. "I mean, if I knew everything, then I would know details like the color of your undergarments.."

She glared at him and sighed. "Why are all men such perverts?"

Yuhi does not like how she said all men. He does not want her to group him under the same level as other men. Since they are on this topic about other guys, there is something he wants to clarify with her.

"There is one thing I don't know about you. You had two ex-boyfriends before you went out with Mamoru."

No matter how much he researched, for some reason, nobody knew. He found this strange since she dated these two for quite some time. How is it possible that none of her friends knew about those other guys?

Eternal Melody 53 Watch over me carefully

The thought that she did an excellent job hiding it crossed his mind. But based on her circumstances then, he found it strange. Yuhi did not want to research her. He felt like he was invading her privacy too much. The only reason why he knew this was because of Tsueno Mamoru, Mamoru was the one who told her this. Sumire dated Mamoru last year in August till the end of December, and then the accident happened. Before then, she apparently saw somebody else.

A small diagram formed in his head.

December 2013- June 2014 -- ?August 2014 - Started dating Mamoru (16)December 2014- Accident

When Sumire was fifteen years old, she dated somebody for a good half-year. But who?

Sumire sighed and pulled away from him. "Do you really want me to tell you?"

This was the first time he ever saw her look so troubled. To say he wasn't curious was one thing.

"His name was Sano, and he was six years older than me. I met him at a business meeting." Sumire mumbled as she played with the straw of her drink. "When I was finally old enough to take over the work my parents left behind, I started attending business meetings and parties. I met him there."

Yuhi did not speak right away. Did he hear her correctly? Six whole years age difference? Yuhi does not mind age gaps in love; after all, he is two years older than Sumire. But the max-age gap he would agree on is three; four would push it. What was this girl thinking of dating somebody older than her?

"Call it the naivety of youth."

Yuhi flicked her forehead. "You should have called the police." He trailed off. What if they did something? Wait, "Did you two--" he does not want to finish his sentence. Just the thought of it bothered him greatly.

"Well, there was a lot of kissing. I guess he touched me a bit."

"The police," Yuhi repeated in a trance.

Sumire rolled her eyes. "Calm down; he didn't do that. He was the kind, gentleman type."

Kind gentleman? Yuhi scoffed at this. If that guy was a gentleman, he would not have suggested going out with her. If he genuinely liked her, he would wait until Sumire was older.

"Sano is a common name, what is his surname?"

"If I tell you his surname, don't look for him."

"Sumire," Yuhi said sharply. "The name."

He wants to know what kind of guy would date a minor; no dating is not the issue. There are many couples with large age differences. The problem is that person touched her. "What do you mean by a little?"

Yuhi wants to know all the details before he brings this matter to the police.

"Yuhi, you better not be thinking of reporting this. It was consensual."

"Why are you defending him?"

Sumire sighed. "I am not defending him; the guy ended up being a jerk in the end. But at that time I was dating him. You can only file reports if there was no consent involved." She extended her hand out and caressed his cheeks. "Yuhi, it's okay."

"...the name?"

"Nagawa Sano."

Yuhi thought she would not tell him, so when she suddenly did so. He did not know what to think. But that name? Yuhi knew that name very well, or rather he met the guy a few times. That person is a prominent figure in the business world.

"So, do you get it?" Sumire said. "Do not say a word to anyone. Sano and I have not met once since our break up, so you do not have to worry, Yuhi."

"Why did you two break up?" Yuhi changed the topic.

He does not want to drop the charges, but she probably does not want trouble. If the guy was an average person, it would be easier. But unfortunately, he is not.

"He cheated on me with some girls at work." Sumire sighed. "He was very obvious about it. I don't think he even bothered hiding it. Whenever I stayed over at his place, I would find female garments everywhere. When I picked it up he would tell me, is that not yours? One time I refuted back and said it wasn't. He then said it was his sisters or cousin."

Sumire grew agitated the more she spoke. The more Yuhi listened, the more amazed he was. To think she put up with that behavior for so long.

"When he broke up with me, he said that he could not date a child any longer. He has needs or something that I could not understand."

"Those needs.." Yuhi interjected. "You know what he meant, right?"

"Of course I knew, I wasn't stupid. I was furious but back then I cried. I was angry but I cried instead. I don't know what happened after I started crying. I think he tried to console me at least once, but I pushed him away. He said to me, if I want to continue seeing him then I could. But not as his girlfriend."

Yuhi has met many players, but this is the first time he has heard of somebody so despicable. Nagawa Sano, he even treats his relationships like a business deal.

"Did he think he was doing me a favor or something?"

She looks furious. Then again, the guy was terrible to her.

"If it were me, I wouldn't treat you that way."

Sumire laughed. "I know you're very kind to me."

Is that all he is to her? A kind guy? Yuhi frowned, he did not want that. He buried his face on her hair. "Since you mentioned that guy, I have to say something. He is one of my company's sponsors, so you may see him around."

At that comment, he watched her expression darken. He wanted nothing more than to give her a reassuring kiss on the lips, but after that stunt, he pulled earlier. Yuhi did not want to take a chance.

"It will be okay. I won't leave your side even for a moment."

"Then, Yuhi-san, you have to make sure you're watching over me properly."

Watch over her more than he already does so? Yuhi does not think that is possible unless he watches her twenty-four seven. If he does that, they will have issues. Sumire seemed utterly oblivious to this as she continued eating her meal.

Eternal Melody 54 Hostile

After that talk with Sumire, she told him she wanted to look around the building. He gave her his pass and told her to call him when she finishes Yuhi went to his next job; there was still some time before the recording, so he attended the meeting.

The moment Yuhi entered the room, he spotted a man with golden brown colored hair and grey-colored eyes. He wore a navy-colored jacket and brown-colored pants. Yuhi immediately recognized him as Sumire's ex-boyfriend.

"..."

Speak of the devil. Why on earth is this man here?

Yuhi warned Sumire that there is a chance he would appear, but to think it happened right after their conversation.

"Perfect timing Terashimkun, this man will come here often now to help with the events for our artists."

This man is not interested in the entertainment industry. He never got himself involved before.

Yuhi suspected that he was doing this to get involved with Sumire. Based on what Sumire said to him, this man still wanted to meet with her.

"Terashima Yuhi, correct? We met briefly before but.."

Yuhi nodded.

He turned to the person on the right; it was the president of this company Hino. A man with spiky purple hair and golden colored eyes. "President."

Hino turned to him and frowned. "Here comes my slacker. I wondered where you were, but it seems like you were skipping out to go dating."

The rumors must have reached him already.

"What's wrong with a few dates? I need a girlfriend too."

At that comment, Hino hits him on the head with a book. "Don't get a girlfriend without introducing her to me first. I'm like your guardian."

He rolled his eyes at that comment. There is a reason why he has not told the president regarding Sumire yet. Yuhi thought to tell him. Like he said, he acts like his guardian. But Yuhi quickly decided against it. When he analyzed Hino's past behavior, Yuhi realized that the guy showed hostility towards females.

"Listen to this San, Yuhi is hiding things from me now."

Sano chuckled. "It's okay for kids his age to hide a secret or two, besides having a girlfriend his age is not surprising."

"Then, do you have one?"

"I came to Tokyo to meet my ex."

"Huh? Oh, right, the one you mentioned before."

Yuhi frowned when he saw where the conversation was heading. By ex, does he mean Sumire? He shook his head; this guy has dated many people since he broke up with Sumire. He needs to stay calm and keep things professional as much as possible.

"I will introduce her later; she came with me today."

Hino sighed. "Alright, but I don't understand you. After Touko cheated on you and Miyazawa, too, I thought you would have learned your lesson."

Indeed, anybody would think so. But those two were mere substitutes for Sumire; he does not care for any of them.

After talking for a few minutes, the informal meeting started. Yuhi could not help but look over at Sano every so often. Professional, intelligent, and he seems to be well-liked too. He could see why anybody would fall for him, but at the same time, Yuhi felt bitter. The words Sumire said earlier played in his head.

Now that he actually sees this guy, he can't help but think. This person dated Sumire, he even touched her.

"Any questions?"

Hino raised his hand. "Sano, just a question. You mentioned you want to work closely with an artist from this company, but does it matter who?"

"Not at all."

"Then, Yuhi."

Yuhi's eyes twitched in annoyance. It seems like he will get no say in this whatsoever. Hino is doing this deliberately.

The other members started to split off into their groups. Yuhi stayed in his chair, looking at the ceiling dazed. The ex-boyfriend appears before the fiancée.

It seems like courting Ibuki Sumire won't be easy. He already loses out to Mamoru, who has already passed away. He wants to make Sumire happy; he wants her to smile. What can he do to make sure she is smiling all the time?

His thoughts broke off when somebody called out to him. "Yuhi?" A voice from the doorway said. "Say about the--"

Damn Sumire...

Who on earth told her where he was? It was already far too late for him to do anything; they saw each other. Sano stood up, surprised.

"This is surprising; you're here, Sumire?"

At that comment, everybody in the room glanced over. Thankfully, there were not many people, but they were already looking over and whispering. Yuhi could not miss Hino's hostile glare.

"Sano."

Yuhi stood up and walked over to her. He draped his jacket around her shoulders. "Did you need something?" He reminded her.

"There was an area that had your name on it. I was wondering if I could go there."

"That's my private space, and yes, yes you can. There is a bed there too, so if you want to take a nap, go ahead." He squeezed her hands. "I will join you in a bit."

"Okay, thank you, Yuhi."

Yuhi noticed her gaze on Sano for a few seconds, but she quickly turned away. "You knew Ibuki Sumire, Terashimsan?" one of the board members said.

A deep sigh crossed his lips. "Yeah."

"Then, you should have said so before.."

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He finally broke free. Yuhi leaned against the wall and sighed. Those board members can get annoying. So what if he knew Sumire? Why did they make it sound like she was extinct or something? Sure she has not appeared in public for a while, but he hated how they spoke about her. He took out a cigarette and lighter. Sumire didn't come back or call him, so she most-likely fell asleep or something.

His thoughts drifted onto what happened earlier. Sano's expression towards Sumire bothered him. Yuhi could not understand what it meant.

"Mind passing on a message for me, Terashimsan?"

Yuhi sighed when he saw the owner of the voice.

"No."

Sano smiled. "It seems like you have an interesting relationship with her."

"I am her boyfriend," Yuhi argued.

But Sano shook his head. "It does not appear to be like that. If you were her boyfriend, she would have at least kissed you before leaving."

Why is this guy so sure of that? He has not seen Sumire in a long time. "People change."

"She is the same as before."

The air around him grew heavy, and Yuhi glared at Sano. "Look, I want to keep things professional. But since you're the one who is bringing up this subject, then I will remind you that not only did you break up with her, you cheated too. I don't think you have any right talking to her."

Eternal Melody 55 What do you want?

To his surprise Sano burst into laughter. It was not the reaction he expected at all. But then again Yuhi did not know this man at all.

"I wanted to test your reaction, but huh.." Sanos lips curve to a smile. "It appears to me that you like Sumire a lot."

Test? Yuhi frowned when he heard those words. "What do you want?"

"To get back together with her and also, you rejected quite a few proposals from friends of mine."

Yuhi sighed. "Alright, I will accept them. But I will not let you go through with the first thing." He glared dangerously at the man. "Sumire is mine."

Does this guy truly think he would let go of Sumire? After all those years of waiting, why would he do something like that?

"What if she leaves you?"

"That is up to me to decide." A sharp voice interjected.

Yuhi glanced over at the source to find Sumire standing not too far from where they were. Judging from her expression, she heard every single word. The girl's fiery gaze however made his heart skip a beat. Why does she look so good to me even though she is glaring? Maybe he does have a strange fetish of some kind.

Sumire walked over to him and Yuhi spotted several folders in her hands. He chuckled. It seems like she found those quickly. In those folders were the drawings he did of her whenever he was bored. When he had no work to do and waited around, Yuhi would often draw her picture. Sometimes he would use his imagination, other times he would ask one of their mutual friends to take a photo. When she debuted, he used the ones from her TV appearances and concert.

"You will be late for the recording."

Yuhi nodded. "Don't worry, I can make them wait." He brushed his hands across her cheeks. "Did you sleep?"

"For a little while."

"That's good." Yuhi could not miss Sano looking at them. He hated how the man remained smiling. Does this guy like Sumire or doesn't he? Nobody would like it, if the girl he liked is being touched by another guy. But Sano does not appear phased at all.

Floor Sixty - Recording Studio S

Sumire knew Yuhi was worried. But they both knew they could not get rid of Sano. From what she learned, this guy is friends with the president here. She did not want to cause Yuhi any problems so she even invited Sano along to watch. This move however seemed to upset him.

"So," Sano said. "How have you been the past few months?"

Her gaze dimmed at his words. "It's been a year."

"Ah, yes it has."

Does this guy even remember when they broke up? Sumire shook her head, calm down. She needs to control her emotions. But really what is with this situation? How much bad luck does she have, out of all the business sponsors this company has why does it have to be him? They could have sent any representative, but it has to be this guy.

"Did you change your number?" Sano reached over and caught a strand of her hair between his fingers. "No matter how many times I called you, I could not reach."

Does he not remember how he ended up smashing her phone when he tried to touch her after dumping her?

"Time has passed." Sumire did not mention the past nor answer his question directly. She thought if she did it this way then he would leave her alone. But it seems like that is not the case here.

Sano persisted. "It was easy for me to obtain your new number but the calls never went through. Did you block me?"

Yes, yes she did. Sumire knew Sano very well. Even if he changed numbers, he would keep the last few digits the same. That was why she made sure to block calls from a similar number. For a while his old number would appear on her block list but then a new number appeared. Sumire did not like to use her phone often so she kept track of the numbers.

"I did."

Sano laughed. "I always liked how honest you were." He trailed off and glanced over at Yuhi who finally started. "It seems like you're very fond of him."

"I like him."

"That is a lie." Sano replied. "You're not the type of woman who would jump to another guy after the death of your lover."

Sumire shuddered when she heard the words death. While she already acknowledged that Mamoru was dead. It still pained her whenever she heard it from another person. Hearing it from Sano, it gave her the creeps. She glared at him. "What do you want already?"

"So hostile, you should lighten up a bit. I haven't seen you in so long and it seems like you have become prettier."

She felt empty hearing those words. Sumire knew he was only saying it for show. This person does not harbour any feelings for her, he simply wants her as a bed companion. In a few months she would turn seventeen. She is already legal age wise, he is trying to get her to sleep with him.

"You sound very bitter." Sano commented. "Are you still upset? A year has passed already. Sure I cheated, but did you want me to touch you? If I touched you would you have agreed?"

Her eyes twitched in annoyance. Why is this guy trying to make it sound like it was her fault? Is he trying to give excuses even though he was the one who cheated on her?

Sano sighed. "Honestly Sumire, you have not changed at all. It was my fault for cheating but given your neuroticism, could you blame me?"

Neuroticism is a personality trait for an individual in a negative, anxious or emotional state. These people tend to feel more depressed and suffer from feelings of guilt, envy, anger and anxiety more severely than other people.

"So that's what you thought of me."

"I thought it was a few jealousy issues at first, but when I saw how depressed you got over it, it was a bit frightening. I realized that dating a younger girl would have its challenges. But this was a first for me. Still I brushed it off because you were young, immature and naive."

"If that's what you thought and if I caused you that many problems, why are you still talking to me?"

She does not understand this person at all. Why is he still speaking to her if she was that much of a burden to him? Sumire has not thought about her relationship with this person in so long. Mamoru did a good job helping her forget him. It helped that he worked in Tokyo often and was mainly abroad and thus out of the country. But now it seems like she will have to face him, and confront the past she thought was long and done with.

Eternal Melody 56 Disgusted

Young and naive, huh?

That is the one thing she will agree to. She was young and very naive. What was she thinking dating a person like this? How could she fall for those honey coated words? Back then she probably just wanted somebody to love her, she wanted to stop feeling so empty and useless.

Sano was the perfect person to fill that gap in her heart. He was the kind of guy she needed at that time.

At least at the time she had no idea what he was really like. He was her first boyfriend and she was very new to relationships. Since he was the older one, she simply followed whatever he said. He was the one with experience and knew what he was doing.

She did not question him when he first kissed her, or when he started doing a bit more. She didn't question him at all. But maybe she should have. 'There were times where I hesitated, where his actions frightened me.' Sumire regretted not speaking up then.

"Do you want to get back together?" Sumire asked.

Sano's lips curve to a smile. "This is what I love about you, you're very smart for your age. Not only are you smart, you do everything I say. You do not complain but you're not submissive either. If there is something you dislike, you would tell me immediately." Sano paused. "You're also in a good position in the entertainment industry despite your break."

A good position? Now that she thought about it, even back then Sano mentioned something about it. He wants to gain some connections in the entertainment industry.

"But more than that, I am looking forward to seeing how much you have grown." He lets go of her hair and extends his hand out.

Sumire could no longer take it and the moment he reached towards her, she grabbed his hand and sent him flying. A large crashing sound - and Sano leaned weakly against the wall. Traces of blood on his forehead.

"Nagawsan!"

"Oh goodness, somebody call the president."

"What a violent and scary girl."

Sumire however did not mind the comments and walked over to where Sano was. "Did I not say so before? I am not a pushover. Do not bring this matter up to me again."

How could he even suggest something so ridiculous as getting back together with her? No, this man only wants somebody he can sleep with. He simply enjoys the joy and thrill of dating a younger woman. He does not have feelings for her at all. He wants to take advantage of the current hype around her. His role is simple, to play the Prince charming who helped her move on.

It disgusted her. Did he think she would not notice?

Her thoughts broke off when she felt a familiar warmth. Yuhi hugged her from the back. "Want to go home?"

Sumire nodded. "Yes please."

"You heard that, I am leaving."

"But the recording--"

"We can do it another day, I wasn't in the mood today since so many unnecessary people are around." Yuhi did not mention any names but she followed his gaze.

Sano laughed. "It seems like I am in the way here." He weakly got up. Blood gushed down the wound on his forehead.

One of the female assistants in the room came over very concerned. "I'm fine."

Sumire couldn't miss the subtle way he flirted with the assistant and sighed.

This is what she disliked about him. Even when they dated, he would casually flirt around with other women in front of her. Whenever she mentioned it, he would tell her jealousy is cute but if she overdoes it, it will become unsightly.

Back then she only paid attention to the cute comment and not the second part. If she paid attention to the latter then maybe something would change. Maybe she would have been the one doing the dumping.

Sumire tugged on Yuhi's sleeve. "I want to go."

Yuhi nodded. "Okay." He turned to Sano. "There is an infirmary on this floor, I'm sure the staff will take care of you."

"I see."

"Before I leave," Yuhi looked over at the other people in the room. "None of this leaves the room."

Sumire could not miss the dangerous look in his eyes and shuddered. So this is how Yuhi normally treats other people? This is the first time she is seeing it. Yuhi wrapped his arms around her shoulders. "What about buying groceries?"

"Mm, not in the mood now. We still have some ramen right?"

Yuhi laughed. "Cool, that sounds good."

.....

Apartment

Sumire sighed deeply, she just finished preparing the meal. So many hours have passed since then and it was already time for dinner. But she still couldn't forget what happened earlier. To think she met that man again after so long. Sumire understood that they would eventually meet again, even if she avoided the entertainment industry. There is still the business world. Sumire had not thought of Sano in so long, but now that she has, she feels strange again.

That person has not changed even though so much time has passed. Still the same jerk, Sumire wondered why she even bothered with a man like that. The words young and naive echoed in her head. She was indeed young and naive.

Back then it did not matter to her who she went out with, as long as she could fill the empty feeling in her heart. The person named Sano, now that he has returned. Sumire knew she would have to face him. But her gaze fell on Yuhi who just entered the kitchen, she won't be alone. He will be there for her.

Yuhi did not hesitate to defend her. She thought he would handle the situation professionally, but he discarded his professionalism to help her. He would do that much for her sake.

Eternal Melody 57 Narcis

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Nagawa Sano was the first son of the Nagawa family, his family was considered new money among the elite rich circle. Indeed his family only rose to fame during his eldest brother's generation, so they were not like the other members of the elite. The elite these days is now split into traditional and new.

While most people try to curry favour with those who belong in the new money side. The ones with the real power are members of the traditional family. In order to establish his position in the family, he looked among the traditional families for somebody he could get close with.

He found the perfect girl that fit all the requirements.

A girl who would help him solidify his position.

The second daughter of the Ibuki family, Ibuki Sumire. It was not a coincidence that he bumped into her during that party, it was all planned.

He came here to Tokyo when he heard the news that she came here. But he did not expect to find her so close to another guy.

His gaze fell on the pair. For the past few minutes they were arguing about different kinds of sauce. It was a childish debate and yet he watched Sumire carefully. He never saw her that carefree with him before. It bothered him more than he thought it would.

He only used her, that was why when she served her purpose, he was in a hurry to get rid of her. She was the perfect girl who would help him, but at the same time she was dangerous. The girl is six years younger than him, he knew what the consequences would be if people found out. That was why he did not flaunt their relationship but casually mention how close they were.

Other people interpreted it ambiguously and congratulated him.

"As much as this debate interests me." Sano spoke up. "Should we not proceed with the meeting?"

Yuhi sighed. "Well I guess that is true. But what is there to discuss, I already prepared everything."

Sumire quickly interjected. "But Yuhi, you have to consider other things too. The time of the concert, and the end. When are the breaks? Will there be food stands available since it is a six hour long concert?"

"That stuff is troublesome."

"Quit being so lazy." Sumire pulled out some papers. "I already contacted these catering services, they are willing to help. But I do think that we need a bit more. We have to keep everything under the budget too. So the food isn't too extravagant but it isn't simple either. Keep in mind that they will be standing or sat for a long time, foods that are easy to carry are better."

Another thing he liked about Ibuki Sumire was her strong business sense.

He remembers one time where he fell sick and had so much work left to do. But when he woke up the next morning, all his work was complete. The only one who had been with him then was Sumire, so he knew it was her. When he asked her she said it was her.

"Perhaps we could provide packaging with the leftover budget?" Sano spoke up. "Most catering services tend to neglect their packaging."

Sumire nodded. "I agree there. Yuhi, we could use the logo you designed for the tickets.."

She is acting quite calmly today. The other day she seemed visibly shaken. It seems like she calmed down overnight.

For the next few minutes they continued discussing things calmly when the doors opened.

"Yuhi, come here for a second."

"President." Yuhi looked over at Sumire. "You okay?"

"Im fine, you should go."

"Alright." Yuhi bent down and whispered something in the girls ear.

Sumire laughed. "Silly, go already."

Sano silently watched them. It seems like they are in the flirting stage. After the two left yesterday, he tried to ask around about the two. But nobody knew a thing. Yesterday was the first day people knew their relationship. When Terashima Yuhi left with his friend, Sano took a seat beside Sumire.

"So, continuing from yesterday. Did you decide?"

Sumire sighed. "You know, after I beat you up yesterday, I thought you would understand already. Is the message not clear enough?"

"Message?" Sano feigned ignorance.

Of course he knew what she was trying to say. He was very surprised when she hit him. He did not know she had that side of her. She was always timid around him and obeyed everything he said. To think she developed a back bone in the time they did not meet. When Hino learned what happened yesterday, he said to him that he would help deal with Ibuki Sumire. But Sano refused his help.

He won't let anybody intervene.

Besides this girl still likes him. Her reaction yesterday proved it.

Playing hard to get? How many times has he seen this tactic before?

"Yes message." Sumire trailed off. "I would rather not talk about personal matters here."

Sano chuckled. "I see, that is like you. But I do have a question," he recalled the exchange from the other day. "-- are you living together with Terashima Yuhi?"

"Yes."

He thought as much but he found it very strange. She refused to move in with him back then, even though she was there often. No matter how late she stayed, she would end up leaving, she never spent the night. That cold and aloof part of her attracted him. She loved the thrill and the danger that came from their relationship. Sano could not deny liking it too.

So they are living together? Maybe they have already done it.

"Terashima Yuhi is quite the player, he has a very bad reputation, sleeping with many female artists."

"Those are rumors."

"What if I tell you, I have seen him do it before?"

Sumire who was sorting out the papers looked up. "If you are trying to create a rift between Yuhi and me, please forget it."

At that comment he raised his eyebrows. "Forget it?" He repeated. Why would he do something like that for? He will not stop this until he gets her. If he has to target Terashima Yuhi then so be it. He will make sure Ibuki Sumire returns to him.

"Yes, forget it. I owe that person so much, so no matter what he does I will not hate him."

Sano frowned when he heard those words. She owes him? What does she owe him? "If you have a debt towards him, I could lend you money.."

Is she talking about money?

Eternal Melody 58 What do I want?

Sumire should not have a hard time managing money due to her strong business sense. But since she is only a young girl, it is easy for people to trick her.

To his surprise she suddenly bursts into laughter. "Of course you would think of it that way."

"Am I wrong?" Sano questioned. "If it isn't money and a different kind of favour, then tell me. I will do anything I can to make sure you break free from him."

In Sano's eyes Terashima Yuhi is not any different than him. Sure the kid is rich and famous. But everybody knows he is an orphan, in terms of family backing he has nobody. Sumire lost her parents, yes, but the wealth of the Ibuki family is all hers. Terashima is very sly. Sano does not know what method the kid used to win her over but he will not lose her.

Sumire stopped replying and he frowned.

It seems like he will have to change tactics. He took a deep breath and stood up. He knelt on the ground and bowed. "I'm sorry."

At that comment Sumire seemed surprised. "Huh?"

"Forgive me, you were right all along. I should not have cheated on you."

"Uh.." Sumire looked at him awkwardly. "Even if you apologize--"

"I understand, I will work hard."

"Work hard?"

Sano nodded. "I will work hard to earn your forgiveness."

She didn't reply right away but he heard the sound of her chair. He found that the girl had also bent down onto the ground. "Say.." Sumire spoke up. "I actually don't understand what kind of stunt you are trying to pull here. But you won't get anywhere trying to pursue me. Yuhi and me are not dating like you said, we are only good friends. I already decided that I will not date anyone ever again. I will accept your apology, if you mean it but nothing else." She quickly stood up.

Sumire picked up the documents from the desk. "I will photocopy this."

With those words said the girl swiftly left the room. Sano's gaze dimmed, he did not expect that from her. That lonely face and those soulless looking eyes. Did the death of another man bother her that much? Sano did not think that it would affect her that much. He feels strange, what is this?

Sano did not remain in that position long and chased after her.

The filing room was not too far from the meeting room. Sano however ran after her so he was quite out of breath. "Let me help you."

Sumire blinked but nodded. "Alright."

This entire thing felt strange to him. Why on earth did he run here? Why-- why does he feel like this towards her? Is it because he has never seen that expression on her face before? That lonely look, that hollow gaze would frighten anyone away.

"Did you come here to Tokyo for a reason?"

"I wanted to escape the town, it was suffocating there." Sumire replied.

In the past Sano thought all of Sumire's loneliness was merely teen angst. He blamed everything on her net. But just now when he saw that look on her face, Sano realized that something was different. He did not understand why he was suddenly paying her this much attention. Is it because it is thrilling? Thrilling to know there is something he can still learn about the girl he discarded and threw away.

His gaze fell on the girl who was busy making copies of the documents. She was a lot taller now and her hair was longer. Her body was more developed too, long legs, bigger chest. Right now Ibuki Sumire looked like a goddess. Sano wondered if this oblivious girl had any idea how she looks right now. It is no wonder so many people complimented her appearance when she debuted.

He was overseas when Sumire made her idol debut, and the news there did not feature her so much. But the people he asked to keep an eye out on her reported everything to him. Her new look baffled him, he did not think she would change so much.

Back then she was timid ...wasn't she?

....

2014

Sano re-entered the room and found Sumire changing. He stood silently by the door and watched. He could only see her back and yet he liked what he saw. She looks beautiful. Sano refrained from doing anything with her this entire time, but it seems like he can go a bit further today.

"Sano?"

"Hey." Sano greeted and walked over. "Care to stay over tonight?"

"I guess I can stay for a little while, but I have to go home."

Her parents are far too strict. But then again, it is only natural for them to be so protective over their daughter. This girl is a real gem and nobody seems to realize that. Sano wrapped his arms around her and whispered in her ear. "Isn't it okay?"

Sumire nodded and Sano led her to the bed.

One of the things he found while dating Ibuki Sumire was the girl had lips that were very kissable. Any guy would enjoy kissing these luscious lips of hers. He found it strange that the girl never had a boyfriend before.

"S--sano.." Sumire panted. "This feels a bit weird."

Sano licked his lips. "Weird?"

"Should we be.."

Is she starting to have doubts? No good. Sano gently kissed her chest and saw her shudder. "Leave everything to me love."

.....

Present

"--s-sano!"

Sano snapped out of his trance and found a much older Sumire standing in front of him shaking her head. The girl pointed to the photocopier machine. He ended up printing 3,000 fliers instead of three hundred.

Sumire sighed and picked up the papers. "I guess we can recycle some."

"..."

He wonders how it would feel now to kiss her. How would it feel to touch her like he did before? Nobody is around right now. Sumire maybe stronger now, but he is still a man. He is physically stronger than her and he could easily overpower her.

But does he want that? Even if he forced himself on her here, would that be enough to convince her? He could blackmail her with pictures and she may agree. But Sano recalled her hollow gaze from earlier and paused.

The current her is a bit dangerous. Sano does not know what she would do if he went through with his initial plan.

Eternal Melody 59 Interes

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This new Sumire interested him so much. Sano wanted to get back together with her, but at the same time he kept his other relationships. He thought she was still the same as before and she would easily fall into his hands. But she seems to have developed quite a backbone.

He wonders what she thinks of him. When he broke up with her, did she grieve or?

"I dated somebody right after we broke up." Sumire brought up. "I even lived with him for a bit."

Sano looked at her blankly. "Kanagawa Ren, correct?"

Sumire did not seem surprised and nodded. "Yes." She trailed off. "He was the one who saved me from a pinch. After you dumped me, I went to a bar to get a drink and well that did not end up well. In your words I had a childish tantrum."

He already knew about that incident since he had his people watch over her. But by the time his people came to help, somebody already took her away. If Sumire knew he was the one who set that incident up, would she get mad at him? How would she react? He set that up so she would call him. Who would have thought that Sumire would end up getting saved by somebody else.

He calculated wrongly.

"You did not date him for long."

"Because he had to go abroad." Sumire explained.

"Aren't you lucky? After that guy left you got yourself another boyfriend almost immediately."

The look in the girls gaze did not change. "I was lucky huh? I did not have the time to be lonely."

Here comes another negative reply. This was the only part of her that bothered him before, she was unusually negative at times. Again with the teen angst, he often had such thoughts. But now? Now something is different.

His thoughts broke off when he heard the sound of rushing footsteps.

The doors burst open revealing Terashima Yuhi.

"Yuhi? What's wrong--"

Terashima rushed past him and pulled the girl into his arms. "Thank god..."

"I'm alright Yuhi, but thank you." Sumire mumbled. "Ah, help me get rid of these other copies. The sponsor copied too much."

Yuhi glanced over at him, his gaze was very dark. "Sumire, let's go somewhere else."

Sano watched as the two quickly left the room. "Were you not supposed to keep him busy my friend?"

Hino appeared from the other door and sighed. "Well Yuhi is hard to trick, he catches on quickly." He trailed off. "Hey, do you have to chase Ibuki Sumire?"

"Hmm? I thought you were supportive."

"Only because I don't think this is a good time for Yuhi to get a girl, he is at the height of his career right now. It is far too dangerous for him to be in a relationship. However, I changed my mind. Yuhi will do anything for that girl, he even told me this empire he built to this very day was for her. He loves her that much."

Sano blinked when he heard that declaration, he could even imagine Terashima Yuhi saying those words. The empire he built huh? Indeed, the empire Terashima Yuhi built was large. Ever since the boy debuted when he was ten years old, to now eight years later. He has the most connections out of everybody in the Entertainment industry, and also the business world.

He initially came to this company to make connections with Terashima. But who would have thought the guy would end up being one of his biggest rivals? Then again maybe he is the only one who thinks that way. A one sided rivalry is interesting too, because Terashima Yuhi does not see him as a threat.

"Sumire seems to be scarred deeply from the accident."

Hino nodded and passed him some papers. "These are the unofficial hospital papers. It seems she locked herself up at home for a month. She did not speak or see anybody at that time. She did not sleep for two weeks or so and when she finally did she had a mental breakdown." He paused. "Do you want me to continue?"

Sano froze when he heard those words. "Does she have a mental condition? I thought it was simply her neuroticism."

"I don't know where you heard that, but she does not have that at all. It is a secret but that girl has severe depression. I was actually surprised when I saw the records. She had it ever since she was younger, and yes even when she dated you. Didn't you notice the signs?"

The signs? Her passive attitude and her negativity? Sano genuinely believed it was all teen angst, he did not think much of it at all. So that's why she reacted that way when he called her a psychotic bitch. Huh, it suddenly makes sense to him now. So all those times where it looked like she wanted to tell him something..

"Anyhow it seems she did go to a facility for a while, but it ended badly there since one of the workers abused her. Her family decided to cover up the incident and simply brought her home."

"She often wore long sleeves to hide her scars. I saw them though."

Hino nodded. "Well, that's all I can say. I thought she was a pretentious woman but that isn't it. If Yuhi is serious about her, I won't say anything anymore." Hino trailed off. "I suggest you stay away too, it's a bit too heavy for you."

Sano's lips curved to a smile. "Do you think I can't handle her?"

"You probably could. But look, this isn't a subject you understand well. You might cause her more emotional damage if you're not careful."

"Hehehehe." Sano burst into laughter. "This is interesting."

Hino sighed and shook his head. "This is a very bad idea." He passed him the documents. "You read the rest of it alone, but I warned you in advance. This woman isn't normal. Your better off chasing after somebody else in the rich elite circle."

Sano shook his head. "No, there is no need."

Sumire, she will return to him.

Eternal Melody 60 Is this okay?

K Bar - Tokyo -

Terashima Yuhi was not the easily jealous type, at least that was what he thought. But when he saw Sumire with Nakara, then Sumire with her ex. Yuhi realized how petty he was. The feelings of jealousy exist in him too. His gaze fell on the girl fast asleep in his arms. The moment they arrived at the bar, Sumire fell asleep.

It wasn't Friday, but he noticed she was sleepy and so he decided to come here instead. Yuhi examined her face for a few minutes and frowned. She looks exhausted. Sumire pretends that it does not bother her, but he saw the expression on her face when they had to meet that guy again today.

'Should I stop bringing her with me?

But if I do that, she would be left here by herself.:

Yuhi carefully tucked a loose strand of hair away and noticed her stir. Soon she opened her eyes. Sumire looked at him half dazed and half wondering before she closed her eyes again.

He blinked and chuckled. "Hey wait a sec."

"Yuhi, I'm tired. I want to keep sleeping."

"What about food?"

Sumire shook her head. "Sleep."

She is so cute when she is sleepy. Yuhi watched as she closed her eyes again, it did not take long before she fell into a deep slumber. He did not bother going back to sleep and continued to watch her.

Sometimes Yuhi wondered if this was okay. While spending each day with her like this is very nice. He knew that things could not remain this way forever. Sumire will eventually have to go back to the entertainment industry.

Returning is good for her, but at the same time it is bad. She won't have time for school, and her life won't be normal. Everybody will remember her as the girl whose boyfriend passed away due to an accident.

If she wants to get rid of that label, she will have to work even harder than before. Yuhi is afraid of what this would do to the girl. The world of music is not pure and could destroy a person completely. She is weaker than he thought she was.

She is strong, brave and courageous but also weak. That was fine, no human out there is perfect. But Terashima Sumire is in her most fragile state right now.

Mamoru, what was that guy thinking? He knew his illness would not get cured. So why on earth did he ask Sumire out? If he was only going to leave her behind, then he shouldn't have gotten closer to her.

Yuhi knew it was cruel of him to think this way, but he could not bear seeing Sumire in so much pain.

She really is far too foolish, her skin colour too. She's far too pale. Guess what happened between her and Iwa really had an effect on her health. She was already losing loads of blood to begin with and such a action didn't help her at all.

Yuhi shuts the door and made his way down the hallway, and down the steps. He spotted Jae on the counter.

"Ah King, welcome. Is she sleeping?"

Yuhi nods, "Yeah".

Atushi, who was washing up, called out from the kitchen area. "Both of you don't have any luck from the seems of it. Terashima you wanted to speak with Aki right?"

"Did that guy come here?"

"It seems like you just missed him."

Yuhi sighed as he took a seat on the stool. "Sumire was looking for him not too long ago. I figured she had some questions for him, that's why I thought to look too."

Jae blinked. "Well, he is obviously missing her on purpose. If he wants to appear before her, he could do so anytime he wants no?"

At that comment Yuhi looked away annoyed. "That bothers me."

"The thing that bothers you now is the appearance of the ex right? I looked into him like you asked, but I couldn't find anything suspicious. Well other than his numerous scandalous relationships."

"Is he in one right now?"

"Hmmm not any important ones, a few A lister celebrities but the ones he boosted into that position."

That was annoying, Yuhi wanted too find some dirt on him. If he could find some dirt, then maybe that guy would leave Sumire alone. He seems to be the type who cares about his status more. "He came here to use Sumire right?"

"It seems so, she has a good standing in the idol industry. Her debut song star was a huge hit and even now it is in the top 5. She only sang it for three lives and one tv appearance, a total of four times. Naturally nobody has gotten sick of it yet."

"I have a bad feeling." Yuhi looked at the documents Jae passed him. "Keep an eye on these women, maybe we could use them."

"Got it."

Atushi returned from the kitchen. "But you know Yuhi, you should be careful with Sano. That guy is a snarky one."

Yuhi raised his eyebrow at this. "You know him?"

"I'm friends with his brother, he was in Sumires class before."

What a strange twist of fate, huh? "I don't like him." Yuhi muttered.

"Nobody liked him. That nice guy acts?" Atushi scoffed. "We all saw through it, The problem is the guy who should have been her boyfriend was acting so wishy-washy and annoying. When Sano appeared and took Sumire away, I was not surprised. Sumire prefers guys who are straight forward."

Yuhi lit up his cigarette with his lighter and inhaled. "You know that guy you mentioned, where was he when Mamoru passed away?"

"Running away like a coward I'm afraid. Nearly all of them did that. Nobody understood what happened. We were all busy preparing for her concert. He was the one who received the call and rushed off. I think he got there before us but could not help."

"I understand it was a harsh time for you all. I don't want to blame you. But the one who was hurt the most was Sumire." Yuhi sighed. "Couldn't you all put your grievances and conflicting feelings aside and help her out?"

"I understand how you feel Yuhi, but it was not that easy and I think Sumire understood that too. Even if we helped her then, she would not have relied on us but pushed us away instead."

Yuhi understood that mindset too but he still felt frustrated. Those guys were all there to help her and yet nobody did anything.