Chariot and Moon

by ww411

Summary

Akira, Ryuji, and Mishima come of age by being super gay together. Emotional vulnerability. Mishima gets a Persona.

Notes

I loved Persona 5 (and have logged like, 150+ hours on it), but one thing that bummed me out was that [spoilers] there were no M/M relationships possible. It made sense to me that a game whose themes were about being an outsider that some kind of gay relationship would be possible. I also thought that certain potentially interesting subplots for other characters were hinted at but not as well explored as I would have liked, so this work aims to correct that.

In short, this work will include a lot of gay relationship (sex included, but not the main draw, hopefully), coming of age, and other teenager-y drama that I think the game could have benefitted from including.

Side Note: If you're here for the sex, this chapter doesn't have any. All in good time :P
“Apologize to Ryuji!” Akira’s words from earlier repeated themselves in Ryuji’s brain for what was probably the 50th time that day. His fingers tapped the side of the ratty cot he was lounging on with a restless cadence. There was something about the way Akira had said it… the shove and rude words that had prompted it had all but left Ryuji’s consciousness. Akira, usually so levelheaded, had done something that seemed totally out of character. Possibly escalating a chance rude encounter into a fight was something Ryuji would’ve done - but something he would’ve thought that Akira would brush off with trademark calmness.

“Apologize to Ryuji!” The words were powerful, demanding. Ryuji had almost expected to see Akira’s clothes change, and for Arsene to appear and impale the offender on the end of his cane.

"Akira..." Ryuji had felt drawn to him ever since they had accidentally stumbled into Kamoshida’s Palace. Akira's charm was head-turning in the real world, but in the Metaverse, as Joker, he radiated a self assuredness that made Ryuji feel like they could take on anything and win.

Suddenly, he was reminded of the first time he had summoned his Persona. Ryuji had felt self conscious in the skintight leather, but Akira had said, "It looks good on you.” And not in that dry, joking tone that he sometimes used when he was calm despite whatever crisis was rearing its ugly head.

Now that Ryuji thought about it, he had felt a similar tightness in his chest and stomach when Akira had said that…and every single schoolboy crush he’d had since he was 8.

"He is pretty for a guy..." Ryuji murmured aloud. He shook his head like a dog coming out of water. It's just because we've been in danger together, he thought. And...I've never had someone in my corner like that. That's all.

The sound of the front door closing interrupted his train of thought. "Ryuji? Could you come help me with the groceries?" His mom’s voice sounded muffled through his door.

"Coming!" He rose from his cot and entered the kitchen/living area of their tiny home. Mihoko Sakamoto stood at the table, a couple paper bags in front of her. Mihoko was an unimposing woman. Her slight frame seemed more suited to a bird or a kite. At the moment, she was removing various canned vegetables from one of the bags and placing them in the pantry drawer.

Ryuji sighed, walked over and pulled the other bag to him. Inside, a bunch of frozen dinners and instant noodle packages. Well, at least he'd have memories of the buffet from earlier to relive.

"Sorry Ryuji, you're going to have to make do with this for this week," she said. "I have to cover Hisaya’s shifts at work this week so I won't be home until late. But I got the nice brand ramen you like for us tonight, at least."

"Thanks mom," Ryuji grinned. "Let's eat!"

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"So, how is school going?" Mihoko asked.

"It's ok," Ryuji said.

"You've been staying out later," she said. "Did you join one of the school teams?"
"What? No." Ryuji stared down at his food, moving the dregs of his noodles around aimlessly with his chopsticks. "Just been hangin out with some new friends."

"Ohhh I see," Mihoko said, a smile tugging at the corners of her mouth. "And who is the lucky girl who's won my Ryuji's affections?"

"W-what?! It- it ain't like that!" Ryuji protested as a pink flush betrayed his cheeks. The room suddenly felt very warm.

"Mhmmm..." Mihoko’s grin revealed itself in full. "Your old mom’s been around the block you know. I know a crush when I see one!"

"..." Ryuji stared harder at his dregs, not trusting his voice or his face.

"So you don't know if she feels the same way," she continued. "Well you should say something. I know you boys don't like sharing your feelings, but trust your mom, it helps to get it out there. And if she's really so nice, she'll let you down easy even if she doesn't feel the same way."

She got up from her seat and put an arm around Ryuji's shoulder and squeezed gently. "It'll all work out sweetheart," she said, kissing the top of his head. "Go on and do your homework or something. I'll handle clean up."

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That night, Ryuji sat at the edge of his cot, flipping his phone over and over in his hands. Finally, he tapped out a quick message to Akira.

[RS] Hey, you up?
Akira received a text from Ryuji. Akira has a crush on Ryuji. Akira tests the waters to see if Ryuji feels the same.

Chapter Notes

No sex in this one either. Please read it anyway :)

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Akira’s phone buzzed and he raised it blearily to his face. "Who could be texting you so late?"

"It's Ryuji," Akira said as a smile unfurled on his face. Ryuji was the first friend he had made in Tokyo, and their friendship had grown with incredible speed in the last month. Like Akira, Ryuji struggled with a label that had been unfairly bestowed upon him, and that mutual understanding had spurred an emotional closeness that could be considered uncommon in people who had been friends for years.

Of course, Akira felt similarly about Ann, who also struggled with her own labels. But his connection with Ryuji was unique, and soon after they had stolen Kamoshida’s Treasure from his Palace, Akira had realized: Oh…I have a crush on Ryuji.

And Akira had crushed hard. He loved the way Ryuji spoke, with an animation and openness that he both admired and envied. He loved the way Ryuji had been so willing to dive into the dangers of Kamoshida’s Palace in order to help others, even when he didn’t have a Persona at the time. And of course, Akira loved the way Ryuji looked in his Phantom Thief attire. It was a good thing that Akira took point as leader, otherwise he’d probably spend too much time staring at the way Ryuji’s tight leather pants hugged his ass.

He had given it some thought, and deemed it not impossible that Ryuji also swung the other way, despite his loud appreciation for the opposite sex. After all, Akira’s last and first boyfriend had been a stereotypical jock type. That established, Akira decided that he should start testing the waters with Ryuji.

“Ugh, tell him a good Phantom Thief needs his sleep!” Morgana yawned and curled back up into a tight little ball of black and white fur.

[AK] I am now. What's going on?

[RS] Oh, shit sorry, I thought you'd still be awake.

[RS] My bad, we can talk tomorrow.
It's cool, why're you up so late?

I'm...excited that we're gonna keep doing this Phantom Thieves thing. Can't sleep.

I know how you feel.

That's cool and all but duddee you're always so tame!

Show a little feeling for once

Akira chuckled to himself as he lowered his phone to his waist and lifted his shirt up to show off his surprisingly toned torso. He gave a thumbs up and an exaggerated seductive look to the camera before sending the selfie to Ryuji.

A whole minute passed before Ryuji responded.

Dude!!! Not what I meant!

...but I think our training's paid off, you look pretty ripped

You know you liked it

Bullshit

You take so long to respond to stare?

It ain't like that man!

Anyway, if you're free tomorrow, want to train?

Exams are coming up. Shouldn't we be studying?

Ughh dude. How about we train first, get ramen, and then study?

Sounds good. I'll see you tomorrow.

Akira grinned goofily to himself. “Got him,” he said softly aloud. After all...what kind of fully straight guy would've taken that opportunity to comment on his abs?

The next day, Akira met Ryuji outside the Protein Lovers gym. Ryuji was dressed in a teal tank top and a pair of gray sweats that had been rolled up to his knees. Akira wore his customary tracksuit.

Dude, I don’t know why you wear that to the gym,” Ryuji said. “I was on the effin’ track team and I never wore a tracksuit!”

“It’s comfy,” Akira said, a little defensively. “Besides, I get cold on the train. It’s too air conditioned.”

“Aw c’mon, next you’re goin’ to complain about havin’ cold hands because you have bad circulation,” Ryuji said. “What’re you, a chick?”

Akira reached up to rub the back of his neck sheepishly. “...They get cold sometimes.”

“I’m tellin’ you man, chicks don’t dig the tracksuit. You gotta show a little more skin, like me. Show ’em that manly muscle,” Ryuji said.
“Ah I see...and did you learn that from your current or past girlfriend?” Akira said with a deadpan tone and expression, though a small crinkle of laughter in his eyes gave away his teasing intent.

“I mean...I just read that somewhere,” Ryuji said as his cheeks flushed and his eyes grew wide. “Fine, you got me, I’ve never even been in, you know, a couple...Have you?”

“Yeah, twice, back home,” Akira said. “My first girlfriend broke up with me after I was arrested.”

“Oh shit dude, I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to bring up somethin’ like that,” Ryuji said.

“It’s no big deal,” Akira said. “I don’t think we were going to be together forever anyway. And here I’ve got Ann and you. I’d take you guys any day.”

“That’s so sappy...but I get it.” Ryuji threw an arm around Akira’s shoulder. “I can’t believe you’re more of charmer than me!” They started to go in before Ryuji paused. “Wait, you said you’d been in two couples, but that your *first* girlfriend broke up with you after you got arrested...”

“Yeah...” Akira said. “Why?”

“So wait, you dated someone that wasn’t a girlfriend before her?” Ryuji asked.

*Oops*, Akira thought. He hadn’t meant to “test the waters” so quickly. But the cat was pretty much out of the bag now. “Yeah, my first boyfriend,” he said.

“Oh!” Ryuji’s eyes widened again, and Akira could swear that there was some red in his cheeks again. “I didn’t know you batted for both teams.”

“It’s not really so different, at least in my experience,” Akira said. “I don’t think their pros and cons could be generalized to dating either sex.”

“Well, who did ya like datin’ more?” Ryuji asked.

“Hmm...Daisuke,” Akira answered. “He didn’t try so hard.”

“I don’t get it,” said Ryuji. “Don’t ya want someone to try hard?”

“Well, what I mean is, Ichiko had this idea that to be a good girlfriend she had to be all demure and cooking for me and always laughing at stuff I said, even when it wasn’t funny. And she expected me to always be showering her with gifts and defending her honor and all that crap,” Akira said. “Don’t get me wrong, I liked her. But I think we just went in with different expectations, and that’s why it didn’t work out in the end.”

“Huh,” Ryuji said. “I never thought about it like that. What happened with Daisuke?”

Akira shrugged his shoulders. “His parents found out, and then they moved. I haven’t heard from him since - his parents were pretty strict. I know they took away his phone. And if he’s sending me letters...my parents aren’t passing them along.”

“Wow...that sucks...” Ryuji gave Akira a reassuring pat on the shoulder. “Well...I can’t believe I’m sayin’ this sappy shit but...you can count on me. I ain’t goin’ nowhere.”

Akira smiled. “I know. Come on, let’s go work on our ‘manly muscles.’”

“Aw man, gimme a break, it sounded better in my head, all right?!” Ryuji gave Akira a light punch on the shoulder, and Akira’s heart leapt at the touch, and the tacit acceptance that it meant.
If you like how things are going, let me know! If not, let me know constructively!
Thanks
Akira

Chapter Summary

The moment you've all been waiting for...

Chapter Notes

As you might guess from the summary, there's sex in this chapter. Ryuji and Akira get closer than ever ;)

In the gym, they ran together on treadmills for about 20 minutes before Akira noticed Ryuji starting to favor his right leg; he was wincing every time his left foot came down. Akira reached up to wipe sweat from his forehead. “Do you mind if we switch to something else?” he panted. “My legs are getting tired.”

“If you want,” Ryuji said while powering down his treadmill. “We can switch to weights.”

Ryuji stepped off the treadmill and casually leaned against it, though Akira could see that he was shifting as much of his weight as he could to his right side. “I’ll spot you first,” Akira offered.

“Thanks,” Ryuji said with visible relief as he lay down on the bench. He did ten reps, and then Akira bent his knees and crouched slightly to help bring the bar up, accidentally brushing the top of Ryuji’s head with his clothed crotch, which sent an unanticipated surge of arousal through him. Better not to say anything, Akira thought. If he noticed, Ryuji didn’t say so. “Your turn,” he sprang up from the bench, grinning widely, as always.

As Akira took his place on the bench and looked up at Ryuji, his eyes were instantly drawn to the front of Ryuji’s gray sweats. Was Ryuji just that well-endowed, or was he a little bit aroused? Fortune favors the bold, Akira thought. “Hang on a sec,” Akira said. “I’m getting a little warm now.” He unzipped his tracksuit jacket, revealing his bare chest and stomach. “Alright, now I’m ready,” he said, lowering himself to the bench again.

Ryuji was definitely more pink in the face now, and Akira could swear he saw the front of his sweats twitch and grow a little more pronounced. This continued for several more sets, and Akira watched with some bemusement and excitement as Ryuji grew pinker and sweating, and further, kept reaching down to adjust his pants, surreptitiously trying to hide his increasing arousal.

“I think I’m good for today,” Akira said, as Ryuji looked around furtively for what was probably the tenth time. “Let’s hit the shower.”

“Y-yeah,” Ryuji said. “Let’s go.”

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The locker room was surprisingly empty. Akira opened a locker, stripped down, and quickly stowed
his clothes before padding over to the shower area. Unlike the school showers, which were arranged in separate stalls, the Protein Lovers shower area was just a large, communal open space with shower heads interspersed throughout. Akira turned on the water and closed his eyes contentedly as the heat from the water and steam seeped into him.

“The shower after working out always feels so good,” he murmured aloud.

“Yeah, like all the gross sweat and dirt is just comin’ off ya,” Ryuji said.

Akira opened his eyes to see Ryuji had selected a shower head directly across from him. He glanced down for a quick second - some of Ryuji’s arousal had been lost in the walk over, but he definitely seemed “fluffed.”

“You know, for some reason I expected you to be blond down there,” Akira blurted out. *What?! Who says that?!

“H-hey! Why’re you lookin’ at my junk?!” Ryuji’s face flushed the deepest red yet as he covered his crotch with his hands. *Uhhhh…*

“Sorry, just the contrast drew my eyes,” Akira said/bullshitted. *Worst bluff ever…you call yourself a Phantom Thief? Who would believe that?* “You do a great job with your dye. I can never even see the roots.”

“Dude that is the gayest thing you’ve ever said,” Ryuji said. *Wow, he bought that…he really must be into me. Time to go for broke.*

“If you don’t want this, tell me,” Akira said. “But I’m picking up on signals that you do.” He paused, watching Ryuji's face for a reaction. After a few of the longest seconds in Akira's life, Ryuji nodded so imperceptibly that Akira would've missed it if he hadn't been paying such rapt attention. Still, he had to be sure, so he didn't move. A small sound escaped Ryuji's lips as they looked into each other's faces.

“I want you,” Ryuji said softly. That was all Akira had ever wanted to hear. He reached up and cupped the back of Ryuji’s neck, and then with a little pressure, brought their lips together.

“Mm! - Mm! - mmmm…” Ryuji’s startled, muffled (and ultimately, not at all genuine) protests did not last long. It started off soft, just a series of lightly pressured pecks, but as Akira felt Ryuji lean in, he kissed harder, taking Ryuji’s bottom lip into his mouth to massage it ever so slightly before letting it go. Ryuji moaned, and Akira felt him kiss back so hard that their teeth clicked together for a second before he could adjust.
Akira’s other hand reached up to rest gently on Ryuji’s chest. He lightly traced circles around a nipple, before letting his fingers glide down past Ryuji’s treasure trail and around Ryuji’s now fully erect cock. Ryuji gasped, but didn’t pull away. Akira began to pump Ryuji’s cock slowly, sliding Ryuji’s foreskin up and down the shaft a few times before letting the tip of his thumb rest on the slit of Ryuji’s cock. Akira’s thumb circled the slit a few times; he relished the slick feel of Ryuji’s precum against his skin.

“God that feels so good!” Ryuji gasped out as their lips parted for air. “Please don’t stop!”

Akira kissed Ryuji again lightly as he massaged Ryuji’s frenulum. “I don’t plan to…” He got to his knees and kissed Ryuji on the tip of his cock before taking the head into his mouth.

“Unngh…” Ryuji moaned as Akira expertly worked his tongue and lips around the swollen head of his cock. Up close, the sight of Ryuji’s manhood sent a shivering thrill through Akira’s body. At a guess, Ryuji was about 6.5 inches long, and somewhere between 4-5 inches around. When hard, his foreskin retracted just enough to expose half the head of his cock, but could be pulled further back to expose the whole head. Ryuji’s balls were smooth without being shaved, and when Akira paused for a breath, he sank his nose into the soft skin, and Ryuji’s musk filled him with even more lust.

Diving back in, Akira sucked enthusiastically, urgently at Ryuji’s cock head, flicking his tongue up against the frenulum over and over as his hands continued to pump the shaft and fondle Ryuji’s balls. “Akira…holy fuck I’ve never felt so good in my life…!” Despite his initial nervousness, it seemed to Akira Ryuji was really leaning in to what was happening; his hands were planted firmly on Akira’s head, and he was bucking his hips slightly, pushing himself into Akira’s mouth eagerly.

“That bar is about to get a higher,” Akira said, pulling off for a moment. Ryuji looked adorably confused for a second, but the look was replaced with one of intense pleasure as Akira went down the shaft of Ryuji’s cock in one fell swoop, until his lips were latched firmly at the base of the shaft, and the head of Ryuji’s cock was plugging the back of his throat.

“Fuckkkkk,” Ryuji moaned as Akira deep throated him. With one of his hands still fondling Ryuji’s balls, Akira reached around and grabbed a handful of Ryuji’s tight, runner’s ass. He could feel the muscles of it flex along with every time Ryuji’s cock pulsed with a new wave of pleasure. God, Ryuji was so fucking hot. In this moment, Akira wanted nothing more than for Ryuji to cum down his throat.

“Dude, I can’t take much more of this…!” Ryuji warned, his grip tightening on the back of Akira’s skull. Ryuji’s words kicked Akira into overdrive as he began moving up and down the shaft again, constantly deep throating Ryuji’s cock. With his hand on Ryuji’s butt, Akira reached a finger toward Ryuji’s hole, letting his fingertip rest there for a second before gently massaging, but not penetrating it. His other hand went to his own erection, which he began to pump furiously.

“Fuck, fuck, shit I’m going to cum, I’m going to cum…!” Ryuji gasped loudly. At that, Akira plunged down the shaft and at the same time, pushed his finger ever so slightly into Ryuji’s hole. The taste of salty cum filled Akira’s mouth as Ryuji pumped seven heavy loads down his throat, his cock throbbing with each shot. The multitude of sensations (and what was basically the fulfillment of one his longtime fantasies) was enough to push Akira over the edge, and he shot his own load onto the tiled bathroom floor.

Akira gently cleaned the last bit of cum from Ryuji’s cock as he came off of it before he stood up to face him again. Ryuji was still pink in the face, and he was panting as if he’d just run a race. “I- I- … damn!” he said finally.

“I’m glad you liked it,” Akira said, kissing him gently on the lips. “…but we should probably get
going. Don’t want to get caught with our pants down, so to speak.”

“Right...” Ryuji said. While Akira was practically glowing with post-coital bliss, Ryuji looked like a scolded puppy as he pulled on his post-workout clothes.

_Shit_...
Ryuji

Chapter Summary

Ryuji has a little freakout, Akira helps him through it.

Chapter Notes

Spoiler: This chapter kind of requires a reminder that Ryuji got kicked off the track team because Kamoshida told the whole team about how Ryuji's dad was a drunk that hit Ryuji and his mom, so Ryuji took a swing at Kamoshida and got the team disbanded. Ryuji's mom blamed herself for his actions, which Ryuji feels a lot of guilt for.

"Ryuji, come on," Akira's voice had a tinge of urgency to it, but it sounded curiously far away. Fuck...we just...and I liked it...I'm...

At the edge of his vision, Ryuji saw Akira pull his phone out. He felt a weird pulse of energy, and suddenly he found himself in his Metaverse costume. Without looking up at Akira - no, Joker - Ryuji asked "...Why'd you bring us here?"

"It's private," Joker said. "...I thought you seemed like you needed it."

"...Yeah," Ryuji said. "...thanks."

Joker walked over to the wall and sat. "Sit with me?" he asked. It sounded like he wasn't sure how Ryuji would respond. That uncertainty...so unlike him, especially when he was Joker.

Ryuji walked over and sat beside him, keeping a few inches of distance between them. "I'm sorry, I shouldn't have gone so hard," Akira said. "I should've realized what a big step something like that is."

Maybe...but I wanted it, Ryuji thought. I said, I want you. You didn't make me say that.

Joker waited, and when Ryuji didn't say anything, he continued. "It's ok to feel confused," he said. "I did...I thought that there was something wrong with liking another guy that way."

I don't think there's anything wrong with it, Ryuji thought. But what about what other people think? What would Ann think? People already think I'm just poor trash...and now this...

Joker reached out his hand tentatively, and then took Ryuji's. Ryuji heard him breathe a sigh (of exasperation? of relief?), but Joker made no other noise. He felt Joker squeeze his hand lightly, comfortably, and automatically, Ryuji squeezed back, running his thumb against the back and side of Joker's hand. They sat this way for a long time, neither saying anything. It was calming; Ryuji settled into a rhythm where he would stroke Joker's hand on every other breath, just staring at this perfect replica of the wall of the real gym. It was easier to focus on than what they'd just done.
Finally, Ryuji looked over at Joker. “…can we talk about what happened today?” Ryuji asked. Joker nodded. “I mean - can I just talk, and you listen?” Another nod. Joker steepled his fingers together and peered over them at Ryuji.

"That was…real intense today," Ryuji began. “And…I…don't know...I've wanted to kiss you for a while now. And now that I have...I realize that I didn't kiss you just 'cause I think you're good-lookin' and a good guy. I don't know if this is going to make sense..."

“I think there was this, idea, this hope inside me that thought, if I kissed you…that that would mean I was like you. That I could become you," he continued.

"I don't get it," said Joker. "What do you mean?"

"It's just...you're so goddamn perfect. You're good-lookin', smart, and everyone seems to just like you. I mean Ann...when she looks at you - in the Metaverse 'specially - she's so into it. And Morgana thinks you're amazin'. And so do I. You don’t care what the world thinks,” Ryuji snuffed loudly and wiped ineffectively at his eyes with his sleeve. His face felt like it was on fire underneath his mask! …but at least it was stopping Joker from seeing how red he probably was. “It's stupid. I'm not different now. Still just that poor punk-ass kid at school who everyone thinks is going to be a bad influence on you. Still that kid that made his mom cry."

“Before Kamoshida…at least I was a runner. At least I was good at something. No one was faster than me, not when I was really tryin’. But shit…” Ryuji hit his leg with a balled up fist in frustration. “Now I ain’t even that."

“I mean fuck! If we hadn’t gotten dragged into Kamoshida’s Palace by accident, would you even be friends with me?!” Ryuji stopped suddenly, his chest heaving like he’d just run a marathon. His eyes stung with hot, angry tears, which he wiped away roughly with a gloved finger.

“Skull…” Joker’s voice cracked - not with adolescence - but with emotion. Maybe it was just his imagination, but Ryuji thought that behind the mask, Joker’s eyes were just as wet as his own.

"...you idiot," Joker smiled as he lifted his mask and flicked a tear from his eye. "How could I not like you? You're so...alive-you wear your heart on your sleeve and I know I can count on you like nobody else. You say what's in your heart and I know you mean it. That's not being some punk kid - it's admirable."

Joker swiveled so that they were facing one another directly. He took Ryuji’s shoulder in his free hand. "Listen to me…you're always ready to act to help someone else…even before you had a Persona. You just ran into Kamoshida’s Palace because you wanted to help the people he was hurting. Skull…I think you’re the heart of the team. And you inspire me to lead the Thieves the right way."

There was a short poignant pause, and Ryuji shook his head. “…You’re so sappy,” he said. “But thanks.” Then, in a move that surprised himself, he leaned forward and kissed Joker on the lips for a brief moment. Pulling away, he was pleased to see that Joker looked a bit shocked. Ryuji kissed him again and grinned. “Come on…you promised you’d help me pass my freakin' exams today too.”
Chapter Summary

Ryuji finds out where Akira lives. First appearance of Morgana in this fic.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Ryuji was silent for nearly all of the train ride back to Yongen-Jaya. As he leaned against the subway window, his fingers fidgeted inside his pockets. Out of the corner of his eye, Ryuji could see Akira watching him when he thought Ryuji wasn't paying attention, a slight look of concern still on his pretty face.

I wonder if he thinks I'm still down…Ryuji thought. …he's kind of cuter when he's not all cool-guy calm and takin’ charge.

As he thought that, Ryuji's mind filled with the memory of what they'd done in the gym. Akira's smooth, pale skin had glistened so attractively in the steam, his fluffy hair looking almost silver as water droplets formed all over it. When he’d leaned in - that urgent, desperate, HOT kiss - and the blow job that followed. Ryuji was starting to get hard again just thinking about it.

Ryuji started a little when he felt a hand on his shoulder. "We're here," Akira said.

Ryuji looked up to see the front of a small cafe. "Lee blank?" He asked uncertainly. "I don't know that English word."

Akira laughed and reached up to ruffle Ryuji's hair. "That's because it's French!"

"Oh..." Ryuji kicked mentally kicked himself. That was the one bad thing about Akira. Good grades seemed to come to him without effort, while Ryuji often felt he got the same grades whether he studied or not. It made him feel even more inadequate. "We here to get a snack before we study?"

"No," Akira said. "I live here. My room's the attic."

"No shit, really?" Ryuji said. The information involuntarily brought a smile to his face. If Akira lived in a cafe attic, he probably wouldn't care that Ryuji's bedroom was more closet than room.

Stepping inside, Ryuji was immediately hit by the tantalizing smell of curry mixed with a bittersweet smell he knew was coffee. Despite that, the shop was empty except for a man with a short, trimmed beard wearing a pink collared shirt underneath an apron.

"Welcome," the man said to Ryuji, though not in the fake sweet way that chain store employees would use. He seemed to spend a second taking in Ryuji's blond hair, untucked shirt, and flopped out suspended, then turned to Akira. "This a friend of yours?"

"Sojiro, this is Ryuji," Akira said. "He's in my grade at school."

"You two better not get into any trouble up there," Sojiro said. "If you do..."
“You’ll throw me out,” Akira finished. “I get it. We’re actually here to study. It’s nice and quiet here.”

Ryuji wasn’t sure why, but he could swear that Sojiro winced at that. “All right, all right. I’m glad to see you’re taking your studies seriously,” he said.

“Akira’s got really good grades,” Ryuji blurted out. “This is more for me.”

“Yeah yeah, misunderstood delinquent with a heart of gold,” Sojiro said. “I get it. Go on upstairs, you’ll scare away my customers.”

“What cust-“ Ryuji was cut off as Akira pushed him toward the stairs.

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Akira’s room was emptier than Ryuji had expected. A couple of shelves, one of which held dusty cardboard boxes, the other completely empty, save for the center shelf, which held a fake ramen bowl that Ryuji recognized from Ogikubo. An old sofa, a desk, a small table that held an ancient tv and a bed that was just about as small as Ryuji’s cot back home. Even Morgana, who was cleaning his face with his paw, looked like he barely fit on it.

“It’s not much, but it’s mine for now,” said Akira. “Make yourself at home.”

“I can’t believe you kept that ramen bowl I gave you at Ogikubo,” Ryuji said. “I mean, even I don’t like their ramen that much.”

Akira shook his head. “Me neither…but it reminds me of you when I look at it, so I like to have it there.”

“Oh!” Ryuji felt a warmth blossom from his chest; he could swear that the room had gotten a few degrees warmer. To cover his embarrassment, Ryuji moved to sit down at the edge of the cot.

“What’d you do today, Morgana?” he asked.

Morgana breathed out a theatrical, long-suffering sigh. “You’re looking at it. It’s boring when nobody in the cafe understands me.”

“Why didn’t you come to the gym with Akira?” Ryuji asked.

“Because that would’ve been even more boring,” said Morgana. “What was I going to do, watch you two sweat and smell you get stinky with those weights? No thanks.” He paused to lick his paw again. “Although Akira can be pretty impressive on the dummies.”

“Whoa! You know how to use those!?” Ryuji said, wide-eyed. The dummies at the gym were for people who practiced martial arts forms like Wing Chun. Usually the guys he saw using them were incredibly fit and ripped - although now that he had seen Akira shirtless and then some, he could picture it. That’s pretty hot. Ryuji thought, as spots of pink appeared in his cheeks.

“Oh, it’s nothing,” Akira said, abashedly reaching up to scratch his neck. “Just something I picked up because I had the time.”

“That’s so cool, you have to teach me!” Ryuji exclaimed. “Plus I bet it’ll help with the Phantom Thief stuff!”

“Shhh, not so loud you idiot!” Morgana said. “Sojiro’s still downstairs! And also, these walls are pretty thin.”
“Oh, sorry,” Ryuji said. *Scolded by a cat...jesus my life is weird. “My bad.”*

“I’m sure it’s fine,” Akira said. “Sojiro hasn’t paid me much attention so far. And Morgana...sorry to disappoint, but Ryuji’s here to study, so I don’t think we’re going to be terribly interesting tonight either...”

“Ugh... you guys are so boring. Plus we all know Ryuji’s not going to score high marks anyway,” Morgana said. “He doesn’t even have one good subject!”

“What’d you say?!?” Ryuji shot up from the cot and brandished his fist in front of Morgana’s face.

“You heard me,” Morgana said as he continued to bathe his face. “What’re you going to do about it?”

“Why you-!”

A laugh from Akira broke the tension. “You look ridiculous,” he said, putting a calming hand on Ryuji’s shoulder. “Could you imagine if Sojiro came up here and saw you picking a fight with a cat?” Ryuji lowered his fist and hung his head a little sheepishly.

“You’re right...” he said, glaring daggers at Morgana. “I get too worked up over what a *cat* thinks about me.” Morgana hissed at him, but Ryuji ignored it. How the hell did Akira stand hanging around this cat all day? Ryuji probably would’ve tossed him by now. Although to be fair, Ryuji had never heard Morgana say anything less than nice to Akira.

“No big deal,” said Akira. “And Morgana, you should apologize to Ryuji...and maybe give us some space for the evening. Can’t have any distractions.”

“Fine, fine, fine,” Morgana said, somewhat chagrined. “Sorry Ryuji.” He jumped off the bed and headed for the stairs. “It smells better downstairs anyway.”

Chapter End Notes

Mishima should enter the story in a couple chapters, and then I'll start jumping around more in terms of time, if that makes sense. I just like to establish things slowly at first.
Akira and Ryuji, Sitting in a Tree...

Chapter Summary

Ryuji and Akira's relationship is discovered!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

They studied until dark, which was surprising to Akira. Ryuji usually got distracted by something within the first 15 minutes, but something today was apparently just clicking for him. It was almost frustrating, watching Ryuji read his textbook without looking over except to ask Akira the occasional question. Akira had hoped that they would study together on the sofa or the bed, but Ryuji had elected to sprawl himself out on the sofa, so Akira was relegated to peering at him over his own textbook. So, while Ryuji spent the late afternoon studying for exams, Akira spent it studying Ryuji: the way his brow furrowed when he was concentrating, the way he bit his lip when he didn’t know an answer…the way his shirt rode up a little every time he stretched himself out. Damn it…Akira thought as he realized for the twentieth time that he had turned several pages without absorbing any of it.

Finally, Ryuji looked up from his book and made eye contact. “What…? Do I have something on my face?” Ryuji wiped at the corners of his mouth with his sleeve.

Akira laughed. *Ryuji, how’re you so damn cute?*

“Then what’s up?” Ryuji got up from the sofa and took a seat next to Akira on the bed.

“I was just thinking there was something I wanted to tell you after what you told me today,” Akira said. “When you said you felt that I don’t care what the world thinks… and that you feel like you’re not good enough for me…”

“Oh yeah, what’s that?” Ryuji asked, perking up. “Am I about to hear the deepest darkest secret of Yongen-Jaya’s most hardened criminal?”

Akira flicked Ryuji’s knee as hard as he could. “Ow!” Ryuji complained. “Quit usin’ your secret-dummy-finger-flickin’ techniques on me!”

“I’m being serious!” Akira said, though he couldn’t keep a small smile from gracing his face. “Anyway, it’s my glasses.”

“What about ‘em?” Ryuji asked. “They’re nice-lookin’.”

“I agree,” Akira chuckled. “They’re also fake. The lenses are just regular glass. I don’t need them to see at all.”


Akira sighed as he took the glasses off and started polishing them with his shirt. “I guess I thought that wearing them made me look like a better student…so when people at school found out about my criminal record, they’d maybe think it was just a rumor.” He chuckled again, this time a bit ruefully.
“Sounds stupid, now that I say it out loud.”

“I guess it kinda does,” said Ryuji, peering into Akira’s now unadorned face. “Let me see ‘em.” He placed them on his face after Akira handed them over, then got up from the bed and stretched. “Whaddya think? Do I look like I’m top of the class?” he grinned that adorable, mix of cocky and innocent grin of his. “… What’s up? You’re blushing…”

Shit, Ryuji with glasses on is actually really hot. Akira coughed slightly to cover his embarrassment. “Top-of-the-class!Ryuji is really doing it for me.”

Ryuji frowned as he took the glasses off. “Hey c’mon, don’t make fun of me…”

Akira stood up and pulled Ryuji into a tight hug. “I’m not!” he protested. *Does he seriously not get how fucking cute and handsome he is?* It was amazing how natural the hug felt, how easily they fell into it. *Am I going too fast?* “I…I know it was a big step today. And I’m sorry if it was too much. You seemed to like it at the time…”

Ryuji smiled and surprised Akira with a light kiss. “…I definitely did.” He looked up into Akira’s eyes. “And…it feels good to just - be able to show you, just like, physically how much I like you. I thought it’d feel weird, huggin’ and kissin’ a dude…but this feels like everythin’ I’ve ever wanted.”

“Mhmm…” Akira brought his forehead to meet Ryuji’s.

A creak from the bottom of the stairs alarmed them to the impending presence of Sojiro. Akira felt Ryuji push away from and him and fall back onto the sofa, opening the book he’d left there to a random page as a pink flush crept up his cheeks. "I'm locking up for the night," Sojiro said when he got to the top. "Be sure your friend catches the last train. I don't want the school complaining that you're a bad influence on others by making him late tomorrow."

"Don't worry," Akira said. *I wonder if he's ever going to warm up to me…*

"Uh huh," Sojiro waved carelessly as he descended the stairs. Shortly thereafter, Morgana came bounding up the stairs, something crumpled up in his mouth. “Pleash terll me you’re done witsh shtudying’,” he said.

Akira stayed quiet until he heard the sound of the door closing downstairs. “What’ve you got there?”

Morgana walked over to him and spat a wad of bills into his lap. “I got bored downstairs so I decided to practice my Phantom Thief skills.”

“Wait, you actually stole money from people?” Ryuji asked.

“Of course not! I just left the cafe and looked around for money that people had dropped,” Morgana said. “How insulting…and you’re welcome. I’m sure Akira is going to spend at least some of it on medicine or equipment for you.”

“Yeah well…! Ah, it ain’t worth it,” Ryuji said, even as he made a rude gesture at Morgana. “I should be heading home I guess…” He didn’t seem all to pleased by that to Akira.

“You sure? If we wake up early tomorrow, we could leave before Sojiro gets here,” Akira said.

“What?!” Morgana leaped up onto the shelf so he could be at eye level with Akira. “Is this because you two were kissing earlier?”
Ryuji turned the same shade of red he’d turned at the gym earlier. “H-how do you know about that?!”

“I actually came up before Sojiro did and I saw you kissing, and I thought, ‘why don’t I give them some privacy’ like any good friend would and went back downstairs,” Morgana said. “I didn’t think I’d have to give up my spot on the bed!”

“Y-you’re not gonna tell anyone, are you?” Ryuji asked.

“Who am I going to tell? Ann?” Morgana asked. “Please…I bet she already knows. She has good intuition.”

“…do you think she’d be cool with it?” Ryuji asked plaintively. *Damn, those bedroom eyes turn into puppy dog eyes pretty fast, Akira thought.*

“We’re Phantom Thieves!” Morgana said. “We have better things to worry about than who you like to kiss, Ryuji.”

“Hey, I still like girls, I just like kissin’ Akira too!” Ryuji said.

“Good,” Akira tugged Ryuji over to his bed. “It’ll be a tight fit, but I think we’ll manage.” He laid back on the bed and beckoned Ryuji to join him. Ryuji hesitated for a second, then moved to crawl on top of him, straddling Akira’s left leg before lowering himself onto Akira’s body. Ryuji’s weight on top of him was comforting - like when Morgana did the same, only more so.

They spent the night just lying there: Morgana curled up on the top half of the pillow above their heads, Ryuji’s head on Akira’s chest, listening to Akira’s heartbeat, and Akira’s arms around Ryuji, holding him tightly and securely, as if he was afraid he’d go flying away if he didn’t hold on.

Chapter End Notes

The way things are planned out now, I’m expecting two more chapters this week, and then the introduction of Mishima starting next! Thanks everyone for waiting so long for what was promised, and staying with it. I really do appreciate it!
Chapter Summary

It's smut again

Chapter Notes

I initially wanted Akira and Ryuji to get down and dirty again in the previous chapter, especially because the idea of Ryuji wearing Akira's glasses is really hot to me for some reason, but I couldn't quite make it make sense what with Sojiro and Morgana being around and somehow not catching them. Posting it here anyway, because I assume that if you're reading, you're at least as much of a perv as me and will enjoy it ;)

Then, “Akira, are you hard?” Ryuji asked. “Somethin’s pokin’ me.”

Akira turned red. “I uh… I’m really into top-of-the-class! Ryuji,” Akira said lamely.

Ryuji flushed with embarrassment and pleasure. “Well, I hope you’re ok with him just bein’ pretend, ‘cause that ain’t ever happenin’ in real life,” he said, sitting up and shrugging his shoulders with faux embarrassment. “…Thanks, Akira. I never woulda made a move if you hadn’t.”

Ryuji slid up so he was directly lined up with Akira, then lowered himself gently. He could feel Akira’s cock straining through the fabric of their pants, and the thought of Akira being so turned on by him without even having to do anything sent a rush of affection through Ryuji (and a rush of blood to his own cock). Watching Akira’s face, Ryuji could see that he wanted a kiss, or more, but was afraid of going too fast. It’s my turn to take the lead, Ryuji thought.

He began by softly grinding their crotches together, and was rewarded by a soft groan of pleasure from Akira. He was so goddamn cute with his eyes closed…Ryuji leaned over and kissed each eyelid. “Ryuji…” Akira said, as he thrust his hips up.

Shit… I don’t actually know how to take the lead with this kind of stuff, Ryuji thought. “So uh… I don’t want to leave you hangin’… but I uh…” he could feel his face turning red already. So embarrassing. “I don’t really know where to start with this…”

“I’m not complaining,” Akira said. “If it feels bad, I’ll tell you. But I kind of doubt that’s going to happen… just do what you think will feel good - or tell me to do something, and I’ll do it.” God, how does he stay so calm in these situations? I feel like my heart’s gonna beat through my chest…

“Umm….ok…” Ryuji leaned back so he was basically sitting on Akira’s thighs. “Take off your shirt?” he said hesitantly. So tame after what we already did… Ryuji kicked himself mentally. How is he turned on by me?

Akira smiled reassuringly at him before reaching down and peeling his shirt off, revealing his slim, toned torso. Ryuji reached out with his left hand and touched Akira’s chest. He was so warm. The
feel of Akira’s heartbeat steadied him, and Ryuji took a deep breath. His fingers traced their way down to the front of Akira’s pants, where his cock was clearly outlined against the fabric. Ryuji palmed it instinctively, and Akira let out another groan of satisfaction. *So far so good…just do what feels good for me…*

Ryuji pulled his on shirt off, knocking the glasses he was wearing a little askew as the shirt came over his head. Akira reached up and adjusted the glasses. “Top-of-the-class! Ryuji is even hotter with no shirt,” he said.

Akira’s words swept across Ryuji’s brain like a wave, filling it with brazen courage. Ryuji dived forward and kissed Akira hard, slipping his arm under Akira to bring their chests together. The feel of their skin-to-skin contact was electrifying; Ryuji pulled Akira tighter to him, until he couldn’t tell the difference between their separate heartbeats and breaths.

Akira’s hands gripped Ryuji’s butt firmly, and he found that he enjoyed the sensation. “Take my pants off!” he managed to get out from between their mashed-together lips. He felt Akira’s finger fumble at the catch on his pants, and then Akira’s fingers against his hips as he pulled his pants and underwear down. Ryuji’s cock sprang up a little on release, smacking him in the stomach and leaving a small droplet of precum.

“Fuck that is hot!” Akira blurted out.

“Who’da thought it’d be me to get the famously calm leader of the Phantom Thieves to curse like that?” Ryuji said. “Anyway, your turn.” He tugged Akira’s pants down eagerly. Akira’s cock was a little longer than Ryuji’s by about half an inch, though not quite as thick. Like Ryuji, he was uncut, and the pink head of his cock contrasted prettily with the pale color of the shaft. His pubes were trimmed short but not shaven, and his balls were silky smooth.

“Jesus…every part of him is so effin’ pretty…”

Ryuji reached down and grasped Akira’s cock as Akira had his, giving it a few cautious pumps. It felt good in his palm, the skin softer and smoother than Akira’s hand. “Mmf…that feels good,” Akira said. Ryuji leaned down again and kissed Akira as he continued stroking him. *C’mon Ryuji…he can jerk himself off.* Ryuji began kissing down Akira’s body, down his sternum, to his trim belly, until finally he reached Akira’s cock.

*Go on…if it tasted bad, Akira wouldn’t have done it…* Ryuji lowered his face to Akira’s cock. He could feel heat coming off of it, and smell Akira’s arousal. It was similar to his own precum when he’d smell it out of curiosity/lust himself, but there was something about it too that was distinctly Akira. Ryuji steeled himself with a breath, then put his mouth around the head as he’d seen Akira do.

*It’s like sucking a salty, thicker thumb in’a turtleneck,* he thought. *Not bad though. Nice, even.* Akira groaned again as Ryuji ran his tongue experimentally over the underside of his cock. It emboldened Ryuji to start sucking in earnest. He tried to go as far down on Akira’s cock as he’d seen him do earlier, but found that he couldn’t quite make it past the halfway point before he felt the urge to gag. “Oh man!” Ryuji said as he pulled off to catch his breath. “How’d you do all of me before?”

Akira shrugged. “Practice makes perfect. I couldn’t go all the way myself with Daisuke for a while.”

“R-right…” *I ain’t about to give up that easy!/ Ryuji went down on Akira again, sucking at his cock like a drowning man gasping for air. Ryuji felt Akira’s hand grip the back of his head and tighten as he bucked his hips upward uncontrollably, desperately trying to delve deeper into Ryuji’s throat.*

“Mmf…” Akira being so hot for him was making him even hotter. Ryuji grabbed Akira’s hips, and managed to get another inch into his mouth.
The appeal of getting a blowjob is obvious - but Ryuji had not thought that giving one could be so hot too. Every time Akira groaned his approval, Ryuji felt a throbbing pulse in Akira’s cock, and knowing that he was the cause of that made him just as hard as he’d been at the gym.

“Fuck…Ryuji that feels amazing,” Akira moaned. “…come up here, I have an idea.”

Ryuji pulled off again and obediently moved up so he was face-to-face with Akira. God, the flush in his face is so cute…Akira put his legs on either side of Ryuji and then said, “Here, lean down a little…” Ryuji leaned down a little, and Akira reached out and grabbed him by the waist, guiding him until their cocks were aligned against each other and touching. With his other hand, Akira encircled the two of them and slowly began bucking his hips again while using his thumb to spread their precum over both heads.

Ohh I get it…Ryuji began mimicking Akira’s thrusting movements, grinding their slick cocks against each other in Akira’s hand. The feeling from the friction of the two rubbing against each other was intense, more so even than when Ryuji had secretly bought a bottle of lube for his jerk-off sessions. Every thrust sent a new surge of sexual energy through Ryuji’s body and a trembling thrill up his legs that threatened to cause him to collapse on top of Akira.

Watching Akira as they frotted against each other was just as arousing. The sheen of sweat that was building on Akira’s toned body, the look of turned on concentration on Akira's face as he worked to match Ryuji's rhythm, and the hard breaths that came from each of them punctuated only by the occasional uncontrollable grunt or yelp of ecstasy combined to give Ryuji an even more intense experience than the one he’d had in the gym shower.

In this moment, he was more physically connected to Akira than he’d ever been. The feeling of their balls dragging against each other was like the satisfaction of scratching an itch multiple a hundred times. The tautness of Akira's muscular shoulders under his arms, a base against which he could stay upright forever. And Akira's lithe, sexy legs wrapped around him, holding him in that perfect position so that every thrust spurred the next, deeper, harder, and faster - it was too much! “Akira - I’m gonna cum!” Ryuji warned him.

“Me too-!” They shot together, covering Akira’s chest and face in pearlescent white confetti.

They breathed raggedly in unison for a couple of seconds before Akira reached up and stroked Ryuji’s face softly. “…man, I’m surprised how good that felt,” Ryuji confessed. “I mean, I wasn’t even inside you or nothin’…you really know what you’re doin’.”

“You were no slouch either. I should’ve expected that kind of stamina out of a star athlete,” Akira teased.

Ryuji ducked his head in embarrassment, though part of the pink in his cheeks appreciated the veiled compliment. “Haha, yeah, I guess so…”

“I don’t want to take away from this moment, but if you could get the cleanup stuff from under the bed for me, that’d be great!” Akira said, gesturing at himself.

“Oh god, right!” Ryuji swung his feet off over the bed and nearly fell as his leg wobbled beneath him. Propping himself up like that so intensely had put a strain on it. Luckily, he managed to catch himself, and Akira didn’t seem to notice. Ryuji reached under the bed and pulled out a somewhat crusty looking rag that might’ve once been an off-white towel. “…you’ve been usin’ this a lot,” he said.

Akira blushed. “Well…I do see you pretty much everyday…”
“Shit, I did the same so I can’t judge…” Ryuji handed the towel over so Akira could clean himself up. “But uh…while we’re on the subject…this is gonna be a regular thing, right? …’cause I’m kinda hooked…”

Akira laughed as he wiped himself off and threw the towel back under the bed. “You were here for this, weren’t you? I’m definitely not ready to call it quits.” He pulled Ryuji close and hugged him tightly, his face on Ryuji’s chest. “Lie down next to me…the after is just as good - just in a different way.”

And as they lay against each other, Ryuji hugging Akira from behind with his arms wrapped around Akira’s chest, Ryuji got what Akira meant. As long as he had Akira in his life…he’d be safe, wanted, and loved. He’d belong.
The following morning, Akira woke to his phone buzzing underneath his pillow. Across from him, he saw that Ryuji was totally unbothered. He looked so peaceful with his eyes closed, his chest rising and falling with each breath. Akira kissed his forehead, but Ryuji still didn’t stir. Above his head, however, Morgana stretched and yawned. “It’s so early…” Morgana complained.

“We have to leave before Sojiro gets here to open shop,” Akira said simply. “We’ve got half an hour.”

“Yeah yeah yeah…” Morgana grumbled. “This is all your boyfriend’s fault.”

Akira blushed. “We haven’t made anything official. I don’t want to rush him.”

“Uh huh. Well I’ve seen enough TV to know that when two people kiss in high school, it makes them a couple,” said Morgana. “Anyway…” he stretched out and extended his claws into the pillow. “I bet I could wake Ryuji up…”

Akira gave Morgana an exasperated look, then sat up and gave Ryuji a shake. “Whassat? Lemme sleeepppp.” Ryuji pushed Akira away; or, rather tried to. As there wasn’t any space for Akira to go, Ryuji might as well have been pushing the wall. “Five more minutes…”

“He is *really* cute when he’s sleepy,” Akira mused aloud. “Five minutes couldn’t hurt…”

“I don’t get what you see in him,” Morgana said. “But we’ve got half an hour at most until Sojiro gets here, so…” Morgana flexed his claws again meaningfully.

“All right, all right!” Akira shook Ryuji again. “Come on, we’ve gotta go!”

“Ughhh fine…” Ryuji sat up and rubbed his eyes blearily. “Can I borrow a shirt? …and is it weird if I use your toothbrush?”

“Yes, and go ahead,” Akira responded. “Just make it quick, we have to leave ASAP.”

“Right right right…” Ryuji peeled off his shirt and tossed it into his bag. He walked over to Akira’s box full of clothes and began rifling through. “Man, don’t you have anythin’ that isn’t white, gray or black?” Ryuji complained. He pulled an off-white v-neck shirt out of the box. “Think I can pull off the V?” he asked.

Akira looked him up and down, pretending to imagine Ryuji in the shirt, while in reality just tracing the faint muscle tone of Ryuji’s chest down to his stomach. “I think you look hot,” he said.

Ryuji flushed pink. “I’m not even wearin’ it yet,” he said.

“Ugh, if you guys are going to be gross, I’m going to wait downstairs.” Morgana hopped down from the bed and raced down the stairs.

Akira smiled. “Come on, let’s not keep him waiting too long.”

———
It was so early that they managed to get seats next to each other on the train. A good thing too, because Ryuji almost immediately fell asleep on Akira’s shoulder, his mouth slightly open. They arrived at the school with an hour to kill, which they spent sitting in the courtyard, quietly reviewing some last minute questions.

“Good morning!” Ann Takamaki’s cheerful voice broke their last-minute study session. She approached one of the vending machines and bought a juice before sitting down with them. “I’m mad that you guys didn’t invite me to your study session, but to be honest, it’s too early for me. I definitely wouldn’t have come if you had anyway…you guys ready?”

Akira nodded, calm as ever. “Actually, yeah,” Ryuji said. “Akira’s good at helpin’ me study.”

“Well, let me quiz you! What’s it called when a woman uses her womanly powers to take down men?” Ann asked.

“Oh…” Ryuji said.

C’mon man, you know this…

“…A femme fatale!”

“Whoa!” Ann and Morgana said in unison.

“Screw you guys!” Ryuji stood up from the table quickly, but Akira caught his arm.

“Nice job…I knew you’d get it,” he said in that ridiculous, calming voice. “You worked really hard yesterday. I don’t even stay up that late studying.”

Ryuji relaxed under Akira’s grip. “Yeah, I know. Thanks.”

“Sorry Ryuji, I didn’t mean to insult you,” Ann said. “Hey, before we go, would you guys mind meeting at the hideout after exams today? I know we have more, but it’ll be quick, I promise!”

“Sure,” Ryuji said. “Anything to hold off the studyin’ a little longer.”

—— ——

Ryuji was the last one up to the rooftop. When he got there, he saw that Akira looked a little winded - in fact, the front of his shirt was all bunched up, as if he'd been dragged by it forcefully - and Ann looked like she was about to burst.

“Finally!” she pulled Ryuji over and pushed him up next to Akira.

“All right guys, spill the beans - what happened yesterday?” she said.

Out of the corner of his eye, Ryuji could see that Akira was stone faced as usual. “What’re you talkin’ about?” he bluffed, scratching his neck in what he hoped was a non-suspicious way.

“Don’t play dumb with me, Ryuji, you’re not good at it!” Ann said. “First of all, you two have been spending a lot of time together!”

“We’re best friends!”

“Second, I’ve definitely caught you staring at Akira a couple of times, in and out of the Metaverse!”

“Whatttttt you’re imaginin’ things…”

“Third, you spent the night at Akira’s yesterday!”

“How could you even know that?!”
“You’re wearing one of his drab shirts instead of your usual bright yellow ones AND you got to
school early, which would never happen unless someone was there to wake you up!”

“…ok but that doesn’t prove- “

“Plus, Akira had a bit of a drool stain on his shoulder this morning, which I think means you fell
asleep on his shoulder on the train earlier this morning! And finally, you just lied about having spent
the night there, meaning you think you have something to hide!” Ann crossed her arms triumphantly
and stared at the two of them, daring them to dispute her.

“Whoa…” Morgana said for the second time that day.

Ryuji looked over at Akira; he was grinning wider than he’d ever seen him grin. “What’s so funny?”
Ryuji grumbled.

“That was just so…thorough,” Akira said. “She didn’t leave you any points of escape. At least not
that I can see.”

 “…fine,” Ryuji lowered his voice for the first time in probably five years. “We kissed and fooled
around a little yesterday, ok? And I slept in Akira’s bed last night. You happy?”

“Happy?! I’m so happy for you I could scream!” Ann pulled Ryuji into a hug, jumping up and down
as she did so. “And I’m so glad all of that womanizing crap was just an act!”

“Umm…I admit that I might’ve crossed the line a coupla times with the womanizing stuff, but I’m
still into girls, Ann,” Ryuji said. “I’m just also into Akira. That’s allowed, right?”

Ann stepped back so he could see her roll her eyes at him. “Of course it’s allowed! I’m a model,
Ryuji, I know literally dozens of guys who like guys. It’s fine, and anyone who doesn’t think that is
an idiot.”

 “…thanks Ann.” Ryuji’s voice caught a little. “Really. You wanna get a crepe before we all go
study?”

“Ryuji, if I ever say ‘no’ to that please call an ambulance,” Ann said. She turned to Akira. “You
know, you’re really doing a great job turning him into good boyfriend material, even after, what, one
night? I’m starting to see the appeal.”

“Really?! Could you say that to your girlfriends?” Ryuji asked.

“No!” she gave him a shove before picking up her bag. “You’re definitely treating me to a crepe
now!”

Ryuji turned to Akira with a grin. “Well, it was worth a shot, right?”

Akira returned the smile. “Maybe, but I usually try to win girls over with my personality over word
of mouth.”

“Screw you, we can’t all be leader of the Phantom Thieves!”

Chapter End Notes
Expect the next chapter to finally introduce Mishima!
Do you believe in the Phantom Thieves? Mishima stared at the poll he'd placed on the Phan-Site, his brow furrowed in frustration. "16%..." he murmured aloud. "That's such BS..." It was so obvious to him that the Phantom Thieves existed, he just couldn't understand why people, even students and faculty at Shujin, were so quick to dismiss the idea out of hand.

Admittedly, Mishima had been closer to the situation than most; he still had the bruises to prove it. They had to be real...and more so than that, they had to be Kurusu, Sakamoto and Takamaki. Who else but Shujin students would've even known and cared about Kamoshida's abuse? And of those, how many were victims, like Shiho? How many were beaten down cowards...like me...

That was why the Phan-Site needed to succeed. He had to pay them back for what they'd done for him. But so far, progress was slow. He was no closer to showing the world how great the Phantom Thieves were. He was no closer to being somebody important, somebody famous. He was just… cheering from the sidelines.

"Hey Mom," he greeted his mom as he entered their home.

"Hello dear," his ___ Mishima's eyes remained glued to the TV program she was engrossed in. "...Your father's-"

"-going to be working late again," Mishima mouthed silently with her. It had been the same exchange every day for 4 years now, ever since his dad had taken that job at Okumura Foods.

Mishima headed to his room, where he opened his laptop and began scrolling through the new posts on the Phan-Site. It was mostly garbage: either troll posts or requests so insignificant that Mishima wondered why the person had even taken the time to post. It wasn't surprising...the Internet was full of people who had nothin better to do than troll, and with so few people actually believing in the Phantom Thieves, good requests would obviously be scarce.

Still...there had to be something...Mishima's eyes scanned the forum relentlessly until they fell upon a single, promising entry. Immediately, he texted the details to Kurusu.

[AK] That's horrible.

[YK] I know the Phantom Thieves will take care of it.

Hitting home on his phone, he was about to put it away before he noticed a strange, red-and-black
app that he didn’t recognize. Huh…some kind of malware, probably. He’d have to put his phone through a factory reset. After doing so, he tossed his phone to the side and laid back on his bed. The last few days had been a series of late nights: creating the Phan-Site, moderating it, passing the most promising information along to Kurusu…

Kurusu…Mishima had been intimidated by him at first, knowing only about his criminal record. But even then, he had felt an attraction. He had realized that the swooping sensation when Kurusu looked at him wasn’t just from fear, but from lust. And when he’d discovered that Kurusu was a Phantom Thief, and their leader probably…Mishima’s fear!lust turned into a full-blown crush.

Everything about him was just so…exciting. He was braver than Mishima (after all, he had taken on Kamoshida without batting an eye). He was a better student than Mishima (how in the hell he managed to Phantom Thief and study was baffling). And of course, he was stunningly attractive. Just thinking about Kurusu’s piercing, dark eyes and imagining himself ruffling that adorable fluffy black hair was enough to send a rush of blood to Mishima’s nether regions.

He cocked his head, confirming that the sound of his mom’s TV program was still ongoing, then reached up and locked his bedroom door. Then, he quickly tucked his shirt up behind his head and tugged down his pants. Although he had technically been on the volleyball team, Mishima had not gained much in the way of muscle from the experience. He was slim but not muscular, and he had little muscle tone. Despite being self-conscious in innumerable other ways, Mishima was actually pretty confident in his looks. Mishima was uncut, 6 inches long and about 4 or so inches around. He had certainly watched enough porn to realize that there were plenty of guys who were into the “twink” look, and Mishima thought that he fit that description perfectly. In fact, being as slender as he was made his cock look bigger than it was.

Reaching down, Mishima wrapped his fingers around his swiftly hardening cock and gave it a few strokes. He kept himself all but shaved down there, preferring just the slightest layer of hair to frame his junk. Mishima ran a hand down his smooth chest down to his equally smooth balls, cupping and fondling them slightly as he began to stroke himself off in earnest. “Mmm, Kurusu…” he murmured softly, imagining Kurusu on the bed with him, his fingers doing the work that Mishima’s were doing.

He imagined Kurusu coming up and showering his body with kisses before taking his cock into his hot mouth. “Fuck…” The thought of Kurusu looking up at him as he deep throated him was incredibly hot. But he needed more…Mishima leaned over the side of his bed and pulled a shoebox out from under it. He opened it, removed the magazines on top, and pulled out the dildo and lube that he’d bought online. The dildo was a dark aubergine, and it had a flared base with a suction cup that allowed easy removal, as well as giving it the ability to stand upright. Mishima squirted a generous dollop of lube out onto his fingers and began circling his hole with his fingertips, letting himself relax more and more until his fingers slid in essentially of their own accord.

Once he felt ready, he squirted more onto the dildo, and positioned it, imagining Kurusu leaning over him, pressing the tip of his cock to Mishima’s hole. “Please fuck me Kurusu…” Mishima murmured, and pushed the dildo in. He’d done this countless times, but each time he was struck by how freaking intense it was, how every time was just as pleasurable if not more so than the last. Each time he pushed the dildo in, he felt a surge of sexual energy spread throughout his body, and each time he pulled it out, only the desire to push it back in as swiftly as possible.

Given the angle, he couldn’t quite maneuver it at the speed he wanted, so Mishima removed it and stood it up on his desk chair, imagining a nude Kurusu sitting there, cock up, ready. Beads of precum were flowing freely from Mishima’s cock and he swiped it away with his fingers and transferred it to his mouth before sitting on the dildo. This was his go-to fantasy, as well as his favorite position to watch in porn. The thought of being in control despite being fucked, of being the sole reason for the
sheer pleasure of Kurusu, of exposing all of that to whoever was watching. So hot.

Mishima quickly began rising and falling on the dildo, his eyes closed as he imagined one of Kurusu’s strong arms wrapped around his chest, the other at his waist as he fiercely pumped into him. “Fuck yeah…let me ride that cock…!” Mishima groaned as he continued to stroke himself. “Yeah…Kurusu…you like my tight ass?” In his fantasy, Kurusu would always grunt out a feral “Yeah!” and begin pumping even harder. Kurusu being so singularly focused on him was so arousing…he was close now…there was no turning back…

“Kurusu, I’m gonna cum! I’m cumming!” Mishima moaned softly, imagining Kurusu speeding up one last time as they both orgasmed hard in unison. Mishima fired five shots onto himself, one of them landing in his open mouth, which he swallowed instinctually, eagerly, even.

Mishima opened and his eyes, returning to sober reality. He sighed; it was always a little sad afterwards, as he came down from his high and realized that his imagination wasn’t reality, that his feelings were unrequited. It wasn’t healthy, Mishima knew, to fixate on someone that wasn’t going to return his affections. But how could he avoid it? Kurusu was in his class, had saved him from an abusive teacher…had genuinely seemed like he cared about Mishima, even if it was platonically.

*I have to be worthy of that…I have to!*

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The next day in class, Mishima was staring ahead during a boring lecture when he noticed Kurusu and Takamaki pulling their phones out in the corner of his vision. He surreptitiously placed his elbow on his desk and rested his chin on his open palm at an angle, so it looked like he was still paying attention to the lecture, but was in reality watching Kurusu and Takamaki.

Judging from how their faces mirrored each others’ reactions to whatever was being texted, they were clearly talking to someone together, probably Sakamoto. Whatever it was, it was important. And when they put their phones away, Mishima could swear that he saw a tightening in Kurusu’s facial muscles, his face a steely mask of resolve. *They’re going to do something today…they’re going to change someone’s heart!*
Mishima

Chapter Summary

Mishima gets his Persona!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Mishima wasn’t sure what had possessed him to follow them, but he was doing so now, tailing them just a few feet away inside Shibuya Station, his face partially obscured by a hoodie he’d casually thrown on. He watched them stop just outside and risked getting closer, just around the corner from where they were. “You ready?” he heard Kurusu say, followed by sounds of assent, and curiously, a cat’s meow. And then, he felt sick for a moment, a sharp pain in the center of his forehead. For a moment, he could swear the world was tinged a purplish red. Is this…still Shibuya Station? Where is everyone?

But Mishima heard footsteps approaching, and he quickly hid himself behind a nearby trash can. Peering out from behind it, he saw people he could only assume were the Phantom Thieves stroll purposefully past and into the subway.

Those are their costumes? … I can literally tell who all of them are… Mishima thought. Well… except for whatever that cat thing is… I can’t just stay here…it’s creepy without any people.

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The ride through whatever this place was harrowing, to say the least. Mishima was beginning to question his judgment as he hung for dear life onto the back of the cat-turned-bus, his feet braced on the bumper and his fingers constantly scrabbling for purchase. Finally, the cat-bus stopped and Mishima dropped to the ground, rolling away to hide behind a curve in the tunnel as he watched Kurusu, Sakamoto, and Takamaki exit the bus, which promptly turned back into a cat. “Look!” Sakamoto’s voice was strangely amplified - Mishima could hear him as if he were standing next to him. “Isn’t that?”

“Mishima?” Kurusu’s voice. But…he was still looking ahead. The Phantom Thieves moved forward, and Mishima saw…a copy of himself? Whatever it was looked exactly like him, except its eyes had eerie glowing yellow irises.

“Who are you?” his copy asked. “Wait…could you be…the Phantom Thieves? …Really!? You wanna change my heart, even after all I’ve done for you guys!?”

“Do we need to?” Kurusu asked.

“Of course not! I mean…ME of all people!? I’m the one guiding you to fame! You need me! Without me, the Phantom Thieves will never be more than just a curiosity in the pages of history!” Mishima’s copy shouted. Mishima’s fingernails dug into his palms. How could that copy twist his desire to help the Thieves into such a gross misrepresentation.

“Does…does Mishima-kun really feel that way?” Takamaki asked. Mishima’s stomach twisted
uncomfortably. To think that she would even consider the possibility…

“I’m not cruel,” his copy said. “I need you as much as you need me…if you just shut up and listened to me, you’d be even more famous. And I’d get some of the spotlight too…I wouldn’t just be some stupid zero anymore…”

“No! That’s not true! That’s not how I feel!” Mishima ran out from behind his cover. “Please…stop saying such horrible things…”

“Mishima?!?” The Phantom Thieves turned, surprised to see Mishima, the real Mishima come running out from the darkness.

“That explains why you guys felt heavier,” the cat thing said. “I didn’t want to say anything-“

“Oh? You brought him here…I thought I sensed something familiar…” his copy interrupted. “I guess you can hear all that I have to say from his mouth then.”

“I…I don’t feel that way,” Mishima said. “I only want to make up for what you did for me and others by changing Kamoshida’s heart…”

“Come now, Mishima, don’t lie to them…and don’t lie to me, or well, yourself…” his copy said, locking eyes with him. Mishima found he could not look away. “We both know the real reason you want to help the Phantom Thieves. It’s like I said before…without them, we’re zeroes. We mean nothing to the world. If we were to disappear, who would notice? Our parents? HA! Don’t make me laugh? Friends? What friends? Nobody noticed us when we were literally covered in bruises…”

“That’s…that’s not true…” Mishima was keenly aware of how the Thieves were all looking at him now. With revulsion? Or worse, with pity? “You…you shouldn’t say stuff like that…”

“I’m only being honest,” his copy said. “Which is more than can be said for you in the real world. How many times have you looked at Kurusu and wanted nothing more than to -“

“SHUT UP!” Mishima shouted, his eyes suddenly wild with fear. His copy recoiled as if it had been slapped, its eyebrows curving down into a glare. “You…you don’t know what you’re talking about...YOU’RE NOT ME!”

Curious dark tendrils appeared all around his copy, wrapping it up in a glistening, black and red cocoon before exploding outward, revealing a demonic looking fey creature, though its face was still Mishima’s.

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His copy had the Phantom Thieves on the ropes. Somehow, its lithe body was nearly always just out of reach, as if each Phantom Thief was just miscalculating the range of their attack. What's more, half the time that the Thieves had managed to score hits, the copy had struck back with deadly effectiveness.

Mishima gasped as Sakamoto landed with a brutal crunching noise in front of him. Sakamoto was swaying as he rose to his feet, looking more than a little punch-drunk.

"Skull!" The cat monster ran up to Sakamoto. Its spirit - or whatever that thing was - appeared and brandished its weapon, and Sakamoto seemed to be filled with renewed energy as he raced back into the fight. Breathing heavily, the cat monster turned to Mishima, who recoiled a little at the attention. “I don’t know how much longer I can keep this up…Mishima! You have to accept it! That Shadow is part of you!”
“But I don’t want to be that…” Mishima said softly.

“That’s good! That’s okay! But he’s a part of you right now, whether you like it or not. And whether you like it or not, I’m not sure the Phantom Thieves can survive this,” the cat monster said. “But you can make the choice, to rebel against him and change!”

Mishima looked at the horrible thing, the Shadow, that was lashing about at the Thieves. His heroes, and if he was being honest, his only real friends. “…You’re right. He is me.” Mishima walked towards the fight. “Hey! Hey you!”

The Shadow turned to regard him, a grotesque grin spreading across its face. “And what do you want with me, you worthless little worm? Come to make yourself the least bit useful by begging for your friends’ lives?”

“No!” Mishima stepped up to it, close enough so he could touch it, close enough so it could attack him if it wanted. “It…It’s like you said…you’re me…and I’m you.”

A pale blue light surrounded the Shadow, enveloping it in another cocoon, though this one was softer, warmer. Words that were not his own burst forth in Mishima’s mind as he fell to his knees, clutching his head: AREN’T YOU TIRED OF BEING AN AFTERTHOUGHT? OF LETTING PEOPLE TREAD ON YOU, BECAUSE YOU CRAVE EVEN THE POOREST ATTENTION? “Yes…I won’t let that happen to me anymore!”

WONDERFUL! I AM THOU, THOU ART I…LET US LEAD THE WICKED ON A MERRY CHASE THAT WILL NEVER END!

A bone-white mask appeared on his face in a flash of blue fire. It covered his whole face, though the wide grin carved into it left room for his mouth, and the mirthful eyeholes allowed him to see. Mishima reached up instinctively and gripped the edges of the mask. He yanked it off, and the cocoon exploded with a flare of blue-white light and energy. Another fey-like creature stood behind him now. Its skin was a woody brown, adorned with - veins? tattoos? - lines that resembled vines creeping up its body. Two tiny horns graced its forehead, which gave its youthful face an even more mischievous look. Two words bubbled to the surface of Mishima’s mind. “Persona…Puck…”

That wasn’t the only change. He now wore a skintight red and black leotard reminiscent of a superhero (think Red Robin from DC comics), complete with a cape that fell to about his knees, a pair of bandoliers that crisscrossed his chest, and a belt with several pouches sewn into it. He also held a spear in his hand, which strangely, felt very familiar.

Sakamoto approached him, still limping a little. “Sheesh…I’m glad that we don’t have to keep fightin’ that thing…”

“I’m sorry,” Mishima bowed his head apologetically. “I…I shouldn’t have followed you. You all got hurt because of me…and you might even have died…”

Sakamoto shrugged his shoulders, and Mishima winced as he heard a distinct cracking noise. “Don’t worry about it dude.. We’re all good, aren’t we? …but I vote we call it a day.”

Takamaki nodded. “Yeah…I already feel tired and we haven’t even left the Metaverse…”

“Way ahead of you.” The cat monster had turned into a bus again, and Mishima could see Kurusu at the wheel. Kurusu leaned out the window and beckoned everyone to get on. As Mishima boarded, Kurusu stopped him with a warm clap to the shoulder. “Hey…welcome to the Phantom Thieves…oh, and give some thought to a codename. You’ll need one.”
One of the things I missed in Persona 5 that was in Persona 4 was how the characters got their personas. I liked getting to see some real emotional vulnerability early on, and care about them before they join your team. Anyway, that's why I decided to have Mishima get his Persona this way instead of in Kamoshida's Palace.

Mishima's Persona is Puck (from Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream), and my thought is that his element is Bless and that he specializes in inflicting the confuse and dizzy status effects.

Also...I'm having some trouble coming up with/deciding on a codename for him. So far I'm considering Imp, Ghost, and Thespian, but I'm not sold on any of them. If you like any of them or if you have a suggestion, please comment, I'll definitely consider it!
The ride back to Yongen-Jaya had been pretty quiet. Mishima had avoided the eyes and words of anyone who had tried to engage him, and so the group (minus Ryuji) had quietly gone their separate ways without fanfare. It was a nice evening to roam the streets of Yongen-Jaya, and Akira was glad of the few minutes he and Ryuji were able to do so, tired and hurting as they were from Mementos.

It was nice to be able to sit down at Leblanc though. Sojiro had already left for the night, so the place was quiet.

"Your mom's ok with you staying over again?" Akira asked.

"Yeah. Late shifts all week." Ryuji stretched, then winced a little. "Shit, Mishima's Shadow really packed a punch..." he rubbed his leg and Akira saw his face pinch with pain. "My-“ Akira had never seen him look so vulnerable, even when Shadow Kamoshida had been beating him mercilessly, the first time they’d met. Ryuji’s eyes were so soft...he looked almost apologetic. "My leg’s killin’ me..."

"Hang on." Akira made up a makeshift cold pack with some ice from the fridge, several paper towels and a large ziploc bag, then offered Ryuji his shoulder to help him up the stairs. It was strangely reassuring, the weight of him, the way that Ryuji’s face felt, pressed up against his own.

Ryuji breathed a sigh of relief as he laid back on Akira's bed and placed the cold pack on his thigh. "Thanks. You're a lifesaver. One day my leg’ll be normal. It already feels that way when we’re in the Metaverse.” They lay in relative silence for a while, Akira's head on Ryuji's chest, with Ryuji slowly twirling tufts of Akira’s hair between his fingers. Morgana lay stretched out on the couch, looking about as exhausted as he possibly could.

"Sheesh…I didn't expect that outta a guy like him." Ryuji broke the silence as he crinkled the cold pack against his thigh.

"Hmm? What do you mean?"

"Well you know...Mishima's the kind of guy to just roll over...remember with Kamoshida? I didn’t think his Shadow would be so strong...“

"He may have been like that, but you heard him back there...he's fighting back now. We can’t all be blond punks running into danger to save the world.” He looked up into Ryuji’s face and gave him a kiss.

“That’s true, I am pretty special!” Ryuji grinned widely, but then his face grew sober, even thoughtful. “What do you think his Shadow meant?”

“What do you mean? I thought it was obvious Mishima’s pretty insecure,” Morgana said.
“C’mon man, I’m not that dumb…right before it changed, he said somethin’ about Akira, how he wanted to do somethin’ to him…” Ryuji looked into Akira’s face. “You don’t think…?”

Akira stared blankly at him. “What, you have a theory?”

“Well…yeah. What if he’s like me? What if he wanted - wants, to kiss you?” Ryuji said. “I mean…it makes sense. Hell, even Ann looks at you like that when we’re in the Metaverse. And I’ve heard girls talkin’ about you in the halls, about how hot it’d be to have a boyfriend with a criminal record.” Ryuji definitely sounded a little petulant to Akira near the end. Was he feeling jealous?

Akira waved his hand dismissively. They don’t know anything about me…what they do ‘know’ isn’t even true…and it’s so shallow…“Like I’d be interested. And Ann…she is breathtaking. But I don’t think we’d be a good match.”

“You two, maybe. You’ve got history.”

“Why’re you bringing this up?”

Akira smiled mischievously. “You jelly?”

“I ain’t jealous! I already got to kiss you!” Ryuji protested. “I’m just sayin’ that’s probably it. Why else would he be embarrassed by it and not want us to know?”

“That actually sounds plausible Ryuji,” Morgana said. “I’m impressed.”

“Man, even when he compliments me he makes it sound a little bad…” Ryuji looked down at Akira. “D’you think you could magic up a warm pack for me? I feel like my leg’s frozen…”

“I guess I could boil up some water and wait for it to cool down…” Akira offered.

“That’ll take too long…I’ll just tough it out,” Ryuji said.

“How about this?” Akira sat up and put his hands on Ryuji’s cold leg and began massaging the spot gently with his fingers.

“Dude, that’s perfect…” Ryuji sighed as he leaned back.

“Yuck. I can see where this is going, and I do not want to be here when it happens,” Morgana said. “Remember our deal, Akira!” He hopped down from the couch and headed down the stairs.

“Deal? What’s he talkin’ about?” Ryuji asked.

“Oh!” Akira ducked his head in embarrassment. “I uh…made a deal with him that every time he gives us some, you know, alone time, I’d get him a roll of sushi the next day.”

“Dude, that’s gonna add up so fast!” Ryuji laughed. “How’re you gonna afford stuff for Thievin’?”

Akira pinched Ryuji’s thigh lightly - eliciting a sharp yelp from him - before continuing the massage. He enjoyed the feeling of Ryuji’s taut skin beneath his fingers, even if it was cold. That Ryuji allowed Akira to see him this vulnerable…it filled him with a determination to be worthy of that trust. “Well, if you want to go cold turkey on that stuff to save money…”

“Hey, I didn’t say that!” Ryuji said, eyes wide. “But speakin’ of…the thought of you kissin’ Mishima kinda turns me on. Is that weird?” In his head, Ryuji pictured Akira taking the smaller boy in his arms and pinning him against the wall, attacking his lips with his own. He felt his cock stir a little.

Akira cocked his head to the side. “You know, I’d never thought of him that way…but he is cute.
And the way he feels about himself…it makes me want to just scoop him up and hug him and just, I
don’t know, give him something good in his life for once…”

Funny, that’s how I felt when you told me about why you were arrested, Ryuji thought. I thought,
‘this guy needs a break.’ “Anyway…” Ryuji scooted forward a little, so that Akira’s fingers moved
from his mid-thigh to his upper thigh. “I’ve been doin’ some research…” He could feel his cheeks
turning red again. Shit, why was he still getting so nervous around Akira?

“Exams aren’t for some time…I’m impressed Ryuji.”

“Not that kinda research…!” Ryuji looked around furtively. “I meant, you know…porn kinda
research.”

Akira arched an eyebrow and looked at Ryuji with that infuriatingly sexy calm look of his. “Oh?”

“So I was thinkin’…did you ever do um…butt stuff with Daisuke?” Ryuji asked.

“Yeah.”

“And it was good? It didn’t…hurt you?”

“Honestly, those were the best orgasms I’ve ever had,” Akira said. “I’m not gonna lie, it takes some
getting used to. But once you do…it’s- well, it’s freaking amazing.”

“Oh! So…I was wondering if we could…try that? I mean…when I was uh…on top of you before…
it felt so good just bein’ so close with you, you know? And -“

“Say no more,” Akira pressed a finger to Ryuji’s lips. “I definitely want to do this with you.” He
reached under the bed and pulled a box out, rummaging past some things before pulling out a
condom and a bottle of lube. “Come here…let me show you the ropes.”

Ryuji practically threw himself at Akira, and their lips found each other almost immediately.
“Fuck…” Ryuji groaned as their lips slid roughly against each other. He felt Akira's hand reach up
his shirt and trace a circle around his nipple. Ryuji was rock hard within seconds, and as he lightly
brushed the front of Akira’s pants, he could tell that Akira was as well.

Kissing could never suffice for long, and soon they shucked their shirts, and their pants soon
followed. Akira thrust his clothed cock up against Ryuji’s; the moan that escaped his lips sent a pulse
of aroused energy through Ryuji, leaving a small wet spot of precum on the front of his boxer-briefs.
“I have to see you naked…” Akira gasped. “Please!” Ryuji could only nod his head furiously in
agreement.

The two pulled off their underwear and took a moment to revel in the moment and their bodies.
Ryuji soaked in the sight of Akira’s face, his eyes half-closed in pleasure, but somehow still
watching him with that knowing expression. His fit chest and abs, his arms and legs, and of course
his long cock. He could tell Akira was checking him out as well, his eyes sliding down from Ryuji’s
face down to his throbbing erection.

“All right, give me your fingers,” Akira said. When Ryuji obliged, he squirted some lube out onto his
fingers. “Now just, massage me down there…” Again, Ryuji obeyed, and Akira sighed as he felt
Ryuji’s slick fingertips against his hole. Around and around…Akira quickly relaxed under the
pressure of Ryuji’s fingers, and within minutes Ryuji had two of his fingers a couple knuckles deep.

“I thought this might be kinda gross,” Ryuji said. “But it’s actually really hot…your insides are so
hot, I can feel you pulsin’ around my fingers.”
“Just wait until you’re feeling it on your cock…god!” Akira said, his eyes rolling back suddenly as Ryuji’s fingers brushed against his prostate. “Fuck…I need you to fuck me, Ryuji…here.” Akira sat up and pulled the condom down Ryuji’s rigid member, then lubed it up before laying back down. He spread his legs a little and pushed himself up on his toes so he could help Ryuji with the first steps of penetration.

Ryuji shimmied forward on his knees, and Akira lowered himself gently until he felt Ryuji’s cock spread his cheeks and find the entrance of his hole. Akira reached down and gripped the base of Ryuji’s cock to steady it, pushed down slightly, and they were rewarded with a slight popping sensation as the head of Ryuji’s cock slid into him. The tightness and heat of Akira’s hole around his cock head felt incredible. He could swear he felt Akira flexing around it, each flex sending a wave of pleasure through Ryuji’s brain. “Fuck…” Akira groaned “How’re you doing?”

“I can’t believe it’s gonna feel better than this…” Ryuji said. “This already feels amazin’!”

Akira couldn’t keep a series of pleased moans from leaving his mouth as he slid the rest of the way down Ryuji’s cock over the course of the next couple minutes, each moan causing Ryuji to twitch and groan himself. He could already feel himself slicking the inside of the condom with precum. “You’re in,” Akira said as his butt hit Ryuji’s thighs.

“Fuck yeah…” Ryuji’s face was screwed up in intense concentration. Just focus...make this last...can't cum too soon...“This feels sooo good dude…”

“Lean forward,” Akira said. As Ryuji did so, Akira scooted forward a tiny bit and brought his knees closer to his chest, hooking each knee with an arm so his butt was upturned and Ryuji was basically in a pushup position above him, his cock still throbbing inside him. “Ok…now fuck me, Ryuji. I want- no, I need you…”

Ryuji leaned all the way down so he could kiss Akira passionately on the lips. “And here I thought I couldn’t get any fuckin’ harder for you…” He began pulling out and thrusting back into Akira. Ryuji began slowly at first, but with each thrust Akira would let out an encouraging groan of pleasure, and he quickly sped up into a steady rhythm.

Holy shit…Somehow, Akira looked even hotter right now. The sweat beading on his forehead, how his hands were gripping the bedsheets tightly. His fit chest and stomach, so hot under Ryuji’s fingertips. Akira's legs, loosely wrapped around him, holding him close. The sound and feeling of Ryuji’s balls slapping against his ass every time he thrust in…and of course, watching his length disappear inside Akira over and over again! Ryuji was sure this must be what heaven felt like.

Ryuji watched as Akira grasped his own cock and started pumping it in unison with Ryuji’s eager thrusts, and with the other, he grabbed a handful of Ryuji’s tight, muscular ass, pulling it down eagerly with each thrust. Fuck that’s so hot! Akira’s clear desire, his clear need for Ryuji was driving him crazy. Ryuji couldn’t keep himself from groaning as he continued to piston in and out of Akira. “I don’t know how much more I can take!”

“I’m close too…I just want to feel you cum inside me…just keep fucking me until you-!” Akira’s sentence was cut off as Ryuji sped up, powerfully slamming himself in over and over until he felt Akira’s grip tighten on his ass. Akira came hard, and with each shot Ryuji felt Akira’s hole spasming around his cock. With one last thrust, Ryuji came and swore he saw stars. He collapsed onto Akira, breathing hard, his cock still semi-hard inside him, his nose buried into the crook of Akira’s neck. Jesus, how does he not smell like sweat after sex? He still smells fuckin’ amazin’…

“That was really fuckin’ good,” Ryuji gasped into Akira’s ear.
“Yeah…I’m definitely going to need you to do that again.”

Chapter End Notes

Hope you all like Ryuji x Akira smut because I have every intention of writing more of it :P
Mishima, then Akira

Chapter Summary

Mishima gets his codename

Chapter Notes

No smut this chapter. Sorry :D

Thank you everyone who contributed a codename idea! I appreciate everyone's support so much, you have no idea

“Well, what’re your guys’ codenames?” Mishima asked the group at large. It was his first real outing in the Metaverse - before tackling a Palace, the group had decided it’d be best if he warmed up in Mementos. He sat in the backseat with Takamaki, while Sakamoto was in front with Kurusu.

“Joker.” Kurusu waved his hand as he took a tight turn to avoid a Shadow’s attention.

“Skull.” Sakamoto turned around to face him. “I mean, kinda had to, right?”

“Panther.” Takamaki flashed her trademark peace sign.

“Mona.” The cat b- Morgana - said. How is that working...this bus doesn’t have any speakers.

“Oh…well Skull and Panther are pretty literal…I don’t get Joker and Mona…” Mishima said.

“They’re cool names though.”

“Joker’s because he’s our trump card!” Morgana said. “And Mona’s because Skull forgot my name 10 seconds after he met me and thought it was Monamona.”

“Anywayyyy, what if we call you ‘Ghost’?” Sakamoto suggested. “Your mask’s all white and your Shadow was hard as hell to hit.”

“I don’t know…Ghost kinda sounds like a villain’s name, doesn’t it?” Takamaki said. “How about Thespian? After all, your mask looks like a classic drama mask!”

“Pass,” Sakamoto said. “I don’t even know what that means…Joker, what do you think?”

“Hmm…I’m thinking about Mishima’s outfit. What does it remind you guys of?”

“Dunno…I guess the cape is superhero-y,” Sakamoto said.

“Oooh you’re right! Just like the cartoons I used to watch!” Takamaki said.

Kurusu nodded. “Right. Remember what Mona said about our outfits? They represent our inner selves’ spirit of rebellion…so maybe something related to that?”
“…Robin,” Mishima suggested.


“It works on another level too,” Takamaki said. “His Persona, Puck - it’s from Shakespeare! And he goes by the name Robin Goodfellow!”

“Shit, I didn’t know that,” Kurusu said. “That’s cool!” He stopped the bus, letting it idle for a moment so he could turn around and give Mishima a wink. “Like I said before, welcome to the team…Robin.”

“Thank you! I- I won’t let you guys down, I promise!” Mishima said, his face set with determination. “Run down some Shadows Mona! I wanna see what Puck can do!”

Ryuji punched the air. “All right! Robin’s got me pumped up! Let’s take down some Shadows!”

———

Akira, Ryuji, and Mishima stood outside the security door in the central garden of Ichiryusai Madarame’s Palace. Akira stood calmly, not moving except for the slow rise and fall of his chest as he watched the door. Ryuji was shifting his weight between the balls of his feet, bouncing back and forth, giving the club he wielded the occasional practice swing. Mishima fiddled nervously with the shaft of his spear, occasionally glancing over at the other two, as if to affirm to himself that they were still beside him.

“I’m gettin’ antsy,” Ryuji said. “I mean…what’re the odds that Panther and Mona pull this off? First they gotta distract Yusuke long enough for Mona to pick the lock, and they gotta do it before Madarame gets back? And make sure he sees it? And with Panther’s shitty acting?”

“It’ll work out,” Akira said. It has to…Inside though, he had the same doubts as Ryuji. While hilarious when the stakes weren’t high, he had to admit that he wouldn’t have bet on Ann’s acting skills unless there was no other option. But of course, he had to keep a calm exterior. If the team fell apart, if they didn’t trust each other…

“Yeah but…” Mishima said, his voice wavering a little. “This is only the second time you’ve ever done this…and my first time.”

Akira hesitated a moment before approaching Mishima and putting a comforting hand on his shoulder. “You’ll be fine…you did okay in Mementos, remember? And you’ve got Skull and I at your back.”

“Thanks Kuru- sorry, Joker,” Mishima said. “…and I’m sorry again for spreading around that rumor about your criminal record. It’s my fault people at school avoid you…”

“I already forgave you for that,” Akira said. *He’s so hard on himself…*”Besides, not your fault. It’s the guy that framed me, and Kamoshida for making you do it. We’re square.”

Mishima smiled gratefully. He seemed like he was about to say something, but stopped himself. “Thanks.”

“Ugh…I’m done bein’ antsy, now I’m just freakin’ bored!” Ryuji complained. “I almost wish a Shadow would show…” He walked over to Akira, put an arm around his shoulder and leaned in close to whisper in his ear. “I kinda also wish that Mishima wasn’t here…we could fool around a bit.”
Akira blushed and pushed Ryuji off affectionately. “Come on, none of that. I’m the leader; I have to stay focused on the mission.”

“Damn, so responsible.” Ryuji leaned in one more time. “Think about it though - I bet Metaverse sex would be pretty great, just sayin’!”

“Hey, what’re you guys whispering about?” Mishima asked. He sounded a little hurt.

“Yeah Skull, I didn’t think you knew how to whisper,” Akira said, grinning widely at the chance to put him on the spot. “What were you whispering about?”

“Dude!” Ryuji sounded genuinely shocked, and Akira inwardly punched the air seeing a blush creep up his neck.

Luckily for Ryuji, the moment was punctuated by the security fence going down with an industrial humming noise. “Time for that later, let’s go!”
Six Phantom Thieves sat around the small table in Akira’s bedroom. The table groaned under the weight of the hefty pot that had been set upon it, and the smell of food filled the admittedly somewhat dusty air. The atmosphere was somber; they had all just shared their issues with Yusuke, to make things fair. Ryuji, his drunken, now absent father. Ann, her best friend’s sexual abuse by Kamoshida. Mishima, his own physical abuse at the hands of the same. And of course, Akira’s criminal record.

In an effort to lift the mood, Mishima said, “Thanks for inviting me to hot pot guys. I don’t get out as much as I’d like…” Why did I say that? They’re going to think I’m a total loser…

“Dude, you’re not even the newest Thief anymore!” Ryuji said, clapping him on the back. “You gotta stop sayin’ shit like that.”

“Yeah!” Ann said. “We’re happy that you’re here!” She leaned in close to his ear. “I promise!” she whispered.

“Thanks Takamak- Ann,” Mishima said. She’s so nice…I can’t believe people believed those rumors about her and Kamoshida…

“I’m sorry to bring this up, but would it be possible for me to stay at one of your places tonight?” Yusuke asked. “I don’t want to impose…”

“You can stay at my place, if you like,” Mishima found himself saying. What?!. “I mean, any Phantom Thief is welcome. My parents probably wouldn’t even notice…and my room’s got an extra futon.”

“Thanks, that sounds perfect,” Yusuke said.

“Look at Mishima, stepping up,” Akira said, smiling slightly. It’s not fair…Mishima thought. When Akira smiled, he went from being debonair and handsome to being cute and approachable in a split second. “If you don’t want to make the trip, you can stay here too, so long as you don’t mind the couch. Ryuji stays over all the time.”

Mishima jumped a little as Ann stifled a loud cough - or maybe it was a laugh? - into her drink. Maybe it was his imagination, but Mishima could swear that he also saw Ryuji turn a little red at that revelation.

“I think I would prefer Mishima’s futon to your sofa, if you don’t mind,” Yusuke declined gracefully. “…I don’t suppose there’s any chance of a bath before we go? I find it hard to get to sleep if I don’t take one before bed…”
Akira nodded. “Sure, there’s one just down the street. And today’s one of their herbal days, so it’ll be extra good. I think I’ll join you.”

“Yeah! Count me in!” Ryuji exclaimed, throwing an arm around Akira’s shoulders. Mishima felt a pang of jealousy at that. If only he had the confidence to do the same…

“You guys go ahead…it’d be boring with just me in the girls’ section anyway,” Ann said. “I’m going to go home. But I’ll walk with you guys.”

Akira caught Mishima’s eye and raised an eyebrow in question. “You coming too?”

*Akira naked?!* Mishima felt himself growing hot under the collar. He cleared his throat awkwardly and stuttered out, “Y-yeah! Sounds like fun…”

_____

“Oh man, hot pot and then bathhouse! Ann’s missin’ out!” Ryuji said. *And Akira bein’ naked didn’t hurt either…though Mishima and Yusuke ain’t exactly bad lookin’*. Ever since he’d started fooling around with Akira, he’d started noticing how hot other guys could be too. And damn, it was making it hard to concentrate on stuff like studying. If he wasn’t getting some relief regularly from Akira, Ryuji thought he’d probably have been kicked out of school for bad grades by now.

Man, and Akira looked hotter than ever. The bath had made his skin look even softer and healthier than usual; he practically glowed. It even made shy Mishima seem a little more confident, and aloof Yusuke warmer. And if he wasn’t mistaken, he was pretty sure he’d seen Mishima sneaking more than a few peeks at all of them in the changing room - Ryuji had even made eye contact with Mishima after one such glance, and Mishima had turned away, blushing. Ryuji had to admit, his cock had stirred a little when Mishima had dropped his pants. Mishima had been wearing lime green and white briefs; the thin material had done little to hide the details of Mishima’s cute, tight little ass. The thought of picking up the smaller boy and fucking him up against the wall was incredibly arousing.

“Ryuji???”

“Huh?” Ryuji snapped out of his daydream to see Mishima and Yusuke staring at him oddly; Mishima seemed concerned, Yusuke…who knew?

“Our time’s up, come on, let’s go!”

_____

Ryuji didn’t even make it up the stairs before Akira pushed him up against the wall and locked lips with him, his hand already fumbling at the button on Ryuji’s pants. Not missing a beat, Ryuji kissed back hard. *Fuck…like all of Ryuji’s kisses, this one was hot and a little rough, and just the right amount of sloppy. Ryuji’s kisses were…desperate, and raw, and real. As the clasp came undone, Ryuji’s thick cock sprang up into the air, the tip already wet with precum.*

“I’m so fuckin’ horny Akira…” Ryuji gasped.

“Me too…I was counting the seconds until our time was up,” Akira said, equally breathless. “I have to say, I think you’re right about Mishima. He was definitely checking us all out.”

“Right? Pervy bastard-!” Ryuji sucked in his breath as Akira grasped his cock and began stroking it.
“I could say the same about you,“ Akira chuckled. “I saw you checking his ass out when he bent over.”

“Oh… uh… well, lookin’s ok, right?” Ryuji said sheepishly, which only made Akira’s cock throb impatiently inside his underwear.

“Relax, I was looking too.” Akira teased as he ran a finger over the slick slit of Ryuji’s cock. It was so cute how Ryuji bit his lip when he did that…”I think it’s hot that we can check out guys together…”

“For real? Cause since we started all I’ve been doin’ is eye-bangin’ people…” Ryuji threw his head back as Akira expertly pumped his cock.

“I guess I better keep you happy or someone else’ll steal you away,” Akira smiled mischievously, then got on his knees and wrapped his lips around Ryuji’s cock. One hand gripped the shaft and continued to pump it as he sucked eagerly, while his other hand undid his own pants and began jerking himself off. Akira couldn’t believe how hot it was, blowing Ryuji. The smell of his aroused musk, the feeling of his cock diving desperately deeper with each thrust, and the sound of Ryuji’s ragged breathing and moans of encouragement; Akira was dripping his own precum onto the stairs but he barely registered it. All that mattered was Ryuji.

“A- Akira, I gotta sit down, this is too intense!” Ryuji said, his legs trembling uncontrollably.

Akira stopped reluctantly so Ryuji could lie back on the stairs. He pulled Ryuji’s pants and underwear down to his ankles, then lifted Ryuji’s shirt up and over his head. Fuck, Ryuji was so hot…Akira’s eyes swept over him, taking in every taut detail.

“Akira…please, you’re drivin’ me crazy! I can’t be the only naked guy here!” Ryuji pleaded. The begging’s kind of hot…Akira took his time peeling his shirt off, savoring every moment of Ryuji’s eager eyes watching him undress. His pants went next, and Akira reveled in how Ryuji’s eyes were instantly drawn to the large bulge in his black, low-rise boxer briefs. “Akira…” Ryuji breathed out as Akira slowly hooked his thumbs under the waistband and pulled down, allowing his full length to spring up.

Akira knelt down to give Ryuji a gentle kiss on the forehead, and then another, more passionate one on the lips. “Akira, let me suck you off… I want to taste you…”

Akira obeyed, sliding up the stairs so his hips were in line with Ryuji’s face, his cock pointing straight out at his mouth. He gasped slightly as Ryuji’s hot, eager mouth enveloped him, moist and hungry, taking more than half of his length in one go. Ryuji’s hands grabbed Akira’s hips, and Akira felt his fingers dig in slightly, pulling him into each lustful suck. Using the railing to steady himself, Akira leaned back and grabbed Ryuji’s cock. He has so much precum…it’s so goddamn hot how turned on he gets…

When Ryuji came up for air, Akira slid back down to kiss him again, this time opening his mouth to Ryuji’s tongue, which met his enthusiastically. The taste of their combined precum was intoxicating, and Akira moaned loudly as he leaned into the kiss, bringing their bodies together. In so doing, he felt the slippery head of Ryuji’s cock touch his crack and slide up it slightly, leaving a trail of clear precum. Reaching back, he aligned Ryuji with his hole and began grinding down on it, letting it trace slick circles around him.

“F-fuck…how does that feel so good…” Ryuji groaned.
After a few more seconds of that slow circling, Akira applied a little more pressure and was rewarded by the feeling of Ryuji’s thick cock head slipping inside him. Akira kept up his slow circling technique, continually applying ever so slightly more pressure as he slid further and further down Ryuji’s shaft, until finally, he felt his butt touch Ryuji’s thighs.

“How’s that feel?” he asked.

“Fuckin’ amazin’…you look so fuckin’ hot ridin’ my cock…”

Akira slowly began riding Ryuji’s cock, up and down, relishing in every sensation of Ryuji sliding in and out of him. “Ryuji…god, this feels so good…” Every time he slid down, Akira felt a rush, a warm tingle that spread throughout his body, one that seemed to even flow out of him and into Ryuji. Each slide down also pulled a muffled curse from Ryuji’s lips, or a biting of the lip, or a grimace of pure pleasure.

Soon, the sensations became too intense, and any semblance of rhythm was lost in Ryuji’s thrusting. He thrust into Akira with reckless abandon, one hand gripping the edge of a stair while the other held onto Akira’s waist for dear life. Every slap of their bodies against each other drove Akira further and further into sexual ecstasy until finally:

“Akira…I’m gettin’ close…” Ryuji warned him.

“Do it…cum inside me…” Akira moaned as he continued to ride him. Ryuji came hard, and with every shot Akira felt Ryuji’s cock throb inside him. Though he had barely touched himself, he felt a familiar tightening in his balls and Akira unloaded all over Ryuji’s chest and stomach.

“Fuck Akira…” Ryuji said, after a few moments hard breathing. “That was…fuck.”

Akira smiled as he leaned forward to give him a kiss before easing himself off of Ryuji’s softening cock. “All you, Ryuji. All you.”

Chapter End Notes

Man, it is tough thinking of ways to describe sex without feeling like I'm repeating myself. Hope you all enjoy!
Chapter Summary

The Phantom Thieves at Shujin have lunch together

It was lunchtime at Shujin Academy; the four Shujin Phantom Thieves sat together on the rooftop, enjoying the cool air as they ate. Many Japanese high schools required their students to bring lunch from home, but luckily for them, a school lunch was provided as part of the Shujin experience.

“Do…do you put that on everything?” Mishima asked as he watched Akira unscrew a thermos and pour curry liberally onto the school lunch (rice with tofu and a meat sauce, along with grilled vegetables).

“I’m addicted,” Akira admitted as Ryuji and Ann shook their heads in secondhand embarrassment. “Want some?”

“It’s not too spicy is it?” Mishima asked. He didn’t dislike spicy food, but anything that was hotter than Sriracha could spell danger for him.

“I don’t think so,” Akira said.

“You do eat it everyday though…” Ann said.

“…I’ll try a bite,” Mishima decided, taking the spoon Akira offered. Whoa! The curry was boldly spicy, yet had sweet notes of apple. Mishima thought he could even taste something vaguely coconutty…”It’s so flavorfull!” he said. And then the spice hit him full-force. “Hot!” He grabbed for the drink closest to him - Ryuji’s orange soda - and took a big gulp.

“Dude, not cool!” Ryuji complained as Ann and Morgana collapsed against Akira in a fit of laughter. Akira himself seemed to be fighting the urge to do the same.

Whew…. “Sorry Ryuji. I’ll get you another one.” Mishima started to get up.

“Nah, it’s fine.” Ryuji stopped him. “So how was havin’ Yusuke over? He snore?” Ryuji asked.

“No…but he rearranged my room. Said it wasn’t feng shui and he wouldn’t be able to fall asleep with it like that,” Mishima said. “He almost found my d- um…” His face turned bright red as the others regarded him curiously.


“Think of something you idiot! Anything! “My uh…d-dirty magazines…” Wow… that’s barely better…what kind of Phantom Thief is bad at lying?” Mishima said. His cheeks felt incredibly hot, despite the constant cool breeze.

“Gross,” Ann said. “We need to get some girls on the team…”

“It’s not that gross. It’s more just weird that he doesn’t use the Internet. You’d think a guy that made the Phan-Site would know where to look for the good stuff,” Ryuji said as he waggled his eyebrows.
suggestively at Mishima, who turned an even brighter shade of red. “Besides, it ain’t like we can just post a freakin’ club poster up…”

“If Yusuke was here, I’m sure he’d be grossed out too,” Akira offered. “That guy seems… aggressively asexual.”

“I don’t know…he did fall for Ann’s crummy acting,” Morgana said.

“Anyway-!” Ann pushed Morgana off of Akira’s shoulder. “I feel like we have better stuff to talk about.”

“Yeah, like what kind of dirty magazines is Mishima into,” Ryuji said. “What do you think his type is?”

“Ugh, so vulgar, Ryuji,” Morgana groaned. “Don’t you get enough of this talk with Akira?”

It was Ryuji’s turn to turn red. “Sh- shuddup you stupid cat!” He aimed a flick at Morgana, who nimbly dodged the attack and began cleaning his face on the far side, supremely disdainful.

Akira and Ryuji are that close… Mishima felt an ache in his chest. He’d never felt that close to anyone, let alone a male friend. He wasn’t even thinking about it sexually - just the thought of being able to share stuff that intimate with another person…for a long time he’d felt that it was greedy of him to even consider the possibility.

“No…it’s ok. You guys are my friends…” Mishima started. “…I don’t want to keep things from you…” I’m - “ He closed his eyes, regretting everything, from his words to the fact that tears were forming at the corners of his eyes. He wiped them away angrily. Why was this so difficult? Just say it…” I like guys.”


“W- what do you mean?” Mishima said, his fear suddenly replaced by embarrassment. “Am I obvious?”

“Don’t worry, not in school,” Ryuji said. “But at the bathhouse last night…your eyes kinda wandered a lot.”

“Plus, your underwear,” Akira said. “Not incriminating in and of themselves, but definitely pinged my gaydar.”

“Ohhh does he wear colored briefs?” Ann asked.

“Yeah,” Akira confirmed.

“W-what?” Mishima said again.

“A lot of the queer guys at the modeling agency I work at wear that kind of stuff,” Ann explained. “I think there’s a website or something they all buy it from.”

“This is so embarrassing…” Mishima said, his face flushing a soft pink.

“Eh, don’t worry about it,” Akira said. “My suspicions about Ryuji were a lot more embarrassing.”

“Dude!” Ryuji protested, as he jumped on top of Akira, trying to get a hand over his mouth.

“I mean, have you seen his Metaverse clothes?” Akira continued as he deftly batted Ryuji’s hands
away, grinning mercilessly at the blond. “A guy whose ‘spirit of rebellion’ shows up as a skintight leather outfit cannot be solely into girls.” Akira focused his attention on Ryuji and said seriously, “Sorry…I just think…when it comes to the Thieves, we shouldn’t have any secrets. We should be able to be ourselves here, because we’re all some kind of misfit, you know?”

“Yeah, I know…you’re right.” Ryuji made a rude gesture at Akira anyway as he got off of him.

“I…” Ann began, her face as pink as Mishima’s. “I may have kissed Shiho a few times. We said that it was so we would be good kissers when we got our first boyfriends, but…I have to admit I liked it.”

“Wow, the only straight person on our team is Morgana, and he’s a cat!” Ryuji laughed. “We should ask Yusuke to add rainbow colors to our logo!”

“I am not a cat!” Morgana exclaimed, though the school bell drowned him out - lunch was over.

As they got up to return to class, Mishima felt a warmth spreading across his chest as he watched his newfound friends. Thank you…thank you all so much…
Chapter Summary

Ryuji has a moment with his mom

Chapter Notes

Fair warning, there's a brief flashback to Ryuji's childhood at the very beginning, and his dad is both abusive and uses a homophobic slur.

Seven years ago…

“Stop your fucking crying!” Ryuji winced as his father threw a bottle at him; it shattered on the wall behind him, showering him in glass and lukewarm beer. “Fucking hell…wasting perfectly good beer…get me another one ya little shit.”

Ryuji walked over to the case by door, pulled a bottle out and walked over to his father, who took the bottle and opened it with the coffee table’s edge.

“What the fuck you waitin’ for? A tip?” his father slapped him in the face with the back of his hand, smearing Ryuji’s tears against his fingers. “Tch…” he wiped the moisture off on his pants disgustedly. “Get the fuck outta here…and stop crying. You look like a fucking faggot.”

———

Present day…

Ryuji kicked off his shoes as soon as he got home. It was almost disappointing to be there; the past few days had been Metaverse and sleeping over at Akira’s. But today, Akira had said he was going to hang out with Yusuke to get to know him better, and the other Phantom Thieves had gone their separate ways at end-of-day bell.

He fired up a game of Star Forneus - Ryuji felt like playing something mindless and violent to pass the time quickly. After about an hour, Ryuji threw the controller from himself in annoyance. Compared to the adrenaline rush of fighting Shadows, video games were a shitty copy at best. Ryuji sighed in boredom. He perked up when his phone buzzed - maybe it was Akira?

[YM] Hey Ryuji, can I ask you something?

Just Mishima…Ryuji breathed out a sigh of disappointment from his nose.

[RS] What’s up dude?

[YM] About lunch today…

[YM] Thank you for accepting me, and trusting me.
Yeah man, Phantom Thieves stick together, no matter what.

So…Akira is into guys too?

Whoa…is he gonna make a move? Ryuji scratched his head frustratedly. He hated thinking about stuff like this. Ryuji was pretty sure he didn’t want the additional label of being boyfriends. But it was impossible to deny that Akira cared about him deeply (even displaying that ridiculous fake ramen bowl in his room). And Ryuji’s feelings for him…they weren’t just sexual. Some of his most treasured memories with Akira were just them, lying together alone while holding hands, or stroking his hair.

Everyday since their first kiss had been an exhilarating whirlwind, one where he had either the Metaverse or the anticipation of sex to distract him from thinking these kinds of thoughts. I still like girls…and we haven’t technically been on a date…so we can’t be boyfriends right? I’m not a f-

You still there?

Yeah, sorry, got distracted.

And… yeah he is.

Ryuji saw Mishima typing something out several times, erasing whatever it was each time before saying:

Ok cool. Is he uh…seeing anyone?

I’m just wondering because the rumors about him are already pretty bad.

And if this gets out…

Ryuji wondered guiltily if Akira was putting more thought into their relationship than he was. He’s not afraid of what other people think of him at all…he even just told me that he’d had a boyfriend before, straight up. I bet he’d tell anyone that if it came up…God…and me…I’m still fuckin’ terrified people will find out…I’m the same guy I was when I punched Kamoshida…

Yeah…

We’ll talk later, ok? My mom just got back and needs some help with some stuff.

Ryuji sighed as he sat back and tapped his phone against his thigh. He felt bad about lying to Mishima, but…he unlocked his phone again and tapped out another message.

Hey, you free tonight?

Yeah, no plans so far. What’s up?

Wanna get dinner at that diner on Central Street?

Sure. See you then!

———

Ryuji sat across from Akira at the diner. The other boy looked at him expectantly. Ryuji cut off a piece of his nostalgic steak and put it in his mouth, chewing as slowly as possible.

“So…” Akira began. “What’s going on? You seem kinda worried…”
“It’s…,” Ryuji said. He rubbed his temple frustratedly. Ryuji wasn’t the type of guy to think about his feelings very often; he preferred to act. “…Yeah. I’m…wonderin’ about us.”

“What do you mean?” Akira said.

Ryuji sighed. Why was this so hard? If they were alone in Akira’s room, he’d have no problem just jumping on him and making out. But this shit? “I mean, you just told your about his first boyfriend when it came up, like it was nothin’,” Ryuji said. “You know, calm as fuckin’ ever. And I…I don’t think I can do that.”

Ryuji looked around furtively. “…we’ve been foolin’ around since…well, since after we changed Kamoshida’s heart. And…I don’t know what that makes us…we haven’t talked about it. But I don’t want to ruin a good thing, you know? And I’m not even sure I’m ready to say…I’m your boyfriend.’ It ain’t like I don’t care about you, or that I wouldn’t be proud to say it…I just…”

Akira reached out and put a comforting hand on Ryuji’s knee under the table. “It’s ok…I remember what you said to me after…in the Metaverse. You don’t want another label, right? I don’t want to push you into anything.”

Ryuji shook his head. ‘I fuckin’ know. That’s…kinda the problem. When I’m with you…I feel…I don’t know…free. Like I ain’t gotta be anyone but myself. But…when we’re in places like this…I remember that I’m still afraid of what people think of me. That without you, I’m the same guy that punched Kamoshida. And then I feel like I ain’t good enough for you.”

Ryuji felt Akira’s grip on his knee tighten. “Ryuji…”

“I’m sorry. It ain’t like you’re pushin’ me. I just…feel like I gotta be better…” Ryuji said as he played with his food.

“Do you want to stay over tonight?” Akira asked.

“I really do…but if I do, we’re prolly just gonna end up fuckin’ like usual. And I feel like…I need to think about us more,” Ryuji said. “I’m just gonna head home after this.”

“Ok…” Akira looked disappointed, and Ryuji felt a pang of guilt as they got up to leave.

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When Ryuji opened the door to his apartment, he found his mom asleep in her work clothes on the couch. She came to as he closed the door and tossed his jacket onto one of their cheap, plastic kitchen chairs. “Ryuji…?”

“Yeah mom?” He sat next to her on the couch. “What’s goin’ on?”

She looked down, then up at him. “Are you okay, Ryuji?”

He looked at her, surprised. “Yeah, why?”

“I’m sorry that I’ve been working double shifts this week…I know the apartment feels empty when it’s just you,” she said.

“It’s ok mom…I know you’re doin’ it for us,” Ryuji said. “I’ve got a…a part-time job, to help us out. S’why I’ve come home late a few times.”

“So thoughtful…” Mihoko reached out and took Ryuji’s hand, giving it a gentle squeeze. “…is that
why you haven’t been sleeping here the past few days?”

Ryuji’s eyes widened, and he unconsciously slipped his hand from his mom’s to jam them into his pockets uncomfortably. “I’ve…I’ve been stayin’ at a friend’s house. L-like you said, it gets lonely here.”

“Oh…” Mihoko’s eyes wandered over Ryuji’s face, searching for something. “Is it that crush we talked about?”

“W-what?” Ryuji’s face flushed hot, and he averted his gaze. “N-no…”

“Ryuji…” Mihoko’s gaze remained on him, not angry or probing, but hurt.

Shit…He had never been good at lying, especially to his mom. “Yeah…”

There was a long pause. Ryuji saw his mom’s mouth open and close a few times as she searched for the words she wanted. “Are you…being safe?”

“M-mom!” Ryuji said, flushing even hotter. “It’s- we’re-…yeah.” Mostly…Ryuji thought, remembering their last time. His mom kept looking at him. “What?”

“Well…why haven’t you told me anything about her? I don’t have to meet her anytime soon, but I want to know about any person that’s important in my son’s life…”

“Mom…” Ryuji finally returned her gaze, feeling pinpricks of moisture form on his eyes. Shit…he didn’t blink, didn’t move so they wouldn’t leak out and betray him.

“Ryuji, what’s wrong?” Mihoko put a comforting arm around his shoulders. When he didn’t say anything, she pulled him close into a tight hug, letting him rest his chin on her shoulder as she had since as far back as he could remember. Despite her slight frame, he felt safe in her thin arms, warm, supported. Ryuji could smell the comforting scent of her cheap, lavender shampoo.

Now that she wasn’t looking at him, he allowed himself to blink; thin rivulets of tears ran down his face as he shook in Mihoko’s arms. “Mom…I’m scared. I don’t want to hurt you anymore…”

“Ryuji, you are the greatest gift that the world has ever given me…you can tell me anything, and I will never stop loving you as much as I do,” she said, stroking his hair.

Ryuji hugged his mom closer to him, forced himself to speak. “It’s…a guy. The person that I like…he’s a guy.”

A pause from his mom that seemed to last for minutes- and then she turned her head and kissed him on his cheek, right where his tears had flowed down. “Oh sweetheart…you scared me! I thought that you had something awful to tell me…” She squeezed him so tightly that Ryuji felt the blood flow to his arms get cut off.

“You’re- you’re ok with it?” he asked, hardly believing it.

“Ryuji…all you’ve told me is that you’ve met someone that makes you very happy, and that he happens to be a boy. I’m surprised, I admit - all your crushes growing up were on girls…but with your father’s influence, I guess that you probably wouldn’t have admitted anything else.” Mihoko broke their hug to look him in the eyes, then kissed him on his forehead and the tip of his nose, as she’d done since childhood. “I’m so happy for you. I’m sure that whoever you’re with must be very special.”
Ryuji smiled as he drew his mom into another hug, burying his face in her hair. “He really is,” Ryuji admitted. "He really is.”
After school the next day, Ryuji shot a quick text to Akira.

[RS] Hey, sorry I was bein’ weird last night…

[AK] It’s ok. I went through this stuff too you know...

Ryuji paused a moment; he wasn’t sure what exactly he wanted to say to Akira, only that he wanted to spend some alone time with him. But Leblanc would have customers and that crusty owner, and school wasn’t exactly private.

[RS] Wanna hang at my place after school?

[RS] It ain’t much, but it’ll be just us.

[AK] That sounds perfect.

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“Here it is. Home sweet home.” Ryuji unlocked the door to his apartment and opened it wide. He watched Akira turn his head slowly, taking it all in. The modest kitchen, its dingy linoleum and plastic table and chairs lit by a single overhead light, adjacent to the living area, which consisted of a small tv, couch and plastic coffee table. A short hallway with three doors: “My room, my mom’s, and the bathroom,” Ryuji said, pointing.

“Oooh, I want to see where the magic happens,” Akira said as he walked over and opened Ryuji’s door. “…it looks like Sojiro’s attic before I cleaned it up.” Ryuji’s floor had a layer of dirty clothes strewn across it. He had a cheap, faux wood desk in the corner with a small lamp and stool. The walls were covered in posters and torn out magazine pages of track stars, male and female, in various action and standing shots.

“Shuddup dude… I know where to find everythin’ I need,” Ryuji said. He sat on the edge of the cot, and Akira sat next to him. The warmth of his body next to Ryuji’s was comforting; he wrapped an arm around Akira’s waist and pulled him closer. “I’m sorry,” he said again. “I was just…gettin’ caught up in my head. And you know I ain’t that smart, it was tough…”

Akira mussed Ryuji’s hair and gave him a soft kiss on the cheek. “I hate when you say that…I don’t think you’re stupid at all.”
Ryuji felt a flush of pleasure creep up his neck as he shook his head bashfully. “Nah dude, it’s fine.”

Akira blew a raspberry. “That’s bullshit. You might be a bit slower when it comes to some things… but to me, you always get to the right answer.”

Ryuji blushed, embarrassed by Akira’s compliments. Then he pushed him backwards onto the cot and kissed Akira hard on the lips, savoring their softness, the light moisture and heat of them. When Ryuji broke the kiss, he was pleased to see Akira’s cheeks were pink with pleasure.

“I’m glad you’re ok,” Akira said softly as he stroked Ryuji’s cheek. His fingertips felt like feathers on Ryuji’s skin.

“Yeah…I am,” Ryuji said. “I…I thought about us a lot last night. And…I told my mom about us.”

“I’m glad she took it well,” Akira said.

Ryuji ducked his head and smiled. “Yeah…she’s pretty cool.” He flopped down onto Akira’s chest, listening to his steady heartbeat for a few minutes, just focusing on Akira just…being there. The scent of him, now familiar. The crook of his elbows, the gentle curve of his neck. Looking up at Akira, Ryuji felt surrounded by him, and safe.

“I missed having you over last night,” Akira said, breaking the silence. “…I guess I’ve gotten spoiled.”

Ryuji laughed as he pulled himself up to be face-to-face with Akira. “Dude, me too…I felt kinda cold without someone to uh…cuddle with.”

Akira leaned in, and Ryuji moved forward to meet him for another kiss. He felt Akira’s hand move from the back of his head to the small of his waist, where his fingers lingered on Ryuji’s ass. Ryuji slipped a hand up Akira’s shirt, tracing the gentle lines of his stomach up to his chest, where he let it rest. Their kiss began chaste, just light brushing of their lips against each other, but as Ryuji felt himself and Akira grow more aroused, the kiss became more passionate, rougher, until their tongues were battling each other for dominance. Ryuji felt Akira’s grip tighten on his ass, and in response, he slid his hand down to Akira’s crotch, dragging his fingers over the bulging outline of Akira’s cock.

It was always amazing to Ryuji how he could look directly into Akira’s eyes for ages and not feel uncomfortable. Now they were wide open, watching him, seemingly asking him to keep going, but not wanting to break the subtle silence of the moment. Ryuji kissed Akira a third time, lightly, then hooked his fingers under Akira’s shirt, slipping it and his Shujin jacket off while doing the same himself. He splayed his fingers out across Akira’s stomach, feeling the steady rise and fall as he breathed.

“You’re uh…you’re beautiful,” he said.

Akira smiled up at him, his hands resting on Ryuji’s hips. “Look who’s talking…”

Their bodies met again, joined shortly after by their lips. Ryuji ground his crotch up against Akira’s, groaned slightly as the friction sent waves of pleasure to his brain. He kissed Akira on the side of his neck, then slid down to his waist, where he undid the catch on his Shujin pants and pulled them down slightly, exposing Akira’s tented-up gray low-rise boxer briefs. Ryuji kissed Akira’s cock through the thin fabric, relishing in the soft sigh of pleasure that Akira gave in response.

Ryuji slipped his fingers under the waistband of Akira’s underwear, then pulled them down to reveal Akira’s hot cock. No matter how many times he saw it, he always felt a thrill when it first came out. He kissed the head, then kissed down the shaft and on each of his smooth balls, reveling in the sheer
heat that they gave off, the smell of Akira’s precum, his arousal.

“Mmf…” Akira groaned as Ryuji took his cockhead into his mouth. Ryuji felt Akira pulse in his mouth as he thrust lightly deeper. Ryuji gripped the base and braced himself against Akira’s stomach, then began sucking in earnest, using his tongue to polish Akira’s cockhead liberally, lapping up the salty precum that was flowing freely as a result of his efforts. “Ryuji…fu-fuhuck…you’ve gotten really good at this…”

Ryuji stopped to grin proudly up at Akira. “I had a good role model.” He dived back onto Akira’s cock, bobbing up and down on it a few more times before trying to take it all into his mouth. Akira seemed to swell in his mouth as he tried to push down the last couple of inches. Ryuji could feel Akira plugging the back of his mouth, eagerly pressing further. Ryuji breathed out through his nose, relaxed…and Akira slid the rest of the way in. Ryuji felt his throat muscles flexing involuntarily around Akira, each movement sending a shiver up Akira’s body.

“Fuck, Ryuji-!” Akira pushed Ryuji off of him, gasping hard. “I’m going to cum too soon if you keep that up…”

Ryuji slid up Akira’s body to give him another long, deep kiss. Akira smiled when they broke apart. “I can taste myself,” he laughed.

“Not gonna lie, that’s pretty hot,” Ryuji said.

“Let me have a turn,” Akira said, his slim fingers tugging on Ryuji’s waistband.

Ryuji propped himself up on his knees so Akira could pull his pants down past his ass. He was wearing a pair of sporty, pink, low-rise boxer briefs with a green waistband. “You and Mishima wear the gayest underwear,” Akira teased as he fondled the large bulge.

“You like it,” Ryuji shot back, grinding his crotch against Akira’s hand.

“Yeah, I do,” Akira admitted. “Scoot up!”

Ryuji scooted up so Akira could slide his pants and underwear off his legs before he took Ryuji’s cock into his mouth. God…Ryuji threw his head back as Akira expertly worked it with his lips and tongue, sliding down about halfway each time before coming back up. Ryuji bucked uncontrollably as Akira swallowed his length whole, eagerly sucking away. He braced himself against the wall, unable to stop thrusting his hips forward and face-fucking Akira, who gamely accepted it. Every time Ryuji saw his cock disappear into Akira’s mouth, he felt himself throb as he tried desperately to delay his orgasm.

“Fuck…” Ryuji pulled out, leaving a snail trail of precum and saliva on Akira’s chest. “I don’t want to cum yet either.” He slid down to kiss Akira, and felt Akira’s cock bump up against his ass. Akira looked up at him with questioning, lustful eyes. Ryuji sighed. “I want to…but I think I’m not ready yet…I want the first time you fuck me to be perfect.”

“It’d be perfect cause it’d be you,” Akira said. “But that’s ok. Take all the time you need.” He grinned lustfully up at Ryuji. “I wouldn’t say no to you fucking my brains out right now though, if you’re up for that.”

“Every fuckin’ time,” Ryuji grinned back. “I can only get so hard for you, you know?”

“Great…I have some lube and stuff in my bag…” Ryuji quickly retrieved a condom and the bottle of lube from Akira’s bag. He pulled the condom down his cock impatiently and lubed it up as Akira did the same to his hole. As Ryuji positioned himself, he saw Akira shiver in anticipation, his lips parted
ever so slightly in an expression of pure arousal.

“Fuck me Ryuji…” Akira said breathlessly. “I need you inside me…”

Ryuji slid the head of his cock in, gasping at Akira’s now familiar, yet hot tightness. He watched Akira’s face pinch slightly as he forced himself to relax around Ryuji’s girth, then smile as he adjusted. He saw Akira’s stomach muscles grow taut and relax, and with each such tightening, he felt Akira’s hole flex around his cock, sending a sexual tremble up his cock and through the rest of his body.

“Deeper, Ryuji,” Akira pleaded. “I need to feel your hard cock all the way inside me…”

Ryuji pushed in slowly, watching Akira’s face for any sign of discomfort, but Akira only looked as sexy as ever, smiling wide as Ryuji’s thighs met his ass. Akira placed his calves on Ryuji’s shoulders and propped himself back slightly, so his ass was upturned toward Ryuji. As their eyes met, Akira gave Ryuji the smallest of nods.

Ryuji began pushing in and out of Akira rapidly, driving in and out with as much force as he dared, loving the sound of his balls slapping against Akira’s ass with every thrust. “Fuck yes Ryuji!” Akira moaned loudly as Ryuji pistoned in and out of his hole. “I fucking need your cock…yes…yes…YES!”

Ryuji held onto Akira’s legs for dear life as he continued pounding him. “Your ass is so hot and tight!” he groaned as he thrust harder and deeper, trading speed for power. The sight of his cock sliding in and out of Akira’s ass was somehow even hotter than his mouth; being able to see every last bit of pleasure on Akira’s face was driving Ryuji to the brink of cumming with every thrust. “I can’t keep this up much longer-!”

Akira smiled. “I want you to cum inside me…fuck the cum out of me Ryuji…I’m so close!” Akira moaned as Ryuji began slamming in and out with reckless abandon, pulling out until just his cockhead was still inside, then pushing back in roughly. “Fuck…I’m gonna cum!” Akira sprayed his chest and face with cum, and every shot was accompanied by a corresponding flex around Ryuji’s cock, which was more than enough to push him over the edge.

“Fuck!” Ryuji collapsed on top of Akira as he came hard, his cock swelling and throbbing inside Akira as he filled the condom with his cum.

“Oh man…” Akira said. “That was the best yet, I think…”

“Yeah…” Ryuji breathed. He felt totally drained, like he had just sprinted a great distance, but still filled with the adrenaline of accomplishment.

“Clean up’s going to be rough…” Akira said, after a few minutes of them just lying together, enjoying the post-coital bliss.

“Fuck…” Ryuji groaned. “Yeah…I would die if my mom caught us like this.”
Akira

Chapter Summary

Akira meets Ryuji's mom

Chapter Notes

This is a bit of a long one, which is why I didn't post it yesterday as originally planned. Sorry, life got in the way. Hope you enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Covered as he had been, Akira got first dibs on the shower. It was a small standing shower, with hardly any room to turn, but it was at least one that couldn’t also double as a high pressure dish washer, as Akira was used to at Leblanc. Now, freshly scrubbed and with one of Ryuji’s towels wrapped around his waist, he stare aimlessly around Ryuji’s room, memorizing small details like the soda stain on his desk and the worn track shoes stuffed in the corner beside it.

Ryuji’s mom knows about us, he thought with a smile. Akira was glad that Ryuji had someone at home that supported him.

Ryuji entered the room at that moment, still scrubbing his hair dry. Akira’s eyes traveled the length of Ryuji’s body automatically, inevitably. He loved the tautness of Ryuji’s stomach muscles, the wiry strength apparent in his arms and legs, and his terrible posture. Akira walked over and kissed him lightly.

Ryuji blushed at the faint brushing of their lips. “Why aren’t you dressed yet?” he asked.

“I got distracted checking out your room,” Akira said truthfully. “And then when you walked in, I got distracted checking out you, so…”

Ryuji flushed even pinker. “Dude, you’re so forward…but I definitely don’t mind the second look.” As he got dressed, Akira watched Ryuji stretch and open his closet, absentmindedly flipping through a rainbow of brightly colored shirts. “Hmm…this one!” He pulled a bright red shirt with an equally loud logo out and pulled it on. “Come on, let’s get dressed and play video games or somethin’ in the other room.”

They ended up just lying together on the couch, with Akira lying between Ryuji’s legs and his head resting on Ryuji’s chest. There was something incredibly soothing about just lying there silently, listening to the steadiness of Ryuji’s heartbeat, feeling as if - though it was ridiculous - that it would beat forever. Akira also loved Ryuji’s fingers playing with his hair. Ryuji seemed to particularly enjoy stretching out strands of his hair and watching them bounce back, or attempting to flatten it only to have it poof back out.
“So…” Akira began. “Tell me about your mom. Am I going to meet her tonight?”

“If you wanna,” Ryuji said. “She has a normal shift today.” He paused in twirling Akira’s hair, the strands half-twisted around his fingers. “I mean…she’s short. She’s skinny too. But I dunno, she’s great. She’s been takin’ care of me all by herself since my dad left…”

“Sorry…I didn’t mean to have him come up,” Akira said, looking up at Ryuji apologetically. I can’t believe his dad hit him…if only we were changing hearts back then…

“It’s ok…I was happy when he left,” Ryuji said. His face furrowed at the memory. “I felt bad though. My mom spent that week crying, and all I could think about how great it was that he wasn’t around…” Ryuji resumed twirling Akira’s hair as he chewed on his lip. “But…she says him leaving made her stronger, and a better mom to me. She says it’s the best thing he could’ve ever done for her, even if money’s been tight ever since…” The skin around Ryuji’s eyes softened. “I learned how to be strong from watching her, not my dad.”

“Well, then I’m looking forward to meeting her,” Akira said. “She must really be someone special since she raised you.”

Ryuji playfully slapped Akira in the chest. “Man, I’m startin’ to think you’re butterin’ me up for somethin’ with all your compliments…” He leaned forward and kissed Akira, pausing their conversation with a moment of intimate physical connection, their lips sliding against each other sweetly, smoothly, slowly. “So, what about you?” Ryuji said as they broke apart. “You know about my parents…what’re yours like?”

*What’s there to tell?* Akira thought. “Well…my mom’s very social. She hosts parties a lot, and she always knows what’s going on in everyone’s lives. She likes trying new food, and dancing. Everyone in town goes to her for social advice. And my dad…he’s strict. Traditional, you know? He likes to read the news, and complain about how things in the world are. He likes cars.”

Ryuji gave him a little nudge on his shoulders. “Come on dude, that’s like surface stuff. Tell me somethin’ good!”

Akira shrugged. “I haven’t heard from them since I got to Tokyo. They called to make sure I got here ok, but not since.” He paused to collect himself, suddenly feeling very drained. “I don’t know…I feel bad…”

“You ok?” Ryuji’s face creased with concern.

“Yeah…it’s just…” Akira picked at Ryuji’s pant leg as he thought. “I feel guilty. You have such strong feelings for both your mom and dad, good and bad. But when I think about my parents…I don’t feel strongly at all. When I came out to my mom, she told me that she didn’t mind, but not to tell anyone because our town was small and everyone would know. She said she’d talk to my dad about it when he was ready…I’m not sure he even knows.”

Akira closed his eyes tightly. He suddenly felt like crying. There was no way he could let Ryuji see that - he had to be a strong leader. Unflappable. *Steel bars…handcuffs…granite…* Akira recited a mantra of tough things in his head until he trusted himself to open his eyes. “And you know the rest: when I was arrested and convicted, they couldn’t get me here fast enough. Told me it was for my own good, that I’d get to see the big city and make new friends. They didn’t believe me…nobody in town did.”

Akira felt Ryuji’s grip tighten on his shoulder. “That’s fuckin’ bullshit man! Are you serious?!” Ryuji’s face turned red, his eyebrows turned down in a baleful glare. “What the hell kinda assholes
live in your town? *Nobody* believed you? What the fuck?!” His fingers began to drum an angry beat on Akira’s collarbone. “And that ‘your own good’ shit? That’s such crap! They obviously just didn’t want to lose face-!” Ryuji stopped mid-rant as Akira sat up. “Sorry…I know it ain’t helpin’ to get worked up…”

“It’s ok.” Akira turned around and pulled Ryuji into a tight hug. “I’m glad to see someone so definitely on my side in this.”

Their conversation turned into a nap, with Ryuji lying on his back on the couch, and Akira resting his cheek on Ryuji’s chest. They awoke to the sound of keys jiggling in the front door lock. “Ryuji? Are you home?” A woman’s voice called as the door swung open.

Ryuji sat up suddenly, dislodging bleary-eyed Akira and dumping him unceremoniously on the ground. “Yeah mom, I’m here!” he exclaimed loudly. “Um…is it ok if Akira stays for dinner?”

A woman who was presumably Ryuji’s mom came into the room, putting two bags of groceries down on the table before looking over and answering. “Yes, I think that would be lovely! … Where is he?”

Akira rose from his prone position in front of the couch, rolling out a kink in his neck as he did so. Why did he feel so tense? “Hello, Ms. Sakamoto. It’s a pleasure to meet you,” he said. Akira bowed stiffly. “Please let me know if I can help with dinner in any way.”

Ryuji nudged him with a pointy elbow. “Too much dude…you’re makin’ me look bad…”

Ryuji’s mom laughed - she had a surprisingly raucous laugh for such a petite woman. So that’s where Ryuji gets it from… Akira grinned despite himself. “That’s all right dear,” she said. “Dinner’s instant ramen. I’m just going to fry up some gyoza and sauté some tatsoi and call it a success.”

Akira grinned - why did it feel awkward? - and clasped his hands together below his waist, suddenly stricken with the realization that he didn’t know what to do with them. Why are my palms sweaty?

“That sounds delicious,” he said.

Ryuji’s mom began preparing dinner: chopping up garlic, boiling water, washing the fresh tatsoi. “So, how long have you and Ryuji known each other?” she asked. “I don’t remember you from the track team…”

“We met in April,” Akira answered. “I’m a transfer student.”

“Oh, that sounds interesting! How are you liking Tokyo?” Ms. Sakamoto dumped the chopped garlic and tatsoi into the wok.

"I like it a lot. There's a lot more to do here. And I've met some really cool people too...present company included of course." Akira gave Ryuji a small one-armed hug.

"And how is your family liking it here? Did you move because of work?" Ms. Sakamoto asked as she dropped frozen gyoza into a skillet.

"...I'm actually living with a guardian. My parents are back in the country,” Akira said.

“Oh!” Ms. Sakamoto was silent for the rest of her cooking. Akira looked nervously over at Ryuji, who returned the look.
As they sat down to dinner, Ms. Sakamoto spoke again. “Akira, I don’t mean to pry, but I would like to know the circumstances behind you being here.” She paused, looking over at Ryuji with hesitancy on her face. “I trust my son’s judgment…but please, relieve a mother’s worry. Won’t you tell me?”

“It’ll be ok if you do man,” Ryuji said, throwing an arm around him reassuringly. “You ain’t got nothin’ to be embarrassed about. You’re the good guy in that story.”

Akira bowed his head and filled Ms. Sakamoto in on his past: the woman fending off the drunken advances on her, how Akira had stepped in to help her, only to have the man threaten her into lying about Akira assaulting him. He told her about how his town hadn’t believed his side, and how his parents had thought it best to send him away for a probationary period. When he finished, he realized that he had been gripping his chopsticks quite firmly; the cheap wood had hairline fractures running up from from where he had squeezed so tightly.

Ms. Sakamoto pulled a tissue from her purse and dabbed at her eyes. “It is so sad that a young man like you has been treated so unjustly by the world…I know what it’s like to feel trapped...” she smiled at him and Ryuji. “But I am happy to see that it hasn’t stopped you from spreading happiness anyway.” She reached across the table and squeezed his other hand; Akira started in surprise. It had been a while since he had felt ‘mothered’ in any way. But he returned her smile. “Please consider our humble apartment a second home for you. Come by any time!”

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Akira left Ryuji’s apartment without much fanfare: a hug from Ms. Sakamoto, and a kiss and a fist bump from Ryuji. As he walked toward the train station, he felt his phone buzz.

[MS] Hello, I hope you don’t mind

[MS] This is ryujis mom.

[MS] I took your phone number from his phone.

[MS] His birthday is coming up at the end of the month, the 21st.

[MS] Would you help me plan a good one?

[AK] Of course. Anything to make him happy.

[AK] I’ll think of some good ideas and get back to you.

[MS] Wonderful! I’m glad you’re someone my son can count on!

Chapter End Notes

As always, comments are appreciated! Let me know what you think and what you'd like to see happen. You never know, it might appear!
The gang visits the TV station.

Chapter Notes

Note: not gonna lie, literally wrote this because Ryuji says something like, “Goin’ to the bathroom didn’t even make me feel better” in this scene in-game, and my first thought was, “Why would you expect it to???? What were you doing in there?”

The school trip to the TV station had sucked pretty hard so far. Akira was used to staying alert in class even when he already knew the material, but something about the TV station had had him yawning all day. Even though Ryuji had been upset about it, Akira had welcomed the opportunity to drag around the heavy black cables that were strewn about the studio floor. It was better than listening to their hostess explain the obvious, anyway.

“Man, that guy that was hittin’ on Ann was a jerk, but he’s not really a big target…” Ryuji complained. “This sucks…” Even when he’s complaining he’s cute…Akira loved the way Ryuji’s lips curved down slightly when he pouted.

Akira shrugged his shoulders noncommittally. He hadn’t really expected the trip to turn up a real target.

“And they’ve got us doin’ this dirty work…” Ryuji sighed grumpily. He looked over at Ann and Mishima, who were watching them from across the room with Morgana, who had slipped into Mishima’s bag. Ann stuck her tongue out at them with a teasing smile, to which Akira, Morgana, and Mishima laughed while Ryuji made a semi-rude gesture back. “There’s gotta be some way to make this trip worth i-“

Ryuji was cut off by a large group of crew members bringing racks of clothes and miscellaneous props into the room, separating the pair of them from their school group. Worth it, huh? Akira grinned. He had just the idea. Akira tapped one of the less harried looking crew on the shoulder and asked, “Excuse me, but could you point me to the bathroom?” The woman hurriedly pointed, then continued on with her duties.

“Come on!” Akira grabbed Ryuji’s hand and dragged him away.

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“This is a pretty nice bathroom,” Ryuji said as they entered. It was pretty nice: white, marble looking floor tiles, black, granite looking countertops, and matching stalls. More importantly, it was empty. “I don’t gotta go though, so I guess I’ll just wait outside.”

Akira shook his head and grabbed Ryuji by the front of his pants, deftly tucking a finger in and
giving his soft cock a little nudge. “I don’t have to go either…but I thought this might be a nice way to make this trip fun for you.”

Ryuji turned pink and his eyes widened. “Here? In public?” he said uncertainly.

“The bathroom’s not public,” Akira said easily. “Look at it…it’s an executive bathroom. Besides, we’ll be in one of the stalls if someone walks in. And it’ll be a quickie, I promise.”

“Well…I am gettin’ turned on…” Ryuji grinned that beautifully sexy, cocky grin of his. “All right, let’s do this.”

Akira pulled Ryuji into one of the stalls and pushed him up against the wall, kissing him roughly as his fingers worked to undo the top of Ryuji’s pants. With the clasp undone, Akira looped his fingers around Ryuji’s hanging suspenders - something about them was so HOT to him - and in no time, Ryuji’s pants and underwear were bunched around his ankles, and Akira was on his knees coaxing Ryuji’s rapidly rising cock to life. “Fuck, this is hot!” Ryuji whispered loudly.

“Shhh!” Akira stood and pressed a finger to Ryuji’s lips. “Let’s not get caught till you get off at least.”

Getting back on his knees again, Akira gripped Ryuji’s cock and aimed it at his mouth, taking it all in one fell swoop. He heard a slight gasp from Ryuji, but no words. Instead, Akira felt Ryuji’s fingers muss up his hair as he let his throat muscles do all the work of flexing around Ryuji’s cock. After all, he couldn’t risk the sounds of a sloppy blowjob giving them away.

Akira was actually enjoying the forced quiet. It gave him a chance to really focus on every sensation of the moment. He breathed in deeply, growing hard himself at the smell of Ryuji’s aroused musk and the salty taste of his precum. Akira kept one hand on Ryuji’s butt, squeezing the hot runner’s cheek even as he enthusiastically encouraged Ryuji to thrust hard and roughly into his throat. With his other hand, he fondled Ryuji’s smooth balls, relishing their silky feel as they bounced and tightened with every flex of his throat.

After a couple minutes, Akira could sense Ryuji getting closer; his thrusts were coming faster now, and less even, and his breathing had become more ragged. Also, try as he might, he was unable to stop himself from letting small grunts escape his lips, which drove Akira to finally pull away from the deep throat and begin sucking in earnest. “Fuck…Akira I’m gonna cum!” Ryuji whispered urgently.

At that, Akira dove down deep again, plugging his throat with Ryuji’s fat cockhead, and was rewarded with five shots of Ryuji’s thick spunk. Akira swallowed each shot eagerly, and when they stopped, he even pulled Ryuji’s foreskin back and licked the rest of his cock clean. Ryuji moaned softly as Akira licked him one final time before helping him pull his pants back up.

“Wait, you don’t want me to…?” Ryuji asked.

“I’d love it, but people’ll definitely have noticed we’re missing by now. Don’t worry, it’ll just make next time better for me,” Akira said as he gave Ryuji another kiss. “Let’s go.”

———

As they left the bathroom, they ran right into Ann, Mishima, and Morgana. “Where have you guys been?” Ann asked. “Ms. Kawakami asked us to go look for you because you were taking so long.”

“Yeah, we thought you might’ve ditched!” Mishima threw an arm awkwardly, yet somehow endearingly around Akira’s shoulder.
“That’d draw too much attention to us, we wouldn’t have done that,” Akira said to him. Mishima’s nose wrinkled, and a look of confusion crossed his face. *What? Did I say something weird?*

“Can’t a couple of guys get lost findin’ the bathroom?” Ryuji asked loudly. “Geez…anyway, it was worth it for the break from that boring shit.”

“Well, we will be getting off earlier than normal,” Ann said. “We could do something fun after this.”

“Ooh, I want to go to that pancake-looking place we saw on our way here!” Morgana said. “I’m hungry!”

“You mean Dome Town?” Ryuji asked. “It’s a theme park, with roller coasters and stuff. I’d definitely be down to go.”

“Me too,” Mishima said. “I’ve never actually been.”

Akira was about to respond when a handsome, brown-haired boy who looked about their age rounded the corner. He wore dress pants and a stylish short brown coat, as well as shoes that looked both expensive and well outside the normal high school students attire. “Oh, hello!” he said. “Are you lost? I don’t think non-personnel are supposed to be here…” Though his words were somewhat admonishing, the tone was pleasant. It seemed like he didn’t really care.

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The brown-haired boy laughed. “I’m not a celebrity, not unless a few TV interviews count. My name’s Goro Akechi.”

“Oh!” Ann’s eyes widened. “I’ve seen you! You’re the ‘high school ace detective!’” Akira nodded in affirmation. He didn’t know the face, but he’d definitely heard the name before from eavesdropping on girls at school.

“That’s an exaggeration,” Akechi said humbly. “If you all are here tomorrow, I’ll be giving an interview. Maybe you’ll get to say something from the audience…they like to do audience polls and questions here.”

Their conversation continued for a couple more minutes, and Akira had to admit, Akechi had a charisma to him. He was undeniably handsome, and pleasant. He was self-effacing and didn’t seem to mind Ryuji’s earlier rudeness. And when Akechi excused himself, Akira couldn’t help but admire the other boy’s confident swagger. But there was something about him that Akira didn’t like…every bit of his charisma seemed calculated, rehearsed, focus group-tested.

“…what a jerk…” Ryuji muttered under his breath. “People like him?”

“You just don’t get it,” Ann said. “Some girls like a man whose idea of brunch isn’t a slice of toast and an orange soda.”

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“You just don’t get it,” Ann said. “Some girls like a man whose idea of brunch isn’t a slice of toast and an orange soda.”

“Yeah,” Mishima agreed. “I mean…I’ve heard girls talking about him at school…I can see why now.”

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“I mean…I’ve heard girls talking about him at school…I can see why now.”

“Ugh can we talk about something else?” Morgana complained. “This is awful. Plus, Kawakami is definitely going to chew us out for taking so long.”

“If she’s going to be mad anyway, what’s the big deal in takin’ our time?” Ryuji asked.
Mishima and Ryuji sat together on a bench inside Dome Town across from the most popular coaster in the park. They had ridden it three times already, but Akira and Ann couldn’t seem to get enough of the thrill. Ryuji had begun to feel nauseous after the third ride, and Mishima had offered to sit with him while the others continued to go on the ride.

“Whew…” Ryuji sighed. “I feel a lot better sittin’ down now…geez, I didn’t think Ann would like roller coasters so much…”

“I’m not that surprised,” Mishima said. “She’s loud and outgoing; I can see her liking being able to scream her lungs out. I’m honestly more surprised that you’re not…”

“Shuddup…” Ryuji said. “It ain’t that I don’t like it. Just that enough’s enough.” He stuck his tongue out at Mishima.

“Sorry, I didn’t mean it in a bad way,” Mishima said sheepishly.

Ryuji’s face softened. “Relax dude, I’m just messin’ with you. We’re friends, that’s what we do.” He put an arm around Mishima’s shoulder and gave it a firm squeeze. “Seriously, we’re bros. And I’ve known you almost as long as I’ve known Ann. We’re cool.”

“Y-yeah,” Mishima smiled. Suddenly, he was very aware of how close Ryuji was. He felt the weight of his arm on his shoulders, and the heat of it seemed to penetrate him to his core. Ryuji smelled good too: a mix of masculine sweat and whatever deodorant he was using. Mishima could feel himself beginning to tent up. “So uh…” he paused, trying desperately to change the subject to something else. “Are you and Akira…boyfriends?”

Ryuji turned bright red. “W-what??? Why would you ask that?”

“Well…Ann and Morgana have hinted at it…and also, back at the studio, when you guys came out of the bathroom…” Mishima began to flush pink as well. “I uh…I smelled cum on Akira’s breath…”

Ryuji sighed and rubbed his eyes. “Man, I told him we’d get caught…not that I’m really complainin’. Besides, like I said, you’re cool.” He shrugged his shoulders and affixed Mishima with a rueful look. “He’s always doin’ shit like that, just surprisin’ me with kisses and uh…more, sometimes.” Ryuji stretched his arms out and let them fall to his sides. Instantly, Mishima missed the weight of Ryuji’s arm already. It had felt…safe. “I guess we’re boyfriends…we haven’t really talked about it officially. But I mean, we fool around a lot…and we talk about serious stuff. We haven’t really gone on any dates…but I’m not sure I’m ready for that yet.”

Ryuji chuckled to himself. “He hasn’t made me feel this way, but I’m kinda terrified I’m gonna screw this up…he’d be my first, you know, relationship. And he’s already been with a guy *and* a girl. I feel like I’m gonna mess up cause I’m a noob at every part of this.”

Fuck…He’d known in the pit of his stomach that that was probably true. If Akira was into guys, of course he was going to go for Ryuji, or even Yusuke. Ryuji was hot, all toned muscle and bad boy aesthetic. And Yusuke was just, pretty, like Akira was, and an extremely talented artist to boot. And what was he? A website administrator that, as far as he could tell, hadn’t gained any muscle mass in his tenure on the volleyball team. Mishima slumped dejectedly into Ryuji, who interpreted the motion as an armless, yet comforting hug.
“You ever been with anyone?” Ryuji asked.

I can’t believe he thinks I might’ve…Mishima shook his head ‘no’ very slightly. “No…it’s just been porn and fantasies and toys for me…”

“Toys?” One of Ryuji’s eyebrows lifted in confusion. “I don’t get it…”

Mishima flushed a deeper red. Shit, why did I say that? “Um…you know…like…a sex toy,” he whispered finally. “One that you stick, you know…inside you.”

“Ohhh…” Ryuji looked at Mishima with a strange look. He seemed…impressed? And then, “Damn…” Why the hell does he look dejected?

“What’s wrong?” Mishima asked.

“You can prolly guess,” Ryuji said. “After what I said before…I’ve never…um…been fucked by Akira. I want to! But I’m nervous and…” his voice dropped even lower. “Kinda scared. It seems like it’d hurt a lot.”

“It can at first,” Mishima said. “But once I got it…it’s like the best feeling I’ve ever felt.” He leaned in closer. “When I use my toy, I definitely shoot way harder and more than I do without.”

“Yeah…” Ryuji shifted his position slightly, casually adjusting his pants as he did so. Is he hiding a boner? “Akira said basically the same thing…it’s not that I don’t want to try it…just I don’t want my first time doin’ it with Akira to suck, you know? I want it to be as good as my first time with him was…I feel like I owe it to him.”

“You could practice with my toy,” the words left Mishima’s mouth before his brain had an opportunity to process.

“For real?” Ryuji’s eyes brightened. “Dude, that’s awesome!”

“Haha yeah…” Mishima said, grinning toothily, yet emptily. “That’s what bros are for, right?”

“Right! I’ll text you tomorrow!”
Chapter Summary

Ryuji gets some practice in

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The next day, Mishima answered a ring at his door to find Ryuji standing there, grinning that cocky, yet hot grin of his. “Hey, Mishima! You ready?” He rubbed his hands together. “I’m a little nervous, but I’m kinda excited too…”

Mishima returned the grin - heartbreaking as it was, it was also infectious. “Y-yeah! Follow me to my room.”

Once there, Mishima pulled his shoebox out from under his bed and pulled out his usual dildo and lube. Ryuji eyed it apprehensively. “This is what I use,” Mishima said. “It’s nothing fancy, but it gets the job done.”

“I don’t know dude…got anything smaller for me to start out on?” Ryuji asked nervously.

“Sorry, no…” Mishima said apologetically. “These things are expensive…plus the more I have, the more likely one of my parents finds one, right?” He shrugged his shoulders. “I mean, I learned on that, so you’ll be able to. Besides, the tip is pretty small, you should be able to take that in the beginning.”

“Well…ok,” Ryuji said. “…thanks for letting me borrow it.”

“Wh-? Borrow?” Mishima shook his head. “No way! Then what am I going to do?”

“Aw man, but I need to practice…” Ryuji said. “I thought you said I could use it…”

“You can!” Mishima said. “It just can’t leave here with you.” He shrugged his shoulders again, this time sheepishly. “Sorry…I didn’t think this through.”

“So, what, am I supposed to use this in front of you?” Ryuji asked. “…That’s kinda embarrassing. And weird.”

Mishima’s cheeks flushed pink, and his cock twitched in excitement at the thought. “I uh…I mean, you could…I could coach you, I guess.”

Ryuji seemed to hesitate, and then he nodded his head. “Yeah, ok. You know what you’re doin’.” Ryuji began stripping down; Mishima sat across from him, crossing his legs to hide his obvious arousal. Damn, Ryuji’s pretty ripped…I wonder if I’ll look like that after a few weeks of Phantom Thieving…Mishima couldn’t help staring at Ryuji’s rippling, muscular torso, tracing each contour and wondering how it must feel to run his fingers, or better, his tongue over the skin. So hot…

“You like what you see?” Ryuji asked cockily. “You’re starin’…like a lot dude.”
“Sorry!” Mishima blushed a deep red now. Ryuji’s confidence was so hot. “…you’re all muscly… it’s pretty hot,” he admitted.

Ryuji laughed. “I don’t mind. Actually, it kinda helps me feel less self-conscious…” As he pulled down his pants, Mishima’s eyes were invariably drawn to the bulge of Ryuji’s neon underwear. Even though he was soft, Mishima could see that Ryuji was thick. Every outline of his package was visible through the thin fabric. Mishima could feel his own cock straining against his underwear. In fact, it was starting to get uncomfortable.

“Ok…” Mishima said, his voice cracking a little. “Ahem, sorry. Uh…when I start, it helps to warm yourself up with your fingers. Like, just start with one and move up as you get used to it. You can use my bed if you want, it’s probably easier.”

Ryuji shed his underwear and squirted lube onto his fingers. He hopped onto Mishima’s bed. *Fuck… that bounce, though!* Mishima wanted nothing more than to leap onto Ryuji and take that cock into his mouth, coax it to life and suck down every last drop of cum it had to offer. And Ryuji’s ass! Tight and muscular, but with enough fluff to jiggle just enough to drive Mishima’s lust through the roof. No wonder he and Akira are together…it’s amazing they do anything else…

Mishima watched Ryuji’s face pinch with discomfort as he inserted the tip of a finger into his hole. “Just let yourself get used to it,” Mishima said in what he hoped was a soothing voice. Slowly, Ryuji began to push his finger deeper in. After a few minutes, he added a second. *Fuck*…Mishima wanted to touch himself so badly - this was the hottest thing he’d ever seen in his life, including porn, and the inability to relieve himself was driving him crazy.

“Ok…I think I’m ready to try the thing,” Ryuji said. He picked up the dildo and lubed it up, pointing the head at his hole. Again, as he placed the tip, a look of discomfort flashed over his face. Strangely still, he remained soft.

After several minutes of no progress, Mishima asked tentatively, “Are you ok?”

“Yeah…it’s just…I don’t know, I’m not really likin’ this,” Ryuji said. “I can’t seem to get hard.”

“That’s probably holding you back…you have to relax, and you have to want it,” Mishima thought aloud.

“It’s hard to be turned on while I’m lyin’ here naked and you’re just watchin’ me!” Ryuji complained. “I feel like I’m takin’ a test…”

“Sorry…do you want me to leave?”

“Fuck no! You’re not a bad-lookin’ guy…I want you to do somethin’ sexy to get me in the mood!”

“Oh!” *What should I do…?* Mishima started by removing his shirt. He felt a little subconscious next to Ryuji. Mishima was a thin boy, and next to Ryuji’s toned body, he felt a little emasculated.

“Yeah, that’s it…” Ryuji said, one of his hands moving to his cock, which was slowly beginning to swell.

His courage and daring buoyed by that, Mishima slowly peeled off his pants next. He kept eye contact with Ryuji as he tossed his pants to the side, reveling in the blond’s rapt attention and growing arousal. Mishima fondled his bulge slowly, causing it to push almost grotesquely against the front of his briefs. “You want to see it?” he asked, hoping to God that the voice he was using was sexy.
“Hell yeah…Mishima…lemme see that cock…” Ryuji said as he jerked his growing member.

Mishima pulled his underwear down quickly, bending down so as to tease Ryuji just a second longer. As he straightened, he brushed his fingertips against the tip of his cock, and transferred the salty precum to his mouth. He heard Ryuji groan in lust. Looking over, he saw that Ryuji was fully hard now, jerking himself off slowly as he watched him. “You like what you see?” he mimicked Ryuji’s earlier question.

“I ain’t complainin’,” Ryuji said as he looked Mishima up and down, drinking in his slender frame, his pale, soft skin, his bobbing, turgid cock. He grimaced as he tried to push the dildo in deeper, but gasped in pain as he went a bit too far, pulling it out. “Jesus, why the hell can’t I get this?!?”

“Um…do you want me to help?” Mishima asked.

“If you think you can…” Ryuji said, frustration with himself clear on his face.

Mishima walked over, leaned in. He was surprised by the sheer amount of heat that seemed to be coming off of Ryuji’s body. “Can I…touch you?” he asked hesitantly.

“Whatever you think will help,” Ryuji said. “I want to do this!”

Mishima ran his fingers along the ridges of Ryuji’s toned stomach. He traced Ryuji’s treasure trail down to the base of his cock, but didn’t grasp. Not yet; he simply traced circles around it with his fingers, reveling in the excitement of finally being this close to another boy. And one that was so attractive too! With his other hand, he picked up the dildo and positioned it at Ryuji’s hole. As gently as he could, Mishima circled Ryuji’s hole with it. “Close your eyes,” he commanded, and Ryuji obeyed. “P-pretend like it’s Akira…” That’s what works for me….

“Akira…” Ryuji moaned softly. His cock bobbed in the air. It seemed heavy and meaty to Mishima; again, the urge to put his mouth over it was almost irresistible. Instead, he gripped it and began slowly jacking it in time with the circles of the dildo. Slowly, slowly Mishima did this, not breaking rhythm until he felt Ryuji finally relax. At that point, he pushed the dildo in gently, just a couple of inches. “Akira…” Ryuji moaned again, his eyes closed in fantastical bliss. “You’re in…”

Mishima began to slide the dildo in and out, slowly but surely, adding a millimeter of it to Ryuji’s depth with every few pushes. All the while, he jerked Ryuji’s cock, itching to touch his own as he dripped precum onto the floor. This was better than any porn he’d ever watched or read. The smell of Ryuji’s precum was intoxicating. The feel of his skin. The sound of his moaning, and whispers to an imagined Akira. And then there was just the sight- here he could see in full detail Ryuji’s skin tightening with every thrust of the dildo, every droplet of precum that oozed from his cock. The best part was Ryuji’s face: he could see in perfect detail how every thrust and twist of the dildo showed itself as pleasure on the beautiful blond’s face.

Finally, Mishima reached the base of the dildo. “You did it,” he said aloud. “See? I told you it wouldn’t be that bad…”

Ryuji’s eyes fluttered open. “Fuck…I did it…” He made eye contact with Mishima, his eyes sparkling and soft with warm gratitude. “Thanks. I don’t think I coulda done this without you.” He closed his eyes and grinned. “I didn’t expect it to feel this good…I see what Akira was talkin’ about now,” he laughed.

The mental image of Ryuji fucking Akira filled Mishima’s mind and he let out an involuntary groan. “That’s hot…” he murmured, taking his hand off of Ryuji’s cock to give his own a few tugs.
“isn’t it?” Ryuji said, red-faced, his eyes fixed on Mishima. “…you’re a good coach…I’m so turned on right now…” He reached down and began sliding the dildo in and out of himself and closed his eyes contentedly. “Mmm…” Ryuji moaned, his head thrown back against Mishima’s pillow.

“Fuck…” Mishima kept stroking himself as he watched Ryuji, engrossed in the sight of the purple length disappearing into the blond boy. Ryuji’s eyes opened, and he turned his head to look at him. “Hey…can you…do it faster for me? It’s tough with this angle…”

“Yes!” he hadn’t meant to sound so eager, but the whole situation was so much hotter than he had expected. Mishima took the dildo and began pushing it in and out of Ryuji at a quick, staccato pace. “Ryuji, you look so hot!” he gasped.

“Fuck…Mishima keep doin’ that!” Ryuji arched his back, thrusting himself down to meet the dildo on every push.

“Ryuji…” Mishima gasped. “I want more than this…please!”

Ryuji seemed to hesitate, than he turned over on his side and placed a hand on each of Mishima’s hips. “Fuck it, I want more too…!” He lifted Mishima up, the muscles in his arms standing out, straining hotly as he placed him on top of himself, with Mishima’s head at his crotch and vice versa. “Keep fuckin’ me man,” he said.

Mishima was seized by instinct now. Looking at Ryuji’s throbbing cock close-up, he could feel the sexual need they shared more than ever. Grasping the dildo again, he began fucking Ryuji with it anew. With his other hand, he steadied Ryuji’s cock in front of him and took the fat head into his mouth. Mishima wasn’t sure what he expected, but he hadn’t thought that sucking a dick could be so HOT. The feel of Ryuji’s throbbing thickness in his mouth was exciting. It pulsed with sexual energy, and Mishima felt himself tremble against Ryuji’s body with every such pulse. Mishima peeled back Ryuji’s foreskin, gave the head a few quick licks, polishing it till it shone with his spit.

And then, somehow, it got better as he felt Ryuji’s breath on his cock, followed by the moist warmth of his mouth on it. Mishima moaned around Ryuji’s length at the new touch. He bucked his hips involuntarily, feeling shivers of ecstasy run through his body with each passing second. Ryuji’s mouth was like a portal to another dimension where all he could feel was pleasure. “Fuuu…” Mishima groaned. He could feel a familiar buildup in his balls. He was past the point of no return. “Ryuji, I’m…” He felt Ryuji begin thrusting with greater intensity and urgency, impaling himself on the dildo even as his cock pushed itself deeper into Mishima’s mouth.

They came together. Mishima drank deeply of Ryuji’s cum, savoring each shot of viscous, salty goodness. Each shot was accompanied by Ryuji swelling impossibly large in his mouth, and it was all Mishima could do to keep any of his seed from spilling out of his mouth as he swallowed valiantly. He could feel Ryuji doing the same for him, sucking out every last drop of cum that he could coax out of him with his tongue, until finally, Mishima collapsed against him, utterly spent.

The only sound in the room was their breathing, first quick and short, but slowly evening out. “That was so fucking good!” Mishima broke the silence excitedly. “So much better than on my own! Please tell me we can do this again…” He looked over at Ryuji, finally, and saw the blond boy’s face was downcast. Mishima felt his heart drop into his stomach. “What’s wrong…? Was I…bad?”

Ryuji looked up at him. “No man, it was great…I just…I feel like I shouldn’t have done this with you…” he got up, removed the dildo from himself and began getting dressed. “Sorry…I…I’ll text you when I can. I need to talk to…” Ryuji’s voice caught in his throat. “Sorry…”

He left the room, leaving Mishima feeling very cold, and very alone. “Oh no…”
I know, this is rough. And I know I'm leaving things on a bit of a sad note this chapter, but I think this is good for the story I'm trying to tell. A relationship without conflict is unrealistic, especially between people that are relatively/completely new to it.

Don't worry, the ending of this fic will be happy, but this is just going to be a bump in the road before that point. Please trust me and stick with it :)
Confession

Arcade…catered ramen…hmm…Akira tapped his pencil thoughtfully against the small notebook that Sojiro had given him for recording his daily activities. He was currently using the margins to write birthday party ideas for Ryuji. It was surprisingly difficult. Ryuji had a lot of interests, but they didn’t really translate well to birthday party themes; at least, not ones that Akira could think of.

Akira’s phone buzzed in his pocket. He fished it out and smiled as he saw Ryuji’s face filling the screen. Akira brought the phone to his ear. “Hey! What’s going on? I was just thinking about you.”

“Oh…you were?” Ryuji sounded…different over the phone. Less his usual loud, chipper self and more…morose? Akira pressed his phone into his ear and plugged his other ear with his finger. “I…I need to talk to you. In person. Are you free tonight?”

“Yeah…stop by whenever…” Akira’s face pinched a little. Why did Ryuji sound so weird? “Did something happen?”

“Umm…yeah. But I have to tell you in person. See ya soon.” *click* Ryuji had hung up before Akira could say anything in response.

He looked up at Morgana, who was cleaning himself on the desk. “Hey, Morgana? Do you mind stepping out for a little bit? Ryuji’s coming over to talk, and I get the feeling it’s really personal…”

Morgana looked like he was about to say something rude, but seemed to think better of it and merely nodded. “Yeah, sure thing.” He hopped up onto the window ledge and disappeared into the evening.

“What the hell is going on?” Akira wondered aloud.

They sat on the couch together for several long minutes of silence. Akira reached out to take Ryuji’s hand and give it a comforting squeeze, but Ryuji flinched away. “Sorry…but…maybe hold off on that until I tell you…” The last time Ryuji had felt this guilty had been after he’d punched Kamoshida, and his mom had come to the school. She had blamed herself for what he’d done…but now…he couldn’t even blame Mishima for being a bad guy, like he did with Kamoshida. He could only blame himself.

“I…you know how we’ve…been foolin’ around a lot…but I’ve never been…you know…the bottom,” Ryuji started. His voice was shaking. Ryuji took a deep breath to calm himself. “Well…I was nervous about doin’ that with you. So, I asked Mishima if he’d ever been with a guy like that.” He paused. “It’s stupid…I should’ve just gone to you. I don’t know what I was embarrassed about… I think I wanted to surprise you? Show you that I could be all confident and sexy too…”

“I don’t get it,” Akira said. “What are you trying to say, exactly?”

Ryuji’s eyes stung with moisture, but he refused to blink or wipe them away. He kept his gaze on his knees. “I…I asked Mishima for some tips. And then outta the blue, he says I can use his toy to practice. And it seemed like a really good idea. I met up with him today, and he was tryin’ to coach me through it. But I was gettin’ real frustrated ‘cause it just wasn’t goin’ in. It was hard to get turned on, with me bein’ naked, and you not bein’ there, and Mishima standin’ there with his clothes on watchin’.” Ryuji placed his hands on the back of his head, interlocking his fingers as his forehead reached his knees. “So I asked him to help me by doin’ somethin’ sexy. So he started to strip. And I thought that wasn’t a big deal, cause we weren’t like, touchin’ or anythin’.”
“It worked…I started relaxin’ and enjoyin’ it. I thought, now I can do this for you…and Mishima was standin’ there jerkin’ off…and I was lyin’ back with his fuckin’ toy in my ass, so turned on…” Ryuji was quiet for ten whole seconds. “And then he said he wanted more. And I can’t lie to you, Akira. I can’t do that to you. I did too…we ended up suckin’ each other off.” Ryuji shook his head. Really, his whole body shook as he turned to look Akira in the eye. “I knew what I was doin’…that’s the worst part. I mean, sure I was real turned on. But I could’v stopped it at any time. He wasn’t forcin’ me to do any of it. And then I realized…this is the same as what my dad did to my mom when he’d go home with chicks from the bar. I’m…” Ryuji wiped his face angrily, but the tears in his eyes remained. “I’m just like him…”

“At least if I screwed this all up…us…as- as boyfriends…” Somehow, this time, the word came out easily. Now that the possibility was in jeopardy, Ryuji finally realized that that was what he really wanted, what he’d been denying to himself. “But…” his vision of Akira blurred, and he brushed away his tears again angrily. “I can’t not be friends with you, at least. Please…”

“Forgive me…? Even if I can’t forgive myself…"

Akira’s face was still. Not a single muscle moved. Ryuji waited. What else could he do? Of course, Akira would need time to process, and Akira being Akira, he’d take all the time he needed before saying anything. Each moment felt slower than the last…if it wasn’t for the time display on the DVD player behind Akira, Ryuji might’ve thought they’d gone to the Metaverse and were in a Palace where time was different. But he waited.

Then: “Please leave,” Akira said.

“W-what?” Ryuji had heard him, of course. He had been straining as hard as he could, to make sure he heard whatever words might escape Akira’s mouth. Those two words struck him harder than any Shadow ever could.

“I said, please leave,” Akira repeated himself. His face was still devastatingly impassive. The stillness, the calmness that he gave off that Ryuji admired, now turned into a knife that was stabbing into Ryuji’s guts and twisting with reckless abandon.

“Please…Akira…this can’t be the end…it can’t!” Ryuji pleaded. He longed to take Akira’s hands into his own, to hug him, to kiss everything back the way it was. He wanted to lie back on the couch with Akira’s head on his chest and his fingers in Akira’s hair.

“Please leave,” Akira said for the third time. “I need some time to myself.”

“I…” Ryuji stopped. He saw a flash of emotion in Akira’s face before it returned to its stoney demeanor. Was it anger? Frustration? …Hatred? Ryuji stood up and walked to the head of the stairs.

“I’m sorry…see you tomorrow.” The slightest nod from Akira. Ryuji descended the stairs and exited Leblanc.

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Akira flipped his phone over in his hands, flashing Ryuji’s picture before his eyes over and over. Each time, the knot in the pit of his stomach tightened, and his grip on the phone did the same. He had amazing, incredibly fond memories of Ryuji. Ryuji slurping down ramen like a fiend and making an unintentionally homoerotic observation about it. Ryuji running in front of him, the smell of his sweat and determination filling Akira with the drive to keep up. Ryuji initiating a kiss for the first time…how could that same, wonderful person have…?

Akira didn’t know why he dialed the number. It had been instinct. “Hello?” The voice on the other end was sleepy and distorted. “Akira, is that you? Is something wrong?”
“Yeah…it’s me, mom,” Akira said. “Can we talk?”

“Honey, if something’s the matter, you know you can go to your guardian, right? He does have to cover certain expenses. It may be faster if you talk to him first.” Akira heard a stifled yawn from the other end of the line.

“It’s not like that mom. It’s…personal,” he said.

“Well, what’s the matter? I can’t help you if you don’t tell me.” She sounded so far away…

“I…the guy I’ve been seeing…he just told me that he’d been with another guy,” Akira said. “I don’t know what to do…or how I’m even feeling. Does that make sense?”

“Oh, Akira…” his mom sighed on the other end. “Didn’t I tell you not to get involved with anyone like that? You’re going to have to come home in a year anyway…”

“Mom! That’s not the point!” Akira snapped.

“There’s no need to get snippy with me!” she responded angrily. “I’m not the one who made a mistake here! Shouldn’t you have expected something like this anyway? Gay men are all about the casual sex, aren’t they?"

Akira was silent for several seconds. “You know what…I don’t know why I thought this would be a good idea.” His voice was as brittle as glass. “Good night.”

“Don’t you want to speak with your fa-“ Akira hung up the phone and set his phone on silent. He walked over to his bed and collapsed on it, feeling more drained than he had after any of his trips into the Metaverse. What could he do? The Phantom Thieves needed another target…but even if they found one, would something like this affect their performance? Could they still operate as a team? How did he feel about Ryūji now? About Mishima? Akira brought his knees to his chest and hugged them close, then covered himself with his blanket. His whole body trembled, and the twisting feeling in his stomach, the weight on his chest, they refused to go. After several long minutes, he fell into a fitful sleep.

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Morgana jumped as quietly as he could from the windowsill to the room, seeing that the light was off and Akira was in bed, curled tightly into a ball. Huh…no Ryūji…He had expected the vulgar boy to stay the night as he usually did after coming over in the evenings. Morgana hopped onto the bed and moved stealthily to Akira’s face. Though he was clearly asleep, Akira’s face was full of tension, like every muscle in his face was contracting. What happened…? Morgana hesitated, then curled up into a ball himself by Akira’s side. Answers would have to wait till tomorrow.
Three Days

Chapter Summary

The day after Ryuji's confession: a glimpse into each of the affected guys' days.

Chapter Notes

This one's way longer than usual, which is why I didn't update yesterday. Hope you all enjoy :)

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

As Akira rode the train into school the next day, he noticed Morgana was unusually quiet. In fact, he’d been almost silent the entire morning, only meowing in thanks when Sojiro had provided him with his morning saucer. Truthfully, he wished the cat would say something, anything to distract him from the hurricane of feelings that seemed to be swirling around his torso. Akira wanted to say something…but then he’d be that crazy guy talking to his cat on the train.

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Akira walked into the classroom and took his seat behind Ann, giving her a superficial smile as he sat down. Mishima was giving him looks that were creased with apprehension while trying to avoid eye contact, something he was failing at spectacularly. Akira pretended he didn’t notice. He didn’t feel very angry when he looked at Mishima, or thought about him. It was more…sad? A general sort of hurt, an awareness, like…well, like he’d endured since coming to Shujin, with students gossiping and spreading rumors about him openly and without shame.

He’d never felt that way with Ryuji though…Ryuji had bonded with him instantly, as easily as falling asleep. If memory served, Ryuji had been more enthusiastic about them being friends at first than he had.

And he couldn’t blame Mishima for being attracted to Ryuji, certainly. He couldn’t blame Mishima for (he assumed awkwardly) offering to help Ryuji. And he couldn’t really bring himself to blame Mishima for wanting to do more after seeing Ryuji naked. God knows he would’ve wanted to, had their positions been reversed. But still…

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At lunch, he sat with Morgana in the courtyard, calmly watching the other students chat and laugh. Akira’s chest felt tight, watching them. He wasn’t watching them out of jealousy…his gaze was more wistful. What was it like, he wondered, to not have to think about changing the world? And changing it while struggling under the weight of an unjust criminal record?
His phone buzzed. Akira hesitated - what if it was Ryuji? - but checked it anyway. *Message from Ann Takamaki…*

[AT] Akira, where are you and Ryuji?

[AT] It’s just me and Mishima up here.

[AT] He seems kind of quiet today.

[AT] *quieter.

[AT] Are you ok? Did something happen?

[AT] Ryuji’s not answering my texts.

So Ryuji had ditched lunch with the group too…he sighed. It would be cruel to not respond, even if he didn’t feel like it.

[AK] I’m fine…just needed some time alone.

[AK] I’ll tell you about it later.

[AT] Ok…it’s weird up here without you.

[AT] Mishima isn’t even checking the Phan-Site on his phone…

*Geez…Mishima probably felt just as bad. Here was a boy who had been physically abused by an authority figure, who had had no friends until the Thieves came into his life, and who on top of that was probably dealing with all the baggage of being 16 and gay in Japan. No, Akira didn’t think Mishima was a bad guy. He’s probably freaking out and wondering if he’s ruined everything. Akira wondered if he should text Mishima that he wasn’t mad at him. But I am kind of mad at him…Akira realized. And Ryuji…*

“Kurusu-kun…?” Akira looked up to see Makoto Nijima standing over him. Her question implied hesitance, but Akira could see by the expression on her face that she meant business.

“That’s me,” he said. “…can I help you?”

“I would like to speak with you in private,” she said. “Perhaps in the student council room after school?”
“…” I was just being polite…I don’t actually want to help you…Akira thought. He sighed loudly.  
“Fine…”

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“…[We’re] the Phantom Thieves!” Makoto put her phone back into her pocket, having just played a recording of Ryuji and Ann declaring to the world their extracurricular activity. She watched his face for a moment, waiting for a response. When Akira wasn’t forthcoming, she spoke. “So? You, Sakamoto-kun, Mishima-kun, and Takamaki-chan are all Phantom Thieves, aren’t you?”

“Oh crap! We screwed up…” Morgana said. Makoto’s gaze flicked to his bag, and he gave it a chastising tap with his hand.

“…that recording doesn’t prove anything,” Akira said. “Ryuji’s a known ‘troublemaker’. People will think he’s just making things up for attention.”

“Even so, if I present this to the police, they will likely add you to their suspect list, as it is very short. Such an investigation would make it very difficult for you to continue your activities, don’t you think?” Makoto asked.

“…” Damn…I didn’t think of that…

At that moment, Akira’s phone rang in his pocket. He made no move to answer it, continuing to keep eye contact with Makoto. If she was worried at all by his calm demeanor, she didn’t show it.

“Go ahead, answer it,” Makoto said.

Akira put his phone to his ear, and immediately regretted it. “SOOOOO are we doing some PHANTOM THIEVING today?!” Ann’s voice blared from his phone so loudly he almost flung his phone across the room as he pulled it away from his ear.

“That was convenient,” Makoto said, a slight, yet somehow supreme smile on her face. “After school, call a meeting. I want to meet with all of you together.”

Akira started to laugh. Jesus fucking Christ…of course…of fucking course…it’s never too much… His fingernails dug into his leg as he gripped his pant leg. “So that’s it, huh? Just a meeting, and this goes
“No…” Makoto said. “I have a proposal for you all. But I’d rather not go over it twice.”

All of a sudden, Akira felt exhausted. “Yeah, I bet.” He fell forward, his forehead clunking loudly onto the table. The cool surface soothed the hotness of his skin. He wished one of the non-cat Thieves was with him. One of them would say something that would push him in the right direction.

“This is exceedingly inelegant,” Yusuke would say. “I demand you tell us your motives at once!”

“…you figured it out…” he imagined Mishima quailing under Makoto’s steely gaze, and Ann’s face creased with disappointment in herself. “W-what should we do?” He’d look at Akira, expecting him to say something great, and Ann would be more than ready to back him up.

But what he really wanted was Ryuji…they’d escape into the Metaverse, and laugh about how close a call that was. Ryuji would say something funny, intentionally or not. He’d hold Akira in his strong arms, stroke his hair, and kiss him. Akira smiled into the table as the image crossed his mind.

“Um…” Makoto’s voice broke his daydream. Her tone was questioning; she hadn’t expected this reaction. Akira felt a light touch on his shoulder. “Are you alright? Should I get the nurse?”

“No,” Akira waved her off, his forehead still glued to the table. “Just…let me relax for a minute…”

“Hey…” Makoto seemed hesitant, but her tone was soft, even motherly. “You may be a Phantom Thief, but you’re still a student here. That makes you a little bit my responsibility. Are you ok? Do you want to talk about it?”

Akira had to chuckle at the quick reversal in demeanor. “…I’m fine.” I have to be… “Come on. I’ll take you to meet the team.”

“Ryuji?” A knock on his room door. “Ryuji? Are you awake? You’re going to be late for school!” Ryuji turned over in his cot and put his pillow over his head. He wanted to be asleep again. When he was asleep, he didn’t have to think about what he’d done. What it made him…
“Ryuji?” The door opened, and his mom entered the room. She sat beside him and lifted the pillow from his head, gently ran her fingers through his hair. “Are you feeling ok?”

“…I’m sick,” Ryuji said softly. How could his voice crack with just two words? He was sick...*Just not that way...the other way. The way dad was...*

“Ok, sweetheart, I’ll call the school and tell them you won’t be there today,” his mom whispered. She brushed his hair another time, then leaned over and kissed his temple. “I’ll see you tonight.”

At the sound of his mom leaving, Ryuji rolled back over onto his back. He couldn’t stop thinking about Akira. The way he strode confidently through Kamoshida’s and Madarame’s Palaces, like he owned them. The way he’d deliver jokes in a deadpan tone of voice. The way his lips were so soft and inviting, and seemed to drag all of Ryuji’s thoughts and emotions to the surface, at which time he’d blab something sappy and embarrassing to Akira.

He sighed and sat up. Just a week ago, Akira had been lying on this cot, looking up at Ryuji with both trust and lust in his eyes. He’d begged to have Ryuji inside him. Akira had been so open with him...he always just...told Ryuji what was on his mind, how he felt about him. Why didn’t he realize how great and fucking rare that was in a person? And a person who was hot and smart and best yet, thought Ryuji was all of those things and more? And now it was over... Ryuji punched his pillow in anger and helplessness. He had to leave his room. There was too much Akira there.

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Video games occupied him in the living area for hours. Ryuji welcomed the mindlessness of the action and shooting games he had. He could get lost in them for short bursts in which he’d forget about Akira and what he’d done to him. But his hands were starting to get cramped, and his vision blurry from staring at the screen. His movements were becoming automatic, and the short bursts of relief coming further and further apart.

Ryuji moved to manga next. But it only took him a couple of hours to blaze through all he had. It was easy to skim when he already knew their plots and dialogue by heart. He sighed. Akira had cuddled with him on this couch...he’d trusted him with a story about his parents, his past, that Ryuji was sure nobody else knew. Akira had been vulnerable to him here, and Ryuji had jumped at the chance to be needed. Maybe that was part of why he’d done what he had with Mishima...”

Ryuji shook his head stubbornly. Every time he thought about it he felt like he had a stitch in his chest from sprinting a long way. There had to be something else to do...but he couldn’t leave the apartment. School was still in session...Ryuji walked over to his mom’s room and entered. It was the only room in the apartment that he didn’t have memories of Akira in. There wasn’t much to distract him here. The room was functional, and little else: there was a bed, a dresser with a mirror, and a nightstand.
As he stood there, Ryuji was struck by a memory that he’d forgotten from childhood. When he was seven, his mom had been hospitalized after a particularly bad fight with his dad. She’d been gone for a few hellish days. He remembered sneaking into the room while his dad was passed out on the couch, opening his mom’s nightstand drawer - she kept her perfume there - and lying down next to it, just breathing in the flowery scent. It was a place and a memory of intense comfort.

He did it now, opening the drawer, lying down, letting the lavender smell wash over him and fill his mind with warm memories. *If only I wasn’t 50% my dad’s genes,* Ryuji thought. *Maybe I wouldn’t’ve fucked this up so bad…* He sighed and flopped his head to the side. *Huh? What was that?* Ryuji got on his stomach and reached under the bed to pull out a circular box.

Opening it, he saw a wide brimmed women’s hat that had been flattened by its stay. He lifted it out without enthusiasm, tossing it onto the bed. *Whoa…* Underneath the hat was a bottle of fancy sake, about 2/3 full. “Dad didn’t drink fancy shit like this…” Ryuji murmured aloud. He unscrewed the cap and gave it a sniff. *Huh…* Given the smell of beer, he had expected it to smell bitter, but instead, the scent was sweet, almost fruity.

He stared at the open bottle in his hand for a moment, then tilted it back slightly and took a sip. *Damn…* the sake was smooth, almost indistinguishable from water in its finish. It lit a slight fire as it reached his belly, sending tendrils of warmth from his stomach to each of his limbs. “That’s pretty good,” Ryuji said aloud. “Why don’t people drink this instead of beer?” He took another sip from the bottle and was rewarded by another wave of warmth that spread to every space between his head and his toes. It was almost like Akira was in the room, saying something ridiculously nice and complimentary to him, and Ryuji’s face would get hot, and he’d blush, but be happy. Ryuji took another sip.

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“Ryuji, I’m home!” Mihoko Sakamoto entered her apartment. The lights were on, but Ryuji wasn’t in the kitchen/living area. “Ryuji? I bought miso paste so I could make soup for you. Are you feeling better?” She stepped into the hallway. The light was out in both Ryuji’s room and the bathroom, but the light in her own bedroom was on. “Ryuji? Are you in my room?”

“…yeah. ‘m in here…” Ryuji’s voice sounded weak. A terrible shiver swept over her, like an icy hand was gripping her heart.

Mihoko pushed open the door to see Ryuji propped up against her bed, a third-full bottle of sake next to him, and her nightstand drawer open. He looked up at her, his eyes slightly unfocused. “Now I really feel a little sick,” he said, grinning sloppily, with one corner of his mouth rising higher than the other, and it never quite reaching his eyes. It was like someone had thrown a bucket of ice water in her face. Mihoko’s eyes went wide, her body trembled, and she felt her heart skip a beat.
“Ryuji!” Mihoko knelt beside him, wrapped her arms around him and pulled him close. She kissed his head, 5, 10, 20 times. “Are you ok? Can you get up? Do you need to throw up?”

Ryuji shook his head. “Nah…I didn’t drink *that* much…and it’s been a couple hours…”

Mihoko felt his forehead with the back of her hand. It was sweaty, but not feverish. “I’m afraid there’s nothing you can do but wait to feel better,” she said. “I can still make some soup for you. You’ll need food and water if you don’t want to feel even worse tomorrow morning.”

“…ok,” Ryuji said. "Is this yours?" He looked at the bottle. "I've never seen you drink it..."

Mihoko smiled and kissed his temple for the second time that day. "I bought it when your father left, and I had my first drink from it when I won custody of you. I've had a drink from it on every special occasion since then: your birthdays, when you made the track team, when you brought that nice boy Akira home..."

At that, Ryuji reached up and grabbed the front of her jacket. “Mom…? I…” His voice caught in his throat for a moment. Mihoko saw that his eyes were damp with tears. Ryuji’s jaw tightened, and he buried his face into her shoulder, his body shaking uncontrollably. “I screwed up…I screwed everything up…”

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How to apologize for…Mishima typed the words hesitantly into Google. He wasn’t sure how to phrase what he wanted, so he was hoping the autofill feature would do it for him. Lying…no…being a bad mom…? No…Nothing showed when he typed the word ‘sucking’ after ‘for’. Sleeping with…None of the options seemed directly relevant. Mishima sighed and clicked on the top option. Give them space…let them work through their feelings…show them that you understand your mistake…do something to make them feel like they can trust you again…no guarantees though.

Mishima held his head in his hands. You idiot…He’d ruined everything, all because he couldn’t keep it in his pants. In one fell swoop, he’d made tit so that both Akira and Ryuji probably hated him. They’d probably tell the other Thieves about it, and then they’d blame him for tearing the group apart. They’d kick him out, and he’d be a zero again…

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I’m sorry…I’m sorry…I’m sorry…He had tried to mentally prepare himself, but when Mishima saw Akira walk into the classroom, it felt like there was a stone lodged against his Adam’s apple, choking off any words he wanted to say. Akira barely looked at him, and he hardly responded to Ann’s happy greeting.
None of the lectures that morning stuck in his mind. In fact, he spent it writing out possible apologies in his notebook. They all sounded stupid though, even in his head. It was a relief when lunch rolled around…temporarily anyway. He felt his heart drop a little as he opened the door to the rooftop and found only Ann sitting there, *It’s already started…us falling apart…*

Mishima sat next to Ann and unpacked his lunch. “Hey…” he greeted her.

“Hey!” Her face brightened as she saw him. “I’m glad you’re here…I thought I’d be eating lunch alone.” Her face darkened a little. “I had enough of that while Shiho was…was..was in the hospital.” Ann gave Mishima a forced grin. “Oh, but everything’s good now. I wonder where the others are… Akira was kind of brooding today, don’t you think?”

“Haha, yeah…” Mishima shifted his weight between his feet uncomfortably. *Did she know?*

“I haven’t seen or heard from Ryuji all day either,” Ann said. “Which is weird, considering it’s Ryuji.”

“Right…” Mishima chuckled awkwardly. It was hard to enjoy a joke at Ryuji’s expense when he wasn’t there to react to it. Especially since Mishima was the reason he wasn’t there.

Their lunch continued in much the same way, with Ann trying to engage him in conversation while they waited, and Mishima unable to give more than one or two word responses. In the end, Ann admitted defeat and got on her phone. Mishima couldn’t even bring himself to do that. All he used it for these days was the Phan-Site, and now…

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Mishima tapped his foot anxiously against the fence post he sat on. Akira had agreed to meet him at Inokashira Park, but…what if he changed his mind? He had every right to… And with Makoto discovering them, demanding that they go after some mafia boss that they didn’t even know the name of…Akira had enough to deal with. Mishima had made up his mind.

He breathed a sigh of relief as he saw Akira walking up the path toward him. Mishima waved nervously. “Hey…” Akira nodded in greeting, but said nothing. No confident smirk graced his face today; instead, his mouth was a weary line that cut across his face like a battle scar.

“It’s been kind of a rough day, hasn’t it?” Mishima began lamely. Akira raised an eyebrow at him that seemed to scream *Are you serious?* and Mishima had to force himself to not flinch. “Anyway… I wanted to talk to you because I have something important to say… Thief-related, like I said…”
“I’m sorry… for everything. I don’t have an excuse for my actions, and I don’t expect you to forgive me. But… it’s like how you change hearts… like those people, I have to atone for my actions. And… I think I know how to do it. The way to do it is… to make sure that the Thieves can continue on.” Mishima took a deep breath. *You can do this… it’s the right thing to do.* “I… I quit. You guys don’t need someone like me on the team.” Akira raised both eyebrows in surprise, his mouth opened slightly but no sound escaped. “Ok then… well… goodbye!”

Mishima turned on his heel and ran. He got about 15 feet before he tripped and face planted into the dirt path. “Oww…” His right knee throbbed with pain, and he’d scraped the palms of both of his hands. He sighed into the dust as he heard Akira’s footsteps approaching. *I’m just going to lie here and hope he walks past me…*

Mishima felt strong arms lift him up and prop him into a sitting position. Akira was looking at him, his expression serious except for a slight curl of lip and crinkle of amusement in his eyes. “I’m sorry…” Mishima apologized again.

“What the hell are talking about?” Akira asked him.

*What?* Mishima scrunched his face up in confusion. “Did…did Ryuji not tell you?”

Akira nodded. “He told me. What does that have to do with you quitting?”

“I… There’s so much pressure on you right now… with your criminal record… with Ryuji… and now the Thieves have to take on someone whose name we don’t even know?” Mishima shook his head. “I… I think it’s best if I’m not in the picture. That’s one less thing for you to stress about.”

Akira looked at him with incredulous eyes, then reached forward…and pushed Mishima to the ground. “Fuck outta here with that shit,” he said.

“W-what?” Mishima had never heard Akira swear like that before. *The stress really is getting to him…*

“You think that, now, in the middle of what you know is a high stress moment for me and the Thieves, that removing one of the team is the best choice? No, Mishima,” Akira said. “As leader, I don’t accept your resignation.”
“But…don’t you hate me?” Mishima asked suddenly, dreading the answer.

Akira’s face crinkled dismissively. “No, of course not. I’m not mad at you for wanting to get with Ryuji. He’s hot.” His face darkened. “I’m mad at Ryuji for…god, I don’t know how to explain it.” Akira reached down and pulled Mishima to his feet again. “Anyway, it’s not important. You’re not quitting the team. We need you…” He looked Mishima in the eyes, their noses inches apart. Mishima’s knees felt weak. Akira was so hot when he was this intense. “And if that doesn’t do it for you - I need you. Like you said, things are stressful. I don’t need you quitting on me and making things worse. Got it?”

Mishima hesitated, unsure of himself. Then he fell forward, wrapping Akira in a tight hug. Akira tensed up in response, but eventually wrapped his arms around Mishima as well. “Thank you…”

“Don’t mention it,” Akira let go and stepped back. He looked at Mishima’s face quizzically, then ran his thumb under each of Mishima’s eyes, flicking away the moisture he collected. “Jesus…if it wouldn’t make me a hypocrite, I’d kiss you right now.”

Mishima’s heart skipped a beat and he felt his face flush with heat. “W-what? Why?”

Akira laughed as he pulled Mishima along towards the subway station. “You look like you could use a good kiss.”

Chapter End Notes

Don't worry, the angst is coming to an end soon. I'll get back to the regularly scheduled fluff and smut soon enough. Feel free to complain to me about how long it's taking in the comments ;)
Akira

Chapter Summary

Thieves chilling in the park

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Ryuji stared at the Phantom Thieves group text on his phone. His fingers hovered over the virtual keyboard, but he couldn’t seem to figure out what he wanted to say. The Phantom Thieves were going after a mafia boss now? And he hadn’t been there…he’d been passed out in his mom’s room, and then he’d been sleeping off the alcohol. Hey, sorry I missed the last meeting! How can I help now? The words sounded stupid even in Ryuji’s head. Besides…Akira hadn’t texted him specifically or anything. Did he even really want to see him? Had Akira told the other Thieves? Maybe that was why Ryuji hadn’t gotten any texts from Ann...

Ryuji had spilled his guts to his mom that night, thankfully not literally. It was already embarrassing enough that she had found him like that. After telling her what he’d done with Mishima, she’d put her arms around him and comforted him. But Ryuji had seen the look of hurt flash across her face; she knew as well as Akira did now what it felt like to have trust betrayed. “You’ve made a mistake,” she had said. “But that doesn’t mean that that mistake defines you. It only defines you if you let it.” She had held his face in her hands, her eyes waiting on his to focus on them. “You are not your father.”

———-

The following Sunday morning, Akira woke feeling anxious. There was no way he could handle doing Thief investigating today. Ryuji had yet to respond to the all-Thieves chat about this mafia boss anyway. And as angry as he was at Ryuji…Akira knew that he would need him for their next challenge.

“Hey, Akira…” Morgana said from the desk. “Are you ok?”

Akira shook his head. “No…We’ll talk about it together later, ok? I’m going to crowdsourse some advice.” He unlocked his phone and sent a message to Ann and Yusuke.

[AK] Hey, can we meet? I want to talk to you guys about something.

[AK] I was thinking Inokashira Park.

Akira didn’t have to wait long for responses.

[YK] The park? Sure. I’ve been meaning to paint a landscape…maybe something there will catch my eye.

[AT] Yessss thank you I have been dying not knowing

Akira shook his head in warm amusement.
Four Phantom Thieves sat on an idyllic hill in the middle of Inokashira Park. A light breeze swept through their hair, bringing with it the smell of summer pollen. Akira absentmindedly picked a dandelion from the ground and twirled it between his fingertips, watching the sun dance across its simple yellow petals.

“So…did you just call us here to relax?” Yusuke asked. “If so, I wonder why Ryuji and Mishima aren’t here as well…”

Ann gave him a light shove. “Yusuke! Give him time! Something bad clearly happened!”

“Oh!” Yusuke looked mortified. “My apologies…please, take your time Akira.” He steppled his fingers and peered over them at Akira, his attention totally fixated on him.

Well…at least he’s not framing this to draw later, Akira thought. “So…I think you all know me and Ryuji have been fooling around together for a while.”

“I suspected, but did not know for sure,” Yusuke said. “You did seem awfully close for just friendship. I was considering asking you two to pose for me…” He trailed off as he noticed Ann glaring at him balefully. “My apologies again. Please continue.”

Akira chuckled quietly. “Yeah…it’s been a little rough. I think I’ve been maybe too eager to jump into something serious with him…” Because I feel exposed. Because I wanted him to be a foundation for my stress. “But Ryuji wasn’t sure about being that out yet, I guess. So I didn’t push it. Yesterday, Ryuji calls me and asks if we can talk. And when he comes over, he’s really upset. He won’t look me in the eye. He tells me that he really wanted us to take the next step, you know, in bed—”

“Gross,” Morgana interjected. “No gory details please.”

“Don’t be rude!” Ann shoved Morgana this time. “We’re listening, Akira.”

Akira shook his head. “It’s ok. There’s not much else to tell…basically, Mishima offered to help Ryuji practice, and they ended up fooling around themselves. I mean, I know we weren’t technically official, but I still feel shitty.”

A pause from the others. Then:

“That blond idiot! I’m gonna slice him up!” Morgana arched his back belligerently and flexed his claws into the soft earth beneath him.

“Oh, Akira…that’s really rough,” Ann said. “What’re you going to do? I’ll help any way I can. Do you want me to dye his hair pink without him knowing? I could totally do that.”

Yusuke reached out and awkwardly patted Akira’s knee. “I am sorry to hear that you’ve gone through this. It seems to me that you have had enough hardship in your life thus far.”

Akira shook his head and laughed. “I knew I could count on you guys…but no. Really, I just want your advice on what to do next…I’m sorry I’m being a bad leader, I shouldn’t have to ask for you guys about this stuff…”

Ann threw her arms around him and gave him a tight hug. “Akira, don’t say stuff like that! We’re
her for you…you don’t have to carry us around on your shoulders all the time!” Her face fell as she shook her head. “I don’t know what you should do, Akira…I don’t think that’s something we can just tell you to do…”

“Hmph…” Morgana sniffed with annoyance. “I say we give him the cold shoulder for a bit.”

“Please take what I’m about to say with a grain of salt,” Yusuke said. “I’ve never been in a couple before, but this is my take. Well, first I must ask you something: do you still care about Ryuji in a romantic way?”

Akira shrugged helplessly. “I don’t know! I have so many good memories of him - eating at Ogikubo, hanging at the arcade - but this one memory of him is a big one… I feel like it’s a deal breaker. Isn’t it?”

Yusuke shook his head. “I don’t see it that way. Of course, it’s your prerogative to. But the way I see it, even if people can be divided into two groups of good and bad, good people will always have flaws and make mistakes that hurt others that they regret, and bad people may have done deeds that helped people, or care deeply about specific people. You must decide whether this one memory of Ryuji is bad enough to outweigh all the good ones of him.”

Akira was silent for a long moment. That makes sense…but it really still leaves me where I started…

“If you want my advice,” Yusuke began again. “I think you should forgive him. And that might take time. But even though I have only known the both of you for a short time, even I can see that you both care deeply about each other. As I was saying earlier, I’ve honestly considered asking you to pose for a double portrait. You two have a connection. It needn’t be romantic - but I think you would be foolish to throw it all away now.”

“That…is pretty good advice,” Ann said, her eyebrows raised in surprise..


“I’m honestly a little shocked, no offense, Yusuke. You’ve really never been in a relationship before?” Ann asked.

“I have fielded many requests of interest from both men and women,” Yusuke admitted. “But thus far I have accepted none of them.”

“Well that doesn’t surprise me,” Akira said. “You’re definitely rocking that ‘hot, starving artist’ look. I bet if you set up a canvas here on a busy day, you’d probably get, I’d bet you get…oh…at least five peoples’ numbers.”

“I feel like some of them might get turned off by him being more interested in the painting than them though,” Ann said. “Remember when he was painting me the first time? He didn’t even say anything the entire time he was painting!”

“Sure, I think some people would be turned off by that,” Akira admitted. “But I think others would appreciate the passion that he has. That’s what won me over anyway.”

They looked over at Yusuke, who had pulled out his sketch notebook and was scribbling away. “What’re you drawing, Yusuke?”

“I just had an idea watching you two talking about me;” he said. He turned the notebook around, showing a rough sketch of two very caricatured ugly versions of Akira and Ann squawking away at each other. “I call it, ‘Rude Gossips in the Park.’”
“Damn…” Akira laughed as Ann turned red. “Good thing I always carry a Coolifier Pad.” He gave Ann a one-armed hug as he nodded appreciatively in Yusuke’s direction, then gave Morgana a small scratch behind his ears. “Thanks guys. I haven’t felt like smiling at all these past couple days, and here you’ve got me joking and laughing.” He ducked his head. “I’m so lucky to have you guys. I hope you know I feel that way about you.”

“Sappy, but I’ll allow it,” Morgana said as he rubbed his head up on Akira’s exposed side. “We wouldn’t have gotten this far without you.” Ann and Yusuke nodded their agreement.

“Same goes for you. I’ll let you guys know when I’m ready to go intel-gathering.”

Chapter End Notes

My current plan is for Akira and Ryuji to make up next chapter. So keep an eye out :)
It had been two days since Ryuji had confessed to Akira. He had gone to school yesterday, but had kept to himself, avoiding the other Thieves as best he could. For once, he was glad that they weren’t in the same class. Now he sat at home, staring at his quiet phone, willing it to ring. The Thieves group text had been silent all day…Ryuji wondered if they’d created a new group that he wasn’t a part of. The thought was like a stitch in his chest, invisible, but splitting his chest like an axe.

No…Akira wouldn’t just ghost him like that, would he? Ryuji got up and grabbed a fizzy orange drink from the fridge. He downed half of it in one gulp - it wasn’t as good at calming his nerves as the sake had been - but it was something. He almost spilled all down his front as his phone chirped loudly. He had almost forgotten what it sounded like.

[AK] Hey.

Ryuji’s heart skipped a beat. Akira…What the hell did ‘hey’ mean?

[AK] I know you were in school today, even if none of us saw you.

[AK] Let me know if you want to talk. I’m ready now.

What to say? What did Akira want to say? As awful as this limbo was, Ryuji didn’t want it to end. Limbo would be better than Akira saying calmly, “We’re over.”

[RS] …ok

[AK] Ok. I’ll see you at Leblanc then.

Ryuji tapped lightly on the glass. A moment later, Akira descended the stairs and walked over to open the door. He stepped aside expectantly, but Ryuji didn’t step in. “…he looked at Ryuji questioningly. How did Akira look so effing calm? Didn’t he know Ryuji was more scared now than he’d ever been? His father and their first introduction to the Metaverse was nothing compared to this. Did Akira already know what he was going to say? Shit…I shoulda studied for this…

“Sorry,” Ryuji said. “I was just…distracted.”

“It’s ok. Come on.” Akira led Ryuji to the attic. “I asked Morgana to make himself scarce so we could talk in private.” He sat down on the edge of his bed. “Make yourself comfortable.”

Ryuji sat on the couch. He couldn’t take his eyes off of Akira…if this was their last time together, he wanted to be able to remember as much of him as possible. He needed to memorize the curve of his
lips, the shine of his eyes…”I’m sorry,” Ryuji said, after the silence had dragged on for a minute. “…I ain’t gonna make excuses for what I did. I know it was wrong. I know that I…” his voice caught. “I know that I hurt you. Just…get it over with quick.”

Akira shook his head. “Ryuji…I’m not going to apologize for asking you to leave. I know it must’ve been hell not hearing from me…but I just couldn’t. Honestly, I’m still kind of mad at you.” Ryuji flinched, the words feeling like a punch to the gut. “But I’ve thought about it… and I need you. I need Skull on the Phantom Thieves. You’re my guy in the Metaverse.”

Akira got up and joined Ryuji on the couch. His eyes were dark and serious, and they seemed to look right past Ryuji and see the fear of loss as plain as if it was tattooed across his face. “I’m not really mad that you were with Mishima like that…and honestly, I’m not really mad at him either. What I am mad about is that you didn’t talk to me. I feel like you didn’t trust me to tell me that you were nervous. That’s what I thought we were. I thought we could trust each other with anything. I thought that you weren’t just my potential boyfriend, but that you were my best friend, and that we shared anything, without judgment. And to feel like I lost that…” Akira trailed off. “I felt like everything was over.”

Ryuji reached out and squeezed Akira’s hand, his eyes wild and desperate. “But it’s not though… right?”

“No,” Akira said ambiguously. Then, he returned Ryuji’s hand squeeze. “I’m not ready to say goodbye to you. But…I am ready to forgive you.” Akira leaned in. Ryuji could smell his breath, see every individual eyelash. And then he felt Akira’s soft lips on his own, and he sank into them, letting his brain absorb the gentle friction as the only important thing in the world.

They broke apart, and Akira smiled. Ryuji’s heart soared at the sight. “I missed that,” he said simply.

“It’s only been a couple days,” Ryuji joked as he ran his thumb over Akira’s. “But I get it. I mean, not just that. I just missed talkin’ to you. Hearin’ your voice. Aside from my mom, you’ve been the steadiest person in my life…and I’ve only known you for a few months now.” Ryuji stood up and paced around in a circle before settling on the edge of Akira’s desk. “It kinda scares me, if I’m bein’ honest. I care about you so much already… maybe that was part of why I did that with Mishima…I think subconsciously, I thought I would screw it up anyway, and it would be better to do it early, before we got in too deep.”

Ryuji sighed. “I gotta be honest with you again…I was so bummed out that I faked sick yesterday. And then, while I was at home, I found a bottle of my mom’s sake. And I drank enough to pass out…she found me like that and I told her everything I’d done wrong…” He looked up at Akira. “So that’s all my dirty laundry. Basically, I might just turn into dad one day. You’d be takin’ a risk, bein’ with me.”

Akira laughed and stood up from the couch. He approached Ryuji and leaned in again, giving him the slightest kiss. “It’s a risk being with anybody.” He traced a circle around Ryuji’s inner thigh and let his hand come to rest on it, inches away from Ryuji’s crotch.

“I have a full disclosure thing to tell you too,” Akira said. “First - all the other Thieves know about our situation.”

“Aw…I was kinda hopin’ they wouldn’t find out…” Ryuji groaned. “Now they’re gonna be on my case even more.”

“Morgana, maybe,” Akira said. “I think Ann and Yusuke understand though. And Mishima…well, that’s the other thing. I almost kissed him the other day.”
“What???” Ryuji eyebrows lifted in shock. “How the hell did that happen?”

“Well, nothing happened,” Akira said. “He asked if we could talk, then told me he was quitting the Thieves because he didn’t want to be a source of stress on me. I told him that that was bullshit, so he’s still on the team, obviously. But he just looked so sad and cute…I honestly wanted to kiss him. But then I realized that’d make me a hypocrite and also kind of a dick, so I didn’t.”

Ryuji shook his head and laughed. “Oh my god dude. You’re as thirsty as he is!”

“Please, you actually sucked his dick,” Akira said. “Though I am curious…was he good?”

“He was surprisingly good,” Ryuji admitted. “And I bet with that toy of his…well…I wouldn’t say ‘no’ to fuckin’ him if you know, I was single.”

Ryuji felt Akira’s hand move closer to his crotch, and he felt his cock swell up in response. “Someone’s getting excited…” Akira glared in faux outrage. “Just talking about Mishima gets you going, doesn’t it?”

“N-no!” Ryuji spluttered. “It’s just that it’s been a couple days…and your hand’s really cl—“ Ryuji’s breath caught as Akira palmed his hard cock through his pants. Ryuji felt Akira’s fingers trace the bulging outline delicately before settling in place.

“I’m just joking,” Akira said reassuringly. His breath was warm on Ryuji’s face, his lips slightly parted with desire. He kissed Ryuji again, and Ryuji kissed back hungrily. As their lips slid against each other, Ryuji felt Akira’s hand on his belt and zipper, undoing both with aggressive impatience. Akira pulled the resulting flaps of Ryuji’s pants aside, revealing Ryuji’s hard cock bulging against his bright red underwear, a spot of wet arousal already forming at the summit of the bulge.

Ryuji moaned loudly as Akira bent over and mouthed his cock. Even through the thin layer of fabric, Ryuji could feel the heat of Akira’s mouth. “Hunhh….” Ryuji moaned again as he felt Akira press his tongue up to the damp spot on his boxer briefs. “Akira please…” Akira’s fingers scrabbled briefly against Ryuji’s belly as they searched for his waistband, then pulled down his underwear. Ryuji gasped as he felt the cool air hit his manhood; his stomach muscles tightened as his cock slapped gently against Akira’s face.

God, Akira looks so hot holding my cock like that… Akira was crouched down, lightly stroking Ryuji’s cock as he held eye contact with Ryuji. Without breaking it, he stuck his tongue out and gave Ryuji’s cockhead a few exploratory licks. “You look so hot….” Ryuji gasped, and Akira responded by taking more aggressive licks, ones that curled his tongue around Ryuji’s shaft and cockhead. “Akira please….” Ryuji begged again. The teasing was so hot but it was driving him crazy. He felt like his cock was a steel rod between his legs, he was so turned on.

Akira slid Ryuji’s pants down to his ankles, then came up between his legs, laying his hands softly on Ryuji’s toned stomach. His fingers glided over every divot of Ryuji’s abs before Akira, still maintaining eye contact, returned his mouth to Ryuji’s cock, taking nearly all of it in one go. Ryuji cut off a yelp at the sudden heat and moisture, the sensations of pleasure scrambling his brain of coherent thought. He pushed up into Akira’s mouth eagerly and involuntarily, desperate to get every inch of his throbbing cock down Akira’s throat. Akira took it expertly, allowing his jaw to slacken around Ryuji’s girth so he could pump away without resistance. He guided Ryuji’s hands to his head, moaning around Ryuji’s length as he gently pushed down on Ryuji’s hands, encouraging him to fuck his face even more roughly.

Ryuji answered the unspoken desire valiantly, entwining his fingers in Akira’s hair as he pushed him down on his cock with every thrust. Each thrust plunged his cock to the back of Akira’s throat,
where he felt the muscles flex and massage his cockhead for an instant before he pulled back and repeated the process. “Shit… Akira, I don’t want to cum without touching you,” Ryuji said as he felt himself get dangerously close to the brink.

Akira pulled off of him with a loud, sucking sound, giving Ryuji a few rough licks before standing up fully. Akira peeled his shirt up over his head, and Ryuji couldn’t help but let a small gasp out. Where Ryuji’s muscle tone was a runner’s, wiry and tight, Akira’s was that of a fighter, each muscle tensed up and ready for action. Ryuji reached out and touched Akira’s chest, his fingers lightly kneading the taut flesh. Then they moved down to his stomach, and after the catch on Akira’s pants. Ryuji undid the catch as he kissed along Akira’s collarbone, and was rewarded by the feeling of Akira’s hot length pressing fervently against his fingers through the fabric of his underwear.

Ryuji pulled down, and Akira stepped out of his pants and underwear to stand fully naked in front of him. "You're the hottest guy in the world!" Ryuji blurted out. Akira ducked his head modestly, his cheeks flushing a rosy pink that Ryuji found somehow both cute and hot. He reached out and fondled Akira’s length, reveling in the heat and weight of it in his hand. Akira thrust forward into Ryuji’s hand, kissing him passionately as their crotches came together. Ryuji opened his hand to allow both organs into his palm, and he used his fingers to smear the precum from both cockheads down and around their heads and shafts. “Your cock feels so good on mine…” he said.

Akira grinned and began thrusting roughly into Ryuji’s hand and against his cock. The delicate friction around them sent waves of pleasure through Ryuji’s body. Seeing Akira thrust “into” him was more of a turn-on than Ryuji had expected. It was masculine, hot to see Akira taking charge in such a way. He’d thought he’d feel girlish and not himself in this position; instead, he felt safe, protected.

Ryuji let go of his own member and grasped Akira firmly. Akira looked at him in surprise. “What’s wrong? Too much?” His face creased with concern.

Ryuji shook his head. “No… not enough.” He guided Akira’s cock to the entrance of his hole, felt tendrils of pure excitement spread out from it at the light touch of Akira’s cock. “Grab a condom… I’m ready…”

Akira’s face seemed to light up, and he moved quicker than Ryuji had ever seen him move to grab a condom and a bottle of lube. Akira rolled the condom down his cock and lubed it up as Ryuji watched both eagerly and apprehensively. He gasped as Akira applied the somewhat cold lube on his hole, but the gasp turned into a purr of appreciation as Akira began to circle it and lightly finger him. But it wasn’t what he wanted; Ryuji grabbed Akira’s arm. “I want to feel you…just go slow…”

Akira raised his eyebrows in surprise, but Ryuji could swear that his words had somehow caused Akira to get even harder. “Ok,” Akira said. “Let me know if it gets to be too much.”

Ryuji felt Akira’s cocked press up against his entrance again. It felt so big, yet its hardness and its heat seemed to penetrate through the condom and send shivers up Ryuji’s spine. Akira began thrusting ever so slightly, pulling back at the slightest resistance, teasing Ryuji’s hole with every push forward. Ryuji had seen how good full penetration could feel from watching Akira, but he was amazed at how good even just the teasing of his hole felt. Every push sent tense sexual energy up his body, and every pull back filled him with anticipation for more.

Finally, Ryuji’s hole gave way and Akira’s cockhead popped in. They gasped in unison. Akira’s cock felt so big; Ryuji couldn’t believe that it was actually inside him in any way. “Fuck, you’re so tight…” Akira moaned in appreciation. The muscles in his chest, arms, and stomach stood out and glistened with a thin sheen of sweat as Akira eased himself forward even slower than before. Ryuji closed his eyes and focused on the feeling of Akira inside him, willing himself to relax and allow him
in. He slowed his breathing, let himself feel every point of contact between his hole and Akira’s cock, until finally, he felt Akira’s thighs on his ass.

“You’re in…” Ryuji couldn’t keep the tone of amazement out of his voice. Akira had gone so slowly that he’d barely felt any hint of progress, and now here he was stuffed with his cock. “This is way better than Mishima’s dildo!” he exclaimed. And it was. He could feel the heat of Akira’s cock inside him, how it throbbed every time Ryuji flexed around it. He could see how Akira reacted to that, his eyes half-lidded in lust, his jaw slightly slack.

“You ready?” Akira asked.

“Yes…god, please,” Ryuji said. “I want you to fuck me….” Akira wrapped his arms around Ryuji’s shoulders to steady himself, then began to thrust slowly and evenly into him, each thrust sending Ryuji’s adrenaline and endorphin levels to new heights. There was nothing else in the world he could focus on now, even if he wanted to. “Mmm…” Ryuji sighed in pleasure as Akira’s cock massaged his insides.

Ryuji wrapped his own arms and legs around Akira, pinning him to him, pushing against him eagerly every time Akira thrust forward, encouraging him to go faster, harder. “God, please, Akira! Harder! I need you deeper…fuck…” Akira picked up the pace, slamming deep into him twice every second, his rhythm precise yet rough. Ryuji had to tighten his hold on Akira to avoid slipping off the desk - it was instinctual, his mind hardly registered the danger consciously. Ryuji had never felt such an intense pleasure before. With each thrust, he felt warmth surge through his body, saw precum flow freely from his cock without it being touched.

“Akira…” he moaned as he pulled him in close, their foreheads and chests coming together. “Fuck, fuck, fuck” His mind couldn’t even hope to articulate what he was feeling.

“Ryuji…” Akira breathed out as he continued to push into him, his body tense, yet so alive against Ryuji’s skin. He looked so hot in the moment, every muscle in his body taut with the effort of bringing them shared pleasure, of not cumming too soon, of making sure that Ryuji’s first time was as good as it possibly could be. “Ryuji…Ryuji…” his face was screwed up in concentration, an expression Ryuji found adorable because it was Akira, and hot because he knew Akira was trying as hard as he could to make this moment last.

Just the thought of Akira being so into him while he was in the throes of his own sexual ecstasy was driving Ryuji insane. He wanted Akira to feel as good as he was feeling, and for him to know that what turned Ryuji on the most was knowing that Akira was too. “Akira…” he moaned as Akira’s balls slapped against him again. “Fuck…” It was so hard to string words together like this. “I…I want you…I want you to cum…please…cum inside me!”

“That’s so hot!” Akira gasped out as he began fucking Ryuji even faster, his lips meeting Ryuji’s as their bodies mashed together. “I want you to cum for me Ryuji…” he breathed into Ryuji’s mouth as he pushed in and out of Ryuji’s hole, practically leaving it with every pull out, and slamming as deep as he could with every thrust in.

“Akira-!” Ryuji came harder than he ever had in his whole life. His cock was like a garden hose, spraying his and Akira’s body with hot streams of white. As his insides flexed involuntarily around Akira’s cock, he felt it swell inside him two, three, six times before Akira collapsed against him, as spent as Ryuji was.

They lay like that for a minute in silence, waiting for their heartbeats to slow and their voices to come back. Finally, Ryuji broke the quiet. “Akira…I’m so glad I didn’t mess us up…” He ducked his head, a bashful pink coming to his cheeks. “You’re my best friend.”
Akira’s lips brushed Ryuji’s again, and he gave Ryuji the smile that still gave him butterflies in his stomach. His cheeks too were an unusual pink. “You’re my best friend too. My boyfriend, I’d say, even.”

Ryuji nodded his head slowly, a shy smile creasing his mouth upwards. “Yeah… you’re my boyfriend.”

Chapter End Notes

I now officially return you to the smut/fluff that you signed up for. At least for now :D
Mishima

Chapter Summary

Ryuji is welcomed back to the Thieves and Mishima admits his crush(es)

Chapter Notes

Sorry for the later than usual update. Life has been hectic lately. But rest assured - I don't start stuff without finishing it :)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“OW GOD get off!” Ryuji exclaimed. The second he’d walked into the karaoke room, Morgana had sprung at him, and was now hanging off his pant leg. All four sets of claws scrabbled to stay locked on as Ryuji shook his leg vigorously to dislodge him.

Mishima couldn’t help but laugh with the rest of the Thieves. Even Akira was laughing; and it was a full laugh that came from his belly. Mishima smiled inwardly - it was good to see Akira in high spirits again, and not so stressed out that he couldn’t enjoy the funnier moments in life.

With a final kick, Ryuji finally managed to send Morgana flying from his leg onto the booth seat. Morgana landed on all fours, ignoring Ryuji’s angry “What the hell?!” as he licked his paw with an air of supreme disdain. “Honestly, you stupid cat, what the shit was that for?!”

“I’m not a cat!” Morgana hissed angrily. “And *obviously* it was because you jeopardized the Thieves by stressing out our leader with your- your ungentlemanly antics!”

“What-?” Ryuji’s forehead wrinkled with offense. “I already said sorry! And we made up anyway! Geez…” He poked at his leg where Morgana had clawed him. “I think you drew blood,” he said, his face and tone mournful.

“Wait, you guys made up!?!” Ann sprang to her feet as well, then turned to Akira, grabbed him by the shirt and began shaking him as vigorously as Ryuji had shaken his leg. Mishima could practically hear Akira’s teeth rattling around from where he was sitting. “Why didn’t you tell me?! Tell me all the details!!”

“Yes, I too am curious,” Yusuke said. “Please, spare no details! Akira, as you know, I am working on a painting entitled ‘Desire’, and I believe your story may lend me invaluable insight!”

Ryuji rubbed the back of his neck sheepishly; a habit he’d picked up from Akira. “I uh… I don’t think you guys want *all* the details…” he said, his face flushing a little pink.

“I don’t know… Yusuke sounds pretty enthused,” Akira said. “And I bet Mishima wouldn’t mind some details either, am I right?” He gave a sly wink to Mishima that sent a surge of heat somehow to both Mishima’s face and his crotch. Mishima opened his mouth to respond, but found that he couldn’t think of anything to say. It was true, after all. The thought of Akira and Ryuji’s makeup sex
*was* pretty hot. And unlike Puck, Mishima was a terrible liar.

“I uh… I uh…” Mishima stammered. His lips felt numb as he gulped air like a goldfish gulps water. Still, it was better than just blurt out some embarrassing secret like he had been doing in the past. *Freaking Ryuji and Akira*…He both admired and was jealous of their confidence. Akira, with his calm, collected approach - unflappable, and willing to stand up to authority figures like Kamoshida with that same calm visage. And Ryuji, who wore his heart on his sleeve, willing to show the world who he was in any given instant. Why couldn’t he be like that? No wonder people thought he was a ‘zero’…he’d never given them anything to dispute it.

“Anyways!” Ryuji saved him from the other Thieves’ attention as he squeezed himself between Mishima and Akira and threw an arm behind each of their shoulders. Mishima could feel the heat of Ryuji’s body, the weight of his arm, and it seemed like every toned muscle therein. He could even smell Ryuji’s deodorant, a heady, spicy scent of masculine energy. It sent tingles down to the small of Mishima’s back. “You guys figure out a plan for this mafia boss dude yet?”

“No…” Ann’s face was dejected. “All we know is that he’s the boss of an operation that’s using high school students to traffic drugs. We’ve seen some people in Shibuya that could be his guys…but it’s not like we can just walk up to them and ask them their boss’s name, right?”

“Yes, I guess not…it’d be best if he didn’t even know us…” Ryuji said.

“It’ll be tough figuring out the other two keywords not knowing him though,” Akira said. “We’d have to be lucky…”

The Thieves lapsed into a moody silence. “Hang on…” Mishima said softly. “What about that reporter lady we met outside Madarame’s house? She might know about this guy…”

“Whoa! Yeah!” Ryuji pumped his fist. “That’s a great idea!” He turned to Akira. “You still have her card, right?”

Akira reached into his pocket and fished out his wallet. From it, pulled a small plain business card. “Ichiko Ohya…I guess I’ll just give her a call right now…”

_____

“That should work for me. Thank you! I’ll see you then!” Akira hung up the phone and turned to his friends, smiling broadly. “She says she can help!”

“Whoo!” Ryuji exclaimed as he pumped his fist again. “So uh…what’s the plan?”

“She’ll meet me in a bar called ‘Crossroads’ in Shinjuku tomorrow night,” Akira answered. “I’ve never been…anyone want to come with?”

“Isn’t that district supposed to be kind of skeevy?” Ann asked.

“Yes, I’ve heard it can be dangerous to the uninitiated,” Yusuke said. He paused, then added, “Though I doubt Akira would be foolish enough to be drawn in by some two-bit criminal’s hawking.”


“Uh…you know what that means, right?” Mishima asked.
“Not really,” Ryuji admitted. “I guess I thought all the street lamps or store signs would be red or somethin’. Is that not it?”

Mishima shook his head, a slight embarrassed flush creeping up his cheeks. “It means uh…well, like there’s supposed to be sex shops and clubs and people who have sex for money there.” His face turned even redder. “And uh…?” Mishima checked his phone for Crossroads’s address. “It’s in the Shinjuku-Ni-chōme…it’s a famous gay district.”

“How can a district be gay?” Ryuji asked. “Does that mean everyone there’s gay?”

“Probably more than most, but not everyone,” Mishima said. “It just means that most of the bars and clubs there will be gay, I’d think…”

“Geez, well you seem like more of an expert than me and Akira,” Ryuji said. “Why don’t you come with?”

Mishima’s palms felt very sweaty all of a sudden. Wandering around the famous gay district of Tokyo with Akira and Ryuji? Admittedly, he’d wanted to go for a long time, but had never worked up the courage to do so. He had bought his dildo from a shop there, but it had been through an online mail-order service, so he’d never actually set foot into the shop. Even if he had, he was pretty sure they didn’t sell that kind of stuff to you if they knew you were in high school. Shinjuku with Akira and Ryuji… was it a good idea? Everyone seemed over it but…

“Uh hello? Mishima, you there?” Mishima started as Ryuji poked him firmly in the ribs.

“Ah! … yeah, ok. I’ll go,” Mishima said. “We can meet at Shibuya station and ride the train there together, if that works for you?”

Ryuji and Akira nodded. “Yes! I feel like we’re on the right track with this, finally,” Ann said. “I was getting nervous…”

“That Niijima girl did not seem the type to make threats lightly,” Yusuke said. “If we do not pull this off, I genuinely believe she will expose us.” The group nodded grimly.

“Well…our time’s almost up anyway,” Ann said. “Let’s just lie low until you guys meet with that reporter.” She got up and gave Akira a big hug. “I’m so happy that you guys made up! Bye!” She waved cheerily to everyone before leaving the room.

“We’re counting on you.” Yusuke inclined his head to everyone, then himself left the room.

“I gotta pick up some groceries for my mom, so I gotta head out too,” Ryuji said. “But I’ll see you both tomorrow!” He gave Mishima a friendly, if somewhat painful clap on the shoulder. Mishima nodded quickly with what he hoped was a convincing smile on his face. His lips jammed together tightly; Ryuji had slapped a fresh bruise from a Shadow in Mementos.

Ryuji then turned to Akira and gave him a slow, lingering kiss. Akira’s arm wrapped instinctively around Ryuji’s waist, and Ryuji’s hand held the back of Akira’s head gently. The kiss was warm, passionate, and in its length, bordering on overtly sexual. In short, it was everything Mishima wanted out of his first kiss…something, despite his misadventure with Ryuji, he had yet to receive. It felt like one of Kamoshida’s blows to the gut. The world seemed to spin around the pair of them in Mishima’s eyes, until they were the only things in focus. Of course these two perfect guys would be together…

They broke apart as Morgana yowled angrily. “Come on! That’s too long for just a goodbye kiss!”
“Sorry,” Ryuji said, though his broad grin said otherwise. He gave Akira a quick peck on the cheek before turning to leave. “See you again!” And he left the room.

Mishima found himself breathing raggedly and quickly, and he took a deep breath to center himself. He felt a warm hand on his shoulder. “You ok Mishima?” Akira was looking down at him with concern on his face. “You seem like you’re hyperventilating a little…”

Mishima nodded his head. What else was he supposed to do? He felt a twinge of pain in the center of his forehead; it reminded him of how he’d felt when Puck first awakened. “Hey Morgana…” The words sprang unbidden to his lips. “Can I talk to Akira alone for a minute?”

Morgana sighed, then nodded as he left the room. “Keep it quick. I’ll be right outside.” He left, and Akira sat next to him.

Akira raised an eyebrow at Mishima. “What’s this about? You’re not going to try to quit on me again, are you?” His tone was joking, but his face was serious, as always. Mishima genuinely believed that Akira wanted him on the team. The thought filled him with equal parts warmth and guilt. Warmth at Akira’s genuine kindness… and guilt, that all he could think about, now, and when he was alone, was Akira pushing him against the seat, kissing him like he kissed Ryuji.

Mishima shook his head. “No, it’s not that…” he said. “I…I want to be honest with you, since you’re so honest with me, and everyone else, it seems. I admire that, you know? And honestly, I’m kinda jealous.” Mishima’s eyes turned down. It was hard to look Akira in the eye with stuff like this. His dark eyes always just seemed to pierce deep into him, look past the words he’d use to sugarcoat things and cut right to the heart of things. “I… I have a crush on you.” Mishima admitted.

“Oh,” Akira said. His brow furrowed slightly. “I guess I owe Ryuji a soda or something.”

“What? You knew?” Mishima asked. His chest felt so heavy. It was like he had one of those old-timey medicine balls on his chest.

“Not for certain,” Akira said. “Just one time Ryuji said he thought you might…” He shifted his weight between both feet, though his eyes never left Mishima’s face. “Is that all you wanted to say?”

Mishima shook his head again. “No, that’s not all…I just wanted to thank you again for keeping me on the team. This is the coolest, best thing I’ve ever done with my life and I…I’m so grateful to you. And… that’s why I’m going to try to get over my crush on you. And stop one from forming on Ryuji…though I might be too late on that…”

Akira laughed as he put an arm around Mishima’s shoulders and squeezed tightly. “He is crazy hot, I’ll give you that. Thanks for telling me that - I know it’s not easy…so, do you just crush on every cute guy you see? Is Yusuke next?” He said teasingly as he waggled his eyebrows suggestively.

“I do not!” Mishima pushed Akira off him with faux outrage. “I mean… I *lust* after cute guys I see… but that’s not like a crush, and I bet every guy does that!” He bowed his head sheepishly. “Though… I guess I do crush on every cute guy that’s nice to me and isn’t more obsessed with painting than with, well, you know.”

Akira laughed again; the sound sent a thrill of guilty pleasure through Mishima. He could make Akira laugh…”I like honest Mishima,” Akira said. “He’s a cool guy.” He got up from the seat and offered Mishima a hand up. “Come on, we’re literally like a minute away from going over time and I don’t want to pay for another hour. Let’s walk to the station together.”

As always, I appreciate any kind of questions, comments and critiques. Please let me know what you think! And thanks in advance for it, plus any kudos :)}
The ride to Shinjuku had been fairly uneventful. Both Morgana and Mishima had expressed concern about Ryuji still wearing his school uniform, but there was no helping it. There wasn’t time for Ryuji to change, and of course, Akira couldn’t say ‘no’ to him, not when he’d been so excited to go. And anyway, Ryuji looked good in those pants. There was something about the way he let the suspenders flop to either side that drove Akira wild. The look really worked for him, emphasizing his punk jock aesthetic.

“Whoa, it’s so bright even though it’s night…” Ryuji blinked rapidly as they exited the train station. “It almost hurts my eyes…”

“I didn’t expect that at all,” Mishima admitted. “It’s practically daytime.”

Akira could only nod in agreement. A theater nearby displayed its current film with a huge neon red sign. To his right, there was a sex toy shop that hawked its wares in equally bright fashion. Across from the theater and surrounding the shop, intimately small gay bars advertised the kind of crowd they catered to with brazen pride: a kink bar featured an anatomically correct mannequin wearing leather bdsm gear, a bear bar featured an oddly cute bear mascot, and a sign in front of a third bar advertised that young men under 22 paid half cover. They seemed to stretch on for as far ahead of them as they could see.

“This way,” Mishima pointed as he looked at the map on his phone.

They had hardly gone more than a block before a woman dressed in lavender sitting behind a fold-out table called out to them. “Excuse me? You there, the fluffy-haired boy?” Akira looked over at her and pointed to himself questioningly. “Yes, you! …I sense great things coming in your future, and great danger! You must let me read your fortune!”

Is she for real? Akira shook his head. “Umm…no thanks. I’ve got somewhere to be…”

“Wait a minute…” Mishima said, his eyes squinting as he looked at the woman. “Hang on! That’s Chihaya Mifune! She’s the Maiden of Relief!”
Chihaya blushed even as Ryuji, Morgana, and Akira looked at Mishima blankly. “Who the eff is that?” Ryuji asked.

“Yeah, you say that name like we should know it,” Morgana said.

“Her fortunes are never wrong!” Mishima exclaimed excitedly. “Come on? Really? It’s like an urban legend, but true! Getting my fortune told by her is one of the reasons why I’ve been wanting to come here!”

“Why?” Ryuji laughed. “You going to ask her what universities are going to accept you? Nerd.”

“No!” Mishima said. “I was going to ask her what I could do to improve my l-…um…”

“What?” Akira asked.

“Never mind!” Mishima blushed. “It’s not important.”

“Your love life?” Chihaya asked.

“I've never run away from a cop before!” Mishima gasped as the group hid in an alleyway. "Why'd you have to wear your school uniform?"

"I'm sorry, alright?" Ryuji hung his head like a puppy who'd just been scolded. Honestly, while Akira was annoyed that they were now late for their meeting with Ohya, he did find Ryuji's contrition very cute.

"I've never run away from a cop before!" Mishima continued, his words breathy and urgent. "What if he remembers my face? What if he tells all the other cops what I look like? What if-"

Ryuji rolled his eyes as he put a hand over Mishima's mouth. "Calm down dude...if he's gonna remember anyone, it's gonna be me, the blond dude wearing his school uniform in Shinjuku. And even I don't get too much trouble from the police anyway." Ryuji heaved a huge sigh. "Man...it's probably better if I don't go to the bar with you though. Damn...all this way and I don't even get to go in...I guess I'll just chill at the bookstore outside it..."

Akira put a comforting hand on Ryuji’s shoulder. “Thanks Ryuji…we’ll try not to take too long.” He leaned in close so he could whisper into his boyfriend’s ear. “I’ll make it up to you later,” he said suggestively. Ryuji’s eyes widened and his mouth dropped open in shock for a second, but he quickly regained his composure.

“A-alright!” he exclaimed with an awkward, yet cute thumbs-up. “I’ll see you guys later.”
If there was one word to describe Crossroads, it would be garish. The room’s walls were purple, and multicolored paper lantern themed lamps gave the entire bar a soft, cozy glow. Unlike the other bars they had seen, this one hadn’t had any sort of advertisement on the front about its desired clientele; just a simple sign that welcomed anyone who wanted a place to relax. The bar was empty except for the bartender, a drag queen dressed in a kimono and a wig that was as purple as the walls, and the reporter that Akira recognized as Ohya.

“Hey, you kids old enough to be in here?” The bartender asked, though her tone was not belligerent.

“Relax Lala-chan, they’re here for me,” Ohya said. Despite the two empty glasses next to her, her words weren’t slurred in the slightest.

“If you say so,” Lala said. “Just make sure they don’t drink any booze.”

“Yeah yeah,” Ohya waved Lala off. “Just give ‘em a couple of energy drinks or sodas or whatever kids drink these days. First round on me.”

“Thank you, Ohya-san,” Akira said perfunctorily as Mishima echoed him.

As they sat down, Ohya pulled a notepad and pencil from her purse and turned to regard him quizzically. “So…you want to know who people are scared of in Shibuya. Why is that?”

“It’s for a school project,” Akira said. Mishima nodded along, though he kept his eyes averted and kept picking at nonexistent lint on his pants. Wow…he is *really* bad at lying…

“Right…” Ohya’s eyes lingered on Mishima, though she said nothing else. “Well…I never do anything for free. So I’m going to need a scoop from you if you really want to know.”

Akira nodded. “Yeah, I’m a student at Shujin Academy. I was there when Kamoshida confessed to his crimes. I’m one of the students he was going to have expelled.”

“I see…” Ohya scribbled something down on her notepad. “And why did he have it out for you?”

“I, and the other students, accused him of being the cause of Shiho Suzui jumping off the roof,” Akira said.

“Mhmm…” Ohya muttered as she scribbled more things down in her notepad. “And were you on his volleyball team? Did you suffer from any of his other abuses?”

“Well…no,” Akira admitted. “I’m a transfer student to Shujin. I’ve only attended for a couple of months now.”

“Hmm…you haven’t given me much to work with,” Ohya said. “I could do more if I could ask you questions about what it was like to be under his thumb, but it sounds like you didn’t have very much contact with him outside of that one incident. Am I right?”

“…yes,” Akira said. This wasn’t going as well as he’d hoped.

“If you could get me an interview with one of his athletes, I think I could help you,” Ohya said. “But you haven’t told me enough to write a story. She downed her third drink with relish and waved Lala over for a refill. “But until then…”

“…I was on the volleyball team,” Mishima said. His voice was quiet. He cleared his throat and tried
again. “I was on the volleyball team. I can give you your interview.” His voice was stronger now, confident, even authoritative. “Please…we really need to know.”

Akira turned to him and brought his eyebrows together worriedly. “You sure, Mishima? We can figure out something else-“

Mishima shook his head quickly, even violently. “No. This is something I can do! Please…let me do this for us.”

“Lucky you,” Ohya said to Akira. “All right then. What’s your name?”

“Yuuki Mishima. But everyone just calls me Mishima.”

“And you’re a student at Shujin, and are on the volleyball team?”

“Yes, I’m a second-year. I’m not on the team anymore…but I was when Kamoshida was the coach.”

“I see. No offense, but you don’t look the athletic type. Why did you join the team?”

“I…” Mishima hesitated. “I wanted people to notice me…the best team at our school was the volleyball team…I thought if I was on it, people would notice me more.” Akira’s eyes narrowed in concern as he saw Mishima’s fingers grip the fabric of his pants tightly. “…you’re right though. I wasn’t very good at it. There wasn’t any athletic reason for Kamoshida to let me on the team. But he found out that I was good with computers, and that…that I would do whatever he said to stay on the team. Take any abuse…”

“You’re good with computers? Why did he want that from you? What else did he ask you to do?”

“He didn’t fucking ask!” Mishima snapped. His face reddened. “Sorry…I didn’t mean to swear…”

“No, it’s ok,” Ohya said, her expression of zealous reporting softened slightly. “I shouldn’t have phrased it that way.”

“…Thank you. … He…he asked me to spread rumors about students he didn’t like online. He was one of them.” Mishima nodded his head toward Akira. “And I became his…messenger. Whenever he was unhappy with one of the team members, I was the guy who he’d send to call them to his office…”

Mishima’s knuckles whitened as his hands gripped his knees like talons. "I knew what I was doing…but I turned a blind eye. I told myself that if I didn’t do it, someone else would. That if I didn’t listen to him, he’d just get angrier and take it out on even more people. But deep down, I knew it was wrong. I knew that I was doing it to take his anger off of me…in reality, I wasn’t protecting anyone but myself..."

Mishima shook his head like a dog shaking water from its body. Akira could see droplets of moisture forming in the corners of his eyes, but when he reached out to offer a comforting hand on Mishima’s shoulder, Mishima shrugged it off. He chuckled suddenly, ruefully. “I wonder if it even made a difference…it’s not like he didn’t abuse me too...” He paused, as if considering his next move, then pulled his shirt up, exposing the bottom half of his ribcage. He pressed a couple fingers to a spot on the second lowest rib on his right side. “The bruises are gone, but you can still feel a nub where cracked my rib here. All the adults believed that I had just fallen wrong in practice…it didn’t help that I told them that myself either.”

“He cracked your rib…?” Ohya asked, her voice high pitched, almost incredulous.
Mishima nodded. “Go ahead and feel, if you want. I’m not lying.” Ohya put a couple fingers where Mishima had pointed out the injury, and her eyebrows raised in shock. “It’s fucked up, but I used to hope that Kamoshida would screw up one day and hit me hard enough to cause some real damage…then maybe someone would notice. Nobody ever seemed to care about a few scrapes…and when he really wanted it to hurt, he’d go for the stomach so it wouldn’t bruise. But I guess it’s nothing compared to what Shiho and the other girls had to go through…”

“I…” Mishima’s voice broke. “I helped him…and in the end, Shiho was brave enough to do what I couldn’t and take the only thing she could into her own hands…I should’ve done something…I could’ve helped her…I could’ve stopped her…” Mishima’s gaze dropped from Ohya to his lap, and he shook slightly as tears finally began to fall. “…I didn’t even try…”

“So now that Kamoshida has confessed, how do you-“ Ohya began.

“Enough! Please!” Akira held up a hand and put his other arm around Mishima’s shoulders, and this time, he didn’t shrug him off. His face hit Akira’s chest, and Akira felt the dampness soak through the fibers of his shirt. Mishima’s body felt like spun glass against him; Akira could only hold him and wait for the shaking to stop.

“You’re right…” Ohya said. “I’m sorry.” She placed her hand on Mishima’s back gingerly, as if she was afraid he would shatter at her touch. “Really, I’m sorry. But you are doing something, you know. Doing this interview with me…it’ll open peoples’ eyes. They’ll know better what signs to look for…and it’ll give courage to others like you who are too afraid to say anything. I promise.”

Akira nodded his agreement. “She’s right. You *are* helping.”

Mishima stopped shaking, and he looked up at Akira, his eyes dry. “Thanks to you,” he said with a small smile.

“You done good kid,” Lala said from behind the bar. “Nearly brought a tear to this old queen’s eye too. Lucky for you too. I would’ve charged you if I’d smeared my eye makeup. This stuff isn’t cheap!”

Mishima laughed at that: a real, full, happy laugh. Akira was surprised at how much he liked hearing it; now that he thought about it, he realized that Mishima hadn’t done so since he’d known him.

“Anyway…the name you’re looking for is Junya Kaneshiro. Don’t go digging up trouble!” Ohya warned. “I may need to interview the both of you again.”

Akira rolled his eyes, but grinned. She was rough around the edges, but he liked Ohya. She had a heart, even though it was buried under layers of journalistic zeal and alcohol. “Thank you, Ohya-san. I’ll definitely be in contact with you again.”

Chapter End Notes

Don't worry, the next part of their Shinjuku adventure will be a lot lighter!
Mishima

Chapter Summary

My favorite three guys hit up Shinjuku

Chapter Notes

Sorry for the delay on this update. At first, I had thought that the night would end with a 3way, but as I was writing it, I came to the conclusion that if that does happen, than I need it to be *earned*, emotionally speaking. I wanted to write the scene because I thought it'd be hot, not because it was particularly good for the story I'm hoping to tell. I may release that "alternate ending" of this chapter when I get to the end, but until then, I hope you're all willing to stick it through with me for however long it takes. Thanks, and I hope you enjoy!

Mishima started a little as Akira grabbed his arm. “Hang on a sec, I need to use the bathroom,” Akira said.

“Oh, ok, uh…I guess I’ll go too,” Mishima said, flushing pink a little.

“Don’t do anything untoward in there,” Lala-chan warned from the bar, her eyes sparkling with mischief. “There’s only so much bleach in my storage closet!”

Akira shook his head in amusement as Mishima stammered. “W-we won’t!”

“She’s just teasing,” Akira said as he pulled Mishima into the bathroom.

On entering, Akira grabbed a couple paper towels from the dispenser and wet one of them in the sink. “Aren’t you going to pee?” Mishima asked.

“Oh…oh wow…” Mishima said.

Boyfriend…

“Haha yeah… thanks. He was kind of a dick to Yusuke when we took down Madarame, now that I think about it. You’d think he would’ve been more sensitive since he’s so close to his mom.”

Akira shook his head and chuckled. “Right? That was a really emotional moment…still, he doesn’t ruin the mood when it really counts.” Akira raised an eyebrow suggestively at Mishima, who
promptly blushed a deep red. “You’d know, wouldn’t you?”

“I- I- I- …” Mishima stuttered.

“Relax…” Akira said as he pulled away, his eyes full of barely contained laughter. “You really need to learn when someone’s messing with you.”

“Y-yeah…” Mishima ducked his head and followed Akira out of the bathroom.

Ryuji emerged from the bookstore pink in the face. "Man, they wouldn't sell a lotta shit in there to me. Did you know they sell dirty guy on guy manga in there?"

"It's called yaoi, Ryuji," Mishima said as he blushed pink.

“Ooh, d’you know that cause you have a collection?” Ryuji asked as he threw an arm around the both of them.

“N-no!” Mishima exclaimed, his face turning redder. “I…I’ve just seen it on the Internet, th- that’s all.”

“Chill!” Ryuji said. “Alright, you guys can tell me about the bar later - what should we do now?”

“Wander around, see if any place serves high schoolers?” Akira asked. “None of us really knows the area. I could go back in and ask Lala-chan if she knows of anything.”

“Nah, let’s go exploring!”

In front of a bear bar:

“Umm…. ” Mishima shook his head. “The smallest guy in there could crush me like a twig.”

“Holy shit… that guy’s like three times as wide as me… and most of it’s muscle…” Ryuji said, his eyes wide. “How much time does he spend in the gym, you think?”

“I think some people just find it easier to get big,” Akira said.

In front of a sex toy shop:

“Hey Mishima, isn’t that the logo on your dildo?” Ryuji asked.

“… I actually think he’s going to pass out if his face gets any redder,” Akira said.

In front of the young men’s club:

“Whaddya mean we can’t get in? It says under 22!” Ryuji said angrily to the bouncer.

“Yeah, *between* 18 and 22!” The bouncer responded. “Come back when you’re in college, huh?”

As they stepped away from the club, Mishima sighed. “Well…it’s not like we’re exactly dressed for
clubbing, are we?"

Ryuji was wearing a bright red shirt with an equally bright logo on top of his school uniform pants. Akira wore a blazer over a white v-neck and jeans, and Mishima was wearing a simple polo on top of jeans and his signature green sneakers.

“Yeah, but we’re still good-lookin’ guys…” Ryuji complained. “Shouldn’t they let us in anyway?”

“They probably don’t want to risk getting fined,” Akira said.

“Man, this blows…the only place that let in high schoolers was that first bar you went to…” Ryuji said as they sat on a bench nearby. “I wanted to party…”

“Well…it wasn’t exactly a club vibe in there,” Akira said. “More chill.”

“Better than a park bench,” Ryuji said. “Come on…we gotta do something! Our night can’t end like this!”

“…what about the Metaverse?” Mishima said.

“Huh? I don’t wanna fight Shadows…that’s not really partyin’,” Ryuji said.

“That’s not what I mean,” Mishima said. “Places that aren’t Palaces in the Metaverse are totally the same as real life, right? So why don’t we just go into the Metaverse and go into the club you want? If the public has a cognition of it, it’ll probably even have people in it. Right Morgana?”

“I guess…” Morgana said. “That sounds right. I guess we could try it.”

“Alright, why not?” Akira said. He pulled out his phone, and Mishima and Ryuji quickly joined him. “Let’s do this!” They each tapped the strange red eye.

Nothing seemed to change. “Wait…did it not work?” Ryuji asked. He looked down at himself. “I’m not wearing my Skull clothes…”

“It did!” Mishima said, pointing at Akira’s bag, from which Morgana’s over large head was poking out awkwardly. “See? Morgana’s in his Metaverse form!”

“All right! Let’s try that college club!” Ryuji suggested. “I mean, it’ll be cool to see what it’s like before we’re actually there!”

———

No bouncer stopped them at the door; Mishima guessed it was because the majority of the people who frequented the club didn’t get stopped.

Inside, loud pop music was blaring over the speakers, and cognitions of young men danced with perfect rhythm to it. The club was a big square room with a bar off to the side, and featured a smaller square platform in the center of the room, on top of which more cognitions danced.

“Damnnnn this place is lit!” Ryuji said. “Awesome idea Mishima!”

“Yeah, nice work,” Akira said as he gave Mishima a friendly clap on the shoulder.

“Thanks!” Mishima’s chest seemed to fill with warmth.

“Dude, this is probably even better than the real club!” Ryuji said. “We can totally cut loose!” Ryuji
turned to Akira, his demeanor suddenly shy. “You…you wanna dance with me?”

Instead of answering, Akira just took Ryuji’s hand and led him toward the center of the room, climbing onto the platform himself before helping Ryuji up. Soon after, they were dancing on top of it, seemingly unaware of the world around them. Unlike the cognitions, they’d kept their shirts on, but Mishima still couldn’t take his eyes off them. They looked so perfect together. Ryuji, leanly muscular, his legs carrying the beat of the music with perfect precision. Akira, subtly athletic, his creamy skin already glistening with a thin sheen of sweat. Their bodies seemed to move in perfect rhythm with each other. No wonder they were together…Mishima heaved a small sigh.

“You ok?” Morgana asked beside him.

“Yeah…” Mishima said, even as the muscles in his face drooped slightly. “It’s just…he’s so great… he was nice to me…he believes in me…in what I can bring to the Thieves. The instant he came to school, he noticed something was wrong…he noticed me. And…I mean, you know.”

“Yeah,” Morgana said. “He’s a great guy, our leader. I really lucked out when I ran into him. I can’t believe he sees something in Ryuji.”

“I wish I could be more like them,” Mishima said. “They’re so confident…”

“You can be confident too, you know,” Morgana said, his ears twitching thoughtfully. “I’ve seen you do it.”


“Here,” Morgana said. “In the Metaverse.”

“I guess…” Mishima said. “But that’s when I’m with the team. When I’m Robin. Outside the Thieves, I’m just Mishima.”

“Don’t be ridiculous!” Morgana gave Mishima a light swat on the back of his leg. “You’re Robin whether you’re in or out of the Metaverse. The Metaverse just gives you a little push, is all.”

“What do you mean by that?” Mishima asked.

“Well, haven’t you noticed that the others are different in the Metaverse too? Akira’s even cooler (you’ve seen how everyone looks at him when he’s Joker, and how he eggs them on), Ryuji’s less of an idiot (I’ll admit it, he does give those Shadows a harder time than most of us), Yusuke is overly dramatic (you remember what he said when he first got his Persona, right? ‘A breathtaking sight…’) …and you’re braver. It’s because that’s what you all see as what it means to be a rebellious hero. It’s a part of you - it’s just easier to access in the Metaverse. What I’m saying is, you can be Robin anytime you want.”

Mishima nodded his head. “Yeah…yeah, that makes sense. Thanks Morgana!” He stretched up and rolled the kinks out of his neck. “You’re right! I’m gonna go be Robin!” As he got to the platform, he realized that it was quite a bit taller than he’d thought. As he reached up to grab the edge, Ryuji and Akira stopped their dancing to lean over and pull him up.

“All right Mishima! Is this the part where you show us you’re secretly an amazing dancer?!?” Ryuji asked excitedly.

“No, I’m almost definitely going to be terrible…” Mishima said, smiling sheepishly. “But it’s fine, right? So long as we’re having a good time!”
“That’s the spirit!” Ryuji exclaimed. “Show us what you got!”

Mishima was sure that if someone had been recording the moment, he’d have probably found himself very embarrassed. But now, throwing his arms around with reckless abandon, moving his chest to the beat of the music, and even trying the same moves that Akira and Ryuji were doing: Mishima had never felt so confident in his life.

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“Whew! I’m thirsty…” The three of them had danced for nearly an hour on end before finally deciding to call it quits. Ryuji was fanning himself with his shirt, exposing his toned stomach with each flap of his wrists. His eyes widened as he realized something. “Hey, do you think the bartender will give us drinks? And if so, will they be like actual alcohol?”

“One way to find out, right?” Akira said.

“Don’t get too sloppy guys, we still have to report to the group and take on Kaneshiro’s Palace tomorrow,” Morgana reminded them.

“Awww don’t be such a spoilsport Morgana, we’ve got plenty of time! Cut loose!” Ryuji said. He grabbed them both by their arms and dragged them through the crowd of cognitions over to the bar. “Come on, pick your poison. I’ll tell ya right now - beer is gross. You should definitely try sake though.”

The drink that Mishima got burned on the way down, but not in an unpleasant way. It made his chest and then his belly feel warm, like he’d just eaten a huge helping of Sojiro’s curry. He felt a rush to his head as well, like he’d stood up too quickly. But unlike those times, the feeling didn’t pass after a few seconds. Instead, it felt strangely good. He felt like cotton balls were filling the inside of his skull, blotting out or dampening his thoughts about whether he was cool enough to be in a club or whether he’d be any good at dancing.

“Damn Mishima, you downed that fast!” Ryuji said as he sipped from his glass. “You done this before or something?”

“Was I not supposed to?” Mishima felt heat rising to his face; but rather than embarrassment, he felt a heady blend of bravery and affection for the two of them. “It didn’t taste bad at all…just kind of sweet, and a little bit bitter, I guess.” He smiled slightly. “I can see why people do this all the time… I’m tired, but it’s a good kind of tired, you know?”

Akira nodded. “You’re right.” He swirled his own drink around in his glass a few times before taking a long sip. A shudder ran through his lithe body. “This stuff is dangerous…”

“It does kinda seem strong, doesn’t it?” Ryuji asked. “Not that I’d really know off the one time…but it seems stronger than the stuff I’ve tried before. I already kinda feel a little off.”

“It’s probably because it’s from the Metaverse,” Morgana said as he he lapped at his own drink. Surprisingly, the bartender hadn’t even batted an eye when Morgana had requested one of what Akira had ordered. “In peoples’ minds, this stuff gets you drunk, and that’s all it is for them, so it makes it more effective.”

“You just pulled that outta your ass!” Ryuji laughed as he took another sip.

“I made an educated guess! But since it’s you, I get why you wouldn’t recognize it,” he shot back. Akira snorted and started coughing violently in between peals of laughter as his drink found its way
into his lungs. Mishima couldn’t help but join in. “Aww c’mon man, you’re supposed to have my back,” Ryuji said, his face pouting a little as he gave Akira a hard clap on the back.

“I’m sorry…” Akira apologized, and his face actually did look contrite. “If it makes you feel better, I wasn’t laughing at what he said, I was laughing at the expression on your face.”

“…” Ryuji rolled his eyes and punched Akira lightly in the arm. “I guess that is better. A little.” He stretched back on his stool and sighed expansively. “Man, what a great night though… bummer than Ann and Yusuke didn’t wanna come. Would’ve been nice to have the whole team here.”

“Yeah…” Mishima agreed, his head drooping ever so slightly. “You guys…you’re all the best…you know that? I think you guys are the best people I’ve ever met…”

Ryuji flushed pink as Akira smiled into his glass and nodded. “I feel the same,” Akira said. “It’s very lucky that a transfer student with a criminal record somehow made friends with the best people in the city.”

“You’re right,” Ryuji said. “I mean, you all know. I was just that punk kid who hit a teacher before you got here. Now I’m Skull, a Phantom Thief. I’ve got a team that has my back. And I’m doin’ somethin’ with myself. And it’s all thanks to Akira!”

“Mhm!” Mishima said, raising his near-empty glass. “To Akira!”

Even Morgana raised his glass, albeit very awkwardly (and yet, very cutely) with both paws. Akira ducked his head in embarrassment. “You’re giving me too much credit,” he said. “But thank you. We wouldn’t have gotten this far without you guys!”

“Cheers!” They brought their glasses together with a loud, satisfying clink.
Chapter Summary

Akira and Ryuji get down and dirty in Mementos. Shameless smut

Chapter Notes

Sorry this one took a while to write. I tend to get "excited" when I write smut, which is why it takes so long when I do. Enjoy!

It was nearly midnight when they had left the club. Surprisingly, Mishima had asked Morgana if he wanted to stay at his place tonight, and Morgana had agreed. GoodGuy!Mishima, Ryuji thought. I wonder if he’s giving me and Akira space on purpose? As it was, he and Akira were on the train back to Yongen-Jaya.

“I think it’s time I make good on my promise, don’t you?” Akira whispered into Ryuji’s ear. He dragged a fingertip down Ryuji’s chest and stomach suggestively before tucking the first knuckle into Ryuji’s waistband.

“Hey man, we’re in public!” Ryuji looked around the train car furtively. With Mishima and Morgana having left, they were the only people left on the train, aside from a drunk businessman who was passed out at the other end.

“That doesn’t get you a little hot?” Akira teased. His cheeks still had spots of pink on them, and while his words weren’t slurred, they had a little bit of a drawn out quality to them, like he was savoring every syllable. Ryuji felt Akira’s finger brush against the base of his cock and linger for a couple seconds, and immediately felt it began to stiffen. “…you didn’t get to see the bar…I want to make it up to you…”

“Akira…!” Ryuji pulled Akira into a tight hug, forcing his hands away from his erection. “Come on…you know everythin’ about you makes me hot…” Damn it…this hug was a shortsighted idea. Ryuji could feel Akira’s hardness pressing against his own, separated only by the denim of Akira’s jeans and fabric of Ryuji’s pants. He could already feel a slight dampness in his underwear. The urge to kiss Akira, to tear his clothes off and just ravish his body was becoming almost impossible to resist. “Literally the second we’re somewhere private…” Ryuji left the last part of his sentence hanging, in an effort to be as seductive as Akira was.

“Really…?” Akira smiled, and Ryuji felt a tiny pang of apprehension at the mischievous glint in Akira’s eye.

“This is Yongen-Jaya…this is Yongen-Jaya…” the intercom blared as the train came to a stop. Akira grabbed Ryuji’s arm and pulled him out of the car.

“Whoa! What’re you-!” Akira pulled him into another hug, and their lips met hard. Ryuji felt a warmth in his head that seemed to drown out all other senses besides Akira’s body on his own. Their
kiss was messier than their usual kisses, but the urgency with which Akira was kissing him was just as big a turn-on as the practiced tongue and light lip-nibbling that he usually went for. It was like Akira was a man dying of thirst, and Ryuji was an impossible fountain. He felt Akira’s hands slide down his body, briefly palm his crotch - Ryuji shuddered at the touch, kissed harder in response, his tongue breaking past Akira’s lips - and then Akira’s hand slid away and into his own pocket. What-?

And then, he felt hard material between his and Akira’s foreheads. Ryuji opened his eyes and stepped back, and found himself looking at Akira in his Joker outfit, grinning at him with that smug, shit-eating smile of his that somehow drove Ryuji wild with lust. “We’re somewhere private now…” Akira said meaningfully.

“Is it safe here?” Ryuji asked, looking around.

“Sure it is,” Akira said breezily. “Look behind you, there’s one of those safe waiting rooms.” He was right. They were in a rest area in Mementos. Ryuji felt Akira’s hand press against his back, and he moved with him toward the booth, where Akira pressed him up against the glass wall and began passionately making out with him again, his hands dragging down Ryuji’s leather clad chest and stomach before reaching his crotch and giving it a sensual squeeze. Ryuji gasped into Akira’s mouth at the touch. “You like that?” Akira asked, his voice heavy with desire.

“Fuck…yes…” Ryuji moaned as Akira continued to rub him through the leather of his pants. He was so hard that his pants were actually starting to feel a little uncomfortable. “Aaah…Akira please…”

“Please what?” Akira said.

“Please…I want more…” Ryuji whimpered.

“Good…me too…” Akira reached up and slowly undid the buttons along the side of Ryuji’s leather jacket. The wait was unbearable…finally, the jacket flapped open, revealing a thin white sleeveless mesh undershirt. Akira grabbed the ‘u’ of it with both hands and ripped it in half, revealing Ryuji’s heaving chest and toned abs.

“Fuck! That was hot!” Ryuji gasped.

Akira nodded as his fingers turned to Ryuji’s double belt. Akira found them even hotter than Ryuji’s suspenders. They were black with silver buckles, oozing tough masculinity. Akira deftly undid the buckles and pulled down, and Ryuji sighed with pleasure and relief as his cock sprang up and hit cool air at last. He felt Akira drag a gloved finger over its length and shivered with anticipation.

“You’re already so turned on…that’s hot…” Akira said as he massaged Ryuji’s precum against his thick cockhead. “What do you want me to do next?”

“God…whatever you want…just please don’t stop…” Ryuji said.

Akira began slowly stroking Ryuji, but did nothing else besides look him in the eye. “Come on now…tell me what you want me to do…I don’t want to be leader of the Phantom Thieves all the time…take the reins…” He put a gloved hand on Ryuji’s chest and kissed him passionately before pulling back and watching him with waiting eyes.

“I…I wanna feel your mouth on my cock!” Ryuji said.

Akira smiled wickedly, and Ryuji could swear he saw his erection get harder and more defined through his pants. Akira bent down and placed a hand on Ryuji’s stomach, pushing him back up against the glass before taking his cockhead into his mouth and giving it a gentle suck, caressing it
with the inside of his cheeks. “God-!” The back of Ryuji’s head hit the glass as Akira’s tongue flicked against the slit of his cock. Akira didn’t stay there for long - with each passing moment, he delved deeper down Ryuji’s cock, leaving a hot sheen of saliva over its length with every pass.

*God damn,* Akira was good at this. His lips were already at the root of Ryuji’s cock, and Ryuji could feel Akira’s throat muscles convulsing around his cockhead. And *fuck,* Akira looked so hot sucking his cock. There was something almost perversely satisfying, but still intensely hot about watching his thick member disappearing into Akira’s mouth. Just watching him was getting him close. “Stop…! I don’t wanna cum yet…” Ryuji breathed out, and Akira pulled off with a slight popping noise.

“What’s next?” Akira asked coyly.

“I wanna see you!” Ryuji said. “I’m standin’ here with my cock out and you’re still wearin’ all your clothes!”

Akira nodded. “That’s hardly fair,” he agreed. “Why don’t you help me out? There’s an awful lot of buttons here.” He shrugged off the outer jacket and let it fall to the floor. Beneath it was a long sleeve grey dress shirt, covered in buttons, some of which definitely seemed decorative. Akira began to undo each button slowly, looking Ryuji up and down with appreciative eyes.

“…fuck that!” Ryuji said after the third button in twice as many seconds. He reached out and gripped Akira’s shirt as he’d done for him and pulled down hard. Buttons came popping off rapid-fire with a sound akin to popcorn, spilling out across the tiled floor. Akira’s torso was exposed now though, glistening with a hint of sweat. Ryuji leaned forward and kissed Akira on the mouth before working his way down to a nipple and taking it in his mouth, swirling his tongue around as his fingers traced the contours of Akira’s toned stomach. Finally, his hand came to rest on Akira’s crotch.

“Wait…” Akira said.

“What?” Ryuji looked up at him, confused.

“I…I want to cum without touching my cock,” Akira said. “You think you can do that for me?”

“I will take that challenge!” Ryuji exclaimed. He grabbed Akira by the shoulders and turned him around so that Akira was pressed against the glass. “Take off your pants…” he said lustily.

Akira’s pants fell to the floor and he stepped out of them. The sight of Akira’s round bubble butt was intoxicating. Ryuji threw his own gloves to the floor so he could reach out and squeeze the mounds of flesh with his bare fingers. He didn’t have quite the runner’s ass that Ryuji did, but Ryuji found the extra bit of fluff to be incredibly hot, especially when it jiggled with every move. Ryuji slapped his weighty cock a couple of times onto each cheek, relishing in the gasp that escaped Akira’s lips. “Yeah…you want my cock, don’t you?”

“Please…” Akira begged, his whole body quivering with eagerness.

Ryuji pressed the head of his cock - slick with saliva and precum - to Akira’s hole. He teased it gently, as Akira had done for him, his cockhead tracing a circle around the hole each time before lightly pushing forward, stopping at the slightest bit of resistance. Below him, Akira whimpered with pleasure, pushing himself backward with every forward movement of Ryuji’s. But Ryuji couldn’t be rushed. He continued his slow pace despite Akira’s hot whispers of impatient complaint, until finally, his cockhead slipped into Akira with hardly a hint of resistance.

“Fuck…” Akira swore. “I missed this…you’re so thick…aaah!” Ryuji could swear his cock got even harder at Akira’s words, and Akira’s gasp of pleasure seemed to confirm it. He began to push in
slowly, letting Akira’s gasps and quivering guide him forward until his thighs were touching the backs of Akira’s. “Yes…you’re finally in…” Akira groaned with pleasure, and Ryuji felt Akira’s insides flex around his cock, triggering a fresh trickle of precum. “Please Ryuji…fuck me…I fucking need that cock!”

“You don’t need to tell me twice!” Ryuji pulled out and slammed back in powerfully, sending a sexy tremble across Akira’s hot ass. Again and again he did this, turned on by the sight of Akira’s breath fogging up the glass in front of him with each thrust. Though he was bracing himself against Akira’s hips with his hands, it felt like there was just the one point of contact between them, his cock and Akira’s insides. It was the only sensation that was registering in his brain. Akira’s insides were hot and pulsing around him. Ryuji’s fingers gripped the sides of Akira’s hips tightly, holding on, it seemed, for dear life.

“Fuck…fuck yeah Ryuji…I love that cock!” Akira moaned loudly, his voice echoing throughout the safe room. “Your cock belongs inside me…” He reached back with his hands to grab Ryuji’s ass and pull him forward, harder, rougher. Every thrust of Ryuji’s cock now elicited a pulse from Akira’s insides, a hot, dirty moan, or both.

Ryuji’s hands moved from Akira’s hips to his hair and where his shoulder met his neck. He tugged on Akira’s shoulder every time he pushed in, reveled in the feeling of Akira’s ass mashed up against him, the cheeks caressing his slightly sweaty skin, Akira’s ring of muscle alternately tightening and squeezing along the length of his cock, and GOD just the sense, even if it wasn’t physically true, that each push forward would force him deeper in. “Fuck me deeper!” Akira practically shouted. “Ah! Pound my ass!” Akira’s words were just as much of a turn-on as the sensation of him around Ryuji’s cock. His words seared themselves into his brain, and Ryuji felt himself get close to the brink.

“I’m starting to get close Akira…” Ryuji warned.

“Me too…” Akira said. “Wait…” He turned his head back to look at him. “I want to be looking at you when I cum…think we can do that?”

It was Ryuji’s turn to smile mischievously. “Yeah…I think so.” He pulled out of Akira, and a disappointed breath escaped him. “Don’t worry…” Ryuji pulled Akira upright and turned him around.

“What do you have in mind you sneaky Thief?” Akira asked.

Instead of answering, Ryuji simply picked Akira up by the waist, pressing him up against the glass wall for support. Realization dawned on Akira’s face, and his eyes filled with lust. “Yeah…Ryuji please…” Akira wrapped his legs around Ryuji’s waist to brace himself, gasped as Ryuji’s cockhead teased his hole.

“You ready?” Ryuji asked. “I’m gonna fuck the cum right outta you!”

Akira gathered the precum that had been leaking liberally from his own cock on his fingertips, a slight breath escaping him at the touch. He transferred the precum to the length of Ryuji’s exposed cock, making it slick once more. “Please!” Akira said. “I need your cock!”

Ryuji slid in all the way to the hilt of his cock in one go, eliciting a happy, toe-curling groan from Akira. He began pumping into Akira again. The position did not allow him to pull out much as he’d been doing before, but Ryuji made up for it with speed and intensity, his thighs hitting Akira’s ass two or three times a second.

“F-f-fuuuckkkkk!” Akira hands gripped Ryuji’s biceps, squeezing the hard muscle as his insides were
battered by Ryuji’s assault. His cock bounced around on his stomach with each thrust, painting it with snail trails of precum. “Ryuji… I can’t take much more… it’s too intense!”

“Yeah, fuck! I need you to cum for me!” Ryuji said breathlessly, somehow, impossibly picking up his pace.

Akira groaned loudly as he came, his cock spurting seven uncontrollable shots across his face, his chest, his stomach, even the glass behind him. With every shot, Akira’s insides flexed with even more intensity than before, sending waves of pleasure up Ryuji’s cock to spread throughout his whole body. However, it was the sight of Akira cumming without any stimulation of his cock, knowing that it was all because of him that drove Ryuji over the edge, and he began to cum after Akira’s third shot.

Ryuji continued to pump into Akira as he shot five thick loads, each thrust pushing his seed deeper into Akira’s ass. “Fuck… I can feel your cock throbbing inside me,” Akira moaned. He seemed to nestle deeper onto Ryuji’s cock, which though softened, was still pretty hard. “Can you… just hold me like this for a little?”

Ryuji blushed pink and ducked his head bashfully. “Sure I can.” He bent his knees slightly so he could work his arms under Akira to prop him up more against the glass so that their faces were inches apart. He gave him a quick kiss, his tongue swabbing the inside of Akira’s mouth before pulling away. “What was that for?” Akira asked, his eyes wide with surprise.

“I uh…” Ryuji’s cheeks burned a deeper shade of pink. “I really like you, Akira. I just… wanna make sure you know that.”

Akira inclined his head, but the spots of pink in his cheeks and his smile gave away the pleasure he felt at that. “I really like you too, Ryuji. And it’s ok. I know.” He tightened his grip around Ryuji’s shoulders, squeezing their bodies together in a tight embrace. Then he sighed, reached up and scooped the cum that had gotten on his face and hair away with his fingers. “Man… if Sojiro’s still at the cafe when we get back, I’m going to die of embarrassment.”

“Dude!” Ryuji complained. “Don’t talk about him when my dick is literally inside you! Way to ruin the moment…”

“Sorry!” Akira apologized, though his eyes were mirthful. He leaned forward and kissed Ryuji passionately, their lips seemingly scrabbling against each other for purchase. Akira winked. “I’ll make it up to you later.”
Ryuji

Chapter Summary

The Thieves chill at Big Bang Burger and Mishima and Ryuji have a bit of a heart-to-heart.

Chapter Notes

Sorry it's been so long since my last update. I've been swamped with Pride stuff and July 4th this week, plus a healthy dose of writer's block. Perfect storm and all that. Hope you enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

“Shit…how the fuck are we supposed to get up there?” Ryuji exclaimed as the Thieves stared up at the floating bank that was the heart of Kaneshiro’s Palace. He turned to Morgana. “Mona, can you turn into a plane or something?”


“Dammit, that’s useless!” Ryuji complained.

“Hmm…Puck and Arsene have wings…” Yusuke suggested. “Is it possible that they could fly us up?”

“Worth a shot, right?” Akira said as he summoned Arsene with Mishima following suit. The two Personas picked up their users by their armpits and began to slowly rise up. They were about five feet up before Akira shook his head and they descended. “There’s no way…I think he could carry me up. But it’d take forever…and I don’t think he could do everyone else too. We’d spend all our time getting up there and the day would be over.”

“Yeah, same for me,” Mishima said. “Good idea though Yusuke. I didn’t think of that.”

The Thieves stood in silence for a minute, brooding over possible solutions, but nothing feasible came up. “Well…maybe we should call it a day for now and think/sleep on it,” Ann suggested. “We’re not going to make any progress just standing around here.”

“Yeah…” Akira looked and sounded dejected. Ryuji felt a pang of worry in his chest. The deadline that Makoto had set for them must be weighing on him heavily. He wished he could do something to help, but his mind was drawing blanks. Besides…though he hated to admit it, out of all the Thieves, he definitely had the least clear grasp of how this “cognitive world” worked.

The instant they left the Metaverse, Akira’s phone buzzed. He checked it, then shrugged his shoulders. “Well…I guess this is a good opportunity to prepare anyway. I’m going to go meet with Takemi-san. She says she has some new stuff in stock.”
“Boring!” Morgana chimed from his bag. “Let’s go get sushi.”

“With what money though?” Ryuji asked. “We shouldn’t be spendin’ money on stuff like that till after we change Kaneshiro’s heart.”

“Fine…” Morgana said. “Well, what about Big Bang Burger? That place is nearby. And cheap!”

“That would be enjoyable,” Yusuke said. “Let us go do that. I’m afraid I have precious little in funds as well, and a cheap meal would be ideal.”

“Is it weird hanging out without Akira?” Ann asked aloud as they all gathered around their table.

“Why would it be?” Morgana asked.

“I don’t know…I guess it’s not weird…we just usually don’t do it,” Ann replied.

“We ate lunch together that one time,” Mishima said. “Though…that was because…um…yeah. Never mind.”

An awkward silence fell over the group. Would we not be friends without Akira? I mean…Yusuke, yeah. But…Ann and I were close once…

“I should eat here more often,” Yusuke broke the silence, apparently unperturbed. “I can’t believe a double burger with fries is only 100 yen. How do they keep their prices so low?” He took a bite of the burger and chewed thoughtfully. “And it tastes quite good, considering the price. I have certainly had worse.”

Oh thank god… “I heard a rumor that they mix in other meat with the beef,” Ryuji said conspiratorially. “Like, strays and stuff.” He glanced meaningfully over at Morgana, whose eyes narrowed in a cat glare that was really more cute than threatening.

“That would be a shame…” Yusuke said as he took another bite. “I don’t detect any unusual flavors though. And…don’t restaurants often get tested by health inspectors and such? They’d get caught if such a rumor were true, no?”

“Man, you take all the fun outta it,” Ryuji said as he took a bite of his own burger. “Hey, I heard some places in America have made a ‘ramen burger’ and that it’s startin’ to get sold in places around the city. I didn’t see it on the menu here though…” He took another bite out of his burger. “Think it’d be good?”

“Maybe?” Mishima said. “I could ask one of my forum friends who’s American if she’s ever had one.”

“Forum friend?” Ann asked.

“Oh!” Mishima blushed a shade of pink that Ryuji found strangely appealing. “Just…someone I met online a few years back. We met over a game in the Gun About Beta.”

“Do you know for certain that the person you’re talking to is who you believe they are?” Yusuke asked. “We’ve all heard horror stories about Internet matchups…”

“Not like, for sure…” Mishima said. “But it’s not like either of us is planning on visiting the other. Besides, all she knows about me is that I’m a guy that lives in Tokyo and my screenname.”
“What’s your screen name dude?” Ryuji asked. “We can play together if I’m online.”

“It’s…um…Mishiman,” Mishima said sheepishly.

The other Thieves burst out laughing. “So, ‘she’ basically knows your name,” Ryuji said through his laughter. “Dude…” He pounded on his chest as he choked slightly on a morsel of burger that went down the wrong pipe. “Anyway, mine’s ‘RunAbout’.”

“Aww, that’s cute, I like that,” Ann said.

“Yes, it works on 2 levels,” Yusuke said. “It’s very aesthetically pleasing to my ear.”

“I’m surprised Ryuji came up with it,” Morgana said. “It’s pretty good.”

“Shaddap you stupid cat, no one asked you!” Ryuji said loudly. He blushed as he realized the entire restaurant was staring at their table, including the staff. “Sorry…!” He apologized to the room at large as the Thieves all enjoyed another group laugh.

When the laughter died down, Mishima spoke up again. “So what’s it like going to an arts school, Yusuke? You guys still have to learn like, math and stuff right?”

“Yes, of course,” Yusuke said. “It’s legally required. Unfortunately that means a lot of my time is dedicated to studying or painting to keep up with the course load.”

“Is it just like, visual art there?” Ann asked. “Or are there writers, actors, musicians, and so on?”

“Yes, the school caters to all forms of art, visual or otherwise,” Yusuke said. “Oftentimes other non-visual-art students will pose for art classes. I hear they are compensated quite well.”

“Wait, so you didn’t need me to pose nude at all, did you!?” Ann said angrily. “Did you just want to see me naked you perv!?”

“How crass of you to suggest that!” Yusuke said, his usually serene face marred by offense. “No! There was simply no model at my school that approached your beauty. I merely hoped to capture it for everyone to enjoy! I wished to create my own Sayuri…” He shook his head. “Such a dream is impossible with you now, of course.”

“Why, cause she won’t pose nude for ya?” Ryuji asked, his eyebrows waggling suggestively.

“No, because her personality is inadequate compared to what I envision my Sayuri’s to be,” Yusuke said.

“Haha yeah!” Ann said. “I’m definitely not posing nude! … Wait a second…”

“Are you like the other students at your school, personality-wise?” Morgana asked.

“Not really,” Yusuke said. “Our personalities run the gamut from such personalities as reserved as my own and Mishima’s, to one’s that are more gregarious like Ann’s and Ryuji’s. Our similarity lies in our deep passion for the art form that we have dedicated ourselves in entirety to.”

“Jesus what a mouthful,” Ryuji complained.

“My one complaint is that ours is something of an…incestuous community,” Yusuke said. “I imagine that if you drew up a chart of everyone’s dalliances, you’d have something akin to a spider’s web.”

“What’s that mean?” Ryuji asked, confused.
“He means-“ Ann blushed. “That everyone there is hooking up with everyone else.”

“Oh!” Ryuji’s eyes widened with surprise, and Mishima shifted uncomfortably in his seat. Then Ryuji grinned. “Isn’t that a good thing? Sounds like it’s easy as hell to hook up. I mean…if it wasn’t for Akira I’d probably still be jerkin’ it by myself every night.”

“Gross, Ryuji!” Ann exclaimed. “We don’t need to know about your nightly habits.”

“Frankly, I would prefer if the drama was contained to the performing arts students,” said Yusuke. “When people get into these messy relationships, their reliability as models decreases, it’s difficult to concentrate because someone’s fighting down the hall…it’s all very aggravating.”

“Man, you don’t sound like a teenage guy our age at all,” Ryuji complained.

“Don’t you get enough sexual kicks from Akira?” Yusuke asked innocently.

Ryuji turned bright red. “Fine! Never mind then!”

———

As the Thieves’ meal wrapped up, the others began cleaning up and preparing to leave. Morgana elected to go with Ann in Akira’s absence.

“Hey Ryuji…do you mind if I chill with you for a bit longer?” Mishima asked.

“Umm…” Was it a good idea for him to be alone with Mishima again? It wasn’t like he was afraid that Mishima would try to seduce him or anything like that. Just because he’d made up with Akira didn’t mean that he didn’t still find Mishima attractive. Part of it was just that Mishima had the same pale, soft, smooth skin that Akira had, dark hair and slim build. However, if he was being honest with himself, Ryuji knew he was attracted to Mishima also because of just who he was. Mishima had an earnestness to him that Ryuji found appealing too. He was like Akira in that way too - an aura of reliability, though in a different way.

“It’s ok if not,” Mishima said after several seconds passed without a response. He looked disappointed, with his lips pressed thinly together, his eyebrows slightly furrowed. “Just thought it’d be cool to hang out ”

“Oh yeah! Sorry! I zoned out…” Ryuji said apologetically. “Sure.”

A long, awkward silence passed. Mishima stared at his feet, and Ryuji tried to look away from the soft, pale skin of Mishima’s neck, so similar to Akira’s.

“So, how was that interview the other night?” Ryuji asked suddenly, hopefully. “I’m still kinda bummed that I couldn’t get into the bar…it’s amazin’ that you guys got us a name from it.”

“You didn’t miss much…” Mishima said, his tone strangely evasive.

“Yeah? Tell me about it,” Ryuji urged him, curious about what he’d missed.

Mishima shrugged. “It was a small bar. Purple walls, lit with paper lanterns. The bartender was a drag queen with a purple wig in a kimono. She was really nice!”

“So what was the interview about?” Ryuji asked. Mishima didn’t respond right away. He seemed like he was considering his next words very carefully, turning them over in his head until he was happy with how they looked.
“She wanted an exclusive with students who had suffered under Kamoshida,” Mishima said finally.

“That makes sense…” Ryuji said. “But…Akira didn’t really know him. He just got threatened by him at the end. She could make a story outta just that?”

Mishima shook his head. “No. I ended up doing the interview.” He chuckled, but it was a noise without any real joy behind it. “You know…it was first time I’d ever talked to anyone about Kamoshida.” Mishima’s eyes squeezed shut, and he put his head between his knees. “I was such a wuss about it,” he sighed. “Crying in front of Akira and two total strangers was not my best look. I’m kind of embarrassed.”

“Why?” Ryuji asked. “S’not like you could’ve done anythin’ about it then. None of us could.”

“Well…you were the only person that stood up to Kamoshida for a long time…I admired you for that…I thought, that’s what a real man would do.”

Ryuji blew a raspberry loudly. "Fat lot of good it did me. It gave him the excuse to fuck up my leg. Worse, he broke up the track team, and I lost all my friends in one moment of bein' a dumb shit. Got my mom dragged in to deal with it and be lectured about bein' a good mom and lettin' me dye my hair..."

“That's right...” Mishima said. “I forgot he broke your leg.” Ryuji's face pinched, and Mishima winced. "Sorry...I didn't mean it like that. Just...you carry yourself so confidently...I wish I was like that, so it's easy to forget.” Mishima’s fingers grazed his side, rubbed at a spot on his ribs. “…He cracked my rib here. The bruise was pretty big…it covered like half my side. You can still feel the nub where it healed weird.”

“I didn’t know that…” Ryuji said, his voice thick. He’d of course seen Mishima’s bruises before, on his arms and face. But they’d always been possible to explain away as practice injuries, even if he knew they weren’t. That Kamoshida had hurt another person, probably more, as he had him…Ryuji was filled with a familiar rage. “That fuckin’ asshole! Breakin’ my leg was one thing - I at least threw a punch at him! But you! Ugh…I know we changed his heart but I’m still steamed about his shit!”

“Thanks…” Mishima ducked his head, embarrassed but a little pleased by Ryuji’s emotional reaction. “I wanted to talk to you after Kamoshida broke up the track team, you know. I wanted to tell you how much it meant to see someone stand up to him, even just for a second. Before the Thieves came along...you were kind of a personal hero for me...you got out.”

Ryuji blinked in surprise. “I was…your hero?” He threw his head back and cackled, the idea was so ridiculous to him. “Me…the punk kid everyone thought was a loser…that’s incredible.” Ryuji shook his head slightly. “Sorry it took until Akira for me to really live up to that…”

“No! Really! Seeing you live your life, not caring what everyone thought about you, freeing yourself from Kamoshida…it helped. It gave me something to hope for when I wasn’t strong enough to do it myself. You were everything I couldn’t be…I...I stayed there. I helped him, even when I knew it was the wrong thing to do…it’s partly my fault that Shiho...that Shiho…”

Mishima stopped speaking suddenly, and Ryuji felt a twinge of panic. The right thing to do was to put an arm around him, comfort him somehow. But what if it turned into something else? He couldn’t make that mistake again…

Mishima shook his head as if to clear it of his painful thoughts. “It’s ok…” he said to himself as to Ryuji. “I can’t change the past…but I’m doing something now. The Thieves and I...we’re going to
make sure that nobody bad like that gets away with it. That’s what I believe…” He looked over at Ryuji, as if for confirmation.

“Yeah…” Ryuji nodded his head. *That’s exactly it.* “It was sick…seein’ how many adults didn’t see or care about what Kamoshida was doin’. That’s why we gotta force ‘em all to see.”

Mishima smiled. “I’m glad we all feel the same way…Now that I think about it…I didn’t have anyone to talk to about it…and you heard everything my Shadow said, back when I joined the Thieves. No one noticed...” Mishima chuckled bitterly. "No one cared. My dad was never home to notice. And my mom’s never paid much attention to me. Truth is…I was…well…really *am* jealous of you."

"I'm sorry that I almost messed things up between you and Akira...” Mishima blurted out."I was being selfish…”

“No dude. I’m the one that shoulda known better. You were just…” Ryuji ducked his head, his cheeks pink. “You were just doin’ what I wanted. Things between me and Akira happened so fast that I got swept up in it. I forgot what it was like to be alone. You just wanted to have someone by your side…I get that. That was me…shit, that *is* me.”

Mishima blinked rapidly in surprise. “Wow, Ryuji, I didn’t expect you to get all emotional.”

“You’re right though…that’s what I wanted. That’s what I still want…what you and Akira have. Not even someone to…” He blushed here, and Ryuji shifted his weight uncomfortably, frustrated that there was a part of him that found it cute. “…well, you know. But just…someone who’s at my side. Someone who I could count on…and you know. Akira is so reliable. He’s capable. He’s hot…you really lucked out.” Mishima smiled wanly at Ryuji. “…That’s all.”

“Dude…” Ryuji gingerly put a hand on Mishima’s shoulder and gave what he hoped was a chaste squeeze. “Even if you don’t have a boyfriend…me, Akira…the other Thieves…we’re in your corner. We’ll always be there to back you up. I promise.”

“I know…” Mishima continued to smile a little wistfully. “It’s hard to see the two of you so happy and not be a little jelly. But I’ll get over it. And if we’re not boyfriends…I’m glad we’re friends. Really.” There was such sincerity behind Mishima’s words that Ryuji was almost bowled over. *Wait...he’s crushin’ on me too? Geez...crushin’ on one guy is hard enough...* Ryuji felt a blush start to creep up his face. Still, the information wasn’t unwelcome. He could feel his ego grow a little at the new information. It wasn’t just Akira that could turn heads after all…

Chapter End Notes

In terms of a schedule, I think what I'm going to do now is promise an update on Sunday evenings (or Monday mornings at the latest) every week, with possibly bonus updates during the week depending on how prolific I am.
Mishima

Chapter Summary

Makoto joins the team!

The past couple of days had been eventful, to say the least. When the Thieves had hinted to Niijima-senpai their difficulty in “tracking down” Kaneshiro, she had taken matters into her own hands, rushing out into Shibuya, finding an unsavory looking character, and demanding to be taken to Kaneshiro himself. She had been driven off, and the Thieves tried to hail a taxi to follow. But it was Ryuji, jumping in front of the cab that actually got one to stop. Mishima had felt his heart nearly stop at the foolish action. He had then immediately felt pangs of guilt, and tried to paper over them with thoughts like He’s just a good friend. That’s all. Nothing more to it.

ISN’T THERE? Puck’s voice had boomed in his head, and Mishima’s forehead had creased at the painful volume of it. There can’t be….he’d responded sadly.

Then, on finding Kaneshiro, the man had blackmailed them with compromising photos of them and Niijima-senpai in his base of ill-repute. The Thieves had trusted Niijima-senpai at this point, and let her into the secret that was the Metaverse. Her actions had proven useful - with them secured as customers in Kaneshiro’s cognition, and thus allowed them into the flying bank that housed his Treasure.

There, Niijima - no, Makoto now - had awoken to her Persona, which took the form of a motorcycle, her spirit of rebellion manifesting itself as a tight fitting biker outfit with spikes adorning the shoulders. With her help, they had blasted their way out of the bank and back to the real world. She had taken to the knowledge of the cognitive world easily enough, asking questions that none of them had thought to ask since their introduction to it. And ultimately, she had joined the team.

And man, was she a welcome addition! She seemed to have an innate sense for the Shadows’ weaknesses and abilities, more often than not pinpointing exactly what move needed to be made to send a Shadow crashing to the ground. Moreover, Mishima found that their abilities complemented each other in battle, with Puck creating illusions to keep the Shadows off balance while Makoto and Johanna zoomed around the battlefield, needling them with attacks while giving Akira advice and relaying his subsequent orders.

In fact, with her help, they’d been able to secure a route to Kaneshiro’s Treasure in one day. They’d sent the calling card the following day, and today they were taking the fight to Kaneshiro himself. Privately, Mishima felt that calling themselves Thieves was a bit of an exaggeration, considering that they had never seemed to be able to steal a Treasure unnoticed.

The Phantom Thieves now stood outside of the final vault in Kaneshiro’s bank. “Everyone ready?” Akira asked, his hand already on the door. He was practically twitchy with eagerness, his whole body tensed and ready to get underway. That was why he was their leader, really (and of course, why Mishima was crushing hard on him). He wasn’t as tactical as Makoto, nor as strong as Ryuji; but his almost manic enthusiasm when they were on the job - it was infectious, and it made all of them fight harder when it came down to it.

Mishima nodded along with everyone else. Akira opened the door, and a collective gasp arose from
all of them at the realization that the Treasure was behind another vault door that had not been there the last time.

“What the hell?!” Ryuji complained loudly. He gave the spinning dials of the safe a solid kick, but it did nothing.

“A safe…!? This wasn’t here the last time we came…” Morgana exclaimed. “He changed the entire room so quickly… I guess this Palace isn’t a bank for nothing.”

Kaneshiro stepped out of the shadows and stood in front of it, flanked by two of his thugs.

“Greetings… welcome to my private city bank. I’m surprised you made it here alive. It seems you are quite lucky.”

“Lucky? Don’t be ridiculous,” Makoto said confidently. Her knees were already bent, her hands lowered but ready to engage. Mishima felt a surge of admiration towards her. She had taken to being a Phantom Thief so quickly… he remembered his first visit into Madarame’s Palace. He’d felt like puking when they’d finally encountered him, much to Puck’s displeasure. DON’T REMIND ME… Puck’s voice boomed in his head. Mishima made a mental note to ask the others if their Personas were as vocal as his was.

“We’re gonna change your heart and make you confess!” Ryuji said angrily.

“Yeah! Your days of abusing everyone are over!” Mishima said. “We’re taking you down!”

“Tch…” Kaneshiro launched into a speech about how the world was one where the strong ruled, and that the weak existed to be exploited by them. His actions were justified because he was once one of the weak, and had now clawed himself up to a point where he could be the one benefiting from the arrangement. It was only fair, according to him.

“Fuck you man, that doesn’t give you the right to blackmail people for money!” Ryuji interrupted.

“Yeah, that’s crazy! Even if that’s true, aren’t you getting back at the wrong people?!” Ann asked incredulously.

“We will never agree to being the source of your riches!” Yusuke added.

Kaneshiro snickered and shook his head. “Ha! I’m going to swarm all over you…and squeeze out every last penny!”

His head bowed and he hunched over. Suddenly his body convulsed and a sickening cracking noise split the air. He groaned with every crack, and spat dark liquid onto the floor. His hands rubbed together like the mandibles of a fly, and suddenly, his eyes bugged out, staring at them with malice from a thousand lenses. Transparent wings sprouted from his back and he buzzed up into the air. He pulled a pair of what looked like semiautomatic pistols from his suit jacket. “I can take care of you dumb kids myself!”

“Behind me!” Joker shouted as Kaneshiro let loose a spray of bullets at the Thieves. The Thieves reacted as one, diving behind their leader. He didn’t move, instead summoning a giant blue anthropomorphic elephant. "Girimehkala!" The bullets rebounded off of its belly and zipped unerringly back towards Kaneshiro. The bullets bit into his arms and legs, spawning trails of that same dark liquid from their impact points.

“Graargh!” Kaneshiro fell from the sky and landed unceremoniously on the ground.

“All-out attack!” The Thieves converged on him as one, laying into him with all they had before
jumping back to view their handiwork. Kaneshiro’s once-pristine white suit was in tatters now, and dark liquid stained it so it was more black than white. He looked like he was wearing a Rorschach inkblot test.

“Damn…you kids are stronger than you look…with your little Halloween costumes…” Kaneshiro muttered. “I’ll have to break out my big guns…” He sprang up with surprising speed, flew to the dial on the enormous safe behind him. The dial spun and pulled back, and suddenly, a large metal monstrosity resembling a piggy bank stood before them.

“A fuckin’ fat pig?” Ryuji said loudly and incredulously. “For real?”

“You better not be talking about me!” Kaneshiro’s voice sounded from within the metal, and the pig’s eyes rotated to look at him before letting loose another spray of bullets.

Akira stepped easily into the line of fire, summoning Girimehkala again and reflecting the bullets back. Unfortunately, they simply bounced off of the pig’s metal hide without appearing to damage it at all. “Really? You know that won’t work….” Akira said cockily. How was he so confident? Mishima was fairly sure that none of their weapons could break that metal exterior…maybe he was relying on their spells to do the trick?

“Fine! I’ll just crush you beneath me!” Kaneshiro emerged from the pig and it began spinning in place like a giant hamster ball, with Kaneshiro dancing above it like some kind of deranged fairy.

“Robin, hit him with Dazzler!” Akira shouted.

Mishima obeyed instinctively, summoning Puck to hit Kaneshiro with a blinding blast of light. “Shiki-Ouji!” Akira summoned another Persona, this one a large Persona that looked something like an origami samurai. “Psi!” He hit Kaneshiro with a burst of psychic energy, causing the dizzy Shadow to fall from his precarious perch, and subsequently be run over by it as the Thieves scattered out of its path.

“Damn it…!” Kaneshiro definitely looked worse for wear - he flew up and back into the pig. “Fine… I’ll crush you from inside…”

“Joker…we need a way to break through that shell!” Makoto said urgently. “We can’t get to him from out here!”

“Panther! I need you to help me super-heat that metal… Fox, you’re on standby. Be ready to hit it with ice when I give the word. Queen and Skull - be ready to hit it as hard as you can. Mona - keep everyone up, and Robin, do what you can to keep him away from us in the first place.”

The Thieves sprang into action. Mishima and Morgana ran to the side of the room so they’d have a vantage point while the rest of the Thieves took evasive action. Ann summoned Carmen and bathed the pig in red hot flame, while Joker summoned Orthrus and added his own flames to the mix. Soon, the pig itself was glowing a dull red, and the room itself was oppressively hot. “Dude…it’s even more dangerous now…!” Ryuji complained as he dodged the rolling behemoth, helped in part by an illusion of him that Puck created a few feet away.

Akira ignored him and yelled, “Great work Panther! Fox, you’re up!” Yusuke summoned Goemon and the room quickly became cold as he and Akira (now with the help of Jack Frost) hit the superheated metal with blasts of cold air and frost. The metal shuddered and creaked as it underwent a massive temperature change in the space of a few seconds. It veered off course and crashed into a wall, where it came to a shuddering halt.
“Now, Queen, Skull!!” Makoto charged forward on Johanna, Ryuji balanced precariously behind her on the seat. With a loud rev of the engine, Johanna caught air, and Makoto and Ryuji came down on the cold, now brittle metal with all the force they could muster. The metal gave like glass beneath Makoto’s fist and Ryuji’s club, revealing the beaten Kaneshiro.

“Goddammit…you kids…what gives you the right to judge me?!” Kaneshiro said. He chuckled bitterly. “I guess it doesn’t matter…you’ve won…but you haven’t got anything on the guy in the black mask…better hope you don’t run into him…”

The Palace gave a shudder. Its owner was beaten, its Treasure all but taken. “We don’t have time for this,” Akira said. “Everyone, load up the Treasure and let’s go!”

———

Back in Akira’s room at Leblanc…

The Thieves sat in a circle at various positions around Akira’s small room. Ryuji sat next to Akira, his head resting wearily on Akira’s shoulder. Mishima felt a pang of jealousy, but chose to sit next to Makoto.

“So…how does it feel to have your first success as one of the Phantom Thieves?” Akira asked.

Makoto smiled, and it was full of warmth, lacking in the stress that had tugged at it just a week earlier. “It feels good,” she said. “I feel like I’m finally doing something worthy. We’re doing something to make the world better. We’re adding justice to the world. I…I can’t thank you enough, for allowing me to join. Especially after that foolhardy risk I took…”

“Without that risk, we may never have reached Kaneshiro’s Palace in the first place,” Mishima pointed out quickly. “I like having you on the team. It’ll be nice having someone more tactics-minded with us anyway…we kinda just went in and bashed heads in Madarame’s Palace.”

“Thank you…I will do my best to perform adequately as the team’s strategist,” Makoto promised. She reached up and rubbed her forehead, yawning a little as she did so. “Please excuse me…I’m not used to the exhaustion of operating in the other world yet.”

“I nearly collapsed when I first awoke to my Persona,” Yusuke said. “There is no shame in feeling its effects.”

“Same,” Ann said. “And honestly, I’m glad to finally have another girl on the team.”

“What’s wrong with us guys, huh?!” Ryuji asked. “We’re the Phantom Thieves! You could do a lot worse than us…”

“I’m just teasing,” Ann said as she rolled her eyes. “Relax! But you guys definitely talk about dicks and sex more than I did with Shiho…I mean jeez…what else is there to say?”

“Really?” Makoto asked apprenhensively.

“I beg your pardon, I certainly do not indulge Ryuji in his vulgarities!” Yusuke protested.

“Me neither!” said Morgana.

“…you guys all pretty much know my dirty laundry from when you met my Shadow…” Mishima said, his face turning pink. “So embarrassing…”
“You got your Persona differently?” Makoto cocked her head, her interest piqued. “Really? How?”

“I was wonderin’ about that…what was the deal with that? None of us got our Personas that way,” Ryuji said.

“Remember when I told you that Persona users can’t have Palaces because their Personas are reflections of their true selves?” Morgana asked.

Ryuji looked at Akira - who shrugged with a bemused expression - and then back at Morgana. “…sure.” Mishima had to disguise a laugh as a cough.

“Right, well, a Shadow like that is kind of like that, except it reflects only the worst desires of that person. They’re awful, of course, being the worst part. But that doesn’t make them not that person… and when that person rejects them, the Shadow can gain a huge amount of power from that rejection,” Morgana explained. “That’s why Mishima had to accept that that Shadow was him, and why when he did, he got a Persona.”

“…right…” Ryuji said. “I’m not sure how that makes sense…but ok. How do you even know that?”

“I…” Morgana’s nose twitched. “I…don’t know. I just…do. It’s a memory…but I can’t remember how I got it…I just seem to know it’s happened before.” He flexed his claws into Akira’s bed with frustration. “I just wish I could remember!”

“Well, let us know if we can do anything…” Mishima said, reaching out to pet him. “I can do some research on the Internet for you if you want.”

“I wonder how much of this is even known to people,” Makoto said. “It’s not exactly hard science, is it? Although speaking of…I don’t know about Yusuke, and definitely not Morgana, but we have exams coming up.”

“Man, I can’t think about exams now…what about Kaneshiro? Will the change of heart be enough?” Ryuji asked.

“From what it sounds like, it always has been,” Makoto said. “And if he does turn himself in, I’m sure I can hear about it from my sister. So you have no excuse, any of you. If we want to avoid drawing undue attention to ourselves, we will have to continue in our studies as if we don’t have this…extracurricular activity.”

“ Doesn’t that mean that Ryuji shouldn’t study then?” Morgana said. “Even his Japanese is questionable…”

“Sh-shut up you dumb cat! I bet you wouldn’t do good on those tests either!” Ryuji said. “There aren’t questions about Shadows and Palaces and shit!”

“…do well,” Makoto corrected.

“What?” Ryuji asked.

“You mean, ‘I bet you wouldn’t do well on those tests,’” Makoto said. “‘Do well’ means scoring high marks in this case. ‘Do good’ would mean doing good in the world as a result of scoring high.”

“Uh…” Ryuji said.

“He doesn’t get it…” Ann shook her head sadly. “Maybe we should all study together soon, huh?”
Happy Birthday, Ryuji

Chapter Summary

It's Ryuji's birthday!!! A collection of short scenes at Ryuji's birthday party

Chapter Notes

Yes, I realize that his birthday's actually July 3rd.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Group text between Akira Kurusu, Ann Takamaki, Yusuke Kitagawa, Yuuki Mishima, Makoto Nijima, and Ms. Sakamoto.

[AK] Ok, everyone - Ryuji’s birthday is next week, and I want to make sure it goes well.

[AK] Also, Ms. Sakamoto, this is way harder than I thought it’d be.

[MS] Please, you can call me Mihoko-san.

[AK] If you’re sure…

[AT] Aaahhhhh this is so cute!!!!!! What’s your plan?? Is it going to be super romantic? Candles? Starlight? The works?!

[AK] Uh no…it’s a party, not an anniversary.

[YK] Would you not feel a bit awkward attending such an intimate moment between the two?

[YK] Although now that I think about it, I am curious as to how Ryuji conducts himself in a romantic relationship.

[YK] Akira if you choose to take that route, I won’t protest.

[MN] Oh! I didn’t realize you and Ryuji were together!

[MN] That’s ok of course!

[MN] I just thought you were very close friends. A…bromance, I think is the slang for it?

[AT] Yeah, that’s it. But no, they’re not all touchy-feely cause they’re bros

[AT] it’s because they’re super gay for each other.

[AK] Ann, could you not say that in a group text with RYUJI’S MOM

[AT] Oh oops. Sorry Ms. Sakamoto
[MS] Seriously, all of you can call me Mihoko-san. And it’s alright. I was young once too. What did you have in mind, Akira?

[AK] Well, I had a hard time thinking of stuff that Ryuji’s into that would translate well into a birthday party.

[AK] So what I ended up thinking was that we could reserve the special events room at the arcade in Shibuya for a few hours, play games, eat cake, etc.

[AK] And then after just hang out in the park or something.

[AK] I checked with the people at Ogikubo too - they said they’d be able to cater it. I think Ryuji’d be really into it.

[YK] That sounds kind of pricey all together…can you manage it?

[AK] Oh yeah, I won like 100,000 yen in the lottery last month. Should be enough, I checked.

[MS] Wow, you’ve thought of everything. Is there anything you need from me?

[AK] Yeah, if you could get him to the arcade without getting him suspicious, that would be amazing

[AK] I’ll text everyone the time later. Just need to make the reservation.

[AK] if any of you let this slip I will sic that Incubus Persona on you I swear to god

[MS] What in the world does that slang mean?

[YM] It's just an inside joke meme, Mihoko-san

“Man, how many groceries are you plannin’ on buyin’?” Ryuji said to his mom as they exited the train station at Shibuya. She had asked him to go with her into the city to help her bring groceries home. Why she couldn’t have just gone to their neighborhood market, he had no idea. Apparently she needed an ingredient that was only available in the city.

“I have to go all out since it’s your birthday!” his mom responded cheerfully. She started walking toward Central Street.

“Wait, we ain’t goin’ to the one in the underground mall?” Ryuji asked.

“No, it’s a small little shop,” his mom responded. “It’s a very special, rare ingredient. I don’t know where else in the city I’d get it!”

Ryuji suppressed a sigh. He didn’t mind helping his mom out, but he’d really hoped he’d be able to spend most of the day with Akira. But…Ryuji pretty much never said ‘no’ to his mom. And it was hard to even be annoyed about it since she was doing it for him.

He nearly bumped into her as she stopped suddenly. “What’s goin’ on?” She’d stopped in front of the arcade on Central Street, and she was looking up at it intently.

“That’s right, I wanted to get something for you from here,” Mihoko said. “Akira told me there was a game you liked.”
“You can’t actually buy games from the ar-“ Ryuji was cut off as Mihoko grabbed his arm and yanked him with her through the doors.

“SURPRISE!” She and the rest of his friends shouted, as Ann threw a handful of confetti into his bewildered face.

Akira stood in the middle of them, looking both very handsome and very smug in slim fitting v-neck over which he wore a light blazer. “Surprise,” he said again. “It’s impossible to reserve the whole arcade, but we do have a room in the back. But since you’re the birthday guy, if you need tokens, all you gotta do is ask at the desk over there. As many as you want, all included.”

“Guys…this is the nicest thing anyone’s ever done for me…” Ryuji said, his voice a little quavery as he tried to keep too much emotion from spilling out at once.

“I feel kinda bad, I wouldn’t even have known if it wasn’t for your mom,” Akira said.

“But it was Akira who put it all together,” Mihoko said.

Ryuji shook his head slowly. “This is so awesome you guys…thank y-!” His words were cut off for the second time that day as everyone rushed him for a group hug. “Aaah! Guys…! You’re crushin’ me!”

Ryuji stared open-mouthed at Makoto, who had gathered a small crowd around her as she played Gun About. Her lips were pressed tightly together in concentration, her eyes focused on nothing but the movements of the enemies on screen. Her arm moved with pinpoint precision, and it seemed that every squeeze of the plastic trigger was accompanied by the electronic death scream of another virtual enemy. It took several more minutes, when the screen was literally more enemy than scenery, before Makoto finally succumbed.

The small crowd around her erupted in a cheer, and Ryuji found himself joining in. Makoto's eyes grew wide and her cheeks reddened as she finally realized the presence of her audience. "Way to go gamer chick!” someone in the audience shouted.

Makoto's eyes scanned the audience quickly and her eyes settled on Ryuji. "Excuse me," she said as she stepped down from the game's raised platform and made her way to him. "That was unexpected," she said when she reached him.

"Yeah, damn, was that your first time playin’?” Ryuji asked. "You were so good! More like Ma-PRO-to, amiright?” It was kind of a dumb play on her name, but for some reason his chest was swelling with inordinate pride at it, especially since she looked embarrassed by the nickname.

Makoto’s cheeks reddened further. "I’m sure I wasn’t that great…but thank you." She rummaged around in her purse for a few seconds. "Actually, while I have you here..." Makoto pulled a wrapped gift from her purse. "I...realize we haven’t known each other for very long, so I hope you like it. Everyone told me you like anime and manga."

Ryuni unwrapped the present to find the first volume of a detective manga. The cover featured a man with an extremely hardboiled look, crouched down to examine a spot on the floor. “It’s my favorite series,” Makoto admitted.

“I didn’t really think you were the mystery type Makoto,” Ryuji said. “I’m a little surprised honestly. But in a good way!”
Makoto smiled. “It’s ok, I know everyone at school thinks I’m like a robot. Akira’s helping me with that.”

“He’s giving you help too, huh?” Ryuji said. “Man…I don’t know how he manages his time and still has the energy to go Shadow bustin’. You know he sometimes helps that politician guy in front of Shibuya Station? Just because he believes in him, I guess.”

“Our leader really is admirable,” Makoto agreed. “You’re very lucky to be dating him.” She flushed a little. “I admit I’m a little curious. Is he always all leader-y? You don’t have to answer if you don’t want to.”

“Nah, it’s cool,” Ryuji said. “He’s…mostly still like that when we’re alone. Just…confident. Like he always knows what he’s doin’, like nothin’ the world throws at him can faze him.” Ryuji cracked his neck and examined his slightly chewed fingernails somewhat mournfully. “I wish I knew how he does it. Makes me wonder what he sees in me, sometimes.” He gave Makoto a funny look. “I don’t know why I’m tellin’ you all that. Must be your sister’s influence rubbin’ off on you, huh?”

“Maybe…I wouldn’t be so down on yourself. The way he looks at you is genuine, I can tell. And as for what he sees in you, well…we all have a type,” Makoto joked. “Maybe he likes a bad boy!”

“I ain’t even that though!” Ryuji protested.

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“Ryuji, do you have a moment?” Ryuji turned to see Yusuke approaching him, a flat parcel wrapped in plain brown paper and string under his arm. Yusuke held it out to him. “I hope you like it. I didn’t have much notice, so it’s the best I could do under the time constraint.”

“Dude, you didn’t…” Ryuji carefully undid the string and removed the paper to find a small painting. Red paint had been splashed liberally onto the canvas as a backdrop, with white lines outlined in some choice places with black. The lines formed the Phantom Thieves logo that they’d come up with together for Madarame’s Palace. “Holy shit this is amazin’! I’m gonna hang this up as soon as I get home! It’s fuckin’ incredible man!”

“I am glad you like it,” Yusuke said, a small smile creasing his lips. “Tell me…what do you see when you look at this painting?”

“Uh…” Ryuji blanked. “Our logo?”

“Yes, that is what I have depicted,” Yusuke said. “But do you see anything in the way I have chosen to do so?”

Ryuji stared harder at the painting. It looked like the red paint had been…almost thrown haphazardly onto the canvas by a wide brush. The lines of the logo were starkly white against the red, carved in with some tool, almost violently, Ryuji could see now as he looked closer. The tool had bit into the canvas in some places. “It’s…angry? It’s almost like you slashed it with a knife or somethin’.”

“Yes!” Ryuji leaped back a bit, startled by Yusuke’s outburst of sound. “Thank you, Ryuji. Even your untrained eye has spotted it - though with some prompting. Still!” Yusuke moved to Ryuji’s side, gestured at the lines on the painting. “You see? I have painted the Phantom Thieves as you see them, as a blade of righteous anger that will bring change for the good of everyone.”

“That’s…whoa…” Ryuji held the painting gingerly, like a person cradling a baby for the first time. “Thank you! Really.”
“Here!” Mishima shoved a gift-wrapped box into Ryuji’s hands. “Uh…happy birthday! I hope you like it…”

“Dude, why so nervous?” Ryuji said as he began to tear the wrapping paper off. Even though Mishima’s shyness was the total opposite of Akira’s confidence, Ryuji still found it endearing. Attractive, even. The way he shuffled his feet, and how he would just barely meet Ryuji’s eyes, and when he did, a touch of pink would appear in his cheeks. Shit! He was just standing there with Mishima’s gift half-opened, looking like a total idiot.

Ryuji tore the rest of the paper away to reveal a shoebox. He opened it to find an extremely nice pair of sneakers. “Holy shit Mishima, these are awesome! How’d you know my size?”

“When I decided to get you shoes for your birthday, I just checked your shoe size one time when we were all meeting at Akira’s,” Mishima explained. “And…well, your old shoes are looking kind of ratty, so I figured you could use a new pair. I hope you like the style.”

“I definitely do!” Ryuji said. They were just his style: a loud red with stylish black stripes and gold trim. “Thanks!” He gave Mishima a quick hug, causing him to stammer out an adorable ‘y-you’re welcome.’

“I was thinking…maybe I could join you and Akira at the gym sometime…I don’t want to fall behind you guys. I have to try my best too!” Mishima said, his usually soft eyes filling with determination.

“Definitely!” Ryuji nodded. “We’ll keep each other on track!”

They grinned at each other awkwardly for a moment. "Us being friends isn't weird, is it? After..." Mishima asked.

Ryuji stuck his hands in his pockets and looked at the ceiling. "I mean...it ain't exactly normal. But honestly...I do wanna be friends with you. What we talked about last time...you're the only person on my life who really gets it. Gets how much Kamoshida sucked, and how fucked up it was, and how it's prolly screwed us up.." Ryuji shook his head in frustration.

"It pisses me off," he continued. "All those guys I used to run with on the track team...they still blame me for throwin' a punch at him. Even though they had taken just as much shit from him as me before then."

"That sucks, Ryuji," Mishima said. "I'm sorry that happened to you." He hesitantly reached for Ryuji’s shoulder and patted it clumsily. “And…I’m glad we’re friends too.”

“Hey…” Ann stopped Ryuji halfway through his walk to the drink station. “I guess everyone’s just kind of giving you their presents when they get the chance. I thought I’d give you mine now.” She reached into her purse and pulled out a small, gift-wrapped box that was roughly the size of an orange.

Ryuji unwrapped the box carefully. Ann had clearly put a lot of effort into making the box look pretty. He didn’t want to just tear into it like a wild dog. Ryuji opened the box, and lying on the inside, there was a small, very cute plush charm to be hung from a keychain. It was incredibly elaborate for its size, in the shape of a dolphin wearing sunglasses. He looked up at Ann, his eyebrows creasing in confusion. He ran his fingertips over the plush charm lightly. “This is uh…
“Oh, I saw it on Etsy! Some guy calling himself Takeji Zaiten?” Ann said. “Something like that.”

“A dude made this?” Ryuji’s voice was incredulous.

“Don’t be shitty!” Ann gave him a playful slap on the arm. “It’s so cute!”

“That’s my point!” Ryuji said. “Not tryin’ to be shitty, just sayin’ most dudes aren’t into this kinda thing!”

Ann rolled her eyes. “Ugh, whatever…it’s not a joke gift, you know,“ she said. "Remember, after Kamoshida...I brought up the dolphin that you got your mom from the aquarium back when we were in middle school?"

"Yeah..." Ryuji said. "You said I owed you interest because you lent me the money for it."

Ann turned a little pink. "I was just joking!" Her gaze turned down, and her expression grew sad. "That dolphin was the last time I really felt like we were friends...until just recently, I mean. I...I wanted to give you this to tell you that I'd...I'd like us to be that close again. And...I'm sorry I didn't do anything to stop us drifting apart."

"Ann..." Ryuji's voice caught in his throat, and he swallowed his embarrassment. He shook his head. "I should be sayin' sorry to you...it's not like I did anythin' either. And now that I think about it...I feel like I was the one that closed myself off, not you. My dad was...that was when he was at his worst, you know? He was comin' home drunk every night and takin' out his shit on me and mom. I was ashamed...I thought hidin' pain was the manly thing to do." Ryuji snorted a little derisively at himself. "I ain't that dumb now, but I was. I'm the one that's sorry. I'm sorry I shut you out...that musta sucked."

Ann stamped her foot and wiped her eyes with her sleeve. "Damn it Ryuji, I can't cry at your party! People will be taking pictures!" She suddenly moved forward and wrapped Ryuji in a tight embrace. She felt warm and soft, and she smelled of flowers and a little bit like cake batter. He returned the hug gently, his chest tight with emotion. Ryuji hadn't realized how much he'd missed having Ann as a friend. His mind flooded with memories of their friendship: when she had jumped in to defend him against kids who made fun of his often out of style and ill fitting clothing, the two of them watching anime and reading manga together, the two of them loudly denying a relationship to their classmates. He remembered realizing that he had a crush on her, how he'd felt ashamed at the feelings he'd have when he saw her, and afraid that he'd ruin their friendship. He'd thought, and still did, that she was the most beautiful girl he'd ever seen.

"So uh..." Ryuji chuckled awkwardly when they broke apart. "Thanks for the present. I really do like it." He pulled out his keys and attached the charm.

“We’re officially friends again, huh?” Ann said. "I...I promise to never let us grow apart again. I'll notice, next time you're in trouble!"

Ryuji grinned. "Yeah, me too. You're stuck with me, Takamaki."

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Akira watched as Ryuji talked and laughed with his mom. They were so affectionate with each other. She was quick to fix an errant hair for him, hug him, give him a kiss on the top of his head or the side of his cheek. And though Ryuji would make an attempt to escape the hugs and kisses, Akira could tell he did so half-heartedly, and enjoyed the attention from her. After all, he’d agreed to go
grosery shopping with her on his birthday. Few teenage boys would have been so amenable to that, at least in Akira’s estimation.

He felt a presence at his side, turned and saw Mishima had joined him. “It’s nice, what he has with his mom, isn’t it?” Mishima said. By his tone, it wasn’t really a question.

“Yeah,” Akira said quietly.

Mishima looked at him for a few seconds, his face slightly pinched as he debated whether he wanted to say what he was thinking. “I’m jealous of him too,” he said finally.

Akira started, his face losing its composure for a quick second. “Jealous…?” Akira said. “Yeah…I guess I am.”

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The party was winding down now; Ryuji had stepped outside for a bit of fresh air, having grown tired of the filtered air-conditioned air inside the arcade. He smiled as he felt a familiar arm across his shoulders. “Hey,” Ryuji said. “Thank you for this. Really. It’s the nicest thing someone’s ever done for me.”

Akira’s face broke into an adorable smile, and he ducked his head in a rare moment of modesty. “It was actually pretty hard to come up with something,” he said. “I’m going to have a hell of a time topping this next year.”

Ryuji laughed. “Dude, I’ll be happy just so long as you’re there…” He trailed off as he remembered that Akira wouldn’t be here next year. “I know it’s still a long way off…but…I really don’t want you to have to leave.”

Akira gave Ryuji a reassuring squeeze. “At the very least, I’ll visit as often as i can. And I’ll definitely be here for your birthday. I promise I’ll be there for you.” He stepped in front of Ryuji so they were face-to-face. “Come on, let’s not talk about that stuff. It’s your birthday.”

Ryuji nodded ruefully. “Yeah…sorry to bring the mood down.” He flashed Akira with one of his patented cocky grins, the one that he knew would bring a spot of color to Akira’s pale cheeks. “So uh…since it’s my birthday, where’s my present?” he asked in a faux insulted tone.

Akira rolled his eyes even as he played along. “Oh, well you know, since I put all this together, I figured I’d just tie a bow around my dick and let you unwrap it when we were alone,” he said, his face set in a deadpan expression.

Ryuji threw his head back and laughed so loud that several people in the street turned to look at them for a second before going back to their daily business. He put a hand on Akira’s shoulder to steady himself. “Is it weird I wouldn’t be surprised if you actually did?” Ryuji asked. “…now that I think about it, I kinda want you to.”

“I actually do have a present for you. A tangible one, I mean,” Akira said, the color of his cheeks showing his feelings even if his face remained composed. “But it’s a Metaverse thing. It’ll have to
“Wait until we go there next. I can’t be carrying it around the city, you know?”

“That sounds so awesome, I can’t wait,” Ryuji said. He looked back in the direction of the arcade, where he could see everyone just standing around chatting idly. He looked back at Akira, who had a questioning look on his face. “Hey… I know you were thinkin’ we’d all go to the park or somethin’ after this…but I’m kinda tired. You think we could just hang out at Leblanc? Just the two of us, I mean?”

Ryuji felt a swooping feeling in his stomach as Akira pulled him in close for a bone crushing hug. “Yeah… I’d like that.” Akira’s lips brushed against his ear and then just grazed Ryuji’s. “Happy birthday, Ryuji.”

Chapter End Notes

I debated whether Ryuji should be gaining additional abilities by strengthening his relationship with other people, but ultimately I decided against it because a) I feel like I'd have to have come up with something for nearly every scene I wrote here, and b) because it would've been awkward to put in Captain Kidd talking to him at the end of every one of those.

It's a cool idea I think, but doesn't work so well in the fan fiction format imo. What do you all think?
They got back to Cafe Leblanc and found the windows dark. Apparently Sojiro had already locked up for the night. “You have the key, right?” Ryuji asked.

Akira pulled the keys out of his pocket and jingled them lightly. “Of course…besides, even if I didn’t, I’m sure Morgana could pick the lock.”

Morgana nodded from inside Akira’s bag. “Yeah, that lock is nothing compared to Madarame’s room lock. I could get that open in less than a minute I bet.” He looked back and forth between Akira and Ryuji. “I’m sure you guys are going to want some space…just leave the window open for me when you’re done.” He looked up at Ryuji and somehow managed to grin. “Consider it my birthday present to you!”

“I’m exhausted…” Ryuji said as he flopped backward onto Akira’s bed. He sat suddenly and grinned at Akira. “In a good way, I mean. Today was so awesome…I can’t believe you planned all that out with all the other stuff we have goin’ on. For the past couple of years I’ve just gone fishing on my birthday…”

“Glad you liked it,” Akira said as he lay down next to him. He wriggled his arm under Ryuji so he could run his fingers through his hair comfortably. It was strange. Frankly, Ryuji could stand to use some conditioner. The bleaching of his hair had definitely dried it out, but Akira still found the sensation comforting. The feeling of it was just so undeniably Ryuji…

Then, he felt Ryuji’s hand come to rest on top of his crotch and give it a tantalizing squeeze. Akira felt a surge of blood rush into his cock. “Do I get to unwrap this present now, at least?” Ryuji asked playfully.

“It would be rude not to, after I went through all the trouble of getting it for you,” Akira replied. He turned his head so he could give Ryuji a kiss. Their kiss in front of the arcade had been over too quickly, but now Akira savored the very fact that he could savor the feeling of Ryuji’s soft, slightly chapped lips. As their lips slid against each other, Akira felt himself grow fully hard in Ryuji’s grasp, causing a sharp intake of breath from him as he became more sensitive to Ryuji’s touch.

Ryuji smiled into the kiss, and Akira couldn’t help but do the same. Akira turned fully on his side so he could lean deeper into the kiss and throw a bit of weight behind it. Ryuji moaned, and his hand shifted from Akira’s crotch up his shirt to run lightly over a nipple. “Akira…” Ryuji gasped, somehow already sounding breathless. “I want to feel you against me…”

Akira broke away from the kiss reluctantly, quickly shucking his shirt and diving back in as soon as
Ryuji had done the same. The feeling of Ryuji’s hot skin against his was electrifying, combined with their lips touching, their tongues wrestling each other, Ryuji’s fingers tracing his back, his hair, the outline of his hard cock through his jeans…Akira found that he had to focus on one thing at a time or he likely would’ve cum right there.

Finally, Ryuji’s fingers deftly unbuttoned the catch on Akira’s jeans, and he yanked them and Akira’s underwear down slightly to expose Akira’s manhood, a pearl of precum already glistening at the tip. “Man, you got it for me baaddddd,” Ryuji said with a smug smile that Akira somehow found cute.

“You’re one to talk,” Akira said as he swiftly tucked his fingers into Ryuji’s waistband and gave Ryuji’s hard cock a squeeze, which elicited a slight yelp from Ryuji. “What do you call that?”

Ryuji seemed to think hard for a moment on a possible retort, but came up empty-handed. He shrugged, then moved down the bed so his head was at Akira’s waist. “I got nothin’,” he admitted. Akira shuddered at the feel of his warm breath on his cockhead, which was just peeking out of his foreskin. “But I know I can shut you up if I do this!” He leaned forward and pulled Akira’s foreskin back, then wrapped his lips around the revealed cockhead and gave it a rough suck that elicited a popping sound that was incredibly arousing and an involuntary moan from Akira.

Damn…Ryuji’s blowjob skills had really improved in the relatively short time they’d been together. He worked his tongue against Akira’s cockhead like it was second nature, even as his lips slid over the ridge of it and the shaft over and over again. Every few seconds or so, he’d dive in deep and let his throat muscles do the work as they flexed around Akira’s rigid cock, at which point Akira could do nothing but hold onto the back of Ryuji’s head for what felt like dear life.

“Fuck…Ryuji…I’m going to cum in your mouth if you keep this up much longer!” Akira warned.

Ryuji pulled off. “I’m all for that, but not yet!” He slid back up the bed to give Akira a kiss that tasted of his own salty precum, Ryuji’s saliva ever so slightly thickened by it. It triggered a fresh wave of lust in Akira, and he kissed back hungrily, his tongue practically swabbing the inside of Ryuji’s mouth for every last drop of it.

“Hey, get your own!” Ryuji joked as he pulled away from the kiss. He sat back so he could tug his own pants down past his knees, revealing his hard cock bulging obscenely against his underwear, a dark spot already formed on the red fabric.

Akira reached out and grabbed Ryuji’s butt, pulling him forward forcefully so he could put his mouth over the dark spot on Ryuji’s boxer briefs. He gave it a few sucks through the fabric before he pulled down the underwear and took Ryuji’s fat cockhead into his mouth. The taste of Ryuji’s precum was intoxicating; Akira couldn’t help but spend a few extra seconds letting his tongue polish every surface of Ryuji’s cockhead. “Shit that feels so good…” Ryuji moaned, and Akira dove down deep so that Ryuji’s thick cock plugged the back of his throat, getting another yelp of appreciation from Ryuji. Ryuji began thrusting into Akira’s mouth, and Akira gamely pulled on Ryuji’s butt to help him along, reveling in the feeling of Ryuji’s cock pressing deeper and deeper, of his nose smelling Ryuji’s musk every time it was buried in Ryuji’s pubic hair. “Ah!” Ryuji gasped, his hands pushing away at Akira’s head. “I don’t want to cum yet!”

Akira pulled off Ryuji immediately, and Ryuji collapsed/slid down him, breathing just as hard as Akira was. Akira’s mind was instantly drawn to the thought of Ryuji riding his cock as Ryuji’s butt came to a rest at Akira’s hips, with Akira’s cock neatly wedged up between the cheeks.

“Hey…” Ryuji said, his soft brown eyes on Akira’s dark ones.
“What?” Akira asked. “Do I have something on my face?”

“No…I was just thinkin’ how lucky I am that you…that you like me back,” Ryuji said. “Thanks, Akira. For everything.”

Akira shook his head even as he ran a hand up Ryuji’s toned torso to cup his cheek. “I should be thanking you. You’re amazing. I…trust you more than anyone in my whole life. And I feel just as lucky. Not because I think your face is stupid cute, or your ass is porn star hot…but…you’re the best guy I know.”

Ryuji blushed hard, and Akira felt a rush of affection crush his chest that had nothing to do with the fact that Ryuji was currently on it. “Shit, I could say the same thing about you…” Ryuji leaned forward and they shared another long, lingering kiss. “Though if I’m bein’ honest, I do think my ass is better. You gotta get on my runnin’ level if you want to look this good.” Ryuji winked.

“Shut up,” Akira laughed. “You trying to get blue-balled tonight?”

“Yeah right, the way we are right now, there’s no way you could resist me,” Ryuji said. “All I have to do is this…” he spread his legs a little and let the tip of Akira’s slick cockhead tease his hole. Akira felt a shudder run through his whole body, and from the smug look of satisfaction on Ryuji’s face, he had felt a bit of that too.

Akira sighed dramatically. “You’re right. You’ve got me.”

“Good.” Ryuji leaned forward so their eyes were inches apart. “Because I’m going to need you to fuck me.”

I wonder if it’s possible to black out from being too turned on? Akira thought as Ryuji ground his ass up against Akira’s cock again, smearing his slippery precum all over it. It only took about a minute of this before Akira felt Ryuji’s entrance give way and the head of his cock pop into Ryuji’s fantastic warmth. God…the gasp from Ryuji, the way he bit his lip as Akira slid in…

“God, I can feel you pulsing inside me…” Ryuji breathed. “Fuck…it’s all I can do not to go down too fast…”

“Take your time…” Akira said, his hands full of Ryuji’s tight ass.

A couple minutes more of Ryuji slowly sliding down accompanied by increasingly hot whimpers and moans, and Akira finally felt Ryuji’s ass cheeks come to a rest on his thighs. “Fuck, you’re in,” Ryuji groaned. “You feel so damn good…” His eyes met Akira’s and he grinned cheekily. “You ready for me to ride you?”

“Fuck, Ryuji pleas-“

Ryuji took Akira’s breath away as he slid up and down the shaft at a steady yet brisk pace. Akira did what he could to thrust up to match him, the feeling of Ryuji’s ass flexing around him was just too arousing. It was all Akira could do to focus on Ryuji’s face, his eyes closed tightly, his bottom lip tucked under his top lip as he bit it concentration. How he could manage to be so cute and so sexy at the same time was beyond him. “Shit…Akira I’m gettin’ really close…” Ryuji warned. “Tell me you are too!”

“I could’ve cum for you 10 minutes ago,” Akira said, his hands gripping Ryuji tighter as he increased the pace of his thrusting. “I want you to cum for me!” They came together, Ryuji firing shots of white all over Akira’s face and chest even as Akira filled him. Ryuji smiled down at him with that ridiculous post-coital smile he got, and Akira couldn’t help but return it, even as he reached
up to remove some of Ryuji’s cum from his hair.

“Man, this keeps happening to me…” Akira complained. “It’s so annoying to get out of hair…”

“You know you like it,” Ryuji said impishly. He made to get up, but pitched forward suddenly; his arm shot out and braced itself against Akira’s chest, knocking the wind out of him. “Hah! Sorry!” Ryuji said, his face reddening and his eyes turning away from Akira’s. “My knee’s feelin’ a little bit weird after bracin’ on it just now.” With considerable discomfort, he used his arms to push himself up off of Akira and roll over. “Could you…could you grab the towels and shit? Sorry…I feel like I gotta chill for a sec…”

“Yeah, yeah of course!” Akira sprang up to grab the usual cleanup materials. Then he turned around and put a hand on Ryuji’s shoulder. “Hey, don’t beat yourself up about this, ok? That was some of the best sex I’ve ever had…plus, my leg’s cramped up in that position before…it’s cool.”

“Right…” Ryuji met Akira’s eyes with some reluctance and what seemed like a somewhat forced smile. “Yeah. Thanks…hey, could you hurry on those towels? I feel kinda gross right now…”

“Yeah…yeah, of course…” Akira said again.

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“Yo, Akira! Sorry to ask this of you, but I’m going to need your help around here today!” Sojiro’s voice roused Akira from his sleep.

“Whazzat?” He lifted his head and looked around bleary eyed.

“I said, wake up and get down here, I’m going to need your help around the cafe today!” Sojiro responded. “Hurry up - I want you to finish your breakfast before we open.”

Fuck…Akira stretched and yawned, his eyes drifting over to his boyfriend as he snuffled a little in his sleep. He looked so peaceful and cute with his chest rising and falling slowly. Akira reached out to gently ruffle Ryuji’s hair. Ryuji’s hair…Ryuji…OH SHIT

“Wake up!” Akira put his hand on Ryuji’s side and shook him a little.

“Five more minutes…” Ryuji mumbled as he turned on his side so his back was facing Akira. Akira felt a twinge of guilt; Ryuji looked so adorable with his bedhead, his hair all matted up on one side.

“Wake up!” Akira gave him another shake. “Sojiro’s here!” he whispered urgently.

“Shit!” Ryuji came awake suddenly, his eyes as wild as his hair. "What do we do?"

"Sojiro wants me to help him out today. Maybe..." Akira's brow furrowed as he desperately tried to think of a solution. "Keep quiet up here, wait for him to go for a smoke and then I'll call you?"

“Yeah…yeah, ok,” Ryuji said, his wild eyes calming down slightly now that they had a plan.

“Akira, you up yet?” Sojiro’s voice sounded again from downstairs.

“I’m up, I’m up!”

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It felt like hours before Sojiro went outside for a smoke break, though in reality it was only about 45 minutes. Akira quickly fished out his phone and texted Ryuji to let him know the coast was clear.
Ryuji descended the steps like a stampeding rhino, only to skid to a halt and throw himself into one of the chairs facing the counter as Sojiro stepped back inside.

“So uh…where’s my soda at, Akira?” Ryuji bluffed, his voice a little higher in pitch than usual. “I’m dyin’ of thirst over here.”

Sojiro raised an eyebrow from the door. “Good morning, Ryuji, was it? You’re here awfully early. I didn’t see you come in.”

“Oh, well you know, it’s a Sunday, s’not much to do at home…” Ryuji waffled. A cold sweat was beginning to form on Akira’s forehead. Normally, he would’ve found Ryuji’s lack of ability to spin a lie endearing, but now…he wasn’t sure where Sojiro stood on gay relationships. Frankly, Akira didn’t have high hopes. Sojiro’s comment about how he didn’t keep guys’ numbers in his phone had struck him as a bad sign early on, and while he’d been doing his best to build his relationship with Sojiro by learning how to make coffee and curry from him, and helping around the cafe…they hadn’t talked about anything particularly substantial.

“Right…” Sojiro said. “I guess I must’ve just missed you.” He turned his head to Akira. “Well? Get him his soda.” He came in and reached under the counter to pull out a lighter. “I forgot I left this here,” he said before he exited the cafe again.

Ryuji heaved a huge sigh of relief as the door closed behind Sojiro with a cheerful jingle. “Phew…I thought we were goners for sure…”

“Yeah…” Try as he might, Akira couldn’t keep a note of apprehension from creeping into his voice. “What kind of soda you want?”

“Just a lemon-lime Ramune is fine,” Ryuji said. Once Akira got him his soda, Ryuji took a sip and looked at Akira with plaintive brown eyes. “Hey…you seem kinda worried…”

Akira nodded slightly. “I am, a little bit. Sojiro’s…kind of old school. I don’t know how he’d react if he knew about us…and I don’t need to be on thinner ice with him, you know. I feel like he’s starting to like me…but technically he could throw me out whenever.”

“Well, if he did you could always stay with me!” Ryuji offered, a little excitedly, Akira noted with a mix of pleasure and satisfaction.

“I don’t know…I wouldn’t want to impose on your mom. She’s got her hands full with you,” Akira teased. “But all seriousness…wouldn’t it be kinda weird tiptoeing around her so we could…you know…”

“Oh yeah…” Ryuji said, his face falling a little. So goddamn cute. “I didn’t think about that.” He leaned forward and sighed again heavily. “So…you’re gonna be working here all day, right?”

“Looks like…” Akira said without much enthusiasm.

When closing time finally rolled around, Akira finally let his shoulders drop down into a more comfortable slouch. The cafe had been quite a bit busier than usual for some reason, with not just regulars coming in but even a few new faces. Most of the new faces looked like the kind of tourists who liked to branch out from the beaten tourist paths and sample the “real” Tokyo, but one had been a native Japanese woman, probably in her early to mid 30s. She had carried herself with an air of confidence and authority, and wore a professional yet sleek suit despite it being summer. Oddly, she had just ordered a coffee, stared hard at Sojiro when he wasn’t looking, then at the Sayuri
“Hey, before we lock up, mind if we have a chat?” Sojiro said, breaking Akira’s train of thought. The look on his face was inscrutable.

Akira walked around the counter and sat down so he was facing Sojiro comfortably. “Not at all,” he replied in a tone of voice as neutral as Sojiro’s expression. “What’s up?”

“I’m just going to cut to the chase, talk to you man-to-man,” Sojiro said. “It’s about that ‘friend’ of yours, Ryuji.” Akira couldn’t help but feel that Sojiro had put the tiniest bit of emphasis on the word ‘friend,’ but he couldn’t quite place the meaning behind it, if there was one at all.

“What about him?” Akira asked. He managed to keep both his face and his voice from abnormality, but inside his stomach was churning like it was trying to digest that extra-spicy curry he’d first made in a disastrous attempt to improve upon Sojiro’s recipe.

“It’s come to my attention that he has something of a bad reputation at your school,” Sojiro said. “I’m not surprised, with how he dyes his hair like that and carries himself…but whatever. Looks aren’t everything. I’m worried that being…friends with him isn’t in your best interest.” In a moment, Akira’s dread turned to simmering anger. “It won’t look good on your record if he gets involved with something bad and you’re a known associate of his,” Sojiro warned. “I mean, this is a guy that punched a teacher, from what I’ve heard.”

Akira stood so quickly that he became a little lightheaded. “He punched that teacher because he was talking shit about his deadbeat drunkard dad!” he yelled. Sojiro was taken aback, but his surprise was quickly overtaken by an expression of irritability. Akira soldiered on anyway. “And that teacher was the one that was on the news a few months ago - he was physically abusing the boys on his team and sexually harassing the girls…he’s the reason Ryuji even has a limp! He’s the reason that Suzui tried to kill herself. He deserved a lot more than a punch…and Ryuji was the only person who was willing to even do something about that scumbag before he confessed!”

“That may be true, but it still doesn’t look good on you!” Sojiro said. “I’m not saying he didn’t have cause to punch him…but think about it. Best case scenario, Ryuji is a good kid…with a temper. Even though he was right this time…what about the next time someone pisses him off like that? His punch might’ve been justified…but his reputation is still shot. Do you see what I’m saying?”

Akira shook his head stubbornly, his skin tingling like he could feel every drop of sweat interacting with every pore. “It’s bullshit,” he said, his voice short and terse.

“Look, I get that you like him-“

“Like him? No, listen to me,” Akira said. He wasn’t yelling anymore, his voice wasn’t even clipped and angry. Instead, it was authoritative, confident - it was Joker’s voice. “I don’t just like him. I love Ryuji. Ryuji is one of the best guys I’ve ever met. When he sees something wrong with the world: he wants to fix it. When he sees a friend in trouble: he takes action. I’ve seen him literally step in front of a taxi for a friend he hadn’t even made yet. Sometimes he goes in without a plan - and that’s a liability, sometimes.” Akira leaned in close so that his nose and Sojiro’s were almost touching. “But don’t you dare imply that that’s stupid or weak. Don’t you fucking dare.”

All the fight seemed to go out of Sojiro at once, like air leaving a balloon with a hole in it. “I…I can see I’m not going to change your mind on this. Your funeral,” Sojiro said. “When you’ve lived in this country for as long as I have, you learn that the nail that sticks up gets hammered down…but maybe that’s something you have to learn for yourself.” He got out from behind the counter and headed for the exit, but stopped with his hand on the door handle. “You love him?” Sojiro paused.
“From the sound of it, I’m guessing you mean that in a ‘more than a friend’ kind of way.”

“Yeah,” Akira said. “Unapologetically.”

“Well… I can’t say I get it. Doesn’t seem right to me, two guys. But that just leaves more women for the rest of us, I suppose. Sheesh…” Sojiro pressed down on the door handle but didn’t push out. “I’m not going to kick you out. I think your heart’s in the right place. I really do. Just… don’t get caught up in anything stupid, ok? And try to keep your friends and…and Ryuji out of that stuff too.”

The door closed behind Sojiro and the cafe was quiet again. Akira got up to lock the door behind Sojiro, and when he turned around he saw Morgana looking at him from the bottom of the stairs. “I’m sorry if we woke you,” Akira said, suddenly feeling as drained as if he’d spent the day in Mementos.

“No, that was pretty juicy,” Morgana said lightheartedly as Akira went to shut off the lights for the downstairs area. They climbed the stairs up to Akira’s room together. “So, you going to tell Ryuji you love him? Or should I do it?”

“Don’t you dare,” Akira said, forcing himself to laugh at Morgana’s attempt to cut the tension. “I’ll do it.”

“Oooooo…” Morgana said childishly. “Akira loves Ryuji, Akira loves Ryuji. Akira loves—” Morgana was cut off as Akira aimed a light kick in his direction, which he nimbly dodged. “Wow, rude! And animal abuse!” Morgana said. “But seriously…” he hopped up to join Akira on the bed. “I hope I get to be there when you tell him. I can just see the look on his face…he loves you too, I think.”

Akira smiled. “Yeah, I think so too.”

Chapter End Notes

Sojiro's growth as a character is one of my favorite parts of Persona 5, and I'm hoping to explore that more in this fic, especially as it relates to some of the admittedly douchy heteronormative shit he says in-game. Hope you all enjoy, and as always, comments are always welcome :)
Signs of Love

Chapter Summary

Akira confesses his love to Ryuji, the gang goes to the fireworks festival, and a new potential conflict raises its head.

Chapter Notes

Sorry for the late update. Had crazy writer's block all week and managed to hammer this out just now. For the last bit, I experimented with writing it in a play-type format, which I think I like for the non-smut parts of this fic. We'll see how it goes.

Also, I know the title is a P4 reference. Sue me.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

It was 7 in the morning on a cool summer day in Inokashira Park. Two athletic figures ran next to each other along the mostly empty park paths. Akira ran a few steps behind Ryuji whenever they trained together. He liked to joke it was because watching Ryuji’s butt was a good motivator, but in reality it was really just that Ryuji was faster. Their run ended, as it always did, by the big willow tree near the eastern side of the pond.

Akira couldn’t help but admire the way Ryuji looked after a good workout. Sure, his muscles seemed tighter, and the sheen of sweat over his skin gave him a masculine aura that Akira found very attractive. But it was the flushed pink of Ryuji’s cheeks and the tired but satisfied gleam in his eyes that Akira found most appealing. Ryuji lifted his shirt to wipe the sweat from his brow, and Akira couldn’t help but gawk at the ridges of his toned stomach. Ryuji blushed as he lowered his shirt and caught Akira staring at him. “Quit it…” he said, giving Akira a playful shove. “You’re makin’ me self-conscious.”

“You have zero reason to be self-conscious,” Akira said with total honesty.

Ryuji shook his head but smiled. “Seems like just you and maybe Mishima think that, but I’ll take it.” He sat back against the tree and put his head to rest on the bark. “Today was a good day…I feel like we really pushed ourselves.”

“No kidding,” Akira said as he took a seat next to him. “You almost left me on that last hill.” He gave Ryuji a light nudge with his shoulder.

“Sorry…” Ryuji said, his face creasing in rueful apology. “I get caught up in it and-”

“I’m just joking,” Akira chuckled. “That’s something I like about you. You push me…no, you inspire me to be better than I am.” He gave Ryuji a cocky smile. “Scratch that, better than I already am.”

Ryuji rolled his eyes. “Ok, Joker.” He’d started calling Akira that whenever he felt that he’d gotten a
“Hey Ryuji?” Akira made deliberate eye contact with him, staring into the other boy’s warm brown eyes. “Can I tell you something?”

“It’s not gonna be bad, is it?” Ryuji asked, his tone and face light. “I don’t wanna ruin this runner’s high I got goin’.”

“No, it’s not bad…” Akira leaned into Ryuji, going so far as to rest his head on Ryuji’s shoulder so Ryuji was looking down at him to maintain eye contact. “So uh…Sojiro knows about us. He kind of…confronted me last night.”

Ryuji’s eyes went wide. “Is everythin’ ok?”

“Yeah…he was ok about it once I explained things to him,” Akira said evasively. “But the whole thing made me realize something that I have to tell you.”

“That wasn’t it?” Ryuji asked. “My heart’s still racin’ dude!”

Akira chuckled as he snuggled deeper into Ryuji’s shoulder. Ryuji responded by giving him a light kiss on top of his sweaty head. “I just wanted to say…I love you.” Ryuji’s face turned pink again, and his eyebrows came together as his brain shortcircuited as it tried to think of a response. “I mean…I love every second we spend together. When I think about you, I can’t help but smile. I trust you more than I trust anyone else in the world…and I admire you more than anyone else in the world.”

“Akira…” Ryuji’s voice shook a little. “Really? I mean…why? I…love you too…but like…it’s so obvious why I would…I guess it’s all the same shit you just said. But I-”

Akira pressed his lips to Ryuji’s suddenly, cutting him off, kissing him urgently until Ryuji relaxed into it, until his heart stopped racing. At that point, Akira broke the kiss off and met Ryuji’s eyes again. “I kind of wish you’d been there…not to say anything, but just to hear what I said about you.”

“W-what’d you say?” Ryuji asked. His voice was almost plaintive in tone.

“Just that I love you. That I admire you…because you’re the kind of guy who takes action when he sees something wrong with the world. When we were going after Kamoshida at first, you were all about finding witnesses to nail him. When we went after Kaneshiro, you stepped in front of a taxi for someone you barely even knew. And you do all these things without even thinking about it…” Akira put a hand on Ryuji’s chest, finding comfort in the steady heartbeat he could feel through the thin fabric of his shirt. “Your heart’s in the right place. That’s the best thing about you.”

Ryuji’s face turned a deeper shade of pink. “Dude, that sounded like a speech out of a romance movie…but thanks…I’m sorry I don’t know how to say how I feel about you so good. You’re just…there. I know I can count on you. You’re my best bud and my boyfriend - and I still can’t believe how lucky I am that I can even say that…”

“Hey…don’t overthink it.” Akira took Ryuji’s chin in his hand, and their lips met again for a long, passionate kiss. They kissed until the heat of their bodies and the sweatiness of their skin made it almost gross to keep going.

———

Akira, Ryuji, Yusuke and Mishima stood waiting for the girls at Shibuya station. Yusuke and Mishima both wore yukata: Yusuke’s was a midnight blue that was almost black, Mishima’s a
slightly lighter shade that brought out the blue highlights in his hair. Ryuji and Akira looked about the same as usual, except Akira was missing his glasses.

“It’s soooo hootttt…” Ryuji complained as they waited.

“I feel like I’m being baked…” Morgana agreed. Akira wiped sweat from his forehead as he nodded in agreement. He was definitely regretting not buying a yukata for the occasion - both Yusuke and Mishima did not appear to be suffering too badly in the heat.

“Those girls are way too late…” Ryuji

“They must be taking a while with their yukata,” Mishima said.

“Why aren’t you two wearing one?” Yusuke asked.

“I don’t got clothes like yukata,” Ryuji grumbled. He looked both Mishima and Yusuke up and down. “But damn, Yusuke, you look way too normal wearing that.”

“People often say that to me,” Yusuke said.

“It’s a little uncomfortable for me,” Mishima admitted. “I mean, it’s kinda nice cause it’s so hot right now…but I’m like super paranoid that my obi sash is going to come undone somehow and everyone’s going to see me in my underwear…”

The others stared at him for a few long moments. “You know you can wear clothes under the yukata, right?” Akira asked.

“Yeah…but it’s so hot,” Mishima said. “Isn’t the whole point of yukata that they’re cool to wear in the hot weather? Yusuke, are you wearing clothes under all that?”

“Just my regular undergarments,” Yusuke responded. “And I have applied antiperspirant to prevent damage to the fabric.”

“Why d’you have a yukata in the first place, Mishima?” Ryuji asked. “You don’t seem like the type. No offense.”

Mishima shook his head and chuckled. “No, it’s ok. I think I look weird in one anyway. My dad works for Okumura foods and one time there was an office-family summer party or whatever and it was required dress. So I had to wear one. This is only the second time I’ve worn this, to be honest.” He blushed pink. “I needed my mom’s help getting the sash on so it’d stay closed. So nobody pull on it!”

“But what if we want to see you in your underwear?” Akira asked in his trademark deadpan tone of voice.

Mishima’s face turned beet red even as a smirk tugged at Akira’s lips. “Sh-shut up…n-nobody wants to see that…”

“Ah, by the way, the exams…” Ryuji said. “How’d you think it went?”

“I bet you got a big fat F on them,” Morgana teased.

“Shuddup! We - we don’t know that yet!” Ryuji said, though a hint of desperation was apparent in his voice.

At that moment, a pair of young women also in yukata approached the group. “Hey, are you guys
going to the fireworks festival?” One of them asked. “Want to come along with us?”

Ryuji’s eyes grew wide. “A-are they hittin’ on us?”

Akira elbowed him in the ribs. “Don’t say that. It makes you sound insecure,” he whispered.

“Are you a model? You look really good in that yukata,” the other woman said to Yusuke.

“That’s enough…” Yusuke said. “My friends and I aren’t interested. You are disgracing your yukata. You should be more aware of your womanhood. Perhaps your bows should be in the front?”

(a woman who wears a yukata with a bow in the front, if wikipedia is to be believed, is traditionally considered a whore)

The two women exchanged glances, then promptly turned on their heels in a huff and walked away.

“Dude…” Ryuji sounded disappointed. “I mean…not like it was gonna go anywhere, but that’s like, the closest I’ve ever gotten to bein’ hit on by a girl…”

“I believe they were more interested in myself and Mishima,” Yusuke said. “And neither of us are interested.”

“If you’re so disappointed, why don’t you go after them then?” Ann and Makoto joined the group, looking beautiful in their brightly colored yukata.

“So, those are the kinds of girls you like, Ryuji,” Makoto said. “I have to say, your taste in men is better.”

“Thank you,” Akira said as Ryuji spluttered incoherently.

“…You know, Yusuke’s such a pretty boy, but he is really missing out because of what he says,” Ann said.

“I guess, but he’s more likable since he stays true to his ideals. Definitely more than someone I know,” Makoto said with a pointed glance at Ryuji.

“I heard that Ryuji’s pretty much failed his exams,” Morgana chimed in.

“Oh?” Makoto’s voice was dangerous. Queen-like, even.

“Mona, you little -” Ryuji began, his eyebrows coming together angrily.

“It’s going to get crowded if we don’t get going,” Mishima interrupted. “We should go.” He put a hand on Ryuji’s shoulder awkwardly. “It’s ok! I’m sure you passed, we spent a lot of time studying so…” He lowered his voice a little. “I’m not sure I would’ve turned those girls down if they’d been cute guys…so don’t feel bad about it Ryuji.”

“I wasn’t even gonna do anythin’!” Ryuji protested as the group began to leave. “But damn, you all look amazin’ in yukata! Talk about Japanese beauty…”

“Man, I can’t believe it rained…” Ryuji complained as they crowded into the convenience store.

“My feet hurt… it’s cold…the festival’s been canceled…this sucks…” Ann complained. “But at least you all aren’t eye-banging my legs anymore…I should hang out with Mishima more.”
Mishima giggled as the rest of the group coughed uncomfortably. “So, what should we do now? It feels kind of lame to let the night end this way…” he said.

“If you guys don’t mind coming to Yongen-Jaya, we could hang out at Leblanc,” Akira suggested. “I could make us some coffee and curry to warm us up a bit.”

“That does sound good.” Makoto admitted. “I’ve had Sojiro’s coffee but I haven’t tried the curry yet. If you’re sure it’s not too much trouble, I’d love to go.”

“Of course it’s not,” Akira said. “You deserve something close to a real welcoming party. A rained out fireworks festival isn’t exactly good enough for a Queen.”

———

The smell of curry fills the air at Leblanc. All the Phantom Thieves save Akira are seated at the middle booth.

Makoto: “That smells amazing…I didn’t realize how hungry I was.”

Ryuji: “Oh mannn, it’s the fuckin’ best!”

Ann: “Akira really is the whole package, isn’t he? Good looking, knows how to cook, leader of the Phantom Thieves…”

Morgana (innocently): “Yeah, what do you bring to the table, Ryuji?”

Ryuji begins to rise up, his face angry and ready to throw down.

Akira (behind the counter): “A strong sense of justice. And also, an amazing ass.”

Morgana: “Gross. I’m sorry I brought it up.”

Akira: “I’m not. I could talk about how great Ryuji’s ass is all night. I mean, c’mon guys. I can’t be the only one.”

Yusuke: “It is remarkably well-muscled. His Thief outfit leaves very little to the imagination in that department.”

Ann (to Makoto): “See? It’s all dicks and asses with these guys. I guess I should count myself lucky that they don’t talk about my boobs. At least not to my face.” Ann sticks her tongue out at Ryuji and Akira.

Ryuji: “What’re you stickin’ your tongue out at me for?! I didn’t even bring it up!”

Makoto: “That’s a fair point. But it would be a bit arrogant of you to pile onto the ‘Ryuji has a great ass’ train.”

Ann (shaking her head): “Oh no, you too?”

Ryuji: “What train?!”

Makoto: “Well, Yusuke and Akira are on it. And Mishima too, probably. He’s just too polite to say so. Maybe even Ann. ‘The lady doth protest too much, methinks.’”

(Mishima turns bright red, and Ann does a spit take all over Ryuji.)
Ryuji: “Oh *come* on!”

Ann: “Seriously…we’ve been friends since we were like, 7. He’s like a brother to me. A pervy brother.”

Ryuji: “That’s so unfair…Akira and Yusuke were checkin’ out your legs too and you’re not yellin’ at them…or spittin’ coffee all over them either.”

Akira: “You can change into one of my shirts if you want.”

Ryuji (*sarcastically*): “Oh boy, a white, gray, or black v-neck, how will I decide?”

Akira: “I go with what works.”

Ryuji: “Even Mishima wears more color than you. Even if that color is just green.”

Mishima: “Hey! … What’s wrong with green?”

Ryuji: “Nothin’!” (*He gets up and goes upstairs, comes down shortly after with a white v-neck, a gray one, and a black one. He’s also shirtless. Akira does a wolf-whistle and Mishima turns red again. Ann shakes her head with exasperation.*) “So? Which one do you think?”

Akira: “Actually, I’m not sure you need a shirt.”

Ann: “Ugh, flirt with him on your own time!”

Akira (*laughing*): “Ok ok. Any of them, really. Like you said, it’s not really a choice.”

(*Ryuji slips into the white one. Akira brings over plates of curry and rice for everyone.*)

Akira: “Order up!”

Makoto: “That smells delicious!”

Morgana: “It’s going to be the first thing I eat when I’m human again…”

(*The Thieves dig in to the food like starving people, clearing their plates in very short order. Afterwards, Mishima’s phone buzzes and he looks at it reflexively.*)

Mishima: “Hey, you guys got tweeted by @Kouzeon! You’re Twitter famous!”

Yusuke: “What?”

Mishima: “Oh, it’s the Twitter account of that idol, Risette! Here, see?”

(*Mishima shows the Thieves his phone. A picture of Akira and Ryuji kissing at the park is the subject of the tweet, with a caption that says, ‘A kiss after a hard workout. #bestmotivation #relationshipgoals’*)

Mishima: “Her music is good, but I also just follow her because she’s really supportive about gay stuff.”

Ryuji: “Uh…did she just out me and Akira to the whole freakin’ school?!”

(*Everyone gets that exclamation point over their heads*)

Mishima: “Oh shit, I didn’t even think of that! I bet she just saw you guys being all open about it in
the park and figured you were out…”

Makoto: “Well, if anyone gives you crap about it, just let me know. I’ll do everything I can to make sure the school doesn’t just sweep it under the rug.”

Ryuji: “Thanks Makoto…”

(The rest of the evening is somewhat subdued. Eventually, the only people left in Leblanc are Akira and Ryuji).

Akira (putting his arm around Ryuji): “Are you ok?”

Ryuji: “No… I’m… actually kinda scared… which is ridiculous. We’ve risked our lives so many freakin’ times already. And it’s not like I gotta reputation at school to protect…”

Akira (gives Ryuji a gentle kiss): “It’ll be ok… I promise. And not just me - everyone except Yusuke is going to have your back at school.”

Ryuji: “You’re so calm about this… were you out at your old school?”

Akira: “Yeah… Daisuke and I were basically like you and me - eventually we just couldn’t not be affectionate with each other in public. Maybe that was dumb… that’s how his parents found out about us.”

Ryuji: “What about at school? What did people say?”

Akira: “It was ok… I’m lucky I lived in Okina City, at least. People in the city tend to care less about this kind of stuff. Daisuke had it worse. He went to a high school in this little country town not far from the city, but he told me that he was all anyone talked about. And then… he just disappeared when his parents moved. They… they didn’t even let us say goodbye to each other.”

Ryuji: “That sucks man…” (He looks at Akira with a concerned expression) “You don’t… still have feelings for him, do you?”

Akira: “I… honestly, I wish that we’d been given the chance to have closure. And because of that, sure, there’s always going to be a small part of me that wonders what might’ve been. But Ryuji… I’m with you.” (Akira tilts Ryuji’s chin up so they’re looking each other in the eye). “I promise. I will always choose you.”

Ryuji (letting his head fall into the crook of Akira’s neck): “That’s good enough for me. Umm… I know we have school tomorrow, but… is it ok if I stay the night?”

Akira (nuzzling Ryuji’s hair): “The answer to that is always going to be ‘yes.’ C’mon.”

Chapter End Notes

For some reason, the thought of Mishima in a yukata really got me going, and I’m super sad I couldn’t fit some smut into this chapter. Maybe I’ll write a standalone smut about that after I’m done with all of this…
Anyways, as always, comments and suggestions are welcome!
Consequences

Chapter Summary

Consequences of Risette’s tweet

Chapter Notes

It’s brief, but there is tw: violence, tw: homophobic slurs in this chapter.

Also there’s marijuana use, so, you’ve been warned.

Akira and Ryuji stand together on the train platform. A few other Shujin students are in the background. They appear to be surreptitiously looking at the pair of them and whispering to each other. Ryuji looks uncomfortable; Akira looks a little pissed.

Ryuji: “Maybe it wasn’t a good idea to come in together today…”

Akira: “…fuck ‘em.” Akira’s facial expression softens. “But hey…if you want to split up, we can do that. I just think they’re going to gossip about us anyway. Might as well be together for it.”

Ryuji: “Yeah, you’re right…fuck…I never thought I’d miss bein’ ignored…”

Akira: “We’ve got bigger stuff to worry about anyway. You saw that message Mishima sent to us last night. This Medjed…I’ve read a book about them. They’re serious hackers…”

Ryuji (face going from apprehensive to determined): “Right…how do we even go after them? Medjed can’t be anyone’s real name…”

Akira (noodling): “And Mishima would’ve been more forthcoming if he knew anything we could act on…maybe he has some Internet contacts he could ask?”

Ryuji grunts in affirmation. The train arrives at Aoyama-Itchome.

Ryuji (looking at Akira): “Well…I guess we gotta face the music, right?”

Akira: “We don’t have anything to be ashamed of. Don’t let them get to you.”

Ryuji: “Ha! Captain Kidd is tellin’ me that I should ‘blow away’ anyone that steps to us. Kinda makes me wish I could go all ‘Skull’ in the real world.”

Akira (smiling flirtatiously): “I wouldn’t say ‘no’ to seeing you in that outfit outside of the Metaverse.”

Ryuji shoves Akira playfully, then squeezes his hand briefly.
Ryuji: “Yeah yeah! Come on…we’re gonna be late!

———

Mishima walking through the halls of Shujin after school, on his way to the hideout to discuss the mysterious Ali Baba text that Akira received earlier in the day. He pauses when he hears the sound of raised voices down the hallway to his right. One of them sounds familiar…

He turns down the hallway, locating the sound behind a janitorial closet. Tugging it open, Mishima sees Ryuji surrounded by three other Shujin boys. Ryuji’s lip is split and the left shoulder of his jacket is torn. The other boys turn to see the intruder, revealing them to be members of the former track team. Ryuji is staring defiantly back at their leader, Nakaoka, who’s grasping the front of Ryuji’s shirt roughly.

Mishima: “What’s going on here?”

Ryuji: “The hell’s it look like? I ain’t exactly doin’ this shit to myself…”

Nakaoka: “This has nothing to do with you, Mishima. Just get the hell out of here. This is track team business.”

Ryuji: “Really? Kinda felt like the boxing club to me…”

Other boy: “Shut up, faggot!”

He hits Ryuji in the stomach, causing him to double over. Ryuji makes no attempt to block the blow. Is there a reason he won’t fight back? Maybe he’s afraid he’ll get the blame…

Ryuji: “You call that a punch…? I’ve been hit harder by Ann…”

Mishima: “C-cut it out…this isn’t right…”

Nakaoka: “What the hell would you know? You were Kamoshida’s guy until the dude freaking confessed. It’s your fault that Suzui girl tried to kill herself.”

Mishima (wincing): “…yeah. But…that doesn’t mean I can’t be better now. And I’m telling you guys to stop.”

Mishima stands up straighter even as the other boys step closer to him.

Nakaoka: “Yeah? And what’re you going to do about it?”

Mishima (pulling out his phone): “I’ve been recording this the whole time and uploading it to the cloud. If you keep going I’ll give the footage to the police and have you all arrested. It’ll be hard to get into university with that kind of mark on your record, won’t it?”

The other boys look at each other nervously while Nakaoka looks livid.

Nakaoka: “…Fine. Fucking fag lover.”

He and the other boys push past Mishima. Mishima runs to Ryuji, who’s collapsed to the floor and is touching his lip and examining the bit of blood on his fingertips.

Mishima: “Are you ok?”

Ryuji: “Hurts to stand a little, but I’ll be fine. I’ve gotten worse from Shadows. And their punches
ain’t got shit on Kamoshida’s.”

*Ryuji struggles to stand, but ends up falling on his butt again.*

Ryuji: “Shit…can’t put too much weight on this yet…”

*Mishima pulls out his phone and texts Akira what’s happened.*

Ryuji: “What’re you doing?”

Mishima: “Texting Akira what just happened.”

Ryuji: “Geez, why’d you do that…he’s gonna freak out over nothin’.” *Ryuji heaves a sigh.* “Well… s’what it is, I guess. Help me stand up, would ya?”

*Mishima helps Ryu to his feet, with Ryuji leaning heavily on him. As they exit the closet, they run into a teacher.*

Kawakami: “Oh my god, Sakamoto-kun, are you alright?”

Ryuji: “‘m fine…just my leg actin’ up is all.”

Kawakami (*her face darkening*): “Don’t bullshit me Sakamoto, I can see your lip is split and your jacket is torn. Who did this to you?”

Ryuji: “Not gonna say.”

Mishima: “Really? Why not?”

Ryuji: “They ain’t gonna learn anythin’ if they just get expelled or whatever…they’ll just blame it on me bein’ too much of a wuss to deal with them on my own.”

Kawakami: “That’s ridiculous. School is a place where you should be safe.”

Ryuji (*snorting*): “That wasn’t true when Kamoshida was here…”

Kawakami (*biting her lip*): “Sakamoto-kun…”

*At that moment, Akira runs up, his face tight with concern. Morgana can be seen poking his head out of his bag, quickly hiding when Kawakami turns to regard them.*

Akira: “Ryuji, are you ok?!”

Ryuji: “Just need to rest for a bit. It’s my leg.”

*Akira and Kawakami both wear the exact same ‘stop bullshitting me’ face.*

Kawakami: “He won’t tell me either.”

Akira: “…well, whatever. We should get you home.”

Ryuji: “Fuck, home’s far away.”

Kawakami: “Language, Sakamoto!”

Ryuji: “For real, sensei!?”
Mishima: “My place is pretty close. We could take him there until he feels better…?”

Ryuji: “Oh yeah…sounds good. See ya Kawakami-sensei.”

Kawakami: “I really think you should-!”

_The Thieves leave Kawakami standing there with a worried expression on her face, but she makes no move to stop them._

Mishima watched Ryuji lie back on his bed, wincing with him as Akira helped Ryuji gingerly lift his leg up. Ryuji collapsed backward and let out a sigh. "Fuck...sorry, Akira. I don't think I'm gonna make the meeting today." He gave a halfhearted grin which quickly turned into a grimace as he was reminded of his split lip.

"Medjed can wait," Akira said. "Are you sure you're ok? I could see if Takemi-san could make a house call..."

"It's fine, really," Ryuji said. "I've been in a fight before. Just usually hit back."

"Why didn't you?" Morgana asked.

"S'better if I hit his Shadow, isn't it?" Ryuji massaged his leg and grimaced again.

Mishima fell into his desk chair. His body felt like it had been drained of blood, his skin clammy and cold. His breath left his lungs in short bursts, and his hands trembled against his thighs as he tried to settle them in his laps. Something about what had just happened had seemed more real than when they fought Shadows in the Metaverse. Or maybe it was just that if they got hurt in the Metaverse, Morgana, Ann, Makoto, and even Akira on occasion could all patch up everyone with a Mediarama spell.

“You ok, Mishima?” Ryuji’s voice broke his reverie. “You’re lookin’ kind of pale…”

“They didn’t hit you too, did they?” Akira asked.

“N-no…” Mishima said, his face turning red with embarrassment. “I’m just freaking out a little… somehow this seems more…real and dangerous than the Metaverse does. I’m being stupid.” He hadn’t felt this anxious in some time. Not since Kamoshida, really. Mishima looked between Akira and Ryuji; their faces were slightly concerned, and Mishima felt tendrils of guilt and shame creep through his chest. What right did he have to feel this way? He wasn’t even the one who’d gotten hit…they didn’t even know he was queer too…

“I’m s-sorry…you’re the one that got punched and I’m the one losing it…” Mishima covered his face with his hands.

“Can I get you something?” Akira asked. “A glass of water?”

“I…there’s some Tupperware under my bed…can you grab it for me?” Mishima asked.

“…sure,” Akira said, and crouched down to retrieve the Tupperware, handing it over to Mishima with a dubious expression on his face.

Mishima took the container from him and set it in his lap. He hesitated for a moment before cracking it open, and a vaguely skunky smell immediately filled their nostrils.
“What the heck’s in there?!” Morgana asked as his nose crinkled.

“Mishima! Wow, really?” Akira asked. His tone was surprised but lacked judgment.

Mishima nodded a little bashfully. “Yeah…back before…before the Phantom Thieves…I used to get…just crazy anxious. Like just now…Takeshi on the volleyball team suggested I try this…maybe it’s just the deep breathing, but it helped calm me down, make me forget about whatever Kamoshida did that day…”

Mishima removed a small square of paper from the container and began rolling the joint on his desk. He noticed with some satisfaction that Ryuji was watching with undisguised fascination. Mishima was having some trouble rolling it with his hands trembling as they were, however. After a couple failed attempts, Akira got up from the bed and walked over to the desk.

“Do you want me to roll it for you?” he asked.

“Y-yeah. If…if you can, please.” Mishima turned his face away.

Akira wordlessly rolled the joint, his nimble fingers tightly wrapping the paper around its payload. Once finished, he handed it over to Mishima, who produced a lighter and a toilet-paper-wrapped toilet paper roll from the box as well.

“Is that…what I think it is?” Ryuji asked.

“Depends,” Akira said, a smile tugging at the corners of his lips. “What do you think it is?”

Ryuji’s voice lowered to almost a whisper. “You know…weed.”

Akira nodded.

“Man…both of you guys smoke and I’m the one with the reputation as a delinquent…the world ain’t fair,” Ryuji complained jokingly.

“I haven’t for ages,” Akira said. “But…for a while after my arrest…I thought, why not lean into the criminal label?” He blushed, and Mishima felt a surge of affection for him. “Kind of a dumb reason.”

Mishima lifted the joint to his face and placed it expertly between his lips. He lit it, then breathed in deeply. Starting the neglected routine had an immediate effect on him; his hands stopped trembling, and he felt himself finally start to come down and relax. He breathed the smoke back out into the toilet paper roll. Mishima took a second hit, then offered the joint and roll to Akira.

Akira hesitated, then turned to Ryuji. “Do you mind?” he asked.

“I’m kinda curious myself,” Ryuji admitted. “Yeah, go on. I’m uh… I’m cool with it.”

Akira took the joint from Mishima - the brush of his fingertips sent an electric thrill up his spine, and Mishima felt his face grow flushed again. Akira didn’t seem to notice; he took the joint, took two hits as Mishima had, and then looked over at Ryuji again. “Did you want to try?”

Ryuji reached for the joint and roll, turning them over in his hands. “So, what do I do? Just breathe in?”

Akira nodded. “Just breathe in gently, you don’t need to suck on it. Try to hold the smoke inside you for a bit, then breathe out. It’s ok if you feel like you need to cough.”

Ryuji put the joint between his lips and breathed in. Mishima watched the end of it glow red, then
laughed as Ryuji held the smoke for a second, his face contorted in concentration and a little discomfort, before releasing the smoke with a few loud coughs. “It smells kinda weird,” Ryuji said. “…should I be feelin’ anythin’? I don’t feel any different.”

“It might take a little time,” Mishima said. “And a few more hits.”

“Ugh, I’ll keep watch outside,” Morgana said. “That smell is awful!”

With the joint smoked, Mishima is sprawled backward on his chair, a sloppy grin plastered across his face as he watches Akira clumsily return the Tupperware container to its spot under his bed.

Mishima: “Not so smooth now, huh leader?”

Akira: “I’m smooth when it counts.” He bumps his butt up on Mishima’s shoulder, causing Ryuji to erupt into laughter from his seated position on the bed, and Mishima’s cheeks to turn red again.

Akira saunters over to the bed; Mishima can’t help but watch him. Even the way he walks is confident. He commands attention, and Mishima is more than happy to comply. After all, when he has a reason to watch Akira, it means he can appreciate how soft his hair look, his subtle musculature, the self-assured way in which he does, well, everything. Akira reaches up to brush a stray hair from Ryuji’s forehead, then leans in close to Ryuji’s ear and says something Mishima can’t make out.

Ryuji: “Mhmm…Thanks Mishima…my leg doesn’t even hurt at all anymore. And I feel so…fuckin’ calm. Man, I can see why Americans do this all the time…”

Akira: “Yeah, thanks. Who knows what might’ve happened if we’d stuck around? Kawakami might’ve kept pushing…”

Mishima (blushing): “It’s nothing…I would’ve kept walking just a few months ago…I…would’ve been scared they’d go after me. But you guys have shown me a different way to be…so in the end, it’s all you.”

Ryuji: “Nahhhh that’s bullshit…I’m glad you showed up. Really.”

Mishima: “Me too…I guess I still kind of doubted that I could be Robin in the real world too.” He grins at both of them. “Thanks to you, I know I can.”

Akira: “Maybe we gave you a nudge, but the rest is all you.”

Mishima: “…well…thanks for giving me that nudge.”

The three Thieves lie back on Mishima’s bed, relaxed, but sober.

Akira: “So…who was it?”

Ryuji: “What?”

Akira: “You know…who hit you?”

Ryuji: “Oh…Nakaoka, from the track team. And a coupla other guys on the team too…”
Akira: “Right…I remember him.”

Ryuji: “Yeah…he wasn’t all that fast when the track team was still official…but he always tried hard. I don’t think…deep down, now, he’s a bad guy…”

Akira: “You said before it’d be better to hit his Shadow…you guys up for a quick Mementos visit tonight? Just the four of us, I mean.”

Ryuji: “…"

Ryuji: “Yeah…yeah I can go.”

Mishima (nodding): “Definitely. We have enough to worry about without people at school coming after either of you…”

Akira: “All right then. Let’s go.”

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Nakaoka’s Shadow stands in front of them, his gleaming yellow eyes watching them warily as they approach.

Nakaoka: “Who the hell are you weird-looking nut jobs…? Oh I get it…you’re the Phantom Thieves, aren’t you?”

Nakaoka’s Shadow takes a step backward.

Nakaoka: “I’m not a bad guy…why’re you guys here?”

Akira: “Skull, your call. How do you want to handle this?”

Ryuji hesitates, then reaches up and removes his mask. He points at his cut lip.

Ryuji: “Does a good guy do somethin’ like this?”

Nakaoka: “…I…that doesn’t count.”

Ryuji: “Why the eff does this not count?!”

Nakaoka (venomously): “Because…because I hate you! You ruined everything for me…! All because you couldn’t keep your temper under control! If that’s the way the real world works - then fine! I’m going to take my temper out on you!”

Nakaoka’s Shadow is enveloped in black before it transforms into the Oni Shadow, a muscular red skinned behemoth.

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Nakaoka’s Shadow stands defeated.

Ryuji: “I gotta say, felt really good gettin’ a few of my own hits in.”

Nakaoka: “…so what now? Is this…it for me?”

Ryuji: “What?! ‘Course not…”

Nakaoka: “Then what makes you think I’m gonna quit taking shit out on you? You beating the shit
“out of me here doesn’t make me hate you any less…”

Ryuji: “…uh…Mona? Any thoughts?”

Morgana: “I don’t know…but if we’re not careful…his desires will get too distorted and he’ll form a Palace…or worse, he might keep fighting us and get himself killed.”

Mishima (hesitantly): “Nakaoka…why do you really hate Ryuji?”

Nakaoka: “Why do you think? He…he ruined my chance at a track scholarship…”

Mishima: “From what I’ve heard, that doesn’t sound right…you were middle of the pack, weren’t you?”

Nakaoka (bristling): “What the hell did you just say to me?!”

Mishima (removing his mask): “I’m not trying to hurt you, Nakaoka. I think…I think we’re the same. In this way, anyway.”

Nakaoka: “What the hell do we have in common, Mishima? You weren’t exactly the star of the volleyball team…”

Mishima: “It’s not that…I think you’re like me…because you like someone that won’t like you back. Not the way you want.”

Nakaoka: “That’s…just what are you implying?”

Mishima: “You know…that you don’t really hate Ryuji…you like him so much that you hate him for it. You’ve been taught that it’s wrong to feel that way. So you feel guilty about it…and now that he’s with someone…you’re lashing out because you don’t know what else to do. You think you hate him, but you’re just making up excuses to keep yourself from acknowledging your *real* feelings for him.”

Nakaoka: “That’s…!”

The Shadow’s shoulders slump in emotional defeat.

Nakaoka (starting to cry): “You’re right…you’re right. I always liked him…he was the fastest in our year. When he was running, it was like he was flying. He was carrying all of us forward. But I told myself that it was just because we were on the same team. It was camaraderie…but then he got kicked out, and the team broke up. And I…still thought he looked like he was flying.”

Nakaoka (to Ryuji): “I’m so sorry…you’re right. I’ve been a horrible person…I’m going to…I’m going to apologize to you in real life. I’m going to make sure that none of the other track guys gives you any shit. And…I’m going to come clean to myself. Thank you.”

Nakaoka’s Shadow shimmers away, and Akira retrieves the trinket it leaves behind.

Akira: “…that was intense. Are you ok?”

Ryuji: “Yeah…I never even realized he felt that way…I feel…weird.”

Akira: “Me too. The way he described watching you run…that’s how I feel.”

Ryuji: “That’s so sappy.” Ryuji claps Akira on the shoulder. “I love it though, keep tellin’ me how great I am.”
Morgana: “Gross.” *Morgana looks up at Mishima.* “Robin? You holding up?”

Mishima: “Yeah…I’m a little embarrassed. But I’m fine, don’t worry. It’s not like we didn’t all already know all my dirty laundry. Nothing a little late night diner food won’t fix, if you guys want. I’ll treat.”

Ryuji: “Damn, Robin’s actin’ like a real senpai! Looks like he’s gunnin’ for the leadership position Joker!”

Akira: “Fine with me, management doesn’t pay as much as you’d think.”

Morgana: “That’s why he has to wear that dumb apron at the flower shop. You guys have to see him in it, it’s hilarious.”

Akira: “You’re just jealous you can’t pull off a flowery apron like I can.”

Chapter End Notes

Originally, I imagined ending this chapter with Mishima finally joining the OT3 but something about just having them fuck after smoking didn’t sit right with me, so I scrapped the smut which I’d started to write in favor of what it is now. Hope you all still enjoy :D
Chapter Summary

The boys chat at the diner, and Nakaoka apologizes to Ryuji

Akira, Ryuji, Morgana, and Mishima sit at a booth at the diner on Central Street. Ryuji and Mishima occupy one side of the booth while Akira and Morgana occupy the other. Mostly eaten plates of homestyle food sit in front of them.

“Whew…even though we were only in there for that one thing, I feel wiped out. Today’s been so stressful…” Mishima said as he used a piece of bread to mop up the remaining gravy on his plate.

Ryuji gave Mishima a playful slap on the back. “You were so on top of things today though…first at school, then talkin’ Nakaoka’s Shadow down…I mean, hell, I’ve only ever seen Akira do shit like that. And only on regular Shadows, not peoples’ actual Shadows.”

Mishima blushed pink, and Akira felt affection warm his chest for the smaller boy. To him, it seemed like Mishima was so used to thinking of himself as a zero that even his accomplishments were diminished in his eyes just by virtue of them being done by him. “It was a fluke…my Shadow was kind of the same, so I figured…”

“Don’t sell yourself short. You’re as much a Thief as any of us,” Akira said firmly.

“It may not have been flashy, but what you did back there was better than flashy,” Morgana added.

Mishima chuckled a little bit and rubbed the back of his neck ruefully. “You’re right…thanks. If only there was a way for me to talk down Medjed, right?”

Akira felt doubt grasp coldly at his heart. With all of the day’s events, he’d completely forgotten about Medjed and Alibaba. It was hard to admit…but he had no plan. How could they target a group of people, much less ones who were essentially anonymous?

“That’d be borin’…” Ryuji said breezily. “We’re gonna change their hearts as soon as we figure out who the eff they are! Between all of us I’m sure we’ll figure it out…well, I’m sure all of you guys will.” Ryuji grinned toothily, and Akira felt the cold in his chest lessen slightly for a moment. “I’m probably just gonna tag along for the ride.”

Akira returned the smile with his trademark slight smile. “Yeah, definitely,” he bluffed easily.

“And man…when we take down Medjed, that’s gonna be an even bigger deal!” Ryuji said, his voice starting to rise in excitement. Akira nodded in thanks at Mishima as he clamped a hand over Ryuji’s mouth. “Oops, sorry!” Ryuji’s voice dropped to a conspiratorial whisper. “But think about it guys! This shit’s already all over the news! When we do this, everyone’s gonna be talkin’ about us!”

Mishima nodded slowly. “Yeah, I think you’re right…people are already talking about how we took down someone the police couldn’t touch…now if we take down Medjed…we’ll be famous.”

Morgana puffed up a little from inside Akira’s bag. “And the more people that are thinking of us, the deeper into Mementos we can go…I’ll get my memories back…and become human…”
Ryuji pumped his fist excitedly. “Yeah! It’s a win-freakin’-win!”

Their table got a number of scandalized glances at Ryuji’s outburst. He blushed a very cute shade of pink and mouthed an apology to the other tables. “Sorry about that...I’m just so damn pumped! It’ll be like...like...” his face turned a little redder. “It’ll be like...bein’ the star runner of the track team again.” He looked up at Akira, worry in his warm brown eyes. “That’s not bad, is it? I just...I wanna feel like someone worthwhile again...I want us to walk through school and not have people freakin’ badmouth us the entire time...”

“I don’t think so...” Mishima said. “I mean, if I’m being honest...” he looked kind of downcast. “Part of why I started the Phan-Site was because I wanted to be someone important. If I couldn’t be a Thief myself, I could at least be connected to them. And now that I am one...it feels even more real. I feel like I could do anything, be anyone I want to be, you know?”

Akira nodded his head. “That’s not weird at all. For me...even though my criminal record is bullshit...I still feel trapped by it. Doing this...it’s like I’m proving to myself that what I did was right - that stepping in, even when it’s hard is the right thing to do.” He reached across the table to give Ryuji’s hand a squeeze. “If it wasn’t for you, we might’ve never kept going after Kamoshida...I think we all have you to thank for everything that’s happened since.”

Ryuji’s face flushed and he scratched the side of his neck in embarrassment. “Nah, that’s givin’ me too much credit...” Akira made a mental note to reward him for being so cute later. “It’s you that’s been leadin’ us.”

Akira ducked his head modestly. “A leader’s nothing without the people following him...let’s just agree that we’ve all given everything we have to the Thieves and leave it at that.”

“Yeah...thanks for helpin’ me out with this tonight guys...” Ryuji said. “School was gonna be a nightmare if I had to put up with that shit too.”

“What were we going to do, just let it happen? No way!” Mishima said firmly. “You’re important to m- us...” His face turned slightly red, and from the spots of color in Ryuji’s cheeks, Akira could tell he had picked up on Mishima’s slip of the tongue as well. They were both so cute when they were blushing.

“Thanks,” Ryuji chuckled awkwardly. Mishima’s face turned even redder and a silence fell over the group.

“Hey, I don’t want to be that guy, but it’s getting late...shouldn’t we start heading home? It’s a school night...” Morgana piped up after about 10 seconds.

“Ugh, thanks, Mom...” Ryuji griped, though his face was joking.

“Since you love your mom so much, I’m going to take that as a compliment,” Morgana said primly.

“Yeah yeah, whatever,” Ryuji reached over and roughly tousled Morgana’s ears like he would a human’s hair. “Let’s get goin’ then.”

Outside the diner, Akira laid a hand gently on Ryuji’s arm. “Hey, Ryuji? Would you mind staying the night with me? I...I’d like your company tonight.”

“Of course, man!” Ryuji said. “My mom’s gonna be home late anyways...let’s do it.”

Morgana let out a loud groan from Akira’s bag. “Oh man, am I going to have to give you guys some space again?”
Mishima let out a short, involuntary bark of laughter, turning red as everyone turned to regard him, including people on the street. “S…sorry.” Mishima seemed to shrivel up into himself. “I uh… I just hadn’t thought about how your whole situation affected Morgana.”

“I bet you’d like to be a fly on the wall, huh Mishima?” Ryuji teased.

Mishima blushed hard again. “Sh-shut up! …god, who wouldn’t want that?” Mishima mumbled.

Now it was Ryuji’s turn to blush. “Maybe I should go see if Nakaoka would be interested in me…” Mishima continued, giving them both a rare wink and a small chuckle. “Anyway, thanks for getting diner food with me. See you tomorrow!” Mishima gave a wave and started heading for the subway. “Don’t get into trouble without me.”

“Man…Mishima’s gettin’ dangerous,” Ryuji said.

“I know what you mean,” Akira said. “He’s got a little more confidence now, and that’s making him a lot more attractive, to be honest.”

“Thank god, I’m glad it’s not just me,” Ryuji said. “I was feelin’ guilty…’cause it felt like, you know…how I messed up before.”

Akira laughed and threw an arm around Ryuji’s shoulders, pulling him in close. “There’s nothing wrong with checking out someone cute. And Mishima is definitely cute.”

“Definitely,” Ryuji affirmed, his cheeks still red.

“Oh right, you’ve actually seen the goods,” Akira said. “I’m almost jealous.”

“Oh my god, I should’ve gone with Mishima,” Morgana said as Ryuji blushed a deeper red. “Can we get going and stop talking about Mishima already?”

———

That night, Akira found it hard to fall asleep. Morgana lay curled up in a ball just above his head, and Akira held Ryuji in his arms from behind, watching his boyfriend breathe slowly in the dark. Both of them found it easy to fall asleep, exhausted as they were from the Metaverse, secure in their belief that he, Akira, would figure out a way for them to take on the Phantom Thieves’ biggest threat yet. But try as he might, Akira could think of nothing. Impulsively, he pulled Ryuji closer to him, which elicited a small grunt from him but did not wake him.

Akira could feel Ryuji’s heartbeat with his hand slipped up and under his shirt. He would do anything to keep it beating happily, healthily…but the thing was, now…he didn’t know how. What would happen if he couldn’t come up with a way to address the Medjed threat? All the goodwill they had built up - gone in an instant. Defeated, the Phantom Thieves would fall out of peoples’ memories, and the Thieves themselves, with their justice proven wrong…would they fall back into their old patterns?

Akira buried his nose into the nape of Ryuji’s neck. The scent of sweat and Ryuji’s deodorant had a calming effect on Akira. He felt his own heart slow to match Ryuji’s measured pace. I don’t know how… but I’ll keep you safe… Akira kissed the back of Ryuji’s neck and closed his eyes before falling into a fitful sleep.

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Ryuji leaned against the wall by the stairs on the second floor, fiddling with his phone as he waited.
Akira had received another message from Alibaba today, and the Thieves were going to meet again today to discuss. *Man, it sucks that I'm not in the same class as Akira...* Ryuji looked up as he sensed someone approaching.

It was Nakaoka. “Hey…” the other boy looked uncomfortable.

“…what’s up?” Though Ryuji knew that they’d changed his heart, he couldn’t help but feel a little wary. His lip still hurt, after all.

Nakaoka seemed to pick up on Ryuji’s wariness and deflate a little. “Sakamoto… I wanted to say I’m sorry… for yesterday, I mean. And… all the shit that me and the rest of the track team gave you. You’re a good guy - and you tried to stand up when nobody else was brave enough to do it…” He shook his head. “We all know we were being cowards... but it was easier to blame you.”

“Thanks, Nakaoka…” Ryuji said. “…I’ll be fine. My face’ll still be pretty, don’t worry.”

“Haha, yeah…” Nakaoka’s eyes widened and his face turned red. “I mean… not that I think your face is pretty…!” He made as if to walk away, but turned back, a look of frustration on his face. “Look… I’m also sorry because… because the only reason I went after you when I found out you were… into guys is because… I have a crush on you. And I was just trying to hide it away - I convinced myself that if I went so far as to hit you… it would mean that I didn’t feel that way. But uh… as you can see, it didn’t work. So… sorry. I don’t know how I’ll make it up to you… but I will. I promise.”

“Hey man… I’m not gonna say that your punch didn’t hurt, cause it effin’ did… but it’s ok. I get it. And you don’t have to worry about makin’ it up to me. The best thing you can do is keep workin’ as hard as you can for the track team,” Ryuji said, looking Nakaoka straight in the eye. “I got some… other stuff goin’ on right now, so I can’t help with that… but if you want... we can get some ramen at Ogikubo sometime soon. Like old times, ok?”

Nakaoka gave a tentative smile. “Yeah… yeah I think I’d like that.” He started a little as they were joined by Akira, Ann, and Mishima. “Umm… just text me, I guess. See you…” Nakaoka gave them all a quick nod of his head before rushing off.

“What was that all about?” Ann asked as Akira, Mishima and Morgana tried their best to not look like they knew what was happening, with varying degrees of success.

“Just... gettin’ some closure on track team stuff,” Ryuji explained. “C’mon, let’s get goin’. Medjed ain’t gonna deal with itself.”
Kawakami looked up from her grading as Mr. Hiruta and Ms. Chouno entered her classroom. They took seats across from her atop the front row of desks. “So where’s the fire Sadayo-chan?” Mr. Hiruta asked. “You said this was of the utmost importance.”

“She’s sure he didn’t just get into a fight with someone and not want to get in trouble for it?” Mr. Hiruta asked. “What makes you think he was assaulted?”

“Sakamoto-kun is the kind of boy who has a hot temper, wouldn’t you agree?” Kawakami asked, at which both teachers nodded. “If he had a grudge against someone, don’t you think he would have given them away, so at least they’d get in trouble too? Instead, he chose to protect their identity while risking punishment himself…”

“He could just want to deal with it himself…” Mr. Hiruta said. “A lot of guys are like that. Not me, of course…” he lightly adjusted his immaculate puffy silk shirt.

“The other suspicion I have stems from the gossip surrounding him and the transfer student, Kurusu-kun,” Kawakami said.

“There’s been rumors flying around about them since Kurusu-kun got here,” Ms. Chouno said. “He
sometimes spaces out in class but he gets every question I ask him correct, and he aces his exams as well. Whatever else he might be, he’s a diligent student. I’m sure most of the rumors are blown out of proportion anyway.”

“This isn’t a rumor…” Kawakami said. “It’s essentially confirmed, which is why I called it gossip. Do either of you follow the idol Risette on Twitter?”

“…I do,” Mr. Hlruta admitted. “But I don’t check the app all that frequently. Why?”

“A couple of days ago, she tweeted this…” Kawakami handed her phone over to the two. She had the relevant tweet queued up already. Both teachers’ eyes widened.

“Oh!” Ms. Chouno said in surprise. “I see…so they are more than just friends.”

“Sakamoto-kun always seems to have an arm draped around his shoulders,” Mr. Hiruta added. I suppose this clarifies that.”

“So the reason I called you hear today is because I want your support for an LGBTQ group for students and faculty here at Shujin,” Kawakami said. “Seeing Sakamoto-kun beaten up like that…it’s made me realize that this school isn’t a safe place for all of its students. And I believe it’s my responsibility as a teacher to make sure that it is. I’m going to bring this up at the next faculty meeting - and it would help me out a lot if I had some support in the meeting.”

“Is there student interest in this?” Ms. Chouno asked. “I can’t imagine many students would be comfortable joining something so explicitly LGBTQ if they’re afraid at school.”

“I’ve thought about that, and the best thing I can come up with is to make sure that the language on the posters advertising it is very welcoming. Plus, I plan on holding the group’s meetings in the music room in the Practice Building. The glass is frosted and the room is soundproof, so people won’t be able to see who’s there without joining in themselves,” Kawakami said.

“Why are you asking us specifically to support you?” Mr. Hiruta asked.

Umm…have you seen the way you dress…? “Because you two are the youngest faculty members, and I thought most likely to agree with me,” Kawakami said aloud. “And Ms. Chouno has spent a lot of time abroad, and my understanding is that a lot of foreigners are a lot more open about that stuff.”

“Right…well I can’t disagree with you that this is an issue,” Mr. Hiruta said. “Fine, I’ll support you if you bring this up at the next meeting. But honestly…I think you’ll have to push really hard for this. It might not be worth it for your career…you’re still young, after all.”

“My job is to teach students and make sure that they can use what they learn here to become amazing adults,” Kawakami said. “If any of them are too busy being scared to be here, then I’m not doing my job…I realized that again, recently.”

Ms. Chouno nodded her head. “As dedicated as ever, huh? All right, I’m in too. Good luck to us all…we’ll need it.”

———

Mishima stood at the back of the group as they crowded into Sojiro’s house. The house was dark and quiet except for the dim, flickering light of a TV coming from a room at the end of the hallway ahead of them.

“The door ahead is open, and I can hear the TV,” Makoto said.
“You don’t think he passed out or somethin’? I mean…Boss ain’t exactly young, is he?” Ryuji asked.

Ann elbowed Ryuji in the ribs. “Don’t say stuff like that…! Though I am a little worried…should we check on him?”

“Please excuse us…” Makoto said as they started to walk down the hall.

Suddenly, there was a flash of lightning followed almost immediately by a crash of thunder, which was itself accompanied by what sounded like the loud scream of a girl. The lights went out.

“W-was that a scream?! A-are we sure it’s the best idea coming in here…?” Mishima asked tentatively. His stomach felt like it was tying itself into knots, and he was pretty sure it wasn’t because of the sushi they’d had earlier. Hell, he’d been antsy since they’d run into Akechi at the train station beforehand.

“Relax…it’ll be fine!” Ryuji said breezily. “Besides, we’ve got some kickass sushi with Boss’s name on it…he’ll definitely get over it. Boss? You in here?”

“That’s not what I’m worried about!” Mishima said, his voice rising in pitch. He could see the dark shapes of his friends around him, but it was hard to tell who they were individually.

Mishima heard a loud thunk on his left. “Ow! Goddammit I hit my knee on somethin’…is anyone near a light switch?” Ryuji’s voice called out. Instinctively, Mishima moved towards Ryuji’s voice until he just about walked into him.

“Hey Ryuji…can you hold onto my shoulder…? I’m kind of freaking out a little…” Mishima asked. God, he hadn’t meant to sound so pathetic. None of the others were losing it. There was just something about the darkness that got under his skin. Still…he felt Ryuji’s hand on his shoulder and felt his fingers grasp it firmly.

“Easy man…we’re all here. It’s just Boss’s house…”

Mishima heard footsteps behind him, and then the sound of a light switch being clicked on and off a couple of times. “No good,” Yusuke said. “It appears the storm has knocked out the power.”

“This feels kind of creepy…” Ann said from somewhere to Mishima’s right. “Umm…maybe we should try asking if Futaba’s home? Futaba…? Are you here? It started raining outside and the door was unlocked…” If Futaba was there, she gave no response.

“C’mom guys…let’s get outta here,” Ryuji said. “We ain’t gonna find Futaba wanderin’ around in here in the dark. Probably just gonna knock a lamp over and break it or somethin’…”

Gratitude filled Mishima like hot cocoa on a cold winter day. He heard the other Thieves begin moving towards the door, and he found that he was able to continue on as well, the light weight of Ryuji’s hand on his shoulder pushing him forward.

“I sense someone’s presence…” Yusuke’s voice said from ahead of him. And as he mentioned it, Mishima, his body already on high alert, could sense the single degree increase that another person entering the space had caused.

“I-is someone there?!” he squeaked out.

There was another flash of lightning, and in the light, Mishima saw a small, redheaded girl standing directly behind Makoto. “AAAAH!” he, Makoto, and the girl screamed, before she dove back
through a door and slammed it shut.

Suddenly, there was the sound of metal against metal, and the sound of Sojiro’s muffled voice could be heard through the door. “Are you OK, Futaba!?”

“Crap, he’s home!” Mishima felt Ryuji’s hand tighten on his shoulder. Ryuji pulled Mishima into a side room along with everyone else except Akira and Makoto.

“Who the hell are you!? Don’t move!” A flashlight turned on, revealing Akira standing in the middle of the hallway and Makoto on her knees holding onto his leg. If he was being honest, it made Mishima feel a lot better to see someone as strong and as smart as Makoto freaking out as much or even more so than he had. “You…? What’re you doing in my house?”

“Ah…good evening sir! We…didn’t mean to barge in…” Makoto said hesitantly.

“Niijima-san!” Sojiro sounded surprised. “Wait…I thought Akira was with that Sakamoto guy… don’t tell me it’s one of those open relationships I hear millennials are into these days…”

“We’re just friends!” Makoto protested.

“Friends get that close to each other these days?” Sojiro asked.

“I…”

At that, the rest of the Thieves walked back into the hallway. “You kids are here too!?”

“We uh…brought you some sushi, but nobody answered when we rang the bell… the door was unlocked too,” Ann started to explain quickly.

“Umm…we could hear the TV though…so we got worried that you had passed out or something…” Mishima added.

“The door was unlocked?” Sojiro sounded surprised.

“Yes,” Ann replied.

Sojiro sighed, and his shoulders sagged. “I do that sometimes…I guess I’m getting old.”

“Umm…if it’s ok, we’d like to ask you something…” Makoto started. “There’s…there’s someone else living here, isn’t there?”

Sojiro nodded. “Yeah. My daughter.”

Makoto raised her hand halfway in a questioning manner. “Could she be…Futaba Sakura?”

Sojiro’s eyebrows raised at Akira, and Mishima couldn’t help but wince a little. How Akira managed to keep calm in every scenario was beyond him. “You told Niijima-san too!?”

“Is there anyway we can meet with her? I think we may have frightened her earlier, so we’d like to apologize…” Makoto said.

“That’s…” Sojiro started.

“Is she sick?” Makoto asked.

“No! It’s not like that,” Sojiro said. He sighed again. “I shouldn’t have kept this a secret from you.
Let’s talk at the cafe. She’ll hear us if we stay here.”

“Oh my god it’s like we’re standin’ on the sun!” Ryuji complained as the Thieves appeared in a largely featureless desert. “How the eff is this a tomb!?”

“Well…we’d definitely die of thirst if we were stranded someplace like this in real life,” Mishima said. “But…a Palace should have stuff for us to interact with, right? Are there even any Shadows around here?”

“I don’t sense anything nearby,” Morgana said.

“Wait, what about that?” Yusuke said, pointing past them.

The group turned to see some kind of pyramid structure sparkling in the sunlight far off in the distance.

“We ain’t gonna have to walk that far, will we?” Ryuji asked.

“No way!” Morgana said before transforming into a bus. “All aboard! I’ll crank up the a/c as much as I can!”

Several minutes later, and all the Phantom Thieves were drenched in sweat. Ann and Makoto sat in the front seat, with Makoto driving, while Akira shared the second seat with Ryuji and Yusuke. Mishima sat alone in the last seat.

“You call this a/c? I’m dyin’ here…” Ryuji complained as he flopped his head onto the seat in front of him.

“Ann, can I have a sip of water?” Makoto asked, her own head practically draped over the steering wheel. “I thought I saw you had some mineral water…”

“Sorry, I already drank it…” Ann said mournfully as she used the front of her shirt as a makeshift fan. “I…” She looked over her shoulder to see Ryuji and Akira openly ogling her. “Take THIS!”

She yanked on the emergency brake, causing Ryuji to hit his forehead on the front of the seat before flipping backward into a pile on Mishima’s lap.

“Ewww you’re all sweaty…!” Mishima complained. Ryuji’s skin was uncomfortably warm, and it was that curious mix of slick and sticky sweatiness. He could also feel the grit of sand there.

“It ain’t like you’re not!” Ryuji shot back.

“Quit it you guys, it’s not good on my inner workings!” Morgana said. “It’s bad enough my insides are going to smell like sweaty guys for a week…”

“Hey, why’re you singlin’ us out!? There’s two girls in here too, ain’t there!?” Ryuji said.

“Yeah, and Ryuji doesn’t smell gross, he just feels gross right now,” Mishima blurted out before turning pink. “I mean…we all probably do…” Mishima pushed Ryuji out of his lap. “…shutting up now.”

“Oh my god…” Ann complained. “Guys…we need to find Mishima a boyfriend. The tension between you guys is getting ridiculous.”

“I must agree,” Yusuke put in. “I think if Mishima were able to…relieve his urges as frequently as
Akira and Ryuji do, these awkward conversations could be a thing of the past.”

Mishima felt his face turn even hotter in the desert sunlight. “I…I don’t need help finding a boyfriend! And I-“ Bright light suddenly filled the interior of the bus as they crested a dune, as sunlight reflected off the white surface of the pyramid and through the windshield. “Wow…”

The Phantom Thieves sat up straighter in their seats. It was time to get busy.

Chapter End Notes

I really had a hard time finding the time to write this week, so I hope this chapter hasn’t suffered too much. Hope you all still enjoy :)
Akira notices Mishima's discomfort in Futaba's Palace, and the boys go to the bathhouse again to talk it out.

Akira stared up at the mural in front of them. It depicted Futaba seated on a throne, with three individuals in front of her, one of whom was reading from some kind of document.

“What’s this a picture of?” Ann asked.

“This adult seems to be reading something to a crying child…?” Yusuke said. “I can sense…serious pain harbored in her heart.”

“I should never have had Futaba…” a voice rang in their heads. “She was always such a bother…”

“It seems you caused your mother a lot of trouble…She must have had some kind of maternity neurosis…” the voice continued.

Akira heard a short exhale of breath come from Mishima next to him. When he looked over, he saw that the other boy wore a pinched expression, as if he was remembering the taste of something very bitter.

“You ok, Robin?” Akira asked quietly, moving closer to the other boy so that only he could hear him.

“Y-yeah…I’m fine,” Mishima said. “That was just…really brutal.”

“That sounded like a suicide note…” Makoto said to the group at large.

“Could it be that’s what Futaba remembers of her mother’s suicide?” Yusuke asked.

“That’s a fuckin’ sick thing to do to a kid if that’s how it all went down,” Ryuji said. He punched his palm angrily. “C’mon, let’s get goin’.”

“Futaba…you are…” a voice sounded in everyone’s heads again, though this one was different than the one that had come before. The mural in front of them depicted Futaba standing behind a woman who appeared to be jumping in front of a car.

“Are those…her mother’s last words?” Makoto asked.

“She committed suicide right in front of her…” Yusuke said. “How horrible.”

Mishima’s stomach twisted inside of him, and his vision swam. An image of Shiho jumping from the roof of the school filled his mind, and he swayed unsteadily on his feet. He fell forward, his hands
outstretched to catch himself…and fell into Akira’s arms. Akira’s arms felt sturdy and strong, and the heat that emanated from him didn’t seem just physical. Even behind his mask, Akira’s eyes looked concerned.

“I’m sorry, Robin,” Akira said. “I’m pushing you too hard.” He helped Mishima to his feet.

_“I’m the one that’s sorry…I should be able to keep going…like you always do…”_ Mishima thought.

“Ryuji, Morgana, take backup with him. Yusuke, Makoto, Ann - you’re up front with me. Let’s keep going,” Akira ordered.

“But-“ Ryuji started to say something.

Akira stepped quickly to him and whispered something unintelligible in Ryuji’s ear. Ryuji’s expression quickly changed from frustration to acknowledgement. “Gotcha. You can count on me!” he said with an adorable grin and a brisk salute.

Akira shook his head in mock exasperation. “Yeah yeah, I know,” he said, and gave his boyfriend a quick kiss on the lips. He moved forward, gesturing at Yusuke, Makoto and Ann to join him in the lead. “Alright, let’s move.”

Ryuji walked up to Mishima and threw an arm around his shoulder. “He’s countin’ on us to keep Shadows off their backs. You good?”

Mishima smiled gratefully up at him. “Yeah, just need a moment to catch my breath is all.”

“You work too hard,” Morgana said from below him. “Between this, school, and the Phan-Site, I don’t know how you keep it all going. Pretty much only Joker’s schedule is crazier than yours.”

Mishima shrugged his shoulders helplessly and gave Morgana a light scratch behind the ears. “You’re probably right…like father, like son I guess. He’d probably be proud of me if he knew what I was doing…”

Ryuji and Morgana shifted uncomfortably at that, and Mishima felt a twinge of guilt at having made things awkward. “Sorry…let’s get going. We don’t want to fall too far behind them.”

“Don’t you know how hard I work to provide for you!?” Futaba’s mother’s voice rang in their heads again at the third mural, this one depicting a young Futaba tugging on her mother’s skirt, only to be scolded by her.

“Isn’t it normal for a kid to want to spend time with their parents?” Ann asked, her expression sad.

“I certainly would,” Yusuke said. “But this doesn’t make sense…”

“It doesn’t match what Sojiro told us her mom was like at all,” Makoto said.

“I don’t think any of what we’ve seen is true…at least not in the sense that it’s the full picture,” Akira said. “We’re seeing how Futaba remembers things happening…not necessarily how they actually did.”

Morgan shook his large head sadly. “This is what she’s going through? She thinks she killed her mom just by being a normal kid? No wonder her heart’s distorted enough to have a Palace…”

Ryuji saw Mishima bite his lip through his mask, noticed that the other boy’s breathing grew heavy.
Keep an eye on him…I think this stuff is close to what's going on in his own life…Akira had said to him. Not one for subtlety, Ryuji gave Mishima a light punch on the arm.

“You zonin’ out?” he asked quietly.

“Huh…? Oh…yeah, a little,” Mishima admitted. “Sorry…it’s…it’s nothing. Let’s keep going.”

———

“Whew, I can’t believe we secured a route to the Treasure all in one day,” Ryuji exclaimed.

“It definitely helps having three more Thieves than we started with,” Akira said.

“Indeed,” Yusuke agreed. “…If you don’t mind, I’d like to return to my dormitory now. I’d like to get the images of Futaba’s Palace down on paper while they’re still fresh in my mind.”

“I should get going too,” Makoto said. “We’ll leave it to you when we give her the calling card.”

“I’m starving,” Ann said. “So I’m going to head off too. Let me know when you decide we should head back in.”

“Oooh, can I come too Lady Ann?” Morgana asked. “I could use something to eat too.”

“Of course, come on!” Ann opened her purse and Morgana hopped in. “See you!”

The rest of the Thieves left for the station, leaving Ryuji standing there with Akira and Mishima. Mishima’s face was downcast, his eyes fixated on his lime green shoes, his hands stuffed into his pockets. “I guess I should get going…” Mishima said.

“Hmm…I was thinking about going to the bathhouse,” Akira said. “Do either of you want to come with?”

“Hell yeah!” Ryuji said, pumping his fist excitedly. “I’m so sweaty dude…and I feel like I got sand effin’ everywhere.” He looked over at Mishima expectantly. “How about it Mishima? You in?”

“Umm…” Mishima seemed to waver a little.

“C’mon man, it’s the perfect way to relax after an exhaustin’ day fightin’ Shadows!” Ryuji put his arm around Mishima’s shoulder.

“Well, I definitely need a bath now that you smeared your sweat all over my neck,” Mishima complained, giving Ryuji a playful shove, a small smile breaking through his previously wan expression. “Fine, let’s go.”

Being the slight perv that he was, Ryuji couldn’t help but ogle Akira as he undressed in the bathhouse changing room. Akira’s body was fit and surprisingly toned, every corded muscle emphasized by the hazy light of the room, the shadows they cast contrasting almost playfully against his pale skin. As Akira pulled down his pants and reached for a towel to cover himself with to enter the bathing area, he caught Ryuji’s eye and gave him a meaningful wink.

Ryuji felt his face grow hot and he shifted his gaze to Mishima, who - goddammit - was standing there only in a pair of lime green briefs, carefully folding his shirt and shorts before placing them away in a cubbyhole. Ryuji couldn’t help but stare at him too, his eyes drinking in the smaller boy’s thin frame, delicate-looking but strong, like a bamboo chopstick. Plus, while Mishima’s butt wasn’t particularly large or muscular, on his body, it seemed to fill out the back of his briefs quite nicely, his
round cheeks seeming almost plush. It was all Ryuji could do to not spring a boner when Mishima quickly shucked his underwear in favor of a towel.

His train of thought was broken as Akira gave him a nudge with his elbow. “Stare anymore at us and you’ll start drooling,” he joked. “Come on, that bath is calling my name right now!”

“Right!” Ryuji said, still pink in the face. “Let’s go!”

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By coincidence, the first bath available to the three of them was the one they’d all bathed in following their victory at Madarame’s Palace. Akira and Ryuji sat next to each with Mishima across from them. Already, Ryuji had sunk into the water until it was just below his chin.

“Aaahhh…” he sighed contentedly. “This is the freakin’ life…is there anythin’ better than this?”

“I can think of a couple things,” Akira grinned, leaning to the side so he could rest his cheek on top of his boyfriend’s head while putting a hand on Ryuji’s thigh. The last week or so had been incredibly stressful for Akira. Having been unable to come up with a solution for Medjed himself, Akira had spent many sleepless nights tossing and turning over a solution, all the while maintaining a facade of confidence for the benefit of his friends. But the stress had definitely begun to take its toll. Hell, he had plucked out a white hair just the other day. Futaba basically falling into his lap as a master hacker had been a ridiculously lucky moment. Relaxing in a hot bath with Ryuji and Mishima was long overdue.

“Y-yeah, thanks for convincing me to come,” Mishima said, though his voice sounded a little strained, like he was forcing himself to sound cheerful. “This is really nice.”

“Just nice? Even with these two smoking hot guys sitting naked right in front of you?” Akira teased. As expected, Mishima blushed pink and a small, genuine smile tugged at the corners of his lips. “Haha yeah, I guess this is pretty much the setup to a gay porno…” he said as Akira and Ryuji laughed uproariously, the sound of it echoing throughout the small tiled room.

He looked down at his hands through the water, his face growing serious. “I’m sorry I couldn’t go with you through the whole Palace, Akira,” he said. “I…I should be stronger than that…”

“What’re you talkin’ about man?” Ryuji asked. “You did fine today. Bein’ on backup duty ain’t so bad…”

Akira lifted his head from Ryuji’s to look Mishima in the eye, his undivided attention on him. “Do you want to talk about it?” he asked. “I’m always willing to listen…and I’m sure Ryuji is too.”

Ryuji nodded his head. “Yeah, definitely. Lay it on us.”

“It’s stupid,” Mishima said. “Just…that stuff about ‘never should have had her’ reminded me of my mom. She acts like I’m a burden because I’m not an ace student like Akira or Makoto, or a great athlete like Ryuji…and…I know I shouldn’t let that stuff get to me, but she’s still my mom, you know? I just…I want her to care about me…”

Shit, he’s a lot like me…Akira thought. His fingertips’ grip on Ryuji’s thigh tightened ever so slightly. He suddenly felt the need to be close to Ryuji, have Ryuji’s arms wrapped around him, forming a cocoon of safety and love.
“And then the suicide…it reminded me of Shiho….how part of it was my fault…and I know I’m working to correct that, but…that guilt…it’s going to always be there, isn’t it? Unless my heart gets distorted and I ignore it…” Mishima shook his head, then continued, his voice cracking a little as he spoke. “And then that whole ‘I work so hard to provide for you’ stuff is just… classic my dad. I don’t think I’ve actually been able to talk to him for a couple of months now. He’s always heading into work early and staying really late…it’s like he doesn’t want to spend any time with us anymore…”

“…that sucks dude,” Ryuji said, his expression softly concerned. “I get it though. My dad…well, you know. He left when I was little, so I know he doesn’t give a rat’s ass about me or my mom. But even so…I feel like if he were to show up tomorrow with a new haircut and a job and was beggin’ for forgiveness…part of me would still hate him for what he did to me. For what he did to my mom. But part of me would want him back, you know? To just be a normal family…I feel kinda guilty thinkin’ about it, to be honest.” Now Ryuji leaned into Akira, his arm snaking around Akira’s hips to pull him in close and tight. “But I got this guy. I got my mom. I got you and the others…honestly, I’ve never been happier.”

“Me neither,” Akira said. “I mean…you know my story too. Both of my parents couldn’t wait to send me away. I think they believed me when I told them I was just trying to stop that asshole from hurting that woman…but they basically said the same shit as Sojiro. That I should’ve just kept my head down and minded my own business. And really…that’s what made me realize that we were just…a facade of a family. We looked good on the outside…but on the inside, there was no real connection, no bond like I feel with all of you. When I think about each of you…shit, when I think about all the other people I hang out with that aren’t Thieves…I have better, more vivid memories of them than I do of my own fucking parents!” Akira stopped suddenly, realizing that his voice had grown louder, his tone more and more bitter. Mishima was looking at him wide-eyed, his mouth slightly open in shock. Ryuji looked up at him with concern in his warm brown eyes. He already knew all this, of course. Akira felt Ryuji’s thumb on the outside of his thigh, felt it stroke his skin comfortingly, felt Ryuji’s arm pull them closer together. His bitterness was instantly replaced by gratitude. What had he done to deserve such a sweet, attentive boyfriend?

“Wow…” Mishima said. “I…wow. Thanks for sharing that with me, Akira. I…”

“Did I break the illusion for you?” Akira laughed. “Am I no longer perfect?”

Mishima reddened slightly and shook his head. “It’s not like that! If anything…you’re even more admirable. You’re going through all this shit and stress and you’re still pulling off being our leader? You’re amazing.” Mishima scratched the back of his neck sheepishly. “And it’s kind of nice, knowing we’re the same in more than one way…makes me feel like I could be as cool as you one day…graduate from my ‘zero’ status, right?”

“C’mon Mishima, you’ve done that man!” Ryuji exclaimed. “You’re a freakin’ Phan-“ Akira elbowed him in the ribs. “Phan-Site admin!”

Mishima echoed Akira’s laugh from earlier. “You’re right…it’s kind of nice when we go into the Metaverse though. Not that I don’t like maintaining it, but it is still work.”

Akira raised his eyebrows. “You consider Metaverse days to be break days…? Mishima, you’re working too hard…I mean, you look fine now with this bath, but a lot of the time you’ve got some serious baggage under your eyes.”

“Oh boy, Senpai noticed me!” Mishima deflected. “Seriously, I’m fine. I want to bring as much as I can to the table.”
Akira shook his head. “You already are though…and from what you’ve told me, a lot of what you do is moderating the forum…couldn’t we hire someone to do that? We make enough money to do it. All it takes is confusing some of the bigger Shadows in Mementos and they basically toss money indefinitely at us.”

“I guess that’s true…” Mishima said. “Someone else could definitely do the forum moderation…but who would have that kind of time?”

Akira shrugged. “I don’t know, a high school or college student? I’m sure someone wouldn’t mind making a decent amount of money doing that kind of work. Try posting an ad for it on the Phan-Site and we’ll see what we can get.”

“…you’re right,” Mishima said. “Thanks Akira. You really are a great leader. We…we’re lucky to have you.”

Ryuji nodded his agreement, then gasped, nearly inhaling a mouthful of bathwater as he did so. “Crap! We’ve only got five minutes left…” he groaned. “Man…I don’t wanna head all the way home…can I stay with you tonight?” he asked.

“Like I’ve said before, the answer is always ‘yes,’ Ryuji,” Akira laughed.

“It’s polite to ask!” Ryuji protested. “Everyone’s always sayin’ how I’m vulgar so I’m workin’ on it!”

“I think they’re talking about your habit of burping in peoples’ faces, Ryuji,” Mishima said. “Nobody wants to smell what you last ate.”

Akira laughed again as Ryuji’s face took on an adorable expression of contrition and shame. “If you want, you can stay over too, Mishima. You’re even further from here than Ryuji is,” Akira offered.

“If that’s ok…” Mishima said. “I don’t want to intrude on your alone time.”

“Don’t worry about it,” Akira waved Mishima’s concerns away with his hand. I get the feeling that it would suck for you to be alone tonight…. “It’ll be fun.”

Chapter End Notes

Hope you all enjoyed this. I thought Futaba's Palace might resonate particularly with my head canon of Mishima, which invariably brings him closer to Akira and Ryuji. That OT3s coming soon!
It's happening! It's finally happening!

Chapter Summary

On this blessed day, the OT3 becomes official, 37 chapters (holy shit) in. Sorry it took me so long to get to the part that I advertised :D

Chapter Notes

And of course it's shameless Akira x Ryuji x Mishima smut, so I hope you enjoy it as much as I do ;)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Cafe Leblanc was dark and quiet by the time the boys got back. Akira unlocked the door and flipped the switch, flooding the familiar space with soft, warm, yellow light. “Anyone want a quick cup of coffee?” He gave Ryuji a quick hair ruffle as Ryuji opened his mouth to respond. “Or a soda?”

“I’m fine, thanks,” Mishima said. “We’ll be going to sleep soon anyway, right?” The bath had helped tremendously, but he was still tired from Futaba’s Palace. The real difference was just that instead of feeling exhausted, his tiredness seemed to wrap around each of his muscles like a warm blanket, coaxing him gently to sleep.

“You’re probably right,” Akira said. “I should stick to being addicted to curry and let the coffee addiction wait till college, huh?” Akira ran a hand through his fluffy hair with a hint of sheepishness, and Mishima couldn’t help but feel special that he was allowed to see Akira like this, a privilege granted, so far as he knew, to only Ryuji so far.

“Come on, let’s go to my room,” Akira said, leading the way upstairs.

Ryuji and Mishima followed obediently. Akira and Ryuji immediately took seats on Akira’s bed. His cheeks flushed with a little pink, Mishima made a sharp left turn and sat on the couch. His fingers found a loose thread sticking out from the old cushion he sat on, and he began to pick at it absently. The three sat in a comfortable silence, simply enjoying the security of being in each others’ company. A smile unfurled on Mishima’s face as he watched Ryuji rest his head on Akira’s shoulder, and Akira instinctively lean into it and rest his cheek on Ryuji’s head.

“What’re you doing sitting all the way over there? Come on over here.” Akira patted the space next to him, shifting his position so that Ryuji would be directly to his left.

“O-ok.” Mishima got up and gingerly took a seat next to Akira, keeping his eyes trained on his feet. He felt Akira’s and Ryuji’s eyes on him, could feel heat rising up his neck to his face. The heat of Akira’s body next to him definitely didn’t help matters. It was all Mishima could do to not get an erection. Maybe it had been shortsighted to hang out with them after hitting up the bathhouse… Mishima felt like he could feel the touch of Akira’s skin through even the heated air that separated them.
There was a long silence, and then Mishima felt Akira’s fingers on his chin, pushing it up and turning it so he was facing the two of them. Ryuji wore an amused expression while Akira’s was … concerned? “You ok? You seem kind of…anxious still,” Akira said.

“I-it’s not you guys!” Mishima said quickly. He tried to look away but Akira kept his fingers gently but firmly on his chin.

“All’s forgiven, Mishima. Really!” Akira said lightly. Mishima tried to crack a smile but he could tell Akira was unconvinced. Akira looked back at Ryuji, who gave him a half shrug, half nod, in a sort of “your call” kind of gesture. And then, still keeping his fingers grasping Mishima’s chin, Akira leaned in slowly, and Mishima felt Akira’s soft lips meet his own. It was a relatively chaste kiss, but it left Mishima lightheaded regardless.

Behind Akira, Ryuji gave a soft grunt of appreciation, his hand resting conspicuously on top of his crotch. “Ok, yeah, I’m definitely into that. That was hot.”

Ryuji’s words broke Mishima’s stunned surprise and he pulled away instinctively from the kiss. “W-what’re you doing?”

“I guess I was trying to invite you in a more natural way,” Akira said. “Like, we’d just flow into it, you know?”

“Invite me? What?”

“You know…into Ryuji and me’s relationship,” Akira said. “After that smoke…I think we’re both finally brave enough to ask if that’s something you want…”

“I…” Mishima pinched himself, but nothing changed about the scenario before him. “I don’t know…I…what’s that going to be like?”

“We don’t know,” Ryuji said. “It ain’t exactly the kinda romance you see in movies and TV and shit. But we both like you…and we wanna try this out if you do. Plus, we both thought you looked great in that yukata.”

Mishima blushed a deep pink. “You’re just saying that…”

He lurched backwards as Akira gave him a playful shove. “Jesus, I just kissed you,” Akira said. “What else do Ryuji and I have to do to prove to you that we’re serious?” Akira looked down at his lap, his expression a little bit bashful. “Have I misread how you feel about us?”

“No…” Mishima said. “I’m just…really hoping that this isn’t just a dream…ow!” He flinched as Akira pinched his thigh.

“It’s not a dream,” Akira said. “Come on…let Ryuji and I take your mind off of the Palace and all the other bullshit you’re dealing with…”

Mishima nodded, and Akira leaned in again and pressed his lips against Mishima’s. Akira’s kiss was purposeful, confident - just as he imagined it would be. Akira’s hand gripped the back of his head, holding him in place as their lips slid against each other, as Akira’s tongue darted out, almost as if to place smaller kisses of its own.

“Shit that’s hot…” Mishima heard Ryuji say, and then the sound of him moving toward them.

Ryuji’s hand was suddenly hot on his chest, having slipped up his shirt with a delicate quickness that surprised him. The touch caused Mishima to gasp in surprise, then shift uncomfortably as his pants became too tight to comfortably contain his erection. As Ryuji traced small circles around his nipple,
Akira continued to gently but assertively massage Mishima’s lips with his own, his hand at Mishima’s waist, holding him firmly. Mishima felt like he could swoon into Akira’s arms.

Then, Mishima felt Ryuji move behind him, somehow doing so while keeping his hand up Mishima’s shirt. His lips grazed the back of Mishima’s neck, and he could feel Ryuji’s warm breath causing the fine, invisible hair there stand up. “C’mon Mishima…don’t just keep your hands at your sides. Don’t you wanna touch?”

Akira pulled back from Mishima and lifted his shirt a little, showing off his toned stomach. “Yeah Mishima…don’t you want to touch?”

Mishima felt his breath catch in the back of his throat. “C-can I?” Akira nodded his head, and somehow the slight movement was seductive, sending a fresh wave of blood to Mishima’s cock and accompanying lightheadedness. Mishima reached out and laid his fingertips on Akira’s abs, gently and slowly tracing each contour as if to memorize exactly how they felt.

Akira leaned in again to kiss him once, then said, “We don’t have to go further than this if you don’t want to…”

Mishima nearly pulled a muscle shaking his head. “No! I…I definitely want to do more than this!” And in a moment of bravery, he lowered his hand to give Akira’s crotch a crude squeeze, and was delighted to find that his hand closed around Akira’s rock hard pole. Akira gasped at the touch, and the sound of it drove Mishima to new heights of bravery. He tucked his fingers into the waistband of Akira’s pants and let them drag across the base of Akira’s hard cock, reveling in the thin whine that escaped Akira’s lips.

“Mishima, you tease…!” Ryuji said with a small laugh from behind him. “I don’t know how you’re takin’ it so slow…he’s too hot for me to not get right into it.”

“I want to make this last a long time,” Mishima said. “This is pretty much the greatest thing that’s ever happened to me.”

“It’s not becoming a Phantom Thief?” Akira asked.

“Ok, second greatest,” Mishima amended. “But it’s close…!” He gasped as Ryuji’s hand suddenly dived down into his pants and gripped his hard cock. Ryuji gave it a few small pumps, then reached around with his other hand to unbutton and unZip his pants for better access.

“You ready to see the heat he’s packin’?” Ryuji asked lewdly.

“I’m ready to taste it,” Akira said, and Mishima felt his face grow hot. He gave Mishima one last kiss on the lips before lowering himself down to his crotch. He put his fingers down Mishima’s waistband and gave the lime green bulge a kiss and the tiniest toothless nibble. Then he pulled down Mishima’s underwear to let his 6-inch uncut cock spring out, a bead of precum already forming at the tip. Akira licked it off with relish, and Mishima gasped at the sudden warmth and wetness. Akira began working the head, letting his tongue lash against the cockhead while he pumped the shaft and fondled Mishima’s balls. Mishima found that he couldn’t help but press himself backward into Ryuji’s chest so he could rise and fall to the rhythm of Akira’s pumps, and the scent of Ryuji’s sporty deodorant drove him even further into the depths of lust.

“Eff this is so hot…!” Ryuji leaned back a little so he could pull of his shirt, then reached down so he could pull Mishima’s off as well. The feeling of Ryuji’s hot, muscled body against his back was just as arousing as watching Akira’s head bob up and down on his cock, and Mishima couldn’t help but let a low groan escape his lips. Ryuji’s hands roamed over Mishima’s chest and stomach while he
scattered Mishima’s neck and shoulders with feather-light kisses. And against the small of his back, Mishima could feel Ryuji’s manhood straining like a red hot poker.

Akira pulled off of Mishima’s cock with an obscenely lewd sucking, popping noise before looking up at the two of them lustily. “Ryuji, how about you join me down here? I think Mishima and I could use a little help…” Mishima felt Ryuji nod behind him before he shifted his weight and moved away to join Akira in lying across the bed, his breath now feeling slightly cool against Mishima’s spit-coated cock.

Then, Ryuji took Mishima into his mouth, and another whine of arousal came unbidden from Mishima’s throat. Where Akira gave a blowjob that was assertive and confident, one where his tongue flicked expertly against Mishima’s member and his fingers teased all the right spots of his balls and even his hole, Ryuji’s blowjob was rough, sloppy with spit and SO INSANELY HOT. Ryuji took Mishima’s cock like a starving man would swallow food, with an urgency and manliness that drove Mishima wild. Ryuji’s hands gripped Mishima’s waist tightly and did not move, but Mishima felt like it was a necessity that they stay there lest he jerk upwards at each of Ryuji’s ministrations.

“Ryuji, you’re hogging him…” Akira admonished lightly.

“Sorry,” Ryuji said with a grin as he pulled off Mishima, a thin line of precum connecting his lip and Mishima’s cock.

Akira leaned forward and begin teasing at one side of Mishima’s cock with his lips and tongue, and catching on, Ryuji moved to the other side and began licking and massaging Mishima’s cockhead from the other side until the two were essentially making out with Mishima’s cock between their lips and tongues. And goddamn was it hot, seeing Ryuji’s blond head and Akira’s black one fighting for dominance over his cock, sending sensations up to his brain that one mouth couldn’t do on its own.

“Guys…I’m gonna cum all over you if this keeps up much longer,” Mishima warned them.

“That sounds hot, but I’m not quite ready for this to be over yet,” Akira said as he sat back, Ryuji following suit. “So what’s next Mishima? Any requests?”

Mishima’s eyes traced over the firm contours of muscle that made up Ryuji’s chest and abs, his strong arms and adorable face grinning cockily at him. “I’m the only naked guy here…that seems wrong…” he said.

“How ’bout we give him a little show, Akira?” Ryuji said suggestively.

“Sounds good to me,” Akira replied, even as he lifted up his arms so Ryuji could pull his shirt up and over his head. Though he had seen Akira barechested at the bathhouse just minutes before, seeing him now in a sexual context was entirely different. His body was fit and toned like a fighter - every muscle like a caged tiger ready to spring into action at a moment’s notice.

“You guys are so hot…” Mishima murmured, and a flush crept up his and Ryuji’s cheeks, though Akira of course remained unflustered.

“You ain’t exactly hard to look at either,” Ryuji said, his fingers tracing up Mishima’s thigh, stopping just before they reached his crotch.

“Pants, Ryuji,” Akira reminded him. Both boys stood up on their knees and reached for the catch of the other’s pants to undo them, sliding them down to reveal their underwear: royal purple boxer briefs on Ryuji, and sleek black ones on Akira, both bulging obscenely with their arousal.
They look like underwear models, Mishima couldn’t take it anymore and lunged forward, his hands gripping the waistband of both pairs of underwear and pulling down roughly to expose their rock-hard cocks, tips already glistening with precum. He immediately took Akira into his mouth as he’d been longing to almost since the day they’d met, reveling in the delicious salt of his precum, the smooth warmth of his skin and the gasp of appreciation that Akira rewarded him with.

At first, Mishima kept his attention focused singularly on Akira’s 7-inch uncut cock, his tongue lapping eagerly at the precum that flowed easily from it. He wanted to drink in every last detail of this; Akira’s hot, pale skin, the way his balls, smooth and silky soft hung pendulously below his impressive length. Akira gripped the back of Mishima’s head with a gasp, his fingers weaving themselves into his hair, and Mishima responded with an enthusiastic plunge down, letting out a soft moan of satisfaction as Akira plucked the back of his throat.

“Goddamn that’s so hot…” Mishima looked up to see Ryuji give himself a few tugs, his eyes glued to Mishima on Akira’s cock. In response, Mishima let Akira’s cock all but escape his mouth, only to dive back down with a perverse gulping noise that triggered a fresh flow of precum from both boys and a low groan of appreciation from Akira. Ryuji reached up and turned Akira’s head towards him, and the two began kissing passionately, their tongues wrestling for dominance. As Ryuji turned into the kiss, his thick cock poked Mishima in the face, the fat cockhead smearing a slick trail of clear liquid across Mishima’s cheek.

Mishima let out an involuntary moan, then pulled off Akira so he could bathe Ryuji’s cock in spit and Akira’s precum. “Eff-!” Ryuji exclaimed into Akira’s mouth as Mishima worked his length. Unlike Akira, who took a more passive role, Ryuji seemed like he couldn’t help but push himself further into Mishima’s mouth, stretching his lips around his thicker member.

“Think you could fit both of us, Mishima?” Akira asked, his voice almost desperate for attention.

Mishima pulled off of Ryuji and looked up at the two hottest guys in the world, his vision practically swimming because of his lust. “I’m sure as heck gonna try!” Mishima grabbed each shaft in a hand and guided the two cockheads into his open mouth. The feeling was incredible; the two slick cockheads slid against each other inside him, and the friction, the sound of Akira’s and Ryuji’s appreciative moans only spurred Mishima to keep lapping at their turgid members.

“Aaah Mishima, we can’t just let you do all the work…” Ryuji said after a couple of minutes. He pulled out of Mishima’s mouth, and a small sigh of disappointment seemed to follow it. “Come on, let’s…” Ryuji laid down on his side so his face was level with Mishima’s cock. “Akira?”

“Oh, I see… Akira grinned that smug, sexy smile of his and he joined Ryuji in lying down, his face now at Ryuji’s cock, and his own manhood still thrust into Mishima’s face. “Let’s do this!” Akira said as he buried Ryuji’s cock deep into his throat, and Ryuji followed suit on Mishima.

Mishima let out another unbidden gasp, but not to be undone, he quickly reattached himself to Akira’s cock, sucking eagerly at the hot length of flesh, determined not to be the first person to cum. At this angle, instead of being able to run his tongue over Akira’s frenulum, he could instead do so over the surface of the top of his cockhead, which not only triggered a sexy moan from Akira, but even encouraged him to thrust slightly into Mishima’s mouth, an action that Mishima was only too happy to adapt to, letting Akira’s cock push itself onto his tongue and fill his mouth with the delicious salt of his precum.

Meanwhile, Ryuji’s rough licks and sucks were already steadily driving Mishima to the point of no return. The feeling of Ryuji’s hot, wet mouth on his cock was arousing enough, but the sloppy sounds that were coming from below Mishima’s waist as a result of it only served to amplify his arousal many times over.
Emboldened, Mishima reached up and grabbed Akira’s butt in one hand, steadying him as he used the other to massage the skin behind his balls. Then with his first hand, he began to use a finger to tease at Akira’s entrance, hoping that Akira would enjoy the stimulation as much as he did when he performed it on himself. Akira’s thighs closed around Mishima’s arms briefly as he gasped at the new touch, but he quickly adjusted and renewed his assault on Ryuji’s cock.

Possibly because he knew Ryuji best, it was Akira who was rewarded first. Mishima felt Ryuji’s lips tightened suddenly around his cock and stop moving, and looking down across Akira’s body, he saw Ryuji thrusting with reckless abandon into Akira’s mouth, and on the last couple of thrusts, white pearlescent fluid leaked out of the corner of Akira’s mouth. Akira scooped up the errant cum with a finger and returned it to his mouth as he pulled off of Ryuji and began to meticulously clean his length of any remaining cum with his tongue.

It was all too much for Mishima. “Ah, Ryuji-!” he managed to gasp in warning before he exploded in Ryuji’s mouth, firing six shots of hot liquid down Ryuji’s throat as he thrust harder than he ever had in his life, and with last thrust even pulling out of Ryuji’s mouth and spraying his last shot all over Ryuji’s face.

“Fuck!” Akira gasped, and suddenly Akira’s cock seemed to grow even bigger inside Mishima’s mouth, swelling impossibly as it filled him with thick, salty cum. Even though he had just cum, Mishima felt a renewed surge of lust at Akira’s orgasm, and he swallowed greedily with each shot until finally it stopped, Akira’s head resting warily on Ryuji’s thigh.

The three lay there for several seconds, gasping at the physical exertion, basking in the post-coital bliss of endorphins and adrenaline. It was Akira who broke the silence. “So, Mishima, what do you think? This something you want to be a part of?”

Mishima’s eyes widened. “Y-you were actually serious?! I just thought you guys were horny and I was available…”

Ryuji laughed. “Come on man. We wouldn’t do that to you…you’re our friend. Or I guess, hopefully our umm…mutual boyfriend?”

Akira shrugged his shoulders. “This is new for me too…all I know is that I really like both of you. And both of you seem to really like me, and each other. This just seems like too perfect an opportunity to pass up.”

“We’d be boyfriends…?” Mishima asked. His head was swimming with the possibilities: the three of them hanging out in yukata at a summer festival, going on dates at Seaside Park… “So I could…?” Mishima sidled up next to Akira, pressed his body up against his and put his arm over Akira’s chest, his face nestled into the crook of Akira’s neck.

Akira nodded. “Of course.”

Ryuji stretched and yawned widely, showing off everyone one of his perfect, white teeth. “Mishima’s go the right idea, I’m tired as hell.” He laid down on Akira’s other side, laying his arm over Akira’s stomach and making eye contact with Mishima across Akira’s neck. “This is the effin’ best, ain’t it?” He blushed a little. “Makes me feel so…safe.”

Mishima nodded even as he stifled a yawn, snuggling deeper into Akira’s neck as he felt himself drift quickly towards sleep. “Yeah…that’s exactly what it feels like.”

Chapter End Notes
What will happen to our three best boys now? How will the beach celebration play out? What happens as the Thieves get more mainstream and popular? Who the heck knows, I'm flying by the seat of my pants here!

As always, feel free to stop by in the comments and let me know what you think!
Akira woke feeling more well-rested than he had ever been in his whole life. On either side of him, he felt the gentle tickle of breath from each of his boyfriends, his blanket tugged over all three, though it did technically give them some modesty, it did little to hide the evidence of their illicit activity the previous night. Mishima had sunk down so his head could rest on Akira’s chest, and Ryuji, as always, had ended up wrapping his arm around Akira’s shoulders from under his neck, his lips practically brushing Akira’s ear. The rest of their limbs were equally tangled. Akira’s arms were essentially glued to his sides, as Ryuji’s other arm was crossing his torso, his fingers laying delicately across the edge of Mishima’s back, and one of his legs thrown haphazardly across Akira’s own. Mishima meanwhile, clung to Akira’s body like a sloth to a tree branch, one hand up and buried in Mishima’s fluffy hair, the other brushing Ryuji’s ribs.

*There are worse ways to wake up,* Akira thought to himself. Knowing Ryuji, he wouldn’t be up for some time, given that it was summer and they had nowhere to be. He wondered idly if Mishima was an early riser like him, or whether he was closer to Ryuji in that respect. At the moment, he looked just as out cold as Ryuji was. Akira suddenly realized that it would be impossible for him to get up without waking at least one of them. Akira realized that it would be impossible for him to get up without waking at least one of them. *Dear god…* would he have to spend the next hour or so just lying there? The thought of being forced to be unproductive for that long rankled him. Was it possible for him to make use of the time? Perhaps he could try meditating…that might prove useful in the Metaverse. Maybe.

“*Ahem,*” Akira heard behind his head. He tilted his chin up to look, and found himself looking into Morgana’s bright blue eyes. “*So…what’s this all about, huh?*”

“Shhh…you’ll wake them,” Akira whispered, playing it cool.

“It’s morning, they should be up anyway,” Morgana said. Then he leaned down next to Ryuji’s head, and Akira, with his arms pinned to his side, was powerless to stop him from slathering his paw with spit before sticking as much of it as he could into Ryuji’s ear.

“Agh, what the hell!?” Ryuji came awake with a start, sitting up abruptly.

“Wh- uph!” Mishima exclaimed as he woke at the noise and promptly fell off the edge of the bed.

“Why the hell is my ear wet!?” Ryuji asked as he used the edge of the blanket to wipe it at. Akira
jerked his head at Morgana, who sat back at the head of the bed, looking somehow both amused and annoyed at the same time. “Morgana…! You stinkin’ cat, I’m-!” Ryuji suddenly tugged the blanket up to cover himself more fully. “We’re not decent! Get outta here you pervert!”

“I should be saying that to you!” Morgana said. “This is where I sleep, I shouldn’t have to come home, expecting a nice warm bed, and then not only not have room, but also have to see your pale butts shining in the moonlight! I’m scarred I tell you! I had to drag that blanket up on you to get any rest at all! At least have the decency to cover up before you go to bed!”

“Why’re you layin’ this all on me!?!” Ryuji demanded, though his cheeks were a little red with embarrassment. “Akira an’ Mishima are here too, aren’t they?”

Akira felt a tug on the blanket from below. “Yeah, uh…I could use a little more blanket here guys…” Mishima said. “I’m practically hanging all the way out, if you get my drift…”

Akira sighed. Time to flex those leadership muscles. “Let’s all get dressed before we have this conversation…I guess it’ll be good practice for when we tell the rest of the group…”

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[RS] Hey Ann, you want to grab some lunch with me today?

[RS] I’ve got something I want to talk to you about.

[AT] Sure! What’s up? The way you phrased that is making me nervous…

[RS] It’s nothin’ bad! Just meet me at the diner in Shibuya and I’ll fill you in there!

“So…” Ryuji shrugged his shoulders helplessly. “There really isn’t that much of an explanation… Akira and I like each other. Akira and I like Mishima. Mishima likes the both of us…I know it’s not exactly normal…but neither are we. So we’re givin’ this a shot.”

“You know…I was hoping that Mishima would get a boyfriend so you’d all stop being so tense around each other when we’re hanging out, but this works out too, I guess,” Ann said.

“I feel really good about this, you know?” Ryuji said. “It’s like…I feel like everyone in the group has got my back. Doesn’t it make sense for me to like, wanna be with more than one of them?”

“Well good luck with Yusuke,” Ann laughed.

“I didn’t mean it like that…!” Ryuji protested, though his tone was a little sheepish. “I’m glad you’re not weirded out by it…”

“Ryuji, come on…how could I be upset with you for doing something that makes you happy, that doesn’t hurt anybody?” Ann reached across the table to take his hand. “It’s like you said…I’ve got your back!”

Ryuji ducked his head, a small smile unfurling across his face. “Yeah…I know.”

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“So, what do you think?” Akira spun in a slow circle for them.

Mishima gulped and turned red. He couldn’t believe Akira was comfortable just standing there in a swimsuit for everyone to see - though to be fair he was in a fitting room, and someone would have to be walking past and glancing in to see. And Akira was incredibly fit and hot…so it wasn’t like he’d
have a reason to be embarrassed. “Y-you look great!” he stammered.

“Lookin’ good dude!” Ryuji said with a thumbs up. “We’ll totally match!”

“Your trunks are blue too?” Akira asked.

“What? Oh, my bad, mine are red,” Ryuji said.

“Wait, Ryuji, are you colorblind?” Akira and Mishima asked together.

“Uh yeah…” Ryuji said, his face wrinkling in confusion. “You didn’t know that?”

“No, how could I have known that?” Akira asked. “I don’t remember it coming up…”

Ryuji shook his head. “Remember in Madarame’s Palace? With the paintings and shit? Did you guys just think I was too dumb to tell the difference between the paintings?”

Akira shrugged. “No, I thought you were just trolling Yusuke so I went along with it.”

“Same,” Mishima said. “Seemed in character for you.”

Ryuji sighed as his shoulders sagged. “I guess that’s better. Kind of. Anyway, you look great man. Everyone’s gonna be watchin’ you. At least these guys are.” Ryuji motioned between him and Mishima with his thumb.

“I mean, who else would you be watching?” Akira smiled as he closed the distance between them to give each of his boyfriends a quick one-armed hug and peck on the cheek.

Mishima felt his heart leap at the touch of Akira’s bare torso against his arm. “A-Akira-!” he said, his voice stuttering again. What he would give to be that brazen in public himself…

Akira gave him an amused look and then gifted him with another kiss, though this one was on his lips. “Never stops being fun making Mishima blush, does it Ryuji?” Akira asked, even as Mishima felt his face redden more.

“Nope! But you know, I think that’s kinda part of what I like about him!” Ryuji agreed.

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“So…uh…you gonna say anythin’?” Ryuji asked.

Akira, Mishima, and Ryuji all sat around Akira’s room. Futaba sat behind Akira on the bed, while Mishima lounged on the couch and Ryuji sat on the desk chair in reverse, his arms atop its back and his chin resting on his forearms. Futaba made a small high-pitched noise and ducked behind Akira, though her eyes remained looking out from behind him, cautiously jumping between Ryuji and Mishima.

“Don’t rush her, Ryuji,” Akira said. “But really, Futaba, these guys are my number one guys. I mean, I’m dating both of them, so they can’t be that bad, right?”

Futaba’s eyes widened behind him. “You’re dating both of them?” she asked, her voice incredulous.

“Yup,” Akira answered nonchalantly.

“I thought that stuff just happened in fan fiction,” she said.
“You read fan fiction, Futaba?” Mishima asked. “What kinds of stuff do you like?”

“Usually the stuff that has like, my favorite characters from games in them,” Futaba answered. “I haven’t read any of the threesome type stuff though! I’ve just heard about it, is all.” She retreated behind Akira, suddenly shy again.

“Mishima, you read fan fiction?” Ryuji asked.

Mishima turned pink. “I uh… I have. Not for a while since I’ve been busy with Thieves stuff…but yeah, I used to. It was pretty much all gay stuff. There’s not a lot of gay stuff out in the open in Japan… I guess I wanted to know what it was like, even if it wasn’t real. I figured… if I ever got a boyfriend, it’d be nice to have some idea of what I was doing… even if it was all just from a story someone made up.”

“Oh, I see…” Ryuji nodded sagely. “I guess that explains why you were so good in bed right from the start even though you were a virgin. Akira had to teach me all kinds of shit.”

“Ryuji!” Mishima’s face went through five progressively darker shades of red. He bowed his head in Futaba’s direction. “I’m sorry Futaba, Ryuji’s a little… vulgar.”

To his amazement, Futaba shook her head and laughed. “No way, that’s the most interesting thing I’ve ever heard him say. Tell me more, Ryuji. I wanna see if you can make Mishima’s face match Ann’s Metaverse outfit.”
Some beach fun and then post-beach smut to make up for my lackluster update last week

“Aw man, I can’t believe they just left us to go on a freakin’ boat!” Ryuji complained. He lay with his head in Akira’s lap, pressing a cold can of soda to his neck. Despite the heat, Akira didn’t mind having Ryuji there in the slightest. Honestly, he was just happy that Ryuji was comfortable being that close to him in public, even if they could just be seen as very close friends. His only regret was that Mishima was lounging a couple feet away in a beach chair.

“And it’s so effin’ hotttt….I seriously think I’m dyin’ here guys…” Ryuji continued.

“You’re dying?” Morgana said from inside the cooler. “Try having black fur!”

“At least you fit in the cooler though…” Ryuji said. “That’s kinda cheatin’, ain’t it?”

“Still though!” Morgana insisted.

“I do agree it was slightly rude of them to inform us of their boat plans only now,” Yusuke said. “Though, perhaps Futaba is not quite ready to spend time with all of us at once just yet.”

“Whatever their reason, we need to find something to do to take our minds off this heat…” Mishima said.

“We could go into the water,” Akira suggested as he felt a bead of sweat roll down the small of his back. “Although…” he looked over at the cooler. “Is that something you’d want to do, Morgana? Is sea water ok to get on cat fur?”

“I mean, you can always give me a bath later, right?” Morgana said. “And I’m kind of curious! I’ve never been in the ocean before…do you think I’m the kind of cat that can swim?”

Several minutes later…

Ryuji pressed a tissue against the pinpricks of red that stood out against the skin of his arm. “Man, this is the second time…”

“Sorry…I guess I’m not a water cat after all,” Morgana said, even managing to both look and sound apologetic.

Mishima let out a snort that quickly became full-blown laughter. “Haha, oh god, sorry! Ahahahahaha, Ryuji - your- your- face! Priceless!”

Ryuji stuck his tongue at at Mishima. “Glad someone enjoyed it…well, what can we try next?”

“Didn’t you bring a volleyball? There are four of us…we could do a couple rounds of beach
“volleyball,” Akira suggested. “And Morgana can be the ref! He’s probably got the sharpest eyes out of all of us.”

“How shall we split the teams?” Yusuke asked.

“Who cares? What I care about is, what do the winners get?” Ryuji asked.

“Hmm…” Akira thought for a moment, then dug into his pocket and pulled out one of each of a 1, 5, and 10 yen coin. With his back to the others, he gave the the 10Y coin to Morgana, who tucked it under himself, and put one remaining coin in either of his hands. “All right, so there’s a 10Y piece in either one of my hands or under Morgana. Whoever chooses it will be on my team!” Akira explained.

“And as for winners…I guess the losers can treat the winners to dinner tonight? And they’ll get bragging rights too,” Akira mused.

“That seems fair,” Mishima said. “Ok, I’m in.”

“I’m afraid the sort of dinner I’m capable of treating anyone to is rather meager, but I’ll just diet for a few days to make up for it,” Yusuke said. “Very well, I agree to the terms.”

“Sheesh, so formal,” Ryuji said. “I’m down too.”

“Ok…I think…” Mishima reached out and touched Akira’s right clenched fist. “That one! Cause your teammate will be your right hand man!”

Akira flipped his hand over and opened his fist, revealing the 1Y coin. Ryuji let out a short back of laughter. “Maybe leave the detective work to that asshole Akechi, huh Mishima?”

Now it was Mishima’s turn to stick his tongue out at Ryuji. “Why don’t you choose then, Ryuji?”

Ryuji cracked his neck confidently and stood up. He walked right up to Akira and stared directly into his eyes. Akira tried his best to return the stare impassively, though after a few seconds, he used the opportunity to look Ryuji up and down and give him a suggestive wink. Flustered, Ryuji pointed at Morgana. “I think he’s got the 10Y coin.”

“Oohh, outsmarted by Skull, how embarrassing,” Morgana teased.

“Not really,” Yusuke said. “Mishima had a 33% chance of selecting the correct coin, and once he did not, Ryuji’s odds increased to 50%. That said, I think my chances with Mishima are rather good. He was on your school’s volleyball team, wasn’t he? I suspect his technique may be of more worth on the court than your raw athleticism.”

“Oh yeah?” Ryuji responded confidently. “We’ll see about that!”

“Damn, I can’t believe we lost…” Ryuji said ruefully as Mishima and Yusuke exchanged high fives behind him. “I mean…I guess Yusuke was right when he said that Mishima was on the volleyball team so he’d be good…but who’d’ve thought Yusuke would be too?”

Akira shook his head. “Surprised me too,” he admitted. “Still, it’s not like the stakes were high.”

“That’s true…man, I shouldn’t have been so confident about it…he’s gonna be on about this for months,” Ryuji complained.
Akira put his arm around Ryuji’s shoulder and whispered in his ear as a finger lightly traced a circle around Ryuji’s nipple. Ryuji’s skin felt so hot beneath his. “Well, I’m sure he and I will find some way of making it up to you…”

“Dude!” Ryuji’s eyebrows raised and he stumbled back from Akira so fast he almost fell backwards. “You…you can’t say that stuff to me out here on the beach!” He leaned in closer so he could whisper, though the whisper itself was loud with urgency. “You can’t hide a boner in these swimming trunks man!”

“How vulgar,” Yusuke said as he and Mishima rejoined them. “I hope that you’ll leave such topics of conversation at dinner.”

“Blame Akira!” Ryuji said. “He’s the one who’s tryin’ to get some while we’re out in public!”

In Akira’s room…

“So,” Ryuji said, smirking. “What’re you planning on doing with your winner’s braggin’ rights, Mishima? Nothin’ too weird, I hope. Or are we gonna do a repeat of the bathhouse night?”

Akira felt a bit of blood rush to his crotch as two adorable spots of pink appeared in Mishima’s pale cheeks. “I- I mean I wouldn’t turn it down…” he said bashfully. “…can we?”

“Why don’t you make a move and we’ll see what happens?” Ryuji said, leaning back against the wall, his expression openly suggestive. Mishima turned a little redder, but quickly stepped forward into Ryuji’s embrace so their lips could meet.

Watching the blond punk’s lips slide roughly against Mishima’s soft lips was incredibly hot, especially as Mishima seemed to sink with pleasure into Ryuji’s more domineering style. Akira felt his swim trunks become fully tented with his arousal. “Damn, Ryuji’s right…” he said aloud. “That is really hot.” Akira stepped forward himself so he could press himself against Mishima’s back, kissing the back of Mishima’s neck and letting his nose drag slowly up it and into Mishima’s hair, savoring his slightly sweet smell, a smell that was undeniably Mishima, and just lightly seasoned by the smell of sea salt.

Mishima let out a whimper of pleasure, and his hands fell to Ryuji’s butt, pulling him into himself as they ground fully clothed against each other. “Eff-! We gotta do this with more clothes off!” Ryuji said as he broke the kiss and began peeling his shirt off. Mishima and Akira followed suit, and then Mishima’s lips were back on Ryuji’s, his fingers now exploring every square inch of Ryuji’s torso that he could reach.

Mishima’s enthusiasm was contagious, and Akira found his own fingers wandering the smaller boy’s slim torso. He started at Mishima’s chest, his fingers gliding over Mishima’s small, aroused nipples before sliding down to Mishima’s stomach, then moving to the small of Mishima’s back and up to his shoulders, massaging him gently the whole while. It was getting to be too much just watching the two of them. Akira needed more.

He dropped to his knees and reached up to grope both boys’ crotches, both distended by their arousals. He felt the heat of each erection through the thin fabric of their swimming trunks, felt himself get even harder as each boy let out a low, primal groan. Akira deftly undid the string at the front of each pair of trunks, then tugged them both down to reveal their engorged manhoods. Fuck, both already had beads of precum forming at their tips, signaling their owners’ intense arousals. Akira wrapped a hand around each one to steady them, then mouthed both of them using his tongue.
to quickly swipe off the salty liquid. He then began to move between their two cocks, sliding down each one as far as he could one or two times before switching to the other, relishing the sounds of combined lust, disappointment, and satisfaction as he left and returned to each one.

“Ah!” Mishima bucked involuntarily against Ryuji as Akira deep throated him in one smooth motion. “Akira!” He stopped kissing Ryuji for a moment to admire Akira on his knees, his immaculately smooth pale skin, his lightly defined abs, the tent in his swimming trunks, made all the more obscene by the small circle of precum that darkened the tent’s zenith.

“Akira…! I…I want you to fuck me…!” Mishima gasped out.

“Hell yeah, I definitely wanna see that!” Ryuji said.

“How do you want to do this?” Akira asked as he undid his swimming trunks and let them fall to the floor as he stood.

Mishima gulped as he reached out almost involuntarily to fondle Akira’s length and his balls. “I want to ride you…” he said, almost shyly, but his tone was full of desire.

Akira nodded his head. “Sounds good…I can do that.” He moved to the edge of his bed and sat down, his erection pointing straight up, ready for what was to come. Mishima walked over and fell on all-fours before grasping Akira’s cock.

“Let me just…” he said before taking Akira into his mouth. Damn, you would never know Mishima was a relative virgin. Though the last couple inches of Akira’s erection evaded his efforts to take them, Mishima was an excellent cocksucker, his tongue always in motion as his lips slid back and forth over the ridge of Akira’s cockhead.

“I’ll get him ready for you,” Ryuji said as he rummaged under Akira’s bed before pulling out the bottle of lube. Akira watched as Ryuji squirted a generous dollop out onto his fingers before transferring it to Mishima’s hole, who moaned breathily around Akira’s cock at the sensation. This continued on for about a minute, Mishima sucking Akira’s cock enthusiastically, the occasional slurp escaping his lips, and Ryuji gradually adding fingers to Mishima’s hole until finally, Mishima said, “I think I’m ready…”

Akira gasped as Mishima lowered himself onto his saliva and precum slicked erection, as the sensitive skin of his cockhead briefly teased Mishima’s entrance. Though Mishima’s back was to him, it was hot hearing his slightly labored breathing, watch the muscles in his arms, shoulders and back stand out as he braced himself on Akira’s thighs, his cute, plush little butt quivering ever so slightly as Mishima rocked against his cock. In front of them, Ryuji watched, his perverse pleasure clear on his face as he tugged at his own erection.

“Ahh-!” Mishima let out a small exclamation as Akira’s cockhead suddenly breached him, slipping in about an inch.

“You ok?” Akira asked. He’d have pulled out if he could, but sitting down as he was, there wasn’t anywhere for him to go.

“Yeah!” Mishima gasped. “Just was really intense for a second there…this already feels way better than a toy…mmmm…” Mishima groaned as he slid down another inch. “Akira…I want to feel all of you inside me…” Akira rocked his hips up slightly, and Mishima let out a happy whimper as Akira slid in further. The feeling of Mishima’s hot, tight insides covering his cock was so intense Akira had to bite his lip to keep from cumming too soon. Finally, after what felt like minutes of excruciating heat, Akira felt Mishima’s butt reach his thighs. Mishima let out a contented sigh.
“This feels sooo good, Akira…” he moaned. “I’ve literally fantasized about this exact situation…and now that it’s happening…god, I want it to last forever…” Mishima began sliding up and down Akira’s length with purpose now, letting out little moans and whimpers as Akira’s cock jabbed at his prostate.

Akira groaned in ecstasy, reveling in the feeling of Mishima’s velvety insides caressing his shaft, his silky skin dragging smoothly against his torso, his plush butt squishing against his thighs. He could feel Mishima’s hole tightening and squeezing around him, as if it was trying to draw him in deeper with every stroke.

“This is freakin’ hot!” Ryuji said from in front of them, his hand almost a blur on his own cock. Akira couldn’t help but admire how hot Ryuji was, despite being buried to the root inside Mishima. His skin a little darker from the day’s activities in the sun, Ryuji looked like sex itself, his toned stomach heaving and flexing with exertion and lust.

“It can be hotter!” Mishima said, gesturing Ryuji to come closer. When he did, Mishima reached up and braced himself on Ryuji’s hips so his face was level with Ryuji’s fat, swaying cockhead. “Akira, I’m going to need you to take the reins a little here…” he said, before engulfing Ryuji’s cock in his warm, wet mouth.

Akira felt himself get even harder inside Mishima as he placed hand on either of his hips. “You ready?” he asked, not wanting Mishima to accidentally bite down.

“God yes, Akira, just fuck me already!” Mishima pulled off of Ryuji to say impatiently before returning to Ryuji’s cock with a loud, obscene squelching noise.

Akira began to pump in and out of Mishima rhythmically, his butt rising up off the bed with every upward thrust into Mishima’s virgin ass. Every thrust brought Mishima further down on Ryuji’s shaft, triggering a fresh groan from Ryuji until Mishima was practically standing, bent over fully at the waist to service Ryuji.

Akira made eye contact with Ryuji over Mishima’s bent over form, and Ryuji gave him his trademark smirk that drove Akira wild. Ryuji’s forehead glistened with sweat, but nowhere near as much as his cock, which Akira watched with perverse pleasure as it disappeared deeper into Mishima’s mouth with every passing second. “Goddamn, you guys are both so effin’ hot!” Ryuji exclaimed. Akira watched his eyes drift down to his crotch, lewdly ogling Akira’s cock as it pumped in and out of Mishima.

Emboldened and turned on by the attention, Akira slowed his pace slightly and lengthened his strokes so that he was nearly pulled out of Mishima before he thrust back in, getting off on the exposure of the full length of his cock. “Akira-! That’s so hot! Fuck! Mishima! I’m…I’m going to cum!” Ryuji practically shouted before thrusting roughly into Mishima’s waiting mouth. Mishima took the first couple of loads with ease, but as Ryuji’s thrusting grew more haphazard, Ryuji slipped out of him and painted Mishima’s face with streaks of hot, white cum.

“Akira, I need you cum in me now!” Mishima said lustfully as he thrust himself backward, pushing Akira back down on the bed and resuming his riding again, lifting his slim body up and down as quickly as he could while still traversing the full length of Akira’s cock.

“Eff! You gotta cum too man!” Ryuji said, who, despite having cum, still sported a half-hard cock. He bent down in front of them and took Mishima into his mouth, letting the smaller boy face fuck him even as he impaled himself on Akira’s stiff member.

“Oh my god! Oh my god! OH MY GOD!” Mishima’s cries grew more and more ragged as Ryuji’s
ministrations caused him to increase the pace of his riding. “I’m going to cum! Shit, I’m going to cum!” Mishima came hard, and practiced cocksucker that he was, Ryuji took Mishima’s load with ease. As Mishima came, Akira felt his insides flex involuntarily around him, and that combined with the expressions of sheer lust on Ryuji and Mishima sent him over the edge as well.

“I’m cumming-!” Akira warned, and in the couple of seconds before he did, Mishima slid down so that Akira was fully inside him. “Ah!” Akira gasped as he came, shooting his load deep inside Mishima even as he fucked it deeper as he bucked involuntarily against the smaller boy’s back. As his orgasm subsided, Akira turned Mishima’s face to him and gave him a kiss, relishing in the salt of Ryuji’s cum that still lingered in Mishima’s mouth.

“Wow…” Mishima said when Akira broke the kiss. “That was so intense…” he slumped back against Akira’s chest, and Akira wrapped his arms around Mishima instinctively. “I kinda never want to get up.”

Ryuji laughed as he sat next to Akira, pulling out a towel from under the bed as he did so and wiping Mishima’s face clean. “You’re a horny little bastard, ain’t ya?” he joked.

“It’s hard not to be around you guys,” Mishima said shyly.

“Well, luckily for you, I think we both feel the same way,” Akira said as he gave Mishima an affectionate kiss on the side of the cheek. “Come on…much as I want you to stay there too, I think we should get dressed…don’t want Morgana getting traumatized again.”
“Ugh….” Ryuji groaned petulantly as he and Akira approached the school gates together. “I can’t believe summer’s over already…” Akira smiled slightly as his blond boyfriend slumped into him dejectedly, nearly knocking him off balance and into a fluffy haired girl holding a watering can.

“Oh!” she squeaked, her voice rising several octaves in the span of a second. She raised her watering can instinctively, sloshing a little water onto Akira’s shoes and pants. “Oh, I’m sorry!”

“It’s no trouble,” Akira said amicably. “It’s not like you can even see it. It’s just water.”

“‘Sides, it’s my fault anyway,” Ryuji said. “I shoulda watched where we were goin’. My bad.”

The girl inclined her head politely to the both of them. “Thank you…” she blushed a soft shade of pink. “Don’t let anyone make fun of you, ok? I think you look cute together!” Then, as if realizing the strangeness of what she’d just said to people she’d just met, she turned a darker pink and turned around, busying herself with watering the plants in front of the building.

“Ok…nice meetin’ you…” Ryuji said to her back before he and Akira entered the school. He made a circular motion around his ear with his finger. “Kinda crazy, wasn’t she?” he commented as they stepped over the threshold of the building.

“A bit strange,” Akira admitted. “But she seemed nice. And at least she wasn’t treating us like the school delinquents.”

“That’s true,” Ryuji chuckled. “Though we kinda are, even if it’s not really our fault. Well, not really your fault, at least. Do you think we’re still the main thing on everyone’s minds? I was kinda hopin’ all that shit would die down over the summer…”

“I bet we are…” Akira said. “But not because of that…more because of our big summer job.” He gestured at a Phantom Thieves keychain charm that hung from a nearby student’s backpack. “After Medjed, I bet everyone’s talking about the Phantom Thieves. People were even talking about u-them on the train here.”

“Man, how can you be so calm about it all?” Ryuji asked. “It’s all I can do from freakin’ screamin’ it from the top of the school.”

“Try not to do that,” Morgana admonished him from Akira’s bag. “We already had enough of a scare with Futaba.”

“Did you hear a cat?” a girl a few feet ahead of them asked her friend.

“Shut up!” Ryuji hissed at Morgana. “You’re the one that’s gonna get us caught!”
Akira laughed and gave Ryuji a short, one-armed hug and kiss on the temple as they reached the second floor. “I’ll see you at lunch, Ryuji.”

“We shoulda walked here slower,” Ryuji responded, his cheeks a little pink. “But yeah, see ya!”

Akira entered the classroom to find Mishima already at his desk. “Morning!” Mishima greeted him with a wide smile.

“You seem a lot happier about school being back than Ryuji is,” Akira said with a small chuckle.

Mishima ducked his head, a little embarrassed. “I mean, it’s not like I’m the best student or anything…” He grinned up at Akira. “That’s your job lately,” he said, a note of pride in his voice, one which sent a thrill of pleasure down Akira’s spine, and a smile to his lips. “But you know, with everything else that’s going on…it’s nice to have something that’s just…normal in our lives, you know?”

“I get that,” Akira said, though in truth, despite how stressful it was…he loved being leader of the Phantom Thieves. It wasn’t the fame and renown they’d garnered that excited him. It was the sheer thrill of risking their lives in the Metaverse, the feeling that they were getting justice for people that otherwise would never see it. That said, he did know how nice it was now to come home from an exhausting day fighting Shadows and be able to flop into bed with one or both of his boyfriends. “I prefer our domestic bliss over school…but I see what you mean.”

Mishima’s neck turned a little pink. “I mean, yeah I like that stuff better too. We should -”

He was interrupted by Kawakami entering the room. “All right class, take your seats. We’ve got a lot of material to cover before I’m comfortable letting you all gallivant around Hawaii in a couple weeks!” Kawakami said to the class.

“Talk to you at lunch!” Mishima said with a small wave.

Akira gave his shoulder an affectionate squeeze, ignoring the ripple of conversation that followed the gesture before he headed for his desk, smiling to himself slightly as Ann burst into the room, looking beautiful as always, if slightly disheveled. “Sorry I’m late!”

———

The Thieves, minus Yusuke and Futaba, sat in a semicircle on the roof of the school with their lunch boxes in their laps. Since the last time they’d been up there, someone had added a number of planters, each bearing a few sprouts of some plant. “Looks like someone else’s usin’ the roof as their hideout,” Ryuji joked. “Whaddya think they’re growin’? Weed?”

Makoto made a dismissive motion with her hand. “Of course not. This would be a terrible place to hide such illicit activity.” She wrinkled her nose a bit. “Although I suppose our meeting places as the Phantom Thieves haven’t exactly always been private…”

“Akira’s room is definitely the best hideout so far,” Morgana added. “And most comfortable too - though more for Ryuji and Mishima than me these days.”

“Anyway…” Ann said as Ryuji and Mishima made big shows of being absorbed in their lunches as Akira smirked. “Have you guys seen those posters that Kawakami had put up around the school? It looks like she started a club.”

“Oh yeah? What kind of club?” Ryuji asked as he put a piece of grilled fish in his mouth.
“A gay club,” Ann answered, and Ryuji nearly choked on his fish. “The first meeting’s today after school in the band room.”

“For real?!” Ryuji shook his head. “Christ, what for?”

Akira raised an eyebrow at his boyfriend. He could be pretty dense sometimes. “Umm…probably because of that time…you know…when she found you and Mishima in the hallway…”

“Gross, were you two making out in school?” Ann asked.

“Uh, no, we weren’t together then,” Ryuji said with annoyance. “Man, but seriously…? Why’d she go and have to do that…”

“Well, at least you and I should go,” Akira said. Kawakami really was serious about the whole going the distance thing. As if he didn’t have enough commitments. “For the first meeting anyway. She won’t say it, but I know she thought of doing it for our benefit. And I’d feel bad if no one showed up…which I feel like is a real possibility if we don’t show.” He looked over at Mishima. “You want to come?”

“Umm…” Mishima shrugged his shoulders. “I guess…? I’m not really sure what it’d be about, but if you guys are going…”

“I’d go, but I have a modeling session today,” Ann said. “And I really have to make it if I’m going to beat that Mika!”

“Shit, I wish I had an excuse…” Ryuji said. Akira gave him a nudge with his elbow. “I mean, not cause I want to bail on Kawakami, just…I feel like she’s gonna ask us to talk about our feelings and…I don’t really want to do that except with you guys, you know?”

“It’s ok, I’m sure she won’t make you talk if you don’t want to,” Akira reassured him. “Besides, I’m sure she put a ton of work into researching how to best go about this over the summer. I think it’ll go better than you think.”

———

Ryuji, Akira, Mishima and the girl who singlehandedly ran the newspaper club sat in a semicircle of desks set up around Kawakami, who stood at the conductor’s stand at the front of the room. Ryuji looked up at Kawakami with a bored expression on his face, while Mishima’s expression was more apprehensive. “Ok, so I assume you’re all here because you saw the posters I had put up around the school,” Kawakami began. “I started this club because I-”

“Ain’t that someone at the door?” Ryuji interrupted, pointing at a silhouette outlined against the frosted glass of the band room. The figure seemed to be paused in front of the door, its hand outstretched to grasp the doorknob, but hesitant to enter.

“Uhh…shouldn’t we let whoever it is in?” Ryuji asked after several seconds. “Door ain’t locked though…”

Finally, the door opened with a click, revealing Nakaoka from the track team. He darted into the room and closed the door behind him before selecting a seat on the edge of the circle, next to Ryuji, to whom he gave a small, almost relieved smile. Ryuji returned the smile with a smirk of his own and a small wave, but on his other side, Akira could see Mishima looking at Nakaoka with conflicting emotions on his face.

“Right, so as I was saying, I started this club because I realized that this school isn’t necessarily a safe
place for all of its students.” As Kawakami said this, she seemed to be deliberately avoiding eye contact with Ryuji, who had adopted a more defiant facial expression. Nakaoka shrank back in his chair, his face red with shame. “In short, the idea of this club is to be a place for you to feel okay about being yourself in school, even if you don’t feel safe elsewhere here. It’s also a place for you to be able to see you’re not alone, and that there are people going through the same thing you are, and people like me who aren’t, but will support you regardless. So…why don’t we start by going around the circle and introducing ourselves? If you’d like, tell us something about yourself and why you decided to come here today.” She pointed at the newspaper girl. “Why don’t we start with you…?”

“Oh!” The girl blushed slightly, seeming a bit flustered at being singled out. “I’m…Ichika Ohya…” she began. “Anyway…I run the school newspaper, and I thought that maybe I could help out by doing a spotlight on the club. Not naming any names or giving away any kind of identifying information of course…my idea is just that people will be more welcoming if they know something about you…umm…us, I guess. If that makes sense?”

“Ichiko?” Akira asked. “Any relation to the journalist?”

“Umm, yes, actually,” Ichika said. “I’m surprised you read those kinds of entertainment articles, Kurusu-kun. But yes, Ichiko Ohya is my aunt.”

“Thank you, Ichiko-chan, that’s very generous of you,” Kawakami said. “Just as a precaution, I’d appreciate it if you gave me your article to proofread before you publish it.” Ichika nodded, and Kawakami turned to Akira. “You’re next, Kurusu-kun.”

“I’m Kurusu Akira. I’m a transfer student. Everyone at school thinks I’m some kinda violent criminal…so them giving me shit for being bi is honestly kind of a relief,” Akira admitted. “Though I guess everyone thinks I’m gay because of that Risette tweet.” I’m not doing much to disprove that theory…dating two guys and all.

“…right…” Kawakami said. “Umm…Mishima-kun, how about you?”

“Errr…right, I’m Yuuki Mishima, but everyone just calls me Mishima,” Mishima began. “I’m…gay. It took me a while to admit that to myself…but since then I’ve found a really great group of friends that supports me. And…” he swung his head to look at both Ryuji and Akira. “I’m really grateful.”

“Thank you, Mishima,” Kawakami said. “Sakamoto-kun, how about you?”

“I’m Ryuji Sakamoto. I like girls, but I like guys too. Heh, mostly guys lately though.” He gave Akira and Mishima a cocky smirk, and Akira felt his heart leap a little in his chest. Damn him for being so cute. “That’s all I got to say for now.”

Kawakami turned to Nakaoka. “My name’s Kobayashi Nakaoka,” he said, his gaze firmly fixed on his desk. “I came here because…well, because I had decided that I’d stop lying to myself about who I liked…or I guess, what kind of person I liked. But it’s harder to live free like that than I thought…my friends are pretty much all on the track team, and sometimes they say stuff that’s anti-gay or whatever, and I feel like all I can do is laugh along with them or I’ll lose them… I even had a hard time coming in here, knowing that everyone here would be okay with who I am…”

Nakaoka looked up suddenly, his face a bit chagrined. “Sorry for talking so long.” He met Akira’s gaze and flinched a little. “…sorry.”

“Thank you for sharing, Nakaoka-kun,” Kawakami said. “Does anyone want to say anything in response to anything that anyone else shared?”
Akira’s breath caught in his throat. He got the sense that he should say something, but he wasn’t sure what. Part of him still wanted to punch Nakaoka in the face for what he’d done to Ryuji…but after changing his heart, there wasn’t any point to that besides making him feel better. The silence dragged on for several more seconds.

“I think I know how you feel,” Akira said finally. “When I got arrested…everyone I thought was my friend in my hometown abandoned me. Kind of the worst case scenario you’re imagining, right, Nakaoka? I mean, I haven’t gotten a single phone call from anyone in my hometown, not even my parents, since I got here.”

“I’m not going to lie to you, Nakaoka,” Akira said, looking the other boy squarely in the eye. “It hurt a lot. It felt like something heavy was sitting on my chest all the time, and I wanted to scream at everyone I knew for just…I don’t know, ghosting me. And then my parents decided the best thing for me was to move away from home for a year to be on probation….” Akira laughed, and he noted with some satisfaction that the noise of it startled Kawakami and Ichiko, enraptured as they were in his story. “Turns out they were right, I guess, though not in the way they probably thought. I believe I’ve met the best people in the world here. People who gave me a chance, even knowing about my past, and who have stuck by me. I wouldn’t trade those relationships for anything.” He sighed. “I guess I’m the one being longwinded now. What I’m trying to say is this…worst case scenario, it’ll hurt a lot…and I don’t want to tell you to just come out, because I don’t know your family situation. But what I will say is that if it does hurt…it’s not going to hurt forever. There’ll be people to help pick you up, if you let them. And even though I can’t speak for them, I imagine that everyone here is happy to be there for you.”

“He’s right,” Ryuji said. “We all know what it’s like. I’m a fuckin’ delinquent too, ya know?”


“Oh sh-! I mean, crap…! My bad…geez, what was I sayin’? Oh yeah, my uh…crap’s the same as Akira’s really. Everyone thought…or I guess thinks that I’m just a bad guy with a bad dad, and that’s who I’m always gonna be. I thought that too. But it ain’t true. People are prolly gonna sling a ton of sh- crap at you, Nakaoka. But it’ll all be BS. It’s hard, but you just gotta hold your head up high, knowin’ it ain’t true, and knowin’ that you’re doin’ some good in the world by bein’ in it. I think that’s the way you can feel free…that’s how I do it, anyway.”

“Wow…” Nakaoka’s voice sounded a little choked up. “I…thank you, Kurusu-kun, Ryuji. That actually…makes me feel a little better.”

“Sure thing,” Ryuji made finger guns at him. “If you want, let’s go get Ogikubo after this. It’ll be like old times, huh?”

Nakaoka nodded, his face surprised, but pleasantly so. “Yeah…yeah ok. Thanks, Ryuji.”

/scene

Chapter End Notes

I wish that P5 had clubs in it, but I get why they didn't because of the whole Akira being ostracized thing. I think I like how this turned out? Please let me know what you think in the comments :)}
Akira

Chapter Summary

Mishima shares some insecurities, Akechi confides in Akira, and a little extra bonus at the end

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

“So what did you think of the club?” Akira asked. He and Mishima were riding the train together, after Ryuji and Nakaoka had headed off to Ogikubo. The other boy was quieter than usual.

“It was better than being beaten upside the head with a volleyball,” Mishima joked. “It was more fun than I thought it’d be. I guess I didn’t realize how nice it is to hang out with people that are like…your community, you know?”

“Yeah, I know what you mean,” Akira said. They lapsed into another silence.

“Is everything ok? Are you not feeling well?” Akira asked.

“Huh? Oh…no, it’s not that. I don’t know…I’m just thinking about Ryuji and Nakaoka,” Mishima said. “It’s just…no, it’s dumb.”

“Hey…” Akira put his arm around Mishima’s waist and pulled him in for a one-armed hug. “You can tell me anything. No judgment, I promise.”

“It’s silly…I just keep thinking like…Nakaoka’s on the track team, he and Ryuji have history, Nakaoka’s got a crush on him, and he’s in better shape than me because he’s on the track team, and what if Ryuji realizes he’d rather be with him than with me and-”

“Mishima, take a breath,” Akira said, and Mishima took a deep breath before looking up at him sheepishly.

“Sorry,” he said.

“Hey, it’s ok to feel insecure,” Akira said. “Everyone does sometimes…but you have to trust Ryuji…and trust me. We’re not leaving you. You’re exactly what we’re looking for in a boyfriend.”

Mishima blushed, and Akira felt his heart skip a beat for the sheer cuteness of this boy. “Thanks, Akira. I don’t mean to doubt either of you…just other stuff is going on in my life right now.”

“What’s wrong? Anything I can help with?” Akira asked.

“No, not really. Just the usual stuff, but worse,” Mishima said. “My dad’s been working all the time…more so than he does usually, I mean. If it wasn’t for me seeing my mom doing his laundry, I wouldn’t even be sure he was even coming home at all.”

“Your dad works for Okumura Foods, right?” Akira asked.
“Yeah,” Mishima nodded. “Ever since he got that management position, he’s been working extra hard so we can afford the apartment we’re in now. And it’s a nice apartment…I just miss seeing him.”

“That sucks…” Akira said. “I take it you’re close?”

“Mhmm,” Mishima said, though his face grew a little sad. “Or, we were…my mom…well, my biological mom’s dead. She died when I was really young. My uh…stepmom…she’s…she’d rather watch TV than hang out with me, and that’s fine, I guess. But my dad…he’s the whole reason that I’m into like, film and stuff. When I was younger, we’d always stay up late watching movies, usually like, old ones or American ones, and we’d act out our favorite scenes together. Heh, it probably went on longer than it’s cool to admit…but it’s been years since the last time. And it’s been weeks since we last even talked…”

“Oh, Mishima, I’m sorry…” Akira buried his nose in the other boy’s hair, and Mishima let his head rest on Akira’s chest. “I’m…I’m sure your dad still cares about you and loves you. He just…he just feels like working that job and providing for you and your stepmom is the best way to show that he cares about you.”

“How do you know that?” Mishima asked, his voice a little thick.

“I guess…same thing happened to me and my dad,” Akira said. “He started working a lot more, we stopped doing things together. And then…years after it started, we talked…and we realized that we didn’t know anything about each other anymore, not really. And it felt so awkward that…it just never happened again. I…”

“Akira…I don’t want that to happen…” Mishima said. “I just…I need my dad in my life…he’s a big part of who I am. What do I do?”

“My advice is to talk to him and tell him what you’ve told me,” Akira said. “Give him a call if you can’t at home…and…worst comes to worst…we can always see if we can find him in Mementos. Just you and me, if you want.”

Mishima nodded into Akira’s chest. He seemed to radiate a life-giving heat that suffused Akira’s body with love and protectiveness. “You’re right…I’m going to do that as soon as I get home. Thanks, Akira. You’re the best!” God, the earnestness of Mishima’s face…Akira couldn’t help but swoop down and give him a quick kiss on the lips. Mishima’s lips were so soft, like tiny little pillows that Akira could collapse onto.

Mishima blushed again, and he smiled shyly. “Well…you are. Anyway…this is my stop. I’m going to do what you said. I’ll let you know how it goes…see you tomorrow!”

———

Akira pushed open the door to Leblanc. A familiar, brown-haired figure sat at the counter, a steaming cup of coffee in front of him. Goro Akechi…Sojiro watched his only customer warily, but Akira could tell that Sojiro was at least partly pleased that the so-called second Detective Prince was frequenting his establishment and enjoying his coffee. Morgana let out a suspicious hiss from inside Akira’s bag. “What’s he doing here?”

“Oh, hello Kurusu-kun!” Akechi looked up from his cup. “I was wondering if you’d be back before I finished my coffee.” He gave Akira a smile, but it was the same kind of smile he’d given to the TV cameras way back in spring. Ostensibly warm, but somehow empty of real meaning.
“Were you waiting for me?” Akira asked.

“Oh no, my apologies, I didn’t mean to give that impression,” Akechi said. “I’m just here for the coffee. Sae-san recommended it, and mentioned you in passing. I thought I might take you up on that conversation we agreed to earlier this year.”

“Right…sure,” Akira said.

“Really?!” Morgana asked.

“Err…let me take care of my cat first,” Akira said. He walked up the stairs to the attic and set his bag on the ground.

“Be careful not to give anything away,” Morgana warned. “I’d come down with you, but well…I’m not allowed while the cafe is still open.”

“I’ll be fine,” Akira said, giving Morgana a quick ruffle of the ears. “This is home territory. I’ve got the advantage.”

Going back down the stairs, Akira found Akechi staring at the Sayuri from his bar stool. “It’s really an astoundingly beautiful work of art,” Akechi said. “Though this…reproduction seems to have dispensed with the mystery of the original.”

“I like this one better,” Akira said.

“You’re quite lucky to live here,” Akechi mused. “A fine work of art to look at, proximity to the train…and it must be nice to wake up to the smell of Sakura-san’s coffee.”

“Yeah…it goes great with his curry too,” Akira said. “I’m pretty much addicted at this point.”

“Oh? I haven’t tried it yet,” Akechi said. “I’m afraid I’ve already eaten tonight, but perhaps in the near future I’ll try it.”

“You won’t regret it,” Akira said. “As you might have guessed, I eat it almost everyday.”

“With such a ringing endorsement, I’ll have to try it very soon,” Akechi said. He paused, as if considering his next words carefully. “You know, I’m curious to hear what you think. We first met discussing the Phantom Thieves…they’re more popular than they’ve ever been, at this point, having taken down even Medjed…I suppose you feel vindicated?”

“A little,” Akira admitted. “I’ve always thought that the Phantom Thieves have been working to dispense justice that the police can’t, won’t, or are just ill-suited to do. It seems like many more people agree with me now.” He took a sip of his own coffee. “But I would support them even if that wasn’t the case. I am hopeful though. With their success…I hope people are inspired to fight injustice in their own lives.”

“Oh I think they are already,” Akechi said, his expression growing a little somber. “But who they view as unjust has been a problem for me personally at least.”

Akira raised an eyebrow. “What do you mean by that?”

“As you know, I’ve been on the opposite side of opinion as you,” Akechi said. “And it seems that with the Phantom Thieves’ popularity now soaring, people are quite eager to throw me under the bus. I’ve received a considerable amount of hate mail more or less since Medjed was defeated. Nothing that constitutes a death threat, so no investigation is necessary…but many people seem to be
under the impression that I require the services of the Phantom Thieves…that I am in need of a change of heart. What do you think about that?"

“Really? That sucks…I don’t think sending hate mail is fighting injustice at all,” Akira said.

“It was shocking at first, to be honest. And I admit, I have grown accustomed to a certain…public popularity,” Akechi said. “You know, I thought that people genuinely liked me…but I guess the lesson here is that they can be quite fickle.”

“Well, for what it’s worth, I don’t like how people are associating you with injustice just because you’ve been lukewarm about the Phantom Thieves,” Akira said. “I think they’re missing the whole point.” He couldn’t help but grimace slightly. Was he the only person Akechi could talk to about this kind of stuff? It seemed heavy for having only spoken with him the handful of times beforehand. He couldn’t help but feel bad for the other boy though…god knows Akira himself had been unbearably lonely before coming to Tokyo and meeting Ryuji, Ann, and the rest of the Thieves. “I’m sorry you’ve had to deal with that. I…I know we’ve only spoken a few times before this. Hopefully me listening is helping you? I bet it’s hard balancing school and detective work…and now this? Hang in there.”

Akechi smiled, and a hint of real warmth seemed to be present in the expression. “Thank you, I appreciate that. It all still isn’t as difficult as pinpointing the identities of the Phantom Thieves…it’s happened enough times now, and across such different targets, that I think it’s possible to rule out blackmail as the Thieves’ modus operandi. Moreover, the drastic personality changes of each of their three previous targets…blackmail doesn’t do that. Not so convincingly. I probably shouldn’t be saying this to a civilian, but I get the sense that you’re trustworthy enough to not go spreading this around…but the police really have no idea what they’re dealing with here, and no real leads.”

“No offense, but that sounds like good news to me,” Akira said.

“Hahaha, none taken my friend,” Akechi said. “I must say, it is refreshing to speak with someone with whom I disagree so civilly. Although I suppose I really only have my hate mail and the occasional jeer at school to compare to, so the bar is quite low.”

“Well, let me assure you that I didn’t send any of that hate mail,” Akira joked.

“Sakura-san tells me that you are an exceptional student,” Akechi said. “The grammar and phrasing of much of the hate mail is sorely lacking. I doubt that someone of your academic caliber would be responsible. Moreover, you seem the type of person to be comfortable in airing your grievances publicly and standing behind them. I’m afraid you’d be at the bottom of my list of suspects in The Case of the Poorly Written Hate Mail.”

“I guess I’ll have to try harder for Senpai to notice me,” Akira said dryly.

Akechi laughed so hard he snorted a little. “My apologies,” he said after he regained his composure. “Senpai…I believe we are the same age, no? I will say that some of the fan mail I received prior to the Phantom Thieves was along a similar vein.” His cheeks flushed a rare pink. “Some of it even pornographic in nature.”

“It’s better than hate mail, right?” Akira asked.

“I suppose…” Akechi said. “People have some…outlandish ideas about my sexual prowess, I’ll say that much…Ah! I shouldn’t be saying sentences like that in public.”

“I think it humanizes you,” Akira said. “And that might help with some of the hate mail, if the
culprits were here to witness it. It’s hard to hate someone if you really know them.”

“I wonder if that’s true…” Akechi said, his tone…distant? Wistful? “Do you think you know me, Kurusu-kun?”

Akira raised an eyebrow. “What a weird thing to ask…I feel like I know you a little better now than I did before, that’s for sure. Of course I don’t know everything about you, that’d be impossible. But I like what you’ve shown me so far,” he said.

“Truly? Well, thank you,” Akechi said. “Umm…I don’t suppose you’d be willing to share your number with me? It would be nice to chat more frequently instead of having to rely on happenstance. Though I will of course try to stop by here when possible.”

“Sure,” Akira said, and they exchanged numbers. Geez…every contact in Akechi’s phone was marked as a work number. He made sure to mark his own as “friend.”

“Great!” Akechi said, and the faintest spot of pink appeared in his cheeks again. “I appreciate it.” Akechi took a last sip of his coffee. “Unfortunately, I do have some errands to run tonight, so I really must be going. But thank you for the coffee, and the conversation. I hope to see you again soon, Kurusu-kun.”

“Sure, see you soon,” Akira said. Akechi got up from his stool, paid his tab, then left the cafe.

“So he really was just here for a drink,” Sojiro said. “You can never tell with these cop types. He seemed nice enough though. Definitely more so than that prosecutor woman.”

“He seems lonely,” Akira said. “I don’t think he has many friends.”

“A lonely celebrity type then?” Sojiro said. “Well…that’s more than a lot of us commoners have, isn’t it…”

“You can’t buy or fame your way into fulfilling relationships,” Akira said. “And you can’t replace fulfilling relationships with money or popularity…”

“Speaking of popularity, I’m surprised he exchanged his personal number with you,” Sojiro said. “I wonder if he had an ulterior motive in mind…”

“What do you mean?” Akira asked.

“Oh, well…he seems to take care of his appearance more than the average man, he’s deliberately well-spoken, and he blushed when he was speaking to you,” Sojiro said. “I’m just wondering if he’s…interested.”

Akira shrugged his shoulders. “Heh, well…I think two boyfriends is enough for me right now.”

“Two!?” Sojiro said incredulously.

“Yeah, Ryuji and Mishima,” Akira said. “We’re still figuring it out, but it’s been good so far.”

“Jesus, kids today make things so complicated,” Sojiro said. “I need a smoke. Watch the shop for me, will you?”

———

[YM] Hey, I called my dad like you said
And I told him everything that I told you, about how I missed him, and watching movies with him, and all that mushy stuff

And he said that he knows that he’s been working late and hard and that he hasn’t been seeing us as much as he’d like

But he also said that the company’s ramping up for something big that requires all hands on deck

And that he’s going to have to keep the same hours for like another month until the project launches

But after that, he said he’ll be getting a huge bonus

And we’ll all go on a family vacation somewhere, and he said I could pick where!

Holy shit, that’s amazing Mishima!

I’m so happy for you

Any thoughts on where?

I was kind of thinking…Los Angeles

Because of Hollywood, you know? Or do you think that’s too touristy/close to our Hawaii school trip?

I’m pretty sure that even though they’re both American, LA and Hawaii are totally different places

Geographically even they’re super far apart, right?

Yeah, you’re right! Besides, it’s not like we’d have to spend the whole time in LA

America’s a big place! I’m getting pumped already!

Just try not to get wooed by any cute American guys

I wouldn’t do that!

Besides, I already have a blond boyfriend

Haha that’s fair. Though Ryuji’s English isn’t exactly American-sounding…

Or even English-sounding, if we’re being honest

Ouch! I’m screenshotting that burn!

You don’t have to blackmail me into committing sexual acts with you you know

I’ll do them for free

Don’t say stuff like that to me now!

My stepmom’s home!

your_move.jpg sent
(Picture of Akira lying flat on his bed, shirt hiked up to his chest, his pants unbuttoned and his bulging underwear visible)

[YM] holy hell that’s hot

[YM] hang on, I’m locking the door

[YM] two_can_play_at_this_game.jpg sent

(Picture of Mishima in front of a full length mirror on his knees with his back to the mirror. His pants are down to his knees, with the focal point of the photo being his lime green briefs covered butt)

[AK] ok, time to kick Morgana out, sec

[AK] he is not happy

[AK] says I owe him more sushi

[AK] good thing metaverse money becomes real

[YM] omg shut up and send me another pic

[AK] damn, you’re thirsty

[AK] I like that though

[AK] hows_this.jpg sent

(Picture of Akira lying back, now shirtless. The waistband of his black boxer briefs has been pushed down slightly to expose his rigid cockhead, which he grasps with his thumb and forefinger)

[YM] you are so goddamn hot

[YM] I want to taste your big cock

[AK] hell yeah

[AK] I want to feel your lips around me

[AK] and run my hands through your hair

[AK] and taste the salt of my precum in your mouth

[YM] fuckk

[YM] look_at_what_youve_done_to_me.jpg sent

(Picture of Mishima standing fully nude in front of the mirror, his right hand upraised to take the picture, his left hand pointing at his erection, a shiny bead of precum visible on the tip)

[AK] no regrets

[AK] your dick looks so hot and suckable

[AK] I want to hear you moan as I deepthroat you

[YM] I want a close up of your cock
[YM] please

[AK] *your_wish_is_my_command.jpg*

(Picture of Akira’s uncut cock and balls from below, his face visible past it grinning smugly)

[YM] god I wish you were here

[YM] I need you

[YM] inside me

[YM] like now

[YM] like yesterday

[YM] *hope_youre_into_this.jpg*

(Picture of Mishima with his face pressed to the ground, his butt facing the mirror, his back arched down and his right arm upraised to take the shot, his left hand reaching back to spread his cheeks. His pink rosebud seems almost to wink at the camera)

[AK] goddamn I almost just came

[YM] yeah, you like my ass, don’t you?

[YM] you want to fuck the cum right out of me

[AK] I’ve never wanted anything more in my life

[YM] *im_pretending_its_you.jpg*

(Essentially the same picture, but with a dildo pushed in to the hilt in Mishima’s butt.)

[YM] tell me how you’d fuck me

[AK] I’d start slow, letting you feel the full length of my cock with every slow thrust

[AK] I’d make you savor it

[YM] yeah, make me beg you to fuck me harder

[YM] faster

[AK] as soon as you did, I’d pick up the pace

[AK] I’d fuck you hard

[AK] slam into you so I could hear you whimper with pleasure

[YM] fuck yeah I can almost feel your hands on my hips

[YM] I want you to cum inside me

[YM] and fuck your cum deeper into me

[YM] I want to feel your dick throbbing inside my ass
[YM] I want to make you cum!

[AK] you’re doing a great job and you’re not even here

[AK] I want to feel you flex around me as you cum

[AK] I want to be the reason you cum harder than you ever have

[YM] fuck_me_akira.mp4 sent

(15 second video of Mishima riding a dildo on his chair, moaning Akira’s name softly but with increasing intensity until he cums all over himself)

[AK] gfjkal.mp4 sent

(20 second video of Akira thrusting up into his hand, Mishima’s name constantly flowing from his lips before he too cums all over himself)

[YM] that was way hotter than I thought it would be

[AK] yeah, it really was

[AK] I’ve never tried over the phone before

[AK] but it was surprisingly great

[YM] definitely

[YM] anyway…thanks for listening to me about my dad

[YM] I think things are going to work out

[YM] your advice was really good

[AK] I’m just glad I could help.

[YM] Haha me too! It’s getting late, I think I’m going to clean up and go to bed

[YM] See you tomorrow!

[YM] and uh

[YM] I love you <3

[AK] Love you too, Mishima

[YM] was the emoticon too much?

[AK] god no, it was cute

[AK] good night Mishima :*

[YM] good night <3

Chapter End Notes
I didn't start this chapter with smut in mind but I somehow started writing sexting when I got to that point so I just ran with it. Hope it wasn't too jarring from the rest of the chapter lol

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