There Is No Sweeter Innocence Than Our Gentle Sin

by livixbobbix

Summary

Studying for finals is hard. Staging an assassination against an unkillable target is impossible. Even worse? Attempting it all whilst carrying your best friend's baby, of which you barely even remember... well, creating. Nagisa didn't know how his life had ended up like this.

(Also known as the fic where Nagisa gets knocked up through an unlikely turn of events, Karma doesn't know how to deal with it, and the author has no idea what they'd have done if they didn't end up becoming literal billionaires)

Russian Translation now available

Notes

Warning: this fic contains mpreg and ABO dynamics. Also the non explicit implication of underage sex (Karma and Nagisa are their canon ages). Basically: don't like, don't read. This is your warning. On a lighter note, this was originally a headcanon that spiralled out of control. Whoops?

The title comes from Hozier's 'Take Me To Church'

Now contains a few "bookmarks" of good places to stop if you choose to binge read!
See the end of the work for more notes.
When Nagisa felt the bile rise up in his throat for the fourth day in a row, following weeks of nausea, he just knew the fantasy was over for him. Since he’d known what the secondary genders even were, Nagisa had prayed that he’d turn out to be a beta, which was of course the most common. He wasn’t dumb enough to ever consider he’d be an alpha, from his frame alone that much was obvious, but he’d hoped he’d turn out lucky enough.

After a few shameful google searches, avoiding the barrage of pornography that showed up, Nagisa concluded that the symptoms for an omega’s first heat perfectly lined up with his own condition. At almost fifteen, he was the right age for a presentation. The thought had made Nagisa shift awkwardly, and immediately delete his search history. His mum was about to have an absolute field day.

A week had passed since then, but yet nothing at all heat like. He wasn’t concerned exactly, though definitely cautious. He’d had to awkwardly purchase some emergency heat blocker (a deodorant like thing which masked the scene of omega heat) from the pharmacy, just in case anything did happen. Mostly, Nagisa was just tired, sick, and hormonal. He supposed that his body was just preparing itself to change, not that he wanted it to. Nagisa would take the nausea forever, rather than well and truly presenting as an omega.

He didn’t feel like an omega, or at least, how he assumed omegas were supposed to be. Though Nagisa didn’t like fighting, and would only resort to it in self-defence, he certainly wasn’t submissive on an instinctual level. It was true that omegas were less common than betas anyway, but the few Nagisa had met had been concerned with little else than domestic chores and their alphas. He was still young, but Nagisa knew that whoever he was, it wouldn’t be that.

His victory against Takoaka proved that. The exhilaration of bloodlust and defeating his enemy was near deafening, and for a moment he forgot all about the nausea and discomfort. The other members of 3E had gradually left following the fight, leaving only Nagisa and Isogai behind. Truthfully Nagisa didn’t know why Isogai was actually hanging around, probably something to do with being the class representative…

“Nagisa kun!” His voice snapped out. “You look faint.”

Nagisa blinked, vision a little blurry. “I-I’m okay, thank-“ Before he could finish, he doubled over, vomiting what little food he’d been able to stomach directly into the flower bed.

“You should go to a doctor.” Isogai’s voice was gentle, but it had an edge of steel underneath it. Thankfully, as Nagisa’s presentation hadn’t actually happened yet, he wasn’t compelled by an alpha’s command.

“I’m okay,” Nagisa attempted to reassure him, voice croaky from the way his throat burned after the acid.

Unfortunately for him, it had also been Isogai who caught him throwing up the day before. Kayano had been eating fermented soy beans, and although Nagisa had never considered himself to have strong feelings about them, the mere thought of them had sent him hurling. He’d accidentally bumped into Isogai on his way to the one toilet that was actually in the class building to do said
throwing up. Though they weren’t particularly close friends, Isogai had shown the same concern then, until Nagisa insisted that he was fine.

Isogai chewed his lip. “Are you sure you don’t have some kind of bug?”

Before he could reply, Nagisa felt his lower body muscles weaken, and he practically flopped over. With Isogai’s concern, he’d stepped near enough to catch Nagisa before he fell to the ground. For a flying moment he thought that this was the moment his heat was doomed to arrive, which tempted him to use the last of his strength to push the alpha off him. However, he paused, shivering. It was summer, yet Nagisa felt cold all over, much too cold for heat. His breath drew short. What was happening to him?!

“Nagisa kun,” Isogai said steadily, “I’m going to take you to a hospital, okay?”

“No hospital,” Nagisa tried to protest, his voice small.

Isogai lowered him slowly, finding a more convenient position to lift him onto his back. “School’s over already, you can’t just go to the infirmary.”

He was just so tired, so faint, that he didn’t have the arguments left in him. Still, he couldn’t help but feel incredibly guilty that his stupid body was making Isogai carry him the whole way down the mountain, and possibly significantly further than that. During the long trek, it was almost as if Nagisa was dropping in and out of existence. He still kind of felt on the edge of hurling, but truthfully he suspected there was nothing left.

If it did turn out to just be his presentation, Nagisa really hoped that Isogai wasn’t planning on sticking around after he got dropped off, because he wouldn’t be able to take the humiliation. Even if he was confirmed to be an omega, he refused to be a weak and useless one. He didn’t know what he’d do, but it definitely wouldn’t involve nearly passing out. The thoughts kept him conscious at least, if not entirely lucid, until they’d made it to the main grounds of the school. He was thankful at least that there weren’t that many people around.

If they were being stared at once they’d left the property, Nagisa didn’t really notice. All he wanted to do was sleep, but the least he could do was keep his body from becoming dead weight. Isogai kept his mind busy, repeatedly asking if he was alright. He really was way too good a person for his own good, Nagisa thought, enviousness of Isogai’s natural selflessness.

“Karma kun!”

Nagisa snapped out of his daze, suddenly more than alert of his friend. Karma being Karma, he’d skipped Takoaka’s extra training. He wasn’t sure why Karma was just hanging around close to their school, though he hoped it was assassination related rather than general mischief. Gently, Isogai slid him off his back, though he still supported most of Nagisa’s weight, holding him upright.

Karma scanned him over. “What happened to him?”

Whilst Isogai explained, Nagisa simply hung there, limp. When he got to the part about Nagisa throwing up, Karma’s demeanour appeared to shift, like he’d gone from nonchalance to hanging on to every word. If Nagisa had been feeling a little better, he’d have felt more fuzzy that Karma actually seemed to be concerned about him. It was a reminder that they were actually friends, now. His stomach twisted at that thought, forcing him to remember why he’d been avoiding Karma for the last two months.
That train of thought would only serve to make his illness worse, so Nagisa forced it down, attempting to steady himself. The moment he tried to shift so he was holding his own weight, he almost instantly stumbled again.

“I’m taking him to the hospital,” Isogai finished. “Want to help carry?”

“I don’t need an e-escort,” Nagisa got out.

*Karma shrugged, taking Nagisa’s arm over his shoulder to help support his weight. “Sure.”*

Feeling like the victim of some disaster, Nagisa gave up and allowed the two alphas to carry him down the street. Thankfully, there was a hospital not so far from there. It had been a while since he’d been admitted to an actual hospital, his mum much preferring to keep him inside. Due to the heat, the waiting room was filled with patients. Everything felt simultaneously sickly and sterile at the same time.

Like some kind of parasitic leech, Nagisa clung onto Karma whilst Isogai talked to the receptionist. Although he didn’t want to think too hard about what he looked like, he felt inexplicably comfortable, protected. Maybe it was something to do with his newfound omega nature, being pressed against an alpha in that way. If he didn’t feel so woozy, he would’ve sworn that Karma was intentionally releasing a few pheromones to calm him down. Nagisa’s nose shifted as if by instinct, trying to get closer to the scent glands on Karma’s neck to inhale it deeper. For all that Karma was, Nagisa had never expected him to feel so steady.

“Nagisa kun,” Isogai cleared his throat, causing Nagisa to stumble back. “They’re going to take you to a doctor now.”

“O-oh,” Nagisa turned around properly, still supported by Karma’s arms, to see a wheelchair that had been brought out for him. Though he understood its necessity, he couldn’t help but cringe. That lonely, kind of overused, wheelchair summed up the entire day.

Still, he was relieved to actually sit down, exhaustion catching up at a terrifying pace. Isogai and Karma were left in the waiting room as some nurse wheeled him towards some kind of consultation room. Everything was so surreal that Nagisa barely paid attention to where he was going, only that soon the nurse was gone, and he was face to face with a fairly young looking doctor.

Her smile was surprisingly bright, as she glanced between him and her computer screen. “Shiota Nagisa? Yes, I have your medical information here. I’m Doctor Kawahara, what can I help you with today?”

He almost sobbed. “I threw up pretty bad around an hour ago and collapsed.”

“Had you been feeling sick before this?”

Nagisa thought back. “I threw up yesterday too, and the day before that. But I’ve been feeling sick for a few weeks.”

She took his vitals briefly, before glancing back over at his desk. “I can confidently say that you’re showing signs of dehydration, which likely caused the collapse. Have you been making sure to take in fluids in this weather?”

His eyes fell to the floor. “I couldn’t keep them down.”

That caused Doctor Kawahara to look concerned. “It says here that you’re un-presented, correct?”
Ah, there it was. “I thought they were signs of heat.” He bit it out.

“A male omega, then? Have you been experiencing any other signs?”

“Mood swings,” he thought quickly. “Headaches, exhaustion… It’s been going on for around a month.”

“For a month?” She raised her eyebrows. “Okay, we’ll just give you an ultrasound to check on the development of your internal sex organs, and we’ll go from there.” Doctor Kawahara stood up then, moving around the room to pull out some kind of monitor. “Do you think you can get up on the bed?”

The medical bed looked like an impossible challenge, but Nagisa was feeling at least a little better out of the heat, and shakily managed to pull himself up. He lay down, pulling his shirt up as instructed as Doctor Kawahara spread surprisingly cold gel over his lower stomach. Frankly, he had no idea how presentation check-ups were supposed to go. She had a kind of calming presence though, and the anxiety of not knowing what was wrong with him was swiftly fading.

Nagisa had good senses, and he could tell there was a tension in the air that suggested something wasn’t quite right. She moved the scanner contraption back and forth over his abdomen, frantically clicking on the screen, zooming in and screen capturing a few images. He felt incredibly uneasy, like his illness was worse than just heat.

“I’m going to put my hand on your stomach, okay?”

He nodded shyly as she pressed tentatively on one area, before returning to the ultrasound machine.

“Shiota san,” she said gently, “are you sexually active?”

Nagisa supposed it was a routine question, but it still made him cringe. What did ‘sexually active’ even really mean, anyway?

“No,” he finally answered.

She took a deep breath. “Was there maybe a situation you don’t quite remember clearly, where you could have been drugged or otherwise unaware?”

Surely that had nothing to do with presentation?

“No,” Nagisa pressed again, ejecting a certain, shameful memory from his brain.

“It’s just,” she turned the screen clearly so he could see it. “This might sound crazy to you, but look here.” Doctor Kawahara pointed to a shape on the screen. “This here could be a head, and this the back, and,” she zoomed in further, “this looks like a tiny arm.”

“I-I’m sorry?” He felt bile rise up again.

Doctor Kawahara reached underneath the small monitor, producing a tube that looked ready made to hold pee. “I’m going to pull the curtain around you, and I want you to urinate into this okay?”

She handed him a bottle of water like a peace offering.

Nagisa knew he was supposed to trust doctors. Once she’d left him alone, he forced himself to drink as much of the water as he could, and managed to at least pee a little bit. He wasn’t sure if it was enough, but then again he hadn’t experienced one of these appointments before. Once he’d
signalled he was done, the doctor politely took the sample over to her desk, and swiftly dipped something into it.

“It will be just a few minutes,” she said reassuringly. “There,” she looked over at the stick. “Positive. I’d like to do some further tests just so we’re completely sure, but Shiota san, you’re pregnant.”

A chill rushed over his bones. “Huh?” It came out like a whisper.

“Somewhere between eight and nine weeks, judging by the size of the foetus,” she looked over at the screen again.

“F-foetus.”

She looked highly sympathetic. “I appreciate this must be some highly shocking news, Shiota san. Would you like me to give you a moment alone?”

Nagisa just about had it in him to nod.

“He really did that?” Karma pondered as Isogai recounted the fight he’d missed. “Didn’t think Nagisa had it in him.”

“Karasuma just looked over and picked him,” Isogai said, apparently still processing the events from earlier. “And Nagisa took him out like it was nothing.”

“Before getting sick?”

“Before getting sick,” Isogai confirmed.

Karma pursed his lips. Though Nagisa was what he considered to be a master at masking himself, it was odd that he’d suddenly get sick like that. He almost felt… worried about him. That made Karma wrinkle his nose, leaning back more casually in seat.

“Where is my son?!” A highly agitated woman burst through the waiting room, stalking over to reception like she wanted blood.

It took Karma a moment to place the woman as Nagisa’s mother, whom he’d only met two or three times before. Even back then, he’d always been wary of her, like her presence left some kind of invisible stench. It made sense that she was there, though. Considering they were all underage, it was expected she’d be called in.

The receptionist fumbled in terror with their clipboard, stammering out something Karma couldn’t quite catch.

“That’s not GOOD ENOUGH,” she truly rose her voice. “I get called at work to collect my supposedly pregnant omega son, and you can’t even-“

He felt his throat close up. Nagisa… pregnant? That couldn’t be right…

“Woah,” Isogai let out beside him. “I never would have-“

Karma stood up quickly, as if the ground had turned to quicksand, dizzy and suddenly dry throated.
“Karma kun, what’s-“

Before he could finish, he let his legs carry him out of the building on autopilot without looking back.

Chapter End Notes

My main tumblr is Livixbobbieex but my ass class blog and the one I used to discuss this fic is right here.

I recently changed discords so if you want to discuss my fics with me directly, please join this this link (and ignore all others)
“Don’t look at me like that,” Nagisa’s mother said, gripping the steering wheel like she was choking it. He was almost surprised she wasn’t doing the same to him.

Nagisa was out of tears, so he just kept his eyes down, praying the journey would be over soon. All he wanted to do was shut himself in his room and hide forever. Everything felt like a bad dream, like he could wake up in his bed, completely fine, at any moment. He was much too solid for it to be some nightmare situation tucked in the depths of his brain. That didn’t mean it felt real, though. Considering his mother hadn’t let him say yes to a print of the ultrasound, there was no physical evidence of it.

“Nagisa.” Her tone was sharper than the blade Takaoka had given him. “Stop being so pathetic.”

He clenched his fist and kept quiet, staring out of the windows as buildings went by. It didn’t help when he started to recognise the structures closer to the apartment building. He hadn’t taken the anti-nausea tablets the doctor had given him, but he was sure the feeling of impending doom was making it much worse. His mother was silent when she finally pulled the car to stop, probably in an attempt not to make a scene for the neighbours.

The pretence was over the moment Nagisa closed the door behind him. Like the entire room had been doused in shadows. A shudder ran through him. This was worse than when he’d initially been transferred into class 3E, so much worse. She’d been angry back then, livid and disappointed in him. But with the way she was looking at Nagisa, it was almost as if he was dead in her eyes.

“First,” she said with a tone that could be mistaken for nonchalance, “you get transferred down a class. And now this?”

“I-I don’t-“

There was only ice in her eyes. “Call up the clinic right now, I want you to get rid of it as soon as possible.”
He felt frozen. It didn’t feel real yet, and now it would be gone? Perhaps that was easiest, and Nagisa could pretend none of this ever happened. The mere thought seemed to go against him on an instinctual level. He was certain that he had it in him to kill, but something so defenceless… Even if it felt hypothetical, he knew he couldn’t do it willingly. Not before he’d processed it.

“I can’t.” He said, way firmed than he felt.

Her fist clenched. “You’re fourteen years old, Nagisa. You’re still a child.”

Nagisa shook. “I can’t kill it.”

“How do you possibly think you can look after a baby?”

He didn’t know.

“You can’t f-force me.”

She looked at him in disgust. “Get out of here. I don’t even want to look at your face. You won’t be welcome in this home until it’s gone.”

Honestly, he should have seen that coming a mile off. It wasn’t the first time she’d thrown him out, but he had a feeling that she definitely meant it. His legs carried him independently towards his bedroom, surprisingly cold despite the summer heat. He didn’t know how much to pack, so settled for just a couple of outfits, plus his school stuff, or anything else that was completely essential. By the time he emerged from his room, his mother was nowhere to be seen, and he was able to slip out silently, turning his back on his life.

A few doors down, Nagisa stood for a moment to collect his thoughts, before knocking lightly. This was not an unfamiliar position to be in, stranded in the hallway with only a backpack’s worth of belongings. It had happened just a few months ago, when he was originally transferred. Though, a small chill ran through Nagisa’s bones, and he knew deep down this held a greater sense of permanency.

“Oh,” the elderly woman swung the door open. “Nagisa chan!”

Nagisa forced himself to smile and lightly bow politely. “Good evening, Hiranka san.”

She let her eyes rake over him, before sighing and stepping aside. “You’d better come in.”

He nodded once more out of politeness, and stepped inside the apartment. Whereas his own was mostly very clean and white, like something out of a catalogue most of the time, Hiranka san’s home immediately smelt of old dust from the collection of ornaments that covered every spare surface. Though he’d offered to clean more than a few times, the least he could do in return for somewhere to stay, she’d rejected him. Nagisa always wondered if she found the smell comforting or something, like an ancient book shop.

At least she didn’t ask why he was here, a tradition he much appreciated. Nagisa knew he wouldn’t be able to hide it for long, though. Oh god, was he going to get fat?! He made his way to the small, second room. Hiranka san had been his babysitter when he was younger, and the room was like a second home to him. Setting his bag down on the futon, he stepped quietly to the wall, stroking his finger tip against the rip in the paper he’d caused when he was seven.

Slowly, he drew his hand down again, and rested it against his stomach for the first time. It felt just as flat as usual, in fact, he was sure a large meal would have made it more swollen. Before his mother had made him leave the appointment, Doctor Kawahara had told them that the baby was
Nagisa knew that he couldn’t get rid of it. It was ridiculous, but it was almost as if he felt a kind of flutter or warmth underneath his hand. Logically, that didn’t mean he’d actually have to *keep* it, either. There were plenty of people out there who wanted a baby, much more than he did. It would just mean holding out for a few months, in which it would be bigger than bean sized and a thousand times more terrifying. It was some kind of plan, at least. Nagisa felt more comfortable with having a plan.

Eight or nine weeks, the doctor had said. She’d told him that he would have an appointment with an actual midwife, to confirm it officially. Alone in that dark bedroom, Nagisa knew he had to admit it to himself. There was only one night he didn’t really remember, a result of a hang out turned party that got out of control, and one person he’d woken up with in an incriminating enough position. With the haze of the alcohol that had been brought out, Nagisa had very limited memory of what had actually happened that night, but he’d silently prayed it hadn’t gone that far.

He at least had the right to know. Cringing slightly, Nagisa pulled out his phone, opening up LINE.

> Hey

> Thanks for taking me to the hospital earlier

> Can we talk about something?

Under the sweltering sun, responsible for the heat wave that was plauging Tokyo, Nagisa dragged his feet down the mountain. Even Ritsu didn’t seem to have any idea where Korosensei was taking them. All Nagisa wanted to do was nap, honestly. It had only been a few days, but now he knew the cause of his ‘mystery illness’, the symptoms hit him tenfold. At least the anti-nausea tablets had done absolute wonders. Nagisa no longer had the desire to throw up every five minutes.

“Hey, Nagisa kun.” Karma caught up from behind him.

It caused Nagisa to jump slightly, not prepared for Karma to suddenly want to talk to him. He hadn’t replied to Nagisa’s message, and honestly Nagisa didn’t know how to bring it up. Karma was already completely unpredictable, so he couldn’t see how dropping *that* bombshell would go well at all. Making he should just bake it into a cake or something.

“I hear you really did a number the other day. I sure wish I could’ve seen that assassination of yours.”

There was a certain edge to the end of his tone, as if he’d wanted to say something else entirely. Being Karma of course, he recovered quickly, keeping his posture tall. Nagisa had doubts about his fight with Takaoka. Though he’d proven he could assassinate a human, Korosensei was an entirely new ball game. He wondered how well he’d be able to stab a knife with life growing rapidly beneath his skin.

Nagisa couldn’t help but beam under the praise, regardless. Another side effect of his condition – now that he knew he was an omega, some sort of placebo effect had kicked his newfound instincts into overdrive. At least he wasn’t drooling over the scent of every alpha that came his way, but Karma’s approval made his legs a little wobbly.

“Alright, we’re here!” Korosensei finally announced, turning to face them. “Behold!” He pulled
back the bushes they’d stopped in front of, revealing an expanse of water. “A pool I made specially for E Class!”

In the height of summer, the pool looked incredibly inviting. He could practically feel the ghost of the cool water against his skin, some much needed relief. Everybody cheered at the sight, stripping their clothes off rapidly. Nagisa almost did the same, yet his fingers stilled on the hem of his t shirt. He’d spent at least an hour tiptoeing up in front of a mirror to survey his stomach from every angle. There was no discernable bump, but he was frightened to reveal it, nonetheless. Swallowing in shame, Nagisa made his way over to the shade, where a few sun loungers had been set up.

“Nagisa kun?” Sugino looked over his shoulder. “Aren’t you coming?”

His eyes raked to the ground. “I’m still kind of sick, swimming can’t be good for it.”

At least he seemed to accept that with a shrug, not questioning it further. Nagisa wasn’t sure if he could deal with that right now. He settled down on the lounger, the other one taken up by Hazama, and instantly felt better to be off his feet. Though hopefully the sickness would be over soon without the need for pills, it would only make sense that the exhaustion got worse. He forced himself to keep his eyes open though, watching his classmates play around in the pool. Nagisa supposed he didn’t have the right to be a child anymore.

The mood shifted when Kurahashi attempted to splash Korosensei, causing a huge amount of alarm from their teacher. Karma decided to mess with him, rocking the lifeguard chair back and forth, threatening to push him into the water.

“Karma kun! Stop it! I’ll fall in!” Korosensei continued to shriek, until he noticed the class stare at him with rapt attention. “Oh, I just don’t like swimming is all. It’s not like my tentacles get all swollen up so I can’t move or anything…”

Korosensei couldn’t swim! Nagisa instantly logged that in his mind. He’d been writing down all of Korosensei’s weaknesses, but finally they’d come across something truly useful. If they could get their teacher weak, he’d lose the incredible Mach 20 skill that made him so impossible to kill. When Nagisa returned to Hiranka san’s apartment, he immediately made for the notebook he’d been keeping, adding it to his previous list of weaknesses. He decided on highlighting it with a massive ring around it. This really could finally be something actually usable. Though Nagisa wasn’t good at coming up with plans for himself, the endless streak of possibilities.

Though nobody else had come up with anything either the next day, there was definitely a shift in the mood, a buzz under everybody’s skin that they might have some kind of chance. Korosensei didn’t seemed too phased by the reveal, acting like his normal self. Nagisa watched amongst the others as their teacher demonstrated his fake motorbike.

The moment was cut short, Terasaka slamming his way in. “What are you doing, Yoshida?”

“Hey, Terasaka!” Yoshida replied. “The two of us were talking motorcycles the other day, since no one else here is into them.”

“Not only am I a grown up,” Korosensei explained, “I am also a capital M Man among men. I’ve been known to dabble in this kind of hobby. And this baby can hit 300 kilometres an hour. What I wouldn’t give to ride the real thing one day!”

Yoshida pointed a finger. “You kidding? It’d be faster to just hold it and fly!”

Though amongst everyone else Nagisa laughed, something appeared to boil in Terasaka’s blood.
He stepped forward and kicked the bike over sullenly, causing Korosensei to freak out.

“Geez Terasaka, what was that for?” Yoshida reprimanded.

“You apologise!” Nakamura joined in. “The not only am grown up, but also capital M Man among men Korosensei is crying.”

Terasaka didn’t seem to be phased by their complaints. “You guys are just buzzing like a bunch of bugs.” He reached behind him. “Time for an extermination!”

He tossed an aerosol can onto the floor, causing it to burst open and flood the room. Nagisa wasn’t directly close to it, but even from where he was stood it reeked of chemicals, swiftly flooding the room. He found himself spluttering as the air was poisoned by it, trying to keep it out of his lungs.

“Terasaka!” Korosensei raised his voice. “Pranks are pranks, but this is going too-“

Terasaka shrugged the tentacle off his shoulder. “Don’t touch me, monster. You’re beyond creepy – and so are all of you, getting pulled into being all buddy buddy with the monster!”

The atmosphere soured completely. Though Korosensei was technically their target, Nagisa like most his other classmates had grown to actually like him a lot. He’d witnessed it himself, Korosensei went above and beyond any other teacher he’d ever had in the past. Though they were still definitely trying to assassinate him, there was no hatred in any of their hearts.

Karma was leant casually against the wall. “Don’t get your panties in a twist. If you don’t like it, just kill him. I mean, that’s kind of what we’re here for.”

It was plainly a challenge, and Terasaka picked up on it. “You trying to start something? Fine by me! From day one you’ve been-“

He stepped forward, but before he could even lay a hand on Karma, he was grabbed firmly by the face. “Now now Terasaka, if you want to fight, actions must come before words.”

Nobody missed it when Terasaka’s legs shook under the grip. Karma was an alpha, a fact he was making obvious. Despite being shorter physically, it definitely felt as if Terasaka was below Karma’s foot, he himself only a (perhaps overcompensating) beta. With just a gaze, the high tilt of his chin, and the scent he casually released, Karma was easily able to display his dominance. It made Nagisa’s legs tremble, just a little.

Humiliated, Terasaka slapped his hand away. “Let me go! Bunch of losers.”

He stormed off, but the atmosphere dragged behind him. Terasaka’s anger issues were the least of Nagisa’s worries, though the tension didn’t make anything easier. Karma had raised quite a good point, one that Nagisa himself had been thinking. They had the means to kill Korosensei, so why not come up with a plan?

Chapter End Notes

I hope everyone enjoyed :3 I hope the next upload will be speedier, but please keep in mind I work a full time job.
Command Time

Chapter Summary

Following Terasaka's instruction, Class 3E attempt to assassinate Korosensei

Chapter Notes

You may or may not hate Karma after this one...

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Even the next day of school, when Terasaka burst into class uncharacteristically late even for him, there was still a cloud around him that said something was wrong. With Korosensei’s sinuses problem, leaking whatever fluid that Nagisa really didn’t want to think about too hard, the day was already far from typical. He set his chopsticks down, the weird canary coloured phlegm stuff having put him off anyway.

“Oh! Terasaka!” Korosensei rushed to the doorway. “I was worried you wouldn’t come in today!”

Teraska didn’t make a huge show of his touch though, wiping off some of the fluid. “Hey, octopus… It’s time we killed you for real. Come to the pool after class. After all, water’s your weakness.” He looked around the room. “You all come help! I’ll knock him smack into the water for you!”

Whilst an assassination plan was what the class really needed, there was still an air of unease. Nobody had really known where to start with Korosensei’s weakness, so by all means it should have felt like a godsend that somebody was coming up with an idea. But on the other hand, certainly in Nagisa’s eyes, Terasaka hadn’t done much to earn their trust. With that fact, and the aggression from the day before, his bloodlust wasn’t stirred.

Maehara stood up. “You haven’t helped with anybody else’s assassination, Terasaka. And now, when it’s convenient for you, you’re ordering us around… You really think anyone’s going to jump at the opportunity to help you?”

Terasaka didn’t seem fazed. “Like I give a damn either way. Hell, I’d be happy to have the ten billion yen prize all to myself.” He stormed away, yet again.

“Well, I’m not going,” Kurahashi announced very loudly.

“Oh,” Korosensei said confidently, “let’s all go!” As the words left him, the weird fluid began to harden and spill even more rapidly over the wooden floor, kind of like quicksand. “Here Terasaka is ready to assassinate me. This is the perfect chance for everyone to kill and make up!”

Whilst the others stayed in the classroom, trying to clean up the snot as Korosensei rallied them up, Nagisa found himself slipping away. There was something about the way Terasaka was suddenly acting that just didn’t feel right. Whilst Nagisa knew he wasn’t particularly bothered about
Terasaka’s personal issues, he still had this deep kind of urge to get to the bottom of it. Maehara had been right, Terasaka had never shown much of an interest in the assassination before. He hadn’t walked far by the time Nagisa caught up, just behind the class building.

“Terasaka kun!” He called out. “Are you really going to kill him?”

He turned, and kept his voice flat. “Well, geez, Nagisa. Of course I am.”

Nagisa swallowed. “Well maybe you should tell everyone your plan of action.”

It appeared that his mistrust wasn’t badly placed, because Terasaka stepped into his space, yanking Nagisa up by his shirt collar. “Aw, shut it! You weaklings, always cowering together! It isn’t like you’ve got a vision of really killing him!” He shoved him back, though not hard enough for it to hurt. “But I’m not like the rest of you. I’ve got a vision for killing him, alright. Easy as pie!”

As he walked off, Terasaka seemed confident enough in his plan, but not in himself. There was something going on there, something below the surface. Even his words sounded like someone else’s. It was unsettling, and Nagisa had no confidence in trusting him. But Nagisa didn’t want to go without seeing it through, either. Although Terasaka’s plans had nearly ended in Nagisa getting injured once before…

“You’re not going, Nagisa kun.”

A chill ran through his bones, as Nagisa turned to face the owner of the all too familiar voice. “W-what do you mean?”

Suddenly, Nagisa’s throat was tight under the commanding presence. Karma didn’t lay a hand on him, but Nagisa still found himself backed up against the class building under the mental strain of it, meeting the taller boy’s challenging eyes. Finally, Karma really did touch him, holding his shoulder firmly still. It was only the two of them, the rest of their class completely unaware, which only served to make Nagisa feel more under threat.

“You have no idea what kind of plan Terasaka’s cooking up. It might be too dangerous for you,” he swallowed, eyes raking down to his stomach, “when you’re like that.”

So Karma had figured it out, then. Nagisa wasn’t exactly surprised, and he knew that they did need to talk about it, but there was something toxic surrounding him. He didn’t know how he’d found out, presumably the hospital trip? Or had his scent changed that much already, something he’d heard of happening to omegas in pregnancy? Whatever it was, Nagisa hated that he’d chosen right then to complain about his condition. The more he thought about it, the madder he got. Karma was his friend, but he didn’t have the right to tell him what to do.

Nagisa snapped his head around, struggling against the hold. “Let go of me.”

“No,” he said darkly, gripping harder.

“I said let go!”

Karma took a hold of his cheek, forcing Nagisa to look him in the eye. “Oh? So he can speak.”

He was truly seething with rage. With both of Karma’s hands occupied, Nagisa figured the best option of escape would be to kick him, hard. It would probably shock him enough to loosen his hold enough so that Nagisa could get out, but that was wishful thinking.
Sensing the gears ticking in Nagisa’s mind, Karma let go of his shoulder, though moved to tilt his chin up, forcing him into direct eye contact. The toxic feeling surrounded Nagisa, getting progressively stronger until it flooded all of his senses. Blurring around him, the real world seemed to desaturate, and all that was left were Karma’s gleaming mercury eyes, piercing right into his mind. The ground seemed to cave in below his feet.

As soon as the fear had reached his heart, freezing him in place, another feeling began to churn. Something primal just clicked, and Nagisa woke up. His alpha was here, staring at him. All Nagisa had any desire to do was to please his alpha, to do exactly as he wanted. With his legs shaking, he lowered himself to his knees, never breaking the connection of the eye contact. He straightened his posture as best he could, and tilted his neck, displaying his untouched scent glands.

“I have to protect you,” Karma finally said, confidently. “So you have to stay right here, out of the way of danger.”

Nagisa nodded eagerly, though there was enough of him still in there to hate every second of it, to try and strain against his alpha’s will. He was just so dizzy.

Karma took a couple of steps, breaking off the intense stare, though the toxic feeling still remained. “Okay, good. I’ll be in the forest.”

He walked off quick enough to not catch Nagisa’s desperate gasp as he caught his breath again, and the sobs that spilled out as he collapsed onto the ground. Sickeningly, he was clouded by the urge to remain in that exact spot, to wait patiently until his next order. It wasn’t even that he was scared of what might happen if he moved, he just… couldn’t find the will to. It was as if his body was completely ignoring his brain.

Nagisa strained again after a while, desperate to prove at least something to himself. Finally, though it felt like swimming through a tub of super glue, he managed to crawl just a little to the side. With every small movement he made, the struggle seemed to get less and less. By the time Nagisa had managed to pull himself to his feet, taking small steps away from the clearing where their class building lay, the compulsion had mostly physically worn off, but that didn’t stop how fundamentally ill it made him feel to disobey his alpha’s command.

A few minutes into his walk, as Nagisa approached the site of the pool, the ground shook with the sound of an explosion, followed by the screams of his classmates. Either something had gone horrifically wrong, or Nagisa’s intuition had been right. He picked up pace, breaking into a run to reach the outdoor pool.

When he reached it, the pool was devoid of any water, or people. The ground was covered with debris, which Nagisa realised was from the now missing dam that Korosensei had built. Terasaka and Karma were standing there, clearly arguing about something, with the way Terasaka was attempting to loom over Karma.

“-not my fault! Blame the guy who made me go through with it! He’s the guy that got everyone swept away!”

Without hesitation, Karma stepped forward, expertly levelling out his weight as he threw a hard punch towards Terasaka’s jaw. From the sound of the contact alone, Nagisa could tell it was a hard hit. Despite the difference in physique, the force of it was enough to throw Terasaka off his feet, leaving him rather pathetically sprawled on the ground. Now that his sense of scent was improving, Nagisa truly saw the difference between a beta and an alpha. Though betas were mostly unaffected by pheromones, the sheer amount of steel and dominance in Karma’s gaze was enough to keep Terasaka firmly on the floor.
Something uncomfortable churned in Nagisa’s lower stomach, similar to the feeling he’d experienced when Karma stared him down. His throat went dry, and his vision blurred at the edges slightly. It was sickening, but he swelled at the sight of it. He’d never approved of Karma’s more violent mannerisms, but something just stirred within him, now it wasn’t turned against him. Nagisa was drawn to the pheromones, just about ready to fall to his knees again. He was giving off this scent like he was the strongest person to exist, an ideal protector… Nagisa hated it.

“They didn’t get swept away,” Karma said, his tone flat. “You did. If you’ve got time to go pointing fingers, try using it to figure out what you want to do here.”

His voice was so steady…

“Nagisa kun?” He addressed, snapping Nagisa back to reality. “Are you coming?”

Nagisa hesitated, but nodded. As he did so, whatever Karma had managed to do to him broke away. Finally, he felt unshackled, clearer. He turned, and followed Karma down the flow of the river to where the action was happening. By the time they got there, their friends were safe, watching Korosensei fight Itona at the bottom of the waterfall the river now lead to. Of course it had been a sadistic plan out of Terasaka’s control.

“Is this for real?” Okajima said, dazed as the rest of them.

Kataoka looked over at them. “That’s not much water. Is he really that powerless?”

“It isn’t just the water.” Terasaka finally caught up with them, as if his confidence hadn’t just been totally humiliated.

“Terasaka.” Isogai practically growled.

Terasaka ignored the threat. “He can’t go all out because he just got finished saving you all. See? Look above him there.”

Following his eyes, Nagisa realised that Muramatsu, Yoshida, and Hara were all still trapped against the cliff. Korosensei had no opportunity to save him, as Itona was putting his full strength into the fight. Amongst the others, he let out a sound of horror. They needed to save them, if it was impossible for Korosensei to do himself.

Isogai didn’t let it go. “Wait a second… don’t tell me they roped you into doing all this!”

“That’s right.” He sounded almost proud. “Shortsighted guys with no vision and no goals are doomed to be played by smart guys like them…” Something in his composure seemed to change suddenly. “But you know… at least let me choose who’s pulling the strings. I’ve had it up to here with those jokers, and I sure don’t like the idea of them walking off with the prize. So, Karma,” he turned, “why don’t you try controlling me?”

“Huh?” Karma looked him over. He may not be on his knees and tilting his neck as Nagisa had been compelled to earlier, but it was unmistakably a sign of submission.

“Give me a strategy out of that shrewd mind of yours! I’ll put it off perfectly and save all of them!”

The alpha let it seem like he’d been expecting it. “Sure, but can you even handle one of my plans?” He reached over, ripping Terasaka’s shirt open. “You might die.”

Terasaka was only fired up by that. “Oh, I’ll do it alright. I’m the perpetrator who gets results.”
Karma beamed. “Okay.” He leaned over, then, spelling out whatever plan he’d swiftly come up with lowly into Terasaka’s ear. Although Nagisa knew that Karma’s plans were always well built in logic, they were always dangerous. He didn’t think Karma was joking when he’d stated Terasaka could die.

Simply nodding, though, Terasaka made his way swiftly down the cliff, jumping into the water. Though they couldn’t hear exactly what he was saying from their position, the action became quite clear. He stripped off his shirt, standing directly in Itona’s path, like he was tempting a wild bull in a ring or something. Waves of dread set over Nagisa.

He couldn’t help but step forward. “Karma kun-“

Karma didn’t rip his eyes away. “It’s alright. Shiro’s not out to kill us students. And it’s precisely because we’re alive that Korosensei’s attention is divided. Even Hara san; she might look like she’s in a pinch, but Itona’s attacks won’t be aimed at her. It’s like I told Terasaka: he’ll hit you with a tentacle hard enough to knock you out, but you take that speed and power like your life depended on it.”

Like some kind of fortune teller, Itona whipped out one of his tentacles, but Terasaka was ready for it, wrapping the appendage in his discarded shirt as he was shoved backwards in the water.

“Terasaka’s still wearing yesterday’s shirt,” Karma continued calmly. “Which means it got a direct hit at point blank range from whatever was in that weird spray. That’s sure to have an effect on Itona. So, having made a chink in his defences, the octopus…” he paused, as Korosensei quickly flew up the cliff in the confusion “…can rescue Hara san. His weak points are the same as Korosensei’s, right? So all we have to do is use his same tricks right back on him.”

With everyone catching on, they leapt into the water and began splashing Itona’s tentacles with water. Nagisa was tempted to join them, but then Karma gave him another shot of that moody glare, forcing him to hold back the whimper that built in his throat. Nagisa’s feet were glued to the grass again, even as Karma leapt down onto a rock.

“You’ve absorbed a lot, I see,“ he addressed loudly. “Your advantage is dwindling.”

Nagisa couldn’t hear the rest as he spoke lower, but it was obvious that Itona had lost as the others surrounded him, ready to douse him in more water. Swiftly, Itona and Shiro surrendered, wandering off together in the opposite direction. Though he hadn’t been allowed to do anything, Nagisa felt the high of victory rush through him.

When Karma was dragged down from the rock by Terasaka, and then attacked with water by the others, Nagisa couldn’t help but see a completely different, careless person. He didn’t know what he’d been thinking, letting Karma threaten his brain with his power like that. The shroud was gone from his eyes. Karma was not his alpha. He might be, Nagisa’s insides churned as he thought of it, the father of whatever was growing inside him, but that didn’t give him an automatic claim. It had been a while since they had classes on secondary gender dynamics, but Nagisa knew that the only way Karma had any rights over him would be if they’d actually bonded.

He turned away from the post-crisis fun, deciding to grab his things and make a trip to the public library before returning to Hiranka san’s apartment. Nagisa would never let Karma, or any other alpha for that matter, take control of him like that again. If he was doomed to be an omega, he was going to learn as much as he could to fight against any part of it that made him weak.
Thank you for reading! All your comments mean the world to me! If anyone has any questions about my ABO universe, don't hesitate to ask.
Bet Time

Chapter Summary

Studying for finals commences, and the E Class have a run in with the Five Virtuosos in the library.

Chapter Notes

Quick reminder again that I do not claim to own Assassination Classroom, and due to the placement of this fic, some lines of dialogue are directly taken from the original.

With all of the drama from the past week of his life, Nagisa had completely forgotten that finals were even coming up. And once he did remember, he didn’t know where to begin. In the tiny room Hiranka san had given him, every time he picked up a book its contents seemed to turn to soup on the page. The school system felt so chillingly small, with everything else crashing down around him. Like had been happening a lot recently, Nagisa slipped his hand against the skin of his stomach. For whatever reason, a spell of comfort washed over him whenever he did it.

Needing to distract himself, Nagisa pulled himself to his feet and came into the main room. The apartment was almost entirely open plan, so Hiranka san noticed him walk into the kitchen area, though she was watching some odd TV show. Hiranka san’s idea of adventurous cooking was plain rice. Although that had been very convenient for a few days, the simple diet easing his nausea, he was a little tired of it. Nagisa wasn’t particularly skilled at cooking, but it was the least he could do in return for a bed to sleep in.

Noodle salad was pretty simple to manage, anyway. He chopped the vegetables, soothed by the soft hum of background noise. Nagisa didn’t like pure silence much anymore, it lead to too many thoughts. He brought the knife down quicker, really hitting into the onion. Whilst he was sure Hiranka san wasn’t looking, he twisted it around in his hand, going through some of the basic positions Karasuma had taught them. It was weighted differently, being a kitchen knife, but it was still good practice.

“It’s time to eat,” Nagisa said eventually, serving the noodles.

“Mm, time to eat,” Hiranka san agreed. She at least didn’t seem to mind the different meals, which made Nagisa feel less like some kind of freeloader. He wasn’t a culinary genius or anything, but it did taste nice, warm and comforting. The plain rice had made him feel like even more of an invalid than he currently already was.

“How are your studies going?” Hiranka san asked when she was about half done with it.

Nagisa swallowed. “Okay, at the moment. I’m a little worried our teacher still wants me to score within the top fifty, though.”
She smiled. “I’ve always thought you were very smart.”

Dropping her gaze, the gears in his head began to spin. He was certain he would do worse than at midterms, considering how hard he’d studied for those without whatever mental wall was blocking him. The doubt lingered on him that night, carrying through until the next day. Everybody at school was gearing up in exam preparation mode, settling themselves outside due to it being so hot in the class building. At least Korosensei’s speeding around for extreme studying help was providing a nice breeze.

“Korosensei,” Nagisa asked finally, “do you want us all to make top fifty this time, too?”

“No,” he sped around, “I was too focused on your total scores for midterms. I’ve come to believe that each student should have a goal better suited to him or her. And that’s why I’ve come up with the perfect target for our assassination classroom.”

Nagisa nodded, trying to focus on the English word flashcards he was being shown.

Korosensei came to a stop in the middle of them for a moment. “Now then, as Shiro said, when I lose a tentacle, I also lose speed.” He demonstrated with a government issued gun, shooting off one of his own. “One fewer tentacle and there’s already a difference. See? I can’t keep up the quality of my clones, and now there’s a few child clones mixed in.”

Sure enough, skirmishing around them were a bunch of mini Korosenseis, playing around rather than helping them to study. Science was probably Nagisa’s weakest subject, but even if he understood it he didn’t really want to understand the logic behind why the clone reduction was happening.

“Lose one more,” he continued, “and you get more child clones with the parent clones fretting about how to make ends meet.”

That had taken a tragic turn. Nagisa found himself shifting uncomfortably.

“Lose yet another… and now the father clone has vanished, leaving the mother clone to raise the children on her own.”

Right then, Nagisa wished for some kind of noise to drown it out. He forced himself to turn away from the dramatic display. A dark thought every now and then was one thing, but watching his probable doom on fast-forward was too much for a sunny afternoon. Though deep down he knew he wouldn’t be able to avoid thinking about it for too much longer.

“Each tentacle lost is a ten percent reduction in movement. Here’s the deal: the students who get the best overall score and/or the best score in each subject will have the right to destroy one tentacle. This is the final exam for our assassination classroom. Can you get any closer to that ten billion yen prize? That, students, is up to you.”

Something burned within Nagisa’s chest. In Nagisa’s case, then, he should aim for top marks in English. He knew he was moderately good at it, but… the top mark out of everyone seemed almost impossible. But so did assassinating Korosensei. No, Nagisa didn’t want to collapse under the challenge, he was suddenly fired up. If he could get the top grade, and assassinate their target in the process, he was going to try his best.

The challenge seemed to resonate with everyone, as they returned to the class building before the day ended. Small groups gathered around the room, discussing strategies. Korosensei giving that kind of handicap… they had to take full advantage of it.
“One tentacle for each top score…” Nagisa thought aloud.

“Yeah!” Okuda said. “We can do this!”

Not in any group in particular, from his usual seat in the back of the classroom, Karma commented “when are you ever this fired up, Okuda san?”

Nagisa still hadn’t spoken to him, since the whole pool incident. Not that Karma had really tried himself, either. He knew it wasn’t anger he felt, but it was still something uncomfortable that had Nagisa shifting uncomfortably in his presence, averting his eyes whenever they accidentally made contact.

“Well, science is my one strong suit, I might finally be able to help everyone out!”

Kayano smiled. “We have our share of high scoring students here. Acing one subject each isn’t that far-fetched.”

Sugino’s phone started vibrating against the table. “Shindo?”

“Hey, what’s up?” He said into the phone. “Haven’t seen you since the tournament.” He paused for a moment, before laughing lightly. “Still condescending as ever.” His eyes then went wide, as he put the phone down on the desk, flicking it to speaker mode.

“-independent study session.” They hadn’t heard the start of it, but the rest of the class gathered round. “Their leaders are the pride Kunugigaoka, geniuses known as The Five Virtuosos.” Shindo put on a voice much like he was announcing the results of baseball. “Coming in at second place in midterms! The socially aware mass media hopeful who crushes the competition: Media Club President Araki Teppei! And in third place: dominator of competitions in the humanities, the perspicacious poet, and student council secretary Sakakibara Ren! In fifth place: the memorisation monster burning with a grudge against Akabane, Biology Club President Koyama Natsuhiko! And in sixth place: the man whose sharp tongue and LA-honed language skills are light years beyond the rest, meeting leader Seo Tomoya!”

“I-is that you doing these introductions?” Sugino questioned.

“Y-yeah, uh- I’ve always wanted to try my hand at announcing.” He took a deep breath, and resumed. “And reigning over all these from the very top, in first place, coming in first on the national mock exams, and with perfect scores in all subjects, the man with leadership in his genes: student council president Asano Gakushu!”

“The principal’s only son!”

“Asano with perfect scores in every subject, and the others with their specialisations make up The Five Virtuosos. They’re looking to keep you from returning to the main campus. If this keeps up…”

Sugino nodded. “Thanks for looking out for us, Shindo. But it’s alright, right now our goal isn’t to get out of the E Class. Still, to meet the goal we do have, we will need to beat the A Class on points. Watch us, okay? We’ll put up a real fight!”

Shindo sighed. “Knock yourself out. The E Class’s fight isn’t my problem.”

With the conversation basically over, Sugino turned the speaker off again, giving Shindo a quick goodbye before hanging up. If anything, the news about the A Class fired everyone up more. Of course, Nagisa had been aware of the Five Virtuosos, their position made clear since first year. He
still thought he at least had a shot, though, for the first time ever. He didn’t want to just get bad grades and accept it anymore.

…Except science, maybe. That battle could come another time.

By the time class filtered out, his brain was filled with nothing but assassination and victory. They just had to pull this off.

“Nagisa! Kayano!” Isogai called out as they left the building.

“Isogai kun?” Yet another person Nagisa hadn’t spoken to since the whole situation developed.

“Want to study in the main campus library after class tomorrow? I reserved it way in advance with finals in mind. They always shunt the E Class aside till later, so this is practically a platinum ticket for us!”

Without thinking, Nagisa exclaimed “let’s do it!”

“I’m in!” Kayano joined the sentiment.

Well, at least that kind of setting would probably help him focus more. It had become a sad trend, really. Whenever Nagisa was left alone, he couldn’t escape the thought of his situation. He knew he’d have to deal with it, eventually. During the summer, at the very least. Almost two months’ worth of thinking. It would probably be physically unavoidable by then, though he didn’t really know. He didn’t know anything.

Through the evening, the next day in class, and even the library, the words started to swim on the page. The longer he stared, the more ‘m’ and ‘w’ looked like exactly the same letter. English may be his favourite subject, but with the level of focus he was placing on it, the more he was getting annoyed with the grammar and confusing spellings.

“Well, if it isn’t the E Class crew!” The voice jolted him out of it, and Nagisa looked up to meet eyes with Araki Teppei. “This library is wasted on the likes of you. Pearls before swine, am I right?”

Unfortunately, that was nothing Nagisa wasn’t already used to.

Seo Tomoya joined in. “Move it, scrubs. Those are our seats. Get lost!”

“Hey!” Kayano stood up. “Don’t interrupt our studying!”


“These seats are ours,” Isogai said firmly. “We reserved them.”

“Yeah!” Nakamura sighed. “And being able to study in air conditioning like this is simply heavenly!”

Koyama Natsuhiko stepped up to goad them. “Have you forgotten? The bad grade E Class can’t defy the A Class – not at this school.”

“W-we can too!” Surprisingly enough, it was Okuda who addressed him.

“What?” Koyama bent into her space.
“We’re aiming for the top finals scores in every subject! Let’s see you try and boss us around then!”

Koyama was clearly offended by that. “Don’t talk back to me, you cheeky bitch! And those glasses make you look like a hick! Right, Araki?”

“Oh, uh huh.”

Sakakibara Ren, during Okuda’s confrontation, had managed to slip around them, much too close to Kanzaki has he held her hair in his hands, gripping her shoulder. “In all your criticism, you’ve overlooked something. See? Here we have a peal among the swine.” He leaned in, making a disgusting show of breathing in her scent. “What a pity, you and I would make a magnificent pair… If only you had the academic chops. Perhaps you could be our servant.”

The display made Nagisa practically squirm in his seat, immediately thankful that he wasn’t really smelling of much yet. A few months ago, he would have thought the display an unfortunate example of how many omegas were treated. Now he knew for certain he was one too, it made Nagisa feel sick. Aside from himself, Kanzaki was the only other omega who had presented in their class, and likely would be the other one, considering it was a less common secondary gender. In Japan, suppressants weren’t available until age twenty, accept from a few extreme cases. And from his brief search online, Nagisa had found that scent blockers were expensive. Kanzaki had no choice but to display her sweet omega scent, and with the bonus of her looks, it was no wonder that she attracted the worst kind of alpha. How long until people noticed Nagisa, and he had to deal with the same thing?

“Uh, er… no.”

Nagisa wanted to scream, as he felt Sakakibara’s (awful smelling) pheromones trickle out. He wanted to tell her how to ignore them, how to turn it around so he was the one trapped, rather than her. But Nagisa had never put it to practise before, forcing him to hesitate. He could see her tremble, attempting to resist the urge to submit to the alpha. It was the exact position Karma had held him in, and not only did it feel worse to see it played out again, but it enraged him.

“Hang on…” Koyama said. “Aren’t these the same ones from midterms?”

“Hey!” Isogai directed at Sakakibara. “Cut it out already!” His own pheromones, much fresher, but laced with threat spilled out. It was enough to make Sakakibara still in his place, unused to dealing with much challenge, especially from another alpha in such a way.

“I get it!” Koyama announced. “So you’re not entirely without academic skill – in one subject, anyway.”

Araki strolled towards them. “Then how about this? Whichever of our two classes snags the top spot over all five subjects gets to make the loser do anything they want.”

Nagisa jumped, as he felt a hand slap down on his shoulder. Instinctively he tried to wiggle away from Tomoya, but his grip was firm. “What’s wrong? Chicken? You’re all bark and no bite! We’re perfectly willing to put our lives on the line.”

He was close, too close. In one swift movement, a blur that Tomoya would barely be able to see, Nagisa had his pen at the boy’s throat, the nib only just digging into his skin. It wasn’t enough to hurt, but it was enough that the threat was more than clear. A quick glance showed Nagisa the others had done the same, stunning the Virtuosos. That’s right, they were assassins now.
“You probably shouldn’t be so quick to bet your lives,” Nagisa said.

“Alright, then!” Tomoya had backed off. “We have ourselves a deal!”

“We’ll make you do something worse than death,” Koyama added, though without his earlier confidence.

Sakakibara joined them. “You can’t run!”

“You’ll regret this!” Akari joined them, and the four practically sprinted out of the library.

Yet another challenge, huh? After the commotion in the library had calmed down, Nagisa returned to his book, seeing the words clearly.

Chapter End Notes

As always, I thank you for all your notes and comments, they're much appreciated <3

(I promise a lot of this is set up, Karma and Nagisa will have a long conversation about all this... eventually :D)
Exam Time

Chapter Summary

Following their bet with the A Class, 3E take their end of term final exams.

Chapter Notes

Drama~

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Rumours of their bet with the A Class spread around the school rapidly. The rest of 3E hadn’t been angry that just the few of them had made a bet that could affect them all, though. If anything it was just an extra layer of challenge. Even Tersaka seemed to be taking it seriously. If they failed to gain the handicap, they still had months left to assassinate Korosensei. There was, however, no way out if A Class got to make them do anything they liked. It was too risky, so a serious team effort was necessary.

“Come on Karma kun! Shape up and study well!” Korosensei yelled from the back of the classroom.

Ah yes, there was still that.

“You know you have a good chance of getting the overall best score!”

When Nagisa turned to look at him, he appeared to be sleeping underneath his maths text book. “I would anyway. Your teaching methods are top notch. But you know, Korosensei… the way you’ve been going on about top this and top that – you’re sounding like a regular teacher: crappy and boring.” It was enough to get Korosensei to stop. “Anyway, what’s the plan? You know the A Class goons have something up their sleeve.”

Okajima faced him. “Don’t sweat it, Karma. What more does the E Class even have to lose?”

“If we win,” Kurahashi stood up, “we can make them do anything! I’d like them to let us use the cafeteria!”

Korosensei laughed. “I have an idea about that. What if we make them hand this over?” He sped to the front of the classroom, brandishing a copy of the school pamphlet. “You’ve already been at the bottom of the heap. That’s why I’d like you to experience a lively battle for the top. An assassin must aim for the top – and take it down.”

He really liked the sound of that. Not that Nagisa really felt like he was aiming to get back to the ‘top’ or regular class. Even in Class D, Nagisa had always been looking up from the bottom. The only difference now was that instead of having no goal, nothing at all to work towards, they had a collective target. Assassinate Korosensei, and destroy the A Class’ reputation. It didn’t seem impossible. With everyone working so hard together to reach that goal, it was almost as if it was
just within their grasp. Well, everyone except Karma, it seemed.

Karma… He had no idea what was going on with Karma. His laziness wasn’t exactly unheard of, for sure, but if anything the chance at assassinating Korosensei was something Nagisa thought would motivate him. It was true that he hadn’t joined in on the pool plan, but Nagisa assumed that was more to do with his mistrust of Terasaka. For a moment, Nagisa worried that it could be something to do with him.

Maybe it was selfish, but Nagisa couldn’t bring himself to ask and find out. He didn’t want to. There was no denying that he’d have to, eventually. But that day wasn’t here yet. He hadn’t been doing it consciously, but Nagisa begun to realise he was definitely avoiding Karma. Since the whole pool incident initially, but even more so following the bet with the A Class.

Even the next day, before their first exam started, Nagisa made sure to get there as early as possible. He wasn’t the first one there, in fact Nakamura joined him on the way in. It didn’t matter though, because Karma was bound to get there as late as possible, by which point Nagisa could keep his eyes firmly on his own desk. Which he did, once the rest of their class eventually filed in.

The thing about exams is that they can feel like a blur and like an eternity at the same time. By the time they were allowed to flip the papers over and start writing, Nagisa’s hand was writing the answers almost independently from the rest of his body. Answer after answer was just coming to him like they hadn’t before. The questions during the English test were nothing worse than he’d already practised. In fact, having been instructed to read the books in both Japanese and English, Nagisa found it pretty easy to imitate the original style.

They weren’t all that easy. In fact, Nagisa still felt himself get stuck on some of the same science questions that had always confused him so much. But for some reason it didn’t make him lose energy and give up. This is what they’d prepared for, even. Nagisa just gave it the best shot he could, and soon enough the two day exam period was over. After that, it was just a waiting game, until they were graded and revealed to the class.

“Well, class,” Korosensei placed the sealed results envelopes down on the desk, a few days later. “Your scores in all subjects have arrived.”

The tension was so thick even Karasuma wouldn’t have been able to slice through it. A few tallies were taking place around the room, ready to determine the results of the bet, but everyone else was on the edge of their seats. Nagisa found himself gripping his thumb desperately, his toes curling in anticipation for the results.

“Here goes. Starting with English: First in the E Class and first in the grade… Nakamura Rio!”

Although there was a slight drop in his stomach that he hadn’t come first, Nagisa couldn’t help but feel the taste of victory, and proud of Nakamura. When he turned his head, she looked confident beside him, as if she’d already known what the results would have been. Beating the A Class though… it felt very real suddenly.

“What that!” She smirked, fanning herself.

“Perfect,” Korosensei said as she approached him at the front of the class to collect her results sheet. “Though your motivation had a whimsical side that worried me.”

“There’s ten billion at stake here! Don’t forget about the tentacle now, Korosensei.”

His face flashed red, as he always did when they were correct. “I won’t.”
“Nagisa kun,” Nagisa was thrown back slightly at the surprise force of Korosensei speeding around the room to put their results papers in their hands. “You put up a good fight, but you haven’t kicked your habit of making spelling mistakes when it really counts.”

Sixth. Nagisa had come sixth! It was the highest he’d ever scored in any subject during their time in junior high. He’d even managed to score a ninety one. That reality, despite not coming out on top, meant he couldn’t be disappointed. In fact, for the first time in a while, he felt proud of himself. Now he just needed to keep improving.

“Still,” Korosensei continued, “top marks in a subject means that’s one tentacle down.” He put a little flag on one of them, to symbolise it. “Let’s wait until I’ve read all the scores to see if we have something to celebrate. Next up is Japanese: First in the E Class… Kanzaki Yukiko! However! First in the grade goes to Asano Gakushu of the A Class!”

It was disappointing, but Kanzaki looked no less happy as she approached the front of the class to receive her results. It wasn’t over yet, the bet was still entirely winnable.

“Kanzaki san,” Korosensei said, “you did an excellent job. And that’s enough.”

“Asano can really nab those points,” Maehara complained, leaning on his desk.

“He’s crazy tough,” Mimura said, “Nakamura only beat him in English by a single point.”

Isogai sighed. “That’s the top in the nation for you. No chinks – not in any subject. They’re collectively known as The Five Virtuosos… but it really comes down to Asano. You’ve got to take him down or you’ll never get to the top.”

“Let’s move on,” Korosensei said. “In social studies, first in the E Class goes to Isogai Yuma kun. As for first in the grade? Congratulations! You beat Asano out to take the top spot!”

Standing up in joy, Isogai fist bumped. “Yes!”

Nagisa couldn’t blame him. Asano was clearly the one to beat, and doing that was a huge challenge. Not only did it mean they had two tentacles, but they only needed to score top in one more subject to win the bet against the A Class.

“An excellent job,” Korosensei continued, “especially considering all the fiendish questions you had to deal with!”

“We’re two to one!” Fuwa pointed to her chart excitedly.

“Next up is science…” Sugaya said. “Is it Okuda?”

“First in the E Class for science is Okuda Manami! And… Marvellous! First in the grade is also Okuda Manami!”

She gasped, and Nagisa felt himself rise to his feet along with the rest of the class in celebration.

“That’s three to one!” Fuwa announced.

It meant that they’d won the bet against the A Class. They’d got the top score in the majority of the subjects, and thus put the A Class in their bet. Now, they could have whatever they wanted. They’d proven the impossible was actually possible.

“We don’t even have to hear how math turned out!” Maehara said, as Okuda received her results to
applause. “The E Class won this! Great work Okuda! That tentacle is yours!”

Kimura pumped his fist. “And so is what we’re asking for in this little deal!”

“I can’t wait!” Kurahashi exclaimed.

“So that leaves maths,” Takebayashi said.

Korosensei went to reveal the final subject score. “First in the E Class for maths is Takebayashi Kotaro! However, first in the grade goes to Asano Gakushu of the A Class.”

It didn’t matter so much, considering they’d already won, but Nagisa was deeply surprised that Karma hadn’t once again secured the top spot. Back when they’d met, even in their first year, Karma had already been miles ahead, well onto high school level stuff. Nagisa had been sure back then, nobody was his match when it came to numbers. Although Takebayashi was intelligent, it was surprising for him to best Karma in his best subject.

Takebayashi looked shocked too, as he went up the front to collect his results.

“This,” Korosensei announced, “leaves Takebayashi and Kataoka san in joint first place in the E Class overall, and seventh in the whole grade. Congratulations!”

Seventh place? And first in the E Class? Karma had been fourth overall, during midterms. How had he fallen so badly? Had he really not studied this time around at all, like Nagisa had worried? He turned around, in an attempt to gage Karma’s reaction, but he’d already managed to slip out without anyone else noticing, probably during the celebration. Nagisa swallowed. He was angry with him, but that didn’t stop him from hoping it was okay.

It was hard to judge Korosensei’s emotions sometimes, due to lack of facial expression. “A quick break is well deserved,” he said, and sped out of the classroom.

Pushing the emotions aside, Nagisa turned to Kayano, who was looking over at her papers.

“How did you do, Kayano chan?” Nagisa asked.

She beamed. “I’ve gone up so many places! I’m nearly in the top fifty this time!”

He was proud of her. Though she had studied and worked for it, it was great to see her, and everyone else come out so high. For the next few minutes, Nagisa turned to the rest of his friends, chatting about their results, during which time Karma managed to slip back in again, returning to the back of the class, until Isogai and Kataoka stepped to the front of the class, and got the rest of their attention.

“We’ve discussed it,” Isogai announced, “as class representatives, and we think that the prize we take from the A Class should be a class decision, as it was a team effort.”

“But,” Kataoka continued, “we also think we should use the opportunity to assist in our assassination. Korosensei is already handicapped, and we could increase that.”

Isogai nodded. “If anybody has any suggestions, please.”

Beside Nagisa, Nakamura leant back in her chair. “Korosensei’s biggest weakness is water, right, Nagisa?”

The class looked at him. Swallowing, Nagisa nodded, reaching for his notebook. “Yes, the water is
the biggest weakness we’ve found so far. If even Shiro and Itona wanted to use it, it could be the most important overall.”

Sugino looked like he was thinking. “If we combined all his weaknesses with the handicap…”

“…We stand a real chance of assassinating Korosensei for real!” Kurahashi finished.

“So,” Isogai summarised, “we just have to force Korosensei somewhere with water.”

Terasaka stood up. Ever since the pool incident, he’d been keeping quiet, though Nagisa was pretty sure the rest of the class had already forgiven him. It had seemed like he was done in planning assassinations.

“We heard a couple of the A Class bragging about some trip,” he looked between Yoshia and Muramatsu. “I don’t know where it is, but-“

That was right! Every year, the top students always got to go on a domestic trip during the summer as a reward for getting the top grades. It was unquestionably the A Class’ prize, but now they could demand anything, it seemed well within their grasp.

Nakamura raised her eyebrows. “Isn’t that in the resort in Okinawa?”

Kataoka grinned from the front of the class. “An island surrounded by water, and three tentacles missing. If we work out the details of this, we stand our best chance yet!”

“Let’s have a vote!” Isogai said. “Hands up if you agree to request the domestic trip as our prize from the A Class?”

The vote was unanimous yes. They would iron out the plans later, but it was a real, true attempt that could actually work. If they piled their resources together, they truly could assassinate Korosensei. They could do this, win the prize, and prove themselves as worthy assassins. The plans vibrated through Nagisa, as his mind already began to turn, right back until Korosensei returned again.

“All right, class, you had a fine showing in the finals,” Korosensei said, “taking the top spot in three out of five subjects. Shall we get started with the assassination? The top three can choose any tentacle they like.”

Terasaka interrupted him, standing with Muramatsu, Hazama, and Yoshida at his side. “Woah there, Octopus! We got more than three in the top spot!”

“No,” Korosensei said, “there are three, Terasaka kun, over Japanese, English, social studies, and-“

“Huh?” He cut him off again. “Quit playing dumb! Five subjects, that’s Japanese, English, social studies, science, and home ec!”

“H-home ec?!”

“No one said what subjects to ace,” he announced, throwing the tests on the desk, each with a perfect score.

Hazama chuckled lightly. “Nice that we all had a hand in this scheme.”

“W-wait a second! Home ec is just-“

“Just what?” Karma finally said. He’d looked weirdly shaken when he’d returned, Nagisa noticed.
“Isn’t that a little rude, Korosensei? Why, home ec is the toughest subject of them all.”

Not just three tentacles, but seven! It would be the best chance of beating him they’d ever come close to. There was no way they were letting their teacher get away with not letting them take it, Nagisa smiled to himself, and begun to chant ‘seven!’ with the rest of the class. Korosensei may be planning to blow up the world, but Nagisa had learnt how important the class’ respect for him was.

“Seven?!”

Isogai stuck up his hand. “Oh, and Korosensei, we’ve been talking… We’ll use our prize from the A Class wager with this assassination.”

“What?”

They could truly do this. They had to.

“Congratulations on retaining your individual top rank.”

Gakushu stood silently, his father not even turning to look at him.

“For so I’d like to say, if it weren’t for a wager you’d made with the E Class.” Ah, there it was. “A wager that you lost. The entire school knows all about your little bet. You’ll have a tough time refusing the E Class’ request now. So what will you do? Do you want the school to protect you?”

Feeling every pound of the humiliation weigh down on him, Gakushu lowered his eyes. “No, thank you.” It was never a real offer.

His father stood. “I believe you said you’d put a collar on me and keep me as a pet, or attempt to expose my non-existent secrets. You certainly talk big for a whelp who can’t even win a bet with his peers.”

Gakushu clenched his teeth, body shaking as he tried not to react. It was what his father so clearly wanted, for him to yell and kick and try to fight back. No, Gakushu must stand still, like a statue, like the pawn his father so clearly wanted him to be.

He raised an eye brow. “How are you going to push the E Class back down again? Do you have any plan at all?”

Just stay steady. “Their strongest is already cut down,” Gakushu bit out. “The rest of them will fall again.”

“Ah yes,” he sat back down again, leaning on the desk. “Akabane. You’re foolish if you think that’s taken care of.”

“But-“

The glare was chilling. “I observe all of my students. You should learn to better judge; those who will fall, and those who will rise back up when they’re knocked down. He may very well come after your top spot.”

Gakushu had no words, nothing to fight him off with. He just stood. Better to say nothing at all.
“You claim you don’t need help. Well, I will advise you then. Say, have you paid much attention to Shiota Nagisa lately?”

His brow furrowed. “Why would I care-“

On his feet instantly, his father pounded his fists hard against the desk. “And this is why you fail. Have I taught you so badly to completely ignore the enemy? Well.” His gaze darkened. “The boy is pregnant. Maybe not to an untrained nose, but the stench is all over him.”

That was crazy. Gakushu didn’t even want to know how that had come up. “What? So you’re going to expel him?”

“Hmm,” he paced, “I could. I could also use it to my advantage, an example. You mustn’t be so quick to push away your opportunities. Akabane is young and impulsive, the kind of alpha who would likely be distracted if, say, his omega was taken away from him, especially by another alpha of equal or greater standing.”

“How-“

“Please. It’s as I said, the Shiota boy reeks of it.”

Gakushu swallowed. “Are you implying-“

His father waved him off. “You said you wanted no help, of course. Keep Akabane down however you like, as long as you get results. Do not disappointment me again.”

Chapter End Notes

Thank you for reading! Once again all your comments and kudos mean the world to me <3
The school break finally starts, coinciding with Nagisa's birthday.

An odd pairing.

A violent knocking. Tap tap tap. Tap tap tap. Tap tap tap. Nagisa just wanted it to stop, to lie in silence and stare up at the ceiling.

“Nagisa chan! You don’t want to be late for your last day of school!”

It wasn’t just the last day of school before the summer break. It was the twentieth of July. As of seventeen minutes past four that morning, Nagisa was fifteen years old. It didn’t feel like much of an achievement, though his whole situation was just a tiny bit less depressing. Not much, but a tiny bit. At least Hiranka san didn’t know the significance of the day, which meant no awkward singing or something.

He quickly dressed himself, rushing out the door as quickly as he politely could. Life went on, and they all had things to plan, teachers to assassinate… Nagisa had been dragging himself to school the last couple of months, but finally it felt like his energy was returning somewhat. With that train of thought, Nagisa realised he’d forgotten to take his anti-nausea tablets, in the rush of leaving. The fact that he wasn’t immediately doubled over and vomiting gave him some hope, like those symptoms were finally leaving.

At least because it was the last day, they met directly for the assembly in the main school building first, rather than having to climb the whole way up the mountain. As much as Nagisa hated all school assemblies… It was one of the things that he didn’t blame Karma for always skipping. These assemblies, aside from a tiny bit of actual information, were nothing more than an excuse for anti E Class propaganda.

“Aw yeah, here he comes,” Terasaka announced finally, as Asano and the Virtuosos made their way into the hall, “Mr Student Council President.”

Of course, the E Class were waiting for him. It wasn’t so much an ambush, but definitely a confrontation.

“What do you want?” Asano tried to push past. “I’m too busy with the ceremony to deal with the likes of the E Class.”

“Not so fast,” Terasaka put a hand on his shoulder. “Aren’t you forgetting something?”
The boy’s eyes widened as he noticed the class. As their representative, Isogai stepped forwards. “We had a bet, Asano, where the winner could make any one demand. We sent our demand via email. I trust you have no complaints?”

Terasaka walked around him. “Don’t even try pretending it was all just a joke! We could always throw home ec into those five subjects. ‘Course, we’d still win!”

And, oh, Asano’s facial expression was priceless. Like he’d chewed on a lemon, his face scrunched up for a moment, before neutralising. “You can have your trip.”

The rest of the students piled in, lining up in their designated spots. There was a slightly different mood present. The E Class weren’t just a bunch of nobodies to mostly ignore and jeer at. Not that there was any respect, either. If anything, the rest of the school hated their guts. It didn’t really matter, though it had been a bonus, all of Nagisa and the rest of the E Class’ energy was focused on their assassination.

The speaker, one of the teachers from the other classes, came to the microphone. “Now it may be the summer vacation, but don’t slack off. Er, uh… You don’t want to end up like the E Class…”

The same old drivel, the same old comments about 3E. For once, Nagisa had no regrets. If he hadn’t been transferred, he would have missed out on all of this. It was as Korosensei taught them, they stood with their heads held high for the remainder of the assembly. The group demonstration made the ridicule sound much more like it was, aimless words and propaganda. With the thought spurring them on, it was over in the blink of an eye.

“One for each of you,” Korosensei said when they made it back to the class building, colossal books (at least twice the size of the Kyoto trip ones) on each of their desks.

“Again with the over kill guidebooks!” Maehara complained, attempting to carry his.

“And even this isn’t enough!” Korosensei continued. “The temptations of summer are simply too many to mention. Now, then! We’re about to head into summer vacation, but you have a certain main event coming up.”

Nakamura brandished the pamphlet with the details of their island trip. “Yeah this – what we won in that wager!”

“It’s a privilege normally reserved for the class with the best grades – that is, the A Class. But this time, both the A and E classes dominated the top fifty. You more than qualify.” Korosensei beamed. “Summer vacation! The Kunugigaoka Junior High Special Summer Course: three days and two nights at an Okinawa resort!”

Along with the rest of the class, Nagisa found himself cheering.

Korosensei continued. “So what you’d rather do…”

“Yes,” Isogai said, “we’ll cash in our tentacle destroying rights during summer camp.”

“Seven tentacles is a big handicap. But don’t stop there! Come after me with raw hunger on this island… surrounded on all sides by water – my weakness! Let me be honest: You’ve become formidable students indeed. I’ve already given you report cards to show your parents. These are my report cards for you.”

In a blur, the classroom filled with sheets of paper, all detailing Korosensei’s highest score – a double circle. Everyone had passed their first term, and they’d done it well.
“In the first term you made full use of the basics you learned. This summer vacation, it’s time for plenty of fun, plenty of studying, and plenty of killing. Class 3E, Kunugigaoka Junior High: the assassination classroom! The first term full of fundamentals is hereby over!”

With that speech over, the summer break began. Nagisa had been invited to hang out with Sugino and some others to celebrate, but he’d turned it down. It may be his birthday, and the start of a long break, but he wasn’t in any kind of celebratory mood. He just wanted to go back, take a nap, and start on their summer break homework or something.

Nagisa hung around a little in fact, volunteering to help clean the classroom before eventually making his way down the mountain alone. At least it wasn’t as hot as it had been during the week long heat wave. He appreciated the silence, letting his mind wander to insignificant things. By the time he approached the main building, everyone else had already left.

“Hey, Shiota kun, aren’t you running a little late?”

He felt his body freeze up as he turned his head to see Asano jr leaning casually against the school building. Nagisa’s eyes darted around rapidly. They were very much alone, so Nagisa decided that whatever this was, it would be best to comply, for now.

Asano sauntered closer. “All your friends came by much earlier.”

“I stayed behind to help clean up,” he told the truth.

“No need to panic, Shiota. I caught some of the E Class’ records out of the corner of my eye earlier in my father’s office.”

Nagisa shifted, though it was possible that seemed pretty farfetched. “Oh,” he said politely, “it’s not that big of a deal.”

“No?” Asano came closer, practically invading his air. “But you only turn fifteen once. So much for the undeniable bond between the E Class students.”

“Really,” Nagisa said, leaning away, “it’s not a problem.”

Asano smiled at him. Though by any other standards, it would have come off as charming and charismatic, it made Nagisa feel uncomfortable. It was so out of the ordinary, given how clear his hatred of the E Class had been earlier. There was something under the surface for sure, but why? He felt the unfortunate urge to find out.

“I insist.” His smile deepened. “You have that silly bet still. Say, some ice cream wouldn’t be too much of an extra stretch.”

He wanted to buy Nagisa ice cream? “W-well-“

“Got somewhere better to be, Shiota?”

Nagisa really didn’t, unfortunately. There was no chance that Asano was being genuine, like he felt sorry for Nagisa and wanted to treat him out of the kindness of his heart. Similarly though, there was no real challenge in his tone or stance. Perhaps he was just covering it up exceptionally well, but there didn’t seem to be some kind of mental battle in play. With that, Nagisa concluded that he must want something. But what?

Meeting his eyes, Nagisa returned his smile. “Okay then… Won’t it matter to be seen with a
member of 3E?"

Pacing forwards, Asano shrugged. “Not where we’re going.”

After thinking about it for the last few seconds before he could change his mind, Nagisa followed him. Thankfully, Asano didn’t try to make much conversation. Nagisa didn’t attempt to question further, either, even when Asano pulled him onto the train. He just stared out of the window, at the town going past, gripping one of the overhead straps to keep himself upright.

The questions only started him when Asano took him into a tall building, directing him into the elevator as he pressed the buttons, and it moved upwards. Shortly after, the doors opened up to reveal a rooftop, absolutely covered in plant life. At a better glance, it was definitely some sort of roof garden, though nowhere Nagisa had ever been.

“I thought we were getting ice cream,” he said, after they stepped out.

“It’s over there, see?” Asano pointed to the far left side of the roof, where there was a slightly obscured counter.

It certainly looked a lot fancier than what Nagisa was used to. Most things generally were, but by the looks of it, he was out of his natural element. He took a deep breath, trying to recall some of the things Bitch Sensei had taught them. Funny how some things came in handy.

Nodding with confidence, Nagisa allowed Asano to lead him over. They had a pretty basic set up, with a clear counter displaying all the different flavoured scoops available. However, Nagisa noticed there was a much longer menu on the wall behind, which Asano appeared to be studying.

“What flavour was the least likely to make him throw up? “Uhm…” he thought. Asano waved him off. “Just go find somewhere to sit down. I’ll order.”

Not wanting to argue still, Nagisa found a free table. There were a few spread around the garden, far enough apart from each other that it didn’t really feel like a cafe or anything. They weren’t the only ones there, though on a summer’s day it didn’t seem particularly busy, either. The whole feel of it was that of some kind of hushed secret kept between patrons, a hidden sanctuary.

Asano eventually found him, returning empty handed.

“They do table service?” Nagisa asked as Asano sat down. It took him all of two seconds to realise how impoverished that made him sound.

He shrugged. “With some of their menu, yes.”

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He shrugged. “With some of their menu, yes.”

Nagisa really should have thought this through, rather than agreeing on a whim. He wasn’t even sure he had enough money to pay for this. When he’d left home, he’d grabbed what little pocket change he had lying around, and he’d already blown through most of it in a few weeks. And it wasn’t like he had any way of getting more, considering the school’s policy on students having jobs.

He thought about it for a moment. Asano might be from the A Class, the biggest haters of the E Class, but aside from a somewhat snooty attitude, Asano himself had never really done much harm. Not directly, in the very least. He would still be guarded, highly, but there was no need to be impolite.
Smiling, Nagisa drew his gaze. “Thank you for taking me here.”

Asano shrugged. “It’s not so far out of the way. My father used to take me here whenever I achieved the best grades, up until a year or so ago.”

“But not today?” Nagisa found himself questioning. “You still got the number one spot.”

He sighed. “He still considers it a loss. Any success of the E Class that challenges his philosophies is, but especially when he considers it my fault… Anyway, Shiota kun-”

“You can use ‘Nagisa’,” he found himself saying, “I don’t really like using my family name, just in case it changes back again.”

“Okay then,” he said, face neutralising again, “Nagisa kun, the A Class will be getting our lead back. Once I find out your secret, of course. Say, you scored highly in English. You wouldn’t happen to know what’s behind the sudden boost, would you?”

Of course that was what he wanted. Nagisa took a deep breath in, and increased the spread of his smile.

“I don’t know what to say, Asano kun, I just studied extra hard.”

There was something behind his eyes that demonstrated how little Asano probably believed that, but Nagisa wasn’t so worried. It was the truth, at the end of the day. They’d had to sign a non-disclosure agreement for the government anyway, so it wasn’t like he could tell Asano about the extra motivation, even if he wanted to.

“Hmm,” he said, eventually, “I’m sure you’re all looking forward to that little trip.”

“It wasn’t too much to ask, was it?”

He sighed again. “Your class could have asked for much worse. Nobody from A really bothers with that, anyway.”

At that point, a smartly dressed waiter came out, carrying one of the most ridiculously intricate things to pass as ‘ice cream’ Nagisa had ever seen. It was intricate, an explosion of colour, like something on a tourism brochure. Definitely, he realised, out of his price range. There were even little candy sticks poking out! It looked almost hilarious, next to the bowl of what appeared to be plain vanilla in front of Asano.

“What?” Asano said, noticing Nagisa’s look of horror. “You said you didn’t know what you wanted.”

Nagisa looked at the colossal plate. “T-this is too expensive,” he said, once the waiter had left.

Waving him off, Asano picked up his spoon. “It’s nothing. Call it a birthday gift. If you really must, it’s as I said, I’m sure your silly bet can stretch to a tiny bit of ice cream.”

Finally, Nagisa decided to pick one of the wafer pieces off. His eyes fluttered closed as soon as he put it in his mouth. Sugary sweetness danced on his taste buds, and soon the entire wafer had disappeared. Quickly, he started practically shovelling the ice cream into his mouth, moaning around each spoonful. After a very bland diet, and no sign of nausea, this was the best thing he’d tasted in weeks.

“Nagisa kun,” Asano said flatly, “slow down. You’ll make yourself sick.”
“Oh,” Nagisa licked the trail of vanilla that had rolled down his chin, and forced himself to put his spoon down for a second.

He sat up straighter. “Speaking of that bet. I have a proposition for you.”

“Proposition?”

Asano’s head tilted a little. “It has become clear to me that you will have nowhere to live soon.”

Nagisa didn’t quite follow that. “Huh?”

“Did you know,” he leant forward just a little bit. “That I happened to take a little tutoring opportunity, some elementary kids that happen to live in the same area as you. You’ve come and gone from a different address recently.”

Eyes darting around for the best escape route, Nagisa began to panic. “You’re following me.”

“Not quite,” Asano smiled casually. “I just observe. Presumably the family situation is due to the baby, but I did some digging. I’m not quite sure you’ll be able to rely on the kindness of others less knowledgeable for much longer, especially when it starts making itself more obvious, no?”

It was as if Nagisa’s body turned to stone. He was completely and utterly frozen in place, unable to even take a breath in. It wasn’t like he’d thought much about what he’d do when people found out, honestly he hadn’t thought about it much himself with everything else going on. With his signature smile, Asano was yanking everything to the surface. What was he going to do?

Finally he managed to take air in. “H-how-“

“Yes, I can smell it on you,” he said nonchalantly. “Oh, don’t look at me like that, Nagisa kun. I’m better at honing my senses that other alphas, especially at our age. Besides, it’s like you’re carrying around a piece of Akabane’s scent. Every time I so much as glance in his direction that garbage scent makes me want to hurl.”

“You want to throw up every time you look at me?” Nagisa got out.

“Only if I concentrate hard enough.”

Nagisa picked up his spoon again in a tight grip, a little confused by what Asano meant by any of that.

“Anyway,” he continued, “let me spell it out for you. I have a big house, plenty of spare rooms, and a father who spends most of his life in the school office. All you have to do is ask.”

There was no way he could properly process that. Had Asano, of all people, seriously offered him a place to stay? Before that day, they’d never even spoken a word to each other. Asano seriously wanted something, but Nagisa had no idea what he could possibly have to offer.

“I couldn’t.”

His face flat lined a little. “Nagisa kun,” he emphasised again, “how do think that elderly woman of yours is going to react when she finds out she’s hosting a mateless, underage, pregnant omega? In fact, I could give you clear evidence of her aversion to it. You wouldn’t want to bring shame on her good name, would you?”

They weren’t touching, but Asano may as well have a hand around Nagisa’s throat. It was true,
though. He couldn’t rely on pure kindness forever, especially if it would end up harming her. It had already gone too far. Now Nagisa really thought about it, what other choice did he even have?

“Why?” He barely whispered. “What’s in it for you?”

Asano leant forwards again. “I want all your secrets, of course. Keeping a close eye on you is beneficial to me. Just say the word.”

Nagisa swallowed.

Chapter End Notes

As always, I appreciate your comments and kudos!

(Just as an aside, Asano is bullshitting a lot of what he's saying. He's trying to find an excuse as to why he knows where Nagisa lives, or anything about his situation, that's better than just 'my father told me’)
Chapter Summary

Having accepted Asano's offer, Nagisa arrives at his home.

Chapter Notes

You wanted more pregnant content, I delivered

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Asano’s home was, compared to anywhere Nagisa had ever lived, practically a mansion. He found himself staring at the outside of it, checking his phone once again to make sure he’d got the right address.

“Nagisa kun, I have another gift for you.”

Nagisa jumped at the voice behind him, whipping his head around to find that Asano was somehow there. He really needed to improve on his special awareness and reflexes. Karasuma had given them all homework for the summer, to think of some of their physical weaknesses and continue to train them out – so long as it wasn’t anything too dangerous without supervision.

“A gift?” He asked, nervous at the thought of it.

Like some kind of dealer, Asano pulled an aerosol can out of his jacket. “Scent blocker.”

Looking at the can suspiciously, Nagisa swallowed. It was illegal for omegas to use suppressants under the age of twenty, but scent blockers were as common as regular deodorant. He didn’t know exactly how it worked, but it was definitely the most typical method omegas used to avoid attention, if they wanted. Nagisa wasn’t so sure he was producing much of a scent yet himself, though it must have been enough for Asano to suss him out.

“My father practically lives in that school office,” Asano said when Nagisa was still silent, “but he’ll easily notice pregnant omega scent, when he ever does come home.”

It was a fair enough trade off. Asano had never actually demanded Nagisa tell him any of his secrets from 3E, claiming he’d be able to figure them out. Nagisa was happy to give up the scent he couldn’t even really tell he had. He took the can, shook it slightly, and sprayed it over the glands on his neck and wrists like he would with cologne. In lieu of taking his trousers off to focus on the ones on his thighs, Nagisa gave himself a quicker spray all over.

“Is that okay?” He asked, slightly tentatively.

“May I?” Asano replied, looking at his wrists. Nagisa nodded his consent, and Asano lifted his arm straight up to his nose, pressing close to his scent gland. He inhaled deeply, before nodding. “Just like a beta.”
Nagisa couldn’t help but beam to himself about that. A beta was all he’d ever wanted to be. Maybe, he thought, after he had the baby, he could use some of this blocker and his existence wouldn’t be much different after all. It quelled the dread somewhat. Of course, he would have to accept it one day. But one day could come later, much later.

Pushing all of that aside, he followed Asano inside his house. The alpha pointed out the back entrance, which Nagisa was to use exclusively, and the back staircase to the upper floor. Nagisa hadn’t even been in that many homes with one staircase, let alone one with multiples. Of course he’d taken off his shoes, carrying them in his hand, but he still felt hyper conscious that he could be leaving some sort of mess. The entire place was pristine. It also seemed pretty western, from the layout and design of the doors.

“This can be your room,” Asano said, having climbed the stairs and taken a few steps down the hallway. “I don’t think my father’s taken a step inside since he bought the house.”

Tentatively, Nagisa placed his hand on the handle, and pushed it open. It was bigger than his room was. And it was only used as a spare? There were no decorations, of course. It was more like someone had made a checklist of all the items that belonged in a bedroom, and blindly ordered them all in shades of white and beige. It was more than he could have dreamt of, and in that moment, he forgot that he was meant to be highly on guard about Asano giving him these things for free. Tears started to trail down his cheeks. He just really needed a hug.

Before Asano could react, Nagisa wrapped him up in one, squeezing him tightly. “T-thank you, Asano kun.”

Asano pulled away sharply. “What are you doing?”

Right. That wasn’t really decent behaviour. Nagisa wiped the wetness from his eyes. “I’m sorry, my emotions have been out of control lately.”

Seeming to soften his guarded stance slightly, Asano coughed. “Well. This is yours for now. The door to the en suite is over there,” he pointed, “just... stay put until I come and get you next.”

“Okay,” Nagisa said, finally dropping the shoes down by the door.

Asano made a swift exit, shutting the door behind him to leave Nagisa alone in the big room. With nothing to do but unpack what little he had, he decided to sit down on the bed. And wow, that was comfortable. He couldn’t resist swinging his legs over, stretching out and lying down properly. He wasn’t as exhausted all the time as he’d been, but it had still been a long day. Nagisa’s eyes fluttered shut.

He’d had to think of something to tell Hiranka san, without potentially tarnishing he reputation. Nagisa wasn’t the best at lies, exactly. In the end, he’d told her that his dad had offered him a place to stay. It was, at least, something the old woman would know not to bring up in front of his mother. That way, nobody would check his whereabouts. Hiranka san hadn’t questioned it either, just shaking her head like normal when Nagisa offered to clean.

It wasn’t like he could just hide in Asano’s house forever, though. What it did, however, was buy him some time. Perhaps, if everything went to plan and they assassinated Korosensei during the trip, Nagisa wouldn’t even have to stay for more than a couple of weeks. With all that money, his share of the ten billion yen prize, he could easily just buy a place. Or at least rent, somewhere.

The next thing he knew, he was jerking upwards, startled by a very persistent knocking noise. Nagisa blinked, noticing that the lighting had changed out of the window. Had he really fallen
asleep? He yawned, going to his feet again to open the door.

“Asa-“ Nagisa stopped, noticing that Asano was accompanied by an adult man.

“Nagisa kun,” he said seriously, “this is the family butler, Toboso. I have sworn him to silence.

No way. “Uhm, hi?” Nagisa didn’t know how to speak to a butler. A butler! Though he couldn’t really picture either member of the Asano family cooking or cleaning, he’d definitely never met somebody with a butler before. He wasn’t wearing anything too fancy at least, though he looked as clean and sharp as the rest of the house.

The man bowed his head slightly. “It’s nice to meet you, Nagisa san.”

It was weird for someone so clearly older than him to use such polite address, and it made Nagisa wrinkle his nose just a little.

“Anyway,” Asano waved the butler off, who nodded and left the room. “Toboso will bring you two meals a day. You’ll have to find you own lunch somewhere. Now,” his stare deepened, “we need some ground rules, Nagisa kun.”

That was to be expected. Nagisa stepped aside, allowing Asano into the room.

“Number one is obvious, he sat down on the bed. “At school, you don’t know me. We don’t walk there together, no talking to me like you know me, understand?”

It wasn’t like Nagisa had any plans to talk to him anyway. “That’s fine.”

He nodded. “No disturbing me, either. Unlike the E Class, I value my work.”

Nagisa sighed. No matter how good their grades turned out to be, it seemed the mentality of the rest of the school was doomed to remain the same. Though, he had no real desire to spend time with Asano. But Asano was doing something selfless? Nagisa didn’t really know how to process everything. It made him want to be nice in the very least, or to give at least something back.

“You can go anywhere else here you want, I suppose,” Asano seemed to think aloud. “Nobody over, though. I don’t care how loved up you and Akabane may be, but-“

Maybe it was his crazy hormones, but Nagisa started laughing. More obnoxiously than he had in years. He sat down on the bed, practically clutching his dies as tears of amusement formed at the corner of his eyes.

“It’s not a joke, Nagisa kun.”

“I’m sorry,” he gasped. “It’s just… Me and Karma kun… loved up,” he started laughing again.

“Oh?” The way Asano’s raked to his stomach was unmissed. “I thought he was your-“

“Karma kun isn’t my anything.”

Asano shrugged. “It doesn’t make a difference to me. Anyway,” his tone changed sharply, “I will leave you.”

Nagisa wasn’t sure why he was so desperate to leave suddenly, but it didn’t really matter. After the impromptu nap, he decided to just get on with the homework he’d been intending to do originally. It would give him more time to focus on the assassination, at least. The moment he really sat down and focused on it, it wasn’t that hard, and Nagisa had already finished a good amount of it before
there was a knock at his door again.

“Nagisa san,” the butler said when Nagisa pulled the door open. “Your dinner.”

He wasn’t exactly sure what the procedure was. “Thank you, Toboso san.”

With a slight hesitancy, he came in, and set down the tray next to where Nagisa was sitting. The sheer smell of the rich food made his mouth start to water. A proper warm and filling meal was exactly what he needed. He’d also been brought a glass of water… and a bottle of pill looking things?

“Toboso san,” he asked, “what are those?”

“Pre-natal vitamins,” he replied, and bowed slightly, “for the baby.”

Nagisa shifted. Those were a thing? He toyed with the bottle, once Toboso had left, suddenly put off the food. He supposed, if he really was going to have a baby, the least he could do was make sure it was healthy. Maybe it was a pure omega thing, but Nagisa definitely felt protective. Which made him feel crazy.

It was that thought, lingering on until he eventually fell asleep, that lead to him sitting in the maternity section of an omega clinic the next morning. Nagisa wasn’t generally the type to feel awkward in social situations, but he just wanted to curl into a small ball. The majority of the room was filled with happy looking couples, but even those who were alone looked as if they were around five to ten years older. He squirmed, eyes firmly planted on the floor, until his name was called.

Ignoring the odd looks, mixed in with a couple of glares, Nagisa made the walk out of the waiting room into the doctor’s office, as instructed. It was pretty small, filled with just a small desk, and what he presumed was an ultrasound machine, with a sort of reclined seat next to it.

He was greeted by a smiling, middle aged woman. “Shiota san! Please, take a seat. Make yourself comfortable.”

Nervously, Nagisa did, feeling particularly observed. “You can use my given name,” he said, and then mentally cursed himself to the force of habit.

“That’s quite alright, Nagisa kun,” she softened. “I’m Doctor Shirogane, and hopefully will be your doctor for the remainder of the pregnancy. So!” Her tone suddenly snapped. “You’re around twelve weeks, yes?”

Nagisa shifted. “I think.”

She nodded. “Well, we’ll find out exactly how far along you are in just a moment. You’ll probably be glad to hear, though, that with luck the worst symptoms from the first trimester will start to go. Although, I will warn you, you might start to develop some nasty heart burn. There are plenty of pregnancy safe medications for that, though!”

He didn’t even know there were pregnancy dangerous medications.

“Oh, okay, Nagisa kun,” she said, gentler. “Let’s have a look at that baby. Please, pull up your shirt a little. This gel might be a little cold, okay?”

Nagisa really didn’t want to, but he did as she said, and rolled his t shirt up to expose his stomach. He couldn’t help but hiss slightly when the gel was indeed freezing for a moment, like ice cubes
down the back of a shirt. It was fine after a few seconds, though, and then Doctor Shirogane covered the area with the scanner.

She moved it around a little, before pausing. “Ah, there we go.”

His jaw didn’t drop, exactly, but his throat ran incredibly dry. On the screen, right next to her, was the image of a baby. He’d seen it before, a month or so ago, but he’d barely been able to process it. It looked so unlike the clump of cells he’d been envisioning. There was a head, clearly, a body, tiny legs…

“That’s-“

“Yes,” she beamed. “That’s your baby.”

The image on screen shifted, and Nagisa found himself sitting up more. “It moved.”

“Yes,” Doctor Shirogane confirmed. “Yes, he or she has just developed reflexes at this stage. If you were to hit your stomach, they would flinch, not that you’d be able to feel it yet. They can even suck their thumb.”

She went about her routine of checks, measuring the length of the baby somehow. Nagisa was barely paying attention. His eyes were fixated on the black and white image, watching the baby, his baby, squirm around as the scanner was moved over it. It was hard to wrap his head around the fact that this was all happening inside of him.

“They’re a little on the short side,” she said finally, “but not outside the healthy range. Almost exactly two inches! That’s about the size of a lime.”

Finally taking his eyes off the screen, he looked at his flat stomach, certainly not lime sized. “But…”

She noticed. “Every pregnancy is different, Nagisa kun. You’re young of course, so your skin is bound to be a little tighter than the average person. Because you’re a male omega, your anatomy and the actual positioning of the womb is slightly different from a woman’s. There are a variety of reasons, really, but don’t worry, you should definitely start to notice a bump in the next few weeks. If it hasn’t already, your scent should start to change significantly too.”

Was that what he wanted? He didn’t think so. It would be dumb to think he’d be able to hide a baby forever, but the longer he got to avoid that conversation, the better.

“Oh,” Doctor Shirogane continued. “I estimate your due date to be the 18th February, give or take a few days.” She smiled, and picked up another device. “Now’s the fun part – would you like to hear the heartbeat?”

Slightly dumbstruck, Nagisa couldn’t help but nod. As she had with the scanner, she moved the wand looking thing over the skin of his lower stomach. And then there it was, clear and loud, beating at lightning pace.

Once again, I truly appreciate all comments and kudos!
Technique Time

Chapter Summary

The E Class meet up before their island trip to hone in their assassination plan

Chapter Notes

You asked for baby bump, I deliver

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Tapping his thumbs aimlessly on the screen of his phone, Nagisa read the message over and over. It wasn’t that Sugino was asking for anything outrageous. He just wanted to meet up a little early, before heading to their training. Although it was the summer break, Karasuma had called their class in for a few extra assassination lessons, before the main event of their trip. It was optional, but Nagisa couldn’t miss it. It was odd, how much he enjoyed learning the art of assassination.

His eyes raked over to the copy of his scan photo, resting on the nightstand. Nagisa had naturally been doing that for a couple of days, ever since his doctor has asked him if he wanted a copy. It wasn’t exactly the same as it had been in the office, when he could literally watch it moving, but he was still trying to wrap his head around it, this living thing inside of him.

If he were to shift his gaze down just a little, he’d meet the collection of adoption leaflets. Eventually, Doctor Shirogane had managed to get it into his head that it was definitely an option, though she clarified she was no expert. He knew he couldn’t avoid it forever. Every time Nagisa shut his eyes and tried to imagine himself with a baby, he just couldn’t picture it. It wasn’t like he knew much about babies other than what he saw in popular media, either. He knew babies cried, sure, but how was he supposed to know what they were crying for? He also only had about a five hundred yen to his name. Babies were more expensive than that, weren’t they? Plus he didn’t know how he’d be able to look after it, unless he dropped out.

A baby was impossible. But so was the idea of letting some other people he’d never even met before have his. How was he meant to know that they weren’t secretly psychopaths or something? The leaflets had stressed that there were different types, but the words were swimming the longer he looked at it. He still had another six months to decide, at least.

Maybe he should tell Sugino about it. After all, they were best friends… But aside from having no clue how Sugino would react, Nagisa didn’t know how he could even begin to bring it up. Of course, it was about to become very obvious very fast. As the thought came, Nagisa ran his hands down to his stomach. It was like going to the doctors had cursed him, or something, because even the very next day he started to notice his stomach was not as flat as he was used to.

After the lime analogy, Nagisa had looked up more of the fruit comparisons. Currently, the internet agreed his baby was the size of a peach. After staring at himself from every angle he possibly could in the mirror, he didn’t look unmistakably pregnant, but there was definitely a curve to his abdomen that hadn’t been there before. He could probably pass it off like he just ate a lot, maybe.
He eventually decided to just bite the bullet and meet up with Sugino, though he still wasn’t sure about whether he’d tell him or not. The next morning, Nagisa spent the longest he ever had choosing an outfit. It wasn’t like he’d had much time to pack the clothes he needed, in fact when his mother kicked him out he’d blindly grabbed items and hoped for the best. Nagisa just ended up going for the loosest t shirt he had, adding a sweater vest at the last minute in case he really needed to cover something.

Sugino didn’t seem to notice at all, far more distracted by some bugs. “Woah just look at them all.”

“Why are we here at school?” Nagisa asked, having been roped into carrying a box for his insects. They were just a bit away from the main building, far enough into the forest for some decent bug collecting.

“Well…” Sugino said a little nervously, “I don’t want everyone to see me out catching bugs at my age. I’m a city boy – I’ve always wanted to do this. And Karma happened to point me to a tree with some good bugs on it.”

Nagisa wasn’t sure why and when Karma and Sugino had had an actual conversation independently, especially about bugs of all things. Then again, that was probably just the disadvantage that came with avoiding him for weeks. He probably couldn’t keep that up for much longer.

“I didn’t expect you to come, Maehara,” Sugino turned. “Never pegged you as an insect fan.”

Maehara peaked out from the tree he was leaning against. “Our next assassination’ll be at that island resort, right? Wouldn’t you say we’re missing a little something?”

“Like what?” Sugino asked.

“Money!” Maehara exclaimed excitedly. Although they got along just fine, Nagisa wasn’t really close with Maehara, so any hope of telling Sugino about the baby had been quickly diminished. He wasn’t ready to make it major public news. “You need buying power if you’re going to snag yourself a swim suited babe! That runt won’t do the trick… but a giant stag beetle? Those babies’ll get you tens of thousands of yen! Auction them off online for major cashola- we’ll make at least enough to cover a fancy dinner and a place to chill out!” He sped off, presumably to look for the bugs.

Sugino sighed. “I think he’s forgotten what this trip’s all about.”

“Yeah,” Nagisa agreed. “Not exactly a fifteen year old’s vacation plans.”

“That won’t work!” Maehara stopped in his tracks, and Nagisa and Sugino looked up in the direction of the sudden, female voice. “Giant stag beetles? Those are old news!”

“Kurahashi?” Maehara questioned, staring above him where she was sat in the tree.

“Morning! You’re all here to scrape up some spending money too, huh?”

“Hey,” Sugino said, “what do you mean stag beetles are old news?”

She hopped down. “Well… I guess they were super pricey right around when we were born, but today’s artificial breeding methods have saturated the market, bringing their prices way down.”

“The Great Stag Beetle Crash!” Maehara exclaimed. “I thought one beetle would about pay for one babe.”
“No way,” Kurahashi waved him off. “These days, babes are way more expensive."

“You sure know a lot about this, Kurahashi,” Sugino said. “Are you into bugs?”

“Yes! Along with every other living thing! Hey, since we’re all here… Let’s all go bug hunting! We’re bound to find tons if we all try!”

It was better than being cooped up inside with only Asano for company, at least. He was actually enjoying the fresh air, and the sun on his skin. Even if they were only searching for bugs, it was something that felt normal.

“Mmm pretty nice haul” Kurahashi called out, pointing to a small net kind of thing, holding a dozen bugs or so.

“Woah! Did you set this?” Sugino asked, coming over to admire the handiwork.

“My own homemade trap. I put it out last night. There are about twenty more of them out there, so that’s about a thousand yen a piece if we’re lucky.” Kurahashi explained, pointing to a few other marked locations on a map.

“Not too shabby for a side job!” Sugino sounded impressed. So was Nagisa. If done with the level of expertise that Kurahashi appeared to be displaying, it seemed just as viable as a regular career.

“I hope we caught the one I was looking for!” She said, almost wistfully.

Yet another voice called out from an upper location. “What an inefficient trap. And you call yourselves the E Class?”

“Okajima!” Maehara looked up.

What was with the amount of people hiding in trees that day?

“Pulling in a measly thousand yen at a time? Yeah right.” Okajima leapt out of the tree. “My trap’ll bring in a cool ten billion!”

Was he talking about the assassination?! “Ten billion… you don’t mean——” Nagisa let out.

“Oh, but I do. If we’re planning an assassination on this southern isle, that octopus’ll be letting his guard down in the meantime. And that’s what I’m after.”

He began to walk down hill slightly, and Nagisa and the small party that had now formed began to follow him. He ducked down into the bushes, and pointed over at the clearing. Korosensei was sat in the centre, wearing a weird bug costume, on top of a pile of magazines. With a little closer inspection, it was clearly all pornographic.

“Oh yeah – here we go! He went right for my dirty book trap!” Okajima continued. “Wow. When do you see the speedy Korosensei moving that slowly? That one must be right up his alley… And what’s with the stag beetle dress up? Is he trying to blend in? That’s just sad.” He cleared his throat, tone darkening slightly. “Every mountain has one: the porn repository. The kids who find their dreams there grow old enough to buy their own dirty magazines, then leave behind dreams for someone else to find. It’s a place of never ending dreams!" Once again, his tone changed, like the snap of a band. I’m glad you’re here! Lend me a hand- our porn power’ll give him a dream he’ll never wake up from!”

Nagisa shifted. If Maehara had been crass before, Okajima was bringing their small group to the
“I did some major research on his top turn ons, you know. Can’t buy the stuff myself, but I found a few.”

Nagisa thought for a moment. “Wouldn’t he like anything with big boobs?”

“As it turns out, yeah,” Okajima pulled out his phone, handing it to Nagisa.

His camera files showed dozens of close up images of Korosensei with different styles of magazines, annotated with a few pretty detailed notes on his reactions, and how effective the porn had seemed to be. It was a level of dedication and careful planning that Nagisa didn’t really expect from someone like Okajima.

“That’s amazing, Okajima kun. So for the last month, you’ve been swapping out porn and carefully observing his reactions?”

Sugino sighed. “No grown up ought to be picking up a month’s worth of porn mags! That’s just sad.”

“It’s just like your traps, Kurahashi,” Okajima continued. “You get absorbed in studying your prey for a long time too, right?”

“Yeah…” Kurahashi didn’t seem like she enjoyed that comparison.

“I’ve got a dirty mind. If you want to hate me for it, go on ahead. But it’s only because I’m a super-lech that I know: pornography can save the world.” Okajima pulled out his blade.

Somehow, he managed to make such a statement sound inspiring. He was almost… cool.

“I’ll get him, alright! Under all that porn is a net strung with anti-sensei BB’s! He’s deep in that book now – we can nab him for sure! Someone cut this rope and trigger the trap. I’ll jump in there and finish him off!”

There was no harm in trying. Anything can be a sword if you polish it enough. Okajima’s porn sword might just run Korosensei through. Before Nagisa could cut the trigger, Korosensei’s attention was taken away from the porn, and his eyes extended like a bug.

“What the- His eyes went all ‘bwoop’!” Maehara exclaimed.

“I don’t have any data on that face!” Okajima looked nervous “What kind of porn does that signify?!?”

“There you are!” Korosensei said cheerfully, holding something. “A Miyama stag beetle. And with that eye colour!”

Kurahashi appeared to have forgotten that they were trying to ambush him, and jumped out from the bush, gasping. “Are they white, Korosensei?!”

“Oh, Kurahashi chan! Indeed they are!” Korosensei said.

“Wow! Just what I’ve been looking for!”

“Yes, right here on this mountain!”

Okajima cursed to himself. “Oh man, and we were so close!”
Nagisa couldn’t really hear what they were talking about, but they were jumping up and down on
the pile of porn magazines excitedly, deep in discussion about whatever Korosensei had seen.
Then, he looked down, and his face changed completely.

“Mortifying! How super duper mortifying! I’m so ashamed… such behaviour is unbecoming of an
educator. I knew there was a trap under all of this porn but with each magazine more to my taste
than the last, I couldn’t resist!”

“He saw right through it!” Okajima said, as the rest of them came out into the clearing.

Nagisa couldn’t help but laugh slightly to himself. Of course Korosensei had.

“So what’s the big deal, Kurahashi?” Sugino asked. “That’s a Miyama stag beetle, right? In games
and stuff, they sell for way less than a giant stag.”

Kurahashi smiled. “Miyamas have been going for a good price lately. They’re hard to breed. One
this size could fetch twenty thousand.”

“Twenty thousand?!”

“Plus, take a good look at its eyes,” Korosensei interjected. “They’re usually black, but these are
white. I told you about albinism, right?”

“Oh yeah – like super rare creatures born pure white?” Sugino remembered.

“Yes, and stag beetles are only albino in the eyes. A natural born Miyama white eye, as they’re
known, is extremely rare. Why, this even has academic value. You could sell this for hundreds of
thousands of yen, easy.” Korosensei handed the beetle to Kurahashi.

“Hundreds?!”

Nagisa could do so much with that money. He could even maybe rent a place somewhere until
everything blew over, which would cut off any power Asano had over him.

“I told Korosensei I wanted to see one just once, and he said he’d use his zoom eyes to find one for
me.” Kurahashi explained. Okay, you lowlifes: raise your hand if you want this baby!”

“I do!!!” They all shouted at once.

“What to do, what to do?” She laughed, and then sprinted off.

“I was the one who caught it!” Korosensei wailed.

Unwilling to miss out on their chance at such good money, they all took off after her. Being
naturally more athletic, Maehara and Sugino sped ahead. Nagisa wasn’t exactly a slow runner, but
carrying a small human inside of him seemed to have decreased his maximum speed, as even
Okajima was ahead of him.

Though, Okajima didn’t have much of a sense of direction, and ran directly off the edge of the
small cliff, falling into the water. Hundreds of thousands of yen it may be, but Nagisa couldn’t
have it on his conscience to leave somebody in danger over that.

“Are you okay?!” He called, hoping Okajima hadn’t hurt himself too badly.

“’M fine!” Okajima shouted back up at him, demonstrating he could pull himself out of the water.
Nagisa relaxed. “We should be getting to class by now, anyway!”

It was, after all, the real reason everybody was hanging around. Nagisa made his way to the class building, changing into the normal school PE kit. They had a week left before the assassination, so every second of preparation counted. Due to the nature of their strategy, Karasuma had everyone on target practise. It wasn’t exactly a weakness, but marksmanship was hardly Nagisa’s strong suit. He could still reliably hit a stationary target, though.

“Well, well,” Bitch Sensei had joined them, though she was reclining casually. “I see you little brats are working up a good sweat, summer vacation notwithstanding.”

“You train too, Bitch Sensei,” Mimura suggested. “Your gun and knife skills aren’t that much better than ours.”

“Grown ups are sneaky.” She said with confidence. “I’ll hitch a ride on your strategy and only take away the best parts.

“That’s my Irina.” A man appeared behind her.

“L-lovro, sensei!”

Nagisa, and the rest of the class who had decided to attend, snapped up to attention. They’d all seen glimpses of the pro assassin before, that time he visited to determine whether Bitch Sensei was still a decent enough assassin. He’d never interacted with the class, but everyone was more than conscious of him watching from the shadows.

“He’s here as a special instructor for the summer.” Karasuma announced. “He’ll give us tips on our strategy -from a pro’s perspective.”

Lovro looked disapprovingly at Bitch Sensei. “Rest one day and your fingers and arms forget about killing. If you don’t want to flunk out, hurry up and get changed!”

“Yes! Absolutely!” She rushed off.

It was almost amusing. How scary a master could Lovro have been for Bitch Sensei to obey his orders? Nagisa didn’t feel fear, particularly. It was more like an awe at being in the presence of such a seasoned assassin. He felt questions rise to the surface he didn’t even know he could think up.

“Thank you for your cooperation,” Lovro nodded. “Please, back to your training.”

Hard to not feel a little on display, Nagisa did the best he could to return his full focus to the shooting. His brain was bubbling over. He found himself watching Lovro and Karasuma, deep in discussion, more than he was watching the targets. Once everyone was taking a small break, and not paying any attention to him, Nagisa couldn’t help himself.

“Lovro san?”

He looked down at him. “Yes?”

Nagisa bit his lip. “What is the very best assassin like?”

“So you’re interested in the world of assassins, eh?” Lovro said it in an odd way, as if he was leading on to something.
Feeling a sudden rush of shame, Nagisa looked away. “Oh, uh, th-that’s not why I…”

“Well,” he began to narrate, “there’s only one person on this planet who can be called the very best assassin. As is often the case in this line of work, no one knows his real name. They call him by one nickname… and that is: The Reaper. Elusive, incomparably cold blooded, and with piles of bodies in his wake, he is known by the name of Death himself. If you keep having trouble killing your target… The Reaper will show up sooner or later.”

Someone like that?! Nagisa felt some kind of urge swell up inside him. He didn’t want this famous assassin to get a shot in. Like they had some sort of ownership over Korosensei’s assassination. He was determined they beat this Reaper to it.

Lovro seemed to notice. “Alright, young man. I shall teach you a sure fire technique.”

“Sure fire?”

“Yes. An instant kill move, from this pro assassin to you. Okay, show me how your best attack.”

That was putting him on the spot, a lot. Nagisa was determined, though. He pulled out his knife, took a deep breath, and went for the attack in the way Karasuma had taught them. Lovro easily dodged his every offence, like it was nothing. He was just as good as Karasuma, if not better. Instead of keeping up the session, however, Lovro easily disarmed him and knocked Nagisa down to his knees in one swift movement. He was tough.

“Why aren’t you attacking in the way I heard so much about?”

Lovro had heard of him? Nagisa looked up from the ground, dazed. “Wouldn’t you be expecting it?”

He smiled. “Sometimes, it’s warped expectations that are the most effective.” He pulled Nagisa to his feet. Before Nagisa could really react, something shifted, and the most piercing bang shook through him, knocking him to his feet once more. Lovro hadn’t even touched him.

“Was that the surefire technique?” Nagisa looked up in awe.

“Yes. But then again, it didn’t look like one, did it? When I was in a tight spot as an assassin, I used this to squeeze my way out. But it has conditions that must be met – three of them. First: you must have two weapons. Second: you must be up against an expert. And third: your foe must know the terror of being killed.”

He pulled Nagisa up again. “A sure fire, instant kill move doesn’t necessarily kill instantly. Given the ideal conditions, of course, any assassin can do the deed. But reality is rarely that agreeable, especially when your target is a pro with airtight defence. But this technique can create an ideal killing situation in just such a pinch. It sets the stage for an instant kill.”

“Sets the stage, huh?”

“Every assassin has a second blade. Yours, I’ve heard, is your demeanour. Use that. Move from a standstill, as fast as you can, and make it as loud as possible. You’ve probably heard the comparison that your blade is an extension of your body. So. Time it just after dropping the knife. The closer you get, the more the target is focused on the knife. Toss that focus with the knife as though placing them into mid-air, and an assassin will not overlook those few moments. In one fluid motion, swiftly draw your second blade. A literal second blade. That’s how you make your kill.”
Nagisa felt chills run down his body. “You think I can do all that?”

Lovro looked as though he was studying Nagisa very carefully. “I don’t take omegas into my charge. Not that any have ever asked, being against an omega’s very nature to kill. But even if they managed to find that bloodlust, against all odds, it’s too dangerous. Omegas are delicate, too easy to manipulate and damage. But, Shiota Nagisa, maybe on this one thing I would like nothing more than to be proved wrong.”

Chapter End Notes

Again, I appreciate all comments and kudos!
Assassination Time

Chapter Summary

The E Class begins their island trip and carries out their planned assassination

Chapter Notes

With special thanks to my girl Issy who studies Chemistry at university - who has enough patience for me to pop up every now and then and like 'hey give me something complicated and sciencey'

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Asano kun,” Nagisa said, popping his head into the kitchen. “I’m going to leave in a minute.”

Asano put down his pen. “What did I say about disturbing me when I’m working?”

Nagisa just smiled. They’d had this conversation a few times, but Asano never seemed to actually mind. In fact, Nagisa definitely got the feeling he enjoyed talking about whatever he was reading. Perhaps he liked the sound of his own voice. “What are you learning about?”

“Splitting patterns in phosphorus NMR spectroscopy.”

He frowned. Nagisa had never really had much chemistry with the sciences. “What does that mean?”

Asano sighed, slamming his book shut. “NMR stands for nuclear magnetic resonance.”

“Nuclear?” Nagisa thought about it. “Like the stuff that explodes right?”

Clenching his fist around it, Asano grabbed the book and thrust it into Nagisa’s hands. “That is not what nuclear means. You’re in desperate need of this. Honestly I know you’re in the E Class but I never realised your understanding of science was so… pathetic.”

The words he said were mean, but the gesture was actually pretty kind. Nagisa accepted the book. “I’ll read it on the boat… Did you get around to reading Sonic Ninja yet?”

Asano rolled his eyes. “I don’t have the time for American comics.” He paused. “I saw the mafia plot coming.”

“You should watch the movie,” Nagisa said. “They combined a lot of the arcs.”

“We’ll watch it when you get back,” he shrugged.

He wanted to watch it with Nagisa? They’d barely even interacted with each other, aside from Nagisa trying to make polite conversation. He’d built more of a relationship with Toboso. Still, it was his favourite movie. For a guy who seemed to know everything, it was almost fun to be able to
show him things. Nagisa couldn’t stop his smile.

“Don’t you have a boat to catch, Nagisa kun?”

“Right!” Nagisa picked up his bag again. “I’ll see you later, then.”

Asano stood up. “Nagisa kun…” he took a deep breath. “Have a safe trip. And don’t forget our little lesson.”

Like his words were a punch directly to the stomach, Nagisa nodded. “I promise.”

It turned out, by the time he was on the boat, that the book was even more complicated than it had initially sounded. It was probably university level, if Nagisa had to guess. He was still committed, though, and managed several chapters of it, even if he didn’t really understand what he was reading. Standing out on the deck and staring at the ocean got a little old, after a few hours. Eventually though, there was enough commotion to signify that they’d definitely reached the island. Nagisa was pretty thankful to be on dry land again.

“Welcome to the Fukumajima Resort Hotel!” A smartly dressed man said, the moment they reached the resort. “Please enjoy this tropical juice with our compliments.”

Nagisa thought about taking one, but he remembered Doctor Shirogane briefly mentioning that there were certain things he should definitely avoid eating. Fruit juice was probably fine, but he didn’t want to risk it without knowing exactly what it was. He wasn’t the only one not taking it, anyway.

“We can go directly to the beach from the hotel.” Korosensei announced. “Seems like they have plenty of other leisure activities, too.”

He couldn’t hear the full conversation, but Mimura must’ve said something about splitting into groups – just as they’d planned to kick off the assassination. They’d already discussed their roles in great detail, of course. Nagisa’s group would be ‘snorkelling’, though in reality their job was to find the location for the assassination, incorporating water. Walking towards the hotel, Nagisa had already seen a couple of good positions, out of the corner of his eye.

Korosensei, at first, decided to go gliding. That was good news, as he’d be far out of the way and too distracted to get a real taste of what they were doing. As the groups dispersed, Nagisa and the rest of their group changed into the wetsuits provided by the resort. He felt highly self-conscious in something so skin tight. The baby could pass for a very large lunch, though, he thought. Nagisa would just have to make sure to be seen eating a lot.

“Group one is doing a good job of throwing him off,” Sugino commented, once they were sat on the jetty.

“They sure are – and with a little assassination in the mix.” Karma replied, looking up at Korosensei flying around in the air. “They’re trying not to draw the other groups’ attention.”

Nagisa handed him the goggles. “Yeah…” It was basically the only word Nagisa had spoken to the alpha in weeks.

“We’re up next!” Kayano snapped him out of it. “Let’s do what we have to do and get changed ASAP!”

“Got it!” Sugino ducked under the water.
Nagisa stood, and took a deep breath. Everything would go to plan. He dove into the sea, feeling the cool relief of water against his skin. All they needed to do was find a great location, and they’d already agreed that one of the small chapels would be the perfect place, being dome shaped already.

“If we shortened some of this wood somehow,” Karma surfaced after they’d surveyed the area for a few minutes, “this building would be low enough for the high tide.”

“Korosensei would already be wet,” Nagisa realised, “and weakened.”

“Let’s get to work!” Kayano said cheerfully.

It wasn’t the easiest of jobs, lowering an entire wooden structure, but there was an underlying fire between each of them. They were so close now, to assassinating their teacher and winning the bounty, that Nagisa would at least be willing to try the most impossible sounding things to get to that goal.

It was already nearly sunset by the time they were done, and met up with the others on the beach. The other groups seemed to have done a good job distracting him, as Korosensei looked totally worn out, lounging out on the seating.

“Phew what fun that was. No wonder I’m so tan!” He said, skin (?) that was usually yellow completely tinted dark.

Kimura looked at him. “Even your teeth are tan.”

“So much for picking up on your expressions,” Okano sighed.

Isogai cleared his throat, sticking to their plan. “Alright, Korosensei, after dinner comes the assassination.”

“Yes, yes. The shipboard restaurant!” Korosensei got up, and walked away from them. They couldn’t tell his facial expressions, but Nagisa was sure it would have been one of underestimation. It was probably good to be confident, but he didn’t even know how it could possibly go wrong.

“Hasn’t that octopus had enough fun for a day?” Terasaka complained. “Meanwhile, we got to pretend to have fun whilst we got everything ready!”

Yoshida shrugged. “Well, if we kill him today, we can just enjoy ourselves tomorrow.”

“I guess,” Muramatsu replied. “Let’s give this some oomph and finish the job!”

It was just a waiting game until the boat arrived. Everything else was completely set up, save for the video that still needed some editing. They all knew the plan by heart, but Nagisa found himself zoning out of the conversation, going over it in his head over and over.

“You don’t feel sick, do you, Nagisa kun?” Karma asked, taking him out of the thought train.

Though a quick look over made Nagisa think that Karma was showing genuine concern, rather than teasing him, he still felt perhaps unreasonably frustrated. Nagisa had never been the type to hold grudges, but he realised that even with the distance he’d recently enforced between them, he was still angry. Nagisa was sick of being babied, treated like a helpless omega who could do nothing for himself.

“The ship’s here,” Nagisa said instead of actually answering. Though he was mad, he wasn’t
unreasonable enough to take it out on Karma solely for asking him if he felt okay. He was just… on edge.

Once the plate of food was put in front of him, Nagisa’s appetite was completely lost. He would really have to force himself, especially if he was going for the ‘my stomach is totally just the result of a large meal, no babies to see here’ angle. Maybe if he ate enough, he’d get fat all over, and nobody would even notice the significance of his stomach, hence avoiding the awkward ‘announcement’ of the baby.

“Here we are on the shipboard restaurant we rented out.” Isogai announced. “Let’s slowly savour our meal as we take in the night sea.”

“I get it…” Korosensei thought. “First you’ll get me good and seasick to weaken my capabilities, eh?”

If only it was just that. Isogai nodded. “Of course. That’s assassination 101.”

“You’re so right. But will it really work that well?” Korosensei took a hold of his glass. “Seasickness is no match for a teacher who’s all pumped up anticipating an assassination—”

“You’re too dark!”

If Korosensei could frown, he probably would’ve. “Am I really that dark?”

“Forget your expression,” Nakamura complained. “We can’t even tell your front from your back”

“It’s too confusing.” Kataoka agreed. “Do something, would you?”

“Have you forgotten, students? I can molt, and in so doing, shed this dark skin!” As if to demonstrate as he spoke, Korosensei shed his skin carelessly. “There! Back to normal!”

Fuwa perked up. “That’s your once monthly molt!”

“Just another of its uses,” he lectured, “I tend to save it for particularly sticky situations, but—” In that brief moment, Korosensei realised what the room had been thinking.

He’d just put himself in an even worse situation, practically in the palm of their hands. They’d been training for ages, and perhaps this time their blades would finally reach him. The tension remained high at that level throughout dinner, bloodlust growing strong in everyone’s hearts. Once they were off the ship, Korosensei appeared incredibly sick, just like the plan.

“Alright, Korosensei, it’s after dinner,” Maehara said cheerfully.

“Here’s where we’re meeting,” Sugaya pointed out, “a floating chapel, away from the hotel”

They lead him inside, and took their agreed positions.

“Take a seat, Korosensei,” Okajima said.

Isogai smiled. “There’s nowhere for you to run.”

“This’ll be a fun assassination,” Mimura said.

“We’ll start with a movie” Okajima announced, looking over at the screen that they’d already set up.
“Your intelligence, inventiveness, and your earnest efforts…” Korosensei said, much like a proud parent. “That’s what I most look forward to. I expect a no-holds-barred assassination! Now, then… What on earth are you going to do, hmm?”

“First you’ll be enjoying a video Mimura put together,” Isogai explained, “then the seven top testers will destroy your tentacles. That’ll be the signal for us all to jump in and begin the assassination. Does that sound alright, Korosensei?” Isogai

Korosensei laughed. “More than alright.”

“Thanks for setting this up, Mimura,” Sugaya looked over at him

“It was hard work – I was editing all through dinner,” Mimura replied.

“Korosensei,” Nagisa took his position, stepping forwards. “I have to pat you down first. We may be surrounded by water, but if you smuggled in that swimsuit, you’d still be able to get away.”

Korosensei beamed “You’re being so careful! But I wouldn’t pull such a dirty trick.”

Nagisa wished he could just strike him right then, when he wasn’t expecting it. This teacher could easily dodge his attacks even when he’s touching him, however, Nagisa knew. But if they all worked together… Well, they were about to find out. He nodded, letting the rest of their class know that there was no foul play to look out for.

“Are you ready?” Korosensei took his seat. “No need to hold back! Come right at me!”

“Here we go, Korosensei,” Okajima turned off the lights.

That was their grand signal. Silently, in the darkness, as the movie exposing some of Korosensei’s worst moments began to play, Nagisa and most of the others left the chapel and took their positions. They had about an hour to get completely set up, before their assassination would truly begin. It seemed like a long time, but in the moment it went by in the blink of an eye. There was no time for conversation or anything else, only focus.

“Commence operation,” Ritsu finally announced, “five seconds elapsed.”

That was their signal. Kayano took off on her speed boat, along with the three other students with the responsibility, which had been attached to the wooden structure. With all four of them pulling at such a high speed, the wood came off with ease.

“Thirty five seconds elapsed!”

It was time. Nagisa, and the remainder of the E Class who weren’t shooting, activated their flyboards. Using their well-honed in balance that Karasuma had taught them, they shot up, joining together to make a complete hydraulic cage around their teacher. Nagisa found himself repeating the plan to himself, even then. Korosensei didn’t do well with sudden changes to his environment, so from the chapel to a cage of water, his weakened tentacles would become confused and lower his reaction speed even further.

Ritsu began to fire, which was everyone else’s signal – those who weren’t involved in the cage at least – to start shooting. Their goal wasn’t to hit him, but to actually aim away to confuse him. The final blow goes to those two, Chiba and Hayami, who had left onshore dummies fused with their scent. All they had to do was rise up from the sea, and deliver one final shot.

And then everything went ‘boom’.
I'm sorry that not of different from canon content is really going to happen in this last chapter and maybe the next two, but I promise it'll be worth it! I'm going to try and get them out as quick as I can so we can get to the parts some of you have been waiting for~ All comments and kudos give me life and motivation!
Chapter Summary

With the failure of their assassination, some members of the E Class fall ill.

Chapter Notes

Once again, apologies that this is more of a 'building up' chapter, but I promise, the next two are pretty cool. Regardless, I hope you enjoy :3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Nagisa!”

The sound of Kayano’s voice and the boat engine caused Nagisa to snap out of his blank shock, just a little. He knew he’d been thrown back by the explosion, right into the water, but Nagisa wasn’t hurt. Maybe the adrenaline was to blame for that. Something felt different about this. It was so unlike the other attempts, Nagisa felt like it just might have worked.

“Stay alert! He can regenerate!” Karasuma ran down the jetty, followed by Bitch sensei. “Isogai kun, Kataoka san: change of plans. Watch the water!”

“Yes sir!”

Korosensei had nowhere to run, even if he had survived the shot!

“Over there!” Kayano pointed.

In the sea, bubbles were staring to form. Nagisa was no science genius, but it was surely possible that there was something in Korosensei’s DNA that could react with the water in such a way. Then, a tiny ball floated the surface, inside it containing what looked like Korosensei’s gloating face. What the hell was that?

It laughed. “My trump card of all trump cards: My Absolute Defence Form! The exterior is crystallised high-density condensed energy. The energy left over upon shrinking my body down hardens in a shell around it. In this form, I’m absolutely invincible!”

Nagisa’s heart dropped. That was Korosensei’s voice. He was completely alive and well, by the looks of it, unharmed. All their greatest efforts, and they’d completely failed.

“No… So if you always stay in that form, we can never kill you!” Yada realised

“If only that were the case,” he said. “The energy crystal will decay in about one day. And the moment it does, my body will re-inflate, absorbing energy and returning to its usual form. On the other hand, for the approximately one day until this crystal decays, I can’t move an inch. This brings with it certain risks. What I’m most afraid of is being placed into a high speed rocket during that time and discarded in the far reaches of outer space… But I’ve thoroughly studied that
eventuality. Nowhere in the world is there a rocket capable of making that flight within twenty four hours.”

It almost seemed unfair. After all that, he’d had yet another trick up his sleeve. Even taking all his weak points into account, it was an utter failure. Killing him seemed definitely impossible.

Terasaka picked him up. “Invincible, my ass. Something like this has got to be breakable somehow!”

“It’s no use! Even a nuclear bomb wouldn’t leave a scratch.”

“Oh I get it,” Karma, said casually, from the shore. “No weaknesses means we’re out of options.” He signalled Terasaka, who threw Korosensei over, and then showed him something on his phone.

“No! Stop! I can’t cover my face without any hands!” Korosensei complained.

“Sorry, sorry, then I’ll just… stick this sea slug on you.” Karma continued, as if embarrassing him to death was an option. “Someone go find me a filthy old guy so I can jam this thing down his shorts!”

“No! Help!” Korosenseu tried.

“In some ways we can do whatever we want with him,” Kayano said, though she sounded miserable.

“Yep.” Nagisa agreed. “And Karma’s positively gifted at times like this.”

“We’ll disperse for now, students.” Karasuma sighed. “The top brass and I will discuss how to deal with this one.”

“Going to throw me in a pool of anti-me material? It won’t work. A portion of my energy would explode; like before, the blast would send everything nearby flying. But you should be proud. Even the armies of the world couldn’t get this far with me. It all comes down to the magnificence of your plan.”

He could speak their praises all he liked, but it wouldn’t change anything. He was still alive. Korosensei continued to praise their assassination like he always did, but it was their biggest disappointment yet. They’d been so sure, it was more of a shock that their full throttle attack had missed the mark than being knocked back into the water had been. Nagisa just felt so exhausted.

With nothing more to gain, everyone quietly made their way back to the hotel. Nagisa gathered that the rest of the group shared his sentiment of just wanting to curl up and go to bed, but it still felt as though they were waiting for some news, like some validation that they weren’t all massive failures. They sat around downstairs, almost in complete silence.

“I’m just so exhausted!” Maehara finally said.

“Let’s head back to our room and rest.” Mimura agreed. “I don’t feel like doing anything.”

Terasaka stood up. “What, one lousy miss and you lose all your oomph? We did what we were supposed to do, so tomorrow we can just enjoy ourselves!”

“Ooh, yeah!” Okajima announced. “Tomorrow I get to take in some swimsuited beauties for sure! No matter how tired I may be, I’m not too tired for a nosebleed!”
“Man, I just don’t have the energy,” Maehara groaned, and collapsed against the table.

As he often did in that kind of situation, Nagisa laughed awkwardly. Something was wrong, he just knew it like an itch underneath the surface of his skin. Everybody was too exhausted. There was the fatigue that came with failure, but this felt like something else, something less psychological.

“Can I lean on you a second, Nagisa kun?” Nakamura asked, approaching him before her knees buckled. She fell to the ground before Nagisa could move to catch her.

She’d just confirmed his fears. Nagisa kneeled to her level. “Nakumra san!”

“I want to get back to the room and change, but my body can’t seem to move at all,” she said weakly

Nagisa put a hand on her forehead, immediately jerking it away. “You’re burning up!”

“Just imagining those babes gave me a nosebleed!” Okajima said lightly, blood gushing out of him.

“Okajima kun!” Now Nagisa was seriously worried.

“I-is this?” Karasuma rushed in, but stopped dead before he could finish his announcement. A quick glance around told Nagisa that almost half of their class was suffering. “Hey! Where’s the hospital on this island?” Karasuma asked one of the resort staff

“Oh… well, it’s such a small island…”

Before he could argue with her, he got some kind of phone call. With the way his eyes widened after a few seconds, Nagisa could tell it wasn’t good news.

“Who is this?!” Karusuma asked, displaying the alarm in his tone.

Kayano thought fast, opening her phone. “Hey Ritsu!” That was right, if Karasuma didn’t know who he was talking to, there might be some way of Ritsu tracking it. As Karasuma continued to listen, Nagisa watched the phone, and location of the caller slowly get revealed.

Karasuma’s brow creased. “You mean you did this?”

He gestured Nagisa and Kayano towards him. Quickly, Nagisa held up the phone, showing him where the call had originated from. Alarmingly, it looked like it was from the island itself. Karasuma hung up the phone, and slammed Korosensei down on the table with a rage Nagisa had never seen from him before.

Taking a deep breath, he looked over at them. “Class, I need to make a quick phone call. I’ll explain everything after.”

Nagisa and Kayano looked between each other. He didn’t know what was happening, but it was definitely serious. They’d never witnessed Karasuma get so fired up like that before.

“Allright.” He cleared his throat, finally. “This appears to be a hostage situation. Somebody has infected a good portion of this class with what he calls an ‘artificial virus’. He claims that it is very deadly, and could kill the infected within a week. There is an antidote, but he wants us to exchange Korosensei, and specifically the two smallest students, for it at the reception of that other resort on the mountain.” He paused. “Now, the best thing to do is to stay calm-”

Calm?! How were they meant to stay calm? He’d just said that half of their friends could be dead
unless they met some stranger’s crazy demands. The two smallest students undeniably referred to himself and Kayano. Were they about to become hostages? Nagisa would do it, if it would save everybody else.

“Mr Karasuma! As we’d expected, it’s no use!” A woman who Nagisa vaguely felt like he’d seen before rushed in. Perhaps she worked with Karasuma. “Even when we play the government card, the hotel just responds with claims of privacy protection.”

“It figures.” He said, stormily.

“It does?”

Karasuma sighed. “That mountaintop hotel is a noted site for illegal negotiations.”

“A remote island in the southern sea?” Bitch Sensei considered. “Couldn’t ask for a better location.”

“They have connections with some government higher ups.” Karasuma announced. “Even the police are hands off”

Karma folded his arms. “Clearly they’re not going to cooperate with us”

“What are we gonna do?” Yoshida finally verbalised. “At this rate, a lot of us will die! We didn’t come here to be killed.”

“Calm down, Yoshida kun.” Hara reassured him, despite being one of the infected herself. “We won’t die that easy. Just come up with a way to deal with this.”

“Yeah… sorry, Hara,” he bowed his head.

“It’s too dicey to do what he says.” Terasaka said, matter of factly. “Send your two runtiest students? These two squirts?!” To demonstrate, he gave Nagisa and Kayano a good whack on the head. “We’d just be handing him hostages! First off, I’m pissed at anyone who would even do this kind of thing. No one lays a finger on my cohorts! I say we ignore his demands! Let’s get everyone to a Tokyo hospital!”

“I’m opposed.” Takeybashi cut in. “If it really is an unknown, artificial virus, even the biggest hospitals won’t have the antivirals to stop it. The time wasted in bringing in the sick could hurt them more.”

“Say what?!” Terasaka exclaimed.

Takebayashi knelt down next to the infected. “We’ll work on treating the symptoms for now – you’d better hurry off to the trade spot.”

“Takebayashi…”

He was right, though, Nagisa realised. Their hands were tied. If Korosensei could move, they might’ve stood a chance… It was almost funny. If their assassination attempt hadn’t been so successful, they might’ve stood a chance.

“So he’s the one they’re after.” Karasuma looked over at Korosensei.

Korosensei finally spoke up. “There is a way”

“Korosensei? All set.” Ritsu announced. Had they secretly been working on something all this
“It looks like Ritsu’s completed the prep work I asked her to.” He announced. “I need the healthy students to come here. Wear something you can get dirty.”

It really did seem like they were going to go through with it, when Korosensei instructed Karasuma to call for transport. Nobody bothered to change, and Korosensei didn’t go any deeper into whatever he was planning, so they remained sitting there, waiting for the cars to arrive. When they did, Nagisa almost didn’t want to leave. It was the only way to save their friends, though. At least, that’s what he told himself for the silent drive up the mountain.

The cars finally came to a stop about three quarters of the way up the tall mountain. They could clearly see the hotel, which was shaped a lot like a cone, looming over them at the top. Blocking it was a sheer cliff face.

“It’s so high…” Kimura said.

“I infiltrated the hotel’s computers and got schematics of the interior – complete with guard locations.” Ritsu announced. “A large number of guards are stationed at and around the main entrance. It’s not possible to enter the hotel without going past the front desk. However, there is an entry way on this side, atop the ledge. The terrain is impassable, and there are no guards posted there.”

So the plan was for them to climb that thing?!

Korosensei confirmed it. “If you don’t want the enemy to get his way… there’s just one thing to do! Not counting the ten patients and the two left behind to care for them, all capable students must sneak in from here, get the jump on the guys at the top, and steal that remedy!”

“It’s too dangerous!” Karasuma immediately said. “The ease with which he threatened us indicates we’re up against a real pro.”

“Yes. Perhaps it would be wisest simply to hand me over. What do you think? It’s up to all of you.”

Bitch Sensei looked at the cliff face. “They’ll plummet to their deaths before they reach the hotel.”

Nagisa wasn’t sure. It didn’t look significantly harder than anything they’d done in training. Karasuma had made them climb the cliffs around school for hours on end. Nobody’s technique was weak anymore. He was pretty sure he could climb that thing without falling at the very least.

“Nagisa kun, Kayano chan… I’m sorry, but-“ Karasuma started.

The rest of their squad seemed to agree, Isogai taking the lead as he began to test out climbing the cliff face. When the ease of which he was doing so became clear, Nagisa was more than confident they could do it. He joined the rest of the class, taking a good hold of the rock.

“Well, I mean, if the ledge is a problem this part’s a piece of cake, especially compared to our usual training.” Isogai said. “Right? But we haven’t practised fighting an unknown foe in an unknown hotel, so, Karasuma Sensei, it won’t be easy, but could you be out commander?”

“We’ll make that jerk pay for messing with us!” Terasaka called out.

Something went over Karasuma’s face, before nodding. “Attention! Our objective is the top floor of the hotel at the summit! Our mission will shift from a stealth infiltration to a surprise attack!
We’ll use the same hand signals and link ups from training! The only difference is our target! You have three minutes to memorise the map. We begin at 21:50!”

“Right!” They all called.

Remembering his training on the mountain as best he could, Nagisa remembered his balance and hauled himself up as best he could. It was a little more difficult than he remembered, though the last time he’d done this, he probably weighed a little less. He was being more careful than he usually was too, perhaps out of some instinct. His arms were getting so tired.

“Karma kun! Wait!” Nagisa called out. It was what Karasuma had always instructed them to do during training, at least in first. They paired up, in case one was in trouble and needed to help the other. Of course Karma had ended up as Nagisa’s partner, way back then.

“I’d like to,” Karma turned, “but we’re kind of on a schedule here.”

“You’re right,” Nagisa said, continuing to climb. “Let’s do this.”

He was not going to fall into the trap of being some weak and useless omega who had to rely on an alpha for everything short of breathing. Nagisa was different from that, he had to be, no matter the circumstances. In this fight, he had something he was desperate to prove.

Chapter End Notes

All kudos and comments give me life :D
Chapter Summary

The students continue their assault on the resort

Chapter Notes

Once again, sorry for lack of non canon content. I promise you only have to put up with another half chapter of it - I just thought this arc was too important to skip over, and would have made the story as a whole feel incomplete. As promised, I'll be uploading as quick as I can to get to the more interesting stuff ^_^ Happy reading!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Putting all they’d learnt into the real world was a lot harder than it originally sounded. Although Nagisa had fought Takaoka before, he had been trying to prove a point rather than seriously intending to harm Nagisa. These real, professional assassins were tough, so tough that when they’d faced the poisoner, Karasuma himself had been incapacitated, and was having to be tugged around by Isogai.

Just around the corner from the place they were standing was, if Nagisa was guessing right, another professional assassin. They had made it all the way up to the fifth floor walk way, before their path was blocked by a tall, blond man. There was something in his stance that said he was ready to fight, but it was so subtle… He was definitely a pro

“Hey, why’s he just standing there in the open like that?” Yoshida whispered.

Yada looked almost as if she was scanning him in concentration. “That vibe he’s giving off…”

“Oh, yeah, I can totally call it now,” Yoshida realised. “If it’s kill or be killed, he’ll kill.”

Moving lightning fast, the man slammed his first into one of the windows, causing it to crack around his hand. He didn’t seem fazed by this, standing to attention as if to greet them. “What a drag, hm. If I can hear your footsteps, you’re not tough enough for me, hm. Supposedly some special forces teacher was taking the lead too, hm. I guess Smog’s gas must’ve gotten the better of him, hm. Probably killed each other at the same time, hm. Come on out, hm.

Even though he was a professional assassin, clearly, Nagisa felt no fear. In fact, there was something odd about him, like an itch Nagisa wasn’t sure of the location of.

“You say ‘hm’ a lot, old man.” Karma stepped forwards, fairly so since he clearly knew their location.

Ah, there it was. The rest of them stepped forwards, since there was no real advantage to hiding their numbers right then.
He shrugged. “I heard it would make me sound more like a samurai, hm. It’s got a cool ring to it, so I’m trying it out, hm. Maybe I’m wrong, but I don’t mind, hm. After I kill you all here, I can drop the ‘hm’ with no loss of face, hm.”

From Nagisa’s hands, Korosensei joined the conversation. “Bare hands… are those your killing tools, then?”

“There’s actually quite a demand for this, hm. Passing through pat-downs has its distinct advantage, hm. Once they come closer, I snap their necks, hm. Or, if I feel like it, I could crush their skulls, hm.” He flexed his wrists in demonstration. “You know, it’s funny, hm. The more you train your strength for killing people, hm, the more you feel like using it for something else, hm. A fight, to be precise, hm. Against a might foe – to the death, hm. But what a let-down, hm. Seeing who I’m up against, I’ve all but lost my will to fight, hm. Plus, it’s a pain killing a bunch of small fry by myself, hm. I’ll call in my boss and my colleague to kill you together, hm.”

He took out a large walkie-talkie, but before he could contact anybody, Karma was moving. With a speed only Karma could manage right there on the spot, he grabbed a hold of one of the decorative plant pots that were lining the walkway, swinging it around like a baseball bat to hit the device right into the window, next to the punch shatter.

“Hey, old man, hm.” He said confidently. “You’re pretty average for a pro, aren’t you? Breaking glass, busting skulls? I can do that too. But if your opening move is to call in reinforcements, maybe you’re too scared to take on a junior-high kid alone.”

Nagisa could sense that the rest of their group was unnerved by Karma’s taunts, but he could sense a different kind of energy from Karma. He’d seen him fight many times in the past, back when they were twelve and in Class D together. That was rash, mostly unplanned violence he used to get his way. Right then, Karma’s entire presence wasn’t fully dark.

“No! Don’t be reckless!” Karasuma yelled.

“Stop right there, Karasuma Sensei,” Korosensei said. “His chin is down. So far he’s been showing off his swagger with his chin in the air, looking down on his opponents. But this is different. His words may be as rough as ever… but his eyes are looking straight ahead, alert, observing his foe head on. He’s been lying low ever since finals, but it seems he’s learned well from his failures.”

The pro shrugged off his jacket. “Alright, hm. Let’s see what you can do, hm.”

“Give this everything you’ve got,” Korosensei warned. “You’re facing one high wall: an adult!”

If Karma took the advice in, he didn’t show it. “If you insist…” With his hands still gripping the plant pot, he charged forwards with it, but the assassin gripped it with ease. Knowing Karma, that definitely wasn’t everything the alpha had planned. You could practically hear the gears of his mind spinning.

“Too soft, hm. You’ll have to find a better weapon, hm.” With ease, the assassin snapped the plant in half.

“Don’t need one,” Karma said casually, and moved out of the way of the assassin’s lunge. The fight was a blur, with the assassin trying to get his hands on Karma, and Karma avoiding each potential blow with expert precision. He was light and steady on his feet, concentrating fully on his opponent. A part of Nagisa swelled up, in something almost like proud. There’d been a change in him, somewhere.
“Wow… he’s dodging or blocking every blow!” Kayano commented beside Nagisa.

Korosensei hummed. “That’s your defence technique, right, Karasuma Sensei?”

Of course, he must have picked it up in practise. Karma tended to skip many of their extra sessions, and indeed also the mandatory ones, with the excuse he didn’t need it. He’d definitely picked up a lot from it, though, even if he didn’t realise.

“What’s wrong, hm?” The assassin halted his advance. “You’ll never get past me if you don’t attack, hm!”

“You think?” Karma said knowingly. “I mean, I could be doing my best to distract you while the rest of us slip past a few at a time. Relax. No underhanded hijinks here. Now… it’s my turn.” He cracked his knuckles, and got into an offensive position. “Barehanded, like you. We’ll settle this fair and square, man-to-man.”

The assassin looked him over. “I like that face of yours, young warrior, hm. With you, I’ve got a chance— a chance of a fair fight I can’t experience in the assassination business, hm.”

This time, as the fight resumed, Karma did indeed do his best job at attacking. They moved together in a blur, though Nagisa did manage to notice how Karma favoured swift kicks and slashes, whereas the assassin was trying to get his fists on him. Surprisingly, the fight was pretty equal, until the assassin was knocked back onto his knee. Nagisa’s heart jumped in his throat. Was Karma really going to win so clearly? Even before Karma advanced, Nagisa sensed the darkness form. Sure enough, the assassin pulled out an aerosol can – the same as Smog had used earlier, and sprayed it right at Karma, causing him to fall to his knees.

“It’s over, hm,” the assassin said, gripping his hair. Nagisa had to bite the inside of his cheeks. If the man was serious, Karma could really die.

“That’s dirty! There’s nothing fair about sneaking that into a fight!” Yoshida called out.

“I never said I fight only barehanded, hm.” He yanked Karma up by the head. “One musn’t get too particular about ones hangups, hm. Just another key to sticking around in this business, hm. A spray of gas at point blank range, hm… You’ll never defend against it if you don’t see it com—”

He was cut off by the same spray, coming from Karma’s own hand, still perfectly mobile.

The assassin stumbled back. “Wh-what have you=’

“What a coincidence!” Karma said easily, completely unscathed. “We were both thinking the same thing!

“How… did you… get that… hm….? And how… did you not… breathe my gas… hm?”

The assassin made a final stand, charging clumsily towards him with a knife he’d pulled out of his jacket, but Karma easily grabbed him by the arm, flipping and pinning him onto the floor.

“C’mon Terasaka!” He called. “Quickly, quickly! We’ll need duct tape and sheer numbers to beat this monster!”

“Yeah, I’m on it,” Terasaka replied, pulling a bag out of his own backpack. “The promise of a barehanded, one on one fight? It was bullshit from the word ‘go’!”

Following the instruction, and coming out of his stunned state, Nagisa followed the rest of their
group to help pin the assassin’s body, still struggling against the gas, firmly to the ground. As they prevented him from moving, Karma swiftly moved around him with the tape, fastening his limbs together.

“Careful taping him up.” Karasuma instructed. “With his superhuman strength, you’ve got to be cautious even though he’s paralysed.” Karasuma

Karma admired their handy work.“I filched an unused cartridge from that poisoner guy. It’s so handy, I wish it weren’t a one time use kind of thing.”

“How, hm… did you see my gas attack coming, hm?” The assassin choked out. “Is that why you didn’t breathe any in, hm? But I only showed you my bare hands, hm… How, hm?”

“Isn’t it obvious?” Karma replied. “I was on guard against everything but bare hands. I’m sure you really did want a barehanded bout… but you would have had to stop us by any means necessary, and if I were you, I would have done the same.” He lowered himself, sitting cross legged in front of the assassin. “I trusted your attitude as a pro… and that’s why I was on guard.”

There was something much more mature in Karma’s entire demeanour, like he’d somehow changed for the better. To his horror, Nagisa realised his throat had gone bone dry, and there was a weird itch in his neck. He shifted uncomfortably as quiet, glancing thoughts filled the back of his mind. Strong alpha, they whispered, he can protect you, your alpha. Nagisa almost wanted to scream to drown them out. It was just some kind of hormonal thing. Just hormones, that’s-

“Karma kun had never known great defeat,” Korosensei interrupted his train of thought, “but those midterm exams taught him all too well: losers are people just like you who live their lives thinking about all sorts of things. Once you realise that, you inevitably find you can no longer make light of your opponent on the battlefield. You can see if your foe is thinking like you, trying hard like you. You come to see their abilities, their circumstances. Someone who can be respectfully wary of their opponent… That person has no chinks on the battlefield. You grew so much from that one defeat. You’ll make a name for yourself one day.”

The assassin seemed to agree. “You’re nothing to sneeze at, young warrior, hm. I may have lost, but I enjoyed our time togeth-”

Before he could finish, Karma dug around in the bag Terasaka had provided him, producing two tubes. “What are you talking about? The fun’s just beginning!”

“What the hell is that, hm?”

“Wasabi and mustard. I’m going to put them in your nostrils. I’d been on guard around you all this time, but now that you’re tied up, what’s the point? Once these are in, I’ll plug your nose with a special clip, stuff your mouth with ghost peppers – a thousand times hotter than average chillies – then, to top all of that, I’ll gag you. Done and done! Okay, old man hm? Now’s the time to show your willpower as a pro, hm.”

Nagisa swallowed. “Korosensei, Karma kun hasn’t really changed all that much, has he?”

“No, he hasn’t. I’m concerned for his future.” Korosensei agreed.

“What the hell did you bring with you, anyway?” Terasaka asked, as Karma finished up torturing their opponent. “Hey, let’s get going! Keep dragging our feet and they’ll find us!” Terasaka.

“They’ll find you,” Karma said, finally turning his attention away, “you Big Hulk.”
“Shut it!” Terasaka complained, practically dragging him away.

Though they kept their stealth up, there were no other secret assassins poised to try and defeat them for a little while, as they followed the map Ritsu had set out. Thankfully, the guy hadn’t had time to call for reinforcements, and had in fact given away that more did exist. The only thing they could hope for was a smooth ascent the rest of the way, although it was unlikely.

“Okay, everyone,” Ritsu announced as they reached a staircase. “The terrace is upstairs.”

“The bar floor,” Hayami said. “That could be tricky.”

“Yes,” Ritsu confirmed. “There’s a stairway to the VIP floor inside a lounge here. The back entrance is locked; we’ll have to come in through the longue to unlock it.”

Isogai looked up towards the doors, where music was booming. “We really stand out, you guys.”

“Let’s have the teachers hide here. We’ll sneak into the lounge and unlock the back entrance. We girls won’t look suspicious alone in a place like this.” Kataoka suggested.

Karasuma shook his head. “No. It’s girls going alone that makes it dangerous.”

“Oh! In that case…” Karma shot Nagisa an oddly suggestive look.

“Huh?” Nagisa voiced his confusion, the rest of the group looking at him.

“It’s just,” Kataoka looked him over, “if any of the boys stand a chance of getting in, it’s you, Nagisa kun.”

He still didn’t understand exactly what they meant, but he was frightened to ask.

“If Nagisa kun is okay with it,” Karasuma said, “I approve of the mission.”

“Come on, Nagisa kun!” Yada said cheerfully. “You wan’t to help in the assassination, don’t you?”

He gave in. “F-fine.”

“Great! Now go get changed, snappish!”

As soon as they’d said it, Hayami swiftly pressed a pile of folded clothes into Nagisa’s arms, pushing him off into the first room that was unlocked. It didn’t seem like anybody was currently staying in there, due to a total lack of bags. Looking at the clothes he’d been provided made Nagisa want to cry, but he’d already agreed to it, and had no choice but to slip them on.

It wasn’t uncommon for male omegas to choose to dress in the feminine way. Not that he really knew any others, but he’d definitely seen it in the media. At the Junior High stage, any segregation was based on the primary gender alone, but after that, if you were an omega you were essentially a girl in official eyes. Even the thought made Nagisa squirm.

His mother had forced him to wear dresses before, but none were as promiscuous as this. When he looked begrudgingly in the mirror, it definitely wouldn’t do. At the moment, Nagisa’s t-shirts fit loosely enough to mostly hide the curve of his stomach, but this top was so tight that if anything, it highlighted it. Never mind the skirt, he couldn’t be seen like that. The best option, he decided, was to suck his stomach in as far as he could, tugging the material up and over the bump. With the way it flared out, it disguised his stomach, but to the disadvantage that it showed an indecent amount of thigh.
Stuck between a rock and a hard place, Nagisa left it like that, and finally went outside to join the rest of the group again. The stares bore into his skin, and he just wanted to run away and hide.

“Can we just go?”

They nodded, and entered the longue. Club music was blaring as people either danced along to it, or hung out at the side lines. Nobody was giving them a second glance, at the very least. Hopefully this mission would be over in the matter of minutes. All he had to do was hide behind the girls, and nobody would even see him.

“C’mon! Get out in front and protect us, Nagisa kun!” Kataoka said, pushing him forwards.

“I can’t! I can’t be out in front!” Nagisa panicked.

“Give it up,” Kataoka continued, “go on!”

“Why me?”

“We’d like a guy around, but in places like this they check guys real carefully.” She replied.

“Yeah, but even so-“

“It’s all part of the plan!” Fuwa cut in.

“Really?”

“Yes, really!” Ritsu agreed.

“Not you too!”

Hayami crossed her arms. “You're acting too normal. It's not fresh enough.”

“But that’s not what I’m looking for! Where did you find these clothes, anyway?”

“Cast off beside the outside pool,” she responded, casually.

Nagisa couldn’t help but shudder. What if they were diseased, or something? After this was all over, he was going to have a two hour bath, definitely.

“Ugh let’s get out of this filthy place ASAP!” Fuwa said.

Nagisa’s eyes narrowed. “And yet you seem to be enjoying yourself, Fuwa san.”

A tap on his shoulder made him jump, as he turned to face a guy of around their same age. “Hey! Where’d you come from? How about a drink – anything you like, it’s on me!”

Oh, god. That had definitely not been a part of the plan, or what he’d agreed to.

“Go ahead, Nagisa! Keep him company!” Kataoka took any choice away, pushing him towards the boy.

“But, Kataoka san…” Nagisa complained lowly.

She grabbed his shoulder, whispering into his ear. “We have to act normal, remember? We’ll come get you if anything happens.”

How did it come to this?
“Oh! So you’re Nagisa chan! I’m Yuji.” The boy introduced, a hand on Nagisa’s back steering him towards the bar. “Is there anything you like?”

Nagisa didn’t know what to do in a situation just like this. “Uh…”

“No worries, I’ll order for you,” he turned to the bartender, rattling off the name of some drink Nagisa had never heard of. From the smell of it once it was placed in his hand, it was most definitely alcoholic. ‘C’mon, drink up! I’m paying! We’ll do it up big tonight, anything for a nice omega like you!’

“N-no! I…I can’t drink.” Nagisa excused. He couldn’t anyway, due to his doctor’s warnings, but he was never drinking alcohol in his life again. All it had gotten him in was this huge mess. His mind turned to Yuji’s comment. Omega? Nagisa realised, with a small amount of horror, that in the rush of the assassination and then their infiltration, he’d forgotten to apply any of that scent blocker stuff. It hadn’t seemed to be an issue before, but he must be producing some kind of scent.

The more natural he acted, the better. “Um, Yuji kun? Are you here with your parents?” Nagisa decided to ask, as Yuji downed his own drink.

“My parents? Like they have the time! This is just between us, but my old man, he’s a famous TV personality.” He announced, excitedly. “You know him, believe me! He’s such a big deal, he can get away with anything. He was bragging about squeezing this omega woman announcer’s ass for twenty four hours straight!”

That sounded gross. “Does your dad have some kind of grudge against asses or something?”

Yuji looked away, as if he’d run out of any kind of reply, and pulled out a cigarette looking thing. There was an odd smell coming from it, though, causing Nagisa to wrinkle his nose.

“That’s… not a regular cigarette, is it?”

“Yeah. I just got into it. At my age, if you know about these, you’re cool.”

Nagisa reached over, inspecting it closely. He wasn’t sure he had any grounds to lecture people on what they did with their lives, given his own situation, but he couldn’t help but feel bad for the guy. “Our teacher said he doesn’t know if smoking those will make you look cool, but it definitely makes your life harder.”

“Life’s already hard for us betas!” He slammed a fist on the table. “We gotta force ourselves to try and look cool! It’s worse for me, always getting compared to my old man. You’ve got it made… All you have to do is pick a cool guy”

“Uh… yeah…” Nagisa looked away from him. If only his life were that easy.

“Nagisa!” Kayano called out, across the room.

“Kayano!” Her coming to get him could mean danger, but Nagisa was overjoyed he was allowed to leave. “Oh, um… I gotta go,” he excused.

“What? Already?” Yuji looked up.

“Bye now!” Nagisa said quickly, going over to Kayano’s side. The girls didn’t seem to be in too much danger, at the very least, and were waiting by the balcony door. “Don’t leave me alone like that!”
“Sorry! We hammered out a strategy!” Kataoka said, like that had been the plan all along.

“Great,” Nagisa responded genuinely. “I can’t wait to get out of these clothes.”

“Hey, wait up! Ladies!” Nagisa turned, to see Yuji had followed them. “As a special treat, check out my signature dance moves!”

The display was awful. Even if he’d actually been a good dancer, the moves were so try-hard Nagisa just wanted it to end. That’s all he seemed to be – try hard. It was a little sad, really. Maybe if Yuji learnt to be more comfortable on his own two feet, he could be a genuinely nice guy. His moves grew too frantic, though, and he knocked a drink out of a taller man’s hand, spilling it all over his jacket.

“Hey brat, tough guy, eh?” The man approached.

“N-no, I-“

“Get over here!” He grabbed Yuji by the shirt.

Yuji trembled. “I didn’t mean to…”

“This is a million yen jacket. I demand compensation. Your address, now! Add on pain and suffering, and that’s three million total. Pay up now and we’ll only leave you half dead.”

“What?! M-my father will pay! Please don’t beat me up!”

“Excuse me, Yakuza San?” Okano stepped up, with apparently some pity.

“Yeah?”

Expertly, she flipped, kicking him back so he was knocked out in one blow. Nagisa was sure that if Karasuma had been there to see it, he would have been proud of how flawlessly she’d pulled off the technique.

“Excuse me, sir?” Yada asked one of the men guarding the door. “That customer just suddenly collapsed. Take him out of here and get him checked out.”

“Oh yes. Sorry for the bother.” He left his post, and seeing their chance, some of the girls ran through the open door.

“Back to the dance floor with you!” Yada said kindly to Yuji. “And don’t tell anyone about this, okay?”

“Even when girls pull off something so effortlessly cool,” Nagisa said, his eyes following them, “you still have to chin up and act cool… It is hard.”

“Nagisa chan…” Yuji looked up at him.

He sighed. “If we meet again, keep acting cool, okay? Anything but drugs and dancing… if you can help it.”

Joining them, he ran around the back of the longue, unlocking the door so the rest of their group could come through. The second it was unlocked, Nagisa slipped away, this time finding a cleaning cupboard to change in. Once his regular clothes were touching his skin again, he felt infinitely more comfortable. It wasn’t like he’d done much, anyway.
“Wow, you sure got changed fast, Nagisa,” Kayano said, once he’d returned.

“Yeah.” Nagisa looked down.

“Hmm? What’s wrong?” Kayano asked.

“It’s just… You girls did everything this time around. What was even the point of me being in this get up?”

Karma quickly cut in, holding up his phone to display a photo of Nagisa in the outfit. “Comic relief, duh!”

“Don’t you dare Karma kun!” It was how he’d used to tease Nagisa before all this mess had started, strangely familiar. As he reached for the phone, Karma laughed, holding it above his head and out of his reach. It didn’t bother him that much, really. In a sense, the normalcy of it was refreshing. Perhaps they still had hope, somehow.

Chapter End Notes

As always, I appreciate comments and kudos. Next chapter, which I hope to upload ASAP, the big fight
Finally, after fighting one final assassin, they’d made it to their destination – the top floor of the resort. Nagisa was exhausted from their previous encounters, but now they were so close, the desire to protect his friends won out. The room was just a pretty nice looking suite, save for the multi-monitor set up on the desk, and what looked like a bomb beside the chair. Karasuma signalled them, and they approached silently, as they’d practised before.

They made it very close to the man in the chair, before he let out a deep breath. “Itchy. The very memory makes me itch. But maybe that’s why my senses have grown so much keener: because my wounds are always exposed to the air.” He tossed a variety of detonator remotes up into the air, causing them to fall around the room. “I told you, I’d come prepared to kill a Mach 20 monster. I have spare detonator remotes in case one is snatched away at high speed. Enough to press any one of them if I happen to collapse.”

Nagisa had definitely heard that voice before, but this time it was much more sinister.

“Of the people I couldn’t reach, there were three assassins and one other.” Karasuma said, fully recovered and holding a gun. “An insider who vanished with Ministry of Defence secret service funds and the assassination budget. What do you think you’re doing, Takaoka?”

Takaoka, the man Nagisa had faced before, stood up. “What naughty children. Coming in the back door to see your dear teacher? That’s not how your good old dad raised you. Ah, well, I’ll have to give you some summertime tutoring.” He kept scratching at his cheeks, where there were already exposed wounds and scars. “Shall we go to the roof?” He picked up the bomb. “I’ve got everything ready to welcome my beloved students. You’ll follow me up there, right? After all, your class is only alive thanks to my benevolence.”

They didn’t really have much of a choice but to follow him. Though highly on guard, the class trailed behind their old ‘teacher’, until they met the warm summer air. There didn’t seem to be anything suspicious going on, so they could probably rule out any kind of ambush. It just looked like a regular roof, albeit with a helipad in the centre.

“Hiring assassins, threatening students with a virus – such atrocities… Have you gone mad?” Karasuma said, glaring at Takaoka.
“Now, now, I am exceedingly sane! This plan will save the world!” He responded, not sounding sane. “If only you’d sent those two small ones along to bring me the one with the bounty, my assassination plan would’ve gone off without a hitch. See, my plan would have used the… what’s her name? Kayano? The girl. The bathtub in my room here is filled with anti-Sensei BB’s. I’d have her go in there holding the target. Then I’d bury them alive in cement. For him to return to his usual form without touching those BB’s, he would have to blow everything up, including his student. But he cares too much for his students to do anything heartless! So I figure he’d just do me a favour and melt away! It gave me a fright when I learned you all came here together, but it doesn’t much change what I have to do. My mood will determine how many of you leave here alive.”

He was talking far more like a sadistic monster than a real human.

“Do you think you can get away with this?” Korosensei asked.

He laughed. “It’s the more humane route… compared to the inhumane way you’ve treated me! Their humiliating glances and the knife you tricked me with… Whenever they cross my mind, my face gets so itchy I can’t even sleep at night! I’ll pay back my bad evaluations with results. I’ll take the humiliation I suffered and give it back in spades! You in particular, Shiota Nagisa. I will never forgive you for spoiling my future.”

Nagisa felt very exposed all of a sudden, as all eyes turned towards him. Did that mean that this whole thing was his fault? If they failed, the lives of his friends would be blood on his hands. He would be responsible. Nagisa couldn’t let that happen.

Chiba cut his thoughts off. “So in asking for the shortest students, he was going after Nagisa.”

“A completely unjustified grudge!” Yoshida agreed.

“Huh,” Karma stepped forwards, “you wanted Nagisa kun here so you could settle the score? Would that make you happy, beating him? Given the size difference? I could show you a much better time.” There was the same kind of taunt in his tone, but something in it made Nagisa wonder if it was Karma’s efforts to protect him.

“You’re nuts.” Terasaka bit out. “You only lost to Nagisa by your own damn rules! Listen, whether you’d won or lost back then, we’d still hate your guts!”

It had at least agitated Takaoka. “I don’t remember asking for you blockheads’ opinions! Don’t forget I can get rid of half of you with just one finger!” He’d begun to scream. “You. Shrimp. Come upstairs alone. To the heliport.”

“Nagisa! You can’t!” Kayano called out.

Their blood would be on his hands. Nagisa handed Korosensei over. “I don’t want to… but I will”

“You can’t,” Karma said, panic evident in his tone as he grabbed Nagisa’s wrist in a vice. “It’s too dangerous for you.”

He was doing it again, the control he’d placed on Nagisa a few months ago, in order to prevent him from helping with Terasaka’s assassination plan. Nagisa could feel it in the air, the toxicity of the pheromones attempting to wrap around his senses, compelling him to remain still and paralysed. It was so unnatural for Nagisa to close his eyes, but he forced himself, remembering everything he’d learnt.
“I can’t believe I agreed to this,” Asano complained, sitting opposite Nagisa, cross legged on the bed.

“Please,” Nagisa asked softly. “I really need to practise, and I don’t know many other alphas.”

The alpha rolled his eyes, but then focused on maintaining eye contact. It was much slower than it had been the first time Nagisa had experienced the sensation. Before, it had been as if Karma was yanking the ground out from under him, more powerful, like the snap of a whip. With the way Asano’s pheromones filled the air, it was more like a slow lull.

“Nagisa kun,” he said steadily, “nod your head for me.”

It wasn’t the same as when Karma had commanded him, but that didn’t stop the static buzz at the back of his head. It accepted Asano’s words, making him sway forwards. He wanted to do as the alpha pleased, wanted to fulfil the command. Nagisa nodded.

Almost instantly, it was ripped away, making Nagisa feel cold. “You’re not even trying.”

“I’m sorry,” it felt weirdly exposing.

There was a fire set in Asano’s usually cold eyes. “Alright, Nagisa kun. We’ll do it again.”

“Okay.”

Yeah, that was right. Nagisa didn’t need to listen to Karma. He wasn’t his alpha, and even if he was, even Nagisa’s omega nature didn’t mean he had to do what he said. This mission was more important than Karma’s will, more important than the potential danger. He broke out of Karma’s grip, and any mental hold Karma had over him fractured, causing his eyes to go wide.

“He’s so agitated, who knows what he’ll do,” Nagisa stepped towards the helipad. “I’ll hear him out, talk him down, and get him to hand over the remedy in one piece.”

With no other protests, he climbed the stairs, getting up onto the pad where Takaoka clearly wanted him. He was waiting there, staring at Nagisa like his next meal. Nagisa couldn’t help but feel a little sick, once he noticed the knife laid out for him. It really did seem like Takaoka wanted a rematch.

“Oh – don’t take this the wrong way,” Takaoka announced to the rest of their group. “I don’t want you interrupting my precious time with Shiota Nagisa.” In one swift movement, he pressed one of the detonator remotes, blowing up all possible exits to the helipad. Nagisa was trapped there.

“Now no one else can come up here. Do you understand what I’m trying to do? This is revenge for our earlier fight.”

“Wait, please, Takaoka Sensei,” Nagisa tried desperately, “I didn’t come here to fight.”

“I’m sure. Those dirty tricks won’t work anymore. I can see myself doing you in, quickly, just like that. But it’ll be over too soon to make me feel any better. So before we fight, there’s something I need you to do. Apologise. On your hands and knees. Atone wholeheartedly for having pulled a dirty sneak attack because you lack any real skill.”

He had to, for his friends. Nagisa lowered himself so he was kneeling. “I-“
“You call that on your hands and knees, you rotten brat?! Head on the ground!”

Nagisa’s eyes fell on the bomb containing the remedy. He could get this out. Shaking slight, Nagisa put his head to the ground. “I have no real skill, so I pulled a dirty sneak attack. I’m sorry.”

He flinched when Takoaka dug his boot onto his head. “Oh, and after that you talked back to me, told me to get out. Is that any way for a brat like you to talk to an adult? Is that any way for a student to talk to his teacher?!”

“I’m just a brat and a student, and it was wrong for me to talk back to an adult, a teacher. I’m very sorry.”

“Now you’re speaking from the heart. Your dear old dad is so pleased!” He let Nagisa up, though he remained on his knees. “As a reward, I’ll let you in on a little something. I asked Smog what happens to the people who die from that virus. He showed me some pictures. What a laugh! Their bodies, covered in boils! Faces like bunches of grapes! Wouldn’t you like to see that, Nagisa kun?”

Before Nagisa even had time to react, Takoaka picked up the bomb and threw it far away, pressing the detonator once again. It, and the cure within, exploded. Just like that. In the matter of a second, all of this had been for nothing. He’d just signed everyone’s death sentences. It must have shown on Nagisa’s face, because Takoaka begun to laugh like a madman.

“Yes! That’s the face I wanted to see! You ought to put it in your summer diary – your friends’ faces, bubbling up like so many grapes!”

Nagisa’s hands folded around himself. Unlike when he usually placed his hands on his stomach, as he’d found himself doing a lot recently, it didn’t calm him down. Nowhere within him was the urge to cry. No, all Nagisa felt was sickening rage. It was if Nagisa couldn’t even see. He could have been in a pitch black room, for all that it mattered. There was nothing, just Takoaka. Just his target, and him.

It was said that violence was against an omega’s nature. Even Lovro, a true professional and expert in killing, had told him so. By all means, Nagisa should be shying away, crying and begging. There was nothing, nothing but cold. His eyes were fixed to the ground, and then they raked up to the knife. The blade looked sharp, lethal with its cool metal. Nagisa reached out for it, feeling its weight and the steel on his fingertips.

“I’ll… kill you…”

He would use the blade to kill his target. Nagisa pictured it, driving it into the man’s chest. Or maybe he wouldn’t go for the quick kill. If he could get the right angle, perhaps a slash to the throat. It wouldn’t even be that hard. Nagisa wanted it, wanted Takoaka’s blood to paint the plains of his skin crimson.

“That’s right… that’s the way.”

The voice caused Nagisa’s eyes to snap up to meet Takoaka’s. Maybe he’d carve those demon eyes out and keep them as a reminder. There was nothing left now there was no hope. The only thing Nagisa could do was make him pay for the lives of his friends. He owed it to them, to himself. He was going to kill Takoaka, and he was going to make it hurt.

“I’ll kill you… for what you did to them,” he pulled himself to his feet.

“That’s the spirit!” Takoaka goaded. “Come and kill me, Nagisa kun!”
Oh, he would kill him. He’d kill him so bad that before he was done, Takaoka would be begging for his own death. Before Nagisa could advance, something hit him in the back, hard. He turned naturally, realising the object was Terasaka’s stun gun.

“Don’t be getting cocky Nagisa!” He called out. “Quit worrying about other people, you damn wimp. This virus will go away by itself with a good night’s sleep! Murder is murder, even with a piece of trash like that! You gonna give into the crazy, and throw your chance at ten billion out of the window?”

“Terasaka’s right, Nagisa kun,” Korosensei also called. “Killing him isn’t worth it, and being in a blind rage will only work against you. Besides, he doesn’t know anything about the remedy. We’ll ask the poisoner downstairs. Just knock this one out; that’s enough.”

Takaoka stopped laughing, and screamed shouted. “Hey, now, quit being a wet blanket! Unless he comes at me with a real intent to kill, what’s the point? I’ll use this squirt’s bloodlust for revenge in a most humiliating way, and finally my own shame will disappear.”

“Nagisa kun,” Korosensei’s voice was level, as if he was teaching him math, “take Terasaka’s stun gun. His life and my life. His words and Terasaka kun’s words. Think carefully, now. Which are worthy?”

Nagisa… suddenly didn’t know what to do, what he wanted. The blood was still appealing, but he bent down, fastening the stun gun in his belt.

“Ooh, don’t you look cool?” Takaoka went back to laughing. “I see you’re determined to use the knife. That’s a relief. Oh, and just so you know, I do have spare vials of that remedy. If you don’t come at me like you mean it, or if your friends get in the way, you can kiss these babies goodbye. Hear that, Karasuma? Stay out of this. This stuff takes a good month to make. There’s not enough for everyone, but it is your last hope.”

As best he could, Nagisa got into the correct stance, brandishing the knife. When he approached, though, it wasn’t with as much vigour and confidence as he’d felt just moments ago. No, now he was shaken up by the advice of Terasaka and Korosensei, Nagisa easily missed his blow. It gave Takaoka the opportunity to kick him hard on the chest, knocking him back.

“What’s wrong? Aren’t you going to kill me?”

Nagisa would, he had to. He owed it to avenge his friends, to himself… He attempted to attack again, but Takaoka easily grabbed him by the wrist, knocking him back. Every attempt to fight was almost instantly thwarted, yet every hit from Takaoka landed. Nagisa was left coughing and panting, thrown off and already worn down to the bone.

“Hmm,” he said, making for a kick to Nagisa’s stomach (which he managed to block). “You’re awfully protective of right there.” He held him sickeningly close, making a show of scenting his neck. Nagisa was never forgetting scent blockers again. “How precious. Almost enough to make me feel bad.” He kicked him the chest once more, causing Nagisa to fall to his knees. “Hey, don’t be tiring out on me! We’re only just getting started! Looks like it’s time for me to use this, too,” he pulled out a knife. “I’ll cut off your hands and feet, have them stuffed and mounted. I’ll keep them with me and cherish them forever. Nothing better than the prize of a poor, tragic omega to keep with me.”

Shuddering, Nagisa’s mind finally cleared up. He wasn’t in the right state for a kill, not anymore, and now Takaoka had mentioned it, attacking more in this way would only put himself and his baby in more danger. Nagisa had been trained to be an assassin, not a murderer. Besides, he
thought, he didn’t particularly want to give birth in prison. It was almost funny, the day he’d defeated Takaoka the first time had been the day he’d been taken to the hospital. He could defeat him again, the same way.

Remembering the technique Lovro had taught him before the trip, Nagisa went through his mental checklist. Takaoka was definitely a professional who knew the fear of death, and, as he stood up again, Nagisa could feel he had the stun gun attached to him, his second blade. Good, that was all three of the conditions. Takaoka was about to become Nagisa’s guinea pig.

“Wh-what are you doing?” Takaoka noticed the shift in his demeanour.

Finally focusing, Nagisa approached as casually as he had before, like he was walking down the street on a perfectly normal day. Takaoka froze, and made no attempt to defend himself as his eyes clearly slid to the knife Nagisa was holding. As soon as he was close enough, Nagisa let it fall to the ground, lunging forwards as he clapped as loud as he could. Just as Lovro had promised, it stunned the man, causing him to stumble back. Before he could come back to his senses, Nagisa swiftly pulled the gun, activating it.

As Takaoka was electrocuted, and fell to his knees, Nagisa realised he’d won. There was no immediate rush of victory, though. No, he still had something to say. After all, this man had taught him what true blood lust felt like. If anything, Nagisa should thank him. He tilted the man’s face up with the gun, forcing him to look him in the eyes.

“No. Just, please, don’t end this with that face! That face will haunt my nightmares until my dying day!”

Nagisa ignored him. “Takaoka sensei, thank you,” he smiled genuinely, before electrocuting him a final time, and Takaoka fainted.

He was vaguely aware of cheering in the background, but Nagisa only really came back around when he felt himself being pulled into a firm hug. He didn’t return it, blinking to look up at Karma’s face. Oh, he wasn’t sure if Karma had ever hugged him before.

“Nice,” Karma cleared his throat, trying to pass the gesture off.

“Are you okay, Nagisa?” Isogai rushed over to ask.

He felt a little faint. “Yeah…”

“Well done, Nagisa kun.” Korosensei said from Kayano’s arms. “For the first time, I wasn’t sure how things would turn out. I’m relieved.”

“Yeah, and I’m fine,” Nagisa said, though dizziness was settling in suddenly, “but now what? The remedy we took off Takaoka sensei won’t be enough.”

Karasuma pulled out his phone, dialling something. “Let’s get out of here, at least. I’ve called a helicopter. You wait here. I’ll bring up the poisoner.”

“Ha, you don’t need a remedy,” the group’s attention suddenly went to the other side of the room, where the three assassins they’d defeated were standing, poised for a fight. “You brats thought you could get out of here alive, huh?”

“We’ve defeated the man who hired you,” Karasuma said calmly. “you’re out of reasons to fight. I’ve mostly recovered, and these students are pretty strong. How about we stop now before anyone else gets hurt?”
“Yeah, okay,” the third one said.

“You just don’t know when to give up-“ Yoshida started. “Huh, ‘okay’?”

“Our contracts don’t cover avenging the boss,” he shrugged. “Besides, it’s like I said, you don’t need a remedy.”

“This here is what I gave you,” the poisoner demonstrated. “An improvement on the food poisoning bug. It’ll keep going strong for another thirty hours or so, but then it’ll lose its oomph, and with it, its poison. Now this is what our boss told us to use. If we’d used this, you’d really be in dire straits.”

“Right before using that virus, we three talked it over, hm,” the second assassin said. “Our boss only gave you one hour, hm. We figured we could do the handover without resorting to a deadly virus, hm.”

“It was enough to make you feel like your lives were in danger, anyway,” the poisoner continued. Okano stepped forwards. “So you went against orders? Can you do that when he’s paying you?”

“What are you, stupid?” The third assassin sounded offended. “If you think pros will do anything for money, you have another thing coming. Of course, we’ll do our best to abide by our client’s wishes, but he never had any intention of giving you the remedy. Either we become killers of a bunch of respectable Junior High kids, or we take a hit to our professional standing. We just calmly weighed which option had more risk from here on out.”

“And that’s why, sorry to say,” the poisoner cut in, “none of you will be dying. Give the patients that supplement and put them to bed, they’ll feel even better than before they were sick.”

“I’ll believe it once I see those students recovered,” Karasuma said carefully, as a government helicopter arrived. “I’ll have to detain you for a while for questioning.”

“Ah, well, you’ve got a week to wind it up before the next job starts,” the third assassin said casually, leading the rest of his group onto it.

With that, it was just their small group left on the rooftop, waiting for the transport back to the hotel. In each passing second, where the weight of everything that had happened set into Nagisa, the adrenaline faded. He was exhausted, so worn down that all he wanted to do was sleep. The more he tried to stand upright, the more he swayed, before everything went blurry, and then completely dark.

When Nagisa stirred, it was still pretty dark out. He was lying down, flat on his back, and looking at a nicely maintained ceiling. Once his brain caught up, Nagisa realised he must have been taken back to the hotel they were staying in. He wasn’t in his own assigned room, but rather some sort of empty reception room, lying on an uncomfortable stretcher. He didn’t feel particularly injured, just a little sore and groggy. Feeling confident he could, he sat up, taking in the room around him properly. There was nobody else there, save for the boy snoozing in the corner. How long had he been out?

“Karma?” Nagisa questioned, tentatively.

Immediately, his eyes flew open. Something seemed to cross Karma’s face, but he resorted to a grin. “Good, you’re awake.”

“What-“
Karma came closer, waving him off. “You passed out before the helicopter came, but the paramedics checked you out and cleared you. Don’t worry, I made sure they wouldn’t spill anything.”

That sounded… threatening. “Spill anything?”

He shrugged. “You’re both just fine. Or alive, at least.”

Oh. Nagisa had been so caught up in the adrenaline of it all that he hadn’t considered whether the baby was okay, once he’d launched his attack on Takaoka, aside from that one glancing thought that had brought him back. That was comforting at least, to know Nagisa hadn’t accidentally harmed it with his actions. Perhaps it would have been easier, though, if the ‘big secret’ had been spilled that way. If Karma said they wouldn’t talk, though, they most definitely wouldn’t. Thinking about it, had Karma stayed by his bedside all night? His eyes bore dark circles that suggested that was the case.

“Just in time,” Karma looked at his phone. “They’re going to start the assassination soon. Want to come to the beach and watch?”

Though he didn’t doubt Karma wouldn’t care too much about the rules, Nagisa was probably deemed healthy enough to carry on as he liked, if he’d been left without any medical supervision. He wouldn’t miss the assassination for the world, after everything.

“Okay.”

They didn’t say much, on their walk down to the beach, though Karma stopped further back from where their friends were also waiting. In the centre of the sea, there was a large metallic structure. If Nagisa had to guess, the government had built it to contain him, filling it with some kind of anti-Sensei material. Perhaps it would work.

“That was some impressive assassination earlier,” Karma finally said, following Nagisa’s eyes to the sunrise.

Nagisa found himself stiffening for a moment, before his shoulders dropped down again. “Mm, it was nothing. Just something Lovro san taught me.”

He sighed. “Do you think the government plan’s going to work?”

It was odd, for Karma. Not the kind of question he’d phrase aloud to Nagisa, of all people. Knowing him, Karma had probably already come up with three loose ideas of what to do when Korosensei inevitably escaped from the holdings. Nagisa felt it though, he knew deep down it wasn’t going to work. Everything felt far too clean and perfectly judged for that. There was no way Karma didn’t sense that too, which lead Nagisa to believe there was something else on the tip of his tongue.

Deciding to indulge him, Nagisa shrugged. “I get the feeling Korosensei will find a way to escape.”

Karma inhaled sharply. “Nagisa kun…”

“Yes, Karma kun?” He couldn’t help but soften a little those rare moments where Karma lost all of his natural charisma. Nagisa turned away from the facility that was holding their teacher, facing him.

His fist clenched. “I’m… sorry.” He paused for a second, as if he was waiting Nagisa to bail him
out of the apology. “I know I can’t understand what it’s like to be an omega, but it can’t make it any easier and… Look, I should beat you fair and square, not because you had no choice. It’s no excuse, but I just feel this urge to protect, and,” he swallowed, “I should trust you more. Your fight with Takaoka proved that… not that you should have had anything to prove in the first place, but… I’m sorry, Nagisa kun. I swear, I’ll never command you like that again.”

It was a lot to take in. Nagisa had buried much of the emotional impact away, focusing on never letting it happen again. He did believe Karma. It was rare to get a forced apology out of him, let alone an admission that he was actually wrong.

“What’s this coming from?” He found himself asking

“Huh?” Wow, he looked vulnerable. “Karasuma sensei spoke to me about it, after they finished checking you over, but,” he clenched his teeth, “I should have known it was wrong on my own.

“It is a lot to forgive you for,” Nagisa realised.

“Please Nagisa kun, accept my apology,” he said once again, genuinely. There was no hint of darkness in his form.

Smiling softly, Nagisa offered his hand. “Okay. I forgive you.” Or at the very least, he’d begin to. He didn’t want to make it too easy, of course.

Karma accepted it, and Nagisa looked down at where their hands were joined, feeling a new sense of peace wash over him. There was no magical fix, but he felt strangely balanced again. They still had a lot of talking to do, of course. Not right then, though. There were more urgent things. Nagisa turned his head to the sunrise.

“It’s a new day, after all,” Nagisa looked out.

A few minutes later, and predictably, Korosensei was free, zooming around the beach at Mach 20 like his old self once again. Nagisa had almost missed the tentacles. There was no disappointment there anymore. They’d just have to assassinate him extra hard, next time.

Karma seemed to share the sentiment, taking the safety off his gun. “Want to take a shot, Nagisa kun?”

“Sure,” Nagisa replied, and followed him further down the beach to join the fire of bullets.

Chapter End Notes

Until next time~
Nagisa’s entire existence sucked. It sucked so hard, he could be the king of suck. He really had to stop thinking about sucking, given the situation. The whole ‘glow’ rumour was fake, completely and utterly fake. Nagisa felt gross, sweaty and disgusting. Ever since getting back from the island trip, all he’d wanted to do was hide under the covers and sleep for days on end. The more he slumped around in bed, though, the worse the itch under his skin for a change of scenery became.

He just wasn’t built for laziness. Nagisa needed to go out, do something. Unfortunately, the lack of clothes that fit him was an issue. Most of his clothes had been loose to start with, but in the heat of summer, he was down to one shirt that hid his stomach, and it was starting to get scratchy considering how much he had to wash it.

There was only one day left until they were back at school. He wasn’t sure how effectively he was going to hide it then. Maybe that was the best. Though it was true he didn’t actually know how Karma felt about it, he probably wouldn’t appreciate a massive announcement. If people just gradually realised, surely that would also be okay, right?

They still hadn’t had that conversation yet. It was far, far overdue. At least they weren’t avoiding each other. That had to be some kind of progress. Maybe Karma had something going on, Nagisa was never sure. Though they were on speaking terms, Nagisa hadn’t even seen him for a couple of weeks. He’d have to shortly, in less than twenty four hours. At least they still had another five or so months.

Thinking too hard about Karma wasn’t helping the itch underneath his skin. Nagisa tossed the blanket away from his body, forcing himself to sit up. At the very least, he needed to go for a walk. He was going to die without the sun on his skin, he was sure of it. He stretched out, and picked up his phone for the time.

>>> Hey Nagisa, I don’t know if you’re busy today but I’d love to take you out for sushi later, if you want. Please let me know! Love, dad.

Nagisa blinked at the message, reading it over and over. His father hadn’t had much time for him recently. Although his reaction to being put in the E Class wasn’t as strong as his mother’s had been, he had still seemed pretty upset. They hadn’t actually spoken since, rarely did these days. He always claimed to be busy, so Nagisa would feel bad if he said no.
He texted back, and immediately decided that he was going to have to bring a jacket, regardless of the heat. Nagisa had become somewhat of an expert when it came to which angles to stand at and how to cover himself in the right way, recently. Fashion had never been anything he much cared about, but it really did come in handy.

His father greeted him outside the small restaurant, pulling Nagisa into a somewhat awkward hug. Nagisa immediately noticed the tired look about him. Even though he’d been younger at the time, Nagisa had picked up on the way he acted like being a part of their household was a curse. The distance didn’t seem to have fixed that.

He still looked cheerful, enough. “Nagisa! I’m sure you’ve grown!”

Outwards, maybe. Nagisa was more than aware it was just a comment to make him feel better, but he still smiled all the same. “A centimetre or two, I think.”

His father led the way inside. “How’s school treating you?”

“It’s good,” Nagisa replied, though he knew he had to be reserved. They did, after all, have a non-disclosure agreement with the government. “I was nearly in the top thirty at finals.”

“That’s great!” He said, as they took their seats, perhaps just a little too cheerfully. “I’m truly happy for you, Nagisa.”

Nagisa looked over at the sushi whirling around on the conveyor belt. He didn’t know exactly, but he was pretty sure he was meant to be avoiding raw foods. As much as sushi was his favourite food, most of it looked pretty unappealing, anyway. At least the vegetarian options were probably safe. He reached for a few plates, not his regular choice.

“Do you have enough wasabi on that?” his father joked as Nagisa spread out the paste.

Looking down at his dish, Nagisa realised he was definitely right. It didn’t seem bad, though. He tried one of the rolls, finding the spice more appealing than he usually did, despite the burn in his throat. As if he was doing it to prove a point, Nagisa added even more. All he wanted was spicy food, and lots of it.

“It’s really good,” he defended, and continued to eat.

“Are you getting along with your mother alright?”

“…” Nagisa didn’t know what to say. If he was asking that question, then he clearly hadn’t spoken to her. That was probably a good thing.

“Must be hard when she’s so strict,” he continued, “I feel bad for bailing on you.”

It was not the time to open up that can of worms. Nagisa had mostly pushed those issues so far away that they were practically buried. After all, it had in the end been his own choice to stay living with his mother after the divorce, not that it got him particularly far. Still, he didn’t want his father to worry or anything.

“It’s not so bad,” Nagisa lied, “if you don’t get her mad she’s not so strict.”

“I thought sashimi was your favourite,” he changed the subject, once again looking at Nagisa’s plate.

Nagisa swallowed. “I can’t eat it right now,” he said without thinking.
“Why? Is something wrong with you?” He asked with concern.

He really didn’t want to do this. He wanted to crawl right back into that duvet cave and hide. Never in his life did Nagisa envision he’d be having this conversation with his father. Though to be honest, there were many things going on currently that he wouldn’t have imagined in a million years. After all that had happened recently, Nagisa didn’t have much fear.

“I’m pregnant,” Nagisa shrugged, taking a bite of his food.

“Oh,” his father said, “that’s… nice? Congratulations.”

It was better than him yelling and making a scene, Nagisa supposed, though the indifference wasn’t that encouraging either. Though, after a few seconds, he seemed to slowly realise the weight of Nagisa had actually told him, rather than the polite response he probably saved for office assistants or something. Nagisa couldn’t help but attempt to avoid his eyes as his expression slowly morphed.

Before anything could be said, though, a familiar figure appeared on the seat behind him, holding up a sign. Korosensei looked earnest as he always did, though he was wearing his typical disguise reserved for public appearances. He pointed at the sign, which read: ‘Summer Festival! If you’re free at seven tonight, meet at Kunugigaoka Station!’

Well that sounded… fun. A summer festival? Nagisa hadn’t had any plans to go to one, but it would be the trip out that he really needed, perhaps.

Sensing his slight hesitation, Korosensei swiftly took out a marker and scribbled something else: ‘The last day of summer vacation! Let’s hang out and have some mindless fun!’ He darted off at his great speed, leaving Nagisa to stare at the wall.

Nagisa stood up. “Hey, uh, thank you for the sushi, dad!”

“Huh?” He blinked. “You’re already done? Wait, I-“

He didn’t hear whatever his dad had been about to say, already at the exit of the place. The conversation had gone on for long enough, at least. Nagisa didn’t really want to just sit through the awkwardness that was bound to follow, as much as he would always love his father. Besides, he didn’t want to be late.

Asano’s house was actually pretty close to the sushi place, in comparison to where he used to have to come from. Never too careful, Nagisa came in through the back entrance as usual, observing the property quickly before calling out to announce he was back. Nobody responded to him at first, so he assumed Asano was probably holed up in his room. Unlike Nagisa, he seemed to have no issue in remaining within the same four walls for long periods of time.

Good, Nagisa thought as he checked the time on his phone, I’m not late after all. He paced upstairs, though paused opposite the door to the guest room. It still felt wrong to refer to it as ‘his’, on some level. Hesitating, he wasn’t sure if Asano would appreciate him knocking on his bedroom door. Though, he also didn’t seem like the type who would appreciate lateness, either.

It turned out that Nagisa didn’t even have to knock, because Asano pulled the door open before he reached it, wearing the same uninterested face as he usually did.

“Are you just going to stand there?” He asked, leaning against the door frame.

Nagisa blinked. “N-no.”
Asano moved aside. “Come in, then.”

His bedroom was surprisingly the same as the rest of the house, utterly plain. It was meticulously clean, lacking even the smallest speck of dust. If Nagisa didn’t know any better, he would have thought Asano was preparing for a military room inspection or something. He was sure there was more to Asano’s personality than just this, at least.

“This movie had better be good,” he said, sitting back down on the bed where his laptop was out.

Nagisa joined him. “It is, I promise.”

Nothing made him feel better than his favourite movie. Though, he’d seen it so many times he could practically mouth the lines of the best parts, he found himself rather lulled by it. Asano seemed to want to watch it in complete silence. With nothing to really keep his brain active, he flitted in and out of light sleep after a while, blinking to see a few specs of action.

He still didn’t quite understand why Asano was being so nice to him still. At least, he was a much nicer person than the aura he gave off implied. A summer in his presence had confirmed that for Nagisa. There was no way he was letting his guard down, though, as genuine as some of his actions had seemed to be. Nagisa just couldn’t put his finger on it, yet.

A glancing thought in the back of his head undermined everything else. He was letting his guard down right then, wasn’t he? Nagisa had easily allowed himself to get too comfortable, casually falling asleep. Another side of him realised that comfortable wasn’t necessarily bad. That was, of course, until he realised his head had made its way to Asano’s shoulder. Not that the other boy seemed to mind, but Nagisa wanted to douse himself in holy water as soon as he realised, quickly jolting off.

“Are you okay?” Asano asked, not taking his eyes off the screen.

Nagisa realised it was the end credits playing. “Fine! I’m totally fine… What did you think of the movie?”

He shrugged. “It’s just a cliché action movie,” he sighed, “but some of it was pretty creative. It’s not awful.”

At least that made him alert. “You should watch the second one! You can definitely tell they had a bigger budget this time around, the special effects were amazing. It sucks that it’s not out in Japan yet, more people should get to see it.”

Asano’s eyes narrowed. “How have you seen it if it’s not available over here?”

Uh oh. Nagisa could hardly explain that his teacher had flown he and Karma to Hawaii on a whim for one evening. He needed to think of a reasonable lie, and fast.

“I, uh, streamed it online?”

It seemed to pass. “In English?”

Nagisa stood up, needing to get out fast. “I’m good at English.”

“Going somewhere?”

“Yeah,” Nagisa realised, “A summer festival. I’m glad you liked the movie!”
Once Nagisa was out of there, there wasn’t a lot for him to do. It wasn’t like he could change into anything more festive, given the situation that his stomach had put him in. He didn’t know what he was going to do when it was twice as big. In the end, he decided to ask Kayano if she wanted to meet up before everyone else. They hadn’t actually spent much time together the whole break, and Kayano was one of his close friends.

He headed out around an hour early, meeting her just outside the station. Like a few other girls he’d seen on the way, Kayano was dressed traditionally. She smiled brightly and waved when she saw him, and a warm sensation rolled over Nagisa. There was nothing like spending time with your friends.

Before the rest of their class arrived, they had a good time catching up with each other. Kayano was one of those people who was always so genuine and light-hearted, it was admirable in a way. Nagisa was happy that she was assigned to sit beside him in class, over anybody else. For a moment, he considered taking advantage of the privacy to tell her about the baby.

Nagisa hadn’t even managed to spit it out to Sugino, though, who was much closer to him and more laid back. He wasn’t sure how Kayano would react to such news, be it support or horror. At least he’d managed to get it out to his father. That was a pretty good start, surely. Eventually, he and Kayano wandered to the site of the festival, where everything was in full swing.

They mostly stuck together as they checked out all the stalls and games, chatting lightly about the atmosphere. The night was warm, and the site so colourful - it was definitely the perfect way to end the summer break. As had been happening quite a lot recently, Nagisa got a deep and somewhat uncontrollable urge to eat. Kayano didn’t seem to mind, though, happily going over with him to the stalls.

Korosensei was currently running at least ten of them, using his super speed cloning abilities to do so. At least he looked happy. “Ah, Nagisa kun, I’m happy you decided to visit my stall, I’ll even give you a student discount!”

He was running most of the food stalls, but Nagisa wasn’t going to argue with him. Kayano eyed him a little weirdly when he ordered five chicken sticks and a bag of candyfloss, but he was so hungry, and thinking completely with his stomach. The weird stares continued when Nagisa ripped open the candy floss, pulling a little off as the perfect garnish to his chicken.

“You’re eating that, Nagisa kun?” She said with slight horror in her tone.

Nagisa stopped chewing. “Uhm-“

“I bet that actually tastes pretty good,” Karma appeared behind them, carrying a large bag.

He eyed him. “Did that guy actually give you the games consul?” Earlier, they’d both walked past Karma had been arguing with the guy running the string lottery. Nagisa wasn’t particularly surprised. Karma sure was persistent when he wanted to be.

“Plus my other prizes,” he grinned. “Can I try some?”

Nagisa was so hungry, he didn’t want to share his food, but he still found himself handing it over with a smile. It was pretty weird, but it was all he wanted to eat right then.

“I like it,” he admitted after a few seconds, “if you get the ratio right.” Karma’s eyes darted between the two of them. “I’ll see you around,” he announced, and walked back off in the direction he’d came.
Kayano had gone quiet, as she usually did when Karma was present, but turned to smile at him. “Let’s find somewhere to watch the fireworks.”

“Yeah,” Nagisa agreed, following her in the direction of a mound nearby, to give them a bit more of an elevated view. He frowned, his stomach producing the small vibrations usually responsible for hunger pangs. There was no way he could physically be hungry. He’d eaten so much chicken on the way to the hill he didn’t even want to look at food.

When the fireworks actually started, it only got more intense, though if Nagisa really focused, it felt more like popcorn bursting. Not unlike… movement. Staring down at his own stomach intently, the little butterflies started up whenever a new firework exploded, creating a loud bang in the sky. Nagisa’s doctor had said babies could hear stuff… He couldn’t help but rub his stomach lightly. *I like the fireworks too.*

“Our summer break sure was packed,” Kayano said beside him.

“But I bet our second term’ll be even more packed,” Nagisa replied. He was counting on it.

Chapter End Notes

I'm going to be on holiday for a week now, so the earliest you're likely to get the next chapter (unless some miracle happens) is next Saturday. As always, I appreciate any comments and kudos <3 (Don't worry karnag fans, there's a lot of fluff in the next chapter)
Return To School Time

Chapter Summary

Summer break is over, and now Nagisa has to deal with classes again

Chapter Notes

Did ya miss me? For real, a lot of fluff was overdue.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

There was no way Nagisa could go anywhere like this. He’d sooner wear a dress. Granted, it was his own fault. He should have thought to test his school uniform before the morning he’d have to wear it. The trousers had absolutely no hope of buttoning up in the correct place. The only way he could get them on his body was buttoning them low, which meant they only rose halfway up his butt. To make matters worse, the shirt was so tight that although he could button it, they were gapping so far he was sure they could fly off at any moment.

No matter which way he turned in the mirror, not only was his stomach on display, but it was highlighted by the shape of his clothes. A month or so ago he could have gotten away with the excuse he’d just eaten a lot, but it was clear now, nearly halfway along, that he couldn’t just hide it. The waistcoat helped, slightly, but there didn’t seem to be a way to disguise it, unless Nagisa wanted to carry his bag in front of his stomach all day.

That… seemed like the most viable option. Applying his scent blocker, Nagisa’s main issue was the trousers. They were sure to be a uniform violation. A quick google search gave him the idea of looping one of his hair ties into the fastening. Sure enough, it held the trousers together enough so he could wear them properly, and he could at least hide the small gap that they left. It didn’t do all that much to disguise the bump issue, though.

As he had before summer, Nagisa left the house ten minutes before Asano did, walking in a different direction. It was actually quicker to reach the class building that way, anyway. If he was the first one there, he could just sit down and hide his stomach under the desk with nobody in particular looking at him. Unfortunately, he was already late, and the mountain climb was challenging.

By the time Nagisa made it to the top, considering he hadn’t been able to use the main path from the direction he’d come from, he was actually late for class. Assassination had helped him learn how to act natural, though. All he needed to do was take a deep breath, walk in, and sit down with nobody giving him a second glance. Bag poised in front of his stomach, Nagisa took a deep breath, and entered the school building.

His stealth tactics didn’t go to plan. For starters, Nagisa was never late, so the fact that he was drew attention from the get go, nobody simply shrugging his presence off. Clutching the bag like a shield, he refused to meet their eyes, shuffling over to his desk as quickly as he physically could. Only once he was sat down did he relax feeling less exposed before the pointed look Korosensei
gave him, marking him down on the register.

As the lesson went on, at least people seemed to forget about the oddness of his arrival. Nagisa himself attempted to focus on what was being taught, though that was kind of hard. Every time Korosensei’s voice picked up with enthusiasm, small flutters returned to his stomach. After the fireworks the night before, he’d felt them more, especially when he was lying or sitting down. It wasn’t constant, but Nagisa was sure they must be tiny kicks.

The realisation didn’t freak him out as much as it should have. It was one thing to know he was carrying around a living human, another to actually feel it, after all. For some reason, it just brought a smile to his lips. There was no way he could actually know for sure, but he suspected the baby moved more whenever something exciting sounding happened.

By the time the morning lessons were brought to a close, Nagisa was already uncomfortable. It had been a dramatic summer break, but at least he hadn’t been sitting still at old, wooden desks for hours on end. He felt clammy, like he needed to shift every few minutes. The situation was only doomed to get worse as time went on. He was also just about ready to collapse in hunger. Unfortunately, all Nagisa could bear the thought of was chocolate covered strawberries. There probably weren’t many of those around.

When it was actually time for lunch, Nagisa remembered that he didn’t actually have anything to eat at all. He’d spent so long fussing over his clothes that he’d rushed straight out of the door, and it wasn’t like he had any source of money to buy anything. Nagisa’s mouth watered as his classmates pulled out their own food. He would probably pass out without it, but he didn’t have much of a choice.

“Hey, Nagisa kun.” At the sudden voice, Nagisa’s eyes flicked up, noticing Karma standing over his desk. “Want to eat with me outside?”

It felt like that was somehow code for something. It was better than sitting in class and watching everyone else’s nice food, though. Nagisa nodded, and stood up from his desk, stretching out before following Karma outside. They didn’t go very far, with Karma’s judgement just outside the gym storage shed would be a good place to sit.

Karma sighed, apparently comfortable as he lay flat out on the grass. As it was the end of summer, the temperature had changed from unbearably hot to a warmer breeze. For a moment, Nagisa wondered if Karma was going to fall asleep, looking so peaceful sprawled out like that. He himself was sat cross-legged, with nothing better to do than to study Karma’s form.

He peeled one eye open. “Aren’t you hungry?”

Nagisa shifted. “I don’t have any food.”

Without moving an inch of the rest of his body, Karma stuck out his arm, reaching into his bag and blindly feeling around for something. He produced a plastic bag, lazily tossing it to Nagisa. A brief glance told him it was a hasty collection of food, likely purchased from the store that morning.

“Eat up,” he said, a hint of sarcasm lacing his tone.

“Uh, thanks,” he returned politely. He considered arguing, he really did, but Nagisa was starved. It was hardly gourmet but it all looked incredibly good. Nagisa only meant to take some of it, but the moment he took his first bite, the hole inside him caused by the hunger began to fill up. It felt so good to do so that within minutes, it was all gone. And, he was still a little hungry. Shame seeped out of him by the gallon.
“Sorry,” Nagisa finally said, “I didn’t mean to have it all.”

“I’m not that hungry,” Karma responded, like he was in his own world. “Do you want some strawberry milk too?”

Nagisa did. Strawberry sounded absolutely incredible right there and then. Still, he’d tried one of Karma’s favourite drinks before, and it had been so disgusting it had been all Nagisa could do not to spit it out. He really didn’t want to risk it, especially since he’d only just had food. He needed to make the most of it, not vomit it all back up again.

“I’m okay, thanks.” He paused. How long had it been since he and Karma honestly hung out alone together? Nagisa almost forgot how exactly to speak to him. “How’s the games console you won?”

Like magic, Karma sat up, grinning as he began to describe how he’d set it up and the functions of the upgrade as opposed to the other model. Though it wasn’t his biggest hobby, Karma was definitely more interested in gaming than Nagisa had ever been. Though, if he remembered correctly most of his games had been more harmless, popular anime tie in kind of things than the expected war games. At least he could chime in every now and then.

Korosensei’s return, zooming through the window of the classroom (he’d spent the time in Sydney that day), signified that it was the end of break. Karma didn’t seem in a particular hurry himself to get up and return, but Nagisa stood on cue, dusting any stray crumbs off his trousers. When Karma finally stood to join him, picking up his bag, Nagisa realised his big mistake.

He’d been so blinded by hunger that at the first mention of food, Nagisa had jumped out of the classroom, leaving his bag stowed under his desk. The bump on his stomach was going to be on full display. Nagisa would just have to pray, and walk as swiftly as possible back to his seat. Feeling more confident that he could do so, he sped to his seat, as if nothing had happened.

Being less hungry, Nagisa could at least pay attention a little more. At least he would’ve, if he didn’t feel weirdly stared at. He looked at his own pen and paper of course, but Nagisa could sense the eyes bearing into the back of his head. If he had to put up with this for the next few months, he wasn’t completely sure how he’d get through it.

By the end of the day at the very least, when everyone began to pack up to go back home again, they seemed to have forgotten about it. At least then he could return to the safety of bed and hide under the sheets for the next few hours. Nagisa decided the best strategy would be to wait a little, let the others spill out first so he didn’t have to disguise himself so much.

He got as far as the hallway, before running into Isogai of all people who had just emerged from the toilets. “Oh, sorry, Nagisa kun.”

“It’s okay,” Nagisa said, stepping to the side so he could pass.

“Hey, uhm,” he said a little awkwardly, meeting Nagisa’s eyes, “I didn’t say anything today.”

Nagisa wasn’t following. “Huh?”

“So the rumours,” Isogai clarified. “I accidentally overheard your mum talking to the receptionist that day Karma kun and I took you to the hospital. I didn’t confirm anything.”

So that was how Karma had figured it out, rather than some crazy 6th sense intuition? Nagisa wasn’t exactly embarrassed that Isogai knew, and had clearly known for months now. At least he wasn’t going around adding more fuel to the fire. Most people their age would.
“Thanks,” he decided, “you can tell them if you want.”

“Nagisa kun-”

“I’m not hiding it well,” Nagisa looked down at his stomach. “They’ll find out for real eventually.”

Genuinely, he smiled. “I hope you’re okay.”


“Only if you’re sure.”

Nagisa got the feeling he really meant that. He politely excused himself, allowing Isogai to go on to fill out the extra duties that came with being the class representative. At first glance, once he was outside, he was otherwise alone on the mountaintop. The realisation relaxed him somewhat as he took in the space.

“Yo,” an all too familiar voice said behind him.

Of course he’d only be able to enjoy it for a few seconds. Karma was leaning casually against the class building. From the way his demeanour shifted, Nagisa wondered if he’d been waiting specifically for him to come out. He stood up more fully, strolling over to where Nagisa had stopped.

“Wanna hang out at my house for a bit?”

Nagisa swallowed at the out of nowhere request. He’d seen Karma’s house maybe twice in his entire life. Mainly because his mother thought Karma was ‘trouble’, back when they were in first year, but they’d also drifted apart before they really got to that level. From what he remembered, it totally matched Karma’s personality. His bedroom had even been booby trapped. His mother wasn’t there to stop him right then, Nagisa realised.

“Sure,” he agreed. After all, it would be nice to go back to normal, or as normal as they could manage.

Karma’s house was located in the nice part of Kunugigaoka, on the outskirts as far away from the rest of it as possible, which meant they had to take the train to get there. Nagisa wasn’t exactly sure what his parents did, other than travel a lot, but it must be something important to afford such a big home. It wasn’t the same level as the Asano household had, but then again they likely weren’t being paid millions by the government for silence and co-operation.

If not for the look of it, the smell of incense immediately brought back the memories. It wasn’t unpleasant, though. Looking around, the eclectic collections of art and random objects had grown in the two or so years since he’d last set foot inside. Everything was pretty well maintained though, surprisingly not covered in dust. He wondered how often it got cleaned. For some reason, the image of Karma dressed up with an apron and a duster seemed equal parts foreign and hilarious to him.

Nagisa set his bag down at the hallway, smiling to himself as his eyes met an old photo of Karma and his parents in the mountains somewhere, clearly taken five or so years ago. He was holding up some kind of clay artefact, dressed in jungle gear that was much too big for him, grinning from ear to ear with a gap in his teeth. It was actually kind of... cute. They’d never really talked about it, but Nagisa had gathered that Karma’s parents used to take him places a lot, until they decided he was old enough to be left home alone. It would be nice, maybe, to practically live by yourself, though Nagisa wondered if it ever get lonely.
“Those clothes don’t fit you,” Karma commented as Nagisa stood up, before he could painstakingly tug his shirt back down over his stomach again.

He didn’t really understand why he did it, but Nagisa froze up at the prospect of describing all that had happened to him recently. Not that Karma had any say in what he did, but with Asano’s status as ‘rival’ in his life, he didn’t want to throw fuel on the fire. Even though he considered Karma one of his best friends, he was highly unpredictable. It would be better to keep his silence, just for the moment.

“None of my clothes do,” Nagisa decided to reply without going into detail. “I can’t afford to get any more.”

“Borrow some of mine,” he said, “they might work.”

That would be a little odd, wouldn’t it? Nagisa was pretty sure people didn’t generally just share clothes like that. Though, it would make sense. Karma was a lot taller than him, and although now not nearly as full round the middle, there was at least a better chance that he could wear it without the dangers of buttons ripping open or something. He was lucky they hadn’t already. He signalled his agreement, and they entered Karma’s bedroom, not visibly booby trapped this time. Karma went over to his wardrobe, manically tossing items out of it without much method, so that Nagisa was practically buried in a mountain of clothing.

“Go try it on,” Karma said, once finally satisfied, shoving him the direction of the bathroom.

Still reluctant, Nagisa decided to humour him, changing from his own school shirt into Karma’s larger one. Even without looking at it, he knew it was a bad idea.

“So? Does it work?” It seemed Karma had lost his patience after a minute or so.

Nagisa looked in the mirror briefly, before emerging. He looked absolutely ridiculous. Although the clothes fit him more around the middle, the sleeves fully drooping over his wrists. The shirt didn’t stop at his hips either, as it should, but rather fell down to his thighs. It seemed as if they were about to swallow him hole. Still, better that than his clothes clinging to his stomach.

“Karma kun?” Nagisa asked, his friend’s face unreadable. All he knew was Karma was looking at him weird, too weird. “What’s wrong?”

That seemed to snap him out of it. “Nothing,” he said, “it’s a little long.” As if to prove his point, he stepped closer, tugging at the end of the fabric hanging at Nagisa’s leg.

In doing so, he accidentally brushed the skin of Nagisa’s hip with his knuckle. Surprised, Nagisa jolted back, away from the invasion. Though Karma didn’t verbally tease him, the glint in his eye said that he’d picked up something. Before Nagisa could flinch away in time, he slipped his fingers there with purpose, tickling him rapidly.

Nagisa tried to escape, but Karma gripped him, apparently enjoying his pained laughter. “You’re ticklish, Nagisa kun~”

“St…op,” Nagisa doubled over breathlessly, once Karma did actually let him go. As if on cue, he noticed the stomach flutters appear again, tickling him from yet another angle. The baby was definitely more ‘active’ whenever it was excited. Somehow, the moment set Nagisa in his own world, completely free of anything other than happiness. He didn’t know exactly what it was he felt, like a cocktail of different emotions being shaken up inside him. Whatever it was, even for second, there was only light.
If you thought this was fluff, you're not ready for the next two chapters :D As always, I appreciate all feedback!
As the days went on, Nagisa’s entire situation was still a hot topic, despite the clothes not being so tight anymore. For their first week back, it was as if everyone had forgotten how to speak to him like he was a regular person. Kayano had developed a habit of flushing whenever Nagisa looked in her general direction. Though it was never directly brought up. Nagisa didn’t really understand why, if they’d had some kind of secret discussion or something. He didn’t really feel the need to talk about it, not unless he had to.

Fortunately, their lives were significantly more interesting than that, and it faded to the background. With Itona finally joining their class, everyone’s focus shifted back to assassination. Nagisa was thankful for that, although it hadn’t completely gone away. Every now and then, he’d be shot a sympathetic look or two.

Nagisa didn’t know if he was putting out some kind of signal, but everyone seemed to be offering him food, instead of just Karma (who suspiciously seemed to carry more food around with him, these days). It didn’t help that he didn’t have the willpower to refuse it, not when it was practically served up on a silver platter. At least he wasn’t going hungry. Considering how often he had the urge to eat recently, all in all being somewhat adopted, mostly by the girls, wasn’t so bad.

It didn’t seem to matter how much scent blocker Nagisa doused himself in, he was still getting babied. Even Karasuma was doing it. He’d tried to ban Nagisa from their training entirely, but with as much begging as Nagisa could politely muster, he’d managed to convince their teacher that he could definitely partake in the less dangerous stuff. It was hard, running around now his weight was significantly changed, but there was no way Nagisa was going to just sit everything out. Considering Karasuma hadn’t verbally brought up any reason except weight gain, thankfully, it didn’t seem like there was any danger of being banned.

After a day of this attention, Nagisa was about to fall asleep. It was only the final bell that jolted him awake, signifying that the school day was over. He wasn’t in any particular hurry. In fact, now Nagisa wasn’t supposed to be paying attention to anything, he was about to collapse straight back down onto the desk. Uncomfortable though he was, the idea of sleep won out.

It took a few seconds to get the motivation to actually move from his position. Nagisa sighed, cringing at the effort of bending down to pick up his bag. He winced as he did so, cursing how big the baby was getting. If this was only halfway, Nagisa dreaded how much worse it would probably get. It didn’t help that his bag was heavier too nowadays, filled with all the extra books Korosensei
wanted him to read to improve his English.

Right on cue, Kurahashi rushed over. “Nagisa kun! Can you manage it?”

“Carrying such a heavy bag could be dangerous,” Fuwa agreed.

Still seated beside him, Nakamura smirked, and swiftly grabbed Karma by the wrist as he walked past from the back of the classroom. “Don’t you want to help him?”

Something in the way Nakamura’s eyes glinted made Nagisa swallow in danger. There was something not completely light about her intentions. To his surprise, Karma just shrugged, easily taking Nagisa’s bag out of his grip. Nagisa didn’t try to stop him, almost a little alarmed at Karma’s actions. He supposed it wasn’t really babying him, he didn’t have to fight this.

“Coming?” Karma asked, as he turned to walk out of the class.

Quickly, and a lot more easily now he wasn’t carrying anything else, Nagisa followed his steps until they’d exited the building, and began to make their way down the hill. It wasn’t the shortcut Nagisa had found from the Asano residence, but that couldn’t be helped. It was a slightly easier walk, the normal way, too.

“I’m sorry,” Nagisa found himself saying as he strained. “They shouldn’t have made you carry my bag.”

Karma shrugged. “It’s not that heavy.”

“I could have handled it,” he muttered. Though, he did appreciate just a tiny bit less strain. The baby was starting to get seriously big, and with every day Nagisa became more aware that he was carrying around a miniature human all the time. Even the little flutters had become a lot stronger, much more kick like and frequent. Right on cue, he received a sharp one, which came as enough of a shock after the few hours of calm he’d had for him to double over slightly.

Concerned, Karma grabbed him by the arm. “Are you okay?”

“Mmm,” Nagisa winced, standing up properly again. “Just a kick.”

“Really?!?” His hands flung out, making towards Nagisa’s stomach.

“Karma kun! The bags!” Nagisa looked over to the ground, which they’d carelessly been dropped on.

Karma stilled, dropping his outstretched palm. “Oh, right. I’ll pick them up.”

Chewing his lip, Nagisa grabbed Karma’s wrist before he could change his mind. “Here, just press lightly.” He guided Karma’s tentative hand, lifting up the fabric of his shirt to make it easier. Nagisa wasn’t quite sure if he’d be able to feel it or not, considering Nagisa had barely felt it himself at first... though it had been getting stronger.

“Nagisa kun, it’s not-“ He froze, eyes widening as the baby tried another strong whack. Almost instantly, his other hand moved to cup the remaining area of his abdomen, pressing down a little firmer. As if the baby could feel him too, it rewarded Karma with a series of even stronger kicks.

Nagisa smiled softly at the look on his face. “You woke them up properly now.”

Karma didn’t look like he was entirely with him. “So tiny!” It seemed the soft kicks had evolved
into target practice with Nagisa’s internal organs, causing him to wince again. “And so strong already,” Karma grinned, “we’re going to have to enrol them in martial arts classes.”

That left a bad taste in Nagisa’s mouth, but he let it pass. It wasn’t like he was getting too attached or anything just from a small, harmless fantasy. If he shut his eyes, he believed it too, for a moment. It was like that first flutter of movement all over again, weirdly blissful. Until the kicks sped up again.

“I wish they were a little less strong,” he bit out.

“It hurts?”

“Ahh!” Nagisa clenched up at another kick, before relaxing his shoulders. “Only sometimes.”

“Hey there,” Karma crouched slightly so his head was more level with the bump, speaking with unprecedented softness. “That’s really impressive, you’re going to be great at torture someday… but maybe you shouldn’t start on your daddy.”

As if by magic, the baby really did settle down, though Nagisa could feel it squirming around a little still.

Karma still appeared transfixed. “Nagisa kun… they {listened} to me.”

Lucky bastard.

Nagisa looked down at him, before confusion struck. “Karma kun, are you… crying?”

“No.” Karma stood up and turned his head away from Nagisa, wiping his eyes on the back of his sleeve.

Feeling something overwhelming rise up within him, Nagisa forced himself to turn away and not get too caught up in whatever bliss this moment contained. “We have to come home,” he said, though he wasn’t annoyed. Karma picked the bags back up again, and they walked down the mountain together.

Nagisa realised, maybe half the way there, that he didn’t currently live where Karma assumed was his home. Ever since leaving Hiranka san’s apartment, Nagisa had no desire to go back anywhere near that part of town. In fact, that sounded like the worst possible place to go.

“I can take the bags from here,” Nagisa said, the minute they were at the bottom of the hill.

“I don’t mind,” Karma reassured him.

“Really,” Nagisa said, reaching for them. “Thank you.”

“Suit yourself,” Karma said, handing them over. “Later, then,” he walked off in the direction of the train station.

The next morning, Nagisa was the first one in class, the way he preferred it recently. Funnily enough, his living situation had actually benefited his academics. With nothing better to do with his time, Nagisa had seriously taken to just doing homework. It also weirdly helped that there was an air of pressure surrounding the property. It was no wonder that Asano was as ridiculously genius, even with this natural talent. Though Nagisa had none of Korosensei’s strange assignments left to complete to occupy his time, he pulled out two books, recommended for their significance in literature, one copy in English and one in Japanese so he could reference the words he didn’t
understand. At least it would wake his mind up.

“Yo, Nagisa kun,” Karma had strolled into the classroom without Nagisa noticing, after he’d read a couple of chapters. He tapped his fingers on the page of the book, as if his voice wasn’t enough to get Nagisa’s attention.

Nagisa took his eyes away from the words, and smiled politely. “Good morning.”

Though it was unusual for Karma to be early to anything, especially class. He didn’t wear the odd circumstances on his face, casually pulling up a chair, leaning with his elbows over Nagisa’s desk. “Sleep well?” He yawned.

“Yeah,” Nagisa replied, though it was only half true. The baby’s movements had become significant enough, especially when he lay still, to be pretty distraction. “Thanks.”

“Milk?” Karma offered, pulling two pink cartons out of his bag. He stabbed the straw though one of them, leaning back casually to sip at it.

Nagisa hated the beverage with a passion, but he was actually a little thirsty. “Sure,” he said, taking the other drink. At least his taste buds hadn’t shifted so much that this magically tasted good to him, artificial strawberry would always be one of the worst things. Still, he sipped at it, the sensation of liquid nice down his throat.

“How are your human chorionic gonadotropin levels? Are they in the normal range?” Karma leaned back forwards, chewing on the end of his straw.

“My what?”

Karma shrugged. “What about your progesterone?”

Was that something Nagisa should know about? It sounded long and about science, probably beyond his level. “I don’t even know what that is,” Nagisa admitted.

“It’s a hormone,” Karma explained, “it’s important for, you know,” he simply gestured Nagisa’s form.

Of course Nagisa grasped what he meant. Perhaps Nagisa really should know what those things were, then. He was surprised that Karma did, though he knew a lot of things. It was like something had changed, after they walked home together. Karma seemed weirdly… interested. Nagisa decided he was okay with that, more than. It would be somewhat of a nice change to not be keeping this all to himself.

“Why don’t you just come to my appointment with me?” Nagisa said before he could think it over properly. “Then you can just ask the doctor.”

Karma was silent for a moment, long enough for Nagisa to slightly regret asking. “Sounds like fun,” he said in his usual nonchalant tone, though Nagisa suspected he really did mean it.

Before they could talk anymore about it, the others begun to file into the classroom. It was their cue to separate, Karma standing up casually and going to his own seat. Nagisa put the books and empty milk cartoon into his bag, the taste of strawberry lingering on his tongue. For the rest of the day, he got lost in the lessons, and he didn’t talk to Karma about anything baby related, except from agreeing on the location and time to meet.

When the weekend, and the date of the appointment, rolled in, once again Nagisa was surprised to
find Karma there early, earlier than he was. He smiled, bundling his hands up in the far too long material of Karma’s sweatshirt, which Nagisa had chosen to wear considering the chill of the autumn weather (it also held a comforting scent).

Though it was slightly less exposing to not be sat in the clinic alone, Nagisa still felt the stares set on them. He squirmed, pulling out his phone so he could disappear mentally from it all. Karma did the same beside him, brandishing his DS console. At least he didn’t seem bothered by the attention. Nagisa swallowed, forcing his eyes back to his own device.

“Shiota Nagisa?” The receptionist finally called.

They both stood up, following her the way into the doctor’s office. Nagisa was slightly thankful it was the same room as before. He didn’t really understand why, but he felt a little better and more at ease due to that.

Doctor Shirogane turned around on her chair, smiling. “Ah, Nagisa kun. Take a seat, please. This must be your alpha.”

“He’s not my alpha.”

“I’m not his alpha.”

They both said simultaneously.

She cleared her throat. “Well, there’s a chair over here, uh…”

“Karma’s fine,” he said, sitting down on the seat next to the examination bed, where Nagisa had already taken his place.

“Oh, fine,” Doctor Shirogane said, though Nagisa could tell there was some hesitance in the way she looked between them. “Well, Nagisa kun, I’ll start by taking your blood pressure,” she approached him, and got to work. “How have you been feeling?”

“The sickness stopped,” Nagisa replied, “so not too bad.”

She noted down the figures of his blood pressure. “That’s good. Though don’t be surprised if you start to experience some aches and pains. Heart burn is especially common around this time.”

That didn’t sound like much fun. Nagisa swallowed, knowing deep down it would only get worse.

Moving forward on her chair, she instructed Nagisa to pull his shirt up. She placed a firm hand on his stomach, feeling around for something. “Definitely a lot bigger than before, huh,” she said, putting a little pressure on him.

“What are you doing to him?” Karma finally piped up, steel lacing his tone.

“Karma kun,” Nagisa warned, sensing threat.

Doctor Shirogane laughed it off. “I’m just feeling for the location of the uterus. It shouldn’t hurt him. Don’t worry,” she looked more towards Nagisa, “some protective instinct is actually a healthy and natural reaction. I’m just going to measure the bump now, okay?”

Karma scoffed, but at the very least didn’t make any kind of fuss besides that. In fact, he didn’t say anything else, as Doctor Shirogane took out a tape measure, and wrote down the correct figures. Despite that, Nagisa could feel the level of focus coming from him. He almost wanted to turn
around and snap Karma out of it.

“Alright,” she finally said, reaching for her small table of equipment, “time for the fun part. You’ll remember that the gel can be very cold, Nagisa kun.”

Nagisa winced all the same as it hit his body, still uncomfortable even with the warning. She quickly smoothed over it with the ultrasound equipment, though, so the really cold feeling didn’t last for long. The screen on the machine was turned on, and there it was. Definitely more defined, more proportionate, but still his baby.

“See there,” Doctor Shirogane pointed out, “looks like they’re hiccupping.”

He couldn’t hold back his gasp. “It can hiccup?”

“Can you feel that?” Karma asked beside him.

Nagisa shook his head slowly, eyes glued to the screen. Sure enough, he could see the baby jerk a little. They were such tiny little movements, fleeting. So small that he couldn’t even feel them, as he did the other movements. Hiccups were such a normal thing, so basic, but Nagisa’s heart just crumbled the more he looked at it.

“That’s so cute,” he said, as light tears begun to fall. “I’m sorry, I don’t know why I’m crying.”

Slightly awkwardly, Karma touched his shoulder, as if to comfort him. It was an awfully nice and serious gesture, which made Nagisa suspicious. How often was it that Karma really focused on things? It was meticulous, as Doctor Shirogane proceeded. She explained that this scan was much more in-depth, mostly to check the development of everything was fine. Nagisa had to force himself not to cry again when she zoomed right in on the heart, literally showing it beating.

Nagisa found himself zoning out through a lot of it, as Karma asked whatever medical questions he’d wanted to. If it was truly important, he was sure it would be explained to him. Instead, Nagisa just watched the screen, which had been zoomed out again to show the whole picture. Somehow, he didn’t think he’d ever possibly tire of it.

“It’s right now that I’d usually be able to tell you the gender,” Doctor Shirogane said a little louder, and more in Nagisa’s direction, “but the baby is lying in an awkward position.”

Of course it was. Of course their child was destined to have a mysterious side. It sounded a lot like Karma. Nagisa wasn’t sure how he felt about that, entirely.

“Do you both want a copy of some of the pictures?” She asked. “I captured a few good ones.”

They both said yes.

Chapter End Notes

Look see they're developing... at /a/ pace. You'll definitely like next chapter if you're into your karnag, cheeky bit of Karma POV :D As always, your comments mean the world to me! <3
Time To D-D-D-Duel

Chapter Summary

Karma has some pretty strange thoughts, and Bitch Sensei organises a competition

Chapter Notes

Time for some Karma POV! I'm sorry it took a bit longer to get done, but it was a little challenging to write. Still, I hope you'll all enjoy the result! (And yes, I saw the opportunity to reference Yugioh and took it)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Karma was bored, plainly. He hated average, harmless days like this. The assassination attempt of earlier, a combination of his first ever try and Kayano’s recent pudding plot, had been weak. Though whatever Okuda had done to the shards of anti-sensei material to make them practically microscopic was pretty impressive, Korosensei had sussed out they were hidden in his food instantly.

There had been a lull in attempts recently. Karma suspected it was due to what happened over summer, with how un-killable Korosensei had turned out to be despite their greatest efforts. More the opportunist, Karma was waiting on making any plans of his own. It wasn’t as if anybody’s bloodlust was going anywhere.

He wished he’d just skipped this lesson. He could’ve got away with it, no problem. All it would take was slipping away during the lunch period. Karma hadn’t taken the chance whilst he had it, though. In fact, he hadn’t really skipped at all recently. He sat back in his chair, letting his eyes drift away from the board. Tapping his fingers lightly on his book, Karma focused on the same desk, three rows in front, two to the left. At least somebody was focusing on the lesson. Karma sighed, watching sky blue hair bounce slightly as something was written down.

So maybe that had been a slight factor to his renewed interest in school. Although he’d forced himself as best he could to banish whatever protective instincts his inexperienced body was throwing at him, they weren’t completely gone. Watching from a distance was fine, or at least he presumed it was fine. So long as he wasn’t actually doing anything.

The bell rang, snapping him out of it. The day wasn’t over though, since they still had PE. At least those lessons had become more interesting, now that Karasuma had upped the difficulty. Instead of skipping, he got changed with everyone else, and walked outside. Karasuma wasn’t actually there waiting for them already, due to some government thing. He’d had a lot of those recently.

With nothing better to do, everyone split up, most electing to practice in their small groups to kill the time. Karma would have been fine to just sit down and relax, but he could hardly turn down the challenge of a fight. His nervous system lit up, driving into hyper awareness, at the insinuation of practice.
“Karma kun,” Isogai had said, “want to spar?”

They weren’t particularly friends, too much of a rule follower for Karma’s tastes. Still, they were perfect opponents for this kind of thing, evenly matched in most ways. So Karma had agreed, drawing his knife and getting into stance. Karasuma’s higher intensity lessons had meant that everyone was at a certain standard. Bored of being the best fighter purely by default, it was a welcome change.

He spun the blade in his hand as Isogai attacked. Seconds into the fight, he really had to concentrate, attempting to block his thrusts with the back of his forearm. Isogai’s strikes were fast, almost completely dead on target. Whilst Karma could predict his movements before they were made, Isogai lunged hard, hitting with purpose. The situation wasn’t ‘life or death’ enough for his instincts to really shift into high gear, and with a particularly well timed blow, Karma’s knife, and body, was on the ground.

After wiping the sweat off his brow, he kicked back up onto his legs, grinning. He didn’t mind losing too much. It had been a fair fight, and Karma would readily admit that, holding out a hand for Isogai to shake in a sign of respect. As he turned to pick the blade he’d dropped back up, his eyes met Nagisa’s… well, Nagisa’s ass.

A few yards closer to the class building, Nagisa was bent in some kind of position. His hands were on the grass in front of him, with his feet planted firm on the ground too, so he was bent over. Karma’s grip tightened on the knife faltered as he witnessed Nagisa change the angle slightly, lifting his butt even higher into the air. It was if his brain had short circuited out of nowhere, and all he could think about how round his ass cheeks were. Not that he’d ever spent much time staring at asses, but this one seemed particularly full. He briefly wondered if he could figure out the circumference and volume of them, though accurate calculations would call for a closer look.

Nagisa bent out the position (almost disappointingly), turning around in a standing stretch, he smiled when he saw Karma looking at him, waving before returning to the position. As Karma’s eyes raked over the omega’s body, his throat got dryer. He’d never really looked at Nagisa before. He had such a pretty smile, showing through weirdly plush lips. Like the rest of the (unfortunately lacking) exposed skin, they were pale, smooth and flawless. The newly swollen curve of his stomach had only made his hips look wider, thighs so thick Karma had the urge to dig his fingers into the flesh and squeeze. Nagisa bent down again to pick up his water bottle, and Karma observed with rapt attention the swallowing motion of his unmarked throat.

Wow, Nagisa was attractive. He was the kind of attractive where some classic American rock tune would fit perfectly as the backing music to a slow mo montage of him flipping his hair. Had he always looked like that? Had he always appeared so irresistible, or had he just been completely blind to it before?

Isogai had practically jumped back, turning his nose in disgust. With horror, Karma realised he was reeking of his own alpha scent. He felt himself flush bright red, turning the opposite way. He’d have to just make a deal with himself to not look at Nagisa for too long at once again. If nothing else, leaking out pheromones like that was uncomfortable for everyone within his radius, especially another alpha. The scents just didn’t mix well.

Karasuma showed up before anything else could go too haywire. As if he’d never left at all, they picked up where they’d left off, war games that were more like combat drills. He could admit that at the very least they were entertaining, even challenging. By the time he was done with them, they’d all worked up a sweat.

When everybody was packing up to go home, he noticed Nagisa looked a little worse for wear.
Physically he understood that, considering his body was already working itself overtime, but Nagisa still insisted that he could handle the same as everyone else. Now Karma had opened Pandora’s box, he couldn’t shut it again, watching Nagisa pant with exertion for far too long. He suddenly had the urge to study every single thing about him, down to the rise and fall of his chest.

Before Nagisa could go off in his own way, Karma strode over, yanking his bags out of his hands. Although Karma had done this more often than not recently, Nagisa still startled at being yanked, looking up at him with wide eyes, before he made an effort to grab them back.

“I can carry my own bags,” he said, once Karma had swung them too far out of his reach.

Karma knew he probably could. He could feel that they weren’t that heavy, and he’d seen him carry them with no issue before. Admittedly, he’d missed spending the time together. Nagisa, despite his clearly more threatening side, was definitely Karma’s only real friend. He was fine with that, it wasn’t as if he had much use for friends in the first place. Maybe purposely staring at his butt crossed the line of friendship, however. That was just a moment of weakness. Besides, it was Nagisa’s face he was looking at, right then.

His face was nice enough to look at, too. Mostly evenly shaped, large eyes, smooth skin – it fit with what was largely considered attractive on omegas. He’d go as far as to think that Nagisa maybe qualified as ‘pretty’, in his own way. That is, if you didn’t notice the silent unsettling menace that danced across his eyes every now and then.

“What’s wrong?” Nagisa said, snapping him out of whatever thoughts he was experiencing. He blinked, remembering that he usually would have come up with some taunt by now, rather than just staring.

He thought on the spot. “You’re sweaty.”

“Oh,” Nagisa said, wiping his forehead with the back of his arm.

“Now you have to let me carry them,” he said, shrugging as he started to walk off, “so you won’t get sweaty again.”

That didn’t make much sense. At the very least, Karma would have liked to think he could pull some somewhat convincing logic out of somewhere. Nagisa either didn’t question it, or just gave up, following Karma the same way down the hill. They made light conversation, as they usually did, but Karma couldn’t concentrate on it, or anything else but Nagisa’s movements.

Maybe there was something wrong with him. His own hands were getting sweaty, even, the more he looked. Running dead into a tree and slamming his head against it seemed like the best way to deal with whatever this was. Unfortunately, Karma wasn’t alone, and doing that would make him appear even crazier.

In front of the train station, which was on the way to Nagisa’s apartment, he paused, clearly expecting Karma to hand him his bags back. They’d been through this ritual before, but now Karma was truly studying him, he noticed something off in Nagisa’s composure, like he was a little nervous about something. Instantly, Karma’s own mind sharpened up.

“Nagisa kun, don’t you want me to walk you all the way home?” He tried, not handing the bag over.

“It’s fine,” Nagisa said a little too fast, “you’d miss your train.”

Karma decided not to budge. “They run every few minutes.”
“Please,” he softened his voice and widened his eyes, “it would make me feel bad.”

He had no rational explanation for it, but something inside of him twisted at that. It wasn’t as if Nagisa was trying to control him. The idea of doing something that would hurt him in any way felt purely wrong. For Karma, that was a foreign sensation, he’d never had qualms about harming anybody in the past, revealed in it, even. Nagisa certainly hadn’t been an exception to that before.

Somewhat stunned by whatever that was, he held out the bags finally, saying nothing else until Nagisa had taken them, said his own goodbye, and walked out of the station. Karma blinked, finally coming back to his senses when Nagisa was gone. It was incredibly... shifty. There was definitely something Nagisa wasn’t letting on.

Before Karma could tell himself there were bigger issues than what Nagisa was doing, curiosity got the better of him, as it usually did. Since they’d had to come all the way down the mountain, the busiest period of students commuting through the station was over, so Nagisa wasn’t lost to the crowd. Karma easily spotted him, outside the station, heading the opposite direction from his house.

Apparently his qualms about harming Nagisa didn’t apply to following him, at least. Karma was more than apt at this, keeping as large a distance as possible so nothing would alarm Nagisa of his presence. His guard appeared to be down, anyway, and it was best being kept like that. Luckily, his appearance was distinctive enough that Karma could easily keep track of his movements.

Weirdly, he appeared to be heading back to school. It was possible that he had some club or extra lesson or something, but there was no good reason to be so deceitful about it. Though Nagisa could potentially get embarrassed about extra school work being necessary, Karma doubted he’d hold onto it being secret for so long.

It got even stranger when Nagisa continued past the school, not entering its grounds at all. They were the only two people around, so Karma really had to keep up the stealth. He’d definitely come far enough that he couldn’t play the following off as some kind of accident. The best way was to be overly cautious, keeping almost a street length away from Nagisa.

Finally, he turned into a large looking house. Karma had no idea whose it was; if he got any closer to read the name plate, he’d easily get discovered. Stranger still was that Nagisa didn’t go to the front door and knock in his usual polite way, but instead went round the back and let himself in. That ruled out a private tutor. And considering he’d lied about it… the whole thing was shady.

Karma could have staked the place out for more clues, but he decided the payoff wouldn’t be worth the effort. At least for now, he knew Nagisa was keeping something from him. He’d find out what, soon enough, by whatever means necessary. After everything, he did in fact have to wait for the next train for a while, by the time he made it back to the station, and the sun was setting as he reached his house.

He flopped back on his bed, too full of thought to study much of anything. At least the mystery of it all was a distraction from his… other feelings. Groaning after a while, he rolled over, trying to think about anything other than the way Nagisa had looked at him. Facing his side, he caught sight of the small set of images that rested on the table. He smiled slightly, picking up and admiring his copy of the scans, before sighing, letting the reel fall to his chest. That was another complication.

The next day started out just as average as the last, and Nagisa was completely back to normal. Karma was bored again, albeit keeping a strict eye on whatever Nagisa was doing. He was halfway through imagining how exactly he could comfort him, when there seemed to be more than light disagreement towards the front of the class.
“Aw, come on Bitch Sensei,” Maehara stretched out casually, “we were just kidding.”

As she often did, their teacher looked seriously ticked off. Karma almost wanted to congratulate Maehara for getting her that worked up, and then to ask exactly how he did it for future reference. She looked as if her head was about to explode. Before she could pull her own hair out, however, she took a deep breath, and leaned across the desk, forcing Maehara to kiss her for around half a minute before releasing him.

They’d had more than a few lessons on her signature ‘kiss of death’, so Maehara was able to pull away from it mostly unscathed. This fact seemed to irritate her, though the anger had deflated as she plopped back down on the desk, muttering about how bored she was.

She perked up again, like she’d had the best idea in the world. “Surprise test time!”

That earned a groan from everyone.

Folding her arms, Bitch Sensei grabbed hold of some chalk. “Push all the desks so we have a ring in the middle of class, or I’ll just make it worse.”

Though he wasn’t afraid of her on any level, Karma didn’t want to find out what ‘worse’ was going to be, so like the rest of them he obeyed, until there was a clear square, similar to the set up months ago when Itona had fought Korosensei. Whilst they’d been putting in the hard work, the board had been filled with what looked like the set up of a tournament, with all their names listed it seemingly random order.

“Are you serious?” Isogai questioned. “A tournament?”

Bitch Sensei nodded. “The First 3-E Kiss Tournament!”

“Is that legal?” Somebody, judging by the quietness of the tone probably Okuda, asked.

She leant back in her chair, looking down at them all like she was some sort of super villain/genius. “How else am I supposed to grade you on seduction?”

It was clear that she was doing this out of a place of boredom and laziness, but it wasn’t worth the fight. Karma didn’t care too much, it was no worse than some of the other stuff she’d made them do with the excuse of ‘education’. No matter what, it was better than repeating the letter ‘v’ for half an hour.

“You haven’t split this between boys and girls!” Yoshida complained, presumably because he was lined up to kiss somebody of his own gender.

“It’s assassination,” Bitch Sensei rolled her eyes, “not fun.”

Nobody really put too much of a fight, against him anyway. Karma sailed through the first three rounds with ease, barely kissing anybody for more than a few seconds before he was declared the winner. Though he was unaffected, the atmosphere had risen somewhat, becoming far more competitive. It was kind of stupid, and not like they were going to win much. Of course, Karma did understand the satisfaction that came with winning.

There were some surprises, such as Okuda making it as far as that round, though she’d looked about ready to pass out before Karma had even really touched her. Ritsu had been knocked out the first round, though, given that she was a machine (not that Takebayashi hadn’t tried – a clip of which Karma had captured and saved for future torment). And then there was Nagisa, who like him had made it to the final four.
Karma swallowed, realising what this result meant. Due to the rules of Bitch Sensei’s tournament, he would have to face Nagisa next. It wasn’t like he’d been trying before, or that he particularly cared about the result of this stupid test. But he was going to have to kiss Nagisa. Maybe he could just cop out with a small peck and call it a day, but Karma never was good with backing down from competition. Plus, he kind of wanted to see how the look of defeat would be written over Nagisa’s face.

He stepped forwards casually to face Nagisa in the makeshift combat ring, trying to ignore the fact that they had a massive audience. Or perhaps that would help him keep his cool. It wasn’t a real kiss, just a display he could easily get over and done with, so they could move on from this. Besides, he’d already kissed Nagisa once, he already knew what it was like.

The memory of it, suddenly uncomfortably filling his brain, was doing the opposite of calming him down. Karma’s heart seemed to race at the thought of Nagisa’s lips sliding against his in the dark, the ghost of his fingers gripping onto Karma’s shoulders, practically manhandling him back into the bathroom. After a hand was shoved down his trousers, Karma’s memory was patchy at best, non-existent at worst. But that had been under the influence of alcohol. He was completely alert this time, it would be easier. If only whatever odd feeling in his stomach would disappear.

Nagisa showed no such hesitation, wordlessly grabbing onto the lapels of Karma’s blazer before he could break up the atmosphere with some kind of joke. He only caught the menace in Nagisa’s pupils, the true gaze of an assassin about to go in for the kill, for a moment before he stuck. Despite the madness that had danced across his eyes, Nagisa’s lips were surprisingly soft against his, in both pressure and texture.

Still alert, Karma realised that Nagisa was standing up on his tiptoes to reach him, tugging at his clothes to actually support his weight. Letting go of whatever boundaries he had, Karma decided to just go in for it, leaning down and shifting them so that Nagisa’s feet were on the ground again. It gave him more of a vantage point, a less extreme version of having Nagisa beneath him.

Nagisa didn’t seem to mind this change, sliding his hands from the blazer to cup Karma’s face. The kiss, and touch of his hands, was light, but Karma got the unsettling feeling Nagisa was preparing to snap his neck the second he let his guard down. He responded to the threat naturally, wrapping his arms around Nagisa’s much smaller body, in preparation to crush his form. It also practically pinned his hands in place, keeping them from doing anything funny.

It was still just a kiss, the mechanics just like any other. As long as Karma kept in control of it, it wasn’t nearly as bad as he’d thought it would be, just because it was Nagisa. In fact, the longer the gentleness went on, the more Karma urged to deepen it, to win this dumb contest and tease him about it later. Logically, he knew he shouldn’t let his guard down, or get too cocky, but the fighter inside him won out.

Softly, he bit down on Nagisa’s lower lip, lightly tugging it between his teeth. It had the desired reaction of Nagisa gasping, parting his lips just enough to allow tongue access. Moving quickly, Karma pried the space open further with his own lips. Nagisa didn’t move away from him, apparently unwilling to just give up by that point. Well he could try, but Karma had the upper hand already. He could work Nagisa to pieces, and he was going to.

Not that Nagisa was passive. He followed the pace Karma set, matching whatever movement he made by the book. Karma wasn’t sure how long it went on for, other than the awareness that there was little space between their bodies, and the temperature had clearly risen. Deciding they had to finish this battle, Karma slid his hands up Nagisa’s back, to hold the back of his head. Nagisa had a thing about his hair, something easily exploitable to catch him off guard. He buried his fingers into...
the hairs just above the nape of his neck, tugging lightly.

Practically vibrating in his arms, Karma was sure he’d won. But then, there was a hand on his ass. Karma hadn’t even noticed Nagisa move away from his face, but clearly it was no accident. Nagisa *squeezed*, causing Karma’s brain to short circuit. *Nagisa* was touching his butt. On purpose. And kissing him. Hands were still on his butt.

The situation was hopeless. Karma was frozen, and Nagisa didn’t hesitate. He came alive, like lightning, and Karma was nothing more than his helpless victim. He couldn’t even keep up as Nagisa’s lips practically claimed his entire soul. Not even aware of how many hits it was, his knees buckled the second they separated, falling embarrassingly on the floor.

He was stunned, everything blurred, though he was sure Nagisa had walked away, as if nothing had happened. Nagisa could have stabbed him right then and there, if he’d wanted. All the strength in the world couldn’t have helped Karma. There was no doubt in his mind – Nagisa was a born assassin, a killer who could be done with him whenever he wanted. Karma definitely felt fear, deep set in him, but there was something else, something more intense than that.

And then Karma realised the only rational explanation. He was in love.

Chapter End Notes

EDIT: Alright binge readers! If you're reading this fic for the first time, this is a good place to take a break, get a snack, or just put the fic down for now! Or, if you still have energy, by all means keep reading on.

Worth the wait? Hehe, poor Karma.

It was really awesome to get a large response to last chapter, and really motivated me to get this out through some nasty personal stuff. Please, keep the comments coming!
It was just an average day for Tomohito. With midterms approaching once again, the tension had shifted towards the exams. No bets related to assassination had taken place this time, but after their match with the A Class at the sports festival, everybody felt the tension and the urge to silence them once and for all. Even with Korosensei’s guidance, Tomohito was nowhere near scoring top grades, but all the same it felt like a team effort.

Tomohito had left the classroom during lunch break to go to the toilet, turning his back to the chaotic discussions between everybody. When he slid the door back open again, the chatter died down completely, twenty five eyes, their entire class minus Nagisa and Karma who had gone off outside, blinking up at him in sync. Unused to such attention, simply from walking into a classroom, Tomohito knew something was up.

“Sugino kun!” Maehara stood up from his desk, clapping him on the back. “You’re close friends with Nagisa, right?”

He had no idea why he was asking, but Tomohito had no problem telling him the truth. “I guess… he moved away, going back to his own desk, “we haven’t hung out that much for a while. He spends most of his time with Karma nowadays.”

“As if you’re gonna get an answer out of him,” Terasaka reclined in his desk.

His answer apparently wasn’t good enough, as several of his classmates surrounded his desk. “Did you… notice if he was dating anybody?” Yada pressed.

Tomohito flushed, the idea of Nagisa dating anybody abstract. “Why?”

“You can’t get pregnant by yourself,” Nakamura said casually. “They’re trying to figure out who his baby daddy is.”

“Huh? Pregnant?”

He felt the stares on him from everybody once again. “You didn’t notice?”

They had to be joking. Sure, he’d noticed Nagisa had put on quite a bit of weight recently, but that
wasn’t the kind of thing he’d question or dwell on. Tomohito was a beta, and knew as a result that his sense of scent was far less than the other dynamics. As far as he knew, Nagisa was a beta too, practically by default considering how rare male omegas were.

“It’s true,” Isogai sighed from the front of the class, seriously. “Nagisa didn’t mention it to you?”
The attention shifted, and suddenly everybody was surrounding Isogai’s desk. “He confirmed it?”
“No way!”
“How do you know?”
Tomohito allowed himself to calm down, just a little, at that revelation. So he hadn’t been completely blind to what was going on with his friend, then. This entire thing was just an overly dramatic class theory.

Isogai stood up, like he was about to give a speech to a crowd. “Nagisa did give me permission to share this. Before the summer break, he seemed really sick. I caught him throwing up two days in a row, but he said he was fine. It was only when I was closing up the building, the same day he defeated Takaoka, that it got really bad and he collapsed. Karma and I took him to the hospital, and we were waiting to see if he was okay when his mum ran in and started shouting about it to the receptionist.”

There was no reason for Isogai to make all of that up, Tomohito realised. An uncomfortable feeling rushed through his body, like he couldn’t comprehend what was even going on. Before the summer break would mean all of this happened months ago. Had Tomohito really not noticed?

Kayano, who had been quiet throughout all of this, stuck her head up. “Karma kun was there?”
“Yeah,” Isogai confirmed. “We ran into him halfway there, and he helped me carry Nagisa.”
Nakamura muttered something under her breath.
Maehara looked over at her. “He didn’t mention anything to you, Kayano chan?”
She looked down again. “Nothing. Like Sugino kun said, he spends most of his time with Karma kun now.”
“That makes sense.” Itona, of all people, piped up from the back. “If Karma is the only one Nagisa can speak to about it.”
Fuwa cleared her throat. “I can work this out.”
Leaning back, Sugaya rolled his eyes. “I don’t think this has happened in one of your detective manga.”
“Don’t you see the signs?” She said, a mad look in her eye. “The reason Nagisa has been so quiet about this is because the father is famous!”

Through the deep, dark night in central Tokyo, Shiota Nagisa strolled. He was clearly underdressed for the coolness of twilight, shivering as he made his way down narrow and cluttered streets. The young omega sighed out, watching his breath turn into a small cloud of mist in front of his step. To make matters even worse, the sky roared, and a flood of rain began to drop down on his shoulders.
“Hey, you,” a strong voice called out. “Are you okay there?

Not wanted to inconvenience anybody, Nagisa turned around, pulling his damp clothes around his frame. “I’m fine, thank you.”

Before Nagisa could walk away, the mysterious man caught him by the wrist. He reached into the bag he was carrying, producing an umbrella which he opened, covering both their heads. “That’s better, huh?”

Nagisa blushed. “T-thank you.”

“Let’s go somewhere warmer, yeah? It would be wrong of me to leave you here alone in the cold.” He continued to hold onto Nagisa’s arm, walking at his own pace.

Side by side, the two made their way through the veil of darkness, the city ambience and heavy sound of the rain filling the lack of conversation. They hurried, until the attractive stranger stopped outside a large and very fancy hotel, standing out from the rest of the scenery around them.

“I hope this isn’t too forward,” the man said, once they were safe in the lobby, “but you should come with me to my room to dry off. You could get sick if you stay in those clothes.”

Nagisa trembled. “I don’t even know your name.”

He smirked, leaning down to Nagisa’s level. “It’s Sasaki Takumi.”

“Wait, like the pop idol?!”

“Oh,” Nagisa said, following him into the elevator. “Nice to meet you, then.”

“You can call me Tachan, if you’d like,” he stood closer, lifting Nagisa’s hand up to his lips.

“This is such a big room,” Nagisa commented, once he was let inside, and looked out at the prime view it had over the city.

Sasaki Takumi folded his arms. “You need comfort when you’re touring the world.”

“Of course,” Nagisa nodded.

Before Nagisa had time to react, Sasaki Takumi sped into his personal space, bracing himself against the window with one hand, which trapped Nagisa’s body. “Perhaps an omega as beautiful as you right here could help me feel more comfortable.”

Nagisa gulped. “I-I-

He leant in. “I’m about to travel for several months. Let’s make some final memories.”

And then Nagisa gave into the offer of the night of passion, knowing that their affair would be doomed to end by the sunrise.

“That’s definitely never happened in a detective manga.”

Fuwa flushed. “It may have been a collaboration with Kirara chan.”
“That doesn’t sound anything like Nagisa,” Tomohito finally said, though he was currently reevaluating everything he knew about his friend.

Kayano chimed in “plus, why would he just be in the city like that?”

Nakamura sighed. “I know for a fact it’s not true, because I know who it is.”

Everybody turned in tandem, and before she could even move a muscle, her desk was surrounded by everybody.

“Why didn’t you say anything?” Maehara spluttered, apparently one of leaders behind the investigation. “Who is it?!”

Nakamura shrugged. “It’s serious blackmail material, I don’t want to waste it just yet.”

Glancing between each other, everyone turned back to her in disbelief. “You can’t just leave it at that!”

Like she was studying them all, Nakamura stretched out. “I promise it’s not a celebrity.”

“Then who?” Kurahashi pressed. “Somebody older? Somebody we know?”

Takebayashi, who hadn’t seemed to be paying much attention to any of this, pushed his glasses properly back up his nose. “How do you know, Nakamura san?”

“I suppose there’s no harm in giving you the details,” she said. “Remember that stupid party Maehara kun tried to get us all to go to?” Tomohito did remember it, and saying no to it since he had homework. “Well, I got bored, and decided to show up a bit later. I was looking around for people to talk to, and found Nagisa surrounded by some high schoolers. He didn’t do anything, but I told them to leave him alone. So I asked Nagisa if he was okay, and he was already drinking some sort of mixed drink they gave him. He didn’t seem too bad overall, so I let him slip off. When I came into the other room, he was making out with, um, somebody. They got up and went upstairs together, and I saw them lock the door. They definitely didn’t come out for the rest of the party, that I saw. But the timings make sense.”

Like it had been ripped from the back of his head, Tomohito remembered something, clear as day. “I asked him how the party was,” he said quietly. “Nagisa told me he was embarrassed that he fell asleep in a bathtub.”

“So they spent the night in a secluded room, by the sounds of it,” Nakamura summarised. “There’s some other evidence I’ve noticed too, but it’s pretty damning that-“

She stopped mid-sentence, the sound of the door sliding cutting her off. As Karma and Nagisa walked back into the classroom, everybody scrambled, trying to make it look far less like they’d been having a group discussion. Of course, Karma had a sharp eye, and instantly picked up on the awkward atmosphere.

“Whatcha talking about?”

“We’re planning on practicing some of our new skills this weekend,” Yada said, quickly and confidently. “We were just deciding on where to meet up so we can drill parkour.”

The rest of the class released a shared breath as Karma seemed to accept it, going to his own seat, and nothing else was said. When their afternoon lessons began, Tomohito couldn’t stop staring at his friend. He thought he was struggling with the preparations for midterms, and whether Kanzaki
had actually waved at him or not the other day. How had he not noticed? He chewed his lip. Why hadn’t Nagisa just told him?

He didn’t manage to catch Nagisa before he left once the day was over, Karma closely at his side (like usual) as they walked off together. Despite not being as creeped out by the guy as Tomohito had been, there was still something off putting there. Something inside him didn’t like the way, kind of possessive sometimes, that Karma looked at his friend. He hoped Nagisa knew what he was doing, spending so much time with him recently. And then, it was like Tomohito had a stroke of genius.

“Why don’t we try and listen to their conversation,” he said, once he was sure there was no way the pair could hear him.

Those remaining in the classroom regarded him. “That’s true,” Sugaya said. “If Karma is the only one Nagisa can confide in, he’s bound to mention it.”

“You could try it,” Nakamura shrugged.

“We can meet outside early,” Maehara said. “And watch them be alone through the window. Itona kun, do you think we can add a microphone to your tank?”

He shrugged. “It should be easy!”

Tomohito slipped out, whilst they knuckled down the rest of the plan. Now he’d suggested it, he actually felt pretty bad about suggesting they spy. He forced it into the back of his mind once he was home, getting his school work and studying out of the way. Once he was done with that, and ready to sleep off the day, he considered texting Nagisa. It felt like something a good friend should do, but he couldn’t find the right words. Instead, he switched the device off, rolling over to shut his eyes.

As promised, he made sure to get to school extra early the next morning, where some of his classmates had already gathered, to make their preparations. Itona had his small tank, now fully equipped to capture audio, hidden behind Korosensei’s desk, completely set up. It was just the waiting game, after that. As more people joined their little stake out, finally Nagisa walked into the class building, like normal.

Apart from a small sense of thrill, it wasn’t that interesting to watch. For around ten minutes, he was just sat at his desk, quietly doing homework. Tomohito was just starting to think none of this was worth it, when finally Karma walked in too. You could smell the anticipation in the air, practically.

“Yo,” Karma said, voice a grainy quality due to the microphone.

Nagisa looked up at him and smiled. “Morning, Karma kun.”

“What’s that?” He asked, pulling up what was technically Maehara’s chair to face opposite to him.

“Just math homework.”

Karma snatched it out of his hands, reading it over, before looking at Nagisa seriously. “These answers are shocking, even for you.”

Nagisa tensed. “It would be a lot easier to focus if your demon baby didn’t keep kicking me every five seconds.”
Beside him, Kayano gasped loudly, clapping her hands over her mouth, which knocked Tomohito out of the immersion. He wasn’t quite sure what was so dramatic, but the action inside was more interesting. Karma stood up from his seat, crouching down closer to Nagisa as he said something gently, too soft for the microphone to pick up.

“Well,” Nakamura said, “there you have it.”

Wait. What?! It suddenly dawned on Tomohito that Nagisa had said the word ‘your’, to Karma. Huh? There was no way – Nagisa and Karma? They were just friends. Sure they spent a lot of time together, and Nagisa tended to talk about Karma a lot, and Karma looked at Nagisa funny, and they’d had the most dramatic and drawn out kiss during Bitch Sensei’s competition the other day… Tomohito’s eye twitched. He truly was blind.

“What a revelation,” a familiar voice cut his thoughts off.

“Korosensei?!”

Their teacher had managed to sneak up to watch the action with them without them noticing.

“Quiet! I don’t want to miss it!”

Kataoka looked at him critically. “I’m surprised you’re encouraging this kind of thing.”

Korosensei’s face turned blue with sorrow. “Don’t you see? These last few weeks I’ve been in anguish!” He wailed. “I’m totally trapped between my responsibilities as a teacher, and…” he looked down, his expression turning to one of shame, “my love for scandal and gossip.”

“He’s a terrible example,” Kimura said.

Hayami lowered her head. “A poor excuse for an educator.”

“It’s not like this was something anything I said could fix!” Korosensei swiftly defended, zipping around the small group that had gathered. “They can’t take back the situation! I could only advise!”

“Such advice,” Okano muttered.

“Why are you guys all gathered out here?” Karma said, leaning out of the now open window. It was enough to stop Korosensei from moving frantically, at least. Tomohito swallowed, wondering how long their cover had been blown for. Something told him Karma knew exactly what they were doing.

“Just a small pre-class nature lesson on the autumn foliage!” Korosensei attempted to cover for them.

“Aw, and we weren’t invited?” Karma rolled his eyes.

Nakamura cleared her throat. “You didn’t miss much.”

“I’ll bet.”

Shamefully, they left their stake out position, going round to enter the classroom properly for the day. Although Tomohito’s mind wouldn’t stop swirling, nobody else outwardly appeared too bothered by the revelation. If anything, a few people looked almost satisfied. Tomohito just didn’t know how he’d missed all of this significance. The day surprisingly continued as normal, until the end of it. He really needed to speak to Nagisa.
“Nagisa kun,” he quickly approached his desk before Nagisa had finished packing up his stuff. “Uhm, want to walk home together today?”

Though he didn’t specifically say it, Nagisa seemed to realise that Tomohito definitely meant ‘alone’. Gracefully as ever, he smiled. “That sounds like fun.”

Although he felt his eyes on his back as they left together, Karma didn’t make any kind of protest. It made Tomohito wonder what the actual depth of their relationship was. Once he and Nagisa had made it far enough so that nobody would overhear them, it was the first thing got out.

“Are you and Karma dating?”

Nagisa stopped in his tracks, his face turning slightly red. “No, it’s not like that.”

*Then what was it like then?* “B-but you’re-“

“Sugino kun,” Nagisa said seriously, “I, uhm, I’m really sorry for not telling you about all of this.” As if to emphasise his point, he bowed lightly. “I promise I was going to, but I couldn’t figure out the right way,” he played with his loose shirt sleeve. “I guess now I don’t have to. Karma kun and I aren’t an item, and we won’t ever be, despite everything. I-I understand if you don’t want to hang around with me anymore-“

“No!” Tomohito said quickly. None of this had even made him consider losing Nagisa as a friend through his own will. “It’s fine.”

Nagisa looked up, hope shining in his eyes. “Really?”

Tomohito felt his confidence return. “You’re not going to just talk about baby stuff all the time now, right?”

“Of course not!” Nagisa rushed. “No, not unless you ask or something.”

“Then nothing too much has changed,” Tomohito smiled, though he couldn’t escape the thought that Nagisa would be opposite him with an actual baby in his arms, in just a few months’ time. That was an alien concept, if he ever knew one. “Let’s go home.”

Chapter End Notes

In case you somehow missed it, this story is now a series! After so many requests for it, and now you have the final sort of piece of the story from Nakamura in this chapter, I decided to write what actually happened as a sort of part two, so please check that out! I made it a separate story, mainly because I don't want to add underage tags to THIS story, but also, my style of writing is more 'we should only know what the characters know'. But if you're curious, there you have it!

Sasuki Takumi is not intended to replicate a real person. He's just a fake, famous pop singer in this universe.

Your comments and kudos only inspire me to write faster! A lot, lot, LOT of drama ahead!
Lesson Time

Chapter Summary

After a parkour mishap, the E Class have to help out at a pre-school for two weeks.

Chapter Notes

This took me a little longer than I'd have liked, but as a bonus, it's twice the length of a normal chapter! I really liked this one.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Dad?” Nagisa stood in the hallway, rubbing his eyes, a blanket draped around him. It was the middle of the night, far past his bedtime, but it was impossible to sleep over all the shouting.

“Where are you going?”

He sighed and walked over, crouching down to Nagisa’s height. “Just for a small walk.”

Nagisa trembled. “Why do you have so many bags?”

“Nagisa-“

“Where are you going?!” Tears started to form in the corner of his eyes. “Please don’t leave me here with mum. Please!”

He pushed the hair away from his face. “You’ll understand when you’re older.”

“Please!” Nagisa grabbed his arm desperately.

Easily getting out of his grip, his father stood back up again, and picked up his bags. “I’ve already made up my mind.”

He couldn’t stop crying. “Why?” He choked.

“I’ll see you really soon, okay?”

“Dad-“

“Will you be good for me? Promise, Nagisa.”

“I promise,” he whispered. His father was already out of the door before he was through the sentence, though.

At the shriek of his phone alarm, Nagisa jolted awake, and immediately wanted to bury himself under the covers. He was in too much of a cold sweat from the dream to consider going back to sleep, so it was much more of an instinctual reaction to hide from the danger, even if it was his
own memory. As soon as Nagisa’s heartbeat calmed down some, the physical discomfort was much more noticeable.

Groaning, he cringed as he pulled himself out of bed, shuffling to the bathroom as quickly as he could. The little demon thing inside him seemed to have most of their fun using his bladder as a punching bag, and it meant he had to pee far more than he ever had in his life. Even if there was nothing there to pee, the need was very much there. Demon was an accurate description, he thought when he was done, rubbing his sore back.

“Akuma,” he said softly, as the baby kicked at him in protest. It definitely wasn’t a name, but it felt a little better than referring to it as ‘his baby’ all the time. Yes, incredibly accurate. He’d barely gotten any sleep in, considering how badly Akuma’s weight cut off his breathing if he lay flat. Nagisa had to think long and hard about why he’d even set his alarm for a weekend in the first place, until his brain finally caught up.

Well, a little assassination practice never hurt anybody. Trying to force himself into the land of the living as best he could, Nagisa pulled on the clothes with the most amount of room left in them. Even some of the things Karma had loaned him didn’t fit anymore, but the large sweatshirt still seemed to swallow him while. He found himself not minding too much about that, being surrounded in comforting scent.

Nagisa’s plan to leave quietly was foiled pretty soon, running into Toboso the second he stepped outside of the bedroom. “Ah, Nagisa san,” the butler bowed, “my apologies.”

“IT was my fault,” Nagisa replied politely.

He raised an eyebrow. “Going out without breakfast? Nagisa san, if I may, that’s not a good idea for you. I’ll make you something.”

With still an amount of time left before Nagisa really had to go out to meet his friends, and the tell tale clenching of his stomach, he didn’t argue about the offer. Though Toboso had said time and time again that as a guest of Asano, he was only really doing his job, it made Nagisa shift uncomfortably. Asano had demanded nothing out of him, and it had been months now, but he still needed that barrier of mistrust there as protection.

“Is soup and rice alright?” He asked, once Nagisa had followed him into the kitchen.

“Thanks.” What Nagisa really wanted right then was a heavy crepe full of chocolate, strawberries, and whipped cream, but the plainer option was probably the healthier choice. He sat himself down, whilst Toboso cooked, naturally in his element. There was no sign of Asano around, despite the smell of food within the house, which would usually lure him out.

As if he could read his mind, Toboso sighed. “It must be exam time. Gakushu would have wasted away years ago if I didn’t bring food right to his door.”

Thinking about it, Asano seemed to have a weirdly intimate relationship with his butler. “Has Asano kun always been like this?”

“Mmm,” Toboso turned, placing the food in front of Nagisa.

“Thanks for the food,” Nagisa said, before tucking in.

“Without speaking too out of turn,” the butler continued, “Gakushu and his father have a… strained relationship. Even when he was a child, after his mother left, nothing was accepted but success. Truthfully, Gakushu exists only as a shadow.”
Nagisa swallowed. That seemed hard. At the same time, it was a feeling he could relate to. His own mother only wanted Nagisa to exist in the ideal way she saw him, and the second he went against it, he was discarded. The less Nagisa thought about it the better, which wasn’t hard with everything else distracting him. Perhaps that was why Asano threw himself into school so fiercely.

Once he’d finished his meal, he thanked Toboso once again, and finally left the house. He made it to where everyone had agreed to meet in good time, and although most were already there, he technically wasn’t late, which was an achievement. Everybody was just stretching out and discussing their plans for the day, so he hadn’t missed much.

“So we’re racing over the buildings to the station?” He overheard Nakamura say. “Sweet.”

Although Nagisa had technically been taught the techniques to do that, the thought made him somewhat nervous. Karasuma had always been there to spot them if they made a misstep, and he knew the terrain of the roofs far less than he knew the mountain. Considering his athletic skill was diminished, Nagisa decided it was better to just sit this part out.

“They’re gonna get in trouble~” Karma said beside him.

Nagisa startled slightly, since he hadn’t noticed him arrive. “Really?”

Karma shrugged. “Karasuma sensei specifically told them no parkour out of class. If he catches them doing it so openly, then well…”

“You care?”

“I don’t,” Karma confirmed. “But I have better things to do. Want to grab some coffee?”

Nagisa didn’t really understand how coffee with him was better than racing everyone above the town, but he didn’t complain. “Sure. Since when have you liked coffee?”

“Okay,” he admitted, “it’s more like ‘let’s go to a coffee place so I can try a new drink flavour’.”

“So nothing in it for me,” he said dryly.

Karma wrapped an arm around his shoulders, in what could be a nice gesture or the start of a headlock. “There’s always the pleasure of my company.”

“Pleasure.”

“My my,” he said lightly, “you’re in a bad mood.”

Nagisa sighed. “I’m sorry.”

Karma stilled for a second. “Let’s go get those drinks.”

With nothing further to add, Nagisa agreed, and they went to one of their usual places. Admittedly, when Karma bought him a serving of the new strawberry flavoured concoction, his mood sky rocketed. This was a lot better than the parkour, definitely. He wondered if this was the kind of thing Karma did when he skipped lessons.

Once they were satisfied (Akuma seemed to be resting after finally getting the strawberries), they decided to just take a walk to the station and meet with the others. They were bound to have finished at least a few circuits, at least. Walking slowly, they caught sight of their classmates above, rushing around like it was nothing.
Most civilians weren’t paying them any attention, until there was a sickening crash. With their extended vantage point, the students on the roof came to a swift pause. Nagisa looked at Karma with mild alarm.

Karma shrugged. “I told you something bad would happen.”

As quickly as he could, Nagisa rushed forward, catching a glimpse of what had happened. The rest of their class had gathered around an older man, lying pained on the ground beside a messed up bike. His best guess was that they’d somehow run into him, and it had ended up in injury. That definitely wasn’t good.

“Let’s get out of here,” Karma said quickly.

“Why?” Nagisa looked at him. “We should help.”

“We’ll only get in trouble,” he rationalised, “and we weren’t doing anything wrong.”

Nagisa hesitated.

“Fine,” Karma said casually. “I’ll see you later.”

As soon as he’d disappeared, the sound of ambulance sirens filled the small alleyway. Nagisa still didn’t know what had happened in all the confusion as the unconscious man was carried away. There was a certain amount of dread in everyone’s eyes. As if to add to the atmosphere, everyone’s phones buzzed.

Nagisa looked down at his messages, from an unknown ID.

>I will see you outside the hospital emergency department.

Given that everybody had received one, there weren’t too many options over who could have sent it. The likely answer was Karasuma, as it was his word everybody had gone against. Nobody even thought about skipping out from going, silently taking off in the direction of the hospital. The mood was incredibly sour.

“Are you sure you want to go Nagisa kun?” Kayano asked him on the way. “You weren’t involved.”

“I would have been,” Nagisa admitted, “if I could. I should share whatever punishment we get.”

Sure enough, Karasuma was waiting for them outside the hospital, once they reached it (entirely from walking normally). He looked pissed. “A hairline fracture of the right femur,” he announced. “It’s mild enough that he should be up and walking in a week or so, but given that you kids are a state secret, my men are negotiating a gag order and an out of court settlement.”

A sudden whoosh of the wind revealed their teacher, face completely black with rage.

“K-korosensei,” Isogai stammered.

Kimura looked down. “B-but it was such a narrow street.”

“Who’d ever expect an old man to be riding his bike down there?” Okajima justified.

“He’s right.” Okuda said.

Yada begun. “I do think what we did was wrong…”
“But we did it to sharpen up our skills,” Nakamura finished.

“You just don’t get the pressure and panic of having to save the earth,” Terasaka added.

Before anybody else could make an excuse, Korosensei sped around them at Mach 20, delivering a harsh slap to each of their cheeks. It stung.

“Will you report that as injuring the students?” Korosensei turned to ask Karasuma quietly.

“I’ll overlook it this once,” Karasuma agreed. “I knew the risks when I introduced that high level training… It may have been too soon for you after all. It’s my fault.”

He turned to go back inside, and Nagisa felt his stomach drop. It was hard, to hear Karasuma blame himself for something that was clearly not his doing like that. It was down to their stupidity, not his.

“Sensei… we’re sorry,” Kimura finally said.

Everybody joined in, bowing their heads in apology.

“You may have grown too strong. Drunk on your own power, you forgot to put yourselves in the shoes of someone weaker than you. That makes you no different from the students on the main campus.” He held up one of their textbooks, and tore it in two. “The midterms are now exactly two weeks away. I forbid any of you from studying for them. It’s not a punishment. There are simply other things you should be studying first. I’m responsible, too, for having forgotten to teach them.”

Eventually, they were let inside, and it was hard to look at that crippled man’s face. Still, they had to do what was right, and all extended as sincere an apology as they could to him, lead in by Korosensei. The man didn’t look too pleased, though, and who could blame him? All they could do was say they were sorry, though.

“Do they know their task?” He finally said, addressing Korosensei.

Their teacher nodded rapidly. “Yes! Class, in Matsukata san’s place, you will be assisting with the running of the pre-school until he recovers.”

Huh? Pre-school? Was that what Korosensei meant, in place of studying? Well, there was much worse tasks out there. Nobody really complained, dismissed after that with only the address of the school. They were all pretty much doomed for midterms, Nagisa realised by the time he returned to the Asano residence. If Asano was studying this hard to make sure the E Class didn’t beat him again, it turned out there was no need.

There was no sign of him, even the next morning, so Nagisa didn’t have a chance to mention it. The pre-school wasn’t too far away, and he arrived on time with the rest of his classmates. It seemed that regardless of his involvement, Karma had received the punishment as well, as he gathered with the rest of the group.

“Listen to this, children!” The one helper working there announced. “Principal Matsukata has been hurt, so he can’t work for a while.”

The group of children, most under five years old, looked at each other in confusion.

“So instead,” she continued, “these young men and women will do anything we need for the next two weeks!”
After she’d finished speaking, it was like the floodgates. Small children launched their attack, and Nagisa genuinely thought they could have won. There was no time to come up with any sort of strategy, they may as well be defenceless. Nagisa felt genuinely overwhelmed, unsure of what to do as two of them tugged on his clothes for attention.

Like she had some sort of power over her troops, one girl cleared her throat, and the rest of the kids cleared off. “So what exactly are you planning to do for us, now? Barging in on us en masse… Reckon you can at least work off the oxygen you’re taking up?”

Given the whispers from her fellow classmates, she definitely had the control.

Before anybody could say anything, she quickly grabbed hold of a broom, threatening Nagisa with it like a sword. “First, have you got what it takes to work? Let’s just see, shall we, huh?”

“Hey, uh-“

The girl took a step forwards, but the wood gave out under her foot, causing her to fall through the floor.

“That part of the floor is no good,” one of them said.

“Aren’t you getting it fixed?” Isogai asked the staff member. “I mean… this building is pretty decrepit.”

“We don’t have the money,” she said wistfully. “Any waitlisted student, any child not attending primary school – our principal takes them in at rock bottom rates. He can’t even hire enough staff, so he winds up working the hardest.”

“Twenty eight of us for two weeks…” Maehara said. “I bet we could get some stuff done.”

Hara agreed. “Sure we could!”

“Okay guys,” Isogai addressed them. “Let’s divvy up the duties and work in his stead! First a strategy meeting!”

“Got it!” Everyone responded.

Nagisa bent down, pulling the little girl out of the hole. “Are you okay?”

She folded her arms and shrugged him off. “Didn’t hurt. Aren’t you going with your friends.”

“Hm,” Nagisa tried lightly, “I’d rather hang out with you, if that’s okay?”

Though her demeanour clearly shifted, body language becoming more open, her tone didn’t change. She huffed, still not facing him. “I guess I can’t stop you.”

He sat himself down. “What were you playing before?”

“I wasn’t playing.”

Nagisa decided to change his tactic. The girl still seemed stone cold. “Did I overhear that you weren’t at school? What are you doing here, then?”

She finally turned around, looking him suspiciously in the eye. “What’s it to you? Anyway, these kids would be nowhere without their leader.”
“Leader, huh?”

“I am the oldest,” she stated. “I bet I’m better at it than you... I don’t know your name.”

Nagisa smiled. “I bet. It’s Nagisa, by the way.”

“Sakura,” she replied, a small amount of salt leaving her tone.

Before they could continue their conversation, the rest of the E Class returned from their conversation. Nagisa had no real preference what job he was given, so he was okay with having missed the meeting. He could always get the details after.

“Nagisa kun,” Isogai came over to him. “We put you on helping out with studying, if that’s okay.”

He looked at the girl. “Sakura chan? Want some help?”

“Sure, whatever.”

Nagisa picked himself up as she wondered off to get one of her study books. He had no real idea how to help with studying. Some subjects he only just grasped himself, and explaining them, to a child no less, felt out of his reach. He sat down beside Sakura at a table, flipping through the maths book she’d given him. By the looks of it, she was far behind for her age.

“Make it snappy, Nagisa!” She demanded. “Weren’t you supposed to get me to Tokyo University?!”

“S-sorry.”

“Hmph.”

“Uh, hey,” he tried, “you never said why you weren’t going to school.”

“Huh?” She eyed him suspiciously. “Bullying, of course, bullying – the typical, stupid kind! I don’t get people... Kids that age should be innocent and sweet. But once they get a little bigger and stronger, I guess they use that strength to hurt people. You’re thinking it too, aren’t you? ‘Don’t run away’. ‘If you don’t like it, go to school and get stronger yourself’. Just like Mama and Papa say. Well, you look weaker than me, so you probably don’t understand.”

Nagisa didn’t know what to say. This girl, even though she was so young, spoke with far more maturity than he’d ever heard from a child before. He was still figuring some of this stuff out for himself, yet Sakura seemed so certain. Underneath her exterior, Sakura seemed like a nice kid. Before he could even formulate an answer for her, a commotion outside caught their attention.

She stood up sharply. “Aren’t you coming?”

He supposed he had to follow her. When they came outside, Kurahashi and a group of the kids were gathered around a tree. Nagisa followed their eye levels, until he saw the kitten that seemed to stuck up there.

“See what happens when you pluck up the courage to climb? The higher you get, the more dangerous it is. What’s the harm in staying down on firm ground?” Sakura commented beside him.

Internally, Nagisa thought that sounded boring, when applied to all things. He’d grow restless if he never tried to work for anything, aim higher. Of course, Sakura had no way of knowing the weight of the task the E Class had been given, the goal to save the entire planet. It was a mentality that had
been driven into all of them.

A few meters away, it seemed like Okajima and Kimura were coming up with a plan, gearing up to use their skills for good. There was no doubt the kitten would be rescued.

Suddenly, a thought popped into his head, as they made their preparations. “Sakura chan, if that treetop is school, and the ground is this place here… we all found our strength down on the ground. While looking up…” Nagisa said as Kimura used Okajima to vault up to the tree, “…and getting looked down on, we learned plenty about how scary heights were before we started climbing. That’s why we can go our own way now. Still… somewhere along the way we forgot our fear of heights, so we do still fall to the ground every now and then. So learn here. You can go to school once you have a game plan.” Nagisa bent down to her level and took her hand. “That’s my secret lesson, from me to you. Now let’s go work on that maths, shall we?”

By the time the day was over, Nagisa was all mathed out. Still, somehow, it didn’t seem like much of a challenge to get through. Once Sakura had opened up to him, time appeared to fly past. Some of the others were helping the build the place up, though most were providing entertainment to the kids. It was definitely a group effort. Out of the corner of his eye, he briefly noticed Karma surrounded by a bunch of them, apparently using him as climbing apparatus. For some reason, it surprised him that he seemed to be so good with kids.

It wasn’t until he got back that the tiredness finally hit him. All Nagisa wanted to do was crawl under the sheets and sleep for about a week. Suddenly, he had a lot of respect for those who did this regularly, as a career. Small kids really were hard work. An uncomfortable knot tied in Nagisa’s stomach, at that thought. Before he could delve into it too much, he sensed another presence.

“Rumour has it the E Class are skipping school,” Asano said seriously. “Right before exams.”

Nagisa swallowed. There was no way he could tell the full truth. “Our teacher set us up with a community project,” he settled with.

“Hm,” Asano’s eyes were pure steel. “Is this cockiness? Or plain stupidity.”

“There are no bets this time around,” he said.

“Still…” the alpha swallowed, and then rolled his eyes. “Come on. You still need to study. Come with me.”

Nagisa was tired, and in no mood to study, but he followed anyway, for some reason.

“Hey,” Nagisa rubbed his eyes, stepping out of the bedroom.

“Good morning!” A small girl with hair the colour of the outer rings of fire rushed up, burying her face into his stomach.

Naturally, Nagisa bent down to her level, hugging her back. “Did you have nice dreams?”

“Mm,” she let him go, dancing around excitedly. “I dreamt that daddy made me the best pancakes ever and ever in the world, and I told him, and now I’m gonna get pancakes!”

Nagisa eyed up the kitchen. “That’s awfully nice of him.”

“Well,” she said, “I asked real real polite.”
“It’s true,” Karma said, emerging from the kitchen with his hair clipped back off his face, a bowl of presumably pancake mix in his arms.

“What do you think?” Karma looked down at the little girl. “Does he deserve some breakfast?”

“Hmmm,” she said. “I think so!”

Nagisa woke up, instantly feeling uncomfortable, moreso about this dream that reliving his own childhood trauma. It had felt so real. As if to remind him, Akuma gave him a few sharp kicks. Perhaps it was a sign they would turn out to be a girl. He dressed himself, ready to face the final day at the nursery. In the two weeks that had passed, Nagisa had actually found himself having a really good time. As all the building and improvements had gone on around them, he’d become proud that they were doing this much to help out. These kids definitely deserved it.

He was practically overjoyed when Sakura was nowhere to be found. They’d gone over their strategy a few times, but Nagisa hadn’t been entirely certain if she’d actually pluck up the courage. There was still the possibility she’d managed to stay at home, but he hoped she was busy at school. Having spent most of his time with her, it also meant Nagisa didn’t immediately have anything to do.

Seeing their opportunity, he was flocked the moment he placed himself somewhere, mostly by the girls, who were naturally a little bit less energetic and more willing to sit down. After a flurry of requests, which were hard to focus on individually, they settled down marginally.

“Nagisa~,” one said, “will you do my hair like yours?”

“No fair I wanted to play with Nagisa!”

“How about we take it in turns?”

They blinked.

Nagisa shuffled behind the girl who had asked first, and swiftly replicated his hair style on her own head. Though he hadn’t done it on somebody else before, he was so used to the repeating the motions, it didn’t look too askew. It wasn’t something he put much thought to, and was much messier than the style the girl had arrived wearing.

She looked in a small, toy mirror, and grinned. “Thank you!”

“Me next!”

Within minutes, a small queue had formed. It was a little weird, once he was making progress, to see so many tiny heads mimicking him. In another sense, it was a little cute. He wasn’t really doing much, yet they seemed so happy.

“What’s this, huh? Nagisa kun’s salon?” Nagisa looked up to see Karma standing above him.
“You’re stealing all my fans.”

“Do it on Karma too!” A dark haired girl requested.

“Yeah! Make him look pretty!”

Karma shrugged, slumping to the ground. “Girls’ orders.”

Nagisa swallowed. Styling Karma’s hair felt a little different than a bunch of kids’. Still, he forced himself to remember, it was just hair. The other girls had their own hair ties, so Nagisa had to take his hair down, letting it fall to his shoulders as he flexed the elastic between his fingers. Tentatively, he reached out, threading Karma’s fire truck red hair between his fingers. It was surprisingly silky to the touch. Nagisa focused, pulling the much shorter locks into something that resembled bunches.

“How do I look?” He turned, once Nagisa was done.

His resolve crumbled, if he ever even had one to begin with. Nagisa giggled, admiring how ridiculous he looked. His hair resembled tiny bat wings.

“How cute!” One of the girls said.

“How cute looks cute with his hair down!” Another noticed.

He hadn’t really thought out it, when he took his ties out. Suddenly self-conscious, Nagisa folded his arms over himself. He hated how he looked with his longer hair exposed fully, how much it felt like the style of a girl.

“Hmm,” Karma said, “but I’m cuter.”

Wait, was he indirectly implying something like a compliment? A twisted, kind of humiliating compliment, but that was just Karma’s style. Nagisa felt his face heat up, and immediately needed to stop himself, and any stray thoughts that might creep in. Karma was just messing with him. Before he could dwell on it too hard, they were both signalled over.

Principal Matsukata had made a full recovery, and was being shown all their improvements. Joining the rest of the class for the final part of the tour, Nagisa noticed the man wore the same grouchy expression. Still, there was something about him that seemed lighter, like he definitely did appreciate the work the class had done to the run down centre.

Something else grabbed Nagisa’s attention, in the middle of their speech.

“Hey! Nagisa!” Sakura said, rushing up with an exam paper. “Ta-da! I came in second!”

“Wow, that’s great!” Nagisa replied with genuine excitement. “Well done!”

“I did just what you said! I came in only for my math test, like a sneak attack. I finished my test and left.”

He bent down to her level, reciting his own idea. “And in the middle of a test, the bullies couldn’t do a thing.”

“Yep! Apart from the teacher, I didn’t tell anybody I was leaving!”

“Using your best attack before your opponent can get into position: that’s how we fight in the E Class, Sakura chan. Keep on using those hit and run tactics, and you’ll have more weapons at your
disposal in school.”

“Th-then…” she looked down. “You’ll teach me again sometime, right?”

“Of course!” He beamed. Something in him yearned for the girl to succeed, after everything.

Principal Matsukata cleared his throat. “You all run back to school, now. You have some important work to attend to.”

Their midterms were over and done with in a blur. Nagisa’s tactic had been to not think about it, too much. He just put pen to paper, and wrote as fast and accurately as he could. By the time the exams were over, it was like a breath of fresh air. There weren’t so many stakes resting on it, so the tension was a lot less. That was, until everyone was handed their results, and the atmosphere was nothing short of depressing.

Nagisa left that day with Sugino and Okajima at his side, both looking solidly depressed with their papers. Nobody had been too eager to compare results, so Nagisa kept his pressed firmly to his chest. The less they knew about it, the better.

“What a let down. Guess that first time was just a fluke, eh?” Araki Teppei, one of the members of the five virtuosos, said. The rest of them blocked their path, as they entered the main campus.

“We didn’t even need to smash you at pole toppling.” Seo referenced one of their earlier competitions.

Nagisa swallowed down his secrets.

“Cat got your tongue? That’s not surprising.” Koyama added.

Sakakibara shrugged. “At this school, grades are everything. Those on the bottom have no right speaking to those on the top.”

“Eh? Then you can’t say anything to me, now, can you?” Like he’d manifested out of the shadows or something, Karma appeared behind them, his presence fearful, as he waved his papers, stating he’d managed to come second out of their entire year. “I mean, our teacher’ll probably be like, ‘it doesn’t count if you didn’t come in first.’ Hasn’t it dawned on you? I’m the only one who gave it my all this time around. Everyone else was pulling their punches for you. Said you’d have no standing if you kept on losing.”

“What?!” Four of the A Class said.

Maybe it was just a result of spending so much time with him, but Nagisa could sense something was off about Asano. It was as if there was a twinge in the air, like the smell of rusted steel. It made him shudder at the thought of what could be coming.

“That’s nice and all,” Asano finally spoke up, before Karma could turn away, “but you’re incorrect. In fact, it would be unfair to give yourself the only credit. It takes a lot of work for some people to come tenth overall… Right, Nagisa kun?”

In some sort of state of mutual shock, all eyes turned to Nagisa’s form. He couldn’t help put tremble, feeling highly on display. It was almost hilarious, the best grade he’d achieved in his life was his own personal nightmare. He wanted to hide, to run away and disappear. It felt as if it was tattooed onto his forehead – ‘2nd in the E Class, 10th Overall.’

“I-is it true?” Sugino asked.
Okajima blinked. “How?”

Asano cut in, before Nagisa could answer for himself. “My skills as a tutor, of course. Even the E Class isn’t completely hopeless.”

Seo squinted. “What? You tutored preggo over there!?”

“No need to be like that,” Asano waved him off. “Who cares, he has some kind of brain, at least. Hey, Nagisa kun,” he spoke in a tone he never usually used, during their conversations, “come hang out with us. You’ve proved you’re better than these losers.”

And there it was. Nagisa had known, known for months, that in accepting Asano’s offer, he’d sold his soul to the devil. Of course he’d waited till now, the perfect moment, to cash it in. And he knew it, Nagisa had no choice but to go along with whatever Asano asked of him. Nagisa’s debt was far too big. He had nowhere else to go. It was stupid. He’d been in chains all along, but forced himself to remain as ignorant to them as possible.

“You’re not serious,” Okajima said, as Nagisa took a step forwards.

Nagisa wanted to scream that he was sorry, and that he didn’t mean any of this, but instead he just lowered his head.

“Nagisa?” Sugino asked.

Karma, it seemed, had already walked off, not interested in sticking around for this betrayal.

Taking the deepest breath he could, Nagisa moved away from his friends. “Sure,” he met Asano’s eyes.

Asano smiled.

Chapter End Notes

Time for a Japanese lesson! Akuma (悪魔, or あくま phonetically), literally means 'demon'. It is not a name, of any sort. So when Nagisa was thinking the baby was like a demon, that’s the word that stuck. Because Nagisa is using it AS a name, I’m not translating the word for the rest of the fic (like how Sakura is a word in Japanese in its own right, but is being used as a name here too), but just keep in mind that when you see the word in the future, that’s what it means. And no, the baby won’t actually be stuck with that name once they’re born :’)

Also, I just wanted to address that Nagisa's second dream is literally that - a dream. Whether their child ends up looking anything like that, well... I guess you're gonna have to stick around for some more chapters :D

As always, comments only encourage me to write faster!
With Bitch Sensei missing, Class 3E have to follow the great assassin known as The Reaper's command.

Even though Nagisa had known the weight of his actions, and thought that he was prepared for the backlash, the reality was far worse. He’d almost have preferred it if there had been a giant confrontation. But no, instead, simply nobody had spoken to Nagisa at all. It wasn’t even as if everyone had been there, when Nagisa followed Asano’s order, though he couldn’t exactly blame them for spreading what had happened. Or the subsequent reaction. Nagisa was a traitor.

He was almost, sickeningly, a little grateful that they had Bitch Sensei’s problems to deal with. If buying flowers and trying to set her up with Karasuma was going to take the focus away from him, then Nagisa was surely here for it. Unfortunately, things hadn’t gone to plan, and their teacher had been more than mad. Nobody had seen her for days.

“Day three, huh?” Chiba said, when she didn’t show up for their English lesson.

“Maybe we went too far,” Yada thought.

Korosensei, dressed up in something ridiculous, leaned over by the window. “Call me if anything happens with Irina Sensei. I’ve got to get to Brazil to take in a football match. Samba-bye!”

“That’s right –“ Maehara started, “he’d had his mind set on attending that game for a while now. He’s your typical once every four years fan.”

Kataoka looked down. “I wonder if Bitch Sensei’s okay.”

“No good,” Yada said after attempting to call her number, “I can’t get through.”

That sounded… suspicious.

Surprisingly, it was Ritsu who spoke up. “There’s no sign of her on GPS or public surveillance cameras.”
That was definitely alarming. Sure, Bitch Sensei locking herself up to mope for a few days sounded like her exact response to a situation like this, but this was all adding up far too much to just be normal. Then again, she had looked extremely hurt, at everything. Perhaps they’d been underestimating the extent.

“She wouldn’t leave over something like this, would she?” Chiba asked, almost rhetorically.

“That’s not it,” the man who had sold them the bouquet of flowers for Bitch Sensei the other day entered their classroom. “There’s still something you need her to do.”

“Right?” Fuwa said. “And besides, it’s fun having her around.”

“Yes, you’ve bonded nicely, you and her,” he said, setting down the flowers he carried. “My preliminary research has already verified that much. All I’ll do is exploit that.”

Wait. This wasn’t right. Why was this man here, saying such threatening things? Nagisa felt a chill run through his whole body, and sickness boil in his chest.

“I’m the assassin known as The Repaer,” he said, like it was nothing. “And now I have a lesson for you all. A flower’s beauty negates human caution and opens the heart. But the original reason flowers evolved to be so lovely and fragrant – Ritsu, bring up the image I sent you – was to attract insects.”

The image pulled up on Ritsu’s screen was nothing short of horrifying. So horrifying, in fact, Nagisa hardly believed it was real, much like something out of a thriller movie or a video game. There was no mistaking it, though. That was their teacher, beaten and chained up like a torture victim. He almost threw up.

“I’ll cut to the chase,” the Reaper continued, “If you want to keep her alive you must all come to the location I specify – and not a word to your teachers. You don’t have to if you don’t want to. I can send her to you. To each of you. Equally. In little pieces. And my next flower will likely be one of you.”

“Hey, now, buddy,” Terasaka, apparently uncaring that he was up against the most famous assassin, “we have no real obligation to save that bossy bitch. Plus… did you think we wouldn’t give you a beat down, right here, you kidnapper?”

The reaper just smiled. “That’s incorrect, Terasaka kun. Wrong on all counts. You all like her more than you think. And a human could never cut down The Reaper. Fear not. The Reaper only cuts people down.”

As if nature itself obeyed his command, wind gathered. Nagisa found himself blinking in the intensity of it, and like that, the Reaper was gone. The only evidence he’d even been there in the first place were the flowers, swirling in the gust out of the window. Lovro had been right, all that time ago. That definitely was the world’s best, a whole other level to anything they’d faced before.

Isogai bent down to pick up something, a sheet of paper that had apparently been left. “‘Come as a class to the location on the map before six tonight.’” He read aloud.

“Just like with Takaoka and Shiro,” Chiba said. “They must be looking to take us hostage and draw out Korosensei.”

Sugino slammed his fist down on his desk. “Damnit!”

“We using these?” Terasaka said casually, holding up their new PE clothes.
They had been a gift from the government. Though their class referred to them as PE clothes, in reality they were armour worthy of the field. Built with some of the best technology out there, it wasn’t a light gift to receive. It kind of gave Nagisa the feeling that the urgency of everything was hiking up, and reminded him of how little time was really left.

“To protect someone, right?” Nakamura said.

Terasaka nodded. “Greatest assassin or not, we won’t let his plans go off without a hitch!”

“Just one issue.” Nakamura pointed towards Nagisa, and everyone’s eyes followed.

They didn’t have to say it. The shift in the atmosphere was more than telling enough. Loud and clear, everyone was thinking the same thing. Nagisa was too much of a liability, worse than useless. He hadn’t immediately thought about it, the desperation to save their teacher from that danger clouding almost everything else. Regardless of it all, there was no way Nagisa could live with himself if they did nothing.

“He requested all of us,” Nagisa said, finally. “Twice over. We can’t just leave Bitch Sensei to that monster.”

The silence was uncomfortable. Nagisa wasn’t magically forgiven, despite this do or die situation. He swallowed, knowing that nobody had much of a solution.

“M-maybe he wouldn’t notice if Nagisa didn’t come,” somebody said, quietly.

Isogai cleared his throat. “I doubt it, he wouldn’t have emphasised it otherwise.”

Kayano stood up. “I-I know not everyone was there, but we saw Nagisa kun fight against Takaoka san. That was only a couple of months ago. I don’t think he’s putting himself in any more danger than the rest of us. In terms of assassination, Nagisa kun is one of our best.”

Though he wasn’t sure if he actually believed all of what Kayano had said, Nagisa was thankful that at least somebody wasn’t treating him like an invalid.

“I agree with Kayano chan.”

Finally, the eyes turned to the back of the room, and Nagisa’s heart leapt through his throat.

Karma stood up properly. “A guy like that reaper? He has this planned down to a T. There’s no way around it, even if we wanted there to be. But,” he exhaled, “Kayano chan is right. In this, I trust Nagisa’s own judgement. There’s no way the rest of us could tell what his own body can handle.”

He was surprised, just a little. It seemed Karma’s views had changed significantly since that time on the island. There was no doubt he really had meant every word of that apology.

“I’ll do it,” Nagisa said. “As long as nobody spends extra time looking out for me. I know I can handle myself. Besides,” he tried to lighten it, “he wants us as a class, right? He probably won’t go after us individually.” Hopefully, anyway.

“Mm,” Okajima said. “A class.”

“Okajima kun,” Isogai warned, “there are far more important issues right now. So, we’re agreed?”

The atmosphere was still stiff, and nobody was about to just let Nagisa’s betrayal slide, but Isogai’s
words at least meant people weren’t refusing to look at him anymore. There wasn’t much of a plan to make, given that they were far from having the upper hand in this, but they still discussed the precautions, before going their separate ways.

Once Nagisa had returned to the Asano residence, it felt like preparing for war. Unusually, against a very human and the most terrifying target at all. None of his assorted guns and knives would come much in handy, for this, though he knew Takebayashi and Okuda were coming up with something. All Nagisa had to do was adorn his PE clothes.

Their built in technology meant that they stretched to fit whoever was wearing it, to give the best protection no matter the conditions. Due to this, they turned out to be the most comfortable clothes Nagisa actually had access to. If they were more inconspicuous, Nagisa would consider wearing them all the time. In this condition, with the graveness of the situation, that joy was somewhat diminished.

The time came for Nagisa to leave, finally. He tried to be as silent as possible, not wanting anybody to notice his absence. Still, that didn’t stop luck being against him. The second he closed the bedroom door behind him, he instantly heard the sound of a second door.

“Where are you going, Nagisa kun?” Asano said, no obvious threat in his tone.

Nagisa didn’t trust that intuition at all, though, and he didn’t have time for this. “Just out for a class thing?”

“Dressed like that?” Asano took a few steps towards him. “You look like you’re about to join the army.”

“Don’t worry,” he said, “I’ll be back later tonight.”

Asano eyed him suspiciously. “Why would you want to go to a ‘class thing’ anyway? You’re better than them.”

That made Nagisa feel uncomfortable. He shuffled awkwardly. The only thing worse than hearing the usual A Class taunts would be to join in with them. Nagisa still had some pride left in him.

“Why are you so against them?”

“Why aren’t you?” Asano retorted. “Look, I know you’re all buddies on the surface, but really Nagisa. Are they your friends? They didn’t seem particularly pleased for your success. I know that if it were my friends who had exceeded all expectations, I’d feel nothing but pride and happiness for them.”

They had been ignoring him for days, without even giving him the chance to defend himself… No. Nagisa wanted to punch himself for even buying into it for a second. Though, in some way, he wondered if Asano genuinely believed the words he was spouting. It didn’t look like Asano was just going to give up, and Nagisa didn’t have the time to wait out whatever he had to say.

Nagisa knew of two, sure fire techniques to stun a target and incapacitate them. His clap stunner move would be the easiest and quickest to execute, but it also relied on a few conditions. Nagisa didn’t have any kind of weapon in his hand, and even if he did, he assumed that Asano didn’t know the fear of near death like his other opponents had. That left Nagisa with only one option.

Before Asano could say anything else, Nagisa wove his way into his personal space. As quickly as he could physically move, he combined pacing light onto his tiptoes, and winding his arms around Asano’s neck to pull him more down to his level – he was around the same height as Karma. He
just barely took in the stunned look in the other boy’s eyes as he sealed their lips together.

Asano didn’t respond much to Nagisa’s kiss, mostly passively letting it happen to him. In a sense, Nagisa was glad of it, as it made the mechanics of the kiss of death far easier to replicate. Within no more than five seconds, Asano’s arms slumped at his sides, pliant. It was easy for Nagisa to pry his mouth open with his own lips, slipping his tongue inside to seal the deal. When he started to feel Asano’s weight rest on him, Nagisa knew he was nearly done for. Just a little more, one finishing move... It didn’t need to be as extreme as the trick he’d used to take Karma out. Nagisa pulled back as he would naturally, but captured Asano’s bottom lip between his teeth and tugged very lightly, before releasing him entirely.

_Huh_, he thought as Asano dropped to the floor like a puddle, _total overkill_. “I’m sorry about this,” Nagisa said anyway, stepping around his body to make his exit.

It turned out that the location the Reaper had marked out wasn’t so much in the middle of nowhere. Instead, it was something he’d probably walk past every day without questioning, quite like the assassin himself. From the outside, it just looked like a plain building, a bunker if Nagisa really had to describe it. Apparently, though, it was also a tomb.

“Is that the way in?” Maehara said, staking out the location from the bushes.

“I did a loop around from above,” Itona said. “No sign of anyone in the area.”

“Ritsu,” Hara said, speaking into her copy of the phone app, “if we’re not back by midnight, tell Korosensei what’s going on.”

“I will,” the AI agreed. “Stay safe, everyone.”

“Let’s go.” Isogai commanded.

Just like it was a regular drill, something they’d practised over and over like an art form, they approached the bunker silently. Once the door was opened easily, they flooded inside, stealth their key. It lead to an open, grey room.

“That’s all of you?” The voice of the Reaper asked from some kind of intercom. “Okay, then: I’m closing it up.”

On cue, the doors slid shut. They were locked in.

“Hmm,” Karma paced over to an area, as if he’d spotted something. “So you can tell what we’re doing? ‘Reaper’? More like ‘Peeper’.”

“We kept our end of the bargain!” Kataoka said. “Just give back Bitch Sensei and it’ll all be over!”

Below his two feet, the floor began to shake, and then Nagisa became very aware that they were traveling downwards. Even inside him, tiny kicks protested the sudden change of motion. Not only were they locked in, but they were going to be trapped underground. The technology seemed old and unsafe, but they made it to the bottom with only a small bit of debris.

“Trapping complete!” The Reaper stated. “Doing it all at once like this keeps the risk to a minimum.”

Three of the walls appeared solid, but the forth was like metal bars, though far too tightly packed for anybody to consider slipping between them. It was also likely the most secure part of the trap. Everybody else seemed to have the same thought, and began punching the walls in the attempt to
find some sort of escape route.

“Bitch sensei!”

“It’s alright,” the Reaper said casually, “of he comes quietly, no one gets killed.”

“If we go the defiant route…” Okajima stepped up to the bars, “you won’t get mad enough to kill?”

“Nope.” The Reaper confirmed. “You’re a little too scared, even for a kid.”

Okajima kept the charade up. “Actually, I’m a little relieved.”

“Here! It sounds hollow here!” Somebody shouted.

They all knew what to do, on that cue. Without haste, a small bomb was attached to the spot, with a detonator time of just a few seconds. They stepped back to prevent from being hit by anything. At the sound of the bomb, Okuda threw one of the smoke screen capsules she’d crafted, obscuring them from any cameras. In under the space of the minute, the entire class had made their escape.

“Now for the moment of truth.” Maehara said, as they went out into the open space. It didn’t look like much, just a gigantic, open network of tunnels.

“Can you hear me, E Class?” The Reaper said over yet another intercom. “The truth is, I’m very pleased you escaped. It’ll be the warm up before the unknown big game. I expect great things from you.”

“It’s like… A game.” Hayami realised

It was. A highly sadistic, thought out game. Forget pleased, the Reaper had likely been counting on his escape. Like this, with just his voice appearing at unknown times, they couldn’t even see his face. That made him the most dangerous threat Nagisa had faced. Faces told the most stories, after all.

“Let’s intercept him here.” Isogai said, taking the lead. “No matter which way he comes from we’ll have the upper hand if we outnumber him.”

It was sound logic. They’d already accounted for this, in their discussion earlier. If there ever was a chance to split up, half of them would search for Bitch Sensei. Those who had already volunteered wasted no time in speeding off, leaving the rest of them to try and keep the Reaper busy, to keep his all seeing eyes on him.

“Back us up, Ritsu.” Hara requested.

“Don’t feel like it.” Ritsu said from the screen. “Not like I’m gonna defy the Reaperman. I’d sooner turn off than do any work.”

“She’s been hacked!”

The sickening sound of footsteps drowned them out. Nagisa turned to look, but there was no sign of the Reaper, despite hearing the sound get closer. He had to really focus before he saw it, just the slightest hint of a shadow. Although he could just about sense that, Nagisa couldn’t make out the Reaper at all. This was the skill of a true assassin.

Yoshida and Muramatsu seemed to catch sight of the figure too, running towards him together for a
quick attack. Although they both threw punches, they missed horrifically, unable to connect to his seemingly non-existent skin. Together on the ground, they slumped.

“The first skill I honed upon becoming an assassin was head on combat,” he said as he approached, smacking Kimura hard into the wall. “It’s ninety nine percent unnecessary for an assassin, but without it, the remaining one percent of targets would get away. If you’re looking to become the world’s best assassin… it’s an indispensable skill.” He approached Kayano, and kneed her hard in the chest, the sickening crunching sound echoing in the tunnel as she collapsed. “Females are so very fragile. Can’t be treating the rest of my hostages so carelessly.”

Nagisa’s eyes raked from Kayano’s form to the shadowy mass. Something powerful over took his body, right then. A voice inside him said that this was what he was meant to do. Though this was the most famed assassin of all time, Nagisa could rely on his second blade.

“Move aside, everyone. I’ll take him.”

“Nagisa kun…” Karma said, panic and warning lacing his tone.

He took a deep breath. The cracking sound must have been from their new clothes, the armour absorbing the shock. Nagisa was certain Kayano was mostly unharmed, only a little bruised at worst. But there was no way the Reaper knew that. It was like Nagisa just knew, he’d thought it was her ribs. He’d revelled in breaking them. What Nagisa was feeling, as he approached the assassin, wasn’t bloodlust, it was anger.

Before Nagisa could take another step, a deafening noise, the slamming of hands together, rung out right in front of his face. It was as if his nerves turned into solid stone, shock paralysing his entire body. His brain was awake, but he couldn’t move even the slightest inch.

“The clap stunner. Yours and Lovro’s might just startle a cat.” The Reaper taunted him. “But this skill has yet another level. Human consciousness has a wavelength: the higher the peaks, the more sensitive one is to stimulation. So when your foe’s consciousness is at its most sensitive peak, you strike with your most powerful sound wave. That impact won’t just temporarily spook your opponent. It’ll paralyse their nerves, immobilising them for a while.”

Nagisa felt his knees buckle. The Reaper sighed, kicking him hard in his midsection so that he fell hard onto his back the rest of the way. “Omegas get me mad most of all.” He raised his voice. “So that’s it, eh? Now then, I seem to be short some people. Come along, don’t waste any more of my time.”

Once Nagisa regained sensation, he choked, breaths coming up short. He was certainly winded from the impact, but he didn’t feel particularly injured. It seemed, as he looked around, that the rest of them had been knocked out whilst Nagisa was in shock. Hopefully, nobody had witnessed more than just the clap. Nagisa didn’t want them to worry over him. He sat up properly, and instantly regretted it, stomach cramping up weirdly as he got the urge to vomit.

It took more strength than it usually would, but Nagisa managed to unsteadily pull himself to his feet, before being shepherded off with the rest of his classmates. They were dumped back in the cage, a collar placed around each of their necks.

“Try not to mess with them too much. These are individual bombs. Wouldn’t want you to prematurely explode!”

It took him mere minutes to round up the Bitch Sensei rescue squad, who received the same treatment. With them, Bitch Sensei, who looked completely unharmed, stood next to the Reaper.
“She was with him all along,” Itona said angrily. “She tricked us.”

Perhaps the betrayal would have felt worse, if the room wasn’t spinning. Another cramp, like a snapping band around his midsection, made Nagisa slide down against the wall. On top of whatever that was, he felt stupid, like a failure. He’d been so out of his league it was laughable, and now they were all in danger.

“Nagisa…” Kayano voiced her concern.

Nagisa waved her off, trying to focus on one solid thing.

“I don’t know how you’re going to try killing Korosensei,” Karma said, “but will it really all go according to plan?”

“No matter how poor my intel, I’ll still get results. That’s the world’s best assassin for you.” The Reaper said confidently. Before he could continue to boast over his victory, though, something seemed to come up on his phone.

“Karasuma?” Bitch Sensei questioned.

The Reaper considered it. “How did he know?”

“The octopus.” Itona answered for him. “Said if there was ever a wall his students couldn’t get over… Then it’d be his turn.”

“Well, shucks. That sure throws a wrench in my plans.” It didn’t sound like it had, really.

“Korosensei and Karasuma Sensei!” Hara exclaimed.

“But Korosensei was still in Brazil!” Nakamura said.

The Reaper shrugged. “Oh well. Plan sixteen it is.”

“My time to shine.” Bitch Sensei walked off with him.

Though everyone was discussing how excited they were to be rescued, and how they could always have faith on their teachers, Nagisa couldn’t find the enthusiasm. He was started to sweat, and shiver. Internally, he knew something was very wrong with him. Though there wasn’t a lot he could do about it, in a cage.

“Nagisa kun,” Karma got his attention, “are-“

“I’m fine,” Nagisa snapped.

Before he could be questioned any further, Korosensei crashed through the roof. Well, it seemed the Reaper’s plan had gone smoothly, if trapping their teacher was the goal. He was scarily good.

“Korosensei?!”

“Are you okay?!”

“Irina Sensei…” Korosensei said in disbelief, as the ceiling above them closed in. “Class… is everyone unhurt?”

Maehara groaned. “I can’t believe he captured you too.”
Korosensei placed one of his tentacles on the bars of the cage, and it immediately started steaming. “Bars made of anti-me material, eh? It’s tricky stuff, to be sure… but my body has finally overcome it!”

“Really?!” Okuda said with excitement.

“Now to reveal to you… my secret internal organ weapon!” Korosensei fell to the floor, and stuck out his tongue to start licking at the bars entrapping them. “I made this tongue with a coating of digestive juices. Give me half a day and I can lick these bars away.”

“Say…’ The Reaper’s voice cut in over the intercom. “Keep licking like that and I’ll detonate everyone’s neck bombs.” He, Bitch Sensei, and Karasuma entered the room together, standing on the other side of the bars. “Now, then – better hurry. I’m about to flood this place with water. This is a drainage canal. On my command from the control room up above, two hundred tons of water per second will squeeze you into noodles against these bars.”

“Wait! You intend to kill the students, too?” Karasuma said with alarm.

“Of course,” he said. “It’s too late to wait.”

Karasuma snapped his attention. “Irina! You knew as much, and yet…”

“As a pro, I just prioritised results, that’s all.” Bitch Sensei looked down. “Isn’t that what you wanted?”

“True, it may be a little harsh…” The Reaper trailed off. “Or should I let our best chance of saving the world slip away before our eyes?”

Karasuma eyed him sternly. “Here’s how the government sees it.” Before the Reaper could even react, Karasuma smacked him hard. “The lives of twenty seven people are weightier than the earth. If you still plan on killing them too… I’ll stop you. And I’ll tell you this, Irina,” shrugs off jacket, “being a pro isn’t quite so carefree.”

The Reaper turned, and made a run for it.

“I don’t think so!” Expertly, Karasuma too turned to begin his pursuit.

“Turn on your transceiver!” Korosensei called.

“Hmph. How rash. Karasuma may stand apart from others… but he goes even further. Just look at how easily he trapped that octopus.” Bitch Sensei stopped in the middle of her sentence, receiving something over an ear piece. “Understood.”

Once Bitch Sensei left the room, there was nothing left to do but wait. Although there was plenty to discuss, the tension was far too thick for that. Instead, it was completely silent as they looked to Korosensei’s half of the transceiver, their lifeline. No sound came from it, until a little bit of static could be heard, followed by what sounded like an explosion.

“Karasuma sensei!” Korosensei called to him. “Are you alright?!”

Karasuma’s voice came over it clearly. “What is it?”

“I finally got through. What was that explosion?”

“I’m alright,” he responded. “But Irina’s trapped under the debris. I don’t have time for that. I’m
“You can’t!” Kurahashi took the device from Korosensei. “Why won’t you help her, Karasuma sensei?”

“Kurahashi…” Karasuma sighed. “Irina partnered with the Reaper to get results in her own way. A real pro accepts her own responsibility.”

Kurahashi’s voice was only full of determination, though. “What’s being a pro got to do with it? I know this is coming from a fifteen year old… but Bitch Sensei is only twenty one! Growing up in an environment with no peace of mind, she probably forgot to pick up some of the pieces along the way that would make her a grown up. So please… rescue her, Karasuma Sensei. Just like how you forgive us students when we make mistakes.”

Saying nothing else in response, Karasuma turned his end of the transceiver off. Despite her betrayal, Nagisa felt his stomach drop at the idea Bitch Sensei could be seriously harmed, although she was, well, a bitch.

“Hey,” Itona said, tugging on his own collar. “These collars are pretty simple. I bet they only have a detonate and unlock function built in.”

Terasaka looked over at him. “So?”

Isogai perked up. “We can take them off?”

“Yeah,” Itona said. “They’re not advanced enough to have recognition technology.”

“Over there,” Mimura pointed. “See the camera? It only points in this direction. If we stayed against this wall here, it would be like a blind spot.”

Sugaya stood up. “I bet if I use some of my paint spray, we could use the built in camouflage technology to disguise ourselves from his peeping eyes even more.”

The plan was executed swiftly, hopefully to confuse the Reaper of their whereabouts. Nagisa was thankful to be on the bottom of their little stealth plan. The idea of anything athletic seemed far, far out of reach. He wasn’t sure how long they were there, though as a team, focus was high, until it was cut off by a ginormous splashing sound.

“What was that?” Kayano questioned.

Nakamura moved out of formation, as did the rest of them, to gather around Korosensei as his super vision eyes popped out. “Hey what’s going on?”

“The Reaper has a knife – no, a wire! He uses that on Karasuma and – no, he blocks it with his elbow! He’s using his knife as a shield, and seeing that, he switched to a kick.. but at the same time! What a great fight!”

“What the heck are you saying?!” Okano complained, his commentary confusing for all.

“Explain it so we understand!” Maehara demanded.

“Oh,” Korosensei said, “we planned for this, just in case. I can just about stick one tentacle through.” He demonstrated it, extending it to the far reaches of wherever Karasuma and the Reaper were engaging in this epic battle. Even Nagisa had it in him to gasp in alarm at the sound of a gunshot, but Korosensei seemed unfazed, pulling out a carton of tomato juice from who knows
where and downing it.

All they could do was wait, until Karasuma eventually emerged, shirtless and unscathed. Bitch Sensei, despite her apparent injuries, looked mostly fine too. In his arms, Karasuma carried the body of the Reaper, completely immobile. For a moment, Nagisa wondered if he was dead for good, though that really wasn’t Karasuma’s style at all.

“The man had marvellous skills, but put too much faith in them.” Karasuma reflected, once he’d let them all out of their cage.

“Whoever influenced him was a fool.” Korosensei said sombrely, looking over at his body. “He could have used his skills to follow a much straighter path.”

“Sparing people or killing them… It’s all up to the person and the world around them.” Karasuma agreed.

“Yes, it is. Right, Irina Sensei?” Korosensei turned to her.

She tried to pick up and sprint off, but she had nearly been crushed mere minutes before. Even Bitch Sensei couldn’t heal that fast. Most of the class followed her, and she was quickly grabbed by Muramatsu and Yoshida.

“Hey bitch! What’s the big idea, running away?”

“Argh! Just do whatever you want!” She gave in. “The boys with their usual pent up animal lust, the girls with their usual envy of my beauty- just let it all out in an explosion of sexual violence!”

“Her ideas are getting wild.” Kimura said.

“Look,” Teraska addressed her, “just come to school like always. No more shirking your duties for days on end.”

“I’m dying to know more about that story- swindling Arabian royalty until you were on the brink of war!” Yada smiled.

“If you don’t come back, I’ll just keep that French Boys Over Flowers manga you leant me!” Kataoka added.

Bitch Sensei pouted. “You know I was this close to killing you all.”

“Is that a problem?” Takebayashi said. “Backstabbing, treachery, isn’t that what makes you a bitch?”

“And if we can’t even enjoy school with a bitch, what are we doing being junior high assassins, anyway?” Nakamura smiled

“That’s right.” Karasuma approached her, and pulled out a single red rose, no clues to how he’d come across it. “This flower wasn’t borrowed from one of our students. I came by it intentionally, by defeating the enemy. Is that good enough for your birthday?”

“Yes.” Bitch sensei blushed.

“Karasuma sensei, a word before things take a turn for the racy?” Korosensei asked.

Karasuma sighed. “It definitely won’t, but please.”
“I don’t want the students involved in this kind of danger again. I must insist on an environment where we can safely kill and be killed.”

“I know.”

Nakamura cleared her throat. “I can’t speak for everyone else, but… If we’re going to forgive Bitch Sensei for nearly getting us killed, as a class, it’s right that we forgive Nagisa kun too.”

That caught Nagisa off guard. It took a lot of effort to focus on her words, but Nagisa looked up, trying his best.

“Look,” Terasaka said, “maybe it’s not our business who you hang out with in your spare time. If we judged that, we’re no better than the A Class after all.”

“As long as you don’t become too much like them,” Sugino added.

“I w-won’t,” Nagisa said faintly.

Nakamura’s eyebrows furrowed in concern. “Nagisa kun? You look a little-“

Nagisa felt his insides lurch uncomfortably, and an internal dropping sensation he’d never experienced before. Without really thinking about it, he naturally let his hand fall to the source of the sensation, mostly located in his lower behind. It felt… damp. He brought his hand back, in front of his face as he struggled to focus on it. Though it was blurry, the colour of crimson coating his pale skin was unmistakable.

Once he realised that he was, in fact, bleeding, his knees crumpled. Faintly, as all the colours blurred together into darkness, Nagisa realised he hadn’t felt any of the usual jabs or rolls that plagued his stomach since the lift had been lowered. How odd. How peaceful?

Chapter End Notes

TW - descriptions of potential miscarriage

Essentially, the events of this chapter play out very similar to the actual episodes of the anime. Once they enter the bunker/trap, they escape and eventually encounter the Reaper. Nagisa gets blinded by his anger, and tries to take the assassin on. The Reaper uses the clap stunner on him, and kicks him back pretty hard. Nagisa assumes he's physically okay due to the armour capabilities of their PE Clothes, but quickly begins to feel nauseous and some weird cramping. He holds it together until the Reaper is incapacitated by Karasuma. Whilst everyone celebrates, Nagisa realises that he's bleeding pretty heavily from down there, and faintly realises he hasn't felt any movement either. He passes out, and that's where the chapter ends.

Now that's out of the way, thank you for reading! This chapter originally didn't end on this cliffhanger, but it was getting seriously long, so you'll have to wait just a day or three! *dodges knives* I won't ask if you enjoyed this one, but hey, you can't say I'm not ramping up the drama. As always, all comments and feedback give me life and are much appreciated! I may even update again tomorrow :D
Hospital Time

Chapter Summary

Karma waits desperately for news as Nagisa's examined at the hospital

Chapter Notes

TRIGGER WARNING APPLIES FOR THIS CHAPTER ONCE AGAIN. IT'S NOT VERY EXPLICIT, BUT I WILL BE SUMMARISING WHAT HAPPENS IN THE END NOTES. READ AT YOUR OWN RISK.

Now that's out of the way, I can't believe we're on chapter 20!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Throughout his life, Karma had spent a lot of time in hospital emergency rooms. Whether it had been a result of childhood misplaced curiosity (the worst instance of which had left him with a pretty cool scar on his left elbow), taking a one punch too many, or putting someone there himself, Karma was more than familiar with the process. How many times had he sat in this very chair, tapping his foot incessantly as he waited for news?

None of it compared.

There was only so much threat that came with a broken arm or nose. Those could heal. Karma had never seen so much blood before, not in that way, not just pooling out of somebody like that. What a reality, in which Karma could be bothered by the sight of blood. The way Nagisa had slipped back into it, like he was being swallowed whole…

Back when he and Nagisa had first met, it was so different. Nagisa was just another boy in his class, though admittedly it took a few days for him to realise the ‘boy’ part. Truth be told, he’d been mostly irrelevant, and would have escaped gaining any of Karma’s attention, if not for the way he noticed him staring sometimes. So Karma had given him the benefit of the doubt, and then they were friends.

Nagisa had been easy, and safe. Karma had never had a friend like him before, one he didn’t need to keep an arm’s length away at all time. It was… refreshing. But the deeper their bond became, the more Karma realised Nagisa wasn’t just the innocent boy he appeared as. There was something else, something terrifying, that made him see Nagisa as more of an opponent. The more he dwelled on it, the more he began to fantasise, of beating him until his bones snapped under his fists, drawing his blood and leaving him to choke on it. It was no question that Karma had to push him away back then, for his own good.

Karma’s stomach lurched. He thought he knew fear, had bonded with it, even. In his times of loneliness, fear was the only thing he could count on, a constant. He’d tamed it, mastered it, and inflicted it on others. But it had never felt like this. Karma had never been stranded before, not quite in this way. Nothing he could do would help. All he had was this chair to sit in, and waiting.
When the receptionist entered the room again, empty due to the late hour and the small size of the town, Karma practically flew out of it, ready to demand information.

She sighed, holding her clipboard in front of her midsection. “Akabane san, was it?”

Karma swallowed. “Is there… anything?”

A sympathetic smile crossed her expression. “The doctors are doing all they can, that’s all I can say.”

It wasn’t that he didn’t believe her, but Karma wanted nothing more than to punch to woman, hard. Of course he couldn’t risk that, he’d only end up getting thrown out by security. He shuddered, going back over to the designated seating. Deep down, he was only angry at himself, and he knew it. He’d take back his dumb promise to not act so overprotective in a heartbeat, if he could. If Nagisa wasn’t so damn desperate to play the hero, all the time…

“Akabane san?” A male voice, this time, caught his attention.

Karma tried to look just a little bit less hopeless, and clenched his fists in preparation for whatever news was about to come.

The man, a doctor, he presumed, chewed his lip. “We think Shiota san is experiencing a placental abruption.”

“What do you mean, you think?” Karma bit out.

He seemed unchallenged. “There’s no way of officially diagnosing it yet. Given that we know he experienced some sort of abdominal trauma, and the blood loss, we can only assume. Basically, it just means the placenta has detached slightly from the womb. Right now, we’re hoping we’ll be able to judge the extent of the damage via ultrasound. If it’s only minor separation, he’ll be just fine.”

None of that sounded good. “And what if it’s not minor?”

“There,” the man tugged on his collar, “we may have to perform an emergency c-section. But that’s a whole other bridge to cross if we come to it,” he said quickly. “Shiota san is in a much more stable condition now, anyway.”

There was nothing else Karma could think of to say or ask. Instead, he just nodded, slumping back down in the chair once more. At least Nagisa wasn’t knocking on death’s door, or anything. There was no relief, though. It was still so early… Truth be told, Karma wasn’t sure how early babies could survive, like that. Everything in his core shook from the uncertainty.

The scan photo was only a month old, and their baby still seemed so tiny despite all its incessant kicking, unless it had grown significantly since. Karma knew, really, he had to trust the medical professionals in this, but all of that was so much more easily said than done. Not like he had a choice. The thought of ‘what if’ was too paralysing for his brain, he had to force it out. For a moment he closed his eyes, though there was no chance of rest, as if that would somehow make the time pass quicker.

It was the middle of the night, so once Nagisa had been safely ‘delivered’ to the hospital, everyone else had left after a few minutes. Karma couldn’t blame them for it really, it’s not like their presence would have done much. They had parents to get back to, and so and so. Karma’s parents were somewhere in Punjab, last time he checked, so that wasn’t much of an issue.
“Akabane Karma.” A feminine, yet stern voice said.

Karma peeled his eyes open, to set them upon Shiota Hiromi. He supposed it made sense that she’d found out about all of this somehow, probably through some legal obligation of the hospital. The last time he’d seen the woman, they were in the same exact position. Even though it had only been a few months since they last waited for updates on Nagisa’s wellbeing, it felt like a lifetime ago.

He’d thought he was scared, back then. Admittedly, he’d freaked out at the revelation. The idea of Nagisa being pregnant was so abstract it seemed like one gigantic dream. Deep down, he’d known. Technically, he wasn’t sure. He knew that they’d done something he couldn’t really remember at that party, but had been secretly hoping it went no further than an awkward make out session. Other than that, he supposed Nagisa could have been doing all kinds of things in his free time, but that didn’t really sound like him. The next time Karma had seen Nagisa in the flesh, though, he was certain. A spike raced through him, and Karma had never felt so inherently protective over something before in his life.

Once the initial… shock had faded somewhat, Karma couldn’t help but think that maybe their baby would be cute or something. As long as they didn’t accidentally mess it up too much, at least. If they were lucky, he or she would turn out more like Nagisa. It wasn’t like Karma hated his own looks or personality or anything, but the truth was unavoidable. Though Nagisa made some stupid choices from time to time, Karma couldn’t help but think of him as one of the best people he knew. If any child of his had even the smallest part of Nagisa’s heart in them, they’d be set for life.

Karma regarded Nagisa’s mother, finally. He didn’t say anything, no words really came to him. Instead, he just gestured for her to take his seat beside him. Her presence didn’t make him feel less alone, even though she did sit down, a seat away from him. Before the atmosphere got too awkward, Karma reached into his pocket.

“Strawberry kit kat?”

She glared at him, clutching her purse. “Do you know how much sugar’s in that?”

“Suit yourself,” he shrugged, and peeled back the wrapper. “They’re lucky, y’know.”

“Hmm.”

The sweet flavour danced across his tongue, but it didn’t make him feel any better. “The vending machine is about the most entertainment they have.”

“That’s what you’re thinking about?”

Now that Karma wasn’t alone to drown in his own thoughts, everything felt just that little bit clearer, less on the edge of insanity. He slumped back in the chair, exhaustion finally starting to set in, just a little. It had been a very long day, after all.

“Hey now,” he tried to pull off casual, “I’ve been here, like, three hours longer than you.”

Her lips pressed tightly together.

Just like that, they were back to the silence. People came and went, with medical situations of differing urgencies. Apart from that occasional flurry of excitement, there was only the constant ticking of the clock, counting down each and every second. Even with the steady ticking, its meaning, and time itself seemed to fade way into nothingness.

Just as Karma fell to the edge of consciousness, the same doctor from before entered the waiting
“Are you both here for Shiota Nagisa?”

Nagisa’s mother stood up. “Yes, I’m his mother.”

Karma felt a fresh shot of the bone chilling fear race through him.

The doctor kept his face neutral, though he bowed. “His and the baby’s conditions are stable. Fortunately, we managed to assess the damage wasn’t threatening, and the bleeding stopped on its own. We’ll have to keep him in for observation for a few days, but if all goes well he should be able to return home for the remainder of his pregnancy. That being said, he shouldn’t do anything strenuous from now on that may result in stress to his body.”

He’d never felt such a strong spill of relief flow through his entire body. The very force of it nearly knocked him backwards. Everything was going to be… okay. It was extremely dizzying, when every inch of him had been preparing for the worst. He almost wanted to laugh.

“There’s no danger to his life?” Shiota Hiromi asked.

The doctor shook his head. “His condition is improving rapidly. He’ll be just fine.”

“Can I see him?” The request spilled out of Karma’s lips, but he was glad he’d said it. Having seen Nagisa so limply on the floor, he needed to see him healthy to truly believe it.

“I…” The doctor eyed him up and down. “Alright. Right this way.”

Karma immediately began to pace, before noticing the lack of secondary steps. He turned back, looking at Nagisa’s mother. “Aren’t you coming?”

She stiffened, and turned around to face the exit to the hospital. “I’ll be back to take him home tomorrow.”

Immediately, he knew. The woman was lying. Once he’d caught onto it, his brain exploded. Nagisa hadn’t mentioned anything about his mother at all, since everything had happened. Sure, he wasn’t really the type to complain about parents in many conversations, but it was odd, for it to not come up at all. And then there had been Nagisa’s apparent lack of clothes for a while there, and lunch food. Not to mention how desperate he seemed for Karma to not walk him home, and how he’d gone into a strange building located in the opposite direction.

Before his mind could spiral any further, a door was slid open and closed behind him, leaving him to catch sight of Nagisa’s form. He was hooked up to an IV drip, and looked so pale Karma thought he could fade away into translucency at any second. Despite the knowledge he was going to be okay, Karma’s heart jumped up into his throat.

“K-karma?” Nagisa barely said, like moving his lips was genuine effort.

Instantly, Karma went down beside him, dropping to his knees next to the bed so their faces were more level. “Hey, Nagisa kun.”

Nagisa blinked slowly. “You stayed?”

“Yeah,” Karma found himself reaching for where Nagisa’s limp hand, a tube attached to the back of it, “I couldn’t miss all the fun.”
A tiny huff motion came from Nagisa, which Karma could only hope was an attempt of laughter. “T-they said that Akuma’s going to be okay.”

Huh? “Demon? What demon? Did you hit your head or something, too?”

“Oh,” Nagisa said, voice cracking. “I meant, uhm, I’ve kind of been calling the baby that a lot. I guess it... stuck, at some point.”

“Akuma, huh?” Karma’s eyes travelled to Nagisa’s stomach. “So mean, before they’re even born! Just that much of a troublemaker already.”

“Trust me,” Nagisa said, “it suits them.”

It was a little cute, maybe. Though Karma hoped Nagisa wasn’t set on actually calling the baby that once it arrived. A name like Akuma was pretty badass, but he didn’t want their child to be set up for bullying before they could even talk. He could live with it, for now at least.

“Nagisa kun…” Karma started, whilst his guard was still down. “Did your mum really throw you out from home?”

All but confirming his suspicion, Nagisa turned his head to the other side. “I’m sorry I didn’t tell anyone. I... I didn’t want you to worry.”

He was stupid. Undeniably, unbelievably stupid. But as much as Karma wanted to knock some sense into him, it wasn’t the time. He didn’t have the energy left within him. As long as Nagisa was breathing, the rest could wait. Huh, something seemed to have changed within him recently, at least when it came to Nagisa. It was like he couldn’t even lay a finger on him.

“Try and get some rest,” Karma suggested, deciding not to deepen it.

“Okay.” His voice sounded so unbelievably fragile. “Uhm, Karma kun… No, don’t worry.”

Well, Karma couldn’t be overly generous to let that slide too. “What is it?”

Nagisa turned his head back to face him again. “W-will you stay with me?” He asked weakly. “I’m sorry, it’s just your scent-“

He was most certainly still out of it, to make that request, but Karma was so exhausted he couldn’t deny him. The idea of letting Nagisa out of his sight again struck him wrong. Deciding to just let his instincts have what they wanted, he shrugged his jacket and shoes away, so that it was slightly more comfortable.

“What are you doing?” Nagisa questioned.

Karma managed to find his smile. “What, you were going to make me sleep on the floor?”

“I-I guess not.”

Throwing caution to the wind, Karma stretched out briefly before climbing onto the hospital bed, which didn’t have that much room to begin with, and folding himself around the curve of Nagisa’s back. It took a little bit of adjusting, but they fit together comfortably. Unable to ignore his protective urges, he rested his chin on Nagisa’s shoulder, and wound his arms around his body, practically covering him like a blanket with his own mass. As best he could, Karma attempted to release his most calming pheromones, which only ended up relaxing him too.
“Please stop putting yourself in danger from now on,” Karma let out lowly.

“I promise.”

Summary:

Karma waits for news, after the rest of the class had made sure Nagisa got to the hospital safe. A doctor eventually takes pity and tells him that the placenta might have come a bit loose from the abdominal trauma, which would have caused the bleeding. After a while Karma is joined by Hiromi Shiota, who he assumes was contacted by the hospital. The two wait in mostly silence until they're told that the damage wasn't too bad, and that Nagisa would be completely fine so long as he's careful for the rest of the pregnancy. Karma figures out on his own that Nagisa must have been thrown out from home, as his mother leaves once she knows he's okay. Karma is allowed to see him, and Nagisa weakly confirms it, and asks if Karma will stay with him. Karma agrees, and they fall asleep holding each other on the hospital bed.

See, you didn't have to wait too long! And no need to mad at me, until next chapter... :D Once again, your comments and feedback really give me life and I've hugely appreciated the high amount I've been receiving lately!
Future Time

Chapter Summary

After his career counselling meeting, Nagisa is forced to think very seriously about his future

Chapter Notes

Incoming angst warning :')

By the time Nagisa was finally discharged from hospital, he was more than glad for it. Though he understood that the whole rest and observation ordeal was important, that didn’t mean he wasn’t bored of having basically nothing to do all day. He’d forced Karma to go off to school the first morning, and there was only an hour of allocated visitation time after class was over. Still, that hour he’d spent with Kayano and Sugino was like a tiny piece of treasure, chatting and laughing about some of the day he’d missed.

When he actually stepped into the classroom again, it was almost as if none of the ordeal had actually happened. That was what it was like to be part of the assassination classroom. Always moving forward, and shrugging off anything that attempted to hold them back. Another day was that, another day.

Moving forwards, it seemed, was actually the issue. Nagisa blinked, staring at the piece of paper that had been handed out to everyone. Written on the blackboard: Career Counselling Day! Well, it wasn’t as if Nagisa’s paper was entirely blank. He’d filled in his name, at the very least. To be honest, with the magnitude of everything Nagisa hadn’t been able to think too far forward.

“Is that octopus seriously doing career counselling?” Bitch Sensei walked in casually. Instead of her usual, more revealing attire, she’d completely covered up, now wearing a fluffy white jumper that looked like it was designed for comfort than sexual appeal.

“No,” Okajima said, covering up his nosebleed, “hiding it has actually made you more sexy.”

“In a way you’ve grown,” Mimura said.

In the distraction, Nagisa only just noticed his own paper being shifted around on his desk. He looked down, to see that it had been filled in already for him. Fortunately (or unfortunately),
Nagisa recognised the handwriting from the many other times she’d messed with him. He blinked, reading it over.

**Preferred high school: All Girls’ School**

**First career choice: Stay at home mother/Karma’s housewife**

**Second career choice: Maid**

“Hey, Nakamura san!” Nagisa complained, looking to the desk at his right. “You wrote this! Why would you warp a person’s career path like that?!”

“Men’s work doesn’t suit you.” Nakamura shrugged.

“Yo, Nagisa kun!” Karma approached. “Want to take a graduation trip? I hear Thailand have some great omega resorts-“

Nagisa’s face heated up. “I don’t think that’s what those are for!”

“Huh? What’s this?” Before Nagisa could stop him, Karma had snatched the paper away from him. “I’m flattered, Nagisa kun, but we have to be married for that.” His eyes glinted. “Maybe we should go to Las Vegas instead and have a shotgun wedding!”

Nakamura leant forward in her chair, laughing. “As long as I get to be Nagisa kun’s bridesmaid.”

“Who’s getting married?” Kayano turned her attention to the conversation.

“Nobody!” Nagisa said loudly. “And we can’t go on a graduation trip, anyway.”

Karma didn’t appear fazed. “Such a spoilsport.”

He sighed. “Akuma’s going to be here before that.”

“Oh,” Karma said, crouching down, “that’s very true. Hey, Akuma chan, did you know you’re already ruining all my fun? You better make up for it sometime.” The door slid open as one of their classmates re-entered. “That’s my cue.”

Nagisa sighed as he watched Karma go. Of course he’d only been joking. There was no way he actually wanted them to be married. The thought still embarrassed him, though. Quickly wanting to get that out of his head, he grabbed an eraser, rubbing Nakamura’s teasing off the page entirely. He still didn’t know what else to write, though.

Kayano coughed. “A-are you really calling the baby that?”

He flushed. “It just sounded better than saying ‘the baby’ all the time. Probably not when they’re actually here.”

“*Akuma* chan?” She smiled, and looked down at her own desk.

“It’s because they kick me a lot,” Nagisa admitted. “It used to be really annoying, but I don’t mind so much now.”

Kayano looked back over at him. “Does it hurt?”

Thinking about it, Nagisa wasn’t really sure *how* to describe it. “Not really. At first it felt like little flutters, but now it’s definitely just-“ as if they knew they were being spoken about, Akuma gave
him a pretty good whack just below his ribs “–kind of uncomfortable,” he winced.

It really was true that he didn’t mind so much anymore. After the blood, and not feeling any kind of movement, Nagisa welcomed it, almost hated when Akuma was being quiet. At least if they were kicking him he knew they were okay. Maybe that would change in time, but at least for now it was an internal comfort. His eyes turned back to the career sheet in front of him, which was much less comforting.

“Still stuck?” Karma asked, once he was done with his meeting.

Nagisa swallowed, knowing he only had a few more minutes to either make something up, or dig deep down into that dark something that bubbled under the surface of his skin. He wasn’t sure if he was ready to write that down on paper, though. Maybe nothing was better.

“Oh, Irina Sensei’s tag is still attached.” Kayano looked towards the front of the classroom, where their teacher was retelling some sort of story to Yada and Kurahashi.

Karma shrugged. “She’s not used to buying off the rack.”

“Should we tell her?” Kayano asked, every showing

Nagisa screwed up his paper. There was no time like the present to dig into that part of himself, he supposed.

“I’ll get it.” He stood up from his desk, and concentrated on the situation fully. In this case, his own hand was his blade. Nagisa kept his footsteps steady, and took a deep yet silent breath. Remembering what the Reaper had told him, he attempted to focus on Bitch Sensei’s wavelength. If manipulating it at its peak would make her collapse, Nagisa wanted to achieve the opposite. He approached with care, and waited for the moment her consciousness was at its lowest, and lined his own up.

He ripped the tag from her back, and she didn’t even flinch. It was too easy. Bitch Sensei was a professional assassin. Nagisa knew, with absolute certainty, that he could have killed her if he wanted to. Had they been in a regular crowd, and had he been carrying an actual blade, he could have stabbed her right in the neck, and slipped his weapon away again before anybody noticed.

“Last but not least!” Korosensei turned, as Nagisa entered the staff room. “So what’s your chosen career, Nagisa kun?”

“Sensei,” Nagisa begun, “I… I think I have a talent for killing people.”

It felt different, to really say it. Different from when Karasuma had volunteered him as the strongest student to fight Takaoka. Different from all the times he’d put himself forward. Saying it, admitting his talent, sent shivers down Nagisa’s spine. Korosensei said nothing, so Nagisa decided it was better to continue.

“A-At any rate, I think I could get to where I do what the Reaper does. For someone with no real strengths, I couldn’t hope for a better talent for my future. Korosensei… should I… should I become an assassin? Please… tell me what path I should follow.”

Korosensei regarded him for a moment, without any change to his face. “Have you truly considered this path, Nagisa kun?”

“I don’t think there’s anything else,” Nagisa finally said it. He’d never said it aloud before, never even truly thought about it. “In everything but assassination, I’m average or less. B-besides, it’s not
like there’s a lot of decent careers out there that don’t require a high school education.”

“Nagisa kun-

He shuddered where he stood as his eyes begun to sting. “Somebody has to look after the baby. I-I think I could. It’s not like I know a lot, but I’d learn. And if I became an assassin, I wouldn’t be working regular hours, just every now and then, to get enough money. It’s my only choice.”

“Despite everything,” Korosensei begun, “I consider you a sensible student. But a career in assassination isn’t as basic as just showing up and lodging a knife in someone’s gut. It takes time, finesse, and a lot of sacrifice. Most who accept that lifestyle accept the risks that come with it. Risks to your own life, and those close to you… Generally, it’s a life without attachment, without family.”

Nagisa didn’t know what to say to that.

“Nagisa kun,” Korosensei continued, “there can be doubt that you have a gift for assassination. Whether facing a monster, a violent teacher, or a genius assassin, you have the courage to attack without fear. For a master killer, that’s an indispensable skill. But, Nagisa kun… this courage of yours is fraught with desperation. You’re taking your own safety and dignity too lightly: ‘it hardly matters what happens to someone like me’. The most important thing is that this is your choice, and if it’s your choice to keep and raise your child, your life is not just your own anymore. But even as your teacher, it would be wrong of me to allow you to blindly throw your potential away.”

“Korosensei,” Nagisa got out, unexpectedly through light tears, “I’m… I’m really scared.”

Now that it was out there, it was as if reality finally came crashing down on him. Smiling at scan photos and rubbing his growing stomach whenever he felt movement… it was all trivial. In only just over three months, there would actually be a real, living, breathing child to take care of.

Logically, he knew. Nagisa knew he was still going to be in middle school, with nowhere to live (he didn’t think Asano would take kindly to a crying baby), and no money. He didn’t even know what to do with a baby. But after all that had happened, the idea of losing them again made him feel just as sick.

“Of course,” Korosensei said, “many people go down the path of assassination out of fear, because they feel like they have no other choice when it comes to survival. But there is always a choice, Nagisa kun, and I think you should consider yours. To what end should you use your talents? And for whom? Re-examine these questions, and all of the options available to you. Then we’ll talk again. And if you still want to be an assassin, and everything else, I’ll support you with everything I have.”

Nagisa returned to the classroom with a heavy heart. He knew what he had to do, though. Even as the lessons returned to normal after career counselling was done for the day, Nagisa felt almost impatient. It was as if now he’d forced this thing part the way off his chest, he wanted to rip it out completely.

When school was actually over, the ‘enthusiasm’ faded somewhat. Nagisa ended up procrastinating by doing his homework for the day (even the weirder, more time consuming tasks that didn’t need to be handed in for another week or so), and some extra studying after that until exhaustion became too much.

Finally, lying on his side in bed (his back was too uncomfortable), Nagisa built up his nerve and googled adoption agencies. It wasn’t like he hadn’t thought of it before, at first he’d mentally committed to this, but with everything else going on the idea of what would actually happen to the
baby faded into the background. He swallowed, scrolling through several articles. Most of them seemed geared towards those looking to adopt, rather than actually giving the child away. He hadn’t considered how overwhelming it would be.

Nagisa couldn’t do this alone. With his hands shaking slightly, he opened up LINE.

He almost wanted to bury himself completely under the covers and draw the conversation to a close. But then his phone made its notification sound, and Nagisa knew he couldn’t. He swallowed, reading over Karma’s reply as he typed himself.
Maybe it would be okay. Karma always had some sort of plan, or could at least come up with one on the spot when the situation demanded it. That is, if he cared enough. A part of Nagisa was terrified that he’d get bored of a baby. It didn’t seem likely, right then with all his enthusiasm, but Karma had definitely gotten bored of him once before, back when they were in their first year. He definitely couldn’t do it alone.

On the train ride the next day, Nagisa tried to mentally prepare what he was going to say. Every way he could think of even beginning his sentences sounded forced and almost foreign to his tongue. By the time he was knocking on Karma’s door, Nagisa was still clueless, and it most certainly showed on him.

“What’s wrong with you?” Karma asked, the moment he opened the door.

He didn’t realise it was that obvious. “Nothing’s wrong.”

“You look like an overfed armadillo.”

“A what?”

Karma stepped aside. “Did you want to come in?”
“Mm.” Nagisa closed the door behind him, quickly slipping off his shoes. He considered that maybe deciding to do this here hadn’t been the best idea, after all. At least if they were in public, he’d have an easier escape route.

“So,” Karma said, sitting down on the sofa, “what do you want to talk about?”

Regarding him for a moment, Nagisa had to just spit it out. “Your opinion on adoption agencies.”

“Wha?”

Nagisa clenched his fist, as if it would give him support. “I thought that you’d want some say in this matter, so I haven’t even really looked yet.”

“You want to dump our child in some orphanage!?”

He jerked slightly. “N-not an orphanage.”

It was already too late. Nagisa could sense it, Karma’s agitation thick through the air. Even without delving into his unique talents, he was emitting the beginnings of unmistakable angry alpha scent. For other alphas, it would be either a signal to back down or to goad further, but for Nagisa it just seemed… sour.

Karma glared at him. “You know that’s where they’ll end up, right?”

“Not necessarily!” Nagisa attempted to defend. “I-it doesn’t have to be through the public system, I don’t think.”

“Even so!” Karma stood up. “I can’t believe you want to just give our child up to some random people you’ve never even met before.”

“I don’t want to!”

“Fine,” he said, his tone cool as steel. “You asked for my opinion. I’m against it. Veto, or whatever.”

For some reason, that set a fire straight through Nagisa’s blood. This wasn’t the path he even wanted, but Karma had some nerve choosing against it for him. It wasn’t just Nagisa’s decision, but he wasn’t okay to just accept Karma’s word as final. After a few moments of not saying anything, Nagisa realised he was angry.

“You’re not the one who has to live with it!” He burst out, finally spreading his emotions out.

Karma crossed his arms. “If that’s how you feel.”

This had been a mistake. Everything had, but especially assuming that Karma would have anything helpful to add to this situation. “You’re acting like a child.”

His eyes widened, as if he hadn’t expected Nagisa to call him out. At this point, Nagisa couldn’t control himself, couldn’t be a meek and silent bystander. He was sick of letting Karma speak for him. With nothing else to add to this, Nagisa decided to just leave, before he said anything worse whilst he was in no mood to stop himself. At least, he tried to leave, before Karma blocked his path with his own body.

“You’re the child, storming out like that,” Karma said.

Nagisa attempted to step past him. “You already made your stance clear.”
“Because it’s wrong to just have a child and abandon it the minute you change your mind!” Though he didn’t raise his voice, it was sharp and full of menace. “What if they ended up in poverty or getting abused or something?”

“And how are we going to look after it any better?” Nagisa said, really digging into the fear that was reality. “I don’t have any money to look after a baby, or anywhere to even live really right now.”

“I have here, and a large allowance-“

He felt as if he really could burn where he stood. “Until when? *Somebody* has to take care of them, and neither of us can get a job without a high school diploma.” Digging up one of the darkest thoughts, those he’d kept buried since the day he even found out his secondary gender, Nagisa shuddered. What Nakamura had said the day before seemed to jab him like a knife. He wasn’t going to live a life where all he amounted to was being Karma’s housewife. “And just because I’m an omega doesn’t mean it should be me.”

Karma didn’t budge. “So that’s what this is about.”

“This is about trying to come up with some kind of rational plan to deal with this.”

There was that look in Karma’s eye that Nagisa recognised, the one he got whenever he was about to punch someone. “You’re so desperate to get rid of our baby. Always throwing yourself into stupid, life threatening situations and for what? To play the hero? It’s almost as if you were *trying*.”

It felt as if Nagisa’s lungs had seized up and dropped into the floor. He couldn’t believe that after everything, Karma would really say that kind of a thing. Nagisa’s internal organs twisted up, until he remembered one detail. This was Karma he was dealing with, Karma whose signature fighting style was finding the worst and most insulting thing to specifically hurt his opponent.

“You really think that?!” Nagisa asked, though it was through tears he couldn’t have stopped.

Karma’s chin tilted up. “If the shoe fits.”

He almost didn’t believe him. Sure, he was more than aware that Karma wasn’t the most balanced person, but this went beyond that. How badly must Karma think of him, to assume that Nagisa was purposely trying to hurt their baby. The air surrounding him was toxic, and Nagisa had to leave before he went even crazier.

“Get out of my way,” he said, and surprisingly, Karma let him go.

Nagisa didn’t even bother to stop for his shoes. Although they’d been easy enough to kick off, putting them back on again would have required him to bend down – which was quite the process given the size of his stomach currently. He decided he would rather just leave as soon as possible, though slightly regretted that once he was outside and walking on the uncomfortable ground.

He tried to disguise it as much as possible, but his pathetic sobbing sounds still drew people’s eyes to him. Of course people would glare at the pregnant, crying, shoeless, middle schooler with scorn, though. His stomach was so dome shaped it wasn’t as if he could pass for just ‘fat’ anymore. Still, Nagisa tried to rush past, to hold it mostly together.

It wasn’t one of the busiest times for the train, so Nagisa managed to find himself a seat at the very least. His eyes stung with the tears, but mostly at that point he was just dry heaving, praying nobody would pay him too much notice. It didn’t help that his scent blocker was probably wearing
off (he hadn’t used that much), broadcasting his mood to everyone in the vicinity.

Opposite him, a woman who he’d place in her late twenties bounced a toddler gently on her knee. The kid didn’t seemed fussed, eagerly trying to look over her shoulder at the buildings rushing by. With her other hand, she rocked a pram back and forth. The woman didn’t seem too bothered at the demand for her attention, sighing softly to herself. A man of around the same age walked up the train, and said something softly to her. It probably wasn’t anything out of the ordinary, given the public location, but she still beamed up at him anyway, their hands connecting an appropriate amount on the pram handle. It seemed so peaceful.

Nagisa’s hand flitted down to his own stomach, and he begun to sob fully. He was more than aware he was creating an uncomfortable scene, but he couldn’t stop. The second the train pulled into the station, and the doors slid open, Nagisa practically ran off it. All the way back to Asano’s, he tried to hold it in just a little until he finally arrived, and closed the bedroom door behind him before collapsing onto the bed and letting everything out.

He lost all sense of time like that. All he knew was that the pillow was wet after a while, and he felt dizzy and disoriented. Though it had been a glancing thought a couple of times, Nagisa finally experienced the full, miserable reality that his life was basically over now and there was nothing he could do about it.

“Nagisa kun.” A sharp and loud pounding came at the door.

Nagisa ignored it, burying his head underneath the pillow.

He heard a sigh. “You’ve been crying for hours now. Can you at least keep it down?”

His stomach twisted, but he still didn’t reply, wanting to fall back into his own silence.

“You’re filling the place with distressed omega stench.” He paused. “You better be dressed.”

Nagisa didn’t really move when Asano opened the door. He didn’t have the energy to care that much about being seen in such a vulnerable state. Asano wasn’t putting out much of a threatening scent, anyway. In fact he barely even carried one anyway. Not really knowing what possessed him, Nagisa flashed up out of his lying position, and latched onto Asano like he was a buoyancy aid. He didn’t attempt to hug Nagisa back, but he didn’t force him off, either. They just… stayed like that, until Nagisa felt just a tiny bit more grounded.

“I—I’m sorry,” he finally said, pulling back.

It was Asano’s turn to not say anything. He’d moved to a seated position beside Nagisa on the bed, and just stared at him.

“I’m sorry f-for the kiss thing too,” Nagisa got out, whilst he was on a roll with the apology.

“You’re really strange, Nagisa kun,” Asano said after a moment.

Nagisa wiped his eyes with the back of his sleeve. “I’m a mess.”

“And that wasn’t obvious before?” He responded, but not venomously. “You wouldn’t be here otherwise.”

“My mum used to tell me that my life would be completely messed up if I didn’t follow the path she set out for me,” he nearly felt sick. “I—I didn’t believe her up until now.”
Asano cleared his throat and looked sideways. “Her life can’t be that stable if her first response is to throw you out.”

“It’s because everything I am is just one disappointment after another, i-in her eyes. You don’t need to try and understand.”

“I understand,” he said, albeit quietly, almost through gritted teeth.

For the first time in a few hours, Nagisa shifted his thoughts from his own misery. Here he’d been complaining about his own life, when Asano plain and simply had much more to live up to. With a seemingly omnipotent father, Nagisa had seen for himself how far Asano had to go to live up to his expectations, how he’d isolated himself for days just to make sure he scored well on midterms. There was a kind of underlying fear within in, something Nagisa recognised. It seemed obvious to Nagisa, suddenly, that they probably had a lot in common. He focused on that, finding it a good distraction to his own life.

"M-maybe we could be friends," Nagisa suggested shyly, though the words sounded almost ridiculous coming from his lips, out of nowhere.

Asano blinked. "Friends? Why would you want to be friends with me?"

"You're not your father, just like how I'm not my mother. I-I know it sounds weird, but…" Nagisa looked at him properly. “You just refer to everyone as your minions. It sounds like such a lonely way to live, a-and I feel lonely right now.”

“What use are friends.”

Nagisa decided not to let him turn away from him. “Somebody to talk to, you know, about your day and your opinions and stuff. Someone you trust. Someone to comfort you, when you need it. And even if you don’t want any of that, somebody to just spend time with is still a friend.”

Once more, Asano was quiet for a second. “You’re not completely stupid, right? You do know that I manipulated you into humiliating your own friends?”

“It’s not the worth thing somebody’s done to me,” Nagisa admitted. “You had a reason, right?”

Something in his face softened. “Your favour or lack of it would have been an easy distraction, to pull the others down.”

“Oh,” Nagisa said, “that wouldn’t have worked.”

“Hmm?”

He decided he wasn’t going to feel bad about this. “You see, if you challenge Karma to anything, he tries extra hard at it. His worst enemy is complacency, if anything. He doesn’t care about me, anyway.”

Asano shifted forwards a little. “You really are very dense if you think that’s the truth.”

“It is,” Nagisa said, feeling his stomach twist up into a brand new knot. “I may as well just be his incubator.”

He sat closer still. “What if I proved you wrong?”

That sounded dangerous. “I-I don’t think you can.”
“Now that we’re friends,” Asano said like it was hard, “you should trust me. I have a plan.” There seemed to be a certain danger in his tone. “Akabane hurt you somehow, right?”

Nagisa almost automatically denied it, because he hadn’t laid a hand on him physically. Instead he said nothing, which seemed to be better than a lie. He still felt hurt.

“Nothing too underhanded,” he continued. “Really, if he hurt you, he probably deserves it. What do you say, friend?” He stuck out a hand.

For some reason, maybe because the darkest parts of his soul had been drawn to the surface recently, Nagisa accepted the hand and shook it.

After the long day of lessons, Nagisa came out of the classroom, the same time as his other friends. Now that he and Karma were back to avoiding and ignoring each other at all costs, it had seemed to drag on. Nagisa was also nervous, somewhat, for what would happen. He’d never been a major player in a scheme before, as much faith as he did have in it. There weren’t that many ways it could go wrong.

He knew it was already in motion, given the way his classmates stopped in their tracks as they exited the class building.

“Asano kun?” Isogai, taking on his usual role as leader. “Why are you here?”

Like they’d discussed, Asano stood still and steady, unfazed by his questioning. ‘I’m just picking Nagisa up.”

Nagisa gathered his nerve, and emerged from the small crowd that was forming. “Ready to go, Gaku-chan?” The words sounded wrong, but he was happy with his delivery, smiling as he naturally would as he took a hold of Asano’s arm to mimic close familiarity.

“Why?” Somebody asked, Nagisa lost whoever it was to the distance and the fact his heart was beating fast with nerve.

“He’s been staying with me recently,” Asano shrugged, “and Nagisa has doctor’s orders to take it easy. In walking him home, I’m just being a decent human really.” He leant into Nagisa’s body, and rested a hand on the small of his back as if to guide him.

Nagisa swallowed. “I’ll see you all tomorrow.”

His eyes remained level, straight on the target of the path back to Asano’s home as he begun to walk past the rest of his friends. Perhaps this would go entirely the wrong way, and they’d hate him for this, but honestly that was the least of Nagisa’s current worries. It felt like a necessary sacrifice.

“So?” Nagisa asked, once they were out of sight and earshot, the two of them springing apart from the intimate position they’d adopted.

Asano looked triumphant. “I was right. He looked like he wanted to murder me.”

The fire in Nagisa’s stomach burned just a little bit brighter.
I'm sorry this took me a little longer than I would have liked! I wish I had an excuse, but really it's because I ended up getting wasted and having a 24 hour hang over, which put me out two days. I'm... responsible. But hey, it's a pretty long way, so don't get too mad.

Or... do get mad, because this chapter... †) I'm so sorry, I just like it when they fight. Hey, 14/15 year olds say and do the stupidest shit, okay? *dodges the incoming attack*

I'd never tried multimedia on AO3 before, but I thought making actual screenshots would be more fun than just a few lines of dialogue! I might continue to do this for the rest of the fic, it depends on whether you guys like it or not :)

As always, I love and appreciate all comments and feedback! Until next time~
Balance Time

Chapter Summary

With the school festival rolling around, Karma and Nagisa are still raw from their argument.

Chapter Notes

I'm so sorry this took so long! A combination of illness, being away for the weekend, and surprising chapter length are all to blame! I hope you like this one :3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Walking home in the darkness, Nagisa found himself shivering. Now that it was nearing the start of winter, the loose and light clothes weren’t doing much to shield him from the temperature. The only thing he had that qualified as warm clothes was the cardigan part of his school uniform, though that didn’t really stretch around his middle at all. Anything else he currently had available was covered in Karma’s scent, and Nagisa didn’t want to walk around with that wrapped around him.

It had been worth it, though. Nagisa was just making good on his promise to continue to tutor Sakura, the girl from the nursery, if she wanted him to. Though it was mostly academic, it practically made his heart sing to discover that she’d actually managed to make herself a friend. He’d made her admit that school wasn’t so bad after all, which had taken some time. Though he’d tried to say it wasn’t necessary, her parents had given him a small amount of money for it.

He wasn’t even out at that late, it was just getting dark pretty early due to the season turning to winter. There was still this kind of sense of loneliness, though. Sakura’s neighbourhood wasn’t anywhere near the main roads, so the walk was silent. Of course, Nagisa wasn’t ever truly alone anymore, the sudden roll in his stomach a sharp reminder of that.

Now that Akuma was growing so fast, Nagisa seemed to feel everything. He came to a stop, resting part of his weight against a lamppost. Placing his hand on his abdomen, Nagisa let his eyes fall closed, the movements not slowing down in the slightest. The cool air turned his breath to mist the longer he stood like that, chill running through his bones.

“Lazy all day and then suddenly all energy at the worst moment,” Nagisa grumbled. “Just like…”

He sighed, and picked himself back up to just try and walk through it. It was constantly there, right in the back of his head, that Akuma wasn’t just his baby. Through every single unfortunate event, for better or worse, this child was half of him and half of Karma. Maybe they’d come out with hair that mimicked the shade of blood, or perfecting that roundhouse kick they’d been practising for the last few weeks inside of him. Nagisa wasn’t sure if he’d mind that or not, as long as the poor thing didn’t end up inheriting his own height.

Of course, Nagisa was never going to find that out. He wouldn’t see Akuma grow at all, so he
could only hope they’d turn out to be a good (and tall) person. It wasn’t what he wanted, but it was all he had. He tried to remember that, tried to not smile at each and every one of Akuma’s gentler movements. No matter what Nagisa did, there would always be a hole in his heart, a mourning for something he could never have.

Nagisa had to come to a stop once more, his breath short after a particularly hard round of the kicks. He’d be surprised if he didn’t start to bruise up or something, after this. At least Nagisa was almost back, though there wasn’t much comfort to be had. Worse still, it was only going to get more uncomfortable, for the next three months.

He felt a little ridiculous doing it, but Nagisa slid the palm of his hand so it was flush against the skin of his stomach. ‘Can you calm down for just a few minutes, please?’

If anything, Akuma just kicked a lot harder.

“I know I’m not…” Nagisa paused, appropriate words such as ‘daddy’ feeling ridiculous on the tip of his tongue. “I know I’m not Karma kun, but, you could try and listen to me a little too?”

Another seemingly targeted kick told him Akuma’s answer.

“Look,” Nagisa said, “I get that you miss him and all, but he said some really mean things to me! You and I, we’re better off without it.”

Finally, he could only detect the slightest of twitches coming from his stomach.

“So we’re in agreement, then.” Nagisa nodded, and straightened properly before setting off the rest of the way back. Thankfully, Akuma seemed to have mercy on him, and remained mostly still until he got in and out of the cold. As usual, he waited until he was all the way upstairs before announcing he was back.

Before he could enter the bedroom, Asano came out of his. “Welcome.”

Nagisa smiled. “It’s very close to proper winter out there now.”

“Yeah?” Asano raised an eyebrow. “Maybe it’ll snow.”

He stretched out his sore muscles whilst he still had the chance. “How did the festival preparations go?”

“Hmm, I secured Sakura Gakuin to perform for our second day.”

Nagisa jolted. “Y-you know-”

“I know a lot of people,” Asano cut him off. “Hm, speaking of the festival,” his eyes sharpened, “your café… thing. How’s that going?”

Before Nagisa had taken off to tutor Sakura for the evening, the rest of the E Class had spent the day preparing their stock for the festival. It was crazy, how much that mountain had felt like a hostile death trap at the start of term. Korosensei’s suggestion that it could give back for all their troubles had been widely well received, and after collecting everything for so long, Nagisa was almost looking forward to it.

“Good,” Nagisa replied honestly.

“You might want to keep an eye on your supplies,” he said, as if it was slipping from the tip of his
tongue. “Just in case.”

He turned away, before Nagisa could question what he meant.

For the most part, their first day wasn’t unsuccessful. Though there hadn’t been a high volume of customers so far, those that they had served had all enjoyed their meals. Nagisa really did want to beat Asano and the rest of the A Class, but the most important thing was the quality. Even though they weren’t going to have many more customers, their hopes were still up and the food had to be prepared fresh. They had to keep up the standard, after all.

Nagisa was fetching some supplies from the classroom, which for all intents and purposes was more like extra storage with the festival going on. They were only light ingredients, so nobody had any complaints about it.

“Listen, Nagisa san,” Nakamura stood at the door, the only other person in the room, “about what I said the other day… I’m sorry.”

Nagisa blinked. “The other day?”

“Mmm,” she nodded, “the career choice forms. It must be tough, to go through life thinking you’re one thing, and then to turn out to be something else.” Her eyes fell to the floor. “I thought that times were different now, but it’s still hard out there for an omega, huh? You didn’t choose that… Did my teasing hurt you?”

Honestly, Nagisa was a little surprised to be receiving such an apology. He thought about it for a moment. Although her comments had triggered something off inside him, he wasn’t truly bothered by what she had said. It was more the frightening possibility of them coming true, over anything else.

“Oh it’s nothing!” Nagisa smiled. “I can handle a little ribbing.”

“Oh, okay. I’ll try to lay off the teasing, anyway.” Nakamura nodded. “Karma kun said I should.”

Nagisa jolted. “Karma kun put you up to this?”

“Not at all,” she said, lowering her head slightly. “I wondered if you were being so quiet this week for any reason, and he brought it up. I’m the one who wanted to apologise. He said it’s not fair that you’re the only one that has to suffer because of the, uh, baby. So I started teasing him too.”

Well, wasn’t that an attitude turn around?

“How is it, by the way?” Nakamura cut his thoughts short. “Since you left hospital.”

Nagisa sighed. “Just fine.” As the words left him, he gasped at the sudden jolt in his abdomen. He was beginning to wonder whether it was possible Akuma could truly understand him, because it was getting a little creepy. “Kicking right now,” he explained.

“Woah really? Can I?” She gestured. He didn’t have a problem with it, so he nodded, and Nakamura’s hands fell to his stomach. “Weird,” she said, after a few seconds.

“Ooooooi! Nagisa chan! I came to hang out!” A sickeningly familiar voice sounded out, from outside.

Nagisa stuck his head out of the window. “Y-y-yuji kun?!”
“Yuji?” Nakamura questioned. “Oh, from the southern island – that guy who mistakenly fell for you.”

“H-how did you know I go here?!” Nagisa looked him over, his appearance screaming ‘douche rich kid’ the same way it had before.

“I looked up the island’s guest records.” Yuji replied, like it was nothing for him. “When I checked the school website, I saw your festival was underway!”

“O-oh, I see…. Ah, ah,” Nagisa noticed what could almost be a swift gust of wind, and suddenly his legs were exposed. “Wait!” He hissed. “Nakamura san?!”

Nakamura, who was now wearing his trousers, looked at him with an evil glint. “One last time!”

“The words were barely even out of your mouth!” Nagisa looked down at his own form. He was now wearing her own skirt, though his jumper had been tugged down considerably. There was no way Nakamura’s skirt was going to zip up properly.

“He’s rich, isn’t he?” She whispered to him. “We’ve got to raise our per-customer average any way we can. Take this to hide that stomach of yours,” she stripped off her own jumper, and bunched it up for him to carry, before raising her voice. “Go get em, Nagisa chan! The fate of our class rests on your hostess skills!”

Albeit lightly, she pushed him out of the window so he stood in front of Yuji with nothing to hide. Though the get up was far less embarrassing than the outfit he’d been forced into in the hotel club, he was stood like this in broad daylight. The mask of darkness from the atmosphere was totally preferable to this.

“A-ah,” Nagisa started, “over this way, then?” He gestured an area completely obscured by the foliage, which hopefully meant that less people would see him dressed like that.

“Should I carry that for you?” Yuji gestured the jumper Nakamura had given him.

“Ah no,” Nagisa said quickly. “It’s just in case I get cold!” Trying to look like it wasn’t a major effort for him was near impossible, but Nagisa managed to sit down on the grass, across from the other way too happy teen.

“Man, I’m so glad I came during the festival!” Yuji said, once he’d been discreetly served some noodles. “And to have you wait on me, too! Plus? Your suggestion to eat in private where no one else can see us? You’re getting my hopes up!”

That was the opposite of what Nagisa wanted! He blinked, unsure of how to get out of this situation. Completely unused to being approached by sleazy guys, Nagisa had no idea how was even the conventional way to act. Momentarily, something above the bushes caught his eye. A massive cue card?! Well, it was better than nothing. Nagisa cleared his throat.

“I-I want you to eat all~ my favourites.” He acted, as if he truly meant it. The words left his lips easily enough, at least. He’d practiced the acting thing recently during Asano’s plot, anyway. Perhaps Nagisa really could do this.

“Sure, sure!” Yuji agreed enthusiastically. “Say the word and I’ll get the whole menu! Oh, I quit smoking those sketchy herbs. After all, you were worried about me!”

“Oh, huh!” That was, actually kind of good. Nagisa felt something swell in him, the small amount of glowing pride that came whenever he truly helped a person out.
Kurahashi, who apparently had found their location, arrived with more food. “Here you are!”

“Ooh, this looks good too! Let me get a picture!” Yuji produced his phone, capturing the dish from multiple angles.

Before he could begin to eat it, there was a rustle in the bushes nearby. From them emerged the assassin Redeye, who they’d first met all the way back during their trip to Kyoto. Nagisa didn’t have a clue why he was there, unless he was following their class online and had seen the website or something. Under his arm, he carried a bird, and with his other arm he held a gun.

“Hey! Karasuma san! Brought you something!” Redeye announced.

Yuji gasped. “Who’s that? He has a gun! M-maybe we should call the police!”

Nagisa was going to have to think really fast.

He practically leapt atop of Yuji to stop him from calling anyone. “Whoa! N-no, that guy is, uh…” Nagisa noticed another white cue card, and just decided to read from it. “Y-yoshioka san from the local hunt club.”

“Yoshioka san?!” Yuji looked at him suspiciously. “But he’s totally a foreigner!”

Another cue card shot over the bushes, and Nagisa accepted it. “H-he’s naturalised. A big anime fan, you know?”

“Oh, really? Well, enough about Yoshioka san…” Yuji gulped. “Nagisa chan, be honest; what do you think of-“ Before he could finish his sentence, he screamed.

Nagisa turned to look over his shoulder, and noticed Lovro crouching right there, looming over Nagisa’s form like a shadow. Nagisa himself wasn’t bothered, but to anybody who wasn’t a part of their class, something like that would seem incredibly creepy, for sure.

“Lovro?” Karasuma greeted him.

Lovro nodded. “The octopus invited me.”

“I see. I’m glad you’re still alive, too. Your pupil’s been worried. Go see her.” Karasuma turned and motioned the way into the class building.

“I will.”

“W-what’s with the scary old dude?” Yuji set down his noodles. “He’s no ordinary guy…”

“M-mild Yagyu.” Nagisa read directly from his next cue. “A big name in the Asasuka theatre scene.”

“He’s a comedian?!”

“Th-that conversation?” He had decided to go down the improv route. “They were discussing a bit! His pupil quit comedy, see, and became a teacher here, and…” Before Nagisa finished, the scene before his eyes was a little unbelievable. All the assassins they’d met during their crazy third year appeared to be gathered around to eat, likely invited by Korosensei, knowing their teacher. “F-fellow comedians! From Asasuka! And the guy eating the wasabi Mont Blanc is doing a reaction schtick he learned directly from Mild Yagyu! We just seem to fall in with that kind of crowd.”

“Hey, Nagisa chan…” Yuji looked at him seriously. “You’re lying, aren’t you? My dad’s a big
name talent. Since I was little, I’ve seen the faces of tons of people who’ve cozied up to him. I can
tell when people put up a front, wear a fake smile. The girl I met at that island hotel? She wouldn’t
smile like that.”

“Wow. Good eye.” It seemed Nagisa shouldn’t pursue a career in acting or misleading others, then.

Yuji shrugged. “Nothing good about it. Just an unwanted talent I got from my skeevy
environment.”

There was no use in keeping up the charade, Nagisa supposed. Coming clean, at least about
himself, would keep the focus off the assassins. “You’re right. I was lying to you.” He sighed.
“I’ve looked like this since I was a little boy, I can’t help it. And I always hated it.”

“Wait. ‘Boy’?”

Nagisa decided to keep going. “But lately I’ve learnt that this side of me, it can be useful. So I
don’t hate it that much now. I’m sorry. I’m a guy.”

“Another lie?”

“No, really.”

“A-another one?!”

“Really.”

Yuji blinked. “I-I thought for sure you were an omega.”

Nagisa flushed. “Well, t-that part’s not a lie.”

Considering it for a moment, Yuji smiled softly. “Then we still have hope!”

“Actually…” Nagisa took a deep breath, and strained to pull himself to his feet. Once he was
stood straight, he let go of Nakamura’s jumper, so his bump was no longer obscured. “I’m also
pregnant.”

Yuji took a step back. “No way… B-but-”

“The baby was a lot smaller back when we first met,” Nagisa said, and then he thought of
something. “Examined from another angle, your faults and weaknesses can be weapons. What I’ve
learned, recently, is how to do just that. It’s how we put together this café, and it’s the connection
that brought all these people here today. It’s really exciting – and fun.”

“Hmm.” Yuji turned, as if to leave.

Suddenly, guilt rushed over Nagisa. “Oh, b-but since I tricked you, I’ll give you your money
back!”

Yuji just turned back to look at him over his shoulder. “Nah. I just… I just feel like such an idiot.
I’m out.”

Nagisa’s heart dropped out of his chest. He felt awful. Truthfully, Nagisa realised he’d been much
more worried about wearing female clothing than he had about tricking the guy into spending all
his money. It seemed to be something Nagisa had become recently. The realisation of it all
suddenly felt very… wrong. Nagisa had never considered himself a manipulative person, but he’d
been doing it a lot recently.
Two wrongs didn’t make a right. Nagisa thought he knew that, thought he was above it. He had the capacity to really hurt somebody. It was a reality that was new and strange for Nagisa. For so much of his life, he’d accepted that he was basically powerless to the situations surrounding him. Discovering his talents for assassination had turned the tables entirely. Nagisa was strong now, he could stand firmly on his own.

Once, before he’d come to 3E, Nagisa had been staring up at everyone else, yearning to share their stage. And now he was on that stage in his own right, he had this kind of power. He could tear others down from his vantage position, could cause them pain and hurt and force them beneath him. It wasn’t a power he wanted to use, Nagisa realised. Remembering what Korosensei had asked him to think about during career counselling, Nagisa suddenly understood.

If Nagisa became an assassin, tearing bodies down into nothingness, just like now the power he felt would be empty. Nagisa wasn’t built to hurt others, not if he felt this bad about upsetting someone. It just wasn’t worth it. Perhaps there was another route he could do down with his talents, if he looked hard enough for one, a route where he used it for good.

There wasn’t much he could do about Yuji, though. Nagisa just decided to go back inside, his ‘hostess’ duty over. Considering Nakamura was nowhere he could see her, that’s where he assumed she went. They really needed to swap their clothes back, as soon as possible. There was no way Nagisa was going to be wearing a skirt for the rest of the day.

“Have you seen Nakamura san?” Nagisa asked, stepping into the room which most of the class was using to cook the food.

“Not around here,” Muramatsu said, stirring the pot of noodles.

“Maybe try down by the river,” Isogai added.

Nagisa was about to thank them, at the very least, before there was a sharp clench in his stomach. Like a force overtook his body, he seized, and likely would have fallen had he not planted his hands onto a desk and doubled over. It felt as if someone was taking a hold of everything in his abdomen and squeezing it in their fist, and the pain was intense. It wasn’t stopping. His brain went a little white, more focused on that than whatever was going on around him.

“Nagisa kun? Are you okay?!” Someone said.

He attempted to nod, but his teeth clenched as he bit out a whimper.

“H-he’s not going to have the baby is he?”

“No I think there has to be water for that.”

Maehara, who was closer, rushed over. “I’ll go put some towels down!”

Nagisa managed to gather to shake his head. He had no idea how long it lasted, but when the feeling finally began to subside, he was unbelievably exhausted. It took a while for him to actually come back to himself, blinking to focus on the crowd of his classmates who were crowded around him. At some point, he’d sat down on a chair, so he was looking up at them all. Once the remnants of the pain faded, Nagisa started to freak out.

“Nagisa kun? What’s wrong?”

Despite everything, Nagisa snapped up at the voice, comfort washing over him. Karma.
“It hurt,” he got out, the alpha’s presence giving him a kind of strength. “Like…” With no good words to describe it coming to him, Nagisa mimicked the motion of squeezing his hand into a fist.

As if he was medically examining him, Karma bent down. “Does it still hurt?”

Nagisa shook his head, but leant into Karma’s space automatically.

“Probably just false contractions,” he stood back up properly, casually.

“How do you know that?” Okajima said.

Karma shrugged. “Must’ve read it somewhere. It’ll be okay, as long as there’s not another one.”

That was… comforting. He’d heard about those, briefly. Nagisa took a deep breath, trying to pull himself together. Even if something was going wrong, it wouldn’t be as quick as that, right? He was just being overly neurotic. The doctors wouldn’t have cleared him from the hospital if it wasn’t safe to do so. It was just a little bit of fear. Nagisa could cope with fear.

He steadied himself, and stood up. “I—I’m sorry for worrying everyone.”

“It’s nothing, Nagisa kun,” Isogai said.

“Can you walk?” Karma asked.

Nagisa tried it. Now he was coming out of his state of minor shock, it was clear no real damage had been done to his body. In fact, he was right back to his main discomfort being Akuma kicking up a storm inside him. Those little movements actually helped him reorient himself. He wondered if they were just excited to hear Karma’s voice again.

Though he didn’t actually say anything, there was a cold gleam in Karma’s eye. He exited the room, silent as though he’d never even been there to begin with, and Nagisa just got this feeling. Like Nagisa was compelled to follow. Without announcing his own departure, Nagisa did just that, tracing Karma’s footsteps towards the exit of the building.

“Oh, Nagisa san,” Nakamura bumped into him in the entrance. “Shame about that Yuji guy.”

Suddenly, Nagisa remembered why he’d even come into the building. “C-can we swap clothes back now?”

“Sure!” She smiled cheerfully, and before Nagisa even realised she’d done it, he was back in his normal, ill fitting trousers. It was significantly less breezy.

Though it was probably a little rude, he rushed past her. Karma was no longer in his line of sight, but luckily Nagisa had caught his general direction. He could easily turn around, but it was niggling at him. He felt such an intense need to go to him. So Nagisa walked, right past the remains of the festival and into the forest. Karma hadn’t gone far, and was casually perched on a rock in the first clearing Nagisa came to, tossing his knife between his hands.

“You know, Nagisa kun, I was impressed.” Karma said, without looking at Nagisa to acknowledge his presence. He tossed the knife, so it landed straight in the ground a metre in front of Nagisa’s feet. “Your stint with Asano? Little mouse like you, I couldn’t have expected something so dirty. I mean,” he jumped down from the rock to actually glare at Nagisa, “obviously you didn’t come up with it, but you looked like you were enjoying it. And then I thought ‘wow, he’s really gone down hill.’ Acting like Asano’s personal lapdog? Come on now. I thought you had some standards.”
Nagisa shook, although he knew Karma well enough. He was only saying this because he knew it would get under Nagisa’s skin. “Why do you care who I hang out with?”

Karma’s chin tilted up. “I don’t care. Mix up with whoever you want, just don’t act like his bitch.”

“Why?” Two could play at that game. “Would you rather I be yours?” Nagisa didn’t believe it for a second, although Asano had been sure he’d proven his point before. If Karma had any kind of romantic interest in him, then at least it would make sense. But Nagisa had it all figured out, in his head. It was as if Karma wanted to possess him, just because he could.

Surprisingly, Karma didn’t have an answer for it, so Nagisa continued, rage burning through his small body. “It’s always been your choices. Your commands. And I know some decisions I shouldn’t make on my own, but I don’t need you making them for me.”

Karma stepped forwards. “If you’d listened to me those times you wouldn’t have been hurt!”

“I didn’t have a choice!” Nagisa yelled. “The reason my mum threw me out in the first place was because I wouldn’t get an abortion!” He took a deep breath. “So. Listen to me now, Karma kun, I could never intentionally hurt our baby.”

“Abandoning them.” Karma bit out.

“Do you have a better plan?”

“People shouldn’t have kids if they’re just going to leave them.” Karma looked at the mulch beneath his feet. “Things like that can screw a kid up for good.”

Though he couldn’t be totally sure what Karma was talking about, Nagisa could make a good guess. Was that why Karma felt so passionately? Sure, Nagisa knew that Karma’s own parents weren’t around that much, but Karma usually seemed indifferent to it. Just a tiny bit, Nagisa softened. “You think I seriously want that? We don’t have any viable options.”

“I could get a job.”

“With school?”

“Isogai kun manages.”

“And what about everything else?” Nagisa felt the irritation rise again.

Fully in his personal space, Karma met Nagisa’s eyes once again. “A thirty billion yen bounty divided by twenty eight. Between the two of us, we have enough to do anything.”

That was… a good point. Nagisa hadn’t ever wanted to rely on money, but they would have a lot of it when they killed Korosensei. By all logic, that would solve most of the practical issues that came with having a child. But it wasn’t only about practical.

“We’d be stuck together for twenty years at minimum.”

Karma stiffened. “So that’s what’s so bad, huh?” He stepped around Nagisa, and began to walk away, like that was the end of their argument.

Nagisa suddenly felt unsteady, with everything that had happened in the last fifteen minutes. He wasn’t prepared for that to be it. “Karma kun! Wait.”

Karma stopped in his tracks.
Taking a deep breath, Nagisa dug into his raw feelings. “I was born into a world where all my parents did was fight. What if they weren’t fake contractions? Akuma deserves more than that.”

“Nagi-“ Karma turned back around.

“More than what either of us can possibly give them, Karma kun! I don’t want to give them away, but- We might not be the best thing. I haven’t made a decision yet, but I think this is the best one. I hope you’ll come to think so, too. At the very least, right now, we need to stop fighting.”

For a moment, Nagisa was sure Karma was about to walk away again, but instead his shoulders slumped. “Fine. If that’s what you really think, then I’ll hear you out. I’ll look at agencies and the rest of it with you. But. If an equal decision is what you want, then my opinion counts too. I’m looking you straight in the eye, aren’t I?”

Despite himself, and his brain likely being clouded, Nagisa felt a kind of stability wash over him. Karma wasn’t looking down at him, regarding Nagisa as his equal. This fight was meaningless. If Karma was prepared to listen, finally, then Nagisa would be too. The rest of it, for the sake of everything, Nagisa could let slide for now.

“Okay, Karma kun. We’ll consider it. But at the end of it, what’s the best for Akuma is what’s really important.”

“I’ll agree to that.” Karma nodded.

Nothing was fixed, but at least they’d wrapped a bandage around it. It was a start. Nagisa nodded back at him.

Chapter End Notes

*sigh* Well, it's an improvement from last time, right?

As always, I love comments, feedback, and kudos!
Finals Time

Chapter Summary

Nearing the end of their second term, it all comes down to the final exams.

Chapter Notes

The fluff is strong in this one wow

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"W-what do you mean, underweight?"

Doctor Shirogane smiled at him sympathetically. “It’s not extreme enough that I’m concerned, from a medical standpoint. But yes, your weight gain is slightly under the typical amount for this stage of pregnancy.”

Nagisa looked down at his frankly huge stomach. “But-“

“You sound like a middle aged woman,” Karma commented, from his designated chair.

His eyes narrowed. “You’re not the one who has to carry this around with you all day.”

“Alright,” Doctor Shirogane finished writing something on her small clipboard. “Would you like to return to the chair?”

Defeated, Nagisa just nodded and followed her instruction. He didn’t get how his stomach was smaller than it was supposed to be. Although there was still over two months left, he felt gigantic, and it seemed impossible that his stomach could grow any larger. Though, he supposed he’d rather that than Akuma be born too small. At least his suffering was nearly over.

As always, he flinched at the cold gel she spread over his abdomen, though he was somewhat more prepared for the sensation. It was quickly warmed up again by the pressure of the ultrasound wand, and then the sonogram appeared on her screen. He’d seen it a few times now, but Nagisa’s heart still soared. It was so clear.

Doctor Shirogane hummed, and zoomed in on a few parts. “It doesn’t look like the placenta has separated any further,” she announced finally, “though you should definitely continue to take it easy. The baby has to double its weight from here on out.” That sounded… stressful. “Aside from being a little on the small side, all the developments are perfectly fine,” she pointed to the screen, “see the head, and arms, and…” she stopped. “Do you both want to know the gender? I can see it today.”

Nagisa almost lurched up. “You can really tell?”

“I’m confident, yes.”
He looked over at Karma. “Do you want to know?”

Karma had been uncharacteristically quiet. If anything, Nagisa had half expected him to jump for joy and demand the information instantly. It was odd of him, to be so subdued about anything that involved the child. He shrugged, matching Nagisa’s stare.

“Do you?”

Frankly, Nagisa wasn’t sure. He’d never actually truly thought about it, picturing Akuma as a generic baby rather than a real, tiny human. For a second, Nagisa thought that he might say yes, if not only for excitement but also the convenience that pronouns would create. He realised, sharply, that perhaps it would be a bad idea after all. The more he could picture, the harder it would be to eventually let go.

Doctor Shirogane seemed to read his mind. “It’s perfectly normal to wait. In fact, I’d say more of my patients would rather be surprised.”

“Can we wait?”

Karma shrugged. “If Nagisa kun doesn’t want to know, then I don’t mind.”

She smiled, cutting the slight tension. “I’ll just keep it to myself for a few more weeks, then. How have you been feeling, otherwise?”

Nagisa chewed his lip. “Last week I got this sudden squeezing pain in my stomach, but it went away after a minute.”

“Mmm,” she said, “did your stomach harden at all?”

“I don’t remember,” Nagisa responded honestly.

“It certainly sounds like it could Braxton Hicks, but generally that shouldn’t be too painful.” Doctor Shirogane smiled. “It’s your body’s way of practising for the main event. You only really need to worry about them if you have four within an hour, which could be a sign of preterm labour instead. Okay! You’re free to pull your shirt back down.”

That was an ominous thought. Nagisa could only really hope Akuma wasn’t planning on going anywhere any time soon. If they were already small for their age… Nagisa didn’t want to think about it. The appointment was basically over after that, but it continued to play on his mind for the next half hour or so. Was Akuma really that small? Internally, it didn’t really feel like it.

The smack sound of Karma putting a tray of food down in front of him snapped him out of it.

“A happy meal?” When Karma had offered to buy him food, Nagisa’s morals regarding letting anybody buy him anything had disappeared. He was permanently hungry. Besides, they were at a fast food joint, so it wasn’t exactly fancy or expensive.

Karma took a bite from one of his fries. “And the rest of this.”

With slight dismay, Nagisa looked at the pile of food in front of him. “I can’t eat this.”

He shrugged. “Doctor’s orders, Nagisa kun. Here, a large meal for you, a happy meal for Akuma chan.”

So Karma was trying to fatten him up, now? Unfortunately, with the grumble of his stomach,
Nagisa’s will power didn’t hold out for much longer. The second he bit into one of the chicken nuggets, his mind went blank, and before he knew it most of the food was gone. Slightly ashamed at how crazy he must have looked, Nagisa swallowed, leaning forward to sip his drink from the straw.

“Did you look at the files I sent?”

Karma slouched back. “They’re all serial killers.”

*Of course.* “They can’t all be serial killers.”

“Sure they are,” he took a bite of his remaining food. “Nobody smiles like that naturally.”

Nagisa shifted. “You know they have to do background checks.”

“That doesn’t mean they're *good* background checks.”

“Did you even really look?”

Taking another bite, Karma nodded. “The Watanabe family’s business will crash in a few years, easy. The Abe family live right next to a radioactive plant. Aoki is just a terrible family name. I’m pretty sure I saw the Miyamotos’ oldest kid in a police report last week. And,” he paused and pulled out his phone, “that Fujiwara man is definitely a serial killer. Look at his eyes.”

Nagisa squinted, looking closer at the image the couple had submitted to the adoption agency. Sure enough, when you zoomed in, there appeared to be a certain amount of menace in the man’s expression. For a moment, Nagisa was tempted to excuse the image as just an unfortunate one, but then he noticed what looked like whips in the background. He almost dropped Karma’s phone, sliding it across the table in shame.

“You done?”

Nagisa nodded, slightly aware that Karma probably meant a little more than ‘are you done with the food’. Any conversation about adoption agencies faded out, as they left the restaurant and began the walk back to the train station. As they engaged in lighter, non-baby related conversation, Nagisa felt a tug on his heart strings. Before he could stop himself, he imagined a faceless child skipping along in front of them. Nagisa and Karma would be happily chatting to each other, though both keeping a sturdy eye on their son or daughter. Then Karma would say something funny, and Nagisa would laugh and squeeze the hand he was holding tighter, and…

Freezing up for a moment, Nagisa nearly choked. It was just his weird, hormonal, dumb, omega pregnancy brain playing up again. Perhaps it was a little mean, but Nagisa was thankful when he and Karma went their separate ways. At the very least, it saved him from further potential to embarrass himself. The longer he stood standing, the more uncomfortable he became, so he didn’t stall in returning to the Asano residence.

Though the usual kind of silence greeted him at first, upon entering, Nagisa wasn’t expecting to see Asano slumped by his bedroom door. It was hard to tell, through looking at his form, that he was looking at a fourteen year old boy rather than a withered shell of a person. Nagisa had grown accustomed to the steel and domineering nature of Asano’s gaze, but immediately, the difference was obvious. His eyes were hollow, empty, as if he’d set them upon a ghost.

Nagisa swallowed, unsure of how to approach this. “Asano kun-“

“Can you… not call me that?”
“Uhm…” Nagisa felt awkward, “are you okay, Gakushuu kun?”

The silence that followed was so awkward you could practically hear crickets chirping.

“On second thought-“

“-why change this late in the game?”

They both nodded in agreement.

“I-I can’t join you on the floor,” Nagisa said, gesturing his stomach. Even if he made it down there, standing back up again afterwards would be… a process, to say the least.

Slowly, Asano nodded, as if he was coming back to his senses. “Thanks.” Swiftly, he shifted his weight so he could kick back up onto his feet again eloquently, as if he’d never been slumped in the first place.

“Wait!” Nagisa said, experiencing a kind of whiplash with Asano seemingly back to normal. “D-don’t you want to talk about it, or something?”

Asano stepped past him. “You’ve said all you needed to. Go study, Nagisa kun.”

With finals in a week, things really were getting serious. Asano had spent every waking moment holed up in his room, just as he had during midterms, and frankly Nagisa was a little worried for him. After Sugino’s intel that the Headmaster had taken over the A Class’ lessons, he presumed it had to be something to do with his father after all.

What Nagisa hadn’t expected, however, was for Asano to be waiting for them on the border of the main campus at the end of the day. But there he was, leaning casually against the grey wall, as if he wasn’t clearly anticipating their arrival. When he caught sight of them, he stood up properly, and it suddenly felt like they were marching into battle against a great enemy.

“Huh? It’s Asano kun.” Kayano said

Maehara folded his arms. “What do you want?”

“You’re not the kind of guy who’d run recon on us,” Sugino said, before looking over at Nagisa. “Unless…”

Asano cleared his throat. “It pains me to say this… but I have a request.” Silence. “I’ll cut to the chase. That monster… I want you to kill him. Not physically, of course. Kill his educational policies.”

“His educational policies?” Yada questioned. “Like… how?”

“Easy. I want you, the E Class, to dominate the top spots in the next end of term exams. I’ll be in first, of course, but excellent grades mean nothing when coming from an excellent student. For detritus like you to show up the A Class, though… That’s how we ruin his stance on education.”

Asano said confidently, like he’d thought this completely through.

Kataoka took a step forwards. “Asano kun, I’ve heard about the chilly relationship between you two. Are you saying… you want us to deny your father’s methods and turn away from him?”

“Don’t misunderstand. ‘Be strong enough to kick even your father down’. Or so I’ve been taught… and now it’s time to put it into practice. I don’t know about anybody else, but that’s our
relationship. But that’s not the case for the other, lesser students. Right now, A Class is hell. With their hatred for the E Class their only support, he’s making them study beyond their limits! If they win like that… it’ll be the only method they trust from now on. You can only gain so much strength in hating, scorning, misleading your foes. Even opponents like you will still give them trouble. They’ll still be my flunkies in high school. But if my flunkies’ strength is lopsided, I can’t rule the ruler. Sometimes defeat can… open some eyes. So please: show my friends and father a proper defeat.”

Once Asano was done with the delivery of his speech, he bowed to them. Although recently he was never actually unpleasant to Nagisa, *bowing* to them was a whole other ball game. Nagisa could tell, though he wasn’t even trying to mask his arrogance, he was being totally serious in his intentions.

“Huh? Is this any time to be worried about someone else?” Karma crept up beside him. “You’re not taking first place, I am. I told you: next time the E Class won’t go easy on you. I’ll be number one, with the rest of the E Class right under me. I’d say tenth place would look good on you, Asano kun.”

“Ooh Karma said it! He’s taking first place.” Muramatsu commentated, noticing the way Asano glared at him.

“Just don’t let it turn out like it did last time.” Takebayashi muttered.

Terasaka moved behind Karma, and grabbed a hold of his shoulders. “At least try to do better than me, huh?” Before he’d even got the words fully out, Karma flipped their positions, kicking him repeatedly in the ribs.

“Asano,” Isogai stepped forwards, removing the focus from the fight. “We’ve been trying to do our best to win all along, and we’ll do it this time too. That’s how it’s always been for us and the A Class. We’re happy if we win, frustrated if we lose. No need for ranks beyond that. Isn’t that enough? We’ll do our best so you can all be glad you had the chance to take us on.”

“Don’t think too much,” Karma said, mimicking slitting his own throat. “Just come at us like you want to kill us. That’s what makes it fun.”

“How amusing. Then I’ll fight with my gloves off, too.”

Asano’s confidence felt much more like his true personality, than what Nagisa had experienced the other day. It was a happy thought, to say the least. They’d made an agreement, an understanding between the two of them, and Nagisa definitely had it in him to worry now. With nothing left to say apparently, Asano turned around to leave them there, his proposition like wisps in the air.

“You don’t have to go with him,” Karma said, picking up on the way Nagisa’s weight instinctually shifted.

Nagisa tried his best to look calm. “It’s okay. He’s my *friend*, Karma kun.”

Though, Nagisa couldn’t actually catch up. Asano was walking at a fast pace, and whilst Nagisa would have been able to match it regularly, his pregnancy weakened body didn’t stand a chance. Naturally, Asano must *know* this, which made it clear he didn’t want to continue the conversation. Regardless, Nagisa was able to walk fast enough to keep him in his line of sight.

For the remainder of the week, they studied like mad. Though there was no major wager, the stakes were massive. As their finals, these were the exams that really counted. Despite having
scored scarily high (for his standards) in mid-terms, Nagisa was genuinely nervous. Regular day to
day facts were a struggle to remember with the state his head was in, let alone the barrage of
knowledge he’d be needing to get anywhere near the top fifty. Really, the week blew fast quickly,
and the next thing Nagisa knew, he was on his way to his English exam.

As they walked down the hallway, it was clear that Asano hadn’t been kidding about the state the
A Class were in. Like they could sense their presence, they rushed to the door window, chanting
‘kill the E Class’ like mindless zombies.

“Hell of a look in their eyes.” Yoshida said, as they tried their best to ignore it.

Nakamura shrugged, apparently unaffected. “The A Class is probably psyching themselves up.
Can you beat them, Karma?”

“Who knows?” Karma tilted his head, but Nagisa sensed he wasn’t being serious about his
uncertainty. “If any of them really do plan to kill me, that might slow me down.”

It was clear, once they were settled in their seats and the exam had actually begun, that these
exams were on a completely different level to any of the others. Within the first few minutes,
Nagisa found him tripping up on the complicated English vocabulary, despite it being his best
subject. To make matters worse, a sickening tightening begun to form in his stomach midway
through the listening exam.

It was the worst possible timing. Nagisa forced himself to close his eyes and bite hard on his lip to
prevent himself from letting out any sounds of pain. Breathing through his nose slowly, the
sensation wasn’t the worst he’d ever experienced, even if it was causing him to sweat and lose
focus. Thankfully he was far more aware than he had been the first day of the festival, and he
noticed his muscles loosen after a minute or so. Proud of himself for getting through it, Nagisa
guessed the answer.

After English, the exams only got harder and harder. There was absolutely no way he could aim
for full marks on any of them, so he opted to write as fast as he could, and put wild answers down
rather than leaving any blank spaces. Partial credit, after all, was better than no credit at all. It came
to its height in maths. There was no way anybody human could actually answer all of these
questions. The last question alone… Nagisa blindly wrote a few formulas out that could potentially
be relate to it, but there was no way anybody would get it. Anybody except… maybe Asano and
Karma.

Finally, he slumped back in the chair, as comfortably as he physically could. It was over. The mood
around the room was pure exhaustion. However, there wasn’t an air of defeat. Papers quite literally
out of their hands, it would only be a waiting game, to see if they’d overcome the A Class once and
for all.

“That last question, huh?” Maehara joked, a row ahead. “That was insane.”

Karma had already stood up, making his way to the front. “What are you talking about? It was
practically elementary school maths.”

Maehara’s face fell into a contortion, though it didn’t mean much coming from Karma, who by all
standards was insane when it came to intelligence. Nagisa was sure it wasn’t false confidence, that
Karma genuinely did mean he’d found it easy. There was no way of knowing, yet.

The wait for their results was torture. It felt like the entire school was on edge, twirling their
thumbs until doom was revealed. And then the day came, and Nagisa felt a tiny bit sick. Not only
was their reputation, all they’d been working for this year, on the line, but also their future. If somebody didn’t make top fifty, per Kunugigaoka Junior High rules, they wouldn’t be allowed to graduate from compulsory education at all.

“Now then, class, I’ll be returning your compiled exam papers,” Korosensei finally announced. “Did your second blades manage to reach their targets? No grumbling about a point here or there, now. Were your scores this time good enough to get you into the top fifty overall? The main campus will be posting the overall ranks right about now, so let’s start with the ranks here in the E Class, too.”

Before Nagisa even paid attention to the individual marks, Korosensei rolled out the scroll of the overall marks. Like everybody else, he rushed over to it, scanning for his own name. *Fourteenth.* In those exams from hell, he’d come *fourteenth.* Although it was technically a drop from last time, given the circumstances, Nagisa had never been prouder of any academic achievement ever.

“I-I-I’m forty sixth?!” Terasaka said, bewildered.

Wasn’t Terasaka constantly dead last in E Class? That meant…

“We did it!”

The mood of celebration washed over at them like a tsunami wave. Undeniably, they had proven the system wrong. Nagisa felt practically dizzy from it. Blinking again, he read the results properly, and noticed what was at the top. Not only had Karma scored first overall, he’d done it with full marks. He couldn’t place the sensation that rushed through his whole body, other than pride and joy.

“Karma kun!” Nagisa turned to him, smiling brightly. Whatever was crashing through his body was too powerful, and burst out. He couldn’t help but practically fling himself at Karma, into a kind of half hug, half grab.

Korosensei also beamed. “How does it feel, Karma kun, to go after that first place rank on such a high level battleground… and win?”

“Uh, whatever, I guess.” Though Karma attempted to sound casual, a deep tint flushed onto his cheeks. He turned and looked back at Nagisa, and squeezed his shoulder back. When their eyes and smiles locked, the flutters grew, and Nagisa was *floating.*

The flutters became real flutters, with all the commotion going on. Nagisa looked down at his own bump, happiness not in danger. “Even Akuma’s proud of you.”

Once Nagisa had nodded his consent, Karma’s hand slipped against his stomach. Once he could feel the strong kicks (perhaps Akuma was trying to dance in celebration), Karma’s smile and complexion grew stronger. Naturally, their bodies leaned into each other, as if they were floating together in a bubble.

“It seems your battle against the perfection boasting Asano kun came down to that final math problem.” Korosensei confirmed, knocking them out of the moment slightly.

“About that…” Karma didn’t move his hand from Nagisa’s abdomen, but turned to face their teacher. “I’m not sure exactly why, but I don’t think I could’ve solved it if I didn’t spend this year with you all. That’s the kind of problem it was.”

Taking a deep breath to attempt to collect himself, Nagisa noticed Karma had turned back to him. He didn’t even really think about it, sliding his own hand on top of Karma’s. Through the gaps left
by his fingers, Nagisa could feel Akuma’s kicks for himself, that and how warm the back of Karma’s hand was.

And then came the dread. Nagisa wasn’t supposed to be this comfortable with Karma, was he? Though it had been his own suggestion they try to stop fighting, to forget about it for the sake of their baby, he hadn’t intended to just forgive Karma for what he’d said as if it never happened. Yet… Nagisa couldn’t muster the anger he should be feeling. Frankly, he really didn’t know what this grip that was forming in his chest was.

Scanning up from the movements of his stomach, their gazes met simultaneously, Karma’s eyes containing a kind of warmth that seemed to burn him from the inside out. All Nagisa could really feel after that was butterflies.

Chapter End Notes

We’re nearing D Day ;)

As always, I hope you all enjoyed this one, and I strongly encourage comments and feedback. It really does motivate me to write and get these chapters out quicker for your reading pleasure! We hit 5k views, also, so yay! Thank you so much for your continued support.
Chapter Summary

Whilst cleaning the storage shed, the truth about Kayano comes out

Chapter Notes

I hated writing this one but twas necessary for the plot

Despite the Headmaster trying to knock down the E Class building, and subsequently assassinate Korosensei himself, things had been pretty relaxed ever since the finals. With finals out of the way, the next thing on everyone’s mind would be high school entrance exams. The deadline for choosing was swiftly approaching, and Nagisa still wasn’t sure. He’d ended up just putting the school his mother had always talked about down on the form, considering it’s the only one he’d ever thought he had the option of attending. Now that his doors were wide open… Nagisa would just change it, when he set his mind on something.

It was the last day of term before the winter break, so not much in the way of lessons was going on. The real preparations would kick into high gear afterwards, probably. With the drama festival the day before, in which Sugino had given a weirdly haunting performance, everybody was just hanging around until they’d be allowed to go their separate ways for the break. Nagisa and the rest of his friends were gathered around Sugino’s desk, discussing the events of the festival, when Nagisa caught Kayano’s eye from outside the classroom.

Noticing that Nagisa had seen her, Kayano waved widely in a gesture Nagisa realised was meant to beckon. Curious to see what she wanted, Nagisa excused himself (the conversation not really involving him anyway) and went out of the classroom. Planning the production for the drama festival, Nagisa had seen a rare side to Kayano, the only other time he’d really experienced it being when she came up with that pudding assassination plan. He hadn’t realised she was so passionate about stage production, but she’d seemed firmly in her comfort zone.

Together they walked to the storage shed outside, and immediately Nagisa saw the issue. You couldn’t even see the floor, it was so fully covered in these blue bead things. Nagisa faintly remembered that Kayano had volunteered to clean up after their play, earlier.

“Oh no, everything fell out and made a huge mess, huh?” He studied the scene.

Kayano flushed. “Yeah, my hand slipped while I was cleaning… These are the beads we used for the river in the play. We borrowed them from a prop company.”

“It’s fine,” Nagisa said, realising that the prospect of cleaning all of those sounded terrifying. “Let’s pick them up together.”

“Thanks!” Kayano replied, cheerfully.
For obvious reasons, Nagisa wasn’t too much help. He did, however, manage to find a broom. Though he was meant to be taking it easy, he figured doing a little bit of sweeping only counted as light exercise. Whilst he swept, Kayano sat on her knees with a dust pan. The progress was slow, but Nagisa didn’t really mind. He hadn’t spent much time with Kayano at all, recently.

“I see.” Nagisa turned, to see Korosensei had entered the room. “So this is why you stepped out. I’ll help you, too.”

“Can we count on you, then?” Kayano smiled.

Taking advantage of his Mach 20 speed, Korosensei practically flew around the room, gathering up the little beads significantly faster than he and Kayano could have managed to do it. For a moment, Nagisa couldn’t help but think about how much things had changed since the start of the year, when Korosensei was a target and nothing else to them. Though he was leaving his back completely defenceless in order to help them, Nagisa knew shooting him was no use. If it were that easy, their year would have been a lot different.

“Something smells weird,” Korosensei commented.

“Oh, during the school festival, we smoked food in here. As for the sweetness…” Kayano looked at Nagisa. He felt himself flush, with the realisation his scent blocker had probably worn off. Nagisa wasn’t so obsessed with using it for class anymore, at least, it was pretty clear that he was pregnant, so there was no point. “We had a lot of different school events, huh?”

“Yeah.” Nagisa nodded. “But once we clean this up, they’ll be all over.”

Kayano smiled. “It really brings back memories. Like when Korosensei first came to the E Class…”

“Back then, you kids were complete amateurs, huh?” Korosensei said, like a proud parent.

“I failed at the beginning,” Nagisa remembered that sneaky bomb attack at the start of the year. “And Sugino couldn’t do it either.”

Kayano sighed. “After that, Karma kun came, and he didn’t know much about Korosensei, so he asked you, right, Nagisa?”

“I got really impatient when Itona kun came along… I thought he’d get him first,” Nagisa continued wistfully.

They really had been through a lot. When Nagisa had originally been dropped into the E Class for his appalling science grades, it felt like the end of the world. And then Korosensei had shown up, and his new role as assassin begun. So much had happened that he never thought would; their various victories against the A Class, a trip to a southern island, learning how to properly fight, getting pregnant…

Nagisa sighed. Somehow, he wouldn’t have wanted it any different. Perhaps Kayano was having the same sort of feelings, given how quiet she’d turned. Out of nowhere, a chill washed over Nagisa’s body. Sickeningly, it reminded him of one of his mother’s bad news. He’d learnt to tell those signs without even looking at her face, like invisible electricity through the air of a room.

Instincts never failing him, he turned, and Kayano was stood there with an expression that he’d never seen painted across her face. It was cruel, sending a shiver through his bones. Nagisa’s eyes trailed up then, to the green tentacles sprouting from her neck. Before his brain even had time to process it, she used one of them to push Nagisa (with an almost careful pressure) into the corner of
the room. Immediately afterwards, she seemed to trigger some kind of explosion. It was enough to
knock him back slightly, but the wall caught his body.

Nagisa’s vision was obscured by it, but once he could see, both Korosensei and Kayano were gone.
There was a gigantic pit in the centre of the room, as if this plan had been planned meticulously.
He coughed, legs feeling a little wobbly, and then all he could hear was whatever commotion was
taking place below.

“Nagisa kun? Are you okay?” Isogai rushed in, and stared at him in concern.

He had it in him to nod, albeit a little weakly. “I’m fine.”

“Are you sure?” He came over to him, sidestepping around the gigantic hole in the floor to offer
him an arm.

Though he would have been a little annoyed at being babied ordinarily, Nagisa knew that given his
recent medical history, he couldn’t exactly blame his classmate’s concern.

“Yeah,” he said, looking down at his stomach. “It’s okay. I can feel them moving.”

Regardless of that, Isogai still insisted on helping him outside. The rest of the class had gathered
there, clearly confused about what was going on. Korosensei eventually burst out of the ground,
panting heavily, and slight relief rolled over Nagisa. At least he was alive, still. Kind of ironic,
really.

“Korosensei…” Nagisa acknowledged weakly.

“What in the world was that just now?” Isogai looked at him.

Before Korosensei could answer, Kayano appeared, her look almost completely alien to Nagisa. It
was terrifying, how she’d seamlessly gone from one of his best friends to something
unrecognisable. She made her purchase on the roof, looking down at them as if they were bugs
underneath her thumb.

“Aw man, I attacked with all I had, too. I can’t believe I let him get away. I must have
underestimated him.” Kayano announced, sounding

Korosensei finished recovering. “Kayano san… what in the world?”

“Sorry,” she said, “Kayano Kaede’s not my real name. I’m Yukimura Aguri’s little sister. You
understand now, don’t you? Murderer.”

“Yukimura…” Hara thought aloud.

The name rung a bell in Nagisa’s memory, but with all of the chaos he couldn’t place it. Nagisa
couldn’t tear his eyes from Kayano’s face. It was as though it belonged to somebody else, as
foreign as the strangers he passed by on the steer.

Kayano kept her glare. “It’s no use crying over spilt milk. I have to reset. I’ll try to kill you again
tomorrow, Korosensei. I’ll let you know where beforehand. Now that I’ve fought you tentacle for
tentacle, I know for sure. I can definitely kill you as I am right now.”

Just like that, she was gone, as fast as the wind. She used supernatural ability, a ‘gift’ from the
tentacles, Nagisa supposed.
“Unthinkable.” Itona stated. Nagisa glanced his way, feeling his chest burn up. If anybody knew what was going on, it would be him. “If she grew tentacles without any maintenance, she would have been under constant hellish pain. There’s no way she could bear it without having it show on her face.”

“Not only that, but she’s Yukimura Aguri’s little sister?” Maehara said.

“Isn’t that our old homeroom teacher?” Sugino asked.

Nagisa felt his stomach turn. Wait, hadn’t Kayano said ‘murderer’? When Korosensei showed up, two weeks into the start of term, Nagisa had just assumed she was dead or something. Yukimura Sensei had been a much better teacher than he’d had for his first two years, but with everything he’d forgotten all about her. It was a highly uncomfortable feeling.

“I thought I’d seen Kayano before somewhere.” Mimura pulled out his phone, displaying an image of Kayano, long black hair on display. “I remembered after seeing her with her hair down and her harsher expression. Do you remember Mase Haruna? The young acting prodigy who could easily take on any role. It’s been a while since she left the entertainment business, and her hair and personality are completely different, so I didn’t notice…”

It felt kind of like Nagisa’s head had been dunked under water. He was aware of what was going on around him, but it was all muted, like he was floating along rather than existing solidly. Almost like everything was just a dream, Nagisa followed as the others drifted back inside the class building. With the revelation, everyone gathered around their phones, frantically searching the internet to confirm it.

Nagisa found one of the dramas his mother had been into, a few years ago. Taking it all in, there was no denying it was Kayano, though perhaps a couple of years younger. Even though there was no difference to her actual facial features, it was like staring at another person. Nagisa couldn’t help but wonder which one was the real Kayano.

The first day they met, when she’d transferred to Kunugigaoka, Nagisa had only sensed a warm presence. He’d never really been close friends with a girl before, but when Kayano had shown him a better way to tie his hair with a smile, Nagisa had felt happy to have her beside him in class. Then again, Kayano had been friends with everybody, but now he thought about it, she’d never let anybody get too close.

Really opening his eyes, Nagisa saw it for what it was. To hide her true intentions for so long, Kayano was smart. Though Nagisa hadn’t really tried to make it that way, a lot of the attention had been on him this year. His bloodlust, and everything else, had been the perfect mask for her to hide her own behind. With everyone’s eyes trained on him, she’d managed to slip into the background. Her cheerful, harmless, fun personality… was just acting?

“Korosensei,” Mimura asked, “Kayano called you a murderer. What happened in the past? We’ve built up trust with you for so long now, we won’t doubt you.”

“But you have to tell us about your past.” Kataoka agreed.

Isogai swallowed. “If you don’t, nobody will be able to accept the current situation. That’s where we’re at right now.”

“Very well,” Korosensei agreed, solemnly. “I’ll tell you everything about my past. But before that, Kayano san is an important member of the E Class. I will tell you when everyone in the class is together.” His phone buzzed with a text notification after he’d finished speaking. “It looks like
Kayano san wants to meet this evening.”

Nagisa kept quiet whilst the details were ironed out. The only thing that kind of grounded him was the idea that Kayano wasn’t all the way gone. Surely she couldn’t have been lying to them all for a full year completely… They’d been so much together. Fixating on that, Nagisa could only hope that maybe they’d be able to help her, somehow, get her back the Kayano they all knew.

With that playing so intensely on everyone’s minds, it was a waiting game until the evening, the time Kayano had requested they meet. Nagisa found himself anxiously messing around with the hair bands he always wore on his wrists, the events of the day whirling around in his mind. With nothing to be gained from hanging around in class, everyone went home at the correct time, though there was no question that they’d all meet for Kayano’s sake.

“I have to save her,” Nagisa mumbled to himself, on the way down the mountain.

“Save her?” Karma cut in, jolting Nagisa out of his own head. He hadn’t even noticed he was walking so close. “I could kill her.”

Frighteningly, it didn’t sound like one of Karma’s regular threats that held no greater intention than to set a person on edge. The chill that ran through Nagisa told him that Karma probably really did mean it.

Nagisa stopped walking. “Wh-“

“She hurt you,” he gestured. “Or tried to.”

He still looked a little bit askew from the blast, but physically Nagisa was completely unharmed. “She didn’t! S-she… she pushed me out of the way.” Nagisa realised all of a sudden, and his heart leapt. Kayano had pushed him in the corner to stop him from being hurt! “I think she brought me with her because of my scent,” he flushed slightly, “to mask the smell of the anti-sensei bullets. She moved me away from the blast. I don’t think she’s any different than she has been all year. She’s still the same, genuine and harmless person.”

“So were you.”

Nagisa had no idea what he meant by that. Neither did Karma, by the looks of it. His eyes went a little wide, like he hadn’t meant to say it at all. When Nagisa didn’t voice a reply, Karma remained silent the rest of the way to the station, his way home, clearly deep in thought.

Sure enough, Kayano was at the meeting place she’d specified. It was a field out in the open, and her form was part the way masked by the tall grass surrounding them. As if they were about to face each other in battle, Nagisa and the rest of the class stood slightly behind Korosensei, with Kayano keeping her distance opposite.

“So you came… Then, let’s end this.” Kayano sliced the grass with her tentacles, an impossibly fast whip. “Korosensei, I’m the one who gave you your name. I’m practically your mother, so I’ll scold and destroy you.”

“Kayano san,” Korosensei said with urgency, “it is too dangerous to keep using those tentacles! If you do not remove them and get treated immediately your life could be in danger!”

She didn’t appear to care. “What are you talking about? They’re in excellent condition. It’s no use trying to make me lose my composure with a bluff.”

“Kayano…” Nagisa couldn’t stop himself. Now he was sure she was in there, he had to know.
“Was it all an act? Even when we were having fun? Or overcoming trials together with everyone?”

“It was all an act. I am an actor, after all,” she confirmed, and then turned to the rest of them.
“When Nagisa was defeated by Takaoka Sensei, I was so irritated, I wanted to join the fight too. When I was kidnapped by delinquents and kicked by the Reaper, I was so angry, I wanted to kill them. But I bore it and acted like a frail girl. Because if my identity was found out before I killed him, I wouldn’t be able to avenge my sister.”

Fuwa swallowed. “Your sister… Yukimura Sensei?”

“It was so unfortunate that she was killed by Korosensei. She loved being a teacher. I heard a little about you all, too.” Kayano replied, casually.

“We know, Kayano,” Takebayashi said. “In March of our second year, we only had her for two short weeks, but she was a very passionate and good teacher.”

Sugino looked over at her. “Would Korosensei kill Yukimura Sensei just like that? He’s never done anything that cruel in front of us before.”

“Right? At least hear him out, Kaede chan.” Kurahashi begged.

Surprisingly, Karma was the next to open his mouth. “He was a teacher who even came all the way to my house when I was suspended. But are you really okay with this? I can’t imagine that what you’re doing now is the best way to solve this as an assassin.”

It was sensible, coming from him. He’d decided Kayano wasn’t a real threat to Nagisa after all, then? Unfortunately, it didn’t seem like his words were helping. Nobody’s were.

“You body probably feels hot, with just the nape of your neck cold,” Itona stepped up, using his knowledge on this to his advantage. “It’s the abnormal metabolism characteristic of those implanted tentacles. If you fight in that condition, you’ll really be in trouble. You’ll lose control with the heat and intense pain, and your life force will be sucked out by the tentacles. Worst case…”

Before he could finish, Kayano’s tentacles caught on fire.

“Shut up. Outsiders should be quiet. No matter the weakness or shortcoming, if it’s polished, it can become a weapon. You’re the one who taught me that, Korosensei. If my body’s so hot I can’t bear it, then I’ll make it even hotter and gather the heat in my tentacles!”

“No! Any more, and—“ Korosensei tried.

She whipped the tentacles once more, creating a ring of fire separating her and Korosensei. By then, her tentacles were fully alight, but she didn’t seem fazed by it at all.

“I’m in the best condition!” Kayano shrieked. “My whole body’s so sensitive that I won’t miss any opening right now.”

Nagisa couldn’t give up on her, not just yet. Every instinct in his body was rushing with a kind of protectiveness. It would be entirely wrong for him to stand by and just let his friend destroy herself like this. Especially if there was a danger of her dying… Nagisa had gone through this before himself, he’d been willing to put himself in harm’s way for the end goal. He’d grown better than that.

“Stop it Kayano!” He shouted as loud as he could. “This isn’t right! I learned, too!” It seemed he’d
taken a few steps forwards, as he faintly felt Nakamura and Sugino’s arms wind around him in restraint. Still, Nagisa needed to make himself heard. “That if you sacrifice yourself to kill someone, there won’t be anything left behind!”

“I’m not planning on sacrificing myself, Nagisa. I will just… kill this guy.” Quick as a bolt of lightning, Kayano flew into the air and launched her attack. “Once I put my mind to something, I just keep rolling!”

Perhaps Nagisa had been wrong, somehow. By the looks of it, Kayano wasn’t acting at all. Were those really her true feelings? The fight before his eyes was an intense blur of tentacle on tentacle warfare, too hard for him to sense much of with his own vision. His heart clenched at the way the fiery tentacles moved around Kayano’s form.

“I plucked off a piece!” She yelled, obviously having removed one of Korosensei’s tentacles. “It’s still moving!”

“In a mere ten or fifteen seconds of full out battle, her mind is already starting to be taken over by the tentacles…” Itona said, the dread clear from his tone.

“What’s the matter Korosensei?” Kayano taunted. “My head doesn’t hurt anymore. The pain feels good now!”

Itona looked down. “It’s too late if they’ve already taken her over that much. Whether or not she accomplishes her revenge, a few minutes after the end of the battle, I think she’ll die.”

Was this really the assassination Kayano wanted to carry out? Even if she did kill him, she wouldn’t live to see the results. It was terrifying, how far revenge could drive someone. Nagisa didn’t know what he’d do if she died, just like that.


“Looks more like she’s gonna die any minute now” Maehara said.

“Can’t we do anything?” Sugino glanced around frantically. “Do we just stand by and watch her get eaten away?”

Out of nowhere, Korosensei’s face popped up between the flames. “Class!”

“Korosensei?!” Nagisa jolted.

“Why just your face?” Sugaya asked.

“It’s a clone! I don’t have much leeway with Kayano san’s ferocious attacks! It’s all I can do to leave an afterimage of my face!” Korosensei explained, in between getting attacked. “We have to remove her tentacles ASAP! They’re only putting off all that abnormal heat because she’s not giving any thought to her own survival! At this rate, the tentacles will suck out her life force and she’ll die! But! As long as her bloodlust matches that of her tentacles, they’ll be rooted to her nerves, impossible to remove! We don’t have the time to talk her down like we did with Itona kun!”

Hayami swallowed. “Then how can we…”

“There’s only one way: I’ll pull them out as we fight. I’ll let her hit my greatest weak spot: my heart, located just underneath my tie. If it’s completely destroyed, I’ll die. If I can make her feel like she did me in, her tentacles’ bloodlust will weaken for a moment, if only for a bit. And in that
moment, one of you will have to make Kayano san forget her bloodlust.”

“Forget it? But how?” Hazama asked.

“Whatever works. Anything to get her mind off assassination. It’s the only thing I can’t do. If the target of her bloodlust were to try any funny business, her bloodlust would only intensify. But if you can quell that bloodlust, the tentacles’ bond with her would momentarily be broken, and I might be able to remove them with minimal damage!”

“And Kayano’s tentacles would be on your heart the whole time?” Mimura realised. “Wouldn’t you die first?”

Korosensei appeared to break a sweat. “If I’m lucky, I’ll postpone that fateful, final moment… But I’d say the odds of me dying are about fifty fifty.”

“No!” Kataoka protested.

“But you know… For me, the entire class not being able to graduate uneventfully is even worse than dying.”

As the class began to argue over what to do, the gears in Nagisa’s mind began to turn. He wasn’t going to let this end here. Nagisa’s best chance of incapacitating somebody was his clap stunner, now he’d improved it. Considering everything, the wavelength of her consciousness was too messed up for Nagisa to take advantage of and manipulate. Any weapons, guns or knives, would do more harm than good.

When Kayano struck, tentacles shoved in the centre of Korosensei’s chest, Nagisa knew there was no time. Korosensei wrapped his tentacles around her to hold her still, and Nagisa found himself walking towards them. He’d made a promise to himself to stay out of danger, but aside from the lick of the flames, Nagisa was certain she was no danger to him.

There was only one technique left at Nagisa’s disposal. He’d only fully used it twice, both having the desired result. When he used it on Asano, to take him out and avoid any questioned, the boy had gone straight down. Somehow, he’d never imagined that it’d work on Karma. Nagisa still didn’t know why exactly he’s used the kiss technique on him, rather than just quitting – it wasn’t as if he’d cared about winning Bitch Sensei’s contest. But there was just something infuriating about the way Karma had been kissing him, making his head spin with dizziness. An electric urge had just rolled through him, a desperation to prove that he could hold just as much power, that Karma couldn’t just walk over him like a blushing maiden. It had also been a little bit fun.

As he stepped right in front of Kayano’s struggling form, the shouts of his classmates were drowned out by his own concentration. This was different from the other times, Kayano’s life lay on the line. It was a little awkward with the size of his stomach, but with a slight twist, they were mostly aligned. He dove in quickly, pressing a kiss to her lips. Wasting no time, he gripped her shoulder, and pried her mouth open with his own lips. Eyes closed in focus, he replicated Bitch Sensei’s kiss technique, his tongue his blade. It can’t have all been an act. They’d had fun together. There was no way it was all revenge. Her body trembled in his arms, and then she collapsed.

“Korosensei… will this work?” Nagisa detached their lips, holding her body out like an offering.

“Full marks Nagisa kun!” Korosensei agreed. “They’ll come out now!”

He got to work quickly, detaching the tentacles from Kayano’s neck. Nagisa couldn’t help but wince at the way her unconscious body writhed at the intense strain it was under. It didn’t take
very long for them to be out, though, and finally her body seemed to relax.

“Does this mean Kayano san is okay now?” Okuda asked.

“Yes… probably.” Korosensei answered. “She’ll need absolute rest for a while.”

Without warning, Nakamura wrapped an arm around his shoulder.“Hey prince charming! Shutting her down with a kiss, eh? Nice!”

Feeling shameful, Nagisa dropped his eyes to the ground. “I thought it was a good way to make her forget her bloodlust. I’ll apologise to her later.”

“Fourteen hits on a ten second kiss?” Bitch Sensei came close to him, tilting his chin up her finger. “You’re getting sloppy.”

“‘Hits’?”

She smirked. “I trained you on forced, indiscriminate French kisses. You should have been able to make forty.”

“Mmm,” Maehara cut in. “Twenty five’s tight for me.”

“God I hate this place. I can just about make it to twenty,” Kataoka complained.

The ribbing was expected, Nagisa supposed. As long as it meant Kayano was safe… he could take it. Though Kama had also approached him with Nakamura, he was being uncharacteristically silent. If anything, Nagisa would have expected him to be the first to start making fun. Nagisa looked over his shoulder at him, noticing something he could only describe as forced neutrality in his eyes. Was Karma still mad about what Kayano did in the storage shed, after all?

Before Nagisa could find out, Korosensei started choking.

“Koro sensei?!”

“I’m fine,” he forced out. “It’ll just take a while for my heart to recover. I’m sure there’s something you’d like to hear me say, but please, wait just a little longer.”

Out of nowhere, a gun shot was fired. Nagisa whipped his head around in the direction of the noise, which was contained to a nearby piece of raised land. Instantly, when he saw two cloaked figures, he recognised one as Shiro. How could he not, given how much trouble the guy had caused?

“Quit playing up the deathbed angle,” Shiro sneered. “You’re still alive enough to dodge. Useless girl… She’d give her own life for that revenge narrative of hers- you’d think she could’ve done a little better than this. You’re quite the monster. Just how many assassins have you driven away in a single year? But there are still two of them right here.” He removed his mask, exposing his dark hair and artificial eye. “I’m the last one. You took everything away… and I’ll make you pay for it with your life.”

“The genius scientist, with cloaked face and altered voice…” Korosensei trailed. “So it is you, Yanagisawa.”

Shiro, or Yanagisawa (whoever that was), simply looked down at him. “Come, two point zero. March will bring a perfect death for an accursed life.”

They left, before anything else could be said. Before Nagisa’s mind could even catch up to
whatever *that* was about, Kayano spluttered, eyes blinking open. All Nagisa could think after that was *thank god she’s conscious*.

“I...”

“Kayano san,” Korosensei said, “thank goodness.”

Nagisa swallowed. “Kayano... are you okay?”

“Uh huh...” She turned her face away from him. Nagisa hoped she wasn’t mad about the kiss... he’d definitely have to think of a really good way to apologise for that.

“Kayano chi...” Okano let out.

She sat up a little, looking around their class with a shameful expression. “It was pure bloodlust at first... But as I spent time with Korosensei, I started losing my conviction in that bloodlust. Like, doesn’t this teacher have some circumstances I don’t know about? And shouldn’t I find out what they are before I kill him? But that’s when the bloodlust in my tentacles swelled forth. They wouldn’t let me not do it. How *dumb*. Everybody was genuinely enjoying their assassinations while I wasted the year on plain old revenge.”

After all of that, Nagisa had to say *something*. Hesitating for a moment on exactly what, Nagisa drew his mind to all that happened this year. There was no use in calculating a good response to her, he decided. Best to just speak directly from the heart.

“Kayano... Once you taught me this hairstyle, I stopped fretting about my long hair. And like you said, everyone liked the name ‘Korosensei’ – we’ve been using it all year. It doesn’t matter what you were after. We all made you our friend, together. No matter how much you suffered on your own, we can’t let you say it was all an act – not all those days you were smiling right there with us. Korosensei promised to tell us everything once we were all together. He’s not a saint. We know he doesn’t always do the right thing. But let’s hear him out. All of us – together.”

“Yeah... Thanks.” Kayano looked at Nagisa, then, and burst into tears. “I can stop acting now.”

Nagisa... wasn’t *good* with crying. He got the impression it was good tears, at the very least. She was being comforted by some of the girls, so he didn’t feel too bad.

“Korosensei...” Isogai said, “whatever’s in your past... we’ll accept it, as long as it’s the truth.”

Korosensei nodded. “I wanted never to talk about my past if I could help it. But I see I have to. I don’t want to lose your trust, the bond we share. This past summer, on that southern island, Karasuma sensei said of Irina sensei, ‘the better the assassin the broader her skill set’. I think that’s relevant here. This E Class is the first I’ve ever taught. Even so, I’ve managed to teach you just about every subject without a hitch. Why do you think that is? That’s right: Until two years ago, I was the assassin known as the Reaper. And one more thing... Even if you do nothing, I’ll die come March. Either I die alone or the Earth dies with me: that’s the only part of the future an assassination can change.”

With that, Korosensei began to talk.

Chapter End Notes
Jealous Karma? Jealous Karma... Don't worry, I promise a lot of fluff SOON.

I have no idea how this chapter got so long...

As always, comments are my top motivation!
With the second term over and the winter break in swing, Nagisa has no other choice but to spend it with Karma.

I make it sound like I have an actual summary for this, but it's literally just 6k words of domestic fluff. I hope you're all happy :')

After Korosensei had told them all the truth about his past, the mood had been weird. With all that had already happened that day, his teacher’s backstory was near impossible to fully comprehend. Nagisa could only describe the feeling it left as hollowness. After all they’d been through, thinking of Korosensei as a monster they had to kill for the good of the earth, it was a bitter pill to swallow.

Defeated, Nagisa had collapsed straight into bed and fallen asleep for what felt like years. Despite how uncomfortable he was recently, usually taking at least an hour before his body was comfortable enough to relax, the emotional toll had won out that night. Kayano had been taken to hospital after Korosensei’s speech, though Nagisa was sure she wouldn’t be in any real danger. He tried to remind himself that being medically monitored wasn’t the end of the world.

Even after a night’s rest, Nagisa didn’t feel much better. Suddenly, assassination felt fundamentally wrong. Killing had come so naturally to him, his secret talent… but Korosensei didn’t deserve to be killed. Then again, if he wasn’t their target, then what had they been doing all year? The idea of reverting back to a regular student/teacher relationship sat uncomfortably with him.

At breakfast, Nagisa played with his rice, swirling it around the bowl with his chopsticks aimlessly. It seemed like the first time in his recent memory he wasn’t hungry. Unfortunately, that probably wouldn’t last very long.

“What are you, a little kid?” Asano commented from across the table.

It was actually pretty rare that they’d eat together. Most of the time, Asano was closed off, electing to say in his own room. Aside from studying, and the few times Nagisa had hung out with him in there, he had no idea what he did there… inventing some kind of plot, probably. Nagisa had been surprised to see him already sipping on his tea, that morning, as Toboso finished preparing the food.

“I’m sorry,” Nagisa said, pushing the bowl away from him. “I can’t eat anymore.”

He cocked his head. “Did something happen?”

Was this Asano’s friendship? It still felt a little strange, speaking to him like he would anybody
else. Though, Nagisa still had to hold himself back. There was no way he could explain that one of his best friends had been living with a false identity all year, had tried to murder their teacher, and was now in hospital recovering from the weapons she’d implanted into her own body. He was under written agreement with the government that he wouldn’t disclose basically any of that information.

“I’m just tired,” Nagisa decided on, “end of term, and everything.”

Asano pushed his own bowl forwards, signifying he was done. “About that,” he exhaled heavily, “my father’s being… strange.”

“Oh?” Nagisa wondered if anything had changed, after everything at school had gone down the way it did.

“Today’s Christmas,” he announced, as if Nagisa didn’t know the date. Though he’d never celebrated it, it was hard to miss the apparel everywhere. “My father says he’ll be here this afternoon, until after the New Year.”

Funnily enough, Nagisa’s first reaction was happiness for Asano’s sake. Though he didn’t show it, Nagisa could see underneath the surface that really, he yearned for a normal relationship with his father. Though, actually being present in his own home for more than an hour shouldn’t be such a revelation. Regardless, it showed some kind of willingness to spend time with his son. Perhaps he really was turning his act around, after all.

“I didn’t think he’d be the type to care about Christmas,” Nagisa said.

Asano shrugged. “He picked it up back in his college days in America, apparently. Anyway,” he looked slightly nervous, “unless you want to stay completely silent in your room for several days…”

He understood. Though, it didn’t freak him out as much as it probably should’ve. Nagisa’s brain had had enough shock go through it to last a life time, these last few days, so he supposed there wasn’t any capacity for panic left in there.

“Don’t worry,” Nagisa said cheerfully, “I’ll sort something out.”

“I’m sorry about this,” Nagisa said, small bag of possessions thrown over his shoulder.

Karma leant against the doorframe. “You look like a stray puppy with fleas.”

Ignoring the fleas part, he had a point. Nagisa just sighed, and took a step inside Karma’s house, once he’d moved out of the way. He was a little surprised Karma had even agreed to it so readily, honestly. Perhaps Nagisa should have felt more nervous, about spending an unsupervised week in Karma’s company. It wasn’t like he had much of another choice, though. Maybe he could have asked Sugino, but as far as Nagisa knew, his family were pretty traditional. He didn’t want to get him any kind of trouble, by association.

“Thirsty?” Karma asked, once Nagisa had properly entered, set down his bag, and removed his shoes.

He was, a little, but Nagisa didn’t want to be even more of a charity case. “Not really.”

Karma’s stance remained casual. “How about some food, then?”
Nagisa was about to decline him again, but his stomach had a mind of its own. Considering he’d mostly skipped breakfast, it showed immediate interest, grumbling embarrassingly loudly. At this the disappearance of his appetite had only been a brief thing…

They didn’t make any agreement, but Nagisa found himself following Karma into the kitchen. It was more than a little awkward, but he sat down on one of the bar stools that were set up next to the counter. Fondly, Nagisa remembered one of the few times he visited Karma’s home when they were younger. Karma had been showing off, spinning around on one of the stalls until he actually fell off it. Nagisa had laughed so hard his apple juice came out of his nose… though he’d had to hide it when Karma’s mother started telling her son off. His parents were around a lot more, back then.

As Karma begun making them sandwiches, Nagisa couldn’t help but let his mind wonder. He’d only ever met Karma’s parents a few times. He took after his mother, Nagisa had thought privately. Karma’s father seemed a little more reserved, though maybe that was just because of how tall he was (Nagisa was under five foot back then). He did remember the man blinking with confusion when Nagisa explained that no, he wasn’t a girl.

“So,” Karma said, sliding the food over. “What do you want to do?”

Nagisa took a bite, and his eyes fluttered shut. He hadn’t been paying attention to what Karma had put in it, but the flavour was heavenly. Though he knew Karma always did pretty well in home ec, but that was nothing to pay special attention to. Karma did well in every subject, after all. In the end, after they were done with the food, they just ended up watching movies in the living room.

It was a good distraction from everything that had been going on. A couple of them were only English with Japanese subtitles, so Nagisa was too busy focusing on that than letting his mind wander. He was suddenly very thankful for Karma’s presence, and dry comments over now and then to keep Nagisa grounded to his surroundings.

Eventually, after a break for ‘dinner’ (mostly just dry snack foods), the late evening came. Nagisa felt his eyes begin to drop halfway through some psychological horror film, none of the spooky atmosphere affecting him particularly. That meant only one thing; it was time for bed.

“I’ll go get the futon,” Karma said, as though it didn’t bother him.

They were sleeping in the same room, then? It wasn’t a big deal, Nagisa forced himself to remember. Friends had sleepovers all the time. Still, he cringed at the idea of sleeping on one in his condition. Beggars can’t be choosers. Nagisa followed him to his bedroom, immediately affronted by alpha scent. The amount of incense around the house masked the scent from other locations, but here… Swallowing dryly, Nagisa made his way over to the futon, bracing himself for the pain of lowering his body.

“You’re not sleeping on that thing,” Karma said, slightly sternly.

Nagisa looked over. “B-but it’s your bed.”

“You’ll never get back off it,” Karma rolled his eyes. “It’s not a big deal. What, unless you want to share.”

He bit his lip. Would that be so terrible? He knew girls did it, all the time, so… “Alright.”

Karma’s face turned an odd shade of pink, like he hadn’t been expecting that answer out of Nagisa. Well, Karma had a pretty large double bed. They could probably both fit on it, without touching
too closely or anything. Shamefully, Nagisa remembered his moment of weakness when he was in hospital, when he’d asked Karma to hold and comfort him. It hadn’t been a big deal then.

Then came the next issue – pyjamas. All the way back when his mother had originally thrown him out, Nagisa hadn’t had time to think practically about what he was taking. He hadn’t really thought about nightwear, and it hadn’t actually been an issue for quite a while. Usually, he’d just sleep in his underwear or something. It wasn’t like he’d never been in his underwear in front of Karma before… they’d had to change for PE together for three years.

Nagisa swallowed, and let his trousers pool to the floor, averting his eyes from Karma’s body. Immediately, he wished he’d kept the trousers on, despite how uncomfortable that would be. He was definitely over thinking it. Nagisa decided to at least keep the jumper he was wearing on, for a bit of extra warmth. It was technically Karma’s, though, back when he’d given Nagisa a bunch of clothes.

Keeping his eyes planted on the floor, Nagisa went over to the bed. The moment he sat down on it, his mind went blank. Instead of worrying about what he looked like, he had to worry at what his instincts were screaming at him to do. Currently, that was to rub himself into the covers and pillows and burry himself in Karma’s raw scent. Not wanting to look like a crazy person, Nagisa put all of his concentration into resisting that urge.

He barely noticed Karma sit down beside him, ready for bed himself. He’d forgone any kind of shirt, but at least had his legs covered with sweat pants. A little scared of what he’d do if he tried to plant his head down and immediately try to fall asleep, with his body in its over sensitised state, Nagisa bit his lip and thought of something to distract himself. Wracking his brain for a moment (incredibly forgetful, in its current state), Nagisa quickly thought of something. He twisted his body, ignoring the pain that came with that, and reached over the bed for his bag.

“H-hang on a second,” he said, sensing Karma was about to ask what he was doing. Thankfully, it didn’t take him long to find what he was looking for. “Here you go,” Nagisa said, handing over the miniscule package.

Karma looked down at it as though it was a bomb about to explode in his hands. “For me?”

“Mm,” Nagisa smiled. “Happy birthday, Karma kun! Uhm… It’s not much,” he admitted, “I only have a little bit of money from tutoring Sakura chan.”

His eyes went wide, as he untied the draw strings. Thankfully, the shop owner had been kind enough to offer Nagisa a tiny bag, not unlike one you’d get with jewellery, so he didn’t have to worry about wrapping it up. Nagisa couldn’t stop his heart from thumping, as Karma took his gift out and admired it. He could only hope he wouldn’t hate it.

“I was surprised to find it,” Nagisa said quickly. “It was just in that shop in town, you know,” his eyes darted downwards, “that one with all the Harry Potter stuff.”

For a movie that hadn’t even been released in Japan yet (a fact that Nagisa was very frustrated about), he was surprised to see merchandise. Still, when Nagisa had seen a Sonic Ninja pin hanging up, he felt compelled to get it. It was only small, no bigger than his thumbprint, with the character illustrated in the chibi style.

Karma looked like he wanted to say something, but instead smiled. His genuine smile, that was, not the smirk he often wore when he was up to something.

“Thanks,” he put it down on his bedside table.
Nagisa was a little too overwhelmed for him to make a big deal out of the gift, so he smiled too, and nodded. It would have been weird for Karma to fling his arms around him in gratitude, or something. This was comfortable, the space they were meant to share.

“Are you happy to be fifteen now?” He questioned, dying to change the subject.

Reclining, Karma stretched a little bit. “It doesn’t feel much different.”

It wasn’t like they were average fifteen year olds. First and foremost, they were assassins, and after that… they’d be parents. Nagisa wrinkled his nose at that, the concept still sounding foreign. He’d just about got used to being pregnant, but after that… At the thought, it seemed Akuma was bored of being calm, especially as Nagisa wasn’t doing anything interesting.

“Oh,” he let out, at a strong kick. “Ouch.”

The signature grin had returned to Karma’s face. “Is Akuma chan throwing me a birthday party?”

Nagisa hunched over slightly. “Feels like it.” He sighed, rolling the material of the jumper up slightly. It never really did much, but Nagisa could at least try resting the flat of his palm against his skin. After a few seconds

“Eugh,” Karma said, out of nowhere.

That sounded worrying. “W-what is it?”

“I think I can… see a foot?”

Nagisa peeled his eyes opened, and looked down at his stomach. Sure enough, he could see his skin literally lift up, as Akuma moved around. Feeling it was one thing, but seeing it? “That’s kind of gross.”

“It looks like something out of that movie Alien.”

“W-what’s that?”

Leaning over for his phone, Karma quickly typed something into YouTube. He passed Nagisa the screen, and Nagisa had slam a hand over his mouth at the video. Though horror didn’t really bother him (aside from jump scares), and the special effects were clearly dated, he still felt the strong urge to puke after witnessing that.

“A-akuma’s not coming out like that,” Nagisa said, somewhat defensively, despite how much it looked like his skin could rip open.

Karma was paying more attention to his stomach. “They’re giving me a high five,” he announced.

“Don’t encourage it!” He complained. ‘Pregnancy is beautiful’, people said, ‘a magical experience’! When he regained his physical abilities, Nagisa was going to punch whoever came up with that notion. It was much like carrying around a parasite at all times. Still, he let Karma do what he wanted, trying his best not to cringe at the violent movements.

He’d never say it out loud, but Karma’s warm hands made him feel relaxed, despite the pain. As if he was being lulled back into his exhausted state, Nagisa felt his eyes begin to drop. Karma’s voice (Nagisa wasn’t sure what he was saying) was soothing, soft when he spoke to his bump. He knew that it would be bad to fall asleep like that, though, no matter how good it felt right then and there.
“Go to sleep, Nagisa kun,” Karma eventually said, loud enough to force Nagisa’s eyes open.

He was so exhausted. “Akuma doesn’t want to,” he muttered bitterly, the twist in his stomach proving it.

“Come on,” he said, though it wasn’t that demanding, “how do you usually sleep?”

Nagisa would really like to be lying on his back, but Akuma was far too high up for that. If he even tried it, he probably wouldn’t be able to sleep. Wordlessly, he shifted onto his side, wrapping the loose sleeves of Karma’s jumper over his hands like mittens. Groaning lightly in frustration, Nagisa reached for one of the pillows, sacrificing the head comfort for something to rest his stomach on.

Without warning, he was enveloped in warmth. Perhaps Nagisa would have freaked out and complained, if he wasn’t instantly soothed. Karma’s arm draped over his body, resting easily on the swollen bump. He pressed up close, chest resting against Nagisa’s sore back, with his chin Nagisa’s shoulder. Slowly, Nagisa sensed comforting pheromones trickle out into the air of the room. Despite how at home Karma’s scent was making him feel, Nagisa forced himself to remember that despite everything, he wasn’t actually his alpha.

“There can’t be much room left in there,” Karma murmured, slipping his hand against his skin, to stroke it soothingly.

By all logic, Karma’s gentle and tired voice right against his ear and his touch should have had the opposite of a calming effect, but Nagisa suddenly felt drowsy, flooded with pheromones that were more protective in nature. Why was he allowing this level of intimacy, again? He almost had the urge to purr, nuzzling up closer to his alp- Karma. Akuma agreed, finally settling down after a few final firm kicks.

They woke up in the same position, practically. Nagisa came back to the land of the living, slowly and blinking with confusion. For a moment, he forgot where he was, staring at unfamiliar walls. As the seconds ticked by, though, Nagisa became very aware of the arm that was draped over him, and the warm breath that was tickling the back of his neck.

“Uh, Karma kun,” he said, panicking slightly.

It didn’t exactly have the desired effect. If anything, Karma just clutched him tighter, and took a very deep inhale. With great embarrassment, Nagisa realised his nose was pressed right up against his scent glands. None of his scent blocker was lingering to cover him, pheromones that Nagisa hadn’t learnt to control or understand yet. Even more horrifyingly, it felt good. With every deep breath, Karma’s ribcage heaving against Nagisa’s back, Nagisa felt more content. He didn’t even care that Karma was literally scenting him.

The moment didn’t last much longer. As if Karma had suddenly suffered from cardiac arrest, he let go of Nagisa, flipping his body away so fast he bounded hard against the mattress.

“Morning,” he said, strained.

Without the pheromones relaxing him, Nagisa became aware of the intense pressure signifying he needed to pee. At least Akuma wasn’t giving him the punching bag morning alarm treatment, even if they were apparently using his bladder as a cushion. Well, it was an excuse to end whatever this was. Nagisa shifted out of bed, wincing as he stood up.

“I’m going to shower,” he decided to say on a whim. At least that would neutralise his scent, just a little.
Grabbing the sheet in bunches to gather it around his form, Karma nodded. “You know where it is, right?”

Perhaps Karma was just shy in the mornings? To be honest, the idea of Karma being shy at all sounded a little stupid… but maybe it was just one of those things where his confidence needed an hour to recharge. Whatever the case, Nagisa made his way to the bathroom. Once he’d emptied his bladder, he stripped off his clothes and turned the shower on.

The warm water was instantly soothing, especially in juxtaposition to the cold weather surrounding them. Nagisa could have spent hours in there, allowing his muscles to relax under the scalding spray. Since it was bare, Nagisa decided to lightly poke the skin of his stomach. By the feel of it, Akuma hadn’t quite woken up yet (a fact he was grateful for), so there was no mysterious skin raising.

Nagisa regrettably turned off the shower, and the soothing comfort it gave him. He’d like nothing more than to soak even further in the bath, but that simply wasn’t happening. Even if he somehow managed to safely lower himself into it, he seriously doubted his ability to get back out again afterwards. Instead, he towelled himself down and changed into his limited supply of clean clothes for the day.

When he returned to Karma’s bedroom, after the cleanliness of the shower, the scent appeared to be significantly stronger. Considering he was far less exhausted, it made Nagisa’s mouth begin to water, a fact that made him want to run away in shame. Karma was for the most part where Nagisa had left him, although he looked a little different. He was flushed and sweaty, slightly dishevelled. Nagisa had to wonder what he’d even been doing whilst he was gone. By appearances, running laps around the room or doing push ups or something.

Much like the day before, neither of them really knew what to do next. The next few days of their winter break passed exactly like that. They found something to amuse themselves with, at least. When they got bored of movies, they played video games, or just generally existed in each other’s company. Despite not having that much to do, Nagisa never quite felt devastatingly bored. After all, Karma probably was his best friend. It was just like having an extended sleep over.

The last straw came when they turned to card games for entertainment, though. As Karma dealt out the cards and explained the rules, Nagisa finally began to notice a bit of stir craziness set in. It wasn’t as if Karma’s house was dirty (surprisingly, considering he basically lived alone, it was very clean), but Nagisa began to notice some weird things. One of Karma’s text books, for example, wasn’t pushed into the book shelf all the way, and it was irritating him. Nagisa just had this deep urge to fix it.

“Show me your cards,” Karma said, jolting Nagisa out of it.

Nagisa sighed, letting the cards he’d drawn fall flat on the table. He understood the appeal of poker, and kind of grasped the rules, but he didn’t think he’d ever be good at it. There was a lot of strategy involved by the sounds of it, and whilst Nagisa was good at founding the perfect plan to guarantee himself a result when he needed to, this was a lot longer. It was drawn out, involved a lot of factors, and played more into Karma’s skills. Nagisa got the feeling he was actually really skilled at this game.

Karma looked them over. “That’s a straight.”

“Do I win?” Nagisa asked, studying them.

Letting his own two cards fall, Karma smirked devilishly. “Straight flush.”
Thankfully, they weren’t playing for anything. That was most of the game, apparently. Not in the cards, but in misleading the opponents. Nagisa would be frightened to face Karma if there were actual bets in play, though he didn’t have much of value in the first place.

“So,” Karma said, “want to play for real?”

Nagisa squirmed at that idea. “Do you mind if I clean?”

“Huh?”

Turning a brand new shade of crimson, Nagisa realised he’d voiced his desire out loud. He wanted to go outside and dig a hole to bury himself in. The worst part was, Nagisa didn’t have much of a clear and rational explanation as to why he’d requested such a thing. Now he just looked insane, probably. He had to think of something fast.

“It’s New Year’s Eve!” Nagisa remembered, suddenly. Good, that was an excuse. “It feels weird to not be cleaning today.”

Karma shrugged. “My parents never really celebrated it.”

Come to think of it, even despite his weird urges, it did feel kind of odd to be missing all parts of the celebration. “Can we?”

“Sure.”

Nagisa had never felt so satisfied. He’d never been a fan of cleaning, ever. Sure, he wasn’t particularly messy – his mother would have screamed at him for hours – but it wasn’t exactly a hobby of his. Every item he lined up perfectly, his heart practically burst with joy. Maybe he really was going insane… The extra energy wasn’t unwelcome, though.

“What do you do for the holidays, then?” Nagisa asked eventually.

Karma considered it for a moment. “Not a lot. My parents took me to Diwali in Varanasi one time… but that’s earlier in the year.”

“Where’s that?”

“North of India,” he said casually. “I liked the lights.”

Nagisa nodded, turning his attention back to the task at hand. After making sure the furniture was in perfect alignment, it was time to make it spotless. His next enemy was the bookcase. He’d dusted all the individual shelves, but then there was the very top of it… He just knew there was dust up there. Unfortunately, he wasn’t quite tall enough to reach it. Nagisa attempted to balance on his tip toes, stretching his arm as far as it could go.

He yelped as hands latched onto his hips, lifting him into the air. “Karma kun!”

Karma didn’t respond, but he did a terrible job of masking his laugh.

“You could have just done it yourself,” Nagisa complained, but dusted up there anyway.

After they finished up downstairs, they moved on to upstairs. There wasn’t as much to do, but it still made Nagisa much more relaxed. His final target was Karma’s bedroom. It really was very tidy already, which made sense, but something under the surface of Nagisa’s skin still squirmed.

Karma scratched the back of his neck. “I’m getting a drink… You can start if you want.”
Nagisa swallowed, as he was left alone. What Karma was giving him permission to do was surely… intimate. Funnily enough, there was nothing he immediately wanted to fix, yet the itch was still present. Tentatively, he stepped over to the closet, assuming maybe something would have been hung up incorrectly.

He opened it, and breathed in deeply, more of Karma’s natural scent filling his lungs. Most alphas that Nagisa happened to pass smelt a lot like dirt or metal, not unpleasantly so. Nagisa couldn’t put his finger on exactly what Karma’s scent reminded him of, other that it felt a lot warmer and inviting (when he was relaxed, that is).

Before he even noticed what he was doing, he’d taken one of Karma’s shirts from the hanger, and was pressing it into his nose. Once he remembered how creepy that was, borderline stalkerish in fact, Nagisa quickly tossed it away, causing it to land on the bed. He chewed his lip, an urge racing through him. Before he could decide against it, he took another shirt, and then another. Soon, there was a pile of clothes covering the sheets.

It wasn’t good enough. Nagisa went over to the bed, and began to examine his work. Hands working almost on autopilot, he arranged the clothes nicely, to his own liking. It became almost like a ring in the end, the bottom lined with fabric, with a thicker layer to keep the edges defined. Nagisa took a step back, looking it over. It was nice, and he really wanted to lie in it, but something was missing…

Turning his head, Nagisa noticed that Karma’s school blazer was draped over the back of his desk chair. Perfect. Locking onto his target, Nagisa snatched it carefully, and began to consider where to position it. It would clearly work as some kind of centrepiece… Maybe it would look nice next to the pillows.

Out of nowhere, Karma forced a cough, making Nagisa practically jump out of his bones. “What, are you nestling or someth-“ His eyes fell from Nagisa’s guilty form to the bed. “Oh.”

Finally, Nagisa’s sense returned, and he dropped the blazer. It seemed he really had been building a nest. Out of Karma’s clothes. On his bed. Without any permission to do so. Well, that settled it. Nagisa was never looking Karma in the eye again. He was tempted to go outside, dig a hole, and bury himself six feet under.

“U-uhm…”

Karma kept his cool, though, sauntering over. “Looks comfy.”

Nagisa couldn’t help but flush at his approval, his inner omega incredibly pleased. “I’m sorry… I’ll put it all back.”

Like it was a crash mat, Karma flopped back onto it. He reclined, making a big deal out of sighing with his shit eating grin plastered across his face. “Is this why you wanted to clean?”

Trying to pretend his brain wasn’t short circuiting, Nagisa averted his eyes. “M-maybe.”

Karma kicked himself back up again. “If we’re doing this tradition thing, I was thinking of cooking soba noodles.”

It was all so casual. Nagisa agreed to the noodles, following Karma back down to the kitchen. He wasn’t nearly as good at cooking, but he could at least attempt to help. Finally, though, Nagisa felt satiated. That realisation suddenly brought along hollowness. He and Karma were essentially playing house, and whilst their mutual comfort in each other’s presence made his heart burst with
happiness, dread wasn’t far behind. This was going to end badly, Nagisa just knew it. You couldn’t really exist in a perfect little bubble. Pretending… it was only going to hurt more in the long run.

He tried to remind himself that, late at night. The cleaning had worn him out, but Nagisa didn’t want the New Year to pass without him. Despite the coldness of outside, Nagisa’s body felt pretty hot. They ended up sitting outside, not saying much to each other. He tried to remember what his life had been like, this time one year ago.

Honestly, Nagisa probably wouldn’t even recognise his past self.

Looking up at the sky, the crescent moon shining down on them, Nagisa felt very small. His breath caught, at the sound of the first bell to signify the start of the New Year. Even as a little kid, he’d loved listening to them. As was tradition, they rung out another hundred and seven times, filling the air with their melody. Nagisa’s eyes slipped closed, taking in the sound.

When the skies fell silent again, Nagisa smiled. “Happy New Year, Karma kun.”

“Happy New Year,” he replied, eyes lost in the constellations.

A customary kick came to his stomach. Nagisa sighed, looking down at it. *Yes, Akuma, happy New Year to you too.*

They went back inside, after the festivity was over. Though Nagisa had become (frighteningly quickly) accustomed to sleeping beside Karma, sleeping with him in a nest was something different entirely. It was heavy. Karma either didn’t recognise or care about the significance, relaxing pretty quickly, though Nagisa could tell he was awake.

Nagisa felt restless. He shifted into several positions, impatient to find one that was going to work for him. To make matters worse, his stomach decided to complain. He knew he couldn’t go and eat anything, but now the thought was on his mind…

“I want ice cream,” Nagisa mumbled to himself.

Karma stirred. “Huh?”

He tried turning over again, groaning at the effort. “Strawberries…”

The mattress shifted beside him, which Nagisa guessed was just Karma turning over, tired of his annoying pregnant omega antics. *Nagisa* was certainly tired of it. Frustratingly, he began to feel incredibly hot, which didn’t make much sense given the winter season. He gave up in the end, deciding to just trip the clothes off, aside from his underwear. That was significantly better.

Nagisa was the first to wake up in the morning, with his mandatory bladder emptying duty. Thankfully, Karma wasn’t clinging to him, so it was easy enough to remove himself without causing a disturbance. When he was done, he was tempted to go back into the warm nest and sleep again. Upon investigation, Karma had stretched out in his absence, so there wasn’t much room for him to seamlessly return.

For a guy most people were fearful, or at the very least wary, of, Karma looked peaceful in his sleep. There was none of that mischievous fire that danced across his features when he was up to no good, or the malice than sometimes set in when he was doing something seriously bad. He looked kind of harmless, actually, despite Nagisa knowing far better. Nagisa’s chest fluttered at the way he breathed lightly, chest rising and falling with steadiness, and he knew he had to turn away.

“Your dad’s a heavy sleeper, huh?” Nagisa said quietly to his stomach, as he felt Akuma roll
Aside from those soft movements, he began to feel the familiar pangs of hunger. Not so hot anymore, Nagisa crept over to the nest, quickly grabbing one of the shirts to pull over his body. With his stomach in the way, there was no chance of it buttoning up, but at least the sleeves kept his arms warm.

He went down to the kitchen, hoping he’d find something there to satisfy him. For some reason, he didn’t really feel like a normal breakfast. Nothing that involved cooking, at least. He tried the fridge, nothing really catching his eye at first. Out of desperation, he moved to the freezer, though he wasn’t expecting much at all.

It was packed with stuff that definitely hadn’t been there the day before. Nagisa looked over at the shelves, which were lined with strawberry ice cream of several different brands. The sight pleased his stomach, and he eagerly reached for a brand he knew, grabbed a spoon, and let the flavour he’d been craving dance across his taste buds.

“Morning.”

The spoon fell slightly out of Nagisa’s mouth. “H-hi.”

“Nagisa kun,” he tutted, “that’s not a healthy breakfast.”

“S good,” he replied around the spoon.

Karma leaned against the counter nonchalantly, though a slight flush was evident on his cheeks. “You fell asleep before I could give it to you last night.”

Nagisa needed to take a moment to process that. “Last night?”

“Well yeah,” he said, “you said you wanted some, so.”

“Y-you got me ice cream in the middle of the night?”

He stood up properly. “You better appreciate it. Anyway, what do you want to do later?”

He really didn’t want to just drop the subject right then and there. How did Karma even find a place that was open in the middle of the night, on New Years no less… Nagisa couldn’t help but feel guilty. He was being a massive burden, he was sure of it. Despite that, the ice cream did taste good. Now that it was there, he may as well eat some of it.

“We could go to a shrine or something,” Nagisa offered.

“Eh…” Karma paused. “I don’t really believe in that kind of thing. But I don’t mind.”

After Karma had grabbed a spoon and helped Nagisa finish the first tub of ice cream, they headed out. Nagisa was only wearing his (technically Karma’s) regular clothes. Even if he had his kimono to hand, he had serious doubts that it would have fit him still. They probably wouldn’t be the only ones dressed casually, or so he hoped.

By the time they actually got to the shrine in Kunugigaoka, it wasn’t busy. Most people, Nagisa guessed, were still midway through their morning traditions. At least that meant no queuing. It wasn’t like any of the big shrines in Tokyo, but even a small town like theirs could get pretty busy.

Nagisa realised, when he actually stepped up to throw his offering coin in, that he didn’t know
what to pray for. As a kid, he generally defaulted into wishing for a generally good year. *I pray that I’ll graduate*, Nagisa thought, as he went through the ritual. *I pray that Kayano will recover soon, that Karma and I will continue to work things out, and*, he hesitated, *that Akuma will be born safely into this world.*

Not making any kind of offering himself, Karma waited for him. As they left the premises together, passing the people who were setting up the festivities in preparation for the crowds who would surely come by later. He found himself not missing the traditions he’d always taken part in that much.

Even though he and Karma just went straight home, Nagisa decided he wouldn’t have wanted it differently. They spent the rest of the day chatting and watching the special TV programs for the day, and Nagisa forgot. Even if allowing himself this would come back to haunt him later, Nagisa just couldn’t bring himself to care. It was a new year after all, a fresh slate. He felt *happy.*

In bed that night, when the lights were completely turned out, Nagisa sensed Karma roll onto his side, propping himself up on his elbow.

“Say, can I ask you something?”

There was no harm. “What is it, Karma kun?”

Karma hesitated. “I was thinking… Maybe we could drop the formalities.”

“*Why?*” It was the first thought that came to mind.

Rolling onto his back, Nagisa could tell Karma was thinking. “It’s a little weird, right? We’re going to be parents really soon, and… I think I’d rather just call you *Nagisa.* Are you okay with that?”

“Oh…” Nagisa felt his blood boil.

“I’ll just do it on my own, then,” Karma said. “G’night, Nagisa.”

It wasn’t like it would do anymore damage, Nagisa supposed.

“Karma,” he said, letting the wisps of it float out into the darkness. Nagisa smiled, rolling over himself to bury his head into Karma’s chest. It just felt *right.*

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Chapter End Notes

First of all, full credits to @assclass-stories on Tumblr (DianaMorticai on AO3) - who you should all check out her content is great - for the idea for Karma's birthday gift!

I hope that’s enough fluff to tide you over...

As you might have gathered, sorry guys, no civil war arc. It's not like I WANT to skip it, but... Karma beating the shit out of Nagisa when he's like 5000 months pregnant? Not gonna happen. I mean, Nagisa's already being constantly beat up by his child, so we can let him have a break. As for the kind of plot development, I've decided to just kind of leave it to your interpretation. This fic won't really touch on any of that plot
(unless you want like another 20k words before we finally meet the baby - lol) - though don't worry, Karma and Nagisa will physically face off much later in this fic!

Anywho, as always, comments and feedback mean everything to me!
Detachment Time

Chapter Summary

The winter break draws to a close

Chapter Notes

Nagisa's favourite river is de Nile

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Nagisa found himself saying Karma’s name a lot, in the coming days. It was more than ridiculous at that point, Nagisa wasn’t even talking as a natural human. Still, every time he said it, leaving the honorific off, he felt a kind of giddiness.

“Karma, can you pass the salt?”

“No problem, Nagisa.”

Of course, Karma was doing it too. That helped, at least a little bit. Perhaps they were just as strange as each other… If that was true, he feared for whatever Akuma’s personality was going to be, if he was to buy into the whole nature vs nurture thing. For all that his pregnancy had given him as a preview, there was no doubt that his child was half Karma.

“Hey Nagisa, want to play another round on the DS after this?”

“Sure, Karma.”

A few days after New Year, the country had churned back into its regular self. Since the few days of celebration had passed, Nagisa knew his time in this small bubble with Karma was coming to a swift end. Despite a few moments of weakness, where he allowed himself to just be happy, Nagisa was beginning to snap himself out of it. It was all too good to be true, really.

Nagisa couldn’t be an ignorant little kid anymore. Through everything, he’d sacrificed that part of himself. Strangely, he wasn’t that mournful about it. At least, right then, there was no time to cry over lost childhood. It also meant that he couldn’t allow himself to get lost in fantasies. Spending a little over a week in Karma’s company, as good as it felt, was unsustainable.

“Karma, do you want to come with us to visit Kayano later?”

“I’m alright, Nagisa.”

Honestly, Nagisa didn’t know what was best for himself. There was no way this was normal. It felt normal, at the time, but… It shouldn’t be, right? His head was getting all confused. They were just friends, friends who made a pretty big mistake and were trying to make the best out of it or something. Whatever his head was doing to him, working against all logic, thinking of Karma as ‘mate’… It needed to stop. And he wasn’t going to stop, cuddling up next to him every night. At
the thought of Karma’s warm arms around him, Nagisa softened, and immediately lurched.

What was *wrong* with him?

“Are you sure you don’t want to come?” Nagisa asked once again, right before the time he had to leave. He’d arranged to meet Sugino, Kanzaki, and Okuda outside the hospital, once Kayano had recovered enough for visitors. He knew that they weren’t exactly close friends, but…

Karma shrugged. “It’s cool. You go.”

He sounded bothered by something, though Nagisa had no idea what. There was no use dwelling on it, Nagisa supposed. There was no use trying to convince Karma to do something he really didn’t want to. Perhaps it would be some good air space from each other, anyway.

“Shoes?”

Nagisa nodded, leaning most of his weight on the railing of the staircase. If he had really wanted to, Nagisa could have suffered through the exertion of trying to put them on for himself… But he didn’t mind the help. He lifted one foot, allowing Karma (who was basically squatting) to slip the shoe on and tie the laces up. They repeated the process, almost therapeutically. After that was done, Karma wordlessly grabbed one of his coats, not going as far as to fully put it on Nagisa, but draping it over his shoulders.

After he let go of the stairs and put his arms properly into the garment, Nagisa felt the beginnings of that all too familiar twinge. Automatically, he reached out for the closest thing to cling on to, which happened to be Karma’s arm. Nagisa thought he’d become better at handling these, ever since they’d started happening. He squeezed his eyes shut, trying to focus on his breathing.

“Contraction,” he managed to bite out in explanation.

Thankfully, Karma chose not to say much, but allowed Nagisa to cling onto him, supporting his back with his hand. Until it was over, Nagisa stood like that, using Karma’s body as his only tether from the pain. It was a pretty bad one, but not as intense as that first one in class.

Finally, he breathed, coming down from it. “H-how long was that?”

“Minute and a half,” Karma answered. “Are you okay?”

Nagisa shuddered slightly, but pulled back. “Mm. I’m fine now.”

“I can come,” he said.

“I can get there fine,” Nagisa said. He didn’t want Karma to come just for Nagisa’s sake. “We still have two weeks before we really have to watch out.”

Saying it aloud, their eyes locked and widened. Saying it like that, *two weeks*, it made Nagisa feel weird. He wasn’t due for another five, but Doctor Shirogane had made it very clear that Akuma might not actually wait that long. It still seemed so far in the distance that Nagisa hadn’t really allowed himself to *think* about what would happen next, but in reality it wasn’t that much time at all. His appointments were about to bump up to weekly visits, even.

“See you, Karma,” he said softly, letting himself out.

“Later.”
To be honest, Nagisa was enjoying his ability to walk whilst it lasted. From everything he’d seen, it would get pretty tough from here on out. Not that he wasn’t completely exhausted by the time he made it to the train station, though. Luckily, pregnancy did have *one* benefit. Automatically getting the good seat on the train… he was going to miss that. The first few times he’d hated it, feeling as if he was inconveniencing everyone, but now he was so uncomfortable with standing on his own two feet for so long he’d stopped caring so much.

He made it to the hospital only a little late, but his friends were already standing outside talking.

“Hey Nagisa!” Sugino said, as he approached. “How was New Years?”

Nagisa wasn’t entirely sure *how* to describe how he’d spent the winter break. “I didn’t do that much,” he said, “but it was pretty fun.”

“Man,” he said, “I ate *so much.*”

They continued to converse casually, as they made their way inside the hospital. After briefly talking to the receptionist, they were quickly let into the room that Kayano was recovering in. Even at a glance, Nagisa could tell she looked a lot better. She was sitting up comfortably, and smiled when they walked in.

“How are you doing, Kaya-“ Nagisa stopped himself. That was right, she wasn’t actually the Kayano he’d known. “Yukimura san.”

She kept her fond smile. “You can call me ‘Kayano’. ‘Kayano Kaede’ isn’t bad at all.”

Sugino sighed, sitting down on one of the designated visitor chairs. “So much for your winter break, huh? Not to mention the holidays.”

“I’ll make it back just in time for the new term,” she said, sounding not at all bothered by her situation. This really *was* the real her, huh? “How was your time off?”

“None of us could even bring up the subject of assassination,” Sugino said.

It was true. They’d made a LINE chat when they were planning their assassination on the southern island, to iron out some details without having to physically be together. Since then, it had retained its use for assassination planning, amongst other things. The only message Nagisa had noticed all break was somebody asking about the homework.

“I’m sorry,” Kayano looked down. “It’s all my fault. Now that I know the truth, I’ve gotten some closure, but… Now the rest of you all know about Korosensei’s past.”

“No Kayano,” Nagisa felt the need to say, “we had to find out sometime.”

“We all tried so hard not to face facts…” Okuda sighed, “so we could enjoy our fun assassinations for even just a little longer.”

“Everyone’s probably spent the break thinking how we can face our assassination classroom from now on,” Nagisa said honestly. At the way Kayano hung onto his words, Nagisa remembered something very important. “Oh! And… I need to apologise to you Kayano. About that night. I’m sorry!” For emphasis, he bowed as best as he could. “That’s the only thing I could come up with in the heat of the moment. Are you mad?”

When she was silent for a moment, Nagisa expected the worst. “Heck no! You saved me. All I can do is thank you!”
“Thank goodness!” Nagisa breathed a sigh of relief. “If you’d said we were through…” He didn’t know what he’d do, actually. The guilt of driving one of his best friends away from him with a kiss, even if it was only to save her life, would have been horrible.

“You worry too much.” She dove under the covers. “We’ll be friends forever.”

Kanzaki stood up. “We should get going. Kayano san must be tuckered out.”

“You’re right,” Nagisa said. He didn’t want to wear Kayano out more, now she was definitely recovering. “Bye, Kayano!”

“See you in a couple of days!” Okuda added.

“Later!” Sugino called, as they left the room.

Once they were outside, Kanzaki leant against the doorframe, letting out a laugh sound that could also easily be a cough.

“What’s up, Kanzaki san?” Nagisa felt compelled to ask.

“She’d been watching the class from somewhat of a distance, but now I feel like she’s finally joined us in the same place.”

She had a point, Nagisa realised. The others asked if he wanted to come with them to get some food with them, but he declined, therefore having the entire way back to think about things. He was really glad that Kayano was still himself. He hadn’t had much of a chance to really dig deep into what had happened. Now that he could plainly see that the Kayano he’d made friends with was still there, he didn’t mind that she’d hidden her real identity. At the end of the day, she was an assassin, just like everyone else.

Was that why Karma refused to come see her? Nagisa got the feeling he had a hard time trusting people, so that would make sense… Thinking about Karma, something deep inside him lurched. Walking alone back to the train, Nagisa realised he missed him. It can’t have been more than an hour or two, but Nagisa felt all wrong without Karma at his side.

That couldn’t be healthy, on any kind of level. He’d diagnosed it for himself, finally. His head was just all confused, that was all. Internally, being so close, his stupid instincts had decided to latch on. Staying in his presence would only make it worse, so Nagisa needed to leave as soon as possible, re-build the distance between them enough so that he could think of anything other than being held by Karma.

“How’s Kayano chan?” Karma asked from the kitchen, when Nagisa got back.

Nagisa bit his lip. “A lot better. She’s going to come back to school with us.”

Nodding, he ate a spoonful of ice cream. “Well, looks like the final term’s going to be interesting.”

He really had gone overboard with the ice cream. Nagisa was never going to be able to eat the stuff again, after this. They’d managed to go through about seven of the large tubs in a few days, and that had taken effort. At least Karma could see the back of part of his freezer again, at least. There was that blurry, funny feeling again that threatened to swallow Nagisa whole.

“I’m okay to go back today,” Nagisa said, whilst he still had his nerve.

Karma blinked. “Why?”
He swallowed. “I-I totally sprung myself on you. I’m really sorry about that,” he lowered his head, “and thank you for letting me stay here this break. B-but, it’s not right for me to take advantage of that permanently.”

“This is just as much my fault,” Karma pointed out calmly. “You don’t have to leave.”

Like static in the air, he could sense something coming from Karma. He wasn’t entirely sure what it was, it wasn’t the same clear way he could tell how his mother was feeling – that came from years of practise. Trust him to make this hard for Nagisa.

“I know I don’t have to,” Nagisa tried to match his tone, to keep himself from bursting into tears or something equally ridiculous. “But I still feel like I’m imposing.”

“Nagisa-“

He couldn’t. “This is my choice.”

If Nagisa was ever going to look back on this conversation, he knew it would be with regret. He just didn’t have the guts, right then, to tell Karma the truth. Perhaps Karma would have understood, if he’d really let him know that he was feeling this crazy attachment, and the only way to sever it back to a manageable level was by putting their regular distance back between them. It was for the best, anyway. Karma didn’t need someone like him tying him down, no more than Nagisa already was with all of this. He’d have agreed with Nagisa, if he’d told him, Nagisa was sure.

“Fine,” Karma lounged back neutrally, “whatever. Can you get your things okay?”

Why did Nagisa feel so… disappointed? He almost wanted to take it all back, to declare that he’d changed his mind, but then he remembered he had to be firm. There was no way he could act like a child anymore. Forcing himself to grow up… that surely meant doing the things he didn’t want to do at all, because they were for the best.

Karma was so hard to read. Probably the hardest person Nagisa had come across in his short life, since he discovered his talent for it. Everything up there, in his head, came across with whirling complexity. When Nagisa could truly interpret what Karma’s intentions were for certain, it was because Karma wanted him to know. As Nagisa picked up all his things, Karma was very quiet, even when he said goodbye.

Forcing himself to take a deep breath, Nagisa made his way out into the cold. He couldn’t let himself turn around. When he reached the Asano residence, definitely absent of Asano Senior, given the lack of car (the easiest tell-tale sign of his presence), it felt almost eerie. It was as if Nagisa had somehow moved on, begun a new chapter of his existence, and was trying to force himself back a few pages.

Still, he walked up to the back door as he usually did, opened it like always, and made his way upstairs like he had so many times before. Nothing had changed, in the week and a half since he was last there.

Likely having heard the door, Asano chose the right moment to come out of his bedroom. “You’re back.”

“Mmm,” Nagisa forced himself into pleasantness. “Did you have a good break?”

He leant against the door frame. “More like weird. Your class didn’t do anything to my father, right?”
Technically, they *had*, when he tried and failed to knock down their class and faced off against Korosensei. Nagisa hadn’t immediately noticed that large of a change in his personality, right off the bat. Then again, Nagisa didn’t know enough to get a full measure of it, unlike his son would have.

“Nothing out of the ordinary,” Nagisa replied. Technically, it was the truth.

“He got me a *birthday card,*” he wrinkled his nose.

Wait. “It was your birthday?’”

Asano rolled his eyes. “Yeah, the first.”

That was the final straw, apparently. Tears formed at the corners of Nagisa’s eyes, spilling out at steady rates. He didn’t know why that had done him in, but there was definitely guilt. After all, Asano had really saved his ass, even if it was for less than honourable purposes. Deep down, he was lightly aware that this was probably also his hormones playing up, at least.

“I’m s-sorry I didn’t know,” Nagisa managed to get out. “Y-you were so nice to me on my birthday, a-and you took me out, and I didn’t even *know* about yours.”

Blinking slowly, Asano looked over Nagisa much like he looked at homework. “I’m not that bothered by birthdays. So what, you lived another year? It’s not that much of an achievement.”

“But,” he felt so awful. Nagisa forced himself to take a breath. “I’ll make it up to you! Like an IOU.”

“I don’t need—” Asano stopped. “An IOU? Something I can cash in, whenever I want? That’s an *interesting* proposition, Nagisa kun.”

Nagisa was beginning to hate the ideas produced by his stupid brain. “W-within reason. I’m really sorry,” he repeated, again. “Uhm, happy late birthday.”

“Sure,” he said, “I forgive you.”

That made him feel a little better, at least. He excused himself, returning to the same blank canvas of a room that had somehow felt like his own in the last few months. It didn’t smell at all like Karma. There was no warmth, no ultimate comfort that had left him the most at ease he had been in his memory. This was for the *best.* Nagisa went over to the bed, forcing himself to lie and try to relax on it.

Giving up on that plan, he opened the draw from the bedside table, pulling out the notebook, and the knife he’d hidden underneath it. He flicked through it, the list of Korosensei’s weaknesses all written out before his eyes. It was time to focus.

Taking a pen, he did some quick maths, and wrote it out.

**Days until assassination: sixty four.**

**Days until birth: forty three – approx.**

The final term was about to begin.

Chapter End Notes
What, you thought I'd let them actually stay happy? For more than a chapter at a time? Fools.

In other news, this chapter is more of a 'wrapping things up'. I promise, we're on the homestretch now. Not for the fic in its entirety, not at all, but for you know what ;)

As always, I love and appreciate all comments and feedback!
Valentines Day Time

Chapter Summary

After a pretty uneventful month, Valentines Day roles around.

Chapter Notes

*writes chapter from Karma's POV to confirm that yes, he did indeed have a boner in chapter 25*

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“U-uhm,” Okuda stood in front of him, holding out a box, “the chocolates you asked for, Karma kun.”

Karma considered them, and took the sealed box. She’d gone to the extra effort of wrapping them up all nice and cute… perfect. This was going to work out great, Karma was sure. It had been a simple request, he was sure, just chocolates laced with a little cyanide. He was going to hide them in Terasaka’s shoe hole later, to see what would happen. It wouldn’t really hurt him, probably. The flavour of cyanide was too strong to miss, anyway, he’d likely spit the chocolates straight out.

“Thanks, Okuda san,” he pocketed the chocolates.

What? Karma only had a few days left to have any real fun, he was just making the most of it whilst he still could.

Speaking of fun… Karma noticed Nakamura sauntering over. “Something for me?” He joked, though plainly she had no chocolates in hand.

Naturally, she ignored him. “Look over at Kayano chan.” Sure enough, the girl was trembling, badly hiding what looked like a box of her own chocolates underneath the desk. “I’d say she has the hots for Nagisa.”

Karma felt himself stiffen. “What makes you think that?”

“This special image, for one,” Nakamura pulled out her phone, displaying the clear picture of Nagisa kissing Kayano. “Wanna torture her a little?”

He considered his options. Going along with Nakamura would definitely be the easiest, the most expected course of action for someone like him. It was good cover for his real feelings, so he nodded, and begun to approach Kayano’s desk with her.

“What do we have here?” Karma questioned, making her jump from behind.

“And who are those for, hmm?” Nakamura followed.

She blushed heavily. “Wh-what do you mean? It’s just a formality! Th-they could be for
anybody!"

“Oh?” Karma motioned for Nakamura to pass him her phone, which still had the picture on the display. “And here I was sure you were giving them to this guy here.”

Kayano’s entire form crumbled. “Forgive me! Please forgive me!”

He wasn’t really sure what her deal was, or who she was addressing that to. It was pretty clear she had developed a crush on Nagisa. He wasn’t sure how long for, probably hiding her true feelings with those genius acting skills, but that had stopped after that kiss. Now… She was practically cowering in them.

Karma would be lying to himself if he didn’t acknowledge that he, too, had been destroyed by Nagisa’s kiss. Like his own personal poison. It had been a lot deeper than that, but it was still the catalyst. He wondered if he’d ever be fortunate enough to feel it again, though the thought also scared him. At first, he’d felt a kind of madness rush over him that night Nagisa had kissed Kayano. It was like being stabbed in the gut repeatedly, every hit a reminder of what he wasn’t allowed.

And then Nagisa had spent the winter break with him. It was odd, when they’d first been friends, Karma had enjoyed Nagisa’s company because he was just a harmless little mouse. And now he knew better, knew that Nagisa could kill him in his sleep, letting his guard down wasn’t scary, it was thrilling. Karma had never felt that kind of desire to be close with anybody, but Nagisa… Nagisa rewrote all the rules for him with his mere existence.

“Let’s continue this discussion,” Karma’s eyes darted around the classroom. “I know where.”

Leading the way, they went outside, to one of Karasuma’s favourite areas to drill them. It wasn’t far from the main path towards the class building, where the trees were tall but pretty easy to climb. Due to a great variation in branch height, some of the higher ones were masked by the branches below. Right at the start of the school year, Karma had pegged it as an excellent vantage position.

He scratched the back of his head. “You don’t want Nagisa to hear this, right? He can barely walk right now, let alone scale a tree.”

There weren’t any arguments to that, at least, and they began to climb up. It really was true, watching Nagisa attempt to move anywhere at speed greater than that of a small turtle was kind of… entertaining. At his last appointment a few days ago, the doctor said it was because Akuma was facing head down now, and would be staying like that. He wasn’t sure how happy Nagisa had been about that development, though he had pointed out it was better than when Akuma was constantly practising their summersaults.

“So,” Nakamura said, when they’d reached the intended branch, “spill it.”

Kayano trembled again, and practically collapsed into the bark. “I-isn’t it perverted? Nagisa’s an o-omega, and-“

“I don’t see the big deal,” Karma found himself saying. “People just like who they like, right?”

“I guess…” She faced him properly, face crimson. “You’re okay with it?”

If that didn’t feel like a hard punch the gut… If Karma were honest, he wasn’t okay with it. Though he wasn’t particularly happy about Kayano lying to them for almost a full year, he had to respect the nerve she had as an assassin. Kayano herself wasn’t the problem. It was just, he wanted Nagisa to be his, not somebody else’s. But Karma knew now, he’d promised, he didn’t have any
right to claim that.

He sighed. “Why would I care what Nagisa does in his spare time?”

“But-“

“Yeah,” Karma said, “our kid’s not calling you Mama. So, now that’s settled.”

Kayano’s flush remained. “I don’t know where to start! I’ve acted love tons of times and studied it and stuff but I have no real life experience liking a classmate! Like, what expression should I make when I give him the chocolates?”

If Karma really knew the answer to that, he’d be taking Nagisa out to dinner already.

“Say,” Nakamura cut in, “Isogai and Kataoka are below us. Let’s study them.”

They watched the interaction from above like some kind of drama, with Kataoka handing Isogai a giant selection of different kinds of chocolate. They made a pretty good pairing, really. As class representatives, it was only natural that they’d grown close together. Kayano seemed to be hanging onto every word, so at least she was taking this seriously.

Nakamura yawned. “I saw Kanzaki give chocolates to Sugino earlier. He flipped.”

Karma thought about it. “Hayami gave Chiba some chocolate bullets next to the target range on our way over here.”

“See?” Nakamura said. “Everyone has their own whys and hows for this.”

That was pretty sound advice, Karma guessed. He could go off that. “Shouldn’t you just say what you want to say in your own way?”

“Yeah,” Kayano agreed. “Thanks, you two. Looks like he’s over there.”

Following the direction of her eyes, Karma too saw the small figure resting against a much smaller tree, his cerulean hair unmistakable. He rolled his eyes. “Well, I’m gonna go help him out. He has no chance standing up again on his own.”

His heart rate started to rise, when he leapt out of the tree, but not from fear of falling. In truth, he’d been thinking about telling Nagisa everything. It wasn’t like Kayano had dibs or anything, Nagisa’s heart was still fair game. There wasn’t going to be a better time, Karma thought. Though, it wasn’t as if he had chocolates or anything, mostly because he wasn’t a twelve year old girl.

Maybe he could ask him out. It’s not like it would make much of a difference, they went out together all the time. Would it really change things that much if Kama called it a ‘date’ rather than ‘hanging out’? It was just the matter of wording, really. Trying to ignore the tell-tale tingle of heat rising in his cheeks, Karma pictured it. Nagisa, let’s go on a date.

It wasn’t as if they’d be doing more than the usually did, anyway. Maybe it would be nice to kiss him or something, but he didn’t need to. Mostly, Karma realised his feelings for Nagisa were surprisingly innocent. Sure, there had been a few times… Karma was certainly attracted to him, and being in such close quarters to Nagisa a little over a month ago, well, his body had reacted. Thankfully, he was sure Nagisa was too innocent to notice.

And then there was New Years morning, where Nagisa had woken up first. Karma found him eating ice cream in the kitchen, wearing one of his own shirts. The sleeves were comically long on
his arms, but that meant the extra fabric was tantalizing. Aside from the shirt, the only other thing he’d been wearing was underwear. *Tight* underwear. Part of his ass and thighs had been covered by the length of the shirt, but he could see that creamy skin he had weird urges to bite into. He’d had to actually bite his own hand to supress himself, when Nagisa started practically sucking the ice cream from the spoon.

So maybe his feelings were a *tiny* bit sexual.

“Yo,” Karma collected himself to say, when he reached the spot Nagisa was resting.

Nagisa blinked slowly through thick eyelashes. “Oh, hey Karma. I didn’t mean to fall asleep.”

Of course he didn’t. Karma decided to drop to his level, sitting down beside him. “What were you doing?”

He stretched his arms. “The ground’s more comfy than the school desks,” he yawned. “I was gonna eat chocolate.”

Sure enough, there was a large pile next to his thigh. “Wow Nagisa, I didn’t realise you were such a *womanizer*.”

“It’s not like that!” Nagisa protested. “They weren’t giving them to me *romantically*.”

Whilst that was probably true, Karma wouldn’t put it past Nagisa to just not notice at all if the intention was romance. If Karma was going to do this, right now, he had to be really direct. Plainly saying ‘I like you’… Nagisa would just assume he meant as friends. But what if it went wrong? Karma couldn’t say anything too incriminating, in case he needed to backtrack at any point.

Before he could say anything, Nagisa had a finger to his throat, soothing his pulse point. After the initial jolt of fear, Karma did find himself relaxing, concentration returning to normal.

“Karma?” Nagisa tilted his head an asked innocently. “What’s wrong? Your wave of consciousness was all over the place.”

At the last hurdle, Nagisa’s soft yet worn out smile, Karma hesitated. Somebody like Nagisa… deserved so much better than him. Karma had already screwed him up for life as it was, and though he liked messing with Nagisa a little, he still wanted the best for him. Maybe *that* was love, rather than admiration for his talent and appearance. Karma lived to see him squirm, but… real happiness was better in general. Somebody like Kayano could make Nagisa happier than *he* could even try to. That was right. No matter what, Karma couldn’t let his true feelings slip.

“I’m hungry,” Karma announced, desperately trying to change the subject. He reached over Nagisa’s body.

Nagisa lightly bat his hand away. “Mine.”

Karma rolled his eyes. “I’ll bet you for them.”

Keeping up his smile, Nagisa ate a chocolate from one of the boxes he’d already opened. “What kind of bet?”

“How about,” he thought, “if I can balance all the boxes on your stomach, I get to keep one.”

“All of them?” Nagisa said, a little weakly. He said a lot of things like that, recently.
Karma swallowed, deciding to concentrate on this. “Sure.”

He picked the largest, and flattest box out of the pile to make the best base. Nagisa’s stomach was incredibly curved, but physically it had the least chance of wobbling and knocking the rest down. Nagisa just watched him as he evaluated it like a real problem. He didn’t even like chocolate that much… But a bet was a bet, even if he’d initiated it. The tower got to quite an impressive height, actually, to the point where there was only one was remaining. Biting his lip to concentrate, he was just about to balance it, when there was a sudden, clear foot shaped emergence from Nagisa’s stomach, unbalancing the tower so it toppled.

Nagisa couldn’t hold his laughter back. “I guess you lose.”

For a moment, Karma was speechless. Betrayed by his own child… And at the very last second, too.

“You might want to stay in there,” he warned, speaking directly to Nagisa’s bump. “If you decide to come out right now I might have a bone to pick.”

This was all he needed.

“Rio chan,” Kaede looked down at the interaction between Nagisa and Karma, “d-do you see it?”

The other girl shrugged. “Depends what you mean.”

Kaede was sure she was right about this. “It’s just, they look like a family.”

It was all she could see, unless she was being somehow deceived. From their position, she couldn’t make out the conversation entirely, though she gathered they were playing some kind of game, but that had died down. It felt intrusive to watch them, to be honest. Nagisa was resting his head on Karma’s shoulder, and Karma was touching his baby bump with uncharacteristic softness.

In just a few days, as Nagisa had told her, they could have a baby. They were going to be parents.

“Hmm,” Rio said, otherwise silent.

She watched Karma flip himself onto his feet, bending down to offer both hands for support, practically pulling back up. It wasn’t even really competition. The two had something between them, this bond, that Kaede couldn’t replicate even if she wanted to. And she didn’t want to. Though despite the circumstances, she still liked him… getting in the way of something like that...

It was a good thing Kaede was an actress. She’d played a character all year, she could do it again. This time, she’d take on the role of Nagisa’s friend. She’d still give him the chocolates, platonically, and wish him good luck for everything in the future. Then she’d stand back, try and move on as Nagisa did with his own life.

She even found herself smiling lightly. Karma and Nagisa weren’t as good as acting as they probably thought they were. If they were planning to continue pretending to be plain friends, then well, it was a ticking time bomb before someone discovered the truth. Before graduation, if she had to make a guess. But, she’d keep that a secret. Boys, they really could be clueless.

Chapter End Notes
They're both idiots.

Time till D Day: 4 days *whistles*

As always, I love all comments! Until next time!
Due Date Time

Chapter Summary

Finally, the 18th of February rolls around

Chapter Notes

*side eyes*

See the end of the chapter for more notes

With all things considered, Nagisa wasn’t sure how to feel about it being his due date. The last month and a half had been pretty uneventful, filled with a few reluctant assassination attempts. Nagisa was just too tired and uncomfortable to think about much, just quietly nodding along in class as if he wasn’t suffering. Still, there was a light buzz under his skin. Tomorrow, he might finally have met his baby.

For the last couple of weeks, everything even slightly out of the usual had been met with tension. Nagisa wasn’t blind, he could feel the way Karma’s eyes fell on him if he so much as shifted weirdly. He didn’t think it was going to be that dramatic, but it felt nice to not be alone in the nervousness. It was February the eighteenth, the day he’d had marked ever since that first real doctor’s appointment.

Maybe he could attempt to ‘enjoy’ the last day. He had a love/hate relationship with Akuma’s kicking. On the downside, it was kind of annoying, even hurting now they were a lot stronger, but… It was kind of sad to think he wouldn’t feel it again, in a way. Still, for the last nine months, his body hadn’t been his own. It would be nice to have it back, though Nagisa wasn’t sure if he even remembered what that was like.

Of course, he noticed the way everyone was looking at him. Nagisa hoped it wouldn’t happen right there and then, at least. God, that would be embarrassing. Still, the day had to go on as planned. During third period, after basically being on the edge of his seat for most of the day, Nagisa begun to feel the ever familiar twinge. Though he’d learnt how to cope with his false contractions well enough, he couldn’t help but freak out just a little.

He tried his best to breathe through it, clutching the desk as his eyes squeezed shut. Causing a scene was the last thing he wanted, which thankfully didn’t seem to have happened. The contraction was over in around a minute, he suspected, though it was hard to tell. His heart started beating faster than usual, once he’d come down from it. This could be the start. Nagisa’s eyes were locked on the clock. Unfortunately, that meant that time seemed to move excruciatingly slowly.

The lessons bled into each other, broke up for lunch, and started up again without another contraction in sight. Nagisa felt a little defeated, when even by the end of the school day he hadn’t felt another one. That didn’t mean it wouldn’t happen, he tried to force himself to remember. They weren’t through the entire day yet.
“You okay, Nagisa?” Sugino thought to ask, when they were dismissed from class.

Trying and failing to catch up with a normal walking pace, Nagisa nodded. “I just want them out,” he admitted.

“You know,” Maehara said casually, “if it’s a boy you should call it Hiroto.”

“No way,” Nakamura cut in. “It’s clearly a girl, and Rio is a great name.”

Karma looked over at her. “Yeah sure, in your dreams.”

“Why not just stick with Akuma,” Hazama suggested, because of course she would.

Walking anywhere felt akin to trying to carry a watermelon between his legs, but thankfully they weren’t going too fast. Only one more day, Nagisa told himself. It felt impossibly short and long at the same time. In one sense, the idea of it only being mere hours now was terrifying, in the grand scheme of things such a tiny amount of time. But it still felt so far off, like it was still going to be months, an abstract idea of a child that would come eventually.

Once they’d eventually reached the bottom of the mountain, everyone said their goodbyes for the day, though he sensed the way they all seemed to glance over their shoulders at him. It felt like quite a bit of pressure on him and his womb, actually.

Karma lingered. “Are you-”

“I’m not going to give birth in the next ten minutes,” Nagisa said. “I’ll, uhm,” he thought, “I’ll text you, if anything happens.”

It didn’t turn out to be necessary. No matter how much he paced around the bedroom, lay in a variety of positions, and twirled his thumbs, nothing was happening. In the end he decided to at least try and get some sleep, he was exhausted anyway, and it would kill some time. Unfortunately, when he woke up again, it was the morning, and he was still pregnant. And then the day came and went, and then it was the next.

Nagisa had heard stories about people going all the way up to forty two weeks, which made him want to cry in despair. On the twentieth of February, he was only two days over, and with every second that passed, he felt more and more overdue. At this point, Nagisa was half tempted to stick his hand up there and pull the damn baby out himself. That probably wouldn’t be the safest way to do it, though.

It didn’t help that Karma was treating him like an invalid. Nagisa felt like one, for sure, but that didn’t mean he needed reminding. If he was completely honest with himself, he probably wouldn’t have been able to walk as effectively without Karma helping to hold him up, but he didn’t have to be happy about that. Thanks to the days bleeding over, he was having to go through another doctor’s appointment.

Doctor Shirogane looked at him sympathetically, as he was practically carried into her examination room. “How are you doing, Nagisa kun? Feeling some strain, probably?”

Nagisa nodded weakly, attempting to get himself comfortable on the examination chair. He was well aware of the procedure, at that point. He answered the mandatory questions about his health, lifted his shirt so she could feel for whatever she needed to on his stomach, and sighed when she brought the ultrasound wand out, and Akuma’s image filled the screen.

“Heartbeat is 132bpm,” she noted, “nicely in the average range. Alright, time for the internal
examination. Karma kun,” she gestured.

Karma’s grip on Nagisa’s shoulder (he hadn’t even registered him putting it there) tightened. “No,”
he practically growled, in a voice that was uncharacteristically serious for him.

Doctor Shirogane kept her features neutral. “It’s no different from every other appointment,” she
explained. “I promise it won’t hurt Nagisa kun.”

His fingers only seemed to clench tighter. Nagisa swallowed, the pheromones coming from Karma
detectable despite the neutralised examination room. Though he usually loved Karma’s protective
scent, this wasn’t something warm that smelt like home, but with an edge of ice, threatening.

“I don’t mind if he stays,” Nagisa said, to keep the peace. He didn’t need Karma getting himself
thrown out.

She just smiled. “If you’re sure. Don’t worry about it,” she looked directly at Karma, “if anything
this is a good sign. They say alphas and their babies are like dogs and earthquakes. It shouldn’t be
long now at all.”

Nagisa cringed as he usually did when she went ahead to check whatever she needed to. It wasn’t
exactly painful, just highly uncomfortable. Not just physically, but also the fact that she had her
fingers inside him… Nagisa just had to remember she was doing her job. This was for Akuma’s
sake, after all. It felt slightly better than the other times, somehow, with Karma’s hand tethering
him.

“All right,” she announced, “you’re actually 90% effaced, and about 3cm dilated.”

He almost lurched up. “I am?”

“Honestly,” she removed her gloves and sat at her desk, “it could be a matter of hours. It could also
be days from now. Some babies just like to take their time, that’s all. If labour doesn’t begin
naturally on its own for another week,” she paused, “we’ll have to think about a medical induction,
but I’m hoping that won’t be the case. In the meantime, there are a few things you can do to try and
help things along. Light exercise such as walking, for example, eating spicy food, sex,” Karma’s
hand fell from Nagisa’s shoulder like it was molten lava, “primrose oil. Anyway, hopefully, the
next time we see each other, you’ll be in the delivery room, yes?”

“Yeah,” Nagisa said, though he didn’t feel so sure.

“So,” Karma said, once they were out of the clinic, “want to walk back to my place?”

That sounded… exhausting. “What for?” He asked. Nagisa didn’t mean to sound like he was being
short, but

“She said walking would help, right?”

Nagisa strongly suspected there was an ulterior motive there. There was a certain edge to Karma,
thought he was obviously trying to keep it covered up. Well, it wasn’t like Nagisa had much better
to do. If Karma wanted to keep his eye on Nagisa for a few hours, which he so clearly wasn’t
hiding well, Nagisa didn’t have a problem with it.

Ordinarily, it would have only been twenty minutes to Karma’s house, but with his own personal
bowling ball attached, it felt like a small eternity. Still, it seemed Karma had a good judge of his
limits, stepping just fast enough that Nagisa was pushing himself, but not so quick that he was
completely overexerted.
“Can we take a break?” Nagisa eventually had to ask, lightly panting for breath.

They rested against a wall, in the end, as Nagisa recovered from so much movement. Yeah, he needed the baby out of him as soon as possible. They were leaning opposite one of the local primary schools, he noticed. Nagisa turned his head towards Karma, who was silently studying the building.

“Hey, Karma?”

“Hmm?”

Nagisa chewed his lip. “Have you decided where you’re going for high school yet?”

He shoved his hands in his coat pockets. “I’m just staying at Kunugigaoka.”

That was… odd. “How come?” Nagisa couldn’t help but ask. “You could get into any school you wanted to.”

“That’s probably true,” he said, standing up, apparently satisfied that their rest time was up. “But I don’t think I’d work as hard,” he shrugged. “Kunugigaoka has competition. You?”

Nagisa wasn’t sure he liked the sound of that. “I just put my mum’s choice Keisetsu down,” he admitted, “I was going to change it but… I couldn’t think of anything better.” The entrance exams were in only a few days. Akuma had better get out before that, otherwise he’d be screwed.

“Are you cold?”

He hadn’t noticed, with everything else bothering him, but he was shivering. “A little,” he said, looking up at the white clouds covering the sky. “I think it’s gonna snow.”

Karma slipped his long black coat off before Nagisa could protest, and wrapped it around his shoulders. Admittedly, the warmth, and Karma’s freshly worn scent, was kind of nice.

“Aren’t you going to get cold?” Nagisa said, feeling a little bad.

He half chuckled. “I’m not the one who’s like a million months pregnant.”

Thankfully, Karma’s house wasn’t far from there. It was still a form of torture in getting there, but Nagisa had never been gladder to see it. For one, it was incredibly warm, the kind that was just comforting, causing his body to go all sluggish. As if his eyes were zeroing in on a target, Nagisa went straight over to the sofa, easily the most comfortable place in the whole house. He sighed, shifting so he melted into the cushions.

“I have an idea,” Karma flopped back beside him. “I’ll cook you curry.”

“Curry?” Nagisa blinked back his exhaustion. “Hmmm.”

He grinned. “Not just any curry. The spiciest curry.”

Nagisa sighed. “I don’t think that’ll actually work.”

“So?” He jumped up again, and Nagisa wanted to slap him, jealous of all that energy. “You’re hungry, right.”

“Me and Akuma both.” He was always hungry.
“Here,” Karma picked up one of the woven blankets up from the side table. “You stay right there.”

Nagisa meant to reply, but the warm blanket made him increasingly drowsy. It helped that it smelt inherently like Karma. Not the natural alpha scent he produced, but that of the foreign incense that often clung to him. Without caring to feel guilty about it, Nagisa lifted the corner of it up to his nose and inhaled deeply.

He must have fallen asleep like that, because the next thing he knew, his eyes were watering, and there was a weird crick in his neck.

“Dinner’s ready!” Karma announced, proudly presenting his dish.

Nagisa rubbed his eyes. “Thanks for dinner. What’s in that?”

“Half my spice collection,” he said casually, pulling up the coffee table to put the plate on. “I chose the ones that combine well too, though.”

Tentatively, Nagisa took a hold of the spoon, and tried a bit. The curry was alright for a moment, even on the edge of tasting really good, before the spices hit the back of his throat. Almost instantly, his throat went tight and his eyes seriously began to water. By the millisecond, it was getting worse. His tongue felt completely numb, face heating up as he spluttered.

“Karma!” He complained. “Water!”

“Right,” Karma rushed off, producing a bottle.

Nagisa practically snatched it off him, pouring almost half of it directly into his mouth. “What spices?!”

“I threw in some ghost peppers,” he said, as casually as he was talking about a clove of garlic or something. “Eat up.”

“But-“

“You’re miserable.”

“And this is going to help?!” He considered it. If this plate of pure hell ended his suffering, it was probably worth it. Cursing mentally, he got it over with, practically shovelling the food down his throat, crying as he did so. When the plate was finally clear, Nagisa had downed three bottles of water.

Karma looked at him cautiously. “How do you feel?”

“Like I need the bathroom,” Nagisa choked.

He perked up. “Because your water’s gonna break?!”

“No,” Nagisa said, frustrated. “Because your baby is using my bladder as a plushie toy and I just filled it up.”

Once he’d peed for the twentieth time that day, and the spiciness had begun to wear off, Nagisa returned, still no sign of anything contraction like.

“Did it work?”

“Am I screaming yet?” Nagisa groaned. “Of course it had to take after you, lazy and late for
Karma shrugged, and draped the blanket back around Nagisa’s shoulders. “Maybe they’re just comfy.”

Nagisa squeezed his eyes closed, feeling a die down in movement. “Great. I think Akuma’s napping.” He looked down at his stomach. “Just get out of me already!”

“Doctor Shirogane said to let it happen naturally.”

He snapped his head around. “Yeah, well, Doctor Shirogane says—” Nagisa stopped whatever comment he was about to bite out, and thought about it. He’d do literally anything to get Akuma out of him, right then. “Karma, you know what else she suggested…”

Like Nagisa had just punched him or something, he shuffled away awkwardly. “Uh, that’s, uhm—”

Nagisa, who had magically seemed to regain energy, was quicker, practically crawling over to him. This, he decided, was a great idea. The ends completely justified the means. “Don’t you want to get this over with?”

“Nagisa!” He backed up further, until he ran out of space on the sofa. “You’re just frustrated.”

“Exactly!” Nagisa countered. “It doesn’t have to be for long.”

“That’s not the problem!”

“Then what is?” Nagisa tilted his head. It was as if a demon really had taken over his body, with one goal in mind. Now, how to get Karma on board? Shamefully, he thought back to some of Bitch Sensei’s lessons. “Don’t you want me?”

“Also not the problem!” He flushed.

“But Karma,” he grabbed onto Karma’s shirt. “You want to meet our baby, right? Just a little bit of sex,” Nagisa paused. Maybe it was time to bring out the big guns. “Just a little, and your omega won’t be in so much pain anymore.”

“I—” he paused, “fine. Uh…” he looked at Nagisa like a math problem. “Lie back, maybe?”

Nagisa just didn’t care anymore. He wanted to not be pregnant, by any means necessary. To be honest, he’d probably live to regret this, but… Well, they’d done it once before. That was the source of this mess, anyway. It wasn’t like he could get more pregnant. He did as Karma said, leaving his personal space to lie as flat as he comfortably could, letting his legs part.

Karma followed his momentum, but braced himself awkwardly, eyes raking down his body. “I… Is there enough room?”

Hanging onto that, Nagisa felt his brain zero in on that. He sat back up again. “So that’s it? You think I’m fat.”

“That’s not what I said—”

It was too late, though. All of the hormones had been building, and Nagisa couldn’t help but release them all in one pathetic sob. He already felt disgusting enough, wanting nothing more than to just curl into a ball and hide until it was all over.

“I get it,” he said, in-between pained crying sounds. “I’m gross, and sweaty, and disgusting.”
“I meant logistically,” Karma awkwardly put a hand on his shoulder, as if to comfort him.

Nagisa buried his head in his arm anyway. “I’m sorry.”

He was more than aware he was acting crazy. Karma just let him cry on him, without saying much. In fairness, Nagisa couldn’t blame him. It was probably what he needed, anyway, to just cry the stress out until he felt better. Despite the nap, his emotions were taking their toll on him. He was so tired, but the fight was leaving him. Nagisa decided he didn’t mind anymore, Akuma would come when he or she wanted to.

“I’m gonna go,” Nagisa said after a while of sitting in silence.

Karma stood up first, helping to pull Nagisa to his feet. He was definitely looking forward to being less dependent on others, for sure. “I’ll walk you to the station,” he said, voice a little strained. It wasn’t a request.

They made it there, at a pretty slow and steady pace, just in time for the train. It was a silent walk, but then again there was nothing really to be said. Most of what Nagisa had been feeling had been spelled out through his tears. But then, as they walked through the entrance, Nagisa begun to think that maybe the silence wasn’t enough.

“Karma,” he begun, but once he had his attention, the right words escaped Nagisa’s lips. What he really wanted to say was thanks for putting up with him, for (mostly) not running away and leaving him to deal this all alone, for taking care of him. But he wasn’t sure how to convey it. “I’m sorry for getting your shirt wet,” he said.

“Oh, this?” Karma looked at his still damp sleeve. “It’s cool, I’m sure I’ll get worse.”

Nagisa swallowed. “Bye, then,” he said quietly.

By the time he got back to Asano’s, he was completely tuckered out. He didn’t bother to announce his return or anything, instead going straight for the bedroom. After stripping his clothes into the most comfy things he had, one of Karma’s jumpers (which he’d stretched beyond recognition but still kind of fit him) and a pair of sweat pants, he attempted to make himself comfortable.

The exhaustion won out on whatever party Akuma had decided to throw in his stomach that evening. Maybe they were tired of being stuck inside him too. He seized slightly at one movement which was particularly painful. It seemed like they were trying to punch their way out of him.

Yeah, Akuma was definitely going to turn out like Karma. It was a nice thought though, somehow. Nagisa’s eyes managed to slip closed.

His body had other plans, though. The next thing he knew, his body was gripped in the middle of a forceful contraction. It was lower down than the others he’d grown to know and hate, creating an intense amount of pressure. He winced his way through it, body slumping when it ended. After he re-caught his breath, Nagisa looked at his phone. He must have been asleep for a few hours, given the time it read, rather than the few minutes it felt like.

Groaning, Nagisa attempted to get comfy again, some real rest the only thing he wanted right then and there. He was too emotionally tired to get excited about another false contraction. However, once again, it felt like the moment he closed his eyes, his body was overtaken again. Nagisa forced himself into a sitting position with the shock of it, just as painful as the last. It didn’t last that long, though, thankfully.

Akuma protested, a visible ripple going across his stomach as they moved. Feeling a slight twinge
of nerves, Nagisa looked at the clock on his phone once again, and his heart practically leapt out his throat. *It had only been around fifteen minutes.* He tried to force himself to remain calm. This could mean anything. His body could just be playing a cruel trick on him. Fingers shaking, Nagisa opened up the timer, and just watched the seconds unbearably add up.

Exactly fourteen minutes and twenty three seconds after the last one, it was like a full body surge. It definitely felt difference to the false ones, still painful, but in a different way. Once it was through, Nagisa’s body couldn’t relax again. It had to be *really* happening. He almost wanted to laugh, and to cry, and to throw up from the anticipation.

And then Nagisa realised he didn’t know what to do next. He’d somewhat assumed that it would happen dramatically or something, and he’d be whisked straight away to the hospital, not alone on a quiet evening. Maybe it was some instinctual thing, or just Nagisa’s own self knowing he couldn’t handle this, but he moved to stand and allowed his feet to carry him across the hallway.

He knocked lightly at first, but when that garnered no result, he pounded the door with the force of his entire body. Eventually he almost fell into it, when Asano finally pulled it open. It didn’t look like he’d been asleep or anything, but he was definitely ready for bed. Nagisa gulped, noticing the unimpressed stare Asano gave him as he raised his eyebrows.

“Uhm,” Nagisa said, already under clear scrutiny. “I’m really sorry about bothering you, but, I think the baby’s coming.”

His eyes widened for a second, before his hands were on Nagisa’s shoulders, walking him backwards. “If you get *any* kind of fluid on my carpet,” he warned, “I’ll make you scrub it out. Come on,” he ordered, “bathroom.”

Nagisa just did what he said, instruction a big comfort. Going back through the bedroom into the attached bathroom, Nagisa saw his point. Though the house was pretty western in design, the floor of the bathroom was like any other Japanese shower room. Any spilled fluids would be pretty easily washed away with the showerhead. Nagisa wasn’t sure how to feel about that being Asano’s first priority, but he was in no place to complain.

“S-shouldn’t I go to a hospital?” Nagisa asked, leaning against the sink to support his weight.

Like it was just a fact, Asano sighed. “They’ll probably just send you away if it’s too early. Do you know how far apart the contractions are?”

Thinking Asano would probably make a good doctor (it wouldn’t be a stretch to say he’d be good at anything) if he wanted to, Nagisa tried to think. “Fourteen and a half minutes, last time I checked,” he said.

“Okay,” he said calmly, holding Nagisa’s eye contact. “I’ll time the next few for you,” he paused, “you’re never telling anybody about this. Clear?”

“Sure,” Nagisa said. It was good Asano knew so much about everything. Leaning against the sink definitely felt a lot better than lying on the bed, at least. Asano went to sit there, leaving Nagisa alone in the bathroom. The door was open, though, so he was still in his line of sight. The feeling washed over him again, and Nagisa’s fingers clenched to the sink like a buoyancy aid.

“It’s over,” he exhaled, after it ended.

Asano clicked something. “That’s the starting point.”

Starting point? Nagisa wanted it to be the ending point already, and it hadn’t even been an hour
yet. Well, an hour since he was aware of it, at least. Between that contraction and the next, he tried to let his mind send him elsewhere, to focus on something good rather than a sudden sense of dread. It really was going to hurt, wasn’t it? Nagisa was sure he could handle it, but then the next contraction arrived. He struggled to keep himself upright, letting out an involuntary whimper of pain. The false contractions had nothing on this.

“Fourteen minutes and two seconds,” Asano’s voice came.

Nagisa wasn’t sure if that caused him relief or not. The fact that they were speeding up surely had to be good, right? Naturally, he found it was better to stick his hips out and sway them slightly. The next two contractions were only a little closer together, but the pain was ramping up. He begun to lose all sense of time, just working through them.

He was pretty sure he was at thirteen minutes and something, or maybe it was twelve? Nagisa gasped as another one hit, like dunking his lower half into a sea of knives. It seemed to last a little linger too, and Nagisa’s eyes were squeezed so tightly he wondered if they might end up imbedded in the back of his skull.

When it finally went, he fully slumped, though he was unwilling to let go of the sink. Somehow, it was like a security, freezing him in time. No more than a minute later, another sensation rolled through him. For a second, he thought he’d blacked out between contractions, but it wasn’t pain. It was more like a weird pop, and then suddenly warm fluid rushing down his thighs.

It couldn’t be anything else. Nagisa’s eyes raked down. The sweat pants he was wearing were soaked through, and there was definitely a lot of clear fluid on the floor. He tried his level best not to hyperventilate. The contractions had been temporary pain, but that, that made this incredibly real. It was happening.

“Toboso to get the car ready, okay?” Asano said, the scene making it very obvious what had happened.

“I’ll get Toboso to get the car ready, okay?” Asano said, the scene making it very obvious what had happened.

“O-okay,” Nagisa got out.

Finally, it was time. He was going to have a baby. As if that wasn’t enough, Akuma kicked him, probably in complaint at the absence of their nice, comfortable fluid. Nagisa let go of the sink with one hand, ribbing it soothingly on his stomach. Weirdly, at least right then, he didn’t feel fear.

Nagisa had done a lot of scary things this year, and giving birth was probably going to top that list, but that little kick drowned it out.

“I can’t wait to meet you,” he found himself saying gently, “please don’t hurt me too bad.”

Chapter End Notes

Time till birth: mere hours

I feel like we need a drum roll or something.

Thank you so much for sticking around for the main event! As always, I appreciate all comments and feedback!
Birth Time

Chapter Summary

After being rushed to the hospital, Nagisa goes into full out labour

Chapter Notes

Finally.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Never in his fifteen years of life did Nagisa think walking down a flight of stairs would be such an impossible challenge, but there he was, like he was descending Mount Fuji or something. Asano didn’t offer any support, though he did stand close, surely so that Nagisa could grab onto him if he felt like he was going to fall or something. Akuma was seriously low down in him by that point, which made lifting his legs insanely difficult.

Still, he made it downstairs, a feat which deserved some kind of medal, in his mind. He also had an actual towel between his legs, which didn’t help, because he was still leaking amniotic fluid. It was like everything around him became a giant blur, like it wasn’t even happening. Nagisa was just floating along, going where he was told to go without question. The idea that he was in the process of giving birth was surreal.

Toboso was ready for them, by the time they got outside. “Straight to the hospital, Nagisa san?”

Looking up at the night sky, Nagisa registered a snowflake land on the tip of his nose. He’d said it would snow. “P-please,” he weakly attempted to bow in politeness, only really managing to move his shoulders.

Entering the car was the next challenge. Nagisa braced himself against the metal of the door, cringing at the idea of bending his knees. Toboso quickly paced forwards to help him, offering out his hand for extra support. It was a process, but eventually Nagisa managed to lower himself, sitting on the towel as he struggled to stretch the seatbelt around himself. He was surprised to see Asano join him in the back, clearly keeping an eye on him.

Once they set off, Nagisa looked out of the window as the buildings sped past. Taking a deep breath, Nagisa focused on that blur, taking his mind off the impending dread. For a moment, he couldn’t help but think back to months ago, the excruciating car ride with his mother after he’d found out he was pregnant in the first place. How far he’d come. Even back then, the weight hadn’t really dawned on him that he’d eventually have his and Karma’s child. Oh, that reminded him of what he’d been forgetting. Thankfully he’d remembered his phone, and he fumbled for it.

The second he got Karma’s contact up on screen, his next contraction hit, significantly more painful than the last given his position. For some reason he panicked, thrusting the phone in Asano’s general direction.
“No way,” Asano said, looking at it. “I’m not texti-“

It was cut off by Nagisa’s involuntary groan. It hurt so bad. His entire body tensed up again, completely possessed by the feeling. Though it can’t have even lasted a minute, it still felt like a small eternity.

Asano swallowed. “Fine.” He snatched the device, and handed it back to Nagisa a few moments later. “That should give Akabane a sense of urgency.”

“Thanks,” Nagisa mumbled weakly, after the contraction wore off. He decided for his own sake, he probably didn’t want to know the contents of that message.

Due to it being late, there was barely any traffic around and they reached the hospital pretty swiftly. A brand new jolt of fear went through Nagisa’s body at the sight of it, but he forced himself to keep it together, just a little longer. Surprisingly, it was a little easier getting out of the car again, though the pressure was immense.

“I’ll stay with the car,” Toboso nodded. “Good luck, Nagisa san.”

Nagisa thought he should say something more substantial, but he just couldn’t think of anything. “T-thank you,” he turned, and noticed that Asano had also got out of the car. “You’re coming?”

“Just to make sure you don’t fall over on the way in or something,” Asano replied.

Together, they made it inside the hospital emergency department. With the goal so clearly in sight, Nagisa had felt a new surge of energy overtake his body. He almost managed to walk like a normal person, all the way up to the doors. Nagisa wasn’t entirely sure how this was meant to go, but the reception desk seemed like a good start.

“U-uhm,” he said, “excuse me, I-“ His next contraction hit, unfortunately, before he could explain himself, causing him to double over.

The receptionist looked over at Asano. “Labour?”

“Yes,” he said, “for two hours now.”

“Has his water broken?”

“Just before we left,” Asano nodded.

She smiled, lips pressed tight. “I’ll call for somebody to take you to the maternity ward.”

“Nagisa kun,” Asano turned to him, as the contraction came down. “I’ll be going back home now, okay?”

Nagisa nodded. He really should say something substantial, the situation seemed to call for it, but he just couldn’t put it into words. Perhaps he’d live to regret that, but with how overwhelmed by everything that was currently happening to him, he didn’t have the luxury of choice. There was too much he wanted to get out, but instead, Nagisa just expressed what he could in a slight smile.

“You know,” Asano said, before leaving. “People have been doing this for millions of years.”

Nagisa supposed that was his own way of saying ‘you can do this’. “Goodbye, Asano kun.”

“This way,” the receptionist said.
By the time Karma arrived, Nagisa was already strapped to a couple of monitors, wearing a hospital gown, and had been judged to be nearing five centimetres dilated. Nagisa wasn’t really sure if that was a good thing or not, but surely it meant he was halfway through this, or something. The contractions still hurt, but it wasn’t excruciating yet.

“Oh,” Karma said the second he entered the room, “you haven’t had the baby yet.”

Nagisa shifted so he was sitting more upright. “I don’t think it happens in…” he attempted to do the math, “three hours.”

“I was reading,” he said casually, targeting the chair closest the hospital bed and sitting down on it, “that one woman went to the toilet and the baby just slipped out.”

“That’s-“ There came another contraction. “Nice,” he finished a minute later, after it was through.

Something crossed Karma’s face. “That looked worse than the other ones you’ve had.”

He looked over the clock. “Nine minutes.” At least he was still getting a bit of rest in between. They’d been speeding up, though. That was for the best, he finally decided. He’d rather this whole process be over with as possible.


Before Nagisa could question what he meant, Karma reclined like he was right at home, and pulled out his Nintendo DS. Nagisa just watched in shock as he casually resumed whatever game he’d been playing earlier, jaw practically dropping to the ground.

“What?” He said, like he was confused that Nagisa was glaring.

“You brought your Nintendo?”

Karma eyed him. “It’s going to take a while, right?”

“Y-yeah, but,” Nagisa looked down. “I thought you’d be more supportive or something,” he mumbled.

“Do you wanna play?” Karma waved the device in front of his face.

He considered it. “Yeah okay.” It wasn’t worth being mad, when they had so much ahead of them still. Honestly, it sounded like a good distraction. Nagisa took the gaming device from him, and resumed the game of Mariokart he’d been playing. Leaning in close, Karma watched him play over his shoulder.

“Overtake them,” Karma commented.

Nagisa kept his eyes on the screen. “No I wanna get the item.”

“But Nagi-“

Using his best skill, Nagisa used the controls to throw a shell at the computer player in front of him, disabling them so he could take over anyway. Surprisingly, he got pretty immersed in the game. It was a nice break from everything else, and soon, Nagisa wasn’t thinking about the pain and dread of what was happening to his body at all.

Until he got blue shelled a second away from the finish line. “No! No! Damnit!”
There was a cough. “Bad contraction?”

Nagisa whipped his head around to see Doctor Shirogane had entered the room. Ignoring Karma’s slight snigger beside him, Nagisa let go of the DS and flushed. He probably looked like the worst parent ever. Swallowing at that thought, he tried his best to smile politely.

“Road rage,” Karma eventually said, cheerfully.

She smiled. “See, I told you it may only be hours. How are you feeling so far?”

“I’m okay,” he replied honestly. At least, he wasn’t screaming and begging for it to end, so that had to be good. “A little hungry,” he added.

“Nagisa kun,” her tone became gentle, but with a slight edge to it, “I will have to advice against eating anything.” Pressing her lips together, she nodded. “I’m not going to sugar coat it, but I don’t want you to panic either. Due to your earlier placental abruption, medically we have to consider your delivery risky. You’re clearly doing just fine right now, which is why you’re not surrounded by a team of nurses, but we have to keep it under close observation. It’s not uncommon,” she continued, “that we may need an emergency c-section. Eating food could interfere with that process.”

Squirming, Nagisa forced himself to take a deep breath. “I-I really don’t want a c-section.”

“Neither do I,” she said seriously, “and so long as things go the way they are right now, it won’t be necessary at all.” Walking over to one of the monitors, she noted something down. “The baby’s heart rate is fine right now, can you feel them moving?”

“Y-yeah.” It felt insignificant with everything else, but Akuma was still wiggling around as they always did.

She cleared her throat. “Then, just continue what you’re doing. I’m going to check you out now, alright?”

Attempting to relax his body, Nagisa let his legs part, focusing on a specific area of the wall throughout the uncomfortable examination. At least it didn’t take her that long to find what she was looking for.

“Definitely five centimetres, almost completely effaced,” she announced.

“Still?” Nagisa couldn’t help but feel disappointed. He’d hoped in all that time he’d get a little closer.

She nodded. “You’re actually progressing pretty quickly, Nagisa kun. Many first timers are in labour for over a day before they get to this point. Things will speed up soon, now you’re in what we’d call the active phase. Now, are you wanting any pain relief? Though I will warn, if you choose to get an epidural, it may slow things down some.”

This was probably something he should have decided on long before. Perhaps on a whim, Nagisa decided he didn’t like the sound of it. Sure, everything was painful, but it wasn’t something he couldn’t handle. People had been doing this for centuries without any kind of drugs. If all of those people could do it without any pain relief, then so could Nagisa. He wasn’t weak. How hard could it even be?

“No, thank you,” Nagisa finally said.
Smiling once more, Doctor Shirogane took a step back. “I’ll leave you to it, for now.”

“Aw,” Karma said once she was gone, “I was kinda looking forward to you being all drugged up and crazy.”

If Nagisa was going to complain about that comment, he was distracted by yet another contraction. It didn’t last much longer than the last one, but it definitely felt lower down in his stomach, creating a very uncomfortable pressure. Nagisa ended up gripping the sides of the hospital bed, gasping his way through it until it released his body.

“That was…” Karma started, “just under nine minutes.”

Well, at least they were creeping closer. For the next good hour of his life, that remained the trend. Though he didn’t think knowing the exact second difference in gaps between his contractions would help him, it was actually comfortable to hear that he was progressing, if only on the tiniest scale. Unfortunately, despite the pretty static time, the intensity of the contractions increased. Nagisa was beginning to lose his sense of time, only figuring it out on a proper scale whenever Karma announced them.

“Hey Nagisa,” Karma said after a particularly strong one, “it’s past midnight.”

Nagisa attempted to wipe some of the sweat from his forehead. “Hmm?”

He sighed. “That means it’s probably going to be Akuma chan’s birthday today.”

It wasn’t a bad birthday to have, Nagisa supposed. It probably meant Akuma would end up being one of the youngest in their school year, though. He was thinking way too far ahead, he realised after a moment or two of daydreaming. Somehow, Nagisa thought there wouldn’t be much of a danger of him forgetting the date.

With a knock at the door, Doctor Shirogane entered the room again and repeated the same procedures. “Still at five,” she said neutrally and turned to one of the monitors, “contractions are eight minutes apart. It’s completely normal for things to slow down a little at this stage, so don’t worry. Every labour is different.”

Nagisa tried his best not to worry, but he couldn’t help but begin to feel the exhaustion. He’d been knowingly at this for four hours, and that didn’t include whatever had started during his sleep. How long had it really been? Six hours? Seven? All Nagisa really wanted to do was relax and go to sleep, but the contractions were just close enough together that he couldn’t be all calm for too long.

When she came back in again, two hours later, she announced that he’d only dilated another half a centimetre. Nagisa wanted to bury his head into the pillow and cry, at that. It had been so long, for so little. The pain was still manageable, but it was increasing. Nagisa hadn’t been able to hold back a few of his noises of discomfort, though.

“At least it’s progressing,” Karma said. He’d grown surprisingly more silent, as it went on. He appeared content in sitting beside Nagisa, counting down every second as it came. Nagisa didn’t really need or want much else, though. Not being completely alone through this was enough.

“Yeah,” Nagisa started, before his face morphed in pain. “Oh-“ His body lurched forward as he attempted to keep his breathing steady.

Karma looked over at the monitor. “Six minutes and ten seconds.”

“I just want it to be over,” he complained, body slumping backwards.
“Some things get worse before they get better, right?”

He attempted to take that as a positive, but the road ahead began to look bleaker and bleaker. The contractions only sped up after that, until he was at five minutes between each one. With the increase in frequency, so came greater intensity. Nagisa finally understood it, then. It wasn’t so much that one contraction on its own was unbearable pain, it was experiencing one after the other. With every single one, his body was getting worn down to the point he was scared it was going to break.

But he had to do this. There was no way of getting around it, so Nagisa just clenched his teeth as the next one came on. He couldn’t pretend he wasn’t completely exhausted, though. Scared that he might genuinely collapse, Nagisa turned his head towards Karma. He’d lost all sense of time.

“What time is it?”

Karma looked over at the clock. “Just gone past half three.”

It felt so fast, yet and like an eternity. Like a lifetime ago since his water even broke. The time between contractions was beginning to morph into less of a small period of rest, and instead into their own type of small hell. He was just tensing the whole time, trying to steel his body in preparation for the next contraction.

“What is it?” Nagisa bit out, way harsher than he’d intended to, when he picked up on Karma looking concernedly at him.

Karma swallowed, his face pale. “You skipped a whole minute.”

Sweating, Nagisa tried to take that in. “What do you mean?”

“That was only four minutes,” he said seriously, “just under.”

“Oh-oh.”

Studying him, Karma went to his feet. “I’m going to go get Doctor Shirogane, okay?”

A spike of fear shot through his entire body. Not necessarily because this whole process might be coming to an end, although that was scary, but because Karma had suggested leaving him. Knowing it wasn’t permanent, Nagisa forced himself to nod his consent, but the moment he stepped out of the room, Nagisa was miserable. Somehow, Karma’s presence had been keeping him sane throughout it all. Alone, he didn’t know what to do.

Karma couldn’t have been gone for more than a minute, mostly calculated by the fact Nagisa hadn’t had another contraction by the time he and Doctor Shirogane arrived again.

“Alright, Nagisa kun,” she said, “sounds like you may be moving into transition.”

Transition? Transitioning into what? Nagisa was about to ask, but then she went and checked his dilation again. He still had some sense of shame, enough that he wasn’t about to strike up a conversation whilst she had her fingers inside him.

“Seven centimetres,” she announced happily. “Nagisa kun, I need you to focus on this, okay?”

Nagisa shifted. “Okay.”

“It’s going to get a lot worse from here on out, so prepare yourself.” She swallowed. “It won’t be
long now at all. I’ll be checking you frequently, from now on, but it’s your body. You have to let us know when you start to feel the urge to push, okay?”

He supposed he could do that. With a slight increase in motivation, Nagisa felt ready for the next contraction, though it still came far too soon. And then the next one came so shortly after, and he really begun to sweat. The one after that was just short of agonising, but Nagisa managed to close his eyes tightly, getting through it.

And then it was as if all hell broke loose.

Nagisa had no other way to describe it apart from it being like some sort of floodgate just broke. It went from waiting between contractions to one giant blur. It barely seemed like there was time to breathe before the next one hit, and with the effort he quickly made to take air into his lungs, there was no rest. Then there were the contractions themselves, as if his body was being roasted by fire from the inside out.

He didn’t even know what noises he was making, except that there definitely was noise. He couldn’t bring himself to care much about it, though. It was like tunnel vision for a moment, where he could think about the pain and only the pain. After what felt like several solid minutes of contractions, his stomach began to churn.

“I-I feel sick,” he managed to get out. No sooner had he said it, a plastic tub was practically shoved onto his chest. With the added motivation, he couldn’t help but throw up into it. Unfortunately, it didn’t make him feel much better at all, as it was followed straight away by another hellish contraction.

“I’ll buy you sushi,” Karma said suddenly, once the contraction came down, causing Nagisa to turn his head to look at him. There was an unmistakable terror in his eyes.

“W-wha-“

“You haven’t been able to really eat it in months, right?” He spoke frantically. “After this, I’ll get you a platter.”

Nagisa groaned. “I just threw up and you want to talk about sush- Ah!” Another contraction hit him.

“I’m sorry,” he said, a whisper that barely made its way to Nagisa’s ears. “I don’t know how else to help.”

He couldn’t stop himself from feeling guilty. What did he even look like? Nothing short of one gigantic mess, probably. Nagisa, internally, thought that maybe he should be handling this better than he currently was. He should be happy, excited, not just thinking of how miserable the pain was making him feel. But then the next contraction came, and he forgot all about it.

“How far now?” Nagisa demanded.

Doctor Shirogane checked him. “Around eight and a half centimetres. You’re doing great, Nagisa kun.”

‘Great’. He definitely didn’t feel great. A kind of mania was taking over him, causing his body to go frantic. Finding himself writhing, Nagisa felt like some kind of torture victim. He just couldn’t get a break, it was endless, like a new existence where this torment was final.

“Can I-“ Karma started.
Nagisa snapped, his voice bringing him out of his own little world. “Karma, I hate you!” He screeched. “You did this to me!” And then the worst of the contraction started to drop, more guilt filling his entire body. He couldn’t hold his own tears back. “I-I’m s-sorry,” he said, “I didn’t mean that.”

Karma swallowed. “Is it helping?”

“H-huh?”

“Is hating me helping?”

Squeezing his eyes shut through another one, Nagisa attempted to consider it. “A little bit,” he replied weakly.

“Then,” Karma said, “I don’t mind if you hate me. Is there anything I can do?”

“I don’t know,” Nagisa managed, “just-“ His next contraction hit before he could think of what he really wanted. Hand flying out to grab the side of the hospital bed, Nagisa ended up accidentally catching Karma’s instead. It felt slightly better than the cool feel of the bed, to have a (somewhat sweaty) warmth grip him back.

As the next few came and went, Karma got closer to him. Though he didn’t really understand how, if only for a few minutes, the pain softened. He wasn’t entirely aware of what was going on, but he was sure Karma was doing something to make his body relax. With his free hand, Karma moved the sweaty hair out of Nagisa’s forehead.

“Feels nice,” Nagisa muttered. As a result, Karma continued to stroke his hair, threading his fingers across his scalp soothingly.

All of that was the calm before the storm. When it hit, it hit hard. In all the hours of suffering, Nagisa hadn’t screamed yet. He’d shouted, cried out, groaned, and half shrieked, but he hadn’t screamed. Honestly, he’d thought that was just something that happened in movies or medical dramas. But he just couldn’t hold it back anymore. As the only physical release for how he was feeling, Nagisa screamed. He screamed and screamed until his throat was raw.

“I want the epidural now!” Nagisa yelled through tears.

“Nagisa kun,” Doctor Shirogane said levelly, “you’re too far along for that.”

“What?!”

She looked at him sympathetically. “It would take around an hour to order for one, get an anaesthesiologist here, and for it to actually kick in. Honestly Nagisa kun, I think your baby will be here by then.”

If Nagisa could go backwards in time, to when he’d rejected the pain relief in the first place, he might murder himself. There was no way it was possible for a human to go through all of this and survive it. Surely, surely there was only so much agony a human body could take before it gave out. Nagisa was definitely reaching that limit, if not already on it.

There was no possible escape from it. And, oddly, Nagisa didn’t even care about the prospect of meeting his child anyway. He was in so much torture, and it was all because of this mistake. Nagisa regretted it so much, right then. Nothing was worth this. In that moment, he would take everything that had happened between him and Karma back in a heartbeat.
He didn’t even have what was lying next as motivation. Who had he been kidding? Nagisa wasn’t ready to be a parent at all. He couldn’t undo it, and now he was going to be stuck with a baby. Fear mixed with hate ran through his veins. His body had been taken over and destroyed, by this. Honestly, Nagisa was sure he would die.

“It hurts so fucking bad,” he sobbed.

“I don’t think I’ve ever heard you curse before,” Karma pointed out, just the slightest amount of amusement in his tone.

Nagisa didn’t drop his hand, but he did glare, immediately irritated. “If you say anything like that again I will kill you with my own two hands right here right now.”

“From the hospital bed?”

“Don’t think I couldn’t!”

Karma squeezed his hand tighter. “I know you could.”

He tried to catch up with his breathing again, letting the sudden spike of bloodlust fade into the background. With it, and the pressure, Nagisa just about noticed a faint wiggling motion very low in his abdomen. It made his brain falter, for a second. He didn’t really hate this child, did he? Trembling, Nagisa knew he didn’t. He wouldn’t have given them a name (or, a kind of name) otherwise, right? He had to do this.

“Nagisa kun,” Doctor Shirogane said, after an amount of time he wasn’t sure of had passed. “Ten centimetres. Are you ready?”

He hadn’t even noticed her checking him. “R-ready?”

She gave him a knowing look. “It’s time to meet that baby of yours. Is there a position you’d rather be in?”

Frankly, Nagisa wasn’t sure he could move even if he tried to. “L-like this,” he managed.

“Okay,” she said, “you can put your legs up on the stirrups here. Are you with me?”

Nagisa did as she said, the prospect of this all being over soon suddenly highly appealing. “Mmhmm.”

“Your body is your guide, okay? I promise you, it knows what to do. When you feel the urge, push with your contractions.”

With the amount of pressure in his lower half, Nagisa didn’t think there was much else he could’ve done. The excruciating contractions still went on, but he was filled with a new burst of energy. As it turned out, she was incredibly right. Like something weird came over him, Nagisa’s body worked of its own accord. Somehow, it was the easiest thing he’d done so far.

The contractions slowed down a little, giving him a chance to really catch his breath. It just felt natural, the instructions shoved deep into his instincts somewhere. As each surge went through him, Nagisa went along with it, physically feeling the baby travelling lower. It was still painful, but also kind of weird.

“I-I can feel it,” he let out, bearing down.
Not only could he simply feel it, he could feel every single millimetre of his body stretch far beyond its limits. He still couldn’t hold back his tears or cries of pain, not when he could feel the baby moving lower and lower. After each contraction, it seemed to be going back up again, but he couldn’t stop himself. This was all his body was.

If somebody had told him he’d be right here a year ago, physically giving birth to his and Karma’s child, Nagisa wouldn’t have believed them.

Right when Nagisa thought there couldn’t possibly be much further to go, he started to scream again. Not only was the stretch unbearable, it burned. Except, burn was almost an understatement. There was no other pain on earth he’d experienced before it that came close.

“I can see them,” Doctor Shirogane announced. “You’re starting to crown.”

Yeah, Nagisa thought, no kidding.

“I’m going to need you to really push now,” she said calmly, “the hardest pushes you can give me.”

“I can’t!” Nagisa screamed in a voice that wasn’t his own. “I can’t do this!”

He tried, he really did, but he just couldn’t. And just when he focused on the pain once more, everything seemed to go white. Had he really actually died? Suddenly, Nagisa just couldn’t feel a thing. It was so intense. Where was he again? Nagisa experienced the weirdest kind of sensation, like he could just fade away.


Nagisa jolted, and turned his head, meeting Karma’s burning eyes. “I-I-“

Karma squeezed his hand so impossibly tight. “You can do this. I know that you can. Where’s the Nagisa I know, huh? He doesn’t just give up, no matter how hard things get. You need to hang in there, okay?”

Somehow, it was exactly what Nagisa needed to hear. Nodding vigorously, he renewed his efforts, pushing with all the force in his body when the next contraction came. Though he was sure his lungs would run out of oxygen, he continued, entirely overwhelmed by sensation.

“That’s the head! Umbilical cord isn’t a problem, you’re good to go,” Doctor Shirogane said. “One more big push, and you’re done.”

He wasn’t really listening, though. Using Karma’s hand to anchor him to the earth, he gave it every single thing he had inside of him, the strain taking over everything. There was no measure for how long it lasted, until it was over, and he suddenly felt very empty. Instantly, his body slumped.

And then the room was filled with this unmistakable sharp, high pitched crying.

Chapter End Notes

What, you thought I wasn't going to cliffhanger you?

Whoops?
On a side note - officially this chapter means we're at 100k! I promise I didn't actually plan this, it was more a happy accident, to be honest. I can't believe it though, honestly.

Until next time~ You know what to do.
Chapter Summary

After a long and painful birth, Karma and Nagisa finally get to meet their new baby

Chapter Notes

How did this even get so long?

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Back in elementary school, when he was very young, Nagisa remembered a teacher standing at the front of the classroom and lecturing the class about what love was. Back then, he hadn’t paid much attention to it. There wasn’t much to think about, love had just been yet another emotion. He’d understood it. Nagisa thought he knew what love was. The way he used to cling onto both his parents when he was young, before their issues really started. The way his chest tightened and his heart began to pound when he watched his favourite movie. A smile between friends who trusted each other. Even the abstract idea of a wedding in spring between two partners. Those were all what he would consider love.

But then he faintly heard the words ‘it’s a boy’, and suddenly Nagisa wasn’t so sure anymore.

A kind of lull set over him, as his body recognised its desperate need to rest. He found himself shuddering, like everything was going out of focus. His body had gone through a lot, after all. Absently, Nagisa didn’t expect he’d recover from it any time soon.

There was a weight handed to him, jolting him awake, and Nagisa knew he had been wrong about love. Love was resting in his very arms, and his body felt too small for it. He hadn’t even noticed himself start to cry again, softer this time, but his vision was blurry and he could feel wetness as he tried to blink himself out of it. A small movement further knocked him out of his daze, and then Nagisa finally looked down.

A baby was on his chest. During the living nightmare that had been the last stages, the top of his hospital gown must have been stripped from him, though he didn’t remember how. He could feel it though, the way the baby almost snuggled right against his bare skin. No, not just any baby. His baby. Living, breathing, and right in his arms. He was all wrinkly and a bright red and purple colour, plus covered in blood, but it didn’t matter.

“He’s p-perfect,” Nagisa got out. It wasn’t just a black and white baby shape, anymore, or the infuriating kick of feet inside his stomach. He was so perfect, in fact, that he couldn’t even remember any of the pain it took to get him here.

“You did a great job, Nagisa kun,” Doctor Shirogane said carefully. “I’m going to cut the umbilical cord now, and then we can see about getting him cleaned up.”

Nagisa attempted to pay attention to her, but he just couldn’t take his eyes away from his baby. He
had a son. Though it was all screwed up from the crying, Nagisa studied his face, committing it all to memory. He wouldn’t forget this ever, he was certain. Only faintly registering her clamping the cord in two places before snipping it, he continued to hold his baby close.

“W-why’s he so sad?” He couldn’t stop himself from questioning, as he continued to cry.

The doctor chuckled. “He’s just exercising his lungs, that’s all. Well, I don’t think we need to worry about his breathing.”

Finally, she handed him a warm towel. Before she gave him the instruction, Nagisa automatically knew what to do, cleaning some of the blood from the baby’s body. Terrified of accidentally hurting him, Nagisa used the lightest pressure he could muster, cleaning him up just a bit, though he still retained the colouring. As Nagisa did it, the crying calmed down. The baby’s crying, that was - Nagisa was still a mess.

She brought out a stethoscope, placing it on the baby’s chest, whilst writing down whatever she needed to. Nagisa allowed her to manoeuvre him around as she went through whatever tests she was doing, checking his reflexes and pulse. Somehow, Nagisa already knew the verdict. This baby was entirely healthy, after everything.

Finally, he began to blink, opening up his miniscule eyes. A fresh bout of tears slipped out of Nagisa, as he gazed down. He had Karma’s eyes, a weird cross between mercury and gold. Honestly, Nagisa had always thought newborns looked kind of alike, but not this one. The more he looked, the more Nagisa could tell he’d end up with a lot of Karma’s features.

“I-is he meant to be that small?” Karma questioned, beside him, piercing the small bubble Nagisa was in. That was right, Nagisa wasn’t just in his own little world.

Doctor Shirogane cleared her throat. “If it’s okay, I’d like to measure him… Nagisa kun?”

He didn’t want to tear his eyes away. “Where are you taking him?”

“Just over there,” she said kindly, and gestured the other side of the room. “You’ll be able to see him, don’t worry.”

“O-okay,” Nagisa, though incredibly reluctantly, allowed her to take him.

She wasn’t gone for long, at least. That didn’t mean every inch of his body didn’t itch, though. Nagisa never thought it was possible to be so attached to another living thing, but there he was. The impossible had been achieved already that day, so really there shouldn’t be much left to shock him.

“Five pounds and six ounces,” she announced, “a little small but not in any danger. Forty nine centimetres long. All ten fingers, all ten toes. Time and date of birth: February 21st, 6:42 am. So far,” she came over, having dressed him in a blue hat and blanket, “perfectly healthy. We’ll need to take him for some more tests in a while, but that can wait just a little.”

Nagisa felt better, now he was had his baby back in his arms. Now that he had been mentioned, he really was tiny. If Doctor Shirogane said he was fine, then Nagisa wasn’t worried. He’d felt so much bigger coming out. It made his heart jump up into his throat, just seeing how small and helpless he was. Honestly, Nagisa kind of felt the same way.

“Do you two have a name yet? I’ll have to get them to sort out an ankle bracelet.”

They’d never talked about it, not really. Not an actual name. Looking down at his baby, Nagisa realised a name like ‘Akuma’ was far too harsh. He was just too pretty to be named anything
demonic. Finally forcing himself to tear his eyes away, Nagisa found himself looking at Karma, who his gaze immediately. Karma still looked incredibly pale, lips uselessly parted. It was clear that neither of them had a clue.

“Don’t worry about it right now,” she said, sensing their hesitation. “We’ll just call him Baby Shiota.”

“Oh no,” Nagisa shifted, speaking the thought that came into his mind. That left a bad taste in his mouth for some reason, it just felt wrong. “Akabane.”

“Nagisa...” Karma said with a slight edge to his tone.

Nagisa swallowed. “I don’t like using my family name anyway. He doesn’t need to carry it on.” He looked at Karma properly. “Uhm, it doesn’t have to be that, if you don’t want it.”

“I-I don’t mind.”

“Okay then,” Doctor Shirogane said, “Baby Akabane it is. If you don’t mind me saying, he’s a very beautiful baby. You both did a good job with him.”

He couldn’t help but feel a weird kind of selfish pride at that. Of course, he knew this was the most beautiful baby that had existed ever, but it felt kind of good that other people recognised that too. God, Nagisa wasn’t going to turn into one of those parents, was he? His baby made this kind of yawning motion, rubbing his cheek against Nagisa’s chest as his eyes fell closed, and Nagisa fell in love all over again.

“It might be best to take him whilst he’s sleepy,” Doctor Shirogane said softly.

Automatically, Nagisa clutched him tighter. “No taking him.”

She patted his leg sympathetically. “It’s only to make sure he really is completely healthy, and it’s only for a few hours. Honestly, take advantage of this. It’ll be the last time you sleep in a long time. Besides, you’ll have the pass the afterbirth shortly.”

That didn’t sound good. It felt physically awful to do so, but Nagisa slowly offered up his baby. Annoyingly, she was right. With the extra shot of adrenaline fading somewhat, Nagisa was definitely beginning to feel every single ounce of exhaustion. Still, he cringed to see her take him, putting him on some kind of medical transportation thing. He craned his neck, attempting to keep his eyes on him.

“K-Karma,” Nagisa found himself weakly calling out. It was a bit pathetic, but he couldn’t help it. “Keep an eye on him?”

Eyes widening a little, Karma nodded. “Okay, I promise, Nagisa.” He turned to the doctor. “Is that allowed?”

She smiled. “Right this way.”

With his nose pressed right up to the glass of the nursery window, Karma couldn’t help but feel just a little bit lost. Alright, more than a little bit. Still, he had a promise to keep, and he wasn’t going back on it. As much as Karma didn’t even want to look too hard, his eyes flew to his son, calmly sleeping in the little cot the hospital had given him. Well, wasn’t that crazy? He had a son.

Karma found himself clenching his fist and swallowing. For the first few seconds of the baby’s
life, Karma’s brain had gone into overdrive. Sure, he’d known this would end with a baby, but it was very different seeing it. He’d dropped Nagisa’s hand in shock, at the first glimpse of his poor, confused, squirming body. And then, frighteningly, Karma had begun to feel the dread.

He’d reached his fear quota for one day, surely. Karma had never had a problem with witnessing pain or gore or anything like that before, sometimes he even enjoyed it. But seeing Nagisa go through all of that? It might haunt him. With the way he’d been screaming, Karma had at least for a few seconds thought that maybe, Nagisa might die.

But Nagisa seemed fine in the end, holding their child close, and Karma’s heart dropped down into his stomach. He couldn’t bear to really take it in, to pay much attention to his son’s face. If he did, then it would surely play on repeat in his head, unforgettable. With how determined Nagisa was to give him up, there was no other way. Truly knowing what his son looked like, holding him… It would be impossible to part with him forever.

After all of that, though, Karma wouldn’t fight it. Amazingly, he knew for certain now that Nagisa was simply stronger than he was, in every single way. Had that been him, Karma probably would have died. With that in mind, he knew deep down that it was only right to let Nagisa make that choice. Karma would just have to find it within him to deal with it, somehow.

A nurse popped her head out of the door. “Akabane san?”

Of course, Karma had been standing like that for a few hours, and he was currently the only person in the room, though people came and went. The baby had been born just in time for the sunrise of a new day, and now it was almost noon. But he had to keep up his agreement – no letting the baby out of his sight. Or, that was how he chose to interpret it. Nagisa was kind of hard to understand sometimes.

“Yeah?” Karma turned to face the smiling young woman.

She beamed. “You know, your son is easily the most behaved one here.”

Karma snorted. “Of course he is.” He definitely got that from Nagisa.

“Mm,” she continued, “barely any crying at all.”

He knew that. He’d been watching as the nurses came and went, checking up on him. Well, at least his son was under good care. It still felt really kind of surreal, like Karma could blink and all of this would be a dream. Likely, it didn’t help that he didn’t know how he was supposed to react to all of this. Nagisa had cried, but Karma didn’t really feel that.

Leaning against the door, she raised her eyebrows. “Do you want to come see him properly? You’ve been stood here since before my shift even started.”

Clenching his teeth, Karma just didn’t know. On the one hand, he knew that it was for the best to not go with her, but now she’d offered… He didn’t have that kind of impulse control. Presenting the wristband he’d been given just before the tests were done, he was allowed in. It took all of his nerve to approach, his legs practically turning into twin steel rods.

The baby was much more normal looking, he noticed. Not quite what Karma was used to from movies and stuff, but a little more like what he’d expected. Peering into the crib, bright eyes seemed to gaze back at him. Breath catching in his throat, Karma couldn’t help but take in that soft yet inquisitive look, something he’d seen Nagisa wear countless times.

“Want to try holding him?”
He began to panic again. “What if I hurt him?” It wasn’t something Karma would admit under any other circumstance, ever, but he really was scared. He didn’t know how to do this. Generally, he didn’t know much about babies at all, except that they cried and slept a lot.

She smiled. “I’ll spot you. Don’t worry, babies are less fragile than they look. Here,” bending down slightly, she picked him up gently, “sit down on that chair over there, I’ll hand him to you. That might seem a little less daunting.”

For some reason, Karma felt compelled to do as he was told. It wasn’t something he often felt the urge to do, but with the weight of everything he decided not to question it. She, at least, seemed to know what she was doing. He followed her direction to adapt his arm into a cradling position, though it felt incredibly foreign to him.

“He’s strong,” Karma said, not to anybody in particular.

The nurse cleared her throat. “I’d let you have a moment alone, but security…”

Karma nodded. How could something so little create that kind of pressure?

“He was just in case. The baby didn’t seem that interested in what was going on, blinking slowly like he was in a daze. With how sleep deprived Karma currently was, he couldn’t help but relate.

Unconsciously, he’d moved his free hand a little, still trying to get it into his head that he was holding a living, breathing, tiny person. A miniscule hand clutched around his index finger, and suddenly everything shattered. He was sure his jaw must have dropped, as he watched his son grab onto him. There weren’t any tears or anything, but it was close. Instantly, Karma knew he’d throw himself in front of a rain of bullets for this child.

“He’s strong,” Karma said, not to anybody in particular.

Every inch of Nagisa’s body hurt. It wasn’t pain like labour had been, more like a whole body deep ache. The kind of soreness that made the prospect of walking anywhere anytime soon seem highly unappealing. It all felt like one gigantic blur, unclear in his memory from start to finish. He knew that he’d had the baby, and basically passed out soon after he was wheeled away. With his absence, in that hospital room all alone, it didn’t really feel real.

But then there was a knock at the door, and his very real son was wheeled into the room. Nagisa shifted so he was sitting more upright, cringing as he did so. It wasn’t really an actual crib, more like a box on wheels. He couldn’t help but think that was a tiny bit funny. He was being pushed by a nurse, but Karma followed closely behind, looking more than a little exhausted. Nagisa’s stomach twisted with guilt at that, considering he’d had the luxury of a nap for a few hours.
“How are you feeling?” The nurse said, checking some kind of chart. “Your baby’s been given an all clear, by the way.”

Nagisa hadn’t been worried about it, but he still felt a little relieved. “I’m okay,” he said, though his voice was a little croaky and raw from all the screaming.

“I’m happy to leave you now,” she explained. “Picking him up and putting him back down again is easy, here.”

Deciding it was probably in his best interests to do so, Nagisa paid very close attention. Every word she said, about how to cup his head properly, and make sure he was leaning against his chest correctly, was etched into his brain. He really didn’t want to accidentally hurt him as a result of his inexperience. Still, after everything, it didn’t sound too hard.

“He’ll probably need feeding in an hour or so,” she said, once he was safely in Nagisa’s arms again. “You’ll be able to tell, they usually start turning their head from side to side and make sucking motions. When that happens,” she said, “just press this button, and somebody will come in with a bottle of formula. Cotton wool, water, and things are at this station here, for when you need to change him. Again, just press the button, if you need anything.”

The moment she left the room, Nagisa definitely felt overwhelmed. Looking down at his soon, who was currently yawning sleepily, calmed him down, somewhat. He looked a little different from the wrinkled and shrieking thing that had come out of him, a lot more decidedly like Karma, now he wasn’t covered in blood. Not that Nagisa was unused to seeing Karma covered in blood…

Gulping, it dawned on Nagisa that he was responsible for this life now, from that moment up until the day he died. It was a heavy weight to carry, but Nagisa realised he wouldn’t want any other reality. He wouldn’t be letting go of his son anytime soon. At that thought, a whisper of dread set in. Letting go of him was exactly what Nagisa had set his mind upon, wasn’t it? Even at the thought, Nagisa burst into tears.

“Why are you crying?”

Whipping his head around witnesses the slightly concerned way Karma was looking at him, Nagisa continued to lose it. “I-I can’t do it,” he admitted. “I can’t give him up.”

Karma bit his lip. “Nagisa-”

“I won’t!” Nagisa continued. “He- I- I love him too much.”

“Okay,” he said, with a hint of carefulness.

“U-uhm,” Nagisa said, despite the shame that was rushing through him. “You don’t have to do a-anything.”

Something harsh came over Karma’s expression. “You seriously think I’d just walk out on you like that?”

Nagisa didn’t know what to think. He was making this decision selfishly, he knew, and the less people it implicated, the better. It was the most selfish thing he’d ever done in his life, honestly, but any other ‘choice’ felt so incredibly wrong to him.

“No,” Nagisa said, “but-“

“If you want to be in this,” Karma said slowly, “we’re in it together, okay? He’s mine too.”
It felt too ideal, too unrealistically good a situation for this to end in. Of course, he had no idea how they’d manage it. Right then, though, he didn’t care. His hormones were too high. They could figure it out another day, maybe. One day to just be plainly in his own little bubble would okay, right? He certainly felt like he deserved it, after the toll taken on his body.

Nagisa swallowed, turning his attention back to his son. Honestly, he was still in awe of him. “Look what we made, Karma.”

At least, Karma certainly appeared happy. “You know, now we’re keeping him, he needs a name. I’m tired of just thinking of him as ‘the baby’.”

“How?”

“Well,” Karma said, moving closer, “unless you seriously still want to call him Akuma. It’s a cool name and all, but-”

“No,” Nagisa said immediately. “I don’t think it suits him anymore.” But what did? He didn’t have a clue about what names were good for babies. Maybe Karma did. He was smart. “Why don’t you choose?”

Karma snorted. “I don’t exactly have a dictionary of baby names in my head.”

“It was your suggestion!”

“I don’t know… Luffy?” He pronounced, his accent butchering the word a little.

Nagisa wrinkled his nose. “Like One Piece?”


Looking down, Nagisa felt like it was useless. “We’re not naming him after any popular anime characters. And Kirito isn’t even a real name.”

Going silent for a moment, Nagisa thought Karma had just given up or something, but then he perked up. “How about… Nirvana?”

“That’s kind of weird,” Nagisa said. “How would you even write that?”

Quickly, Karma seemed to spot some sort of clipboard with a pen attached to it. Before Nagisa had the chance to question whether he was allowed to do that or not, Karma was already writing something down, pausing to think for just a moment before he scribbled.

“Look, see, like how you’d say Nirvana in Japanese,” he passed over the sheet.

It wasn’t the type of kanji Nagisa was typically exposed to, though he did recognise it. “But you want it pronounced like it is in the other language? It sounds a bit like one of those weird sparkly names… Nobody would know how to pronounce it.”

“It’s better than a boring, regular name. He doesn’t need to be called something typical like Haruto or Hinata or Asahi or something.”

Nagisa sighed. “That just reminds me of beer.”

Smirking, Karma seemed to have an idea. “Maybe we really should call him that, remind him of his origins.”
He couldn’t help but gasp “Karma! That’s so harsh!"

Karma looked out of the window. “It’s still snowing outside. How about Yuki?”

“I don’t think naming him after the weather is much better,” Nagisa admitted. Personally, his own mind was coming out blank. His baby wiggled in his arms, like he was impatient to just be given a name. “Already pretty smart, huh?” He said it softly, impressed with his son’s attempt to gain his attention.

Like inspiration had suddenly struck, Karma grabbed for the piece of paper again, though it didn’t take him that long. He slid it over to Nagisa. “You can spell it like that, right?”

Nagisa read it, and thought about it for a moment. “Daichi,” he tested, “with the kanji for ‘great wisdom’. Akabane Daichi...” The more he considered, the more he kind of liked it. Somehow, it suited him. “Hi Daichi,” he said, addressing his son.

“You want to stick with it?”

“Yeah,” he said. “I like it.”

Karma moved the paper away. “Are you sure about the family name?”

“Oh,” Nagisa said. He’d been pretty out of it, back when he said that. But his sentiments still stood. How often had he instructed people to not call him by his family name, anyway? “I’m sure. Akabane Daichi has a better ring to it than Shiota Daichi.”

Surprisingly, after that was settled, there didn’t seem much else to do. Nagisa wasn’t bored though, somehow. Seeing his son, who now had a real name of his own, squirm in his arms was more than enough to keep him occupied. He really wouldn’t ever get tired of it. Even when a nurse came in with a large lunch, and he had to hand Daichi over to Karma so he could eat, he kept his eyes trained on him.

Though he’d expended so much energy the night before, Nagisa wasn’t actually that hungry. His stomach had deflated a little, looking more like he’d swallowed a balloon rather than a beach ball, and he wasn’t exactly jumping at the idea of filling it back up again. Though it wasn’t just a vanity thing, he supposed otherwise he just wasn’t in the mood for food.

After he couldn’t eat anymore, and Daichi was passed back to him, Nagisa felt exhausted again. But he didn’t want to miss anything. Daichi began to turn his head from side to side, parting his lips and closing them again like he was trying to do an impression of a fish. It was nothing short of adorable, but then Nagisa remembered what the nurse had said.

“I think he got jealous of my food,” Nagisa explained, pressing the button.

Honestly, he didn’t know if his instinctual judgement was correct or not. As far as he’d been aware, you only knew babies were hungry when they started crying. But Nagisa didn’t have the energy to deal with crying right there and then, so he hoped he was guessing right.

A different nurse came in that time, carrying a small bottle. “Ah, is someone getting hungry?”

“I think so,” Nagisa said, still uncertain. It felt a little embarrassing, that he had to check with somebody else first. Shouldn’t this just be the kind of thing he sensed?

She smiled. “Well caught. You know, a lot of people tend to leave it until the baby starts shrieking. It’s a sign you’ll soon be a natural at this.”
That made him feel a tiny bit better about it. Tentatively, he took the bottle from her, not that he knew what to do with it. Sure, the basics were pretty obvious, but what if Nagisa did it the wrong way and made him choke or something? Did babies instinctively know how to drink, or was it one of those things they picked up like walking or speaking?

Noticing his hesitation, the nurse came a little closer. “Would you like a little help?”

“Yes please,” he admitted quietly, shamefully.

“I remember when I had my first,” she spoke softly, “it was incredibly daunting. Here, make sure his head is propped up so he can still breathe properly. Don’t try and force it, just press it to his lips and he’ll have it if he wants it.”

Nagisa tried his best to do what she said. It took him a moment, but sure enough, Daichi opened his mouth and began to suck on the rubber teat thing. After the nurse’s instruction to tilt the bottle a little differently to make sure he wasn’t accidentally taking in air rather than milk formula, Nagisa realised it really wasn’t that hard. Daichi at least seemed content, powerfully gulping it all down until he was done with the small amount in the bottle, only stopping the suckling when it was clear there was none left. He let go, producing this kind of sighing noise that made Nagisa’s heart burst into pieces.

After she’d shown him how to wind him properly, she left again. Now that he was full, Daichi seemed to go out like a light, apparently happy to take a nap. Reluctantly, Nagisa decided it was probably better to put him down again. He really didn’t want to, but it was better than accidentally nudging him awake or something.

“You should get some sleep too,” Nagisa said, very quietly. “I kind of made you stay up.”

Karma waved him off. “I’m fine. There’s nowhere to sleep, anyway.”

Shuffling over a little, Nagisa patted the space beside him. “There’s room up here. I don’t mind.”

It didn’t seem like Karma was going to fight him on it. The second he was up on that bed beside Nagisa, his eyelids drooped, and he was quickly asleep. Nagisa owed him at least that, considering it was really his fault he was so tired in the first place. Unfortunately, Karma’s chosen sleeping position involved using his shoulder as a pillow, so Nagisa couldn’t move much. His eyes roamed from Karma’s sleeping form to Daichi’s. The apple sure didn’t fall too far from the tree.

Nagisa rested his own eyes too for a while, taking advantage of the opportunity for rest whilst he still had the luxury. It was like that weird space between sleep and consciousness, where he wasn’t really sure if he was actually resting or not. After a while, he sensed Daichi was fussing, so Nagisa bent over as best he could to pick him up again. A quick glance at the clock told him nearly two and a half hours had passed. Maybe he was hungry again.

Somehow, Karma managed to sleep through the nurse coming in with the bottle, though she did make an effort to be quiet after noticing him. Daichi seemed more reluctant this time, taking quite a while to latch on. When he eventually did start drinking, he only seemed to want half the bottle, pulling away from it strongly. Nagisa tried his best not to worry about it. After all, he didn’t always feel like a full meal.

Eventually, Karma did actually stir, probably from all the jostling it took to get into a comfortable position. He didn’t complain, though, and left his head right where it was for a moment, before he sat up properly. It was weirdly serene. For a while, they were both content to stay there, looking down at their son together.
“He sure is cute, isn’t he?” Nagisa said eventually.

“Of course he is,” Karma replied. “He has half of my DNA.”

Nagisa couldn’t help but roll his eyes. “Yeah, he totally gets that from you.”

Not picking up on his sarcasm, or more likely choosing to ignore it, Karma’s hand moved over to him. “Well he got the size from you. Isn’t that right, Tiny?”

With the way Karma’s hand was positioned, it was actually covering Nagisa’s. He wasn’t sure if it was the hormones or the confusion of everything, but Nagisa’s heart began to beat just a little bit faster, a warm heat spreading through him. It was nice, being so close like this. It almost felt like family. On a whim, he turned his head, only to find Karma staring back at him. Swallowing the lump in his throat, Nagisa realised just how close they were. Practically sharing air, uncontrollably, Nagisa felt his lips begin to pucker in preparation-

“Oh,” a nurse said, “I’m sorry to disturb you!”

They practically snapped apart.

“It’s fine,” Karma said, voice a little strained.

Her lips pressed tightly together. “There are some visitors waiting for you in reception. Shall I give them the okay?”

“Visitors?” Nagisa questioned aloud.

“Twenty five teenagers,” she said, “and a… weird looking man.”

That probably wasn’t something she saw every single day of her job. The fact that he and Karma were both still only fifteen was probably strange enough, she probably wasn’t ready to deal with a whole band of misfit kids. Nagisa was surprised they’d all even come, to be honest. He didn’t know how they’d even found out.

He felt a little bit happy, though. “Sure,” he said, “let them in.”

Nagisa wasn’t expecting much else, but he was still taken aback when within five minutes, his bedside was absolutely surrounded by his classmates. He barely had time to blink, before there was just a chorus of coos and so many questions that Nagisa couldn’t even register, let alone answer. Not that he wasn’t grateful for the enthusiasm… His son wasn’t even a full day old, yet he was more popular than Nagisa had ever been. Somehow, that seemed a little unfair.

“You have to give them some space!” Korosensei said, having disposed of whatever disguise he’d arrived in. “No overcrowding the baby!”

Automatically, everyone took a step back, finally giving Nagisa enough space to think.

Nagisa gathered his courage. “Everyone, this is Akabane Daichi.” After he said it, he peeled back the swaddling cloth the hospital had provided a little, holding him up slightly so they could see him properly.

After a chorus of a few gasps, it was actually Terasaka who spoke up first. “How did you two make that?”

Karma removed himself from the bed. “You see, when two people like each other very much,
“He looks a lot like Karma kun,” Kataoka said matter of factly, thankfully cutting Karma off before he could finish whatever he was going to say.

“But he’s so small, like Nagisa kun,” Maehara said.

Nagisa shifted. “How did you even know he was here, anyway?”

Isogai smiled. “We basically figured it out when neither showed up at school today. Honestly, we nearly managed to assassinate Korosensei today, he was such a nervous wreck.”

Korosensei himself was in the corner of the room, a handkerchief to his eyes. With the noise dying down, his blubbering sobbing noises were obvious. A stream of tears rolled down his yellow cheeks (if you could even really call them cheeks), as he muttered something to himself that was mostly unintelligible. Nagisa hadn’t wanted anybody to worry.

Nakamura lunged with her knife, though their ever unkillable teacher still managed to dodge. “Worth a shot.”

“No assassinations in front of our son,” Nagisa said, sterner than he’d meant to.

“Surprisingly cute,” she said, giving Karma some kind of odd look. He returned it, smirking as he did so. Nagisa would never understand their friendship.

Kurahashi sighed. “It seems so weird that you’re parents.” When the others turned to look at her, she cleared her throat. “I mean, it was one thing seeing Nagisa kun all fat and stuff, but now they have an actual baby.”

Maybe Nagisa should have been offended over the ‘fat’ comment, but it was only a minor thing. She was most definitely right. As he was discovering, keeping a baby alive and well inside him was far easier than doing it externally. At least after the first few hours, Daichi still looked good and happy. It had to be a sign that they weren’t doing the worst job ever, surely.

“A-are we allowed hold him?” Kanzaki asked shyly, after the conversation died down a little.

Nagisa didn’t feel so sure, suddenly. It wasn’t that he didn’t trust his classmates, but Daichi was so small and fragile and precious, it was hard to even find the will to pass him over to Karma, let alone everyone else.

“Okay,” he said eventually, knowing he’d have to bite the bullet eventually.

Karma glared. “If any of you come even close to dropping him, I will personally end you.”

“Karma,” Nagisa warned, though he couldn’t help but feel kind of happy that Karma was so protective of their son already.

Not everybody wanted to, but a good amount of their friends formed what could only be described as an orderly queue. Nagisa tried his best not to be bothered that they were playing pass the parcel with his son, and focus on the moment instead. Sugino looked incredibly frightened, probably from Karma’s threat, but wore a giddy smile once Daichi was snug in his arms. Similarly, Kayano smiled brightly at her turn, though she seemed more confident in what she was doing.

“Can you even hold him properly, Korosensei?” Kimura asked, once it came to his turn.
"Of course!" Korosensei’s face flashed with its circle to represent correctness. "As Karma kun remembers from one of his first assassination attempts, my tentacles have great suction."

It felt so long ago.

The moment he was actually holding Daichi, though, he started the crying again. Nagisa still couldn’t understand him, but he hoped it was the good, emotional kind of tears. At least he had multiple tentacles, some he could continue to dry his eyes with. "Little E-29," he got out.

"Isn’t he a little young for middle school?" Nagisa said, though he didn’t mind.

Karma chuckled lightly. "Hear that? And he’s not even a day old. He’s so smart already."

Korosensei straightened out somewhat. "On an honorary basis, of course."

After Daichi had been branded with his unofficial roll call number, he yawned, falling asleep again like that. Using his regular speed, Korosensei deposited him back in Nagisa’s arms, completely unharmed by the experience.

"Bored of us already, huh, Daichan?" Nakamura laughed.

"He’s worn out from all the attention," Nagisa said.

Now the very tiny reason they’d all come was out of it, everyone quietly made their goodbyes, not wanting to wake him back up again. Once the room was completely clear of them, a happy lull set over Nagisa. He was glad to have the space again, but that had been nice. Recently, the other members of the E Class had become some of the most important people in his life, so it was only right they got to meet the number one most important person.

He was tempted to put Daichi back down in the cot again, feeling a little restless after being stuck still for so long, but he looked so comfy Nagisa decided against it. Every single moment he had Daichi curled up against his chest was the best moment of his life ever, and that was just a fact. Though Daichi seemed to be taking to frequent naps, Karma looked much more alert after only a little bit of rest. Nagisa was still concerned for him, though.

"Hi," the same nurse who had informed them of their visitors returned again, after knocking on the door. “It’s getting close to the end of visiting hours now, but you have somebody else.”

Well, Nagisa hadn’t been expecting that. “Who?”

“She says she’s your mother.”

A shot of dread went through him. “A-are you sure?”

“Absolutely not,” Karma said, voice completely firm.

The nurse looked them over. “I’ll come back in a few minutes.”

“Nagisa,” Karma said, “that woman threw you out like you were last week’s trash. I don’t think she should be around our son.”

“I know,” Nagisa replied, eyes meeting the floor. He’d truly thought he was dead to her, completely disowned and disregarded. Though of course it had upset him, Nagisa had much bigger issues to deal with, let alone what his mother thought of him. There was no possible explanation for this sudden change of heart, that Nagisa could think of, at least.
“Then we’ll just tell her no,” Karma was apparently satisfied.

Nagisa chewed on his lip for a moment. “There’s no use.”

“Huh?”

“We’re still minors,” Nagisa tried to rationalise. “If she really wants to see him, then she probably can. I-I also kind of want to see what she has to say.”

“I didn’t want to bring it up,” Karma said, “but didn’t she practically abuse you for years?”

Swallowing down his fear, Nagisa tried to think properly. “We’re in a public hospital. She can’t do anything.”

He exhaled dramatically. “If you trust her, then fine.”

“I’m not exactly happy about it,” Nagisa defended.

But fate was decided. When the nurse came back, and they gave her the okay, and then it just became the tense waiting game. Nagisa couldn’t help but hold Daichi a little tighter, protectively, though he knew full well nothing too bad could really happen, even if his mother did get in one of her moods. Eventually, she arrived at the door, closing it behind her, though not taking a step closer.

“Hi, mum,” Nagisa attempted to say as confidently as possible, having not seen his mother for several months. Karma just glared. When she didn’t say anything, he felt obligated to continue. “This is-“

“They’re small,” she said cautiously. “I can tell from here. Smaller than you were, I think.”

Nagisa swallowed. “His name is Daichi. And he’s five pounds six.”

“Hm, only a little smaller. May I?”

He wasn’t about to do a quick analysis. Nagisa studied seemingly every crevice of his mother’s face for sign of bad intent. Practically staring into her very soul, he couldn’t detect any of her subtle or more obvious ticks. Only when he was certain she was in one of her light places, he nodded, letting her come forward. He couldn’t help but cringe still, when she took Daichi out of his hands and held him close to her.

“No need to flash your alpha pheromones at me, Karma kun,” she said nonchalantly. “You should be frightened of me, anyway. Even from the start, I knew you were a bad influence, but getting my underage son pregnant? You show some nerve even looking me in the eye.”

Nagisa felt the atmosphere rise. “It took the both of us,” he defended.

“Yes,” her head turned back to Nagisa, lips pressed tight. “I’m well aware of the mechanics.” Then, something very odd happened. Her expression softened, and she smiled. “I’d hoped you’d wait ten or fifteen years more before giving me a grandchild, but… He’s a sweet thing, isn’t he?”

He had no idea what to say. “U-uh, why? Why did you come?”

She sighed. “As I’m sure you’re aware by now, you can’t unlove your child, no matter how they might disappoint you, no matter how hard you might try. Perhaps I was wrong, to turn my back on you so quickly. Though you’ve disobeyed my wishes,” she straightened, and handed Daichi back,
“you’re still my son, Nagisa.”

What would he have given to hear those words, just a few months ago, before this happened?

“Let me put it this way,” she continued. “I’ve been given leave from work for the next few months, up until the summer. I tried to dispute it, but my superiors insisted. I suppose you can’t fight off suspension due to stress by arguing. I’d like you to come back to me, Nagisa.” She paused. “Your top responsibility, as a parent, is to secure the best possible future for your child. You won’t be able to do that without a high school diploma. So, here’s my proposal. I will take care of your son during the hours you attend school, until he’s old enough for other alternatives. Every moment you’re not at school, he’s entirely your responsibility. People will talk, and there will be shame, but for you, I will put up with it.”

Nagisa’s breath caught, with far too much information to process.

“Of course,” she said, “aside from your taking most of the care and financial burdens yourself, there is one other condition. When you both turn eighteen and are legally able, you’ll get married.”

Chapter End Notes

*whistles* Did I mention I like cliffhangers?

If you're interested, this is how Daichi’s name is spelt, in kanji, hirigana, and romanji:

赤羽 大知
あかばね だいち
Akabane Daichi

Or, if you want the English way, Daichi Akabane

It's pronounced like 'D-eye-ch-ee'

Hopefully this is the satisfaction you've all been waiting for, though not even close to the end of this fic. Once again, I appreciate and strongly encourage all of your comments, they're the reason I get these chapters out so fast!
“Married?!?” Nagisa couldn’t help but exclaim. “Why?”

“Think about it Nagisa!” His mother raised her voice a little. “Do you know how illegitimate children get treated?”

He hadn’t thought about that. “It’s not the nineteen hundreds…”

She sighed. “This is the kind of thing you have to think about. Did you even consider how you’d register the child?”

Honestly, he hadn’t got that far in his thoughts for the future. “I- But we don’t love each other.”

“I’ll be back tomorrow,” she completely dodged. “You’ll have decided by then.”

Thoughts raced through Nagisa’s head at such a high speed he barely noticed her actually leave. Dreadfully, he knew she was right. Or, at least, had some kind of a point. He had to take true responsibility, and that meant… Well, Nagisa wasn’t exactly sure what it meant. Doing the right thing, surely, though Nagisa didn’t know what that was yet.

On the one hand, her offer was a blessing. Though Asano had been nice enough to accommodate him, there was no way that was stretching to a new-born baby. Casually moving in with Karma like he had over the winter break just seemed kind of wrong, like a level of intimacy Nagisa wasn’t ready for yet. Even though that was the best alternate option, there was no way he’d be able to finish compulsory education.

His mother had him pinned. For a moment, Nagisa genuinely considered that a life of homelessness may be better than one with his mother. There was something, though, deep in his instincts, that wanted to believe her. Maybe because she’d looked at Daichi with more affection in her eyes in the space of a few minutes than she’d shown Nagisa in his whole life. The idea of leaving him in her care…

“It’s the best option we have,” Nagisa admitted.

Karma, who had been particularly silent during that exchange, finally seemed to pipe up. “Are you serious?”
He didn’t want to look Karma in the eye, as he said it. “It’s not like I want it. She’s ridiculous. What would marriage achieve?”

“That’s your problem with this?”

“No!” Nagisa defended. “But it’s just so-“

Karma shrugged. “It’s a piece of paper. The bigger issue is our son’s wellbeing.”

“Maybe she’s changed,” he supplied weakly. “I don’t know Karma. But I do think it’s better than any other option there is. I didn’t sense any kind of bad intent… And I’m the one who had to live with her all my life. Her moods are turbulent, but… She seemed really serious.”

“You know what,” he exhaled, “I do trust you. Fine. It’s your decision.”

Nagisa knew he couldn’t put it off, like he so badly wanted to. It felt like a small curse. Honestly… Nagisa didn’t want to admit defeat, either, admit that he probably did need his mother. He’d been okay, with sacrificing his childhood and everything else. As his feelings had proved, Daichi was more than worth all of it. It felt like taking a step backwards. Though, Nagisa supposed, it wouldn’t be for that long. Their assassination deadline was in less than a month, and the bounty that came with it. It was traditional, to stay at home with your parents for the first month…

But then he’d have to marry Karma. Though he was right, all it had to be was a piece of paper, Nagisa couldn’t help but find the idea kind of depressing. How long would it even have to last for, twenty years? That was longer than Nagisa had even been alive. Somehow, he didn’t quite feel ready to commit himself to something like that. Maybe it was the right thing, though. This wasn’t about him, or what he wanted.

Would Daichi really be looked down upon, based on the poor decisions of his parents? Nagisa couldn’t imagine anything worse, to screw up his life so soon. It wasn’t like he knew what he was doing for any of this. He really would have to start thinking properly about this, rather than relying on his instincts. Hormones were taking over his brain, though. It was hard to be logical.

“I need to think,” Nagisa said eventually. He swallowed. “You know you’re allowed a say.”

Slumping, Karma didn’t seem too bothered. “In this, I honestly think it’s down to your experience.”

“Karma, I-“

Before he could continue the discussion, yet another new nurse entered the room. Unlike the others, she looked a little sterner, disgruntled.

“Visiting hours are nearly over,” she stated.

Nagisa blinked. “He really can’t stay?”

“For everyone,” she dismissed.

“Who pissed in her cereal?” Karma smirked, knowing full well she was still in earshot, as she was going out the door. “Anyway, what were you saying?”

Perhaps it would be best to just speak what he was feeling. “I-I’m just really happy. Uhm… If you weren’t here with me, I don’t know what it would be like, but I think I’d feel a lot more lost. So, what I’m trying to say is,” Nagisa was rambling, and he knew it. An uncomfortable twinge distracted him, though. “I need the bathroom.”
Karma studied him. “All of that, because you want help walking to the bathroom? Who knew parenthood would make you so dramatic.”

Sure, Nagisa could stick with that. “Please?”

Actually being stood up wasn’t the worst thing in the world, but the process of getting into that position was something else. Nagisa knew it would just get easier with time, but that didn’t mean it didn’t suck. Turns out, he didn’t have his own body back just yet. He would eventually, right? Surely he wasn’t going to be destroyed forever. He couldn’t believe Daichi was so small, with the toll his body had taken.

Walking was… a challenge, but he barely remembered what walking normally felt like anyway. With less pressure bearing down, Nagisa managed it, with minimal assistance needed. Still, Karma’s hands were a nice guide, making it feel far less daunting. He even opened the bathroom door for him.

“I don’t think getting married would be so bad,” Karma said, once they were inside. “Now I think about it, I don’t mind.”

For a moment, Nagisa completely forgot about his bladder. “I-is this you asking me to marry you?”

“No really, but—“

“In a bathroom, no less,” he complained. “You couldn’t have waited five more minutes?”

Karma didn’t seem bothered. “You’re alright from here, right?”

“I’ll manage,” Nagisa said. Once Karma left the room, he sighed, though managed to relieve himself without much issue.

And then he caught sight of himself in the mirror. He looked a mess. Sure, Nagisa hadn’t been expecting to just pop a baby out and go back to exactly how he looked before, but he still looked pregnant, or else just fat. Not as big as he did before, but still. He also had gigantic bags under his eyes, and looked like he could collapse from the plague at any moment. Honestly, he was surprised Karma had yet to tease him about it.

Shuffling back into the recovery room, Nagisa found Karma in his own little world. He was sat on the visitors chair, holding Daichi to his chest gently. Honestly, Nagisa thought he could fall asleep like that, if left to it. There was this soft smile on Karma’s face, an expression Nagisa hadn’t really ever seen from him before. He almost wanted to go and join the comfort.

“Did he wake up?” Nagisa asked eventually.

Karma looked up. “Yeah, for a minute. He’s sleeping again now.”

“Well,” Nagisa said, “it’s been a big day for him. You look just as tired.”

“I’m fine,” he tried, moving to put Daichi back down.

“Karma… Maybe you should go back home.” As much as Nagisa hated that idea. “You need to get some rest.”

It seemed like some rare things really were going on that day, because Karma sighed and nodded. “Okay, but… I’ll be back tomorrow.” Very quickly and gently, he rubbed his thumb across the rough location of Daichi’s hand (considering he was all swaddled up), before moving closer to
Nagisa. Before Nagisa really knew what was happening, Karma leaned down, pressing his lips to his forehead. “Bye.”

Stunned, Nagisa didn’t say goodbye back. Had that really even happened? The pressure of his lips had been so light he could barely feel it, yet its ghost still lingered. Like a red hot brand, his kiss seemed to burn into his forehead. Struck dumb, Nagisa just stood there, embarrassingly flushing. What was Karma even playing at?

He needed to pull himself together.

Unfortunately, it was hard to do that. Daichi was fast asleep, so Nagisa didn’t want to disturb him. There was nothing to amuse himself with, that wouldn’t create noise. He had only his own thoughts, and currently, Karma occupied most of them. Hopefully it would all pass in the space of a day, because no way could Nagisa hold a conversation otherwise. At least he had the ‘fun’ challenge of getting back down into bed.

Eventually, the same, grumpy nurse came back in again. Nagisa didn’t really know what she was there for, but he was almost glad to have another person to interact with.

“I’m going to take him back to the nursery now,” she explained.

Immediately, Nagisa’s heart jumped up in his throat. “W-why?”

“Because,” she said, “that’s the policy here for patients who need a bit of extra care. Due to your age, and everything.”

If Nagisa was more of a naturally confrontational person, perhaps he would have argued with her more. Unfortunately, he’d probably shy away from a praying mantis if it looked threatening enough, so Nagisa kept his lips pressed tight. He couldn’t help but feel annoyed though, he could still take care of his baby as well as anybody else.

“The toll on your body is simply different,” she added. “You’ll see him again first thing in the morning.”

Well, he knew when to pick his battles. “Goodnight, Daichi,” he said, before he was wheeled away.

The moment that door closed, Nagisa went straight back to wondering if this was all some weirdly vivid dream. Without Daichi in his literal sightline, the only real reminder he had was the soreness of his body. He felt a little bad for it, but Nagisa was too tired to really be worried. Soon, the most logical thing to do, sleep, took over.

When he woke up again, it was to a new nurse wheeling Daichi back in again. Nagisa supposed it hadn’t been the worst thing in the world, then. In fact, a brand new wave of energy rolled over him. Instead of being worn out, he was refreshed, ready for anything. Though the soreness was still very present, it didn’t bother him much. There were more important things.

It had been just over a full day since Daichi was born. Now that Nagisa had had some time to breathe, the rest of his life began. He was determined to be the best parent he possibly could. It just felt like the right moment to start. So, after Daichi was in his care, and he’d consumed the hospital supplied breakfast, Nagisa pulled himself to his feet, ready to go.

Then again, despite his commitment, Nagisa didn’t know exactly where to start. He picked Daichi up, studying the way he looked up at him, slowly blinking. Being a day old, Daichi really didn’t seem to do much. Nagisa didn’t mind that, he supposed. He was sure he’d mourn these days, in the
future. Well, the least Nagisa could do was walk around a little. It had to be boring, staring up at
the same thing all day.

Nagisa wasn’t sure if Daichi actually noticed the difference or not, but he certainly seemed more
awake than he had the day before. When he needed feeding, he seemed to fuss a little more too,
squirming and opening his little gummy mouth wide. It felt somehow harder, without Karma there
with him. Nagisa managed though, or at least, he felt like he was. Daichi seemed happy enough. He
realised, then, his feelings hadn’t just been heat of the moment. He really did love this child, with
all that he was.

When visiting hours finally opened up, Nagisa was half surprised that Karma wasn’t already in the
room again within seconds. He wasn’t bothered, though, electing to hope that Karma was sleeping
or something. Magically, Nagisa’s burst of energy had lasted, enough that he was in such a good
mood nothing could irritate him, even with the knowledge his mother would been visiting later.

In fact, Nagisa’s first visitor that day turned out to be his own father. It took him by surprise, when
the nurse had warned him of it. Ever since they got sushi that day, Nagisa hadn’t heard anything
from him. That didn’t matter, though. Nagisa didn’t expect to hear much, just like usual. He’d just
taken his father’s indifference as silent disapproval, and left it alone.

“Hi, dad,” Nagisa said, once his father had entered the room. He’d decided to sit down on the
hospital bed, rather than walk around freely as he had been.

Keeping a somewhat cautious distance, his father remained next to the door. “A-are you well?”

Nagisa swallowed. “Yeah, I’m all good… Do you, uhm,” he didn’t know the right thing to say.
“Do you want to come closer?”

He took tentative steps towards them. Helping the situation along a little, Nagisa held Daichi up.
“I-“

“We named him Daichi,” Nagisa explained. Though his father didn’t ask, Nagisa sensed what he
wanted. It wasn’t so hard to hand Daichi over, that time. His father was ready to respond, though
looked slightly hesitant as he took Dachi into his arms.

“I think I owe you an apology,” he said. “The indifference I showed before… That was wrong of
me. I was shocked.”

“That’s okay,” Nagisa replied. Honestly, it hadn’t really stuck with him that much.

His father nodded. “Nagisa, I can’t say I’m happy about this. I suppose I should be angry or
disappointed, but I fear I lost that right long ago. Really, your mother and I can only blame
ourselves. How could we assume you’d manage to lead a normal life, with only us for example?
Things should’ve been different.”

“But then I wouldn’t have him,” Nagisa said, trying to shed some of the weight of his father’s
words. He pulled himself to his feet, taking Daichi back. “And I wouldn’t trade him for anything.”

Flashing a sad smile, his father sighed. “I still remember the day you were born. Though I was
terrified, when I held you for the first time I was just so excited. I’d never imagined being a parent,
before that.” He paused. “I always thought you were smarter than you come across… I at least
hope this isn’t on a whim, that you’ve thought this through.”

“Karma and I,” Nagisa started carefully, “we’re going to take care of him.”
“Karma?” His father questioned. “Is that… like it physically pained him, his features clenched, “your boyfriend?”

He couldn’t help but turn away, breaking eye contact. “Not quite.”

“Well,” he said, “I’ll see you, then?”

“Sure,” Nagisa replied, not wanting to drag the awkward conversation out much further.

After that, his father let himself out, drawing their brief meeting to a close. He wasn’t sure how to feel about all of that, or what it meant. Mostly, Nagisa had done just fine without his father a constant feature in his life, he didn’t desperately need a change. It was a stark contrast to how Nagisa would have felt about this months ago.

It mellowed him out a little, but Nagisa was still in a pretty good mood. He had more important things to think about, anyway. Mostly, it felt like being a little bubble, where the real issues he’d have to strongly consider weren’t hitting him. He knew there was no way this could sustainably last, but it didn’t seem to bother him.

“Yo,” Karma said, when he finally showed up. “How’s Tiny?”

Nagisa had had to put him down for a while, after his father left. “Napping.”

Of all the things to undo his light mood, it was odd that it would Karma. He looked a lot better than he had yesterday, now that he’d had some rest. Perhaps because he was afraid Karma might do something again, Nagisa couldn’t help but stare at his lips. They’d been weirdly soft, against any kind of expectation. Just from looking at them, it wasn’t like they were shiny with gloss or balm or anything (not that Nagisa could imagine Karma wearing that, ever). Wow, Nagisa needed to stop staring at his lips.

“I bought sushi,” he said, pulling a pack out from his backpack. “As promised.”

It took Nagisa a moment to place what he meant, before he realised. He barely remembered the last parts of labour, but Karma had said something about sushi. “Oh! Thanks for the food,” he said politely, taking it from him and immediately tucking in. “Is this allowed?”

He shrugged. “Sure it is.”

Though it probably wasn’t, Nagisa didn’t really care. He hadn’t really been able to eat his favourite food for months, so it was incredibly satisfying to have it again. If he couldn’t have his body back just yet, at least he could have that. Without Daichi doing much to occupy Karma’s attention, they were left to themselves.

“Nagisa-“

“I’m going to try and get discharged today,” Nagisa cut him off. He was frightened of what Karma might say, whether he’d bring ‘it’ up.

He blinked. “Don’t they usually keep you for a week with this kind of thing?”

“Yeah…” Nagisa sighed. “But the entrance exams are tomorrow.”

“You’re going to take those?” Though Karma’s expression and tone didn’t express much shock, Nagisa could tell it was there.
“It’s not like I have a choice,” he said. “I’ll just have to get through it.”

Karma tilted his head. “You had a baby yesterday.”Apparently he didn’t want an argument, though. “You’ve made your choice then.”

“It’s the best option we have,” Nagisa said. “Uhm, I know you said it was up to me, but-“

Grinning, Karma waved him off. “Don’t worry. I have it covered.” Nagisa was very, very afraid of whatever that meant. “Say, if you wanted to take Daichi home today, don’t we need clothes or something?”

“I didn’t even think of that.” Wow, Nagisa’s good parenting mission wasn’t going as smoothly as he’d hoped.

Karma didn’t seem bothered. “I’ll be back soon.”

He was gone, before Nagisa even had a chance to question it. He did trust that Karma knew what he was doing, though. Looking over at Daichi, who was tucked in the crib, still oblivious. Nagisa couldn’t help but wonder if Karma’s senses were naturally better than his. Still, he felt calm as he looked over at his son. At least he didn’t have to worry about any of this.

“What’s that?” Nagisa let out, when Karma returned.

In his hands was a monstrosity. It was clearly a baby sleep suit, but unlike anything with a cute pattern, it was gaudy. Mostly white otherwise, some cheap looking print was stuck on the front. It read ‘I heart Tokyo’, though the heart was an actual red coloured heart. Exactly the kind of thing an obnoxious foreigner would buy as a souvenir, it wasn’t exactly what Nagisa had envisioned dressing Daichi in ever.

“Clothes,” he said, cheerfully.

Nagisa cringed. “You’re going to force Daichi to wear that? Whilst he’s so defenceless?”

“It was the only thing they had in the gift shop,” Karma shrugged.

“Great,” Nagisa said, eyeing the garment, “now he’s going to look like a tourist.”

Stretching out, Karma shook his head. “He’ll look cute. They had a bunch of different colours, but we don’t know what his fashion sense is yet, so I just went for plain. It only cost me three thousand yen.”

“Three. Thousand. Yen. You spent three thousand on that?”

“Lighten up,” Karma nudged him. “Look, he loves it.”

To be honest, Daichi looked completely apathetic, but Nagisa decided not to tell Karma that. He decided it would be best to just accept it. Karma could make half the fashion decisions, he supposed. After he got out of the hospital, he was definitely buying something better, something that would suit him. Not that Daichi would ever look less than the most beautiful baby in the world, of course.

Nagisa swallowed. “We need to go and buy him actual things. Not just from gift shops.”

“How about tomorrow,” Karma suggested. “After your exam.”

He nodded. How did he end up here, again? How on earth did he ever fall into a conversation
about baby shopping with Karma? This had been the weirdest year of his life, without a doubt. It was, also, absolutely the best.

Until, naturally, a nurse came in to announce his mother was in reception. This time, Nagisa remembered to steel himself. He was going to accept her offer, so he hoped it would keep her happy. That didn’t mean her presence didn’t intimidate him, though. It still felt kind of like losing, submitting once again to whatever she wanted for him. Nagisa would accept it, though, given what he’d probably put her through.

“So,” she said immediately upon entry, as if she’d never left, “have you made your decision?”

Nagisa gulped. There he was, about to sign his entire life away to his mother’s will. But then, looking at Daichi sleeping peacefully, Nagisa had no regrets. If it was for him, anything.

Karma kept his gaze low. “How about a counter offer?”

Oh no. Though Karma hadn’t really seen much of his mother, definitely not the more hysterical sides to her, he had to know what he was getting in to, arguing with her. Then again, Karma always was the type to play with fire. Nagisa didn’t see this going over too well, not at all. His eyes darted between the two of them, hastily trying to figure out a way to defuse this before something went really wrong.

At her glare, Karma decided to just continue. He reached into his bag, and pulled out some paperwork. “Intent Of Bond forms.”

“That’s archaic,” Nagisa couldn’t help but let out. “I- that’s still a thing?!”

Intent Of Bond was the kind of thing he learnt about in history lessons. Back when alphas and omegas were the majority secondary genders, and there was no real need for bonding. The exact dates of it escaped his memory, considering it wasn’t really the area of history that was studied in school. Bonding was permanent, a mark that would never go away, unlike the rings and words of marriage.

He thought it had something to do with a beta falling into a position of power. With no option to mate, something betas couldn’t biologically do, the concept of marriage was popularised. It was a beta thing, mostly, but the fact that it could be undone meant it had appeal. As far as Nagisa knew, it just took over, and bonding became less.

The only reason he even knew about Intent Of Bond was because it caused a massive drama at one point in Europe, though they didn’t learn much European history at all. Only basic concepts. It was invented as an answer to marriage, a ‘trial’ period much like marriage, that could be written off after time passed if no bond actually happened. Children born from it still counted as legitimate, in many places. Different versions of the law existed, he knew, and some countries had abolished it all together. Japan, it seemed, still had it, though Nagisa rarely came across it. That didn’t surprise Nagisa, considering how slow the country he lived in was to update itself.

Karma looked his mother dead in the eye. “It’s a loophole, better than marriage. Me and Nagisa can sign these, register right away, and Daichi won’t be treated any different. The family register would look just the same as a married couple. It’s less messy than marriage, and, when it times out in ten years, it’ll just be like we got a divorce without actually doing anything.”

“But you’d own me,” Nagisa said. “I’d be your legal property.”

His eyes flicked to Nagisa. “Don’t you trust me enough to not take advantage of that? It’s only a
piece of paper.”

Nagisa did. He trusted Karma with his life, honestly, but… It made him uncomfortable. Being an omega was bad enough as it was. But he had to really weigh this up. Karma was right, this was less permanent than marriage. It wasn’t like he was ever going to actually bond with Karma. Unless he wanted to get married to somebody else by twenty five (not likely), Nagisa couldn’t think of another way it would actually affect him.

“I’m a presented alpha,” Karma said, “so I’m fine. But Nagisa needs consent.” He held gazes with Nagisa’s mother. “You are, legally, his sole guardian, right?”

Of course she was, after the divorce. She swallowed. “Hand me the papers.”

Perhaps Nagisa should have been more upset that she was so willing to sign him away, but it wasn’t worth it. Without much care, she signed her name, and then passed the paper to him. Once, he’d heard that he should read everything he signed, but he didn’t see much point. Hand clenching around the pen, he shook. With just a few lines, he’d be giving himself away. He and Karma would be engaged, or, more than engaged, really. But this was for Daichi’s good.

Just on the dotted line, he drew the same strokes he’d been writing since he was old enough to hold a pen. With his name just across from Karma’s, the deed was done.

Chapter End Notes

EDIT: Alright binge readers! If you're reading this fic for the first time, this is a good place to take a break, get a snack, or just put the fic down for now! Or, if you still have energy, by all means keep reading on.

Some world building in this one!

So they're like... KIND OF married, heh.

I can't believe I made you wait, like, over 100k words for a forehead kiss ;') Get used to this.

As always, I love to see such great response to my writing. I'm so stoked you guys all loved the last chapter so much, I hope you enjoyed this one, too. I appreciate all feedback!
Standing in his bedroom again felt like he’d entered another plane of reality. So much had happened since the last time he saw it, yet it was almost as if he’d never even left. Of course, Nagisa knew he had, the physical evidence of that was squirming in his arms. It still felt like foreign territory, though. How many times had he hidden away up there, when he was younger? Though it wasn’t exactly the bedroom of his childhood, he’d left that behind after his parents’ divorce, it was close enough.

Nagisa was no longer the kid he’d been when he left this place. Or, at least, he couldn’t be. He was honestly surprised the hospital had even allowed him to go home so soon, though he supposed with the combined argumentative and wit powers of his mother and Karma, they hadn’t had much of a choice. Not that it had helped him, much. All his books were at Asano’s house, so he hadn’t studied, or slept for more than a few naps. Plus, Daichi was wearing that hideous outfit, and it hurt his eyes to look at it.

His phone buzzed again, though Nagisa tried not to be annoyed about it. That, sending him home, was the deal he’d made with Karma, at least, so one of them could get some sleep. Naturally, he’d promised he’d let Karma know any updates as they came. It hadn’t meant that Karma should text him at least once every half hour, like he was doing. Though, this meant Nagisa’s entire camera roll now was just Daichi sleeping from different angles, in slightly altering lighting.

Nagisa really couldn’t stand there any longer. It was time to bite the bullet. Leaving his bedroom, which he had to be careful about, trying to open a door with a baby in his arms was a little challenging, Nagisa stepped out into the hallway. He wasn’t exactly worried about the entrance exams, after everything. Perhaps he should have been, but it honestly seemed pretty insignificant.

He’d try his best, though, for Daichi’s sake.

“I have to leave now,” Nagisa plucked up the courage to say.

His mother turned from where she was sat at the kitchen table, halfway through her coffee mug, “Take a bottle of water,” she said, “it’s good for the brain.”

Had Nagisa missed this? It wasn’t like his mother hadn’t cared for him, before everything. Of
course there had been her moods, but other than that... It wasn’t so bad. Though, there was no way anything could revert exactly back to the way it had been. He still didn’t regret a single thing, though.

“Thanks,” he said, stepping over to the fridge. Daichi decided to co-operate with him, not really moving as Nagisa opened the door with his free hand. “Uhm, Karma and I are going shopping later, after the exam.”

He didn’t know why he’d held his breath, because his mother just nodded. “You always need more than you think you do.”

It was time, then. He stepped closer to his mother, slipping his arms a little differently so he could support Daichi’s head, in preparation to hand him over. Tensing only a little, it wasn’t as hard as he thought it would be to let his mother take him. Daichi didn’t seem to care in the slightest, blinking once before shutting his eyes in sleep.

“Do you-“

She sighed. “Nagisa, he’s in good hands.”

Swallowing, he tried to remember that. “Right. Bye, then.”

“Don’t stay out too long with Akabane kun.”

Nagisa didn’t respond to her, instead picking up one of his larger coats and leaving out the door, once he’d made sure he had everything. With the bulkiness of the clothing, he was managing to pull off the ‘just overweight’ look once again. It also meant, when he got to the train, that nobody immediately moved for his sake anymore. Honestly, Nagisa didn’t want to go through the process of sitting down and standing back up again, so he didn’t mind.

Finally, once he was truly on his way to Keisetsu High School, which was a pretty long journey out of Kunugigaoka, Nagisa finally pulled out his phone. Karma hadn’t actually spammed up his messages, at least. He found himself smiling, before tapping out his reply.
Of course. Though Nagisa had already left, he’d taken a couple, before getting all his stuff together. Karma could be predictable, sometimes. Looking down at the photos, his heart swelled. He’d never thought he’d actually *miss* being pregnant, but it was really kind of weird, not being able to feel his baby moving around in him all the time. The photos were a decent replacement, he supposed.
Well, Nagisa hadn’t needed or expected much else. It was kind of funny, really, how brief Karma was over text. He never said anything he didn’t need to, at least in texts to Nagisa. Typically, in their class group chat, his language was much more proper. Secretly, Nagisa hoped that just meant that he was comfortable around him, even virtually, rather than anything else.

Even having signed that paper work the day before, Nagisa realised nothing was that different. Being basically engaged to Karma… It was just a technicality in his life. Perhaps because Nagisa knew exactly how it would end, completely written off legally in only a decade, it didn’t hold the same impact as actual marriage or anything would. There was no chance they’d actually bond ever, so admittedly, Karma was right. It was just a piece of paper.

Nagisa could survive until the afternoon, hopefully, if he didn’t combust in the middle of the exam. That was still very much a possibility. Though, after all he’d been through, he was sure he could pull through till the end. Once he arrived at the school, he couldn’t stop his hand from shaking, as he looked down at his examination ticket. Nobody else amongst those making their way to the entrance seemed as worried. Then again, Keisestsu was a _good_ school, they were all probably far more prepared. Until he heard a commotion.

“Go, go, Nagisa!” Korosensei, or, _multiple_ of his clones were screaming.

“W-what the heck are you doing, Korosensei?!” Nagisa got out. He looked around nervously, hoping nobody had noticed it was for _him_. Doubtful.

He continued speeding up and down the street. “Cheering you on, of course! How could I not be
there for my dear student’s big moment? Yikes! Is that the time?! I’ve got to pop in on Kimura, Kanzaki, Chiba, Hayami, and Hara – all within the next four minutes!”

Before Nagisa could formulate a response to that, he sped off, breaking out into Mach 20 and flying off into the sky. It was almost funny to watch, Korosensei had become much more lax with the whole ‘national secret’ thing recently. At least most people had already gone inside the hall to take their exams. Nagisa just kept his head down and entered the building, though he did feel slightly better with Korosensei’s support.

He’d never be like that. Recently, Nagisa had been thinking a lot about his future. After tutoring Sakura for so long, he thought maybe he’d like to be a teacher too, some day. It was a good, stable career, after all, over assassination, anyway. And Nagisa wanted to inspire people, just like Korosensei had inspired him. Without the E Class, he probably wouldn’t be half the person he’d become. If he could even capture a bit of that…

Nagisa swallowed. Korosensei just seemed to care so much about all of them, went out of his way to support them constantly through anything. There was no way he could match that… Though, there was nothing else that Nagisa wanted to be. Now he’d thought of it as a possibility, it was the only thing that stuck with him. Well, he still had around a week left to decide.

Standing up as straight as he could, tough with his change in centre of gravity, Nagisa signed himself in. He’d made it, with time to spare. The sight of the wooden chairs and desks brought on phantom pain before he’d even sat down, but he forced himself to just take another deep breath. After surviving child birth, the pain would be comparatively minimal, he reminded himself. He still winced, though, as he reached for his pen and began signing his name on the paper.

“Alright,” the examiner said eventually, “you may begin.”

He flipped the page, and began to write. Considering he’d been through the Kunugigaoka Junior High final exams, some of these questions felt basic. As if his pen became a sword in its own right, Nagisa sliced through the questions as they came. He hadn’t need to cram, he realised, after he noticed he was halfway through his English paper already. There were some things that escaped his memory, but he made logical guesses for all of them. You couldn’t have points deducted, of course.

Like always, science gave him a bit of trouble. Nagisa had improved a lot, from being completely clueless like at the start of the school year, though, especially without studying, there were definite cracks in his knowledge. Applying some of the strategies Korosensei had drilled into him, he decided to fly through the paper, answering all the questions he definitely knew the answers to, and then going back to tackle the trickier ones. ‘NMR’. NMR… Nagisa had definitely seen that somewhere, before. Wracking his memory, he finally recalled that book Asano had loaned him, before their assassination trip. Smiling to himself, Nagisa recalled one of the first chapters he’d read, and managed to answer the question.

He’d become like a machine, somehow. By the time a lunch break was called, Nagisa was completely fired up. He almost didn’t want it to be lunch break, whilst he had the energy. Still, he pulled himself out of his seat, following everyone else out of the room. Tears stung the corners of his eyes, as he stood up and the adrenaline faded. His entire lower half was on fire.

Nagisa just had to grit his teeth, too pained to even think about eating. He had to focus, though, to just stick this out till the final exams. This breathing thing he’d learnt due to the contractions sure was coming in handy… Sure the pain wasn’t blinding him, he took sips from the water his mother had reminded him to take, finding he felt a little better.
Though he was still on fire for the second portion of exams, they weren’t awful. Nagisa felt sure that he could do this, and possibly get a good mark. He’d come fourteenth in his year, completely legitimately, and he knew he shouldn’t forget that. People, specifically one tiny person, were depending on it. Before he knew it, he was putting his pen down, with twenty minutes left in his last exam for the day.

It kind of felt like a strange fever dream. Once time was called, and Nagisa was allowed to leave, his mind completely flipped over to the mental list of baby supplies he needed to get. Perhaps it should have been more bizarre, how quickly he seemed to go from ‘schoolboy’ to ‘parent’, but this was his reality, now. This was the agreement he’d made, with his mother. School during the day, so he’d actually be able to take care of Daichi properly in the future, and then all his other responsibilities. Somewhere in the mix; assassination.

Just as promised, Karma was waiting at the entrance of the train station for him. He looked definitively better, up to his usual strength. It made Nagisa feel better, though, rather than jealous. Though he knew he’d get there eventually, he was having to limp with every other step. At least they had a month, before their assassination deadline. Hopefully, it would be enough time for his body to go back to normal.

“Yo,” he said, as Nagisa approached. “How was the exam?”

Nagisa smiled. “Exhausting, but… I hope I did well.”

“’Course you did,” Karma shrugged. “So, shopping?”

“Mmm,” he agreed. “I- I thought maybe we should try the department store, first.”

Nodding in agreement, Karma began to walk, though he kept his pace slow. “It’s probably easiest to get everything in one shot.”

There was one disadvantage to his plan, though. Being the commuter town it was, Kunugigaoka didn’t have much in the way of shopping. There was exactly one department store in the town, and not only was it incredibly expensive, but it was giant. Standing there, right in the shop entrance, Nagisa had no idea where to even start.

Karma had already jumped on the elevator, though, which seemed like a pretty good idea. Glancing at one of the signs on the way up, Nagisa realised it did indeed direct that baby things were on the top floor. The floors in between only had a few people shopping, yet for some reason the top was full of people. He supposed people did have babies, all year round.

“Woah,” Karma said, immediately stepping over to the clothes, “Nagisa, look at this!”

Admittedly, it was adorable. On one of the first hangers at his eye level, there was a tiny little super hero suit. Its bright colours and chest logo weren’t the best part, though. The back had a detachable cape, which although would end up being a practical nightmare, made the look. He looked through the hangers, though the only ones available seemed to be six months plus.

“It’ll be too big,” he said, mournfully.

Karma picked it up, regardless. “He’ll grow.”

They did steer towards the new born section, though. Everything was just as adorable, if not more so. There was far too much choice still, though. Nagisa immediately wanted to buy all of it. He supposed it wasn’t like Daichi cared what he was wearing, or would even remember it… This would get a lot easier, when he was older. At least then, Nagisa would be able to narrow it down to
favourite colours and patterns.

“How about these?” Karma picked up a miniature pair of shoes.

Just looking at them, Nagisa wanted to burst into tears. “He’s not going to be walking anywhere, for ages,” he let his logic speak. The shoes were impossibly small, though, looking at them closely, he was certain they’d swallow Daichi’s even tinier feet.

Predictably, they made their way into the pile, regardless of Nagisa’s opinion. They were so cute, he didn’t mind it, though. Maybe they’d even help to keep his feet warm. Well, that was enough justification. Nagisa tried to think about it properly. Honestly, all Daichi really did was sleep at the moment. Though he knew that would change, right then at least, it was probably alright to get mainly sleep suits.

Having gone through the struggle of putting that stupid onesie on Daichi back at the hospital, Nagisa immediately disregarded everything that didn’t have buttons. Nagisa got it, he’d probably hate someone forcing his head through that thing too, if he didn’t understand what was happening. He ended up picking up the more basic designs, though they were all very cute.

“Nagisa~” Karma tugged on his sleeve. “I’m not taking no for an answer.”

The item Karma was holding, a bright red, short sleeved jumpsuit with a matching strawberry patterned hat, was ugly for sure, but the kind of ugly that was also kind of sweet. If Daichi ever saw the inevitable photos of himself as a baby, far in the future, he’d probably end up hating him and Karma both.

He tried to resist. “It’s a bit-“

“I picked it up in the bigger size~” Karma continued. “In summer, it’s gonna be a perfect fit.”

“We need to get a coat or something,” he said, silently allowing Karma to keep the item. “It’s really cold out.”

It didn’t take long, given the season, to find what was more of a snowsuit, and a bunch of hats. Nagisa wasn’t sure if they’d be taking Daichi out that many places, as winter turned to spring, but it was probably better to be prepared, than not. With that, a bunch of outfits for at least the first three months of Daichi’s life (plus a few for later), the ‘fun’ part was mostly over.

The rest of it was completely overwhelming. Sure, Nagisa knew very basic necessary items, but there were a bunch of products he’d never even heard of. Who knew babies needed so much… Though he figured a lot of it probably wasn’t necessary. Some things, at least, were easy enough, like blankets and a towel, along with baby was and shampoo (though Daichi didn’t have much hair at all, only a few sparse dark wisps). And then they came to the crib section.

“Is one of these better than the others?” Nagisa voiced aloud, stunned by the variety.

Karma shrugged. “Different kinds of wood?”

“That wouldn’t be wrong to just get the cheapest one?”

Meeting his eyes, Karma began to grin. Nagisa couldn’t help but copy his expression, almost laughing. Honestly, the fact that they were even discussing cribs together was still ridiculous to him. Instinctively reacting to Karma’s slight movement, Nagisa met him in a high five, self applause for quickly making a decision.
Because they’d have to ask a staff member to get one for them, Nagisa just noted down its name. A few other items were easy enough to get. They ended up with a nappy bag (a bit of a depressing grey colour, but it was the only one without flowers), a changing mat (considering there was no way a gigantic table would fit in his room), and what seemed like an endless supply of bottles and dummies. He had no idea where he was even going to put any of this stuff.

The last hurdle was the pram and pushchair section. Though he didn’t know where exactly he’d be taking Daichi, it seemed like one of those things he should own anyway. He was kind of amused at the way they were all lined up, like the start of a race or something.

Straight away, Karma pulled one of them. “Hey, this one says it converts into a normal pushchair. Let’s get this one, convenient, right?”

Nagisa knew, deep down, that it was probably because Karma couldn’t be bothered to go through this major shopping experience again, any time in the near future, but he was right. Frankly, Nagisa wasn’t built for extended shopping trips.

“Oh, let’s get it.”

Happy to finally be approaching the till, after they’d received a self-construct crib, Nagisa’s arms were starting to ache under the weight of everything. The cashier shot them both an odd yet somewhat disapproving look, but didn’t say anything before she started scanning their collection. Nagisa panted, now free of the weight.

“That comes to 191,300 yen,” the woman said.

Nagisa almost collapsed, right there and then. He was going to have to sell a kidney or something. He’d been thinking maybe fifteen thousand, at a push. The receipt, having auto-printed, was so long it was like something out of a comedy sketch. Had they gone overboard, or something? Honestly, Nagisa had turned his eyes away from a lot of the things they’d walked past.

Like it was casual, Karma handed over a card. “You can put it all on this.”

He knew better than to say anything, right there and then, but Nagisa had many, many questions about that. Surprisingly, the card was accepted without a problem. He just hoped Karma hadn’t stolen it, or something worse. Using the fact that they’d purchased a pram to their advantage, it turned out to be great mobile storage. Being the stronger one, Karma took the crib box.

“What?” Karma said, when they were finally outside again.

Nagisa tested out pushing the pram forwards, weighted down with everything. “Where did you get that?”

He shrugged. “My parents left it with me.”

“Well, yeah,” he said, “they said it was for emergencies, but I figure Daichi counts.”

It still didn’t sit quite right. They weren’t even done yet. Though, they only popped into a regular corner store, far less daunting than the labyrinth they’d just come from. The problem there wasn’t necessarily what to get, but more ‘how much’. He figured this kind of thing, formula, wipes, and nappies, would be pretty easy to get whenever he needed it.

Regardless of that, he found himself with his arms completely full, by the time they were done. The
two of them probably looked ridiculous, walking around with everything, plus their mass purchase of three different types of item, accompanied by the soda Karma had apparently picked up. The total was a lot less, though.

As first baby shopping trips went, Nagisa supposed he’d done quite well. Hopefully, Daichi wouldn’t be needing much else, until he was a little bigger. At least he’d been the voice of reason when it came to things like toys, of which they’d only picked up a couple. It was probably better to have more than he needed, than less, however.

There was a slight logistical problem they hadn’t considered about Nagisa’s apartment complex. There wasn’t actually any kind of elevator, just flights upon flights of stairs. Usually, Nagisa had no complaints about it, but he was pushing an incredibly full pram, and Karma’s arms were full. By the time they made it to his floor, Nagisa was about ready to collapse, and even Karma was panting slightly under the strain.

He felt happy to ring the doorbell really, so at least he could go nap or something. Immediately, Nagisa remembered that he had a baby now, and there would be no nap or sleep of any other kind. Somehow, he still wasn’t mad about it. His mother opened the door, after a few seconds, holding a tired looking Daichi.

“Did the exam go well?” She said, as they both entered.

Nagisa nodded. “I think it did.”

His heart swelled, as Daichi started blinking, clearly attempting to focus on Nagisa’s face, though his eyes weren’t developed enough to see so far away yet. Though he’d been distracted all day, everything came flooding in at once. He’d really missed him, even if it was just skirting under the surface. Nagisa dreaded having to leave him for school each day, if this was how he felt.

“Hey Tiny,” Karma said, moving to take him, as he apparently forgot the rest of the bags.

Daichi opened his eyes a little wider, definitely watching the way Karma spoke to him. His tiny little arms broke free from the blanket, waving around a little under the attention. Karma just smiled at him, slipping his finger up so he’d have something to grab onto.

“I think we have enough stuff,” Nagisa said to his mother.

She looked over at it, taking up most of the hallway. “Just keep it tidy.”

He’d try his best. “We’re going to have to build the crib.”

“Fine,” she sighed, “I’ll call you for dinner.”

Nagisa wouldn’t ordinarily feel the need to repeat that information to Karma, but he looked so engrossed in his little bubble, Nagisa was sure it would be necessary. He rocked Daichi around slightly, though not violently enough to bother him, like he’d somehow been doing this for years. Quickly, Nagisa snapped his gaze away and picked up the bags. He couldn’t allow himself to go there.

Chapter End Notes

Is this straight up the fluffiest chapter yet? I can't decide. I kind of cheated on the
LINE screenshots, but I don't have any artistic talent really, unless you want to picture Daichi as a stick figure :) Anybody who wants to is more than welcome, though!

Once again, thank you all for your lovely comments, they motivate me a lot!
Nap Time

Chapter Summary

Nagisa discovers the true reality of caring for a new born

Chapter Notes

This is good amounts of fluff and angst

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Never in his life had Nagisa been so thankful for his special forces training. He was sure, as he took a few cautious steps back, that he made absolutely zero noise. In fact, he was confident he was silent as ever. It took a lot of will to not show his joy at that, finally stretching out a little. He was ridiculously tired. The constant feeding and getting up in the middle of the night was wearing him down, for sure, but it wasn’t as bad as the crying.

For some reason, Daichi had been doing nothing but that, for hours. Nagisa had no clue what was wrong with him, either. He’d hardly cried at all in the few days they’d been home from the hospital, so this was an unwelcome change. Though Nagisa had heard people say that babies just needed to be left to ‘cry it out’, the concept felt awful to him. Perhaps it was some instinctual thing, or Nagisa just felt bad. He was sure that if he didn’t know any other way of communicating, he’d probably cry a lot too.

It would help if Daichi could just tell him what he wanted, though, rather than leaving Nagisa to guess. He’d basically gone through everything he could think of, though. There was no chance he was hungry, he’d moved his head away when Nagisa had tried, and he wasn’t about the force it down his throat. He didn’t need changing, though Nagisa had done that just in case. He’d tried putting him down swaddled up, just in a sleep suit, even holding him… nada.

Following the trend of the day, even though Nagisa had been quiet, the few seconds of silence Daichi had blessed him with were over the second Nagisa wasn’t out of his immediate view, though being held hadn’t made much of a difference either. If this went on any longer, Nagisa was going to start crying, too.

He picked Daichi up again, though he didn’t immediately calm. “Please stop?” He tried, rocking Daichi gently as he did so, knowing the request was completely useless. There was no way he wouldn’t just pass out from exhaustion, soon.

Nagisa knew he definitely shouldn’t, but picked up his phone with his free hand to google search if he had a type of rare illness or something. Given how long they’d tested him in the hospital just under a week ago, it was doubtful, but he didn’t know what else to do. His mother had gone out, and even if she were here, Nagisa had no desire to rely on her advice.

Before he could search anything, he noticed a message notification from their class LINE group. It wasn’t anything that important, just a general inquiry to his wellbeing, but Nagisa felt himself snap.
He hadn’t meant to rant, exactly, but he ended up sending a rushed paragraph about how exhausted he was, completed with a ‘I think I brought home the wrong child’. He practically collapsed down onto his desk chair, legs about to give out on him. Of course, Daichi kept up the crying.

When he stopped again, for a moment, Nagisa shouldn’t have gotten his hopes up. He did, though, so the stream of puke that came out of his son’s mouth, and directly onto him, still took him by surprise. Somehow, Nagisa still felt like he wasn’t actually ill. He was pretty sure this was just a reflex to all the crying.

“Oh no,” he said as gently as he could, lightly tapping Daichi’s back to make sure he got it all up. “That’s your own fault, you know.”

Daichi, who apparently hadn’t learned his lesson, continued to cry. He tried his best to soothe him, dreading the fact that he’d have to try and feed him again soon, since the contents of his stomach were now located on Nagisa’s hoodie. Not that he minded the fate of his clothes, which were more of an afterthought. He barely even heard the door buzz.

“Yo,” Karma leant against the frame, “what’s the matter with him?”

Nagisa blinked, like he was some kind of apparition. “K-karma? What are you-”

Apparently not about to answer his question, Karma reached over, taking Daichi into his own arms. Nagisa didn’t resist him, watching it happen. Daichi’s mouth went completely shut for a moment, before he blinked up and sighed, snuggling into Karma’s arms like nothing was wrong. Absolutely stunned, Nagisa watched Daichi closely, who was apparently choosing favourites. Little traitor.

“Miss me, huh?” He said gently, and then shrugged. “I figured it was my turn.”

“Your turn?” Nagisa couldn’t even be jealous or anything. He was just relieved.

He looked Nagisa dead in the eye. “Well yeah,” he said, “you’ve had him alone for a few days now, so… Unless you don’t want me to take him.”

Debating it with himself, Nagisa’s desire to finally have a nap won out. Karma was right, anyway. As much as leaving Daichi anywhere did pain him, it probably was his turn. He was half Karma’s too, after all, so Nagisa wasn’t exactly worried about the idea. If anything, he was sure Karma would be less clueless than he was.

Still, he needed to be responsible. “Take him where?”

“I don’t know,” Karma said casually, looking far more interested in Daichi’s movements. “Out, somewhere.”

“Great!” Nagisa responded, and then thought about it. “Hang on.”

With good speed, he rushed around the small apartment, grabbing all the things he’d found necessary in the last few days. It was a really good thing they’d bought that large bag. Somewhat haphazardly, he threw in everything, though he did make sure to double check. He also pulled out a couple of blankets, because he was pretty sure it was cold outside.

“I changed him around half an hour ago, he hasn’t been fed in a while and he threw up whatever he did have in his stomach, so you’ll need to do that soon. Also, he’s been crying for ages, hopefully he’ll sleep or something,” Nagisa thrust the bag into Karma’s hands, hoping he’d taken in all that.

Karma nodded. “I’ve got it.”
Once he’d managed to get that pram down Nagisa’s horrifically inconvenient stairs, Karma didn’t know where to start. There wasn’t all that much you could do with a week old baby, he realised very quickly. It was cold outside, so he couldn’t take him anywhere. At least, he was pretty sure keeping babies warm was important.

Figuring it was better than sitting at the bottom of the apartment building all day, Karma decided to just go back to his house. A small walk wouldn’t be so bad. He got up, looking down at the pram. For all he’d been crying when Karma got there, Daichi seemed pretty chilled out, minutes away from falling asleep by the looks of it.

He’d felt bad, reading Nagisa’s message, like he was just leaving him high and dry with their kid. Logically, he knew that wasn’t really the case, and he didn’t want to just walk around following Nagisa like a lost puppy, either. This was the least he could do. Not like it was a chore, though. He smiled, despite the fact Daichi couldn’t smile back at him yet.

As soon as he started walking, pushing the pram gently in front of him, Daichi was out like a light. Pretty proud of himself, he sped up just a little, assuming the motion was helping. All he really needed was a little bit of fresh air, it turned out. It wasn’t that far from Nagisa’s house to the train station, at least. Not that he was trying to cheap out or anything, but he was pleased to find out it was free for kids under six. Wistfully, he wished Daichi would stay that small. At the same time, though, he looked forward to when his favourite activity wasn’t ‘sleep’.

It was odd to have the elderly smile warmly at him. That wasn’t something that happened a lot to him, and honestly he soaked it up just a little, rocking the pram back and forwards a little bit. This could useful, actually. If this was the kind of reaction Daichi’s presence got him… It could be really good cover. Nothing too dangerous, though, not yet.

Equally weird was pushing him from down his own street. Karma didn’t have much attachment to it, like some people would. His parents had moved around so much, they’d only lived in Kunugigaoka since he was eleven. It was surprisingly long, for them, but Karma was glad of it. There probably wasn’t any sentimental reason to it, more than they considered Karma old enough to be left at home whilst they did whatever.

He noticed, instantly, the house wasn’t as he’d left it. And unless some neighbour had approached (unlikely), it meant his parents were home. The knocker was perfectly straight, and Karma tended to be heavy handed enough with the door that it was usually at an angle. Well, this would be interesting. The last time he even saw them was a weekend towards the end of the summer.

“Ah, Karma, you’re home,” his mother called, when she heard him move the door.

Karma sighed, carefully taking Daichi out. Luckily, the slight movement didn’t disturb him. Better to just get this over with, he figured. He hadn’t mentioned the whole Daichi thing, the last time. It was back before Nagisa was all ballooned up, and admittedly, Karma hadn’t accepted it himself fully at that point, not enough that he’d bring it up to his parents.

He swallowed, and entered the living room. “What brings you to Kunugigaoka?”

“You used the card,” his father blinked. “Almost two hundred thousand. We thought you’d been arrested.”

Karma rolled his eyes. “That sounds lame. I’d like to think my bail would be more than that.”

His mother tutted. “You know that’s only for emergencies.”
“It was an emergency,” he defended. “Say, call it your ‘new baby’ gift to me. His name is Daichi by the way. I’d get him to say ‘hi’ but he’s taking a nap.”

“You spent two hundred thousand yen on a… baby…” His father thought aloud, like he couldn’t wrap his small mind around it.

“Like you can’t afford it,” he scoffed. “Want to see him?”

Nodding curtly, his mother held out her arms. “He has an old soul,” she said, after a moment. “I can feel it, just looking at him.”

He’d disagree, really. “Nagisa thinks he looks more like me, but Daichan’s facial expressions are all him.”

“Nagisa…” she trailed off. “Was that… that boy you brought around a few times?”

“Yeah,” he admitted, “that’s the one.”

“Never mind… that,” his father said. “There’s another reason we’re back in Japan.”

He took Daichi back, satisfied that she’d had more than enough time with him. “What’s with the suspense?”

His mother cleared her throat. “We were actually thinking—“

“-We’re buying a house in India,” his father finished. “Just south of Mumbai.”

What did they want, congratulations? A house warming gift? Honestly, Karma didn’t pay much attention to his parents’ whims anymore. There was no point, once they were set on an idea, they’d likely stick it out all the way to the end.

“In fact,” his mother said, “we plan to mostly move there.”

Ah, there it was. “Nice,” he shrugged.

“You’ve finished your compulsory education,” his father addressed him. “Not that I agree with any of that system, of course. If you wanted, we could just get you a private tutor. It’ll be hard to find a suitable school, unless you’re willing to take it in either Marathi or English.”

Karma felt the muscles in his arms tense. Perhaps, under different circumstances, he would have been on board. But it was too late, for his parents to suddenly start caring for him. He couldn’t help but look down. Somehow, the idea of leaving Daichi made him feel sick to his stomach. He’d never let himself fall that deep down the rabbit hole before, but Karma couldn’t stop himself from wondering how his parents had done it so freely, over and over. Leaving anywhere… It would tear his heart in two.

“I’m not going.”

His mother stiffened. “I suppose we can’t force you, physically.”

“Well,” his father stood up. “We’ll be going, then.”

“That’s all?” Karma bit out.

“Hmm,” he replied. “We have a meeting to get to, with an estate agent. Naturally, we’re selling this place.”
He left straight away, naturally, but Karma’s mother hesitated for a second. When she came closer, outstretching a hand as if she meant to ruffle his hair or something, Karma naturally moved away. Parental affection was a foreign concept to him. It was like they simultaneously saw him as both five and twenty.

Sighing, she made her distance. “Be good, okay?”

Karma said nothing, and made no gesture to allude to the fact he’d understood her. It was what she usually said, before disappearing to wherever for months on end. Permanently, this time, by the sounds of it. He didn’t move again when she left the room, only once he’d heard the front door shut. Though he was angry, he’d resisted the urge to yell. It wouldn’t get him anywhere. There was no use in fighting a hopeless battle. Well, Karma would just have to move past it.

“Just ignore them, eh, Daichi?” Karma half whispered, though nobody else could hear him. “They just don’t get how awesome you are. But that’s okay, you don’t need them. I’m starting to think I don’t, either.”

Though Daichi had slept through the exchange, he did begin to stir, after that. He squirmed a little, clearly bothered as he began opening and closing his gummy mouth. Suddenly, Karma felt just a little bit out of his depth. Of course, Nagisa had managed it the last few days, so it couldn’t be hard. By all means, he should be perfectly capable. Thinking about it for a moment, he remembered something a nurse had said.

“Hungry, huh?” He said aloud, though he wasn’t sure Daichi could really understand him. Though, he didn’t start crying at the idea, so Karma took it as a sign. It was easier to make up a bottle, than to try and read his son’s needs expertly, anyway. Thankfully, Daichi immediately took it, appearing content when Karma sat them down on the couch. He took the whole lot, at least, so he must have been hungry.

Karma figured he probably shouldn’t give him anymore, if he’d thrown up earlier. Daichi just blinked up at him expectantly for a moment, as if Karma had forgotten something. Somehow, it did jog his memory. He moved Daichi up over his shoulder like he was supposed to, and began to pat his back for a while.

“You know,” he said, “I think you’re all I really have.” He held Daichi close to his chest, still feeling like the luckiest person alive. “Say, it’s kind of boring down here, isn’t it?”

He spent the most time in his bedroom, anyway. Deciding it would probably be best to carry him as he was, Karma stood up, somewhat cautiously taking the stairs. They made it in one piece, at least, though he could sense Daichi looking around over his shoulder. Navigating the maze that was the current state of his bedroom floor, he made it to the end of the bed, sitting down on it. Then, he considered ‘what next’. There wasn’t that much of interest.

“Wanna see this?” He tried, standing up again to bring them over to the spice shelf he kept. “I collect these, sometimes. Not that you can have any of them yet. My favourite is cayenne pepper, but there are rarer up there,” he pointed. “I’ll make sure you appreciate spices, one day. Hmmm, how about video games or something, those are cool.”

Sitting back down again, though he’d moved Daichi back to the cradle position, he pulled out his Nintendo DS. Making sure it was close enough to his face to see, Karma attempted to play a game. It was kind of hard, with one of his hands effectively in use, but Daichi seemed to like it a little more, paying attention. He liked the bright moving colours, Karma guessed.

He was at a tiny loss, after his battery wore down. What else did Karma do, when he was bored?
“Want to try some pushups?”

Nagisa blinked sleepily, before the pounding on his door brought him to his senses. He yawned, sitting up to adjust to his surroundings. It felt like he’d been asleep for centuries. Still, he was a little groggy, and sore, as he pulled himself to his feet to slide his door open.

“Oh,” he said, “hi, mum.”

She scanned over him. “Have you been sleeping the whole time I was back?” She peered in. “Where’s Daichi?”

He thought about it for a moment. “Karma took him,” he remembered. And thank god for that.

“He what?” She sounded baffled, like he’d announced they won the lottery or something.

Nagisa shrugged. “He dropped by and offered to take him for a few hours, it wasn’t that long ago—“

And then he caught sight of the clock. Nagisa had only meant to take a brief nap, but at least eight hours had gone by. If nothing else was going to snap him out of it, that certainly did it. He rushed over to his phone, only to find no messages from Karma. He checked all other group messages too, but they were only general chit chat.
He nearly shrieked, at the attached image. The first thing Nagisa noticed, immediately, was that Karma was shirtless. If not for the baby resting on his chest, it would have come off as extremely provocative. His trousers were unsettlingly low on his hips, and the lighting showed off every inch of his well-maintained abdominal muscles perfectly… Before he started drooling, Nagisa forced himself to focus on the baby. Daichi was lying on his stomach, looking as cute as ever.

With nothing better to do than twirl his thumbs, Nagisa waited anxiously. Admittedly, the rest had been nice, and made him feel, physically, so much better. Emotionally, however, Nagisa couldn’t help but feel guilty. It made him feel less, that he’d needed this time out. It was an option that so many people didn’t have.

When Karma did arrive, he didn’t look bothered at all, at having Daichi all to himself. “Hey,” he said, “you look better.”

Looking down at the pram, where Daichi blinked up at him, Nagisa felt a tug on his heartstrings. He really had missed Daichi, even without knowing it. He couldn’t help himself from reaching in, holding the comfortably familiar weight of his son in his arms again. Apparently, Daichi wasn’t done with his earlier torture, because he started crying again almost instantly.

Nagisa squinted. “Well, nice to see you again too.”

Lightly, Karma laughed. “He hasn’t slept properly,” he admitted, “only really short naps here and there.”
“Right,” Nagisa said. That made sense. “I was thinking of giving him a bath today… U-uh, do you wanna maybe help?”

“Sure,” Karma replied.

It seemed better to do that, and then put him down to sleep properly. He figured a good place to start would be the bathtub. Once he began to run the water, Daichi stopped crying again, apparently more interested in that than anything else. Nagisa wasn’t completely sure the best way to go about it, though he thought it would work if one of them held him, whilst the other washed him. Their bathtub was pretty shallow, anyway.

Once they’d both checked that it wasn’t too warm for him, Nagisa carefully lowered him down. Automatically, Karma leaned over, gently cupping the back of Daichi’s head and shoulders so he wouldn’t go underneath the water. Following his lead, Nagisa took hold of a small cup, gathering up a small amount of water to pour over his stomach.

Karma half laughed. “He looks like he’s at a spa or something.”

He had a point. Nagisa had never seen Daichi look that content. His eyes were closed, though Nagisa could tell he wasn’t sleeping. Like he wanted them to do it, his limbs were spread out and relaxed, seemingly enjoying the attention and the sensation of the water. Nagisa had no complaints about that, he’d have hated it if Daichi really fussed and struggled. He squirted some of the infant wash they’d bought onto his hands, and Daichi didn’t seem to mind that, either. As first baths went, he’d call it successful.

Daichi started kicking a little when they lifted him out of the water, though Karma managed to get the towel around him quick enough that he didn’t start back up with the tears. He watched them, taking in the new experience. The level of focus, on top of everything else, melted him.

“He looks like a tiny cloud,” Nagisa found himself saying, as they dried him.

It was standard after that, as they changed him and got him into a sleep suit. Daichi seemed grateful, finally, to be in his crib. That, or, he was just tired from the pretty long day. Either way, he was out almost instantly. With luck, they’d get a good three hours or so before he needed feeding again. Nagisa was glad for that, at least.

“I think we did well,” Karma said, keeping his voice low.

Though Nagisa wasn’t sure his exact meaning, he found himself nodding. “Were you really okay today?”

Karma stuffed his hands in his pockets. “Yeah, we were just fine. He’s no trouble.”

On the contrary, Daichi felt like nothing but trouble. “I still can’t believe this time just one week ago, I was in hospital.”

It was also insane how quickly that time had gone. He’d never considered one week such a high amount of time, but it felt like Daichi had been here his entire lifetime. Honestly, he couldn’t even clearly remember what it was like, before. Now, everything was hectic and stressful and tiring, but as a trade off, Nagisa’s heart had doubled in size.

“Are you ready?” Karma asked. “To go back to school.”

Nagisa thought about it. “I think so. My body isn’t… back to how is used to be yet. I’m worried about the assassination.”
He straightened. “We can practise, if you want.”

“Right now?” Nagisa eyed him suspiciously.

“Sure,” Karma pulled out his hand, making it a flat target. “You can still hit, right?”

Karasuma had taught them how to do it properly, how to centre your body, create the perfect fit, and work with your weight. Thankfully, that was one of the first PE lessons they had, rather than the more advanced ones Nagisa had been banned from. Still, it felt different, attacking their teacher. He didn’t want to hurt Karma, not that he thought he could.

Weakly, he threw a punch, which barely even shifted Karma’s arms.

Something in Karma’s mood warped, a new fire burning in his eyes. “Is that all you’ve got?” He taunted.

It stirred Nagisa up. The gears in his mind began to spin, as bloodlust coursed through him. There was no chance he could try his clap stunner. Karma would be ready for it, and it would probably startle Daichi. Once he’d made his mind up, Nagisa calmed himself, forcing his outward appearance into a neutral demeanour. He was sure, the longer he looked Karma in the eye like that, the more Karma would anticipate his movements. Focusing fully, he found the right moment to strike.

At just the right opening, he jabbed his index finger into the centre of Karma’s throat. It was enough to shock the air out of him, so he was distracted enough for Nagisa to sweep his leg, causing Karma to stumble backwards and fall to the bed. Nagisa followed his momentum, placing a knee over both of his legs. To finish his move, he positioned his elbow, the toughest body part he had access to, poised to jab down on Karma’s throat.

“You’ll be fine in class,” Karma looked up at him, a flush dancing on his cheeks, probably embarrassment at losing. “I give.”

Ignoring the pride that swelled through him, the action had caused some moderate pain. He’d have to start to learn to live with it, until it went away, if he wanted to be any use in class. He kind of owed it to them, after the inconvenience of pregnancy. With his position, standing on his knees either side of Karma’s hips, Nagisa was actually a little taller. In no hurry to move, he kind of liked it.

Karma swallowed. “Do you want to watch something? Before Daichi wakes up again.”

Steeling himself with a deep breath, Nagisa decided it was a good plan. He climbed off Karma, settling down at his side. His bed was a lot smaller than Karma’s, but there was just enough space for the two of them to lie next to each other, though their thighs were pressed tightly together. Despite his extended nap, Nagisa still found himself getting drowsy, unable to focus of the video on Karma’s phone screen, eventually falling asleep on Karma’s shoulder.

Chapter End Notes

I hope you all enjoyed that one! It's nearly 4am, dear god.

As always, I appreciate all comments and feedback!
Chapter Summary

After their sleep over, Karma and Nagisa officially register Daichi’s birth

Chapter Notes

*arises from the dead with a new chapter*

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Somehow, Nagisa almost slept through the whole night. At least, it was the very early hours of the morning when he woke up again. Considering Daichi needed feeding every two hours or so, the fact that Nagisa had somehow slept for that long was more than just a little bit alarming. Heart rate immediately picking up, he suddenly felt wide awake. And then Nagisa noticed footsteps.

“K-karma?” Nagisa blinked through the darkness.

The figure froze, and then relaxed. “About time you woke up.”

Nagisa forced himself to sit up. “You… stayed here?”

“Well,” Karma said, leaning over the crib, “I fell asleep just after you did, and you didn’t wake up when he started fussing, so.”

Ignoring the fact they’d had an impromptu sleepover, Nagisa immediately felt bad. He’d slept all day, and excluding a few hours in the evening, all night too. There was no way he should have been that tired, and even though he clearly was, it wasn’t right to act on it for so long. Though, he supposed he was awake now. He shuffled to his feet, determined to do at least something helpful.

Apparently fine with Nagisa’s absence, Daichi had his eyes closed in sleep. Nagisa only had to assume, given the returning footsteps, that Karma had fed him and stuff. He looked pretty relaxed, anyway. He still couldn’t help but feel the guilt creep in, though. As his eyes blinked to properly adjust to the darkness of the room, he noticed Karma moved again.

At the sound of springs moving, Nagisa side stepped back over to his bed, which Karma was now casually occupying. His bed was actually pretty small, so Nagisa wasn’t exactly sure how they’d both fit in it comfortably during the night. That is, he assumed they had, unless Karma had stayed up that entire time. Though he was still tired, Nagisa hesitated about knowingly just climbing into bed with him.

“Uhm, I—“

Karma peeled one eye open. “I’m having a nap.”

Nagisa decided not to argue with him. It wasn’t like he had much on his agenda that day, anyway. There was still the matter of his things, he’d have to go get those soon. Considering he’d have to go
back to school tomorrow, there wasn’t that much time left. Somehow, it seemed daunting. Sure, he’d left Daichi a couple of times, but he’d either been asleep, or majorly distracted by exams. With nothing to take up his thoughts, he knew it would be hard. But he also knew it was for the best.

Quietly, he sat and watched his digital clock tick on. Still coming out of his sleep, time seemed to warp a little. Every time he lazily blinked, the numbers shifted by a significant amount. He yawned slightly, as it ticked by to twenty to seven, which was close enough. Looking over at the crib again, it was really odd to think that Daichi was officially a week old now. It felt like he’d been with them for a lifetime. The moment was kind of peaceful, just before the break of day.

The idea of daytime, and activity filling the house, made Nagisa realise that his mother would be awake too soon. She rarely slept past the sunrise. Filled with dread, Nagisa didn’t think she’d take too kindly to Karma staying over without permission, especially since he was in his bed. Things had been strangely alright this past week, and Nagisa didn’t want to send her back into her darker state. After not having such rules for so long, he’d have to adjust.

Tentatively, Nagisa approached Karma’s sleeping form, and nudged him awake. “Uh, Karma-“

Karma groaned, rolling away from him. “S’not school.”

Kind of feeling like he was poking a wasp’s nest, Nagisa shook him. “You need to get up,” he said, his tone disguising the urgency he was feeling.

“What?” Karma sat up groggily.

“It’s getting late,” Nagisa glanced the clock. “And my mum will be up soon.”

For whatever reason, he decided not to argue with Nagisa about it, picking what little stuff he’d brought up. Nagisa carefully opened his door a little, poking his head around it to check the coast was clear. Just as he was about to announce that it was, Karma had already taken the opposite route, stretching out on the balcony. Given all their training, Nagisa wasn’t too concerned about Karma leaving that way.

Nagisa stilled, after he’d joined him. A massive part of him really didn’t want Karma to leave. But there was no real excuse to hide behind, without facing the potential wrath of his mother. He had no idea why he felt like this, it wasn’t like him to be so attached. It had to be down to hormones, or something.

“L-later,” he started, grasping around his head for any kind of reasoning. “We should go do the registration stuff.”

Karma yawned. “Why today?”

He decided he could go with that. “We only have another week to do it, so it makes sense since we don’t have school today.” More than aware it didn’t make that much sense, Nagisa changed tactic. “Do you have your ID? I think they’d need that kind of thing, right?”

“I could go home and look for it…” Karma eyed him suspiciously. “Nagisa, wh-“

“Uhm,” Nagisa said, trying to hold back whatever useless ramblings came to him. “Thank you for everything yesterday. I’ll see you later?”

Thankfully, Karma was happy to shrug it off. “Sure, see you.” Before Nagisa could move from where he was stood, Karma folded him into a kind of hug. Nagisa wasn’t sure if it was a hug at all,
Karma barely wrapped his arms around half his form before stilling, instantly putting distance between them. “Later,” he said, and expertly leapt from Nagisa’s building.

He just put it down to the fact that Karma was clingy in the mornings. That revelation had been pretty clear over the winter break, when Nagisa found his purpose morphed into mostly Karma’s personal pillow. Shuddering in the cold air, Nagisa made his way back inside his bedroom. With Daichi still soundly asleep, he felt pretty alone.

Collapsing onto his bed, which retained small amounts of Karma’s scent, Nagisa closed his eyes for a moment. He didn’t really get why he was feeling this way. He just hoped it would be over soon, so his mind wasn’t so busy all the time. It was embarrassing, the way his heart started to beat faster whenever Karma was around. Though nobody could see him, Nagisa clenched his fist and rolled over, curling into a ball.

Daichi started fussing after a time, which distracted him enough. Yes, Nagisa thought as he stood up, this is all your fault. Making the judgement that there was no reason to continue to hide from morning, he tried to collect himself. At least Daichi only needed changing (far less fun than feeding, but also less time consuming). When he settled, but didn’t slip straight back asleep, Nagisa decided that he may as well just get him dressed. Now he’d committed himself to getting all of Daichi’s registration papers sorted, he figured he may as well go and his things back also.

One positive was that he could kind of fit into his old clothes again. They’d been too loose on him when he bought them, and the extreme weight had mostly gone, so they were only a little tight. By no means was anything ‘back to normal’, but Nagisa was glad that he didn’t necessarily look all that pregnant anymore. Hopefully, even his school uniform would be okay to wear again.

The smell of breakfast eventually drew him out of his bedroom. It was something he hadn’t really experienced for a while. So far, since he’d been back, his mother mostly left him to his own devices. He elected to take it as a good thing, though. It was the best way to look at things. She was waiting at the table for him, places set up. Hoping Daichi wouldn’t be too jealous of his eating, Nagisa put him down.

“Thanks,” Nagisa said, taking a sip of the tea.

There was clearly something off with his mother. “Next time Akabane decides to sleep over, tell him to use the front door,” she said, tone level.

Nagisa coughed and choked on his breakfast. “H-“

“Nagisa,” she glared at him, “I’m not oblivious.”

“M-mum,” he said very quickly, fear spiking through him. “I can explain, we were just-“

She rolled her eyes. “I know you’re not doing anything. You gave birth just a week ago, and I’d hope you learnt your lesson.”

This was not the kind of conversation he wanted to have with his mother. He knew that at a point in most people’s lives, this ‘chat’ with parents was supposed to happen. Luckily, or so he thought, they’d avoided that. It wasn’t like he didn’t learn it in school, or anything. At least, if she was going to talk about this with him, Nagisa had hoped it would be under better circumstances. His eyes raked to the floor as his cheeks flushed. Nagisa was tempted to explain that he and Karma were never an item to begin with, but the actual story of how he got drunk at a party (which he wasn’t supposed to be at in the first place), hooked up with his friend and then didn’t remember a thing about it until there were living consequences of his actions probably made it sound a whole
lot worse.

“It’s not like that,” he muttered instead.

The sound of her own mug coming down on table jolted him. “Speak properly.” She sighed. “You know, I do understand. Babies are tough work, and I wasn’t even alone in doing it, though it felt that way sometimes. Honestly, I’m shocked that you haven’t been left with this yet.”

That stirred a certain kind of anger in him. “It’s not like that,” he repeated again, firmer. “If anything Karma’s the one who wanted to keep him so badly, and the bond thing was his suggestion.”

“Yes,” she continued, “but I know the reality of how teenage boys are. One idea one day, the next something completely different. But,” she said, “I’m willing to give you the benefit of the doubt. Fine, if you’re desperate to share parental responsibilities, then I’ll allow it. You know where the spare futon is. It’s not like you can do any more damage.”

“I-I thought you wanted-“

That had been the wrong thing to say. “You think I wanted this kind of life for you? After everything I’ve done for you?” Her breathing picked up, and Nagisa flinched. “If you hadn’t been so determined about this, things would be so much easier. And don’t think because I allowed you back here that I’m happy about it.” Rather than yelling like usual, she calmed somewhat. “The hospital called me, when you were rushed in for the blood loss, and my first thought was that you’d simply dug your own grave. Of course, I couldn’t escape the dread of never seeing you again, even after everything, so I begun to consider it. I’ve accepted this reality, now. Don’t mistake that for enthusiasm.”

“You’re right,” Nagisa said, suddenly a little solemn. “This isn’t the easiest path I could’ve taken, but, I wouldn’t go back and change my mind for anything in the world. Karma and I, we’re going to try our best.” For good measure, he bowed his head a little. “And I’m thankful for whatever support you’ll give me along the way.”

“Hmm,” she said, and sipped her tea like nothing had happened.

It felt like some kind of warfare, though she wasn’t being cruel to him. In fact, she was giving him her consent to far more than Nagisa would have expected. Something had changed there, and he didn’t think it was just because he’d been in hospital. He wished he could just ignore that, but his investigative senses weren’t going to let him. Right then wasn’t the right time, though.

“Thanks for the food,” he said when he was done. “We’re going to drop all the registration papers at the municipal office later.”

Disinterest. She met his eyes and nodded, but she didn’t say anything. It was better than screaming or other hysteria, though. Feeling like he should, Nagisa cleaned up the dishes and everything. Once Daichi was fed, he decided he didn’t want to wait around. A break from the rising atmosphere would be welcome, anyway.

Walking to Asano’s house was an odd experience, to say the least. Now that he was pushing a pram in front of him, it felt like foreign territory. Like he had done for many months, Nagisa checked that there was no car immediately in the driveway. When the coast was clear, though, instead of sneaking in through the side entrance, Nagisa did something he never had before, and rung the doorbell.
Toboso, who was presumably just fulfilling is regular duties in answering the door, looked down at him, face immediately brightening. “Nagisa san! You had the baby!”

He couldn’t resist returning his smile. “Yeah,” he peeled back the blankets a little, so he could see. “He’s really tiny, huh?”

“Hello there,” he bent down a little. Daichi didn’t have much of a reaction, but seemed to be attempting to focus on the man now invading his space. Toboso continued to beam at him though, apparently unbothered.

The sound of heavy footsteps filled the silence. “What’s-” Asano stopped midsentence, having noticed Nagisa’s presence.

“Hi, Asano kun,” Nagisa tried, feeling kind of on edge.

Cautiously, he continued down the stairs. “So. You had the kid alright, then?” Toboso moved aside when Asano came to the doorway, allowing him a look. “Weird. Do you want to come in or something?”

“Only to get the things I left,” Nagisa said. Somehow, if Asano was insinuating they hang out or something, it felt almost too weird. Though, Nagisa had been the one who insisted that they were friends now. He knew he shouldn’t just stop that, now he’d had the baby. Out of the people he socialised with regularly, Asano was probably the one who needed a friend the most.

Daichi chose that moment the start kicking around. Not crying like he was hungry or anything, which was a relief. It was probably just some kind of curiosity, Nagisa thought. Figuring he’d probably want to have a less obstructed view too, he moved to pick Daichi up. For a moment, he wondered if he just recognised the place or something. Though his eyes couldn’t focus on anything too far away, Nagisa suspected he was trying to.

“I can go get it,” Asano offered.

Was he being genuinely nice? Without opportunity for personal gain? Then again, Asano had sat with him and got him to the hospital, so Nagisa shouldn’t be so surprised. Really, he was actually a pretty decent person. Without the difference of their positions, he couldn’t help but wonder if they’d have made friends anyway.

So, Nagisa waited just on the edge of the hallway. Toboso excused himself, so once again, it was just him and Daichi. He hadn’t lost interest in the surroundings quite yet, so Nagisa bounced him a little, making the most of his active state. It wasn’t long before Asano returned, hands full of his things. It both seemed like a lot, and yet such a small amount to live from for so long.

“Oh,” he said, “thanks!” Realising he couldn’t really take the bags with the way he was holding Daichi, he moved on auto, handing him over to swap loads. He’d never realised how convenient prams were for storage, but he was incredibly thankful for it. There wouldn’t have been much hope of him carrying all of those bags on his back all day.

Asano coughed. “One question, before you go.”

Meeting his eye, Nagisa realised that he’d quite literally forced him to hold his son whilst he did all that. Asano didn’t look mad or anything, and he wasn’t holding Daichi badly, but he did seem moderately uncomfortable. Immediately feeling bad, Nagisa motioned with his arms as if to ask for him back, but Asano didn’t take the chance. On some level, then, he was enjoying this. Nagisa smiled with warmth, and dropped his arms.
“What is it?” He asked.

The tense in his muscles told him that Asano was being careful not to accidentally drop Daichi or something when he reached behind to pull out the gun. At the sight of it, Nagisa’s heart jumped out of his body. And then he recognised that it wasn’t just any gun, it was *his* gun.

“What’s this?”

Nagisa felt honestly speechless. He wasn’t the best at coming up with excuses on the fly, and everything moderately sensible kind of abandoned him. There was no way he could deny its existence, but he couldn’t tell the truth either. Before they’d even been introduced to Korosensei, right back at the start of the school year, he’d been forced to sign a confidentiality agreement. Asano was probably the *most* dangerous person to risk breaking that contract with.

He gulped. “I-it’s for paintball.”

“Paintball.”

Now he’d said it, he had to go for it. “Uh, yeah! I’m on a competitive team, that’s why it has the logo and everything.”

Asano didn’t look like he bought it, at all. “You were playing competitive paintball whilst you were pregnant?”

“Obviously not,” Nagisa laughed awkwardly. “I, uh, right, yes. I took a break from the competitive paintball, but I missed the glory days so I kept the gun as a memento.”

He pursed his lips. “You know I could get you expelled for unauthorised club activities.”

Nagisa put on his best smile. “Anyway, I’ll take the gun now, *and* the baby. I’ll see you in school, Asano kun!”

At the very least, Asano didn’t prevent him from leaving. He watched Nagisa like a hawk, though, as he tucked Daichi back into the crib and stashed the gun, before returning back inside. Nagisa wasn’t oblivious, he knew that if nothing else had caught him on to the unusual nature of the E Class, *that* definitely had. But there wasn’t a lot he could do to fix it.

Turning around and pushing the pram away from the house felt like closing a massive chapter, but it also felt kind of good. There were many good things ahead. Daichi blinked up at him sweetly for a little while, but the motion of being rolled eventually ruled out and set him off to sleep again. It worked a little too well, actually. He’d have to start doing this, the next time Daichi felt like refusing to take a nap.

The offices weren’t exactly close, but the train skirted by them and the nearest station would be a further walk than he currently was facing. So, he just set off, enjoying the first fleeting moments of the ‘beginning of spring’ sunshine. Tomorrow, it would be March, and thus the month Korosensei’s death was due. The short time they had left was absolutely terrifying.

Unfortunately, during his extended walk, Nagisa didn’t manage to think of any amazing assassination plans. All he could think about was whether he had the correct paper work, and how exactly the conversation was going to go to get the forms in the first place. It all felt kind of mundane and boring, but also in a way that curiously thrilled him.

As it turned out, it wasn’t so hard. When he met Karma there, all they really had to do was stamp their names on the birth registration form. Of course, they read through it first, but it seemed pretty
straight forward. There were a lot of things, important things, he hadn’t even thought about yet. He was really going to have to start, though, feeling overwhelmed by it all.

“Do you want the honours?” Karma said, hints of tease lacing his tone.

Nagisa looked down, at the space where he had to officially write out Daichi’s name. He hoped that when he was older, he wouldn’t dislike their choice, considering he’d have to live with it and everything. Using his best writing possible, he drew out the characters for ‘Akabane Daichi’, and then put the pen down. Everything else seemed to be in order.

Noticing he was stirring again before Nagisa did, Karma picked Daichi up before he was able to feel ignored. “Guess what,” he said in a tone that was so unlike how he usually spoke, “you exist now legally. It might not seem like much of an achievement, but, we’re sure proud.”

Leaning on his arm a little, Nagisa slipped into his happy bubble.

Chapter End Notes

Okay so, I'm super sorry for not updating this past week. I got really sick, and either was alseep, too in pain, or didn't really have to motivation to write. But it's here now! This chapter is more to 'wrap things up', before we move into the... next... arc... Yay?

As always, I love big responses. Maybe it'll even help my health, who knows. So please, leave all your comments and feedback! Till next time~
As the school year begins to wind down, Korosensei has plans for the E Class year book.

Thank you all so much for being lovely in my comments last chapter, I'm feeling a lot better now :D

“No~,” Nagisa groaned at the sound of crying, trying to hide under the covers.

A warm finger prodded him. “Your turn.”

He groaned again, not like it would do much good. “But-“

Karma shoved him (out of his own bed), before he could form a debate about it. He just couldn’t wait until Daichi slept the whole way through the night. Honestly, the sleeping habits were the only thing in the world he’d dream of changing. Recovering from his shove, Nagisa stretched out before picking Daichi up, escorting him to the kitchen so he could heat up a bottle.

Though his mother had kind of given her blessing for it, their new arrangement had developed pretty fluidly. They’d wound up not paying much attention to the ‘futon’ rule. Falling asleep in the same space just seemed natural, like the best way to go, even if Nagisa’s bed was exceptionally small for the both of them. Besides, with everything else going on in their lives, the ramifications of it were the least of his problems.

Despite his complaints, he’d found this second week of parenting easier than the first. With half of the night time responsibilities rather than all of them, he was certainly less tired. He was less daunted, too, or at least he kind of knew what he was doing now when it came to Daichi’s care. Going back to school had been hard, but also made him feel less stir crazy. Physically, things felt better too, at least he wasn’t cringing every time he had to sit. It was good, overall. A voice in the back of his head warned that it was perhaps a little too good.

Testing that the temperature of the now prepared bottle was okay against his own skin, he shifted his focus to that. Daichi took it immediately, drinking the formula probably a little too fast. Nagisa couldn’t help but feel guilty for denying him, though realistically he did know he’d only delayed getting up for a few seconds. He thanked every god known to man when Daichi didn’t throw it all back up once he was done, just sighing sleepily after Nagisa had winded him. Honestly, all that child did was sleep. Probably catching up on the nine months where he didn’t sleep at all and just kicked the hell out of Nagisa every few minutes, Nagisa thought.

Catching his tiredness once again, Nagisa padded back towards his bedroom. By the looks of it,
when he slid his door back open, Karma had gone straight back to sleep after he left. Nagisa couldn’t blame him, honestly. Carefully, he tiptoed across the room, putting Daichi down with minimal noise. Pretty pleased with himself, Nagisa slid back into bed.

He lay on his side parallel to where Karma was. With his brain now pretty alert, Nagisa couldn’t help but watch him, just for a few moments. His sleep must have only been light, given his soft breathing. For reasons Nagisa wasn’t quite sure of, he reached, lightly playing with the strands of hair which covered Karma’s forehead. He pushed it back, exposing the pale skin that rarely saw light. Fleeting thoughts swirled around his mind, causing Nagisa’s heart to flutter.

“Go back to sleep, Nagisa,” Karma murmured.

It was all he could do not to shriek. Of course Karma hadn’t been asleep. Of course. He wanted to crawl under a rock and die. Instantly, Nagisa snatched his hand back and rolled over. Putting his back to Karma was dangerous, but it was better than potentially having to look him in the eye. Thankfully, he kept his distance, what little he could, until sleep won out.

Karma woke him up again, though not for Daichi’s sake. In fact, when Nagisa’s eyes adjusted to the daylight streaming into his bedroom, Karma was already out of bed and dressed. He practically loomed over Nagisa, which made him hope Karma hadn’t been examining him like that for too long.

“Nagisa~, wakey wakey.”

He couldn’t help but moan in protest. Nagisa didn’t exactly form any words, but he meant something akin to ‘five more minutes’. Just a bit of extra eye resting time, before he had to face the day. Honestly, Nagisa wasn’t exactly ‘not a morning person’, but he liked waking up naturally, when his body felt like it, rather than via ‘double pronged Akabane Alarm Attack’.

Karma straightened. “Guess I’ll just have to kiss you or something.”

That got his attention. He was still a bit too groggy to freak out over it, though he did pull the sheets tighter around his body. “What?”

“Well,” Karma said matter of factly, “if you’re gonna go all sleeping beauty on me, I don’t have much of a choice.”

He bolted upright, throwing the sheet over Karma’s head in panic. “Alright I’m up!”

Smirk revealed once he’d rid himself of the sheet, Karma pulled his phone out of his back pocket. “What do you think?”

“Bring Daichi with you to class today,” Nagisa read aloud. “From Korosensei. Why? What does he want?”

Karma shrugged. “Who knows. I don’t mind anyway, it’s down to you.”

He weighed it out. On the one hand, Korosensei wouldn’t request something like that for no reason. Weird reasons, sure, but not just on a whim. It must be important, and Nagisa would feel bad ignoring that. However, taking Daichi with them to school, all day... He wasn’t sure how Daichi would even react to that.

“I think it’s okay,” Nagisa said, eventually.

Which meant they had to dress him in proper, warm, outside clothes. As much as Daichi seemed to
like bath time, heavy clothes, and actually getting him into them, was a completely different story. Nagisa didn’t blame him, though. He, too, probably wouldn’t like his limbs being manipulated and forced into confining clothing. If only Daichi didn’t act like they were torturing him…

He’d calmed down by breakfast. By that, Karma distracted him with a bottle, whilst Nagisa cooked. It wasn’t anything complicated at all, his culinary skills were kind of limited, but it was a bigger amount than usual. They’d need their strength, for whatever Korosensei had in store for them. He made a serving for his mother too, though she wasn’t up yet.

They were mostly done eating, by the time she actually came in. Nagisa swallowed, taking in her appearance. Though it hadn’t been enough to alarm him about leaving Daichi with her during school hours, she’d been acting weirdly apathetic recently, since their conversation the week before.

“Thanks,” she said after sitting down, ignoring the food to take a sip of her tea.

Nagisa steeled himself. “We’re going to take Daichi with us today.”

She shrugged, turning her head to look out of the window.

At least Karma knew better than to say anything. When it came to Nagisa’s mother, at least this past week, he’d subdued himself a little. Of course, Karma was an expert when it came to battle tactics, and apparently reigning in his personality when he needed to. Nagisa was silently thankful for it, though he was worried. His mother was the type to never show him weakness or vulnerability. Logically, such a change didn’t happen without a reason.

“I’m heading out,” she said, not actually touching her food.

Before Nagisa could form the words to ask where she was going, or for how long, she was up and out of the door. He watched dumbfounded for a moment, half expecting it to have been a phantom, and for her real self to emerge.

“What’s her problem?” Karma said, after taking a gulp of his coffee down.

Nagisa chewed his lip. He wished he knew. His notebook wasn’t in reach, so he made a mental note. Skipping meals could mean a lot of things, though without many other symptoms she probably wasn’t ill. Anxious, maybe. She seemed pretty on edge about something, which strengthened that theory. And leaving, without explanation. She’d been fully dressed, though she’d never been the type to casually lounge around.

The sound of letters being pushed through the door distracted them, though. Almost like a giddy child, Karma stood straight up, though he handed Daichi over before bending down for anything. Nagisa supposed he didn’t get post that often. Sifting through a dozen letters, he came over to the table with two.

“Look who’s popular,” he waved the envelopes in front of Nagisa’s face.

Unfortunately, whilst he was holding an infant, Nagisa didn’t have the mobility to grab them from him. In fact, when Daichi started fussing, they were almost forgotten on the table. After changing him, Nagisa elected to just get him settled in the pram until they had to leave. Everything else seemed in order. The pieces of paper did catch his eye, though, before he was out of the door.

Ripping open the first one, Nagisa’s eyes scanned the characters rapidly, and his heart almost stopped. Losing control of his hands, he dropped it to the floor, blinking to try and process what he’d just read. Karma looked over in question.
“I… This is an acceptance letter,” he said shakily. “I-I got in to Keisetsu. I did it!”

Not entirely sure what came over him, Nagisa practically flung himself into Karma’s arms, wrapping himself up in the moment. Somehow, he was happy he wasn’t just experiencing this alone. Karma did squeeze him back.

“Good job,” Karma said against his ear.

“And you got into Kunugigaoka, right?” Nagisa released him, taking a step back.

Karma shrugged. “Not like I had to try.”

He chose to just ignore him. Realistically, he knew Karma probably had tried, a lot. The original entrance exams he had to take to even get into Junior High had been a nightmare in paper form, the very memory of which made Nagisa shudder. He could only imagine the horrors Karma had supposedly breezed through. He didn’t buy the ‘no effort’ act in the slightest.

Moving on to the next letter, Nagisa’s stomach fell out of his body. He was silent, reading it over and over to make sure what he was seeing was right. When there was no chance he was just reading the statement wrong, his legs actually gave out on him and he was all of a sudden half sprawled on the floor.

“Woah,” Karma said, “who died?”

There was just the slightest edge to his tone, though, as if it could be a genuine question. Nagisa heaved, speechless. He hoped it might be forged or something. But it seemed legitimate, the right hospital was listed, as well as the debt figure he now owed it.


Karma snatched the medical bill out of his hand. “Let me see that.” His eyes scanned the page. “Don’t they have insurance for that kind of thing?”

“I didn’t get it,” Nagisa admitted. There was money available that covered childbirth costs would have required him to physically go to the municipal office and declare his pregnancy. Despite the clear benefits, he’d been far too embarrassed to just show up like that.

“Well,” Karma said, handing it back to him. “We better kill Korosensei.”

Though their assassination was hardly about the bounty anymore, there was at least some hope. Nagisa stashed the letter. He was concerned for his mother’s well being as it was, she didn’t need an extra something to freak out about. At least it the money wasn’t due too soon. With that reminder, it was about time to leave.

Karma stopped them, before they were through the door. “Is the pram a good idea?”

He had a point. “Right…” There was no way they were realistically going to get that thing all the way up the mountain to the class building.

“We could just carry him,” Karma suggested.

“The whole way?”

Already having made up his mind, Karma picked Daichi up, who didn’t too bothered to have his position shifted. As far as Nagisa could tell, he liked being carried, though it had never been for
such a long time before, or through such conditions. Karma was strong enough to manage it, though, and they made it without much issue.

Of course, it did slow the both of them down enough that they were the last ones to arrive. They should have just left earlier, honestly, because the second they walked into the classroom, they were surrounded. Somehow, Karma managed to pass Daichi over without Nagisa really noticing, leaving him to the fray of their cooing classmates.

“How come you bought Daichan?” Kurahashi asked.

Nagisa would have answered her, but he couldn’t get much of a word in. At two weeks old, Daichi was probably still too small to understand and enjoy such attention, though Nagisa could see him attempting to focus, especially on those who got in a little closer. It was far better than being bothered by it all, though. Eventually, enough space cleared so he could sit down at his desk, just like normal.

Leaning over his desk slightly, Sugino looked over at Nagisa. “Did you hear about the Tokyo Yogurt Swallows’ game last night?”

Even in the best of times, Sugino knew that Nagisa didn’t really follow baseball, but that didn’t mean he had to entirely brush him off. “I didn’t get a chance,” Nagisa admitted. “What happened?”

He listened as Sugino launched into a commentator style retelling of what an amazing game it had really been, and all the new things he was going to have to try. Honestly, Sugino was a very passionate person when it came to his interests, and nothing quite matched baseball. Nagisa hoped for his sake he wouldn’t have to give it up again. It was nice, though, making him feel a lot better. Just because he was holding a baby now didn’t mean everything between them had to change.

Holding far less interest in the game than Nagisa did, at his side Kayano just smiled and nodded politely, looking in a somewhat dreamlike state.

Sugino addressed her directly. “What are you planning to do Kayano chan? Are you going to return to acting?”

She looked down. “I don’t know. I haven’t decided yet. I do miss acting, but,” she smiled. “I like it here a lot more.”

“It’s the final counselling sessions today,” Nagisa pointed out. Disliking the pressure that came with that just as much as Nagisa did, Daichi started crying. It wasn’t particularly loud, but still enough to tie Nagisa’s heart into knots. Hopelessly, he looked towards Karma, who quickly (for him) got up from the desk.

Nagisa looked up at him. “Will you take him?”

Without a protest, Karma lifted him out of his arms, rocking him gently for a few moments until he quietened down. “Coming to hang out with me, huh?” He pressed a brief kiss to Daichi’s cheek, transporting him back to his own desk.

“Huh…” Sugino said out loud, as if he was confused by the display.

Nagisa sighed, wearing a neutral smile. “Karma’s better at the calming down kind of thing. At least, when nothing’s actually wrong with him. He doesn’t know how to communicate other than crying, so he just does it sometimes.”

“I figured he was the type who make babies cry more,” Nakamura chimed in.
Before they could get too deep into the theories of parenting, Korosensei finally arrived. They went through the register as usual, which confused Nagisa somewhat, before he closed his book and sped up to Mach 20, doodling messages of congratulations on the blackboard.

“You all got into one of your top two schools!” He announced. “Congratulations! Splendid job wielding those second blades of yours! You’ll all move on to high school like the twinkling stars you are! It’s a weight off my shoulders, too! We were supposed to start our final career counselling… but first there’s something I’d really like to do. And what does one do, on such a joyous occasion?” He paused, and then darkened his voice. “Editing.”

“What for?! ” Everyone said in unison.

Korosensei cleared his throat. “I’m making a year book of course, just for the E Class!”

“Making a yearbook?” Nagisa questioned.

“Yes!”

“Oh, right,” Kurahashi remembered. “We did a whole school one. With Karasuma Sensei as our teacher.”

“And poor Korosensei isn’t in a single shot,” Yada pointed out.

“Actually… “ Chiba started. “He popped into a few at Mach speed, just under the radar.”

Behind him, Nagisa could feel Sugino’s interest. “It’s like one of those ghost photos.”

“Exactly! That’s why I want to use these photos instead!” Suddenly, a flurry of pictures flew through the air, landing in gigantic piles on his desk. “A year of unguarded moments! These treasured selfies with all of you- thirty thousand in all! Now to find the most memorable ones together!”

“I don’t really like looking at pictures of myself,” Nakamura complained.

“Why not?” Fuwa asked from behind.

She sighed. “My eyes as so tiny.”

Approaching her swiftly, Korosensei pulled out picture. “Don’t worry – I’ve made versions with the big eye filter too!”

“How terribly kind of you,” she said dryly.

“The official yearbook does have plenty of the usual shots…” Sugino pointed out.

“If we’re making another one,” Hara said, “we can be more unconventional!”

Korosensei only pulled out more photos. “Leave it to me! Cool beauty Hayami san at the pet shop… Oh! And here’s a night time campus shot of Mimura on air guitar! I’m just getting started! Princess Kataoka, trying on her royal vestments! Dainty Muramatsu, right when a cockroach scurried out! Tuckered out Karma and Nagisa, embracing their newborn! Naked Okajima, running around the grounds at night in the buff!”

“Woah, hang on a minute!” Okajima stood up from his desk. “So there could be some super sketchy pics of me in there?”
“Find your own photos, all of them! Then get rid of them!”

It was pandemonium. Everyone rushed forwards, in an attempt to get their hands on the photos. Nagisa didn’t even want to know how bad some of the ones in the pile might be. He did manage to get his hands on a couple, though. The one Korosensei brought up was in the hospital, when he’d rested with his head on Karma’s shoulder for a while, Daichi between them. That was before their class had come to visit them, so he must have zoomed up to check they were okay or something. It was embarrassing, but… He kind of liked the shot, quickly stashing it in his own bag.

“Oh, my!” Korosensei said, amid the chaos. “Who knew editing would get you so fired up?” He didn’t seem too bothered about them being ripped up, though. “Okay, next we’ll choose photos for our school events! How about these, huh? What do you think?”

It really was a one of a kind year, Nagisa thought, as Korosensei pulled up even more photos of their experiences together. It had also been the best year, though. For a fleeting moment, he pictured how dull it would have been without the E Class.

“Oh, but I haven’t taken nearly enough photos!” Korosensei announced. “I was aiming for a ten thousand page year book! Outside, class! We’ll dress up and get a wider variety of shots!

That began to explain some things, like why he’d asked them to bring Daichi with them. It seemed he truly was serious about the whole ‘honorary membership’ thing. At least, until they got outside and into his apparently endless stream of costumes. Clearly, Korosensei just needed a baby to fit into some of these cosplays. Poor Daichi was subjected to a variety of outfits, to fit whatever purpose. Nagisa didn’t exactly have an issue with it, perhaps he should have, but some of them made him look incredibly cute.

Sugino, who had been forced to dress in Pokemon trainer getup (Korosensei insisted he could pull off an Ash Ketchum resemblance), was finally allowed out of their teacher’s grasp. The actual poses of the photos weren’t exactly athletic, but Sugino was wiping the sweat from his forehead, tired of how fussy Korosensei was being. He handed Daichi (who was in a Pikachu themed outfit) back over to Nagisa, tuckered out.

Thankfully, Nagisa had been mostly spared from the ordeal, though Korosensei was currently chasing Karma around for something… cowboy related. Karma didn’t look particularly impressed about being forced into the photo shoot, but even he didn’t stand a chance against Mach 20 speed. Korosensei had a hat on him already. For reasons unbeknownst to Nagisa, his shirt was also half off him.

Aside from appreciating his highly annoyed expression, Nagisa couldn’t stop his eyes from raking down. In the few times now that he’d spent in Karma’s company for full days, he hadn’t seen him actually work out. Biologically speaking, he was aware that alphas just tended to develop muscles easier, but it almost wasn’t fair. Nagisa needed to snap out of it. Never in his life had he stared at another guy’s exposed chest for such a long period of time. But, he just couldn’t help himself, picturing exactly how those muscles would feel pressed up against his body in bed later.

“Korosensei helped us a lot with our entrance exams this February,” Kayano commented, snapping Nagisa out of his daze. “But otherwise it’s been a free for all.”

“Yeah,” Nagisa said, throat still dry, “with us totally at his mercy.”

Karasuma sighed. “He’s probably spoiling you. You’ve come plenty far, thanks to your classes through January – now he wants to spoil his full-fledged students a little. I bet that’s what he’s thinking.
“Oh, I get it,” Kayano said.

“Do you think we turned out like that too, Karasuma Sensei?” Nagisa couldn’t help but ask.

He considered Nagisa, then, meeting his eyes directly. “Sure. If I ever have a hard time, I’d trust you without hesitation. I can count on you.”

Ending that conversation, Bitch Sensei drifted aimlessly through the shoot, mumbling to herself about something. It wasn’t in a language Nagisa could even recognise, which meant she was clearly completely out of it. There was a certain aura about her, though, like she was far more content than usual. In fact, it was the happiest Nagisa had probably ever seen her.

“What’s with all the mumbling lately?” Okuda voiced.

“Maybe she found religion,” Itona responded dryly.

Catching Korosensei’s attention, apparently even their teachers wouldn’t be spared. Karasuma and Bitch Sensei were suddenly dressed up for a wedding, western style with a proper bridal gown and bouquet. Bitch Sensei looked absolutely over the moon with this, whilst Karasuma was on the edge of anger. It wasn’t at the top of Nagisa’s priorities, but he did think they were a good match.

“What’s the meaning of this?” Karasuma growled.

Korosensei practically giggled. “We need to get you in on the cosplay action, Karasuma sensei. Or is this a fitting?”

Nagisa may or may have not have joined in with the cheers and whoops of his classmates.

“Phew!” Korosensei exclaimed, finally putting his camera down. “That ought to be enough on campus photos.” It wasn’t going to end just there apparently, because expertly, Korosensei had them all in what could only be described as a gigantic handbag.

“Hang on a sec!” Terasaka called out.

“Then why are we all stuffed in this bag?!” Maehara questioned.

“On-campus photos are hardly sufficient. I’ll be taking photos with you all around the world.” Korosensei said it like it was casual, like a trip around the world happened every day.

Terasaka looked around the group in horror. “What, now?!”

“Why go to such lengths?!” Maehara continued.

“Because it’s fun. And that’s also why I’ll take the time and effort to use my ingenuity and tackle the year book with all my might! Here we go! Slingshot!”

After being flown to Hawaii way back towards the start of the start of the school year, Nagisa didn’t mind Mach 20 travel that much. In fact, the speed was kind of exhilarating, much akin to a theme park ride. Watching the world go by so fast, it was hard to not feel powerful. Surprisingly, Daichi didn’t seem too fussed about it either, save for a moment of confused squirming.

“Nowhere too wild, Korosensei!” Nagisa remembered. “He hasn’t had any vaccinations yet.” He sounded so old, saying that. Not just like a grown up, but practically ancient.

With limited time, they only visited major tourist destinations, and nowhere for too long. The Great Wall of China was pretty cool, though they struggled to get a decent group photo with all the
people. They zoomed west, stopping at the most famous places, Moscow’s Red Square, Athens’ Parthenon, the Leaning Tower of Pisa and Coliseum. They briefly stopped for pastries underneath the Eiffel Tower, before jetting off to New York.

Despite it being late at night, due to the time difference, looking out at the Statue of Liberty was still impressive. Like most of what they’d seen that day, it was something Nagisa had only ever witnessed in pictures and movies before. It was crazy, how all of this was happening due to some disastrously bad grades.

“Hey, Nagisa, look what I bought,” Karma said, behind him.

Nagisa turned, and immediately his soul dropped. “Where did you even get that?”

He just shrugged, but looked kind of pleased with himself as he displayed baby clothes similar to the monstrosity (which Nagisa hadn’t gotten around to burning yet) they dressed Daichi in to come home from hospital. It was just white, with the tacky ‘I heart NY’ phrase on the front. Nagisa hated that kind of tourist trap thing, it looked awful.

“And the best part,” Karma said, and tugged out two matching shirts from the carrier bag he was holding.

“No.” Nagisa said immediately.

Practically pouting, Karma didn’t put them down anyway. “Don’t be a spoilsport. Family photo time, c’mon. When else will we be here?”

Groaning, Nagisa took the shirt from him, pulling it over his head. “Only one photo.”

Pretty tired from all the travelling, Daichi protested a little at his new outfit, but he didn’t throw a complete fit. It was one of the few moments ever Nagisa actually wanted him to kick up a fuss, to get him out of this. Still, he indulged Karma, holding Daichi up and leaning in close so he could fit in Karma’s selfie, with the famous statue in the background.

He didn’t get the chance to take any more, though, because Daichi actually did start crying. Somehow, Nagisa recognised it as hunger cries. Annoyingly, something that would be quite the process, or at least he’d found whilst out. Before he could even really begin to collect his thoughts, though, a warm bottle was pressed into his hand.

“Oh,” Nagisa said, “thanks, Korosensei.”

Their teacher’s face was coloured a kind of blue or purple, which tended to show shock or panic. Nagisa wished he had his notebook of weaknesses on him, right then. He’d just have to write it in later; is made nervous by crying babies. He let out a kind of laugh, before suddenly shrieking.

“Is that the time?! We need to get back in time for career counselling!”

Nagisa had forgotten all about that. Getting back into the bag, the journey home didn’t feel too long. Internally, he tried to ignore the thoughts that stirred up and crept about. When they landed back next to their class building, and Korosensei called their names one by one, Nagisa tried his best not to get lost in it. He knew what he wanted, he thought, but saying it to Korosensei…

When his turn came around, most people had already gone home. He was last, after all. As expected, Karma hung around, not showing much care for his own meeting. Karma knew what he wanted, though. Nagisa couldn’t help but be envious of that, as he handed Daichi to him and stepped into the staff room.
“Now then…” Korosensei begun. “Have you found what you’d like to be, Nagisa kun?”

Last time, he’d asked Nagisa to think, to really think about his options. Nagisa had been so lost back then, but now, finally, he was finding his own two feet. In that moment, assassination, his very best talent, had felt like the only option. Now looking at it, Nagisa couldn’t imagine something worse. Though it was true he had high potential for success, and he didn’t hate the actual career, it would just be so wrong. There was a lot of risk and sacrifice involved with that life, most suitable for an existence of loneliness. But Nagisa wasn’t alone. Leaving Daichi for long periods of time, with the potential that anything could go wrong and permanently happen to him… Nagisa just couldn’t justify putting him through that.

“Korosensei…” He gathered all his confidence. “I’m going to be a teacher. I’m not fast like you, or invincible like you, or smart like you… But I want to be a teacher like you.”

It sounded like a crazy, far off dream. There could never be a teacher quite as good as Korosensei, Nagisa knew, but he could at least try. After spending time tutoring Sakura, Nagisa had developed a fondness for explaining things. He lit up with happiness, at her successes. It just felt right, and once he’d considered it, the idea of a normal job, becoming a teacher, wouldn’t escape him.

Korosensei’s face changed to his ‘correct answer’ mode. “That’s right. It suits you. You each have a talent bestowed on you all equally that you will also lose equally some day: youth. Keep swimming forward now, without stopping, before this talent, your youth, escapes you.”

“I will,” Nagisa promised. “See you tomorrow, Korosensei!”

“Yes, see you then.”

Feeling happy now it was over, Nagisa joined Karma, who was the only other person waiting around. Daichi was fast asleep in his arms, completely unbothered by their motions as they begun to walk home together. Then again, Nagisa could hardly blame him, it had been an exceptionally long day. It was a shame he wouldn’t remember any of it when he grew up, but at least they could say they took him places.

“How did it go?” Karma asked eventually.

Nagisa hummed. “Good. I-I think it’s going to be tough, but this is the path I want to be on.”

It was already dark, by the time they made it back to Nagisa’s building. He was almost dead on his feet himself, just about ready to collapse into bed. At least Korosensei hadn’t given them any homework or anything.

“We’re back,” Nagisa said, when they entered.

Apparently not in a better mood than she’d been in earlier, his mother acknowledged them with a slight movement of the hand, remaining silent. It was far better than yelling, though. Not wanting to dwell on it, Nagisa practically pulled Karma into his bedroom, sliding the door closed behind them. Somewhat miraculously, Daichi was still fast asleep, and therefore easy to put down properly.

The moment they did, though, the entire building shook.

“Probably just a mini earthquake,” Karma shrugged it off.

Nagisa had a bad feeling. Call it some kind of intuition, but he knew it can’t have been that. A flash of orange light from out of the window caught his attention. There was no way that was nothing.
Like something possessed him, he stepped out onto the balcony. From there, he could hardly comprehend what he saw.

“No,” he said, “look.”

Their class building, and the entire mountain that housed it, was covered in some sort of force field.

Chapter End Notes

I really hope you enjoyed this one! And yes, I've risen from the dead now.

You know EXACTLY what we're headed for, whoops.

As always, I truly appreciate all comments and feedback
Barrier Time

Chapter Summary

Karma, Nagisa, and the rest of 3E go to investigate the mysterious barrier over their school.

Chapter Notes

I cried writing this. Not because of the content, but because I was forced to watch a certain few episodes. It's only going to get worse, too. Whoops.

There was no way it could be some kind of fluke thing. The dome like shield that was covering the mountain looked too flawlessly executed for it to be some freelance assassination attempt. Even from his own balcony, Nagisa could see the army tanks in the street, the people rushing out of their homes to see what was happening. It was all so bone chillingly real. Something inside of Nagisa right there and then just knew it was the end.

But even from his apartment, Nagisa couldn't really tell what was happening. The air in the room told him Karma was feeling the same way. Or, at least, was thinking about something. Acting fully on impulse, Nagisa knew he couldn't just stay here. His feet carried him of their own accord as he left his bedroom.

"-now with no place to run thanks to the Shield of Earth, is the culprit behind the moon’s-" The TV played what looked like an emergency broadcast. His mother was sitting in front of it, very still.

"Mum," Nagisa begun, without the time to think about phrasing it well. "Can you watch Daichi for a few minutes?"

Taking her attention away from the TV, she turned to look at him. "What is this?"

"Please." There was no use in hiding the desperation in his voice. "I’ll tell you everything after, but."

Whilst he attempted to come up with any kind of explanation, she stared at him, blinking almost robotically. Her lips pressed tightly together and she lowered her gaze. In that moment, Nagisa felt like he had no choice but to just take her silence as agreement. When all was said and done, he knew she wasn’t cruel without true cause.

So Nagisa just nodded, and re-entered his room. "Come on," he said, "it’s okay to go."

To his surprise, Karma didn’t say anything. As Nagisa looked over at him, though, his eyes were like a storm, a whirlwind of ash and fire and electricity. It wasn’t the face he usually wore when he was concentrating. There was something far more abstract going on up there. Still, he followed Nagisa, all the way out of the building and out into the streets.
“This road is closed!” Some sort of official was shouting. “Please follow instructions!”

He had to keep going, using his smaller body to his advantage to duck between people as the crowds got thicker. Eventually, there wasn’t much further he could go due to the guards blocking the road, but he could see the bright dome of light clear enough. A tsunami of dread washed over him. How naïve had they been, to believe that all of this could end peacefully?

“-This monster is in a stand off against the entire planet, of all things, and has taken some of our nation’s junior high students hostage, having gone under cover as a teacher. He is an extremely-“

The speech continued to play, from loud speakers, and Nagisa clenched his fist. It was so completely twisted and wrong, nothing at all what Korosensei was like. He felt sick, at the way they were so remorselessly dragging him through the mud.

“-It’s their job to say that kind of stuff,” Karma said beside him, noticing his agitation. “Whatever this plan was, they planned for the public’s reception. This is just damage control.”

Nagisa didn’t care. It was still wrong. But he was helpless where he stood. With the amount of military personnel around, he didn’t have a hope in hell of sneaking in. From right where he was, Nagisa was certain he’d only be caught and immediately arrested if he even tried it, and that wouldn’t help anyone. He continued to push forwards, though Karma hung back.

“Nagisa!”

Nagisa turned to face the girl running toward him. “Kayano!”

“What is all this?!” She said, coming to a stop beside him.

It seemed other members of their class had showed up, too. Terasaka had managed to break to the front of the crowd, and was threatening someone, though to no avail. It wasn’t as if the officer knew who they were, he supposed.

“Nagisa! Kayano!” Isogai rushed up towards them. “-Did you see the news? This is awful!”

Before Nagisa could answer him, he was blinded by bright camera flash. All at once, there were countless cameras pointed at him. Not even a person comfortable with attention should be okay with this. Nagisa couldn’t even see how many there were, but it felt like he was on display for the entire world.

“Look at this!”

“Could these be the students that had been threatened by that monstrous teacher?”

“-You’re those junior high hostages, right?!?”

“-Excuse me, how do you feel right now?”

“-You must be relieved to hear he’s been captured!”

Nagisa blinked, unable to fully focus on all the voices surrounding him. With microphones practically shoved under his chin, he could hardly even breathe. Weakly, he registered one of their comments. Korosensei had been captured? Was that what the lights were all about?

“What’s this about him forcing you to perform sham assassinations?”

“What was it like spending a whole year ruled by a teacher who could explode at any second?”
At the sound of commotion, Nagisa turned his head. Muratamatsu was trying to break free of one of them. “Shut up! It’s none of your business!”

“He’s not the evil teacher they’re saying he is!” Kurahashi addressed the cameras.

Naturally, the reporters ate it up and spun it. “Did that monster tell you to say that? How awful it must have been. You can tell us the truth. These are the innocent children that monster used as hostages!”

Why were they pitying them? A sinking feeling rushed through Nagisa, as he realised that Karma must have been right. It suited their narrative, the story they wanted to report on. There was no need for the truth, in their eyes.

“You have no permission to film here!” Karasuma’s familiar voice boomed over their interrogations. “Leave at once!”

“But,” one of them started, “what about our duty to report the truth?”

Karasuma stood talk, considering them all. “And terrify junior high kids for sheer entertainment value? Some duty! By the authority of the Defence Agency, this area is off limits. In the interest of public safety, I’ll ask you to leave. I’ll take these students into protective custody.”

Relief washed over Nagisa at that. Not just because he was being removed from the limelight, but also because there was a certain stability that came with Karasuma. No more government lies, he was sure, as their teacher Karasuma was somebody they could depend on. Nobody protested, apart from the press, as he lead them into a tent the military had obviously set up on a provisional basis.

“Karasuma Sensei…” Isogai begun, once everybody had gathered round. “What happened to Korosensei?”

But then Karasuma stood up straight, and Nagisa could tell he was building a wall in-between himself and them. “Time was up. The government implemented their last resort, the one they’d been preparing all this time.”

“There’s last resort?” Isogai pressed.

Takebayashi pushed his glasses up his nose. “That barrier, you mean?”

“That’s the only cage to keep him trapped,” Karasuma explained. “In a week, they’ll use a high power laser to kill him.”

Nagisa caught on immediately. He could see it all, how the government must have been preparing all of this. Right then, he knew that really they were a decoy. Something to keep Korosensei distracted and in one location. For them, it must have been a win win situation. If the class managed to pull off an assassination, it would still be problem solved. Somehow, that made his blood boil.

“No! What about our assassination?” Maehara questioned, though it was useless.

“You tried your best so far.” Karasuma said, no emotion showing in his voice. “Now leave the rest to us.”

Terasaka eyed him up. “Oh, now you’re the big man, all ‘leave it to us’??!”

“We’re completely in the dark!” Kurahashi complained.
“And that statement made it sound like it’s all Korosensei’s fault!” Kanzaki added.

“This is not cool,” Kataoka said. They told us to kill him, and now they’re elbowing in on our job?!”

Perhaps he’d just grown up a lot recently, but when Nagisa thought about it, that wasn’t his view. Being used didn’t sit well with him in the slightest, of course it didn’t, but he mentally took a step back. If he were in a position of power, and there was a chance the entire world could be destroyed, he wouldn’t sit there and do nothing. Karasuma was right, they’d had their chance, and not completed the assassination in time. It was only natural that such drastic measures were to be taken. Nagisa couldn’t resent that.

“And it won’t sit well with Korosensei unless we do the deed!” Isogai pointed out.

That, then, flipped things around for him. Though he understood the other perspective, Isogai’s words struck him in the heart. After everything they’d been through, it would be the worst betrayal of all to step back and let the government over. This entire year, Korosensei had been the best teacher, had supported and built them up in preparation for the day they’d kill him. Letting all of it be for nothing, disappointing Korosensei… It made Nagisa’s stomach turn.

“Karasuma Sensei, please, let us go!” Nagisa joined in on the begging.

“There are elite troops posted throughout town and on the mountain. No more openings for you to use to your advantage.” Karasuma’s stare met Nagisa’s dangerously, as if he was planning on trying something. “Give it up.”

Somehow, Nagisa found his voice. “No! There’s so much we haven’t talked about with Korosensei! So much we still want to do! So please, let us go–”

Before Nagisa could continue his protest, Karasuma yanked him by the shirt, slamming him back down onto the floor. It wasn’t hard enough that he’d be truly hurt, in fact Nagisa didn’t think he’d even bruise from it, but it still shocked him. He’d never laid a finger on them, outside of training. In a sense, it pleased Nagisa to know he was seen as enough of a threat, rather than something dainty.

“I can’t let you go!” Karasuma’s voice had more urgency in it. “This is national policy! Now you listen closely, Nagisa kun…” He tugged him back up by the material of his clothes. “Don’t give me a hard time. Are we clear?”

There was something there, Nagisa could tell. This was no regular scolding. Locking eyes with Karasuma, he couldn’t hide the emotion that was dancing around in there. Nagisa just knew, on some kind of instinctual level, that Karasuma didn’t truly believe in the government standpoint. But that wasn’t all. Nagisa practically lit up, placing why the phrasing of his words had sounded familiar.

“It’s no use, Nagisa.” Karma, who had been hanging away from the rest of their class, stood and entered the fray. “In the end, he’s just another company man. When push comes to shove, he’ll just follow orders to save his own skin.”

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“That’s exactly right,” Karasuma nodded. “My position lets me protect people when they need it most. Besides, even going by my own conviction, I’m thinking he should be killed after all.”

Apparently done with them, he begun to walk through their gathering, stopping to talk to another soldier. “Arrange transportation and escorts for them at once.”
“Sir!” The guard responded and followed Karasuma out of the tent.

Not wasting any time, Terasaka vented his frustrations. “Dammit! Karasuma! That bastard!”

“Terasaka kun…” Nagisa begun. He just had to get this feeling out.

“Huh?”

“Karasuma Sensei just said ‘don’t give me a hard time’, very clearly.”

“Yeah?” Terasaka looked at him weirdly. “So what?”

“Remember what he said earlier? ‘If I ever have a hard time, I’d trust you without hesitation. I can count on you’.” Nagisa gulped. The rest of what he was about to say was just a theory, and he would be addressing it everyone… He just hoped he was right. “So I think ‘don’t give me a hard time’ means he trusts us and can count on us to handle things. We have Karasuma Sensei’s trust – he’s leaving this to us. So…” Nagisa wasn’t the best at making plans. “Let’s put our heads together and sort it all out: what we want to accomplish, what we’re capable of, what Korosensei would want us to do.”

Thankfully, he was let off the hook. “Nagisa kun’s right,” Isogai stepped up. “Nobody else here would be comfortable just leaving this. Korosensei wouldn’t be either.”

Of course, there wasn’t a lot they could discuss in that space, where anybody could potentially hear them. Together, they just agreed to discuss it all on their class group chat. They had Ritsu on their side, of course, who could make the chat secure against even the government. There was no solid plan, quite yet, but Nagisa knew it would involve infiltrating the mountain. Even if all it meant was seeing Korosensei one last time, it would be worth it.

When the escorts came for them, nobody resisted. With the disruption, the streets were absolutely rammed with cars, so it wasn’t a fast journey home. Nagisa sat there, in an admittedly nice car, watching the world go by through darkened windows. It wasn’t hopeless, though. He wouldn’t let this be the end, no matter what the government tried to do.

Nagisa was at least grateful that they didn’t insist on walking him to his front door. If anything, though, that just made it incredibly obvious they were being watched. He and Karma, who had managed to convince them to take him back to Nagisa’s too, would have to be very careful about that in the coming days. It was time to start watching the movements of security cameras, though he wouldn’t be surprised if there were ground agents too.

Ready to meet his fate, Nagisa pulled the door open. Inside his own apartment, the entire experience felt foreign. There were no windows with a sightline of the school from there, and the rest of it was all kind of neutral. Like a self contained bubble. The TV and radio were turned off, so there was no sound apart from the distant blaring of sirens.

“Both of your faces were all over the news,” Nagisa’s mother came back in. She was carrying Daichi, who looked comfortable enough at least. “What is this?”

Nagisa swallowed. “Mum, I-“

She glared at him. “Think long and hard on this, Nagisa. I want to hear the full truth from your own lips.”

“I-I-“
“I’ll take Daichan,” Karma cut him off. Something in his expression told Nagisa not to question it. Thankfully, his mother didn’t resist him, in fact she held Daichi out like an offering. “This isn’t a conversation for me,” Karma said as he passed Nagisa to get to the front door, leaning in close enough so that only he would hear properly.

Karma had left him to it, then. Really though, Nagisa knew that he wouldn’t go far. He was right, this did feel like a conversation Nagisa needed to have with his mother. All he needed was to find the inner courage to do so. Easier said than done.

“So,” his mother begun shortly. “This is the reason behind everything. You were held hostage all year and you were acting out.”

“No!” Nagisa exclaimed quickly. “That’s not-“

Her face clenched up. “I don’t recognise you anymore.”

“You’re right,” Nagisa said, dragging the fire out of him. “But I’ve changed for the better, mum, not the worse. We were never held hostage.”

“Then what?” She snapped. “What explanation do you have?”

He cringed. “Just please don’t freak out.”

Of course, he hadn’t changed out of his school uniform, before rushing out. So he could easily reach into his trouser pocket, and bring out the government issued knife. Somehow, she didn’t start screaming, though the fear in her form was very obvious.

“Mum,” he said, “at school, they trained us in assassination.”

And Nagisa begun to talk. At this point, he assumed nothing bad would actually come from breaking his confidentiality. So he started at the beginning, the true story of the moon’s explosion, through their summer trip, the real reason he’d ended up in hospital that time, up until what was currently happening. Throughout his explanation, she remained silent, but not uninterested. He made sure to include all the good times too, rather than just the facts. They were just as important.

“I’m very sorry for not telling you the truth before,” Nagisa said. “But I hope you can understand. I know it might sound ridiculous to you but, this year has been one of a kind, and there’s nothing I would change about it.”

“‘One of a kind’,” she scoffed. “Every day, it’s something new with you.” She stood, turning away from him.

Nagisa’s head shot up. “W-where are you going?”

“To lie down,” she snapped.

Feeling like he could just burst into tears, Nagisa stood there and just watched until she disappeared into her own bedroom. With everything that had happened that day, all he wanted to do was to pound on her door, begging for forgiveness and to be held like a little kid. But he took a deep breath instead, letting neutrality wash over him. He’d been through enough that he couldn’t just collapse now, he would just have to steel himself and cope.

He opened the front door, stepping outside without locking it. Karma had positioned himself slumped against the wall, Daichi in some kind of a light sleep still, cradled in his arms. Though he was alert enough to look at Nagisa when he came out, Karma looked as if he could benefit from a
very long nap. Sighing, Nagisa slid down the wall too, sitting down right beside Karma.

“That wasn’t the worst she could have taken it,” Nagisa said. When Karma didn’t respond, aside from tilting his head slightly, Nagisa felt like curling up into a ball. “I just don’t think-“

“She’ll get over it,” Karma said plainly, cutting him off.

Perhaps it was just because he was exhausted, both physically and emotionally, but he leant his head on Karma’s shoulder. It wasn’t really comfortable, Karma was muscular rather than soft, and the difference in their heights meant that Nagisa’s head didn’t really fit well there, but somehow he didn’t care. There was just this something about being in his space that kept Nagisa drifting closer.

Karma’s own head was tilted towards him, ever so slowly inching closer. It was as if a phantom had reached into his chest and gripped him by the heart. His body was clenched up, about to crumble and cave in on itself. It wasn’t as though he tried to resist the urge to pull his body closer, but there was something else, deep down inside him, that made him hesitate.

The sound of Daichi stirring snapped him out of it. Nagisa found himself slowly blinking, as if adjusting to light, as he pulled back. Within moments, it became full out cries. In a sense, Nagisa was actually thankful for it.

“He’s hungry,” Nagisa got out. “We have to go back inside.”

Karma shot him a look. “You can just tell?”

Pulling himself to his feet, Nagisa bent down, taking Daichi into his own arms. “I guess,” he admitted, “I just have a feeling.”

“Well,” Karma used a swinging momentum to jump right back onto his feet, “we have an infiltration to plan.”

He didn’t speak much about the plan, as he watched Nagisa make up a bottle. Even when Daichi was soothed and ready to fall back asleep again, he kept whatever his thoughts were on lock. It wouldn’t be an effective plan if he didn’t let anybody else know about it, so Nagisa could only assume he was working out all the tiny details. At least he’d perked up.

Even when they lay down together, Nagisa could tell that Karma’s brain was still working on overdrive. Considering how long a day it had been, that probably wasn’t healthy at all. There was something erratic going on there, like some kind of mad scientist working out his next experiment. Perhaps it was wrong to disturb him, but Nagisa knew it could wait until morning. He waited, examining Karma’s consciousness, until the right moment to strike. Karma jolted, at Nagisa’s fingers suddenly pressing into his neck, but he did then calm.

They locked eyes, for a moment, before Karma wrapped his arms around Nagisa. This differed, greatly differed, from the other positions they’d been sleeping in. It would definitely qualify as cuddling. Nagisa weighed out his options, thankful that the darkness of the room was covering the flush he wore, before he decided he was okay with it. Karma relaxed, yet clinging to him like a teddy bear, was better than him being frantic.

Of course, it didn’t last for more than a few hours before Daichi woke them up again, and they had to slip apart. Throughout the night, though, they were still mostly close. At least, up until the sun rose and Karma’s relaxation had worn off. Nagisa had honestly never seen him so eager to greet the morning, but he decided not to question it.

“Looks like we have our own personal guards,” Karma stretched out, looking through the window.
Nagisa joined him, and sure enough, Karasuma’s agents were keeping an eye on them. Or, at least, were stationed outside the apartment building. With so much surveillance, it would be hard to really plan anything, so having Ritsu for communications was a massive advantage. Together, their plans would have to begin.

Somehow, he knew Karma had an idea, before he said anything. “It’s a good thing we have a cover.”


Karma smirked. “Time for Daichi’s first cherry blossom viewing.”

Getting the feeling that Karma was set enough in his plan without much regard for Nagisa’s opinion on this, he mostly just decided to accept it. “It’s too early in the year for that.”

“Fine,” Karma shot him a pointed look. “Time for a generic picnic that just so happens to be in a great position for surveillance.”

Though he probably should have been more concerned or bothered about using their son as a decoy, Nagisa couldn’t help but agree it was a good plan. Who in their right mind would bring such a young child to an environment like that, even without the added threat of accidentally being mistaken for trespassers by the army? Assessing it, Nagisa decided there was no real danger, at least not when compared with what they were planning to do.

As it turned out, pushing a sleeping infant around was the perfect disguise. Nagisa snuck a glance, and the agents barely batted an eyelid, suggesting they weren’t finding their activity suspicious. Naturally, they couldn’t get too close to the boundary, but they knew the mountain like the back of their own hands, and thus ways to approach it without drawing too much attention to themselves.

“So,” Karma said, as town turned to foliage, “have any ideas?”

Nagisa stopped in his tracks. “I thought you had the idea.”

Not stopping himself, despite his pace being slowed by trying to push a pram over uneven ground, Karma shrugged. “You’re better at observation than anyone else. We only have one shot at this, so, we need to find the perfect angle.”

He couldn’t help but flutter under the slight praise. But it was also a lot of pressure, and Nagisa barely knew where to start. This was an entire mountain to deal with. But they were all familiar with it, given Karasuma’s intense drills. Unless any member of the military had trained on this specific mountain, there was a significant advantage. So the main thing was finding the best route to take full advantage of that. Instinctively, Nagisa begun to consider the areas that had a lot of low roots and shrubs. Their class could run it blindfolded, but any outsider would potentially miss the danger and trip.

But Nagisa kind of got the feeling Karma had already thought of all of that. Any person could come up with that plan. No, Karma needed something only Nagisa could dream up. Unfortunately, it didn’t always work like that. Nagisa had to be right in the moment, sometimes, to fully see the perfect route to success. But he could try.

To no avail, he just stared into the trees, brain going through all the possible choices. That, at least, until a twig snapped and heavy footsteps filled the atmosphere. Nagisa turned sharply, knowing it was too late to try and disguise themselves. They’d been spotted.

“Hey!” The soldier said, taking fast steps over to them. “This area’s restricted! I’m going to have to
ask you to—"

Karma pulled a kind of meek expression. “Oh? This area too?” He laughed it off. “Apologies, we thought it was just right up to the barrier. You know how it is with kids,” he gestured, “this one doesn’t like to sleep unless we take him on a walk.”

The soldier softened, a little. “It’s no problem, an honest mistake.” Then, his face broke out into a full smile, like this was the most interesting thing that had happened all day.

“Yes,” Karma nodded, “sorry to be trouble! Gee, it must be important work here, huh?”

The poor man sighed. “Patrolling an entire mountain for trespassers isn’t that exciting. You’re the only people I’ve come across.”

“Right,” Karma said. “Nobody in town even wants to come close, but we like the peace and quiet.”

Sensing his cue to talk, Nagisa nodded. “Yeah.”

The man barely paid attention to him, which seemed like it could work out in their favour. “How old is he?”

“Just over two weeks,” Karma beamed. “If I’m honest, this is the most interesting conversation we’ve had in a while, too. So,” he continued, “patrolling, huh? We come up to this spot a lot… When are your breaks? I could point out some great spots.”

Nagisa was nearly astounded, as Karma continued to talk, about how well he was extracting this information. Given that the soldier wasn’t paying all that much attention to Nagisa, he could pretty easily note down the important stuff, without raising alarm. Within minutes, Nagisa had the details of their break pattern, where the patrols changed over, their location... It would take a bit of work, but it was enough to make an accurate diagram of the soldier’s paths. With this, they could play dirty, attack from behind.

“Well,” the man said, “I’m now very behind schedule. I hate to do this, but you still aren’t allowed to be up here this week.”

Karma waved him off. “It’s not a problem. Have a great day!”

They turned, making their way ‘back down the mountain’ until the soldier was completely out of earshot and eye. The whole experience made Nagisa giddy inside. By what he’d observed, the man wasn’t feeding them false information. At least, unless he was a master at hiding his body language, though Nagisa was certain he’d read his intentions correctly.

“We should feed all of that back to Ritsu,” Nagisa realised. “She’ll be able to calculate the best route.”

Karma nodded. “I have a few plans.” When Nagisa looked over at him as if to question, he lowered his head a little. “You could tell, even though they’re elites, they have rules to follow, a chain of command. We know this place better than them, so the best way is to mess with them – split off in small squads, and zero in on the bigger targets.”

It made a lot of sense, actually. It wasn’t just wild speculation, Nagisa could tell he’d really thought this through. He did as he said he would, when they got back, and supplied Ritsu with the information. After that, it was a waiting game, for the rest of the week. Now that they’d both played their part, returning to the mountain would just raise the alarm. So, with the help of their classmates chipping in here and there, everything was put into motion.
At least Karma was confident in his plan. He’d announced it on their group chat, even, and nobody had protested. Even sitting in his bedroom with Karma, Nagisa noticed the gears ticking behind his eyes. Nobody protested his request to take the lead, when it came down to it, though. Karma was good at playing to their individual strengths, drawing it out for maximum damage.

When the actual date of the assassination came, however, there was a lull towards the end. Despite being mostly trapped indoors with no school or anything all week, it hadn’t dragged on that much. It was like one gigantic rush of adrenaline. Of course, Nagisa also had Daichi to take care of full time, which really should be considered an actual job.

Maybe they were just saving their energy, but it was actually kind of peaceful. Whilst they waited for the thick of night to come, they rested on Nagisa’s bed, fully dressed in their special gear. They’d ended up with Daichi between them, more a bridge than a barrier. It occurred to Nagisa, then, that what they were about to do was real danger. It was worth it, to go out and honour their goals, to save the world... But it was a moment he may not be able to recapture, in the same way.

“Come on,” Nagisa eventually found himself saying. “We only have a short window.”

Karma nodded, pulling himself to his feet as he took Daichi with him, holding him close to his chest before kissing him briefly on the forehead.

Nagisa took him, hugging him in a similar fashion, his throat welling up. “We love you,” he said, barely even a whisper. He just had to force himself to remember that this wasn’t a goodbye. They’d be back, before morning, hopefully.

Knowing what Nagisa had to do, Karma nodded. “I’ll wait for you on the balcony.”

Gathering all the courage he had, Nagisa carried Daichi, making his way through his apartment until he reached his mother’s bedroom door. All week, he’d barely even seen her. Only when their paths crossed, which was inevitable in such a small home. At least, she hadn’t said much to him, and Nagisa could only hope it wasn’t resentment.

She opened the door, and took one look at him, dressed for a mission. “So you’re going out, then.”

Gulping, Nagisa tried to remain calm. “Mum,” he begun, “please... Allow me to go. I-I need to see my teacher.”

Hesitating for just a moment, she exhaled. “Alright, if you believe it’s the right decision.”

“W-what?”

She looked him right in the eye. “I need to start making my peace. You’re not the helpless child you once were. For any parent, that’s a harsh reality to face, but... You didn’t listen to me all those months ago. Admittedly, I was shocked, and angry, that you were so willing to throw your life away, make the wrong decision. I’m not saying I would take back my view point, but I see now. You defied me, yet, I know somehow that for you, you chose right. So I’m going to start having more faith in your decisions. If this is what you think is right, then, I believe you. Just please,” she tilted her head, just a little. “Allow me to remain your mother on some things.”

Nagisa felt inexplicably weightless. He tripped up on his words, trying to find the right ones. “U-u-uhm, will you-“

“Just don’t make a habit of it,” she said, taking Daichi from him.

He nodded. “We’ll be back by morning.”
“Nagisa.” Her tone was sharp. “Nothing dangerous.”

“Of course,” he replied, and sprinted into his bedroom, straight onto the balcony, and into a jump, landing on the next roof top. He didn’t have to turn, to sense Karma was right behind him. Of course, his centre of gravity had shifted since the last time he did anything like this, but his feet still knew how to carry him. As the others began to join them, they sped towards the school.

Chapter End Notes

I hope you liked this one! The next chapter might take a little longer than usual just because of the sheer AMOUNT of canon material, so please be patient ^_^

As always, I adore all comments and feedback!

On another note, I made an ass class side blog now. Not for any particular reason, other than I wanted the URL, but go check it out if you want :)  
https://nagisasthickthighs.tumblr.com/
Chapter Summary

3E race up the mountain, desperate to see their beloved teacher one last time.

Chapter Notes

im so sorry

Feeling the burn of exertion in his chest, Nagisa kept up the pace across the rooftops. It was very hard, with months of not really exercising, which had caused his endurance to go down. Still, the urgency of the situation won out on any urge to stop to catch his breath. They only had one shot at this. As they raced towards the school, Nagisa remembered to keep his body low, veiled in the darkness of night. They didn’t want to attract any reinforcements.

When they reached the edge of the forest, Isogai came to a stop, turning to address them all. “Our last mission: get everyone to school safely!”

And thus came the handover of power. “Okay,” Karma said, taking Isogai’s place. “You all know the plan. Advance.”

Nodding amongst everyone else, Nagisa stuck with Karma, as their group split off. They’d discussed this on their group chat- they’d break into small teams to target each bunch of guards. Karma was good at recognising everyone’s individual strengths, and using them to his advantage. He’d split everyone into groups that worked together. All they had to do was approach from behind, before they’d be seen coming.

Nagisa could hear the commotion through his ear piece, as he and Karma came across their first few guards. They gave each other a quick nod, before Nagisa leapt out from the bush, startling one of them even before he made use of his stun clap. Once he had, though, Karma administered a punch to the back of his head, knocking him fully to the floor.

Immediately, Nagisa dropped down, tying the man up in restraint. Meanwhile, Karma fought a second guard, overpowering him without exerting too much effort. The third guy, focusing only on Karma, begun to back away. Nagisa saw his shot, swinging out a leg so that he tripped, falling forwards flat on his face.

Karma grinned like wildfire, pulling what looked like a wasabi tube out of his pocket. “Part of the plan,” he explained.

Nagisa wasn’t about to question that kind of thing, when it came to Karma. As long as it worked, Nagisa couldn’t complain. Still, they didn’t have that much time. There was only about three hours left until Korosensei’s deadline, and the most important thing was seeing him. Karma acknowledged that, it seemed, straight up shoving the tube up the first guy’s nose.
“This squad’s taken care of, Karma,” Chiba’s voice came through the ear piece, as the man began to scream.

“Ohay,” Karma said.

There was a small amount of static, before Chiba’s voice returned. “How’s things by you?”

“Hmm? Right now…” Karma looked critically at his torture.

“Ow!” The man cried out. “It burns!”

“Sorry ‘bout that!” Karma ‘apologised’. “But you’re all such pros. How else am I going to get you to scream?”

Nagisa was a bystander, at least for this part. They had different styles, he didn’t enjoy ‘playing with his food’ as much. Still, Karma had a point. Plainly, Nagisa could see what he was doing. Better to lure the rest of the guards to them, rather than aimlessly chase them around the mountain.

“Your screams’ll be the bait to lure even more reinforcements,” Karma explained, and then turned to Nagisa. “I’d like to take care of two or three more while I’m here. That’s doable, right, Ritsu?”

Nagisa saw her appear on Karma’s phone screen. “Yes. About three more are approaching over the ridge. And there’s a fixed machine gun on the high ground, with all the fir trees.”

“Roger. So if we go from the crimson-glory-vine thicket through the stand of stone oaks?”

“Yep. That should get you there.”

Karma nodded, satisfied. “Okay, Terasaka, go that way, take down their guys, and advance to the lone pine.”

“Got it!” Terasaka’s voice came over, clearly already on the move.

Somehow, Karma didn’t even need to say anything. On some instinctual level, Nagisa knew what their next move was. They took off again together, speeding closer towards their class building. With all the commotion, all the guards had come right into this area, right where they wanted them.

“Okajima, I’m there,” Karma said, having taken his vantage position. “Another fifty meters.”

From his position, Nagisa could see Terasaka, Muramatsu, and Yoshida all break out into a sprint together. His eyes followed them, seeing they were gunning towards a far taller than average man. Something about him screamed that he was some kind of leader. He knocked them all back, as if it was effortless.

“Still some of you jokers left, eh?” He stood next to a low hanging tree, his form ominous and looming. Though, he was looking out, not behind him. Nagisa realised he could keep low, sweep around the foliage, and if he was extra careful, climb it without being noticed. “It’s true: we did let our guard down,” he said. “Looks like you kids are far better at this place than we are.”

At that moment, from somewhere undetectable, both Chiba and Hayami fired their shots. Of course, they were a perfect hit, right in the centre of his chest. Nagisa couldn’t thank their timing enough, given him the distraction he needed to continue his movements towards the tree. The guy pulled the stun darts out, as if they’d done nothing but pinched.
“Stun darts, eh? But if you know what you’re up against… It’s no problem at all.”

Nagisa could sense the end of Karma’s patience. Like a good leader, when his troops fell, he jumped into the fray himself. By the looks of it, he did manage to take the guy by surprise, but the punch he threw did nothing. Even Karma couldn’t instantly overpower someone with such a physical advantage to him, and he was knocked back.

“You punks…” He growled, very annoyed by then. “If you’d only behave, this’d all be over. What in blazes are you objecting to this late in the game?!”

“This is something we have to resolve ourselves!” Kanzaki ran at him, though didn’t make much of an impact.

Karma, who was stood up properly again, caught Nagisa’s eye from the branch he’d managed to scale. Giving him all the permission he needed in one glance, Nagisa lay his body out, getting ready. When the moment was exactly right, he threw down his knife, the quick blur of motion distracting the soldier enough. Not wasting a moment, he dangled down from the tree by his legs, clapping hard.

He flipped down, keeping a hold of his head. “Karma!”

Karma was already there, launching into an impressive axe kick. Immediately, the man’s form crumpled onto the ground, boneless. Nagisa landed, just about keeping up on his own feet. Together, they’d managed to do it.

“Nagisa?” Karma said.

Nagisa panted, slowly adjusting to what had just happened. Unable to help himself, he rushed forward, meeting Karma in a high five. Instead of pulling away, though, Karma’s hand clasped around his own, tugging him in. His other arm came around Nagisa’s back, making it a real hug. Feeling a sense of elation, Nagisa followed suit, feeling overwhelmed yet happy in Karma’s arms.

“Hey! He’s still moving!” Kayano yanked them out of the moment, pointing to the still squirming soldier.

Quickly, the others moved in with their tasers. “You damn brats!”

“Finish him off first, you dumbasses!” Terasaka yelled. “You can keep your show off high fives!”

Nagisa dropped out of Karma’s hold immediately. God, that was embarrassing. Karma had just… distracted him. What if their classmates hadn’t been there? Barely able to handle the shame, Nagisa turned his back. They could have got themselves into real danger. Damn Karma, for making him that way.

Once he was out, though, there were more important matters. They were facing right up against the barrier. Isogai was the first to take a step forwards, extending his palm first as a safety measure. He got through, though, and the rest of them quickly followed.

Korosensei was waiting for them. “I could tell by the sound.”

“Sensei…” Nagisa let out. It felt good, to see him again, after the fear that they maybe wouldn’t.

“You’ve come so far, class.”

“Korosensei!” A communal cheer broke out, and everyone rushed towards him.
For a moment, the seriousness of the situation evaporated. Seeing Korosensei welcome them all so easily, like they were just going to school like normal… It put Nagisa at ease. Everything had been worth it, just to feel this again. The others also engaged in light conversation, expressing their joy at seeing Korosensei. Though he too was happy, however, Nagisa saw just the slightest fragment of sadness, even without his face shifting.

“I see,” Korosensei eventually turned towards the sky. “So they’ll be firing the killing laser just before midnight. That much power would even shut down my Absolute Defence Form.”

“No!” Kataoka exclaimed.

Kurahashi came forwards. “Korosensei, let’s find a way out of here! We’ll be your hostages, or whatever it takes!”

“There’s no stopping that laser now,” he said, peacefully, “not when people know I’m out there.”

“Did you know all along that it would come to this?” Hayami asked, her head down.

“Even if I don’t explode,” Korosensei said, “you can’t expect all these nations to not be afraid of a creature like me. Sooner or later, they’ll want to snuff me out. It’s only reasonable.”

Fuwa exhaled sharply. “There might have been away if only we’d acted sooner… Like breaking the barrier projectors, or making the rounds online or on TV to plead our case!”

“That would have gotten you labelled even more dangerous, and you might have been placed under even stricter surveillance. Besides, the projectors have impregnable defences. There are anti-aircraft weapons in place if I so much as hunk a rock at them. With your current capabilities and equipment, you’d likely get caught along the way. That is how perfect this plan was. They spared nothing, pouring in tech and time and people. This assassination, this crystallisation of the world’s wisdom and efforts, surpasses my own abilities, for which I offer my respect and am honoured to have been its target.”

As much as Nagisa absolutely hated that reality, he knew Korosensei was entirely right. Nothing they could have done would have stopped this from happening. They were just small parts of a massive scheme, out of their depths. But they shouldn’t be bitter about it, Nagisa realised. Even getting here, though it hadn’t necessarily caused much, was enough to be proud of.

“But…” Yada trailed. “Then all our hard work getting here – that was all wasted?”

“Is anything ever really wasted, Yada san?” Korosensei reached out, touching her forehead with a tentacle. “The process, your hearts, that’s what’s important. You used every last bit of what you learned to come see me. As a teacher, there can be no greater happiness.”

“So what if time’s up!” Terasaka protested. “Why won’t the government and the rest of them hear us out, when we’re the ones who’ve been closest to you? This octopus…” he thought for a moment. “Okay, he’s a perv, but he’s not dangerous!”

Hazama sighed. “’We won’t listen to what those kids have to say. We’ll just pity them instead.’ It’s insulting.”

“Like we can just shut up and take this…” Muramatsu said.

“Next time I see those goons, I’m gonna-“ Yoshida begun.

Korosensei grabbed hold of them. “Terasaka kun, all of you… Let me give you some advice. As
you go through life, the mighty current of society is bound to get in your way, and there will certainly be times things didn’t go as you’d hoped. When this happens, do not look to society for a cause. Do not renounce society. Frankly, you’d be wasting your time. Instead, just say, ‘that’s life!’ and muddle your way through with frustration. Once you’re past it, consider: If society’s swift current is tossing you around, how should you be swimming there in its midst? You should have learned how, here in the E Class, in this assassination classroom. You don’t always have to stand and face it head on. You can run, and you can hide. If it’s not against the rules, you can try a sneak attack. You can use unconventional weapons. Stay determined – not impatient nor discouraged – and with repeated trial and error, you’re bound to reach a wonderful outcome eventually. That’s because each and every one of you is a top tier assassin who can do just that.”


Korosensei let out his signature laugh. “Now’s the time for this lesson. An educator never misses an opportunity to teach. But you know, for you to try so whole heartedly to save me…” His tentacles came down on each of them. “I’m so happy, I’ve been holding back tears this whole time. I mean it.”

Once the tentacles were removed from his skin, Nagisa touched his forehead. How was Korosensei so calm? Of course, his philosophies were fair enough, good, even, and Nagisa had to accept that there was no way to stop this assassination now it had begun… But what about before? If Korosensei hadn’t given up his one year to become their teacher, if he hadn’t been so dedicated and faithful, he might have lived. It was almost as if they were his greatest weakness.

“By the way, Nakamura san,” Korosensei continued on, “your footsteps were awfully gentle, even during that pitched battle. And… Do I smell something sweet?”

“Sharp ears and a sharp nose… It’s been exactly one year since the day the moon exploded, right?” Nakamura grinned, pulling a cake box out of her bag. “As I recall, Yukimura Sensei made today your birthday. Feel free to praise my skill in getting it here in one p- Hey, I’m talking!”

Korosensei leant over the cake, bright pink in colour. “But… It’s just… It’s my first sweet anything in a week!”

“Ew! You’re drooling!” Nakamura complained, before giving up. “Come on guys, let’s get singing!”

With the rest of the class, Nagisa gathered round as the candle was lit. An odd sense of serenity washed over him. Forget about the moon, the laser, or any of the looming threat. This was just what it was, plain and simple, just a birthday party. Nagisa joined in singing with the others, the English ‘Happy Birthday’ song ringing somewhat tunefully from them all.

“C’mon, blow it out, Korosensei!” Maehara said, as the rest of them cheered. Korosensei leant over the cake, puffing up his chest, he prepared to blow. Before he could, however, a dark mass came out of the shadows. Almost… tentacle like in form, it was like a black whip, smashing into the cake at a speed Nagisa’s own eyes could barely even comprehend. He turned, instantly meeting the two figures.

“Happy birthday,” Shiro, the man who had caused them so many issues in the past, snarled.

“Shi-no, Yanagisawa…” Terasaka trailed off. He was right, Yanagisawa was unmasked, now. Somehow, he looked less intimidating, less evil, with his face covered.
He stood there, facing them, still like a marble statue. “The time is ripe. Let me give you the gift of
the world’s cruellest death.”

Ignoring him, the eye naturally fell to the demonic mass stood right beside him, looming over the
conversation. Nagisa wasn’t exactly about to break out into a scream, the creature’s form wasn’t
that kind of scary. No, it was more the type that made Nagisa’s bones freeze, limbs turning into
piles of lead to keep him in place.

“Sensei…” It groaned, voice just as unsettling. “You know who I am, don’t you?”

“Why don’t I introduce hi – to your students, too.” Yanagisawa announced. “He’s the man who
stole the name ‘the Reaper’ from that octopus. And…” the white robes fell from his body“…as of
today, he’s the new Korosensei.”

It let out another moan, like it was seriously in pain, and launched up into the sky, landing on the
roof of the class building.

“That’s… Is that thing…?” Yoshida begun.

“Reaper 2.0…” Nagisa’s brain caught up, throat dry. “The one who’d attacked us!”

Muramatsu recoiled. “Before it was just his face! Now his whole body is a monster!”

“He’s just had the same modifications as that octopus. The only difference is that he begged for
them. Completely unlike that botched Itona or my little sister over there. Can you even imagine? A
man who overpowered you singlehandedly even as a human now has both incomparable tentacles
and hatred. The destructive power!” Yanagisawa continued on, like a mad scientist proud of his
creation.

“Die!” 2.0 launched clean into the air.

Nagisa didn’t have much time to think about what was going to happen next, before his body was
launched upwards and back. Like a shockwave, he couldn’t hold back his natural reaction to scream
as he was launched. Everyone else, it seemed, had also been caught up in it. Less than a second
later, Nagisa was back on the grass, though he’d hit it hard.

“A sonic boom,” Yanagisawa explained. “His tentacles have an initial velocity of Mach 2. And
they can reach a top speed… of Mach 40.”

In the distance, 2.0 and Korosensei began to fight each other. Or, at least, what looked like it. It
was far to fast, for Nagisa to really comprehend.

“M-mach 40?!” Okajima exclaimed.

“In short, his basic performance is doubled,” Yanagisawa explained. “2.0’s superhuman kinetic
vision and intuition are amplified via his tentacles making him readily adaptable to a supersonic
world. Unlike some amateur children, he took to his tentacles readily- just like version 1.0 over
there. But the greatest difference is that unlike you and that octopus, those tentacles were designed
with continuous operation in mind. You see, he needs no upkeep. He’s disposable. In exchange for
only three months to live, I’ve made it so that he can tap into this tremendous energy. And there’s
not even any danger of him exploding at death.” He let out a manic laugh. “A safe and flawless
weapon, is it not?”

Beside him, Kayano shivered. “You always do this… Always hurting others- from your safe spot
away from it all!”
Nagisa took his eyes off the fight in the distance, examining Kayano. He hadn’t considered how muddled her feelings must be. According to Korosensei, this was the man who had abused and tormented her sister. He couldn’t pretend to understand the full story, but he could see it written all over Kayano’s face. If he assumed correctly, she probably felt like she owed it to her sister, to stand up against Yanagisawa.

“Is that what you think?” He sneered, and pulled something out of his pocket. Too late, Nagisa realised that it was some kind of syringe, which he didn’t hesitate in injecting into his own neck. “I’m not prepared to die? Is that what you think?”

“Hey, that’s~” Sugaya begun.

“It can’t be…” Okuda gasped.

Yanagisawa ripped off the plain cloak he was wearing. “I don’t give a damn about my life anymore.” Now that his chest and back were exposed, Nagisa could see that he was transforming. The tentacles weren’t dramatic, but Nagisa got the sense that was the point. “Not if I can kill you, who stole everything from me... Joints, muscle fibres, spinal cord, nerves: it may not be my entire body, but if I can gradually implant tentacles in these key places, I can become superhuman while retaining my human faculties... Die a pathetic death, guinea pig...” a bright, violet light burst from his covered eye “…so your beloved students will be scarred for life!”

In the distance, Korosensei was thrown back, flat onto the ground.

“Class...” He still managed to address them. “There’s something I forgot to mention in my earlier lesson: Even an assassin who’s cleverly avoided all head to head battles is sure to have a number of times in life when he or she must fight with every last ounce of strength. In my case... That would be now!”

With a frightening roar sound from 2.0, they launched at each other once more. Nagisa couldn’t really get much of a sense of what he was seeing. The fight was all so fast, far above any kind of human level. With every attack coming from 2.0, there was a sonic boom. This was the kind of battle that was beyond them, not even the same dimension. By his wildest guess, Korosensei was losing ground. In fact, he was slammed down hard into it.

“Korosensei!” Nagisa called out, almost on instinct. Automatically, he reached for his gun, drawing and aiming it. But then, Nagisa realised with shaky hands, he wasn’t even aiming at anything. The battle was mismatched between Korosensei and 2.0, but also between them. All the Special Forces training in the world couldn’t have put them on the same stage. Nagisa hopelessly dropped the gun, collapsing onto the grass. You would think all their hard work was completely meaningless, a hindrance, even. They couldn’t do anything to help, and they couldn’t run away.

“Is he... starting to dodge?” Takebayashi said, bewildered.

Nagisa’s phone vibrated with Ritsu’s excitement. “Evading attacks with the minimum amount of strength, using soil to block the light... He’s closing in and ‘killing’ their power. Seeing him improvise a way to close their battle power gap... That’s our Korosensei, through and through.”

The two super beings exploded back from each other, and the battle came to a stall.

“Yanagisawa,” Korosensei panted, “leave us. This is a place for students to learn and grow. You are not entitled to be here!”

Unfortunately, Yanagisawa didn’t seem swayed by that in the slightest. “Still fancy yourself a
teacher, eh, guinea pig? Then let’s put you to the test. Don’t you see why we chose this moment to make our move?” He clicked, which caused 2.0 to start groaning even louder, flashing in bright red colours. “You’ll protect them, right? Isn’t that what a teacher does?”

A white beam from 2.0’s tentacles shot out, seemingly right towards Nagisa’s face. He had to close his eyes under the intensity, hearing only an explosion. When he opened them again, Korosensei was stood right in their path. There was no explanation other than that he’d taken all of that power, square in his chest.

“Korosensei!” Nagisa cried out in alarm.

“You’re the very model of an educator, guinea pig!” Yanagisawa practically cheered, like this was all just a game. “You can escape these harsh blows on your own, yet you take them head on to protect your students! Alright, 2.0. Next!”

Red lightning danced around 2.0’s towering form, but once again, Korosensei jumped in front of them, blocking any impact. No matter how many attacks there came, Korosensei stopped them from every single angle. Even for him, this wasn’t good. Korosensei even paused for a moment, doubling over to vomit.

“Put the target with his students and this was bound to happen,” Yanagisawa sneered. “Wrong answer, kids. Deciding to show up here tonight was a bad move.”

“Stop, Yanagisawa!” The all too familiar commanding voice of Karasuma rung out. Nagisa turned his head sharply, and sure enough, he along with Bitch Sensei had made their way up the mountain. He pointed the gun at his head. “Don’t drag those students in any deeper!”

It was too late to warn him of Yanagisawa’s transformation. Using his new found super speed, he sped up, plainly slapping Karasuma hard enough that he immediately crumpled, knocked hard onto his side.

“Karasuma!” Bitch Sensei called out, rushing to his side.

“Shut up and watch, government lapdogs. You don’t stand a chance against me now.”

Nagisa shook, where he stood. This entire fight, what it came down to, it was their fault. Deep down, he realised, he’d known all along. They all had. Every fight, every moment… It rushed before his eyes. They’d seen this moment, how it would all end, and they’d looked away.

“How does it feel?” Yanagisawa continued, as Korosensei stood back up, but was immediately captured in a hold by 2.0. “What’s it like, seeing your despairing students being a hindrance to their dear, dear teacher? Now do you see it? Your greatest weak point?”

It was so clear. They were Korosensei’s greatest weakness.

“That’s preposterous!” Korosensei announced, though, before Nagisa could get too deep into it. “This isn’t a question of right answer or wrong! They risked life and limb to try and save me, and overcame obstacles to meet me here! That process, those hearts- they’re the greatest gift a teacher could receive! They’re not a weak point, and they’re not a hindrance! They’re my students! And I’m proud of each and every one of them! What’s more… protecting one’s students is a teacher’s natural duty!”

Yanagisawa didn’t look particularly impressed. “Yes, yes, very good. But we’ll deny you that duty of yours, too. Soon your strength will run out, and the students you’ve been protecting? I will slaughter them. This year you gained by destroying our lives… I’ll make it have been all for
naught! Then our revenge will finally be complete! Now, let’s continue. Better protect those sweet students of yours.”

He couldn’t do anything else, however, because a gun shot was sounded, and Korosensei was dropped in the shock of it all.

“Idiot!” Karma called out, sharply.

Nagisa snapped his head, only to see that Kayano had jumped into the fray. “But- how?!?”

Kayano calmly lowered her gun, and pulled her knife. “Run, Korosensei. I’ll buy you time- just hide somewhere and recover!”

“Kayano san?!” Korosensei cried out in panic.

Right there and then, Nagisa didn’t blame him. He wanted to rush in, to go pull her back, but it was far too late. He just had to trust that Kayano knew what she was doing, or at least what she was getting into. It still felt painful to witness, though. Even as Kayano was shoved by a tentacle, and somehow managed a clean slice.

“Oh, that’s a former tentacle user, for you,” Yanagisawa commented, scientifically. “Retained that kinetic vision, I see.”

“Stop, Kayano san!” Korosensei begged.

She turned to him. “I’d regretted it all this time. That it was my fault the class learned the truth. That I snatched away the fun times we’d had together. So at least… let me protect you… as your student!”

“You were right! Thanks to your actions, the class got to learn what was truly important!” He tried to get up, but was immediately smacked back down again.

“2.0?” Yanagisawa called out, and then gave him the thumbs down.

Somehow, moments before it happened, Nagisa knew what was about to happen. But, Kayano had already launched herself into the air, preparing her attack. It was the quickest hit, but it probably wasn’t the best path. She should have stayed low… This was the only way Nagisa could even begin to handle what he was witnessing, breaking it down, just a bystander. He could only stand still, and see the tentacle coming for her.

When it pierced her clean, straight through the chest, even despite his best attempts, Nagisa felt something within him snap. It was so quick, Kayano didn’t have a chance to scream, before her heart was torn from her body. His own body shook, eyes dry with how wide they were. They have all been trained in assassination, but Nagisa had never actually seen death before. Not really, not right in front of his eyes.

His throat couldn’t produce any sound, his breaths were coming up way too fast and short for that. Helplessly, all he could do was watch, as 2.0 removed his tentacles, displaying the gaping hole through her centre. Flimsily, her body collapsed onto the grass, giving off the slightest twitches, an after effect of death.

It was too far away to see up in detail, but Nagisa could tell her eyes were still open, open yet glassed over. Shuddering, he remembered clearly how often he’d found those eyes a comfort. It wasn’t something he’d questioned. It was just a guarantee, every day, he’d just come into class, and at his side, Kayano would greet him. Warm smile, warm eyes. Even though she’d lied about
her identity for most of the year, her friendship was still genuine, and that’s what had really mattered. And now it was over.

Yanagisawa continued to laugh like a psychopath. “I get to have both sisters die right in front of me?! What a couple of trouble makers! Maybe I should have kept her as her sister’s stand in! Too bad I’m not interested in some holey bitch.”

Korosensei crawled over to her body, and his entire form combusted into crimson flames. It was so much more than the previous rage he’d exerted over the year, where he would turn a deathly black. Nagisa could hardly blame him, he’d probably look the exact same, if he had that ability. He was moments way from reaching for his own gun, to fire a bullet into the back of Yanagisawa’s skull.

“There we go! When you’re beside yourself, your emotions twisted, your whole body goes pitch black!” Yanagisawa exclaimed. “You couldn’t be at full power otherwise. In other words, this is the destructive creature showing his true colours! You yourself have negated the whole year you spent wearing that ridiculous yellow hypocrite’s face! Most satisfactory! And as for this full bore fury of yours… In showing his full power, 2.0 will negate that, too. Now for his final attack.”

He injected something into 2.0’s body, then, causing the creature to expel purple flames of its own. There was no use thinking of it as ‘him’, anymore. There was no human left in there. He charged at Korosensei again, who was forced to abandon Kayano’s body. Just like that, the battle continued, though it seemed faster than before, if that was possible.

Nagisa forced himself to take a deep breath, and it was as if everything happened at once. No matter how much he wanted to, how much every muscle in his body screamed for him to move, Nagisa couldn’t. It had just been proved to him that real death could happen, at any moment. Even if they all stormed at Yanagisawa at once, 2.0 had paramount power, they’d just be taken out. And going alone, that would be plain suicide.

Maybe if things had been different, Nagisa wouldn’t have stopped himself from going despite the risks. But as he let out air he was holding, Nagisa knew he couldn’t. It was stupid, regardless of the situation, but Nagisa had a lot to live for. Nothing, not even vengeance, would be worth giving all of that up. Besides, he’d promised his mother he’d be back by morning. He had a son to think about now.

So Nagisa removed himself from the situation. It was the only way he could force himself to get out of this. Constructing a wall between his emotions and his logic, Nagisa examined everything. Right then, he had a duty to fulfil. His comrade’s corpse (it was the only way he could bear to think about it) had been left on the ground, and his main mission was to get to safety. Any good soldier would stop to collect the dead, though. He could allow himself that.

Whilst the rest of the class stood around in awe, Nagisa rushed over to the body. Up close, it was far more horrifying. The eyes were indeed wide open, struck in mid-death horror. Bending down, Nagisa closed them out of respect, before picking her up. He couldn’t bear to look at the damage to her midsection, though there was no avoiding the glimpses of bone jutting out of her skin, ribs snapped clean off by the tentacle.

“Let’s get away from here!” Nagisa called out to the others, standing properly. He wasn’t sure if it was just the adrenaline coursing through him or not, but he managed to support her corpse without too much strain.

“Nagisa?” Hayami let out, tuning to him.

“Now,” Nagisa urged, “while his attention is elsewhere! If we stay, we’ll get tangled up in this for
“Running away is a perfectly sound battle tactic!” Karma cut in, eyes setting upon Nagisa’s with understanding.

Perhaps it was the power Karma exuded, or just everyone’s brains catching up, but nobody stuck around to argue. The rest of his classmates ran off, travelling to the bank of earth closer to the class building, more of a vantage position. Nagisa couldn’t quite sprint, not with the body, but he moved as fast as he could, panting when he finally came to a stop, only when a massive bomb sounded out. And, then, white light.

“No…” Nagisa said to himself, “it’s yellow.”

“Nuh-uh, red!” Terasaka disagreed.

“Green!” Nakamura called out.

“Blue!” Kataoka added.

Nagisa’s head perked up. “White!”

Somehow, that white was far more brilliant than the first, so bright he couldn’t see much of what was happening, even if he’d tried. Yet another sonic boom sounded out, and then, after all the pandemonium, it went eerily silent. He could have sworn he saw Yanagisawa’s body fly back, though, dissolving against the anti-sensei force field. 2.0 was nowhere to be seen, though sparkles of light flew throughout the sky. As Korosensei collapsed onto the grass, he could only assume the fight was over. Nobody shouted for joy.

Keeping his arms as level and steady as he could, Nagisa stepped forwards. “Korosensei? Kayano, she’s-”

Before he could get it out, some of his classmates began to sob. Though he realised the danger was over now, Nagisa couldn’t bring himself to break down the wall he’d created. It was easier, to hold his emotions back. So, somehow, he didn’t produce any tears himself. What good would it do, at that point, anyway?

“Let’s lay her down,” Chiba suggested.

“No,” Korosensei said, “don’t, Nagisa kun. I don’t want her to have too much contact with the germs in the soil.” Koro

Nagisa trembled a little. Clearly, their teacher was so beside himself he hadn’t accepted it. “Korosensei…”

“Class, the past you’ve lost will never come back. I myself have made so many mistakes… But we can learn from the past so we don’t repeat it.” Surrounding his main body, smaller, white coloured tentacles appeared. They were almost ethereal, like little strings of light. Looking closer, though, they were tinted with red.

“Huh? W-what’s this?” Nagisa stammered, blinking rapidly.

Korosensei looked him in the eye calmly. “Kayano’s blood and somatic cells. I gathered them up before she fell to the ground and stored them in a sterile membrane I made with compressed air.”
“I-in the middle of battle?!” His heart rate began to pick up. Could that be… hope?

“I’d set aside the tentacles meant for protecting you.” Korosensei reached over, taking Kayano from his arms. “Those were the only ones I didn’t use for fighting. Now to string all these cells together, one by one. Faster, more accurately…” Her entire body began to glow. “I’ve been improving my skills all year long – so if the same thing happens again, it won’t have the same tragic ending. Some cells can’t be repaired, so instead I’ll leave gaps and fill them with my mucus. Within a few days, her own cells should regenerate and replace it. I’m a tad low on blood. Type AB donors, please!”

Like obedient soldiers called to duty, Itona and Karma offered their arms. Korosensei didn’t waste any time, of course, attaching tentacles to them. Clearly, Nagisa could see the blood slowly being pumped out of them, and in to Kayano’s body.

“Nakamura san!” Korosensei commanded. “Gather up that birthday cake and put it my mouth!”

“Huh?” Nakamura said, somewhat taken aback. “But it’s a smashed up pile of dirt covered garbage!”

“I need to replenish my energy! And I wanted to eat it that whole fight! I’m calling thirty minute rule!”

Her eye twitched. “Thirty second!”

Disregarding the hygiene aspects, Nakamura did as he said, and he rapidly ate the cake as he continued to work. Peering in closer, Nagisa could see the wound close before his eyes. The wall he’d built seemed to sway, the light that hope produced only growing brighter.

“Now, once her heart starts working, she’ll come back to life,” Korosensei explained. “It should go perfectly, according to my ‘what to do for a gunshot student’ manual! I can say this now, but if your bodies were ever torn to pieces, I was prepared to put them back together.” He laid her on the grass, and his tentacles sparked with electricity. “As long as I’m around, that is. As long as the teacher is properly seeing his student.”

Like a makeshift defibrillator, Korosensei sent the electricity right into her chest. Nagisa’s breath caught, as her back arched. It was the longest second of Nagisa’s entire life, before suddenly, Kayano let out a gasp. At that, everything in Nagisa crashed down at once.

“Did you save me… again?” She sat up, as if she hadn’t just been dead.

“As many times as it takes,” Korosensei said, and fixed her hair. “Your sister would have done the same.”

Collectively, everybody let go. There were cheers, jumps of excitement, yet more tears… Finally, there was something worth celebrating. Nagisa couldn’t hold back his wave of relief. For more than a few minutes there, he’d accepted there would be no out, no way to bring Kayano back. It was enough to make him forget everything else, flinging his arms around her shoulders in pure joy.

“Kayano… thank goodness you’re alright!” He said, because what else could he say?

“Nagis-“ She sneezed, and then looked down. “Hey! What’s with this getup??”

It took Nagisa a moment, to realise what her problem was. Though her skin had been completely healed, with no evidence that a gaping hole had been ripped into her, her actual clothes were still damaged. As it was, her chest was almost entirely exposed. With her life in the balance, it hadn’t
exactly been a *priority*, but Nagisa turned away in respect, cheeks tinting.

Not everyone showed the same concern, though. Okajima had to be physically restrained, and Itona was crouched down in front of her, staring critically.

“W-what?” Kayano questioned.

Itona held his gaze. “Pathetic.”

“What is?!”

“Aw, c’mon.” Maehara pulled his jacket off, and wrapped it over her arms so at least she wasn’t as exposed. “Korosensei even fixed up your hair for you.”

Kayano accepted the jacket, but turned her head. “Thanks, but I wish he’d fixed up my clothes first.”

“Y’know, Korosensei’s so generous with his care and all,” Okajima drawled, “you might’ve come out of that a little bustier than before!”

“Is that so, Korosensei?” Yada accused.

Their teacher didn’t answer her question, though, instead collapsing straight onto his back. “Phew… I’m beat.” Compared to his usual somewhat frantic nature, Korosensei seemed unusually satisfied. That, and kind of… frail. “Class? What kind of assassin would let a dying target escape? Don’t you see? It’s killing time. Fun times… are bound to end. That’s what a classroom’s all about.”

A pit opened up in Nagisa’s stomach. Looking up above their heads, the original threat hadn’t disappeared. All of that had been a distraction. The light of the laser, shining right down on them from above, told them it was right on schedule. There was no time to waste, or hesitate.

“Guys…” Isogai begun, facing them all. “We have to decide this ourselves. We could choose to stay out of this and leave it up to fate… Show of hands. Who doesn’t want to kill Korosensei?” Everyone, including Nagisa, stuck their hands up without hesitation. “Okay, hands down. Who wants to kill him?”

Muscles trembling, Nagisa raised his hand once again, knowing there was no going back. He couldn’t stand it, but it wouldn’t be right, to leave Korosensei to the laser. This is what the entire year had been building up to, right from the moment Karasuma first appeared in their classroom, announcing their mission. So much had changed since then, and Nagisa had been through things he hadn’t dreamed of, but something had remained constant. They were killers. Their target was their teacher. And, now, as painful as it was, they had to graduate with their bond still intact.

Though he’d been the first of their class to admit his desire to kill Korosensei, Nagisa was frozen in place, as everyone else gathered around Korosensei’s body. It was one of the weaknesses he’d written down, not too long ago. Korosensei wouldn’t be able to escape, if all his tentacles were pinned at once. The others got into position, holding a tentacle down each. Nagisa stilled, though, his fingers clashing around his knife.

“You can’t move like this, right, Korosensei?” Nakamura asked.

Korosensei nodded. “Exactly so, Nakamura san. I am worried about your weak grip, though.”

“Your heart is right under your tie. Who’s going to-“ Kataoka begun.
“You guys, please…” Nagisa stepped towards the others, his knife fully drawn. “Please, let me.”

It was an urge he couldn’t really explain. All the endless hours he’d spent looking up to Korosensei, studying his every move, taking in his lessons. Perhaps it was selfish, but, somehow, Nagisa would never be able to move on, if it wasn’t his blade. He looked down at his knife, then. How many times had that exact blade missed the mark? Being the one to strike, it was a massive ask.

“We got no complaints.” Terasaka almost grinned.

Karma looked him dead in the eye, his own pupils ablaze. “You’re the head of this class, Nagisa.”

Despite everything, the praise still got him. For just a second, Nagisa allowed himself to beam, before continuing his approach. Steeling himself, he lowered his body so that he was sitting on Korosensei’s chest, poised for the kill. It felt wrong, though, to stroke so suddenly. At least, Nagisa felt like he should say something.

“Sensei…”

“Nagisa kun,” Korosensei looked him in the eye, “you can stab down through my tie. The very day I received this tie, I managed to put a hole in it. I left it like that. This, too, is an important connection. Ah, but first, I have to say my goodbyes to these teachers. Irina Sensei,” he turned his head, “are you sure you don’t want to join in? This is your chance at that bounty.”

Bitch Sensei shot him a kind of sad smile. “I’ve gotten enough already. So many ties, so much experience- from you and the children both. This assassination… Is the bond between you and those kids.”

“And, Karasuma Sensei- You, too, have made these students what they are today. Please continue to offer your guidance.”

“You may have caused me no end of trouble,” Karasuma said, “but this one year I’ll never forget. Farewell, Korosensei.”

“Yes.” Korosensei seemed to glow. “Now then, class, it’s about that time. Twenty four hours wouldn’t be enough time for me to say my goodbyes to each of you in turn. We can’t talk long… So instead, I’ll take attendance, one last time. Please look me in the eye and answer in a loud voice. Once you’ve all responded, you can kill me. N-nobody left early, did they?! If someone didn’t respond now, of all times, I’d kill myself!”

He was stalling, because of course he was. “Just do it already!” Some of the others shouted.

“Alright: Akabane Karma kun.”

Nagisa’s eyes darted over to Karma, who looked incredibly solemn. “Here.”

It was maddening, waiting for his turn. They did attendance every day, they’d been through this routine countless times, but… Those times, they’d been the start, not the ending. There’d never been a ‘last time’, before. Nagisa didn’t look, but he could hear sniffles, even full out crying from behind him. It made his own throat well up.

“Shiota Nagisa kun.”

He forced the lump in his throat back down. “Here.”
Somehow, it was worse, once his turn was over. Realisation dawned on him that it would be the last words he exchanged with Korosensei. There was so much he still wanted to say, wanted to ask, and the moment was already gone. With every passing name, Korosensei got closer to the end of the class, and the dread built. Finally, he got to Ritsu, who was in tears herself.

“It was a really… really fun year,” Korosensei said, afterwards. “I’m so happy… to be killed by you all. From one traveller to another, a yell- for all of life!”

At the silence, Nagisa knew it had to be time. He gripped his knife, positioning it right above his target. At least, he attempted to. Through all his efforts, Nagisa couldn’t hold the blade still. All their lessons on accuracy, and the most basic thing… The harder he tried, the more impossible it seemed to be. No clean hits, then. Nagisa would just have to come down hard, and hope for the best. This was it, the moment everything had been building up to, and it was like a crushing weight. There was so much Nagisa was feeling, right then, that he unleashed it all in a guttural scream, bringing the blade down.

Before it could hit, though, one spare tentacle pressed against his neck. “Don’t kill me feeling like that. Calm yourself. Smile.”

Nagisa swallowed painfully. But if he was going to end Korosensei’s life, the least he could do was honour this final request. His eyes began to feel heavy and wet, though he didn’t quite register tears. He took a very deep breath, taking in the air as if it was his entire life. Everything, even the most insignificant of memories, flashed before him. There would never be another person in his life quite like Korosensei, but he was right. If not for this moment, the finish line, none of that would have even happened. So, Nagisa exhaled, and brought a smile onto his face.

“Goodbye, Korosensei.”

“Yes,” Korosensei said, “goodbye.”

That blade- the one he’d carried around, relied on all year- became a vessel for his emotions. Everything went into that blade. All his thoughts, his feelings, his soul itself… It flowed through him, and Nagisa gave everything, in that one motion. This was his final thank you to Korosensei, the one he deserved, for all he’d done for Nagisa. His arm came down, and he felt the pressure of the knife digging into Korosensei’s chest.

From the wound, golden flecks of light began to spill out. It almost felt like a congratulations, for graduating. His hand still gripping the knife, Nagisa’s eyes drew up, watching the lights swirl around the sky, like a million fireflies. Looking back down again, Korosensei’s body was completely gone, deflated. All that was left was his tie, and the knife Nagisa held.

The sky was completely ablaze with the lights, but some of them were already floating away, out into the night sky. There would be nothing left of Korosensei. It was that moment, that realisation of what Nagisa had really just done, that everything broke away. Korosensei was gone, dead. Nagisa would never see him again.

Every inch of pain came tumbling out of him. Nagisa doubled over, clutching his chest, as if that would help at all to heal the hole he’d just stabbed through it. Nothing could have stopped his sobs, which sounded more like screams, filling the silence up. He didn’t even care that he wasn’t alone, that the others were all crying too. Nagisa just screamed and screamed, because there was nothing else left. It was the only thing his body could produce, in its desperation.

It was, without a doubt and despite everything else he’d been through, the worst pain he’d ever felt. This was a permanent pain, one without any kind of end in sight, and Nagisa was hopeless. He
couldn’t fix it, couldn’t take it back, so he remained there, hunched over where Korosensei’s body had been, and cried until he physically couldn’t anymore.

Chapter End Notes

I literally cried writing this (three times) okay I can't

Sorry that this is just kind of exactly what happened in the anime, but I didn't want to skip over it, and honestly Daichi isn't going to be in the forefront of Nagisa's mind, in a situation such as that. Next chapter, though, we'll see him again.

Well then, I'm sorry for any emotional trauma caused.
Aftermath Time

Chapter Summary

The class graduates

Chapter Notes

I apologise for last chapter's depression, here's fluff :')

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Nagisa lost all sense of time. All he knew was that eventually, it hard turned midnight, which meant it was graduation day. Without really thinking about it, they’d drifted back inside, with not a lot left for them out there. Once all the specks of light had flown way, at least, there was no other trace of Korosensei. He’d meant to search their old class building for some memory of Korosensei, but he’d been distracted by the two large books on his desks. In fact, they, along with a diploma, were placed in front of everyone.

He sat down at his own desk, trying to find a way to process everything. Unable to resist his curiosity, Nagisa opened the one entitled ‘year book’, and fresh tears began to form, not that they’d really stopped, though. The book was about as thick as five dictionaries, at his best guess. At one look at the first photograph, a group shot, Nagisa slammed it closed again. It was too much, right then. He turned his attention to the other book, ‘Korosensei’s Rules To Live By’. Nagisa almost laughed, when the first page was just a manga.

If the laser hit them, Nagisa didn’t notice it. With how long (and incredibly detailed) the book turned out to be, and the emotional exhaustion of it all, he fell asleep, right at his desk. The next thing he knew, he was blinking his eyes open to sunlight. Still in a kind of trance, he stood up, walking over to the window.

Having Daichi had turned him into a light sleeper, with the constant waking up to feed him, so he was noticeably the first to wake. Nagisa’s stomach flipped over itself. He’d promise his mother he’d be back by morning. There was no way this wasn’t all over the news, though. He just prayed she wouldn’t worry. Outside, Nagisa caught sight of Karasuma, talking to some of the soldiers. Hopefully, they wouldn’t be too mad at them sneaking in.

If he squinted, just enough, he could see the cherry blossoms beginning to bloom in various places around the mountain. They weren’t fully out, taking over the treeline in vibrant shades of pink, more… scattered. Fresh. He didn’t really buy into much of the general symbolism, but it did feel fitting, like a sign that life was destined to go on. Like that, a small amount of the weight on his soul was lifted.

Eventually, Karausma and Bitch Sensei joined them inside, waking the others up with their presence. At that point, Nagisa returned to his own desk, not wanting to draw any more attention to himself. For a moment, Karasuma just regarded the class in silence, before stepping up.
“I imagine there are some things you’ll find hard to swallow,” he begun. “You’ll have all eyes on you for a while, I’m afraid, and I’m sure they’ll be asking you to keep quiet on confidential matters. I’ll do my utmost to protect you, of course, but allow me to apologise to you in advance.” Karasuma finished his sentence with a bow.

That was to be expected, Nagisa supposed. He hadn’t really done well with the cameras before, but he could maybe learn to ignore it. There’d be something else for the world to turn their eyes to, eventually, more interesting than them anyway. They wouldn’t be Korosensei’s students, if something as fickle as the media were to scare them off.

“Karasuma Sensei, it’s fine” Maehara said. We’ll do our best to get this settled peacefully, too.”

“We don’t want to complicate things for you.” Okano added.

“In return, we do have one request.” Kataoka stood up, looking around the rest of the class, before turning back to Karasuma. “Please let us attend Kunugigaoka’s graduation ceremony today. Our days spent battling with the main campus are yet another precious memory we made with Korosensei.”

Karasuma nodded. “Sure, I’ll arrange it. After all, that’s why I’m here.”

Isogai, too, got to his feet. “All students: stand up!” Well, although they’d graduated, he was still their class representative. Nobody argued about getting to their feet, taking the signal to bow in respect. “Karasuma Sensei, Bitch Sensei, you taught us so much. Thank you!”

“Thank you!” Everyone repeated.

The tension snapped. Before Nagisa could even stand back up again, Nakamura had him in a headlock. He didn’t have the energy for a might, so he didn’t attempt to break out of it, though still struggled against her hold so she didn’t get bored and try anything worse.

“So, Nagisa kun,” Nakamura said, “look at you being our top assassin in the end, huh?”

He had it in him to flush, somehow. “Well-“

“Bet you’re excited for graduation. We have to wear our formal uniforms, you know. I can’t wait to see you all dolled up in a skirt!”

“W-what skirt?!” Nagisa protested, actually trying to wiggle out of her grip.

“Aww, don’t be shy Nagisa~,” Karma laughed, patting his hair. “If you don’t want to wear it to the ceremony, you can always wear it at home later~”

Nagisa squeaked. “What exactly do you mean by that?!”

Karma didn’t get the chance to tell him, exactly what he meant by that, because graduation would be starting soon. Due to everything, they couldn’t have it on the main campus, so everyone was lead instead to the local civic centre, where correct uniform (including trousers) were handed out.

Somehow, all of that was more surreal, than their assassination.

Eyes barely focusing on the stage, Nagisa sat patiently amongst the rest of their class, waiting for his name to be called. Despite everything, they were still the last to receive their official diplomas. When he’d been transferred down to E Class in the first place, Nagisa had understood that he wouldn’t be graduating at all, due to the existing policies. He hadn’t had a hope at all, the idea of stretching his grades up to fiftieth in the entire year impossible. But, a lot of impossible things had
happened that year.

“Shiota Nagisa!”

Nagisa readily stood up. “Yes!”

He made his way up to the stage, where the principal was waiting. “You’ve got a sharp look in your eyes these days,” he said. “The result of your teacher’s instruction, I’m sure.”

“Yes, sir.” Nagisa said, and then chewed his lip. “And please don’t overdo things.” He politely accepted his “Take care, now.”

He hadn’t really thought about what this meant, for his position. Surely, once the drama about the earth potentially being in danger died down, eyes would inevitably turn to the school. Nagisa just hoped he didn’t take it out on Asano, or anything. As far as he knew, though, their bond had been healing, if only just a little.

Before he knew it, the ceremony was done. There had been a few of the necessary speeches and such, but Nagisa hadn’t taken any of them in really. All he’d been able to think was that this chapter, this goal in the back of his mind, was over now. Finally, Nagisa had completed compulsory education.

Naturally, when they were dismissed from their seats, Nagisa drifted over next to Karma. They’d tended to do that, even before Daichi. Nagisa didn’t have much of an explanation for it, other than it just being comfortable. Or else, it was just something that was, something he’d decided not to question. So, they mutually approached each other, brandishing their matching diplomas.

“Glad that’s over,” Karma said, walking casually towards the exit.

Nagisa looked up at him. “Really?”

He shrugged. “They dragged it on a b- hey!”

Following his eyes, Nagisa realised what he’d spotted. His own face broke out into a grin, when he spotted his parents in the crowd of people, his mother holding Daichi. At least he didn’t look too traumatised by their nightly absence, though Nagisa still suddenly felt bad. He reminded himself that it was definitely just a onetime thing, though. No way could he ever leave Daichi behind, to go off and do something so dangerous.

Karma rushed over first, clearly lining for the child. Though Nagisa couldn’t blame him. It wasn’t like they’d bought him any formal clothes (there was no need, and the nightmare of trying to get something over his head just wasn’t worth it), but Daichi had been dressed in one of the nicer outfits, at least, one that didn’t just look like straight up pyjamas.

“Heya Daichi,” Karma said, holding out his arms. “Come to see us graduate, huh?”

Before his mother could actually hand him over, Daichi started wiggling, and then his lips began to spread, stretching out into what looked like a smile. Nagisa couldn’t help but stop dead in his tracks, his gasp catching in his throat. It wasn’t as if Nagisa really paid much attention to child development stuff, so he didn’t know what age babies tended to start smiling at, but he just knew it was genuine. When he came closer, just enough for Daichi’s eyes to be able to see him clearly, his face neutralised for a moment, before the smile returned, wider and more definitive than before. It was one of the single best things Nagisa had ever seen, the sweetest expression on Daichi’s face, and if his tears weren’t all dried up, he probably would have cried seeing it. He couldn’t help but think: life went on.
Karma, too, blinked in confusion, before grinning wildly back, taking him into his arms. “Yeah? We’re happy to see you too.”

Fully aware it was kind of a weird thing to observe, Nagisa couldn’t hold back his thoughts about Karma’s voice. There were plenty of tones he tended to use, the more serious one, his groggy morning voice, his slightly sing song teasing… The way Karma chose to speak to Daichi was most like the latter, though far softer. Honestly, Nagisa could close his eyes and listen to it for days.

And then he opened his eyes for real, taking in the situation. “Mum, Dad… Why are you here together?”

Beside him, Karma coughed lightly. “I’m going to go catch up with the others.”

As much as Nagisa would have appreciated the stability of having Karma at his side right then, he did have to appreciate the thought. This was probably a conversation Nagisa really did have to have with his parents, alone. His heart did kind of ache, though, eyes following Karma’s path over to Terasaka. Knowing Karma, he was probably darting around, showing everyone Daichi’s new ‘skill’.

Nagisa’s father cleared his throat. “At the end of last month, that monster – your teacher – paid me a visit. Just after I came to visit you in hospital. Both he and your mother told me how hard you worked, how determined you were in making it this far.” He looked down at Nagisa, then, and smiled.

“Your father and I have talked it over,” his mother said. “We’ll follow your example and work hard to give us another try.”

“H-huh?” Nagisa couldn’t be sure if he’d heard that right. He really did find more tears to let out, then. For years, those were the words he’d so desperately wanted to hear. It was the very reason why he insisted that everyone call him by his given name. And all of this was Korosensei’s doing?

His father laughed, patting him on the back. “Nagisa, you’re making it seem like you’re sad about this!”

Nagisa could tell he didn’t mean it, but he still blinked up, accepting the handkerchief his mother offered. “N-no, I’m just… really happy.” His shoulders started heaving with sobs again. “Y-you’re serious?”

“We’ve discussed this a lot,” his mother smiled.

“I’m sorry,” his father picked up. “And I did do a lot of thinking, for a while, about family… It’s not right that I put this distance between us. I feel like I’ve missed out on so much, and,” he paused, “I’d like to know my grandson, if you’ll allow it.”

Nagisa’s heart burst into pieces. Well, he’d been meaning to cry over that. “He smiled at me,” he sobbed, nonsensically. “He’s getting so b-big now.”

His father smiled knowingly. “Mmm, and in the blink of an eye, he’ll be graduating Junior High.”

“No,” Nagisa protested, through a half laugh. He didn’t even want to think about that inevitability. “I should get back to the others,” he said eventually, looking over his shoulder.

“Okay,” his mother nodded. “We’ll see you back home.”

Nagisa went, then, feeling completely light headed. The rest of the class were all gathered in
generally the same area, rather than with their parents. It didn’t take him long to locate red hair amongst the group, and he began to float over.

“E Class, a word!”

Turning sharply, it was indeed the very similar to the last time they’d faced so many reporters. Now it seemed their movements were organised, and they’d come in packs. It was a good thing, at least, that right then, Nagisa felt like he could take on the world and then some. The flash of cameras shouldn’t intimidate him.

Karasuma jumped in front of a pushier one, creating a barrier with his body. “This place is off limits!”

Of course, they paid no attention.

“Tell us about the monster!”

“How do you feel right now?”

“Did you really kill him?”

“You vultures! Spare a thought for the student’s feelings, for once!” Karasuma said, and then turned away. “Outside, everyone! Quickly! There’s a bus standing by outside the main gate!”

Despite his best efforts to contain it, a couple of guys still managed to get through, breaking into a charge towards them. Before they could, though, a couple of Asano’s ‘minions’, the Virtuosos, stepped in and held them back. Like he’d planned this all alone, Asano himself walked through the centre, and with a click of the fingers, a tarp thing was covering the class’ heads.

“What the hell are you doing?!” A reporter complained.

“Quit meddling with our coverage!”

Paying them no attention, he led the way, and they began to walk in formation. Taking the signal, Nagisa and the rest of the class followed. At least that was the issue of how they were going to get onto the bus finally solved.

“You quit meddling with our moment in the sun!” Seo retorted.

“Our ties and our relationship end today,” Asano looked back over his shoulder, “for the most part, but we are still students who studied at the same school. To abandon you now would bring shame upon your ruler- me.”

They reached the bus efficiently that way, without the reporters getting so much as an extra word in. One by one, with their help, everyone boarded the bus. Nagisa himself hung back, watching the others get to safety. Immediately in front of him was Karma, who had paused for a moment to exchange words with Asano. Nagisa couldn’t quite make out what it was, from where he was standing, but frankly he didn’t really want to know.

“C’mon,” Seo said, giving Nagisa a shove. “You’re bringing up the rear!”

Nagisa did as he said, taking one step up and onto the bus. He did turn back, though, and met Asano’s eye. Once again, it felt like it would have been right to have some kind of an exchange, a conversation to spell out everything he felt. But even if the situation had been right for that kind of thing, Nagisa probably wouldn’t have taken the opportunity.
“Off you go,” Asano said instead, but there was a great amount of warmth in both his tone and expression. A kind of fondness, even.

There was nothing left to say, so Nagisa just flushed slightly, shooting Asano his best attempt at an equally warm smile. The doors of the bus automatically closed, after that, and the vehicle began to slowly pull away. Nagisa straightened, finding his way to the seat next to Karma. He slumped down in it, practically all the energy in his body draining away from him.

At least Daichi was still awake, apparently having found the change in environment interesting. He was nowhere near big enough to hold his own head up yet, but Karma had him propped up that way slightly, so his face wasn’t just directed towards the ceiling. Though, he wasn’t doing the smiling thing either, eyes focusing on something or other.

Nagisa turned away to look out of the window, and tears streamed down his face. This, seeing the world go by, felt like a real goodbye. It wasn’t sad or regretful, though, just… bittersweet. The bus kept going, taking them out of the main town. Nagisa hadn’t thought to question where Karasuma was sending them, until they pulled into a strange building he’d never seen before.

Out of habit, Nagisa pulled out his mobile phone. He hoped that Ritsu would still be able to stick around, despite their graduation. Somehow, though, he was sure she would find a way to outsmart her creators once again. She appeared on his screen, not saying much, but instead pulling up a map. Nagisa swallowed when he realised where they were. The Ministry Of Defence.

When what looked like two soldiers got onto the bus with them, Nagisa felt a spike of fear. The only comfort was that he trusted Karasuma not to send them straight into slaughter. Still, Nagisa had known that really, there would be consequences for going against the government. He just had to hope it wouldn’t be too harsh. The soldiers didn’t give much away with their expressions, anyway.

They were lead together into the building, without much of a chance to stop and ask what was going on. After last night, Nagisa wasn’t sure about the others, but much of the fight had left him already. He would just accept whatever his fate was going to be. No matter what, showing up last night had been more than worth it.

Almost hilariously, they were told to wait in what looked like a classroom. Nagisa supposed that for a job like Karasuma’s, you probably had to go through a lot of training. It seemed that despite graduation, they were still stuck in a classroom. The set up of the desks was different to their classroom, so nobody really defaulted to their usual positions, simply filing in one by one. So they sat down, simply waiting for next instruction. At least Daichi wasn’t making a fuss about any of it, finally fast asleep at the warmth of Karma’s chest.

After a little while of waiting, Karasuma strode into the room, pushing a large metal suitcase with him. They kept their silence as he made his way to the front of the room, as if to address them. Some other colleagues followed behind, rolling more and more inside.

“As promised,” he said, and then opened the case to reveal more paper notes of money than Nagisa had ever seen in his life. “Despite the government’s plans, you did get the killing blow, and therefore qualify for the bounty. Also,” he smiled a little, “you can call it hush money.” He bowed, and then left the room.

Nagisa’s jaw was almost on the floor. Though he didn’t rush to the money like some of the others, his eyes went very wide. That much money, being just a number was okay, but actually seeing it in front of him was almost beyond comprehension.
“Oh man!” Maehara exclaimed loudly. “I’m gonna buy-“

“We can’t.” Isogai cut him off, and then exhaled. “Everyone, what I mean is, I don’t think Korosensei would want us to rely on so much money.”

Nakamura gulped. “B-but… The money.”

“He’s right.” Kataoka nodded. “Korosensei taught us the honour of making our own way in the world.”

“I think we should keep a sum of it,” Isogai added. “Just enough for some small things.” His eyes darted around the room. “All those in favour?”

Listening to their points, Nagisa found himself raising his own hand. They were right, to live a senseless life of luxury would be almost disrespectful to Korosensei’s memory. It was their responsibility to live on, now, taking his guidance in stride. Somehow, he decided the near two billion yen he was owed didn’t seem so important.

“Wait a minute,” Maehara said, and pulled the others close to say something in a whisper.

The only ones still sitting, and thus out of ear shot, Karma and Nagisa automatically shot each other a look of confusion. Karma was kind of incapacitated with a snoozing baby in his arms, so Nagisa was just about to stand up to see what was going on, when they turned back to them.

“So,” Nakamura begun, “we talked it over.”

“We think that both of you should keep your cuts,” Isogai said.

Again, Nagisa’s eyes darted to Karma’s. “W-why?”

Terasaka scoffed. “You two just had to go and make a kid.”

“It just makes the most sense, and it’s not like we didn’t earn the money,” Maehara said.

“The reason we, as a class, are giving it up is because we don’t need this kind of money,” Isogai continued. “We’d risk becoming complacent. But both of you have a reason. Korosensei wouldn’t want anybody to suffer just for honour’s sake.”

Kurahashi nodded. “Besides, aren’t babies meant to be crazy expensive?”

“And you’d barely have time to spend with him if you got jobs on top of school,” Sugino said.

Isogai smiled. “We trust that both of you wouldn’t overuse the money. We just think that it would be just as wrong to deny him anything based on our decision.”

“Korosensei made Daichan an honorary member,” Kayano added. “We could argue about whether that means he gets a cut or not, but just in case.”

Not entirely sure what to make of any of that, Nagisa found himself looking at Karma again. They communicated with their eyes, then. On the one hand, Nagisa agreed with the classes’ sentiments that they shouldn’t live off lumps of money, but on the other… It would be nice, to have that kind of a security. When Daichi inevitably grew up and wanted to experience the world, Nagisa would feel just as bad saying no due to lack of money.

“Alright,” Karma shrugged. “If that’s what you think.”
Nagisa nodded. “Only for Daichi’s wellbeing.”

They decided on some other things, after that. They wouldn’t give all the money away. The others were keeping just enough to qualify as a small boost, for themselves. But it wouldn’t all go back to the government. They decided to donate some of it, to a few places, but most importantly, to try and buy their mountain. It was bound to be made off limits, otherwise.

Nobody kept them afterwards, so Nagisa walked through his front door that evening, suddenly a billionaire. “We’re back!”

“Welcome,” his mother said, decidedly in a better mood. “I’m nearly done with dinner.”

It felt too normal. “I-Is dad not here?” Nagisa realised, after scanning around the apartment.

She pressed her lips together. “Nagisa… We can’t just go straight back to living together. Your father and I are going to take it slower, at least at first.”

He did understand that, and decided to try his best to hide the minor disappointment. Aside from that, everything else was normal. They didn’t talk about the assassination, over dinner. Even afterwards, it was just light conversation, before the same routine. Nagisa and Karma went about their evening like any other night before, bathing Daichi and changing him fresh, before feeding him and returning to his bedroom to put him down.

Except, Nagisa hesitated. He was holding an almost asleep Daichi in his arms, yet when he looked at the crib, it seemed like the worst thing imaginable. Perhaps it was wrong, to treat his son like some sort of safety blanket, but Nagisa just couldn’t stand the thought of letting go of him. At least for this one night.

“W-would it be bad?” Nagisa looked over at the bed, studying it.

Karma gave him his answer, stripping off and lying down in it. The debate was soon over, and Nagisa came over himself, settling down carefully. With Daichi lying between them, they couldn’t sleep as close as they had been, but he didn’t mind that. It would be really bad, to accidentally overwhelm him in their sleep.

For a while, Nagisa just watched Daichi. He didn’t seem to mind not being in his own bed, so to speak, dropping off without too much fuss. Though he knew it would only last for a few hours, Nagisa examined how peaceful he was, innocent to the horrors of the night before. His eyes raked up to Karma, then. Nagisa had to squint to see it, but what he found was the subtle trail of tears rolling down his cheeks.

Had Karma cried, yesterday? Nagisa had been so busy sobbing in that moment himself, that he hadn’t really noticed. It made sense, though. Karma was never the type to publically share his emotions. In the darkness, Nagisa wasn’t sure if he knew he’d been spotted, or not. On a slight whim, he reached up, collecting one as it fell.

Instantly, Karma’s hand gripped his wrist, like an instinct, but it softened just as quickly. This, Nagisa realised, wasn’t something they needed to talk about. When Karma’s hand slid up, covering his in a hold, Nagisa didn’t move away. It comforted him, too, made him remember that no matter what, he wasn’t alone in this. He drifted off that night without really realising it was happening.
You asked, I delivered.

This chapter was very almost delayed by Brendon Urie :'}
Surprisingly, it was the kicking that woke Nagisa up first, before the crying. Unlike being bothered by sound, which made him hazily aware of reality, being whacked was sharper, more alarming. He peeled one eye open, both loving and hating each of these new developments. On the one hand, ouch, on the other, it made him happy, that Daichi was beginning to do more than just exist.

Beside him, Karma yawned, leaning up on one elbow. “Mmm? Four and a half.”

It took Nagisa a moment, before he registered what Karma was talking about. He sat up, pulling a restless Daichi with him. “Really? That long?”

Karma rolled over onto his front. “New record, right?”

Another development Nagisa was happy about. Daichi had progressively been sleeping longer and longer at night, halving the amount of times he needed feeding. He wasn’t entirely sure if it was the right thing to do, but Nagisa knew he was hardly being starved, so he’d decided not to worry about waking Daichi up every two or so hours. Plus, he was appreciating the small amounts of extra sleep. Even if it did mean that Daichi was far less chilled out during the day.

In fact, he’d recently discovered the advantages that came with seeing the world, and as such, Daichi had begun fussing whenever he was put flat on his back. Though Nagisa held him so he wasn’t actually putting any weight on his feet, Daichi’s face broke out into a wide smile when he was positioned in a sort of stand. Despite the early hour, Nagisa couldn’t help but smile back at him.

Though he groaned lowly into the pillow, Karma looked as if he was actually going to get up, for just a moment. He reached out, gently patting Daichi’s back. “Mornin’”

It would be hard, to readjust to any kind of school routine. The slightly later mornings for the last couple of weeks had kept him less groggy. At least, physically. Around the country, most kids were celebrating the time off, preparing excitedly for the new school year. Even without Daichi to consider, neither of them, nor the rest of their friends, had done much celebrating. Aside from lying low until the media coverage died down, Nagisa was still mourning.

But even from his bed, he could see the cherry blossom trees in full bloom, getting ready to shed their flowers. Which only meant one thing, that it was time to try his best to move forwards. Of
course, it wasn’t going to be the same. Nagisa was starting a new school, outside of Kunugigaoka, and he wouldn’t know anybody there. Though, the prospect of making friends wasn’t what scared him the most.

It was all over his student information. The blessings of secondary gender irrelevance were over, at High School. Generally, if you hadn’t presented as anything by fifteen, you were a beta. Though he’d heard of people trying to hide it, it was all over Nagisa’s medical records. Until the day he died, from now on, he had an ‘O’ plastered right beside his name.

He knew he shouldn’t get so het up about it, considering nothing bad had actually happened yet, but intuitively he just had a bad feeling. Perhaps it had been the letter that arrived asking whether he’d prefer to wear either the male or the female variation of the uniform (which thankfully he’d kept far out of the reaches of Karma’s vision – lest he be teased for a lifetime). Keisetsu would be slightly better than a public school, though. He’d heard the horror stories about those.

Before he could think too much more about it, Daichi’s face fell, like he just remembered the reason he woke up. By the looks of things, considering Karma’s eyes were closed once again, Nagisa was going to have to deal with it himself. Not wanting to leave it long enough for serious tears, Nagisa moved Daichi into more of a hold, and pulled himself out of bed.

By the time he returned, with a now fed and more settled Daichi, Karma had already gotten himself dressed. As it turned out, the Kunugigaoka High uniform was pretty similar to their old one, so it wasn’t too much of a shock to the eyes. What would be a shock, however, was turning separate directions once they got out of the door. But it was no use living in the past.

When he pulled on his own (and yes, male) uniform, Nagisa’s eye caught the book Korosensei had given each of them. Of course, he’d flicked through it, taking in a page or so at a time. He hadn’t been able to handle any more than that, not just because of the twinge of sadness it produced, but that thing was ridiculously detailed. Some pages were like sifting through academic papers, though in another sense it was comforting. The book was endless, which meant Korosensei’s presence was also endless.

“Nagisa?” Karma was suddenly very close to him, presumably to get his attention or something, but it still caused him to jump.

“O-oh,” Nagisa replied, fixing his eyes on the floor. “Did I space out?”

Karma really was standing close, close enough Nagisa could practically feel his breath. “I said, ‘do you want to get him dressed’?”

It took Nagisa a moment to figure out what Karma was on about. It was hard, when there was so little space between. His head was spinning, like he was being shocked with electricity, charged and held in place by being so close. Deep down, Nagisa knew that feeling like this wasn’t normal. But there was a small voice, right in his depths, that argued that nothing about the pair of them was normal. So he shouldn’t worry.

“It’s okay,” Nagisa said, forcing himself to take a half step backwards. Turning his attention to his son would definitely be the best thing to do. “I don’t think Mum’s going out anywhere.”

He nodded, shifting Daichi slightly in his arms, and Nagisa just knew it was time to go. Out of the corner of his eye, he caught his reflection in a small mirror, checking his uniform over one last time before bending down to pick up his bag. After giving a somewhat interested Daichi a quick kiss to the forehead, Nagisa straightened himself.
“I’ll see you after school,” he said, and turned, ready to go out of the door.

“Have a good day.” Karma called after him, like a wife sending her husband off to work.

Keisetsu was pretty far away, out of Kunugigaoka. With an entire train journey to take, Nagisa had to leave significantly earlier than Karma did. He hadn’t exactly asked, but he was sure Karma didn’t have much of a problem with it. Once Nagisa had made his way onto the train, the somewhat melancholy twinge inside him grew, almost like homesickness. Perhaps because it was a new environment, rather than the same class building that had become like a second home, but Nagisa found himself missing Daichi a lot more.

Though he’d been there to take the entrance exams before, the building still felt incredibly foreign. Nagisa swallowed, and tried to force himself to remember he wouldn’t be the only one. The first day of high school was a big deal for most people. When Nagisa found his way to right place for the start of year ceremony, he was surrounded by it.

It wasn’t like he really meant to, but Nagisa couldn’t help but take analyse his surroundings, as teachers gave their various speeches. Like he’d suspected, many were on edge, visibly nervous, though he noticed a few students grouped together. Already friends from attending the same junior high, he guessed, though he couldn’t be entirely sure. Though it was still only the first day, at first judgement most seemed pretty clean cut in appearance. It was no wonder this was the school his mother wanted him to attend.

Once the ceremony was done, and Nagisa followed everyone else to the classrooms, his next task was finding the right seat. Perhaps that could be his strategy for making friends. Back in 3E, he’d ended up pretty close to all the people who sat around him, but he supposed that didn’t mean much. Their class shared the kind of bond nothing else could replicate. At the very least, he should make an effort to get along with the people around him.

“Hi!” A dark haired girl on his right declared. “Ooo, looks like we’re desk buddies!”

A bit more enthusiastic than Nagisa had expected, but she gave off a nice, warm feeling. “N-nice to meet you.” He could do this. One friend already, and without even really trying. “My name’s Shiota Nagisa-“

She blinked, clearly doing a double take as confusion flew across her expression, before it settled again. “Nice. Higashi Haia.”

Nagisa sighed, guessing it was because he’d used the male form of ‘I’. Going through the whole gender thing again was bound to happen, but he didn’t have to be happy about it. At least she wasn’t necessarily dwelling on it. He just got the feeling, examining her, that she was just generally a bubbly person. Or, it didn’t seem like she was playing it up.

“You know,” she said, “I feel like I know you from somewhere. Did you go to junior high with one of my friends or something?”

Dread set in, but Nagisa decided to answer her honestly. “I went to Kunugigaoka.”

The girl directly in front turned around. “Kunugigaoka? Like the school that where they killed that monster?”

Higashi gasped, clapping a hand over her mouth dramatically. “How scary!”

Nagisa wanted to correct her, to shout from the roof tops that Korosensei was not the monster the media had portrayed him to be. But he couldn’t. It didn’t matter that the assassination was over
with, they still had a confidentiality agreement. Perhaps even until the day he died, Nagisa wasn’t allowed to tell anybody the full truth.

“It wasn’t so bad,” Nagisa managed, trying to ignore the way the rest of the class were staring at him like an animal in a zoo.

“Weird,” the girl in front of him said, turning back around to face the front.

Leaning over her desk, Higashi reached forwards, poking the girl. “You shouldn’t be so harsh, Kita chan. Shiota kun must’ve been through so much already!”

She turned back. “Sorry.”

Somehow, Nagisa guessed that she didn’t really mean it. Thankfully, though, their homeroom teacher walked in, taking the spotlight away from him. At least Nagisa could cope with plain school. The routine wasn’t far off what he’d expected; stand, introduce self, sit back down again. He was sure at a school like Keisetsu, the pressure and hard work would begin soon, though. At least they were being eased in.

He tried his best to concentrate. At least the good thing about going to this school in particular was the free ride into university. So long as he passed well, at least, he wouldn’t have to worry about entrance exams in a few years, since the school was already attached. Still, regardless of the security, Nagisa was hardly the type to slack off. He was going to do as well as he possibly could.

Without much chance for any other interactions, Nagisa took in the lessons, which were far more like introductions to what they’d be studying than actual lessons, right up until the lunch bell rung. It took Nagisa a moment to register why everyone was getting up, before realising he wasn’t a part of some out of bounds side campus anymore, confined to just eating in the classroom. Being excluded for so long, Nagisa had almost forgotten what normal life was like.

Not that he’d ever really participated in much lunch time socialisation. For the first part of his first year of junior high, of course, Nagisa had just sat amongst his classmates, chiming in at fleeting moments of conversation. And then he’d made friends with Karma. It had been summer, and Karma wasn’t one for large crowds of people, so Nagisa had ended up sneaking to the roof with him, until the weather got colder and they drifted apart. Back then, he knew he’d been giddy, he’d felt special, even. It was embarrassing.

Nagisa really should have been paying attention, rather than getting lost in thoughts of Karma. He’d been so dazed that he clearly was blocking the way out of the classroom. Though he jumped a little, when he was lightly shoved out of the way, Nagisa could hardly blame them. He just about broke out of his confusion enough to get into the hallway, before he noticed a hand come down right above his shoulder.

“So, Shiota chan, was it?”

Tentatively, he looked up at the taller guy. He looked about average, dark hair and dark eyes, but they were gleaming with something predatory. Nagisa gulped, sensing this wasn’t about to be a friendly chat. It made sense, logically, by all appearances Nagisa was an easy target. At least he was more than capable of handling bullies. But there was something different, something that wasn’t entirely violent. He leaned forward, wrinkling his nose in what Nagisa realised was a sniff. Right then, he realised his mistake. He hadn’t even thought about wearing scent blocker, that morning.

The guy turned, gesturing someone who was clearly his friend. “Say, Kaito, you ever seen a male

What? *Cute*? Sure, he’d been called that teasingly, but… “U-uhm, I’ll be going now,” he tried to slip out.

“Hey,” the first guy said, “not so fast. Just relax. I’ve never seen one of you before.”

For the second time in that day, Nagisa felt like a zoo exhibit. A part of him wanted to punch the guy in the nose or something, but that wouldn’t get him anywhere other than detention. There was a better way to deal with this, to just smile and nod until they got bored and found something more interesting to do.

“That’s nice,” Nagisa went with. “Excuse-“

He cocked his head. “Is it true that you have a pussy down there like a girl?”

Before Nagisa could yelp and find somewhere to bury himself six feet under at that question, somebody else cleared his throat.

“You’re only asking that because you’ve never seen anything remotely like that before, Oshiro kun.”

He pulled away from Nagisa like hot coal. “A-aino senpai…”

The boy in question quirked an eyebrow. “Perhaps you should run along, before lunch runs out, huh?”

They excused themselves, without further argument, giving Nagisa a moment to breathe. Nagisa couldn’t help but flush, not so much embarrassed by their discussion, but by the whole ‘damsel in distress’ act. He’d been trained in assassination for a whole year, he didn’t need somebody else to defend him. It had just stunned him, a little, to be spoken to like that by other guys.

“Shiota kun, did I hear?” The guy, clearly an upperclassman by the way they’d spoken to him, said. “Are you okay?”

“Yeah,” Nagisa got out. “I’m fine, thank you.”

He smiled, light brown hair slightly masking his eyes. “Let me walk you to the nurse’s, just to be sure nobody else bothers you. I’m only a beta myself, but it should be enough.”

Nagisa didn’t want help, but he knew it would be rude to reject it. He just hoped that whatever scent blocker the nurse happened to have would be strong enough. Though, he knew he couldn’t hide himself forever, with everything going round about Korosensei and the assassination to less attention he brought upon himself, the better.

“So,” he said, after a few paces. “First day, huh? I found it pretty daunting.”

“Please call me Nagisa,” he said, out of habit. It was more important right then than it had been before, though. Now that his parents were getting back together, or at least there was a high chance of it, it was more likely than ever that his family name could change back, creating an awkward situation for everyone.

He paused in his steps, before shrugging. “Only if you call me ‘Rin kun’, then. Let’s be on equal
Looking up at him, Nagisa determined that there was only pure intention. “Okay,” Nagisa said, and let him lead the way.

Karma stood on the edge of the Kunugigaoka High School campus, hands shoved in his pockets. Just outside the main gate, a few reporters were lined up, figuratively pressing their noses right up against the glass. None of them had dared come up to him when he passed, though, so they couldn’t be *that* desperate. Most of everything was starting to blow over, anyway.

Catching sight of the class list, displayed clearly for everyone to see, a smirk grew across his face. Though it had always been his plan to work against Asano and his followers, it was going to be easier, now he was assigned to class ‘1-1’ with them. He needed to be kept on his toes, so he was happy with the arrangement. At least, focusing his energy on coming out on top seemed like the right thing to do, the path he was meant to follow or whatever.

That didn’t mean he had to have an *entirely* clean slate. Any kind of ceremony was bound to be boring, anyway, so who could really blame him for skipping. He sauntered off to the right classroom, predictably finding it to be completely empty. Right then, he realised he had a choice to make. Usually, he’d go straight to the back of the room. Not only did that mean that he wasn’t in the teacher’s direct vision, but it was a small vantage point over the rest of the class. On the flip side, though, he imagined Asano’s face. It would be making more of a statement.

Predictably, when the others filtered in to find Karma in the first seat, right at the front of the classroom. He didn’t react to their confusion and gasps of ‘that’s Asano kun’s spot’ externally, though it did wash over him like a pleasant melody. In fact, he acted as indifferent as he could, allowing them to gawk.

“Very funny, Akabane kun,” Asano himself said, when he came in, followed by his other minions. “You’ve made your point now.”

Karma looked up at him casually. “No matter how you look at it, I can sit here. I scored above you, fair and square. Besides, my name’s first in the roll book.”

For a moment, Asano looked like steam was about to rise from his shoulders, a sight that meant success in Karma’s eyes. He straightened, though, quickly neutralising, and sat down on the chair beside him, the number two spot. Though it was important for Karma to look uninterested, he did keep an eye out for the nervous expressions of Asano’s cronies.

“Just so you’re aware,” Asano begun coldly from his side, “*I will* be taking the top spot back.”

“Well,” Karma said, and leant back in his chair. “I guess you can *try*.”

Before the threats could deepen, their new teacher walked in. She looked mostly soft, serious yet harmless, and it was hard to not take an instant disliking to her. After all, Karma had sworn off teacher kind in general, before the E Class. He supposed he should give the woman a chance, but he really didn’t want to. Compared to the kind of year Korosensei had given them, anybody would pale.

“Class,” she cleared her throat, after going through the general housekeeping stuff, “let’s kick this year off a pop quiz.”

That just sealed the deal. Still, Karma could play. It was a chance to prove that beating Asano had not just been a fluke, a stroke of good luck. As it turned out, they ended up scoring the exact same,
so it wasn’t as much of an opportunity to shine as he’d hoped. Interesting, however. Aside from a few jabs he got in here and there, the rest of the day was disappointingly uneventful. It was just… school.

Karma was tapping his foot, by the time the final bell rang out. He didn’t bother waiting around, rushing off as soon as he could. There wasn’t really that much reason for doing so, other than minor concern for Daichi’s wellbeing. Though, they’d managed well enough during the end of junior high, and he was too young to really miss them. That didn’t mean he wasn’t growing up too fast for Karma’s liking, though.

By the time he actually got back to Nagisa’s home, he estimated he had over an hour before Nagisa would show himself. With no actual homework on the first day, Karma just hoped Daichi was in a good enough mood to keep him entertained. Or, it was more mutual entertainment. It still felt like treading on thin ice, though, as he knocked on the door, especially without Nagisa at his side.

He didn’t really focus on Nagisa’s mother, though, when she opened the door. Daichi’s lips broke into a full faced smile upon seeing him, and he let out a couple of high pitched noises, squirming energetically. Karma’s natural tunnel vision was engaged, and he swiftly reached out, taking Daichi into his own arms. At least remembering the be polite, he slipped his shoes off, toeing them into a somewhat lined up position. What next? Usually, Nagisa was with him, and they just disappeared off into the bedroom.

“I made some tea,” Nagisa’s mother cleared her throat.

Of course, Karma knew it was far more than just a statement, or a kind gesture. Having somewhat sussed out a few things from Nagisa’s past over the years, there was nothing Karma would like more than to give her the full piece of his mind, but he couldn’t. For starters, they’d have to find a new baby sitter, but he also sensed that it wasn’t what Nagisa would want. For him, Karma would keep his silence.

Karma followed her over to the table, sitting so that Daichi was mostly propped up in his lap. In a sense, it was like having a shield of cuteness to protect him. She didn’t immediately start saying whatever she was clearly planning to, simply sitting opposite him. Though he didn’t really drink tea that often, Karma took his cup, slowly sipping the hot liquid.

“What are your intentions towards Nagisa?”

She asked it, plain and simple, out of nowhere. It was so fast that Karma was stunned for a moment, not even sure where to begin with it. For a brief second, Karma wondered if he was just being too obvious with his feelings. He’d assumed that Nagisa’s incredible perception was a learned skill, but it was possible that he’d learnt it from somewhere else too. At least, it certainly seemed like an interrogation suited for a potential partner.

Karma forced himself to straighten. “What kind of intentions?”

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Karma forced himself to straighten. “What kind of intentions?”

She sighed. “I’m not blind, Akabane kun. So I’ll ask again. What are your intentions?”

“We’re friends,” he said. “And we’re looking after Daichan here.”

Little did she know, that’s what he’d decided months ago, before Daichi was even born. Really, whatever he felt for Nagisa didn’t really matter. There were bigger fish to fry, other than feelings. She regarded him with a slight curiosity, like she was trying to study his face.

“Just don’t do anything stupid.”
Karma took another sip of his tea. “Of course not.”

What he meant, of course, was ‘no promises’. It played on his mind for the rest of the evening, though, which made him feel no less than pathetic. Though it was fine before Nagisa actually got home, considering he had Daichi to take his mind from it, it felt like a tonne of bricks the moment he was alone.

One of the few times he actually was alone nowadays was during showers. He’d never really been the type to spend a significant amount of time in there, but his mind was racing. He couldn’t put a finger on why it bothered him so much. There was absolutely no chance of anything happening between them that would inspire such a conversation, but… Karma was at a loss, a feeling that itched underneath the surface of his skin.

When he returned, fresh and fully dressed, the first thing he noticed was that Daichi was taking a bit of a nap, in his actual crib for once rather than between them on Nagisa’s bed. A long day for him too, probably. Then he noticed the next thing, which was Nagisa sprawled out on the floor, in some kind of yoga position. Karma had to do a double take, before Nagisa started moving, pumping his hips in thrusts. Out of nowhere, he felt a kind of painful weight, and then twitch, in his lower stomach.

Karma’s only choice was to dive for the bed, grabbing the closest pillow to position over the top of his crotch. He had only his good reflexes to thank, that he made it into that position before Nagisa could open his eyes and notice him.

“Oh, hey Karma,” he said sweetly.

Despite the conversation, his face was still screwed up in concentration, and Karma had a front row view of his ass. “What are you doing?” The question slipped out of him.

To his minor disappointment, Nagisa left the position, standing up properly. It was for the best, though, before he was left in a situation that wouldn’t go away on its own. Karma attempted to focus on the wall behind Nagisa, knowing looking him in the eye would only make it worse. All things considered, with Daichi and the assassination and everything else, it had been well over a month without any kind of relief. Sleeping next to Nagisa, of all people, pressed so close… He deserved a medal for keeping it together most of the time.

“Just some exercises,” he explained pleasantly. “Pelvic floor or something, it’s meant to tighten the muscles.”

At the mention of tight, Karma’s throat went bone dry, and his hands clenched into fists. The fact that Nagisa didn’t even know he was doing it made the torture all the more worse. Not when all Karma wanted to do was grab his ass and squeeze, or slam him back and against the wall by his shoulders, watch that face of his contort…

Perhaps Karma needed to rethink his intentions.

Chapter End Notes

I’m sorry this took so long, honestly. I was pretty busy this week, but mainly I hate starting new arcs and I just know how juicy the next couple of chapters are, like I wanna write THOSE ones already :’
Spelling of names we care about: 愛野 凛 Aino Rin
東 ハイア Higashi Haia

As always, comments keep me going!
Two weeks into school, and things were going as well as they realistically could be. Nagisa still got the feeling they were just being eased in, and he’d soon be swamped with work. For the time being, though, he was trying to keep as on top of it as he could. Daichi was sleeping for a lot longer at least, so he wasn’t as permanently tired as he’d been a month or so ago. That didn’t stop him from yawning, though, his brain slightly overworked.

It wasn’t that Nagisa was being intentionally anti-social, but spending his lunch break in the library just happened to be the best option. That way, he could get as much homework out of the way as possible, so he didn’t have to even try to find the time at home. Considering Daichi had developed a habit of acting like he was being tortured whenever somebody wasn’t holding or otherwise engaging him, it was hard to get any work out of the way.

Such a diva, Nagisa thought to himself, though it was laced with twinges of sadness. He was developing his own personality already, but it was happening so fast. It was like he’d blinked, back in the hospital, and suddenly they were here. Nagisa couldn’t help but feel bad about it, like he hadn’t appreciated this stage enough. It wasn’t like aging was something you could go back and redo, either.

“Nagisa kun?”

He jolted, lost in thought and not expecting anybody to talk to him. “S-sorry,” he said, automatically. His eyes came to more of a focus, realising it was Rin, the upperclassman who had helped him out a couple of weeks ago. Since then, when he’d been escorted to the nurse’s, they’d only briefly acknowledged each other in person.

Smiling softly enough, he shrugged. “What are you doing out here?”

“Did you want to sit here?” Nagisa couldn’t help but ask. “I can move.”

Rin waved him off. “Man, they must’ve got stricter if you’re already doing homework during school hours. That only really started for me around midterms.”

Nagisa just knew he was going to hate midterms, with no massive bonus goal to work towards. He just had to think of it as his next target, set his eyes straight ahead. High school was something he had to get through. Though, he’d known what he was getting into, when he applied. Keisetsu was
regarded as a tough school to even get in to, for good reason.

“Say, you really shouldn’t hang around by yourself all the time,” Rin continued. “Are those guys still bullying you?”

He wasn’t sure how to respond to that. “No,” he responded as quickly as he could, somewhat startled. “Oshiro kun hasn’t really spoken to me, and his friend isn’t even in the same class as us.”

Pulling out the chair beside him, Rin sat down. “I went to the same middle school as those two. Seems they’re still jerks.”

“It’s okay,” Nagisa said. “I can handle it.”

Of course, there was no way he could talk about his year of assassination training, how he’d faced up against professionals, far scarier than a couple of teenage boys. So he just had to hope that Rin would trust him, take his word for it. He couldn’t help but think of the third page of Korosensei’s book, a list of excuses about what they’d done the last year, for every situation.

“I was thinking…” He swallowed. “There’s a café just around the corner of campus, they do a really great latte, you know, I think she drew a cat in mine last time- Anyway! Do you maybe want to come with me, after school?”

All of a sudden, Nagisa felt his heart raise up, and then promptly drop again. It sounded fun, but… “Oh-“

“I mean!” Rin swiftly backed away a bit. “My friends will be there too and stuff, they’re really nice! They won’t mind you’re a first year, I mean.”

“It’s not that,” Nagisa said. “I’m just really busy today.”

Rin blinked for a moment. “Oh, I’m sorry.”

Immediately, Nagisa felt bad. He flashed Rin his best smile. “I would have really loved to come, Rin kun.”

“Oh, don’t worry about it. We go there quite a lot, so, another time?”

“Yeah,” Nagisa smiled. “I’d like that.”

It really wasn’t that he didn’t want to hang out with his new friend. Maybe, even if it had been another day, Nagisa would have considered staying out an hour longer or something. But the pit in his stomach reminded him that it wasn’t just another day. Officially, it meant Daichi was now two months old.

Though he supposed it wasn’t that big of a deal, they weren’t holding any kind of celebration or anything, it did mean Daichi was due a doctor’s visit. Nagisa was sure there wasn’t anything wrong with him, but it was better to know for certain. Plus, he needed a series of vaccinations, a thought that made Nagisa shudder, no matter how necessary he knew it was.

Regardless, he’d have to take a different train, and he was going to meet Karma outside the surgery. And he definitely didn’t want to be late to this. The whole age thing was bad enough as it was, but Nagisa didn’t want to further the bad impression by appearing completely irresponsible. So, he really couldn’t just hang around.

“Well,” Rin said, when the bell rang to signify lunch was over, “I’ll see you around.”
Bouts of nervousness set in, for the remainder of the day. He was sure Daichi was fine, but now he’d started to think about it, could there be something really obvious he missed? Had he been checking on him enough? Nagisa tried his best to ignore it, but worry was seriously taking over. At least the final bell rang shortly enough, and he practically raced away from school grounds.

He was almost panting by the time he got to the train, and all the seats were full up, but at least he had time to catch his breath in between spots. Looking at his phone, he realised that he didn’t really have to rush. There was still plenty of time for walking allowance, and he knew that Karma probably wouldn’t be there yet. Not that he’d ever be late, Nagisa just suspected he wouldn’t leave until he absolutely had to.

So, he kept his pace a lot lighter when the train pulled into the right stop, reaching the paediatrician’s with plenty of time to spare. Karma actually was already there, actually holding Daichi, with his other hand gripped around the pram. Even from a slight distance, Nagisa could make a guess that he hadn’t been particularly happy about being laid flat, with his vision obscured.

“He cried half the way here,” Karma complained.

Nagisa sighed, taking him out of Karma’s arms. “Only half?”

“Yeah,” he said, “until I just gave up and carried him.”

Given Karma’s track record and like to make people bend to his will in torture, Nagisa couldn’t help but be slightly amused that he was so easily manipulated, by a baby no less. It was pretty ironic, given Karma’s name. Nagisa didn’t mind so much, with no desire to discipline what he took as moderately inconvenient curiosity. At the end of the day, Nagisa supposed it was a good thing Karma had suggested they get the convertible pram, since they hadn’t gotten a particularly high amount of use out of its first setting.

Waiting inside for the appointment to actually begin wasn’t as bad as any of his pregnancy check ups had been, but Nagisa still felt an air of unease. A few confused eyes. Nagisa sat as still as he could, thankful that all the various shapes and colours seemed to be keeping Daichi distracted enough so that he didn’t fuss much. Though he was ‘sat up’ on Nagisa’s lap, leaning his weight against Nagisa’s chest, Nagisa noticed he was straining with his neck a little, like he was trying to hold up his own head.

“Ah,” a receptionist finally came in. “Akabane?”

They shot each other a look, before standing up to follow them down a slight labyrinth of corridors, before finally reaching the right one. Nagisa hesitated for a moment, his earlier worry coming back to him. Before he could dwell on it for long, however, Karma leaned over him, easily opening the door himself.

The man on the other side didn’t seem that scary. He stood up and smiled. “Nice to meet you both,” he said, gesturing for them to enter his office. “Please, take a seat. This is Daichi chan, I take?”

Nagisa found himself nodding, feeling more at ease with every second that passed. Taking a small glance, Karma didn’t seem like he wanted to say anything. Though he’d appeared mildly annoyed a few minutes ago, Nagisa guessed that maybe he was just as nervous about this too. It was hard to tell what was going on in Karma’s head, sometimes.

“Alright,” the doctor said. “I’m Shuzenji. I think it would be best to get the easier stuff out of the way first, whilst he’s still happy. Is he sleeping well?”
The proceeding questions weren’t so hard. Nagisa couldn’t help but flinch with every answer they gave, wondering if he was saying something bad. The doctor didn’t seem too bothered by anything they said, just nodding along with what Nagisa had to hope is approval.

“I’d say everything sounds good,” he finally came to his verdict. “But now I’ll examine his health.”

Despite being a medical professional, Nagisa still hated to hand Daichi over to who was essentially a stranger to them. But he knew he had to just get over it, for the sake of Daichi’s wellbeing. Doctor Shuzenji brought him up to the examination table, and Nagisa craned his neck to see what was going on. Thankfully, it only looked like weighing scales. That wasn’t so bad.

“Seven pounds eleven ounces,” he announced. “Still pretty small for his age, but that’s a good increase from his birth weight.”

A strain on Nagisa’s chest was lifted. If he was putting on weight, it surely had to mean that he was doing okay so far. He didn’t mind so much, then, about the other examinations. Daichi didn’t seem to care that much either, as he was poked and prodded. Nagisa hoped he hadn’t found anything, considering there had been no stopping in the examination to point anything out.

Doctor Shuzenji turned around and smiled. “He’s doing just fine. As I said, he’s small, one of the smallest I’ve seen for this age, but as long as he continues to develop and put on weight, you shouldn’t have anything to worry about.” It turned into a grimace. “Now for the harder part.”

He launched into what Nagisa assumed was the general speech about vaccinations he gave. Nagisa honestly wished he’d brought his notebook in with him, there was a lot to remember and some of the scientific things were going over his head. Looking at his side, Karma’s face was taunt in concentration, so Nagisa felt like he could relax just a little. His stomach did turn at warnings of potential fever and upset, though.

“It often helps,” he said, “if one parent comes up with me. All you have to do is hold him still, it’s far more comforting for them to see a familiar face.”

“You do it,” Karma said, eyes bearing into Nagisa.

Nagisa really, really didn’t want to. But he absolutely understood why Karma didn’t want a part in it. For his own experience, injections weren’t exactly pleasant, and the needle would be a lot larger compared to Daichi’s tiny body. He’d have to just get through it, though. He just hoped Daichi wouldn’t hate him for it.

He sat as he was instructed, with Daichi on his lap. Doctor Shuzenji decided to start with the biggest combination one, getting the needle ready. Nagisa could hardly bear to look at the thing, holding Daichi perhaps a little bit too tightly. He took a hold of Daichi’s leg, and Nagisa cringed. Daichi didn’t just start crying, he screamed piercingly, and Nagisa felt like the worst person alive.

“It’s okay,” the doctor reassured soothingly, quickly reaching for whatever the oral vaccine was. Nagisa saw through his method, realising that Daichi would be too distracted to think about spitting out the foreign substance. “Last one now.”

Once again, an injection to the leg. Impossibly, Daichi’s shrieks only grew louder, as he attempted to thrash out of the way. Nagisa felt sick to his core, like he was holding his son down for torture. In reality, it didn’t even last that long before the doctor pulled away again, sighing sadly.

“It’s over now. We’ll keep you for the next ten minutes, just to make sure there’s no bad reactions to anything, but after that you’re good to go. I’d recommend getting some infant medicine from any
local drug stores, just in case he does get a bit of a temperature. ”

Nagisa attempted his best comfort, but it didn’t help that much. Holding Daichi much closer in more of a cuddle didn’t seem to do anything other than soak the material covering his shoulder with tears. Panicked, his eyes found Karma’s, who didn’t look much better. His face was white as a sheet. Wracking his brain for anything to make it better, Nagisa did know a few calming techniques, but he had no idea if it would work on a baby.

Pulling Daichi back slightly so he could see what he was doing, Nagisa searched for a specific pressure spot, on the neck just beneath the chin. The only choice he really had, he lightly pressed there, as quickly as he could safely jab. Miraculously, the shrieking stopped, cries becoming silent, sniffling sobs. Daichi looked up at him, and the sheer amount of hurt in his eyes broke Nagisa’s heart.

All he had the power to do was to wait it out. And Nagisa hated every moment of it. Worse still, they’d have to come back in a month for the next round, and then again the month after that. Putting him through this again, it made Nagisa feel evil. He knew letting him get sick with something really dangerous was far worse, though. At least he wouldn’t remember this.

There was no use trying to put him down when they were allowed to leave. Thankfully it seemed Daichi wasn’t about to start holding grudges, and continued to somewhat cling to Nagisa. He wasn’t producing much noise at all by the time they got outside, but Nagisa could tell he was still upset. A little worn out, maybe.

“We should go shopping,” Nagisa said, trying to distract himself from the sombre mood.

Karma didn’t say anything, though Nagisa could see there was a clench to his jaw. It was no use trying to get to the route of the problem when Karma was like that. At least, probing him until he got an answer. Nagisa pulled himself together, trying to think of the best way to ‘reboot’ Karma so at least his presence was bearable.

Nagisa thought for a moment. “How was school? Did they give you any more quizzes?”

It wasn’t the most interesting of conversations by a longshot, and Karma seemed slightly taken aback, but the more they walked, he lightened up a little. Hearing about Kunugigaoka was weird, having viewed it recently as a piece of his past. Karma continued to complain about mock exams and how he was having to knuckle down to stay ahead, all the way until they were half done with the shopping. High school was bound to be a lot tougher than middle school, though, so Nagisa was glad he wasn’t slacking.

He’d carried Daichi the whole way round the shop, so he was thankful when he noticed him dropping off. As a consequence of sleeping longer during the nights, he was far more awake at day, but Nagisa supposed the toll of the vaccines on his body was tiring him out. Hoping it wouldn’t disturb him too much, Nagisa took advantage of the opportunity to put him in the pram, praying he’d sleep it off the rest of the way home.

By the time they got in, Karma was still deep in thought, Nagisa was still mellow, and Daichi was still asleep. At least they had a bunch of nappies (such a small child could go through an insane amount), plus a soda that Karma had apparently thrown in. Instantly, Nagisa registered the smell of food. It wasn’t that his mother’s cooking was necessarily bad usually, he just hadn’t been expecting such strong flavours. Something was up.

“Ah, Nagisa!” She called. “Akabane kun. Welcome back.”
Slipping his shoes off, Nagisa craned his neck. “Mum? What’s—“

“Welcome!” His father popped his head around. “Your mother suggested we eat dinner together tonight.”

“Really?” Nagisa couldn’t hold in. It seemed a little too good to be true. Something he hadn’t had in so long…

His mother was in the kitchen, standing over the stove with some pans. “It’s pork cutlet tonight.”

She looked… Happy? His father looked happy. Nagisa wondered if he’d fallen into some kind of alternate reality. Maybe something has sneakily replaced his parents because this wasn’t normal. Like he was eight years old again, Nagisa stepped forwards, into the more communal area of the apartment.

He turned back around, trying to communicate his fear and confusion. Karma wasn’t giving him too much back. Swallowing, Nagisa supposed he shouldn’t expect the most. At least when it came to his mother, Nagisa appreciated that Karma reigned in most of his biting comments. He assumed it was to avoid setting her off over her unpredictable edge, though Nagisa had never actually told him about it.

“We’re going to leave Daichi in the pram,” Nagisa said, in an attempt to make the atmosphere less awkward. “I don’t want to wake him up.”

His mother really was in a good mood, because she smiled. “How did it go?”

Nagisa chewed the inside of his cheek. “He’s healthy and everything, but he didn’t like the injections.”


Nagisa’s father laughed. “A lot of things feel like that, even when you know it’s for the best. I probably have a few stories of Nagisa when he was young.”

Something in Karma’s demeanour shifted. “Oh really?”

Like a switch had flipped and suddenly Karma was expelling a level of natural charm, he sat down at the dinner table. Nagisa followed him, scared for what this conversation was going to lead to. His father sat opposite them, clearly at ease. There was a terrifying glint and focus in Karma’s eyes.

“No…” Nagisa tried to warn, but nobody paid him attention.

“I remember one time,” his father continued, “I think Nagisa couldn’t have been older than five? Anyway, I took him out for sushi, and he’d never seen conveyor belt style before. He could barely contain himself.”

“Dad,” Nagisa complained, burying his head in his hands.

“Aw,” Karma said, “how cute.” The edges to his tone were like knives. He was definitely going to be hearing about this later.

“Oh!” His father clapped. “It gets better! You see, he thought it was magnificent, but he couldn’t figure out for the life of him that the circuit continued into the kitchen. I don’t know, I think he must have assumed that all the food was going to be wasted or something, because he just started grabbing at every plate that came past. I wasn’t paying much attention, and the owners actually
“asked us to leave, because nobody else was getting any food.”

With an almost howl, Karma burst out laughing. Not just his teasing, intentional laugh, but something pure that took over his whole body. His composure just went, and Nagisa couldn’t sense even the slightest bit of bad intent, though he was sure Karma would bring it up again later. His breaths came rapid, face contorting in a kind of ugly way, yet Nagisa had never seen him look so attractive.

“What did he do next?” Karma wheezed.

His father beamed. “Started crying of course. I practically had to drag him out of there, whilst he complained about wastage. I had to explain it all to him, then. You still like sushi though, right, Nagisa?”

Nagisa looked down at the table. “Dad…”

“What’s this?” His mother came in then, with the bowls. “Embarrassing stories of Nagisa? I have a few.”

“This isn’t fair!” Nagisa stated, probably unable to handle much more. “Thanks for the food.”

“Oh,” Karma jolted, like he just remembered. “Yeah, thanks.”

Figuring Karma wasn’t really used to ‘family meals’, Nagisa supposed he would forget something like that from time to time. Now he’d relaxed, he at least appeared to be having a good time. He was handling Nagisa’s parents, like a pro. His smile didn’t falter, though, no matter how closely Nagisa observed him. It was almost like he fitted in or something.

Nagisa stood up, once he was done eating. “That was great, Mum. Karma and I will wash the dishes for you.”

Shooting him a look, before rolling his eyes, Karma stood up too and nodded, making to pick up a few bowls. Diligently, he followed Karma into the kitchen, but all bets were off the moment he was close enough to the sink. Though he took care not to break anything, he moved fast, finding the perfect opening to splash Nagisa in the face with water.

“That’s for pimping me out,” Karma drawled, but he didn’t seem too serious.

He couldn’t hold back his laugh. “Stop it!”

Karma threw him the rubber gloves. “You can wash it.”

“What are you going to do?” Nagisa narrowed his eyes. “Supervise?”

“I mean, I was going to dry, but that’s a much better idea.”

He dried anyway. It felt oddly calming after such a long and dramatic day. Really, Karma didn’t seem like he minded that much, other than the slightest annoyance at ‘unnecessary’ exertion. They were done, with everything put away as neatly as possible, before too long and without an issue. After all of that, Nagisa actually felt pretty tired.

When they came back, he could tell that Daichi was stirring. Figuring he’d he slightly happier to fully wake up in Nagisa’s arms, Nagisa sighed and picked him up. There didn’t seem to be a significant shift in his temperature from what it normally was, but Nagisa was still going to keep a close eye on it. Daichi squirmed a little, but was still groggy.
“I’m just going to take him to my room,” Nagisa explained. “In case he gets really unsettled again.”

“Goodnight,” his father called.

Nagisa entered his room, Karma right behind him, but couldn’t wipe the smile off his face. It seemed like everything he’d ever wanted. His parents, at least, they looked really happy. He just hoped they’d keep it up, without going back to how they used to fight when he was really young. Things couldn’t have gone better, really.

“Oh,” Nagisa let out. Karma looked at him, as if to ask what it was. “I forgot to finish my homework.”

“Tut tut,” Karma joked, reaching out for Daichi. “You don’t want to fall behind.”

He still felt guilty about it, as he fetched his school bag and sat at his desk, despite knowing that Daichi was in more than good hands. Nagisa tried his best to finish off what he’d been working on, before Rin had started talking to him. He’d almost finished, before a rattling kind of noise caught his attention. Distracted, Nagisa turned and looked over his shoulder.

Karma, who had apparently finished the soda he bought earlier, was shaking around the empty bottle, causing the marble to fly around, rapidly hitting the glass. He had Daichi semi propped up with some creative pillow arrangement, so he wasn’t completely flat. At the very least, Daichi looked entertained by the stimulation, smiling and moving his limbs excitedly. It was a stark difference to how he’d been earlier. Though he was clearly trying to keep the noise down, Karma beamed right back, laughing lightly at their son’s enthusiasm.

Nagisa knew that Karma could qualify as ‘baby whisperer’ on occasion, but he wasn’t jealous or anything. On the contrast, he couldn’t help but stare. He’d never seen Karma so openly happy and loving about anything. Mostly, because he didn’t really broadcast his emotions much. Sure, Nagisa could easily tell when Karma was angry or frustrated or anything like that, but he kept his positive feelings largely to himself.

It was a privilege, almost, to see Karma’s most natural and pure of smiles. The smile Nagisa had grown to love.

Something uncomfortable clenched his chest, at that fleeting thought, and he almost doubled over in a wave of sickness. It had been just a fleeting thought, but… His fingers trembled, struggling to keep their grip on his pen. The world came crashing down right around him. Everything, every little thing, suddenly made complete, horrific sense. All the times he’d found himself staring for too long, their touches, the way some of Karma’s words lit him ablaze… There was a huge, (disgustingly obvious, now he thought about it) all comprehensive reason behind it all.

At some point, without realising it was happening, he’d fallen in love with Karma.

Chapter End Notes

fucking finally, am I right?

Took him over 150,000 words, but here we are.

If you guys don't know, ramune is a type of Japanese soda. Rather than a lid, it has a
marble thing you have to push down into the bottle - it's impossible to get back out again though, so once you're done drinking it makes a rattly kind of noise when you shake it. Just google search it if it sounds really weird - it tastes great, though I kind of think it's like, PURE sugar

Sorry this took a little longer than usual, I marathon watched all of Boku No Hero Academia :') (Maybe one day I’ll write a crossover- I already decided what Karma's quirk would be)

Once again, all comments and such are my biggest motivator!
Admitting his feelings to himself had caused a few things to happen. For one, now he was aware of them, it was like they’d multiplied. Nagisa had fallen for Karma slowly, slow enough he hadn’t noticed it happening, but now it was as if he’d tripped over and face planted the floor. That was a pretty good analogy, because this development was hurting his head.

Nagisa seemed hyperaware of every little movement Karma made. Every time Karma so much as caught his gaze, Nagisa had to avert his eyes, trying to hide the blush that so quickly rushed upon his face. Whenever Karma said anything, Nagisa practically jolted out of his skin. And then there was his scent. Having lived amongst it for so long, it didn’t have a dramatic, heart stopping effect on him. Perhaps that would have been better, somehow. The thing was, his scent was so ingrained into Nagisa’s life now that he associated it with home. It wasn’t as if he constantly walked around smelling like Karma or anything, but it was definitely a presence he’d gotten used to and would feel wrong without.

Falling asleep next to him was absolute torture. It wasn’t like he could suddenly start insisting they sleep separately, after so long. Karma would quickly start to suspect something, which was something Nagisa definitely couldn’t deal with. He kept his distance as best he could, jerking away every time they brushed legs. How had he existed like this every night before? It didn’t help that Karma tended to sleep like an octopus, wrapping his limbs around Nagisa’s body in the oddest of ways. Of course, Nagisa’s bed was pretty small. He wondered if Karma knew he was doing it.

He couldn’t sleep. Nagisa knew sleep was probably the best thing to do, rest on his emotions and see if this was just a fluke. It could just be a result of the stressful day, easily. Deep down, he knew that wasn’t true. At least Karma was out of it soon enough, and wouldn’t notice Nagisa’s internal breakdown. This was going to become a real big issue soon enough, because with every passing second, Nagisa wanted to burst it out. Even Karma’s soft, sleep filled breathing almost set it off.

There was no way he could live like this. It was all Nagisa could do to not poke him awake and just tell him, right then and there. Fear held him back. This, love, was unchartered territory. The worst part was that Nagisa didn’t even know what he wanted. Even if he did know his feelings, he didn’t know the next step, even if there was one.
When Daichi inevitably woke up, Nagisa was almost over the moon. At least it was something to do, rather than try his best to avoid staring at sleeping Karma at all costs. He’d been expecting him to be a little more unwell, or at least fussy over the vaccinations. Honestly, he didn’t seem that bothered by any of it now he’d long since gotten over the crying spell. Nagisa hoped he’d stay that way, tough as nails.

After he’d fed him, and decided to change him (mainly to put off going back to bed), Nagisa felt a little bit better. At least when he laid down, holding Daichi as tightly as he could without worrying about suffocating him, his mind was taken off things, eventually allowing the exhaustion to win out. It wasn’t a very deep sleep, though, more like he blinked and suddenly it was morning.

He hated the feeling of waking up hollow. Like the night before had just been paused for a little bit and everything else was still the same. Nagisa closed his eyes immediately after blinking them open, as if that would help him escape from the reality of everything. It didn’t work for long. Though his eyes were closed, the rest of his senses were awake. Nagisa knew something wasn’t quite right.

Letting his eyes fall open again, he instantly noticed the phone, aimed in his direction. He yelped, immediately sitting up as his brain caught up. Karma didn’t seem too bothered about saying anything to him, his attention more on the phone. It took Nagisa a few seconds to realise that Karma had clearly been taking photos of him or something, and was probably backing it up online so it could never be deleted.

“What are you doing?!” Nagisa tried to grab his phone.

Karma happened to have much longer arms, simply holding the device over his head. “Maybe it’s a secret,” he teased.

Frustration overtaking him, Nagisa planned his next attempt. His eyes narrowed, taking in his surroundings. “Where’s Daichi?”

“Huh?” Karma looked a little thrown off, before relaxing again. “Well, he woke up a while ago, but you slept right through it, and he went right back down after that, so,” he looked over his shoulder at the crib, gesturing. “You were thrashing around like crazy, anyway.” His demeanour shifted, and Nagisa knew any seriousness was over. “Dreaming about something nice?”

Nagisa almost jumped out of his skin. “N-no…” He had to pray he hadn’t done something embarrassing.

His prayers weren’t being answered by the universe, apparently, because then Karma tapped the screen, and a weird sound came out of it, a delicate kind of rumbling. It was only when Nagisa caught the actual footage playing that he understood. Karma hadn’t been taking a picture of him, he’d been video tapping him, purring in his sleep.

“What’s this?” Karma’s eyes glinted.

Honestly, there were a lot of omega stereotypes that Nagisa wasn’t entirely sure the level of truth of. He’d heard thing, but he hadn’t exactly come across it in his own life. Purring was a sign of contentment, an instinctual reaction and appreciation for being safe and cared for. Naturally, over the years, it had become a sexual connotation, so Karma having footage of it… embarrassing.

Of course Nagisa bolted, going up on his knees to balance out the height difference. So Karma wouldn’t be able to just do the same, he swung his leg over his thighs, trapping him in place. No way was Karma allowed to keep a video of him doing that. Karma didn’t just give up and hand it
over to him, though. He leant back, as if daring Nagisa to follow. For some reason, Nagisa took the
bait, shifting his balance in a desperate grasp.

Karma took the perfect opportunity to flip him onto his back. The movement was smooth,
calculated, and suddenly Nagisa was springing against the mattress. Following the same
momentum, Karma braced himself above him with one hand, grabbing both of Nagisa’s wrists and
pinning them above his head with the other.

“You’re not having it, Nagisa,” he drawled.

Throat suddenly very dry, Nagisa automatically did his best to swallow what little saliva there was.
Still a little thick from sleep, Karma’s voice was kind of gravelly and deep, even with his teasing
layered over the top. His whole body gave a kind of shiver, stunned as it took in what was
happening. Karma was on top of him, in between his legs due to their previous position, pinning
him in place, looming over him.

Nagisa let out a light whimper, beginning to sweat. Something uncomfortable churned in his
stomach, and then he jolted. Between his legs, he felt a slight, sickening, trickling sensation.
Naturally, it was enough to snap Nagisa out of his daze, and into panic mode. Having no idea what
it was, he automatically assumed the worst, that it was blood and the flip over had been too rough.

“I really need the bathroom!” Nagisa tried, squirming. Surprisingly, Karma let him go right away.
Perhaps out of fear that Nagisa would accidently pee on him or something, or just because he
valued the footage more, but he didn’t protest, allowing Nagisa could dash out of the room.

As soon as he was in privacy, Nagisa didn’t hesitate over checking. Awkward as it was, he shoved
a hand back there, indeed contacting a large amount of dampness between his ass cheeks. Cringing
as he did so, he pulled his fingers back to inspect them. They weren’t red with blood, so at least he
could relax a little, but then Nagisa realised what it was, and stumbled back, landing ungracefully
on the toilet.

That was slick. As in, the natural lubrication omegas produced during sexual arousal. Nagisa had
never experienced the sensation before, so of course he hadn’t noticed it happening. Cheeks
entirely pink, Nagisa wanted to hang his head in shame. Not only were his feelings messing with
his head, they were messing with his body. At least his panicked pheromones had probably
overtaken his aroused ones. Karma hadn’t seemed to notice it.

This would be so much easier if it was pure lust. Anybody with eyes could see Karma was
attractive, and Nagisa supposed he carried that kind of dangerous, rough, charming aura that people
tended to go for. If it was just that, Nagisa could get over it. He could just jerk off in the shower or
something, and then be good for the rest of the day. Nagisa knew it wasn’t like that.

Speaking of showers, that seemed like the best course of action. Mostly because the sensation was
kind of gross, and he wanted to wash it away immediately, but also for the scent it was producing.
If Karma hadn’t noticed before, he’d definitely notice if Nagisa returned in that state. A sick part of
him felt a tingle of excitement at that prospect.

Stripping off his clothes and turning the spray on, the warmth of it shocked his sensitive skin. It
just wouldn’t stop playing on his mind. Nagisa was a truly awful person, for getting turned on from
that. He felt weird that it had just been the slick, though, rather than getting hard. He figured maybe
one came before the other or something. The more he thought about the situation, the more his
lower stomach twisted, and he’d answered his own question.

Although this was more familiar territory, it was almost worse. The slick Nagisa could excuse as
something he didn’t understand, but this… Nagisa squeezed his eyes shut, trying to think about anything other than Karma. Unfortunately, the harder he tried, the more the thoughts raced in. He bit his lip, imagining what would have happened if he hadn’t freaked out.

That was a ship long sailed, though. Better yet, what if Karma decided he wasn’t done teasing him. ‘What’s taking so long’, he’d burst in, and find Nagisa like that. Giving up, because his problem wasn’t going to go away, he wrapped a hand around himself and begun to tug erratically. His head slammed back against the wall as he pictured Karma doing the same to him, naked now and backing Nagisa up into a corner.

He could almost feel it, Karma’s hot breath ghosting against his ear, rough hands tracing the lines of his body. Of course Nagisa would be paralysed there, a slave to his touch. Subconsciously, he tilted his neck, leaning into phantom kisses and licks around his unmarked scent glands. ‘Stop…’ Nagisa would say, ‘don’t…’ and when it became too much, then, ‘don’t stop’.

In reality, he did his best to keep quiet, though he started panting with exertion. His pace just got quicker, as his fantasy Karma’s hands travelled lower. He imagined Karma’s hand replacing his, taking over completely. And Nagisa would be happy at first, but then the pace would slow to almost nothing, just to torment him. He wouldn’t be able to do much about it, other than accepting it, or else beg. ‘Please… More’.

And maybe Karma would deny him at first, tracing over his length with just a single finger, making him shudder. Until he got bored, at least. And then, Nagisa would cry out, as Karma roughly spun him around, shoving his face up against the tiles. He wouldn’t be able to see, but he’d be able to feel Karma’s gaze on him. And perhaps Nagisa would wobble a little, and he’d have to rebalance, accidentally sticking his ass out a little. Karma, ever resourceful, would take his chance, grabbing at it roughly, spreading his cheeks apart…

Nagisa’s face screwed up as he eventually snapped and came, the tension leaving his body. It was kind of a relief; it had been so long with everything had happened, before the whole omega thing came out at least. Unfortunately, after a few moments of peace and happy endorphins, the conflict crept right back in, even worse. Perhaps getting himself off to thoughts of Karma touching him in the shower wasn’t an effective way to deal with his confusing emotions. He wondered if he’d even be able to look Karma in the eye.

Once he’d actually washed himself off, Karma seemed casual as ever. Apparently Nagisa had been in the shower long enough that Daichi was up again, ready to face the day it seemed. As he’d suspected, Nagisa couldn’t help but avoid eye contact with Karma. Daichi was incredibly sluggish, he noticed. He suspected it was just a delayed reaction to those vaccines, which he supposed was probably a good thing.

Frankly, Nagisa couldn’t live like this. He couldn’t live so close to Karma, when all he wanted to do was scream about his love from the rooftops. Clearly, it wasn’t just emotions he could dig and bury. This was going to come out eventually, so better right then than later, in case something incredibly embarrassing happened. Knowing Nagisa’s luck, he’d blurt it out in his sleep or something.

“Karma,” he suggested, “do you want to go for a walk?”

Wow, Nagisa thought to himself, way to make that sound anything but casual. He couldn’t have this conversation here, though, not in such a cramped space with his mother right around the corner. Confusion crossed Karma’s expression, and honestly Nagisa couldn’t blame him. He was acting insane.
Eventually, Karma shrugged. “Did I miss something today?”

“No!” Nagisa denied very quickly, attempting to think of an excuse. “Uhm, you wanted to take Daichi to see the cherry blossoms, right, a while ago? I-it’s probably the last weekend there’s going to be any, so I thought we could go to the park or something. E-especially when he’s all sleepy like this.”

“You know that was just a decoy excuse,” his eyes narrowed, but he let it go. “Sure, why not?”

Well, that was progress. Daichi was too out of it to really protest much to anything, getting dressed in ‘outdoor’ clothes, or even being laid flat in the pram. The moment they were out of the door, Nagisa’s brain almost short circuited. So far, this plan was going well, they’d left the apartment and this was the perfect time to have a conversation. Walking down the street, Daichi dropped off at the motion, and it was now or never.

But then Nagisa hesitated, the words at the tip of his tongue not really forming. What did he even want to come from this? Sure, he knew he really needed to get his emotions out in the open, but there had to be a next step. In the back of his head, he imagined Karma saying he liked him back, but even then… Did he want a relationship?

Nagisa suspected they were far beyond the point of dating. But none of this was a normal situation. Wouldn’t it make it awkward, if they both had feelings? He didn’t really know all that much about love, but he imagined that if Karma liked him too, those feelings would increase. And even if they did end up together, there was always the chance that it wouldn’t even work. They were okay having Daichi and being friends, but actual break ups could get messy. From first-hand experience, Nagisa couldn’t live with himself if he put Daichi through that.

He swallowed, remembering there was no chance Karma liked him back. Why would he? Way back at the start of their year in 3E, Nagisa had overheard the girls declaring Karma the most attractive (on looks alone, they’d emphasised), unanimously. Realistically, he knew Karma could date anybody he wanted to, if he tried. Basically, he could get better than him. The situation they were in was incredibly complicated, but there was no way Karma would spend so much time with him, if not for Daichi. They were tied down to each other.

But Nagisa knew keeping it to himself would probably be worse than all that. Best case scenario, Karma would just accept it, and they could both mutually ignore it and move on with their lives. Sure, it would be painful, but it would be for the best. At the very least, Nagisa knew Karma wouldn’t freak out and run away from him. Nagisa trusted that he loved Daichi far too much for that.

When they actually got to the park, Nagisa considered, after not getting any of that out verbally, that maybe words weren’t the best way to express himself. They were walking at a leisurely pace, Karma pushing the pram, as a light breeze tore flowers from the trees. A petal landed on Karma’s head, and Nagisa considered it. He considered leaning in under the guise of removing it, standing up on his tip toes but connecting their lips instead. That way, he’d know, if Karma kissed him back.

His heart thumped inside his chest, when he realised he was going to just go for it. For better or worse, Nagisa would be presenting himself loud and clear. Steeling himself, he let his hand drift on to the handle, covering Karma’s head, and Nagisa considered it. He considered leaning in under the guise of removing it, standing up on his tip toes but connecting their lips instead. That way, he’d know, if Karma kissed him back.

Karma looked down into the pram, and laughed lightly. “Aw, he doesn’t know what it is.”

On inspection, it seemed a blossom had drifted its way inside, and was covering Daichi’s face. It
was pretty cute to look at, but Nagisa still hated it when he was upset. He sighed, his confession plan going way out of the window, and picked Daichi up. Once in Nagisa’s arms, he did calm down, far more interested in the sudden change in surrounding.

After bouncing him a little bit, Daichi almost looked like he would instantly drop off again. That didn’t stop him from batting his limbs at the sight of the blossoms in the air, though, in a kind of attempt to grab at them. Nagisa suspected he’d like it a lot, when he was old enough to actually appreciate it, a thought which made him smile. The non-subtle sound of Karma’s phone camera brought him out

“Really?” Nagisa asked, only slightly annoyed. He couldn’t help but feel slightly on edge.

“I guess I just like taking pictures…” He explained. “You know, of things I want to remember.”

Nagisa’s breath hitched. “O-oh, sorry.”

He didn’t seem particularly torn up over it, though. He moved around, leaning in closer to Nagisa, and flicked the display of the camera around. The least Nagisa could do was indulge Karma’s selfies, he supposed. He smiled, trying to hold Daichi up as best he could, and let Karma take a few. The session was over, though, when Daichi squirmed and rubbed one of his eyes.

Karma looked over his shoulder. “Want to go to that café over there?”

That sounded like a great idea. Perhaps if Nagisa had food to occupy himself with, something to do with his hands, it would be easier to get his words out. The downside was that it was a more formal situation for a conversation, but it was the best option he had. By the looks of things, Daichi was going to go right back to sleep again anyway, so staying still for a period of time would end up being pretty convenient.

In the time it took them to sit down, order, and start on their food, Nagisa tried to psych himself up. His eyes darted around, verifying that they weren’t close enough to other people that it didn’t feel like a private conversation. The seating was pretty spaced out, anyway, enough for them to fit the pram next to them without disturbing anybody. Daichi had gone back to sleep, at least.

“What is it, Nagisa?”

Nagisa gulped, not allowing himself to meet Karma’s eyes from across the table. He didn’t know what he was so worried about, it was just words. Sure, they were important words, but… He knew that Karma wouldn’t run off and leave him, even if he did reject Nagisa’s feelings. Or, at least, he prayed that.

But what would change, for the better? It was hard to imagine himself in a real relationship with Karma. Perhaps Nagisa should stall, call this entire thing off until he figured out what he really wanted. But he was combusting, from the inside out. The most likely result of his confession would be quick acknowledgment, and then they’d just ignore it. At least, that would be better, than keeping it to himself.

Karma leaned closer in the plastic chair. “Okay, fess it up.” He reached forwards, pulling Nagisa’s food away from him. “You clearly have something to tell me.”

Yes, Nagisa thought, I love you. It didn’t even have to be a longwinded confession, just those words. I love you. I love you. I love you. I love you. I love you. I love you.

“Nagisa,” Karma started waving his hand in front of his face. “Are you about to tell me you’re dying of some rare disease, or something?”
Only potential heartbreak, Nagisa wanted to respond. His heart was actually hurting, though, with how hard it was beating against his chest. He wanted to bang his head against the wall, knowing he was just being a coward. But he just couldn’t force the words up and out of his throat. It was the way Karma was looking at him, studiously, clearly trying to work out for himself what was wrong. Nagisa couldn’t help but feel very tiny, under his unrelenting gaze.

“K-karma, I—“ Yeah, that was good. One word down, a couple more to go. “I—“ Nagisa just didn’t understand how this was so painful. He turned his head in the opposite direction, feeling his face flush up. “I just wanted t-to say that, uhm.” His throat caught up, completely dry.

Karma leant back again, letting his chair hit the ground with a thud. “Jeez, you sound like you’re about to confess to killing a man, or something.” He perked up. “You didn’t do that, right?”

Forcing himself to look Karma in the eye again, Nagisa clenched both his fists. “No.”

“Then what?”

Nagisa nodded, mostly for his own purposes. “Recently,” he begun, “I’ve… noticed some feelings. And so, uhm, Karma, I just felt like I should tell you.”

Karma cocked his head. “Okay…”

This had been a bad idea. “I realised that what I really want is—“ Right there and then, Nagisa’s nerve vanished. “To join a club!”

“Huh?” Karma questioned, confused.

It was too late to take it back. “Yeah, uhm, everyone has started to join at least one. B-but, I just didn’t want to say anything, because it would mean that you’d have to take Daichi alone regularly, and—“

“It’s hardly a problem,” Karma shrugged. “What, you thought I’d be mad or something?”

“Something like that,” Nagisa dropped eye contact again.

He was an idiot. There was no way this would have worked out. Fear won out, and Nagisa knew what he had to do. Burry it, repress it, find a way to live with it… Perhaps even get over it entirely. He couldn’t stand it, but all things considered, it was for the best. Who was he kidding, anyway? What he had with Karma, their friendship, it was good. It made Nagisa happy. It was something he didn’t want to ruin.

It was clear. Karma could never find out about Nagisa’s true feelings.

Chapter End Notes

Fun fact, none of that smut even happened in my original plan. I just... I got carried away idk the words just came out of me or something ‘:)

*hides from all your anger*

What, you thought I’d let them just... be happy? Like that? Me? No they must suffer first.
Most people his age would be overjoyed at a week long break from school. Even the nerdier kids, who took school super seriously seemed happy about it. It made sense, midterms were coming up and it was a free week to study. In Nagisa’s case, golden week was a nightmare. It wasn’t that he usually hated it or anything, but this one year, Nagisa didn’t want the time off. The more he could avoid Karma, the better.

It wasn’t the best tactic in the world, but it was the only way he’d found to cope with it. Being in Karma’s presence for too long just messed with his head even more. Even when Karma had simply reached across him for something, Nagisa’s hands had gotten all clammy, and he’d found himself leaning towards him, like he was desperate for their skin to touch. It was pathetic.

But he had to get over it. Had to. Nagisa knew he could, eventually. What was the likelihood he was destined to love only one person, for his entire existence? He couldn’t help but think about someone like Maehara, who had definitely dated more than one girl. Then again, Nagisa highly doubted he’d been in love with all of them. It would be a lot easier, if Karma wasn’t so… Karma.

“Yo, Nagisa kun, are you paying attention?” Nishi Hansuke waved a hand in front of his eyes.

Blinking slowly, Nagisa tried to ignore his thoughts. “Y-yeah, sorry,” he turned to look at the boy who sat at his left. “It was a late night.”

He shrugged, and leaned back in his own seat. “That essay nearly killed me too. ‘Find three different sources’, like, most of it’s useless.”

Nagisa didn’t have the heart to tell him he’d already done the civics essay. Really, it was Daichi causing havoc to his sleep schedule. He’d celebrated too soon, about him progressively sleeping for longer periods. For the last week or so, it was right back to square one, and waking up every two or three hours. Mostly, he’d just turned out to be extra hungry, so it didn’t freak him out too much (correction: it had freaked him out quite a bit for a couple of days until he just looked it up). He didn’t mind so much, if it meant he was actually growing. It was getting a little ridiculous that he still fit into newborn clothes, despite being slowly approaching three months.

“I’m finding it pretty tough,” Nagisa smiled.
“And it has to be handed in tomorrow,” he continued to complain.

In front of them, Kita turned over her shoulder. “Perhaps you’d have done it by now if you actually paid attention in class.”

Nishi leaned forward, halfway across the desk. “You can’t have been paying much attention either, if you’re turning around to look at me so much.”

“As if,” she muttered, turning back around with the flick of her hair. Considering he sat directly behind her, Nagisa knew she wasn’t turning around to sneak glances, but he did notice the slight flush on her face.

“Anyway,” Nishi continued, looking at Nagisa. “My birthday’s coming up next week. I thought I’d invite the whole class to my party, since we’re still getting to know each other.”

The boy who sat behind them, Minami Sora snorted. “And here I was feeling special.”

Nishi grinned. “There’s gonna be cake, you know. Don’t complain. So,” he met eyes with Nagisa, “are you coming?”

It sounded like a lot of fun, to be honest. Nagisa felt like he was on the verge of being friends with a few of his classmates, but there was only so much you could bond during school hours. So, he almost instinctively said yes, before a sour taste on the tip of his tongue stopped him. Of course, he couldn’t just go to a party whenever he felt like anymore. It felt wrong to do that, anyway.

“I usually go out of the country with my family that week,” Nagisa lied, feeling completely awful about it. “I really wish I could, though.”

Not seeming too bothered, Nishi waved him off. “Don’t worry about it.”

“I can edit you into the photos, Nagisa kun!” Higashi announced cheerfully.

Nagisa didn’t always understand her logic, but he couldn’t fault the way she tried to make everything into a positive. It was a pretty earnest attitude that he kind of hoped would stick with her. He still felt bad about not being able to go, though. But Nagisa had known what he was signing up for, and he’d made his decisions, though honestly it hadn’t felt like he had much of a choice. Not he regretted it, he wouldn’t regret it for anything.

He let his classmates return to their planning, simultaneously wishing the day would end, and wishing it would last forever. Eventually the last bell rang, though Nagisa had to get a move on. Walking back to the train station had become pretty routine at least, and he could make it in good time. He didn’t rush, though—there wasn’t really much cause to. Perhaps he’d be able to avoid the grip Karma had on his heart, when he say him again.

Nagisa pepped himself up, the closer he got to home. It was a new day. That wasn’t saying much, he’d told himself the same thing for the last week and it hadn’t changed anything. Reluctantly, Nagisa finally reached his door, taking a deep breath to steel himself before opening it. By all appearances, it looked empty, though Nagisa knew somebody must be in considering the door was unlocked.

“I’m back,” he called lightly, garnering no response. That was pretty odd. He sighed, opening the door to his bedroom.

“Hey,” Karma said, not taking his eyes off the book he was reading. At first glance, he seemed pretty nonchalant, but there was clearly an underlying frustration across his face. It took Nagisa a
moment, to fully examine the scene. Something crossed across Karma’s face, and Nagisa’s eyes were drawn to Daichi, who was resting half in his lap. He supposed it was pretty hard to concentrate, with a baby being completely active.

Nagisa couldn’t put up with it. “I’ll take him,” he said, reaching over.

If anything, Daichi seemed happy to be carried by Nagisa, presumably because it meant he had a higher view. Nagisa had stopped even bothering cradling him horizontally nowadays, only when he really had no other choice. The fuss just wasn’t worth it. The easiest way was to just carry him half over his shoulder. Unfortunately, as a sharp tug came to his head, Nagisa remembered that it gave Daichi perfect access to his hair, AKA his new favourite toy.

He took in the scene again. “Are you studying?”

“For midterms,” Karma explained, looking only a fraction more relieved.

“Already?” Nagisa knew, once he’d asked it out loud, that it was a bit of a stupid question. For quite a while, everyone had assumed that Karma was somehow naturally a genius. Whilst that was still definitely true, everyone discovered the hard way that actually being the best took a lot of hard work. Nagisa figured staying at Kunugigaoka had been a good decision, if it meant he had Asano to compete against. At least, Nagisa assumed that was mostly why he was taking this so seriously, to stay at the top.

Karma, now with his arms free, pulled the book closer to his face. “Negative four over root X becomes,” he muttered aloud to himself, “negative four multiplied by one over X to the power of a half-

Though he was pretty sure Karma had skipped over a step in his self-explanation, a sinking feeling set in Nagisa’s stomach. He should probably start thinking about studying himself, soon enough. Definitely a little closer to the actual exams, though, or else he’d probably end up forgetting everything he tried to keep in. At least Karma looked like he was focusing, eyes narrowed and forehead creasing slightly. It was kind of cute. Nagisa mentally slapped himself. Seriously, his forehead was cute now? He definitely needed to get out of here.

“Uhm,” Nagisa started a little uselessly, as a plan started to form in his head. “If you want to study in peace, I can look after Daichi this week off.”

Karma peered up from his text book. “Nagisa, that’s-

“-Only fair,” Nagisa cut him off, realising the clear advantage to this arrangement. Even if it did mean having Daichi to himself for a while, a little tough but hardly a chore, it was the excuse he needed to avoid Karma at all costs. “You have him every day when I’m still at school,” he pointed out. “The hours would add up, by now.”

Clearly conflicted, Karma looked between him and the book. “Okay,” he finally said, as if it pained him. “Not all day, though.”

Trying not to look as relieved as he felt, Nagisa nodded. It wasn’t like he had to avoid Karma forever, just long enough for his feelings to disappear, and then they could go back to being friends as normal. Nagisa wasn’t really sure if they would disappear, but he at least hoped he’d be able to get over them, to cope with them.

“Do I have something on my face?” Karma met his eyes.

“W-wh-” Nagisa felt an immediate spike of fear race up his spine. “No!”
He really didn’t look like he bought that. “Oh, so you’re staring at me for some other reason?”

“I wasn’t staring!” It wasn’t a particularly good defence. Nagisa had been too quick with his denial, easily proving it to be false.

Karma tossed the book aside, apparently deciding that tormenting Nagisa was worth putting studying off. Very slowly, almost cautiously, he began to slide off the bed. Feeling exactly like prey, Nagisa turned away, trying to come up with a plan on the fly. Turning around had also been pretty suspicious… He needed an excuse. Mentally apologising, Nagisa pretended he was just putting Daichi down in the crib. Surprisingly, he didn’t instantly start sobbing about being laid flat, instead choosing to entertain himself with his own foot.

“Then what were you doing, huh?” Karma said, so close behind him Nagisa could feel his breaths on the skin of his neck, though they weren’t actually touching. All he could do was stand frozen. When Nagisa didn’t respond, he bent down, so Nagisa could practically feel his lips moving against his ear. “Plotting to kill me?”

Breaths coming up short, Nagisa found himself turning around, contorting his body at the waist to face him. Karma was looking down at him through slightly lidded eyes, gleaming with mischief. Nagisa was tempted to try and flip him over and pin him to the ground, now he’d challenged him. It would be hard, considering Karma was probably on guard for something like that… Nagisa was almost frightened of what would happen, if he was pinning Karma to any kind of surface.

And then he heard the front door open, signifying his mother’s apparent return. Karma didn’t look too bothered by it, like he’d been expecting it almost, but Nagisa bounced back. Though the heat started to leave his body pretty quickly, the shame didn’t. He really needed some time to himself.

One of these days, he just knew he was going to end up going for it, lunging up and kissing Karma for real, and then where would he be?

However, as he found out, being alone had its own challenges. Not that he was really alone, the entire basis of his excuse to avoid Karma was that he was taking Daichi somewhere. But then Nagisa realised that there wasn’t actually much to do at Daichi’s age. At least when Karma was with him, he could have a conversation. He could try and have a conversation with Daichi, but the most he’d get out of it was confused babbling.

He ended up circling one of the local parks a few times, and then bought a crepe when he ran out of ideas. Daichi seemed to be judging him, just a little, when he sat down to eat it. Although he’d cooperated in Nagisa’s time of need the other day, he still generally hated not being able to see things, so he’d finally given in and turned the pram into its conversion. It was hard to ignore the slight worried tug at his heart, now that he couldn’t keep an eye on Daichi at all times, but he did seem a lot happier.

Nagisa figured it was more interest rather than anything else, probably. He supposed he’d be confused by the concept of food if he didn’t know quite what to associate it with. Though he knew solid foods were a little while off, it was pretty good he seemed intrigued by it. That, or he was just following the motion. Whatever the case, the actual crepe was pretty good. Nagisa had gone for the strawberries and cream flavour in the end, not his usual choice but it seemed like it was calling his name. He hadn’t really eaten them since being pregnant, he’d had enough for a life time.

He took Daichi out when he was done eating, since he was shoving his fist into his mouth. It wasn’t as if Daichi was actually doing it all the time to tell him he was hungry, but it was a pretty good sign considering when he’d last been fed. He seemed even happier to be up essentially on Nagisa’s lap, so he didn’t put him back in again. That was at least slightly more entertaining. He wasn’t sure how much Daichi really understood, but Nagisa found himself pointing out certain
things, carrying him around until he got too tired.

The next few days followed in a similar fashion. It was the height of a nationwide public holiday, so anywhere more interesting was pretty much a no go. The most exciting thing he did was buy Daichi a stuffed animal. Considering how grabby he was getting with Nagisa’s hair, it made sense to get him something to actually hold onto. Nagisa found he started to not mind it much at all in the end, finding Daichi’s reactions to everything fascinating, now his life had slowed down and he had the time to appreciate it.

Not to say the hours where he just napped weren’t a little more boring. Nagisa almost considered showing up to that party after all, but it would a little odd if he randomly turned up with a baby. It wasn’t as if Nagisa was massively against the idea of telling his friends about Daichi, it just wasn’t the type of thing that would come up in conversation. At that point, he’d left it long enough that it would be worse to casually bring it up.

Nagisa considered it for a moment. She was definitely right, they hadn’t seen each other since graduation. There had been a few meet ups here and there, before high school started for everyone, but Nagisa hadn’t felt like going to any. Regardless, it would be nice to see his friend after such a long time, plus it was something to do.
He met Kayano just outside the set of whatever she was currently working on, in the end. She was already waiting for him, waving him over confidently. It hadn’t been that long since he last saw her, but she did look quite different. Most noticeably, her hair was back to its natural brown and she wore it down, but she also looked more mature in general.

“Nagisa!” She exclaimed happily. “I’m glad you could come.”

He could only return her smile. “I’m happy you invited me. It must be pretty busy, if this is your only day off.”

Humming to herself, she shrugged. “It’s not so bad. Acting is what I love, so it doesn’t feel too much like a hard job. Plus, I still have high school on top of everything, so it’s nice to do it without worrying about falling behind.”

Nagisa nodded along, as they started to walk without much of an aim. He felt proud of her for getting back into something she was so clearly good at. Though in the end it had turned out to be her true feelings, she had fooled him for over half a year. At the very least she seemed happy, and she wasn’t slacking on her academic work either.

“Anyway,” she turned to him. “Have you had a good time this break?”

He looked down at the pram he was wheeling and sighed. “I’ve mostly just been looking after Daichi.”

Kayano paused in her step, bending down in front. “Hi there Daichan, don’t think I forgot about you.”
“Is he awake?” Nagisa peered over the top.

Her attention was focused elsewhere, though. “I thought he’d have grown quite a bit more by now,” she confessed. “He’s still so little.” She looked up at Nagisa with a sort of mischievous glint in her eye. “Tiny… Daichi… You know that works…”

“Wait-“ Nagisa tried, but she’d clearly already formed the idea.

“If you combine it with the Japanese word for ‘small’, then… Daichiisai.”

Nagisa almost choked on his own saliva. “You can’t make him live with that nickname!”

She grinned. “But it kind of suits him now.”

As long as nobody else ever found out about it… Nagisa just didn’t want him to get teased or anything, but he supposed Kayano doing it was okay. She was pretty inventive with her nicknaming, anyway. After that, they continued to chat, mostly catching up on how everything was since they’d last seen each other.

“How come you’re looking after him this week, anyway? Is Karma kun sick or something?” Kayano eventually asked.

“Karma is…” There were many, many different ways Nagisa could finish that sentence. “I’m avoiding him,” he admitted.

Kayano cocked her head. “Oh. Did he tease you too far again or something?”

He had no idea what even came over him. Nagisa opened his mouth in preparation to come up with some excuse, or to just dodge it all together, but that wasn’t what came out. He’d been practically bursting with feelings for what felt like aeons, and they ended up all tumbling out. Kayano kept pretty quiet, letting him talk freely, though she didn’t seem disinterested. Nagisa had never really ranted to her about anything before in their friendship, but there seemed to be no stopping him.

“That sounds… tough…” She eventually said, when Nagisa ran out of things to say.

Miserably, Nagisa looked dead ahead, focusing on nowhere in particular. “It’s… hard to describe, how frustrating it is being i-in love with your friend.”

“I get it,” she said, after a moment. Nagisa turned, noticing she too was looking out. “Do you think not knowing would make him happier?”

“I think so,” Nagisa admitted. “It’s definitely less complicated.”

“Then, you shouldn’t confess to anything. If you love someone, then the most important thing is that they’re happy, even if it hurts you to see it.”

That sounded like pretty good advice. On the flip side, Nagisa noticed how good it felt to finally get those feelings out there, to not be hiding them. Perhaps if he told Karma, the weight would be gone, for good. He did feel like Kayano was right, though. This time apart, he guessed, was starting to prove it. Nagisa just didn’t know what to do.

Chapter End Notes
Chiisai (小さい) literally just means 'small' in Japanese. The chii sound is similar to the chi in Daichi, which is why it works. A direct translation of Daichiisai actually could be 'incredibly small', because 'Dai' means 'great'. If that makes any kind of sense :; I love Japanese puns.

Speaking of Japanese puns, if you know any of the language, then you'll realise EXACTLY how lazy my OC naming was :'

Names we care about: 西 半助 - Nishi Hansuke
南 空良 - Minami Sora
北 蝶 - Kita Chou

On another note, poor Kayano :')
Chapter Summary

First year midterms finally arrive

Chapter Notes

Alternative title: please dont murder me guys

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“So…” Sakura said, craning her neck. “How did I do?”

Scanning across the paper one final time, Nagisa smiled. “You’re really improving, Sakura chan! You got twenty three out of twenty five right this time.”

She didn’t look so pleased. “Huh?!” She snatched her homework from him. “How did I get two wrong?”

Sighing at her impatience, he pointed it out on the paper. “This one you just forgot to carry the number over, but this,” he looked at a sequencing question, “is pretty complicated.”

Frowning, she looked at it again. “Let me change it, then.”

“That’s a bad idea.” When she looked up at him with question, he continued. “If you didn’t quite get it on your own, and you’re not honest about it, then your teacher won’t know you struggled at that part. They wouldn’t be able to help you understand it better. I’ll do my best to explain it to you now, though.”

Sakura huffed, as she often did, but she didn’t make much of a protest. Now she’d started school for real again, she seemed to be taking everything more seriously. Since she was in sixth grade, she’d have to start thinking about junior high pretty soon. Still, he was proud of how far she’d come in the half a year or so that he’d known her. Whilst he didn’t exactly need to help her with the huge task of getting in to a school, Nagisa still found himself tutoring her.

They were almost done, a light of understanding flickering behind her eyes, when Daichi finally chose to wake up. He didn’t immediately start crying, but Nagisa could tell the difference between happy and slightly displeased noises. “Sorry,” he said, stopping midsentence to pick Daichi up out of the pram.

“Is he mad or something?” Sakura cocked her head.

Nagisa looked him over. “Hungry, probably, at this point.”

She squinted. “How do you know that? I didn’t know you could speak baby.”

Though he could easily register the sarcasm in her tone, Nagisa suspected there was a hint of
genuine curiosity. He supposed she might not have been near many babies that young before. Though, he realised with a twinge of sadness, Daichi definitely was getting older, rapidly. It still almost felt like he’d only been there for the blink of an eye, yet he was already three months old.

“Part of it’s just instinct,” he said eventually. “But he’s been asleep for a while without feeding.”

“Oh.” Sakura sounded, before looking up. “Can I hold him?”

A part of Nagisa wanted to immediately say no. Not that he didn’t trust Sakura specifically, he just disliked handing Daichi over to anybody who didn’t know exactly what they were doing. Perhaps Karma had had it all right with the potential death threats if Daichi was dropped or else harmed in any way.

Nagisa smiled. “Here, now be very gentle, okay?”

She took to it pretty well. Nagisa kept a very close eye, coaching her through it, as she held him in a decent enough way. Actually feeding was far more difficult, but she listened to what he said, and was doing it correctly when he instructed her. Thankfully, Daichi was apparently in a good mood, deciding not to fuss or move around too much. Sakura looked pretty pleased with herself, at least, or maybe she was just purely enjoying the experience.

“Is that your boyfriend?” She asked, when his phone buzzed.

Nagisa jumped in fear. “K-karma’s not my boyfriend!”

A smirk came across her face. “Then how come you knew I was talking about him?”

Well, she had him there. She really had him there, actually, because Nagisa’s throat went dry, and she met his eye with a slight gleam. And he’d been doing so well too. With exams and everything he and Karma hadn’t exactly had time to have much of a conversation, more just existing in each other’s presence. It had been extremely helpful, and Nagisa’s brain was beginning to adjust itself back to normal, finally. Or so he’d thought.

“Did you understand everything I said?” Nagisa deflected. “I think I’ll have to leave now.”

Mercifully, Sakura passed Daichi back over to him. “It wasn’t hard.”

Since Karma had texted him, Nagisa assumed he was done with his exam. Kunugigaoka’s midterms were a week earlier than his, which was both a good and bad thing. Now that Karma’s last one was over, at least Nagisa could throw himself fully into studying. Or, at least, that’s what he was planning on doing. He may not be in crazy competition like Karma was, but he still needed to do well.

After he said his goodbyes, Nagisa tried to keep his mind busy. Freshly up, he made the ‘sensible’ decision to just carry Daichi until he got bored, which was a slight task. It was one of the few times Nagisa was actually glad of how small he was, because if he was heavier Nagisa would probably have struggled a lot more to carry him and push the pram at the same time.

Karma seemed in better spirits that he had been for a while, when they finally crossed paths. He waved, even, with a smile that didn’t seem to hide anything. Which immediately sent Nagisa’s senses into high alert, because sometimes Karma’s purer expressions were far more dangerous than his obvious ones.

Of course, Nagisa was mostly ignored, when he got close enough. “Yo Daichan~,” Karma immediately said, taking him into his arms. “Have a good day?”
It wasn’t as if Daichi could reply to him properly, but his face broke out in a heart stopping smile, and he let out a squeal kind of sound. Part of Nagisa hated that it was so cute, because he couldn’t feel any emotion other than a deep love. Honestly, if anybody wanted to strike an argument with him, all they needed to do was hold Daichi in front of him and no matter what, he wouldn’t even be mad about it.

“How did the exams go?” Nagisa asked, shamefully feeling a little jealous.

Finally, Karma snapped his eyes away. “Huh? Oh, they were nothing.”

Which probably meant they were challenging enough, in Karma Speak. It was hard to interpret, but Nagisa figured he was getting pretty good with it. There was no way he’d ever be able to read Karma perfectly, he’d accepted. Certain emotions were easier to understand than others, but Karma was almost expert at guarding himself when the situation really demanded it.

They didn’t have a whole lot on their plate after that. Due to exams throwing a small blip in their unofficial routines, things had gotten a little weird, which was why Nagisa had taken Daichi tutoring with him. He knew it would be over soon enough, but it was like there was a weird kind of air surrounding him. Like static in the air before a lightning storm.

“I don’t feel like going home,” Karma said. “Let’s do something.”

Nagisa blinked. “Y-you know I still have to study?”

His eyes glinted. “You’ll do fine, and there’s plenty of time for that.”

Says the person who just studied non stop for weeks, Nagisa thought. And then he considered it. Maybe, at the end of the day, this could actually be a pretty good thing. Now that he was slowly and surely overcoming his feelings for Karma, less blinded by them with every passing minute, it would be a test of sorts. If he could successfully make it through time (presumably alone, if you didn’t count Daichi) with Karma, then he didn’t need to avoid him so much.

“Like what?” Nagisa dared to ask, his voice a little small.

It became apparent that Karma hadn’t exactly thought his plan through. “I don’t know,” he shrugged. “We could go catch a movie or something.”

Nagisa couldn’t help but stare blankly at Daichi. “I don’t think there’s any chance of him sitting still and quiet for that long.”

There wasn’t a lot of baby appropriate things to do in Kunugigaoka anyway. Or, at least, Nagisa wouldn’t even really know where to look. Nothing particularly fun, or what he’d consider fun, would suit him. It was a problem he’d never really thought he’d be facing, which was almost hilarious. There had to be something else out there, other than walking around and occasionally getting food.

“The park?” Karma suggested.

It sounded a little lame, but he supposed it was the best option. It was the start of evening, so nobody else was there when they got to the park closest to Nagisa’s apartment block. Not exactly a prime hang out location, it made sense. They’d never taken Daichi there before, so it was a pretty new experience, even if he was too young to appreciate much of any of it. Nagisa could see it over his face, alert and taking in information.

Just sitting quietly in a park was even worse than going there in the first place, so they ended up
near the baby swings, which really looked like the only thing even somewhat suitable. The main problem was how tiny he was. Looking at the size of those swings compared to him, Nagisa was pretty sure he could slide right through the gaps. Though they were beginning to swap over, Nagisa could still fit him into newborn sized clothes if he really wanted to.

“Want a go?” He asked aloud. At least Karma was sensible enough to see the same issue, lowering a pretty confused Daichi into the bucket thing very carefully. Once he was in it, Nagisa could tell he was supporting his back fully, rather than leaving him to just flop over.

Meanwhile, Daichi looked a combination of confused and impressed at this new experience. It wasn’t as if he could enjoy it to the full extent, even when Karma rocked him a little, but eventually he seemed to decide he was happy about it. Nagisa let go of his apprehension, crouching down himself with a smile. Once he got used to it, or perhaps because Karma pushed the roughness a little far, his face really broke out into a wide grin, and he let out what Nagisa interpreted was meant to be a high pitched giggle.

“Would you rather get a cat or dog?” Karma asked, out of nowhere.

Nagisa had no idea what he was talking about. “What do you mean?”

“Not right now,” he shrugged, “but someday. I think we should get a pet.”

“A… pet…?”

Karma scooped Daichi out of the seat, stretching with his free arm. “I guess we’d have to live somewhere pretty big if we got a dog, and cats are less high maintenance. But dogs have more of a clear personality.”

Somehow, Nagisa felt they’d skipped quite a few steps of this conversation. They’d never talked about any kind of plans for the future, let alone adopting animals. Sharing a child through less than desirable circumstances was one thing, but purposely sharing a pet? And living together, in a large residence, apparently? Part of Nagisa was a little scared, that Karma had clearly thought this through at some point, whilst the rest of him was about to have an emotional meltdown.

“I haven’t exactly thought about that kind of thing,” Nagisa admitted.

Any conversation died down after that. They only stayed there for a little more, before heading home. Daichi was pretty much out of it at that point, so they didn’t really spend much time catching up with his parents (his father had been spending increasingly longer times in the apartment). For the first time in a while, despite the ever present tug on his heart strings, Nagisa felt oddly settled.

Of course, it couldn’t last long. Right after that he really did throw himself into studying, right up until the days of his first exams. Without any kind of crazy stakes, other than his own success and dignity, Nagisa didn’t feel particularly nervous about them. Even when the test begun, and it was just him with pen and paper, surprisingly he kept his cool.

Maybe it was because of the insane difficulty of their exams the last year, due to their constant battling with A Class, but Nagisa didn’t find himself stretching too far, though it definitely wasn’t easy. At the end of his first day, practically everyone in the class complained about it, minus Kita who spent most of her time rolling her eyes at them.

By the end of the second day, Nagisa felt pretty good about his chances of getting a decent score, despite being just a little mentally exhausted. To follow was perhaps the worst part; waiting for
everything to be graded. Nagisa decided it would probably be best to just put his mind at rest and move forwards, though. Due to the day being just tests, Nagisa was allowed to leave earlier than he usually would have.

It wasn’t particularly exciting. His friends were going out to ‘celebrate’, but Nagisa instead had seen a ‘gleaming’ opportunity. By calculations, he could make it the Kunugigaoka High’s campus by the time Karma’s lessons would ordinarily finish. Which, he’d found, meant that they could do a quick spot of child free shopping without feeling bad about it. The height of his recent existence, truly.

By the time he actually arrived, it seemed the day was already over. It felt a little odd, going near his old school. Nagisa was internally so focused on moving forwards, he supposed he hadn’t dedicated a lot of time to looking back. He honestly felt a little awkward standing there, as people he recognised spilled out, off to go on with their normal lives. Nagisa just waited, hoping nobody would look at him too closely, but Karma was nowhere to be found.

For a moment, Nagisa wondered if he’d just forgotten or something, but with Karma that was pretty unlikely. When the stream of students came to an end, Nagisa could only hope Karma hadn’t gotten himself into any trouble. He hadn’t entered the actual grounds yet, only peering around every now and then to check. At the sight of red hair coming from the building, Nagisa felt a spike of hope, until he realised it was, when he opened his eyes and shot him a kind of beckoning loom, actually Asano.

“Nagisa kun,” he commented, when Nagisa came close enough. “What brings you here?”

Nagisa found himself smiling, because it had actually been quite a while since he’s see him. “I’m meant to be meeting Karma. Do you have any idea where he is?”

“Akabane kun is…” Asano huffed. “I don’t know actually. Hanging around somewhere probably.”

“He didn’t skip or anything, right?” He couldn’t help but ask.

Asano muttered something that sounded an awful lot like ‘I wish he had’, before straightening. “What, did he leave you high and dry again?”

He awkwardly laughed that one off. “How did the exams go for you?”

Something odd came across Asano’s face, like a mix between anger and pain. It was only really in his eyes, though, the rest of him remaining rigid. If Nagisa had to make a wild guess, then Karma had retained his top spot, whilst Asano had come second again. Of course, Asano was never going to admit that to him – this was a personal score, unlike their junior high final exams. Nagisa would have to get it out of Karma later.

“Good enough,” he said quickly. “Say, Nagisa, seems you’re not busy right now.”

Nagisa didn’t like the sound of that at all. “No… I guess not.”

He smiled, but it was more chilling than light and natural. “Remember our agreement?”

Brow creasing, Nagisa wracked his memory. “Agreement?”

“Mmm,” Asano took a step closer to him. “You forgot to get me a birthday gift, we made a deal. Anything within reason.”

It came flooding back to him. Nagisa had been so upset, when they had that conversation. Looking
back on it, mostly he was overwhelmed, and anything would have set him off. Walking away from Karma that day had practically broken his heart, and now Nagisa understood why. Not that it had done him much good, because things had worked out as he initially feared they would, in the end.

“Okay,” Nagisa said. “You can have your gift.”

Asano raised an eyebrow a little, folding his arms. “It has two parts. The first is that you absolutely cannot breathe a word of this to anybody.”

That made Nagisa realise that whatever Asano was about to ask of him could be disastrous. On the other hand, though, he was protected by his conditions. Nagisa had definitely specified that it had to be within reason, so he was more than welcome to reject anything dreadful. At least agreeing to it right there and then would free Nagisa from doing something potentially worse in the future.

“Alright,” he said. “I’ll agree to that.”

Asano sighed. “I have a crush.”

*That,* Nagisa hadn’t been expecting. It was hard to imagine Asano caring about anybody enough, especially in a romantic sense. He supposed it made sense, but at the same time, he didn’t know how he could be of any help. Asano was attractive and popular enough with his own merit, and could charm just about anybody if he really wanted to.

He coughed, when Nagisa didn’t question him. “I want you to show me that kiss thing.”

“W-what?!” Nagisa immediately jumped back.

“Relax, Nagisa kun,” he sighed. “It fits within the ‘reasonable’ conditions, doesn’t it? It’s not like you haven’t done it before.”

He attempted to calm himself down. “So that’s what you want?” He asked quietly. “You just want me to kiss you? Right now? Here?”

“More like a lesson, really.”

It felt kind of like cheating. Which was ridiculous, because he wasn’t even in a relationship with Karma, and thus there was nothing to betray by doing this with Asano. He was right, too, Nagisa had already kissed him, even if it was only to take him out as quickly as possible. Then, there was also the moral dilemma of Nagisa showing him something that was technically an assassination move, though it wasn’t the worst one…

“Fine,” Nagisa said, not looking him in the eye.

Apparently, Asano wasn’t in the mood to waste time, because suddenly there were hard hands cupping his face, tugging it up, and then a slightly painful clash of lips against his. Nagisa wasn’t quite sure what to make of it. Admittedly, it was a pretty bad kiss no matter how you looked at it, even if there was only one person on the planet he actually wanted to kiss. It was more like Asano was trying to eat his face off, than anything else. It was violent and forceful, far too much teeth, and Nagisa couldn’t have returned it even if he wanted to.

Mercifully, he pulled off. “So?”

“Uhm…” Nagisa wasn’t sure how to approach this. A part of him felt that maybe he should actually teach Asano constructively. “You’re going in too hard. You can still dominate a kiss without leaving your partner behind. Start out slower, get them to relax into it before going for any
of the deeper stuff.”

Surprisingly, he looked like he was paying a lot of attention. A little flustered with embarrassment, Nagisa knew the only way he could really teach this technique was to demonstrate it. Tentatively, he raised himself onto the balls of his feet, reaching out gently for Asano’s cheek. It wasn’t so much of a do or die situation, so he could take the time to show him properly.

Asano didn’t try to change the pace himself or anything, and Nagisa could tell he was concentrating. After a little while, and some slight encouragement, he actually kissed back, matching him. Nagisa was prepared to leave it at that, rather than go for any rapid hits. Now that Asano was expecting it, it would be pretty hard to get a total overkill, without resorting to anything drastic.

“Okay?” Nagisa said, pulling away.

The only warning he got was a flash of fire in Asano’s eye, before he was being kissed again. This time, though, with Asano’s actual lips rather than his whole mouth. It took Nagisa by surprise, stumbling enough that he had to be steadied, and he instinctively wound his arms around his neck. It demonstrated just how quickly Asano could learn, because this was worlds apart from the first attempt. It wasn’t quite at the level that he could get hits in, but that just came with practise. He didn’t really feel anything though, other than mechanical technicalities. Nagisa was slightly flustered by the end of it, forcibly detaching them to catch breath.

Instead of looking at him, Asano was staring somewhere. “Look who finally showed up.”

Nagisa wanted to melt directly into the floor. Sure enough, that was the moment Karma had decided to come out of the school. There was absolutely no chance he hadn’t seen at least some of that, and to his horror, Nagisa realised that he couldn’t even explain it, since he’d promised. Not that Karma seemed to want to stop for a confrontation. He walked straight past them, his face neutral rather than angry. Nagisa hated the part of himself that wished the opposite.

“S-see you, Asano kun,” Nagisa got out, following after Karma.

Even when he caught up, Karma didn’t say anything to him, didn’t start yelling at him. Why was that even something Nagisa wanted? Were they just not going to talk about it, like everything else? There were many things Nagisa couldn’t tell him, couldn’t voice into words, but this at least he had to give at least some explanation for.

“I-“

“See who you want to see, Nagisa,” Karma cut him off, before he could even really start. “Why would I care?”

Nagisa stopped in his paces. Of course not. Why would Karma care? He deflated, like his heart just spilled out into the floor. He had to get over this.

Chapter End Notes

Karma’s internal thoughts : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7wfYIMyS_dI

Look, okay, I did say this fic isn’t anywhere near complete. AKA, they're not gonna be
happy and in love... yet... hehe

I hope you all enjoyed this one! As always, comments and feedback motivate me to write faster :D
Thoughts Time

Chapter Summary

After the kiss between Gakushuu and Nagisa, the dynamic between the three of our boys gets frosty.

Chapter Notes

This got real angsty real fast.

In truth, Gakushuu didn’t really feel bad about it. He wasn’t a senselessly malicious person, he would never set out to hurt somebody without cause. It hadn’t even been something he’d planned to do. Of course, he hadn’t been expecting Nagisa to show up at all. Everything else had just been opportunistic, a plan made up on the fly.

It wasn’t like Akabane didn’t deserve it. Perhaps Gakushuu had been a little more worked up than he usually would have been, though, due to the midterms. Even the thought of it made his stomach turn over, and he clenched his teeth. He should have taken his top spot back with ease, but there he was, with a total score of 499/500, shamefully the same exact mark. Getting even wasn’t inherently the worst thing in the world, worlds less humiliating than finals last year.

At least Akabane had somewhat of an excuse. A single stroke missed from an uncommon kanji in their Japanese test? It could happen to anybody. But no, once again, it had somehow been maths that let Gakushuu down. Right at the start of the paper, too, he’d messed up an easy question. Not wanting to run out of time like with finals, he’d gone through the first questions as quickly as possible, cutting the time spent on them in half. It had been an easy question that, naturally, Akabane had taken great pleasure of pointing out.

“You forgot to add the one?” He’d laughed in a way that wasn’t meant to show mutual humour. “You even wrote it right there in your equation.”

Humiliating. Or, at least, it could have been. Gakushuu had been taught not to show weakness, so he’d just unclenched his fist, keeping his entire form as neutral as possible. If Akabane wanted to gloat, then, all he had to do was not react to it. Showing he was above it was far better for his reputation. It was easier said than done, but he’d managed it, even if he’d been close to boiling over the the edge by the end of the day.

So perhaps Gakushuu had told a few white lies. For a start, he definitely didn’t have any crushes – he shuddered a little at the thought – and he’d known a little more about Akabane’s whereabouts than he’d let on. But he’d weighed out his options, and taken advantage of the opportunity. It wasn’t like he didn’t have a reason. He didn’t really feel as if he was ‘using’ Nagisa either. That whole promise thing had been his idea, after all.

“How were the tests?” His father asked, over dinner.
Gakushuu gripped his fork. “You’ll get the report card.”

They considered each other almost mutually, for a moment. Eating dinner together had been a trend recently. Gakushuu wasn’t exactly sure how he felt about it. He knew he didn’t hate it, but it was clearly a little forced. After so many years of eating alone, he supposed it was hard to break the habit (ignoring how admittedly ‘okay’ he had been with it when Nagisa was there).

“More water?” Toboso offered, as if that would defuse the situation.

His father simply raised a hand, dismissing him from the room. “Did you regain your top position?”

He couldn’t help but turn his head slightly. “Technically.” But how could he count it? No matter how he looked at it, it was failure.

“You only have yourself to overcome,” he said, expressing morphing into something softer. It freaked him out.

Gakushuu wasn’t sure what he meant. He didn’t want to ask, though. And so their meal returned once again to silence. His father was being ridiculous, anyway. Gakushuu had plenty to overcome, clearly. He would, though. Getting a slight jab in at Akabane… It wasn’t an outright win, but it was a start. A chip his exterior, or more, maybe. Not that it was of any interest to Gakushuu, but he couldn’t put his finger on it. If his senses were telling the truth, then Akabane had a kind of obsession with Nagisa. He’d been aware of it for months, of course, he’d even told Nagisa about his suspicions.

He also knew that Nagisa didn’t return it. Every time he’d even alluded to any connection between the two of them, Nagisa had swiftly denied it. Though the rush of his answer made Gakushuu consider that it possibly wasn’t entirely truthful, everything else made Nagisa seem genuine, unless he was some kind of expert at hiding his feelings. Anyway, it was simple. It was a lesson for Akabane’s arrogance, parading the very thing he couldn’t have right in front of him.

It would be wise for Akabane to just let it go. Clearly, though, as Gakushuu discovered the next morning, that wasn’t the case. Predictably. There was no sign of Akabane when he first arrived, slipping off his outdoor shoes. Then again, Gakushuu always did turn up early. Maybe, if he was lucky, Akabane had decided to skip. Gakushuu was more than aware of his reputation for that, but he hadn’t actually missed a lesson during high school.

Not that Gakushuu cared, of course. He’d already done enough, to just leave it. He had nothing left to say to Akabane on the subject. When he wracked through his mind, it was definitely the best course of action. So he decided to go on with his day. Pretty average, really; walk to class, sit as desk, arrange pens, prepare to perch high above the others…

He didn’t talk to anybody as they filtered in, which probably demonstrated his bad mood. Not that Gakushuu really tried to make conversation unless he had an express reason for it, though he at least usually acknowledged his classmates. Being a firm leader was one thing, a completely cold and rude one was another. Mostly, he kept his eyes fixed dead on the blackboard, until Akabane finally showed himself.

Feeling the tension stretch out in the room like thread about to snap, Gakushuu could feel the eyes on him. He didn’t indulge them, instead keeping his own gaze fixed dead ahead, making the shunning obvious. Predictably, irritation thickened in the air. Perhaps he should have left it like that, let Akabane suffer some more, but his scent was churning his stomach (it had been very hard to ignore how it clung to Nagisa), and he didn’t feel like putting up with it all day.
“What?” He bit out, like he was tired.

Akabane’s tone was laced with seriousness. “Let’s go somewhere for a chat.”

Gakushuu looked him dead in the eyes. “Don’t be ridiculous. Class is about to start.”

It seemed like he’d excepting that. There was a flash in Akabane’s eyes, before he turned around, casually strolling out of the class room. He looked over his shoulder, as he reached the door, like he was inviting Gakushuu to follow. Obviously, Gakushuu shouldn’t give in to what he wanted. He knew that, and yet… somehow, he found his feet moving in pursuit.

He had better not get written up or anything for this. Gakushuu followed him through the hallway, avoiding being caught by anybody else, until they were outside. It was kind of eerie, being around a school building without much noticeable activity, though Gakushuu was used to that kind of thing by then. Finally, apparently satisfied, Akabane came to a stop. He turned to face Gakushuu, hair blowing in the light wind.

*Don’t get intimidated*, Gakushuu reminded himself, feeling the chill of the glare spouting from his cool, metallic eyes.

“So,” Akabane begun. “Yesterday.”

Gakushuu raised an eyebrow. “Is there a problem?”

It wasn’t exactly fresh rage, when Akabane really glared at him. Knowing his personality, if it were, he’d probably be dodging punches at this point. No, this was something thought about, slept on, dug deep. Not that there was anything Akabane could say or do to him. Gakushuu knew of his fighting reputation, had seen glimpses through his own eyes, but he was certain he could hold his own at minimum.

“Look,” he said, slightly more nonchalant. “You can do whatever with Nagisa, I don’t care. But. Don’t use him.”

Oh, so that was his problem? Gakushuu was aware of his feelings, otherwise he wouldn’t have done it to begin with, but this was pathetic. “Are you really in any kind of position to be making demands, Akabane?”

If Akabane could shoot bullets from his eyes, Gakushuu would have been a dead man.

“Why are you playing coy with me, huh? I’m just saying, don’t drag Nagisa into it.”

In just a few seconds, Gakushuu had a debate with himself. Clearly, Akabane was delusional. It would probably be more effective to just leave Akabane to it, to let him suffer forever in this weird
cycle of love, or whatever it was. He could use this, exploit it for his own benefit. But, long term potential aside, Gakushuu wasn’t sadistic. Perhaps giving Akabane the cold hard truth would be a good thing, a good deed. It may be painful at first, but, really it would end up benefitting him.

“Listen to yourself. Or do you need me to spell it out for you? Nagisa doesn’t care. Are you forgetting who took him in all that time ago? Do you know how many times over just a few months he insisted there was nothing between you two? It was the first thing he even said, ‘we’re not lovers and we never will be’. Perhaps your clearly unrequited obsession with him is what’s truly harmful here?”

“You-“

“And next time,” Gakushuu continued, “why don’t you ask Nagisa who dried his tears every time you did something senseless?” He straightened himself, his yearly quota for noble behaviour fulfilled. “I’m returning to class now.”

It was safe to say Karma was miserable. Not just about his ‘discussion’ with Asano, he was more mad about that than any other emotion, but everything else. Somehow, it didn’t matter how much he knew he didn’t have the right to be jealous over what happened, it still hurt like every single one of his limbs was being stabbed, allowed to heal, and then stabbed again. And then, after the initial bite, he was furious. This unofficial war between the two of them, it was nothing to do with Nagisa, and every inch of him boiled with the petty blow that was tugging him into it, using him.

Not like it wasn’t exactly what he’d do if he were in Asano’s place, though. Perhaps that’s what made it worse.

Considering how often Karma used words as a weapon, he should know better than to let verbal combat get to him. And yet, he couldn’t stop thinking about what Asano said. It kept playing over and over, like a jammed tape. Then there was doubt. Asano could easily be lying to him, it would make more sense for him to do so, and yet, Karma believed every damn word he’d said.

When it came to Nagisa, it was like dealing with an enigma. Karma could never be too certain of what was around the corner, what Nagisa was thinking. Letting his hopes slide up had been his own fault, though. He wasn’t blind. Of course he’d noticed Nagisa watching him, flushing at certain moments without proper reason. So he’d turned it up a little, teasing him whenever he could, watching for any kind of incriminating reactions. There were bigger issues than Nagisa potentially having a crush or something on him, though, so Karma had yet to directly bring it up.

Asano was right. He was no good for Nagisa, not really. It wasn’t like Karma hadn’t known that, it was one of his reasons why he never planned on telling him his true feelings. Assuming Asano was referring to the times where they’d fought, when Karma had seen Nagisa’s tears for himself… Had Karma really cared about putting them there? Truthfully, Nagisa deserved somebody who would be struck with true horror at the thought of hurting him.

‘Obsessed’, he thought to himself, was a ridiculous claim. He wasn’t obsessed with Nagisa. There were plenty of things he could do, without Nagisa so much as crossing his mind. Although, he supposed, he did let his thoughts slip to Nagisa quite often. But it wasn’t like it was unhealthy. Potentially, it could be much worse, he could be going full crazy alpha and banning Nagisa from so much as speaking to anyone else.

Karma had no idea why it stung so much, because Asano hadn’t exactly told him new information. He’d just killed a miniscule flicker of hope, really. He didn’t know why it continued to trouble him. But intelligently, he knew moping about it forever wasn’t going to help him much, so he did the
best he could to steel himself, to return like nothing was bothering him.

The end of the school day was both a blessing and a curse. Part of Karma screamed to turn the other direction, to run far away from his problems, but there was a force that stopped him. He had responsibilities now, something he wouldn’t change for the world, but also something that meant he couldn’t just avoid everything and everyone.

Walking back to Nagisa’s apartment was at that point a familiar journey. Despite spending so much time there, Karma refused to refer to it as ‘home’. Doing so would only dig himself in deeper, plus it made him feel even more like a stray. He was only there out of necessity, but that didn’t mean he actually hated it.

Nagisa’s mother gestured him in greeting, not actually saying anything. Occasionally, they’d talk, but he supposed she wasn’t really in the mood for it.

“Ah, Karma kun,” Nagisa’s father, who had been spending increasingly more time around the place, greeted. He had Daichi propped up in his lap with a bottle, which meant there was one less thing for Karma to worry about. “Good day at school?”

Lying through his teeth, he decided, was the best option. “It was alright.”

He wasn’t good at the whole family conversation thing. Not that they were really his family, though he supposed it was technically close enough considering they were his son’s grandparents. Even when he was really young, his parents had never really spoken to him like that, more interested in telling him some story about travelling if they felt like engaging in conversation, than hearing about something as mediocre as his school day.

At least he had Daichi to cheer him up, for as long as it took Nagisa to get home. Presumably, he’d just woken up from a nap or something, because he seemed pretty alert. Karma sighed, sitting down with him at the desk chair. Naturally, Daichi wasn’t particularly content with that arrangement, immediately squirming. Karma guessed he was trying to grab something, and decided to sacrifice one of Nagisa’s pencils. There was an attempt to keep hold of it, all but forgotten when Karma accidentally brushed his toes, causing him to giggle. It brought a smile to his face, at least.

And then Nagisa actually came home. Karma barely noticed anything, until Nagisa was sliding the door open, and set down his bag. Last night, following the kiss, they hadn’t spoken more than they’d physically had to. It seemed, when neither of them said anything, they were about to follow that trend. Nagisa being in the room with him, though, filled his brain to the brim uncomfortably.

Karma got up, practically thrusting Daichi into Nagisa’s arms. “I’m going for a walk.”

His eyes widened, though he made no attempt to stop Karma. It was for the best, because if Nagisa had said anything, Karma might have suffocated right there and then. He grabbed the blazer part of his school uniform, since it was in reach, and quickly tugged it on as he made his way out to the balcony. No way was he walking out the normal way.

“W-wait-“ Nagisa said, like he was finally waking up.

Not indulging him, Karma quickly calculated his path, and leapt off. Thankfully, his parkour skills weren’t getting rusty in the slightest, and soon he was on the ground. Karma hadn’t exactly planned what he was going to do, he realised. It was quickly becoming summer, and the sun still shined bright in the sky. So, he just walked, aimlessly, trying to find something to think about other than Nagisa.
Eventually, the ache of his stomach gave him at least something to do. Even walking around the store and then eating the slightly weird selection he found didn’t help, not really. His legs were even starting to hurt, as he walked over practically every inch of the small town they lived in. Somehow, every street managed to remind him of Nagisa.

The rub of metal over his chest, too, screamed out for him. Irritated enough, Karma reached for the lining of his school uniform, and tugged out the pin into his hand. It was really stupid, but wearing it had become a given, as natural as wearing a watch or socks or something. His thumb toyed with the figure, a tiny chibi Sonic Ninja figure that Nagisa bought him for his birthday. There wasn’t much reason for it, Karma had just… worn it since that day. It was the best birthday gift he’d ever gotten.

Debating it for a moment, Karma refastened the pin, brimming with frustration. Feeling like this was a kind of pain he wouldn’t know how to put into words. If he had less self respect, he would have called it ‘pining’. As the sun finally went down, Karma seemed to be reaching some kind of edge, boiling over the point of anger. Completely alone in some kind of park (which appeared more for exercise purposes than playing), Karma let it take him for a moment, and he swung a fist at some metal bars.

Pain coursed through his knuckles, and he knew that hadn’t been the smartest of ideas. He unclenched his hand and flexed his fingers, just to check he hadn’t broken any of them. They all moved okay, though Karma could tell it was going to bruise. In a sick kind of way, the physical pain was an apt distraction from the emotional one, and he embraced it.

Exhaustion finally coming upon him, Karma scaled the metal frame he’d just punched, and then lay flat, ignoring the uncomfortable way the metal bards pressed into his back. Above him, the moon came out, shining low and bright in the sky. After everything with Korosensei, the moon was beginning to lose its crescent shape, small chunks crumbling off it. In just a decade or so, it would return to its normal sphere, or so the experts said.

What would Korosensei tell him to do? Probably not ‘avoid your problems and hope they just go away’, Karma knew. He’d probably advise Karma to look ahead, vaguely, because why would he just make it easy and give Karma the answer? Karma tried his best. He and Nagisa couldn’t go on with this, he was more than aware. He also couldn’t tell Nagisa the truth behind his feelings, so what was left? Ignore this blip? Push past it until it didn’t hurt anymore?

He found Nagisa on the balcony when he returned, right where he’d left him, staring up at the moon for himself. For a blissful moment, Nagisa didn’t notice him, clearly lost in his own thoughts. Just watching him, Karma’s breath caught in his throat. There he was, beautiful Shiota Nagisa, parent to his child, and the only person Karma could even imagine loving.

“Oh,” Nagisa said, barely looking up at him. “You came back.”

Standing completely still, Karma wasn’t sure what to say. He couldn’t lose Nagisa, he just couldn’t. An existence of hell, pushing aside every one of his feelings, playing the friend and acting happy when he inevitably ended up in the arms of someone else – all of it was worth it, so long as Nagisa was still by his side.

Unable to take it anymore, embarrassingly, Karma found himself flinging his arms around Nagisa. He seemed a little taken aback for a moment, not moving until Karma squeezed him tighter, hiding his face and heavy eyes in Nagisa’s hair. Apparently Nagisa had mercy on him, because he hugged Karma back after that, no questions asked. At least, right then, Karma knew that the tension between them was forgotten. Despite himself, he couldn’t bear the thought of letting go again.
To be fair to Asano, he's telling the truth as HE understands it... Heh...

Imagine a world where Nagisa and Karma just discussed their feelings? They'd be halfway to their honeymoon by now *sigh*

I hope you enjoyed this one! I promise, the next chapter isn't as depressing. As always, I appreciate any comments and feedback!
Celebration Time

Chapter Summary

Nagisa's birthday rolls around

Chapter Notes

Finally some fluff

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Things both changed and didn’t change after everything went down. Nagisa couldn’t help but feel like there was some kind of invisible air bubble between him and Karma now, although neither of them seemed to acknowledge it. Regardless, they were still friends, and it was getting to the point that Nagisa could at least ignore the tug on his heart, which before was a constant, disorientating problem.

Finally, their lives fell into a kind of normalcy. Or, as normal as it could possibly be for them. Not a lot really happened in between midterms and finals, aside from Daichi finally getting too big for newborn sized clothes (an achievement long overdue, though it didn’t come without sadness). As it stood, they’d both passed the first term of high school, and, Nagisa blearily realised when he woke up that morning, it was the last day before summer.

“Hey, Nagisa,” Karma nudged him. “No sleeping in.”

That was rich, coming from him. If Nagisa didn’t physically (with great difficulty) force him up on weekends, Karma would happily spend until noon in bed. Ordinarily, Nagisa wouldn’t have much of an issue waking up, but Daichi had had a bad night, and as a result, so had he. He suspected he must be teething or something (basically confirmed after Karma had decided it would be a good idea to feel his gums, which had only caused more crying, because really Karma how would you like it if someone shoved their fingers inside your mouth?), and aside from crying every couple of hours, Daichi had apparently decided that Nagisa and Only Nagisa was allowed to hold him.

“Will you get up if I give you your gift?” Karma said lightly.

Huh? Gift? And then Nagisa remembered, not only was it the last day of school, but it was also his birthday. Compared to last year, his circumstances were slightly better. Being sixteen and at least a little sure of where the future might take him was a stark difference to being fifteen, pregnant, and essentially homeless. It hadn’t been all bad, Asano had bought him ice cream which was pretty nice.

Nagisa forced himself to sit up, which was a challenge due to the child on his chest. He was surprised Daichi was staying so still, contently drooling on him. Perhaps the disadvantage of taking cat naps was finally catching up with him. It still made Nagisa feel uneasy, despite how peaceful Daichi seemed right then, to know he was in any kind of pain.
“Maybe,” he said, a little weakly, his voice still groggy from sleep.

Guessing he’d need his arms for this, he detached Daichi from himself, sitting him down on the bed. Somewhat amusingly, he hadn’t quite got the hang of sitting up by himself yet, and toppled sideways within a few seconds. At least it seemed to perk him up, as he started giggling about it, before rolling over sideways. In fact, Daichi was finding himself hilarious as he did this, frantically rolling back and forth like a fish out of water, a little strange to watch but at least he was amusing himself. Eventually he stopped for a moment, flat on his back, and stuck his arms out vaguely in Karma’s direction.

Karma didn’t hesitate, picking him up off the bed. “So *now* you want me to hold you, huh?”

The only reply he got was a tiny cough.

“Anyway,” Karma said, bending down to pick whatever it was up, a tiny bit harder with Daichi clinging to him, “there you go.”

Accepting the present, Nagisa looked at it quizzically. It was pretty big and hardly a consistent shape like a box or something. The wrapping seemed a little haphazard and messy, but Nagisa was surprised he’d bothered with it to begin with. Frankly, Nagisa hadn’t expected a gift of *any* kind. He found a weakness in the wrapping, ripping it a little, which caused a tiny pen to fall out and onto his lap. Nagisa picked it up, confused about how something so small had needed so much paper. It was pretty cute, actually, just a regular biro except it had a little sushi roll decoration stuck to the top of it.

He was just about to say thank you, when he noticed a different colour of paper peeking out through the tiny rip he’d created. Confused, Nagisa removed the paper properly, only to find essentially a whole new gift inside. He looked up at Karma, but he didn’t supply him with any explanation, so he ripped the next layer open. It kept going and going, until Nagisa was sporting a pretty impressive selection of sushi themed stationary.

“You really got all this?” Nagisa found himself asking, as he admired the prawn sushi shaped USB stick. “I only gave you a *pin*.”

Karma shrugged, sitting down beside him. “You can return the favour in half a year.”

He couldn’t hold back his smile, as he came to what he figured was the last layer. This time, nothing small fell out, and, by the looks of it, there was nothing else. Tentatively, Nagisa picked up the material, looking at it with horror. It was a kind of tie dye design, which wasn’t really his style anyway but definitely not the worst part. Across the front, in black letters, the English words ‘chocolate fucking jesus’. Nagisa was taken aback by the phrase, repeated three times, on the t-shirt. Occasionally he saw weird shirts from cheap places with questionable translations out and about, but never quite like *that*.

“K-karma?!” Nagisa spluttered. “What-”

Karma snickered. “You know that market in town? The one that sells all those cheap clothes?”

“Let me guess,” he narrowed his eyes. “You couldn’t resist.”

“Maybe I saw it and thought of you~” Karma joked, and then laughed properly. “Your *face*.”

Ignoring Karma finding any excuse to tease him, admiring the gifts, he really loved them all. Of course, Nagisa didn’t like sushi *that* much, not to the extent that he was being branded with, but it was all thoughtful. The T Shirt was classic Karma, though, which put Nagisa back into the territory
he knew. Not that he was ever planning on wearing that.

Right, Nagisa thought, brain catching up. “Thank you.”

Karma shrugged, and then perked up again. “Stay there, I’ll be back.”

He placed Daichi back on his lap, and then darted out of the room before Nagisa could even say anything. Somehow, Nagisa didn’t even feel like questioning it, looking back over at his small pile of gifts instead. Also interested in the collection of tiny objects was Daichi, who lunged for whatever was closest to him, definitely making to grab it.

“Don’t put that in your mouth,” Nagisa sighed, already seeing it coming.

Daichi looked at him, but not like he really understood the instruction. He babbled something beyond comprehension, as he often did when directly spoken to, and then stuck out his arms. Not minding indulging him, Nagisa picked him up, letting him essentially stand on his thigh (though Nagisa was holding most of his weight still). Apparently he was in an affectionate mood, because he wrapped his arms around Nagisa’s neck contently.

Karma returned, eventually. It took Nagisa a moment to realise he was actually already wearing his school uniform, which just reminded him that he would have to get up shortly. He was in a weird kind of mood where although there wasn’t much actually going on, time seemed to pass rapidly. Nagisa didn’t really want any of it to end, though.

“Breakfast in bed,” he shook the bottle of milk formula he was carrying.

“For Daichi maybe,” Nagisa half muttered, but he was smiling.

Sitting down beside him, Karma passed the bottle over. “Maybe there’s a reason~,” he teased lightly.

That scared him, just a little. “A reason?”

Something in Karma’s demeanour changed, his face turning a little more serious. “We should talk.”

A spike of pure fear shot through Nagisa. Somehow, he just knew that those words meant potentially something bad. Immediately, he wracked his brain for any potential conversation topics, but it came up blank. He couldn’t even count the amount of times Karma had initiated a serious conversation on his hand, because it had never happened.

Karma leaned across, poking him lightly in the arm. “Say, Nagisa, you look like you just saw Karasuma Sensei in his underpants.”

“O-oh.”

“I don’t even know why I was thinking about this,” he exhaled, “but it seemed like the right thing.”

If Nagisa had a free hand, he would have reached out to reassure Karma or something. He couldn’t stand it when Karma didn’t automatically have the right words, or seemed unsure about something. Perhaps it wasn’t entirely fair to feel that way, but Nagisa was just so used to admiring Karma’s knowledge of just about anything, it was unsettling.

“We should move somewhere.”

“Well,” Karma reclined, “I think it makes sense. Your Mum’s going to have to return to work soon, anyway. I can’t say I don’t hate it, but Daichan will get bigger eventually. Plus,” he snorted, “it’s not like we can’t afford it.”

Nagisa’s throat went dry, like he couldn’t quite process the words Karma had just spoken to him. The idea of living somewhere alone with Karma sent his heart into near overdrive. It wasn’t good for the feelings he was trying his best to get over. On the other hand, he knew that sentiment was ridiculous, because literally sharing a tiny bed with Karma should be far worse than an entire apartment – presumably. Maybe officially owning something together, putting a real label on it, scared him.

A part of him wanted to protest that they were too young to move out, but he tried to cut the thought off. They were too young for a lot of things, yet they lived through them. And then there was another, slightly more selfish part of him that was just happy his family was going back to normal. Seeing his father back around so often… It had been all he’d ever wanted a few years ago. To simply just… leave all of that behind… Nagisa didn’t feel quite ready for it.

He knew Karma was right, though. It would have to happen eventually. Daichi was getting older, and as much as Nagisa dreaded it, would start wanting to move around and get into things more and as it stood there wasn’t really much room for it. A part of him didn’t see the permanency of this situation, he knew. It wasn’t just like he and Karma were having an extended sleep over, they had a child and that was a life commitment.

“I- I need to think about this,” Nagisa got out.

“I know,” Karma said, entirely like he’d been expecting it. “It’s time for breakfast, anyway.”

Nagisa waited for Daichi to finish with his bottle, winding him properly before getting up himself. At least he seemed more settled. Karma pushed the door open for him, thankfully, as he had no free hands. Almost immediately, he stopped in his tracks.

His father was sitting at the table, sipping coffee. “So, he’s finally awake.”

“What’s this?”

The room was decorated, to an extent. By that, there was a small banner, and breakfast was already laid out. Nagisa blinked slowly, trying to comprehend what he was seeing. All of this, just for him? Perhaps he’d had something like this when he was a lot younger, if both parents were ever in the mood, but definitely not in recent years.

“I made breakfast,” his mother said, with a smile.

A smile. Cautiously, almost like he was dreaming, Nagisa made his way over to the table. With Daichi clinging to him, seemingly in no hurry to stop, it was a little awkward to manoeuvre himself down. Everything about it just felt so warm and comfortable, and despite it definitely being a special occasion (Nagisa felt just a little bad about them wasting time on him, to be honest), this was something he craved. Could he turn his back on that?

“I made breakfast,” his mother said, with a smile.

A smile. Cautiously, almost like he was dreaming, Nagisa made his way over to the table. With Daichi clinging to him, seemingly in no hurry to stop, it was a little awkward to manoeuvre himself down. Everything about it just felt so warm and comfortable, and despite it definitely being a special occasion (Nagisa felt just a little bad about them wasting time on him, to be honest), this was something he craved. Could he turn his back on that?

It was a good thing it was the last day of school, and their teacher wasn’t too concerned with proper lessons, because Nagisa was completely distracted. Even as people discussed their summer plans around him, he just nodded along, unable to relate too much to them. It just wouldn’t stop plaguing his mind, and internally he kept going round all the pros and cons.
“I honestly can’t believe you’re still doing homework on our last day,” Rin said, finding him in the library during lunch. As he often did, he sat himself down beside Nagisa. Though Nagisa couldn’t help but feel a little guilty, suspecting Rin somehow felt obligated to spend time with him, he did appreciate a little company.

“Oh,” Nagisa said, hiding the actual pros and cons list he was writing, “force of habit I guess.”

He shrugged. “So, any summer plans? I heard all the first years were going out to celebrate surviving the first term, but that’s just word of mouth.”

“I thought about it,” Nagisa said, “but a few friends kind of invited themselves over to my house for my birthday, and I didn’t want to blow them off.”

Rin blinked. “It’s your birthday today?”

He hadn’t really found it important enough to mention, truthfully. “Y-yeah?”

“Nagisa kun!” He slammed his drink down on the desk. “Why didn’t you tell me?”

The librarian glared at them both. “Both of you need to be quiet.”

Rin shot Nagisa a look. “Want to go somewhere else?”

He couldn’t help but hesitate. Really, Nagisa wasn’t exactly the loner type, at all. He enjoyed spending time with his friends as much as he could, but he had other things to prioritise. Doing as much homework during his free hour of the day made sense, so that’s what he chose. At this point, it would seem a little weird to just show up to lunch like everyone else. But Rin was just asking him to hang out, presumably. It wouldn’t be so bad to spend time with his friend, considering he had a whole summer to write essays.

“Sure,” Nagisa said, shoving everything ungracefully into his bag.

Trusting Rin’s superior knowledge of the school campus, Nagisa trailed after him. He seemed confident enough in his strides, at least, that he’d likely already planned where he was going. They ended up outside of the building, not quite off the campus, but slightly edging on the sports field. Considering the heat of summer, thankfully Rin chose somewhere shaded to sit himself down.

“Cupcake?” He asked, pulling a mini cake out of his bento.

Nagisa looked at it. “I couldn’t.”

Unwrapping it, Rin placed it in Nagisa’s hand. “Sure you can. My Mum gives me one every day, so.”

“T-thanks.”

It was a pretty good cupcake, admittedly. Nagisa found himself savouring every tiny bite, licking his lips when he was done. He supposed it wasn’t too big a gesture that he should feel bad about accepting it, really, but he was still grateful. So far, although Nagisa definitely got along with his classmates, when it came down to it he considered Rin his only real friend.

“Say, Nagisa kun, we should hang out some time in the summer. If you’re free, that is.”

It depended on how he defined ‘free’. Unlike a lot of the others, Nagisa was hardly travelling anywhere – that sounded like a whole other kind of nightmare. But, he had a five month old son
who was quickly becoming aware enough of life to get bored without constant stimulation. Keeping him occupied, as well as general care taking, wasn’t particularly relaxing.

“Yeah,” he said anyway, “we should.”

Lunch was over, shortly after that. Somehow, Nagisa felt a little better, thinking about something less heavy than his quickly impending future. The rest of the day went pretty quickly, with some final assignments being handed out before they were all dismissed. Nagisa tried his best to push his more troublesome thoughts cleanly to the back of his mind, instead focusing on the positives.

Perhaps, he thought when he actually got home, he’d thought that too early. The second he opened the door, he was bombarded. Of course, he was used to getting back to relative quiet after the chaos of the school day, so a group of teenagers right in his face was bound to make him jump just a little.

“Surprise!”

Nagisa stared blankly at the group. “I-I already knew you were coming.”

“Aw man,” Sugino rubbed the back of his neck. “I just wanted to say it.”

Limply, Kayano waved a miniature flag.

Nakamura slyly approached him and fiddled with his hair, before Nagisa had the chance to stop her. She didn’t do anything as potentially cruel as pulling out the ties, knowing how he felt about it, but he did feel a weight that wasn’t there before. Catching sight of himself in the mirror, he realised she’d placed a glittery tiara on his head.

“Nakamura san!” Nagisa complained.

She laughed, a hint of evil there. “Birthday princess~”

It had been so long since he’d seen some of them, especially all at once, that Nagisa couldn’t help but smile. Honestly, even if this was just three of his closest friends (plus Karma, who Nagisa didn’t feel right about putting in the same category), nothing could match the bond he shared with his old classmates.

Behind all of them, his mother cleared her throat. “Your father and I are leaving now. Are you sure you don’t want us to take Daichi?”

“I’m sure,” Nagisa said, without really thinking. He appreciated the offer, and he understood why his parents didn’t really want to hang out in a room full of teenagers, but as much as he could possibly manage, Daichi was his responsibility. Moving somewhere with Karma would properly fulfil that, a voice inside of him whispered.

Currently, Karma was holding him. Over time, Nagisa had realised Karma was more himself one on one, than in a large group. Not that Karma hated attention or anything, Nagisa’s best guess was he wasn’t as practised at being actively involved in such social situations, so he only spoke up now and then, when he had a reason to. Anyway, Nagisa came close enough for Daichi to clock onto his presence, and typically he began squirming, reaching out with his arms.

A part of him immensely enjoyed this. Sure there was crying, smiling, laughing, random babbling… But the gesture Daichi had recently learnt felt entirely different. A lot of things were still largely a guessing game, but this was genuine communication, clearly asking whoever it was to pick him up. It was an explicit request for something, the first of his life, and it made Nagisa’s
heart swell up to the brim.

They ended up sitting in a sort of circle on the floor, generally catching up with each other. Nagisa appreciated that, rather than all of the attention being on him. He was glad to hear that everyone was getting on okay, now that the kind of initiation to high school period was over. It was both peaceful and casual. His parents had left money to order pizza, so they ended up with a small feast between them.

Once food was involved, it was only a matter of time before Daichi actually started complaining. Nagisa wasn’t sure whether it was genuine hunger or jealously or what, but it was becoming pretty common when there was food around him. Though, Nagisa wasn’t a hundred percent sure when babies even needed real food. He was only just about five months old…

“I got it,” Karma said, noticing the displeasure in his expression, and began to stand up.

“Aw,” Kayano said, finishing her slice. “Poor Daichiisai.”

Sugino turned to her. “Eh? What’s that?”

She ignored the look Nagisa shot her. “It’s just a little nickname.”


“Y-you can’t call him that!” Nagisa protested, though nobody seemed to care. “You’re okay with this, Karma?!?”

Karma shrugged. “I don’t know, it’s cute.”

“Isn’t that right, Dai…chii…sai,” Nakamura sounded out.

Annoyingly, Daichi turned his head towards her, presumably recognising the sound of his own name. He seemed to find this incredibly amusing, first breaking out into a wide grin, before giggling his little head off. It was so good, in Daichi’s eyes apparently, that he looked straight at Nakamura and raised his arms. It surprised Nagisa a little, considering he’d only ever seen him do it towards his own mother and Karma before.

“See,” she said, picking him up, “he loves it. Hey, why don’t you guys ever let me babysit?”

“Maybe I value my son’s wellbeing,” Karma said.

Once he was offered a bottle, Daichi seemed a little more content, if not sluggish. Nagisa supposed that was normal, after being exposed to so much social activity when he was used to mostly quiet evenings. Even when he eventually really did need to be put down for a nap, Nagisa realised he was having a really good time, just hanging out with his close friends.

And he knew he could have this. He could have a life that was his and Karma’s, where they could have friends over whenever they wanted in their own space. It still felt dreamlike, and a lot of him had reservations. On the one hand, he was terrified that it would shoot him in the wrong direction, would strengthen his feelings for Karma more. On the other, more powerfully so, he wanted it.

“Did you have a good time?” Karma questioned, after everyone eventually said their goodbyes and they were left to clean up.

Something in him broke down, then. “Yes.”
“That’s g-“

“Let’s move out somewhere,” Nagisa cut in, feeling boldness spike up in him. “You’re right, I think it’s the best thing.”

As if Karma had expected him to end up saying that, he grinned slightly. “Tomorrow. Right now… There’s still a few hours of your birthday left. Want to watch some Sonic Ninja?”

Nagisa prayed he wouldn’t regret this.

Chapter End Notes

I'm gonna go out here and assume most of you will be very happy with these developments :D We needed a pause in the drama.

As always, I highly appreciate all comments and feedback!
Moving Time

Chapter Summary

Karma and Nagisa go apartment hunting

Chapter Notes

This chapter is not #spon by Ikea

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Do you think we should get a sectional?”

On his list of conversations he never thought he’d be having with Karma, this came pretty high. The morning after his birthday, he’d woken up feeling a whole new kind of content happiness. Since they didn’t have anywhere to be, they were just hanging out on top of the bed, letting their conversation drift to the agreement they’d made.

Nagisa considered him. “Maybe we should choose a place first. It might not fit.”

He propped himself up on one elbow. “Then let’s do that.”

“N-now?”

“Sure,” Karma said nonchalantly. “Kunugigaoka’s not a huge town. I don’t know how many decent apartments there’ll be.”

Somehow, Nagisa knew he literally did mean ‘let’s go right this second’. So much for a relaxing day… Though, Nagisa was pretty sure you couldn’t just turn up outside places and demand to be shown around. Karma seemed confident, from the way he hopped up, that he knew what he was doing. Well, it was his idea. Nagisa supposed it might just be one of those cases where he mostly followed along.

Leaving the house to go anywhere was a kind of art. It was a little different when Daichi was under a month old, where he was mostly happy to nap so long as he was clean and full. Now he showed full interest in his surroundings, and would start making a fuss if he was ignored for more than a couple of seconds. So, aside from the regular spare bottles and nappies and wipes (oh so many wipes), a change of clothes (you never knew what might happen), they also had to bring some kind of entertainment. And not just one thing, oh no – their son had the attention span of a goldfish, multiple items to rotate.

Knowing the small size some apartments could get, it wasn’t worth taking a pram. If Daichi was in any kind of a mood to not cooperate with them, he wouldn’t be happy sitting in it anyway. Which meant he had to be carried, mostly by Karma because his arm strength was better suited to holding a baby for that long, so there had to be a separate bag for all the emergency stuff, plus there was the matter of deciding what the best clothes to wear were because it was really hot around Tokyo
and there had to be a balance of lightness without exposing too much of his skin to the sun and parenting was stressful, okay?

“We’re just going out to the park,” Nagisa announced, when they finally were ready.

His mother didn’t pay too much attention. “Have a good time.”

If Karma questioned why he was lying, he didn’t show it on his face. In truth, Nagisa had no idea how to even begin to approach the subject with his parents, when he still had his own reservations. Perhaps, he thought deep down, it would be better to bring that kind of thing up when it was more than just an idea. On the other hand, he couldn’t just leave it until the morning they moved.

Despite a slightly sleepy baby clinging onto him, Karma kept the pace quite brisk, like he definitely knew where he was headed. Nagisa followed as close behind as he could, smaller legs struggling to keep up with Karma’s wide strides, round the seemingly random and winding streets. He had to blink when they finally stopped, trying to take in where they were. It was a housing agent.

“Oh,” Nagisa found himself saying, because of course that made sense.

“Well,” Karma said, taking another step forwards, “are you coming?”

Nagisa wasn’t sure if this was the kind of thing you could just show up to, but he went anyway. The interior of these offices looked absolutely clean and pristine, Nagisa was kind of frightened to touch anything, for fear of breaking it. It looked kind of like a ghost town, with nobody else present except the guy at the welcome desk.

“W-welcome,” the receptionist looked between them, like he was confused. “Are you waiting for somebody else, or?”

Karma flashed a cheery grin. “We’re renting an apartment.”

Eyes darting between them both, he coughed, and then pressed a button without saying anything else. Nagisa couldn’t help but flit his gaze on Karma, who still seemed pretty nonchalant about this whole thing. He swayed slightly as he stood, fixing his eyes on something across the room, Nagisa was almost tempted to follow it.

A woman came out, then, with a practically painted on smile. “Right this way.” She led them over to a small desk in the corner, and began frantically typing something. “So, what are you looking for?”

When Nagisa didn’t immediately say anything, Karma cleared his throat. “Three bedroom apartment, somewhere with a view.”

His heart fell into a metaphorical pit. Of course they’d need a three bedroom place, because it would be weird to voluntarily sleep in the same bed. Because they were just friends. Friends who didn’t have feelings for each other. Friends. It would be good for him, really, to have his own space for clear thoughts. A life without the constant temptation to snuggle up to Karma felt like a fake reality, but not something he could pass up.

“Budget?”

“Unlimited.”

“Reasonable.”
Karma looked at him with slight betrayal. “But-“

“I don’t need anywhere fancy,” Nagisa tried to remain firm, before Karma signed them up for a penthouse. He supposed it made sense, Karma (or his family at least) had always had money, so he was bound to have somewhat expensive tastes. Had he been suffering, in Nagisa’s shoebox of an apartment?

The agent typed something else. “Do you have any other requirements?”

Perhaps Nagisa really should have thought it through some more. He supposed that he’d be able to tell when he actually saw a place, but as it stood he didn’t even know what to look for. As long as it was big enough and had a roof, it was basically good enough. He was surprised that Karma didn’t appear to have any additional requests, though.

“I have an idea,” she said. “Is it… just for the two of you?”

“Three,” Karma pointed cheerily.

“Of course,” she hesitated again. “I can drive you to a nice place I think would suit you, for the low price it’s practically a steal.”

Nagisa, once again upon seeing her company car, couldn’t help but feel massively out of place. He paused for a moment, unsure of what to do. Making his mind up for him, apparently, Karma opened the car door, and handed Daichi over to him. They hadn’t really taken him in a car before, considering it was easy enough to walk or take the train somewhere, and they were too young to drive anywhere. Nagisa’s mother had driven him home from the hospital, and that was it. Just like that time, Nagisa decided the best way about it was to clutch Daichi tightly, not that he seemed to mind.

The place she began to slow down in front of looked okay, at least. The building looked like it was sturdy enough, which Nagisa guessed was meant to be important. It wasn’t too far from his current home at least, though it wasn’t exactly just around the corner either. Nagisa took a good long look at it, trying to picture himself living there. Then again, he was one of those people who could probably make it work just about anywhere.

Though the actual building wasn’t that tall, there were still a few flights of stairs before the floor they were being shown. Nagisa really wished he’d brought his notebook with him, it would have been handy to write everything down. Carrying a pram down so many stairs was bound to be annoying, but it was something they were both currently used to.

Finally they exited the stairwell, shuffling along to the end of a long hallway, before she found the door. A part of Nagisa was half expecting the door to swing open, and beams of glorious golden light to pour through. In reality, it was just plain walls and a wooden floor, but he still felt slightly taken aback, winded.

He gently kicked his shoes off in the entrance way, and stepped inside. This, his potential future home. The initial hall inside was littered with various doors, but it opened up so you could directly see that there was what looked like a pretty large balcony. Nagisa found his own feet carrying him further inside. To his left, there was a decent sized kitchen set up, and the rest of the space was empty.

Unable to stop himself, Nagisa gradually explored the rooms before him. On the right were two bedrooms of roughly the same size. The slightly larger one also had a door directly to the balcony, whilst the smaller one had a slight chunk taken out of it for the toilet. Unlike the cheaper apartment
he lived in with his parents, this one had a separate room for the shower, and the bath came just off that. Since he didn’t know the price tag, Nagisa instantly worried that it was far too fancy, even if it was pretty bare bones.

The only room on the other side of the apartment, before the larger open space, was a much smaller bedroom, though it looked more suited to being an office of some description. All of the bedrooms were western style, which Nagisa saw as a good thing. Letting Daichi anywhere near something as fragile as tatami seemed like a recipe for disaster.

“What do you think?” He asked Karma, for some kind of assurance.

Really, Nagisa was happy with it. Although he knew they should probably look at others for at least an option rather than settling for the first place he saw. Nagisa didn’t need anything else, though. It was big enough for his needs. All he really cared about was the place not being totally trashed. Sure, it could use a bit of life, but it really wasn’t bad.

“All of this,” the estate agent said, “for only ¥149,000 a month. The landlord is keen to get this place settled as soon as possible. You could even move in within the week.”

Karma narrowed his eyes, though likely not at the shockingly cheap price, but her word choice. “Why such a great deal?”

“Holiday coming up,” she said quickly. “They want it dealt with so they can have a stress free break.”

“Where?”

She matched him. “Hawaii.”

“I like it,” Nagisa interjected, before Karma got into a full blown argument.

Considering him, Karma backed down his stance. “We’ll take it, then.”

Just like that. Nagisa felt like he was going to get whiplash, by how quickly it was all happening. He’d been in turmoil about moving out just yesterday, and then there they were, signing the lease for an apartment which, after they’d paid the deposit (thankfully they had practically bottomless bank accounts), was officially theirs to occupy, once everything went through.

Nagisa’s senses did tell him there wasn’t something quite right about everything, though. Deep down, he knew it wasn’t supposed to be that simple, especially considering their age. But, at the same time, it seemed too good to pass up on. It played on his mind, though, even when they ended up in a fast food joint for some lunch.

“Are you gonna eat that?” Karma said, reaching over to take a handful of Nagisa’s chips before he could answer.

“W-we need to have a conversation with my parents,” Nagisa said, taking a sip from his strawberry milkshake. He’d consumed so much strawberry flavour whilst he was pregnant that he was honestly surprised he could still even stomach the stuff. Maybe he’d just developed a taste for it.

Karma took a bite of his burger. “You do the talking.”

Damn it. But Karma was right. Nagisa shouldn’t have the luxury of just stepping back. When they were done with their meal, he could tell Daichi starting to get grouchy too. There was only so much a baby could sleep through, and honestly he suspected carrying him around for much longer was
not one of them. He had to remember that he was confident in this, that they couldn’t just live forever in Nagisa’s tiny bedroom.

“Welcome home,” his father called, seconds after they returned. “We’re making soba for dinner.”

Somehow, he was taken over by guilt, rather than pure apprehension. Despite everything, a selfish part of Nagisa still wanted to act like a child, to come how to his parents cooking every night. But that was a reality long gone. Though they’d only just got home, Karma gave him a certain kind of look that he read instantly. To make it worse, Karma took Daichi with the pretence of settling him down for a nap, which left Nagisa all alone.

He cleared his throat. “U-uhm, Mum, Dad…” He trailed off, not entirely sure of where to begin this conversation. “Can we talk? About something.”

“That’s not a happy face,” his father looked round at him. “Did something happen?”

“Y-you could say that-“

His mother cleared her throat. “The food’s ready.”

Perhaps it would be easier to do it, when they were all seated. Nagisa shot Karma a slightly helpless look of distress, but he didn’t appear to want to dive in and help. He could barely even concentrate on eating. Something that didn’t go amiss, though, was the heave of his chest lessening. Like a relaxant, something made him feel more at ease, all through his muscles. Sneaking a glance at Karma, Nagisa could only see concentration across his expression. He was using calming pheromones, Nagisa realised.

“What did you have to say?” His father said eventually, after getting a taste of the noodles.

Right. “W-we were thinking,” Nagisa begun, because this needed to sound mutual. “Daichi’s getting a lot bigger, you know, I think he’ll pick up crawling soon! Anyway, with that into consideration, and Mum,” he addressed, “you’ll really have to return to work soon. We think it would be best if we moved out.”

Predictably, it wasn’t the best reaction. His mother’s gaze lowered, and his father spluttered on his food like he was dying. You couldn’t have cut the tension that suddenly formed. Nagisa’s eyes flitted from parent to parent, sweat beginning to form. There was no other noise, apart from Karma casually slurping his noodles up.

“Nagisa,” his father begun, with a low and disciplinary tone. “You can’t-“

“It’s for the best,” he cut him off, moving into defence. “I- we, we’re so thankful for all of the help we’ve been given, but it can’t last forever. For everything you’ve done, I’m grateful, but with your blessing, this is what we’ve decided.” For good measure, he bowed his head as low as he could without face planting the table.

His mother cleared her throat. “Okay.”

“Hiromi?!” His father let out.

She glanced at him. “Some things are in life are inevitable.” Returning her eyes to Nagisa, she sighed. “You… both of you have handled parenthood surprisingly well. Better than many twice your age, actually. I’m proud of you, Nagisa.” How much had he yearned to hear those words? “You’ve also shown me that even if I don’t want it, I shouldn’t hold you back from what’s the best for you. I’ll support it.”
Nagisa was practically floored. It did make him feel a lot better, though, to know that he wasn’t something she was opposed to. Like a weight was lifted. Despite his father clearly not being as enthusiastic, Nagisa knew he’d come around, eventually. Karma slurped his noodles again, louder this time, and he knew it would be okay.

Now that everything was taken care of, they actually had to do the whole moving part. Taking a step into his frankly overcrowded bedroom, he wouldn’t even know where to start. Though they wouldn’t get the keys for another few days, he was on so much of a roll that he just wanted to sort through things. The items he did own surely wouldn’t be enough, he realised. Unless they wanted to sit on cardboard boxes.

“Karma…” He found himself saying when it was finally night, and he’d gotten lost in his thoughts over and over. “Did you think it was weird?”

“Huh?” Karma rolled over to face him, half obscured by the pillow. “What do you mean?”

Nagisa couldn’t let it go, then. “You asked her why it was so cheap, right? And she kind of dodged the question. It just… seems a little odd.”

Through half lidded eyes, Karma started randomly patting around, finally locating his phone. He didn’t say anything, so Nagisa leaned across, half resting on his chest. Karma didn’t seem to actually mind, typing in what looked like the address of their new place. Nagisa’s eyes struggled to adjust to the light in such a dark room, but he made out a few words.

He gulped. “D-did that just say murder?”

Karma tilted his chin up a little bit, clicking on one article. “Jilted lovers… stalker… both found dead in one of the rooms. Interesting.”

“What room?”

Karma shrugged. “It doesn’t say.”

“We just bought a haunted apartment.”

He eyed him. “Aw, is Nagisa scared of ghosts?”

It had been a long day. So much had happened so quickly, Nagisa wasn’t sure he was up for Karma’s teasing. He didn’t know who in their right mind would be happy about living in a murder house, but as long as there wasn’t a corpse… Instead of putting up with it, Nagisa dove under the covers hiding his head. From their positions, this also meant he was face planting Karma’s chest, but that was just a minor. At least he let it go.

Afterwards, after the dawn of a new day, Nagisa really did discover the stress of moving. He decided against taking his bed or anything like that with him, not that his parents mentioned anything. A part of Nagisa still couldn’t face the finality of it. So, his bed and desk stayed. He was taking mostly everything else he owned, though. Going through his possessions caused a slight buzz to flow through him, like he really was excited. They’d have to buy most of the things they needed.

Which is how Nagisa found himself standing outside a kind of garishly blue building. The actual place had been Karma’s idea, which he instantly regretted it seemed once he realised that buying from there would require them actually building the furniture for themselves. But Nagisa felt better about buying relatively cheap furniture, where he could, so he was convinced.
“This place has a map,” Karma pointed out, upon entry.

Nagisa looked over at the dark blue floor plan. “That means we can get everything here, right?”

The shop provided tiny notebooks and pencils, which made Nagisa a little more excited than he wanted to admit. It made him feel like a terrible parent in a way, but looking at the scale of the store he was relieved they’d left Daichi back at home. As far as Nagisa could figure, his mother and father didn’t really mind, wanting to spend as much time as possible before they moved out.

The way the store was set up meant that they had to walk through a bunch of model rooms, which displayed all the available products in ‘realistic’ settings. Looking at how put together it was, Nagisa didn’t think realistic was a good enough description. Then again, he had no real passion for interior décor, or much artistic talent in general. Function over form, he thought.

Thankfully, but also surprisingly, they didn’t really argue too much about those items. It didn’t take long at all, for Nagisa to have the product numbers of a table and chairs, a book case, bedframes and mattresses, etc. (and yes, the sectional sofa Karma apparently wanted). By the end of their circuit, they probably had more things for Daichi in hand than anything else (because toys, Nagisa was realising, were a bit of a godsend).

Although it looked like the light at the end of the tunnel, the real ‘fun’ came when entering the market bit. Nagisa was simply overwhelmed by items he didn’t even know he needed. Once again, he let Karma lead the way, tugging him by the sleeve over to the crockery. They ended up going for the plainer stuff to get by, though there was so much he could hardly carry. At least as a start, he was certain they got the essentials.

And then Karma stopped, right in front of the rug section. “Let’s get this one.”

Nagisa was sure to a lot of people it was nice. It looked pretty intricate, dark shades of maroon weaved into a Persian styled pattern. But he couldn’t help but squint at it, somehow feeling a little nauseous. It just… wasn’t to his tastes. Plus, it would look a little ridiculous, considering how basic the rest of their purchases were.

He went with a slight tactic. “Karma, it’s eighty thousand yen.”

“So?” Karma tilted his head.

“I don’t think it counts as essential.”

Karma thumbed the material. “Sure it is.”

“How?”

He shrugged. “It’ll look nice. Plus…” he looked up, like he was thinking of something. “Exposing babies to multiple cultures is important.”

“Put it in your room then,” Nagisa mumbled. “You can’t just use Daichi as an excu-“

“How’s that fair?” Karma argued back. “I pay for half of it.”

What exactly did Karma intend, to tape a line splitting their apartment in perfect halves? Nagisa didn’t voice that out loud, afraid that it would give Karma ideas. If he had the opportunity to freely decorate half the place without care, he was sure he’d end up somehow mortified.

“That doesn’t mean I want to have to look at it all the time!”
“Fine.”

With that agreed, and carrying the slight monstrosity with them, they were left to the mercy of the warehouse. Half afraid that Karma would demand something in exchange for his compromise, Nagisa went as fast as he could, in an attempt at distraction. As more and more items were added to the large trolley they’d picked up along the way, Nagisa had no idea how they were going to get it all back with them.

The worker gave them a slightly odd look, glancing between them and the somewhat ridiculous amount of items they ended up checking out. With every item she scanned, Nagisa felt a little bit nauseous, wondering how he’d even physically managed to pick up so much. When it came to the final mug at the end, Nagisa’s breath caught, and then she announced the final total. Too extortionate it was beyond his comprehension. Though, he supposed it wasn’t that much considering how much money they really did have.

“Would you like home delivery?” She asked, once the massive sum had been split between their bank accounts.

Karma’s eyes flashed. “Absolutely,” he grinned at her.

Normally, Nagisa would complain that he was being lazy, but honestly he would have agreed to it too. Even filling out the address details and paying the extra cost, there was definitely some of that relief of not having to find some way to transport everything, given that the superstore was actually decently far away from Kunugigaoka.

“Thanks for shopping at Ikea!” She waved, when they finally left.

Though the bulk of it was now out for delivery, he still had to take the rest of his things. The best plan he had was going a single box at a time, despite how torturous it sounded to carry them that far, but mercifully his father offered to just drive him. His mother ended up tagging along too, but Nagisa found himself pretty happy about that. He supposed it was natural that they’d want to see the suitability of the place they’d chosen, for themselves.

“I’ll meet you there,” Karma said, decidedly not helping him carry any boxes.

Part of Nagisa automatically did believe that Karma was just trying to get out of physical labour, but it tugged at his thoughts. Karma… really didn’t have that much to pack, that Nagisa had seen. It made sense, considering their ridiculously extended and unofficial arrangement, that Karma had more things at his actual home. He tried to ignore the parts of him that felt bad about it.

Before it really registered with him, his parents had said their goodbyes, and Nagisa was all alone, in a strange apartment, and surrounded by cardboard. He was never really alone, though, considering he had Daichi, but on occasion, when he was asleep (soothed by the car ride, no doubt), it was hard not to, even if it was kind of a welcome break from so much activity.

Once again, he didn’t really know where to begin. Milling everything over, he supposed he should get Daichi sorted out first. The more placated he was, the easier the rest of it was going to get. He was halfway through reassembling the crib, when Karma finally showed up. Inexplicably, with several boxes of his own, and only a single bead of sweat running down his forehead. Sometimes, Nagisa just didn’t even want to ask questions.

“Welcome home,” he said, for the first time, truly in an apartment of their own.

“I’m home,” Karma returned, wearing a smile that only held a hint of devilishness.
A rough kind of representation of their apartment, based loosely on a real place!

Chapter End Notes

EDIT: Alright binge readers! If you're reading this fic for the first time, this is a good place to take a break, get a snack, or just put the fic down for now! Or, if you still have
energy, by all means keep reading on.

Just imagine they said 'okaeri' and 'tadaima' at the end.

Just so you know, the next chapter gets wild, so be prepared for that.

As always, comments and feedback are my main motivation!
As the days went by, a few things were established. The first, and Karma’s favourite, was that Nagisa made breakfast. All around, it was convenient for him, since he couldn’t muster so much effort in the morning. Nagisa, to Karma’s disbelief, seemed to wake up with the sun. Given the opportunity, he’d happily snooze until lunch time, by which hour he got just a little too restless. So it was more of a late breakfast, and more like left overs than anything.

In exchange for that, and getting Daichi up for the first few hours, Karma took the night times. It wasn’t so bad, now that he was basically sleeping through it, though he’d graduated to his own room. He tried his best not to mourn that, in the same way he tried not to mourn the walls that separated his and Nagisa’s beds.

At some point during the last few months, Karma had developed… something. Sleeping without the warmth of Nagisa right beside him wasn’t something he would have guessed would be difficult, yet he’d genuinely found himself feeling a little bit lonely at night. He didn’t have the luxury of dwelling on it for too long, though. On the plus side, he did appreciate the extra stretching room.

Typically, he ended up cooking dinner. Not that they really needed to eat the same meal or at the same time even, but it just kind of happened. Karma didn’t mind, anyway, he kind of enjoyed cooking- even more so now he had his spice collection again, so making an extra portion for Nagisa was hardly a chore. Maybe spending so much time with Nagisa’s family had indoctrinated him into the whole communal eating thing.

In addition to whatever routine they’d ended up forming, the furnishings of the place were pretty much complete, even after the inconvenience of putting most of it together. There weren’t really any decorations anywhere other than his own room (which was pretty dark, just the way he liked it), except from the class picture they’d stuck up, mainly so it wasn’t absolutely blank. Aside from that, they had a TV too (Nagisa and his love for movies hadn’t been hard to convince), which was exactly Karma’s plan for the day.

Or, at least, it was his plan, until a child was dumped on his lap within five seconds. It almost took him aback, how suddenly it came upon him. Daichi blinked up at him, looking just as confused for a moment, before chewing on his own hand. In question, Karma craned his neck around the back of the sofa, to find a kind of flustered Nagisa.
“I’m going to the bathroom,” Nagisa said shortly, and left just like that.

Karma got it. Not that he minded, but Daichi had developed a bit of an attachment thing recently. He’d noticed it before, but now that they’d moved and there was nobody else to occupy him, he seemed to really hate it when he wasn’t getting whoever’s full attention span. Sure, it was a little tiring, to focus on one thing for so long. Something seemed off with Nagisa, though.

“Hey,” Karma said, bopping his nose. “What are you looking at?”

Daichi tilted his head up. “Kakakakakaka,” he replied, and then went into some other kind of noise that couldn’t really be considered syllables.

He did his best to look interested in the baby nonsense, twisting a lock of the dark hair that was finally growing through around his finger. From their positioning (he’d worked out the math to minimise the glare on the TV screen), there was no real direct light shining on him, so Daichi’s hair appeared a kind of tinted dark brown. Outside, or so he’d noticed, it actually came off a kind of plum tone, though it wasn’t really thick enough for him to tell yet.

As the minutes went on, without Nagisa’s return, Karma couldn’t help but feel a little unsettled. A part of him almost wanted to get up and check, but he stopped himself. The likelihood was that he just wanted five minutes to himself, or something. Karma supposed he could allow him that, but any longer and he wouldn’t be able resist the teasing.

“You’ve been demanding, huh?” He questioned.

Like Daichi actually understood him, he starts tugging at Karma’s sleeve, with the hand covered in copious amounts of drool. Fortunately, he’d developed an immunity to bodily fluids. It didn’t seem like Daichi was tired, or in a particularly bad mood, though. Huh.

On some kind of cue, Nagisa remerged. Now Karma could actually get a good look at him, he was noticeably dishevelled. Nagisa didn’t say anything, plopping himself down on the other side of the sofa and staring at the wall. Since he apparently wasn’t going to engage in conversation, Karma didn’t either, and naturally began observing him.

He just kept shifting, and his body was tense. Like he just couldn’t relax. Probably ill, then, though Karma had no idea what with. He was thankful of the distance, at least. The shifting didn’t stop, eventually evolving into shivers. Karma was pretty sure it was that, considering the way Nagisa wrapped his arms around himself, which was a little ridiculous in the height of summer. If Karma had been just a little bit less bothered that day, he would have happily just sat around in his boxers.

“What?” Nagisa snapped, eventually noticing Karma’s gaze.

That was pretty unlike him. Maybe he was going insane. “Nothing,” Karma shrugged.

Nagisa confirmed his suspicions, muttering something under his breath. If demeanour wasn’t already enough, he could actually scent traces of it in the air, when he concentrated. There was something else, too, but he couldn’t quite put his finger on it.

“They say talking to yourself is the first sign of madness,” Karma supplied.

If looks could kill, Karma would already be buried six feet under. “Leave me alone,” he said quietly.

So something was up. If Karma had been a better person, he would have just left it there, and recognised Nagisa probably just needed some time alone. Unfortunately, he was not a better
person, and an urge to get to the bottom of it was ignited within him. Nagisa shifted once more, like he wanted to turn himself over and sleep.

They sat in relative silence, until Nagisa let out a noise that could only be described as a whimper, and he let his body fold in on itself. It was around then that Karma began to sense distress laced in his scent. He couldn’t stop his body from perking up with alert at that, mind racing with possibilities for what could actually be wrong. Nagisa seemed to sense it too, meeting his eyes for a moment, before turning them again onto the floor.

So Karma turned his attention back to Daichi, who was practically clamouring for it. Thankfully, at least he was in a good enough mood, content to look at the flashing colours of whatever program he’d uncaringly flipped to when he entered. As long as Karma bounced him every now and then, to remind him he was still being looked after, Daichi was mostly settled, until he started getting tired and rubbing his eyes.

After sneaking a glance at Nagisa, who definitely wasn’t going to do anything about it, Karma bit the bullet, holding Daichi close to him so he could stand up. Stretching out his legs, Nagisa still looked indifferent, so he just went straight to the bedroom. It wasn’t anything much, just a crib and a chest of draws for clothes, with whatever toys they owned somewhat haphazardly located in the corner. Really, he didn’t particularly care, it wasn’t like Daichi would ever remember it.

Considering his son, Karma just knew he wasn’t tired enough to just fall straight asleep. Not that he had Nagisa’s practically supernatural sense of judgement, but Daichi was still squirming around. Trying his best not to do it too violently, he rocked him from side to side, hoping that would induce sleep. At least he stopped the kicking in the ribs he was previously receiving. Once he seemed docile, Karma figured ‘good enough’, and finally put him down.

“Yeah yeah,” he said, trying to ignore to slightly dejected look Daichi was shooting him. “Lights out time.”

He’d fall asleep, eventually. At least with a plain room, there was nothing else really to keep him occupied. Karma sighed and closed the door, one problem taken care of. His next was still sitting on the sofa, rolled up like a woodlouse. He didn’t get why Nagisa wouldn’t just tell him he was sick or something, it’s not like Karma would care (much).

“Nagisa-“

There was that glare again. Nagisa rose to his feet, and lumbered over to his bedroom like his feet were made of lead. He closed the door hard, too, as if he was trying to make a point out of doing so. Karma was pretty sure he hadn’t done anything to anger him, surprisingly. Even if he had, Nagisa didn’t usually react in such a way. That look, it was the same one he gave a target before he was about to slit their throat.

He considered going after him, but then again, why should he? If Nagisa wanted to be a big baby, then, well, Karma had the place to himself practically. No need to go back to his own bedroom. He ended up sticking his head in anyway, to grab one of the books he was meant to read. It really wasn’t anything he didn’t already know, so he ended up paying more attention to the One Piece reruns playing in the background.

So it probably wasn’t the most constructive use of his newfound free time, but no other ideas really came to him, that he wouldn’t be forced to clean up later. Well, relaxing was fine too. He didn’t get a lot of time for that recently. Daichi would probably be even harder to keep occupied after resting up, so really he was just getting his couple of hours in.
Nagisa tentatively emerged from his bedroom, after a while, still as sluggish as before. “I-
Something doesn’t feel right.”

His blood began to run like red hot lava. It was like somebody had just opened the best bakery
ever, right in their apartment. The exact scent wasn’t something he could put his fingers on, fruity
and sugary and oh so intoxicating. It didn’t matter, he wanted to sink his teeth into it. Legs moved
against his will, and he got closer to the source.


Right there and then, Karma totally lost it. Tunnel vision switched on, and all he could see was
omega. The closer he got, the more it overtook him, inviting him in to take a bite. He moved until
there was no more space between them, trapping Nagisa against the wall with both arms planting
him there. Eyes flicking down to the direct source, the tantalising swell of his scent glands, Karma
couldn’t resist digging in, wrapping his lips around the area and sucking.

Nagisa instantly keened under the attention as his gland was stimulated, his scent getting even
better now he was so obviously pleased. With the mix of sweat on burning skin and the sweetness
of his scent, it was like licking salted caramel. And Karma couldn’t stop. Of course, pressed so
close with aroused omega filling his senses, he felt himself harden too, but it was more of an
afterthought. His top priority was licking a trail up Nagisa’s throat, savouring his taste.

Slowly, he worked his way up, until he met Nagisa’s earlobe. He ended up sucking on it, dragging
his teeth along the flesh. This rewarded him with a kind of broken noise, something he’d like to
keep and replay forever. Almost reluctantly, he pulled back, looking Nagisa right in the eyes. Aside
from the clear, burning desire swimming in his pupils, Nagisa looked wrecked already. He was
panting, cheeks about the same colour as Karma’s own hair, sweat sliding down his forehead…

More. He needed more. That time, he went for the other side of his neck, peppering increasingly
intense kisses down his path until he met the other gland. Vaguely, he became aware of his hips
moving of their own accord, desperately searching for friction, but he didn’t really register if they
made their mark. He also faintly noticed Nagisa wrap his around his back as he sucked, clutching
onto him.

“M-mark me,” Nagisa practically whined. “Alpha, please, bite-“

Karma felt his gum swell up around his upper canines, in preparation to do just that. It was all his
body wanted to do, recognising Nagisa as a compatible omega. Feeling like it was the exact right
course of action, he let his sharpened tooth scrape against the gland, teasing the omega who
practically became putty. He would bite his mark, claiming Nagisa for himself and bonding them
together until one of them died.

Somehow, like a miracle, a wave of logic came over him. Nagisa would never so shamelessly
beg for him like that. No chance in all the plains of hell. As quickly as he could, finding it almost
painful, he separated them, taking a huge stride back. Nagisa looked up at him in confusion and
hurt, and it almost snapped his heart in two.

“You’re in heat,” Karma choked out, recognising it now for what it was. “Or close enough to it.”

Pure unbridled fear flashed in Nagisa’s eyes. “I-“

“Go,” Karma practically commanded, motioning for his bedroom. “I can’t-“

“Please stay!” Nagisa reached out for his arm, looking completely and utterly panicked. “You
Karma couldn’t. A few more minutes with Nagisa like that, and he wouldn’t be able to resist ploughing into him on whatever surface was closest. He didn’t even think Nagisa was in full heat yet, considering he had the ability to form sentences, but Karma had never been close to an omega like that before. They needed protection and comfort, though, didn’t they?

He tried his best to concentrate, ignoring the pheromones swirling around the air. “Go back inside and close the door,” he said as steadily as he could. “I’ll stay right beside it, over here. Okay?”

Nagisa nodded weakly, making his escape behind the safety of his door, and Karma sank pathetically down the wall. The worst and most intense of it was gone, but the real torture was how his scent lingered. Karma had never come so close to losing complete and total control of himself before. That had been too close, dangerous.

At least he managed to ignore his own arousal. As much as he considered doing something about it, lowering his inhibitions even more would only make it worse, and he was pretty sure a bunch of alpha sex pheromones would make the heat worse, too. The panic and the weight of the situation he’d almost gotten himself into helped kill it, at least, allowing him to think at least somewhat neutrally. He was as loose as he could be with his scent, letting it seep under the doorway so at least Nagisa knew he was there.

Just like that, time seemed to pass both fast and slow. It dragged, but Karma’s mind was so full that hours passed with every blink. Even with the door closed, the scent gradually increased, becoming stronger and richer. He’d never been so thankful before when he eventually heard Daichi wake up again, so at least he’d have something to do. Judging the timing of it, it would probably his last nap of the day, and then Karma really wouldn’t know what to do with himself.

He wasn’t sure how much leaving would disturb Nagisa in that state. Remembering the desperation in his eyes, he didn’t want to risk it. Figuring it was the best he could do, Karma stripped off his t shirt, pressing it against the door. It would have to be good enough. To make matters slightly worse, Daichi did not seem to be in the best of moods, bursting into tears the second he walked into the room.

“Ouch,” Karma said aloud, but Daichi didn’t let up. “Come on, it’s not like I ignored you.”

Daichi just cried some more, so he essentially gave up. By process of elimination, he was probably just hungry, but Karma changed him anyway, a challenge when all Daichi seemingly wanted to do was roll around and kick him. Karma didn’t sign up for this. At least the bottle shut him up. Not that Karma wanted him to be silent and placid, but he was already, not that he’d admit it, in over his head.

“Here’s how it’s gonna work,” he addressed, setting him down close to the sofa. “I’m sitting right here, you’re going to stay there, here’s a teddy.”

He didn’t look particularly impressed with that arrangement. Not that Karma supposed he was capable of understanding the concept of authority yet, but it was never too early to learn. He sighed, going back to whatever he was doing before. Moping by Nagisa’s bedroom door, that was. Again, probably not the most constructive use of his time, but he didn’t know what else to do.

Daichi got bored of the one toy supplied to him, after exactly four minutes and two seconds, unfortunately. Not in a particular mood to deal with the consequences of that, he raked his eyes around for something else. There were still a couple of boxes they hadn’t completely unpacked yet… It would probably be fine, under supervision.
“Go nuts,” he said, fetching one before sinking back to the floor again.

Immediately entertained by items that weren’t toys, Daichi began sifting through it, and Karma let his mind wander. He couldn’t let himself get too far gone, for fear what might happen if that scent was stronger, and he was less in control of himself. Actually, looking his child in the eye was basically the best abstinence reminder he could get. No way was he dealing with another one of Daichi. He’d be completely overpowered. And then Karma blinked, really looking, and then he noticed the object he was chewing on, namely, his old knife from 3 E.

Well. He knew from experience those knives weren’t dangerous to normal humans. Anti-sensei material was pretty tough, he knew Daichi wouldn’t be able to gum any of it off of. After the initial spark of concern, he realised he didn’t have much of a problem with it. If anything, it was an ideal material to chew on. Nagisa might have had a different opinion, but well, he wasn’t exactly able to voice it.

Karma padded around for his phone, sliding the camera app open. What? It was adorable. No use trying to get Daichi to smile for him, lest he drop the knife, but the concentrated expression was just as good. He considered sending it to the group chat, ‘assassin in training’, but it would probably cause Nagisa to actually murder him.

“All right,” he said eventually, “hand over the weapon.”

Blankly, Daichi blinked up at him, and continued to chew on the knife.

Karma sighed, actually moving over to him. “Daichan~”

He practically wrestled it out of Daichi’s mouth, which Daichi found hilarious apparently, surprisingly keeping an impressive grip. That was probably the right thing to do. Karma returned to his previous position, wiping the knife off on his sleeve before tossing it up in the air, easily catching it by its handle. It amused him for a while, at least.

At the feel of something suddenly pressing on his thigh, Karma jolted. Right beside him, somehow, Daichi was trying to get his attention, about two meters away from where Karma had placed him. Which meant either he’d teleported somehow, or he’d moved on his own. Huh. That was new. Karma supposed he needed to keep more of an eye on him, then.

He ended up playing with him properly until it really was bed time, which he had no problem with. If anything, it really did make everything else bearable, until he had to be put down for the night. Ordinarily, he’d relax after that, but he found himself returning to Nagisa’s door, like a soldier who couldn’t leave his post. It wasn’t the most comfortable of positions, so sleep didn’t come easily to him.

After some point, it definitely turned into full blown heat. Even with the distance Karma had forced between them, he suppressed every single instinct he had, tried as hard as he could to not fall into a rut. It was damn near impossible. Just to get some kind of release, he practically bit his own arm to shreds, teeth needing to latch onto something. He couldn’t imagine how bad it must be, to actually be in a heat.

He stood up, and pounded on the door. “Nagisa, I…” Karma suppressed the growl he so badly wanted to let out. “I’m leaving water outside. I’ll be in my room for ten minutes, so take it before I come back.”

This was survival.
Nagisa had never felt like this, like he could just combust at any moment. His skin was containing his body and it was irritating him. Fire burned and rushed through every single vein. He wasn’t even sure what day it was, how long had passed, or where he even was, other than his own personal hell. The memory of how he even got there was blurred, though somehow he was naked (probably ripped the clothes from his body in frustration), and there was a shirt and a bottle of water beside him. He tried to drink some of it down, to quell and cool him, but it just made him feel sick, desire taking over.

Desire to be touched. He’d tried that already. Most of the burn was in his lower zones, and once it had become more prominent than the pain, there was nothing he could really do to resist it. Even after wrapping his hand around his apparently permanently hardened length, tugging rapidly until his body eventually shuddered and released, there was no real relief. It had barely even taken the edge off, resulting in a sore and tired wrist.

So this was heat.

A part of him knew where the need really lay. To the core, what heat was… It was a biological need. Even as out of it as he was, Nagisa hesitated, tried his best to hold off on anything too humiliating. His body, however, completely wet from the sweat and the slick pouring out of him, just gave in. Too tired after a point, Nagisa ended up giving in, letting the heat fully take over.

It wasn’t enough. He lay on his side, gingerly shoving a finger in and out of himself with little finesse. When it failed to fulfil him, he added a second, which cooled the burn just a little. He didn’t feel much of anything, no capacity for pain or any real pleasure, but that didn’t seem to matter. His body was somewhat satiated, but not completely satisfied.

As he naturally half rutted against the sheets, desperation building, he was thankful for the steady stream of alpha pheromones. Had his body not been completely weakened, he would have got up and followed it to the source, but it was good enough. It kept Nagisa from panicking in his vulnerable state, at least. He wasn’t alone. At his other side, he had the shirt… filled with kind of old but still intense alpha pheromones. He pressed it to his nose, inhaling the scent with a whimper.

The thought infected him and for the first time in his life, Nagisa wished he remembered that night between them. It was absurd, but it was the only experience he had to go off, even if all he recalled was standing in the kitchen, and then suddenly waking up next to Karma in a bathtub with a sore ass the next morning. Of course the result had made itself obvious, but other than that, nothing.

So he pictured that his fingers weren’t his own, that instead of suffering as he was he had his alpha there with him. It didn’t matter, right then, how much he inherently knew it was wrong to think of Karma in that way. He shoved his fingers deeper, knowing that Karma probably wasn’t the type to go easy or gentle. That was fine by him, with the way his body was currently reacting, the harder the better.

Then again, in a situation like this, when Nagisa wanted him so badly… Karma was too devious, too sadistic to just pound him like he wanted. This heat was already torture, but he’d find a way to torture him more, and a sick part of Nagisa would probably enjoy it. Groaning into his pillow, he sped up his motions, spreading his legs open a little more.

He moved up to three fingers, which barely even fit and probably stung like hell, but he didn’t care. Even in preheat, he’d been pretty out of it, but Karma had touched him, a little. Almost seeing white at the memory of Karma’s lips on him, his scent gland of all places (the thought of sharp teeth scraping against it sent Nagisa to a whole other plane of existence), and the weight of his
body trapping him against the wall, he was almost completely lost to the world.

There was another need brimming inside him at that thought, something his body just knew. Of course, rubbing up against him, Nagisa was pretty certain Karma had been hard, he’d felt it, but there was something else. In his madness, he curled up his fingers inside, mimicking the one thing his body really was craving — a knot. Just like that, finally, a wave of relief came over his entire body, making him cloudy and breathless.

Nagisa winced as he pulled his fingers out, trying to catch his breath, though even the exhaustion was far better than the torment. But, then, just a minute or so later, it came upon him just as strong. There was nothing he could to hold it off, except do his best to give his body what he wanted. He was getting worn down, and fast. To the point, soon enough, where he couldn’t even move, sobbing his pain into the sheets.

By the time it really was over, Nagisa didn’t really have a sense of himself. Broken beyond his limits and out of tears, he stared up at the ceiling. Despite it being plain and white, imaginary blurs seemed to dance across his vision. A, perhaps stupid, part of him couldn’t stand to just lie like that, after everything. He felt dirty and wrecked. So he leapt up, doing his best to hobble over to the door on shaky legs.

“Oh,” Karma jumped back at the sight of him, like he’d been leaning against the door and had quickly gone to his feet or something. “You-“

Nagisa stumbled upon seeing him, falling into him. Thankfully, Karma’s honed reaction speed came to his rescue, and he apparently decided to move and catch Nagisa, rather than dodge out of the way like he so easily could have. Like he was some kind of tether, Nagisa hung onto him, feeling just a tiny bit saner.

He looked at him for a second. “You’re naked-“

At that point, Nagisa didn’t even care. He wasn’t entirely sure how to voice anything anymore. “B-bath.” His dried slick was clinging uncomfortably to his legs, for one.

“It’s boring when you’re totally defenceless,” Karma muttered, and then moved quickly, sweeping Nagisa off his feet into what was basically the bridal carry. “Otherwise this would be prime blackmail.”

“I’m sorry,” Nagisa said into his neck, burying his head there. “Uhm, Daichi-“

He didn’t hesitate in his reply. “Asleep already. We had fun and all.”

“Fun?”

Karma didn’t respond to him, just stepping forward and carrying him into the bathroom. He almost protested, when Karma gently lowered him into the tub and turned on the tap. It felt kind of unnatural and gross to take a bath without showering first, but Nagisa probably couldn’t have stood up long enough anyway.

Surprisingly, Karma averted his eyes once it was full enough. “You good?”

Nagisa really didn’t want him to leave, but he nodded anyway. At the sound of the door closing, Karma leaving him all alone, he felt a very strong twinge of sadness. The water was nice against his skin, though, relaxing all the muscles that he tensed up. He didn’t stay in there for long, scrubbing as much as he could manage, and then drawing his knees up to hug them.
He just about got steady on his feet again, draining the water out of the tub as he did so. After stumbling over to the towels, Nagisa slowly patted himself dry, wincing at the feel of it on his tender skin. At least he did feel better, though, to be clean and at least somewhat fresh. Once he was a little bit happier, he caught his reflection.

Naturally, his hair had fallen out of its ties after everything, but that wasn’t his main concern. No. When he brushed some of the strands away from his neck, it was clearly lined with bruises. Some of them weren’t so bad, but others were dark. And Nagisa knew exactly how they got there. Worse still, the darkest were concentrated around his scent gland, right on top of it! It wasn’t quite a bonding bite, but it was close. Karma had marked him.

Nagisa was going to scream.

“Karma!” He rushed out, dropping the towel in his anger. “What were you-“

Taking one look at him, Karma instantly looked up, staring intensely at the ceiling. “What did I do?”

Noticing where he was standing, right next to the open door, Nagisa swallowed. “W-why were you in my room?”

Karma met his eye again, though definitely locking his gaze right there, and had the nerve to smirk, holding up the shirt, currently coated in something Nagisa prayed was drool rather than slick, but both were equally embarrassing. “I mean, I got the whole nest thing ages ago. It made sense, like, you were having my baby after all. But this? You got a kink for my scent or something?”

This couldn’t be happening. No way was Nagisa admitting that. “What are these?” He hissed, deflecting it back to the original purpose.

Apparently having regained his head, Karma came closer, as if to inspect the bites for himself. “Well, you shouldn’t have begged me for them.” When Nagisa tensed, he exhaled. “Relax, I know it’s just an alpha thing, not a me thing. Ha, your face! Go clean your room yourself, then. And put some clothes on.”

Nagisa practically raced back into his bedroom, slamming the door closed behind him to mute out Karma’s chuckles. And the worst part? If his body worked normally, it would only be three months or so until he had to go through this all over again.

Chapter End Notes

*sighs at Karma* Yes, sweetie, you *did* sign up for this, when you begged Nagisa to let you keep the baby... Remember that drama?

See, told you it was wild. I'm also not posting this at 4am today, which is why you have actual chapter notes. Woah look at me go.

Also, Daichi has purple hair because I couldn't decide when I invented him, said it for a joke, and that's just kind of how I picture him so there we go. In a universe where Nagisa's hair colour is natural and an octopus can be a teacher, their son can have purple hair. At least I didn't give him Todoroki Shotou syndrome (though Karma is a Todoroki confirmed after last chapter, passive aggressively slurping soba...
Poor Nagisa thinks his first time might have been anything worth fantasising about. He should read this fic's prequel...

Anyway ramble over. Please comment any feedback etc. as usual, I do love it!

じゃね~
Batting an almost six month old’s curious hands away from his hair was not what Nagisa would consider the best way to spend the morning. Usually, he wouldn’t mind a little tug here and there, but Daichi had been getting considerably stronger lately, and actually kind of hurt when he decided to yank with the force of his entire body. It wasn’t often that much of an issue unless he was carrying Daichi over his shoulder, because his hair was out of reach. And why was it an issue that day?

It was completely Karma’s fault, no matter what he claimed. The bite marks surrounding Nagisa’s throat had just barely faded. He still had a litany of red spots and bruises, clearly visible, even though it was already approaching the end of the summer break. They had better go soon, because there was no way Nagisa could show up to school like that. Or in public in general. Even at home, his hair was down, because weighing out his options it was the less embarrassing one.

Nagisa still hated wearing his hair down. Shame and reminder of his other’s old tendencies aside, it simply got in the way. He felt like he was constantly pushing it out of his face, but it was better than exposing the marks. At least Karma hadn’t taken the opportunity to make fun of him for it yet. In fact, they hadn’t really spoken at all unless necessary, since his heat. It didn’t help that Nagisa could barely look him in the eye.

On the one hand, Nagisa was kind of enjoying the peace and quiet. On the other, he was quickly becoming kind of bored. Stir crazy, almost. Again, that was mostly Karma’s fault, but he’d also been recovering his energy. Though, he wasn’t really in much of a hurry to go out anywhere. Despite being able to logically accept that it wasn’t his fault exactly, Nagisa still felt bad for leaving Daichi for what was essentially three days. He didn’t seem particularly bothered, but he still felt like he should make it up to him.

“What do you want for dinner?” Karma said, and Nagisa automatically flinched at his return.

So maybe the avoiding had been his doing. Despite it all, he wasn’t actually mad at Karma. If anything, Nagisa owed him a lot. He knew that if things had panned out just a little differently, it would have been a lot worse than just some bruises, and then he definitely wouldn’t be able to talk to Karma ever again. So, he was very grateful he clearly had more sense.

"I'm not that hungry right now," Nagisa said, knowing that he couldn't really blow him off with no reply. "I don't know."
Karma quirked his head a little. "Rice then."

"Plain rice?" Nagisa found himself turning to him properly. He wasn't exactly a fussy eater and he knew he hadn't specified anything, but it seemed a bit depressing. He'd basically been living off plain rice anyway since his heat, as the only thing he could stomach after the upset it caused to his insides.

"I'm tired," he excused. "You can make something better yourself."

Not sure how much he believed Karma, but aware that he had no real right to complain, Nagisa shrugged it off. He hardly felt like cooking some sort of grandiose meal either. It felt like there was something on the tip of his tongue, but Nagisa couldn't form real words to express himself. He hated that effect, but he hadn't really learnt how to handle it yet.

"I'll throw in some chicken," he said eventually. "Just because I'm nice."

Nagisa had a few retorts for that, but he actually was nice, so he didn’t say anything.

Finally realising Karma was there, perhaps, Daichi blinked and thrust out his arms. It was still the only kind of meaningful communication he had, except perhaps Nagisa could count how he'd keep moving his fist around his mouth when hungry or rubbing his eyes when tired. He was definitely getting somewhere, though, demonstrated by his nonsensical drabble.

"Papapapapapa," he said, so at least it was discernible sounds rather than pure noise.

Karma took a step back, eyes widening like he'd seen a ghost. "Woah."

"What's wrong?" Nagisa asked a little wearily, because Karma wasn't often stunned to silence.

"You mean you didn't hear that?" He reached down, picking Daichi up into a tight hold. "Look at you go, huh? And I was your first word!"

Nagisa blinked. "Word? What word?" Had there been words? Daichi was a bit too young for real speaking, wasn't he? Not that Nagisa really knew, but he didn't think they did it that young. It was rare that he could even hold a stream of syllables for that long.

"He's clearly saying 'Papa'," Karma replied, though he didn't seem particularly worried about explaining himself to Nagisa. "Isn't that right, Daichan? Can you say it again? Pa...pa," he sounded out slowly.

Daichi giggled and squirmed, repeating his mumbled attempts at the 'word' even more. Then again, why wouldn't he, if he thought he was going to get a reaction? Nagisa was highly sceptical, considering how tiny he was. He almost expected better from Karma, who was undoubtedly intelligent enough to see mindless baby talk for what it was.

"See," Karma pointed out. "He's doing it."

Nagisa wasn't sure if he should tell him. "I-I'm not sure he's doing that on purpose. It's probably just a fluke-"

"Don't be so negative~" Karma poked him in the cheek. "Don't listen to him, hey, Daichan. Your Mama doesn't want to be proud of you."

"Mama?!" Nagisa spluttered, jumping off the sofa. "Don't encourage something like that!"
Karma cocked his head. "Why? You gave birth to him."

Flush rose up on his cheeks. "Yeah, but, it's so girly."

He shrugged. "Let Daichi decide then."

'But he's a baby', is what Nagisa wanted to say. He kept himself in check, though, not wanting it to turn into an actual argument. There wasn't a lot he could really do to change Karma's mind on this, but he supposed it was okay. He'd just have to count Daichi's _actual_ first word at a later point, in a few months when he had the capacity to actually know what he was saying.

Karma took him into the kitchen area like that, presumably to start cooking the food. Well, as long as he was careful (which Nagisa trusted he would be). Whenever Nagisa made breakfast, he usually ended up doing it with Daichi in his arms too. Now that he'd started moving around on his own (he'd noticed it a couple of days ago, how Daichi seemed to drag himself forwards on his forearms), Nagisa was a little concerned about leaving him on the floor where he could speed off easily. At least he seemed interested by everything in there.

Somehow, Nagisa found his feet moving towards them, though he could plainly see what they were doing from where he was sat before. It was basically the easiest meal in existence to make, involving basic measuring before throwing everything in the rice cooker. Karma sighed after he'd done it, presumably bored by the waiting time. Not bored, however, was Daichi, who was fixating on everything Karma was doing.

"Do you think we should give him normal food soon?" Nagisa's brain supplied, before he could really think about it. It was one of those things that he'd considered briefly before, though he wasn't sure why it had slipped out right then.

Karma looked a little unsure. "I don't think he really needs it."

But he would someday. A part of Nagisa wanted Daichi to stay a helpless newborn forever, which was perhaps contributing to why he so wanted to be certain that he hadn't meant to say anything that sounded like a word. He'd never really thought of himself to be the type that would be remorseful about that kind of thing, but he was starting to realise that those days weren't going to come back. Though he was still definitely small, Daichi would never be _that_ small again. But Nagisa still loved him exactly the same amount as he had holding him in his arms for the first time, a fact that took him by surprise sometimes in its intensity.

"I think it's better to get him used to it," he found himself defending. "When he really _does_ really need it."

"If you want to try it," Karma shrugged, pulling a spoon out of the drawer with one hand.

They quietly agreed not to give him anything too hot, in case it burnt his gums. Eating that evening, Nagisa kept a close eye on him. Daichi really did seem to be watching them, and the food now entering their mouths. He could have sworn, even, that he was mimicking their eating, gumming on his own hand.

With no objections after they were done, a spare, tiny portion made its way into a bowl. Though it had been his suggestion, Nagisa wasn’t sure exactly how to do this. Daichi was just so small and fragile, Nagisa was sure he’d choke or something. With that thought in mind, Nagisa ignored Karma’s questioning look as he mixed normal formula milk in. It made the concoction look kind of gross, if he were honest, but at least the taste would be what he was used to.
Apparently neither of them had had the forethought that Daichi would eventually need a high chair or something along those lines, which meant that right then, they didn’t have a lot of options. A look of horror came across Karma’s face, when he realised the position he’d left himself in. He didn’t actually complain, though, tugging Daichi onto his lap. Nagisa would just have to do his best not to spill anything.

Daichi looked a little perplexed at an actual loaded spoon coming towards him. Thankfully, to create that expression, he’d opened his mouth a little, which gave Nagisa his opportunity. Though he didn’t quite force it, he pressed the spoon against his mouth. Surprisingly, after only a second or two of confusion, he seemed to get it, closing his lips around it. He continued to look a little wary at the new texture, before visibly swallowing.

“I’m glad you like rice,” Karma commented softly. “Otherwise your life was about to get real difficult.”

In reply, Daichi smiled widely, as if to request more. Now he knew he definitely didn’t hate it, Nagisa was a little more confident with the next spoonful. Daichi just took to it, as if this wasn’t the first experience he was having with food or cutlery. Nagisa hadn’t exactly intended to give him the whole bowl, but they reached the bottom pretty soon. In fact, Daichi seemed to pout, when the next spoon didn’t come. At least he hadn’t actually caused that much mess, only a small amount of it making its way to his chin.

It was the best that could have gone. When it came to clearing up, Nagisa felt that spike of remorse once again. Though it wasn’t as if he was suddenly already completely grown up, Daichi was definitely taking the steps towards it. First the (kind of) crawling, and then eating real food (Nagisa refused to count the supposed talking). He didn’t know how to feel. In a way, it was bitter sweet.

By the time Nagisa returned from the blind spot which was the kitchen, Daichi had been lowered back to the floor again, and was apparently finding a stray hair tie to his interest, though Karma was nowhere to be seen. For a moment, Nagisa just stood there and watched him, love overwhelming his heart. Then, like most objects, it ended up in his mouth, which meant Nagisa really had to keep a close eye. Daichi had it between his gums, experimenting with pulling the tie forwards and backwards with his thumb. Unfortunately, he tugged a little too vigorously, and that was the moment Daichi discovered the concept of elasticity.

The moment the band hit against his chin, Daichi’s eyes widened in shock, before he started to wail. Although it couldn’t really be worse than a slight sting, Nagisa still felt immediately awful about him being in pain. He instantly went to pick him up, as if that would help a little bit. Though Nagisa did know this was only temporary, and probably wouldn’t discourage him from exploring things he probably shouldn’t.

“You’re okay,” he hushed, holding Daichi flush against him as he sobbed into his shoulder. It took a little bit of manoeuvring, but he got a hand free to stroke the back of his head. When that didn’t really work, Nagisa allowed himself to observe the right moment before lightly applying pressure underneath his chin. Slowly, he sensed the chaotic waves of his consciousness relax, and the cries died down into just sniffing.

It was only a few seconds more before Daichi was taking advantage of his position to play with Nagisa’s hair again, but in that case Nagisa didn’t really find it. Perhaps Daichi was just tired, too, because he didn’t bounce back to high spirits straight away. By the looks of things, it was actually probably time for bed. Somehow, Nagisa was feeling the same exhaustion.

Before he could just put Daichi to bed, though, Karma came back out again. Despite the light mood of earlier, he seemed a little more serious. Immediately, Nagisa wished for the ground to swallow
him again. After the whole heat fiasco he’d finally felt less on edge, but there Karma so effortlessly brought it back. Nagisa swallowed, not wanting to engage in it so directly.

He found himself walking over to his own bedroom, though in some kind of bold move, he left the door wide open. Taking a deep breath, he let himself collapse onto the bed, Daichi slotting in beside him. Nagisa closed his own eyes, on the cusp of sleep, though it wasn’t long until the mattress shifted.

“Nagisa,” Karma said, though it wasn’t cruel sounding.

Knowing he couldn’t avoid it forever, Nagisa let his eyes flutter open. Karma was staring at him, meeting his eyes with focus. So he clearly had something to say. But Nagisa was almost afraid of what it could be. He found himself holding Daichi, who had fallen straight asleep, a little closer, like some kind of comfort.

Nagisa swallowed. “We should talk.”

“Mmm.”

But a kind of panic took over him. Maybe just because it had been a little while since they’d laid together like that (he was almost disgusted by the way his heart fluttered), but Nagisa was frightened of the atmosphere. It wasn’t the type he could easily duck out of. Not the type he was ready to accept yet. He wasn’t sure if it was okay to feel like that, like he shouldn’t drag the depths of his feelings out in the open.

So he changed the subject. “We have to do something about Daichi soon. Now my Mum would have returned to work.”

“Oh,” Karma blinked, a little taken aback, before rolling over to stare at the ceiling. “What were you thinking?”

It was one of those things that had just been in the back of his mind. “Some kind of nursery or care centre or something maybe.”

Karma looked over at Daichi’s sleeping form. “I don’t know. He’s still so small.”

“People have to do that kind of thing though,” Nagisa justified. “I think they’d take him at that age.”

“But what if he gets hurt?”

Though it wasn’t like they were sending him off to war or anything, Nagisa felt the same. It had practically broken his heart to see Daichi in just a small amount pain just then, so Nagisa didn’t know what he’d do if he ended up with scrapes and bruises and the rest. There was also the idea of leaving him in the care of someone he didn’t even know, no matter how qualified they might be.

“I think it would be good for him,” Nagisa reasoned aloud, finally. Perhaps it was a bit of an oversight, but he didn’t think Daichi had ever really been put next to a baby of his own age. He wasn’t sure how much they even really needed to socialise at so young, but it felt like a good thing.”

Apparently it wasn’t an argument Karma felt “We’ll look then. But it had better be somewhere that takes bribes.”

“Just what are you planning?!”
“G’night Nagisa.”

A little bit worried at that prospect, Nagisa looked over at his relaxed expression. “Why would you want to leave him in a place that accepts bribing?! Isn’t that unsafe-“

“Simple. Easy way to get a nanny costume. Remember the maid outfit that one time? I think we’re due a repeat.”

He knew exactly what that meant. Nagisa turned away from him, flush dancing on his cheeks. “N-nannies aren’t the same as maids anyway!”

“Sure,” Karma dismissed.

He closed his eyes again without telling Karma to leave.

_____________________

**Fan art**

A really adorable strawberry Daichi by Miyoko Miru
And Karma being dangerous with the baby, also by Miyoko Miru

These arts are honestly so adorable and I'm super happy to share them with you! Please give the original some love whilst I die over these!

Chapter End Notes

A little shorter than the last one, but hey we all needed a breather!

I hope you all enjoyed!

As always, please leave comments and feedback!
“Nagisa kun.”

Nagisa whipped his head around at being poked, letting his muscles relax from their tense, defensive state. It wasn’t like him, to get so caught up in studying. They’d only been back at school for a short while, and whilst he was still adjusting to it, everything had seemed to speed along so quickly. Without him really realising, it was almost midterms.

He blinked, looking back at his classmate. “O-oh, sorry.”

Higashi, the girl who sat beside him, rolled her eyes. “You’re really in your own head, huh?”

“I’m focusing on study hall,” Nagisa defended.

She cleared her throat, as if she was about to make a declaration. “You’re coming out with us later.”

Eyes darting around, Nagisa realised he was surrounded. The classmates that sat around him were looking at him with varying levels of intrigue. Like if he said no, they’d end up dragging him with them anyway. Sure, Nagisa could probably make an excuse and get out of it if he really had to, if it were do or die, but he knew when to pick his battles.

“Oh, I see,” Minami leant forwards from behind him. “So you just have crazy parents?”

Nagisa panicked. “No! I’m not texting them.”

But he wished he had just stuck to that. It would have been a really good excuse. Pretending like it was simply his parents being strict, and therefore not letting him see anybody socially, would have been completely plausible. Thankfully, though, they didn’t actually press him about who he was texting. Nagisa did it under the desk, just to be sure.
A weight was lifted from his shoulders, though Nagisa still felt guilty about passing off his parental duties. He knew he could make it up, though. It had actually been pretty hard to find any kind of child care that took them in so young, considering most (including that place they’d fixed up the year before) ran from ages two and above. Which meant they had exactly one option, in the entirety of Kunugigaoka. They’d been ridiculously lucky to even get a place.

“Yeah,” he said, just as the final bell sounded out. “I can come.”

“Great” Nishi, the boy who sat at his other side, wrapped an arm around his shoulders. “We’re getting bubble tea.”

Nagisa didn’t particularly care for bubble tea, but it probably wasn’t the worst way to spend his time. He tried his best to nod along with their conversation over to the shoe lockers, but they were talking about a memory, rather than anything from popular culture. It made Nagisa’s heart sink a little, when he couldn’t follow it, though he knew it was entirely his own fault.

As it turned out, the place they were taking him to wasn’t that far from school. In the opposite direction from the train station, sure, but Nagisa supposed he wouldn’t be back too late. Somehow, he felt as though he was being watched, like they were half expecting him to make a break for it. That theory was confirmed, when he was very purposely pushed into the middle of the group, once they entered the small shop.

Since he wasn’t particularly fussy, Nagisa just went for the basic cold brew tea, though chose strawberry bubbles in the heat of the moment. Perhaps he never was going to get over the strawberry thing. He followed his classmates over to the corner of the shop, where they’d claimed
the biggest table.

“Come,” Nishi said, “you can sit here.”

“Thanks,” Nagisa replied, and took a sip. The tea was nothing special, but the strawberry burst in his mouth shortly after with sweetness. The conversation between everyone picked up, which gave him time to slowly sip it and listen in.

“So,” Higashi leaned forwards after a while, “what we really want to know is if you’re actually in the Yakuza?”

Nagisa choked on his tea. “E-excuse me?”

“Oh my god,” Nishi wacked her arm. “You can’t just ask him that!”

He looked between all their curious faces. “Y-you asked me here to find out if I was in the… Yakuza….?”

“Well,” Minami said, “it’s not like we haven’t been trying to get you to hang out with us for months now, but yeah, kind of.”

Nagisa swallowed. “Why do you even think that?”

“We have quite a lot of evidence, actually,” Higashi pulled a sizeable book out of her school bag, and slammed it on the table. “I don’t like making blind accusations. So.” She stared at him, like this was definitely supposed to be an interrogation. “We’ve only ever seen you in class. The second it’s over, you bolt, like there’s something you have to get back for. Whenever there’s a break, or a weekend, you’re always busy.”

He wasn’t entirely sure how to react to that. “Y-you think I’m some sort of crime lord because of that?”

“Of course not,” she sighed. “An underling, maybe. I mean, it’s not just that. Everyone agrees you’re kind of mysterious Nagisa kun, no offense, and some things just don’t quite add up. Nobody has ever seen you shirtless, so you could easily be covering tattoos. Your demeanour. You always seem to have money. Plus you’re, like, one of the best in PE, and…” She trailed off.

“She means you don’t look like you should be,” Kita finished for her, brushing her dark hair out of her eyes.

Nagisa understood it. Part of him was still convinced he was going to grow at least some time soon, but at the moment he was small and skinny. He knew that was supposed to be normal for an omega, no matter how hard he trained with anything it would be hard to build up much visible muscle. All of that meant that with his assassin training, his athletic abilities might seem a little out of place.

But Nagisa wasn’t at liberty to tell them the truth. Lest he get in serious trouble with the government, potentially, he couldn’t tell anybody what happened in the last year. The rest of it, that was just his own decision. It wasn’t that he was particularly ashamed of anything, but it had been so long without bringing Daichi up, it would probably be worse now he’d known them for so long.

“I’m not taking part in any organised crime,” Nagisa finally settled on. “So you don’t have to worry.”

Higashi’s eyes widened. “But-“
Kita glared at her. “It’s done now.”

“I just take studying seriously,” Nagisa explained. “And I don’t have any tattoos.”

“Oh,” Nishi shrugged. “Well, that was fun.”

“But my research!” Higashi complained.

Nagisa looked at her, admittedly, well maintained notebook. It seemed like she’d actually put quite a lot of effort into her notes. Perhaps they had that in common. Nagisa remembered how fun his surveillance of Korosensei had been. At first he’d just done it out of necessity, figuring that maybe it would be a good idea to record everything they knew about their teacher. But at some point, though, Nagisa had come to think of it as a hobby. He enjoyed scouting for information.

“There’s some pretty solid evidence here,” he smiled. “Nine out of ten times, this would all have definitely added up to me being in the Yakuza.” Finally, Nagisa looked between them all. “Uhm, is this some kind of rumour going around?”

Kita leant back in her chair. “Yup,” she punctuated with a pop.

Great, so everyone thought he was part of some kind of gang? Maybe that explained why some people seemed a bit wary of him, so he hadn’t been imagining it. In a sense, it was kind of hilarious. Nagisa had never had much of a reputation before, so this was all new. Ironic, really, considering his true personality. Assassination maybe, but he wasn’t a criminal. He wasn’t sure how to feel about it.

“I’ll hang out with you more often,” Nagisa promised. “At least, during school hours.”

Minami blinked. “So you do have really sucky parents?”

“Not really,” he responded automatically. “I don’t even live with them anymore.”

_Damnit._ The interest that comment peaked wasn’t ideal. Nagisa wanted to crawl away and hide, at their unwavering stares. Thankfully luck was on his side, because that was the moment his phone began to vibrate. His eyes flit down to it, Karma’s contact showing up on screen. Considering Karma never called him, he was instantly worried.

“Who’s that?” Higashi asked.

“My roommate,” Nagisa panicked, and then pressed to answer. “What’s wrong?”

“Hey Nagisa,” Karma’s voice came over the other end. “The hostage situation can’t be too bad.”

Nagisa bit his lip. “It’s not so bad.”

“Anyway, question- Where did you put that washing thing?”

Honestly, Nagisa didn’t even know what he was talking about, but something else stuck out. “What for?”

There was a pause at the other end of the line. “I need ammonia.”

“Why?”

Karma laughed casually. “Just a small juice stain.”
“Juice?” Nagisa questioned. “Why did you even have juice?”

“…He didn’t want to drink the water as it was.”

It took him a moment to process what Karma meant by that. “You gave Daichi juice?”

“Relax Nagisa,” he remained casual. “It’s not like I gave him a bottle of rat poison.”

“Karma! Do you even know how much sugar’s in that stuff?”

“It was fine! I mean, until it landed up all over the place.”

And then Nagisa remembered that this conversation wasn’t happening in isolation. Something had briefly come over him, making him forget the series of eyes now trained upon him. The full conversation would have been hard enough to explain on its own, but hearing only half of it probably would seem pretty strange. By the looks of things, Nagisa had already spent enough time out.

“I’m coming back now,” he said, making it definitely not an offer but a fact.

Karma definitely hesitated, like he was about to tell Nagisa not to. “See you,” he said in the end, and the line went dead. Perfect.

Swallowing, Nagisa shoved his phone in his pocket. “Sorry guys, I should probably go.”

Higashi’s eyes followed him, as he stood up. “What was that about?”

“I don’t really know yet,” he answered, “and I’m not sure that I want to. Uhm,” he looked them all over, “I had a lot of fun.”

“Hey, you’ll come with us again sometime, right?” Nishi said.

Nagisa left with a smile plastered across his face. Aside from spending mutual time with Rin during lunch, it had been so long since he’d been involved in a normal conversation. Well, normal enough, if the Yakuza accusations were discounted. Even when with one of his old classmates, the conversation managed to flit to something child related.

There were worst problems to have, though, he thought as he made his way to the train station. He could never view looking after Daichi as any kind of chore, even if he was currently worried after Karma’s call. He supposed nothing could have been too wrong, considering how level Karma’s voice was. He couldn’t tell as easily through a phone call, but Nagisa still was very good at reading his thoughts.

By the time he actually got home, a whole number of bad things could have realistically happened. However, when he opened the door and took his shoes off on autopilot, there didn’t seem to be much chaos. Nagisa peered around the wall, looking into part of the kitchen area. No sign of anybody. Thankfully, though, before he had to start searching every room, Karma’s head popped up from the sofa.

“Yo,” he greeted, and went back to whatever he was doing.

Nagisa stepped forwards tentatively. There didn’t appear to be much of a mess at all, really. In fact, the more he looked, the more creepily spotless everything seemed. Either Karma had just been messing with him, or there was something shady going on. Somehow, Nagisa decided that he
didn’t want to dwell too much on it, if there was nothing to worry about.

“I’m home,” Nagisa said out of habit. “Did you solve the juice problem?”

“Hmm?” Karma looked up, with slightly tinted cheeks. “Oh, yeah. I shouldn’t have called you,” he mumbled.

Looking over, Nagisa saw Daichi in his own little world, sitting in the high chair they’d finally bought him, eating a banana. Well, by the looks of things, he wasn’t really eating it per say, more playing with it. Apparently, he’d discovered that mashing it with his fists made the fruit an interesting texture. Nagisa knew that he shouldn’t be really concerned, since they were still feeding him the formula regularly. At least it was entertainment.

After a few seconds, Daichi noticed him, and started banging his tray with renewed vigour. He hadn’t quite said another word yet (Nagisa still wasn’t convinced he’d been saying ‘Papa’ at all, though he supposed he had been repeating the syllables a lot), but not for lack of trying. Nagisa was almost surprised he was so lively, considering he didn’t have the (kind of) luxury of napping whenever he felt like it anymore.

Once he was done… punching in excitement, he stuck his arms out, asking for a hold. Thankfully, Nagisa had become kind of numb to messes, barely even flinching when Daichi wrapped his arms around his neck and nuzzled into him. He still wasn’t particularly happy about cold mush being rubbed into his skin, though.

“You need a bath,” Nagisa sighed. He, too, was going to need a bath.

Daichi just giggled, and rubbed his cheek into the crook of Nagisa’s neck again. Even though he’d only been gone an hour or so longer than usual, he felt a twinge of what felt like homesickness. It didn’t make that much sense when he broke it down, but it was a lot harder to leave Daichi at a nursery rather than just with his mother, especially after the summer break. He knew he’d get over it, eventually.

“At least you can add banana to your list,” Karma commented, standing properly beside him then. For reference, Nagisa had been noting down exactly what foods he liked and didn’t. Fortunately, so far, he seemed to just be a fan of food in general. How much of it actually ended up in his mouth, however, was another question.

Now that Daichi could hold himself up pretty solidly, they definitely didn’t both need to bath him, but Karma made like he was going to help anyway. Considering his lazy personality in most things, it never seemed to apply when it came to Daichi. Nagisa wasn’t even sure if it was a conscious thing or not, but it was the same for him. Hard work, yes, but the last thing Daichi was was a burden.

If Nagisa could have paused his life right there and then, he would have.

Chapter End Notes

Nagisa Is Not In The Yakuza

The Yakuza is like, the Japanese mafia, if anybody doesn't know what that is.
Festival Time

Chapter Summary

The annual Kunugigaoka school festival rolls around again.

Chapter Notes

I wrote 4k words today. Daichi cuteness level over 9000.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Alright Daichan,” Karma said, “time to go.”

Daichi didn’t seem particularly keen on going anywhere, right then. He was far more fascinated with… Karma had to do a double take, not entirely sure what he was playing with. On closer inspection, it turned out to be the TV remote. He hadn’t quite managed to turn the box on, but he was making his best effort to press all the buttons.

Of course, Karma would have let him stay there if he could, since he knew he wouldn’t miss anything too important if he happened to skip school that day. But then Nagisa would scold him, and it just wasn’t worth it. So Karma just sighed, and bent down to take the remote out of Daichi’s hand. His son looked up at him in betrayal, when Karma’s tug outmatched his own strength, and tears began to stream down his face.

“Sorry,” Karma tried. “But you’ll get over it.”

He continued to sob a little, but it didn’t turn into full blown crying. Karma swung his bag over his shoulder, and picked Daichi up with his other arm. Thankfully, he seemed to forget his upset pretty quickly, and didn’t try to put up a fight. Karma considered that a positive, because the less he freaked out at this point, the better.

Sure, it made the most logistical sense, but he’d totally got the short end of the stick. Nagisa got the happy, excited reunion, where Karma got the whining of separation. It wasn’t so bad at first, but in the last few weeks Daichi seemed to actually notice he was gone. He wasn’t ever really that clingy otherwise, annoyingly. Karma knew he wasn’t exactly neglected, but it still sucked.

At least Daichi was probably a little too young to remember where they were going, just from walking there. Nursery wasn’t particularly far thankfully. In fact, Daichi remained pretty subdued as they entered the building, but he knew he wouldn’t last for long. Considering he had to leave pretty early for school, it didn’t help that they were one of the first ones there. Well, better to get it over with.

“Papapa,” Daichi whined the minute he was put down, shaking his head back and forth and reaching his arms out.

Karma felt his heart breaking, so he crouched down to attempt reason. “C’mon Daichan. Toughen
up a little, huh?”

He didn’t seem to like that idea. Recently he seemed to be getting the whole ‘shaking your head means something negative’ thing, and Daichi hadn’t stopped doing it. Karma sighed, knowing that they couldn’t really drag this out any longer. One of the members of staff shot him a sympathetic look, and Karma just hated sympathetic looks.

“Are you gonna say bye?” He tried.

Daichi shook his head again and whimpered, even if he didn’t really know what Karma was saying to him. With nothing else to do, he stood back up again, straightening, and tried his best to ignore the whining sobs as he turned away. Ordinarily, he wouldn’t be so affected by something like that, but it made him feel awful. He just had to hope Daichi would get over it in a few minutes.

Like usual nowadays, he was the last one to class. Not that Karma was ever desperate to be the first there, but apparently he’d walked in on some kind of discussion. Looking at the time, he was only a minute late for actual lessons, though they seemed to be pretty into it. Whatever it was, didn’t sound that interesting or worth his time, so he just went straight over to his desk.

“Akabane,” Asano acknowledged.

Karma forced a casual smile on his face. “Mornin, Asano kun.”

He swung round, looking Karma in the eye. “We’re discussing our final roles for the school festival tomorrow.”

That sounded boring. Sure, the last one had been okay, since he’d been in direct war with Class 3A, it was interesting. Not that he’d been the most involved even then, he and Nagisa had been fighting and he really hadn’t been able to bring himself to care that much about something so trivial. With absolutely nothing than the honour of Class 1-1 to protect (which he didn’t care about really), he wasn’t motivated.

Asano cleared his throat. “Since Akabane has nothing to add, all positions are final.” He glared at him, then. “The only role left is a greeter. I trust you won’t drive our customers away.”

Shrugging, Karma leant back. He probably had better things to do, like study, but it wouldn’t be the worst. If Asano really wanted to win the best booth, then it would be a good chance to mess with him. Of course he was most definitely planning something, that much was clear, or else he wouldn’t have made any kind of big deal about it. Karma might… strongly dislike the guy, but he did respect his intelligence.

Nothing else was said in regards to the festival for the rest of the day. The final exams would be coming up shortly, and although once again there were no massive stakes this time, Karma felt a kind of determined focus. He would most definitely aim to beat Asano indisputably. It would hold more weight, perhaps, given that this time they were studying in exactly the same circumstances. So there wasn’t much time to waste on stupid things like festivals.

Of course, like he often did, Karma forgot all about it when he got home. It was empty as always when he got there, considering how much closer his school was compared to Nagisa’s, but he’d found an appreciation for that. At least there would be just a few minutes for him to clear his head, after the headache that was having Asano exist in the seat next to him all day.

He perked up when he heard the door begin to open, though. As good as silence could make him feel sometimes, he always preferred his brain to be busy, on the move. Also, he just kind of missed
Nagisa after spending so long amongst idiots. Daichi too, of course, but with a grand vocabulary of one word you couldn’t quite hold a conversation in the same way.

“Welcome,” he played off his minor excitement.

Nagisa’s smile glowed, as it so often did. He slipped his shoes off carefully, a far happier looking Daichi in his arms. It made Karma’s vision blur at the edges, surrounding Nagisa’s form. A lump formed in his throat, and all he wanted to do right then was pace up and hold him. But he couldn’t. Somehow, he was no longer afraid of Nagisa himself, but the way he made him feel.

“Karma?” Nagisa said, in front of him by that point. “You look—”

He forced himself to drag his eyes to the ground. Karma had been experiencing some pretty weird things recently, when it came to Nagisa. Sure, he’d accepted that it was normal to want exactly what he couldn’t have. And he really couldn’t have Nagisa, that much was obvious. As full of shit as Asano was, Karma was pretty good at judging a lie. ‘We’re not lovers and we never will be’. It would be a lot easier, he figured, if Nagisa was truly unavailable, rather than the fleeting knowledge it was just a bad idea.

It was actually Daichi who interrupted Nagisa’s speech and his own train of thought. He made a noise that didn’t particularly resemble speech, lunging out for Karma with his arms. Well, at least he’d forgiven his earlier betrayal. Karma accepted him into his own hold, feeling slightly more whole when Daichi happily squealed and wrapped his arms around his neck.

That was right. This was what was truly important. The pressure of the strings tugging his heart, common whenever he was in the same space as Nagisa recently, lessened immediately. Apparently it was visibly obvious, because Nagisa didn’t try to continue with his question. Although he was still sure that Daichi liked to be held, he was getting increasingly more restless, and started squirming like he wanted to be put down within a few seconds. Karma sighed, not wanting to fight him on it, and Daichi was off like a rocket.

Nagisa smiled after him. “He was doing that when I picked him up too.”

He hadn’t bothered to learn proper crawling still, more than content to just drag himself along the floor. Karma supposed it was whatever, as long as he was getting places. Sometimes Karma would put him down and he’d be the other side of the room in a blink. He wasn’t entirely sure how, but Daichi had a pretty impressive amount of natural stealth. Whether to be proud or somewhat concerned by that, however, was a different matter.

“Oh, Outsmarted by our son?” Karma asked teasingly. “I thought you were the number one assassin.”

“I’m tired,” Nagisa complained. “They’ve really been ramping up the lesson difficulties.”

Karma wasn’t sure if it was as hardcore as Kunugigaoka’s exam preparations. Then again, Keisetsu was a pretty exam heavy school. At least Nagisa didn’t have to suffer with any big festivals. He definitely wasn’t looking forward to it, even if it was just a few days of his life. Right then, he almost regretted not finding out exactly what Asano was planning.

“We need to go shopping,” Nagisa said, nonchalantly walking over to the fridge. “Unless you feel like instant ramen again.”

Part of him hated instant ramen, but the lazy voice inside him said that food was food and he was totally fine living off the stuff. He stretched, following Nagisa over to the kitchen. He was right, upon inspection, there really wasn’t a lot. They tended to buy food and other supplies out of
necessity, not routine.

Karma sighed. “Real ramen sounds good.”

“Tomorrow morning?”

And then he remembered. “I can’t. I have that festival for the next few days.”

Nagisa looked at him in question. “I’m surprised Kunugigaoka are even holding something like that.”

He had a point. After everything with Korosensei came out, the school had noticeably been keeping a low profile. The media circus was only just beginning to die down, with the doors to the school very much being closed to the public. The annual festival was practically famous, in this part of Japan. By hosting it so brazenly, they were practically inviting the media back in again. Well, perhaps money and tradition were more important than reputation.

Though, he didn’t have much to verbally say about it, so he shrugged instead. “Let’s just order food in.”

Nagisa chewed his lip. “Isn’t that kind of a cop out?”

“Not if you’re hungry.”

“Fine,” Nagisa said, grabbing a soda from the fridge and moving over to the sofa, where he sat himself down and started scrolling through his phone, presumably looking for places that did delivery. “I have to study biology anyway.”

Karma joined him. “Huh? And how’s your biology?”

He made a sour face. “You know that science is my worst subject.”

“Want some help?” It was a semi serious offer. Though science wasn’t necessarily his favourite subject, he never really struggled with any of the facts. “I could test you or something… Hmm, what’s mitochondria?”

Nagisa’s expression creased with confusion. “The…powerhouse of the cell?”

“Well-“

“I don’t know,” he complained. “I’m not studying anything like that anyway.”

Karma felt a real kind of determination to help him then. And, surprisingly, not because of the pleasure that would come with undermining and humiliating his intelligence. He supposed there was nothing wrong with assisting Nagisa in study, in fact it was probably the opposite of wrong. It just made sense, considering it was likely he’d have at least an idea about the subject.

“So what are you studying?”

His eyes raked over to the wall slightly. “Gestation,” he mumbled lowly.

He paused a second to take that in, before laughter rose. “You should know more about that already than anybody.”

“It’s really technical!” Nagisa’s voice rose a pitch in complaint. “And I didn’t really pay attention to any of the science stuff. I just kind of wanted Daichi to be born already back then, and I don’t
think that’s going to help me answer questions about mono whatever antibodies!”

Was that… a trace of sass Karma was detecting?

“Monoclonal,” he found himself correcting.

Nagisa made a noise of exasperation, and that’s when Karma felt a slight movement press down on one of the sofa cushions, right beside his leg. He looked over, noticing tiny hands pressed there, Daichi’s head peering up over the top. Of course, he supposed they hadn’t really paid much attention to his whereabouts, it was only a matter of time before he got bored.

“Hi Daich-,” Nagisa said, his stress apparently fading just like that, before cutting himself off.

Karma was confused as to what had distracted him, when he noticed the significance. In order to be in that position, Daichi had definitely pulled himself up, using the cushions to support his weight as he stood. Sure, they’d held him up with his feet on the floor before, but never like this, practically up on his own. Daichi didn’t seem fussed about it, like he’d been doing this for weeks already. Well, at least that explained how he’d found the TV remote earlier.

In all honesty, Nagisa looked a little more spooked about it than Karma was. Almost as if he didn’t know what to say. Before he could, though, he heard the unmistakable sound of their door buzzer, which meant the food Nagisa must have ordered had arrived. When Nagisa didn’t immediately move, Karma scooted forwards, picking Daichi up with him as he stood. At the swift movement of being swept into the air, Daichi giggled, no complaints about being removed from his standing position.

He looked curiously at what turned out to be a pizza guy, though undoubtably recognised the smell of food. Well, it was better than instant ramen. Again. Karma gave him the money, and transported the pizzas straight over to the sofa again. Thankfully Nagisa was hungry enough to forget his shock, which meant they didn’t have to eat in awkward silence.

Unfortunately, however, Nagisa had forgotten one very important detail regarding their son. The thing was, Daichi did eat well. He had a couple of teeth now and once he’d been introduced into the idea of flavour, all he seemed to want to do was eat. So, it was kind of hard to have any kind of food in front of him, leaving him out, without upset. Pizza was great, but probably not something they should be feeding to an eight month old.

That didn’t stop Daichi from crying, when he figured out he wasn’t going to be getting anything. Karma thought about it quickly, and tore the crust from his own slice. He figured it probably wasn’t that different to regular bread, which they’d already introduced him to. It wasn’t as bad as all the cheese and sauces, anyway. Thankfully, Daichi was immediately pacified when Karma handed it to him, keeping him propped up on his lap.

“You think it’s alright to give him that?” Nagisa asked tentatively.

He examined the way Daichi’s face broke into a smile as he chewed off a little. “He seems fine.”

The rest of the evening passed without much issue. Daichi managed to finish a decent amount of the pizza crust, after which his tiredness became obvious. As usual, they gave him a quick bath, before putting him to bed. A positive about the nursery is that it seemed to tire him out a fair bit in comparison to the full weekends they had him. He was straight to sleep, and Nagisa had even forgotten about his biology problems.

The new day brought new issues, though. Not only did he have to go to school on what was
technically a weekend, but he had to spend all day with Asano, his mindless friends, and the rest of the boring class. It wasn’t exactly a thought that had him leaping out of bed. His absence could be used for one thing, though. Nagisa seemed to take huge personal issue with any time he left Karma alone with Daichi, though Karma could tell it wasn’t out of mistrust, but some kind of guilt. It got on his nerves, only so many times he could physically say the words ‘I don’t mind’, so any opportunity to let Nagisa ‘make it even’, or so to speak, was a good one.

At least, that’s what he told himself. Karma convinced himself it was worth it because that was the only way he had any motivation at all to not skip. That motivation almost immediately vanished when he arrived at school, to be greeted by Asano’s dumb, smug face. It sent a storm of rage through his body, but he kept his cool.

“Good to see you have the troops out already,” Karma gestured the preparations for the ‘booth’. Unlike last year, it was just a pretty small tent, rather than the concert thing he’d tried to pull off. “What happened, lose all your pop idol friends?”

He scowled, a little. “Anything too flashy wasn’t approved. So, we’ll be targeting a different demographic. Not the masses, no, something more exclusive, luxurious, more expensive.”

Resisting the temptation to roll his eyes, Karma did notice a glint of something. This wasn’t just Asano trying to be extortionate, no, it was like Nagisa had pointed out for him – all eyes would be upon the school. Asano needed to draw as little attention to them as possible, so he’d chosen a quiet option, yet something he could hike up the price for and still boast competitive profit numbers.

“What is this?” Karma peered round. “Some kind of resort on the go?”

It certainly seemed like it. Even though it was really just a massive tent in front of the school building, the insides had been decorated meticulously. Karma wasn’t exactly an expert at interior design, but he didn’t doubt that he was seeing top range materials. There was an entire lounge to relax in, a makeshift kitchen and bar, massage tables, a hot tub, even… It seemed to be a full spa, and it was already buzzing with the preparations of his classmates.

Asano smiled flatly. “Your job is simple. You stand outside, welcome people in, hand out complimentary champagne – both alcoholic and not. Here’s your uniform.”

He pressed it straight into Karma’s hands. It took him a brief moment to really take in what Asano had just done. The trousers were fine, just your regular formal black style, but the top half, if it even counted for so much, was just a very skimpy waistcoat and bowtie. Frankly, it was probably something a stripper would wear. He immediately saw right through it all. Asano had never been shy about playing dirty before, no, but humiliation? That was Karma’s territory. So what, his plan was to ridicule him by dressing him in a stupid outfit? In front of his peers? Well, he could go along with it.

“You want me to wear this?” Karma played dumb.

He met his glare. “Call it eye candy, if you must.”

Karma was unable to hold his smirk back. It would have been a lot harder, if Asano hadn’t said anything so incriminating. Of course, trying to make a point out of humiliating him wasn’t Asano’s main goal here, he was far too driven by victory to focus all his energy on that. Which meant he hadn’t thought it through meticulously. And now Karma had the chance to turn it right back around.

“Well,” he cleared his throat lightly, and then raised his voice so that the others could hear him. “If
you want to see me all dressed up like this, then I can hardly say no~”

The ball was in Asano’s court, and he remained rigid, though ever so slightly taken aback. “You know that’s not what I meant Akabane.”

“It’s alright, Asano kun~” Karma clapped him on the back. “It’s the twenty first century, after all. Nobody here’ll judge you for finding another alpha attractive.”

“Enough,” he barked out.

So maybe this could be a little fun. He did as Asano said, changing into the uniform. Honestly, he didn’t really care about being practically shirtless, or the questionable looks he was getting from passers-by. The only truly bad thing about the outfit was how cold it was, since they were nearing November. Still, Karma realised that to undermine Asano properly, he had to do his ‘job’ as best as he humanly could, turning around to catch Asano’s eye with a wink every now and then.

It turned out that all it took for him to actually lose it was speaking to their customers. Karma took great pleasure, when an elderly woman asked him what their booth was, and why he was dressed in such a way, that poor sweet Asano was ‘in denial for his long term feelings’, and just needed some kind of excuse to live out his fantasies. He hadn’t seen much after that, aside from her going inside to ruffle Asano’s hair and say something to him.

So, eventually he came out, a bottle of massage oil in hand. At this point, Asano was quite literally inviting this. But he wasn’t stupid. For a moment, neither of them said a word, communicating only in their glare. Still, Asano did carry a certain determination. He must have thought whatever he was about to suggest through at least somewhat.

“Seriously?” Karma quirked an eyebrow.

“We’re not getting enough customers to buy the additional massage,” he explained. “So, you’ll be advertising it.”

Was he for real? “So you want me to rub massage oil over myself?”

Asano did look sincere. “You see to have no problem parading yourself around out here, so I doubt it will be a problem.”

Karma saw it for what it was. A game of who could out embarrass the other. Fine. Humiliation was a discipline that couldn’t be mastered without having a tolerance for it yourself. So what if people were looking at him weird? Seeing Asano squirm every time he made a slight dig was more than worth it. Until, unfortunately, he just stopped reacting at all. Whether it affected him or not was a different question, but he looked bored and that was no fun.

“Say, Asano kun,” Karma strolled over. “How much am I getting paid for this?”

He didn’t bother to look up, from where he was counting the money. “Clearly you’re not.”

Karma leant himself on the table. “But I have rights, Asano kun. First the unpaid labour, what next? Hell, I haven’t even had a break yet.”

“Akabane,” he said lowly. “If you don’t-“

He cut himself off, and Karma whipped his head around to where he was looking. Sure, he’d noticed a few other people come to stop and stare at their ongoing battle, but this was about to turn into a full blown argument. Being slightly sheltered by the tent, they couldn’t be heard clearly.
Even with the price of entry, he immediately clocked people moving as if they were going to buy their way in. Well, it was true that drama sold well.

Asano took a look at his pile of money, and then back at Karma. “I have a proposition.”

“Oh?” Karma entertained.

“I will win this,” he said confidently. “I have to, to establish myself, to show even the older classers that I remain on top. But this tactic, although effective, I need to be certain. We need more visitors.”

How precious. “You’re asking for my help?”

Asano’s shoulders heaved. “Yes.”

“And what do I get for it?” He faked batting his eyelashes. “Aside from charity.”

He thought for a moment. “My father might not be in charge anymore, but I still have influence. I’m the class president. I can see to it that your personal records are wiped clean.”

Didn’t seem worth it. “Hmm.”

Asano’s glare deepened. “Think about it Akabane. What kind of university would accept someone with a history like yours, regardless of grades? The fighting, absences, suspensions… Maybe you’d be lucky, but this is the kind of thing you’d want to be sure on. I can make sure it all goes away.”

Well, if he wanted to win that badly. Karma hadn’t been completely worried about his admittedly rocky behavioural records. He could turn on the charm when he really needed to, interview well, and as long as his test scores were decent… He supposed there wasn’t too much harm in working with Asano on this, though. He nodded, sealing their contract.

“When you said we should come to the festival,” Nagisa hissed, “this wasn’t quite what I imagined.”

He was having some serious Karma problems, in both senses of the word. He’d been doing so well recently, pushing his pesky feelings aside, slowly getting over them. Apparently not fast enough, because surely the universe was punishing him. There Karma was, stood in front of him, except he was half naked, clothed only in shorts so tight they could be underwear, and a bowtie. To make matters worse, he looked totally at ease, chest glistening and dripping with some kind of oil.

Nagisa was completely and utterly merciful that he had Daichi with him, otherwise his mind would have gone to dark places, and he wasn’t sure what he’d have been able to do to stop it. It was the final day of the Kunugigaoka school festival, and Karma had seemed far more engaged in it than before. Was this the reason why?

Still, Karma perked up with a genuine smile, as if nothing was wrong. “Hey, you made it.”

“Papapapa,” Daichi motioned, alert and pretty happy to be in such new surroundings.

“You’ll get oil all over you,” Nagisa muttered, but Daichi didn’t seem to care that much.

“He’s fine,” Karma brushed off, immediately tipping Daichi upside down. He was rewarded with a couple of high pitched squeals, though at least he knew when to stop before Daichi got too queasy.

Nagisa went up on his tip toes, trying to peer over Karma’s shoulder. “What is this?”
With his free hand, Karma scratched the back of his head. “It’s a long story-“

“Hey! Over here!”

Automatically, Nagisa turned, only to come face to face with a pretty hefty looking video camera, a boom mic, and a hungry eyed reporter. It took him aback a little, but it wasn’t something he hadn’t faced. Though it had been hard to ambush them in public, every now and then, during the first month or two after graduation, the occasional journalist had tried to get a story. With Kunugigaoka so open like this, it made sense that at least local stations and such would be present.

Karma handed Daichi back over to Nagisa, steeling himself. Nagisa just did his best to ignore the toxic scents slowly over taking his surroundings. It didn’t stop the camera from being pointed straight in his face, though.

“You were one of the hostage kids, right? How do you feel, months on? Why would you come back here? Do you blame Kunugigaoka Junior High for what happened?

“U-uhm,” Nagisa begun. “No questions, please, thank you,” he ducked out of the way.

Karma, for some reason, didn’t follow him. But Nagisa knew he could handle himself, and he wanted to be as far away from the flashing lights as possible. Looking over his shoulder, Karma had stayed where he was, and was talking the journalist. Nagisa wondered why for a moment, figuring that Karma had realised they wouldn’t be leaving with no story.

He kept looking over his shoulder as he walked, which meant he crashed right in to somebody. “Sorry!” He said quickly.

“Nagisa kun,” Asano himself looked down at him. “Akabane Two.”

He wanted to crawl underneath a rock and die. Of course he’d known running into Asano would be a danger, but one he could avoid in a crowd. Ever since the whole kiss thing, they hadn’t spoken a word to each other. And although Nagisa felt bad about it and still wanted to be his friend after everything, the awkward atmosphere between them was worth avoiding.

“Hi,” he said, because he wasn’t going to be impolite.

Asano frowned, looking at what was going on. “Time to handle that. Excuse me, Nagisa kun. We’ll have to catch up later.”

He didn’t get the chance to, though. Somebody else approached, a taller, hefty looking man in a finely pressed business suit. Nagisa couldn’t quite remember the name, but the face was familiar, it was all over the news. He was the man who had taken over the school, when Asano’s father had been asked to step down. Nagisa drew himself closer, only catching the end of the conversation, as the reporters were banished from school property.

“Asano kun,” his eyes bore onto him like hot coal. “Akabane kun. I think you should both join me in my office.”

Nagisa prided himself on his ability to sense intent in a person. Though he wasn’t sure what Asano and Karma both had in store for them, it definitely wasn’t good.
Yay, I'm so glad I got this out today! I'm going to a musical festival this weekend, so considering writing time, there probably won't be another update for a week or more, just a heads up!

I hope you all liked this one. There's actually quite a bit of set up woven into this chapter in particular ^_^

As always, I lovelovelove comments and feedback, so please don't hesitate to leave some! I'll try my best as always to respond, even with limited WIFI
End Of Term Time

Chapter Summary

It's the last day before the winter break

Chapter Notes

I literally have work in five minutes, help. The speeeeed

See the end of the chapter for more notes

For reasons not completely clear to him, Nagisa was feeling incredibly impatient. Unlike before summer, where there wasn’t much to do towards the end of the term, they were being worked to the bone. Nagisa’s head was swimming, considering they hadn’t even had a break in the load after the final exams, but he supposed this was the path he signed up for choosing such a top school. Somehow, despite all of that, things seemed a little easier in the last few months.

“Pst,” Higashi poked him in the arm, “you know-“

Before she could finish what she was about to say, their teacher cleared his throat. “Higashi san.”

She gulped. “Yes, Sensei?”

“It may very well be the last day, but there’s still a lot of work to get through.” His demeanour softened a little. “Your conversation can wait until after class.”

Nagisa was surprised she wasn’t getting a harsher punishment that simple chiding, so he deducted everyone must be in a pretty good mood. He stretched out subtly, waiting for class to be over. At least *Karma*’s punishment was over. He (a known trouble maker) and Asano (a first time offender but the ring leader of the situation) had been given essentially a community service punishment. Nagisa still wasn’t sure why Karma had been dressed like that, but the school hadn’t been happy. If they’d been avoiding more controversy since the assassination, giving a slightly sarcastic interview half naked hadn’t really helped.

It didn’t really matter to *Nagisa*, aside from having to have Daichi to himself the past few months a lot more than he usually would. If anything, he was just glad it was over because a Karma who was forced to spend at least an hour a day cleaning with only Asano for company was not a happy Karma. At least they’d coped with it without trying to slit each other’s throats.

As his thoughts began to wander, class finally drew to a close. It seemed like Higashi wasn’t about to let go what she’d wanted to say, because she turned right to Nagisa the minute their teacher left the room with a heavy sigh and well wishes for the new year. With that, their second term of high school was officially over.

“Come with me,” Higashi grabbed him by the wrist, pulling him out of his seat so fast he could barely grab his bag. Nagisa yelped, but didn’t prevent her from dragging him swiftly out. “Walk
He almost complained that she wasn’t giving him much of a choice, but he wasn’t in a hurry. Since Kungigaoka’s break started a day before Nagisa’s, he didn’t have to worry about picking Daichi up from nursery. Higashi was making it seem like whatever she was about to tell him was important. By dragging him away from the rest of their friends, he guessed she had to tell him something.

Finally, when they were surrounded enough by a bunch of third year students who wouldn’t care about their gossip, she let it out.

“Have you noticed anything about Kita and Nishi?”

Nagisa paused in his steps. Raking his mind back, there hadn’t been any alarm bells ringing. They’d seemed the same as they were everyday, and Nagisa rarely ever missed anything major. Had he just been blind, or something? Then again, Higashi was pretty observant herself.

“Not really, why?” He asked.

She looked at him with wide eyes. “Is it seriously just me?”

Nagisa let out a slightly awkward laugh. “I don’t know what you mean.”

“Nagisa kun, for real,” she glared, “they literally spent Christmas Eve together.”

It took his brain a moment to catch up with the meaning of that. He supposed it was a pretty romantic holiday in concept, and two high school kids spending it together would probably raise some questions. But they were just friends, weren’t they? If Nagisa really thought about it, it wasn’t out of the question, they did seem close.

“Oh,” he let out, verbalising his thoughts at least a little bit.

She deadpanned. “I need to get them to admit it. Once their feelings are out in the open, they can date properly, and we’ll all be happy for them.”

“W-what if they want privacy?”

Higashi didn’t seem too concerned with that though. “Overrated. Maybe if they weren’t already so obvious about it. Anyway, you’re helping.”

He most definitely hadn’t signed up for that. What did she even want to do, to prove their friends were in a relationship? Nagisa wasn’t sure what that would actually achieve, but to her credit she did seem very determined about it. And how could Nagisa help? He hoped whatever she was planning wasn’t completely insane, though Higashi’s planning face was something to reckoned with, Nagisa was a tiny bit scared.

“You really think they’re together?” He asked, because at least that would be better than if they weren’t in a relationship.

Higashi smiled wickedly. “Of course. And after the break, we’re going to prove it.” Before Nagisa could ask what her plan even was, she pulled out her phone. “I have to hurry off now anyway, have a great New Year!”

Well, that was interesting. So it seemed Nagisa had inadvertently signed up to bug his friends. Perhaps he should give them a small warning, but that would probably just set them on edge. The least he could do is try and contain her from doing anything too bad. On his own by then, Nagisa
paused to wonder if he really had been oblivious. Though he would he happy for his friends, he hadn’t seen it coming.

“Hey, Nagisa kun.”

Nagisa jumped, not immediately recognising the voice, and turned to face its direction. He faltered, locking eyes with Oshiro. Since he’d harassed him a little and been generally creepy on their first day, Nagisa had avoided any conversation with him. Oshiro, too, hadn’t approached him, after Rin had told him off. They’d mostly just acted like the whole interaction never happened.

“Yes you,” he said, assuming Nagisa was confused. Something was off, though, his demeanour less cocky than usual. “Uhm, can we go and talk somewhere?”

Of all the things that could be considered a good idea, going off somewhere alone with Oshiro was not one of them. But it wasn’t like Nagisa couldn’t handle himself, if he really had to. Maybe it was just his senses, but he was inclined to believe that there wasn’t any bad intent behind his request. In fact, he was curious.

Nagisa swallowed. “Okay.”

They didn’t quite walk together. Oshiro moved a few paces in front of Nagisa, leading him outside the school. Although there was more of a buzz of people outside, they were less confined and much more engaged in their own conversations. It was like hiding in plain sight. Although, Oshiro didn’t quite start talking then, shuffling Nagisa over to the wall.

“Man,” he said, “I’ve been trying to figure out a way to say this for months.”

Nagisa held his eye contact, detecting a kind of nerve behind his expression. So he wasn’t about to say anything bad? He wracked through his brain to try and prepare for whatever it could be, but nothing made sense. Why would he hold on to something for months, just to bring it up right then?

Oshiro nodded, a self-affirmation. “My family likes to play local news channels quite a lot. So, I was kind of surprised to see you on there, weeks ago now.”

Had they actually put him on their coverage? “You know I went to Kunugigaoka Junior High,” Nagisa pointed out. Thankfully, most of this classmates didn’t dwell on the drama surrounding his old class.

He let out a light half laugh. “Don’t worry, that’s not what I’m asking. It’s not like you were on it for long, but I turned an eye towards it, you know anybody would if it was someone they recognised… Is the kid yours?”

Nagisa’s breath caught in his throat. Even back in the moment, bombarded with reporters at the festival, he’d forgotten about Daichi. The flurry of activity hadn’t bothered him back in the moment, in fact he’d seemed indifferent to the attention. How had Oshiro jumped to the right conclusion, based on just that?

“It’s just! It’s been messing with me,” he sighed into his hand, when Nagisa didn’t reply. “Maybe you were babysitting or something, but some guy cut you off and I didn’t really get a closer look. Uhm, you know there are rumours about you right? I’m sure you could be real scary, for sure, but a kid explains more than that yakuza thing could and-“

“Slow down.”

“Huh?”
“Slow down,” Nagisa repeated softly. “Your thoughts are all over the place.”

Oshiro took a deep breath, and his consciousness levelled out. “Look, you hear stuff, about what happens to omegas, but when it’s somebody you know? I don’t want to make you uncomfortable,” he panicked again, “if you don’t want to talk about something like that. But you must be so brave, to go through something so awful and come out the other side and look after a kid.”

It took Nagisa a moment to catch up with what he was implying, and then he blanched. His thought process made sense, because not many people would willingly have a baby so young, but his and Karma’s situation had just been messy. He hadn’t been assaulted, or anything.

“I’m truly sorry,” Oshiro bowed his head. “You’ve dealt with enough already, you definitely don’t need stupid… comments. I hope you’ll forgive me.”

Nagisa wasn’t sure how to even begin to correct him. On the one hand, he was glad that he regretted being sexist, a lesson many people could do with learning, but it was for the wrong reasons. He shifted where he stood, trying to ignore the heavy way Oshiro was looking at him. Should he just accept the apology and move on? It wasn’t as if they spoke much. Then again, Nagisa didn’t want him to think he was some kind of victim. He had to set him straight.

“Hey guys.”

Rin came up behind Nagisa, cutting off the conversation. Of course, he probably assumed Oshiro was annoying him again. The moment he arrived, Oshiro met Nagisa’s eyes with a somewhat panicked expression. Rin wasn’t the most confrontational or, well, protective of people, but he did have a certain level of superiority that came with age.

Dropping his gaze for a moment, Oshiro straightened. “Have a good break, Nagisa kun, Aino Senpai.”

“What did he want?” He asked, the moment he was gone.

Nagisa wasn’t sure why Rin was being so frosty. “To… apologise?” Honestly, he was still processing that entire conversation, not sure what to make of it exactly. “He wasn’t bothering me, I promise.”

Rin’s demeanour softened. “Well, anyway. How was your day?”

“I’m just glad it’s over,” Nagisa admitted. “They gave us a lot of homework though.”

“Tell me about!” He complained. “All we heard was how lucky we are to have such a great education and a well known university and really we should want to do more work. Bleh, it doesn’t make a difference to me, I’m leaving next year.”

That was news. “You’re not staying here for university?”

They continued to walk together, coming out of the school grounds. “I thought about it, but that’s not the reason I came here. Probably sounds ridiculous, but I just applied for Keisetsu because that’s what my friends were doing. I guess you are, though?”

“It’s what my Mum wanted,” Nagisa admitted. “I considered somewhere different, but… A lot was going on around the time of applications, so I just went with it.”

Rin nodded along. “So, to the station?”
Steps faltering, Nagisa felt his heart drop. “I don’t know if I can go home.”


Nagisa forced himself to smile. “Don’t worry Rin kun, it’s nothing bad. It’s just, it’s Karma’s birthday today, and I still haven’t found him a gift. It’s not like I wasn’t trying, but nothing felt good enough. And now I’m stuck.”

There was a moment of heavy silence, where Nagisa was sure Rin was trying to find the words to say ‘good luck with that’, when he cleared his throat. “You know, I’m pretty good with gifts.”

“You are?” Nagisa felt hope rise. Maybe Rin could be his saviour. “I don’t even know where to start.”

“Karma your roommate, right?” Rin thought aloud. “Maybe something practical, since you live together and know the kind of things he doesn’t already own.”

He considered it for a moment. “Karma’s not… really a practical type. He bought me an endless pile of sushi stuff for my birthday.”

“Sushi? Is that why you have all those pens?”

“It’s my favourite food,” Nagisa tried to explain. “But he was mostly did it to embarrass me.”

Rin went quiet as they walked, before stopping in his tracks. “Does he have a favourite food?”

“He drinks strawberry milk a lot…” Nagisa trailed. “I don’t think there’s any gifts like that.”

In reality, there were many things he could buy Karma. Nagisa knew the kind of things he’d like, from his favourite video games to weapons, but it just didn’t feel right, especially now he could afford something better than a simple pin. Thinking about it, Karma would probably prefer quality over quantity. But what?

Now that he’d thought about it, maybe he should just get Karma milk. It would be a fair trade off, considering all of the sushi apparel. But simply something like that… If Nagisa wanted to get him back, then he simply had to think like Karma would. The excess made to tease him… The only way Nagisa could even achieve something to that effect was getting him a life time supply or something.

“You just had an idea,” Rin said, “didn’t you?”

Nagisa grinned. “Thanks for all your help!”

It was totally unlike him, a gift Karma wouldn’t expect. For some reason, it made Nagisa giddy. Sure, it wasn’t anything deep and meaningful, but somehow that wasn’t the point. Not only would it be a taste of his own medicine, but there was a big chance he would also genuinely like his gift. So, on the brisk walk to the train station, with a little help from Ritsu to get to the right phone number, the Au Lait Series manufacturer received a strange call.

Aside from chipping the money in to buy their old class building, it was the single largest purchase Nagisa had made with his bounty. Sixty cartons of the stuff to be delivered to their front door, on the first day of every month for the next year. It basically translated to two cartons per day, but he could easily land up with an excess. For good measure, Nagisa bought a single carton, so he’d have something to give him. This experience, plotting something, was demonstrating the joy that definitely did come along with it. He understood, slightly, why Karma and Nakamura had so much
fun together. Not that he’d be able to keep it up for as long as them, a taste of it was more than enough.

“I’m home,” he called, not long after he’d got off the train and made his way back.

There was no sign of life in their apartment, aside from a muffled sound coming from behind Karma’s bedroom door. Well, looked like he’d had a productive day. Stalling outside for a moment, Nagisa knocked, but only received yet another muffled noise in response. He didn’t often go inside Karma’s bedroom, since he had no real reason to, but he knew Karma would be far more vocal if he really didn’t want Nagisa in there.

“You’re still in bed?

Karma looked him dead in the eye. “It’s my birthday.”

“Karma, it’s 5pm,” Nagisa let out, at the sight that greeted him. Karma looked half asleep, where Nagisa had left him in the morning.

“Where’s Daichi?”

“Hiya!” A face popped out from underneath sheets, and Nagisa felt his bafflement dull.

Karma yawned lazily, pulling himself up so he was kind of sat. “I can hear you worrying from all the way over here.”

“Did you at least feed him?” He couldn’t help but question, since Karma wasn’t really the type to stay in bed once he’d gotten out of it.

He deadpanned. “You really think he’d be this chilled out without food?”

Nagisa forced himself to relax, he knew Karma was right, really. With the large workload, spending an entire day hiding in the warmth of bed almost sounded heavenly. He found it almost a little hard to believe that Daichi had seriously been kept amused by staying in one room all day, but he certainly didn’t seem to be in a bad mood.

“Eh,” Karma continued on, “we had fun, didn’t we, Daichan?”

Daichi giggled, emerging fully from where he was hiding. Unsteadily, Nagisa immediately noticed his attempt to pull himself to standing. Recently he’d got pretty good at standing on his own for a few seconds, but only if he’d pulled himself up on furniture, or been placed that way. So he immediately knew that an attempt to just pull himself up, especially on an uneven surface like a bed, wasn’t going to go so well. As predicted, he quickly lost balance, and Nagisa had to dive for him so he didn’t go toppling straight onto the floor.

Naturally, he found this entertaining, clapping his hands together as if he wanted another turn. Nagisa didn’t dare put him down again, just in case he got the idea to try that again, which would knock a good few years off Nagisa’s life. Thankfully, firmly in his arms, Daichi gave that pursuit up, wrapping his arms around his neck with a sigh. Finally, calm washed over him.

“Here’s your gift,” Nagisa said, manoeuvring a free hand to pull out the milk and toss it to Karma.

Karma looked at it for a moment, before shrugging and piercing into it with the straw. “Thanks.”

He didn’t know what was going to hit him. Maybe Nagisa could get used to this whole messing with people thing… Unlikely. It was a little bit of fun this one time, but it didn’t suit his
personality, he thought. Still, seeing Karma’s face when they got that first delivery, he couldn’t wait. Without really thinking about it, he found himself lowering himself, so he was sat on the edge of the bed. Daichi realised, too, and began squirming as he dropped his arms, forcing Nagisa to let him go.

Thankfully, he didn’t go that far, still doing that weird army crawl thing over to Karma. Once he got there, he seemed content to just tug at Karma’s arm, at least pulling himself so he was sitting – a skill he had actually mastered. Karma didn’t seem to mind, ruffling his hair.

“I’m staying like this for the rest of the break,” Karma murmured.

“We have to go to my parents’ for New Years,” Nagisa pointed out.

Karma’s face fell. “Since when?”

He sighed. “They don’t get to see Daichi that often anymore… You don’t have to come, but, you wouldn’t want to spend it here alone, right?”

For a moment, Karma did look like he was seriously debating doing just that, but his demeanour softened. “I guess not. They’re cooking, at least? Your Mum’s food is pretty great on special occasions.”

Well, as long as it convinced him. With everything considered, Nagisa felt like he got along a lot better with his parents, since moving away. He was looking forward to spending the celebration with them this year, although spending the break at Karma’s old house last year had been surprisingly fun. They’d still have New Years Eve alone, though. Well, not quite alone, he remembered as Daichi giggled again. Never alone, but he wouldn’t want any different.

Chapter End Notes

I wish I had something clever to say here but AGH I NEED TO UPLOAD MAYBE ILL FIX THIS IN EDITING

PRAY FOR ME LADS

First edit: okay so this chapter pushed me over 200,000 words can you believe it?
New Year Time - Second Period

Chapter Summary

Once again, the new year rolls around, and everyone takes a nap

Chapter Notes

i have returned from the war

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It was weird to celebrate New Years again. The year before, they were just making it up as they went along, but this time around it felt like they should know what they were doing. Still, it was New Years Eve, and they didn’t have any particular plans. Nagisa was almost tempted to suggest a massive cleaning adventure again, but he didn’t quite have the same nesting urge anymore. He also figured that Daichi was a little too young to notice it was any different to a normal day, so he wasn’t concerned with doing anything for his sake.

Daichi looked content enough anyway, sitting up on Karma’s lap in the living room. He couldn’t help but wonder if he should be worried about letting him watch TV and things, if that was bad parenting. Then again, Nagisa would probably find a way to be worried no matter what he did. By the looks of things, Daichi was too worn out for much else. There was no way even a movie would keep him interested in any other circumstance.

To be fair, it was getting late. Even if, now they were on their break from school, they supposedly had the luxury of waking up when they wanted, Daichi seemed to have other plans. Nagisa supposed he took after him in that sense, he too didn’t really sleep that long after the sun was up. There was no room for him to complain, he’d take not sleeping in over getting up several times in the night any day.

At least Karma didn’t seem determined to keep him up until midnight. “Time for bed, huh?”

Possibly at the sound of the word ‘bed’, Daichi attempted to squirm out of his grip. “Papapa,” he complained desperately.

He wasn’t quite strong enough to break free from that, even if he was weirdly powerful for his tiny size. He had no problem wriggling away from Nagisa whenever he felt like it, anyway, but wasn’t that just typical? Thankfully, Karma seemed to have noticed that he really didn’t have energy left in him, and kept a pretty firm hold on him as he shifted in preparation to stand up.

“Dada,” Daichi tried again, holding his arms out for Nagisa in desperation.

Nagisa sighed, standing up to comfort him. “Come on Daichi, you need to rest.”

He tried to sound out something else, but it was muffled in his arm when Karma handed him over, apparently not too annoyed at the blatant favouritism. When it came to things like this, comfort,
Daichi seemed to cling onto Nagisa far more than he ordinarily would. With his head tucked into the crook of Nagisa’s arm, he gave up the fight, going pliant as Nagisa carried him into his room.

Daichi must have been really tired, because the motion of Nagisa walking alone was enough to send him off to sleep. He made a sighing kind of noise, rubbing his cheek against Nagisa’s chest, before his eyes flitted closed. It would be a pretty long day tomorrow, anyway, so a long rest was probably for the best. He didn’t even stir when Nagisa wrapped him up and laid him down. Still, Nagisa kept his steps backwards light, so as not to disturb him before exiting the room.

“I’m surprised you’re not making a big deal out of that,” Karma said, when he flopped back down on their sofa.

Nagisa peered at him. “He’s always picking sides like that.”

He sat up a little more, looking at him curiously. “Ah, is Nagisa a little sleepy too?”

Was he missing something? Nagisa wasn’t particularly tired, all things considered, there was just a lot to focus on. At least he’d passed his first year of high school already, so he didn’t have to worry about grades for a good number of months. Daichi hadn’t been particularly rowdy either, unless you counted launching half his dinner onto the floor. Falling asleep did sound nice, he supposed. At the thought, Nagisa replied with a yawn.

Karma chuckled lowly. “You’ve been trying to get him to say that for months now. You really should get some rest, if you’re gonna miss it.”

It truly took him a moment to catch up. Oh. Nagisa scoffed a little, he hadn’t been trying to get Daichi to say ‘dada’, silently encouraging, maybe. He was just so used for Daichi lunging his arms out at him, he supposed he hadn’t thought about it too hard. Too tired to have a huge reaction, Nagisa instead felt a kind of warmth build up

“Wanna watch Sonic Ninja?” Karma poked him in the arm.

“Hmm?” Nagisa replied sleepily. “It’s on?”

Karma shrugged. “I can get it. It’s better than watching some idol show anymore.”

“I hope you’re not breaking any laws,” he mumbled. When a reply didn’t come, Nagisa guessed he probably was, but he didn’t really care. The opening music begun, and he forgot everything else, nostalgia and excitement taking over. It was his favourite movie. Nagisa sighed, feeling the familiar thrum of emotion. Perhaps it was a little childish now, but sometimes that was what put a smile on his face.

“How come you’re not trying to show me anything new?” He couldn’t help but question, sensing Karma’s focus. Mostly, it was Karma who was actually into movies. Where Nagisa liked to sit back and enjoy them, Karma tended to analyse and construct deep opinions. Especially recently, since they only had one TV, Nagisa was dragged along for what were supposed to be the classic good ones. He kind of enjoyed the one with the singing nuns.

Beside him, Karma shrugged. “You’re too tired to appreciate it.”

They didn’t discuss much during the movie, aside from a couple of biting jokes. In fact, in between action scenes, Nagisa felt his eyes drooping. He didn’t quite fall asleep, more drifting in and out of consciousness, though at some point he ended up using Karma’s shoulder as a pillow. Honestly, he
was surprised Karma didn’t move him, other than to nudge him when the film was over.

“You’re gonna miss the new year.”

Nagisa blinked. “Oh.”

Karma stood up, stretching out lazily. “I mean, you don’t have to come outside, but—“

“No,” he said quickly, “I want to.”

Wrapping a blanket around his shoulders, he followed Karma out onto their balcony. Even with the slight cover, Nagisa still shuddered in the winter chill. Still, oddly, it felt like it was worth it. Below them, sounds of festivities and parties rung out, everyone else far more prepared for the celebration than they were. He brushed his mind away from that, though, looking up at the fractured moon.

A lot had happened in the last year. Last time it was New Years, he was pregnant, yet Daichi would be one soon. It felt so long ago, and yet like the blink of an eye. On top of everything else, the assassination and high school, the year had been pretty crazy. Yet, somehow, it had dwindled to a rather peaceful close. Strange, that. He wouldn’t want to spend it with anybody else, though.

Beside him, Karma was silent, seemingly lost in thought. A lot had happened between them, too, in the last year. Nagisa was sure a part of him was always going to yearn or something, but he was happy, at least, not empty. Even if he couldn’t have Karma in a way that was more than friendship, but better that than nothing.

Regardless, as always, he found himself drawn to his side. Standing so close to a Karma deep in thought wasn’t good for the sake of his health. Under the light provided by the moon, his golden irises gleamed with… something. Whatever it was, Nagisa was magnetised closer, the effect so quick that it almost shocked him.

Of course, Karma noticed, looking at Nagisa in question. Somehow, he didn’t really care right then. Even if he knew he was going to beat himself up for it later, Nagisa couldn’t help himself from wondering what would happen, if he did stand a little closer, they could be kissing. It was a dangerous thought, but it wouldn’t leave him, to the point his breathing hitched, and he almost went for it. Doing that would be easier than saying something like ‘I’ve been in love with you for the last six months or so, possibly longer, but I’ve been trying to get over it and I’m not sure if I love you less or more than I did before, and I’m just really confused right now’. And then the first bell rung out, before he could do much of anything.

“Looks like the year’s over,” Karma turned to face him properly.

“It’s been crazy,” Nagisa said, his breathing short.

As if Nagisa’s heart wasn’t already racing, Karma shot him a small half smile. “Wouldn’t change anything though.”

Anything?! Well, Nagisa supposed that some things were just supposed to happen. If they hadn’t… maybe they wouldn’t be there, right then. He loved being around Karma, though. Did he wish there was something more? Maybe. He wasn’t used to feeling this way, but it was hard to not feel a little lonely, with so many people coupling up.

“You’re worried about that kind of thing?” Karma laughed a little, and then Nagisa realised he might have said some of that out loud. “Go date somebody then. It’ll be good for you.”
Nagisa snapped straight out of it, a chill running straight through his bones. Huh? Somebody else? But there had only ever been Karma… Was that really what he wanted? Well, Nagisa supposed that was his answer. Karma wanted him to be with somebody else, somebody who wasn’t him. Nagisa should have known, really, that there was no chance of them. Well, he did know, but there was always fleeting hope… He still felt sick.

“Happy new year,” Karma commented, when the final bell sounded.

Nagisa mumbled his reply. “I think I’m going to go to bed.”

He didn’t wait for Karma to wish him ‘goodnight’. In fact, Nagisa just went directly to his room, flopping onto his bed as he was. Despite how exhausted he was, sleep didn’t come that easy to him. Nagisa just couldn’t make himself comfortable, without feeling a hollow chill of emptiness. He didn’t cry, at least, he was better than that. When he finally did pass out, it was the kind of flit where he flitted between consciousness, until it was finally morning.

The moment getting up became justifiable, Nagisa stumbled to his feet. He figured that he could at least get things ready, rather than moping in silence. Since they were going to be out of the house for a full, long day, it did require that level of preparation. He wasn’t sure how much be trusted Daichi’s levels of focus, to only bring a toy or two. Try five minimum.

It wasn’t long until Daichi seemed to wake up on his own anyway, which gave Nagisa something to do directly. Since he had already been up, he swiftly got a bottle ready, something that was second nature at this point. Daichi had got past the point of instantly crying whenever he was hungry at least, and was already stood up in his crib expectantly when Nagisa went in.

“At least you have some energy,” Nagisa said, lifting him up. He didn’t bother enforcing any proper eating, and instead sat down on the sofa and allowed Daichi to sit on his lap. If Daichi was confused about the change, he didn’t make much of a fuss about it. Nagisa let out a long breath, and leaned his cheek onto Daichi’s soft hair.

When Daichi was done drinking, Nagisa went about changing him, and made the wise decision to get him dressed for the day after breakfast. In fact, he was lucky Daichi was content enough to sit in the high chair when he put him there, amused with the orange segments Nagisa gave him. He spoke unintelligibly to himself, as Nagisa finished getting everything ready.

“All done?” He asked, when Daichi was definitely playing rather than eating.

Daichi nodded, raising arms. Well, the mess could have been worse. Soon enough, whatever food hadn’t made it into his mouth was whipped away, and Daichi was dressed in clothes fresh for the day. Considering Karma wasn’t even up yet, and it was still pretty early, Nagisa was proud of his own efficiency. Not that they really had to leave any time soon.

It didn’t take very long, after being left to his own devices, for Daichi to get bored and start tugging on his trouser leg. Even if Nagisa had been really busy, he wouldn’t have been able to stop himself sliding down on to the floor. At least Daichi didn’t seem to want to do anything too complex, quickly crawling off to produce a small ball. Well, if that’s what he wanted.

He still seemed to find it hilarious that balls would roll if he pushed it hard enough. Even more funny, it seemed, when Nagisa pushed it back at him. Nagisa didn’t get what was humorous about it, but whatever floated his boat. He pushed it back a little harder, so that it hit Daichi’s outstretched hands with a little bit of force.

“Good job,” he encouraged gently.
Daichi broke out into a massive grin. “Bu-buh-”

In question, Nagisa shuffled a little closer. “Ball?”

Expression morphing with concentration, Daichi opened his mouth and tried again. “B-Buh-buh-“

“Ball.” Nagisa said slowly. “Buh-all.”

“Buh-“ He pouted, and then launched himself to crawl into Nagisa’s lap. “Dada.”

Nagisa didn’t mind so much. “Yeah, I guess that is a little easier to say.”


He had to admire the determination. Well, Daichi was only ten months old. Three (and a half?) real words wasn’t bad, Nagisa thought. He didn’t know if it was good, either, but he supposed everyone developed at different rates. For a moment, he seemed content to sit right there, half on Nagisa’s nap. In fact, a little too content.

Considering he hadn’t been awake too long, Nagisa wasn’t sure if he should let Daichi nap already, but he supposed it was a good opportunity considering they would be out all day. From all appearances it was a light sleep, when his eyes eventually flitted closed, so Nagisa didn’t dare move him. There were worse things he could do, other than let Daichi fall asleep on him.

Surprisingly, not long after that, Karma actually came into the living room, fully dressed and seemingly ready to go. He looked like he had something on the tip of his tongue, but he didn’t say whatever it was when he noticed Daichi. Light on his feet, he swiftly made his way around into the kitchen, and grabbed something to eat. Whatever it was, they existed in silence, until Daichi woke up on his own.

He blinked slowly for a minute or two, before crawling out of Nagisa’s lap like nothing had even happened. Apparently the sofa was more interesting, considering he went straight over to it, managing to pull himself to his feet a little better now he’d had plenty of practise. Nagisa left him to it, knowing he wouldn’t bother going far.

“What time did you say we’d be there?” Karma asked, when Nagisa approached.

He pulled out his phone, taking a look at the clock. “I didn’t, really, but we should probably leave soon.”

Karma nodded, and that was that. Like some kind of wedge was between them now, they didn’t say anything else. Admittedly, living together meant that they wouldn’t catch up like normal friends, and didn’t need to talk constantly, but Nagisa had learnt to gauge the difference between types of silences. This one was uncomfortable and heavy, full of something that needed to be said.

Instead of speaking to him, though, Karma sidestepped. “You ready to go, Daichan?”

At the sound of his own name, Daichi sidestepped around the edge of the sofa, just barely hanging on, to look up at Karma in question.

Karma walked over to him and crouched down. “C’mon, I know you don’t get it yet but today’s a celebration.”

Whether he understood any of that or not, Daichi at least seemed intrigued by it. He looked intently at Karma, before moving like Nagisa hadn’t seen him before. For a while, he’d gotten pretty good
at figuring out the basics of using his legs and feet, but he was still pretty slow and tentative, even with the solid support. Yet, for some reason, he didn’t seem to hesitate in taking steps towards Karma, completely on his own.

It was going well for him, too, until he seemed to realise that he wasn’t holding onto anything. Thankfully, Karma sensed the panic in his expression, and managed to grab him before he face planted. Being whisked into Karma’s arms was significantly more fun than toppling over, so Daichi giggled, not realising the significance.

“You gotta be more careful,” Karma said, picking him up properly. “Just don’t run away us now, huh?”

He didn’t seem too concerned with walking anywhere else. It didn’t take long to get out the door after that, due to his earlier preparation. It was pretty cold outside now, in the middle of winter, but the walk to his parents’ wasn’t a particularly long one. Seemingly, since they didn’t live close to any shrines, this part of town was all but abandoned.

Soon enough, they were knocking on the door, and then Nagisa’s parents were right there. “Ah, Daichi!” His father exclaimed, reaching straight for him.

*Hi Nagisa and Karma too,* Nagisa thought internally, but he didn’t say anything. Really, he couldn’t blame his parents for being all over Daichi. Firstly, Daichi was *Daichi,* basically all the adorableness the world had to offer put into one tiny person. Second, he was their grandson, and they hadn’t seen him in a while. They’d visited a few times back and forth, since the move, but naturally it was different from living in the same tiny apartment.

“Something smells good,” Karma commented, pretty much an expert at dealing with his parents at this point.

His mother nodded. “You can come in, Nagisa, Karma kun. Happy New Year.”

At least she wasn’t still referring to him as ‘Akabane kun’. That was some progress. Moments later, they were settled down inside. Even if it was clear where his parents’ attention really was, it felt nice to actually catch up. The last year had been a whirlwind when it came to their relationship, but for some reason it was beginning to feel settled. Whatever the case, Nagisa was content at worst, elated at best.

Daichi, at least, was overjoyed with the change in environment, which was fair enough. At least he usually got to see something else when they took him to nursery, but it was winter and there wasn’t a lot to reasonably do. Well, the winter break would be over soon enough. That was a thought. Already, they were nearly done with their first year of high school.

With the increasingly quick passage of time at the forefront of his mind, they sat down for dinner. They hadn’t bothered with any traditional osechi dishes last year, so it had been quite a while since he’d eaten anything like it, and Nagisa’s mouth was salivating. Aside from being filled with nostalgic joy in the form of a meal, it was quite entertaining to see Daichi’s take on it. He’d only been given some of the plainer, easier to eat things, but it had been a while since he’d tried something completely new, at his little face just lit up.

For some reason, it struck him that the conversation that had developed wasn’t really about him. In fact, his parents were asking Karma something to do with his school work. Nagisa would be paying attention, ordinarily, but his thoughts were drifting. Not that he ever had been, but Karma didn’t feel like a guest. In a sense, it wasn’t the best for his confused mental state, especially after the night before.
Regardless, they were soon done with the food, and there were no other grand plans. It was a little different from the New Years Days of the past Nagisa had just spent with his mother, so they ended up watching the Emperor’s Cup. Nagisa didn’t really follow sports that much, with the exception of baseball he couldn’t help but pick up from Sugino, but he still found it enjoyable enough to forget the rest of his problems.

And then it was all over, just like that. They left the apartment with a supply of mochi, and promises to visit (aka bring Daichi over) more often. Due to his early nap, Daichi was definitely flagging by the time they were down the stairs, and was straight to sleep with the motion of walking. Now that it had been pushed back, the quiet between him and Karma was a lot more comfortable. Maybe things continuing the way they had been, on the surface, wouldn’t be so bad.

When they finally reached their front door once again, however, it was completely blocked by a suspect crate. It took Nagisa a moment to realise what it was, before his heart started beating faster. Setting this up had been one thing, but finally seeing the results? Of course, it was the first of the month, and they were going to get a delivery like this for the rest of the year.

“Huh?” Karma questioned aloud. “What’s this?”

Nagisa couldn’t help himself. “Why don’t you open it?”

If Karma caught on and became suspicious, he didn’t show it, following Nagisa’s direction. Thankfully, it wasn’t sealed particularly hard, just enough for transport. Karma made quick work of opening the lid, enough to take a look inside, and then went completely silent. Even though Nagisa wasn’t leant over it in the same way, but from his position he could see that in the crate was a lot of strawberry milk. If the order was correct, enough for two a day for the next month, until the next shipment came in.

“What-“

“Of course I wouldn’t just give you the one,” he explained, “for your birthday.”

Karma spluttered. “Y-you-“

Enthusiastically, Nagisa nodded his agreement. “You gave me a bunch of sushi things because it’s my favourite food, so I thought, it was only fair to give you your favourite.”

Blinking once, twice, Karma burst out in laughter. He said something that sounded like ‘I can’t believe this’, before taking one, and standing up straight. “I’m not sure I like strawberry milk this much.”

“That’s too bad,” Nagisa replied, feeling oddly firm. “This wasn’t an easy gift to find. You wouldn’t want to waste any of it.”

“I’m going to hate it by the end of the month,” he complained.

Nagisa’s one single devious bone in his body made itself present. “The year.”

Stunned, Karma looked him dead in the eye for a moment, before bending down, wrapping his arms around Nagisa’s shoulders. Not that Nagisa had noticed it, but he’d definitely grown a little, since they were last in any kind of embrace. He didn’t remember having to stretch this much to return it. With Karma’s hug, which caught him off guard, Nagisa’s messing days were over and done with.

“Thanks,” he said seriously, before letting Nagisa go and clearing his throat. “Anyway, you’re
gonna have to help me with all of this, if you’re concerned about wastage.”


Karma tutted lightly. “You should have thought of that~”

Chapter End Notes

And Karma will regret some of his choices.

Sorry about the space between updates. This one gave me a bit of trouble, but I’ve honestly been pretty busy considering I start university in a couple of weeks, and have to move to the other side of the country :’) Also ill, but I'm always ill.

Next time, y'all will hate me, but it's necessary whoops. Have fun until then~
Fulfilling his promise to Higashi, Nagisa helps to stake out their classmates' date

Despite knowing it would be worse to go back on his promise, Nagisa couldn’t help but feel guilty about invading his friends’ privacy. Higashi, right next to him, seemed to have little of that guilt. She had been certain, though, that her intelligence was correct. Supposedly, Kita and Nishi would be on a date somewhere around the area, and based on her knowledge of Kita’s choice of favourite drink, they were staking out the entrance of a coffee shop. Why was he doing this, again?

“Oh my god,” she said loudly, clapping a hand over her mouth. “There they are.”

Nagisa peered around the corner. Sure enough, she wasn’t lying. However, they weren’t really doing anything coupley, and he wasn’t convinced. Just because they weren’t the same gender didn’t mean that their close friendship had to signify something romantic… But he supposed that they could easily be together too. Nagisa’s stomach turned, at the realisation he was getting sucked in.

“Damn,” Higashi muttered. “I can’t see them anymore. Let’s get a better view.”

“Wait!” Nagisa’s instincts came roaring in. “They’ll see you if you move like that.”

Okay, he was totally in this. Nagisa sighed, and forced himself to detach from the situation. If he needed to watch somebody, where would he go? They were out of Kunugigaoka, so Nagisa didn’t know the area as well as home, and would have to rely on his immediate senses. They couldn’t just run out in front of the café, he knew for a fact there were pretty large windows, and they could easily be seen. He needed to find a better position.

Nagisa raised himself up a little, still using the wall for cover, as he tugged on the building’s drain pipe. Satisfied it would be able to support his weight, Nagisa found his footing. A voice in the back of his head that sounded an awful lot like Karasuma warned him that he really shouldn’t be doing this kind of thing in public, but he justified that it wasn’t really free running. As long as he kept himself low and out of sight, he wasn’t putting anybody in any danger.

Higashi cleared her throat, looking up at him with a kind of awe. “What are you doing?”
Half way up the wall at that point, Nagisa hung off to look at her. “Spot checking.”

Easily enough, he pulled himself up and onto the roof, keeping his body flat, so he finally had a good view of the street. Surveying his options, he judged that a small crepe cart would be the best place. It was better to hide in plain sight, amongst a small crowd, rather than behind a tree or something that would seem more suspicious. It was big enough to conceal them, in a good position, and not something you’d pay great attention to. Perfect.

Maybe it had been a while, and Nagisa was taking this far too seriously, but Nagisa pointed the location out, like he was giving some kind of command. Higashi seemed to get it at least, and impressively didn’t make herself that noticeable as she crept over to the location. To save time, Nagisa took the high drop from the roof, breaking his fall with a roll and dusting himself off, before he joined her too.

“Okay,” Higashi said, once they were in position. “Once this is over you’re telling me how you learnt to do that.”

“It’s-“ He scratched the back of his head. “A long story.”

She flicked around. “You’re not helping yourself with the whole Yakuza thing.”

Nagisa laughed awkwardly, brushing it off. What was more important was his eyes falling on his target. Wait, target?! He was definitely far too into this. At the same time, though, it wasn’t like they were doing anything incriminating. From his now better position, they really were just ordering a drink.

“I’m not sure what we’re gaining from this,” Nagisa commented.

Higashi looked at him like it was obvious. “Obviously so we can be happy for them and support their relationship.”

“But they-“

“Just wait,” she cut him off. “They’re in a public place, so even if they do something, it’s going to be really subtle. You might not believe me Nagisa kun, but I don’t want to expose them or anything, I just… don’t like there being secrets.”

Nagisa swallowed. “You know you could just… ask them? Like you could have just asked me about the Yakuza thing. Nishi would probably tell you at least. You don’t actually have to sneak around to make accusations.”

“It’s not as simple as th-“

“Nagisa kun? And, uh… Was it Higashi san?”

Immediately, the both of them turned away from their stake out. Nagisa relaxed, when he saw that it was only Rin, though Higashi still looked like she’d seen a ghost. Well, at least what they were doing probably wasn’t too obvious, especially to Rin with his limited context. The two of them had never really had a long conversation about his classmates, only ever mentioned in passing.

Nagisa smiled awkwardly. “H-hi, Rin kun.”

He approached them casually, like they weren’t up to anything. “How’s everything going?”

“Great!” Higashi said. “Hey, did you know that Nagisa’s actually a ninja?”
“Is this that Yakuza thing again?” Rin scratched his neck. “That’s an old rumour.”

“Why is it a rumour at all!?”

The vendor of the crepe stall cleared his throat. “If you kids are just going to stand there and talk about the Yakuza I’ll have to ask you to leave.”

“Wait no,” Higashi said, “I’m going to buy something, promise… Uhm, how much is the chocolate and banana one?”

He glared. “Two hundred yen if you move somewhere else.”

“Oh! Okay!”

While he began to prepare her crepe, Nagisa considered going back to the task at hand, but he wasn’t sure Rin would understand why they were stalking their friends. It wouldn’t be odd, at least, for he and Higashi to just be hanging out. They had a decent cover there already and Nagisa was going to rely on it. Even when Rin raised an eyebrow at him, showing his suspicion, he turned away.

“Oh hey! Fancy seeing you guys here!”

At that point, all three of them jumped in surprise, with Higashi nearly dropping her crepe, though she dove dramatically to rescue it. Looking straight at them was Nishi and Kita, take away drinks in hands. True to his mission, Nagisa observed them. There was no sign of couple behaviour, but they were stood close together and looked comfortable doing it.

Kita, though, looked a little more suspicious. “I thought you said you were going to be busy today, Haia chan.”

“Not at all!” She waved her arms rapidly. “I was running some errands, but I’m all done now, yep!”

She raised an eyebrow, turning to Nagisa and Rin. “And you two?”

“They’re on a date!” Higashi quickly fired, before they had a chance to say anything.

Nagisa’s mouth went bone dry, so much so that he couldn’t force the words of denial out of his throat. And of course, at such an accusation, it was only natural for his cheeks to flair up pink. Instantly, he realised that only looked more incriminating. It wasn’t that he had a problem with Rin, but the idea of him dating anybody?

Eyes darting between them, Nishi seemed a little confused. “Really? I didn’t know about that.”

Once again, Nagisa startled, when Rin grabbed his hand. “It’s new,” he said, not missing a beat.

“How about you?” Higashi asked, realising her chance.


Though she covered half her face with the cup she was drinking from, Kita worse a slight blush.

“Anyway.”

Satisfied she’d finally got her answer, Higashi nodded. “Is that the time, well, I have to go! See you guys back at school!”
Well, that was over fast. Nagisa watched, as she sped away at top velocity, muttering something to herself. He wasn’t entirely sure what she was planning to do with this newfound information, but a part of him didn’t even want to know. Hopefully, it really was just knowing for the sake of knowing, rather than anything bad.

“Yeah,” Rin nodded, “we’ll leave you to it.”

Nagisa allowed himself to be pulled along in Rin’s direction. That had gone about as well as it could have, if you didn’t count accidentally being caught twice because of lack of spacial awareness. Even if it did mean he had to pretend to be on a date with Rin, at least they had the answer.

“So,” he said, when they were far enough away. “Are you going to tell me what you guys were doing?”

He wasn’t entirely sure how to explain it. “Higashi just really wanted to know if they were actually a couple or not.”

“I see,” he said lightly. “Well, you’re a good friend for going along with it. Do you want me to walk you back to the train station, now that your, uh, accomplice has gone.”

“A-are you sure that’s not too much trouble?”

Rin just hummed in response, and then changed the subject. All in all, it was actually kind of nice to hang out during the school break. Nagisa really had been meaning to, at some point, but he was always so busy with Daichi and everything else. The only reason he had agreed to this was he already promised, kind of. Otherwise, it just didn’t feel right, leaving him when he didn’t have to. He tried to forget it, at least, and actually exist in the moment.

“Uhm,” Nagisa realised after clearing his mind, there was still a weight in his hand. “Y-you’re holding my hand.”

Rin looked down at where they were joined. “Eh, sorry about that,” he said, without letting him go. “I wanted to make it convincing.”

“I don’t mind!” Nagisa said quickly, not wanting him to feel bad. “Thanks for that.”

“This has been kind of fun,” he shrugged. “You know, we should do this for real sometime. More… alone, though.”

“E-eggh-” Whatever Nagisa was about to say was cut off by his own fall. Normally, he would have just tripped, but the time he had to catch himself was shortened since he had to drop Rin’s hand first. He had less than a second realistically to figure out what to do. Working mostly on instinct, Nagisa managed to propel himself, rolling over and using the momentum to launch back onto his feet.

Rin blinked. “Woah, Higashi san wasn’t kidding.”

“Oh,” Nagisa refused to meet his eyes. “It’s nothing, really.”

He looked excited, though. “No seriously! How did you learn that?”

“Parkour,” he thought fast. “I used to do it a lot for fun!”

Yeah, that was a nice excuse. Even though Nagisa was a little (more like a lot) rusty, and his
technique wasn’t particularly refined due to the last few months of pregnancy and doctor’s orders to not take any risks, it made him feel almost fresh again. He knew Karasuma had taken great care to get them to promise not use their training in public, but he figured small things like that were okay.

“Maybe you could show me?” Rin said, words becoming a slight staccato with nerve. “Or, I mean, I don’t think I could do anything cool like that, but I’d love to see it.”

Nagisa paused. “T-that wouldn’t be boring for you?”

“Not at all!” Rin shook his head vigorously.

“I’d like that then.”

With little else to say to each other, now that arrangement was in place, and they were near the train station anyway. When he was actually on the train, the scenery speeding out his vision, Nagisa couldn’t stop possibly overthinking it. Was that a date? Of course, it probably wasn’t, because nobody would ask him on a date in the first place… But with the context it sounded like it. It couldn’t be, because you only asked people on dates if you liked them like that, and there was no way Rin could. They were just hanging out. He was satisfied with that.

But for some reason, he couldn’t let it go. Once the train pulled into Kunugigaoka, Nagisa felt his nerves spike up, like he’d done something wrong. He knew, of course, that he hadn’t – it wasn’t even a date! Even if it was, that wouldn’t be bad, exactly. Logically, Nagisa knew it was a bad idea to overthink this as much as he currently was. All it did was set him on edge, as he got home.

“Welcome back,” Karma called from the living room. “Have fun?”

“Y-yeah!” Nagisa said far too quickly. “Uh, you?”

If Karma was going to answer, he didn’t get the chance, because suddenly there was a small weight barrelling into him. Considering he’d only just started the walking thing a week or so ago, Daichi was slowly getting it, for short distances, before he gave up and flung himself at the nearest object. Honestly though, it wasn’t the worst thing.

“Dada,” Daichi squealed, hanging off his trouser leg.

It just reminded Nagisa that he didn’t have time for dates or not dates or whatever it was. Sure, spending time with his friends was okay, Nagisa had accepted that, every now and then. But he already didn’t really get to spend all that much time with Daichi, considering that nursery tended to wear him out. The time he did get, he wanted to use soaking as much of it up as possible.

“Hi,” Nagisa greeted softly, and bent down to pick him up. As always, Daichi wrapped his arms around his neck once he was up there, clinging on. He kind of hoped he wouldn’t grow out of it, at least any time soon. It freaked him out that he would have his first birthday soon enough, like an entire year had gone by with the blink of an eye. Having a one year old son… Definitely terrifying.

From where he was sat, cross legged with what looked like math homework, Karma looked up. “You know you were only gone for, hmm, three hours?”

Nagisa sighed. “It always feels like longer.”

He laughed lightly. “You need to get out more or something.”

“U-uhm, actually!” It spilled out of him, before he could stop himself. “I said I would see Rin at
Like a blur, Karma was suddenly on his feet, so close to Nagisa there was barely room to breathe. “Who’s that?”

Nagisa gulped. “My friend from school. He asked me to go out with him.”

“Oh, so it’s a date, huh?” Karma said, teasingly.

“No! It’s not like that,” he practically begged. “It isn’t!”

For a moment, Karma’s eyes widened, like he was going through several emotions at once, none of which Nagisa could really pin down. “It is a date,” he said, though the teasing was gone, and then let a humourless life. “You don’t have to lie.”

“I’m not!” Nagisa continued to protest.

Karma brushed him off. “Doesn’t matter. Why, it’s not like you have to ask my permission.”

“B-but, Daichi…”

He shrugged. “We have fun, don’t we, Daichan?”

Daichi just gurgled a little, apparently not in the mood for a conversation.

“Hey, Daichan,” Karma continued. “Remember what I taught you. Show me a fist.”

Nagisa’s jaw dropped, when Daichi, after thinking about it for a moment, did just that. Sure, it wasn’t that impressive that he could form a fist, but doing it on command was something different. He looked poised, too, purposeful. And immediately, his blood boiled. This was exactly why he shouldn’t leave for too long!

“You taught our son how to throw punches?! On second thought-“

“Relax,” Karma drawled. He formed his own fist in demonstration, and very lightly pounded it against Daichi’s. Clearly knowing what to do, Daichi immediately released his fist and drew it back, letting out a sound to mimic the sound of an explosion. “See.”

Nagisa let his tension drop. That was right, he was being too quick to judge. Karma would be absolutely fine, he knew that, he was probably better at looking after Daichi than he was, anyway. So he nodded, and let it drop, remembering to text Rin later to say he definitely could come hang out with him. Hang out, because it was not a date.

Yet, the next morning, he found himself worrying about what to wear. If they were going to do free running, he needed something definitely suitable. Nagisa didn’t have a lot of that, except his gear from 3E. He was still surprised it hadn’t been seized from them, to be honest. He supposed he could at least wear the trousers and undershirt, and one of his regular coats over the top… Nagisa realised he needed to take a moment to evaluate everything.

Everything else went like normal; get Daichi up, changed and fed, then entertainment, then breakfast, until whenever Karma chose to get up. At that point, as he did most of the time, Daichi decided to drop whatever he was doing and barrel into Karma. That gave Nagisa the time to clean up, and then go back into his bedroom to stare at his reflection for the twenty third time.

He cringed internally, when it really was time to go. “Do I look okay?”
Karma looked at him quizzically. “What kind of a question is that?”

Flushing from head to toe, Nagisa should have known that was a bad thing to ask. “D-don’t worry.”

“I mean, looking at me like a naked mole rat isn’t helping.”

“I’ll see you later,” Nagisa bit out, ready to slam the door behind him, but he calmed down enough to give Daichi a kiss on the head at least.

It wasn’t a date. It was just two friends spending mutual time together alone. Nagisa kept telling himself that, the entire way, because the more he told himself that, the truer it became in his head. Unfortunately, he didn’t have that long to convince himself, because they were actually meeting in Kunugigaoka. Keeping the lessons he learnt in 3E in mind, Nagisa didn’t want to take any risks. Something dangerous like free running had to be done out of the public eye, and a place he knew well. So, they were staying in Kunugigaoka, the only place Nagisa had ever lived.

Nagisa himself hadn’t really been there that much, but there was a small warehouse kind of close to Yoshida Motors, which he knew a few of his ex classmates had used for extra practise since it was abandoned. It seemed like a good enough place, other than their mountain. Nagisa didn’t know why, exactly, but it felt kind of wrong to take an ‘outsider’ there.

He was the first one there, but Nagisa didn’t think Rin was the type to cancel without letting him know. He’d texted him the directions, at least, but it could be pretty tough to find your way around a place you weren’t familiar with. So, he waited, and wondered if this was a bad idea. Rin had said he was interested, but Nagisa wasn’t sure how he felt about being watched.

“You know, asking me to meet you in a place like this isn’t helping the Yakuza rumours.”

Starling at the voice behind him, Nagisa turned, to see Rin standing casual. “I-I-“

Rin waved him off, though. “Don’t worry, I’m just messing with you.”

Nagisa forced himself to calm down. Maybe he should just learn to live with this. Sure, it wasn’t the best impression to give people, but maybe being secretly tough was better than being weak and helpless... There was room for a moral debate on all of that, but at least for now, Nagisa would accept his fate and try to look less threatening.

“So!” Rin continued on. “Are you going to show me something cool or what?”

“Right,” Nagisa remembered. “What did you want to see?”

He scratched the back of his head. “I don’t really know how this kind of thing works. Can you do a circuit, or something?”

Nagisa mentally took in his surroundings and calculated a possible route. Since he knew his friends had used it, he deduced he could trust everything to hold his weight. And because he was meant to be demonstrating, the route he figured out would perhaps allow for some fancier, ‘show off’ moves. Once he’d analysed and taken everything in, he nodded, and then sped off.

It was easier than the mountain course, but then again Nagisa had been pregnant back then or, later, had just given birth, so of course it would seem that way. He definitely saw the appeal, though. Whilst you could get around the place with nothing more than a good sense of balance, the sheer amount of beams, pipes, and chains hanging from the ceiling meant you could use a large number of different skills.
He decided the best way would be start at the top beams, and work his way down. Getting up there was no problem, he mostly made use of the existing ladders where he could, transferring to convenient bricks and pieces of metal to get to the beams closest to the roof. He paused for a moment, collecting himself and calculating his route one more time, before breaking out into a run.

Though it was true he was a little rusty, since he hadn’t done anything like this for a year, it was all engrained in his muscle memory. He ran from beam to beam, finding a good place to flip off, landing with just a tiny wobble a little lower. Maybe he should have been worried about that, but it only shot familiar adrenaline through his veins. He continued on, swinging and flipping his way down. At the lowest level of beams, he decided to show off a little more, since he wouldn’t injure himself if he did fall.

In the end, Nagisa backflipped off some of the low beams, landing securely with slight flourish. He panted, his body finally catching up with more exercise than it was used to. Somehow, it felt almost cathartic, to be doing this kind of stuff again. Though, he wasn’t sure why he missed it so much. Nagisa almost wanted to climb up again, and have another shot.

“Woah,” Rin called, “that was amazing!”

“I-it was nothing really.” Nagisa approached him again, unsure. He’d almost forgotten that Rin was watching him.

He shook his head. “Honestly, Nagisa kun, you’re amazing.”

Nagisa couldn’t help but flush.

“Actually, I kind of wanted to talk to you.”

A pit formed in Nagisa’s stomach. “Is something wrong?”

Rin took a deep breath. “I like you a lot, Nagisa kun.”

“I like you too,” he softened. Friends were supposed to like each other.

“No, I mean, I really like you. Like, I want to see you more like this, and hold hands like yesterday. And, if you let me, I’d like to call you my boyfriend.”

Nagisa’s brain essentially blue screened. Rin… Liked him? Wanted them to date? He was almost tempted to look around for hidden cameras, because why would somebody like Rin have feelings for him? Why would anybody? He could tell, though, from Rin’s demeanour that he was probably being genuine. So the appropriate thing to do would be to reply, rather than just

He hadn’t even considered Rin in that way. Nagisa tried to picture it, but he didn’t really have anything to base it from. Though, he knew feelings could be developed over time, and he did get along with Rin… Dating him wouldn’t be so bad. For some reason, the idea made him feel funny, an emotion he couldn’t quite pin down. Though, even though it shouldn’t have stuck out, he couldn’t help but remember what Karma had told him.

And then his brain switched back on again. He shouldn’t even be considering this! It was the very reason why he couldn’t be with Karma, he had Daichi to worry about. He didn’t have the time for a boyfriend. Nagisa already felt awful about going out two days in a row, trying to maintain a relationship with that limitation wasn’t fair, on anybody. But Rin was being direct with him, and he at least deserved that returned.

“Rin kun,” he started shakily. “There’s… Some things you don’t know about me.”
He blinked. “Don’t tell me you’re actually involved in crime.”

“No! No,” Nagisa looked away. “It’s not that. I… I have a baby. Well, he’s not really much of a baby anymore, but-“ Rin’s eyes were glazed over, he noticed. “Are you okay?”

Because his mouth was hanging open, Rin choked on his breath. “You have a what? B-but-“

“I was in my last year of junior high,” Nagisa begun. It hadn’t necessarily been his intention, but once he started explaining, he didn’t really stop. He left out a lot of the gory details, especially the assassination training, but there was enough to get the jist. Nagisa had just made a mistake, which he didn’t even remember, and it had turned into the best part of his world. “I love him more than anything else,” he explained. “Which is why I can’t do this. I wouldn’t put anything else first.”

For a long time, Rin was silent. “It doesn’t change anything?”

“H-huh?”

His shoulders slumped. “I can’t say this isn’t going to… take me a while to wrap my head around, but- Look, maybe I’m being dumb here, but my feelings haven’t changed. And I wouldn’t expect anything like that out of you. I promise, I can handle it.”

Internally, Nagisa felt like he was standing in quicksand. He knew it was a bad idea, knew it down to his bones, but Nagisa didn’t want to hurt him. Part of him just wanted to run, but that wouldn’t solve anything. If it was like quicksand, another part of him said, then he would take the hand outstretched to help him, wouldn’t he?

“Okay.”

Chapter End Notes

Nagarin5eva?

Look, sometimes you have to go on a long journey before you reach your end destination. Read the Odyssey, it took that dude ten goddamn years to sail across the Mediterranean. And then he fought like a hundred men to get his wife back with his son and some farmer sidekicks it’s wild. I don’t know if Nagisa will end up fighting a hundred men for Karma's hand in marriage, but that’s an image for you.

I mean, credit where credit’s due, at least Rin knows how to confess his feelings. Unlike SOME people -_-.

Anyway I'm going now bye hope you had fun in the next chapter Karma takes his son on a stealth mission. Brace yourselves.
(Not) Stalking Time

Chapter Summary

In which Karma is Not Crazy and just wants to buy his son some shoes

Chapter Notes

Y'all gonna be facepalming so hard.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Karma didn’t like this. He had no idea why, but he just didn’t like it. It seemed he had been wrong when he thought that Nagisa being taken and unavailable because of more than a psychological barrier would help him get his feelings in check. And he was fully aware he was acting like a toddler crying because an old toy was taken from them… not that Nagisa was a toy, or ever really his in the first place.

It wasn’t even like Nagisa was away longer than usual. He always tended to see this Rin guy in school. But now there was this air surrounding him at all times. Karma couldn’t quite put his finger on what it was, but it was just different. By all appearances, Nagisa looked happy. Karma hated it. It wasn’t like this boyfriend was bad, from what he could tell he seemed kind of vanilla. Definitely not good enough for Nagisa, but then again Karma doubted there would be anybody good enough.

“Nagisa,” Karma half called, bored. “Whatcha doing?”

Like he was in his own little world, Nagisa looked up very sharply. “Huh?”

Well, that was suspect. “You looked busy, is all.”

“I’m just texting Rin,” he said, a soft smile growing on his lips.

Of course he was. How long did they really need to text for, exactly? Maybe that was the difference. Nagisa might be physically with him, but his attention was clearly elsewhere. It ground his gears, that was for sure. Though, Karma couldn’t exactly just go and rip the phone out of his hands and demand Nagisa talk to him, because that would make him look absolutely insane. And Karma wasn’t insane, he was just… annoyed.

“Oh really?” He decided playing it off was his best option. It was what Nagisa would probably expect out of him. “What kind of texts?”

Nagisa looked back down at his phone. “I don’t know, just texts?”

“Let’s see.” Naturally, Nagisa startled, but Karma was quicker, and stronger. He practically launched himself onto Nagisa, easily manoeuvring the phone out of his grip. For some reason, Nagisa didn’t attempt to fight him. Karma wasn’t that interested in reading his messages, but
something caught his eye and made him want to hurl. “’Nagichan’?!”

“Can I have it back now?” Nagisa asked, defeat lacing his tone.

Karma forced himself back to neutrality. “Sure,” he climbed off him. “I didn’t take you for the embarrassing texts type.”

“It’s just a nickname,” he defended. “I don’t love it, but that doesn’t matter, right?”

He knew when he couldn’t win. If Nagisa wanted to be gross and cutesy, well Karma supposed there was nothing he could do to stop it. This had been his own doing, he knew, in the first place. Unfortunately, he couldn’t convince himself that Nagisa had gone and gotten himself a boyfriend totally based on what he’d said, even Karma wasn’t that arrogant.

Before the conversation could go any further, Karma looked at the time and figured Daichi had been napping for long enough. It was a small miracle he’d even wanted one, in the first place… Maybe nursery had been wildly interesting. He ignored Nagisa’s look of question as he pulled himself to his feet, and just as predicted, Daichi was already stood up in his crib. In all honesty, he was actually attempting to scale the crib, to let himself out. Whoops.

“Hey there,” Karma said lightly. “Don’t do that.”

Recently, Daichi had picked up the concept of ‘don’t’, so of course he was rewarded with a glare. “Up.”

He didn’t feel like arguing with him about it. Karma reached down, lifting him out of the crib. Not that Daichi seemed to want to be held at all. In fact, he started squirming the second Karma had him up. Happy to let him do what he wanted, he just placed him down on the floor, holding on for a second or two to give him the chance to find his grip. Unfortunately, he left it a little too long, and just face planted when Karma removed his hands.

Karma couldn’t help but laugh lightly at his little face, crouching down. “Dummy,” he ruffled his hair, “you know walking doesn’t work that way. You want some help?”

Appearing to think about it for a moment, Daichi shook his head, crawling back over to the crib so he’d have something to help pull himself up. Once he managed it, he let go with determination, taking a good amount of slightly shaky steps all the way over to the wall. Looking pretty pleased with himself, and his ability to stay upright, he skirted around it, making for the door.

“Yeah yeah, good job,” Karma said, opening it properly for him.

He practically raced out again, though his tiny legs couldn’t really catch up and it wasn’t long before he toppled over again. Karma supposed he just needed practise, though that was the point he did just give up and go to a much faster crawl. For a moment, Karma wasn’t that bothered about what he was gunning off to do, until he realised.

Unfortunately, Daichi was still weirdly quick at crawling, and made it to the living room before Karma had a chance to stop him, swiftly grabbing the TV remote from the table, and – somehow – turning it over to some stupid kid’s show. In any other circumstance, he’d be impressed that Daichi had even figured out how to do that, but it also meant that Daichi would complain (aka cry a lot) if he changed it back over. So he was forced into watching it. Knowing where to pick his battles, he gave up, lifting Daichi so he could sit on the sofa and see it properly.

Nagisa, still engrossed in his phone it seemed, didn’t seem to care. “Are you still okay to pick Daichi up tomorrow?”
He almost felt the urge to roll his eyes. “I haven’t changed my mind in three hours.”

Apparently frustrated about something or other, Nagisa flopped back. “I don’t know what to do.”

“Huh?” Karma looked at him curiously. “What do you mean?”

Nagisa blinked. “You seriously want to help me?”

“Sure,” he shrugged, “why not?”

He groaned, then, looking at Karma seriously. “Tomorrow’s Valentines Day and I don’t know what to do about it. I-it’s easy for girls, but I don’t know what’s appropriate. Who gets chocolate for who if you’re both guys? Does being an omega change things?”

“You’re asking me if you should buy chocolates for your boyfriend?”

Nagisa nodded, and Karma wanted to throw himself over the balcony. How was he supposed to know, anyway? But then he paused, and thought about this in the long run. A happy Nagisa in general was better than a Nagisa angry at him for purposely giving bad advice. Well, not necessarily, but Karma did have to live with him, which unfortunately meant it made his life easier to stay on Nagisa’s good side. His bad side? Weirdly terrifying.

“You should go for it,” Karma said finally. “It would be more awkward if he got you something, and you show up with nothing.”

Nagisa chewed his lip. “You’re right. Uhm, a-also, do you think it should be homemade or is that too much? We’ve only been together for a month.”

Only? In Karma’s eyes, it was a lifetime. “Just buy some.”

With that settled, Karma continued to mope for the rest of the day. He even ended up paying attention to Daichi’s stupid TV program, because at least that was better than watching Nagisa return to his own little world. It continued to plague him throughout the night, straight through to the next day.

He couldn’t help but latch onto the thought that Nagisa had changed recently. Not that Karma needed a reason, but it was an excuse to be suspicious. He’d heard quite a lot about a personality change - once starting a relationship - being a cry for help. So he wasn’t being ridiculous. Nagisa’s… boyfriend seemed pretty harmless, but maybe Nagisa was being fooled somehow (ignoring the fact that Karma knew how good at judging intentions Nagisa was, because that didn’t fit with his theory). So then it was reasonable to check it out for himself, right? Sure, Nagisa could physically defend himself, but he was too nice. Karma was an alpha, he was supposed to protect him.

So, when he woke up after little sleep, Karma may have shoved a few unusual supplies into his school bag. He still had to pick Daichi up, not that he minded that. In fact, maybe Nagisa would be less mad at him if he found out (on the small chance he would), if he used Daichi as a shield. Nagisa was rarely mad when Daichi was held in front of him.

Of course, he said goodbye to Nagisa as normal, and took Daichi off to nursery. No complaints about being left that day, he seemed immediately distracted by some toy or other. And then came school, which was considerably harder to not want to wish away when he had things he had to do. Since they’d already taken their final exams, there was no entertainment of a challenge, he’d have to wait for the second year to roll around for that. He’d read ahead, anyway. So it was all boring this, basic thing explained over again that, yawn yawn.
Until the day finally came to a close, and then Asano’s annoying hands were slamming down on his desk. Whatever it was, Karma didn’t have time to listen or care. Even though they’d spent quite a bit of time together due to their punishment (which really was more Asano’s doing in the first place), they hadn’t spent much of it talking. And he preferred it that way, even if a bit of accidental teamwork had driven up their profits at the festival.

“So,” he begun, “the project.”

Karma looked up at him, just barely. “The what?”

“Don’t play dumb with me Akabane,” Asano bit out, and then straightened. “Look, it seems that we’ve been thrown together on this, so we’ll be getting it done right away.”

There was a project? With Asano. Well, if he insisted. “Sure thing, but you’re coming with me.”

His eyes narrowed. “I’m not going anywhere.”

“Well,” Karma leant back in his chair, “I promised I’d pick Daichi up today, so you better learn to walk and talk.”

He was almost surprised, when Asano followed after him. Tempted to test him, Karma made it a brisk walk, and since he was pretty sure Asano didn’t know this part of town, he didn’t have to chance to walk ahead or make him talk school work. He really didn’t care about whatever it was they were meant to do, at least, he didn’t yet when there was something more important to focus on.

Luckily, Asano didn’t manage to get a word in before they reached the nursery. If Karma wasn’t running on something time sensitive, he’d have dragged it out, because Asano looked, in short, hugely uncomfortable. Any opportunity to make him look like that, well, Karma didn’t want to waste it. Maybe he’d manage to orchestrate this again sometime, with a video camera.

He didn’t get the chance, before Daichi became aware of his arrival. “Papa!” He launched himself at Karma’s shin.

“Hey~” Karma picked him up. “Have some fun today?”

Daichi wrapped his arms around his neck, but peaked around curiously. “Dada?”

“Sorry about that.” Karma sighed. “You wanna go see Dada?”

He nodded, which made Karma’s life a lot easier. They couldn’t continue the conversation, because a slightly distressed worker came rushing round the corner, panting. She paused when she saw them, straightened, and shot him an approving nod. Daichi looked pretty innocent in his arms, but he had to wonder just what he’d put the poor woman through.

Asano cleared his throat. “Is that all, then?”

It really wasn’t. Karma turned and faced him. “Asano kun, introduce yourself to Daichan.”

His brow creased. “But he’s a baby.”

“So?” Karma laughed lightly. “He’s just another little guy.”

Gulping, Asano bent forward a little. “Hello. I’m Asano Gakushuu.”

“Gaga,” Daichi reached out curiously, batting him on the nose.
Asano jerked back like it was poison. “Teach your son some manners.”

“He’s one, or, almost,” Karma defended. “It’s harmless.”

“Hmm,” Asano said, like he didn’t believe him, and then paused. “What’s it doing?”

Karma looked between them. As Daichi often did when he wanted to be held, he kept his arms out, motioning towards Asano with a pout. Weighing out his options, Karma decided that he may as well do what he wanted. Before Asano had the chance to stop him, Karma pushed Daichi into his arms, relying on his reflexes to catch him.

He didn’t hesitate to pull out his phone, now his hands were free, and snap a quick photo. “Smile!”

“Gaga!” Daichi giggled, nuzzling into his neck.

“Why?” Asano asked flatly.

Laughing, Karma shoved his phone back in his pocket. “He likes you, clearly. Definitely didn’t inherit that from me. Anyway, to the station.”

“Wait!” Asano called as he chased after him, not too well practised at travelling fast with a baby in his arms. “The station?”

Karma nodded. “We’re buying him shoes.”

“Shoes?”

He didn’t bother answering Asano. In fact, handing Daichi over to him had turned out to be the most effective way to shut him up, after that. He didn’t even bother complaining about being dragged a town over. So he was taking Asano along for this, apparently. Karma supposed he was fine with that, it would make him look more casual. It wasn’t like he was properly attempting to stalk Nagisa, he was just keeping an eye out, in a location he was likely to be in.

It was a decent length journey, and after a while Karma couldn’t hold off at least talking a bit about the project. Nothing that interesting, or hard, or much work… He had to give credit where it was due, Asano could more than carry his weight. Still, once the train pulled into the station, Karma changed the subject immediately. If Asano wanted to argue then, well, he had the absolute handful that was Daichi.

There was no sign of Nagisa on their way to the shoe shop. But that didn’t mean anything because he wasn’t… following him. This was the best place to buy shoes around, it just happened to be in the same general location. And if Nagisa found out and complained, then, he was just making sure their son’s feet were in good hands.

“Welcome,” a youngish girl greeted them. “Ah, are you getting shoes for the little one?”

Asano jabbed him in the shoulder. “Shouldn’t Nagisa be here for this?”

“We talked about it,” Karma shrugged. “He said he doesn’t care, as long as they fit. I think he’s just kind of sick of stopping Daichan from walking around when he wants to.”

The girl who worked there smiled. “So, you want him measured?”

“Sure thing,” Karma offered, finally taking Daichi back from Asano.

He wasn’t really sure how this kind of thing was meant to go, but he followed all of her
instructions. As she said, he sat down with Daichi on his knee, holding him as still as he could. Daichi didn’t seem all that impressed with the set up, immediately trying to scoot forwards and grab whatever device she was using for measuring.

“You want this, huh?” She said gently, letting him hold it. “Don’t worry, I can go get a spare one.”

Karma sighed, and ruffled Daichi’s hair lightly. He didn’t seem that bothered, once occupied, with her swiftly manoeuvring his feet around. After she was done announcing his size, Daichi had just about figured out how to slide the gauge around. She left them to it, which oddly made Karma feel pretty out of his depth. You couldn’t really go that wrong with shoes, right?

Looking at a few options, he pulled out some pretty basic trainers. “What do you think of these?”

“Akabane,” Asano glared at him, “you really think I have an opinion or care?”

From his lap, having been transferred there immediately so Karma could go look at shoes, Daichi made a grab for his arm. “Gaga gaga gaga!”

Asano looked down. “Fine. They’re fine. Just put them on him.”

Making sure he had the correct size, Karma bent down and tried to put it on him. Immediately, Daichi’s focus changed, curious at what he was doing. It took him quite a bit of manoeuvring, more than it would to put socks on him. In fact, once he seemed to notice the difference of the foreign object, he wanted it off. Though, ignoring Asano’s snigger as Daichi kicked him in the face, he managed to get them on and fastened.

“Wanna go for a walk?” Karma encouraged, picking Daichi up and popping him on the floor.

He didn’t seem so sure about it at first, but he took a tentative step. A couple of seconds later, and he managed to walk from sofa to sofa. Enough so that Karma could see he hadn’t instantly tripped wearing them. Satisfied with that, Karma tried not to think about the price of something Daichi would quickly grow out of, and paid for the pair.

Asano cleared his throat once they were out of the shop. “Are you done now?”

They hadn’t come across Nagisa yet, so Karma definitely was not done. “How about some coffee?”

He deadpanned. “There’s something going on.”

Perhaps Karma would have actually explained himself to Asano, but then his eyes caught a flash of blue. “Get down!”

Surprisingly, Asano didn’t question or disobey the sudden order, crouching down behind a large bush. Daichi giggled lightly, but didn’t reveal their position. As it turned out, his instincts were right. That was clearly Nagisa, deep in conversation with another guy who must be Rin. Fighting his instincts to growl, he instead observed. The guy was taller than Nagisa, although that wasn’t hard, and seemed pretty plain looking and harmless. *Vanilla*. A part of Karma almost wished he had crazy tattoos or something he could warn Nagisa to stay away from.

“Oh,” Asano said, “so that’s what you’re doing.”

“I’m not doing anything,” Karma denied.

Asano glared. “You’re obsessed, Akabane. There’s a lot of things I wouldn’t but past you, but this?” He shook his head.
He scoffed. “I’m not stalking him. That would require more finesse, in which case I wouldn’t have brought you.”

“So,” he straightened up. “What’s your price for my silence?”

Karma raised an eyebrow. “You joined in, as an accomplice. You can’t try and tarnish my reputation without ruining your own. Say, people won’t believe you came all this way with me just for that, especially your,” he coughed for added effect, “minions, since they know you used to be close with Nagisa.’

“Seek psychological help.” Asano finally had enough, and made to walk away. “We’ll be completing the project come the weekend.”

“Can’t,” Karma called out. “It’s Daichan’s birthday.”

He turned over his shoulder. “Monday morning then.”

Soon after that, he was gone, and Karma was just left with Daichi. “Well,” he addressed him. “Now we’re going home, and nobody finds out about this, yes?”

Daichi just drooled a little on his shoulder, which was response enough.

Chapter End Notes

I hope you all enjoyed that one! Well, poor Karma, huh? This chapter makes me want to write a Karma and Asamo buddy cop au. Sorry this took a little longer than expecting, I once again got very ill. I'm okay, but it was questionable there for a second :’(

Also! The shoes thing? I recently had to leave my job working in a shoe shop, so I added it in this chapter as a tribute to that. I measured so many babies for their first pair of shoes! Honestly, best job ever, even if I often did get screamed at or, yes, kicked in the head. Some parents would even take photos of me putting the shoes on, bless.

Important notice!

Please don’t be alarmed, first of all. I just want to keep you all up to speed. So, this is the last chapter before I start university. I’m moving halfway up the country on Saturday, and will be beginning my Japanese language degree (yay!). It also means that now I don’t have a bunch of free time. Although the first year doesn’t really count towards the end grade, doing well means I’m going to get a scholarship for next year?

Why do I really need a scholarship? Well, because I’m moving to Tokyo! Or, hopefully. I need to get the grades, and need the right Japanese university to accept me, but you get the idea. I’m moving to Japan, at least. And, you know, it’s really kind of an expensive country. To live there for one year, as part of my degree, I need all the moneys I can get. Plus, I’m kind of an overachiever. The point is, I really need to
study as my first priority.

Please don’t feel guilty about accidentally pressuring me or anything, because you really don’t! I love all your comments like “please update soon!”, because it just tells me you guys want more, which is such a compliment!

I am not giving up on this fic in the slightest. It’s just, likely going to slow down quite a bit. Remember when I used to update like once every three days before I got a job? And now it’s kind of around once a week ish? Well, it’s just going to slow down again. Honestly, I can’t tell you by how much, because I have no idea what the size or consistency of my workload is going to be. I’m considering putting it on a proper ‘once every two weeks’ schedule, but really I don’t know yet.

I absolutely love writing this story, and I love how much you guys seem to love it! So I’m still going to try my best, but you just need to be aware of that. I’m not sure when the next update will be, but I’ll see you then :D
Somehow, though he was as well rested as possible these days, Nagisa felt extremely drained. In theory, he supposed a large amount of it was the emotional strain of everything surrounding him, trying to split his time as fairly as possible between everything, on top of school, and the fact that Daichi would be turning one. He felt bad about it, but the idea of his son’s first birthday made him feel kind of sick. It was unreal, that it had already been a full year.

He wasn’t sure what he was really supposed to do for a first birthday. Daichi didn’t even understand what the concept of that meant, so Nagisa couldn’t exactly ask him what he wanted to do. In fact, really he knew he could give Daichi a bowl of stones and he’d be happy for hours, but the thought of that was kind of awful.

“Poke,” Rin said lightly, doing just that to his cheek.

Nagisa blinked, focusing back on his surroundings. “Oh,” he said, “did I zone out again? Sorry.”

Just smiling, Rin didn’t seem that bothered about it. “Thinking about something?”

“Nothing interesting,” he half lied, not really feeling like talking to Rin about anything like that. Though, frankly he didn’t have an issue with it, it was just… something he didn’t think he’d be able to understand.

“Am I seeing you this weekend?”

He grimaced slightly. “Sorry, I’ve been out far too much already.”

Rin just sighed, and then leant forwards. Nagisa tried his best not to flinch when he ruffled his hair. It wasn’t that Nagisa didn’t want to spend time with him, it was just if he did he’d spend the entire time eaten up with guilt. As it already was, it was bad enough that he had to go to school every week day, where Rin would see him already.

“That’s lunch,” Nagisa said, when the bell sounded to signify the break period was over. He stood up, shoved the remnants of his food back in his bag, and made for the door.

“Hang on just a minute,” Rin called out, momentarily sprinting to catch up. “We’re going in different directions.”
He knew what was coming, and braced for it. Like it happened in slow motion, Nagisa saw Rin’s face come closer towards his, and he waited for the perfect half second to slightly twist his head, so that Rin’s lips planted themselves on his cheek. Maybe Nagisa was being crazy, but he kept panicking whenever it happened. A part of him wondered whether it was the risk of not being in complete private ever, because it wasn’t like he’d never kissed anybody before. Or perhaps it was the context that mattered, since they’d all been mostly meaningless.

Still, he was able to pull away after a second or two of contact, smiling as honestly as he could. It was enough of a goodbye, apparently, since they really did pull in separate directions after that. With only a little bit of the school day left, everything else went rather quickly, a blur of an English lesson and more homework. After that, at least, he was glad to be on his way home.

Keeping a good pace when he got off the train, Nagisa actually reached the nursery earlier than he usually would. Often, he’d manage to make it right before closing, but there were a couple of other families still there. He weaved his way through them in the entrance way, so he could announce himself there. But the worker shot him a certain kind of look, and he knew something was up.

It didn’t take him long to find out. Right around the corner was Daichi, though not instantly recognisable. Honestly, Nagisa didn’t want to know how it happened, but he was completely covered in mess. Aside from stray bits of mud, he seemed to have a bunch of paint all over himself, in an array of colours. Almost hilariously, he had a bunch of red in his hair, which only heightened his resemblance to Karma.

“It was finger painting today,” the worker explained. “We’re working on cleaning everyone up, but…”

That didn’t explain why paint was covering his whole body, but he still didn’t feel like questioning it. At least he was painting with proper materials this time it seemed, rather than his usual choice of food. It seemed to be that it was full body painting, rather than just finger, but there was only so much control you could expect out of a one year old, he supposed. Honestly, Nagisa was slightly surprised something so small could cause so much mess.

“Don’t worry about it,” he smiled and began to walk over. “I was going to give him a bath anyway.”

Daichi’s face lit up. “Dada!”

“Hey,” Nagisa picked him up, ignoring the smudge of still wet paint over his side. “Did you have fun today?”

He didn’t answer him, but instead put his hand on Nagisa’s cheek, smudging him with a red handprint. Considering the amount he’d dealt with the last year, a bit of stray paint was the least of his worries. Surprisingly, Daichi didn’t immediately complain when Nagisa started to make his way out of the building, which meant he must have been pretty worn out.

It didn’t help that it was the height of winter, though it hadn’t snowed like it did a year ago. Probably finding the warmth comforting, he remained practically snuggled in his arms, in fact noticeably dropping off a few minutes later. He hadn’t done that for a long time, either. It made Nagisa realise that maybe he really did miss the days where Daichi would easily just fall asleep against him.

By the time they got home, he still hadn’t stirred, so Nagisa hoped the bath he was definitely going in would wake him up more. He felt bad, but if he just let Daichi sleep now, he’d likely be up all night, and he didn’t want to deal with the ramifications of that. So, before he unlocked the door, be
cringed before gently shaking Daichi awake, bracing himself for a look of betrayal.

However, instead of pouting at him, Daichi yawned peacefully, slowly blinking his eyes open. Nagisa immediately wondered if he’d accidentally brought home the wrong child. Well, he supposed he should just count his blessings. He doubted anything would keep Daichi in such a passive mood once he immediately put him in the bath.

“We’re back,” he called out, shifting the door open.”

“-ack,” Daichi tried to mimic.

There was a moment’s pause. “Welcome home,” Karma called back, using the formal version of the phrase with a bite of sarcasm.

Daichi jolted even more awake, at the sound of his voice. “Papa?"

Knowing when to pick his battles, Nagisa bent down, letting Daichi stand on his own. He hoped the paint on his hands had dried during the journey, because he went running off (well, he walked as fast as he could currently manage) down the hallway. He stretched his arms out, now that he was childless, deciding to waste no time in running the bath. Otherwise, their entire apartment was going to be covered in paint.

By the time the water was running, Karma had picked Daichi up, holding him at an arm’s length as he came into the bathroom.

“What happened to…” He stopped mid question, face morphing into a smirk. “Say, Nagisa… Did you walk home like that?”

It took Nagisa a moment to realise what he was talking about. He hadn’t even thought about what he’d looked like, back at the nursery, he’d just wanted to go home… Before he could turn his head away to look in the mirror, Karma’s hand was just there, touching his cheek. Like his brain was suddenly struck by loose electrics, he jolted, though Karma must have mistook it for discomfort, removing his touch immediately.

Nagisa swallowed. “It was finger painting day, apparently.”

“No kidding,” Karma looked down at Daichi. “Is that how this happened?”

Though he tried his best to reach out for him, Karma was quicker, and managed to dodge. Not too happy about that, Daichi tensed up for a moment, before tears began to spill out of his eyes. Since he was already covered in paint, Nagisa took Daichi off him, soothingly rocking him a little, whilst managing to glare. He seemed to get over it pretty quickly, at the least.

Since apparently Karma wasn’t going to be all that helpful, Nagisa balanced Daichi on the lip of the counter. It was a skill developed with a lot of time and practise, but he’d become an expert at holding him up and undressing him at the same time. Still a little upset, Daichi did his best to protest, but Nagisa still managed to get his clothes off and him into the bath.

He was eventually joined by Karma, who had rolled his sleeves up and got on his knees. Daichi seemed to be in a forgiving mood, allowing Karma to hold him up. It meant that Nagisa had the free hand he needed to fill up a small jug, pouring it over Daichi’s dirty hair. Surprisingly, he’d never been that fussy about actually being washed, which was convenient. The bath water quickly began to turn multi coloured, as paint was washed off.

Daichi appeared to notice the difference compared to his regular baths, lunging for the colours. It
was a good thing Karma was the one holding him up, because despite his size Daichi was oddly strong, especially when he wanted to go places. Though, maybe Nagisa was worrying too much about it. The water wasn’t even that deep, so he was probably fine… But really, so close to that first birthday, Nagisa wasn’t that keen for all the growing up stuff.

“I think you’re good,” Karma said, breaking the silence.

Apparently he wasn’t, because Daichi immediately tried to wiggle out of his grip. Since he had water and soap on his side, he managed it within a few seconds, giggling as he did so. At least the actual cleaning part was out of the way. Nagisa sighed, letting him play as he wanted to for a few minutes. That, it seemed, turned out to be a slight error of judgement. Daichi got this devious glint in his eye, and then slammed his hand down across the water, splashing him.

It was a good job Nagisa was used to recognising that kind of look, and managed to dodge. Karma hadn’t been in the direct target line, but apparently decided that was enough, picking Daichi straight up despite his protests. Daichi gave up, though, letting Karma wrap him in his towel, since warmth was preferable.

Which meant Nagisa was left to drain the tub, and then try and wash the paint from his own face. He didn’t really mind any of that, though. Though he couldn’t really pin point the cause, something in his life was making his head feel… full. An uncomfortable kind of full. Once he was cleaned, he went back into the living room, where Daichi and Karma were chatting. Well, Daichi wasn’t making much sense, but Karma was still nodding along.

Sitting down next to him, Nagisa joined in with the playing along like he could understand. At that point at least, Daichi had been dressed in his pyjamas, and after a few minutes his energy started to flag. Considering how covered in paint he’d been, Nagisa had to assume the finger painting had been pretty vigorous anyway, so it made sense.

“Oh yeah?” Karma asked seriously, when there was a pause in the babble.

Daichi stared him back just as intently, and then continued on. Listening in for a moment, Nagisa determined there were no actual words going on, not that he could make out anyway. Regardless, he probably thought he was making perfect sense. He turned around, seemingly noticing Nagisa’s presence, and continued to babble in like he was a part of the conversation.

Sitting down next to him, Nagisa joined in with the playing along like he could understand. At that point at least, Daichi had been dressed in his pyjamas, and after a few minutes his energy started to flag. Considering how covered in paint he’d been, Nagisa had to assume the finger painting had been pretty vigorous anyway, so it made sense.

“Are you still going tomorrow?” Karma asked after a while.

It took Nagisa a couple of seconds to register what he meant. “H-huh? Oh, yeah… Are you still not coming?”

Karma tilted his head back, looking up at the ceiling. “To spend the day with your parents? Nah. I have homework, anyway.”

He supposed he couldn’t blame Karma. Why would he want to hang around with Nagisa’s parents? They seemed to get along well enough, but that was clearly out of necessity than any real desire to. His parents were busy on Daichi’s actual birthday anyway, so it wasn’t like he was missing anything important in not going.

With nothing much else to really talk about between them, the evening basically tapered out from there. Daichi was gone at that point, ready to be tucked in after everything. And then he and Karma went their separate ways, as had been the case recently. Nagisa tried to remain positive that it was just that they were both busy and tired, rather than any underlying issue between them. Still, he couldn’t help but miss just hanging out more.
The following morning, they remained the same. Karma really wasn’t kidding about the studying it seemed, deep in the zone. That was, the brief moment Nagisa even saw him. As always, he preferred to work in the silence of his own bedroom, and only Daichi was ever permitted to disturb that. So, Nagisa brushed it off, getting Daichi up and dressed by himself.

It was early, and they definitely didn’t need to rush. Still, Nagisa wasn’t even going straight to his parents. He knocked on Karma’s door out of courtesy, to let him know that they were in fact leaving the house, but he didn’t get much of a response. Nagisa wasn’t desperate to wait either, knowing how impatient Daichi was bound to get.

“Ready to go?” He asked with a slight sigh, making out to pick him up.

Daichi blinked up at him, realised the connection outstretched arms and restricted ability to move, and did his level best to run off in the opposite direction. Thankfully, it wasn’t like they were running late or anything, in fact they were early. Considering his options, Nagisa decided that fighting Daichi on this wasn’t really necessary.

“No no no no no,” Daichi was meanwhile babbling, wondering around hastily.

Nagisa crouched down to his level, still so that Daichi wouldn’t decide he wanted to play tag. “Do you want to walk?”

Slowly, from the chair he’d taken refuge behind, Dachi nodded. It took him a few moments, before he accepted that Nagisa wasn’t going to try and pick him up again. Finally, he came over, following Nagisa out of the front door. Then came the next challenge, the stairs. Since they lived in an apartment, Daichi hadn’t had much of that kind of climbing practise.

He looked up and Nagisa, and then the stairs, and then back to Nagisa, before stretching his arms up. Not wanting to spend an hour leaving the building, Nagisa happily obliged. He was apparently comfortable up there after everything, wrapping his arms securely round Nagisa’s neck, the few paces from the front door to the stairwell enough. Nagisa couldn’t help but notice Daichi had got a lot heavier than he used to be.

The walk to the park wasn’t far from there at least. Kunugigaoka was still cold, though not as bad as the evening before. Nagisa had always preferred the warmer weather, so it was hard he supposed not to feel a little bit down trodden before the turn of the seasons. Now that Daichi was old enough to really take it in, Nagisa wondered how he’d like spring.

“Nagisa kun!” A loud voice jolted him out of his thought.

“N-nakamura san!”

She grinned widely. “And Daichiisai! Aw, did you miss Auntie Rio? Come here.”

Daichi looked somewhat alarmed when Nakamura took him out of Nagisa’s hold, but he didn’t start crying surprisingly, nor did Nagisa stop her from doing it. He blinked up at her, breaking out into a full smile after he got used to being held by someone else. Though Nagisa was sure Nakamura didn’t hold many infants, she seemed comfortable enough supporting his weight.

“A-auntie?” Nagisa questioned aloud.

“A-a-“ Daichi tried to copy, before giving up. “Hiya!”

She rocked him a little, and then raised her pitch. “Aw, you’re so much bigger than I remember you! Isn’t that right? Huh? Did you grow?”
Honestly, he hadn’t pictured her to be big on baby talk, yet she continued to coo at him. Nagisa and Karma never really engaged in that kind of thing. Maybe it would have been different if he’d been doing it since Daichi was born, but back then it had seemed kind of silly, especially since he knew Daichi hadn’t been able to understand him. Switching now would be just as odd. Daichi seemed to understand him, anyway.

Nagisa laughed awkwardly a little. “How has school been for you, Nakamura san?”

Still looking at Daichi, she shrugged. “Passed first year with flying colours of course. None of it was as interesting as last year though.” She paused in her speech. “Has it already been a year?”

“Almost,” he swallowed. “It’s Daichi’s tomorrow, so.”

She rolled her eyes. “I knew that. I just didn’t bring it up in case my invite to the birthday party got lost in the mail.”

“B-birthday party?” Nagisa spluttered. “We’re not having one!”

Genuinely, Nakamura looked a little taken aback. “What do you mean, you’re not having one?”

“We thought about it,” he admitted, “but we decided there was no real point in an actual party. He doesn’t even know what a birthday is, and it’s not like he’ll remember it.”

Her mouth fell open for just a second, just she snapped it closed again, instead wearing a slightly concerning smirk. She instead turned her attention back to Daichi, who honestly seemed pretty entertained by whatever she was saying to him. With no particular plans other than meeting each other, since they hadn’t in a while, they just walked through the park.

Honestly, Nagisa had forgotten how full on Nakamura could be sometimes. He found he was having a nice time catching up with her though. Everyone had been so busy that there hadn’t been that many meetups, Nagisa included. He even had their group chat on mute, only checking it on the rare occasions he remembered it. Everything was so normal nowadays that the events of last year were beginning to feel like nothing more than a bad dream.

Eventually, since they were both very busy, Nakamura did have to return Daichi, and go off on her own way. Though Daichi didn’t really protest to being handed back over, he did look genuinely a little sad, waving at her as she walked off. He couldn’t deny that it was cute. Then again, a lot of the things Daichi did were cute.

Of course, as always, when he eventually got to his parents’ Daichi was immediately taken off him again. Nagisa tried his best not to care about how little acknowledgement he received from them, pushing it aside. It made sense anyway considering it was almost Daichi’s birthday, and it wasn’t like they got to see him that often. At least his father smiled at him and kept the door held open.

Nagisa didn’t know how to feel about where his relationship with his parents stood. By all means, it was better than how it used to be, or at least he thought so. Barely speaking felt better than the fear he used to be subjected to, anyway. Whether his mother had changed or not was a different question, but she certainly seemed to be less on the edge of some kind of break down. He was glad that his parents genuinely loved Daichi.

Now that they were inside, and he wasn’t limited to being carried, Daichi was pretty happy too. Not that there was much to do at his parent’s place. Nagisa probably should have had more foresight for that, but there wasn’t much he could do about it then. Well, Daichi had a tendency to ignore everything that was intended to be a toy, and instead play with things that were probably...
dangerous, so Nagisa was sure he could amuse himself.

They ended up sitting in the kitchen area, since his mother made some tea. As predicted, Daichi wandered around, checking out the unfamiliar surroundings. He seemed particularly confused by the traditional seating in the living room, since they had a proper sofa at home. Once he’d had enough of that, he ended up back at the table and was picked up by Nagisa’s father.

“I can’t believe he’s already one,” he commented, looking down at Daichi on his lap.

“Mmm,” Nagisa replied out of necessity, not wanting to think about it too much.

The day went by without fanfare after that, with little more to talk about. By the time Daichi got tired enough to need a nap, Nagisa decided to take the chance to leave. Again, Daichi didn’t complain when Nagisa elected to carry him, but didn’t actually fall asleep either, a somewhat impressive feat.

Of course, when they actually got home, and Nagisa let him down, he straight up passed out on the floor in the time it took him to take his coat off. The floor couldn’t possibly be the height of comfort. Maybe he should feel guilty about letting him sleep like that, though he was planning on putting him straight to bed.

“Wear him out?”

Nagisa looked up, meeting Karma’s eyes. “I don’t know how.”

Honestly, Karma didn’t look that much better, a little hunched over with dark circles under his eyes. He didn’t show it anywhere else in his expression or demeanour though. He walked over confidently enough, scooping Daichi up in his arms. He didn’t stir, or anything. Was he getting enough sleep normally?

“Maybe he’s having that growth spurt,” Karma offered, as if he could hear Nagisa’s thoughts.

The doctor kept saying so. Every time Daichi had a check up, he declared that he’d grow soon. It had yet to actually happen. Daichi had been growing, and was definitely a lot bigger than he used to be, but the change had been incredible subtle. If anything, the change in Karma’s height had been more jarring recently. Nagisa found that he was craning his neck up more and more almost every day.

Karma put Daichi down for the nap he was taking properly, and then returned back to his room without saying much else. Whilst Nagisa wouldn’t have minded basically having their whole apartment to themselves, there wasn’t a whole lot to do. He didn’t have any real homework to do, so he invented extra studying until Daichi woke up again, though he wasn’t in a particularly boisterous mood.

Before he knew it, the day was over, and he was left to his own thoughts. Nagisa didn’t tend to look back on things too much, but it was surreal how this time a year ago he was suffering in hospital. It was a good thing you couldn’t remember pain, however even if it were possible, everything was still completely worth it. He tried to drown out the scarier thoughts of what was ahead.

He knew when he woke up the next morning that Daichi didn’t understand what the day was, or care about its significance, but that didn’t matter too much. As always, he was awake by the time Nagisa pulled himself out of bed, significantly in brighter spirits. So maybe on some subconscious level he did know.
“Happy birthday,” he said anyway, as Daichi looked at him funny.

It wasn’t that much of a treat, but Nagisa let him have an extra piece of fruit for breakfast, as well as some of the dreaded strawberry milk. He and Karma had had a long debate about whether drinking that stuff was alright or not, but it hadn’t seemed to have too much of a bad effect. Nagisa just didn’t want him developing a huge sweet tooth already. Internally he’d been referring to it for a while, but it was crazy that Daichi was now officially one year old.

Nagisa wasn’t in a particular mood to rush him, so he let the eating turn more into playing. It was still the usual kind of morning. What wasn’t usual, however, was Karma making an appearance. He even jolted at the unexpected sound of the door. Karma didn’t give him much in terms of acknowledgement, yawning his away across the apartment until he reached the coffee pot.

He just watched him do it, trying not to be grossed out when he poured his own carton of strawberry milk into the mug. “Happy birthday Daichan~”

Once again, Daichi mostly looked confused by the new word, though giggled somewhat.

Karma didn’t seem to mind that, ruffling his hair with one hand as he took a sip with the other. “He’s still so small.”

“Not as small as he was a year ago,” Nagisa commented, looking over at him.

He nodded slowly. “It was the first thing I thought when they handed him to you that first time. I didn’t get how you were so big yet Daichan was so tiny.”

It had been a lot, hadn’t it? Ignoring Karma’s slight insult. Of course, to this day, he still loved Daichi as much as he had that first moment he set eyes on him. It was just more manageable now, he’d adjusted to it, but back then it practically knocked him off his feet. Karma was right though, even know he was smaller than he probably should be, he was a proper little person now.

“He needed room to kick me,” Nagisa remembered.

Karma laughed a little under his breath, before straightening out, as if he wanted to say something. He didn’t get whatever it was out, though, because out of nowhere there was a knock on the door. They both looked at each other in question, as if either one of them was expecting a guess. When only silence followed, Nagisa slowly walked over to the door, curiously pulling it open.

“Surprise!”

Whatever he’d been expecting, it wasn’t several of his old classmates to be there. The last time this had happened, during his own birthday, he’d actually been expecting it. So the actual surprise made a little more sense in this context. Then again, Nagisa wasn’t quite sure what to say, but Nakamura’s wicked grin was enough to set the record straight. He wasn’t mad at her for organising whatever this was, he should have expected it really, but he was more dazed than anything.

“C-come in?” Nagisa got out.

Kayano waved a small flag, significantly more decorated than it had been for his own birthday. “Sugaya couldn’t be here,” Nakamura explained, “but he wanted to help so he made the banners.”

Nagisa nodded very slowly at her words. When they all came in, Karma also gave them a nod of acknowledgement, just as confused as Nagisa was, though he didn’t wear it as obviously. Daichi
just squealed, as if he actually sensed that all of these people were here for him.

“We’re not bothering you, right?” Sugino asked him lowly as the others moved in. “Nakamura just said she has this idea, and-“


By the time everyone actually got dressed, which was a challenge considering how interested Daichi was in the party, and how not interested he was in wearing clothes, it looked as if they’d been planning a party all along. Nakamura was right, Sugaya had done a pretty good job on the banners. Unused to seeing his home decorated so colourfully, Daichi seemed practically amazed. Even if he didn’t know what a birthday was, he knew about toys, and it seemed like he was about to receive a lot of them. Nagisa couldn’t help but feel a slight shot of guilt when he realised everyone had bought a gift. Unfortunately, he knew first hand how costly any baby things could get. The idea of the others forking out a lot... He tried his best not to worry about it, as they sat around and waited for Daichi to open his gifts.

“You have to rip it,” Karma explained to him, out of the ear shot of most of their friends. Of course, he’d never really come across wrapping paper before. Karma demonstrated it a little, creating a small tear. Face shooting up with concentration, Daichi attempted to do the same, though his hands had to be guided a little.

Nagisa smiled. “That’s a good job.”

That was the point, apparently, when Daichi decided this new thing was extremely interesting. More interesting than any of the gifts underneath. Even when everything was open, and he was surrounded by more stuff than any one year old probably needed, he seemed content to just sit and shred the paper, occasionally crumpling it up into small misshapen balls.

Admittedly, it felt nice to have everyone over, enough so that he regretted not trying to organise something in the first place. Even if Daichi didn’t get what a birthday was by the time he turned two, they’d still definitely throw something, though that was still a very long way off. Weren’t babies supposed to turn into nightmares at that age? He dreaded it, though he couldn’t help but wonder if Daichi even counted as a baby now.

Unlike the days before, his energy levels remained consistent through to everyone leaving. Having been made the centre of attention by them all day, he genuinely seemed to pout as everyone filtered out of the door. His wave was practically pitiful. It was almost the school break, and Nagisa wished he could explain that Daichi would probably see them again soon.

“Say thank you,” Nagisa instructed softly. He didn’t expect much, but he figured it was good to introduce manners sooner rather than later.

His face creased up. “Tha-tha-Thank.”

It was close enough. Nagisa held him close, as he shut the door, and like that the energy disappeared. He supposed being engaged directly for so long must be tiring, not that they didn’t usually pay him attention. It wasn’t so bad, he could explore all his new things the next day. Daichi yawned onto his shoulder, burrowing his head. Nagisa internally took his earlier sentiment back. He was still definitely their baby. With the smile he displayed on his face, he was sure Karma was thinking the same thing.
I hope you all liked that!

First of all, sorry for being gone so long. I honestly didn't intend a two month break, but a lot of things happened. On top of university work being... a lot (I spend most of my life ranting to myself in Japanese at this point it's awful) I've been going through some really sucky health issues. I somehow developed anemia which means I had zero energy, and I MEAN zero. My medication for that only just started to kick in, and then my dog passed away, so I had that to deal with. Basically, none of this has been great, but I'm here now!

I hope this upload is proof I'm not forgetting about this story, though I'm not sure how quickly I can get the next chapter out. I hope it was worth the wait and the extra length makes up for it!
Anniversary Time

Chapter Summary

A year after Korosensei's death, 3E meet up to clean their old classroom

Chapter Notes

Nagisa and Karma play an intense game of hide and seek

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It was hard not to feel sad and regretful. There were so many good things ahead, now that Nagisa had reached the end of his first year of high school. On the one hand, that meant there was going to be more work and studying. On the other, he was inching closer to his goals. He had to hope that this is what Korosensei would have wanted.

"Are you ready to go?"

Nagisa nodded slowly. "We're probably late already."

Looking more towards the door than his eyes, Karma swallowed. "Well, they're gonna be there all day."

He tried to take that in, but it was hard to not feel a little deflated. As much as Korosensei would have wanted them to be positive, it still stung. To the day, it had been exactly one year since his death, since they went from assassins to regular civilians. Something their class had mutually agreed was to honour his memory by keeping the classroom clean.

Nagisa was pretty sure some of his old classmates still did it regularly. Maybe out of habit, or maybe out of responsibility since they technically owned the place now. So it probably wouldn't be in much of a bad condition. No worse than it would be over the summer break maybe, though Nagisa knew for a fact Korosensei had kept it in pretty good shape back then too.

Sighing, he bent down. "What did I say about putting that in your mouth?"

Daichi, who had been on the floor the entire time, looked up, toy car between his lips.

"He acts like we don't feed him," Karma commented.

At the word, Daichi dropped it from his mouth. "Food?"

"No food yet," Nagisa said, picking him up. "We're going out."

Thankfully not starving, Daichi didn't seem to mind all that much. He did wiggle though, so Nagisa put him back down again. Immediately Nagisa regretted that decision, since Daichi took it as an opportunity to run around without an aim. Getting his shoes on him like that was a nightmare waiting to happen. Honestly, they'd considered not even taking Daichi, but in a weird way it felt...
They did eventually get out of the door, with only a minor struggle and bribery. After that, the walk was pretty much silent, since neither of them were in the mood for much of a conversation. Despite his protests, Karma did elect to carry Daichi once they got to the actual mountain. Whilst they were barely phased by its dangers anymore, Daichi was still only one, and definitely didn't have the athletic ability yet.

He seemed captivated by the surroundings, which Nagisa supposed was fair considering he hadn't been to a new place in a while. Unfortunately, the excitement was almost too much, considering the way even Karma has struggling to hold him still. He didn't seem upset by the restriction though, busy lunging out in attempts to grab random parts of the forest.

A large group of their classmates were already there by the time they got to the actual class building. But then again, they were hardly early. Their ex classmates were already absorbed in their own things, it seemed, though Isogai shot him a wave and a bright smile when they came past. Given that he'd been their class rep, he was the one who actually held the key to the classroom.

"Hey guys," he greeted cheerfully. "Great to see you here! Some of us have already made a start but there's plenty to do!"

Nagisa smiled back politely. "Mm. Everyone seems pretty busy."

"And Daichi," he took a cautious step forwards. "He's so big now."

Daichi perked up at the mention of his name, scrabbling up across Karma's shoulder to try and judge his source. Thirteen months old now, he definitely had grown a lot from the baby he was when Isogai would have last seen him. Speaking of growing a lot, it looked like everyone had. Everyone, it seemed, except Nagisa. Maybe getting pregnant had tricked his body into thinking it was fully grown or something, a cruel price for a high reward.

"Oh hey!" Maehara rushed over to join the exchange, dropping one of the wash buckets he was carrying. "Long time no see, huh? Hi," he bent down a little as if talking to Daichi, holding his hand out in a wave. Looking at him confused for a moment, Daichi clenched his fist and tried to meet him half way.

"He's trying to give you a fist bump," Nagisa explained. Or at least, he sincerely hoped that was what Daichi was attempting, rather than an actual punch.

Maehara laughed, not really seeming to mind, when another voice called out. "Hey Maehara! Get back here!"

Looking over in the direction it was coming from, Nagisa couldn't see anyone, but he recognised Okano's voice. It was good to know everyone was still getting along, he supposed.

"Yeah! I guess I should run... You coming?" He looked over at Isogai.

Isogai smiled at Nagisa as he walked past. "See you round."

With that they were essentially left alone, with only background sounds of work to remind them they weren't. Nagisa took a tentative step forward, heading towards the class building, but Karma took advantage of his naturally bigger stride and crossed over in front of him, stopping in his path. There was definitely something off about his whole demeanour, Nagisa realised, remembering how he'd kept silent through that entire exchange.
"Uhm, Karma-

He was cut off by their son being shoved into his arms. "You take Daichi today."

Nagisa blinked. "Where are you going?"

Unsurprisingly, Nagisa didn't get a response. He turned over his shoulder, watching as Karma walked away off into the woods. Nothing had happened between them, had it? He retraced their journey in his head, trying to remember if something he'd said had upset him in some way... It all came up blank. Maybe it was just simply being here?

Whatever the case, Nagisa knew Karma pretty well at this point. And he knew when he needed to leave Karma alone. So instead of trying to follow after him, he continued the way he was originally headed, right into the classroom. Honestly, it was a good thing he had Daichi at his hip, because it was the only thing grounding him to the reality and that he wasn't back in 3E.

Nobody else was in the classroom, making it eerily silent. Nagisa couldn't help but be drawn to his old desk, slowly walking over to it. As he would have every morning, he turned and faced the front of the room, eyes fixed on the blackboard. He blinked, a flash of light obscuring his vision. For just a second, it was like a phantom had crossed into the room. Just as quickly as it appeared, it went again, clearly just a trick of the light.

"Dada," Daichi complained from his arms, jolting him out of his thoughts.

When Nagisa turned his head to look at him, Daichi was already smacking his mouth with his hand. "You want a snack?"

The only answer he got was a babble of something unrecognisable, which he took as a yes. With nowhere better to put him down, he sat Daichi on the chair, whilst simultaneously wiggling the bag from his shoulder. At this point, a bag of baby supplies was absolutely necessary whenever they went within a minute of their house. He hadn't learnt that the hard way yet, but he didn't want to. He fished a pretty generic bag of milk biscuits out, ripping it open. They were actually surprisingly good, in his opinion, though by the looks of things Daichi would probably finish them all.

He turned around, and paced over to the blackboard. It lacked the usual residue of chalk, suggesting that nobody had drawn on it for a while, but he decided it could probably use a good wipe down anyway. It seemed somebody had already left some cleaning supplies in the room, so he quickly got to work, checking regularly over his shoulder to make sure Daichi wasn't about to fall off the chair or choke on his food or anything.

It felt odd, standing in such a place. Although he'd stood right there and cleaned the blackboard many times, there was a different kind of air. He was in a different stage of his life, compared to being a middle school student. He felt the sudden and strong urge to keep his eyes set forwards, rather than behind him. That's how he'd gotten through his first year of high school, at least.

"I thought I might find you here."

Nagisa's head snapped towards the doorway, where Kayano was standing. "I-I'm surprised you made it."

She smiled widely. "I happened to be between projects right now."

Kayano was a lot different to how she'd been during their year as classmates. Although her personality hadn't shifted that much at first when her fake persona had been revealed, a year outside of their influence had left her feeling a little different. Nagisa had seen her a couple of times
this past year, a month ago for Daichi's birthday, but it was rare that they had a full conversation. Somehow, right then, the shift felt more obvious. The energy surrounding her was more self-assured, more grown up, though maybe that was also the change in her look.

"Is there going to be anything for us to see yet?" He questioned politely. Nagisa always kept an eye out for her stage name, but it seemed that nothing had been aired to the public.

She stepped over closer to him. "A few small roles I did should be airing soon! It takes a little while to get back into acting after such a long break," she grinned. "I already have a lot of offers on the table though, so, I have to trust I made the right choice!"

Nagisa nodded. "If it's what you were meant to do-"

"Then I should do it," Kayano completed, with a small sigh.

"Done!" A much higher pitched voice loudly proclaimed. "Dada, dada, dada, done!"

It was pretty normal for Daichi to get impatient when he felt ignored. Nagisa was happy he'd finished it all though, which meant his energy shouldn't turn into irritability, if he was lucky. Nagisa came over to him, taking the packet out of his hands. Of course Daichi had managed to get a beard of crumbs smudged around his chin, ready for Nagisa to wipe off. He included the hands for good measure, even though they were bound to get dirty again instantly. Not wanting to leave him like that, he set him down on the floor, pulling out a toy car from the bag to keep him somewhat occupied. It seemed he was more interested in doing his own thing right then, since he wasn't looking up at Nagisa in a pleading request to be played with.

"It's odd," Kayano stared out of the window.

"Hmm?"

She glanced around the room. "Standing here again."

Before Nagisa could answer her, his phone buzzed its notification sound. A part of him just wanted to ignore it. He probably should have just turned the device off anyway, before coming here, but it had slipped his mind. In case it was something important, though, Nagisa took a quick look at the screen. It only displayed the name and a small preview of the message. Glancing at it, it only seemed to be Rin, and nothing urgent. On a day like this, he figured it was better to just turn his phone off.

"Who's that?" Kayano questioned, possibly noticing the shift in his demeanour. He knew she wasn't purposely invading his privacy or anything, since she was standing in a position where she could easy see his phone screen, but the question made Nagisa jolt anyway.

He took a deep breath. "J-just my, uhm," he paused, flush building on his cheeks. For some reason, he couldn't quite spit it out.

Kayano's lips parted in what looked to be understanding. "I thought you and Karma were practically joined at the hip."

It had been a long time since their last proper conversation. The last time, he'd made an idiot of himself, going on and on about his feelings for Karma. Although they'd seen each other since then, he supposed there was no reason for her to assume anything had changed. A small part of Nagisa wondered if anything had changed.

"It was practically his idea," Nagisa mumbled, though he wasn't sure if she caught it or not. It was
probably better if she didn't.

She hummed. "Are you happy like this?"

"I'm happy," he forced himself to say, afraid of what a more genuine answer would have been.

Taking a deep breath, a determined look crossed across her face. "I don't think you can fall out of love with somebody quickly. I-I think you can swallow it down a lot, but it takes a while to really let go of it."

Dread set over him. "So I should keep going?"

Maybe it was awful. Honestly, Nagisa wasn't sure how he felt about anything right now, and it was beginning to make him feel dizzy. It wasn't like months ago, before the new year, where he got this sort of uncontrollable buzz underneath his skin whenever Karma so much as looked at him. Perhaps subconsciously, he'd started to associate that with not being infatuated with him anymore, though there was something, like a churn in his stomach, that didn't feel quite complete about it. And Nagisa knew he liked Rin, but he wasn't so far gone in lying to himself to pretend he loved him. But you weren't supposed to love somebody right away, as far as he knew. So Kayano was right, he needed to just keep going as he until the somewhat uncomfortable feeling he still had faded.

"That's not what I-" She didn't get to finish her sentence, a tiny weight barrelling into her leg. "Daichiisai!"

"You're still calling him that?" Nagisa half groaned, though he couldn't help but feel relieved that the subject had changed.

Daichi didn't seem to mind, pointing at the toy he was rolling around. "Car."

"Yeah!" Kayano bent down to play with him. "Do you like cars?"

"Big car," he giggled, pushing it towards her.

Nagisa was surprised at his apparent ability to string two words together, but he didn't express it. Instead, for just a little bit, he watched Kayano readily play cars with Daichi. Being an actress, she was pretty skilled in the art of playing her audience, and Daichi seemed overjoyed in the level of interest in something so small. Whilst they were doing that, he took his chance to start working on cleaning the rest of the classroom, something that was quite methodical.

As the day went by, his old classmates slowly flitted in. Most of the demanding maintenance had been outside, anyway, so they hadn't had much of a reason to come in before. Nagisa continued to clean around them, as a few gathered around. Some of them were just having conversations with each other, but quite a few joined whatever Kayano and Daichi were doing at that point. Honestly Nagisa would have expected Daichi to be a little more nervous with the group of practically strangers gathered around him, but he was just soaking up the attention.

The natural light began to fall eventually, by which point almost everyone was inside. Nagisa gave up cleaning, at that point, as the conversation became more communal as opposed to small groups. There was an odd air in the room, though, like they were dancing around the subject. Somehow, though, it didn't feel like a time to be sad.

"Hey," Maehara said, standing up from his chair. "Do you remember that time Korosensei was trying to show Okuda san that experiment, but some other chemical got knocked in?" He gestured towards the wall. "I can't believe there's still a scorch mark there."
Okuda flushed, but the rest of their class started to laugh. It had been pretty amusing, actually. One moment Korosensei had been calmly explaining a more advanced version of the lesson, and the next he was rushing around, sliming practically the whole classroom to contain the flame. It was a shame it was after they'd established the 'no assassination attempts in class' rule by then, because Nagisa was sure they could have had a good shot.

"Karma poured it in," Okuda said, her voice low.

Of course he had. Okajima turned to look at him. "Hey, where is Karma?"

Apparently that was the cue for the rest of them to look expectedly at Nagisa. Like he actually was supposed to know. "H-he came with me," he said, "but I haven't seen him since this morning."

"I haven't seen him," Nakamura shrugged.

Nobody else pipped up to his whereabouts. Although Nagisa was absolutely certain that Karma could take care of himself, he couldn't help but feel a little worried, especially considering his mood earlier. Everyone else had returned inside... Perhaps Nagisa should just give him the space he so clearly wanted, but surely a whole day's worth was enough.

"I guess I could go look for him," he offered.

Nakamura jumped up. "We'll look after Daichan!"

"Will you." He deadpanned. Though, he supposed they'd practically been looking after him all day. Since Kayano had come in, he'd been changed and fed again properly, so it wasn't like he should be too much trouble. Given that they'd been out all day, he'd probably just fall asleep. Surely he could trust them to not break a sleeping infant.

"It's probably a little rough out on the mountains," Isogai offered.

Nagisa felt the tension drop from his shoulders, and sighed. With everyone looking over at him expectantly, he kissed Daichi on the forehead, and then set off. Where would Karma even go, anyway? Definitely not all the way back home, or so he hoped. Unfortunately, Karma had a lot of prime places mapped out of this forest, and Nagisa had yet to find them all.

At first he followed the route they'd taken when infiltrating the army, back on that night a year ago now. He had to assume that logically Karma would have chosen the route most familiar to him for himself back then, which would make it a familiar place to hide in now. Still, so signs of him anywhere. Nagisa almost considered climbing a tree for better vantage, but he didn't think it would get him very far. Karma was smart for sure, but he wasn't extremely stealthy.

Next Nagisa checked the ravine like formation, following the same logic. Karasuma had trained them a lot there, so it still qualified as familiar. Once again, he couldn't see any signs of Karma. Nagisa paused, then, at the bottom of it. Of course he'd checked around the classroom first, and he hadn't been their either, so where else?

He ended up following the river downstream, and then there he was. It was almost fully dark by then, but Karma's red hair still stuck out like a flame. Though it was subtle, he saw the way Karma's form tensed up, almost at the same moment Nagisa laid eyes on him. He must have heard the footsteps, then, so there was no point in Nagisa trying to sneak up on him. Instead, he approached casually.

"Hey," Nagisa said, sitting down beside him, legs dangling over the cliff face where half their ex classmates had almost been thrown off.
Karma didn't say or do anything to acknowledge him.

"It's c-"

"Don't." He said, tone sharp with ice.

On an ordinary day, Nagisa probably would have left it at that, but he felt compelled somehow to not take that for an answer. He felt an almost kind of rage spiral up inside him. Everyone else was sitting inside and respecting Korosensei's memory, not off sulking somewhere alone. Hadn't they grown out of this kind of thing?

"You should come back," he tried to say, firmer.

Karma laughed without any obvious humour. "And why would I do that, Nagisa?"

"Because," he protested, "I know that you're upset," he sped up before Karma could cut him off to deny that, "but I don't think this is what Korosensei would have wanted. Maybe it's not fair."

Without warning, Karma jumped up, as if he was about to stalk off again. He seemed to change his mind though, mid stride. "Nothing about anything is fair."

"Oh," Nagisa produced the sound, without registering it leaving his lips.

He turned to face Nagisa, though something about it seemed less on edge. "I just can't get over it," he finally admitted. "I think it was right... the ending, that is. But the way it happened?" Karma almost shuddered. "It feels like chaining an animal up for slaughter when I replay it in my head. There's not a lot to celebrate about that."

That's what this was about. "No it wasn't ideal," Nagisa got to his own feet. "But I don't think that's what mattered. Maybe Korosensei was trapped, and maybe it wasn't a typical assassination since he kind of... chose it, but... Wasn't that kind of the point? All year, we were trapped in a bad situation, but we made the best of it, like Korosensei taught us. We still assassinated him together after all, and I like to think he was proud of us for that."

"You think so?"

Nagisa couldn't help himself. He strode forward, going up on the balls of his feet to wrap his arms around Karma as best he could. Since embracing his neck would probably just be uncomfortable for them both, he instead wrapped his arms around his middle, burying his head against Karma's chest. For a moment, Karma remained completely still, but relaxed into it, and then hugged Nagisa back. His eyes weren't wet against Nagisa's shoulder, but it was as close to crying as Nagisa thought he'd get.

"No," he stumbled back, pushing Nagisa away from him all of a sudden, a real kind of panicked look in his eye. "You can't do that."

He stared up at Karma. "D-do what?"

Karma's face morphed, and then like a quick shudder again it completely neutralised. "So. Let's go back to class."

Now Nagisa was even more concerned. What was going on with him? "Wait-"

But he was already walking. "You found me, didn't you? Fine. I'll come and sit with you and chit chat like you want. Is that enough?"
He wasn't fine, and it wasn't enough, and Nagisa realised with an amount of horror that there wasn't a whole lot he could do about it. So he steeled his shaking limbs, and just followed Karma back.

Chapter End Notes

I hope the formats not weird! Ao3 wasn't working so I had to copy and paste off wattpad and post this on my phone.

I'm still ill and have a Japanese exam on monday but I'm hanging in there.

Hope you all enjoyed!
Chapter Summary

Nagisa's regular preheat makes him feel ill

Chapter Notes

I truly am back from the dead wow look at his

See the end of the chapter for more notes

He was already feeling it. Nagisa hated being an omega. With every core of his being, right then, he knew his life was simply unfair. A part of him just wanted to go to the school infirmary and be allowed home for the rest of the day, but that would just draw attention to himself. At least his heat cycle was regular. Some omegas, he knew having seen for himself, just went into heat without warning sometimes, so at least he had that.

If only he didn’t want to rip the clothes from his body. An electric buzz, and not a pleasant one, was rushing under the surface of his skin. It wasn’t itchy in the traditional sense, but that was the closest way to describe the heat building there. Everything was so sensitive that the brush of fabric against his skin was maddening. But there wasn’t a lot he could do about it, in the restricting school uniform.

“Aren’t you gonna eat that?” Higashi gestured his lunch.

Weakly, Nagisa shook his head. Though his closest friends knew he was an omega, they were all betas themselves. It would be hard to get them to relate to how sickening heat could get, even when you were expecting it. He supposed maybe the symptoms were coming on a little fast, since he was already feeling nauseous, but he didn’t think he was in any danger.

Higashi just shrugged, taking it to eat for herself. Since they’d started their second year of high school, things had been a little different. Kita and Nishi were dating pretty openly now, and had a natural priority for each other. Whilst that normally would have been fine, Minami tended to socialise his way around the room, rather than sticking with just them. So, not wanting to leave Higashi in an awkward position as third wheel, he’d decided to try and spend more time with his friends, rather rushing off to Rin every lunch break.

Not that he was avoiding Rin. After thinking long and hard about it during their school break, he’d figured out what he had to do. Mostly, that involved swallowing his fears. How could he expect to love somebody if he didn’t really try to? Speaking of which, Nagisa probably should try and find him. They didn’t have any plans after classes ended, so looking for him then was a terrible idea. And Nagisa at least wanted to explain why he’d be missing the next two days of school.

First, though, he excused himself from the classroom to the tiny omega bathrooms. At least Nagisa had enough forethought to bring heat scent blocker with him, just in case. Early preheat wasn’t so bad in terms of scent if nobody came too close to him, but there was always the risk that a sharp
nosed alpha could pick it up in passing. Easier to just dab a little on like cologne, than experience
that.

Nobody gave him a second look on the way to Rin’s classroom. He always hated popping his nose
in there, but he steeled himself to do it, slowly poking his head around the door. Thankfully, Rin sat
just two desks away from the exit, so it didn’t take a lot for Nagisa to get noticed. Unfortunately,
when Rin stood up out of nowhere, a bunch of eyes set upon him. They didn’t really hang around
with Rin’s friends that much, so Nagisa was pretty sure they only really thought of him as ‘Rin’s
boyfriend’. He cringed, trying to ignore the boisterous teasing noises they were serenaded with.

Still, he slid out of the room quickly, without answering any of their questions. “Hey!”

“C-can we go somewhere?” He finally got out, realising there was no good way to say it.

Rin didn’t really seem to mind the odd question. “Sure.”

Nagisa was happy to let him lead the way. Even after over a year of attending it, their high school
was still pretty big. He still didn’t know every inch of it, or which rooms would be free. They
ended up going up a few floors, and into what seemed to be an empty art room. He wondered what
the danger of somebody walking in there was, but Rin closed the door behind them, giving at least
a slight sensation of privacy.

“First,” he said, and before Nagisa could ask what he meant, he cupped his cheeks and pressed a
kiss to his lips. Thankfully he didn’t make it very deep, and Nagisa was able to disguise his
discomfort until he pulled away. His skin was far too sensitive to be touched, even in a gentle way
like that.

Nagisa managed a weak smile, and stepped away. “Uhm, tomorrow-“

He looked like he’d just caught a beam of sunlight. “Oh, so you heard? I’m kind of nervous
honestly.”

That… in wasn’t what he’d meant. “Is something happening?”

Rin blinked, clearly surprised that Nagisa hadn’t heard whatever it was about. “They chose me to
open the festival tomorrow!”

“That’s great,” Nagisa tried to say with as much enthusiasm possible, which was a hard task
honestly. It was almost impossible to feel anything other than discomfort and irritation with the
state he was in. Still, it was a good thing for him. Since Rin was president of his own class this
year, he was going to naturally be in the running for jobs like that. Nagisa had been planning on
missing the entire festival already, though.

His grin spread wider. “I don’t know where your class is going to be, but you’ll try and come,
right?”

“O-oh,” Nagisa looked down. “That’s what I wanted to tell you. I can’t go to the festival.”

Rin took a step back, but he looked more confused rather than upset. “How come?”

This was a conversation Nagisa had been dreading for a while. “Omega things,” he said in one,
hurried breath, hoping that he wouldn’t dwell on it too long.

It took Rin a second. “Oh, is it your-“
“Yes,” Nagisa cut him off, not able to force himself to look at him.

A really uncomfortable silence filled the room. But there wasn’t a lot else Nagisa could say to make it better. He’d known it would be something they’d have to deal with eventually, but not how to go about that. Maybe he should have looked it up or something, but it was too late for that. Now all he could do was hope that Rin would excuse himself and ask no further questions.

Rin swallowed. “Do you want... help?”

That wasn’t what Nagisa had been expecting to hear.

“E-eh what?” Nagisa felt all the blood rush to his head. A small voice told him that logically he shouldn’t be making assumptions. Aside from offering to share his heat, there were many things he could potentially help with. Maybe it was just a gut feeling, that he knew exactly what Rin actually meant. It could just be the preheat, but he began to feel just a little bit more nauseous. He hadn’t even considered that kind of thing.

“That’s not weird is it?” Rin tilted his head. “Most people help their omega’s when they go into heat. Isn’t it just the right thing to do?”

“But-“

He sighed, then, like Nagisa just didn’t understand him. “I just don’t want you to be hurting,” he paused, and then softened. “Besides, hey, Nagichan, who’s going to protect you?”

Nagisa forced himself to quell the rage that burned just below the surface. He knew what Rin meant, he did, but he didn’t need protection as if he were helpless prey. If Rin weren’t a beta, maybe Nagisa could have brushed that off as something instinctual, but there was a real seriousness in his tone. Yes, it was dangerous for an omega to just wander about as normal during a heat, if he could even manage that in the first place, but that was hardly what he was doing.

“I can look after myself,” he said, more like he was biting the words out of him.

Rin came closer, practically shielding him with his arms. “It’s not that I don’t think that. But there’s other things, like making sure you eat and drink. You shouldn’t go through that alone.”

Who made him such an expert? “I won’t be completely alone.”

He dropped Nagisa as if he was being burnt. “You’re staying at home?”

“Yes?”

It hadn’t been the right thing to say, he realised. Rin went very quiet for a moment, but it was a different kind of silence. After a few seconds, Nagisa realised it was anger, and automatically braced himself for whatever was about to come. He’d never seen Rin angry before.

“At home with your alpha ex boyfriend?” There was something wild in his eyes. “Just so I can get that straight.”

Nagisa felt his body start to shake. “It’s not like that.”

He glared. “What else is it like?”

“I can’t just make him move out every time this happens,” Nagisa all but whimpered.

Rin knew about their entire messy situation. Well, maybe not all of it, but the parts that were
important. At least, Rin knew enough that he and Karma weren’t a thing, and the only reason they lived together was out of mutual convenience. If he was that uncomfortable with it, then he should have brought this up months ago.

“Yeah, but it’s hardly,” he took a deep breath, “I guess the right word would be appropriate.”

If Nagisa had been less on edge, he would have kept his mouth shut. But it came tumbling out of him. “You don’t trust me?”

“Heat is different,” Rin said firmly. “It’s a disaster waiting to happen.”

“Nothing’s happened,” Nagisa stated, annoyed now that Rin assumed to know exactly how heats went. “We’ve been through this a few times now, and everything was fine.”

He raised an eyebrow. “Something clearly did happen, or you wouldn’t have a child.”

Nagisa’s jaw dropped. He knew that he was angry and confused, but his mind went otherwise completely blank. Stunned out of possible things to say. Had Rin been thinking like that for a while, and finally let it out? Or was it just his own imagination running wild? Whatever the case, there was nothing Nagisa could say, he didn’t think.

“R-rin, I-“

The bell signalling the end of the lunch break sounded out. Not even hesitating, Rin shot him a pointed look, and then exited the room as swiftly as he physically could. Nagisa just stood there for a few minutes, blinking in silence, as if he expected Rin to just come back and say it was a practical joke. He knew he couldn’t stay there forever, though, so he eventually lost that hope and returned to his classroom.

The rest of his lessons dragged, as the preheat became steadily worse. He couldn’t really fixate on the whole Rin situation, not with the sweat building under his skin. If that had been their first fight, then he’d have to deal with it later. Right then, all he could think about was getting home and stripping off his torturous clothes. The second the day ended, in fact, he was up and out of his seat without saying goodbye to anybody.

By the time he was on the train, the pace of which he couldn’t control, Nagisa was out of breath. In his rush to get home, he’d started to sweat even more, breaking down the heat scent blocker faster than Nagisa was comfortable with. He didn’t feel like he was in any real danger, but he couldn’t miss people glancing at him in question. There would still be a few hours before he really smelt of heat, at least.

He made it home before that happened. He’d agreed with Karma a few days ago that he wouldn’t pick Daichi up this week, just in case he did have to come home early. Usually, he’d at least announce he was back, but Nagisa was more than happy to just disappear to his room and hide there for the next few days. It didn’t help that the atmosphere between him and Karma was still rough. Civil enough to carry a conversation for sure, but there was always a subtle edge to it whenever they were in the same room. And their apartment wasn’t particularly big. He just had to hope Karma was studying alone in his room as he usually did.

That wasn’t the case, unfortunately. And it only took Karma a few seconds. “Are you gonna want dinner?”

It made sense that he’d be able to tell, since they were so close all the time. From Nagisa’s perspective, too, he barely even noticed Karma’s scent unless he was really up close, since he was
used to it. He supposed that if that suddenly changed, he’d pick it up immediately too. The last shreds of the blocker were basically gone.

“No, thank you,” he said weakly.

“Are your scent blockers up?” Karma asked seriously.

They’d been a necessary investment. In addition to spray you could wear on your body, there was also a kind of air con like device which could be attached to the wall in any room, turned on and off whenever needed. Nagisa usually turned it on a couple of days before he expected a heat, so it had been neutralising his scent for a while already. It meant that he wasn’t as comfortable during it, but it was a compromise he was willing to make.

Nagisa nodded instead of speaking up, suddenly feeling a little dizzy. Perhaps any other time, he’d let himself indulge just a little in the scent of alpha, but that was exactly what he insisted to Rin he wouldn’t do. So Nagisa instead tried to concentrate on not standing any closer to Karma, which was hard due to his biological programming. Emotional cheating still felt like cheating.

Karma’s hands suddenly clasped his shoulders, which was painful in hypersensitivity. “You’re shaking.”

“O-oh.”

The serious look seemed odd on Karma’s face. “You should go to your room.”

His room? Yes, that sounded good. Nagisa winced, after Karma let him go. His arms were truly bothering him then, so Nagisa lost his train of thought, pulling his school uniform off right then and there. He whimpered as he did so, but once his top half was free, he felt a little bit of relief. Preheat was painful, so he didn’t think the good feeling would last long.

“D-“ Karma swallowed. “Do you want me to speed it up?”

Yes, they’d done that before. Nagisa wasn’t sure exactly how long his preheat would ordinarily last, but he was very much aware that being around Karma made the entire process quicker. It was nothing quite like the first time, Nagisa didn’t even want to think about that, but every other time he’d been in heat since then, he’d made peace with some light scenting. After directly breathing in alpha scent for a few minutes, his heat seemed to come on furiously within the hour. But that felt wrong given his earlier argument, too.

“No, thank you,” he got out.

Nagisa wasn’t sure how he was going to go through this, as he was, completely alone this time. He’d known he’d probably have to cope with his heats completely alone one day, but he didn’t feel completely ready for it to be right then. Karma would probably still bring him water, he hoped. That couldn’t be considered wrong, could it?

He was forgetting something. “Uhm, Daichi-“

Karma raised an eyebrow. “Oh, he needed a nap. I have no idea what they do to him there, but he was knocked out.”

That soothed him for a moment, bringing an element of calm to his frantic mood. As soon as he’d felt that, though, his stomach began to churn. He lurched forward a little with it, automatically feeling faint, as his body went about the sickly procedure of making slick. Although he was mostly expressionless, Nagisa knew Karma’s subtle moods. He could see the way his jaw clenched, his
nose kind of scrunched. Nagisa understood why, it felt as gross as it probably smelt, so he took it as his cue to leave.

He sidestepped around Karma, and closed the door to his bedroom behind him. Though he wasn’t on the edge of full heat, he knew it was close. Stripping the rest of his clothes off haphazardly, he clambered onto his bed. It would be hard, but he knew it would be best if he tried to get some sleep. Waking up mindless and in heat would be easier, or so he thought. Nagisa shut his eyes, trying his best to erase any thoughts of any alphas from his head.

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It didn’t matter that Nagisa wasn’t in the room with him anymore, the traces of omega preheat still lingered and it was turning Karma insane. Maybe it was a good thing that Nagisa hadn’t let him scent him… Karma still could have detached himself, he was certain, but he’d be a hell of a lot more frustrated. He was supposed to be banishing thoughts of Nagisa, anyway.

Maybe it was just easier to be mad at Nagisa, than mad at himself. A part of him thought that he must be mistaking his feelings. Karma wasn’t sure, but love was supposed to involve wanting to see the other person happy. By all appearances, Nagisa was over the moon, but Karma got no enjoyment out of it. No, he only felt kind of bitter. So that feeling, just wanting Nagisa, rather than loving him, should have been easy to fix. But, well, Karma wasn’t good at letting things go.

Thankfully, for his own sanity, it wasn’t long until Daichi woke up again, which made Karma feel significantly less alone in his own thoughts. It was pretty easy to tell he was awake, anyway, because recently he made it very obvious when he was bored, and there wasn’t a lot Daichi could entertain himself with from his crib.

In fact, when Karma went into his room, he was already trying his level best to climb out of it.

“Papa!” He gave up at that, apparently content to just let Karma do the hard work for him.

Karma regarded him for a moment. “Hungry?”

His face screwed up as though he was really thinking long and hard about it. Karma couldn’t help but snort at him, because it really wasn’t a big decision. Then again, maybe he’d been so tired he wouldn’t remember that he hadn’t eaten anything since they got home. Apparently he had a moment of clarity, because he nodded very vigorously.

Karma sighed, bending down to pick him up. “Any requests?” He didn’t get a response. “How about… green peppers?”

He wished he had a camera, because the look of pure horror that came across Daichi’s face was hilarious. “No! Yucky!” For extra measure, he tried pounding his fists against Karma’s shoulder. “No!”

“Relax Daichan,” Karma laughed, “you know I wouldn’t do that to you.”

He whimpered, as though he didn’t really trust him. Honestly, Karma wasn’t in the mood to make him anything complicated, probably just a smaller version of whatever he was making for himself. He settled on yaksisoba, since it would only take a few minutes to make. Though he put Daichi down when he got into the kitchen area, he didn’t rush off to play by himself.

“Help Papa,” Daichi said firmly.

He’d learnt that word recently, Karma thought. At least, he’d started to notice it. Maybe because
Nagisa was always yelling at him, ‘Karma do this’, ‘Karma help me with that’ (well, maybe not always, but way more than Karma ideally wanted). So of course Daichi had picked it up. There wasn’t a lot he could really do, since Nagisa would probably murder him for letting their son too close to knives or flames.

Karma thought about it for a moment, and chopped up one of the vegetables, his practised hand making quick work of it. “Hmmm, can you throw this in the bin?”

When handed the scrap parts, Daichi clenched his first firmly, and seemed completely intent on doing the best job he could. They went on like that, with Karma giving him tiny tasks, and Daichi taking great pride in carrying them out. He rewarded him being omitting green peppers (Karma wasn’t the biggest fan of them either), and a carton of strawberry milk.

It seemed like Daichi was in a kind of clingy mood that day, because he stuck at Karma’s side without seeming at all bothered. He decided to skip out on studying, at least for one day, mostly out of feeling bad about it. Even with the nap, though, Daichi seemed pretty tuckered out. They ended up watching some sort of animated movie on his bed, though Karma wasn’t really paying attention to it. There was something or other about a talking cat, but Daichi seemed to understand it more. Karma really couldn’t be blamed for dropping off too, once Daichi gave up on trying to keep his eyes open. He dreamt about cats, funnily enough.

Chapter End Notes

I hope you all enjoyed this one!

Look they're fighting!

Look cute baby!

As always, all comments and feedback are much appreciated. Don't forget to like and subscribe if you enjoyed this video! Ding the notification bell to never miss an update! Use code James for 10% off your purchase!
“Can anybody tell me why the lord only took male omegas as concubines?”

It was a long, long lesson. It wasn’t that Nagisa disliked history, or his teacher, but this particular subject was uncomfortable. Of course, most people had learnt about the different genders back in the mandatory middle school health classes, and then seemed to have forgotten it all. Nagisa had never really noticed it come up in school, since then, but this particular lesson seemed to be focused on a situation involving omegas.

Which meant that everyone in the class turned towards him, as if he’d know the answer.

“They can’t get pregnant!” Someone stuck their hand up earnestly.

Nagisa nearly choked on air. Was that what people generally thought? Or maybe they were right, and he was some kind of medical miracle. Though he didn’t remember anybody telling him anything like that. Of course, Nagisa wasn’t about to stand up and inform his teacher that he was wrong. Perhaps his life would have been a little simpler, if that were the case.”

“Mm,” their teacher said, “very good. As you should all know, a male displaying omega characteristics is considered a genetic dysfunction. Whilst it may be technically possible, in practise, I believe it’s too hard for the body to contain.” He paused, and glanced around the room. “But this isn’t a science lesson. So, as you know, marriage to a beta woman was highly controversial. At the time, it was generally accepted that it wasn’t enough for an alpha. But, omega women are far too fertile, leaving the one solution- “ He sighed, cut off by the school bell. “Remember to pair up and finish this section together.”

As usual, they stood up as their teacher left, and the second he was out of the door, normal conversation picked up around the room. Nagisa felt the tension drop from his shoulders, far less on display than he had been before. Honestly, he’d mostly been zoning out for that entire lesson, which seemed far better than fully listening to it.

Higashi didn’t waste any time tapping him on the shoulder. “Let’s work together!”

“Hey, no fair,” Minami complained. “You don’t just get to claim Nagisa kun for the one project ever on male omegas.”
“T-that doesn’t mean I know about it!” Nagisa felt the need to state, because that hadn’t crossed his mind lately.

Shooting a look at Minami, Higashi shrugged. “No, but you get better grades than I do in history.”

Nagisa looked down at his notebook. “O-okay then.”

“Great! Should I come over to yours this weekend?”

“Wait!” Nagisa realised exactly why that couldn’t happen. “Can’t we just… do it at your house?”

Higashi looked at him curiously. “Not right now. My parents are away this weekend and wouldn’t let me have someone over. Besides, they’re redoing the kitchen, so the whole place is a mess.”

“The library then!” It was the last option he could think of.

“What are you hiding.”

He hadn’t exactly told his friends everything yet. It hadn’t been necessary. The only reason he’d told Rin is because he would have felt awful hiding such a huge part of his life, but friends weren’t supposed to know everything about each other. Nagisa didn’t know what to do. The more excuses he made, the more Higashi of all people would grow suspicious. And who knew what she might uncover when she really went looking. Also, a part of him wanted to squash that Yakuza rumour completely.

He accepted his fate. “I’ll see you tomorrow, then.”

“Great,” she grinned. “Oh, Chou chan! Are you coming with me tonight?”

“Huh?” Kita looked up, but then nodded. “Mmm.”

That was Nagisa’s signal to escape. He pushed all of his books into his bag, and quickly swung it over his shoulder. There was a lot of work to be done that weekend, and Nagisa would rather get it out of the way as quickly as possible. He had to get out quickly anyway. It seemed like Daichi was finally realising what was happening, rather than accepting just being put in the care of others. He had apparently got the memo that he was being left, and didn’t seem to like it. So, Nagisa felt bad.

He was caught before he could get out of the classroom, however. “Nagisa!”

Rin took a deep breath. “I’ll walk with you.”

He couldn’t help but brace himself. It sounded like he was about to face a serious conversation, and honestly he wasn’t so sure how that was going to go. It still felt like there was a heavy tension
between them, like a wall blocking their bodies. Rin kept pace beside him, though he was completely silent as they made their way out of the school building. He wasn’t taking Nagisa off anywhere private though, it seemed, so it couldn’t be that serious.

“What did you want to talk about?” Nagisa asked, when he couldn’t stand the silence for much longer.

Rin inhaled sharply. “It’s going to be summer before we even know it, right?”

He had a point. It was as if spring had passed in the blink of an eye, almost escaping him entirely. Already, the air was beginning to get warmer again, and the school work load was increasing. A part of Nagisa wished everything would slow down, but mostly he just had his eyes ahead. He almost wanted it to be the future, already.

“It’s getting to the time where I have to be really serious about where I apply for university,” Rin continued, when Nagisa didn’t respond to him. “And I’m not sure where to go.”

Nagisa considered him for a moment. “There’s a lot of places you could take economics. And you get good grades.”

“Mmm,” he agreed. “I was actually thinking of staying at Keisetsu.”

That was completely new. “I-I thought you really wanted Kyuushu.”

He sighed. “It’s just so far away. I don’t know anybody in Kyuushu. At least here, I know the place, and I already have friends…”

For some reason, Nagisa had a really bad feeling about that. Though they hadn’t spent a ton of time talking about it, even from the start Rin had seemed set on where he wanted to go for university. It was pretty out of the blue, for him to just change his mind like this. How long exactly had this been plaguing him?

“Didn’t you say most of your friends weren’t staying?” Nagisa remembered.

Rin looked down at him. “Well, you’re still here.”

“O-oh,” Nagisa wasn’t immediately sure why, but that made him feel really uncomfortable. He didn’t want Rin sacrificing anything for him. They hadn’t even been dating for that long anyway, not long enough for the path of his life to be altered.

“I thought you’d be happy,” he said.

Honestly, Nagisa didn’t know what to say to him. “I want you to be happy.”

Rin seemed to slow his face. “You don’t think I would be?”

“I think,” he paused, “I think you’d come to regret it.”

He stopped completely. “I get it.”

Nagisa could practically taste the tension in the air. “Get it?”

“You want space,” he shrugged. “You’ve barely spoken to me recently, so I should have expected it.”

“That’s not it!” Nagisa insisted. “I just don’t think you should change all your plans just because of
me.”

“It’s not just for you!”

At that, Nagisa began to doubt himself. Was he just being big headed somehow, thinking everything was about him? But Rin hadn’t listed any other reasons… Nagisa hadn’t actually thought about what was going to happen next year, in the slightest. Maybe under difference circumstances, Nagisa would have been complimented that Rin cared for him so much. Yet right then, Nagisa just felt trapped.

“You’re going to miss your train,” he said finally.

“Rin, I-“

“Just go.”

Nagisa didn’t feel like sticking around and arguing, even if he didn’t have to get home. He had a strong suspicion that this had been building up for a while. The thing was, Nagisa really didn’t want to fight. It felt like Rin had been at least somewhat mad at him for almost a month, rather than actually wanting to forget about their initial argument.

Once he was on the train, he did his best to forget about it. There were more immediate issues. Like tomorrow, for example. He had no idea what he was going to tell Higashi. Even though it was a weekend, Nagisa highly doubted Karma would be willing to take Daichi out for a whole day, so it seemed that the truth was about to be forced out. Maybe it was about time.

It wasn’t that he was desperate to hide the truth away, it just felt like it was too late to suddenly announce the existence of his son. His son who currently looked pretty happy to see him, rather than still upset at being left. Whenever Nagisa actually got to the nursery, he ran straight into his arms, and today was no exception. No, Nagisa wouldn’t ever purposely hide this.

“Dada!” Daichi exclaimed, when Nagisa picked him up.

He was getting so heavy. “Did you have a good day?”

His brow seemed to crease for a moment. “Budderfly,” he pointed.

It really wasn’t what Nagisa had asked him, but apparently that was important. “Yes,” he looked at the mural that was painted on the wall, “that’s a butterfly. Want to go look at it?”

Daichi shook his head. “Down.”

Honestly, Nagisa wondered how much longer Daichi was going to let him pick him up at all. He started wiggling, and Nagisa decided not to force him. Though, once he was on the ground, he didn’t go running off, instead practically hugging Nagisa’s leg. Knowing he’d be able to keep up, Nagisa began to take short paces, towards the exit. Daichi seemed to get the message, trailing along behind him.

Once the outside air hit him, he seemed to pick up that they were actually going home. He sped up, almost tripping over his own feet in efforts to walk in front of Nagisa. Not that he knew the way, or at least Nagisa was pretty sure he didn’t. He wasn’t about to test it. In fact, Daichi seemed to have picked up the pace, and was about to run straight into the road if Nagisa wasn’t careful. He had enough trained reaction speed to lunge forward and grab him by the shoulders, electing to hold him by the wrist the rest of the way back.
Apparently he really was in an independent mood, because he was running in circles the second Nagisa let him go to unlock the building door. When it was open, he barrelled straight inside, right up to the stairs. Nagisa was about ready to collapse into bed, so he walked over, ready to carry Daichi to their apartment. The second Daichi saw his outstretched hands, he dodged, dashing to the other side one the lobby. Once he felt safe, it was clear he knew what he was doing, because he started giggling about it.

“Alright, go on then,” Nagisa said softly. Honestly, Daichi never really got to practise climbing things, so it would probably be good for him. However slow that process was turning out to be. Although he was tired, Nagisa didn’t want to rush him, so he stayed patiently behind, just in case Daichi decided to give up and lean backwards. “Good job,” he said, when they finally reached the top. It was the moment Daichi decided that he wanted to be carried again, reaching up as if he hadn’t been running away for the last hour.

Nagisa couldn’t help but remind himself that there would be a day where Daichi wouldn’t need him at all. Even now, running around and wanting to do everything for himself, it was so far from the helpless new born he was almost a year and a half ago. It was odd that he almost missed it. Even now, though, Daichi still nuzzled up to him (when he allowed Nagisa to hold him) in the same. Maybe that wouldn’t change.

“We’re back,” he said, carefully kicking off his shoes. Even though he was still holding Daichi, he used his co-ordination skills to work his shoes off too, along with his coat. Throughout this, Daichi stayed mostly still, burrowing his head into Nagisa’s shoulder. Any longer, and he’d fall asleep like that. Whilst that might sound like a good idea, Nagisa didn’t want him waking up in the middle of the night demanding food. No, instead, he just placed him down in the high chair.

It must have been a busy day for everyone, because Karma came out in the middle of a yawn. “Hey.”

Nagisa felt his shoulders relax. “Are you making dinner?”

Apparently, that was the cue for the door buzzer to sound. “Well, it just arrived.”

“Delivery?” Nagisa looked in the direction of the door. “Really?” Although he definitely qualified as lazy, Karma tended to be pretty mindful of what he ate, and it was rarely junk food.

“It’s a Friday,” he shrugged. “If you don’t want it, there might be some instant ramen in the cupboard.”

Nagisa realised that probably meant it was the only thing in the cupboard. “What happened to you doing the shopping before coming home?”

“Something came up!”

“Something like, you forgot?”

Karma’s eyes flashed. “I would never.”

Perhaps it was a little childish, but so was conveniently forgetting to get something as basic as shopping. Nagisa’s gaze flicked around the room, sitting upon the towel used to dry the dishes. By the looks of it, it was still pretty damp. Like a flash, Nagisa sidestepped over to it, moving to flick it right at him, spraying stray drops of water.

“Oh,” his head lowered, bearing right into Nagisa’s, “you’re gonna get it.”
Although he lunged forwards, Nagisa saw it coming, and dodged, leaping over the kitchen counter as an attempt to block him. All the while, Daichi giggled at their display. Even if Karma had physical height and power on his side, Nagisa was more naturally nimble. Karma knew that, and how to change his tactic. Unfortunately, there wasn’t a lot of space to run in their small apartment. Since Nagisa wasn’t going for the kill, it was easy enough for Karma to just stride and reach for him, forcing his body off the ground. Nagisa shrieked in good fun, trying to swing his legs out to kick Karma in one of his essential organs. But his grip was strong, and Nagisa was out of practise. The only thing that made Karma let go was the sound of the buzzer again.

Nagisa straightened himself out, once he was back on the ground. “What did you even order?”

Turning over his shoulder, Karma shrugged. “Your favourite.”

“…Sushi?” He wasn’t even aware that any places did sushi delivery near them.

“Your second favourite.”

Nagisa didn’t even know he had a second favourite. “Which is?”

“The first place that had a kid’s menu.”

They ended up eating fried chicken, which Nagisa decided he wasn’t mad about. It had been a while since they ate badly, and Nagisa was tired. Daichi seemed to be enjoying it too, though hopefully not too much. Still, Nagisa was surprised by how much he was eating, given that he’d almost been asleep.

“I’ll buy real food tomorrow,” Karma eventually promised, having demolished his meal.

“Speaking about tomorrow,” Nagisa bit his lip. “Is it okay if one of my classmates comes over? We just have this project, and-“

He put his cartoon of strawberry milk down on the table. “It doesn’t matter to me.”

“Are you sure?” He looked down at his plate. A part of him wanted Karma to say no.

Before he could respond, there was a light banging of Daichi’s fists pounding proudly on his tray. “Done.”

Karma stood up. “Hmm, you ate quite a lot.”

“Papa,” he reached his arms up.

He didn’t hesitate to hold Daichi, though obviously attempted to avoid the food mess all over his shirt and face. “You definitely need a bath.”

Apparently that was enough of a goodbye for Nagisa’s sake too. Nagisa cut his losses, as the two of them disappeared into the bathroom, leaving him to clear everything else away. At least it was methodical enough for him to get lost in it, until the kitchen was practically sparkling. Nagisa then moved his bag into his bedroom, tugging the restricting school uniform off in favour of something more comfortable.

When he returned, Daichi was freshened up, in his pyjamas and plopped on the sofa with some movie or other. Not that he’d probably stay awake until the end of it. Nagisa sighed, going to sit down beside him. As predicted, his eyes started to droop, and it wasn’t long before he was asleep. Knowing it would be bad to just leave him like that, Nagisa gently scooped him up, carrying him
off to bed.

Karma seemed to have decided he was going to study for the rest of the night, leaving Nagisa with not a lot else to do. He returned to his own bedroom for a little bit, flicking through his history textbook with the illusion of actually working, but it didn’t hold his attention for long. Instead, he found himself sinking down into the pillow, drifting off.

Sunlight gleamed through the window the next morning, and Nagisa was horrified at how late it was. Yet, somehow, he still felt tired. He dragged himself out of bed quickly, throwing on the first clothes he could grab. Looking briefly at his phone, Higashi was supposed to be there at any moment. Rushing now, he went into Daichi’s room, surprised he hadn’t been crying up a storm. He must have been tired too.

By some miracle, Nagisa managed to get him changed, dressed, and halfway fed by the time he got a text from Higashi, to say she was outside. He hadn’t had time to plan what he was going to say, in the slightest. And then he realised he couldn’t just take Daichi out with him. Nagisa decided that he was just going to have to deal with the consequences of annoying Karma, since he wasn’t willing to leave Daichi without supervision. He put him on the floor outside Karma’s room, pounding on the door hard enough that he’d definitely wake up, and then rushed out of the apartment.

Higashi was outside, leaning against the wall. “This building is a lot nicer than I thought it’d be.”

Gulping, Nagisa nodded. “We got a pretty good deal on it.”

“You and your roommate, right?” Higashi stood up properly, though kept her arms folded. “Do I get to meet him?”

“I-I suppose,” he looked down. “Look, about that-“

“You told me his name, didn’t you? Argh, what was it? I can’t go in and introduce myself incorrectly!”

“It’s Karma, but-“

Her hand flew to the door handle. “We need to get started.”

Nagisa jolted. “Wait, Higashi san, there’s something I really need to tell you first!”

“You’re,” she cleared her throat, “you’re not really in some sort of crime ring, are you?”

There was a certain kind of fatigue that came with this reputation. “The reason I never see anybody outside of school is because I have to take care of my son!”

“What?”

He hadn’t meant to say it quite like that, but it was out there now. “And that’s why I live here, with Karma. So we can take care of him, together.”

“Nagisa kun,” Higashi laughed after a moment. “I’d have noticed if you were pregnant.”

Oh. “It was almost two months before starting high school,” Nagisa explained as calmly as he could. “I was busy with a lot of… sports right after Daichi was born, so I lost most of the weight.”

She blinked. “You’re being serious.”

Nagisa nodded. “I know it’s a lot to take in, but-“
“Do I get to play with it?!?”

Well, that he hadn’t expected. Higashi, with all her conspiracy theories… He thought she’d be grilling him for hours about this, not just accepting it. He could help but think she didn’t actually believe him, like he was trying to pull some kind of practical joke on her.

“Him,” Nagisa corrected, “and, I mean, if we have time?”

He couldn’t help but feel nervous as he lead the way upstairs, and then unlocked his door. The way her eyes slightly widened when she saw the place didn’t go unmissed. Though it wasn’t particularly messy, there were a couple of toys strewn around he hadn’t had the chance to clean up yet. Aside from his own parents and some of his old classmates, Nagisa had never had had someone over before.

“S-should we sit at the table?” Nagisa suggested, since they did actually have to do some work.

Slowly, Higashi nodded, setting her bag down on top of the table. “Yeah.”

Nagisa was just straightening out his books, when he caught the noise of the door opening. It was only slightly, a child sized gap apparently, because it was closed almost immediately after Daichi was thrust out of it. Well, he’d known Karma would probably be moody with him, but leaving Daichi alone was worse!

He stood up, going to pick his poor confused son up. Daichi didn’t immediately try to squirm away, which meant he was in a clingy mood. “This is Daichi.”

“O-oh,” Higashi tilted her head, squinting as though he was a mirage. “Hi?”

Nagisa walked over and sat back down again, Daichi on his lap. He was right, Daichi seemed happy enough to sit there, once Nagisa handed him one of his markers (too large for there to be much risk of choking without him noticing) to amuse himself with. He was mostly apathetic to the strange girl in his home, though maybe that was tiredness.

“He doesn’t look like you,” Higashi pointed out, as if she was just voicing the first thing that came to her head.

Looking down at Daichi, Nagisa sighed. “I promise you I do remember having him,” he smiled almost sadly, “he just takes after his Papa.”

“Papa?” Daichi perked up, head whipping around.

“We’re not going to see him now,” Nagisa told him, “unless you want him to fight me again.”

Higashi exhaled. “You really have a baby.”

So there it was. “I’m not sure if he counts as a baby anymore,” Nagisa smiled.

“Can I hold him?”

“If he lets you,” Nagisa transferred him onto Higashi’s knee. He was old enough now that he didn’t feel the need to instruct her on how to properly keep him upright. Mostly, Higashi just looked transfixed. “So, the project?”

“…Right.”

Even with Daichi’s presence, and the probably hundreds of questions brimming under the surface,
they got right down to the work. Every inch of Nagisa’s soul hated the inaccuracies of what he was being forced to write about, but it was probably worth it for the sake of good grades. Even if the history book he had to read from’s reasoning for the catalyst of this incident was simply ‘he was an omega’. Maybe something less biased would have been more interesting, since the story involved the guy murdering the lord he was supposed to be ‘serving’ as a concubine. Whatever the case, they were getting through the work at a pretty good pace.

“Afternoon.”

Nagisa had been so distracted with what he was writing he’d barely heard the door open. Karma finally made his appearance, as if he’d got only twenty minutes of sleep. Apparently he was still mad about the awakening, because he didn’t give Nagisa any other acknowledgment, going straight into the kitchen.

“Wait.” Higashi peered around the corner, and then lowered her voice. “That’s Karma?”

Nagisa slumped in defeat. “Yes.”

“The Karma?”

“Yes.”

“The father of your child, Karma?”

He swallowed. “Yes.”

Higashi grinned. “He’s hot.”

“Yes- Wait. No, that’s not what I meant.”

It looked like she was about to say something, but she was holding her tongue. Daichi had long since migrated to playing with his own toys on the floor, bored of the lack of amusement, but perked his head towards their conversation. Hopefully he wasn’t quite old enough to repeat any of that.

“Oh no you don’t,” Nagisa lurched up when he caught sight of what Karma was doing, racing across into the kitchen. “You barely had half of the cartons this month, and the delivery comes in a few days!”

Karma looked at his coffee cup. “I need caffeine. Especially after what you did this morning.”

“Maybe you should have gone to sleep earlier,” Nagisa chided.

“And whose fault is it for buying the milk in the first place?” Karma smirked, and took one of the strawberry milk cartoons, pouring it in. “It was more of a prank on yourself, Nagisa~. Anyway, aren’t you going to introduce me to your friend?”

Without much warning, Higashi lurched up, striding her way into the kitchen. “Nice to meet you, I’m Higashi Haia.”

He shot a smile at her, then, and Nagisa couldn’t help but feel his stomach twist. “Akabane Karma, but you can just call me Karma.”

Higashi returned his smile, one of her hands moving up to her hair to twist it around her finger. Nagisa’s jaw dropped, feeling a little uncomfortable just standing there. He hadn’t seen Karma
smile at anyone for that quantity of time... ever. For some reason, a kind of sickly rage burnt up inside him, like he wanted to snap their attentions away from each other.

“Anyway,” he eventually said, taking his mug. “I’ll catch up with you when you’re done.”

Higashi looked at Nagisa when he left. “Does he have a girlfriend?”

Nagisa tried his level best not to grab one of the knives from the draws and hold it at her throat, bloodlust charging up, taking over his body. It was like his eyes became the barrel of a gun, locking onto their target.

“Yes, N-Nagisa kun?” Her voice broke, like she was afraid.

He snapped out of it. “We have work to finish.”

Chapter End Notes

Freudian slip perhaps, Nagisa?

As always, all comments and feedback are very much appreciated!

Next time, the drama just gets more high key
Nagisa couldn’t stand the recent developments in his life. He was absolutely livid under the surface whenever he had to see Higashi, Rin, or Karma. Unfortunately, he saw them all quite frequently. It was like he had three different, huge problems, and he was just alternating between them all with every waking minute. At least it was only a month until the summer break.

Tuning it out didn’t really work. Because it seemed to be all Higashi wanted to talk about. Nagisa was almost scared of his own mood. Every time she suggested they hang out at his place, or she asked any kind of question regarding Karma, he felt his bones begin to boil, blood lust simmering at alarming rates. And he knew this was not a good thing, at all. He knew that he shouldn’t be thinking about wrapping his hands around her dainty throat.

“It shouldn’t matter, right?” Higashi stated, as they walked along together. “Now that I know.”

Nagisa swallowed his fury. “It’s just busy with a baby.”

She wanted to come over again. Maybe there had been a reason, Nagisa’s ears had started to burn by the time she opened her mouth, so he hadn’t really listened to it. But, it didn’t matter. Nagisa just needed to make a better excuse. She’d spent the entire remainder of her first visit making eyes at Karma. And what’s worse, Karma didn’t even seem to mind her doing it. Or maybe he just hadn’t noticed. Nagisa was in love with him for almost a year and Karma didn’t notice.

Higashi came to a stop. “You’re not… annoyed at me, are you, Nagisa kun?”

Well, he wasn’t going to tell her that. Nagisa wasn’t annoyed, exactly. If anything he was annoying himself, because it wasn’t like he had the right to feel this way. Karma could take care of himself. Maybe he was acting a little rash. Though, Nagisa wasn’t even going to allow himself to entertain the idea of ‘what if’.

“I’m not annoyed,” he said levelly.

“Well, okay…” Higashi sighed. “I’m sorry if I’m… pushing at your boundaries. My parents have kind of been on my case lately. I’ve been wanting to stay out as long as possible.”
Maybe Nagisa was wrong to be acting this way. It wasn’t like Karma was even his to be concerned with anyway. And contrary to everyone’s belief, apparently, he never had been. It just felt like his heart was about to be ripped out of his chest with the thought of them together. And he couldn’t even try and distract himself anymore because all Rin wanted to talk about was university. Nagisa was about to drown under the guilt of it all.

On that thought, Nagisa remembered that he had agreed to meet with Rin. So close to midterms, even without the tension between them Nagisa would have cut off most contact. As always, he didn’t want Rin’s prospects to suffer for his sake. But, he knew it wouldn’t be right if he avoided all contact completely.

“I’ll see if Karma has a problem with it,” Nagisa promised reluctantly, before turning away.

He showed up to the roof five minutes early, but Rin was already waiting there. Deep in his many files, it seemed. Even when he wasn’t studying recently, it was all about university worries. Nagisa really wanted to try his best to help, but he didn’t know how exactly. He didn’t feel right about lying, No matter the circumstances.

“Hey,” he said, as warmly as he could.

Rin looked up from what he was reading and cracked a smile. “Hi!”

Coming to sit down beside him, Nagisa’s suspicions were right. He was looking at application forms. Although it was easy to get straight into their high school’s university, you still had to apply to do so. Nagisa couldn’t immediately see if there were any others tucked beneath it, but with their recent issues he highly doubted it.

“Are you filling those out?” He just had to ask.

“Oh,” he looked down at it. “I was going to.”

Nagisa took a deep breath in. “Rin kun-“

“It’s okay,” his face turned a little sad, “I know you don’t agree with it.”

He hated the tone of defeat in Rin’s voice. “I just don’t want you to give up your life for me.”

“It’s hardly giving up my life!” He raised his volume then, obvious frustration filtering through. “I can study this subject literally anywhere in Japan. Why not take it here?”

There were many, many reasons Nagisa could think of. The largest perhaps was that Rin seemed so attached to this. What if they broke up before then, and Rin ended up regretting his entire life? Nagisa couldn’t be the reason for that, no way. Maybe if they’d been together for longer, it would be more worth debating, but not like this.

“We’ve only been dating for a few months. It just,” he swallowed, “seems like a lot.”

Rin’s eyes widened. “Wait, is that the reason?”

“Please don’t take that in a bad wa-“

But he looked like he was seething already. “We may as well just break up now then.”

“W-what?”

“If you don’t see any kind of future for us,” he said seriously, “there’s no point in wasting our time
Was that it, then? Nagisa knew that they’d argued a lot recently, but weren’t all couples supposed
to do that? It didn’t seem like a reason to break up… He wasn’t entirely sure about how he felt
about the idea of breaking up, he hadn’t considered that it would even happen. Maybe he was a
little scared. He didn’t actually want to lose Rin, though. Plus… he wasn’t sure anyone else would
even have time for him.

“It’s not that I don’t see anything,” Nagisa tried honestly. “I just… haven’t thought about it yet.”

Rin’s face darkened. “Time’s real and it’s coming for all of us, Nagisa kun.”

“That’s… a little heavy, don’t you think?” It made Nagisa feel a little on edge.

“Well, it’s true!” He snapped. “I’m not saying you have to start planning the wedding but there’s
no point in staying in a relationship you see the end of.”

The wedding?! Even if they were just on the roof, out in the open, Nagisa felt like he was
suffocating. A part of him begun to wonder if Rin had a point, though. That’s typically what
happened. Logically, you either stayed together forever, or you eventually broke up. When Nagisa
thought about his life in five years or so, it was true he didn’t see Rin in it, but that was because he
hadn’t even really thought about that part of his life yet.

Nagisa wasn’t sure how to explain it. “It’s not that I see the end.”

“You have to face the facts!” Rin raised his voice once again. “In half a year I could be moving to
the other side of Japan.”

“Long distance relationships can work,” Nagisa tried.

“Can they?!” His eyes flashed dangerous. “I just don’t see why you’re so against this then. You’re
right, I could study anywhere, so why not here? Unless you’re planning to break up with me, in
which case, save us both the trouble and just do it now.”

“Rin k-“

He gripped Nagisa by the shoulders, his eyes staring straight into Nagisa’s. “Is that what you
want?”

Nagisa didn’t know what he wanted. He hated himself for thinking it but this was almost an easy
out. Deep down, he knew that even standing here and doubting this was a sign he should just take
it. But his stomach lurched.

“No!” He protested, finally. Hopefully convincing enough.

Rin took a deep breath. “Then all I want is for you to be more serious about us.”

“I don’t know how,” Nagisa admitted. Really, he wasn’t sure what Rin actually meant by that.

His eyes flashed. “Stop spending all your time moping around your house with your ex for a start.”

Nagisa was sick of this argument. Maybe because they’d had it literally countless times. Not that it
always became a full argument, sometimes it was just a jab here or there. But it was getting under
his skin. It wasn’t like debating it would change anything, Nagisa didn’t understand why Rin
couldn’t just make his peace with everything and leave it at that.
“He’s not my ex boyfriend,” Nagisa let out, for what felt like the hundredth time. “…And you know why I can’t.”

Of course, Rin knew about his duties as a parent had to come first. He’d literally agreed to that, before Nagisa could even accept the idea of a relationship. He had to consider that maybe Rin hadn’t really understood all of what that meant. How could he? Nagisa wouldn’t have, either, before he had Daichi. But children put things into perspective.

“I’m not stopping you from bringing him,” Rin shrugged.

Had Nagisa heard that right? “Y-you want to meet Daichi?”

Rin remained firm. “I don’t mind. It’ll have to happen eventually, right?”

Suddenly, Nagisa was terrified by that possibility. Yes, he knew that eventually, if their relationship continued, that it would come up. Honestly, Nagisa was still at the stage of denying Rin from walking him home right up to his apartment door, instead insisting that the building was close enough. Even if neither of Nagisa’s own parents had ever been interested in dating someone else, he knew he’d have hated it if they’d been dragging new people in and out of his life. He couldn’t do that.

“I’d… have to think about it.” It was the only answer he could give.

“You’ll think?” It sounded like a question, but Nagisa couldn’t be sure.

Nagisa drew his eyes to the floor. “I-I don’t have a different answer to that right now.”

“Listen,” Rin said, and then paused, as though he was going through a lot in his mind right then. “If it means that much to you, I’ll also apply to Kyuushu.”

Was that what Nagisa wanted, though? Sending Rin away just because he wanted it was just as bad as him staying. Ideally, Nagisa wouldn’t even be a factor in his decision. Or, at the very least, he’d only be a small one. At least Rin had said ‘also’. That meant he was less likely to be backed into a corner and bound by a decision just for his sake.

“I didn’t want you to do it just for me,” Nagisa’s voice wavered, like it was almost a plea.

Finally, it seemed like Rin’s anger had passed. “And it won’t be,” he smiled. “But, I really like you a lot, okay? I don’t want to just let this go.”

Nagisa nodded. “Okay.”

Before he had the chance to even think about it Rin wrapped his arms around him, eclipsing his form, as if he was scared Nagisa would wriggle out of his grasp. They’d shared plenty of hugs but this felt intense. The longer he held on, the harder it was for Nagisa to breathe. It wasn’t like he could move, though, his face smushed into Rin’s shoulder.

When he finally pulled back, Nagisa thought he might be let free, but then Rin smiled and pressed a kiss to his lips. Nagisa didn’t exactly have much of a choice about it, but he didn’t mind returning it, if Rin really did just want to kiss and forget about it. But then he didn’t leave it at just that, instead deepening is, a sort of franticness beneath it all.

Nagisa tried his best to turn his head, detaching them. “Rin kun, anybody could walk up here-“
He seemed pretty nonchalant. “Have they ever?”

Leaning down again, he kissed Nagisa even harder than he had before, as if there was some kind of intent there. Nagisa decided to just go along with it, though thought hard about keeping his participation to the proceedings to a minimum. It was hard to get absorbed in a kiss, when he was studying it so meticulously. He met Rin’s movements, but was careful not to initiate anything himself. Only when Rin’s hands slid lower down his back, pulling him in closer, did Nagisa start to worry. He begun to tug on his school shirt, like he was about to shove his hands underneath it, which was far too much for their school’s roof.

“That’s enough,” Nagisa tried to say a little firmer, using what force he could produce with his arms to create at least a small distance between them.

“Sorry,” Rin looked down.

It seemed like that was it, then. Just like that, they both made their goodbyes for the day, since they’d met after school finished for once. Some people were still milling around for clubs, but the building was relatively quiet around this time. Nagisa was able to make his way through it without bothering anybody at least.

His mind was full from that conversation, anyway. He hated that he and Rin didn’t seem to be getting over the argument stage of their relationship, which seemed to be dragging on for aeons. Though, it wasn’t like they ended up disagreeing every day about everything. Nor were they completely incompatible. Nagisa remembered how well they got on when they were just friends, what felt like years ago now.

“Hey, Shiota.”

Nagisa paused at the unfamiliar sounding voice. It couldn’t be anybody from his class, all of them had got the message by now that he went by his given name. Yet, it was kind of odd that anybody else would recognise him so easily, since Nagisa mostly kept to himself and his regular friends. A lick of danger ran up his spine.

When he turned, he felt like he might vaguely recognise the guy. Definitely not in his class, but in his year. He was sat with Oshiro, who Nagisa hadn’t even spoken to for a long time, over by the wall. Nagisa gulped. From the panic shot look in his eyes, this really couldn’t be good. It was almost like he was telling Nagisa to run.

“Wait-“ Oshiro said, but his friend was already walking towards Nagisa.

The guy raised a hand though, a silencing gesture. “I only want to talk.”

Nagisa got the feeling that he didn’t just want to innocently talk. “I’m running a little late,” Nagisa tried.

He laughed. “Wait just a second! Say, Shiota chan, where’s that boyfriend of yours?”

“Inside,” Nagisa started to walk again, in an attempt to just push past him.

“Stay.”

His tone was like icicles. A small part of Nagisa’s brain immediately wanted to snap to his order, and then he felt this kind of compression and sourness in the air around him. Had Nagisa not gone through all he had already, he would have been very scared. This was an attempt as alpha command, with no regards to the legalities of that apparently.
Oshiro seemed to be trying again. “Kuronuma kun-“

He looked at his friend, taking his attention off Nagisa for just a moment. “What, we’ve dropped to family name basis now? He’s just an omega,” he turned back to Nagisa again, “second hand goods at that.”

Nagisa glared at Oshiro, who’d turned white. “I only mentioned it once or twice…”

Kuronuma came even closer, uncomfortably in Nagisa’s personal space. “So, does Aino know about this dirty little secret of yours, huh? I mean, I’m no gossip, Shiota chan, not unless you give me reason to be.”

He didn’t even know what Kuronuma wanted from him. It seemed like a lot more than intimidation. Like he was looking for an excuse to do something to Nagisa. Nagisa didn’t miss the way even Oshiro looked to be very frightened. But Nagisa wasn’t. He’d had to face people, trained killers, far worse than a teenage alpha with some kind of superiority complex.

Maybe Nagisa was just on edge. Angry at Higashi for her obvious crush on Karma, angry at Rin for the entire way he’d been acting recently, angry at this situation he’d found himself in. Nagisa’s bloodlust had been trickling out of the seams these past few weeks, and there wasn’t a whole lot he could do to hold it back.

“Are you going to kill me?” Nagisa asked softly, tilting his head up to look Kuronuma innocently in the eye.

It clearly wasn’t what he’d been expecting to hear, from the way his eyes widened just a little. “Not at all,” he tried to regain is cool, “I-“

“U-uh, K-kaito...kun...” Oshiro interrupted him.

Nagisa didn’t take his focus from his target, though. He continued to stare him in the eye, unwavering in his attention. Stood like that, with Kuronuma practically paralysed under his gaze, Nagisa felt a familiar itch. Having held it back for long enough, he smiled sweetly, the aura promising certain death spilling into the air around them.

“W-what’s this,” he stammered.

Smile growing, Nagisa’s bones began to buzz. Darkening his gaze, he counted the palpitations of Kuronuma’s heart, choosing the right millisecond to strike. It was all he could not to go straight for the killing blow. No, instead he stamped forward, using the brief moment of actual paralysis to push him back, sitting him down on the wall he’d been lounging on before. Realising he’d fight back when he regained his senses probably, Nagisa slipped round behind him. One of his hands rested behind Kuronuma’s head, the other tilting his chin up, the perfect position to snap his neck.

Nagisa looked up at Oshiro’s trembling form. “I’d keep this conversation to yourselves.”

Losing to an omega would destroy his reputation, and it seemed both of them knew it. Satisfied that Kuronuma was subservient in fear, Nagisa let him go, continuing on his way home. He didn’t want to look back over his shoulder and think too hard about that conversation. He had far more to worry about, than whatever that had been. Yes, he decided. He’d just force it down for now, he had places to be.
Sorry I just enjoy BAMF Nagi. A little shorter than usual but theresarlotofdrama.

Kuronuma literally means black swamp by the way.

Shameless self promo, I actually started working on a new AU! You can find it through my profile if you want, it's called A Little Wicked and it's basically this fantasy type thing, I'm having a lot of fun working on it.

I hope you all enjoyed this one! Don't worry, in a few chapters time you'll both love and despise me~ As always, all comments and feedback are appreciated!
Sick Time

Chapter Summary

Daichi gets ill

Chapter Notes

A new chapter? So soon after the new one? *gasp*

Also there's technically unnecessary drug use in this chapter. Well.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Nagisa loved the summer. The way the world seemed to spring to life, with everything else melting away for just a little while. Summer meant that there were no exams or schoolwork to worry about for a little while, not that it had stopped Karma from being at the books. It was the middle of his school break already, most of it having passed slowly and with little fanfare. Even turning seventeen hadn’t felt like much worth mentioning.

He tried to concentrate on whatever Rin was saying, but it was hard when his mind was elsewhere. Nagisa should have just told him he couldn’t make it. It wasn’t like this date was anything important, just ice cream on a hot summer’s day. At some point during the walk over to the shop and the incredibly long queue, they’d run out of real conversation. Now his words didn’t carry much weight, practically floating away into the sky.

It was ridiculous. Nagisa knew that he shouldn’t be worrying this much. Daichi was just a little bit sick, unwilling to eat and in a bad mood in general. Children, especially toddlers, got ill all the time. In fact, Nagisa was pretty sure he’d been worse on a few occasions with the sniffles. But, he’d looked so sad and almost worried when Nagisa said goodbye. His own parents had left him in the care of others in a worse state, Nagisa knew, and he’d lived. It wasn’t like he was even alone, he doubted Karma would let him out of his sight. But, that didn’t mean he wasn’t completely on edge.

“Wouldn’t you say, Nagisa kun?”

Nagisa blinked. “Hmm?”

Tilting his head, Rin just shrugged. “I was just saying it’s probably a lot hotter than this in Kyuushu.”

“Oh,” Nagisa shifted in his seat. “I like the hot weather.”

Rin sighed. “You’ll have to come visit me, then.”

He thought about that for a moment, before realising. “Does that mean-“

Taking a giant spoon of ice cream, Rin beamed. “I changed my mind after all. As much as I want to stay here… Well, there’s not a lot to do around here. Not for the next four and a half years of my
life, at least. After that… I’m not sure where I’ll be. But that doesn’t matter quite yet.” He sighed. “You don’t need to look so happy about it”

Nagisa caught himself. “I’m sorry. I’m just, really happy for you, Rin kun.”

He wasn’t about to launch over the table and embrace Rin, especially not in public, but he did reach across and take his hand. Nagisa just hoped it was enough to convince him. Mostly, he was just relieved, absolved of guilt. Things would work out, he knew they could. Even if their actual time together felt like it was swiftly coming to an end.

Rin looked down at their hands, still wearing his smile. “I think there’s something I have to tell you, actually.”

“Oh-“ Before Nagisa could even really start his sentence, his phone started vibrating. Sparring a glance down, his heart leapt up into his throat. “I have to take this.”

Rin’s brow furrowed. “It can’t wait?”

“That’s Karma…” Nagisa tried not to panic. “It could be something important.”

“But we’re in the middle of talking-“

“Really, Rin kun-“

It rang out.

Rin leant back in his chair. “See, if it’s anything really important he’ll just call back.”

Seconds later, it started to buzz again, and Nagisa shot Rin a glare. “Hello?”

“Nagisa.”

There was something incredibly wrong with Karma’s tone, something that frankly frightened him a bit. Immediately, his mind spiralled worse than it had before. “What’s wrong?”

There was a pause. “I-I don’t know.”

“What do you mean you don’t know?” Why did Karma sound half broken?

He paused again. “He won’t stop crying for long enough to tell me.”

Nagisa needed to be rational about this. So, based on that information, Daichi wasn’t feeling much better. He wasn’t actually crying before Nagisa left, though, so it had probably become worse if anything. But the worst thing to do would be panicking, right? It seemed like Karma had already gone to that step.

“He just doesn’t know how else to express he’s ill,” Nagisa tried to justify.

Karma’s voice came through quieter. “What about the throwing up?”

His blood ran cold. “The what?”

“I didn’t want to bother you with just that,” Karma admitted.

“Why didn’t you just call when it happened?!”
It was hard to quell the anger running through his body, even though he knew it wasn’t Karma’s fault. He would never intentionally put Daichi at risk. Nagisa took a few deep inhalations, feeling his heart rate slow to a more manageable rate.

“I thought I could handle it!”

“Well,” Nagisa thought, “have you taken his temperature?”

“You really think our son let me get anywhere near him with that thing?”

That probably had been a pretty stupid question. Daichi seemed to pick favourites with Karma for a lot of things (Nagisa wasn’t bitter about it, he wasn’t) but illness was not one of them. Even a minor case of sniffles, and he freaked out if Karma even tried to touch him. He didn’t like it so much when Nagisa tried comforting him either, but he had an easier time with it.

“Are there any strange rashes or something?” Nagisa had read somewhere that it could be a sign of something serious, but he wasn’t about to tell Karma that.

There was a moment of silence, as if Karma was actually looking. “I don’t think so?”

He tried to think of anything else. “Maybe you’re just worried—”

“Do you really think I’d have called you if I wasn’t a minute away from taking him to the hospital!?!”

The silence down the phoneline, between both of them, said it all. Nagisa knew Karma definitely wasn’t stupid, the furthest thing from it, he wouldn’t just call Nagisa if it was nothing. Even if he was struggling, he wasn’t the first to admit he needed help. He definitely wouldn’t actually go to a hospital if there was no reason.

“That bad?” Nagisa just about got out.

“I-I even tried asking Okuda san but she didn’t know.”

He gulped. “I’ll be back as soon as I can, okay?”

Mind starting to race, Nagisa hung up the phone. Maybe it was just a stomach bug. Though he hadn’t been to nursery since their school break, it wasn’t as if they’d confined him inside. He could have picked up anything, it wouldn’t be fun but it was unlikely there was anything dangerously wrong with him. He just needed to be calmed down enough to get some fluids in him or something.

“What was that about?”

Nagisa had completely zoned out of where he was. For the briefest of moments, he worried that leaving so suddenly would anger Rin, since it wouldn’t be the first time Nagisa had cancelled plans. He didn’t have enough time to even consider it, though. No matter what the consequences were, Nagisa’s mind was made up.

“Daichi’s sick,” he explained, already moving to stand up, “I have to go home.”

Predictably, Rin didn’t look impressed. “Why can’t Karma look after him?”

“It’s not about that…” Nagisa was beginning to feel sick himself. “I shouldn’t have even come anyway.”

“What’s that supposed to mean?”
He didn’t have time to have another fight. “I’ll see you soon.”

Maybe it was awful to just walk off like that, but Nagisa was prepared to deal with Rin being upset with him. As soon as he was on his way, it disappeared from his mind entirely. As much as he was sure it wouldn’t get worse in his short journey home, but that was no reason to not rush. Like everything moved in a blur, his feet pounded on the concrete below him.

Soon enough, he was there, having just about enough sense left in him to kick off his shoes first. Despite Karma telling him about constant crying, their apartment was near silent. Nagisa was half convinced Karma had actually just gone to the hospital. But, he walked quietly, to where Daichi’s door was slightly ajar. He pushed it open, to find Karma was still there thankfully, though he was just sat there. By the looks of things, Daichi was asleep.

“I’m here,” he said as quietly as he could manage whilst still being heard.

Karma blinked, like he was surprised Nagisa was there. “You came.”

Seeing that Daichi was, by immediate appearances, okay, most of the tension left Nagisa’s body. He whimpered in his sleep, though, thrashing about like something was bothering. Just by the look on Karma’s face, he knew he couldn’t have exaggerated much of it.

“You got him to go to sleep,” he said, hoping it might make him feel better.

It didn’t work. “He knocked himself out with all the crying.”

As if on cue, Daichi did begin to stir. Though their speech could have been the reason, Nagisa doubted it, with how unrestful he’d just seemed. He seemed more confused than he usually would be, his gaze not really focusing on anything. It only took a few moments, though, before he gained some awareness. And then came the crying, which apparently Karma hadn’t been kidding about.

“Dada!” He sobbed, amongst unintelligible noises. That was good, though, it showed he at least knew where he was.

“Hey,” Nagisa said softly, “how are you feeling?”

Daichi continued to sob, which was enough of an answer. Taking his chances, Nagisa came right up to him. When Daichi didn’t immediately flinch away, he took his chance, pressing the back of his hand to his forehead. Not that Nagisa often touched him like that, but he immediately realised it was a hotter than usual.

“He probably has a fever,” he admitted.

Karma shot him a sympathetic look, knowing what that meant. It also meant Karma wasn’t planning to help him with it, though Nagisa supposed he could let him off since he clearly had tried earlier. The thermometer was already in reaching distance. He didn’t have much of a chance to mask what he was doing. When Daichi saw it, his eyes widened with new alertness, and his cries even became worse.

“He probably has a fever,” he admitted.

Karma shot him a sympathetic look, knowing what that meant. It also meant Karma wasn’t planning to help him with it, though Nagisa supposed he could let him off since he clearly had tried earlier. The thermometer was already in reaching distance. He didn’t have much of a chance to mask what he was doing. When Daichi saw it, his eyes widened with new alertness, and his cries even became worse.

He did his best to be gentle. Physically forcing Daichi into anything felt close to evil as far as Nagisa was concerned, even if he knew it was necessary. But, he held him still as he could, eventually working the device into his ear. Daichi screamed, as loud as Nagisa imagined was physically possible, trying to bash out of his grasp. The thermometer clicked quickly enough, giving him a reading, and he took it out. Looking at it, it was pretty high, not enough to warrant a quick trip to the hospital, but definitely a fever. Though, Daichi had never reacted like that before. He usually calmed down, when Nagisa actually took his temperature.
Immediately, Nagisa had a theory.

“Can you point to what hurts?” It was worth a try, at the very least.

Daichi didn’t do anything immediately, but either his betrayal faded, or he just did it out of his own pain. Sobs becoming a little more quiet, he clutched his ear, tugging it before thrashing around again. Though he was in no way a doctor, it made sense. An ear infection, then, hopefully would explain the temperature and the sickness.

But first to comfort him. “It’s all done now,” he said, “I promise.”

It was a lie, though, Nagisa knew. If he had a fever, then Nagisa had to give him medicine. He was pretty sure whatever child friendly flavour it had advertised on the box was a complete lie, because Daichi hated it more than green peppers. There wasn’t a single time, in Daichi’s year and a half of life, where Nagisa had managed to give it to him without a struggle. Even the first time he’d got the sniffles, and had never tasted it before, it was like he knew.

“I think it might be an ear infection,” Nagisa said, turning to Karma. “It looks like it’s hurting him. Did you try giving him this?”

Karma nodded. “He spat it back out again.”

Cringing, Nagisa poured a little onto a spoon. “Daichi…”

“No!” He’d stopped sobbing, though discomfort was written all across his face. Though there wasn’t a lot of escape room, since he was barred in by the crib, Nagisa didn’t doubt that he’d try it.

“What if we make you pancakes after this?”

Daichi seemed to mull it over, for maybe half a second. “Not hungry.”

So bribery wouldn’t work. “It will make your ear stop hurting.”

He started up the crying again, so clearly that wasn’t about to happen. Nagisa couldn’t get too annoyed at him, he doubted Daichi was old enough to have grasped the concept that suffering briefly was worth a greater reward. But who knew what his son was thinking? There wasn’t a lot of other options.

“Hey, Daichan,” Karma finally piped up. Before Nagisa could stop him, he grabbed hold of the spoon, taking the dose into his own mouth. “See, tastes great.”

“Karma!” Nagisa turned to him in a mixture of alarm and horror.

He shot Nagisa a look. “What? It’s for babies, it won’t do anything to me.”

If he was going to be concerned about him doing that, it would have to wait until later. “You gonna be brave, Daichi?”

He didn’t respond to Nagisa, but he didn’t start freaking out either when he came closer with a new spoonful. It took him a few moments, but eventually, with the spoon pressed insistently against his lips, he opened his mouth. Nagisa didn’t waste any time tipping it in, immediately picking Daichi up and holding him close afterwards, reassuring him of how good he was.

Daichi didn’t seem particularly happy about any of it, but he at least didn’t try to spit it back out. That was a win, in Nagisa’s eyes. Since he relaxed a little, Nagisa decided to let him stay like that,
rather than putting him back down again. Perhaps the body heat wasn’t the best for him, but he needed the comfort.

“Should I get a wet cloth?” Nagisa said, mostly wondering aloud.

“Don’t,” Karma replied pretty quickly. “That’s not how fevers work. If you make him too cold it’ll just rise back up again higher.”

They spent quite a while like just like that. Nagisa held Daichi in his arms, soothing him as best he could every moment he looked like he remembered he was in pain. Beside him, Karma had elected to just start speaking to Daichi as he normally did. It wasn’t the most engaging of conversations, especially as Daichi barely responded, but it did the job of distracting him until he began to doze off again.

Nagisa knew that sleep was probably the best cure for him, overall. His body just needed some rest to help fight the infection. Once it seemed like he wasn’t going to wake right back up again, he nodded to Karma, before moving him back into the crib. He decided to forgo any covers, though, given his temperature. Much more peaceful than before, Nagisa was happy to leave him for a while.

Not that he went far. Just about creeping out, Karma behind him, he slid down the wall right beside Daichi’s door. It was the easiest way to listen out for anything. Karma apparently had the same idea, sitting next to him. Even if Daichi really did need to rest, Nagisa doubted either of them would be able to take their minds off it for long enough to do anything else.

“You’re better at this than me,” Karma finally said.

Where was he in his head? Even though Nagisa observed him, as he observed all those around him, it was incredibly hard to get any kind of sense of Karma’s intentions. It frustrated him to no end, one moment he thought he knew where they stood, and then the next he acted completely different. Though they’d been friends for many years, arguably more than that, there was only a small percentage of Karma that Nagisa could say he understood.

Nagisa swallowed. “Not really.”

“Imagine if I’d actually taken him to the hospital just for this… I can’t help but feel like I’m failing him or something. It shouldn’t be that hard alone, just because he’s a little bit sick.”

Surprising even himself, Nagisa didn’t like the moments where Karma actually admitted his weaknesses. Prying them out of him was one thing, but wilful speech? Nagisa did know from confidence that Karma wasn’t truly being himself when that happened.

“You just worry about him a lot, maybe too much sometimes,” Nagisa rationalised. It would be awful if Karma didn’t. “I remember, the day he was born, you said we were in this together, right? I wouldn’t be able to take care of him alone, at least not forever. He needs the both of us.”

Without warning, Karma was half on top of him, though it was an awkward position from where he’d moved from. It took Nagisa a moment to even register what was happening to him, and when he did manage to get it into his brain he was being hugged, it was over, and Karma had returned to himself. Not that it stopped the electric buzz beneath Nagisa’s skin.

“So,” he said, old tone returning, “do you want anything for dinner?”

Nagisa tried to straighten up. “Nothing too big… and not for Daichi either, if he really was sick. Maybe if he seems up to it we could let him watch a movie or something.”
It was probably going to be a long few days.

Chapter End Notes

Poor Daichi... He'll be okay though I promise!

Honestly there's a chapter I really really want done for Christmas, hence the quick updates. I have an exam soon, so I might have to not update for a couple of weeks AFTER said chapter. But, well, you'll see.

As always, comments and feedback are much welcome!
Chapter Summary

Nagisa's looking after Daichi for the day

Chapter Notes

Am I on a role or what?

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It had only been a few hours, and Nagisa was near exhausted to the bone. As much as spending time with Daichi made him the absolute happiest, it really was hard to do it alone. Daichi didn’t just have energy, he exuded it, which was fine for a little while, entertaining, even. There didn’t seem to be any stop to it, though, and Nagisa needed a nap. Not that he’d trade it for having Daichi any way other than this.

“Come on Daichi,” Nagisa tried from across the apartment. “It’ll only take a few seconds.”

Instead of co-operating, Daichi seemed to find Nagisa’s struggles absolutely hilarious. Enough to run around, directly away from him, laughing as he did so. Nagisa wouldn’t mind Daichi trying to give him trouble ordinarily, but he could see the potential mess. Lunch, it seemed, had been too much of a success. He was going through a kind of fussy eating phase, so Nagisa had just been happy he’d eaten all of it. Well, at least half, the other half was smudged over his face and hands.

Daichi was annoyingly fast, when he wanted to be. Clearly, or Nagisa would have caught him by now. The apartment was hardly a large space to run around, but it was just big enough that they could turn circles without Nagisa easily being able to grab him. The furniture only worked to Daichi’s advantage, since it blocked Nagisa’s path, and he wasn’t as easily equipped to just crawl underneath some of it.

Finally, he changed tactic, coming to a stop. Surely, Daichi would give up when the fun was taken out of it. Like he guessed, Daichi did stop moving, but he didn’t seem to be in much of a rush to come back over to Nagisa. No, he just stood there firmly, like he was prepared to stare him down. Once again, Nagisa wished Karma was there, because he probably could have stayed there and beat Daichi in a battle of will. But Nagisa couldn’t. Surely, there was only so long before he got bored.

Making his mistake, Daichi did turn, and Nagisa basically launched himself before he had the chance to figure out what was going on. Swooping Daichi into his arms, he only majorly squirmed for a moment or two before accepting defeat. Trying his best not to drop or further bother him, Nagisa reached for wipe.

“I do it,” Daichi complained, turning his head as far out of Nagisa’s grasp as possible.

Nagisa sighed. He really did want to do everything himself these days. Whatever the case, he
wasn’t about to try and force the issue. Hoping he could trust Daichi not to run off again, he set
him down on the floor, handing him the wipe himself. Daichi seemed a little unsure, at first, but
they’d been through this routine enough times by now. He had the right idea in general.

“Well done,” Nagisa said, taking the liberty of throwing the wipe away. He hadn’t done a perfect
job, but it was the effort that counted. His face was at least acceptably clean.

He wandered around without clear aim for a few minutes, which gave Nagisa enough time to
actually clean up some of the mess the whole chase had caused. He knew Daichi was more than
okay, anyway, since he could hear him mumbling away to himself. Despite his awareness that
Daichi could speak very well for his age, he couldn’t comprehend half of the things that came out
of his mouth. For a moment, he went quiet, before barrelling himself into the side of Nagisa’s leg.

“Papa gone?” He blinked innocently.

Nagisa looked down at him. “You only just noticed?”

Daichi didn’t answer that, toddling off outside Karma’s room, where he started to knock. “Papa?
Papa!”

“He’ll be back later,” Nagisa picked Daichi up whilst he said it. There was always the chance he
might get upset about that, and he didn’t want to be chasing after a tearful Daichi. Thankfully, he
seemed okay about it.

Wrapping his arms around his neck, Daichi was content to cuddle up to him. “Love you Dada.”

Nagisa beamed. “I love you too. What do you want to do now?”

Nothing, if he was going to take Daichi’s lack of response for granted. He didn’t get how he could
go on and on about nothing, but go completely silent at other times. Nagisa decided to just make it
easier for him by supplying some options.

“How about… A movie?”

Daichi shook his head.

“Playing cars?”

“Nooo.”

Nagisa thought. “Drawing?”

“Yeah!”

Of course, the messiest of activities. It was almost like Daichi was going it on purpose. Still,
Nagisa didn’t hesitate, getting a few coloured pens and paper out. Daichi’s idea of drawing didn’t
really constitute actual artwork yet, the most complex thing being an attempt at a circle, but he
seemed to enjoy scribbling with varying colours. Since he doubted Daichi would be in the mood to
stay there for a while by himself, Nagisa decided to ‘draw’ (AKA do his homework) next to him.

He was pretty excited about it for a few minutes, frantically swapping between colours to fill the
first few sheets of paper like they were nothing. Nagisa left him at it, trying to actually make sense
of his work. Once again, returning to school after a large break from it was a bit of a learning
curve. It was tough, and he knew it was only going to get tougher, but Nagisa knew it would be
worth it.
“Sun,” Daichi pointed, taking more interest in his page, where’d he’d only got as far as writing the date.

“That’s Sunday,” Nagisa corrected without thinking about it for a moment.

Daichi seemed to accept that, going back to his drawing. It took him a few seconds before he took in what happened. Although he’d technically said the wrong thing, Daichi had still recognised one of the readings. Immediately, Nagisa was curious. It wasn’t like he’d prompted him or anything.

“Daichi?” He asked, to get his attention. “C-Can you read that?”

He didn’t say anything, but then Nagisa got an idea. He didn’t know when kids were supposed to learn how to read. The doctor hadn’t even mentioned it at any of Daichi’s check ups. Nagisa didn’t know if teaching him like this was too early or anything, but he was pretty sure it wouldn’t do any harm. Taking a piece of paper, he wrote the first five letters of the alphabet as big as he could. He was interested to see what would happen. Though, he didn’t expect too much. Recognising one kanji was no different really than being able to identify a picture.

“Ah, ee, oo, eh, oh,” he said slowly, over pronouncing the letters as he pointed to them all.

Daichi studied it for a moment. Nagisa wasn’t sure what to make of his reaction. Did he even know what to do with this information? He supposed not, but there was no harm in just showing him. To Nagisa’s surprise, he repeated the letters, but more like a word than individuals. Daichi still seemed interested, surprisingly.

“Well done,” he said. “How about this?”

He experimented with a few things. Firstly, he covered up one of the letters, wondering if Daichi could figure out what was gone. He had a good time shouting them out, but he didn’t seem to be getting the answer right, though. Following that, he tried just pointed to each one, and asking him to name it. Again, he didn’t really seem to know the difference but there was an adorable concertation on his face. At least he was having a good time doing it.

“A!” Daichi called out finally, correctly.

Probably a fluke, Nagisa decided. He didn’t want to stretch Daichi’s brain too far, for fear of giving him a headache. So, Nagisa left him to it, returning to his homework for a little while. He didn’t get particularly far, finding watching Daichi far more interesting. Instead of going back to drawing, he still squinted at the letters.

“Well done,” he pointed, after a little while.

That was enough of that, then. Nagisa obliged, moving his work into a mostly neat pile, and then bent down to pick Daichi up. He wasn’t sure where he wanted to achieve from that, but he never minded having Daichi in his arms. Even though he was rapidly getting heavier, almost by the day. Nagisa wouldn’t even be able to lift him soon.

He tapped Nagisa’s arm. “Play blocks?”

“Sure.”

Daichi had a lot of fun with those, too. Now that he had the motor skills to actually build a proper tower, it held his attention for quite some time. Nagisa sat with him of course, occasionally contributing a block to give Daichi the reassurance he wasn’t just playing alone. Daichi took the most joy in knocking down his creations afterwards, in increasingly creative.
When his phone started buzzing, it took him by surprise. His first thought was Karma, but he only ever called when he absolutely had to. Reaching for it, he was confused to see that it was actually Rin calling. Which was odd, because he always seemed to prefer texting. He didn’t have a reason to be calling, did he?

“Hi?” Nagisa questioned down the phone.

“You never texted me back,” Rin replied simply, though his tone was light.

He was definitely forgetting something. “Texted you back?”

“You said you were going to come out with me today, but you didn’t know when, remember?”

Nagisa only slightly recalled that conversation, since he’d been half awake at the time. He didn’t doubt that he’d agreed, though. But then again, he hadn’t expected Karma to leave earlier in a kind of raged frenzy. All Nagisa had caught of it was there was a specific book he needed and he couldn’t get it so he was spending the rest of his day in the library. Which meant he was alone with Daichi.

Nagisa cringed in preparation for another argument if he said no. Cancelling plans seemed to one of the things that really got to Rin, even if he claimed to ‘understand’. It almost wasn’t even an option. He thought about just going out to meet him. Ever since the argument they had about Nagisa not being serious enough, months ago now, he had been thinking about it. Enough even to off handily mention it to Karma, who seemed apathetic, so he didn’t have to worry about his feelings.

“Do you mind going to a soft play?”

Daichi didn’t seem to mind the sudden idea of an outing, once Nagisa had hung up the phone. Although, actually leaving was a little bit of a process, since Daichi was in the mood to put his own coat and shoes on. By the time they actually got out, significantly later, he also insisted on walking the entire way. With Daichi skipping along just ahead of him, Nagisa started to feel pretty nervous.

It was now or never, though. Rin was stood there, waiting for him outside. “Hi!”

Nagisa made sure to distance himself a little so he didn’t try to go for a hug. “Rin,” he cleared his throat, “this is Daichi.”

His eyes drew downwards. Nagisa’s own followed him, trying to gauge his reaction. Daichi, too, looked a little confused. Maybe because they’d stopped and now they were all just staring at each other. It was hard to guess what Rin was thinking, though it looked like he was just analysing everything. Nagisa almost wondered if he’d ever seen a toddler before.

“He’s so small,” Rin admitted, and tried crouching down. “Hi there, Daichi.”

Nagisa half expected Daichi to immediately run over to the new interesting person, like he’d seen him do many times now. But, to his genuine surprise, Daichi remained silent, shifting behind Nagisa’s leg as if to hide. He tugged on the material of his trousers like it was a blanket. Which was odd, because he’d never shown any kind of fear of strangers before.

“He’s just shy,” Nagisa lied, unsure of what to make of it.

Rin nodded, standing back up again. “That’s normal, isn’t it?”

“He just needs to get used to you…” Nagisa looked down, where suddenly Daichi was thrusting
his arms out. Usually, he’d verbally ask. Nagisa knew for a fact ‘up’ was one of Daichi’s most confident words. Still, if he wanted to be carried, Nagisa wasn’t going to deny that.

They made their way inside. Honestly, Nagisa never really took Daichi here that often. Most weekends they wouldn’t really take him out, since he got enough out of the house time from nursery. During the recent break, if they went anywhere, it had pretty much been exclusively outside. So, he wasn’t exactly a regular, but he did know there was a small café area next to the baby play section.

Daichi wasn’t even squirming in his arms from excitement of getting down and being allowed to play. In fact, he was clutching onto Nagisa rather tightly. Even when they found a table, he didn’t seem to want to sit on his own chair, content apparently on Nagisa’s lap. It was easier to think about what Daichi was doing than anything else, considering Rin was being completely silence. He didn’t miss the way Daichi looked longingly at the play area.

“Do you want to go play?” He tried.

Very subtly, Daichi nodded, and that was all Nagisa needed to lower him to the floor. He didn’t have qualms about letting him go off and do his own thing, since the chairs were so close. At least Daichi looked a little bit happier, once his mind was distracted by a plethora of bright colours and activities.

“This isn’t the best place for a date,” Nagisa finally said, half like it was intended to be an apology.

Rin waved him off. “There’s worse places.”

“Than screaming children?” He said it through a smile, though.

He looked around. “It’s different to how I thought it would be.”

This definitely could have gone a lot worse. Rin didn’t seem too bothered that Nagisa had dragged him to a somewhere like this at least, but he did look completely out of place. With not a lot else to discuss, since the main subject honestly scared Nagisa a little, he ended up just asking Rin about his homework. It brought him back, to all the lunchtimes they’d spend in the library together. A much simpler time, almost. At least there was that to focus on. But there was still a conversation to be had.

“Rin kun, I-“ Before he could get his words out, a weight banged into his leg.

“Dada, hurts,” Daichi sniffled, his voice low.

Nagisa hadn’t seen him injure himself, but there was no blood or obviously twisted limbs, nor was Daichi screaming. So it couldn’t have been too bad. Still, he picked Daichi back up again, holding him close in comfort. He seemed to relax a little for a moment, before taking in his surroundings. Once he did, he shifted around, turning so he could bury his head in Nagisa’s jacket, hiding from the world.

“What are you doing?” He asked through mild amusement.

“Aw,” Rin said, and then started tapping the table.

Nagisa sighed. “I think he’s just tired. He’d been running around all day.”

“I don’t mind,” Rin smiled. “Nagisa kun, I’m happy, really. It feels like you’re ready to be serious.”
“O-oh.” From inside his little hideaway, Daichi began squirming like he was trying to get comfortable. “I think we should be going now. Daichi definitely needs a nap.”

Rin stood up. “I’ll walk back with you.”

He ended up carrying Daichi as they walked. Which meant he was definitely going to have a long nap. Nagisa, too, needed a long nap. It had been a weirdly long day. It felt like his arms might fall off, but he would never complain.

“It’s kind of weird to me,” Rin piped up. “Knowing you have a son is one thing but seeing it…”

Nagisa wasn’t sure how to respond to that. He supposed he’d find it weird too if he were in Rin’s shoes. But being a parent had been his reality for so long it was even stranger to imagine a different life. Of course he knew there had been a time before Daichi, where he wasn’t constantly putting anyone else’s needs above his own, but it was so distant now.

It didn’t take them too long to get back to Nagisa’s building. Ordinarily, he’d have said his goodbyes right there, but he supposed there wasn’t much of a reason anymore. He didn’t really want to disturb Daichi more, anyway. Though he didn’t directly invite Rin in, he hardly stopped him either, and he followed him all the way to the door.

Manoeuvring himself to produce the key and get the door open was always a challenge when holding Daichi. Daichi was still awake, when Nagisa looked, so he put him down to make it easier for himself. Once the door was unlocked, Nagisa pushed it a little bit, surprised to see Karma was already standing in the hallway.

“Oh, Karma!”

Daichi looked up wearily. “Papa?”

“I just got back,” he explained. “Where did you go, huh?”

Daichi stumbled straight past him and into their apartment, apparently not interested in that conversation.

“Just the soft play place,” Nagisa explained, and then remembered himself. If only the ground could swallow him whole. “R-right. Karma, Rin, Rin, Karma.”

Behind him, Rin shifted. “I’m Aino Rin, nice to make your acquaintance.”

Karma seemed to look him over for a moment. “Is that so?”

Nagisa gulped. “A-anyway! I should be saying bye, now! I’ll see you tomorrow, Rin kun.”

He froze when suddenly Rin was kissing him, hard, with very little warning. It was too quick for him to move away, or do anything. It wasn’t just a kiss, though, it was like he wanted to start a passionate make out right there in the hallway. Nagisa wasn’t particularly comfortable with that situation, he realised, at least ten seconds into it. Rin’s hand was practically fisted in his hair, so it was hard to break off the kiss. By the time he managed it, the apartment door was already closed again.

“W-what was that for?” He tried to catch his breath.

Rin shrugged, like that hadn’t just happened. “I didn’t get the chance to do it earlier.”
He wasn’t sure. “Right.”

“Your hair is kind of nice like that,” he said nonchalantly, lifting a strand that had obviously come loose between his fingers. “Maybe you should wear it down sometime.”

“Oh,” Nagisa felt his stomach twist.

“Anyway!” He smiled. “I’ll see you at lunch tomorrow? Love you!”

Nagisa practically raced inside the apartment, after watching him walk away for a few seconds. His heart was pounding so hard it threatened to beat out his chest, and he didn’t think in a good way. Mind swimming with thoughts, he felt like he might just drown right then and there.

“What’s wrong with you?” Karma looked him over, though something in his aura felt a little smug.

His eyes fell to the floor. “I don’t know.”

Chapter End Notes

~Japanese lesson of the day~

日曜日 - nichiyoubi - sunday
日 - hi - sun (one of many readings)

Same kanji, just different reading. It's one of the most common and simple ones (it's literally in the word JAPAN - 日本) which is why Daichi would be able to recognise it the same way a child could point to a picture in a book and say what it is.

あ(a)い(i)う(u)え(e)お(o) are the first letters of the Japanese alphabet. However, the up thing was kind of a small joke because ue うえ (上) means 'up' (or more like above or on something). We don't really have any words like that would work like that - basically letters in the right order to form a word - in the English alphabet so I couldn't 'translate' it. IMPORTANT ASIDE - it's literally just a joke though like I'm 70% sure it's not grammatically correct in Japanese because that language has a lot of verbs and nuances I'm not going into. But hey, he's a baby.

~end of Japanese lesson~

So! I hope you enjoyed this one! Next chapters... gonna be your Christmas present! But it's very painful. Like, VERY painful. So gear up. Heh.

As always, I love your comments and feedback!
Nagisa’s life became a weird lull, almost, where every seemed to be okay but for some reason he just felt like it wasn’t. Even if exams were rapidly approaching them again, things were mostly happy. Ever since their ‘outing’ together Rin had been far more affectionate than usual. If they were going anywhere together, he always made to hold Nagisa’s hand nowadays. He also seemed to want to kiss and hug him a lot more. Any sane person would have been overjoyed.

He wasn’t so sure how to feel about the change. Maybe Rin was just stressed, because his entrance exams were so close, literally setting the course for his life. So, Nagisa tried his best to just go along with it, though he kept having to silently reinforce some kind of boundary, since Rin didn’t really seem to know when to stop. It wasn’t so bad he couldn’t put up with it, though.

“I’m bored,” Rin said, putting his book down pathetically.

Nagisa looked up from his own work with a smile. “You should still study.”

“But you’re so much more interesting,” he complained, moving over to kiss Nagisa on the cheek. When Nagisa didn’t respond immediately, he moved closer, pressing more kisses closer and closer until he caught the corner of Nagisa’s mouth. Nagisa could already see him completely forgetting the work he was supposed to be doing.

Shifting away, he gave Rin a look. “You want to be accepted into university, don’t you?”

“You’re right, you’re right,” he resigned. “I mean, I know you’re kind of a distraction, but are you still going to help me sort everything next week? I’m free on Tuesday.”

“I can’t on Tuesday,” Nagisa realised. “My heat’s due around then so I’ll be at home.”

Like that, the atmosphere grew frosty. “At home?”

Nagisa swallowed. “No different to always.”
“I just don’t get why you would,” he said, looking almost kind of mad. “Why don’t you just spend it with me? It’s not like we don’t love each other, right?”

His throat ran dry. There were so many reasons he could think of. Though Rin did seem to get more intense with the kissing recently, they hadn’t done anything like that. And Nagisa wasn’t sure if he even wanted to. With the exception of that one time Rin offered to help him before, he’d never even really thought about it.

“R-rin-“

“I mean,” he continued. “It’s weird enough that you stay at home with your alpha roommate. Like what am I or anyone else supposed to think?”

Nagisa’s brow creased. “You think I’d cheat on you?”

He exhaled heavily. “No, I don’t think that. It just doesn’t make sense to me. Do you even love me?”

Feeling a little bit funny, Nagisa realised he was shaking. He knew what he was supposed to say, the right answer to that question. Two people who’d been dating for as long as they had were meant to be in love with each other. And Rin had been saying ‘love’ a lot lately. Nagisa still hadn’t figured out how he felt completely. All he knew is it wasn’t the same as what he felt for Karma, what he’d so easily called ‘love’ before. But there had to be different kinds of love, or maybe he was just wrong before.

“Yes,” Nagisa finally said, afraid of anything different. If he didn’t, then Rin surely would break up with him this time.

“Then prove it! I don’t see what the problem is!” He paused for a second. “It’s not like you’re a virgin.”

Nagisa felt that comment like a stab to the chest. Technically, he wasn’t, but he had no recollection of it. He barely even counted it internally. And sleeping with Rin whilst in heat, where everything seemed to blur into one giant mess in his head, wouldn’t be much better.

“But I wouldn’t even remember it,” Nagisa thought aloud.

“Oh,” Rin said, the anger dropping from his tone, “I see now. You should have just said something! Actually, my parents are going on a trip out of town tomorrow. You could come over then?”

Nagisa wasn’t sure what to make of that. “W-what?”

There was no point in asking, though. Unfortunately, Nagisa knew exactly what Rin meant. He also knew that he couldn’t get out of it now. There weren’t any excuses he could make that would help him. Even if he was aware he physically could say no, something within him froze, like he couldn’t quite express that.

“I don’t really get the house to myself often,” Rin actually answered. “There aren’t many other opportunities.”

“Okay,” he forced out.

He pressed a less intense kiss to Nagisa’s lips, apparently satisfied. Like nothing had happened, like it wasn’t a big deal. Maybe Nagisa had it wrong, and he needed to stop seeing it as one. This was
normal, expected of them probably. It was just the shock that was shaking him, surely. Rin just went back to his studying, whilst Nagisa stared aimlessly at the words on the page, not being able to take any of them in.

With the school day nearly at an end, they eventually said their usual goodbyes, despite the prospect of ‘tomorrow’ looming over him. Nagisa didn’t have a lot of time to think about it after that fortunately, busy with the rest of his daily routine like picking Daichi up and taking care of him when they got back home.

Nagisa didn’t even think about Rin again until much later. But of course, Daichi demanded a lot of attention, so it was easy to forget. It had become a regular thing now for him to sit with Nagisa when he did his homework. As always, Nagisa gave him a few pieces of paper and pens, though he wrote five letters on one of them. Convinced Daichi had pretty much mastered the first ones he was taught, they’d moved onto the next five letters. He picked them up just the same as before, though he had a little difficulty saying ‘ke’ right when it was on its own. It wouldn’t take them too long to get through the entire alphabet at this rate, though Nagisa didn’t know where to take it from there. Maybe trying to get him to string them together? But he wasn’t sure if that was pushing way too far.

Whatever the case, Daichi enjoyed it now, and Nagisa enjoyed teaching him. Though, like always, he did eventually get tired and randomly started scribbling instead. When Karma came in with food, it was the clear winner. Not that Nagisa minded, because he was pretty hungry too, and he always enjoyed Karma’s cooking. Well, except the times he dumped ridiculous amounts of spice on the meal, but that was few and far in between.

“D-do you mind picking Daichi up tomorrow?” Nagisa plucked up the courage, about halfway into his food.

Karma looked up at him. “I mean, sure? How come?”

What was Nagisa supposed to say? ‘Hey do you mind looking after our child because my boyfriend wants to sleep with me and I’m too chicken to say no’? This was a hugely uncomfortable conversation to have with anybody, let alone Karma. Even though he hadn’t physically saying anything, Nagisa was somehow petrified that Karma knew exactly what he was thinking around.

“I might sleep over at Rin’s,” Nagisa finally got out, exhaling deeply once it was pulled for him.

Though he hadn’t known what to expect, Karma looked apathetic. “Okay?”

That was good, right? He should be happy, with that weight off his chest. But Nagisa wasn’t. He could even admit to himself he’d wanted Karma to be busy or something. At least that way Nagisa could make an excuse that wasn’t just his own inadequacies.

“Ohay?” He tried, his voice small, just to give Karma another opportunity.

He squinted. “What, did you want me to say no?”

Damn it, was Nagisa that easy to read? “No!”

“Nagisa,” he leant forwards in his seat, “you’re okay, aren’t you?”

“I’m fine,” Nagisa denied, and pushed his plate away, unable to stomach another bite.

Karma shrugged, like he wasn’t going to pursue it further. Nagisa just stared at the table, after that, until Daichi proudly declared he was done with his food. Since Karma had cooked, it was only fair
that Nagisa cleaned up. Quite the task, since Karma didn’t know the meaning of ‘clean as you go’. At least it was easier than trying to wrestle Daichi to clean his face.

He lost himself in his own domestic routine until the next time he was alone. Usually, a nice warm shower would relax him, but it just made him feel more on edge. When he stepped forward to grab his towel, he caught a sight of himself in the mirror and immediately deflated. He didn’t get why Rin was so eager, he was nothing special. His body bordered on grotesque. He hated his lanky arms, how wide his hips were compared to his small waist, his too round face. His stomach was absolutely covered in red and angry stretch marks that never went away. It was a constant reminder that his body would never go back to looking normal.

Maybe he could leave his shirt on. He wouldn’t actually have to take it off, really, would he? Nagisa turned away from his reflection, ashamed that he didn’t have much of a clue. Even if he wasn’t a virgin, it stood only as a technicality. Nagisa still didn’t remember a thing about sleeping with Karma, except feeling sore the next morning. He didn’t know what to do.

He tossed and turned that night, rest unable to find him whilst he was freaking out so badly. The small amounts of sleep he did get were unsettled, like he was half conscious the entire time. Morning came just as he felt himself starting to go insane, signifying most of his time for thinking was up.

Nagisa wasn’t sure what to bring, even. Although he’d told Karma he was sleeping over, Rin hadn’t specifically said anything about that, so bringing an overnight bag felt a little off. He decided to just throw a few of the essentials in his school bag, like a toothbrush and clean underwear. Speaking of, Nagisa didn’t know what to wear. He cursed himself for not owning anything that wasn’t just plain, but he’d hardly been expecting to have to make this choice. And then he remembered that it didn’t really matter, because wasn’t the point to take it off?

Leaving for school that day felt akin to walking to his own funeral. Perhaps it was a good thing, then, that he didn’t actually see Rin during the day. It was hard enough to focus on his work as it was, and it would probably have just made it worse. Nagisa wondered if his friends knew what he was thinking, if they noticed. Nobody said anything, though, or called him out for acting weird. And then, when the final bell rung out and he went out into the corridor to meet Rin, his time was up.

“Hey,” he greeted with a kiss to Nagisa’s cheek, and a half hug. “Good day?”

Nagisa nodded, feeling every urge to hurl himself out of the window. Not that that would really help him. Rin waved goodbye to his friends, and then took a hold of Nagisa’s hand. He was tethered in that way, following along where Rin lead him. But Nagisa didn’t feel so secure in his own mind, as Rin talked about his day. This was still casual for him. It was supposed to be casual, though, wasn’t it? It was then that Nagisa realised with a sinking feeling that just because this was the first time, it wasn’t just a one time thing.

He’d been to Rin’s house before, a few sparing times. It was pretty normal, maybe a little nicer than the average home for the area. After taking his shoes off, though, it seemed there wouldn’t be much time to take it in. Rin took his hand again, as though he was afraid Nagisa would slip out of his grip, and started taking him straight upstairs.

Nagisa had hoped for a little bit more time to gather his thoughts, but maybe it was better to get it over with as soon as possible. Rin certainly wasn’t wasting any time, laying a kiss on him before his bedroom door was even all the way opened. Compared to some of the more recent times Rin had kissed him, though, it wasn’t as rough.
Ordinarily, Nagisa would have pretty happy about that. Normal kisses he was fine with, but the anticipation burned under his skin. Rin’s fingers hooked underneath the fabric of his jacket, as if to push it off, which Nagisa reluctantly helped him to do. His hands seemed to slide down with it, fixing on Nagisa’s waist as he pushed him further into the room. They only slid lower, moving down to grasp his butt. He tried his best not to react and flinch, logically knowing he was about to do a lot worse.

He let go, gently guiding Nagisa down as he did so, so he ended up sitting on the bed. Rin didn’t keep his momentum going, instead squatting to around the same height. At that point, the kiss had to break, due to need for air. Not that he thinking clearly regardless, Nagisa’s attention drifted around the room, which seemed both huge and tiny at the same time.

“I messed your hair up,” Rin reached for one of the loosened strands, tugging it between his fingers. Though he probably didn’t do it on purpose, it was enough to make his ties fall out, the rest of his hair coming with it.

“Oh,” Nagisa let out, unsure of how to respond.

Rin brushed it out of his eyes, cupping his cheek. “You’re beautiful like that.”

But he didn’t want to be. Nagisa tried to ignore the sick feeling in his stomach when Rin moved in to kiss him again. This time, his lips met his jaw, and then moved down to his neck. Though he felt no submissive urges, Nagisa still tilted to allow him the access. It turned out to be an error of judgement, because then he was kissing his scent gland. Even if he’d tried, it was impossible to hold back his flinch, automatically pulling away.

“Are you sensitive there or something?” Rin blinked.

Nagisa didn’t have a good explanation. Maybe it was because Rin was a beta, and just wouldn’t get it. There were some things Nagisa could deal with, but right on the scent glands implied a lot more than just a kiss. When Nagisa didn’t respond, Rin just took it as a signal to touch it again, first with his fingers, and then again with his lips. Even though he was prepared, Nagisa just squeezed his eyes shut and bore it. A good tactic for the rest of the evening maybe. Despite his efforts to remain calm, his limbs begun shaking, but Rin seemed to mistake that for pleasure.

Without much other warning he was pushed back, so he lay flat out on the bed. This time, Rin actually did follow him down, kicking his legs apart so they were spread. He returned to a normal kiss again, which thankfully meant he couldn’t really see the way Nagisa’s face reddened as hands brushed against his thigh. More from inexplicable shame than arousal.

He’d thought that despite his uncertainties, he’d at least be able to relax when he actually got to it. Perhaps Nagisa was being ridiculous. He was here, with his boyfriend of a pretty significant amount of time, who was currently all but grinding on top of him. He should be extremely turned on. But he felt a kind of emptiness, and it was deafening him. At least he didn’t have to do much, pliantly providing his warmth should be enough to keep Rin happy.

“S-slow down,” Nagisa finally said, albeit very softly, when his hand shifted down his front. He needed time to adjust, lest he freak out and accidentally hurt him.

But Rin didn’t seem to hear him, fingers continuing their path, fiddling with the button of his trousers.

“Rin,” Nagisa tried to warn again.
Lips plastered at his neck again, he felt them stretch into a smile against his skin. Did he think Nagisa was saying his name in a good way? Nagisa’s heart rate began to pick up, unsure of where to find his voice from.

Instead, he tried moving one of his arms, lightly giving Rin a little shove in hope’s he’d get the message. “Really!”

“Mm,” Rin said into his neck, “quit moving.”

His free hand moved quickly, taking Nagisa’s arm and holding it down. He was sure it was meant to be a playful gesture, but Nagisa felt the thrums of threat. It didn’t seem to matter, though, the other hand returning to its task. Like of a sudden moment of clarity, Nagisa knew with his entire being that he didn’t want this to happen anymore.

“Stop,” Nagisa finally found the will buried deep within him.

He thought it would be clear enough. Rin sure enough did move his hand, but now instead of attempting to strip him he palmed him through his trousers. Of course with the frenzy building inside his head, it didn’t feel good at all. Nagisa just felt more ill, more like he was suffocating.

“Stop!”

But once again, he didn’t. And Nagisa’s body only one option left, to go into do or die mode. It wasn’t a case of thinking anymore, everything shut down, and he just had to protect himself. Adrenaline rushing through him, he yanked his hand free, slamming both together right in front of Rin’s face. Moving so fast Nagisa was going purely on his instincts, that second or so paralysis from the shock was enough to flip their positions. Almost expertly, Nagisa was on top of him, holding him in place with his thighs, and his hands locked around his throat.

There was a certain kind of confused terror in Rin’s eyes. Not entirely back to himself yet, Nagisa had every urge to apply real pressure, to choke him until his last breath. Right then, it was the most natural course of action, what he was built for. But even so, somewhere in the back of his head, something screamed at him not to do it. Not loud enough to drown out the forefront completely, but enough to be heard. So he did the only other thing he could, and fled.

Rin didn’t try to stop him as he quickly grabbed his jacket and bag, even if he did manage it in mere seconds. Nagisa practically flew down the stairs, not bothering to put his shoes on properly before exiting the house. Even then, there wasn’t time to stop in his mind. Nagisa just kept walking, onwards and onwards. It felt like the only thing to do until he got home. He didn’t look back over his shoulder even once.

“Nagisa?” Karma asked, confused clearly at the sight of him. “I thought you were sleeping over.”

Finally, he exhaled deeply, and everything came rushing back in. Nagisa had nothing to say to Karma, nothing he’d be able to produce anyway. There was a lot he maybe wanted to say, but it all caught in the back of his throat. He did the only logical thing, then, and continued on straight to his bedroom, refusing to meet his eye. All he had left now was the comfort of curling up in his own bed and pretending like the day never even happened.

Until a knock came at his door. “Seriously, Nagisa, what gives? Don’t make me stand here all night~”

Nagisa didn’t want to deal with this right now. He got up from his bed, fully intending to just tell Karma to leave him alone. When he opened his door, though, he locked eyes with Karma, and
simply crumbled. There were no tears, but he clung to Karma like he was his lifeline. Karma didn’t touch him back at all, which Nagisa was ridiculously grateful for.

“H-he, he-“ Nagisa tried to respond, since he’d asked, but he couldn’t drag the words out of him.

That had been the wrong thing to say, because Karma was pulling back, fire in his eyes. “He did what?”

Suddenly Nagisa was very afraid. Even though he hadn’t said anything, he could already physically feel the waves of fury coming from Karma. He didn’t know why, exactly. It wasn’t anything to do with him, aside from being his friend of course Karma didn’t need to be getting so angry just for his sake. But the atmosphere was clear, and it only made Nagisa feel more on edge.

“Karma, it’s okay-“

He seemed to loom over him. “I’m going to assume the worst unless you tell me otherwise.”

Nagisa crumpled. “H-he d-didn’t stop, a-and h-had my arm, and I almost killed him!” It came back in flashes, every scene just as bad as it had felt in the moment.

Admitting that out loud made Nagisa feel sick. He’d been too sure of himself, what felt like years ago now, when he’d declared he was considering a career in assassination. Killing Korosensei had been different, more earnest, and Nagisa hadn’t been acting alone. But this… holding a fresh life in his hands, so ready to just take it. Nagisa was very scared.

“Did he touch you.” It didn’t sound like much of a question, with how dark his tone was.

Nagisa said nothing, and apparently that was enough of an answer. Inexplicably, a tear ran down his cheek, and his body begun to tremble. He wasn’t sure why he was crying, other than a kind of shock maybe, but once he’d started they didn’t stop coming. Something in the air shifted. If Karma was bothering to try and hide his rage laced scent, he wasn’t doing a good job, but there was something else there that made Nagisa feel like he was safe here.

Karma’s jaw clenched. “You’ll be okay here for a little bit?”

He’d been friends with Karma since they were twelve, and basically in his constant company for the last two years. He knew the look that was across Karma’s face, far too well. It was how he looked when he was about to kill someone, and suddenly Nagisa was afraid again.

“Don’t do anything,” Nagisa begged, the tears still fresh in his eyes. He lunged to grab Karma’s arm, as if that would hold him back. “Please, Karma.”

He looked down at Nagisa. “Why not?”

It was a challenge. He was waiting for Nagisa to give him a good reason, something to stop whatever he was planning. Nagisa could think of plenty, but he knew Karma. He knew that nothing he could say would be good enough when it came down to it. Karma already has his mind set, and it would be near impossible to change it.

“Stay with me,” he asked instead, voice barely above a whisper.

Karma looked him up and down once again, before wrapping his arms around his body.

Karma was in over his head. He wasn’t built for situations like this, that required tact and comfort.
If he didn’t hit something, specifically Rin (hard, and right in the liver), he was going to go insane. Still, for Nagisa’s sake, he tried his best to keep himself at bay. Hard, when every inch of his body was screaming out for blood. The fact that Nagisa didn’t have any physical injuries to speak of was the only thing working in his favour.

He didn’t know exactly what had happened, since Nagisa was so reluctant, or maybe completely unable to spit it out. But Karma could put two and two together, and that gave him enough of the story. He should have just warned Nagisa. Of course, he’d only had the displeasure of meeting Rin once, and that had felt off. Namely at the way he passionately kissed Nagisa, locking eyes with him the entire time. Which obviously had to mean something, because Nagisa was a good kisser. At the time, of course, he’d just found it kind of funny, pathetic that he felt the need to piss a circle around Nagisa, like that was some kind of threat. He didn’t think he’d have taken it this far.

At some point, Nagisa had stopped crying, though he still shook in his arms. It would be even worse, Karma knew, to just leave him like this. Even though Karma had frankly never been good at comforting people, and he wasn’t about to learn. All it seemed Nagisa wanted to do was hold onto him, though, and Karma could at least stand there. Until time begun to cease meaning, it seemed.

“I’m just going to put Daichi to bed,” Karma said gently, remembering that fact.

Nagisa seemed reluctant, but he let Karma go, slipping out the door. Thankfully, in the time he’d been in Nagisa’s room, Daichi didn’t seem to have got himself in too much trouble. He was getting a lot better at amusing himself with his own toys nowadays, though Karma still found he couldn’t sit in the room for ten minutes with him without Daichi begging him to play with those sad, wide eyes of his. Not that he minded.

“Allright,” Karma eventually said. “Time to go to bed.”

Daichi turned around and looked at him blankly. “No.”

“Oh really?” Karma raised an eyebrow. “How come?”

“Tidying, Papa,” he explained. “No bed.”

Karma just stood there and let him carry on for a moment. If he actually was cleaning, then it made Karma’s life a little easier. By the looks of it, he actually was, though he was being meticulous about it. He knew that Daichi was bound to be slower at picking up his toys than someone older than him, but this was ridiculous. At the pace he was going, they’d be there all night.

“You’re clearly stalling, Daichan. Come on.”

“Have t’tidy,” he complained.

He sighed. “I’ll clean up the rest of it.”

“No!”

Okay, that was it. “This isn’t a negotiation.”

“Yes is,” he mumbled.

“You don’t even know what that means,” he said, forcefully picking Daichi up. He didn’t seem to like this very much, almost instantly bursting into tears. “Not you too.”

So apparently Daichi had indeed won the negotiation, because Karma was not in the mood to deal
with more crying in one day. His tears instantly dried up when he was put back down again. So, he let Daichi return to his ‘cleaning up’. He tried to help him, just to speed things up, but then Daichi gave him a look that could only be described as the stink eye.

“All done,” Daichi finally turned around with a huge grin plastered across his face. Only about half the toys had actually been put away.

Karma raked a hand down his face in emotional exhaustion. “Does that mean you’re ready for bed?”

“Mmm, no!”

“Too bad,” Karma said, feeling the irritation burn back. “You’ve got to be tired by now.”

Daichi yawned. “No sleepy.”

He didn’t actually argue when Karma picked him up again anyway, taking him right into his bedroom. Daichi could claim what he wanted, he was so sluggish Karma had a hard time even getting him into his pyjamas. He was pretty sure Daichi didn’t have the energy after that to try and get up again, which was good enough for him. He sighed happily, when he was actually put down.

“Night night.”

Daichi didn’t respond to him, which was good enough to mean his job was done. He stretched out, closing the door most of the way behind him, and took in the sight of their apartment. He’d sort it out tomorrow morning or something. Right then, that had taken a while, and he figured Nagisa needed to know he was actually coming back.

When he entered his room again, Nagisa was curled up on the bed, having stripped off to just his boxers and a t shirt, looking out of the balcony doors that acted as a window. Something caught in Karma’s throat. He could tell he was still awake, just from the way he was breathing, but he was silent otherwise. Karma had been a while… He wondered if Nagisa still wanted him close.

“Nagisa,” he tried, questioning if Nagisa had even heard him enter. He didn’t react to his voice, though.

Even if Karma had been desperate to just leave him to it, the laces of distress poisoning Nagisa’s scent made it almost impossible to turn away. He decided to try what had worked best earlier, and just hold him. Slowly and carefully, he came over to the bed, and laid himself down on it. Nagisa made no objection to his presence, though he didn’t acknowledge it either.

After a minute or so, Nagisa turned over onto his back. Even though the room was pretty dark, Karma could see his eyes were open, fixed blankly on the ceiling. He didn’t move any closer, leaving that decision up to Nagisa. If only he could tell what he was thinking. Karma almost fell asleep like that, when Nagisa finally turned over again, locking eyes with him directly.

His scent grew sweeter than before, which at least showed he was more relaxed. Neither of them said anything, though, and the silence grew heavier with every passing second. If Karma had been a better person, he might have been able to find the right thing to say to Nagisa then, but his brain didn’t supply anything worthwhile. Nagisa looked like something was on the tip of his tongue, but he remained soundless.

Nagisa moved quicker than Karma could anticipate, so he was wholly unprepared when suddenly Nagisa’s lips were there, sliding against his. It was surprisingly gentle, despite his speed. With this not even being in the realm of possible ‘actions that Nagisa may or may not take’, Karma was
shocked, eyes still wide open. But Nagisa didn’t pull away, either, cupping the back of Karma’s head with his hand.

There was a logical part of Karma’s brain that knew what this was a bad idea, but it was drowned out. It was hard to think clearly, when someone he’d loved for so long, but never been able to have, was kissing him. Nagisa’s scent only became sweeter still, intoxicating him completely. Even if it was awful of him, there was nothing Karma could have done to prevent himself from returning the kiss with vigour, clutching Nagisa back.

Nagisa keened into it, taking on the magnified passion. It didn’t take long for the kiss between them to deepen. His inner alpha jumped the gun, then, gums beginning to swell as his canines extended. Not a lot he could do about it, he bit lightly on Nagisa’s bottom lip, though not hard enough to actually break the skin. Even though he had no intent to bond him, Nagisa shuddered at the suggestion, a half whine escaping from his throat. If he could, Karma would have played it on repeat for days.

When Nagisa’s hand came to his shoulder, pushing him so he’d be flat on his back, he didn’t protest. Nagisa followed him, now lying on top of him to continue the kiss from a different angle. Not that he weighed much. Though, maybe just from discomfort, he quickly moved his legs apart, so his knees were planted either side of Karma’s thighs. Though Karma could have pushed him off if he really wanted to, he felt deliciously trapped under Nagisa’s hold.

Their kissing went on like that, though it intensified with every second. Karma let his hands grab Nagisa’s back, pressing him close, though he made sure they didn’t drop lower than that. There was a reason, he knew, but it escaped his mind in that second… As much as his now very awake cock would have liked it. There was no hiding anything between them, their bodies were so tightly wound together, he could tell Nagisa was hard too.

Nagisa broke the kiss, instead moving his lips to his neck. Without warning, he zoned in on his swollen scent gland, sucking it between his lips. Karma had done it to him before, when he was in preheat and had barely been able to control his own urges. He hadn’t realised its effect on him would be so… potent. Without Nagisa’s mouth to silence it, his moan rung out loud and clear. He’d be embarrassed, maybe, but then Nagisa dug his teeth in.

He was an omega, of course, so it wasn’t like he could actually bond them. As much as the implication was definitely there. Maybe most people would be ashamed in his position, but Karma didn’t have time to think about the social implications. The sound it drew out of him wasn’t one he’d made before. It was all Karma could do to resist biting Nagisa back, returning the favour.

Nagisa pulled back, once again. Karma was ready for another kiss, but instead he shifted completely, going up on his knees to sit up properly. He was panting heavily, face flushed, looking down at Karma through lidded eyes. It was just about the hottest thing Karma had ever seen. But then he shifted his hips, grinding their crotches which were conveniently lined up together.

“K-karma,” he sighed, rolling his hips again. “Ah!”

Karma’s brain just about short circuited. Because on top of moaning his name, Nagisa raked a hand through his still down hair, pushing it up and out of his face. He tilted his head back at the same time, displaying his neck. Karma burned. Unable to really control himself, he sat up as fast as he could, pulling Nagisa’s head down so their lips connected messily once more.

Moaning into the kiss, and shifting his hips desperately again, Karma could tell Nagisa didn’t mind it. His scent took over everything else, intensifying with every second. Karma felt a kind of heat beginning to burn underneath his skin, his own instincts completely clouding his actual sense. If he
didn’t do anything, he was going to go insane. Quickly, he grabbed a hold of Nagisa, and flipped him so he was on his back.

“Alpha,” Nagisa breathed, extending his neck from its already provocative position.

Honestly, even in Karma’s wildest fantasies, he hadn’t envisioned Nagisa being like this. Nagisa was a lot of things, but naturally submissive was not one of them. It took him aback, quite a bit. The only time Nagisa had ever referred to him as ‘alpha’, he’d been practically in heat. **Heat.** The spike of fear that shot through his entire body was just about enough to give him a moment of clarity. He should have recognised this scent, far beyond regular arousal, before.

Immediately, Karma forced himself away, falling off the bed as he did so. He only had seconds before he forgot all over again. Nagisa didn’t know what he was doing, probably not even who Karma was, and wasn’t that just as bad as what had already happened to him? As the only measure he could think of to kill his urges was biting down on his own hand, hard. Nagisa barely looked conscious, though he seemed somewhat confused, until he realised that he was now alone.

“W-wait!” The amount of sheer begging in his tone almost broke Karma’s heart.

Karma couldn’t even choke out an apology, rushing out of the room before he did something they’d both regret. The impossible scent carried out into the hallway, which wasn’t ideal. Still filling his senses, he had half the mind to go back in there and, well, thinking about that wasn’t helping his problems.

It took actually looking down at himself to realise where it was coming from. His shirt and trousers were soaked, both from sweat, and what appeared to be other fluids. With how strong Nagisa’s scent clung to it, he knew it had to be slick, which apparently had soaked through Nagisa’s underwear at some point during that. His knees grew weak at the thought, so he punched himself in the face as hard as he could.

In the interests of not being an actual pervert, he stripped the clothes off immediately, practically rushing into the bathroom. He frowned at his erection, which had somehow withstood two rounds of self abuse and psychological torment. There was only one solution he could think of. He turned the shower on, winding the temperature down to minimum, before jumping in. It sucked just as much as he thought it would, but at least it did the job.

Finally, Karma was able to catch his breath again. Not that he could process whatever the hell had just happened at all. Clearly, Nagisa was in heat, but he wasn’t **supposed** to be. So something had brought it on? Maybe stress? Karma hadn’t been paying much attention in those science classes, just enough to pick up the information he needed to do well on exams, but in rung a bell.

He froze when he came back out. Despite disposing of the clothes, and scrubbing Nagisa’s scent off him, it still lingered all over the place. Even though he’d diminished his arousal, it was about to come right back. And then Karma begun to panic, because he couldn’t stay here like that, lest something awful happen. But what else could he do? He couldn’t just leave Daichi here, since realistically Nagisa wouldn’t be up to looking after him.

Karma cursed himself, quickly pulling on some clothes before making a snap decision. It didn’t feel like there was another choice, or way to go. He had to get out. As quietly as he could, he pushed the door to Daichi’s bedroom open, where he was still sleeping soundly. As he’d learnt from the episode of sickness he had, there were some things that woke Daichi instantly, and some things that didn’t. As long as he was careful... He managed to gently pick him up without waking him, getting him into a position that would end up with the least amount of jostling. At the same time, he picked up a bag they kept if they ever needed to take Daichi somewhere on short notice,
just full of spare clothes and other essentials.

It was irresponsible, maybe, but far better than staying here. Once Karma closed and locked the apartment door, incredibly quietly, he realised he didn’t have much of a plan for where they were going. His heart hadn’t quite even calmed down yet, through that whole ordeal. Having Daichi certainly complicated matters.

Somehow, his feet ended up carrying him to Nagisa’s parents’ building. Maybe he was just on autopilot, but as places to take Daichi this late in the evening went, it wasn’t a bad shot. It was hardly the middle of the night. Karma swallowed, still remembering the buzz in code, and went right up to the apartment.

Fortunately for him, it was Nagisa’s father who answered his rather frantic knocks. “Karma kun?”

Karma tried his best to smile politely, he’d long since judged that Nagisa’s parents were probably people he’d rather be on the good side of, though under the circumstances it came off a little awkward. It wasn’t like he particularly cared what they thought of him, it didn’t matter, but they were still Daichi’s grandparents. So, for his sake.

“Can I put him down somewhere?” Karma didn’t hesitate to ask.

A little confused, Nagisa’s father nodded. “Sure, come in, just take him to Nagisa’s room.”

Miraculously, Daichi was asleep throughout that entire affair. It was odd, though, going back into that tiny room after so much time. It was a lot smaller than he remembered it being, actually. Most possessions had been removed from it, but there were still a few things that were Nagisa’s, here and there. There wasn’t a crib in there anymore, so Karma put Daichi down on the actual bed, deciding to just hope he wouldn’t move around vigorously enough to fall out of it. As much as he didn’t want to, he probably owed an explanation.

“Is Nagisa okay?” He asked, the second Karma emerged.

Karma nodded, this being a conversation he really didn’t want to have with either of Nagisa’s parents. “It’s just heat.”

As predicted, the atmosphere was instantly pretty rough. Karma didn’t need to say anything more, at least, any further questions too uncomfortable. He seemed to understand what had happened, more or less, just from that. Karma tugged the collar of his shirt up, in an attempt to hide the bite mark now residing on his neck.

“Well,” Nagisa’s father said, “you can stay here for now. Hiromi shouldn’t mind.”

Karma shifted awkwardly where he stood. “I only really meant to drop Daichi off.”

“Of course not!” His face morph. “It’s far too cold to just be walking around outside alone, especially at your age. I insist!”

“Okay,” Karma said, and that was that.

He dismissed himself to Nagisa’s room once again, though he knew he wouldn’t be able to sleep before he even attempted it. His mind was too full, reliving the entire day all at once it seemed. As the hours seemed to pass, the more angry he got once again. Though a big part of it was at himself. But it was easier to turn it on something else.

Eventually, Daichi did wake up, though he was rightfully confused. “Papa?”
Karma forced a smile. “Hey there~. You slept for a long time.”

He didn’t actually question why he wasn’t at home, instead raising his arms in the same way he always did. Even though Daichi probably could have got himself down from the bed, Karma lifted him, placing him right down on the floor. Like some sort of animal wondering around unknown territory, he walked curiously across the room, pushing the door open.

“Gram’ma!” He immediately yelled, when he caught sight of Nagisa’s mother, who was apparently also already awake.

She looked a little surprised to be affronted so quickly, but at least picked a now very excited Daichi up and onto her lap.

“Would you mind watching him,” Karma forced himself to ask. “I have a place I really need to be for a few hours.”

“Good morning to you too, Karma kun,” she said, taking a sip of coffee.

“I’ll be back,” he assured.

Karma’s head was still pounding, beating down into his bones. Even if the physical manifestations of his anger had faded, it was still very much real inside him, perhaps more dangerous that way. But, without really planning too much about it, he found himself on a train to the next town over. This would be easier if it was a school day, but it was ridiculously easy to get personal information nowadays.

Sure enough, he didn’t really have to walk far, or wait long. He was fortunate enough that Nagisa had chosen to date someone with an active social life. Now just to play it off. Though they’d only met in person once, there’d been enough ice in that exchange for Karma to make his threat known. It was a public place, so he couldn’t do much. Still, he managed to catch Rin’s eye, and apparently that was enough to make him freeze.

“Fancy seeing you here!” Karma said, strolling right up to him with fake casualness.

He gulped, glancing around. “Good morning.”

Not so confident now. “I think you and I should go find a nice quiet place to chat.”

“I-I’m kind of on my way to something-” He looked around again, even though there was nobody to help him.

“It wasn’t a suggestion.”

Karma had already seen a pretty secluded side street a few paces down from there. It wasn’t perfect, but there weren’t a lot of people of people around anyway. He doubted anybody would be there to bother them. Like nothing was wrong, he walked beside Rin, leading him right where wanted him. The second he was in position, Karma had him slammed against the wall, holding him there with the back of his arm.

“Listen,” he tried to struggle, “whatever you think happened-“

“I don’t care,” Karma kept his tone light, “what you did. What I care about is what you’re going to do. It’s not hard to remember. If you even look at Nagisa again without his express permission - and trust me I’ll know -well, I’m not going to tell you what’ll happen, doubt you can handle it. But you don’t want to find out.”
His eyes showed fear, but there was still a determined resilience underneath. “Is that meant to be a threat?”

Karma sighed, because maybe this could have been a lot easier if he just kept his mouth shut. Eh, who was he kidding? This would have happened regardless. His body was itching for blood, to set things right. Even looking at Rin pissed him off. His words were at least a little thought out, but he was obviously frightened. Pathetic. Nagisa sure knew how to choose them. He’d show Rin a real threat.

Not wanting to spend more time than necessary on this, his hand formed a first, and then he swung.

Chapter End Notes

TW FOR SEXUAL ASSAULT
Nagisa is hanging out with Rin when he mentions his heat again. Rin gets angry over Nagisa still wanting to stay at home, since he lives with Karma, and demands that he have sex with him to prove that he actually loves him. Not wanting to lose Rin or have another fight, Nagisa reluctantly agrees. The next day, he’s definitely having a lot of second thoughts, but still goes over to Rin’s place.

Nagisa’s obviously uncomfortable with that they’re doing, but they don’t get too far before the touching gets too much and Nagisa asks him to slow down. When Rin ignores him, he tries again, another few times. Since Rin didn’t stop, Nagisa freaks out and uses his clap stunner to get away, though the assassin in him is tempted to kill Rin in the process.

He goes home and straight to Karma for comfort. Karma’s not sure what to do, aside from let Nagisa hold on to him, and decides to just lie next to him in bed. Without much warning, Nagisa starts kissing him, and it all gets heated very fast. Just short of actually having sex, Karma realises that something’s off, and Nagisa turns out to have gone into sudden heat.

Realising that Nagisa can’t really consent to what’s happening, Karma forces himself away, however Nagisa’s scent still messes with him enough that he has to leave. He takes Daichi off to Nagisa’s parents, just to watch him. Then, he goes to find Rin, and basically threatens him to never speak to Nagisa again. Just to prove his point, he then beats him up.

---- TW OVER ----

Well, Merry Christmas everyone! Thanks for 1000 kudos by the way, that’s pretty unreal. My gift to you? Well, Rin and Nagisa's relationship is over! Isn't that just what you all wished for? Hehe....

I hope this chapter doesn't ruin your day! I mean, the sadist in me kind of does, but oh well! As always, love all your comments and feedback, please don't hate me too much!

Just as an important note, this is gonna be the last chapter for a while, hence the length, and why so many chapters have been posted recently. I have my Japanese exam at the end of January and it's really important that I do well, so from now until
then I'll be focusing on studying! Don't worry, though, I'm not gonna leave you forever on this cliffhanger.
Discord Time

Chapter Summary

Nagisa does his best to process what happened to him

Chapter Notes

Remember how I said I wasn't going to write and take a break and study and stuff? Apparently that was a lie... Oh well!

I should mention that the trigger warning from last chapter still applies, it's not nearly as explicit but there's still discussion of sexual assault in this chapter

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Time swirled around Nagisa like it wasn’t even real. He didn’t know how long he’d been in his room for, his memories were so blurry that it was more like one moment he was so out of his mind he barely knew where he was, and then the next he was mostly conscious. Nagisa hadn’t exactly gone back to normal, he didn’t think.

He knew he’d been in heat. That much was obvious, from the uncontrollable burn under his skin that had lasted for so long. But it was different. Not just going into it early, even though that threw him, but the actual sensations weren’t right. Nagisa hadn’t even been desperate to find release during it. In fact, he wasn’t sure if he’d even got off once. Instead of that, he knew all he wanted was his alpha to come back.

No, Karma. Even thinking of him in that kind of a way was bad news. But Nagisa simply couldn’t help whatever his body demanded. At first, the heat hadn’t been half as bad as it normally was. Not that Nagisa really remembered the start of his heats ever. But he knew it hadn’t been as painful, and he wasn’t alone. But then suddenly that was ripped away, and it was like he went into shock. All Nagisa knew was he wanted Karma back, and he was going to scream and cry until he got it.

Despite his new found numbness, a part of him knew it was a good thing Karma left. If Nagisa had managed to get pregnant after having sex once, outside of heat, then who knows what might have happened. Maybe they’d have twins or triplets or something crazy. A part of Nagisa’s head, something deep within him, wanted that, the second he even thought of it. And it was freaking the rest of him the hell out. This was a dangerous path.

He couldn’t be angry. Even if he did have a reason to be, it was like his body just shut down any possibility of really feeling it. It had been his fault anyway, hadn’t it? He had been the one to rush straight into Karma’s arms, to climb on top of him and do all of that. Nagisa couldn’t blame Karma for pushing him away. Why would he even want Nagisa like that? Except, he’d been at least a little bit turned on, he remembered feeling it. That being said, heat pheromones would force that effect… Nagisa was an awful person, plain and simple.
When he finally heard a sound in the apartment, after so much silence, he jolted. Of course, Nagisa hadn’t really planned for the fact he would actually have to get up at some point. But, he knew, it would be better to just rip it off like a plaster. Reluctantly, Nagisa tugged on some clothes, and shuffled out into the living room.

Karma grinned at him sheepishly. “I thought you were dead in there.”

It transcended all reason, but Nagisa felt himself shake where he stood. “I’m sorry,” he hung his head low.

He squinted, as though he was confused, but then shrugged. “Your parents send their love or whatever.”

“My parents?” Nagisa questioned, but then it left his mind. Karma looked a little… off. Firstly, his hand not only looked bitten, but bruised around the knuckles. He’d been hitting something, and pretty hard. He’d also bruised his neck somehow. Nagisa squinted, realising with horror that those were. Especially right over his scent gland, where there was a discernible bite. Shameful. He wished he could take those marks back.

“Mmm,” he replied.

Nagisa gulped. “What happened to your hands?”

A smile that didn’t feel particularly authentic crossed his face. “Walked into a wall, anyway, Daichan missed you! Didn’t you, huh?”

Daichi was in his arms, of course, though he didn’t look too bothered about apparently being jostled about. Just looking at him made Nagisa feel at least a little bit better. Guilty about something else. Tentatively, Nagisa stepped forwards, taking Daichi from Karma’s arms into his own. No matter how bad Nagisa felt, taking care of Daichi had to be his first priority. He held him close, practically forgetting the rest of the world.

“Dada,” he hugged back.

Nagisa tried his best to look happy. “Did you have a good time?”

He nodded enthusiastically. “Gram’ma and gram’pa go!”

“You went to Grandma and Grandpa’s?” He corrected softly.

“Yeah!” Daichi pulled away, wanting to look him in the eye. “Eated chocolate.”

“Ate,” Nagisa corrected once again, and wondered why his parents had been dishing out chocolate of all things.

That was apparently enough. “Down now,” Daichi commanded.

Maybe he should start enforcing pleases and thank yous, Nagisa thought to himself as Daichi quickly scampered off to his own bedroom. Now that he was getting more confident with actual sentences, Nagisa thought it wouldn’t be too hard for him to grasp. And manners, unfortunately, were kind of a necessity of life. Then again, he and Karma were rarely polite with each other, so it could be an entirely foreign concept.

There was still a conversation to be had, especially now Daichi was off doing his own thing.
“Karma, I-“

He took a deep breath and looked at Nagisa was a neutral expression. “Don’t worry about it. You were in heat. It doesn’t matter.”

It did matter, though. Nagisa was shaking once again, in a bad way. They could blame it all on his heat, sure, but Nagisa hadn’t been in heat during the first kiss, not really. Nagisa didn’t really know why, it was beyond logical explanation, but he knew he’d wanted that. Or maybe he really hadn’t noticed his heat at all. Still, there was no way he could tell Karma that.

For reasons unbeknownst to him, Nagisa lowered his head. “You’re right.”

Karma narrowed his eyes. “What are you doing?”

He gulped. “I’ve had enough fighting. If that’s what you want, then I agree.”

“What are you tilting your neck like that?” Karma’s tone was cold, as if he was considering throwing a punch his way any second.

Nagisa hadn’t even noticed that he was doing it, but Karma was right. He was extending it too, leaving his scent glands as exposed as possible. The thing was, he didn’t immediately want to return his posture to normal. An urge buzzed under his skin, like this was the right thing to do.

“I-I-“

“Maybe you should go rest some more,” Karma said seriously.

Nagisa lowered his head. “Okay.”

“No, wait,” Karma grabbed his wrist. “Not just because I said so.”

“Okay.”

His eyes narrowed. “Snap out of it!”

Nagisa took a few steps back, until his back hit the wall. It wasn’t as if Karma was cornering him or anything like that, in fact he hadn’t even moved, but Nagisa felt very much trapped. Under Karma’s slightly concerned gaze, he was beginning to choke. His hand reached around behind him, desperately feeling for the handle to his bedroom door.

What was wrong with him? Even when he darted inside, alone once again, Nagisa couldn’t shake the feeling off. Even like this, Karma didn’t want him. He’d pushed Nagisa away, physically, and literally run off. Why would anybody ever want him anyway? Even in heat, even as an omega… Nagisa didn’t know why he was going down this spiral, but there was no stopping him.

It hadn’t even taken him a weekend of being broken up to fall straight back into his feelings, pathetically. If he even was broken up… He hadn’t actually said anything, to officially end their relationship. Unless almost killing him wasn’t enough. Internally, it definitely felt over. Well, if Rin ever found out about what he did with Karma, it would definitely be the end anyway.

Nagisa shuddered at the thought of it all over again. When he closed his eyes, all he could see was the haze of hands pinning him down. So Nagisa strained to keep them open, sliding down his closed bedroom door to the floor, staring into the darkness. He still smelt the sour aftermath of the heat lingering, despite having opened his window. But Nagisa hadn’t had it in him to shower yet.
He knew he couldn’t stay here forever. School was literally tomorrow… Nagisa wasn’t sure if he could even show his face. No, he knew he had to. If he could force himself through the cusp of death multiple times, then he could certainly do this. He just… had to gather his energy. Forcing himself to his feet, Nagisa cracked the door open a little bit, thankfully to find Karma wasn’t out there.

Using all the skill of an assassin, Nagisa made his way into the bathroom. Once the water was on, soothing his muscles, he felt a little better. His body at least didn’t carry any evidence of the weekend’s events, not outwardly. It was like stepping into a warm cocoon. Though, Nagisa didn’t want to dwell on the feeling enough to take a bath, too.

It didn’t exactly feel better, being clean, but at least he wasn’t just streewing in everything. He didn’t feel like talking to Karma, though. Even seeing him was a reminder of all that Nagisa wasn’t. It had happened before, hadn’t it? Back when they first met, Karma got bored of him after mere months of friendship, and then spent the next year and a half pretending he didn’t exist. The only reason they spoke at the start of their insane third year was due being thrown into such a crazy situation. And, after that, Nagisa had ended up pregnant.

“Dada!” Daichi exclaimed, when he noticed Nagisa standing at his door.

Life would be easier for him if he could just accept that. This thing between he and Karma, it only existed because they were forced together by their own mistakes. When he really thought about it, there was no way they’d be so close, if it wasn’t from sheer obligation. It was artificial closeness, not something either of them would want under any other circumstance, surely? Of course, it was hard to ignore the very real pain in his chest that followed the thought of his feelings being complete fabrication.

But Daichi shouldn’t have to suffer because of that. Nagisa came in properly, sitting himself on the floor. Weirdly, it reminded him of birth. The instant he’d been handed Daichi, so much smaller and helpless back then, he’d forgotten all the pain it took to get him there. It was the same even now, just one look at his smiling face and the pain and complications of Nagisa’s mind vanished.

He played with Daichi for a little while, though he wasn’t completely invested in whatever games his small but kind of frightening mind cooked up. It would be nice, to be so carefree again. The realest in his mind knew that Daichi would grow up one day, it was already happening, and then he’d have to experience real pain of his own. That didn’t stop Nagisa from dreading it.

“Read this book?” Daichi pointed, once his game had run its course.

Nagisa looked at where he was pointing. “Sure I will.”

Since his apparent strong interest in learning letters, Nagisa had invested in more books. Surprising, because more often than not it was Karma who bought things on a whim. Honestly, Nagisa worried they hadn’t done it enough when he was a lot younger. So, he was making up for it now. With the way Daichi yawned, he was probably due a nap anyway.

He read the first few pages out slowly, watching the way Daichi studied the words written there. Eventually, though, his focus tapered off, and he began to yawn before his eyes fell closed. Practically sitting on top of Nagisa, he didn’t have the heart to move him. In fact, within a few minutes Nagisa’s eyes finally grew heavy too.

Nagisa wasn’t sure how long he slept for. He woke up to Daichi’s impatient squirming, wrapped up in the way Nagisa had gripped onto him. For just a moment, Nagisa hugged him a little tighter, before letting go. As much as he wanted to just hide here with him, Nagisa knew he couldn’t.
The rest of the day passed and morning came before he even noticed it happening. Somehow, he mostly managed to avoid Karma entirely, even if that meant another empty, practically sleepless night. He didn’t want to do this. But Nagisa knew he may as well get it over with, pulling on that same school uniform.

As always, he went to say goodbye to Daichi, before Karma took him off to his nursery. He didn’t say anything to Karma, though, what would he even find to say? Nagisa flushed, though, at how his marks still bruised Karma’s neck. Of course, his uniform didn’t really cover them, and he couldn’t wear a scarf all day. Nagisa wouldn’t even show his face if the positions were reversed, though.

The atmosphere of school felt kind of odd, grey and intimidating. Still, he kept his head down, walking onto the grounds. All he had to do was get into the classroom, then he’d avoid all the things he was worrying so much about much. Even with his eyes on the ground, though, he couldn’t help but feel like everyone was watching him.

“Morning, Nagisa kun!” Higashi rushed up to him from behind. “How was your weekend?”

He jolted, but forced his shoulders to relax. “I-it was… busy?”

Higashi swallowed. “Just ignore them, okay?”

As they stepped into the building, Nagisa was about to question what she was on about. But then he realised it hadn’t been just a feeling. Everyone’s eyes set upon him, some less subtle than others. One girl, a first year, even took a step back. Like she was… afraid of him or something. He started to panic.

Nagisa nearly choked on his own breath when he caught sight of Rin, and not out of latent fear. It wasn’t like he was waiting for him, or anything, in fact he was just talking to a friend. Nagisa froze as they locked eyes. Rin looked… like he shouldn’t even be standing. Practically every inch of his skin was covered in varying shades of red, purple, and black. And that was only the skin he could see, they seemed to continue under his clothes. One arm was in a sling, though it looked haphazardly done. His appearance, it was like he’d been beaten halfway to death.

“Nagisa kun,” Higashi said quickly, “come on.”

He allowed himself to be tugged by her, though the stares followed. “T-they think I did that?”

They entered their classroom, right over to their desks. “I think everyone knows you broke up,” Higashi said, “and those rumours about you… they’re still in the back of people’s minds. If you didn’t do it, then maybe someone you know? Either way…”

If not him, then someone else… And then Nagisa remembered Karma’s anger, his bruised knuckles… Marks he could only really get from punching something. Someone. This was Nagisa’s fault. Down to his own bones, he seethed. This wasn’t what he’d wanted. He didn’t had any solid proof, but it was far too much a coincidence. Karma could get arrested for this.

Now the way even his classmates looked at him made sense. Whatever Rin had done to him, though they probably didn’t know that, it didn’t matter. Nagisa never thought he’d be in this position, where people were afraid of him. All he knew was he didn’t like it. Sickeningly, they were right, too. Part of the blame was certainly on his own head.

“Nagisa kun, a word?” Oshiro came and stood behind his desk. “Before lessons start.”

Higashi glared up at him. “Just leave him alone.”
“I-it’s okay,” Nagisa tried to reassure. He stood up, feeling nauseous as he did so. “What is it?”

He gestured with his head, just outside their classroom. Nagisa followed him, relieved that most of the people gathered in the hallways had made their way to their own lessons by then. At least this was semi out in the open, rather than some darkened corner somewhere.

“What are you doing?” Oshiro looked a little exasperated. “I’ve been trying to keep this whole thing at bay for weeks. Kuronuma hates your guts, you’re just giving him ammunition.”

“I didn’t do it,” Nagisa begged.

“After I saw what you did to Kuronuma?” He shot Nagisa a look. “I don’t believe you. Just tell me the truth!”

Sweat began to form. Usually, Nagisa could at least tolerate his scent, at worst he was mildly off put by whatever alpha pheromones he came across. But this, he felt sick. He didn’t think Oshiro was trying to alpha command him or anything, he was just angry and demanding, but Nagisa felt like he was choking. It was so wrong to be stood so close.

“N-nagisa? Are you okay?”

Nagisa spluttered in response, knees beginning to shake uncontrollably.

He swore under his breath. “I’m taking you to the nurse, jeez.”

It wasn’t like he had much of a choice. He could barely hold up his own weight, so he was doomed to go wherever Oshiro lead him. In an effort to help Nagisa even walk, he had a hand on him, but being so close, taking in more of his scent, only made him feel worse.

The nurse took one look at him. “He’s an omega, isn’t he?”

Oshiro nodded sincerely.

“Then step away from him!” She chided. He didn’t hesitate in obeying, and within seconds, Nagisa felt a little less like he was going to die. “It’s okay, you can leave him with me now. Thanks for taking him here.”

“S-see you later, Nagisa kun.”

The nurse turned to him seriously, and then tugged the collar of his uniform down. “No bond mark?”

Oshiro nodded sincerely.

“Then step away from him!” She chided. He didn’t hesitate in obeying, and within seconds, Nagisa felt a little less like he was going to die. “It’s okay, you can leave him with me now. Thanks for taking him here.”

“S-see you later, Nagisa kun.”

The nurse turned to him seriously, and then tugged the collar of his uniform down. “No bond mark?”

“B-bond?” Nagisa just about got out.

She handed him a cup of water. “I’ve been working here for a lot of years. Teenagers of your age often make reckless decisions, I’ve seen it all. You’d have been here before if you were somehow allergic to alphas, which suggests to me you mated with someone.” The nurse looked him over curiously. “But no bond. You should see your doctor as soon as possible.”

Although he had caught his breath, he still felt the pain in his chest. “A doctor?”

The nurse looked at him sadly. “I’m no expert in the real medical intricacies of secondary genders. But mated omegas suffer without their alphas. Those side effects seem to be happening to you, regardless of your situation. My sister almost died from an improper bond, I don’t want to scare you but they can be quite serious. As for now, I think maybe it would be best if you went home.”
“N-no!” Nagisa stood up quickly. “I’ll be fine, really.”

She smiled. “Alright then.”

At least his friends, the people who sat close to him, were all betas. If he was truly unable to tolerate alphas, then he should be okay in their presence. It didn’t make any sense, Karma hadn’t been anywhere near his scent glands. There had to be something medically wrong with him, then, surely. He had to wait until the lunch break, going through all the possibilities in his head.

‘Improper bond’ was the first thing he googled, the second he was able to pull out his phone. It didn’t seem to fit, though. He scrolled through quickly, but most of it was about the alpha positioning the bite slightly wrong, or the omega being so distressed it just didn’t take properly. Perhaps Nagisa was distressed, but Karma hadn’t marked him. If anything, it had been the other way around.

‘Will a bond form if an omega bites an alpha?’

_It is impossible for an omega to bond an alpha. When an alpha marks their omega, the bond will affect both parties. The couple’s pheromones will mix and their bodies will accept each other as mates. Due to this process, only an alpha and omega can actually bond. Betas do not possess scent glands, and any attempt from an alpha/alpha or omega/omega couple to bond could end in brief illness for both parties, as their bodies force the unnatural process out._

-Dr Tanaka Jun, Head of Secondary Gender Dynamics at Tougyou University

‘What happens when an omega bites an alpha?’

**11,000,000 results, the first page of which mostly pornography.**

‘What happens when an “omega bites” an alpha?’

_Feral omega attacks local residence, arrested – Hakone News_

_Yesterday a crazed omega wreaked havoc on the outskirts of……….. she has not been identified………… attacked citizens with mad cries………… somehow managed to bite an alpha in the process, marking him in the way an alpha would bond an omega………… reprimanded… During the time the omega was in police custody, she suddenly fell ill, screaming out for the very same alpha she attempted to mark. It seemed to all that she was acting as an omega abandoned by her mate, though this was of course impossible, and the alpha involved was unaffected. This strange illness didn’t last long, though, her symptoms lessening………… She will be sentenced…._

Nagisa was terrified. If he’d somehow bonded himself to Karma, if that was even possible… He felt sick, and not from the surrounding alpha pheromones. It said in that article that the symptoms had faded, so he had to hope that would happen. This couldn’t be permanent, especially since Karma had done this to him. He was angry, so angry.

Even when school ended, and he picked Daichi up, he didn’t feel a lot better. Aside from the alpha problem, Nagisa felt this primal urge to return home. But that didn’t stop how mad he was. It was all he could do to keep calm until they actually reached it. As typical these days, Daichi rushed off the second Nagisa got his shoes off, so at least he didn’t have to play happy for too long.

He didn’t feel any joy to be back home, even if the scent of the place eased the tug of his stomach. But Karma was already there, and just looking at him made his blood boil. There was a weakness inside of him, too, that whispered that he wouldn’t be able to do this. But he forced it down.
“I need to talk to you,” Nagisa said directly. Though, he wasn’t sure what about. The apparent bond he now had or the fact that he nearly killed someone, it didn’t matter. “Alone.”

No matter what, he knew this was going to become an argument, and he didn’t want to have to expose Daichi to it. Most of Nagisa’s childhood memories of his parents together was fighting. Karma looked sceptical, but shrugged. Looking around, Nagisa decided to step out towards the balcony, which at least had a glass door so they weren’t leaving their son completely unsupervised.

“You promised me Karma,” he said, the moment the door was closed,

Karma tilted his head. “Huh?”

“I told you to leave Rin alone!” Nagisa raised his voice, anger flowing out of him. “But at school today, he was beaten to a pulp!”

For a moment, Karma just stood there, as if he was trying to process it. “That idiot… He shouldn’t have shown his face.”

“So you’re not even denying it?” Nagisa’s voice came out a little small, almost like he wanted Karma to say he had no involvement.

“What do you want me to say?” He said seriously. “He only got what he deserved.”

“It looks like you almost killed him,” Nagisa protested.

Karma’s golden eyes flashed. “What a shame that would have been.”

“You can’t mean that! What are you going to do if he tells someone?” Nagisa felt sick, imagining him being put in prison or worse. “I’ve seen you… reprimand people before, Karma, and it’s never been like this. You’ve never left anyone this badly injured.”

“Do you really not think I covered that?” He said it confidently, almost arrogantly. “He knows what’ll happen to him if he tells anyone, if he so much as goes to a hospital, or speaks to you again.”

“You should have just left it.”

He looked him dead in the eye. “He hurt you Nagisa.”

All of Nagisa’s doubts came rushing forth. He didn’t want to admit to himself, everything that happened. Nagisa didn’t want to be helpless and innocent in this. In truth, he was sure he knew the person Rin really was, and it wasn’t that. Which meant he’d driven him that far. Nagisa had to take some of the blame.

“H-he didn’t do anything I didn’t agree to, though,” Nagisa stuttered. It’s my fault! I- I just panicked, and-“

“Why would you defend something like that?!” Karma yelled, with the force of his body. “Maybe I needed to take it out of your hands.”

“Everyone seems to think I did it,” Nagisa pointed out.

Karma looked down at him. “You?”

“Yes!” His voice also raised.
“Maybe you should be thanking me for looking after you,” his voice lowered, cooler and more threatening.

“I can look after myself,” Nagisa affirmed.

The look Kama gave him chilled him to the core. Like he really didn’t believe him. Maybe because he was apparently more sensitive to it, but Nagisa could sense Karma losing his containment of his pheromones. That was right. In this situation, Karma was the alpha, and Nagisa was the omega. He should be overjoyed that Karma wanted to protect him, and yet… it felt so wrong.

“Can you? Look at you,” he gestured for effect. “Having the skill of an assassin won’t help you every time. You don’t even know how to stand up for yourself.”

Nagisa felt his own threads snap. “And why do you think you have the right to?”

“Because you’re weak!”

He couldn’t stand it anymore. Anger overwhelming him, Nagisa threw a punch, as hard as he could, hurtling towards Karma’s face. Unfortunately, Karma’s reflexes were quick, and their height difference meant Nagisa was unbalanced at such an attempt. Easily, Karma caught his hand in mid-air, stilling its motion. There was nothing Nagisa could do about physical strength, and Karma easily outmatched him.

“So, that’s what you want?” Karma looked at his fist. “To fight me?”

“I want you to stop acting like I’m yours!” Nagisa used all of his force to yank himself out of Karma’s grip.

“Who threw themselves at who?” He said, with an almost sneer in his tone. “Who begged for who?”

“Y-you’re the one that said it didn’t matter,” Nagisa felt his own shame rise. He was shaking, once again.

The tension fell from Karma’s face. “Nagisa-“

Heart pounding in his chest, Nagisa turned away. Thankfully, there was a door to his own bedroom directly from the balcony, and that door had a lock on it. Karma made no attempt at following him, though, so at least there was that. Nagisa tried his best to ignore the way his scent glands ached.

Chapter End Notes

Oh dear. Oh dear. Oh dearrrrr.

By the way! I would like to point out. Aino Rin? Not really just a name. It kind of sounds like the sentence ai no rin (愛の凛) which can kind of be translated as 'Rin of love', or 'love's Rin', but the kanji for Rin actually means 'cold'. With that in consideration, his name means 'coldness of love'. So like, you can't say I never warned you that bad things were going to happen...

(the names in this fic are 50% foreshadowing and 50% laziness, and you'll never know which)
Well, see you next time?
Reconcile Time

Chapter Summary

It's Christmas Day and Nagisa meets with an old friend

Chapter Notes

shady’s back tell a friend

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Has anyone ever actually measured the level of your stupidity?”

Nagisa shifted in his seat. “Well-“

Shooting him a glare, Asano aggressively sipped his coffee. “Honestly, Nagisa kun.”

He looked down. “I didn’t come here just for insults.”

Asano’s face remained expressionless. “You came because you’re fighting with Akabane again- Don’t look at me like that, I have the misfortune of sitting next to him in class, I can tell when he’s in an off mood, and it’s usually to do with you. I almost feel bad about outscoring him in finals. Almost.”

It had been a while since their argument. In that time, Nagisa had hardly spoken to him, far less than he usually did when they weren’t on the best of terms. At the very most, now, it was only a few sentences a day. And they were exclusively about Daichi. Those conversations only happened when completely necessary anyway.

“I don’t hang out with you just because I’m upset with Karma.”

Asano took another sip of the coffee. “No?”

“You’re my friend,” Nagisa said, a soft smile on his lips.

“Dada! Dada!” Daichi came barrelling into his leg. “Got ouch!”

Nagisa sighed, picking Daichi up onto his lap. Inspecting him over, he didn’t have many obviously bad injuries. His hand, however, had a little red mark on it. There was an open wound, though it wasn’t very big or bleeding, right on his finger. By Nagisa’s best guess, it was probably just a paper cut, since he’d been colouring, nothing that would traumatise him for too long.

He looked down at Daichi. “It’s only a tiny cut.”

“Look, Gaga!” He stuck his finger out proudly. “Ouch.”

Asano leant back in his chair. “Well, then, you should be more careful.”
He tilted his head. “Why?”

Daichi’s new favourite word. It seemed to be his response for almost everything, nowadays. Nagisa wasn’t sure if he even took in the answers he supplied, but he humoured him regardless. Most of the time, he seemed to nod and accept whatever he was told at least, if Nagisa was lucky. When he wasn’t so lucky, there would be a follow up ‘why’.

“I have to deal with Akabane all day every day,” Asano looked at Nagisa. “I’m not doing it with his stunt double.”

Nagisa sighed. “Why don’t you go find your colouring stuff and bring it back over here?”

“Kay!” Daichi scampered off.

“And whilst you’re at it,” Asano continued, “get him to stop with that nickname thing.”

“I can’t,” he said, honestly. “That’s just what he knows you as now.”

“You’re his parent!” Asano protested, but didn’t push it further.

Nagisa watched after him, as he tried to pick up the paper and a considerable amount of crayons. Since it was the school break, and he didn’t have to go to nursery, Nagisa didn’t think it would be good to just stay inside. For himself, either. Things between he and Karma were so bad that Nagisa would spend as much time out of their apartment as humanly possible. Lest he suffocate… A weak part of him even considered staying with his parents for a little while, though he knew he couldn’t really do that. Hmm, weak.

Asano cocked his head. “What is it now?”


His eyes narrowed. “I didn’t need you to tell me that. Just end whatever the fight is, and my suffering with it.”

Still not looking him in the eye, he thought about it. “Maybe I would, if Karma actually apologised.”

“You’d have more luck ending world hunger,” Asano leant forward. “You could always motivate him somehow. I’d be happy to help.”

“Whatever you’re suggesting…”

Nagisa didn’t get to finish, since Daichi was done collecting his things at that point and Nagisa felt bad discussing plots in front of him. He picked Daichi up, lifting him so he was on his own chair. He hadn’t bothered trying to find a high chair for him, since he’d run off the second his eyes set upon a little children’s area.

Maybe there was some truth in Asano’s misguided suggestion, though. Waiting for Karma to get over himself and apologise could take years. That is, if Nagisa even wanted to make up. The effects of his ‘bond’ had thankfully worn off after about a week and a half, allowing him to at least be within speaking distance of an alpha without feeling queasy. If that was what being mated was like, then Nagisa couldn’t see himself ever partaking in it.

He shouldn’t have to be the bigger person every time Karma was in the wrong, though. A part of Nagisa didn’t even care how petty it seemed, he just… wanted things to be different. He wasn’t so
angry at Karma that he had no intent of making up with him. But if things were different, perhaps that would mean they wouldn’t be entirely true to themselves.

“I think we should probably go now,” Nagisa said politely. “It was really nice seeing you again, Asano kun!”

Asano stood up from his seat. “I do mean it. Fix Akabane.”

Nagisa stiffened. “I’m not sure it’s my problem to fix.”

Letting Daichi down from the seat, Nagisa didn’t stop him from running along a few paces ahead of them. Out of earshot, but not so far Nagisa couldn’t lunge out and grab him if anything happened. He envied that Daichi got to be innocent to all of this, or that’s what Nagisa hoped he was. There was no real knowing how much he actually picked up.

“You’re practically in love with each other, aren’t you?” He rolled his eyes, noticing the way Nagisa’s breath caught. “I don’t care about the ins and outs of your relationship.”

“Is this advice then?” Nagisa gathered himself for a moment. “Karma doesn’t have those kind of feelings for me, he made very clear. At best he just wants to possess me or something for the sake of it.”

Asano didn’t miss a beat. “He does, legally.”

A chill ran up his spine. “What do you mean?”

“You signed bonding papers, didn’t you?” He said easily. “Regardless of being physically mated or not, it’s irrelevant in the eyes of the law.”

“We’ve had those for nearly two years. He hasn’t even mentioned it since the day we signed them.”

Asano looked at him. “But he could.”

Nagisa stared at the ground. “I know he wouldn’t do that.”

“Well,” an ingenuine sad smile was on his face. “If it helps you sleep at night. I’ll see you, Nagisa kun.”

Catching sight of him about to turn, Daichi rushed up, launching himself at his legs. “Bye bye Gaga!”

Asano looked down at him. “Yeah, later.”

Sighing, he watched Daichi let go after a few seconds, coming right back to Nagisa’s side. Nagisa didn’t even really want to take him home yet. Before leaving, Nagisa had told Karma he was taking him out, which constituted their conversation for the day. He’d only shrugged, so Nagisa had to assume he wasn’t too bothered. By the looks of things he hadn’t been awake long, anyway.

It was mid-afternoon already and Nagisa wasn’t in a rush. If only it wasn’t winter. He thought about getting them some actual food or something, but it was madness today, absolutely everyone in the town seemed to be queueing up outside doors. Daichi didn’t question why there were so many people, but he did seem pretty enamoured with the bright lights that were draped in every other shop window.
So much so that he walked into an inflatable Santa thing, instantly rebounding off it. “Look where you’re going Daichi!”

“Ouch,” he said, after the fact.

Nagisa sighed. “That’s exactly how I feel about this time of year too.” And then looking in the shop window, Nagisa noticed something. “Do you know what day it is?”

Looking up at him, Daichi wore an adorable pout.

“It’s Christmas,” Nagisa supplied. “Which means it’s also your Papa’s birthday.”

Daichi’s lips parted, like this was life altering news. “Why?”

He crouched down a little. “He’s a year older today. Do you know how many years it is?”

Face contorting, he seemed to genuinely think about it, before proudly producing four fingers.

Nagisa smiled. “A little more than that. Your birthday isn’t for a while yet. Usually, you buy people presents for their birthday. Do you want to go get one?”

“Okay!”

Honestly he didn’t think Daichi possibly understood every part of that conversation, but he looked excited at the prospect of shopping. Nagisa smiled politely at the worker as they entered, hoping Daichi didn’t end up knocking anything over. Thankfully the more valuable things were either high up or locked in cabinets.

He was literally a child in a candy shop… or, well, a toy and collectable shop. Just short of breaking out into a run, Daichi wandered around as fast as his little legs could carry him. He looked around, hands reaching thankfully for the less damageable items. Eventually he stopped, in front of a bin with a few assorted items. It took him a moment, but he pulled out a cheap plastic toy katana.

“This is what you want?” Nagisa looked at it. “Remember, it’s not for you.”

“Well, it was his choice. At least he wasn’t picking up a ten thousand yen Vocaloid figurine or something. Nagisa paid the worker, before handing it to Daichi to carry. It wasn’t really toddler sized, and looked ridiculous in his arms, but he seemed to be proud carrying it anyway. At least they weren’t too far a walk away from home.

Daichi was determined, though, to even carry it up the stairs. So, as usual, the stairs took a significant amount of time. He didn’t rush him, though, it wasn’t like there was a time limit. Eventually, Daichi, the katana, and Nagisa made it up in one piece. Reaching into his pocket for the keys, Nagisa realised he was probably missing something.

“Oh, Daichi,” he crouched to his level again, “all you have to do is give it to Papa, and say ‘happy birthday’.”

Daichi looked at him curiously. “Ha’ee birthday!”

Nagisa smiled. “Just like that.”

He didn’t waste any time, when the door was unlocked, running straight off to Karma. Nagisa hung
back, not really wanting to be involved in the conversation. He took his shoes off slowly, locking the door behind him. From there, it was hesitant steps, though he couldn’t get through to his bedroom without showing himself.

“Ha’ee birthday Papa!” Daichi had leapt into his arms.

Karma at least looked happy. “Wow, is that for me? I’ll have to show you how to use one of these things~”

For a brief moment, he looked up at Nagisa, and it was all Nagisa could do to shoot him a shy smile. He didn’t wait to see Karma’s reaction, instead just going straight into his room. Nothing of the situation really mattered, Nagisa couldn’t sit in there and pretend that everything was okay. To simply act like nothing had happened between them would be sacrificing a part of himself.

But Nagisa had never felt so lonely. Perhaps that was why he’d asked Asano if he’d wanted to catch up. It was easy enough to keep his mind off it when there was school work… Though school was just as bad. Everyone still gave him a wide berth, as if he would turn around and kill them if they didn’t. The only people who still spoke to him were his friends, though even they seemed a little more wary of him now. But Nagisa wasn’t willing to tell them the truth.

He thought back to a time when all he’d wanted to be was like Karma. The first half of his first year of middle school was spent wondering after Karma, imagining a world where he could be all of that. Nagisa hadn’t done anything himself to earn this reputation, but he was still taking the fall for Karma’s actions. Was this what it was like, to be like him?

“K-Karma kun!” Nagisa said, surprised to see his friend actually in class. “I was worried… You didn’t reply to my text.”

With a grit in his teeth, he didn’t even look up at him. “Didn’t see it.”

Had Nagisa done something wrong? The last time he saw Karma was the day after his thirteenth birthday, right at the start of the winter break. He tried to think back to it. Was Karma mad because he didn’t pay for their food? Nagisa had tried his best to insist that he at least pay his own half, but sometimes it was no use arguing with Karma, not when he had his mind made up.

He cleared his throat. “W-well, it took a lot of asking, but my mum said you can come over and play video games with me again!”

Finally, Karma met Nagisa’s eyes, disinterest in them. “Sorry, I’m busy.”

“But I- I didn’t say when it was!” Nagisa defended.

Karma clenched his fist. “Nagisa kun…”

“Oh,” he immediately retreated, taking a step back. “Another time then.”

Like that, he returned to his own desk, legs shaking under every step. Had Karma finally gotten bored of him? Nagisa couldn’t blame him… he was so… nothing. He’d known getting into this that it couldn’t possibly going to last. Karma was brilliant, strong and smart and funny, and he just made Nagisa’s heart flip over in his chest… Nagisa was sure he’d turn out to be an alpha. For himself, there was no chance of that. He deserved to be friends with someone on his own level.
That was right. Just because Nagisa was the other parent of his child, just because of how much they’d been through together, didn’t mean anything had changed since then, except Nagisa was an omega now and even more supposed to be beneath Karma. His natural talent for assassination didn’t mean much, especially not anymore. Because he wasn’t an assassin.

His feelings were still a complex nightmare to him. Now that he wasn’t dating Rin anymore, there was nothing to stop everything he tried to long to suppress from rushing right back in like a tsunami. Except this time, there wasn’t even the hint of hope. He hadn’t even actually confessed his feelings, yet Karma had pretty much rejected him. He looked down on the way Nagisa wanted him, even when he had an excuse for it, maybe even hated him.

Nagisa had to be some kind of a masochist, because somehow it didn’t change how he felt. Some of the things Karma had said and done, not just during that fight, were awful. And even if they were in a real ‘relationship’, Nagisa knew that Karma wouldn’t mystically change the way he acted. Apparently, though, that didn’t matter because he still wanted him, wanted to be loved and accepted and everything else that came with it and enough. It wasn’t going to happen but his soul ached for it anyway.

He wasn’t sure how long he stayed in his room, except at some point it became dark, and he heard the muffled sounds of Karma putting Daichi to bed, seemingly going into his own room afterwards. Nagisa’s mind was spinning. Regardless of all of his feelings, he knew it was wrong to keep stepping around each other like this. Maybe Asano really was right, he’d have to take things into his own hands for them to change.

A peace offering, perhaps. He tried to walk confidently out of his room and into the kitchen. As predicted, the apartment was seemingly empty otherwise. He opened their fridge, pulling out a carton of strawberry milk. It appeared that Karma had thrown himself into actually drinking the damn things, since the fridge wasn’t overrun. Then, he knocked on the door.

“It’s the last one,” Nagisa held up the carton, when Karma opened up.

He looked at him like he’d seen a ghost. “Do you want to come in?”

Tentatively, Nagisa stepped inside. Even when they were on good terms he rarely went into Karma’s room, it was very much his own space. Subsequently it was also the most decorated place in the apartment. Nagisa wasn’t really sure how to describe it, except moderately bohemian and mismatched. He sat down awkwardly on the bed, noticing the near comical amount of school books that spilled over the desk.

Karma took the carton from him, though instead of going straight to drink it, he put it on top of his dresser. Nagisa craned his neck, noticing another of the cartons already up there, but he didn’t have time to question it. Karma was back in front of him, blocking his view of anything else. He didn’t say anything, though, like he understood Nagisa hadn’t come just for milk.

“Uhm-“ Nagisa started, but then stopped before words came about. “Happy birthday?”

The edges began to crack. “What’s this, some kind of repeat present?” he mock sighed. “I thought you were the non lazy one, out of the two of us.”

Nagisa smiled. “I also got you a katana.”
“Our son got the katana,” he corrected, “or am I mistaken?”

He could play along though. “With my money. He picked it out himself though.”

Karma smiled too. “I guess it’s kind of his job to rinse money out of us.”

Just like that the brief light faded, conversation hitting a dead end. They were avoiding the real issue between them, and they both knew it. But where to even start. Nagisa didn’t really want to fight again, in fact he hated the idea, but it still felt like there was a fight to be had. There was so much between them, Nagisa wasn’t sure how else they’d get it all out.

He didn’t get the chance to speak, because suddenly Karma was on him. Nagisa wasn’t sure what he was even trying to do, or how to react. Instinctively, he scrambled back, away from the sudden mass headed towards him. Apparently that threw off whatever motion Karma had been going for, his entire weight toppling across Nagisa and forcing the both of them down against the mattress. It was extremely ungraceful and Nagisa banged his nose on Karma’s shoulder in the process.

“What are you doing?!” Nagisa squirmed. “Karma!”

Finally, he relented, moving off him to sit on his heels. Staring down at Nagisa in an odd kind of way.

Nagisa sat up, rubbing the back of his head. “I think-“

“I’m sorry,” Karma cut him off. “For not listening to you.”

There it was, the mystic Akabane Karma Apology. Even if Nagisa had been the one to reach out for it first, but that was just a small detail. He’d proven Asano wrong, at least. But Nagisa wasn’t wholly satisfied with just that, either. Wasn’t certain Karma really understood his point.

“You don’t listen to me,” Nagisa bit his lip. “Even when it’s important-“

He shot Nagisa a look. “That’s what I’m doing right now isn’t it?”

“By cutting me off?” Nagisa said, though it wasn’t harsh.

Karma took a deep breath. “I said some things.”

“You did.”

“Now who’s cutting who off?” He didn’t sound too annoyed, though. “You’re not weak, or desperate, or whatever else I said. It doesn’t matter. I just…” His face tinted pink. “I’m those things, not you.”

Nagisa looked him in the eye. “You never used to take things out on me like that.”

“I wanted to,” he admitted. “When we first met I wanted to beat you to a bloody pulp.”

That made him feel uneasy. “W-why didn’t you? It’s not like you’ve ever had a problem with fighting before.”

Karma turned his head away, staring at the wall. “I was scared.”

“Of me?” Admitting something like that wasn’t like him, it didn’t even seem real. “What’s that supposed to mean?”
His face was still tinted when he looked at him again. “You don’t even know the power you have. It ticks me off.”

“Karma-“

“Can we just leave it here?” Karma almost snapped. “I don’t want to talk about that anymore.”

Nagisa knew the best thing to do would be to push him for it, to get the whole truth. There was a lot, he could see all over his face, that Karma wasn’t telling him. But Nagisa didn’t want another fight. Even if he did push, Nagisa was afraid of what he might hear. In his own way, at least, Karma seemed remorseful. He’d be stupid not to accept it.

He lowered his head. “Okay.”

Most of the tension dropped from his shoulders. “I missed you.”

His heart skipped a beat. And then his body crumpled, because he’d missed Karma too, so much. Not just this past month, no, more like the whole year. Ever since he’d realised the true extent of his feelings, and that they’d never be returned, he’d put this distance between them. He missed it, missed their friendship, missed how being close to him used to feel as breathing. But there was no changing it. A very Karma like sentiment filled his head, he was already stuck in hell, so he may as well enjoy a few fleeting moments where he could.

“What is it?” Karma tilted his head. “You have your ‘I want to ask a dumb question’ look.”

Nagisa swallowed. “C-can I stay?”

He didn’t say anything for a second. “If you want?”

Permission. Nagisa nodded, straightening his body out, and then slowly lowered himself. Karma’s pillows were surprisingly soft. When Karma just watched him, Nagisa turned over, self conscious. The mattress dipped beside him, shifting with Karma’s weight. For a moment, they lay there separate, before he felt a tentative touch to his arm. Starved of such intimacy, Nagisa leant into it, and then Karma didn’t hesitate to hold him properly, wrapping their bodies together like they used to. Except, back then, it had been out of necessity because of how small his bed was. Now there was no such excuse.

It didn’t matter, though. After such a long time, Nagisa finally exhaled, eyes fluttering shut.

Chapter End Notes

EDIT: Alright binge readers! If you're reading this fic for the first time, this is a good place to take a break, get a snack, or just put the fic down for now! Or, if you still have energy, by all means keep reading on.

I'm ~pretty sure~ most of you will like this one. I REALLY mean it that I have to study now, though :')

As always, comments and feedback are much appreciated :3
Morning Time

Chapter Summary

It's the last day of their second year of high school

Chapter Notes

helpme

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Waking up beside Karma was peaceful. It varied, what position Nagisa opened his eyes in. Sometimes, it was exactly as they’d fallen asleep, others they’d drifted completely apart to opposite sides of the bed. That morning in particular, he must have rolled over in his sleep, since his head was pretty much buried in Karma’s chest. Karma’s arms were still wrapped around him, though, chin resting on top of Nagisa’s head. He couldn’t move anywhere, not like that. Even in sleep, Karma was a lot stronger than him.

An unfortunate consequence of being an early riser, and Karma being a deep sleeper. Though, he couldn’t say he cared that much about the situation. There were far worse places he could be. Already, Nagisa felt his breaths syncing up to Karma’s, heartrate slowing into a lull. He could have just stayed there forever, if there weren’t things to do.

Nagisa almost hated that he missed the warmth, when Karma’s death grip on him loosened. He wasn’t quite awake, but definitely stirring. Instead of just lying there limply, Nagisa used the opportunity to get on with his actual duties. He extracted himself gently, tiptoeing out of the room. After a quick but necessary trip to the bathroom, he carefully craned his neck into Daichi’s bedroom.

What he saw, like most days as of recent, was an already awake Daichi, trying to escape his crib. Nagisa had told him countless times not to do that, but yet there they were. It was almost like he was doing it on purpose, to make some kind of a point.

“Mornin Dada!” He called out proudly.

Nagisa sighed. “Morning to you too, Daichi.”

As always, Daichi tried to squirm and wiggle away from him whilst he was being changed. It wasn’t as though this was a new part of his personality, but since his second birthday less than a month ago, it had certainly become worse. It didn’t help that he was completely spoilt, either. Despite attempts to keep it at least a little under control, there still seemed to be toys everywhere. But that was his and Karma’s own fault.

He giggled, when Nagisa finally let him go, jumping up and down on the spot. “Wanna see Papa!”

That sounded like a great idea. If Daichi wanted, he could totally be Karma’s problem for the rest
of the morning. Not that Nagisa saw him as a problem, of course. His energy levels were tiring, for sure, but Nagisa almost saw it as endearing. He was definitely more inquisitive than generally mischievous, and Nagisa had a hard time ever telling him no.

He followed after him like a baby duck, even though they were only going into Karma’s room. Though Daichi could easily climb onto most furniture these days, Karma’s bed was just a tiny bit too high for him, so Nagisa had to lift him up. He crawled across the bed curiously, going right over to where Karma was lying. Cautiously, he poked him on the cheek.

Karma’s hand came up, instinctually swatting him away. It wasn’t hard, though, not much more than a bat. Daichi didn’t seem to mind, which was fair enough because he had technically attacked first. Nagisa joined them, sitting cross legged on top of the mattress. He saw Karma crack an eye open.

“Wow, Nagisa, you shrunk overnight.”

Daichi laughed again. “Nooo Papa.”

He smiled. “How did you get in here, huh?”

“Ran.”

Nagisa suddenly felt his brief spout of energy fade, since nobody was in a rush clearly. After a second or two of debate, he lay back down, almost ready to go straight back to sleep. This arrangement between he and Karma, they hadn’t really talked about it. They hadn’t seriously talked about anything since they made up, and that was a couple of months ago. Even if their friendship was rekindled, he knew it was weird. But, he slept better like that.

“Want pancake,” Daichi announced.

“Huh~? Pancakes? That’s not a proper breakfast.”

Daichi rolled down in between them. “Don’t care!”

He looked over at the clock. “Hmm, not sure we have time. Maybe we can have them later.”

Eyes widening, Daichi looked desperately at Nagisa. “Dada? Dada do it!”

Nagisa smiled. “I can’t just change the time Daichi.”

“Why.”

“You have to go to nursery,” he explained, “but it’s the last day. You won’t have to go back for a couple of weeks after that.”

Whatever face he pulled wasn’t happy. “Me no wanna.”

Karma poked him in the cheek, revenge for earlier. “I don’t want to go to school either, but sometimes, I got’ta.” On hearing that, Daichi started scooting himself away from them. “Where are you going?”

“Going!” He announced, managing to half abseil his way down from the bed, making a point of his exit.

Nagisa had heard a lot of things about two year olds, enough that he held his breath for most of Daichi’s birthday. So far, nothing too crazy had happened, aside from the almost frightening rate at
which he was picking up words (he clearly remembered the days when Daichi couldn’t speak at all). No real temper tantrums, if anything Nagisa thought he was just starting to pick up *sass*. He was growing up too fast.

“I think he needs a proper bed,” Nagisa said, whilst he thought about it. “He’s going to just climb out of that crib one day.”

Karma bit his lip. “I’m pretty sure he’d managed it already.”

“A-and you didn’t tell me that?!”

He sighed, rolling over to stare at the ceiling. “He’d be sleeping like that until the day he turns twenty, if I had it my way.”

Nagisa mimicked his motion. “He’ll be starting *school* in only a couple of years.”

“We’ll go at the weekend or something,” Karma promised. “Maybe we can get him one of those crazy ones with a slide.”

He was confused, when Karma moved to get up. “You’re not actually making him pancakes, are you?”

Karma shrugged. “I wouldn’t have said no. It’s bills day.”

*Bills day.* Nagisa hated bills day. It wasn’t like they couldn’t afford it or anything, but *nobody* liked chunks of money being taken. Truthfully, Nagisa was *okay* at maths, but it was different when the numbers really applied and seemed to swim off the page at him. He would have been more than happy to let Karma just sort it out, but Karma kept insisting he check it too. And Karma always seemed to know when Nagisa only skimmed it.

He took the opportunity, when Karma left the room, to pull on his school uniform. A part of him wished he could do what Daichi wanted and just stay at home, but that was hardly responsible behaviour. People seemed to have mostly moved on from all the drama surrounding him, but that didn’t mean he particularly wanted to sit through the graduation ceremony, where there would be speeches. Because apparently his taste *had* to include valedictorians.

Karma was holding something that definitely didn’t look like a bill, when Nagisa left the bedroom. “Woah, she finally managed it.”

“Huh? Managed what?”

A devilish look came across his expression. “Maybe I won’t tell you.”

Nagisa caught a glimpse of it. “Hey! That’s addressed to me too!”

“You’ll have to come get it,” he darted left, holding the paper high above his head.

He knew Karma was just teasing him, but Nagisa didn’t want to give it up. The mystery struck him as interesting, and now he was invested. He jumped, trying to tackle it out of Karma’s grasp. The motion managed to unbalance him, but he was too tall for Nagisa to actually reach. It caused them to topple onto the sofa.

Karma didn’t give up, thwarting Nagisa’s attempts to wrestle it from his hand. They were completely play fighting at that point, making light kicks and bats at each other. It was unclear who had the edge, until Karma somehow managed to manoeuvre it so he had hold of both Nagisa’s
hands. Using the brief advantage, he pinned them hopelessly.

It took his brain a second to catch up, for the endorphins to shrink away and for everything to go cold. Like a strange dream behind his eyelids, Nagisa remembered hands pinning him down, and feeling completely helpless. It made his chest tighten, and his stomach burn with nausea. He couldn’t be here like this.

“Karma, stop,” he said seriously.

Immediately obeying, Karma released him, sitting up to move completely off him. “You’re okay.” Nagisa nodded, his breathing returning to normal. “I’m sorry,” he said quietly, almost a whisper.

“Here,” he bumped Nagisa’s shoulder, and handed him the piece of card. “Crazy, huh?”

Nagisa’s eyes widened. “No way.”

Relaxing again, Karma looked up. “I want to know what Bitch Sensei did to pull that off.”

“Maybe he just asked her?”

“Karasuma Sensei?” Karma raised an eyebrow.

Nagisa examined it another time. “This is almost a year from now.”

“Heh, probably so nobody makes plans. Don’t think she’d take too kindly to people skipping the wedding.”

He put the card down on the table. “Don’t try it.”

“I wouldn’t dare,” he replied, voice full of sarcasm. “Where did Daichan go, anyway?”
Nagisa pulled himself to his feet. “I should probably get him dressed.”

It was weird, the thought of his two old teachers getting married. Like everyone else’s lives really were moving on. Appropriate, since it was the last day of the school year. They were coming to the time where things like university was more than just an abstract concept in the back of his head. As much as Nagisa knew what his goal was, and was confident in it, everything still seemed a little daunting.

“Don’t wanna,” Daichi said, immediately after seeing Nagisa standing at the door.

Nagisa sat down on the floor. “It’s only for a few hours.”

He crossed his arms. “Stay with Dada!”

“I have to go to school too. Don’t you want to play with all the toys at nursery?”

Daichi didn’t say anything, but stared down at the floor.

Opening one of the draws, Nagisa pulled out a very colourful item. “You can wear your favourite shirt. And, when I come get you later, we can read a book.”

“Me put on,” he demanded.

Nagisa decided to just let him do it, only having to assist a little bit when his head got stuck. The jeans were a slightly different story, but at least he managed to get them mostly on. Eventually presentable enough, all Nagisa had to do was straighten out his hair a little, since it had a habit of sticking out in wild directions. Cute. He probably needed a hair cut, though, otherwise soon it would be covering his eyes.

Daichi knew automatically when he was free to leave, squirming away from Nagisa’s hand to run off and out of the room. Karma was changed himself by then, already in the kitchen. Unfortunately for Nagisa, since he’d spent a little too long in bed, he didn’t have time to eat anything properly. It would be bad to have nothing, though, so he grabbed a piece of fruit.

“See you later,” he said to Daichi, not even willing to attempt giving him a kiss goodbye.

Daichi looked up at him. “Bye bye!”

“Have fun,” Karma said, over his shoulders.

Nagisa knew he wasn’t about to have much fun at all. But he forced himself to leave, anyway, taking the ever familiar walk to the train station. At least there would be a couple of weeks without any long journeys. It wasn’t like either of them had any plans for the break, aside from what had turned into the annual classroom cleaning memorial for Korosensei. As far as Nagisa understood it, all Karma wanted to do was study. Already.

Thankfully, once he reached school, nobody payed him much attention, and he was able to slip into his seat without being stopped or stared at or anything. Class hadn’t started yet, but everyone else was already there. Usually, Nagisa was one of the first.

“You’re a little late, Nagisa kun,” Kita observed.

Nagisa slumped. “Karma was being… Karma.”

She looked at him inquisitively. “Who?”
“His hot roommate,” Higashi answered, for him.

“Oh yeah,” she looked at Higashi directly. “You met him, didn’t you? Is he really that good looking?”

Nishi leant forward in his chair. “Hey!”

Higashi shrugged. “I mean, I at least think s-“

“Stop it,” Nagisa said, his stomach twisting over with rage. He couldn’t deal with the way she kept talking about him. But this time he didn’t have the excuse of ‘you already have a boyfriend’ to keep his thoughts at bay. He knew he wasn’t actually going to do it, but he felt the urge to kill. And to do it right then and there.

“I’m sorry?” Higashi sounded scared.

Nishi looked at him funny. “Hey man cut it out.”

Nagisa remembered, then, where he was. “I-I didn’t mean to-“

“Oh,” he moved away though, “you’re just really not helping the things people say about you.”

He slumped. “You believe them.”

Kita nudged her boyfriend. “We don’t.”

Nishi didn’t look so sure, though. “It’s just… a bit of a coincidence that you break up for reasons you won’t tell us, and then he shows up looking like that?”

Clearing her throat, Higashi looked at Nagisa. “It’s okay.”

Their teacher arrived, before anything more could be said on that topic. Nagisa wanted to sink into his chair and just collapse. Better yet, cease to exist. Only briefly, though, he still had things he needed to do. Like decide when to go to Ikea. It was more comforting to think of that, then anything else surrounding his head. He did try to pay attention to their last lessons, though.

The actual day of teaching ended early, due to the graduation. Even though he was surrounded by people, Nagisa couldn’t help but feel very much alone, when it came to lunch time. He didn’t really feel much like eating, though, only really chewing lightly to fit in. When everyone started to pack away and get ready for the ceremony, Nagisa almost flinched.

“You okay, Nagisa kun?” Minami’s hand came down on his back.


He didn’t want to sit through a long graduation ceremony. He didn’t want to pretend to be happy yet wistful about everything leaving. And certainly, he didn’t want to listen to Rin give a speech about how great his time at this school was. At least the one good thing was he and his friends were leaving, so Nagisa wouldn’t have to spend half his time strategically avoiding him in the hallways.

Higashi smiled. “Do you want to skip it?”

Nagisa had only skipped class once before, for something that didn’t include sickness. And that was years ago. He remembered Karma begging him to try it out, that they’d have loads of fun and he should try not being so straight laced. It had been fun, thrilling briefly, but Nagisa had hated the
feeling of doing something wrong, the fear that he might get into trouble. Back then of course, his mother would have declared Karma a terrible influence and outright banned them from hanging out.

Still, Nagisa nodded, realising that slight punishment was probably better. He didn’t know where they were going to go, though, or what they’d do. Nagisa was surprised she was even offering, considering how he’d spoken to her earlier. He wasn’t exactly being the best friend. They dawdled behind the rest of the class, until Higashi sidestepped. Nagisa followed after her, until she poked her head into an empty classroom.

“Graduation ceremonies are boring for me,” she explained, without being prompted.

Nagisa swallowed. “I’m sorry for acting like that.”

She waved him off. “Don’t worry about it, I clearly touched a nerve.”

“It shouldn’t have though,” he looked down, “it’s not like we’re together.”

Higashi swallowed. “That doesn’t mean you’re not allowed to have feelings about it.”

“That should go for you too,” Nagisa pointed out.

She shrugged. “I’m starting to think he’s not really my type you know, can’t really see myself being a step mum. No offence.”

“N-none taken.”

Higashi tilted her head, then. “Hey, is that why you really broke up?”

He hadn’t actually spoken to any of his friends about it, other than brief confirmation that his relationship with Rin was over. The only person who kind of knew the truth was Karma, and, well, that hadn’t turned out particularly great. Relatively, he told himself it wasn’t that bad, but he didn’t want to drag it all back up to the surface again.

“Kind of,” he said, because it had been the origin of their initial fight.

She stood very straight. “You know you don’t have to, but I don’t mind if you want to talk to me about it. I mean, when you like someone, it’s hard to have a serious conversation. And I don’t think you have many of those, right?”

He wasn’t sure what to say to that. It wasn’t that Nagisa didn’t trust her, or didn’t appreciate the offer, but Nagisa didn’t like speaking about his problems. Unloading all of that to someone else, it was against everything he’d been programmed to do. Still, maybe he could think about it, even if right now his toes curled at the thought.

“Thank you,” Nagisa said seriously.

They spent the duration of the ceremony just hanging out, which was a nice change from all the drama in his life. It felt good, to just talk about normal things. He tried to stop her, but she ended up sketching on the little blackboard, just small doodles here and there. Nagisa hadn’t noticed before, but she was actually pretty good at art. Much better than him, anyway.

The sounds of commotion came from outside the classroom, showing the ceremony was over. They said their goodbyes with a friendly nod, with promises to maybe see if they could meet up over the break. After that, it was separate ways, getting lost in the sea of excited people who were
happy the school year was finally over.

Nagisa was pretty happy that he’d managed to avoid his ex boyfriend, but as luck would have it, he almost ran right into him. He dodged in time, thankfully, but not without bringing attention to himself. For less than a second, Rin’s eyes met his, before he jerked away like the sight of Nagisa was a poison. Not that Nagisa had a lot to say to him either. He stiffened, and then forced himself to exhale, before he kept walking. He wondered if that would be the last time they ever saw each other.

Chapter End Notes

Higashi was totally about to say 'baby daddy' before she cut herself off.

私は、今日しけんがありますから、日本語だけ書きます。どうして? しんぱいしてる... とてもバカです。勉強しなければなりませんが、書きました。草。日本語がことできません。ぜひみんなさんはあそびました。私においのりしてください。

(Hilariously most of that is likely incorrect. わかりませんか? Ggr ;)
“Do you like sukiyaki?” Karma looked down at Daichi quizzically. “I don’t remember.”

He didn’t seem to care much about his question, instead making what Karma assumed to be some sort of machine like noise. He was just wandering around, arms stuck out wide. If Karma had had a choice, he definitely wouldn’t have taken Daichi out on an errand like this. There was no human measure for how much he loved his son, honestly, but stuff like this took twice as long as it otherwise needed to.

Deciding that Daichi was going to have to like it, he grabbed beef from the fridge, putting it in the shopping trolley that Daichi had refused to sit in like a good obedient toddler. If such things even existed. Karma worried nowadays, though, when Daichi was quiet for too long. The only annoying thing about sukiyaki was it was a lot of food to make, though he was going to insist Nagisa eat a lot of it later, for strength.

Conveniently for him, his heat had hit during the weekend, meaning he didn’t have to miss any school. It was not the best for Karma. He knew their… night time arrangement was a little weird, but it was apparently making him co-dependent or something, because he’d missed Nagisa last night. He’d returned to his own room, which was a good and necessary thing since Karma didn’t have scent blockers in his room, and as much as he’d almost got used to that kind of scent, he didn’t need to have it covering all his possessions.

It meant Karma had Daichi to himself for the time being. But sitting around in their apartment all day would have bummed him out. It was almost like torture. So, he took Daichi shopping. He was pretty sure Daichi didn’t mind, by the looks of him. He was still skipping along happily in front of him, in a whole world of his own.

“Papa!” Daichi stopped, pointing to something on the shelf. “This!”

Whatever it was, Karma knew he didn’t need it. He also couldn’t really be bothered to bend down and pick it up. “Not on the list, Daichan.”

He pouted, and then stuck his tongue out.

Naturally, Karma returned the gesture.
He ran off again, and Karma just let him do his own thing. It wasn’t exactly a big shop. Actually, Karma would actually be a little impressed if Daichi managed to get himself lost. Not that he thought Daichi would care the same level other kids his age in that position would. One time – which Nagisa did not need to know about – he managed to hide in a bush for a full hour, not a care in the world.

“Papa! Papa!” He ran up to him, and started tugging on his trouser leg. “Me want!”

Karma looked at him sceptically. “Want what?”

He started frantically pointing. “This this this!”

Despite it being a small shop, apparently they still had room for toys. Following his pointing direction, Karma realised he wanted a kids’ bb gun. Immediately, it didn’t look the right size at all. Honestly, Karma wouldn’t have had an issue with getting it, but there were things to consider. For one, it had only just been his birthday, and he seemed to own endless toys. Nagisa worried about spoiling him too much, and probably wouldn’t be happy if Karma bought him a legitimate weapon.

“You don’t need it,” Karma cringed as he spoke.

“Want it,” he pronounced, like Karma hadn’t heard him before.

He looked down at him sadly. “Sorry, Daichan, you can’t.”

His eyes welled up. “Papa…”

Karma couldn’t stand it when he cried. Even when he was just a baby, and crying was all he did, he never really got over the way his hear used to sink. Thankfully, once Daichi had picked up some words, tears became a very rare occurrence, only when he didn’t know another rational way to express himself. The last month or so, though, things seemed a little different.

“Come on,” he tried, “I have everything we need already.”

Daichi turned towards the BB gun. “No! Me. Want. This.”

He didn’t know what to do in this particular situation. “We’re going.”

What he hadn’t expected was for Daichi to start shrieking. You’d have thought Karma was torturing him or something. In fact, people turned to look at him like he was doing just that. Karma had half the mind to throw a fist through their judgey expressions, but he didn’t want Daichi to start crying even more. It didn’t matter, though, because he apparently decided to just face plant the floor.

In any other situation, he would have found it at least a little funny. His son was such a drama queen. But, by the looks of things, he wasn’t planning on moving any time soon. And Karma couldn’t just leave him there. There weren’t that many options. Ignoring the dirty look an elderly woman gave him, Karma just bent down and scooped Daichi over his shoulder.

Of course, he wasn’t particularly happy about that. He continued to sob, desperately trying to squirm and whack Karma’s shoulder with his tiny fists, presumably so he’d be dropped. Granted, Daichi was a lot stronger than he actually looked, but not so much that his punches were any more than a minor inconvenience.

“That,” Daichi finally said, out of nowhere, barely audible through his whimpering.
He was looking at sweets, now. “Will you stop freaking out if I get you candy?”

Daichi was silent, still huffing, but the worst of it seemed to have died down. Maybe bribing him wasn’t the best thing to do, but Karma hated seeing him upset, and he was starting to get a headache. There was only so much he could take… He picked it up, ready to get out of the shop as quickly as humanly possible, flashing an only semi apologetic smile at the cashier.

He’d calmed down by the time they were outside, by the looks of things. “Down.”

“There you go,” Karma said, handing him the sweets.

Daichi looked at them sadly. He took a handful, and clearly decided to take an age chewing on it, like he was going to cry all over again. He wasn’t just going to forget it, then.

“Listen,” Karma tried, crouching down, “you have a lot of toys already, don’t you? Besides, something like that’s too big for your right now.”

He blinked. “Am big.”

“Yeah,” he sighed, “but you still can’t hold a gun the size of your own body.”

“No,” Daichi said louder, batting his hand like he was going to try and punch him.

Karma dodged easily, though. “I promise you, that’s just not how it works! If you really want a gun, then maybe you can get one that you can actually hold. But not right now, yeah?”

His bottom lip started trembling. “Now want.”

“But we have to go home,” he explained. “Otherwise you won’t get to eat, or play with the rest of your toys… Maybe I’ll have to take your books away too.”

Fear struck his eyes. “No! No! No, nonononono.”

Karma wouldn’t actually punish him like that. Or at all. “Then come home with me, and we can read them. Does that sound good?”

“O-okay,” Daichi slowly put another sweet in his mouth.

He’d take it. As they started to walk back, he seemed to forget about being upset, eventually morphing back into his usual self. Karma didn’t know what that had been. On the rare occasions he said no to anything, Daichi just accepted it. Had he been possessed or something? Or maybe it was the universe catching up to him, considering how well tempered Daichi had generally been for the first two years of his life.

By the time they got to the apartment, it was clear Nagisa wasn’t over his heat quite yet, since things were exactly as they’d been left. That was fine, it wasn’t like Karma minded having Daichi to himself. He was fine by that point, calm enough to ‘help’ by passing him items of shopping. Maybe it was just a blip. Everyone had bad days.

“Come on then,” he said eventually, “which book do you want?”

Finally, Daichi’s face brightened up, and he scampered off to his room. Naturally, he came back with five, though they were all pretty short from memory. Maybe a little too short. But Karma didn’t really know, it was more Nagisa’s thing to sit and read with him. It wasn’t that Karma didn’t care of have the time, but Nagisa was just the person he defaulted to, and the one who was
convinced that he could actually read it, half the time.

“G-gu-ri,” Daichi pointed to the page.

Karma didn’t really understand little kid books. Maybe because his parents had never really read that kind of thing to him, when he was young. Whatever this was, it was weird. Something about mice and eggs and decisions. Daichi seemed to like turning the pages, at least. Maybe he really was reading it, since he’d pronounced one of the character’s names, but it was also very possible he’d heard it enough anyway.

As he actually read it for him, Daichi’s eyes were glued to the page. But regardless, Karma wasn’t totally invested in whatever the story was, barely comprehending the words he spoke. The good thing about kiddy books, though, was they didn’t last that long. He was almost relieved about that, until he remembered Daichi had also bought out another four.

“Hey, Daichan,” he said, pulling out some pocket change. “Do you want to see something cool?”

He blinked up at him. “Cool?”

“Paying attention?” Karma moved to sit cross legged in front of Daichi, who was clearly focusing intently on the hundred yen coin he was pinching. Using a simple sleight of hand move, he acted out taking the coin with his other hand, creating the illusion of it ‘disappearing’. It was a pretty basic trick, but as someone who had never seen it before, Daichi’s jaw adorably dropped to the floor.

Laughing lightly at his expression, Karma exposed the coin again. “See?”

Daichi squinted at the coin, like it was made of fairy dust or something. “Again.”

“Okay,” Karma said, exposing the coin again. “Watch it closer this time.” The trick he pulled was pretty similar, though to shake things up a bit he leaned forward, mimicking pulling the coin out of Daichi’s ear this time. He still looked like he’d seen a ghost or something, his young mind not quite able to process basic ‘magic’ tricks.

Still, whilst Karma was laughing at his confusion, he reached out, grabbing the coin from his grasp. “Mine.”

“Huh? How does that work?”

“Ear mine,” he demonstrated, and then pointed to the coin. “Mine.”

Tilting his head for a second, Karma shrugged. “Fair enough. You keep it.”

It wasn’t like he was that fussed about a hundred yen. Or like Daichi could realistically buy something with it. There was still a funny look all over his face, like he was genuinely trying to figure out how that had happened. Maybe Karma would teach him how to do it, when he was a little older. There were many things on that list. Namely things like poker, since the game had gone over Nagisa’s head the seven times Karma had tried teaching him.

He pulled a face. “Papa… Need change.”

It took Karma a minute to catch up, but it was clear what he meant from the way he was tugging at his trousers expectantly. No, he took all his regrets about Daichi growing up so fast back. He could grow up right now, if it meant Karma didn’t have to do this anymore. And perhaps two years of changing nappies was enough. If he had it in him to recognise when he needed a change, then it
would be okay.

“You know what…” he looked around slowly, “follow me.”

“Why?” Daichi asked, but trotted after him anyway.

He swung the door to their toilet open. “You see this? This is where you’re gonna go now before you need changing.”

Daichi tilted his head. “Okay.”

‘Okay’? That felt a little too easy, but he didn’t feel like complaining about it. Hopefully, he really did understand that concept. But that was perhaps pushing it a bit. It didn’t matter, though, because he still had to change him right then. The worst part of the day, honestly. After that, it seemed like Daichi had had enough interaction for a while, pointedly going off to flick through his books on his own.

Halfway through cooking dinner, Nagisa finally emerged from his room, looking bleary and kind of like he’d just been in a car accident. Karma couldn’t help but wrinkle his nose, as the scent of past heat briefly hit him, before the door was shut. Even if he’d become just a fraction more neutral to it, he still quickly threw some spices in the pot, letting that fill his nostrils instead.

“Are you going to want to eat?” Karma asked.

Nagisa almost jolted. “I don’t know,” his voice was dry and croaky, “I’ll see how I feel after a bath.”

Sticking his head up at the sound of his voice, Daichi looked elated, rushing to embrace his leg. “Dada!”

He paused, but didn’t seem too upset at Daichi stopping his path. “Did you have a fun day?”

Daichi nodded. “Get a gun.”

Of course that’s what he’d remember. “Karma?”

“I said he might get one,” Karma tried to explain casually, “if he shut up about getting the one in the shop.”

His eyes narrowed. “Why were you even near a gun today?”

“Why are you even still standing here?” He disregarded. “You smell gross.”

He didn’t, really. Karma had noticed that his scent fluctuated quite a bit, but that wasn’t saying much since it was hard to put a finger on exactly what it was ordinarily. Right then, Karma would have compared it to some kind of fruit tea. Far less annoying than some of the girls at school, who smelt like straight up sugar and chocolate but not in a particularly good way.

Nagisa pulled a face, but was obviously not genuinely upset. He just disappeared into the bathroom, turning on his heel. By the looks of things, he probably would be eating. If he still felt ill, most of the time he’d just straight up refuse, or look like he was going to hurl at the thought. So, Karma put a bowl out for him.

As though he’d timed it, Nagisa emerged, clean and good as new, right when he was finished with the cooking. Of course, Daichi wasted no time in starting his food, when Karma poured some out
for him, but Nagisa seemed to be gingerly toying with his chopsticks. Maybe it wasn’t necessarily his place, but he was irritated, and he didn’t care. He took Nagisa’s bowl himself, filling it with as much food as possible.

“What are you doing?” He asked, like he was a little lost.

Karma slid the bowl back over. “You need to get your energy back up.”

He looked at him funny. “You keep trying to feed me too much. This isn’t the first time, either.”

That was a false statement, truly. “That’s a lie,” he said jokingly.

“Yeah, sure it is,” Nagisa looked at him, “alpha.”

Karma choked on the air. He couldn’t deny that he hadn’t expected *that*. All reasonable words left him. The only time Nagisa had ever called him something like that was actually during his heats. At least that was excusable, because Nagisa was so out of it that he probably didn’t even remember Karma’s name at the time. So it caught him off guard, to say the least.

Nagisa’s face fell. “Karma? Are you okay? I was only joking!”

He forced himself to calm down, ignoring the way Daichi was giggling, examining them both. It was a good thing he was too young and innocent to understand the various complexities that came with secondary genders. It didn’t particularly feel like an urge that originated from him being an alpha, wanting to provide for every helpless omega in sight. No, he thought, surely not. He just knew Nagisa would fall asleep without eating, and would annoy him by searching through the kitchen in the middle of the night.

“You’ve spent too much time around me recently,” Karma said.

He looked down at his food, a smile returning to his lips. “Maybe.”

“We need to work on your delivery though,” he explained. “And it doesn’t really work if you immediately take it back.”

“So, even more time together?”

Karma sighed. “Eat up.”

Chapter End Notes

Yo.

So, I did my Japanese exams. They went okay, like I know for a fact I did well enough to pass, but HOW WELL I passed is... debatable. I said I only listen to anime music in one of them it was a whole dead ass thing. But anyway, that's done now. I have two history exams next week, which I know NOTHING about, but I'm going to start studying for them now :D

I have no idea how good the latter half of this chapter is because I'm honestly pretty hung over from karaoke last night. Also, it snowed, I was wearing a crop top for some reason, and now I have a cold. Anyway! I hope you like this one :3
(lmao remember when I said I was going to take a break from this fic and just didn't take a break)
Nagisa was extraordinarily tired and he regretted everything. Last night, he’d agreed to watch over Daichi until he needed to go to bed. He’d still had homework to do, and Karma looked pretty beat for reasons unknown to him. Whatever the case, Karma had been asleep, and Nagisa had dealt with putting Daichi to bed himself. Daichi didn’t really like sleeping anymore. And when Daichi didn’t want to do something, hell hath no fury.

Anyway, by the time he was in his bed and stayed there, Nagisa was close to passing out. To make matters worse, Karma had been cuddling the sheets in his place, which meant sleeping in the cold. He honestly spent most of the night annoyed about that, before eventually drifting off. Of course, somehow, he still woke up being held by Karma, although it seemed Karma was actually already awake.

“Nagisa,” he said softly, “Nagisa you have to get up.”

He couldn’t help but nuzzle his head closer, like he was trying to bury himself in his skin. “Just a little longer.”

“Nagisa…”

“Mmm?”

Nagisa tilted his head up, to try and catch a little of Karma’s expression. He could see that he was flushed, could feel his heart beating rapidly under his ear. Still half asleep, he wondered how easy would it be to just take? If Nagisa were someone else, someone who was good at this kind of thing, he’d just lean up and kiss him stupid. But, Nagisa knew he could never pluck up the courage for something so bold.

Karma bit down on his lip. “It’s pretty late…”

“I’m comfortable,” Nagisa complained, rolling over so that his body was almost completely on top of Karma’s, his thigh awkwardly between Nagisa’s. It wasn’t the most comfortable anymore like that, but he felt like a heating pad.

“Ah-huh,” he said, like he was on edge. “Seriously Nagisa what’ve you been eating lately? I can’t breathe.”
A taste of his own medicine, then. It wasn’t like Karma had never lay his entire body completely on top of him, smothering him entirely. In fact, he did that quite often, presumably just to laugh at the way Nagisa squirmed and struggled. Still, he complied a little, giving Karma’s chest a little more room. But he still wanted to go right back to sleep.

Apparently that had given Karma ideas, because his hand came down to his hair. Ordinarily, Nagisa would have flinched away, but he didn’t want to lose his pillow, somehow. He just let him do it, threading his fingers through his long and probably unruly hair. Usually, if anyone, it was Daichi who tugged at it. Speaking of…

“Dada~ Papa~”

Nagisa stuck his head up, locking eyes with an equally sleepy looking Daichi, who’d apparently got himself up. He’d been doing that, since not being confined to a crib with bars on it. Perhaps it wasn’t a good idea, to let him just wander around as he liked with no supervision, but so far at least it hadn’t been much of a real issue.

Daichi leant against the door frame. “Hungry.”

Instantly, Nagisa was out of bed, ignoring the way Karma lightly sniggered at him. There was no way Nagisa was dealing with it when he was truly hungry. Hungry Daichi was Angry Daichi, and no, he had to avoid that at all possible costs. If Nagisa had actually slept in a little, it was fair enough for him to want breakfast anyway.

Thankfully, he did manage to curveball that, and his day got off to a pretty smooth start. As smooth as could go, nowadays. Nagisa had thought that going to a university affiliate high school would be different, but everyone still seemed highly bogged down in third year stress. Of course, Nagisa was still concerned about doing well, he had to pass, but half his classmates had turned into zombies. And it wasn’t even summer yet.

Instead of the usual laughter and chatting that filled the classroom, most people were studying, like their fears were channelled right into their textbooks. The only time he’d seen anything like it, it had been the final exams of middle school, where Class 1A had gone completely crazy. Perhaps Nagisa should be studying more, even Karma hadn’t been spared from this insanity. But, it wasn’t like he didn’t put work in, actually Nagisa felt pretty secure in his position right then.

Higashi slammed her head down into the English text book. “I don’t get it.”

Peering over, Nagisa tried to figure out what she was looking at. “Are you okay, Higashi san?”

“No,” she groaned, “never okay. These words don’t make sense.”

“You have the two halves of the sentence the wrong way,” Nagisa pointed out gently, “maybe you should try and remember to flip it around in your head, so it’s more like Japanese.”

She looked down at the paper. “Oh, yeah, that’s a little better. Ugh, we can’t all be fluent.”

Nagisa knew she was joking, but he still felt self conscious. “I-I’m not really.”

Turning around, Kita shot him a weird look. “You are pretty good at English, though.”

He couldn’t actually use a large chunk of the English he knew. It was easier, in a language that isn’t his own, to detach himself from the things he said. However, the lessons Bitch Sensei had given him would probably give his current teacher a small heart attack, no matter how ‘confident’ he was in actually saying them. But he wasn’t fluent.
Their teacher came in, then. So far, now that they’d adjusted to being in their third year, their teacher was a little stricter than most. Thankfully, Nagisa was pretty adjustable. He stood instantly like everyone else, ready for some tough lessons. Just because Nagisa wasn’t in a permanent state of stress didn’t mean it was easy.

A woman he only vaguely recognised knocked harshly on the door. “I need to take Shiota Nagisa please.”

Everybody turned to look at him, and Nagisa felt his heart drop to his stomach. Clearly, something was wrong, but it could be anything. She seemed urgent, too. He tried his best to stop his mind from racing to horrific conclusions, standing to excuse himself without being too disruptive. Ignoring the curious looks that followed him on the way out.

The woman, probably some kind of office assistant, didn’t waste any time. Nagisa almost struggled to keep up with her, she was walking with such urgency. There was no attempt at casual conversation, though, not even to fill the awkward air around them. This was definitely serious, then. It was only halfway through the walk that Nagisa realised where he was going.

She stopped outside the headmaster’s office, looking at him expectantly. At least nobody was in trouble, causing him to be called for, that would probably be at reception. So either Nagisa had done something exceptional (he hadn’t, from recent memory), or he was in some serious trouble. The last time Nagisa had something like this, he found out he was going to be in E Class.

He was practically pushed into the room, where not only the headmaster sat, but two other important looking men. “Ah, Shiota san, please take a seat.”

Automatically, Nagisa’s legs started to shake, but he did as he was told.

“We’ve called you here to discuss… perhaps an unpleasant issue,” the headmaster said awkwardly. “But it has recently been brought to our attention, and we’d like to deal with this as quickly and quietly as possible.”

Nagisa gulped, mind racing a mile a minute. “W-what for?”

He grimaced. “We’re aware of your… living situation. As you should know, it goes against our policy to condone students of different genders living alone together. That also applies to secondary genders. Perhaps that could have been rectified, but the child… complicates things.”

It was like he forgot how to breathe. After so many years of nobody even mentioning it, Nagisa had forgotten that being a parent even had the potential to get him into trouble at school. He’d hidden it pretty well whilst he still had the baby weight, but even after that, he just hadn’t brought anything about his outside life up. The only person who knew was Higashi, and she wouldn’t try and get him reported. ‘Revenge’ didn’t seem like Rin’s kind of game, despite everything. Realistically, there was only one other group it could be.

“I-“ Nagisa almost choked on his words, “it hasn’t mattered from b-before?”

His lips pressed tight. “We’ve had a complaint about it now. Something like this getting out, it could be devastating. It looks like we condone that type of behaviour.”

How terrible for them. Breaking through the fear racing through him momentarily, he saw a slight desperation there. Nagisa realised that he could be expelled at any second, if he said even slightly the wrong thing, they’d just take it as an excuse. They didn’t want to expel him, though probably not out of any sympathy. No, they probably didn’t want to look awful in kicking an omega out for
non disruptive offences. Much easier if Nagisa just stepped down or something.

“But nobody knew…”

“Well,” he sat up straighter, “it’s true we were also unaware. But it is all over your records, Shiota san. It only takes one person to look. Your involvement in the Kunugigaoka Middle School controversy isn’t a secret, either, and its still of interest to academics and press. You must think of what this selfishness could mean for your peers, and our institution as a whole. It puts us in a difficult position.”

They were surely just going to kick him out, then, before anything got out. And if it did, they could claim ignorance, and that they did the right thing. He didn’t have time to feel the panic that was clearly causing his body to shake. Or to even go through the five plans he’d have to potentially make

Nagisa briefly thought of something. “We have bond papers, it’s not like any of this is out of,” he cringed, hating the way it sounded, “wedlock.”

The man beside the headmaster looked furious. “And most omegas in that position drop out of high school. You’re still an underage parent.”

Clearing his throat, the headmaster looked at him frankly. “We can’t make any decisions right now. We’ve already spoken with your guardians, and they won’t be able to fly in to meet us before the end of the day, so, the meeting will recommence with them on Monday.”

Nagisa sat forward. “But my parents only live an hour away.”

His eyes narrowed. “Yes, but as you say, you are legally bonded. Since your alpha is also a minor, our next most appropriate line of communication was with,” he looked at some files in front of him, “Akaabne san’s parents. Until then, you may return to regular classes.”

Oh no. Oh no. That wasn’t good at all. Karma didn’t like his parents. In fact, he’d told Nagisa a few times he was glad they were living all the way in India. Nagisa was pretty certain he never spoke to them, unless it was via brief text message maybe. Why were they even coming? Surely, they wouldn’t have an interest in helping Nagisa get out of this. Couldn’t they have just said no? What was Karma going to say when he found out?

Sometimes, Nagisa forgot he was technically a ‘child’ still. He was almost eighteen, but still a while off that golden beacon of twenty that would grant him full adult status. He was so used to acting like he was older than his age, living separately from his parents, doing boring household stuff, having a child… This threw him. They weren’t even interested in letting him stand up for himself.

Nagisa got up, dismissing himself from the room as quickly as his legs would carry him. Once he was out of there, the emotions came spilling out of him finally, now he had a second to think about it. Even if Karma’s parents were supposedly coming out all this way, surely they wouldn’t defend him passionately enough that he’d get out of this.

He was a little angry, then. Because he knew, courtesy of Asano, that Karma chatted about his ‘home life’ all the time. And not once, he assumed, had a teacher even cared about it. Because he was an alpha, and Nagisa was an omega. He could have a kid in each continent if he wanted to, and nobody would really care. And it was infuriating because he couldn’t stand up and scream about everything that was wrong with that, because they didn’t want to listen. He’d always read about terrible things happening to omegas, but he’d never related to it through his own experiences. It
wasn’t fair. But he didn’t want Karma to have to suffer, too.

Maybe he could get into a public high school if worst came to worst. But then he’d have to seriously study for any shot at a decent university, let alone find one that would accept him with an expulsion and an international incident on his permanent record. Perhaps it was only fair. Nagisa hadn’t really felt the consequences of his decision to keep Daichi, yet. Of course it was tough looking after him all those years, and there were certain normal teenage things he’d sacrificed, but nothing truly bad had happened to him.

“Have a nice meeting?” A voice called out.

Nagisa froze. He’d automatically started to walk back to class the quickest way, which meant cutting past one of the changing rooms. Unfortunately, this was during gym period for one of the other classes in the year group. Nagisa was face to face with Kuronuma, Oshiro’s friend, the guy he’d ‘assassinated’ months prior.

He continued to walk, ignoring any further attempts of goading. He’d given away that it was definitely him, nobody else would know exactly where he’d been instantly. Presumably, then, this was for revenge. Maybe Nagisa would have been angry, but it was at the back of his mind right then and there. The deed had already been done, he was irrelevant.

Nagisa spent the rest of the day not really speaking unless he really had to, until the final bell rung out. He had to, most importantly, figure out how exactly to tell Karma about his parents. Nagisa could only hope he didn’t get too upset with him, but with the way his luck was going currently, it wasn’t likely. He’d just have to brace himself.

When it came to picking Daichi up, briefly, all the bad feelings fell away. He wondered, standing there in the waiting area, if any of the other parents looked at him weird. Nagisa couldn’t say he’d ever noticed it, but then again they didn’t know his entire backstory. Or maybe, like him, they were too preoccupied with being reunited with their kids.

“Dada! Dada!” Daichi came rushing out, a screwed up piece of paper in hand. “Did ‘ragarmi.”’

If he meant ‘origami’, that was certainly not what he was holding. Maybe, if Nagisa gave him the benefit of the doubt, it had been something before he clearly got excited and scrunched it up in his fist. But, well, Daichi didn’t exactly have much patience. Nagisa couldn’t imagine him sitting down and carefully crafting on his own.

Nagisa bent down all the same, examining it like it was precious. “Nice job! What shape is it?”

“Uhm, boat!”

Everything was worth this. There was not even the slightest thought in his head that maybe it would have been easier if he’d gone with his initial determination to adopt out. Even the thought of it hurt him, now that he loved Daichi with somehow more than the force of his entire heart. As long as Daichi was fine, it didn’t matter what happened to him. It didn’t even feel like much of a sacrifice, after that.

In fact, Nagisa was happy to find him in a ‘good mood’ moment. It probably wouldn’t last all evening, but honestly a temper tantrum or two was the least of his worries right now. A part of Nagisa just wanted to hold him close and squeeze his little pouty cheeks off. But Daichi probably wouldn’t appreciate him doing that. He still snuggled up to him… sometimes…

“Do you want to stop by the park and play battle ship?” Nagisa suggested, now that he had a
It was great motivation to get Daichi to agree to baths. Perhaps encouraging violence wasn’t ideal, but he seemed to get a kick out of it. Not just toy boats, though, there were also rubber ducks and fishes involved. Everything was hilarious off scale. It wasn’t so much of a real game, aside from him tugging a toy ship around and ‘sinking’ everything else.


He continued with bomb sounds all the wait out of the building, earning them some strange looks. But Nagisa didn’t care, because he couldn’t trade anything about Daichi for the universe. Even if it felt like he was chasing after his craziness most of the time. Daichi stopped then, focusing on… something, before throwing the paper over arm. That warranted an even bigger explosion noise, apparently.

Nagisa smiled lightly. “You just used your boat as a… grenade?”

Daichi tilted his head. “Bye bye boat.”

“Let’s just go home then, yes? Or would you still like to go to the park?”

He didn’t seem to mind the change in plans, just skipping ahead. Not that Daichi knew the way to the park, but Nagisa just took that as a signal that he wanted to go home. Well, Nagisa knew he couldn’t avoid the inevitable now. There was absolutely nothing he could do, until Monday. He couldn’t lose his nerve, right there and there.

Unusually, Karma hadn’t vacated to his own room to study by the time they actually got back. Most days, he’d come out to greet them anyway, but he was clearly sitting at the table, looking at something on his phone. Nagisa had no idea how to even begin to explain what had happened. Thankfully, Daichi was still excitable enough.

“Yo Papa!” He said, trying and almost failing to tug his own shoes off.

Nagisa narrowed his eyes. “You taught him to do the ‘yo’ thing?”

“Hey Daichan,” Karma said, allowing Daichi to run up and fling himself at his leg. “Yeah, of course I did.” He looked down at Daichi. “Hey, why don’t you go and choose something you want to wear tomorrow from your room?”

That meant he wanted to talk, alone. Daichi ran off, not even questioning it. Wow, he was in a good mood.

“Karma,” Nagisa started, “I-“

Karma looked down at his phone again. “Why did my parents text me- for the first time in a year- to tell me they’re at the airport and they need our address?”

“So quick?” Nagisa practically squeaked.

He stood up, though he looked concerned and confused instead of angry. “They said it was to do with you… What’s going on, exactly?”

“Listen, I’ll explain, I just-“
Nagisa was cut off by the buzzer.

Chapter End Notes

I'm on my way to library to study Japanese history, ay fun.

Anyway! Yeah, Japan really IS this backwards in sexist in some cases, IRL, so I wanted to represent that with omegas here. Yay, our first taste of the real world! References for the events of this chapter come from Good Morning Call, and Jyuu Yon Sai No Haha (14 year old mother) - both drama series. I kind of... mushed both circumstances. JYSNH is actually a really good drama, especially if you're interested in teen pregnancy in Japan lol.

I hope you enjoyed! Or, well, are living in anticipation. Look, you had two solid chapters of fluff, it's only natural that the drama resumes.
Parents Time

Chapter Summary

Karma's parents arrive

Chapter Notes

(this chapter isn't the one I cried over don't worry your little socks)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Nagisa hadn’t seen Karma’s parents since he was a first year in middle school. It wasn’t exactly how he thought his day was going to set out, to have them at their door. Uselessly, Karma’s eyes widened, but he didn’t make any move to answer it. God, Nagisa had hoped that he would have an opportunity to explain this situation first, from his own lips. No time for that though.

By the looks of things, Karma was just going to stand there like he’d seen a ghost. And Nagisa couldn’t stand the silence. This was his fault, anyway, so he decided to take the plunge in stepping forwards, right up to the doorway. Karma made no move to stop him, not in the slightest. Nagisa thought he’d have had something more to say, he was never usually this silent. He undid the latch.

The first thing Nagisa noticed, actually, was a whole lot of luggage. For some reason, that’s all his eyes could focus on, easier to zone in on the floor. He couldn’t stand the idea of looking up, direct at the problem. Nagisa was terrified, chilled to the bone, just from this presence. He didn’t know what to say or do.

“Nagisa,” Karma’s mother said, her tone sharp as a blade. “A shame that we’re meeting under such circumstances.”

They’d met him before, a few times, but he realised what she actually meant. For all intents and purposes, it was like he was their son in law, now. It was a completely different context. He’d never met somebody’s parents like this before. But it wasn’t exactly normal circumstances, they were in his home, and with all the drama…

He tried to remember his manners. “W-welcome, Akabane san.”

It was weird, they were younger than he remembered. Since he’d only been twelve the last time he saw them, practically a child, all adults had seemed generally old. But no, they were definitely both younger than Nagisa’s own parents. It was clear, Karma looked most like his mother, though he got that feeling from the sharpness of her eyes, rather than the crimson colour of her hair. Behind her, Karma’s father was silent, though it was obvious he was examining everything happening before him.

Her chin tilted up. “This place isn’t what I imagined it would be.”

Finally, Karma got a grip on himself. “What, were you picturing a mansion?”
“Well,” she met his challenge, “I assumed since you ‘don’t need our money’, you’d found yourself in a life of luxury!”

Karma glared. “So sorry for disappointing you.”

His father spoke up, then. “Don’t speak to your mother like that.”

“You left the country,” Karma pointed out, “I can speak to her however I please.”

The tension was too much for Nagisa to put up with. By the looks of things, they could stand there and argue all day. Weirdly, he felt on edge, like he really didn’t want them to hate him. Probably a fleeting cause, he imagined they hated him already. He needed them to be on side, though Nagisa was pretty sure his school had already decided what they were going to do.

“C-can I take your coats?” Nagisa tried, the only thing he could think of.

Neither of them actually said yes, but Karma’s mother started slipping hers off. Surprisingly, despite her cool exterior, she was dressed in light and comfortable looking clothes, lightly coloured like the breeze. His father, too, was clad in a similar fashion. It really felt like they should have been wearing business suits or something. Somehow, though, it made him feel just the slightest bit more at ease. He still rushed over, taking the coats to hang up, avoiding the suitcases. Wouldn’t they have left that at their hotel?

Karma seemed to notice the luggage, too. “You’re not staying here.”

“We flew out on such short notice,” his father said, “there’s no choice.”

He didn’t seem too happy about that. “You still haven’t told me why.”

His mother looked directly at Nagisa. “You didn’t tell him?”

“I-I didn’t get the chance,” Nagisa admitted, feeling sick to the stomach. “It’s really hard to explain.”

“There’s a good chance of your expulsion,” his mother said, “nothing hard to say about that.”

Karma’s eyes widened, looking at Nagisa in question.

“Anyway, there are more important things to discuss right now,” she continued. “Like how we’re Nagisa’s legal guardians? You failed to mention that, Karma.”

Nagisa swallowed, looking at Karma desperately. “That’s why my school called them.”

They ended up drifting to the table. Not the sofa, that would be far too familiar. Them on one side of it, Karma and Nagisa on the other. If Karma was annoyed at him for not saying anything, he wasn’t showing it. Choosing his battles, Nagisa figured. The atmosphere was so awkward, Nagisa could practically feel if crawling under his skin.

He hadn’t said much, all things considered, but it was Karma’s father who looked between the two of them seriously. “Why would you sign those papers?”

“M-maybe this isn’t a conversation for me,” Nagisa interjected, desperately feeling like he didn’t belong.

Karma’s mother glared at him directly. “You signed yourself into this family. That’s why we came here.”
“What papers?” Karma challenged, even though Nagisa was certain he’d caught onto at least that.

His father didn’t look impressed. “The intent of bond forms, Karma. I don’t know what possessed you, at fifteen, to sign away your life like that. I thought we showed you better than that. Just how many times did we tell you how much we regretted settling down too young?”

Beside him, Karma stiffened. Nagisa felt a chill go through his body, and then a certain kind of anger. As far as he just heard it, he’d told Karma in not so many words that they regretted their lives. Regretted him. Karma never mentioned his parents treating him like that… But Nagisa knew he wasn’t in a situation where he could just speak up about this. He felt kind of sad, actually.

Karma sat up a little straighter. “To make life easier for our son, who we kind of owe something to, you know?”

He didn’t let up, though. “Why would you sign those papers either? And you know what I’m talking about. Did you really need to claim paternity?”

“Why wouldn’t I?” Karma sounded a little taken aback.

His mother leaned forward. “Because that’s going to stay with you for life.”

If only the floor could swallow Nagisa whole. He should be disgusted at what they were saying, really, but Nagisa couldn’t help but think how lucky he was. Everyone knew the horror stories, most people in Karma’s position wouldn’t have cared, would have run off and left him to deal with it all alone. Nagisa knew he wouldn’t have been able to do it alone.

“Yeah,” Karma didn’t miss a beat, “kids are kind of permanent.”

“How are you meant to know it’s even yours?” His father challenged.

That hurt, but his feelings weren’t the most important thing in this situation, not by a long shot. He could feel cool anger, simply racing out of Karma. There couldn’t be fight, not here and now.

Nagisa thought about all of this, in just a second or two, and acted first. He could feel the tension all over Karma’s consciousness, and suddenly struck, poking him hard in the throat. Immediately, rational cutting off.

“You should see him,” Nagisa finally said, as gently as he could. “He’s so much like Karma, I think I’ll mix them up one day. It’s been a little while, anyway, I should check on him.”

It wasn’t that Nagisa was just trying to leave Karma to deal with it. It didn’t matter what his parents said, it felt like just watching him get scolded, and it didn’t even involve him entirely. Well, it did involve him, but they seemed more upset at Karma’s actions. Nagisa had known, years ago now, that those bond papers hadn’t been a good idea. And now here they were.

Daichi was in his own little world, when Nagisa came into his room. He was sitting at the foot of his bed, rather than on it, head stuck in one of the books he seemed to read all the time nowadays. From page to page, he flicked, not acknowledging Nagisa’s presence at all. Predictably, there were toys everywhere, which of course he hadn’t bothered to try and clean up or anything. But there was only so much you could expect out of a two year old.

He seemed to finish what he was reading, closing the book, and then his eyes widened like he was at a magic show. “Dada!”

Nagisa sat down on the floor in front of him. “Were you playing a game earlier?”
“Yeah!” He said enthusiastically. “Truck go boom, and, and-” He started rambling, his words sounding like speech, but way too fast and mispronounced for Nagisa to actually understand what he was actually saying. He still nodded along, though, as if he truly was completely invested in the conversation.

Honestly, playing with Daichi was much better than sitting through the other conversation. In fact, there was nothing Nagisa would rather do with his time. Not that Daichi really wanted him to do much, anymore, mostly just handing Nagisa the occasional toy to hold for a few seconds. He was deep in whatever he was doing, though, fully concentrating.

Nagisa would probably hate anyone who tried to take him away, too. But he supposed Karma’s parents had left him first, or something. It wasn’t something Karma ever spoke to him about, he was hardly the ‘share your feelings’ kind of person. So Nagisa didn’t understand the full situation, at all. Calling it a rocky relationship, based on that interaction.

“Where Papa?” Daichi eventually asked, like he only just noticed.

He wasn’t sure how to go about this. As far as Nagisa knew, Daichi had never met his other grandparents before. It would be easier if Daichi was older, since there was surely no way he’d be able to understand what was happening, why there were strange people he didn’t know in their apartment. Did he even really understand what grandparents were?

“You know your Grandpa and Grandpa?” Nagisa tried.

Daichi thought about it for a second. “Gra’ma and Gra’pa! Wanna go!”

He sighed. “Sorry Daichi, I didn’t mean we’re going to their house. We have to stay here tonight.”

His lower lip trembled. “But-“

The last thing anybody needed was a break down, especially on a day like this. The thing was, Nagisa almost had no idea if and when it was going to happen. Sometimes, he just got really upset out of nowhere for no reason. He tried to give it a silver lining, though, that Daichi was just getting smarter and more aware of himself. It must be overwhelming, to learn and experience so much new stuff every day.

“Hey, look at this,” Nagisa redirected his attention, rolling one of the cars into the bedframe.

Daichi lunged after it. “Big crash!”

“Actually,” he started, “most people have two Grandma and Grandpas.”

He was rolling the car around. “Two?”

“Yeah,” Nagisa observed him for signs of understanding, “One set for each parent. Your other grandparents are here, today.”

Daichi seemed pretty apathetic to this news, which confirmed that he didn’t understand the significance of it. That was probably better, anyway. Daichi was usually pretty good with new people, but there was no real knowing how he’d actually react. He wondered how Karma’s parents would react. With the way they were talking about everything, Nagisa wasn’t sure it would be good.

“Hey.”
Nagisa looked up, just to see Karma standing there. He looked **tired**. If he thought about it, he **had** been sitting in here for quite a while now. Had Karma’s parents been chewing him out all this time? Perhaps Nagisa shouldn’t have left him to the wolves, though he was sure Karma could handle himself. It was Nagisa’s fault they were even here though.

“Papa!” Daichi forgot his game, stretching his arms out.

Karma didn’t pick him up, instead just sitting down beside Nagisa and giving him a high five. “Looks like you’re having fun.”

“Yeah!”

He looked at Nagisa. “Did you know you’re only interested in my family’s money?”

That was… weird. “B-but you don’t even have access to that anymore, you said.”

Karma didn’t seem particularly happy. “The **best** part is how I need to stop using you for sex.”

It was almost funny, though Nagisa spluttered, face reddening at the suggestion. It would have been, if the situation wasn’t so serious. Did Karma’s parents truly think those things about their relationship? They hadn’t outwardly disliked him **this** much before, before he and Karma had any kind of ‘romantic’ attachment.

“They told me what happened,” Karma continued, then. “I want to know, why **now**?”

Nagisa stared at the ground. “This guy… wouldn’t leave me alone, so I guess I… used my **talent** on him.”

Karma stiffened. “**How?**”

“I didn’t hurt him,” Nagisa confirmed quickly, “but I think he held a grudge.”

The conversation between them tampered off, then, and instead they just turned, watching Daichi play his little game. There was something Karma wanted to say, but wasn’t. That much was obvious. But Nagisa supposed that was fair, since he hadn’t been able to tell Karma what happened to him earlier that day. It didn’t feel like this day was ever going to end.

“My parents are staying,” Karma eventually said. “I could force them not to, I guess, but it sounds like you need them or something.”

He shifted. “I don’t know what good they can possibly do. I-I know nobody’s going to listen to **me**, anyway, but they seemed pretty certain. I think this is just a formality.”

There was a weird look on Karma’s face. “Why are you-“

“Papa!” Daichi cut him off before he could finish. It seemed like he didn’t actually have anything important to say, though, instead just loudly reminding them that he did, in fact, exist. He came over to Karma, tugging on his shoulder, as though he was attempting to climb up there.

“You wanna **go**, Daichan?” Karma said teasingly.

They playfought like this a lot. Daichi always seemed to find it funny, trying to get at least a few good hits in. Of course, Karma was extremely careful not to actually hurt him in the process. Daichi shrieked in delight when Karma had him tipped upside down over his shoulder. He tried his best to squirm out of that hold, but of course Karma was a lot stronger, and he wasn’t just going to
let Daichi win.

The two of them would have happily done that for hours, but they were interrupted in the way Nagisa’s stomach eventually grumbled. Loudly. It startled even him. It was sad, actually, since he’d been enjoying briefly not thinking about everything that was going on in his life.

“I already ordered food,” Karma said, “it should be here soon.”

Did that mean pizza? Nagisa wanted pizza. “What did you order?”

He wrinkled his nose. “Indian, since it’s clearly my parents’ favourite.”

Nagisa really couldn’t help but wonder if there was something truly broken there. As far as he’d gathered, Karma had always liked his independence, or at least preferred it to the idea of having strict parents. But Nagisa supposed anybody would be sad, if they felt unloved. He knew he certainly had, when his parents were freshly divorced and he didn’t really see his dad all that much.

As if on cue, the buzzer sounded out, and their little bubble of sanctuary was pierced. Karma went to go answer the door, so Nagisa took just a few seconds to linger where he was. He felt oddly nervous, at the prospect of stepping back out there, as though he was walking into a lion’s den. At least there would be food. Food was a good talking point to change an awkward topic.

Thankfully, nobody looked at him too closely. Karma’s parents were still sat at the table, dishing up their plates, though notably the luggage had been moved. At least, nobody looked at him, until of course Daichi decided to follow right after him, like some kind of lost duckling. Hopefully the amount of food to choose from would prevent him from getting stressed by relatively new people.

The tension in the room seemed to rise, though, Karma’s parents stopping mid motion. And then Nagisa remembered that Daichi was actually pretty big now. It was probably less overwhelming to meet a baby, which could only really exist. But at two, Daichi was aware of his surroundings, could hold a decent conversation sometimes. He was his own little person, and reminded Nagisa and Karma of that fact every day. Most people didn’t suddenly meet their grandkids when they were this old.

“Papa,” Daichi said, almost tripping over his own feet to get to where the food was. “Hungry.”

Karma’s tone was the equivalent of an eye roll. “Well, nothing’s stopping you from eating, is it?”

He climbed his way up onto a chair, looking at the selection in front of him. “Wow.”

“He-He’s-“ Karma’s mother struggled to put into words.

“His birthday was a couple of months ago,” Karma said bitingly.

Nagisa sighed, not wanting to sit through another argument. “Do you wanna say hi, Daichi?”

Like he was guilty of something, Daichi froze, mouth stuffed full of food. “Uh, hi!”

Things went quiet after that, though it was less uncomfortable since everyone was eating. Nagisa noticed, though, both of Karma’s parents were more focused on watching Daichi than eating their own meal. It didn’t seem to be in a bad way, if anything it was a look of awe. Nagisa was strangely pleased about that, because as humble as he was in himself, he could readily admit that his son was absolutely amazing.

“Done,” he said eventually, proudly presenting his plate.
Nagisa regarded him, realising he’d eaten quite a lot. “Good job,” he said, “hands!”

Enthusiastically, Daichi clapped his hands together, sticking them out. He seemed to think cleaning up after eating was a bit of a game, which was fine by Nagisa, since it made his cooperation ten times easier. Once Nagisa had wiped his hands clean, he worked on his mouth, which was only slightly covered in curry sauce. He was done in no time, and Daichi had had enough, squirming away.

“Wanna see,” Daichi pointed enthusiastically to the TV.

Karma caught onto exactly what he meant. “A movie? Which one?”

“Frozen!”

“No.”

“Yeah!”

He groaned loudly. “You’ve seen that movie like twenty times now.”

Karma wasn’t exactly stopping him, though, getting up from the table to go put it on for him. Honestly, Nagisa didn’t understand his fascination with that movie either, but it kept him highly entertained for a couple of hours. It was the most quiet they could get him nowadays, aside from when he was reading, but he didn’t focus on that for too long.

Since they were doing that, Nagisa decided to clear everything up. Karma’s parents didn’t say anything to him, still, barely even reacted to him taking their plates. He supposed that was better than the harsh words of earlier, though. They didn’t say anything to each other, either… Nagisa wasn’t sure what they were doing.

When he returned, they were halfway out of their chairs, exchanging a nod between them, before going off to Nagisa’s room. To sleep, presumably. Great, absolutely great. Nagisa’s face went a little red, when he realised that meant they definitely knew about his and Karma’s sleeping arrangement. Apparently Karma didn’t care about this fact.

He flopped down on the sofa, eventually, in an attempt to stop worrying. Okay, so he’d seen this movie a couple of times recently. But he didn’t mind it so much, it wasn’t the worst thing he’d ever seen, and he knew eventually Daichi would be obsessed with something completely different, probably, anyway. So he happily sat to watch the movie, pressed pretty close to where the two of them were sitting, despite their unnecessarily large sofa.

And then Nagisa noticed that Karma was singing under his breath.

He looked up. “You know the lyrics?”

Karma stopped for a second, looking at Nagisa seriously. “Have you not noticed how often he wants to watch this movie?”

“But the lyrics?”

He got an evil look on his face. “But with you~ I see your face~ and it’s nothing like I’ve ever known before~”

Nagisa groaned, trying to ignore the mock way Karma was staring at him, eyes sparking with mischief. “Stop.”
“You know the chorus,” Karma laughed. “C’mon.”

They weren’t at karaoke! Still, Nagisa found himself joining it, but not without an eyeroll. He didn’t even know the song that well, but Karma, who had elected himself Ana’s role, seemed to be going strong right into the second verse. Maybe they really should got to karaoke. Nagisa stopped caring after a little while, singing along freely.

He laughed, at the end of the song. “Can I say something crazy….Will you marry me?”

“Can I say something crazier?” Karma said, as dramatically as he could manage. “Yes!”

The look between them was weirdly intense, after what had been pretty light hearted. Was Nagisa reading too much into it? Or-

Daichi looked up at them seriously. “Ew.”

Thankfully, that broke the tension that had suddenly formed swiftly, both of them finding that reaction pretty funny. Karma laughed, ruffling Daichi’s hair, before he managed to squirm away. He actually did seem to get a little bored of the movie, then, getting off the sofa to run around. Neither of them dared turn the film off, though, in case he did decide he felt like watching it properly again.

Maybe it wasn’t the best reaction to such a serious situation, but Nagisa was happy to have his mind taken off that could only be described as his own impending doom. Things seemed simpler, on the screen of a kid’s movie. Eventually, Daichi did come sit with them again, very obviously struggling to keep his eyes open at the end. He was asleep, before Nagisa shot Karma a look and moved to stand up, bending down to carry him. He cringed, finding Daichi quite a bit heavier than he once was, especially as dead weight. They shouldn’t have let him fall asleep like that, but Nagisa could just him a bath in the morning, he supposed. Though, trying to get him dressed into pyjamas and into bed was a bit of a challenge, without waking him up.

Nagisa got into his own night clothes, to find Karma was already lying on top of the bed, deep in thought. Maybe he should say something, but he didn’t know how. Honestly, Nagisa was surprised Karma wasn’t completely mad at him, considering this entire situation was his own fault. He deserved his anger.

“Karma-“

His eyes flicked open. “Hey, wanna mildly piss them off?”

Nagisa’s face contorted in confusion. “Your parents? How-“

Definitely having a plan on hand, Karma reached behind him, forcefully smacking the wall behind the headboard. “Oh, yeah, Nagisa. Harder!”

He went red, ever so red. Like he was going to spontaneously combust. “What are you doing?”

“Nothing they clearly don’t think we already are,” he justified, and then lunged, shoving his hand underneath Nagisa’s armpit.

Nagisa squeaked. “Ah- Karma!”

He grinned. “Perfect.”
“No!” Nagisa said in horror, fully realising what he was trying. “I’m not going to partake in... sex noises.”

“Fine,” he replied simply, “I’ll just do it on my own. Mmm,” he raised his voice, “right there!”

Nagisa had to stop him, immediately, or he wouldn’t be able to look Karma’s parents in the eye. Since Karma had strength on his side, Nagisa had to move with the force of his whole body, leaping on top of him so he could have a hope of pinning him down. Thankfully, Karma hadn’t been expecting it, so Nagisa managed to get his shoulder held down on the bed, shoving a hand over his mouth to silence him.

“You’re only helping,” he said, though it was muffled. “With the noise.”

Nagisa removed his hand and turned away. “Just go to sleep.”

“I would,” he said, “but you’re blocking my access to the lamp.”

He climbed off him, then, lying so his back was turned away from Karma in mock annoyance. He clearly wasn’t that effected by the gesture, though, still swinging an arm over Nagisa’s body, spooning up to him from behind. Nagisa was, admittely, used to this, and would probably struggle to sleep without it nowadays. He couldn’t resist, pressing himself back closer so Karma knew that he wasn’t annoyed enough to hold a grudge.

Nagisa didn’t dream that often, or if he did, he didn’t remember it, since he tended to wake up naturally with a decent amount of rest. That night, however, Nagisa had some kind of image. It was weird and abstract, but Nagisa knew he had to run away from it. He went as fast as he could, until he bumped into something. Someone. Karma. The dream shifted then, his brain somehow latching onto the last night’s activities.

Even asleep, a part of him knew this wasn’t exactly right. It didn’t seem to matter so much, though, as dream Karma’s arms wrapped around his body, lips going to his neck. Naturally, Nagisa arched against him, closing the small gap between them. The words weren’t exactly clear, but as fake and overdramatic as they’d been, Nagisa became weak as dream Karma repeated the moans he’d made.

He blinked awake, still in Karma’s arms, but fully clothed. Karma’s lips were pressed to his neck, but he was actually minorly drooling on him, rather than kissing. Nagisa would have been grossed out, but if anything he felt hot, too hot, especially between his legs. Knowing he had no time to waste, Nagisa extracted himself as quickly as he could, without waking Karma up, heart pounding in his chest. He reached for the emergency scent blocker he had stashed for, well, emergencies, and sprayed it over the place his body had just occupied.

Nagisa wasn’t even sure what time it was, but he needed to shower. The feeling of slick between his thighs had never been pleasant, even if it thankfully wasn’t a lot. He was still hot all over, by the time he got there, but he refused to do anything about it. There was no way, with how much Karma was currently occupying his mind, that he’d be able relieve himself and not think about him. And he couldn’t go there. So, he turned the shower temperature down, and suffered.

It wasn’t ridiculously early, he realised afterwards, so on somewhat of a whim Nagisa decided to cook breakfast. Usually, they were too busy for anything that fancy, especially if Nagisa wanted to stay in bed as long as possible. But that wasn’t an issue today, on the weekend. Besides, they did have guests, no matter how bad the circumstances of them being there were.

He was actually surprised to see Karma’s mother come out of the bedroom, just about the time he’d finished preparing the food. Fortunately, it was the kind of thing you could just cook when
you wanted it, once the preparation was over. She blinked, too, like she surprised to see him.

“Good morning,” Nagisa said, as politely as he could manage. “Would you like tea or coffee or anything?”

She sat down at the table. “Sencha, if you have it.”

It was like he forgot how to make tea, right then and there. He left the actual food aside, and watched the water boil like a hawk. Like the tea would turn bitter if the temperature was just a degree off. When he was a lot younger, he got pretty good at making tea, realising it always seemed to put his own mother in a better mood.

“Here you are,” he set it down carefully, lowering his head.

She tilted her head. “Nagisa, if all I wanted was a submissive omega housewife for my son, I’d be less upset about this bond contract of yours.”

He wasn’t sure how to react to that. “I-I-“

“Relax. You must think we hate you,” she said steadily. “On the contrary, had the circumstances been different, I think I’d approve of the relationship. Karma’s always carried so much anger, I’ve seen it in him since he was a child. That seems to fade a little, when he’s next to you.”

Nagisa really wasn’t sure how to respond. Was it some kind of backhanded compliment? “We’ve… been through a lot, together.”

She looked solemn. “We’re not traditionalists, even if our concerns might make it seem that way. My husband and I married and started a family before we knew what was good for us, before we’d even lived our lives. If I could do it over, another way, I would. I never wanted Karma to have to live with that kind of a weight.”

“I don’t,” Nagisa swallowed, “I don’t think I could ever say something like that. Not to anyone, certainly not to my son. It wasn’t the life I imagined myself having, but I’ve never wanted to go back and change it. I think Karma would say the same.”

“There you go,” she looked at him more directly. “You can drop the act now. You are opinionated, I won’t be offended.”

“It’s not an act,” Nagisa defended, somehow finding an inner strength. “Or an opinion. Anybody would think their parents don’t care about them, if they directly say they wish they’d never had them.”

She took a sip from her tea, like she was unsurprised. “Yes, I suppose neither of us were the best at expressing our emotions, or the best parents. I regret that, too. Perhaps you won’t believe that, but I do love him, I think it’s hard not to love your own son.”

A part of Nagisa wanted to argue. Because he knew what it was like to love a child. He knew how much it blinded him, how he wouldn’t hesitate to do anything for him. And he’d had that love since the moment he first held him, held him and never wanted to let go. The idea of leaving Daichi on his own for any quantity of time, when it wasn’t necessary, made him feel sick.

“The food smells good,” she changed the subject. “Do you cook often?”

Nagisa turned back towards kitchen. “N-not really. Karma showed me how to make this, though.”
She sniffed, testing the air. “Aloo Paratha? He liked it a lot when he was younger, too.”

“All Daichi ever seems to want to eat is pancakes in the morning,” he said, “and this is a similar enough compromise.”

Finally, a gentle smile came on her face. “He’s a sweet boy, from what I can tell. I feel like he’s intelligent too. You’ve raised him well.”

What was he supposed to say to that? Thank you?

She coughed. “You’re intelligent, too, Nagisa. Why would you sign yourself over as property so freely? I don’t believe Karma would have forced you, at least I certainly hope that.”

“H-he didn’t,” Nagisa said, somewhat taken aback. “The only reason I did was so that we’d look like a real couple on paper. I- I couldn’t stand the idea of Daichi being judged, because of our mistakes. I trusted that Karma wouldn’t use his,” he cringed, “ownership in a bad way. We never thought it would impact anybody else, though. I’m sorry for it.”

Her eyes were wide. “You love him.”

Nagisa practically jumped. “I-“

She waved him off. “I’m not upset. I think just about anyone would be overjoyed, to realise their child is loved wholly by someone decent.”

Any longer, and he was going to freak out. His feelings for Karma confused him to the core, and for someone to just put an easy label on it… A year and a half ago, Nagisa would have agreed, easily. But then he dated, and whilst he was sure now that he hadn’t been saying ‘love’ with his heart to Rin, it still complicated things. And now, Nagisa didn’t understand his own emotions. Wasn’t sure if ‘love’ was even the right word to describe the storm Karma raged inside his heart.

“I’ll help you stay at your school,” she said suddenly, “with all the power I can. And I’m sure my husband will do the same. No matter your intentions, for all intents and purposes, you’re an Akabane now. And I’ll tell you one thing, our family doesn’t give up when there’s a problem.”

Chapter End Notes

*drama intensifies*

This turned out... weirdly fluffy. The song Karma and Nagisa were singing is 'Love Is An Open Door', by the way, if that wasn't clear. Hmm. Calm before the storm, my friends.

In other news, my exams are FINALLY over. Now it's just... two tests a week, once again. Yeah, university is hard.

As always, I love and appreciate all comments and feedback!
Nagisa tried his best to swallow down the nerves in his stomach. After a very long and confusing weekend, it was finally the morning before the meeting. Even though Nagisa was pretty much convinced that his expulsion was guaranteed at this point, but Karma’s mother had inflated his hopes a little. If he dared hope.

It was clear that whatever else they were aside, Karma’s parents were very intelligent. That made sense, Nagisa supposed. Karma had to get it from somewhere. Maybe there really was a way around it, maybe… They weren’t telling him, but Karma’s parents seemed to have figured out their plan. They were more like silent thinkers, Nagisa realised.

“One, two…” Daichi was looking at the spoons on the table, “uhm, four…”

“Three,” Karma’s father corrected him.

“Oh.”

Aside from what Karma’s mother had said, during their brief conversation a couple of days ago, Nagisa wasn’t really sure how they felt about Daichi. In Daichi’s case, he seemed to have adjusted to the new people in his life pretty quickly. But he’d never really shown much stranger anxiety before anyway. Perhaps that was a good thing.

“That was pretty close, you know,” he said, and then went silent again. Almost like he was brooding.

Karma’s mother sipped her tea. She drunk a lot of the stuff, apparently. “Though didn’t you say reading came more naturally?”

“Y-yeah,” Nagisa said. He wasn’t exactly the show off kind of parent, but he was proud. “I think he was able to read ‘dog’, last week. It’s improving really fast.”

She smiled. “I remember when Karma was leaning to read.”

Karma coughed, not so subtly. “Surely that was the nanny’s job, not yours.”
“You still showed me,” she didn’t miss a beat, “you were so pressed about it!”

“I think I’ll go off now,” he replied, somewhat darkly.

He hated this game of happy families, Nagisa could tell. It made him feel guilty, because he knew Karma was only tolerating it for his sake. At least it would be over, in just a few hours. Nagisa was honestly pretty happy about that, no matter the result of the meeting, it was better to know for definite what course his life might now take.

“Papa?” Daichi looked up in confusion, as Karma started reaching for his coat.

Karma bent down, once he had it on. “You’re coming with me a little early today, Daichan.”

It made more sense, due to the meeting. But Daichi, thankfully, didn’t seem to mind that his routine was slightly changing. He hopped down from the table, going over to the entrance to find his shoes. Honestly, he really was pretty smart. In only a few years, he’d have to start school for real, though, and Nagisa wasn’t sure how to feel about that.

“Have a good day,” Nagisa called out.

Daichi was in his own little world, though he still turned around. “Bye bye.”

Similarly, Karma nodded at him, which was as close to ‘good luck’ as he was going to get.

Pressure refilled the atmosphere, then. At least with Daichi around, things weren’t just quiet. Nagisa wasn’t really sure how to strike up a conversation with Karma’s parents. Despite that conversation, and their agreement to help him, Nagisa was still pretty sure they resented him. But there didn’t seem a lot he could do to actually fix that, honestly.

“What are you worried about?” Karma’s mother asked smoothly.

He jolted. “Things could still go really badly.”

Karma’s father leant back in his chair. “You should have more faith.”

“We should probably leave soon, too,” Nagisa tried, “my school’s a little far away.”

It was more than a little awkward, shuffling out to school with other people. Nagisa was so used to his walk by then that it was weird to be accompanied, most days he would keep his head down and walk as fast as he could. They still maintained silence between them, though Nagisa noticed Karma’s parents seemed to be looking around quite a lot, as if they were floating through a dream word.

Thankfully, by the time they got on the train, the lack of conversation wasn’t weird. Kunugigaoka had always been quite a respectful town. Like most days, Nagisa just stared out of the window, as the train sped between towns. But this time, he realised it might be the last time he saw the blurs of the scenery around him, and he felt a kind of sadness in his chest.

They waited outside the office he’d originally heard his fate in, on a few plastic chairs. Nagisa still felt like a guest here, sandwiched between two parents who didn’t really belong to him. He wasn’t really sure how to cope that this was the reality of what was happening, that there was still a good chance that he’d be expelled at any moment.

“Please do come in,” one of who Nagisa assumed were the board members, gestured at the door.
It didn’t feel as scary, now he wasn’t completely on his own, with the authority opposite him. Reading their expressions, Nagisa wasn’t sure what everyone was thinking. They seemed guarded, chins tilted up like they were looking down on him. Something in him deflated, like he knew their minds were already made up.

The headmaster looked between them all. “In the interests of keeping this situation at minimum, I would like to give Shiota san the opportunity to voluntarily step down, which would mean none of this would appear on his permanent record.”

“We’re not interested,” Karma’s mother said sharply.

He inhaled. “Very well, then. After much consideration, I’m afraid we don’t have any other choice but to terminate Shiota san’s education here.”

Nagisa couldn’t breathe.

“Tell me,” Karma’s father spoke up, “which rule you believe has been breached?”

The headmaster gulped. “There’s not necessarily an explicit rule, but as a private institution, we have full discretion over matters-“

He stood up. “That’s ridiculous. How are students supposed to know what sort of lifestyle, if you refuse to refer to them as rules, to abide by, if they’re not listed anywhere? Even the most well respected companies have an employment contract. Yes, they’re ultimately left up to the boss’ interpretation, but those guidelines still exist. As an educational facility, as well as enriching the mind, is it not your responsibility to prepare your students for that working environment?”

“Underage pregnancy is a given for anywhere,” he said, tiredly.

Karma’s mother cleared her throat. “But, the child was born before Nagisa was even officially accepted into this school. By that logic, if you’re truly looking into the backstories of all of your students, then you had no issue with it before. That suggests some time during the last two years, you changed your policies. But… there was no written notice of this on record.”

Nagisa hadn’t even thought about that. Technically, he hadn’t even sat the entrance exam until the day after Daichi was born. A spark of hope started to burn in his chest. For the first time, Nagisa really saw how alike Karma was to his parents. They could fight, like this. They really might save him.

The board members looked at each other, and sweat beaded down the headmaster’s face. “B-but the cohabitation…”

She smirked. “Ah, yes, that.”

Karma’s father looked over at her, matching the expression. “Rules without clear purpose are a little Orwellian, don’t you think? I can’t say I’ve ever been an educator, but surely the goal of it is to prevent anything inappropriate from happening. However! Nagisa is bonded to our son.”

“You recognise that,” Karma’s mother looked down at him, “or else we wouldn’t have been contacted as his proper guardians. Clearly, Nagisa’s birth parents have given their consent for this arrangement, and we have no issue with it. It’s hardly inappropriate.Traditionally, omegas have always bonded young. Expulsion on that basis would look more like intolerance to omegas in general, no?”

“I-“
“Of course,” Karma’s father continued, “any kind of rumour is best to avoided. I trust you have the resources to properly contain anything from getting out. We, too, will provide a moderate financial donation to assist in this cause, as well as to further ensure this institution thrive – without this particular issue coming up again.”

The headmaster looked absolutely terrified. “V-very well. W-we graciously accept your generosity. Shiota san w-will clearly continue his studies here.”

“Come on, Nagisa,” Karma’s mother said kindly, standing up to leave the room like that had been nothing at all.

On shaking legs, Nagisa followed them both, unsure of what had actually just happened. They’d… done it, like it was nothing. During that whole thing, he’d felt much like a fly on the wall than an actual participant, oddly detached. They were powerful people, with how quickly they’d convincingly unravelled that entire situation.

He was grateful, so grateful. Nagisa demonstrated it with a proper bow. “Thank you.”

“It’s nothing,” Karma’s mother said. “Karma’s been almost expelled many times, and he was actually guilty those times.”

“Still,” Nagisa said, “I practically owe you my life.”

Karma’s father sighed. “Don’t make it a habit, Nagisa. Anyway, our flight is in an hour.”

That stopped him right in his tracks. In an hour? Sure, Nagisa hadn’t expected them to hang around much after everything was settled, but they were just darting straight off. Something left an awful taste in his mouth at the realisation. Was it like this every time they went somewhere? Did they usually slip away with little fanfare?

“Drawn out goodbyes don’t do anybody any good,” Karma’s mother said. “This was always the plan. We’ll be seeing you, Nagisa.”

He wanted to yell at them that this was wrong, awful, but the words just wouldn’t come out. By the time he could even consider standing up to it, their backs were turned, and they were already have gone. Karma must have been used to this kind of treatment, the way it was handled so casually. It wasn’t like Nagisa could claim to have had a good relationship with his parents when he was younger, but he would have been worse if he felt abandoned like that.

But there was nothing Nagisa could do to fix it. Regardless of everything else, Nagisa still did owe them a great debt. Finally, he could let out the tension, because he was going to be okay again. Not that he’d been afraid of it before, but at least now he also knew that his position he was secure, for the foreseeable future.

Nagisa was actually pretty happy to return to class, since thinking he wouldn’t be allowed to again. He just hated the small amount of commotion it caused, walking in once a lesson had already started. Of course their teacher had to stop midsentence, and everyone turned to look at him as walked over to his desk. But that didn’t matter, really.

“You were gone a while,” Kita said, slight surprise lacing her tone, when the break started.

Nagisa looked down. “I… Had a meeting.”

“Sounds scary,” Nishi said, a gentle smile at his lips.
And then Nagisa thought that maybe he should just tell them the truth. Higashi already knew everything, albeit by accident, and she hadn’t hated him for it. But how was Nagisa supposed to bring something that significant up, after so long? It wasn’t exactly the easiest topic to just bring up out of the blue.

Higashi leant over. “What was that even about, anyway?”

“Daichi,” he said, before he lost his nerve, “and Karma, and everything else they found out about. But it’s all settled now.”

Kita squinted. “Who?”

He swallowed down as much air as possible. “My son.”

Of course, he had to explain after that. It was really hard to put everything into words, but he found himself talking for quite a while, drifting into his own world, almost, as he laid everything out. Nobody interrupted him, or asked any questions, so he just kept going, until really he’d run out of things to add.

There were a few beats, after he’d finished talking, and then Kita cleared her throat. “Nagisa kun… Why didn’t you just tell us?”

He was taken aback by that. “I-It didn’t really come up at first, and after that it seemed a bit weird to suddenly mention it after so long.

“He really is a cute kid,” Higashi said, breaking the silence.

Kita and Nishi looked at her with open mouths. “You knew?!”

She smiled awkwardly. “Ahaha, yeah… Kind of.”

“I think it’s pretty cool,” Nishi said. “Weird, but also… I can kind of picture you being a parent.”

Nagisa felt a lot better, now that they were talking about it, like a gust of fresh air swirling around his soul. He could stay, without fear, and now he wasn’t keeping anything from anybody. He really hadn’t had a good time with the stress, he realised now the weight tugging him down was gone. He was strangely ready to move on with his life now.

Thankful to be allowed in them, Nagisa paid a lot of attention to the last classes of the day. There was still a part of him, though, that couldn’t stop worrying about the catalyst of this entire situation. That guy, Kuronuma, had to have quite a lot of hatred for Nagisa, to try and get him expelled. Nagisa didn’t really like having enemies.

He got through the rest of the day, though. As much as he was grateful to be allowed to stay, he was also looking forward to going back home. Seeing Daichi again… It almost seemed like the older he got, the more Nagisa hated leaving him. Which was surely the opposite of how it was supposed to be. When he got old enough to reasonably be allowed out of an adult’s sight, Nagisa wasn’t sure how he was going to handle it. Weirdly, he was looking forward to seeing Karma, too, a fluttery feeling in his chest.

…What he wasn’t expecting was to see him so soon. But, as he came out of school, like he did pretty much every other day, Karma was waiting for him. Nagisa briefly looked down at his phone, but there was no message there to tell him that this was the plan. This was odd, Karma hadn’t just shown up like this before. Had something happened?
“Hi, Karma kun!” Higashi said pleasantly.

Karma smiled back, like this was casual. “Yo, it’s been a while.”

“I...” She looked at Nagisa, “I can’t stay around and talk today, but it was nice seeing you!”

Nagisa stared at Karma. “Uhm, what are you doing here?”

“I’m happy to see you too,” Karma said dryly. “I got out of school a little early, so I thought I’d come see how things went today.”

“You skipped, didn’t you?”

He didn’t seem fazed. “Does it matter?”

“Oh, Shiota chan!”

They both turned around, staring at the boy who had shouted. Nagisa’s heart sank, when he saw Kuronuma’s smug face right in front of him. He really hadn’t chosen a good moment, no. Especially with Karma here…

“I’m surprised to see you’re still here,” he continued.

Karma tilted his head. “Why’s that?”

“Karma,” Nagisa warned.

He knew when a fight was worth having, and this was not one of those times. It wasn’t as if Nagisa was happy about being walked over and insulted, or that he couldn’t defend himself. But it wasn’t worth it. He felt sick, feeling the dread set over him. If Kuronuma was that angry with him for winning in a fight, then he would be livid with what was about to happen.

“I’m just happy to see my friend,” he clapped Nagisa on the back.

Karma’s eyes narrowed. “Friend?”

Kuronuma didn’t give up the challenge. “Sure.”

“And he lets you call him ‘Shiota Chan’, does he?”

He didn’t look phased. “What’s it to you?”

_Stupid._ Nagisa felt like he was watching a car crash happen right in front of his eyes, and there was no way he could prevent it. What, it wasn’t like Karma was ever going to listen to him. And Kuronuma had walked right into his fury. He saw Karma’s face morph with not so subtle anger, and his hand came down on the back of Kuronuma’s neck.

“Why don’t we go continue this conversation somewhere else?” It wasn’t an invitation.

Kuronuma stood up a little straighter. “No.”

His eyes flashed. “Well, if you want me to tear you to shreds in front of your entire student body, that can be arranged.”

“W-why don’t you try me,” Kuronuma looked around nervously, like he was trying to locate the backup who just weren’t coming.
“Mmm, tempting, tempting,” Karma was looking down at him, “I’d rather just give you the warning to not bother Nagisa again, though. A little less messy, no?”

Nagisa couldn’t let them come to blows. “Karma,” he said again, “please don’t.”

“Yeah,” Kuronuma said, “listen to your omega bitch.”

Karma’s shoulders filled with tension. “Sorry,” he stepped closer, “I’m not sure I heard you right.”

Somehow, Nagisa saw it coming before it happened. Before Kuronuma had the chance to react, Karma delivered a swift knee, aimed right at his liver. With the way his breath catch, and his body crumpled in half, Nagisa knew it had been a direct hit. Kuronuma looked like he was going to throw up, definitely not able to fight back.

“You still wanna go?” Karma said, forcing his head up by grabbing his hair roughly.

Nagisa looked around nervously, realising a bunch of people had gathered around them to watch what was happening. The Rin situation, although was old news, had not faded from anybody’s memories. Nagisa being caught up in yet more violence... was not good. He also really didn’t want Karma to get into any kind of trouble for random assault.

“That’s enough,” Nagisa tried a little more firmly. “He gets it.”

Karma dropped him. “Count yourself lucky.”

Unsure of what else he could possibly do, Nagisa grabbed him by the wrist. “Let’s go, Karma.”

Surprisingly, Karma allowed Nagisa to pull him away like that, but Nagisa felt the anger buzz under his skin still. He was still in the mood for a fight. What was Nagisa supposed to do now, try and calm him down? Honestly, the more Nagisa thought about it, the more bothered he became. Hadn’t they had this exact argument, months ago? Karma had even said it was wrong, then, to just beat up whoever Nagisa had an issue with, hadn’t he?

“I should have kept going until he cried,” Karma said, clearly annoyed. “He was about to.”

Nagisa stopped in his tracks. “You don’t have to fight my battles for me.”

He stuffed his hands in his pockets. “I never said I had to.”

“But I don’t want you to,” Nagisa protested.

They’d stopped right in front of a smaller alleyway. Nagisa could tell, because Karma paused to look down it, apparently concerned now about arguing in public like this. He tugged Nagisa that way, almost holding him against the wall so that they could have this conversation relatively out of view. He was pretty sure, just from the way Karma’s face was morphed, he was still in fight mode.

“Why not?” Karma questioned, clearly holding down the growl under the surface.

“B-because!” Nagisa tried to keep his head high. “They’re my problems, not your problems. And I don’t think violence is the best way to solve them.”

Karma’s head tilted. “Didn’t you say the whole reason this happened was because of violence? You should have just gone all the way, not left him unsatisfied enough to come back and hate you.”

It left a bad taste in Nagisa’s mouth. So apparently this whole situation was his fault. And perhaps
he’d been internalising that anyway, but that didn’t mean Karma was entitled to just give his opinion. It was getting underneath Nagisa’s skin, but he didn’t really know how to put it into words. Karma was so close to him nowadays, they practically spent all of their time together. Nagisa had never been annoyed by that before… Was he even annoyed?

“W-why do you want to control my life so badly?” Nagisa settled on, and immediately knew that hadn’t come out right.

Karma took a step back. “So now I’m controlling you?”

“Kind of!” Nagisa just about got out. No, he wasn’t putting it into words the right way, not at all. It was like… Something weird, something he couldn’t put his finger on. But Karma was always there, by his side, in his head… Nagisa was suffocating.

“How?” Karma continued. “I’ve never forced you to do anything, or even tried.”

And then Nagisa felt like he should just back down. As mad as he was about the fighting, there was something deeper going on, something that wasn’t really Karma’s fault, or at least Nagisa didn’t think so. And now wasn’t the right time to bring it up. No, it wasn’t really annoyance he felt, it was a kind of fear. But he didn’t want to just let this slip either.

“M-maybe those weren’t the right words, but—“

Karma’s expression darkened. “You have no fight in you Nagisa.”

“W-what?”

“You don’t stand up for yourself!” He turned, eyes flashing wild. “You just… Give up, and it pisses me off. And then when you start, you hold back. For once in your life, fight for something!”

Nagisa tried to stand firm. “How can I do that when you’re telling me to?!”

“Fight me,” Karma half growled.

Nagisa felt his heart drop to his feet. What did Karma mean, physically fight him? They were arguing about fighting, initially. It was more than that for both of them, though, clearly. They shouldn’t fight about this, they should talk, maybe. But the more Karma looked at him like that, the more the tension built, the more Nagisa wanted to fight him, regardless of how counterproductive it was.

“Don’t be ridiculous,” Nagisa hissed.

“Why not?” Karma’s head tilted up. “I know you want to, I see it over your face. Come on then, let’s go.” He stepped towards him, and slapped him backhand on the shoulder. “C’mon,” he hit him again, “c’mon.”

Nagisa threw a punch. This wasn’t like the last time he’d done it, when he was just frustrated and hadn’t really intended to hit, deep down. No, this time he struck Karma right in the face. And, frustratingly, it kind of felt good. Despite that, though, Karma didn’t move, didn’t flinch. That made Nagisa feel awful, like it hadn’t really changed anything, and now all he was left with was an empty heart and an aching fist.

“That all you got?” Karma said casually, like he hadn’t just been punched.

And then the irritation returned, and Nagisa struck again, the side of his arm into Karma’s chest,
that time. He wasn’t just going to stand down (even though, a small voice inside him warned that this was exactly what Karma had wanted in the first place). This time, Karma actually dodged, focusing properly. Of course, they were both trained in combat. But Nagisa was a little worried, considering Karma’s superior strength, and the fact that Nagisa had been banned from participating in lessons like this in the later part of his pregnancy. They weren’t evenly matched in fighting, so Nagisa was going to have to look for a chip in his defence, and quickly.

Karma reached out, grabbing a hold of his school tie, and yanked him forward. That was one hand occupied, good. But, Nagisa had been jerked too quickly to be fully in control of his own arms. So, working on quick instinct, he jumped. Grabbing onto Karma’s arm, his legs flew up, winding around Karma’s neck in a choke. With Nagisa’s entire weight practically on one arm, he folded in half, slamming him onto the ground. Despite how much that hurt his back, Nagisa gripped tighter.

“I’m not just a push over!”

If Karma wanted to respond to that, he couldn’t, not with the way Nagisa was cutting off his airway. He’d have to give up soon, lest he actually pass out. But, Karma was also ridiculously strong. After just a few seconds, though his arm was shaking, he slowly managed to pick Nagisa back up again. Nagisa started to panic, but, surely Karma couldn’t hold out much longer.

His back was slammed, hard, into something, which caused his legs to spring free. When he realised he wasn’t falling to the ground, and had instead been dumped on what he realised was a closed dumpster, his legs closed again. However, from the angle, he’d attached himself to Karma’s hips rather than his neck. He could still use the force to pull them closer, to get another hit in, so he did just that, using what upper strength he did have to pull himself up right, so he could throw a swing.

This time, Karma caught his wrist, but didn’t take the opportunity to get another hit in. Instead, he just looked at his wrist, and then Nagisa’s face, and then he grabbed the back of his head with his free hand and kissed him. Nagisa’s brain short circuited, of course it did, because that was the last thing he’d been expecting. His wrist went limp, the fight instantly leaving him. Karma dropped it, his hand moving to grip his back, pushing them closer together.

The last time they’d kissed, it had been surrounded by the classmates in middle school (Nagisa couldn’t bring himself to count that time a few months ago, since he’d been so delirious with heat he barely remembered). Since then, he’d kissed a few people, for a few various reasons. But, none of those times had felt quite this.

He couldn’t put it into words, other than being barrelled over like a tornado hit him. His blurry memories of Karma being a good kisser, although also forceful, were correct. There wasn’t a lot Nagisa could reasonably do to resist this, so he didn’t, instead wrapping his arms around the back of Karma’s neck to pull him closer still.

Once Nagisa had down that, Karma stopped holding back, deepening the kiss so that Nagisa’s head started to spin. What did this mean? They hadn’t exactly been acting like normal friends… recently. Was this some kind of confession? Not that Nagisa had imagined Karma confessing any kind of feelings, but he wasn’t always the verbal type, not on serious things. Did this mean they were… together now, or something?

Nagisa’s heart fluttered at the thought, briefly distracting himself enough that Karma was able to slip his tongue in. Like a spark of electricity shot up his spine, Nagisa melted, like a puppet on Karma’s string. He’d gotten better at this. An unpleasant drop of jealousy went through him at the thought of Karma practicing kissing on anybody else. Possessively, he dug his nails into the skin of his neck, tugging Karma’s lower lip roughly between his teeth. Mine.
If being together meant this, then in that moment Nagisa wanted nothing more in the world. Nagisa may have kissed a lot of people, but this finally felt wholly right, where he belonged. Between their bodies, pressed right together, there was a steady heat building. For just a seconded, Nagisa thought that maybe their fight didn’t matter, not when there was this fire. It was terrifying, but, if this wasn’t love, Nagisa didn’t know what was.

But… They argued a lot. Hadn’t they been arguing just now? It was meant to be a fight, not… Suddenly, the heat turned ice cold, and Nagisa turned his head away, panting to catch his breath. Karma didn’t move either, doing the same. Regarding him, Nagisa wasn’t sure what to think anymore. It wasn’t exactly the mature way to deal with things, fighting and then making out over it. They were like that, close one moment, and then unable to talk to each other for weeks at a time. What if there were real feelings involved? What if it was worse? Nagisa remembered how awful it was, watching his own parents fight all the time. He couldn’t do that, in good conscience, but he also couldn’t see he and Karma having a perfectly good relationship either. Nagisa felt sick, because no matter what this love was, that wasn’t healthy.

“Karma,” he swallowed, and then the rest of the words got caught up in his throat.

Karma reached out, taking a strand of hair between his fingers. “Nagisa.”

He looked like he was going to kiss him again, and Nagisa’s heart shattered, but he put a hand between them. “We can’t do this.”

They weren’t good for each other. Nagisa felt like he’d always known that, deep down. They’d been physically fighting. Karma had come so far since the days of senseless violence, but in Nagisa’s name, that didn’t seem to matter. And Nagisa… his bloodlust had been slipping out a lot recently, admittedly in relation to Karma, hadn’t it? They brought out each other’s worst, not their best.

There was something else, Nagisa knew, something he couldn’t consciously admit to himself. Having lived so long with the knowledge that no matter what, he couldn’t have Karma, he was used to it now. A certain kind of fear, fear of the unknown, was about to swallow him whole. Nagisa wasn’t ready for the opposite to be true, after all of this time. He was scared.

“We-” Nagisa started, when Karma said nothing at all. “I-, Karma, I-“

His golden eyes looked so icy. “What is this?”

He loved Karma, was in love with him, probably always had been since the day they met. And Nagisa realised above all else, he wanted what was best for Karma. And that wasn’t him. He could never be enough for him, could never be what he needed. Nagisa had known that for a while now, really, but it felt more real now. He needed to let him go.

“Nothing,” Nagisa forced out, physical pain coming with it. “It can’t be anything. Karma, we-we’re no good for each other. So,” he swallowed the sob that threatened to rise up, “I’m s-sorry.”

“Nothing,” Karma looked down at the ground. “This is nothing to you.”

“That’s not what I mea-“

“No,” his eyes narrowed, “I heard you loud and clear.”

Nagisa hopped down from the dumpster, turning away from him. “Go home,” his voice cracked. “I’ll go pick Daichi up like normal. That’s the most important thing, isn’t it?”
A part of Nagisa yearned for Karma to stop him from walking away, to grab him by the wrist and fight for him all over again. But he didn’t, he just stood there, and honestly it was probably for the best. Nagisa couldn’t *take* anything else. So, he walked, trying his best to ignore how wet his eyes became with every step. Without looking back over his shoulder, Nagisa felt like he’d just lost a colossal part of himself.

Chapter End Notes

This is the chapter I was talking about listening to *When The Party's Over* and crying over on tumblr lol. I just hate 'break ups'. It really fits, imo, though.

Uhm, well, one step forward, five steps back? Not gonna say anything else, just going to brace for your collective wrath :) Until next time~
Nightmare Time

Chapter Summary

Nagisa adjusts to life after his and Karma's fight

Chapter Notes

I was listening to High School Musical writing this

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It wasn’t a break up, but it felt like one. It felt like more of a break up than the time Nagisa actually was broken up with someone. It was like he’d entered into this realm of near permanent misery. Most people didn’t have to see their ex every day, certainly didn’t have to live with them. Again, Karma wasn’t even his ex, but apparently that didn’t seem to matter.

He knew it was a good thing, all in all. Had Nagisa kissed him back like he knew he could’ve, then who knows what might have happened. Nagisa was sure, and he stuck by it, that it would have just ended in more pain for everyone involved. There were still the unfortunate side effects of that, though. He couldn’t help but miss the good bits, their real friendship.

Karma seemed to be acting like nothing ever even happened. They weren’t spending any more time together than they physically had to, nor talking, but when they did interact it was like he’d erased it from his memory. Perhaps that was for the best, rather than the both of them moping around. Karma was an impossible person to read, really, so Nagisa wasn’t sure whether he actually meant it, or if he was just putting on an act.

“Are you putting your shoes on or are you just sitting there?”

Of course, Nagisa had more immediate issues to be dealing with.

Daichi looked up at him innocently. “Uh, sitting!”

“Aren’t you,” he crouched down more to his level, “aren’t you excited to see your Grandpa?”

His father had offered to take them out for sushi. Nagisa thanked everything he could think to thank that Daichi wasn’t really a fussy eater, so he didn’t have to worry about taking him places like that. He definitely had preferences, but there weren’t a lot of things he outright refused. Despite that, he was still small for his age, according to the doctor. Nagisa had just accepted it was probably always be that way, at this point.

He stood up excitedly. “Gran’pa! Wanna see Gran’pa!”

Nagisa looked at him curiously. “Then you need to get ready properly.”

“Why?”
His answer to most things, really. “Well,” Nagisa said, “you might hurt your feet if you walk around with no shoes, plus it seems pretty cold.”

The gears were clearly spinning in Daichi’s mind. Instead of looking at Nagisa, he stared at the wall, as if it held all the secrets in the world. If he was actually going to reply, he was taking his time thinking about it. Apparently he wasn’t going to say anything at all, as it turned out, because instead he pulled himself to his feet and started wandering as if he was heading for his bedroom.

“*Now* where are you going?” Nagisa questioned.

“Trucks!” He announced.

Nagisa wasn’t sure how he’d arrived at that conclusion. “Can’t you play with them later?” He picked up the discarded shoes. “There isn’t really enough time right now?”

Apparently he hadn’t been careful enough with showing the shoes, because Daichi seemed to assume Nagisa was going to put them on for him. At least, Nagisa could tell that was what he was thinking, because his face immediately morphed in horror. Anybody would think he was trying to do something worse, than just put his shoes on. It took only a few moments for the real crying to start.

“No,” he complained through the tears, “I do it!”

Nagisa still didn’t really know the best way to deal with this kind of thing. He knew that as a two year old, Daichi couldn’t possibly be expected to have the best handle on his own emotions, or to understand why things were happening as they were. So of course he’d likely be upset, crying about it like he currently was. But that didn’t stop what was like pins and needles in Nagisa’s heart at the sight of it, especially since he’d accidentally caused it.

“You can do it,” he said as softly as possible, putting the shoes down, “I promise.”

Daichi did actually approach him, then, though somewhat tentatively. Whilst still standing up, he took one of the shoes, and tried ungracefully to shove it on his foot. Unsurprisingly, it didn’t really work out for him, and there came a fresh bout of tears. Rather than let him scream about it on the floor, Nagisa quickly reached out to hold him close, which thankfully he didn’t reject.

There was no real knowing what he was actually upset about, whether it was literally just the shoes, or something else had somehow set it off. Whatever the case, he was crying onto Nagisa’s shoulders about it, and that probably wouldn’t stop for a little while. He did actually calm down in a few minutes, though, as Nagisa did his best to actually comfort him.

“Do you want to try again now?” Nagisa tried.

Daichi pulled back, silently nodding as he sat down. This time, since he was a lot less stressed, he managed to get them on like normal, after another minute or two of manoeuvring. He stood up, then, still clearly a little upset but visibly happier with himself. At least that hadn’t turned into *too* big of a deal.

“Good job,” Nagisa praised, because he thought it was probably a good thing to encourage positive behaviour. “Are you ready to go?”

He nodded, and so Nagisa moved to open the door, letting Daichi run along out of it first. Of course, he still insisted on walking everywhere in his own. Thankfully, the sushi place wasn’t incredibly far from the apartment. With the fresh air, and space to run around a little, Daichi actually cheered up from his bad mood.
Nagisa’s father was already waiting outside, by the time they arrived. He would have felt bad about being so late, but at least he didn’t look anything other than happy. Naturally, Daichi was overjoyed to see him, speeding into a proper run so he could launch himself. Thankfully, Nagisa’s father was ready for him, able to pick him straight up.

“Hello there Daichan,” he said fondly. “Have you been good since I last saw you?”

Daichi nodded enthusiastically, though Nagisa wasn’t sure he’d entirely agree.

“Well, then we can definitely get dessert!”

“Don’t excite him too much,” Nagisa warned. “He won’t eat otherwise.”

His father smiled. “You look well, Nagisa.”

It was surprising to hear something like that. Nagisa didn’t feel all that well, both emotionally and physically. But maybe he was just doing an extraordinarily good job of hiding it, or else his father didn’t really notice that kind of thing. But given his past reactions to things Nagisa had told him, it wouldn’t be so surprising.

They went into the restaurant together, finding a place where Daichi could sit down safely. Not that he seemed that concerned with sitting, instead instantly drawn to the food moving on conveyor belts. Nagisa knew he was going to have to keep a good eye on him, lest he get too interested and start grabbing out for stuff.

“You can eat in a minute,” Nagisa said, though not scolding.

The meal was actually pretty nice, all things considered. Sushi was his favourite food, anyway, so it was never a bad time when he got to have it. Surprisingly, Daichi seemed a little unsure at first, but hunger seemed to win out, and he ate whatever was put in front of him without much hesitation. All the while, Nagisa’s father engaged him in pleasant conversation, mostly about generic life things.

“How’s Karma doing?” He eventually asked.

Nagisa automatically stiffened at the question. He didn’t want to talk about how Karma was doing, didn’t really know that himself. Of course, it wasn’t entirely unexpected. He knew his parents liked Karma as much as they could do in their circumstances. But Karma always was pretty good at charming the right people when he really needed to. Of course, Nagisa hadn’t brought up their fight.

He looked down at empty plate for a moment. “Pretty good.”

“Good,” he leant back, “that’s great. And you’re good, hmm, Daichan?”

Daichi just looked at him and giggled, a beaming smile all over his face. Instead of actually answering the question, though, he tugged on Nagisa’s sleeve somewhat expectantly. It took Nagisa a second of regarding him, before guessing he was probably thirsty. He reached into his bag, pulling out a juice carton, swiftly piercing it before handing it over.

His father cleared his throat. “Actually, I had some news. Your mother and I have decided to renew our vows.”

It took Nagisa a moment to register what that meant. His parents had been reunited for a while now, he almost forgot that they were technically still divorced. A few years ago, this was all he
would have wanted to hear. Though he wasn’t full of tears about it anymore, Nagisa still felt overjoyed about this turn of events. He wanted them to be happy.

“R-really?”

He smiled. “We’re not doing anything for it, just signing papers, but we decided it was about time.”

The rest of their meal followed pretty nicely, with Nagisa feeling light at the announcement. Other than that, his mind drifted off to some far away place. Daichi was far more interested in playing with his grandfather than Nagisa, anyway, so it didn’t matter so much. If anything, Nagisa was happy for him to expend the energy before they returned home.

“Take care of yourself,” Nagisa’s father waved them off.

Daichi ran half of the way back, before evidently running out of steam. It was pretty bad, by the looks of things, like even lifting up his foot was tiring for him. Nagisa’s suspicions were confirmed when Daichi let him pick him up, letting his head flop down onto Nagisa’s shoulder. Of course, Nagisa didn’t mind at all, honestly missing the days this would happen more often.

Nagisa put him straight to bed when they got back, not bothering to undress him further than his shoes. He probably wouldn’t nap for too long, at least, no matter how tuckered out he currently looked. Honestly, Nagisa was looking to the summer break, which was coming up soon enough, since he could spend more time with him. Now that Daichi was a little older, and actually wanted to do things.

The day was average after that. Nagisa defaulted to doing homework, because it was never a bad thing to get that out of the way. Of course, average now meant he and Karma mostly avoiding each other, unless there was a pressing reason not to. Nagisa hadn’t experienced a lot of those reasons, though living in such close quarters they saw each other, every now and then.

He managed to go to bed that night without saying more than a few words to Karma. Nagisa didn’t want it that way, but it was better than the alternative. He didn’t really sleep, though. It was hard, when he’d been so used to Karma being there, holding him. Recently, Nagisa had barely been able to sleep at all, only getting a few unsettled hours here and there.

Though, he was woken up by a large crashing sound, instead of on his own. Nagisa was immediately alert, as anybody would be in such a situation. Unfortunately, he had no weapons in his bedroom, so he decided to just try slowly approaching the door. He stepped out, not detecting any movement, though it was pitch black in the apartment.

Relying on all his past training, Nagisa moved as delicately as he could, barely making a sound. He still couldn’t sense any movement, but there was something, crawling under his skin. What was that? Nagisa side stepped, mapping the layout of his home in his head, until he collided hard with a mass that definitely wasn’t supposed to be there. It was enough to knock him to his feet, at least.

And then the lamp switch was flicked on, and Nagisa blearily realised he’d landed on top of an equally confused looking Karma. That was just his luck. Nagisa scrambled backwards immediately, still on the floor but at least not so close.

“I’m guessing you heard that too,” Karma said eventually.

Nagisa pulled himself to his feet, and took a brief look at things in the light. A couple of the dining chairs were displaced, and some of the things from the kitchen had been pulled out onto the floor…
which was probably what had caused the noise. That was even more confusing, though, because he had no idea how it got like that.

His senses told him to check on Daichi, immediately, but there was nothing wrong with him, at first glance he was just asleep in his bed as usual. But there was clearly nobody else there, and Karma hadn’t done it… So what? Nagisa was confused, and a little worried.

Surprisingly, Karma was on the same page. “Hey, maybe this place really is haunted.”

Nagisa jumped. “Huh?”

“Remember when we looked up the whole murder thing before moving in?” Karma said. “I mean, it’s about the right circumstances for ghosts.”

He was almost an adult, so he wasn’t scared. But, a lump formed in Nagisa’s throat, no matter how casual Karma had sounded. The wind couldn’t have caused such a loud noise, certainly not that much mess. But there wasn’t any other explanations, jumping to mind. Maybe an earthquake? But that wouldn’t have caused the same kind of noise.

“Ghosts aren’t real,” Nagisa disputed, convincing himself.

Something went across his radar, then. He could sense it in the air, consciousness that wasn’t really steady at all. Looking back into his son’s room, that sense only got stronger. Although he was sure Daichi was there, he definitely wasn’t peaceful in his sleep. Carefully, Nagisa decided to flick the light switch on, not wanting to freak him out with mysterious footsteps.

“Daichi,” he said softly, “what’s wrong?”

Finally, Daichi’s head poked up from under the covers. As suspected, tears were streaming down his face. “Dada.”

Nagisa didn’t waste any time going down to his side. Immediately, once he was in reach, Daichi clutched onto him, sobbing into his shoulder. At first, Nagisa couldn’t tell what happened. He was pretty sure Daichi wasn’t sick. But, he was shaking in Nagisa’s arms, which meant something had definitely happened.

“Dada and Papa gone,” he got out. “All alone!”

He felt awful, even hearing that. “It was just a bad dream,” Nagisa soothed, “it’s over now.”

“He came to look for us,” Karma supplied, “but got messed up in the dark. He probably pulled open the cupboard in the kitchen by accident and freaked out enough to run back in here.”

Daichi looked up, realising Karma was there. “Papa!”

At his summons, Karma came and knelt down beside Nagisa. “You’re alright.”

Nagisa wasn’t sure what had happened in the actual dream, but Daichi sounded genuinely concerned about them not being there for him. Of course, dreams were dreams, but Nagisa was afraid that something might have set that off. He didn’t want Daichi to ever think for one second that he was being left alone. Nobody deserved that.

“I promise,” Nagisa said, “we’re right here. We’re not going anywhere.”

He pulled away, eventually, just a little bit calmer. Nagisa wasn’t sure how to deal with this. If it
was anybody else having a nightmare, they’d have the capacity to realise it wasn’t real. He wasn’t sure if Daichi could understand that concept, even if he knew they were right beside him currently. Nagisa decided the best thing he could do for now was just that, to remain close.

“Hey, Daichan, scoot over a little,” Karma suggested. When Daichi obeyed him, Karma actually lay down beside him. Under any other circumstance, it would have been hilarious, since Karma was clearly far too big to fit on a toddler sized bed. “We can lie like this until you fall back asleep.”

Daichi’s eyes were still wide open, though. “Dada…”

“I’m here too,” Nagisa reassured, and then considered it. There was barely any room at all on the bed, mere inches at best, but Nagisa decided to make it work, just about squeezing on to it himself. He stroked Daichi’s hair as soothingly as he could, just so he’d know they were still there.

Nagisa wasn’t sure how long it took him to drift off again, only that it was a relief when he actually did relax. Shooting Karma a look, it was a small task to extract themselves. They managed it, though, without waking him back up. Nagisa just had to hope he wouldn’t have another episode. Their assassination training really did come in handy, as they were able to get out of the room and close the door almost soundlessly.

“I just hope he’s okay,” Nagisa said, half to himself.

“He will be. We always did make a good team,” Karma said, a little carefully.

Despite that, Nagisa still felt his stomach flip over. He didn’t have any words to respond to that. Yes, they did work well together, sometimes. That was the key, sometimes. If Nagisa could have it any way, they’d work well the whole time. He couldn’t rely on just sometimes. That was no real life. It didn’t matter how much his heart called out for Karma, no matter how much it shattered at the thought of never having him.

“Nagisa,” Karma breathed out, “I’m, I mean, I shouldn’t have done what I did.”

It was almost funny, that Nagisa wanted to question what part of it he thought was so wrong. How far could they trace back the actions he shouldn’t have taken? Not that Nagisa was completely innocent, either. Why was Karma saying this now, anyway? An apology was rare from him, and springing it on Nagisa like this made his head spin.

“Why?” It was the only thing he could think of saying.

Karma didn’t say anything for a moment. “It hurt you.”

Nagisa refused to look him in the eye. “You’ve always been a sadist.”

“It doesn’t make me happy,” Karma snapped. “Even when I caused it, it just doesn’t work anymore, to see you in pain. It’s not satisfying, or funny, or anything. It just sucks.”

He wasn’t sure how to take that at all. It was a nice thing to hear, but that didn’t undo all of their issues. It was also hard to tell how deeply Karma really meant that, or whether he was just saying it. He seemed serious, at least. It made Nagisa feel a little uncomfortable, though, that Karma was implying he would have liked to hurt Nagisa before.

“I don’t want you to change,” Nagisa let out.

Karma just shrugged. “I can’t choose what to want. As much as I’d like to.”
Was Nagisa supposed to take this as a huge compliment, or something? Or, he didn’t know what Karma’s real intent was. It didn’t help than everything other than the rational part of his brain wanted to rush into Karma’s arms and accept that as enough. But no, that was a vicious cycle, Nagisa saw that now.

“I want you to be my friend,” Karma tried, when Nagisa didn’t respond, though he looked uncomfortable saying those words.

“Friend.”

There was no way such a statement wouldn’t hurt. Though it could never happen, Nagisa was still in love with him. He didn’t know the specifics of what Karma felt for him, but it wasn’t friendship. Suggesting such a thing sounded ridiculous.

Karma lowered his head. “I’ve never seen you as just like a normal friend. Not even from the start.”

“Maybe family is a closer word,” Nagisa finally supplied. The idea of being ‘friends’ seemed foreign and wrong and not at all enough.

Straightening up, Karma nodded. “Nagisa,” he said, perhaps in the most serious tone Nagisa had heard from him, “I wish we could forget about what happened.”

“I can’t,” Nagisa immediately dismissed. “Karma, it’s too much. Not just that one argument, everything else. I can’t forget about it.”

“I know,” he said, maintaining his serious voice. “But that doesn’t mean I want to argue about it anymore. So, truce?” He held out a palm.

Considering him for a moment, Nagisa decided to take it. “Okay.”

Like that, Karma’s shoulders dropped, and he let go of Nagisa’s hand. “Well, anyway, I’m going back to bed. I forgot what it was like to wake up to our demon child at weird times in the night. I don’t really miss it. Night.”

“Don’t call him that,” Nagisa lightly scolded. “Goodnight.”

Chapter End Notes

Hi, so, apologies for the delay. I kind of broke my foot (whilst drinking vodka- alcohol is bad kids), which was not good. I'm okay, but it's going to take a month or so to heal. Since I had that, and university to deal with, it took me a bit longer to finish this. But anyway! I hope you enjoyed it!

They're taking a step in a good direction now, so at least there's that. I'm honestly so excited to get to 'part three' of this fic... which will hopefully be soon but you never know what random chapters I'll add in between.
University Time

Chapter Summary

Asano points out a slight chink in Karma's life plans.

Chapter Notes

communication

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“I like you, Karma kun!”

Karma looked at the girl in front of him. She’d just asked him for help explaining a math problem, and Karma hadn’t had anything better to do. But clearly there was an ulterior motive. Honestly, Karma hadn’t been expecting it. Hisami Mayu never struck him as a particularly bold person in the years he’d been classmates with her. Then again, most of his classmates didn’t really interest him enough to notice them.

“S-say something!” She demanded.

He didn’t really have a lot to say. There were only two options, to make fun of her or to let her down gently. Ordinarily, he’d have leant for the first one. It was pretty easy humiliation and black mail material for later, should he need it. But, surprisingly, Karma didn’t really feel like doing that. Maybe he was just in a bad mood, but it lost its appeal fast. So, he had to say no? Maybe he could just try and make her take it back, instead.

“Hisami san,” Karma started, “you know I have a son.”

She looked up at him with wide eyes. “Of course, but, it doesn’t bother me!”

That was too earnest sounding, but Karma had committed to being good about it. He couldn’t turn back on his resolution, as much as he wanted to right then. It didn’t really matter what had happened, Nagisa was still the only person Karma had ever had any desire to date. At least, there was nothing he could really gain from this relationship either.

“Sorry, I don’t really have time for dating right now.”

It wasn’t cruel, by his standards, but she still looked pretty upset. Of course, it wasn’t Karma’s job to comfort her, she probably had friends that would do that. No, he probably deserved a pat on the back for being so kind. She didn’t actually say anything, instead just turning on her heel. But, there wasn’t a lot he could do.

“What a tragic love scene.”

Right on cue to make his day worse. He wasn’t sure how long Asano had been standing there, though he wouldn’t put it past him to have lurked throughout that entire conversation. As much as
he had to accept it, he didn’t understand what Nagisa saw in him, to actually want a friendship. Maybe it was because he didn’t have to sit beside him in class every day.

“Go after her if you’re concerned, Asano kun,” Karma quipped. “Maybe she has a thing for red heads.”

His faced morphed into a rather unpleasant scowl. “You think I want your rejects?”

“Summer’s coming up,” he shrugged, “it’s almost tradition to spend it with someone.”

Asano didn’t seem too phased by it. “Not that it’s any of your business, but I have plenty of dates lined up.”

Honestly, Karma actually believed him. Apparently, being the student president really did give you benefits. It was definitely that, rather than his top of the class position, since Karma didn’t get as many people bugging him. That wasn’t a bad thing. It was obvious to Karma that they wanted him for status, anyway. Asano wasn’t dumb enough to fall for any of it, credit where it was due.

“I thought you’d be busy with your university application,” he said.

“I’m not worried about it,” Asano responded nonchalantly, “the American application process is simple.”

“They’ll be lucky to have you,” Karma turned away, making the sark unmissable in his tone.

Apparently Asano wasn’t going to stop there, though. “You’re planning on attending Tougyou, right? Kind of far away from any of the Keisetsu campuses. Assuming you considered that with Nagisa, of course. Must be tough.”

A part of Karma froze. Of course, he’d known in the back of his mind that the entire reason Nagisa went to that specific high school was because it was the easiest way to get into the attached university. Which Nagisa was only really going to because it was what his mother wanted, and he wasn’t so bothered himself.

Karma, on the other hand… He’d just automatically gone for Japan’s number one university, with anywhere abroad being completely out of the question, for obvious reasons. He had no concerns about actually getting accepted, so it was pretty much set at this point. But, now that he thought about it, they were pretty far…

The bell rung, signifying the end of the break. It almost startled him, jolting him more awake. At some point, Asano had already left, because he was ready at his desk by the time Karma came in. He wasn’t particularly excited to be sitting next to him, visibly seeing the smugness all over his face. There wasn’t much Karma could do immediately, annoying as it was.

Of course he did his best. Every time he spoke up in their lessons, Karma found at least some way to dispute him. He felt a bit better, seeing how he was gradually striking a real nerve. It didn’t really solve any of his actual problems though. Were they even problems? Karma hadn’t thought of it like that before. He tried not to think about it, in fact, until the day ended.

But it was at the forefront of his mind, once most other things were removed. Maybe, he could find a way to distract himself again, but he wasn’t in the mood right then. He had to study a little, or else he might not actually get into a good university at all. Of course, like always, the apartment was empty when he got in, kicking off his shoes before he put his bag down on the table.

He liked their apartment. It was a lot smaller than the home he’d been used to before, but whilst
that was an empty shell of a home, this was definitely more full. There were stains in random places that didn’t want to come out (in retrospect Karma probably should have paid more attention in home ec), pieces of clutter he’d lost track of, and a minimum of five toys strewn around somehow, no matter how often they cleaned the place up. But, Tougyou was too far away from there, wasn’t it?

That left his mind, then, at the sound of the door opening. “We’re back.”

Daichi didn’t waste any time, launching himself through the door. “Papa!”

“Daichi! Shoes!” Nagisa sounded a little exasperated. He’d probably been in an active mood then, or Nagisa really was tired.

Actually stopping in his tracks, Daichi kicked the shoes off quickly, and proceeded to dash into a running jump. Thankfully, Karma saw it coming far enough in advance to actually catch him, lifting him up onto his lap.

“What happened to you?” Karma asked, noticing a little plaster on his elbow.

Daichi looked at it. “Got an ouch!”

The way he said that was almost proud. It was probably just a scrape or something. As much as Karma hated the idea of his son having any form of injury, he’d learned to live with that kind of thing. Daichi didn’t seem to know reasonable fear with a lot of things, so he wasn’t exactly careful. That tended to lead to minor scrapes and bruises.

“Look, Papa,” he said, after Karma obviously took too long to respond, “I’m brave! Yamada Sensei said.”

“What a terrible injury!” He played along. “I think we should cut your arm off.”

He grabbed his arm protectively. “Nuh uh, doesn’t hurt anymore!”

“Hmm,” Karma looked at it, “I’m not sure. Maybe we should go to the doctor.”

“No he’ll stab me!”

He wasn’t sure where that came from. “Huh?”


Karma looked at him. “You’re really worried about that? Say, Daichan, I thought you were brave.”

“I am!” He wiggled out of Karma’s lap, hopping onto the floor. “Am brave! Want an inbec…ton. Dada! Want some!”

“You don’t need any more,” Nagisa said, though not unkindly. “Not until you’re older anyway.”

“B-but-“

Karma could see where that was going to go, from a mile off. “Are you going to help me cook, Daichan?”

“Yeah!”

“Then, you need to go clean yourself up first.”
Nagisa’s eyes narrowed. “Is that your way of making me give him a bath right now?”

He leant back in his chair, shrugging, but that was exactly what he’d been trying. “I mean, I could do it myself, but then I’d only have time to make one portion.”

Unsurprisingly, Nagisa didn’t actually argue with him, or look too annoyed about it. Daichi wanted to do a lot of things on his own nowadays anyway, so giving him baths was more like supervision than actively doing much. Karma stretched out, deciding to actually get on with the cooking like he’d said. It would be easier to get the stuff that involved knives out of the way without a two year old begging for a turn.

For a moment, though, he just watched Nagisa leave. There was a weird space between the two of them, which was better than the fighting, but still hadn’t gone away. But he’d lost track of what normal was for them anyway. It still stung him, every time he looked at Nagisa. He’d thought, in the heat of the moment, that if Nagisa rejected him after the kiss at least he could try and forget about it.

Apparently Karma wasn’t so good at forgetting about things. Because every time he looked at Nagisa for too long, he remembered what it was like to kiss him (way better than he imagined a kiss could be), to hold his body snug against himself. If anything, Nagisa pushing him away only made Karma want it more. Because Nagisa hadn’t said that his feelings weren’t the same, not really. Nagisa wouldn’t have kissed him like that, otherwise. He just thought they shouldn’t be a couple, Karma had come to realise. In his own head, that didn’t necessarily have to be a permanent thing. With that shred of doubt, Karma couldn’t let it go.

No matter what happened, he was sure it would always be Nagisa he wanted. He’d never even attempted to look at anybody else in that way. Then again, he hadn’t exactly attempted to have feelings for Nagisa either, it had kind of just happened. But thinking back on it, even at the start, Karma had known there was something about Nagisa he couldn’t ignore, that was why he’d even spoken to him in the first place.

They remerged after a little while, a now clean Daichi ready to help as he was promised. Being very careful about it, he lifted Daichi up to let him stir and help out with a few of the easier cooking tasks. All the while, Daichi was apparently in a chatty mood, so Karma got a full stream of consciousness. A lot of it didn’t really make much sense at all, but that didn’t matter so much. He still nodded along, asked questions where he felt it was needed.

It continued that way through to eating too. He didn’t mind, that Daichi had lost the ability to shut up. If anything it meant that he’d tire himself out quicker, eventually. As much as tired Daichi was already a force to be reckoned with, at least it was at the time where he could actually be put to bed. Nagisa looked noticeably weary too, but at least managed to nod along as they ate.

“Run a marathon?” Karma joked, once Daichi had finished and finally wanted to play on his own. Nagisa looed up at him blearily. “Finals.”

Thankfully, Karma’s had happened already, and he was relieved of the stress. He could see it taking its toll on Nagisa right then. Karma knew Nagisa was very capable of getting a good pass mark, and that he hadn’t slacked off on studying, but there still seemed to be this fear ingrained into him. Unfortunately, Karma wasn’t exactly the best at reassurance.

“You’ll do fine,” he said casually, “at least you only need to worry about passing the year.”

Nagisa took a deep breath. “You’re right. It must be tough for you, with real entrance exams.”
Karma shrugged. “It’s no big deal. Hey, Nagisa, about that-“

“Dada!” Daichi interrupted them, rushing in with an arm full of books. “Wanna read now!”

Looking down at him, Nagisa barely sighed. “You want to go to bed?”

His face creased. “Want to read.”

“But,” Nagisa started, “won’t you fall asleep?”

He thrust the book up proudly. “I won’t!”

Nagisa didn’t argue with him further than that, going over to sit with him on the sofa. Really, all he had to do was hold the book open, when Daichi was in this kind of mood. Karma wasn’t exactly sure when most kids should read, but from the sound of things, Daichi was working it out. But maybe he wasn’t ‘most kids’.

Eventually, though, he did give up on reading it for himself, and Nagisa took over. He read steadily, but not overly slowly. Karma was supposed to be concentrating on his own studying, but it was hard to when Nagisa was reciting so softly. He felt himself being lulled into an odd yet not unwelcome sense of peace.

“Knew you’d fall asleep,” he muttered, and then yawned.

Karma stood up to stretch. “I’ll take him to bed,” he offered, seeing as Nagisa had been in charge of the bath.

He picked him up as carefully as possible, not wanting to disturb his sleep. Thankfully, he wasn’t a crazily light sleeper. He didn’t even stir in Karma’s arms, in the time it took him to carry him into his bedroom. Thankfully, he was already dressed for bed, so Karma only really needed to manoeuvre the covers before gently putting him down. He looked like an absolute angel sleeping away like that. Of course, Karma knew better than to fall for the innocent look at this point.

Nagisa had his eyes closed, when Karma came back in. It was clear that he wasn’t actually asleep, but he looked like he could be any moment. Karma should probably tell him to just go to bed, but hey, Nagisa could look after himself. As much as Karma wanted to suggest it, he kept himself quiet, instead just sitting down beside him.

At least Nagisa was comfortable enough to relax a little, shoulders dropping their tension. “Today has been… long.”

Karma didn’t really have a response for that. He agreed, though, especially with what was brewing underneath his skin. Every part of him just wanted the day to be over.

Continuing on, Nagisa smiled softly. “At least the exams are nearly finished. But, I guess you have university entrance exams. Those are a lot worse.”

“I’m not worried,” he confirmed. He wasn’t worried about passing, anyway.

Nagisa shook his head. “Don’t just take it for granted, though. Besides, it’s still far away.”

Taking a deep breath, Karma knew he had to do it. “It is far away.”

“Hmm?” He said, like he had no idea what Karma was talking about.

Karma thought about it, instead of replying. He knew that there was a chance to just try and forget
about it, right now. But, weirdly, Karma didn’t want to. When deadlines got closer, the desperation for solutions would only turn out higher. And there would, eventually, need to be one. Karma didn’t want to fight with Nagisa anymore, he really didn’t.

Which meant that he had to try and bring this up… for healthy discussion? It wasn’t like him, Karma knew that, and he had no real desire to do it. At the same time, he was bored of this same routine, of avoiding things until everything blew up and then they didn’t speak until it became too much. So, maybe it was smarter overall to avoid it, as much as doing so crawled under his skin.

“Keisetsu University isn’t as close as the high school is, right? And Tougyou is even further in the other direction.”

Nagisa looked up at him. “What are you saying?”

He frowned, then. He might be clearly tired, but Nagisa wasn’t stupid. He was far from stupid, even if his grades used to let him down years ago. This wasn’t the time for mind games, but then again, Nagisa didn’t seem like he was trying that either. In fact, Karma wasn’t really sure what this was, the only thing he could come up with was some deep set denial.

“Karma,” Nagisa said, “what is it?”

He took a deep breath. “They’re hours apart. I don’t know how we’re going to make it work.”

Nagisa swallowed. “You don’t know.”

Was he supposed to? “No, I don’t know this time.”

“I don’t know either,” Nagisa’s voice was a little quiet, as he stood up and walked towards the balcony, just looking out of the window rather than actually going out onto it.

That got under one of Karma’s nerves. “I thought you were the one who wanted to talk about stuff.”

“I do!” He turned around to face him.

“Then why are you walking away?”

“Because…” Nagisa swallowed, his eyes dropping to the ground. “There isn’t a solution! I’m just going to have to drop out.”

“What.”

Karma’s blood started to boil with annoyance and rage. Of course that’s the kind of thing Nagisa would suggest. Because when it came down to it, Nagisa was like that. He’d always be the first to take a bullet, even if there was a way around it half the time. Which, for reasons not fully clear to Karma, actually bothered him.

“One of us has to,” Nagisa said, “and I couldn’t live with myself if I held you back.”

He clenched his teeth, holding back every violent instinct that came to him. “Can you stop being so self sacrificial for once?”

“What you want to do is far more important!” Nagisa didn’t back down. “The world already has plenty of teachers-”

“They don’t have you yet.”
For a moment, they both went quiet. Karma could see the gears spinning in his head. Karma, too, didn’t really know what else to say. He hadn’t wanted to fight with Nagisa, but here they were again. At least punches weren’t being thrown, this time.

“We’re just not on the same level,” Nagisa started, “in anything, our lives don’t fit together in the same way as kids that happen thrown together in the same school. Even back then, you were dragged down b-by-“

“You were twice the assassin I ever was and you know it,” Karma responded, before Nagisa could even finish his sentence. He was sick of this. Sure, Karma would normally bask in someone thinking something like that, but it was different when it wasn’t somewhat begrudging. Different when it wasn’t even really true. Different when it was Nagisa.

A part of him used to want to beat the lights out of him. Not because Nagisa had done anything, really, it was almost what he wasn’t using. But actually fighting him, as brief as it had been, hadn’t been the relief he’d hoped for. Kissing him, on the other hand… Though it left a bitter taste, now. Truthfully, Karma didn’t even know what he wanted anymore, but it wasn’t this.

Nagisa’s breath shook. “This isn’t assassination Karma, this is real life!”

“I should have just applied to somewhere closer,” he changed the subject. “I should-“

“No.” It was sharp, and to the point. “I wouldn’t have let you do that.”

“Let me?”

Apparently he wasn’t done, though. “You can’t sell yourself short like that. I know how difficult it is to get a job like the one you want, you need a top university like Tougyou. It is the closest, of that standard.”

“And you can’t just drop out,” Karma pointed out. It was one thing he was sure about, not just letting Nagisa ruin his own life.

“What then?” His eyes widened. “We both drop out? We might have money now but I know it won’t last forever.”

They were certainly both that stubborn. And Karma knew, if they couldn’t change universities, if he wouldn’t stand for Nagisa just dropping out, it might just end up being the only way out. Where nobody wins. Could he really live with that?

“I don’t know,” he repeated.

Nagisa exhaled in more of a sigh, and outside heavy rain started to beat against the glass.

Chapter End Notes

Such drama.

My own university has been so busy ugh. I have a couple of weeks of hell, so may be a slight delay with the next chapter. Who knows, I might be pretty inspired and write it since we're now at the beginning of the end of this... second phase/part I guess. Maybe I'll knock them out pretty quick, since it's spring break soon. My foot's still kind of
broken so I won't exactly be partying much.

I actually wrote a scene for way later in this fic in my creative writing class... though I changed their names to Norman and Kameron lmao. It's... high key kind of scary I can't wait to get that far so I can show you all.

Anyway, I'll see you in the next chapter. I have to write my OWN Japanese university application now, it's an absolute nightmare. I don't have to do any tests or anything, but I do have to write an essay about my 'study plan'. It's kind of ridiculous since there's no real information on the 'foreign website' for the university. The info they DO have is deadass just in Japanese, and it's really technical language to follow. They asked me about my Japanese ability IN JAPANESE like imagine if you couldn't read the language at all (admittedly I had to get my Japanese friends to help me because it was so damn confusing). Also they made me get a chest xray so I guess I'm radioactive now lol. Rant over :'

(See this is what you get when I don't update at 3am. Rambly author's notes.)
Chapter Summary

After months of getting nowhere, Hiromi makes an offer

Chapter Notes

this one hurt me

See the end of the chapter for more notes

To their credit, they talked about it. Or, they tried to talk about it. All summer, they attempted to have the same conversation over and over again, and they always ended up in the same place. Nagisa was frustrated with himself, even, because he couldn't find a good way out of it. He wasn't willing to let Karma change his ambitions, but it wasn't like Nagisa was even close to being smart enough to get into that university. He couldn't even choose one close, since application periods had long ended.

They argued about it for a whole summer, at once almost every day, whilst fitting in other stuff. Nagisa was spared serious entrance exams, since his high school was connected to the university, but Karma still really needed to study. Thankfully, this didn't seem to have affected his motivation much, since he'd spent most of his days doing it non stop. Which meant Nagisa happened to have Daichi non stop.

Not knowing the answer was getting under Nagisa’s skin. He was eighteen years old now, he was supposed to know more things, learn how to better deal with situations. There was only two years now until he became a proper adult, at least. Part of him denied that internally, though another side of him knew that for the most part he was definitely more adult than other people his age.

But it didn’t matter. They were still fighting, though he supposed it was better than how their fights used to be, right up until the weather got cold and the leaves started to shrivel and die. Since school had started back up, they hardly had time to actually even think about it, which was bad considering how much of a priority it probably should have been.

“Come on Daichi,” he said, trying not to get too impatient.

Daichi was currently clinging to his bed, despite Nagisa not even getting close to touching him, half dressed in a way that would have been hilarious in any other situation. Any situation that wasn’t a morning where they were on a slight time crunch. Sometimes, Nagisa didn’t know what had gotten into him.

“Not going,” he cried.

Not, ‘I don’t want to’, but a full decision. He’d been fine and sweet as ever when he woke up, but now… Truthfully Nagisa didn’t really know what to do about it. Most of the time, Daichi would just eventually give up or get distracted. But, they didn’t have time for that. So what did that mean?
Nagisa had to… punish him now, or something?

The thought made Nagisa want to shrivel up. He knew, full well, that it was necessary, but… Daichi’s hurt little face. He could get over telling him not to do things that were dangerous, but those were mostly just warnings. Nagisa was out of depth with this kind of thing, honestly. He wished he could just reason with him, instead.

Nagisa sat down. “Why don’t you want to go?”

Daichi said nothing.

“Is it because you don’t like it there?” He tried, feeling a little bit stupid.

His face screwed up, though he didn’t actually reply. Instead, like a demon possessed his body, he grabbed at his pillow and tossed it across the room. When that didn’t do much, he flung himself hopelessly across the bed.

“You’re angry about something?” He swallowed. He should tell him off for that, but Nagisa didn’t want to make it worse. “That’s okay, everyone gets angry sometimes. But, it’s not good to throw things. You know that, don’t you? I think it’s better to talk about it first, then it won’t feel…” he tried to think of an appropriate word. “It won’t be such a big feeling.”

Daichi stilled for a moment. “My shirt?”

“Your shirt?” Nagisa considered him. “Is something wrong with it?”

“Can’t see it.”

It took him a moment to figure out exactly what Daichi meant. There was no way he’d forgotten how to look down at his own clothes, so it probably wasn’t the shirt he was currently wearing. So he wanted to wear a specific shirt? That he couldn’t find? That was the closest he could guess, go what Daichi really meant.

“What colour is it?” Nagisa tried.

“Uhm, rainbows.”

That was helpful. Unless he suddenly wanted a tie-dye, Nagisa took that to just mean multicoloured. Did he have shirts like that? Honestly, it was usually Karma who bought him clothes, and Nagisa didn’t have a problem with that arrangement. Until now, at least, because he’d lost track. He left the room briefly, looking through things that had recently been washed.

A few options in hand, he returned, holding them out. “One of these?”

Daichi perked up, holding his arms out. “My shirt!”

He just let him take it, but then realised he should probably say something. “You know, it’s okay to just ask next time.”

But Daichi was distracted, pulling the other shirt off in place for the new one. No matter how good he was getting at dressing himself, really, it still took him a little while. Time Nagisa barely had. However, rushing him after he just managed to calm down was probably the worst possible thing he could do. So, he waited it out.

Thinking about getting ready, Nagisa wasn’t sure where Karma was. Kind of important, since
Karma was supposed to actually take him. He hadn’t seen him at all that morning, actually. Had he slept through his alarm or something? Nagisa, less patient after that, decided the best course of action would be knocking on his door.

“Karma?” He tried, after three knocks.

After a minute or so, a very groggy looking Karma came to the door. “Is the house burning down or something?”

Nagisa blinked. “Ah, no… Actually…” He peered into the room. “Aren’t you going to school?”

Looking back over his shoulder, Karma shrugged. “Not today.”

That was surprisingly unusual, in these past few years. Karma very rarely actually skipped his classes, without good reason. So there must be some kind of good reason, though Nagisa wasn’t sure what it could possibly be. Since entrance exams were coming up, Nagisa would have thought that school was very much a place Karma wanted to be.

“There’s a couple of problems I still don’t understand,” Karma supplied, though half through a yawn.

“So… You’re skipping school to study… for school?”

“Anyway,” he changed the subject, “I don’t mind Daichan staying here.”

After all of that struggle? Nagisa was… annoyed at that fact, even though it would mean he could easily dart out now and still make his regular train. At the same time, though, that was kind of bad. As much as he didn’t really want to force him, Nagisa was sure that bad habits developed early in childhood would remain for like. His morals were on the line.

“I don’t want him to pick up that kind of thing,” Nagisa explained. “Will you pick him up later, then?”

Karma tilted his head. “Sure.”

That was it, then. By the way Karma straight up disappeared back into his room without further conversation, Nagisa had to assume so. But it had been like this for a while now… He hoped Karma was actually okay, rather than putting on some kind of an act. Looking at the time, though, he didn’t exactly have to option to stick around.

“Are you ready, Daichi?” He asked, poking his head into Daichi’s room.

This time, Daichi was at least dressed, but he’d occupied himself with a book. Which meant Nagisa was… annoyed at that fact, even though it would mean he could easily dart out now and still make his regular train. At the same time, though, that was kind of bad. As much as he didn’t really want to force him, Nagisa was sure that bad habits developed early in childhood would remain for like. His morals were on the line.

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This time, Daichi was at least dressed, but he’d occupied himself with a book. Which meant Nagisa was probably going to have to remove it from him. Had he had the energy, Nagisa would have groaned. Instead, he approached carefully, patting Daichi on the head. Daichi whined, but Nagisa got the feeling he understood that it was time.

He wondered whether this would get easier once Daichi started real school. It felt like just a week ago, Daichi was a helpless little baby, but really he was almost three. It certainly didn’t feel like three years. But, he was definitely changing every day, even if that included the bad stuff sometimes, Nagisa didn’t mind. Sometimes, he thought he missed it, but it nice that Daichi could actually tell him what he needed now, instead of the guess work that filled the first year.

Nagisa had pretty much given up on the notion of being on time for school, but since Daichi (thankfully) walked into nursery confidently, it was only twenty minutes or so late rather than an
hour. Sometimes, he wished he hadn’t gone with his mother’s wishes, attending a school so far away. Maybe if he’d gone to another school, he and Karma wouldn’t be having so much trouble.

He wished he could just take the Tougyou exam and make this whole situation go away. But, even if he’d applied, Nagisa would never have made it. The acceptance was so selective… Karma was going to the right school, doing the right course, the right level of intelligent. The only way Nagisa could have dreamt of it was if Korosensei was still- no, he shouldn’t think like that. There were things he couldn’t take back, so he just had to keep his eyes ahead now.

The day passed with little fanfare, a certain kind of recklessness. With everyone so stressed about their personal futures, the conversations and events were less interesting. Honestly, Nagisa didn’t mind the arrangement his friends had come up with, studying near silently in their breaks. Sometimes it was nice, to work alone but still in the company of others.

“Hey, Nagisa kun,” Nishi said, once the final bell rung out. “Are you busy today?”

He thought about it for a moment. “I-I mean, I think Karma already picked Daichi up, so…” Did he have an excuse? “I am, actually.”

Nishi scratched the back of his neck. “Really? Heh, well… I’m a little lost on my application details actually.”

“Oh, you are?”

He smiled awkwardly. “Would you mind helping me? I mean, only if you have the time! I totally understand if you can’t, I mean, your kid comes before helping me with something so dumb, right?”

Nagisa was a little confused. “Why me?”

“You know things,” he shrugged.

He thought that maybe he should tell Nishi that he was literally transferred into the E Class once because of how awful his grades were. Then again, his academic record probably made him look for more impressive than the actual truth. Nagisa had never been regarded as ‘the smart one’. But, his friend was asking for his help. How could he refuse? Karma had been resting all day, anyway, so he was probably in prime arguing mood. Nagisa would rather avoid that.

After sending a quick text over LINE, Nagisa nodded. “Okay, let’s go.”

Nishi’s house wasn’t too far away, at least, almost on the route Nagisa would have started to take home anyway. The way there, they didn’t talk about much other than normal school things, though there was hardly gossip. They were friends, but they didn’t really have all that many hobbies in common. But sometimes that was okay, Nagisa decided.

“Welcome back,” Nishi’s mother chimed, the moment the door even made a sound.

He kicked off his shoes. “Hey! I brought Nagisa kun over!”

She appeared, then, wiping sweat from her forehead. “Oh, hi, Nagisa kun! It’s been a while since I saw you… I apologise, I wasn’t expecting guests.”

“He won’t stay for long,” Nishi said casually.

Nagisa lowered his gaze, bowing his head. “Thank you for having me, Nishi san.”
She smiled. “Oh, you’re no trouble! Well, I’ll leave you to it then.”

Honestly, he hadn’t really been to Nishi’s house often. He forgot, sometimes, that most people still came home to their parents after the school day. It was a nice house, though he didn’t have much of a chance to look at it, following his friend instead. His room was tidy, functional in the sense that there wasn’t a lot of decoration or clutter.

He stretched out, reaching for his laptop. “I appreciate you doing this.”

“It’s no problem,” Nagisa said.

It was actually a little confusing, so there was no wonder Nishi had wanted at least a little bit of help with it. Nagisa really didn’t mind, in fact finding the teaching element of it quite enjoyable. He was almost proud, seeing Nishi’s face relax into understanding when Nagisa explained a certain point. A large part of him knew, in the back of his head, that this was definitely what he was supposed to be doing with his life.

Eventually, Nishi had had enough, flopping back on his bed. “Well, I’m beat. Thank you for helping me!”

Right then, though, Nagisa thought of something. “N-not that I mind! But, how come you didn’t ask Kita san instead?”

He bit his lip. “We… haven’t been getting along so well, recently.”

That sounded bad. The two of them had been dating since their first year of high school. Although Nagisa didn’t know the ins and outs of their relationship, as far as he could tell it was pretty solid. They weren’t overly affectionate or anything, quite respectful all things considered, but they’d seemed happy. At least, up until summer. Nobody was really happy anymore.

Nishi sighed. “It’s hard, with all of this university stuff and everyone being so busy. We barely get to see each other anymore, and there’s a chance we might be on different campuses. I don’t know… I think we might break up.”

“Oh.”

“Don’t worry about it,” he said quickly, waving Nagisa off. “It’s not your problem.”

He swallowed, wondering if he should just leave it. “Do you want to break up?”

“No… I don’t,” Nishi admitted. “But a part of me wonders if it would be for the best.”

“Then I think you should try and figure out what part’s stronger.” Nagisa almost thought aloud. “That would be the best way to decide.”

He nodded his understanding, before moving to walk Nagisa out. He hoped that Nishi would figure it out soon enough… he didn’t like the idea of a friend being unhappy.

All things considered, he hadn’t actually been there that long. Despite it being winter, he found it wasn’t even dark yet. And, he really didn’t want to go home yet. Maybe that was awful… Nagisa knew he shouldn’t avoid things, but he was sick of the arguing, even if they both declared it wasn’t really arguing.

He thought about it for a little while, all the way to the train station, but when he got off in Kunugigaoka, he ended up walking directly to his parent’s apartment. It wasn’t like he’d been
invited, or even warned them he was coming, but something possessed him in that moment and he ended up going anyway, a little nervous as he knocked at the door.

“Nagisa?” His mother said in confusion, when she answered.

For a moment, Nagisa wasn’t sure what to say. In fact, he couldn’t remember the last time he’d even been here alone. He hadn’t found a reason to visit before, not without Daichi with him. His mother, too, seemed slightly confused at the lack of toddler. But, right then, Nagisa needed a clear mind.

“Good evening,” he said, instead of all of that.

“Your father’s out running,” she said, watching Nagisa like a hawk as he removed his shoes and stepped into the apartment space. “He should be back soon, though.”

A large part of him thought he’d made a mistake, right then. Honestly, he could hardly remember the last time he was completely alone with his mother. She was better, though, or at least getting there as far as he could tell. But, being on edge wasn’t a behaviour Nagisa could easily unlearn. He’d spent a portion of his life, guarding against her happy days.

“I don’t mind you coming,” she said, “but did something happen?”

He shook his head. “No, everyone’s okay.”

At that, she seemed a little less on guard. “Ah, that’s good to hear. Your father told me you were busy.”

“Y-yeah,” Nagisa dropped eye contact, “there’s a lot to do with applications and stuff.”

She nodded. “Must be tough.”

“We just can’t agree,” it slipped out of him, before he could hold it back.

Nagisa didn’t exactly like talking about his problems, to anybody. It wasn’t like he bottled things up in a hugely bad way or anything, he just didn’t want to be burden, especially since a lot of his ‘problems’ were probably mediocre in comparison to other people, anyway. In fact, Nagisa instantly wished he hadn’t said anything at all.

“Yes,” she said, “sometimes it’s hard to find a common ground.”

He still, somehow, didn’t stop himself. “We- our universities are so far away.”

Momentarily, her face darkened. “I see.”

Right then, Nagisa felt a familiar sickly fear. It wasn’t exactly the same of how she used to be, when she went into one of her moods. But, Nagisa could tell there was significant effort there, holding it back. What was Nagisa thinking, almost asking for such heavy advice from someone so temperamental? He hoped his father would just show up to defuse the potential situation.

“You won’t do anything stupid, Nagisa,” she said. “Keisetsu is an amazing university. Considering your circumstances, acceptance is… an honour.”

He looked down. “I wasn’t going to drop out.”

That was exactly what he’d suggested though, on instinct. It wasn’t that he didn’t care about university, the truth was the opposite, but he had to weigh things up. Karma was brilliant, and one
day, Nagisa knew he was going to help a lot of people. There was no way he could stop that, in
good conscious. So, if the choice was that, or he drop out, then he would do it without question.

“Of course not,” she said. “Well, I assume you’ve come to the conclusion that you can’t possibly
live as you have been.”

Nagisa almost choked on the air.

“Then, you’ll just have to go your separate ways.”

He really did choke, then. “B-but-“

Eyes narrowing, she looked towards one of the doors. “It’s not like we don’t have a spare room.”

“You don’t mean-“

She shrugged. “If you’re not willing to just ask for yourself, I’ll offer. Your father won’t disagree,
I’m sure. We can watch over Daichi, whilst you study at university.”

Nagisa’s blood ran ice cold. Leave... Daichi? That hadn’t even been an option, in either his or
Karma’s minds. How could they even have thought about that kind of thing? It was awful and
selfish and plain wrong. But, they hadn’t thought about this, had they? Even when he was born, the
discussion about what they were going to do in order to be able to keep him was centred around
high school, not anything further than that.

He couldn’t just give up his son. Well, it wouldn’t be giving him up, exactly- no, Nagisa needed to
stop even beginning to consider it. As much as Daichi loved his grandparents, and they appeared to
love him, Nagisa couldn’t help but remember his own childhood. Even if his mother hadn’t been
the worst, until he became a teenager… Even if she was getting better. It would be sick, to even
potentially subject Daichi to that, though his mother had never given him the impression that there
was something she wanted to change about him.

“Karma will never agree to that,” Nagisa said, because he needed something to say.

Because Karma would never agree. Before Daichi was even born, he’d been the one passionately
against adoption. It wouldn’t exactly be the same as that, but it was similar enough Nagisa knew it
would strike a nerve. Nagisa didn’t even agree to it.

His mother sighed. “What else are you going to do, Nagisa?”

“W-what?”

“The reality is you’re almost an adult,” she said, “I know I can’t cling onto you and your choices
anymore. So, I’m asking you, what else can you do?”

He avoided the question. “Y-you can’t really just take responsibility for him, it’s too much-“

“He’s my grandson,” she cut him off. “And, despite everything, you’re not quite an adult yet. It’s
still my job as a parent to make sure you’re taking the right path. For that, I’d do anything. Ask
yourself what you’d do.”

Nagisa didn’t want to. “T-thank you but I think I should be going home now.”

“Don’t make a decision you’ll regret,” she said.

He would regret any kind of decision. How could he not? The life he currently had suited them all,
but… The sense of doom was impending. What else was he going to do, aside from dropping out. What was worse, dropping out, or letting Daichi live away from him? If Nagisa dropped out, the easiest option for everyone, he was sure Karma wouldn’t forgive him. He said he’d drop out *himself*. And Nagisa would never forgive Karma, for doing something like that.

But leaving Daichi with his parents… Aside from his heats, Nagisa had never spent a single *day* away from his son. And he had no real desire too, either, even when Daichi was in an impossible mood. Though, Nagisa was sure it wouldn’t be like he couldn’t see him whenever there was more than a few hours spare… but he wanted to see him all the time. It wasn’t even about what Nagisa wanted, it was about what Daichi needed.

What else could they do, split Daichi *between* them? That was ridiculous, especially at such a young age. It just sounded like an easy way to give him instability and Nagisa couldn’t even dream of messing him up like that. Stability… He swallowed hard. Maybe… Maybe he was actually being selfish here. But, surely having his real parents was the best thing for him.

“*Oh, you’re back,*” Karma said.

Nagisa had been so lost in thought that he’d barely registered even coming home. “*I went to see my mum.*”

He raised an eyebrow. “*Really? How come?*”

“She made an offer,” he burst out. Nagisa *needed* to hear Karma say no, so he could banish the thought from his mind entirely.

Thinking of Daichi… where was he? Knowing his personality, he’d usually rush right to the door, if he heard someone come in. But, Nagisa could see the shoes Daichi had left the house in earlier were there, so it wasn’t like Karma had forgotten to pick him up or something like that. This wasn’t a conversation that should be had anywhere near him anyway.

“What kind of offer?” Karma asked, as though he was only half interested.

Could Nagisa even bring himself to say it? That was an answer, then, was it not? If he couldn’t even say it, how could he do it otherwise? But, Nagisa still felt sick and nervous. There was a knowing voice right there, in the back of his head. He didn’t want to listen to that voice, or the possibilities that went along with it.

“That Daichi could stay with them,” he got out, though quietly.

Surprisingly, Karma didn’t react much physically. “*You told her that was ridiculous, right?*”

“Well-*“ Nagisa wasn’t sure what to say in regards to *that*. “*Not exactly.*”

“It *is* ridiculous,” Karma reiterated.

His shoulders slumped. “I told her you’d say so.”

“*Me? What about you?*” His eyes sharpened in an accusatory way.

“I’m not exactly enthusiastic about it,” Nagisa said.

But Karma was stiffened up now. “*You’re going to say but or something, aren’t you*”

“*N-no, I-“*
“You’re an awful liar, Nagisa.”

That got under his skin. “I’m not lying! I left pretty much after she said it.”

“Then why are you bringing it up?”

“I don’t want it Karma, I-“

He stopped midsentence, at the sound of a door creaking open. Nagisa’s heart stopped, realising that of course he shouldn’t be arguing with Karma like this. That was one of the few things he was really against, arguing in front of him. Nagisa remembered when his parents used to fight, how sometimes he’d hide and hope it all went away.

“Dada,” Daichi said, a little sleepily, “I go bath now.”

Nagisa looked at him, a little confused. “You want a bath?”

“Yeah!”

Well, it was pretty late, he was still dressed in his day clothes, so it was probably time. It wasn’t strict enough to call a routine, exactly, but he started what they usually went about in the evenings, although Daichi didn’t usually request a bath. Whilst he sat around in there, Nagisa got a full and very detailed report of how his day went, before he was dried and pyjamas were put on, and he decided he wanted to read.

Nagisa wished they could stay exactly like this forever. But they couldn’t, could they? There was a lump in his throat, actually putting Daichi to bed. Because it was Nagisa’s wish…but maybe not the best thing for him. His head was spinning, then. It wasn’t even just about distance, it was time. Right now, high school was no different to them having normal jobs, really, but university…

“Karma,” Nagisa started, when Daichi was fast asleep. “Karma, we need to talk about this.”

He dropped the book he was reading from down on the table. “Yeah.”

“I-“ He took a deep breath. “Our time is running out, before we’re forced into some sort of choice. We need to decide something, soon.”

“What do you want to do?” He tilted his head, tone of voice much calmer this time.

“Stay like this,” Nagisa said, without hesitation. “But we can’t do that, we’d spend over half the day travelling, just to live here.”

His eyes flicked down to the wooden table. “Neither of us are dropping out. I won’t let you, and you won’t let me. And it’s too late to apply anywhere else now.”

“I hate it,” Nagisa said, “but I don’t see any other choice.”

“My parents left me all the time whilst they travelled,” he said, “and I grew up to hate them for it.”

Nagisa’s face crumpled up a little. “But it’s not the same. You were left with nannies, and you didn’t know when they were going to leave.”

“Does that matter to a child?”

“Maybe!” Nagisa didn’t even know. “My parents were never… bad to me back then, when I was that young. Not until after my dad left. I know they love Daichi a lot, and he loves spending time
there."

Karma closed his eyes. “Visiting occasionally is different to living somewhere. Nagisa, I—"

“I don’t want this,” Nagisa repeated again. “But what we want doesn’t even matter. It’s about what he needs.”

He heard Karma take a deep breath, opening his mouth to say something, but no words came out. They were supposed to be talking, but in a sense, the absence of words was what was needed. Otherwise, they’d talk around it for hours, only reaching the same dreaded conclusion. If only it wasn’t this way… but, this was it, wasn’t it?

Chapter End Notes

I wanted to study but ah, inspiration.

I also keep writing for my new AU. Not ALW, my other... new AU. I have a too many fic problem lmao.

As always, comments and feedback are much appreciated!
Nagisa was surprisingly nervous. The weather forecast was playing in the background, discussing the sudden snowfall they were having, but he could see just from looking out the window. He just hoped Karma was okay, even if he was technically inside, since the reports were talking about delays to start times. Many of his friends, too, had their entrance exams today. He could only hope they’d all made it in time. Honestly, the last time it had snowed this much was the day Daichi was born.

“Are you finished with your lunch, Daichi?” Nagisa asked.

There was no school, and no way Nagisa was going out just to take Daichi to his nursery. So, it was a day in by all means. Daichi had started showing signs of boredom about being stuck indoors for so long, and honestly Nagisa didn’t blame him. Thankfully, he’d managed to distract him with food for a short while.

“All done!” He said proudly.

Nagisa smiled, taking the plate away from him. “You ate a lot, huh?”

Right then, his phone buzzed.
He looked up at the news report, frowning at the message.
Nagisa couldn’t help but smile at his phone. Karma had been studying so much recently, he was glad it hadn’t been for nothing. There was a difference, Nagisa thought, in Karma not caring and Karma being confident. This seemed like confidence, a far cry from the subtle freaking out Nagisa had seen but not commented on, for the last few weeks.
Was he thinking about the fact they had a child? A child that was easily more susceptible to a cold than Nagisa would be? Then again, he wasn’t strictly a baby… As long as he wrapped him up warm enough. Nagisa liked that idea, actually. He was running out of things to do, and Daichi usually needed to be in a sleepy mood to sit through a movie or something. Taking him out would solve that problem.

So, of course, Nagisa just gave in. Daichi seemed excited about the prospect of getting to go out and play in the snow, enough so that he let Nagisa dress him up properly without much complaint. In fact, it was adorable, how happy he looked about this. He could barely contain himself, bouncing back and forth on each foot impatiently.

Once they were outside, Daichi’s eyes widened with joy. But, like he didn’t know exactly what to do with snow, he just charged forwards, immediately losing his footing. Thankfully, snow was pretty soft, and he just looked dazed rather than hurt. Instead of crying or something, he started to laugh, rolling around whilst staring in fascination at the way the fresh snow crunched.

“Come on Daichi,” Nagisa said, “you can play around once we’ve met up with your Papa, right?”

He skipped off a little more carefully once Nagisa helped pull him to his feet. To get to the restaurant Karma was talking about, it would be best to ride the train, so he started in the direction of the station. Along the way, some young school students were in the midst of it all having a snow ball fight. Of course, Daichi’s jaw dropped at this interesting new game. It was all Nagisa could do to shuffle them along and try to dodge.

Freezing by the time they actually got to the restaurant, Nagisa was glad to go inside and warm up. Daichi seemed far less bothered, though, so at least there was that. Nagisa couldn’t stop shivering himself, even with the restaurant’s heating trying its best. They were the first ones to arrive, so he
hoped that Karma hadn’t found any delays or anything.

“Yo.”

Nagisa looked up, to find Karma standing there, snow dusting his shoulders and hair. He couldn’t help but notice, with a slight twinge of jealously, that a couple of other people eating at the restaurant were staring at him too. Of course, Karma was very tall, enough so to attract a few curious stares. But it wasn’t just that, he was also… annoyingly attractive. Even able to qualify as handsome on some level when the mischievousness was wiped off his face.

“Papa!” Daichi said excitedly.

Karma picked him up into a hug without question, before he noticed Nagisa looking. “What’s wrong Nagisa? Is my face too high for you to see?”

He’d assumed Nagisa was just jealous of the height thing, then, rather than admiring his looks. Honestly, that was probably the preferable option. Besides, it was a little creepy in a sense, to just stare at him like that. Karma sat down, placing Daichi on the seat beside him, and Nagisa decided that they could just stick to that analysis.

“…Just be quiet,” he said. “How did your exam go?”

Karma leant back nonchalantly. “It was no big deal. None of the problems were beyond what I had expected.” Nagisa could tell he wasn’t lying, he looked relaxed as ever. “Who cares about the exam? Anyway, I wanted to discuss something with you. Let’s all go on a graduation trip.”

“…A graduation trip!?”

“We’ve never really taken Daichan anywhere,” Karma said, “I thought we should, before university. He’s old enough to understand what it actually is, now.”

Daichi looked up. “Trip?”

Karma continued, though. “Us and the rest of our ex classmates. We’re all going to become students or inherit the family business, so we’re going to have less chances to go on trips together. Everyone should be able to make it if it’s Mid-March, right?”

Thinking about it, Nagisa felt uneasy. “Mid-March? Entrance exams will still be going on. If anybody fails their midyear exams, then…”

“I’m telling you, it’s going to be fine. We’re Class E, after all,” Karma smirked. “Takebayashi made sure not to repeat the mistakes he made when he took his high school entrance exams, and squeezed his way into a private university commensurate with his abilities. I passed by Isogai at the exam hall earlier, and it didn’t look like he had any problems, either. Even Terasaka passed the exam for one of his backup universities, so even that cheeky bastard is gonna be a student. As far as I know, everyone should be able to make it.”

“I’m telling you, it’s going to be fine.” That sounded good, actually. Nagisa rarely had time to keep up with any of the group chats, so it was nice to hear that they were all doing well. But then he remembered a recent conversation. “Kayano wouldn’t be able to make it! She said that she had a film shoot overseas around that time!”

Karma’s eyes widened. “Seriously!? I see. That’s too bad… She sure is a popular actress.”

She really was, much to Nagisa’s admiration. Her schedule was so busy, it was hard to find a good
time to talk to her. Though, Nagisa was worried about bugging her, so he didn’t try that often. Still, from what he did hear, and physically get to watch for himself, her acting career was going great. He was proud of her for achieving such an important role.

“She said it was for an Action-Adventure film called Gold City,” he remembered.

“Eh?!” Karma stood up so suddenly, it made Nagisa jump. “You’re kidding! That movie is directed by the same guy that did Sonic Ninja!”

“R-really?”

“Yes, really!” Karma exclaimed. “I’m so jealous! So, she’s already an international star. Kayano chan’s amazing!” He regained his composure, then. “I didn’t know you still regularly kept in touch?”

For some reason, seeing Karma fanboy so easily struck Nagisa’s heart. It was so cute, really, especially coming from someone like Karma. It was subtle, but he definitely did qualify as a fanboy. Especially when it came to that director. Nagisa couldn’t help but remember that time Korosensei took them to Hawaii to see Sonic Ninja, even if Karma claimed he only liked the director, and found the story “cliché”. Nagisa knew by now, though, that he did actually enjoy the film, in a guilty pleasure kind of a way.

Nagisa remembered when Karma asked him to the first movie, all those years ago. Back then, a part of Nagisa just assumed it would just be a one time thing, but the next day Karma had wanted to discuss almost every detail with him. That was how they fell into hanging out all the time, becoming best friends.

“Yeah,” Nagisa snapped out of it back to the actual question, “although, all we do is exchange text messages. She’s extremely busy, so we shouldn’t let our messing around snatch away her precious time.”

Karma’s jaw dropped a little. “Nagisa, you’re way too reserved. For us, she isn’t ‘Mase Haruna’, she’s Kayano chan, a member of Class E just like us. Sometimes you should just try being pushy and invite her out. She’s our friend, right?”

He swallowed. “Maybe you’re right, but-”

“Although,” Karma just cut in anyway, “I guess it’d be impossible to invite her to a graduation trip if she’s doing a film shoot overseas. Did you hear where she was going?”

“Yeah, she said she was going to Phnom in Southeast Asia. They’re doing a film shoot at a group of temples designated as a World Heritage Site.”

Karma struck his hands together suddenly, and his face morphed in the way that it usually did when he came up with some kind of plan. Daichi, who was being surprisingly silent during this entire exchange, decided to copy him, clapping his own hands.

“I know where we should go for our graduation trip,” Karma said. “Let’s go see Phnom’s World Heritage temples!”

“Wha-“

“This is perfect!” Karma beamed. “I was thinking that we should go somewhere overseas, so let’s go where Kayano’s going!”
“B-but that’s crazy! If we go there, we’ll just bother her!”

Karma shrugged. “It’s okay if we’re just going there to take pictures. It’s not like we’re going there specifically to bother her. It’ll just be coincidence that we meet her there. Just coincidence, an innocent family holiday.” His smile turned pure demonic, and Nagisa knew there was no stopping him. “It’s decided.”

Without a moment’s hesitation, he pulled out his phone and started typing. With the way Nagisa’s own phone buzzed, he knew he’d sent a message to their group chat. Nagisa didn’t pull his phone out, but with the rapid vibrations, he could tell Karma was getting a lot of responses.

“See,” he held out his phone to show Nagisa, “everyone looks like they wanna go. It’s decided.”

“I guess there’s nothing I can do about it, then.” Nagisa sunk back in his seat.

Karma clicked his tongue, as another message appeared. “That Isogai. What’s he acting so timid for?” On the screen, the message from Isogai read that he was worried about his exam results. “If he used his full strength, then he definitely passed, and yet…”

“Well,” Nagisa started, “probably, but… Isogai kun seems worried about the trip itself, too.”

“Ah, I get it,” Karma nodded. “It’s because he’s as poor as usual.” His phone vibrated again. “Hey, Nakamura said she can get discounts. That’s Nakamura for you. She made quick work of that. Now Isogai can come, too. You have no complaints either, right, Nagisa?”

Did he? In just a few minutes, he’d been roped into a whole trip. The idea sounded fun, he supposed, but he couldn’t help but feel bad for Kayano. What was he thinking, giving Karma that kind of information when he was in a mood like this? Nagisa couldn’t help but feel pretty uneasy.

“It’s because I was blabbing about Kayano’s schedule that everyone’s going to go bother her. This is all my fault,” Nagisa replied.

“Don’t worry about that,” Karma waved off. “After all, I just got the details from Kayano herself.”

“Huh?!?”

Karma showed Nagisa Kayano’s reply, where indeed she had given him the full details of her own schedule. Although, the message read that she was busy, so she regrettably couldn’t go. So Nagisa’s information wouldn’t have completely caused all of this, but he still felt bad. A real film shoot was far more important than a graduation trip.

“See? With this, I was able to confirm the location and time of the film shoot from Kayano herself. This whole plan of mine has nothing to do with you spilling the location, so you can sit back and enjoy the trip.” Karma grinned.

He’d put this entire scheme together so quickly. “I’m grateful that you took my feelings into consideration, but will Kayano really be happy about having such a large number of people intrude on her?”

“Of course! Now, go ask her what her film schedule will be and where she’s lodging.”

Nagisa’s face heated up. “I can’t do that!”

Karma laughed lightly, “I guess not. Even I wouldn’t be so shameless to ask her something like that~ We’re gonna surprise Kayano with everyone, so let’s keep it a secret.”
With so much conviction, Nagisa knew there was no easy way out of that. By the looks of things, whether he liked it or not, he was going to be going on that trip. Honestly, he didn’t hate the idea, in theory. Their entire class had only managed to meet up once a year, though Nagisa had managed to see a few of his friends, here and there.

“You think Daichi will be okay… on a trip all the way to Cambodia? He’s never been on an aeroplane before…”

Karma looked down at Daichi. “You’ll be fine, won’t you?”

Of course, Daichi looked a little confused. “Okay?”

“You’ll like it a lot,” Karma continued, “do you want to fly on a plane?”

“Woah,” his eyes widened. “A plane?”

Karma smiled. “And there’ll be temples and stuff, it’s pretty cool.”

Well, Nagisa could hardly veto it now. Maybe it would be nice, to take him somewhere. Most kids had been on at least some kind of trip, but they’d never had the time or the thought to do it. They hadn’t even taken him to Tokyo, which was a little ridiculous since it was so close. Nagisa suddenly felt very bad about that.

Once food came, Daichi was a little distracted by eating to be too excited. Though, Nagisa wasn’t sure if he really understood the concept of a big trip like that, no more than the abstract idea of it. He began to warm to the idea, because surely Daichi would love to go somewhere new and exotic. Especially with this cold weather.

They stayed until they couldn’t really justify it anymore, and one of the restaurant staff was giving them the side eye, even though her face showed a smile. The reason they didn’t want to leave was because after this, they were taking Daichi to his grandparents. It remained unsaid between them that they were dreading it.

This seemed like the best way to go about a horrible situation. Rather than just leaving Daichi alone one day out of nowhere, they were going to let him spend one night away, to see how it went. Then, they’d gradually build up to it. Of course, if things went really badly, then there was no way they could make it a permanent thing. Nagisa felt almost sick, since he’d never spent a long time at all away from Daichi.

He skipped around obliviously in the snow on the way back, whilst Karma and Nagisa didn’t really say anything. When they did get back, with Daichi’s things already packed, they didn’t dwell long. As usual, he was hardly upset about hearing he was going to his grandparents. But then again, Daichi seemed to adore attention no matter what, when it wasn’t coming from either of his parents. And he was probably about to get a lot of that.

“Grandma! Grandpa!” Daichi said immediately, as he was dropped off.

Nagisa’s father picked him up. “Wow, you got so big since I last saw you.”

He hadn’t really. Nagisa had sort of hoped that his tininess wouldn’t be permanent, but last time the doctor had said Daichi was 10cm smaller than the average, and in most cases it would stay that way. In fact, there was literally a one year old at the nursery who looked like he was about to be taller any day soon. But the kid was also really beefy… Maybe Nagisa should ask what his parents were feeding him. Not that he could really relate to any of the other parents without getting really strange looks.
He cringed, snapping back to reality. “Bye then, Daichi.”

Daichi barely even turned his head. “Wanna play… um… sticks.”

“Hey, Daichan,” Karma said a little louder, “we’ll see you tomorrow.”

He finally looked. “See ya!”

Nagisa was… a little surprised. Then again, Daichi had never seemed to mind the separation that came with nursery. Still, that was… kind of cold. So it turned out that they were worrying about nothing, by the looks of it. He exchanged a look with Karma, but it didn’t seem like a good idea to drag this out anymore.

They left his parents’ home, then, but neither of them got as far as actually leaving the building, mutually coming to a stop. Although Daichi hadn’t seemed upset in the slightest. That was a good thing, Nagisa had to tell himself. Far better than Daichi being upset and crying out for them or something. He hoped Daichi wasn’t just putting on a brave face.

Standing there for a while in silence, Nagisa assumed Karma was thinking the same thing. He could see the gears turning in his head, though there was something else there. As good as reading people as Nagisa could be usually, sometimes Karma was still a mystery.

“We should go do something,” Karma said suddenly.

Nagisa’s brows creased. “Now?”

He shrugged. “Better than sitting around and doing nothing.”

The thought of going out and having fun, with such a terrible situation looming over them sounded awful. He was almost mad at Karma, before he noticed there was little nonchalance in his demeanour, and Nagisa understood. This couldn’t be just a test for whether Daichi could handle the separation, it had to be for them too.

“Like what?”

“It’s almost funny,” Karma said, “I’ve forgotten what I used to do, without a kid to look after.”

Nagisa privately thought that was a probably a good thing. Aside from a few… blips that Nagisa would rather not think about due to the fights they’d caused, Karma really had toned down the delinquency after Daichi was born. But then again, there wasn’t a lot of time for minor criminal activities.

“Let’s go to the arcade,” he continued, after a beat.

“A-alright?” Nagisa ended up just tagging along, as always. There weren’t that many fun places in a small town like Kunugigaoka, aside from maybe this and the cinema. Recently at least, Nagisa was only really aware of the places designed exclusively for little kids, so this was new, since Daichi was too young to enjoy this kind of a place.

Bright lights and high pitched shrieks told him that they were still above the intended age range. In fact, there were a couple of kids who looks about twelve or so, but that was about it. Nagisa decided to keep his mouth shut about that, lest Karma say something like ‘ah but you could pass for twelve’. His blood already boiled.

“Oh, no way!” Karma said. “They have laser tag!”
Nagisa’s face went pale. “L-laser tag?”

“Want a match?”

That was perhaps even more childish, but, a match against Karma? “Okay.”

The attendant, who was probably younger than the both of them, also looked a little weirded out as he had to explain the rules. It didn’t matter, though. Funnily enough, Nagisa felt excitement buzz under his skin. They hadn’t had the opportunity to fight for a very long time… under good circumstances, anyway. Nagisa wasn’t exactly a combative person, but taking Karma on and trying to win? It set him alight.

It didn’t seem to matter, that they were the only ones there and way too old to this. One their vests were strapped on, guns in hand, and they were in a dark room… It was game on. For most people, this was just a bit of childish fun – and it was – but, well, Karma wouldn’t easily lose. So, going their separate ways, they both took cover.

There wasn’t a lot of time to map out the arena, but Nagisa tried to do his best. Knowing his territory was his best chance against Karma. Of course, there was two ways this could go. Karma could go by his normal technique, or he could try to throw Nagisa off. The thing was, Nagisa had seen in action, Karma’s strategies were most effective when he had an army at his disposal… not to underestimate his solo powers, of course.

Nagisa thought about the difference in their abilities. He, personally, would benefit from striking all at once at the perfect opportunity. Karma would… try to draw him out, probably. The best thing he could do was climb a part of the apparatus, but he didn’t want them to get kicked out. He’d hide, then, he doubted Karma would aim where he couldn’t see, even if ammo wasn’t an issue.

“You’ll have to come out sometime, Nagisa~” Karma called, when he got bored. He had no concern that Nagisa could just hit him, he was walking so openly… Though, surely he’d hear the big heavy gun, if Nagisa took it out. Nagisa never got over being a little clumsy with drawing them, never finding the perfect swift movement. To his credit, his weight was changing on an almost daily basis back in 3E.

Nagisa dive rolled behind the next bit of cover, making sure to remain behind Karma at all times. Maybe, if he made his presence just on the edge of obvious, it would get under Karma’s skin enough to make a tiny error or two. He remained silent, though, gun accessible as he needed it to be. He could wait here as long as he needed to.

However, the disadvantage of not knowing the surroundings came back to bite him. He was fine remaining behind Karma, until Karma moved all of a sudden, diving behind a hide Nagisa had hardly even noticed. Now, Nagisa might as well be out in the open, for such a small oversight. He didn’t hear anything, but Karma could easily loop back around.

“Gotcha.”

Nagisa barely managed to duck, pulling his weapon to aim wildly, though he didn’t tap the trigger. His vest didn’t make any noise, which meant Karma hadn’t got a direct hit. He wasn’t taking into account that these lasers were probably less reliable than their usual targeting. There was a certain degree of error…

He didn’t even see Karma’s face, just the glowing target as he straightened his arm. In the time that took, though (he was rusty), Karma managed to charge, a high kick coming down on his wrist, and the gun immediately left Nagisa’s grip. Great, now he didn’t have a weapon. The only option, aside
from swiftly retrieving it, was to try and take Karma’s.

He darted up, recovering quickly from the force of Karma’s kick, but surely Karma would be on extra strong guard against that. Nagisa just needed one slip up… But then he looked at Karma, who wasn’t going for the quick kill. Instead, he stood, gun poised right against the sensor in the centre of Nagisa’s chest. It was hard to see, in the dark, but Karma’s eyes were shining, his face in a pleased grin. Nagisa couldn’t help but match his expression.

“Any last words?”

Nagisa let his hand move slowly, without any bloodlust or detectable intent. He let his fingers stroke over Karma’s knuckles, where he held his gun so steadily. Karma had barely noticed it happen, but he definitely noticed when Nagisa put his entire weight into it, twisting Karma’s arm awkwardly out of his own control. His finger squeezed over Karma’s, setting off the laser, aimed directly at the sensor on his own shoulder.

Nagisa released him. “My win.”

For a moment, Karma’s face was one of shock, before it morphed into amusement. “I’ll win one day.”

Maybe it was the adrenaline, but Nagisa had an uncharacteristic burst of confidence. “I doubt it.”

Karma smiled even brighter, and then started laughing. Honestly, it would have been criminal not to join him, even though Nagisa was already starting to regret saying something like that… Something so… arrogant and not him. But it was fun, Nagisa hadn’t had this kind of carefree feeling in a very long time.

“What do we do now?” Karma finally said. “We paid for an hour, but that was only ten minutes.”

“Rematch?”

“E-erm,” a nervous voice came over the speakers. “T-this is a non contact game. Please leave the arena immediately.”

That was embarrassing. Nagisa had been so deep in his own little world with Karma, he’d completely forgotten that of course, there were cameras and people watching them. Oh no, and they hadn’t really held back either. If only Nagisa could crawl under a rock and die right then and there. They weren’t kicked out of the entire arcade, at least, though the looks they got were really dirty this time.

Of course, Karma didn’t seem to care. “What do you want to do next?”

“Next?” Nagisa let out, half through a choke.

Karma shrugged. “How about dance dance revolution?”

Nagisa was no good at dancing. He knew that at its core, it was just a rhythm game, hard at first but easy to master. But still, his limbs flailed, and he knew he looked ridiculous. Still, he ended up doing it anyway. Naturally, Karma almost doubled his score, though Nagisa had never thought of him as much of a dancer… Then again, how different were these rapid movements to feet during combat?

They played a few more games, until the arcade actually closed. The win rate between them was pretty even, though as it turned out Karma had far faster reflexes, which gave him a natural
advantage at these kind of games. It didn’t even matter, though, he didn’t mind losing a few. Actually playing was more fun, anyway.

By the time they were on their way home, it had stopped snowing so heavily, only a dusting on both of their shoulders. The road had already been cleared, and the town was just about starting to churn back to life. It was already dark, too, so he could just about see the snowflakes flying around underneath the street lights.

“Hey, Nagisa,” Karma said, not giving Nagisa time to duck before a snowball was launched at his head.

Nagisa squinted, wiping the snow from his hair. “What are you, five?”

He giggled, truly like a little kid. “Your face is all red~”

He wanted to wipe that smirk off his face. Nagisa shoved him, as hard as he could, knowing the snow would break his fall. It had to be the perfect weight distribution, to knock him over given his size, but thankfully, Nagisa had mastered it now. Just like that, Karma was falling, but Nagisa wasn’t paying enough attention either, momentum carrying him down too.

Karma’s warm chest broke his fall, and stopped him from getting covered in snow. Karma wasn’t so lucky, though he didn’t complain, just stretching out his arms, like he was about to do a snow angel. Nagisa was at least a little bit embarrassed at being on top of Karma, once he realised, so he moved off to the side, his back getting covered in snow anyway.

It didn’t seem to matter that they were literally lying on the side of the road, it felt like they were the only people in the world, right then. A sick twist in his stomach reminded him that no, the picture wasn’t complete. He almost felt guilty for having fun without Daichi there between them, as much as he knew it was normal for parents to go out without their kids. Otherwise, babysitters wouldn’t exist. But… the circumstances…

Karma was just looking up at the sky, although through the snow and the clouds you couldn’t really see the stars. He turned his head towards Nagisa, and Nagisa almost jerked away, since Karma had just caught him staring. Karma didn’t tease him, though, instead reaching out. Nagisa didn’t flinch, when Karma’s finger brushed a snowflake away from his eyelash. He inspected it for a moment, before poking Nagisa in the cheek.

For a moment, neither of them said a word. Nagisa wasn’t a stranger to his own body, he recognised his heart rate starting to beat faster, how could it not, with Karma’s golden eyes on his. With his choice to touch Nagisa so gently, when Nagisa knew how capable of the opposite he was. This feeling deep in his chest wasn’t going away, he knew that, but instead of running from it as he usually did, Nagisa relaxed, not seeing the point. Nagisa knew it would be wrong to take back what he’d said, about them not working so well together. He still believed that, in his head, even if his heart said otherwise. But, it wasn’t like they had much time left together, anyway. He didn’t want to waste his time forcing it down, even though he wouldn’t do anything. He could live with it for just a few more months.

“Let’s go home,” Karma said.

Nagisa nodded, dreading the fact that soon, it wouldn’t be their home anymore.
Okay so, you might have noticed, but a whole bunch of this is almost directly lifted from Korotan D. You don't have to have read it to understand the events of this fic, though, because I'll include pretty much all of it (in an altered state because of this fic's context) in a couple of chapter's time. Basically, up until they leave the restaurant is that content. Since there's no official English translation, I'm using a lot of Blazarddragon's work (they gave me full permission to do this). I am, however, rewriting quite a bit of it to fit my own style, and I own the book in Japanese to I retranslated a couple of sentences myself. But yeah, full transparency.

Anyway, I hope you enjoyed what's a bit of fluff!
Wedding Time

Chapter Summary

Finally, two of their beloved teachers tie the knot

Chapter Notes

drink responsibly kids

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Time seemed to slip out from Nagisa’s finger tips, before he could even really notice it happening. He hated it, since there was so little time as it was to remain living as they were. But, right after entrance exams and the winter break, everything flew. Before Nagisa even knew it, it was practically the end of the school year already.

And then, just like that, they were preparing for a wedding. Nagisa had never cared much about valentines day, but right then he thought it was a nice time to celebrate a wedding, especially between two of his ex teachers. He remembered back in E Class, although he didn’t participate so much himself back then, that everyone had been routing for them. It felt about right, that they were finally tying the knot.

Also, he got to see Karma in a suit. Nagisa was hardly looks obsessed, but it was hard to not admire how good Karma looked all dressed up like that. Sure, his school uniform was kind of suit like, but it was entirely different thing. With this, Karma looked mature and handsome. He’d even bothered to tame his hair, just a little. Nagisa blushed, ashamed at staring at him for so long.

“Something in your eye?”

“No,” Nagisa stood up, “I was just looking at Daichi. He’s cute like that, isn’t he?”

Daichi had his own little suit, and it was adorable. Nagisa could take hundreds of photos of him dressed like that, but that was already how Karma had chosen to spend his morning. His Daichi clothing preferences were ‘fits him’ and ‘not dirty’, and he mostly let Karma choose what he wanted, since he seemed to mind more. However, there seemed to be something too sweet for words about a nearly three year old in a suit. Nagisa swallowed, realising his birthday was actually only a week away.

Karma looked down at him. “Hey Daichan, are you excited to see a wedding?”

Honestly, Nagisa had never seen a wedding. He had no real extended family, and his parents’ friends were the formal types who wouldn’t have invited a child to a wedding, even the after party. So, he was excited too, for his own sake, especially since they were celebrating more than just acquaintances.

Daichi nodded, though he was starting to get visibly inpatient. “Is there gonna be cake?!”
“I don’t know,” he shrugged, “probably.”

“Why is there a wed,” he paused mid-word, “-ding?”

Karma shrugged. “It’s just what couples do when they love each other a lot.”

He looked between them. “When you and Daddy having a wedding?”

Somehow, in perfect synchronisation, Karma and Nagisa choked. What was air? Nagisa didn’t remember, after such an innocent yet terrifying question. Of course, he knew where it came from. Since he went to nursery, Daichi was exposed to a bunch of other kids who could actually talk amongst one another now, most of which had parents who were happily married.

“Y-you know,” Nagisa gulped, “not everyone has to get married.”

“Does that mean I don’t have to?” Daichi tilted his head, eyes full of genuine relief. “Good! Don’t wanna!”

Nagisa had no idea this had been plaguing his son. He was too young to be worrying about that kind of thing, anyway. He could worry about it in thirty years or so. That seemed like a good amount of time. Thinking about that kind of thing made Nagisa’s head spin, anyway.

“You’re going to be on best behaviour today, aren’t you, Daichi,” he said, about as sternly as he could manage (which was not very stern).

Daichi didn’t seem that offended at this request. “Why?”

He’d already had a ‘why’ phase. However, Nagisa was starting to believe that before, he’d mostly been just copying it as a response to conversation, rather than genuinely wanting to know the answers to his burning questions. Or maybe he did, and this was just a repeat. But whatever the case, he had a lot of questions nowadays.

“Because, Karasuma sens- san, and,” Nagisa thought about swearing in front of his son, even if it was in a foreign language, “Jelavic san were very nice to invite you to their party, so you should to be nice too.”

“Hmmm.”

As fun as this debate was, there wasn’t a lot of time for it before the wedding started, so they had to leave for the reception, which was due to follow the ceremony at the shrine. Nagisa had never thought such a traditional wedding would fit his teachers, whose relationship was anything but traditional, but maybe that was kind of nice.

It was crazy, Nagisa thought on the way, that by the time they saw them again, they were really going to be married. It was just such a weird thought, even though he understood they were very happy together. A part of Nagisa thought about how happy Korosensei would have been, to see this day finally come.

When they arrived at the reception hall, more modest than Nagisa had been expecting (though he supposed Karasuma would have vetoed anything too crazy), the newly married couple weren’t there yet. That left them with a little time to leave their bags, since most people were staying overnight, and catch up with friends, before their attention would be completely focused on celebrating the marriage.

Daichi looked extremely happy, to briefly be the centre of attention. Of course, for a lot of
Nagisa’s ex classmates (who had all been invited), they hadn’t seen him in almost a year. Most of them didn’t see toddlers on a regular basis, so it was only natural he was going to be made a fuss of. By the time Nagisa could even get a word in, Daichi had been passed halfway around the room, though he didn’t look like he minded.

It was kind of a funny set up. By the looks of things, a large proportion of the guests were co-workers, probably pretty high up in the ministry of defence based on Karasuma’s own position. All middle aged and serious looking, it was a big contrast to the group of nearly thirty teenagers (and a toddler). Nagisa wondered if they were confused about their attendance.

That thought was cut off, though, because just like that, the married couple were announced. They’d changed out of their traditional clothes for the wedding already, now dressed in a tuxedo and form fitting wedding dress respectively. An expression Nagisa didn’t recognise too well on them, they were both glowing, practically. So that was post-martial joy.

Like a smooth operation, everyone took to their seats, and the reception began. Even married, they didn’t look outwardly overly affectionate with each other, but Nagisa could sense the happy air between them. That was, of course, until it was time for the mandatory speeches, a feature of just about any wedding. Nagisa was just happy he didn’t have to say anything himself, though he was pretty sure Isogai and Kataoka were going to say something.

It was strange, hearing what their co-workers had to say. Nagisa had only really known them as teachers of course, which would follow a completely different way of acting that regular work. Well, at least in Karasuma’s case. He wasn’t sure he could imagine his ex English teacher being any different at all.

A couple of the stories were at least a little bit humorous, though. Most were kind, praising the couple’s dedication and spirit respectively. At least, nothing embarrassing came up, Nagisa imagined much to Karma’s displeasure. He was a little alarmed that sake was being passed around, with absolutely nothing to stop them despite being two years too young. Everyone else was drinking it, but… the last time Nagisa had any alcohol, he’d ended up black out drunk and pregnant. Karma had taken some, though. He allowed himself one glass, sipping it as slowly as possible, even though that made it taste kind of bad.

Finally, it came to their turn. It had been decided on the group chat months ago that as their old representatives, Isogai and Kataoka were going to say some words, since it would be a nightmare to try and get through everyone. They were also probably the best candidates for writing speeches, in general. So, Daichi, who had ended up with Isogai somehow, was passed finally, and they stood up.

Isogai cleared his throat. “Today, we’re honoured to attend the wedding of teachers who shaped us into the people we are today—”

It was a really nice speech, with just the right amount of sentiment, light-heartedness, and real feelings. Between them, their power over the speech was something on a whole other level. Nagisa even felt his own throat welling up at the heavier parts, but then again, this was all a part of their memories. Nagisa found himself drinking a little more rapidly. Bittersweet, wonderful memories, although neither of them went too far into certain details. Some things had to remain between their class, after all.

And, like that, the official part of the celebration was kind of over. There’d been food here and there between speeches, but there was now a real chance to eat, and nobody really hesitated. There’d be a chance to hang out and catch up a little later, anyway. At that point, everyone excitedly talked between themselves, conversation flowing almost like they were still classmates.
“Have you noticed anything weird about Bitch sensei?” Karma asked, eyes on the bride.

Nagisa looked. “Not really? She looks… happy, maybe? Is that weird?”

“Hmmm…”

Daichi followed his eyeline. “Is there cake now?”

“Not yet,” Nagisa said, trying to let him down gently. He’d actually stuck to being on very good behaviour, mostly keeping quiet during those long speeches. It was probably the quietest he’d been in a year. At least Nagisa could pretend for one day that he had a well behaved child, rather than the demon he morphed into half the time.

Karma held some food up to his mouth. “Don’t you want some of this, though?”

He took it, face morphing. “Don’t like it.”

Of course he didn’t. Thankfully, Nagisa had prepared this exact situation, well aware of his son’s moods. Although he wouldn’t call Daichi fussy, there were still things he would refuse. That would result in hunger, which turned into anger pretty quickly. Avoiding that kind of thing was key, so he produced a packet of savoury biscuits to give to him.

As the dinner slowly drifted to a close, the atmosphere in the room seemed to shift, everyone becoming slightly more relaxed. People naturally started to drift, away from their tables and into small groups, and it was inevitable they’d do the same, during the lull between this formal party and what was about to happen.

“It’s nice,” someone from their group said, “that they’re including a few western traditions too.”

Together, his two ex teachers made their way out onto the dancefloor. Funnily enough, Nagisa couldn’t imagine Karasuma dancing, especially since this wasn’t really tradition here. At the same time, though, they both looked incredibly happy, wrapped up in each other. In fact, Nagisa wasn’t sure if he’d ever seen them that happy. They looked really good together, though.

When the dance came to an end, it was like they morphed back to their usual selves, though happiness was still dancing across the both of them. This was probably the better part of the wedding, where they could actually see everyone on a more personal level, where the celebration truly began. Of course, there were a lot of guests, so Karasuma split himself off to go talk to his co-workers, leaving them…

“Bitch sensei! Bitch sensei! Congratulations!” Most of them chorused.

For a moment, her face was light, before she realised what they’d said. “B-brats! It’s my wedding day and you’re still using that awful nickname? It doesn’t even work anymore! I’m not your sensei, and my family name is changed!”

“Even now,” Karma apparently couldn’t help himself, “it still suits you though.”

Maehara shrugged. “You’ll always be Bitch Sensei to us.”

“Maybe we can go back to Bitch Neesan,” Nakamura smirked. “If the teacher label bothers you.”

If rage was a visible aura, then she would have definitely been showing it. However, there was a layer underneath all of that that suggested to Nagisa she wasn’t actually that livid about it, but it was hard to tell. After their teasing, though, everyone did take legitimate turns in congratulating
her, to the point where there was a pink dusting on her cheeks.

Nagisa smiled listening to it all, until he felt a tug on the material of his trousers. Daichi was looking up at him impatiently, although otherwise not making a fuss. Had the amount of people around him made him go shy or something? That never usually happened. Nagisa felt bad, like he should be paying more attention.

“You know what to say,” Karma nudged him, noticing as well. “Go on.”

Daichi nodded, a determined look on his face. “Congratulations on your wedding,” he managed smoothly, holding his head up high, before awkwardly lowering it, not really getting the concept of the gesture yet.

What Nagisa hadn’t been expecting was for Irina to fall to her knees, an almost teary look in her eye, before hugging Daichi close, lifting him up into a hold. He was used to receiving hugs of course, but he wasn’t the biggest fan of being carried, so Nagisa was surprised when he let it happen. In fact, the whole scene was a little weird. She had never shown an interest when he was a baby, where mostly the others fought over who got to hold him.

“I didn’t know she was such a kid person,” Kurahashi said lightly.


Nagisa’s eyes narrowed. “Just what are you planning, Karma?”

“Just a theory~”

“Can’t you leave it to after their wedding day?!”

Karma clapped his hands together. “I know we already had one, but there should be a toast, just between us!” Like he’d somehow planned this for a while, he managed to get a glass into everyone’s hand, taking Daichi back in the process, and everyone joined in raising their glasses.

This was champagne, rather than sake. Nagisa decided, after a few sips of it, that he liked the taste more. It didn’t burn his throat as quickly, at the very least. At that point, she was released from her obligation to greet them, and once again everyone turned to groups. Aside from the situation of a wedding, it felt nice to catch up with all his old friends.

There was on absence he definitely felt, though. Kayano was in the middle of filming, all the way over in Hollywood, so she hadn’t been able to make it. Of course, her career was the most important thing, but she’d seemed really torn up about not coming. Being an actress must be so tough… He admired her a lot for doing it.

Nagisa was mostly happy to hang around at the side lines and chat, where quite a few people were dancing instead. He didn’t feel like it, especially since he was no good at dancing and didn’t want to make an utter fool of himself. Daichi, on the other hand, was right in his sightline, currently being instructed by Maehara and Okano in some sort of odd moves.

“Come with me, for a minute?” Karma came over to where he was talking to Sugino.

Immediately, he was a little alarmed. “Is something wrong?”

His face was neutral. “Not at all! We just need to talk, alone. I think I figured something out.”

Nagisa looked at Sugino apologetically, before allowing Karma to lead him off. Apparently, it
wasn’t just a semi private conversation he wanted, because he took Nagisa from the main hall all
together, leading him to a side room. Nagisa’s heart flipped in his stomach, when he realised that
they weren’t alone at all.

“What do you need to talk about?” Irina turned as they walked in, looking more than a little
annoyed. “Cornering a bride on her own wedding day,” she huffed. “I should throw you out.”

“Karma…” Nagisa said, suddenly afraid of whatever he was planning.

Karma looked at Nagisa. “I’m just testing a theory. Say, Bitch Sensei, feeling a little moody lately?
Hell, I’d even say you’ve put on some weight.”

She growled, of course she did (what was Karma thinking?), and reached down, pulling off one of
her high heels to throw it expertly at Karma’s head. He managed to dodge it in time, but that didn’t
stop Irina, who was already stalking towards him. For a second, Nagisa almost feared for Karma’s
life. Almost.

“Listen here, brat, you don’t know what you’re talking about.”

“Oh yeah?” Karma tilted his head, and spotted someone’s abandoned wine glass. “Then drink from
this. That shouldn’t be a problem, right?”

Irina’s fist clenched, before she looked down. “H-how?”

“Karma?” Nagisa had no idea what Karma was talking about, but he had an odd feeling about it.

“Come on,” Karma said casually. “No offence, Bitch Sensei, but you were doing a poor job of
hiding it. What kind of bride misses the toast at her own wedding, after all? Now maybe you just
didn’t want to drink, but…” his chin tilted up, “I kept catching the way you stood. Do you know
Nagisa used to do that all the time, way back when? It’s like you have a weird tension in your back
and hips. And, oh, let’s not forget the way you keep tugging at that dress. With your sense of
fashion, why wouldn’t you want it to sit as tight as possible?”

“No…” She said weakly.

“Why,” Karma continued, “I’d say you were pregnant.”

As if on cue, she burst into tears. Nagisa considered himself quite the expert on dealing with tears
nowadays, but it felt a little different when it was his old teacher, rather than a two year old child.
Still, as if it was instinctual, Nagisa went over to her, and rubbed her back soothingly. That was his
first response, the revelation only just then hitting him. Pregnant.

“It’ll be okay, Bitch Sensei.”

“Will it?!” She snapped at him. “I, I…” she gasped, “Tadaomi doesn’t know, or anything. H-he-“

“Well,” Karma said, “at least he’s tied down now, right?”

Nagisa shot him a glare. “Not helping.”

He’d cried, when he found out he was pregnant. When that doctor had given him ‘a moment’,
leaving him completely alone with the ultrasound image right in his sightline, it was the only thing
he felt he could do. At least, until she returned, with Nagisa’s mother who had been anything other
than happy, and he’d had to toughen up immediately, less concerned with his own feelings. But the
situations were entirely different. Nagisa had been fourteen, definitely not just married, and at first
had no idea whose baby it even was.

“I’m going to get fat,” she wailed.

“I-“ Nagisa didn’t even know what to say. He’d never pictured her being a mother, or this kind of conversation happening.

“I wasn’t trying to make you feel bad,” Karma explained. “Don’t you think you should tell him, though?”

She looked up at him. “How?”

Nagisa got that. He hadn’t even had to actually tell Karma himself, since he’d managed to overhear that information. Considering how he hadn’t been able to bring himself to try and talk practically with Karma for months, he didn’t know if he would have been able to reveal that kind of thing, so easily.

“He’ll notice, eventually,” She continued, a little pathetic sounding.

Nagisa winced. “You love each other, right?”

“We’ve never talked about babies,” she said. “I don’t even want one.”

Karma thought for a moment. “But you’re keeping it. You wouldn’t be careful about the alcohol otherwise.”

She pouted. “I don’t know the first thing about looking after a baby.”

He half laughed. “You think we did?”

Thinking back on it, Nagisa didn’t know how they’d even managed. Maybe just because they had no real choice, other than to learn and learn fast. Though, Daichi was happy and healthy as could be, so he liked to think they’d done a pretty good job overall.

“W-will it hurt?” She looked up at Nagisa in horror.

Without giving her a direct answer, he laughed awkwardly. What was he supposed to say? Yes, it was the worst pain I’ve ever endured, good luck! That would just be cruel. It wasn’t like Nagisa had had anybody to ask that kind of question to, but he probably wouldn’t have been soothed at all by the full truth.

“I think being pregnant for so long was worse,” he explained. “But I forgot about all of that when Daichi was born.”

He still hated that he didn’t remember those first few moments so quickly. The pain had been so excruciating, and he’d been so exhausted he almost passed out, so it was all blurry. All he really knew was one moment he had a baby in his arms, and his life was completely changed. He’d never seen anything so small and precious and right then he really hadn’t felt any of his own pain. It felt like coals were burning in his chest, at the memory. He wanted to go find Daichi and swaddle him up all over again.

“I’m going to get fat,” she repeated, a little defeated.

Nagisa swallowed. “I think you should tell Karasuma sensei too, though maybe not right now.”

“In seven months?”
“Ah, no,” he felt awkward, “maybe once the party’s over.”

“I’ll leave you for a bit,” Karma said, just like that.

Don’t do that kind of damage and just leave, Nagisa thought with anger. But then he realised that Karma wasn’t attempting to be cruel, rather, he could see it in his face. He just thought Nagisa would do better at having this conversation, than him. That was probably why he wanted Nagisa to come with him, in the first place.

Nagisa swallowed. “How long have you known?”

“Two weeks,” she didn’t meet his eye.

That was… still a kind of acceptable amount of time to keep it a secret. “Then I think you should definitely tell him soon.”

She nodded, looking surprisingly serious. “How am I going to keep it a secret today?”

Just because Karma had figured it out, didn’t mean anyone else was going to. Nagisa hadn’t even suspected, and he considered himself pretty perceptive. Then again, so was Karasuma, and likely the people he worked with. She was right, if Karma had guessed that easily, then anybody else could. And the most damning factor was the alcohol, so it would just take replacing that.

“Drink a lot of water?” He suggested.

The look in her eyes was crazed. “No, that won’t work. But you could help!”

“M-me?”

“You’re good at being unnoticeable, just sneak up behind me and swap my glasses every time someone hands me a drink! They’re just going to be suspicious if I don’t drink!”

Right, hormones. It was a stupid plan, really. Or, at least, definitely not the best one! But, Nagisa felt a certain kind of sympathy. What she was suggesting… could work. It was a wedding, so it wasn’t like Karasuma or anybody else would have their guards up against him. He supposed it didn’t matter if she was married, pregnancy was still terrifying at first. If it made her feel better… he’d do it.

“Okay…”

He left the room before she did, making it as inconspicuous as possible. It was hard to return to the celebration after hearing such news, though. Now that he wasn’t faced with comforting anybody, Nagisa could fully process it. They were going to be parents. He knew many members of their class had seen Karasuma in particular like a father figure, but now he was going to be a real one. Nagisa could hardly even picture it.

“Is she feeling better?” Karma asked, coming up behind Nagisa.

“I think so…” Nagisa peered at him. “Why did you confront her?”

He shrugged. “She looked like she was carrying a weight on her shoulders. Figured she wouldn’t want to remember her wedding like that.”

Was it really that selfless? “And making me come?”

“I was only guessing,” Karma said with a slight smile, “there was a significant chance I was wrong.
Then, well, if I falsely accused her of being pregnant? I would have needed a witness to my murder.”

Nagisa felt uneasy, but there wasn’t much time to dwell on it. Right then, he had a promise to fulfil. It was hard, to maintain the sort of precise blood lust he’d need to channel for so long. But, he would try his best. He removed himself from anyone else he knew, needing as few distractions as possible. He’d never tried to use his talent against, well, a glass before.

Sure enough, she was swiftly handed a glass of what was definitely alcohol. Nagisa’s eyes narrowed, looking for the best path to take. He brandished an identical, yet empty replacement, and held his body tight and small, practically invisible to those who weren’t expecting him. Moving like a shadow, Nagisa was undetected, and managed to switch the glasses out.

Success! Irina herself barely even blinked, until she felt the shift of the glass in her hand. Nagisa immediately retreated, not wanting to push his luck, and waited just as he had before, simply setting the full glass down on a table. At first, it was kind of a slow process, but then a big part of the plan backfired massively.

“Oh,” one of the guests said, “you’re going through those drinks quickly!”

Karasuma looked at her with concern. “Maybe you should slow down.”

Struck with pride over logic, she tossed her hair. “Not at all. I’m fine, aren’t I?”

It was becoming a problem, though, because Nagisa was running out of empty glasses to steal, and there weren’t exactly that many places where he could dispose of the liquid. He panicked, momentarily, when Irina seemed to holding the glass out expectantly. Nagisa didn’t have much of a choice, except to just take it from her. But, there was nothing to replace it with.

With only a second to even think about it, Nagisa did the only thing he could with of and downed the entire glass in one swig, handing it back to her. There was nowhere to spit it out or anything, not without going all the way to the toilets. Not an option. So he had to swallow. Once it was down, and his throat burned with fire, he realised that as long as he was fast enough, it would be an alright system, at least until he could locate more glasses.

Nagisa wasn’t sure how long it went on for, before the married couple said their final thanks to everyone, heading off to bed. He was just so focused on his task, he hadn’t had time to think about anything else. Without the glass to capture his attention… where even was he? His vision wasn’t exactly doubled, not really, but everything had a very weird haze around it.

Oh, right, the wedding! Some of his classmates were saying their final goodbyes, he should go join them. Easier said than done, his feet barely responded to what his brain was telling them to do, turning into jelly. That was kind of funny… Like jelly… Nagisa started to laugh to himself, before his attention was drawn elsewhere. His classmates. Them. Those people.

He saw Karma say something to Karasuma. It was weird, Karma was actually taller than him now, by a good two inches. Weird… and kind of hot. But Karma was permanently hot. More so today. Dressed up in that suit, he looked like a prince… or, something to that effect. Nagisa wasn’t sure. But, then, he turned, talking to some woman who looked older than him and definitely wasn’t a part of their class, and Nagisa saw fire.

“Karma,” Nagisa violently ripped his shoulder away from the woman, whoever she was. “Let’s go back to our room.”
Karma blinked in confusion, tilting his head. “What for?”

“I’m jealous of Bitch sensei,” he said, “let’s have another baby.”

His face went bright red in an instant. “Y-y-huh… Ha… That’s a good one, Nagisa…”

“Are you coming then?” He needed to get Karma away. “I don’t have all night.”

“Just how much have you had to drink?” He hissed, almost directly into Nagisa’s ear.

That was a funny question. It had been so fast, Nagisa didn’t even remember. A few glasses, maybe… Instead of saying that verbally, though, he laughed. But that was wrong, right, he needed to see this through. What was he suggesting, again? He lost track of his thoughts, Karma was standing so close… was he scenting him? Nagisa flushed all over.

Karma straightened up. “Nakamura, can you keep an eye on Daichi for a minute?”

She shrugged. “I don’t mind, what for?”

“I’m taking Nagisa to bed,” he said.

Wait, did he hear that right? Karma was taking him to bed! And in that moment, Nagisa wanted nothing more than exactly that. He clung on to Karma’s arm, letting him lead the way. It felt like he was walking on air, right then, and he was happy about that. It was probably the most happy and careless and free he’d felt in a while.

“You didn’t dance with me,” Nagisa complained when they were in the hallway, drawling it out.

Clearly amused, Karma’s hand moved lower, supporting his back. “You can’t dance like this.”

Nagisa stopped in his tracks. “Stop being mean to me, Karma kun.”

“You haven’t called me that in a long time,” Karma stopped too, looking down at him.

Hadn’t he? Right, they were much more intimate than that nowadays. Did Nagisa just say that out loud? He didn’t know, only slightly cared, and spent the next minute laughing about it. Karma was still flushed, but he didn’t look annoyed. It was a really nice look on him. Nagisa wished he could see it more. Maybe that should be his next personal mission, to make Karma smile like that more. He only really did it regularly when Daichi was being cute.

His face fell. “I didn’t say goodnight!”

“Huh?”

Nagisa’s heart dropped into stomach. “I’m such a terrible father!”

Catching on then, Karma exhaled. “You’re not a terrible father.”

“Am too!” Nagisa turned away.

“Daichan loves you a lot,” Karma explained patiently. “Everyone’s been making a fuss of him all day, I honestly don’t think he’ll even notice.”

“R-really?”

“Yeah, I mean-“
Nagisa interrupted him with a hug, squeezing his arms around his midsection. “You’re such a good guy, Karma. You make me feel better, except when you’re mean. But you’ve been less mean than usual. Plus, you’re cute.”

Karma separated them. “I’m what?”

He nodded enthusiastically, though. “Like, so cute!”

“Say that one more time?” He had a smirk across his face as he pulled out his phone, though there was still a hint of flush.

“Cute,” Nagisa repeated, a little bored of this. “You’re cute… Wait, I’m not sure if that’s the right way of putting it… Handsome? Out of my league? Hot? No…” Suddenly, his eyes sparkled as he found the word. “You’re beautiful! That’s it!”

Karma slowly lowered his phone “I-”

“Beautiful,” Nagisa said mostly to himself, testing out the sound of it on his tongue. “Sometimes I’m not sure if you’re even real. I know we have a kid and stuff so you’re just stuck with me, but I still don’t get why you hung around with me in the first place y’know. Makes me think that you might just be a dream or something, and one day you’ll just fade away… Beautiful describes you best, definitely, I could write a poem about it… uhm…” Nagisa cleared his throat, “Your hair is so red
Fire burning autumn leaves…
Marry me some day?”

Karma blinked, through Nagisa’s drunken giggles. “Did you just… write a haiku about my hair… and propose to me?”

“I can write better!” He claimed. “Maybe…”

He swallowed. “Do you really feel that way, Nagisa? Or are you just too drunk to even know what you’re saying?”

“I’m not drunk,” he said.

Karma smiled, just a tiny bit. “I can smell it on your breath.”


“I’m really not lying-“

“Would I be able to do this?” Nagisa asked, practically launching himself up onto his tip toes, and dragging Karma’s neck down clumsily. He let his eyes fall closed, and pressed a hasty kiss to his lips. But, immediately, he noticed he hadn’t exactly got the best angle. Not that that mattered, he was kissing Karma! Any kiss with Karma was a rare and treasured opportunity. Karma wasn’t moving his lips, though, letting it happen for a few seconds before he pulled away.

“Karma,” Nagisa breathed, meeting his eyes.

He tried to go for another kiss, but Karma turned his head. “You’re too drunk for this.”

“I’m no-“

Karma grabbed him by the shoulders, eyes wide and serious. “Really, Nagisa. You need some
sleep now, okay? I-if you still feel like this in the morning, we can talk about it then.”

“Y-you’re not mad, are you?” He felt his spirit collapse. He hadn’t meant to upset him… His stomach twisted in a sickly way. “Don’t feel so good…”

He softened. “No, I’m not mad. C’mon.”

Before Nagisa knew what was happening, Karma had whisked him off his feet, carrying him bridal style. Like that, pressed against Karma’s warm torso, the idea of sleep suddenly seemed incredibly appealing. Karma carried him easily all the way to the room, placing him on the bed gently whilst simultaneously trying to remove his suit jacket.

“Drink this,” he said, holding a bottle to his lips.

Nagisa accepted it helplessly, letting the liquid flow down his throat. It certainly tasted better than the alcohol he’d been drinking all evening. Where would be without Karma? Karma, who managed to be his greatest dream and also his worst nightmare at the same time. Right then, limp and helpless, Nagisa felt pathetic. He was such a bother…

“I’m sorry,” he murmured.

Karma let out a light laugh. “You’ll probably feel pretty bad when you wake up, the amusement from that will make up for the trouble. Get some sleep now, hm?”

Nagisa lost consciousness the moment his head hit the pillow.

Chapter End Notes

The next morning, probably:

Nagisa, with his head in the toilet of shame: I'm /so/ sorry

I had a lot of fun writing this chapter, actually. Alcohol can be... a curse and a blessing. Also, Karasuma and Irina having a child is a legit canon thing, it was in the graduation album! I figured based on the age in the manga panel, Irina would have to be pregnant around now at the latest. Since it's canon, and it won't really come up to later in this fic, the baby is a girl! I decided on calling her Nao, for no reason other than J Drama references. If you can tell me what show I'm referencing... virtual cookies.

I'd have gone a little more into detail but there's going to be two chapters where the E Class hangs out soon, so like, you'll get your actual described meet ups, don't you worry. This chapter was already plenty long enough!

Speaking of which, only 4 more chapters until the end of 'part two'. Strap your seat belts in.
Zoo Time

Chapter Summary

It's Daichi's birthday

Chapter Notes

how did he get so old

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It was officially the worst day ever. The date was February 21st, which meant that it was Daichi’s third birthday. And Nagisa hated it. Not celebrating his son, of course he loved that part, but the fact that his baby was really not so much… a baby anymore. In fact, this time around, Daichi actually understood what a birthday was. Well, at least when he was informed it was, indeed, his birthday.

That meant Karma had been roped into making him pancakes. A terribly unhealthy breakfast choice, but it was only his birthday once a year, so he supposed it was okay to let it off just this one time. Daichi looked overjoyed at his, because of course he was, and they hadn’t even got to gifts or anything yet. Would he be able to contain himself?

Since Daichi was, well, Daichi, he’d of course insisted on helping cook. Because nothing was simple when it came to what he wanted. Of course, Karma was letting him do it, no matter if that doubled the preparation time. Outwardly at the very least, Karma seemed less bothered than him about the birthday, humming contently to himself.

It had been a week and they hadn’t talked about it. For once, it wasn’t like Nagisa hadn’t tried. In fact, as soon as he’d felt like he didn’t need to hurl his guts up anymore, he’d wanted to set things straight with Karma, even if he hadn’t known exactly what to say. But, the second he’d even opened is mouth, Karma had just told him that it was okay and didn’t really matter so Nagisa shouldn’t worry. Nagisa did worry.

Instead of not remembering at all what happened, this time it was just hazy. Though he couldn’t exactly recall everything he’d said and done, he definitely got the point. It was… incredibly embarrassing. At least Nagisa knew, definitely now, that alcohol was something he needed to avoid for the rest of his life. It didn’t mix well with him at all.

“So, Daichan,” Karma had finished cooking, and sat opposite him at the table. “What do you want to do today?”

“Uhm,” Daichi spoke, shovelling pancake into his mouth. “I dunno.”

Nagisa couldn’t help but smile. It was pretty comical, how Daichi would sometimes beg for the most random things but couldn’t come up with anything the one day he’d definitely get away with it. Neither of them were saying it, but it kind of felt like their last chance to spoil him, at least for a
while. After this they had about a month left of school, and their separation date wouldn’t be long after that.

“But if you could go anywhere,” Karma tried, “where would you pick?”

“The zoo!”

Honestly that was a little unexpected. Although he was still slightly too young to have that much of a strong preference for themes of toys, he never seemed to care that much about animals. Then again, that could have come from anything, another kid talking about it or something he caught on TV maybe. At least he hadn’t said anything impossible, but it was a little random.

“Okay,” Karma said, “let’s go, then.”

Nagisa sighed. “He needs to finish breakfast first.”

He shrugged. “I didn’t think there was any danger in that not happening.”

Naturally, Karma had given him more than just the one pancake. He definitely wasn’t having this again, not for a few years probably. And Daichi wasn’t hesitating to eat it as fast as possible. Well, it really was just this once… Nagisa tried to stop himself from worrying, but with so much in his life to worry about, that was easier said than done.

With Daichi so excited, at least, for once it didn’t take all that long to get ready to go out. The rest of their apartment was left in slight disarray, but that could always be fixed. It wasn’t the highest of his priorities, anyway, even if the pile of things somewhat got under his nerves. He’d been surprised to see Karma’s parents had actually sent a card, this year. Nagisa liked to think that was more a good thing than a bad one, though it had been hard to tell Karma’s reaction.

There weren’t any zoos particularly close to Kunugigaoka (Nagisa hadn’t been to one since he was a child, honestly) which meant quite a bit of travelling. Surprisingly, Daichi hadn’t been too impatient or bad about it, though that was likely just a result of the anticipation. At least, for most of it, until his patience wore just that little bit too thin.

“Is it there yet?” Daichi leapt up onto Karma’s lap, peering out of the window.

He just hummed, instead of answering.

Nagisa sighed. “Almost, I think.”

Daichi pouted. “Wanna go…”

Thankfully, it wasn’t that much longer until they were in the right place, and just a short walk to the zoo. Even outside the entrance, there seemed to be quite a few people queueing. It seemed to intrigue Daichi quite a bit, having never really confronted a scene like that before. It only ramped up his excitement, and he bounced on the balls of his feet.

“Woah!” He bolted off, the moment they actually got in. Because he had a habit of doing that, Nagisa wasn’t surprised or panicked, rather skilled at lunging after him quickly. “Look!”

Most kids would probably want to run straight to the crazier stuff like tigers or something, but Daichi’s eyes had gone straight to a group of meerkats. Did Daichi even know what a meerkat was? Maybe that was why it was so interesting? Whatever the case, he practically flocked to them, nose right up against the glass.
“You like those?” Karma asked.

“Rats!”

Nagisa crouched down. “Ah, those aren’t actually rats Daichi.”

“If he wanted to look at rats we could have just gone to the pet shop,” Karma complained, though not seriously.

“Wanna rat,” Daichi said, “big rats.”

“They’re called meerkats,” Nagisa tried his best to explain, “they usually live in Africa, I think.”

Daichi’s eyes narrowed in curiosity, and he pointed. “But, they’re rats!”

Maybe Nagisa should be questioning why Daichi wanted a rat in the first place, rather than his misidentification of them. Had he seen something weird on TV? Nagisa wasn’t sure what kind of three year old wanted a pet rat that badly, wasn’t it usually puppies or kittens or goldfish? Not that he was getting any kind of animal, no way. Daichi was enough to handle without an animal accomplice.

“Okay,” he said after a little while, turning his head around. “Go home now?”

Karma looked down at him, amused. “You know there’s more than just those, right? You don’t want to go see the other animals?”

“I do!” He protested.

“Like what? There’s a whole bunch like tigers and giraffes and snakes—“

“Snakes!”

So that was the direction they took. On the journey to go find some reptiles, there were a few other smaller animals dotted around, and whilst Daichi ran up to see them all, they weren’t as fascinating to him as the ‘big rats’ were, it seemed. At that point, he started to take a more reasonable pace, skipping along instead of running.

The reptile area was inside, and was decorated to look almost a little menacing. Nagisa didn’t think snakes were so scary, but maybe they had some other animals in there too. Daichi showed no signs of stopping, though, not phased by any of the dark lights or creepy vibes. And then, he caught sight of the snakes, which were apparently incredibly exciting.

“Don’t tap on the glass,” Nagisa warned, before Daichi got a little too excited.

He looked up. “Why?”

“They’re relaxing,” he pointed out, “you wouldn’t like it if people did that to you, right?”

Daichi didn’t respond, but he didn’t tap or do anything else that could be considered obnoxious, and it looked like he really was enjoying looking. Though, at least like this, the snakes weren’t really moving around all that much. Karma tapped him eventually, pointing to where one of the workers was holding a medium sized snake across her shoulders.

“S’cool!” Daichi ran straight up to the attendant, forgetting everything else.

She smiled at him. “Do you like snakes?”
Daichi had never said anything about it before, but he nodded enthusiastically, like he was confident in it.

“Well, this girl’s called Ungaii! Would you like to touch her? Gently, of course.”

For the first time a little tentative, he reached out, petting the snake on the head. Nagisa was surprised at how careful he was actually being, since it was rare he actually saw animals close up. His eyes lit up, when the snake started to slither onto his hand. The attendant laughed, and moved the snake so it was resting on his shoulders.

“Feels funny!” He declared.

Nagisa couldn’t help but find it adorable. Karma, on the other hand… looked kind of pale. He wasn’t scared of snakes, was he? Nagisa had enough sense to know the zoo wouldn’t be able to this kind of thing if the snake was venomous, or was any danger unless threatened. A few other people looked a little horrified in their direction, but Daichi was happy, so that didn’t really matter. Even when the snake went back to its handler, his eyes were still wide with awe.

Then he remembered. “What do you say, Daichi?”

“Thank you!” He said, and then, “bye bye Mrs Snake!”

Well, hopefully that would keep him in a good mood for a little while. They spent a while walking around to the other animals. As they got deeper into the zoo, the animals became a little more recognisable, though Daichi seemed more curious about them in general than excitable as he had been, only wanting to stay for a couple of minutes or so.

And then they came across the elephants.

“He’s naked!” Daichi (loudly) pointed, like he was scandalised.

Nagisa cursed all the kids TV and movies that seemed to have this obsession with dressing animal characters up in real clothes. He also wondered why that comment was coming then, since they’d been walking around for quite a while already. Though, maybe the fur made it a little less obvious. A couple of people were looking at them, anyway.

Karma laughed lightly. “Animals don’t wear clothes.”

“Do they know?”

“I don’t think so,” Nagisa said. “Their skin is thicker than ours, anyway, so they don’t really need them to stay warm.”

“Plus,” Karma added. “They’re kind of big you know. It would take a long time to make them clothes that fit.”

His nose twitched. “It’s wrinkly and old.” So, not a fan of the elephants then. “I’m hungry.”

It had been quite a while. Despite being kind of cool outside, so early into the year, they found a place to sit. Surprisingly, Daichi hadn’t been kidding, eating his food probably a little bit too fast. Nagisa felt a little bad at that one, like he’d been inadvertently starving him, but Daichi had been enjoying his surroundings, clearly.

“Say, Daichan,” Karma started, “what’s your favourite colour?”
“Uhm…” Daichi blinked, looking at the food in front of him.

Nagisa looked at Karma in question too.

“I was reading this thing,” he explained to Nagisa, “that you should ask kids questions like this once a year, just to see what they say.”

Daichi looked up again. “Yellow… I think…”

“What’s your favourite toy?”

“Gun!”

He meant a water pistol, which Nagisa regretted right then and there lest someone overhear this conversation. It was better and less violent than an actual BB gun, and looked just far away enough from a real gun that he didn’t have to think about the reality. It was only given to him on special days, though. He was half Karma’s son, after all, and thus already devious when he wanted to be.

Karma shot Nagisa a slightly devilish look, at that one. “What’s your favourite fruit?”

“Strawberry!” He said that one, thankfully, a little prouder than the previous answer. “Uhm, what about Papa?”

He laughed. “I agree with you, there. Hmm, how about, what’s your favourite TV show?”

Daichi’s head tilted. “Dunno.”

“Favourite thing to eat?”

“Pancake!”

Karma smiled. “How about for dinner?”

“Dead bird,” he announced.

“You mean chicken,” Nagisa couldn’t help but correct. It was kind of funny, how he got the words mixed up and the wrong way around, but at the same time it gave them really weird stares, especially in restaurants.


Daichi thought about it for a moment. “My shirt.”

No other detail, then. Though, Daichi looked like he had something in particular in mind, even if he wasn’t going to clearly tell them that.

“What’s… your favourite game?”

He stood up on the bench proudly. “Fighting!”

The look Karma gave Nagisa was definitely not apologetic. “We’re in a zoo, right? What’s your favourite animal?”

“The snakes,” he nodded to himself. “I like snakes. And big rats! The big rats are funny! Wanna big rat. Wanna buy one. In my bedroom! Then! Then, I can play with him. Daddy! Big rat big rat!”
Nagisa sighed, hating that he was the one being asked. “We don’t have enough room for any pets. Besides… those type of, uh, big rats, have to live outside. You can go see them again though, before we leave.”

“You done with the questions?” Karma asked.

“Hmmm, no.”

“Okay,” Karma said lightly. “I have a couple more. What’s your favourite book?”

His face fell, a little. “I have lots! Don’t wanna choose!”

“You don’t have to choose,” he let him off the hook. “How about… do you have a best friend?”

“Mrs Snake… Probably.”

“Favourite place?”

His face screwed up in concentration. “The big green bush outside.”

Karma was clearly amused. “The what?”

“At home! S’big! Think there’s magic or, or-“ Whatever he said after that was left to the imagination, because Nagisa had no clue what word he was attempting to pronounce.

Honestly, Nagisa had no idea what he was talking about either. He hadn’t noticed any particularly big bushes outside their apartment, and if there were any, it certainly wasn’t magical. Nagisa wasn’t sure what to think of his favourite place being something as simple as a bush, but, he seemed excited enough about it.

“Last one… What do you want to be when you grow up?”

That was quite the question for Daichi’s young mind, apparently. For a moment, he stared off into the space, before shrugging. “Bigger.”

Honestly Nagisa could relate. He hoped that Daichi actually would grow up to be actually tall, unlike Nagisa. Though! Nagisa still had a couple of years in which he could, suddenly, shoot up a couple of centimetres or so, ignoring the fact that Karma was technically younger than him and had shot up by ten.

“Papa…” Daichi said. “Can I play now?”

They had been talking to him for a while. “Go ahead.”

Nagisa sighed, watching him run off to a small playpark area. Of course, he deserved it after such a long conversation. It had actually been interesting, to see his responses. Maybe they would change a lot, in a year. He didn’t seem so bothered about conversation right then, running off to climb something or other. Of course, Nagisa kept an eye on him, but he was steadily getting less concerned about him injuring himself.

“He’s so big,” Karma complained stretching out. “Feels like yesterday he could barely even hold his own head up.”

Nagisa shifted. “I kind of don’t like it.”

A glint came across Karma’s face. “Didn’t you say you wanted another kid?”
He half spat out his water. “What.”

He laughed properly. “Ha, your face! What’s wrong, Nagisa~? It was your suggestion.”

“I-,” Nagisa couldn’t look him in the eye, his face turning red. “I thought that we weren’t talking about that.”

Honestly, he couldn’t believe that he’d said all of those things. They were definitely not hidden desires (well, maybe some of them were). He had been glad Karma hadn’t really brought it up this week, but he supposed it was only a matter of time. Nagisa was definitely never touching alcohol again, it only brought pain and misery.

“I don’t want any more anyway,” Karma said, mercifully changing the subject.

Nagisa blinked. “Ever?”

He shrugged. “I mean, it’s not like I’ve thought about it. It kind of feels like we already have enough, though.”

This was… an odd conversation to be having with Karma. “I wouldn’t want to go through all of that again.”

It had been worth it, to have Daichi. But, that didn’t mean he ever wanted to repeat being pregnant or any of the rest of it. But then again, he hadn’t thought about it too much, either. He had university to think about, more immediately, and then his career. Anything else seemed to far off in the future it was hardly even a blur.

After a little while, Karma looked weirdly serious. “What if I want to talk about it?”

“Ka-“

“More animals!” Daichi rushed back over to them, excitedly.

Karma’s face adjusted. “I mean, you’re the boss. It’s your birthday.”

“’m three!” He said, proudly presenting the right number of fingers.

“That’s pretty old, huh?” He grinned. “C’mon, then.”

Instead of just letting him walk along beside them, Karma picked him up into a shoulder piggyback, which earned him a squeal of delight. Of course, for a three year old, that was rather high up. That way, at least, he could see the rest of the animals a lot easier. Nagisa walked beside them, at a leisurely pace.

It lasted for a little while, until Daichi decided he was bored and wanted to run around again. Nagisa wasn’t sure where he even got that energy from, honestly. That just left them to walk along together, making sure he didn’t actually run too far. For the briefest moment, Nagisa felt their finger tips brush together, though they mutually snatched the hands back again, tension rising and dropping. Truthfully, if Nagisa could have paused his life in any moment, there was a good chance it would have been right then.

Chapter End Notes
We have a lot of Daichi being very much Karma's child so far, but here's some Daichi being very much Nagisa's child lol. Who doesn't like snakes? I actually think they're adorable haha, I religiously watch Snake Discovery on Youtube.

Prewarning, the next few chapters are gonna be LONG. This is the fluff before the storm.

ALSO! Speaking of threes, this chapter means we're almost at 300,000 words :0
Graduation Time

Chapter Summary

After officially graduating, they take their trip to Cambodia

Chapter Notes

Officially over 300k words!

Also again this follows the plot of korotan d but I did add and remove quite a bit. I think I made it pretty obvious but italics represent them speaking in English.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

After the ceremony, Nagisa waited impatiently, Daichi in his arms. Usually, Daichi would hardly let him hold him like that, but after so long of having to sit patiently, he’d become kind of sleepy. Of course, despite Nagisa’s explanations, there was no telling if he actually understood that this was a really significant day or not.

“Congratulations,” Nagisa said, as he felt he should, when he finally caught sight of Karma.

A grin came across his face. “No need to be so formal, Nagisa. It’s not like it’s a big de-“

“You graduated,” Nagisa mumbled out, half yawning.

“You graduated,” Nagisa said, “it is a big deal.”

Kunugigaoka’s ceremony was later than Nagisa’s, which had taken place days before. With this, they had both officially survived high school, diplomas to boot. Though, Karma’s parents hadn’t bothered to make the trip over from India, so Nagisa had just taken Daichi. Despite being proud of him (how could he not, he was graduating joint first), it had been pretty tedious to sit through the entire thing.

“I just want to go on the trip already,” he complained, half childishly.

Nagisa handed Daichi over to him. “I need to use the toilet.”

His bladder had been near bursting for a while, after all. He still couldn’t help but think it was weird to be back in this school, even if it technically wasn’t the same as the middle school, the difference wasn’t so easily felt right then. Most people were chatting in family groups, so it wasn’t hard to slip past. When he was done, though, he accidentally bumped into someone.

“Oh, Nagisa kun.”

Nagisa looked up, to see it was Asano of all people. “Congratulations on your graduation, Asano kun.”
“And you,” he returned. “I heard you were accepted to your university of choice. It seems we’re both happy.”

He nodded. “But it must be scary, to go all the way to America.”

“A fresh challenge.”

It suited him, actually. Karma was already going to the best university in the country, and he doubted Asano would want to fight the same battle over and over. America was a bigger country than Japan, anyway, so there was more for world domination of whatever he was planning. And knowing Asano, there was a chance he’d stay there, too.

“Nagisa kun,” he said, “we won’t see each other for a long time.” He held his hand out, offering it.

Nagisa looked at the hand suspiciously, but decided to take it. It was a sign of uncharacteristic respect from Asano, and he wasn’t going to just pass it up. It didn’t last long, though, the two of them detaching after a couple of seconds to go their separate ways. Nagisa felt happy, though, a smile playing on his lips.

“Let’s go home,” he said, when he returned to Karma.

Because of what was happening the next day, they didn’t do anything in particular to celebrate. Like any other day, they went just home and cooked dinner, and just relaxed for a bit before going off to bed. But, Nagisa was still a little nervous. He was excited to go on a trip with all of his friends, of course, but that didn’t stop him being worried about taking Daichi so far away, considering they’d never really taken him more than an hour away from home before. On top of that, Kayano still didn’t know they were actually coming. He hoped they weren’t too disruptive…

But since airports were kind of a time crunch, when the next morning came, he barely had a chance to think about. It was too quick for Daichi to even get a chance to complain, before he was fed and dressed and as many books as possible were squeezed into a toddler sized carry on. Neither he or Karma wanted to deal with the consequences of boredom on a plane that they would be confined to for hours.

Almost hilariously, though, they were some of the first of the group there. Having a kid had turned them into prompt people, apparently. Okuda and Kurahashi, in fact, were standing around chatting. Karma went to greet them immediately, better friends with Okuda at least than Nagisa was, so he hung back instead.

“Daichan!” Kurahashi said, spotting him. “You’ve grown so much since I last saw you!”

“You saw him last month,” Nagisa half joked.

She waved him off. “He grows every time I see him.” She bent down. “How are you?”

“Sleepy,” Daichi said, yawning as if to prove his point.

Nagisa felt a little bad about that one. “You’re excited, though, right?”

“Wanna fly a plane!”

The rest of their group gradually arrived, one by one. There was a little bit of time before the flight, so chatter broke out between the groups. He hadn’t had that much of a chance to speak to them at the wedding, so it was nice to actually catch up properly. The small area of the airport they were occupying was a chorus of ‘it’s been a long time’ and ‘how have you been?’.
Maehara came over to where Nagisa was standing with Sugino. “Sugino, looks like you’ve gotten even more buffed since the last time I saw you, huh?”

“Yeah, I guess so,” he said, a little bashful as he smiled. “I’m aiming for entering the pro leagues in four years, so I’m carefully honing my body.”

Nagisa was really happy for his friend. Of course, Sugino was usually busy training, and Nagisa with being a parent, so they rarely got to hang out aside from events like this. But, from what messages they did exchange, Nagisa knew his baseball was going really well, enough that he was certainly going to make it as a pro. As a result, he had definitely bulked up from how he used to be in middle school, making him one of the most muscular of their group.

“I bet you’ll kick ass on the college baseball scene, too!” Maehara encouraged.

“Yeah!” He said, and then he clearly saw something that made him nervous. “Kanzaki san!”

He hadn’t realised Sugino still had a crush on her, but it seemed just as strong as it had been years ago. Though, Kanzaki was objectively beautiful, the picture of omegan beauty with her soft feminine look and flowery scent. She was a lot more than that, and Nagisa knew Sugino wasn’t concerned with just her looks, but he felt a weird kind of bitterness. Not that Nagisa had ever wanted to be seen as a perfect omega, ever. He didn’t know where the feeling was even coming from, but he didn’t like it.

“It’s been a while, Sugino kun,” she smiled. “When you were playing at Koshien, I was cheering for you as I watched you on TV.”

“Really!?” His eyes practically popped out of his skull, and it was like he forgot how to breathe. "Thanks so much! They say it was a miracle that we made it through that first round, but maybe it was all thanks to you, Kanzaki san!”

“Hey,” Takebayashi interrupted the exchange, together with Okajima. “Sorry I’ve been neglecting to keep in contact with you all.”

Kurahashi waved her hands. “Ah, Takechan, long time no see! Okachin’s here too~!”

“You decided on going to the Metropolitan University of Agriculture, right Kurahashi-san?”

“Yup yup, I’ll get to play around with all sorts of living creatures there~ You’re going to be a doctor, right Takechan?”

He nodded. “My application tentatively went through, so I’ll need to steadily work on my weak points. Okajima, are you going straight forward on the path of eroticism as usual?”

Okajima puffed out his chest. “Well, you see, I’ve got my heart set on eroticism, so I don’t need something like college. I’m going to dive straight into the freelancing business and take erotic gravure photos of women all over the world!”

“Wow~,” Kurahashi praised, “I don’t really get you, but that’s so cool!”

Nagisa winced. “Can we try and keep this kid appropriate?”

Thankfully, they weren’t hanging around for much longer before they had the board the plane. Daichi’s eyes went wide at the boarding area, and he ran right up to the window, nose against the glass to look at the planes with wonder.
“C’mon Daichan,” Karma went over to him. “You can’t just stand there and look at it.”

They let Daichi sit by the window, with Karma taking the aisle due to his ridiculously long legs. As someone who had never even been near a plane before, Daichi was taking it pretty well, pressed against the window once again. Even when it took off, he showed no signs of fear, squealing happily at motion of flight. To be honest, Nagisa had only been on a plane a couple of times himself before too, and it definitely felt more secure than when Korosensei had carried them.

“Hey,” Yada leaned over, “so are we gonna arrive at Kayano’s filming site?”

“Hmm~” Karma said, relaxed. “Who really knows~? This movie is a massive international collaborative work, which means their shooting team will be quite conspicuous, so as long as we’re near the site, we should be able to find them somehow, right?”

Terasaka didn’t sound happy about that. “Karma, you bastard! You’re the one who came up with the idea, so be more serious about it!”

“Of course,” he reached into his backpack nonchalantly, and handed some kind of object over. “Okay, here you go, Terasaka.”

He unravelled it, and honestly Nagisa was a little horrified with what he saw. There was a t shirt in the package, plastered with Kayano’s face. What’s worse was that the front read ‘Mase Haruna is my wife’. Nagisa knew all about Karma’s taste in awful t shirts, Daichi had suffered because of this, but this was way too far.

“This is quite well made,” Takebayashi said in admiration.

“I had such a hard time selecting a picture,” Karma explained. “If you wear this T-shirt and raise this banner, I have no doubt the locals will pity you and take you to her. Good luck~“

“Just when did you make that?” Nagisa hissed, inaudible to anyone else.

“Who the hell would do that!?” Terasaka complained.

Hazama closed her book loudly, glaring at the two of them. “Ugh, looks like those boys haven’t grown out of fooling around since middle school.”

“Shut up, Hazama!” Terasaka snapped his attention. “You’re just as much of a bookworm as ever, you know? And what’s with the English novel, anyway?”

“This is the original novel Kayano’s movie is based on. It might give us clues regarding the location of her film shoot, am I wrong?”

“Oooh!” Pretty much everyone chorused, all unable to relax on their own due to Karma and Terasaka’s antics.

“So?” Nagisa asked, at a regular volume. “What kind of story is it?”

“The hero is a no-good man who gambles for a living and dreams of getting rich quick. One day, he ends up helping out a girl from Japan and, after mistakenly thinking that she likes him, protects a Buddha statue from rogues for her sake.”

“A buddha statue?”

“It’s no ordinary statue. It’s the key to unravelling the mystery left behind by an ancient
civilization. It’s an ancient civilization in an adventure novel, so of course the key is going to be some worn-out item, right? The buddha statue is housed in an old temple, powerfully depicted as one eroded by the jungle’s trees. This scene is surely going to be used in the movie. The place we’re headed to is the perfect location for this, correct?”

He’d thought about as much, from what he’d looked up. “Yeah, there are famous temples designated as World Heritage Sites. Many of these temples are scattered inside the jungle, some buried as if they were eaten by the jungle itself. I researched these temples in advance and wrote up a summary of my findings,” he reached into his bag, pulling out some guide books he’d prepared, “so please take this, everyone.”

“Thanks, Nagisa!” Isogai said, taking his. “That’s an aspiring teacher for you. This reminds me of Korosensei when we went on that school trip.”

He laughed it off. “These aren’t as thick as his, though.” Truthfully, he’d just had a bit of time on his hands the past few days, after finishing up with school. Daichi didn’t want to hang out with him every second of the day, unfortunately.

Karma took one too. “Well, you can’t do more than what you can,” he smirked, “nerd. Takebayashi, how’s things going on the SNS?”

“Ritsu helped me out. We’ve collected all the information posted about the staff for Gold City.”

Just like that, Nagisa’s phone buzzed, despite being in the middle of the air. By the looks of it, everyone else’s had too. On his screen were a bunch of pictures, mostly landscapes. All in all, it did look like a beautiful place. Nagisa felt a thrum of excitement, especially now he’d seem it.

“There was nothing written down identifying the film’s shooting location,” Takebayashi continued. “However, we did find a few landscape photos of the shooting location uploaded online. Please look at these photographs. The temple is pictured behind Gold City’s lead actor, Jerome March.”

“Woah, it’s Jerome March!” Hara said. “He’s so cool!”

“He’s the biggest young movie star right now!” Nakamura sounded… excited.

Takebayashi cleared his throat. “I also expanded our search to include locations shown in anime. For the sake of making a holy pilgrimage, I’ve learned to compare the backgrounds drawn in anime with photos and identify their locations. After all, even now, anime backgrounds are often drawn by tracing real-life landscapes. For example, I can determine which direction to go based on which way the antenna on a house might be installed.” He fixed his glasses.

“So you’d go that far…” Yada said, a little uneasy.

“When I analysed that location through this method, I found some ruins in Nagisa’s guidebook that have a high probability of being the location of the film shoot. It’s in a post from six hours ago.”

“Alright!” Sugino yelled. “Then let’s go to the Wat Baken ruins!”

Nagisa still felt a little bad, at springing themselves on Kayano like that. But, there wasn’t anything they could do about it now, except focus on having the best trip possible. He looked over at Daichi, who had somehow miraculously fallen asleep during that whole commotion. So he really hadn’t been kidding about being tired. Not wanting to wake him up, Nagisa put his earphones in his ears and listened to music, in an attempt to discourage Karma from conversation.
Unfortunately, though, his bladder had other ideas, about an hour in. He thought about just holding it until the plane landed, but he had no idea how long that was going to take. Of course they’d gone for a budget airline, too, so there wasn’t exactly a huge amount of room. He tired his best to stand up, twisting his body as he stepped out in an attempt to make the movement as smooth as possible.

Right then, though, the plane jolted with turbulence, as if it was about to fall right out of the sky. Nagisa was thrown completely off balance, and his hands instinctually came out to break his fall. He had been tossed forwards, but he collided with something. Nagisa blinked in confusion, until he realised he was now on Karma’s lap, straddling him in a way that looked like he did it on purpose. Karma said nothing, but looked at him curiously, in question.

Nakamura wolf whistled.

“Get a room,” Terasaka complained.

Nagisa extracted himself like his thighs were resting on red hot coals, face turning bright red. He scampered straight to the toilet, simply locking the door behind him to escape from the rest of the world. Once the issue of his bladder was taken care of, he didn’t even want to show his face, for fear of the embarrassment it would bring. Why did he have to fall like that? Surprisingly, though, Karma didn’t tease him at all when he gathered the mental strength to come back out, simply humming as Nagisa sat down in his actual seat again.

Eventually, the plane came in for its landing. Daichi, once awake from his brief nap, was even more excited at the descent, the tropical sights probably looking quite interesting from the tiny window. And then came the chatter and the questions. Nagisa tried his best to answer everything that was being thrown at him, but it was hard to keep it up, all the way off the plane and through border control.

“Do you want to go straight to the movie set?” Karma stretched out, fortunate enough to be spared from the interrogation.

Nagisa thought about it. “Shouldn’t we at least leave our bags in the hotel first?”

“Daddy!” Daichi demanded. “Me first!”

He winced. “I don’t know, Daichi. Bananas?”

“But what about…“

Karma picked him up in one quick swoop, tipping him upside down and playing with him like he was a salt shaker. “Huh? You got a question, Daichan?”

The only response he got was shrieks and giggles.

They did actually end up going to the hotel first. Since nobody wanted to spend too much money, they were sharing twin rooms. Naturally, since they also had Daichi, that meant Nagisa was with Karma. For some reason, the thought of sleeping in such close quarters again made him feel a sick kind of nervous. He was actually really thankful Daichi was going to be there, too. As if that was going to make it less… awkward.

Everyone was excited, so they didn’t spend any time relaxing before setting off for the movie set. Like the rest of the group, he was immediately taken in by the beautiful scenery surrounding them, despite it being as hot as summer. It really would look amazing in a movie, he thought. Since it was such a major production, Karma had been right, it was quite obvious where the production actually was, and barely took them any time to find it.
Nagisa was taken aback, when he caught a glimpse of Kayano in the middle of a scene. It was one thing to know about her job, and to see her on screen, but seeing the huge production behind it all was frankly weird. The locals who wanted to watch were cut off at a certain point, but in front of that where countless crew members, all doing their jobs. He was in a bit of a daze, until he noticed Kayano and the guy she was acting with storm off in opposite directions, Kayano going to sit underneath a tree.

“We should go over,” Maehara suggested. “Looks like she’s taking a break.”

Well… Hopefully it wouldn’t be too bad then. “Kayano!” Nagisa called out with the rest of them.

Kayano’s head snapped up. “Nagisa!?” She rushed over to them, like she was on a mission. “Eh, why is everyone here!?”

Nagisa could only laugh nervously, feeling like this was still somehow entirely his fault.

“It’s really just a coincidence~,” Karma lied, mischievous smile to boot. “The destination for our graduation trip just happens to be the same as your film location~”

“I’m so surprised!” She said, at least not seeming angry about it. “I was just thinking about all of you, so I thought I was seeing an illusion!”

Having not seen her for a while, most of their group made a huge fuss, of both her appearance and her success. Nagisa didn’t quite have the courage to join in, though he could see how she practically glowed, like the major celebrity she was becoming. Underneath it all, though, he could see that she was the same Kayano.

“Wow,” Daichi said, clearly overwhelmed with everything.

She laughed, picking him up like he was still a baby. “Ah, you’re still so little, Daichiisai. I’m not sure if you even remember me, but it’s been a while.

“M’not little,” he complained, but didn’t try to wiggle out of her grip.

“I’m sorry, I’m sorry,” she said cheerfully. “How old are you now, anyway?”

He stuck out his fingers. “Three!”

“No way!”

“Yeah!”

“Haruna? What’s up?” The director, Nathonni approached them, which was fair enough considering the commotion they were probably causing. Anyone who spent the amount of time Nagisa did with Karma would know the director’s name.

Kayano switched to English. “My dear friends have come to see me! We were classmates in middle school!”

“Oh?” He smiled. “If they’re your friends, then they’re welcome here. You’re a true professional. A respectable actress.”

Beside him, Karma stiffened, and spoke as level as possible. “I am a fan of your work. I became interested in your stuff after seeing Kill Romance, and I flew from Japan to Hawaii to watch Sonic Ninja.”
Knowing that Karma was as good at English as he was, Nagisa was surprised by how rigid his speech sounded. Taking a look at him, though, his cheeks were tinted with just a hint of pink, eyes shining as jewels. And then Nagisa realised that in the face of the director he’d idolised, Karma was nervous enough to forget his English.

“*I’m happy to hear that!*” Nathonni extended a hand. “*Please promote this movie more and more in Japan!*”

Karma accepted it firmly, nodding graciously like he didn’t want to let go. Okay, it was kind of cute.

“Ah, over there, isn’t that Jerome March?” Okajima pointed out.

“You’re right!” Yada clapped. “It’s Jerome!”

Nakamura practically jumped up like a fangirl. “Wow, he’s super handsome in person! He’s got such an aura!”

Jerome turned his eyes towards them, noticing the girls all waving, and raised his hand in a kind of wave

“Jerome looked this way!”

“I saw his face for a second!”

Nagisa wrinkled his nose at their behaviour. They were trained assassins, but here they were shrieking in the face of an actor. He was attractive, sure, in a kind of old rugged way. He tilted his head, looking a little closer at him. He was a similar build to Karma, though Nagisa could tell he’d probably put on his muscles for aesthetic reasons, due to the less even distribution on his lower half, rather than function (he had a fleeting thought that Karma was more attractive anyway).

He left the trailer, staff speeding after him like baby ducklings. “*Director, I’m ready.*”

“I’ll have to go back now,” Kayano smiled apologetically, setting Daichi back down on the ground. “You can watch from here and we can talk later, though!”

The director hadn’t said anything about the fact they’d taken such a young child to a movie site, so Nagisa hoped it was okay. He wasn’t sure that Daichi knew how major the things he was seeing was, but he seemed interested regardless. In fact, Nagisa had never been that interested in production himself, but it was fascinating to see it all work like a well oiled machine, Jerome and Kayano having their make up reapplied and getting back into position.

“*Action!*”

“*Thanks for saving me again,*” Kayano looked up sweetly, as the character she was playing.

“*From now on, I’ll save you as many times as it takes.*”

Her expression turned serious. “*You’re only in it for the money.*”

“Yes, I do love money,” he said casually. “*But you know, there are other things I love besides money!*”

“*Like what!*?”

Jerome grabbed both her shoulders. “*You.*”
It was at that point Nagisa realised what he was watching was about to be a kiss scene, and he felt weirdly uncomfortable with it. Maybe because the line was cringy, or else because he was getting a bad vibe from Jerome. His face came closer to Kayano’s, and Nagisa stiffened. He’d seen Kayano kiss other people before, on screen and in their class itself…

“Oh shit, it’s a kiss scene!” Okajima whispered in a low voice.

However, she turned her head away, and Nagisa felt a flood of relief.

“Cut, cut!”

“I’m so sorry!” Kayano said to Jerome.

Jerome smiled. “You’re nervous because your partner is the Jerome, right? Relax, relax.”

She smiled back at him, biting her lip. Once again, Nagisa felt a little bit sick. He really didn’t like the feeling he got off that guy, though he didn’t think he was especially dangerous, really. No, there was some other kind of aura. It kind of reminded him of the way Rin used to look at him, every time he wanted a kiss. Nagisa shuddered at the thought.

“Take two, action!”

The takes went on like that, over and over again, though each time Kayano messed it up when it got to the kiss part. Like that, Nagisa realised just how tedious making a movie could really be. It didn’t seem to matter how many times it happened, Kayano wasn’t getting over whatever was bothering her.

“Cut! It looks like this isn’t going to work no matter how many times we try. Let’s shoot some more scenes, and once you’ve thrown off your reserve, go back to the kiss scene.”

“Wait a sec, can we postpone the kiss? We can look forward to it later,” Jerome winked.

Instantly, the film staff went into motion, changing all the cameras and the lighting for the next scene. It was pretty impressive, how quickly they worked. In the meantime, though, Nathonni started to talk to Kayano, and by the looks of it, it wasn’t good. Nagisa felt incredibly guilty, then, for wishing failure upon her. He really hoped she wasn’t in trouble.

“How about some lunch?” Isogai suggested, when it became clear it was going to be a pretty long conversation.

They ended up going to one of the food stalls by the entrance of the ruins, which were usually a popular tourist attraction. Everything tasted amazing, which was a silver lining in this. Daichi had no complaints either, declaring that each item of food was ‘yummy’. It brought Nagisa’s smile back, actually. Hopefully there would be a chance to take him to see the temples up close.

“Good work, Kaede chan~” Kurahashi called out.

Sure enough, Kayano was approaching them with a smile. “Hinano-chan!”

“You’re amazing!” Maehara said. “You spoke super fluent English with Jerome March!”

She shook her head at the compliment. “It was pretty unsteady and shaky. Even though Korosensei and Bitch Sensei drove it into me, my skills will quickly grow dull if I don’t use them.”

“I didn’t get that impression at all though? Your acting was also almost completely spot on. It was
only near the end when you looked like you were having a bit of a hard time.”

Muramatsu grinned. “So you were nervous having such a handsome Hollywood star come in such close range after all?”

“Y-yeah, you might be right,” she laughed, though it came off as quite awkward.

Karma approached her then, whispering something in her ear.

“Huh!!?” Her face turned cherry red, and Nagisa was worried about what he’d said to her.

“Hey, hey,” Yada said, “is it tougher to be in an international collaborative film compared to a Japanese drama or movie?”

“Y-yeah…” She looked down. “Well, somehow I manage to get by with my English, but the film’s staff come from all sorts of different countries, and almost nobody out of the people hired on site can speak in English, so when you put all that together, it makes things very difficult for the line producer. Everyone is using everything they have, but it still takes a lot of time.”

“Wow, really?”

“The director will suddenly come up with an idea, but every time the staff tries to implement it, we end up with something nonsensical, and there are times when we simply don’t have enough manpower to do it anyway.”

Karma beamed in admiration. “Ah, that’s so like Nathonni. It’s the directors with that degree of selfishness that are able to make interesting movies.” He looked at his watch. “I want to hear even more stories from you, but I guess it’s almost time for you to go, Kayano chan?”

“Ah, you’re right. I gotta go.” She was about to stand up, but then came an explosion of loud voices. “What the… it sounds like it’s coming from the filming site.”

They tagged along behind her, as she made her way back to the set. It was hard to catch some rapid and passionate English, but Nagisa could tell it wasn’t good. It seemed to be between the director and Jerome, plus some other two guys, but it was really hard to tell what was actually going on.

“I can’t postpone the shooting date any more than I already have! Doing things your way will take too much time!”

“It’s your job to keep your work on schedule! We’re running late because you take so much time communicating with the local staff, not to mention they take too much time to procure the goods I ask for!”

“Don’t put the blame on others! We’re experiencing this delay because you keep changing the scenes around!”

“Because it’s my job to make the movie better!”

Like a car crash, the rest of the staff stopped in their tracks to watch what was going on between the director and what Nagisa had to assume was the producer. Most people looked bewildered, though, which made sense since Kayano had pointed out that they didn’t really speak much English.

“What are they saying?” Daichi asked, tugging at Nagisa’s wrist.
Nagisa felt bad, but he had to just shush him.

“Whenever I make a change, it’s your job to make it happen, right!?”

“Aah, I understand,” the producer said. “If my work is of such little concern to you, then you can gather up your own staff by yourself. I quit.” Like that, he turned on his heel.

“Hey, wait! Are you abandoning your workplace!?”

The producer turned around one more time at the sound of his voice, gave him the finger, and then left. He made no effort to go after him, though, instead muttering angrily to himself in a different language altogether which Nagisa thought sounded like Italian.

“Director, you should apologize and have him come back,” the cameraman said.

“Woah… I don’t really get what just happened, but it looks really bad,” Terasaka whispered.

It was like a chain reaction. With the producer guy gone, it seemed all the staff he’d been responsible for also left their posts. It didn’t seem to be any of the really important people, at least, but those who were transporting the film equipment and doing odd jobs like that were completely gone.

“Director, what do we do!? We won’t be able to make the movie like this! Losing our assistant is just the same as losing all our limbs!”

“…We’ll need some new staff.” Nathonni said coolly.

“And where the hell will we find new staff!? We’re already on a tight schedule!”

“Kayano chan,” Karma called out, “we can help them, right?”

Terasaka looked at him like he’d been punched. “Are you stupid!? We’re total amateurs!”

“And so we can help,” Karma shrugged. “You’re a stupid amateur with physical strength.”

“Huh!?”

“-Which means you can help out with heavy work and chores, right? Let’s support Kayano’s performance.”

Nagisa agreed with him actually. If Kayano had been distracted by their visit, then it was their fault that the argument had even happened. He didn’t want to be responsible for ruining an entire movie, and it wasn’t like they had firm plans for the rest of their trip, aside from coming to see Kayano. He wanted to help in whatever way was possible.

“Korosensei, Karasuma sensei, and Bitch-sensei…” Nagisa started. “Under their guidance, we polished all sorts of blades in the assassination classroom. Right now, there should definitely be something useful we can do.”

“Yeah!”

“Let’s do this!”

“Everyone…” Kayano said, gratefully, “thank you!” She walked straight up to Nathonni. “Director, my friends say they want to become part of your staff and help out!”
“I’m grateful for the offer,” he sounded a little sceptical, “but what are they capable of?”

Karma stepped forwards, this time speaking English far more fluently. “As you can see, everyone has various skills on top of being able to speak English, so I think we’ll be of use. We can also serve as interpreters for your Japanese staff, and this guy is especially sturdy, so it doesn’t matter if you bury him in the Earth and use him as a pillar.” He pointed to Terasaka.

The director laughed. “Your English is perfect. If your friends can speak it this well then we’re saved.”

“Hey, Karma,” Terasaka called out. “What the hell did you tell him?”

“I asked him to please handle Terasaka kun with care,” he lied through his teeth.

Terasaka clicked his tongue. “I bet you told him to abuse me!”

“Hey, nice hat,” Daichi said.

Nagisa blinked, realising that during that entire exchange Daichi had slipped out of his sight and was now about to bug the director. He was too close for Nagisa to lunge after him, though. Thankfully, Karma was right there, and quickly grabbed a hold of him before he could walk further and do some kind of damage.

“Ah, who’s this?”

Karma scratched the back of his head. “This is my son, Daichi.”

Nathonni cleared his throat. “Hello,” he said in accented but otherwise understandable Japanese, “it’s nice to meet you.”

“Hi!” Daichi replied, not nervous at all.

With that sorted, the next thing Nagisa knew, they were put to work. They split off into various tasks, working well together like no time had passed since their assassination training. Those who had more of an artistic flare had the chance to get some real experience in the fields they actually wanted to go into. The rest of them were designated the heavy work. Or, at least, Nagisa tried, but he could hardly shift the equipment and people were starting to get annoyed.

“It’s so hot,” Yada complained.

“Here,” Nagisa handed her a bottle of water, “make sure you stay properly hydrated.”

“Oh, thank you! Which team are you in, Nagisa?”

Nagisa’s shoulders drooped down. “I’m just doing miscellaneous chores that don’t require a lot of strength… I thought about helping them transport their lighting equipment, but I don’t have enough strength to even carry any of it, so some of the female staff members got mad at me.”

Someone had to look after a very curious Daichi, anyway, and Karma was far more useful in this circumstance. So, childcare and odd chores where his demotion. Well, keeping Daichi at bay was probably the hardest job of them all. A film set was a gigantic playground to a three year old, naturally. If Nagisa took his eyes off him for more than a second, he’d find Daichi touching or climbing on something he really shouldn’t.

He still managed to be busy enough, especially since every time he tried to find a job to do, the
staff just wanted to fuss over Daichi, and it took an extraordinarily long time to actually get to work. Naturally, Daichi was loving the attention. Since he’d slept through the plane journey, he was wide awake, and showing no signs of slowing down as the hours went on and filming eventually came to a stop, that day.

Nagisa caught up with the others, and they headed towards Kayano’s trailer. Of course, there was a possibility that she’d be too tired after a long day of filming, but even if that was the case everyone felt like they should at least say goodnight. On the way, they passed Jerome, who seemed to be practising a fight scene with a guy of similar stature. The guy must have been a stunt man or something, because his martial arts was very convincing.

“Hey, Nagisa,” Karma called. “Have fun?”

“Mmm,” he replied, a little awkwardly. “You?”

He seemed a little bothered, actually. “I don’t like that Jerome guy.”

“How come?” Nagisa was secretly pleased that they agreed though.

Karma shrugged. “He’s been kind of creepy with the girls all day. I have half the mind to scent you or something in case he tries it.”

“Y-you’re not going to,” Nagisa folded his arms across himself, a bit of warning lacing his tone.

He wasn’t dumb. Since they lived in such close quarters, Nagisa was aware that his scent didn’t quite scream ‘available’. He was so used to being with Karma, in fact, that he’d forgotten what his natural scent even was, since it was always laced with his. It went the other way, too, and a dark part of him kind of liked that Karma smelt like a trace of him. However, they weren’t bonded, so his scent wasn’t definitively ‘taken’ either. If Karma actually smothered him in alpha pheromones, on the other hand… But that was near humiliating.

“Relax,” Karma waved him off, “I know you can handle yourself.”

“…Let’s join the others,” Nagisa said lowly.

When they approached Kayano’s trailer, she was in the middle of a conversation with Jerome and Nathonni. Not wanting to interrupt, they all waited, until the two men walked off into the distance together. It seemed like the work day didn’t ever end.

“Nice work,” Maehara commented, when they were gone.

She turned around, beaming herself. “Great work, everyone!” Her gaze drifted, then. “Oh, I want to try riding in one of those!”

Nagisa followed where she was looking. Just off the roadway, a bunch of Tuk Tuks were lined up, ready to take tourists into the actual city. Nagisa had heard of them before, but riding in one seemed pretty nice, and a good way to see the sights. Terasaka didn’t hesitate, going over to them to try talking to the drivers.

“You guys coming?” He asked roughly, returning.

“You’re amazing, Terasaka!” Kayano declared. “You’ve really made progress with your English!”

One of the drivers beckoned Kayano. “Everyone, get on, get on!”
Everyone laughed, as he was speaking perfect Japanese.

“What!?” Terasaka grumbled. “I said what!?? Come on! It’s fine that I used Japanese since I still managed to arrange this properly!”

“Sure, sure, thank you.”

They all followed onto the Tuk Tuks, splitting off into small groups. He ended up sharing one with Okuda, Kayano, and Karma, with Daichi designated to his lap. Like that, the Tuk Tuk sped off down the tropical road, a cool wind blowing as they went. It felt a lot better than the stagnant heat of the day.

“The wind feels so good,” Kayano sighed.

Karma cleared his throat. “You sure do have some hardships to deal with~”

“Eh?”

“That philanderer, Jerome, is a pretty nasty guy. Wouldn’t co-starring with a guy like that hinder your performance?”

Kayano smiled wryly. “I don’t know… I think that I can concentrate on my own acting, but…”

“You’re worried about Kayano, too,” Karma nudged him, “right, Nagisa?”

Nagisa blinked, not sure what he meant. “Hm? I don’t think there’s anything to worry about.” Kayano could handle a guy like that, he was sure.

“Really?”

“I often hear about just how much effort she’s made in this world,” he thought. Kayano was an incredible actress, after all. Karma had been worried about him, earlier, though. “It’s alright, Kayano’s blade isn’t so fragile that her acting would dull from a little thing like that.”

The Tuk Tuks dropped them all off in the city centre. Whilst it sounded fun to walk around everywhere, everyone was pretty tired from their long day. When it was suggested, then, that they relax on a pleasure boat, nobody had any complaints.

“Since we’re all the way here, let’s do some touring!” Hara suggested. “I’ve already found some places that look quite nice!”

They found a really nice restaurant inside the ship, which allowed them to watch the riverside as they travelled. It really was beautiful, Nagisa thought. He’d never been that interested in travelling, but right then he saw the appeal. It would be nice to take Daichi to more places like this, especially when he was old enough to appreciate it a bit more. Even right then, though, his eyes were wide, staring at the colours of it all.

The rest of his friends were far more concerned with the food on offer.

“Woah, there’s a ton of coriander in here!”

“Awesome! There’s so much shrimp!”

Hara, in particular, seemed to be in love with it. “This is delicious! The seasoning they use here is nothing like the seasoning they use in the ethnic dishes you can eat in Japan. Everything tastes so vivid, and there are spices I’ve never used before, so this will make an excellent reference!”
Whilst they ate, a show started. A bunch of women came out, dressed in bikinis, and started to dance to some pretty dramatic music. Of course, that managed to capture the attention of some of the group. Maehara whistled, subtly leaving him.

“Woah, I can’t afford to miss this!” Okajima stood up from his seat, made his way to the front row, and started taking pictures of the dancers.

Right when the dancers grasped the decorative torches at the sides of the stage and appeared to bring the flames to their faces, fire suddenly blasted forward. This startled Okajima quite a bit, causing him to fall on his butt. Everyone else in the room applauded.

“Woah!” Daichi said, innocently more fascinated with the fire than anything else.

“I’m having so much fun!” Kayano said, nudging Nagisa with her shoulder.

“I’m glad,” he said honestly. “Since you were so tired, I was worried that we were forcing you along with us.”

“Not at all, this is our graduation trip, after all! To be honest, I wanted to tour this place, too!”

He was really glad to hear that. With the flashy performance at an end, this time, live mood music started to play on stage. The other customers stood up and began dancing, finding the partners most of them had come with. Well, Nagisa supposed there was a romantic sound to it. Nobody was that co-ordinated, some older couples even joining in.

“…That’s so nice,” Kayano sighed.

Maehara stood up, attempting to pull Okano with him. “Hey, let’s dance.”

Okano resisted him. “No way. I can’t dance.”

“What? All you have to do is move your body like that, so dancing’s gotta be easy, right? I’ll teach you.”

“…Sure,” she gave in, nodding. She got up, then, moving against Maehara.

“See? You can do it!” He just went for it, showing her the pattern of his feet.

“Yowza! You two are hot!” Muramatsu teased easily.

Nagisa couldn’t help but feel slightly astonished, at how good Maehara was. “That’s Maehara kun for you. He’s polished his motor skills even further.”

“Hey,” Maehara looked over his shoulder, “everyone else should dance, too! Just rock your bodies to the music, and you’ll look alright!”

Begrudgingly, a few of them got up, and did actually join in. Nagisa had no real desire to do so, but they looked like they were having fun. Since he was the apple of most of their eyes, Daichi was stolen by a group of his classmates, but he didn’t seem to mind, attempting to copy the dance with his much smaller limbs.

“D-do you want to dance, Nagisa?” Kayano asked, cheeks pink.

“Eh?” Nagisa hadn’t been expecting that, but he supposed he almost owed it to her. “Okay… sure.” He stood, then, and awkwardly tried to hold her, tough since she was taller than him in the high heels she was wearing. He did his best to mimic everyone else, though the music didn’t flow
through him so easily.

After that, they went right back to the hotel, light chatter flowing all the way. Daichi was still occupied, so Nagisa walked freely with Kayano, not getting too invested in any sort of deep conversation. When they arrived, everyone was too tired to hang around for long, so they quickly went their separate ways.

“Papa,” Daichi complained, when Karma approached him. “Don’t wanna sleep yet.”

Karma sighed, overacting it. “But I want to sleep.”

“Stay with Nakamura san!” He said proudly, looking over at her. “We playing!”

Nakamura shrugged, casually. “You never let me babysit~”

*For good reason.*

“Heh…” Karma looked over his shoulder at Nagisa. “I don’t mind, for a little while.”

Nagisa gave in. “Fine, just while we unpack and get ready for bed.”

Daichi was absolutely elated at this news, though Nagisa could tell he was going to start to get sleepy very soon. With that, Daichi went back to Nakamura and Kurahashi’s room, and Karma and Nagisa went back to their own. It was even worse than he’d thought, in such a small space, alone with Karma. Wanting to cut it as short as possible, Nagisa excused himself to the bathroom in order to change.

“You looked like you were having fun with Kayano chan,” Karma commented, once Nagisa returned in his pyjamas.

Nagisa couldn’t help but flush. “I don’t know how to dance, I probably looked stupid.”

“Why don’t you see for yourself?” Karma smirked, holding up his phone.

“Karma!” Nagisa complained. “You took photos?”

“What, you thought I’d waste this opportunity?”

Though he attempted to grab the phone from him, Nagisa was no watch for Karma’s superior height. Even when he jumped on top of the mattress, Karma simply moved back, holding the device above his head. Nagisa wasn’t really annoyed about it, it was hardly the most embarrassing photos Karma had of him. It was actually kind of fun, lunging after him in futile attempts.

Eventually, Nagisa stopped to catch his breath. “It’s not like you can dance either.”

“Sure I can,” Karma shrugged.

There was no way, unless he was referring to that arcade game. “Since when?”

Before Nagisa could defend himself from the dangerous glint in Karma’s eyes, his legs were kicked out from underneath him. Of course, Karma did quickly catch him, supporting his back into a classical dancing dip. Embarrassingly, Nagisa automatically clutched him back, afraid for a moment that he’d fall.

“Guess I’ll just have to prove it,” Karma teased, pulling him back up. “Well?” He kept one hand on Nagisa’s waist, but reached out for his hand. Nagisa decided not to immediately indulge him,
instead putting a small amount of space between them.

“W-we don’t have any music,” he tried to protest.

Bored of waiting apparently, Karma took hold of Nagisa’s hand anyway. “Do you need me to count it out?”

“No,” Nagisa turned his head to the side.

Karma took it as an invitation to hold him closer, so Nagisa’s face was pressed against his sternum. Annoyingly, Karma was a rock hard mass against him, honed muscles making him feel sturdy. Nagisa was thankful he apparently decided not to make it too complicated. In fact, they weren’t really moving, more just swaying slowly together. It wouldn’t win them any ballroom competitions, but that didn’t matter.

With the location of his ear, Nagisa could hear Karma’s steady heartbeat. It soothed him, somehow, and he found himself moving with its rhythm. Like pulling the two of them into a bubble, shielded from the rest of the world. He felt blissful. This was better than the romantic music, by any measure. With Karma, he found he didn’t need music. This was enough.

Eventually, Karma came to a stop, still holding onto him, but not actively pressing him close. This allowing Nagisa’s head some movement, he pulled back a little too, staring up at Karma. Nagisa wasn’t sure exactly what he’d expected, but all taunting was gone from his expression. Trembling a little, he let his body move as it wanted, dropping Karma’s hand to instead slide his arms up and around his neck.

Due to their height difference, Nagisa was quickly forced onto his tip toes, leaning his weight into Karma. He met him in the middle, still gripping his waist as he leaned down. Chest pounding like a bomb about to explode, Nagisa swallowed. He wanted to kiss Karma, really kiss him. For some reason, though, some hesitation he couldn’t name, he didn’t immediately slam their lips together.

It was more intimate than a kiss could ever be. Nagisa usually hated holding eye contact for such a long time, with anybody. This wasn’t so much an exception, he still felt uncomfortable. But deep down, he knew exactly why the discomfort was there, and it wasn’t just him being shy. Karma just loved to drag stuff out of him, though, the things he could hardly bring himself to admit. Honestly, Nagisa was kind of thankful for it. Soon, though, the gazing became too much. Throwing all logic away, he closed his eyes, ready to cause impact.

And then the door slammed open.

“Alright,” Nakamura said, “I’m done babysitting the kid.”

Like they’d been electrocuted, they sprung apart. Well, that was one thing solved. He was peacefully asleep in her arms, though, so Nagisa didn’t feel that guilty about keeping him up. Well, maybe a little sorry for Nakamura, after he and Karma had disappeared from the group. But she’d asked for it…

Nagisa steeled himself with a deep inhale. “Thank you,” he said, carefully taking Daichi from her. “I’m really sorry, we-“

Her eyes darted between the two of them. “Save it for the morning,” she said, with a smirk that was far too knowing, and then stepped out of the room again.

“Well,” Nagisa said quietly, laying his poor, tired, son out on one of the beds. “We should probably get some sleep too. Do you want him?”
Karma winced. “And spend the night getting kicked?”

Nagisa’s eyes narrowed. “I spent nine months getting kicked with no way of stopping it.”

“Or,” Karma didn’t seem to care. “We share and he gets the bed to himself.”

A chill went down his spine. “T-these beds are pretty small though.”

“We were fine back in your parent’s apartment,” he pointed out. “Your bed was tiny.”

“You were a lot shorter back then,” Nagisa breathed. “Goodnight, Karma.”

He climbed into bed, manoeuvring Daichi carefully so the three year old wasn’t taking up the entirety of the bed. Daichi was fast asleep, though, barely letting out more than a sigh as Nagisa secured him in his arms. It had been a while since they were like this, and it reminded Nagisa of those few times when Daichi was very young, and holding him close at night was a great comfort. Like that, he fell almost straight asleep.

Chapter End Notes

The plane thing was a direct reference to this advert https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dpbyYD-qr9A

This chapter was... long. The next may or may not be longer, who knows. Home stretch, people. Two chapters of this part remaining. I just REALLY wanna get to it lol that's why I've been writing so fast.
Nagisa woke up bleary the next morning, limbs aching from the hard work they’d done the day before. It was a different feeling, waking up in a foreign country. He’d woken up with the sun, and like usual, Karma was still deep in his sleep. Deep in his sleep and… lightly snoring. It wasn’t obnoxious or anything, but it was enough to motivate Nagisa to get up and dress himself, before tiptoeing out of the room.

Almost like she’d been waiting in ambush, Nakamura grabbed him in an almost headlock. “Morning.”

“A- morning,” Nagisa decided it was best to just let her have her way.

Her face went devilish. “I’m not letting last night go~”

Nagisa winced. “W-what about it?”


“Woah, really!?” Maehara clapped Nagisa on the back, having overheard that portion of the conversation. “ Took you long enough.”

He wanted to melt in the floor. “We’re not!”

“Oh my god,” Nakamura rolled her eyes. “Just kiss already.”

Nagisa noticed then that it wasn’t just Nakamura and Maehara confronting him, but some of the rest of their group were gathered around, and were starting to take notice. Nagisa didn’t even have it in him to have this conversation with Karma himself, let alone with a huge group of his ex classmates. But, it seemed like he was cornered.

“We’re going to separate universities,” he admitted, “so it doesn’t even matter.”

Fuwa clapped her hands together. “Sometimes the best love stories involve a degree of separation.”

“H- love?”
He was surrounded by pitiful glances.

“I mean,” Nakamura said, “it’s been kind of obvious for a while. You literally said you wanted to have more kids with him a month ago.”

Nagisa felt like he could cry. “Y-you heard that.”

Maehara winced. “We all heard it.”

That was worse, somehow, than just Karma knowing about it. Nagisa realised that they were expecting something out of him, a response or some sort of confession, but as much as he’d gone over this again and again in his head, he couldn’t think of any words to accurately explain how he actually felt.

“We,” he said, “we’ve been through this over and over. It won’t happen.”

He found himself walking up, not wanting to stick around for more conversation or the sad way they looked at him. He didn’t mean for it to come off as angry or anything, but maybe that couldn’t be helped. Suddenly, Nagisa wasn’t in a very talkative mood. But that didn’t seem to matter too much, they had a job to do now, rather than just messing around.

They spent the morning on the movie set the same as the day before. The staff were getting familiar with their presence at this point and therefore they started to gel easier as a unit. Of course, Kayano was busy preparing for her scenes. Nagisa was looking forward to seeing what this was all looked like on the big screen, when the movie was finished.

He noticed, about halfway through the day, a bunch of people were gathered around a heavy looking metal case. Nagisa couldn’t help but join them, since everyone seemed to be pretty interested. There even seemed to be a monk there, as he placed the case on the table and started to unwrap it. Carefully, he lifted up a brilliant golden Buddha statue.

“Oooh!” Nathonni said, bringing his hands together in prayer. “This Buddha statue is several hundred years old, a precious item worshipped in one of our villages. It is also considered a work of art, a national treasure of high value. Please feel the weight of this statue. It is my hope that in your acting and filming, you bring to light its profundity. Alright, let’s borrow the power of this statue and make this movie a success! You’ll be able to act realistically if you’re in front of a statue like this, right, Jerome?”

“What did you say? Do you know what happens when you make the Jerome angry?” Jerome pulled out a gun and pointed it at Nathonni.

“W-what are you doing!? Stop!”

It didn’t matter, though, because whilst a gun shot sounded out, there was no bullet. “Gotcha! It’s just a toy gun! So? Wasn’t my acting totally spot on?”

Of course, Daichi, who was tagging along like Nagisa’s shadow, looked up at the gun lovingly. “Want it…”
Jerome looked down. “What did he say?”

Nagisa winced. “Just that he wants to play with your gun.”

Nathonni laughed. “You like… bang?” He gestured the last part, with his hands.

“Yeah!” Daichi nodded enthusiastically. “S’cool.”

“In this scene,” Hazama said, “the novel states that the inside of the ruins converts into a dungeon, but that doesn’t seem like something they can make on set.”

“Yeah. They said that they’re doing the dungeon scene at the studio.”

“These days, CGI is becoming more and more common, and they can make replicas, not to mention the actors and staff would be nervous when handling something like a genuine Buddha statue, so wouldn’t you say that they’re handling this poorly?”

“There’s a lot of directors who like to stick to using the real thing. There are movies like Heaven’s Gate, where they went several billion yen over their assigned budget because they had arranged for things like genuine locomotives and silver tableware. There’s also Ask This of Rikyu, where they actually used 400-year-old tea ware designated as a national treasure, making it a very realistic but luxurious production.

“Now that you mention it, I’ve heard of horror movies that invite genuine curses. Poltergeist activity would awaken during filming, and actors would suddenly die. Maybe something abominable will occur here as well.”

“It doesn’t sound like a joke when you say it, Hazama.”

“Understand?” Nathonni cleared his throat, wanting to get back on schedule. “In this scene, Jerome and Rin reach the ruined temple after they read a clue left behind by her father. When they open the stone doors leading to the inside of the temple, they find the Buddha statue hidden within. It’s a scene where their pains are finally rewarded, so perform with emotional abundance without saying anything weird. Take one! Action!”

Of course, they acted out the scene perfectly, wandering into the temple where the authentic statue was located. Even in the raw light of day, it seemed to shine.

“This is… the Buddha statue father left behind!” Kayano acted.

“That’s amazing, damn.”

“Cut!” Nathonni yelled. “That was great! You were filled with such splendid realism!”

Kayano didn’t move from her position, though. Since they had been such close friends, Nagisa could tell that there was definitely something up with her. Kayano didn’t act like that for nothing. She continued to gaze at the statue, almost like she was transfixed by it.

“Hey, come on now, Haruna,” Jerome teased, “do you actually want that statue? If you want it as a present from me, I’ll ask someone who I can buy it from.”

“It’s different…” She said. “This one is different from the one we saw earlier.”

“…What did you say?”

“Look, the one from earlier didn’t shine like this!” She took a light that Jerome was using as a prop,
and used it to light up the statue. “It didn’t sparkle like this! It was a duller, more refined shine!”

Nagisa joined everyone else, as they gathered to have a closer look. He felt something sick rush through his blood.

“This is…” The monk lifted it up, “a fake!”

Nathonni’s face turned white. “Look for anybody suspicious who may have entered the vicinity!”

It was near pandemonium, for a few minutes. Everyone had gathered around for the scene, and were looking at each other suspiciously. This wasn’t the best way to get to the answer, Nagisa was pretty sure… Any one of them could have been involved, too. But why would they stick around? The thief was probably already gone.

A member of staff raised his hand. “I didn’t see anybody suspicious, but one of our production members has gone missing. A tall, thin person.”

“Don’t tell me,” Nathonni scrambled, “that person slipped into our staff and stole the statue? But how?”

“Nathonni, come here!” A member of staff yelled, pointing to an area of the set that appeared to be torn. “Could it be that they invaded through here to steal it?!”

“Follow that production man! And contact the local police!” Nathonni shouted, the sound echoing through the set. Immediately, the staff got in their cars, and started to driver after him.

“This isn’t the time to stand around like morons and do nothing!” Terasaka yelled. “Let’s go chase after that statue thief, too!”

Fuwa nodded, seeming a little calmer. “At a time like this, we need to figure out exactly what happened. Let’s try passing through this wall ourselves.” She walked through the damage, and apparently found what she wanted. “Look! There’s a broken tree branch hanging over the fence. Moreover, the break looks fresh. When we would play Cops and Robbers, this was one of the things Korosensei taught us about so that we wouldn’t get caught by Karasuma-sensei, right?”

“That!?”

Nagisa remembered that game. He’d been pregnant with his mobility restricted at the time, but still ended up enjoying it. Of course, Karasuma had been an incredibly overpowered, and got most of them out instantly, but it had been a lot of fun.

“Over here! Hurry! This time, we’re the cops!” Kataoka started to run.

With the memory in mind, it was like something came over Nagisa, and suddenly he was back in assassin mode. All he knew was that the thief had to be stopped, and he had the power to do it. There was only one thing… Daichi was looking kind of confused, at all the people rushing around. Fire flowed through Nagisa’s limbs. Put on too much time pressure to think about it properly, he thrust Daichi into Nathonni’s arms.

“Be good!” He yelled, running off with the others.

Kataoka started to scaled the fence that sectioned off the filming site. Within the forest, there were many brand new traces, indicating that someone had passed by. Footprints in the mud, branches broken from being stepped on, and scraped moss all told the story of a person’s passage. They were fresh enough that Nagisa was sure they couldn’t have got far.
“There’s only one set of footprints!” Fuwa shouted.

“Then, is there only one culprit?” Someone yelled back.

“I don’t know. There might be others mobilized separately from him.”

Everything aimed right ahead. Isogai quickly scaled a tree, and pointed. “There!”

They rushed up a hill, and on the other side of it, they could clearly see a man walking across it. His pace was casual, so he probably thought he had gotten away clean. However, they were quite a large group, as subtle as they were trained to be. He noticed he was being followed, and immediately took off clearly panicking.

“He ran away! Everybody, after him!” Isogai commanded.

At Isogai’s command, Okano and Kimura jumped out together, everyone else following behind them.

“I will catch you!” Kayano shouted desperately.

Suddenly, Jerome appeared, apparently following them. “This isn’t something the lead actress should have to do. The Jerome will get the statue back for you, so watch me!”

Using their honed athletic abilities, Okano and Kimura had managed to flank him, running ahead so they could wait. The man tried to turn around, but Terasaka, Isogai, and Karma had caught up behind him, blocking any way to escape. With Jerome practically skidding down the hill, the rest of them managed to surround him completely.

“What’s up with you all!?” He looked around.

“That’s the golden Buddha statue, right?” Isogai pointed to the bag he was carrying. “Please hand it over quietly.”

“Just try taking this by force. Who knows what’ll happen to the statue if you do.” The man whistled a shrill sound.

Terasaka tried to charge forwards. “This guy’s making fun of us!”

“Wait,” Isogai stopped him. “Let’s use a projectile weapon.”

“A projectile weapon? Do we even have one!?”

As if on command, Sugino used his practised throw to launch a ball right at the man, hitting him in his blind spot. Instantly, he crumpled, though he was probably unlikely to sustain a head injury from that. In order to protect the statue, Isogai managed to catch him before he hit the ground.

“Phew, it was a close call, but we’re safe.”

“That wasn’t a safe. More like a strike. am I right?” Sugino gave him a thumbs up.

Isogai carefully unwrapped the statue, confirming that it was the golden Buddha statue.

“With this, the case has been settled.” Sugino said.

Suddenly, a whistle rang out, followed by a chain of them. They’d relaxed too quickly, because they were the ones being surrounded, right then. With each whistle, the numbers of people
surrounding them increased rapidly. Among them was the stunt man they’d caught a glimpse of, the day before.

“All of you!” He yelled. “If you value your lives, put the statue on the ground!”

“Rawan!” Jerome replied desperately. “Just who are you!?”

“We’re a gang of bandits so notorious that the people of this country tremble upon hearing our name, the ‘Shishidan!’”

“There’s this many people involved!?”

Terasaka groaned. “This has become a big pain in the neck.”

“Hey, Isogai,” Karma said, nonchalant as every in the face of such danger. “Doesn’t this situation seem kinda familiar?”

“The pole-toppling match at the sports festival!” He realised.

“We’re greatly outnumbered, so once they have us closed off, it’s all over. First, we have to break through.”

“Then, I’ll start by running with the statue, so anybody who’s confident in their speed should follow me! We’ll use our speed to throw off our opponents and cause confusion. Those guys will probably go after me, so those who aren’t confident in their speed should separate from me and let those at the filming site know about the bandits!”

“Okay!”

Isogai took off in an instant, breaking out from their trap by jumping over one of their shoulders. A group of the most mobile of them followed suit. After they had gone, Muramatsu and Yoshida followed, and then Terasaka and Isogai, seemingly having fun rather than being stressed. It seemed that even though it had been years, they hadn’t lost any of their skill.

“Catch the one holding the statue!” The stunt man, Rawan, shouted.

They ran after Isogai, and Nagisa took that as his cue to follow, along with Kayano and Karma. They rushed into the forest, using the trees for cover much like they had back on the mountain that hosted their 3E classroom. It was surprising, how Nagisa’s muscles hadn’t forgotten, swinging from branch to branch as easy as walking.

The bandits hurriedly pursued Isogai, but Isogai, having run into the forest, climbed the trees, jumping from branch to branch and quickly disappearing from the enemy’s view. The statue was passed back and forth between Class E, making the location of the statue even more transient and perplexing to the thieves.

“Heeey, wait for me!” Jerome complained. “You’re too fast, Haruna!”

“If you can’t follow me, go back alone!” She snapped.

“Karma!” Isogai shouted, now without the bag.

“What happened to the statue?”

“I passed it to Kimura earlier. I was hoping to confuse the enemy by alternating who held it, but those guys have cornered us carefully. There’s just too many over there. They’re slowly narrowing
Nagisa caught sight of something, then, some kind of weird energy. He knew this was a very important and crucial situation, but it seemed to call out to him. Like he was possessed, Nagisa ended up following it, slipping into the trees. What he saw then was real genuine ruins, rather than the ones built fake for purpose.

“Nagisa?” Karma was calling out. “Where did you go?” Eventually, he found him. “What happened?”

“Are these… ruins?” Nagisa stared in awe. They were so eroded they were practically a part of the forest itself, ruined pillars painted with gods. “Amazing…” He started to walk towards it, until he noticed a weird kind of face, one that kind of looked like… “Eh? …Korosensei?”

“What the heck is that!?” Karma exclaimed, a little taken aback.

“You can’t just arbitrarily become part of the ruins,” Kayano commented, looking admirably at the tower.

“Korosensei…” Karma sighed. “I guess he visited places like this, too.”

He walked around the relics, and then noticed a weird, dome like objected hidden behind the tower. It only took him a few moments before he realised it was shaped just like Korosensei’s face. And it was gigantic, big enough to be a planetarium, even. He got the feeling it might have been grand, once, but after years it had become dirty and covered in plants and erosion. Looking at it closer, he realised one of the teeth doubled as a door.

“Hey, isn’t this place suspicious?” Jerome called out. “Wouldn’t it be better if you didn’t go in?”

He didn’t care that much about Jerome, of course.

He entered cautiously, fumbling around for a light switch. It looked like… a normal house. They stepped inside, which revealed a pretty large interior. There were a bunch of things scattered all over the floor, but also normal furniture like a TV and coffee table, though it was all completely coated in dust after being neglected.

Nagisa stepped wrong, accidentally stepping on a whoopee cushion.

“He had things like this?”

“Over here, too!” Kayano produced what looked like a machine gun, but actually turned out to be a water gun.

“Aah, this is totally the room of an absolutely no good human being.” Karma tossed a bag of sweets.

“In other words,” Nagisa realised, “this building is one of Korosensei’s hideouts?”

“Probably… It looks like sensei had rest stops all around the world.”

“Although, for a hideout, isn’t the design too self-assertive? It’s kind of painful. Instead of a ‘painful car’, it’s a ‘painful house’.” Karma joked.

Nagisa couldn’t help but laugh, overwhelmed by memories. “You’re right.”
Isogai and the others caught up with them, then. “Woah, what’s up with this room?”

“His material desires shine through here, huh?”

“Is this a hideout for when he wants to be a good-for-nothing? Geez, he’s so careless!”

“This is so nostalgic.”

Everyone, it seemed, was overwhelmed. Of course, coming on this trip, nobody had been expecting to hear much other than their own memories about Korosensei. To find a place like this, it was almost as if he wasn’t really gone. That was a bittersweet thought.

While everyone was still in astonishment, Okajima stared down with a sharp eye a corridor which continued to the back. “How divine…”

“Everyone, come here!” Kataoka called out.

They all gathered around the photo wall she was looking at. It was absolutely plastered with life sized photos of them, all aiming their guns at Korosensei. They must have been taken quite early in the year, based on the size of Nagisa’s stomach.

“This was…when we were all aiming at Korosensei.”

“Yeah… I didn’t know he took a picture of that.”

Karma breathed heavily. “This isn’t the time to be standing around immersed in our memories. It’s good that we were able to hide here, but sooner or later the bandits will find this place and attack. Let’s look for something we can use to oppose them.”

“You say that, but there’s nothing but junk here…” Kataoka voiced.

“That’s not the case, you know?” He replied, picking up a toy slot machine. “There’s a lot of things we can use.” He caught a mouse and held it in his hand. “There’s a lot of bandits, and I can only come up with so many ideas. You all think of something, too.”

“Yeah!”

Together, they all set to work in trying to find something, anything, that would help them in this situation. The incredibly valuable statue was placed down amongst the junk somewhere, which maybe they’d regret. Unfortunately, there wasn’t much that useful looking, as much as he tried to look at anything resourcefully. The best thing anyone could find was some rope, to set a sort of trap. They made other preparations based on their surroundings, though, more traps.

With that set, Kimura took the bag, and with a few of the others set out to lure the bandits into being trapped. Without a lot to do in that time, all he could do was wait and listen, and hope that everything was going okay. They turned off the lights, hoping to confuse the enemy, and took some of the fake machine guns.

“I won’t let you get away!!” They heard, as Kimura rushed back in.

The thieves chased after him, and stated to fumble. “Turn on the lights!”

“Ouch!”

“Hey! Hasn’t somebody found the lights yet!?”
Just like that, there was the sound of something rupturing. Based on their sounds of anguish, just as one of the bandits yelled this out, sounds of something rupturing began to go off here and there. By the cries of anguish, Nagisa guessed it as the water balloons Karma had mixed with hot chilis. Not wanting to waste the opportunity, they started pelting them with more of the balloons.

“Are you making fun of us, you damn brats!? The water’s coming from over there! Charge!” Rawan yelled.

It was about then that they managed to figure out where the light switch was. Once it snapped on, of course, their group was ready for them. They’d dragged the panels of their class holding the guns around the area, but the thieves didn’t necessarily know that. They jerked into each other, in the same space. Since they piled up, they were in the perfect position to fall straight into the pitfall they’d created, effectively trapping them.

“It’s a trap!”

Just like that, they fell into the bottom of the pit.

“We did it!”

“Alright!”

People started to cheer.

“No matter how you look at it, this has to be a hole Korosensei used in his simulations to devise countermeasures against pitfalls, huh?” Isogai said.

Kataoka nodded. “Korosensei was weak against pitfalls, wasn’t he?”

“Putting that panel with those photos of all of us around this hole really makes you feel like you’re being aimed at, too!”

“So Korosensei used measures as desperate as this. It’s no wonder we were almost unable to kill him.”

“But to think we’d find traces of Korosensei at a time like this…” Nagisa said, still amazed at it all himself. “This brings back all sorts of memories from that class, right, Kayano?” She’d been standing right next to him, but there was no reply. “Kayano?”

“Nagi-“

At the sound of his name, he turned around sharply. “Kayano?!“

He realised, right then, that her voice had been cut off midsentence. Horror shot through his bones, and his feet took off, immediately heading in the direction of the voice. It seemed that Rawan had managed to escape the fall, and held Kayano with another one of his minions, a sword in his hand. A sword that looked incredibly real and dangerous.

“Kayano!”

“I’d love to kill her,” Rawan sneered, “but I’ll forgive all of you if you give me that golden statue!”

“No!” Kayano shouted, trying to escape. “You can’t hand over the statue! I’m fine, so just finish him off!”
That only prompted him to start strangling her. “Hand over the statue or I’ll cut off her head!”

This situation felt frighteningly familiar. It was like he was shot back to years ago, when he was on that helicopter pad with Takaoka, left alone to fight whilst his friends could only watch in horror. Except, that time, Nagisa had gone voluntarily. He’d been armed. There was no way Kayano could easily fight back, from this, and Nagisa wasn’t about to let anything bad happen to her.

“Isogai-kun…” Nagisa turned over his shoulder, “I’m sorry, but please hand him the statue.”

“There’s no need to apologize, Nagisa. There’s no other choice,” he handed over the bag.

Tentatively, Nagisa took a step forward, presenting it. “With this, will you please relea-“

Before he could even finish his sentence, a kick came to his face, so fast he couldn’t defend from it. Rawan had used the full force of his body, and it was hard, immediately knocking Nagisa’s much smaller body down into the dirt. He heard screams, but his ears were ringing, his body fighting not to lose consciousness. He tried to raise his own head, but it was significantly hard.

One eye peeled open, to see Kayano struggling as they tried to lead her away. A sword was now directly held to her throat, and Nagisa instinctively knew he needed to protect her, somehow. He saw Jerome try to pursue them, but get kicked himself. Nagisa tried to force his eyes to focus, noticing that Jerome actually was out cold.

“W…ait…” He tried, finally finding the adrenaline to lift his head.

“Nagisa, don’t come any closer!” Kayano shouted. “I can get myself out of this!”

That was typical of Kayano, even though he knew it was a direct lie. There was very little chance of her being able to get out of this. She had always liked killing for herself, back in their classroom, and whilst she was happy to help others, she didn’t like accepting any in return. Even then, he could tell she didn’t want to burden them, despite the possibility of actually being killed right then and there. But Nagisa refused to just leave her behind.

Right then, he felt a comfortable presence beside him, and he instinctively reached out for it. Limbs shaking, he somehow managed to find the strength to stand upright, though he was still leaning. Karma grabbed a hold of him, eyes not hiding the concern, but Nagisa forced himself to look away. Saving Kayano was much more important than him.

“Hey, do you think you can escape safely like that?” Karma called out, as the minions were starting to make their escape through the jungle. “Unless you release her, we’ll follow you wherever you go, and if that happens, we’ll expose your secret hideout, you know?”

“Is he planning to make his escape using a helicopter!?” Isogai pointed, and sure enough, the sound was almost deafening as it appeared. They couldn’t get too close to Rawan to try to stop him either, out of fear of what he’d do to Kayano. A rope ladder dropped from the sky.

Karma’s tone remained calm. “There’ll be a gap in his defences when he carries Kayano up the ladder. Let’s use that chance to attack!”

Going straight into commander mode, Karma started to give out instructions, but Nagisa already knew what he’d have to do. No running in without thinking, no attempts at reason. Nagisa would have to use his true talents. So, he lowered his head, staring down Rawan like prey as he waited.

One of Rawan’s minions picked Kayano up over his shoulder and started to climb the rope ladder, one step at a time. Rawan followed, directing his sword at them all. Of course, there was nothing
they could do right then. Approaching the helicopter carelessly would only spell more trouble.

“Rise!” Rawan commanded.

But they were ready. “Itona!”

“Okay!”

Isogai turned his back toward the ladder, put his hands together, and waited for Itona. Itona sprinted, using Isogai’s hands as a stepping stone. Like he weighed nothing, Isogai tossed Itona into the air. He flew like a missile, jumping over Rawan and reaching below his minion’s feet. He tried to grab him but missed, though that still meant there was a gap created, due to their shock.

“Now!” Yoshida and Muramatsu charged, managing to grab onto Rawan’s feet.

Okano jumped off Maehara’s back. “Give Kayano back!”

He was quick to try and kick her off, but in the commotion, he couldn’t handle her precise skill and hang on at the same time. As he fell, he dropped the bag containing the Buddha statue, which Okajima dove for, managing to protect before it broke.

“You shitty brats!” He stood. “Have you come to have a death match with me!?"

He tried to take a stance with his sword, but Kataoka was quicker, kicking it from his hand in a quick and fluid disarmament. It clattered onto stone, whilst Terasaka took the opportunity to tackle him to the ground. Karma was ready for him, his foot right over his head.

“Too bad. An assassin kills his opponent before bothering with a death match.” He kicked him, knocking him out.

Nagisa didn’t have time to worry about that, though, not with Kayano still in danger. He saw his chance and jumped into the ladder. With his weight, he managed to get the ladder to swing wildly, enough to distract the guy carrying Kayano. Sugino followed up by launching a stone at the guy’s head, causing him to relax his grip on Kayano’s body.

“Kayano, get away!” Nagisa shouted.

Kayano twisted her body under her restraints, slipping out of the subordinate’s arms. She shot Nagisa a look, and Nagisa realised what she was going to do. She closed her eyes, jumping out blindly. Nagisa had no choice, no time to think, but to jump out too, trying his best to catch her. He got the positioning right, managing to catch her in his arms, but they tumbled onto the ground. Above them, the helicopter swung out, crashing into a tree.

He blinked, in a daze with Kayano’s body on top of his. “I’m sorry,” he smiled bitterly, “I wasn’t able to catch you properly.”

Kayano shook her head. “No, I wouldn’t say that at all!”

“Are you injured?” He looked her over. “Did anything get hit?”

“I’m alright. I’ve trained myself for things like this.”

Everyone rushed over, cheering. “Amazing!”

“That just now was straight out of a Hollywood movie!”
Nagisa found himself being jostled, whilst the others worked on freeing Kayano from her restraints. Everyone took turns in hugging her, happy that she hadn’t been hurt during that entire ordeal. Nagisa turned over his shoulder, his body incredibly strained, and smiled at Karma. Karma hadn’t run over to Kayano yet, instead looking at him with an odd, low expression.

But, whilst they relaxed, Nagisa sensed a sudden aura of bloodlust. He turned back, to find that Rawan had woken up again, and this time stared at them all with a deafening type of rage. So he wasn’t going to go down easy, even after so clearly losing. There was only one thing he could do, then. Nagisa picked up the sword he’d dropped, and got into position.

“Know your place!” Rawan shouted.

Nagisa could feel his anger in waves, so loud and obnoxious. It would make this easier, though. He paused for just a moment, allowing his heartbeat to match up with Rawan’s wavelength, right as it reached his peak. Nagisa walked slowly, observing the way Rawan looked like he was going to make a break for it, until he was close enough, instantly dropping the sword. His eyes followed the sword, creating the gap in his consciousness that Nagisa needed to clap, right in front of his eyes.

It had been a while since Nagisa used that move, though. He forgot just how quick it was, cutting his brain off completely. Nagisa also forgot that with that, his opponent had lost the ability to stand upright. He tried to dodge, but didn’t manage it in time, and suddenly he was smothered by Rawan’s large and petrified body.

“Nagisa, Nagisa!” The others called, doing their best to lug the man off him, restraining him properly this time.

Kayano approached him. “Nagisa!! Are you okay!!”

He wheezed, lugs burning with effort. “Ugh, to make a blunder like that at the very last moment… I’m sloppy.”

“It was all thoroughly recorded with 8k resolution,” Ritsu said cheerfully, from Kataoka’s pocket. “Nagisa kun, I’m sorry, but there’s no take-two.”

“Hey!” Muramatsu called out. “The Buddha statue’s also in one piece!”

“Thank goodness,” Yoshida sighed, “if its neck or something had broken, we would’ve received divine punishment!”

Isogai clapped his hands together. “I’m so glad we were all able to kill together again after so many years!”

“Thank you for saving me,” Kayano said, a little gentler.

“You don’t need to thank me,” Nagisa winced. “I can’t do things perfectly like Korosensei yet.”

“That’s not true,” Kayano whispered, barely there.

Isogai cleared his throat. “Let’s wait for the local police to get here, then we’ll return to the set!”

With everyone in agreement, they relaxed together, celebrating their victory. Nagisa wanted to join in, but the adrenaline rush that had even kept him conscious was going to wear out, he was sure, and then he’d just crash. However, before he had the chance to even sit down and catch his breath, there was an insistent hand attached to his wrist.
Karma maintained the same facial expression as earlier, though there was something determined in his eyes as he half dragged Nagisa off with him. Not that Nagisa had the strength to resist, anymore. He didn’t stop until they were well out of eye or earshot, a little deeper into the jungle. Nagisa was going to question what he was doing, but then Karma pushed him up against a tree, pinning the wrist above his head.

“I’m sorry,” was all he said, before planting a rough kiss on Nagisa’s lips.

Of all the things Nagisa had been expecting, it wasn’t that. His back trapped against the rough bark, Nagisa used it for leverage, leaning up to meet him. What struck him was Karma’s scent, so clearly displaying that he was turned on. Nagisa couldn’t help but let his eyes flutter closed, melting into the way Karma held him, meeting him blow for blow.

Even when they had to breathe, Karma went for his neck, peppering kisses and bites everywhere he went. Nagisa let him do it, even tilting his head to give him more room, hands clutching at his shoulders. He held back the moans and gasps that threatened to come out, instead just breathing heavily as heat burned through his body.

Karma released his arm, then, using his now free hand to thumb at Nagisa’s bottom lip. His mind was spinning, but a part of Nagisa started to question where this was coming from, and why. Kisses with Karma had always been so complicated… And this… They kissed again, and his brain short circuited, so he decided that the questions could come later.

A sharp sound like the snap of a twig was the only thing that brought him out of it. He pushed Karma off gently, looking around. Though, nobody was immediately standing there, and he’d been a bit preoccupied to hear actual footsteps. Karma looked around, too, though he didn’t seem to have heard anything.

“Scared of the animals?” Karma said teasingly.

It was… strange. “I-I think we should go back now.”

What else was he supposed to say, exactly? With a bit of space between their bodies, Nagisa’s rationality returned. They… probably shouldn’t have done that. Now what? There was a lot of buzz, though, amongst the friends that hadn’t noticed they were gone. It wasn’t so long until the police arrived, and they were being driven back to the movie set.


He rushed back over to Nathonni, grabbing a hold of the clapperboard. “Lights, camera, action,” he recited, in highly accented English.

Had Nagisa… disturbed a famous director… by leaving him with his son?

“He was no trouble,” Nathonni said, as though Nagisa had said it out loud. “I’m just glad you found the thief and everyone’s okay. Alright!” He addressed everyone. “I know it’s been stressful but we’re still on a tight schedule. Let’s do our best to get these scenes finished!”
“One problem, Director!” The on-sight medic pointed out. “Jerome isn’t going to well enough for any action sequences, it looks like he got knocked out pretty badly.”

Nathonni ran a hand down his face, and then looked Karma up and down. “You’re about the same height and build, and we’re down a stuntman... Do you think you could be his body double for a few action scenes? Call it repayment for the child care.”

Like he’d been electrocuted, Karma nodded firmly, though Nagisa could tell the gears of his mind were turning rapid fire. He wasn’t sure if he also felt bad about leaving Daichi, but to be asked to be in a major movie, by his favourite director no less. It was a wonder Karma wasn’t screaming like a fangirl or something.

“Did you have any lunch while we were gone?” Nagisa asked Daichi, since Karma was in a daze. He shrugged. “Nope.”

Nagisa wasn’t letting him out of his sight for the rest of the day at least. So, whilst everyone got busy in setting up for the big action scenes, Nagisa took Daichi off to go get food. There wouldn’t be that much for him to do, anyway, since most of it involved heavy lifting. Once again, thankfully, Daichi was fascinated by the new options, eating up everything Nagisa offered to him.

“Hey, Nagisa,” Sugino said, sitting down opposite him with some food. “Daichan.”

“He-ow,” Daichi said, mouth stuffed full.

Nagisa smiled. “That was a pretty impressive throw back there.”

“Thanks,” he beamed, but then his face went uncharacteristically serious. “Do you mind if we talk?”

They were already talking, so Nagisa had to assume he meant without the presence of Daichi. But, a twist of guilt returned, at the idea of leaving Daichi with anyone else. The last thing he wanted to become was a distant parent, especially considering the context of what was going to happen after they returned from this trip.

“What about?” Nagisa decided the best way was to switch to English.

Sugino swallowed. “About what I saw earlier.”

“Daddy,” Daichi complained, “can I go play?”

Nagisa looked around the area. “…Only where I can see you.”

“I,” Sugino switched back to Japanese when Daichi couldn’t hear, “what’s happening between you and Karma?”

“N-nothing,” Nagisa turned his head away.

“I’m sorry,” he looked a little awkward. “I wanted to find you earlier in the jungle, to see if you were okay, and then I saw-“

Nagisa jolted, not wanting him to let him finish that sentence. “We were just-!”

“If you think Karma’s going to make you happy,” Sugino said carefully, “then I’ll be happy too.”

He sighed, feeling uneasy. “But you don’t think he would?”
Sugino’s eyes closed. “I started to consider Karma a friend, back when we were in class together. I don’t know, Nagisa. Back then, he joined our class, and then you were pregnant pretty soon after that. There wasn’t a lot of time to think about it. I’ll admit, his… personality used to make me wary, but I can see there’s more than just what he puts out. There has to be something to love there, right?”

“Love’s a strong word,” Nagisa said, looking up into the sun. “We used to argue about everything, and we don’t talk about the important stuff… I really don’t think it matters, anyway, in just a few days we won’t be able to see each other so often.”

“But earlier?”

He winced. “It’s like…” Nagisa didn’t even know how to word it. “It’s like I’m playing baseball, and I hit a really great shot that looks like it could be a home run. So I start running, but as I get closer, I can’t stop thinking that someone could sneak up and get me out at any moment, when I’m not looking, and by the time I get to third base, I have to stop because I’m so worried about making a fool of my self in even trying to make it all the way.”

Sugino nodded. “I think I understood that.” He held up a finger. “But, you’re forgetting one thing. You can wait at third base, but, you’ll still have to run for it eventually. It doesn’t make a difference to the score, so you may as well just go for it when you can, right?”

That was… as close to a blessing as possible. It was the kind of advice that would have been useful maybe a year ago, or even before that. Right now, it felt like it was too late. If Nagisa told Karma how he felt in undeniable words, then it would only make things harder and more complicated. But, he supposed the metaphor could apply to other elements, too.

After he was done with lunch, Nagisa went back towards the set, where his friends were preparing. On top of Karma being given a role, a few of his more athletic friends had been given roles as ninjas, for a chase scene. Admittedly, they looked really cool in their costumes, but Karma definitely looked the best in whatever get up he’d been dressed in.

“We’ll start filming in 10 minutes! Hurry it up with your preparations!” Nathonni said through his megaphone.

“Westerners really like having ninjas appear for no reason, huh~” Karma commented. “But if it’s that director, it may end up being interesting after all, so I’m looking forward to this, too.”

Maehara stood up. “I’m jealous of you, Karma. If word got out that you did the stunts for Jerome the heartthrob, you’d be soooo popular with the girls!”

“Karma,” Nagisa started, able to see right through his heart, “you’re really happy, aren’t you? Even if you try to hide it, I can still tell.”

He grinned. “Not really.”

“Okay, take-one! Action!”

“Woah! Ninjas!” Daichi exclaimed to Nagisa, as the scene played out before them. Karma and Kayano were running away, pursued closely by the ‘ninjas’. It looked impressive in person, but he could only imagine it would look amazing as a film, too.

“Cut! Magnificent! That was even better than I had imagined!” Nathonni called in excitement. “But why in the world are you all so physically capable?”
“Our PE teacher in middle school was super strict! If you ever saw his superhuman moves, you’d totally offer him a job,” Kurahashi answered proudly.

Nagisa had resolved to not leave Daichi again, but then it came to the kiss scene. And Nagisa really, really, didn’t want to watch it again. That Jerome was creepy! Even if it was her job, the idea of Kayano having to kiss someone who looked at her like that… Besides, his own lips were still tingling. Unfortunately, it didn’t look like Daichi was going anywhere, fascinated by the filming. Nagisa didn’t want to ruin that joy for him, so he silently distanced himself.

“Nagisa, where are you going?” Karma caught him, because of course he did. “The filming site is that way.”

“I was thinking that I should try not to disturb Kayano.”

“You’re the one who said that Kayano’s blade isn’t so fragile,” he pointed out. “What are you going to do if you don’t put your faith in her here?”

Nagisa swallowed. “Also, when I watch Kayano’s kiss scene with Jerome, I feel really anxious.”

“Ooh? And why is that?”

“Because of her work, Kayano’s in a frightening world where it’s impossible to know just what might happen, right?”

“Well…” Karma didn’t seem so sure, “I guess.”

“If by chance she were to get involved with a lewd beast like that and have her career as an actress adversely affected in the future… when I imagine such a thing, supporting her in person feels so complicated.”

Karma burst out laughing, even though he was being serious! “Nagisa, it’s not that you like Kayano, is it?”

He spluttered. “What?”

“What?” Karma repeated. “You’ve always been close.”

“B-but-“ Nagisa didn’t even know how to feel about this, considering Karma had had his tongue in his mouth just a couple of hours ago. “I like Kayano like a friend.”

“…Does that mean you’re admitting to liking someone?”

Nagisa didn’t want to have this conversation, especially if Karma was in this kind of a mood.

“Nagisa!” His eyes lit up, and he poked him in the cheek. “Can I guess?”

“You can try,” he said, begrudgingly.

He thought for a moment. “Hmm, does their name begin with ‘Ka’?”

“T-that could apply to a lot of people,” Nagisa answered, feeling a lot younger than he was, when his cheeks went a little people.

Karma clapped triumphantly. “Karasuma sensei?!”

“Ew!”
“Look,” Karma said, a little more serious, “instead of chatting here, let’s go watch her. If you’re going to support her, you have to watch her properly with your own eyes.”

Nagisa didn’t have a choice, in the end, since Karma grabbed his shoulders and physically steered him along. At the filming site, Kayano and Jerome were already standing in position, though she looked pretty nervous. Jerome, meanwhile, smirked.

“Action!”

“You’re only in it for the money!” Kayano said confidently, repeating her lines.

“Yeah. I do love money. But you know, there are other things I love besides money!”

“Like what!?”

“You.” Jerome grabbed her by the shoulders and

What Nagisa hadn’t been expecting to see was Kayano’s hand, raised perfectly to slap him. He looked stunned, but then she moved in, kissing the cheek she’d just hit.

“Don’t just steal my lips as you please! With this, we’re even.” She smiled, but Jerome seemed to have forgotten they were in the middle of a scene. “Hey, don’t space out on me! We need to go retrieve my father’s Buddha statue!”

“Cut!” Nathonni exclaimed. “Haruna, your ad-lib was the best!”

Jerome was poised to complain, though. “D-director! Doesn’t this totally go against the script!?”

“Yup, it does. Haruna proposed the idea to me, telling me, ‘Rin is a determined, unyielding character, so having her be swayed by a single kiss from a man is way too simplistic. I want to add to this scene.’ However, never in my wildest dreams did I think that suddenly slapping you would be her ad-lib! I’m in awe!”

“Wai- but you treated my ad-libs like a joke!” He stopped, like he was about to go into a Daichi level temper tantrum. “Director, you’re laughing way too much!”

“Jerome, your talent is in your reactions to other people’s ad-libs. You can check the video we recorded just now. Your expression is first-class, which maximizes the charm of your character.”

Like that, the day was a wrap, and they went back to wait for Kayano, once she was allowed off for the day. Nagisa released his breath, realising it hadn’t been that bad at all. Kayano had definitely held her own, so he felt a little stupid for worrying. Of course, once they saw her, she was circled by various praise.

“It’s a common thing for screenplays based on great novels to lay down such undisguised opportunism,” Hazama said. “Even when the original novel isn’t a love story, they employ cheap developments such as that. In the original novel, the charm of Rin’s character is supposed to be her unshakable, strong heart.”

Fuwa nodded. “And that’s precisely why it’s better to make use of her self-assured character! I told the director that when we were eating.”

“The director didn’t take it as bad as I thought he would. It sounds like the producers were pushing for it since it was written by a screenwriter they had sponsored, but it seems he was unsatisfied with the script. Right, Mimura?”
“Yup. As the director, changing the script is easy if he gets onboard with Kayano’s ad-lib. In
Hollywood, it’s fine if the final product takes a 180 degree turn by the time filming is complete
and editing begins.”

Kayano smiled. “So, taking the director’s responses to three different people as a hint, I decided to
try acting the way you saw earlier. I wasn’t sure if he was going to give me the okay, though.” She
came over to him, then, and Nagisa gulped before she even opened her mouth. “Nagisa! What did
you think about my acting!?"

He needed to be honest. “It was amazing. Maybe I’m just stating the obvious, but… the one
standing there was Rin, not Kayano. You kissed with Rin’s heart and words, then returned to being
the usual Kayano. I guess that’s what acting is.”

“It depends on the actor, but I leave my role behind the second I hear the word ‘cut’. After all, the
eyeryday me is the everyday me! I don’t want to take my work home with me.”

“So,” Nakamura interrupted, “how was Jerome’s kiss? Was it good? Was it, was it?”

“Hmmm, I guess it’s because I’ve felt Bitch Sensei’s kisses, but I thought it was nothing special.”

“Ooh~ After facing off against a Hollywood star, our Kayano has said it herself!” Nakamura
laughed.

Karma approached them casually. “And yet Nagisa was so worried that you’d go all lovey-dovey
over Jerome’s kissing technique~”

“Wai- Karma!”

Kayano turned to him. “You’re horrible! You thought I’d brainlessly get hooked by a goofy
showoff like that!?”

“I’m sorry, I’m sorry!”

Everyone turned to him at once.

“Nagisa, go apologize!”

“You’re treating Kayano like a slut!”

“I’m really sorry!” He bowed his head.

She smiled as though she wasn’t truly bothered. “Let’s go get dinner again tonight, and you can
make it up to me.”

So, once she was ready, they went out once again. This time, instead of the boats, they ended up in
the first restaurant they could find big enough to accommodate them all, in the middle of town.
With nothing looming over them anymore, everyone finally relaxed and started to have a really
good time with each other.

It had been a long day for Daichi again, with no nap this time, so he fell asleep towards the end of
the evening festivities. Karma, the strongest of the two of them, carried him back, as they had to
excuse themselves from the rest of the group a tiny bit earlier to make it back to the hotel. With the
fragmented moonlight above them, it seemed like a good time to talk, but neither of them said a
word, settling Daichi down in bed.
He looked so peaceful, like that, his nose twitching a little. Honestly, it didn’t matter how long it had been, his son’s existence took his breath away sometimes. He could stand there and watch him like that, for years at a time probably. However, right then, Karma slipped out to the balcony that was attached to their room, stretching out in the summer heat.

“You have bruises,” Karma said, when Nagisa came out to join him.

He winced. “I guess he did get me pretty hard.”

A slight smile played across his lips. “You beat him pretty easily, when it came down to it.

And a strike of stupidity came across Nagisa’s mind. What happened in a foreign country, so far away from their home, could easily stay there. These last couple of days had been so distant from reality, so dream like, that Nagisa’s sense of self control was shattering. He couldn’t help but think about the way Karma had looked at him earlier, so much fire and brimstone and everything.

“Nagi-“

Nagisa raised himself up onto his tip toes, pressing his lips against Karma’s. It was gentle, innocent, and only lasted a few seconds, but Nagisa’s heart soared out of his chest. He fell back down, rolling back onto the flats of his feet. For once, it didn’t feel dramatic or heavy or anything like that, instead it was as natural as breathing.

Karma gulped. “What was that for?”

He had it in him to smile, though he couldn’t muster up a verbal reason. The only thing Nagisa could think of went right back to love, and honestly, it seemed cruel to say something like that. On both of them. Not when they had to separate, in just a few short days. On the other hand, though, Nagisa found it easier to let go nowadays. With the future standing a firm iron wall between them, so set and definite, there was less ‘what if’s. It made every fleeting moment less tough to accept, anyway.

“We were interrupted earlier,” Nagisa settled on, still drawing his eyes away at saying such a thing, cheeks heating.

“I thought that was a heat of the moment kind of thing,” Karma said, a little shaky.

Nagisa’s eyes snapped back. Instead of arguing with him, he reinitiated the kiss, making a point of making it more definite this time. Karma met him properly, and they melted together like they always had. At least here, there was nothing nasty beneath the surface of it, nothing in particular they were doing this to avoid saying. But yet, so much…

Though, as it naturally heated up, the difference in their heights got a little frustrating. Nagisa was a little confused, when he felt Karma’s hands slide down to his back all the way to his butt in a very purposeful way, until he got the idea. As well as he could from that position, he jumped, automatically wrapping his legs around Karma’s hips as he was caught. Karma didn’t hold him like that for long, though, depositing most of his weight on top of the balcony rail.

“Don’t let me fall,” Nagisa detached from him to say, and also catch his breath. A dark thrill raced through his nerves.

Karma’s free hand cupped his cheek. “I would never.”

It didn’t get more passionate that that, not after such a long day, but this was somehow better. With nothing to fight over, and nothing to hold him back really, Nagisa could concentrate on the slow
slide of their lips together, the press of Karma’s pounding chest against his, and it made him feel dizzy. A good kind of dizzy, though, because like Karma said, he was secure in the knowledge he wouldn’t fall.

Chapter End Notes

Neither of those kisses were in the original plan whoops.

The next chapter won't be nearly as quick, but I hope you had fun reading these korotan D bits!
And then they said goodbye

nearly 7000 words and there's barely any dialogue

He’d spent months preparing for this, but the reality was somehow worse than he’d imagined it to be. Putting off as long as they could, they were visiting Nagisa’s parents. And Daichi just saw it as another sleepover, which he’d been having frequently ever since this was decided officially. Honestly, he really didn’t seem to mind it, and Nagisa’s parents always reported that he’d been good as gold.

Maybe it was selfish upset, then. He kept trying to tell himself that it really was only just for a couple of days, and he could come see Daichi at any time. Any time, but this felt so permanent… Nagisa let his eyes fall closed, for just a second. Everything was going to be okay, it had to be, this was just the hardest part. The impossible part.

Daichi was leaning on him innocently, in his own little world. It was everything Nagisa could do not to fuss over him too much, since that would likely be more stressful for everyone. Sitting in his parent’s living room, nobody really said much about the impending situation, for a while just wordlessly existing.

He hummed. “Want sushi.”

Nagisa blinked out of his daze. “Oh, you’re hungry?”

“I’m sure we can go out for some tomorrow,” Nagisa’s father said.

Tomorrow, when he’d have to be on the way to university. They all knew this was the best way of doing things, but Nagisa would have preferred to have him till the last second. It seemed worse, though, to let him experience the last minute stress of moving without really understanding why. Nagisa, too, hated to see the apartment packed up.

His mother coughed suggestively, looking towards the clock.

Nagisa’s throat closed up and he nodded, standing up. *It’s not permanent*, he reminded himself, he was planning to talk to him every day, and see him as often as possible. It would be fine, but Nagisa didn’t feel fine. He bent down to Daichi, hugging him closer than he usually would. But, this was a pretty important hug.

“I’ll see you really soon, okay?” Nagisa choked up.
Daichi looked up, unbothered. “Bye bye.”

He stepped back, letting Karma say his own goodbye. Nagisa didn’t hear what he said, but Daichi nodded with weird kind of sincerity, although Nagisa knew there was no way he could understand the full implications of this. Wanting to make this the least traumatic, they practically drifted out of the apartment, barely even making another sound.

It took him all of five seconds before tears blurred his vision. He didn’t exactly start to sob, he kept them at bay, but it was staring to hurt. Nagisa wanted to rush right back, because that hadn’t felt like enough, for a situation as big as this. It wasn’t an ending, he knew that, it was just another thing… Just a few days in reality. But logic could only get him so far.

“We have to go pack,” Karma said, strained.

Of course, he still wasn’t the best at the whole comfort thing. But Nagisa got the message, though. In his own way, Karma was telling him to set his sights ahead. And that was right, standing here and dwelling on the past wouldn’t do anything other than make him even more upset. It was time to hold his head up high.

There was a lot to get through, when they returned to their apartment. The apartment they’d lived in for years now. Instead of immediately focusing on his attention on packing everything up, though, he slid his fingers against his bedroom wall. He remembered the day they agreed to the place, which was a little dumb in hindsight since they’d looked nowhere else. Even if it turned out someone may or may not have been murdered, Nagisa had still liked it.

A lot had happened, right there. There were marks on the walls, a stain on the sofa that wasn’t going to come out no matter what. Even when he actually turned to packing, he noticed how many random and useless things he’d acquired over time. Sentiment started to kick in, and there wasn’t a lot he could even think about throwing away, even if he wasn’t going to be needing it at university.

In the times he hadn’t been getting along with Karma so well, he’d felt like the walls of the place were like a prison, but he could see that wasn’t really the truth. In many other ways, it felt like it had nurtured him. He wouldn’t have wanted to live anywhere else, at the very least. He was definitely going to miss it, and everything it represented.

Karma knocked at his door. “Hey, look what I found.”

Blinking up at him blearily, Nagisa saw a dusty book in his arms. “Is that-“

“Yes,” he said, flicking though the pages, “want to come take a look with me?”

Nagisa was pretty much done at that point, so he decided it could hurt to go with Karma. They sat down on the floor, since most of their furniture had already been taken away. Their 3E graduation album was somehow a lot thicker than he remembered it being. Aside from when they first received it, Nagisa hadn’t brought himself to look at it.

In control of the pages, Karma flicked at a slow enough pace, and they looked through them together. It was hard, though, to see Korosensei’s permanently smiling face now that he wasn’t with them anymore. Nagisa’s throat tightened, but there were also some nice things, fleeting memories of his classmates that he might have forgotten.

“I look so fat,” Nagisa mumbled, as they got to the latter part of the album, and therefore the year. He definitely didn’t miss looking like he’d swallowed a bowling ball all the time.

“Yes,” Karma said, “kinda.”
Nagisa nudged him, though he wasn’t so shallow to have secretly wanted Karma to tell him he was wrong or anything. He’d minded it more at the time than looking back at photos, anyway. After that, they got to when Daichi was born, a couple of photos were in the hospital when everyone had come to visit him, but mostly they were from that photo day. He’d been so small.

Nagisa frowned, one of the longer pieces of his hair had come loose from all of the work packing, and now no matter what he did it didn’t want to go back into position. This happened quite a lot, actually. Unfortunately. He sighed, annoyed, pushing it out of his eyes for the fifth time.

“Why don’t you just cut it if it bothers you that much?” Karma asked, curiously.

“Huh?”

His hair? Cut it? A couple of years ago, it was all he’d wanted to do. His hair was only long like this thanks to the way his mother used to be, and he’d spent a long time fixating on it until Kayano had tied it up for him. He wasn’t under his mother’s control anymore, but in that time he’d stopped really noticing it. When he was younger and a lot more grabby, Daichi had pulled on it a lot, and it was cute enough to stop him from wanting it off. Besides, he knew he was obviously an omega, and nobody questioned the hair length due to that. But, he hadn’t exactly come to like it ever, still cringing at the sight of it sometimes.

“R-right now?” Nagisa questioned.

Karma shrugged. “I mean, if you want to.”

He supposed nothing was stopping him, technically. Yet, oddly, he felt a bit of ingrained reluctance. It was just hair, but it had represented a lot to him. Now Karma was just reminding him, putting it back into his hands. And somehow, he felt like if he didn’t do it right then, he might not ever. For some reason, he shook a bit at the thought.

Nagisa stood up, looking around for scissors. Thankfully, they weren’t too hard to find, on top of the pile of miscellaneous things they weren’t sure the true owner of. Karma watched him curiously, not commenting when Nagisa disappeared into the bathroom. A part of Nagisa kind of wished he had, even if this felt like something he had to do on his own.

Looking in the bathroom mirror, Nagisa let his hair out of the ties that near permanently held it up, and took a thick strand between his fingers. With his reflection like that, he was almost shot right back to when he was eleven years old. The last time he seriously considered cutting his hair. He’d nearly done it, before his mother’s footsteps outside the door had spooked him. But, he wasn’t the scared child he’d been back then.

His fingers shook, where he tried to hold the scissors steady. He took a deep breath, and started to cut. The snipping noise was near deafening. Nagisa could only watch in a kind of morbid fascination as blue pooled at his feet. With his first attempt, it wasn’t even that short, but his head already felt a bit lighter. He kept going a little more confidently, and the sensation became kind of addictive, like shackles falling from his head, until just like that there wasn’t that much more to cut.

It was short, but it didn’t really look like he’d pictured. Then again, Nagisa wasn’t sure what exactly he’d pictured. He still looked mostly the same, rather than suddenly much more masculine. But, he didn’t dislike it either. It was a part of it, definitely, but it was right then that Nagisa realised that just maybe, his hair hadn’t been the only thing making him so insecure for so long. Time to take a step forward.
“Um-“ Nagisa announced his presence a little awkwardly.

Karma’s eyes raked over him, before he started to crack up, light laughter flowing around the room.

“What is it?” He actually felt pretty defensive. He didn’t think he looked that awful.

Stretching his arms, Karma’s face went back to mostly neutral. “I like it, but it’s pretty uneven… Do you want some help?”

Nagisa ended up sitting down in front of Karma, handing him the scissors. On top of that, Karma found a comb, and meticulously raked through his hair. He thought that he could actually fall asleep like that, with Karma’s gentle and precise fingers tracing his scalp. Every now and then, the scissors would close, though the stands of hair falling were far smaller, since he was just tidying it up.

“Are you leaving the front?” Karma’s voice was jarring in the moment of serenity.

He thought about it for a moment. “Maybe it needs a little bit.”

Saying no more, Karma stood up on his knees, shuffling around so he was in front of Nagisa. From that position, Nagisa could see the concentration in his eyes clearly. It was a good look on him. He seemed even more gentle like that, one of his sharp canines biting lightly into his lip whenever he made a cut. Perhaps letting Karma so close to his face with scissors was a bad idea, but right then Nagisa trusted him completely.

“I’m done,” he said finally.

Nagisa was in a daze, though, so Karma rolled his eyes and simply half dragged Nagisa back into the bathroom. What he saw that time once again wasn’t exactly the dramatic difference he’d envisioned years ago, but it was a lot better. Aside from the difference in colour, from the front at least Nagisa’s hair looked similar to Karma’s, and the back was actually a little shorter. He decided he liked it, properly.

“You should be a hair dresser,” Nagisa said, experimentally playing with his now short locks.

Karma sighed. “Too much effort. I’m all hot now.”

He left Nagisa standing there in a way that seemed kind of purposeful. For a moment, Nagisa did just stop there and stare, knowing this would take a bit of time to get used to. This entire change would… and Nagisa was about to go back to being alone through all of it. Their apartment was empty, practically. His life was empty, with the separation from those most important to him.

Karma was standing out on the balcony, seemingly deep in thought. When he slid the door open, Nagisa shuddered as the cool spring air hit him unexpectedly. Aside from that, it was a nice night, the sky dark and clear and framing the fragmented moon, which was slowly starting to reform its original shape. Instead of saying anything, though, he sat down, looking up at the sky. Without prompt, Karma did the same.

Cold as he was, Nagisa felt an electric buzz just underneath the surface of his skin. Though he had intended to be looking at the stars, he found his gaze trained on Karma. Where Karma’s focus was on the night sky, Nagisa’s was on the steady rise and his chest, the way his eyes followed the constellations, how he scratched behind his ear every now and then.
Nagisa had once thought he was over this. Over him. Clearly, he was mistaken. He wasn’t dumb, he knew that he watched Karma more than he did any other friend, more than he had with anybody else before. It wasn’t normal, what they had between them. They only had one more evening together, Nagisa realised. He could hold off, for such a short amount of time. He forced himself to turn away.

It turned out to be a mistake, because then Karma’s fingers were at the nape of his neck. “I missed a hair,” he defended, miming flicking it away.

Karma’s fingers lingered on his skin, however, for long enough that Nagisa severely felt their absence. Perhaps, it wouldn’t be as easy as he’d first hoped to forget him. Looking once more at Karma, who had turned away from him again, Nagisa knew it for sure. He knew that just leaving it like this, a peaceful evening before they parted ways, wouldn’t be enough. Nothing was enough.

Scared of facing an eternity of ‘what ifs’, he realised he had to do something. But Nagisa hesitated, the idea of suddenly declaring his love for all of Kunugigaoka to hear out on that balcony ridiculous. Though he did love Karma. There was no pretending he didn’t, what would be the point? He loved Karma in a way he had never loved anyone else.

Noticing Karma had turned his eyes back to Nagisa, he knew it was time. Finally time to do something about this. What did he really have to lose, anyway? Courage fuelling him down to his core, Nagisa swallowed his nerve, and shuffled a little closer. He didn’t miss the way Karma followed him, the gears of his mind turning, probably trying to make sense of Nagisa’s actions.

Well, Nagisa thought, try and predict this.

Taking grasp of every flame that burnt within him, Nagisa lunged, meeting Karma’s lips in a kiss. It hadn’t been a long time since he’d felt them, but Karma’s lips were still weirdly soft and pliant against his own, moving as if on autopilot. The kiss didn’t last as long as he’d intended it to, turning more into a peck. Nagisa begun to lose his nerve, at the reality, mind spiralling that this wasn’t such a simple thing at all.

Pulling back to meet Karma’s somewhat dazed expression, Nagisa knew he should apologise. “Uhm-“

Karma dove back in again, kissing him properly. The angle was a little awkward considering they were sitting side by side, but Nagisa couldn’t help but respond. As Karma’s hand moved to clutch the back of Nagisa’s head, Nagisa’s eyes slid closed, wanting to get completely lost in the feeling. It was no match, where they were trying to use tricks and techniques against each other, like the time on their trip, it was just… a kiss.

Nagisa needed more. Now he’d tasted what he’d spent so long forcing himself to remember he couldn’t have, in a situation where there was nothing to stop him and a whole other kind of urgency, it was like the floodgates had opened. He pressed closer to Karma, chest pounding as he moved a hand over to cup his cheek, like he was afraid the kiss would somehow end. It felt like they were melting into each other, but it still wasn’t enough. And then, Nagisa thought, dizzy with the way Karma’s scent started to shift, how bad would it be to take this all the way?

Somehow, almost hilariously, he finally felt comfortable with this. It made sense, in a way, that it happened like this. Like a rhyme. The only reason they were even right there, on that balcony of their apartment together, was because of the events of that party years ago. It felt right, to end this bond between them in the same way. To finish this particular chapter of their lives and move on completely.
So Nagisa pressed deeper, pushing Karma back slightly so he had enough space to climb onto his lap in one swift movement. Karma didn’t seem to mind the development, kissing back harder, hands sliding down to Nagisa’s waist. Finally, he pried his mouth open, though it wasn’t the time to make use of the ultimate French kiss technique. With his position, standing on his knees whilst Karma was simply sat, he actually had a tiny height advantage.

Once he experimentally shifted his hips, taking it beyond the realm of an innocent kiss, Karma seemed to get the idea. His hands trailed lower, right to where the fabric of Nagisa’s trousers met his skin. When Nagisa didn’t bat him away, he dug his hands underneath the material, sliding like a red hot brand against his ass. Though it probably shouldn’t have stirred up such a strong reaction, after all it was only skin, Karma’s fingers felt like molten. Nagisa couldn’t help but break off the kiss, sucking in a deep breath as he clutched Karma close by the shoulders.

He could feel Karma’s chest pounding against his own, before his slightly shaking fingers trailed lower. Still clinging on, Nagisa couldn’t help but whimper slightly in anticipation as the fingers moved further and further down, until pressed right against his rim. The heat was almost unbearable, his body knowing what might be coming. There hadn’t been any build up, not really, and even his own body seemed confused, shaking even though Nagisa was certain in wanted Karma in any capacity.

Recapturing his lips, Karma finally dipped a finger barely even partway into his heat, as best as he could from the awkward angle of his hand and the restriction of Nagisa’s clothes. Automatically, Nagisa scrambled, instinctively attempted to bear down on it. It felt so impossibly different to his own fingers, and Karma wasn’t even moving it. He moaned into the kiss, in an attempt to demonstrate just how much he wanted it.

Far too soon, Karma pulled away, removing his hands from Nagisa’s trousers entirely. Logically, Nagisa knew it was because they couldn’t go much further like that, but that didn’t mean he didn’t miss the sensation. So quickly taken over by lust, Nagisa broke the kiss again, panting to catch his breath and try and assess the situation.

The way Karma was looking at him, through burning, half lidded eyes, was almost enough to set Nagisa off right then and there. Desire looked good on him, but he already knew that. Still not satiated, Nagisa reached out, his hand now completely steady with focus. It was terrifying, holding Karma’s gaze as he began to undo the button and zip of his trousers, but it also made him feel kind of powerful.

Karma’s hand came on top of Nagisa’s, once he’d removed the clothing enough to get a proper visual on his erection. It was still restrained by underwear, but it still made Nagisa’s mouth water. He’d never seen anything such as this with his own two eyes like this, so much arousal, and because of him. Though he couldn’t comprehend this was finally happening, after how long they’d both spent beating around the bush, and the fact that it was Karma he was with…

And then Nagisa noticed one of Karma’s fingers was glistening, covered in his slick.

“I’m sorry!” He said immediately, looking down at the offending finger, before turning away to try and hide his flush. God, he hated his stupid omega body, and Karma had barely touched him. How embarrassing.

Realising what Nagisa was talking about, Karma blinked. “Why?”

Not wanting to go into it, Nagisa leaned forwards again, pressing a kiss to the corner of Karma’s mouth. Taking his mind off that, Nagisa decided to just continue what he was doing before. Tentatively, he slid the palm of his hand across the surface of Karma’s boxers, creating a steady
kind of friction. Nagisa had never done this before, to somebody else, so he couldn’t help but feel like he was testing the waters.

It couldn’t be that hard, right? Sure, technicalities aside, he was pretty much a virgin in the sense he had no idea what he was doing, and he was hardly being led. He knew the theory, at least, he had a dick. Karma was an alpha, but surely it couldn’t be that different. Aside from his scent, though, out in the open like that it was so intense, so different. Against the small movement of his hand, Karma’s erection twitched, and there was a barely audible groan.

But then Karma gripped his wrist again, breaking the kiss. “We need to stop here.”

Pulling back, Nagisa felt confused. Wasn’t this what they both wanted? What had been such a long time coming? Suddenly, Nagisa was more than a little bit frightened, about how much he wanted it. How much he needed it.

“Don’t you-“

“We don’t have… condoms,” Karma said finally, voice strained. “Unless you have a secret stash somewhere.”

Nagisa didn’t care. He just… wanted him. “So?”

“So,” Karma replied like it pained him, “unless you want another kid, it’s a really bad idea.”

Deciding to catch his breath, Nagisa realised he was right. What had he been thinking, anyway? Throwing himself into Karma’s arms like a maniac… This wasn’t him. But his brain and his body were functioning in two different realities. He knew, somehow, that this was an awful idea, but something was making him do it anyway. But no, he needed to slow down. No sex. But, Karma’s scent said otherwise, and Nagisa’s mouth watered.

Pulling his body down, Nagisa braced himself on one elbow. He knew the theory of what he was about to do, but… He hesitated, for just a moment. What if he made a fool of himself, or something? He gulped, eyes gazing up to look at Karma. He was watching him, but something seemed different. Karma was usually unflappable, able to keep his features mostly neutral. Yet, there was heat in his eyes, he looked turned on.

“How abo-“

“Thisisfine,” Karma said, in one breath.

Nagisa wasn’t going to waste this opportunity. He reached out for him again, finally sliding his hand comfortably against Karma’s erection. Trying to keep his fingers steady, he pulled back the underwear, allowing his cock to spring free. He couldn’t help but flush. It was one thing, slightly glimpsing it every now and then, and another being so close to it hard and ready to go, because of him.

“A-are you ok-“

With a sharp inhale, Karma’s hand came down to Nagisa’s head, fingers twisted into his hair.

“Yes.”

There was no going back, after that. But, he looked at it like a puzzle, precum already starting to ooze out. Actually going to approach, it was bigger than he’d been expecting. Using what knowledge of this act he had, Nagisa lowered his head, slowly taking the tip into his mouth. In an attempt to at least try and get used to it first, he didn’t take him down any further. Karma’s fingers
tightened, which encouraged Nagisa to continue. He was supposed to suck, right? Allowing his lips to move slightly, he attempted a sucking motion.

It still didn’t feel like exactly what he was supposed to do. Nagisa tried to force himself to think about what he’d like, if they swapped places. Slowly, he bobbed his head, trying to take Karma down as far as he could whilst not gagging at the weirdness. Embarrassingly, it seemed, that was only about half way, before his mouth felt overly full. But Nagisa wasn’t going to quit. He made up the space with his free hand, setting a good mark for where to slide his lips down to.

Feeling the head of Karma’s cock twitch in his mouth, Nagisa knew he had to be doing something right, at least. He picked up the pace with more confidence, also experimenting with pressure. As long as he remained cautious of his teeth, this wasn’t as hard as he’d thought it would be. He allowed himself to look up, in an attempt to gauge a reaction. Karma’s eyes were completely shut, and his free hand was in his mouth, absorbing any noises.

Somehow, that made Nagisa feel just as good. He sped up again, adding twists and squeezes of his hand to the mix. Slowly, he became aware of pressure between his legs, and then friction. Assuming it was just Karma’s leg or something, he couldn’t help put move against it, bringing relief to his own neglected arousal. Nagisa gasped at that, causing his tongue to flick against Karma’s heat.

“Mmph?” He groaned around his own hand, erection twitching right inside his mouth.

The way Karma’s fingers dug into his scalp at that gave him some ideas. It seemed advanced, but… Nagisa could try. As he moved up and down, he used the pressure of his tongue, sliding it around whatever parts of Karma’s cock was his mouth. He stopped concentrating eventually, just letting his body make whatever movements felt right.

Without much warning, Karma’s grip on his hair tightened, the yank becoming near painful. Naturally this took him by surprise, half moaning despite the heat still in his mouth. The vibrations that caused apparently did it for Karma, because suddenly Nagisa’s mouth was full of hot, somewhat salty fluid, without any other indication it was going to happen.

Barely taking in the extremely high pitched whine Karma made around his fist, Nagisa pulled off immediately, sputtering. Some of it had gone directly down his throat, apparently, but he managed to spit the rest of it out. Nagisa was in dire need of water, the taste kind of gross now he wasn’t in the heat of the moment.

Karma just lay there, panting and blinking slowly up at him like Nagisa was a phantom. Then again, Nagisa, too, wasn’t sure what to think. His scent was still intoxicating, but he was starting to feel a tiny bit more level headed. It might not have been sex, strictly speaking, but it was definitely sexual activity and Nagisa wasn’t sure how he felt about it. It was… enlightening, at the very least.

He reached out, then dragging his thumb across Nagisa’s lip and down his chin. “You might want to wash that off.”

It took Nagisa a moment to figure out what he meant, until a small glob of white appeared at his fingertip. Even though he was still hard, it faded somewhat, as Nagisa wrinkled his nose. A whole shower seemed like a good idea, actually, not only to wash that and the sweat away but to also clear his mind and make sense of what had just happened.

His knees shook as he stood, and he noticed an ache in his jaw that didn’t want to go away. What he hadn’t expected, though, was for Karma to just flip up onto his feet, starting to wordlessly follow him. Nagisa didn’t face him, in the bathroom, nervous about taking his clothes off. He
literally just had Karma’s dick in his mouth, he shouldn’t be getting shy over nudity. But, Nagisa still disliked his body.

Desire to be clean eventually won over, and he removed everything piece by piece, kicking it to the side before he turned on the shower spray. For a moment, he was soothed, but then Karma’s warm hands were gripping at his waist, his body pressed against his back. Nagisa was on edge for a moment, but then relaxed into the sensation, his erection finding new life.

He didn’t say anything, reaching to the side to squirt shampoo in his hand. Nagisa gasped, when his fingers went to his hair again, lathering it in. This was a different touch to his gentle threading through earlier, and definitely to the way he’d been pulling. It was firm, more like a head massage, and Nagisa forced himself to keep his mouth shut. Surprisingly, each touch had felt good.

Without warning, Karma spun him around, and Nagisa’s heart started to beat impossible fast. It was easier to calm down when he couldn’t see him, but now he got the non-neutral way Karma was looking at him, and he almost whimpered because of it. This wasn’t an innocent shower, though Nagisa didn’t think it had been that in the first place.

It took him all of five seconds to get Nagisa up against the wall, tongue dancing against his. Nagisa felt better like that, though, used to their fierce kisses together. Of course, that usually didn’t involve nudity, where Nagisa could feel every inch of Karma’s body pressed up against his. He gasped into the kiss, body about to fall into an overstimulated state despite not really even being touched yet.

Karma groaned in annoyance at their height difference, and carefully gripped underneath Nagisa’s thighs, lifting him semi-forcibly. It was harder in the water, but Nagisa automatically tried to grip him, legs wrapping around his hips. The wall was actually useful in supporting his weight, preventing him from sliding straight back down again.

For a moment they were practically encased like that in their kiss, until Nagisa’s hips started moving semi automatically and he gasped, fire like pleasure rushing through him. He gripped the back of Karma’s head, eyes fluttering shut as his hips shifted again with need. It was kind of hard from the position he was in, but his hips didn’t get that memo.

Bracing one hand against the wall, Karma used the free one to trace the length of his body, before eventually wrapping round to his front, gripping over his cock. With nothing to assist in drowning it out, a whine escaped his throat, and his hips jumped into his touch. Still having the capacity to feel shame, Nagisa buried his face in Karma’s shoulder, breathing hard like he was about to pass out.

It felt impossibly different to his own hand, in a way he couldn’t really fathom, and still not quite the same as the less purposeful friction he’d come across in a couple of his heat mishaps. This was stark and real and he needed more of it. Nagisa wanted to say all of that, but it was like his words had been stolen from him, and all he could do was breathe.

Against him, he felt Karma’s own hips start to shift, more of that scent being released into the air. Despite being in the shower, Nagisa was near certain it wasn’t going to come off him for days. A dark part of him kind of liked that. He was confused, momentarily, when he heard the shower spray turn off, but Karma’s hand ground against where he was hard and his thoughts cut off.

And the next thing he knew, he was being thrown onto his back. Nagisa didn’t even know whose room it was, because Karma was braced on top of him, occupying his vision. His body automatically lifted up, trying to meet his again, legs coiling themselves around Karma’s waist again. Their skin was wet, sliding against each other a little awkwardly but definitely a lot easier
than before.

The way he reached his peak was so sudden it was frightening. Rocking their hips together in an imitation of sex was starting to feel impossibly good. Karma groaned close to his ear, lips attached to his neck, and Nagisa’s vision just went white. He was pretty sure he let out some kind of embarrassing moan, though he was too far gone to hear it.

It felt so much more whole like this, rather than being alone. Karma bit into him lightly, nowhere near his scent glands but that didn’t seem to matter, only elevating the pleasure. His nails tug into Karma’s back desperately, body shaking all over after the sensation finally began to mellow out to a more bearable level.

He gasped for breath as he came down, finding that it was impossible. Peeling an eye open, he realised Karma’s entire weight was crushing him, cutting of his lungs. For a moment, Nagisa just wanted to lie there, because having Karma’s warm body so close felt amazing, as did the heavy breaths right against his ear once he released his skin.

“Karma,” he said uncomfortably, shifting his arms to try and push him off.

Looking begrudging about it, Karma did give him some room, grabbing something or other in order to clean the semen that was now covering Nagisa’s stomach. Turns out that entire shower was pretty much pointless. Before he could comprehend anything else, though, Karma’s lips were on him again.

Nagisa was pretty physically satiated, and too busy being mystified to feel much more arousal. That didn’t seem to matter though, because Karma’s kisses didn’t seem like they were leading anywhere. Nagisa kissed him back, cupping his chin, giving into the warm feeling of closeness he didn’t want to go without ever again, now he’d felt what it truly was. He lay dizzy like that, until he eventually drifted off to sleep.

*I need to tell Karma how I feel*, Nagisa told himself, *if I don’t I might regret it forever, no matter what happens.*

Nagisa woke up first. He was confused about being so cold, until he remembered that there hadn’t been any covers and he was still naked. It was one of the few times, sleeping beside Karma, that they hadn’t woken up wrapped up in each other. He missed the closeness, and the heat, but at the same time, like this, he could see Karma so close.

Even in his sleep, Karma had a light smile across his lips, chest moving slowly with every breath. He was so beautiful like that, sun streaming through the window to dance across his still sex messed hair and eyelashes, causing them to shine golden. Maybe it was a little creepy, but Nagisa didn’t care, he’d happily watch Karma like this every day of his life.

He did turn away, though, flopping onto his back to stare up at the ceiling. A smile stretched out on his own face, as he got lost in the white paint work. For once, he was satisfied. They hadn’t gone *all* the way, but that didn’t seem to matter with the way he felt. He was nervous, but almost a good type of nerves. Honestly, there were a million feelings bubbling up inside of him, all working to make his heart pound in his chest.

Unfortunately, his bladder betrayed him, right in the middle of basking in his own elation. So, with great reluctance, he got up as gently as he could, tip toeing out of the room. Perhaps it was a little stupid, but he felt weird walking around naked like this. Though, he didn’t exactly remember where his clothes had been tossed, in the heat of last night.
Once he was done with the toilet, he decided to step into the shower room, so he could brush his teeth. Aside from the new hair, he inspected his reflection, trying to figure out if he looked any different. Should he look different? He felt a little different, in a way he wasn’t exactly sure that he liked. It felt funny, far too much but also not enough all at once. A couple of footsteps were his only warning.

“Trying to run away already?” Karma said, though it was teasing.

He hadn’t bothered with clothes either, and Nagisa’s throat tightened. They didn’t have time to do anything else, he was pretty certain, but now that he’d had it he wanted more. He couldn’t vocalise that, though, because Karma hugged him from behind, draping his arms over Nagisa completely, chin resting on his shoulder. Nagisa decided he liked their reflection a lot more like that.

He turned, and in the innocent light of day their kiss felt like so much more. But he didn’t think he could get bored of kissing Karma, even soft and light like this. It didn’t last very long, they didn’t have that luxury of time. In fact, time was indeed his worst enemy right them. How cruel, to finally feel just a little bit right after so many years, with the knowledge it was going to be taken away so soon.

It was near painful to part, with the inevitability of what would happen next. They both pulled on their clothes, going to sort out the last bits of their luggage. And everything happened so fast, until suddenly Nagisa was standing there with the suitcase of belongings he was taking with him to university, looking at this apartment for what he realised would probably be the last time.

“I’m going to miss this place,” Nagisa said, and then closed the door behind them.

Karma nodded, looking a little out of it too, but didn’t say anything else. In fact, side by side, they walked through Kunugigaoka together silently, neither of them wanting to comment on the amount of memories they had of every little thing they passed. Far too soon, they were at the train station, and again couldn’t bring themselves to speak. If Nagisa did, he was afraid he might cry once again. So, again, they were silent, but still very much with each other.

“So,” Karma said eventually, listening to the announcement. “That’s my train.”

The lump that rose in Nagisa’s throat almost choked him. He couldn’t possibly say all the things he needed to. Of course his hesitation would wind up being their downfall. There wasn’t enough time to express what he’d tried to convey in his actions the night before, and now it was too late. The lump grew bigger, when Karma bent down to pick up his bags.

Nagisa’s breath caught in his throat. He had to get something out. Accepting that it wasn’t going to come, Karma simply nodded and turned, stepping towards the platform. For a moment, Nagisa just watched him go. Watched Karma casually saunter out of his life, severing all ties between them without second thought.

“G-goodbye, Karma,” he finally said.

Karma stopped mid pace, and visibly breathed. Dusting a few blossom petals from his shoulder, he turned over his shoulder, looking Nagisa over.

“Nah. See you later, Nagisa.”

The train sped past, causing his loose clothes to flutter in the wind it created. Without saying another word, he turned back around, and entered the train due to take him in the opposite direction. Nagisa’s train wasn’t due for another ten minutes, so all he could do was stand and
watch, and wonder when the next time he’d see Karma’s face would be.

His own train was announced, loud over the speakers, which caused Nagisa to snap out of it. He had to leave Kunugigaoka, and most of what had happened there, behind him. Once he’d stepped onto the train, found a seat, and made himself comfortable, his eyes fell to the window. The town he’d grown up in, that had given him all his memories, was gone after just a few minutes of the train moving. That insignificant, huh? It really did feel like an ending, at least between them.

‘I love you.’

Nagisa looked out at the sky. After everything, he’d forgotten to say it.

Chapter End Notes

EDIT: Alright binge readers! If you're reading this fic for the first time, this is a good place to take a break, get a snack, or just put the fic down for now! Or, if you still have energy, by all means keep reading on.

well

that concludes part two everyone

haha

will see you soon, a little while in the future :’) :’) :’)

(I'm going to update ALW soon though)

In the meantime, you know your comments give me writer fuel wink wink
Messages Time

Chapter Summary

A trip through time, told through line screenshots

Chapter Notes

Don't be fooled by the word count

Most of these are from Nagisa's POV. When they're from Karma's, I tried my best to make it obvious

See the end of the chapter for more notes
No I don't think it's THAT serious

He got shot

Only once

He shouldn't be able to hold the gun!

Actually

Karma?

Did you fall asleep?

Maybe trying to watch movies and text isn't the best idea...
Nagisa 16:53
Nagisa 16:53
Nagisaaaa 16:53
I heard some things~ 16:54
Read 16:54
What things?
You and Karma 16:54
Read 16:54
What about me and Karma??
Hmmmm 16:55
Read 16:55
What did he tell you?
Nothing! 16:55
Thank you for coming to the movie premier! It really couldn't have been made without you!

I had a great time! You really were amazing!

I wish I could take a break now haha, but I have so many projects... Have you got any plans now it's close to summer?

I'm just going back home.

I'm excited though. There's a lot of work to do over the break but at least I get to see Daichi.

Right!

Tell Daichi-sai we love him!

I wish you'd stop calling him that.

But it suits him :3
FRI 9/20
Do you speak to Karma a lot still?
Never mind
Forget I asked
Are you digging for gossip?
I'm not!
I just think he's mad at me or something
He hasn't... spoken to me in a while
We don't talk about you really
Unless you're after the Photoshops
The what
So...

What did Nagisa do?

Nagisa? What about him?

Just figure it out already

It's starting to feel like we're back in high school except more dramatic
If someone doesn't speak to you for two months aside from yes or no answers, does that mean they hate you?

It's 3am in Massachusetts.

Right, sorry.

It's still the afternoon here!

How did you even get my line?

And why are you coming to me with your relationship drama?

Everyone else is too involved...

It was fine when I saw him over the summer but ever since then it's weird.

But we didn't leave on bad terms.

Akabane didn't shut up in the three years I had to sit beside him.

He probably wants space or something.
Is Nagisa mad at me?
You've got to be kidding.
He barely messages anymore
Happy birthday Karma

Thanks
I slept with Karma.

I'm changing my number

Also

We all kind of knew that already

Sorry

But you do have a child together

I mean a year ago

Excuse me

You did WHAT

I take it back

Don't tell me you had another secret child and you need me to hide it

What? No!
So this is big news

He really didn't say anything about it?

Nope

You know I'd only use this against you so why are you telling me?

I'm worried it's because of that

But we were fine afterwards

We still haven't talked about it but we just went back to being friends

And everything was fine over summer break

I started to regret it straight after it happened and I still regret it now

I know what happened now

What?!

Honestly I think you and Karma need to talk about it properly. Want some help?
Are you coming home since it's the end of our first year?

It's 1am.

American times are different anyway. My year doesn't end until summer.

Oh, really sorry.

Well, we should hang out in the summer!
It sucks that we couldn't see each other during the break
You're pretty busy though! I don't blame you
How was it, anyway?
Eh, pretty boring actually
I didn't really see anyone.
Promise you won't freak out
08:53
We had to go to hospital
08:53
You WHAT
08:55
I can't pick up right now we're in the x ray room
08:56
WHY
08:56
I'm sure it's fine I just
08:56
Daichi decided to do an impression of python
08:56
Didn't go too well
08:56
They said it's just a sprain
08:59
Where are you?
08:59
I'm coming right now
08:59
Nakamura said you needed my help

She did?

Well, she said you need to start going to someone else with your questions, but she sent me this one because she thought I'd know

She also told me what it was

Sorry.

I'm sorry she bothered you

Not at all! I want to help!

So, someone asked you out?

Yeah, just some guy in one of my classes. I thought we were just good friends

And you want to say no?

Dating isn't really me...
Are you busy Saturday?

What for?

I was wondering if we could switch days this weekend

There's this thing

Actually I am kind of busy, sorry.

Ooo busy? You're never busy

Got a hot date or something?

Kind of, actually.

You're kidding?

I mentioned my friend Gotou kun, right?

Karma?

Don't worry about it, Saturday's fine for me.
Are you doing alright Nagisa?

I'm good!

Is something wrong?

Is Daichi okay?

You spoke to him only an hour ago, he went to read just like you told him to.

Nothing's wrong! We just heard that you were seeing someone.

You know about that?

Karma mentioned it in passing.

Anyway, we'd like to meet him. You should bring him over for dinner sometime.

I'm not sure, it's only really been a few months...
Nagisa! 01:36
There's going to be a third Sonic Ninja!

01:36
No way!

Wait, how do you know????

I can't find it online anywhere, even if search in English

01:42
I actually have an audition for the lead woman!

01:43
Woah! That's amazing Kayano! I'm certain you'll get it!

It's a really big role so I'm not getting my hopes up too high

01:44
It hasn't been officially announced yet so please keep it a secret!

01:44
I guess you can probably tell Karma though

01:45
Eh, you should probably just tell him yourself
You did amazing!
You watched the game!
Of course
Congratulations for winning!
I can only hope important eyes were watching
I'm sure you'll be drafted in no time
And just like that, in the blink of an eye, four years passed.

Chapter End Notes

Don't worry, all will be explained :3 I just wanted to bridge the gap a little instead of throwing you all in with a four year time skip

In other news, I made a discord! Not just to discuss my fics, but just karmagisa in general. It's existed for like a day so far but it's pretty fun, here's a link, so please join: https://discord.gg/5GaNeMF
“Nagisa…”

Nagisa groaned, turning over. It was too early to get up, after the events of last night. He used to be such a morning person, but university had changed that entirely. Now all Nagisa wanted to do was to sleep for days… Why did he need to get up again? He’d gone to bed pretty late, fallen asleep even later than that.

“I don’t want to wake you up, but my flight might leave, unless that was your plan all along…”

He finally sat up, rubbing the sleep from his eyes. “S’too early.”

“I thought you were excited to go home,” Shouyou grinned.

“I am,” he said a little more seriously, “but moving again… The last time I moved I fell asleep for three days.”

“Plus,” Shouyou said lightly, “I won’t be there.”

Nagisa rubbed the back of his neck. “That too.”

Shouyou bent down, kissing him briefly on the lips, before he really did need to check that all of his things were in order. In the meantime, Nagisa forced himself to face the day. Fortunately he’d been prepared to stay over, and actually had fresh clothes at the ready. That didn’t always happen, so Nagisa was glad because it was going to be a busy day.

“Did you see where I put my passport?” Shouyou stuck his head around the door.

Nagisa looked over. “You said you were leaving it on the bedside table so you wouldn’t forget.”

He groaned, and wrapped Nagisa into a hug. “I’m not going to *survive* without you.”

“You’ll be okay,” Nagisa said, squirming out of his grip. “I don’t know anything about animals, anyway.”

They met in a really odd class. Aside from the many actually related to his degree, Nagisa had gaps to fill in his second year, and he’d ended up realising that if he took a literature class, his schedule...
gave him extra time on Fridays to leave early, so he could go see Daichi a little bit sooner.
Shouyou didn’t really have a big excuse like that, he’d just chosen it since he’d already read the
books on the reading list. They’d bonded over being the only people in the class taking completely
unrelated degrees.

Since then, they’d spent a lot of time together, through a combination of surprising mutual interests
and just running into each other a lot. Shouyou had asked him out towards the end of that year, and
Nagisa hadn’t know how to say no, but he’d ended up having a good time. Enough that they were
still dating two years later at least, and Nagisa was pretty sad about him leaving.

His happiness overtook that, though. Shouyou was insanely passionate about what he studied. He
still didn’t know exactly what job he wanted, which seemed strange to Nagisa with something as
direct sounding as zoology, but in the meantime he had a work placement in Africa. It was a pretty
unusual choice, and Nagisa loved to hear about it, he was proud. Aside from that, there was his
own life too. Tomorrow was his first day of his work placement, the last hurdle in his teaching
certification.

“Okay,” he said, “I think I’m ready.”

Nagisa nodded. “You’ll be late if we don’t leave soon anyway.”

They had to take the train to the airport. It was kind of a busy time, and they both had substantial
suitcases, so they were practically squished together the entire way. After actually arriving, it was
too hectic to think about much. Shouyou had to check in straight away, lest he get caught in the
queue from hell, so Nagisa just waited.

All in all, they’d made it in pretty good time. There wasn’t that much to spare, but Shouyou
reached the front of the queue before Nagisa would have started to panic about getting through
security. He’d had this thought last night, before the party, but he didn’t want to ruin Shouyou’s
last night of fun with their friends by worrying him about getting up early.

“I’m all done,” he came over, only with a carryon. “How much time do you think there is left?”

Nagisa looked at his phone. “A few minutes, maybe.”

“I’m going to miss you,” he said seriously. “More than you think.”

He met his eyes. “I’ll miss you too.”

“I wish you could just come with me or something,” Shouyou sighed. “You’ll be okay, won’t you?
I know how you get in your head sometimes. Not that you’re not fine without me! You… survived
twenty years without me, of course… What was I saying?”

Nagisa laughed lightly. “I’ll be okay. I’ll be busy with work and having Daichi all the time again.
More than enough to keep my mind occupied.”

“If I can’t call you,” he said, “I promise I’ll text as soon as I can.”

“I’m not sure how reliable the reception is in Tanzania,” Nagisa smiled. “You should probably go
through to security now.”

“Wait!” He said, like he was about to break out into a sweat.

It was rare that Nagisa would examine Shouyou in this way. There were plenty of things Nagisa
had shared with him throughout their relationship, but his bloodlust was not one of them. Mainly
because he didn’t want to scare Shouyou, and, well, there was no real reason for it to come out. Sometimes, though, when he freaked out a little too much, Nagisa found himself syncing up with his heartbeat, subtly pressing a finger to his neck to release some of the tension.

“Is something wrong?” He asked curiously.

“No, ah,” he dug his hand into his pocket. “Damn, I swear I wasn’t going to do it like this. Not that I really had a plan or anything but I just chickened out I guess but I’ll regret not ever saying it so,” he finally breathed, “I know that I’m leaving for a while, but please don’t forget about me. I’m certain that no matter what, you’re what I want, so I want to prove it with a symbol.” He bent down to one knee.

Nagisa’s entire world caved in on him.

“Will you marry me?” He pulled out a shiny ring.

He forgot what breathing was momentarily. What. What? What! Oh no, people were definitely looking at them. Had this been any other circumstance, Nagisa would have easily said that he appreciated it, but they weren’t ready yet. He loved Shouyou for sure, but life long commitment?! Maybe in a couple of years he could think about it, but…

“I-“ What could he even say? “You know I can’t get married.”

He stood up, though he still looked earnest. “I know. But you only have two years before that contract naturally runs out, right? I figured there’s no rush.”

Nagisa knew he couldn’t just refuse. That would be public humiliation, for one, and everyone would probably stare at him in horror. He sensed an old woman tearing up, a few feet away! Did most relationships even survive rejection like this? Nagisa really didn’t want to break up. He couldn’t send him away with a broken heart… What could he do? It was true that there would be years before Nagisa could legally marry anyone, so maybe his mind could change in that time…

“Yes,” Nagisa swallowed as the word came out.

Apparently, Shouyou still didn’t care they were in the middle of an airport, because he kissed him passionately without warning. “I love you so much.”

“You’re talking like we’re on our deathbeds or something,” Nagisa half joked, trying to feel better about it.

“Give me a break,” Shouyou looked ecstatic, sliding the ring onto Nagisa’s finger. “I’m about to leave for months and we’re engaged.”

Nagisa noticed a few people clapping and he wanted to die.

“Have a safe trip,” he said as positively as possible. And then, before he forgot, “I love you too.”

“Goodbye!”

And just like that, at the age of twenty two, Nagisa was engaged and left alone at the airport, with no one else to deal with the looks of the crowd such a brash action had gathered. His face turned red, and he didn’t hang around for a second longer than was socially acceptable, wanting to disappear into the sea of people using the train.

That train ride was over before he even knew it, he spent so long internalising his every thought.
He regretted saying yes, in the case that he wouldn’t change how he felt. Surely that would just make Shouyou feel worse, lying to him. But, he knew seeing him happy was worlds better than seeing him sad. Either way, Nagisa would have been stuck in this hatred spiral.

When he changed over lines, to the train headed straight for Kunugigaoka, it was empty enough for him to find a seat. At that point, he finally looked at the ring on his finger. Considering the university student budget, it was really nice. Sparkly. Nagisa wasn’t sure if it was too ‘in your face’ or not. But, Shouyou was always saying he wanted to give Nagisa the best. If that meant flashy things… Nagisa dug his hand into his pocket, deciding taking it off would count as betrayal.

Jolting forwards slightly, Nagisa realised that the train had finally come to a stop. He had reached Kunugigaoka station, exactly on the scheduled time, carrying considerably more bags than he had been when he was last there. Going swiftly so as not to annoy everybody else, Nagisa picked them up and vacated the carriage, stepping out onto the platform.

He’d only been there for two seconds before he was knocked back, almost straight off into the tracks. “Daddy!” The small voice called, hands squeezing his middle and head currently buried in his jacket.

Nagisa smiled, pulling his son closer into a more equal hug. “What did I tell you about running off from your Grandma like that?” It wasn’t exactly a harsh scolding, though.

Daichi pulled back. “But Daddy! I just wanted to see you as soon as possible.”

“I’m here now,” Nagisa said, picking up his bags again.

“Forever and ever this time!” He squeezed Nagisa tighter, definitely not inheriting the physical strength from him. “And in a week Papa’s gonna come home too and we’re gonna have the best time ever!”

If anything, Nagisa missed hearing his ridiculous enthusiasm all the time. It was so refreshing that Nagisa’s most loathed responsibility was ever saying no to him. “Have you got any plans?”

“Mmm,” Daichi finally let him go, though grabbed Nagisa by the wrist instead to pull him towards the station exit. “Can we hang out in the library this weekend? Or, today!”

“Sure we can.” He was never going to question his son’s preference for books over park swings.

“Daichan! You promised you wouldn’t run off today!” Nagisa’s mother said as they approached her.

Daichi bowed his head. “I’m really sorry, Grandma.”

She looked exasperated. “…He didn’t give you much trouble, did he?”

“Non stop this week,” she half glared at him.

Letting go of him, he turned and hugged her around the waist. “Really, really sorry.”

His mother sighed. “I know you’re just excited.”

“Let’s go drop my bag off first,” Nagisa said to Daichi, “and then we can go to the library, okay?”

“I’ll help!” He announced, trying to pull one of the really heavy bags.

At seven years old, Daichi hadn’t hit much of a growth spurt yet. Whilst it wasn’t at the point of
being unhealthy, he was on the edge of it. The doctor had insisted, though, he was just naturally short, and might just remain that way for the rest of his life. Considering he was also one of the youngest in his class, it was almost funny how most of the other children practically towered over him.

Despite that he was strong, though. Weirdly strong. In fact, he was tugging at one of the bags Nagisa had even been struggling with. Nagisa was happy about that, at the very least. He also felt a little bad, since they’d be moving in just a day. Nagisa wished he could have got the keys a bit earlier, but it would have to wait until tomorrow.

As far as he knew Daichi was looking forward to it, anyway, as much as he loved living with his grandparents. The apartment was, unfortunately, pretty far away from Kunugigaoka. Karma’s job, assuming he actually got it, meant he had to be close to Tokyo. So, not wanting to make things too hard for Daichi, Nagisa had chosen somewhere near enough, though it had been a nightmare to find any affordable apartments. Once again, he was going to miss Kunugigaoka.

“Are you excited for tomorrow?” Nagisa asked, remembering.

Daichi pouted. “Not really.”

Moving so far away meant he had to change schools. Ordinarily Nagisa would have felt bad, since he’d only been attending school for a year, but he knew how much Daichi didn’t like where he currently was. He tried to look at the positives of it, because a huge reason for that was boredom. He had a smart child and typical school systems didn’t cater to that too well. Since they were going to be closer to Tokyo, that opened up the options. Considering that he himself went to one of the fancy, well regarded private schools, he’d tried to take everything with a pinch of salt, because aside from looking good on a university applications, it hadn’t actually been the best, even if it had lead to the best year of his life.

They were careful, though, in choosing somewhere where he wouldn’t just be left going over the basics for years on end. And, well, calculating the cost of that up to high school, the amount of prize money Nagisa had left was starting to look like pocket change. But that was alright, it was worth it if it made Daichi happier. That’s what it was for, anyway. He just hoped he wouldn’t get too corrupted by rich kids.

“I think you’ll like it a lot more,” Nagisa tried, “they had a whole library there too.”

He didn’t perk up so easily. “Why can’t I just stay home with you?”

“Because,” honestly Nagisa wished he could, “I have to go to school too.”

“Can I go to your school when I’m bigger?” Daichi looked up hopefully.

Nagisa scratched the back of his head and laughed awkwardly. “I’m not even completely qualified yet, you know.”

They didn’t linger around the apartment too long. Nagisa was honestly happy to be turning his back on it for the most part, with little else tying him here. The bedroom that was once his was a lot smaller than he remembered, though Daichi had more things than he’d ever kept. It amazed him how they’d once managed to fit an entire crib in the space.

After the greetings were all over with, and bags were dropped off, an increasingly impatient Daichi grabbed him by the arm and practically started to drag him through the streets. Again, Daichi was a lot stronger than he looked, and could easily pull Nagisa where he wanted. His golden eyes
glimmered and narrowed with challenge, looking even more like Karma with every day he aged.

His eyes lit up when they reached the library. Even excited, though, he seemed to remember himself. The first thing he did was carefully remove his backpack full of books, and carefully place them all in the returns sections.

Daichi was no longer allowed new books, unless he really liked it and was going to read it multiple times. There was no point, he went through everything age appropriate too quickly. So, it was frequent trips to the library and back. Considering how a lot of kids were nowadays, Nagisa didn’t have much to complain about.

Though he wouldn’t be able to take any books out, since they were going to be moving soon. He hoped Daichi really was as okay with it as he said. Honestly, he and Karma had given Daichi the full choice, even if it would be hard to understand the full weight of his decision. He’d said he wanted to live with both of them, so both of them it was.

He seemed happy to just sit there and read on his own, though he rested half his weight on Nagisa’s side. Nagisa relaxed too like that, knowing that he could have Daichi like this for the next week. In the meantime, he pulled out his notes out, taking the chance to prepare a little more tomorrow. His nerves had been consuming him for days.

“What’s this kanji?” Daichi said all of a sudden, though it was quiet.

Nagisa looked at it for a second. “Uhm… morality. It means doing the right thing.”

He nodded, and went right back to reading intently.

“Hey,” Nagisa said, “why don’t we get some hot chocolate?”

“Yes!” He said a little louder, closing the book. “Uh, please.”

The library had a café attached to it. Nagisa assumed that was because people didn’t really go to libraries all that much anymore, with the exception of stressed out university students. They had to make money some way that wasn’t late fees. Or just entirely off his son. It was part of the library routine, anyway, because they were pretty good inexpensive drinks.

Daichi skipped along to that area rapidly, pointedly bringing the book with him. By the time Nagisa caught up, he was trying his best to read the menu, standing up on his tip toes. He might be small for his age, but he was still a lot bigger than he was as a toddler, and Nagisa couldn’t pick him up so easily anymore.

“Nagisa?”

Nagisa turned, and then smiled brightly. “Isogai kun!”

Daichi’s eyes, too, lit up. “Isogai san!”

He bent down to Daichi’s level. “Hey there! It’s been a little while since I saw you, huh? How’s school been.”

“I hate it,” he said, earlier pout returning. “It’s so boring. Can’t wait till I don’t have to go anymore.”

Isogai laughed. “You have quite a few years yet, I’m afraid.”
“Daddy,” Daichi turned to him, “I really wanna finish this chapter…”

He was asking for permission not to socialise, hilariously. Not that Daichi hated talking to people, on the contrary, sometimes he talked a little too much. He supposed it would be nice to catch up with Isogai for a little while, without worrying about keeping ‘boring adult conversation’ to a minimum. There was no real talking to Daichi when he was distracted, anyway.

“Why don’t you go sit down on that comfy chair over there?” Nagisa said. “I’ll get you your drink, and you can come over when you’re done, okay?”

Isogai’s smile remained. “I’m here with a couple of people from my university, would you like to join us?”

Two very beautiful women around their age were waiting at the table for them. Of course, Isogai was still a perfect guy, clearly not changing. They were definitely pretty in different ways, one dark haired and elegant looking, the other bleach blond and clearly bold. He could tell from the body language, too. He wondered how they’d ended up friends.

“Ah,” he said, “this is Nagisa, one of my old classmates from back in middle school. Nagisa, this is my girlfriend, Yamada, and her friend, Tanaka.”

The girl beside Isogai, presumably the girlfriend, smiled warmly. “It’s nice to meet one of Yuuma’s friends. He talks about you guys a lot.”

Nagisa returned the politeness. “It’s nice to meet you too. Yamada san, Tanaka san.”

“Oh no, please call me by my given name,” the blonde girl said, her voice sugary sweet. “It’s Ariel, spelled with the characters for ‘bubble’ and ‘princess’.”

Right then, Nagisa wished he had his sense of scent less obscured, but that was a side effect of the suppressants he’d been taking for the last two years, ever since he was legally able to after becoming an adult. Even dulled out, he could get a sense of Isogai’s alpha, but nothing else. Likely just a very over the top beta, then.

Nagisa thumbed the cup. “Have… you heard from Karma recently?” They did go to the same university, after all. He never spoke to Karma unless it was related to Daichi, of course, hadn’t even seen him in months.

Isogai shot him a warning look. “Uh, no not really.”

“You know Karma?” Ariel looked at him with a menacing glint to her eye.

“We were all in the same class,” Isogai explained, and Nagisa got the message to downplay his involvement in Karma’s life.

Yamada looked at her friend. “It’s been almost a year now. You didn’t even date him that long.”

Oh, great. The world may just as well have crashed and burned and swallowed him whole. He didn’t want to deal with one of Karma’s exes. Nagisa wasn’t exactly ignorant to what Karma did in his spare times. It was true that they only talked about Daichi in recent years, but they were still in a big group chat together, and occasionally Nagisa browsed through it. Not that he really showed off about it either, but it got brought up every now and then. The ones that became relationships never seemed serious. What right did he have to complain? He had a boyfr- fiancé. He’d agreed to get married. Would it be so unreasonable for Karma to eventually do the same?
Ariel giggled, though in an incredibly unsettling way. “He doesn’t know it, but my Kachan will come back to me any day now.”

“Y-you mean Karma?” He asked.

She nodded enthusiastically. “Mhmhm.”

Nagisa squinted, feeling a sudden urge to hurl. “He let you call him… that?”

“Oh sweetie, I could call him anything.” She stiffened, then, and her arrogance dissipated. “Excuse me.”

She got up and walked with a quick pace to the bathroom, her wavelength clearly agitated. Well, that was awkward. Thankfully she didn’t seem to know who Nagisa was, otherwise it would be really bad. Nagisa should probably take the chance to leave, before Daichi decided he was finished reading. Despite her what she put at the surface, he could sense a sharpness there, and she’d probably pick up on a child looking practically identical to Karma.

“Who—”

“Akabane Karma is not a name we bring up,” Yamada said sternly. “For good reason.”

Isogai had his diplomatic smile plastered on, though he looked like he was about to sweat. “It was some time ago now, though.”

She glared at him. “He’s still the exact same as he was, months later. Absolutely no remorse.”

It was like a car crash, and whilst Nagisa knew he was better off not knowing, he found himself asking anyway. “W-what did he do?”

“I don’t get it,” she said dramatically, “Ariel’s a model, you know. Any sane man would shower her in attention, but no,” she sighed, “she chooses the fuckboys.”

“Right,” Nagisa shifted. “Well,” he looked at Isogai, “it was nice catching up, but I should probably go check on my son.”

Isogai looked apologetic. “Are you coming tomorrow?"

“I can’t,” he fiddled with his shirt sleeve. “I have my first day at work.”

His eyes widened. “Should I be saying congratulations?”

“Ah,” Nagisa laughed awkwardly, “it’s not that big a deal.”

“No, I mean,” he looked at pointedly at Nagisa’s hand, “your ring. You had a pretty serious boyfriend, right?”

“Oh,” Nagisa flushed, but not really in a giddy way. “It happened just before he left.”

“I won’t mention anything for now,” Isogai sensed his discomfort, thankfully enough.

He’d have to tell people eventually, he realised, especially walking around with such a flashy ring. The idea of taking it off still seemed kind of wrong to him, even if that was the easiest option, and Shouyou was currently on an aeroplane. He toyed with it, after leaving Isogai’s table, realising it was a pretty good fit on his finger. Being married sounded scary, he imagined it. Gotou Nagisa… It didn’t sound awful, but…
“How’s the book going?” He slid down next to Daichi, placing the untouched hot chocolate down on the table.

He barely even registered he was being spoken to for a few seconds. “Huh?”

Nagisa smiled. “Pretty good, then?”

Daichi closed the book, giving Nagisa the one over, before flinging his arms around him. “Missed you.”

“I missed you too,” Nagisa wrapped a lock of his plum coloured hair around his finger. “I’m not going anywhere this time, I promise.”

Chapter End Notes

There’s two sides to every story, remember.

Shouyou’s name is written like ごとう しょうよう, or 後藤 逍遥 in kanji, if you’re interested.
Caught Up Time

Chapter Summary

Karma goes back to Kunugigaoka to see their old classroom.

Chapter Notes

it gets worse

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Karma rolled out of bed with a groan, head pounding just a little. He hadn’t particularly wanted to go out, but he’d decided in the end he could put up with just one more night of it, since university was now officially over for him. He’d passed the most important tests already, so he just had interviews and training to go. But he wasn’t worried about those. At least it was a day away, giving him time to recover from his minor hang over.

“Oh, good morning,” a girl appeared at his doorway, clad in his shirt from last night and dark curls. Great. He’d momentarily forgot about that, a result of the alcohol also. Karma was not in the mood. Then again, it was his own fault for agreeing to it, wasn’t it? At least he was in his own place, but that meant he was going to have to wait for her to leave. Her… He paled a little bit. Had she told him her name? Because it completely escaped his mind.

“Do you want breakfast?” She asked, wryly. “I already started making some, and here,” she tossed him some painkillers.

So he couldn’t even just throw her out. Besides, that was one of his favourite shirts. He’d probably have to figure out her name somehow, then. Some girls seemed to have a habit of testing him on his memory, the morning after. One was so obnoxious about it he’d pretended to forget. But, it wasn’t like he’d really done anything. He’d never approached any of those girls, he’d just agreed when they propositioned him.

“Sure,” he said, because what was the likelihood of it being poisoned?

It was scrambled eggs. Not a hard dish but still pretty tasty. He sat opposite her, briefly considering that she was attractive but not in a very typical sense. Unlike Nagisa, whose blue eyes were much more akin to the sky on a normal day, hers were more like a rough sea. This was nothing to do with Nagisa, he forced himself to remember.

She was examining him, rather than looking. “Thanks for the sex.”

He almost choked on his egg.

The girl laughed, in a way Karma really didn’t choke. “What? We’re both adults here. At least, I sincerely hope so. Man, I needed that,” she stretched out casually.
This didn’t happen. He was, unfortunately, well acquainted with one night stands at this point. Standard procedure was that she would act shy the morning after, if she even stayed long enough, since the guise of drinking or the general party atmosphere was gone. Even beta girls, who stereotypically were more straight forward. Then again, he rarely even agreed to omegas. Their scents annoyed him to some degree, and they always expected a lot, courting and commitment. Definitely no guys, that was too familiar. Beyond hanging out a few times, it always started to feel too wrong for him to put up with, anyway, regardless of who it was.

“So,” she continued, when Karma didn’t, “who are they?”

“Huh?” He suddenly felt full.

Her smile was pitiful. “You’re in love with someone, right? That’s why you use human comfort as a coping mechanism.”

For one of the few times in his life, Karma was lost for words.

“At least,” she said then, with the nerve to half laugh, “you blurted out as much last night. That, and, I took a psychology class one time.”

“It’s a long story,” he said, suddenly wishing he didn’t eat all.

Her smile turned sad. “They must be pretty great, huh?”

Don’t think about it. That’s what he’d been telling himself these past few years, and usually it worked. Turning it off and pushing it away was hard, near impossible at times, but it hurt less that way, and he preferred that. When things were forced to the surface, well, it tended to get kind of ugly. And Karma didn’t enjoy ugly.

“You don’t even know.”

“Well,” she said, suddenly standing up to put her discarded trousers on, “I hope it works out for you.” She picked something off the floor, and tossed it right at him. “I took the liberty of saving my number, you know, in case you get over it someday and want to go again. Otherwise, I’ve been told I’m a good listener. See ya.”

Well, that happened. Looking down at his phone, Karma realised she’d saved her contact ‘love life guru’, and the door was closing behind her before he had the chance to be polite and at least say goodbye. So, he supposed he really wasn’t finding out her name. Or getting that shirt back. Damn, he really did like that one.

He cleaned the plates, and then immediately jumped in the shower. He wouldn’t usually be so enthusiastic to do so, but he wanted to wash the scent of her perfume from his skin. Coping mechanism… That would require there be something to actually cope with. And Karma was just fine. Nagisa had his life, and Karma had his, and that was that, irrevocable link between them or not.

Thinking back to it, once again, he had been the one to put the distance between them. They’d talked a lot at first, despite the distance, and admittedly he’d been happy. But, it went on, and Nagisa seemed very geared towards being friends. And Karma was okay with that, at least he thought he was, until the summer break when he saw a lot of Nagisa all of a sudden. Then, well, it had been torture.

Knowing Nagisa’s touch, and knowing he couldn’t feel it again… It had hurt to even be around him. Which was stupid really because he’d known that was going to happen, years before, it was
half the reason he’d kept his feelings to himself. So, that had left him with only one option, to fade himself away, to cut off their friendship entirely. They were always going to be that link between them, they shared a child, but aside from that it was a thing of the past.

Time to go to Kunugigaoka for the last time in a while, he thought, once he was clean.

He didn’t have time to go to their yearly clean up. Maybe it was surprising, but Karma actually liked going to the old place, even if it did mean physical labour. Most of the time it was just fun to catch up with his ex classmates, and nice to remember. And, well, Daichi always liked being made a fuss of. Karma wondered if he’d grow up loving that mountain as much as they all had. Even if he couldn’t make that event, though, he still wanted to go.

The journey he had to take was time consuming, but worth it. But he’d gone this many times over the last few times to see Daichi, and honestly he wasn’t going to miss it, even if it had been more than worth it at the time. Almost hilariously, it was late afternoon by the time he reached Kunugigaoka, and then started to make his way up the mountain.

Aside from being overgrown and rough around the edges, nothing had really changed all that much. His route was the same, step for step, as it had been since the first time he walked that way, every day for almost a year. The building, too, was kind of tattered, but at least it was due to be cleaned up a little. Karma sighed, looking up at it. Somehow it seemed smaller now.

The door was locked, he remembered, since Isogai had been elected in charge of the keys. Well, Karma examined the padlock, hopefully this wouldn’t do too much harm. He pulled an appropriately sized pin out of his pocket, and set about picking it. Doing so wasn’t hard, exactly, he just had to find the right angle, and just like, it came unlocked.

He closed the door behind him, and was overwhelmed by the familiar scent of old classroom. This hallway, the creaky wood beneath his feet… it was weird being back there. Karma walked like he had every day that year (well, the ones he didn’t skip), right back into that classroom. Somehow, empty as it was, it didn’t really feel that way. For a moment, he just stopped and stared, taking it all in.

“Who’s there?”

Karma would know that voice anywhere. But, he hadn’t been expecting anybody else would show up, so what were the chances? He hadn’t heard footsteps before, but that was just the skill of the best assassin he knew. He took a deep breath, and turned.

“Nagisa? It’s been a while.”

Months, to be exact. They’d both had exams on Daichi’s birthday, albeit at different times of the day, so they’d managed to split it in half without actually seeing each other. In fact, Karma had become an expert at avoiding Nagisa recently, and only part of that was actually intentional. Aside from that, though, he knew it was going to change eventually, since he’d have to see him anyway at the end of next week to pick Daichi up. Annoyingly, with distance and time, Nagisa was even more attractive than Karma remembered, though his once fresh fruit scent was completely off and artificial, like clean linen.

“Karma,” Nagisa regarded, surprise in his tone but little enthusiasm. “But… only Isogai kun has the key, right?”

He took a deep breath, trying to keep this as neutral, and forced a light smile on his face. “But you’re here,” he demonstrated with his lock pick, “so you broke in too.”
“You haven’t changed, huh,” Nagisa sighed. “Your hair’s different.”

It wasn’t exactly new, he’d just started styling it a little different, so his fringe didn’t cover his whole forehead anymore. “You like it?”

“What are you doing here?” He dodged, tone still serious.

“Nothing particularly…” He laughed it off. “Just want to scare those who’re coming tomorrow. Thinking about setting up some traps.”

There was a distant look over his face. “I see… So you’re definitely not coming tomorrow.”

“Don’t think so.”

“Your job will be decided will be decided at the government office tomorrow, huh?” That was said a little lighter. “Don’t you feel uneasy?”

Karma turned his back on him, walking over to the desk that used to be his. “I only need to act like the perfect interview candidate. It’s hardly a problem. Do you think my acting skills are worse than the others?”

There was no response, but Nagisa laughed awkwardly, a kind of habit he always displayed when he didn’t know what else to say. Sometimes he found it endearing, other times it grated on his nerves a little. In a circumstance like this, it was more of the latter.

“Honestly the kind of job I want is right up ahead,” he continued, “so there’s no time to waste on this kind of failure.”

“That’s great Karma…” Nagisa started, definitely sincere. “You’re not lost at all.”

He couldn’t believe that after so long, this was how they were talking. They didn’t exactly slide straight back into place comfortably, like no time had passed, like Karma hadn’t mostly avoided Nagisa’s conversation for the last three and a half years. But he hadn’t expected that they would, and maybe that was for the best. But, he could tell there wasn’t hatred. It was more like rusty and chipped gears doing the best to work in tandem.

What? They’d never have worked well together like that. Karma was pretty secure now in the fact that he wasn’t a relationship kind of person. Clearly, Nagisa was, since he always seemed to be finding them. Not that Karma was bitter or anything. On the contrary, Nagisa seemed happy or at least content with his life, and this guy annoyed him less than the last one, though he’d only met him once. Maybe it was because he looked like he was about to melt into a puddle when Karma tried out a half glare for fun, just to see how he’d react.

If they were both secure, then, Karma supposed he didn’t have to force a wedge between them anymore. Especially if he was essentially forced to see Nagisa once a week for the rest of his life, and that wasn’t including social events or anything like that.

“Nagisa,” he offered, “want to explore?”

Maybe it was the atmosphere of the class building sending him back to his teenage self internally, but they did slip back together as they walked around. It was all small talk, but they chatted around, walking to the hallways, leaning against the shoe lockers, even mooching around the science room. At least right there, though, it wasn’t about them, it was about the memories.

“It hasn’t changed at all,” Nagisa said, as they stepped into the staff room.
“The whole mountain was bought after all,” Karma remembered. Nobody else to interfere with it.

“If I remember correctly,” Nagisa smiled, “it was you who suggested that.”

“I don’t want it to be destroyed by other people,” he paused. “Speaking of that, it’s good to sell it at a high price as a tourist spot.”

Nagisa laughed again, and just like that, they ran out of conversation. And this was the last room of the building. Although this hadn’t been an experience Karma had intended to share, a part of him didn’t want this to be over yet, not when it had been so long since Nagisa stood by his side. So, he chose to dig around in one of the desks, his hands securing what he was after.

“That’s…”

“Korosensei’s graduation album,” he pulled it out, opening it up.

Nagisa swallowed “Korosensei… I remember that first day, when he showed up.”

Karma just listened to him recall it all. Of course he’d heard this story from many people, since he was still on his suspension when Korosensei first became their teacher. So, Karma didn’t focus on the words Nagisa spoke, but his soft tone. The way his eyes glassed over, his soft fingers stroking over the pages of the album… He zoned out.

“It was like a department store of weaknesses…” Nagsisa reflected. “I wonder why so many.”

“Mmm?” Karma came back to him himself. “Isn’t that the octopus’ own way?”

“It was the result of his seriousness to be a teacher,” Nagisa smiled. “For our own sake.”

“Promise?”

“For Korosensei, it’s very important.”

“That being said, that education goes beyond my imagination.”

How often were there teachers like Korosensei? He remembered his first day in that class, the frustration of Korosensei getting the better of him. He also remembered standing on top of a hill, staring down at locks of long blue hair, blowing about in the wind. It had been a while then, too, since they’d seen each other.

Of course, his priority hadn’t been Nagisa that day, though. He was only motivated by the thought of killing his teacher, releasing all his pent up frustrations. To the point he’d called his bluff and risked dying for it. Nagisa had dived after him, he remembered, though he didn’t follow him the whole way down. But Nagisa had always been like that. Not that it mattered, Korosensei had had a plan.

“Only a teacher with Mach 20 can be that flawless at meddling,” he said. “I have no choice but to praise him.”

There was that laugh again. “Although everyone wanted to kill him, he meant everything to us. W-without his guidance, I might have become an assassin. In that year, a few entwined threads unwound. It’s the same for everyone.”

Karma agreed with him. “Although I don’t trust teachers, I guess I changed a little, thanks to that octopus.”
“Korosensei always seemed like he had a plan, but there were some unexpected failures. Lewdness and gluttony. But, he thought of us more than anything else.”

“Even so, there were things even Korosensei himself couldn’t have predicted at all.”

Nagisa shot him a half smile. “I don’t think anyone could have predicted Daichi.”

It was true. Of all the things Karma had expected from his last year of middle school, having a child wasn’t one of them. And he couldn’t regret a second of it, because it had given him the best son ever. Karma had met other seven year olds, and even if he was naturally biased, none of them were as cool, intelligent, funny, etc. etc.

He turned, then. “Or Kayano. I didn’t expect Kayano to have tentacles either.”

Karma remembered it all too well. “Completely no mark, a really great actress.”

“No matter how perfect her acting was, having those tentacles was painful,” Nagisa looked away from the book. Kayano endured the pain and hid it all the time.”

“For a whole year… for her sister.” Karma swallowed. “In order to avenge Yukimura Sensei.”

Nagisa shot him a look. “Yukimura sensei died for the sake of protecting Korosensei. It wasn’t Korosensei’s fault.”

The memories got a little uncomfortable after that. Their conversation tapered out, and Karma could only remember the night sky, and a million lights swirling around them. At some point they closed the book, drifting apart again. Karma ended up sitting by the window, staring out as the sun began to set. It was a mellow kind of piece.

“Hey, Karma?” Nagisa said eventually.

He turned his head. “Hmm?”

“Want to take a walk?”

“Sure.”

So Nagisa was the same as him, then. Neither of them quite wanted to leave, and in a space like this, they were separated from the realities of their separate lives. Somehow, the mountain was just as nostalgic as the actual building. But, so much of their time had been spent out here, training, working together. They ended up wandering down by the pool, which was so covered at this point it seemed like it was becoming a part of the mountain again.

“We got to experience so many things that we would never have been able to if assassination wasn’t added into the classroom,” Karma commented.

“I wouldn’t have wanted it another way,” Nagisa replied, looking out at the water.

A childish urge came over him. Again, maybe it was just being in this kind of environment again, because he was shot right back. All the space between them faded, and well, Karma just kind of wanted to mess with him. He gave Nagisa a playful shove, suggesting he was going to push him right into the swimming pool.

At first, Nagisa looked annoyed, pushing back at him, after he’d recovered from the initial fright of almost falling. “What are you, twelve?” He muttered.
Karma smiled, and shrugged. “Careful where you’re standing.”

“You really haven’t changed,” Nagisa said, almost like he was surprised.

“Did you?”

Swallowing, Nagisa didn’t meet his eyes. “Since being a student here? Yes, a lot. I didn’t use to see a lot for myself, but then that teacher taught me… that’s why I want to be a teacher.”

“Because he was there,” Karma agreed, “I have myself now.”

“Everyone is working hard on their own way. If it wasn’t for that one year, nothing would be the same.”

“I guess everyone likes that octopus.”

They strolled around some of their old haunts, a few memories of their younger selves coming to light wherever they went. Once they’d just about covered the mountain, they ended up close to the class building, standing right at the cliff Karma had once thrown himself over the edge of. Nagisa was wrong, he felt head changed quite a bit, since that day.

As if to get revenge for earlier, Nagisa’s hand came up against his arm, mock pushing him over. He kept it light, though, like he wanted to make it clear it was only a game.

“You wanna go?” Karma clenched his fist, regaining his balance after a light stumble.

He laughed. “Only if you’re sure you want to lose.”

A wide grin broke out on Karma’s face. “Oh, you bet?”

“I know,” Nagisa returned his smile wryly. Like it was an invitation, he sauntered off, back inside.

Karma had missed Shiota Nagisa. To a degree even he hadn’t realised. Nagisa had a lot of smiles, from light to downright cruel, but his playful one had always been one of Karma’s favourites. His existence was a cruel joke of the universe, to be honest. To dangle the only person he’d loved (and frankly, likely ever would) in front of him, but cause so much to stand in the way, to make any idea of them actually being together so far from possible that it was almost funny to imagine it… Well, Karma must have been a bastard in a past life somewhere.

They ended up back inside the classroom, though they’d just about pulled all of their memories up to the surface already, and there wasn’t a lot else to say. Karma looked around, and then spotted some left over chalk. Maybe he really should try to freak the rest of his ex classmates out. He picked it up, starting to draw out a cartoon version of Korosensei, knife in his head to boot.

“Karma…” Nagisa noticed what he was doing.

“It’s okay,” Karma brushed off, “they’ll clean it up tomorrow.”

“You’re not going anyway!”

Karma ignored him, instead staring at his artwork. “It’s a shame that you couldn’t be here to witness our growth. It’s a win and you run away, Korosensei…”

For just a second, it was like Korosensei’s signature laughter had filled the air. Nagisa looked at him, too, like he’d heard it too. Of course, there was no way, but the two of them laughed to themselves anyway. If it was possible for Korosensei to haunt the place, then Karma was sure he
would.

Nagisa stepped over to the front of the class, then, where Korosensei once stood, fingers brushing against the roll book. It didn’t matter what was between them, he was still proud of Nagisa for coming so far with what he truly wanted to do. Honestly, he knew Nagisa was going to be one hell of a teacher, even if he didn’t have Korosensei’s superhuman abilities. He had this annoying way of getting to people sometimes.

He plopped himself at his old desk. “Don’t lose, Sensei.”

There was an actual gasp, before Nagisa brought himself back to reality. “Of course, you too.”

“Dummy,” Karma scoffed, standing up. “It’s time to go.”

Nagisa didn’t say anything for a moment, until Karma was right beside him. “Can I have that piece of chalk? I kind of want to write something.”

“Sur-“ Karma moved to hand it to him, but stopped midsentence.

All day, Nagisa had kept that hand concealed. He must have, because surely Karma would have noticed. Right on his ring finger, clear as day, well, there was a ring. Karma had never pictured Nagisa being one to wear jewellery for fun. Which could only mean one, devastating thing. He dropped the chalk, causing Nagisa to look down at it, making like he would pick it up. But he reached out, grabbing his hand forcibly like it would dematerialise.

“You’re…”

“Yeah,” Nagisa snatched his hand back.

His mind started to spiral. Sure, he knew Nagisa was all loved up. But that was his own thing. They hadn’t been dating for that long, right? Not long enough for something permanent like marriage. What was Nagisa thinking saying yes? Unless… He actually wanted to get married? To someone like Gotou? Karma’s fingers shook.

“I think we should probably leave,” Nagisa said, cold. Like the magic was over. “I’ll see you next week.”

Was that it then? Of course, this wasn’t the same Nagisa he’d turned his back on at the train station. It all crashed down on him, then, and suddenly he was alone in the classroom. Just like he’d been when he arrived. Had Nagisa even really been there? No, of course he had, otherwise it wouldn’t feel like he’d been stabbed.

Relationships were temporary. But this… They couldn’t come back from this. No amount of casual sex or any of the rest of it had managed to be anything more than a temporary distraction in four years. He’d learnt not to think about him all the time, to live a functional life without Nagisa at his side, but that hurt had never stopped occupying his mind at all. And now he might just have lost Nagisa forever.

He let out a bitter, humourless chuckle. But hadn’t he already, years ago?

Chapter End Notes
Oh the angst, the humanity!

See you next time for Slightly Less Angst
Karma was hot. Now, Nagisa had always known that. However, he hadn’t seem him in months, and he was somehow even hotter. It couldn’t be the hair alone, surely? That was the only major thing that seemed to have changed, but just that being so affective… If he’d been attractive before, then now he embodied some kind of masculine perfection and it was near mouth watering.

And Nagisa was tearing himself about it because he had a boyf- fiancé. This had to be some kind of emotional cheating or something. Maybe it was okay as a distant admiration, something like a model or move star. Shouyou didn’t hide when he found people in movies attractive, did he? Nagisa definitely didn’t feel jealous, if he did. So maybe it was okay, if he still remembered that it wasn’t Karma he loved. Not anymore.

Maybe he was just sexually frustrated in general. Even that seemed better than some latent feelings he’d forgotten to squash. But… He thought back with the scrunch of his nose… It had only been like a week and a half, maybe even longer. He’d also never really been frustrated like that before, very rarely the initiator at all, so he didn’t know why that would start all of a sudden.

A part of him wondered if it really was just that Shouyou was far away, and he was missing him on a deeper level than he’d expected he could. Like his brain was confused about now lacking love, and had just reached out desperately. And, hey, Karma had been standing right there. But it hadn’t even been a day. Nagisa was sure something as dramatic as that couldn’t happen so quickly.

He concluded that it was just the shock of this immensely long day, where his emotions had been dragged about fifty different directions. There would be no cheating, physically or mentally. In fact, right then and there, he decided to send his fiancé a text message to ask how his flight went. Nagisa tried to ignore the fact that he’d have to see Karma very soon.

Daichi was right at him when he returned, hugging him again just as hard as he had at the train station. Honestly, Nagisa felt a little bit guilty about leaving again, even if it was just for a couple of hours. But visiting that classroom had felt entirely necessary, considering what he’d have to do tomorrow. Besides, he knew it would be good for his parents to have a little time with Daichi, since they were moving away.

“Did you have a nice time?” Nagisa asked.

He nodded against his chest. “I got ice cream.”
“Oh, really?” He smiled. He didn’t mind Daichi having treats every now and then.

His father laughed. “We won’t be able to spoil him so often anymore. “

Daichi bit his lip. “I can still come’n visit, right?”

“Of course you can,” Nagisa said gently, “whenever you want to. It’s getting kind of late now though, aren’t you tired?”

“Nope!” He stated proudly. “I wanna stay up with you!”

This happened a lot. In fact, pretty much every time Nagisa visited. Usually, Nagisa would just go lie with him until he eventually passed out from exhaustion, rather than letting him stay up like that. But, they couldn’t exactly keep that up as a habit. And he knew that Daichi was perfectly capable with going to bed on his own.

“I’ll be right there in the morning,” he said, “I promise. And the morning after that, and the morning after that…”

“Fine,” he half groaned, though he also giggled. “Goodnight Daddy, goodnight Grandma, goodnight Grandpa…”

Of course, he got a chorus of goodnights from everyone, before going off to his bedroom. Nagisa was pretty tired too, so it probably wouldn’t be long until he joined him anyway. He just hoped everything would work out, since tomorrow was bound to be kind of a dramatic change. Maybe sensing it, or maybe out of habit, his mother brought over a cup of tea.

“Thank you,” Nagisa said, cupping his cold hands around it.

She sat opposite him. “So you said yes, then?”

He almost splilt it. “W-wha?”

His father shot him a smile. “That Gotou- though maybe we should call him as Shouyou now- told us he was planning on asking you to marry him. Well, it was more like he asked us for our blessing.”

Nagisa didn’t think he was that kind of traditionally minded, not enough to speak to his parents beforehand. He’d barely blinked an eye at the idea of Nagisa having had a child at fifteen. In fact, he could remember several occasions when Shouyou had told him he thought traditional things were a waste of time. Was he just trying to impress his parents, or something? He wasn’t sure how he felt about that.

“W-what did you say?”

“Clearly,” his mother gestured his ring, “We said that if it was what you both wanted, then we’d support it.”

His father smiled. “Seeing your child find someone to be happy with is any parent’s dream. We should be saying congratulations.”

Nagisa wasn’t sure why he felt deflated. Why would his parents say no to a request like that? It wasn’t like they’d met Shouyou a lot, and the times they had, they’d seemed to like him. Nagisa should be over the moon with his life. By all means he had the best of luck, with little to even complain about. But, that ring felt like a heavy weight on his finger. It’s just because it’s new, he
told himself, *something to get used to.*

Soon enough he really was too tired to sit and talk. Thankfully his day had been pretty long, so it wasn’t odd to excuse himself from the conversation. Nagisa just had to try and be quiet, in case Daichi actually had managed to go to sleep. He sighed, kind of glad this would be the last time they had to cram a futon into that tiny room. He used all his skills to sit down on it soundlessly, checking there was no movement.

“Daddy…” Daichi said softly, the minute he shifted.

Oh, well. “Come on then,” he said, though he wasn’t at all annoyed really.

Just like that, Daichi slipped out of his bed, padded over to him, and lay down at his side. Nagisa tried not to cringe too much at the feeling of his weirdly cold feet, and wrapped his arms around him with a sigh. He was happy to start the next part of their lives together, finally, now that the limbo of university was over.

“Love you Daddy,” Daichi mumbled, clearly half asleep.

“I love you too,” he said, though he knew Daichi wouldn’t be able to fathom how much.

Unfortunately it was an early start for them both the next morning. A start Nagisa experienced with a tiny foot in his face. He wasn’t sure how it was even possible for Daichi to wiggle around that much, in one night, but it happened constantly. He pulled himself up to ready himself first, knowing everything else would be easier that way.

He stood in the bathroom for a probably unhealthy amount of time, scrutinising every inch of his appearance. They’d had practise and stuff already, but this was going to be Nagisa’s first time with a real class. He didn’t want to make an awful first impression, considering they were going to be stuck together for the next year. Presuming he didn’t get fired before then.

After his fifth attempt at flattening his hair, he decided it was probably not going to get any better. Taking a deep breath, he knocked back his two daily pills, hating the rough feeling of it travelling down his throat. Then, Nagisa squinted, realising the birth control was kind of pointless since his fiancé was in another country. But, well, it was kind of part of the habit now.

Everything was going to be okay, he told himself. He had other things to think about anyway, first. He went back into the room, where Daichi was still knocked out. He wished he could let him continue to sleep peacefully, but unfortunately that wasn’t going to happen. Nagisa crouched down, not wanting to be too startling, and started to shake Daichi awake.

“Morning Daichi,” he said.

“Wha-” He rolled over, still sleepy apparently.

Nagisa shook him again. “Your new school is pretty far away, so you need to get up now, or we’ll be late.”

“Don’t wanna go.”

If Karma were there, he’d probably just pick Daichi straight up over his shoulder and tell him ‘too bad’. Unfortunately, Nagisa wasn’t really strong enough to pull that off. Nor did he want to resort to bribing him. They were on a time limit, though, so Daichi really couldn’t get his own way this time. School was important!
“I have to go,” Nagisa said, “and my school’s not so far away from your new school.”

“Is it?” He finally poked his head up.

He smiled brightly. “I’ll tell you all about it when you’ve brushed your teeth.”

Things didn’t go too badly after that. Daichi really did get up and mostly presentable, though his dismay when Nagisa showed him his uniform was something else. Of course, not all elementary schools required uniform, in fact most didn’t, so this was a new thing for him. Still, he did tug it in, a pout on his face the entire time, especially when Nagisa had to help him with his buttons.

Aside from the face he pulled, he looked really kind of cute dressed up like that. Definitely far too old for Nagisa’s liking, but there was absolutely nothing he could do about that. Despite Daichi’s clear reluctance, they managed to get through the morning, breakfast included. It was the kind of morning that went by in a blur, and the next thing he knew, they were saying goodbye and walking to the train.

He suddenly felt a little bad, witnessing the almost forlorn way Daichi stared out of the window as the town sped past. He’d been worried about being late, but not so much about Daichi’s actual feelings. It must be really scary to face such a sudden change, especially since he already wasn’t the biggest fan of school. Nagisa related, honestly, though it was probably much worse for a seven year old.

“Everything’s going to go fine today,” he said, “I promise.”

Daichi didn’t say anything.

“Are you nervous?” He tried. “That’s normal, you know. I’m actually pretty nervous myself…”

He took his eyes off the window. “You are?”

“Well,” he said, “if you have a bad teacher, you can’t really learn a lot. I have to make sure that a whole bunch of people do well so they can eventually get good jobs for themselves.”

“You’re a great teacher, Daddy,” Daichi rested his head on his shoulder. “Wish you were my teacher.”

Honestly, Nagisa half agreed. Teaching a bunch of kids around Daichi’s age sounded far less intimidating than a group of teenagers. Teenagers that were only four or five years younger than him. The nerves really were starting to get to him, then. But he had to briefly put that to the back of his mind, when the train came to their stop.

Even Nagisa felt a little intimidated stepping towards Daifugou Academy. Since it was a rare school that catered for all age groups, it had to be big. There might not be a mountain campus, but even having been to a school like Kunugigaoka, he felt highly out of his depth. He swallowed, looking around. Some of the older students walked past, graceful and postured enough to look like they were floating.

“Oh okay,” he crouched down, swallowing. “Try your best to have a good time. Make friends!”

Daichi looked over his shoulder at the big building. “I don’t want to.”

“I know,” Nagisa winced. “Just give this place a chance? I’ll be picking you up soon enough.”

He nodded, finally turning on his heel, following the other kids. He looked so small like that,
Nagisa couldn’t help but watch him go for a while. Daichi was pretty tough, he knew that, so he just had to hope he was going to be okay. He couldn’t stay for too long, though, or else he really would be late, and that wasn’t the impression he wanted to make on his first day.

Gokuraku, as it turned out, was pretty different to the school Nagisa had just left Daichi in. Like, different universes, different. But that didn’t matter, everyone deserved to have a good education, so Nagisa was going to be the best teacher he could be. Of course, he’d never actually worked before, and he just as nervous at the idea of meeting his co-workers.

The headteacher, as it turned out, was a lot more laid back than any other member of staff he’d met at a school. His shirt was untucked and he had long dark hair, swept back in a kind of messy ponytail. Still, Nagisa felt his throat go dry with nerves. This man could technically break his entire career, so Nagisa needed to try his best to get along with him.

“So you’re our new trainee,” he said, the minute he noticed Nagisa. “I should welcome you.”

“It’s nice to meet you,” Nagisa said as politely as possible, bowing his head. “I’m Shiota Nagisa-” He looked down at a piece of paper. “Looks like you have class 3-5. Good luck with that one,” he gestured the door.

That didn’t sit well with Nagisa at all. This school didn’t have a system like the E Class, but he could tell the stigma of being put in a bottom class was already there. He hadn’t even met these kids yet, but he felt almost protective over them already. What they needed was for someone to have faith in them completely, so they didn’t just get left behind in a system built against them.

Just remember to smile, he told himself, finally stepping into the classroom, barely giving himself enough time to look around.

“Hello everybody! I’m Shiota Nagisa, the trainee teacher in charge of this class.”

And then Nagisa looked, and realised the horror of his current situation. This was nothing like his E Class at all, where Nagisa had mostly looked up at his new teacher in stunned silence and awe. He was surrounded by boys that were better described as thugs than students, all glaring at him like he was their next meal. The whole classroom was in utter disarray, too, like there had been no order to it for years.

Their words came in fast.

“Huh? A trainee?”

“You’re shitting me.”

“Hey, that’s a girl!”

“Let’s pull down her pants and see!”

“C’mon, you’re in junior high, ain’t’cha?”

Honestly, this wasn’t really what he’d envisioned when he decided to become a teacher, but he hadn’t had the luxury of choosing where his placement assignment was. The power balance here was the complete opposite to how it had been with Korosensei, the teacher he admired the most. Maybe if he’d just grown taller… This wouldn’t be so much of an issue.

“Do you know what kind of place this high school really is?”
“If you don’t want to wind up in the hospital, make this a study hall.”

Right then, the bell rung, just as he was starting to break out into a cold sweat. He’d forgotten everything, but maybe he could bring it back.

“T-the bell’s rung, so take your seats, class.”

“T-take your seats, class,” one of them mocked, and the group started to laugh.

Nagisa gulped, as the crowd of them parted. Another boy, definitely the leader of the group, seemed to have been hanging back, but now approached him with an equally deadly look in his eyes. Even if his suppressants dulled the effect, there was no doubt he was exuding alpha. Nagisa was almost frightened by it, especially when he lunged out, grabbing him easily by the tie.

“You don’t get to boss us around. We’ll kill you.”

Kill? Nagisa’s balance shifted. Kill? It was such a simple word, something people said casually every day. But kill had once meant so much to him. Killing was the basis of who he’d become today. And right then, Nagisa remembered exactly who he was. Even if Korosensei wasn’t exactly with them anymore, he still wanted to make him proud, to follow his teaching.

Nagisa focused on his consciousness, finding just the right moment, before dropping the roll book on the ground. Predictably, his eyes fluttered down, and that’s when Nagisa struck, clapping his hands together hard right in front of his face. Whilst he was briefly paralysed with shock, Nagisa dove around him, grabbing him by chin. Not wanting him to actually get hurt, he pulled out a chair, placing his limp body down on it. His free hand jabbed into his throat, a clear threat by all appearances.

And then he smiled. “I do hope you can kill me- before graduation, that is.” He picked up the discarded roll book, and walked back to the front of the class. “Take your seats. Let’s begin.”

They stared at him with wide eyes, and half of them looked like they’d gone into a state of shock. The boy he’d just attacked was giving him a look of pure fear. Slowly, one by one, they located the seats and desks they’d carelessly pushed aside. Nobody made too much of an effort to align them neatly or anything, but the fact that everyone was sat down was an improvement.

He swallowed. “I’ll try my best to remember all your names, but it might take me a couple of days!”

There still seemed to be a reluctance, from each of them, to reply to him. But, they got through it. All the while, Nagisa did study their names. It would be a lot easier if he could address them all properly as soon as possible. Hopefully, once they stopped staring at him like he’d actually killed their classmate, they’d be able to get along.

“Let’s see,” Nagisa said, once he was done. “We’re supposed to start with Japanese…” He looked around the room, and suddenly a bit of inspiration struck him. “It seems like you already enjoy practising your characters,” he gestured the insane amount of graffiti on the walls, “but I’m noticing a couple of errors.” Grabbing a sharpie, he squinted, finding one at height level. “Who wrote this kanji?”

There was a cough, but no actual answers.

“Well,” Nagisa corrected it, drawing in the missing stroke. “I feel like you were trying to write ‘discard’, but you actually wrote ‘pick up’.” This time, he found a piece of chalk, and wrote the two different kanji on the board as big as he could. “They’re similar, so they’re easy to confuse, even
though you probably learnt them years ago.”

He went on like that. Thankfully, there was a lot of graffiti on the walls. And, most of them were at least a little bit wrong, even if it was only the stroke order. The silence with which they watched him do it was a little unsettling, but he supposed it was better than huge disruption. It wasn’t quite making them write him a poem about tentacles, but sometimes the basics were more important.

“Does anybody have any questions?”

One of the students in the front raised an eyebrow. “Who are you?”

He laughed awkwardly. “About kanji?”

“He’s probably Yakuza,” someone whispered, receiving an elbow for daring to put out the question.

Nagisa almost groaned. Not this again. Thankfully he’d avoided giving out that impression during university too much. But, then again, he hadn’t gone past acquaintances with most people he met at university. How could he, when he was either going back home to visit Daichi, or studying at every opportunity he found. It had been hard to even give Shouyou much of his time, with most of their ‘dates’ just being studying in each other’s presence.

“I’m Shiota Nagisa,” he repeated again, and wrote his name on the board, since they were talking about kanji. “You can call me as Nagisa Sensei though, if you want. I don’t really use my family name.”

“He killed his family,” someone else whispered.

Nagisa cleared his throat. “Like I said, I’ll be your teacher for this next year, so let’s do our best to make it a good one. Anyway, we don’t really need all of this mess anymore, so let’s clean it up.”

His class blinked. “For real?”

“All of this has got to be distracting,” he said, “it’s important to have a clean place to learn.”

One boy stuck his hand up, receiving a glare from the person next to him.

“Yes,” Nagisa’s eyes went to the roll book, “uh... Suzuki san?”

“Uhm,” he said, “didn’t you also mess it up, though?”

Nagisa smiled. “That’s right! So, I’ll help you, of course.”

Once again there was a pause, like they weren’t sure what to do. But, exchanging deathly looks, a couple approached and tentatively took the cleaning supplies. Soon enough, most of his class got to cleaning. Not all of them, some remaining in their desks, but Nagisa didn’t want to push it too far on the first day. He did help too, of course, though he wasn’t blind to the way he was being eyed up.

It was like the clouds cleared from his eyes, once they were done. The place wasn’t picture perfect, but it was a good start. With a fresh gaze, it looked far less like a prison cell and more just like a classroom. In fact, even the students who had seemed threatening at first seemed more normal. Looking at them, as they returned to their desks, they were just that. Kids.

“I guess we didn’t really do that much Japanese,” Nagisa said, “but it feels better. Surrounding
yourselves with the things you can’t remember, like writing on the walls, can actually be a really good tactic. Just remember to clean it up afterwards!” He thought for a moment. “How about a break for five minutes, before we move onto… maths.”

He’d hoped that that would give them a chance to relax a bit, but things remained just as tense. There were a few whispers between the students, but once again, most of them just looked up at him. The levels of consciousness were spiked, all around the room, with people thinking too hard. Whether they’d done well in school before this or not, Nagisa could tell that there was a lot of intelligence there.

The boy he’d used his bloodlust on earlier had been silent, but then it seemed to spill over. “What did you mean?”

“A-are you confused by something,” Nagisa looked at his paper again, “Satou san?”

His eyes narrowed. “Kill you? You told us to kill you.”

Right. He had said that, huh? “I mean, n-not for real! I don’t want anyone to go to prison,” he laughed, “but I guess you can get close. If you manage to get me in that kind of position, I’ll have no choice but to give you an automatic ‘A’.”

That caused a few heads to raise up. “You’re kidding.”

“Nobody here’s got an A in their life,” a boy on the front row pointed out. “Don’t you think it would be a little strange if we started now?”

Nagisa remained steady, though. “Everyone in here is capable of scoring an A, even without assassination.”

Just as he finished his sentence, he felt just a little bit of bloodlust in the air. Of course, Nagisa was only a human, he couldn’t tell exactly where it was coming from. But, an attack was coming, so he kept on guard for it. Sure enough, it wasn’t long after that one of the students took an elastic band and fired some sort of object at him. Since he’d seen it coming, though, Nagisa was prepared to dodge it pretty easily.

“Good try!” He announced. “You should try being a little calmer when you go for a surprise attack, though.”

The rest of the day didn’t go too badly, after that. Nobody acted like dreamlike picture perfect students, exactly. Nagisa wasn’t sure exactly how much they were taking in, but it was only the first day, so none of the content was too complicated. Considering they weren’t threatening him anymore, that was pretty good progress in just a few hours. And, before he even knew it, the final bell was ringing out.

They weren’t exactly at the level of thanking him, but he decided a start was a start, as they left the classroom significantly cleaner than it had been when he first stepped in that morning. It had even taken his E Class some time to warm up to Korosensei, and he had been the best teacher. Then again, Nagisa was hardly responsible for blowing up the moon (then again, Korosensei hadn’t been either, but nobody knew that then).

Looking at his phone, once everyone left, he noticed a message, sent much earlier in the day.
Nagisa smiled at the messages, like a kind of weight had been lifted from him. Firstly, knowing Shouyou was safe and seemingly enjoying himself. But also the vote of support. Nagisa knew he tended to brush off compliments and praise, and Shouyou tended to give both freely and often. But, right then, it meant a lot to him.

He forced himself not to dwell on it, since he had places to be. If the internet situation really was bad, then he wasn’t too pressed to reply right away. Instead, he gathered his things, and headed out of the door. Looking around him, there didn’t seem to be a hugely dramatic divide between the students in his class and the rest of the school.

Dachi didn’t look particularly happy to see him. Somehow he’d managed to mess up his uniform a little, his buttons done up slightly wrong and his hair out of place. So it didn’t look like he was going to be gracefully floating anywhere anytime soon. The pout from earlier was still on his face, and Nagisa honestly wondered if it had ever left.

“How was it?” Nagisa tried anyway.

Daichi shrugged. “Fine.”

He wasn’t going to buy that. “Did you learn anything interesting?”

“…Not really.”
Nagisa tried to be rational here. Daichi was seven. What seven year old actively wanted to go to school? Still, he knew that he didn’t hate learning at all. He was always coming to Nagisa, asking him to explain complicated things. And of course Nagisa obliged, because he loved how interested Daichi got about certain topics.

“Well,” he said, “at least we can go home now. Are you at least excited to see it?”

He looked up at Nagisa, and then grabbed his hand. “Do I get a bigger room?”

“Not really,” he laughed, “living so close to Tokyo is quite a bit more expensive, you know, but it means we can go out to more places.”

Nagisa himself wasn’t exactly sure what to make of the new apartment. He’d only moved this close to make things easier for Daichi, which meant sacrificing a few things, one of those things being space. It had been hard enough to find an apartment that had two bedrooms in the first place, for him anyway. His and Karma’s starting salaries weren’t really equal. In comparison, the apartment they’d lived in for the first few years of Daichi’s life was practically a mansion.

“You can choose where you want everything,” Nagisa said, opening up the door properly for the first time. “Maybe it would be better if you choose some things you like here, and some things to keep at your Papa’s place.”

Daichi nodded, though he was clearly in his own little world. Honestly, Nagisa hated the idea of him living out of a backpack or anything like that. But, it’s what he’d wanted, out of the options he was given, and Nagisa had tried his best to explain. This was a day filled with new things, he supposed, so it was only natural to be a little quiet.

“What do you want for dinner?” Nagisa decided to ask.

He blinked. “Can we get delivery?”

Nagisa tensed. “My cooking isn’t that bad.”

Daichi didn’t say anything, which was insult enough. He could cook well enough! Well, breakfast anyway, that was easy… Truthfully Nagisa had never really had to cook that much else. When he was younger, his mother had prepared meals, and even when they moved out Karma cooked dinner for him, even when they were fighting. And, well, he hadn’t eaten the most healthily at university… Nagisa didn’t claim to be the best parent in the world but no way was he feeding his son a diet of instant ramen. So he hadn’t practised his cooking much, but he wasn’t incapable.

But… It had been a hard day. “I guess we can get pizza…”

Daichi perked up, finally. “Really?”

“Just this once okay!” He felt it necessary to say. “Only if you promise to eat healthy for the rest of the week. And that includes peppers.”

He wrinkled his nose. “But Daddy… I hate those.”

Nagisa smiled. “Do you hate them more than you like pizza?”

As if on cue, his stomach rumbled. “I want the pizza.”

“Then, let’s set up the TV and watch a movie. You can pick.”
He thought for a moment. “Sonic Ninja?”

*Again?* It was Nagisa’s favourite movie, but he’d seen it so many times at this point… “Anything you want.”

Some really freaking adorable art of Daichi by [hefengwuyulovesu](https://www.tumblr.com) on Tumblr! I think it’s really awesome that people want to draw art of my fics, and I’m glad they gave me permission to share it here so everyone gets to see the cute plum boy ^_^
Chapter End Notes

See, I haven't forgotten how to write fluff
Karma couldn’t help but feel a little apprehensive. He remembered the day he and Nagisa had decided to send Daichi to a place like this. Of course, since they were moving, he had to change schools anyway. Karma just wished they’d let him skip a year or something, but that wasn’t an option apparently. He wasn’t sure if throwing money at the problem was really the solution to anything, either.

Wasn’t that exactly what his own parents had done? His first years of school hadn’t been anywhere exclusive, exactly, but they’d sent him to Kunugigaoka, like that was going to straighten him out or something. But Daichi wasn’t like him, and didn’t need ‘straightening out’ or anything like that. So, Karma knew what private schools were like, mostly gateways to get accepted into the ‘good’ universities, even so young.

He caught sight of Daichi, then. One of the advantages to a school like this, for multiple ages, was that the library didn’t close when lessons ended. Unlike Nagisa, Karma’s job wasn’t as school timetable friendly. Not that it had taken Daichi much convincing to spend a couple of hours in the library. Karma didn’t understand entirely how that kept him so entertained, but he wasn’t going to complain about it.

Daichi’s face broke out into a huge smile. “Papa!”

Over the years, Karma had gotten used to Daichi’s weight barrelling into him. Sometimes it was completely without warning, but in this case he hadn’t seem him for almost two weeks. Maybe he’d had the short end of the stick, in letting Nagisa have Daichi first, since it meant he had to wait the extra week. Begrudgingly though, he’d been the busiest with the hiring process (which he passed with flying colours).

“Hey Daichan~” He picked him up, sighing at his feather light weight. “That’s a happy face.”

Daichi giggled. “Missed you!”

“Huh? I missed you too, you know,” he let him down again.

“I thought you were coming to pick me up from Daddy’s.”

Karma stuck his hands in his pockets, and they stated to walk. “I was, but then I thought it would
be better if I showed you the way home right away. I already picked up most of your stuff.
Anyway, how was school?"

He didn’t say another for a moment or two. “Fine.”

“Just fine?” He raised an eyebrow. “ Didn’t you learn anything fun?”

“Not really,” Daichi said, though he walked along happily enough. “Yagami Sensei said there was
gonna be a lot of tests soon.”

“Tests, huh?” Karma looked down at him, and thought that Daichi was pretty young for tests.
“Those take a lot of preparation, you know.”

Daichi hummed. “I’m not worried about them.”

He grinned. “Really? Well, then you can definitely get the highest score.”

“I will!” Daichi jumped up, tugging at his arm. “I can get the top in everything!”

“Hmm, okay, if you score top, then I’ll get you anything you want. Is that a deal?”

His eyes widened. “Anything?”

“Pretty much,” Karma said. “As long as it’s physically possible.”

A determined look came over his face, but then he stuck his head out to the side. “Papa! There’s a
pancake man!”

Even at the mention, Karma was halfway through pulling his wallet out of his pocket. But then, he
remembered himself. Whilst he could justify spoiling Daichi a little every time he’d seen him for
the last four years of their lives, things were different now. For half of his life, he was entirely in
Karma’s care, so he had to be careful with all of these treats.

“It’s a little close to dinner time,” he said responsibly. “Maybe tomorrow? It’s the weekend
tomorrow.”

He pouted. “Okay…”

Karma gave him a little nudge. “What do you want to do, anyway?”

“I don’t know yet.”

He was sure Daichi would probably let him know. Very loudly. At 6am the following morning.
Karma didn’t mind, though. His first week at work had been surprisingly tiring. Although of course
he knew that it wasn’t going to be easy, he was more than kept on his toes. He found that he kind
of liked that, though. Of course, not as much as he loved spending time with Daichi.

“Did you hear that, Papa?”

Karma blinked, paying attention once again. “Huh? Hear what?”

But Daichi had already taken off, on his own adventure. Thankfully he wasn’t running too far, so
that Karma couldn’t catch up with him. Still, he wasn’t so happy with his son darting down
alleyways he didn’t know. He was clearly focused on something, though, hands reaching out
underneath some sort of box. Apparently it was what he was looking for, but he started to lift it.
“Hey, careful!”

But Daichi didn’t seem to have any qualms. “Look!”

Now that the box was out of the way, Karma could see what Daichi had been hearing. It was kind of hard to see, at first, but two bright blue eyes were blinking up at them. As Daichi pushed it up, a small cat was revealed, black and dark brown and incredibly filthy. Not to mention, a quarter of its tail was hanging off by the bone. On seeing them, the thing hissed, but Daichi didn’t look scared at all, pity evident all over his face.

“Papa…” Daichi looked up at him. “We have to do something!”

“I-“ Karma wasn’t exactly an expert on stray animals. “We can take it to the vet?”

He didn’t even know where the closest vet was. It might seem cruel, but he had half the mind to just walk away. It wasn’t really his problem. But, Daichi would never forgive him if he suggested that, Karma was sure. And, well, leaving an animal to die in the middle of the street wasn’t the best start to being responsible.

“Don’t pick it up, Daichan!” Karma tried, as Daichi reached out, but his son was undeterred. “What if it bites you?”

“I don’t mind,” Daichi said, scooping it up anyway. “It’s probably hurting worse.”

Although the cat didn’t sound happy, it didn’t actually bite or scratch at him, and Daichi seemed more than ready to carry it. With no other choices, then, it looked like they were taking a detour. He cursed himself internally, pulling his phone out of his pocket to search for directions to the nearest clinic. It wasn’t like he’d lived in this area for long, either.

“Okay,” Karma said, “but we have to walk there quickly.”

He remained tense the entire way there, partially because this clinic was in the middle of nowhere, all things considered. Daichi was doing a good job of holding the cat steady, which was now mewling and whimpering. Karma knew he wasn’t going to hear the end of it if anything bad happened to that animal now, the evidence was all over the

The receptionist in the vet looked a little surprised. “W-welcome.”

“The kitty’s hurt,” Daichi said.

She peered down at it. “Is it your cat?”

“We found it,” Karma explained, and then he looked at the cash machine. “Look, I’ll pay for it.”

The woman nodded. “I’ll call for the vet right away.”

The cat hissed at her, but Daichi petted its head. “It’s going to be okay.”

It didn’t take them very long to be ushered into what appeared to be an examination room. Karma had never had pets, so this wasn’t something he was familiar with exactly, it was kind of similar to a regular doctors but everything had a kind of weird smell.

The vet smiled, like she was trying to make herself seem as warm as possible. “Nice to meet you…”

“Akabane Karma,” he introduced politely, and then nudged Daichi, reminding him to bow his
“I’m Doctor Doubutsu,” she retained her smile. “I’m guessing you found a stray. Mind if I take a look at them?” She lowered herself a little, asking Daichi.

“You have to be really careful,” Daichi emphasised, but he allowed her to take the cat from his arms.

She placed the cat on the examination table. “Don’t worry, I’ll be very gentle. I’ll start by seeing if there’s a microchip, and we can go from there.” The cat lay still as she got a gun like device out, and pressed it to its neck. “Just like I suspected, nothing. What are your plans, then?”

Karma’s eyes went wide. “I… just wanted to take it here.”

The look she gave him was a little pitiful. “I’m not sure there are many shelters around here that’ll take him so sick.”

He really wished she hadn’t had said that right in front of Daichi. Though he had his eyes on the cat, he could sense Daichi stiffening. Great. Daichi might be only seven years old, but he was smart enough to connect the dots of what would happen if no shelters would take the animal. He really didn’t want to deal with the fallout of that.

“Papa!” Daichi said in alarm. “We have to keep it!”

Karma swallowed, turning back to the vet. “Just do everything you can for it, we’ll worry about it later.”

She nodded. “I can see that this tale need to be amputated, so we’ll have to keep it overnight and hopefully perform the surgery tomorrow morning. In the meantime, I’d like to do some x-rays and blood tests to make sure there’s nothing else wrong, and hopefully administer some vaccinations. The cat doesn’t look too underweight, so there’s that at least. By the looks of things now, I think it’ll be able to recover.”

“Just do your best,” Karma said, wondering how expensive this was going to be.

“If everything goes smoothly, I’ll give you a call tomorrow afternoon!”

He turned to Daichi. “You hear that? It’ll be fine now.”

Daichi looked up at the vet. “Are you sure?”

“I’m pretty sure,” she looked between him and the cat. “Why don’t you wish it some extra luck, though?”

He nodded seriously, petting the cat gently on top of its head for encouragement. The cat let him do it, looking ever so slightly more comfortable, before Daichi reluctantly took his hand away. After that, Karma thanked the vet, before ushering Daichi out of the place as soon as possible, before Daichi decided that he wasn’t going to trust her.

It took him all of five seconds after they left. “Papa…”

“I can’t just get a cat, Daichan,” he winced.

He stood still. “Why not?”

There were plenty of reasons why he should not get a cat. For one, Karma had never had one, and
had no desire to. He didn’t even know how to take care of a cat. And even if he did, he had no idea if it would be in his tenancy agreement or not. There were sections of it he’d admittedly scan read, not really finding it that important. He wasn’t sure how best to explain that excuse, though.

“Pets are expensive,” he said, “I’m already paying for its medical bi-“

“I won’t ask for anything ever again!” Daichi interrupted, eyes practically ablaze. “I promise Papa! A-and I can probably eat a little less, so we can feed it!”

Karma looked at him. “You won’t grow up much taller if you don’t eat properly.”

He shook his head. “I don’t care!”

“…You really want to keep this cat, huh?” He sighed. “Look, you must be starving right now. We need to go home and I’ll think about it, okay?”

Daichi really didn’t look like he was okay with that, but he went with him anyway, in a much more subdued mood. Although Karma knew there wasn’t a lot he could do about that aside from agreeing to something he couldn’t guarantee, he still felt really bad. By the looks of things, attempting to distract Daichi into happiness wouldn’t work.

Aside from the cat thing, he realised maybe it would be a little scary, to move somewhere completely new. Not that he’d ever really seen Daichi get scared by anything before… Well, he’d tried his best to make it look not completely empty, whilst not going too crazy on the décor. He knew his own tastes were a little much for some people.

“Well, what do you think?” He said, letting him inside.

Daichi peered around, a little stiff. “s nice."

“I didn’t really know what you wanted to do with your room,” he said, “so I figured we could go shopping or something. We can get whatever you want.”

“Even a bed with a slide on it?”

Karma shrugged. “I thought you’d be more interested in bookshelves.”

Daichi really did perk up a little. “How many?”

“Well,” Karma squinted, “I don’t know how many are going to fit here.”

“Why don’t we put some on the ceiling!”

It seemed like Daichi had forgotten the concepts of basic physics, but Karma decided not to tell him that. He remained in a semi-good mood for the rest of the evening, at least, managing to eat and hold a conversation throughout. Karma could tell he wasn’t quite right, though. Instead of rushing off to get lost in a book the moment he was allowed, he stayed mostly silent, staring at whatever was playing on the TV.

Karma sighed. “It’s probably time for you to go to bed.”

See, he was being responsible, rather than just letting him go off when he got too tired. Though, a part of Karma just really hoped he’d wake up in a better mood, and he wanted to fast forward to that part. Daichi didn’t protest for once, getting into his pyjamas at swift speed, and pulling himself into what was just a temporary bed. It definitely was a bland room, he realised when he looked at it
like that, but it wasn’t going to stay that way.

“Well, goodnight then,” Karma said, when Daichi remained pretty silent.

“Papa…” *There it was.* “I’m worried about the cat…”

“Hey,” he said, “don’t worry too much. I promise we can go see the cat again tomorrow, no matter what.”

Daichi clenched the sheets between his fists. “Okay… But what if it’s really really hurt and the vet can’t help?”

He swallowed. “Okay, I don’t really know a lot about cats, but it was only the tail, right? I don’t think that’s enough to kill it.”

“Are you sure Papa?”

Debating it for just a second, Karma gave up. “That’s it, come on.”

He didn’t really give Daichi a choice in the matter, picking him up over his shoulder. Daichi squealed in slight alarm, but didn’t try too hard to fight him off as Karma carried him out of the room, plopping him down on his own bed. With Daichi in that kind of mood, Karma knew he’d just be worse on his own. Maybe he should try and just let him work through it, but he didn’t want to make him feel more worried about it.

“You can stay here,” Karma said, “as long as you try to go to sleep. Got it?”

Daichi nodded, morphing into some kind of octopus the second Karma lay down next to him, squeezing him so tight that Karma might have suffocated had Daichi actually been bigger. But he didn’t mind so much, especially when he actually started breathing heavily, signifying that he had actually fallen asleep. Even though it was pretty early, Karma didn’t mind so much, especially after his long first week of work.

And then he couldn’t stop thinking about that damn cat. What were the chances of Daichi even coming across something like that? He was really proud of him today, though, Karma realised. One thing Daichi had was serious compassion, and honestly Karma wasn’t sure where he’d got that from. He had no complaints, though. After taking a sift through his contract the next morning, Karma made a perhaps bad decision.

“Wake up, Daichan,” Karma gave him a nudge.

Daichi groaned, apparently not wanting to.

“Daichan~” He poked him in the ribs. “We have to go out shopping.”

He opened his eyes. “Shopping?”

“Well yeah,” Karma said, “we’re going to need to get cat things.”

The expression Daichi had on his face for the few seconds it took for the gears to spin in his head was frankly precious. Once he’d figured out what Karma meant by that, he shot up, giving Karma a hug so enthusiastically it nearly knocked him over.

“You really mean it?!”

“If the vet *lets* us,” Karma said, but it was pretty much settled then. “Come on, then.”
He’d never seen Daichi eat breakfast so fast, excitement pouring out of him in waves. Karma couldn’t hold him off for long, and they were soon at the closest pet store no more than five minutes after it opened. Daichi grabbed his hand and a basket, dragging him off into the cat section as if he was some sort of expert. Honestly, Karma wouldn’t put it past him to have read a book about animal care, so he was more than happy to follow, pretty much clueless himself on what cats needed.

A part of his soul died when they eventually got to the check out. Then again, they had picked up a lot of toys, as well as things that were probably necessary… This cat had better be the best pet ever. It was worth it to see how happy Daichi was, though. Of course, he didn’t have any siblings, and he most definitely wasn’t going to get any, so at least this would give him something else to do.

There was a spring in his step even when Karma dragged him into a different shop to buy furniture. Despite his enthusiasm about the bookshelves, that was definitely less interesting. He didn’t push him too far, though, since he could add to his room gradually. Karma was at least happy to have got most of the necessary stuff done, before they eventually returned home to construct everything.

“I’ll take the kitty things!” Daichi announced.

Karma squinted. “You’re the one who wanted the fancy bed. You help set it up.”

He pouted a little at that, but didn’t seem to mind helping Karma out too much. Not that DIY was a particular skill either of them had. Still though, he eventually had places to put his books, and a much cooler bed than Karma had ever had as a kid. Yes, it had a slide attached. There was only so much responsibility he could maintain.

That was at the back of their minds, though, when the phone call from the vet finally came. No more than five seconds after he put the phone down, he found he was pretty much forced out of the door. Thankfully, they’d got most of the stuff set up already, because a big part of Karma didn’t actually want to say no to Daichi’s excitement.

There was a different receptionist this time. “Welcome,” he said, “I’m guessing you’re Akabane san?”

“Hi!” Daichi said, rushing right up to him as if he was the one being addressed. “Is my kitty ready yet?”

“Right in that room,” he pointed.

The cat was waiting on the table, and of course that’s all that Daichi cared about, going over right away to pet it. It half looked like a different animal. The tail was about half its previous length, bearing the clear aftermath of surgery. But aside from that, Karma could actually see that its fur was actually black and white, since the dirt coating it had been removed.

“Everything went smoothly,” she said to Karma. “The blood tests and x rays were pretty much normal, and aside from being slightly malnourished, there’s nothing majorly wrong with her. Almost a miracle, really. I’ll still need to see her in around two weeks to check on the healing progress of the tail. Have you decided what to do, in terms of that?”

“We’ll keep it,” Karma said, giving up entirely.

“It’s a girl?” Daichi snapped his head around.

The vet smiled. “A pretty young girl, too. She was very well behaved for me, so please take good
“I promise!” He said with conviction.

“If you’re going to hold on to her,” she said, “I can implant a microchip for you right now, though you shouldn’t let her out for at least two weeks anyway. Do you have a name in mind?”

Karma looked down at Daichi. “What do you think? I’m no good at cat names.”

“Hmm,” he looked her over for a second, “her face and butt are kinda white, so… Maki!”

“Like the sushi?”

“That’s a good name,” the vet said. “Now let’s make sure she doesn’t get lost again, hm?”

Aside from his eyes nearly falling out of his head when it came to paying the bills, they left the clinic with a cat in tow, though in an actual carrier that time rather than Daichi’s own arms. Not that it mattered, since Daichi insisted on carrying it anyway. He was practically skipping with it, which can’t have been too good for the cat, but Karma figured if it was upset it would just meow or something.

Once it was released into the apartment, even Karma found himself holding his breath. But, after a minute or so of chilling out in the box, Maki finally made tentative steps out. She took one look at the place, before going straight over to the kitchen counter and leaping up onto it, apparently much preferring the vantage point.

“Welcome home Maki!” Daichi said, holding out a hand which the cat immediately nudged its head against.

“Looks that she’s made herself comfortable,” Karma commented. He tried reaching out to pet her in the same way Daichi had, but she just stared at his hand in disinterest.

It wasn’t so hard to adjust to life with a pet, as it turned out. Aside from cleaning up after it and putting food and water down, it mostly did its own thing. That was, following after Daichi like a lost duckling. Daichi didn’t seem to mind this at all, though, putting in top effort to keep the cat entertained. He even caught Daichi (he wasn’t very stealthy, so it wasn’t hard) sneaking it into his bed. Then again, Karma made no effort to stop him.

Even into the week, his fascination with the cat didn’t falter. Not that he seemed to sacrifice his other activities for it either. One day after work Karma found him sitting on his bed and reading aloud to it. The cat didn’t seem to care that much, of course she didn’t, but it sat there obediently anyway. Honestly, Karma couldn’t help but stand outside and listen for a little while.

Daichi still wasn’t at all happy about going to school, especially now they had a cat. Unfortunately, Karma didn’t really have the time or energy to actually argue with him about it, mostly defaulting to ‘you have to go because you can’t stay here alone’. At least he seemed happy to come home every evening, since he got to play with the cat then.

A part of him was actually super happy about the cat, since his second week of work was almost twice as tiring as the first. Of course, he had to play his cards right, and that meant not going too crazy right off the bat. That meant piles of paperwork and reports that never seemed to end. He was planning to do most of the extra stuff the next week, though, so Daichi didn’t feel ignored or anything. But what he did do during the day left him tired all the same, to the point where Daichi’s bed time was quickly becoming his bed time too.
“Papa~” Daichi drawled out, like he wanted something. “Can we play assassin?”

Karma sat up, from where he’d been relaxing on the sofa. “Right now?”

Daichi nodded. “Daddy’s gonna pick me up soon, and we haven’t played all week.”

“Fine,” he acted like he was vaguely annoyed, but he wasn’t at all. “What’s your weapon?”

‘Assassin’ was basically like hide and seek, just a little more dramatic, especially at the ending. It was also Daichi’s favourite game, if he ever wanted to play one. There were no real weapons involved, of course it was never that crazy, but Karma still had a bunch of anti-sensei material knives that had no other purpose.

“Just the knife,” Daichi said.

Karma beamed. “Huh? That confident?”

They got into positions, hiding from each other. Whilst Karma had the advantages of being an adult, plus a year of actual assassin training, one thing Daichi had was his size. He could curl up and hide in some ridiculously small places, and his intelligence meant they were usually well thought out too. One thing Daichi didn’t really possess, though, was much patience.

Sure enough, after only a few minutes of acting like he was hiding, he could sense the presence of the knife behind him. Karma grinned, ducking under the untrained arm behind him, managing to grab Daichi by the waist in the process. From there, it was easy enough to (gently) fling him down onto the sofa, pulling his own knife out at the ready.

Daichi wasn’t so easily deterred, though, that was clear from the wildness in his eyes. He wiggled out of his position before Karma could make any stabs, though, jumping to his feet with his knife at the ready. Karma grinned at him, because it was on. From there, it was a pretty basic fight. Of course, had he really wanted to, Karma could have disarmed him with ease. Daichi was still learning, and no match for hundreds of hours of serious training.

Karma didn’t let him win, though, eventually prodding him in the stomach after it had gone on for long enough. He didn’t like to lie to his son, even if it was meant to boost his self-esteem or whatever, he wanted him to earn his own victories. Daichi didn’t look too torn up about it, sticking his hands out in a surrender pose, laughing all the while.

After that, they simply sat down on the sofa, Daichi trying to huddle up to him as close as possible. Maki leapt up to join them, once she’d seen the fighting was over apparently. She still kept herself firmly planted on Daichi’s lap, but didn’t move away when Karma gave her an experimental pat. Damn cat. Just like that, his eyes begun to get a little heavy.

“Karma?”

He blinked at the unfamiliar noise. “Huh?”

Before he even knew what was happening, when his eyes were just half open, a loud clap sounded out right in front of his face. Of course, it petrified his every nerve, cutting off any hope of movement as his brain was fried. Once he came back to himself just a little, he heard his son’s ever familiar light giggles. Right, he was safe, this was just temporary.

“What was that for?” He stood up, regaining his vantage point.

Nagisa smiled a little cruelly, though he didn’t seem angry. “Leaving our son unsupervised.”
He looked down at Daichi. “You just let him in?”

“He said he was Daddy,” Daichi replied.

“I’m sure you took great care of him,” Nagisa said, with a glint in his eye.

Of all the times Nagisa chose to show him his rare ability for sass, he’d rather have it not been then. “Like you’re much-“

“Daddy!” Daichi interrupted, going over to the counter to scoop the cat into his arms. “You need to meet Maki!”

Nagisa’s eyes widened in surprise. “You bought a cat?!“

“Found a cat,” Karma corrected.

Daichi cleared his throat. “I found her. She was kind of hurt, Daddy, but then me and Papa went to the vet, and now she’s almost better.”

He reached out to pet her, and of course Maki not only accepted, but purred at his touch. Traitor. “I didn’t think you liked pets, Karma?”

“This one’s okay,” Karma said, with a sigh.

Of all the things he didn’t want to be doing right then, seeing Nagisa playing with a cat was probably at the bottom of the list. Although there had been mock annoyance before, there was genuine calm and happy in his eyes that looked ridiculously good on him. And unfortunately, Karma knew it wasn’t going to last, the ringed finger in which he used to stroke the cat was a solid reminder of that, and even just those few seconds hurt him down to his gut.

“Say goodbye to Maki,” Karma addressed Daichi.

He nodded, cuddling the cat as close as possible. “Bye bye, I promise I’ll be back next week!”

As if she understood, Maki meowed at him, before leaping down onto the floor.

“I’ll see you soon, okay?” He gave Daichi one last hug, revenge for how tight Daichi tended to see him. “Have a good time.”

“Love you Papa,” Daichi replied, before scurrying away to put on his shoes.

He and Nagisa exchanged no such verbal goodbyes. It wasn’t malicious, at least not on his end, but he didn’t really have a lot to say to him. Or anything he could bear saying to him. The most they did was shoot each other a half smile. And then, just like that, the door closed, and once again Karma was pretty much alone. It hadn’t felt so empty the week before.

His nap couldn’t have been long, but it had done enough to prevent him from just falling straight asleep, again. Reaching the far corners of his mind for things to do, he straightened out some of the sofa cushions, that had unfortunately suffered during their exchange. Then he thought there was no way Daichi had made an effort to keep his room tidied, so he ventured inside. Things weren’t too bad, but then Daichi was never overly messy, though he did see a black lump that definitely didn’t belong there curled up on the bed.

“Miss him already, huh?” Karma stared pitifully at the cat. “Same, but we’ll see him soon.”

Maki just meowed.
Look, see, kind of a break from all of the angst. I haven't forgotten fluff, people! I hope you all liked this one, and I get the feeling you'll REALLY like the next...
He wasn’t sure if his Daddy or Papa believed him, but Daichi really didn’t hate school. He didn’t! Well, if he had the choice he wouldn’t go, but his Daddy kept telling him he didn’t have one. That was okay, though, because he really liked learning new things. There was so much he heard grown ups talking about sometimes that he didn’t completely understand yet, and he wanted to.

The only problem was he already knew everything his teacher was telling him. The one at his new school was a little bit nicer. Maybe they had a kind of understanding. She let Daichi read the books he managed to sneak in under the desk, and he played along with whatever group activities she set, mostly anyway.

“Akabane kun,” she said, which made him slam his book closed in surprise. “Don’t you want to get your work back?”

Daichi shrugged. It didn’t matter that much to him, he knew he’d get perfect marks. He’d spent his first year of school doing it, and so far this hadn’t been much different. He liked getting good scores, he really did, but it wasn’t really exciting. Although, he made that deal with his Papa now, so he had to make sure he stayed on top in order to get whatever he wanted. He hadn’t decided what that was yet.

“Well,” she continued, “do you mind me asking you a couple of questions about it?”

“Okay…” Daichi kept his eyes on the table.

She pointed. “Did you copy this character out of a book?”

“No…” He looked finally at the piece of paper. He already knew the characters they were learning in class. He’d had to learn, if he wanted to read the longer books. Whenever he didn’t know how to read something, he just looked it up, or asked his Daddy, and never really forgot it afterwards.

“It’s a really good essay,” Yagami Sensei said. “Your cat sounds like quite the troublemaker.”

“She really is,” Daichi nodded enthusiastically. “Papa told me she can open all the cupboards up now too! I can’t wait to see her in…” he thought about it, “three days.”

He loved staying at his Daddy’s place, but he did miss Maki quite a bit. The weather was starting to get a lot warmer now, and her tail was completely healed. She looked kind of funny with it, but
it was better than how she’d been found weeks and weeks ago. Of course Daichi knew she was a cat, and she couldn’t really understand him, but he still wanted to tell her everything about the last week.

Yagami Sensei smiled. “Well, read it over and make sure you finish your other work.”

Daichi realised that maybe he should have spent just a little bit more time concentrating on the lesson, because it was about to be maths. He knew he still did perfectly on tests, but that didn’t mean he understood it that much. No matter how hard he tried, reading ahead just made his head swim. It annoyed him, so he always ended up putting those books down and focusing on what came easy. Maybe he could ask his Daddy, or even his Papa, but he didn’t like it. They always looked really worried when he didn’t understand something. He didn’t want to let them down…

The problems in front of him weren’t hard though, not like the questions he tried to look at that had weird roman letters in the middle of them. At least the first ones were, Daichi sped through the addition questions without having to think about it too much, but then he got to the end of the sheet and his head started to hurt.

He stared and stared but that didn’t make it go away or solve itself. He could do it, he knew that, but… not right away. Two of the kids next to him were chatting about something, which didn’t really help. Daichi almost told them to shut up, but he managed to stop himself. It probably wouldn’t help him too much, anyway.

They’d been nice enough at first, but Daichi didn’t really want friends. Well, he didn’t want to talk about sports teams (unless it was the Yoghurt Swallows, and only because Sugino san was awesome) or run around and play stupid games. After a couple of days they’d stopped inviting him, and stopped trying to talk to him all together by his second week. Which was good news for him, because he could spend time how he wanted without people bugging him.

Turning back to the problem at hand, he started writing things down. Even if he didn’t really understand the question, he at least knew what he was guessing was completely wrong. He bit his lip in concentration, hating fractions with a passion. He could… figure it out… if he just… His pencil scratched against the paper hard in frustration.

Maths was stupid anyway. He didn’t need to use it in the real world. He could just pick a job that didn’t need maths, which was no problem, because- well, Daichi didn’t know what he wanted to be when he grew up yet, aside from being rich maybe, but it definitely wouldn’t involve numbers. It occurred to him just slightly that being rich involved handling money, but that was a problem for future Daichi.

He was relieved when the lunch bell finally rung. Thankfully, the worksheet hadn’t been a test or anything. He tried to put it out of his mind, pulling his bento box out of his bag. At least that was a little bit of warmth in his day. His Daddy always included a note for him, telling him to try his best or have a great day, which made him feel just a little bit better. He sighed, picking up one of his octopus shaped sausages.

And then came the best part of the break. Once lunch was cleared up, they were allowed to leave their desks, shuffled outside to run around. Of course, Daichi slipped two books outside with him, because he didn’t find running that fun. His Papa complained about buying him books whenever he asked because he read them too fast, so he bought him one in English and dictionary to go along with it. He didn’t mind that, though, he liked the extra challenge.

He sat cross legged on a bench, next to where a couple of the girls in his class were braiding each other’s hair. Even that seemed more fun than whatever the rest of them were doing… Whatever
they were doing. Daichi opened up his book and focused. He could pretty much read English letters, but he didn’t know how to actually say a lot of the words out loud, aside from what they learnt in their actual lessons.

He was midway through trying to figure out what perpendicular translated to in Japanese, when he heard someone cry out, followed by laughter. It was enough to make him look up from his book, at least. Not so far away from him, Daichi saw a group of the more stocky boys gathered around something. One of them, who Daichi didn’t know the name of but did know that his dad was a famous sumo star because he went on about it all the time, was stood over someone. Daichi tried his best to remember who the boy on the ground was. He’d started new the same time Daichi had. They were both introduced by Yagami Sensei at the start of the year, but shuffled off to separate sides of the classroom. He got to go sit at the back of the class, for once, and he liked it there. The other boy was even less talkative than he was, but that was because he was from Korea and didn’t know a lot of Japanese yet, Yagami Sensei said.

“Stop annoying us, got it?”

Something wasn’t right. Daichi found himself putting down the book entirely, focusing on the scene. He knew that you shouldn’t push someone around like that, especially if they couldn’t fight back. But maybe his other classmates didn’t know that yet. Maybe he thought it was normal because his dad was a sumo wrestler. A voice that sounded like his Daddy’s told him that he should go find Yagami Sensei, or another teacher, but the muffled sob made him wince. One thing his Papa always told him was to stand up for himself… Maybe he should stand up for other people too.

“Hey,” Daichi approached, “leave him alone!”

One of the boys turned and sniggered. “Stay out of this, Akabane.”

Daichi dropped his book, causing it to thud on the ground. “I said leave him alone.”

“What do you care, anyway? He’s just a dirty foreigner.”

That was no reason to hate someone, was it?

“He’s not the one beating people up for no reason, which shows he has more decorum that you do.” Daichi paused, noticing a flare of confusion wash over his face. “I’m sorry, was that word too complicated for your level?”

“Careful.”

“Or what?” Daichi slapped his hand away from his face. “What’cha gonna do? Kill me?”

The boy swung a punch, but Daichi could see it from a mile off. Despite being likely older, with his greater height and weight, his combat was weak, unpractised. Thankfully, Daichi had practise with dodging from this angle. He probably hadn’t even been in a real fight before, let alone anyone who stood much of a chance of beating him. Easily ducking the swing, the boy stumbled forward,
as his balance had been completely off. From a quick estimation, Daichi wasn’t his equal for strength, but he could definitely be faster, smarter. The boy looked like a hopeless walrus, slamming his entire body weight into the air Daichi had moved out of a second before he even made to move.

“I’m bored,” he said, when the pointless lunges going nowhere. He didn’t want to *actually* fight. “Let’s just end this here-“

“I’m gonna make you listen,” the older boy practically growled.

Well, he asked for it. Instead of dodging clearly, Daichi tested his nerve, making sure to stand still until the very last second. When the punch was just about to hit, Daichi darted out of the way, diving under the boy’s arm so he was behind him. But then Daichi remembered, he hadn’t really got the *hang* of attacking from behind yet. His Papa has seen it from a mile off, just a few weeks ago.

And then, in that split second, he remembered what his Daddy did. It had been funny, because his Papa seemed really scared, and maybe making *this boy* scared would be enough to make him back off. Before he could even follow through on the momentum of his dive, he realised he couldn’t bring his hands together in the right place. Instead of clapping, then, Daichi twisted and positioned his hands right next to the boys’ ears, and clicked as hard as he could. He almost wished he could have seen his facial expression as the action stunned the boy enough to prevent him from catching his fall, causing him to face plant the ground. He hadn’t meant to make him fall that hard, but satisfaction raced through him. The boy’s leg twitched.

“Who’s next?” Daichi asked casually, feeling confident.

The rest of the boys looked amongst each other, before sprinting off in a variety of directions. Daichi sighed. Well, it wouldn’t have been much fun to face them anyway, except for his own happiness at being better than they were.

Remembering the reason he’d even intervened, Daichi strolled over to the kid. “Did they hurt you bad?”

The boy stared at him. “…”

“Right,” Daichi extended a hand, which he accepted after a slight hesitation, helping to pull him to his feet. “You don’t really speak Japanese, right? *English okay*?” He tried, though his pronunciation of English words wasn’t a strong suit.

“…”

He’d have to go *real* basic. Daichi pointed to his own chest. “Akabane Daichi.”

The boy’s grey eyes widened. “S-song Jun-Myung.”

Daichi grinned. “Nice to meet-“

“AKABANE!”

Damn, Daichi hadn’t even noticed the crowd of people gather around the scene, nor his teacher approach. With the way his opponents had run off, he looked like the only one at fault. Maybe he could talk his way out of it. It worked when he was in trouble, sometimes. Other times it just made everyone more mad.
“Yes, sensei?”

Yagami Sensei glared at him. “My office.”

“But I didn’t do anything!”

“Akabane kun, I’m one step away from calling your parents right now.”

Daichi folded his arms. “And tell them what? The school has a bullying problem?”

“My. Office.”

Oh no. But, he really hadn’t done anything wrong, had he? Those boys had been in the wrong, since they were pushing someone else around. Sure, it wasn’t self defence, but he definitely didn’t start it. He was just trying to help out a person in need! Maybe she was going to reward him? But… she was definitely mad.

She went over to the boy, touching him on the back. “Gima kun? Are you okay?”

He didn’t move.

Blood started to roar in Daichi’s ears. He hadn’t really hurt him, had he? He hadn’t meant to! He purposely didn’t even touch him! He gulped, not blind to the way most of the other kids that had gathered were staring at him.

“Y-yagami Sensei?” He finally mumbled, showing a sign of life.

She sighed. “You’re okay. I think you should go see the nurse, okay?”

Daichi didn’t want to stick around for much longer. He grabbed his book from the ground, quickly making his way to Yagami Sensei’s office. He didn’t want to get into real trouble. Those boys deserved it, but… It wasn’t worth it. He clutched the book extra tight, like a shield. Yagami Sensei still looked angry though, when she finally appeared.

“What happened?”

He was near bursting. “I didn’t do anything I swear! I didn’t even touch him, ask anyone, for real! They were being really mean and pushing him around and I just wanted to make them stop.”

She breathed heavily. “Akabane kun, I know you’re intelligent. You know you’re supposed to get me, or another teacher, when something like that happens. Fighting is never okay.”

“It wasn’t really fighting,” Daichi tried, “I just dodged him!”

“Then why was there a boy left half unconscious?”

Daichi didn’t know how to answer that. Maybe he’d just hit his head kind of hard when he fell like that. That was the only explanation he could think of. Even then, it wasn’t really his fault that he’d got too scared to stop himself from hitting the ground. That boy should have picked on someone his own size, or nobody at all.

“Listen, Akabane kun,” she said a little softer, “I know it’s hard to start somewhere new, especially when the others already know each other. But, you have to try a little to make some friends. Starting fights isn’t the best way to do that. In fact, you should never be fighting anyone.”

“I didn’t start-“
She glared at him again, and Daichi realised it was probably best to stop talking. “I don’t want you to be held back by something like this that you can easily fix. I know you’re at least capable of trying to get along with the others. Yes?”

Daichi nodded, but he wasn’t so sure.

“I will have to call one of your parents,” she said.

“But-“ Daichi felt a spike of fear rise up inside him. He didn’t want them to know he was in trouble.

“It doesn’t matter who started it or why.” Yagami Sensei continued, “fighting is pretty serious. I know this is the first time it’s happened, but I still have to let them know. The break is about to be over, shortly, so go back to class now.”

He sat at his desk, wishing he could fold into a ball and disappear. Neither of his parents ever really got that mad at him, but he didn’t want to start! What if they took away his books or something? Well, his teacher had only said she was going to call one of his parents. That meant that he might not be in trouble with both of them, since his Daddy and Papa didn’t talk that much.

Daichi didn’t feel much like reading, when everyone came in and the next lesson started. At least he understood science easily, but he couldn’t stop thinking about the fight. He was in trouble… But Daichi wasn’t sorry for it. If it happened again, Daichi would probably just do the same thing. He was sure he was in the right, but Yagami Sensei didn’t seem to see it that way.

To make things worse, she announced the worst thing ever. “Okay, everyone, time to partner up!”

The only time where a friend might have been useful. It’s not like Daichi hated the idea of having a friend, he just didn’t like any of his classmates. Plus, they were stupid! Some of them couldn’t even read properly, and they didn’t understand half the things he wanted to actually talk about. He didn’t really want to suffer through the boredom just for cases such as this. But then he realised, that boy he’d saved! If he couldn’t speak Japanese at all, then he couldn’t be boring. And, looking around the room, he was alone too!

Daichi took a deep breath, and then made his approach. “Do you wanna pair up?”

He looked a little confused. “…"

“Right,” Daichi remembered, and then pointed between the both of them. “Two?” He even demonstrated the number on his fingers.

His face broke into a smile, framed by the glasses that covered half of it, and he nodded enthusiastically.

Daichi slid into the chair next to him. “You said your name was Jun-myuhh… That’s too hard to say,” he wrinkled his nose, “can I just call you Junchan or something?”

“Juncha…”

He grinned. “You can call me Daichan if you want! Most people call me Daichan at least.”

Jun gulped. “N-nice to m-meet you…”

“Woah,” Daichi smiled, “so you do know a little bit of Japanese… But we don’t have to talk so formally, okay?”
Was it *that* easy to make a friend? Daichi had never really had one before, so he didn’t know. It almost seemed too easy. Then again, he didn’t know how much Jun actually understood of what he was saying. He didn’t seem to mind though, so that was good enough. In fact, he seemed more interesting than everyone else. He was from a whole other country! Daichi couldn’t wait to ask him about it.

“We’re meant to be doing science!” He remembered, and made to grab some of the supplies they needed. “This isn’t very hard.”

It wasn’t really. All they had to do was make a circuit with some wires, a battery, and a tiny light bulb. Daichi knew what would happen, though he thought chemistry was more interesting. You could make things explode in chemistry. Well, he could technically do that here too, but there probably wasn’t enough electricity in this battery to do that. Jun seemed to know what he was doing though, and Daichi pointed at random items, naming them.

“Woah,” Jun said, when it lit up. He mumbled something else, but Daichi had no clue what he was saying.

Yagami Sensei came over to check on them. “Good job, boys!”

Daichi shot him a thumbs up.

For once, he was in a good mood when school was over, but then he remembered what was hanging over his head. Whilst everyone chatted happily, putting their things in their school bags, Daichi sat there for a minute with his fists clenched. He really didn’t want to get told off, but he was sure that was probably going to happen.

Yagami Sensei cleared her throat, when he finally got up. “Your father said he was going to come meet me right after class finished, so you should stay here for a little bit.”

“Uhm, which one?”

Before she could answer him, there was a knock at the door, and then his Papa walked in. Daichi gulped, not wanting to look him in the eye. Not that it was easy to do that, anyway, his Papa was so tall… Usually he would run and give his Papa a hug, he hadn’t seen him for a few days… But instead he hung his head with shame.

“Ah, Akabane san,” Yagami Sensei stood up. “It’s nice to finally meet you. I wish it was under better circumstances, but anyway, shall we go to the office?”

He looked at Daichi. “You okay with that, Daichan?”

Daichi didn’t think he had a choice, but he nodded, slumping down at desk as he was left alone in the classroom. He wasn’t sure how long he sat and waited, swinging his legs, tapping wildly on the wood for some kind of entertainment… With every minute, he started to feel even more nervous. A part of him was glad it was his Papa she’d called, but he still didn’t want him to be angry with him. Eventually, though, the wait was over.

“Come on,” his Papa said, “I’m taking you to your Dad’s.”

He picked up his things, following him half sheepishly out of the school. “Hi.”

“Are you going to tell me what happened?”

He didn’t seem *too* mad. “All of the really tall and mean boys in my class were ganging up on
someone else, so I wanted to help him but then it turned into a fight. I promise, I didn’t mean to hurt anybody!”

His Papa sighed. “Daichan, look, I know why you did it… And you’re not wrong to stand up for other people. But you know fighting isn’t a good way to handle things.”

“I didn’t even touch him though! He was the one trying to punch me!”

“Your teacher said one of them ended up face down on the ground,” he said, “not that I don’t believe you but-”

Daichi wanted to defend himself. “He was punching with his weight all wrong! And, uhm, I tried that thing that Daddy did and made a noise to scare him, but I wasn’t trying to make him fall.”

His Papa suddenly stood still, and looked out really weird.

“P-papa?” Daichi asked. “Are you mad?”

His face relaxed. “No, Daichan, I’m not mad. I think I need to have a talk with your Dad, though. Your teacher also said you were really smart, by the way. I already knew that, but she said that maybe you should try having some extra lessons on the side.”

“That sounds fun…”

He nudged him. “She also said we should think about letting you join a club. How about that?”

Daichi thought about it. A club… Something to do out of class? He had enough fun on his own, he liked reading and playing with his parents… Wasn’t that enough? But then, now he had Maki he was starting to find cats really interesting. So maybe it would be okay to try something new. He kind of thought some of the video games and movies he saw were cool.

“Can I do Karate?”

His Papa half laughed. “Daichan, you do know I got called here because of fighting, right? And now you’re asking to do more fighting?” He paused. “I mean, I guess if you really want to?”

“I do!” He nodded. “But I won’t fight anyone.”

“Alright,” he smiled, “I trust you.”

Daichi relaxed the rest of the way back, even though he didn’t know how mad his Daddy was going to be. If his Papa was okay, then he hoped it would be okay. At least his Papa believed him! But he was right, next time Daichi would go get a grown up. Not that he did anything wrong, but if things worked that way, then it wasn’t worth the trouble.

When they got home, his Daddy was waiting for them, but he didn’t look mad at all. Daichi toed his shoes off carefully, though, just in case, before entering the apartment properly. He tried to tell himself that it was going to be okay… It probably was.

“Hey,” his Daddy said, “I’d ask you if you had a good day, but…”

He felt a little nervous, but he gave him a hug anyway. “I made a friend.”

“You did?” Both of his parents said at the same time.

Daichi nodded. “A huh! He doesn’t speak much but that’s okay!”
His Daddy looked over his shoulder. “Thanks for picking him up.”

“It’s no problem,” his Papa shrugged. “I wanted to ask that teacher some things anyway.”

“Daichi,” his Daddy said, “maybe it would be best if you go to your room for a little bit. We just have a couple of things to talk about.”

“O-okay.”

He did what his Daddy told him to, though even if he didn’t say it was a punishment, he kind of felt like it was. At least he didn’t take his books away. In an effort to try and make himself feel better, Daichi continued reading the book from earlier, though it took him a little while to find his place again. It was hard to concentrate on English right then, though. He only made it through a few pages before he was being called for again.

“Right,” his Papa stretched out, “I just wanted to say bye.”

Daichi nodded, lifting his arms up to be hugged. “Bye Papa.”

He smiled. “I’ll see you in a couple of days, okay?”

That left him alone with his Daddy. But, Daichi felt a little better. He could tell nobody was angry. It didn’t stop him from feeling kind of bad, but… Then, his Daddy held his arms out from the sofa, and of course Daichi went to cuddle up to him. He really needed a hug right about then.

“I think everyone’s already told you what they need to,” his Daddy started. “It’s really not okay to fight. But, it’s not okay to stand by and let other people get hurt either. I’m proud of you for realising that, even if you didn’t handle it in the best way.”

“Really?”

He hugged him tighter. “Fighting usually causes more problems than it solves, anyway. As long as you don’t do it again, and I don’t think you will, then I’m happy. Anyway, tell me about your new friend!”

Finally, Daichi beamed.

Chapter End Notes

I cant even tell if this is fluff or angst or WHAT. But yay, a chapter of Daichi content to warm the soul~
Nagisa was getting more used to being a real teacher with every day. It had been impossible at first, and it was still hard, but Nagisa was starting to see some real improvement in most of his students. Nobody had managed to ‘kill’ him yet, though, and he could sense the frustration. He might have to let them get a small victory, so that they’d focus their full energy on the upcoming summer exams.

Since they’d gotten familiar with him as a teacher already, any real fear that was there at the start of the year had pretty much vanished. They weren’t back to how they’d been for the first ten minutes of their time together, though. Nagisa thought it was a good thing, he didn’t want them to be scared of him. Frankly, he was sure there had been a change for the better.

Even if they were trying to kill him every lesson.

Nagisa ducked from his incoming attack. “Ah, Hyakuya san, you know there’s no assassination in the middle of lessons.”

“But Nagisa Sensei,” he complained, shoving his weapon into his pocket, “there’s like, no time to do it otherwise.”

He thought about it, realising he had a point. Of course, back during 3E, they’d had an entire mountain to themselves. There was only so much you could get away with, in a more normal school environment. The point was extra motivation, though, not a distraction from their actual learning. But, still, he saw that he needed to find a better balance.

“Okay,” he said, “I have a proposal.” Half of them sat up a little straighter. “If you all manage to pass your summer exams, then we can have our final few classes outside. In which time… If one of you manages to kill me, I’ll bump everyone’s grades up.”

“For real? Shouldn’t the person who does it get more?”

Nagisa smiled. “School’s not just about knowledge, you know. It’s also about preparing for the real world, becoming better people, learning to work together… I think you’ll find most success when you work in a team, anyway. So try your best! I know you all can pass, you just have to put in a little work.”
One of the boys, Maeda, who occupied the first row slammed his body down on the desk dramatically. “Easier said than done, Sensei. We’ve never tried before.”

“Don’t worry, I know it’s hard to start something you’re not used to. I’ve pretty much told my son that for years and he still hasn’t got it into his head—”

“Heh?” Several of his students turned their heads at once.

“Nagisa Sensei? You have a kid?!”

“But… You’re so young!”

He should have been more careful with his word choice. “N-not that young—”

Shibata, the boy who had attacked him the first day, raised an eyebrow. “Not quite the goody two shoes you make out to be, huh, Nagisa Sensei?”

“I—"

“It only takes a quick Google search,” he continued, “but a whole lotta info pops up. Like how you were held hostage by a crazy psycho teacher?”

Nagisa was almost overwhelmed with joy. “You… researched!”

“Wait a sec—"

“It might seem basic,” he was so proud, “but that’s amazing! Research skills, even if it’s just using Google, are vital. It shows that you have questions, and the initiative to answer those questions. If you just apply the same to your school work, you’ll be soaring through.” He cleared his throat.

“However, you do have to be careful, because not all information is necessarily… right. Nobody was held hostage, for example. But… I guess I can tell you about that as part of your reward, if you want?”

The final bell rung out, before anyone could give him an answer. Almost in tandem, they stood up, collecting their belongings, and flooded out of the classroom, loudly discussing their plans for the weekend. They didn’t bow first, or anything. But, Nagisa wasn’t exactly fussed about that. The fact that they actually listened to him was all the respect he really needed, and was likely going to get.

Though, he quickly noticed, one of his students hadn’t quite left. In fact, Maeda had moved from his head/desk position and was now staring blankly at the wall in front of him. There was no way he hadn’t heard the bell, it was so jarring in this school that Nagisa even got caught off guard by it sometimes.

“A-are you okay, Maeda san?” He approached.

A scowl came over his face. “So what does it matter?”

“Well,” Nagisa started steadily, “you’re still waiting here, so it must be important.

“Forget it,” he stood up, his chair scraping harshly against the floor.

Nagisa stood up too. “Maeda san… I don’t mind if you feel like you need to talk to me. In fact, it’s my job! It’s helpful, the more I know about everyone.”

He turned back around. “…How old were you, when you had your kid?”
That was a question he didn’t expect. He supposed they’d been talking about it, but he didn’t know why Maeda hadn’t just brought it up at the time, rather than here, privately. There was something else going on there, he realised, and it was definitely his responsibility to get to the bottom of it, one way or another. He didn’t really mind telling him some information.

“Okay,” he said, “sit down.” Surprisingly, Maeda did exactly that, finding his desk once again. “I was fifteen.”

He gulped. “No way? Then how—” Biting his lip midsentence, he looked down at the desk. “No offence, but how do you, like, have a life?”

Nagisa smiled. “It was an… odd situation. I got pretty lucky, with the things that went down at the end of junior high we were given a large amount of compensation from the government. There was a lot of support around me, family, friends, and his father was there the whole time, so I was able to keep going to school. I wouldn’t recommend it though.”

“I… see.”

He wouldn’t let it go. “What makes you ask?”

For a moment, Maeda said nothing. “You won’t tell anyone, right?”

“O-of course not,” that was concerning already, “not unless you’re in real danger.”

His fingers started tapping on the desk. “Look, uhm, it’s not that big a deal. I couldn’t get my hands on suppressants for a few days, a couple of months ago. And now I feel kind of sick and icky and my mind’s just running wild.”

“Wait a minute, suppressants?”

If Maeda was taking suppressants, then that had to mean… He was an omega?! Nagisa almost spluttered, because that was the last thing he’d been expecting. Male omegas weren’t exactly common. Nagisa rarely came across anyone like that, maybe once or twice, but he’d never tried to strike up a conversation. Maeda didn’t, well, seem like an omega. He was relatively tall and well built, and had a similar disposition to his other classmates.

“The dealer was out of town! There wasn’t a lot I could do, you know.”

Nagisa wasn’t at all sure what to do in this situation. “D-dealer?! Suppressants are illegal at your age for a reason.”

He shot Nagisa a bitter look. “You should know, shouldn’t you? Being like I am… In a world like this, it’s not like I have a choice,” he half laughed, “I guess you come from a different life. All of these guys, they’ll wash down the gutter. But people like me? I’ll just end up one of their whores.”

“It’s not worth risking your health!” Nagisa forced himself to breathe. “Something that messes with your entire body like that, you’re supposed to take under strict supervision from doctors, with regular tests. Surely there are other ways—”

“It doesn’t matter now anyway,” he waved him off, “it happened. Found a guy, had the heat, got the postcard. They’re the least of my problems, anyway.”

Finally, Nagisa caught up. “Y-you think you’re pregnant?”

Funnily enough, he hadn’t been taught how to handle this through any of his training. But how
often did this kind of a situation even happen? Nagisa could sense a bitterness from the way Maeda had talked, and suddenly he felt awful. He was right, Nagisa was in a really fortunate position, despite everything, he couldn’t understand something like this when it came down to survival. But he knew already that it was a hard world out there, for anyone.

“It sounds dumb when you say it like that,” he folded his arms. “I don’t know,” he added, almost a whisper.

Nagisa clenched his fist. “You need to find out for sure, either way. There’s a lot of things that can go dangerously wrong in pregnancy. I don’t want to scare you, but you really need to see a doctor.”

Maeda looked away. “This was a mistake. For real, Nagisa Sensei, I can’t afford that kind of thing. But whatever, I don’t know what I was expecting. Nobody can magically take this back.”

He was completely lost. In the back of his head, he tried to think back to how Korosensei would have handled this situation. For the most part, he had pretty much left Nagisa alone to deal with his pregnancy, not unless Nagisa specifically asked him something. Had Korosensei been in over his head, too? Or, did he just trust that they were already doing the right thing? Whatever the case, Nagisa had a responsibility here, and at least he could relate a little.

“It’s not the end of the world,” Nagisa started, “but it’s not easy either, by any stretch of the imagination. But first you need to know for sure.”

“Okay.”

The classroom started to feel cold. “Right now, what I’m most concerned about are the illegal suppressants. I… I know how hard it is to be an omega in the best of the environments, but it’s still not worth risking your health over. You’re so young, you have a lot to offer!” Nagisa thought about it. “Even if you struggle a little in tests, I read all your essays- they’re actually really good, I mean it. If you apply yourself like that across the board, you could get into a decent university, easily.” And then he remembered something Korosensei had said to him. “It would be wrong of me to allow you to blindly throw your potential away.”

Surprisingly, he let out a laugh, though it was humourless. “You sure do care, huh?”


He slumped. “I can’t afford to take a test, though.”

Maybe Nagisa would regret it… But it was the least he could do. He reached inside his pocket, feeling around for his wallet, before pulling out a suitable amount of cash. Sure, Nagisa hadn’t ever had this uncertainty, he’d known for sure he was pregnant before he suspected it, but he still remembered what it was like at the start. He remembered the world feeling so big, and himself so small and alone and fragile.

“Just get a test, okay?” Nagisa tried to smile. “There’s only so much advice I can give you before the whole situation is clear.”

Maeda stared at him with wide eyes. “Seriously?”

On a whim, Nagisa also scribbled down his number on a piece of paper, and handing it over with the money. “You’re not alone, okay? Everyone needs someone they can talk to sometimes.”

Before he could say anything else, there was a knock on the classroom door, before the headmaster strolled in. He stopped in his tracks, at least, when he realised Nagisa wasn’t alone. Honestly,
Nagisa wasn’t particularly fond of the headmaster at all. He didn’t join in with any of the other teachers’ gossip, wincing at the bad way the spoke about their classes sometimes. Though he wasn’t Asano Gakuhou levels of militant in the slightest, Nagisa could tell he still had a kind of prejudice against the bottom classes.

“I’m sorry,” he said, “I didn’t realise you’d be with a student.”

Nagisa shot Maeda a look. “Are we finished here?”

Maeda nodded, then stood up. “Thank you for the talk, Na-Shiota Sensei.”

“That’s good,” he said, “I have to write a report thingy to your university, so I’ll add it. Don’t worry about it, I’ve been through this before, as long as they don’t fail, like, worse than they were before, you’re good. Actually, that’s why I kind of have to speak to you.”

Nagisa was barely even following that. He ended up nodding along, because it didn’t seem too extreme, but he was actually pretty bewildered. Switching suppressants… It wasn’t the worst thing, he guessed. It wasn’t like he’d gone through a lot to find some that worked well for him, he’d just taken the first thing the doctor allowed him.

“Nice talk!” He jumped up, and just like that Nagisa was alone.

Once he had a little more time to process it, Nagisa found himself shifting uncomfortably. He’d said he wasn’t going to fire Nagisa for it… Did that mean that he could have? Just for not taking a specific type of suppressant? As far as Nagisa was aware, there was no legal obligations for omegas to take suppressants, he and many others just did because it was far more convenient and saved him from going through the nightmare that was heat. If he changed suppressants, wouldn’t he have to have one of those?

He tried his best not to think about it too hard, instead focusing on better things, such as picking up his son. That entire conversation with Maeda had made him feel just a little conflicted. It felt wrong to encourage anything like Nagisa went through, but at the same time, Daichi was the centre of his world, the best thing that had ever happened to him, and honestly Nagisa hilariously felt a little bit lucky to have him.

“Daddy!” Daichi rushed up to him with a huge smile on his face. “Guess what?”

Nagisa met his hug back. “Hmm, I don’t know. What?”

“Junchan said he’s going to America in the summer! At least, I think that’s what he meant, it’s kind of hard to tell sometimes but he looked excited. That’s so cool, isn’t it! I’m not sure if it’s the same place that Gaga lives, because it’s a really huge country right? I wanna go somewhere cool, I’ve
“We took you to Cambodia one time,” Nagisa pointed out.

Daichi looked up at him. “Yeah, but I was a baby.”

“You got to hang out with a famous director, though. Whilst your Papa was in the movie.”

He perked up. “Can we watch it when we get home?”

Nagisa thought about it for a moment. Due to the difference in work schedules, Daichi didn’t have to be at Karma’s for another couple of hours, and Nagisa had offered to take him that day anyway… So there was enough time for a movie. In fact, it was probably the perfect way to spend a little bit of time, without getting too invested in any other activities.

So, once they were back, and he ensured Daichi had all of the things he was going to need (mostly just his school things), they sat on the sofa and Nagisa turned on The Golden City. Honestly, it was a pretty decent movie, one of the few ones that weren’t overly violent but still had entertaining action. Nagisa knew Karma’s standards were a little more relaxed about this kind of thing, but Nagisa wasn’t going to encourage it under his watch.

He worried about Daichi, sometimes. Though he knew Daichi didn’t have a malicious bone in his tiny body, he couldn’t help but want to keep an eye out for anything strange. The last thing Nagisa had ever expected was for Daichi to be getting into fights, even if the reason behind it was supposedly justified. And what Karma had mentioned, about him knowing how to use the stun clap… Ever since it happened, Nagisa had been debating teaching him how do use it properly. A part of him thought that maybe it would be safer that way, since so many things could go wrong with it, but then there was a moral difference between playfighting and purposely training his son in assassination techniques.

“She’s so cool,” Daichi half squealed at the screen, snapping him out of the thought.

Nagisa smiled at the movie, where Kayano was currently kicking some guy in the stomach. “She really is.”

“Everyone loves Haruna Mase,” his eyes were practically sparkling. “Can I get a poster?!”

He almost laughed. “You don’t have to call Kayano that, we’re friends with her!” Nagisa understood that, as an actress who did a lot of action, Kayano was quite popular with boys of Daichi’s age, but he wasn’t sure about having a poster of one of his close friends in his house.

“Yeah I know,” Daichi continued, “but she’s so different in the movies!”

“That’s because she’s such an amazing actress,” Nagisa agreed.

They watched the rest of the movie with Daichi’s excited commentary, especially when they got to the part Karma was in. Granted, he was only a stunt double, so you couldn’t really tell that it was him. That didn’t really matter to Daichi, though, he was just as engrossed either way. That was pretty much the climax of the movie, though, so Nagisa was glad, when it was over, to be delivering Daichi when he was in an especially good mood.

Walking into Karma’s apartment was an all out assault on his poor nostrils. Nagisa stood in the doorway, so struck by it that he almost forgot to remove his shoes. It had been a very long time since he tasted Karma’s cooking, and right then he resented that. Whatever he was making smelt so good he was practically drooling on the spot. Daichi, though, didn’t seem to care, rushing straight
over to pet Karma’s cat.

“I missed you so much!” He said, and Maki purred back at him.

“How about,” Karma said a little dryly, “‘Papa I missed you so much’?”

Daichi gave him a hug. “Missed you too.”

“Are you okay there, Nagisa?”

He barely even registered he was being spoken to. “Huh?”

Karma half smirked. “If you keep drooling a puddle on my floor like that I’ll make you clean it up~ I’m making hot pot, so just say if you want some. It’s not like there’s not enough.”

That was dangerous territory for them. They didn’t just… eat dinner together. Unless it was important and regarding Daichi, they barely talked at all anymore. They were their own people, now, albeit with one pretty big thing tethering them together. Then again, they could be doing worse things. It was just some food, some very good food, and it was hurting just about nobody.

“I shouldn’t intrude,” Nagisa looked at the floor.

“I’ve seen your kitchen,” he continued lightly, “you can barely even walk in there, let alone make something as great as this. You must be starving~”

“I-it’s fine,” Nagisa defended. “I get that it’s not the biggest but it’s a decent place to live.”

Karma never had been secretive about his dislike for Nagisa’s apartment. And yeah, Nagisa got it, Karma’s place was far nicer and almost twice the size, but with his fancy job he could actually afford it! The least Nagisa could do was have an apartment that didn’t put him in the negative every month. Though, it only went as far as a few Karma like jabs, Nagisa thought even with the distance between them, Karma would be explicit if he had a serious issue with it.

Still, maybe he was being stupid, but Nagisa did as Karma invited, stepping fully into his apartment. Nagisa couldn’t help but frown at the paperwork that was strewn on most surfaces. Was Karma really that busy? Of course, Nagisa had to grade homework out of work hours, but it didn’t seem nearly as chaotic as all of this.

“You just gonna stand there?” Karma asked again.

“N-no,” Nagisa ignored the way Daichi giggled, “I’m… going to say hi to your cat.”

Maki meowed loudly when Nagisa approached her, batting his hand playfully before rubbing the top of her head against it. Nagisa had never really thought of Karma as a pet kind of person, but he was kind of glad that he was. In the long run, he supposed it was good for Daichi too, to get a taste of responsibility. From what he heard Daichi hadn’t lost interest in her basic care yet either.

Karma came over. “Maki~” He clicked his tongue a couple of times, holding out his arm, and just like that, she started walking up it, eventually perching over his shoulder.

“You taught her how to do that?” Nagisa questioned.

He shrugged, jolting the cat just a little, though she didn’t seem too bothered. “She likes being up high. Anyway,” he wandered over into the kitchen, Maki along for the ride now, “dinner’s ready.”

Nagisa forced himself to breathe. It may have been a while, but Karma used to cook for him every
day back when they lived together. They used to sit at the same table even when they were fighting badly enough to not speak a word to each other. It wasn’t a big deal, obviously he was just being hospitable, and it wasn’t like this kind of a meal was hard to share.

“Thanks for the food,” Daichi said sweetly.

He swallowed. “Thanks.”

Maki jumped off of Karma, going to curl herself around Daichi’s feet instead. Nagisa dished himself a bowl of the hot pot, resisting for just a second before giving in and taking a bite. He closed his eyes, as the flavour danced across his tongue. It wasn’t fair, how good Karma was at cooking sometimes. Was there anything he wasn’t good at, though? Shouyou didn’t cook for him… Nagisa immediately cut that thought off, shuddering at its danger.

Karma looked at him like it was a challenge. “Good?”

“Great,” Nagisa praised honestly.

He seemed satisfied with that kind of a answer. “How was your day, Daichan?”

Daichi swallowed his mouthful. “Really good! We had to do art, though. Art’s boring.”

“What kind of art?” Karma asked.

He shrugged. “I dunno. I didn’t do it.”

“Daichi,” Nagisa said, a little scolding. “You promised you’d try a little harder.”

“I can only try so much!” He complained. “It’s like the manna bar in my video games! If I always try, especially with things that don’t really matter, it’s just gonna go down, right? But, if I save it, then I can try my best when it really matters.”

Karma leant back. “He’s got a point.”

Not really grasping their logic, Nagisa sighed. “Just remember, that kind of stuff comes in handy when you least expect it.”

It felt nice, eating together like this. It had been such a long time since it happened, since this was just a part of their normal routine. Looking back at it, Nagisa felt like he’d been a different person, playing house in some sort of mimic of a ‘normal’ life. Back when he loved Karma more than was healthy for anyone. Surprisingly, despite everything, right then seemed more natural to him than it ever had before.

They sat and talked, though, even when their bowls were empty. It had been a while since that happened too, with him and Karma only ever holding a full conversation when it was about Daichi’s wellbeing. Though, they weren’t perfectly healed. It wasn’t like they were directly speaking to each other really, more that Daichi was speaking to both of them, but that didn’t really matter. Taking the complicated stuff out of the equation, Nagisa realised then that he also kind of missed Karma as a friend.

“Can I go play with Maki now?” Daichi eventually said, once the conversation naturally dwindled out.

“Sure,” Karma waved him off.
Nagisa stood up. “I’ll clear up, since you cooked.”

He felt a little on edge, very much a guest here, but took as much as he could carry into Karma’s kitchen. Surprisingly, Karma followed him in, though Nagisa didn’t really know what for. He supposed he had a full week with Daichi now, so it wasn’t like he particularly needed to soak up every precious second, but whatever Nagisa was doing can’t have been that intriguing.

“Are you just supervising or something?” Nagisa asked, when he just stood there.

“Maybe I don’t trust you with my dishes,” he joked.

Nagisa sighed, tugging his ring off. “I don’t want it to get lost,” he explained, at Karma’s raised eyebrow.

“Fine by me,” he said, turning on tap. Before Nagisa could question whether he was actually going to help or not, a significant amount of water splashed right in his face.

“You’d think in four years, you’d have grown up just a bit!” Nagisa said, half glaring at a now laughing Karma.

Karma grinned. “You’d think in four years, you’d have learnt to see it coming.”

Nagisa’s eyes narrowed, and he splashed him right back, twice as hard. “You deserved it.”

He wasn’t entirely sure how this had turned into a water fight, but when Karma returned his strike for a second time, it was on. Nagisa was aware of how childish this was, but a part of him didn’t really care right then. Karma grabbed him by the wrist, preventing him from reaching for more water, even if he wanted to. Nagisa could get out of it, but they weren’t practising any real violence.

“Don’t make me kick you,” Nagisa warned through his laughter.

Karma grabbed his other wrist, trapping him up against the counter. “Try it.”

Nagisa gulped, the reality of this situation crashing down on him. How had he and Karma gone from barely speaking at all to such a precarious position. With his attractive face beaming down at him, sharp golden eyes gleaming, Nagisa’s knees literally went weak. Though his heart was beating faster, there was also a huge spike of fear right through him. He needed to look around for a way out of this.

“You still have that?”

Karma let go of him. “Huh?”

He pointed to the pin. “That.”

Resting right on the spice rack was a small chibi figure of Sonic Ninja. Placed next to Karma’s most prized collection, like some sort of guard. He’d given it to Karma for his birthday years ago, when he was pregnant and couldn’t afford anything better. At the time, Karma hadn’t reacted hugely graciously, but Nagisa hadn’t blamed him. It was kind of a lame gift. Why did he still have it, after seven and a half years? Why was it practically on display?

“Oh,” he turned back to the actual washing up task. “Yeah.”

Nagisa slid his ring back on firmly, when they were done, and he was swimming in guilt. He knew
he hadn’t actually done anything bad, but for just a few seconds he’d let his mind slip out of his control and he felt sick with himself. Even if he didn’t do anything, he still felt like somehow he was betraying Shouyou. It had just been too long since they spoke.

“I think it’s time for me to go,” he said, stepping away from all of that.

“Okay,” Daichi stopped fussing with Maki, and hugged him around the waist. “Love you.”

“I love you too,” he said, before letting go. He couldn’t be impolite, however. “Thanks for the food, Karma.”

“Anytime,” he waved him off.

He practically sped home with his tail between his legs. Stupid, he told himself. It was stupid of him to let himself fall into that position. Had he learnt nothing, over all the years? Why did it feel like every time he spent time with Karma he was talking two steps backwards? He forced himself to calm down. It was going to be okay. His fiancé was going to be home in just over a month. When that happened, he was sure everything else would slip away.

It had never felt this confusing during university. For the most part, Nagisa had just been content with the way things were. Though, he supposed, those four years had been a bridge between child and adult, and he’d just been waiting for his real life to start. Maybe that was just it, he was still waiting for his life to start, with Shouyou so far away, and his head was just racing away.

As if the universe was laughing down at him, when he got home, that was precisely the moment Shouyou started to call him. Nagisa stared at his phone for a few seconds in utter disbelief. Since he’d left, which honestly felt like a year ago rather than almost a couple of months, they’d just about managed to exchange a few text messages, and that was it.

“Nagisa! Is it a bad time?”

Nagisa clutched the phone tighter. “N-not at all.”

He paused for a second, before audibly sighing. “It’s been so long since I heard your voice.”

Before remembering Shouyou couldn’t see him, he nodded. “Y-yeah.”

“How are you… okay? Is it too late in Japan? I’m losing track, honestly.”

“No, sorry, it’s just been a while-“

He laughed. “I missed you.”

Nagisa swallowed. “I missed you too.”

“So,” he said, “how’s school?”

He chuckled awkwardly. “Probably less interesting than what you’re doing.”

“Aw, don’t be like that, Nagisa! I find pretty much everything you say interesting.”

They started to talk, then, and Nagisa felt about fifty times lighter. He told Shouyou everything that wasn’t just the dull day to day, trying to be wary of how much he was speaking, though he left out any mention of assassination. 3E was the only secret Nagisa had ever kept from Shouyou, honestly. He knew he didn’t really have much of a reason to, but he just felt like he could never understand.
In the same way, Shouyou told him about his work with the animal conservation. Objectively, that was far more interesting anyway. Nagisa found himself smiling, at the excited way Shouyou was speaking. For someone who complained a lot about not knowing what he wanted to do with his life, it was nice to hear him sound so passionate about something.

“It sounds amazing,” Nagisa finally said. “Really, really amazing.”

“That doesn’t mean I’m not excited to see you,” he pointed out. “Even though I don’t… have a clue what I’m doing when I get back… ah damn, my battery is almost dead already. I’ll try and call again a bit sooner next time, alright? I love you.”

Nagisa smiled, pressing the phone closer to his ear still. “I love you too.”

“Ahuh…”

“Shouyou, didn’t you have to go?”

“Right!” He said. “Goodnight!”

The line went dead, after that, and Nagisa flopped down on his bed hopelessly. He missed him more than he realised, and although that conversation had been nice, he felt like there was an even bigger hole inside of him. It would all be okay when he actually came back, Nagisa had to hope. He was just about ready to fall asleep like that, when his phone buzzed, receiving a message from an unknown number.

*It's negative.*

Nagisa smiled widely.

Chapter End Notes

I hope you all enjoyed this one! I think uploads are probably going to slow down now due to exam season approaching, but who knows. Comments are always my fuel ;)
“Hey Daichan,” Karma said loudly from outside his door, “I know I said you could listen to music, but it’s kind of loud.”

Daichi was nowhere to be found, though. And, well, Karma knew he hadn’t just slipped out to another room. Karma sighed, pulling back the curtain that covered the bottom part of Daichi’s bed. Since it was raised off the ground it was kind of like a bunkbed, though instead of an extra bed underneath it was just empty space, which Daichi was currently occupying. He lay on his stomach, writing something down, whilst Maki sat and watched.

“Hi Papa!” He turned the music down, and Maki meowed at him.

“What is this, anyway?” Karma asked, gesturing just about everything Daichi was doing.

Daichi met his eyes. “It’s Twice.”

“Who?” Karma had no idea what he was talking about, but then he looked at what he was writing. “Is that Korean?”

“Yeah!” He nodded enthusiastically. “Junchan still finds Japanese kinda tough so I thought that I could learn his language and then it’ll just make things easier. And, Daddy said that listening to music helps a lot.”

Karma really wasn’t sure how to react to this. He had nothing against it, of course, but it seemed a little out of nowhere. Daichi was incredibly well spoken in his native language when he wanted to be, and considering his age he was pretty good with English, too. So, Karma was happy for him to pick up a third language, in fact it would probably end up helping him in the long run.

“Carry on, then,” Karma said. “Just a little quieter, hm?”

He looked up. “Are your reports really that hard?”

“Very,” Karma half laughed. “Why, you think you can help, Daichan?”

Daichi just stuck his tongue out.

Honestly, Karma didn’t blame him. This part was boring, necessary, but it sent him to sleep most
nights. That didn’t mean it wasn’t worth it, though, for the moments he really got his satisfaction. He returned back to the table, where his most recent pile was. He’d definitely clean this all up, soon enough. Eventually. Once he was finished, if that even happened before he died.

Eventually, Daichi got a little tired of his self imposed studying, venturing out. He sat across from Karma without saying a word for a little while, though it was clear he was bored, swinging his legs underneath the table. He considered asking what Daichi wanted, but then decided against it. He’d spit it out eventually, when he lost all patience.

“Papa…”

“Mm?”

He sucked in a breath. “Junchan invited me to come round after school.”

Well, that was interesting. Daichi had never seemed that into the whole play date thing, but then again he hadn’t really had a friend before either. Karma was pretty happy about that, actually. Having friends was generally considered a healthy thing, and he was glad that Daichi didn’t have to feel lonely when he was at school. However, as much as Daichi rambled about his friend, Karma had never actually met him.

“I don’t know Daichan…” He looked up. “I’ve never met his parents before.”

His eyes widened. “But Papa-“

“I’m not just sending you to a random place I haven’t checked out first,” he said.

“I’m not a baby!”

“You’re seven.” He raked a hand down his face. “Did he say when?”

Daichi bit his lip. “Tomorrow.”

“And you waited till now to tell me about it?” He considered him. “Do you have a phone number or something?”

“Yeah!” He nodded. “Junchan said his mummy said to give it to you.”

“…Okay.” A part of Karma wanted to smack his head against the wall. Daichi confused him so much sometimes. He was so smart, yet, at times his logic was ridiculous. The last time he was at school was Friday, so he would have had this information throughout the entire weekend, at minimum. Karma had no idea why he’d waited until now.

He looked up. “Does that mean I can go?”

“I…” Karma wasn’t sure why he was feeling such a reluctance to something so common. “Go give me their number.”

When Daichi scampered off, presumably to look through his school things, Karma could actually think about it for a minute. He supposed, this was bound to happen eventually. And he trusted that Daichi was a good judge of character, if a little lacking in common sense from time to time. He wouldn’t want to hang around with anybody bad, if seven and eight year olds even could be bad. How dangerous could something like this even be?

Karma unlocked his phone, looking at it warily. He felt awkward, even, thumbing over Nagisa’s
contact. It was a little stupid, because he knew Nagisa wouldn’t really care. Or, well, maybe ‘mind’ was a better word. Karma would probably let Daichi do far more risky things than just going over to a friend’s house, without telling Nagisa at about it. Still…


He could do with learning a little patience. “Give me a second Daichan-“

He typed the number in slowly, squinting at Daichi’s handwriting. No amount of brain power could make up for hurried seven year old scribbles sometimes. And then the phone started to ring, and Karma felt slightly nervous. Which was a little crazy, because when was Karma ever nervous? He didn’t really ever speak to other parents.

“H-hello?” A male voice came down the phone.

Karma shot Daichi a warning look. “Hi, I’m Akabane Karma, Daichi’s father-“

“Ah, yes,” the man sounded happy, which was a good sign, “we hear a lot about Daichi in this house.”

Daichi was staring at him like Maki did when she wanted food. “…Only good things, I hope.”

He laughed. “Of course! I’m really glad Jun-naaa made a friend, it’s been tough for him, learning a new language and all. I should probably be thanking your son for being such a good teacher.” He didn’t get that from him, Karma thought. “Anyway, yes, Jun-naaa said he wanted to invite him over. I presume that’s why you’re calling?”
“Yeah,” Karma thought for a second, “I’m sorry for leaving it so late. Daichi didn’t tell me until five minutes ago.”

“Kids, huh?” He chuckled, barely accented at all. “Well yes, we’d be happy to have him over tomorrow evening, after school. You’d be okay with them walking back together, wouldn’t you? Jun-naa knows the way pretty well by now.”

He looked down at the very hopeful looking Daichi again. “Sure thing, I don’t have a problem.”

“That’s great! Well, I look forward to meeting you tomorrow then

“And you,” Karma hung up the phone. “Well, it’s your lucky day.”

Before Daichi could act too excited, that seemed to be Maki’s cue to jump on the table. It seemed almost purpose, the way she managed to land and plant herself exactly on top of the paper work he’d been doing. And Karma already knew, there’d be hell to pay if he forcefully moved her. As if to add insult, she meowed at him, and started licking herself.

_Damn cat._

“Papa…” Daichi took his chance. “Can you come read with me?”

Karma was tempted to say ‘_what are you, a baby?_’ but there was something earnest in the way Daichi asked him. “I guess it is pretty much night time now.”

Thankfully, that also caused Maki to get up and move. Her bedtime also happened to be Daichi’s bedtime, when he was hear. Even when he wasn’t, she’d usually disappear to his bedroom sometime or later, before Karma was finished with work. Daichi seemed awfully happy, for someone that was supposed to be going to bed. In fact, apparently he was feeling very energetic, because the second they were in his room he scaled his bed, and right after slid down the slide, hitting the floor with a thud.

“Wee,” he said, although quietly, like he knew he wasn’t supposed to do that.

He resisted the urge to roll his eyes, when Daichi climbed right back up again, sitting cross legged expectantly. “…What do you want to read?”

“One of these ones,” he said, pulling some books out from under the covers as if he’d planned this.

“Tell me you haven’t been sleeping with those.”

He just giggled, and then flipped it open. It became clear that Daichi meant he wanted to read under Karma’s supervision, rather than be read to, but that didn’t matter too much. He liked listening to Daichi’s excited voice. Maki seemed to agree, curling what was left of her tail around, sitting at the foot of the bed.

“This story’s kinda boring,” he stopped in the middle of a paragraph, and then looked at Karma hopefully. “Tell me one!”

Karma hesitated. “Like make one up?”

Daichi nodded. “Um, please?”

He thought for a moment. “How about the time my teacher was an octopus?”

“An octopus?”
“Yeah,” he continued, “and then me, your Dad, and bunch of other people tried to assassinate him.”

Daichi looked curious. “Like… ninjas?”

“Kind of like ninjas,” Karma agreed.

It didn’t end up being a particularly accurate retelling of events. In fact, he made it as fictionalised as possible, but Daichi still seemed pretty interested. It made Karma wonder whether they should tell him the actual truth, sometime. Though, a lot of that information was technically classified. This young, Daichi probably couldn’t be trusted to keep his mouth shut. Not that it mattered so much anyway, he hadn’t started asking those kind of questions yet.

Once Daichi started yawning, he wished him goodnight, fully intending to return to the paperwork. He found, however, that his eyes had started to get heavy after all of that. It didn’t take much for his will power to disappear, and he made the executive decision to just go to bed. Not that the extra sleep helped him much, he felt just as sluggish as usual the next morning. He just about managed to drag himself up to make some kind of breakfast, but he was barely conscious, unlike Daichi, who was ready to go right after opening his eyes practically.

“Papa~” Daichi stood by the door. “I gotta go!”

“Alright,” Karma sighed, opening it for him. “Have a good day.”

“See ya!” He waved.

Another thing Karma wasn’t the most happy about was Daichi’s insistence to walk himself to school. But, he’d pretty much insisted a few weeks ago that everyone else went to school alone so he could too. Thinking about it, Karma knew that was normal, and he’d done that too at that age, but still. Sometimes a break was nice, but for the most part, if he had it his way he’d have an eye on Daichi all day.

After putting down some food and water for Maki, Karma left as well, brushing cat hairs from the paperwork he’d actually be needing for the day. As predicted, nothing particularly interesting happened at work. It was the same arrogant conversations, same piles of things to look over. He was pretty sure he was still just in the hazing stage, though, if hazing was.. boredom. The most entertaining thing was annoying Terasaka during his lunch break… but annoying Terasaka had always been fun.

And, of course, he just returned home after that. Even though he knew Daichi was only going to be gone for a few hours, it still felt like coming back to loneliness. Well, not completely alone. Maki meowed at him curiously in greeting. Karma sighed, bending down to pet her. Maki didn’t quite rush up to him looking for affection yet, but she didn’t move away from him either.

“Daichan will be back later,” he complained, looking down at her.

She meowed again.

Karma didn’t know what to do with his time. Normally, when he was alone, he’d just continue working. But he didn’t want to get too absorbed in the work load. He tended to go into a kind of frenzy where he started working and then suddenly seven hours had passed and he was asleep on the floor somewhere.

Maybe he could see a friend. The only problem with that being… He didn’t actually have any. For one, making friends took effort and time that Karma was not willing to invest. He never found
much in common with other people, anyway. On top of some earlier life experiences, having a kid meant he’d had to grow up pretty fast. He found himself almost irritated by people the same age as him. And it wasn’t like he’d made any parent friends either, the opposite problem being most were twice his age. Sure he had 3E, but everyone was busy and the only person who lived anywhere near him was…

He wanted to bury that idea before he even thought it out fully. No way was he calling Nagisa. They weren’t exactly friends anyway, not anymore. Besides… Nagisa was probably busy. Although, he thought, it had been kind of fun, hanging out with him during dinner. But that had been on a whim, because Nagisa had been staring at him like a puppy begging for treats… Inviting him was something else entirely!

Once he’d sent that message, he wanted to throw himself under his bed and never come out again. What kind of a message was that? What had possessed him to even send it? It wasn’t too bad right off the bat, Karma knew he had the skills to play it off, but he was so embarrassed. He was acting like a twelve year old girl texting her first crush. But, well, he’d already gone there now.
Karma went from wanting to hide to wanting to jump wildly on top of it. Which was just as embarrassing, really, he needed to calm down. Or, at least, make the food that he’d lied about having. Maybe he should feel bad about that. But Nagisa had agreed to spend time with him! Without Daichi being there as an excuse! How many years had it been since that happened?

Of course it occurred to him that he needed to slow down. This was just a friends thing, if they could even be counted as friends. Nagisa was literally engaged to someone else, someone who definitely wasn’t him. So… In a friendly way, Karma thought about what kind of dish to make. He wondered if Nagisa’s favourite food was still sushi… Maybe chirashi.

It didn’t matter, though. Ignoring Maki’s curious stare, he stripped off his clothes and headed for the shower, scrubbing the annoyingly long day from his skin. He was on a time crunch, though, so he did it quickly. Then came the hard part… figuring out what to wear. Not that Nagisa needed impressing, or anything. In fact, he should probably try and dress down a little, so it didn’t seem like he’d made a weird effort or anything.

“Stop judging me,” he said, when Maki started watching him stare hopelessly at the mirror.

He scrolled through his phone, putting his music on shuffle in a bid to drown out some of his thoughts. Or so he thought would happen, but the K-Pop music came blaring through instead. He turned it off immediately, internally reminding himself that he needed to reconfigure the Bluetooth settings lest Daichi mess with it again. Though, what he changed it to wasn’t much better. It was still kind of… girly pop, but it had a decent enough beat.

Trying to prepare something that was largely fish meant Maki was pretty interested. She leapt up
onto the fridge, watching him, even trying to get her paws on some of the food. Karma just slightly tutted at her, because most of it was raw, meaning it wasn’t safe for cat consumption. Thankfully, it wasn’t a very hard dish to make, and he was pretty much done in barely any time. And then the doorbell rung and Karma’s heart jumped right up out of his chest.

“Hi,” Nagisa said, appearing right at his door. It was almost like he was an optical illusion or something.

“Can I take your coat?” Karma said, more demandingly than intended.

Nagisa blinked. “I’m not… wearing a coat.”

“Oh, yeah.”

They stared at each other for a few seconds.

“Come in,” Karma just about managed.

Why was he acting like he’d never spoken to another person before? This wasn’t like him. Well, Karma never really got nervous. Was this what nerves were really like? He wanted them gone! Immediately! He took a deep breath, and reminded himself that this was only Nagisa. They’d literally spent years living together, he had no reason to be acting like this.

Nagisa smiled, taking off his shoes first. “How come you made too much food, anyway? Don’t you cook for yourself when Daichi’s not here?”

“I make stuff for Maki,” he shrugged. That part wasn’t really a lie.

“Maki’s a… cat…”

Karma looked at her. “She likes it more than normal pet food.”

“I can’t blame her,” Nagisa approached her, earning a purr as he scratched her ears. “You’re a great cook.”

Praise. Karma wanted to go thrust his face into a bucket of ice or something because he was pretty sure he’d started to go red. How was it possible for Nagisa to take him apart so easily, with just a simple compliment? The only theory Karma had was that he’d managed to build up a tolerance to Nagisa in general, when they were together all the time, and after the separation he was practically back to square one.

“Don’t speak so soon,” he said casually, “I might have hidden extra wasabi in yours.”

“I can’t wait,” he ignored the joke.

Karma hesitated for a moment. “Are you hungry now?”

“A little,” he admitted.

He took that as his cue to go and bring in the food. That, at least, would maybe make things feel less awkward. Food was always a good, neutral, conversation topic. It wasn’t really fancy cooking or anything, but he still hoped Nagisa would like it. At least, he seemed to like what he saw, when Karma set the bowls down, with the way his eyes seemed to sparkle.

“It looks amazing,” Nagisa said, wide and natural smile abound. He took a bite, and his eyes slammed closed. “So good. I missed your cooking.”
Karma gulped, then did his best to regain his composure. “You liked having your live in chef~”

Nagisa just nodded, though. “I think you’ve got better though, since then.”

“I guess I practised a lot,” he admitted, “I didn’t have to worry about making anything bad, since it was only for me.”

“I don’t think I improved,” Nagisa said, “even after four years of university.”

They fell into a natural conversation after that. Which, almost hilariously, wasn’t really natural at all. Karma wasn’t complaining, though, finding the flow of it much better than wildly searching for small talk topics to fill the silence. The more they spoke, the more he relaxed, because it wasn’t so hard after all. Underneath it all, he realised they still had a lot of friendship history.

At one point, Nagisa burst out laughing, and Karma’s brain stopped in its tracks. Nagisa’s bell like laughter, smile planted on his space, eyes all creased up… He couldn’t help but just stare at him, realising that the world was unfair. Engaged, he reminded himself. Has a fiancé who definitely is not you, is literally planning the wedding already, probably.

It took Karma a while to realise that they were still talking even though they’d finished their food. But, he didn’t want to mention it, didn’t want this conversation to end. Even innocently, he’d missed Nagisa a lot. Being a part of each other’s lives was unavoidable now, but Karma knew he’d minimised that. He’d done his absolute best to minimise it and he knew he was going to regret that forever.

Once the threads of conversation died out a little, though, Nagisa looked down at the table. “I really do need to finish this grading…”

Was a ‘I don’t want to’ about to follow that? A bad part of Karma wanted it to, but he conceded that Nagisa’s job was important. The way he spoke about his students made that incredibly clear. He hadn’t really ever seen Nagisa in action, but it wasn’t hard to imagine him being a pretty good teacher. Then again, Karma had only ever liked one teacher.

“Say, how hard is the grading?”

“Oh, well,” Nagisa looked towards the bag he’d brought. “It’s right or wrong answers, I guess…”

“Do you mind if I put on a movie, then? There’s still a couple of hours before I’m supposed to pick Daichan up,”

“Sure,” Nagisa smiled.

Karma selected a movie he’d meant to find the time to watch, anyway, so he wouldn’t be too tempted to disturb Nagisa. He was pretty relaxed about movies, but he knew this one wasn’t Daichi appropriate, and whenever he didn’t have Daichi he was usually working. So, he was excited to finally get the chance. And watching a movie was usually better, with someone else.

“What movie is this?” Nagisa asked, just as Karma pressed play.

“Nathonni’s new one,” Karma explained. “He’s been doing a lot of action recently, so I’m curious to see how a serious piece like this is going to pan out. It’s about war.”

As it turned out, it was an incredibly compelling movie. Even if the plotline was a little basic, only Nathonni could take such a concept and elevate it with his cinematography and direction. Karma kept his thoughts at bay, though, whilst Nagisa sat with his papers, only looking up at the screen
occasionally. He finished about halfway through, though, paying attention properly. Karma found himself smiling, glad that Nagisa seemed just as captivated.

But then the final act played out, and it got a little tragic. One of the soldiers was kidnapped and forced to stab himself to death, whilst the rest of the characters watched in horror. It wasn’t gory, or anything, but the aftermath definitely tugged on even Karma’s heartstrings. He took his attention off the screen, though, when he heard a weird muffled sound. Nagisa was very obviously tearing up, his face morphed in just as much horror. He didn’t realise he’d be that emotionally effected… Was Karma supposed to comfort him or something? Karma was the worst at comforting.

“Uh,” Karma was terrible at this, “are you okay?”

Nagisa nodded, wiping his eyes. “That’s just… terrible.”

What was he supposed to do, hug him? He thought about it, but then Maki jumped up onto Nagisa’s lap and started pawing at him. Nagisa hugged her in close, which was probably better than anything Karma could have offered anyway. He didn’t ask for the movie to be turned off, though, so Karma just let it play until the satisfying end like that.

“That was really good,” Nagisa said, when the credits started to roll. “Really… honest.”

Karma nodded. “The way that Nathonni framed that scene with the shed was amazing, I’m pretty sure he was using natural light which-“ he realised what he was saying, and he stopped. Fanboying was embarrassing. “Sorry.”

Nagisa smiled again. “No, it’s okay. I don’t really notice that kind of stuff for myself, but it’s interesting!”

“Well-“ And then his phone started to vibrate. Not that he was going to forget about Daichi, but it was helpful to set an alarm anyway. Nagisa blinked, looking down at it with question. “Time to pick him up,” Karma explained.

“Right,” Nagisa moved the cat, standing up for himself. “It is probably quite late.”

Karma looked at him. “You can come if you like?”

He seemed to genuinely think about it. “It’s okay, I’ll see him in just a couple of days.”

And then just like that, they were standing in the entrance, and Nagisa already had his shoes back on. Karma wanted to do this again some time. Spending time with Nagisa in any capacity… It had been really fun. He was actually kind of sad about it coming to and end, just in case they wouldn’t be able to achieve this level of comfort again. He didn’t want them to be just a one time thing.

“See ya,” Karma said, and immediately his mind started to race. It felt like there should be some sort of gesture, but which one? A bow seemed too formal, and a handshake was a little weird for them. And, well, a hug did seem a little too intimate right off the bat. Karma didn’t have a lot of time to choose, since he’d already said goodbye, so his brain must have defaulted itself. He reached out, patting Nagisa a couple of times on top of the head.

Nagisa looked a little confused, but shot him a smile regardless. “Bye, Karma.”

Once the door was closed he started to wheeze. What. Was. That?! Yeah, that was smooth, just pat him on the head… He wanted to fling himself into the depths of hell and never return. When did he become this awkward? The only thing that saved him was he didn’t have time to scream about it, instead collecting his composure for a few seconds before eventually heading out.
Daichi’s friend lived in a proper house, rather than an apartment block. But, that was probably to be expected. Karma sighed, stepping forwards to ring the doorbell. It seemed like a pretty nice place. He hoped Daichi had had a good time, after all that. Though, he supposed if he’d had a bad time, he would have been called to pick him up early or something.

A dark haired man opened the door, and stepped out. “Ah, hello?”

“Is it Song san?” Karma started. “I’m here to pick up Daichi.”

His eyes widened in surprise. “Ah, right! It’s nice to meet you in person—” He turned around, shouting something in what was presumably Korean, and on cue, Daichi and a taller boy appeared.

Honestly, Karma was kind of used to the surprised looks he got from time to time. Whenever he mentioned having a child, people tended to assume Daichi couldn’t be older than a baby. And, well, he remembered the weird way the receptionist had stared that one time he had to take Daichi to hospital a couple of years ago, like she couldn’t mentally accept their parent/child relationship. Mostly it was just mild disbelief, though.

“Hi Papa!” Daichi said excitedly, as he put his shoes on, and then turned back. To Karma’s surprise, he too spoke pretty smoothly in the language, before switching back to Japanese. “Thank you for having me,” he even remembered to lower his head.

“Any time!” He waved off.

Daichi had a spring in his step. “So, how was it? Did you have a good time?”

“A great time!” He replied happily. “’m kinda sleepy though. We were playing for a while, Papa. And Junchan’s mummy made such good food.”

“Tell me all about it,” he said.

Chapter End Notes

As always, please leave a kudos or comment if you enjoyed :3

Also, this is TWICE, aka a mess: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mAKsZ26SabQ
“Ready?” Sugino called out.

Daichi nodded, hands gripping the bat. He’d never been particularly into sports, especially in recent years when instead of burning off his energy by running around he’d just talk and endless stream. He seemed to like baseball well enough, though. Maybe because he did, indeed, know somebody who played it professionally.

Watching as Sugino threw the ball, Nagisa got his hands in a good position to catch it. Thankfully, though, Sugino was just as talented at making balls easy to hit as much as he was at making them impossible. Although Nagisa was sure he had the strength to, had he wanted, Daichi went for a sensible hit rather than a large one, so that Sugino could catch it with a jump.

“Good job Daichan!” He called.

Daichi returned him with a thumbs up.

Before he could throw the ball again, an elderly man approached Sugino. “E-excuse me, are you Sugino, from the Yoghurt Swallows?”

It was still weird to Nagisa that Sugino was kind of famous now. Even though he was kind of new to the pro baseball scene, his team had a lot of dedicated fans. Of course, Sugino was a great player, so it didn’t exactly surprise him that he was recognisable. Sugino didn’t look annoyed or bothered by the fan, turning to have a full conversation with him. Even though it was his job, Sugino hadn’t lost any enthusiasm.

“It’s cool,” Daichi said quietly. “Sugino san knows all kinds of people.”

“Baseball is really popular,” Nagisa agreed with him.

Daichi nodded. “They made us play it at school but it’s not as fun as when we play and Junchan is better than me.”

Nagisa looked down at him. “You’re good at other things, though. And, if you want to get better at something, you know how to do it.”

“Practising,” Daichi said, like he was reciting it. “But Daddy, that takes a lot of time and we won’t
“There’s always next year, though,” Nagisa smiled. “Speaking of practising, it’s probably time to take you to karate, right?”

Daichi groaned. “But-“

“You begged us to let you do these lessons,” Nagisa reminded him. “Don’t you like it anymore?”

“I do! But,” he looked over at Sugino, who was still deep in conversation, “this is fun…”

“You only have a week left of school,” Nagisa said. “After that, it’ll be the summer break, and we’ll have a bunch of time to do things like this.”

“Okay…” Daichi sighed.

Sugino came back over to them, a smile plastered over his face. “Sorry about that. That was a really nice hit, by the way. If you just twist your body slightly, it’ll go even further!”

Daichi nodded happily. “Got it!”

It was a really nice warm day. Sugino was usually very busy with training and games, especially around this time in the year, so it was a very rare chance to get to see him. Nagisa, too, was pretty busy right now. Final exams were over, which meant grading almost 30 sets of tests, and some of it was giving him a headache. The pride he felt made it worth it, too. But that didn’t matter, Nagisa wanted to soak up every minute of getting to hang out with his best friend.

They left the park, which was getting a little crowded anyway due to the good weather, and started heading to drop Daichi off for a couple of hours. Although he’d complained about it, Nagisa knew he really enjoyed karate class. At least, he must do, the amount he was practising kicks around his bedroom. He’d made his peace with it, especially since he knew how much not using the techniques for violence was empathised. It was probably a good thing that he heard that from someone that wasn’t his parents too.

“It was nice seeing you again Daichan,” Sugino said, when they got to the entrance.

Daichi grinned. “Bye bye Sugino san!”

“I’ll pick you up la-“

But Daichi had already rushed inside.

“He has good aim,” Sugino offered, as they walked on.

Nagisa thought about it. “He could be good at sports if he wanted to. I think he can run faster than me.”

Sugino smiled. “But he was like that when he was younger too.”

It was also nice to spend time with Sugino when Daichi wasn’t also there. Usually, they’d make sure to try and keep the conversation at least a little interesting for seven year old ears, so like this they could talk freely. They didn’t really text that much, but it was maybe better that way, since they had a lot to talk about together, to catch up on.

Daichi’s lesson was quite early, considering the age group, so they had time to go and grab some coffee.
“I like the ring,” Sugino said eventually, like he’d been debating mentioning it.

Nagisa instinctively retracted his hand. “Oh, uhm…”

“Nakamura told me,” he explained. “Whilst trying to pry for information.”

Of course Nakamura had to be in the know. Nagisa hadn’t really told her, but maybe she’d heard it from Karma or something. Unfortunately for her, no matter how much she’d begged for the gossip, Nagisa hadn’t given her much to go off. He hadn’t even ‘announced’ it anywhere, so maybe he’d give her more details then.

That was a sharp reminder that Shouyou was coming home in just over a week and a half. It was a surreal thought, considering the way Nagisa had adjusted to life without him. For a moment there, he’d forgotten that he was going to return at all. Which was awful, because Nagisa should be feeling overcome with excitement.

Not that he wasn’t… looking forward to seeing him again. It was just the question of all that came next. His engagement was about to become very real and a present part of his life, whereas it was pretty much just tied to the ring he wore. Not that they could actually get married for a while, due to his legal tie with Karma. But… Would Shouyou want to start planning everything when he got back?

He wasn’t sure how Shouyou would feel about him hanging out with Karma recently. Nagisa had omitted that from their few conversations. Not that he was trying to lie, or anything. But, he wasn’t asking for details of every single person Shouyou spoke to in his free time. He wasn’t doing anything wrong. Even if Karma was essentially his ex, for lack of a better word…

Deep down, Nagisa knew, if he was even here considering that his actions might be wrong, he probably was in the wrong. That thought made him squirm because honestly, Nagisa never thought he would be capable of hurting someone else like this. Not that it even would hurt him, necessarily. Thinking about it, he’d probably bend over backwards in an attempt to prove he was fine with it. Shouyou was too good for him.

“Nagisa?” Sugino leant forwards to ask. “You zoned out for a little bit.”

“Oh,” Nagisa put his drink down, “sorry.”

Sugino’s face scrunched up in thought. “Are you happy?”

“What do you mean?” Nagisa asked, his voice small.

“It’s just,” he took a breath, “when my cousin got engaged, she couldn’t stop talking about it. Every time she remembered the wedding she kept smiling. But… You look a little uncomfortable.”

He hated that Sugino had a point. Nagisa hadn’t wanted to marry Shouyou, he still felt uneasy at the idea. But agreeing to it was certainly better than what he was sure would have lead to a break up. Nagisa was just praying that in a couple of years, he’d be ready to get married. But, that didn’t mean he didn’t want him back by his side. Things were much less complicated then.

“I’m okay,” Nagisa answered. “I’m sorry I didn’t really say anything. It’s been a strange adjustment, especially without him here.”

They changed the topic after that, which Nagisa was pretty glad about, though he could tell Sugino was deep in thought. Everything was going to be okay, though, he convinced himself. Practically just one more week, and these few months would be just like a bad dream. And just like that, time
passed, and Nagisa was soon on his way to pick Daichi up again.

Daichi who had somehow put his t-shirt on inside out. Nagisa noticed immediately, but honestly didn’t want to deal with telling him to switch it back around before they got out. At least he was in a good mood, before it became evening. Nagisa assumed he’d be tired from the exercise at least, so it would probably be an early night. He didn’t have a problem with that, though, getting to cooking pretty much as soon as they got back.

“Thanks for the food,” Daichi said, not wasting much time.

At least Nagisa could cook noodles. But it was harder to mess those up rather than cooking them correctly, unless the kitchen got set on fire or something. His stove was kind of faulty, so there was a chance that might genuinely happen someday. But other than that… his apartment was *okay*. Liveable. Not that he wouldn’t like to move somewhere a little nicer, when he was able to get better pay when he was fully qualified.

Nagisa peered across the table. “Are you okay, Daichi?”

He nodded, though he’d been pretty quiet. “Just thinking about the tests.”

The thought of that was a little weird to Nagisa. Daichi was only seven, he shouldn’t have to be worrying about tests *yet*. But, Nagisa knew it was pretty much his own doing. At least it wouldn’t come as such a shock later in life. At least he didn’t have to worry about passing, unless Daichi turned out to be one of those people who panicked under that kind of pressure.

“All that matters is doing your best,” he said.

“I’m not worried!” Daichi defended. “I know I can do it.”

It wasn’t particularly reassuring, but Nagisa let it go. Though, it was hard to take Daichi’s word for things sometimes. He’d been out all day, so he didn’t bug him about wanting to sit and read alone for the rest of the evening either. In the meantime, Nagisa decided to wrap up the rest of his grading. His class had already finished their exams, and he was more proud of them with every moment that passed.

He ended up going to bed just after Daichi did, knowing he was in for an exhausting week. His class had come far from where they started, but with the motivation of actually studying gone he was sure they were going to be more rowdy than usual. Plus… There was also his promise. Maybe he should be warming up or something, since he predicted a lot of exertion.

Though, no matter how much he tossed and turned, he just couldn’t force himself to fall asleep. He must have just stayed like that for hours, because he knew he was definitely tired, but his body just wouldn’t relax. Instead, he just ended up getting bored of staring at the ceiling, and pulled his phone out, rereading some old messages.

Just one more week, and Shouyou would be back. Nagisa wondered how that would change things up, exactly. He’d already met Daichi a handful of times, though he was sure Daichi only thought of him as one of Nagisa’s friends. Well, he didn’t seem to have a problem with him, at the very least. The first time was before they were even dating, one time where Nagisa took Daichi to show him around his university a little bit. They’d run into him, and Daichi had considered them best friends since he bought him ice cream. The other times… Nagisa had omitted the dating part.

He remembered that first date with a smile. Nagisa had been weirdly worked up about it actually, deciding that he didn’t want to go since Shouyou had been such a great friend. But, he’d ended up
showing up anyway, so it at least seemed like he’d given him a chance. And, well, Nagisa had a
good time. It hadn’t felt too uncomfortable, though still different enough from the times they hung
out as friends. And then on the third date, he asked Nagisa if they could kiss (nobody had asked
permission before), and it had felt… nice.

Nagisa knew that he loved him, so he couldn’t understand why his head was messed up like it was.
It shouldn’t make him feel like he wanted to squirm away from everything. And what was worse
was Nagisa knew if he was there right now, he’d comfort him and make him forget about what
could only be described as his doubts.

In the last two years of their relationship, Nagisa had barely doubted a second of it. He hadn’t had
any reason to. The only time Nagisa had really was when the idea of sleeping together came up.
Shouyou had said he didn’t care, and would wait as long as Nagisa needed, ensured him that even
if it never happened it wasn’t a deal breaker. But then Nagisa had felt awful about it, since he
thought it seemed like a big thing to give up. He remembered thinking that Shouyou was too good
for him and all the rest (even though he still kind of thought that way), and ended up just making
himself go through with it anyway. That was… okay, and it got a little easier each time after that,
but Nagisa soon discovered he didn’t really have much of a libido to speak of anyway.

He seemed to have developed that recently too, and he couldn’t do anything about it. Mainly out of
the fear that his mind might run wild and he might start thinking about things he really really
shouldn’t. It had to be the hormones. His doctor had warned that his instincts would probably go a
little wild, after nearly three years of cutting them out. And the unavoidable fact was that Karma
was an alpha, and recently his scent had been making him feel a little dizzy.

A voice in the back of his head told him, though, that he’d been full of suppressants when these
kind of thoughts crept in after they met up at their old 3E building. And there he went, back to
emotional cheating. Nagisa knew he was better than this, but it just didn’t stop. The only solution
he could think of would just be avoidance, but he didn’t want to sacrifice the good place he and
Karma were finally starting to develop either.

It would have to be okay when Shouyou came back. But then his mind raced right back to
worrying about how it would change things. And, like that, his thoughts went round in circles until
he eventually must have passed out, though he didn’t feel much rested when the actual morning
came, and he pulled himself out of bed to get dressed and start the rest of the day.

He got up early, because exams were tough after all and he wanted to make a good breakfast. He
was a lot better at making breakfast foods than he was at main meals, at the very least, so he got to
work. Thankfully, Daichi’s favourite food wasn’t very complicated, and didn’t really take long. He
was able to cook him two pancakes with plenty of time to spare, and went to go wake Daichi up.

“Wow,” Daichi’s eyes went wide, when he saw what was on the table.

Nagisa smiled. “Hopefully you’ll have some extra energy for today.”

Daichi didn’t waste much time in savouring them, but that was okay. There was still a lot of batter
left, so he could have some more for dessert or something. He deserved a little treat this week.
After he was done, he went off to his bedroom to get himself dressed, and with a brief goodbye
they headed their separate ways for the day.

When Nagisa got to class, they all seemed to be eyeing him up. Nagisa put his bag down, taking
the papers out of it, and he saw how their gazes followed. Even if it had mostly been about
encouraging them to ‘kill’ him, he definitely got the sense that most members of his class seemed
to have started to care about how they actually did, too.
He smiled. “There’s no need to be nervous.”

“Come on, Nagisa Sensei,” someone complained from the second row. “What’s with the suspense?”

“R-right,” Nagisa looked at them all. “Congratulations. Everyone here achieved a passing grade, in every subject. Some of you… got even higher. Between you all, there were three B grades. You’ve come far.”

They looked kind of stunned. “Does that mean—”

“Yes,” Nagisa grinned. “We can have class outside today. You’ve all earned it. So, let’s see who can kill me first.”

Chapter End Notes

A little shorter than usual! But, well, some big things are coming, and this felt kind of necessary as a standalone, even if it didn’t take up that much space. I hope you enjoyed, anyway!

Daichi always deserves pancakes.
Even though it was turning to evening, Nagisa felt just how strong the heat of Tokyo was in the height of summer. Daichi didn’t seem to mind to much, walking along happily, but Nagisa had to keep wiping the sweat from his forehead. Honestly, sometimes he felt a lot older than twenty three. Though, they were going out for dinner, so Nagisa had dressed a little nicer than the shorts and light shirt he wished he was wearing.

“Daddy,” Daichi turned back over his shoulder. “Are we nearly there yet? We’ve been walking for hours and hours.”

“You wanted to get sushi,” Nagisa said, catching up with him. “This is the closest place.”

Daichi groaned in impatience, although it really hadn’t been that long. He was sure when they got there, he’d be beside himself with the food choice. But it was a pretty special day, since it was the start of the summer break officially. Fortunately enough for Nagisa and Daichi, they had a long time to relax, having survived the first few months of the school year.

He smiled brightly, when they got to the entrance. “Papa!”

Karma, who had been waiting for them, was ready to catch an excited Daichi. “Hey~”

“I don’t have to go to school for ages,” he said excitedly. “Does that mean we can hang out every day, too?”

“I still have to go to work.” Karma explained lightly. “The country doesn’t stop just because it’s summer. I’d rather hang out with you, though.”

He hoped Daichi wasn’t too disappointed by that, the difference in Nagisa and Karma’s chosen careers. At least Nagisa didn’t have to worry about forcing him into summer groups or anything. He’d stopped complaining about school recently, which was great but Nagisa didn’t want to push it too far. Though, he’d have to think about interesting things to do.

The three of them went inside the rotational sushi restaurant together, and Daichi was wide eyed as the different dishes went past. Honestly, Nagisa was the same, since this was his favourite food. He ignored the eyeroll Karma shot his way as he chose a bunch of different plates without hesitation, eyeing up which one to eat first.
“Anyway,” Karma said, as Nagisa started to eat. “How was the last day of school?”

“It was fun,” he replied, “we didn’t really do much work but we got our test marks back.”

“And?” Nagisa swallowed his bite before questioning.

Daichi wore a brilliant grin on his face, and then pulled something out of his pocket. “Full marks. Japanese, Maths, History, Science, all one hundred.”

“Woah,” Karma took the sheet from him. “Clean sweep.”

“I want my prize now,” Daichi said, eyeing him up more like a target.

“Alright, do you worst,” Karma matched him.

Nagisa looked between the two of them. “A-am I missing something?”

Karma shrugged. “Just a little bet.”

Completely silent for a moment, Daichi suddenly stood up, like he was about to make some kind of proposition. “I want to go to Disneyland.”

“Huh?” Karma considered him. “Since when?”

“Everyone’s been,” Daichi complained. “I’ve never been anywhere fun, and the people in my class said they’re going all kinds of places. And, I know it’s not far away!”

Nagisa didn’t know where that was coming from either. Aside from enjoying the movies every now and then, he knew Daichi wasn’t really a big fan like some children were. At least, he didn’t play with the toys or anything like that, but then again Daichi didn’t really play with toys anyway. Nagisa hoped this wasn’t coming out of some kind of jealousy for his classmates, who he was aware lived fancier lives than they did. Not that he had no money, exactly, but it wasn’t for a lavish lifestyle, and Daichi didn’t know about that.

Meeting his eyes, Karma cleared his throat. “Okay then, I guess we’ll go. How about tomorrow? And I guess we can stay in one of those fancy castle hotels, hm?”

“What?” Nagisa looked at Karma.

Daichi’s eyes sparkled. “Really?! I wanna go!”

Karma shot him a look. “Are you coming?”

“B-but,” Nagisa spluttered, “I need to think about this for a second. People don’t just go to Disneyland on such short notice!”

“Are you busy?” He asked.

Nagisa stared at his sushi roll. “No, but-“

“Please Daddy?” Daichi looked up at him. “Wanna have fun with you too! I wanna try riding a rollercoaster!”

“I-I’m not sure I can afford to just-“

“Happy Birthday,” Karma leant back, a sly look on his face. “It’s my bet, so I’ll cover it.”
So Karma had just removed his only viable excuse. And, well, he didn’t want to let Daichi down, even if he hadn’t necessarily agreed to this in the first place. Plus… it was memories. Nagisa needed something to take his mind off the fact his fiancé would be finally returning in a couple of days anyway, the nerves from the situation steadily getting worse the closer it got.

“Okay then,” he agreed.

Of course, this meant Daichi was in an exceptionally good mood for the rest of the meal, and presumably into the evening when he left with Karma. Nagisa just went home confused, honestly, about how he was now going on a trip. He didn’t have much of a reason to be against it, though, plus he knew it would be fun to go somewhere like that with Daichi, since he was right about their last big trip being to Cambodia before he would even really be able to remember it.

He probably packed a little too much, in preparation for the various things that might happen. And then it was morning, and not long before his doorbell was buzzing. Karma and Daichi looking equally excited about this. Well, Nagisa didn’t want to ruin Daichi’s fun in the slightest, so he pulled his things out, and the next thing he knew, they were on a train.

Maybe Nagisa had been wrong to be surprised at Daichi’s apparent desire to go here, because the moment they were near anything that resembled Disney, he lit up with excitement. Since it was the first day of summer break, they weren’t the only ones either. Daichi could barely stand still, when Karma went off to collect the tickets he’d bought.

“We should go to the hotel first,” he said on return, brandishing a bunch of paper. “We can go straight into the park after.”

It was… big. When Nagisa imagined a place to stay, it would be nice enough but still affordable. As long as it was clean and had a bed, he didn’t really mind. However, Karma hadn’t been kidding about the castle thing, having chosen what definitely looked to be the biggest hotel in the park. Nagisa didn’t feel dressed up enough, having prepared to probably be walking around in the sun all day, and even the lobby made him feel out of place.

Daichi’s eyes went wide, though, since he hadn’t really been in a place like this and was too young to notice that kind of shame. “Woah.”

“Did your Papa choose this place?” Nagisa asked him, when Karma went to check in.

“Kinda,” he admitted, “I sat with Papa for a little bit but then I felt sleepy so I just said that I wanna see a castle.”

Karma came back over, looking far too happy for his own good. “Everything’s good. C’mon, we’re on one of the top floors.”

“Don’t you think this is a little fancy?” Nagisa asked, staring at the room when it was open. It was half the size of Nagisa’s apartment, on its own, though the décor was a little weird, all yellow and kind of dated looking. The room did indeed have a perfect view of the Disney castle, though, accessible via balcony.

Of course that’s what Daichi ran straight towards, bouncing on the balls of his feet. “Look! I wanna go to the castle right now!”

Karma set the bag down. “If you’re ready.”

“Let’s go!” Daichi said excitedly. “Let’s go!”
So, like that, they ended up queueing at the entrance. It was definitely busy, but not the worst thing in the world. This part was efficient, but he was sure the actual ride queues would be hellish. Admittedly, he was glad that they were here for more than one day, just looking at the crowds. Daichi didn’t seem deterred at all by it, though.

“So,” Karma said, “what do you wanna do first?”

He blinked. “I don’t know.”

Nagisa was about to question that, since he’d been the one who wanted to come so surely he should have at least *some* idea about what he wanted to do. But, then he realised, this must seem kind of overwhelming. Knowing Daichi’s tendency to lack patience, he probably actually wanted to do everything all at once and was having a hard time choosing.

“How about we just walk around a little,” Nagisa suggested.

At least that got them away from the main crowd just a little. Daichi didn’t say a lot, mostly looking up at the big colourful buildings. Honestly, it was a lot for Nagisa to take in too, even as an adult. His parents weren’t the type to take him to a place like this, and none of his friends had ever suggested going, not that he had a huge group of friends aside from his old E Class. So, he felt an almost embarrassing buzz of excitement as they walked through.

Eventually, Daichi stopped himself, looking up at a highly decorated building. Nagisa did think it looked impressive too, though clearly more of a façade than an actual building. Looking at the window, it seemed to be some sort of big gift shop, with a few items that looked like clothes as jewellery along with sweets and toys.

“Papa,” Daichi drawled, “can I go in?”

Karma looked over at the shop like it was his own personal hell. Honestly Nagisa couldn’t blame him. Daichi’s patience got even worse when they were in a shop like that, enough to drain Nagisa’s entire energy. The fact that it was a toy shop, too, didn’t bode well for them at all. He predicted that it would be like a hurricane whirlwind, if they followed him around.

“Here,” Karma reached into his wallet, pulling out two notes. “Go nuts. We’ll see you out here when you’re done, okay?”

Daichi’s eyes went wide at the money. “Thank you Papa!”

“That was pretty generous of you,” Nagisa said, when he’d run off.

“Eh,” Karma shrugged, “it’s only two thousand yen. He won’t be long.”

Nagisa’s eyes narrowed. “Uhm, you gave him… twenty thousand.”

“Huh?” Karma swiftly checked his wallet, but then his shoulders slumped. “Well, that’ll keep him busy for a while. Want some coffee?”

Despite losing a significant amount of money, Karma bought the both of them a drink. For once, Nagisa didn’t really mind too much, forcing himself to accept it like the rest of the trip. A moment or two passed, and they both gingerly sipped their drinks. Nagisa was only startled, suddenly, by the sound of a camera shutter.

“Just tourism memories,” Karma explained, not hiding that he’d been taking photos.
Nagisa shifted. “We haven’t taken photos together since we were teenagers.”

Karma held out his phone so they’d both be in the frame. “Smile, then.”

They took a few pictures together. Once they had enough normal ones, Karma turned on his filters. At first they were just kind of stupid, making their eyes a lot bigger and their faces a lot slimmer, sometimes adding artificial glasses or make up or any other accessories. They were okay, but the real entertainment came when the ugly filters were turned on, warping their faces entirely. Somehow, they both ended up laughing a lot at the messes their faces formed into.

The only thing that brought him out of it was the sight of Daichi. Nagisa was concerned, naturally, but it was also kind of hilarious. He had two gigantic bags, probably the size of his body had they been piled up, though they were so heavy he was dragging them along the ground as he walked. He had some sort of lanyard tied around his neck and mickey mouse ears perched on top of his head.

“Did you get any change?” Karma asked, sarcasm lacing his tone.

Daichi smiled, handing Karma a single ten yen coin. “I found a bunch of stuff!”

He joined them, going through every single item with pride. As it turned out, even at a place as overpriced as this, you could buy quite a lot with twenty thousand yen. Some of the choices surprised Nagisa, admittedly, but then again Daichi hadn’t had any supervision at all. He seemed more interested in the merchandise than the toys, though, but a few had still snuck their way in there.

“So,” Karma finished his drink and stood up, easily picking both heavy bags up. “Wanna go on some rides?”

“Wanna try it!” Daichi said happily.

Nagisa wasn’t sure how that was going to go, exactly. The most extreme thing Daichi had experienced was the park, and he hadn’t really wanted to play there for a while now. Nagisa was still a little surprised he was up for this kind of a thing in the first place. He’d have to ask him about it, some other time though.

“This one,” Daichi pointed, when they eventually stopped outside a large mountain. At first he didn’t know what he was talking about, but then he noticed there was a log flume kind of thing, accompanied by the screams of those riding.

Nagisa looked up at it. “Don’t you think that’s kind of scary? You’ve never been on anything like this before.”

Daichi looked at him. “I’m not scared.”

“I think your Dad’s the one who’s scared~” Karma looked devilish.

Though Nagisa hadn’t been on rides like this himself, either, he supposed there was some truth in that. Not that he was scared, he’d dealt with far too much to feel real fear over something like this. But, still, it did make him a little nervous. Although he was sure plenty of people rode it every day, there was an element of lack of control, and huge potential risk… It made him uneasy.

“Let’s go!” Daichi took both of their hands, dragging them over to the queue entrance, marked by a gigantic sign that read ‘Splash Mountain’.

It seemed like Daichi had forgotten a fundamental part of rides, the fact that you had to wait for a
significant amount of time before actually being allowed on. And, well, he never had been the best in queues. At least there was some vaguely interesting stuff to look at, in the meantime, though it was clear he was swiftly becoming bored. At least the wait wasn’t unbearable, until they were finally at the front.

“Are you ready?” Karma asked, when they’d boarded the boat.

“Shouldn’t there be seatbelts?” Daichi asked.

That didn’t make Nagisa feel much better at all, when the boats left the station. Thankfully, it was kind of tame. He was pretty sure Daichi hadn’t really been on a boat for years, so the gentle motion was still interesting for him. It seemed to be more of a ride about the scenery, filled with animals and other apparel from a movie Nagisa supposed he hadn’t actually seen.

What he’d forgotten about, though, was that there was going to be a drop. It didn’t come out of nowhere, but he still wasn’t expecting his heart to drop right down into his stomach as they tipped over the edge and catapulted down at full speed. It reminded him of the feeling of travelling at Mach 20 with Korosensei, but at least then he felt more secure. Daichi squealed in delight, and Nagisa was pretty sure he just closed his eyes and screamed.

“Is it over?” He asked.

Thankfully, it was soon after that, and he was allowed to get off. Nagisa’s legs were shaking, though, after being jolted like that. He was okay once he’d caught his breath, but he wasn’t sure he was in a rush to repeat that experience. However, it wasn’t like he really had a choice. They were at a theme park full of rides.

“They have photos,” Karma announced, heading straight for the booth beside the exit of the ride.

Daichi grabbed his hand. “That was so cool!”

“I’m glad you liked it,” Nagisa forced a smile.

“I want to go on another one!” He announced. “But, bigger!”

“Your face, Nagisa,” Karma pointed, when they joined him, a wicked smirk across his face.

It was indeed horrific. He hadn’t noticed the cameras on the ride, which seemed to have captured the moment after the big drop. Whether he’d been that terrified was debatable, but it was all there in the picture. His face was completely warped, eyes closed but mouth hanging open in midscream, and it might just be the ugliest photo of him ever.

“I-“ Nagisa started, but he didn’t have much of a defence.

Karma leant down onto the desk, addressing the worker. “What kind of things can I get this photo printed on?”

They diligently pointed to a sign. “Aside from the regular prints? There’s mugs, t-shirts, keyrings, postcards…”

“Great, I’ll take them all!”

“Karma,” Nagisa complained, but it was no use.

They left that stall with many, many items. Thankfully Karma stashed most of them away in the
bag, but Nagisa knew they were there and he could do many embarrassing things with them, probably. When it came to Karma there was no bounds. He supposed he’d just have to live with it, since there was nothing he could really do to stop him. He was sure Karma could and would think of worse torture.

They ended up walking around a bit longer, before Daichi saw a big dome like thing and decided he needed to go on whatever was inside it. It didn’t take Nagisa too long to realise that it was a rollercoaster he was looking at. Though Daichi had enjoyed the log flume, a big rollercoaster was something entirely different.

“Y-you know this is going to be quite intense, right?” He looked down at Daichi. “Maybe we should go on a smaller ride first, before something so extreme-“

“Daddy,” Daichi complained, “the last one was really fun.“

“Even he’s taller than the height requirement,” Karma pointed out. “And that’s kind of hard for him. It’s just a baby ride.”

That was a battle lost, then. And to make matters worse, the queue was even longer and moved slower this time. Somehow, that made the anticipation even worse, making Nagisa feel almost sick with every step as they got closer. Daichi, though, seemed at least a little entertained because there were sci-fi themed things to look at and read, and he really did pause to read everything thoroughly.

“This is taking so long,” it was actually Karma that complained. “I’ll be right back.”

He seemed to practically slip into the shadows, before Nagisa could even open his mouth to object. That just left him with Daichi, who wasn’t showing nerves in the slightest. Then again, Daichi never really got scared that often. He was in his own little world for a while, before the cracks of true impatience really began to show. And, since they were inside, it was impossible to know how long they’d have left.

“Where did you go?” Nagisa asked, when Karma returned as slyly as he’d slipped away.

Karma didn’t answer him at first, instead bending down to whisper something into Daichi’s ear, before clearing his throat. “The control room,” he said loudly, so the people surrounding him could easily hear.

“What?” Nagisa asked, apprehensive about such a suggestion.

“It’s really easy to get into,” he said, and heads turned their way. “I know I’m skilled at this sort of thing but it’s really not secure. I think anyone could manage it. I was almost tempted to change the controls to make it go faster.”

And then Nagisa realised there was no way he was telling the truth. He knew what Karma’s face looked like, when he was just trying to mess with people. Karma always loved that kind of thing, and though he knew he’d mellowed out a little with age that wasn’t going to stop any time soon, especially in a childlike environment such as this. But Karma would never endanger other people seriously, or do something that would get him easily caught and arrested. When a few people in front of them swiftly turned on their heel and exited the line, Nagisa understood what he was trying to do.

“Anyway,” he said, “I actually know quite a lot about these types of rides. It doesn’t take an engineer, you know. Most of their employees are actually high schoolers! Imagine us being in charge of so many people’s lives, every day, at that age!”
They’d been in charge of saving the entire world during junior high, but he had a point, he supposed.

“E-excuse me, sir,” a man said shyly, “are you some sort of inspector or mechanic or something?”

“No no,” Karma lightly waved him off. “I just work for the government.”

The man gulped, and took the woman who he was queueing with’s hand, before pulling her away with him.

He continued. “I think this would be an awful way to die, don’t you? There’s no control in this situation, like maybe on a plane or a ship, but at least in those cases you don’t get that feeling of enjoyment before the horror of imminent death with nothing you can do about it~”

Like clockwork, more and more people left upon hearing that, fear in their poor eyes. Though, some at least had the sense to tune it out, just glaring in annoyance instead. Nagisa, too, wanted to tune it out, exasperated at whatever he was fabricating. He was bothered by how effective this method of queue jumping was, though, as they travelled forwards. Surprisingly, Daichi didn’t bat an eyelid, just giggling at what Karma was saying. He must have warned him.

He didn’t stop, though, detailing weirdly specific facts about the track, as if he’d designed it himself. With that, he also explained every little thing that could possibly go wrong, and then moved on to calculating their mathematical possibility. That got them, shamefully, at least over half way to the ride, though some people were defiant and firm.

“You know this particular ride actually derailed a few years ago,” he explained. “But there seems to be an increase in theme park related deaths and injuries anyway. Did you hear about what happened in England and Australia?”

And then he gave graphic accounts of those situations, too, and the next thing Nagisa knew they were right at the front of the queue and even he didn’t want to ride it anymore. But, they’d come all of that way, then, and Nagisa didn’t see an exit that wasn’t onto the ride. So, the climbed on, and he shut his eyes and tried to think about nice things.

He did open them for a little bit, though, enough to appreciate the scenery of the ride. In the end, it wasn’t that bad, though he did feel a little jerked around. The rollercoaster was mostly in the dark, but there were special lights and other affects to make it look like space. The most disconcerting thing was that he couldn’t actually see the track, or what was coming next, but eventually he started to find the feeling kind of enjoyable.

“I wanna go again!” Daichi declared, once it was over, but then his stomach started to rumble.

Nagisa looked down at him. “Maybe we should get some lunch, first.”

“Do they have,” Daichi’s eyes were wide and full of wonder, “Disney pancakes?”

It turned out that they did, in fact, have Disney pancakes. Nagisa didn’t speak fast enough to stop Daichi from ordering them as lunch either, and so that was what he ate. As unhealthy as it was, he supposed that it was just a one off. The next day, he’d definitely make him eat something healthier. And, he’d ban dessert tonight! So maybe it was okay.

“I want a hotdog,” Karma said, deep in thought. “But they’re so big~”

Nagisa looked over at someone else eating the footlong, which was comically a ridiculous side. “There’s no way can eat that.”
His gaze became akin to a pleading child. “Want to share?”

“Sure?” Was that a little weird? Nagisa didn’t know, but it did look good.

Daichi eyed up his pancakes for just a second before eating them as quickly as possible. Meanwhile, Nagisa didn’t even know where to start. His mouth watered, though, at the sight of the gigantic sausage. He knew he’d been right, he definitely couldn’t manage it all. He was glad Karma was there to help him. But… who got the first bite?

Nagisa picked it up, biting the end closest to him. It was good, and he closed his eyes to appreciate the flavour. Once again, though, he was startled by a tug and the sound of a camera shutter. Since the hotdog was pretty long, Karma had managed to simultaneously bite the other end, and took a picture of the process. Nagisa was so startled that he dropped his end, smearing it around his lips a little.

“You got mustard on me,” Nagisa complained, but ended up laughing a little bit at the situation.

“You can’t wait your turn?”

“It looked easier in Lady and the Tramp,” he shrugged, though his eyes crinkled a bit.

“What?”

“Get in the Disney spirit, Nagisa~”

“I didn’t realise you were such a big fan,” his gaze narrowed.

Daichi looked between them in horror. “Does that mean you’re gonna kiss?”

“I-“

“We-“

“Gross. Don’t do it. Yucky.” He stuck out his tongue.

Karma ruffled his hair. “The only one around here getting kisses is you~” As if to prove a point, he blew a raspberry right over his ear.

“Papa!” He moved away, a pout coming across his lips.

That being said, though, Daichi could only be so upset when there were pancakes involved. He finished his food in no time, and Nagisa made sure to cut the hot dog in half before attempting to eat it again. He didn’t even want to look at the photo Karma took. Soon, though, lunch was wrapped up, and Daichi was more than ready to explore some more. They took quite a few photos together, especially in front of the castle, whilst lunch settled just a little.

“Those next!” Daichi pointed to some spinning tea cups.

Karma stretched. “I’ll sit this one out, you go ahead, though.”

The thing was, Nagisa knew it was a bad idea. And, yet, he ended up queueing with Daichi anyway, which didn’t take that long at all considering it wasn’t a big ride. And then, the ride started, and they were spinning around at first. Coming from the bigger rides, Daichi wasn’t shrieking in joy, but he still looked like he was enjoying the motion. But, then, it sped up, and Nagisa started to feel a little bit queasy.

“Daddy,” Daichi said, “I feel kinda-“
And that’s the moment Nagisa knew his intuition had been right, and he puked all over Nagisa’s T Shirt. Of course, Nagisa wasn’t so fussed about his clothes right then, immediately making sure Daichi was okay by cupping the back of his head as he got the last of it up. Thankfully, the ride pretty much ended in that time, giving them some time to catch their breath.

“Daichi?” He asked cautiously, semi lifting him out of the ride. “You’re okay.”

He nodded a little weakly. “Feel better now.”

The pancakes were definitely a bad idea. Though, Daichi seemed to be able to walk just fine, back to normal within seconds. Once that was clear, Nagisa’s parental panic turned down a notch, and he thought about his own state. He was covered in pancake remnants, and definitely could not continue to walk around like this.

“He’s okay,” Nagisa said to Karma, “though I think we should call rides like this quits for today.”

Karma failed to hide his amusement, when he saw that Daichi was in fact fine. “I’ll get you a new outfit,” he offered.

There was something devilish in his tone, but Nagisa didn’t really have much of a choice, finding the nearest bathroom to clean himself. The T shirt was probably a goner, but he was going to cut his losses on that. He just had to sit and wait, though, after he’d mostly cleaned up, since he didn’t want to be arrested for walking around half naked at Disneyland.

“Nagisa?” Karma called out.

Reluctantly, Nagisa opened the stall, awkwardly covering his upper body with one arm. “Did you find anything?”

“Look what we got you~” Karma offered, whilst Daichi stood beside him and giggled. “Can you believe they make them in adult sizes?”

Nagisa’s jaw dropped, at the princess costume Karma was holding. He thought they were over this joke, since Karma hadn’t really even attempted to get him to wear cosplay since they were a lot younger. But, he wasn’t exactly bothered, more, mildly annoyed was the way to put it. Nagisa didn’t even look that much like a girl anymore, not with his shorter hair. A place like this really was bringing out their younger selves. Nagisa’s cheeks heated up, at the idea of walking around like that.

“You can’t be serious.”

He shrugged. “It would suit you, but, I guess there’s also that shirt I got earlier.”

Anything was better than princess cosplay. So, Nagisa pulled it on, unable to comprehend the fact that a shirt with his own horrified face plastered over the front of it was the best option available to him. Though Daichi seemed fine, going on big rides seemed like a bad idea, so instead they once again walked around the whole park, simply experiencing the scenery and, of course, more photos thanks to Karma.

He was surprised that Daichi was even up for dinner, when they eventually decided to go back to the hotel. They had a whole other day, though, so it wasn’t much of a rush. This time, Nagisa made sure he wasn’t eating anything too unhealthy, because more sugar was definitely the worst thing for him right then. The food was a little more high class than lunch, and Nagisa found himself thoroughly enjoying every mouthful.
Daichi was pretty tuckered out, when they got back to the hotel room, but he also insisted on staying up to watch the fireworks display. Considering how great the positioning of the room was, it would be stupid not to take advantage of it. It was a warm summer’s night, anyway, so it was nice to sit out on the attached balcony. The music from the display was faded and distant, but they could still hear the bang of the fireworks, one of the ultimate

“I’m sleepy,” Daichi said eventually, taking himself off to bed.

“Goodnight, then,” Karma said, his gaze following him as he wandered into the room. “Remember when he was tiny and helpless?”

Nagisa smiled. “That was a long time ago.”

He pulled out his phone, scrolling through for a few minutes, before he found one and smiled. “He was so small.”

Nagisa moved over closer to him, to see what he was looking at. It was a picture of Daichi… probably only a few hours old. It was hard to believe just how little and helpless he once used to be, really. Nagisa had had so much going on in his life back then he barely even remembered that part, immediately falling deep into parenting and everything else that his life became a whirlwind. But he was glad there were photos, fragments of memories. He had many of his own, too, from that time they weren’t together and Karma demanded constant updates.

They stood like that for a while, looking at Karma’s collections of memories. He didn’t have the same phone after so many years, of course, but he seemed to have transferred almost everything. Like that, they spoke together, reminiscing and laughing at the millions of memories they seemed to have together. Nagisa smiled, a warmth rushing through him. The bond of parenthood was something only he and Karma could truly share.

“I forgot what it was like,” Nagisa admitted. “Spending time like this. Remember when we went to Cambodia?”

Karma sighed beside him. “My parents always said that travelling is the best way to be yourself.”

“It sounds like something they’d say.”

“My Mum says,” he started, “that you can’t learn who you are by being stagnant. She thinks that you get too influenced by your surroundings, if that’s all you know. Didn’t seem to stop them from settling down in India, though. Moving around every time a problem comes up… I don’t think that helps. I think it’s harder than that,” he admitted.

“I,” Nagisa started, then looked out at the night sky, “I think it’s overcoming the hard stuff that really matters. It kind of seems like running away, and I don’t…” he met Karma’s eyes, “want to do that anymore.”

He smiled, though it looked more like he was in his own head. “We changed, huh?”

“I don’t think that’s a bad thing,” he said, “we still seem to end up in the same place after all.”

“Nagisa…” His eyes searched across his expression.

He blinked. “Hm?”

“Tell me to stop,” he mumbled, and then slid his hand into Nagisa’s hair.
Nagisa was hyper focused on Karma’s face, suddenly frighteningly close to his. It had been over four years since their lips last met, and Nagisa had forgotten what it felt like. A dark part of him just wanted to remember. Would it be different, with so many years between them? Or, would their be muscle memory there? Would their bodies melt back together, like they belonged?

He could feel Karma’s breaths, hear the beating of his heart. And Nagisa was scared, because Karma was giving him a chance to back out, rather than just taking. He got closer by the millimetre, and no matter how wrong Nagisa knew this was, he couldn’t tell him to stop, couldn’t even move away. And inside he was screaming, because he knew he had to want this. He closed his eyes, then, unable to bear looking Karma in the eye.

Only the vibration of his phone broke the silence, and then Nagisa jerked back, knocked out of the spell he’d been under. What was that? He looked down at the phone, the caller ID, and he felt sick to the stomach. Shouyou. His fiancé who would be home in two days. And Nagisa had been just about to cheat on him.

Karma looked down at it, too, before his gaze returned to Nagisa. It buzzed once, twice, and though Shouyou was the last person he wanted to talk to right then, not picking up would have been the last mark of ultimate betrayal. With the look on Nagisa’s face, Karma probably got the message, nodding before returning to the room, closing the door behind him. And then Nagisa was alone.

“Oh hey Nagisa!” Shouyou said excitedly down the phone. “Wait, isn’t it late in Japan?”

“I couldn’t sleep anyway,” his voice wobbled, and he felt even worse at the sound of him.

“Hey,” he said in his softened voice, “I’ll be back in just a dew days. I can barely sleep without holding you either.”

Swallowing uncomfortably, Nagisa played with the hem of his t shirt between his fingers. He needed to change the subject. “How’s Africa?”

He’d before that some kind of reunion was the answer, but even as Shouyou talked excitedly about the animals he’d had the chance to help out since the last time Nagisa last spoke to him. Though of course he was proud of him doing so well, getting to see the world and gain that ever valuable experience, Nagisa almost wished he’d never left. His life would be so much more on track, not so messed up and confused.

“I gave you my flight information, right?” He finally said, the quick anecdotes coming to an end.

“Mm,” Nagisa thought. “I’m not sure I’ll be able to pick you up at the airport. It should be fine, but I’m meant to have Daichi that day, but I’m sure my parents would take him—“

“Nagisa,” Shouyou cut him off. “It’s fine. I’ll probably be horrifically jet lagged anyway. We can just hang out a little later.”

He clenched his fist. “I feel awful, though.”

“It’s been months,” he said, a joke with a hint of sadness, “what’s one more day?”

“You’re right,” Nagisa admitted, “completely.”

“How’s summer for you, anyway?”

He sighed again. “I’m on a balcony looking at the Disney Princess Castle right now.”
“Tokyo Disneyland? Why are you there?”

Nagisa couldn’t hold back his groan. “Because Karma hasn’t learnt to not make stupid wagers with our son, apparently.”

“Oh, you’re with Akabane san?” He sounded a lot more reserved, careful.

He wished Shouyou wouldn’t call him that still. It felt like he wanted to put an ocean’s length between them. Whilst that would probably help Nagisa’s current situation in the short term, he didn’t to be so far away from Karma again. It was awful, and sick. In fact, Nagisa was probably a therapist’s wet dream. He needed Shouyou to come back, but how could he even face him? How could he look into his eyes knowing what he’d just been about to do?

He looked through the glass doors, where Karma was already curled up with Daichi. It had been a long day for the seven year old, and he and Karma who had been mostly subject to being dragged around. They looked so peaceful there together, it made Nagisa’s heart ache within his chest. He couldn’t let it go, and he was a terrible person for it.

“Y-yeah,” he finally said.

The silence that followed was awkward. And Nagisa hadn’t even confessed to the almost kiss, yet. He would do, he had to. Just… Not over the phone, literal continents apart. Everything had swiftly become such a mess.

“Oh,” Shouyou said finally, “they’re calling for me. Are you going to be alright?”

“Yeah,” Nagisa lied, “I’m fine. Have fun!”

Then he swallowed. “Wait, no, I can’t keep secrets from you. I can’t do that Nagisa, I-“ He stopped, then breathed again. “I won’t.”

Was the universe trying to punish him and make him feel even worse?

“Is something wrong?”

“Listen,” he said, “I was given a really hard choice, okay? And we can’t talk about it on the phone- don’t panic, please, but, some things need to be done in person. But it’s tearing me in two and honestly I just really needed to hear your voice. T-the worst part is it shouldn’t even be a choice, because I know what I want, but-”

Nagisa was the worst person on the planet, literally. Shouyou deserved someone so much better than him. Someone who wouldn’t even let thoughts of someone else slip in, let alone almost kiss them. Just when had Nagisa become this kind of person? He hadn’t had feelings for Karma for years, and even then it had been doomed practically from the start. How could he throw something so good and real away for… something so dumb?

He closed his eyes. “I-I think you do know,” the least he could do was give good advice.

“Whatever it is, if you have two options, one definitely suits you more. But, even if it’s harder, you should do what makes the most sense. Did I… tell you about what my teacher said to me, when I wanted to choose career paths? I was considering something I thought was best, but once he told me to think about it, I realised I was just choosing the option that seemed easiest.”

“You really think that?”

“You make good decisions,” he said. Apart from wanting to date someone like him, maybe. “But
we can talk about it, when you come back. Try not to worry too much, okay?”

“Will do,” his tone was cheerful once more. “Love you!”

“Yeah, see you!” Nagisa responded, and hung up.

It took him ten minutes to realise he hadn’t said ‘I love you’ back. Ten minutes of standing on that balcony, clutching his phone, basking in self loathing. Nagisa didn’t cry, but he really wanted to right then. Getting close to Karma… that had probably been a mistake. Letting any of this happen… He had been happy. Yes, he knew he wasn’t exactly ready for marriage, but he’d just wanted to be with Shouyou. Had that really changed, so quickly?

He fell down on the unoccupied bed, closing his eyes, though sleep didn’t come for quite a while. There was also the issue of Karma. The next morning, when he woke up, he didn’t act like anything had happened and Nagisa felt himself getting angry at that. Even though Nagisa was an awful person for not moving away, Karma had initiated it. Then again, Daichi was more the focus of his attention anyway.

So, it was like they were back to square one, during breakfast. They spoke, but only to Daichi, never to each other directly. Nagisa didn’t say much at all, really, eating in mostly silence. And, after that, they picked up and left for the parks again. Nagisa kept his gaze straight, rather than sneaking happy glances at Karma and Daichi’s mutual excitement. There were no insistences of poses and photographs.

And, then, Daichi pointed. “Look!”

“You want to meet a princess?” Nagisa asked, looking over at the line. It was mostly open, so they wouldn’t have to go with him.

Karma looked at him. “You know they’re not real, right?”

“Doesn’t matter!” Daichi said excitedly. “I want to ask them a few questions!”

Nagisa hoped they were normal questions, and not something devilish that would get him into trouble. He really did have a big and compassionate heart, but there was still room for some misguided humour and hijinks when it came to this kind of thing. He supposed it was one of the big things kids went to Disneyland to experience, though, so he didn’t really have a problem with it.

He ran off, then, which left Nagisa alone with Karma for the first time. Honestly, Nagisa didn’t even know what to say. He wasn’t even in the mood to make small talk with him. Really, he just wanted to go home, and curl up under his own blankets completely in his own mind. He needed time to figure out the right thing to say to Shouyou.

“Nagisa,” Karma started, leaning against the wall beside him, but not actually looking at him. “I’m sorry. I shouldn’t have done that last night.”

“You shouldn’t have,” Nagisa repeated.

He looked at him directly. “I don’t know why I did it, or what came over me. But it won’t happen again, I’m sure.”

“It can’t,” Nagisa stared him back. “I’m engaged, Karma. This isn’t like before, where we can just kiss every time we don’t want to talk about things. I’m getting married, to Shouyou, and I’m not just going to turn my back on that. I made a promise.”
“I know,” he said. “You don’t think I know that? I know that it wasn’t ever going to happen years ago, and I still know that now.”

Nagisa felt the anger rise again. “Then why?”

“I don’t know,” he sounded exasperated. “I don’t always think, sometimes!”

“Then maybe you should start-“ Nagisa noticed people were starting to look at them, and lowered his volume. “It’s over, okay. Let’s just forget it happened. We have Daichi to think about.”

The mood was still a bit more mellow, but Daichi didn’t really seem to notice. They went on a few more rides, after that, before eventually calling it a trip, with promises that they could easily come back again if Daichi really had enjoyed himself that much. And, like that, they got on the train once again, and Nagisa walked all the way back to Karma’s apartment with them.

“I’ll see you soon,” he gave a very tired Daichi a kiss on the forehead. He didn’t say goodbye to Karma, aside from a polite nod.

Then, finally, he was alone.

Chapter End Notes

It’s about to get very high key from this point onwards WHOOPSY. (rip shouyou)
Since Karma actually had to work during the days, they’d reconfigured their arrangements a little, so Nagisa was just looking after Daichi most of the times but dropping him back off at Karma’s during the evenings. He still wasn’t really in the mood to talk to him still, though. But as much as Nagisa was mad at him, he was also incredibly mad with himself.

He couldn’t show that, though, or the nerves that were taking him over. Since they’d just been on a mini trip, he told Daichi they were going to be to be having a relatively quiet day, and Daichi didn’t make any protests. He’d spent the last two days doing something not really exactly in his comfort zone, so he even seemed happy to curl up on the sofa and read, the very cheap air con practically choking as it attempted to distribute cool air around the room.

There were things Nagisa knew he could be getting on with, too. Although it was the break, that didn’t mean he could just forget about school. The more organised he was for the winter, where things became more vital considering his students were in their last year. But he just wasn’t in the mood to, right then, the prospect of staring at the walls far more appealing.

A message on his phone read that Shouyou had landed from his flight safely. Just a week ago, he’d been concerned but at least looking forward to his return, with the hope that it would make him feel right again. Now it was the last thing he wanted, because Nagisa would have to face him, knowing what he did. Or, well, what he would have done, had Shouyou not called him right then.

He’d chosen to just get a hotel for the first couple of nights back, whilst he sorted things out. At first, Nagisa had thought it was a little dumb, a waste of money he probably didn’t have. But, he’d insisted, and Nagisa was glad for it now, too sick with himself to act like everything was just fine. At the same time, though, he really did miss him. It felt like half an eternity since they last saw each other.

There was still the matter of Daichi. Nagisa still needed to figure out how to explain all of this to him. Maybe he should have already done it, but a shred of logic had stopped him. Ideally, he’d thought it was probably better to wait until Shouyou was back before introducing that kind of thing. So, Nagisa kept his internal feelings to himself, and thankfully Daichi didn’t really seem to pick up on it.

“Daddy,” he said, looking up finally. “What’s this?”
He pointed to some historical reference in his book. Not that he needed a detailed explanation, maybe a sentence or two would have done, but Nagisa told him about it anyway. He was aware that Daichi probably didn’t intend to ask for a full lecture every time he questioned something, but Nagisa really did get carried away sometimes. Then again, Daichi didn’t really seem to mind, asking questions along the way.

“That seems stupid,” he said, when Nagisa somehow ended up explaining why some battle tactics went wrong. “It would have been better to just…” And then he went silent, face scrunched up like he was actually thinking about it.

It was kind of scary sometimes how much he took after Karma. Aside from just looking almost identical, there were certain nuances that almost made Nagisa forget who he was talking to, if only for just a moment. Though, as far as Nagisa could tell, he didn’t really seem to get joy from harming people, but rather helping them. He was still only seven, but he hoped at least that trait would stay with him.

“I’ll ask Papa tomorrow,” he concluded, eyes sharp.

Nagisa didn’t have much of a problem with that, since Karma always was better at battle tactics, when it came to command. His own talent was reserved only really for himself.

“The army seems hard,” he said.

He smiled. “It probably is. Maybe you can ask Karasuma san, next time you see him.”

“He’s really serious,” Daichi agreed. “I don’t wanna be in the army.”

Nagisa didn’t particularly want Daichi to join any armies either. “Maybe we can see them at some point over the summer. I know… Irina san,” it was hard to remember not to say Bitch Sensei out of habit in front of young ears, “is always looking for someone to babysit.”

“No, Daddy,” he complained. “She’s weird.”

By ‘she’, he meant their daughter Nao. She was almost four years old, now, and incredibly rowdy and confident. Karma said he found their old teacher’s near permanent exhaustion kind of hilarious, but Nagisa was mostly sympathetic. Around that age, Daichi already seemed to have decided that he valued his quiet reading time, but there seemed to be no stopping their daughter.

The last time they’d seen each other, Nao seemed to have become quite attached to Daichi, following him around for hours on end. It was a little funny, but then again Nagisa wasn’t sure how often she ever got to play with older kids. In any case, for once in his life, Daichi hadn’t seemed to have enjoyed the attention much, which Nagisa did feel bad about.

“I think she was just trying to be friendly,” he offered.

“But she’s a girl,” he stuck his tongue out. “And girls are annoying and gross!”

He definitely was at that age. “You read a lot of books about girls, though.”

“These ones are interesting,” he set his book down. “I guess Ha-I mean, Kayano san is kind of cool.”

“I agree,” Nagisa said, “she’s really cool.” And then he looked at the time, reluctantly. “I think it’s probably time to go.”
Although, the way they’d worked things out, Karma should be having Daichi tonight, he was actually staying round his parents instead. Daichi had half requested it himself, so Nagisa didn’t really feel bad. It must be weird, to go from living with someone to not seeing them all that often, and Daichi really did love his grandparents.

A fact that was demonstrated when Nagisa’s father opened the door, and Daichi ran straight into his arms. “Grandpa!”

“Daichan!” He beamed brightly. “How have you been?”

“Guess what!” He said happily. “I went to Disneyland.”

His eyes flit up to Nagisa, but then back down to Daichi. “Really? How was it?”

“So cool!” He dropped out of the hug, quickly making himself at home in their apartment. “They had a castle and everything.”


Nagisa smiled lightly. “Karma made some kind of bet with him, so we ended up taking a quick trip.”

“It was really fun!” Daichi nodded enthusiastically. “Wanna go again… not yet though.”

“I’m sure you can tell them all about it,” Nagisa said. “Have a good time, okay?”

Daichi at the very least gave him a goodbye hug. “Bye Daddy! See you tomorrow!”

The moment the door closed behind him, and Nagisa was alone, he felt his stomach twist. Because this was a part of the plan. Now, he had to go and meet with Shouyou, who for the first time in months wasn’t far away from him at all. Still not close, though. The area in which Nagisa lived was kind of residential, so the hotel he’d chosen was a couple of train stops away.

He looked at that text message again, before clicking off out of shame, staring blankly at his phone. In an effort to bring himself just a little bit of joy, he ended up clicking on the photos Karma had sent him from the trip, since post of them happened to have been taken from his phone. The ones of Daichi with a wide, awe filled smile certainly did the trick. But Daichi being happy had always been the right thought to cheer Nagisa up.

But then he came to some of the pictures the three of them had taken together. If Nagisa hadn’t have known better, they’d have looked just like any other happy family. Family. He remembered family being the best way to think of Karma, because every other word seemed to imply less and didn’t do their relationship justice.

Somehow, the selfies they’d taken in the coffee place whilst they were waiting for Daichi were the worst part. There was no other excuse there, no Daichi to bridge the gap between them, they were just genuinely having a lot of fun together. At the time, Nagisa hadn’t had a care in the world, and was just enjoying every second with Karma as it came. Now, though, all he felt was soul crushing guilt.

Why did it feel like he was about to cry? His thumb hovered over the delete button, because he felt dirty just having these kind of pictures saved into the memory of his phone. But, he just couldn’t do it, and that made him officially one of the worst people ever. He’d already betrayed Shouyou enough, even if Karma had initiated it, but somehow there he was, still actively betraying him.
Once he had to get off the train, he stood outside the hotel for a few minutes, just staring up at its many floors. Nagisa couldn’t bring himself to face him, but what choice did he even have? They were engaged, he’d have to see him eventually. He knew, too, that he couldn’t run away. They were adults, after all, and running away was never the way to deal with things.

He steeled every nerve in his body and forced himself to step inside the lobby, approaching the reception desk like nothing was wrong. Once they’d called up, Nagisa was directed to the lift, and he already knew the room number. He found himself saying it under his breath, as each floor passed, and with each footstep it took to reach the door.

Looking at that door, he knew there were several outcomes. There was no way to tell which one it would be, until it opened, and Nagisa was terrified. Of himself, how he’d feel, whether he’d immediately be happy and forget about everything else, or worse the opposite. All he had to do was open it and see, but he could barely even bring himself to knock. By the time Nagisa got the courage, his knuckles were weak, barely even making a noise against the wood.

“S-shouyou!” Nagisa didn’t know exactly what he felt when he saw him. It was like a huge wave came and crashed over him, and just like that he was drowning.

His eyes went wide. “Na-

Nagisa wasn’t sure what came over him, but he flung his arms around him as though he was some sort of floatation device. This wasn’t happiness, though, he knew that much. Shouyou hugged him back, and they half fell properly into the room, the door slamming shut behind them. But something was different, and Nagisa knew it immediately.

“I can’t believe I’m really seeing you,” Shouyou pulled away, pushing the dark hair out of his eyes. It was longer than Nagisa remembered. “Almost forgot what you looked like.”

He caught his breath. “Y-you’re really back.”

Shouyou gulped, and then turned away. It immediately sent a spike of fear through Nagisa’s body. Even though he knew his people reading skills were above average, anybody would have been able to tell that something was wrong. From the way Shouyou had been speaking on the phone, he was nothing but excited about this day. He didn’t seem very excited… Could he somehow already tell what Nagisa had done?

But then his shoulders started to shake, and when he turned, his eyes were wet. Forgetting himself for a moment, he was more concerned that somebody he loved was clearly upset or distressed. He had no guesses as to why, though, and from the way he’d turned away, physically moving closer to comfort him probably wasn’t a very good idea at all.

“What’s wrong?” He got out, though he didn’t say it with much confidence.

Shouyou met his eyes. “It’s even harder… Seeing you… I love you.”

Now Nagisa was really worried. “I-

“I can’t,” Shouyou continued, “I can’t pretend to be happy and catch up with you like I want to.”

What was that supposed to mean? Nagisa wracked his brain for whatever he could be talking about… Nagisa hadn’t even got the chance to admit to anything yet. Was this about what he’d mentioned, wanted to talk about something in person? Nagisa, too, found he was starting to shake, like he could feel an overwhelming sense of doom growing over him.
They want me to stay permanently, where I was doing my work placement. It’s still in conservation, so it wouldn’t be a lot, but I’d be making a real salary, and everything else is included in the job. I,” he took a deep breath, “I found it really hard, everyone I knew was out starting their careers, and I didn’t even know where I was- but now… I’ve finally found something I want to do.”

Nagisa was confused. “But… Isn’t that great?”

“It’s not in Japan,” Shouyou said.

“O-oh,” and then Nagisa realised. That would mean he’d have to be gone for a little while longer. Nagisa had just about reached his breaking point, without Shouyou. Could he even handle more separation, without something even worse happening? But… Maybe if he wasn’t trying to soak up every second… they could talk a little more frequently?

His eyes fell closed. “I thought about what you said, and you were right. I need to do what makes the most sense, even if it’s harder, so… I said yes.”

“It’s… okay,” Nagisa tried. “If you think it’s best, then you should… go do what makes you happy. We can be apart just a little more… and visit, and stuff.”

“Nagisa…” His voice wavered. “I mean it, I might seem crazy, but I have a feeling. This is what I want to do for the rest of my life.”

“You’re not planning on coming back.”

More tears spilled from his eyes. “I didn’t want to make this choice, I didn’t think it would even happen. But it’s clear enough to me now. I’m sorry, really, but before you were all I saw.”

“Shouyou-”

“It’s not like you can just come with me,” he looked down. “You have your entire life here, and I’m not letting you even think about it.” His fist clenched. “But I guess we can’t always have everything we want.”

It was silent, for just a moment. “What are you saying?”

“I love you, Nagisa, so much,” he shivered, “but I know this is something I have to do. If I could have it any other way, then I would, but…” He wiped his eyes with the back of his hand. “I think I need to be alone right now.”

“W-what?”

His eyes squeezed up. “Don’t look at me like that, please, my heart is already broken but hurting you is a thousand times worse.”

But Nagisa couldn’t even process what was happening. He’d come here… because he hadn’t seen Shouyou for such a long time. Considering they spent practically every day together, happy and comfortable in each other’s space, it was a lot to miss… But he’d also needed to confess how awful he’d been, to beg for his forgiveness. Not for this. It was so unlike him, so out of nowhere, that Nagisa didn’t believe what he was saying. He was half expecting a hidden camera or something.

“You wanted to get married,” he said.

“I did,” Shouyou bit out. “I do. If I could have you and everything else, I’d be the happiest man
alive. But I can’t do that. As happy as being your husband would have made me, I have a purpose now. B-but I understand, if you never want to talk to me again.”

The words he was saying, they made sense to Nagisa, but his heart was about to lurch out of his chest. Why did he feel so angry? Not just angry… All he could hear was the beating of Shouyou’s heart, the roaring of his blood, the waves of his consciousness. To put him through all of that turmoil, just to simply change his mind? He probably didn’t have a right to feel this way, but he felt like his feet could burn a hole in the carpet. This was bloodlust.

“N-nagisa?” His voice was laced with fear.

But he couldn’t hurt him. Instead, Nagisa yanked the ring off his finger, holding it out, motioning Shouyou to just take it back. Its weight had been starting to drag his finger down, and the metal felt so cold it was freezing in his palm. He’d been wearing it out of obligation, because it had felt important to do so… But that didn’t matter anymore.

“Keep it,” he said. “I got it for you.”

Nagisa never liked the damn ring anyway. But his first clenched around it, and he shoved it back in his pocket. He needed to get out of here, so he could breathe properly and really… think about what all of this meant. So, he turned, right towards that door again, and decided that it was time now to let himself out.

“Wait-“ Shouyou said. “I want to say goodbye better than this.”

He didn’t turn, but he did pause. “Goodbye.”

Honestly, he wasn’t sure how fast he walked. He wasn’t even sure where he was going, only that his feet were taking him far away, putting all of that behind him. Despite being almost the height of summer, it had started to rain pretty heavily, but Nagisa didn’t care right then, walking and walking until his legs started to ache.

He ended up on the same train he’d taken, listening to the announcements like a robot waiting for instructions. And, then, he started off again when he was at the right stop. His direction was still aimless, though, and the ring was a heavy weight in his pocket. A large part of him wanted to turn and throw it onto the train tracks, but he wasn’t brave enough.

All he knew was he deserved this, didn’t he? It might have been in a way that he didn’t expect, but he deserved to be broken up with, honestly. But the universe was cruel, because Nagisa hadn’t even had a chance to admit his mistakes, hadn’t been able to at least try and clear his conscience by getting the truth out. And now where was he? He felt like an empty shell.

At some point, Nagisa stopped walking, but he wasn’t in front of his own building. He almost kept going, though, because he knew if he did he could easily be safe and warm and comforted. But Nagisa trembled, then, coming back to his senses if only a little. What did it say about him, that his first instinct was to run straight back to Karma anyway?

It didn’t matter what his heart decided it wanted. He was better than this. He’d been dumped by his fiancé not even an hour ago, and doing something like this… it felt kind of sick. Sick like not moving away from a kiss that was bound to have happened. No, Nagisa needed to go home. He needed to deal with this, on his own, needed to be strong here instead of relying on someone else.

He didn’t know how his luck was so bad, then, because from across the street he saw Karma exit the building. He’d changed out of his work clothes, and appeared to be throwing the rubbish out…
He always picked his strange times… Nagisa just stood there and watched him, for a few seconds. It was wrong to think about such a thing, so soon, but… He wondered what would have happened if they’d ended up together.

They could have been, he knew that. Had they tried harder, had they not pulled away… Maybe Nagisa would have been happy. Or maybe he’d have been even sadder, even more alone. But, he realised, he’d thrown away his chance to ever know, and for what? He needed to go, seeing Karma standing there was confirmation of that, and that was enough. Time to head home.

“Nagisa?”

He called out, and Nagisa clenched his fists, turning once again, his will decreasing. “Karma.”

Karma took a few steps towards him, not caring about the rain. “What are you doing here, huh? Aren’t you supposed to be with-“

Nagisa shook his head, not bearing to look him in the eye. “N-no, I’m not.”

“Did something happen?” He stepped closer still, and there was less than an arm’s length between them. “How long have you been standing in the rain?”

His hands moved up to clutch as his arms and he shivered, like he was only just noticing how cold he was. “I-“

Karma’s eyes flitted down to his hand. “What happened to the…“

He felt a pathetic tear start to fall from the corner of his eye, but he didn’t say anything, shaking instead. How could he even begin to explain, when he was so lost himself. Coming here had been a mistake, but… Was it better than being alone? Nagisa couldn’t imagine his feet carrying him anywhere else, anyway. It was a problem, but, the least of his problems.

He swallowed audibly. “Is this my fault?”

Nagisa shook his head at the suggestion.

“Come inside,” he said. “You look soaked.”

“I shouldn’t,” Nagisa protested.

Karma removed his jacket, which was only slightly less wet than Nagisa’s entire form, and draped it around his shoulders. Under any other circumstances, he would have found how long it was on him funny, in a self-deprecating kind of way. Nagisa’s nose scrunched up at the scent that filled him. Why did he still smell like home, after all this time?

Without exchanging another word, he wound up inside Karma’s apartment. He remembered to take his shoes off, just about, but he kept the coat on, sitting himself down on the sofa. Maybe it was just the addition of his hormones going a little haywire, recently, since he’d been off his suppressants for a while, but the coldness filling his core was filled just a little.

“Do you want tea or something?” Karma offered, after a little while.

Nagisa exhaled. “No, thank you.”

His fingers tapped against the sofa cushion. “You shouldn’t sit in those clothes… Not that I have anything that’ll fit you properly, but you should change.”
“I don’t want this anymore,” Nagisa pulled the ring out of his pocket, ignoring his instruction. It made an unsettling clink sound, as it met the surface of the coffee table.

“It never suited you anyway…” Nagisa shot him a look. “What? I’m just being honest,” he nudged him. “Want to go outside and shoot it or something?”

He didn’t have it in him to smile, but he tried, anyway. “I’m not that angry. H-he didn’t do anything bad.”

“Maybe,” Karma supplied, “but he’s a dumbass.”

“Huh?”

“He let you go, didn’t he?” He said. “Or was it the other way around?”

Nagisa clenched his teeth. “N-no, he-“

“Then he’s an idiot,” Karma said, like that was the end of the discussion. “Anyway, go change.”

This felt so wrong, but Nagisa did what he was told like a lost child. Karma handed him some pyjama bottoms and a jumper to wear, directing him off to the bathroom, and they did indeed hang off him. These weren’t something he could wear out. Was Karma intending for him to spend the night there? Because… That was probably a terrible idea, no matter how he looked at it. They smelt good, though, like wrapping a comforting blanket around his body.

He sat back down beside Karma, cross legged, and Maki jumped up on his lap, pawing at his arm with a meow. That was all it took for him to crack up and shatter, then, practically curling up into a ball as his tears started to come freely. He couldn’t pin down exactly what he was crying for, only that he was hollow and this needed to happen.

“Hey, Nagisa-“

Nagisa snapped around, turning and clinging onto Karma pathetically. He’d live to regret it, he knew, but it didn’t matter right then. He buried his head in the crook of his neck and cried, chest jumping with every attempted breath. For a while, Karma didn’t move a muscle, just let him do it, but eventually his arms gripped him back lightly, moving them both into a slightly more comfortable position. And they stayed like that, until his eyes were out of liquid, and too heavy to keep open any longer.

Chapter End Notes

There's a difference between love and /love/, I think. Well, there you go, it's done. Y'all happy? :'}
It was hard not to jolt, at the sound of the door bell. Nagisa had been a little out of it, but that had simply been how he’d spent the last week of his life. Maybe he’d fallen into some sort of state of shock, or something, but he didn’t really know. There was an intense sadness underneath it all, but he’d managed to spread it thin somehow, manageable but it seemed to be lasting a long time. Days later, and his emotions hadn’t changed.

He hadn’t felt much better about himself, waking up at Karma’s. Ashamed, mostly, about running back to him as he did. Nagisa needed to be strong on his own, not flinging himself towards anyone with open arms. Especially Karma, of all people, though it had felt less sad at least to not be entirely alone. It made Nagisa feel somewhat uncomfortable, though, like really he did just need to be alone.

Karma had made him breakfast, though. It was too much effort, too kind. He wouldn’t have eaten it, not hungry anyway, but it had felt wrong to not even try. So, he left that day feeling almost more sick, in both senses, before he had to attempt to pull himself together. It was a good thing he had Daichi, the only real reminder he had not to bask in his feelings.

“Daddy!” He got hugged the second the door was swung open.

Nagisa relaxed a little, then. “Hi-“

“Yo, Nagisa,” Karma said, casually behind him.

He straightened, letting Daichi go. “Karma.”

“Go put your stuff in your room,” he told Daichi, before casually flopping down on the sofa. “So, I have a suggestion.”

Knowing Karma, that might not be good. There wasn’t anything particularly devilish in his demeanour, at the very least, but that didn’t exactly mean much. He clearly had some sort of plan. As bad as Nagisa felt, though, a large part of him was actually curious to what Karma wanted to say. There seemed to be a wall between them, this week, though Nagisa knew he was also probably to blame for that.

“Okay?”
He smiled. “My parents keep nagging me about going to visit them.”

“Your parents?”

Karma’s parents were an... odd topic. Nagisa never really knew what was happening between them, but they seemed to care at least a little, for Daichi at least. He hadn’t seen them since that one time back in high school, but they sent a birthday card each year at the very least. He didn’t even think Karma spoke to them, though.

“Maybe we should go...”

Nagisa was confused. “Hang on, go where? And, we?”

“They live just south of Mumbai,” he said nonchalantly. “And... I managed to get the next week off work. You’re not doing much, right? I know they want to see Daichan but you should come too.”

What. “I can’t just... go to India on a whim.”

“C’mom, Nagisa,” he dragged him down playfully, so he hit the sofa with a thud. “Like staying here alone is any better. It’ll do you some good, unless you think this is gonna help... Besides, there’s things I want to show you at some point.”

“You’re speaking like I don’t really half a choice,” Nagisa pointed out, though it was hard to feel particularly bothered by that.

Karma’s eyes creased. “You can say no, but that doesn’t mean I won’t fight you on it.”

“...Your parents,” Nagisa swallowed, “are you sure they wouldn’t mind?”

It was no surprise, honestly, that practically the next thing he knew after a blur of preparation, he was on a plane. Nagisa knew deep down that this probably wasn’t a good idea, but Karma had been right. Even going to the airport (with Maki apparently dropped off with a neighbour), with plans actually ahead of him, at the very least he didn’t feel like he was wallowing in his own misery. And, of course, Daichi was overjoyed about getting to go on yet another trip, so he did his best to let that happiness infect his own condition.

He supposed it would also be good for Daichi. He didn’t get to see his grandparents, and it was probably a pretty interesting place to go. Considering he’d previously been complaining about his friends taking lavish trips. Though, pretty much as soon as the plane took off, he fell asleep against the window, apparently worn out from all the excitement already. It was a long flight, anyway.

“I found snacks,” Karma said, plopping himself down beside Nagisa. That was confusing, because he’d said he was just going to the toilet.

Nagisa stared at him. “How? We’re on a plane.”

As if he’d fished a chocolate bar out of mid-air, Karma just grinned at him. A part of Nagisa was tempted to wake Daichi up, just to stop him, but he could never actually do that. He looked so peaceful, leaning against the window. So that meant Nagisa was probably going to be dealing with Karma’s restless energy for a few hours. Karma was naturally distracting, however.

“Nagisa~” Karma half whined. “Let’s watch a movie.”

He blinked. “What kind of movie?”
“Hmm,” he reached over to Nagisa’s screen and started scrolling. “This one looks gory.”

He took one of Nagisa’s earphones, leaning over so that they were sharing the same screen. Nagisa didn’t know why they couldn’t just watch the same movie on their own screens, but he humoured him anyway, trying his best to focus on what was happening in the movie instead of Karma practically using his shoulder as a cushion.

Before the movie even ended, he was asleep too, and Nagisa was trapped from every angle. He didn’t push Karma away from him, though. Whatever he felt about this inside, he knew that deep down Karma was only trying to help. Maybe he wasn’t the best at actual comfort, but the fact that he’d defaulted to trying to distract him or something showed Nagisa that he really cared. And that made Nagisa’s heart flutter in a way that still made him feel a little sick and uncomfortable.

Time didn’t really fly, but that gave Nagisa some time to think about it all. He tried to remember that this was wasn’t a bad thing. There was nothing really for him right then, back in Japan. He closed his eyes, then, until the plane finally started to decline, though he didn’t sleep for even a minute. There were too many things to think about, such as how to keep Daichi compliant through passport control.

Karma seemed to know where he was going, at least. Considering Nagisa hadn’t ever been to India before, he followed without question. He ran after Daichi, though, who seemed near hell bent on running off to places he shouldn’t be. Eventually they made it to the exit, though, in pretty good time. Nagisa at first wasn’t sure how they were actually going to travel to Karma’s parents’ place. But then he caught sight of a local looking man, holding up a sign that had ‘Akabane’ written in the roman alphabet.

“Of course they sent a car,” Karma half muttered.

“You parents?”

Karma didn’t answer him, though, steering them towards the man who automatically took hold of their bags. Like that, they followed him out, and stepped into the car that was waiting for them. It seemed nicer than the taxis surrounding it, but not so fancy that it made him feel actually uncomfortable. Daichi’s eyes were bright, immediately shoving himself up against the window.

“Papa, look at this,” Daichi pointed.

“It’s pretty cool, right?” Karma indulged him.

Nagisa looked out the window too, finding everything to be kind of chaotic. But, still pretty interesting. He wasn’t sure exactly what he’d been expecting, but parts seemed like any other modern city, yet there was something that still seemed kind of old about it. He fixed his eyes mostly on the palm trees, feeling the heat just as bad as he would have if they were at home.

They travelled through the city, until there was clearly no city left and Nagisa could see the ocean. Geography had never been his strong suit, but Karma had said it was south of Mumbai, and there didn’t seem to be a whole lot of land. His questions were answered, though, when the car started to pull towards a port and onto a ferry.

“Are we nearly there?” Daichi asked, looking out at the water.

It had been a long day of travelling after all. “I think so,” Karma said.

That reminded Nagisa of the next problem, Karma’s parents. The last time he saw them, they’d come to visit to bail him out of a school problem since he was still a minor and legally their
responsibility at the time. Probably not a great impression to make on somebody. Although, aside for a few jabbing comments, they hadn’t been unpleasant to him, he still got the feeling they didn’t really like him.

He wondered whether Karma had told them the backstory to him being here. Then again, even now, he couldn’t imagine Karma spoke to them all that regularly. Even he seemed a little surprised, when the boat journey was over, and the car drove on into land that was far more rural and practically just forest. Nagisa wasn’t sure how to feel about this, until he noticed every now and then, there seemed to be a partition in the trees, subtle gates.

Eventually, the car slowed, and they pulled past a very large privacy gate. Nagisa immediately felt uncomfortable. Back when they lived in Japan, Nagisa had visited Karma’s parent’s house multiple times, and it wasn’t anything crazy. Bigger and nicer than most people’s, sure, but not like Asano’s levels of having a butler. This was a whole new level, a modern mansion, though it seemed artfully tucked into the nature. There was only one floor he could see, the rest of the house was raised pretty high off the ground.

“Not how I pictured it,” Karma shrugged, as they exited the car.

Daichi’s mouth practically dropped open. “It’s so… big. Papa! You didn’t tell me we’re rich!”

He sighed. “My parents might be, but I don’t have their money.”

“But-“

“Karma!” Interrupting them, his mother appeared, clad in a casual looking kaftan kind of dress.

“You made it here.”

They didn’t run into each other’s arms, or anything. But Nagisa wasn’t expecting that to happen. As far as he knew, their opinions of each other were still the same as it had been years ago too. Karma’s father appeared too, dressed just as casual with an underlying hint of effort. For a moment, nobody really moved or made an effort to otherwise interact, but eventually Karma’s shoulders loosened.

“Long time no see.”

“I’m glad you had a safe trip,” his father said.

Karma stretched out. “Your place is smaller than I thought.”

His mother wore a thin smile. “You should come inside.” She called out something to the driver, in a language Nagisa didn’t recognise.

He was a little stunned in a social sense, not really knowing the right way to respond, although Karma stated to walk in. Daichi remained stuck to his side, seeming just as unsure. Nagisa realised the best thing to do here would probably be to steel himself and follow. So, he gave Daichi a small, somewhat encouraging nudge, and they came forwards.

The entrance to the house really wasn’t what he expected, given how modern the outside appeared. All he could see was what he presumed to be an imitation of bright and colourful classic architecture, though of course he knew it couldn’t be original. Out of habit, he slipped off his shoes, not sure if that was the custom or not here. Beside him, Daichi did the same, letting out an audible gulp.

“N-nice place,” Nagisa said nervously.
Karma’s mother laughed. “We wanted somewhere that finally felt like home.”

For once in his life, Daichi still seemed quiet, like he wasn’t sure what to make of all of this. As Nagisa had done, he removed his shoes, but instead stepped forwards, not really acknowledging his grandparents but instead looking around. Of course, they may as well be strangers to him at this point. Daichi had been far too young to remember actually meeting them, and it wasn’t like Karma displayed any photos.

“I’m surprised you stayed anywhere,” Karma said.

“Of course, we’re not here all the time,” his father said. “But it’s nice to take a break for the summer. I’m glad you came.” He looked down at Daichi. “You’ve grown a lot since the last time I saw you.”

Daichi perked his head up. “I’m almost eight.”

He quite some months to go before actually turning eight, but Nagisa didn’t correct him. He’d always see Daichi as being tiny, but he knew he’d grown up quite a bit since then. Not that he ever really noticed him growing until his clothes occasionally became too small. Financially, that was kind of a good thing, and he’d never really seemed to mind being small. But he was still just a kid.

“That’s pretty old,” he humoured him. “You still have a lot of growing left to do though.”

Karma’s father was pretty tall himself, though Karma had about an inch on him, if Nagisa had to guess. There was always the chance Daichi could actually have a random growth spurt, though. At twenty three years old, Nagisa had just about abandoned that fantasy for himself. But, that didn’t matter so much anymore, with everything else going on in his life.

“Are you hungry?” His mother finally said, after some silence passed.

“Kinda,” Daichi said, shedding the appearance of being shy. “Do you have pancakes?”

Karma half rolled his eyes. “You had pancakes this morning already.”

“Yeah,” he looked at him like that was obvious, “but, that was in Japan. We went back in time so breakfast hasn’t happened yet.”

Karma’s father laughed lightly. “Sounds logical.”

“We don’t have pancakes,” his mother said, “but there are other things you might like. Shall we go to the kitchen?”

“Okay!” Daichi hopped up, ready, and started to follow both of Karma’s parents eagerly. Of course he was, he was being promised food.

“They’re being weird,” Karma said, once they were gone.

Nagisa didn’t know what to make of it. On the one hand, at least Daichi seemed happy enough, and that was always going to be his biggest concern. Being here was so surreal, especially after an early morning flight, and such a long time on the plane. And, before that, Nagisa hadn’t been expecting to leave his apartment let alone the country.

Taking the liberty, Karma picked up his bags, and once again Nagisa copied him, completely out of his depth. It was odd how Karma seemed to know, or at least convincingly guess, his way around, despite never having visited before. Nagisa wasn’t sure how much time passed exactly, only that
eventually things were mostly sorted out.

The rest of the house was just as fancy, though the bedrooms were definitely more on the modern side of things. Thankfully, by the looks of it, there were enough bedrooms that he wouldn’t have to actually share with Karma. Room sharing was the root of a lot of evil, or so he’d discovered. The view, he found, was pretty amazing… though not worth leaving an entire life behind for.

He found his way into the kitchen after a little while, when there were no other immediate signs of Daichi. Again, it seemed very modern and clean. Nagisa got the impression that even here, they must not be home very often at all, even if they stayed within the country. It seemed almost as empty as the house back in Japan had.

“Daddy!” Daichi jumped down from the table. “They’re teaching me the alphabet! I can read…” he paused to count. “Maybe five now.”

Nagisa wasn’t sure how they’d even got onto that topic, but he didn’t mind. If Daichi was going to turn out to have an affinity for languages, the best thing to do was encourage it. Glancing over at the table, there was indeed a page with curly looking letters that Nagisa didn’t even recognise. He supposed maybe it would be helpful, if he could read sign posts and the like during this trip.

“That’s a lot more than I can read,” Nagisa smiled.

“It was fun! But,” he looked over his shoulder, “can we go somewhere interesting?”

“Daichi,” Nagisa immediately half scolded. Honestly, they should probably work on his manners.

“We could go to the beach,” Karma’s mother suggested. “The best things to do around here are a little way away… But you’ve already travelled a lot today.”

It was pretty much settled like that. Karma didn’t comment anything, positive or negative, about it. As it turned out, the beach wasn’t that far away at all. It reminded Nagisa of that resort they’d visited as teenagers a little, though less artificial. Maybe they’d just come at a good time, but it didn’t seem overrun with too many people.

With the way Daichi’s eyes lit up, you’d think he’d never even seen the sea before. Pretty much as soon as they got there, he made a dash for it, before Nagisa could stop him. He just sighed, as he rushed into the ocean still fully clothed. He’d be cleaning sand out of those clothes for weeks, he knew it, but he found himself smiling. It was rare that Daichi actively wanted to go have fun in the world around him.

“Does he know how to swim?” Karma asked, beside him.

They exchanged a mutual look, before both darting straight after him. The answer to that question was no, or at least to Nagisa’s knowledge. They hadn’t really got round to those kind of lessons yet, and Daichi had never asked to visit a swimming pool or anything similar. Frankly, Nagisa didn’t trust his son’s own common sense to not venture into water that was too deep. Karma had longer legs than him, which meant he got there first, not that Daichi seemed bothered in the slightest.

“I’m looking for flying fish,” Daichi explained.

Nagisa panted after the brief sprint. “I don’t think they come this close to land.”

“Then I’m going deeper!” He said determinedly.

“No way,” Karma grabbed him in one swift movement, swinging him over his shoulder in a sort of
“Papa,” Daichi complained.

He didn’t seem too phased. “Daichan~”

“Put me down!” Daichi whacked him on the back of the shoulders, legs struggling wildly to get free.

“Okay~” Karma half lowered him, before tossing him into the shallow water without warning. At the sight of Daichi’s poor confused face, he burst out laughing, before Daichi just stuck his tongue out. In his annoyance, Daichi raised his arm and splashed, covering Karma with as much water as he could.

Nagisa mostly avoided the carnage of what followed at first, as the two of them started to playfight just like that. It was harder than it looked to move, due to the resistance of the water and the light waves lapping up against them. Eventually, though, Nagisa got dragged into it too, mostly with splashes. At that point, his clothes were already wet, so he wasn’t too bothered.

They spent quite a while like that, with Karma’s parents hanging out on the sand just a little further back. For the first time in a while, Nagisa felt oddly absent of his regular worries. Even once they eventually left the water, there were still a few things to do on the beach, and time flowed away like the grains of sand underneath his feet.

As predicted, it took quite a while to get clean after they returned. Once he was done, he was pretty tired from such a long day. Karma seemed happy enough to take that as an excuse to not have to hang out with his parents any longer. Honestly, Nagisa felt a sort of base reluctance over all of this. He didn’t want to make Karma uncomfortable… Fortunately enough for him, Daichi also seemed pretty tired, despite the extended nap he’d taken on the trip over.

Having Karma’s parents as tour guides turned out to be interesting. For the most part, Karma seemed a little distant, but Nagisa did the best he could to pay attention to what they were saying. Daichi, too, seemed interested enough, doing pretty well without the option of sitting on his own to read. Nagisa, too, find solace in learning something, filling his brain with enough information to be distraction.

There turned out to be some interesting places in and around Mumbai. Over the next few days, they visited caves, old towns, temples… It felt like a lot but also like Nagisa had barely seen any of the city. In terms of this area of the world, Karma’s parents seemed to be experts. He was sure they could have gone on with the tour for weeks. Though, they were on a bit of a time limit.

As much as Karma had kept his complaints to himself, Nagisa could tell he wasn’t exactly comfortable around hi parents. Even if coming here had been his idea… it wasn’t really for his own benefit. On the plus side, Daichi was getting along with his grandparents pretty well. For his sake, Nagisa was glad. He deserved to have that kind of relationship in his life. Even if right then, he wasn’t exactly socialising, rather struggling to keep his eyes open.

“You hungry?” Karma said to Nagisa with a hint of subtlety, like he was looking for an excuse.

He thought about it. “Kind of. Are there any places really near here?”

“Do you remember that one you used to like when you were a kid?” Karma’s father half cut in. “It’s just-“

“In Colaba?” Karma said. “I’m surprised that place is still open.”
“You should take him,” Karma’s mother suggested. “After all, I don’t know when you’ll next come back.”

Karma looked like he was trying to hold back a biting comment, but instead looked over at Daichi. “He’s not going anywhere.”

“Yes can,” Daichi half mumbled.

Karma’s father looked between them. “He’s half asleep. Not like he’ll be any trouble.”

He shot Nagisa a look. “It’s not close but… It’s good.”

“…It might be nice.”

Honestly Nagisa wasn’t even sure what to expect. Daichi had no protests about being left, so Nagisa went to the room he was staying in to change into something a little more restaurant appropriate. He sighed, looking at the slight trail of clothes that had been left with over the floor. Daichi had been choosing who he wanted to share with, and last night it had been him, which meant Nagisa’s ribs were also a little sore from being kicked for half a night.

He wasn’t sure exactly what the dress code was, though if Karma had been young, it couldn’t be too fancy. Nagisa felt a kind of unpleasant nervousness that he didn’t know the origin of and he definitely didn’t like. It was only dinner… Or so he tried to tell himself. In the end, despite the looming heat, he decided on jeans and a shirt, messing with his hair a little with his fingers but ultimately not doing anything with it.

Daichi was just as tired as when he’d left him, by the looks of things when he returned. He barely even stuck his head up to say goodbye properly, which meant he wasn’t going to miss them that evening. At the very least, that removed any guilt Nagisa might have had, about going out without his son.

When Karma showed himself, too, he looked similarly dressed to Nagisa. That, at least, was a small relief. It was more casual than some of the suits Nagisa had seem him dressed in recently, but it definitely suited him just the same. The air surrounding him seemed a little apprehensive, but he raised an eyebrow, like he was asking Nagisa to follow him. Nagisa did, and they slipped out of the house with only a short goodbye.

“So,” Nagisa said, “where are we actually going?”

“It’s a small place,” Karma explained, “it was my favourite in the city, when my parents used to take me on trips like this.”

Nagisa winced just a little at that. He knew Karma was still kind of mad at the way his parents had treated him, once he was supposedly old enough to take care of himself. Honestly, Nagisa didn’t blame him in the slightest for that. At the same time, though, he hoped that one day he’d let some of that anger go. Or at least address it, rather than act like it didn’t really bother him.

It wasn’t that far until they reached a very small jetty, if it could even be called that. Nagisa didn’t know where he was walking, so he’d just followed Karma blindly. He supposed, if they were going into the city, they couldn’t exactly get there by foot. Nagisa immediately felt apprehensive, though, when he caught sight of the one boat there, and nobody else in the area. Karma approached it confidently, hopping on like he knew exactly what he was doing.

“You know how to drive a boat?” Nagisa couldn’t help but question.
“Huh?” Karma stuck his head around. “You sail a boat, dummy.”

He smiled. “I wouldn’t know.”

Looking over at the vessel, Karma shrugged. “I mean, I haven’t in years, but how hard can it be?”

Nagisa got the feeling he was about to drown somewhere in the Arabian Sea, but he supposed Karma wouldn’t put him in any real danger. Then again, in the three years they’d physically lived together, he hadn’t been off doing any sailing (that Nagisa knew about at least – though he supposed there could be some kind of underground boating scene). Just how long had it been? A decade?

Perhaps Nagisa was just plain stupid, because he climbed aboard, cringing as the small speed boat rocked under even his slight weight.

Karma grabbed hold of one of the life jackets, putting it on top of Nagisa’s head. “Ha, now you’re my first mate.”

“You’re making it sound like we’re pirates,” he muttered.

“Ready to go?” He asked.

Honestly, Nagisa felt like he didn’t really have much of a choice in the matter, but he nodded. At the very least, Karma did seem to know what he was doing. Or at least, he got the boat moving, and they sped off into the sea. It was a bumpier ride than Nagisa was expecting, and instantly his nerves were lit up. Not that he was so easily scared… But there was no getting off if something went wrong, not unless he felt like swimming.

Karma didn’t exactly seem concerned about the potential risks himself, moving around a little haphazardly as he controlled him. Was he really qualified to be doing this? Nagisa kept his silence for a little while, but then Karma kept scooting around, and the boat rocked, and Nagisa started to feel a real spike of fear.

“You’re going to make us fall in,” he commented.

Karma leant back, not that concerned. “Relax~”

As if to prove a point, he intentionally shifted his body. Of course, Nagisa knew logically that it was a speed boat and he probably wasn’t capable of causing it to actually rock that much, but for some reason he was just as bothered by it.

“Relax?!” Nagisa just about jumped out of his skin. “I’m trusting you with my life you know! I want to get off.”

There were just a couple of seconds, where Karma’s expression shifted from amused to demonic, where Nagisa realised he’d made a mistake. Of course, on Karma, he’d recognise that look anywhere. Before he even had time to really prepare himself, Karma’s hands came down on his arm, making as if he was actually going to push him in.

“Stop!” Nagisa half screamed. “Stop!”

Karma let him go. “Wasn’t doing anything…” a look came across his face. “Except, of course, obeying Nagisa sama’s wishes.”

Was Nagisa overreacting? He felt like maybe he was… Karma wasn’t exactly acting worse than he
usually did. Nagisa just felt exceptionally jumpy, like he was on a short fuse. Despite acknowledging that, though, he still found his irritation and fear wasn’t going away. He wrinkled his nose, too, Karma’s scent making him feel a little worse.

“I meant take me back to shore not push me into the ocean.”

Karma half snorted. “Who died and gave you trust issues?” He paused, then. “Well, I mean, we’re halfway there now. Either way, we’re gonna have to cover some distance. You may as well just trust me. Not that you, you know, have a choice.”

“I shouldn’t have listened to you in the first place,” he muttered.

“Yeah, I wouldn’t listen to me either.” He have him a much tamer nudge. “You’re having fun though, aren’t you?

There was something a little less confident in that question, Nagisa noticed. Right then, his answer probably would have been no, but then he thought about the entire trip. Whilst it wasn’t exactly high paced mind blowing fun, he was actually having a good time, all things considered. Karma may be messing with him a little, but this was so much better than the alternative.

“...Maybe.”

“C’mon~” Karma smiled a tiny bit less devilishly. “You’re glad I took us to India really.”

Nagisa took a deep breath. “No, you’re right, I am.” He gave Karma his own genuine smile. “Thank you.”

There was only a glint, this time, before, Karma’s hands shook his shoulders again, displacing him like he was going to toss him overboard. Although Nagisa recognised now that he was gripping him tight enough to prevent him actually falling into the water, he still felt that annoyance creep in, even if it wasn’t actual fear this time.

“Alright! I get it,” he tried to free himself. “You’re allergic to emotion.”

Karma let him go, then, mumbling something under his breath.

“Huh?”

“Nothing.” Karma clapped his hands together and moved back, like he was attempting to appear more relaxed. “I can’t wait to see your face when you try their curry! You’ll cry!”


“Really though, it’s good. It’s half of the reason I said yes when they invited me out here.”

Nagisa briefly chewed on his lip. “I thought it was because they wanted to see their grandchild.”

“That too.”

“You’re making it seem like you just wanted a week break from work, and a meal apparently,” he said, though lightly.

He thought about it for a second. “…Nah. They’ve invited me every summer for the last four years. I could’ve come any time.”

“You didn’t come here just for me?” It had been a random invitation, for sure, but Nagisa hadn’t
imagined it had come about just from that.

Karma was silent for a moment. “Well, I thought you could use a break.”

“Karma!”

Nagisa wasn’t mad about it, exactly. In fact, he wasn’t sure how to feel about it. On the one hand, he supposed he had to be at least a little grateful that somebody would think about him like that… But somehow it also made him feel a little uncomfortable. He didn’t want anybody, let alone Karma, handing big things off to him like this, due to him being incapable of handling his own emotions. It made him feel guilty.

“It wasn’t really a lie,” Karma defended. “Would have honestly said yes if it was just for you?”

“…I almost wish I hadn’t now.”

“Hey, I’m just trying to look out for you…” He lent forwards, features turning a little more serious. “You were miserable, at best. Listen, Nagisa, I didn’t want to dwell on it too much. The reason I insisted you come out here with me was to take your mind off everything.”

“You mean like getting dumped by my fiancé?” Nagisa half joked, though there wasn’t much humour in it.

“Well,” Karma shrugged. “I wasn’t going to be the one to say it…”

He exhaled. “No, it’s okay. You’re right, I think. I feel a lot better now that I’m not just… sitting there.”

“Sitting?” Karma looked at him questioningly.

Nagisa nodded. “Waiting. I knew I was just at the edge of something, but what?” His mind started to wander. “I guess I’ve forgotten whatever it was, being out here with you.”

Something in Karma’s focus changed. “Hey look, can you see it?”

“See what?”

“That’s land in the distance,” he pointed, and Nagisa felt relief wash over him. “See, I told you we’d get there in one piece.”

Nagisa sighed. “I wouldn’t be so optimistic. We’re not even there yet.”

“I can’t hear you over my stomach,” he half sing songed.

Nagisa was actually pretty hungry, not that he wanted to admit to it. “You can’t just distract me with food.”

“I’ll try to.”

“I’m kind of worried about ordering,” he said. “I barely know more than three words of the language, let alone how to read it, and-

“I can order for you!” Karma didn’t hesitate to offer.

That sounded like a nightmare waiting to happen. “No! Absolutely not! I don’t want to quite hand over my death warrant.”
“We’ve known each other since we were eleven,” he argued. “I know your tastes better than anybody!

“Exactly my issue,” Nagisa pointed out. “You know that I don’t like spice. If I just let you choose, you’ll get the hottest thing on the menu.”

“When have I ever-“

He could think of many occasions. “When we went to that sushi place, back in our last year of school, and you ordered it with extra wasabi when I wasn’t looking.” Karma started laughing at that memory. “Cut it out! It’s not funny when you do it to tourists either, you know, let alone just me.”

“Okay, I promise;” he put his hands up in surrender, “nothing spicy.”

“Oh no I’m not falling for that either;” his eyes narrowed. “You’ll just get me something weird or disgusting instead.”

Karma grinned. “I love how you’re acting like I’m not the one paying for this meal. I could just get you nothing. Zilch. Nada.”

“So I just have to sit there and watch you eat?”

“That’s your decision.”

And then he thought about it. “I’ll just have what you’re having. If you love this restaurant so much, you wouldn’t sacrifice your own meal just to mess with me.”

Like he was somewhat impressed, a glint came across his expression. “You’ve been spending too much time with me recently.”

“What?”

“Nothing,” he shrugged, “just an observation.”

“I need to pick up tricks like that just to survive around you,” Nagisa said.

“Hmm,” then, Karma pointed. “The dock’s over there.”

Sure enough, he could see it, and that made him feel a little better. He really shouldn’t have freaked out as much as he had, but weird things were happening to him recently. The only explanation he had was being off suppressants for so long was messing with his hormone balance. At least something like that was only temporary. It wasn’t a good thing to think about, because then he realised he was bothered about other things.

“Karma… Now that we’re almost here, I feel kind of bad. Aren’t we being kind of horrible, leaving Daichi back at the house whilst we just go off? I know we’ve spent every other day with him, but… I don’t know..”

He snorted. “Did you see him?” Then he thought about it. “Honestly? My parents barely get to see him. And I think Daichan’s kind of enjoying getting to know his grandparents for once. Barely even hugged me on the way out.”

Nagisa smiled. “He’ll be abandoning you for India the next thing you know.”

Thankfully, Karma didn’t take it too serious. “Nah, I buy him video games and books. He knows
where his loyalties lie.”

“Bribing our seven year old, huh?”

“They’re just a bonus,” he waved off, and then cut off the engine. “So, we’re here.”

“And, surprisingly, alive,” Nagisa added.

He watched mostly quietly as Karma sorted out what he had to, bringing the boat into position properly. Seeing the concentration, Nagisa was definitely convinced that Karma did know what he was doing. He just wondered how it had never come up, after so many years together. Once he was done with that, he stretched out, climbing off the boat. Nagisa didn’t really hesitate about following him.

The sun was most of the way set, as they walked into the city together. Over the last few days, Nagisa had become a tiny bit familiar with some of the more recognisable sights, but Karma was leading him a way he definitely hadn’t been. To know the way so well, Nagisa wasn’t sure just how often his parents used to take him here. Or maybe his memory really was something incredible.

“I’m surprised he remembered this place,” Karma said, as they ended up somewhere that didn’t look that modern at all.

Nagisa looked up. “Maybe it’s worth remembering.”

“You’re about to find out,” Karma pulled him into a building that didn’t look like much of anything at first, but right away there seemed to be a proper entrance, and a staff member waiting. Karma said something to him, which Nagisa didn’t pick up at all, at least somewhat confidently.

The man nodded, apparently understanding. He looked between the both of them a little critically for a moment, before taking off. Once again, Nagisa relied on Karma’s cue, and started to walk when he did. The man lead them up some narrow stone stairs, which didn’t really seem like a restaurant at all, until they reached the next floor. There wasn’t an insane amount of tables, but what they did have seemed pretty full. Instead of what was the main area, though, the man kept leading them through to a balcony, where there was only one table. There were a couple of balconies, separated by a small gap between each, that hung only slightly over the street.

Instantly, Nagisa felt his nerves rise up, but it was different from the boat. There was nothing wrong with this situation, exactly, but it was still sweat inducing. Menus were placed down on the table in front of them, avoiding the candles that were the centre piece. With a nod, the man left them, and Nagisa found his hand shaking just a little as he pulled the chair out to sit down.

He knew why, deep down, this situation was inducing this feeling, but he didn’t want to admit it to himself. Something like that was far too raw and painful to think about. Instead, he tried to force himself to relax, because this didn’t have to be a big deal. He looked down at the menu. He couldn’t read the main part, and although there were some English translations, for the most part the words were too strange for him to make much sense of.

“They haven’t really changed the menu,” Karma said.

Nagisa looked down at the menu again, like that would help. “I don’t know what most of this even is.”

“I don’t mind actually picking for you,” he offered.
He thought about arguing about it, but something told him Karma wasn’t actually going to mess with him that night, despite teasing him. So, Nagisa accepted it, trusting Karma’s judgement of his own tastes. The few times he’d made him dinner recently, it had always been good. So, when a different guy came over, he just let Karma do the speaking. Nagisa wasn’t sure how far his language abilities actually stretched, but at least ordering food seemed to be fine.

For the most part, they chatted. Light, casual conversation to fill what would otherwise be silence. With everything else surrounding them in this setting, Nagisa was pretty glad for that. Then, thankfully, the food arrived, which was a whole new topic. Karma briefly explained it was a slightly elevated version of some common street food. It didn’t matter so much what it actually was, though, because it tasted really great.

It was fun, but there was still a tug at his heart strings. This felt way too comfortable, too overly familiar, even if he knew technically speaking there was nothing wrong with this. But, part of the reason he’d felt so sick in himself before was the way he allowed Karma to make him feel. Even if he wasn’t engaged anymore. It felt… almost dirty and wrong. There wasn’t a strict reason for that, but...

“Hey, Nagisa-“ Karma looked slightly concerned for a moment, but then just confused. “Your scent is a little distressed.”

“S-sorry,” he said, automatically. He hadn’t meant to let it physically seep out.

Karma’s eyes narrowed. “Why can I even tell?”

He shifted uncomfortably in his seat. “It’s not that big a deal. I just have to switch suppressants, which means I had to stop taking the old ones for a while.”

“Bu-“

Before he could finish his protest, or mainly probe for more information, the waiter came over again, this time with a bottle. Nagisa, once again, wasn’t sure what he was saying, but he knew he didn’t like the sound of it. Especially when he actually started to pour some of the mysterious drink, beaming with a wide smile before walking off.

“What’s this?” He looked sceptically at the cup.

Karma looked down at his own. “Some sort of liquor, I guess. He said it was free.”

Based on the length of that conversation, Nagisa was sure he’d said something else, but he didn’t push it. Instead, he stared at the cup again. Alcohol had never been a good idea, when it came to his sanity. Whilst it had indirectly led to the best thing that had ever happened to him, that was hardly ideal circumstances. The last time he’d even touched alcohol had been Karasuma and Irina’s wedding, and that had only led to embarrassment.

“I can’t drink,” he said.

He didn’t question it, but he shrugged, putting Nagisa’s cup in front of him. “I’d feel kind of bad about not taking it. I’ll just have yours.”

“A-are you sure that’s a good idea?”

Karma didn’t hesitate, downing his own cup in one quick shot, before doing the same with Nagisa’s. “I’m twenty two, you know. I have a much more developed alcohol tolerance.”
Something about that statement made Nagisa feel like they were famous last words, but Karma seemed fine after the shots. He tried to remember that his own experience was pretty limited, and there was more physical body there with Karma to soak up the alcohol. He would be fine, probably. At least that conversation, that was bound to be awkward, was put on hold.

That was, until, the man came past again, and noticed the glasses were empty. Not even saying a word that time, he poured them a fresh cup each, though Nagisa could have sworn the quantity was more than before. Neither of them touched them for a while, but then Karma reached over, eventually taking both shots like they were nothing.

“I don’t think it’s a good ide-“

Karma rolled his eyes. “You’re getting jumpy again.”

He forced his shoulders to relax. “You’re right, I’m fine.”

Something in his eyes glazed over. “I’m fine too.” He leant back. “It’s a nice evening, isn’t it?”

Looking out, Nagisa appreciated the view they’d been given properly for the first time. He could sense the busyness from down below them without being in the midst of it. Aside from that, they weren’t ridiculously high up, but he could see pretty far down the old street. Above them, where it was fully night time, light bounced off the crumbled moon.

“I guess,” Nagisa finally said.

Karma looked at him funny. “You can talk to me, Nagisa.”

He met his eyes. “Talk… to you?”

“I mean,” he stared down, “I wouldn’t even accept advice from me. But, I’m happy to listen. Besides, I like the way your voice sounds.”

Was that meant to be some sort of strange compliment? “I…”

“It’s kind of hard, sometimes,” Karma swirled his glass around. “You never tell me how you feel. And it’s impossible to guess.”

Nagisa felt the blood rush to his head. “Y-you’re not much better…”

“Mmm,” Karma put the glass down. “I’m an open book! Like… a dictionary or an encyclopaedia or-“ he paused, only to accept yet another shot, which he downed before Nagisa could even stop him. “I don’t know really. You’ve only gotta ask.”

He felt a slight smile creep onto his face. “Right now I feel like that would be taking advantage. I don’t think you should have any more, if you want to make it back in one piece.”

“I’m not a baby,” he half whined, but thankfully reached for water this time. “I’d never let anything bad happen to you, Nagisa.”

The amount of weight he put in that statement made Nagisa shift uncomfortably. “Karma-“

He relaxed, a little. “That’s like, against the rules or something. You might not be my omega but…” His expression creased. “I guess you’re pretty good at looking after yourself.”

“I appreciate it anyway,” Nagisa humoured him.
Then, Karma pouted. “Gotou’s an idiot.”

“I-I-“

“He is,” he said enthusiastically. “Who chooses work over dating someone like you anyway? Virgin.”

He choked on his own water, then, before releasing with huge relief that there wasn’t a huge chance the people around them would understand Japanese, especially slightly slurred. Nagisa winced, though, at least realising he had somewhat good intentions.

“I-I’m just happy, that he found something he really cares about.”

“Stop that,” Karma suddenly looked a little annoyed. “You’re allowed to be mad. I’m mad. Can I fight him, Nagisa~?”

He gulped. “T-that would probably be pretty hard, since he’s on a different continent right now-“

Then, Nagisa realised he shouldn’t be feeding into this in any way, shape, or form. “Besides, I thought you were over fighting people in my name.”

“Yeah but this one deserves it,” he said confidently. “Just for being stupid. You need to stop being stupid too, or I’ll have to fight you.”

Somehow, Nagisa couldn’t take that threat so seriously. “I’m being stupid.”

He nodded. “It’s the whole ‘if you love them let them go’ thing. It’s bull. You don’t just stop that. It’ll haunt you forever.” Karma’s eyes were so sharp and intense Nagisa almost broke out into a sweat. “I just don’t get it, because he had you.”

“What’s that supposed to mea-“

Karma stood up, like a bolt of lightning, and left without a word. Nagisa craned his neck, trying to follow his motion. Unfortunately, with the way they were positioned, he couldn’t see that far.

What was Karma even talking about? His own uncomfortableness, however, was overshadowed by his concern for Karma’s well being. He hoped he was just emptying his bladder or something.

Thankfully, it wasn’t too long before he came back.

“C’mon,” he said, “I paid whilst I was up. Let’s get out of here.”

Nagisa was about to protest, for the sake of his own sanity, but then he figured maybe a walk in the fresh air would do Karma some good, in that state. Aside from the way he was speaking, Karma definitely didn’t seem that drunk. He was as steady as always on his feet, and seemed to know where they were going perfectly.

Nagisa wrapped his arms around himself. “Are you sure it’s a good idea to take this?”

“It’s my parent’s boat,” Karma explained. “They’ll be mad if I don’t bring it back.”

Honestly, Nagisa wasn’t sure when Karma had started caring about making his parents mad, exactly. He didn’t seem to dwell on that thought, hopping down onto the boat easily. For a moment, Nagisa watched him. It would help if he himself knew how to work a boat, but from the looks of things Karma seemed to know what he was doing. So maybe he wasn’t actually that drunk.

“Okay,” Nagisa steeled himself, before sealing his fate and boarding the boat.
Karma grinned confidently. “You know what I spent my childhood watching? *One Piece.*”

That really didn’t bode well, but it was too late. Within seconds, the boat was powered up, and they were off, leaving the city (and safety) behind. Nagisa’s stomach twisted with dread, but he forced himself to keep it at bay. They’d been fine, coming there. So, Nagisa kept silent, watching the concentration in Karma’s face morph.

“Karma?” Nagisa tilted his head. “You look a little-“

“I forgot where it is,” he blanched, like he’d misplaced a wallet or something. Nagisa thought about asking what he was looking for, but he didn’t really have the chance, before Karma started tugging at something. “Wait, it’s jammed.” He tried again, clearly using a considerable amount of his strength.

Nagisa swallowed. “M-maybe you should just try it another way?”

“I know what I’m-“ he yanked again, and two things happened in succession. First, something came off in his hands. Second, the engine made a spluttering kind of sound, before shutting itself off, and suddenly instead of speeding along the boat was merely drifting.

“Uh, Karma?”

He started to laugh. Not his devilish laugh, or the more natural one that slipped out sometimes. This was something else entirely and it was incredibly unsettling. Nagisa could only stare at him in horror as his brain started to wrap itself around the situation. He’d just… accidentally turned it off, right? Karma had said he knew what he was doing…

As if he wanted to answer Nagisa’s question, he stopped laughing. “Yeah, it’s broken.”


“The engine won’t work,” he explained, like that wasn’t obvious.

Finally, his worry was actually justified. “There’s got to be oars, or-“

Karma shrugged, and then crouched, before casually lying himself out across the boat. Like this was leisure. Like he wanted to star gaze. For a moment, that really did catch Nagisa off guard. Was he really going to do nothing? There were any potential bad situations Nagisa could dream up, and this was absolutely one of them.

“I guess there’s nothing we can do.”

“There has to be-“ Nagisa didn’t know his way around a boat, though, not even in the slightest. He tugged his phone out of his pocket, but there was no reception. Of course there wasn’t, they were in the middle of the *sea*.

Still, Karma didn’t seem bothered at all, staring up at the night sky. Apparently it was pretty easy to ignore Nagisa entirely, as he panicked beside him, or Karma was completely out of it. Nagisa couldn’t exactly move around the boat easily, since he was taking up so much room, and at that rate he didn’t trust Karma to pull him out if he fell in. He was just lying there, humming.

“…Is that the Titanic theme tune?”

Karma giggled like a scolded child. “Come lie down with *me.*”
“This isn’t the time for-” Before he could finish his sentence, Karma got a tight grip on him, tugging him down regardless.

“Really Karma,” Nagisa attempted and failed to free himself, “we need to do something.”

He sighed. “There’ll be a ship at some point, this is a popular piece of water. We’ll just have to wait.”

“And drift out into the ocean in the meantime?”

“The captain always goes down with his ship,” he said lightly, his hand reaching up above his eyes to trace something invisible.

Nagisa’s own gaze narrowed. “If we survive I’m going to kill you.”

“A ship will come,” he pressed again. “Eventually. Probably. It’s kind of warm out here, isn’t it?”

That had to be the alcohol talking. “I’m a little cold-“

He really should have kept his mouth shut. All that statement did was give Karma an excuse to tug him even closer, cuddling up to him like he definitely wasn’t planning on letting him go any time soon. Like quick sand, Nagisa realised it would probably get worse if he struggled further. Honestly, as much as the entire situation baffled him, at the very least his body was warm.

“You smell good,” Karma said after a while, shifting so his nose was buried in the juncture of Nagisa’s neck.

“Ah- Karma,” he regained the compulsion to move again, before giving up.

Letting him scent him like this wasn’t the most comfortable situation Nagisa could imagine, exactly. But then again, he forced himself to relax a little. Scenting didn’t necessarily have to be sexual. In fact, with the crooked smile that came across Karma’s satisfied face as he did it, this seemed much more akin to a lost child who needed comfort.

So, Nagisa let him do it, staring up at the sky hopelessly. Eventually, Karma stilled entirely, and when Nagisa looked down, he realised his eyes were closed and he was breathing heavily. The fact that it was now dead weight meant that Nagisa had lost all hope of doing something about this. So, he stayed watching the stars.

Once the initial dread faded, he thought about it properly. Yes, Karma had clearly been drunk when he said it, but he wasn’t wrong. There would have to be a ship, at some point. People didn’t actually get lost at sea, did they? He was so tired, it finally came upon him. Not that he was about to turn over and nap like Karma had apparently decided to do.

Ignoring everything else, it was actually calm. Like that, he felt half the world away from the things that were bothering him. The night sky really was beautiful, undisturbed and peaceful. The sea was actually pretty calm, and the boat rocked gently with the water, soothing. If he really did put aside the rest of it, it was kind of a nice place to be.

Nagisa wasn’t exactly sure if he slept at all. If he did, it didn’t really feel like sleep, more blinking his eyes into the future. At some point, though, the sun started to rise, and Karma started to drool onto his chest. His throat was starting to get dry, which reignited his senses a little bit. They couldn’t stay out here drifting for too long, they needed water to survive.

Right about then, though, he was jarred by the sound of a horn. His head turned around frantically,
until he caught sight of what it was. A small, slightly janky looking fishing boat was right in their sights, and Nagisa was sure they must have been seen. Although it was small, it was quite a few times bigger than the boat they were currently on. On top of that, it was actually working.

“Karma,” Nagisa nudged him desperately. “You have to get up.”

“Wha-“

Nagisa shook him. “There’s a boat.”

Karma barely pulled himself up, leaning over the edge of the speedboat. “Oh.”

In his desperation for safety, Nagisa barely registered what happened after that. He knew that the boat pulled up next to them, and lowered a ladder over the side. By some miracle, or else deep set survival instinct, Karma managed to climb up it without falling back into the sea. Nagisa followed him up, eternally thankfully that they’d been happened upon.

“Uh,” Nagisa didn’t even know where to start. Even though he’d made it up, Karma was definitely indisposed. “E-English?”

A couple of the fishermen looked between each other, before one stepped forward. “You’re from England?”

“No,” he didn’t realise he’d given off that impression, “we’re just visiting, uh,” he looked at Karma hopelessly. “Karma, what’s the name?”

Thankfully, Karma had it in him to spit it out, the fishermen seeming to understand despite how weak the statement was. It was good he got it out then, because after that, he went pale, suddenly leaning over the boat rail before puking pretty violently. That would definitely be the return of the alcohol. Nagisa almost felt bad for him, until he remembered it was pretty much Karma’s fault he’d ended up there.

“Does he usually get seasick?” He asked, looking over at him. It took Nagisa a second to register what he was saying, his accent kind of thick. Then again, Nagisa was sure he wasn’t much better. It was more like a hangover, but they didn’t need to know that. “Sorry, he’s a little…”

“We’ll take you back,” he said. “Here, have a blanket.”

The journey wasn’t exactly smooth, but it was better than dying out at sea. Nagisa just sat down and stared at the sea, waiting for it to be over. There was only the fishermen shouting to each other in a language he didn’t understand, and the delightful symphony of Karma’s retching. Honestly, by the time they saw land again, Nagisa was surprised he even had anything left in his stomach. He’d never been so happy to see a beach, desperate to get off the boat as soon as possible, though not without thanking their rescuers profusely.

Karma was pretty much silent the entire walk back. He didn’t seem particularly ashamed or anything, but he was squinting as though the light hurt him. Maybe he just wasn’t up to conversation. Whatever the case, really, Nagisa wasn’t the type to hold onto grudges. Whilst Karma definitely deserved some penance, Nagisa didn’t want him to actually suffer.

“We’re back,” he finally opened his mouth, when they walked in the door, kicking his shoes off. “I’m going to bed.”

He walked off, then, like he was in some sort of zombie mode. Was Karma seriously just going to
leave Nagisa to deal with this interaction? He’d broken his parents’ boat. And then there would be the explanation of why they were out all night, when they were only supposed to be getting dinner. Nagisa didn’t want to explain that to Karma’s parents, who he was pretty sure didn’t like him.

“Daddy!” Daichi rushed over to him almost comically, skidding across the floor as he flew into his arms.

Nagisa forgot everything else, dropping down to hug Daichi back properly. After all, he could have died, not that Daichi needed to know that. Like that rebooted his soul somehow, he started to think a lot clearer. Sometimes, he wondered if a simple hug from Daichi could cure the world and everyone in it.

“Did you sleep well?” At least, better than he did.

Daichi nodded. “Yeah, but you weren’t here at breakfast.”

“I’m really sorry,” Nagisa said seriously. “I got stuck on a boat with your Papa, actually…”

He wrinkled his nose. “A boat?”

“Yeah,” he said. “In the middle of the ocean.”

“Did you see any flying fish?” He asked curiously.

Nagisa smiled. “Not that I remember. But, we’ll be taking another boat soon when we leave for the airport,” not that he had any desire to board that boat, “so you might see some then.”

“Where is Papa?” Daichi looked around.

“He got seasick,” he decided to go with that excuse, “so he’s taking a rest.”

“Oh.”

He thought about it. “You can probably see him in a couple of hours. I’m sure he misses you a lot.”

Daichi shrugged. “I’m going to read, then.”

“Are you?” Nagisa wasn’t bothered. Daichi had barely gone off to have his alone time with his books this entire trip. As much as it was nice to have his full attention for once, Nagisa knew it was somehow important to him.

“I was in the middle of a chapter…”

“Go on,” he said, “we have all day.”

Honestly, he wasn’t sure what to do with himself, after that. Daichi grinned widely, and ran off as quickly as he’d come. He still felt like an awkward guest, not really wanting to mess with a house that didn’t belong to him, but he was hungry. That winning out, he wandered into the kitchen, but instead got a little lost in his tracks.

Perhaps that was a trait with all members of the Akabane family. The kitchen had access to an open, outdoor area, visible through glass windows and doors. From there, he could see Karma’s mother doing some kind of stretch, akin to yoga or tai chi or something along those lines. He cringed thinking about it, but he should probably go explain himself.
“Long night?” She barely moved from her position, but still managed to see him.

“Y-you could say that.” Nagisa sat himself down, thinking of how to broach the subject.

Finally, she turned. “Karma insists you’re not together.”

That caught him off guard. “We’re not.”

“Do you want to be?”

It was so nonchalant. Of all the conversations he wanted to be having, with one of Karma’s parents of all people, this was not it. In fact, Nagisa was just about ready to blurt out the boat thing, hoping that it would shift her focus. Something about the way she was looking at him with pure examination told him she wouldn’t drop it so easily.

“I- I was engaged only two weeks ago,” he said a little defensively. Not that he’d even really thought about it at all this week, unless brought up by Karma.

Her posture straightened, and she turned to him properly. “Karma’s always had a tendency to get attached. Even when he just around Daichi’s age, you could never take a toy from him. And every time we moved house when he was young, he always made such a scene. The best thing, we found, was never playing into that attachment. That might have been cruel, but it was less cruel in the end.”

There was so much Nagisa wanted to argue. They’d barely even seen Karma since he was a child, how on earth could she judge his personality now. Nagisa had known that child, and knew him now as a man, and he definitely wasn’t the same. Maybe he attached himself to certain things, but that’s because he cared about them so intensely…

“Of course,” she continued, “I’m saying this as a mother. As detached as you might think I am, I can’t be entirely neutral on this. I think you’re a good person,” her head tilted, “if a little misguided. Be careful about playing into that attachment. Especially if you never intend on going further than mere strings… I can sense the heart break from a mile away.”

“I-“ He didn’t even know how to unpack that.

“Nagisa,” she said, slight kindness if her tone. “Did I ever tell you how I met my husband?”

He shook his head.

Something in her eyes seemed to wander. “I was taking a graduation trip, with a few of my friends. And, well, I wanted to get a closer look at one of the temples. And he, the asshole, came over to lecture me about the ancient stones. We continued the debate over dinner, and I ended up staying for a month, which turned into three, and then we got married on a whim. We did a lot on a whim, back then. And then of course we had Karma, and practicality had to creep in. We tried to find a balance, though.”

Nagisa’s blood began to boil. He wasn’t sure what point she was trying to make, but it angered him. It wasn’t like Karma ever talked about it, but it was clear how his parents’ actions had effected him, in more ways than he probably even realised. It wasn’t something Nagisa was directly involved in, exactly, but he knew how much hurt it had led to. To hear it somewhat romanticised, it was kind of sick.

“Just take it as a warning,” she said eventually.
“We broke your boat,” Nagisa said, boldness rising up inside him like a burning fire.

He ended up sitting with Daichi, anyway, spending idle time with his phone. Whatever the case, he was glad Daichi wasn’t involved in any of this. Even if he was so deep into his book he barely gave Nagisa acknowledgement when he entered the room, it was nice to just be in the same space, with no immediate worries such as work.

A couple of hours passed like that, until he decided he should probably check that Karma was actually alive in that room. This time, when he walked into the kitchen to grab a glass of water, he didn’t feel at all bad about it. He held it steady, as he paced down the hallway, finally pausing outside Karma’s door. There wasn’t much sign of life, when he knocked.

“Karma?” He pushed the door open anyway, allowing light to stream in. “I thought you might want some water.”

He groaned, propping himself slightly to accept it. “Thanks.”

“I wasn’t sure how much you’d remember,” Nagisa said.

Karma stared off into space. “Most of it. Not really what I said, but…”

“It’s probably for the best,” Nagisa smiled. “I won’t hold it against you.”

He looked at him funny. “You may as well. I have enough drunk blackmail against you for years.”

“Then we’re even.”

Like that was a cue, Daichi must have noticed the ajar door, and rushed in just as enthusiastically as he’d greeted Nagisa. For just a moment, he looked like he was being almost careful, until his face lit up. Apparently he didn’t really care so much that Karma was supposedly actually ill, because he launched himself onto the bed.

“Hi Papa!”

Somehow, despite the headache he probably had, Karma found the inner strength to sit up properly. “Good afternoon.”

“Papa…” He tilted his head. “Can we go back to the beach before we leave?”

“No way,” Karma flopped back down. “I have a vendetta against beaches now, sorry. Mountains only from now on.”

Daichi giggled, snuggling up half on top of him, not unlike the way Karma had held him the night before. Nagisa almost considered leaving, but a part of him really didn’t want to. Instead, he made a space for himself, perching on the edge of the mattress. Karma at the very least seemed more relaxed, even though Daichi had the tendency to make accidental jabs.

“Can we climb Kunugigaoka mountain?” He asked. “When we come back to Japan?”

Karma shot him a look. “Ask your dad if he’s in the mood for a hike.”

“Daddy,” he stared up, “I really wanna go visit.”

“I’m sure we can find the time.” Somehow it was one of the few outdoor activities Daichi ever wanted to do. Nagisa wasn’t about to pass that up.
Nagisa wasn’t sure what it was, right then, but he relaxed fully. His body gave out on him and he flopped back himself, much to Daichi’s apparent amusement. It wasn’t so much the setting, being in a beautiful part of India, but right there, in that space, felt oddly right to him.

Chapter End Notes

I'm back bitches. Not just back, but back with the longest chapter yet. Hope that makes up for the absence.

Also if it's not obvious, I know next to nothing about India or boats. I did quite a bit of research but basically take a lot of this with a pinch of salt.

My exams went pretty well, overall! Honestly I'm just really glad I can come back to actually having hobbies, rather than living in the 24 hour library like a troll. So, writing it is! There's a lot I skipped over idek how this chapter got so long.

In my break, I made a lot of memes. I also jokingly made Daichi merch on redbubble (which you can look up with 'tinstiogs' if you really want to). I then proceeded to buy a phone case. So now Daichi's beautiful portrait is forever on my phone. And that's glorious, if I do say so myself. Imagine stanning your OCs so hard you literally take them around with you.

ANYWAY, I hope you enjoy this one, and hope you didn't forget me :'( 
End of Summer Time

Chapter Summary

Daichi wants to attend the local summer festival

Chapter Notes

see im actually back never fear

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“What are they doing?” Daichi asked, as they walked through one of the more commercial areas of the neighbourhood.

“Looks like they’re just setting up for something,” Karma said, looking out at all the people carrying equipment around and setting up stalls.

Nagisa thought about it. “I think I heard they were throwing a festival today.”

The end of summer was swiftly approaching, which meant it was right in the middle of festival season. It wasn’t like they had any plans, but maybe it would be nice to go, considering summer festivals only took place once a year. Daichi always seemed to like them even when he was younger, but which each year that passed he could appreciate more of the activities.

“What do you want to go?” He asked.

Daichi looked deep in thought. “Can I ask Jun chan if he wants to come?”

“If you want?” Nagisa was a little surprised that was where his mind had gone immediately. Then again, he supposed it was inevitable that Daichi would eventually get to the age where fun with friends was more appealing than hanging out with his parents. And, well, once that started, he wasn’t sure it was going to stop.

He grinned widely. “He’ll probably say yes!”

School would be back in session soon enough, so they’d be able to go back to being able to see each other every day. Nagisa was just glad Daichi actually had a friend he cared about spending time with nowadays. And, as it had turned out, plenty of stories to tell about the trips they’d ended up taking. Considering they’d started out the summer with no travel plans.

It had been a couple of weeks since they returned from their trip to India, which had been mostly quiet. Nagisa wasn’t even sure how he was feeling anymore. The actual pain he’d been feeling had definitely faded somewhat, definitely still present but not at the surface. It was numb enough to ignore, anyway, which was fine with the distraction of practically having Daichi every day, demanding his attention most of the time.

He didn’t even know what his arrangements were with Karma anymore. It just made more sense
for him to spend his days with Nagisa, since Karma didn’t have the advantage of being able to take an entire summer off from work. The evenings and weekends seemed to have become a bit of a mash up, with them usually just spending them together these days. The apartment Daichi ended up sleeping at had also become kind of random, but it wasn’t that bad since there weren’t school supplies to keep track of.

Right then, they were actually taking Daichi to his karate class. Daichi was perfectly capable of walking himself there, which Nagisa knew, but sometimes it was nice to walk with him anyway. And, since it was the weekend, Karma had decided to accompany them. Again, not for any particular real reason, but Daichi hadn’t voiced any complaints.

“Bye!” He turned, once they were at the entrance, barely giving them a chance to return the farewell.

At least he was still happy to keep that up. Sometimes even alone, when he had so much energy that he needed to move around, Nagisa caught him practising. For the most part, he seemed to take it pretty seriously too. As much as Nagisa wished he’d chosen a less violent hobby, he didn’t exactly use it for any bad purposes.

“I’ll pick him up later,” Karma said. “If you’re happy to meet at mine.”

Nagisa didn’t have a problem with that, but then he remembered. “U-uh, only if you’re happy to have Asano kun over for a little bit. I think he’d like to say hi to Daichi.”

His eyes narrowed. “Deported from America already?”

“He’s just visiting,” Nagisa matched his glare. “We’re going to hang out in a little bit.”

“Sounds great,” Karma said, not convincing Nagisa that he thought it sounded great in the slightest.

Nagisa decided to change the subject. “How about you? What are you doing until then?”

“Hmm,” he thought aloud. “Not muc-”

But suddenly Nagisa stopped listening. It wasn’t intentional, exactly, but without warning he was overtaken by a sever pain across his abdomen. The blood rushed to his head and he doubled over, instinctively clutching his stomach. He panicked for just a few seconds, before he realised the pain was a cramping on, rather than anything else. It wasn’t usually this intense, from memory, but finally he could place what it was.

“-gisa? What happened?” His ears started to focus again.

Nagisa winced. “I-I just need to sit down a sec-“ He squeezed his eyes even harder.

He wasn’t exactly sure how it happened, but he ended up on a bench, where again he doubled over. It was a little easier to focus, when he wasn’t also concentrating on standing up properly. From there, he managed to take some deep and heavy breaths, hoping that it would go away soon. The pain didn’t quite leave, but as his body relaxed, it got a little more tolerable.

“It’s just a heat thing,” he explained.

It used to happen all the time, before his preheat approached. As far as he knew, that was pretty normal, but it really hadn’t been that bad. He didn’t miss the concerned way Karma was looking at him, like he was trying to process what Nagisa had told him. Then again, Nagisa couldn’t blame
him, it had been quite some time since Karma was around him towards this part of his cycle.

“It never used to be this dramatic,” Karma started, like he was thinking about it. “I remember sometimes you used to go lie around with a hot pad, but…”

Nagisa swallowed. “My doctor warned me that everything can get worse, after going so long without an actual heat.”

“Why would you even stop taking suppressants?” Apparently Karma didn’t care that that was of course a highly personal question.

“I have to for work,” he explained, the cramps already fading off to the background. “Apparently the brand I took wasn’t acceptable, so they wanted me to swap over during the break.”

Karma wrinkled his nose. “That’s legal?”

“I guess?” Nagisa hadn’t really thought about it that way before. Honestly, it wouldn’t surprise him, with the amount of other laws he was otherwise subjected to. Since it didn’t really affect him that much in his day to day life, he didn’t often stop to think about it.

Something shifted in his demeanour. “If it’s this bad already then your heat…”

He’d been dreading it for weeks. More so in the back of his mind, but things like this proved that he’d have to start preparing for it properly. As his doctor had warned, it would probably be more than worse than usual. It had been years since he’d even experienced a heat, since he pretty much started his old suppressants the day he became legally able.

Before, they’d been painful and humiliating, but he’d learnt to somewhat manage it. This, he knew, would be uncharted territory and he had no idea what to expect. You weren’t really supposed to take suppressants permanently, so at least one positive coming out of this was that he wouldn’t have to go through it again for another few years.

“It’s going to suck,” Nagisa said, because what was the point of hiding it? Right then, though a rush of strange emotions took over him. “I-I read some things… Like how sometimes it can last a whole week. And everyone says that you can’t do it alone, but even if I wanted to, I don’t have anyone to ask. You’re the only alpha I really know.”

“Alright,” he shrugged casually, “if it helps.”

“What.” It took Nagisa a couple of seconds to catch up, after the rant that had spilled from his lips out of nowhere.

Karma looked him over. “What? You just asked me-“

“No I didn’t!” Nagisa practically jumped up, pain forgotten as his face went cherry red. “I wasn’t propositioning you. Why would I?”

“I mean,” he remained nonchalant, “you have before.”

“I have- never,” he could barely even breathe.

“Six times… Maybe?” A sadistic smile crept onto Karma’s face, and he started to count on his fingers. “There was the time you got pregnant, that time you wanted to get unpregnant, Karasuma and Bitch Sensei’s wedding, those times you were in hea-“
Nagisa stood up from the bench entirely, turning away in shame. “Alright I get it!” Then he heaved. “Wait, did you say yes?”

For a moment, Karma didn’t say anything, instead standing up himself. Like that, he was looking down at Nagisa calculatingly. “There’s worse things. It’s not a big deal.”

No big deal? Was Karma joking? It was a huge deal. Or, well, maybe it was ‘just’ sex. Friends didn’t just sleep together. Okay, maybe some did, but… It wasn’t like Nagisa was hugely bothered about that, it was more of a trust thing. It wasn’t like they hadn’t already done… quite a lot. Nagisa cringed, even. He’d spent the last four years of his life trying not to think too hard about that night between them. As good as those memories felt…

Why was he even trying to justify this to himself? It wasn’t like he and Karma were just regular friends, as much as it pained him even to admit that. It was complicated, always had been, probably always would be. Even if it was just for the sake of Nagisa’s heat, sleeping together was bound to make things worse. Especially given one of the things that had made it this complicated was that almost kiss.

On top of that, Nagisa wasn’t sure if he could even stand the idea. He couldn’t pretend to know the ins and outs of Karma’s private life, but he’d heard enough to put the pieces together. Karma’s usual type just seemed to be ‘unbelievably attractive’. Which was fair enough, since Karma himself also fit that criteria. Nagisa… most certainly did not. Not even close. There wasn’t a lot in it for Karma at all, and there came guilt.

“I-I have to go,” Nagisa turned, unable to stand Karma’s gaze any longer.

There was no reaction from Karma as he walked away. Which was… good. Maybe they could forget that entire conversation even happened. Probably unlikely. Nagisa felt like he was going to break out into some kind of fever. Of all the things he’d ever imagined discussing with Karma, that was definitely not one of them. Because it was so ridiculous!

He tried to force himself to put it at the back of his mind, right then, which honestly seemed like quite an impossible task. He had other things to focus on, though, like how Asano was expecting him. Nagisa forced himself to take a deep breath, because he could at least think about that. It had been a while since they last saw each other, since Asano had studied in America, and didn’t seem to have much of a reason to travel back home.

Nagisa couldn’t help but plainly stop in his tracks, when he saw him. Asano was leant against a very expensive looking Rolls Royce, typing something on his phone. Though they didn’t see each other very often, they’d still worked in a few hours here and there, over the years, so Nagisa wasn’t exactly surprised by his appearance. Aside from getting a little taller, he looked pretty much the same as he had when they were teenagers, though he always seemed to be dressed like he was on

“Y-you have a car,” Nagisa stated.

“Well observed, Nagisa kun,” Asano replied dryly.

Nagisa smiled widely. “It’s been such a long time!”

“I’ve been busy,” he moved aside, preparing to enter the driver’s side of the vehicle. “Running a company is time consuming.”

He entered the passenger side, feeling far too unimportant to be occupying such a classy car. “I saw the articles.” Asano scoffed. “They don’t ever choose the best photos though. You never look
happy or smile in them.”

“There aren’t any photos of me like that,” he said, and then started up the car. “I’m fine with it.”

Nagisa knew by this point that Asano loved to project this kind of exterior, but he could actually be pretty soft inside, if you managed to ever get to it. That on its own was quite a feat, but also worth the effort. He’d definitely smiled at Daichi many times, when he thought nobody was looking. Though, Nagisa would let him maintain that façade.

The radio had been left playing faintly, he realised. “Is this country music?”

Asano stiffened. “America has… its influences.”

Really it kind of sounded like a mixture of rap and country, but Nagisa wasn’t really an expert, only picking up the word ‘horse’ briefly with the low volume. He didn’t really know a lot about cars, especially since he couldn’t even drive one (lessons seemed like a waste of time and money when he hadn’t ever needed to drive anywhere). Asano seemed pretty calm and calculated about what he was doing, which was obviously a good thing. Nagisa wasn’t entirely sure where they were going at first, but he eventually parked up close to a building Nagisa vaguely recognised.

“Are you coming?”

Nagisa got out, looking up at the building. “Isn’t this where you took me for ice cream, all those years ago?”

“It’s still a good place,” Asano said.

Honestly, he didn’t really remember what the ice cream had tasted like back then. He’d been so stressed and worried and also suffering in early pregnancy. Once it came, this time, Nagisa was looking forward to actually being able to enjoy it. He wasn’t exactly a huge sweet tooth, but it was a hot day and something cold was always going to be nice.

It was nice to catch up with Asano again, even if they did text pretty frequently (by his standards) anyway. He was in Japan mostly for business, but Nagisa was glad he’d managed to free up just a little bit of time. It sounded like a lot, to run your own company. Somehow, though, he couldn’t imagine Asano doing anything less.

“Alright,” he leant back, “something’s on your mind.”

Nagisa paused, mid-spoonful of ice cream. “You won’t want to hear about it.”

“Probably not,” Asano replied. “But you’ll end up telling me eventually anyway.”

He didn’t always… Well, maybe he did end up talking to Asano a lot. But Asano was just surprisingly easy to talk to, again despite his outer exterior. As much as he acted annoyed about things, he actually gave Nagisa pretty helpful advice, most of the time. It helped that he managed to maintain the barrier of not being involved in most issues.

“I-is it common,” Nagisa started, “for alphas to help their omega friends with heat things?”

His mouth hung slightly open. “How should I know?”

“Y-you’re an alpha,” Nagisa turned his head away in shame.

“I don’t really have many omega friends,” he said.
Nagisa thought about it for a second. “I’m your friend.”

His face went bright red. “What are you implying?”

“Nothing!” Nagisa couldn’t believe this. “Why does everyone think I’m asking them to sleep with me today?!”

Asano’s eyes narrowed. “Because it sounds like you are.”

“I’m not!”

“So,” he regained his composure. “Let me guess. You’re talking about Akabane.” Nagisa said nothing. “You asked Akabane to… help you, and presumably he agreed to it.”

The unfortunate thing about Asano was that more often than not, he hit the nail on the head. Maybe that was Nagisa’s fault for coming to him with such problems. Though, he’d gotten a bit better at that over the years, when the Karma related things took up far less of his time, and when he eventually learnt to mostly pay attention to the time difference between Japan and America.

“That sounds like a terrible idea,” he finally summarised.

“I know, right?” Nagisa nodded enthusiastically. “The worst.”

“Why do I feel like you’re still going to do it?”

Nagisa swallowed. “It would only make things more complicated.”

“I wouldn’t know personally,” Asano said, “but this is going to be painful for you. Or, I assume.” With the way Nagisa shifted, he got his answer. “You need to think about it.”

“It’s a bad idea but you think I should do it?” Nagisa wasn’t sure how to take that.

He stood up, having finished his ice cream. “I’m saying you should carefully weigh out all of your options.”

Nagisa was done eating too, so he followed him. Despite not seeing Asano that often, their meetings never seemed to last long either. Once again, Asano was always pretty busy, so Nagisa took the time where he could get it. His words rung in his head. Options. What options? As he’d even said, anything other than suffering alone was inherently a bad idea.

Admittedly, now it had been brought to the forefront of his mind, it was quite a scary prospect. Up to a week of maddening pain… Maybe he would actually go mad, going through that for so long. Then there was food and water and suddenly the prospect of dealing with that alone seemed impossible. His doctor’s morbid tone was gradually starting to make more and more understandable.

He was pretty quiet when they got back inside the car. They didn’t have a whole lot to talk about anyway, which was fine. Nagisa was happy to watch the world go by from outside the window, until Asano eventually pulled up close to Karma’s apartment. It struck him by surprise, a little, since he’d only ever travelled there on foot.

“Thank you for taking me out,” Nagisa said. “I guess you’ll want to see Daichi?”

Asano snorted, already stepping out of the car. It felt a bit weird, going to Karma’s place with Asano of all people, but it would be worth it. Daichi didn’t actually have to try at all to reach the
much softer side of Asano, seemingly it was a permanent privilege he had access to. As much as Asano liked to complain about it, regardless.

In fact, it was Daichi who answered the door, with Karma standing back and designated him out of the way. “Gaga!”

Asano immediately rolled his eyes. “Akabane Two. You haven’t grown.”

He accepted Daichi’s hug, anyway. “I have. I’ll be taller than you soon.”

“You’ll be taller than me the day you stop using that stupid nickname. You’re not a baby anymore, you know. You can say my name properly.”

Daichi just giggled. “Did you bring me a present?”


Asano didn’t seem to mind, though. “Only the best. There’s some things I see kids with.”

Years ago, Nagisa had absolutely banned Asano from anything expensive or extravagant. Just because he had disposable income didn’t mean Daichi needed to be spoilt. Considering he got enough of that anyway. So far, Asano had honoured that agreement, and Nagisa had no reason to doubt him.

He handed a bag over to Daichi, who curiously lifted one of the items out. It seemed to be a small propeller looking thing, decorated with the USA flag. Daichi admired it for a moment, before flicking it, demonstrating that it could spin around. Presumably wanting to get to the next item, Daichi put it aside, instead picking up a black hoodie with the word ‘Fortnite’ written across the middle.

“What’s that?” Nagisa asked, peering at it.

“A video game, Daddy,” Daichi proclaimed, looking at it properly. “You wouldn’t let me play it but Junchan has it at his house and it’s really fun-“ His face froze in horror. “I mean, Junchan played it and I watched. That’s okay, right?”

Never mind that. “S-sure.”

He shot Asano a wide smile. “Thank you Gaga! I love them!”

For just a moment, he caught Asano smile back, before straightening up. “Yeah, yeah. Anyway, I’m off.”

“Already?” Daichi said complainingly.

“I’ve got a business to run,” he said casually. “Bye for now, hm?”

Daichi went back to admiring the hoodie after that, accepting the way that it was going to be. At least Nagisa knew he wasn’t going to be too upset about it, since they’d done this a few times before. Nagisa met Karma’s eyes with a slight smile. He might still harbour quite a lot of dislike for Asano, but he seemed to have decided to be silent about it.

“I wish it was colder,” Daichi said. “I wanna wear it already.”

“You’ll have the chance soon,” Karma finally chimed in. “It’s pretty much the end of summer alre-“
Before he could finish his sentence, the buzzer sounded. Daichi didn’t hide his excitement when Karma moved to open the door, letting his young friend and who Nagisa presumed was his mother inside. He hadn’t actually met Jun’s parents in person yet, though Karma seemed to get on with them well enough.

Once arrangements were made for dropping off later, they didn’t delay much on leaving for the festival. Nagisa knew his audience, and young boys weren’t exactly known for patience. It wasn’t a particularly long walk before the start of the festivities. Being in a place like that, it always made Nagisa feel kind of youthful. Plus, after a year of assassination training, he was once pretty good at all of the games. Not that he was going to be playing any nowadays.

In fact, the minute Daichi was handed money for some of the games himself, he was straight off, Jun in tow. Nagisa felt more like a chaperone, honestly, but he didn’t mind following along behind them, Karma at his side, despite them being still a little raw from that discussion earlier. Of course, Daichi b lined straight for the shooting range. Nagisa tried not to worry too much about that, since many other kids were doing it. Probably, he just wanted to show off his (considerably above average) skill.

“Not planning on exposing any of the stalls this year?” Nagisa asked.

“I didn’t really care back then, everyone does it,” Karma shrugged. “I just wanted that console.”

He smiled. “We never ended up playing video games that often with it, though.”

Karma looked over at where Daichi was laughing, having shot a perfect bullseye. “We had other things to do.”

Standing there with Karma, Nagisa felt comfortable, if that was the right word. They’d been through, frankly, way too much together, but they’d always have to be a close part of each other’s lives. It was a topic neither of them had really had a conversation about before. When he was younger, Nagisa had always just thought of it like the next twenty years of his life, and then whatever happened happened. Of course that had been a naïve thought, because hopefully Daichi wouldn’t decide he never wanted to see them again the minute he became an adult.

One way or another, they were spending the rest of their lives together. There was still this kind of haze of complication surrounding Karma and everything to do with him. At the same time, though, Nagisa steadily found himself becoming more okay with that. Obviously, it wasn’t like he even had a choice in the matter, but he didn’t have to be miserable about it. That was becoming a lot more clear to him now.

So the heat thing… would probably only end up putting them right back to square one. He still remembered what Karma said to him, ‘I’d never let anything bad happen to you’. Granted, those words kind of lost a lot of their power when Karma had almost got the both of them stranded in the middle of the ocean just an hour later, but he got the sense he had meant it. For whatever reason, Karma was feeling this kind of obligation over him, and it felt like it would be taking advantage in a way.

That should be his decision, right there. But, yet, he found himself hesitating. He knew really that Karma was more than capable of making his own choices… And, taking all of the mess between them out of the equation, a part of Nagisa could see how it would be a logical course of action. Maybe Karma just wasn’t thinking about all the rest of it. Would Nagisa even be capable of that?

“Can I have some of that?” Karma asked, snapping his attention away.
It took Nagisa to realise he was after the candyfloss he was carrying. “Sure.”

“Great,” Karma said, picking some off and eating it with the chicken he’d purchased.

“How can you eat that?”

Karma shot him a look. “I learnt it from one of your pregnancy cravings.”

Nagisa couldn’t possibly bear to share heat with someone who had such disgusting tastes. He wasn’t sure he could share a heat with anybody. If he really had to think about it, sex hadn’t been the most comfortable thing for him ever. In heat, he wouldn’t have any sense, any real ability to refuse what was happening to him, and that kind of surrender was terrifying. But then again, there was only one person he could even think about trusting like that.

“Karma…” He swallowed. “About our conversation earlier?”

“Huh?” His mouth was still full.

He was practically flushing down to his shoes. “You wouldn’t even be able to get the time off work, you just had a whole week.”

“You’re my mate,” he said, “or at least on paper. It’s a pretty undisputable medical excuse.”

Nagisa swallowed. “It’s too much trouble, just for my sake.”

Karma snorted. “You’re acting like you’re asking me to go to war for you or something. Nagisa, honestly,” something turned a little more serious in his expression, “you shouldn’t suffer for no good reason.”

“Okay,” he steadied himself.

He peered at him. “You’re actually asking, this time, right?”

They were interrupted, then, by Daichi suddenly running within earshot. “The fireworks are staring!”

Indeed they were. Like the rest of the crowd, he automatically looked up, to where the display was. He’d seen a lot of fireworks, over the years, but Daichi was still amazed by them. The ones in Kunugiaoka were always pretty, but it was clear that here had a bigger budget. Above him, the sky was lit up by colour and intermittent booms, followed by claps from the audience. But, although it had captured his attention for a moment, there was something else he needed to do.

He looked up at Karma, then, and opened his mouth in preparation to answer.

“Yes, I am.”

Chapter End Notes

91 chapters later and....

Anyway, I'll leave you hanging with that for a little while. I actually did pass my exams and got accepted into my university for next year, which means in 3 months I'll
be travelling to Tokyo, which is a little scary but hey :’)

Hope you all enjoyed that one! I... expect you probably did.
“Excuse me, Shiota san?”

Nagisa blinked back to life. “S-sorry.”

He hadn’t felt this uncomfortable in a while. During pregnancy, there had been many uncomfortable checkups, but it had got to the point where he didn’t even care about them anymore, he just wanted everything to be healthy, no matter what they had to do. But, that had been several years ago, enough time to forget how awkward it felt to be examined in that way.

Predictably, this had been Karma’s idea. Insistence, really. The only reason Nagisa hadn’t tried to fight it more was he needed a check up anyway, before his heat. Even if Nagisa knew he was making sense, anyway. There was no way, with his mind heavily clouded, he’d have the capacity to remember something like condoms. Neither of them would, and even if they somehow did, using it correctly was another thing entirely. So, instead, it was STD checks and a much more intense birth control pill.

“I said,” she repeated, “when was the last time you had unprotected sex?”

He was about to say ‘never’, but then he remembered that he _had_ to be honest. “A-around eight years ago.”

She didn’t look like she was judging him, particularly, but he still _felt_ it anyway. Yes, he’d been an incredibly irresponsible teenager, and yes, he didn’t exactly remember it, but he’d learnt the hard way about what happened when you had any kind of sex without preparation. As much as he completely adored Daichi, he didn’t want to repeat that experience.

“I don’t have any more questions,” she said, clicking her pen. “As for birth control, continue with your regular pills for now, but take the one I’ll prescribe to you on the day of your preheat. It should cover you for about a week, but you can resume your normal medication when your heat’s over. We’ll send you your results in a couple of days!”

Nagisa was stunned, leaving the place, having been swabbed and examined in places he really didn’t want to be. But that was all over now, at least. He kept his head down, not willing to even risk looking the other patients in the waiting room in the eye. For a brief moment, he wondered if he should text Karma, but he wrinkled his nose in even more discomfort. He only needed to know
the results.

Instead, Nagisa just went back to his apartment, and tried to figure out where to start. Nothing was messy, exactly, but he still felt like he should clean up or something. Maybe put the good sheets on his bed… if he even had good sheets. He didn’t know what he was freaking out for. It wasn’t a date. A sex date? Hookup? But those words felt kind of dirty and dishonest, because that wasn’t really what it was. Help with an unavoidable biological issue.

He was just nervous, he knew he was. A couple of months ago he’d resigned himself to the idea of only ever sleeping with Shouyou for the rest of his life, but that was over now. And whilst he knew he’d technically slept with Karma already, he didn’t actually remember it. Except that one time, but he didn’t count that because… no actual sex happened.

The less he thought about that kind of thing, the better. Maybe he should use the cheapest bedding possible instead. That was what he used to do, during heats, since he had to immediately clean everything and hope for the best afterwards. Also, Karma probably wouldn’t notice or care about something so trivial. Or maybe he would. Nagisa hadn’t really done this kind of thing before.

Such were the thoughts that tormented his three remaining braincells for the next couple of days. It was the weekend, so Daichi was staying with Karma. Nagisa knew he could have hung out with them if he wanted to, but it felt like they were avoiding each other once again. Or, that was probably more Nagisa’s doing this time. Karma seemed to want to talk about practical things and it was freaking him out.

But then Monday came, and Nagisa wasn’t ready for it. He pulled himself to the door, early in the morning, still dressed in his pyjamas. Of course Karma was decked out in his formal work suit, which looked annoyingly good on him, because of course it did. And here he was, in pyjamas. Nagisa definitely needed the good bedsheets. That he didn’t own. Should be buy some?

“He’s had breakfast,” Karma motioned down to Daichi.

Daichi grinned. “Papa said I can have pancakes for lunch ‘cos I didn’t get any for breakfast.”

“D-did he?” Nagisa wasn’t sure how he felt about Karma promising that on his behalf.

Karma smiled casually. “Alright, I’ve got to go now, I’ll drop by later, though?”

“Okay,” Nagisa said.

“See you!” Daichi gave him one final hug, before taking his shoes off and setting his backpack down on the table. “I wanna study today.”

“If that’s what you want to do,” Nagisa said. “I’ll get dressed, then.”

Daichi seemed more than content to stay like that, when he returned. He had a kind of hilariously sized book across the table, which he was reading from. Nagisa didn’t necessarily feel the need to pry, but glancing at it it seemed to be something or other to do with geography. Admittedly, not a subject that had ever interested him that much, but he was glad he was learning something. He took the opportunity to read over some of his own work. They often did this, he and Daichi, though usually with grading and homework respectively.

“Is it time for pancakes yet?” Daichi finally said, then paused a second. “Can I help?”

It seemed there was no getting out of that one. “Okay then,” he smiled, closing the book. “Go find your apron.”
Nagisa wasn’t the best cook himself, so it definitely wasn’t his fault that Daichi had picked it up. Then again, pancakes were pretty hard to mess up, especially considering how often he ended up making them. Daichi seemed more than happy to actually contribute to the process, which wasn’t too challenging. Nagisa just poured the ingredients into the bowl, and let Daichi go wild.

“Careful,” he said, knowing the apron only offered some protection. “You don’t want to ruin your hoodie.”

He loved that thing. Really, really seemed to love it. Although the size appeared to be age even to eight standard, that was American standard and Daichi was tiny anyway. As a result, it was far too big on him, kind of hilariously. Daichi didn’t seem to mind, though, requesting to wear it all the time despite it being summer. It was the first time he’d ever really cared about clothes, so Nagisa wasn’t exactly going to stop him.

Eventually they got to the actual pancakes part, and Nagisa let Daichi hold the pan steady for a moment or two. He wasn’t one to attempt anything fancy like flips, it tasted the same anyway. As much as eating something so sweet for lunch probably wasn’t the best thing, it was pretty much going to be the end of the school break, and far less chances for stuff like this. A one off was okay.

It was worth it to see Daichi’s happy face when he bit into his pancakes, eyes practically sparkling. That face never got old, bringing a smile across Nagisa’s own expression. A part of him felt like he could stay here forever, but then he was jolted into the harsh realties of things. With the sharp twist of his stomach, he felt himself start to sweat, and that could only mean one thing.

“Do you have all the things you need to stay at your Grandma and Grandpa’s here?” He hated to ask.

Daichi thought about it. “I think some stuff is at Papa’s… And Maki’s at Papa’s!”

Of course. How could he forget the cat? “We’ll go over when he’s finished at work.”

He pouted. “Don’t wanna go on another trip. How come you and Papa are going without me?”

“Daichi…” Explaining any of this to him wasn’t easy. Not that he could ever dream of wishing a second of Daichi’s life away, but it would be a lot easier if he was a little older. “We’ve been on a couple of trips too! Don’t you want to tell your grandparents about them.”

Pushing the plate away to show he’d finished, Daichi seemed to think about it. “I saw some cool things…”

It was enough to win him over for the time being. Nagisa cleaned up the kitchen, trying his best to ignore the twinge of his lower stomach. It had been years, but he knew he still had plenty of time yet. As if on cue, his phone vibrated with a message, and Nagisa almost wanted to laugh. It was short and to the point, your results have come back clear. He had been pretty certain they would, but he supposed the confirmation was… nice. It was nice to not carry any STDs.

He ended up putting a movie on afterwards. As much as Daichi seemed keen to study, he was still only seven, and there were limits. And Nagisa just tried his best to stay still and resist every urge to turn up the AC to ridiculous levels. But eventually time passed, the movie went by, and then there was a knock at his door.

“Papa!”

As always, Karma was ready to meet him like that, as Daichi immediately launched himself once the door was open. “Hey~”
“Missed you,” he said, finally letting go.

“I missed you too,” Karma replied honestly. “Work was pretty boring today, you know. Did you have fun?”

Daichi nodded happily. “Made pancakes!”

Awkwardly, Nagisa pulled himself to his feet. “We need to drop by yours, then go to my parents.”

There was a look of question in Karma’s eye, until he realised. At least, Nagisa assumed it was realisation, with the way his cheeks tinted slightly pink. There really was no way to avoid the awkwardness of this, was there? Right then, Nagisa had never been more thankful that Daichi was there, a necessary kind of barrier.

“Already?” Daichi turned to Nagisa.

“C’mon,” Karma whacked him playfully, “it’s not that hard for you.”

Thankfully, Karma really didn’t live far away, and Daichi didn’t complain much after that. With every pace, though, Nagisa started to feel worse. He knew nothing was in danger of happening yet, but that didn’t mean he was comfortable necessarily. Daichi was quick, for once, about picking up the remainder of the things he supposedly needed.

But then Karma picked up the cat carrier.

“Y-you’re bringing Maki?”

Daichi looked up. “Seriously?” He rushed over to the case. “Did you hear that Maki? You get to spend the whole week with me.”

Karma shrugged. “I can’t keep leaving her with my neighbour.”

As much as Nagisa wanted to argue that his parents were not expecting a cat, he was in a slight race with his own body. He’d just have to extend his severe apologies after the week was up. Maki really didn’t seem fussed in the slightest about this, barely making a noise on the train, which was impressive considering the way Daichi tapped at her to try and get her attention.

Predictably, his mother didn’t look thrilled, when she caught sight of Maki. “I don’t see why you can’t just put her in a cat hotel or something.”

“Aw come on now Hiromi,” Karma said casually, letting Maki out so she could roam free, “she’s had a traumatic past. I don’t want her to feel abandoned.”

Daichi looked up at her with wide eyes. “I promise I’ll look after her Grandma! I know how to feed her, and play with her, I’ll even take out her litter.”

Thankfully for him, Nagisa’s mother didn’t complain much after that. But Daichi was probably the hardest person in the world to have an argument with, so he really didn’t blame her. Cat included or not, Nagisa really got the feeling she was happy to have Daichi stay over. But he’d always been good at evaluating his mother’s moods.

“So,” Karma said, once they were outside.

Nagisa kept pace beside him. “…So.”

Why did it have to be so awkward? If it was like this now, then how bad would it be during his
actual heat? Then again, he probably wouldn’t have time to care. But, his heat wasn’t here quite yet, so he had to live with the awkwardness until then. How was he supposed to act normal, with the knowledge about what would happen later?

“D-did you pick up everything you needed from your apartment?” Nagisa tried, as they stepped onto the train together.

Karma snorted. “What, like clothes?”

Right, of course, they definitely wouldn’t be needing those. “My results came in,” he changed the subject instead.

“Oh?” He shot him a look. “What did they say?”

“I’m fine,” Nagisa stared decidedly at the floor.

“That’s good,” Karma replied. “Same.”

“That’s good,” Nagisa repeated.

He spent the rest of the staring out of the window, almost thankful for the uncomfortable pain in his stomach since it gave him something else to think about it. Karma at least seemed to sense that he didn’t want to talk, and didn’t push him, so Nagisa was grateful for that. Even if he knew they were going to have to do a lot more than that.

The awkwardness didn’t escape him when they made it back to his apartment. He walked straight over to the kitchen and grabbed himself a glass of water, placing the tablet the doctor had given him on his tongue, and then swallowing it down. He just wanted this all to be over. After that, he drifted to sitting on his sofa, because what else was he supposed to do? He shifted, the material of his clothes irritating his overly sensitive skin.

“What do you mind?” Nagisa tugged at the material of his shirt.

Karma shot him a look of slight amusement, but shrugged. “Go ahead.”

He felt mostly shame, pulling it off, and went as far as to sit with it bunched in his lap. Honestly, he didn’t get it. At the most inappropriate moments imaginable, it was like they couldn’t keep their hands off each other, but now they were actually supposed to do things? Nagisa didn’t even know how to act. For once, maybe the haze of heat would be beneficial to him.

“What if it follows ‘don’t’?”

After that statement he was definitely red. Nagisa wasn’t sure what Karma was expecting, but he didn’t tend to talk a lot. Or make many sounds in general. Mainly because it was embarrassing and there was no telling how thin walls were sometimes. So he probably wouldn’t suddenly start now. Just the thought of moaning something like that, begging Karma… It made him feel funny, and he wasn’t sure if it was even in a good way.
“I-I think I need to lie down,” he said, “until it hits.”

“Takoyaki,” Karma stood up.

Nagisa’s face fell flat. “What?”

He shrugged. “It’s not a very sexy word, I don’t think you could really blurt it out by accident.”

“…So if I say that,” he swallowed, “you have to just stop?”

“And vice versa,” it was so nonchalant, “just in case.”

Karma was finding this discussion far too easy, and Nagisa knew it. Just what kind of situations had Karma been in, where he needed specific words instead of just ‘stop’? Feeling shy all of a sudden, Nagisa decided he really didn’t want to know. Didn’t want to think about all of the far more attractive people he’d been with. Why had Karma even agreed to this?

“Also,” he continued, and then pointed at Nagisa’s neck, “what are you doing about that?”

It took him a moment to catch on. His scent glands. The most vulnerable part of his body, practically. “Nothing?”

Karma swallowed. “Don’t most people… wear things, in case of accidents?”

The idea of wearing something like a collar or worse made him feel sick. “Just try not to bite me?” Nagisa tried. He knew it would be hard, but… “I trust you.”

Karma gave him a look that was kind of hard to place, before clearly dropping it. It was fine. Even in heat, he somehow felt safe that Karma wouldn’t bond him. With nothing else said, then, Nagisa slipped into his bedroom, leaving Karma to his own devices. It really was too hot, but he wasn’t about to strip naked and sit around his apartment, especially not alone.

The clothes were becoming a real irritation, though. He ended up just stripping the rest of them off and faceplanting into his bed. Even that made him feel hypersensitive, but he could put up with it. He took one last look at everything, mostly double checking he’d set up enough water, and pulled the covers over his body, still self conscious enough for that at least.

After going through this so many times, he’d figured the best thing to do during preheats was to sleep it off. So, he tried, shutting his eyes and relaxing as best he could. It didn’t help that his mind was already so full of apprehension. If he rested, it was only brief, and he noticed at some point Karma eventually came in, tentatively lying down next to him. Unlike their many, many shared times of bed sharing, they kept their distance from each other, not even coming close to touching as he eventually just lay there with his eyes closed.

Like always when his heat started during the night, it was the stomach cramps that pulled Nagisa out of his sleep. Always the pain that struck him first, the sickening churn in his lower abdomen, as he slowly became aware of the uncomfortable wetness spilling out slowly between his thighs. He blinked finally, and then there was the burn. There was enough of sense within him to recognise the burn wasn’t sending him into the usual panic frenzy.

A deep inhale, and his body began to recognise the comfort of alpha pheromones, responding to his own. He reached towards the direction they were coming from, letting his hands fall upon the body next to him in the darkness. Immediately, Nagisa flipped himself over, curling up against him. With desperation, he buried his nose in the alpha’s neck, practically drinking in the scent that was trickling out of him. It satiated him, just a little.
He needed more of that scent, though. And on a biological level, Nagisa knew that there could be more. Whining into the skin of his throat, he trailed his lips over the area of the scent gland, sucking and nibbling at it to stimulate it. Nagisa ran his tongue across that spot, feeling it swell slightly as more pheromones were dawn out.

The more awake he became, the more it wasn’t enough to keep the heat at bay. He couldn’t help but move slowly against the body as he drank in the scent, soothing the burn of his erection a little. It wasn’t what he really needed, though, not the kind of fulfilment his own body was begging for.

“Alpha,” he said lightly, biting down on the skin below the gland. “Alpha please.”

“Nnn,” the alpha groaned. “Nagisa?”

Nagisa went back to sucking on the gland. “Please.”

The alpha reached over, stilling his body with a firm but comforting stroke of his back before breathing in deeply. “It’s okay, you’re okay. I’m here.”

He let out another desperate noise, and wacked the hands that were stilling him. A part of him was desperate to be slammed back and pinned down, taken fast and rough to cool the urge to be filled. There was nothing possessive in the alpha scent though, nothing that screamed that was about to happen. Nagisa’s omega had woken up fully, though, and all he needed was to have anything inside him.

Though the muscles in his legs were weak, and shook as Nagisa raised himself up onto his knees, the desperation was more powerful. Supporting himself by placing his hands on the alpha’s chest, he swung his leg over so he was sitting on his thighs. Thankful that he’d stripped off his own clothes before falling asleep, he reached down, tugging down the barrier of underwear to allow the alpha’s erection to spring up. The room was too dark to see it, but the feel of it pleased his omega, blaming his own scent as its origin.

He shifted forwards slightly, raising up as he took hold of the length, groping around to try and line it up the best he could with his fluttering entrance. It took a bit of manoeuvring, but that slight press of the head against his rim made him gasp, an almost baffling amount of extra slick trickling out.

“H-hang on a se-“ He gripped his hips, but it was too late. Nagisa had already had a taste of what his body was caving. He was so close.

Choking on a desperate sob, he couldn’t resist slamming himself down, hard. He wasn’t so senseless that it didn’t hurt, but finally, he was full in the way he really needed. It was like he was made for it. The high pitched noise that came out of him was barely human in the feeling of finally being joined, the pheromones of it all rushing through him. With a heavy gasp, his body tightened up and shook, causing his head to fall back.

The hands on his hips tightened considerably. “-ah, Nagisa. Did you just-“

Nagisa toppled forward, so he was lying on top of the alpha’s body, panting heavily. The orgasm had barely even taken the edge off, though it had knocked the wind out of him for sure. He was full though, so undeniably full. It wasn’t enough. He needed it deeper, needed to feel completely claimed. Why wasn’t his alpha moving? From where he was sprawled out, he could reach the alpha’s scent glands again, giving them a firm lick to release more of the scent. Nagisa breathed it in, the musk of spices finally becoming recognisable.
“Karma,” he moaned softly, squirming slightly. “Please.”

He loosened his grip on Nagisa’s body. “Are you o-“

Nagisa groaned in frustration. He didn’t care about the stinging burn as his body was overstretched, didn’t care about taking it slow, didn’t care about being able to walk. Fine then. If his alpha wasn’t going to fuck him the way he was craving it, he’d just do it himself. His legs were even shakier, but it was easy enough to rock his hips just enough to get some friction, a bit of that irresistible grind. He whimpered into Karma’s chest as he moved, lips pressed open against his skin.

Though quickly, once again, it just wasn’t enough. It was too slow like that. Through some sort of sheer will power, his heat blinding out most over sensations, Nagisa planted his hands on Karma’s sternum, using what small amount of upper body strength he had to push himself back up, causing the cock to sink deeper inside him.

“Ha,” he let out, testing out what a small rocking motion from the position. His heat flared again, and he couldn’t help but raise himself up further, immediately slamming back down again. And that was what his body seemed to be crying out for, because he couldn’t help but speed up, repeating that same motion until he was practically bouncing, feeling Karma’s length rub up against all his inner nerves.

Karma was being peculiarly pliant beneath him, and it was really starting to grind on Nagisa’s gears. As fun as essentially using a real erection as a sex toy had turned out to be, the only way his omega would be satisfied is by feeling more claimed. The frustration caused him to move more rapidly. The physical sensation was no different of course, and once again after finding a particularly good angle, his body locked up again. The first orgasm had helped somewhat, but the second did nothing. He kept moving through it, chasing some sort of satisfaction.

And then there was that firm grip again, and a light groan, forcing him still as his body spasmed and flexed around his cock. That was good, that was more of what he needed. Ignoring the warning of the hold, he continued to move, desperate to get to that edge again.

“S-slow down,” Karma finally said.

Nagisa wanted to scream. “Go harder.”

His grip loosened tentatively. “Nagisa…”

It was a good thing they were in almost complete darkness, because Nagisa was sure the glare he’d given him would have terrified him rather than encouraged. Going against every urge that was flying through him, Nagisa stopped his vertical movements, and instead rolled his hips slowly. His eyes flew closed as he focused on his muscles, squeezing as tight as he could around Karma.

Without warning, he was knocked back a small amount as Karma finally sat up, pressing a messy yet wholly possessive kiss to the corner of his mouth. He pulled back, then, aiming better to kiss him on the lips properly. Nagisa returned it, moaning into his mouth as he moved his hips again. Karma’s hands slid from his hips to digging into his back, holding them closer together.

It was a little harder to move how he wanted like that, right in Karma’s strong and calculated grasp. But, finally, Karma’s hips shoved up into him, and Nagisa met it fully. Unable to think straight like that, their kiss turned more into breathing heavily against his mouth. For a moment, Karma pulled away, and he was about to whine at the loss, until attention moved to his neck.
All Nagisa was certain of, right then and there, was that he wanted to be bitten. He wanted Karma’s sharp, alpha canines in the flesh of his scent gland, marking him once and forever. That way, he could have this again. He could have Karma this way whenever he wanted it. And Nagisa already knew, even only halfway through their coupling, that nobody else would ever be good enough.

No bite came, but his lips did press against his skin. Somehow, the kisses felt even better on top of his scent gland, even if there were no teeth. All it did was make Nagisa want more, though, tilting his neck in automatic submission. Karma met him with the same enthusiasm, messily sucking at the plains of skin Nagisa was giving him access to.

“M-more,” he didn’t even know what he was asking for anymore, only that it wasn’t enough. “I need-“

Karma rubbed his back, which admittedly felt nice. “What do you need?”

He shook his head, moving his hips again, coming down as hard as he possibly could. He’d never felt so full like this, but he knew there was something else. Something keeping him from feeling entirely complete. But he felt too dizzy, too desperate, to know exactly what it was. All he knew was to keep moving, to chase the feelings that set him alight.

The grip he had on Karma’s shoulders was all that kept him slightly sane, as he moved faster and faster, chasing that peak once again. And Karma met him, not holding back quite as much. In fact, his own grip on Nagisa’s back tightened, to the point it almost started to hurt. Nagisa’s breaths became heavy pants once again, and then he spasmed as before, but this time it felt even more unsatisfying.

“N-need you,” he said, once they stilled again. “Karma,” he tried to shift on his knees, but his legs were trembling, “need-“

Then, Karma held him tighter, a hand sliding down to cup his ass, the other surrounding his arms. It was gentler than Nagisa expected, when he braced himself, but within moments he found himself flipped around onto his back, with Karma hovering between his thighs, somehow pulling that manoeuvre off without separating them.

Nagisa felt incredibly small all of a sudden, from that position. He was far too out of it to think too hard about the way Karma stared down at him. It was already too much, and at the same time, not enough. Not even really caring, he spread his legs as wide as he could, coiling them around Karma’s hips, a silent beg for him to come closer.

He choked on his own breath, when Karma resumed his movements. Maybe it was the position, or maybe he just chose to go harder, but Nagisa quickly realised it was very good like this. It wasn’t hard enough that he’d consider it rough, but he still found his hands scrabbling to grip something. At first he tried the sheets, but it quickly fell out of his grasp, so he reached his arms up, eventually grabbing the headboard.

Maybe Karma took that as a sign to go harder, or maybe he’d just run out of patience. Nagisa wasn’t sure, but he was glad he was holding something. Karma’s hips clashed against his like a punch, and he was sure under any other circumstances it would have hurt, but he felt the burn start to soothe. It was frustrating, because it still wasn’t enough.

Even with his head tossed back, with Karma stimulating every single already overworked nerve inside him. He somehow needed more. Not that it didn’t feel impossibly good. Nagisa wasn’t sure he’d ever felt this good before. The idea of being so wholly surrounded had never appealed to him, but he knew that he liked it here, something about it just seeming right.
Overtaken by pleasure and sensory overload, Nagisa’s eyes were squeezed shut, and he just needed to feel. Maybe he was letting out noises, he wasn’t quite sure, unable to hear them over the roar of his own blood. Only at some point, Karma’s lips were at his neck again, reminding him of the primal desire to be claimed. He wanted a bite, but it reminded him of something else.

“N-need,” he trembled out, and then lost any reaming shreds of self control, “need your knot. Karma-“ he couldn’t finish the request, spluttering at the sudden way he was tugged.

He just about had it in him to open his eyes for a second, stealing a glance, before fixing them shut again. Karma had pulled back, onto his knees, and he had Nagisa’s hips in a vice like grip that was probably going to leave bruises for a week. It didn’t matter, though, because it meant he could go faster and harder than he had before, and it made Nagisa’s head spin.

Afraid of actually breaking his own bed, Nagisa let go of the headboard, giving Karma full reign to manoeuvre him how he wanted. He couldn’t think straight, but he was pretty sure Karma felt a little wider, if that was even possible. It was what his body was crying out for, though. He wanted to be full like that.

“More,” he cried out, after a particularly hard thrust. “I want-“

“Ah, Nagisa-“

A lot of things happened all at once. Immediately, he was covered again, and his thighs automatically clenched tighter around Karma. Nagisa had never been knotted before, and he hadn’t known what to expect. All he knew was very suddenly, he was fuller than he’d ever been, the base of Karma’s length now completely swollen up inside him.

Everything went white for a moment. Whether Nagisa screamed or cried or nothing at all, he wasn’t even sure. All he knew was he felt so good he might actually die from it, so good it almost hurt. He didn’t even come back down properly, when the haziness cleared a little. Karma was still locked inside him, breathing heavily, and Nagisa’s entire body seemed to vibrate and shudder.

Somehow they met in the middle, lips sliding against lips, clutching each other tightly. It really didn’t make Nagisa calm down, but he was sure that would have been impossible anyway. At least, for the first time ever during a heat, he felt satisfied. Usually he could orgasm five, ten, twenty times and it wouldn’t make a difference, but here, although he was still hard, he felt okay.

It allowed to concentrate a little on the smaller details, like how soft Karma’s lips were. How warm it felt inside him as more and more semen filled him, something that would have grossed him out under any other circumstance but actually felt kind of nice, in a way he couldn’t really make sense of. Right then, Nagisa just wanted to stay like that forever, somehow completely at peace.

Time was cruel, though, and passed before he could even gather his thoughts. Only that Karma eventually pulled away, knot shrunken enough to pull out of him. Nagisa shuddered again at the emptiness, though not exactly from his heat instantly flaring up again. He wasn’t sure what it was, exactly, other than just empty.

Like he wanted to curl into a ball in the dark and clutch his knees into his chest. It wasn’t uncommon, for him to somewhat feel that way after sex, though never this intense. Then again, he’d never had sex that intense either. A part of him really just wanted to be left alone, he’d work through it eventually, but instead Karma’s arms wrapped around him and that felt okay too.

“Nagisa,” he said eventually, smoothly.
He blinked, suddenly confronted with a bottle at his lips. The idea of drinking made him feel a little ill, but somewhere in the back of his mind he knew it was a good idea. He sipped the water slowly, taking as much of it as he could before handing it back over to Karma, who also took a sip, before placing it back at the bedside somewhere.

“T-thanks.”

And then Nagisa froze in the actual realisation of what they’d just done. It wasn’t just sex, it was sex with Karma. He wanted to scream into his pillow. There was no taking it back now, though, and Nagisa wasn’t even sure if he wanted to. With the wave of exhaustion that came over him, though, he didn’t have a lot of time to think about it, physically unable to keep his eyes open. Somehow it was the best he’d slept in a while.

In only a few seconds after waking up, though, the need was back with full force. It wasn’t as intense as it usually was, but still enough to cloud the rest of his mind and judgement. Enough to make him desperate for more of that alpha scent that was so close to him. He just about managed to resist jumping on top of Karma again, instead nudging him awake.

“’m sorry,” he got out.

Karma didn’t waste any time, though, taking him on his back again. The clouds of heat were still definitely there, but Nagisa definitely felt a little more aware. Every shift of Karma’s hips into him seemed to strike him through his entire body, lighting him up in ways he’d never even felt before. Nagisa couldn’t bring himself to make eye contact or anything still, but he held onto him like a vice, gasping every time he rolled his hips just right.

They didn’t draw it out as long as the first time. Eventually, Nagisa found his peak and came with a stuttered moan, and Karma followed him almost immediately after. There was no knot to connect them that time, but Karma still wasn’t in a rush to pull out, and once again they found them sharing a heated kiss, until he got too soft to hold the position.

“Morning,” Karma said, voice more gravelly than normal due to the early hour.

It was still dark in Nagisa’s room, but he could see him a lot better. He could see the smooth lines of Karma’s jaw, the gold flecks in his eyes, the way his hair was completely tousled. Nagisa didn’t miss the heavy way he was looking at him, but it was too much to unpack right then. For once, he was maybe thankful for the way his heat immediately crept back on him.

He craved fullness again. It was less intense than the day before, not so much a painful burn, but more an itch beneath the surface of his skin. Nagisa sighed, at least having the mental sense to feel bad about it. As Karma sat back, panting to catch his breath properly, Nagisa squirmed. Just because his body was weirdly insatiable…

“K-Karma,” he eventually said, squeezing his eyes shut.

For a moment, he paused. “Really?”

This was so embarrassing. “It’s-“

Probably on account of just finishing, he didn’t immediately enter Nagisa again, but it didn’t really matter. Karma kissed him, one of his hands tracing the lines of his body, and that was okay too. More than okay, really. Without warning, he slipped his other hand between his legs, fingers inside him in one swift motion. It wasn’t as good as his cock, but it still took his breath away.

Nagisa felt his back arch up when Karma started to move them, with far more precision than he’d
been prepared for. All the while, he kissed down his jaw and throat, his spare hand tracing circles on his stomach that kept making his heart jump. Even if it wasn’t filling him in the way he really needed it, somehow it still seemed to help cool the itch, and he let go of the tension a little.

His hips bucked back automatically, rocking in time with his fingers. With Karma’s practically sinful lips stimulating the most sensitive points of his neck, there was nothing he could do to hold back the little whines and moans that begged to escape. He wasn’t so bothered by it, though, with everything else feeling too good. Even the noise of Karma’s previous release mixing with his fresh slick, and those fingers, didn’t gross Nagisa out as much as it ordinarily would have. A dark part of him kind of liked it, really. It didn’t take him long to reach his peak again, body locking up and clenching around his hand like a vice.

Barely thinking about it first, Nagisa grabbed onto Karma’s head, holding him close to his chest. Karma didn’t complain at all, once he’d removed his hand so he was in a more comfortable position. Lying close like that, without even the slightest barrier between them, felt just as good as the sex somehow.

“Nagisa,” Karma said eventually, breaking out of his grip. “Drink something.”

Once again, he didn’t really want to, but he accepted it when Karma put it to his lips anyway. At least the cool liquid was a soothing contrast to the burn that went through the rest of him. It was hard to concentrate on that, though, when his body was already starting to buzz in need, ready for the next round though it had barely been minutes.

Karma studied him for a moment. “Do you have any kind of food?”

He nodded. “T-there’s a box by the bed.”

Generally, he couldn’t stomach much of anything during heats, but there were some proper energy bars he could force himself to take a few bites of if he needed it. They were packed with nutrients, but they really didn’t taste that good. He kept them, though, just in case. They had a pretty long ‘use by’ date, too, so he had no qualms about shoving them in the box he kept reserved for heat related emergencies, even if he hadn’t opened it for two years.

Karma was taking quite a while down there, though. Too long.

“Nagisa~” His tone was far less serious. “What’s this?”

Before he could think of a way to explain himself, Karma held the object carefully in his grip, examining it like it was a much more complicated piece of machinery. It was as if something in his demeanour snapped without warning - Nagisa could feel it in the heavy air around him, the mix of their pheromones that had accumulated. He didn’t seem halfway as exhausted anymore.

Karma pressed the button on the end of the cylindrical object, causing it to vibrate loudly in the palm of his hand. “Oh, I see.”

Nagisa could have died right then and there. He didn’t even know how to put it into words, and he doubted Karma would even believe him. The truth was as part of orientation at his university, he’d had to go to an omega health presentation. It had been incredibly awkward and uncomfortable, but apparently it was a requirement. At the end they handed out condoms and the ‘heat aids’ to everyone. Of course, Nagisa had felt too much shame to even look at it, after just throwing it in that box. He forgot it even existed.

Leaning over him, Karma licked the shell of his ear. “You didn’t strike me as the sex toy type.”
Shuddering, Nagisa bit his lip, sanity wearing off. “No, that’s not—”

“No?” Karma pulled back a little, and then lightly traced the device down the centre of Nagisa’s chest. “What is it then?”

Nagisa gasped at the feel of the vibrations against his sternum, a sensation he really wasn’t used to. The anticipation of what might happen next was even more intense as the tingles, as Karma ever so slowly moved it downwards. He seemed content to just watch Nagisa through this, not touching for him except for the hand controlling the vibrator.

He knew Karma had sadistic tendencies. But that was usually reserved for bad things, mischief, other people’s misfortune… Though in hindsight, maybe Nagisa should have expected to be tortured like this, as Karma rolled it over his stomach, causing his core to tighten and his hips to jump. He didn’t need to have his eyes open to know that Karma was watching him, careful yet devilish.

He wanted to cry out, when it finally touched the base of his erection, but Nagisa had it in him at least to slam his fist into his mouth, cutting himself off. Apparently that was the wrong thing to do, because Karma moved the toy to his hip. Which wasn’t nearly enough, but also at the same time, too much.

Not doing what Karma wanted quick enough, it seemed, his other hand reached up, pulling Nagisa’s arm down onto the bed. He didn’t hold him there, or anything, but the message was clear. Like some kind of punishment, though, Karma didn’t move back to giving him attention where he most needed it, instead leaving Nagisa to gasp and squirm.

Nagisa gulped, before his will gave out. “Please.”

“‘Please’ what?” He sounded like he was enjoying this far too much.

“More,” he got out. Nagisa didn’t care anymore. “Karma,” to accentuate his point, he weakly kicked him in the thigh, shifting into a better position.

He heard a low almost chuckle, before finally he had it pressed up against him again. On autopilot, his legs kicked up and apart, unsure of the correct position to be in. The sensation was unlike anything he’d experienced before, and it was like he didn’t even know how to react. He resisted every urge to cover his mouth again, mostly because he just really didn’t want it to stop.

Karma shifted the toy intermittently, so he never got too used to one spot. Maybe he’d have been able to handle it otherwise, or maybe he wouldn’t. All he knew is right then he was pretty much blind to everything else, writhing and moaning so loud it was hurting his throat. Under another circumstance, maybe, it would have gotten him there three times over already, but this was heat, and no matter how food it felt the burn was still there.

“I can’t,” he finally got out, “I need it—“

He paused his movements all together. “Need what?”

Nagisa could practically feel the smug smile, and he just about mustered the courage, for a second or two, to meet his honey toned eyes in a glare. “J-just, ha-” he almost shrieked, when Karma pressed it right on the underside of his tip. “I-inside.”

“All you had to do was ask,” Karma shrugged, before quickly diving forwards, pushing the toy into him in one swift jab. It met no resistance, considering how open Nagisa already was, but it was still enough of a juxtaposition from having nothing, to being (almost) full again, it made him gasp out.
Pushing it in and out of him a few times, as if to check its position was correct, Karma seemed satisfied, pushing the button again to turn the toy on. Nagisa bit his lip, grinding his head back into the pillow as the low vibrations ran up and down his spine. Save for a bit of squirming, this was nothing he couldn’t handle now, he was sure. Karma was still just watching him, not entirely engaged in whatever this was, more like he was observing. It was easier for Nagisa to just close his eyes and focus on the sensations.

But then they just didn’t stop. There was no variation to the intensity of the vibrations, no rise and fall, nothing but this constant. It was somehow both overwhelming and not enough. His body was screaming out for more, of course it was, as its biological function, now he’d had an actual alpha. He needed to finish, but he wasn’t sure he could like that. Liquid fire ran through his veins, and he was dying in it.

“Please,” he requested again. “It’s not enough,” he admitted, practically crying out the words.

“I’m all ears,” Karma said, “just tell me what you need.”

Nagisa groaned. “Y-you,” as more moans spilled out of his lips. “N-need you i-in me. Need your knot, alpha, need you.”

He turned the toy off, pulling it out of him, and Nagisa wanted to thrash and scream. Karma didn’t immediately replace it with himself, and it caused Nagisa to shudder in an unpleasant way. He half sat up, trying to get a read on Karma’s face, but immediately he noticed he couldn’t. Meeting his eyes, he noticed the gold in Karma’s eyes had been swallowed by black pupils, and his scent had shifted to something a lot deeper.

And like that he realised Karma had fallen into a rut.

On a less drama note, here are some really cute fanarts! I love them all a lot, thank you for drawing and letting me show them! (if you want to send me art please do so! Tumblr or discord is probably the best place to catch me)
Yes, I noticed that most kids your age like them.

Gaga

Isn't it too big for you?

Wow! Is this for me?
Imagine thinking Daichi isn't a queen, can't relate.

by hefungwuyulovesu
Little explanation: alphas have it a lot easier than omegas. They only go into ruts when they first present, and when they're around omegas in heat for too long. Most alphas would have already hit the point where they go into a rut, but, well, Karma has a lot of self control when he needs to :') Hope it was worth the 92 chapter wait, and yes, of course you get two chapters :'}
Rut Time

Chapter Summary

The heat continues

Chapter Notes

only Karma would manage to angst in such a situation

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Karma’s eyes narrowed in on the sight before him. That was, pretty much the best thing he’d ever set his eyes upon. Though, he didn’t have much time to dwell on it, suddenly so hard that it hurt. Just staring into those sky blue eyes like this was enough to make him lose any remaining sense of himself. All he could feel was the blood racing through his veins, and this intense need.

He’d never experienced a rut before. Only a minor version of it, when he first presented as an alpha as a teenager. Back then, though, he’d just been a mixture of angry and horny for a day or two. This was… different. Karma wasn’t sure he’d ever felt such intense desire and need, the kind where he knew no matter what, he had to get it.

Darting forward, he pressed a rough kiss to those swollen, parted lips. He wasn’t so concerned with making it good, exactly, everything was just in the urgency to feel. Karma moved away from his mouth, dragging his lips across his jaw, and then down to his neck where the scent was strongest. For just a moment, he allowed himself to breathe it in, quelling the burning of his lower body.

He found his tongue running down to the spot that produced the scent, swollen and red with need. After testing the area of skin, he let his lips enclose around it and he sucked, as though he’d somehow be able to drink that scent that was screaming ‘willing omega’ out. His sharp canines dragged across the skin and his omega whimpered, but he pulled away. One thing that wasn’t blank in Karma’s head was the knowledge that he couldn’t bite him there.

Karma pushed him back hard, causing his back to bounce against the mattress. And that was an even better sight. His omega had his legs spread open already, flushed red from his chest upwards. If it was possible to get harder, Karma probably would have. Even more fire burned through his veins and he was starting to get desperate.

Instead of just taking him like that, though, he decided to make it easier for himself, gripping his omega’s hips roughly and flipping him over, tossing him back down on his hands and knees. His omega seemed a little confused, like he wasn’t sure how position this was supposed to go, so Karma tugged him up into the right position. The view was just as good as before like that, but he couldn’t appreciate it for longer, finally lining himself up.

Inside him felt nothing short of euphoric. His omega was so wet and open, though part of that was remnants of his earlier release. Once he was in, there was no holding him back. He moved frantically, as though he’d die if he stopped. Somehow, he felt nothing short of euphoric, becoming
even more blind to his surroundings, to everything else.

“M-more-“

More? I’ll give you more.

He wasn’t exactly being gentle in the first place, but he let go of his senses, grabbing his omega as hard as he felt he could. It wasn’t enough for him either, though, no matter the speed his hips were moving at, the clash between them each time like thunder. If it was even possible, he needed to be deeper still.

One of his hands moved up from his omega’s hip, trailing the length of his body until his hand fixed in his hair. With the way he groaned, Karma assumed he didn’t mind at all, so he grabbed a fistful, yanking him up like that. He let his own body rest more on top of his so they could be closer, so he could feel the heat of his omega’s skin against his chest.

With his hand in his hair, it gave Karma the perfect access to his neck again, and he couldn’t resist the compulsion. Every whimper and moan he got was music to his ears, especially so up close. It only encouraged him to go harder, chasing the feeling that burned in his lower body. It felt so unimaginably good, he didn’t even know how to take it.

Eventually, it became too much for him, and he felt himself start to swell. Maybe his omega felt it too, with the way his sounds picked up, and how he struggled to rock back against him. All of a sudden, he snapped, releasing that pent up energy all at once. He held on tightly, as his body locked itself in place, and finally relief traversed through him.

His teeth, however, felt like they might fall out. He couldn’t control himself, yet… Somehow he knew he had to move his mouth just a little bit, so he was attaching himself more to the back of his neck, rather than the side of it. That was about as long as he could hold out, before he finally allowed himself to bite down.

It wasn’t a bite that would bond them in the way he so deeply wanted, but it was enough to satisfy the rest of his senses, everything else going completely numb for a moment, before he was able to deal with how good it felt. He’d never knotted anyone before this, but now he understood the way people spoke about it, it felt almost like some sort of heaven, with his omega clenching around him, shivering in his own pleasure.

“Na-gisa,” he finally got out, breathing in his satisfied scent properly.

He just hummed in response, limbs shaking like he couldn’t hold himself up anymore.

Karma took pity, wrapping his arms around his stomach in support. Once he was sure he could hold him, he let himself fall backwards, so he was pretty much sitting. They were attached anyway, but Karma made sure to tug his Nagisa with him, so he was situated in his lap. It felt good like that, as they relaxed, his release still leaving him sensitive to every little movement.

“Myne,” he said, under his breath.

Nagisa nodded, shifting his hips with a whine. “Yours.”

He practically growled, lips moving back down to Nagisa’s neck. His skin was already covered in bruises and other red marks, including the deep bite he’d just left there, which was bleeding just a little bit. Feeling just a tiny bit more level headed, he loosened his grip just a fraction, breathing heavily against Nagisa’s back.
Desire rose within him once again, but there wasn’t a lot he could do about it. To keep himself at bay, he kept sucking at his neck, as though there was even room to mark him up more. Nagisa didn’t stop moving though, only subtle little shifts here and there which felt a weird mix between amazing and incredibly frustrating.

It went down soon enough, but he was still completely hard, and his head was spinning. His instincts won over once again, and he couldn’t resist the urge to push Nagisa back down again, slipping out of him for only a second before they went again. That time, Nagisa’s sounds grew louder, and his stance became weaker, to the point where he could barely even hold himself up.

He didn’t knot him that time, but when they both came down again, Karma knew there was no way they could go again like that. Feeling that desperation rise up once again, though, he turned Nagisa over again, onto his back, except that time he forced his legs up, half marvelling around the way his toes automatically curled over his shoulders.

Nagisa still kept his eyes squeezed shut, but his voice made up for it, pitch turning higher still as Karma moved again. He couldn’t go as hard, but the urgency started to wear off, and it was good enough just to look at him and he ground back and forth. Nagisa’s body reacted pretty honestly, even if he was still shaking like a leaf, worsened still wherever Karma chose to touch him.

Now that the sensations had become more manageable, he actually noticed when Nagisa snapped, chest arching upwards as he clenched erratically around him. It caught him off guard enough that he stopped for a moment, to give his brain some sort of fighting chance of catching up, before he moved through it with him. Nagisa made no attempt to stop him, rocking his own hips back to chase the feeling further.

Although he knew it was down to him being in heat, a part of him wondered if Nagisa was always that insatiable. He knew he wanted to find out, whatever the case. He kept going still, probably letting out a bunch of his own embarrassing noises before he bit down on Nagisa’s shoulder that time, finding his own release once more, before finally softening.

Nagisa clutched onto him tightly after he pulled out, as though he was afraid Karma was going to leave. Honestly, right then, there was nowhere else he’d rather be. He shifted regardless, though, since lying right on top of Nagisa would probably end up hurting him. It seemed like Nagisa was just as worn out, because he didn’t try anything again, relaxing instead. Karma couldn’t help but join him, honestly, letting his eyes fall closed.

When he woke up again, he thought he’d be back to his senses, but immediately he knew he was hard again. Hard and… feeling incredible sensations. When he racked up the energy to look properly, his heart almost stopped. Nagisa was between his legs, alternating between licking carefully and wrapping his lips around his erection. It was even better than he remembered, his heart really falling out of his chest and flying off somewhere.

Apparently noticing he was awake, Nagisa moaned happily, pulling away for a second so he could straddle his lap. Within seconds, Karma was inside him again, and he was sure Nagisa was clenching around him extra tightly. Nagisa might not be choking him, pinning him, even paralysing him- but Karma still felt trapped beneath him. That wasn’t the way this was supposed to go, was it? Well, now he was pretty much clear of his rut feelings, he supposed it was only fair.

Karma knew with clarity that this had destroyed a part of him, and he doubted he’d ever be able to touch anyone else again. Not now that he’d had this. Although he was certain this wouldn’t happen again between them, he could live with just once. At least he knew properly what it would be like, for Nagisa to be his, even if it wasn’t for so long.
He could only take Nagisa’s jumpy, slightly desperate movements for so long though. Reaching up, he grabbed onto his hips hard, controlling the pace as his own hips picked up, pulling Nagisa down onto him in time. It earned him some particularly nice broken moans, some of them even of his own name, and was all the encouragement he needed to keep going, until they both came to their end and Nagisa collapsed down on top of him.

He wouldn’t mind waking up like that every morning.

“You,” Karma cleared his throat, remembering the other reason he was here, “you need to actually drink something.”

Nagisa whimpered against his chest, but didn’t protest when Karma reached for the water, forcing him to drink as much as he could take. There was something else, wasn’t there? Food. He’d been trying to find that, before they got distracted. Distracted because Nagisa was way too hot for his own good. How long had he been in the haze of rut for? He was so beat, he wasn’t sure how much longer he could hold out.

“Thanks,” Nagisa finally said, accepting a bite of the weird protein bar like thing.

It was definitely nearing its end. Karma could tell just from his scent, there were still twinges of heat there, but he was definitely lucid. He didn’t know exactly, but he was sure it would only be a couple more hours of this before it wore off entirely. That struck Karma in a weird, uncomfortable way. He didn’t want Nagisa to suffer, but at the same time, it wasn’t enough. In fact, Nagisa would probably be just fine if he was left in this state. He found himself annoyed at that, turning quickly to pin Nagisa down.

“Ah- Karma,” he said in surprise, but didn’t seem to mind.

Karma didn’t know what to say, or what to do. He just knew that he wanted Nagisa in a way he’d never wanted anybody else before, and maybe being with him like this was the closest he was ever going to come. He entered him again, a little slower that time, though Nagisa still gasped out, wrapping his entire body around him in every way he could.

They rocked together with little of their past urgency, even though a part of him wanted to rush, to not make this the last time. He just stared down at Nagisa, his wild facial expressions, the way he moved just a little bit. Somehow, he knew then how much they shouldn’t have done this, even if there was no way he was going to stop either.

His release snuck up on him that time, and though he was too worn down to knot him one last time, it still satisfied him for a moment too. Nagisa blinked a couple of times, before looking like he was about to actually melt all the way into the pillows. Out of curiosity, Karma took hold of his wrist, lifting it to his nose. It was really hard to tell, especially where his scent wasn’t so potent, but he was pretty sure those last few shreds of heat were gone.

When he got to the point where he had to pull out, Nagisa was already asleep again, his body likely crashing from all they’d been through. He somewhat felt the urge to sleep too, but his mind was coming back to him rapidly, and he noticed just how wrecked everything was, the both of them included.

Granted, cleaning up mess had never been a priority of his in general, but there was something about it. Karma couldn’t explain it even to himself, aside from a slight protective instinct maybe, but he felt every urge to take care of Nagisa as much as he could. Once he was sure Nagisa was settled, it was like gravity itself pulled him out of that bed, and he stumbled on his sore muscles.
The first thing he thought of was running a bath. They’d gone quite a few times, and not paused to clean anything, which wasn’t comfortable for him and would probably be worse for Nagisa. He tried his best to remember how Nagisa liked his baths, but purposely kept the temperature a little cooler than he usually would have, figuring it would probably be appreciated. There was probably no chance Nagisa would be able to stand for a shower.

He let him nap whilst it filled, and then debated whether he should wake him up at all. He wasn’t sure if that would bother Nagisa or not. When he ventured back into Nagisa’s room, he realised how potent the scent of old heat really was. No, he was definitely going to have to air it out or something. Nagisa looked so at peace, though, he really didn’t want to shift him.

“Nagisa,” he sighed, shaking him gently. “Don’t lie there and make me do all the work…”

Finally, he blinked. “H-huh?”

“Do you think you can stand?” That seemed like a dumb question, looking at the state of him. He didn’t really give Nagisa much time to answer, honestly, reaching for him and pulling him into a carry. Nagisa could barely hold his own head up, though.

“Where are we going?” He mumbled into arm.

“You need a bath,” he said, kicking the bathroom door open with his foot.

Nagisa shuddered when his body hit the water, but he relaxed within seconds. He looked kind of cute like that, actually. If Karma ignored the rest of him. He was covered from head to toe in marks and bruises, some of them not insignificant bites. A part of him felt a deep, twisted satisfaction at the sight of him like that.

He slipped out of the room whilst his eyes were closed, and then took the bedroom into consideration. There was no way he was fixing it up entirely, but the least he could do was open a window and strip the sheets. Sheets which were pretty much ruined, but he dumped them in the washing machine anyway.

At least there was the humour in finding that vibrator again, thrown carelessly on the floor. Karma smirked at that, washing it first before tucking it back in that box. He’d never thought of Nagisa as the type, but now he knew he was at least kind of into that thing. It was interesting information, to say the least.

He went to go check on Nagisa, when everything was in good enough shape. The itch was still present in him, just below the surface of his skin. Deeply, he needed to know that Nagisa was okay. When he returned, Nagisa was only barely awake, wincing like he’d at least tried to clean himself. He looked up at Karma curiously, face half sinking below the water.

“Don’t you need to clean off too?”

Karma took that as an invitation, climbing in with him. Except, Nagisa’s bathtub wasn’t particularly big. It was kind of awkward, the both of them attempting to fit in there. Still, the warm water felt nice, and he found himself relaxing just a little despite the cramped space. They didn’t say anything else to each other, though Karma was sure that was mostly due to Nagisa’s weariness.

He didn’t exactly feel completely cleansed, but he decided it was better than nothing. The way Nagisa’s head was lolling around, although slightly entertaining, meant they definitely needed to rest properly. In any other circumstance, he’d have made fun of Nagisa for how broken down he was, but he knew it wasn’t the time. He drained the tub instead, picking him up to take him back
into his bedroom.

Karma tried his best to dry him a little bit, but it was *weird*. There was something too intimate about it, which was ridiculous considering how they’d spent the last… few days? He wasn’t even sure exactly how long it had been. It didn’t seem to matter, anyway, because Nagisa was obviously ready to fall right back asleep again, when he realised he was on his bed. Though, not before dragging Karma down with him.

He wasn’t sure where he’d found the strength to tug him like that, or maybe Karma himself was too weak to put up even the slightest resistance. Whatever the case, he found himself curling up with his Nagisa, protectively clutching him whilst his chest was used as a pillow. And everything suddenly felt okay.

Chapter End Notes

EDIT: Alright binge readers! If you're reading this fic for the first time, this is a good place to take a break, get a snack, or just put the fic down for now! Or, if you still have energy, by all means keep reading on.

I'm gonna admit, this was a hard one to write. I'm all smutted out now. It literally got to the point where I wrote a thousand words of pointless fluff to cleanse my own soul :') But anyway, I hope you enjoy. Back to our regularly scheduled drama soon?
“H-hold still,” Kayano said, tilting his face.

Of all the embarrassing situations to find himself in, this was one of the least ideal. He hadn’t exactly asked for this directly, but he was talking to Kayano anyway, and she had offered – Nagisa was trying not to dwell too hard on it. At least Kayano of all people was the least likely to hold his against him, even if it made him want to slip beneath the floor boards.

“Oh,” he hissed, when she pressed a little too firm.

Her face went red. “S-sorry.”

Nagisa knew it was necessary, though. Kayano had experience with film make up, which was a lot thicker and lasted longer than regular stuff. And that’s exactly what he needed. He could cover a lot of his marks with clothes, but his neck was significantly covered. She’d even had to colour correct it, going over certain points in red and green before putting a lot of foundation on.

“I think I’m done,” Kayano finally pulled back, and turned him towards a mirror.

Admittedly, she’d done a really good job. Aside from looking tired in general, he was pretty much back to normal. He didn’t look like he’d been beaten up anymore, though that wasn’t far from the truth anyway. That thought had to stop right there, he couldn’t bring himself to think about those kind of things, especially with Kayano standing right there.

He lowered his head. “Thank you.”

Kayano smiled wryly, starting to pack her things away. “You were lucky I was filming nearby!”

Laughing awkwardly, Nagisa looked out of the window. He was really proud of Kayano, and how well she’d done with her career. Not that it was a surprise, in terms of acting she was one of the most talented people he knew. She seemed a lot happier recently, though, now she was acting in a drama in Japan – still a major deal but didn’t involve as much travelling.

He straightened out his shirt, then, trying not to cringe at the way the material clashed against his skin. It wasn’t just his… minor injuries. The entire point of having that heat was to change suppressants, and he’d already started the new ones. He remembered, when he first started taking them three years ago, his body hadn’t exactly reacted well, so it was bound to be the same. It
wasn’t the worst, exactly, so far he’d just felt hypersensitive and a little ill.

“It must be tough,” he thought, “filming so often.”

“Not at all,” Kayano said. “I still love acting more than anything else, so it barely feels like work.”

To some degree, he felt the same way. Teaching didn’t feel like a hobby, exactly, but it wasn’t much of a daily grind either. He was looking forward to returning, now that the summer break was over, though he hoped his students hadn’t relaxed too much. He enjoyed teaching them, watching them shape up into the best people they could be... The only problem now was channelling that into helping them achieve their actual goals.

“Nagisa,” Kayano gave him a friendly nudge, “you spaced out.”

“Sorry,” he said immediately, cheeks tinting. “I was just thinking about work.”

She zipped up the bag. “You’ve always been like that, never straying from your target for too long. I’m leaving you a little concealer,” she suddenly changed topic, “don’t worry too much about returning it.”

What would he do without Kayano? “Thank you,” he said sincerely, “really.”

She beamed, winking. “This might be a once in a life time opportunity.”

A part of him hoped so. The rest of him... wasn’t so sure. Waking up after his heat had been an almost surreal experience. Normally he’d feel a little sick and fragile for a few days, but that was the end of it. This time, he didn’t even know how to feel. His memory of everything wasn’t exactly clear, most of it falling into an indistinguishable blur.

He knew that he’d woken up at some point, still completely naked but cleaned up, lying wrapped in fresh sheets. And Karma had been somewhat beside him, though he was fully clothed, as though he was prepared to leave the moment Nagisa gave him the go ahead. It would have been weird any way, he supposed. He couldn’t allow himself to think too long about any alternatives.

He hadn’t really spoken to Karma since then. He’d already had the week off from work, so he’d gone to pick Daichi up a little early. Considering the state Nagisa had been in, he didn’t have a problem with it. It had only been a few texts, here and there, but looking at the time, Karma was meant to be dropping him off again soon. He really had to pull himself together before that happened.

“What time did you say they were coming back?” Kayano asked.

Nagisa snapped out of it. “Should be any minute now,” he never really knew with Karma, though. “Do you want to wait?”

“Oh course,” she said, “it’s been quite a while.”

It was probably hard to find time, with such a busy life. Nagisa didn’t have nearly as many responsibilities, himself, but time really did seem to slip past these days. He couldn’t believe that technically speaking, he was halfway through with his first year as a teacher already. It would probably be the actual end of the year, the next thing he knew. As if to prove his point, the buzzer sounded.

Though things weren’t as painful anymore, he still cringed whilst he walked. He’d never hurt as much as this before, he was sure, it was better than the initial limping he’d had to do, but there was
still a few twinges of pain. He figured part of it was also from the bruises, though. As embarrassing as both possibilities actually were.

After the longest they’d been separated for a while, he wasn’t surprised that Daichi ran straight into him, hugging him like it had been far longer than a week. He’d felt pretty lonely too, though, even if he’d been recovering. Sometimes he only realised how much he missed him until he was in his presence again.

“Daddy!” He said, pulling back. “Guess wha-“

Nagisa looked down at him. “Daichi?”

His face was suddenly flushed pink. “Ha-haruna Mase sama…” His body practically snapped in half, the speed at which he bowed.

Kayano barely even reacted, though. “No need to be like that, Daichiisai,” she laughed. “You know between us, you can use Kayano.”

“R-right,” somehow, he managed to go even redder. “Kayano san.”

Karma gave him a little nudge from behind. “What’re you being all weird for, Daichan? Yo, Kayano, it’s been a long time~”

“Karma,” she smiled.

“No ‘m not!” Daichi tugged his sleeve in protest.

“Anyway,” he said casually, patting Daichi on the shoulders, “did you forget the surprise?”

Something lit up in his eyes. “Daddy, c’mon,” he grabbed him, “you have to come outside.”

Instinctively, Nagisa was very afraid of what he was about to see. He could sense the deviousness all over Karma’s face – Daichi’s too, but he wasn’t as good as covering it up. Shooting Kayano a look, he went where Daichi was attempting to pull him, since he at least was a little too hard to say no to in situations like this.

Daichi led him downstairs without hesitation, almost impatiently. Nagisa wasn’t sure what could be so important, but he supposed he was sucked in at that point, so he had to see it through. It took him a moment, when they were outside, for him to figure out what he was supposed to be looking at. But, following Daichi’s eyeline, he was looking at a bright blue car, parked conveniently outside the entrance.

“This is yours?” Nagisa stared at the car, like it was about to burst into flames.

Karma leant against it. “What do you think?”

“Why?”

Kayano tilted her head. “I didn’t know you could drive.”

“Ah, Kayano,” he grinned, “I took classes during university, you never know when you need a getaway car~. And, Nagisa, I thought it would be useful.”

“Y-you-“

Karma opened the door proudly. “I even got Daichan a booster seat.”
“You live right next to a train station!” Nagisa protested. “That takes you almost directly to where you work.”

His eyes flashed. “I’m glad you have my schedule committed to memory,” his tone was nonchalant, “but I have a life outside of work, you know.”

Nagisa squinted. “Like what?”

“I… I’ll take Maki on walks.”

“Maki.”

“Yes.”

“She’s a cat, Karma.”

He stepped closer, using his superior height to his advantage. “She still likes the outdoors.”

“Just… take her to a park!”

“There are dogs there,” he complained, “she’ll try and fight them.”

Nagisa stepped closer too. “Then train her not to. She’s your pet.”

He raised an eyebrow. “’She’s a cat, Karma.’”

Somewhere behind them, Kayano coughed. “I like the colour.”

Trust Kayano to be there when he really needed her. Karma was so distracting sometimes, he lost track of what his problems were exactly. But that didn’t matter. He supposed… Karma could do what he wanted with his own money, he’d earnt it after all. Just as long as he’d actually thought something like this through…

“It’s really fun, Daddy,” Daichi said excitedly, “we drove all the way here!”

Karma smiled devilishly. “Stop acting like you don’t want to go for a spin~”

No, Nagisa valued his sanity. His car looked okay, though. Nagisa honestly didn’t know a lot about them, aside from what he’d briefly learnt in history class, so he didn’t have much of an opinion other than ‘it’s not falling apart’. Still, he didn’t want to buy into this ridiculousness by going along with it.

“I don’t mind watching Daichiisai,” Kayano added, unhelpfully.

Daichi turned to her. “Really? We can hang out?”

She grinned widely. “In fact, I don’t know this neighbourhood very well. Why don’t you show me which place does the best pudding?”

Somehow, Nagisa figured he didn’t really have a choice in this matter. So, he decided to just cut his losses. He was never the biggest fan of leaving Daichi with other people, but Kayano was one of the top of his list of people he could trust. Besides, they hadn’t seen each other in quite a while. Daichi didn’t seem that bothered about it, anyway.

“O-okay then,” Nagisa said, hand nervously clasping around the door handle.
“Great,” Karma said, hopping into the drivers seat. “See you in a bit.”

Nagisa felt more like he was entering a chariot to the underworld than a regular car. But, everything seemed fine. It even carried that unmistakable new car smell. He still felt a certain kind of nerve come over him, though. He practically scrabbled for the seatbelt, at least feeling a little bit of security with something strapped around him.

“What are you so nervous for?” Karma asked lightly, examining him from head to toe.

He swallowed. “I’m not—” but then Karma revved the engine, and he almost shrieked. “Karma!”

Sighing, Karma started the car properly. “What do you think I’m gonna do, drive us into a wall?”

He tried his best to force himself to relax after that. Of course he knew Karma wouldn’t hurt him, he’d trust him with his life if it came down to it. Maybe Nagisa was just generally on edge. He didn’t really have much to worry about, as it turned out. Karma was… a pretty normal driver. Which made sense, because Karma had always been generally good at most things.

“Where are we going?” He asked eventually, not knowing the neighbourhood so well when he was in a car.

Karma shrugged. “I’m not sure.”

He squinted. “How are you not sure?”

He looked at Nagisa seriously. “You don’t need a plan for everything, y’know.”

“J-just don’t take your eyes off the road,” he folded his arms.

They differed a lot like that, Nagisa realised. Personally, he loved the security that came with having a proper plan. If he had the opportunity, he’d do it every time something came up, much preferring to think through every possibility of an event before it actually happened. That was instinctual for him, though, to have his eyes fixed firmly on his targets. Karma was just naturally better at thinking on his feet, more relaxed about dealing with things as they came about.

“Huh, she wasn’t kidding,” Karma said to himself as they drove a little slower through a residential area.

“Hm?”

He tapped the steering wheel. “Little Junchan’s mum, we were just talking about how many new properties are being built around here recently,” he paused, nose wrinkling. “That was so middle aged.”

Nagisa laughed at that, just a little. Things like that were a little weird for him too. Of course, most people their age didn’t have responsibility for a seven year old child, and their interests weren’t always the best aligned. But on the other hand, he didn’t necessarily have that much in common with people significantly older than him either.

“You ever thought about living in a house like that?”

Staring out of the window as they went past, they all looked like nice places. “I don’t know,” he admitted. As much as he liked plans, those were for solid events, not hypothetical things so far off in the future. “I haven’t thought about it… Why, have you?”
He didn’t turn to look at Nagisa that time. “Maybe, one day.”

Nagisa wasn’t sure how to take that. “I didn’t think that sort of thing appealed to you.”

“No?” He gripped the wheel tighter. “It would be nice, I always thought. To live in a place and know you’re definitely going to stay there, without knowing there’ll be an end date at least.”

On second thought, maybe it was exactly what Karma needed in his life. Things had never been exactly stable for either of them, but in terms of a home, Karma had definitely had it worse. Eight years ago, the notion of Karma wanting anything that resembled a normal life would have baffled him, but somehow it really did make sense.

“Maki would have an even easier time hiding from you,” Nagisa found himself playing into it, “in a big house like that.”

A smile danced on Karma’s face. “At least Daichan would have room for all of his books.”

“A whole library,” Nagisa said, but then shifted. This discussion was reaching dangerous territory.

He shouldn’t let himself fall into dumb fantasies like that. The agreement between he and Karma had been one out of biological necessity, and it had to stay that way. Just because they’d shared a heat, didn’t mean things should change. In fact, if things did change, that would surely be undermining their entire agreement.

And even if he did want it to happen, it just shouldn’t. He’d only just gotten out of a two year relationship. Nagisa hadn’t had a lot of time to think about it recently, but it still stung. He knew his relationship with Shouyou had been far from perfect but… It had still meant a lot to him. He wasn’t sure if he’d even be ready to think about anybody else.

…Which seemed counter intuitive given that he’d spent days in bed with Karma, but he had to just remind himself that it couldn’t mean anything. This was okay, wasn’t it? Right then, despite that conversation, he did feel the familiar thrums of friendship between them. He’d much rather have Karma as a friend, than nothing at all.

It was then that Nagisa realised he was staring at him, rather than the series of houses. In fact, they’d long passed them, but he couldn’t draw his eyes away. And then his mind ran wild, gaze falling once again to the grip he had on the wheel. His heat had been a blur, his memories of it annoyingly unclear, but he did remember Karma’s ‘so hard it almost hurt’ grip on his hips, had the fingertip shaped bruises all over him to prove it.

He knew Karma had made him feel a way he never had before. A way he really shouldn’t feel again, but it was so hard not to look, not to wonder. He had to accept that it was a one time thing, had to. It would just be easier if Karma was a little less attractive, and from his vague memories, good in bed. He finally managed to tear his gaze away in shame. That’s not how friends thought about friends.

They drove around for a little while longer, until the sun started to set. A very small part of Nagisa didn’t actually want to go back, as much as he knew moments like that weren’t built to last. But then he started to better recognise the buildings, and realised they were swiftly approaching Nagisa’s apartment again. He clenched his teeth, as Karma pulled into the same spot as before.

“So, did I convince you?” Karma said, shutting down the engine.

Nagisa looked over at him. “That it’s worth the money you’ll have to pay for parking, check ups, and petrol? …Not really.”
He had the nerve to pout about it. “Aw come on~. It’s not like I bought a yacht.”

“No,” Nagisa eyed him, “I think you need to stay away from boats for a long time.”

Karma laughed, then, and climbed out of his side, encouraging Nagisa to do the same. “I don’t think my parents even cared that much.”

“Maybe I cared,” Nagisa clenched his fists. “I could have died.”

He didn’t seem bothered by that fact, though. “How ever will I make it up to you, hmm?” Once he turned to lock the car, a glint came across his expression. “A hundred drives without crashing? Or, a thousand carries?”

That was the only warning he got, before Karma suddenly had his hands on him, lifting him up as though he weighed nothing. “Karma!”

“I mean, I guess I don’t really have a choice here,” Karma sighed mockingly, ignoring the way Nagisa tried to squirm out of his grip. “You’re lucky you’re so small…”

“Alright,” he conceded. “I forgive you for the boat!”

“And?”

Karma could be awful, when he wanted to be. “I like the car.”

“That wasn’t so bad, huh?” Karma set him down.

But they were suddenly stood very close together, and Karma’s hands were still on his waist. Nagisa attempted to swallow, but his throat turned dry. Like it was some sort of muscle memory, he felt his fingers grip exactly where the worst of his bruises were and he gasped. Really, Nagisa knew he should take a step back, but something possessed him to look up instead, allowing himself the risk of falling into Karma’s eyes.

“Anyway,” Karma suddenly snapped away, “I hope Daichan hasn’t rinsed poor Kayano’s wallet dry.”

“Right,” he replied, as they went inside and started to climb the stairs. “He’d have an easy time of that.”

“Not that-“ but then Karma stopped. “Hey, your door’s slightly open.”

Nagisa looked at it in confusion, before pushing it a little, revealing two people looking far too relaxed on the sofa. “K-kayano? How did you get back in?”

Kayano smiled happily. “We’re assas- I mean,” she coughed, probably remembering Daichi was there, “I learnt how to pick locks for one of my movie roles.”

“We had fun, Daddy!” Daichi added happily. “But ‘m kinda tired now.”

Nagisa removed his shoes, stepping into his apartment properly. “You need some actual dinner first,” he said warmly, “otherwise you won’t sleep well.”

His eyes went wide with hope. “Can we get pizza?”

“Daichi,” he started. “You literally just went out for pudding.”
“So?”

“So, you can’t have two unhealthy things right after each other… Maybe next week.”

Karma laughed a little from the background, and Nagisa realised he had only half entered the apartment. “C’mon Daichan, you know better than to go straight for the kill like that. Play your cards a little better and he might have let you.”

His eyes narrowed. “Don’t teach him stuff like that.”

Kayano looked between them all fondly. “I should probably be going home now, but I had a good time. We’ll have to do this again sooner.”

“Bye Kayano san,” Daichi said, somehow flushing once again.

“Thank you for watching him,” Nagisa said seriously.

She waved him off. “Not at all.”

“Want a lift to the train station?” Karma piped up, shooting Nagisa a look. “Now that I have the car and all.”

“Sure,” she said, “thanks.”

And then it was just Daichi and him, and Nagisa felt a weird internal ache. He couldn’t place why, exactly, but it was definitely there. Not that he should be dwelling on it in the slightest. He had responsibilities, then… such as cooking. Even if that was pretty much the last thing he actually wanted to do right then.

“How about yakisoba?” Nagisa tried.

Daichi hummed. “Okay.”

And like that, the summer break ended anticlimactically.

Chapter End Notes

If you think Karma suddenly deciding he needs a car has nothing to do with Nagisa going on a joyride with Gakushuu Asano like two weeks prior, you’re underestimating the levels of pettiness here.

Also, I just thought I’d point out, I added another fic to this series if you haven't seen already! Please check it out ^_^
Sometimes, Nagisa felt like he was doing well as a teacher. His class seemed mostly settled nowadays, their violent tendencies channelled into something productive, and the room itself was in much better shape. If that wasn’t enough, their scores had improved more than he’d even actually expected, which meant they had to be listening to him, at least a little. So all in all, he knew he wasn’t messing up. But, times like these made him doubt himself.

“Huh?”

“What do you mean?”

“Come on now, Nagisa sensei.”

He had to stay firm with them. “I-I didn’t realise this would cause so much of a stir—“

Ishigawa, a boy who sat in the second row to the left, leant back dramatically. “You’re talking about university.”

Maybe that was just Nagisa being slightly sheltered by private schools for most of his life. The majority of people there had been driven to get into a good university like it was their life ambition, even though for most of them it was pretty much a guaranteed thing. Nagisa had spent the last year of his high school life worried about it, though he supposed he’d had more at stake.

“You’re right,” Nagisa smiled, “that’s the wrong approach. It’s not so much about university itself, it’s about your paths in the future.”

A few groans and snorts went around the room.

His lips squeezed tight nervously. “High school doesn’t last forever. You’ll all need to earn money for yourself somehow eventually, wouldn’t you much rather do that in a job you genuinely enjoy? It doesn’t always mean university- I knew plenty of people that worked straight after high school…. Maybe it would help if you went back to basics and wrote it down.”

It wasn’t that he’d been expecting it to be an instant fix, but it seemed Nagisa might have actually made it worse. Instead of a magical burst of inspiration, they all looked down at the paper in varying amounts of despair. Rather than helping them, he’d managed to send his class of teenagers into an existential crisis.
Just because that kind of thing worked for him, didn’t mean it would work for these students. Because he had seen a different experience than them. Then again, surely he could relate on some level. He’d been through the E Class system, looked down upon and given no prospect of real success. And then he’d been pregnant and struggling to figure out how he’d even manage to get through high school…

He couldn’t help but feel like he’d messed up somehow, at least a little. But what else was he supposed to do? There was no way he could just let them go on with no ambition. Really, it was his job to make sure that didn’t happen. As much as teaching them the basic lessons he had to as the main part of his job description, making sure they went in a good direction after classes ended was more important.

A knock came at the door. “Ah, hello, sorry to disturb the lesson.”

“N-not all ,” Nagisa faced the head teacher, mostly responding that way out of obligation.

“I hope you’re all learning something very interesting,” he said, false positivity shining through. “Anyway, I came by to remind everyone that the school festival is coming up this weekend, and you’re all required to attend. Required,” he repeated. “Good luck deciding on a stall… Can I borrow you for a moment?” He said it like he was trying to be casual.

“Sure,” Nagisa said, though he wasn’t so sure.

His shoulders dropped when they were in the hallway. “Don’t worry too much about the festival, I’m just giving you a heads up. All you have to do is supervise, make sure they don’t do anything too crazy. As long as they participated, that’s good for me.”

Something didn’t really sit well with him. “You don’t want them to try and get as much profit as possible?”

“I mean, you do have 3-5,” he said, almost like it was funny. “We’re not expecting much.”

Nagisa wanted more than anything to throw a punch right then and there. It was only natural to feel somewhat protective over his class. He understood then why Korosensei had got so fired up every time there had been a bet with the A Class back then. How was Nagisa supposed to show them that they actually had a chance of doing something with their lives, when the people around them constantly told them the opposite?

He did know where to pick his battles, though. Something told him that he wouldn’t be taken seriously here, no matter what he said. So he’d just have to prove his point, even if it killed him. Or so he thought once he slipped back into the classroom, their expectant faces making his stomach twist into a knot. He couldn’t let them down like that.

“I hope you’re all ready to take the festival seriously.”

“Aw come on Nagisa Sensei,” he heard, “you know that entire festival’s bullshit.”

He chose to ignore the word choice. “M-may be, but… don’t you get sick of people acting like that? Expecting nothing out of you? I-if you just go along with it, then you only prove them right! Wouldn’t it feel good, to make them the ones to look down on for once?” They still didn’t seem so sure, so Nagisa cleared his throat. “We can have the rest of the week off lessons, to prepare everything?”

All talk of future careers was dropped at that point, with something else to focus on. Any way to get off lessons was worth it in their eyes. Though, they’d been pretty near the end of the day as it
was, so it wasn’t like they were missing much by doing so. The bell rung soon enough, and at the very least they didn’t seem to be in a bad mood as they left.

Just as Nagisa was ready to leave, however, a contact marked as ‘school’ appeared as his phone vibrated violently. “Ah, Shiota San, I’m glad I could reach you.”

A sinking feeling went from his chest to his stomach. “Hello?”

There was a pause. “Daichi managed to get a small bump to the head today- he seems absolutely fine! But, I thought it would be better if he didn’t walk home alone today, just in case.”

Immediately Nagisa’s face paled. The thought of Daichi with any sort of injury ignited something deeply ingrained into his instincts. He knew it couldn’t be serious, since they were only calling him at the end of the day, but still- he couldn’t physically see that Daichi was okay, and he knew that he wouldn’t be calm until he was sure.

“I’ll come pick him up,” Nagisa said, wanting to get off the phone as soon as possible.

He pretty much held his breath until he got there, because that was better than any other alternative. Daifugou Academy was just as intimidating as he remembered it looking, the last time he was there. Every time he saw it, he got a strong surge of second thoughts about sending Daichi to such a huge place. Daichi seemed happier than he’d been the year before, though, which was his only comfort with it.

“Daddy!” Daichi said, happy enough, when he reached the classroom.

It was a little worse than he’d been imagining. It wasn’t just a little bump, barely even visible. No, Daichi had a black eye. Sure, Daichi got bruises every now and then, but nothing that significant. The last real injury he’d received had been years ago, when he sprained his wrist. Nagisa had freaked out then, and he was starting to freak out again, but he knew he had to try and stay calm for just a moment.

“Thank you for watching over him,” Nagisa said to his teacher, with a slight bow.

“Not at all,” she smiled kindly. “Are you going to tell me what happened, now your father’s here, Akabane kun?”

Daichi shuffled over to Nagisa’s side apprehensively. It wasn’t like him to go all quiet, which worried Nagisa even more. The teacher didn’t even know how he got hurt that much? And Daichi refused to talk about it? It shot his mind right to the worst possible place, and that make his insides twist in red hot anger. He bit the insides of his cheeks, in an act of self restraint.

“Bye, Yagami Sensei,” he said instead.

She sighed. “I’ll see you tomorrow.”

Keeping his silence, Daichi walked off, a few paces in front of Nagisa. He seemed fine, in all other senses, at the very least. But Nagisa couldn’t just let this go. Not when there was clearly something Daichi wasn’t telling him. Even then, he seemed nervous, like he wanted out as soon as possible. Not that a child wanting to leave school quickly was… abnormal…

“Daichi,” he said, the minute they were clear of school grounds. “What happened?”

“Nothing…”
No way. “Did someone do this to you?”

If Nagisa found out anyone had laid a hand on his son, there would be hell to pay. He felt liquid rage rush through his blood, his form going deadly still as all of his blood lust rushed to the surface at once. Protective instinct came to him like it was second nature, and he would make whoever hurt him suffer without hesitation.

“Da-daddy,” Daichi’s eyes were wide as he tugged at his wrist. “You’re being scary…”

He snapped out of it in an instant. What was he thinking? He couldn’t murder a bunch of seven year olds. His heart dropped down into his stomach. Scaring Daichi was the last thing he wanted to do, ever. Sometimes Nagisa doubted his parenting, but this was definitely bad. A huge part of him wanted to burst into tears right then and there.

“I’m sorry,” his throat constricted. “I’m so sorry.”

Daichi hugged him at the waist, which made Nagisa relieved somewhat. “P-promise you won’t be mad at me?”

“I prom-” but then Nagisa realised that was a very stupid thing to tell his child. What if he’d done something that needed discipline?

It was too late though. “I needed to get something from the top shelf of the bookcase, so I tried to climb it, but then it wobbled, and I fell, and some of the books fell on me…”

Nagisa inhaled sharply. “That could have been very dangerous Daichi! What if the whole case had fallen on you? You could have been really seriously hurt!” He calmed down a little. “Why didn’t you just ask Yagami Sensei to help you get it?”

“But Daddy!” He let go of him, standing opposite. “They said that I couldn’t do it because I’m too short. So I had to prove them wrong!”

Maybe this was coming from somewhere else… “What do you mean by ‘they’?”

“…” He turned his head, not wanting to meet Nagisa’s eye.

“Daichi,” Nagisa tried, “did someone tell you to do that?”

“No,” he said finally. “B-but, I had to show them.”

He wasn’t sure what to say. “Nobody in your class is that tall, you know they wouldn’t have been able to reach it either.”

“I just wanna be taller,” he complained. “They said it was funny that the first part of my name means big but I’m so small.” And then the pout came. “Wanna be like Papa.”

At the very least it didn’t really sound like bullying, more just kids teasing like they do. Honestly, Nagisa himself hadn’t really had the small thing too much when he was that young, but that was because other kids were distracted with how feminine he looked. A part of him wondered if he should be somewhat offended that Daichi would rather be like Karma than him, but he concede the height thing at least.

“It’s fun being short,” Nagisa said, “you can hide in all the best places. Besides, haven’t you seen your Papa bump his head on doorways when he forgets to duck?”
Daichi laughed a little. “He does that all the time.”

He smiled. “You have a lot of years of growing left anyway, so you might get taller.”

“But then I’ll be a grown up,” he said like he was a little offended. “I’ll have to pay bills and stuff.”

A harsh trade, wasn’t it? Still, Daichi was only seven, he didn’t really need to be worrying about that kind of thing yet. Nagisa was soothed though, seeing that he was mostly okay. He didn’t want to put off returning home much longer anyway, so they left after that, and at least Daichi seemed the same as always, and definitely hadn’t forgotten where they were going.

“Here,” he said, presenting a bag of peas from the freezer when Daichi had settled himself on the sofa. “Keep this on your eye.”

He tried his best to see the funnier side of it, watching him sat there with an ice pack across his face. It was better than the alternatives, even if it was hard for Nagisa to even look at. At the very least, the bruise didn’t look as dramatic as it probably could have, since it kind of blended in with the colour of his hair.

“What are you doing?” Daichi eventually said, when Nagisa had evidently gone too long without speaking to him.

“I’m trying to think,” he said. “We’re having a festival at school this weekend, but my class didn’t figure out

Daichi’s face lit up. “Pancakes!”

He considered Daichi. “That… might actually be a really good idea.”

“Wait,” he realised, “Daddy! I wanna come!”

It took Nagisa a moment to figure out why he couldn’t. He’d be at Karma’s come the weekend, and at that point it wasn’t up to Nagisa. Thinking about it, it wasn’t likely Karma would want to spend one of the few days he had off work hanging around the school Nagisa worked at, but then again, it was even more unlikely he’d actually say no if it was Daichi asking.

“What don’t you ask your Papa when you see him?” Nagisa tried.

“B-but,” he looked a little desperate, “I wanna know now! What if he says no and I get excited for nothing?”

Don’t just give in like that, a small voice inside of Nagisa protested, but clearly Nagisa had abandoned all common sense that day. And maybe Karma wouldn’t mind so much, just a quick conversation… It was to do with Daichi, anyway. Karma wasn’t allowed to get annoyed about parenting phone calls, right?

“Alright,” he said, “in a little bit.”

He waited until Daichi eventually got bored of just sitting around, abandoning the frozen bag completely. It still tugged at his heart, seeing that the bruise hadn’t just instantly faded. The only thing that made him feel better about it was Daichi hadn’t complained about being in any kind of pain, and mostly he just seemed bothered by the inconvenience of having to hold it up. So, Nagisa just sighed to himself, putting the bag back into the freezer before he pulled out his phone.

“Karma,” Nagisa said, “I hope I’m not bothering you-“
There was a lot of background noise, which kind of muffled his attempts of speech. “Hey~”

“Oh, are you out right now?”

Karma didn’t answer for a second. “Just got dragged out after work, you know how it is.”

“Right,” Nagisa said, even if he didn’t know. As it turned out, teachers didn’t participate in the whole drinking after work culture nearly as often.

Then he heard a voice that was way too high pitched and sweet to belong to a guy, and very close.

“So?”

“W-who’s that?”

“Huh? Nobody.”

That thought made Nagisa’s stomach twist. Nobody? It was definitely somebody. Couldn't Karma have just said ‘it’s someone from work’ if it wasn’t a big deal? So why was Karma lying to him? Why was Nagisa allowing himself to get this bothered over it, though? Karma could do what he wants, and Nagisa knew that.

“…okay.”

There was a bit of jostling, which made Nagisa think he'd moved or something. “Not that I mind, but what are you calling for?”

Honestly he felt a little dumb right then. “Uh, Daichi really wants to go to a festival this weekend, and he insisted I ask you now-“

“Okay,” Karma said without hesitation. “Your school, right?”

“Yeah.”

“Sure, s’not like I’m doing anything.”

Nagisa found himself smiling. “I’ll tell Daichi, then.”

There was another pause. “Tell him I said goodnight.”

He wasn’t sure how to feel about that whole conversation, but he was glad it was out of the way, at least. Nagisa just didn’t understand how it could be so easy to talk to Karma sometimes, and so hard others. Then again, he seemed pretty distracted. Nagisa tried his best not to think about it, instead doing what he actually said he would.

Daichi was already pretty much ready for bed, when Nagisa entered his room. He was sat cross legged on top of his bed, squinting at the book he was reading. He must have been deep into it, because he didn’t acknowledge Nagisa’s presence for a moment. Nagisa knew he shouldn’t complain, at least he was in bed.

“Is that a good book?” Nagisa asked.

Daichi didn’t reply for a moment. “I don’t know.”

“Hm?” He was a little confused. “How don’t you know?”

“I can’t really read it well,” he admitted. “’s all blurry in this eye.”
Do you want me to read it to you?"

Daichi nodded. He couldn’t help but feel for him, even if it was technically his own fault. At the very least, maybe Daichi would learn from this and not do stupid things next time. Though… this was Daichi, who had a habit of forgetting why certain things were dangerous. His eye being sore for a few days would probably be a good deterrent though.

“Daddy…” he said eventually. “Can I sleep with you tonight?”

He thought about it for a moment. “Sure.”

So it looked like Nagisa wouldn’t be getting the best nights sleep, but it was okay. He already sensed that Daichi was starting to want to do things on his own, so Nagisa would take any moment like this he could get. He couldn’t exactly carry Daichi anymore, like when he was really young, but he was okay trailing after him and curling up under Nagisa’s arm.

Aside from the bruise, he really did look sweet when he drifted off, his features soft and relaxed. Like some sort of little angel, the more mischievous sides of his personality completely obscured. Nagisa sighed, gently twisting a section of his hair around his fingers. He wouldn’t stay like that for long, surely he’d be kicking Nagisa in the ribs within the hour, but he could live with that.

The rest of the week was pretty much taken up by planning. His class seemed to be good with the pancake idea, and the motivation of missing regular lessons seemed to be enough to keep them working surprisingly hard on everything. Honestly, given how hopeless they’d declared themselves, Nagisa didn’t really see it. This might only be a festival, but they’d designated themselves into teams pretty well, and were getting on with organising everything.

If only he could make them see that this wasn’t so different to a real career. But, he supposed, one step at a time.

Chapter End Notes

Look karmagisa week happened and I wrote 9k words for it and I had no time :) If you wanna check out that fic, please go ahead! I posted it on AO3!

I hope you enjoyed this one, and sorry for that wait!
Karma wasn’t exactly a stranger to bad mornings. Every now and then it happened, and he knew he just had to deal with it, but that was easier said than done. So really, Karma should be more thankful for how easy Daichi usually was, because when the opposite happened it was living hell. Trying to do something as simple of putting a suit on with a seven year old practically clinging to his side.

“Papa,” Daichi groaned again, “I feel really bad.”

“Did you drink the water?” He tried, fiddling with his tie.

Daichi looked up at him. “Tasted gross.”

Honestly he was about to have a breakdown over this. How could water possibly taste bad? It didn’t have a taste at all! Never mind the fact that he was still in his pyjamas, and they were running low on time. It wasn’t like Karma could leave before him, there was only so much he could be trusted with and being in the apartment alone definitely didn’t qualify.

“Where’s your uniform? I thought you were getting dressed.”

Daichi’s eyes went wide. “I don’t wanna go to school.”

“I don’t wanna go to work either,” he said, “but I kinda have to, so you can’t stay here.”

“But-“

“Try and eat some breakfast, it’ll make you feel better.”

It wasn’t that Karma didn’t care about how Daichi felt. But it wasn’t like the first few times he’d ever got sick and Karma had spent days freaking out about it. The minor things, nowadays, he could live with without worrying too much about it. However, he wasn’t even sure he actually felt that bad. Daichi could want to skip school for a hundred reasons.

After Daichi ran off to eat, Karma was actually able to finish getting dressed. So that was one thing down. He didn’t hesitate walking past Daichi, who was sat at the table, and went into the kitchen to grab the packet of cat food, filling up a bowl for Maki, wherever she was. It was hard to keep track on mornings like this one.
“I don’t feel better,” Daichi said.

Karma looked over at his food, which only had a couple of bites taken out of. He looked a little bit pale, maybe… But he also hadn’t eaten. And Karma wasn’t sure he could actually send him off to school like that. What if he passed out or something? His frame was pretty much skin and bones as it was, he’d be knocked out before lunch time.

*Please just be a bad mood.* “What do you mean by feeling bad?”

“My tummy feels like it’s doing flips,” he said. “I’m—”

But then he started coughing, a spluttering kind of noise that rung alarm bells for Karma. Reacting quickly, he grabbed the closest thing that resembled a bucket and shoved it into his lap. Thankfully, he made it in time, before he retched and threw up into it. Although Karma was a tiny bit relieved he’d minimised the mess, that was probably the least of his problems.

“You good?” He tried, when it seemed like he’d gotten up what he needed to.

Daichi nodded slowly.

“Here,” he reached for the water again. “Take a couple of sips, okay?”

He accepted it, doing what Karma told him to. “Feel a bit better now.”

“Daichan,” Karma said, “you finished all those sweets last night, didn’t you?”

“No…”

He rolled his eyes. “You’re a terrible liar.”

And that’s why Karma didn’t usually take Daichi food shopping with him. The closest big shop had a pick and mix sweets section, which was always disaster waiting to happen. Although he appreciated having somewhere to briefly leave him whilst he actually got on with the shopping, child entertainment free. Only that meant Daichi had plenty of time to make himself a jumbo bucket of sweets which Karma actually had to buy since they’d been touched, though he’d told him to take a few days to eat it rather than all at once. And did Daichi actually listen to him? *Nope.*

“I can’t go to school!” Daichi protested. “When Satoshi kun was sick he had to miss a whole day because they needed to make sure the bug was gone.”

“Right,” Karma realised with a small amount of horror, “you can’t go to school.”

“What does a bug mean anyway? I don’t see any bugs…” He actually stared at the bucket of vomit, like he was looking for them.

“You don’t have a stomach bug Daichan. You just ate too many bad things and now your body’s complaining.”

“Oh… Why didn’t you tell me?”

“I did tell you, *three times*, last night,” Karma took a long hard deep breath, clinging desperately to his self control. “Are you sure you feel better now?”

He pushed the bucket away. “Think so.”

This wasn’t *happening*. “Go get yourself dressed.”
“But,” Daichi started, “you just said-“

“Normal clothes,” Karma clarified. “You can’t just stay home alone either. And go grab a book or something.”

It wasn’t like Karma had a whole lot of options here. If he couldn’t make Daichi go to school, then he’d have to take him to work with him. It wasn’t like anybody was going to be able to babysit on such short notice, and even if they could, it wouldn’t be anyone he actually trusted. So he weighed up the pros and cons, and decided he’d be in less trouble for bringing Daichi in than he would be for just plain skipping the day.

Daichi re-emerged dressed in the awful hoodie Asano had bought him, along with jeans and completely odd socks. But whatever, it was okay. He was already going to be late at this point. So he wondered off to find Maki, locating her right on top of the fridge after a few moments of scanning the rooms. For a cat that was on the streets at one point, she could be kind of dumb when it came to finding her actual food, so Karma had to pick her up and place her in front of the food dish. She didn’t seem to have such an issue with human food, however.

“Right, come on,” he said, heading towards the door. “Say goodbye to Maki.”

Of course that meant another minute or so where he pet her. “Bye Maki… Where are we going?”

Karma practically threw Daichi’s shoes into his hands. “You’re coming to work with me.”

“But you work in the government,” he pointed out, securing the shoes to a point where Karma was happy enough that they wouldn’t just fall straight off again.

He gave Daichi a little nudge, half forcing him out of the door as he grabbed his keys and locked behind them. “Exactly,” he realised, “so it’s polite speech today, got it?”

“But Papa,” he complained, on the way into the lift. “That takes so long.”

“Yeah I know,” he pressed the button, “I have to live with it every day. Just like pretty much everyone in this country. Move to America or something, if you wanna avoid it.”

“Is that why Gaga moved?”

They stepped out into the garage area, and Karma unlocked his car. “Wouldn’t put it past him.”

“He always says I should call him Asano san though,” Daichi said with distaste as he got into the car.

“Don’t ever use polite speech with him,” Karma said, “he’s the exception. Seatbelt?”

There was a click. “It’s on.”

That was good enough for him, he supposed. Maybe it would be easier to just use public transport to get into work, but Karma was still trying to prove a point to Nagisa, even if he wasn’t there to see it. He was going to use this car as much as was physically possible. Besides… it was far less crowded, and convenient for days such as this.

“Papa,” Daichi complained, after about ten seconds, “can you change the music?”

He was lucky Karma hadn’t just dumped him off with his neighbour, but… “What to?”

“Uhm, the gun song.”
Karma knew what he was talking about, though he didn’t know whether it was actually about guns or not, but his credit he didn’t speak any Korean. Well, he didn’t mind this one as much as some of the other songs Daichi liked. Honestly, Karma couldn’t wait until he was old enough for a smartphone, because his own Spotify subscription and earphones were probably the first thing he’d buy him.

“Bang bang bang,” Daichi sang along, finger guns in time with the chorus.

It was hard to hate it too much, when he was enjoying himself… It was kind of annoying though, that he’d probably get into trouble for sending Daichi to school even though he looked completely fine right then. He couldn’t trust Daichi to keep his mouth shut about the sick thing, though, even if he’d wanted to try and risk it.

He was content to sit there and sing along to the music at the very least, which gave Karma more of a chance to wake himself up. Somehow, he already knew it was going to be a long day. By the time they actually got into the city, he was only around five minutes behind his regular schedule. At that point Daichi was looking out the window at everything around them, and Karma thanked every force known to man that he wasn’t motion sick.

“You ready?” Karma asked, once he’d parked.

Daichi nodded, getting himself out of the car. “This is where you work?”

“Pretty big, isn’t it?”

At least, kind of. It wasn’t like the hugest skyscraper in Tokyo or anything, but definitely a far cry from anywhere in, say, Kunugigaoka. At least it was distraction enough just to look around, as Karma locked up and directed him towards the entrance. Briefly, he wondered if he should have made Daichi put on a coat, since it was already just the cusp between autumn and winter, but he supposed they weren’t going to be outside too long.

Then again, sneaking a seven year old into a government building wasn’t the easiest thing he’d ever tried. Though, this wasn’t exactly the Ministry of Defence. It wasn’t so much about security, more avoiding the curious looks as they walked through to the regular office. He told Daichi to keep his head down, and hope that they got there without speaking to anyone.

“Right,” Karma said, when they were down to the office. “You sit here and read, okay?”

Daichi perched himself beside Karma’s desk. “All day?”

“I have to work, that’s why you’re here.”

“But Papa-“

One of his co-workers cleared his throat. “Morning, Akabane,” he dumped a pile of paperwork on Karma’s desk, which was a pretty standard greeting. “Why is there a child at your desk?”

Karma sighed. “This is my son, Daichi. He’s seven-“

“And a half!”

“And a half,” he corrected, “he can’t be at his school today but he won’t be any trouble.”

“Are you really gonna do all of that?” Daichi asked after he’d gone to his own desk, eyeing the pile.

“Nope.”

“He seems like a bully.”

Something like that. Though, Karma wasn’t sure how best to explain the concept of hazing to a seven year old. He personally didn’t mind it so much, considering he could dish it out just as hard. No, he was just biding his time for the real stuff, and suffering through the petty things in exchange. He’d become a lot more tolerable, recently.

“Don’t worry about that, huh?” Karma sighed. “This won’t be fun to watch.”

To his credit, Daichi was pretty content after that to just sit and read, no signs of his earlier sickness returning. If it wasn’t for the consistent turning of pages, Karma might have forgotten he was even there in the first place. But it was hard not to get stuck in with everything, the rest of the environment a blur anyway.

“Papa,” Daichi said eventually, “when do I get lunch?”

Karma was half tempted to say ‘never’. It wasn’t unusual for him to skip lunch, finding the extra time of work pretty useful when it came to actually getting things done. But, Daichi hadn’t exactly eaten breakfast, and he definitely couldn’t justify making him miss another meal either. So, Karma looked around, supposing that they could spare a tiny bit of time.

“Are you sure you’re hungry after earlier?”

Daichi nodded. “I feel fine now!”

“Come on, then,” he stood up. “There’s a store close to here.”

“…I want sushi.”

Karma rolled his eyes and started to walk. “Would you have got sushi at school?”

There was a pause. “No, but-“

“Then no way.” Karma thought about it. “You can have whatever they have at the 7/11.”

Karma would cook him something nice later, depending on how he handled lunch. All in all, it was a pretty quick lunch trip, but there was only so much you could do in a 7/11. To his credit, Daichi did eat it all, and at the very least managed to keep it down. So, after that, it was straight back to work again, ad things were going just as smoothly until-

“Papa… I finished the book.”

Karma looked over at him. “Why don’t you… read it again and try and find your favourite part?”

Daichi met his eyes. “I already know what my favourite part is, it’s when the pigs take over the humans-“

“Just what book were you reading, exactly?” Karma asked, mostly to himself. “ Anyway, fine, want to go see Terasaka?”

“Yeah!”
He kind of had to, anyway, but he supposed he could keep Daichi entertained with it in the meantime. He’d perked up at that point, and he was looking around the building with interest in his eyes. Since pestering his old classmate was kind of one of his favourite pastimes, it didn’t take Karma particularly long to locate him.

“Secretary kun, connect me to the professor~” Karma said, leaning against the door.

Predictably, Terasaka wasn’t too happy about that. “Don’t look so self important!”

“Terasaka san!” Daichi ran in excitedly. “I didn’t know you work with Papa!”

“Huh?” Terasaka looked at him. “What’re you doing here?”

“He’s with me,” Karma said, “anyway, the professor?”

Terasaka shot him a death glare as he made the phone call, but Karma knew he couldn’t get too mad. Actually, bringing Daichi with him was probably a great idea. Daichi could be a living nightmare when he wanted to, but other than that he was exceptionally hard to be mad at, even for someone like Terasaka.

“Terasaka san, I have a bunch of questions about this book-“

Karma laughed. “I don’t think he’s ever read a book, Daichan.”

“Oi,” he stood up, asserting himself in his space, which was funny because Karma was now actually 2cm taller than him. “I’ll show you reading-“

“Ah, Akabane san,” the professor entered the room, “it’s been a while.”

Terasaka straightened. “Is there anything I can do for you, sir?”

He smiled, though Karma wasn’t sure how genuine it was. “Just watch the phones… and the child? Anyway, Akabane san, please, this way.”

Honestly, Karma couldn’t hold back the smirk that played on his face. “Babysitter kun,” he said under his breath, as he walked past Terasaka. “I’ll be back soon, Daichan.”

Professor Kyouju’s actual office wasn’t far off what you’d expect, looking at the man. Way nicer than Karma’s one desk, but it wasn’t even worth the comparison. Karma allowed himself to take a seat, since this wasn’t the first time he’d been here, and he knew by then where the correct position was. The professor didn’t appear to have any problem with it, anyway.

“I’ll admit,” he finally took a seat himself, “it didn’t take me so long to read everything, but I had to process it. My first thoughts were that you have a lot of nerve.”

“Nerve is what we need,” Karma said. “It might not be dire times yet, but I’d like to prevent that, wouldn’t you?”

He shot Karma a look. “These aren’t mere suggestions, they’re significant pledges.”

“If we continue like this, the economy will start to collapse even further,” Karma had prepared for this eventuality. “Why alienate a significant amount of the workforce?”

“Prejudice doesn’t disappear in a few months, Akabane san,” he sighed. “As much as your proposals look good on paper-“
He glared. “No, but it won’t disappear at all if we do nothing. Our country has one of the lowest equality track records in the modern world.”

“Anybody with basic research skills can tell you that,” he snorted. “Of course there are other things to consider, most people wouldn’t consider omegas a priority, when it comes to discussions of economic policy.”

“Then most people are making a vital mistake,” Karma practically bit out.

“Did I say I wouldn’t support it?” He rubbed his temples. “You know what happens to the people in your position who stick too closely to their ideals. I’ve seen it before, and I don’t want to see it again. You’re overstepping as it is.”

“I can advise, can’t I?” No matter what, there was no backing down on this. “Then this is my advice. The pointless rules workplaces are allowed to put on omegas are actively damaging the country as a whole.”

Professor Kyouju stood up, then, and started to pace slowly. “I’m assuming that’s your son, with my assistant.” He continued, before Karma even had a chance to open his mouth. “There’s nothing wrong with letting personal matters inspire you, in fact, I used to think politics was the most personal thing. In some ways, a lot of ways, it’s admirable. The question is whether what you do benefits the most amount of people.”

“Who does it not benefit?” Karma grit his teeth, and then stood up too. “We will crumble,” he warned, “but I’d rather not just sit back and watch that happen.”

“Leave me with this,” Professor Kyouju said. “I’ve listened to your advice, that’s all that can happen now.”

Why did it feel so much like losing? But Karma knew he had to play his cards in a certain way here. He could keep pushing, and lose his ear entirely. Then again, there was also the possibility that this go on forever, that he just decided to stall forever. Karma was rarely the type to put all his eggs in one basket, and he severely needed a back up plan.

“-Anyway,” Daichi was saying when Karma left the room, “that’s when they decide they need to build a windmill. Uhm, can you read that word? Because the kanji were kind of confusing at first but Papa said it was like a big tower that makes bread.”

“Ahuh,” Terasaka squinted at the page of the book, “think I’ve seen one of those.”

Daichi’s eyes widened. “Really?”

Karma wasn’t sure what was funnier, that Daichi had assumed that Terasaka couldn’t read at all, or that Terasaka hadn’t corrected him. Whatever the case, he kind of wanted to stand there and watch it all day. Maybe he should have Terasaka babysitting more often. Though, as an honorary member of 3E, Daichi seemed to be pretty good with all his ex classmates.

“Hey, Daichan,” Karma said, “don’t you think Terasaka’s had a long enough reading lesson now?”

Terasaka’s eyes narrowed. “Watch it, Karma.”

“I can’t help that he takes after Nagisa~” He laughed. “Anyway c’mon, some people have work to do around here.”

Daichi grinned. “Bye, Terasaka san!”
The rest of the work day went a little quicker. But maybe that was just the desperation to be done with it that allowed him to hyper fixate on the pages in front of him, streamlining time until the clock hands finally ticked into the right positions, and he could leave. Not that work was done for the day, oh no, he’d probably be working on some of this long after Daichi went to bed.

“Woah,” Daichi said, once they’d excited the building, “we’re in Tokyo.”

Karma half laughed. “We live in Tokyo.”

“Yeah, but, not really!” He looked around at the lights. “Not like this! Can we go see something!”

“You just had the day off school sick.”

Daichi jumped up. “But I feel all better now!”

“…I guess Tokyo Tower’s not far away.”

He grinned ear to ear. “Really? I wanna go!”

What, was he supposed to say no? It was no surprise that minutes later, they were on the underground, travelling right towards one of the biggest tourist spots in the city. And, well, as nice as the tower was, it wasn’t the most entertaining place to just look at. Which is why they ended up going inside, and how Karma ended up almost having a heart attack when Daichi decided to jump around on the glass floors.

“The lights are so cool,” he said, standing as close to the glass as physically possible.

He supposed it was, being practically on top of the whole city. “I’ll take you to the Skytree next time, it’s taller than this.”

His eyes lit up. “I wanna see it!”

“Just tell me when you’re done looking,” he said.

Since the seasons were changing, it was already getting dark, but Karma supposed it wasn’t a bad place to watch the sunset, not at all. Eventually, though, even Daichi couldn’t be entertained for much longer, and they descended again, which allowed Karma to regain a small part of his own sanity. Daichi didn’t beg to see anything else after that, so he was pretty much ready to call it a day and travel back to the car.

“Papa, do you love Daddy?”

That made Karma stop immediately in his tracks. Not necessarily by choice, since his muscles seemed to have forgotten how to move. Where had that come from? He hadn’t even mentioned Nagisa, had he? And where did Daichi even get the idea from? Okay, so he was freaking out a little, and Daichi might be seven (and a half) but he wasn’t stupid. And then Karma realised Daichi was standing right there and he should probably just ask.

“What do you mean by that?”

Daichi hummed. “Satoshi kun said yesterday that he’s getting a new brother or sister soon. And then Suzuki kun asked how, so Yagami Sensei said it’s what happens when two adults love each other a whole lot. But… that doesn’t make sense. You and Daddy don’t live together like Junchan and everyone else’s parents do, b-but I’m still here.”
Karma was sure his face went completely white, even though he couldn’t see it. Of all the conversations he’d been ready to have with Daichi, the ‘where to babies come from’ one was not one of them. Sure, he knew it would come up eventually, at some point, but… where the hell was Nagisa when you needed him?!

“Uhm,” just dodge the question, “there’s different kinds of love.”

“Like how you love me?” Daichi seemed genuinely curious.

He could roll with that. “Yeah, exactly. That’s one type of love. There’s also friendship, romance-“

“Ooo, so what Kayano san is like in the mornings with her boyfriend?”

“You know that’s not her actual boyfriend, right?” If this conversation was about anything else at its core, he’d already be sending her a bunch of messages to inform her of Daichi’s mistakes. “That’s just pretend for the TV.”

“I know that,” Daichi said, like it should have been obvious. “So it’s romantic love that makes a baby?”

Karma cringed. “Yeah, most of the time.”

“Does that mean Daddy’s your boyfriend?”

He’d totally walked into that one, hadn’t he? It wasn’t like Karma could tell him the truth, that a part of him would have loved to be dating Nagisa, but things were so complicated between them even to this day that it felt impossible. But he hated lying to Daichi, as much as the straight up truth might just end up upsetting him. He was too young to possibly understand this conversation.

“You don’t have to be boyfriends,” his throat went dry, “to love each other. Okay? Stop worrying about it, anyway. All that matters is we got you, and your Dad and I love you more than anyone else in the world.”

“Okay…” He said, but he still didn’t seem sure.

But Karma couldn’t quite rip the thought out of his head. Had he been asked that question five years ago, it would have been an easy yes, internally anyway. Though, he wasn’t sure he ever really stopped loving Nagisa. He did his best to squash everything down, to ignore it, but… maybe it was still there. Nagisa was the only person he’d ever loved in that sort of a sense, and somehow Karma already knew that would be true for life. The thought of feeling that way about anyone else made him feel sick to his core. So maybe that was still love. It sucked.

“Let’s go home,” he said, hating the way his voice cracked.

Chapter End Notes

Ngl, I feel bad for Karma. Yikes, that's never an easy conversation, but he's safe for now.

Bonus points if you know which book Daichi's reading and therefore know how it's probably a little inappropriate for a seven year old :)
Daichi had always found the moon kind of interesting. He wasn’t sure exactly how far back he could remember it, but he knew that the chunks of rock were getting closer together. The big explosion had happened before he was even born, so he didn’t know exactly what it had been like before, but he’d seen photos in some of the books he read. He was so used to seeing the chunks that he struggled to imagine it another way.

Apparently, you used to only be able to see it at night. Daichi couldn’t imagine that either, staring out of the window. A part of him knew he should be listening to what Yagami Sensei was talking about, but that was hard when he knew the story already. He couldn’t really stop the way his mind, and eyes, started to drift.

“Sensei!” One of the girls who sat in front of him stuck her hand up. “But what about the monster?”

She smiled kindly. “Oh, you don’t need to worry about that. Our military fought against the monster who broke up the moon, and now it’s gone forever, and nothing like that will ever happen again. Anyway, when it was whole, we used to talk about the rabbit in the moon. What do you think it looks like now? You have your sheets in front of you… the most creative ones will be hung up on the wall later.”

Daichi didn’t know why this story didn’t sit right with him. Everyone knew the story of the monster who broke up the moon, but both his Daddy and Papa told him that it wasn’t true. But, they didn’t tell him anything else either. Even Yagami Sensei seemed to believe the monster story! Daichi trusted his parents more, though. They were the smartest people he knew! He wanted to know the truth, though.

He didn’t draw anything at first, mostly because he didn’t really want to. He’d never liked drawing, nothing really came out like he imagined it in his head, and trying again felt like a huge waste of time. But then Yagami Sensei shot him a look, like he’d be in trouble if he didn’t go along with what she was asking. So, he quickly sketched the basic shape of a hand grenade over the diagram.

“Sensei,” Satoshi asked, “how did they fight against the monster?”

“Well,” she swallowed, “nobody really knows exactly. There’s a town kind of close to here called
Kunugigaoka. The monster captured a group of teenagers, but the government were able to fire a huge laser at it before anyone got hurt.”

Daichi perked up at the mention of Kunugigaoka. It was weird, though, he’d practically grown up there but he didn’t consider it an interesting place. To him, Kunugigaoka was just where his grandparents happened to live, plus the mountain they went to at least once a year. If something so crazy had happened there, why hadn’t he heard about it yet?

Jun came over to his desk, when the lunch bell sounded out. “Playing today?”

“I wanna,” Daichi said, “but, I really need to go to the library.”

“But that was yesterday,” he complained.

They had spent lunch break yesterday in the library, but… “This is really important!”

“Important?”

“Important,” Daichi repeated in Korean. Jun was a lot better at talking nowadays but he still got mixed up sometimes.

“I know that word,” Jun said, face screwing up a little. “But, what?”

“Don’t you find it weird?” Daichi pulled one of the books he’d borrowed out of his bags, since they were heading to the library anyway. “Monsters aren’t real.”

Jun thought about it for a moment. “But Yagami Sensei said this one is.”

“Maybe it’s a science thing,” Daichi said, “that’s why I wanna find out.”

Jun followed him, anyway, and Daichi decided he’d make it up to him. He’d trade him one of his really good Pokémon cards or something. But this definitely beat playing around right then. The school library was a little further away from class than the playground, much to Daichi’s dismay, but he was sure it would be completely worth it.

“Hello, Toshoukan San!”

She lowered her glasses. “Back again so soon, Daichan? How did you get on with the last book?”

Daichi’s arms struggled to lift such a heavy book up to her desk. “It was harder than I thought,” he admitted, “it had a bunch of really weird words that weren’t in my dictionary. Even Daddy said he didn’t know what they meant, and uhm, he knows a lot of things.” His Daddy said that a lot of people read Shakespeare to learn better English, but Daichi didn’t know how with such long words.

Toshoukan san smiled. “It’s still a great story though, here,” she moved from behind her desk and walked over to a nearby shelf. “This is a Japanese translation, but it’s simplified, so you can still understand the story.”

“Thank you,” he said genuinely, accepting it, “but I actually need something else today. Do you have any books about the moon explosion?”

She hummed. “Fact books? I don’t think I have many just about that, but there’s probably a chapter about it over here.”

Daichi took the book and immediately slumped in the corner, flicking through pages and pages about moon facts until he got to a part where the moon was exploded. He started to read as fast as
he could, but a lot of it was just scientific detail. Whilst he understood a lot of it, it wasn’t really what Daichi had been aiming to find out.

“Isn’t that you parents?”

He’d almost forgotten Jun was there at all. But then his eyes raked down, past the blocks of text, and then sure enough, there was a group photo. It took him a moment, because his Papa’s hair was like how it had been a year ago, and his Daddy had really long hair. It wasn’t just them, it was a group photo, and although they looked a little bit younger, and a little funny in school uniforms, he recognised all of his parent’s friends too.

_Pictured above, the class at Kunugigaoka Junior High who were held hostage by this octopus like monster for a year. When the final plan was put into motion by the government, and this became public knowledge, it became clear that these vulnerable teenagers had been manipulated by this monster and were suffering from Stockholm syndrome. All members of the class were present for the laser that finally killed the monster, but none of them were harmed._

“…They wouldn’t lie to me,” Daichi’s fist clenched. “They wouldn’t. T-there’s no such thing as monsters.”

Jun peered over. “Is that what the book says?”

He slammed it shut. “It doesn’t matter!” _But did it?_ “It’s boring, anyway. Let’s go outside.”

“Okay…”

It was hard to pay much attention, though, with so much going on inside Daichi’s head. He couldn’t stop thinking about those pictures. Aside from just the group one, there had been a picture of the old building on top of the mountain. The one they went to once a year to play around and clean up. Daichi had seen it enough times, it had to be the place.

“Aren’t you excited for Christmas?” Jun was saying, as they walked back to class. He wasn’t really listening, but he knew he was supposed to reply to questions.

“Eh…” Daichi thought about it, trying to draw his attention back to what was real, “not really.”

Jun’s eyes widened. “Really? I get to go all the way back to Seoul. My grandparents always give the best presents.”

“I don’t get presents,” Daichi shrugged. “Not until New Year’s.”

“Oh…” He paused for a moment. “That sounds sad.”

Daichi was sadder about Jun being all the way in South Korea for the whole winter break. Not that they got to see each other a whole lot during school breaks, but he’d still miss him. At the same time, it was kind of close to the break already, and Daichi was looking forward to not having to go to school for a little while.

The rest of the day was kind of boring, even Japanese, which was easily his best subject. But he just couldn’t pay attention, not with the kinds of thoughts racing through his head. So he said his goodbyes and headed home as fast as his legs could possibly carry him. He could just ask his Daddy, couldn’t he? Why would his Daddy lie to him?

“I’m home!” Daichi called loudly when he got in, kicking off his shoes in the same breath.
“Welcome,” his Daddy replied, “uhm, Daichi-“

“Daichan!”

His face went white. No. If there was anything that could make his day worse, it was this. Karasuma Nao was what a nightmare would look like in human form. Daichi didn’t really mind having to play with little kids, even girls, even four year old girls. But Nao… She was just so annoying. Daichi had practically spent her entire birthday party trying to avoid her.

“Daddy,” he looked up in desperation.

There was sympathy on his face. “Karasuma san really needed someone to look after Nao chan today. It’s only for a couple of hours, I promise.” His expression changed, then, to the one he usually had when he was about to say something serious. “You have to be nice, Daichi.”

Daichi really didn’t want to, but he didn’t want to be in trouble even more. “Hello, Nao,” he finally grimaced.

She smiled widely, instantly tackling into him like she was trying to knock him over. “Let’s play!”

He looked to his Daddy for help, but he’d already disappeared into the kitchen. Leaving Daichi completely at Nao’s mercy. As much as he knew he could probably just run away into his bedroom and slam the door, that would probably end up with her crying, and he didn’t want to put up with that even more than the playing.

“Fine,” he forced out, “like what?”

She thought about it for a second. “Weddings!”


“But Daichan,” he eyes were wide then, “wanna be married!”

“…Do you wanna just watch Naruto or something?”

She stuck her tongue out. “Yucky.”

“You can get married to Sonic Ninja san,” he said, swiping the action figure off the shelf. It wasn’t his toy, but he was sure his Daddy wouldn’t mind the noble sacrifice.

That only caused her to hug him around the waist again, actually knocking him over that time. “No fair.”

“But,” he tried to think, “you need someone to run the ceremony! So I’ll do that!”

That was finally enough to convince her. Not that Daichi wanted to do this either, but it was the lesser of two evils. Not that it would stop her from complaining later, probably. So, he played along, delivering the best ceremony he could muster considering he wasn’t exactly enthusiastic about any of this.

“My turn to choose,” he said immediately after they were done, wanting to escape this as soon as possible. He reached for the TV remote, flicking to the first kids channel he could see. It wasn’t like he regularly watched a lot of TV, but this was a lot better than any other games Nao would suggest. At least this way he could kind of pretend she didn’t even exist!

“You’re a really handsome guy, Daichan!”
“Huh?!” His head whipped around, cheeks heating up. “What’s that supposed to mean?!”

Nao giggled. “My Mummy says that if you say that, then boys will do anything you want! And, I want cookie!”

“A cookie,” he corrected.

“Choco chip!”

Daichi definitely did not want to go find her a cookie, but he was going to take the opportunity to leave wherever he could find it. So, he jumped off the sofa, and headed into the kitchen. His Daddy wasn’t actually cooking, but was leant over the counter, writing something down really fast. Daichi almost forgot what he was meant to be doing.

“Daddy,” he started, finally getting his attention, “Nao says she wants a cookie.”

He locked up, like he hadn’t noticed Daichi at all. “A cookie? Uhm, it’s kind of close to dinner time…” Then his eyes widened. “Oh, great.”

Daichi looked up at him. “Is something wrong?”

He sighed. “You know how the stove doesn’t work properly sometimes?” Daichi nodded. “It kind of broke completely earlier.”

“I’m not gonna starve, right?” As if on cue, his stomach started to grumble.

“Not after just a few hours,” his Daddy smiled. “Come on, we’ll go out and get something. But after that we need to go shopping for stuff we can make in the microwave oven.”

Nao whipped her head back around at the sound of footsteps. “Cookie?”

“No cookies,” his Daddy explained, “but we’re going to go out and get some real food now. You can have one if you’re still hungry when we get back, though.”

They didn’t walk for very long before eventually stopping at the closest McDonalds. Daichi knew by now that it meant his Daddy was really tired, but he wasn’t going to complain. He and Nao were allowed to choose a Happy Meal each, which meant a new toy in the mix. By the time he finished, he was slightly overstuffed, but everything tasted so good he didn’t want to waste it. It wasn’t like he got to eat this kind of food often.

After all of that, Nao didn’t want a cookie, but Daichi realised she’d eaten the same amount as him despite being quite a bit smaller. She didn’t bug him about playing with her either, when they were back, which Daichi thought he’d be glad about but suddenly, with the extra energy the meal had given him, he was starting to feel bored. So maybe having someone else to play with wasn’t the worst thing.

“Hey, Nao, do you wanna play assassin?”

She perked up. “How?”

Daichi sat up properly too. “It’s kinda like hide and seek, but instead of just finding them, you have to act like you’re gonna kill them. Uhm, here,” he quickly ran off to his room, retrieving two of his toy knives. “Sometimes you can play with guns, but I think Daddy will tell us off. Do you wanna be assassin or victim?”
“Uhm, victim!”

“Okay,” he stood up, handing her the knife. “You have twenty seconds, okay?”

As it turned out, Nao wasn’t the best at hiding. She just dove underneath the sofa, but a few locks of her curled dark hair were easily peaking out. Despite her poor stealth, though, she had pretty good reaction speed, and was able to squirm away before he could hit her with the knife. After that, it turned into more of a chase, and in that case Daichi definitely had the advantage, so he tackled her just a few seconds later.

One of the good things about Nao, if there even was one, was that she didn’t mind playing a little rough every now and then. Even Jun didn’t really like this game. She managed to dodge his knife, kicking against his stomach. It didn’t really hurt that much, but it was enough to distract him enough to give her an opportunity to weakly thrust the knife towards him. Daichi had a lot more practise though, easily pulling it from her hand before she could get a hit in.

“Be careful!” His Daddy half shouted, but Nao just giggled, rolling out from underneath him.

“Nagisa san!” She ran over to him. “I’m fine!”

He checked her over anyway. “Okay,” he turned his attention to Daichi, “you have to remember she’s smaller than you.”

It wasn’t like Daichi was actually trying to hurt her. If he wanted to do that, he’d just kick her in the head or something. His Daddy was just worrying too much again. They were fine! Though, Nao’s parents were kind of scary. He didn’t want to get into trouble with them, and he was sure his Daddy didn’t want to either.

Right then, the door buzzer sounded, and Nao shot up. “Mummy!”

“Thanks for watching my brat,” Karasuma san pretty much invited herself in.

His Daddy smiled kind of sheepishly. “It’s no problem.”

Karasuma san looked down at her. “Looks like you wore her out. Or should I thank you for that, huh, Daichan?”

“It’s fine,” he mumbled.

Nao grinned and ran over to him, hugging him yet again. Hadn’t she done that enough already?

“Bye bye Daichan!”

“Bye,” he said, as Karasuma san steered him out.

His Daddy sighed, pulling his notebook out again like nothing had happened. Daichi bent down to pick up the discarded knife, figuring it was probably a good idea to clean up just a little bit. He studied it carefully for a moment, thumb running over the letters that had always been on the side. SAAUSO, with a bunch of English words underneath. There were too many letters right next to each other with no spaces, and it made his head swim.

“Daddy,” Daichi started, “what does the writing mean?”

He froze. “Why?”

Daichi shrugged. “Just wanted to know.”
“Oh,” he smiled, “it’s nothing important.”

That didn’t feel right. And then Daichi remembered his day at school. He’d been meaning to ask about that straight away, but then Nao had distracted him… Daichi wasn’t about to let it go, though. He wasn’t sure how, but he knew his Daddy was lying to him right then. He thought neither of his parents would ever lie to him…

“I want to hear about the moon,” he said. “About the monster, and the explosion, and everything else.”

He swallowed. “I’ve told you Daichi, there’s no such thing as monsters… Where’s this coming from? I know it’s not just on your mind.”

“Yagami Sensei said it was true,” Daichi protested, “and, everyone else! Even the books say so!”  
*And you were in the book.*

Something darkened over his Daddy’s face. “A lot of people don’t know what they’re talking about. You can trust what your Papa and I told you, can’t you?”

“D-do you promise?” Daichi wasn’t sure how he was feeling, but it wasn’t good.

His Daddy went completely silent. “I don’t think right now is the right time to talk about this—”

“If you can’t promise me then how do I know it’s the truth?!”

“Daichi—“

His eyes started to ache as a couple of tears escaped and he turned, heading right for his bedroom where at least he could shut himself away for a while. He just didn’t understand. Why was it such a big deal? Why was he being lied to? His Daddy had pretty much admitted that there was something he wasn’t telling him, and he just wanted to know. The slam of his bedroom door rung in his ears.

Chapter End Notes

Why am I hurting Daichi so much these past two chapters? Such a soft boyo, who has done nothing wrong? Oh, well. Suffer for drama's sake.

Finally Nao gets a little limelight! I'm basing her appearance from the tiny manga we got of Karasuma and Irina's lives. She has Karasuma's black hair, but other than that I imagine her to look like Irina's spitting image, with the slight change of being biracial. It's hard to actually fit her into the plot of this story but she exists okay :')

Also, she called him "ikemen", if that wasn't clear.

I have a feeling y'all will like next chapter~
Earthquake Time

Chapter Summary

Nagisa receives some bad news about his apartment.

Chapter Notes

yall ready?

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Nagisa would never admit it, but he hated his apartment. The thing was, he didn’t have much of a choice about it. It was the furthest away from the major parts of the city they could get where Karma could realistically go to work each day. And it wasn’t like Nagisa could live any further away from him than he already did. With the added bonus of being within walking distance of Daichi’s school, it was the best choice.

Such a brilliant location had meant that on his salary, he’d had to settle for almost the lowest of the low apartments. And yes, maybe he should have looked around a little more, but he had been in the middle of his last year of university! Besides, finding a two bedroom apartment so cheap, that close to Tokyo, should already be a blessing.

If only you looked past the falling apart bits. It was almost hilarious that technically he had a huge amount of money still stored away in a bank account he didn’t touch. But, it was quite a bit less already than when he’d first won it, on account of almost three years of rent, bills, groceries, plus his university tuition and living costs… He’d lived off that pile of money for far too long, and he knew Korosensei would have been disappointed to find him depending on it.

So really, he just had to cope with it. Daichi never really complained, and as long as he could stay there comfortably enough. Comfortable was debatable, though. The stove still didn’t work, and Nagisa was getting sick of all the microwave food. That wasn’t even taking into accountant the AC unit that had broken maybe two weeks into summer, but they’d lived with that. Plus the weird scratching he heard against the walls, which he hadn’t found the source of.

“Anyway,” the man was saying, “we’re going to have to update the whole building.”

Nagisa was kind of taken aback by that whole conversation. It wasn’t what he’d expected, in the middle of a slightly cold Christmas Eve morning. But somehow there was this man he’d never met at his door talking to him about how this building was even more broken than he actually thought it was, which was a crazy thought.

“I’m sorry?” Nagisa tried again, the words confusing in his head.

“This building,” he said, “it was built in 1982, which means it has to comply with the updated earthquake resistant regulations. And it failed the last inspection, so you’ll have to find alternate accommodation for a couple of months whilst we fix it.”
It took him a moment to process that. “Right now?”

He scratched the back of his neck. “This is the first you’re hearing of this? I’m sorry to have delivered the news, then, there should have been a letter—” The man looked sheepish. “There’s usually a letter. And yes, we’d recommend it. You never know if there’s going to be a big earthquake.”

It was possibly the worse news he’d received on a day like this. It was all Nagisa could do to slowly nod and try to accept what he’d just been told, as the repair man took his exit. Nagisa should have known it was going to be bad, from the moment he seemed surprised to see someone actually still in the building.

Maybe it would have been funny, his building might literally fall apart. But that was all clouded by the fact that he needed to be an adult about this. Somewhere else to live, on such short notice? It wasn’t like he could just rent a new place within a few hours. And it was the middle of winter break season, there was no way he’d be able to find a hotel, either. What was he meant to do?

“Daddy?” Daichi ventured out of his room. “What did that man want?”

Right, Daichi. Well, he was easy enough. He could just stay with Karma. He was pretty certain Karma wouldn’t have even the slightest issue with that, and even if he did, he wouldn’t actually complain about it. Which was fine. A couple of months?! At least it was the break, so he didn’t have to worry about work for a couple of weeks. He could stay with someone, he supposed, but he didn’t want to burden anyone-

Daichi tilted his head. “Daddy?”

“Well,” Nagisa swallowed, trying to think of the best way to explain it without freaking him out. “It turns out that this building might be a little damaged, so we can’t live here for a little while, just until they fix everything.”

“Oh…” He looked confused. “Where are we going?”

“You can go to your Papa’s,” Nagisa explained, though he hadn’t actually asked him yet.

Unlike him, Karma didn’t naturally get the same time off as schools. And the country didn’t really stop working just because of Christmas and New Year’s, so he had to work even more than most people with a job like his. So Nagisa wouldn’t be able to actually ask him for a few hours, when he knew he’d be home.

Now Nagisa had to weigh up his options. It wasn’t exactly likely that there’d be a huge scale earthquake that afternoon, but you could never be completely certain. The only problem was that it was Christmas Eve, and pretty much every couple out there would be busy on lovely romantic dates, which meant going anywhere would be crazy busy. Nagisa supposed there was always his parent’s, but he’d rather not…

“Daichi,” he started, “did you make him a birthday present?”

His face fell. “Uhm…”

“Don’t worry about it,” Nagisa decided, “we’ll go shopping for something, and then you can come and pack up some stuff, okay?”

“I have stuff at Papa’s already though.”
Nagisa tapped him on the shoulder. “Coat.”

Daichi didn’t complain, though he did sigh, picking his one coat up from the rack and pulling it on. He had more than that, but they’d ended up at Karma’s apartment somehow. Then again, so did a lot of things. Nagisa was sure some of his own possessions had ended at Karma’s place, over time, but there were so many piles of paperwork all over the place that it would be hard not to lose something.

“I think you might have to stay there for longer than normal,” Nagisa broke it to him, “so you should take some stuff you’d really miss for more than just a week.”

Despite Nagisa’s previous assessment about things being crazy busy, something possessed him to take Daichi to one of the busiest parts of Tokyo. It wasn’t really his style, but he didn’t know where else to go in terms of finding Karma a gift. And, well, Akihabara seemed like just the place for a closet otaku like him.

Once they were there, though, Daichi instantly seemed to forget the actual purpose of the journey. Nagisa knew he couldn’t really blame him, all the bright buildings and decorations of course incredibly fascinating. It was hard enough to get Daichi to listen to him under ideal circumstances, let alone with so many distractions.

“Do you know what you want to buy?” Nagisa tried.

As it turned out, Daichi didn’t know what he wanted to buy, which lead to walking around a few shops. They considered a few things, here and there, but nothing really stuck. Sure, they had some hours to kill, but even Nagisa was starting to get a little tired. Part of that was probably the amount of crowds wearing him down.

Nagisa wasn’t sure if he should get Karma a gift. He hadn’t, for the past four years, but maybe this time was different. They were friends again now, or at least close enough to it. And Karma had kind of got him a gift, in not making him pay for that Disneyland trip, but it definitely wasn’t for him. But things between them definitely seemed different, from back then.

“I got it!” Daichi said, finally tugging Nagisa by the hand over to a line of gacha machines. “This one has a bunch of cat hats!”

He looked over at them sceptically. “Are you sure this is what you want to get?”

“Yes,” a huge grin on his face, “Papa takes so many pictures of Maki.”

Well, Nagisa wouldn’t put it past him. As much as he pretended like the cat was an inconvenience to him, Nagisa could sense the affection there. So, he had no problem handing over some change, allowing Daichi to scramble over to the machine like he was truly on a mission. Maybe there was a specific design he’d decided he wanted.

In the meantime, Nagisa looked at the other machines, like that was going to help him choose something. Unfortunately for him, nothing else would actually suit Karma. Or, well, Nagisa didn’t possess the imagination of a seven year old to help him justify it. By the time he came back, unsuccessful, Daichi had a slightly alarming pile of pods at his side.

“Did you get the one you wanted?” Nagisa asked.

Daichi turned and nodded. “Almost got the entire collection!”

At least he was lucky. “Do you think you’re done, then?”
“Okay,” he stood up, hilariously trying to carry all the pods at once, cradling them in his arms. “I’m hungry.”

“I’m sure we can find something.”

Easier said than done, apparently. Pretty much everywhere seemed so crazy busy that Nagisa didn’t even want to attempt it, and it was looking like they might be better off just going home. Not that they’d be able to eat out anywhere on a day like this, anyway. He was about to suggest their return, when he caught Daichi looking up a particular building.

“Daddy! Can we go in there?”

Nagisa almost screamed, when he saw the ‘maid café’ sign. “Absolutely not.”

He was sure Daichi’s fascination was more to do with people doing whatever he wanted, and the bright colours, but there was no way he was going to a place like that. Even if it wasn’t necessarily seedy, it didn’t sit right with him. He dragged Daichi along, all the way back to the nearest train so they could at least have a tiny break from the chaos.

It was late afternoon, by the time they got home. Not that his apartment had ever really felt like home to him. The trip had been a nice distraction, but there was still the looming fact that he had to find somewhere else to stay really soon. But he didn’t want to think about that plan right then, instead focusing on what Daichi needed.

“You should pack some things up,” he said, “there might be a few books you’ll want to take for the break.”

Maybe it was weird, the way he sat doing not a lot at all, watching the clock for when it would be the right time to make a phone call. But that was kind of… pathetic, to say the least. Nagisa’s head was spinning, and he really needed some stability right about then, but he was certain pretty much everyone would be busy, and he didn’t want to bother them. Instead, Nagisa waited, until he finally felt okay about the time.

It didn’t take Karma more than three rings to pick up. “I actually wanted to talk to you.”

“Uhm, hello,” Nagisa suddenly felt kind of shy, “I have something really important I need to explain first though.”

“…Okay?”

Nagisa did his best to summarise the events of earlier that day, and Karma diligently listened. It was even worse, repeating it verbally. He summarised with a tone that sounded a lot like he was begging, asking that Karma be able to have Daichi until he figured something out. Which was a whole other issue considering Karma would have work, hence Nagisa having him during school breaks in the first place, but that was a completely different problem.

“That seems kind of illegal,” Karma finally said, “but, you know I’ll have Daichi literally any time… What about you?”

He swallowed. “I haven’t thought about it yet.”

“Then you’re coming too.”

“Huh?”
There was a pause. “What, it’s not a big deal. If you had any simple options you’d have figured it out already, right? There’s plenty of room.”

It sounded like a terrible idea. “I don’t want to be a burden…”

“Well,” he said, “I do have to work, so even if Daichi comes here, someone will have to watch him.”

A poor excuse, but Nagisa didn’t have counter excuses either. “Okay, then, we’ll be over soon…”

He hung up the phone, not sure what to make of that. It wasn’t the worst thing ever, he supposed. He could sleep on Karma’s sofa for a couple of nights. If they really were friends, it wasn’t beyond the realm of normal reactions to something like this. With a few days of extra time, Nagisa would be able to really think about somewhere else to live.

Only a couple of days, though. He made sure of that, packing only a small bag to take. There was absolutely nothing sentimental, only the most practical items such as a couple of changes of clothes. Because that was all this was. Daichi, on the other hand, had apparently decided to take quite a lot, but then again Nagisa had told him to, and he’d rather he be overprepared than under prepared.

“Well don’t you look like a stray?” Karma said, opening up his door.

He was enjoying this far too much. “Thank you for letting me stay here.”

“Please,” he stood aside, “make yourself at home.”

“Papa!” Daichi jumped on him immediately. “Do I really get to stay here?”

“As long as you want to,” Karma replied.

Daichi kicked his shoes off. “Maki!!”

Well, that was him distracted for the next ten minutes minimum. Nagisa sighed, picking up Daichi’s shoes to line them up properly, before removing his own. The least he could do was be a good guest, even if he knew deep down that really he wasn’t going to be much trouble at all. Whilst he was there, he removed his coat, setting down his bag too for later.

“Did you eat?” Karma asked, in a way that suggested it was more about starting a conversation than actually wondering.

“We had lunch,” he said, “but nothing since.”

A glint was in his expression. “Well, it’s your lucky day, aside from the whole apartment thing.”

It wouldn’t hurt Karma to hide how much he didn’t like Nagisa’s apartment either. As much as it turned out to be justified. Though, Karma wouldn’t be Karma if he didn’t make fun of at least twenty percent of Nagisa’s decisions and/or life in general. Nagisa could only be so bothered.

Just moments later, his buzzer sounded. “Ah, just in time,” Karma said, leaving without another word.

He came back with a gigantic, somewhat festively decorated bucket of KFC, his face reading only childlike joy. “Why did you buy all of that for yourself?” Nagisa had to question. “You didn’t know we were coming…”
Karma shrugged. “I’d give some to Maki.”

“You feed fast food to your cat?”

“She was a street cat,” Karma shrugged, “she’s used to it. She wants it.”

Even if Nagisa wanted to argue that further, Daichi very quickly caught wind of what was going on, and he couldn’t exactly hold back a hungry seven year old. He forgot about it after that, once they went over to the table and started eating. Nagisa always thought the fried chicken thing was a little weird, but it definitely put him in a good kind of mood like most traditions did.

“I’m done,” Daichi said, presenting his plate. “Can I go read to Maki now?”

“Sure,” Karma said, sliding it across the table.

Daichi didn’t hesitate, scooping the cat up with him as he disappeared to his room. It had been a pretty long day out of him, Nagisa realised, so he couldn’t blame him for taking some time to himself. Nagisa resigned himself to clearing up. Again, it was the least he could do, since he was a guest here and pretty much in Karma’s debt.

“Do you wanna watch something?” Karma asked, when Nagisa returned.

That sounded kind of nice. “Sure.”

There was that glint again. “Sonic Ninja?”

To be fair, he hadn’t seen it for at least a few months. It would be nice to watch it again, since it was clearly his favourite movie. Or, well, the franchise was more of a mutual favourite between he and Karma on a whole. It was still crazy to think that it was a large part of the reason they were even friends, that time at the cinema being the first time they hung out properly.

“Hey Daichan,” Karma raised his voice, “we’re watching Sonic Ninja~”

There was no reply, which was his loss. Karma put it on whatever the case, and they settled on the sofa, a clear gap between them. He stopped thinking about that, though. It was his favourite movie. He could practically quote it, in English, word for word. But so could Karma. Nagisa, snuck a subtle glance, since he was hardly worried about missing anything, and sure enough his lips were moving in time with the dialogue.

“I kind of want to see the second one now,” Nagisa admitted, when the credits started to roll. He always forgot how good that movie was.

Karma raised an eyebrow. “It’s been a while since we heard anything from Daichi.” He stood up, stretching as he did so, and toed over to his bedroom, opening his door a fraction. “Naw, he’s out of it.”

Nagisa stood up too. “Did he even get himself ready for bed properly?”

“Looks like he’s in pyjamas,” Karma turned and shrugged, before pulling the door to a close. “If we watch the second one, we should probably do it in my room. The walls aren’t the thickest here.”

Even the sound of that made him feel weird. “M-maybe I should just stay out here and try and get some sleep.”
“Out here?” Karma tilted his head. “Why?”

“W-where else am I supposed to sleep?”

Karma looked down at him, nonchalance in his demeanour. “I wasn’t planning on making you stay out here.”

This wasn’t happening. “I’m not taking your bed as well. Letting me stay here is more than enough already, and you actually have work-

“It’s a big bed,” he said, but locked up the moment the words were out of his mouth.

“O-oh,” Nagisa didn’t even know how to respond to that.

He’d slept in the same bed as Karma more times than he could count. But, that was a different time, or under completely different circumstances. He felt himself start to heat up, at the thought of what happened the last time he and Karma were in a bed together. He didn’t really remember his heat, it was more like blurred sequences in his head, but it was enough to make his stomach turn into knots.

It was like Karma had similar thoughts. “It’s not like we’ve never done that before. Just don’t snore, huh?”

“I’ll get dressed then,” Nagisa’s voice raised a pitch higher than it usually was, and he took his pyjamas from his bag, frantically scurrying off to the bathroom.

He should insist that he just take the sofa. Really, he should, but Karma hated not getting his way. Nagisa was too tired already to go through that entire debate with him. But it should be alright, so long as he could calm down. They were watching a movie, anyway, so it wasn’t like they had to go through pillow talk or anything like that. He got himself ready for bed, then, trying to force himself to breathe.

It wasn’t like he’d brought a whole lot of options, but he chose pyjama bottoms what were slightly too long on him, a sleep shirt, and even an additional jumper over the top of that. He could get away with that, since it was a cold winter night. Karma wasn’t in the living room anymore, when he finally decided to show himself. Nagisa almost considered knocking on Karma’s bedroom door, before chiding himself over how ridiculous that was.

“Are you ready?” Karma turned, wearing more like knee length shorts and no shirt, before flopping onto his bed casually.

Nagisa walked over to the frame like his knees were about to give out. Come to think of it, he couldn’t remember seeing Karma’s bedroom. It was a lot simpler than it had been back when they lived together, but his weird décor was spread over the entire apartment, rather than just confined to one room. It was functional enough, for sleeping in.

“It’s snowing outside,” he said, because what else was he supposed to say? At least everyone could relate to that topic of conversation.

Karma craned his neck to look. “Kind of works for this time of year.”

Swallowing, Nagisa took the leap, sitting himself down on the mattress. By sit, it was more like sinking, and Nagisa completely forgot himself, bringing his legs up too properly. It was like he was lying on a cloud, and he almost groaned from the way it cupped his back in the most comfortable of ways. This wasn’t a normal mattress, no way. No wonder Karma didn’t ever appear sleep
deprived, if this is what he came back to at night.

“Nagisa?” Karma shook his shoulders. “Asleep already?”

“No,” he sat himself up, “it’s just so comfy.”

Karma grinned. “Yeah, it’s memory foam.”

Was that meant to be some sort of trap, to get him to stay? Nagisa didn’t even care, if it was going to be like that. Still, he shuffled up a little, pulling his legs under the covers, whilst he tried to focus his attention on the laptop Karma had pulled out and already had set up. It was easier said than done, though, considering again the memories of the last time they’d been in bed together, and Karma’s state of undress.

His one saving grace was how tired he was. With a movie he was so familiar with playing, despite everything else, he found his eyes getting incredibly heavy. Karma was being quiet, so he must be feeling a similar way. They didn’t shut off the movie, though, speech still playing out of it every time Nagisa closed his eyes for just a little bit too long, falling into a weird lull of being only half asleep. If only he was on his own to stretch out completely, rather than contending with the space taken up by Karma’s whole body.

“Karma,” Nagisa groaned, drifting back out of his light sleep yet again. “Stop moving.”

There was a moment of silence, before Karma shuffled yet again. “It’s cold,” he complained, tone full of over exaggerated drama.

Nagisa rolled over onto his back. “Get under the covers, then.”

He didn’t know why Karma hadn’t just pulled himself under the sheets when the movie ended and their eyelids were dropping before. Nagisa forgot what his own issues were with it right then. It was what they’d always done as teenagers, no problem sleeping beside each other. Sure that might have been a little weird, but at the time, there was nothing normal about their ‘relationship’ anyway.

Karma finally curled under the bed sheets. With the extra body, the space under the sheets got increasingly hot, almost unbearably so. Even though the window was still open, and the cold air was blowing in, he was sweating. Nagisa didn’t want to sacrifice the barrier of his jumper though, even if it did mean boiling to death.

After a slight debate with himself, Nagisa rolled back over onto his side, curling up into the foetal position, though the exposed skin of his neck prickled. He was being ridiculous, and he knew it. At this point, Karma had seen him without clothes, in a variety of positions, more times than he could actually count. Though they hadn’t been this close since then, certainly not alone and lying in a bed.

When the ends of Karma’s fingers slung onto his hip, Nagisa was certain he must be asleep. He highly doubted Karma would let his hands wander like that on purpose. It was actually a pretty comforting sensation. Consciously he didn’t mean to, but Nagisa found himself pressing back into it, like Karma’s body was a magnet. As soon as they were close, he knew he shouldn’t have done it.

It had been so nice, the way Karma had held him before. At least, it reminded him of when they were teenagers, before so much distance had been put between them. They were different people now, and Nagisa knew that. It was as if something crazy and desperate had been awoken inside
him, like floodgates. *Just move away*, he told himself, *Karma was right, this is a big bed, and there’s no excuse.*

“*You’re the one moving now,*” Karma murmured, almost directly into his ear.

Nagisa couldn’t stop the almost full body shudder that followed, or the chill that ran swiftly from his neck to his spine. He’d pressed back a little, maybe, but he was pretty sure he hadn’t been moving around that much. Still half asleep, Nagisa realised he must have been, as Karma’s entire arm had ended up slung around his waist, and he could definitely feel the hot mass of Karma’s thigh pressed against his own.

Once Nagisa had come to the conclusion that Karma was, indeed, *that* close to him, nothing could have stopped it. He cringed as the clear, toasted smell of his own minor arousal filled the room, softened by his daily suppressants but still present. Even the cold winter wind wasn’t enough to disguise it. All he could hope for was to shut it off, filling his mind with other things. Of course Karma noticed instantly though, from the way his arm seemed to tense.

His heartbeat sped up erratically. There was nowhere to run and hide, really. Nagisa wasn’t even sure if it was really possible at this point for him to just break it off, and then never speak of it again. In terms of his body, there was clearly only one thing it wanted, considering he hadn’t had the will to shift his hips back and out of the way yet.

And then Karma pressed just the ghost of a hot kiss to his cheek, and he was utterly done for. His body was waking up, but his brain was clearly still out of it. They were both too... *dreadful*. Nagisa was starting to worry if this could lead to anything, so he just kissed him properly on the mouth. It was like exhaling the breath he hadn’t known he was holding, though it wasn’t a hard kiss. Their lips were barely even touching, just close enough to feel the tingle of slow movement.

Surprisingly soothed in his tired state, Nagisa could have easily fallen asleep just that. Their legs were tangled together, though Nagisa’s feet only really reached just below Karma’s knee, if their faces were level. It became less relaxing when Karma’s hand wound into his hair, pressing Nagisa’s head into his hair, pressing Nagisa’s head closer. The sensation of warm fingertips against his cold scalp made him shudder.

In any other situation, Nagisa would have protested strongly against being ‘manhandled’, but he easily found himself allowing Karma to just his grip on the back of his head to roll them over, so that Nagisa’s back was flat on the mattress with Karma poised above him. It most definitely wasn’t Nagisa’s favourite position to be in, but he felt okay with it, dizzy in the feeling as he leant up to continue the kiss.

The slow slide of their slotted lips was beginning to drive him insane. This kind of pace was nice, in a way, but it was also highly exposing. If they were doing this, Nagisa wanted to drown in it, get whatever was pent up out of his system. Grabbing onto Karma’s shoulders for more leverage, he pressed much harsher, as if he wanted his lips to swell up in a bruise after they were done. When Karma pulled back, Nagisa realised he didn’t want the contact to end at all, capturing his bottom lip between his teeth as they separated slightly.

There were no lights on inside the room, though the snow and the streetlights outside meant the sky wasn’t completely dark. Nagisa could still pick apart the features of his face. It made him gulp lightly, the heavy way Karma was staring at him. It was too much. A stolen kiss in the dark they could move on from, even sex for the sake of his biology they could move on from, but it was getting too real.

Either Karma sensed this, or thought the same thing himself, because his eyes gazed down, as if he was planning his next move. Apparently he’d found it, because in one swift move, he dove under
the covers, pushing Nagisa’s legs apart with his strong grip. His form was completely hidden under the duvet, especially in the darkness. Nagisa wasn’t sure how comfortable he felt with Karma down there where he couldn’t see him, he may as well be blindfolded.

He was hard – of course he was, with the heavy atmosphere and warm body pressed so close. Karma’s cool fingers on the skin of his stomach made him hiss, arching his back into the light and somewhat teasing touch. It wasn’t the time for that, though, and he swiftly raked them down, hooking them under the fabric of Nagisa’s pyjamas. He lifted his hips up automatically to help him get them off, though Karma didn’t bother to push them further down than his knees. Nagisa kicked them the rest of the way off anyway, the smooth material sliding down the skin of his calves.

Before he could make any other movement, scalding heat wrapped around him, lips like a velvet vice. It took Nagisa by surprise with absolutely no build up, and his head slammed down roughly on the pillow. Karma seemed like his usual ‘style’ involved a lot of teasing, but this was full on. Though, once he had taken him into his mouth, he wasn’t moving much. No, Karma seemed to be just suckling wetly at his cock, and the sensation was absolutely maddening.

Nagisa had to slap his arm over his mouth, muffling any of the noises that threatened to escape. He didn’t have that luxury, as Karma could feel his alarmingly hot breath ghosting just directly above his sensitive tip. It sent tingles all over his body, and it took all of Nagisa’s will power not to just grab his head and shove him down.

Once again with no warning, Karma licked across the head with the flat of his tongue, and there was no way Nagisa could hold back his shudder. That would have been fine, but then he just kept going, lightly tracing the tip of Nagisa’s erection like he was trying to create an artwork. It was too much, immediately, but not enough that it would actually get him off. Nagisa felt practically suspended, made unable to function just from the lightest touch. Simultaneously, he wanted it to go on forever, and he wanted more. The more Karma carefully traced him, the more his legs began to shake.

Just before Nagisa was going to complain that he couldn’t stand it again, Karma dove down until he could clearly feel wet lips at his base, and the most incredible heat and suction around his entire length. Had Nagisa not had his hand over his own mouth, he would have shrieked. Instead, he bit down in shock, hard enough that the metallic taste of blood danced across his tongue. He’d suffered not enough, to too much, and now there was everything… it was overwhelming.

Perhaps he should be a little ashamed that Karma could easily take all of him into his mouth and throat, but said mouth was too distracting. Messily, his lips moved up and down just a little, providing the smallest amount of friction. Nagisa knew he was swiftly being taken apart, heart racing as his body grew tight. He couldn’t help himself, spare hand diving under the covers to tangle in Karma’s hair.

He could practically feel Karma’s smirk around his cock as he pulled off, a muffled yet audible pop as he did so. Like it was nothing, he went right back to the soft licks, though all around his erection this time, rather than just the head. As if Karma could legitimately read his mind, his
tongue trailed up, dipping just into the slit. Nagisa’s teeth dug deeper, though he couldn’t stop himself from whining around his hand.

Any sort of decency was gone. All Nagisa could possibly think about was ending the torture, whatever means necessary. “P-please,” he let out as his thighs tightened around Karma’s head.

At least Karma didn’t seem to want to argue with him, satisfied with that. He dove back down effortlessly again, his pace faster. Nagisa squirmed and shook, confused but not unthankful about how he’d learnt all of this. His strong hands moved to Nagisa’s hips, effectively pinning him down to the mattress. Nagisa didn’t fight it, so desperate for that final release.

Once Karma’s tongue pressed hard against the underside of his cock, the whole length still in his torturous mouth, Nagisa was done for. Perhaps he could have felt a little more bad about not warning him, but nothing could have stopped the coil snapping from his lower stomach, back arching and eyes clenching as he came harder than he had in a very long time. Karma made it clear he was aware, sucking Nagisa even harder through it somehow, until he stopped pulsing so hard and he came back down.

Karma didn’t appear to mind all that much, lips still fastened there once Nagisa was completely spent. Pulling off slowly enough that Nagisa hissed at the hypersensitivity, he released his grip, though didn’t come back up. Nagisa panted, opening his eyes again and dropping his hand. The room seemed to spin as endorphins rushed through him. He felt truly speechless.

Blinking, Karma re-emerged, hair more dishevelled than it had previously been. Though Nagisa hadn’t touched him, he wore a content look on his face. It would be polite to reciprocate. Nagisa moved to sit up, but Karma practically pushed him back down, curling around his body. He would have struggled to fight against Karma at his best, but now he was exhausted and boneless.

“G’night,” he said casually, though his voice was huskier than usual, using Nagisa’s chest as a pillow.

It had knocked Nagisa’s remaining energy out too, though he turned to look at Karma’s peaceful face before finding his own sleep. He blushed, and used his thumb to wipe a large collection of saliva from the corner of Karma’s mouth. Heartbeat slowing back down, it was finally time for the rest of him to wake up, and suddenly his sweat turned ice cold.

That was possibly the biggest mistake Nagisa had made in his twenty three years of life.

Chapter End Notes

Much drama :0

Don’t get too excited. It won’t be as easy as just sleeping together and then their long list of problems being solved :’)

At least Nagisa finally got his. It’s 2-1 on the unreciprocated blowjobs chart now.
Chapter Summary

It's Karma's birthday~

Chapter Notes

I wasn't gonna update so soon again but I was tempted

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Somehow, Nagisa was glad to wake up alone, the cold wind still blowing over his face, though the rest of him was pretty warm underneath the sheets. It took him a moment to remember why he was even there, before the memory of Karma’s scalding mouth around him came back to surface. It brought back a subtle arousal, before Nagisa recoiled, sitting up properly. Why did he let that happen? And he knew he was just as much to blame for it, rather than just passively there, which was almost just as bad. If he had the luxury, he would have just sat there and screamed. They needed boundaries, if Nagisa was going to be able to survive the next couple of days. Things like that… they really couldn’t happen. Maybe Karma would be willing to just forget it ever happened.

He finally pulled himself out of bed, overwhelmed by his own thoughts. Though, that was only a reminder that he was still completely naked from the waist down. That was enough to freak him out again, and he yanked the covers off in a frantic attempt to find his discarded pyjamas. Thankfully, they’d been taken off before anything could happen to them, so he was good to just pull them straight on.

Nagisa opened the bedroom door incredibly slowly, as though Karma would be sat right outside waiting for him. He wasn’t, which was good at the very least, but he still tiptoed out, silently making his way to the bathroom. Once he was done with his general morning routine, he splashed his face more times than was possibly necessary, and worked on straightening out his sleep tussled hair.

The sound coming from the kitchen was Nagisa’s clue to where Karma actually was. He steeled himself, knowing he’d have to face him sooner or later. He was dressed just the same as Nagisa had last seen him, in the middle of standing over the stove. Nagisa stopped and stared at him for just a moment. Stared at the way his back muscles rippled with each movement, the mess of his hair, the way his pyjama bottoms clung to his hips…

“Morning,” he said, voice smooth but it still startled Nagisa.

“You’re cooking,” he commented.

Karma had a wide smile plastered across his face, as he turned with a spatula in hand. “The world renowned Shiota Nagisa analysis, yes.”
He shrugged off the teasing. “Pancakes?”

“Thought Daichan would appreciate them,” he said, the smile remaining like he physically couldn’t stop it.

What was this? Nagisa had been half prepared to spend the day avoiding Karma as much as possible, but they were talking like normal. Better than normal. Suppressants left his ability to scent a little weird, but he could still get bits and pieces. Not that he needed Karma’s scent to tell. He seemed weirdly happy, to the point it might have freaked him out. He was acting as though it was his birthday and Christmas day all in one – and then Nagisa realised that in fact, both of those things were actually true.

Well he couldn’t tell Karma that it was a bad idea on his birthday. Even if Karma agreed, which he most definitely would, it would still put a downer on things. The only issue with that was he’d have to share a bed with Karma again. As long as they both stayed on their own sides… That should be fine, especially if he made a really conscious effort.

“What do you want on yours?”

Nagisa blinked. “Just a little bit of syrup… thanks.”

“Coming up,” he said, sliding the pancake onto a small plate, covering it pretty sparingly. It was almost like he remembered Nagisa didn’t like things overly sweet, but maybe that was his dark wishful thoughts pulling at threads.

The smell was pretty much heaven, especially when it was up close, Karma practically holding it under his nose. Nagisa took the plate from him, but it was kind of an awkward angle, causing their fingers to touch for just a moment. It was enough to almost cause Nagisa to drop the plate entirely, but he just about managed to hang on to the last shreds of his own sanity.

It surprised him a little to see that Daichi was already up, and in the middle of his own pancake stack, a considerably larger amount of toppings on his own plate. He was definitely too spoilt, but Nagisa was hardly going to do anything about it. It wasn’t his favourite breakfast ever, maybe because of all the pancakes he ended up eating when Daichi was around, but he still ended up liking the taste of these ones.

Karma came in with his own plate eventually, which looked like it should have been called Diabetes, piled high with strawberries and whipped cream. But, it was his birthday, Nagisa guessed. It was like he knew Nagisa’s exact thoughts, though, a demonic grin spread wide from ear to ear. If that’s what he wanted, though, he was an adult.

“Wait,” Nagisa realised, “why aren’t you at work?” It was definitely the middle of the morning.

He dug into his dish. “I got the day off.”

Just how many days off did he have access to? Not that it was a bad thing, Nagisa supposed. But he was surprised Karma had even bothered. It probably wasn’t nice to have to work on your birthday, but he’d never been that big on celebrating it before. At least it meant he wouldn’t just be alone with Daichi in Karma’s apartment, which just would have been weird.

“Do you want your present now?” Daichi said, once his plate was clear.

Karma stopped eating, looking at him in mock surprise. “A present? For me?”
He giggled, giving himself his own permission to leave the table, rushing off to his own room to locate it. Nagisa wondered if he should have made him wrap it up, but he doubted Karma would actually mind. Whilst he was gone, he kept his head down, concentrating on his own food rather than attempting to make a brief bit of conversation.

“Here you go,” Daichi rushed back, pods cradled in his arms.

Karma opened them one by one, taking a good solid look at each one. It was hard to judge what he actually thought about them, but Nagisa wasn’t sure he was even capable of disliking anything gave to him. Watching him open up a bunch of cat hats, though, was pretty amusing to say the least. Especially when it kept going, and he had the entire collection.

“Oh Maki~,” he called, snatching one of them up and disappearing, presumably to go find the cat. He returned, Maki in arms, dressed in the weirdest Pikachu cosplay he’d ever seen. “I love it.”

Nagisa ended up cleaning up, whilst Daichi and Karma morphed into serious pet photographers. He didn’t get it, but he also didn’t have the heart to tell Karma how weird he was being. By the time he came bac, they were still at it, Daichi helping position her so that Karma could get the best possible angle.

“Are you sure she likes that?” Nagisa tried.

Karma finally put down the phone. “Aw c’mon, look at her!”

Maki took her opportunity, though, pawing the hat off her head entirely and running off into the kitchen. Nagisa didn’t see her do it, but he didn’t doubt she’d probably jumped on top of the fridge or something to avoid this. Poor Maki. She deserved more treats, definitely. Maybe Nagisa should have taken a page out of Daichi’s book and also just got him cat stuff.

“Papa,” Daichi said, moving the rest of the hats aside. “Can we play a game or something?”

“Hm, like assass-“ he cut himself off, “monopoly?”

Nagisa wanted to roll his eyes. Like he was actually unaware of the somewhat violent games Karma had no problem playing with their son. He didn’t think Karma would have physically gone as far to tell Daichi not to say anything about it, but even if he had, Daichi tended to talk easily enough without thinking that he’d have mentioned it regardless. It didn’t seem to be so frequent though, after the incident.

He was surprised that Karma even owned the board game. Aside from desperately trying and failing to teach Nagisa how to play poker over the years, his gaming was pretty much limited to the virtual kind. When did he even consciously buy it? Whatever the case, Nagisa supposed that was just his reality then. They were playing the game.

Of course, he insisted on being in control of the bank. Karma had a certain kind of talent with slight of hand, and although he didn’t need to cheat, Nagisa got the feeling he would’ve just to mess with him. Karma didn’t argue, though, and Daichi was more concerned with getting to choose the dog piece to play as.

A few various play styles became evident early on. Daichi wanted to completely sweep out the board, buying everything he landed on without second thought. Karma was a lot more tactical about it, even writing down certain things on his phone, like he was trying to calculate the likelihood of the spaces everyone else would land on. Nagisa ended up with a bunch of the cheapest squares, which should have left him poor… except he kept managing to land on free
parking.

“How are you doing this?” Karma said, not hiding the confused tone to his voice.

Nagisa just smiled, pocketing the cash. The game went on like that, with Daichi losing pretty quickly considering he’d splurged all of his money. Maybe it would have been over like that, but he seemed pretty interested in the result of the game. So, they kept playing, and Karma kept being unlucky with his dice rolls. Even though he owned most of the board, he kept landing in jail, so Nagisa could keep going round safely.

The final blow was that after Karma has spent a significant amount of money on getting out of jail, he managed to land on three of Nagisa’s properties in a row. But that’s what happened when you focused too much on strategy when really it was just a game of chance. Or Nagisa was just incredibly lucky. Whatever the case, he couldn’t help but feel a tiny bit smug, when Karma was officially bankrupted. Karma whined, because he wouldn’t be acting like him if he didn’t, but he also smiled when he conceded.

Except things didn’t end just there. After monopoly, they watched a movie, and Nagisa was honestly a little surprised that Daichi hadn’t tried to go off on his own yet. Under any other circumstances, he’d have been happy about that, if not for the fact that he needed to at the very least clear the air with Karma, and that conversation needed to happen completely alone.

But then after the movie came more games, and then dinner, and then another movie. It wasn’t like Nagisa wasn’t having fun, but- well, he supposed he could live with it. It definitely wasn’t the worst way to spend his day, and yes, it was Karma’s birthday. It felt nice regardless of the situation, though, just spending the day together.

“I’m sleepy,” Daichi finally declared, when it came to an end. “Wanna go to bed…”

Often, he’d just take himself off to bed. Sparing a glance at Karma, they both appeared to be on the same page, figuring he was asking for something different. Of course, as much as Nagisa wondered just how much Daichi needed them sometimes, he was still seven, not seventeen. So, they both got up, and worked on tucking him into bed.

He went off to the bathroom on his own at least, emerging in Sonic Ninja pyjamas and with freshly brushed teeth. Nagisa was even more surprised that he didn’t want to just sit there and read like he normally did, though he spotted the three books that were apparently living beside him in bed. Instead, though, they mutually tucked him in, and Daichi lay back immediately.

“Goodnight,” Karma said, picking Maki, who had run in by his feet, up and on to the mattress. Daichi smiled, petting her weakly as she padded down the bed and curled up beside his chest.

“Night,” Nagisa added, before they slowly left. It still felt weird, but at the same time kind of nice. “I’m pretty tired too,” he admitted.

The bathroom was his only solace. He could get dressed there, into pyjamas that definitely wouldn’t be coming off this time. Though, more importantly, he took the time to breathe alone for pretty much the first time since waking up that day. Thankfully, he knew not every day would be like that. Or maybe he’d like it if they were. All Nagisa knew was he was entirely confused.

Karma had chosen to wear even shorter shorts than the previous night, apparently. He needed to say something. But… Karma had a half satisfied look on his face already, and usually that might have freaked Nagisa out a little. Was there some sort of curse in here, that changed Nagisa’s entire
personality the second that door was closed? He didn’t even have to say anything, and his will was already weak just from the implication of anything happening.

What was that about avoiding doing anything else with Karma? It was hard to think, when he was just there like that. What was wrong with Nagisa? It hadn’t even been twenty four hours. He’d never had a sex drive like this, not unless he counted his heats in that. And there was no way he was in heat. His throat was just… dry, and Karma was right there, and just looking at him made him want to squirm.

And then a dangerous thought crossed Nagisa’s mind, that he hadn’t had that conversation with Karma yet, so would it really be so bad, to do something else? The damage was already done. And Karma wasn’t wearing a shirt again. How was that even fair, when Nagisa had to sleep right beside him? Nagisa knew for a fact that Karma didn’t even work out, so it was like his body was made just to torture him.

He practically fell on top of him like he was possessed by something, connecting their lips before Karma probably even knew what was happening to him. He didn’t move away though, kissing Nagisa back with just as much enthusiasm after a moment of recognition passed. He’d forgot that Karma was really good at this, meeting him exactly where he led.

But then the rest of Nagisa’s common sense finally caught up, and he pulled back a fraction. What was he thinking, jumping on top of him like that? He felt his face burn up, along with the rest of his body, and his eyes squeezed shut. The next thing he knew, though, Karma’s lips were on his again, a strong hand clutching on his back, and he started to melt away.

It was hard to even hold himself together, being with Karma like that. Their kiss eventually deepened, the roaring of his heartbeat making reality fuzzy around them. As lips and tongues clashed, Nagisa definitely got the sense that it was leading somewhere, though he wasn’t sure exactly where. There was only the faint awareness in back of his mind that maybe that was okay. He technically owed Karma one.

Karma’s hands started to push, not as hard as they physically could, but it was merely meant to be suggestive. Somehow Nagisa didn’t want to just let Karma have his way with him, which was definitely an unusual behaviour for him. Instead, he pushed back, taking definite control of the kiss. Karma let him do it, falling back in the direction of Nagisa’s hands, and Nagisa went with him, until he was only about a quarter of the way sat up, the headboard preventing him from flying flat.

Finally, Nagisa pulled back to breathe properly, and to maybe let his brain catch up with what he was actually doing. Currently, sitting on top of Karma. As much as part of him just wanted to end it with just the kissing, Nagisa was definitely aware that they’d already come that far. This was easier when he was just letting Karma do what he wanted, even though his body was tingling even more than it had the night before.

“What’re you thinking about?” Karma half muttered.

Nagisa hardened his gaze a little bit, breaking this down to its most practical elements. He shuffled backwards a little, reaching down for Karma’s crotch. What he found there was an already half formed bulge there, right for his palm to grind against. He swallowed, applying a steady amount of pressure as he moved his hand slowly back and forth.

He didn’t miss the way Karma’s eyes sharped too, pupils growing so large only the slightest ring of gold remained. It was overwhelming, to have him so visually turned on under his own hand. But then Nagisa was pushed to his limit, and he couldn’t deal with the intimacy of eye contact for even
a second more. He was too ashamed to actually say that, though, so instead he planted a kiss on Karma’s jaw.

From the position he was in, their sheer height difference was just far enough that Nagisa couldn’t actually reach hips lips. But that was okay, he could make do with the rest of him. In fact, where Karma’s lips responded naturally to his kisses, the rest of his body jolted like it had just been shocked. It was enough to encourage Nagisa to finally make the leap, his hand drifting up to the waist band of Karma’s bottoms, quickly diving inside to pull him out.

Karma let out a drawn out breathy moan, as Nagisa’s hand wrapped around him. Even Nagisa wanted to moan, at the way he stiffened right there in his hand, erection throbbing almost in time with Nagisa’s heartbeat. He swallowed hard, realising he couldn’t just sit there and hold it. So, he loosened his wrist a little and was almost about to clutch him firm and go up and down as fast as he could until his entire arm ached.

But then he realised he didn’t really want to. That’s exactly the kind of action he took when he felt somewhat obligated to just get his partner off. It wasn’t really the same somehow, so he dropped his grip entirely, only maintaining contact with his thumb. Nagisa traced him slowly like that, almost like he was fascinated with it. Like he was trying to commit every vein and ridge of him to memory.

He didn’t know why, considering this action generally didn’t have a lot in it for him, but he was enjoying himself. Nagisa was nothing but a natural observer, and he noticed the places where Karma’s breaths got just a little more strained. When he simply rubbed his thumb around the head, experimenting with different pressures, those breaths turned into proper moans again, though they were only loud enough for his ears.

All the while, he still kissed wetly against his neck. And when that became a bit of a stretch, he moved down to his chest. Having explored enough, then, he wrapped his hand around him properly, though he didn’t speed up. Although Karma didn’t voice any complaints, Nagisa didn’t miss the way Karma’s hips started to buck into it. If anything he gripped him tighter, practically squeezing him, though he still moved his thumb around the head.

Nagisa didn’t know how he felt about this anymore. On a level higher than he was expected, he was enjoying this. He enjoyed the feeling of Karma under him, under his hand. He wanted... to get him off. Nagisa had never exactly considered himself selfish, but it was a strange desire for him nonetheless. He started to kiss a little harder, sucking hard on his flesh. Nowhere it would show, but Nagisa would remember it was there.

“Nagisa,” Karma breathed his name, like it was hard for him.

He finally pulled back a little, sitting up on his knees. Though he still couldn’t quite bare to look Karma directly in the eye, he stared at his open lips, begging for contact. He dove a little bit, almost toppling over as he was forced to let his erection go. Karma seemed to take the opportunity, hands snapping up to his ass and yanking him forward.

Squirming a little, he realised Karma was then in prime position to grind against his ass. Which he didn’t hesitate to do, still holding Nagisa in place by the hips. It really shouldn’t have felt as good as it did, but maybe that was just the adrenaline of it all, making his own arousal ten times as bad. He just couldn’t help himself, returning the movement.

With every movement of Nagisa’s own hips, he also rubbed himself against Karma’s stomach, his skin providing the friction he didn’t know he so desperately needed. With Karma’s kiss also swallowing him whole at the same time, it was no wonder that the coil inside of him suddenly
tightened, pretty much ready to snap immediately.

He couldn’t hold it back, moaning lightly into Karma’s mouth as he released. It wasn’t a particularly hard orgasm, but he still felt it right down to his toes, like a gasp of fresh air. In return, Karma clutched him harder, rutting against him rapidly a couple of times before he came too, with his own muffled groan. Which was finally their cue to break apart.

“You might want to change out of those,” Karma gestured, through heavy pants.

It took Nagisa a moment to figure out what he meant. Not only were his pyjama bottoms, that he’d been so sure he wouldn’t be changing out of, wet with the evidence of his own arousal, but also now covered in Karma’s fresh release. Since he started to come back down properly, he realised he could feel it on the back of his shirt too.

Karma’s chest still continued to dramatically rise and fall. “Second draw,” he pointed.

Nagisa didn’t really have much of a choice about that. On shaky legs, he rolled off the bed, going over to where Karma instructed him. It was good that his ability to think entirely clearly was clouded right then, so the shame of doing this was clouded somewhat. At the very least, Karma did him the mercy of not looking at him as he pulled the first two items out of the draw and stripped off rapidly.

Of course, Karma’s clothes didn’t fit him. They fit him even less than when they were still in middle school, but it wasn’t a fashion show. He practically barrel rolled back into the bed, curling himself against Karma’s side without even thinking about it. It was easier not to think for a while, until Karma was clearly asleep and he allowed himself to roll away. Once was an error of judgement, but twice was like the start of a bad habit.

Chapter End Notes

This week on These Dumbasses-

I love when Maki is the most vocal one about their feelings in this family :’(}
Family Time

Chapter Summary

As the winter break winds down, they go to visit Nagisa's parents for dinner.

Chapter Notes

Can you fucking believe this shit has gone on for a hundred chapters im?

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It was incredibly hard to quit something that made him feel so good. Or, so Nagisa discovered, still unable to find the will to tell Karma they should probably stop this. Whatever it was, Nagisa didn’t even know anymore. He’d never been ‘friends with benefits’ with anyone before, but even so, it didn’t really feel like how he’d imagine that.

During the daytime things were like they always were, but Nagisa managed to convince himself every single time that this entire thing was weird. Which was a lot easier to do, with Karma away at work, and more thinking time to himself. But then bedtime would come, and Nagisa would forget about everything in about five seconds. It didn’t even matter who initiated it, only that there’d been only one night so far where they both just fell asleep. But it was limited to that, like part of a nightly routine! And okay, maybe one morning, where Karma had woken up hard and Nagisa’s will power had faded and maybe he’d just sucked him off a little bit.

It had been a lot longer than he’d been intending to stay here. But Nagisa kept getting distracted. Either he couldn’t find anywhere to stay that would be at all suitable from a first glance, or Daichi demanded his attention. Karma had left him a spare key when he actually had to go to work, and in the interest of not just sitting around his apartment, Nagisa ended up taking Daichi out, which for the most part seemed to be appreciated.

“Nagisa,” Karma complained, burying his face in the pillows. “Are you sure we need to go?”

He finished pulling on his jumper. “It was Daichi’s idea and you were the first one to agree to it.”

He groaned. “But it’s warm here.”

Nagisa found himself smiling. “You can break the news to him then, that he can’t visit his grandparents because his Papa decided he’d rather lie in bed all day.”

“Huh?”

It was also weird how comfortable Nagisa had become with Karma recently. Comfortable enough to talk to him like that without reading into everything, at least. But the more time they spent together, the more it started to rub off on him. In fact, Nagisa had enough mental strength to ignore Karma then, leaving him alone to suffer whilst he stepped into the hallway. He knew one way to definitely wake him up.

“Yeah,” Daichi called from inside, and Nagisa took that as permission to enter. He was sitting on top of his bed, fully clothed in jeans and the black hoodie Asano had bought him.

Nagisa smiled. “Are you reading anything interesting?”

“Yep,” he didn’t elaborate, but he held the book up a little bit, so Nagisa could see the title.

It made his heart want to twist in two. Instead of his usual slight preference for fiction, he was reading moon books again. Like he was determined to read everything on the planet that had been published about the events of eight years ago. It was like his interest grew every day, and so did Nagisa’s guilt about keeping the truth from him. But that was what he and Karma had agreed, at least for now.

Nagisa knew they’d tell him eventually. It was such an important part of their lives, a part of why Daichi even existed in the first place. But it was finding the right words, the right understanding. Daichi was far too smart for his own good, but Nagisa couldn’t count on him being mature enough to accept the truth for what it was yet.

“Do you want to go wake your Papa up?”

A devious grin appeared on Daichi’s face as he dog eared his book and didn’t hesitate to travel down the slide, landing with a spring in his step and running out across the hall. Nagisa followed close behind, to find Daichi had already leapt on the bed, on top of Karma. With the energy of a seven year old, he was a lot more effective at wake up calls.

“C’mon,” Daichi shook his shoulders, “Papa! I wanna go~. Uhm, Daddy and me will go all on our own if you don’t get up soon!”

Karma peeled one eye open. “You’re not going anywhere without me. Mostly because you’re too little to drive.”

Nagisa watched the two of them. “Don’t tell me I have to go find Maki too.”

“Ugh,” Karma finally sat up, knocking Daichi off him onto the mattress like some kind of bucking bronco. “She’ll scratch my eye out.”

Daichi giggled. “But that’s your fault, Papa.”

“I’m up, aren’t I?”

“You’re still in bed,” Nagisa added.

Karma narrowed his eyes. “You’re meant to be on my side.”

“I’m on the side of not being late, considering we told my parents a time,” Nagisa responded right back.

They hadn’t visited on actual New Year’s Day, so it was actually the weekend after that. Which meant school would be back in session for both Daichi and Nagisa. Most would probably complain about work, but Nagisa was actually looking forward to it. Of course, he was a little worried that his students had slacked off. With university entrance exams coming up so soon, he was a little freaked out over it all.
Thankfully, Karma actually started to get himself dressed then, and Nagisa shuffled Daichi away into the kitchen. The least he could do was start up breakfast whilst they waited. And no, it wasn’t pancakes that time. It had to be an occasional treat, and even so, the last thing Nagisa was about to do was pack a seven year old full of sugar before they went to his parents. He caught Daichi slipping Maki some of his rice, though.

“Okay,” Karma finally emerged, dressed for the day. “Ready to go?”

He hated to admit it, but Karma’s car was actually pretty convenient for occasions such as this. Nagisa was far too used to trains to have a problem with them, but it was nice to be able to avoid the crowds on what was sure to be a busy weekend. It was maybe a little bit quicker too, since they didn’t have to worry about the various stops. They actually got to Nagisa’s parents pretty quickly, even if he had to be subjected to Daichi’s odd taste in music on the way.

Of course, Daichi was ecstatic. “Grandpa!”

Nagisa’s father, who had opened the door, was at least expecting it. He already had his arms out, more than ready to catch Daichi, who had a bad habit of just flinging himself at people from time to time. Nagisa realised it had actually been quite a while since they visited. Nothing major had happened in their lives for the last few months, yet he felt oddly busy.

“I’m sure you’ve got a little bit bigger this time.”

He giggled. “That’s cos I’m almost eight.”

Horrifyingly, he was actually right about that. His birthday was only just over a month away. And, well, Nagisa kind of hated Daichi’s birthdays. Hated the idea of Daichi growing up so fast. It felt like just moments ago, that he was newly born and a tiny squirming thing in Nagisa’s arms. But really, it was quite a while ago. Which meant almost nine years since he and Karma started this thing.

That also meant that he’d known Karma for half of his life. Half his entire life, and Karma had been in it. A huge part of it. And that was just putting things simply. Such a thought made him feel weird, that he was close to having lived more years with Karma than without. So much so that Nagisa could barely even imagine that without, anymore. Not that he was ever actually with him, but that was beside the point.

“Oh yeah?” Nagisa’s father continued. “Then, we should already start planning your birthday party.”

“Think I want some pizza!”

Nagsia’s mother finally came out, wearing an apron. “You won’t be having any of that today, not when I’m cooking dinner. Welcome.” Her smile was tight. “You’re actually pretty early.”

Karma nudged him. “Told you so.”

“Heh,” Nagisa laughed awkwardly, “I guess I worried about nothing. Still, it’s been a while since we were in Kunugigaoka properly.”

“Well then,” Nagisa’s father clapped his hands, “don’t feel like you need to sit around here and wait for it. You can go have a look around.”

Nagisa looked over at Karma. “It might be nice.”
Karma shrugged. “Sure. Daichan? Do you wanna stay here?”

“Uhm,” he perked his head up, “are you going to the big mountain? I’ll come then!”

“I’m not sure it’s the best idea,” Nagisa said in English, looking over at Daichi apprehensively. He felt mean, but it was the only way they could have a discussion in front of him. Although Daichi learnt English in school, and could read and write it astonishingly well, listening comprehension was an entirely different matter.

Karma followed him. “You think he’ll ask more questions?”

“He keeps reading all those books about,” he noticed the way Daichi perked up, like he was trying to listen, “that lunar event, and I know he’s catching on.”

“We go there every year though,” Karma shrugged, “we can avoid them.”

“Okay,” Nagisa switched back to Japanese, “are you ready to go?”

It wasn’t like they’d really even entered the apartment in the first place, so it didn’t take long till they were out the door again. There was still a light dusting of snow still everywhere outside, enough for Daichi to get excited about leaving footprints as they followed behind him, but not deep enough that he was actually worried about the mountain.

They had to take the train, briefly, to get there. Even though it had been years, it felt kind of monotonous, a journey he’d been used to for quite some time. Especially when they got off at the station, and started to walk towards Kunugigaoka Junior High. Of course, the mountain wasn’t a part of the property anymore, so they didn’t have to worry about trespassing.

It had been a while, but Daichi still seemed to remember the way. Nagisa was a little jealous of his energy honestly. Not that he was old by any means, but keeping up with a child was pretty much impossible when it came to the energy aspect. Daichi didn’t even seem to notice, racing on up in the same way Nagisa used to when he thought he was going to be late for class – which he thought was kind of impressive considering he was pregnant for a big chunk of that year.

“Come on,” Daichi turned and complained, “you’re taking so long.”

Karma raised an eyebrow. “Oh really? I could get there quicker than you, if I wanted to.”

“No way.”

“Karma,” Nagisa turned to him, but Karma wasn’t actually there anymore.

Of course, there were a bunch of shortcuts to the class building, ones Daichi definitely didn’t know about. And, well, Karma could be ruthless when he was trying to prove a point. Daichi looked a little confused too, but didn’t wait around to question it, instead marching ahead at full speed like it really was a bet. Which of course meant Nagisa also had to pick up his pace too, and he was kind of out of practise when it came to climbing mountains such as this.

“Who’s the slow one now?”

Even Daichi looked surprised, when Karma was casually leaning against the door of their old class building. “B-but-“

Karma laughed, walking over to ruffle his hair. “Think before you open your mouth next time, huh?”
“Trees?” Nagisa questioned.

He shrugged. “With all the snow I figured it would be quicker. Anyway, let’s break in.”

The building was cold, considering the winter months and lack of proper central heating. It definitely needed a good clean, but aside from that, it was pretty much exactly as he remembered it. That surprised him somehow, even after all this time, like he could slip back into his middle school self at any given moment just by standing there.

“…This is where, huh…”

Karma tilted his head a little bit, paying attention. “Hey, Daichan, what are you on about?”

He folded his arms. “I’m looking for clues. I’m gonna prove you wrong because I know there was a monster here.”

“…If you had a plan like that, why are you *telling* us?”

He flushed. “Oh.”

Karma grinned. “Hey, I can tell you something I guess you didn’t know about this place.”

“Karma…” Nagisa wasn’t so sure about this.

Daichi’s eyes widened. “Like what?”

But Karma carried on. “We actually own this building.”

“Why?”

“Obviously, we loved school so much, we just had to buy it. Ain’t that right, Nagisa?”

He sighed. “Sure. I mean, I loved school enough to become a teacher.”

Daichi shook his head. “Weird. Can I go play outside?”

“S-sure,” he watched him run off, until he could be seen outside. There was no real rush, although they did need to be back for dinner. Nagisa just smiled, walking down the line of desks, naturally drifting to the seat that used to be his own. It was a much simpler time, even if they were literally trying to save the world.

“I wonder what Korosensei would say,” Karma looked out of the window with a sigh.

Nagisa joined him by his side. “He’d say that Daichi got a lot bigger, since he last saw him.”

He turned instead to face the unoccupied desk. “What are you talking about? Daichan hasn’t gotten much bigger since the last time we brought him… He’s still here, y’know.”

“Of course,” Nagisa smiled. “I can practically hear him laughing at us still.”

“Nagisa, I-“

“Papa! Daddy!” Daichi ran in, panting like his life depended on it. “Look what I found!”

Nagisa stared at it. “A rock?”

He pointed. “It has a face on it.”
“Does it?”

Karma squinted. “Where?”

Daichi had the nerve to roll his eyes. “Look, here’s the eye holes, and the mouth is there, plus that crack kinda looks like a nose. Can we take it to that cool rock museum?”

“Rock… Museum…” Karma just sounded tired.

“Yeah!” He nodded. “I read all about it, Papa! It’s only three hours away apparently, and they have hundreds and hundreds of faces like this. We gotta go!”

Nagisa smiled. “Don’t you want to keep this one? You found it.”

“But…” Daichi’s eyes went wide and glassy. “Isn’t that, uhm, selfish? It’s cool… so other people should see it.”

On the one hand, Nagisa’s heart beamed with pride. Kids could be cruel and incredibly self-absorbed, and the fact that Daichi wasn’t made him filled with joy. However, in the same breath, Nagisa really didn’t want to go on a three hour journey to a rock museum. And there was absolutely no way that Karma would drive him there either.

“You still got the book?” Karma asked.

Daichi shook his head. “It’s in the library.”

“Well,” he swallowed, “why don’t you go take a look at it again first. You see, they might already have a rock that looks just like that one. In which case, you should be good to keep this one.”

“I guess…”

Nagisa let his eyes fall to the window, looking at the light. “It’s probably time we start to head back.”

Daichi proceeded to carry his rock down the mountain like it was incredibly precious to him. Which was okay, he supposed. Definitely better than Daichi asking a bunch of really awkward questions which Nagisa had agreed not to answer. And as long as it amused him, what did Nagisa honestly have to complain about?

By the time they got back to his parent’s, the smell of food was strong throughout the air, and Nagisa actually started to realise how hungry he was. Desperate to not be like some kind of freeloader, Nagisa had at least tried to help with the cooking recently, or just done it entirely by himself. So, it had been a little while since food was just made for him, and it really did make it taste a little nicer sometimes.

“Thanks for the food,” he said, unable to resist eating for too long.

It had been a long time since a big family meal like this, too. Nagisa couldn’t help but sneak a few glances at Karma, throughout. He’d feel bad about kind of dragging him to hang out with his family, if he actually seemed bothered by it. Then again, over the years, Karma had spent far more time with Nagisa’s parents than his own. As a result of that, he was pretty at home at an environment like this.

That was helpful, Nagisa supposed. They pretty much treated each other like in-laws. Which… well, they were close enough to that anyway. The only way Nagisa could describe the feeling was
weird. It was comfortable, but that was what made it weird. Karma was discussing something with his father, and his mother was listening to Daichi’s ramblings about the rock.

“-and anyway,” Daichi was saying, “it was really great now we’re staying at Papa’s place.”

Nagisa’s mother raised an eyebrow. “What led you to that?”

He flushed, doing his best to explain the whole earthquake situation. After about a week, he’d cracked a little, and returned there to get a few things. Since, well, he’d brought clothes for three days and he couldn’t face the idea of wearing Karma’s clothes as more than a quick pyjama solution when there weren’t any other choices available. They seemed to be working on the building, at least, but apparently there would still be a little while until moving back became a possibility.

“You should have said,” his father pointed out.

“It’s okay,” Nagisa stared down at the remainder of his food, noticing a more severe questioning glint in his mother’s eye. “I’ve been babysitting his cat.”

Karma nudged him. “Not very well.”

“I told you,” Nagisa tried to hide his annoyance, “that was an accident-“

“She was in the microwave, Nagisa.”

“For thirty seconds, maybe!” He huffed. “She jumped in there herself anyway.”

“Well,” Nagisa’s father said carefully, “as long as you’re okay.”

Was Nagisa okay? Staying with Karma was a lot better than being somewhere dangerous. Well, physically dangerous. His heart was another case entirely. He stuck with that thought, through to the end of dinner, and the usual sitting around afterwards until eventually someone made to leave. Nagisa didn’t exactly feel the urge to be around his parents, but it was still nice enough he didn’t immediately want it to be over the moment he’d stepped in the door.

It wasn’t particularly long after that that they were in the car again, driving all the way back home. Sneaking a glance at the back seat, Daichi had put the rock beside him. Not only that, but he’d wrapped the seatbelt around it, apparently concerned for its safety. Nagisa couldn’t help but feel like it was kind of sweet, if a little weird.

Meanwhile, Karma had his eyes on the road. Which was understandable, considering he was actually driving. Nagisa didn’t have such a responsibility, and there wasn’t much of anything interesting to look at. So, his eyes couldn’t help but fall to Karma, who was right there. His head bobbed back and forth, as Daichi’s choice of music played from the radio.

“I got a boy, handsome boy-” Karma sung, under his breath.

Nagisa let himself look at him properly. “Why do you know the lyrics?”

“Papa,” Daichi complained, “you’re singing it too loud.”

Karma rolled his eyes. “Another complaint out of you and it’ll be Miku the rest of the way home.”

His face went white, because there was honestly not a lot Daichi hated more in this world. “No!”

He cleared his throat. “Number one princess in the world-“
“Stop.”

Even Nagisa couldn’t help but laugh too, just at Daichi’s unimpressed horror. Karma did shut up though, which Nagisa was kind of sad about. He liked to see him like that, when he left all of his guards down. Though, even without the light singing, he still wore the amused smile on his face. For someone that liked to appear rough and sharp, he gained a certain kind of softness to his face when he smiled like that.

And then Nagisa had a horrible thought. *I think I love him.* Like that, his chest started to tighten up and hurt. *I don’t even know what love is anymore,* he told himself, *but whatever it is, I feel it when I look at Karma.* Had they been alone, Nagisa might have insisted they pull the car over entirely. His insides were all cramped up, he didn’t even know how to describe the feeling.

But they weren’t alone, which meant he had to keep quiet. This wasn’t right, then, what they had between them. Nagisa wasn’t sure if he’d caught feelings, or if they’d been there the entire time below the surface. Somehow, the idea of committing to a ‘real relationship’ didn’t sit right with him. It had been quite a while then, since he was engaged, but he still couldn’t shake that feeling. Could he really love Karma, if he’d promised to marry someone else? But then he remembered that time he almost kissed Karma, and that was even more confusing.

The sentiments continued throughout the rest of the day. It had been quite a big meal, so in the evening they only really needed a snack. Daichi had been socialising for a good portion of his day, so he spent most of the remainder reading in his room with Maki for company. Apparently, her mewls were more tolerable than human speech. Whatever the case, he stayed like that, until it was time for bed.

“D-don’t you think that rock kind of looks like Korosensei?” Nagisa finally realised, looking at it on the table, as he shut the door after they said goodnight.

Karma looked at Nagisa like he was stupid. “Now you’re seeing things.”

“You were the one who said he was still there.”

“Not,” Karma breathed in, “reincarnated as a rock.”

Nagisa smiled. “Seems like something he’d do though, just to mess with-“

He didn’t get to finish his sentence, before Karma bent down, kissing him against the wall. Nagisa’s brain could hardly catch up, though he responded as best he could, going up on his tiptoes to minimise the amount Karma had to bend down. He’d gotten a little better at receiving his kisses, too, but this time his heart seemed to beat even faster.

“Get ready for bed,” Karma said, releasing him after he’d caught his breath and disappearing off into the bedroom.

Was he planning something? That time, it felt different. Nagisa got ready for bed in terms of sleeping, rather than anything else. The only issue with that being Nagisa’s increasingly weak will power. But, he’d had a different revelation then. It almost felt… wrong, to keep this up. Nagisa knew very well that sex could just be sex, but this definitely meant something to him, and that was almost taking advantage. Especially when he was too conflicted to commit to anything, even if Karma was on the same page as him. Which Nagisa was a little too afraid to even ask about.

He splashed his face with cold water a couple of times, before finally gathering his nerves. A part of him just wanted to turn over and go to sleep, but he wondered how realistic that even was. He
crept across the hallway, not saying a word as he sat himself down on the bed. Karma was still changing, taking his sweet time of it apparently, but Nagisa knew he shouldn’t be looking too close.

“What’s that face?” Karma poked him, before stripping his shirt off.

Nagisa didn’t even know how to start. This thing we have right now is kind of nice and all but we really need to stop before someone’s feelings get hurt? It all sounded good in his head, but the words were completely trapped on his tongue. Didn’t he have everything he’d ever wanted, just a few years ago? How could he even comprehend letting it go?

“I’m not making a face,” he brushed off.

Karma climbed on top of him, one knee either side of his thighs. As if Nagisa needed reminding how much taller was. His eyes were sharp, a glint in them both that told Nagisa he wanted something. As if automatically, he found himself lean back, until he was flying flat against the mattress. Karma followed him down, still kneeling over him, but bracing the rest of his weight on his hands. He shuffled back a little bit, so he was in the right position to bend down further, pressing his lips against the corner of his mouth.

Even if Nagisa had the mental will to consciously avoid it, he couldn’t help the way his lips puckered up, and his head twisted just that little bit to meet Karma properly. He thought at this point he might have gotten used to the way Karma’s kisses felt, but he still shuddered from head to toe, so entranced by the heat of his lips that he had to wrap his arms around his neck, pulling himself closer.

It didn’t remain gentle for long, their mouths eventually opening and tongues sliding hot and wet against each other. They kissed until they couldn’t breathe, panting for air the moment they broke apart, and then immediately finding each other again. One of his hands wrapped itself in Karma’s hair, at the same time as Karma’s hand went to his waist, tugging at the material of his t shirt. He pulled back, detaching them as he lifted it with a sudden kind of urgency, pulling the garment off entirely and managing to slightly bash Nagisa in the face in the process.

“Ouch,” Nagisa said, rubbing his nose.

Karma pulled back, head tilting. “That didn’t hurt.”

He squinted. “How would you know?”

There was no actual answer, but Karma half threw him back, so he sprung against the mattress, and was lying flat once again. Even though he should have seen that coming, it still managed to surprise him enough to take his breath away for a moment. The look in Karma’s eyes was almost predatory, especially as he came closer, hovering above him. His thumb toyed with the skin just below Nagisa’s (incredibly subtle) pectorals, slowly sliding down his abdomen, eventually finding his hips.

“Off?”

Nagisa nodded, hips canting off the bed at the same time Karma pulled his pyjama bottoms down to aid him. He made pretty quick work of it, tossing them in the corner with the rest of his clothes, which left Nagisa in just his underwear. He didn’t know exactly why he’d decided to keep that extra barrier, consciously anyway, but he was kind of glad he did then.

Maybe it was stupid, but he couldn’t help feeling self conscious. What, with the way Karma was
looking at him, and how exposed he was already. Even with the underwear still there, he could see himself bulging against it, already half hard, and that was bad enough as it was. For his own sanity, he reached over the side of the bed, turning off the lamp.

Karma didn’t comment about it, which Nagisa was grateful for. Then again, he always was kind of good at making things out in the dark… Nagisa tugged at his arm, pulling him closer to kiss him on the lips once again. He was thinking too much, and Karma was his best distraction. Somehow, he was already far too used to the way Karma’s lips curved against his own, so much so that sometimes he wondered if he could feel the ghost of them.

The material of Karma’s bottoms was strange against his naked legs, though not unpleasant. It made him flush, though, to be in an unequal state of undress. So, Nagisa let his hands slide down his back, narrowly avoiding the curve of Karma’s ass, since he hadn’t given him an indication so far that he’d enjoy being touched in that kind of a way. Karma got the message at least, letting Nagisa pull them, and then removing them the rest of the way. Unlike him, he’d chosen to go commando under his pyjamas, and he was already half hard.

It gave Nagisa a moment to process the situation. Karma was on top of him, between his legs, entirely naked- His thoughts cut off then, as Karma returned to kissing him. All Nagisa could do was moan into it, wrapping himself around Karma as tightly as he could. When he moved down, giving more attention to his neck, Nagisa practically put him in a headlock.

Karma’s hips shifted subtly, potentially entirely by accident. It still meant Nagisa could feel his erection rubbing against his stomach, and it really shouldn’t have felt good but it did. The movements, however minor, reminded him of the motions of sex, if only they were positioned slightly differently. The more he did it, the more Nagisa burned with some sort of primal desire that dictated he wanted that, preferably inside him so he didn’t feel so empty anymore.

But that was the one barrier they hadn’t crossed. Maybe there had been a few suggestive touches here and there, but it hadn’t actually been brought up. A part of Nagisa thought it wasn’t that big a deal, but maybe it was. Sure, he’d already done that with Karma, but he hadn’t been in a clear enough head to remember it exactly. Logic was running out of the window though.

Subtly, he directed Karma’s hands down to his underwear, which thankfully he immediately understood. He directed Nagisa’s hips a little, lifting them so he could slip them off, tossing them somewhere distant along with the rest of the pyjamas. It left Nagisa just a tiny bit too exposed for comfort, so he met Karma’s lips again, since their contact had been cut off during the maneuverer.

Since they were both completely naked, everything started to feel a little sharper. It wasn’t too late to just grab him and jerk him off until they fell asleep, but it didn’t feel like enough. Not with the way his blood had turned heavy throughout his body, pounding through with every pulse of his heart. He did reach down, though, wrapping his fist loosely around his erection. But instead of tugging it, which he suspected Karma probably wanted a lot right then, he arched his back, spreading his legs a little more into a certain position.

“I don’t have condoms,” he pulled back once he entirely understood the suggestion, removing Nagisa’s hand.

He was too dizzy to care. “It’s fine,” he said, “I still take my pills.”

Karma froze. “You want to?”

Nagisa didn’t know. Whatever this was, he wanted more of it. Every pulse of blood through his small body wanted Karma inside him. As much as he knew it wasn’t the first time, everything else
was a blur, or just completely black in his memory. But his body seemed to know him, and he wanted, no matter what logic screamed at him that it was a bad idea.

He sat up a tiny bit, arms starting to shake. It was true that going the full way had never been his favourite choice of activity. It made him feel funny in a way he was never sure was pleasant, and it was rare that he ever, well, got off from it. Maybe it was just the heat induced memories talking, but he knew that it had been good, then, and as much as heat was a living nightmare in most cases, he kind of wanted to feel it again.

Swallowing, he pulled Karma’s head closer, kissing him first on the side of the mouth before moving to his lips. He didn’t quite have the courage to say it out loud, but he hoped it would be answer enough. Karma responded in kind, gently pushing him back again until his head was flush against the pillows, and Karma was braced on top of him.

It was impossible not to shudder, as Karma’s hand traced the skin at the back of his thighs, eventually working his way to his entrance. Nagisa’s eyes squeezed shut, at the prospect of having him there. Thankfully, Karma apparently decided it wasn’t the time to tease him too much, not even thumbing over it before he lined himself up.

His eyes automatically flew wide open, at the first push. Though, Nagisa couldn’t even think about looking Karma in the eye during this, so he snapped his head to the side, focusing instead on the corner of the dresser. It was… a lot more than he remembered. He almost forgot how to breathe, as Karma pushed inside him devastatingly slowly, and he stretched around every ridge. At that point, his own desire was so strong that he was open enough that it didn’t really hurt exactly, but by the time Karma’s hips finally stopped flush with his, he was undeniably full.

“Y-you’re almost as wet as when you were in heat.”

He was glad the lights were off, because he was probably cherry red. “Is that supposed to be some kind of d-dirty talk?”

“If you want to look at it that way,” Karma said nonchalantly, though through heavy breaths. “It was more of a,” he paused for a moment, “observation.”

“I-I’m fine,” Nagisa tightened his legs around Karma’s hips, as if to prove a point. “Go.”

He didn’t exactly go fast, though. Which meant Nagisa could pretty much feel every ridge and vein rub torturously against his insides, as Karma pulled most of the way out before filling him up again. Even though he didn’t have the luxury of being able to let his voice sound clear, it was impossible to hide the heaviness of his breaths, light and airy gasps that mingled with Karma’s own sounds of exertion.

Nagisa started to hate the moments he pulled back, even if what followed after it was close to bliss. Because, as stupid as it sounded, being filled with Karma made him feel the most ‘right’ he had in a very long time. Like all of his nerves were being set alight, one by one. Unintentionally, he found himself constricting around him, as though he was afraid he was suddenly going to go away.

Without a whole lot of warning, Karma shifted a little, going up more on his knees. Nagisa was fine with it, honestly, finding the slightly more powerful thrusts to light him up even brighter. It was really hard to keep his noises in though, surprisingly, and Nagisa found himself biting down on his lip hard. Karma’s apartment was pretty well made, as they went, but he wasn’t confident about the thickness of the walls.

Nagisa did realise he wasn’t really giving Karma much to go by, aside from the way he naturally
shifted his body back to meet him. He wasn’t one that necessarily needed to be led in most aspects of life, but for something like this, it was hard for him to recognise what he really wanted. At some point Karma seemed to get that, though.

He moved his hand, which had been cemented on at his hip, down to the back of his thigh. Nagisa didn’t resist him, letting him pull it up over his arm, though not high enough that there was any strain. It was only a minimal shift in angle, but suddenly things went from good to unreal enough that he wondered, for a brief moment, if he was hallucinating it.

It was like Karma was surrounding him entirely, like some kind of second skin. Nagisa couldn’t help but shift against him, wanting nothing but more. There must have been something that told Karma it was a good idea, because he grabbed his other leg too. Instead of just leaving it like that, though, he yanked him all of a sudden, and his legs were over Karma’s shoulders.

Nagisa’s eyes widened like saucers, and he couldn’t even hold back the desperate moan that escaped from him if he’d attempted it. On top of sliding a little deeper with that position, the angle shifted again. But that time, he was grinding against something and it almost made Nagisa lose his entire sense of self. His hands scrabbled for something to grip, to ground himself a little, but the sheets slipped out of his desperate grasp.

“Nagisa~” Karma got out, as though he was a slight bit concerned.

He forgot how to talk, honestly. Or, Nagisa was sure if he tried, it would have turned into moans that were too loud. Instead, he settled for tossing his head back, finally manage to find a but of grip with the pillows. Moments later, Karma was bending him in half, attaching his lips to his neck. He didn’t exactly kiss him, it was more like wet panting against his skin, one of the places where he was the most sensitive.

Nagisa didn’t have much warning himself, before the grinding became far too much for him to handle. He choked on his own heavy breathing, before his mouth opened wide in a silent scream. Like every combined into one point that burned through his core. He didn’t know how long it lasted, only that he was pretty much blind to everything else before it became more like a tolerable hum.

It was all he could do to give Karma his consent by weakly shifting his hips. It didn’t feel bad exactly, Nagisa was more dazed than anything. But still, it didn’t take long after that for him to finish, hips finally losing any sort of rhythm. The feeling of his release inside him wasn’t what Nagisa had necessarily expected it to feel like. He noticed him pulse at the same time as he groaned, finally going completely still. After that, he could feel a few bursts of warmth, but strangely it didn’t gross him out or anything.

The moment Nagisa shakily unhooked his legs, already cursing how stiff they’d likely feel the next morning, Karma practically collapsed on top of him. Somehow Nagisa didn’t really mind, as they both lay there trying to catch their breaths. All Nagisa knew was that it had never felt like that. And wasn’t the first time meant to be a little awkward, anyway?

“That was…” Nagisa didn’t even know the right word. “Nice.”

Karma locked up entirely, before laughter poured out of him. “Nice?”

He flushed. “I- What do you want me to say?”

Shifting, he finally pulled out, a motion that left Nagisa a little sore now he wasn’t so caught up in arousal. “I can do better than nice.”
Nagisa smiled. “Show me.”

Kama tilted his head. “I’d love to, and I know we’re still young and stuff, but I need at least a few minutes.”

“That’s-” Nagisa wanted to scream, going red all over again, ‘not what I meant.’

Karma kissed him anyway, a surprisingly innocent peck to his cheek, before rolling off him properly. He didn’t let him go, though, half spooning him though Nagisa was still on his back, apparently not caring about cleaning up after that. Nagisa hadn’t exactly experienced this kind of affection after sex either before, though he’d been pretty responsible for rejecting that on his own terms. Maybe it was too much, or even not enough, but he was okay with Karma holding him. The dark thoughts of this being wrong, warning Nagisa not to attach love to such an action, were still there, but the sound of Karma’s heart beating drowned them all out.

“Hey, Nagisa?” Karma said, voice a little strained.

“Yeah?” He half whispered back.

He paused. “Why don’t you just stay?”

“Huh?”

Karma rolled him over properly then, so they were facing each other. “I don’t think you’ll be able to find anywhere of your own to stay, and it’s only a couple of months, right? So why don’t you just stay here like this?”

“K-karma,” he let his eyes squeeze shut. “I can’t just continue to freeload from you-“

“It’s not freeloading when you’re family.”

The air he inhaled was like an icicle in his throat. “But-“

“Hey,” Karma shook him, and when Nagisa opened his eyes again he looked really serious. “If you can’t think of a real reason, then there isn’t one, okay?”

“Okay.”

Chapter End Notes

There we go

Did I intentionally write the fic this way so it would take them 100 chapters to have completely lucid sex with each other? Yes, yes I did.

I hope it didn't disappoint! Real talk, as much as this fic kind of started out with me being sarcastic, I've actually loved writing this damn thing. I'm really notorious for not finishing chaptered projects, and I'm so happy that I'll be able to finish this one. There's some big stuff coming, but I really like this chapter! Basically, this is the fic that really got me back into writing again, and I wouldn't have done that without all the lovely people who leave comments or come chat to me about chapter updates. I genuinely wouldn't have the energy if not for this kinda dumb story meaning
something to a lot of people. So, basically, thank you a lot! There won't be a hundred more chapters, but thank you for sticking it out this far, and don't worry, we're getting towards the ending now.

Anyway, mushy stuff over :'}
Karma was having a minor internal crisis, to say the least. In fact, he’d been suffering from said crisis for the last week or so, and he still hadn’t come up with an actual solution. It wasn’t like him, to dwell so long on just one minor thing, but he couldn’t shake it from his mind. Considering how mindlessly simple something like this would seem to any normal person, he was even somewhat ashamed by it.

One thing was for certain, and that was that he was glad he wasn’t in high school anymore. Not that he’d been completely blind to what day it was. That was impossible, with every retail business practically falling over itself to market tacky products. But at least he’d been spared of it for most of the day. On the other hand, he knew he was acting like a high schooler with this debate. Wasn’t it ironic? He remembered Nagisa coming to him with this exact problem. At least back then, Nagisa had actually been concerned about someone he was dating. Karma almost shuddered at that thought, gripping the steering wheel tighter. What had Karma told him that time? Just go ahead and do it. This was the first time Valentines Day was an actual event on his radar, rather than just ‘sad singles day’.

The thing was, they didn’t exactly live by gender roles. And those roles would dictate who gave who the chocolates, and considering Nagisa was an omega- but no, it would be weird to start assuming that right then when it never exactly came up otherwise. Ignoring the fact that they weren’t actually in a relationship. Karma didn’t even know what it was, and honestly he didn’t really want to ask. Lest Nagisa completely reject him, or just freak out over it.

He parked like normal, like every day, but instead of actually readying himself to go home, he made a split second decision and headed towards the nearest corner store. Thankfully, he lived in an area populated enough to have one within a minute’s walking distance. Which was… convenient (hey, maybe that’s why they’re called convenience stores).

Karma kept his head right down, speeding over to the chocolates section as though he was in the midst of a guilty affair. Unfortunately for him, the eye catching display items were definitely… romantic. Huge, heart shaped boxes filled with a variety of flavours and designs- he definitely couldn’t give that to Nagisa. If he even got him anything at all.

Feeling the nerves rise, Karma simply reacted, pulling out his phone. Not that he knew who he was expecting to ask for advice, exactly. Nagisa was his best friend. Or, the only person he actually
trusted anyway. His other option would be Nakamura, at a push, but he wasn’t sure if he was willing to suffer the humiliation. Also, as far as he knew, she was away in England right then. Completely different time zone. He scrolled down his contacts, before something struck him.

Already it was turning out to be a bad idea. But Karma didn’t know what else to do. He had never been so proud that he refused to ask for help when he really needed it. And, well, who else would actually answer him whilst being mostly impartial to the actual situation? She had offered, if he

Say you weren’t dating someone and you’d like to be, but you don’t want to actually suggest that. What kind of chocolates do you buy?

who is this?
remembered correctly.

Wasn’t that exactly the start of his whole internal debate about it? He supposed it didn’t matter what specific social norms said, the definition was pretty much that valentines was for guys, and white day was for girls. And neither of them, as he was so intimately aware, were girls. Sure, he used to tease Nagisa about that kind of thing, but they were in middle school then. Karma knew him well enough that there were way better and more original things to make fun of him for.
He shoved his phone in his pocket, wanting to forget that entire conversation ever happened. It was a pretty good idea, though. Then at least it wasn’t such a big deal. If Nagisa freaked out, Karma could just say he picked it up as a snack. It didn’t have to mean anything. So Karma cracked, picking up a kitkat and sheepishly handing it over at the till.

After that, he just had to hope Nagisa wasn’t paying much attention. He didn’t want to explain why he was in the store so long only to buy a single chocolate bar. Or maybe he did want that, because
Nagisa’s inquisitive face was incredibly attractive. At that thought, he had to stop, clenching his eyes closed for a moment.

*Don’t think about it,* he told himself. Don’t think about how Nagisa’s concentrated eyes seemed to glow through the otherwise pitch darkness, illuminated by nothing but the moon and the streetlights seeping in through the gaps in the curtains. Don’t think about how it was paralysing, how Karma couldn’t see anything else, could only feel the press of Nagisa’s knees either side of his thighs, his hot breath, feather light fingers trailing up his length.

Physically shaking his head, Karma took a deep breath. *Not appropriate right now.* Later, however, that remained open… Not that they did that kind of stuff every night. With both of them at work with jobs that weren’t just restricted to office hours, on top of normal life stuff and Daichi, sometimes they just couldn’t spare the energy. Admittedly, cuddling up with him was just as nice.

“I’m home,” Karma called, sliding his shoes off.

Right on cue, Daichi came sliding around the corner, almost falling over with the way his socks slipped against the floor. Karma had come to predict this kind of greeting, so he was ready when Daichi launched himself, right into Karma’s arms. He picked him up properly, like he was still a toddler. Of course, Daichi was a little heavier, but hey, he could even still pick up *Nagisa* with no problem. He’d only stop with Daichi if he ever got taller than him.

“Papa,” he said, “guess what happened at school today!”

“Hmm, I don’t know,” Karma finally put him down. “Win something?”

He giggled. “No, I-“

“Karma san!”

He was a little taken aback, to see the four year old, but he opened his arms up to her anyway.

“Hello again, Nao chan. You’ve grown really big since I last saw you, huh?”

Nao laughed wildly. “’s good! I wanna be tall.”

“Well, your parents are tall,” he said, “Daichan’s unlucky because he got his height from his Dad.”

She gasped. “From Nagisa san?”

“I’m gonna be taller than you,” Daichi said defiantly. “And you’ll regret this.”

Was that a threat? Karma was so proud. Not that he thought it would actually happen. As much as Daichi wanted otherwise, he’d pretty much remained below average for his age since he was born. Karma had noticed some of the kids in the year below him were the same height or even taller, and that had to suck. Honestly, Karma kind of enjoyed him at his smaller size.

Nagisa finally showed himself, looking *exactly* like he’d been watching after two kids. “It was a favour to Karasuma san, since today’s their anniversary. Bit- *Irina* san was sure you wouldn’t mind, and she was so flustered I didn’t want to argue with her.”

“It’s fine,” Karma waved him off, “what time are they picking her up?”

He shrugged. “At some point this evening, hopefully not too late. I was thinking about making them dinner kind of soon, though, just in case she needs to go off to sleep before they come back.”
“I’ll cook you something,” Karma said, a little too quickly. The idea of having dinner alone with Nagisa… he liked that quite a bit.

Nagisa smiled. “Are you sure? It seemed like a long day~”

“It’s fine,” he emphasised. “You don’t wanna cook twice, right?”

“Right,” he said. “I’ll… go do that, then.”

Karma turned back to the kids. “What were you doing, anyway? We can play a game, hm? How about… floor is lava?”

Not that he was in a bad mood, but even Daichi perked up at that idea. And, well, Karma had no problem with messing up his apartment just a little. They spent the next few minutes constructing a little obstacle course, which pretty much included deconstructing the sofa and a whole bunch of pillows and cushions. Of course, Nao was still pretty young, but she was Karasuma’s daughter, and already had some kind of impressive agility. Karma didn’t exactly participate, but he made sure he was in the right position to dive in before any injuries occurred. Maki, on the other hand, made a pretty good attempt of it, though she soon gave up and curled up in the corner.

“Okay dinner’s rea~” Nagisa stopped in the middle of his sentence. “What happened?”

“’m practicing parkour!” Daichi said, before launching himself from the sofa and attempting a roll landing.


They both groaned about it, but they did as they were told to, sitting at the table properly. In the meantime, reading the look Nagisa gave him loud and clear, Karma set about cleaning up the extreme amount of mess that game had caused. Which was a little ridiculous, it was his apartment, but he knew that it would just stress Nagisa out to look at.

Even he knew the line with such a physical activity right after eating, so most games Karma would consider a good time were pretty much banned. So, maybe it wasn’t the best parenting, but he stuck an inoffensive movie on for them to watch, once they were done with eating. Honestly, Karma had become immune to the point he didn’t even find kiddy movies that unentertaining anymore.

It wasn’t long after it had finished that Nao, who was pretty much flagging despite Daichi’s best attempts to explain something or other to her, was finally picked up by her parents. They saw the happy couple relatively frequently, though they were a little busy for regular drop ins. Someone or other had attempted to add them to the group chat, to no avail.

“Thanks for looking after our brat,” Irina said, taking the very sleepy child into her arms.

Karasuma reached for her, removing her from his wife’s grip to cuddle against his own chest. “Stop calling her that.”

He was always a lot softer with Nao around. Karma got that, though. It was hard to feel any kind of bad way with Daichi right in his eyeline. Other than that, Karasuma was the same as he’d always been, even with his recent promotion. Of course, working for the ministry of defence, he didn’t know much about it. Not really his department, unless budgets were involved.

Nagisa smiled. “It was nice to have you again, Nao chan.”
She didn’t seem like she was awake enough to pay much attention to that, but as far as Karma was concerned that was a success. They didn’t stick around after Nagisa had said that, which was pretty fair. It was getting kind of late for a four year old anyway. Or, kind of late in general. It wasn’t even the weekend yet but Karma was ready to sleep for about fifteen hours.

“Papa,” Daichi started the moment they were gone, “I didn’t tell you my news.”

“Oh yeah?” He looked down at him. “What is it?”

He seemed to stand up just a little taller. “Yagami Sensei said I can take the kanji proficiency test! Well, everyone has to do it, but they’re doing level nine and I get to do level three!”

It took Karma a moment to figure out what he was on about. He vaguely remembered it being a thing of his childhood, he skipped most of them… But it was pretty common to use the earlier levels for practising. He didn’t even know anybody who had gone all the way to level one, maybe a couple who had a level two… as adults. Daichi was only seven, and his teacher was recommending he take three already? Not that Karma was that surprised, he of course knew his son was smart. Pride, though, was something else.

“Well,” Karma said, “you better study then. It’s pretty tough.”

Daichi nodded diligently. “Of course,” he turned, heading for his room, “I’m gonna pass!”

“-I didn’t mean now.”

But he was already gone. Well, if that was what he wanted. He’d been pretty tolerant, when Nao was there, and there was only so much he could expect out of him. Karma didn’t miss the way Maki faithfully bounded after him, allowed the privilege of entering his room. Which pretty much left Karma alone with Nagisa… there were worse things.

“What do you want to eat?”

Nagisa thought about it for a moment. “I don’t mind. I like most of the things you cook.”

He felt warm at the compliment, he really did, but it wasn’t exactly helpful. Karma got on with it, delegating himself to the kitchen. Thankfully, he had a pretty good knowledge of what Nagisa actually liked, and what he didn’t. He didn’t really have time to make sushi, but there were a few other options.

Unsurprisingly, Karma felt at home with a knife in his hand. As much as it was funny to see the wide eye concern on Nagisa’s face when he tossed it about in the air sometimes, it really just was comfortable for him. Not that cutting vegetables julienne and stabbing people were identical skillsets, exactly, but that didn’t matter. He couldn’t go around practicing his knife skills on people, so cooking was a good outlet. Besides, he was pretty good at it, from his own assessments.

“Okay,” he said eventually, once everything was ready and dished up, “you better eat all of this.”

Nagisa’s eyes widened from the table. “It looks really good.”

He almost rolled his eyes. “Eat up, then, it’ll get cold if you just stare at it.”

“Right,” he smiled.

Karma liked his dinners with Nagisa, he really did. Usually Daichi was also there, and he lacked the ability to shut up for more than a minute at a time. Those were good too, but he also liked this.
A part of him wanted to blurt out the extent of his feelings right then and there, but somehow Karma just couldn’t bring himself to.

“I wanted to tell you something,” he said.

Nagisa put down his chopsticks. “Something serious?”

“Kinda,” he started, but then he lost his nerve.

The thing was, annoying, through it all, all Karma wanted was for Nagisa to be happy. Just one of those wide, bright smiles was enough to give Karma a burst of energy that would last him a week, but he always wanted more. Like his own little live in ball of sunshine. And what Karma was about to say, it was a big deal. But… he wanted joy, not for Nagisa to be grateful and in his debt.

Karma swallowed. “I heard at work,” he continued, downplaying his involvement entirely, “there’s going to be some changes in a few policies and stuff… it’s a lot of legal mumbo jumbo but essentially a few things are going to change with discrimination laws. You-omegas won’t be forced into suppressants anymore, for example. It’s not a lot, but, I thought you’d be happy anyway.”

“Oh,” he said, “that’s… really good…”

It wasn’t quite the stunned joy Karma had been hoping for, but he knew Nagisa incredibly well. Well enough to see the gears start to turn behind his eyes, which had already started to light up with possibility. Of course, Nagisa didn’t really need to say anything. Even if it wasn’t a sudden burst of happiness, he knew that in general, over time, it would come to make a difference to his life.

“Are you done?” He asked, looking down at the food.

Nagisa nodded. “Yeah, it was really good.”

He tried his best not to beam up and just stood instead, taking both dishes back into the kitchen. He was a little surprised Nagisa hadn’t immediately offered, but maybe processing time was just exactly what he needed. That was fine too, honestly he didn’t really care about doing the dishes, considering he had to clean up the rest of what he’d been cooking with anyway.

Times hadn’t changed, though, and Nagisa still had a habit of sneaking up on him sometimes. Karma shouldn’t have been particularly surprised that he managed to get behind him in the kitchen without him noticing, but he still jolted in shock when Nagisa wrapped his arms around his waist, resting his head against his back with a sigh. And immediately, all the tension left his body.

Karma wasn’t sure how long they stood like that, though he did eventually turn around, and Nagisa’s arms fell to his side sheepishly. Right then, Karma just really wanted to kiss him. Not make out with him, not suggestively slot their lips together until they eventually fell into his bed, but just an innocent touch that didn’t have to mean anything in particular. Karma… knew better though. Especially in the state of mind Nagisa was currently in, it would freak him out and make him overthink things way more than he should.

“I got you something,” he said quietly. “I was going to give it to you earlier, but then I got distracted.”

The kitkat was a tiny bit crushes from staying in his pocket so long, but Nagisa didn’t seem to care when he handed it over. Maybe he seemed a tiny bit confused about the chocolate bar, but not ungrateful. In fact, he held it gently, like Karma was handing him some sort of precious metal instead. Maybe it was a good thing he didn’t get the obvious valentines chocolates.
“Thanks,” he said, his signature wide smile forming on his face again.

And then Karma considered that maybe he was so in love with Nagisa it was actually starting to hurt him.

Chapter End Notes

This one got weirdly fluffy, huh? Karma's a good babysitter, really.

I wanted to get this out today because it's my birthday tomorrow! (August 20th if you're reading this in the future) Kind of sad, because the chapter after this may be someone else's birthday.... :) I have to spend the entire day in London getting a student visa though, so it's going to be... hectic to say the least. I hope you all enjoyed the chapter!
Eight Time

Chapter Summary

It's Daichi's birthday~

Chapter Notes

lmao let's pretend this didn't take a week

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Daddy! Daddy!”

“Huh?”

It was hard, being woken up by a child. Especially when he was already super tired the night before, and it was definitely before the time they had the alarm set. Daichi never usually got up crazy early… Had something happened? That was all it took for Nagisa to sit bolt upright, knocking Karma’s arm away from his waist.

Daichi vaulted up onto the bed like it was nothing, rolling to the middle of the mattress. So he definitely wasn’t hurt or anything. He was just… venturing into the room at ten to six in the morning. Fine, okay, it wasn’t like he’d ever been banned from doing that, exactly. Nagisa blinked rapidly, trying to wake himself up a little bit.

Karma groaned as his body contorted. At first Nagisa was sure he was still asleep, but then his arm swung out purposely, grabbing a hold of Daichi and yanking him down, pretty much into the middle of the bed, and cuddled him almost like a snake constricting its prey. Nagisa didn’t know if that had been Daichi’s goal, but he seemed happy enough right there.

“What are you doing?” It came out like a sleep thick mutter, and Nagisa was barely even able to make it out.

Finally, he squirmed out of Karma’s grip. “I’m too excited to sleep any longer! I can’t do it Papa! B-besides, it’s my birthday and I wanna be awake for as much of it as I can.”

That caused Nagisa’s brain to finally kick into gear properly. Of course, it was the 21st, Daichi’s birthday. Which meant that he was actually looking at an eight year old, right then. Nagisa definitely needed some more sleep, because he wasn’t ready to unpack that reality. It felt like just yesterday Daichi couldn’t even walk properly.

“Not for another hour,” Karma said, yanking him back down again.

“Papa,” he complained, shaking his arm impatiently, “that’s dumb.”

He didn’t seem to care though. “Nuh uh. You weren’t born yet, so you’re still seven.”
“No fair!”

“You should have thought about that, when you decided to be born three days late.”

“But I was a baby! Babies don’t know anything!”

Well, Nagisa wasn’t getting any extra sleep with that dispute going on right next to him. He cut his losses, rolling out of bed and pulling himself up onto his feet. He supposed all things considered, it wasn’t *that* early. Not when he and Karma both had work pretty soon. Then again, there was a difference between waking up to a normal alarm, and their son jumping into bed with them.

Once Nagisa was done with the regular morning bathroom stuff, he stumbled into the kitchen, and was soon joined by Karma. Or, Karma if he’d turned into a zombie. He yawned widely, trying and failing to co-ordinate pressing the button of the kettle correctly the first time. Which only proved to Nagisa how much he needed it.

“Is Daichi still in bed?” Nagisa decided to ask.

“Well,” Karma sighed.

Honestly, he didn’t get how Daichi had managed to manipulate *that* situation. Well, he hoped he enjoyed it, the huge double bed all to himself. It wasn’t going to last that long. Karma was pretty much dead to the world until he had the coffee, so Nagisa started on breakfast. And yes, it was pancakes. If there was any day he was allowing it, it was a birthday.

“Ugh,” Karma’s face slammed into to table.

That surprised Nagisa a little, because usually he was a little more put together in the mornings. Whatever the case, he was pretty much gone from the world, sipping occasionally at his coffee. Nagisa didn’t really like the bitter taste so much, so he joined Karma with a cup of tea. Maki came up to his feet under the table, brushing what was left of her tail against his leg.

“Okay!” Daichi ran in, “I’m up no-*for me?!*

His eyes widened at the sight of the table. It was nothing that fancy, exactly, just a huge stack of pancakes in the middle with a few toppings options spread out. Nagisa figured it was easier that way, so he could just take whatever he wanted. Not the entire plate, though. He was sure Daichi would probably attempt that.

It only took a few seconds for Nagisa’s theory to be proven right. He piled his serving high, pretty much taking a small bit of every topping, as though he was somehow afraid that he wouldn’t get to taste them all. That left Nagisa and Karma with a pancake each, which was okay considering he wasn’t even that hungry.

“So yummy,” Daichi said, mouth full of whipped cream.

That was the moment Karma’s brain started to click into gear. “Happy birthday.”

He giggled. “You should have said earlier.”

“Maybe I’d have remembered if you didn’t wake me up like that.”

Daichi put his fork down, reaching under the table to pull Maki up and onto his lap, completely ignoring Karma’s complaint. Maki was happy to go, though, curling herself up against his chest. He continued to eat despite the cat, though Nagisa kept a close eye on it, lest he try and feed her...
some of the pancakes.

“It’s probably time you get dressed,” Nagisa said eventually.

“But,” Daichi, who was still in pyjamas, began to protest. “Don’t I get my presents?”

Karma took his plate from him, patting him hard on the head. “Only if you get your butt up and ready.”

“Fine,” he drew out, placing Maki on the table, who immediately started on the remainder of his plate.

Not that Nagisa made an effort to stop her. In fact, he just kind of stared blankly at the whole scene before his eyes. That was until Daichi rushed back in, clad in his school uniform that time. He almost looked expectant, like he’d fulfilled some kind of challenge. Which, Nagisa supposed he had, in a way. Well, it was only fair that he woke himself up.

“Okay,” Nagisa said, “do you want to open your presents, then?”

They cleared the table a little bit, but there wasn’t much they could do to hold Daichi’s enthusiasm back. He started on the cards, first, since a few had been sent to him. One from Nagisa’s parents, though they’d seen him about a month prior, it had been handed to him back then. Similarly, there was one from Karma’s parents. Nagisa was pretty sure Karma wasn’t exactly in contact with them, but he supposed it was nice enough of them to remember. On top of that, Kayano, Sugino, and Nakamura had all managed to send something, each extending their regrets that they were too busy to see him in person that day.

The only other actual card they’d received was from Asano. He was pretty busy, all the way over in America, but he still found the time to send something. In fact, in true style, it had arrived a week early on the dot. Nagisa couldn’t help but feel slightly amused at the way he’d signed it ‘Asano’, as though Daichi was ever going to actually refer to him as that.

“Alright,” Karma said, a wide grin on his face, “are you ready for the presents?”

Even though their living arrangement had been solid for two months, they hadn’t actually consulted each other on what they were buying him. Maybe that had just felt weird to him, since Daichi had been three the last time he received a joint gift from them. So, it was as much of a surprise for him as it was for Daichi, when he was handed a rather large looking rectangle from Karma.

“Woah!” Daichi’s eyes lit up. “This is so cool.”

Karma shrugged. “I figured you’re old enough now, so you can stop bugging me about it. And, besides, your aim could use a bit of work-“

In his arms, he held a toy NERF gun, and Nagisa wasn’t sure what to think. Instinctively he wanted to be kind of mad about it, the idea of promoting any kind of violence, but then he took a long deep breath. It could have been a lot worse. Clearly, the thing was designed much more like a toy than to resemble any kind of actual weapon. It was fine. Nagisa was just… a little stunted when it came to the toys young boys played with, considering his upbringing. Karma would never be that-

“Are these nunchucks?!” Daichi said, having already opened his next present.

That time, Karma definitely didn’t miss the horror in Nagisa’s eyes. “They’re only foam.”
“Ah, be careful with those!”

Nagisa stood up in panic, but it was clear Daichi wasn’t listening. In fact, he was happily spinning them around, as though it wasn’t actually taking much effort. Nor was it a concern of his that he might hit and break something within the apartment. At the very least, Nagisa was comforted by the fact that he seemed to be aware of how to use them properly. Or maybe that should be concerning.

“Alright Bruce Lee~” Karma stood up himself. “We get it. Why don’t you put it away for now, huh?”

“Okay…” He put them down on the chair, but didn’t hesitate to rush over to Karma, giving him a proper hug. “Thank you!”

Karma smiled lightly. “Maybe we can try them on the balcony later, huh?”

Well, at least he was considering not wrecking the entire apartment. Nagisa still wasn’t sure how he felt about any of that, but at least that was excitement on his son’s face, rather than disappointment or boredom. And maybe Nagisa was okay with it, so long as nobody actually got hurt. Then Daichi looked over at him, slight expectation in his eyes.

“R-right,” Nagisa remembered. “Uhm, it’s not really anything physical, but here.”

Daichi took the envelope, and read its contents swiftly. “Really?”

The thing was, Daichi wasn’t allowed to buy books anymore. His parents? They’d been way too soft about it. Which had lead to their apartment turning into a library. And, as Daichi got older, the books got a lot thicker and took up a lot of space. So, it was a (perhaps cruel sounding) mutual decision, between he and Karma. Even at their worst, parenting seemed to be one of the few things they agreed on. No more buying books, instead he had to go to the library each week swap them out.

So, what Nagisa was gifting was pretty rare for him. Ten books, of his own choosing, to own permanently- one he had the time to take him to a book store. It wasn’t exactly flashy to hand over, but he wanted Daichi to have the full choice, so it kind of had to be like that. Daichi seemed pretty happy about it, though, running over to give him a slightly suffocating hug too.

“Get all the rest of your things together for school,” Nagisa said eventually, suddenly aware of the way time was moving along.

He didn’t miss the way Daichi groaned, but he still did have to go to school, no matter what day it was. Which meant Nagisa also did need to get ready for work. There wasn’t exactly a discussion about it, but he slipped off to get dressed, leaving Karma to the rest of the cleaning for the time being. Not that it was the hardest task ever.

Nagisa was already dressed, though, by the time he entered the bedroom too. Karma didn’t really acknowledge him, shimmying out of his pyjama bottoms to pull on his suit, and Nagisa averted his eyes. They had sex far too frequently for Nagisa to be able to justify his slight embarrassment, but that was different. Karma’s touches were often too distracting to even allow him the time to think about it.

“Weapons, Karma?” He tried instead.

“Aww come on,” he said, “he’s wanted that gun for years. And the nunchucks are helpful! You agreed to let him do karate anyway, so really I’m just helping him practise.”
Not sure how much of that excuse he really believed, Nagisa rolled his eyes. “Sure.”

“The books are worse,” Karma retorted, “where do you think we’re going to fit them?”

“I don’t know,” Nagisa shrugged, “build him a shelf or something.”

“Why should I do it? It’s your gift.”

He couldn’t take that. “*Your* apartment.”

“I think two months is more than enough time to count as *living here* too, Nagisa-“

“Right,” he suddenly felt quiet.

In reality, it wouldn’t actually be so long before his excuse to stay here would run out. Sure, he’d heard that work on his apartment complex was taking a little longer than expected, but work *was* still being done. And then what? He and Karma just go right back to the way they were? That concept seemed uncomfortably wrong to him, though he couldn’t exactly picture any other eventualities.

Karma waved a hand in front of his eyes. “Earth to Nagisa?

“Are you sure you have all the ingredients for the cake?”

He frowned, working on knotting his tie. “You’re *that* worried about it? It’s fine, if I don’t have enough of something it’s not like we live far away from a store.”

Nagisa nodded. “You’ll be late.”

Sighing, he had one final pass at straightening his collar. “Stop that. I’m okay, aren’t I? I’ll see you later.”

Nagisa followed him out of the bedroom anyway, just catching it as Karma gave Daichi a hug goodbye, before finally taking off. Like pretty much every morning, Nagisa held in the ‘have a great day’ comment he so naturally wanted to let out. In an attempt to sound too much like a typical housewife, he refused to say it.

“Come on,” Nagisa addressed Daichi, after he’d put some food and water down for Maki, “it’s probably time you go too.”

“Okay,” Daichi stood expectantly by the door.

Nagisa grabbed the rest of his stuff, letting Daichi out before turning behind him to lock up. It was always kind of sad, going entirely separate ways. As much as Nagisa loved his job. He couldn’t believe he such a short time left with his class, the fact that they were so close to graduating kind of freaked him out. It felt like barely any time had passed at all.

Yet, he supposed things were very different to when he’d first walked in, just over a year ago. For one, the classroom was relatively clean, and so were his students, actually. Some of them had even neated themselves out for their recent university entrance exams, job interviews, everything. It made him swell with pride, that the majority of everyone was taking things seriously these days.

He had to dodge an attempted hit with a slingshot upon his entrance to the classroom, though. “Good morning, everyone.”

“Nagisa sensei,” Maeda complained once he’d finished with roll call, “don’t you think this is kind
of pointless?"

“School?” He asked weakly.

“It’s just, we’re all already sorted, so we don’t really need to learn anything else, right?”

He supposed he… kind of had a point. Nagisa wasn’t sure if he wanted to buy into it, though. Honestly, he didn’t remember a lot of his final days of school, since he was so preoccupied with university preparations at the time. It was a little bit dumb, that they had to sit in school for a further month despite already having applied for everything.

“Okay,” he said finally, “why don’t we learn what you want to, then?”

They all looked at him expectantly.

“Uhm,” Tanaka stuck his hand up, “I have one. You never told us the story of you and Akabane san. You said, at the festival, ‘I’ll tell you after you’ve finished your exams’. We’re on the edge of our seats here, Nagisa Sensei. He kind of gave me the creeps y’know.”

“Yeah,” Mitsubishi agreed, “dude’s kinda scary.”

“Unless it’s another mob cover up.”

Nagisa stood up, exasperated. “For the last time, I have no connection to the yakuza!”

“How about the mafia?”

All he could do was splutter.

“Aw come on,” Satou said, “we just wanna hear about your boyfriend.”

“He-he’s not my boyfriend!”

Maeda got a devilish sheen across his expression. “Oh yeah? What’s with all those marks on your neck then?”

Automatically, Nagisa whipped around, hand coming up protectively to the visible portions of his neck, feeling around for the pain that would come from touching a bruise. And then it occurred to Nagisa that… Karma was many things, but he wasn’t stupid. He wouldn’t just give Nagisa a visible hickey, not in his right mind. And Nagisa would have noticed already! And then he realised that Maeda was just messing with him. But, he’d already shown a kind of panic in his eyes, which was an admission of guilt that he was sure everyone picked up on.

His students burst out laughing, of course. “He actually checked?!”

“Well, you pretty much just admitted it, didn’t you?”

“Maybe I should add it to a list,” Satou said, before promptly throwing a crunched up paper ball at him and actually landing a hit. “Ways to kill Nagisa Sensei; get him flustered like a middle school girl.”

He stopped in his embarrassed tracks. Something about that brought him right back to his teenage self, where he’d kept an extensive list of his own teacher’s supposed weaknesses. Nagisa snapped out of it, then, and tried to stand a little bit straighter. There was no way he was going to start going completely easy on them, even if it was close to the end of the year.
“Well done,” Nagisa said, “your final grades have already been submitted, but you did get a hit.”

“Then tell us something.”

Maybe letting Daichi come to that festival had been a mistake. Nothing bad had happened, surprisingly his class had been on their best behaviour, and Karma hadn’t exactly stuck around for a conversation. But it was impossible to not make the familial connection, when Daichi and Karma were stood beside each other. And of course, Nagisa had dodged the questions back then.

“It’s not so exciting,” he said finally. “We were just friends in middle school, and we made an error of judgement. Really. Does anyone have any actual academic questions?”

That was pretty much how Nagisa spent the rest of his day. No matter how begrudgingly it was, his students did manage to come up with some stuff they wanted to learn about. Which was a lot more fun than teaching the actual curriculum, in his mind. And distracting enough to prevent any further personal life questions, though he supposed he couldn’t exactly blame their curiosity.

Nagisa dropped all thought of it, though, when the day actually was over. Usually, it wasn’t such a big deal, but he knew he needed to get home pretty swiftly that time. It was one of the few moments in his life when he was kind of jealous of Karma’s car. Not that Nagisa knew how to drive, nor had the time to, but it sure would be convenient.

Still, he managed to get back about ten minutes before Daichi did. It was impossible to miss, with the heavy footed way he entered, and the call of ‘I’m home’. Not that Nagisa had particularly settled himself, either. In fact he had kind of just been waiting around until he finally got back, since he needed to take him out of the apartment for a little bit.

“Did you have a nice day?” Nagisa said, though his son looked slightly more dishevelled than when he’d left that morning. “Nice to see you, Junchan.”

“H-hi, Nagisa san.”

It had been Daichi’s only request this year for his birthday, which was surprising because he didn’t usually request anything. But he’d said, loud and clear, that he wanted a party. Specifically, he wanted a party with Jun. Which… Nagisa supposed they could call it a party. Really, he had no problem with having Daichi’s best friend over, and Jun seemed like a really good kid. He’d even caught himself using Daichi’s nickname for him, since he said it so much.

“Daddy,” Daichi complained instead of answering, “can we go now?”

“Go where?” Nagisa replied. “You never actually said where you wanted to go.”

He grinned. “I wanna play with my new toys at the park!”

Nagisa looked over at Jun. “Do you want to do that?”

“Sure!” Jun nodded. “Can I get the gun?”

They were just as bad as each other, then. Nagisa wasn’t sure whether that should be a relief or concern. Not that he thought Jun was in any way a bad friend to Daichi. In fact, they got along so well it was like a dream. Much better to have at least one friend than to be lonely all the time, though Daichi had hardly complained about it before.

“Let’s go,” Nagisa said, not wanting to face the idea of keeping Daichi restrained for too much longer.
He was a little surprised that of all the places Daichi wanted to go for his birthday, he’d chosen the park, which unlike most kids his age he tried his best to avoid. Then again, maybe eight was a mature enough age to realise that Nagisa wouldn’t agree to letting him run around with a fake gun inside. Or… he wasn’t sure what the criteria of a gun was. It fired bullets, even if they were foam…

Nagisa blanched when Daichi pulled out the nunchucks too. “Those are a real weapon, you know! Be careful.”

“Don’t worry Daddy,” Daichi replied nonchalantly, “Sensou sensei said to only use it in self defence.”

At that point, he decided to just park himself on a bench, supervising but not paying too much attention, which was probably good for his own sanity. It wasn’t so bad, their playing seemed pretty innocent. Though, the way Daichi managed to actually block a few of the bullets with the nunchucks, through means that seemed purposeful rather than dumb luck, sat a bit uncomfortably with him.

They actually seemed happy to stay there for quite a while. At least, a few hours passed, with Nagisa making some use out of himself and doing a little bit of extra work. Which was basically a reasonable time to assume Karma had managed to get himself home and done whatever baking he needed to, plus it was getting a little cold out since it was February and Nagisa hadn’t taken a particularly thick coat out.

It wasn’t anything fancy, when they got back in. Karma needed the kitchen space for the cake, apparently, so he’d just ordered pizza. Which clearly, no matter what, was going to go down well with Daichi. Plus it was just kind of convenient, since slices could just kind of be taken as needed. It didn’t really have the same feeling as a proper sit down meal, so Daichi and Jun continued whatever conversation they’d been having in the park. Even Maki came along, and Nagisa definitely caught Daichi sneaking her a crust under the table.

“-Nagisa,” Karma nudged him, “I asked you, how was work?”

He blinked. “Oh, good, uhm,” he didn’t really feel like telling Karma about his student’s teasing, “you?”

He shrugged. “Same old same old. I think I found my favourite onigiri flavour, though.”

“That’s… exciting,” Nagisa said wryly.

“It’s been a long process, lots of trial and error.”

“I said I’d make you lunch if you want it,” he offered. “It’s not like it takes much time.”

He grinned. “Will I get a cute note too-“

Daichi cleared his throat, then, showing that he and Jun were clearly done. “Can we do the cake now?”

So maybe at eight years old, he was just as impatient as he’d been at seven. But that was probably also somewhat his and Karma’s faults for allowing it so often. Just like then, when Karma stood up with a slight eyeroll and took his plate, disappearing into the kitchen. Daichi swung his legs in anticipation, before he walked in again.

Admittedly, he’d done a pretty good job on the cake considering the time frame, and it was
decorated well enough that it might have even passed for professional. It looked like a basic sort of sponge cake, but it was iced with what Nagisa assumed was strawberry frosting, with a few fresh pieces of fruit dotted around. Not to mention the eight candles that poked out of the top.

“Alright Daichan,” Karma said, “make a wish~”

It was hard not to miss the slightly troubling look of determination in his eyes as he blew those candles out in one swoop.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you so much everyone for my own birthday wishes! They were all so sweet! Hopefully the next chapter should be up sooner, but just a prewarning here that I’m actually moving to Tokyo in two weeks, so my uploads might slow down just a tiny bit :’) But hey, it just means I’ll be closer to getting to write that idol au :’) (if you don’t know what I’m talking about join the discord lmao)

Have a great day everyone! I hope you like the fluff times!
“Papa!” Daichi marched right over to him, the second he opened the door. “I need to use your laptop!”

“Well nice to see you too, Daichan,” Karma rolled his eyes, attempting to take his shoes off. That was kind of difficult, with an eight year old completely blocking his path.

He didn’t seem to care, really. “It’s important.”

Was it? Daichi had his very own definition of ‘important’. Sometimes, he was correct on it, others he was just being impatient. But Daichi wouldn’t be his son, if he didn’t act like a little gremlin from time to time. So, Karma gave it pretty quickly, eyeing him up as he retrieved his laptop and put it down on the dining room table.

What he hadn’t expected was for Daichi to pull a USB stick out of his pocket. And it would be impossible to mistake the determination in his eyes. Somehow, Daichi meant real business. He seemed to know what he was doing at least, plugging the stick into the side as he quickly searched through whatever files he needed to.

“Do you know about this?” Karma asked Nagisa, who had also clearly been dragged into this.

Daichi cleared his throat before he could answer, and started to press play on what appeared to be a slideshow presentation. “Junchan invited me for a sleep over this weekend,” he paused, and clicked onto the next slide, “and I already knew you were probably gonna say no, so here’s some reasons why you should let me go.”

He… was lost. “You made a whole powerpoint?”

“I have a questions slide at the end,” Daichi said sharply. “Anyway, my first point is you let me stay at Grandma and Grandpa’s for years-“

His presentation went on for quite a while, all things considered. Karma was a little impressed that he’d taken the time to sit down and focus on it for so long. And his points were kind of well articulated, enough so that even Nagisa nodded along to parts of it, before he finally wrapped things up with a punctuated bow.

Karma looked at Nagisa, and just shrugged. It was a tricky one for him, since there weren’t a
whole lot of people he’d trust to take care of Daichi for so long. But, he’d met Jun’s parents enough
times to judge that they were decent people, even if he did get the whole ‘rich people too busy for
normal life stuff’ vibe from them. Thinking about it, he supposed he didn’t have any viable
problems with it, so he was leaving it up to Nagisa.

“You really want to go?” Nagisa asked.

Daichi nodded enthusiastically. “Yeah! And now that I’m eight I’ve gotta be old enough, right?”

“Well,” Nagisa said, “okay then.”

He smiled incredibly brightly. “I can’t wait to tell Junchan!”

At least, Karma thought he was okay with it, until the days passed and Friday evening crept up on
him. It was ridiculous, because by all accounts Karma should have been very used to not having
Daichi there all the time. But, now it just felt weird to not be pounced on the moment he walked
through the door. Well, Maki was at his feet to meow at him, but she was significantly easier to
move.

Still, Karma couldn’t help but pick her up, whether Maki actually wanted him to or not. At the very
least, she didn’t start scratching him, and Karma trusted her enough to know she would have done
that if she really didn’t like it. Maybe it should have occurred to him that he was holding his pet
more like a baby, but even if it had, he wouldn’t have cared. Karma carried Maki into the kitchen,
where he could hear noise coming from.

“Oh,” Karma said, “you’re cooking.”

Nagisa’s shoulders shifted then, like he was startled. “Y-you don’t mind, do you? I just thought
you’d be tired and Daichi’s not even here, so-“

“What are you making?” Karma cut him off, before he could spiral any further.

His lips pressed tight. “Stir fry.”

It was pretty much one of the most basic meals in existence, but that didn’t matter to Karma so
much. It was true that he enjoyed cooking, but sometimes it was also nice to have the night off.
Though, maybe it would have been a good distraction in that case. Karma just nodded, though,
electing to sit on the sofa and play with Maki until Nagisa was done.

At least Maki appreciated the extra attention. She rolled around on the sofa, purring for belly
scratches. And it was hard not to oblige, not when she gave him the wide eyes. Nagisa looked a
little judgemental about it though, when he came in with their plates. Unfortunately for Maki,
noodles wasn’t really something he could give her little bits of.

“Thanks for the meal,” Karma said, before digging in.

For once, they didn’t really talk that much. Then again, he and Nagisa didn’t have a whole lot to
talk about nowadays, not when their lives were so closely bound together. Most of the time, Daichi
chatted about pretty much everything that had happened to him, so Karma didn’t really have to
think about filling the void. Not that it was an uncomfortable one.

Even when they were finished, and mutually cleared everything up. Really, Karma was more
distracted with thoughts of Daichi. Of course, he knew he was going to be just fine at Jun’s house,
but it still scared him a little more than he wanted to admit. What did he even used to do with his
life, when Daichi wasn’t there. Maybe he could go back to petting Maki, but as it turned out she
herself had gone to sleep in Daichi’s room once she’d figured out she wasn’t getting any extra food. Karma thought about petting her in there, but that seemed extra sad. There was a line and sitting in his son’s bedroom with a cat was definitely crossing it. In the end, he went back into the living room, where Nagisa was already semi curled up, working on his grading for the day, or whatever he was doing. That seemed like a good idea actually, since he didn’t have a child to distract him.

Except, it was hard to focus. He tried, he really did, to pay attention to some of the paperwork he really should have been doing. His eyes just didn’t want to focus, words practically swimming off the page. Usually, he’d have been able to do it based on pure will of wishing his work away, but somehow he just couldn’t stop his restlessness.

“Stop that,” Nagisa said softly. “You’ve been tapping your foot like that for an hour.”

He didn’t realise he was being so transparent. “But what if something happens?”

The look Nagisa gave Karma was one of slight exasperation. “Then we freak out,” he reached over and put his hand on Karma’s knee, which was admittedly comforting, “not before.”

He forced himself to take a deep breath, though he was still tense. “How are you so okay with this?”

“Because,” Nagisa shifted over, leaning on him slightly, “it’s just a sleepover.”

Karma attempted to settle himself. “What do we even do now?”

“I don’t know,” Nagisa admitted, “drink wine, or something.” He was obviously joking, but Karma still felt himself blanche a little.

Frankly, Karma had no idea how his own parents had been so comfortable leaving him alone when he was younger. He could barely stand the idea of leaving Daichi for one night with somebody he didn’t entirely trust, alone for months at a time seemed unfathomable. He knew Daichi would probably want his own life, eventually, but it was so far off in his mind, Karma didn’t want to think about it too much. If he had it his way, Daichi would still be two, just about getting the hang of basic words.

“Sounds like a bad idea,” he said finally. He didn’t trust himself and Nagisa around alcohol.

Though, in the now slightly dim lamp light, Nagisa looked particularly good. He’d thrown on some comfortable sweats after work (how glamorous), though he’d kept the shirt, which was undone by two buttons from the neck down. Whilst he’d seen Nagisa look jaw dropping before (many times), the mismatched look of it all was probably his favourite. It was so effortless, so uncaring. It was Nagisa just as he naturally was, and Karma had no urge to put his guard up around it. It was the closest to being naked.

And oh, that was a fun train of thought. In fact, he was wrong. Naked Nagisa was definitely the best Nagisa. Maybe there should be different categories or something, because otherwise there would be no contest, ever. Karma truly felt the urge to kiss the supportive smile from his face, desire surging through his body. Though, he hesitated. Every other ‘encounter’ had taken place in the middle of the night shielded underneath layers of blankets. Those touches were down to wandering hands, heat of the moment lust. If he was to kiss Nagisa then, so openly, it would be inexcusable. And Nagisa had such a tendency to overthink things like this, Karma knew. Whatever their relationship had turned into was so fragile… but Nagisa was leaning close…

Before losing his nerve, he darted in, pressing his lips to the corner of Nagisa’s mouth. Instead of
punching him in the jaw, Nagisa changed the angle of his head, slotting their lips together in a true kiss. So, not a bad reaction, then. Karma sighed into it, pressing closer into his body. Even if it went no further, he could be more than satisfied with one of Nagisa’s sweet kisses, which seemed to calm him at the very soul.

All of the paperwork was abandoned right then, from the both of them. And yes, the rest of his slightly troubling thoughts went with it. He couldn’t think of much at all when Nagisa was kissing him, like his brain just shut down and was full up with him.

As had been the trend recently, it did end up going further. Just as Nagisa seemed to consider ending it, Karma wound his hands in his hair, kissing him deeper before he could pull away. It only caused Nagisa to follow the motion, hand sliding down to grip at Karma’s shoulders. From the slight almost undetectable shift in his scent, it was clear even outside the physical kiss that he wanted this.

Nagisa’s scent was usually like fresh fruit. Though he was sure Nagisa would rather he smelt of gun metal or something, it was actually pretty neutral in comparison to the sickly syrup he’d experienced with other omegas. Karma found it much more tolerable, refreshing in a way. In arousal, however, it became slightly toasted, covered with a hint of caramel or toffee or something. The slight burn was unmistakable. Of course, his suppressants muted it a lot, but times like this brought certain things to the surface.

Karma blinked for a moment, forcing himself to stop breathing in so heavily, lest his mind get completely clouded. During their kisses, he’d pushed Nagisa down slightly, tilting him in the suggestion of lying flat against the sofa cushion. Tentatively, he let go of Nagisa’s head, skirting his fingers instead around the hem of Nagisa’s shirt – much easier to take off whilst not lying vertically. Looking at him through slightly hooded eyes, Nagisa’s own hand moved, undoing two more buttons to give Karma the space to slide the clothing off him.

Avoiding the too intimate sides of his neck, Karma couldn’t help but dive in and suck the skin from the centre of Nagisa’s throat, just below his adam’s apple. As he did so, they naturally rolled back down again, though Karma made sure to hover slightly so he wasn’t crushing Nagisa’s much smaller body with his weight.

It wasn’t exactly like Nagisa to just lie back and let Karma touch him, but that’s all he seemed to do as Karma trailed his lips further down Nagisa’s body. He watched, no, observed Karma’s actions. Of course Karma didn’t mind, persuaded to make even more of a show of sliding his tongue down the flat of his stomach. He didn’t have the whole stereotypical ‘pure and untouched skin’ thing going on. In fact he had a couple of scars littering his sides from a few accidental nicks and falls during their time in class 3E, leaving the surface unsmooth. Just peeking out from his trousers were the pale stretch marks he’d worn for years, which created unmistakable ridges in his skin.

Karma glanced up, noticing how Nagisa’s eyes had fluttered shut. That slightly dimmed the crushing intimacy of the moment, at least. He traced the line of one of the marks with his index finger, top to bottom, noticing the muscles tense beneath his touch. No other person came closer to physical perfection than Nagisa. Smooth, unblemished skin was boring. There was no evidence of life there. Karma could spend hours tracing every spec of Nagisa’s body, if he was permitted.

Maybe that’s just one of the things that came with being in love. The idea of anybody else didn’t dimmed in comparison to the man right there, laying underneath him. Not that he’d ever really wanted anybody else before either, but now he’d actually had it, he could never touch somebody who wasn’t Nagisa. Karma forced himself to take a deep breath, before he got too lost in that sentiment.
With the heaviness of the atmosphere, Karma pulled back slightly, creating a gap between their bodies. Nagisa opened his eyes again, giving him a glance of question. Though his fingers trembled slightly, he reached down, sliding them under the fabric of the bottoms. From his scent alone, Karma was pretty sure he had no problem with this, but he hesitated anyway.

“Karma,” Nagisa shifted so he was more upright. “It’s-“

Before he could finish, Karma kissed him again, rougher than he had before. A quiet but all too real pit in his stomach was afraid. Afraid of rejection, afraid of the truth, afraid how deep his love for Nagisa ran. He had so much power over his heart… But Karma couldn’t push him away again. He wouldn’t let himself.

Pulling off his own shirt and tossing it aside, Karma pushed Nagisa back down, pinning him this time with one hand, as he used the other to work Nagisa’s trousers and underwear off. With the way they were both sprawled, kind of awkward (he needed to get Nagisa to buy a bigger sofa, really), it took a bit of manoeuvring. Once they were off though, and they were situated in a slightly better position, Karma couldn’t stop himself from staring. He was surprised, honestly, that Nagisa was even allowing him to hold him like that.

His eyes raked the length of Nagisa’s body slowly. Though he was clearly hard against his lower stomach, he was more drawn to the odd amount of slick trickling out of him. It wasn’t quite heat levels of mess, but it was enough to keep him transfixed. Momentarily, it struck a bit of concern. He hadn’t touched Nagisa that much. Before he could internally go through every explanation for it, the scent of it really hit him without the barrier of clothes.

Like his brain was suddenly fried or something, he was left with only the most primal urges pulsing through him. He needed to taste. It took some acrobatic shuffling before he was in the right position to seal his lips around Nagisa’s erection, leaving his legs actually dangling off the sofa. As Karma sucked him gently, he was rewarded by the softest of whimpers, a delicate hand weaving its way into his hair.

As much as he’d grown to love sucking Nagisa (another activity he’d happily do for hours on end), it wasn’t what he was drawn to. He pulled off gently, using his had to jerk him slowly as he licked a trail from tip to base, down and down, even further until he finally caught a bit of that slick on his tongue. It didn’t taste exactly like fruit, but there was a kind of intoxicating sweetness that drew him to the source.

Karma paused for a second. Technically, this was one of the few things he was still innocent to. Quickly, he darted his tongue out, licking up the trail of slick towards Nagisa’s entrance. The angle was kind of difficult, but he gripped Nagisa’s thighs to spread them wider, sliding his tongue against it. He was rewarded by even more of the fluid, directly against his lips. If Nagisa had whimpered before, the sound that came out of him was more akin to a loud whine. Against the sides of his head, he could feel the muscles of Nagisa’s thighs tighten and shake.

Not quite satisfied, but spurred on, Karma moved his tongue in the same way he would if it was a kiss. He wondered if he could truly take Nagisa apart like this, till the breaking point he so loved to see. The only disadvantage was that unlike just sucking him off, he couldn’t really let his eyes dart up every now and then to admire the flush Nagisa wore on his cheeks, the way his lips subtly parted…

As much as Nagisa was shifting his hips into it, the angle was never going to improve enough for any more than teasing. He knew well enough that Nagisa would go insane from that, the cracks already beginning to form. It was a good thing that he liked making Nagisa insane, craved it above most other things, in fact.
Nagisa was the first to move away, pulling his hips up. Instead of just telling him to stop or something, however, he turned around, going onto his hands and knees. Karma’s throat instantly went bone dry. He’d never held himself in such a position before, presenting himself like, well, an omega. Karma knew it was technically the best position for this, but... He’d never needed or wanted Nagisa to act in that way. But if it didn’t send his instincts reeling...

He couldn’t help himself, fingers digging hard into the flesh of Nagisa’s ass cheeks as he pulled them apart. Now he could see what he was doing, he trailed his lips around his rim, noticing Nagisa flinch at the light touches. Now he wasn’t supported so much by the cushions, Karma could really see his legs shake. He wanted to do it more. How fun would it be to make Nagisa collapse entirely, he wondered?

Without giving him any sort of warning, Karma dove his tongue in, where the burst of the sweet flavour was the strongest. He moaned himself, why hadn’t he been doing this for years already? Though his tongue was in no way long enough to reach the most sensitive places of his insides, it didn’t seem to matter. He curled his tongue around, getting a feel for his inner walls.

Nagisa mewled out a word that sounded suspiciously close to his name into the skin of his forearm. That only encouraged Karma to do it again, pulling his body even closer. With every small movement of his tongue, Nagisa choked out the most delectable noises, giving up on muffling it at one point to let the high pitched sobs out into the air of the room. Though he wasn’t even the one being teased, Karma needed more, more of that. He fucked his tongue in and out a little, mimicking the motion of sex.

“Ugh, Karma,” Nagisa moaned properly, and then rocked back against his tongue.

Right then and there, Karma decided Nagisa could ride his face whenever he pleased. Though to be completely honest, Nagisa might as well already own his body. He could do whatever he liked with him. Surprisingly, in that moment, it didn’t scare Karma at all.

With Nagisa grinding himself on Karma’s tongue, he let his hands wander. He left one supporting his ass, but the other wound itself underneath Nagisa’s stomach, wrapping loosely around his cock. The sweet moans picked up at that, and Nagisa moved faster. Karma was sure it would be enough to make him come, pretty soon by the way his body was vibrating, and the way his passage clenched against his tongue.

It didn’t feel like enough. Karma pulled back, biting the skin of his ass lightly.

Nagisa whipped his head around like lightning. And, oh, he looked taken apart. The flush was obvious, but his eyes were watery, so swallowed by the pupil they were barely even blue. A clear trail of drool ran down the corner of his mouth.

“Why did you stop?”

If Karma’s trousers weren’t so tight it was actually hurting him, he would’ve come right then. Just at Nagisa whining for him. God, Karma needed him. Needed to love him like this forever. Swallowing the intensity of that down, he forced himself to smirk.

“I wanted a kiss.”

He bent down, but Nagisa clearly avoided his lips, turning his head away again so Karma only caught the tip of his ear.

“That’s kind of...”
“But Nagisa~” Karma grinned. Nagisa, wobbly as he did it, turned back around so they were both sitting. “You taste so good.”

He flushed. “Then why did you stop?”

There was his Nagisa again, the one who knew and loved so dearly. “Because, Nagisa, you were close.”

His face scrunched up. “Was not.”

Karma couldn’t help but reach down, giving his still very hard cock a squeeze, causing Nagisa to instantly shudder and squeak in his arms. It was over quickly, though. Nagisa responded to any kind of challenge with guns blazing, and this was no exception.

“Oh yeah?” He managed to swing his leg over Karma, so he was straddling him. The slight thrill of it was much more familiar, as Nagisa looked at him like some kind of meal. Finally, he shoved his hand down Karma’s own trousers. The hot heat, the visual of Nagisa looming over him, after so much denial… He shuddered, biting down on his lip hard. “You seem pretty close yourself.”

Panting slightly, he clutched the skin of Nagisa’s back. “Ha~”

Nagisa leant in, licking a strip from his collarbone, up the sides of his neck. It was an unfair move, and Nagisa was doing it on purpose, swirling his tongue around the slight raised bump of his scent glands, more than swollen in arousal. If it wasn’t torturous enough, Nagisa nipped them lightly, not enough to mark, but the suggestion was clear. It was all Karma could do to close his eyes, clutching Nagisa close. It felt too good. It was something bonded mates did. For the first time in his life, Karma really wanted to just flip him over and sink his teeth in, to claim him once and for all.

He couldn’t, though. He was better than that. Other ways, though. He could claim Nagisa, if not permanently, in many other senses. He needed to be out of these trousers yesterday. Carefully, Karma slid out from under Nagisa, pulling the smaller man to his feet as he looked towards the bedroom.

Nagisa attempted to take a step, but grabbed onto Karma for support, like his legs were too relaxed to walk. He didn’t protest when Karma lifted him, then, gripping the back of his legs as he started to carry him in the direction of the bedroom. He needed to reduce Nagisa like that again, over and over, for as long as Nagisa would have him.

Maybe Karma threw him down a little roughly, when they reached his bed. Not that Nagisa complained in the slightest. In fact, his lips parted with honest enjoyment, and Karma knew he needed to kiss him again. First, though, he took advantage of the fact that he was standing, half shimmying out of the rest of his clothes before he pretty much launched on top of Nagisa.

He was distracted enough at that point to forget his refusal to kiss Karma. Which was nice, because he was starting to have a short limit, of how long he could go without a kiss from Nagisa. When it came down to it, Nagisa didn’t seem to mind the taste of his own slick, as their tongues collided together. Or else he was just too distracted to notice.

Considering how desperate Karma had already become, he didn’t waste any more time, reaching down to line himself up with Nagisa’s entrance. He was pretty much as open for him as it was possible to be, so there was almost no resistance when he pushed inside. Even though he should be used to this, it still took him a moment to keep himself in check, at that first feel of impossible heat.

Usually, at times like this, Karma couldn’t draw his gaze away from Nagisa’s face. Nothing could
stop him from looking at his expression as his lips parted, wide and honest with pleasure. His eyes remained shut, but they were screwed up tight, which was a pretty good indication when it came to Nagisa. He was never usually verbal about it, so Karma would take what he could get.

He didn’t go as fast as he wanted to right from the off. No matter how open and wet Nagisa was for him, there was still the chance he might accidentally hurt him. And hurting him definitely wasn’t the goal, well not unless he explicitly asked him to. Not that Karma minded torturing himself a little, considering that it felt as though every little ridge inside Nagisa was made to feel perfect against him.

But then Karma shifted the angle of his hips, not with much actual intention, and Nagisa let out a yelp. It was pretty much impossible to ever keep all noise down, but they did a good job usually of being pretty silent, out of sheer necessity. For once, they didn’t have that necessity. Maybe Nagisa was just too out of it to care anymore, before he didn’t even swallow it away.

Karma decided to be a little more forceful then, letting himself go. His own pants of exertion turned into groans as he shoved himself inside in regular beats, utterly lost at the way Nagisa seemed to clench himself around him. In return, Nagisa’s nails dug hard into his shoulders, back arching with pretty much every movement. And his noises only built from there, sharp and clear moans spilling out of him and filling up the rest of the room.

“Karma,” he cried out, clenching his thighs tight around his hips, “Karma I-“

“Are you close?” He asked, lips pretty much pressed against his ear.

Nagisa shuddered. “N-no, but- ah, c-can we?”

He paused his motion for a moment. “Okay?’

“Y-yeah,” Nagisa had his face buried in Karma’s neck. “I just-“

Karma didn’t really know what was happening. But Nagisa’s hands moved, shoving against his chest, and for a second he thought Nagisa was trying to push him off him entirely, until he managed to use his momentum to simply flip them over. In the process, Karma slipped out of him, but Nagisa didn’t waste any time, poised on top of him and immediately sinking back down.

“Like this,” Nagisa said, and his head lolled back, exposing his neck in the best possible way.

It took Karma’s brain a few seconds to actually catch up. And when it did, he pretty much instantly short circuited again. Not that Nagisa really gave him a chance anyway, going up on his knees to ride him the moment he actually could. It was all Karma could do to reach for his hips and cling on for dear life. Where had this confidence come from? Not that he was complaining, not in the slightest. It looked so impossibly good on Nagisa, despite what should have been his alpha instincts at their strongest. Though if he was honest, this was probably his favourite position.

At that point, it was probably Karma who was loudest, now that he was pretty much just lying there. He shifted his hips into it a little, of course, but for the most part it seemed to be that Nagisa just wanted to be free to move, and the last thing Karma was going to do was stop him. Eventually, he stopped moving up and down in favour of just grinding.

Admittedly, that felt just as good. It was Karma’s turn to toss his head back, arching up uncontrollably. It wasn’t fair, the effect Nagisa had on him, looming above him like some sort of demon about to steal his soul. It felt a little bit like Nagisa was just using him for his own pleasure, and a dark part of Karma really liked it. As if he’d read Karma’s mind, he started clenching himself
around his length, in controlled beats that pulsed like insanely tight vibrations.

His eyes were still shut in his own pleasure, but there was a signature cruel smile on his lips that said he knew exactly what he was doing. What was Karma supposed to do, put up a fight against that? Nagisa played him too close to the edge, and all at once he snapped, finally gripping Nagisa’s hips completely still as he released into him with a cry that was so uncharacteristically loud for him he would have been embarrassed if he’d had the mental energy.

It wasn’t always so dramatic, but it felt like stars were dancing behind his eyes. Even when he started to come down, all he could hear were his and Nagisa’s heavy breaths mingled together, and the sound of his blood racing through his body. At some point, Nagisa had collapsed on top of him, and was gasping into his neck. Which had been motion enough to cause him to slip out of him, now he’d softened.

It was hard not to feel a little bit satisfied, though, at the thought that parts of him were currently definitely still inside. There was something that struck his possessive side, with the idea of marking Nagisa up so intimately, claiming him from the inside out. It didn’t matter that he didn’t wear his bond mark, he didn’t need it, not when Nagisa was already so irrevocably his.

“You didn’t…” Karma slurred, brain not quite clear enough yet to put forward his point.

Nagisa paused for a moment. “’s fine.”

That… annoyed him a little. “No way.”

Before Nagisa could actually protest about it, Karma gathered the energy to sit up, throwing Nagisa onto his back again. Coming at exactly the same time was more like something they made up for porn, but he wasn’t entirely selfish and he didn’t let his partner walk away with nothing. That had taken a lot out of him, though, and there was no way an actual round two was happening.

Instead, he lined two fingers up with Nagisa’s somewhat abused entrance, pushing them in without haste. The aim was to make him feel good, and this was probably the quickest way. He couldn’t get hard again, but the feel of Nagisa’s slick mixed with his own release came very close to doing it for him. He didn’t have much of an excuse to explore right then, though, not when he already knew so intimately where the spot that would make him feel the best was.

“Karma wait-“

He didn’t remove his fingers, but he did still them. “Do you want me to stop?”

“Hhh…”

Karma rolled his eyes. “I’m going to need some actual words, Nagisa-”

Finally, Nagisa nodded. “G-go-“

The last syllable turned into a long moan, when Karma started to pump his fingers. It only took him a few seconds and a bit of curling before he found it, which was pretty much confirmed by the way Nagisa suddenly clenched around him, and the whine that followed. Immediately, one of Nagisa’s wrists flew to his mouth, but Karma wasn’t having any of that, pretty much ripping it away with his spare hand and pinning it to the mattress.

“Good?” He asked, more because he wanted to hear every little sound possible.

“H-huh…”
Another time, maybe. Right then, Karma just really wanted to get him off. With all the foreplay, and the sex, it didn’t exactly take him very long. He just had to steadily rub that spot, and the moans built up from there. It was almost cute, the way Nagisa’s hips shifted back and forth on his fingers. Karma didn’t give in to pushing them deeper, though, instead doing his best to focus.

Finally, Nagisa came apart like that, clenching so violently then that Karma wondered if he was trying to keep his fingers there permanently. What was knew, however, was the way he almost screamed as he did so. So it was probably a good thing that he didn’t let himself go like this often, because Karma was pretty sure even his neighbour might have heard that (which might have given him a slight burst of dark pride). At the same time, though, he definitely needed to hear that sound again. He was sure it would be on repeat inside his dreams from now on, because damn. He kept his fingers there, working him through it, until the sounds Nagisa made sounded a little more pained.

“Nagisa?” Karma stroked his cheek, kindly remembering to use his unsoiled hand. “You’re okay.”

Nagisa’s eyes opened, then, but they were glassy, staring blankly at the ceiling. Instinctively, Karma was a little concerned, because his limbs were shaking. All Karma wanted to do was hold him close, but something told him that wasn’t the best idea right then. Clearly, he’d gone a little bit hypersensitive, and it was all he could do to wait it out.

He gulped, after a few minutes. “Ku-ki-“

Nothing more had to be said. Karma obeyed immediately, leaning down to lock their lips together. Instead of passionate, though, their kiss felt more like mutual reassurance. The way Nagisa responded was a little tired, but it at least seemed like he was starting to make sense of things again. That, or they knew each other well enough at that point that something like kissing was second nature.

Karma pulled away to breathe. “You good?”

He nodded, blinking slowly. “I’m tired.”

“Don’t you want to clean up first?” Karma looked in the direction of the door. “You’ll regret it tomorrow, probably.”

“Too far,” he complained.

Karma couldn’t believe this. “I’ll carry you if I have to.”

“Only if you sleep in the wet spot,” he stretched out, like a little kid holding his arms up in expectation to be lifted.

Did Nagisa know he pretty much had Karma wrapped around his finger? Was he doing this on purpose? Obviously, he wasn’t, but Karma still felt personally victimised by it. Not that he’d have it any other way, though. His own legs were a little bit unstable, after that, but he pulled himself out of bed, only half carrying Nagisa to the shower.

Nagisa still looked out of it, pretty much leaning against him for support under the spray. As slightly annoyed he was about having to do all the work, there was no way he was passing up one of the few times Nagisa consented to being taken care of like this. He took his sweet time, massaging Nagisa’s hair with shampoo, and lathering the rest of his body with shower gel. He had to appreciate every second of it, the way Nagisa keened into his touches. Even when they were eventually clean enough, he hummed happily when Karma towelled him down. Ironically, there
wasn’t much that was sexual about it.

Karma’s heart threatened to stop entirely at the way Nagisa curled up in his bed, in the perfect position to be spooned. Maybe his heart did actually stop, at Nagisa’s pleased sigh (which honestly sounded a little bit like a purr) when he did exactly that. Even after so many years, their bodies still lined up nicely together. Which was a position he found himself the next time he opened his eyes, for once feeling very rested.

It wasn’t every morning that they woke up like that. Sometimes, they’d drift apart to other sides of the bed entirely, no matter how close they’d fallen asleep wrapped together. Karma was in no hurry to separate himself, and by the looks of things, he’d regained the logical ability to get hard. Which, it was pretty much impossible not to, lying against Nagisa with absolutely no barrier. As if on cue, he shifted in his arms.

“Morning,” he said, kissing the back of Nagisa’s head.

“Morning,” Nagisa breathed, feeling exactly where Karma was pressed up against him. Not so subtly, he pressed his hips back, which Karma took as permission.

Round two it was, then. He wasn’t in much of a rush, lining his lips up with Nagisa’s throat. Karma figured no matter what kind of suppressants he was on, he was always going to be sensitive there. Nagisa moaned lightly, grinding back against him and extending his neck a little to give him better access. Karma knew they could spend hours like that— until a loud vibration and obnoxious pop music started to play from the other side of the room.

“So you’re a tough guy like it really rough guy—"

Karma pulled away. “Is that your phone?”

Nagisa sat up, a little dazed. “Who’s calling me at—” and then his eyes widened, catching sight of the clock. “It’s half ten!”

It took him a second to realise why that was an issue. “Uh oh.”

He shot him a dirty look. “We’re so irresponsible—"

“I’m up, I’m up,” Karma waved him off, quickly striding over to his set of drawers to pull on the first outfit he saw, co-ordinated or not. “Technically, it’s not that late—"

“Just go,” Nagisa pulled the sheets around him, covering even his nipples as though he was somehow scandalised all of a sudden.

“See ya,” he waved off, darting out of the door. It didn’t take him long to pull on his shoes, but he didn’t miss Maki’s eye of judgement as he did so. Damn cat. “Get Nagisa to feed you, okay?” He said, patting her on the head before racing for his car. Hopefully Daichi wouldn’t be too mad.

Chapter End Notes

Karma’s lowkey a sub but also has minor exhibitionist and creampie kinks huh-

Aside from the scandal, Daichi had a lovely time on his sleepover. He and Jun stayed up far too late playing video games Nagisa doesn't allow and then passed out around
11pm in a candy induced coma. Jun's parents didn't care about Karma being late, but Daichi was unimpressed. In the meantime, Nagisa decided to do the laundry, which was a good thought considering the mess they'd left the rest of the apartment in. Daichi didn't question the lack of cushion covers on the sofa, thankfully.

Until next time~
Mistake Time

Chapter Summary

Domestic life starts to get a little bit too comfortable

Chapter Notes

oof

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It seemed that Karma had found a new favourite hobby. Nagisa couldn’t quite say he minded that much, considering the hobby was eating him out. Karma didn’t even seem to want anything for himself in return, either, not always. And, well, he was pretty good at it. Pretty good at managing to find the time to do it, too, considering their busy lives.

That morning was no exception. Karma emerged from between his legs, panting to catch his breath. Nagisa just sighed, legs having turned into jelly. It wasn’t a bad way to wake up exactly. Lying there for a few seconds, Karma moved up, pressing a light kiss to Nagisa’s stomach, which tickled more than anything.

“I’d eat strawberries off you any day of the week,” Karma declared, nipping at the joint of his neck to his shoulders.

Nagisa flushed, turning his head away. “Stop saying things like that.”

“I could go get some now.”

He turned his head, looking up at Karma seriously. “Sounds messy. You wouldn’t bother to clean that up.”

“You’re right,” he thought about it. “We could always go to a love hotel. That way we wouldn’t have to.”

Nagisa smacked him in the jaw. “Go brush your teeth.”

Karma didn’t take it in a particularly bad way, just snorting. “Anything for you, Nagisa sama,” he said, sarcasm lacing his tone.

When he was gone, Nagisa just lay there, staring up at the ceiling as his brain caught up. It was hard, still in post-orgasm haze. Though even without that excuse, Karma still had this annoying habit of making Nagisa’s head spin. Unfortunately for him, he couldn’t spend all day messing around in bed with Karma. They had places to be, such as work.

He eventually pulled himself out of bed, tasking himself with getting dressed. Nagisa had cracked, eventually, and now he had a couple of drawers for his clothes. Though it wasn’t like he didn’t wear almost the same thing every day, as opposed to Karma who acted as though it would be a
scandal if he wore the same tie within a two week span.

It was a pretty regular morning, and that meant Nagisa was in no mood to cook anything fancy for breakfast. Not when he had to make lunch for everyone, which took enough time on its own. Not that Nagisa went crazy with the cute shapes like some people did, but he was pretty sure that he did a good enough job.

After he was done with that, he sat at the table with some cereal and a cup of tea, in an attempt to wake himself up properly. Honestly, sometimes he felt more tired nowadays than he had when Daichi was a baby and cried half the night. Speaking of Daichi, he hadn’t actually shown up yet, which was odd because he was usually pretty good at waking up at the right time on his own.

“Daddy,” Daichi said as if on cue, clutching a book to his chest. “Can you explain this word to me?”

Nagisa was a little more concerned about why he was reading instead of getting dressed. “Uhm, sure-“ and then he looked at the word Daichi was pointing out. *Sycophant?* He didn’t even know how to pronounce that, let alone what it meant. “What are you reading?”

Daichi just shrugged, sliding down onto the seat. “You don’t know, do you Maki?”

Maki just meowed, unable to communicate in words.

“Are you going to school today?” Karma emerged, patting him a little hard on the head.

He perked up. “Do I get a choice?”

Something about that didn’t sit exactly right with him. “Why don’t you want to go?”

“No reason…’ Daichi said, sounding entirely like there was a reason. “They’re making everyone audition for the play today.”

“I-is that bad?” Nagisa asked. Sure, he’d never shown an interest in anything like drama, but he wasn’t under the impression that he necessarily disliked it either. “It’s just an audition.”

He looked down. “Yagami Sensei says everyone’s gonna get a speaking part!”

Karma snorted. “What are you talking about? You haven’t *stopped* speaking for eight years.”

“I don’t wanna do it on a big stage with everyone looking at me!”

He hadn’t realised it was such a big deal, at this age. Then again, Nagisa supposed this was the kind of thing schools liked to put on their curriculum to ‘stand out’ or whatever the case. He was more than aware that at a school like that, a good bunch of these kids had actor parents, so maybe it did make quite a bit of sense. He was surprised Daichi was being forced into it, though.

“Well…” Nagisa didn’t really know what to advise. “Just try and do your best? There’s going to be lots of time to practise, right? Maybe I can even see if Kayano’s free-“

Suddenly Daichi stood up, eyes going wide. “Really?! Kayano san’s gonna help me?”

“If she has time,“ he emphasised. He really shouldn’t have said that. Knowing Kayano, she’d likely jump at the chance though.

“Then I have to get the biggest role!” He declared, and then ran off to his bedroom.
Karma raised an eyebrow. “Noted.”

“Huh?”

“You just totally used Kayano to manipulate him.”

“I didn’t manipulate him,” Nagisa defended, “it was encouragement.”

“Whatever you say,” Karma said, taking a bite out of whatever he was eating.

They didn’t really say anything after that, more concentrated on their breakfasts than each other. Not that it was the uncomfortable type of silence, in fact Nagisa didn’t really mind the concept of not having anything in particular to say. That was until Daichi came back in, actually dressed that time. Though it had been a long time since Nagisa had had to help him with clothes, he still had his shirt on a little awkwardly.

“I should probably go,” Karma finally said, patting Daichi once more on the head.

“Papa,” he complained, rubbing it.

“Have a good day,” Karma said, and leaned across the table, pecking Nagisa on the lips sweetly.

In hindsight, their reaction might have been hilarious considering the sheer amount of times they’d kissed, but they both recoiled like Karma had electrocuted him or something. What was that? Karma didn’t seem to know, his face flushing almost the same shade as his hair as he stumbled away, turning out the door as fast as his legs could carry him.

“Why’s Papa being weird?” Daichi scrunched up his nose.

“I-I,” Nagisa wanted to coil into himself. “Maybe he’s sick.”

“Oh okay.”

Nagisa wanted to bang his head repeatedly against the wall. At least Daichi hadn’t thought much of it? What was Karma thinking? With the way he reacted, Nagisa was sure he hadn’t been trying to mess with him in one of his ways that were often in bad taste. No, he was pretty certain that the entire thing had been an accident. Which was even more confusing.

“Come on,” Nagisa said, “you should get going too.”

“Okay…” He stood up and grabbed his bag.

Nagisa swallowed down his personal feelings. “You’ll do a good job today, if you try your best.”

He nodded. “I will try!”

That was all Nagisa could hope for, he supposed. Honestly, as long as he knew Daichi put all of his efforts into something, he didn’t mind whether he came first place or last. Daichi, though? Much like Karma, he seemed a little intent on coming first whenever anything competitive arose. Not that you could really come first in an audition, exactly.

Like every other morning, he and Daichi went their separate ways, and Nagisa had to mentally prepare himself for a long day at work. Except, he couldn’t concentrate on that like he usually would. All his brain seemed capable of doing was replaying those few seconds over and over again. Like some sort of slow motion horror movie.
Maybe the worst part was that before the realisation, there was nothing bad about it. In fact, Nagisa definitely enjoyed the idea of sweet, innocent touches just as much as the heavier stuff. The issue was what it meant. Neither of them had actually attempted to define their relationship. Of course there was no denying it was a little more complicated than just sex… but it was a comfortable enough label. Casual, romantic touches definitely didn’t fit under that label.

Did Nagisa want them to, though? Maybe he’d have recoiled at the idea, a few months ago, but… He shook his head. He really should stop himself from going down that route, it wasn’t good for him. But then again, none of this was good for him. Maybe he just hadn’t noticed before, but he felt like a ticking time bomb, primed for explosion. And now he had to go into work and act as though all was fine.

“Roll call time,” Nagisa said, without a lick of confidence.

It had to be fine. He supposed the world hadn’t immediately imploded the second after the kiss ended. His brain on the other hand… He was definitely starting to get a headache. For once, he was glad he didn’t need to teach anything that important, although he still did take his job seriously! Sure, not everybody was going to end the year with straight A’s, but they were in a far better position than when he’d started.

Nagisa had started the school year a trainee with no real teaching under his belt, living in a terrible apartment and engaged. He almost felt like a different person entirely. It was probably a good thing, without getting too philosophical about it. Turning his head to focus on the things that mattered, with every day that passed he inched towards his actual qualifications.

Soon, he’d really have to worry about finding a steady job. Even if the position was offered to him, Nagisa wasn’t sure he’d want to stay here. As much as he’d found the process of teaching kids who were less academically willing surprisingly rewarding, there were certain things about the administration here that he wasn’t sure he could put up with for much longer.

That was, if Nagisa was even going to have a choice. Unlike most careers, there wasn’t a steady stream of entry level positions just waiting for graduates. As far as he’d figured, a lot of this was going to be opportunistic, and his best bet was in this time leading up to the end of the academic year. Thankfully, it seemed there wasn’t a shortage of schools vaguely near them, even if they weren’t currently hiring.

So, then, Nagisa’s entire future was pretty much a grey cloud of fog, and it bothered him to his core that he didn’t know exactly what he was heading into. He knew he should try and enjoy things as they were, but even as the school day ended and he dismissed class, who were all excited for the upcoming spring break, he couldn’t help but try and stare ahead anyway.

On his walk back home, he noticed the start of the blossoms starting to grow on the trees, which really did signify the start of something new. Somehow, that brought his mind back to when he and Karma went their separate ways for university. That was all he remembered clearly, the cherry blossoms and the abyss of internal disappointment with himself for not telling Karma that he loved him.

Likewise, they were very different people back then. His feelings seemed simpler, but in hindsight he wasn’t even sure if it was love over perhaps unhealthy infatuation. Not that it would have done any good to tell him back then overall, he was sure it really would have made things more complicated. But now? One of Nagisa’s biggest reasonings for not wanting to be involved in anything more than friendly co-parenting was the fear of making things messy, if they ever did fight. He’d gone through his own parent’s divorce and even though they ended up getting back together, he couldn’t live with himself if he put Daichi through the same pain.
The damage was already done, though. Nagisa could try his best to deny it, but he was caught up with Karma now. No matter what happened, there would be no escaping the mess. He was painfully aware that they weren’t in any kind of relationship to break up from, but if they did go completely separate ways again his heart would shatter.

Nagisa… wanted to tell Karma the truth about how he felt. The kiss earlier was pretty much proof of what could be. And the more he thought about it, the less keeping things a hundred percent sexual even made sense. No matter how hard they tried, certain intimacies were bound to bleed through. Nagisa really wouldn’t mind if they did, either.

*I love him,* Nagisa thought, *I love him and there’s no reason to lie about it anymore.*

Of course, Karma worked longer hours than him. Which meant that Nagisa couldn’t just speak what was fresh in his mind. Like some kind of child, he was practically bursting at the seams. He needed to get this out, finally clear the weight from his shoulders. Having any sort of shred of self control for the next couple of hours suddenly seemed impossible.

In an attempt to ground himself, he decided to play with Maki when he got in. Honestly Nagisa felt a little bad for her, since she tended to get the most attention when someone was trying to otherwise distract themselves. Not that Maki seemed to mind either way, which was probably a good thing considering how many cats out there just wanted to be left alone.

“-Welcome home,” he called, the moment he heard the door open.

Maki meowed, jumping away from him to greet Daichi. Which, *okay,* it was clear she’d chosen a favourite long ago. To be fair, Daichi absolutely adored that cat. Before the drama with his apartment, he used to talk about her quite a bit, and Nagisa could see the fondness for himself. Perhaps he felt some kind of responsibility for her, since he found her.

“How did the audition go?” Nagisa remembered. If he didn’t bring it up, then Daichi might never think to actually tell him.

“…” Daichi hesitated. “Fine.”

It probably wasn’t fine then. “Did you find out what part you got yet?”

He shook his head. “We just had to read a little bit out loud, but then we had to pretend we were an animal! And, Yagami Sensei told me off for lying down but that’s all Maki does when she’s on her own, and I tried to tell her that Daddy, but I don’t think she got it.”

So Daichi’s ‘acting’ was a little too convincing? “You’re good at reading aloud, though.”

“Yeah…” He suddenly grinned. “Do I still get lessons from Kayano san!”

“I haven’t even asked her yet,” Nagisa defended. “I don’t think she’ll say no, but-“

“It can’t be on Thursdays,” he said, “I have karate on Thursdays.”

*Such a busy schedule.* Thankfully, he didn’t ‘pester’ Nagisa about it any further, though he did slam his school bag kind of heavily on the table. If Daichi was like this now, Nagisa kind of dreaded what his teenage years were going to be like. At least it wasn’t a task to make him sit down and do his homework, he was pretty happy to do that of his own volition.

As per their unofficial tradition, Nagisa got out his own pile of homework to grade. Sometimes, he’d even let Daichi double check the essays to see if there were any spelling errors he’d somehow
missed. Usually, though, it was a comfortable quietness that they could both work in. Of course, Nagisa had quite a bit more to go through compared to the amount of actual homework, but that was about the time Daichi decided to extend his ‘ten minutes of at home reading’.

What was a little unusual, however, was the silence that accompanied the door opening for a final time. Usually, Karma had no issue announcing that he was home, but he just trailed through the house after silently removing his shoes, not paying anyone acknowledgement before collapsing on the sofa like he’d just been out running a marathon.

“You seem stressed,” Nagisa commented.

Karma groaned from the sofa. “Did something give it away?”

“Papa!” Daichi decided right then was the perfect opportunity to use him as a climbing frame. “Are you really sick?!?”

“’m not,” he muttered, manoeuvring so Daichi wasn’t stabbing him with his elbow.

Nagisa hadn’t really meant it earlier but… he was a little concerned. “Are you sure?”

“I’m fine,” he emphasised, though Nagisa was still entirely unconvinced.

“D-do you want me to cook tonight?”

He closed his eyes. “Just order delivery.”

“Karma-“

He reached into his pocked, blindly pulling out his wallet. “I have cards.”

They already had groceries though. Nagisa wasn’t really in the mood to start an argument about it, and he couldn’t control what Karma did with his money. He had too much of it, if he was willing to splurge on a whim. At least he looked a little relaxed then, with Daichi curled up pretty much on his lap at that point. Maybe Daichi wasn’t so far off with the ‘pretending to be a cat’ thing.

As the minutes went on, and definitely once the food actually arrived, Karma came back to his normal self a little, though he still seemed a little tired. A part of Nagisa started to question whether he should even bring up the kiss thing that night, but he knew that the excuse would just snowball and if he let it go right then, then he’d be putting it off forever.

That then meant waiting until Daichi decided he’d had enough of ‘family time’ and eventually put himself to bed. It was very rare that he wanted to stay up so late that any bedtime needed enforcing. Daichi had his moments but Nagisa knew from what he heard from pretty much anyone else who had kids, his son may as well be an angel.

“Night,” he eventually said, abruptly standing and heading for his room. Like always, Maki was at his heels.

“Bye then,” Karma called, traces of sarcasm in his tone.

That left them finally alone. And immediately, Nagisa’s heart rate started to increase. He needed to get this out, but it was just finding the right words. Surprisingly, the anxieties about rejection were clear from his brain. For once. He was pretty certain that Karma at least felt somewhat the same way, and he had plenty of evidence to back that up. But there were so many other factors…
“Karma,” he cleared his throat, “we need to talk.”

“We don’t,” he said, far too quickly for his liking.

Nagisa frowned. “B-but-“

He sighed. “If this is about earlier… It’s okay. I wasn’t thinking, so it was just a little mistake. It won’t happen again, I promise. Let’s just pretend it didn’t. So there’s nothing to talk about, huh? Things can just stay like they are.”

Honestly, Nagisa hadn’t been expecting to feel the tsunami of anger rushing through him. How could Karma just brush him off like that? It wasn’t nothing. And Karma had been the one to kiss him! He could believe Karma hadn’t thought about it, but there was no way it meant truly nothing? Did it? Did Karma… really just want him for sex?

“Nagisa?” Karma questioned, like he was almost a tiny bit frightened.

He snapped out of it. “If that’s what you want.”

“We’re okay, aren’t we?” Karma’s voice was quieter then, unsure.

He’s lying. Nagisa wasn’t sure why the revelation hit him like a brick right then, but it did. He was too emotionally invested in this conversation, but when he forced himself to take a step back. No, he knew Karma’s honesty, and this wasn’t it. Whether it was a direct lie, or he was withholding something, Nagisa wasn’t sure. He was good at reading people’s body language, not their mind. And Karma was all dark.

“Of course,” Nagisa said, forcing a smile onto his face.

He needed time to unpack Karma’s actions. Maybe, just maybe, Karma was saying that for his sake. Nagisa didn’t know, but that was the only explanation he could think of. The only thing he was sure of was that Karma didn’t want to pretend like it hadn’t happened. As much as Nagisa knew arguing about it would clear the air, he was frightened. He was pretty certain at least, Karma really didn’t want to talk. So maybe there was another way, he just needed to think.

“I’m feeling kind of tired,” Karma finally said. “I think I’ll head to bed.”

Something told Nagisa there wouldn’t be many touches that night.

Chapter End Notes

Y’all had too much straight fluff lmao

(before you freak out, YES Karma's just saying that because he doesn't want to lose Nagisa :[)

It's my last shift at work today before I move! I'm so excited eee
Fever Time

Chapter Summary

In which Karma inconveniences Nagisa's one day off work

Chapter Notes

is this how illness works?

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Nagisa was more than aware that Karma was an adult. An adult who was more than capable of taking care of himself. Maybe it was some deep omega instinct he couldn’t always force down, or maybe it was just him, but despite that Nagisa had found himself worrying. Every day, Karma grew increasingly lethargic, and he hadn’t said a thing. But now it had come to this, where Karma’s phone alarm had gone through the snooze cycle twice and he’d barely even moved.

Usually, he’d at least notice Nagisa get up to go to the bathroom in the morning, but he hadn’t even stirred. So yes, Nagisa was starting to worry, even if it wasn’t necessarily his place to. Of course it wasn’t so dramatic that he was worried about him breathing, he could see his shoulders moving just fine, but other than that Karma didn’t really seem… okay? He didn’t move, when Nagisa lightly poked him.

“Karma?” He shook him more violently.

“Huh?”

His voice sounded entirely strained, worse than it usually was in the mornings. With a little more determination, Nagisa tried to turn him over. His hand fell against Karma’s forehead in the process, and he gasped at the unnatural heat. That definitely wasn’t normal. Karma was never usually that warm, which sent alarm bells ringing.

“Do you feel okay?” He sat up properly, practically crawling over him.

Karma finally opened his eyes, blinking at Nagisa like he was confused. “Huh?”

“Jeez Karma,” Nagisa felt his forehead again. “You definitely have a fever.”

“No way,” he tried to lift himself, but ultimately failed.

Honestly, Nagisa wasn’t sure he’d ever seen Karma like that. “Well, you can’t go to work!”

Fortunately for him, Nagisa happened to have the day off. An incredibly rare thing during term time, but there were certain things he wasn’t allowed to do as a trainee. Apparently one of those things was supervise school trips. All he could do was sit at home and hope his class actually behaved themselves. But as much as Nagisa was excited to have a day all to himself (minus the cat), it didn’t look like that was going to happen.
Karma coughed. “I have to-“

He looked at him critically. “Can you even walk?”

“I-“ He thought about it for a few seconds. “Can you get me my phone?”

Nagisa did just that, and decided to leave him to it. After all, they did have a child to look after as well. He didn’t just stop existing because one of them was sick. Maybe, Karma would miraculously get cured in the next half an hour. Given how he’d been the last few days, something told Nagisa that definitely wouldn’t happen.

“Where’s Papa?” Daichi immediately questioned.

“He’s not feeling very well,” he tried to explain. “Just like you when you’re too sick to go to school. He just needs to rest in bed for a while.”

“Oh…” He thought about it for a moment. “Can I help?”

Unfortunately, there weren’t a lot of tasks available for Daichi during a school day. It was really sweet of him to offer, though. Maybe Nagisa would suggest he be moral support, but he wasn’t sure if Karma was contagious. The last thing he wanted to do was deal with a sick Daichi, on top of everything else.

“You can make sure you’re ready and have a great day at school?” Nagisa tried.

“That’s not helping though.”

Nagisa sighed. “It’ll make him more sick if he’s worried about you, though.”

“…Fine.”

He didn’t seem sure at all, but it was enough encouragement for him to ready himself. In the meantime, Nagisa tried to think about what to do. He was pretty much a pro, at taking care of Daichi when he was sick. He supposed aside from appropriate medicine dose, it couldn’t be that different. Then again, he didn’t actually know where Karma kept his stuff like that.

The bathroom seemed like a moderately good place to start. He went through the cabinets, until he eventually found a thermometer. That was pretty much all he found. Nagisa took a moment, upon that discovery, to really think. What kind of person didn’t have any kind of medicine to hand? He couldn’t even find plasters.

There was barely any evidence Karma was even alive in that room, for the next portion of the morning. Nagisa would have been a little more concerned about it, if he wasn’t so focused on making sure Daichi got out to school okay, and putting down some food for Maki. Better to deal with that issue first. Maybe in the time Nagisa had been gone, Karma would have fallen back asleep, and he’d be able to slip out and buy some actual medicine.

“How come you’re not dressed?”

To Nagisa’s credit, he was a lot more dressed right then than he usually was in the mornings. “I have a day off work today.”

Daichi looked like he was in utter dismay. “And Papa’s not going to work too? That’s not fair.”

He smiled a little. “Would you really rather be sick?”
“No… But-“

“You can help after school maybe,” Nagisa suggested, “if your Papa feels better.”

Daichi took a bite of his breakfast, as though he was thinking steadily about it. Honestly, Nagisa hadn’t been around Karma when he was hugely sick before, and he wasn’t looking forward to it. He didn’t understand why Daichi was so ready to sign himself up for the task. A part of Nagisa really did wish he could let Daichi stay back with him, but it was a bad behaviour to encourage.

“Have a good day,” he tried to sound as positive as possible.

Daichi just picked up his bag and left without much fanfare, but it was better than him remaining there to argue with him about it. Nagisa just stood there and watched the door for a few seconds, before turning back to himself and trying to figure what to do. He wanted to make sure of Karma’s temperature, first, then he could go from there.

“Karma?”

He got no reply, so he decided to just venture inside and hope for the best. If the phone hadn’t have been placed on the bedside table, he would have assumed Karma hadn’t moved at all. Maybe it would be easier to do this whilst he was asleep, though. At least Karma couldn’t fight him about it like that. Easier said than done, though.

Thankfully, Karma was lying on his side. That meant Nagisa had perfect access to his ear. Nagisa made use of all his best skills as an assassin to approach him silently, twisting his body so he could get the thermometer in without waking him. Thankfully, it only took a second for him to get the reading, though he frowned. Forty degrees?! That was pretty bad, wasn’t it?

Nagisa pretty much concluded that it was bad enough that he should go get some actual medicine, and better to slip out right then, whilst he was sleeping well enough. He swapped clothes as quickly and quietly as he could, considering he couldn’t just go to the convenience store in his pyjamas, as much as part of him would have liked to.

At this point in his life at least, he was pretty experienced with medical issues such as this. So it didn’t take him long to grab everything he’d need and check it out, before heading back up to the apartment. In reality, he couldn’t have been gone for more than ten minutes, but it may as well have been hours, given the state he returned to.

The first thing that alarmed him was the groaning, which was enough to make him rush into the bedroom. Karma looked absolutely terrible, and that was no exaggeration. He was thrashing around like he was possessed by a demon, making pathetic noises that made Nagisa’s own stomach twist. Clearly, he was in the midst of some sort of fever induced nightmare.

“Karma,” Nagisa shook him hard, figuring that it was crueler to let him sleep on like that. Not enough to wake him, apparently, because he didn’t stop. Nagisa tried again, harder that time, and he absolutely hated the way that cold sweat appeared on his forehead, before his eyes suddenly flew open, wide and glassy.

“Nagisa.”

He swallowed. “You’re okay-“

“Nagisa-“ It took Nagisa a good few seconds to realise Karma was sobbing. Which, to his credit, he’d maybe seen Karma cry twice before, so it was incredibly hard to recognise.
Karma grabbed him hard, dragging him properly into bed with him. It was all Nagisa could do to go along with it, especially with the way his body shook on top of the tears. Nagisa didn’t really know what else there was, except holding him through it. A part of him wondered what temperature it was exactly that people started to get hallucinations.

“Don’t leave me,” Karma finally said, squeezing his arm so hard it actually really hurt. “I love you, don’t leave-“

“I’m not going anywhere,” Nagisa said, maybe a little too quickly.

Apparently that was enough for him to finally relax a little, and before Nagisa could process what was happening, he was asleep again. Only this time, Nagisa was now kind of trapped underneath Karma’s weight. He couldn’t have left if he even wanted to, which meant some serious gymnastics to reach the bag of supplies he’d bought.

Sleeping it off was probably one of the better solutions, though, so he made sure to be as careful as possible. One of the first rules of illness, he knew, was to not try and get his temperature down too fast. Nagisa hoped the cooling cloth he’d picked up wouldn’t be too much, but he supposed it was probably fine so long as it wasn’t far from room temperature.

Once he’d placed it on Karma’s forehead, he found himself stroking his hair out of the way a bit. He wasn’t sure whether it actually felt good or not, but Karma appeared to relax even further in his sleep, which was enough motivation for Nagisa to keep doing it. Who knew Karma could be so clingy, whilst he was sick?

But then a part of Nagisa’s brain finally caught up with the events of before, whilst he’d been so focused everything else. *What do you mean, you love me?* Nagisa almost choked. How much had he wanted Karma to say those words to him before? And then Karma had set their boundaries, which truthful or not made Nagisa lose a lot of his hope. But he knew he was just as bad.

He took a long hard deep breath. Clearly, Karma was delirious. Nagisa was sure he wouldn’t even remember saying it, let alone actually *meant* it. If he was that frightened, he’d probably ‘love’ any random person he thought was there to help him. So Nagisa couldn’t take it too literally. Probably shouldn’t even bring it up to him later.

Nagisa wasn’t sure how long they stayed there like that, only that it was definitely longer than an hour and he was half asleep himself by the time Karma stirred again. At least that time, it was more with a slight whimper than violent thrashing around, and he definitely seemed far more conscious. As long as he wasn’t crying again.

“How are you feeling?” Nagisa tried.

“Fine,” Karma rolled away from him, curling into a ball.

He wasn’t going to give up that easy. “Karma… It’s okay. I don’t mind taking care of you.”

“Ugh,” he rolled around again, wrapping himself up like a burrito. “Don’t you have anything better to do?”

“I have the day off work,” Nagisa reminded him. “What else am I supposed to do? Watch TV?”

“‘s better than lying here.”

He smiled. “I think you should probably stay in bed.”
“You can’t force me!” Karma said, coughing after the fact.

Though he was technically right, Nagisa was going to try his best. He wasn’t sure about his chances anyway, with Karma weakened in sickness, he might actually be able to match his strength. It would be worse in the long run, if Karma suddenly decided he was okay after just a few hours of rest and got up, ultimately probably getting even more sick.

“It’s a little easier to watch over you like this,” Nagisa admitted.

“So why does it matter so much anyway?”

“Because-“ Nagisa could barely even frame his thoughts. “I care about you, Karma.”

He had the nerve to scoff. “You shouldn’t just sit here.”

“I-if that’s what you want,” he finally moved a little, going to his feet. “Try and get a little more rest, and don’t stress yourself out about work or anything.”

Honestly, that was Nagisa’s main theory about why this had happened. Karma always worked hard, he knew that, but lately he’d seemed even busier and more stressed out than usual. Logically, that would only lead to him being rundown, and now this. Nagisa almost felt bad about missing any earlier signs, but this right then was the least he could do.

Somehow, he didn’t think he was going to be banished from the bedroom for long. Karma had his phone with him, but if he didn’t immediately fall back asleep, there was no doubt he’d get bored eventually. In fact, Nagisa had barely been gone for five minutes before he made out a slightly weak call of his name. Honestly he’d expected Karma to last at least ten.

“Can I take your temperature at least?” Nagisa stood by the doorway, brandishing the thermometer.

Karma recoiled. “What are you gonna do?” He rolled over. “Stick it up my butt?”

This man. “Please don’t tell me it’s meant to be used like that, because I put it in your ear earlier.”

He laughed a little, spluttering as he did so. “Why would I own one like that?”

“You own odd things,” Nagisa said, approaching him. As if Karma was doing him some kind of favour, he tilted his head to give him access. “…It’s gone down a tiny bit. I still think you should take some of this medicine though, until it’s in a normal range.”

“No way.”

Nagisa tilted his head. “Is there something wrong with the medicine?”

He actually attempted to shuffle back. “I’m not taking it.”

“Why not?”

“B-because!”

Of course, Karma was being ridiculous, and Nagisa wasn’t entirely sure why. The only explanation he could think of was that nobody had ever really taken care of him as a child, so his natural reaction was to push away any attempt of it. Nagisa didn’t have time for his emotional issues, though, not when his health was in question. So he had to think of another way.
“I’ll make lunch, then,” he dusted himself off. “That is, if you want to eat.”

Karma finally stretched out. “Anything’s good.”

“Take the medicine,” he said sharply, putting it down on the bedside table.

Maybe he’d do it, if he didn’t think Nagisa was watching him. Karma could be petty like that from time to time, and Nagisa had no doubt that sick Karma was also peak petty Karma. He wasn’t going to get anything exciting for lunch either, though part of that was just Nagisa’s worry. Karma hadn’t been physically sick yet, but with something plain like rice and miso soup he wouldn’t be taking any chances.

“You’re keeping me hostage and that’s illegal,” Karma complained when Nagisa re-entered the bedroom. “It’s under section-”

Nagisa raised an eyebrow. “Didn’t I tell you not to think about work?”

Karma spluttered. “I’m not even that sick.”

He should have seen himself, earlier. “You’re lucky I’m actually looking after you. I have better things to do, you know.”

He attempted to sit up. “Like what?”

“Nap,” Nagisa put the food down and folded his arms. “Which I’d be doing right now, if you weren’t taking up the bed.”

“You’re forcing me to be here!” Karma protested, voice rising to a higher pitch than usual. “If you just let me go to work like normal-”

“You wouldn’t be taking care of yourself at all.” He cut in, giving Karma a scolding look. “Did you take the medicine I gave you?”

“…”

“Karma!” Nagisa felt exasperated. “You need it.”

He flopped back, apparently uninterested in Nagisa’s concern. “Can’t you just kiss it better?”

Rolling his eyes, Nagisa was just about to whack him with a pillow. “You’re a bigger baby than Daichi about this.”

“M not,” he replied, weakly.

Nagisa’s eyes scanned the room for a moment, before he realised his opportunity. He had, after all, used his kiss against Karma before. Swiftly and discreetly, in a way he was sure Karma wouldn’t be able to see in his ill state, Nagisa took one of the pills and placed it in his mouth, holding it in the side of his cheek so he wouldn’t accidentally chew or swallow it.

“A kiss, huh?” He crawled onto the bed, so he was braced above Karma.

“Mhmm,” Karma looked pleased with himself. “Right here,” he turned his head, presenting his cheek.

Too bad. Nagisa grabbed him by the chin, pushing their lips together rather violently. Karma made a noise of surprise, but didn’t attempt to break their kiss, even moving his arms to Nagisa’s back so
as to deepen it. Using all his skill, he managed to pry Karma’s lips apart, using his own tongue to
flick the pill out of his mouth and into Karma’s. Instantly, he broke the contact, and snapped his
jaw shut with his hand so he couldn’t try to spit it out.

“Now swallow.”

Karma looked at him with weak betrayal, before gulping it down. “That was dirty.”

“It’s to make you feel better,” Nagisa sighed. “Do you want to eat now?”

Surprisingly, he stopped complaining after that, though he still looked kind of annoyed about the
whole thing. It was kind of funny, watching him pout as he shoveled mouthfuls of rice into his body.
Nagisa sat opposite him with his own portion, figuring that it was only fair. Honestly, so long as he
wasn’t writhing around in pain anymore, Nagisa considered it a success.

“Do you feel any better now?”

He thought about it for a moment. “Kind of. A little bit like I’m on the wrong side of drunk, if you
get that.”

Nagisa shrugged. “I wouldn’t. I haven’t been drunk in years.”

“Since Nakamura’s birthday?”

“H-huh?” He couldn’t possibly know about that.

“You haven’t seen me drunk since Karasuma and Irina’s wedding,” Nagisa said.

“Nuh uh,” he insisted, “Nakamura’s 20th birthday.”

Nagisa squinted. “You didn’t go to that.”

“I did,” a devilish grin appeared. “You were out of it by the time I arrived, though. I only dropped
in to say hi for a few minutes, but I caught your rendition of Nicki Minaj’s ‘Anaconda’.”

He blanched. “What?”

“You know she has a video of that?”

“She what.”

Karma started laughing properly. “You should know by now I have a very large and varied
collection of images of you.”

He swallowed. “What for?”

“Funny.”

He was so infuriating- But he supposed that was kind of sweet. Karma took a lot of photos, and he
was more than aware some of them were of him. It wasn’t that Nagisa was against taking them, he
just preferred to lock it all into his mental memory. Though, he supposed there wouldn’t be
anything physical to look back on if he lived like that all the time.

“…What kind of photos?”

Karma pulled his phone towards him, as though he was offering to show him. Which was a scary
concept, the depths of Karma’s files were definitely something to be feared. Still, Nagisa found himself shifting to a better angle to he could see. Of course, his actual screensaver was a picture of Daichi and Maki, which was definitely adorable. Maybe Nagisa really should take more photos.

“Oh you go,” he said, a photo of the both of them popping up on screen. Nagisa didn’t even recognise it, but he could only assume he was about twelve in that image.

“I didn’t know they went back so far,” Nagisa admitted.

Karma smiled. “I’m pretty good with backing everything up.”

It turned out he really wasn’t kidding. And he had a bunch of incriminating photos, which he just couldn’t stop laughing at. Nagisa half wanted to insist that he deleted them all, but what good would it do, several years after they’d been taken? So Nagisa did his best to smile and laugh along, until Karma started coughing again, and his body was clearly shutting down.

When Karma fell asleep that time, Nagisa finally let Maki in, after clearing up lunch. Poor cat… She’d spent most of the day being ignored. Usually, she really didn’t seem to mind, but right then she chose to jump up on Karma’s bed, curling close to him. Nagisa took the chance to check his temperature one last time, and whilst it still wasn’t normal, it was definitely better.

At least that time, he looked peaceful in his sleep. Nagisa was so close to reaching out again, wanting to push his hair out of face. Logically, he really knew he should go, leave Karma to sleep in real peace. But Nagisa, even if he could resist reaching for Karma like he shouldn’t, still didn’t have the will power to turn around either.

After a long debate with himself, he scooted around to the other side of the bed, where Karma wasn’t even occupying. The least he could do was let himself have the nap he’d denied himself earlier. Though, he only had the will power to stay to himself for long, eventually letting himself roll over, practically spooning Karma from behind. They still had a few hours before Daichi got back, anyway, so Nagisa tried his best to relax. *I love you too*, he really wanted to say, but all that came out was a sigh.

**Chapter End Notes**

Oh what? Did I really drop the l word on you like that? Are you even surprised at this point? Well, Nagisa didn't accept it as a legit confession, but it's up to you :') And yes, it was always planned that Karma would be the first to confess in this way :')

Things are about to get... heh... intense.
Date Time - Second Period

Chapter Summary

Daichi’s school play finally comes around

Chapter Notes

wooo it’s been a while BUT I MOVED COUNTRY OKAY IT WAS BUSY

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Is it weird that I’m getting nervous on our child’s behalf?” Karma stared into the mirror, as though it was about to consume his soul.

“…Maybe a little bit,” Nagisa replied honestly.

The academic year was drawing to a close, which meant that it was time for what was apparently an annual drama showcase. The school seemed to be taking it pretty seriously, given that Daichi had stayed late behind at school all week. Not that Daichi had seemed much bothered by this, in fact he’d gladly reported that he’d been able to just sit in the corner and read whenever his part wasn’t needed on stage.

“What do you think?”

Nagisa smiled. “I’m not sure I’m the best person to ask about fashion.”

“I’m not sure if it seems too ‘trying to impress a first date’, rather than a school play. Not that I’d know…” he shrugged, and then noticed the question in Nagisa’s gaze. “I’ve never been on one.”

“What?”

“What?”

Nagisa swallowed. “What do you mean, you’ve never been on a date?”

Honestly he didn’t seem that bothered by this. “I didn’t realise it was such a big deal.”

“B-but,” he thought, “you dated people at university.”

Karma shot him a look. “I’d use the word “dated” lightly.”

Somehow, Nagisa didn’t get the feeling that Karma was being dishonest. But Nagisa still didn’t understand how through none of that, he’d never gone on an actual date. Surely that had to have happened at least once… Then again, it depended on what he qualified as a date. If neither parties refer to it as one, then he supposed it didn’t count. There was a fine line, between that and just hanging out with someone.
Karma looked good in pretty much anything he wore. Which was definitely unfair, really. He’d probably suit a maid cosplay and kitten heels look like a coordinated outfit. Though Karma was tall enough on his own, any sort of boost would make him terrifying. No, he was more than fine as is. Actually, more than fine, the clothes he’d chosen right then made him look especially good.

“Are,” Karma swallowed, “are you gonna ask me or something?”

It took Nagisa a moment to remember what they’d been talking about, and blood rushed to his face. It didn’t really sound like Karma was teasing him, not in his tone or demeanour. Nagisa didn’t exactly have experience in asking people on dates, though. He was always the one being asked, and then he was in long term relationships, where going out and doing anything alone together was automatically a date.

“You want me to ask on a date?”

Karma shrugged. “Do you want to ask me on a date?”

He stared at the floor. “I’d feel bad about leaving Daichi just for that.”

“So you can’t do dates at home?” He paused, noticing Nagisa’s lack of reaction. “I don’t know any better.”

“Anything can be a date,” Nagisa thought, “if you call it one.”

Nagisa wasn’t sure what the exact qualification was. Karma had definitely taken him to some very ‘date like’ places, though he supposed neither of them had acknowledged it as one. Would it be a weird thing to do? Things had only just started to reach a kind of normal with them again, surely something so clearly romantic would just mess it up again.

“Okay then,” he accepted defeat, “will you go on a date with me?”

“When?”

And he wondered where Daichi got his impatience from. “W-whenever suits you.”

Karma shifted for a moment. “Later? Daichan’s sure to knock himself out, with all the acting…”


Karma reached out then, fingers toying with the hem of Nagisa’s shirt. “I like this.”

“It’s probably yours,” Nagisa admitted, “most of my clothes are kind of big and everything gets mixed up in the laundry nowadays.”

His hands moved up, feeling the fabric as though it was something precious, and Nagisa’s breath was stolen away from him. It had been a while, since they’d done anything that wasn’t sleeping innocently beside each other. And then Karma’s hand was on his waist, his fingers burning red hot even through his shirt. Nagisa’s knees weakened, and he met Karma’s eyes. Which was right about when the doorbell rang.

“That’ll be Kayano,” he moved away, certain his entire body was tinted crimson.

It wasn’t like there would have been time anyway. As much as he could practically feel Karma’s pout following him from behind, Nagisa focused on actually answering the door. Kayano was stood right there, a warm smile cross her face and a bouquet of flowers in her hand. She too, it
seemed, had dressed up just a little bit for this event.

“Try to look a little more excited,” Kayano said, a genuine smile on her face.

“T-thanks for coming.”

She stepped inside. “Like I’d miss Daichi’s big day!”

Karma finally appeared behind him. “What’s with the hair?”

_Oh_, Nagisa had barely noticed. “I thought the black was a little too obvious, so I’m bringing my old disguise out of retirement. I’m going to be Kayano Kaede again, to everyone.” She wove a lock of it between her fingers. “It’s only a one week wash out.”

To be completely honest, some of the parents there might very well be just as famous as Kayano, so it wasn’t like she’d hugely stick out. Though, he figured maybe Kayano actually liked walking around in disguise. She’d lived that way for a year, and though she did go by Yukimura Akari most of the time nowadays, Nagisa was pretty sure she missed it.

“Ready to go?” Karma shot him a look.

“Yeah, let’s go.”

“Wait,” Kayano looked darkly. “I want to see the cat first.”

Karma practically grinned ear to ear. “I’ll go get her.”

He really did love that cat, no matter what he said. It wasn’t as though Nagisa was any better, though. He’d definitely sincerely miss it if he went more than a few hours without giving her a few head pats. Daichi was lucky he was the chosen one, in terms of most of her affections. Maki would probably be a lot softer to cuddle at night than Karma was.

Kayano’s smile returned when Karma plopped the confused looking cat right into Kayano’s arms. Maki was surprisingly tolerant of this, keening into Kayano’s strokes and rubbing herself up against her chest. Kayano almost seemed to lose track of what she was actually doing, until she nodded firmly, putting Maki back down again.

It was only fair that Kayano got a ticket to this play. And she’d been the one who _really_ wanted to come, though it was nice enough of her as it was to help Daichi with his practicing. Nagisa just hoped it had given him an extra boost of confidence, not that Daichi was ever one to show that many nerves. Maybe he’d secretly inherited Karma’s slight flamboyance.

At least it wasn’t a long journey to the school, though Nagisa did feel out of his depth when they arrived. For one, there was quite a big audience, and it seemed no expense had been spared for the actual setting of this play. Was the drama investment so good here that they had all of this stuff to hand? It was like walking into a professional theatre.

“Is the rest of the school like this?” Kayano questioned.

From what Nagisa had seen mostly, it wasn’t. Instead of just one school, it covered education all the way up to high school, and though everything was technically on the same piece of land, the ages seemed to be largely separated. At Daichi’s age, the school didn’t seem that different from anything else he’d expect, but he supposed most people tended to only seriously look at private education like this at junior high age. Which meant facilities like a fancy theatre?
Before he could actually answer, however, they were ushered to their seats. Suddenly, Nagisa felt like he was the one who was the most nervous. But he’d never seen Daichi do anything even kind of like this before, so he had no idea how it was going to go. He found himself tapping his feet as they waited, keeping his eyes fixed on the stage.

…What Nagisa hadn’t been expecting was a kabuki adaptation of Full Metal Alchemist, which honestly took him a moment to recognise. Something like this didn’t seem like it was at the level of most eight year old’s drama, but he couldn’t find a complaint about it. Actually, it was surprisingly good, as it started. And it turned out, Daichi really hadn’t been lying about being the main character. He was playing Edward, blond wig and all, though Nagisa hoped it wasn’t just because he was clearly the shortest boy.

Sure, maybe he came in a little late at one part, and even from the distance Nagisa could recognise an unmistakable ‘deer in headlights’ sheen in Daichi’s eyes, but he actually did pretty well. Perhaps it was a little harsh, to be surprised, but he hadn’t really seen Daichi show an interest in anything like acting before. He was certainly holding his own, at the very least.

When the play was finally over, he realised that overall it was a genuinely good performance. Maybe not quite professional levels but still impressive for their age group. And of course, he was mostly proud of Daichi for doing such a good job, especially since he hadn’t really done anything like it before. Even if he’d done a bad job, of course Nagisa would have cheered for him, but he was even happier the other way.

Once everyone was off stage and the lights were up, the audience mostly remained, waiting to pick up their kids right away. It seemed that someone had put on some atmospheric music, because there was a light tune coming from somewhere, though over the talking Nagisa couldn’t really make it out. He zoned out a little, until he noticed Kayano and Karma were in heavy conversation.

“What are you talking about?”

Kayano looked over. “That guy over there, he’s a pretty well known director. I… haven’t really worked with him before, but I’m pretty sure he doesn’t have any kids.”

Karma snorted. “Maybe he’s trying to scout out talent.”

“At a school play?” Nagisa questioned.

“It happens more than you think,” Kayano nodded. “My parents pushed me into auditions, but a lot of companies will look for kids this way-”

“Papa! Daddy!” Daichi, having apparently had time to change out of his costume and spot them in the audience, came racing over. “How did I d- Kayano san! You came?!”

She smiled brightly. “Aw c’mon Daichiisai, you know I wouldn’t miss it for anything.”

He nodded. “Thank you for your tips!”

“These are for you,” Kayano said kindly, handing him the bouquet.

Daichi accepted them, face going so red Nagisa was scared he might actually pass out. Instead of actually responding, he just nodded fast, practically burying his head into the flowers. He seemed to want to forget that anyone else was there, which honestly wasn’t going to happen with the way Karma looked at him.

“Daichan,” he complained, “come here.” His tone wasn’t really that serious, but Daichi obliged,
letting himself be hugged. “See, you did great. Maybe you’ll be noticed by that famous director if you’re lucky.”

“I get to be famous?” He asked. “Just like Kayano san?”

Nagisa winced. “Are you sure you want that though? You would be busy all the time, and you wouldn’t be able to have normal friends… You’d miss a lot of school.”

“Oh,” he shrugged. “Can I be famous when I’m older?”

Karma laughed. “You can’t just choose to be famous Daichan. It happens randomly, or when you’re really great at something.”

“Some of my agent’s other clients might disagree,” Kayano muttered.

“You can do anything you want to do,” Nagisa told him. And he wasn’t just being all ‘parental’, he knew with his whole heart Daichi probably very well could do whatever he chose to in the future. Except maybe anything that involved music. He’d encourage him in anything he chose to do but some things he wasn’t exactly a natural at.

“Sounds fun,” he said, “maybe some other time. Daddy… did I do okay?”

Oh, he hadn’t actually praised him yet. “You did even better than okay, really.”

Daichi beamed, but then broke out into a yawn, which was pretty much the signal to get up and go home. As much as he was probably still on a high, it hadn’t exactly been a short play, and with the rehearsals and everything it wasn’t surprising that he was tuckered out. So they made it a relatively quick walk, all the way back home.

“Well,” Kayano said when they got to the door, “thank you for letting me watch your play!”

Daichi grinned. “Thank you for teaching me, Kayano san!”

She smiled too. “Let me know the next time you have a play, hm?” She turned her attention towards him and Karma. “I’ll see you soon, hopefully.”

“Whenever you have the time,” Nagisa nodded.

Maybe Daichi would have been sadder, since he clearly adored Kayano, but he was immediately distracted by the cat the moment the door was pulled open. Maki never seemed to mind being left, but she came straight to him, meowing loudly as Daichi scooped her up, attempting to remove his shoes at the same time.

“Poor lonely Maki,” Daichi pouted.

Karma rolled his eyes. “It’s only been around two hours.”

He stuck his tongue out. “Now I have to cuddle with her twice as hard.”

“Shouldn’t you have a bath first?” The reasonable part of his brain came to surface. “You’ve had a really long day.”

“But Daddy,” he complained, “I’m tired.”

Karma sighed. “But I’ll be tired if I have to wash your bedsheets next morning because you got them all dirty.”
“I’m still growing,” Daichi said, “I need sleep more than you do.”

“Maybe I’m still growing,” Karma quirked an eyebrow in challenge.

Nagisa looked at him. “You’d be Godzilla.”

Daichi giggled at that image. “And monsters definitely don’t need to sleep.”

“Sure they do,” Karma shrugged, “everything sleeps at some point.”

“Actually bullfrogs don’t-“

“But they do need baths,” he cut in, “so go.”

He stared Karma down for a few seconds. “I’m taking Maki with me.”

“In the bath?” Nagisa questioned, but he was already gone before he could answer.

“I don’t think she’ll enjoy that much,” Karma commented.

Then again, Nagisa had no doubt Maki would literally follow Daichi anywhere. Like most cats, she seemed to hate water, but if anyone could convince her it would probably be Daichi. Nagisa didn’t mind, as long as he was actually doing what he said he was. Thankfully, unlike some kids, he didn’t seem to hate things as basic as bathing that much.

“Uhm,” Karma said, a little awkwardly, “the date thing, are we still…”

It had been at the back of his mind, honestly. “If you want to?”

He went just a tiny bit red. “Yeah, let’s do it.”

“Then, you make sure Daichi actually goes to bed,” he nodded, “and then I’ll come get you.”

A slight smirk returned to Karma’s face. “I wasn’t expecting a proper pick up. I’ll be in the bedroom, then.”

Not quite what Nagisa meant, but if he wanted to do this properly… He didn’t mind picking him up. Honestly, Nagisa didn’t really have that much experience in ultra romantic dates. It never really got more complicated than dinner for him… he could definitely do that. He didn’t exactly go so far with it, though he did find a jug to put Daichi’s flowers in… and maybe he borrowed a few.

Once the food arrived (because at a time like this, Nagisa didn’t trust his own cooking), and Nagisa set it out, he knocked on the bedroom door, feeling a little weird about this ‘role play’. Karma was certain going along with it though, when he opened the door with a smile. In this sort of a context, Nagisa found himself looking him over. He’d undone one of his shirt buttons, he was sure… Nagisa shook his head, trying not to just stare at his chest. Karma’s attractiveness was something he was more than aware of, but it wasn’t so often he really looked at him, and his heart felt like it was being squeezed.

“Do dates usually start in blank staring?” Karma teased.

“N-no,” Nagisa tried to stand up straighter, “uhm, let’s go?”

Not that they were going far, exactly. For the time of year, it was actually a decently warm evening, and in the interests of keeping the noise levels to a minimum, he’d elected for the balcony. It was nothing too fancy, just a table set up with a couple of flowers and a candle he’d
found in a random cupboard, a pizza in the middle since it was pretty much the easiest food ever. Nagisa didn’t know what else exactly screamed ‘date’, but he’d tried at least.

“Do you mind?” Nagisa said, looking over the setting as they sat down. “You didn’t actually give me much time-“

Karma tilted his head. “What? Pizza? I could probably make it better myself but, it’s not exactly inedible.”

“W-well,” he flushed, “then it’s up to you next time-“

“Next time?” He grinned. “That’s kinda optimistic, Nagisa, you’re coming on so strong.”

Thankfully, he was well aware of Karma’s light attempts to get a rise out of him. “You don’t usually go on a date when you have no intention of a follow up.”

He shrugged. “I don’t know. What do you even do on a first date?”

Nagisa swallowed. “You find out stuff about each other? A-and try and judge whether you’d get along.”

“Like,” Karma leant back a little, “romantic chemistry?”

“Something like that.”

With a sigh, he leant back even further. “But, we already know everything about each other.”

“I guess,” Nagisa replied, “but that’s just the first few dates. After that… it’s just kind of spending time together.”

“Well I can get on board with that,” he shrugged again, and took a bite out of the pizza.

Come to think of it, this ‘date’ wasn’t exactly different from what they did all the time anyway. Was that a good thing? Karma was just… so confusing. He was the one who had said he regretted kissing him, and that they should keep their relationship to just sex, whilst also telling him he loved him when he was too sick to know what he was even saying. And now this.

He tried to eat a bit of his own slice, but somehow he found it hard to swallow. What did Karma even want? If he wanted to date him, he should just come out and say it! Nagisa honestly doubted his ability to refuse him, at this point. If Nagisa had more confidence, he’d try and say something, but he reminded himself it was Karma who wanted to pretend like nothing romantic between them every happened. He was so unpredictable… what if Nagisa said something like that, and Karma didn’t want anything to do with him at all?

“You look nice,” he looked down at his plate. “T-that’s another thing that happens on dates… compliments.”

“Oh,” Karma smiled, “I know.”

Of course. “Ha-“

“What’s wrong?” Karma asked nonchalantly, “you seem a little nervous.”

I love you, he thought. “Nothing’s wrong, I’m just thinking.”

“Well, stop that,” Karma grinned, but then he faltered. “It’s not so different, right?”
Honestly, ‘dating’ Karma seemed like both the most natural and unnatural thing ever. But he was right, they had dinner together all the time. Just because they were calling it something different didn’t mean they had to make it any different. Nagisa tried his best to relax after that, pretending that this really was just a normal evening with Karma.

Before he even realised it, they fell into their normal selves again and the food was pretty much done with. And that was right, Karma was family to him anyway, so it could never be truly weird between them, at least not for long. Karma had a way of doing that, making Nagisa forget everything he was worrying about for a little while.

“What kind of compliment is ‘you look nice’ anyway?” Karma was saying, reconsidering that topic.

Nagisa cringed a little. “It’s… a fine compliment.”

“Aw come on,” he leant back, “I can do better. Hmmmm,” he stared intently, “you have pretty eyes.”

Was that some kind of challenge? “Your hair’s a nice colour with this moonlight.”

Karma sat alert. “Your outfit’s cute.”

“You have… a good nose?”

“You have a full ass.”

“You have great abs.”

“You’re the most stunning person I’ve ever met-“

“O-oh,” the humour somehow left him entirely. Mostly because it didn’t really feel like a joke, somehow.

Karma sighed. “We should probably take this stuff back inside… but let’s clean it properly tomorrow morning.”

“Okay,” Nagisa stood up.

It didn’t take long to bring everything back inside, candle blown out and plates put in the sink. Nagisa felt a little bad about leaving them, but he supposed the date hadn’t actually officially ended. So he should probably… do that. And dates usually ended with walking home, right? He gathered all his confidence and took Karma by the wrist, in an effort to pull him towards the bedroom.

“What are you doing?” Karma questioned.

“W-walking you back.” Even if it was only a few feet away.

“Such a gentleman,” Karma teased. “Really though, I had fun, thank you.”

Nagisa smiled. “Anytime.”

But Karma looked down at him expectantly. “Aren’t you forgetting something?!

“U-uh… we should do this again?”

“Nagisa.”
“I don’t know what you mean—“

But then Karma bent down and kissed him sweetly, cupping his chin underneath his hand. Oh, right. It was a tiny bit frightening, how quickly Nagisa melted against him, will to be doing literally anything else fading in an instant. The kiss itself was hardly intense, but the feeling that came along with it was. Because Karma could blow him away so easily like that, it was almost dangerous.

Finally they broke apart, and Nagisa’s heart wanted to leap out of the confines of his chest. Weirdly enough, he felt his eyes start to ache a tiny bit, like he was going to burst into tears. Such a reaction didn’t really make sense, just doing something like this… Nagisa didn’t exactly feel upset, honestly he didn’t even know how he felt.

He went up on his tip toes, going in for another kiss. On some level, he felt like he needed it. Karma met him with just as much enthusiasm, and their lips slid pleasantly together, Karma’s hands supporting him by the waist that time. Though, it didn’t take him more than thirty seconds for them to wonder, very purposely and suggestively squeezing his ass.

“What are you doing?” Nagisa finally broke away from him. “First dates don’t usually end with…”

He pouted. “But it was a good date.”

“I guess… it was.” But Nagisa found himself smiling. As if he’d be able to say no, or resist again when Karma tugged him into the bedroom properly, closing the door behind them.

Chapter End Notes

Daichi’s staring moment!

And wow what? Fluff? Me? I mean... of course it takes place on a balcony

Now that I live in an actual Tokyo apartment with a balcony, can confirm that the atmosphere is actually very nice. 10/10 would recommend.
Nagisa finishes his first year of teaching.

Just going to put a slight content warning here that some of the acts in this chapter are definitely not healthy and are not intended to be depicted as such. Other than that... enjoy.

When Nagisa stood in front of his class that morning, it felt just like any other day. Going into work, mostly doing his absolute best to avoid his co-workers, before turning to face his class with the role book. And like every morning, they were chatting amongst themselves, loudly discussing whatever was culturally relevant at that moment, though there wasn’t a single absence.

He made his way to the front of the class, and several sets of eyes fixed upon him. Just like assassins locking onto their target… Nagisa was so proud. They still had some growing to do, but so did everyone else on this planet. Already, they were different people to the delinquents he’d been faced with on his first day of school. He smiled, and started to call out names, dodging a few stray bullets as it went.

“What did I say about assassination during roll call?” He finally said, putting his book down, looking across his students for the culprit.

“We don’t have much time left,” Tanaka complained, “we need to try and get a few last hits in.”

Nagisa looked them over. “But the graduation ceremony starts in ten minu-“

An absolute barrage of assault came down upon him. Usually, Nagisa could pretty easily defend against one or two of his students… but all of them? He didn’t have Korosensei’s speed advantage, and with everyone working together to get him at once? He was annihilated within seconds. His pride didn’t even take the slightest hit, though.

“You win,” he finally said, knives pretty much everywhere in his vision. “But you can’t exactly get your grades changed now-“

Shibata folded his arms. “Kinda stopped being about grades a long time ago, Nagisa sensei.”

A healthy bloodlust radiated through all of them, and Nagisa nodded, accepting one of his student’s hands to he was brought to his feet again. Indeed, he was incredibly proud of them all. He was confident, looking over all their happy and satisfied faces, that they were all definitely going to go out and make something of themselves, and that meant his job was done.
“Okay,” he said as the bell rung out, “I guess it’s time for the graduation ceremony.”

Throughout, Nagisa found himself almost tearful. When their names were called up one by one, he choked up, like some kind of proud parent (he dreaded the day Daichi got that old). It didn’t necessarily occur to Nagisa right then that this was also technically a graduation for him too, now he’d completed a year of teaching and would effectively have his license.

Unfortunately, there were some things Nagisa didn’t really have the power to fix, and he did notice some of these kids didn’t have anybody cheering them on from the audience. But, they’d become genuine friends over the year, and it was good to see that they seemed to at the very least be supporting each other and having a good time.

Nagisa found himself slipping away, rather than making a big deal of saying goodbye. Of course, they all had a copy of his email if they ever needed to talk or wanted his advice. So it wasn’t permanent. Really, Nagisa just wanted to make sure the day was about them, rather than focusing any sort of attention on the fact he was leaving.

He had things to do that day, anyway. It was also Daichi’s last day of school before the break, but there wasn’t any kind of huge ceremony, nothing beyond a whole school thing. He’d seemed excited about it though, and he’d begged to be allowed to sleep over at Jun’s house again in celebration. With the newfound alone time, however, he wasn’t actually spending it with Karma. To his lesser judgement, he’d agreed to meet with Higashi, one of his friends from high school.

Of all the ways Nagisa wanted to spend his evening, drinking in the middle of Tokyo was not on the top of his list. But it was also kind of the easiest way to catch up with someone. So Nagisa elected to put up with it, knowing that there should at least be soda on the menu. And vaguely cheap food. That was the thought that kept him going, as well as getting to see his friend again. They’d only hung out a few times during their university years.

Nagisa suffered the busy train, then, more than thankful for the suppressants flowing through his system. It wasn’t the biggest issue for him in recent years, but it still made him a little uncomfortable, being squashed so close together with other people. He was aware he could have gone into the omega and beta women car, but that was far too embarrassing.

Just like they’d arranged, Higashi met him at the station’s exit. She was a little different to how she’d been in high school, definitely more put together now that she had a proper office job, but she was still the same underneath it all. Her almost violent wave on greeting told him that much. Honestly though, Nagisa really didn’t mind.

“D-did you just get out of work?”

She wiped the sweat from her brow. “I just got here,” she paused, giving him a one over, “look at you, Nagisa sensei.”

Nagisa smiled. “I should officially have my license now.”

“She’s a new kind of bar around here. Plus it’s kind of out of the way, so tourists haven’t found it yet.”

She said that last point with lightness in her tone, at least. Nagisa wouldn’t know. He didn’t exactly go to bars, even during his university years. Even if he’d enjoyed that kind of environment, he couldn’t stand missing his call to say goodnight to Daichi. Even right then, he was trying to resist the urge to check up on his son, but maybe that was too clingy. He didn’t want to turn into one of
those annoying overbearing parents.

He followed Higashi, anyway, through some winding side streets he didn’t think he’d seen before. Eventually they stopped outside one of the many skyscrapers, and Higashi lead him towards the elevator. Honestly, that was the worst part. Nagisa thought he’d at least be able to judge the environment first, but this way he was about to be thrown right into it. Before he even had time to look at the environment closely, they were being taken to some seats.

“Honestly,” Higashi said, “it’s not so busy yet because we’re kind of early, but this place is insanely popular. I’m surprised you don’t know about it, everyone who works in the centre of Tokyo does at this point.”

He shrugged. “I’ve managed to avoid drinking with my work colleagues.”

“That bad, huh?” Higashi nudged him. “At least you’re doing something you love overall.”

They didn’t hesitate to order food, at least. Which was great because Nagisa was pretty hungry after work. Whilst they waited, and once the food showed up, they started to catch up. Since he didn’t really have time to regularly text people, it was nice to find out what she was doing after such a long gap in their communication. After that, though, the conversation drifted back to more current events.

“Aw come on Nagisa,” she said, “one highball won’t knock you out.”

There was a very good chance it might. Nagisa felt kind of bad, because drinking was such a normal activity at their age. But Nagisa was permanently terrified of his drunk self. At a brief recap, he either ended up pregnant or wanting to be whenever he consumed alcohol, and that was reason alone to avoid it. Definitely a bad idea, considering he’d have to go back to Karma later.

“I-it won’t, but-“

Higashi smiled. “Don’t worry, I won’t force you.”

He sighed. “Maybe one?”

At least the flavour wasn’t as strong as something like beer. So it didn’t make him immediately want to puke his guts up. She was already on her fourth drink at that point, and she looked pretty normal. Maybe it was only Nagisa who had the weakest tolerance ever. He drunk very slowly, but even after just half the glass he could already feel his face heating up.

Nagisa didn’t really feel drunk, though. Maybe his vision was a tiny bit hazed over, but he still knew exactly where he was, and how he felt. So maybe Higashi really was right, and one glass wasn’t going to kill him at all. But he still wasn’t making this a regular thing. At least, aside from that, it was really nice to actually talk to her again.

“Where’s your baby daddy, anyway?” Higashi asked, elbows planted over the table.

He almost said ‘stop calling him that’, but it had been years at this point. “I have no idea?”

Her head tilted. “But who’s looking after the baby?”

Nagisa wanted to laugh. “He’s staying over at his friend’s house tonight.”

“Huh?” Higashi’s face fell. “But… he was so little.”
“He’s eight now,” Nagisa sighed. It seemed like just yesterday he was a helpless toddler to him too. “Just finished his second year of school.”

“That’s crazy,” she said. “Sometimes I forget you’re like, the proper adult amongst us.”

“I-I wouldn’t say that-“

Higashi raised an eyebrow. “One of my flatmates literally didn’t know how to do laundry. You have, like, a whole human.”

“And a cat now,” he thought.

“I need to meet her!” Higashi immediately declared. “Maybe some time…” she froze as she looked down at her phone. “Shoot! Is that the time?! Sorry, I have to run off.”

“It’s fine,” Nagisa said, feeling that they’d hung out for quite a while at that point anyway.

She picked up her bag, fiddling around for her wallet. “Here, do you mind paying?”

“Sure,” Nagisa took her portion of the bill, and just watched as she ran off. Hopefully they’d be able to see each other a little sooner than the last time had been. He wasn’t waiting long, either before he was able to pay and gather his things. It wasn’t anywhere near the time for the last train, at least, so he wasn’t in much of a rush. He’d just go home, maybe try to relax a little.

This new bar was kind of like a maze though. When they’d entered, he’d been following Higashi, not really taking in his surroundings so much. Clearly, that was a rookie error, but he hadn’t really been on guard for getting lost. After wandering around for about a minute, he finally thought he’d found the way out, he just had to slip a little bit too uncomfortably close to the bar.

But then Nagisa heard laughter, when he was pretty much out. Higashi had been right, this place became really crowded. But he would know that specific laughter anywhere, as much as that fact pained him. So he turned, getting a better look, because surely that had to be the biggest coincidence ever. But then his heart sunk to the floor.

He’d been right, of course he’d been right, about that laugh belonging to Karma. But Nagisa had been expecting to see him with a friend or something. Instead, he was with a woman, a woman who had her arms on him and a way too happy smile on her face. She tossed long dark curls out of her face, exposing her definitely attractive looks, and Nagisa immediately hated her.

Maybe it was unreasonable, to feel so much bitterness towards someone he didn’t even know, but that logic left him right then. Instead he just became a statue of rage, his disbelief the only thing that held him back. Karma had the nerve to look happy, still laughing at whatever she’d said. It couldn’t have been that funny. The woman’s eyes practically sparkled, though, and Nagisa want to throw up. Or take a knife to her nice pale throat.

“Watch it,” a slightly gruff older man said, because of course Nagisa was now blocking the only exit.

Having heard the non-subtle raise of his voice, a couple of heads turned. Of course, Nagisa was more focused on stepping out of his way, but when he looked back up again, and he directly locked eyes with Karma. His laughter had ended, and his face was as pale as a sheet. But that was enough. Nagisa turned quickly on his heel, making to leave the place as quickly as possible.

He practically dove to the elevator, leaning against the walls as it travelled down. Nagisa didn’t even know where he was planning on going, exactly. He thought about heading home, but that
probably wasn’t the most productive way to avoid Karma. *Stupid.* He was so stupid. Why did he even allow himself to think for a second that he could have what he wanted, like a child yearning for some sort of ‘happy ending’?

Once the doors open, he took a few shaky steps forwards, but a loud slam made him turn his head, just in time to see Karma practically jump down five stairs, clearly chasing after him. Nagisa was too angry to care about that gesture, though. He was in the middle of storming away! Unfortunately, Karma had far longer legs than him.

“Listen Nagisa, I know this looks kind of bad-“

“Looks bad?!“ He hissed and turned. “What excuse do you even have? That seemed like more than just a friendly conversation.”

Karma took a step towards him. “She’s really just a friend! We barely talk, even. She just… gives really good advice.”

His eyes narrowed. “Does ‘advice’ include throwing herself at you?”

“She didn’t-“ Karma stared at him for a moment. “What does it matter to you?”

“H-huh?” Nagisa was taken aback by the sudden accusation in his tone. “What do you mean by that?”

His shoulders dropped. “I can go and have a drink with someone if I want to. I said I was going to meet a friend earlier, and that’s what I was doing.”

“So-“

“So, why are you acting like I did something wrong?” His chin tilted up, looking down at him. “If you can go for a drink, then so can I.”

How had *that* come about? Was Karma really trying to make him sound like he was making a big deal out of nothing here? Sure, he had no obligation to tell him where he was going at all times, but that was a trust thing. Nagisa had started to let go of the insecurity of Karma being better off with other people a long time ago, but it turned out he’d been wrong/

“I-I’m not the one who was snuggling up at the bar!”

His stance didn’t budge, though. “You’re angry because I was sitting close to someone?”

“I didn’t say I was angry-“

“Well you look angry,” he gestured.

“Go back then,” Nagisa turned away, “if she means that much to you.”

“Oh come on,” Karma reached out for his wrist, “don’t be like that, you’re making this such a big deal-“

“Be like what?” Nagisa yanked his arm away. “Do what you want Karma, I’ll just go home.”

His eyes widened. “Nagisa-“

“Who is she then?” He knew he shouldn’t ask, but… “How do you know her? You just said it wasn’t a big deal.”
Karma hesitated. “She’s just a girl from university.”

“A friend?” Nagisa squinted. “Did you sleep with her?”

It might seem like a question out of nowhere, but Nagisa knew. He’d heard all about Karma’s college escapades, though never directly from the source, and even at the time he’d felt a sting every time it got brought up. But then Nagisa had been dating someone, so what right did he have to care about it? Was Karma saying he still didn’t have a right?

Maybe Nagisa didn’t… But that didn’t mean they were ‘just friends’ right then. The least he could do was give him a heads up if he wanted to see someone else first. He shuddered, at the memory of the woman’s hands. Karma didn’t often talk about university friends, but Nagisa was certain she hadn’t come up. Which… meant she was one of the hook-ups.

Karma’s silence was the only confirmation he needed.

“I’m going home.”

“We’re not even dating!” Karma threw his hands up. “Even if I was on some kind of date with her, we’re not in a relationship, so why are you acting like some kind of jealous jilted lover?”

Nagisa did his best to hold himself together. “Yeah, I remember, you made that very clear.”

He had, hadn’t he? The moment Nagisa had finally felt ready to attempt figuring whatever their very messy situation was, Karma had told him, let’s just forget about anything that might read as romantic. But then he went and acted like the opposite, and like an idiot Nagisa just went along with it. He knew, he’d known for years, that it would never work between them. No matter how much he tried to fool himself, this was why.

“I didn’t mean it like that.”

“Like what?” Nagisa held back tears, because the one thing he had the strength to resist was letting Karma see him cry over him. “Like I’m just someone convenient to sleep with?”

“Don’t be ridiculous-“

“Would you be okay with it if I acted like that with one of my exes?” Not that Nagisa had many, but that was beside the point.

“She’s really not an ex, just someone I-“

“Just someone you hooked up with one time?” It felt like venom on his tongue. “Because you don’t do relationships?”

“Why would I want to be with someone who isn’t you?”

The crack in Karma’s voice took him aback, just a little bit. But he didn’t allow himself to soften because of it. He clearly had no problem with being with someone who wasn’t him, otherwise he wouldn’t have been… Nagisa started to feel so angry he could barely even think straight anymore. He was sick of Karma changing his mind whenever it felt convenient. Nagisa never thought he deserved much of anything, but even he could allow himself the right to a straight answer.

“I mean it Karma, leave me alone.”

“No.”
Nagisa couldn’t even look him in the eye, so his eyes fell to their surroundings, and he remembered this argument was happening in public. “People are looking.”

“I don’t care,” but he looked around, and tugged Nagisa off for a few paces, round the side of that alley where there were less people. “If you wanted some kind of exclusivity arrangement then why didn’t you just say something?”

“You’re the one who said you didn’t want it,” he finally got out. Besides, why should it be up to him?

“When?”

Was he playing with him? “You implied it. And now here you are, on a date with someone else.”

“For the last time,” Karma’s eyes were wide and impassioned, “it’s not a date.”

“But you slept with her. You’re not just friends.”

“One time!”

“Does it matter?”

What did he want, a medal? Congratulations, because it would have changed everything if it had been twice? Nagisa couldn’t stop himself from picturing it, her hands over him the same way they were in the bar, and he felt sick again. Was this how jealousy was supposed to feel? He was certain, if a ‘friend’ had done that to him, Karma would have been throwing hands already.

“What if it was the other way around, and I was getting close to someone I’d slept with. You’d really be okay with it? You’d be okay with knowing that. You’d be okay with picturing them touching me, doing worse—“

“Nagisa,” he warned.

He didn’t know what came over him, exactly. Maybe it really was the alcohol causing him to run him mouth, or his anger had taken over the rest of his personality. Because Nagisa never antagonised. But right then, he wanted to. He wanted to hurt Karma, to make him feel worse than he already felt. And there was such an easy way to do it. Not that he had enough thought left in his brain to stop him, as the words kept flowing.

“What if it’s not just one? What if you had to think about who even knows how many others? But it’s okay because we’re not in a relationship, so I can just screw however many dozens of guys I want, right?”

Karma slammed him up against the wall, but instead of punching him, he just stood extremely close, pushing their faces up together. “They can’t have you.”

“Why not?” Even on his suppressants, he could feel Karma’s heavy alpha scent. He wasn’t feeling even slightly submissive though, more agitated. But it felt more like Karma wanted to fight him, than anything else. “Because I’m yours?” He pushed back. “You just said that I wasn’t.”

He breathed heavily. “Come with me.”

It was an order, not a question. Yet, Nagisa didn’t feel entirely obligated to follow him. Not in the way an omega follows commands from their alpha. He did follow Karma, though, against every fibre of his body that told him it was a terrible idea. Maybe the alcohol and removed his logic, and
maybe he was just in the mood for a fight. But something in him wouldn’t just end it there.

Even when he realised where they were going, Nagisa couldn’t make himself turn away. When they walked through the door of the lobby, and Karma quickly pressed something on a screen, too fast for Nagisa to even see what it as. Before he could even peer over, he had him by the wrist, dragging him over to a closed off window where a hand came out and supplied a key. At that point, yes, there was no denying that Karma had just dragged him into a love hotel. Would Nagisa have said no, if he’d have known that? Probably not. His skin crawled, though, since he’d never been or intended to go to a place like this.

“Come on,” Karma said impatiently, tugging Nagisa through the door once he found it.

He wasn’t given a chance to say anything, immediately slammed against the wall as Karma crowded him, kissing him hot and heavy. Nagisa couldn’t really do anything but accept it, not that he wanted to anyway. The urgency Karma had was red hot, and Nagisa was dragged into his flames. He’d barely even been touched, but already his legs started to shake.

It was so hard and rough that it almost hurt. But a part of Nagisa kind of wanted it to hurt. This was the only way they could fight, without throwing fists at each other, which was an unhealthy habit he was sure they’d grown out of. Though, with the way Karma yanked at his hair, pushing him into the wall even harder, a leg between his to truly trap him there, maybe the actual violence wasn’t completely absent.

Because Nagisa honestly wasn’t much better, he bit down on Karma’s lip, gripping him a little harder than he needed to. It was weird, he didn’t want to hurt him, but he was mad and he needed to express it in a way that wasn’t with words. Clearly, that hadn’t worked out for them before. Nagisa didn’t really have time to dwell on the on how unhealthy that was, however, because the sensations were starting to become more than just a little overwhelming.

“Remember that word?” Karma pulled away, like it pained him.

“W-what word?”

Karma groaned, still grinding his knee against his crotch. “Before your heat, if it gets too much?”

It was in the back of his head… “Takoyaki?”

“Good enough,” he moved in again for one last kiss.

There was no warning, before Karma twisted him around and shoved him back with way more force than before. Instead of hitting hard against the floor, though, he found the mattress broke his fall, though the wind was still sucked out of him from the sudden move. Karma didn’t immediately crowd over him, instead staying exactly where he was to strip out of his clothes.

Well… Nagisa didn’t want to give him the satisfaction of unwrapping him either. Hands shaking, he undid his shirt buttons, and then unzipped his trousers, canting his body off the bed just a little to discard everything onto the floor. Usually, he’d be just a tiny bit neater, but this really wasn’t the time to care about that sort of thing.

Karma moved over him, like some kind of looming mass. So Nagisa shuffled back on the bed, keeping himself mostly sat up for whatever was going to happen next. Unlike him, he’d removed all of his clothes, showcasing his obvious desire. Nagisa didn’t have time to focus on that, because Karma was so close, roughly thumbing his lip before moving his hand down to his scent glands, scratching against it with his nail.
“Have at it, Nagisa,” he practically growled, “have your dozens of men, none of them are gonna be as good as this.”

He pushed him back, then, so his back hit flat against the mattress. This time he didn’t get the chance to catch his breath, before Karma was on him, teeth angrily scraping over his neck, and hand now clutching at his side. Nagisa was suspended like that, for a moment, but he didn’t just want to stay there and take it either.

So, he dug his nails into Karma’s back, hard. He didn’t just spread his legs open for him either. No, if Karma wanted that, he was going to have to just do it himself. The slightly annoyed look in Karma’s eye made him feel a sick kind of pleasure in that, but it didn’t last for too long since Karma was then yanking him by the legs, tugging his underwear off in one rough swoop.

“You turned on by this?” Karma stared at his hand, which had come in contact with his slick. “Like you want to be claimed?”

No, Nagisa didn’t want that. In fact, he shuddered in a bad way at the thought. He… wasn’t really turned on by this anger between them, was he? Surely, at this point, he was pretty much conditioned to react that way whenever Karma touched him. He wasn’t exactly… unaroused, though. Maybe that was just as sick as the rest of their relationship.

“Turn over then,” he challenged, “if you want it like that.”

Like what? A hopeless omega who would submit to anything just to please their alpha? Even if Nagisa had ever wanted that kind of dynamic (which, he really hadn’t), right then he definitely wasn’t feeling it. So much was on Karma’s terms… even their fight just then, or coming to a place like this. No, Nagisa didn’t ‘want it like that’. But he was feeling an unusual kind of way.

“How about you make me?” He challenged, and then he realised what he was feeling. It was like bloodlust and… real lust, combined and about to take him over entirely.

A cruel smirk appeared on Karma’s face, the kind of expression that showed a predator. “With pleasure.”

Nagisa gasped, as he was suddenly turned over and shoved up onto his knees. To steady himself, his hands ended up planting the wall above the head of the bed. He didn’t even have time to react, before Karma’s hands were gripping his hips, and he was lined up with his entrance, though, instead of shoving up all the way inside him, he barely got more than just the tip.

His body was a traitor, and he automatically tried to cant back into it, but Karma held him firm. Something like that, it was entirely intentional and Nagisa realised Karma was only doing it to torture him. He even pulled out a tiny bit, so Nagisa could barely even feel a thing. It wasn’t as though they’d done a huge amount of foreplay (barely any actually), but apparently it was enough to make him want.

“Karma,” he eventually said, gritting his teeth. He didn’t want to give in, but Karma won out when it came to brute strength.

“I can do this all night,” he leant over Nagisa’s body, licking a strip of sweat from his scent gland. “Can you?”

The last part he whispered right into Nagisa’s ear, causing the hair on his neck to stand up. His hands rubbed his hip, but everything else was pure discipline. Karma… really wasn’t going to move, until Nagisa did whatever he wanted. Nagisa wasn’t sure what that was, and he really didn’t
to ask either. The only way out was self endurance, but with the way Karma decided to bite at his ear, he didn’t know if he’d make it.

“You’re twitching,” Karma continued, slotting one of his hands between Nagisa’s legs. He didn’t jerk him, which would have been just a little bit satisfying. No, instead he just barely fondled him, giving him just a taste of friction.

Nagisa tried, but he couldn’t stop himself from whimpering when he let go. And suddenly, every inch of his body ached.

“You’re mine, Nagisa,” his lips moved back to his neck after he said it, teeth scraping him. “Nobody else’s. So there’s no point in even hypothetically imagining it, got it?”

Right then, he remembered why he was mad. “What kind of double standard is that meant to be?”

He felt Karma flinch. But then his hand came down rough on his throat twisting his head so he was looking him in the eye. “I haven’t even thought about anyone else since that first time during your heat… probably a lot longer before that, too.”

“Oh,” his voice shook.

Nagisa… didn’t know how much he believed it. His emotions were still running high, and the adrenaline from their current position wasn’t helping it. But it didn’t feel like Karma was lying to him. He definitely wasn’t letting this go, but… Maybe he could accept that the intent might not have been so bad originally. It didn’t change a lot, though.

But the cracks were starting to form, and his hips were jutting back at the press of him. Nagisa let his eyes fall closed, trying to breathe, trying to find the right out. He was so completely angry, but he also wanted it. Somehow he already knew he’d come to regret it, but what else was there for him to do? He couldn’t even dream of walking away.

“I’m all yours, okay?” There was just a shred of tenderness in his voice, before he shifted, and Nagisa almost moaned just from that. “I’m not doing anything, not until you say it too.”

“Say wha-“

But then Karma’s lips were back at his throat, and his hand trailed across his torso, the other keeping him in place. Nagisa couldn’t stop his head from spinning, from keening into every little touch. But it was impossible to fully enjoy, with Karma already pressed against him, and he probably knew that. What did he want from Nagisa? Whatever it was, he was close to give in, every passing second making him more desperate.

“Yours,” Nagisa finally called out, “I’m yours.”

He was rewarded immediately. There was no warning, only the violent slam of Karma’s hips against his ass, pushing himself all the way inside him in one violent movement. After being teased like he had been, it was the most satisfying feeling he could comprehend. His nails dug into the wall, in a desperate attempt to steady himself. Even with Karma’s tight grip, he’d used the full force of his weight, and it was a miracle Nagisa hadn’t just fallen over.

Apparently that was his cue to not waste any more time. Karma pulled almost all the way out, before slamming back in just as hard. And Nagisa’s head felt it was about to explode. The speed and force of it… was a lot more than they’d ever done before. He didn’t even have time to think about biting his lip and being quiet, crying out at the rough stimulation.
It seemed like Karma really was trying to prove something, like he was leaving a mark on him just like that. And unfortunately, it was working. It was working far too well for anyone’s good. With every movement, it built and built, and it felt as though there was a buzz underneath his skin. Nagisa almost forgot what they were even fighting about.

But… he couldn’t give in entirely. No, instead, he thrust his own hips back and clenched down around him. With the way that Karma’s breath hitched, it clearly worked. Not that he didn’t just respond with more vigour, though. Honestly, Nagisa was a little worried about the state of the wallpaper after they were done.

“Nagi-“ he panted, “Nagis-“

Nagisa groaned, as his erection rubbed him just right. “M-more.”

Instead of draping his weight over his back, Karma moved back, so he was standing on his knees. He gripped him properly by the hips, and started pulling Nagisa back with his movements, somehow managing to make it even deeper and harder. He was entirely blissed out, especially when Karma gripped him roughly by the hair, yanking him so he was in a slightly more upright position too.

Nagisa squeaked, which probably read more like a scream. Karma started to hit the spot inside him that mad everything white hot, and he didn’t stop. It wasn’t as though Nagisa was a stranger to that kind of stimulation, but this was a lot rougher and faster than he was used to. In order to hold him that position, Karma was kind of pinning his arms, so he couldn’t have even dreamt of covering his mouth. Though he wasn’t really in the right frame of mind to be embarrassed at the volume of the noises that escaped him.

“W-wait, I-I’m-“

But Karma didn’t wait, and Nagisa’s eyes rolled back, the stimulation finally becoming too much. He snapped without much warning, spasming right there in Karma’s arms. He came hard enough that he suddenly wasn’t entirely sure of his surroundings, though he knew Karma was still moving, taking him through it until he became hyper sensitive.

Nagisa shuddered, when he pulled out, and he was unable to support himself on his own. He didn’t feel bad about collapsing down onto the mattress, pleasant endorphins racing through his body. But, after just a second to catch his breath, Karma turned him over so he was lying flat on his back, and then it really was like the room was spinning.

“W-“

“Shh,” Karma leant over him, “you thought I was done?”

He kissed him, before he could reply, and Nagisa made a weak attempt at moving his lips against Karma’s. The distraction was enough for him to line himself back up again and push in, and Nagisa’s eyes squeezed tightly shut. It was far too much, after coming so hard, an almost unpleasant kind of sensitivity. Yet, he couldn’t bring himself to ask Karma to stop.

Had Nagisa had the strength left, he would have wrapped his legs around Karma’s hips and squeezed tight, but he just couldn’t. In fact, Karma lifted his legs for him, and began moving. All Nagisa could actually do was toss his head back and feel, as the stimulation became at least a little bit more manageable again. Consciously or not, he clenched around him again, part of him not even wanting Karma to pull out.
“Nagisa,” he groaned, hands tightening around his thighs. “Nagisa-“

It felt weirdly good, to hear his name on Karma’s lips. It wasn’t exactly that Nagisa enjoyed being passive, and he’d never felt the need to with Karma. He was floating right there, no matter how hard and rough the actual movements were, it felt almost peaceful as the pleasure grew in his lower stomach once more.

“Mine,” Karma said, really bracing his weight over him.

“Mmm,” Nagisa tried to get out his agreement through the rest of this gasps and moans, but he was pretty sure it was lost.

“Gonna,” he started, in between pounding him so hard Nagisa was choking. “Gonna knot you just to prove it.”

Nagisa cried out, not even thinking, and that was just it. “D-do it.”

Somehow it managed to get even more intense from there, with Karma burying himself like he really meant it. And Nagisa was pretty much useless, shaking and thrashing around, until he saw Karma’s eyes go wide and he came to his senses enough to feel the swelling around his entrance. Just a few thrusts more, and Karma looked like he’d been shot right through the chest and been resuscitated.

It honestly took Nagisa’s body a second to catch up, but then he felt it, felt how wide he’d suddenly been stretched, and a tell tale warm throbbing inside. All he knew was he suddenly felt far too good for human levels again, the world around him going black and white for an amount of time he didn’t even know, but then Karma was pressed up against him, chest moving rapidly as he panted for breath.

Nagisa shifted with the last shred of strength in his body. Feeling that yes, they were definitely joined. He hadn’t even known that this could happen outside of a heat, but he’d asked for it, hadn’t he? For a few moments, they just lay there, like they were both trying to make sense of what had just happened. He did realise it was kind of hard to breathe with Karma’s body kind of crushing him, though.

Karma seemed to realise at around the same time, gripping Nagisa tight before the rolled them both over so they were lying on their side. He didn’t really know what to do from there. When he’d been in heat, he’d been too out of it to really notice that period. But right then, his mind was starting to come back to him, and for lack of a better term it felt kind of awkward.

They kissed, for a little while, until tilting their heads for such a long period of time became slightly uncomfortable. Even more back to his senses, Nagisa lay there in the feeling. Every time there was a slight movement, he felt too sensitive all over again, but when they were still it still felt good, just having him there, if only Nagisa could forget everything else. But then eventually he softened enough to pull out, and instantly the gap between them grew cold.

Nagisa turned over, once they were separated, and all the endorphins left his body. He almost felt dirty. Not just because they were in a sleazy love hotel, though that was definitely part of it. Hadn’t they just been fighting about something like this? About how their ‘relationship’ was just sex… ending that argument with more sex and no talking was the most counterproductive thing ever.

“Nagisa,” Karma lay beside him, reaching out in the darkness to trace light shapes on his back, “are you okay? D-does it hurt or something?”
“N-nobody else,” Nagisa finally said, frighteningly loud given the complete silence of the room otherwise.

“’Course,” Karma replied casually.

“N-no,” he tried his best to sit up a little, which was challenging with the way his insides had just been stretched beyond their limits. “I really mean it.”

Karma had the nerve to look amused. “Since the first time the thought hadn’t even crossed my mind.”

“Then why-“

He looked him in the eye properly, seriously. “Is this want you want, Nagisa?”

What did he mean by that, exactly? Right then, no, Nagisa didn’t want it. He didn’t want the fights, and the misunderstandings, and everything else that came along with it. Clutching his knees with his arms, he tried to think. Every worry Nagisa had used to have, stopping him from being with Karma, was almost certainly true. Only now they’d gone way too far to ever really be ‘friends’.

Karma swallowed, taking his silence as an answer. “Then that’s why.”

“I don’t want you to see anybody else,” he finally said. Maybe it was a selfish request, considering he couldn’t fully answer the question.

“Okay,” Karma’s shoulders dropped. “I won’t.”

“I want to know what you want.”

His lips parted slightly, but before he could say whatever it was, an alarm went off on his phone. Of course, they only had a limited time in the room. Nagisa had never actually been to a place like this, but he didn’t want to find out what would happen if they went over the time. He darted to the bathroom as Karma quickly rolled out of bed, both in an attempt to somewhat get themselves together.

Except, he almost fell straight over, teeth gritting pain coming with every step. And that’s why people didn’t usually take knots outside of a heat. Nagisa didn’t really have much of a choice but to put up with it though, sorting himself out as much as he was able to so quickly, before returning to the room to pull his clothes on as fast as he actually could.

Glancing at the time, it was actually pretty late. Normally that was okay, but considering Karma had been at a bar, Nagisa had to assume he hadn’t brought his car. Which, unfortunately, meant they needed to catch the metro pretty quickly. It was pretty hard to keep up with Karma, especially whilst limping, but thankfully the station wasn’t so far away.

Of course, since it was coming up to the last trains, it was incredibly busy. Karma stood close to him, though, more in his personal space than he really needed to be. Forgetting everything and everyone else, though, it was a nice feeling, almost like an embrace. Nagisa turned his head though, looking out of the window as the colourful city lights started to fade.

They were silent, on the way back to the apartment, but Nagisa preferred that to any small talk. Really he was just focused on getting back, so he wouldn’t have to walk anymore. Hopefully for a couple of days minimum. At least the building had an elevator. Nagisa usually took it for time’s sake anyway, but right then he was really grateful, and before he even knew it they were at the door.
“Nagisa,” Karma’s hand stilled, once he’d twisted his key in the lock, “I didn’t get to answer.”

“Oh,” he looked down, “no.”

He took a deep breath in for a moment. “Right now, I really want to go have a shower, and then I want to collapse into bed and sleep for the next nine hours.”

“Sounds,” Nagisa didn’t know how to respond to that, “fair.”

“But,” and then Karma paused. “I don’t want to do any of that without you.”

Nagisa tilted his head. “Have a shower?”

“That’s the only answer I can come up with,” he shrugged, but his cheeks tinted just a little bit. “Whatever this is or isn’t, I want you.”

Maybe something possessed him, but Nagisa found himself grabbing Karma by his jacket, going up onto his tiptoes to kiss him. It was hard and passionate, but it wasn’t really leading up to anything. It just… was, and warmth spread through his entire body when Karma returned it, arms wrapping around his waist.

“Me too,” Nagisa just barely got out when their lips parted.

Chapter End Notes

Is this my contribution to kinktober?

This one sure ended up pretty long... huh. Well look, they kind of talked, didn't they? Seems like nothing can go wrong from here...

On a real note don't miss the last train out of the centre of tokyo. You will be forced to either drink away your misery or go to all night karaoke. Which is, actually, cheaper than a hotel and I have been informed that many people take advantage of that.

I promise we'll have some quality Daichi time next chapter :')
Okay Time

Chapter Summary

Karma and Nagisa are surprisingly okay

Chapter Notes

the story doesn't end this chapter (:

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Things were alarmingly okay. Enough so that Nagisa found himself second guessing whether he was actually still in the right life. Everything was just so… nice. In the mornings, Karma woke him up with a kiss to the cheek, and rubbed his shoulders as he told him to stay in bed and get some more rest. And, then, when Nagisa came to properly an hour later, he got to spend time with Daichi all day.

He felt like a little kid again, now that it was the break. Nagisa was giddy, and he had all of this free time. Outside, it was starting to turn to spring, too. Even Daichi had been compliant enough to agree to actually leave his home comforts a couple of times, so he’d experienced the fresh air. He’d even gone food shopping with him without complaining about it.

That day in particular, though, Daichi had a new book to read. Well, a new series, which seemed ridiculously long with several very thick books, and would surely get him through the break. It seemed fair enough… some sort of medieval fantasy thing. As long as it kept him entertained for more than just a few hours, Nagisa was happy with it.

All of that meant he’d long since disappeared into his room, leaving Nagisa to do normal household chores, until Karma came back from work, and Nagisa’s heart soared with excitement. He restrained himself from rushing to Karma’s arms, but couldn’t hold back his grin when he actually saw him, and Karma wrapped his arms around him, kissing him on the forehead.

“How was work?” Nagisa asked.

“Boring,” he replied, but then after a second thought, “annoying. Things would actually done, if they just knew how to compromise.”

Nagisa smiled into his chest. “You mean, do exactly what you think is best?”

“Maybe,” Karma let him go with a sigh. “But I’m definitely correct-“

“I’m sure,” he said, “but you should save the worrying for Monday… unless you have a bunch of paperwork again.”

His face fell. “I worked through lunch break again-“
“Karma.”

“But!” He raised his arms as if to justify. “I’m actually kind of ahead right now.”

“Does that mean you’re planning something, this weekend?”

“Hmm,” he thought, “nothing in particular. Unless you want to spend all day in bed.”

Nagisa couldn’t help but smile again. “Sounds like a dream. All day, huh?”

He raised an eyebrow. “You don’t think we could go all day?”

“O-oh,” his face heated up red, “like that. I thought you meant, uhm,” he couldn’t even finish the sentence.

Karma poked him on the nose. “You’re too cute.”

“Cute?” He scrunched up his face. “I could kill you in your sleep.”

“Mmm,” he draped his body over his again, “try it some time.”

“I will,” Nagisa said, though the threat in his tone was weak.

Instead of killing, though, Karma kissed him. Of course, Nagisa eagerly returned it, going up onto his tip toes to make the distance a little easier. It wasn’t really a sexual kiss, Nagisa had experienced enough of those to be able to tell the difference, though it certainly didn’t lack passion either. There was something just so endlessly intoxicating, about the smooth way their lips slid together.

“Ew,” Daichi interrupted them, appearing at the door.

Nagisa tried to move, but Karma wasn’t having that, holding on to him. Instead of kissing him normally, though, he at least made it a little more innocent, peppering butterfly kisses over his face. Unfortunately, he was a lot stronger, so Nagisa didn’t have much of a choice in the matter.

“What’s wrong~?” He tilted his head, in false innocence.

Daichi’s nose wrinkled. “That’s gross.”

He laughed. “I’m just showing him some affection. You don’t want some, Daichan?”

“Satoshi kun said his parents started acting all weird and kissy,” he complained, “and then he got a sister. I don’t want a sister!”

“Y-you’re not getting any sisters,” Nagisa confirmed, voice small.

“Yeah,” Karma confirmed, “it takes nine months, you know. So you’ll have to be patient for once in your life.”

Nagisa knew Karma was just joking, but it still almost made him choke. Even the mention of having another child – he shuddered. One was way more than enough. Plus… there was also Maki. They could get another cat or something instead. That… seemed like far less work, and the worst injury he could get from that would be scratches on his arm.

“Why are you being weird though?”
How much had they messed their son up, that he thought his parents kissing each other was the weirdest thing he’d seen? Nagisa always worried about how well they were actually raising him, and moments like that were why. He knew it was a stupid worry, when he had a warm home, a constant supply of food, and parents who loved him with all their hearts, but it was a worry nonetheless.

“Don’t know,” Karma said, handling this far better than him, “felt like it. You okay with that?”

“As long as I don’t have to share my room,” Daichi decided. “I’m hungry.”

Karma rolled his eyes. “Come on then,” he pushed him towards the kitchen, “let’s go choose something, huh?”

Did Karma every worry about that kind of thing, too? They’d never spoken about anything like that. Though, it was kind of miraculous if they spoke about anything serious at all. A shadow loomed over his head, that they had to discuss this development between them properly, not immediately following an impassioned argument. But everything was so good, everything he’d even dreamed of wanting, that he was terrified that something like that would rip it away.

Until dinner was ready, Nagisa took refuge on the sofa, and Maki jumped onto his lap to keep him company. She was apparently in a clingy mood that day, pawing at his chest whenever he stopped stroking her for a few seconds. The cat was much like a second child, as it was. Even if, he grit his teeth as he remembered, she technically wasn’t even his pet.

Thankfully, by the time there was an array of delicious food in front of him, the subject of siblings had been long dropped. After almost an entire day of not having to socialise, Daichi was in one of his chatty moods, and apparently the hilarious subject of that day was asking Karma specific questions about his work, even if there was no chance he’d actually really understand the answers.

“Why are you raising the taxes?”

“So that the government has money for other stuff.”

“What kind of other stuff?”

“Hmm, like…” Karma trailed off, “well I don’t know exactly. All kinds of things.”

Daichi folded his arms. “Junchan’s dad said it was annoying.”

“I’m sure he did.” He smirked his amusement.

“At least,” Nagisa thought, “it’s a little easier to do the math now.”

“I don’t wanna pay more money,” Daichi said, sliding his then finished plate forwards.

Nagisa smiled. “I don’t think anyone does.”

He nodded. “Come here, Maki!”

Honestly, sometimes that cat acted far more like a dog. On Daichi’s command, she jumped up, happily landing in his lap. Before he could be stopped, Daichi grabbed some of food he’d chosen not to eat, and fed it to her. Of course, Maki had no problems with that. At least it was only a small amount, and Nagisa didn’t want to tell him off for no real reason.

“Are you planning to spend all evening with the cat?” Karma asked.
“No,” Daichi said, though he kept her in his arms as he stood up, “wanna play with you Papa.”

“Hmm, we can play Mario Kart, if you want.”

Which lead to about an hour and a half of frustration and anguish, as far as Nagisa was concerned. Karma was never one to just let Daichi win because he was a child, which he supposed was a good thing in some ways. Nagisa tried his best too, his reaction speed maybe just a tiny bit better than Karma’s, a merit of being attacked each day by his students.

“I’m not sleepy,” Daichi eventually declared, when it was most definitely night outside.

“W-well,” Nagisa looked at him, “it’s not good to try and stay up, just in case we have things to do tomorrow.”

“Like what?”

“Doesn’t matter if you’re too tired,” Karma stood up from the sofa. “C’mon, go take a bath. Or do I have to do it for you?”

Well, that was one way to get Daichi’s attention. “No way, I can do it just fine.”

Nagisa sighed, when he ran off. “I guess we have to follow through with that now.”

“Mmm,” Karma agreed, “there goes the staying in bed all day dream.”

“He’d never let us,” Nagisa thought, “he’d choose that day to be full of energy.”

Luckily for them, Daichi did indeed get sleepy from having his bath. Typical, honestly, every time he complained about not being tired it almost always seemed to end up that way. So, only a few minutes later, it was goodbye to him and Maki for the evening. Usually, that meant a lull came over them both, and honestly on occasion it also meant their bedtime.

Right then, though, Karma carded through some of the letters that had been sent to the apartment. “Ugh, I hate rent day.”

“R-right,” Nagisa looked down.

Even after all that time, Nagisa still felt awful about the rent thing. Kind of like he was freeloading. He tried to insist that he paid for everything else, but it didn’t always happen like that. Especially now it had been such a long time, and the repairs to his actual apartment were long since due to be finished. It sunk into Nagisa like the deepest pit of his stomach.

“It’s so depressing,” he muttered, and then threw it on the table. “The only time I miss my parent’s house. At least I didn’t have to see it… or pay Tokyo prices.”

Nagisa stared down. “I-I should probably go grocery shipping, or-“

“Just say the word,” he said like some kind of mind reader, “I’ll put you on the lease.”

Could it really ever be that simple? If they did that, then Nagisa would really definitely have to live with Karma permanently. Not that, all things considered, that was necessarily a bad thing. But his mind started to spiral. Nagisa didn’t even know what their relationship was, it felt like declaring something like that was definitely the wrong thing to do. On the other hand, Nagisa didn’t know what the alternative was.

It wasn’t like he’d just asked Nagisa to mate bond with him, but it still came with a feeling of
permanency. Honestly, that feeling shook him down to his core. The idea of this being the rest of his life, on the surface it wasn’t even close to being a bad thing. In fact, it was one of the things he probably wanted the most. But the moment he started to feel any kind of happiness about it, his darker thoughts crept in.

“…Are you okay?”

Nagisa stiffened up immediately. “I’m just tired.”

He took his chance to escape, scurrying first to the bathroom to ready himself for bed, and then hoping to just be able to turn over and fall asleep. Of course, that was hard when he did in fact have to be with Karma for the next several hours. And there was no chance in hell Karma had actually bought his lie.

He didn’t say anything, though, when Nagisa came in. So instead he just faced away from him, making to curl up on the bed. Like maybe they could just go to sleep and pretend like those threads of conversation hadn’t happen. Nagisa knew, though, how pathetic he was being. How this couldn’t possibly go on forever, and he needed to make some kind of decision at some point.

“Nagisa,” he said finally, and when Nagisa turned, he could see the discomfort in his expression, “this is gonna matter eventually.”

Nagisa swallowed, because he was right. Nagisa didn’t want him to be right. He just wanted to live in this happy careless bubble without second guessing everything. Whatever was going on between them right then, Nagisa was terrified it wouldn’t last if he thought about the future for too long. Even if he knew it was so much what he wanted.

Karma sighed, and started to get ready for bed himself, and Nagisa’s breath caught. He was so unfairly attractive. Tall, undeniably handsome in the face, and all rippling muscle when he removed his shirt. Karma claimed to want him, but Nagisa just couldn’t see why. Not when he’d clearly had a line up of incredibly attractive, smart, and probably more emotionally balanced people.

“Look at you,” he said quietly.

Nagisa thought he was over this whole thing, the stage in his life where he lived a cycle of thinking he wasn’t good enough. But maybe he’d just pushed it away back then, and now serious questions about the future were coming back up again, it was like he’d looped around. It wasn’t like he thought Karma was some kind of perfection, but it still didn’t make sense, why he’d want to be with him for a long time.

“What do you mean by that?” Karma pulled a light t shirt on, but otherwise paused in his changing routine.

He looked away. “Nothing…”

Karma sighed, sitting down beside him. “I wasn’t trying to pressure you into anything, you just always seem uncomfortable when I bring up stuff like rent. U-unless you don’t want to stay here, after your apartment is sorted out.”

“I want to,” he finally squeezed out, “but… look at you, and look at me.”

“Look at you how?”

He gestured himself. “You could have anyone, a-and I’m not exactly anything special.”
“Nagisa~,” Karma nudged him, “stop talking like that.”

He winced. “I’m not saying anything but the truth-“

Before he could even think about adding anything else to that statement, Karma yanked him, flattening his body down on the bed. He didn’t pin him down, instead just leaving him in a dazed state for a moment. But then he yanked his pyjama bottoms off, making him slightly uncomfortably exposed, considering the light was bright and on, and Karma was still pretty much fully dressed.

“W-what are you doing?” He said, resisting every urge to cover himself and hide.

“Looking at you,” Karma explained nonchalantly. “Hmm…” he raked his hands down Nagisa’s chest, cool and jarring against his skin. Nagisa’s breath hitched, as he reached his stomach, tracing the pale lines that marked him there. Karma avoided his crotch, instead moving down to his thighs, lifting up his legs… almost like he was inspecting him. “I don’t see it.”

Nagisa swallowed. “See what?”

“There’s not even an imperfect speck on your body.”

Karma stared him right in the eyes as he said it, with so much uncharacteristic seriousness that Nagisa’s head spun. Maybe Karma was just saying that… but it didn’t feel like that. There was no teasing comment, no brush offs… He wasn’t messing around. But Nagisa didn’t know exactly how to react to that.

“Bu-but,” he started, “you’re stuck with me anyway, so-“

“Too bad,” he said, “‘cos I don’t want anyone else.”

Nagisa choked up. “R-really?”

“Sorry,” a glint came across his eyes, “no take backs. Guess you’re stuck with me now.”

It took all he was to find the energy to smile. “I could do worse.”

Karma kissed him, then, and warmth spread through his entire body. This was what felt right to him, and surprisingly the other stuff melted away. He knew it would have to come up eventually, properly, but right then Nagisa felt like he trusted Karma with everything had. Maybe some people would say Karma wasn’t the most trustworthy person in the world, but Nagisa knew he would place his life into his hands if it came down to it.

Eventually, when things intensified like they so usually did, the rest of their clothes flew off, one by one. It didn’t feel so hurried, though, as their lips traced each other, begging for more but not knowing exactly how to get it. Once they were both fully naked, Nagisa still found himself reaching for the light switch out of habit.

Karma caught his wrist, though, looking at him with challenge. Nagisa knew it probably wasn’t the time, and it was such a ridiculous issue to have, but he felt his body tremble. As much as he might trust Karma, he didn’t quite trust himself. Karma kissed up his arm, though, all the way to his chest, and he tried to focus on that feeling.

He was certainly taking his time, as he moved down slowly, paying special attention to his stomach, before eventually his face was right in his crotch. Nagisa gasped and squirmed, at the first press of his lips against his length, and bit down on his hand when his kisses started to trail.
He didn’t stay long enough for there to be much sensation, though, not enough to get him there. Nagisa’s toes curled with the teasing, quickly finding it torturous. Karma was still moving down, though, until he finally pulled back a little so he could yank his legs and ass cheeks apart, and dove straight in with his tongue.

All Nagisa could do was try not to scream. Karma knew exactly how to work him like that, how to turn every other thought off. With his spare hand, he gripped the sheets, trying to ground himself a little bit. Though, eventually it got just a little too much, and his hips automatically ground back. He could even feel Karma smirk against him, before he moved his hand up, tugging Nagisa’s into his hair.

Encouragement enough, Nagisa let go, allowing himself just to feel as Karma worked wonders on him. Though, he didn’t really want this to end like that, either. As mind-blowingly good as it felt, right then he wanted to feel Karma’s weight on him, link their hands together with closeness. He wasn’t sure if it was obvious or not, or maybe Karma really could actually read his mind, because he finally stopped right then, looking far too devilish and pleased with himself.

Karma kissed him on the neck, first, for once not even giving him a teasing scrape of his teeth. Unfortunately for him, a dark part of Nagisa’s brain wanted that the most. If Karma just bit him and left his mark forever, then Nagisa would have a physical reminder not to second guess himself. In a weird way, he wanted the proof, the unmistakable bond that would keep him going. But instead of rough, Karma was tender, so much so that Nagisa barely even noticed him line himself up with his entrance, until that first push in.

Nagisa held onto his shoulders and gasped, the feeling familiar but no less incredible. He turned his head automatically, neck straining as his body adjusted to being filled up. Karma didn’t waste any time, rolling his hips after just a few seconds of adjustment. And like that, Nagisa was along for the ride, his body slowly lighting up with every grind.

But, then, Karma stopped entirely, which confused him in the middle of his haze. Bracing himself on one arm, he used his other hand to twist Nagisa’s head, and the suggestion was instantly clear. That caused Nagisa to shake in a not so pleasant way. It was a ridiculous thing, that he’d never looked his partner in the eye at a time like this, he knew that. However, he’d had his reasons. His initial discomfort with sex as a whole had definitely been a part of it, but then as time went on, it just felt like too much. Like what they were already doing as intimate enough, without that too.

Even so, Nagisa found himself peeling his eyes open, meeting Karma’s own familiar gold, and there weren’t even words. He felt like he was being attacked, right down to his soul, but in one of the best ways he felt. Karma even had the nerve to smile softly, as he picked up his movements again, and suddenly the last thing Nagisa wanted was to shut them.

It felt different to every other time. Maybe not physically, strictly speaking, except for the emotions racing from his heart down through every vein, buzzing under the surface. He was in Karma’s arms, and he felt wholly okay with it. Safe and warm and protected and… loved. And then tears started to fall from his eyes, because neither of them needed to say it anymore. He felt it, in Karma’s eyes, the way his fingers brushed against his skin. He felt it.

“Nagisa,” Karma groaned, still moving. “You’re so-“

But Nagisa couldn’t even form words. He just gripped Karma’s back as tightly as he could. He wasn’t afraid that he’d move away, it was just that any kind of distance between them felt wrong right then. At least in that moment, Nagisa didn’t think he was afraid of anything. If love was the right word, then he was tempted to scream in from the rooftops.
“Why are you crying?”

Karma wasn’t going so fast that he panted every word, but he still seemed strained. Honestly, Nagisa didn’t have an answer for him. He didn’t know why he was crying, only that it wasn’t out of sadness or pain. Though, it didn’t feel like happiness in particular either. It was more like this energy that was overwhelming him, and tears were the only way he could actually express it.

Instead of answering, he lifted his body a little bit, kissing Karma on the lips. It always had been easier, to just kiss him instead of talking. And that’s what Nagisa needed to do. He needed to kiss Karma until he couldn’t breathe anymore, until his lungs were full of only him. Of course, that would probably kill him, so he settled for holding him close after that, as they focused on feeling good. And Karma was skilled with many things, but this was probably one of his better points.

“Ka-“ Nagisa could eventually barely even think well enough. “Karma I-“

Karma’s hand came down to cup his cheek, thrusts remaining steady. “S’okay. You’re okay.”

He choked up, then, his body reaching his limits. Like he was being slowly torn apart, and all he needed was to rip in two completely so he could come back again. As much as Nagisa didn’t want it to end, what would happen just before that was far too tempting. Though, in the sensation, he did find his eyes squeezing shut briefly with concentration.

“Hey, look at me,” he said.

Nagisa tried his best, locking eyes with Karma once more. At the same time, he ground against him just right, and Nagisa couldn’t hold back his orgasm. Except, it was so different to every other time before. Because he was looking straight into Karma’s soul, and Karma was looking at him with so much pure devotion he couldn’t even begin to second guess it.

It almost didn’t matter, how good he physically felt. Instead, it was like for the first time he’d tapped into something so much stronger, and that energy around him didn’t even feel human anymore. And through it all, he was staring at Karma. The only thing that even made sense to him was Karma, and the way Karma looked back at him was like he felt the same way.

Nagisa just then started to notice the twitching inside him, a tell tale sign that Karma had finished too. Right then, that was a good thing, because he didn’t think he could go again. In fact, he wanted to close his eyes and fall into the most peaceful rest he’d have for a long time. Karma was still catching his breath, though, ribcage still pounding against his own chest as he stared down at Nagisa like he was in some kind of awe.

“I love you.”

Chapter End Notes

EDIT: Alright binge readers! If you're reading this fic for the first time, this is a good place to take a break, get a snack, or just put the fic down for now! Or, if you still have energy, by all means keep reading on.

Things get kind of intense and cliff hanger heavy from this point onwards, so I'd recommend being either emotionally or physically prepared.
“I love you,” Karma said, and immediately collapsed, nuzzling his head into Nagisa’s shoulder.

What.

What?!

You love me?!

Sure, Karma had said it before, but he’d been completely sick and out of his mind. They’d moved on, because clearly that didn’t count, and Karma didn’t seem to even remember it. This wasn’t like those times. Unless… Nagisa knew that sometimes people said things during sex that they didn’t really mean, but this wasn’t an overeager hook up. Karma had… looked at him like he meant it.

Karma at least did him the favour of pulling out of him properly, but then slung an arm over him, like he wanted to cuddle. Right then, Nagisa’s mind was spiralling too fast for cuddling. Was he really just going to drop something like that on him? And then just go straight to sleep? Nagisa had been waiting to hear those words for almost nine years… and just like that?

His exhaustion was gone immediately, which made him incredibly restless, until Karma was definitely asleep. From there, he manoeuvred his way out of bed, splashing his face with water a couple of times. After cleaning away the then uncomfortable evidence of their evening, Nagisa blinked at his reflection in the mirror.

Nagisa didn’t think he could sleep, but he didn’t want to just sit around all night either. When he came back to the bedroom, though, Karma had started to hug one of the pillows as his replacement. Nagisa would have felt bad about that, if he didn’t look so cute doing it. He slid back into bed, lying on his back to stare hopelessly at the ceiling.

Somehow it made it harder, how much he loved Karma too. Loved him so much that his head felt like it might spin away from his shoulders whenever he thought about it. But… what reason was there to deny it anymore? Karma apparently loved him so there wasn’t exactly rejection to fear. Nagisa didn’t know what to think, aside from being sure that they would definitely have to talk about it for real.

Eventually he did drift off, because the next thing he knew he was being licked by a cat. It wasn’t
the worst way to wake up in the morning, in fact Nagisa smiled at first, reaching up to pet her behind the ears, before the thought occurred to him. If Maki was there, roaming around feely, then that had to mean someone else was awake…

“Morning Daddy!”

Nagisa tried his best to smile, forcing to sit himself up. “How long have you been awake?”

“Hmm, I don’t know!” At least he sounded cheerful. “But now I’m bored and hungry.”

He actually looked over at Karma, where he was apparently sleeping entirely peacefully through this. How much had the night before knocked him out, exactly? Still, Nagisa nodded, thankful that he’d put pyjamas back on after his mild freak out, and rolled out of bed. He did have responsibilities, after all. That included not leaving his poor son hungry.

Somehow, Nagisa didn’t really want to eat. He did sit opposite him, though, watching as Daichi slowly chewed on his toast. Something about him seemed distracted, too, but Nagisa would rather he actually eat first, rather than answer questions. He wasn’t sure how long they were sitting there until he finished, only that it was quite a while and Karma still didn’t appear.

“So do we get to anywhere today?”

Nagisa blinked. “Where did you want to go?”

Daichi thought for a moment. “Uhm… I don’t know.”

“Not the library, or anywhere?”

“Uhm…” Daichi trailed again. “I wanna see Grandma and Grandpa.”

Nagisa hadn’t exactly expected that. He knew that Daichi loved them to pieces, but given a free option to choose something… Well, if that’s what he wanted. It was short notice, but he really doubted his parents would say no. Daichi was somehow their soft spot, and honestly Nagisa was happy for them. Maybe it was best that way.

“Also,” he continued, “I wanna bring Maki.”

“Why?” Maybe that shouldn’t have been his first question, but…

“I wanna show them the tricks I taught her!”

Maybe they should stop leaving Daichi unsupervised with the cat. But, it was kind of cute, when Daichi got down to demonstrate her giving him first a paw, then a high five. He decided that okay… maybe they could do that. If Karma had a problem with seeing Nagisa’s parents, then he should have woken up early enough to say something about it.

Eventually, he did stumble out into the living room, and he’d done them all the favour of getting fully dressed. At the forefront of Nagisa’s brain, he’d been acting like it was just any old morning, but then he locked eyes with Karma for just a moment and his heart stopped. How could things ever be the same, after that? He didn’t even know if it was a good thing or not.

“C’mon,” thankfully, Daichi was there to distract his attention. “Papa, we’re going to Kunugigaoka.”

Karma blinked. “Okay?”
“And we’re taking Maki.”

“For a walk?”

Nagisa’s hands clenched in his lap. “I-uh, already let my parents know, that Daichi and the cat want to see them.”

He didn’t fight it. In fact, he just nodded, and wandered over to pick up his car keys. Was the silence some sort of clue as to Karma’s feelings? Nagisa couldn’t help but worry, that maybe Karma actually regretted what happened. That, or maybe he really hadn’t meant to say it, and purely forgot. Maybe the latter was actually for the best. Maybe.

Nagisa mostly stared out of the window, during the drive to Kunugigaoka. It was a familiar trip, but something seemed to linger about the scenery, filling his heart up with dread. Nagisa couldn’t pin point exactly what it was, but it made the hairs stand up on the back of his neck. Even when they parked up at his parent’s house, Nagisa couldn’t help but feel like all of this was wrong.

Of course, his parents were happy when they opened the door. “Daichan! How are you?”

“I’m good, Grandpa!” Daichi said, Maki in his arms. “Did you miss us?”

His father softened. “Of course we always miss you.”

“You brought the cat?” Nagisa’s mother raised her eyebrow. “Come in, everyone.”

Honestly Nagisa was feeling a little nervous. At this point, Karma was as much a part of this family as he was, in his parents eyes anyway, so it wasn’t like it was unfamiliar. What was different was that he and Karma… well Nagisa didn’t actually know what they were. They never got the far on discussing the labels, not that he really needed them. But whatever the case, they were in an exclusive somewhat romantic relationship (agreement? Arrangement? Comapnionship?), and that made things seem a little different. He wondered if his parents could immediately tell.

It wasn’t that Karma immediately did anything that would clue them into that. But Nagisa even found himself jerking, when he felt Karma stand close to him. It wouldn’t even be the first time Nagisa introduced a boyfriend to them (not that Karma was his boyfriend), but like this it just felt kind of weird, and he was immediately afraid of their questions.

But, he knew he was being kind of stupid. Karma wasn’t just some random delinquent he’d picked up off the street! Well, maybe when they’d first met, but that was a decade ago. The point being that Karma was literally the father of their grandchild, so it really wasn’t weird for him to be with Nagisa… in their mutually exclusive arrangement.

“Are you okay?” Karma finally asked him, tilting his head.

In fact, Nagisa almost shrieked, but he found himself aggressively nodding. “I’m fine.”

Karma shrugged, but squeezed his arm in a symbol of support, and Nagisa melted. It was just enough of a reminder that Karma supposedly loved him, and Nagisa definitely loved him. So it really shouldn’t be a probably, simply talking to his family about it. They’d have to tell them eventually, wouldn’t they? Well… if things got more serious. Though, what even was more serious? Marriage?! Even the thought made Nagisa’s face heat up, and he forced himself to swallow it down.

“Since you’re just going to stand there without even taking your shoes off,” his mother said in a scolding way, “you can go and get the fish for dinner. I already put an order in.”
“The one across town?” She’d been using it for years.

She sighed. “You know it’s the only good place.”

“I’ll come with you,” Karma perked up. “I have the car, and all.”

Instinctively, Nagisa felt relief at Karma’s offer, but then he realised that was wrong. It would probably better if he could think through things on his own. But, it would be even weirder if he rejected the offer. Reluctantly, he nodded, and turned right back out of the door again, Karma following, likely on the merit he didn’t actually know where the store was.

“Hey,” he said when they were outside, “I know driving would be quicker, but now I kind of feel like walking.”

Was this some kind of ploy to get him alone? “L-let’s walk through the park, then. It’s nicer that way.”

It was definitely a ploy. There was no way Karma would voluntarily walk anywhere. At the same time, though, he didn’t really seem like he had anything to say. Nagisa, on the other hand? He had way too much, and it was bubbling up inside him. He tried his best to keep it at bay, distracting himself with their surroundings. Whatever was going on, Kunugigaoka was really pretty in the spring, and the cherry blossoms were in full bloom.

“It’s crazy,” Karma said, “we lived here for so long but everything feels kind of different. It feels so long since we just to take Daichi here, when he was too little to even walk.”

He smiled softly. “It was a long time ago.”

“Yeah, and things really did change too.” He paused, for quite a long while, before opening his mouth again. “Let’s go somewhere,” Karma said, pretty much out of the blue.

Nagisa turned his head. “Huh? Like a trip?”

He shrugged. “Your year of teaching is over now, so call it a graduation trip.”

“Where?” He looked up at him, not really sure what to think.

“It’s a big world,” Karma said, “let’s not go see my parents again so soon though.”

As whimsical as it sounded, he didn’t think Karma was actually kidding. Nagisa wanted to scold him about missing too much work, first and foremost, but then he thought about it. Technically speaking, Nagisa still didn’t have an actual job, and likely he’d just have to sign up as a substitute until a permanent position opened up. It wasn’t ideal, but it did mean that right then was probably the best time was probably the best time to do something like that.

Nagisa smiled. “I guess I’ll see what Daichi thinks. You… did mean with Daichi, right?”

He snorted. “As if he’d ever let it go if we left him.”

It felt like such a normal family thing. Though, that was one thing he knew Karma was to him without a shadow of a doubt. Family. The more he thought about it, the more he saw the appeal of the idea. To escape from here for a little while, and hopefully a bunch of his worries with it. Plus, honestly, he’d probably go anywhere with Karma.
“How about New Zealand?”

“What? Why?”

Karma shrugged. “It’s not like I have a list of places. But… a bunch of really great movies were shot there and I kind of always wanted to see it in person.”

Of course, Karma’s inner movie fanboy. “That sounds nice… Or, maybe it would be nice to go to Okinawa again, when we’re not under the threat of death.”

“Nagisa,” Karma reached out, grabbing him by the wrist, “I mean it.”

His shoulders relaxed. “I know you did.”

Somehow, he couldn’t help but feel like those words had a little bit more meaning in them that their surface level. As they continued walking, Karma’s hand slid down into Nagisa’s, linking their hands together as if they were meant to fit like that. It was ridiculous, with the amount of explicit positions they’d had each other bent in during the last few months, but Nagisa found his heart pounding against his chest at such an action. Was his hand sweating?!

“Is it towards the school?” Karma noticed, once they’d passed through the park, and were vaguely near the station.

“No,” Nagisa started to lead the way, squeezing Karma’s hand, “it’s around here.”

“Ugh,” Karma complained, as they walked through the rest of the town, “let’s just say we got lost and go watch a movie instead,” he motioned the cinema.

“My mother would probably love that,” Nagisa thought.

Karma sighed dramatically. “Hey, Nagisa, look over there-“

A little alerted, Nagisa turned his head, which gave Karma the perfect opportunity to kiss him on the cheek. There weren’t so many people around, but Nagisa was still immediately half scandalised that he was doing it in public at all. It was sweet, though, the way his lips just barely brushed against his skin, leaving a mark that seemed to tingle.

“What was that for?”

Karma shrugged. “Remember when we came here for the first time as kids, to watch Sonic Ninja? I kind of wanted to do that then, so now I have the chance.”

“I-“ Nagisa started, but then the words he wanted to say so much got stuck in his throat.

He wanted to curl into a ball and sob, honestly. Something so simple shouldn’t feel so hard. Yet, he just didn’t know where to even start. Every time he looked Karma in the eye he lost all resolve. It shouldn’t be so impossible to tell someone he loved right down to his core how he truly felt. Maybe he should just give up, and write it on a piece of paper, but that found like a cop out.

“Karma,” he tried to force the words out, even if it felt like he was going to hurl, “I-“

Like some sort of saving grace, Karma’s phone started buzzing weirdly loudly. Then, confusingly, so did Nagisa’s. Maybe it was a coincidence, but something about it did seem weird to him. Like the sharpness of the air before a lighting storm. It wasn’t a phone call, though, which was the weirdest part. Nagisa was almost expecting it to be a tsunami warning or something crazy.
“From Karasuma San,” Karma said, and then started to read aloud, “Class 3E, make your way to the old campus right away. This is a state emergency and non-negotiable.”

Nagisa didn’t even know where to begin. “State emergency? Y-you didn’t mention anything about that.”

“Well,” Karma looked equally surprised, “my job is deciding what to do about that kind of thing, but the actual information… I don’t know anything about it.”

“Seems like we have to go,” Nagisa said, before quickly sending a text to his mother to tell her they couldn’t actually pick up the fish.

They travelled to Kunugigaoka Junior High in mostly worried silence, the anticipation burning beneath both of their skins. There was no support or reassurance, it was clear they were both just as concerned as each other. For something that sounded so serious, the day was far too nice and pretty, Nagisa thought as they traversed the mountain, the route still right there in his muscle memory.

Despite being in the area, they actually weren’t the first ones to arrive. Since it was around Korosensei’s death anniversary, most of their classmates weren’t actually so far. Or, so Nagisa noticed, as one by one it became an unintentional reunion. The mood was so sombre, though, there were no real catch ups.

“Nagisa!” Kayano came over to him immediately. “Do you have any idea what’s happening?”

“No.”

Part of him hoped that somebody would, but it seemed like they all got that same exact text message. As though he was actually waiting, Karasuma finally showed himself once everyone was accounted for, and the look on his face was even more stoic than usual. For a moment, he said nothing at all, staring at the group of them as though he didn’t know where to start.

“Come on, Karasuma san,” Maehara called, “you can’t bring us all here and not tell us why.”

Karasuma kept his shoulders straight. “You’re right, and I wish that this wasn’t news I have to share with you. But it’s come to this, and all of your lives may be in danger.”

That wasn’t the best way to start and announcement. Immediately, Nagisa felt his stomach flip over and tie itself up in knots. Hadn’t he just found everything he ever wanted? And now… something was very wrong, clearly. Karasuma wouldn’t just call them here if it wasn’t that serious. It felt like one of nature’s cruel jokes. Beside him, he felt Karma stiffen, and he wondered if he was thinking the same thing.

“As you all know,” Karasuma continued, “the horrific experiments of Yanagisawa were discredited. Unfortunately, they were not completely destroyed. There seems to have been a copycat, who managed to access his work and continue with it for the last eight years. We’ve managed to somewhat track his plans now, but we’re unable to understand the full extent of it, moreover track who exactly is running the experiment, and be able to arrest them for it. If it’s as bad as we think it is, then the entire world could be in danger.”

None of that made sense to him. Who would even want to copy Korosensei’s experiment? Did that mean that there… was another one like him? Was the world in danger of exploding all over again? Nagisa had no idea how to even process this, or the rest of what Karasuma was telling them. Eight years was a long time to be working on something, so who even knew how far he’d come?
“There are no people more qualified in the world than you to deal with, for ease of discussion, what we’ll call tentacles. Unfortunately, that makes you prime targets. Even though your information was classified… the fall out from Class 3E was public. We’re afraid that if they can’t reach you or you don’t comply, then your families might be easily leverage.”

Isogai stepped forward. “Then what do you need us to do?”

He looked like he was about to choke up, honestly. “I want to hire you as temporary agents. They’re right that you’re all the most qualified people to deal with these tentacles, and we can use that to our advantage to. All we know so far is they’re using that technology. I’ll also consider it protective custody. It’s safer in a secure government location, and of course we can deploy regular police to watch over your families just in case. You would be compensated of course, and it’ll be easy for me to excuse you from your work, with the power of government defence behind me. You do have a choice, but this is an incredibly serious matter.” He cleared his throat. “You all did more than a lifetime of service for this country as a part of 3E, but now I have to ask that you pick up those blades once again.”

Nagisa looked over at Karma, and his stomach tumbled out onto the ground.

Chapter End Notes

I told you it didn't just end simple and happy!

Well, here's some big drama. Real talk, I actually got bored when I first planned the story so I added a huge plot and to be honest, I kind of grew attached to it. Hmm, what do you think? Assassins once again? And yes, Nagisa still can't say the L word. He's trying, though! But... that's about to become low on his list of priorities.

Yes, this is actually the final story arc, we're almost there folks. Well, compared to the rest of the fic. This part could be a standalone story :'}
Departure Time

Chapter Summary

Karma and Nagisa discuss their options, in regards to Karasuma's news

Chapter Notes

I committed the number one sin-

Minor content warning, it's not especially traumatic but there is description of what's essentially a panic attack in this chapter. Just so you can brace yourself.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Whatever Nagisa had been expecting to hear, it wasn’t that. Part of him was expecting Karasuma to just come out and say it was a joke, though Karasuma wasn’t one for jokes. The worst part about it all was the silence that followed his words. The moment where everyone started to process what he’d really just told them, and everything else was just the whistle of the wind through the trees.

Nagisa remembered the day Karasuma had first appeared, giving them the mission to kill Korosensei. All things considered, his life had been a lot less complicated back then. Aside from the moon blowing up a few days prior, Nagisa was just an average failure. There was no assassination, no teen pregnancy, no ridiculously complex emotional issues.

Really, he’d been just a kid. Nobody had known exactly how to react that day, when guns and knives were handed over to them, along with the fate of the world. Of course he’d had to grow up pretty fast like that, he hadn’t had the time to even think about it. Even after it all ended, he suddenly had a lot of responsibilities, and he’d just had to accept them, with no way out of it. Though Nagisa’s life had turned out far better than it would have without all the scary stuff, he felt that he’d sped through an incredibly important part of his life.

Except right then, he didn’t really feel like much of an adult. With Karasuma’s words, it was as though he was that same scared and confused fourteen year old. The only real difference was he had so much more to care about. Back then, the threat of apocalypse wasn’t such a big deal to him. The same as hearing a story on the news. It was sad, but, well, he didn’t have much hope anyway-

“We’ll do it.”

It was actually Terasaka who spoke, with the crack of his knuckles. At the same time, his whole gang nodded in approval, taking a step forwards. Nagisa wasn’t sure if they were still as close as they used to be, or if they were just slipping back into old habits. That did mean a not insignificant number of people had already joined the cause.

And, much like school children, a few people started to raise their hands, here and there. Nagisa felt like he was in the midst of some sort of fever dream, barely able to process the information of who it was, and why they were so eager. He had every reason, though, to not step forward. Even if
right then, he couldn’t put his reasoning right into words.

“I will,” Kayano stepped forwards with purpose. “If they stole Yanagisawa’s research, then it was facilitated by the lab that was started by my father. After his death… he should have made sure it was destroyed properly. I can’t help but feel like this is my family’s fault.”

“Kaede-“ Kurahashi tried to interrupt.

She stood firm, though. “I would volunteer anyway! But this- I could have done something.”

Karasuma finally cleared his throat. “The culprit was intent on this mission. If the research had been destroyed, I don’t believe this would have been entirely avoided.” He lowered his head. “Don’t decide anything now. As I said, I’ll be here in the morning.”

The silence returned, as Karasuma finally left. Aside from volunteering, what was there to discuss? Well, there was lots to be said, but nobody seemed to know where to begin. Like the weight of it was finally starting to settle. When Takebayashi turned on his heel, and started to move as though he was heading back down the mountain, everyone’s heads followed him/

“Where are you going?” Maehara called.

“There’s no reason to stand here all night,” he said seriously. “I’m going to think.”

“He’s right,” Isogai said loud and clear. “We all have real lives now. I think everyone should really consider what this would mean.”

There was nothing more to add to it, after that, and everyone started heading off in their own directions. Nagisa didn’t miss the way a few of his ex classmates shot glances in his direction, though. He was the one who’d delivered that final blow, after all. Not that it made him so important, in his own mind. But maybe it was odd that neither he or Karma had said anything.

But then they were the only ones there, and the silence continued. It wasn’t unusual, for he and Karma to struggle to find the right words to communicate with one another. This time, though, Nagisa wasn’t even sure if he had the right words for himself. Nothing in his core was making sense. He was mystified, by how quickly those offers had come in, how ready everyone seemed to just pick up their blades again.

“Karma,” he finally sucked it up and started, as though speaking aloud would help to clear his thoughts.

“Of course we’re not going.”

Instinctually, Nagisa wanted to nod. Of course, Karma was entirely right. There was no way they could just up and leave, even if it was to ‘save the world’. He didn’t think it was particularly an omega thing, since those kind of desires had never influenced him so heavily before. More, he and Karma naturally tended to agree on this kind of thing. When it came to really serious topics, they were usually on the same page.

Yet, Nagisa stood and thought, right there in the spot where it all happened just over eight years ago. Whenever he remembered those days, they were tied to how much he’d appreciated them. The fun they’d had, bonding with Korosensei over assassination. The fate of the world… it had never really been in the forefront of his mind. Those days had changed him a lot, though, as a person. And he couldn’t help but tie those memories to Daichi, too, since that had been such a huge part of it for him.
Your families might be easy leverage.

A typhoon of dread swirled around him. It wasn’t as if that was even private knowledge. Karma had literally been student number one, and it would only take the briefest look at his family registry... They’d even been in news reports, which in this day and age only took a YouTube search. That kind of thing could be done from any mobile phone, anywhere in the world, at any moment.

Suddenly, this wasn’t about him anymore. It wasn’t about how Nagisa felt. It wasn’t about all of the innocent people who could be hurt, or anything else Karasuma had said. Maybe it wasn’t public knowledge that Nagisa had been the one with the blade that day, but that was only a tiny detail. He and Karma stood out as it was, but when it came to family...

“We have to.”

The look in Karma’s eyes was almost terrifying. “What?”

“W-we’re too much of a target.”

He examined him. “Do you really mean what I think you do?”

Nagisa stared at the ground. “I don’t know what else to do.”

“Not just up and leave for however long!” He snapped, then. “Don’t give me that look, you know why we can’t.”

“Karma-“

“We have a son to look after.”

But that was exactly it. “That’s why! You heard what Karasuma san said, that our families will probably be used for leverage if we just go about our lives.”

Karma had gone completely dark. “You really think we’re not capable of protecting him.”

“This has to be bigger than us,” Nagisa almost pleaded. “If Karasuma san had to call us here, then it’s bigger than even him too. And it doesn’t seem like Karasuma doesn’t even know what they have, completely. Unless, you suggest watching him twenty four seven, and being on guard for any kind of force-“

“I’m not leaving him again. Maybe you don’t know what that kind of thing does to a child, but even that once was far too much for a lifetime.”

It was hard to hold back his frustration. Nagisa understood it, he really did. But right then was not the time for Karma to project his own emotional issues onto their son. He couldn’t bring himself to say as much, though, not without it sounding like a petty jab. Daichi was okay, wasn’t he? He knew how much his parents loved him. It wasn’t like, even when they were at university, they didn’t see him every moment they were physically able.

“It’s not like we have a choice-“

“Karasuma said we did,” he all but barked. “Literally. He said it was our decision.”

“Most people aren’t quite in our situation!”

His eyes were sharp like daggers. “Do you have some kind of hero complex or something?”
“You know that’s the last thing I’m thinking about.” Nagisa’s breaths started to become heavy. “But yes, Karasuma san wouldn’t just call us if it wasn’t this important. I don’t want to be a sitting duck either, if something is seriously going to happen.”

“Why should I care?” Karma shrugged it off. “Karasuma probably has endless agents who can deal with it. You saw how quickly everyone signed up. Why does he need us?”

Somehow, Nagisa didn’t think that was it. Karasuma didn’t seem like he needed them, not really. If anything, he’d been entirely apprehensive. If everything he’d said was true, then they were probably already in danger. He could see a slight point that walking into a mission wasn’t exactly keeping out of it either, but that wasn’t what Karma was trying to argue.

“You’d be happy to just sit back and watch this?”

“Yes,” Karma emphasised, “because this isn’t our responsibility. But we have actual responsibilities.”

“When it comes to keeping Daichi safe I’d do anything,” he argued. “That’s the real responsibility.”

Karma stared at him. “Are you sure that’s your real thoughts?”

“Do you know what I think, Karma? I think you’re scared and you’re clawing for whatever argument you can because aside from your own personal feelings, you don’t have one.”

Nagisa physically took a step back, not even knowing where that had come from. He blinked rapidly, not even remembering exactly what the words were. He knew he could have said a lot worst, and honestly Karma didn’t look hugely offended, but Nagisa felt sick. Like his entire head was spinning and would twist right off his shoulders. There was so much going through him, he didn’t even know what to think.

“Nagisa,” he sighed, “are you-“

“Don’t-“ Nagisa heaved, like he actually was going to spew his stomach up.

“I don’t want to fight with you,” Karma came over to him anyway, and put an arm on his shoulder.

He tensed up immediately, which was probably not Karma’s intent. But Nagisa’s heart was pounding and his blood was running thick. If anything, he wished he could run away and hide. Or, he wished Karma would fight him. They were right back at their school, and it only felt right for Karma to lash out. But yet… his touch was so soft.

You love me you love me you love me-

It rushed through his head for a moment, before it was taken over. His blood lust was confused. Seeping out of his pores just a little, but there was no real direction for it to land. He wanted to be angry at him, to set his target, but that just made him limp. With nowhere to go, maybe it made sense that he was turning it on himself. Nagisa started to shake, clinging onto Karms side entirely out of an instinct beyond whatever else he was feeling.

“Breathe,” he said, and Nagisa did.

He couldn’t bring himself to look Karma in the eyes, but at least the shaking stopped. “I-“

“I think you’re the one who’s scared, Nagisa.”
For a reason he didn’t quite understand right then, he started to cry. Usually when he was upset or angry enough for that, he knew exactly what it was about. The lack of that made it even more confusing. Maybe he really was scared. But it wasn’t so much the situation that Karasuma had said, but everything else that came with it, and Nagisa felt lost.

He said it out loud. “I don’t know what to do.”

“I don’t know either,” Karma offered.

They’d ended up on the cool ground, Nagisa on his knees and Karma sat cross legged. He looked towards the school building, which felt insanely huge from his current position. That’s all he could do for a moment, just sit right there. He really didn’t know what to do, but nothing was definitely not it. That’s the only thing he could clearly understand.

“What do you think Korosensei would say?”

Karma didn’t say anything for a moment. “I don’t think he would have thought to put something like this in his guide book. But even if he did… it’s not that I don’t appreciate his advice, I still read it myself from time to time, but we’re adults now. There’s a point where we have to make our own choices.”

“I can’t do nothing,” Nagisa finally said, moving away from Karma’s touch. “If it’s even a risk, that Daichi might get hurt, then I have to do everything to stop it. That’s my first instinct… and I don’t think I can ignore it.”

“Even if it messes him up?” He said it through gritted teeth.

Nagisa swallowed. “If anybody wants to use those tentacles, after knowing what they did to a person… Then I think we have to do whatever it takes. Even if he hates for it in the end, that’s better than anything else.”

“I don’t agree with you,” Karma said slowly, “but I’m just as worried about him getting hurt.”

“I don’t know how far it’ll be taken… if whoever it is would care about hurting us like that, but the risk alone…”

Karma pulled himself to his feet, and he looked mountainous with his height. “I’ll do it, Nagisa. But just as you said, every fibre of my being is telling me not to. However… I’m weighing up the consequences of you being wrong, and I being wrong. And it’s definitely worse if I’m wrong.” He offered a hand out. “Unless you have another solution.”

“I’m not happy,” Nagisa said, after he took Karma’s hand. “I don’t feel like I got my way.”

“I know,” Karma replied. “So I’m not mad about it. We’re a bit beyond that, don’t you think?”

He was right. They were very different people, to how they’d been as teenagers. He couldn’t quite convince himself that they were perfectly good at this kind of thing, but that didn’t matter. All the fight had left Nagisa’s body a little while ago. Now it was time to actually do something, rather than stewing in their own disagreements. And didn’t that feel strange?

“One thing, though,” Karma added. “I’m not going to be the one to tell him.”

Nagisa wanted to contest him. Why should he have to do the hardest part alone? The least Karma could do was be supportive, in this kind of situation. But… he couldn’t push any further. Not when Karma had already conceded. This part, it was his own decision after all. Thinking about it, it was
probably only right that he take that responsibility onto his own shoulders.

“O-okay.”

Their mood was nothing more than sullen, as they travelled down the hill. With everyone else gone, and only the moon lighting the way, it felt so incredibly lonely. Even when they reached the bottom, and headed towards the train station. They’d missed peak commuter time, so there were free seats, but they both stood anyway, holding onto the overhead grips like it was some kind of life line.

His mother was quick, when they opened the door. “What happened?”

Nagisa clenched his fist. “We need to talk about it.”

“Daddy-“ Daichi ran up to him. “Papa! We were waiting for ages. Did you get lost?”

“Yeah,” Karma said, “we got lost. Kind of dumb of us, huh?”

He giggled. “I wouldn’t even get lost in Kungigaoka!”

Nagisa didn’t want to drag this out any longer. “Daichi, would you mind going to your room for a little bit? I need to talk with your Grandma and Grandpa.”

“Okay…” Daichi said, the look in his eye indicating suspicion. “ ’s long as you play with me afterwards.”

His heart ached. He wanted to do that so badly, to innocently spend time with his son and ignore the rest of the world. But that wasn’t an option anymore. His entire thoughts had been consumed by how Daichi would feel, but he hadn’t thought about himself. How he’d be able to cope with that kind of separation. Nagisa just wanted to minimise the pain as much as possible.

“Is something wrong?” Nagisa’s father asked.

He gulped, not even knowing where to begin. “You might want to sit down.”

“Nagisa,” his mother’s voice was sharp.

“You remember what happened when we were in E Class,” his chest felt entirely heavy, “especially that night.”

The expression on her face told him she did. But she didn’t know everything. Back then, Nagisa had only explained what he needed to, for her to understand the story and give them her blessing to go and see Korosensei that last time. She knew that he’d died that night, obviously, but he hadn’t thought about himself. How he’d be able to cope with that kind of separation. Nagisa just wanted to minimise the pain as much as possible.

“Your junior high teacher?” Nagisa’s father’s brow creased. “The news reports said he was some kind of a monster, but I didn’t really believe, not after the way he spoke to me.”

“Yes,” Nagisa’s head was low, “I killed him.”

He spat out his tea.

“To be fair,” Karma finally said, “we all killed him.”

Nagisa’s mother’s grip on her cup tightened. “You said that the government did it.”
"It was classified," he tried. "We were on a strict gag order."

"Why is this so important now?"

He didn’t even know how to put it into words. "One of the men from the government who trained us that year called everyone who had been in that class back. Apparently, some of that research that caused out teacher’s mutation has been somehow adapted and used… I don’t really understand it, but-"

"He thinks that we might somehow be targets," Karma finished for him. "Maybe guinea pigs, maybe something even worse. If we’re hard to reach, then they can’t do anything, but like this they could use anyone’s families as bargaining chips."

"He basically wants us to work as agents," Nagisa took over once again. "But at the same time, there’ll be special forces to keep an eye on our close personal relationships. He said we don’t have to go, but if it puts everyone at risk, we, I think it’s better if we do."

His father took a deep breath. "This is a lot, Nagisa."

"You’re going to work as a government agent," his mother said aloud, "for how long?"

"I have no idea," he said honestly, "until this is dealt with. It seems like the ministry of defence is taking this pretty seriously, though."

"You killed someone," his father said, and then looked over at his mother. "You don’t seem very surprised."

"I knew about the training part," she said.

"You what?"

"We can talk about it properly," Nagisa half pleaded, "when we come back. The biggest problem here-"

"You need someone to look after Daichan," his mother tensed for a moment, and then sighed. "This is a lot to process. You’re going, then."

Nagisa didn’t say anything in response to that. The actual reality hadn’t quite set on him then, but it was true. If they did this, then he’d be going away for a period of time he didn’t even know. Would it be months? Years? He started to feel incredibly sick again, before he remembered that he needed to breathe and have a rational conversation about this.

"I have no idea what’s going on," his father said, "but if you’re worried about Daichi, he can stay here any time."

Was he not getting it. "This isn’t just a weekend, Dad. It could be a long time. It would completely upturn your life-"

"I’m more worried about everyone being safe," he said. "If this is what it comes down to, then I trust you. You’ve only ever acted with Daichi’s best interests."

His mother pressed her lips tightly together. "When do you leave?"

"Tomorrow morning."

"Then go spend time with your son."
That was all Nagisa wanted to do. If he could choose any way to spend these last few hours, it would be with Daichi in his arms. But that didn’t feel like it was the right thing to do, when he was carrying such heavy knowledge. It was only fair that he managed to get it out as soon as possible, to give Daichi as much time as possible to adjust. Such an effort seemed a little futile, though, because in reality there would be no adjustment.

Karma squeezed his hand, as they reached the door, though the expression in his eyes was unreadable. He didn’t say anything like ‘it’s going to be okay’, because they both knew it wasn’t. But this was necessary, and as painful as it was going to be, it was far better than Daichi getting somehow hurt, the mere thought of which made his blood boil.

“Daichi,” Nagisa started, but then his voice broke. How was he supposed to tell his son something like this, when he’d promised him that he wouldn’t leave him again after university?

“Daddy!” He said excitedly, putting Maki down on the bed. “I know it’s kinda late but I promise I’m not tired! So can we play a little before we go home?”

His breathe caught. “A-actually, we decided it would be a good idea if you had a sleepover here tonight.”

Daichi’s eyes lit up. “Really?! Does that mean Grandma’s gonna make me pancakes in the morning?”

“Maybe if you ask her nicely-“

Then he paused, and that all too familiar intelligent gleam came over his face. “Wait, how come?”

“I-“ Nagisa hadn’t actually prepared how he was going to say this. “Your Papa and I need to go away to something for a little bit.”

“Go away?” He tilted his head. “I don’t get it.”

“It’s important government stuff,” Karma cut in. “You know how my job’s very important for the country? It’s like that, they need some help, and we’re just going to have to go.”

An odd expression came across his face. “But, Daddy’s only a teacher! Why does the government care what he does?!”

“It’s really complicated-“ Nagisa tried.

“Are you in trouble?!” Immediately he looked alarmed. “Are you going to prison or something?! T-they can’t just take you away!”

Nagisa hadn’t expected this to go well, by any stretch of the imagination, but it definitely seemed to be going badly. Why prison would be the first thing on his mind, Nagisa didn’t exactly know, but maybe that would have been an easier excuse. He didn’t know how to explain properly, without going into stuff he still thought Daichi wasn’t ready to hear.

“No,” Nagisa sat down, “we’re not in trouble. We actually have to go help a lot of people.”

“Y-you don’t wanna leave, right?” His last word came like a whisper.

“Of course not, Daichi, but we don’t have a choice.”

He sniffled. “Did I do something bad?”
“This is nothing to do with you,” he tried. “This is the best way we can look after you-“

“Then why are you leaving me?!“ He sobbed properly that time.

Nagisa automatically looked at Karma in alarm, and he looked just as bewildered. Daichi hadn’t cried like that in a long time. Sometimes, there was a stray tear or two, but it was never like that. So much so that Nagisa couldn’t even remember the last time- it had probably been years. Even when he scraped his knees badly, he usually just sucked it up. Nagisa never thought it was much of an issue, just that Daichi wasn’t as sensitive as other kids. It wasn’t like he ever saw Karma cry either, even when they were still young. So it was safe to say he didn’t really know what to do right then, how to handle hysterics like this.

“Daichi,” Karma said firmly, and the use of his actual name definitely got his attention. “We don’t want to leave either, okay? But we have to. You don’t think this sucks for us too?”

He trembled. “You promised!” Nagisa attempted to reach out, but Daichi jerked away from him. “Just leave already, if you’re gonna.”

“You don’t mean that,” Nagisa said.

“We’re going to give you a little bit,” Karma said, pulling Nagisa up. “But we’re not going anywhere until the morning.”

Daichi didn’t even acknowledge them, when they left him in the room. Everything told Nagisa that was the worst thing to do, but it wasn’t as if his attempts at comfort had actually worked. Maybe… giving him a little bit of space wouldn’t be so bad. But Nagisa’s heart was already shattered, and it only got worse when they were outside, and the crying only got louder. Especially when all he could do was stand outside and listen.

“Don’t you cry on me too,” Karma said, breaking the silence between them.

Nagisa hadn’t even noticed, but his eyes were definitely heavy and aching. “I-I wasn’t ready for this.”

He swallowed. “We can’t take it back now.”

“He’ll… he’ll be okay.” Nagisa wasn’t so much stating a fact, more trying to convince himself of it.

“Maybe,” Karma said honestly. “Or maybe we just hurt him in a way we’ll never be able to undo.”

“It’s for his own good. Even if he never forgives us. Even if I can never forgive myself.”

“I know.”

Their conversation ended right there, with nothing else to even consider adding. He felt sick, listening to it, but he felt helpless. He wasn’t sure how long they actually stood there, only that eventually the sobs quietened, and melted away into silence. Nagisa had a bad feeling about it, but as long as Daichi was calm enough to listen just a tiny bit more…

He was lying on the bed, facing the wall, when they entered. Maki was pawing at his cheek, but he wasn’t reacting to her. For a moment, Nagisa thought he might be asleep, but he still had his very basic instincts, and he knew that he wasn’t. It was subtle, but even Daichi couldn’t hide the way he flinched at the sound of that door opening.
“Daichi,” he said, kneeling beside the bed, “we’re going to do everything in our power to come back to you as soon as possible, okay? We love you, so much, I’d never go anywhere out of choice.”

“Hey,” Karma reached over, shaking his shoulder. “Daichan. You don’t want us to leave without saying goodbye properly, huh?”

Daichi could be stubborn when he wanted to be, but he actually did listen to Karma, sitting up properly on the bed for a moment. Apparently he was coming to some sort of decision up there in his head, and when he finally made it, he lunged at them both, trying with his tiny body to hug them both at the same time, his arms surrounding their necks, and his head between the both of theirs.

“Please don’t go,” he squeezed them hard, but it sounded like the fight had been taken out of his body.

Chapter End Notes

I mean obviously it was clear that they were going to leave, but there HAD to be a lot of emotional conflict. Yes yes, I know, poor poor Daichan. However, look, Karma and Nagisa actually discussed a problem. They compromised, kind of? They've come so far y'all. This chapter actually went in a very different direction to how I expected it, but I really liked it.

Next time... some action...
It was eerily calm, when the next morning came. It was slightly before dawn, in order to make it in time to meet up with Karasuma, and the rest of Kunugigaoka hadn’t woken up yet. Nagisa had felt bad, about everyone having to get back up early, but the truth of the matter was that was far better than not being able to say goodbye at all, especially when it could be months, and there was always the risk of not coming back in one piece.

“Be careful,” Nagisa’s mother said to them both sincerely.

“Daichan,” Karma said softly.

Daichi was currently standing beside his grandmother. “I don’t want you to go.”

“We’ll be back before you even know it,” Nagisa bent down. “I promise you.”

He seemed almost reluctant, when he gave Nagisa a hug, which made his heart hurt. But usually, their hugs were an entirely happy thing, and there was no happiness right then. After that it was Karma’s turn, and Nagisa could see how Daichi was shaking. Before pulling away, Karma said something into his ear, which only seemed to make him turn stiff.

“Goodbye, then,” Nagisa said uneasily.

Daichi didn’t say it back to them, instead staring down at the floor intensely. Nagisa didn’t want to part like that, but he knew he couldn’t stand there and force Daichi either. It wouldn’t be so long before he came back, or so he told himself, when they’d hopefully see each other in far better circumstances. Not wanting to draw it out further, they turned, leaving with the snap of the door.

They didn’t have anything to say to each other, either, so they travelled in complete silence. It didn’t feel right, to have a regular conversation whilst their son was clearly hurting that bad. Nagisa had to distract himself and keep moving, barely paying attention to the rest of Kunugigaoka before they reached the train station. It felt like clockwork, travelling to the mountain that used to feel like home to him.

They were the last ones to arrive. Nagisa knew that, because every other member of their old class was already there and waiting. He was a little surprised, that nobody had taken Karasuma’s offer to sit this one out. At the same time, though, it felt like a relief. During that year, everyone had gotten
so used to working as a team, and feeling even one of their absences would surely have thrown it off.

Karasuma seemed just as surprised, taking one look at them that dawn. “Follow me.”

Since he’d pretty much just signed his life over, Nagisa had to follow without question. Not that Karasuma would take them anywhere unnecessary. It was at that point, as they travelled back down the mountain, that Nagisa realised just how uncomfortable the silence was. It carried the waves of regret, and it was too early to start thinking like that.

At the bottom of the mountain, a bus had pulled up. At first glance, it seemed like any small bus for a school trip, but Nagisa could tell it was somewhat reinforced. Was Karasuma expecting trouble or something? Whatever the case, he entered it, and the rest of them soon followed suit. The second Nagisa was actually inside the bus, he realised the seat windows were actually blacked out.

“Nagisa?” Kayano said quietly, almost popping out behind him. “You seem spooked.”

It felt like it was a given, these days, that Karma was by his side. But Nagisa realised right then he’d actually fallen to the back of their group, whilst Nagisa had been so focused on the following part that he was towards the front. Although they’d come to an agreement the night before, it was clear then that their small rift wasn’t entirely healed. And Nagisa needed to take his mind off that. It felt a little silly, like they were actually middle school kids debating who to sit with on a trip, but right then he chose Kayano.

“Nothing about this is exactly normal,” Nagisa said, as they sat.

She hummed. “No, it’s not.”

“What about your work?” Nagisa thought aloud. “Y-you can’t just leave in the middle of filming something, right?”

“Thankfully the filming for my morning drama is already done, but I’ll have to miss a few interviews and projects my agent suggested...” Kayano trailed off. “This is more important, though.”

“Where do you think they’re taking us?”

Once everyone was seated, the bus took off, and right then Nagisa wished he could actually stare out of the window. Something like that, losing himself in the view as they passed, may have allowed him to turn the rest of his thoughts off. Right then, he was so overwhelmed, his head felt like pure mush. Maybe he could close his eyes...

“Maybe he doesn’t want us to know,” she answered honestly.

“I hope it’s not far from here.”

Such a thought would make Nagisa feel a lot better. Even if he couldn’t see Daichi for the foreseeable future, he would be happier knowing he was close. Nagisa trusted Karasuma with everything he had, so there was no doubt he would keep his son safe. He just had to hang onto that thought, because right then it was all he really had.

Nagisa zoned out, honestly, during that trip. Kayano did speak to him, a careful smile on her face, but Nagisa couldn’t really retain the information. He tried his best, to look as though he was listening properly, but he just couldn’t. He focused on the road as much as he could, but Nagisa
didn’t drive. And when Karma drove, he was usually... distracted. So Nagisa had no idea if they were heading towards Tokyo or not.

When it finally stopped, they were actually inside an indoor car park. Or something like it. Whatever the case, the area seemed secure, and the bus had stopped and started a few times. Once Karasuma stood, he motioned the rest of them to follow, where they were quickly led through a series of hallways, which seemed designed like they were purposely meant to be confusing.

“I’m going to need each of your finger prints,” Karasuma announced. “One by one. To make things easier, we’ll just use your old class numbers, so starting with Karma.”

“Is this some kind of spy movie?” one of their group commented.

It didn’t hurt, but Nagisa winced anyway when it was his turn, and a voice that sounded slightly inhuman said ‘zero one one’, and then suddenly he was standing aside. Once everyone had been recorded, Karasuma lead them through a heavy duty door, which honestly seemed like it could withstand a bomb, revealing a plain and open area.

“This is a hardly used compound we use for training new government agents,” Karasuma said. “More often we use field training, but for basic skills it’s better to practise in safety. It’s been several years since many of you practised your assassin skills, so this was chosen as the best option. You’ll spend your time here, eat here, receive your assignments here. There’s a bunkroom and bathroom just down the hall, the first thing you should do is change into the uniforms we’ve provided, I’ll be back when I have any news for you.”

“Well,” Maehara said once Karasuma had left, his voice practically echoing, “that was kind of cold.”

“He’s busy,” Okano said, “something this this is going to be stressful.”

“But he doesn’t seem like the old teacher we know and lo-“

Nagisa stopped listening to them, and instead started to take the hallway to investigate. It was the first instinct in a situation like this, to map out all of his surroundings well. When he approached what he supposed was the ‘bedroom’, it felt far more like a prison. Several bunkbeds lined the room, each labelled with their class numbers, with a folded up uniform on top.

He picked up his, noting its similarity to the armour they’d been given back in e class. Well, the underparts of it anyway. He supposed they didn’t need the heavier duty clothes if they were going to remain inside. Nagisa didn’t hesitate about changing, before everyone else would eventually filter in. Just like his old clothes, they fit him pretty well, especially since he didn’t have a pregnancy stomach to contend with this time.

“Nagisa,” Kayano called, amidst all of the group discussions going on, “this is so strange.”

“I didn’t think we’d have to just wait,” he said. “That’s the worst part.”

She stilled for a moment. “Karasuma san really meant it, about wanting to keep us safe.” As though she sensed something, her tone changed. “If he uses this place for training, then maybe there’s something interesting for us to do.”

Nagisa knew then he’d made a good choice, spending time with Kayano. They actually spent quite a while, after they happened to locate some training weapons. Nagisa kept up with his skills due to avoiding assassination attempts in his classroom, but it was nothing compared to Kayano who did regular stunts and physically demanding acting.
Also… Kayano was kind of savage when it came to sparring, as it turned out. Nagisa shouldn’t have been so surprised, but he’d never had the chance to experience it himself. By the time she’d revealed her true identity and stopped holding back in class, he’d been way too heavily pregnant to actually fight with anyone. Somehow though, Nagisa didn’t mind when he ended up with his ass on the floor for the forth time in a row… he really needed to improve.

“You sure have kept up your training,” Sugino commented.

Kayano gleamed. “It’s probably nothing compared to the life of a sports ace.”

“Am I the only one who stayed weak?” Nagisa commented aloud.

“I don’t really have to focus on strength so much,” Sugino explained casually, “I’m always trying to improve my speed though.”

Before they could continue the conversation, or find new training weapons, a few people who definitely weren’t a part of their group walked in. They were a mixture of men and women, all wearing relatively plain clothes, though they weren’t a cohesive uniform in themselves. Nagisa tilted his head, noticing the small cart that was rolled in after them.

“Everyone,” a woman announced, and though she didn’t shout, her voice was so piercing that it seemed to catch everyone’s attention. “I’m Yaiba Suruto. I will be overseeing your general care and training progress, for the foreseeable future.”

“Not Karasuma san?” Kayano asked quietly.

“He’s probably too high up for that now,” Sugino replied.

“According to Karasuma san,” she continued, “you’re all pretty talented, though maybe out of practise. There’s no reason to sit around here, so we’ll start training bright and early tomorrow morning. First though, some meals.”

They were handed out quickly, keeping up the good name for government efficiency. Looking down at his food, it was clearly pretty standard. It seemed healthy but… definitely practical. Nagisa wasn’t particularly a fussy eater, though, so it didn’t bother him much really. Not with everything else to consider. There were no tables, so they sat on the floor together.

“It’s like a prison,” Kayano said.

Nagisa thought about it. “I guess it’s a kind of protective custody.”

Only then did Nagisa notice a shift in their presence. He’d done it silently, but Karma had sat just vaguely beside him that it looked like he was a part of their group, without necessarily intruding. It felt odd to Nagisa, then, that he’d actually gone for so long without paying him any kind of attention. Something was off about him though.

“What were you doing all day?” Nagisa asked.

“Hanging out with Nakamura,” he shrugged, “beating up Terasaka.”

His eyes slid to the side. “You’ve turned right back into your middle school self too.”

“So have you.”

He hoped that wasn’t meant to be a jab of some kind. But Karma was full of double meanings, and
Nagisa couldn’t possibly decipher them all. Instead, Nagisa tried not to think too hard about it, concentrating on his food. Kayano and Sugino continued their conversation, though he saw their eyes slide over a few times.

“Anyway,” Karma put his food down incredibly quickly, brushing himself off. “I’ll see you later.”

He gave Nagisa’s hand a squeeze, and with it came warmth. He hadn’t said much of anything, but Nagisa could tell what that kind of a gesture was. No matter what, Karma was going to be there for him as he always was. However, instead of just taking it and accepting it like that, Nagisa gripped him back even harder, like he was subconsciously afraid of letting him go.

They looked between each other for a moment, before Karma leaned in, almost resting his head on top of Nagisa’s. Nagisa breathed like that, wishing for even more intimacy, though he knew he wasn’t going to get it. Of course, he remembered they were surrounded by their ex-classmates. Though, maybe they were sort of colleagues now.

“Bye,” Nagisa said sheepishly, his Karma batteries apparently recharged. He kind of regretted actually letting go, though, when Karma left his sight.

“Not that it’s the top of our priorities,” Kayano said, “but are you and Karma a thing now?”

Sugino almost spat out his water. “You’re dating? Since when?”

Nagisa scratched the back of his head awkwardly. “Heh… we’re not actually dating…”

“You’re not?!” Kayano looked at him. “Then… what was that?”

“I…” Nagisa was lucky he hadn’t had to explain this to anyone else yet. “It’s complicated. We’re… not seeing anybody else, like that, and I guess we act like any other couple that lives together. But, I wouldn’t call him my boyfriend-“

“Since when do you live together?” Sugino’s expression was wild.

“U-uh,” Nagisa realised then that he didn’t really think to update his friends about his life as much as he should, “since before New Year’s-“

“You didn’t know that, Sugino kun?” Kayano finally chipped in. “I almost brought it up the last time I saw them, but I didn’t have the time and I was so excited about seeing Daichi’s drama performance.”

Behind them, Nakamura cleared her throat. “To be fair, Sugino, you didn’t notice that Nagisa was pregnant either. Though, they weren’t really keeping this one a secret.”

“How come you know?” Sugino complained.

She shrugged. “Karma mentioned it a few times. Actually… more than a few. He talks about you a lot, hmm, Nagisa~”

“R-really?”

She grinned from ear to ear. “It’s worse than when we were teenagers, and he was obsessive then. I blocked his number once, even. At least you’re talking now, though. Do you know what hell university was for me?”

“I’m sorry about that,” Nagisa said awkwardly, even if that was him being honest. Nakamura had
been a close mutual friend for the both of them, and it was easy to go to her for advice. He supposed… it was only natural that Karma did the same.

Kayano swallowed. “I’m happy for you.” Her voice was a little shaky, but he could tell she was speaking from her heart. “If it worked out and you’re happy, whatever kind of relationship you have…” Her eyes fell down. “How is Daichi, with all of this?”

He remembered the heartbroken look on Daichi’s face. The betrayal in his eyes when Nagisa told him that he had to leave. He hadn’t expected a lot from him, coping with this, when he told him. Nagisa hadn’t known what to expect. He hadn’t had any real choice about coming, but Daichi… it wasn’t right, that he had to get hurt because of it. Nagisa just hoped that his parents were giving him some actual comfort about it.

“He’s… He’ll be okay.”

Nagisa told himself that, as though repeating it would make him somehow believe it. But then he thought about Daichi’s face again, and wanted to recoil. Truthfully, the only thing that did keep him going was that this would inadvertently protect him. And the sooner they got to the bottom of everything, the sooner Nagisa would be able to go back to him.

For the time being, though, after they’d eaten, he threw himself into trying to distract himself. With no explicit instruction from Karasuma or this new helper, Yaiba, there was nothing particularly productive to do. His mind would go completely wild, if he didn’t try to engage in as much of their conversation as possible. And, like that, he was able to wish the rest of the day away.

At first the sleeping situation wasn’t quite as awkward as he’d imagined. With the hopes that the new day would carry more actual information, nobody hesitated, when the lights cryptically turned down, to go to bed. As it turned out, Nagisa was sharing a bunk with Sugaya, since he was right after him in their class registration. It wasn’t like they were great friends, so they didn’t really say anything, before Nagisa slipped under the covers of the bottom bunk. Aside from a brief complaint from Okano about having to share with Okajima, everyone else did the same. Not unlike obedient school children.

Except, Nagisa couldn’t sleep. He tried, for a little while, but everything else was so much louder, without anybody’s voice to drown it out. On top of that, it felt weird, being alone. Even though it wasn’t like he and Karma cuddled every single night, Nagisa could always feel his warmth, hear his breathing… Well, right then he could hear breathing, but he could tell that it wasn’t the right breathing.

Maybe it was pathetic, but after quite a while of lying there, Nagisa couldn’t take it anymore. He slipped out of bed, using all of his skills to make the journey silently. He was still in a new place, it wasn’t super easy to navigate with no light, but luckily Karma was at the front of the alphabet, and therefore his bed was the first one.

Until, he got stopped in his tracks by a rock hard mass he hadn’t anticipated, knocking him back. “Ouch-” Nagisa said, rubbing his temple.

There was a moment of silence. “You too?”

In another circumstance, it would have been a little funny that he and Karma had both had the same idea, at exactly the same. Maybe a little sad, too, but at least they were on the same wavelength. At least, with the way Karma grabbed him by his wrist, tugging him towards the bed, Nagisa was pretty sure they had the same idea.
Karma wrapped his arms around him, tight, and Nagisa breathed against him once they were lying down. The mattress was thin and hard, but Karma made him forget. Maybe it was because they still weren’t quite alone, but he didn’t say anything. He didn’t need to, though. All Nagisa needed was his presence.

“Nagisa, Karma,” Karasuma took a look between the both of them, “please take a seat.”

“What do you want us to do, Karasuma san?” It slipped from Nagisa’s tongue without much real thought, as he slipped into the chair. It was certainly a change of scenery, from their training facility, and though it hadn’t even been long he was starting to go a little stir crazy.

Karasuma looked between them both, his brow creasing. Maybe he was just nervous. Nagisa had been too, when he and Karma were the first people from their little group to be pulled. And, well, Karma worked for the wrong side of the government to know much of what was going on either. He’d felt strangely relieved, though, seeing Karasuma in the flesh.

“We have a small lead,” Karasuma said. “Unfortunately, without sending in agents ourselves, it’s gone as far as it can. That’s where the both of you come in.” His hands clasped together, and he looked serious. “You’ll be impersonating prisoners.”

“P-prison?” Nagisa repeated.

“It’s a lot of guess work right now,” Karasuma said, “but yes. Some things aren’t quite adding up… Prisoners going missing without explanation, for example. It’s loose, but in the time frame,” his eyes went dark, “there may be something to do with this research. After all, Korosensei started out as a prisoner too.”

Nagisa didn’t even know what to think. “T-they can’t do that, can they? The government-“

“Everyone knows there’s mismanagement in the penal system,” Karma shrugged. “I’ve spent too many hours reading documents about it to miss that detail. It’s not exactly anyone’s priority, though.” He paused. “It would make sense… less likely to have family that care enough about them going missing.”

Karasuma chose to ignore that, though Nagisa could tell it was exactly as Karma had said. “You’ll be just like the other prisoner. The higher ups know about your presence, but to the average guard, you’re just another inmate. I expect this to be slow and tough, but I need you to observe everything you can, I trust both. Nagisa kun… you’re the only male omega here, and we need both sides of the prison watched. Karma kun, I thought you’d be suited to the role.”

Karma leant back. “Are you telling me I belong in prison, Karasuma san?”

“I trust your ability to squeeze information out,” he said seriously, “despite the other person’s intentions.” Then, Karasuma stood up. “You’ll be further briefed, before you go, but it should be shortly.”

Chapter End Notes

To be honest, I guess not a lot happened.

But
O ho ho

From next chapter onwards you get some serious plot

I hope y'all ready
Nagisa stared hopelessly out of the window, the instructions of the mission haunting his head. They’d been given a very thorough explanation, a forty page rule book, everything that should send them on their way with as much preparation as possible. Nagisa had tried his best to memorise everything, but as it turned out, prison had a lot of rules.

Beside him, Karma sniffed rather violently, despite having been silent for the majority of the car ride.

The worst part about this was that suppressants were considered a luxury. In very rare cases, where an omega was actually abandoned by their mate, it would be considered medically necessary. Paperwork or not however, Nagisa was physically unbonded, and he didn’t qualify. As it turned out, it really didn’t take that long without taking them for his scent to start coming through. Self-consciously, he tugged his collar up, covering his scent glands as best he could.

Nagisa wasn’t sure he was cut out for this. All of the rules, and even the environment itself. Prison was something a lot of people feared, wasn’t it? Just a little at least. Nagisa’s talent wasn’t necessarily best suited to extended role playing, he thought. But he was pretty much under Karasuma’s orders now, and so if it was intel he needed, Nagisa had to get it.

“Are you ready?” Yaiba san asked, as the car just about pulled to a close.

Neither he or Karma answered, but they got out of the car anyway. At first glance, he wouldn’t have really guessed he was standing in front of a prison. Though, he wasn’t quite used to large buildings that appeared to be in the middle of nowhere either. He looked over at Karma, trying to make a guess at what he was thinking about all of this. There weren’t a lot of secrets held in his expression, though.

“-Well then,” Yaiba san continued, her expression just as tight as the meticulous bun her dark hair was pinned up in, “say your goodbyes. You’ll be separated as soon as we walk in.”

Karma turned to him then, a hell of a look in his eyes. Nagisa didn’t get the chance to question him, before Karma pulled him in close, and slotted their necks together. It took Nagisa, admittedly far too used to the suppressants again, a moment to catch up with what was happening. But then Karma’s strong scent filled the air, and it made him weak in the knees as it coated his own glands.
“Stay safe.”

Nagisa’s face absolutely flushed up. He’d never been off his suppressants whilst with Karma like that, and the sensation was so strange. It was nice, though. Karma’s scent certainly made him feel more calm, though he wanted to grip onto him more. He knew he hadn’t been this desperate to fall into it before, and he cringed as Karma tried to pull away.

In the end, he didn’t let him, grabbing him by the shirt to give him the leverage to kiss him. Under any other circumstances, Nagisa would have been embarrassed to do such a thing, but he knew his was going to possibly be the last time he could see Karma for a while. He wasn’t rejected though, with Karma gripping his shoulders and kissing him back just as hard until Yaiba san cleared her throat and knocked them out of the moment.

She showed some sort of government ID at the entrance, and nobody questioned it. Nagisa had, of course, never been in an environment like a prison before. Maybe he should have resolved to start looking around already, since they were actually there for intel, but something inside him told him to just keep his head down and keep walking. He’d… have to get over that.

“And with that, the door was opened, and they were both practically pushed inside. Karma shot him a look for a moment, before they set eyes upon the warden. Actually, Nagisa found himself paying more attention to the office, which seemed quite fancy. Maybe this guy wasn’t so happy with his job, because it didn’t feel particularly prison like. Or else he was just… cheering it up a bit.

“Please, take a seat.”

Nagisa fell back into his ingrained formal personality, sitting as gently as he could. Like this was some kind of job interview. Nagisa was sure he could take him, if he really wanted to, but for some reason he still felt a little intimidated by this warden. Well, Nagisa was pretty much handing his freedom over, for at least some period of time.

The warden wiped his forehead. “I trust you familiarised yourself with the rules. You’re to be treated just as any other prisoner during your time here, and that includes the same punishment if you fall out of line. But, you can change into your uniforms first without all the tests, and I’ll call some officers for you.”

Short and to the point, then. Nagisa accepted it unsteadily, and they were both shuffled off into what seemed to be some kind of visitor bathroom. Whatever the case, it was a slight more generic than whatever that office had been. They were left alone then, like that, but for some reason he and Karma went to separate stalls to change. Though there was no real reason for that… Nagisa didn’t even know what to think.

Karma looked kind of funny though, in a prisoner’s uniform. It kind of reminded him of when they were just kids, and he used to chide that Karma would end up in prison if he kept on the way he was. Of course, at that time, Karma had just laughed and declared ‘they’d have to catch me first’. Well, now look at them.

There were a lot of things he wanted to say to Karma right there and then. But, frankly, Nagisa didn’t even know what to choose. It wasn’t like they were going to die or anything, but it had been a long time since they’d had to say goodbye to each other for any kind of extended period of time.
So words just formed and died right there on his lips.

In the end, they didn’t get the chance to say anything else, because the guards soon arrived, gripping them and leading them down opposite directions. Just like that, so quick Nagisa barely had time to notice it happening. The prison seemed a tiny bit labyrinth like, all the walls and doors so similar to each other if he did end up needing to attempt an escape, it would be hard.

“This one,” the guard said roughly, and then thrust the door open. “It’s not free time, so you’re in complete silence.”

Nagisa was practically shoved inside, actually. He blinked in pure surprise, until he noticed the guard was waiting there expectantly. He tried his best to remember the rule book, realising the guard was expecting him to sit. Nagisa did, pretending like he was in far better circumstances than the ones that currently faced him. At least he could probably manage the task of sitting still for a while, though it was slightly frustrating he clearly couldn’t start what he was actually supposed to do.

Once he was on his knees as he should be, and the door was closed, Nagisa could really take in his surroundings. The floor was tatami, for one, and a couple of futons were carefully stowed away beside the wall. Other than that, perhaps the most important part of his new room was the other person who was also sitting it.

The guy cracked one eye open, as if taking in Nagisa’s appearance, before shutting it again. Well, he at least seemed relaxed. Nagisa couldn’t help but stare at him a little further, with something about him seeming incredibly off. Then again, it was rare that Nagisa even came across other male omegas. Much like Nagisa, he had a more rounded shaped face than most men, though perhaps his longer hair didn’t help that. It was a light almost silver in colour, ending just above his shoulders. Nagisa wrinkled his nose, realising he smelt kind of like all butter shortbread.

He couldn’t actually ask anything about his newfound cellmate, though. So Nagisa found himself attempting to observe. Attempting, because frustratingly, there wasn’t much he could tell just from this. His cellmate was definitely guarding something… though Nagisa wasn’t sure what else he could expect from an actual convicted criminal. He seemed young, though, definitely not much older than Nagisa at a push.

Maybe Nagisa was started to obsess a little bit, but even though he considered himself at least fairly grounded and patient, there was only so much he could do for such a long period of just staring at the walls. There was no clock, so he had no idea how long it actually was, but it honestly felt like hours. His cellmate didn’t even have any sort of quirks or ticks for him to think about, rather sitting in absolute perfect form.

“Get ready!”

The voice was suddenly so loud, in contrast to the almost never ending silence, that Nagisa jolted a little. Finally, his cellmate opened his eyes, raising a brow at Nagisa, before standing with a strange amount of grace. Nagisa forgot the rules he’d studied, instead just copying him. It seemed like pure obedience, standing to face the door with his arms behind his back. The door was opened, then, and the two of them exited, turning to face the wall.

“Number!” The man barked.

“Six three three eight.” His voice was unsettlingly smooth.

Then Nagisa realised it was his turn. “Seven nine six zero.”
He was surprised he even remembered it, given the circumstances. Apparently it was enough to satisfy the officer, because then he commanded them to forward march. Honestly, Nagisa felt a little ridiculous doing it, but he remembered Karasuma’s training back in E Class. The very basics had been done with a similar military like precision.

There wasn’t exactly a lot to take in, before they entered a cafeteria. That was Nagisa’s first proper exposure to the rest of the prisoners. Not that there were many, actually. He didn’t know exactly what he’d been expecting, but it was no hugely open dining space. He kept his head down for right then, though, taking the food and sitting down to eat it without hesitation.

Of course, it tasted kind of bland. But there was enough of it for him to get full, at the very least, and not the worst thing he’d ever experienced. Giving everyone around a quick glance, he realised they were eating as quickly as possible. Nagisa took the note to do the same, and sure enough, the food period was over before he even knew it, and he was having to get rid of his tray.

But then a whistle blew, and immediately his cellmate turned to him. “Name?”

Well, Nagisa guessed that was their signal to talk. “N-nagisa?”

He raised an eyebrow again. “Just Nagisa?”

That was one of the points Nagisa realised he’d actually missed during their preparation to come here. Obviously they couldn’t talk about their mission or the government, but there hadn’t been anything about using a fake name or identity. Well, it wasn’t like any of this would get back to his regular life, he supposed, so there was no point in trying to keep up with a lie.

“Yeah,” he said, as his cellmate shifted slightly to the side, before producing a board of some sort. “Just Nagisa.”

He sat down on the bench, motioning for Nagisa to sit opposite. “So, ‘Just Nagisa’, you ever played chess before?”

Nagisa swallowed, remembering the few times Karma had tried to teach him. “Uh… I know a little about the rules.”

“It doesn’t matter,” he shrugged. “Just look busy with your hands. Fine then, if you’re ‘Just Nagisa’, then you can call me ‘Just Yuu’.”

“Yuu san,” Nagisa chose to ignore the way he looked at him when he added the honorific, “h-have you been here long?”

He started to laugh, then, only cut off by the dirty look one of the offers shot him. “Well, I’m going to take it you haven’t. So, what’d they get you for? Drug possession?” He paused. “Nah, you don’t seem like the type.”

Nagisa had an official story, but he had no idea what to say to this guy. “I…”

He smirked. “I stole a shit ton of money from some kinda important people. And hey, to be fair to me, it was pretty easy. I’d almost say it was worth it. At least I don’t have to worry about rent and all the alphas that wanna fuck me in here.”

It was safe to say Nagisa wasn’t used to this kind of conversation. He’d been teased before, but never quite like that. And he wasn’t even sure if this was actually teasing. His new cellmate was giving him the impression that he was just like that. Nagisa somehow found himself being drawn in, like he needed to know more about this person.
“R-right,” he said, because he was more worried about ignoring the comment.

Yuu just seemed amused, though. “You can quit the blushing virgin act. I can tell you ‘got an alpha.”

*How?*

But then Nagisa remembered Karma’s earlier display, and wrinkled his nose. He was so used to Karma’s scent at this point that he hadn’t even really noticed how much it was clinging to him right then, likely making the entire vicinity smell at least vaguely of alpha. Oh, he was going to kill Karma when they got out of here. So what if he’d made no attempt to stop him at the time?

“For real, though,” Yuu flicked one of the chess pieces. “My last cellmate was kind of unbearable.” He sniffed the air again dramatically. “No,” he groaned, “don’t tell me you’re a Yakuza whore too.”

Nagisa was stunned right then. If he heard the word ‘yakuza’ one more time, he was actually going to consider marching across and joining them! Well, it was probably a little more complicated than that. And then he thought about it, and that was actually worse. At least most people gave him the credit of actually being a full member!

“I’m not in the Yakuza,” Nagisa finally said, the phrase too familiar to his tongue.

“Alright,” Yuu shrugged. “Your alpha doesn’t half smell arrogant enough for it, though.” Apparently Nagisa didn’t reply quick enough, because he opened his mouth again. “He was so annoying. Didn’t think we’d start a dick measuring contest over our body counts, but prison’ll surprise you. See that guy over there? Killed his husband.”

Nagisa gulped. “R-really?”

Yuu shrugged. “Says he deserved it. No offence, but knowing alphas, he probably did.”

Unfortunately, Nagisa was sure he was right. He was fortunate enough to not have been particularly harassed before, but he wasn’t entirely blind to the things that happened around him. Still, it was rare, from what he knew, for the omega involved to actually stand up to it. But Nagisa had spent a year teaching kids who were arguably troubled, he was no stranger to withholding judgement.

The conversation between them died down, after that, and then in a time that felt far too short, the officer started shouting again. With that, they were marched back to the cells, and the silence continued until it was apparently time for bed. Nagisa knew prison was for all intents and purposes a punishment, but even this seemed a little far, mind numbing. He honestly wondered how Karma was coping in this kind of environment.

At first, Nagisa was relieved when it was finally time to sleep. Any change from just sitting like that sounded amazing. Even just unrolling the futon gave him a welcome bit of intellectual stimulation. But that was soon over, and he was expected to go to sleep right away. It was nice to stretch out his limbs at the very least, which had become a little sore from all the sitting.

“Night night,” Yuu winked at him, before rolling over to face away.

There was something so weird about that guy… Though Nagisa figured he’d have to wait quite a while, until the next time they could talk. It wasn’t out of the question, though, and since he needed information, a cellmate who had clearly been here a long time was probably a really good place to start. If only the next ‘free time’ would come sooner.
Except, Nagisa curled up, finding it suddenly hard to sleep. It had been okay, with Karma’s arms wrapped around him. He was so used to the feeling that if he closed his eyes, it was just like they were at home. He could fool himself like that, as though they’d wake up in the morning, probably to Daichi banging on their door demanding food, or just plainly letting himself in and jumping into bed with them.

He curled up even tighter at that thought. This was the longest he’d ever gone without speaking to his son. Even during university, it was rare he’d go even a day without calling. And at the very least, he was able to look at his huge collection of photos. Right then all he had was the memory in his head, and the more he thought about it, the more he felt his heart start to break.

Maybe he was a terrible father, leaving Daichi all alone. If Nagisa felt this kind of pain, then he couldn’t imagine how confusing it must be… though he was sure it would be worse if Daichi actually knew the full truth. Honestly, he definitely couldn’t be trusted to keep this kind of information to himself, anyway. But with nothing else to distract him, Nagisa wished for nothing more to hold him in his arms again.

He found then that he couldn’t sleep. He’d read in the rulebook that he couldn’t toss and turn like wild until exhaustion finally took him over, so he was stuck. It was almost as mind-numbing as staring at the wall was. Except somehow it was worse, because in the dark it was even harder to keep his mind shut to everything else. He tried to think about his actual task, but that was hard, with his only viable plan being talking to his cellmate… which he couldn’t do then.

Nagisa was a little out of it, after just barely managing to get to sleep for what felt like minutes, when he woke up again. Mostly he was surprised, though, that he was being shaken awake. An earthquake? No… Nagisa opened his eyes properly, realising that he’d rolled off his futon during the night, and was clinging onto his poor cellmate.

“You’re lucky none of the officers are looking at you,” he hissed, yanking his arm away since Nagisa was no longer dead weight.

He felt a deep set embarrassment. “I’m so sorry-“

Yuu breathed out. “It’s okay, I get it.” He still shook his head back and forth a little, though. “Can you maybe try and calm down, though,” he wrinkled his nose. “I can smell the distress all over you.”

“So-“

“Quiet!” A booming voice from the other side of the door. “Get ready!”

Much like before, it was the same drill, where they came outside and declared their number. Instead of being marched somewhere, though, they were returned back to the cell, and after a few minutes a bowl of what he assumed was supposed to be breakfast as fed through a small hatch he hadn’t noticed until right then. Just like the last meal, though, he realised quickly it was meant to be a silent affair. Nagisa took his cues from his cellmate, following what he did in getting rid of the bowl once they were done, but then he realised Yuu was sitting in the same way as he had the day before.

“Again?” It slipped out of his mouth, with the slight horror at the prospect of another day of staring at the wall.

“It was good enough for our kind in history,” Yuu muttered. “At least they got a nice garden to look at back then.”
That was it, then. Nagisa supposed it was true. He hadn’t ever had to focus on specific parts of omega history, before. The sort of things he taught in school were more about actual events, than generalised society. That kind of stuff was expected to be taught a lot younger. Then again… he wasn’t sure how much focus was put on life for omegas a thousand years ago. As far as he actually knew, it wasn’t so fun.

Nagisa really started to value ‘free time’. That day, he managed to learn a little more about his cellmate. How he’d already served two years (which was all the more surprising considering his age), and how he didn’t consider himself friends with anyone there. Apparently there was a kind of hierarchy of crimes, and Yuu liked to see himself as high up on that.

Not every single day was just staring at the walls, but enough of them were. Sometimes, they would be ordered to run around the yard, and that was just about the peak of excitement. Presumably, Nagisa would be expected to train himself up after this entire mission was over, so he wanted to prevent his body from growing weaker than it already was.

He asked Yuu about working, but he’d just scoffed with a ‘yeah, right, forcing omegas to work? Even in prison, that’ll cause a scandal’. Nagisa had frowned at that, since he never thought of the country as being that behind. Though, maybe the prison system was lagging behind with the rest of society. Nagisa still thought working would be more entertaining, though.

His favourite time was easily free time, though. The next day, he learnt that Yuu knew how to play cello, and the day after that, he was crazy good at maths. Karma levels of good at maths, and that wasn’t a compliment Nagisa felt he could give out often. Nagisa knew enough about maths to teach it confidently enough to the end of high school, of course, but this definitely went beyond that. He’d just blinked in confusion, when Yuu started explaining some formula Nagisa hadn’t even heard of.

“You could say I’m handy with computers,” he’d laughed.

A week passed like that, and Nagisa got no better at chess. Nor did he learn any kind of important information. The stuff about Yuu… probably wasn’t that helpful. At the very least, though, Nagisa thought he was getting a good grip on when the guard patrols were. He didn’t have a clock to help him, but keeping count in his head was a viable hobby compared to the wall. His eyes were started to get dark and heavy, but he convinced himself that some process was yards better than none.

Until… somehow it seemed like he’d made a mistake. It had only taken him a few days to figure out that the patrols were fixed and efficient, with just a brief glance into each cell before whoever it was moved on. Especially at night, no matter what, it had been the same. So Nagisa was confused, then, at why there seemed to be another patrol around five minutes after the last.

“Inmate,” a voice said, “it’s time for your visitation.”

*In the middle of the night?* Nagisa stayed absolutely dead still, because there was definitely something wrong. To his slight confusion, though, Yuu stood up as though it was normal, carefully treading his way across the room. Just to be safe, Nagisa squeezed his eyes shut, in case Yuu would somehow catch him looking.

“Allrighty officer,” he drawled, like some sort of porn star, “lead the way.”

If that wasn’t some sort of lead, then Nagisa was going crazy.

Chapter End Notes
Oooo the tea, the drama. This is kind of,,, half researched. I did my best to look into japanese prisons but somethings need to be slightly inaccurate for plot reasons. They seem really depressing honestly.

Yuu's kind of one of my favourite ocs lmao

Hope you enjoyed!
Nagisa knew two important things. One; that his cellmate was involved in some sort of suspicious conspiracy, and two; Nagisa absolutely had to figure out what that was. Well, there was always the possibility that Yuu was just… hooking up with the guard. But he didn’t really smell like any kind of sex when he returned that night, when he returned around an hour later. Though, something was a little sanitised about his scent…

“Hey, Nagisa,” he’d said the following morning, “first rule of prison is to keep your questions to yourself, got it?”

So he knew that Nagisa had seen him then. It didn’t matter, Nagisa was pretty sure, by the next time they talked during their free time, that he’d let it go. Choked it up to general curiosity about why he was leaving. Nagisa chose, then, to distract him with the same meaningless conversation as the previous week. Except this time, he examined Yuu seriously.

Come to think of it, there was something off about how perfectly he seemed to sit in silence during the days. Sure, if he’d had to put up with it for two years, it was naturally that he’d become practised in the art.. but Nagisa was sure there was more to it. He spent the whole next day just staring at Yuu, which was easy enough considering he sat with his eyes closed. Perhaps Nagisa really was going crazy, because he was sure that Yuu didn’t even so much as shift. On top of that, his breaths were disturbingly even, timed like a machine. Though it could be some sort of crazy meditation technique, Nagsia didn’t know what to think.

Yuu was definitely something, though, and now Nagisa had to figure out how to find that something out. The most natural method would seem to be gaining his trust, but surely that would take far too long. From what he’d figured about Yuu, something like that could take years. And Nagisa didn’t have that. Unfortunately, no other great plans were coming to mind either. He really wished Karma was there, there was no doubt he’d think of something…

“Oh hey look,” Yuu said at the start of their break, “new book donation. ‘S your lucky day, Nagisa, this doesn’t happen a lot.”

None of the other prisoners seemed particularly interested in the book collection, but Nagisa found himself immediately leafing through them. Admittedly, a book suddenly had a lot of appeal. Anything to take his mind out of this place. It seemed like maybe Yuu shared that desire, though it wasn’t surprising. The least Nagisa could say about him was his mind was sharp.
“Woah no way,” Nagisa said, “they have Sonic Ninja even here?”

Yuu blinked. “You… like Sonic Ninja?”

Admittedly, his eyes lit up a little. “Yeah! I used to read the comics as a kid, and then they started making the movies…”

“No way!” He was totally different to the Yuu Nagisa had started to get to know, eyes bright and round like a small child. “I love Sonic Ninja. I mean, I only watched the third movie because my favourite actress got cast, but after that I tried to see them all. Started the comic books, too, before I got thrown in here… Sometimes they send copies like this, so I haven’t really read the stories in order. What’s your opinion on the third movie? The fandom seems split about whether it’s better than the first.”

Nagisa remembered going to the movie premier for it. “Mm, though I’m kind of obligated to call it my favourite.”

“You’re a fan of Haruna Mase too?”

He almost choked. What were the chances, with his cellmate going into almost scary super fan mode, that he also idolised one of Nagisa’s closest friends? Kayano sure was famous these days… Though, no matter the circumstances, he was sure Kayano would be happy that someone liked her enough to become interested in a whole series.

“Well-“

“Did I hear Haruna Mase?”

And then a slight commotion started. Nagisa had barely even looked at the other prisoners, let alone had a conversation with them, yet at the mention of Kayano’s name… he was surrounded. Well, at least he knew Kayano was weirdly popular amongst prisoners. Or maybe everywhere in general. Somehow, this lead to a lively group discussion about ‘how cute’ she was.

“You know she’s not alpha, right?”

“Yeah? She’s still hot-“

Nagisa didn’t want to hear this. He was almost thankful, when someone brought up that they should focus more on Kayano’s talents as an actress than her looks. He supposed he couldn’t be too mad, that she had so much appeal (across all demographics apparently). Though it was strangely nice, to realise that he and Yuu had something really in common.

Though the conversation was cut short by all those who joined in. To Nagisa’s slight surprise though, Yuu continued it the following day. And he really wasn’t kidding about liking Sonic Ninja. Maybe he even knew more about it that Nagisa did. That was almost impressive, because Nagisa felt he toed the line of being slightly nerdy about that series too.

“I guess you could say those movies mean a lot to me,” Yuu said.

Nagisa thought about it, and it was the same for him. It was the only reason Karma had originally bothered to speak to him. So maybe it had also sealed his fate. But honestly, very little could compare the bubble of happiness he got from hanging out with Karma that day, discussing movies with him as they walked home just like regular friends. And then of course the sequel, because jetting off to Hawaii was definitely a special movie going experience. Actually thinking about it, he was already pregnant at that point.
“I used to marathon them sometimes,” he thought, “not that I have the time to nowadays unless my son asks.”

“Son?” Yuu asked with interested.

Nagisa’s heart sunk. “…Yeah.”

Yuu shrugged. “How old?”

“Just over eight now.”

Nagisa braced himself for a reaction that never actually came. Which was odd. Usually, nowadays, if he mentioned his son without context they assumed Daichi couldn’t be older than a toddler. There was always a slight look of horror/shock when they learnt the truth. It was a normal reaction, Nagisa supposed, though that didn’t mean he had to feel good about it either.

“He cute?”

He found himself smiling. “Yeah, the cutest.”

Maybe, logically, it should have gotten easier as he adjusted to not seeing Daichi every day. But really, the longer he went, the more his heart ached. Especially with only the walls to distract him most of the time. He tried to keep his worries to himself, the best he could, so that he wouldn’t be polluting everywhere with his distressed stench, but that proved incredibly difficult.

It was honestly hard to keep track of the actual days that passed, but Nagisa knew that another week had passed where the same thing happened, as though it was somehow normal policy Yuu was called out of the room. This time, Nagisa decided to think fast. He wasn’t going to get anywhere if he didn’t force this information out somehow.

One of the main conclusions he came to was that all the officers seemed to be ‘in’ on whatever was happening. He could tell that because the next patrol that was due simply… didn’t happen. At least that gave Nagisa some time to prepare. Just in case someone really was around to listen, he waited, and then stood up, stepping lightly across to the corner of the room. They weren’t allowed to stand there for long periods of time, since it was kind of a blind spot from the door.

Nagisa stood there for quite a while, whilst Yuu was absent. But that just gave him time to relax himself. It had been a while, admittedly, but he remembered his assassination techniques. He breathed in and out slowly, paying attention to all the waves of consciousness around him he could sense. It was a little confusing, with other prisoners in the cells around him, but he focused it all at the entrance.

The door opened, then, and Yuu made his return, the officer who’d taken him locking the door without checking too long to see if Nagisa was actually still there. He waited for that perfect moment, before moving fluidly out of the shadows, and slamming his hands together right in front of Yuu’s face.

The last time Nagisa had used this move, his opponent had been a rather large man, and he’d ended up half crushed. This time, he was ready. Not that Yuu was particularly heavy, honestly he was about the same build as Nagisa. Maybe Nagisa was just ultra focused, but he managed to get him onto the ground easily. He positioned himself over him, trapping him in place with both the force of his thighs and his arm braced at his throat.

Yuu was paralysed for a moment, eyes wide with pure terror, but he immediately started to struggle once he regained control of his limbs. “What the hell?”
“Who did you meet?” He demanded.

“What are you talking about?”

Nagisa didn’t believe his confusion for a second. He’d been able to read faces for years, and he could tell when someone had something to hide. Maybe it was a little unclear, with the sheer amount of panic and confusion, but there was a darkness right under the surface. A darkness that said he was absolutely lying. So Nagisa choked him harder, cutting into his jugular. Any harder, and Yuu might actually pass out.

“Who did you see,” he repeated again, staring straight into his eyes.

“L-let,” he spluttered, “let me go and I’ll tell you-“

He wasn’t going to fall for that. “No.”

“You wouldn’t understand! They’re giving me a shot out of here!”

Finally, Nagisa relented, at least letting go of his throat. “Who’s ‘they’?”

Yuu’s hand came to his neck protectively. “You’re this pissed about me hooking up with an officer?”

If that’s what he was doing… Nagisa still didn’t believe it, though. Sure, he seemed weirdly familiar with the officer who came to collect him, but that could mean anything. Nagisa’s nose wasn’t so bad that he wouldn’t be able to sense the remainders of alpha scent. He could be hooking up with a beta, but… this place was swarmed by alphas almost exclusively.

“Why?”

He tilted his head. “Maybe you haven’t come to realisation yet, I don’t know, but if you want something, this is the quickest way to get it. Or the only way. If I gets me treated better in this hellhole, why wouldn’t I? We’re already in prison, it’s not like I can cheapen myself anymore.”

There was something deeper behind that comment. “But what about when you get out?”

“Hah,” he fake laughed, “well, let’s say I’m already damaged goods.”

When Nagisa didn’t say anything, he moved his hair out of the way, exposing his neck fully for the first time since they met. To his utter surprise, even though it was a little hard to see considering the lack of lighting in the cell, there was clearly a perfect set of teeth marks there. Which meant… Yuu was bonded with somebody?

“B-but,” maybe Nagisa was just stressed, because he wasn’t thinking clearly enough to be sensitive, “your scent?”

Yuu shrugged. “Dead.”

“You killed him?”

He burst out laughing, then. “Wow, usually when I tell the dead mate story, I get a ‘poor you’ or ‘I’m sorry’, not murder accusation. Who says something like that?”

Nagisa blinked, realising exactly how that sounded. And then he flushed bright red in a mixture of horror and embarrassment. Yuu was right, what kind of person reacted like that? He moved off Yuu entirely, then, and the bloodlust drained from him. He breathed slowly, hoping that maybe
that would be the best way to calm himself down.

“I-I’m so sorry, I-“

“I didn’t say it wasn’t refreshing,” Yuu said. “Now that you’re done attacking me… I’m in here because I stole money. But, I stole it from big powerful places, and they did everything they could to make sure I’d wither and die here.”

He tilted his head. “Like a bank robber?”

Yuu nodded. “But I didn’t do it in person. I actually wanted to study computers, after high school. I was… pretty good at it, actually. Got it in my head that I wanted to be the next Bill Gates or some shit. I got bonded just as I graduated, though, and my alpha didn’t really like the idea of me going to university.”

“Y-you were okay with that?”

He smiled. “I’d have done anything for him. He didn’t go, either, but he wanted to provide for me, so. Not that illegal MMA fighting makes much bank. I didn’t really have a choice, and there’s only so much housework you can do in a tiny apartment. It was only enough to pay rent at first, but then he went and owed the wrong people, and I got ambitious - and caught before he could pay it off.”

“Then?”

Yuu mimed slitting his throat, and that was enough of an answer. Nagisa was more than aware that that kind of life was honestly the reality for some people, but actually hearing about something so awful… his throat started to close up, and he had no idea what to think. Perhaps it was unlike him, but he almost completely forgot the reason this confrontation was even happening.

“So yeah,” he shrugged, “I’m in here for a while. And that’s if nobody tries to come for me, which to be honest, they still might. I don’t want a public release-“

“Quiet,” a voice from one of the officers barked, and it seemed like Yuu’s favours were up.

Nagisa wasn’t sure how to act around Yuu following that. He smiled, played his attack off like it was just pure curiosity. He didn’t miss the way Yuu seemed to sleep with one eye open, though. But Nagisa was good at hiding his bloodlust. If anything, it was his most important skill. So he could tell how Yuu relaxed, the next day, and it was like nothing even happened. Just a silly little prison fight.

He hadn’t had the chance to continue to interrogate Yuu about exactly who he was seeing, though, and Nagisa just knew it was more than just a guard. Unfortunately, it was highly unlikely that Yuu would disclose something that was clearly so secretive just like that, in front of so many people. So, Nagisa really had to think, and try and find another chance. Unfortunately, another week passed.

“Yuu san,” he started, “uhm-“

Yuu rolled his eyes. “At least use ‘kun’, or something, if you have to. You’re making me feel like an old man.”

“Yuu kun,” Nagisa corrected, “is today the day that you… have your meetings?”

They weren’t supposed to be talking in their cells, but it was a little bit easier to get away with it during preparations for bed, considering the noise of setting up the futon. Yuu just started at him,
though, as he unrolled it and sat on top, cross legged. Nagisa couldn’t tell exactly what he was thinking, then, but he knew it was a lot.

“Yeah, once a week.” Something in his eyes shined. “Maybe you won’t believe me, but I might have a real shot of getting out early.”

Nagisa squeezed his eyes shut. “How?”

“…I can’t tell you.” But then he lunged forwards, looking at Nagisa seriously. “I wish I could, but- I don’t know, I can’t-”

“It’s,” Nagisa thought, “it’s okay.”

“Nagisa,” he said, “you’re in here for a long time?”

He knew the right answer. “Yeah…”

“Maybe… Maybe I can help you get out quicker too.”

Nagisa leaned forwards. “You can?”

He took a deep breath. “This man… it’s kind of like a clinical trial thing. He has some kind of access, to pull us out for tests. If I participate, then… I can live as a free man for the rest of my sentence pretty much.”

Alarm bells started to ring. Someone taking prisoners for research? That sounded exactly like Korosensei’s origin story, and that had ended with the moon exploding. Of course, this was the exact lead Karasuma had been talking about, so there was no way this wasn’t what Nagisa was looking for. And Yuu was practically offering it to him.

“H-how? How can you help?”

“I’ll ask him!” Yuu perked up. “It’s not just me… I could… I’ll bring it up for you.”

Nagisa wanted to ask something else, though. “Uhm, Yuu kun, how did this even start? Why do the officers just allow this?”

He had the nerve to laugh. “You just have to use your assets. Why don’t you try it, huh?”

It took him a moment to catch up with what Yuu meant. “To… seduce the officers?”

“Don’t be a prude,” he shrugged. “We gotta use the tools we have, right? Nature gave us something at least. Needs must.”

Nagisa didn’t respond to that, so Yuu shrugged, and that was that in terms of their discussion. He didn’t have much time to make a decision, though. If he was completely right, then Yuu would be taken soon, and perhaps this was his best opportunity. Whatever the case, Nagisa needed to manage to get out of this cell, he felt like it had to be time.

Yuu gave him a look, before the door swung open as it often did, and the officer cleared his throat. But then Nagisa started at the door, which was a little hard to do subtly without alerting them, and he realised there were four legs. Two officers. That, at the very least, was a little different, though Yuu didn’t seem phased by it at first, by any means.

“Who’s your friend?” Yuu joked, leaning against the door.
“Quiet, inmate, he’s new.”

“Alright alright,” Yuu mock held his hands up. “Well, lead the way.”

Nagisa snapped up immediately, suddenly not having time to think. The officer who took Yuu, he’d already started walking, but the other guy was still at the door, hesitating a little with actually shutting it. He had to do this. He slinked up to the window, and cleared his throat, so that the guy would notice him. Though, he looked a little scared.

“I-inmate,” he said, “go back to bed.”

There came Nagisa’s biggest problem with this idea. No mater what Yuu said, Nagisa had no idea how to flirt. He’d never had to before. He’d always been the one that got hit on, not the other way around. Honestly, he’d never even wanted to hit on anyone. And with Karma, it wasn’t like he really needed to explicitly ask, he just… looked at him in the right way, or reached over.

“I’m not tired,” Nagisa tried to say as confidently as possible, though he wasn’t sure how it came across.

The man opened the door properly, though guarded it with his body, so there was no way Nagisa could just run past him. He seemed too on guard for any attempt at his stun clap. “You don’t want trouble.”

“Uhm,” Nagisa cringed. At least he was close… The only thing that had worked for him in this place was Sonic Ninja, of all things, and he wasn’t sure that would help him. Unless… “There’s seven billion people walking around on this Earth, yet right now, in all of history, you and I get to meet right here. That’s more than one in a million. Some might say it’s fate. And who are we to argue with fate, to waste this night, when some force greater than the both of us brought us here?”

Thank you Kayano. Though Nagisa wouldn’t be able to look her in the eyes after this. He shouldn’t use one of her movies for purposes such as this. The only reason Nagisa even know those lines in such detail is he’d helped her practise for her read throughs, a couple of times. Even Nagisa had found it funny, how cheesy that particular line was, and they’d spent quite a while trying to get through it without laughing. Nagisa’s performance wouldn’t have compared to Kayano’s (who actually made it somewhat believable), though.

The guard’s face was red. “Excuse me?”

Right, that’s a fail. He sniffed the air, and yes, this guy was definitely alpha. Nagisa cringed even more than the romance lines, and tugged the collar of his uniform down, tilting his neck at the same time. A much clearer sign, he knew, than any words he could produce would be. It had been weeks now since he last saw Karma, so he knew his scent was entirely his own.

“W-well-“

Nagisa could smell the beginnings of arousal from him, though, and he almost wanted to hurl. By all means, on a biological level, it should have had some kind of effect on him. All he could think of was wet dog, however. After this, he might have to rub himself up against Karma for an hour to forget about it. He gulped. It wasn’t… cheating, right? For the sake of a mission… would Karma be angry about this? Maybe, but, did he have a choice?

“Maybe I could… tire you out.”

He hid his bloodlust, smiling pleasantly as he stepped over to the officer, rising up on his tiptoes and dragging him down by the neck to connect their lips. The officer had his arms around Nagisa’s
back, holding in place, but that didn’t really make things harder. He tried to ignore the scraping of his chapped lips, and pried his mouth open with his tongue, giving himself the opportunity to perform his kiss of death. The man didn’t even notice what was happening at first, until it was too late to pull away, and just like that he was out, crumpled on the floor.

Nagisa wiped his lips off, then, and frowned. At the very least, it had worked, and he’d already wasted quite a bit of time. He stepped over the officer’s body, sticking close to the walls and using all of his skills to be as quiet as possible. Just because one officer was down didn’t mean another wouldn’t be able to catch him. Nagisa had never had a visitor in this prison, but at the very least he knew where the room was, and took his bet that it was where Yuu was being taken.

The room itself was pretty small, but more importantly it was completely unguarded. There was one window, though it was the kind of frosted glass he couldn’t see through. He could make out shapes, and just about hear their voices, and that was definitely Yuu, in there with somebody. Hopefully, since he couldn’t see through the window, they wouldn’t be able to see him either. So Nagisa crouched, pressing his ear against the small gap in the door.

“Any new symptoms?” A very flat sounding voice said, sounding almost disinterested.

Yuu let out a shuddery breath. “No, not since my last dose.”

“No violent outbursts? No self idealisation? Not even a headache?”

“This entire place is a headache.”

The other man paused. “This is incredibly important research, I know you’re aware of that. I need to know every little thing you feel.”

“I don’t know what to tell you, I feel just the same as last week”

“Very well. Then, you’ll be getting another dose right now.”

“…You said last time that was going to be it-“

“That was conditional on the drug having an effect. You don’t really want to complain, do you?”

“Wait, wait-“ the panic in Yuu’s voice was clear. “Maybe I just have a s-strong tolerance or something. But! My cellmate might be interested i-in helping you too.”

The silence that came for a moment was scary. More than scary, absolutely terror inducing. Even from outside the door, the amount of fear knocked the wind out of him. Nagisa hadn’t felt anything so strong since… Reaper 2.0. He found himself shuddering, as he tried to gather his thoughts. Quite clearly, Yuu had said the wrong thing.

“You told someone about these meetings?”

“I-I-“

“I asked just one job of you. And you told someone.”

The next thing Nagisa heard was a clatter, and then a groan of pain coming from Yuu. Nagisa covered his mouth with his hand as he gasped, trying to be as quiet as possible. Then the next noises were unmistakeable, fists beating against flesh, with the occasional pathetic whimper, a call for help that didn’t come. Every single part of him wanted to rush in there and help.
But Nagisa couldn’t. This mission was too important, and the information he’d just gained might be invaluable. If whoever this guy was found out that Nagisa had overheard this entire conversation, then a number of bad things could happen. He’d surely be way more on guard, if Nagisa stepped in. Especially if this guy might recognise him… All Nagisa could do was listen, as Yuu was brutally beaten inside. He wanted to cover his ears, but he was too afraid to. He hoped Yuu could hang in there.

“I didn’t tell him anything important I swear. Please-“

“Shut it,” he said, and Nagisa heard another bang, followed by a scream.

He winced, trying to shut it out. They weren’t ideal circumstances, but he’d almost started to consider Yuu like a friend. It was hard not to, being in such close quarters for so long. Having so many light conversations in the midst of everything that helped to keep Nagisa sane. Nagisa was shaking as he stood and moved, finding a corner that would be a good vantage point, but hopefully he could hide in.

Nagisa couldn’t bring himself to count how long exactly it was. Only that it was far too long, especially if he was being consistently beaten. Finally, the man appeared to be done, because the door opened and he walked out casually, dusting his hands off as if it was nothing. Nagisa didn’t manage to get a good look at him, only noticing that he was pretty tall, and dressed head to toe in black, before he disappeared around the hallway.

He waited just a few moments, before rushing into the room. Nagisa might be an assassin, but he still almost threw up at the sight of it. Yuu didn’t even look alive, lying in a small pool of blood, his face already sporting purple patches. The only thing that convinced he wasn’t dead was the way that he was shaking, still in fear.

“Y-yuu?” Nagisa tried, but got no response.

Slightly passed out or not, it didn’t matter, because then sirens started blaring so loud Nagisa almost couldn’t think. Had that man caused this? Nagisa didn’t know, but he needed to get Yuu out of here. He needed to get himself out. He was sure then that the limit of useful information had been reached, and having Yuu might be an asset.

Perhaps it was adrenaline, but Nagisa managed to hook Yuu’s arm over his shoulder and pull them to a stand. Yuu wasn’t completely dead weight, instinctually managing to bear a little bit of it on his feet. Walking was a little harder, but as long as they could make it to the warden’s office, they wouldn’t have to go any further.

Everything felt like a strange dream. The alarms continued to sound, and the lights were flashing overhead. Nagisa wasn’t entirely certain, but he thought he heard shouting amongst it all, and then a stampede of footsteps. Thinking fast, he dove the both of them down another connecting hallway, and he watched as a bunch of guards ran past, like they were about to go to battle. He put Yuu back onto the floor, because walking straight there wouldn’t be a good plan with all the officers around. Before he could decide on anything, though, there were another pair of footsteps, and then Nagisa looked up to crimson hair.

“K-karma?”

“Hey-“

Nagisa could barely even believe his eyes. All those sleepless nights missing Karma on a deep, soul crushing level, and now he was actually right there, just within Nagisa’s reach. Perhaps it was
a little embarrassing, but he found himself taking off, practically launching himself into Karma’s arms as he instantly forgot everything else. Karma didn’t reject him at least, and Nagisa breathed into his chest.

*I missed you,* he thought.

“You smell weird.”

Karma pulled away. “Sorry?”

“What’s happening?” He looked around. “How are you out?”

“Long story, incited a small riot,” he said casually. “I came to find you, but all I found was a passed out officer and an open cell. What happened to him?”

Nagisa exhaled. “Long story. We’re taking him with us.”

Karma didn’t argue. “You good to fight?”

Nagisa didn’t know what he meant, at first, but then he bent down, picking Yuu up easily. He’d judged, clearly, that he was weighing Nagisa down. Nagisa knew just how easily Karma could pick him up as though he was nothing, so Yuu was absolutely no problem for him. Nagisa just nodded, though, and then they were on their way.

Thankfully, the office wasn’t that far, but with all the lights and noise Nagisa felt disoriented. It was hard to tell which way they were even waling. Eventually, though, they did find it. All of the commotion seemed to be fully in action, the other side of the prison. He and Karma gave each other just a brief nod, before they burst in.

“What-“ The warden was there, practically cowering in the corner.

“We need you to contact The Ministry of Defence right away,” Nagisa demanded. “Our mission’s over.”

His lips pressed together. “Can’t you see there’s other priorities right now?”

“I suggest you listen to him,” Karma turned, pushing Yuu down into the warden’s chair, where his head lolled. “His wrong side isn’t pretty.”

The warden’s eyes drifted between the two of them, before he nodded, and then made the phone call. Just about right after he finished, the sirens drew to a stop, and Nagisa finally allowed himself to breathe. He did his best to check Yuu out, but there wasn’t a lot he could right there and then. Not without making it worse, at the very least.

It was a nerve wracking wait, but finally Yaiba san walked in, a slightly distressed and unimpressed look in her eyes. Nagisa felt a whole wave of relief rush over him, at her face, no matter how stiff it actually was. The prospect of seeing the free world again… Nagisa had never thought he’d been yearning so badly for it.

“Come.” She looked at them all. “We’re taking him into our custody.”

Karma didn’t bother picking Yuu up again, but he still half supported his weight, and Yuu let out a load groan of complaint. It was encouraging that he was even making noises, though, at the very least. Nagisa went after them, taking his other arm as they were lead out to the car. Despite the tense situation, he physically sighed, as he felt the leather seats cushioning him after so much.
“Don’t get too comfortable,” she warned, “you’ll have a lot to report when we return.”

Nagisa tried to nod, but he couldn’t help but relax. The car was big, so Yuu sat opposite them, a whole row to himself which allowed him to lean, too out of it to sense what was happening. Nagisa sat upright at first, but whether he meant to or not, he ended up drifting closer and close to Karma, eventually resting his head on his shoulder. As if that prompted him, Karma leaned against him too, his head atop of his, and finally Nagisa fell into a satisfying sleep.

Chapter End Notes

oh look they're together again.

the drama of it all....

If it wasn't totally clear, they were in there for around three weeks. Poor Nagisa. Don't worry, you'll hear Karma's side of the story next time~
Nagisa and Karma return from their mission, and Nagisa asks Irina for a specific kind of help.

“It’s about what we expected,” Karasuma nodded, after Nagisa finished recounting what happened. “Your cellmate is still asleep in our medical facility, but once he wakes up we’re hoping to start a series of tests, so we can figure out exactly what he’s been drugged with.”

Karma waved his hand. “I’ve seen it from my own eyes, Karasuma san. I know it works.”

He couldn’t help but look over at Karma in alarm. They really hadn’t had a chance to talk yet, after getting out. Nagisa had slept practically the entire journey back, and then they’d been shuffled into Karasuma’s office right away. He was barely even sure if he was stringing the details of their mission together correctly, though he tried to get as much information out at once.

Karasuma looked at Karma directly. “What did you see?”

He shrugged. “It was sure aggressive in there, every now and then. But something about it wasn’t right, unless you saw it… I can’t explain. Two guys started fighting, but it wasn’t human. They weren’t angry, but they were trying to kill each other. They weren’t just a couple of crazies, either.”

“Very well,” he nodded. “You’ve both done a lot for this investigation. Now you should get some rest, try and regain the strength in your bodies.”

Karma nodded, and made to leave, but Nagisa didn’t want to waste the opportunity. Sure, he was aware that they’d been away for a significant amount of time already, but he got the sense that actually talking to Karasuma during this investigation was more rare than he’d have liked. So Nagisa had to ask.

“Karasuma san,” he said, “c-can I go see Yuu, when he wakes up?”

His face remained neutral. “I have no problem with it. Okuda san and Takebayashi san have already volunteered to help with the research. Maybe you can get some more information out of him.”

They both left, then, headed for their return to the facility with everyone else. It would be nice, to see so many familiar faces again. Nagisa wanted to know, considering how long it had actually
been, what they’d been doing. It couldn’t have been just he and Karma on a mission… and now Nagisa felt a desperation to get to the bottom of the information.

“Hey,” Karma side stepped a little, nudging Nagisa in the shoulder.

“Hey,” Nagisa did it back, as they entered the lift, and the doors shut on them.

It wasn’t like he was as touch starved anymore. They’d spent pretty much the whole time in the care back somewhat cuddling. It didn’t really feel like enough though, after weeks. If Nagisa was like this now, then when this was all over he probably wouldn’t even be able to let Daichi go. Perhaps that’s why he felt such a deep urge to be attached to Karma, like he knew something really big was missing, but he couldn’t actually fill it.

“What happened to your hands?” Nagisa eventually asked, looking down.

Karma looked at them too, where they were definitely rough and scuffed. “I guess weeks of mind numbing work does that to you. I stopped feeling it after a few days.”

The thing was, once Karma mostly left the constant fighting behind, his hands were actually pretty soft. Maybe if Nagisa had actually brought it up a long time ago, Karma would have just blamed his constant handling of baby products, but really it was because he didn’t really lift much a finger in his day to day life. Nagisa didn’t mind, though. His recent discovery was that they were really nice to hold, after all.

“Seems more interesting that staring at a wall.”

Karma tilted his head. “Yeah? No prison fights?”

“…Maybe one.”

The door opened, then, and they naturally drifted just a little apart, as though they were trying to figure out a distance that was appropriate to greet their friends with. Though, unfortunately for him, they didn’t quite get a dramatic reunion. In fact, everyone seemed very much engaged with their own thing, and they weren’t even noticed.

“I don’t know what we should do,” Nagisa said.

Karma shrugged. “I’d go take a nap, but from memory these beds were less comfy than the ones in prison.”

“Right,” Nagisa nodded. “I guess we should… get ourselves filled in, on everything that happened.”

“It feels like I lost sense of time.”

Nagisa understood that, at the very least. He knew of course that had been three weeks, but every day blurred itself into one, so much so that it honestly felt like it hadn’t been as long as that. Perhaps that was a good thing, from an actual prisoner’s perspective. He might have actually turned crazy, if he’d retained a normal sense of time in there.

“Maybe we should keep a little bit of distance from each other,” Nagisa said, without really thinking about it.

“Oh,” Karma went a little quiet for a moment. “Yeah, if you want.”
Right then he realised maybe Karma had taken that the wrong way. Nagisa hadn’t meant anything bad by it… yet he seemed at least a little bothered. He kind of wished he hadn’t said anything at all, if it was going to make him annoyed. This talking thing… it was hard. Especially after spending a few weeks apart, it was like Nagisa needed to recalibrate.

“Wait,” he grabbed him by the wrist, “I just mean, you’re distracting.”

“I’m distracting-“

“It’s embarrassing,” he looked down, “all I want right now it to wrap myself up in your lap and not let go, but I think it’ll freak our friends out too much, especially if we’re meant to be getting updates… It’ll be hard to stop myself.”

“Okay,” Karma said, much lighter that time as his cheeks flushed before his eyes. “But I’ll see you later.”

Nagisa thought about letting him go, just about then, but he couldn’t bring himself to. Instead, he pulled Karma in, right into a deep hug. Nagisa hadn’t felt this needy in a very long time, but Karma had no complaints, holding him close for however many minutes it was before Nagisa finally pulled away with a nod, and turned on his heel, lest they stay like that all day.

It seemed like most people were in the middle of various training, though with a quick headcount some of his friends were absent. Perhaps on some kind of mission themselves. Nagisa sighed, realising he actually had a lot to catch up on. Karasuma was right, though, it would be best to focus on gaining as much of his strength as soon as possible. Luckily, he managed to spot Kayano, over in the corner throwing knives and it seemed like a good chance.

“Hi,” he said, and Kayano snapped up.

“Nagisa!” Her face widened in joy as she drew him into a hug. “You were gone so long.”

“Yeah,” he nodded, “it took a while. But I’m glad to be back now.”

She grinned. “I’m glad to have you back. Some people have had stuff to do, but it was so much quicker. It feels like you and Karma were gone for ages. Though… at least you were together, right?”

Nagisa grimaced. “Actually we weren’t. They separate alphas and omegas in prison.”

“Oh,” she wrinkled her nose, “that doesn’t sound good.”

“It was tough,” Nagisa admitted.

“Really?”

“Yeah, I mean,” he breathed, “it was hard when we went from university too. Even when we were fighting, living together pretty much meant we saw each other all the time, so it was a weird change. And even though I got used to it, recently we’re kind of living together again, though it’s kind of different, so that feeling was stronger this time.”

Nakamura cleared her throat, appearing behind them. “I’d missed my weekly ‘Nagisa pining’ update.”

“I’m not pining,” he defended, “I just-“
She waved him off. “Yeah, yeah. Anyway, I’m surprised you survived prison. Omega prison? What was that like?”

“They’re… really big fans of Haruna Mase.”

Kayano’s face turned a little red. “Really? I-I’m grateful, but… I didn’t think my work would reach that far.”

Nakamura elbowed her in the ribs. “You’re famous everywhere. They even have a fan club for you in London.”

“A-anyway,” Nagisa said, before things got too off track. “Did anything happen whilst we were gone?”

Nakamura shrugged. “Ritsu’s been trying to find any kind of digital footprint, but it’s a lot. Even for an AI like her, she can only process so much information at once, and there’s not a lot we can narrow it down to. We’re also doing a lot of surveillance, but I don’t know everything.”

It still seemed like an incredibly high hill to climb. Slow going, but hopefully as they were able to narrow in, getting the information would be easier. Nagisa could only hope that having Yuu might solve part of the puzzle, considering that he’d had a large amount of interaction with whoever it was. But he needed to be okay first.

“Here,” Kayano pressed her weapon into his hand, “why don’t you throw a knife?”

It actually did make Nagisa feel a little better. It was kind of a mindless activity, but not in the same way prison had been. In the back of his mind, he still had to think about the weight, and how hard he was throwing it. Nagisa had never been the best when it came aim, but he was fairly well practised and at least hit the target, if not perfectly in the centre.

**Why did he miss Karma again already?**

“Nagisa,” a shrill voice broke his concentration, and Yaiba san shot him a look, motioning him towards her.

He handed the knife back to Kayano. “Thanks.”

Yaiba san sighed dramatically when he approached, turning her heel almost immediately. “Your friend’s conscious.”

“I-is he okay?”

She shrugged. “He’s spoken a few coherent sentences. The boss says you might be able to get some more out of him.”

Were they in one of Karma’s weird yakuza films? Whatever the case, Nagisa followed her through the extensive hallways, all the way back into the elevator again. He supposed that it made a little bit of sense, that all the medical stuff would be kept a little further away. Before they reached anything that resembled a hospital, though, there seemed to be far more labs, purpose built for some kind of research.

“Oh okay,” she stopped outside of a room. “It’s this one.”

“Yaiba san,” he said, “is there anything I can’t say to him?”
She looked him over for a moment. “He’s in our custody now. He’s still a convicted criminal, so he’s not going anywhere.”

Nagisa nodded, feeling a bit awkward about her comment, before he stepped inside. It was worse than he remembered, now the adrenaline and urgency weren’t clouding the rest of his judgements. Yuu was so much more purple now the bruises had more time to develop, too, and it made his stomach turn, though at least the bleeding had stopped.

“Thought you were an illusion,” Yuu said, his voice dry and croaky.

He attempted a weak smile. “No, I’m very real.”

Yuu shifted in his bed, wincing as he did so. “Is your name even ‘Nagisa’? They gave me a brief explanation, but let’s be real, I don’t care.”

Nagisa came closer, and pulled up a chair to sit at Yuu’s side. “I wasn’t convicted of anything, and I’m a government agent, but everything else was the truth.”

“Government agent,” he muttered something under his breath, “I mean, I guess you did take me down pretty easy that one time. But I don’t get it. What does the government want with me?”

He looked down at the ground. “I-I thought you might be useful.”

“Useful…” Yuu sighed out a laugh. “I’ve never heard that one before.”

“Listen,” Nagisa said, “that man you were meeting, he’s not just doing an innocent clinical trial. We know he’s making some kind of drug, that’s likely going to be pretty dangerous, we just don’t know what it is yet. So it was better to bring you here with us.”

“It hasn’t done anything, though,” Yuu folded his arms. “That’s why he was so angry.”

He shifted. “It doesn’t matter, really. We’re still going to be doing a few tests, so you don’t have to know anything about it.”

Yuu sniffed the air, then. “You smell like your alpha again.”

Well, Nagisa supposed he’d spent that entire car ride pressed into his neck. “S-sorry. He helped carry you, you know-“

“Hmm,” he pouted, “I’ll reserve judgement. I take it he’s some kind agent too?”

“Kind of…” then Nagisa remembered something. “Actually, even Haruna Mase’s an agent here. I’m sorry I couldn’t say anything about it before, but-“

He rolled his eyes. “Is that meant to be some fake carrot and stick kind of thing? Honestly, Haruna Mase.”

“Really!” Nagisa stood up enthusiastically. “She was busy… throwing knives… just now, but maybe some other time. Actually, we’ve all known each other since junior high.”

“Junior high?”

Yaiba san specifically said nothing was off limits, right? “Yuu kun… do you remember the moon explosion?”

Nagisa started talking, then. He didn’t need to disclose every gritty detail, but he did a good
enough job explaining the main points. That they had an octopus teacher due to a horrific lab experiment, and he was blamed for the whole moon thing. That they were pretty much tasked by the government to find a way to kill him in a year, so they’d learnt to be assassins. He explained that it was kind of hard considering he was pregnant for most of it, but they’d managed in the end. He even gave a brief explanation about Kayano’s fake identity, and how ‘Haruna Mase’ was actually just her stage name.

“Woah,” he nodded, “yeah, that sounds like crack.”

“Crack?” Nagisa tilted his head.

“N-nevermind.”

“A-anyway,” he continued, “it was a really crazy year. But what this guy might be creating… it could be worse than what happened to Korosensei.”

Despite the bruises, his face managed to turn pale. “So you’re saying I… could turn into some kind of octopus freak?!”

“Well,” Nagisa frowned, “I wouldn’t call him a freak…”

“I’m not trying to insult your beloved teacher! But,” he slapped a hand to his cheek, “I’m too attractive for that.”

“If it helps,” he tried, “I think the theory is that the tentacles are less literal this time… more of an internal change.”

Yuu’s eyes narrowed. “Great. I want pudding.”

“I-I can get that!”

Somehow, then, Yuu attempted a smile of his own. “I’m kind of beat, Nagisa. This is a lot to take in. Do you mind if I just take a nap for a bit?” Then his eyes crinkled up and he laughed. “Look at me, huh? Out of prison for a few hours and I’m already making demands.”

“It’s fine,” Nagisa smiled back, and gently squeezed his hand. “I’m sorry for bothering you.”

Yuu pretty much passed out again right then, slumped against his pillows. Nagisa really couldn’t help but feel bad for him. He almost felt second hand pain, just looking at him like that. Even after his worst fights, he hadn’t had injuries that bad, he was certain. It was only natural for him to cringe, at even the thought of it, and wonder just how long it would take to heal.

Even though he was supposed to be involved in this kind of thing, Nagisa felt like he should keep his eyes to himself, as he made his return. It was a ridiculous idea, considering that he should be paying attention to as much as he could. Maybe he was just conditioned internally, to fear anything that seemed like science.

He was a little surprised to see Irina come out of one the rooms, immediately catching sight of him. Nagisa didn’t particularly feel the urge to rush over to her and catch up, though he couldn’t leave without walking past her. Not that he was trying to avoid her, either, though. Nagisa just kept walking, until he came close.

“Have a good time in prison?” She asked.

Nagisa still jolted as though he’d been caught in an electric fence. “I- as good as it could be.”
She raised an eyebrow. “Hmm. I probably won’t get told anything, so.”

But then Nagisa thought about something. The very thing that got him out of that cell… he was channelling what she’d taught him. When all of his other skills weren’t primed to work, perhaps he owed her a lot. But then there was always room for improvement. If he was supposed to be regaining strength… maybe asking for help from the best would be exactly that.

Nagisa felt stupid even considering it. Ridiculous, that he’d ask his old Bitch Sensei for something that equated to sex help. But the threads of curiosity had been strung, and Nagisa wanted to know. Would he even be capable, of learning her skills? Using them in a real battle? Though… anything to be a more rounded assassin.

“Nagisa,” Irina said, her eyebrows raised. “You want something?”

He swallowed. “I want… more assassination lessons.”

“Tadaomi said you already had a good instructor for that already.”

“Not those kind of assassination lessons.”

Her eyes widened a little. “Well, now I’m interested.” She looked him over, head to toe. “It’s true that I haven’t had any particularly wild jobs for a while, especially since Nao… but I’m not rusty. What’s in it for me? And, why?”

“I realised,” he purely spoke his thoughts aloud, “that in some situations, when I don’t have an actual blade, that it might be a useful skill. Even if it’s just the set up. And, I want to perfect my assassinations even more.”

“It’s true that I was always impressed with you as a student,” she said, “and you did get the top grade in class during our kissing practise.” Irina appeared to debate it with herself, then, before finally reaching a conclusion. “Maybe… maybe there’s still some work I can do here.”

He lowered his head almost automatically. “Thank you.”

“Come on, then.” She leant off the wall. “Let’s go.”

“Go where?”

A smirk came over her face. “Rule number one, Nagisa kun, is to polish your blade.”

Nagisa had quite literally signed up for this, just then, so he supposed he had no choice but to follow. He wondered if Irina actually had the clearance to just be taking them out of this facility, but nobody actually questioned them, all the way into the car. Nagisa had no idea about the address she gave, only realising that he’d just resigned himself to whatever she had in store for him.

“W-why are we at a spa?” He asked, when they arrived, clearly in some sort of luxury building.

Irina had the nerve to look smug. “I need something to work with first. Come on, get in the chair.”

He didn’t know what he was doing, in the slightest. Irina must be a regular there, though, because she said just a few words to a receptionist, and suddenly he was being motioned into what seemed more like a medical chair. Was this supposed to be relaxing? Nagisa wasn’t sure, but he was pretty much pressed down into it, like some sort of medieval torture device.

“Oh, okay,” Irina said, and swung an eye mask at him, “put this on and lay back.”
Nagisa was a little nervous about accepting what was basically a blindfold, but he went for it, and tried his best to relax. At first, whatever they were doing felt nice, a nice warm weight above his eyes, before it was ripped away without warning, and admittedly Nagisa cried out a little. Then, he felt himself get stripped, as they did the same to his body. At the very least, he got a little used to the sensation, and something smoothing was rubbed all over his face. They definitely did something to his hands, too, and he was pretty sure he’d somewhat felt the pressure of his nails being filed.

He wasn’t sure exactly how long that kind of torture lasted, but eventually the mask was lifted off, and Nagisa’s skin felt entirely raw. It was strange, to blink in the light after all of that. It made him feel a little dumb, as three members of staff gave him a wry smile and bowed, before the tallest one came over with a mirror, and Nagisa sat up.

“What do you think?” Irina said, giving Nagisa the once over.

“Oh,” he looked in the mirror, “I don’t really see the difference?”

He saw the tension in her brows increase with frustration, before she relaxed again. “Well, we haven’t done any of the major changes yet. But… it’s a start. Now to the hair stylist.”

She quite literally dragged him up by the arm, like some kind of rag doll. Nagisa was hopeless to her whims, though his legs were a little sore after presumably being waxed of all their hair. She didn’t seem to care, though, and he found himself being forced into a salon. The place was cleared out, except for them, and the stylist had a rainbow coloured hair style. Apparently Nagisa had no say in this, before he started to talk to Irina in a whispered tone.

“What are you saying?” He asked.

Irina smiled sweetly. “Just talking about the style.”

“It’s not just for a trim?!”

She sighed. “Your hair style makes your face look too round. It’s okay if you want to come across as cute looking, but we’re going for sex appeal here.”

Well, it seemed ridiculous complain about his hair getting cut shorter. Admittedly, it was still fairly long for a guy, though not outwardly feminine. Nagisa had never really thought about changing the style drastically before. After the first time he’d cut it, he decided it looked good, so he’d just maintained it exactly the same. Honestly, he was kind of interested.

“Oh, okay,” he breathed, “you can do it.”

It was hard not to cringe, as the stylist started messing about with his hair, before eventually directing him to move to one of the special chairs so he could get it wet and wash it. Whatever the case, the shampoo he used smelt pretty amazing, and after being waxed raw just previously, the head massage was at least a little nice.

Nagisa could barely follow what was happening, but then he took scissors to his hair, moving with a speed that wasn’t entirely human. Nagisa just watched him in fascination, as he snipped and snipped away. It was freaky, for him to lose so much in one go, but Nagisa knew he had to just trust Irina. He ended up closing his eyes, unable to even really imagine what it would end up looking like.

He started blow drying it, eventually, and Nagisa hoped that meant he was done. But, then he started touching all over his hair again, and it was followed by weird textures and sounds. Nagisa
cringed once again, but then he finally pulled away, turning the chair. Nagisa opened his eyes again, and he was faced away from the mirror, looking at stylist and Irina, gauging for a reaction.

“What do you think?” The stylist asked her.

Irina’s jaw dropped, her eyes wide as she started at him like some kind of foreign life form. “U-uh, wow.”

In a slight panic, Nagisa twisted around, finally catching sight of himself in the mirror. He almost fell from the chair, because surely that was a different person staring back at him. But, when he moved, it moved, and Nagisa’s soul re-entered his body. Aside from the length of his hair… it had pretty much been the same since he was a kid. The most noticeable change was that his fringe only swept over half his face, and it was fluffed up for more volume, the stands almost tantalisingly dangling in front of his eye, whilst the other was completely exposed. The other side was far shorter than he used to have it… somehow making his jaw look far sharper than he was used to. It made him look… older.

Nagisa squinted, leaning closer towards the mirror. Was it… really him? He looked kind like some sort of idol… not that he was attractive enough for that, of course! He wrinkled his nose, and yet again, his reflection wrinkled black. Did he really… look good like this? Nagisa flushed a little at the thought. It was really different, but he realised he liked it.

“Thank you,” he beamed.

“Come on,” Irina cleared her throat, “we’re not even close to done. We can’t spoil the look with those clothes.”

The stylist gave them another cheery wave, as Nagisa was pulled off again, shoved back into the car as Irina gave a hurried series of directions. Before he even knew what was happening, he was being dragged into a department store, and every single thing he saw was far out of the price range he’d go for. Not that Nagisa usually bought new clothes for himself.

“Allright,” Irina said, picking several items up from the racks with the speed and determination of a typhoon. “Give these a shot.”

Nagisa looked at what appeared to be leather jeans with horror. “I can’t wear something like this.”

“God gave you an ass,” Irina said, “you use it.”

“I.”

“In.” She shoved him inside the dressing room.

Nagisa sighed, taking a long hard look at it. He would never wear this kind of thing. Still, he just preferred the loose and comfortable fit of clothes, even if he’d admitted to himself that he wasn’t going to actually grown anymore. The least he could do was try it, at the very least. He steeled himself, before removing the clothes he was currently wearing, and tried to wiggle into the jeans, which were a little hard to get all the way past his thigh.

He couldn’t bring himself to look at his shirtless reflection, so he dove straight for the shirt he’d been given, which was surprisingly plain and white, though the attached price tag made his eyes almost pop out of his skull. It somehow fit a little different to how he’d expect it too, though, and for once he didn’t feel like he was drowning in it. Nagisa sucked it up, then, pulling on the jacket he’d been given, a similar material to the trousers, and then he opened the curtain.
Irina dramatically sucked her breath in. “I can work with this.”

She reached over to him, though, messing around with half tucking the shirt in, giving it an asymmetric look, before she spun him around. Finally, Nagisa saw his complete image, and he was confused right down to his core. The clothes really did complete the image, making him appear far less soft than he was used to. Somehow… he felt almost dangerous. Nagisa didn’t look like himself. But, he didn’t really feel like himself either. All of these clothes… they were like a costume.

“You see,” Irina scoffed, “this is what happens when you wear clothes that actually fit.”

Nagisa just nodded dumbly, twisting so he could see himself. The look wasn’t entirely masculine, he noticed from the way the leather clung to his thighs, making them look almost wet. He didn’t think he’d ever seen himself in something so close fitting, which lung to the natural curve of his thighs up to his hips. It was like the outfit as a whole was bringing out the best of both sides to him.

“Okay,” he nodded, finally stating his approval.

“Great,” she smiled. “Let’s go pay.”

Nagisa winced, thinking of the price tag. “…Is this how you should be using government money?”

Irina just shrugged, and that was that. Nagisa left the building looking like an entirely different person to the one who entered. He hoped nobody was looking at him, as they exited, and kept his eyes firmly planted to the floor. If he really wanted to learn this kind of skill, he was going to have to be far more confident than he was currently acting…

“Let’s start with the basics,” Irina announced, chin up. “Best ‘I want sex’ face?”

“I-I don’t know-”

This was so embarrassing. It wasn’t as though Nagisa held a mirror up to his face during that sort of thing. He’d never tried to make an expression like that on purpose… it just kind of happened. He supposed… he could just try and think about it. But he didn’t really want to do that right beside his ex teacher. He wanted to smack himself, right then, because he’d literally asked for this kind of instruction. So, he cringed, and attempted his best ‘sexy’.

“You look constipated,” she folded her arms. “Try again.”

Nagisa took a deep breath in, and tried to picture it. It had been a while, but it wasn’t like prison had completely squashed out his desires. It was still shameful to think about this kind thing in front of Irina, but he attempted to block her out. Sexy… Nagisa’s mind spiralled a little, imagining wet lips on his jaw, trailing down, sucking that weak spot on his neck. Whether he specifically meant to or not, he imagined his fingers curling into crimson hair, keeping him just where he liked it… And maybe Nagisa’s thoughts might have started to reflect on his face.

“Much better,” Irina said, as the car pulled to a stop. “Come on, we’re going to my office.”

He hadn’t even known she was important enough for her own office, honestly, but Nagisa was happy for her. They didn’t run into anyone, when they entered the building again, and Nagisa very much appreciated that. As it turned out, Irina’s office was actually decently sized, enough so that he didn’t feel cramped in there. Nagisa couldn’t picture her doing paper work, though.

“I’m going to give you some advice,” she slinked down in her chair. “You don’t need to be confident as yourself. When you do these kinds of missions, the most important thing is to be
someone else. So you leave whatever shame you have with your old character, got it?”

“That’s…” Nagisa thought about it, “a lot harder than it sounds when you put it like that.”

She shrugged. “Nobody said it was easy. You’re just unpractised.”

He supposed that was true. Deciding to just focus, Nagisa honestly felt like he was back in school again. Though this definitely counted as some weird kind of private tutoring. Something told him she was a little glad, though, to be back in the teacher’s chair. It was a little strange for Nagisa too, considering he was usually the one doing the teaching nowadays.

She lectured him on many things. There was a ten minute lecture about his general posture, before she told him that the most important thing was enticement, since he’d already mastered the kiss of death. Unfortunately, that was honestly what Nagisa was worst at. He did everything she said, tilting his neck in a way that was supposed to be suggestive as he spoke, but it still felt ridiculous in this environment.

“You need real practise,” Irina finally concluded, “or this is hopeless.”

“P-practise?”

She shrugged. “If you want to learn this kind of thing, it seems like the best way, to me.”

Nagisa gulped, pulling himself to his feet. “Right. I’ll try.”

There was a glint of something in her eyes. “You’re not going anywhere without me.”

“Why?”

A wild smirk came across her then. “I need to show off my handiwork.”

Somehow Nagisa was afraid. Maybe it would be easier to walk around in a room full of strangers, rather than people he’d known since he was a young teenager. What were they going to think of him? Nagisa didn’t hate this whole makeover, really, but it was going to take a lot of getting used to. Aside from the fact that none of this really fit his self image.

“This is it,” Irina declared as they reached the training area, calling everyone’s attention. “My magnum opus.”

Of course, their heads snapped, and Nagisa immediately felt the scrutiny. This was ridiculous. He was sure he didn’t match his looks, half hiding behind Irina like she was going to protect him somehow. She practically grappled him, forcing him forwards, throwing him to the lions. Nagisa shifted from foot to foot, his arms folding in front of his chest.

“Who’s that?” Kimura asked suspiciously.

“Uhm,” Nagisa flushed almost from head to foot, “hi.”

“No way.”

“Nagisa?!”

“What happened?”

All at once, there was a crowd around him. He didn’t have much of a choice, as he was inspected from angle. Scrutinised. Honestly, he’d never been looked at so closely before. Surely even the
most confident of people would feel slightly uncomfortable with this. Deeply, he regretted even talking to Irina in that moment.

“Looks like you finally hit puberty,” Nakamura joked.

Even Sugino had a slight flush to his cheeks, and Nagisa really didn’t know what to make of that. “R-really,” Nagisa said, “it’s only a little change…”

“Little?”

He shifted again, looking around nervously. At least, someone was being weirdly quiet. “Where’s Karma?”

Almost simultaneously, the others looked around in equal confusion.

“He was just here,” Isogai offered.

Nagisa nodded. “T-thanks. I’m kind of tired, after all this… so I think I’ll go lie down.”

Karma’s whereabouts were honestly a problem for later. Nagisa really did need the rest, needed to go shut out the rest of the world and try and forget what happened that day. Irina’s lessons… he could start to think about them some other time. It was a lot to take in, and he thought it was fair that he have some time to adjust.

“Oh, sorry,” Nagisa said as he stumbled into the shared bedroom, realising the light was already on.

There was a sharp intake of breath, and due to their closeness, Nagisa immediately recognised the twinges of Karma’s voice. He considered it for a moment, before he decided to cross the room, only to find Karma slightly hunched over on one of the beds, his face absolutely scarlet, like he’d been dry heaving or something. He hoped he hadn’t fallen ill within the last few hours.

“What happened?” Karma looked up at him, with a demanding gaze.

Nagisa looked down at himself. “What do you mean? I-“

He sprung to his feet, heat and venom evident from his entire demeanour, and grabbed Nagisa roughly by the wrist, yanking him out of the door. Nagisa was really confused, then, at the sudden urgency. Karma’s head was turning like a madman, staring at the ceiling as though it was about to bite him. Apparently he found himself satisfied, because eventually they stopped.

“Camera blind spot,” he offered for just a second, before smashing their lips together.

Nagisa didn’t have much of a choice but to kiss him back, clutching onto his shoulders for a bit of leverage. In hindsight, he should have noticed the more than evident scent of Karma’s arousal before, but surprisingly it hadn’t been the first thing on his mind. Karma was kissing him as though it was the only thing on his mind and he might die if they happened to stop.

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He hadn’t been sure about what Karma would say, to all of this. Nagisa could at the least accept, now, that for whatever reason he found his normal self attractive. And this was a big change. Irina wanted him to practise his skills… but surely Karma was almost too easy. He hadn’t even had to say anything to him, and he was already like this… but it was a good chance. He considered it, when they physically had to stop for a moment to ease the burning in their lungs.
Nagisa almost bit down on his tongue, moving his head away slightly. “Anyone could walk past here.”

“So?”

He finally let go of himself. “Maybe I don’t want to be interrupted.”

“You-“

He lowered his gaze, peering at Karma from below his lashes. “It’s your turn to follow me.”

Nagisa didn’t exactly have a firm plan, as to where they were going, but then he saw the entrance to the shared guys’ bathroom and it felt like his best bet. The closest he’d come to a door that locked, at least. Karma seemed to get the idea. Now that Nagisa was actually paying attention to it, he could almost sense his small jump of arousal.

“I had some special lessons today,” he explained, lightly pushing Karma back into the stall.

He seemed to get the message, stumbling backwards until his legs met the toilet. The last person who used it had closed the lid, so Karma fell back onto it comfortably enough. Now that Nagisa was somewhat above him, he himself started to feel kind of weird. He liked the flush on Karma’s cheeks that hadn’t disappeared, although he still looked coherent. Well, there was no time like the present.

“Let me show you,” Nagisa planted his hands on Karma’s shoulders, and moved to straddle him, “just what I learnt.”

Karma audibly gulped when he moved in, as though he was bracing himself for some kind of mighty fall. Not that Nagisa wanted to think about Irina in a time like this, but it was important to test out his lessons properly. Usually, whenever he was with Karma, it just flowed. He’d never paid a crazy amount of attention to what he was doing, or where he was touching. Perhaps this was a little advanced. But he still wanted to try.

“O-okay.”

Nagisa absolutely beamed with pride. Like he’d already been thoroughly seduced. That wasn’t particularly hard, though. Even though the things he was saying weren’t exactly like him, it didn’t feel as shameful. It was just kind of amusing to him, a light way, to get Karma’s reactions. Was this why he spent so much of his life making fun of people? To a lesser extent… Nagisa kind of hated that he could see the appeal. He didn’t feel uncomfortable with him, at least, which was a huge improvement.

Nagisa leant back a little, pretty much standing on his knees so he still appeared bigger than Karma like that. “You don’t like the new clothes? It seems like you ran off just now.”

Kind of shifting back, Karma leant as far as he could so he could look at him again, and then bit down on his lip. “They’d look better on the floor.”

He almost laughed. “I think Bitch Sensei would kill you.”

“Nagisa.”

Right. Sexy persona. It was just too difficult when Karma was distracting him. Practically, he’d have to consider what he’d do in a real assassination. He allowed a flowing calm to wash over him, and he looked down again, concentrating on Karma as he was. But then it faded again, straight
away. Nagisa just couldn’t direct his blood lust at Karma. Not properly, at least.

That didn’t mean he couldn’t do this, though. Perhaps on a regular occasion, Nagisa would be half way though ripping Karma’s shirt from his body right then, but something stopped him. Maybe it would be better to do it slower… The clothes they’d been given there buttoned at the front, at least, so Nagisa slowly fiddled with the first one, tugging at it for a good minute before unbuttoning it. He followed the next two in suit, very slowly exposing Karma’s flushed chest.

Nagisa paused for a moment, trailing his fingers along his skin. He wasn’t sure what to think of his own new look, but even from their start he’d always seen Karma as the most attractive person he knew. Almost unfairly so, since he’d never had anything close to an ‘ugly duckling’ middle stage. Nagisa would hesitate to think of him as perfect, but there was nothing he’d ever change about him. Not that he had authority over that…

He kissed him again, then, as the energy grew. It didn’t matter how many times they did it, kissing Karma was like tapping into electricity. Nagisa’s hands grew hungry, spreading across Karma’s chest. He felt a little bit of pressure on his shoulders, and he quickly realised Karma was trying to push the jacket off. It was kind of heavy, so Nagisa let him, mentally apologising to Irina for just a moment as it fell to the floor, though Karma was back on him in an instant.

Admittedly, things sped up right there. Their lips and tongues practically danced together as hands went everywhere, and Nagisa was entirely dizzy for him. He barely even noticed the shirt coming off too, Karma’s own warm hands causing a spark of sensation against his stomach. Whether he truly meant to or not, Nagisa found himself shifting on Karma’s lap, practically grinding in search of some kind of friction. Which, to his sudden realisation, might be bad news for the expensive trousers. He didn’t want to ruin them with his slick the first day he had them.

Somewhat reluctantly, he pulled back, which was a good chance to catch his breath. He shuffled back onto his feet completely, feeling exposed as he started to unbutton them. Noticing the way Karma looked at him, Nagisa perhaps took it a little slow, drawing out the process of unzipping them. He liked the glassy look in Karma’s eyes, as the material slid down his eyes and he kicked them off with the rest of his clothes, which left him in just his boxer briefs.

“I don’t want to ruin them,” Nagisa admitted a little shakily, which was met by a self satisfied look from Karma, who had clearly figured out exactly how they’d get ruined.

He didn’t want to make it a competition, necessarily, but Nagisa wasn’t going to lose here. He was having way too much fun being the one who had it together, and he didn’t want to stop. So, Nagisa debated it, not so far gone yet to have lost his sense. And then he remembered, if he was going to practise his skills, he could easily take it all the way. So, admittedly, Nagisa did something he never thought he would, and then got to his knees.

“Karma,” he said.

“Hmm?” It came off kind of strained though, which was good.

Nagisa remembered what he could, and tilted his head so his neck was extended. “Is this how you want me, alpha?”

There was a moment’s pause, where Nagisa had just enough time to think he’d said the wrong thing. Of course, Nagisa would never usually refer to Karma like that, and he started to feel a bit stupid for it. But then Karma half growled, and yanked Nagisa back onto his lap so fast he almost got whiplash. His lips were immediately at his throat, hands yanking at the waistband of his underwear, and Nagisa was happy to have it gone.
It finally kicked in, then, that it had been almost a month since the last time they were together. As much as Nagisa would enjoy hours of foreplay in any other situation, right then really wasn’t the time. He abandoned the gentleness from earlier, tugging Karma’s shirt off like it would kill him if he didn’t. All the while, Karma’s kisses and nips were dead set on distracting him. Nagisa managed to get his trousers and underwear down as far as he needed, and Karma kicked it off the rest of the way.

Nagisa hovered above him, then, heart pounding so fast it probably wasn’t safe. He didn’t care, though, as his forehead leant against Karma’s and he tried his best to breathe. The anticipation was burning up inside him, but he needed a moment to process everything. Nagisa knew already, he’d be gone when he had Karma inside him, so this was his last chance.

“Tell me you want me.”

“I want you,” Karma said shakily. “Need you. Nagisa-“

He happily lined himself up, sinking down in a fluid motion. It didn’t seem to matter that it had been a little while, all he felt was satisfaction, as he took him all the way to the base. Karma’s eyes had a certain kind of glisten to them, his hands clamping onto his waist, and Nagisa couldn’t stop himself from leaning forwards, placing a peck on his lips.

After just a second or two, Nagisa couldn’t take the waiting, and even a little bit subconsciously his hips started grinding. Karma’s head lolled back a little, and then it was Nagisa’s turn to kiss at his neck too. He moved slowly enough, far more pleased by just the feeling of having Karma there. One thing Nagisa had yet to actually experience, save for his heat, was doing this without suppressants clouding his senses. So close to Karma’s glands, his scent was so much clearer and more appealing, and Nagisa started to feel intoxicated.

Somewhat naturally, they mutually sped up. Nagisa needed a little more than just the gentle grinding movements, so he curled his toes up, and planted his feet on the ground so that he’d be able to push himself up and down more easily. Nagisa gasped, the feeling of sliding in and out a little more intense. His brow creased, his gaze far more concentrated than Karma’s as he tried to shift himself into the angle that was going to feel the best, and he gasped out.

Apparently that was when Karma decided he was going too slow again, because his fingers were suddenly applying a lot of pressure to his waist as his own hips snapped up, and then they were moving together. Nagisa couldn’t help himself, leaning for another kiss, which turned amazingly slopping within a moment as his hips jumped. He wasn’t sure how thin the walls were, though, so he was glad for the way it diminished the small noises that were escaping the back of his throat.

Nagisa loved this in ways he never thought he could. He’d always rejected the idea of being in to sex, but after every time with Karma, he wanted it more and more. Not that he wasn’t satisfied, of course, but satisfaction was fleeting. So then he was left with a kind of hunger. Nagisa didn’t exactly how else to feel about it, but he loved it. The electricity, the heat, the closeness… it felt like everything all at once.

But more importantly he loved Karma.

How had he avoiding looking at him like this for so long? Pleasure was the best look on him, in his opinion, but he knew he was definitely right. Nagisa had never considered he’d find sweat attractive, but the way the front of Karma’s hair clung slightly wetly to his forehead did something to him. The impassioned look in his eyes, too, which brought out the best of their natural gold colour. The flush still tinting his cheeks… and his full lips… It definitely wasn’t fair.
Maybe Nagisa spent too long staring at him, because Karma jerked, then, one hand travelling to his ass to hold him close to his lap. After squeezing him firmly there, his other hand came to the back of the seat, just about giving him enough to push off. Even after so many years, Karma was still weirdly strong, and apparently more than capable of holding Nagisa up with just one arm. His eyes rolled back a little at the position change, but he had decent core strength, and was able to hold himself up flush to Karma’s body, legs immediately wrapping properly around his hips.

A dark part of Nagisa kind of liked that he was strong enough to lift Nagisa so easily. They didn’t stay like that for long, though, before Karma managed to push them against the wall, which took a good part of his weight. It certainly allowed Karma to drive into him harder, almost immediately finding the spot inside him which made his head spin. Nagisa lost track of everything then, crying out to his heart’s content.

It surprised him a little that from this position, their heads were almost entirely level. Nagisa made sure to take advantage, kissing him deeply. He tried to contribute at least a little to meeting Karma’s movements, though it was a little harder like this. Eventually he gave up on that, instead just clenching around him. In response, Karma bit down hard on his lip, which usually would have turned him on a whole lot more, if not for his sharpened canines that clearly wanted to stake a claim.

“Ah,” Nagisa let out, pulling away for a second as his fingers automatically came to his lips, revealing the crimson blood. He wrinkled his nose at the taste of iron.

“Sorry,” Karma at least had it in him to say.

He thought about it for a moment. “Did you just try to claim my lips?”

“Shut up,” Karma murmured, before his hips snapped up hard, and Nagisa’s head immediately tossed back and smacked against the wall.

He didn’t really care about the pain, though, because suddenly it was so fast and hard that Nagisa was immediately alarmingly close. As if to prove a point, Karma’s sharp teeth scraped all the way down his neck, so close to actually breaking the skin around his scent gland that for just a second, before he moved down and actually bit into his shoulder with purpose.

Nagisa didn’t scream or anything when he came, but his head rolled and he let out one of the heaviest breaths he’d ever had, all the tension leaving his body. Karma kept moving through it, though he definitely slowed down somewhat, making it a little more bearable as his brain started to pull itself back together from the thousands of tiny pieces it had exploded into. He relaxed, though, knowing he wouldn’t have to wait long for Karma to get off too, the warm sensation of it weirdly more pleasant than Nagisa had ever thought he’d find it.

Wait. No. That was an absolutely terrible idea. Usually it was completely fine because he’d be able to clean himself up quickly, and the scent would be dulled by the time he actually had to face anyone. Then his stomach turned, because he hadn’t even taken any of his pills since returning to their facility. That definitely wasn’t ideal. To say the least.

“Wait,” he finally came to his senses with the sheer urgency, “pull out.”

Karma immediately did it without hesitation of course, but he looked kind of dazed at the request.

“I haven’t taken my pills,” he explained, and Karma’s eyes widened.

“Oh yeah.”
He almost rolled his eyes, but he decided he wasn’t going to just leave him hanging. So, Nagisa turned them and went down to his knees again, and took as much of Karma’s erection into his mouth as he could without hesitation. It was a really odd sensation, to taste his own slick on him, but he pushed past it. Karma’s hand instinctively wound into his hair, but it was a lot harder for him to grab on with the shorter length.

Nagisa really didn’t waste time, passionately sucking him as though he wanted it. Maybe he even did. He didn’t even know, but Karma’s rough pants from above him spurred him on, swirling his tongue around the head when he could, his hand jerking what he couldn’t comfortably fit in his mouth at the same pace. And, then, for once in his life he looked up, taking a glance at Karma’s blissed out expression. It was worth it, because he met his eyes for just a second, and then actually cried out, once, twice, and that was the only warning Nagisa got before his mouth was full.

He didn’t actually have much of a choice about swallowing it down, as it turned out. It was kind of hard to think about that, especially when it was pretty forceful. Even when Karma pulled out of his mouth, though, it seemed way more complicated to crawl all the way over to the closed toilet to try and spit it out. So, he cut his losses and gulped, looking up at Karma as he licked the remainder from his lips.

With that, Karma dramatically murmured out a curse under his breath and slid down the wall, hitting the floor with a thud.

*Complete K.O.*

“Karma?” Nagisa crawled over into his lap, with a weird desire to be as close to him as possible.

He didn’t actually say anything, for a while, but wrapped his arms around Nagisa anyway. It was nice, to just be able to curl up there, listening to the beating of Karma’s chest. Almost, he was pretty sure, his was beating at the same pace as they calmed down, coming back to their senses just a little. Nagisa smiled, actually feeling a little bit sleepy all of a sudden.

“You’re actually Nagisa, right?” He asked lowly. “Not someone in a crazy good disguise?”

Nagisa frowned. “You’d… do all of that even if you weren’t sure?”

He half chuckled, and then pulled him closer, pressing a kiss to his forehead. “Only the real Nagisa can get me off that hard.”

“Karma,” he turned his head away with an embarrassed pout.

Karma grabbed him by the chin, though, forcing him to look. “So you’re allowed to say ‘is this how you want me alpha’, but I can’t even-“

Nagisa cut him off with a real kiss, effectively shutting him up. It was soft and sweet, tying them together in a way that he very much liked, and he would have been happy to stay forever. They both seemed to mutually know how hard to press, what they could take and what would be too much, and Nagisa felt a little too obsessed with the feeling.

“I want to clean up,” he eventually said.

It was about then that Nagisa really noticed that they were in a toilet stall, instead of their bedroom. And technically, anyone could have walked in during that, or could be out there right then. Nagisa struck his head out first, and there was luckily nobody, so they gathered up their clothes and raced across the room to the line of showers- which were all thankfully separated by curtains, and fell under the spray, which Karma quickly turned on, with a laugh at their mutual ridiculousness.
“Don’t go anywhere again,” Karma half sounded like he was commanding it, though not in a serious sense.

Nagisa met his eyes. “I won’t.”

He kissed him again, and Nagisa forgot where they were. They may as well have been in the midst of an actual rainstorm, for all he cared. And then when they pulled apart for just a moment, looking at each other deeply, Nagisa almost caved in. Because he loved Karma so much, and he wanted to scream it for everyone to hear. He loved him and he wanted to tell him right then and there.

It felt like it had been too long, though. Nagisa wanted to tell him, and maybe it was stupid, but he wanted to do it in the right way. In a better way that felt better than a shared bathroom shower. Not that Nagisa had ever been one for huge romantic gestures, but just this once, he knew he wanted something more. Even if that meant holding his tongue for just a little bit longer, he hoped that even if he didn’t say it right then, somehow Karma would be able to feel it.

“I’m not going anywhere.”

If you want an idea of what Nagisa's new hairstyle looks like

This art is courtesy of one of my very close friends, squid-a-licious, who wouldn't let me actually pay her in money for this commission, so it would mean a LOT to me if y'all would go over and leave her a nice message or something like that (she really deserves it, plus she made Nagisa look hella cool).

Chapter End Notes
I hope you all have a wonderful holiday season! Thank you from the bottom of my heart for sticking with this story for another year, can you believe we're almost at the two year anniversary now?

Anyway, let's just enjoy the two dorks in love.
Attached Time

Chapter Summary

Karasuma has a new mission for Nagisa

Chapter Notes

I hope y'all had a great Christmas/New Years/whatever celebration you follow around this time

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Nagisa,” Karma practically whispered, and then poked him in the cheek.

It took him a moment to come to. “Good morning-“

Karma pressed a kiss to his cheek, then, and clung onto him tightly. It was kind of hard, in the single beds they were given, to not be clinging together though. The last time they shared a bed so tiny, Karma was a lot smaller, and they were far less pressed for space. Somehow, though, even with Karma’s arms around him, Nagisa knew there was a big chunk of the picture missing for him.

Whether Nagisa really consciously meant to or not, he turned his head and kissed Karma properly. To make it a little more comfortable, Karma rolled over a bit, bracing his weight on one arm. Their lips slid together gently, with no real sense of urgency. But that was fine, soft and warm and nice was all that Nagisa wanted right then-

“Can you guys shut up?” Nakamura shouted from across the room.

Karma pulled off him, glared at her, and then purposely moved down to Nagisa’s cheek, giving him kisses that were as wet and sloppy as possible, presumably so they’d make the most amount of noise. Nagisa pushed him away, though, feeling the heat rise to his face. It was easy to forget that they weren’t alone sometimes. As much as he loved Karma, he didn’t want to bother everyone with their PDA.

Nagisa shifted, starting to get out of bed, but Karma caught him by the wrist. “Where are you going?”

“Just the bathroom,” he smiled softly.

Karma shrugged, though, and rolled out of bed to follow him.

“No,” Maehara groaned vaguely from the corner, “not again.”

Nagisa jolted. Although Karma kept telling him it would be fine, for the last week Maehara hadn’t even looked him in the eye. He had this horrible feeling that he might have walked in on something… but Nagisa was too afraid to actually ask him. He’d just been so caught up in the moment, he hadn’t really considered how little privacy there actually was.
He managed to ignore the rest of their friends, though, as they left the room together. Even the joke wolf whistle from Nakamura didn’t bother him, because they weren’t going to do *that* again. Nagisa just genuinely needed to pee. Karma… he was making sure Nagisa kept his promise about staying by his side, he supposed. To an extreme extend, it seemed, as he wrapped his arms around him from behind when they actually made it into the room.

“Karma,” Nagisa at least had it in him to laugh a little, “we don’t need to pee together-“

“I *know* that,” he kissed the back of his neck, as though he was trying to be enticing. “There’s other things to do, though.”

“Ka-“

Before Nagisa could reply, Karma spun him around, and then proceeded to lift him up and place him on the edge of the sink. He didn’t waste any time, moving in for his kiss, and shamefully Nagisa was too happy to give it to him. He forgot everything else, his legs wrapping around Karma’s hips to pull him closer as he was wrapped up, lips sliding against lips in the most perfect pleasure that it was all he wanted.

“Are you guys for real?” Yoshida said brashly, interrupting them entirely.

Nagisa pulled away so fast his head hit the mirror. “We were just-“

“I don’t want to hear it,” he practically huffed, and swiftly turning on his heel to exit the room. “Can’t even use a *bathroom* around here-“

Karma had the nerve to try and kiss him again, but Nagisa turned his head. “We shouldn’t be like this when anyone could just walk in.”

“Why not?” Karma almost pouted. “I like showing off that I have you.”

He hopped down from the sink, and looked over his shoulder. “I actually have to pee.”

A huge part of him really didn’t mind this, though. He couldn’t bring himself to push Karma away whilst he was being so open and affectionate. Surely this was what he’d dreamed of way back, this kind of closeness. Even when he was done with the necessary morning stuff, it was only enough to keep them apart for just a few minutes.

Nagisa supposed the idea of imposing any distance was out of the question from now on. Even at breakfast, they were practically sitting in each other’s laps. Most people just decided to ignore them, but Nagisa couldn’t help but squirm under the judging eyes of Terasaka, who apparently couldn’t even help but glare. It almost made Nagisa’s forehead sweat.

“Chiba and Hayami have been dating for seven years and they’re not like this,” Itona pointed out.

The pair in question just nodded, and gave each other a perfect fist bump.

As if it just spurred him on, though, Karma gently kissed Nagisa’s cheek. Nagisa honestly wondered what he was doing, but then he took in Karma’s entire demeanour. Honestly he… seemed kind of devilish right then. Nagisa thought about it, and then he was certain that this *display* was Karma’s purposeful attempts at messing with everyone. He wasn’t sure how he felt about it, but he knew it wasn’t entirely fake. Just… exaggerated a little.

“I have to go,” Nagisa said eventually, quiet enough for just Karma’s ears.
Immediately his face fell a little. “Are you sure?”

“We might make some progress!” Nagisa then looked over the table. “You can ask Okuda about it whilst I’m gone.”

His jaw fell slack. “I-"

Just to give him a taste of his own medicine, Nagisa kissed Karma on the cheek, before he stood up and headed off. He’d feel too bad, leaving Yuu entirely alone in a hospital room. Whether he deserved it or not, Nagisa was the only one he seemed to trust here, so he didn’t want to waste whatever opportunity that gave him.

Thankfully he was pretty much allowed to walk around this way whenever he wanted, which was a nice break from the chaos of everyone else just being packed into just a few smallish rooms. He was lucky in that regard, especially to be able to spend time with someone he was actually starting to consider an actual friend.

“Hey hottie,” Yuu said, looking up from the book he was reading.

Nagisa smiled. “How do you feel today?”

“Well,” he stretched, “the broken rib sucks. Still bruised as all hell. Yourself?”

“I’m good,” he pulled up a chair. “I left before Karma could cause a fight.”

“Alphas,” he pursed his lips.

Nagisa almost laughed. “I think that’s more of a Karma being Karma thing.”

“I don’t know,” he said, “he still smells as obnoxious as all hell to me.”

Honestly, Nagisa was not offended. Actually, making he’d start feeling weirdly territorial if anyone else mentioned liking Karma’s scent. He shuddered at the thought. Though, in Yuu’s case, he realised it probably wasn’t a thing of choice. It was true Nagisa kind of hated any other alpha’s scent he managed to catch from too close up, but it was odd to think about his own biology actually rejecting it.

“What does it feel like?”

He tilted his head. “Hmm?”

Nagisa took a deep breath, wondering if it was too personal. “To be officially bonded… I’ve never really spoken to anyone who was before.”

Yuu’s eyes glassed over. “Like… you always want to be with them. Whether you mean to or not, you just drift to their side. And you feel like you might die if you go too long without it. I don’t know,” he shrugged, “mostly I just remembered that other alphas made me want to puke if they stood too close. But it’s a little less intense now.”

“…Did that only start after you actually got bonded?”

“You know, Nagisa,” he said, “a lot of these things are also just… symptoms of love.”

He shuddered a somewhat heavy breath. “I know.”

“In a sense, I’m happy that I got the chance to feel it even for just a little while. Just for once, I
know at the time it felt like I was the happiest person in the universe.”

Part of it sounded nice, but part of it sounded terrifying. His curiosity was squashed by that, though, at the very least. Eventually, he managed to get the conversation to drift again to less heavy topics. Which was fine, too, because even out of being in prison together, they got along on that kind of level. It was nice, to pretend as though he had nothing to worry about, just for a few moments. That was, until the door was very brashly swung open.

“Hey,” Karma said, “Karasuma wants to talk with you.”

Nagisa looked towards him. “He sent you?”

He shrugged. “Apparently I know where you are at all times.”

Well, maybe that wasn’t wrong. Truthfully, he and Karma had been spending a lot of time together recently. But Nagisa felt that pull, and it was hard to ignore. He did it without thinking, which made it difficult to stop. It wasn’t as though he was any worse when it came to their training, at the very least. So maybe Nagisa didn’t have a huge problem with it.

And then Nagisa realised something, “R-right. Yuu kun, this is Karma-“

“Yo,” Yuu finger gunned from his bed.

Somehow, Karma managed to seem a little awkward. “How’s it going?”

Yuu didn’t take it as anything more than a greeting, looking back over to Nagisa instead. “You have to leave?”

“S-sorry,” he looked down, “we didn’t get to talk for long today. Have fun with your book!”

He smiled. “It’s not like I have anything better to do.”

“I don’t know what he wants,” Karma half complained, dragging his feet behind Nagisa once they were out of the room.

Nagisa thought about it. “It must be important, if he actually asked you.”

“It’s not like he came down looking for you,” he explained, “did you know he has intercoms all over the place? Kind of creepy to imagine him sat up in his office, watching us.”

“I’m sure Karasuma has better things to do. That’s why he sent Yaiba san to babysit us.”

“Hmm,” Karma said, and then proceed to trap him against the wall with both arms, “I give it five minutes.”

Nagisa found himself flushing. “I-I don’t really want to find out.”

He was sure Karma was only joking, because he’d never really been one for PDA. Maybe sometimes he could be a little clingy, but he knew where the line was. It wasn’t like they had to be together all the time. He was just… trying to get a rise out of their old teacher. Nagisa really didn’t think it was going to work, though. Surely…

But then Nagisa stopped thinking, because Karma was so close to him, and he was giving him that look, and his scent… Nagisa was already weak down to his knees. He stopped caring about being seen, instead moving up to give Karma the kiss he so clearly wanted. Karma moved one of his hands in favour of gripping him by the waist.
Nagisa was immediately hungry, wanting to kiss deep into Karma’s core. A part of him would even be okay with taking it all the way right there and then, because how could he possibly care about what anyone else thought if they saw. Actually, with the way Karma’s body started moving against his, it felt like that might actually become the reality.

“Please stop.” Karasuma’s voice sounded over the intercom.

Karma stopped kissing him. “Say, Karasuma Sensei, you don’t have cameras in the bathrooms, right?”

Immediately Nagisa couldn’t contain himself, shoving Karma away from him. Karma didn’t seem offended in the slightest, though, in fact having the nerve to laugh innocently. He was enjoying this way too much, though from the sounds of it Karasuma wasn’t going to bother replying again. He shouldn’t have done it at all, though!

Then again… it wasn’t as though Nagisa had made any attempt to actually stop him. Actually… he’d half initiated it himself. It was just so hard not to, when Karma looked at him the way he was. Nagisa still had his rationality, but it was like his base needs gagged and kidnapped the sensible version of himself, reserving it only for later judgement.

“Nagisa,” Karma said slowly, calculated, “I know you’re used to suppressants, but try and calm it down. Otherwise I will drag you into one of these laboratories, cameras or not.”

Nagisa’s breath had the nerve to hitch as he imagined exactly that. Before he forced himself to turn away. It was true, even if he was a little unused to actually controlling his scent, he had no excuse for just letting it fly off the handle. It was just… new to be around Karma like that when they were actually, well, Nagisa would still hesitate to say together. Infatuated, maybe. His internal omega wanted to be as close to the alpha he was with as possible, now that he knew that he could.

“What’s wrong with us?” Nagisa just about had it in him to mutter, as he took off again.

“Hmm?” He followed in quick succession.

He almost cursed, before the pull to grab onto Karma’s hand was just too much, not that he seemed to mind. “You don’t think this is a little much?”

“…Do you?”

Nagisa winced. “I-I think a part of me likes it.”

But then Karma’s hand tightened around his, and a slight blush danced on his face. “Likes…”

“Being close with you,” he clarified.

His shoulders relaxed. “Yeah, me too. I like it.”

Nagisa looked up at him, then, and smiled brightly. It was so easy like this, like Karma was a futon he could bundle up in on a cold winter’s day. Not that Karma was… furniture. Maybe that was a bad example. But it was that kind of feeling. Perhaps slightly ridiculously so, considering that Karma was far from the most stable of people.

“Go on,” he said almost like he was in pain, as they reached the elevator. “You know Karasuma’s not forgiving when he’s on a schedule.”

“Later,” Nagisa nodded, and attempted to pull his hand out of Karma’s grasp. Attempted, because
Karma held onto him for a good twenty seconds, before finally letting up.

He didn’t exactly feel bad about their distance, though, when he was finally alone and travelling up to meet Karasuma. In fact, he had a giddy kind of smile on his face the entire time, which he did his best to wipe away. This was clearly a serious situation, and giggling like a teenager with their first crush wasn’t appropriate.

“I’m sorry for being late,” Nagisa punctuated with a bow, and then realised two chairs were already being occupied by Kayano and Yada, whilst Karasuma was stood behind his desk. He kept his head lowered, and took the remaining seat.

Karasuma didn’t waste time, and handed out what looked like some kind of case file to each of them. “I’m sorry for keeping you in the dark whilst we connected the threads of your leads. The rest of your group will be informed shortly, but for now it’s vital that you understand as much of what we have as possible.”

“Ohno?” Kayano read from the page. “Ohno Aku?”

“His employment records show he was an assistant to Yanagisawa during his time at Yukimura Pharmaceuticals,” Karasuma explained. “During the time Korosensei was created.”

Something in Nagisa’s blood boiled. Of course they’d had a long time to process the horrors that had happened to Korosensei. Even if it had led to him becoming their teacher, and getting to meet them, nobody deserved to be tortured for months on end like that. Yanagisawa was clearly incredibly messed up, but it made him feel sick that someone could witness all of that and want to continue the research.

“Anyway,” he continued, “he flew under the radar for quite some time, but now he’s openly in development. It seems like he’s planning to hold some kind of benefit for a new product he’s launching. Thanks to a few documents we managed to gather, that seems to be the drug he’s developed. The three of you will infiltrate the evening.”

Yada leaned forwards. “What are our covers?”

“Kayano was actually already invited,” Karasuma shot her a look, “Yada, we think you could impersonate an heiress.”

“Got it,” she nodded, and Nagisa could already tell the gears were spinning in her head.

Karasuma’s eyes shifted to him. “You’ll be Kayano’s date.”

They glanced at each other, and opened their mouths at the same time. “Huh?”

He looked between them seriously. “Irina insisted that you’ll be a good choice for this mission, Nagisa. Finding a cover that worked was hard, but, you’ve accompanied Kayano to one of her film premiers before. It’s not impossible that you might be an item. Or, failing that, close enough friends that she’d bring you to a formal event.”

Nagisa looked at her. “Are you... okay with that?”

Kayano wore a brave smile. “If this is a big deal, then I doubt he’ll have invited gossip magazines. But even so... there are worse people I could be seen with.”

“In terms of our research,” Karasuma said, “my reports are that there’s definitely something foreign present in Yuu’s system, but it hasn’t been easy to comprehend. If, somehow, you can
“access this drug…”

“Got it,” the three of them said in slightly determined unison.

Karasuma stood up. “You have until tomorrow evening to study your files to the best of your ability.”

They were pretty much dismissed, with that. But Nagisa felt a proper fire coursing through him. Impersonating a prisoner was one thing, but that had been slow, garnering results that were incredibly helpful but were no major break through. This, right then, felt entirely different. Like Nagisa was really about to do something, to finally have his fight. Besides… with the way he’d ended up hurting Yuu, Nagisa was primed for some kind of revenge.

But first, he tried his best to calm his bloodlust. Unfortunately, Nagisa was the type of person who liked to focus in on his targets, so it was hard to put it out of his mind. He was itching already. Gripping the file in his hands, he knew there wasn’t going to be a lot to stop him from ripping into it and reading as much as he could right away.

“We can do this,” Kayano said to him, like quiet encouragement.

Yada, who was walking ahead, turned to smile at them. “We can work together and solve this, hm?”

Kayano had it in her to smile. “We’ll be a kickass team.”

“Well,” Yada turned again, causing her pony tail to swish. “I’m going to go and read what I can right now, but we should figure something out tomorrow, before we leave.”

“M-maybe I should do the same,” Nagisa said, lower, directed to Kayano that time.

She nodded. “I’ll catch up with you later, then.”

Nagisa decided to head back to the sleeping dormitory, avoiding just about everyone on his way. It’s not that he wanted to be antisocial, just that he needed focus. The more prepared he was, the better. So, Nagisa found his way into the room, and actually took a seat on the bed he’d been assigned to. Nagisa hadn’t ever slept there, so he wouldn’t go as far as to call it ‘his bed’. It was just… Karma’s scent was a little distracting as of late.

Mostly, the files were a more detailed run down of what Karasuma had said. Pretty much all the information they had on this Ohno guy, anyway. Nagisa didn’t know why, but he did seem eerily familiar from the few photos of him that had been attached. If he was directly involved with his own experiments, and he was the man who had beaten Yuu… Nagisa felt his stomach turn.

“Kayano said she thought you walked in here,” Karma sat himself down on the bed, having found him anyway.

Nagisa sighed, though not unkindly. “I wanted to read as much of is as possible… Did she tell you about our mission?”

“A little,” he shrugged, and laid himself out beside him in a way that really made it hard for Nagisa to actually read. Then, to make matters worse, he decided to start tracing abstract patterns on his thigh.

“Karma, I’m trying to study this!”
“…Are you going to kick me out?”

“…No.”

He grinned from ear to ear. “Then I’m not stopping you, am I?”

Nagisa closed his file, anyway. “I’ll only be gone for an evening.”

Sitting up to face him, Karma went a little more serious. “I know… You’ll be careful, though.”

“I wasn’t planning on any different,” Nagisa swallowed. “U-uhm, Karma, you know how I’ve been having those lessons…”

His expression was a little hard to read. “I’m pretty sure everyone noticed those.”

He bit his lip. “What if I have to use them?”

“You’re our number one assassin,” he shrugged, “you’ll do what you have to, right?”

“You don’t… mind?” Not being able to bring himself to look at him, Nagisa turned his head. “I didn’t tell you what happened at the prison. Not properly.”

Karma tilted his head. “Oh?”

Nagisa cringed, but something inside him told him he had to. He didn’t know why, exactly, but he wanted to be honest. Even if… there had been a bit of a delay. Eyes falling closed in memory, Nagisa started to explain what had happened with the guard, how kissing him had felt like the only choice right then, but most importantly he was sorry.

But Karma just shrugged again when he finished. “Alright.”

“You’re really fine with it?” Nagisa wrinkled his nose. He wasn’t sure he’d be fine if Karma had just told him the same.

“Why wouldn’t I be?” He seemed genuine. “You said, there wasn’t really another choice, right?”

“But we agreed-“

“So you’re trying to say you cheated on me, or something?”

He flinched hard at that word. “W-well, I wouldn’t do that!”

Karma looked at him properly, then. “If they end up dead afterwards, then you can do what you have to.” He cleared his throat. “It’s what you want that matters more to me.”

The files fell from the bed as Nagisa lunged, needing his fill right then. That was an easy question to answer, even if Karma hadn’t actually asked. He gripped Karma by the shirt, holding him close as he kissed him a little messier than he’d intended. In fact, Nagisa half fell onto his lap, causing Karma (who hadn’t had a chance to brace himself) to topple backwards too.

“You,” he mumbled, partially hoping Karma wouldn’t even hear him. “Just you.”

He grinned, though, and wrapped his arms around Nagisa’s neck, pulling him in properly. It was one of those kisses that didn’t really have an ulterior motive, just filling Nagisa with a pure warmth. A kind of warmth that allowed him to melt into his arms and forget that anything else in the world was happening then, outside of that little bubble they created.
“Okay guys this is getting a little ridiculous.”

Chapter End Notes

Who caught them that final time can be whoever you want them to be lmao.

Anyway I'm sure Nagisa will have a great, safe, and productive mission :) At least he has a Karma waiting for him, as a bit of motivation!

Until next time my friends-

(btw i started a new fic, check it out)
Nagisa hesitated before knocking on the door. He didn’t want to bother Yuu, if he was in the middle of resting, especially with something stressful like this… But there was too much at stake here. Yuu had information he needed, and one way or another he was going to have to get it out of him. He wanted to speak as friends first, though.

“Aren’t you busy with training?” Yuu asked, not bothering with a hello.

He smiled. “Actually, I’m about to head off on another mission.”

“Oh,” something crossed over his face, “for long?”

Nagisa took a seat. “Just for this evening. It’s really important, though.”

“Let me guess... I can’t ask.”

Karasuma had given him blanket permission, technically. So Nagisa didn’t have a problem with repeating the necessary information. It felt good, to get it all off his chest again and teach it again to himself like that. He couldn’t miss the way Yuu tensed up when he said he was going to be so close to Ohno, which made sense. It hadn’t been too long before he was beaten half to death by him.

“That sounds scary,” Yuu said once he was finished.

He thought about it. “It’s not the scariest thing I’ve ever done.”

“L-listen,” Yuu winced as he reached over, seriously grabbing Nagisa by the wrist. “Ohno… he has a way of getting into your head. Everything he says makes sense and the scariest part is you just start to believe him… being here has changed that, but, please just be careful.”

“I will,” Nagisa promised, “I’m not taking this lightly.”

As if to prove that, he went right back to studying once he left. Unfortunately for him, he genuinely couldn’t be anywhere around Karma until after the party. It wasn’t that he didn’t want to be, Nagisa would gladly curl up in his lap right then if he could, but he couldn’t exactly break his cover by having Karma’s scent all over him. And that would be counterproductive when it came to a mission like this. He’d spent long enough, that morning, scrubbing himself raw in the shower.
Not that Nagisa really had an actual reason to study. He’d already gone over the file time and time again. Well, he supposed it was a way to pass time. Though Yada and Kayano had elected to spend time with the others before they left, Nagisa thought it was better without the distraction. He just had to think… that night was going to important.

It wasn’t as though time dragged. Before he knew it, the clock told him he had to make his preparations, so Nagisa finally stood up, stretched himself out, and faced the outfit that had been chosen out for him. Of course, it was Irina’s doing. He took it into the bathroom, where at least there were mirrors, and stripped off his current clothes.

Getting used to wearing trousers that fit him so snug was definitely weird. Even if he technically wasn’t showing anything, he felt so… on display. He didn’t like it. But, he could put up with it for the sake of a mission. Thankfully, it wasn’t as tight as before. Irina had picked out a fairly standard suit, though a lot fancier than what he’d worn to Kayano’s movie premier a few years ago.

Once he had it all on, he looked curiously at himself in the mirror. Would he really be able to fit in, with this cover? Practising his skills with Irina (and executing them on Karma) was one thing, but putting it into practise in a serious situation was a little scary. Nagisa had always thought his skills were more suited to in and out quick assassination, than pretending to be someone he wasn’t, but he knew he had to be ready.

He still felt a little awkward, though, as he stepped out into the main area. Thankfully, the others had seemingly adjusted to his new look. So he didn’t get too many weird stares. In fact, most of the attention seemed to be on Kayano and Yada, who were both far more dressed up than him. And they definitely looked the part a lot more.

Of course, he should have known when it came to Kayano. She was a successful actress, and he himself had accompanied her to one of her premiers before. So he’d seen her in the whole ‘movie star’ get up before, but he was still taken aback. It was hard for him to see her in way that wasn’t his own friend Kayano, and he forgot sometimes the true person she’d actually become. The dress she was wearing was dark red, and seemed to glimmer under the lights. He also noticed, then, that in the high heels she was wearing, she was taller than him.

Yada was in a similar get up, though her hair was tied up in her signature ponytail and her dress was a little more revealing. But Kayano had a reputation to protect, whilst Yada could easily play the role of the privileged heiress. Altogether, perhaps their arrangement would work. He was glad he’d have an excuse to stand by Kayano’s side most of the evening. Yada didn’t worry him, she was probably the most capable when it came to this sort of thing.

Once Nagisa had arrived, they didn’t have time to stand around and chat, since Yaiba san came right down to collect them. “Ready to go?”

Everyone made a quick motion to do the rounds of saying goodbye and wishing them good luck. This mission was the closest so far that they’d actually come to their target, so there truly was an air of how important this actually was. He could sense the nerves from beneath the surface of their skin… and it was all Nagisa could do to somehow attempt to ground himself to the situation.

Except, Karma was nowhere to be found in the group. Nagisa felt a little bad for avoiding him, but it wasn’t as though he had a choice. Karma couldn’t be taking it personally, honestly. It didn’t take him long to locate him, still present but leaning against the wall just far enough you couldn’t consider him as included in the conversation. But then again, that’s where Karma naturally fit in during times like this.

“We’re taking off right now,” he said, where everyone else was still talking to Kayano and Yada.
Karma stood up properly. “Knock them dead.”

A part of him knew Karma meant that literally. “I’ll be back really soon.”

“Hmm,” he said, “you better, or I’ll just kill you myself.”

Apparently he didn’t want to stick around any longer than that, because he sauntered off, back into the bedroom he supposed. Nagisa tried not to be too caught up or worried about it. Maybe it was a little harsh, but he had more important things to worry about than Karma missing him. He’d miss him too, of course. Missing someone, as it turned out, was an emotion that could be incredibly crushing. But it only drove him on to finish it sooner.

Everyone had said their goodbyes, then, so they followed Yaiba san. They’d already gone through the plans several times, of course, so Nagisa knew what he was doing from there, as two cars pulled up, and he and Kayano climbed into the one behind Yada. They couldn’t arrive too close together, of course, and they had to take different routes through Tokyo.

“Are you ready for this?” Kayano asked, looking out of the window.

“I,” Nagisa thought, “I’m as ready as I think I can be… Are you really okay with this? B-being seen with someone like me, I mean-“

Kayano turned her gaze to him, then, and laughed a little. “Did you read what a few articles said when you came with me to that premier?”

“Not really,” he admitted. “I was just excited to see Sonic Ninja Three… And your performance, of course!”

“There were rumours,” she said, “my agents squashed most of them, but that’s because I was worried about you. One thing I’ve learnt in this life, I think, is that people are always going to say things and think what they want no matter what you do. But that doesn’t actually change the person you are, so it’s better to just… not think about it.”

That sounded like a really great thing, actually. Nagisa was kind of soothed by that, though his concern in all of this had not been himself, but Kayano’s reputation. As a beta woman, it would be kind of weird to a lot of people to be seen with an omega, even a male one like himself. He knew by all accounts there were far worse problems, but the society they lived in was tricky like that. There was nothing that said they had to act explicitly romantic, though, which was the easier play for the both of them. Being seen as tied down to a relationship could seriously hinder them at a time like this.

“Is this a hotel?” Kayano said, as the car started to pull up. “It seems kind of fancy.”

Well, they were in one of the fancier neighbourhoods… “Let’s do this.”

At least there didn’t seem to be any kind of press right at the front door step, but he supposed this wasn’t really just a celebrity event. From the files that had been provided, most of the guests were business people, or came from some kind of old money, as well as a few important figures mixed in. Honestly, Nagisa was a little apprehensive for what Ohno might be trying here.

Kayano took him by the arm, linking them together, and they stepped into the hotel. Thankfully, right away there was a very clear sign board, directing to the actual guests that they wouldn’t be able to use the rooftop that evening due to a private function. Well, that was very clearly where they had to go, so they headed there, and pressed the button that would take them to the top floor.
When they stepped out, Nagisa felt a huge sense of not belonging. There was a sizable bouncer right by the elevator, but he couldn’t take his eyes off the scenery. He was looking at some kind of roof garden. On a normal day, he could imagine it would be a nice place to visit, but that evening it was completely decked out with lights and low ambient music. It seemed like a party anyone would want to go to.

“Name,” the bouncer said curtly.

“Haruna Mase plus one!” Kayano announced cheerily.

The bouncer glared at him. “*Your* name?”

“Koshouyama Kaito,” Nagisa replied, the name rolling off his tongue with ease given the amount of time he’d spent rehearsing it that day. Of course, as the master of fake names, Kayano had come up with it.

He gave them a look over, before stepping aside, and just like that they were in. Immediately Nagisa was nervous, scanning the place for any sight of Ohno, but he wasn’t anywhere easily within his sights. Instead, they walked through the place together, and he made the best mental map of the place he could, just in case anything did happen. The more they could take for this, the better.

A few people were gathered around a small bar, in the midst of conversations, but beside it there was what almost looked like it could be a wedding aisle. Chairs were set out, decorated by what he assumed was flowers from the garden, and they were all facing towards what appeared to be a presentation screen. Which, just like the chairs, was wrapped in the foliage, as though they’d been trying to go for a natural look.

Unfortunately there wasn’t much time to actually scope out the surroundings further, before the entire atmosphere started to change. That was then he walked on, and Nagisa immediately knew his feeling back in the prison had been correct. Like it was some kind of signature appearance of his, Ohno was dressed once again in a full black suit, though this time Nagisa could really see his dark hair and slightly crimson eyes.

Like magnets, all the guests came over the seating area at once, their conversations entirely severed. Was Ohno really that much more interesting to them, or was that just the kind of power he had? He and Kayano barely spared each other a glance before the followed the crowd, taking their seats as then they paid attention to what was about to happen.

A few more bouncer types stood behind Ohno as he took his position, just left of the huge screen so he wouldn’t block what was actually happening. Slowly enough that Nagisa couldn’t really notice it happening, the music died down to nothing, and the screen began to glow. It wasn’t anything inherently evil, just a generic company logo, but then he cleared his throat.

“First and foremost, good day everyone. I thank all of you for sparing a moment from your busy schedules to attend my little event here. Honestly, I can’t thank you enough. Well,” he paused with dramatic purpose, “it’s a little daunting, being such a new company. I’m sure you’ll all know my background, but it was daunting, going from a mere assistant in the pharmaceutical industry to now developing this, my flagship product.”

The screen changed, then, to display what he supposed what the product. Nagisa was taken aback, because it was very clear to him that Yuu had had something injected into him. But this was… different. There were two images on the screen, one of what looked like an upmarket container of gummy bears, yet shaped vaguely like tentacles, and beside it a closed package that had a similar
"Brain Tentacles,” he announced. “In both edible and powdered form. I pose the question to all of you, what would you do if intelligence, strength, confidence, wasn’t just something delegated at birth. Yes, you can work on those skills, but there’s only really a certain level you can achieve within your own human limits. From today, I’m going to change that, with just this one supplement.”

This couldn’t be what they’d spent so long gathering profiles on, right? This was deeper than a brain supplement. This man felt very different from the one he’d laid eyes upon before briefly, too. They were definitely the same, he knew, but even his way of speaking... His voice right then was enthusiastic and bright, rather than the flat tone he could remember. It definitely wasn’t right.

“Every day, we understand more and more about how the brain functions. This supplement works by attaching itself to the brain transmitters,” he pulled a physical jar out of his pocket as if to demonstrate, “kicking you into gear to make you the best a human can actually be. Think of your brain as a horse and you as the jockey, this is only the whip.” He chuckled. “Of course, there’s no pain involved.”

Nagisa’s own brain was spinning when Ohno clicked something, and a short video started to play. He didn’t have a lot of experience with pharmaceuticals, not in the slightest, but it just seemed like a very stereotypical advert. It was full of bright light, rooms that were too clean, as a conventionally attractive woman steadily spoke how much her life had been changed by the drug.

“Imagine being a teenager,” Ohno continued once it came to an end, “and having access to something that can not only significantly improve studying, but also skills such as music and sport performance. And that’s just one small part of the market here. Yes, in this year, finally a pill like this is possible. I assure you, it’s not fiction, which is why we’re looking at investors, donors, but most importantly influence. I’m counting on you, my distinguished guests, to help me. Together, we can make this a reality today.” He laughed lightly. “I’ve been talking for a while. Well, I’ll be available for a little while from now to take questions, but please, have a good time here tonight!”

As magnetising as he’d entered, Ohno took a step to the side, and the presentation was completely closed down. Once again, Nagisa didn’t really notice it, but the music slowly raised back up again, accompanied by the low hum of various conversations. It almost made him dizzy, and he had no idea how to actually take all of it.

“That can’t be it,” Kayano said, when nobody else can hear them. “And... I don’t really talk to my dad, but I know pharmaceuticals don’t really work that way. They need years of tests and... proof.”

He racked his brain. “Do you think this is just a cover up?”

Kayano was silent for a moment. “It’s possible. I know we want to get our hands on those pills, one way or another...” She trailed off. “Look at Toka. Maybe she’s hoping to find someone else with a prototype... We should probably start asking around too.”

Nagisa nodded, but looked over at Yada. She was completely turning the charm on, even going as far as to casually touch the arm of the man she was currently speaking to. Precisely that was what he’d been practising, of course, but actually doing it was really daunting. Though, a part of him right then was entirely fired up and he was ready to take action now they were right there.

At first he tagged along with Kayano as she moved over to someone she clearly knew. They’d had a profile of the other guests given to them, of course, but as much as Nagisa had stared at it he couldn’t remember every single name. It was a good thing his cover was accompanying Kayano,
anyway. It was appropriate for him to just stand around.

“Mase chan!” The other woman was saying excitedly. “I’m so surprised to see you here! Last time we talked, you were close to signing your house in Calabasas. What even brings you back to Tokyo?”

Nagisa looked at her in surprise. *California* Calabasas? He knew that being a movie star meant she’d spent a lot of time in Hollywood, but… She was filming a Japanese drama series. *Wasn’t* she? Sure, it wasn’t as if she spoke to Kayano every single day in their normal lives, but they were both busy. But… something as big as that? Maybe she was buying a house just in case…

She didn’t miss a beat, though, just laughing. “I have contracts to wrap up here first, of course.”

His gaze drifted, then, scanning over the other guests. One caught his eye, like he knew her face but not where from… Wait, wasn’t she in one of the bands Daichi really liked? Under any other circumstance, he might go over and ask her for her autograph, but there was a time and a place. Just behind her, though, his eyes entirely zeroed in on something else.

Not only was Ohno not talking to anyone, he was walking with purpose. Nagisa couldn’t stop himself from looking, as he said something to what appeared to be his body guards, and headed for the elevator. Using all of his skills as an assassin, Nagisa silently weaved his way through the crowd, getting just close enough that he was within earshot by the time Ohno was actually waiting.

“To the lobby?” The bouncer asked.

Ohno smiled. “We came in our own cars. No, the basement carpark level, please.”

Something just felt so right about this shot, like everything was lining up. Immediately, Nagisa weaved towards the other side of the roof, where he’d noticed a stairwell. All buildings had to have them. Thankfully, once he was inside, he didn’t have to worry about being seen. The time Ohno would be waiting for the elevator to arrive would only be a minimal head start, and he had to make it all the way to the basement.

Thankfully, Nagisa remembered his parkour. Aside from also practising it when he’d found the chance, in their facility. It had taken a little bit of adjustment, considering the lack of pregnancy and shift of weight this time around. With the adrenaline, though, Nagisa found it easy enough to take the stairs faster than most normal people could, and found he was soon at the bottom without breaking much of a sweat, almost perfectly in time to greet Ohno out of the elevator.

He hid behind a car, for a moment, and just observed. Nagisa had seen his chance and took it, but he hadn’t made much of a plan for what he was actually going to do. He could try and take him out if he was quick enough, considering Ohno was unaccompanied, but there was a lot that could go wrong with that plan. Staring at him, he noticed the imprint of the pill box still poking out of his pocket, and at the very least, he could snatch them.

Blood lust was practically trickling out of his veins as he stood up properly. Just as he’d been taught, he took a deep breath, and did his best to clear his brain of himself. Right then, he was no longer Nagisa. He was going to transform into exactly what Ohno wanted to see, lure him in, and then go for the absolute kill. Well, kill was a figure of speech.

“I enjoyed your presentation,” he said, paying close attention to his tone of voice. “I came down here for some air, but then I happened to catch sight of you, and I didn’t get a chance to ask my question.”
Ohno turned around to look at him properly, before leaning casually with his back to the car door. “I’m glad it made such an impression on you.”

Nagisa nodded as eagerly as he could manage, and tried to concentrate on his scent. It was a little embarrassing, but he could only really bring it out when he thought about Karma. He tilted his head to extend his neck, and imagined hot lips pressed there. Given the situation, it wasn’t the easiest thing to pull off, but he knew it had to be working somewhat. In contrast, as he got closer, Ohno’s alpha scent was… strangely clean.

“Actually,” he said once he was right in his personal space, “I was a little embarrassed to ask in public.” For effect, he let his eyes flutter. “This supplement, it stimulates your brain, right? I’d really love to try it, if it really works in all kinds of ways, for heightening every function.”

“It’s a whole brain improvement system,” he explained calmly, “it works for whatever purpose you need it for.”

“What purposes have you tried?”

“Well, I-“

But Nagisa’s eyes were on the target. He could feel himself coiling around him, and now it was time for the killing bite. It had to be time. If he left it too long, his prey might be able to slip away. With one hand firmly gripping Ohno by the waist, the other moving up to his shoulder, he closed his eyes and administered the kiss of death. The one sure fire technique that would work in this situation, that had never let him down.

Ohno responded without even a second’s hesitation, and it didn’t take long before Nagisa was able to pry his lips open and go in for the kill. He just tried to ignore the fact that this man was probably as old as his parents, and more importantly wasn’t Karma. But this was an assassination technique, definitely not designed for his own pleasure.

But… something was strange. By now he should have easily gotten five hits, minimum, but there was nothing. Ohno was… fighting him. Resisting. Maybe he just had pride. He wasn’t surprised enough. Nagisa could still bring this back. He moved with more determination, but as he went on, that turned into a mild desperation as he searched for what it would take to bring him down.

“Hmm,” Ohno muttered, as their mouths broke apart, not even sparing a pant.

Nagisa couldn’t even move an inch, before something hard and metal was pressed right to the back of his head. Immediately, he knew there was someone behind him, and without his sight, just from the feel of it, he had to assume it was the barrel of a gun. Not only that, but just out of the corner of his eye, he could see someone else, and he definitely had a weapon. There was literally nowhere for him to run, lest he get fatally shot.

“Really, it was nice of you to come,” Ohno licked his lips, “Shiota Nagisa.”

Chapter End Notes

hehehehe

The best thing about making this fic really plot heavy now is that I can use evil
cliffhangers

Nagisa's fake name is kind of a Japanese joke. If you break down the kanji, his name means salt field (Shiota) and beach (Nagisa). His fake name is pepper mountain (Koshouyama) and ocean (Kaito).

Well, until next time everyone~
“I’m going to make a suggestion to you,” Ohno’s fingers lifted up his chin. “Get in the car. That, or we shoot you right here. I would take the car.”

Surprisingly, when there was a real life loaded gun pressed to the back of his skull, Nagisa found he wasn’t in the mood to argue. He didn’t have time to consider his options, not even in the slightest. How could he, when it was so literally life or death? Kayano and Yada… they’d notice he was missing. They’d be able to get CCTV, to connect the dots. He just needed to obey for now.

He slide into the car, and unsurprisingly, the bodyguard went beside him, keeping the gun firmly planted where it was. Right. So Nagisa couldn’t actually break out if he was transported somewhere. The only thing he could think of was that of course, they wouldn’t be going to this much effort if they just wanted him dead. Ohno probably needed alive for something… which meant an opportunity to escape, maybe.

The windows were completely blacked out, and Nagisa’s knowledge of this area of Tokyo was very limited. So he had no real idea where the car was actually going towards, he could only try and keep track of how long it was taking, to gauge what he could about the distance. Thankfully, his time just sat in that prison had made him skilled when it came to counting down the seconds without getting confused.

It definitely wasn’t long, before the car came to a stop. Nagisa half expected them to blindfold him or something, but they were in an underground carpark pretty similar to the one they’d just come from, and there was no way to figure out exactly where he was. Clearly, they were paying this hotel a lot of money, because the gun was kept to his head when he was shoved into the elevator, which definitely had some kind of CCTV. None of that boded well.

Ohno was absolutely staying in the penthouse suite. That was obvious, from the moment he stepped into the room. Actually it was more like an atrium than a hotel room, decorated mildly gaudily, with attaching rooms in both directions. Clearly they hadn’t actually planned this, because a few of the bodyguards spoke in hushed tones, and they seemed to scramble to find a chair to shove him down on, and he couldn’t really see, but whatever his arms were tied behind him with wasn’t proper rope.

“Precautions,” Ohno smiled as though it was innocent.
At this point, Nagisa knew it was better to just say nothing yet. He didn’t want to somehow give away more information by accident. All he could hope now was that they realised he was missing quickly, and that he’d be able to figure out a way to escape sooner rather than later. He didn’t want to anger Ohno into restraining him even further, though, so there was no resistance.

“Leave us,” he said, “he’s not going anywhere.”

He felt a little better without the gun, at least, as much as Ohno was looking at him like some kind of meal. There was little to no slack in whatever his hands had been tied with at least, and even if he did manage to free himself, it would probably be impossible to do it before Ohno would have the chance to stop him. Now he just needed to try and play nice.

“I’m not a bad man, Nagisa,” he sighed. “I’m really just a pharmaceutical start up.”

He didn’t believe it for even a second. “We know this is just a cover up.”

Ohno smiled. “You mean the stronger form of Brain Tentacles? Yes, it has a proper name, but it’s not as catchy, huh? You have low ambitions, if you thought we were stopping there.”

“Is this just for money?”

Ohno pulled up his own chair and sat opposite him. “Sure, that’s part of it. What business man doesn’t want to succeed? But I’m a scientist at heart, not a businessman. The Kunugigaoka Junior High incident… that was unfortunate. But where others might have stopped and given up, I was the only one to press on. I mean technically, the damage on your beloved teacher has already been done. Rejecting any further research is basically letting him die in vain. Make sense to you?”

Did he? Sure, what happened to Korosensei was irreversible, but Nagisa knew he wouldn’t be happy about this at all. As awful as it was, Nagisa was sure, Korosensei had ended his life in a place he was content. But he wouldn’t wish his tentacles or any of it on another person. He’d been so against Itona and Kayano’s tentacles, of course, there was no way in any circumstance he’d want extra research.

“He didn’t die in vain,” Nagisa argued, because he felt like he had to.

Of course he hadn’t. Korosensei had made that clear to them all. He was happy, to have had the chance to teach them all. He didn’t want them to live with the guilt and the feeling of ‘what could have been’. He’d finally found happiness, throughout his life. So Nagisa wouldn’t allow himself to be manipulated into thinking otherwise, not even for a second.

“Anyway,” Ohno brushed him off, “it’s simple, really. Brain tentacles are safe, good, in small doses. But when we up the concentration… things start to get a little interesting. But I don’t want to talk about something so interesting under these circumstances. Promise to behave if I untie you? I have my men posted everywhere, no matter how skilled you are they’ll just shoot you if you try to escape.”

Not one to waste an opportunity to have more movement, Nagisa nodded.

At least Ohno was a man of his word, and swiftly went behind Nagisa to untie him. He got far too close for comfort around his neck, though, inhaling deeply with purpose. Something felt a little weird with Ohno, though, but he couldn’t quite figure out exactly what it was. He didn’t have any method of moving away, though, not until his arms were completely free.

“That’s better,” he said, and then returned to his chair.
Nagisa just stared at him, but tried subtly to look around the opulent room. There were definitely things he could use as a weapon in a pinch, ranging from wall fixtures to actual pieces of furniture. It seemed to like this wasn’t where Ohno was permanently staying. For a man who seemed to have a large amount of forethought… Though that didn’t rule out that it could also be a trick.

It was hard to guess the entire layout, but Nagisa did manage to glace that two rather large doors the opposite side of the lounge area opened up onto a balcony. Considering they were high up in some kind of penthouse, there was a very low chance that he’d be able to somehow escape that way, but he knew it was worth it to keep it in the back of his mind.

“You’ve had close interaction with the tentacles in their early development,” Ohno pointed out. “Horibe Itona was a classmate of yours, no? His capture, now that would have been quite something, but beggars can’t be choosers. Still, you’ve seen them at work.”

Nagisa suddenly felt like speaking. “You’ve improved the actual tentacles?”

He smiled. “In a way. Actually, the most impressive thing is how we’ve managed to alter it all. You see, although Yanagisawa did make some important break throughs with his research, he was far too focused on petty revenge. The tentacles, for example? Too obvious to blend in with society. Especially useless for something like stealth assassination. Well, I’ve found the solution. What if, I asked, we turn those tentacles inward. And what if we make it so small, the victim doesn’t even realise they’ve been implanted there?”

So he wasn’t kidding about the brain tentacles thing? “So there’s actual tentacles inside the person’s head?”

“At first,” he shrugged that off like it was nothing. “But we kept working at it. There’s no lie, Nagisa. We have found a way to market this for a more general improvement. Think of it like scaffolding for the brain cells that already exist. The other is more invasive like that, of course, but that’ll never be sold to the general public.”

“And there’s no way to stop?”

Ohno laughed. “Well, the effects will fade eventually if you stop taking any supplement. In our high dosed version, however, it’s too aggressive. Much like the first versions you would have witnessed, the strength of the tentacles feeds off existing brain function, just as much as it influences it. In cases of extreme aggression, of course we kept in mind an internal self destruct.”

He wasn’t sure what that was supposed to mean. A self destruct? Did that mean that whoever had these tentacles was set to die? His mind immediately went to Yuu, and his chest tightened. Yuu hadn’t been displaying any unusual behaviour, but Nagisa knew for a fact that he’d been injected with it. Or, at least, some kind of version. Was he going to be okay?

“Don’t look so down about it,” Ohno tutted. “You’re an assassin at heart, aren’t you? Just think about the impact this could have on the world.”

He leant in, practically leaning over Nagisa, as he pushed his head back and forced him to look him in the eye. Ohno was an older man who appeared nothing short of sensible, from what Nagisa had seen so far, but there was something crazed and wild in his eyes like a child who’d eaten their body weight in sweets. His scent really was odd, too. Maybe Nagisa was just really in tune with Karma, but he could barely read anything from Ohno’s scent. Like it was somehow artificial. He wouldn’t have second guessed Ohno’s alpha, though, based on every thing else. And yet…

“What kind of impact?”
His crazy smile somehow widened. “I’m so glad you asked. Really, the act of killing is anything but risk free. On top of that, it can be difficult, for the most protected of figures. If we can drug one of the body guards, however, it doesn’t matter who the target is. The guard will be filled with so much killer instinct that they’ll be dead before they notice anything’s wrong. But there’s other scenarios, like war for example. There’s plenty of governments who are already very interested, as well as a few private buyers.”

“You’ve basically created an assassination drug,” Nagisa summarised. “You can get whoever you want dosed, send them off in the presence of the target, and then they’ll take care of it without even realising what’s happening.”

“Ding ding ding! Now you’re getting it.” He backed off, pulling a knife out of his pocket as he started to pace, twirling it around like a toy. “In all honesty, I don’t care so much for it. Life, death, killing… I’m a man of science. Well, I suppose life and death are a part of science. Indeed, killing too. But, a lot of people are the most interested in killing, and they tend to be the ones who have the money.”

Nagisa squirmed. “What will you do with the money?”

He set the knife down, and reached for Nagisa’s hand. “Please, come with me.”

Somehow, holding hands with the man felt like one of the most disgusting acts he could partake in. But if he was playing along, this was a far too basic place to tap out. No matter what happened to him, he was still taking his chance to soak up as much information as he could about Ohno and his plans, and so far he was heavily conflicted. He took the hand, though, cringing at the curl of his fingers.

“Do you see that?” Ohno pulled him over to the huge glass door, though didn’t actually enter the balcony.

Nagisa squinted, honestly not sure what he was supposed to be looking at. “Tokyo Tower?”

He laughed. “Your eyes are too narrow. Open them up, Nagisa, and tell me what you really see.”


“Hmm,” Ohno agreed, “Tokyo is but a small slice. Money is the key to the world, really. If you have it, you can go anywhere, do anything. I care much more for my research, but even that requires funds.”

Nagisa felt, on the tip of his tongue, that he wanted to protest that point, but then he considered it for a moment. It wasn’t untrue, that having money had benefited him. Sure, Nagisa didn’t live the life of a rich person, but having the funds there had saved him way too many times. Even if Daichi’s school was pretty much draining the account dry, it was nice that he had that option on top of his regular salary. So he couldn’t disagree that money wasn’t important.

“You must be tired,” Ohno let his hand go. “Of course, I need my rest too. Thankfully, a suite like this comes with several beds.”

This wasn’t exactly the kidnapping Nagisa had been expecting. Ohno, still true to his word, led him into one of the attaching rooms. It was even more luxurious than the entrance room, somehow. There was a separate balcony attached, but it didn’t appear to be much better as an escape route. As if Ohno was actually reading his mind, two of his henchman came back in, stationing themselves where he definitely wouldn’t be able to get out.
“I hope you don’t mind my precaution,” he laughed, “but needs must. Please, get some sleep. I need you well rested.”

Nagisa was a little terrified of the reason for that, but he did know his battles. It was still more beneficial to keep Ohno sweet, for now, and then he’d figure out the rest when he could. If he pretended to sleep, that would be uninterrupted planning time, honestly one of the things he need the most. As long as he could get out before whatever Ohno meant. He walked over to the bed.

“You’re going to sleep dressed like that?”

“I.“

His face darkened. “I said I want you comfortable and well rested.”

Nagisa started to tremble when he realised what he meant. All of Ohno’s actions seemed to be adding up. What choice did he really have, though? He accepted his fate, and gingerly removed his jacket and trousers. Thankfully, even though Irina had insisted on clothes that actually fit well for an event like this, the shirt was still a little long for his torso, which meant that stood in just that and his underwear, he felt just a tiny bit less exposed.

Ohno’s eyes remained firmly set on him, as he got under the covers. He didn’t know what was expected of him, but he did his best at gently laying his head down, and then closing his eyes as if sleep really was his intention. He slowed his breathing, too, to try and act like he actually was dozing off. But then everything went completely black.

The next thing he knew, he didn’t feel well rested in the slightest, and he was once again tied to the chair. It took his brain a moment in the panic he felt to remember what had happened and what led him up to that point. He was just in a room… His thought was cut off as someone entered, footsteps again his only real clue for a moment.

“Let’s have some fun, huh?”

Ohno’s face was spinning when he looked up at him. “W-what did you do?”

“I said I wanted you relaxed,” Nagisa’s ears started to ring, “now it’s our big experiment day!”

He tried to get his eyes to focus, too weak to struggle against his bindings. “Let me go…”

There was no humour in Ohno’s expression. “Please try to stay still. Moving around will only make this harder.”

Nagisa struggled anyway, his pure instincts coming out. Hands that didn’t belong to Ohno came down hard on his shoulders, though, holding him down perfectly in place. He was no match for the much stronger man, though that didn’t stop him from trying with everything he had in him. His hands felt like lead weights, and it most definitely hurt.

“Why don’t you take a sip of water,” Ohno said casually, “it may calm the nerves.”

He stopped fighting, and caught onto his words. ‘A drink of water’, was he kidding? Something occurred to him, then, that it was just such an unnatural thought. Really… There was definitely a catch. What if he put something in it? Considering the manner in which Nagisa had just woken up, he had to consider that was a definite possibility. He couldn’t drink, so he kept his lips prised firmly shut.

“Oh come on Nagisa,” Ohno whined. “Have some fun with me.”
He turned his head very purposely, as though he was actually going force it.

That must have made Ohno furious, because he gripped Nagisa’s chin in his hand, twisting him to face him. “What are you holding on for, huh? This’ll help you.”

Nagisa glared. “How can it help.”

“I know all about you too,” there was no hint of a smile that time. “You’re talented, aren’t you? That’s why you tried to take me on all on your own. Why didn’t you become a great assassin? You could have had potential… but these feelings. You’d be far better without them. Care, trust, love… won’t you let me remove it?”

“No,” Nagisa strained, “you-“

Ohno’s fingernail dug into the bottom of his chin. “Love is irrelevant. Love… it’s fleeting. It can be cut out easier than any other emotion. Why don’t you take a drink, Nagisa?”

He kept his lips pressed together, somehow even firmer.

“The thing that I hate the most about love is that it’s vapid. It’s the weakest of all emotion. Come on,” he stared directly into Nagisa’s pupils. “Drink it, omega.”

Nagisa found himself turning and stretching out his neck in submission. Wait. This wasn’t right. This definitely wasn’t his alpha. Yet, Nagisa’s arms started to shake, and he couldn’t quite pull his neck back into its natural position. He was alone, without Karma’s scent to protect him. Karma. The corner of his eye started to ache, but he couldn’t stop his mouth from falling open.

“Good boy,” Ohno let go of him, and started to pet his hair, “that’s it.”

He lifted the glass to his lips, and Nagisa swallowed as liquid travelled down his throat. Like a baby, he kept going, as Ohno held the glass steady, and then there was nothing left. His energy calmed, then, clearly happy. The glass was taken out of his sight, and Ohno got down onto his knees as though he was going to beg for forgiveness.

“My apologies,” he tilted his head, “for having to take such measures. You’ll learn though, pet. It’ll feel good to obey me. Just wa-“

Nagisa lost focus right about then, staring down at the floor limply. Everything was spinning worse, and he felt like he was going to hurl. Before he could, though, he was hit with the worst headache of his life. Suddenly nothing else even mattered, and he couldn’t breathe. As it took over his head, it travelled through the rest of his limbs, like a thousand knives digging in and flicking his flesh out, piece by piece.

He saw Karma, all of a sudden. His image was confusing, definitely him, but Nagisa couldn’t quite pin it down. He tried to focus. Had he come to save him? He could barely breathe through the pain, but he knew Karma was holding his hand. Perhaps that would make the burden easier to take. Anything, anything to take him away from this.

“I can’t!” Nagisa screamed at the top of his lungs, “I can’t do this!”

“Nagisa,” his voice sounded desperate, like he was terrified himself. “Nagisa. Nagisa!”

Nagisa looked at him, but something was wrong. He looked younger, and his hair was all different.
He was in pain, he was certain of that, but it was different somehow to the kind he’d just been feeling. Karma made him feel a tiny bit okay, though. No matter how much it hurt, at least he wasn’t just alone. Nagisa felt himself reaching out, desperate for the real grip of his hand. As long as Karma held him, maybe he’d be able to think.

“You can do this. I know you can,” he insisted, but his voice felt distant and off. “Where’s the Nagisa I know, huh? He doesn’t just give up, no matter how hard things get. You need to hang in there, okay?”

Nagisa nodded. “I’m trying, Karma-“

But then his hand turned icy cold, and he knew things were entirely different. Karma was different, but he couldn’t quite make out how. It was more like an abstract painting than the real him, though he could make out his form. He felt some kind of deep instinctual anger, though, like he should be on the defence, standing his ground.

“Look at you,” Karma gestured. “Having the skill of an assassin won’t help you every time. You don’t even know how to stand up for yourself.”

“And why do you think you have the right to?” It fell from his lips in a way that was beyond his control.

“Because you’re weak!”

Nagisa didn’t know why, but he threw a punch which never landed. He stumbled, considering he’d put his entire body weight into it. Karma was gone entirely, and he felt hollow. Just as he noticed, though, he felt his presence behind him, his warm familiar breath tingling down his neck. And, as he naturally would, he relaxed just a little into it. He was fine, wasn’t he?

Then came another hit, and he received it that time. It didn’t hurt in the way a punch was supposed to, though. His skin felt like it was going to burn off, like this deep bodied venomous stinging. Where did Karma go? He looked frantically, before his eyes finally adjusted to a figure. A different, unfamiliar form, who was poised in wait. Nagisa blinked, and then noticed all too familiar blue hair that flowed long and free.

“You’re not where you’re meant to be,” the figure locked eyes with him, suddenly appearing within just a few inches of him. “Wake up.”

His figure raised his hands, clapping so close to his face it might have hit him on the nose. He jolted so strongly that he was sure his heart stopped beating for a moment, and his breaths came hard and heavy. Automatically clutching his chest, he realised after he’d calmed just a little that he was in a dark room, in bed.

The light flicked on. “What happened?”

A man was standing there, clad in a suit, and then Nagisa’s brain caught up. Was that all just some strange dream? The last thing he concretely remembered was Ohno telling him to get some sleep… Had he really been that tired? He reached up with his own hand, feeling the temperature of his forehead. He couldn’t tell if he was too warm, but there was a weird layer of sweat there.

“N-nightmare,” he replied honestly, still too groggy to calculate the correct response.

He looked him over. “Would you like to get some air?”
Nagisa nodded, since that would probably help him catch up. He swung his legs around onto the floor, reaching for the trousers he’d discarded and quickly pulled them on, as the man guarding him opened the balcony door and gestured. When Nagisa stood up, he frowned at the feeling of the carpet under the soles of his feet. Something was off, irritating him about it, but he kept heading towards his target.

The air hit his face like an ice blizzard, though he was sure it hadn’t nearly this cool earlier. He breathed out, though it was hard to relax with the guard’s eyes so firmly set upon him. He decided to take his chances, though, and wandered towards the edge. Of course, he was followed, and in fact the guy took his chance to stand far too close for comfort.

What was he going to do, jump off it to his death? He looked down at the cars down below, incredibly small from the current height, and honestly it didn’t look so inviting. Something did catch his interest, though. The balcony on the floor right below them stretched further than where Nagisa was currently standing. Realistically, he could make an escape that way. Considering the current situation, too, he wasn’t sure there would be a better opportunity.

Perhaps it was time to go back to basics. He faced the man, and before he could aptly question what Nagisa was looking for, he struck his hands right before his eyes. Thankfully, he’d played his cards right, because he froze up entirely. Even though Nagisa was easily physically weaker, he was easily able to get him down to the ground. He only had a set amount of time, though, before he’d come back to his senses and would be able to fight back.

Nagisa jumped on top of him, sitting on his chest to have the best chance of pinning his weight. From there, he moved into a sure fire choke technique, wrapping his hands around his throat. If he could just make the guy lose consciousness, he’d be able to hop down and make his escape within just a matter of seconds. So, he pressed down with everything he had, finding the right position to disrupt the blood and air flow.

He seemed to come back to himself, before Nagisa was done, but it was too late. He spluttered, but Nagisa only pressed harder, watching as the whites of his eyes became red, before they rolled up and closed. He didn’t want to take any chances, though, so he held on with every muscle in his body. He needed to get out.

Somehow, he was angry. This specific man hadn’t done anything himself, if anything he’d shown just a little bit of mercy, but that didn’t quell the fire that was taken shape inside of him. If anything, Nagisa went with even more vigour. He was frustrated with himself, mostly. He’d allowed himself to get kidnapped, to fail entirely, and whatever other consequences his actions had.

He wished it was Ohno beneath him, right then. He’d take all of his words and ideals, and choke them out of him. Kill them where they were the most vulnerable. His brow furrowed with concentration, imagining him in place of the passed out man. Even though his job was more than done, he didn’t want to let go. He couldn’t make himself.

The only thing that actually interrupted him was a sound, off in the distance. The fear of being caught was stronger, apparently, and he toppled off the body. Before he could take off so soon, however, there was an uncomfortable ringing in his ear. He tried to bring himself to his knees, but he swayed, hands clamping over the side of his face like that was going to help in some way.

The world refocused after a second, and panic dropped into his stomach. He’d only meant to keep his hold for just a few seconds or so, but he knew it had been longer than that. His blood went cold, when he realised the man wasn’t moving even an inch. He almost toppled over, as he reached for his wrist, feeling desperately for his pulse.
“Hey!”

The shout was enough to make Nagisa forget all about it. Another one of Ohno’s henchmen was standing on the other balcony, which wasn’t easily attached but it made him clearly visible. He had no time. Nagisa just reacted, relying on his parkour skills to pull his body over the edge of the half wall, hanging on for as long as he could before he dropped, his feet hitting the flooring beneath him with just a small amount of pain.

It wouldn’t take him long at all to be found, he realised very quickly, so he had to make a run for it. Desperately, he felt around for a door into the next room. It was only by some extreme luck that he found it was unlocked and he could simply slide it open. That room at least wasn’t a penthouse, and he could see the door on the other side of the room.

In his desperation to make it, though, he didn’t notice the dark suitcase that had been stored just ever so slightly in his path. Since he took off in a run, he couldn’t do much to prevent himself from falling with a bang, when his foot got caught. The pain was confusing, even though it was by all means a minor thing, and once again it took his brain a moment to catch up with where he was and what he most desperately needed to do.

“Who are you?” A skinny man, who was clearly the guest actually staying in that hotel room. He blocked Nagisa’s path entirely, holding what appeared to be some kind of penknife aimed towards his face. Nagisa could immediately tell he had no actual idea how to use the thing.

“I need to-“

He held the knife in front of him still, not at all faltering. “You’re not going a-anywhere.”

Something within Nagisa snapped, and he saw red entirely. He launched himself, getting both hands on the man’s forearm as he twisted, redirecting the blade towards his own face. There was no room for risks, so he pushed and pushed, wrestling the weapon out of his grip with relative ease and he took hold of it with one hand, quickly slashing it across his neck, which caused him to crumple onto his knees.

From the corner of the room, a woman shrieked, letting go of the blanket she was holding like some kind of security. He grabbed her by the arm as well, making swift work of pinning it to the wall, as he stabbed the blade through her wrist and into the actual wall. Killing her would be going too far out of his way, but that should be enough to hold her for enough time that he could escape. He ignored their cries of agony and fear, and continued with his way out, slamming the door behind him once he finally met hallway. Once again, he didn’t want to risk taking the elevator, so he sprinted straight for the emergency stairwell, which was easy enough to take in a circumstance like this whilst the danger was real. He ran as though his life really depended on it, deciding the basement carpark would be a lot easier to get out from than the actual reception. That time at least, Ohno didn’t have men poised to ambush him, and he was able to slip out of the building entirely.

It was surreal, when he finally made it onto the street, and he let his run turn into a fast walk. It was the middle of the night, still, but there were just a few people around. Drunk men doubled over in the streets, a couple holding hands and laughing together, likely intoxicated as well. He just kept going, his legs aching immensely until he was finally able to orientate himself with the closest train station sign. Of course, it wasn’t even open this deep into the night.

He slid down against the blocked off entrance, finally able to take a breath, though he wasn’t ready to process what had just happened. Nagisa didn’t feel nearly safe enough to consider taking any real rest, no matter how strongly his legs were shaking. As if to mock him for taking even a
second’s break, the sky opened and rain fell down so strongly he knew he’d be soaked through his thin clothes in less than a minute.

It felt heavy against his skin as he stood there, practically trembling, and he winced with every drop that seemed to hit him like a bullet. He stretched his hand out, as though he couldn’t believe any of it was real, and started to notice liquid crimson travelling down his arm. He couldn’t be bleeding, could he? *He needed to get back.* He knew that. So, with whatever remaining energy he had in his poor body, he stood up steadily, and took off into the night.

Chapter End Notes

Nagisa kill count: 4 (sorry guys, he stabbed the lady in the artery, of course she bled out like that)

Can’t wait for the next one!
He was too warm and too cold at the same time. Nagisa wasn’t sure how exactly that had occurred, but the result was him shivering. Ever since stumbling through the entrance of the facility in the early hours of the morning, he’d been on a kind of lock down, and though he understood why, he didn’t particularly want to be sat outside Karasuma’s office.

At least he had a towel to wrap around his shoulders. It was the only thing he was provided whilst Karasuma made whatever calls he needed to, so he clung to it like some kind of life line. Something in Nagisa’s memory had cut out exactly how he managed to get back, more like he was still blinking his way out of the strangest nightmare. But he knew he was right there, at least somewhat safe.

“Nagisa,” a voice called out.

“Huh?”

What followed next was a punch to his face, almost knocking him off the chair he was perched on. Still out of focus from the rest of the world in general, all he was really aware of was how his face seemed to be tingling under the contact. For a moment it didn’t even hurt, before he adjusted and the sting of it set in.

But then firm hands grabbed him by the shoulders, and Nagisa was forced to look into wild gold eyes. “What were you thinking?”

“I-“

Oh, he was mad. “You what?”

“I’m sorry if you made you worry,” he said slowly. “But… I got out of it right away…”

Karma looked as though he was about to throw another punch. “It’s been four days.”

Four days? Something deep and disturbing sunk into his stomach. How could it possibly have been so long… Nagisa had only slept for a few hours at most, he was certain. Wouldn’t he feel weaker than he currently did, if he hadn’t eaten or drunk anything? That was… unless somehow he’d been conscious but was missing his memory of it all. Before he could get lost in the thought, though,
Karma’s arms wrapped around him in a way that was just as violent as his fist.

“I thought you were dead,” Karma muttered, as though Nagisa wasn’t even supposed to hear it.

Unsure of what else to do, Nagisa clutched him back, though he didn’t find himself relaxing into it. A part of him just knew it would be beneficial, the less suspicious Karma was of him. But such a thought twisted his stomach over again. He should be happy. He was happy. His brief capture by Ohno may not have been that successful, but at least he’d learnt some things.

He jolted, at the sound of the door opening. “Nagisa, we need to have another discussion.”

Nagisa looked up at Karasuma, and tried to extract himself from Karma’s arms, but he wasn’t having it. “I’m--“

If anything, Karma held him even tighter. He glared properly at Karasuma, and thick alpha scent practically poured out of him. Nagisa wrinkled his nose, the thickness of it unpleasant even to him. He could have sworn Karma even growled, just a little, and that made him feel wrong. Karasuma just wanted to talk, not threaten him.

Karasuma didn’t look impressed either, but he just sighed. “Later, then. Take some rest for now.”

Somehow, he didn’t think being left with Karma like this was going to be restful. In fact, the moment Karasuma was back in his office, his arms shifted, purposely moving beneath Nagisa’s legs. Before he could quite figure it out to stop him, though, he stood up, suspending Nagisa in the air in some weird attempt at a bridal carry.

“I can walk,” Nagisa protested.

“I’m aware.”

“Karma,” he struggled, “put me down.”

He didn’t. “Relax. I’m just taking you to the bathroom.”

“Why?”

Karma’s nose came down into the crook of his neck. “You smell off.”

He resigned himself to his fate, knowing that he should choose his battles and allowing Karma to carry him was only a minor one. Nagisa didn’t want to scent him back in an obvious way, but even without his own nose pressed to his skin, he could tell that he was concerned. That was, at the very least. Definitely unhinged. If that was true, he wasn’t exactly eager to bring it up.

Thankfully, they didn’t actually run into anybody else on their way to the bathroom. Although Nagisa felt a twinge of unrest at the thought of his friends worried about him, he really didn’t want them to see him like this. He knew he could force Karma to cut it out if he really wanted to, at the very least, but honestly they were most of the way there in just that short amount of time.

Karma wasn’t done with him when he put him down, finally, though. His fingers immediately tugged at the hem of the jumper he was wearing. It was itchy anyway, against his bare skin, considering Karasuma had taken his other shirt almost immediately after he arrived. He supposed he wasn’t exactly uncomfortable with Karma taking it off for him, but it didn’t feel comforting or anything either.

After his torso was bare, so came the rest of his clothes. Mostly he just felt small, like an injured
child more than anything else. With the way Karma looked at him, though, he got it. Karma wanted to protect him now, because he couldn’t before. Yet somehow, Nagisa didn’t find himself running into his arms.

Karma pushed him back gently, underneath the shower spray, after removing his own clothes. Did he need supervising, now? Nagisa shuddered where he stood, the water just a little too warm to feel nice on his skin. He tried his best not to hiss, when Karma touched his shoulder, and for a moment he just let his eyes fall closed, trying to regain his balance.

He wasn’t sure exactly how long he stood there like that, but he could feel Karma staring at him, even though his eyes were shut. It was definitely a weird sensation. He shifted, finally looked around again. He elected to stare down at his feet, as he slowly went about the action of washing himself, though he knew his movements were clunky, as though it was gone from his muscle memory.

Nagisa really looked at Karma, then. His wet hair stuck to his forehead, akin to a flow of blood. He was mesmerised, his fingers reaching curiously for the pulse point on his neck. Karma’s actual blood was pumping fast enough it didn’t take him long at all to find it. From there, he traced down the vein, down the life it carried. He could feel that pulse, so close to his fingertips, all the life flowing through him.

His body gave him just enough bad feeling as a warning, before he felt the bile rise up. Thankfully, Karma probably saw the panic on his face, and didn’t try to stop him before he could dart out from the showers and lean over one of the toilets. He didn’t have to retch for too long, before everything that needed to come up did. Presumably he hadn’t eaten for days, so he didn’t understand how he even had anything to throw up.

All he could see was red. All he could smell was the metallic twinge of iron. Blood. He hadn’t puked up blood, had he? Before he could think too much about it, even more came up, and it was all he could do to grip the toilet seat and just let it happen. In the back of his mind, he knew that he probably needed to throw up for a reason, and it was better to have it out of him, but it didn’t feel great at all.

“Okay?” Karma’s voice came, as a towel was placed over his shoulders to give him at least some cover.

He nodded weakly.

With only a towel tied around his own waist, Karma sunk down to the floor, apparently intending to comfort him or something. It was hard to not appreciate the effort, for sure, but the same confusing feeling came right back. Whether it was okay or not, to lean into him and forget everything else. Some sense did hold him back, at least, and he wasn’t sure if he liked it.

Karma pressed his nose right to Nagisa’s scent gland, then, and inhaled as deeply as he probably physically could.

“What are you doing?” Nagisa asked, a lot more angrily than he’d intended.

He hesitated. “Just checking your scent.”

“What?”

“Making sure you’re not pregnant or something.”

Nagisa turned, then, looking him right in the eyes. “Why would I be?”
Apparently there was enough threat in Nagisa’s tone to get him to back off. “Maybe you should swing past the infirmary, just so you can be checked over.”

He considered it. “Maybe I can visit Yuu. I’m sure he’d want to know, considering everything that happened.”

Karma stiffened. “About that…”

Well, that certainly meant something was wrong. Nagisa felt it sink down there into his stomach. He could see it all over Karma’s face, that he was holding something back. Honestly that wasn’t even really like him, if anything he usually said too much. Somehow that sickly feeling morphed into a weird kind of irritation, and he definitely didn’t appreciate the feeling.

“What?”

“Are you sure you want to hear it?”

His eyes narrowed. “Why wouldn’t I?”

Karma grimaced. “It’s not that I’m against telling you, Nagisa, but you literally just puked.”

“Tell me what happened then,” Nagisa said, “if you want to help.”

“He was fine for the first day,” he started, “but then he started to get unhinged. He attacked one of the people attending to him so Karasuma decided the best option was to put him in a padded cell for now.”

He pulled himself to his feet. “Where?”

“It’s bad.”

“Karma,” he said impatiently, “show me.”

He just nodded, and motioned Nagisa to follow him, after he’d pulled some fresh clothes on. Nagisa was worried, of course he was, but something in him felt a lot stronger now he had a purpose. He and Karma were completely silent the way there, and not the comfortable kind that came with familiarity. He just didn’t really have anything to say.

“Alright,” Karma said, as they approached a wall, “but don’t say I didn’t warn you.”

There was a tiny window cut out, and Nagisa stepped up to it curiously. At first he was just taken aback by the entire set up, which felt more like something from a drama movie than the real world. Yuu looked tiny, sat calmly in the middle of lined, padded room. It looked far too stark white. Nagisa couldn’t stop himself from pressing right against it, which was when Yuu’s eyes snapped up.

Even Nagisa was taken aback, a chill running down his spine when Yuu looked at him properly, like a tiger in a cage. Almost like he was a tiger, he leapt forwards, as if he was genuinely going to attack Nagisa with his bare hands. Even through what must be the smallest of gaps, Nagisa could sense a real sour scent coming from him, as though he was terrified beneath everything.

Karma was immediately by his side, and pulled him back by the shoulder. “He might end up hurting himself.”

“W-what happened?”
“Okuda’s theory,” Karma swallowed, “is that his body was resisting whatever he was injected with. But, eventually it took over quicker than he could fight it. Maybe because violence isn’t supposed to come naturally to omegas.” He shrugged. “It helps, though, with their research. It’s just a problem nobody can get in there to evaluate him properly.”

“Research?” Nagisa felt himself heat up. “He’s in there. He’s suffering.”

Karma winced. “Is it even Yuu anymore?”

“What.”

He held his hands up. “I’m only being realistic here. He probably doesn’t even remember anything after he got injected up until now anymore. From what we can tell, anyway.”

“But I met him after he already had it in him, he doesn’t know anyone else…” Nagisa’s heart almost jumped out of his ribcage. “I have an idea.”

“Idea?”

But Nagisa suddenly felt determined. He was filled with this crazy kind of energy to do something. He had his idea and he needed to enact it right now. He moved so fast that even Karma, who admittedly had a large height and speed advantage on him, couldn’t catch up to his side. Nagisa didn’t really feel like sticking around and waiting for him, though, not when he had important things to do.

“Kayano,” he said, immediately half ready to grab her by the wrist and drag her with him.

Everyone turned their heads around. “Nagisa!? You’re okay!!”

Nagisa stiffened, not prepared for such a warm welcome. He… really had been gone for a while, hadn’t he? He didn’t want the attention, though. Not in the slightest. Nagisa wanted to help, like it was the only thing he could focus clearly on. It didn’t matter about him, not in the slightest. He was fine, they could see that, and that was enough.

“Kayano,” he said again, pushing through the small crowd to get to her. “You can help Yuu.”

Her eyebrows creased, for a moment, before she launched herself, practically jumping into his arms. Nagisa wasn’t really used to receiving such a hug, even though she was around the same size as him, so he almost toppled backwards. Thankfully, Kayano was well aware of her own centre of gravity, and managed to steady them before any further injury happened.

“You’re an idiot, Nagisa!” She hit him on the arm (what was it with people attacking him today?). “I thought you might not even come back!”

“There’s a bigger problem, though,” he stepped back.

“Bigger problems?”

Nagisa took a deep breath. “We need to be able to help Yuu. If the theory about him not really remembering things before he was injected is right… He’s a huge Haruna Mase fan. I think if there’s a chance of him recognising someone, it might work with you.”

Terasaka scoffed from behind him. “You want to send her into a wolf cage?”

“I’ll try it,” Kayano said, meeting him with the same determination.
Kurahashi covered her mouth. “But what if you get hurt?”

She smiled. “I can hold my own, so don’t you worry, okay?”

Sugino looked at Nagisa worriedly. “Do you really think this is a good idea?”

“How wouldn’t it be?”

He didn’t stick around to hear Sugino’s counter argument, instead taking off behind Kayano, as did the rest of their group. It made Nagisa feel better, that they seemed to agree with him about what was right. Helping Yuu, that was definitely the right thing to do. He couldn’t help but feel nervous, though, as the entire crowd of them gathered around to

“Takebayashi,” Kayano gulped, “I need your entry permission.”

It took Nagisa a moment to realise why Takebayashi of all people would be the one with access to such a secure room, but once he pulled out a key card, it made sense. He was the one who was an actual doctor. Why send different medical staff in, whilst they had one who was already a trained assassin and had intimate knowledge of the original tentacles.

Nagisa was certain it would work, but he still held his breath as Kayano entered the room. For a moment, Yuu didn’t even react at all, as though he hadn’t noticed anybody was there. She looked nervous, but she took a few steps closer towards him, and then his head turned around. Nagisa really did tense up for a moment, but no attack actually followed.

“How’s it going, Yuu-san,” Kayano said. “It’s nice to finally be able to meet you.”

It seemed as though his brain was lagging behind a few moments, because he just blinked rapidly before focusing in on her. “Hello Mase?”

She smiled widely. “That’s right! How are you doing today?”

Yuu sighed. “Yeah, I’m definitely in some kind of wild fever dream. There’s no way the real Haruna Mase is here talking to me.”

“Oh,” she remained light, “I feel pretty real.”

Even outside of that room, the mood completely changed, and the relief buzzing through everyone was clearer than anything. Nagisa had only seen Yuu’s temperamentality for a few moments, but he could already tell it was different. This was good, right? Yuu definitely didn’t seem exactly relaxed, and if he thought he was in some kind of nightmare… He couldn’t blame him for that one, though.

Kayano continued to chat lightly with him, and as it went on, some of their group were settled enough by the idea of it to move on and focus on other important things. Kayano was, thankfully, pretty used to handling meeting her fans, and managed to not show any fear she might have. It was at least good to see that neither of them were unsettled.

People filtered out, one by one, until it was just him, Takebayashi, and Karma. It definitely had been helping, because Takebayashi stood taking a near insane amount of notes. Nagisa, on the other hand, was just… watching. And Karma really wasn’t kidding about not letting him out of his sight. Well, he could cut his loses with that, he supposed.

“He looks better,” Nagisa practically pressed his face to the glass.
“He’s sick, Nagisa,” Takebayashi said as though it was just a simple fact. “We’ve already tested him whilst he was sedated.”

“Like he’s self destructing?”

“Yes,” he pushed his glasses up on his nose, “we’re sure he’s going to die.”

Nagisa frowned. “He’s strong. He’s been through a lot. He can get through this.”

“It’s like a kind of poison.”

He turned on his heel, though, rather than sticking around for Takebayashi’s lecture. He didn’t know him. Yuu looked fine, so he couldn’t be that sick. Thankfully, the notes Takebayashi were consumed with were apparently more important than following him to explain further. Karma, though, was predictably hot on his heels. Like he really wasn’t going to drop him.

“What are you doing?” Nagisa stopped and turned to face him. “I’m just going to bed. It feels like a long day. I need to rest.”

“Okay,” Karma shrugged. “We’ll go to bed then.”

There was a weird kind of conflict within him. Nagisa felt like he honestly couldn’t even understand why, but he knew he didn’t want to upset Karma. A low part of him really was complaining, wondering why he hadn’t just run into his arms yet. But an even bigger part really didn’t want to. The idea of Karma’s arms wrapped around him in bed him feel claustrophobic at only the suggestion. Suddenly he felt sick again.

“I want to be alone right now,” he said simply. “I’m tired.”

For a moment, Karma just stared at him as though he was shocked. Almost upset, maybe. But he had no reason to be, Nagisa was sure. He just wasn’t in the mood to cuddle. Karma had other things to do. Why should it matter, what Nagisa did? Anyway, they had their own beds for a reason. Nagisa had a dread feeling that things were going to amp up, and he needed to be better rested.

“Okay,” Karma eventually said, and still leaned in to kiss the top of his forehead, “goodnight, then.”

His lips felt like ice.

Chapter End Notes

a treat for you all
“There’s nothing that can be done,” Karasuma explained. “We’re working on trying out how to figure out the location and access to Ohno’s laboratories as it is. If Ohno secretly developed some sort of cure, and it can be secured… But all my reports say any sort of research is going to take time. More than the rate Takebayashi thinks Yuu has left.”

Nagisa’s eyes narrowed, as he continued to pace around the office. “Isn’t Ritsu on it around the clock? How has one of the best AIs in modern development not cracked it yet?!”

“No.” Karasuma looked at him carefully. “Are you feeling okay?”

Nagisa didn’t even blink. “I’ve known you for a long time, and you’re not acting like yourself.”

Finally, his expression morphed into a grimace. “I know… how situations like that can be. Have you found support with the others?”

“Yes,” Nagisa said quickly, “all the support I need.”

“I am working on it,” he said genuinely, “keeping Yuu alive is beneficial to everyone.”

“He’s a person,” Nagisa thought, but he didn’t voice it. “Am I free to go now?”

Karasuma seemed a little taken aback by the request. “Go ahead.”

Nagisa didn’t know why he was feeling all this anger rushing through him recently. Sure, there were times in life where he did get angry, but they were only brief dark moments. This… it was
like a constant thrumming beneath the surface, and he was ready to burst at just about any moment. Just… something needed to light the fuse.

He walked with a kind of determined purpose, though he didn’t have an exact aim. All he knew was he needed to do something. It wasn’t like he could just go and talk with Yuu anymore. Although Kayano had been successful in having a calm conversation with him, there was no telling how he’d react to someone else. He didn’t even want to admit Takebayashi’s words to himself, but he could see the weakness in Yuu’s form as it was.

All his other friends seemed to be keeping their distance from him somewhat, like they were trying to give him space or something. So Nagisa went to go find his only other option, the one person who seemed to be refusing to leave him alone. Well, Karma wasn’t terrible at reading the air in a room, so he hadn’t been draping all over him, but Nagisa was still more than aware that he was being watched, checked in on.

“Let’s fight,” he said, approaching Karma’s bedside.

Karma looked up at him, peeling an eye open. “Huh?”

He was single-minded about this, though. “I was already cleared of injury. We shouldn’t be sitting around and wasting time.”

“Shouldn’t you,” he scanned him over, “go find Kayano or someone?”

Nagisa’s brow creased. “Are you saying I can’t take you?”

“No, but-“

“Then let’s go,” he said, even more ready.

Obviously, there wasn’t really much space to spar in the dormitory room, so Nagisa headed out into the main area. He didn’t really care, if they ended up having spectators. He even noticed curious stares, as they walked past their friends to the most open area. Not that this was in any way meant to be a show. Just a means to an end, a cure to the itch in his bones.

Karma looked apprehensive, stood opposite him. “Weapons?”

“No,” Nagisa said. “Fists are fine.”

“Oh…”

He didn’t really look like he usually did, in the midst of a fight. Where was that wild fire? Nagisa was irritated, then. He wanted Karma to take this seriously. He went through the exact same training he did, and Nagisa had actually still been maintaining his assassin skills for the last year. He was more ready than anything.

But it seemed like Karma was going to make him throw the first punch. He went right into it, going for the ribs, and though it didn’t seem to hurt him much in the slightest. Karma did seem a little taken aback, though, that Nagisa had actually gone in seriously. When he attempted his next hit, however, Karma woke up a little, blocking him. He knocked him back, a little, but made no serious attempt at fighting back.

The only thing Nagisa could really do then was keep coming at him with everything he had until Karma would have to take it seriously. That was, if he could hold out that long. He kept trying his luck, though, and Karma kept on blocking him, though not properly. Frustrated, Nagisa went for
his side, and finally Karma knocked him back.

Karma fainted left, before grabbing his arm and flipping him over. “You do it by instinct,” he taunted him, “you learnt to fight whilst you were pregnant. So you prioritise protecting your stomach, like it’s some kind of muscle memory. You have way too many openings.”

Nagisa looked up at him from the floor, only having a second or two to register what had happened before Karma jumped on him, effectively pinning him with the weight of his own body. Well, that was annoying. But Nagisa couldn’t really do anything about the fact that Karma was practically twice as big and twice as strong as him. His hands came down, trapping Nagisa’s wrists against the floor, above his head.

“Gotcha,” Karma panted from on top of him. So he had been exerting himself a little.

Honestly, Nagisa had been underneath Karma quite a few times in positions similar to this. Perhaps in a different setting, it would have stirred something within him. Mostly though, he was excited with the fact he knew exactly how to get out of it. Wait. Usually Nagisa would have his hips wrapped around Karma’s, with far more leverage to knock him off. All he felt like he could do was struggle.

Something lit up within him, then, as though he was in actual danger. It was weird, he hadn’t thought he was so concentrated. But then his blood lust buzzed under the surface, and before he could stop it, it sprang right out of him. Without even really thinking about it, he bucked his hips up with everything he had, causing Karma to fly forwards and instinctively let go. From there, he slid his arms out, and used everything he had to flip Karma over, moving in to choke him from the perfect position before he even had the time to react.

It all rushed through him, then, like the most satisfying of addictions. The power, he was reminded of why it was so addictive. When he pressed harder, and Karma’s eyes widened in genuine alarm, he felt like he couldn’t even stop. He… he really wanted to kill. And he was about to. But then he faltered. If he killed Karma, it would raise suspicion to him hugely. He couldn’t do anything if he was locked away in a cage somewhere. Most people would expect him to automatically lose the fight, so he should.

When he subtly loosed his grip, Karma didn’t hesitate to reverse their positions, and Nagisa immediately tapped out. “You win.”

Karma moved off him, then, but his face was unreadable. Nagisa just lay there, and he knew he wasn’t satisfied. Fighting didn’t help anything within him. His head was no less full of questions than it had been when he started talking to Karasuma. Perhaps the floor wasn’t the best place to brain storm, but if he couldn’t distract himself enough… He had to do something to help. What was it Karasuma had said, again?

“-gisa?” Karma was speaking to him, holding out a hand. “Are you just going to stay there?”

Begrudgingly, he accepted Karma’s hand, letting him pull him up and onto his feet. He didn’t feel much like saying anything though. Instead, he dropped his hold, and turned his back completely. Maybe it would be better to try and think about this by himself. He knew, as an absolute fact, that there was a problem and he needed to fix it. But, if even Ritsu was having a hard time, he wasn’t sure who else could.

…Yuu was arrested for hacking into an important security system, wasn’t he?

Nagisa slumped against the wall. Even if Yuu was maybe better with hacking specifically, that
didn’t mean he’d be able to do it. Kayano hadn’t got much out of him, though that didn’t mean it was… impossible. He should go and talk to her. That was a little harder than it sounded, though, considering the current circumstances. Everyone was just a little wary of him.

“Kayano,” Nagisa addressed her, after only a minute of two of looking. There wasn’t any use in small talk at a time like this.

She looked up at him and smiled kindly. “How are you feeling today?”

What did that matter? “Fine, I-“

“You know,” her voice faltered a little, “we can talk about anything. I’ll always be here for it.”

Nagisa nodded. “Good. How’s it going with Yuu?”

Kayano’s eyes widened, before she shifted. “I feel awful that I can’t do much to really help him, aside from make this a little easier and more comfortable for him.”

“I had an idea,” he moved closer. “Yuu’s talented when it comes to this kind of thing. We might actually be help him. If we can get him to help himself.”

“He seems like a kind person,” she said, “but-“

He wasn’t just going to give in that easily. “You’ve gotten to know him a little, right? He doesn’t deserve to be left to die here. Maybe if I come with you, he won’t attack, and we can try and explain how he can help himself.”

“Is it,” she swallowed, “really safe to try that?”

Nagisa looked around. “Just… let’s go now and not tell the others. If we can convince him to sit in front of one of our computers, I really think we can do this.”


“We don’t have a lot of time,” he said, and took off. Kayano was right at his heels, though.

Yuu hadn’t exactly been taking a turn for the better in the last few days. Perhaps talking to Kayano really had helped, or maybe he was just too weak to keep it up, but he’d given up on the manic attacking and was currently curled up in the foetal position. He honestly looked harmless like that, though Nagisa did know better.

Giving him one last look of question, Kayano opened the door. “Hey, are you feeling any better today?”

Yuu sat up, straining as if it was a challenge. “Ugh.”

Kayano crouched down. “I actually brought a friend with me today, if that’s okay.”

“Hello, Yuu,” Nagisa said, approaching carefully.

He looked up at him, blinked, but then turned back to Kayano. “What’s happening?”

“He-“

“I heard that you’re not feeling so great,” Nagisa interrupted. “Actually, I think I might have a way to fix it, but I’m not so good at figuring out things when they involve computers and technology.”
“What,” Yuu tilted his head, “you’re gonna google search it?”

“No,” come on Yuu, “there’s this laboratory, and we know they have all kind of stuff that we could access. Maybe it could help other people, too…”

Yuu scoffed.

“You’d, uh,” Nagisa tried, “get to mess with some rich alphas.”

A smile came over his face. “Sounds like fun. What, you want me to get into their system, or something? I could probably mess with them a little.”

Nagisa stared at him. “Do you think… you could get into the system so we can access key information?”

“I’d have to get a good look at it,” he thought, “I can have a look at it.” Something washed over his face. “Why is this important, again?”

“Just trust me, it is,” Nagisa looked over his shoulder. “We don’t have a lot of time, so we should probably start soon.”

Yuu just nodded weakly.

Well, he was certainly able to stand and walk, as he demonstrated, but he didn’t look as though he was having an easy time doing it. Rather than concern, though, that just made Nagisa even more urgent to get him working on it. On top of just being able to maybe save his life, they really did need to get into Ohno’s laboratories.

“Don’t you think,” Kayano inhaled, out of his ear shot, “this might be a bit much for him?”

Nagisa looked over. “He seems fine to me. This might be his only shot at getting better.”

“Right,” Kayano didn’t seem sure. “And if Karasuma finds out we let him out of here?”

“He should be grateful, if Yuu figures it out.”

They were given strange looks, as they came past, but nobody actually stopped them. Fortunately, Karasuma had given them that kind of status. It wasn’t particularly difficult, then, to get Yuu exactly where they needed him. Currently, Ritsu was plugged into a set of heavy duty computers, doing her best to penetrate all the firewalls. Nagisa didn’t really understand how any of it really worked, honestly, but he was counting on the hope that Yuu could do it.

“Alright Ritsu,” Nagisa said, “we’re getting you some help.”

Ritsu, whose image on the computer screen in front of them depicted her with dark bags under her eyes, yawned in greeting. “Hmm.”

Yuu sat down tentatively, taking a long look at whatever was in front of him. “I think if I-“

He didn’t finish his sentence. In fact, he just started furiously typing. Both Nagisa and Kayano watched in fascination, and even Ritsu jolted awake, with the speed that Yuu was clearly reading and responding to whatever was going on. It looked like it was muscle memory, something he’d been doing for as long as he’d been walking.

“You can do it?”
Yuu didn’t reply, but he did speed up. Nagisa decided to take that as an answer. Which meant that their biggest problem was potentially solved. If Yuu really could break into the system, then, hopefully, they’d have all of Ohno’s most vital information. At the very least, they could think about actually raiding him, and the thought made Nagisa’s blood burn in his veins.

Finally, he looked over his shoulder. “It’s still gonna take a while. Whatever this is, they’re a paranoid freak. Not that I can’t crack it.”

“I’ll stay here,” Kayano said. “Just to make sure he’s still okay.”

Was that banishment? There was a pleading kind of look in Kayano’s eyes, begging him to just go along with what she was saying. A big part of Nagisa really didn’t want to leave Yuu out of his sight. Not whilst it was so vital, and they might be so close, but he knew he could relax at least a little bit. Perhaps the hard part was over, and now Yuu was able to focus. He didn’t miss the way Yuu suddenly spluttered, though, before resuming whatever he’d stopped to type.

He slipped out of the room, though he wasn’t sure where he should head to. Not when there was nothing to do but wait. Nagisa didn’t feel much like ‘hanging out’ with anybody else, not at a time like this. Honestly the only course of action that sounded vaguely alright to him was pacing up and down the hallway. He needed to get the blood rushing through him again.

Something weird struck him, then. Nagisa cried out without really meaning to, clutching his head. Of course he’d experienced many headaches over his life, but none that hit quite so suddenly. It was like fire, like something was worming its way around underneath his skull, trying to bite its way into his brain. He shoved the back of his hand into his mouth to cover up any potential screams, knowing at least on an instinctual level that he didn’t want to alert anyone.

He was taken off his feet, at the force of it, though he managed to crawl away into the corner of the hallway. His eyes fixed shut, and the only thing he could do was clutch at his head, as though that was somehow going to make it better. Time had no meaning right then, and he had no idea what was even happening to him. He needed to try something.

When he opened his eyes, though, all he could see was blood. Blood and the sound of a blade scratching at the surface of something. Scratch. Nagisa wanted to scratch, too. Was there a knife in his hand? It felt heavy, whatever the case, and somehow he knew he had to lunge. Another painful burst hit him right there in the head, so he struck again, and again. A flash of heat washed over him, and he was unbalanced again.

“-at happened?” Hands were shaking at his shoulders, and Karma’s face replaced all of the crimson.

Just like that, Nagisa woke up. “How did you find-“

Karma looked angry somehow. “You reek of distress-“ then he looked down at him. “What did you do?”

Following his eyes, Nagisa almost jumped out of his skin when he saw his own arm. That explained the blood. It was absolutely covered in scratch marks, some of them clearly deep enough to properly puncture the skin. Now that he looked at it, he could feel the deep sting of pain, and he dropped it limp. But that didn’t make any sense.

When he didn’t reply, Karma stared right into his irises. “You’re coming with me.”

Nagisa didn’t particularly know what was happening, but he tilted his head and nodded, accepting
Karma’s hand without question as he lead him over into the bathroom. Karma knew exactly where he wanted him, practically picking him up to sit him on the counter by the sinks as he soaked a towel in water, and did his best to clean the wound. Perhaps it was something about the feeling of water, but just like that, Nagisa was jolted back to reality.

“Why am I sitting here?”

Karma barely deigned to look up at him. “Because I told you to.”

He pulled his arm away. “Did you command me?”

“To be honest Nagisa,” Karma said, clearly out of patient, “you were barely listening to me.”

He didn’t want Karma’s concern, or his manipulation. Advising him to do something was one thing, forcing him was another. His anger went deeper than his emotions, though, and it was burning him up from the inside. It wasn’t safe, if Karma thought that it was okay to just go around commanding him to do things. He was clinging onto Nagisa too much, and he needed to stop that. Needed to force him to leave him alone.

“Do you know what I did to get out?”

Karma’s eyes flicked up. “Huh?”

“I killed one of Ohno’s guards,” he stared at him dead on. “Then I jumped down into the next room, and killed the guests that were sleeping there too.”

“Ohisa-“

“They screamed.” He remembered it, like needles in his eardrums. “It was so loud I-I’m surprised nobody rushed in right away. But I didn’t care. I just left them there to bleed out.”

“Okay,” Karma’s hands came down on his shoulders, as though he was trying to be comforting. “We can fix this.”

He didn’t want fixing. Had Nagisa implied that he was broken? He needed Karma to give up on him… but it seemed like he wasn’t going to do that on his own. Karma was so… attached. Nagisa needed to sever it somehow. He needed to yank Karma away from him so hard that he wouldn’t run back. Which meant digging his claws in and making him hurt. If there was anything Nagisa could try and count on, it was his stubbornness during an argument.

“Look at this,” Nagisa yanked his shirt down furiously, and tilted his head. “There’s no mark here, Karma. What I do has nothing to do with you.”

Karma’s eyes narrowed. “I’m not trying to talk to you as your alpha.”

“What is this then?”

“What, I can’t be concerned for you now?”

Good, he was angry. Nagisa could see it in the way his jaw clenched, and his eyes burned up. But Karma had come a long way since they were both teenagers. He wouldn’t hold such words against him forever. Break him, a dark voice said, you know exactly how to break his heart. And heartbreak was the only reliable method.

“Why do you care for me?” Nagisa asked, plainly.
Karma blinked. “Huh?”

His lips remained straight. “It’s a real question. I never thought caring was your forte, and I have never been the easiest. Anyone sane would have given in by now.”

“Nagisa-“

“Do you hope that if you wait it out long enough, that I’ll fall in love with you?” Nagisa looked up. “Is that all? Time doesn’t change a heart.”

Nagisa’s heart was empty. Karma looked at him like he’d just been punched. Why was he looking like that? Nagisa felt… annoyed. Like he wanted to punch it away. He needed to bury a knife in something and he needed to do it soon. It wasn’t enough, though. How can I get him to leave me alone? Break him. Nagisa needed to do his absolute worst, and break him. Luckily, he knew the words Karma needed to hear.

“What if I tell you?” He said, without blinking. “I love you Karma. Are you satisfied? That’s all you’ve ever wanted to hear, right? Bet it doesn’t even matter to you if I mean it or not.”

The light faded from his eyes, and it reminded Nagisa of death. His own breath caught, the feeling of succeeding a fulfilling one. He still wanted to smash something, his bloodlust not quite satisfied. Perhaps that was because it was a slow realisation. Like the more Karma thought about it, the more it was hitting him.

He just stood there in silence, and didn’t even react when Nagisa slid past him. Was he in shock? Well, that bought Nagisa even more time. There were other things to do, probably, now that problem was taken care of. His arm was an issue, though. He decided it would be best to go by medical himself, an infection wouldn’t benefit anyone. So he left the bathroom, not even stopping to look over his shoulder.

There was a commotion preventing him, though. To reach the other areas of this facility, Nagisa would have to cross through the main communal area, but clearly something had happened. There was a vaguely excited aura in the room, and everyone was wrapped up in discussions he couldn’t make much sense of.

“What’s going on?” Nagisa asked, dazed with it all.

Sugino turned to him. “He did it. Yuu got into Ohno’s system.”

It was as though his brain dropped everything else, just threw it out like it meant nothing to him. If Yuu really had managed it, then that changed everything. He took off properly, his feet carrying him without too much thought. Nobody actually stopped him, though, as he raced towards the room he’d left Yuu in, swinging the door open triumphantly.

“I did it,” Yuu said when he saw him, “I-“

He turned even paler than he already was, though. Before he could even reach his hand up to catch it, he started coughing violently, projecting fresh gloopy blood. Just like that, he couldn’t hold his body on the chair anymore, and there was just a moment of panic in his eyes, before he slipped off it completely.

“Yuu!” Kayano seized over to him in alarm, catching the back of his head before he could hit the ground.

Nagisa could only stare, his mind blanking it out as she screamed at him to go get help. It felt like
he was underwater or something, and he was suspended. Yuu was shuddering, spasming wildly. When Nagisa looked closely, the whites of his eyes turned red, and they rolled up in his head. It fascinated him, and instead of running for someone who might be able to stop it, he came closer, getting to his knees beside them.

Before he could really get a good look, though, Yuu went eerily still.

Chapter End Notes

im so sorry

I DID promise Nagisa would say I love you, though, hehe
Karma was in a bad mood.

Well, a worse mood than usual, at least. He wasn’t sulking or anything like that. He just didn’t… feel much like talking to people. Karma wasn’t that keen on the whole ‘socialising’ thing as it was, anyway, so this really wasn’t out of character for him. He was fine, even if he’d lost much of the desire to even leave his bed for the last few days.

The discussions had been energetic and purposeful, but it was hard to feel any of that. Of course, the air of sadness hung over them all still. Karma was trying not to care too much, but his eyes always found themselves moving over to Nagisa. By every means, he knew Nagisa shouldn’t be okay. They might not have known each other for that long, but he knew how much he cared about Yuu. Kayano? She looked completely lost. She was putting on a brave face of course, Karma could see that. But Nagisa was a blank slate.

Amongst some of the others, he was one of the most vocal about planning their next actions. He hadn’t taken even a step back to think about it, and it didn’t feel like usual him. It wasn’t like Karma had never seen Nagisa switch off and attempt not to address what was bothering him before, but usually he could tell beneath the surface when that was happening. But Nagisa… his smile felt real, as he focused on suggesting their strategies.

A position in leadership didn’t suit him so well.

He was almost ashamed to admit to himself that he didn’t know. He’d been in love with Nagisa for almost a decade, at this point he should know him better than he knew himself. But maybe he was just jilted. The words Nagisa said… they dug deep. It was like something out of an insecure nightmare. But nothing Karma had really worried about for a long time.

Nagisa was acting crazy, but weren’t they all?

Stuff like that didn’t come out of being stuck in a small space with a bunch of your teenage classmates, though. So something was up with him, but he didn’t know what it was. Given what Nagisa had told him about his whole ordeal, it wasn’t out of the question that he wouldn’t feel like himself, but Karma didn’t think it would be expressed like that.

Shouldn’t Nagisa be huddling in the corner and crying or something? To be honest, Karma didn’t
have much experience with traumatic situations. Mostly he just felt weirdly angry that he couldn’t do anything about it. Well, not with Nagisa acting like that and practically refusing to talk to him. He wasn’t his keeper… and Nagisa was right. They weren’t actually obligated to each other. Though that didn’t stop Karma’s urge to do something.

Which left one choice, since he was out of his depth. Kayano was out of it too, which meant that the only other person who really knew Nagisa was Sugino. Ugh. Karma really didn’t want to. It wasn’t that he actually disliked him, in fact he was fine to spend time around him. But that was because of Nagisa. Without him in the room, they didn’t really have a lot in common.

Perhaps he could admit to himself that he felt a little ashamed, anyway, that he couldn’t protect him. It was an emotion he didn’t really understand within himself. He wanted to be angry, he knew that, but really he was sitting on the edge of it. That was why he was driven to do something, maybe, even though he definitely didn’t like it.

The problem with Sugino in particular was the guy radiated friendship. He was very rarely on his own, which meant Karma would have to actually have to cut in a conversation to get him on his own. As much as he wanted to get an answer, he decided to wait it out for a while, until Sugino eventually got up to use the bathroom. It was the perfect opportunity to follow him and wait outside the door for his ambush.

“Sugino,” he said, the moment he exited.

He physically jumped. “J-jeez Karma!”

Karma didn’t want to waste more time on small talk. He looked Sugino up and down, before pointing with his thumb. “Come with me.”

“Y-you could ask normally, you know.”

He didn’t feel much like asking at all. Thankfully, he didn’t need to draw it out for much longer, because Sugino did actually follow him. Perhaps out of fear or concern, or perhaps curiosity. It didn’t really matter. Just so long as he could answer Karma’s questions. There wasn’t a lot of privacy, but nobody was in the dorm room, so it was good enough.

“Something’s up with Nagisa,” he stated. “Do you know what it is?”

Sugino’s eyes narrowed. “Aren’t you dating him?”

His face fell. “Not exactly.”

“Well,” Sugino shifted, “as Nagisa’s friend what I care about is seeing him happy. He went through a lot, clearly. But he doesn’t really talk to me about how he feels.”

“You’ve noticed it, though.”

Sugino swallowed. “He’d probably be more willing to talk to you about that kind of thing anyway.”

“That ship has sailed,” Karma said flatly. “Just… try and distract him, I don’t think any of this is good for him.”

His eyes widened. “Sure. But what are you planning to do?”

A hand slammed around the door, though, before Karma could answer. “Anyone in he- oh, hi guys.”
Sugino stood up. “What’s going on, Maehara?”

He grimaced. “The plans have been fully analysed… everyone needs to meet now. C’mon, Karma. We need your strategy skills in this.”

That redirected his mind just a bit, then. It was the reason they were even in this place, after all. The sooner they could get out of it, the better. Even when Karma had finally agreed to it, he hadn’t factored in how long it would actually take. Deep down to his core, he’d known this didn’t feel right, and he wanted to hate himself for it. Though, he knew that didn’t solve anything, so trying to get this over with was the only option he had.

Really, his biggest priority was being able to see Daichi again. Not even being able to talk to him was driving him insane. Sure, he trusted Nagisa’s parents to take good care of him, but he didn’t know he was okay. And Daichi… he was a lot. Shiota Hiromi definitely didn’t make pancakes as good as him, anyway, so he knew Daichi was definitely suffering to an extent.

Karma hadn’t known it was possible to miss someone this much. Even when he was in university, he got to speak to him every day. If Ohno’s crazy plans didn’t end up killing him, missing Daichi just might. At least, as motivations went, it was a pretty strong one. Honestly the idea of going back home to him was the only thing that really kept him going, and was what lead him to the others so quickly.

Isogai was stood over a map, rolled out neatly over the table, a leader as always. “Ritsu has analysed the plans Yuu was able to access.”

“Sleepy,” Ritsu mumbled from one of the intercom speakers, which honestly was a little creepy.

“Ohno’s main development lab is located in northern South Korea, about an hour away from Seoul,” Isogai started. “It appears that he’s doing everything he can to avoid the Japanese authorities. But, once we break in, take his samples and whatever else we can find as evidence, and it should be enough to arrest him officially. It’s just getting in there that’s the hard part.”

Nagisa cleared his throat. “Along with the plans, we also have detail for their entire security. Now that we were able to get inside the system, Ritsu can understand it enough to affect the cameras and alarms. If we can just slip ourselves in between physical guard schedules, we won’t need to use much force for the most part. It’s-“

“-A terrible idea,” Karma cut in, unable to hold himself back. “Ohno didn’t have a hard time kidnapping you because you walked straight in and underestimated him. Don’t make the same mistake twice.”

He glared. Usually, when Nagisa glared at him, Karma couldn’t help but find it kind of adorable. Sure, he knew Nagisa could mostly hold his own, but he wasn’t that threatening to Karma. Unless he was using his blood lust, anyway. So his glares usually made Karma want to sigh and wrap his arms around him, pulling him in until he yielded. But that wasn’t going to happen right then.

“And your plan is?”

Karma stared down at the map. “We’re not going to be able to group together for this. This place… looks more like a labyrinth. We should split into small groups, and take it from different directions. The quicker we can cover ground the better. If one patrol ends up dealing with a group, then we have more chances.”

He didn’t mean to get so swept up in the actual planning. But once he started looking at it, and his
brain started to tick along, ideas sprung out at him. The more effective this was, though, the quicker he could finally return home. It did feel a little more grounding, as he got into it, but once his time to speak wound to an end, he just felt kind of empty.

“Okay,” Isogai cleared his throat, “then we’ll figure out who would be the best pairing, so we can prepare with what little time we have. Nagisa, Karma, you can be the first pairing.”

Karma looked up. “Nagisa?”

Nagisa stepped towards him. “Maybe you didn’t get the message.”

“I heard you loud and clear.” He felt himself heat up.

Maehara looked between them. “Cool it down guys, whatever’s going on here.”

“Nagisa,” Isogai said, “you and Karma have always worked well together.”

Some weird look washed over Nagisa’s face, and he just shrugged. “Fine.”

Kama’s eyes raked up and around the group, and he locked on with Sugino. Just as he thought, Sugino looked a little confused and taken aback and Nagisa’s actions. He even shot a nod in Karma’s direction, just a subtle one, but it was enough to reassure him. At the same time, though, Karma’s heart sunk down. Maybe it wasn’t his responsibility, but he wanted to do something regardless.

He found himself stowing away from their group subtly, as soon as he was able. Nagisa wasn’t going to talk to him, so that meant Karma didn’t have the power to stop anything. It wasn’t really like him, but Karma had no choice. Maybe, for once, he needed to bring this to someone who did have the powers to stop it.

It wasn’t like he could just dramatically burst in to Karasuma’s office, though, as much as he was in the mood to do so. Karma didn’t really feel like this was something that could wait, but he knew to choose his battles. So, he parked himself outside the office, whilst Karasuma was busy with whatever he was doing, and he thought about what to say.

“Got sent to the teacher’s office?”

Karma looked up, only to find Nakamura leaning against the door. “And you?”

“What?” She sauntered over and sat down beside him. “I can’t walk around the administration? The protective custody is nice and all but I’m starting to get cabin fever. You’re not ratting Nagisa out, are you?”

“He’s not acting like himself. I don’t have another choice.”

Nakamura tilted her head. “Why? You two seem to weirdly understand each other, anyway. Aside from Chiba and Hayami maybe, you’re the most grossly loved up.”

“Hah,” Karma huffed, “I don’t think so. He told me as much, anyway.”

Her eyes dropped into almost perfect narrow lines. “You really think Nagisa’s not in love with you?”

“He said so-“

“He’s lying,” Nakamura said firmly. “I didn’t spend days of my time dealing with your emotional
constipation for ‘he doesn’t really love me’. Trust me, he does, the reason is beyond me, but he does.”

Karma’s face screwed up. “Maybe this just made him more blunt. He’s always been hot and cold. And he’s right… Maybe it’s time I accept that it’s never going to be like that.”

Nakamura shot him a look. “That might be the stupidest thing that’s ever come out of your mouth. It’s always been you, Karma.”

“He literally agreed to marry someone else.”

“The only reason he started dating him is because you were screwing around with some girl,” she sounded exasperated. “It’s not like you were paying attention.”

Karma tilted his head. “What?”

“There’s clearly something up with Nagisa,” she said, “if he really said something like that.” She sighed, then. “You’re both the absolute worst, you know that? If you ever get to the marriage stage in seventy years don’t bother inviting me, I’m already dead from emotional exhaustion.”

Karma’s mind was spiralling, though. He knew there was a time and place, but Nakamura’s words had hit him weirdly. Had Nagisa really talked about feelings and stuff with her? But if Nagisa really loved him back then, why would he act so much like he didn’t. Sure, the feelings had been there for Karma too for a super long time… but it didn’t seem right. That would mean Nagisa was lying to hurt him, or something, but that felt just as wrong.

He didn’t dwell on it for too long, though, because then someone exited Karasuma’s office, shooting him a look. Karma didn’t say anything to Nakamura, and she didn’t make like she was going to move out of her spot, so he accepted it as just that. Whether that was advice or something, he didn’t know, but somehow he did feel like it had helped.

Karasuma shifted when he saw him. “What’s the problem, Karma?”

He slammed his hands down on his desk. “You can’t let Nagisa take part in this raid. He’s a danger to us and a danger to himself.”

Meeting his eyes, Karasuma swallowed. “Nagisa’s one of our best players in this.”

“Not right now,” the heat rose within him. “He told me he killed someone.”

“I’m aware of that.”

Karma’s gaze narrowed. “Nagisa might ‘talk the talk’, but he’s no killer, Karasuma. He’s never used his blood lust for more than knocking a person out briefly. That… I know him. He’s not himself right now. Whether he’s just gone crazy or what… sending him into this situation isn’t safe. Maybe he needs help or something.”

Before Karasuma could respond, Irina swung the door open, apparently not so caring about whether he was busy or not. Huh. He shouldn’t let her one up him. Maybe that was wife privileges or something. She looked at him, though, and the air in the room changed. Somehow… maybe she would get it more than him.

“You can’t send Nagisa,” Karma repeated again.

A strange look crossed over Karasuma’s face. “I can have him talk to someone, before the
mission.”

“It’s not like I haven’t noticed he’s been a little unhinged since he came back.” Irina’s lips pressed together. “Taking a life, for real, is a burden you don’t understand. I saw all kinds of horrors before I ever picked up a knife for myself, but it does change you. It would change anyone. But I had to keep going on.”

Karma glared. “Have you ever killed someone, Karasuma san?”

“Not personally,” he said straightly. “I do understand your feelings, though. But this is important, we’re too close to a major break through here. According to Yaiba san, his training has been just fine, and she hasn’t marked any red flags.”

“But she doesn’t know him like I do.”

Irina winced. “The sooner this is over, the sooner you’ll be able to go home and get him the help if he needs it. You know Nagisa is talented.”

“That doesn’t mean he’s well enough to do something like this.”

“Thank you,” Karasuma said, “for your concern. I’m not taking this lightly, but I have to make difficult decisions. If Nagisa pulls out, then it’s his decision. For now we go on as planned.”

There was a lot that Karma wanted to say right then. He wanted to rip into Karasuma, to tear him to shreds for everything that was wrong with what he was saying. Karma didn’t like it in the slightest, but what could he really do? None of this was his call and frustrating as it was, he did know when he was out of his depth.

Maybe, if he just managed to keep Nagisa safe on his own… He nodded, turning to leave the office, but he froze outside the door, unable to bring himself to close it fully. Whether it was a kind of rage or fear, he didn’t know, but his hand was trembling. It was all he could do to restrain himself from bursting back in and demanding a different answer.

“Are you sure this is a good idea?” Irina’s voice leaked through the slight gap.

Karasuma’s voice followed. “You know now how vital this is.”

“You should have told them. You would want to know-“

“The situation is bad enough as it is,” he almost sounded like he’d lost his composure. “Let everyone focus on their mission for now. I’m doing my best, Irina. A distraction is the worst thing we can throw into the mix.”

Karma closed the door fully, something not sitting right with him at all. So Karasuma was keeping secrets from them, huh? Whatever the case, Karma knew for certain that if they needed to go through with it, keeping an eye on Nagisa would be absolutely vital. Just so long as he was able to keep up with the actual mission too… His legs felt heavy as he returned to their facility, alone since Nakamura was long gone off somewhere, and the dread started to feel like a crushing weight.

Chapter End Notes

Fasten your seatbelts, everyone
(also again, sorry it's been a while. I was travelling then corona really hit and I was super bummed out and uninspired. But finishing this fic is keeping me going I promise.)
They finally travel to Ohno's lab, but Nagisa starts to feel quite ill.

Nagisa’s head felt like it was on fire.

He managed to keep a straight face, since avoiding questions and suspicion was almost his most important goal. But all the while he wanted to rip his hair out and bury his face in his hands. It wasn’t just a simple headache, though. It was like his blood itself had turned to poison and was primed to kill him from the inside out. He wanted to scratch and claw it out of himself, but he could hardly yank his veins out.

“Nagisa,” Sugino addressed him. “You don’t look so good.”

He turned around, the engines of the jet whipping a strong gust of wind through his hair, and he forced a smile on his face. “I feel fine.”

There was a strange kind of foreboding right then, low in his stomach. As though Nagisa was anticipating the coming of something, though he didn’t know quite what. Before Sugino could question him further, he climbed on board, taking his seat without further interruption. Thankfully, nobody sat beside him, and it was only the noise of background conversation to focus on. That, and the heavy weight of his obscured weapons. They were the real deal, this time. They couldn’t exactly be sent in with nothing.

Somehow all he felt like doing was falling asleep. At least then the fire might turn off. Honestly, Nagisa hadn’t taken many aeroplanes in his life. It wasn’t like his parents ever took him anywhere when he was younger, only to visit relatives once or twice. And then after that, he had Daichi. He couldn’t exactly jump on a trip whenever he felt like it. He wasn’t a nervous flyer, but he still felt a kind of anxiety.

Soon enough, though, the engines started to make him vibrate in his seat, and he let his eyes fall closed in a kind of concentration. Thankfully, the journey to South Korea didn’t take so long. Nagisa found himself completely zoned out of it, and the next thing he knew, they were already making their descent. With that kind of motion, his head started to hurt even more and he thought he might start vomiting. He just about managed to hold it in, till they were on solid ground again.

Some heavy looking cars were ready to pick them up from the moment they stepped off the plane. Nagisa assumed they were being provided by the Korean government and they weren’t just sneaking into the country, at least. Somehow entering another vehicle made him break out into a
sweat, though. Thankfully the roads were pretty well maintained, but he cringed every time they
turned.

To keep up appearances, of course, he tried to look as unbothered as possible. Forcing him to stop
just because of his weakness… that was the opposite of what he needed, somehow he just knew on
some internal level. So, once the cards finally pulled over and they got into position, Nagisa tried
his level best to keep steady, simply ignoring the piercing in his head.

“Is everyone ready?” Isogai’s voice came over the earpiece, his tone a whisper but loud
considering the volume of his device.

Nobody replied, but nobody said otherwise either.

“Ritsu,” Isogai continued after a beat, “let’s go.”

“Rodger!”

The work Yuu had done to give them access was what would see them through. Not only had it
allowed them to access to Ohno’s systems for their own planning purposes, but they’d also been
able to get Ritsu in. Nagisa was no genius on the subject, but he did know that AIs could teach
themselves. And Ritsu had studied the system enough that she could pretty much walk through the
front door once she was even in range of their WIFI.

“The lock on the marked entrances are open,” she announced, “all cameras you selected are off.”

Well, they couldn’t mess with the entire system at once, not without creating a huge alarm. A
single camera acting a little weird, that could be any kind of system error. Nagisa ignored
everything else he felt to the best of his ability, trying to focus on the way they’d planned for this.
Their biggest cue was Maehara and Isogai sneaking towards the door first, so fluid they had
disappeared into the night in just a blur.

Nagisa crouched low to the ground, and the ringing in his head built. With every little noise that
came through the earpiece, it was like it was going to electrocute him. All he wanted to do was
yank the wretched thing out of his ear and toss it miles out of his sight. He was close to, actually,
as it drilled into him and he drowned the actual speech out.

Hands clapped down on his shoulders, and whoever it was was extremely lucky to not receive a
knife to the throat. He was already so on edge… Of course it was Karma. Nagisa’s expression
immediately flattened. He wasn’t happy about this arrangement, not in the slightest. Though, he
didn’t really know the reason why. It was just this deep down need to avoid him. Not that he had
any sort of choice about it.

“Ready?” Karma kept it simple, at least.

Thankfully this was pretty much muscle memory. Assassination was something that lived deep at
his core, and it was easy to tune into again. Stealth, being able to sneak his way into a building,
was but a small part of that. He nodded, and followed Karma’s lead. That at least he was capable
of doing. It was like muscle memory, as the two of them moved around each other until finally they
were inside, and able to head off their prepared route.

Even though it was the night, all of the lights were still switched on, though it was far too quiet to
pass as just a regular work day. Although he knew that Ritsu, being a machine, was able to control
all cameras at once to make sure their entire group would be invisible to security, he still felt
incredibly exposed out so in the open.
“Come on,” Karma said, “we’re covering these rooms.”

Nagisa followed after him obediently. It was easier than trying to think for himself, right then. He could at least focus on making his legs work. He wasn’t sure what he’d been expecting, exactly, but it was a normal laboratory, just like the ones in Karasuma’s facility. Well, somewhat. Nagisa couldn’t actually read the writing on most surfaces.

“What are you doing?” He asked, when he noticed Karma’s rustling.

He shoved whatever he was holding into his pocket. “We should take a bit of everything. Unless you know for sure what any of this is.”

Nagisa didn’t. So, all he could do was shrug. Part of him wondered if any of this stuff was a pain killer. He could really use that right now. The lab was full of too bright artificial lighting, and it made him so dizzy where he stood, like his legs were going to buckle at any second. He kept his head down, though, and tried to act like he was doing something of use.

“It’s clear,” Karma said, also speaking into the earpiece momentarily. “Come on Nagisa, we need to go to the next room.”

“Right.” It was easier to follow.

Another voice came through the speaker, and Nagisa was so taken aback by it that he ended up jolting, falling into a weird squat as he covered his ears, trying to make himself as small as possible. He wasn’t quite brought to tears in the pain, it was something beyond that. White hot panic passed through him, it was like he was going to die.

“-gisa.” It cut through the pain, just a little.

Karma was lucky he was standing back, because Nagisa was pretty sure he would have otherwise punched him in the face with everything he had. Instead he stilled, the buzzing calming for just a moment again. Focus. Except, Nagisa really wasn’t sure how to make that happen. He knew that he couldn’t just give up and walk away, but he wanted nothing more than to just go into the corner and sob.

“You should leave,” Karma said sternly.

Nagisa made himself stand up. “No.”

His eyes narrowed. “You’re going to get the both of us hurt or worse. Go sit the rest of this out.”

Something within him was struck. Karma wasn’t asking him, he was demanding it. A deep dark part of him was immediately called to attention, and mechanically he just listened to it. He lowered his head, going towards the door exactly as he surely meant, ready to leave the building and sit cross legged on the grass outside. In fact, that’s exactly what felt perfect to him. He needed to go immediately.

“Wait-” His voice was panicked. “Stop.”

Nagisa’s hand stilled on the doorknob, and something else twisted like fire. His brain was burning even more, trying to force Karma’s presence out. His hand slipped, but he just about managed to maintain his weight beneath his own two feet. Some force was within him, and it didn’t like that Karma had just told him what to do.

“Did you just command me?”
Karma’s jaw clenched. “Like you left me with a choice.”

Somehow, Nagisa knew right then that Karma was going to die for that. At even the passing thought, suddenly the fire was quelled. Tamed. Kill? It liked the sound of that. Nagisa felt static rise in the air as he tuned into his best killer instincts. He had weapons. Karma was too tense for a calm and easy kill, he could feel it through his consciousness. But expending too much energy was dangerous-

The door clicked open.

Perhaps counterproductively, his blood lust instantly disappeared. At least for a moment the pain was gone, enough for him to hold himself on guard. Karma reacted quicker than him, grabbing the guard before he had the chance to signal for anyone himself. It seemed like just a quick reaction, but Karma grabbed him by the material of his uniform to swing him properly into the room with them and headbutted him backwards.

The guy staggered back, but Karma didn’t give him a chance to recover. Within seconds, he was launching with his bodyweight into a perfectly positioned axe kick, and despite everything Nagisa winced when it landed. Like a stack of cards, the man collapsed like he weighed absolutely nothing. Meanwhile, Karma’s own stance was smooth and practised. The man really stood no chance.

“Guess we should move on in a different way,” Karma suggested.

Nagisa swallowed, and braved the earpiece again. “Is the coast clear, Ritsu?”

“All clear!”

Karma stared at him. “You know our next target?”

All Nagisa could do was nod somewhat meekly. He had been involved in the planning of this, after all. He reached for the door handle again, feeling much better than he previously had. So long as he ignored the sweat starting to build on his forehead. As it turned out, studying the plans to the place didn’t make it any less confusing. It was absolutely set out more like a labyrinth than a laboratory. Maybe he was imagining it, but the lights seemed to start flashing manically, like they were primed to disorientate him.

“Ah,” Nagisa stopped in his tracks, immediately crumpling again as the ringing returned. It was stronger, somehow, louder.

Karma really did grab him by the wrist that time, pulling him fiercely back to his feet. “What’s going on?”

He could barely hear him, though. How could Nagisa even dream of focusing? It was louder and louder, like a hive of insects buzzing around his brain. Stop, he begged to himself, make it stop. Maybe Nagisa even screamed out loud, he didn’t know or particularly care. Not when he was full of pain. Karma’s eyes turned to threatening lava. It was like his face was shifting, melting off into something horrifying, and Nagisa couldn’t bear to look at it anymore.

Just like that, everything changed. The pain faded again, but it felt different to just that small break in it he’d experienced. No, everything was light and clear. Serene. He saw the person in front of him when he opened his eyes again, and everything else was gone. He did know this wasn’t a position that he particularly wanted to be in, though.

“Let me go,” he said, gently placing his hand over the grip that was on him. “I’m okay now.”
If anything, though, he gripped tighter. “You’re not okay.”

“I’m going to take care of this now,” Nagisa said calmly. “Let me go.”

“No.”

Unfortunately, standing there like that meant a major thing. The coast may well have been clear just as Ritsu had assured, but that was on the basis that they moved quickly. Sticking around in one place… being loud… of course their position was alerted. He heard it before Karma did, those footsteps racing towards them, and he was ready, knife in non-dominant hand.

He turned at the right moment, feeling their eyes go directly to his blade. He moved quicker than a human could blink, snapping his hands together in a perfect clap to stun them into a paralytic state. To do so, of course, he had to let go of his knife, but he was quick enough to catch it with his right hand, that time. He didn’t hesitate to slash the closest guard’s throat.

The resistance as it dug into his skin was so satisfying. More than a clarity, it was almost euphoric, and he lingered as long as he could before his momentum carried him out of position. He didn’t hesitate, once he was back in a solid position, to lunge forward, his knife stabbing right into his unprotected eye. It felt just as good, adding to his high, as he made sure it had pierced through his brain. He instantly crumpled, lifeless, and Nagisa removed the knife.

The only thing that cut through his moment was an unexplained shocked noise. Nagisa frowned, wiping the blood from the knife with his own trousers. He turned, and Karma had an entirely different expression across his face. What was it? Horror? Maybe. Nagisa couldn’t tell. Not that it was important to him right then.

He tilted his head. “What’s wrong? They’re enemies, aren’t they? We’re supposed to be taking them out.”

The fear across his expression faded then. “You know what?” Karma let out a dull, humourless laugh, “Snap out of it.”

Nagisa could only stare at him. “There’s nothing to snap out of, Karma.”

Fire burned in his eyes. “I don’t care. Something’s up with you.”

“You’re getting in my way,” he tried to side step around him.

“If you can do it so can I,” Karma muttered, before suddenly he was moving.

Had Karma been trying to kill him, Nagisa would have reacted, but instead he moved too close, and he couldn’t stop where he was headed. No, he didn’t stand a chance before Karma’s lips were crashing onto his. Apparently no amount of whatever he was feeling was enough to erase the muscle memory. He knew so deeply how to respond, his lips moving too to return it.

One of Karma’s hands gripped his wrist again, the other clinging on to his waist, like he was afraid of Nagisa slipping away. Just the hesitation, and Nagisa’s automatic response, gave Karma enough time to move in deeper. In pretty much every sense, he was stronger, so he was able to pry Nagisa’s mouth open and slide his tongue in.

Nagisa felt immediately unbalanced. Even though Karma was basically holding him up, he was sure he was about to slide down onto the floor at any moment. With every calculated movement of his tongue, the ringing started to grow in his ears again. It was conflicting, even though his body was starting to go weak, the excruciating heat that left him in absolute agony filled him with
artificial strength.

But then Karma released. “I love you, Nagisa,” it spilled from his lips almost desperately. “I know what’s wrong now. This worked when you did it to Kayano. It’s—“

“We should go our separate ways,” Nagisa said, “we’ll cover more ground.”

There was something dark and empty in Karma’s eyes, and he came to the same conclusion as earlier. Karma was going to keep fighting him. It wasn’t smart, to deal with so many distractions. So Karma should die. It wouldn’t take Nagisa long to take him out, not in this state, and honestly the less mess he made the better.

“Karma,” he said, getting his attention properly. All it took was one look dead on, and Nagisa slammed his hands together right in front of his face.

He was fast, of course. The moment Karma crumpled, he poised his knife, and darted right behind him. Karma couldn’t be underestimated, he knew that deeply. He had no idea how long his stun would actually keep him out, so he might have just seconds to finish him off. It was easy to trip him onto the floor when he was unbalanced, though, darting behind him to pull him down in a controlled way. That left him poised, Karma almost between his legs on the floor, one hand pulling his chin up to make room for the knife his other hand was holding, and he readied himself to make a deep slash.

He was interrupted by a dry cough, though. He whipped his head around at the interruption.

“Ah Nagisa,” Ohno said, “my favourite experiment. Come, come. Drop him. He’s not the one you’re supposed to kill.”

Nagisa did as he said, letting go of Karma’s limp body obediently. He did stare at it though, confused. Why shouldn’t he finish? Killing… It felt like his purpose. The only thing that made him feel the way he should. At the same time, though, he turned his gaze to Ohno. From the ground, the man seemed more like a dark monstrous figure, the only parts of him not black being his too pale skin and crimson eyes.

It was a conflicting emotion. He was sure that Ohno was supposed to be his enemy. Yet… he didn’t really feel much like killing him right then. He stood up, pocketing his knife again, though he still held onto it, and approached Ohno. He had a weird kind of smile over his face, like he was proud or something. Nagisa had no idea why, but he couldn’t stop himself from walking towards him.

“I’m actually glad you made it here,” Ohno said, motioning for him to follow. “I wouldn’t worry about your friends by the way, they’ve all been rounded up. But not a hair on their heads will be harmed! Hmm, if this is successful, they’re all great candidates for further experimentation. Speaking of which, how about a brief tour?”

Nagisa said nothing, but he kept walking at the same pace.

Ohno cleared his throat again. “You know, what I gave you isn’t all I’m interested in developing. I really do want to improve people’s lives. And you know, my lower strength formula really does work! So long as you keep taking them, of course… There’s too many opportunities in this field. I’m even working on secondary gender hormones. That’s a controversial subject, though. Anyway, here we are.”

He was a little confused, when Ohno just gestured a door at the end of the hallway. Was there
something waiting for him in that room? His blood seemed to buzz through his veins, knowing that whatever it was, he was going to do it. He felt it, like a crazy kind of energy. All Nagisa needed to do was kill, to feel the euphoria of his knife in flesh again.

“You’re on your own from here,” Ohno’s hand came down on his back, pushing him towards it. “This is the only way I’m sure that I’ve created complete success, no matter the circumstances or loyalties. Go on, Nagisa, follow your instincts.”

Ohno opened the door for him, and he was pushed inside what was a relatively plain room. The walls and floor were almost identical shades of grey, and the only real thing of note was two mirrors spanning along two of the four walls. He stared for a moment, vaguely realising that there was something off about that, before he turned his attention to the only other thing in the room, one too small figure.

Nagisa’s grip on his knife tightened.

“Daddy?”

Chapter End Notes

dun dun dun

I do love a good cliffhanger

On a more serious note, sorry for the lack of quicker update again. Truthfully the situation with Corona got worse and my home university forced me to leave the country and return home. As it turns out, moving country is a kind of complicated and stressful process, especially when all flights are getting cancelled, your home enters lockdown, and you have days to sort things out. So yeah, I either didn't have time or feel much like writing. Also I, uh, don't enjoy writing action as much anyway. But bleh, sob story over. Basically, I'm back HOME home now, firmly in lockdown. But I'm so close to the end of this story, and I think that inspiration (along with your lovely comments etc.) will motivate me to try and close it out during these hard times.

Anyway, until next time lmao sorry not sorry
“Hey, losers,” a voice called.

Daichi stiffened a little, clenching his fist. He knew exactly what he was supposed to do in a situation like this. He’d been told, over and over again, just ignore it. Talk to an adult or something, and they’d do… something. Daichi didn’t really know what. Somehow, though, he didn’t really feel like going to grab an adult.

“What are you doing?”

Jun seemed to sense his burning annoyance. “Daichan-“

It was too late, though. Daichi already turned to face them. “Just go away.”

“Come on,” one of the boys in his class, Satou Katsuo taunted. “Why so down, huh? Aw, did someone abandon you again?”

He really clenched up at that. The fact that everything was public knowledge made it so much worse. Of course everyone would figure it out when his grandparents insisted on picking him up from school directly for a couple of weeks (though they had stopped after he’d begged them), and Daichi had pretty much avoided the subject entirely. Unfortunately for him, Jun’s Japanese was a lot better after living in the country for a year, and he was a total blabbermouth.

“Well,” Katsuo continued, “we don’t want you either.”

“Daichan, it’s not a good idea-“ Jun pleaded.

He didn’t feel like listening to Jun anymore. He was angry. His Daddy had promised that they wouldn’t be gone for long. But… it had been weeks and weeks. What if they never came back? Of course Daichi loved his grandparents but… he didn’t want to live with them forever. It wasn’t fair. Everyone else got to live with their parents. Now everyone thought he was a freak whose parents didn’t love him. And maybe they were right.

Daichi marched forwards and grabbed Katsuo by the shirt (which would have been more effective
if he was taller, maybe). “I told you, go away.”

“Ooo,” Katsuo looked over his shoulder at the rest of his friends. “I’m so scared. What are you gonna do about it, huh?”

A punch to the jaw, as it turned out, was exactly what Daichi was going to do about it. He let go of the shirt as he delivered it, letting Katsuo stagger backwards. Instinctively, he clutched his face, but he wasn’t down, if anything he just looked more mad. And Daichi should have known that punching someone was just going to make them mad. But it also kind of felt good.

He’d never really been in a real fight before. Karate practise didn’t count, nor did messing around with his Papa, and that fight he’d had with Gima… well it couldn’t count if Daichi hadn’t even touched him. But Daichi had definitely touched Katsuo. He’d made the first swing. He did know what to do, though, protectively raising his firsts in front of him.

“I’ll kill you, freak!”

Kill, huh?

Thankfully, it seemed Katsuo wasn’t trained or well practised. He tried to throw his own hit, but Daichi used a basic rising block. The he tried again, and Daichi used his free hand to punch him in the ribs as hard as he could. With every hit he was unable to land, Katsuo seemed more and more angry (which meant sloppy). And Daichi… he was getting super mad too.

Repeating easy movements… it didn’t make him feel better. But whether he meant to or not, he started to focus on something else, without really realising how it would happen. It was like his brain had just drifted off… and he saw an opening. Instead of blocking, the next time, Daichi twisted his body and dodged, rebalancing again before he moved in, his hands either side of Katsuo’s head. He found a strange kind of calm within himself, and clicked, right beside his ears.

Katsuo went still like he’d been electrocuted. But Daichi couldn’t lose time, stepping back into a position to deliver a sideways kick right to the face, which finally knocked him right off his feet. It was easily enough to be considered a victory… but Daichi didn’t really want to win. No, instead he pounced, sitting on top of him to pin him, and punched him hard in the cheek.

That felt better. Daichi didn’t know how or why. The emotion running through him… he didn’t recognise it at all. But it told him to keep going and he wasn’t going to stop and argue about it. One.. two.. five… he didn’t know how many hits he landed, but Katsuo wasn’t even fighting back or responding anymore. Daichi didn’t want to let up, despite that.

He was caught off guard by arms wrapping around his shoulders, attempting to pull him away. “Stop it Daichan!”

Daichi turned, about to punch whoever that was too, when finally he really saw Jun’s face. His glasses had fallen off centre all crooked from his efforts, but he looked distressed. Most importantly, he was crying. Immediately Daichi felt bad. He hadn’t meant to scare Jun, he really hadn’t! Maybe he should have just listened…

“H-he looks really hurt!”

Oh, Daichi felt a strange twist in his stomach, he did. Looking down at Katsuo, it was more like a beaten corpse from one of his video games than how a normal boy was supposed to look. He’d never seen anything like it in real life. Immediately, he scrambled off him. Not that it would disconnect him from the crime. He had plenty of witnesses.
“I-Did I kill him?!” Daichi half shrieked. “Is he dead?!”

His Papa always said ‘actions have consequences, just like my name’. He didn’t really get it back then, but now… Murder was really serious. Daichi was going to go to prison, then, wasn’t he? Quick, he thought, how do you hide a corpse again? Not that he was even going to get out of it. Oh no. He hadn’t meant to take it this far.

“Shut up,” Katsuo, not so dead after all, spat out some blood.

“What’s going on?” Finally, their teacher walked over.

Daichi had conflicting feelings about his third year teacher. He was a lot stricter than the old one, and definitely didn’t let Daichi get away with as much extra curricular reading. Which meant Daichi didn’t like him that much. Somehow, he got the feeling that it was mutual. He definitely looked pretty angry right then.

“He punched me,” Katuso pointed accusingly.

Their teacher looked between them. “Is that true, Akabane kun?”

“…Only because he was being mean.”

He looked between them. “Satou kun, go to the school nurse. Akabane kun, Song kun, headmaster’s office.”

“Told you it was a bad idea,” Jun muttered.

Frustrated, Daichi stood up. He didn’t feel better anymore. No amount of punching people would bring his parents back. Now that he knew Katsuo was alive, though, he didn’t really regret it either. So he didn’t exactly hang his head in shame as he was lead inside, and he and Jun were made to sit outside in the hallway. This was a new experience to say the least.

“What if they call my parents?” Jun finally said, staring at the floor. “I-I’m going to be in trouble.”

Daichi felt a spike of rage, and jumped to his feet. “At least you have parents to call.”

Something came across his face, and he breathed out deeply. “You’re right. I’m sorry.”

Finally he felt a moment of calm, mixed with guilt. “No. I’m sorry. You did nothing wrong. Sorry.”

“It’s-“

Before Jun could potentially forgive him, the door swung open. “Akabane Daichi, let’s start with you.”

Daichi started to feel very small again, a chill going through his bones at the tone of voice. Maybe it was just normal fear, at a time like this, but Daichi didn’t feel much like resisting him. His legs felt like lead, though, as he walked into the office. It was actually pretty empty, there were a few boxes dotted around but other than that a desk was pretty much all there was in the room.

“Take a seat,” he motioned, moving behind his own side, taking out a handful of paperwork.

Something was weird about the guy… And then Daichi noticed his name plate, and it struck him. Asano? Daichi squinted, really looking at the man. Well, he didn’t really look much like Gaga at all… His hair was a soft green, and Daichi didn’t think that would suit Gaga much. Wasn’t Gaga’s dad a headmaster? That was pretty weird.
“Asano Kouchou?” He said aloud.

He hummed, leafing through some papers, and scanned it briefly. “Akabane Daichi… perfect grades, near spotless record aside from one incident last year… What are you doing being sent to my office?”

A moment ticked by, and Daichi realised it was an actual question. “Um-“

“Are you the troublemaker type, Akabane kun?”

“No, I-“

He put the file down on the table. “Then what were you doing beating another student?”

Daichi knew he’d been caught red handed, so what was the point in lying? “He was mean.”

Not looking particularly interested in that excuse, the headmaster raised his eyebrows. “Oh, I don’t doubt that he was. Most children your age are capable of doing and saying really nasty things. But that doesn’t mean you should hit them.”

He swallowed. “I know that.”

“Hmm,” he hummed. “Well, you’re not to return to class today. Go to the library for the rest of the day. I need to have a serious conversation with your parents, before you can leave.”

Daichi stared at the surface of the desk. “My parents aren’t here anymore.”

He looked down at his file again. “Ah yes, it lists a guardian’s number here. I’ll be giving them a call.”

An irritation grew beneath Daichi’s skin. He didn’t care at all, how much Daichi hurt inside. Daichi didn’t even feel bad about what he did, or potentially getting punished for it. It didn’t mean anything to him, what his grandparents had to say. Even when Jun shot him a look on his way out of the room, even when he entered the library, he just wanted to sit in the corner and curl up.

“Daichan?” The librarian questioned. “Shouldn’t you be in your lesson?”

Daichi stiffened. “The headmaster sent me.”

She looked him up and down. “Ah. Well, go ahead and choose whatever you like.”

“I don’t wanna read,” Daichi muttered.

“Really?” She smiled kindly. “That’s the first I’ve ever heard you say that. Are you sure?”

He hesitated. “D-do you still have that moon book?”

“Of course,” she directed him, “it’s just over there.”

Daichi knew how to find specific books in libraries, so he located it within seconds, taking it with him as he slumped down on a bean bag, hiding between the shelves and turning his back to her. He vaguely remembered where the section was… he’d reread the passage a few times after he’d first discovered it. Not that it told him that much, but it did have photos.

His stomach turned when he eventually found the right page. Right there, with his parents staring into the camera, it was like they were looking at him. He gripped the book harder, as though he
was about to rip it in two. *Would they be disappointed?* No sooner had the thought occurred to him, he pushed it away. No, *he* was disappointed in *them.*

He couldn’t quite escape the sadness that came with looking at their image, though. His grandparents didn’t really have photos around. Not that Daichi was forgetting what his parents looked like, in fact seeing them as teenagers meant they looked a little funny. It was something different and confusing. He didn’t even want to look anymore, but he also didn’t close it either.

“Daichan,” the librarian *eventually* said, “I just got an email saying someone’s here to pick you up.”

Although he knew that was ultimately going to happen, he stiffened. He didn’t regret what he did, but nobody liked getting punished either. He just knew his Grandma and Grandpa were going to be angry with him about it. It wasn’t like it was avoidable, though, so he closed the book and put it away neatly, gulping down his fears and he headed out to the entrance.

Just a tiny… tiny part of him really hoped it would be his Daddy or his Papa who walked through that door. He knew they weren’t going to, but a part of him was still disappointed anyway. Instead, it was his Grandma, who was waiting for him, clutching her handbag tightly. Immediately, he could tell she was absolutely mad.

“Grandma,” he started, but didn’t know what else to say.

“Come on,” she said simply, “get in the car.”

The drive back to Kunugigaoka took forever. Daichi almost wished that she would actually yell at him, just to fill up the silence. Sitting in the quiet just felt so much worse, especially when he could sense her anger. He didn’t feel much like trying to talk either, so the best solution seemed to be staring out of the window, until they eventually returned to the apartment.

She started once he’d taken off his shoes. “What were you thinking?”

Daichi just stared at the floor.

“Answer me,” *oh, she was really angry.* “Do you really have nothing to say for yourself?”

He turned his head. “I’m not sorry.”

Rage burned in her eyes. “*Daichi.*”

“What’s going on here?” His Grandpa walked into the room.

His Grandma turned. “I got called by the headmaster because your grandson started a fight with another student. And not just a playground scuffle. He broke a boys’ nose.”

Daichi peeked up. “I broke his *nose*?”

His Grandpa worried his lip. “What did you do that for, Daichan? You know better.”

He just shrugged. “He was being mean.”

“That doesn’t mean you should start a *fight,*” his Grandma said sternly.

Daichi finally looked up at her. “Just give me my punishment already.”

Somehow, she looked even angrier. “Don’t you dare speak to me like that!”
“Why?” He trembled. “You’re not my parents.” Something really came over him, like he was going to explode, only tears came out instead. “I want my Daddy and Papa!” Daichi yelled, and pushed past, heading for his bedroom where he could at least slam the door.

“You better stay in that room,” he heard her say, but he wasn’t paying attention.

Once he was really alone, he started to cry properly. None of this was fair. He was angry, and sad, and confused… All he wanted was for his parents to come and pick him up again. At least then things would make sense. He didn’t want to be here anymore. He didn’t even know if they were okay. His Grandma and Grandpa wouldn’t lie about that, would they? He threw himself down on the bed, sobs taking over him.

Maki leapt out, meowing in surprise.

“I’m sorry Maki,” he sniffed, really meaning it. “Didn’t know you were there.”

Maki forgave him, apparently, because she started pawing at his face.

Daichi had really wanted to be alone, but Maki being there wasn’t so bad. ‘Be brave for me’, his Papa had whispered into his ear, right before they’d walked out the door. He screwed his eyes up, clutching Maki more like a plushie than a living animal. Daichi didn’t feel brave at all. But it wasn’t like his Papa was here to see it.

Katsuo was wrong, Daichi decided. His parents definitely loved him. They wouldn’t leave him on purpose. His stomach twisted. What if something happened? He remembered before… before he couldn’t live with them… they called every single day. Everyone had phones. And at least then he knew what they were doing… this was all a huge secret.

But what? What would they be doing that they couldn’t even tell him? His Papa played funny games with him sometimes, but they weren’t real. But what if they were? He thought back to what he’d been reading earlier. They never did tell him anything about the moon. And Daichi wasn’t stupid, he could tell they were keeping a secret from him. And there had to be a reason for that. But… nothing had happened to the moon, had it?

The idea of his parents being secret agents or something was crazy, he knew that, but he couldn’t shake the feeling that something was going on. Maybe they were in real trouble. And… well… if nobody else realised that, then it was up to him to fix it! That was pretty brave. The tears stopped, just like that. There was no time to be sad anymore.

Of course, Daichi didn’t know exactly what he was going to do about it. He couldn’t save his parents if he didn’t even know where they were. Which meant one thing, he needed to research this. Unfortunately, he hadn’t brought any books that would be useful over. He could wait until school, maybe, but he’d already read anything about the moon from cover to cover. No, Daichi needed proper grown up science books from a real library.

He inhaled, sticking out his chest and he gathered the courage to open up the bedroom door.

“Grandma-“

She hadn’t softened in time. “I told you to stay in your room.”

There was only one thing he could do. “I-I’m really sorry about how I spoke. And for getting into a fight. I’ll never do it again!”

Her lips pressed tight together. “Thank you for apologising. But you’re still in big trouble.”
“A-actually, I really need a book from the library.”

She just stared at him. “You’re grounded from now on. You’re only to come to and from school.”

So that was a no then. Daichi really wanted to stand there and argue until his face was blue, but he was at a disadvantage. His Grandma could stop him from doing anything. So he needed to play this careful. He returned to his room, head full of thoughts. If he couldn’t do proper research, then he was just going to have to come up with a plan all on his own.

“So…” he said aloud, though only Maki was listening, perched in interest on the bed. He paced back and forth. “I don’t know where they are. I can’t do anything until I figure that out. So… that’s the first thing I have to do.”

Maki meowed.

He nodded confidently. “To get to school… I take the train and walk there. If I didn’t show up… they’d probably call Grandma again. But Tokyo’s big.”

Whilst Daichi hadn’t brought every single book over, he had some. He immediately went through to the shelf, sliding a few out of the way until he found what was a general history of Tokyo. It was pretty long, and some parts of it were boring, but what it did have was a map. He’d brought it because it was a big book, and he thought it would be useful… but not really like this.

He flipped to the right page, and studied it carefully. Every day, he walked to Kunugigaoka station to catch the train from platform two. It was the rapid train, so it only stopped at a few stations, including the one closest to his school. But… he followed the marking for the Chuuou Line with his finger, all the way to Tokyo Station where it ended. Tokyo Station… he knew that was where his Papa worked.

Well, if anyone knew where his parents were, it was probably the government. Unfortunately, he didn’t know that many people in the government. There was Terasaka san… but then the better option stuck him. Karasuma san! Daichi didn’t actually know exactly what he really did, but he knew it was really important. He flipped to the back of the book, looking up the right page for the Ministry of Defence.

Unfortunately for him, once he referenced the map again, it turned out it wasn’t so near where his Papa worked at all. He went to following where the train line passed through, again, until his fingers stopped on a station that seemed close enough. Yotsuya. It was settled, then. He would act like he was going to school like normal, but he’d stay on the train for a few stops. From there… he had to hope Karasuma san would talk to him, and that he knew.

With that thought settled, Daichi finally stood up to change. He wasn’t sure how long it would take to find his parents. His hand stilled on the draws. He should probably prepare some things. Tentatively, he unzipped his school bag, emptying out the contents. Homework wasn’t going to help him, so he slid it under the bed, focusing his attention on what could possibly be useful.

Before he could really debate it, though, a warning knock came to the door. “Hey, Daichan,” his Grandpa said as he entered, “do you want to go somewhere?”

Daichi looked up. “Grandma said I was grounded.”

He smiled kindly. “You can keep a tiny secret, can’t you? Come on, put your shoes on quietly.”

Honestly, he wasn’t going to miss that chance. Packing could wait just a little while. There was no sign of his Grandma as he stepped across the apartment, which made him feel a little weird. Still,
he did as his Grandpa said, and made his way to the entrance, pulling on a pair of trainers. His Grandpa held the door open for him, and the slightly cool evening air hit his face.

“Is Grandma okay?” He asked, as his Grandpa followed behind and locked the door.

He winced. “She’s fine, Daichan.” He patted him on the head. “She just gets stressed sometimes, so she went to bed early tonight.”

“Is it my fault?”

“No,” he said, “but that doesn’t mean what you did today wasn’t bad.”

Finally he swallowed. “I know.”

“Come on,” his Grandpa sighed, “we’re not walking far.”

Daichi followed him without any more questions. Of course, he knew the area around the apartment fairly well. There weren’t so many places his Grandpa could take him that didn’t involve the car trip. For a moment, it seemed like they were heading for the train station, but then his Grandpa signalled to cross the road in the other direction, and they stopped in front of some bright red tori.

His Grandpa looked down at him. “Do you remember what to do?”

Daichi nodded, bowing deeply as he crossed the threshold. Though it had been a little while since he went to a shrine, he’d had it explained to him over and over. He wasn’t sure why his Grandpa had brought him, but he didn’t question him, going over to wash his hands and mouth quietly. It was a little hard to reach the water properly, like always, but he just about managed it.

“Here,” his Grandpa placed a single five yen coin in his hand. “This is what I do when I’m worried about something big.”

Daichi examined it. “You mean if I pray, Daddy and Papa will come back?”

He looked over at the shrine. “I can’t say that for sure. But it doesn’t hurt, right?”

Nodding, Daichi felt a little nervous as he stepped right up to the shrine. Inhaling deeply, he tossed the coin, swiftly following it by bowing and clapping twice. His eyes flew closed, and he tried to concentrate on what he wanted to say. Please bring my parents back, please make sure they’re safe, please help me find them. He bowed once more, feeling a little unsteady on his feet.

“Come on,” his Grandpa said gently, leading him over to where they were selling omamori charms. “Choose which ever one you want. The prayer wrapped inside that cloth will keep you safe.”

He looked over at the stall, admiring the different colour charms in front of him. All of them were for different things, of course. Help with studying, love, protection against evil… he scanned them all over, before finally reaching for a white charm that was simply for good luck. There wasn’t anything specific for finding his Daddy and Papa, but he figured since he had that goal in mind, it was the right charm.

“I want this one,” he said, and his Grandpa handed the money over to the shrine maiden. Daichi looked at the omamori charm sceptically. “Do you think it’ll work?”

“If the gods are listening,” he said, “then I don’t see why not. Come on, let’s buy something to eat.”
Together, they walked towards the exit, bowing at the tori once again. Daichi wasn’t sure exactly if he felt any better after that. If anything, he just felt a strange kind of determination. It was starting to feel more and more like he was doing the right thing. He of course didn’t mention it to his Grandpa, though, as he lead him into a small ramen restaurant.

Honestly, Daichi savoured every last bit of his food. He was about to walk into unknown danger, and he wasn’t sure if there would be much good food to eat. The ramen filled him up at least, nice and warm in his stomach. He kind of wanted something sweet after he was finished, but his Grandpa had already been kind to him. He didn’t want to push his luck.

They returned back, and Daichi crept into his bedroom silently, actually changing out of his school uniform that time. Once he had his pyjamas on properly, though, he studied the drawers. He didn’t know exactly how long he’d be gone for. Thinking ahead, Daichi grabbed a pair of underwear and socks, thinking they might come in handy.

He didn’t want to part from most of his books at all, but he knew they were going to weigh too much. Digging in one of the bags he’d brought over from his Papa’s place, he retrieved his nunchucks. Rule number… three was never walk into danger unarmed. He thought about his NERF gun, but it was too big to just fit in his school bag.

Daichi took quite a while, searching through most of his possessions. He wished he could be better prepared, but time was the more important thing. All together, by the time he was done, his bag was full of potentially useful items. He zipped it up, testing its weight to make sure he was happy to be carrying around with him for a long time.

“What do you think?” He asked Maki. “I wish I could take you with me…”

Maki didn’t do anything, except tilt her head at him. But there was no way he could take her along with him. His grandparents would definitely notice, if Maki came too. Besides… he thought back to when he first found her. Maki looked so much happier now that she was inside and warm. And Daichi was going to come back soon anyway!

When he slipped into bed, though, he did take some extra care to make sure that Maki was wrapped in his arms. He wasn’t sure if she could understand, but she didn’t try to move away from him, no matter how much Daichi tossed and turned. It was a little hard to actually fall asleep, with the anticipation running through him, but eventually he drifted off.

The morning, though, was met with determination. Somehow, Daichi was paranoid his Grandma was going to make him empty out his bag and show the contents, but she didn’t really say much to him. Daichi tried not to think too much about it, instead focusing on eating as much of his breakfast as he could. It was a little hard to actually fall asleep, with the anticipation running through him, but eventually he drifted off.

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“I’m going,” Daichi finally said, at the normal time he’d leave, picking up the money he’d been given recently to pay for his lunch at school.

His Grandma nodded. “Have a good day.”

Daichi wanted to run over and wrap his arms around her waist in a hug, but he needed to be strong. He adjusted his shoes, before picking up his bag and making sure it was secure. Really, once the door was closed, it was just the same as any other day of school. He felt it, though, the sense of wrongdoing in every step he took. Even though everything was the same.

His way to the station didn’t change, and just like always the train was really busy. But everything felt entirely different. He kept himself in a kind of focus, though his legs felt like they were turning
to jelly when the train reached his normal stop. If he just got off right then, everything would be like normal. He had one chance to put an end to this idea for good.

Daichi clenched his fist around the omamori, which he’d kept in his trouser pocket, and the train doors turned shut again. There was no going back. Daichi tried to keep his head up, focusing on the screens above the doors which listed the stations. He didn’t know the way at all beyond his school, so he needed to pay attention.

By the time the train came to the right stop, it seemed like everyone was getting off. Busy with their days, it was more like a stampede than people walking. He didn’t get a chance to think about where he was going, just carried by the flow of people. He tried to stay positive, though. It wasn’t like he could get that lost in just the train station.

Thankfully, there was enough money on his IC Card (he had some extra for emergencies, he guessed) to get him through the ticket gate without being stopped. He didn’t stop to check the rest of the balance, but it was probably not enough for a return trip. There really was no going back, so Daichi just had to look ahead, which meant finding a map.

He didn’t really have to look around for long, because there was a huge one right on the wall in front of him. It was a lot more zoomed in than the one inside his book, but he stared up at it, realising that he would have to go… up? Daichi squinted at it, realising he’d never had to navigate like this before. He knew the numbers around the station meant exits… so if he went to number three… it had to be pretty much a straight line.

Actually, just following a number wasn’t too hard. The station was crazily busy though, so early in the morning, and with so many people walking around it was confusing. Besides… all the exit signs were pretty high up. He kept going, though, until he finally found an escalator. Success came when he finally made it outside, though it came with a weird feeling.

All the buildings around him were so high. He’d never been anywhere in Tokyo, aside from where his Papa and Daddy lived, alone before. Even though he knew he just had to walk straight, it still felt like it would be so easy to get lost. He swallowed, though, and set off, arms going up to clutch the straps of his backpack.

The walk felt like it didn’t take that long. After a couple of minutes, the weird feeling wore off just a little, and he really looked around at his surroundings. He was sure his parents were some place other than just the city, but his mind started to wander anyway, imagining that they were being held hostage at the top of one of those buildings. He got a little distracted, picturing exactly how he would break in, and the Ministry of Defence kind of snuck up on him.

It was an imposing building, he noticed first, the main structure almost towering over the surrounding neighbourhood. Determination rose up within him again, at the sight of the open looking gate. He practically marched towards it, rehearsing the speech he would certainly give in just moments, should he come across anybody.

Unfortunately, the gates weren’t exactly wide open. They were being guarded by a whole bunch of police officers, and it didn’t look like he could just slip through them. Well, Daichi had hoped he’d be able to just walk through the front door and ask to speak to Karasuma san, but it didn’t matter too much. All he needed to do was ask.

He cleared his throat, and the officer looked at him funny. “I want to talk to Chief Karasuma.”

“Daifugou Academy?” The policeman read from his uniform. “Aren’t you a little far away from school?”
Daichi frowned. “I need to talk to Chief Karasuma. It’s about important stuff! He knows me!”

The officer crouched down. “Listen kid, you can’t just walk into the Ministry of Defence with no pass. Are you waiting for your parents or something?”

“Then how do I obtain one of these passes?” He met his eyes. “I know the ministry’s not that secretive.”

He looked around. “Where are your parents?”

“Is something going on here?”

They both turned, faced with a tall man in a suit. Daichi wasn’t going to waste the time. “I want to speak to Chief Karasuma!”

“I’m trying to explain that he can’t be here-“

The man looked at him, though. “I’m sorry, Chief Karasuma is completely out of his office now, he’s been away for months, and I wouldn’t expect his return any time soon… Probably not the answer you’re looking for. But you couldn’t just come inside either, not without an adult.”

Daichi kind of wanted to press more, but his ears were buzzing with the information he’d just been given. Before the police officer considered actually calling for someone, Daichi nodded and started to take off down the street, not entirely sure of where he was going. The first convenience store he came to, just about a minute later, seemed like a good choice though.

It hadn’t been long since he had breakfast, but Daichi clutched what was supposed to be his lunch money, and grabbed a pancake from the refrigerated section. He figured out of all the things he was about to get into huge trouble for, eating unhealthily probably wasn’t one of the important ones. The cashier gave him a funny look, but didn’t complain considering he was handing over money.

He crouched outside the shop, opening the wrapper and taking a bite immediately. This type of pancake definitely wasn’t anything compared to the ones his Papa made, but it was still amazing. But Daichi had to think. *Karasuma san hasn’t been to his office for months.* Well, that was too conveniently like his parents to not be related. Right? That gave him more questions than answers, though.

The only thing he could really decide was that wherever his Daddy and Papa were, it was something to do with the government. It didn’t really explain why though, or what they were doing that was so important they had to leave for months. More importantly, it didn’t explain if they were in real trouble or not. If they were with the government, with Karasuma san, then they were probably okay… but something still felt so wrong to him about it.

“Excuse me,” a masculine voice said, “I think I might have dropped my wallet somewhere around here.”

“Oh,” Daichi stood up properly, looking over his shoulder. “There’s nothing here.”

“Ah well,” the man sighed, “what can you do, huh?”

He blinked. “There’s a bunch of police down the road, you should ask them.”

“Thank you,” he smiled, his teeth almost too white. “I just came from there, though. You mean the ones stationed outside the Ministry of Defence, right?”
Daichi perked up, looking at the man properly. He was tall, but all grown ups seemed tall to him. Other than that, he mostly noticed the black. Black suit, black hair… it wasn’t that unordinary. By all means, the most interesting thing was where he’d just been. Something told him that his man… he might be willing to speak, though Daichi got a strange feeling just from looking at him.

“You work at the ministry?”

He smiled. “Ah, not quite. I am involved with them, though. Particularly a few big cases lately.”

It was almost too good to be true. “What kind of cases?”

The man dropped down, squatting at his level. “I’m not really supposed to talk about them. But, hmm, you are Akabane Daichi?”

A bad feeling shot through him, but instead of walking away, Daichi just tried to stand taller. “What’s it to you?”

“Sorry,” he held his hands up, “I’m not trying to scare you. It’s just, I’ve been working very closely on this case recently. I had to memorise around thirty faces. I thought you’d know about it, if you’re visiting the ministry.”

“You know where my parents are?”

He hummed. “Right now? Not exactly. But I think I’ll be seeing them very soon.” He paused for a moment. “Actually, I think they might be in trouble. But, you might just be the right person to help me.”

Daichi’s head was swirling. Some part of him knew that this wasn’t a good idea, that he should investigate more. But… this man had to be someone important, to know all of that kind of stuff. It seemed like he was exactly the answer Daichi was looking for. If his parents really were in trouble… and they needed his help…

“How?”

He beamed. “My name’s Ohno, and I need you to follow me.”

Kill. That was the first thing he thought, the first thing his instincts screamed at him to do. This boy in front of him, he was so small, so vulnerable. He squeezed the knife like he was trying to choke it. He could see it now, just an easy slash and he’d drop dead within moments, crimson staining the rest of his body. Kill.

“D-daddy?” He tilted his head, and his eyes widened. “Why do you have a knife…”

“Shh,” he hushed, pacing slowly over towards him. “Don’t worry about it.”

He stood up, though, folding his arms. “I looked for you.”

“Just stay still,” he said.

“Daddy!”

Before he could stop it, he was rushed towards, two small arms wrapping around his waist. There was some shifting, before he realised the boy was crying. Squeezing him hard like he wanted to crush him. There was no killing intent, though. It was confusing. Of course, he didn’t forget his knife, but he didn’t move to position it right away either.
“Daddy,” he said again, “you’re finally here.”

Somehow, he found his legs getting weak, and he fell down onto his knees. It got them to about the same height, and he was let go. He felt like he should speak, but nothing came to mind. There was no movement, nothing to make this difficult. *Kill.* The longer he hesitated, the more the urge grew within him. He raised his knife, but his wrist shook, not obeying the instructions his brain was supplying.

He turned his head, fixating on the mirror instead, where it displayed their reflections. Watching himself there, so poised, he couldn’t understand why he hadn’t killed yet. Why he hadn’t sunk his blade into that flesh yet, he couldn’t tell. He was pressed so close against him, a mop of purple hair concealing his face.

All things considered, he should have known his mistake immediately. He should have noticed sooner that that tiny head was also turned to face the mirror, and that even though he couldn’t see those eyes, those eyes could see *him.* It was just the smallest glint, but it was enough. From their position, it was obvious he could see the knife positioned to strike him in the back. But then came a strange dark feeling, a chill that went down to his core.

He couldn’t react fast enough. In less than a heartbeat, the arms were gone, hug cut short. Everything happened all at once. Instead of scrambling back to run from him, the dark feeling only grew. He came closer, too close, and positioned his hands either side of his head, up against his ears, with unsettling precision.

*Click.*

It was like a rod of pure electricity shot through his spine, and he knew he was paralysed. The room didn’t exactly go dark, more of a strange blur as his ears started to ring. He had already been on his knees, but his body still dropped limp somewhat, unable to take its own weight. Unable to even move an *inch.* And that’s when Nagisa realised he was about to be killed.

“No bloodlust?”

*Daichi.* Finally, he blinked again, regaining control of his body. It turned out Daichi had no intent on finishing the job, nor did he move away from him. *Finally,* Nagisa’s eyes focused, meeting golden irises which were wide with alarm. *What was he doing here?* What was *Nagisa* doing here? He immediately re-supported his own weight, protective adrenaline rushing through him.

“Daichi,” he got out, “what—“

Daichi crumpled, his voice turning to little more than a whisper. “I saved you.”

No sooner had he said that, the skull splitting ringing returned at full force, and the hand which held the knife shook again. *Kill.* He could see Daichi now, for who he was, but half his instincts screamed the same thing. *Kill. Kill. Kill.* It was certain that they only thing that would satisfy him, that would keep it at bay, was to take a life. It was as certain as the need to breathe in oxygen.

“Listen to me,” Nagisa begged, trying to keep his voice as level as possible. “I need you to promise me one thing. Can you do that?”

Still very much alarmed, Daichi nodded.

Nagisa swallowed. “Turn around and close your eyes, okay? No matter what you hear, I need you
to promise me that you won’t look. Can you do that?”

He trembled. “I’m scared, Daddy.”

“I know,” if Nagisa had been capable of crying right then, he probably would have. “I know and I’m sorry. But I need you to do this for me.”

Daichi didn’t argue, thankfully, doing exactly what he said. Shuffling on his knees to turn around like that, he looked so impossibly small. With only the back of his head to look at, Nagisa wished he could have paused for a moment, just to take in every small detail of his face. But that would have made what he knew he needed to do so much harder.

There was only one thing Nagisa knew for certain, and that was that the need to kill wasn’t going to stop. No, he needed to take a life and he needed to do it quickly. He wished there could be some other way, anything he could do, but his hope was gone. All he could do was thank the world for bringing him Daichi, for giving him one final moment of clarity through the storm that was raging inside his own brain.

So he raised his knife, channelling every last ounce of energy into it.

And then he plunged it into his own abdomen.

Chapter End Notes

'author chose not to use archive warnings' :)


Hope Time

Chapter Summary

The race is on to get everyone out of Ohno's laboratory

Chapter Notes

I'll give you a fair warning and say this one is pretty heavy-

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Maybe it was awful, but the first thing Karma felt was relief.

Knowing that Daichi was unscathed, from the first moment he’d been dragged into the room, had been the only result he’d been able to care about. Whatever he was feeling about Nagisa being moments away from killing him had faded instantly, replaced with the deepest dread he’d ever felt in his life. Being in that room, with nothing to do but watch through what was probably a double sided mirror… He’d never needed to scream more in his life.

Terasaka was actually the first person to make a move, when it all happened. The moment Nagisa stabbed himself, it seemed like all of Ohno’s people were thrown into a mixture of shock and disarray. Like they’d really been that confident in themselves. He found it easy to move whilst they were distracted, anyway, somehow hitting one of the guys in the face with enough force to knock him out briefly at least, which was enough time to break himself properly free.

Perhaps it was the pure adrenaline, but Karma didn’t hesitate in following suit, punching someone in the face as he pulled himself to his feet. He was distantly aware of some of their group restraining Ohno himself, but that was barely even on his radar. His legs shook like wild, as much as he wanted to just sprint, and he forced himself in the direction of the door.

It was so much worse up close. Perhaps surprisingly, Karma hadn’t actually stabbed someone before. He didn’t know how much a wound like that was supposed to bleed, but it looked like a lot of blood. Too much blood. Thankfully Nagisa hadn’t yanked the knife back out of him, which could have made it even worse, but blood had already soaked through his clothes and was pooling out onto the floor.

Karma felt as though he was caught in the midst of some kind of blur. He was aware of the people rushing around him, rushing past, but all he could do was just stand there and stare. He could barely even hear of feel anything else, it was just echoes around him. Nagisa just looked so lifeless already. Even though he couldn’t have died so quickly from a stab where he’d placed it… Huh? Dead?

“Go take care of your son!” Takebayashi barked, practically shoving him out of the way. He was on his knees for some reason.

Okuda looked up at him. “We can handle this. We know what we’re doing.”
He woke up somewhat, then. Daichi was still faced away from them, keeping his promise despite all the commotion, and Karma’s heart sunk to the floor. The question of why and how Daichi was even there stuck him, but there were far more important things running through his head. Like most importantly, getting him out.

“Daichi,” Karma came in front of him, shaking him on the shoulders to get his attention.

He trembled, eyes closed. “Daddy told me not to look.”

“And I’m telling you you can.”

Finally, he looked at him. “Papa?”

Karma didn’t hesitate about yanking him into his arms. Apparently it took the possibility of never getting to hold him again for Karma to really appreciate it. Daichi didn’t waste time either, looping his arms around his neck and squeezing desperately. He mumbled something, but it was so quiet and pressed right into his shoulder that he couldn’t really hear him. It didn’t matter though. All that really mattered was his safety.

“Hey,” he pulled back, stroking messy hair out of his eyes so he was looking at him properly.

“We’re gonna go somewhere safe now, okay?”

Daichi’s lower lip shook. “What happened to Daddy?”

What did happen? Now Karma’s senses had returned, he let himself look at what was happening on the other side of the room. There were a few people crowded around Nagisa, and he could see that Takebayashi was doing something to the injury, most likely applying pressure, as Okuda handed him things to help. It wasn’t like they just had a full first aid kit on them.

“He’s fine,” Karma said, because he couldn’t even let himself start to process that the reality might be different. “I need you to do exactly what I say.”

Daichi nodded. “Okay.”

Karma looked him over. “Are you hurt anywhere?”

“I don’t think so,” he said quietly after a moment, as though he’d thought about it.

“Okay,” honestly Karma didn’t even have a plan. “Get up and stick close.”

He tried looking again at what was going on with Nagisa, which was definitely something. That was better than nothing. There needed to be some kind of plan. Maybe one was already getting put into effect, how was he supposed to know? It was unnatural for him, given all of the circumstances, but being in charge of anything wasn’t right. Focus on Daichi, the thought came to him, he might be the only thing you have left.

Isogai’s hand clamped down on his shoulder. “We’re going to carry Nagisa out of here. He needs a hospital, and our best bet is using one of the cars to take him there ourselves. The guards in that room with us have already been taken out.”

He could at least fill in the blanks from that. It meant what he really needed to do was get out as soon as possible. As much as the laboratory had been built like a labyrinth, compared to everything else it didn’t seem like the biggest task ever. With that in mind, he grabbed Daichi lightly by the wrist, just enough to actually tug him the way he wanted to go.
As much as parts of him also screamed to take care of Nagisa, he did know he was in the best possible hands, aside from him of course. Priorities. He sidestepped around them, heading out for the door. It wasn’t much of a breath of fresh air when they were outside of that room, but it was one step closer.

“This way,” Nakamura shouted at them, running around the corner herself.

Karma looked at Daichi briefly. “Just like how we play assassin, okay?”

He managed a determined look. “Got it.”

It wasn’t like Karma thought the skills he’d taught Daichi over the years would actually ever be put into practical use. He was kind of glad he had taught him some things, at least. He followed behind him quietly, measuring his steps in the best way to make almost no noise. Karma could barely believe how quiet he was actually being, given the circumstances there was no crying, not even heavy breathing.

Whether there had been any luck in their situation was debatable, but it had definitely run out. Down the hallway, one of Ohno’s men stood poised with a gun, and he looked slightly frantic. Unfortunately, they’d already turned the corner, and being noticed was inevitable. He had only seconds to react, if that.

“Stay back,” he commanded, and pushed his luck with a run.

As he’d thought, taking the guy by surprise and coming at him with full force meant he had no time to actually aim his gun and pull the trigger, so pretty much just crashing into him was enough to disarm him. Without the weapon, the danger wasn’t quite so high. Karma quickly found he had the strength advantage, on top of being the better fighter.

Although, once he grappled the man down to the floor, it became clear he still had some fight left in him. Karma winced, taking a particularly nasty hit to his side in the process. He was pretty sure he had a good grip, but the guy was struggling. Karma needed to knock him out, and preferably as soon as possible, before he could actually break away.

“Let go.”

A chill went through Karma’s bones as he looked up, not expecting to be interrupted. He certainly wasn’t expecting Daichi to be pointing the barrel of a gun towards the man, finger poised on the trigger like he was ready. The energy that filled him then was something dark and unsettled. He didn’t like the look on Daichi’s face at all, quick eyes practically glowing pale with focused determination.

Thankfully, the other guy was just as confused, which gave Karma just the perfect chance to finally shake him off, punching his head hard into the floor. He didn’t think it was going to be bad enough for any lasting damage, not likely, but he was definitely going to be knocked out for long enough. Not that they had any kind of time to hang around, but he had to turn his attention to his son.

“I told you to stay still,” Karma hissed.

“But Papa-“

“Let go of the gun.”

Daichi just looked down at his hands. “What if more guys come? Y-you always told me that it’s dumb to go into a fight empty handed.”
“It wasn’t the time.” Alright fine,” he reached for his own holster, pulling out a knife. If Nagisa turned out okay, he would murder Karma for it, but… “Only for an extreme emergency. And you have to be careful, you hear me?”

He accepted it at least, putting the gun down gently. Not that a knife was worlds better than a firearm. Somehow, though, it felt like far less could go wrong, enough to give him the peace of mind required to get through this. He was much more careful than previously, at least, checking each corner of the place first. When he saw what could only be a dead body on the ground, he knew they had to be close.

“The exit-“

“It’s that way,” Daichi pointed.

Karma looked at him. “You remember?”

“No,” he shrugged, “but it says ‘exit’ in Korean.”

Karma didn’t bother to question him, just accepting it for what it was. Daichi was fast enough to keep up with him, at the very least. Fast enough, and definitely correct when it came to the directions. Ritsu was still controlling their systems, so the door opened for them, and cool air finally hit his face. It was a strange feeling, like a part of him had been convinced he was never going to get out of there.

“What happened?” Maehara questioned him. “We already got Nagisa out.”

“We got held up,” he didn’t feel like explaining himself further. “Where is he?”

Kataoka folded her arms. “Already on the way to the hospital. That car over there-“

He didn’t stick around to hear the end of what she was going to say, practically turning on his heel. Daichi was right behind him, and didn’t even hesitate when Karma swung the door open. In the back of his mind, a part of him even dared to think the words ‘booster seat’, and the real ridiculousness of the circumstances hit him. Daichi was just a tiny child.

“You can let go of that now,” Karma said, failing to hide the glints of desperation.

Daichi stared at his hands, before finally dropping the knife completely, and then jumping both into the car and into his arms. It felt right then that it was the only thing Karma was capable of doing at all. He was vaguely aware that at some point, the car started moving, but that was all background noise. It had been terrifying, to see Daichi act the way he had, now that he looked so tiny again.

“Daichan,” he tried softly, shaking him a tiny bit. “How did you get here?”

The only reply that came out was a muffled sobbing noise.

“Daichan,” he tried again.

“Wanted to find you,” he finally said. “I thought you were in trouble. Y-you wouldn’t just leave for so long otherwise, right, Papa?”

Karma swallowed, feeling like he shouldn’t be having this conversation without Nagisa. “It’s a really long story.”
“O-Ohno’s bad, isn’t he?”

“Yes,” Karma’s fist clenched. “He’s very bad.” He didn’t even want to ask. “He didn’t… hurt you, did he?”

Daichi looked down at himself. “I don’t think so. He just told me to be quiet and sit still a bunch of times. He said I needed to help find you and Daddy, but then he wouldn’t say anything and told me to stay in that room. I got snacks though…”

His heart was heavy. “What do you mean, trying to help us?”

“I went looking for you,” his head remained lowered. “And then he started talking to me about how I needed to go with him to help you.”

“And you just went?!”

He inhaled sharply. “I’m sorry. P-papa, I’m sorry! I-it’s all my fault!”

“No,” he said immediately, “no it’s not your fault.”

That didn’t stop the crying, though. Daichi clutched back onto him, burying his head against his chest. All Karma really could do was hold him. He hated when people cried around him in general, and with Daichi it was the worst. Even after so many years, he didn’t really know how to handle it. He’d take it, though. Daichi could cry on him for an eternity, if it meant he was safe.

His shoulders did eventually stop moving, and when he briefly checked it was clear he’d fallen asleep. Karma honestly had no idea how long he’d been in Ohno’s grasp, he didn’t even want to think about it. He believed him at least, when he said he was okay. But, as the silence came, along with the peace of knowing Daichi was okay, his mind finally turned to the other issue. Nagisa.

The car pulled close to the hospital, right around then, so he didn’t have a huge amount of time to dwell on what was happening. The second it stopped, Karma whipped into action, gathering up a still sleeping Daichi into his arms as he strode right into what he figured must be the emergency department. He didn’t have a plan for exactly what he was going to do, only that he needed to go to him fast.

He knew it was the right place, at least. Several people were huddled together in the waiting room, not that Karma felt like talking to them. Logically, he knew they’d helped a lot. They might have even saved Nagisa’s life. But the ‘thank you’s could come later. Until Karma could properly see him with his own two eyes, he wasn’t going to be accept anything. Unfortunately for him, Kayano caught sight of them, and stood up like she wanted to speak.

He attempted to just push past.

“Listen to me, Karma,” she stood firmly in his way. “They’re operating on him right now. I-it sounded pretty serious—“

“I’m going to see him,” he got out. “Stay here.”

“You don’t have to be alone,” she looked down at Daichi. “I-I know how much-“

“You can’t know,” he felt anger rise up within him, and he really did push past, as much as he was willing to do with his sleeping child still in his arms.

Not that he actually knew where he was going, but the receptionist didn’t make any attempt to stop
him. The haze from earlier returned, as he was vaguely aware of patients being wheeled past on stretchers around him. Even though he had what Kayano said in the back of his head, he still found himself looking at them, as if he was just going to see Nagisa somewhere.

A woman dressed in a doctor’s scrubs caught sight of him soon enough, and approaching him to start saying something, but he couldn’t even try and start to dissect it. At the best of times, he knew maybe twenty words of Korean.

“Shiota Nagisa,” were just about the only words he could say.

It was clear he’d been understood, because she just nodded simply, and pointed towards some chairs down the other end of the hallway. He didn’t feel like sticking around to attempt to talk to her. Although Karma was feeling pretty crazy right then, he knew he couldn’t burst into an operating theatre. But as close as possible was good enough for him.

He was surprised, after all of that, that Daichi was still asleep. Now that there was nothing he could do, he put him down gently, laying him across the length of the chairs. It couldn’t be that comfortable, but it was probably better than being carried. Daichi shivered in his sleep, and once again Karma really took in how small he was. He pulled off the outer jacket he was wearing, hating the amount of blood that had splattered on it, and lay it over Daichi like a blanket.

“Excuse me,” a different woman to earlier was standing behind him, not dressed in any kind of medical gear that time. “I’m an interpreter here… You are Shiota Nagisa’s family, yes?”

Karma found his jaw clenching up. “Yeah.”

She grimaced. “A-as you know, he had a pretty severe wound to his abdomen, and he lost quite a lot of blood. The doctors are doing their best to stabilise him right now. He didn’t hit any major organs, but it was still deep. The biggest concern will be preventing infection. However,” she swallowed, “it seems like he’s also been poisoned with something. The doctor described it like his body is shutting itself down completely. They’re doing everything they can, b-but I was told you should prepare for the worst. I’m sorry.”

He didn’t know if he was supposed to respond or not. The woman didn’t stick around, bowing her head before turning on her heel. Karma just about managed to stumble over to the wall, bracing his arm against it before his legs entirely gave out from beneath him. Prepare for the worst. It was only one stab wound. People didn’t die from that.

Time seemed to go fast and slow around him all at once. Patients were being transferred in and out rooms at a quick pace, but there was no sign of Nagisa. Nobody returned to give him a further update. Just how long did stitches take? It could have been minutes or hours, he didn’t bother to glance at the clock, but it felt like too long.

“Papa?” Finally Daichi stirred, and started to sit up. “Where are we?”

He turned, taking a good look at him, and couldn’t keep himself from sitting down for any longer. “We’re in the hospital, Daichan.”

Daichi shuffled close, looking up at him. “Where’s Daddy?”

What could he even say? “He’s with the doctors right now.”

Karma couldn’t do this. He flat out couldn’t do this. The only way he’d ever been able to accept the idea of living without Nagisa is if Nagisa was off somewhere being happy. Karma could admit he was a selfish person in general, but when it came to Nagisa, he just wanted that for him. To be
happy. Living in a world without Nagisa in it… It was out of the question.

But he had Daichi, and that was his one duty now. As much as Karma wanted to scream until his lungs gave out, or to shut down entirely, he couldn’t. But he was hanging on incredibly loosely. And all Karma wanted to do was to run away. Wanted to run and scream until his throat was raw and bloody. But he couldn’t, and every nerve in his body ached.

What a despicable person he was, to be irritated at the way his own son clung to him. Whatever he was feeling, he knew it had to be a hell of a lot worse for Daichi. Losing a whole parent… How was Karma supposed to look after him, all on his own? Sure, he could care for him easy, but that was different from all the big stuff, the decisions he couldn’t even imagine making without Nagisa at his side.

“Papa,” Daichi said, “i-is Daddy hurting right now?”

Karma clenched his fist. “No, Daichan, I don’t think he can feel a lot right now.”

His voice shook. “Is he going to die?”

He couldn’t take it anymore. Instead of answering, Karma just held Daichi close, burying his own head in Daichi’s hair. Maybe he’d have been a better parent if he said something reassuring, something like ‘no, of course not, he’s so strong’. But Karma couldn’t lie to his son on top of everything else. Instead, a few silent tears slipped out of the corners of his eyes.

This was all his fault. He knew something was wrong with Nagisa. He should have figured out that it wasn’t just some kind of PTSD thing. He should have argued with Karasuma more. It was a crushing weight of failure. Maybe if he’d figured it out, he would have been able prevent any of this actually happening. Nagisa would be… alive.

“Are you crying?” He finally said.

Karma pulled away, briefly wiping his eye. “No, I’m not crying.”

There was a moment of silence between them.

“Papa,” Daichi said. “Papa… Uhm, what kind of bread is inedible?”

“Huh?”

“A frying pan,” he nudged him, “get it? Uhm, I don’t know many other jokes. I looked at some in the library once but I didn’t really get them. Sorry. I’m not good at them. But, I don’t want you to be sad, Papa. You’re never sad.”

He swallowed. “Sometimes it’s okay to be sad.”

“Oh,” Daichi looked down at himself, like he was considering it.

He needed to think about something else. Anything else. The reality of what might happen, what was currently happening, was too much. If Daichi kept asking him questions, he was going to lose it. Not that it was Daichi’s fault… He didn’t know anything about what was happening. As if the situation wasn’t terrifying enough, not understanding it had to be worse.

“Daichan,” he started, “can I ask you something?”

Daichi tilted his head. “Like what?”
But Karma was terrified too. He’d barely had time to process what was happening, but he hadn’t liked the energy that was coming off Daichi back there. The ease at which he held a loaded gun at someone’s head, how he’d held himself calm right until safety, but most importantly… whatever he did to Nagisa. He knew it wasn’t the stun clap, but it was something just as chilling. Not quite like being bitten by a snake, but this whole je ne sais quoi that made him completely unsettled.

“Where did you learn that click thing, back there?”

He just shrugged. “Saw Daddy do it once. A-and then I got into that fight with Gima, and I tried it a little differently, and it worked. But not all the time. I kept trying to do it to Junchan but he just got kind of mad, it didn’t do anything… I don’t really know why, but I just kind of knew it would work on Daddy.”

“Huh,” Karma let out. He couldn’t pretend like he understood it, but it was a part of Nagisa he’d had to learn to accept. He could accept it in Daichi too, if he didn’t try to use it for anything like that again. He was so much like Nagisa sometimes already, it could be alarming.

“Why did you leave?” Daichi finally asked softly, burying his head almost into his armpit.

Karma knew he couldn’t just stall anymore. How could he sit around and wait for Nagisa to wake up and have a functional conversation, when Nagisa waking up at all had turned into ‘if’? It was too much for any kid to go through as it was, the least Daichi deserved was the truth, for real that time. He just wasn’t sure how he was going to take it.

“You know Karasuma san’s job?” Karma tried. “Your Dad and I needed to help him out, so did everyone else. That man, Ohno, he’s trying to make a kind of poison. We all had to try and stop him, we didn’t think it would take this long.”

Daichi squirmed. “And he poisoned Daddy?”

“Yeah,” he swallowed, “I think he did.”

“I-is that why…” Daichi trailed off, like he was unable to finish his sentence.

Karma just pulled him closer again. “That wasn’t really your Dad back there, okay?”

“I hope I’m not interrupting.”

He was knocked out of the moment, then. A new wave of irritation rushed through him, followed by slight guilt. Admittedly, he knew Kayano hadn’t done anything wrong. He was all of a sudden too tired to be that angry anymore. A little annoyed, perhaps, but he knew he couldn’t really hold it against her. It wasn’t like any of this was her fault.

“How did you get through to here?”

She smiled weakly. “The receptionist was a Haruna Mase fan. It… comes with advantages sometimes.”

“You could get them fired for that,” Karma supplied.

What he wasn’t expecting was for her to fling her arms around his shoulders. Immediately he stiffened like a cat being dumped into a pool of water. He wasn’t used to being hugged. Of course Nagisa did it, and Daichi too, but family didn’t count. Of course it was his natural instinct to push away. For whatever reason, though, he didn’t stop her.
“It looked like you need comfort too,” she said. “This is…”

He didn’t respond, but he let her do it. Once he relaxed a little, it didn’t exactly feel bad. At the same time, though, Karma didn’t really want to be comforted. Comfort was something that happened when there was no hope, or so he thought. He wasn’t sure what was going on up in his head, whether he even had that hope or not, but he knew he wasn’t ready to fully go down that path.

Finally she pulled away, looking just as upset hums. “How are you, Daichan? I didn’t think I’d get to see you.”

Daichi looked down. “Kind of hungry…”

Karma didn’t even want to think about the last time he got a proper meal… Thankfully Kayano was quick. “Well, the café won’t open for hours yet, but I can take you to the vending machine?” She looked over at Karma. “If you want to stay here.”

“Thank you,” Daichi nodded, sliding off the chair to go with her. Karma wasn’t certain how much of the realities of the situation had hit him.

Somehow it felt worse, completely alone. Of course, not that it was good to rely so much on his son for his comfort. In fact, it made Karma feel almost kind of pathetic. He should be more in control, in a situation like this, but he had no idea how. Nagisa was completely out of his hands. He couldn’t easily act like he had any idea how to handle it.

The interpreter woman came back, same glum look on her face. “He’s out of the operating theatre. For now, at least, he seems to be in a stable condition. Ordinarily, no visitors would be permitted right now, but given the circumstances… Would you like to follow me?”

How had Karma missed that? He found himself walking after her without replying, anyway. He’d been so certain he was looking at every patient with hawk eyes, but he supposed that if the situation was really that bad, he wouldn’t just be rolled out generally like that. In fact, as he turned the corner into what must be the intensive care unit, it seemed a little more chaotic. Then she stopped outside one of the doors, and nodded.

No amount of bracing himself could have prepared him for what he saw.

He could barely even see Nagisa at first. There were at least three machines switched on around him, each creating an absolute mess of tubes and wires. Just about in the midst of it was Nagisa, far too small on the hospital bed. It barely even looked like him, to the point where Karma felt sick just being there. Nothing about the situation was right.

A part of him wanted to beg something like ‘please don’t die on me, I’ll do anything’, but he forced it down. In fact, instead, the irritation made a return. Karma didn’t know what he’d been expecting, he knew not that though. It wasn’t just Nagisa, he was mad at everything. If he’d just listened to himself, then they wouldn’t even be in this position in the first place. It didn’t exactly come out like that, though.

“Look at you,” he muttered. “You look ridiculous.”

The only reply was the soft beeping of the monitors.

“Damn it Nagisa,” he punched the wall, anger really raising its head. “Why didn’t you just listen to me for once in your life, huh?!” His arms shook, then, out of his control. “Are you really going to leave me like this?” Alone. Except, not alone. “What about Daichi, huh? I can’t do this on my
own."

He’d pretty much proven that to himself already. It had been Daichi who tried to comfort him, not the other way round. Not like it should be. It was like the day he was born all over again, when he’d be scared of even holding him, in case he hurt him accidentally. Karma knew he was capable of basic care, but he more importantly knew that parenting was so much more than that. And he couldn’t do it without Nagisa. Not unless he wanted Daichi to be severely messed up. And he shouldn’t have to. The promise he made to Nagisa had been clear. *If you want to be in this, we’re in it together.* That went both ways. Why Nagisa, and not him?

“Say something, coward,” it was all he could do to hold himself back from actually shaking his limp body. “Wake up and say something!”


“I hate you,” he shuddered, finally collapsing at his side, “I hate you.”

Ultimately, he did know that yelling at Nagisa wasn’t going to solve anything. It wasn’t like he was going to miraculously wake up just to argue back to him. Nor did Karma feel any better. Mostly because it just wasn’t true. It was hard to hate Nagisa when he loved him so deeply. When he was struggling to even comprehend what might happen without him.

Mostly, Karma just felt defeated. There was nothing he could do, except sit there and wait. Feeling entirely powerless was the worst kind of crushing pain. Perhaps all along, Karma was the one who was small and weak in all of this. The energy left him entirely, then, and he was tempted to just shut his eyes too.

That was when machines started beeping like crazy.

His first thought was that Nagisa had actually woken up or something. He scrambled to his feet, but there was no movement in his face. There was no movement at all. Then came the doctors. In his confusion, he let himself get thrown back, pushed out of the way until he couldn’t even see Nagisa anymore, when one of them finally acknowledged his presence. Somehow Karma didn’t need to know Korean to understand the words meant ‘get out’.

It felt like he could barely even walk over to the door, in some kind of daze, but he felt compelled to do what they said. Only when he reached the hallway again did it really hit him. Sudden beeping, half the hospital rushing in, or so it seemed at least, because they kept coming – could only mean bad things. *What just happened?*

As if it couldn’t get any worse, that was exactly when Kayano returned with Daichi, a bag of some kind of food in his hand. Karma’s breaths started to feel heavy, like they were caught in his chest. He knew he wanted to say something, but he couldn’t force any of the words out.

“P-papa?” Daichi said. “What’s wro-“

Something came over his face then, though, and he turned his head as if to listen. Such an action confused Karma for a moment, until it occurred to him that of course Daichi could probably make at least a little sense of what they were saying. Apparently so, because the look that suddenly appeared on his face was something Karma had never wanted to see again, and knew he’d never forget.

“What did they say?!” He grabbed him then, practically shouting.
The first tear fell out of Daichi’s eye. “Dead.”

Chapter End Notes

Just an explanation about the pan joke- in Japanese, frying pan is a loan word, so it's said like furai pan. The word for bread is 'pan'. Therefore, frying pan is the type of 'pan' you can't eat. It's a very well known kind of joke I guess, perhaps on par with "why did the chicken cross the road"

Anyway haha I'll be awaiting the scathing anger of your comments-
Time For Another Chance

Chapter Summary

?

Chapter Notes

I hope this enough of an apology for the suffering

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Karma didn’t feel much of anything.

“He was dead for three minutes-”

“Managed to resuscitate-“

“Medically induced coma-“

It didn’t mean a lot.

There were more machines than the last time. Everything had been explained to him, and even in such a short time, he’d learnt way more than he ever wanted to about ICU rooms. Daichi was the one asking the majority of the questions though, when he wasn’t crying. ‘What does this do’, ‘what’s that for’, and such. After a couple of days, though they’d started to die down.

“His body was trying to shut down,” Takebayashi had said, “much like what happened with Yuu. Just because he died doesn’t mean the effects are going to stop. We’re lucky we had the time to start research because of that, but we haven’t got as far as an antidote. This hospital is trying whatever they can to get the drug out of his system before it can damage him further, then they’ll assess it from there.”

“What they’re doing is right,” Okuda had added. “There’s no revolutionary methods for this.”

Part of Karma thought it was a cop out, but the other part of him couldn’t care anymore. Nagisa died. It didn’t matter that they managed to get his heart beating again. Karma had still… gone through that, and there wasn’t much left within him. Perhaps it could have been some kind of extended shock, but it had been days.

“Don’t go too close,” Karma warned, “you can’t knock any of the wires out.”

Daichi, who had been definitely getting too close, gave him what could only be described as a dirty look. “I want a hug.”

“I know that,” Karma said, not offering one to him.

He couldn’t be mad at Daichi. And he wasn’t, not specifically. He was mad at the entire world all
at once. Perhaps he wasn’t being fair to him, but nothing about this situation was fair. The small sobbing started up again, and Karma just clenched his fist. He knew there was nothing he could do about it. Daichi was crazy smart sometimes, but even Karma was barely able to comprehend what had happened. There was no way Daichi was going to be able to make any better sense of it.

A knock came to the door. “Is it our turn?”

Karma didn’t have a lot to say, when Maehara and Isogai entered the room. He knew that everyone else was hurting too, distantly. Nobody had jumped on the first plane back to Japan yet. A very deep part of him didn’t want them to. When Nagisa woke up, if he woke up, he’d probably like to see them. After apologising for making everyone worry, most likely, because Nagisa was like that.

Feeling weary, he looked at Daichi. “You want to go with them?”

“No,” Daichi muttered.

A heavy silence fell over the room. But Karma didn’t have much to say, and neither did they. There wasn’t much else to do aside from look over Nagisa. But pretty much everyone had seem him at least once, since visitation was allowed. Only two at a time, though, which was why Maehara and Isogai had come in a pair, presumably.

Isogai came towards Daichi, and started to speak with a gentle tone. “Are you sure? You’ve been here all day already… We were all thinking of eating in that nice looking restaurant by the hotel. You can come, if you want.”

“He said no,” Karma repeated.

Sure, it wasn’t the responsible thing to do. If anything, he should be encouraging Daichi to go take a break and eat a decent meal. Or forcing him. He did have the power to do that, he remembered, but actually parenting felt like something so distant. All Karma really knew was that he didn’t want to let Daichi out of his sight. But after the whole ordeal, he couldn’t let Nagisa out of his sight either. Of course almost thirty people couldn’t stay in the hospital the entire time, and Karma could accept that a bunch of trained assassins wouldn’t let him be in any kind of danger. He knew he needed to sleep, at least.

Daichi pressed his lips together. “I-I guess I’m a little hungry. But… Daddy…”

He didn’t like the judgey way Maehara looked at him, when he didn’t reply immediately. “If you want to.”

Looking over at Nagisa for a moment, Daichi turned to him. “The doctor said Daddy wouldn’t wake up because of the medicine… so he won’t wake up without me…”

“He’ll be fine,” Karma said, though he wasn’t so sure. Even if machines were plugged into Nagisa to literally keep him alive, he couldn’t trust anymore that nothing bad would happen.

Daichi nodded. “C-can I come with you then, Isogai san, Maehara san?”

“Of course,” Maehara beamed positively. “I looked at the menu on the way over here, they have this huge dessert, and the waitress was a smoking hot-“

“Maehara,” Isogai hissed.

He flushed. “Right. The dessert. Let’s go.”
“Wait,” Daichi said, scampering over to squeeze Nagisa’s hand. “I’ll see you later, Daddy. Love you.”

Admittedly, a part of Karma was sad to see him leave. But that part was just being selfish, and he didn’t necessarily want to listen to it. If Nagisa could, he’d probably sit up and chew him out for even having those kind of thoughts right then. Though the two of them left, Karma looked curiously over at Isogai, who looked like he wanted to speak up about something.

“You’re not going to the party?” Karma finally said, after the quiet got too much.

Isogai swallowed. “I’ll catch up. It’s hard to see him like this.”

Karma only snorted.

“You can come too,” he sounded more careful that time. “You should take some kind of break.”

“I’m not leaving,” he said flatly.

Isogai just nodded. “Later, then.”

Once he left the room, Karma hated that he felt alone. He wasn’t alone, because Nagisa was right there. Not that he was a conscious presence in the slightest, though. For the foreseeable future. A part of Karma knew he couldn’t just sit there forever, but honestly time had lost most of its actual meaning, the last couple of days.

Sitting in silence for so long had never been something Karma thought he could do, but time seemed to pass so extraordinarily easy. It was like blinking once and a whole hour had gone by. He supposed it would probably be the same for Nagisa, if he were able to have some kind of awareness. But being aware during a coma seemed much more like medical drama to him.

“Karma?” It was actually Okuda who popped her head around the door. “I-Is this an okay time?”

Somehow he didn’t feel the same amount of irritation for her. “It’s not a bad time. I thought everyone went out.”

She shifted. “I was just talking to the staff about Nagisa’s case.”

He found himself springing to his feet. “Is there news?”

“Not a lot,” Okuda looked down, and then pushed her glasses back onto her face properly. “Antidotes to new drugs take longer than just a few weeks to develop, but the nature of the drug was researched. It’ll be helpful for whatever they decide to do to attempt to flush the drug out of his system. I was going through papers with the staff, b-but I don’t have much to do with what they decide.”

Karma hesitated. “Mind if I read those?”

“Sure,” she paused for a moment. “T-the science is encouraging, though. It’s hard for any of us to have hope, but there’s a chance.”

He stared back to Nagisa’s form. “It doesn’t feel like it. People die if they’re killed.”

“It wasn’t really the wound that hurt him,” Okuda mused. “It probably sped up the process some, but, this was always going to happen. It’s a good thing he was already in a capable ICU when it did.”
“What if he doesn’t wake up?”

Karma hated how small his voice sounded. Then again, he hadn’t really tried saying that aloud. He didn’t know why he was right then, either. It was true that Okuda was weirdly easy for him to talk to for whatever reason, but he was oversharing. She didn’t need to know the depths of his dark thoughts, his crazy ‘what if’s.

“As far as we know there was no brain damage,” Okuda supplied quickly. “If the drug can be removed, then hopefully he’ll wake up like normal, like most people do when they’re under a medical coma.”

He slid all the way down the wall. “It’s only been days, and I’m already messing up with Daichi.”

Admittedly, he was a little surprised when Okuda joined him, pulling something out of her purse. “I thought this was the one you like,” she pressed a strawberry milk carton into hand. “Here. What do you mean?”

“I can’t do it alone,” he admitted. “I’m not cut out for it.”

“You won’t be,” she looked up, as though she was in deep thought. “Nothing can replace Nagisa, but we’ll all be here. You’re not alone. I… wouldn’t know what to do with a baby.” She hummed. “Sometimes I think about my science projects like that, like they’re my baby, but it’s not the same. I think I was lucky, compared with other people’s parents, but it was quite lonely. They kept me alive, but, they didn’t show that they loved me really. I always admired that about the way you are with Daichan. Even from the start, it seemed so effortless. I… I think that’s the most important thing. He knows how much he’s loved, and that makes you a good father.”

Suddenly Karma was the one with nothing to say.

“I’m sorry,” she flushed lightly. “I’m not the best with words… or saying what I mean…”

“I got it.” Then, he huffed. “For the record, he’s a lot of effort. I’ve been too hard on him, these last few days.”

Okuda exhaled. “I think he’ll understand. This has been tough on everyone.”

“Don’t you want to ahead and join the others, now you’re done?”

She hummed. “I think I’d rather stay here. If that’s okay with you-“

Karma didn’t reply, but Okuda didn’t move away either. Somehow, the warmth that came from her shoulder beside him was the biggest comfort of all. He still didn’t want to think about what would happen if Nagisa couldn’t be helped. Not right then. Really, he should trust what Okuda was saying. She… probably understood the situation better than he did.

“They’ll start treating him soon,” Karma said, but that was only to himself.

Everything was too white.

Nagisa blinked, eyes struggling to adjust to the bright lights. His ears were ringing a little, but aside from that his senses slowly returned to him. Where was he? Struggling, he turned his head to the side, and the first thing he could really fix his gaze on was… Karma. Though everything was hazy, he knew deep down it was him. Something within him softened just then, and he was calm.
The only explanation that jumped out to him was that he was in some sort of Heaven. It didn’t make a lot of sense to him, he didn’t believe so much in an afterlife. Or, even if one did exist, he definitely didn’t think he’d end up somewhere so nice, after what he did. All Nagisa wanted to do was slip out of bed and insert himself into his arms.

He became aware of a few things right then, however.

The first was straight up pain. It was almost everywhere, especially centred around his torso. What on earth? Nagisa looked down at himself properly, then, and he might have screamed if he’d been able to, but something was stopping him. There was so much stuff attached to him. Wires and tubes and… was he in a hospital?

As if on cue, Karma’s eyes slowly blinked open, before springing wide all at once. “You’re awake?!”

He attempted to reply, but something was stopping him.

Karma took a deep breath. “Y-you can’t speak right now. You have a tube in your throat.”

Nagisa immediately tried to check, and admittedly he couldn’t. A part of him wanted to freak out, considering he had no idea why or how he even got there. The only thing that stopped him was the fact Karma was there. If Karma was with him… he had to be safe. Not being able to say a word was frustrating, though. He needed to know what happened.

It felt like the only thing he could do was blink, when a whole bunch of people rushed into the room. That just made everything even more hazy, though he didn’t try to move away from them. Honestly he felt like some kind of experiment, as they stood over him and took repeated notes. He felt entirely helpless, just lying there, until a woman came close to his head.

“Good morning, Shiota Nagisa san,” she sounded cheerful. “Can you hear me? You’ve been through quite a lot.” She moved in then, talking a hold of his hand. “We had to put a device in your throat to help you breathe, so you can’t speak. But, it would be really good if you could tell me that you understand. Can you squeeze my hand?”

He tried his very best, but his arms felt so heavy.

She smiled widely. “That’s great! Welcome back. I’m just going to ask some yes or no questions, okay? We won’t be able to take your breathing tube out for a couple of days, so for now let’s go with one squeeze for yes and two for no. Do you remember what happened?”

Did he? Nagisa was vaguely aware that he started blinking again. The only thing that came to him was the memory of waking up. He knew who he was… he knew Karma was there… should he know more?

He squeezed twice.

“That’s alright,” she was a little softer. “You still need a lot of rest. It might come back to you. You had a really bad stab wound, and you’ve been asleep for about a week and a half. I know this is probably very scary, but you need to do your best to rest up. Try not to move too much, you don’t want to knock any of your IVs out of the way. We’ll let you relax, now, but this is good. Is that okay?”

Nagisa squeezed her hand, and she finally let him go.

She turned, then, and started speaking to someone else. Everything went a little hazy and out of
focus again, and that time it was his eyes that started to feel heavy. A part of Nagisa knew he wanted more answers than that, but he just couldn’t keep himself awake. Somehow, that felt okay though. He knew he was fine.

Time came both quickly and slowly after that. Whenever he woke up, it wasn’t for that long. Sometimes, he was even on his own. More often, though, Karma was right there with him, giving him stability through the whole thing. If he hadn’t been… Nagisa probably would have freaked out a lot more.

His awareness improved, at least, each time he managed to keep himself awake for a little bit. That had given a mixture of the doctor woman and Karma the chance to fill him in a little. He still wasn’t getting it at first. He knew that he’d died, but he didn’t remember any of that. There was no flashing lights or rush of memories. It just felt like he was groggy after a night’s sleep that went on too long.

Some things came back to him, at least. The doctor kept saying she was checking for brain damage, but he didn’t feel particularly damaged. They were still pumping a lot of drugs into him, apparently, but he would have liked to have thought he was getting more certain of things. He knew most importantly who he was, and why he was there, at least.

Nagisa only really woke up when they took the tube out. He was sure the ventilator wasn’t what left him so tired, in fact mostly it was just really sore. Instinctually, he wanted to eat and drink so badly, and even if the IV was supplying him just fine, he certainly didn’t feel like it. Not that getting it out was any kind of fun, either, but at least he felt less like a machine.

“Okay,” the doctor said, “can you tell me your name?”

He tried, but no sound came out. Then, with more determination, “Na…gisa…”

His throat felt so raw, just after one word, and it didn’t even sound like him. It was like his worst ever cold multiplied by ten. Maybe he didn’t quite have a grasp on the specifics that got him into hospital in the first place, but he knew for certain that he was there and he wanted to get out as soon as possible. So the more he tried, the better his chances.

“Try not to strain your voice,” she said. “This is normal. It should go back to normal eventually, but you might be referred to speech therapy if you struggle. How do you feel?”

“Hurts,” he admitted, his second word not coming out much easier.

She nodded. “You’ve been through a lot. On the positive, though, you’re healing up as well as you can be. We’d like to start working on mobility soon, but this is a great start for now.”

Most of the time, after their interactions, Nagisa had found himself falling straight back to sleep again. But once she left the room, he still felt fully awake. He didn’t want to just close his eyes again. And considering he had his voice back… well, kind of back, it was maybe time for him to get a few answers.

“Karma,” he made his next attempt at speech, looking over at him.

He came right over to his side. “You sound like an old smoker.”

Nagisa tried to smile, before he faltered. “Where’s… Daichi…”

Karma took hold of his hand, running his thumb across his knuckles. “He’s come by a few times since you woke up, but you were knocked out each time. Honestly Nagisa, you woke up after a
week and a half and immediately went back to sleep again. It’s kind of lazy.”

He did his best to narrow his eyes. “Daichi.”

“He’s with Kayano right now,” Karma shrugged. “Not everyone decided to stay here, but a lot’s happened. Don’t worry, he’ll demand to come the minute I tell him you can talk properly now. But he’s being bribed with idols or something, I don’t know. He’s okay. You didn’t hurt him. He just misses you.”

“Miss him too,” Nagisa got out.

Karma squeezed his hand. “They did a lot of crazy stuff to you. I counted up to seven machines, at one point. I even thought about plugging Ritsu in to see if you could communicate.”

“Huh…”

It wasn’t so often that Karma would have to be the one to fully carry the conversation. As much as Nagisa really wanted to speak, his throat… He didn’t want to damage it more than it clearly already was… At least he’d been given a vague other method of communication. He felt a tiny but ridiculous, but holding Karma’s hand was just about the most comforting thing.

“I thought I’d lost you,” it came out of him quietly, almost like it wasn’t supposed to be heard.

Nagisa squeezed him hard in reply. Yes, me too.

He didn’t look that happy, though. “I did lose you. Don’t do it again.”

“Sorry,” Nagisa croaked. He knew there was far more to say than that, but he couldn’t even imagine putting it into words right then. He shifted. “Karma… just… talk a little?”

Honestly, Nagisa was kind of surprised when he did. It was just, after what felt like so much silence, he just wanted a voice to fill it all up. Karma’s voice was surprisingly nice to listen to, anyway, when he wasn’t on the receiving end of an insult. His tone wasn’t exactly deep or smoothing, definitely something more… springy. Somehow, Karma could never sound boring.

He did find himself zoning out a little, though. When he started really filling out the details, Nagisa knew there were parts he wasn’t mentioning in full. The more he talked, though, the more everything started to rearrange itself in his memory. Not everything was clear… but he certainly remembered. Something started to stick out to him, though.

Nagisa had done a bad thing.

Well, he’d done plenty of bad things, but there was so much he couldn’t unpack right then. Instead, it was easier to just focus. He’d… really tried to hurt Karma. Maybe a part of it was due to the drugs still being pumped through him, but he felt sick to his stomach. The things he’d said and done… it was crazy Karma was even still beside him.

There was a really big part of him that wanted to scream that there was too much now, that Karma deserved someone so much better. But. Nagisa couldn’t ignore that knot that formed, even just looking at him right then. Even after so many years, that emotion had never changed. He might have tried, or misinterpreted it at times, but the conclusion he always seemed to come to was simply love.

He’d died once, without saying anything. Admittedly, since waking up, it hadn’t felt like a top priority, but now it had occurred to him. Either one of them could die for real at any moment. It
wasn’t like Nagisa had seen any real kind of afterlife, or felt much of anything except just deep sleep, but he was sure he couldn’t have been happy. He had a lot to say, and as messed up as his throat was, he needed to get it out.

“Karma,” Nagisa interrupted, before he lost his nerve. “W-what I said… to you in the bathrooms… All I was thinking about was… the best way to hurt you.”

Karma’s form turned sharp, before his shoulders relaxed, and he looked down at Nagisa. “You don’t need to try and make me feel better because you’re sorry. Right now I’m just glad you’re alive.”

“No,” Nagisa said, squirming so he was sitting more upright. “Listen to me.”

“It’s forgiven,” he said, though Nagisa could sense the falseness. “There’s no need.”

If Nagisa had been able to stand up and slap him, he definitely would have. “It’s not how I… wanted to say it… In over ten years… I couldn’t find the… words. I’m sorry I… used your feelings… Karma. I can see why… you won’t believe me… That’s my own… fault, after all this time.”

“Nagisa…” Karma’s eyes were wide, and fear was radiating from him.

“I’m still scared,” Nagisa admitted. “Y-you know I’ve… never been the best at putting… things into words. If I wasn’t stuck… in this bed, I’d just kiss you or someth-“

Before Nagisa could finish his sentence, Karma silenced him with an almost desperate kiss to the lips. With the hospital bed in the way, it was an incredibly awkward angle, Nagisa discovered as he strained his neck to even try to return the pressure. After just a few seconds, Karma practically growled in frustration, clumsily trying to tilt his head to get closer. Nagisa clutched onto him greedily, having missed this kind of passion. Karma’s hands gripped his chin, repositioning him further so that their lips could clash, depriving him of the oxygen he’d only just been allowed to breathe for himself. Like he was going to drown if he let go, Nagisa gripped him desperately. They’d always communicated better like this, through action, and Nagisa felt everything.

Only the loud patter of footsteps brought him back down to earth. Their lips separated at the noise, and Nagisa’s head turned to see a team a doctors gathered in the door, some panting and some red faced.

“A-ah, sorry,” one of them said in clearly limited and shaky Japanese. “Your heart-“

Nagisa noticed, then, that the machine that was monitoring his heart rate was practically screeching. Though it wasn’t physically possible, Nagisa felt as if he was blushing from head to toe. As the medical team left awkwardly, not without a warning comment to be careful with his breathing, once they’d assessed that his life wasn’t in any major danger, Nagisa wanted to crawl into a hole and disappear.

Beside him, Karma was practically cackling. “I’m a medical emergency.”

Normally Nagisa would have whacked him lightly, or at least told him off. But it seemed normal wasn’t in question, after everything. “You’re moving too much,” he said instead, “it hurts.”

“Whose fault is that?” Karma retorted quickly, though Nagisa didn’t sense any malice.

“I love you.”
It just felt right, finally. Not a phrase he’d spent hours saying over and over to mentally prepare, not a sentence he’d swallowed down at the last moment due to doubt. For the first time, it was natural. Telling Karma that he loved him was as easy as the sun rising in the morning, as menacing as storm clouds gathering up rain from the sea and throwing it back on land, as set in stone as the leaves falling off trees in late autumn. It was exhilarating, and terrifying, and just about everything. He wanted to race around and screech it across the city for everyone to hear, and to whisper it into Karma’s ear in the dead of night.

Karma wore an expression Nagisa had never seen on him before, and he decided right then and there that he wanted it to appear again. It was one of those rare times, Nagisa realised, when Karma didn’t know what to say next. Surprisingly, even with the weight of what he’d just said, Nagisa wasn’t afraid of his brief silence.

Swallowing, Karma met his eyes dead on, and a tear spilled from them. “I- I love you too.”

It felt like a lot had left him, and the tiredness crept up again. Several years worth of tiredness, actually. A part of him felt at peace, now it was finally out of him, but he knew that wasn’t right. How could he be at peace, when for the first time, he genuinely felt like there would be a lot ahead of him.

Shakily, Nagisa reached up, brushing the tear away. “Karma…”

Karma’s hand came down on top of his, linking them together once more. “There’s a lot we should talk about… but preferably when you don’t sound like that and I can take you seriously. B-besides, I Daichi might actually kill me if he finds out I didn’t tell him you were awake and talking.”

“Oh okay…”

He swallowed. “I should go call-“

“I love you,” it came out so easy that time. A huge bout of glee rose up, and he just about managed a light laugh. “I love you so… much, I could die!”

“Please don’t,” Karma said quickly. “Not again.”

“R-right…”

He kissed his knuckles, before finally dropping his hand lightly. “I’ll be right back.”

Nagisa still felt the tingle of his lips on his hand, and he really did feel like his heart was going to burst- in the figurative sense. The only thing that could make him feel better, right then, was Daichi being there too. Everything else… it felt like for later. Nagisa needed one thing, and that was his family.

Chapter End Notes

LOOK SEE

I GAVE YOU WHAT YOU ALL WANTED

A REWARD AFTER THE PAIN I PUT YOU THROUGH!
Next chapter will be.... "conversation time"

Note for those who understand a little Japanese: Before, I definitely pictured Karma saying "I love you" with "suki da" or "daisuki da", some kind of variation on that each time. There's no way I could possibly translate this kind of feeling into English, but Nagisa definitely said "aishiteru" in this scene. If that doesn't make your heart melt...
After 125 chapters, Karma and Nagisa finally talk.

“Is this… necessary?”

Karma’s grip on his arm tightened. “The condition for you coming home was to stay off your feet.”

Nagisa, who didn’t appreciate being carried bridal style that much, shifted in his hold. “I’m not sure it’s meant to be that literal.”

“You should listen to the doctors, Daddy,” Daichi affirmed, almost looking up at him like he was disappointed.

It felt like he’d spent an eternity in recovering as it was. The hospital staff had seemed to agree that he’d recover much better at home, and they were happy to let him go once they were certain he was completely clear of the drug, and that was wasn’t just going to drop dead again the second he stepped outside. Really, it hadn’t been easy, but he’d managed to walk around the hospital a little by himself. He was eager to just heal as soon as possible so that he could live like a normal person again.

When Karma turned the key in the lock, Nagisa mostly just felt weird. It had been such a long time, but everything was still familiar. It felt like his home. He couldn’t help but notice the almost comedic amount of letters that had been stuffed through the door. Well, they had been gone a while. Far too long. He wasn’t in any rush to open any of them, though.

Karma didn’t seem to be wasting time, either, pacing straight over to the bedroom, which had been completely untouched, he could tell from the laundry that was still sitting in the basket. The hospital had given him a dose of light suppressants, considering going into heat any time soon would be dangerous for his body, but they didn’t really block his sense of smell, and his and Karma’s mixed scent still lingered around the room. Definitely more comforting than a hospital.

Daichi didn’t immediately want to check out his room, which surprised Nagisa a little, since it had been quite a long time since he’d been home too. Instead, though, he pretty much jumped onto the bed the second Karma had put him down. Nagisa winced, the movement of the bed causing pain to shoot through him. Thankfully, Daichi had at least managed to jump the side of him that didn’t have stitches, immediately curling up.
“Are you sure you’re gonna have the energy for your parents?” Karma questioned.

Admittedly, Nagisa did feel pretty relaxed right then. After flying all the way back to Japan, he was exhausted. However, he knew they did need to see them. According to Karma, he had actually let his parents know about the whole death thing (after some convincing from their friends, apparently), and convincing them not to jump onto a plane had been a hard debate. He’d suffered through a phone call with them whilst in hospital, but the in personal visit… he knew he’d freaked them out. At least they were bringing Maki back.

“They probably won’t stop for too long,” Nagisa rationalised.

Daichi attempted to snuggle closer, if that was even possible. “Daddy… do you feel better yet?”

They’d only been back for three minutes. “Yeah, a little.”

“Do you want me to read to you?” Daichi shifted excitedly, and Nagisa winced. “There’s so many books I haven’t read for ages and ages! But, uhm, I’m sure you’ll like them too, Daddy.”

“I love to hear you read,” Nagisa replied honestly.

Of course, when Daichi moved again to get back off the bed, and he really tried to hold in his pained noises. He didn’t feel much like bringing it up, though. Having Daichi like this was worth pretty much any amount of pain. His ability to say ‘no’ to him was going to get weaker, he just knew it. How could Nagisa stand a chance, when the reality of never getting to spend time with him again had come so close?

He was pretty much back again before Karma could say anything, which was a little impressive. Karma mumbled something about bags, not that they had much luggage, but he left the room. Daichi didn’t seem to notice or care too much, immediately getting absorbed in reading. He was proud of how fluidly he managed to read aloud, really. Daichi was smoother with his words than some of his old students had been. At least, until the obvious sound of the door.

“I think Grandma and Grandpa are here,” Nagisa nudged him.

Daichi stiffened up, and he dropped the book in favour of burying his head into Nagisa’s chest. “Don’t wanna.”

“Why not?”

He shook. “T-they’re probably mad at me.”

Nagisa wasn’t sure how to take that. On the one hand, Daichi probably wasn’t wrong. He knew Daichi had had the best intentions… but he did essentially run away from home. Given everything that happened, Nagisa couldn’t be angry with him over that, but he hadn’t been aware of it. It wasn’t like his parents hadn’t tried to look for him, or spent so long worrying… he knew he’d feel differently if he’d experienced the whole thing.

“You put them through a lot,” Nagisa attempted to explain reasonably. “Even if you thought you were doing the right thing… you made them worry a lot. I don’t think they’re mad, probably just relieved that you’re okay, but you still need to face them.”

Daichi looked up at him. “Actions create consequences.” He said it like he was reciting something.

“Exactly,” Nagisa smiled. “Go on, go see them.”
With slightly more confidence, Daichi emerged, and left the room fairly quickly. Although the walls were somewhat thin, he could only make out a small indistinct hum of conversation, which confirmed that the reunion couldn’t be going too badly. Honestly, he kind of wished they’d waited a day or two before dropping by, but it could be worse.

“Nagisa,” his mother said, taking in the sight of him as she entered the bedroom.

“Hi,” he replied, because he had no idea what else to say.

“What were you—“

His father kind of pushed past her, though. “We’re so glad you’re safe. “

Nagisa shifted more upright. “S-sorry for making you worry.”

His mother’s eyes narrowed. “I assume everything’s taken care of now.”

“The guy’s in custody,” Nagisa explained, though he’d only really been fed the information second hand himself. “He hasn’t been charged with anything yet. Kidnapping though… plus whatever else they manage to pin on him, it’ll be a long punishment. Even if he dodges everything else, but that’s not that likely.”

He wasn’t sure how he felt about that whole ordeal. Everyone’s safety was the top priority, and he was glad that Ohno was currently behind bars, but he couldn’t get rid of the itch beneath his skin that he was still around. Somehow, he could still be a threat. Maybe everyone in the room could sense the sudden sour shift of his mood, though, because then his father was clearing his throat.

“So, how was recovery?”

Nagisa didn’t have an easy answer for that. Those first few days of being awake had been a hazy mess of half awareness, and everything after that had been a painful process. Then again, there was also the whole death thing. Nagisa tried his best to indulge them, though, remembering as many actual details as he could. The more he explained, the less questions would be asked to follow up.

It seemed like they weren’t intending to stop by for too long, though. “Well,” his father said, “you seem like you need some serious rest.”

“Thanks for visiting,” Nagisa got out.

His mother hummed. “We didn’t want to be in charge of that cat for any longer.”

“She’s an angel, Hiromi,” Karma commented, having been mostly quiet throughout that conversation. “I don’t see the problem.”

Surprisingly, she didn’t take the bait. It seemed even his parents had gotten used to Karma, over so many years of being wrapped up in each other’s lives. Not that Nagisa minded that much, in all honesty. It was nice to see them, but he was getting pretty tired. Somehow, though, he was pretty certain sleep wasn’t going to find him any time soon.

“Daddy!” Daichi unceremoniously dumped the cat on the bed, once they’d left the apartment. “Maki missed you!”

Maki looked a little annoyed at Daichi, but she just meowed.

“I missed Maki too,” Nagisa said, reaching to scratch her behind the ears.
“I hope you don’t mind delivery,” Karma said, leaning against the door frame. “I’d cook you something nice after all that hospital food, but it’s not like we have any groceries. Unless you’re craving instant ramen.”

“It sounds good,” he said.

Daichi wrinkled his nose, though. “I miss Seoul.”

Karma patted him a little hard on the head. “We’ll go out for shabu shabu once everyone’s up and walking.”

Nagisa couldn’t wait for that. Not necessarily the hot pot, though it sounded good, but to have the ability to just go out like normal. As it turned out, dying really had its drawbacks. He was going to do everything in his power to get properly back on his feet as soon as possible, even if that meant staying off them for now. Besides, eating kind of unhealthy but tasty food in bed with his family was a rarity he was happy to enjoy.

That was, until Daichi started to yawn the moment he was finished eating. Of course, declaring “I’m not sleepy,” when he realised he’d been noticed.

Nagisa moved the plate out of his way, so he didn’t immediately face plant the food. “Of course.”

“B-but,” he rubbed his eyes. “I guess I could fall asleep…”

“Oh no you don’t,” Karma said. “You should sleep in your own bed. You need rest.”

“But Papa-”

Daichi didn’t stand much of a chance. Karma was still decidedly bigger and stronger than him, and could have picked him up even with a protest of huge effort. Daichi didn’t really try to struggle, accepting his fate. It was kind of humorous, it was often he was carried like that anymore. It reminded him a little of when he really was just a helpless baby. It didn’t help that Karma could very easily hold him with just one arm, freeing up the other to also take the plates into the kitchen.

“Night Daichi,” he called out.

Daichi might have muffled ‘goodnight’ back, but the sound was absorbed. He heard their conversation continue just a little, but other than that Nagisa was left in silence. It was weirdly unnerving, he discovered. Part of him really wanted to just curl up and go to sleep himself, yet his eyes didn’t exactly feel heavy yet.

“He looks like he’s ready to sleep,” Karma re-entered the room, carrying a mug of tea. “For you.”

“Thanks,” Nagisa accepted it. It was too warm to drink right away, but it felt nice against his hands.

Karma looked him over. “You look like you’re about to fall asleep too.”

“I’m okay,” he made sure he was sitting up properly, as if to make a point. “Aren’t you?”

Much more gently than Daichi, Karma climbed onto the bed beside him, sitting cross-legged. “I’m
thinking a lot. Now that we’re back here.”

Somehow, Nagisa kind of knew what he was leading up to. And a big part of him was dreading it. After everything they’d been through, it was mutually agreed that just because they’d confessed their love for each other properly, there was still a lot between them. It wouldn’t be right, to just ignore it and jump into things. They’d made that mistake before. They’d put it aside, whilst he was in hospital, but… now he wasn’t in hospital.

“I don’t know how to do this,” Nagisa admitted. “I feel like it should be easy, but…”

“Feels like we need some kind of advisor…”

Something came across Karma’s face, and he shifted over the side of the bed without fully climbing off, searching for something he clearly knew the location of. It didn’t take him long, before he was heaving Korosensei’s life advice guide out. Nagisa was a little confused about why he kept it there, of all places, but he supposed it was one place Daichi wouldn’t accidentally happen upon it.

“Here,” Karma put the book down in front of him, and flicked through the pages before settling on one. “I have no idea if yours has the same advice, but I think we should take it.” He cleared his throat. “You and Nagisa kun have a lot of challenges in front of you. Even though I won’t be there to see it, I know you have it in you to work things out, if you really want it. But, relationships take work and sacrifice! Now, I know the two of you have never been the best at communicating well with each other, but that’s an important thing. I’ve provided a few different ways to start difficult topics down below.”

“Like what?” Nagisa questioned.

Karma snapped the book shut. “Honestly, I don’t think you want to know.”

He found it in him to smile lightly though, at an attempt to ease the tension. “Maybe we should have paid attention to that earlier.”

Karma huffed. “To be fair, it’s shoved in the middle of his endless parenting advice.”

“So,” Nagisa looked dead straight ahead, as though the wall was an enemy. “We should really just talk? No lies anymore, no hiding anything.”

“It seems easy enough,” Karma shrugged. “I don’t know why it’s so hard for us.”

“I don’t even know where to start,” he admitted. “It feels like so much.”

“Maybe,” Karma thought, “from the start is the best. Like,” he swallowed, “when did you start feeling this way?”

Nagisa couldn’t look him in the eyes. “I… Ever since the start of junior high school, Karma. Maybe I didn’t understand what it was at first, but you already meant everything to me. Even from afar. I’m not sure if it was a real crush or not, I just… thought you were amazing, like you could do anything you wanted. And all I ever wanted was to be good enough, that you’d talk to me. And then you did.”

“I always wanted to talk to you too,” Karma said carefully. “I guess you could say I was drawn to you for some reason, but I don’t know how or why. I wasn’t,” he paused, “I’m not good at friends. But you seemed like someone I didn’t have to worry about trusting. I was kind of waiting for a reason to talk to you, so when I saw that you liked movies, I tried it. I didn’t really know what
being friends meant, I knew I liked you a lot, but it was confusing. But then I saw your blood lust.”

He frowned, not quite sure what to make of that. His blood lust? He’d only figured out that talent during his time in 3E. Furthermore, Karma had only actually seen it in action against Takaoka. So Nagisa didn’t even know what Karma was talking about. Even he hadn’t really been able to tame it into anything useful, up until his training.

“What do you mean?” He questioned.

Karma’s lips pressed together. “We were eating at McDonalds, and I couldn’t see where you’d sat down. Then… you poked me, right there in the back. And I saw it… this something. It didn’t know what to call it back then, but I knew it could kill me in my sleep if I wasn’t careful. I was scared, I think, so I backed away.”

Nagisa blinked. “Are you serious?”

“Huh?”

“You stopped talking to me because I poked you?”

“You’re still… mad about it?”

Nagisa turned his head. “I wouldn’t expect you to understand. It hurt.”

Karma exhaled deeply. “Leaving when things got tough was the only thing I knew back then. It’s what my parents did to me, always going off on their trips, it didn’t matter if it was for work or fun. And when they weren’t home, they were always moving home. Living in Kunugigaoka for three years was the most permanent place they’ve ever had, until India. I… I guess just leaving was how I thought you solve problems. I wish I’d handled it better, really.”

“I thought you just got bored,” his voice came out small. “Who could blame you? I was just a nobody… We weren’t even close to the same level. E-even when you joined 3E, it wasn’t the same. And it was hard not to feel like some random omega you happened to knock up.” All at once, strange heavy emotions flowed through him. “It’s not like that doubt ever went away. I never worried about how much you love Daichi, but, you were only beside me because you had to be.”

“That’s not-“

“True?” He shook, and only then did he notice that they’d naturally turned around to face each other. “It wasn’t like you had a choice about being around me. And then the second you got out, you were with other people. Better people. How was I supposed to think?”

He didn’t have to be a mind reader to know that Karma was ticked off. “I can’t tell you exactly when I gained real feelings for you… but it wasn’t because I was trapped with you. When Bitch Sensei made everyone play that dumb kissing game, you were the only one I felt something with. Love was the only thing I knew to call it. But what do you mean by ‘the second I got out’?”

Nagisa’s eyes narrowed. “If your history of university hook ups was supposed to be a secret, you did a terrible job of hiding it.” He reminded himself that he should stay calm. “I know you didn’t have to tell me that kind of stuff, but it still hurt hearing about it.”

Karma was quiet for a moment. “They didn’t mean anything.”

“That doesn’t help though,” he didn’t know how to explain it. “You were still sleeping around with what felt like hundreds of mega attractive women. Compared to that… I’m nothing special. It
doesn’t really matter if that’s not how you see it, everyone else does. I look ridiculous standing
next to someone like you.”

“Why do you care what anyone else thinks?” Karma shook his head. “You only look ridiculous
standing beside me because you’re so short.”

He felt unsteady. “How can I be sure that you won’t ever regret not being with someone better?”

“Better?” Karma snorted. “Even after a hundred times I still kind of wished it was you.”

“One hundred?” He felt a little sick.

“Well, I don’t know.”

His brow creased. “What do you mean, ‘you don’t know’?”

“I wasn’t exactly keeping count,” Karma’s eyes shifted.

“That’s a big number, though.”

“It was over four years. It wasn’t like I was going after it,” he breathed in. “After what happened
our first summer break, I thought it was never going to happen with us. I stopped having a good
reason to say no.”

Something was unsettled in Nagisa’s stomach, at the thought of it. He knew he had no right to be
mad at Karma for sleeping around. But he still felt weird about it. A part of him knew, though, that
he couldn’t change it. If they really wanted to have something together, he needed to move past it.
He needed to start believing Karma, to let it go. He tried to focus on the other thing Karma had just
said.

“What summer are you talking about?”

Karma stiffened. “Our first long break from university. After that night before we left, I didn’t
think it was nothing. I guess we hung out a little, in between that, but I was looking forward to
spending time with you. Mostly Daichi. I tried to hang out with you, but that time you were the one
blowing me off. If I moved close to you, you kept moving away. It sent a pretty clear message that
you weren’t interested, so I stopped trying.”

“You were trying to flirt with me?” Nagisa’s head was spinning. “I didn’t really notice. You just
seemed interested in Daichi- which I was too. You didn’t say anything… and I assumed, since you
never tried to say anything before either, that you just wanted to move on. I guess we were both
just waiting for each other.”

“We were dumb,” Karma said easily. “We’d probably have figured it out, if one of us had said
something.”

“To be honest,” Nagisa thought, “I’m not sure that’s true. I… probably could have made more of
an effort. But I was still scared at the time, of what ‘together’ would really mean. Even before that,
it was always my biggest problem. It’s always been that. Right from the start.”

Karma stared at him with a blank expression. “Since the first year at Kunugigaoka?”

He thought for a moment. “Not exactly. I might have had a crush, but I’m not sure when it became
more than that either… I know I realised after Daichi was born, and seeing how you were with
him. You were happy, letting all of your guards down… that’s the you I liked. I was going to tell
you as soon as I realised, but I kind of chickened out. Honestly… the more I thought about it after that, the more it felt like a bad idea. I didn’t know if you liked me back, and I didn’t want to make it awkward. But even if you did…

Even if we got together, I could only see us breaking up. It only got worse, the more time went on. We weren’t,” his voice wobbled, “we weren’t healthy back then. We used to fight so much, and then just ignore each other without solving anything, over and over again. There was no way one of us wouldn’t have been petty enough to just call it quits at the first hurdle. Even if I wanted to try it, I couldn’t stop thinking about Daichi.

When my parents got divorced… I was so upset. Maybe it’s because I was young, but I felt like my world was ending. Even if they got back together in the end… it still hurt me to see. All the fights, all the arguing- I was always so scared… and I didn’t want Daichi to feel like that ever. Though I guess we kind of failed that anyway. W-when you kissed me, after we were fighting in that alley way, it was the main reason I had to stop. I don’t think I was wrong, though, even looking back on it. We weren’t good for each other.”

For the first time, really during their entire conversation, things went completely silent. Immediately Nagisa was nervous, because the look on Karma’s face wasn’t exactly a good one. His hands shook, and he finally reached for the cup of tea as though it was going to protect him somehow. Through all the talking, it wasn’t warm at all anymore.

“It hurt,” Karma finally admitted. “It took a lot, to kiss you that day. I didn’t know how to say it in words, but I poured everything into that. And then you told me it meant ‘nothing’ to you. Any time I tried to show my feelings, you shut them down. Of course I started to think that you didn’t even like me at all. It was something I thought for a while. At first, I thought we stood a chance, but…”


“You kissed Asano.”

His brow creased. “That? I owed him a favour, and he asked me to show him some of Bitch Sensei’s techniques. You said you didn’t care. You made that too clear.”

Karma shrugged. “Well, I was lying. It bothered me a lot. Sure, I knew that you weren’t an item. Asano’s not the type to initiate make outs in public, I knew he was just trying to get to me. But I was shocked that you would even do that. It made me start to doubt things. It’s not like I was wrong, anyway. Maybe I messed around, but you were the one who actually dated people.”

“Karma.”

He didn’t mean for it to sound like a warning, but his nerves were being tested. There was an energy that had grown in the room, and he really didn’t like it. But he had known that talking about all of this stuff wasn’t going to be comfortable or easy. Unfortunately, it was necessary, and now that they’d started, he really didn’t want to stop until it was all out.

“You always seemed ready to move on.”

That was wrong. “You told me to. The only reason I started dating R-rin was because I didn’t want to hurt him. It’s not like anyone else confessed to me. I was so sure you didn’t want anything to do with me like that… and I didn’t know who else would. I was.. confused. I don’t know why I agreed. He really was nice enough at first… but I know I never really liked him like that. Maybe I was stringing him along to prove something to myself, but it didn’t really work. I-I should have known, with how jealous he got over you, it was a red flag for me and for him.”
“That still doesn’t make what he did okay,” the anger coming from Karma was clear.

Nagisa didn’t want to think about it. “I know. But I still wish you’d listened to me, when I told you I didn’t want you to do anything.” He let his eyes fall closed. “I think I understand why better now. You always kind of thought of me as your omega back then, didn’t you?”

“…Maybe.”

They’d agreed to no lies, but Nagisa decided to let it slide. “I’m not saying you’re controlled by your instincts, but it still probably influenced that. At the same time, though, I don’t want to just be your helpless omega. I-I know there’s some people out there who like to feel like that, and I’m happy for them, but that’s not me. I don’t want to depend on anyone else, even you. I can’t stand up for myself, and make my own decisions about those kind of things.”

“I’m not that sorry I did it,” Karma said carefully. “I don’t regret it, because he really deserved it. But I wasn’t trying to make you feel like that. I don’t want you to. I guess I do think of you as mine, but it’s not like I literally think I own you.”

“I know,” Nagisa smiled. “I think of you in the same way sometimes.”

Karma swallowed. “Did you date Gotou for the same reason?”

Honestly, that question threw him a little. Maybe his relationship with Shouyou hadn’t been the best, but it wasn’t anything like it had been with Rin. Still… he supposed Karma wouldn’t actually know any of that. He could count the amount of times they’d actually been in the same room on one finger, which was impressive considering how important they’d both been to his life.

“Maybe I was a little annoyed with you when I said yes to going on a date with him,” Nagisa thought back, “but I genuinely had a good time that day. I did love Shouyou. I know it’s probably not what you want to hear, but it’s the truth. Considering what you were doing, I thought a relationship was okay.”

“You weren’t just in a relationship though,” Karma sounded strained. “You were engaged to him. Agreeing to spend the rest of your life with someone else is a pretty clear message.”

“I’d given up all hope of us ever being together,” he said genuinely. “It was so far out from things that might happen, I wasn’t even thinking about it anymore. I couldn’t just put my entire life on hold forever, for no possibility. Obviously it was easier when we barely even saw each other. But,” Nagisa conceded, “I didn’t exactly want to marry him either. He proposed to me in the middle of the airport, right before he had to get on his flight. I couldn’t have a serious conversation with him like that. And… somehow I just knew we’d end up breaking up if I said ‘no’. And I didn’t want that. I knew we wouldn’t be able to actually get married for years, anyway. My feelings might have changed in that amount of time. But that never even happened.”

“It’s hard for me,” Karma said quietly. “You’re the only one I’ve felt this wa- you’re the only one I’ve ever loved. And I know I’m never going to love anybody else. I’d be okay, if you were happy with someone else, but I don’t want you to be.”

Nagisa’s voice ended up coming out just as quiet. “I love you more. It, this, it’s a different feeling. I think that’s a good thing. I-I think we feel more similarly than we realised. Me loving someone else bothers you as much as you sleeping with all those people bothers me.”

Maybe they really were just as insecure as each other. That didn’t feel like something he had to voice out loud, he could tell they’d both realised that from the silence that grew.
“Can I ask something?” Nagisa tried. “Why did you try to kiss me, that time in Disneyland?”

“I wasn’t thinking about it.” Karma shifted then, so they were sitting a lot closer, their shoulders touching. “I didn’t lie when I told you I didn’t know. We had a good day together, and I just… wanted to. I wasn’t thinking about any of the consequences.”

Nagisa’s lips pressed together. “I guess I didn’t really try to stop you. That was a weird summer.”

“Do you regret it?”

“My heat, you mean?” He didn’t have to think about it long. “No, not really. I feel like we shouldn’t have just done it, but… it’s not like you never helped me with my preheats before. It felt more like that to me, at least at the time. Maybe it wasn’t.”

Karma looked down. “So that didn’t mean anything to you?”

“I didn’t mean it like that,” he gulped down the last of the tea, before setting the empty mug on the side table. “I don’t really remember much of it. Other than it not sucking. But… after that, when it definitely wasn’t just you helping me out. It did mean something. We should have talked back then. I tried to ignore it, but it was never just hooking up for me. But then it was… more.”

Surprisingly, Karma nodded. “It was always more to me too.”

“Why,” he almost thought aloud, “did you say it was a mistake when you kissed me? I… I wanted to tell you how I really felt that day, but it sounded like you meant you wanted it to stay as just sex.”

“I thought that was what you wanted.”

“I didn’t know what I wanted,” Nagisa admitted. “I still don’t know what everything means. We’re not talking about some far off younger versions of ourselves here. This was only months ago. A-a part of me isn’t sure we’re even ready for anything, but another part of me knows we’ve come a long way. I never said thank you, by the way, for not giving up on me after everything that happened in that facility.”

Karma turned away from him entirely. “I should have known. It’s not like I didn’t let it get into my head. I thought you were just in shock or something, not just under the influence of a drug.”

Something within him turned. “I don’t blame you for not knowing. I still feel like I hurt you, anyway.”

“You can make it up to me now,” Karma turned back, looking him in the eye. “That’s the biggest question, isn’t it? What now?”

“I know that I love you,” Nagisa’s voice cracked. “I spent so many years trying to force myself to stop and I never could, never completely. I don’t think I ever will.”

“I think we know that now,” Karma’s tone was a little steadier. “We’re always going to feel this way about each other.”

“We’re agreed, then. No matter what, we can’t be apart. Which means we have to figure out being together means.”

“There’s not exactly a rule book for that,” Karma shrugged. “I don’t know how you feel, but I don’t think that’s really us. This is it for me, I’m sure about that.”
 Somehow, Nagisa found himself trembling. “We have to think about Daichi. It sounds crazy but this isn’t really about just us. And that’s the main thing that held me back all that time. He deserves a stable life. More stable than we’ve given him so far. I spent so much time worrying about how bad we are for each other… but we’re worse without each other.”

Karma took his hand. “Is ‘together’ enough? I don’t mind what you want to call it… boyfriend, mate, life partner. That stuff isn’t important to me.”

Just like that, Nagisa found himself letting out just a breath of laughter.

“What’s so funny?” Karma said.

“It’s not,” Nagisa steadied himself once more, “it’s just, we’ve wasted so much time. I-if we’d just spoken like this from the start, we could have had all of those years together.”

Something was bright in his eyes, like a new life had been poured into them. “What’s eleven years when we have the whole rest of our lives, huh?”

Nagisa bit his lip. “I do have one request.”

“Sure,” Karma said, “anything.”

“I want us to say ‘I love you’ every single day.”

Karma tilted his head. “Huh? Gone a little sappy all of a sudden, Nagisa~?”

He could tell Karma had left his serious mode behind in favour of his light teasing personality, but Nagisa wasn’t ready yet. Maybe it did sound a bit silly, to actually request it like that, but Nagisa knew he needed to say it. They’d aired everything else out.

“I died, Karma.” His voice really did break then. “I don’t want to sound morbid, but either of us could just die at any moment, for real! I don’t want to do that again. I don’t want to die without telling you how I feel.”

Karma squeezed his hand tight, and looked him dead in the eyes. “I love you.”

His eyes felt heavy, as tears started to bloom. “I love you too.”

Karma moved in, then. And, for the first time, their lips met truly in the middle.

Throughout that entire conversation, they hadn’t really touched much. Right then it felt like every barrier fell at once, and they were threading themselves back together. Physically, he knew they couldn’t get too carried away, he was still injured after all. It wasn’t a deep kiss anyway, not on surface levels. It did mean everything, though.

Gently, they ended up pushing backwards, so Nagisa was lying with his head propped up on the pillow. Karma was careful with him, doing most of the awkward leaning work so he wouldn’t strain himself. More than anything, it just felt nice. That was a good thing. Simple and easy, just like breathing, just like it should be with them.

A knock at the door broke them out of it, though.

“Uhm,” Daichi pushed the door open, “Papa? Daddy?”

All things considered, it wasn’t that late, but it was still strange for him to burst in. “Is something wrong?”
Daichi shifted from foot to foot for a second, before practically diving for them. At least he had the sense to go for Karma’s side of the bed, though he clambered in the middle, curling himself up into a ball before he started to cry. It wasn’t a huge uncontrolled cry, more like low sobs, but it still made Nagisa just as bad as being literally stabbed did.

“I’m scared.” Daichi got out.

Nagisa didn’t care about his injuries, he moved immediately, wrapping his arms around his son. He hated the way he was shaking, as every instinct screamed at him to try and make it better. It felt a little useless, though. Rubbing his back and uttering ‘it’s okay’, and ‘you’re safe’ was barely anything, not after everything he’d been through.

“C-can,” Daichi wiped his nose, “can I sleep with you tonight?”

Finally Karma reached over, stroking his hair lightly. “Of course, Daichan. You know we’re not going anywhere, right?”

“I know,” he said, but he didn’t seem so sure.

He was still so young. When Karma turned out the lights, and they lay down, curled together properly, he remembered when Daichi was just a baby. Back when he and Karma would somehow try and fit in Nagisa’s tiny single bed, with Daichi in-between them. He used to think of him kind of like a bridge, but that wasn’t quite it. If he and Karma were attached by a thread, then Daichi was the binding that tied them. Once he settled, Nagisa too fell asleep almost alarmingly quickly.

Of course, the next morning, once everyone was awake enough to function, there was one order of business that needed to be addressed.

And that was how they ended up still sat on the bed, with Karma’s copy of their 3E Graduation Album open, and a few of the memorabilia weapons they’d kept spread out. They’d agreed it would be better to keep the visual proof out and clear as they spoke, otherwise Daichi might not actually believe them at all. But it was time.

They both spoke in equal parts about the events of their 3E year. The truth about the moon, how Korosensei really was, and most painfully that last night under the barrier. They didn’t just leave it there, though. Daichi deserved nothing but the full truth, so they had to explain what had recently happened with Ohno too. For the most part, though, Daichi was completely silent through it all, until he was sure they’d finished talking.

“So you’re… like spies or something?” Daichi put the knife he was examining down flat in front of him.

Nagisa swallowed. “Well-“

“More like assassins,” Karma cut him off. “Super special forces.”

He blinked rapidly for a few seconds, gears turning in his head. “Have you killed people? Other than this Korosensei, I mean.”

With slight desperation, Nagisa looked toward Karma, hoping he’d chime in with a good answer to that. Unfortunately, Karma just gripped the photo album tightly, apparently unwilling to help him out. Nagisa considered just lying. This entire conversation sounded far too mature for an eight year old to hear, even if Daichi had already been exposed to things no child should ever witness. Then again, where had lying got them the last time?
“I-“ Nagisa sighed, “a couple. Daichi… I’m so sorry. That wasn’t really me, back there. I-I don’t want you to be afraid of me-“

“I’m not,” Daichi said quickly. “I know you’d never hurt me Daddy. I just don’t want you to leave again.

“We won’t,” Karma said firmly. “Ever. I promise you.”

He thought about it for a moment. “Did you save more people, in the end?”

“Yeah,” Nagisa said, “I guess so.”

Daichi jumped off the bed casually. “You’re kind of more like superheroes then, right? That’s cool, I won’t tell anyone or anything, not if it’ll get you into trouble with Karasuma san. Can I go read in my room now?”

Nagisa and Karma glanced between each other. Well, he’d taken that pretty well. Better than anybody his age should. Though, Nagisa knew he was a frighteningly smart kid. He hated that every demonstration of that fact still caught him off guard.

“Go ahead,” Karma said.

“Wait.” He stopped beside the door and turned. “We’ve been billionaires, this whole time?!”

Nagisa almost choked. “W-well. A lot of it’s going towards your school, actually. And we did buy the mountain… and pay rent with it for a few years. It’s a lot less than a billion nowadays.”

His eyes narrowed. “Assassins make a lot of money… huh?”

“You better not be considering it,” Karma said, and by his tone he was only half joking.

Daichi folded his arms. “I want to be a doctor.”

“Huh?!”

He shrugged. “What you do is cool and all, but… They saved your life, Daddy. And not just your life. The doctors at that hospital told me that they save a bunch of lives every single day. That sounds a lot more like being a superhero to me, anyway. Can I go now?”

“Yeah, sure,” Karma said.

That, he hadn’t been expecting. Sure, Daichi was only eight years old. Kids had weird ambitions. When Nagisa had been eight… he’d wanted to become Sonic Ninja. So a literal superhero then. It wasn’t a bad thing at all, it just hadn’t been what he was expecting. He didn’t like to think about Daichi growing up that much at all, but he thought he’d be more interested in being a librarian or something like that. Anything that involved books.

“You really think he means it?”

Karma smiled. “Of course he does. He had the same look in his eye as you did when you told me you wanted to become a teacher.”

Chapter End Notes
One last real chapter to go...

It doesn't even seem real.

We're so close to the end now-
The Last Time

Chapter Summary

You know what it is.

Chapter Notes

It really did take them that long huh

See the end of the chapter for more notes

His world had become a scape of darkness.

Being led into a bright room, then, was quite the change of pace for Ohno Aku. Being in solitary maximum confinement, he wasn’t sure how much time had passed. Proud of his mind, he’d tried to keep track of the time, but when there was no clear day and night cycle for him to keep track of, he was lost. The only constant was the delivery of his meals. His new world had purely become that cell, and he was certain he was going to rot and die in it.

Which was why he was surprised to be left completely alone in a visitation room with one Shiota Nagisa. The visit didn’t surprise him much. This was, after all, the same man who had chased him down at his little party. No, what surprised him was the fact that he wasn’t accompanied by anybody. There was nowhere to watch in, and no cameras he could see. That didn’t mean there weren’t any hidden, though. It was just a table, two glasses of water, and two chairs.

“To what do I owe the pleasure? I’m shocked you’re still standing.” He took a seat on the chair opposite the one Shiota was occupying.

His expression was flat. “I made a deal to be allowed to come here for one private conversation.”

“You boss?”

“You could call him that.”

A wry smile danced onto his face. “You were quite interesting to look in to. I wish I could stay for longer to ask you about your research.”

He reached for the glass in front of him, taking a sip of water. “I’m not going to fool myself into believing that you’re interested in the specifics.” He hadn’t been allowed to drink for quite a while, not since his last meal, so he ended up gulping it down in one go.

“Refreshing?”

He put down the glass. “Quite.”

There was a dangerous glint in Shiota’s eye. “I heard about the schedule they had you on, so I figured you’d be thirsty. You’re right, I didn’t look much into your research. But I did think about
you. Your techniques. I was able to swipe a sample of your drugs, you know, when I spoke to my boss.” He reached for his own glass, to take a careful sip. “You think the same people who treat you to a dark room and two tiny meals a day really provided you a glass of water?”

His throat started to constrict.

Shiota stood up, though, a bright smile plastered across his face, just barely masking the darkness beneath the surface. “I sincerely hope you regret ever laying a hand on my son.”

He was gone like a whisper of the wind.

A lot of things happened after Nagisa’s conversation with Karma.

As it turned out, being bedridden kind of sucked. Though, Karma liked to remind him no less than three times a day, his injury was self inflicted. Literal karma, he supposed. It wasn’t so bad at first, not with Daichi at home with him. School was important, but so was his child’s mental wellbeing. It wasn’t like there was any danger of him falling behind in his lessons, anyway. Besides… they were kind of close to the start of the summer break as it was.

Nagisa had been exposed to a lot of horrors at fourteen years old, and looking back on it as an adult he’d been very young for it. Daichi was only eight. Whilst he seemed to be handling it fine for the most part (during the light hours of the day, at least), Nagisa couldn’t be so sure what was actually going on inside his head. At the same time, he didn’t want to push him to talk about it if he didn’t want to. But he did maintain he wouldn’t push away any of his questions, either.

Karma stayed off work for two weeks, after their conversation, before he was pretty much forced back. By then, at least, Nagisa could just about manage to take himself to the bathroom and kitchen, though not without pain. It was worth not being dead, though. He had to repeat that thought over and over again, to get himself through it.

It really was nice to spend all that time with Daichi, though, who took to sitting in bed with him and reading aloud, or playing video games, or anything else his young mind could think of. That couldn’t be forever, though, and eventually he did have to go back to real school again. He actually seemed happy about it, and that was enough for Nagisa to be okay, though.

It seemed more to be Nagisa who had the issue, rather than Daichi.

He wasn’t really alone though. He suddenly got a high volume of visits from his friends, and though he suspected Karma’s worrying might be slightly behind it, it was nice all the same. Having so many people to catch up without the stress of a mission, on top of being particularly well cared for, caused him to heal petty fast, as far as he was concerned.

The pain didn’t really seem to go away entirely any time soon, but with each day that passed, it did get a little better, and he only really started to have an issue when he strained too much. It wasn’t too long before he was able to go out again, and feel like he was an actual human. Maybe it took such a traumatic incident, to appreciate the little things in life. Nagisa had never been more excited to step inside a supermarket before in his life.

They eventually found out from Karasuma that this time, any kind of research relating to using antimatter on humans was completely destroyed. It still wasn’t public knowledge, and even with their direct involvement there was a limit to how much they were allowed to really know. It seemed to bother Karma more than him, though. Nagisa always kind of got the feeling that he was afraid something was going to happen again.
There was no forgetting the day when Karma anxiously turned to him, TV playing in the background. “Did you hear that?”

Nagisa hadn’t been paying much attention to news. “No? Did something happen?”

His jaw had been clenched. “They just said Ohno died in his prison cell.”

“Oh.”

So, it was over. At least, physically. Months on, Nagisa still couldn’t remember everything that happened whilst he was on that drug. There were… flashes, shadows that branded into him like scars. Daichi still had nightmares. Not all the time, but often enough he’d end up in the middle of their bed. Nagisa didn’t have a problem with that, though. He was always going to remember Daichi as his little baby, no matter how fast he grew up.

Daichi jumped into bed with him one day, and insisted on reading the first chapter of his new favourite book aloud. Recently, though, Daichi’s tastes had turned from fiction to facts about the human body. He’d gone through pretty much anything that was age appropriate, at least, and he was moving up to Junior High stuff. Nagisa was impressed, not only because it was these kind of subjects that had once confused him enough to get him thrown into 3E, but also that Daichi really did seem to be sticking with his ambition.

“I love you, Dad,” he said when he was done, leaning over to give him a hug.

Nagisa froze up. “What did you just say?”

Daichi flushed. “‘Daddy’ sounds like something little kids would say. A-and I’m gonna be nine soon!”

Nine years old. It didn’t long ago at all that he was just that tiny helpless baby who couldn’t say anything at all. His feelings on growing up were mixed, he liked that Daichi was truly becoming his own person, but he couldn’t help but feel nostalgic. All of a sudden, it felt like his life was going so fast, and he was barely even holding on for the ride.

Which probably also had something to do with the fact that he wasn’t exactly in a permanent career right then. Nagisa had already started to go a little mad with doing nothing for so long, returning to work once he was physically able to wasn’t even a question. Except, once again, for the time of year it was, teaching positions weren’t the easiest to come by. So, a substitute agency was the easiest choice, if he didn’t want the gap on his resume to get even bigger.

It wasn’t really what Nagisa enjoyed, though. He valued actually building a significant bond with his students, and it was hard to do that in a single day or just a matter of weeks. The only thing he could tell himself was that it was good experience, at the least. This way he got to teach a variety of students from different backgrounds and ages. It still wasn’t what he wanted to do for long, though.

“You’ll figure it out,” Karma had said when he complained, getting back to his comedically high tower of extra paperwork. Nagisa was pretty sure he was still pulling the ‘bedridden’ card to get out of spending time with his co-workers.

It didn’t come to Nagisa though. A part of him felt a little pathetic, that he was even jealous of his son for having such direct ambitions. Even Karma had focuses that mattered. Sending in applications blindly, hoping that his lack of experience and significant break would be overlooked in favour of his… one good reference… it was a hard reality to face that it wasn’t that easy.

Actually, it was an offhanded suggestion of Kayano’s that really got him thinking.
“Sounds tough,” she’d said, her image over the face call framed by palm trees and some sort of studio building. He was glad they could still talk every now and then, despite her busy schedule of work mixed with her recent move to Los Angeles. “Why don’t you just make your own school?”

He’d almost dropped his phone. “What do you mean?”

Kayano laughed. “I don’t think it’s that surprising. If you want to teach the way you want. Your own place seems like the best place to control that.”

“I-it’s not that simple!” His mind was reeling. “You can’t just open a school? There’s… checks… and you also need a place for that!”

“Well,” she smiled, “I happen to know of a building that we own, which is pretty much purpose built to be a school.”

“I couldn’t-“

“Well not?” She laughed again, a mad glint in her eye. “Korosensei wouldn’t want it to just sit empty- Looks like my director’s calling me!”

It was just an off hand suggestion, but it stuck with Nagisa, playing on his mind. That classroom was like a time capsule for them all… it would feel weird to change it. And he’d definitely have to change a lot of things to make it functional, it had been several years after all and the building was run down to begin with. He’d even started to make a list, which was crazy because he couldn’t really do it… could he?

Well, he was definitely thinking about it. And also thinking about asking Chiba for his opinion on structural improvements.

“I’m home,” Karma said, knocking the rest of his thoughts away.

Nagisa turned his head over the back of the sofa. “How was your day?”

He removed his shoes, dropping his brief case by the door. That usually meant he was either tired or annoyed. Probably a combination of both. “How was yours?”

“One of my students attempted to thumb tack my chair,” he said, “I’m surprised that’s still even a thing.”

“They’re classics because they work,” Karma said, flopping down beside him.

He had an open letter in his hand, which caught Nagisa’s curiosity. “What’s that?”

“Letter from the government,” he shrugged, “letting us know that we have a year to register a full bond.”

“Oh,” Nagisa wasn’t really paying attention. He vaguely remembered seeing something like it before.

“Hmm,” Karma thought aloud. “They’re probably going to keep sending these letters. Unless we actually bonded, of course.”

Nagisa jolted at the mention. Although he knew Karma wasn’t asking that of him, just the idea of it made him feel odd. By all means, after they had finally talked, their relationship had mostly been without issue. The biggest fight they’d had was which TV show to watch. It was so refreshing and
light, and Nagisa’s life had somehow fallen into a state that felt perfect to him. The idea of that changing terrified him.

Sure, on paper, right then they were basically mated. They had pretty much all the same benefits as everyone else, bite or no bite. Though Nagisa didn’t exactly smell fully ‘claimed’, Karma’s alpha scent was all over him enough that his presence would be clear to anyone. Though he still wasn’t sure how comfortable he was with that, either, having suppressed for so long. He’d figured a while ago that the light suppressant, which only stopped his heats rather than the rest of his characteristics, was good enough. There were less side effects, though it was strange to walk around with his omega characteristics on display, even if he had to use normal scent blocker for work.

In reality, at that point it had been almost nine years since he signed those papers, thinking only of Daichi and how to take care of his immediate future. The contract between he and Karma had only been a small detail in the back of his mind, a clock that was slowly but surely ticking away. Recently, he hadn’t actually considered what would happen when it hit zero.

Karma shrugged again, though, and that was the end of it.

At least for a few days. Nagisa was spending a regular evening grading papers, and Daichi had already decided he was bored enough to take himself off to bed. Though Nagisa was sure he wasn’t actually sleeping. He dreaded to think what would happen when Daichi was old enough for a smart phone, with the internet adding far too much to do. When Karma eventually came home, he smelt ever so vaguely of an izakaya, and there was an exhausted look in his eyes. Nagisa knew what he needed right then, at least, and turned the TV to something easy to watch, just accepting it as Karma rested his head on his shoulder.

They were mostly silent, idly watching what turned out to be some kind of romantic drama. It didn’t matter really, Nagisa was just concerned Karma was pushing himself too far again. He was so glad his own career didn’t come with the same kind of overt ‘after work drinks’ expectation. Not that Karma ever really drunk at them, apparently he had ways to get around it and leave early, but it was still enough that it bothered the both of them.

“Hey Nagisa,” Karma sighed, “you ever want something like that?”

On the screen, the couple were discussing their bonding ceremony. So this was a really old fashioned show? Most people didn’t really bother with it anymore, as far as he knew, but in older times there was usually more to becoming mated than just a bite in the heat of the moment. It was definitely more private than a wedding ceremony, but it had always seemed a little weird to him.

“How much did you have to drink?” Nagisa wrinkled his nose.

Karma pulled away, not looking at him properly. “Not more than half a beer. I left the second I could make an excuse.” He stared down, before meeting his eyes again. “This talking thing, it’s good for us, right?”

Nagisa smiled. “Yes, I think so.”

“I was just thinking,” he said slowly, “since that letter. Maybe, since we already did all that paperwork, at some point, if you wanted to, that I’d definitely be okay with that. I mean, it affects you more.”

His world somehow came crashing down on him. Karma had still talked around the subject, but he was still sure, Karma had basically just asked if he wanted to be claimed. Truly and officially.
Mated. Bonded. That he actually wanted to mark Nagisa as his, to the level where even his own biology would accept him. Somehow, that was the only possibility Nagisa hadn’t considered.

“-I need some air,” Nagisa responded shakily.

He practically stumbled his way onto their balcony. The cool breeze was far less soothing than he’d hoped it would be. In fact, it was so stark that it almost stabbed against his face, and somehow that was even more apt. Where was this coming from? Karma wouldn’t say that unless he’d thought about it. Which meant he’d thought about that.

“Hey,” Karma followed him anyway. “You can say no. If you want to wait a year or ten or never even do it at all, it doesn’t matter to me.”

Nagisa shivered. “Does it really, though? You wouldn’t bring it up, if it meant nothing.”

“Okay,” he sighed, “we’re already together, aren’t we? I suggested it because I already know I don’t want anything other than this.”

It was more than that, though. Everything had been so nice, for so long that Nagisa could barely even remember what not being together felt like. He was comfortable, happy, and he didn’t feel like things needed to change. Nagisa knew on a deep level that this was going to be it, for the rest of his life, it wasn’t even a question for him. Sure, bonding was the next logical step on paper, but… He didn’t know why, but he couldn’t say yes to that. Not right then, at least.

“Ask me again,” Nagisa said finally. “I can’t give you the answer you want right now. But ask me tomorrow, or next week, or even in five years.”

“Nagisa-“

“I don’t want to say no to you,” he breathed, “but I can’t say yes right now either. So ask me again.”

“Okay,” Karma practically beamed. “Then I’ll keep asking.”

Nagisa softened. “Come on, it’s cold out here. I’m okay now.”

Together, they headed back inside, though Nagisa reached over the sofa, turning the TV off. It may still be a little early, buy it was clear that both of them wanted nothing more than to just fall into bed. A strange kind of exhaustion was growing inside Nagisa, after that conversation, and he didn’t know how to feel about it.

“What do you want to check?” Karma asked.

It had become somewhat of a bad habit for them. They’d been so much, he just needed to know that Daichi was safe with his own eyes. So, together, they carefully approached their son’s bedroom door, pushing it open as slowly as they could to ensure the noise wouldn’t wake him up. Nagisa couldn’t help but sigh at the sight of his sleeping form, an open book across his chest, and Maki curled up at his feet.

Assassin stealth really came in handy, sometimes. He snuck in, quickly removing it, and Daichi rolled over onto his side, wild hair covering his eyes. Nagisa noted that he needed a haircut sometime soon. That didn’t matter, though. It was nice to see a look of peace on his face, the steady rise and fall of his chest.

Nagisa barely noticed that Karma had entered the room properly too, admiring him in the same
way.

“Look what we made,” he bent down to say directly into Nagisa’s ear, low enough that it wouldn’t wake him.

“Come on,” Nagisa turned, a proud smile on his face. “Let’s go to bed.”

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A few months later

Nagisa rubbed his bond bite anxiously. He had started doing that a lot, when Karma wasn’t actually there to calm him down. The mark wasn’t as sore as it had been whilst it was fresh, but there was still some sensation there. Unfortunately, it wasn’t really working right then.

He should have figured it out a week ago, really. In fact, he probably did, deep down. But, he was full of excuses about how this couldn’t be happening. Even though the same signs had been plaguing him. Honestly, he was a little afraid to confirm it, for this to become reality. There was no running away, though. After he’d spent the morning throwing up, Nagisa knew. Not how, exactly, it had happened - it really shouldn’t have been possible.

The sound of the timer going off on his phone felt more like a scream in their tiny bathroom. Plucking up his courage, Nagisa stood up, and stumbled over to sink. He took a deep breath, and studied the little stick. Then he looked at it again, because… he couldn’t be reading it right? Had he done something wrong? It wasn’t like he had to take an actual test himself last time.

The two, very clear lines were physical proof, though. Nagisa remembered back to those high school anatomy lessons where his teachers had claimed male omegas were a genetic mutilation who had no real chance of conceiving on their own. It was almost funny. Somehow, Nagisa had managed it twice without trying. It didn’t feel like much of an achievement. He was pregnant, again.

As if the universe was taunting him, the usual notification sound went off from his phone, instructing him to take his contraceptive and suppressant pills. Well, he had no need for that anymore. Nagisa wasn’t sure if suppressants were safe to take, so he supposed it was probably best to leave those. It wasn’t like he’d accidentally missed a day. He’d only forgotten twice before, and both of those times he’d banned any kind of sex for a week and half after.

Out of determined curiosity, he grabbed the most recent box, and for the first time took a hard look at the little leaflet it came with. Most of it was just the general instructions, ones he’d mastered completely after years of the things, and side effect warnings. Until he reached the end, which was just small print, Nagisa thought he’d wasted his time, and then he set his eyes upon it.

**Caution:** Due to a difference in hormones, these pills are not intended for use in conjunction with heat. For alternative options, please contact your doctor.

Well. Maybe Nagisa should have read that before.

Right on cue, he heard the front door twist and open. Nagisa swallowed, trying to think of the best way to get this out. There was no way he’d be able to hide it from Karma. He could scent the slightest amount of worry on him, there was no doubt he’d notice pregnancy. If he was… far enough along for sickness. It was only a matter of time.

“Welcome home,” Nagisa poked his head around the door like he was in some kind of comedy
sketch, “would you mind coming into the bathroom with me?”

Karma looked at him suspiciously. “What for?”

He wanted to sink into the floor. “I just need to talk to you in private!”

“You’re being weird again Dad,” Daichi said, still sitting at the kitchen table where Nagisa had left him.

“Get on with your homework,” Nagisa said, about as stern as he could manage.

“Yeah yeah,” Daichi rolled his eyes, a habit he’d picked up a week after his ninth birthday, and hadn’t stopped.

Perhaps Nagisa would tell him off for it later, if he had the emotional energy. There were bigger issues at hand, anyway. Karma looked almost frightened of him, before taking off his shoes with a little reluctance, and walking over to the bathroom. With no time to waste, Nagisa shut the door the second he was inside.

“Are you… okay?” His brows creased.

“I, uh-“ Nagisa hadn’t had time to plan how he was going to say it. He knew he probably looked ridiculous, right then. Immediately, he went to his last resort, and reached blindly for the test (which still rested in the sink), and practically shoved it in Karma’s face.

His expression… morphed, somewhat. “B-but…”

Deep down, Nagisa had really hoped that Karma wouldn’t freak out. “I wasn’t sure,” he said quietly.

“Okay…” Karma said slowly. And then he dropped it like hot coal. “Did you pee on this??!”

“I- That’s what you’re concerned with??!”

“This means…” He trailed off, as though going deep into thought for a moment.

“We-“ Before Nagisa could finish his sentence, or really begin it at all, Karma captured him into a hug, practically swallowing his entire body weight into his arms. At least his scent didn’t seem too traumatised. Falling into his warmth, Nagisa hugged back. He really appreciated the silent comfort.

“We’re going to have another baby!” Karma squeezed him.

Wait. Nagisa pulled back. “You’re… happy, about this?”

“Why wouldn’t I be?” His head tilted in confusion.

For one, they’d never even talked about it, but Nagisa had gathered neither of them particularly wanted another kid. Though this was for sure better circumstances than the last time, even at twenty four Nagisa still felt very young, not exactly prepared to have another baby. And although they ran far deeper than that, he and Karma had only been in an officially, squared relationship for just over a year.

Then again, Nagisa supposed that Karma being excited was a far preferable reaction to him being mad or seriously freaked out or something. They would be okay, he knew that. They weren’t just dumb teenagers anymore. Besides, as much as he adored Daichi with all his heart, sometimes he couldn’t help but miss when he was tiny and innocent, rather than too intelligent for his own good.
Finally, the dread faded away a little. “I guess I’m happy too.”

Karma smiled genuinely, and pulled him in again. “We’ll have to look for somewhere bigger to move to.”

“Huh?” Nagisa said, his face smudged into his chest. “What for? It seems like that’s exactly what we shouldn’t do… stress and everything.”

He pulled away properly, looking at him. “This place is a little small for a baby… plus we’ll have to put it somewhere eventually… I don’t think Daichan would be happy about sharing. I’m bored of renting, anyway. We’d probably end up saving a lot of money in the long term if we just buy a house.”

It was a lot to process all at once. Nagisa had only just got the positive pregnancy test. The fact that he was going to have a whole other child in, honestly, not that many months was enough to freak him out. But Karma’s mind had kicked into a whole other gear, and he was acting as though he was going to march down to a real estate agent’s right that second.

“We’ll find somewhere,” Nagisa returned his happy expression, and then looked down at his stomach. “All five of us.”

Karma’s eyes widened. “It’s twins?!”

“No!” Nagisa hit him in the shoulder. “Or, it better not be! I was talking about Maki.”

“I wouldn’t mind twins,” Karma shrugged.

“Just how many kids do you want?”

A devilish grin came across his face. “How many times are you willing to be pregnant?”

“I think twice is enough!” He turned his head away. “You’re acting like you want an army.”

“An army of Akabanes, huh?” Karma faltered, in the middle of his teasing. “If you still want to use that name.”

It took him just a moment to catch up with what Karma was saying. It hadn’t seemed like such a big deal, but he supposed it was true. Officially, they didn’t share the same family name. It hadn’t come up anywhere, when they registered their bond. Daichi not sharing Nagisa’s family name was more of a background fact. Whether this baby, which was an insane thought, would be known as ‘Akabane’ wasn’t even a debate for him.

“You know I don’t like ‘Shiota’, he explained. “Even though everything with my parents worked out, I guess it represents something to me.”

Karma blinked. “Why don’t you just use Akabane instead, since you hate it so much?”

“Huh?”

“We’re already mated,” he shrugged, “it’s not weird if you use it.”

“But that’s a marriage thing.”

“Okay then, let’s get married.”

Nagisa almost choked. What? Married?! He kind of wanted to throw up again.
“You can’t just ask me like that!”

He looked like he was seconds away from screaming. “I was suggesting.”

“You can’t just-“

“Why not?”

Nagisa stared at Karma, then, and he stared back. Why not?! Why… not? Huh. Karma had him in checkmate right there. What reason did he actually have to say no? It wasn’t like he and Karma weren’t already irrevocably linked for life, in more ways than one, as it was. Maybe it would be nice to call Karma his husband…

He didn’t realise his life was going to take such a crazy turn in the space of fifteen minutes.

“I kind of want to find an excuse to force Daichi into a suit,” Karma said. “And he’ll have to smile for the photos.”

“He’ll hate you.”

“Not if I let him be my best man, he won’t.”

Nagisa frowned. “Why does he get to be your best man? What about mine?”

“Is that a yes?”

Married, huh? If it was with Karma, it didn’t sound so bad. He’d have to think about the name thing, though. Akabane Nagisa felt like an alien concept… though he supposed it had a nice ring to it. Speaking of rings…

“Most people plan these things,” he folded his arms. “Proposals, marriage, babies.”

Karma grinned. “But we’ve never been ‘most people’ now, have we, Nagisa?”

And he wouldn’t want it any other way.

-Fin-

Chapter End Notes

Don’t fret- there’s still the epilogue to go!

I can hardly believe I’m writing this note.

Over two years of my life… officially over? To tell the truth, this entire story literally originated from me making a joke to my friend about teen pregnancy fanfiction. A joke which somehow, I couldn’t get out of my head. Before this… I had a really big problem with actually finishing stuff. I’m great at coming up with a ton of ideas, but I usually move on too quickly to commit to seeing one through to the end. This is the first time I’ve ever finished something that’s not a one shot.

I think a big part of why this fic, in particular, is due to the reception it’s had. Honestly, I did not think the teen mpreg that was originally supposed to be kind of
crack was going to become this well loved by so many people. Not only loved, but I know that it’s really meant something to a lot of you. Really I just want to say thank you, because all of your comments and support have seriously kept me going through everything. Whether you’ve been here from the start, you’re just reading now, or even if you’ve found this fic long in the future- thank you. I’m not kidding when I say it’s meant the absolute world to me.

Two years is a really long time, actually. In terms of my life, I’ve been through so much in that time. Starting University, moving to Japan, moving BACK from Japan because of corona… it’s been a lot. This fic has been written in at least four different countries, on aeroplanes, subways, trains- even in a nightclub one time. Consistently, it’s been on my mind, and it’s really crazy that the ending is finally out there now.

I kind of want to sleep for another two years to make up for it now.

I don’t want to say too much more, but really, it means a lot to me that I was able to entertain you all for so long. So, for the last time, thanks for reading!
“Daichi,” Nagisa peered up at his son. “Don’t you want to check your bags one more time?”

Shifting on his feet, Daichi slid his phone into his pocket. “We’ve checked them five times already.”

“It’s just,” he interjected, mind full of worry, “if your Papa gets done with those secure wrapping people, you really won’t be able to open them again… What about when you land?! You- you won’t be able to get hold of scissors or anything!”

Daichi pressed his lips together. “They have Seven Eleven in Massachusetts.”

“But you’ll be tired.”

Maybe Nagisa was overreacting just a little. Daichi being able to open his suitcases was probably the least of his issues. Actually, his biggest issue that was his son was moving half way around the planet. Moving out to go to a university in Tokyo was one thing Nagisa had been mentally preparing himself for a while, but going to study in America for the next eight years had taken him completely by surprise.

Not that Nagisa minded. Any sane person would be unbelievably proud that their son was going to study at Harvard, especially in something as competitive as medicine. If there was one thing he knew as a parent, having been brought up the way he had, it was that holding his kids back from their dreams was the worst thing to do. Karma was… admittedly less thrilled.

“What’s taking so long?” Daichi tapped his foot impatiently. “What’s Papa doing, sneaking in contraband so I get sent straight back to Japan or something?”

“He… he wouldn’t do that,” Nagisa replied, disliking the lack of confidence there.

The mystery behind his husband’s whereabouts were solved, then, at the sound of the luggage trolley. Karma was pushing the multiple large suitcases, with their daughter perched on top of one of them, pretty easily. He must have said something sarcastic, because she started laughing, blue pigtails bouncing as she moved her head.

Daichi frowned. “Why are they bright green?”

Karma’s eyes narrowed. “So you don’t lose them. Also that was the only colour.”

“Hmph.”

All eyes went down to the luggage trolley.

Daichi rolled his eyes, before crouching down to her level. “Kaguya…”

“I told you we weren’t talking,” she folded her arms.

Daichi tilted his head. “You just spoke to me, though. You can’t want to keep it up that badly-“

Her golden eyes flew wide. “I don’t want you to go!”
Honestly, Kaguya had definitely taken the news the worst out of everyone. Unfortunately, both of them were just as stubborn as each other. Daichi had had his heart set on leaving for a long time, and Kaguya had her heart on protesting it. Nagisa feared how weird it was going to be for her, around the house. It was going to be weird for everyone though.

Daichi flicked her on the nose. “You sure?”

Determination set in Kaguya’s eyes. However, she misjudged her position, and ended up falling off the trolley as she tried to get him back. Daichi laughed at her, which was encouragement enough for her to jump right back up on her feet, at start to chase him. No, even though Daichi was already eighteen, he didn’t seem to care about the fact they were being somewhat of a social nuisance.

He caught her eventually, swooping her up into a piggy back, and by the looks of things the betrayal of his leaving was momentarily forgotten. “You wanna come to the check in desk with me? Let’s go-“

“Wait-“ Nagisa tried, but Daichi had already sped behind them, taking the cart with him into the line. “I guess he doesn’t need us to help, then.”

“Wow,” Karma said, “he’s really not sad at all.”

Nagisa looked over at them wistfully. “I’m worried he’ll get homesick.”

Karma huffed. “I hope he does, and comes crawling back in a month.”

His eyes narrowed as he stared at Karma. “You don’t really mean that.”

“Maybe I-“ Karma pouted. “He’s our baby, Nagisa.”

“That’s a pretty big baby…” He smiled, though. “It’s not like we’re going to be alone, anyway. I’m sure Kaguya’s going to take the opportunity to be twice as loud as usual.”

“What if he wants to stay there forever? What if he gets shot-“

Nagisa sighed, observed Karma for a second, and reached up at just the right moment, jabbing him at just the right place in the throat. He seized up for just a moment, before the tension left his shoulders and he finally calmed down. Nagisa didn’t have to pull that trick on him often, but after seven years of marriage, and almost ten of being bonded mates, there were times when it was necessary.

“He’s going to be okay,” Nagisa reaffirmed. “Part of being a parent is that you have to stop at some point and let them take their own steps.”

“What book did you read that out of?” But Karma clearly wasn’t up to teasing anyone right then. “I thought we’d get two more years at least.”

He stared over at Daichi handing his passport over. “Something tells me he’ll be back before we know it.”

It seemed that Karma didn’t have anything further to say, but he did bend himself down, resting his head on Nagisa’s shoulder from behind. He couldn’t have been too comfortable like that, which meant that he really wasn’t feeling that great about it still. Nagisa tried his best, though, leaning back against him in a way that was supposed to be reassuring.

“Alright,” Daichi re-approached them, Kaguya now off his back. “T-that’s my last call to go
through border security.”

He eyed them both up, for a second, before flinging himself at Karma. Just like he was still an over excited child. Well, Karma had made a deal with him many years ago that Daichi was allowed to hug him like that until the day he grew taller than him. At 180cm, that wasn’t looking very likely for him. Every since he presented as an alpha, it was like his growth hormone had woken up after lying dormant since his birth, and he’d shot up practically overnight. It had definitely slowed in the past two years, though, so the likelihood was going to have to wait to see if Karma shrunk a little in old age.

Somehow, Nagisa knew that Karma didn’t mind that fact.

Then, Daichi came over to him, bending over to practically envelop Nagisa with his body. Yes, it was slightly embarrassing that his son was so much bigger than him. Nagisa looked less and less like his actual father with every day that went by. He sincerely hoped Kaguya wouldn’t get that big, but at almost nine years old she was already getting uncomfortably close to meeting his shoulder height.

“I’m gonna miss you,” Daichi said as he pulled away, and Nagisa could see a tear at the corner of his eye.

“Come on,” Nagisa tried to force his breathing to be steady. “You’ll have a great time. But, uh, remember! No frat parties, no drinking, no drugs, eat at least five fruits a day, call us the second you land-“

“Dad.”

“R-right,” he stopped. It wasn’t just Karma who was allowed to worry. “But most importantly, remember how much we love you.”

Daichi hugged them both at the same time, then, with Kaguya managing to get slightly in the middle of it too.

“Goodbye, everyone,” he turned, just waving over his shoulder once as he headed for the boarder check point.

He’s going to be okay, he’s going to be okay, he’s going to be o-

“I miss him already,” Nagisa said.

Beside him, Kaguya actually started crying. At least Karma was quick about it, at much more accustomed to tears at that point than he used to be. He picked her up in a quick swoop, and she clung on, looking over his shoulder. You couldn’t really see past where the entrance to security was, though, which meant one thing. Daichi was pretty much gone.

“You know what we should do?” Karma said. “We should go buy a dog.”

Nagisa frowned. “Karma-“

“It’s not like we don’t have room now. Isn’t that what most people do, convert their kids’ bedrooms into home gyms or something? A puppy room would be fun, right, Kaguya?” She only whimpered in response. “Maki’s gonna need another friend-“

“We are not getting a dog.“
They get a shiba inu named Pancake.

Kaguya uses the kanji: 赫映. And yes, she is named after the moon princess.

Of course, this isn't IT. Make sure you check out the one shots (they should already be linked as part of this series) as they will delve into a bunch of stuff! Don't miss out on Kaguya's dramatic birth, The Condom Incident, or... perhaps... if there are ever grandkids?

Also, if you haven't already, feel free to join the discord: https://discord.gg/VTHQhHa

My main tumblr is Livixbobbiex but my ass class blog and the one I used to discuss this fic is right here.

I recently changed discords so if you want to discuss my fics with me directly, please join this this link (and ignore all others)

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!