“And why should we work together?”

That was the first thing that came out of Ouma’s mouth when they explained their next assignment to them. At first everyone fell silent, but then he spoke up.

“This is to strengthen our bonds!” Akamatsu exclaimed. “We’re supposed to become friends instead of always fighting! Isn’t a friendly rivalry better?”

“Haaa? Seems like a pain to me!” Ouma replied with a cheerful smile. “We’re soon going to become enemies again, right? It’s useless to play games like this, Akamatsu-chan!”

“Ouma-kun, please, stop causing problems only because you find it funny,” Saihara sighed.

“Like expected from Saihara-chan! I was only joking. I’m all ears, Akamatsu-chan!”

Saihara just really wanted to go back to his room and sleep some more.
Saihara and Akamatsu are composers for two popular idol groups. When their next assignment turns out to be a collaboration between them, they expect nothing but trouble. What Saihara didn't expect was that in the meantime he'd also have to deal with his feelings towards the most problematic idol of them all.

Notes

Happy Saiouma Day everyone!! I really wanted to post some saioumas today, and I only had this multichaptered fic, so I decided to let the world see it, haha

You don't need to know utapri to read it, just treat it as an ordinary idol au! All you need to know is that all of them are about 19/20 years old here and have known each other for years, since they used to attend the same school.

See the end of the work for more notes
“This isn’t a good idea,” Saihara muttered, staring at the empty sheet of paper lying on the table in front of him.

“Of course it isn’t,” Akamatsu confirmed, her expression just as gloomy as his. Somehow she managed to push the responsibility of making the list onto him, so he was the one holding a pen.

Of course it wasn’t a good idea. Of course. They both knew it, and yet they had to do it.

“Why would they even want us to form units like this? Our groups are rivals. TWILIGHT☆MYSTERY doesn’t even belong to the same agency as DAYLIGHT×COMET. There’s no reason for us to work together,” Saihara said, making eye contact with her. “We should—”

“If our superiors decided we’re doing it, then we’re doing it,” she replied. “Also, there’s definitely a reason. Think, Saihara-kun. You’re smart enough to come up with one.”

“I just… would’ve preferred to have something to say in this case,” he sighed, glancing at the sheet of paper again. “They just want to put us against each other. By forming duet units, they’re supposed to learn about the weak sides of their temporary partner and use it against them later.”

“This is exactly what they’re thinking.” Akamatsu seemed to be on the verge of an emotional breakdown, as she just put her hands on the sides of her head, pulling at her blonde hair. “I know we’re both trying to win that stupid award, but this is going too far.”

Even if she said that… Saihara was pretty sure a lot of members of their groups would go along with that plan. They weren’t exactly on good terms, ever since the Academy days, when the group Saihara formed and became a composer of, TWILIGHT☆MYSTERY, got to graduate and debut first. After this, Akamatsu and her band started working with another agency… and that’s how they ended up like this.

He and Akamatsu were a completely different case though. There was no way childhood friends like them would fall out because of such a reason... right?

“I can’t do this, Saihara-kun. I just can’t,” Akamatsu said, completely giving up and resting her cheek on the table. “I just can’t make any of the boys work with Chabashira-san. I’m sorry.”

Saihara could only think that his job was going to be much harder than this. He could swear that he almost heard the mischievous laughter he would definitely prefer not to hear, even though that person wasn’t even around. They were in DAYLIGHT×COMET’s dorms after all, occupying the living room.

Just when he was about to give up too, the door opened and a girl with short, gray hair entered the room, holding a tray with two mugs.

“Good evening, Saihara-san. Akamatsu-san told me about the task you’ve been assigned to, so I decided to make you coffee,” she said with a smile, placing the mugs on the table next to them. “You’re working really hard.”

“Toujou-san… Help us…” Akamatsu whined, raising her head from the table. “What would you do in our place?”

Saihara didn’t want to admit, but the moment she asked the question he got his hopes up. Toujou
was the most responsible person in Akamatsu’s group after all.

“There’s no need to worry so much, everyone,” she replied calmly. “Just think about who gets along with whom the best, and whose voices will sound good together. Don’t rush anything.”

“It’s easy to just say this…” Saihara sighed again. “Does Hoshi-kun even get along with any of the girls? I say in advance that Iruma-san is out of question.”

“Oh, when it comes to Hoshi-san, I can easily handle this,” Toujou stated. “It’s only one song. I’m sure we can create something good together, as our taste in music seems to be similar.”

“Are you… sure, Toujou-san? Sometimes he’s really uncooperative,” Saihara asked to make sure, but he was ready to write Hoshi and Toujou’s names down next to each other.

“He’s certainly less uncooperative than Ouma-san,” the girl replied. “You can leave Hoshi-san to me.”

“What are we going to do about Ouma-kun though?!?” Akamatsu cried. “He might be the one with the most experience and probably biggest amount of fans, but no matter who we pair him up with, it’ll be a nightmare!”

Saihara couldn’t deny that, Ouma really was… exceptional. TWILIGHT☆MYSTERY had no official leader, so when they needed one it was usually Ouma or Momota who would take that role, but if he was to choose the one doing a better job at it, it was the former. It was always him, always in the center of attention… Well, probably because he was doing everything he could to attract it.

He always was like this. It was embarrassing to admit now, but Saihara and Akamatsu both used to be his fans… It was a long time ago, before even meeting him though… since for him, the career as an idol started much earlier than for the other members. Then they went through that whole ordeal with Ouma withdrawing from his idol life, enrolling the same school for beginners as them and pretending to be his own non-existent twin. What was his excuse? Apparently he lost his motivation for music and was looking for another one, but who knows if that was the truth.

Now that Saihara was thinking about it… he really was a pain in the neck, since the very beginning. Working with him only made it more obvious.

“Okay, when it comes to Ouma-kun, I’m crossing out Harukawa-san, Chabashira-san and Iruma-san in advance,” he said without hesitating much. “Though I doubt this helps much.”

“You’re panicking too much and forgetting about one very important thing,” Toujou stated in response. “Even Ouma-san has his weak points. If Saihara-san asks him to behave, I’m sure he will at least try to obey.”

“Why would he though?”

“Because you’re the only one he listens to, Saihara-kun,” Akamatsu said, suddenly sounding more motivated. “Toujou-san is right! Even someone like him has soft spots we can attack! We can do it!”

“Then who do you suggest we should pair up with Shinguji-kun?” Saihara asked, watching her smile falter.

“…”

“…”
“You know what, we should talk about Amami-kun first.”

“That’s a good idea.”

“I wish you two good luck…”

***

“And why should we work together?”

That was the first thing that came out of Ouma’s mouth when the next day they explained their next assignment to both of the groups. At first everyone fell silent, but then Ouma spoke up.

“This is to strengthen our bonds!” Akamatsu exclaimed, ignoring the cold tone of his voice. “We’re supposed to get to know each other better and become friends, instead of always fighting! Isn’t a friendly rivalry better?”

“Haaa? Seems like a pain to me!” Ouma replied with a cheerful smile. “We’re soon going to become enemies again, right? It’s useless to play games like this, Akamatsu-chan!”

“Ouma-kun, please, stop causing problems only because you find it funny,” Saihara sighed, making his face go blank, then laugh again.

“Like expected from Saihara-chan! I was only joking. I’m all ears, Akamatsu-chan!”

Saihara just really wanted to go back to his room and sleep some more. He could swear he heard Toujou giggle from across the room, as if he already won this, but he knew it wasn’t going to be that easy. The real problems would start later.

“Nyeh, no one cares what Ouma has to say anyway!” Yumeno spoke up, annoyance on her face. “If we have nothing to say anyway, just tell us the teams and let’s get this over with!”

“Come on, everyone, I’m sure it won’t be that bad!” Momota said, making both of the composers sigh in relief. If Momota was on their side, it was going to be okay. “Let’s forget that we’re rivals once in a while and just have fun with this!”

“Momota-chan says this as if it really was this easy,” Ouma replied. “We’re in the same band and we’re still fighting over every small thing!”

“No, it’s you who’s trying to pick up fights with me. I’m ignoring you.”

“Don’t pay attention to those idiots, Akamatsu. Like Yumeno said, just tell us what the units are so we can start working,” Harukawa interrupted them. She was actually getting along with Momota, but Ouma was driving her insane…

“Aw, Harumaki-chan, I thought at least you’d understand me!”

“One more word and you’re dead.”

Others were mostly just listening to them with tired expressions, and honestly, Saihara could relate. He really did feel bad for the person they picked for Ouma, but on the other hand… There was no one else who could handle him.

Not that this poor girl could, but at least Saihara and Akamatsu could handle that duet together.
“We shouldn’t fight, everyone. Akamatsu-san said it, we should get along!” Gonta suddenly exclaimed, making everyone’s expressions soften a little bit. Even if they were all rivals, it was just hard to dislike him. Saihara was kind of grateful for his presence.

“Thank you, Gonta-kun,” Akamatsu said, raising the sheet of paper she and Saihara filled out yesterday. “Let me announce the units then. Gonta-kun… You’ll be with Shirogane-san. I hope it’s okay.”

“Oh thanks god…” The blue haired girl muttered. “I’m so glad… I’m looking forward to working with you, Gonta-kun.”

“Me too, Shirogane-san!”

“Chabashira-san…” At the sound of her name said girl seemed to had stopped breathing, only to let out a sigh of relief. “You’ll be with Amami-kun.”

“Well, Tenko can’t say she’s very happy about this whole thing, but if she had to choose, she’d choose Amami-san too.”

“Let’s do our best, Chabashira-san…”

“Yeah, yeah, sure.”

“Toujou-san already knows about it, but her partner is going to be Hoshi-kun,” Akamatsu continued. “I guess I can live with this…” He said, looking neither pleased, nor awfully disappointed.

“Iruma-san will be with Kiibo-kun.”

“You know, Akamatsu-chan, even I feel bad for Kiiboy now!” Ouma exclaimed, even though everyone knew he was the one to usually bully Kiibo.

“Shut up, you little shit!” Iruma stood up from her seat, ready to fight him, but luckily Kiibo stopped her.

“Iruma-san, please, watch your language…”

“Shinguuji-kun….”

Everyone in the room seemed to hold their breath now.

“Shinguuji-kun will be with Angie-san,” Akamatsu finished her sentence, but her tone was making it obvious it wasn’t an easy choice.

“Angie is with Korekiyo? Well, it’s not like she can’t handle this,” she sighed.

“Don’t worry, Yonaga-san, I’m certain together we can create a song our fans will enjoy,” he stated, but nobody felt comforted.

In addition, Harukawa looked like she was ready to murder someone… and it was understandable, considering that only Momota and Ouma were left.

“This must mean I’m with Harumaki, right?” Momota was faster than them, as if trying to save her from the terrible fate. Or maybe save Ouma from dying so young.

“Ah, actually… Yeah, me and Saihara-kun decided it’s safe to put you two together. Not only
because you get along, but also because we think your voices will sound really nice in a duet song.” Akamatsu explained, trying to avoid making things awkward for them. It wasn’t their intention to play matchmakers.

“Nyeh… Does that mean…”

“…me and Yumeno-chan…”

“…are supposed to work together?!”

Ouma and Yumeno yelled the last sentence in sync, making a few of them laugh, but neither of those two looked amused.

“Akamatsu-chan, Saihara-chan… If you even suggest us to make this a love song, I’m going to kill both of you, and then die by Chabashira-chan’s hand,” Ouma deadpanned, staring Saihara in the eyes and making him feel somewhat nervous. Nobody liked to have Ouma stare at them for too long, except for his fans, and Saihara stopped being one a long time ago.

“At least you know your situation, you degenerate male,” Chabashira hissed.

“Ouma-kun… This is exactly why we put you and Yumeno-san together. You can make a song about literally anything,” Akamatsu sighed. “Use your imaginations, you’re usually the most creative ones.”

“Hmm… But Ouma-kun, aren’t you normally okay with love songs?” Saihara asked before he could stop himself. He didn’t know if that’s something he should be proud of, but he knew all of his songs. Every single one until now. Hell, he probably wrote the music for like half of them, and knew the lyrics by heart…

Even if he stopped being a mere fan of Ouma Kokichi, he still found him incredibly talented and loved listening to his voice, that was the undeniable truth. That’s why he knew a lot of his lyrics were, indeed, love songs.

“Eh? I don’t know what you’re talking about, Saihara-chan! Me? Love songs? Never!” Saihara could swear that there was a faint blush on his cheeks, but it was still barely visible and he couldn’t be sure. “I could never write a lo-“

“He’s gay as hell and writes his love songs for you, Saihara. End of the story,” Harukawa interrupted him with a straight face, making Saihara’s cheeks go red in turn.

“W-What are you even talking about??”

“Eeeh?! Harumaki-chan, you traitor! I thought my secret was safe with you!” Ouma cried, and that was it. When Harukawa said it, for a moment Saihara thought it was the truth, but seeing that liar confirm it so easily discarded all of his hopes.

“Wait, hopes…?”

“What secret? We all know you’re thirsting for Shittyhara, you stupid twink!” Iruma screeched, but got ignored yet again.

“If it wasn’t for Yumeno, I would’ve slaughtered you,” Harukawa said, glaring at Ouma. “Be happy you’re still alive.”

“Saihara-chan, I really don’t like this assignment... Can we talk to the president again and try to
“Stop making Akamatsu-san’s work more difficult!” Chabashira joined the chaos, and Saihara could already feel his head starting to hurt.

“I suggest we all stopped making so much noise…” Shirogane pinched the bridge of her nose. “Chabashira-san, we should appreciate Saihara-kun’s work too…”

“Huh? Why?”

“Calm down, everyone.” Toujou clapped her hands, making everyone go quiet. Only she could have that much power in that chaotic group. “Now that we all know our assigned partner, I think we should start discussing with them what kind of song we want to create, right? I’m sure we can count on Akamatsu-san and Saihara-san’s help, but let’s not leave everything to them and have a concept ready before talking about the music with them.”

“Sound like a reasonable idea,” Shinguuji replied. “I assume our part is the main concept and lyrics?”

“Exactly,” Akamatsu agreed, glad that this was finally going somewhere. “We don’t know yet in which order we should go, so if you think you’re ready to discuss your song with us, just hit me or Saihara-kun up.”

“Ahahaha, sure thing! Come on, Korekiyo! If Angie really has to be with you for this project, let’s at least make a hit that even God will hum!” Angie laughed cheerfully, grabbing him by his sleeve and dragging out of the room.

“She really has… a lot of energy,” Saihara sighed, wishing it could be him. “You don’t have to hurry so much. You can think about it on your own before consulting your partner…”

Most of the remaining group just nodded, slowly standing up from their places and leaving the room. Some of them, like Shirogane and Gonta, left together, but the rest seemed to need some time to themselves.

“Welp, see you later, Saihara-chan!” Ouma sent him a smile before leaving, then ran out of the room, muttering something about ‘taking Yumeno-chan on a date’.

“He can’t be serious… right?” Saihara asked Akamatsu, who stayed behind with him.

“Oh course he isn’t. When is he even serious?” She replied, annoyance clear on her face. “First of all, he’s not stupid enough to do something like this under Chabashira-san’s nose. He’s bratty, but terribly smart.”

“Right… You’re right,” he said, but couldn’t help feeling a little uneasy.

He wondered why.

***

He spent the next few hours with Akamatsu, discussing ideas and suggestions they could offer to those units who would have trouble coming up with something for themselves. Amami and Chabashira seemed like a duo what would need a little push… and some of the other teams too, to be honest.

The only unit they skipped consisted of Ouma and Yumeno, since they just knew it’s not ideas that was going to be the problem in their case. They shared some similarities, like being the creative ones.
in their respective groups, as well as the ‘cute’ ones… Though Ouma was incomparably more hardworking, no matter how much of a prankster he seemed to be. It was one of the things Saihara managed to learn about him, so he was sure that team was eventually going to be fine.

When Akamatsu finally decided to go back to her dorms he was almost happy about that. They stayed up late last night, too… Sometimes he was wondering whether choosing a job like that was even a good idea. Managing an idol group like TWILIGHT☆MYSTERY was simply exhausting. It wasn’t like the effects of his work didn’t bring him joy though, so he continued to endure it.

One part of Saihara’s mind wanted to just go to sleep, but the other was convinced he shouldn’t waste his time… Though when he finally reached his room, he knew neither of those things were possible. The muffled sounds of a piano coming from behind the door were enough for him to realize what was going on.

“Ah, Saihara-chan! You’re finally back!” Ouma spoke up, the song stopping abruptly.

“…how did you even get in here? I’m pretty sure I locked the door when I was leaving,” he said, trying not to sound exhausted.

“Are you sure about that? I just decided to stop by and then discovered you forgot to lock the door! How forgetful of you, Saihara-chan! Something could’ve happened! So I decided to stay here and look after your room, and at the same time after your piano…” The purple-haired boy continued talking, making him feel even more tired.

“…so you lock picked again,” he concluded. It wasn’t the first time he found Ouma in his room – sleeping while curled up on his bed, reading his books, playing his piano… For some reason, Ouma seemed to like it more than his own room.

“Tch, you figured me out again. How boring,” Ouma replied. “To think that you used to believe me at first…”

“It was only at first. Why do you keep breaking into my room in the first place, Ouma-kun?”

“It’s a very nice room, just like the owner! I like spending time here because I love Saihara-chan so much!” He said cheerfully, grinning at him and forcing Saihara to think about those unidentified feelings again. “That’s a lie of course! I was simply bored.”

_Figures._ Ouma had to be kept constantly busy, otherwise weird things were starting to happen around. Amami probably knew about it the best, since the two of them shared a room back in the Academy days… Right now there was no need for it and it was rare for anyone to share a room with someone else, so Ouma was living alone.

“Sorry, Ouma-kun, I’m not really in the mood to play with you now… So if you don’t have anything you need to discuss with me immediately… I would appreciate it if you let me rest a little.”

Ouma stared at him for a moment, an unreadable expression on his face, then smiled again.

“Actually, I came here to thank my beloved Saihara-chan.”

“T-Thank me? For what?”

“Wasn’t it your idea to pair me up with Yumeno-chan? I’m pretty sure that if it was Akamatsu-chan to decide about it, it wouldn’t end up well for me.”

Saihara blinked, not expecting that. How did he know? “Well, it indeed was my idea… I was also
“Ah, Angie-chan would also be cool! She has tons of amazing ideas, but I think it’ll be easier to convince Yumeno-chan to do things my way,” Ouma stated happily, and Saihara wondered if he should start worrying now.

“I thought… that you’d be more opposed to the whole idea,” he muttered, finally sitting down on his bed.

“Well, it’s not that I like it. Working together with someone is always a pain, isn’t it? But since we had nothing to say about it anyway, I’ve accepted my fate. It could’ve been worse, you know. I could’ve ended up with Iruma-chan or Harukawa-chan,” Ouma explained, looking bored, then his lips stretched in a sinister grin. “Also, it may be a good chance to find a way to destroy them from the ins-“

“Ouma-kun.”

“Just kidding, Saihara-chan! I wouldn’t do that. They aren’t a threat to us anyway,” he laughed, running his fingers on the piano’s keys, not playing anything specific. Normally if someone other than him or Akamatsu touched his piano, Saihara would kick them out of the room. Normally. Ouma was a special case, since in addition to being an idol, he was a pianist too. “You look tired, Saihara-chan.”

“That’s because I am, Ouma-kun,” he sighed, laying down on his back. “That’s why I said I’m not in the mood to pl-“

“It’s okay! It’s not like I was planning on spending the whole day here, I have work to do too, and tomorrow I’m hosting a radio program with Amami-chan. You should take a nap, Saihara-chan! Do you want me to play a lullaby for you?” Ouma asked with a wide grin, and even though Saihara was sure he was being sarcastic, he also smiled to himself.

“Yeah, please.”

For a few seconds he didn’t get any answer, but after a moment Ouma began playing a slow, calm melody Saihara easily recognized as one of the first song he ever composed for him. Despite being so tired, a part of him was also happy Ouma still remembered that amateur ballad.

Listening to it was so relaxing that he slowly drifted off to sleep, choosing not to think about what Ouma was going to do next…

…what, just like always, was a mistake, as he later woke up with a doodle made with a marker on his stomach – Ouma not only drew his own head there, but also added a caption.

“This person is mine – Ouma Kokichi”

Well, he also woke up covered with a blanket, so maybe he could forgive him this time. It’s not like he had bad intentions, and Saihara was just too tired to get angry about something so silly.
a song about friendship

Chapter Notes

alternate title of this chapter: Saihara is struggling because he's the only sane person in this family

I actually intended to wait until Friday with posting the second chapter, but my dear friend Star agreed to help me beta it, so here we go!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Apparently the first team to go was really the Shinguuji and Angie duo, and Saihara didn’t know how to feel about that, especially when they summoned him and Akamatsu to Shinguuji’s room two days later.

“I can’t help but have a bad feeling about this,” Akamatsu muttered as they stood in front of said room. “Both of them can be quite…”

“Weird. That’s the word you’re looking for, Akamatsu-san.”

“Damn, how did you know?”

That’s when the door opened, allowing them to face a white-haired girl with pigtails. She seemed to be wearing the clothes labeled “no longer fine to wear in public, can be used when painting”, and they were already dirty with paint… in the color of bright pink, which was even more unsettling.

“Ah, Kaede, Shuuichi! Angie is glad to see you! Come in, come in!” She said, waving the paintbrush she had in her hand. Saihara and Akamatsu exchanged looks, then followed her inside.

What greeted them was a sight they would’ve preferred not to see. All furniture had been moved towards the walls, so the center of the room was empty… if they could really call it like this. The wooden floor was covered in pink paint, spread there to create some strange, circular shape. It almost looked like some transmutation circle from that one anime Shirogane made them watch during the Academy days.

The owner of the room, Shinguuji, looked as if he was about to lose his mind and throw Angie (or himself) out of the window.

“W-What the hell is this supposed to be?!” Akamatsu shouted, pointing at the paint on the floor.

“A ritual circle!”

“W-Why is it here!?”

“Angie painted it! Ah, and don’t worry, Kaede, this paint will come off easily, Angie will clean it up late-”

“This isn’t what I was worried about!” Akamatsu yelled. “Shinguuji-kun, please, explain it to me. At least try to make it sound like it makes sense.”
“Even I didn’t expect Yonaga-san to go this far…” He mumbled, closing his eyes. “Our idea was to create a song about a couple trying to revive the dead and give it some Halloween vibes, since this holiday happens to be soon, but Yonaga-san…”

“Nyahahaha, Angie just wanted to make it feel more authentic! If we actually tried it, we could make the song more emotional, riiright?”

“Shinguuji-kun, let me ask you a question…” Saihara finally spoke up. “What happens to the couple from the song?”

“According to what we have already written, one of them dies and haunts the other for the rest of their life,” Shinguuji explained.

Akamatsu seemed to be on the verge of tears, probably regretting putting those two together. Saihara in turn… was simply happy they didn’t pair up Angie and Ouma. That would’ve been an even bigger disaster.

“Angie-san, I don’t think this is a good idea,” he sighed. “Let’s clean this up first, then we can talk about the song… Go over your lyrics, think of the music… and how to make it less creepy.”

“Eeh? So Shuuichi doesn’t like the idea?” Angie seemed disappointed.

“The one who definitely won’t like the idea will be Momota-kun, when he hears about it,” Saihara replied.

“Saihara-kun is right,” Akamatsu said. “I’m really glad you came up with your own idea and actually already wrote something, so let’s work on it together and turn it into a masterpiece, okay?”

“If Akamatsu-san says so, I’ll put my trust in her. Despite being our rival, she wouldn’t do anything that would bring Yonaga-san any harm… right?” Shinguuji asked, caution in his voice. Well, if anyone was to doubt Akamatsu’s true intention, it was him and Ouma.

“First of all, of course I wouldn’t!” She exclaimed. “Second of all, I wish Saihara-kun’s group nothing but the best. I know he’s working hard for the sake of all of you, so I would never try to ruin his efforts!”

“What a passionate answer, kukuku…” Shinguuji laughed, making them exchange uneasy glances again. “Let us get to work then.”

And so, another day of Saihara’s suffering continued.

***

“Isn’t there anything more interesting for you to do than keep breaking into my room?”

“Do you really hate it so much?” Ouma seemed a bit hurt by his question… or maybe it was just acting. Most likely it was. “Am I not allowed to spend time in Saihara-chan’s room? That’s cruel… Even though I never did anything bad…”

“It’s not about you doing anything bad, it’s about my privacy,” Saihara replied, but it wasn’t actually the thing he had on his mind. For some reason his heart seemed to skip a beat upon finding Ouma, taking a nap on his bed again while holding onto his lyrics notebook. That most likely meant he was writing a song before he fell asleep…

For a brief moment Saihara thought that he wouldn’t have anything against Ouma sleeping in his bed
if only he could lay down next to him and just hold him close, but he quickly brushed that idea off.

“Waaaaaah!” Ouma’s answer was bursting into tears, of course. “Saihara-chan is so mean to me, even though… while he was playing with Akamatsu-chan, Angie-chan and Shinguuji-chan… I was working so hard the whole day!”

“Weren’t you just practicing choreography for your appearance in that TV show with Hoshi-kun and Kiibo-kun? I remember you saying that you already know it perfectly,” Saihara sighed, sitting down next to Ouma.

“I was lying! Dancing is hard when you’re as weak as me, Saihara-chan! It’s tiring! And being all sweaty is gross!” He whined, but then instantly stopped crying, confirming that those tears were fake. “Ah, but don’t worry, I took a shower before invading your private space, I smell really nice now. Wanna check?”

Did he just… ask Saihara to sniff him?

“No, thanks, it’s not necessary…”

“Aww, come on, don’t be so shy!” Ouma giggled mischievously, moving closer and then suddenly draping himself over Saihara’s back.

“O-Ouma-kun!” He didn’t even know how to react, feeling the other boy’s warmth against his body. Also… despite lying so often, he didn’t lie about smelling nice.

Thoughts like that were catching him more and more often, especially when Ouma was so close… so he decided to free himself from the pair of skinny arms.

“No, no, I won’t let you go so easily! Prepare yourself, Saihara-chan! Tickle attack!” He exclaimed before shamelessly putting his hands under his shirt and running them over his bare skin, forcing a muffled laughter out of him.

“O-Ouma-kun, p-please-“

“Haaaah? I can’t hear you, Saihara-chan, you have to speak louder!” He laughed as well, ignoring Saihara’s attempts of fighting back. “Come on, is this really enough to make your emo self laugh like this?”

It continued for a while, until Saihara was completely out of breath, but he was sure Ouma still wouldn’t let him go if it wasn’t for…

“Hey, Saihara-kun, I wanted to ask-“

…the door opening without any warning. Or maybe there was a warning, but they just ignored it. Anyway, Amami froze as soon as he noticed them, on the bed and most likely in a strange position, Ouma with his hands under Saihara’s shirt.

“Sorry for interrupting, I’ll stop by later,” he muttered with embarrassment written on his face, backing out and closing the door behind him.

“Wait, Amami-kun, it’s not like thi… Why are you laughing, Ouma-kun?!”

“B-Because… something like this is too cliché to actually happen! I can’t believe Amami-chan thinks we’re doing dirty stuff together!”
“Do you really have to put it like this!?”

“You’re right, Saihara-chan, I totally should be more careful about what I’m saying. We don’t want me to become like Iruma-chan, right? That would totally ruin my image. I would lose fans.” The amused expression instantly changed into a worried one, and Saihara wondered how he could even hope for anything more to be between them. He would have to be insane.

***

Luckily, working with Shirogane and Gonta was a lot easier than what they had to go through with Angie and Shinguuji. When they gathered in the girls dorms’ living room, they already seemed to have a first draft of their song.

“Well, since no one else seemed to like the idea of singing a love song, we thought we might volunteer to do that,” Shirogane explained, a little embarrassed. “We’re addressing songs to our fans anyway, right? It’s not like we’re singing it to each other.”

“Gonta doesn’t have anything against it! Gonta loves all of his friends, and fans, too!” He added cheerfully, and Saihara didn’t have the heart to once again tell him that love songs are usually about a different kind of love.

“Thanks god,” Akamatsu sighed, tears of relief in her eyes. “You’re both right, expressing your love for fans is important… I wish more of you were thinking that way…”

“Come on, Akamatsu-san, if we were all thinking the same way, it would quickly become plainly boring.” Shirogane shrugged with a smile. “The good things about our bands is how unique everyone is.”

Saihara skimmed through the lyrics Gonta and Shirogane showed them. They were actually really cute and would definitely make a good cheerful song about love and dreams – he could already catch himself trying to come up with a melody in his head.

“It probably needs some slight modifications, but it’s going to be a good song,” he said, smiling at the duo as they exchanged happy looks. “I’m sure everyone will like it.”

“Show me, Saihara-kun.” Akamatsu took the sheet of paper from him and read the lines written there. “I… think I’m going to cry. I’m so proud of you two.”

“Akamatsu-san, don’t cry! We want to make people happy, not sad!” Gonta exclaimed, looking a little worried, what moved the blonde girl even more.

“I wish I could work with you more often, Gonta-kun…”

***

The next pair to summon them were Chabashira and Amami. They took advantage of the fact that Saihara stayed in the girls’ dorms for a while longer, working on the music for Shirogane and Gonta with Akamatsu, and called them to Chabashira’s room.

“Wow, Chabashira-san, I didn’t expect you to let Amami-kun into your room!” Akamatsu said as they took seats around the table in her room, clearly teasing the other girl, but she decided to answer honestly.

“Spending time in a boy’s room would be even worse, so Tenko decided this was a safer option,” she sighed, making Amami let out a half-hearted laugh.
“You don’t have to be like this, Chabashira-san. My room is clean and there’s nothing strange about it,” he said, but it didn’t look like she believed him.

“Listen, Amami-san, Tenko is not that naive—” Chabashira began, but Saihara interrupted her quietly.

“He’s telling the truth. His room is probably the tidiest one among all the members of our group…”

“Living with Ouma-kun taught me a lesson.” Amami said with a sigh. “Ever since then, I never leave cleaning for later, even though we don’t share a room anymore…”

“I can’t believe that gremlin actually taught you something.”

“No, it’s more like… I always had to clean his mess as well. I didn’t mind it that much, I sort of came to treat him like a little brother, but…I’m still glad I don’t have to go through that anymore,” Amami explained, and for a moment even Chabashira seemed to be looking at him with something resembling sympathy.

“Ah, speaking of Ouma-kun, wasn’t he supposed to be on TV today? With Hoshi-kun and Kiibo-kun,” Akamatsu tried to change the topic a bit.

“Oh, you’re right,” Saihara muttered. “Chabashira-san, do you mind turning the TV on for a bit? He wouldn’t forgive me for the next week if I missed this.”

“I don’t really feel like watching my rivals perform, but fine.” She stood up and reached for the remote, fulfilling Saihara’s request.

It seemed like they had a good timing. Soon after the TV flickered and turned on, they were welcomed by the sight of three boys they all knew well, dressed in the matching outfits designed specifically for the unit consisting of the three of them.

“Yahoo! Here goes everyone’s favourite, Ouma Kokichi! It’s nice to see everyone!” They heard Ouma’s cheerful voice. “That might be a lie though, who knows.”

“Ouma-kun, you shouldn’t say things like that to our fans!” Kiibo said in response to that, but Ouma just laughed mischievously. The audience didn’t seem to mind his behavior though.

“Don’t bother, Kiibo, he’s always like this anyway,” Hoshi added.

“It’s a part of my charm, Hoshi-chan! Everyone knows that I looove our fans so much and I just want to see them smile!”

Saihara smiled too, being well aware of the fact that he wasn’t lying – he really enjoyed his job and the teasing was just a part of his personality. Most of his lies were harmless.

“It’s great to see you in such high spirits,” he presenter said. “The song featuring the three of you turned out to be a huge success, even though at first probably everyone thought it’s unusual to see this trio together.”

“Well, we can’t deny it,” Kiibo replied. “It’s not like we recorded anything together before, aside from the songs we did together as a group… I’m really happy I was given the chance to work with Hoshi-kun and Ouma-kun this time.”

“Wait, are you really? I was sure you’ve had enough of me!” Ouma cackled, throwing himself at Kiibo’s back. Saihara could still remember how at first they didn’t like each other at all, but with time they warmed up to each other.
Hoshi just ignored them, as if they were some unruly children, and continued to talk to the presenter.

“As for me and Ouma, we already tried creating something together in the past, but it didn’t turn out well,” he stated, making the mentioned boy turn his attention back to what he was supposed to be doing.

“Oh, yeah, back then something like teamwork was foreign to both of us. Nishishi, even now Kiiboy was the one that cared the most, but his grumbling was a motivation in a way.”

“Excuse me, I wasn’t grumbling! This is an act of robophobia!”

“Nothing interesting about watching them,” Chabashira sighed after a moment, as their antics continued on. “Tenko doesn’t understand all those poor girls that like them so much.”

“Come on, Chabashira-san, they’re a pretty funny trio,” Akamatsu laughed. “Our group isn’t that different from them.”

“Tenko doesn’t like to think about it like that.”

Meanwhile Amami was staring at Saihara with a knowing look on his face, making it hard for him not to start sweating. Of course. He must’ve been looking at Ouma with too much affection, or something like that. After that situation from a few days ago it would’ve been impossible for Amami not to suspect anything.

Luckily, he was never a person who couldn’t keep a secret. Instead of saying anything on this topic, he decided to start a different one.

“If we’re done watching our friends making fools out of themselves, like always, we could finally get to the main reason why we called you here,” Amami said.

“Right, of course. Do you have anything you’d want to share with us?” Akamatsu asked.

“That’s… the problem,” Chabashira muttered, sticking her forefingers together. “We don’t even know how to start.”

“We simply don’t know each other well enough, I would say,” Amami added.

“Then how about you use this opportunity to try getting to know each other better?” Akamatsu suggested with a smile. “We predicted that you might have this problem, but we decided not to interfere much.”

“…huh?”

“P-Please, Chabashira-san, don’t look at me like this. It was Akamatsu-san’s idea.”

“Now you’re trying to push the blame onto her?!”

“No, it was really my idea. Listen, guys.” Her expression suddenly became more serious. “Nobody expects you to write a love song or something like this. That would be terribly awkward, since it’s official that Chabashira-san is a lesbian and Amami-kun isn’t much of a ballad writer himself. What I wanted to suggest was… a song about friendship.”

“…about friendship?” Amami repeated, bringing a hand to his chin. “That could work, but like I said, I don’t know Chabashira-san well enough.”

“Are you really forcing Tenko to have a bonding time with a boy just to write a song?!”
“Come on, I’m not that bad,” he laughed awkwardly.

“Amami-kun has younger sisters, right? I’m sure you actually know how to treat girls with respect. Give him a chance, Chabashira-san,” Akamatsu continued.

“If she really doesn’t want to have anything to do with me, there’s no need to force her, Akamatsu-san…”

“…fine,” the other girl finally said, interrupting Amami. “Let’s try this idea. But don’t get Tenko wrong, she’s doing it for Akamatsu-san, definitely not for you.”

“I don’t have any problem with that, really.” He continued to smile, although he looked a bit distressed. “Let’s at least try enjoying ourselves though…”

Seeing Chabashira’s expression made Saihara wonder what did Amami do to deserve that, but for some reason Akamatsu didn’t seem to share his opinion. She almost looked as if she was confident that plan would work out… Did she really believe in Amami that much?

Oh well. It’s not like he had anything to say.

***

“Please, remind me, why am I cooking for you in the middle of the night?”

“Because I missed Saihara-chan so much that I just had to wake him up!”

The loud growling of Ouma’s stomach was trying to signalize something else, as he draped himself over the kitchen table.

“I guess I don’t even have to say it was a lie, nishishi,” he let out a tired laugh.

“Sometimes I wonder what I should even do with you…”

“What do you mean by ‘what’? Just tie me up and do whatever you want, Saihara-chan!”

“Where are you even getting these ideas from…?” It was just too much for Saihara to handle at three in the morning. He put the bowl of noodles in front of Ouma, using definitely too much force to do that and hoping the other boy wouldn’t notice his blush.

“Dunno, they just appear in my head… Anyway, thank you, Saihara-chan! I love you so much!” He said, his usual enthusiasm immediately coming back to him as he happily dug into the food. Saihara was sure some of their friends were more skilled at cooking… Amami for example, Hoshi, or even Momota… but for some reason Ouma decided to wake him up instead.

“What were you even doing so late? Soon it’s going to be morning…” Saihara asked, sitting down next to him and watching the content of the bowl disappear much too fast for Ouma’s sake.

“I’m planning a revenge prank to pull on Momota-chan, since he refused to play video games with me.”

“What time was it when you asked him about it?”

“Not sure, it was about two hours ago, I think.”

“Momota-kun isn’t even around for the night. He’s visiting his grandparents, and you’re lying.”
“So that’s where he went…” Ouma muttered, not even looking sorry for that lie. “You’re no fun, Saihara-chan…”

“So, what were you doing? It’s one of my duties to look after you,” he said, trying to sound serious, but apparently his soft spot for Ouma was just too big.

“I was writing a song,” he replied, the enthusiasm suddenly gone as he stabbed his food with a fork. “But it’s not going too well…”

“I assume it’s not the one you’re supposed to be writing with Yumeno-san…”

“Of course not, we haven’t even started that one yet!” He laughed. “It’s something I’m doing for myself, so there’s no need to bother!”

“Maybe I could help you if I knew what’s the essence of the problem,” Saihara offered, but Ouma shook his head with a smile.

“You’re already helping me, Saihara-chan! You’re saving me from starvation!”

“I wish I could also save you from sleep deprivation, but you’re not letting me do that…”

“Like I said, you’d have to tie me up! I don’t really mind that though, go ahead!”

“You really need to sleep. You’re talking nonsense again.”

For a moment they sat there in silence, Ouma finishing his late night dinner and Saihara just looking at him. He really looked tired, but at the same time wide awake…

“Were you watching yesterday, Saihara-chan?” He asked suddenly.

“You mean your TV appearance?”

“Yhm. What do you think?”

“What should I think? You’ve been a professional for a long time already, you don’t make mistakes anymore…”

“I didn’t mean that. Did I do well, Saihara-chan?”

“Huh?”

“Did I do a great job at getting along with Hoshi-chan and Kiiboy? How’s our teamwork?” He kept asking questions. It was one of those rare moments when he was completely serious.

Not that Saihara was surprised. In the early days of their group, teamwork was one of their biggest problems… and Ouma was one of the worst troublemakers. Now things looked really different, but apparently he was still worried about that.

“…you did really well, Ouma-kun. I’m proud of you,” he said softly, extending his hand to pat his hair. It took him a while to realize that, but Ouma actually really liked physical contact… though most of time Saihara himself was too embarrassed to initiate it. Even now, he broke it after a few seconds and stood up, trying to hide his flushed face. “I’m going back to sleep. You should go as we-“

He didn’t finish that sentence. The other boy successfully distracted him, wrapping his arms around his waist and nuzzling against his belly.
“Don’t go yet, Saihaaraaa-chaaan…” He whined quietly, clinging to him with even more strength and making his mind go blank. “Stay with the little old me…”

“Y-You really enjoy making fun of me, do you?”

“I’m not making fun of you,” Ouma deadpanned, but then he looked up with a smile. “But maybe that’s a lie!”

“You really should go to sleep. You’re working hard every day… Please, rest at least for a bit.”

“Not before Saihara-chan hugs me back.”

He really was stubborn. Saihara always knew he was stubborn, but recently he was getting worse. Or maybe it’s just Saihara who was suddenly very aware of his a-little-more-than-platonic feelings and Ouma’s affectionate nature was driving him crazy. It’s not like he didn’t like that – he really did, but… letting his crush notice that wasn’t a plan of his.

And yet, he found himself bending down and wrapping his arms around Ouma, pulling him into an embrace. Once again Saihara noted that the small body in his arms was pleasantly warm and smelled really nice…

There really was no turning back for him now, he was in too deep.

“Wow, I can’t believe you really did that! Saihara-chan must really like me!” Ouma laughed mischievously, and even though he was only teasing him, Saihara for a moment considered confirming that it was the truth.

“…will you go to sleep now?”

“You must be kidding! Now I really feel inspired!” He let go of Saihara, gently pushing him away and jumping off the kitchen chair. “Gotta write, gotta write… Goodnight, Saihara-chan!”

And with that, he ran out of the kitchen, leaving him alone, confused and wondering if he’d ever be able to understand him fully.

***

“Out of the question,” Akamatsu muttered.

“Rejected,” Saihara agreed, too embarrassed to even read those lyrics again.

“What the fuck did you say!? We worked really hard on this, Cowtits!” Iruma shouted, standing up from her seat. For some reason she ignored Saihara and directed her complaints at the other girl.

“Calm down, Iruma-san! I’m sure they have a reason to reject our lyrics!” Kiibo tried to reason with her. “Saihara-kun, would you mind explaining?”

“Uh, sure. You know what Iruma-san’s solo songs are called?”

“Uhm… I’m not sure. Popular?”

“Lewd. They’re lewd,” Akamatsu answered instead of the poor robot. “And she’s trying to drag you into this without you even realizing it.”

“Kiibo didn’t have any complaints!” Iruma tried to protest, but neither Saihara nor Akamatsu were
going to allow that.

“He wasn’t objecting because he doesn’t understand sexual subtexts, Iruma-san,” Saihara sighed, watching Kiibo’s eyes widen in horror. “If you were writing this song with someone fully aware of what all of this means, I wouldn’t protest…”

“I still would! Iruma-san, you’re an idol! You should aim for a cuter image!” Akamatsu stood up as well, facing her friend. “You can be really cute when you try, I know this!”

“But that’s boring! We already have so many of those cute idiot types in this fucking group!” Iruma replied. “The beautiful genius Iruma Miu refuses to step down to their level!”

“Please, stop arguing!” Kiibo got up too, leaving Saihara as the only one still sitting. He was too tired for this, and the fact that he was woken up in the middle of the night was only making it worse.

“We’re not arguing!” Both of the girls said at the same time.

“Of course, I understand, but… Let’s discuss things more calmly!” He said in a pleading tone. Normally Saihara would’ve helped him. Normally.

Iruma only clenched her teeth and folded her hands on her chest, but… To everyone’s surprise, she listened to Kiibo’s request and sat down again.

“Okay, Tittymatsu, what do you want me to do then?” She asked angrily.

“Eliminate the subtexts so there’s nothing Kiibo-kun doesn’t understand,” Akamatsu said in response. “You need more teamwork!”

“It’s okay, Akamatsu-san… You don’t have to protect me like this. We wrote this together after all,” Kiibo admitted. “I need to study harder…”

“No, no, this isn’t a topic you really need to study,” Saihara finally spoke up. It was enough that Ouma was trying to educate him sometimes. “Just rewrite the inappropriate parts. Iruma-san will know which ones.”

“Fine,” the girl muttered, clearly not satisfied with that solution. “Man, you should stop playing such a saint. Maybe then you’d finally notice that your chance to get laid is right under your nose.”

“H-Huh!?” He uttered, confused both by her comment and the fact that Akamatsu giggled under her breath.

“T-That was a good one, Iruma-san,” she stuttered out. Neither Saihara nor Kiibo understood what they were talking about.

“I know, no need to flatter me so much, Tittymatsu. Anyway, get out, thanks to you me and Kiibo need to start from the beginning!”

And so, she ended up kicking Saihara and Akamatsu out of her room - the former confused, the latter only shrugged, still visibly amused.

“Come on, let’s ask the others if they need any help. If you have time, of course,” she suggested.

“Well, it’s not like I have anything else to do… But what was Iruma-san talking about?”

“Ehm… I’m not sure! You’ll need to figure it out on your own!”
They directed their steps toward the living room, from where, for some reason, they could hear Momota’s voice. Well, maybe it wasn’t that strange lately, since the collab project forced them all to constantly hang out.

What they didn’t expect was Momota, Harukawa, Toujou and Hoshi sitting around the table and playing Monopoly.

“How could this happen… My intuition was wrong… but how! I can’t believe this!”

“Don’t hold it against me, Momota, it’s nothing personal. You’re just unlucky.”

“See, Momota? I told you it wasn’t a good idea to agree.”

“I think it’s a wonderful lesson for Momota-san. To lose a game without losing your pride is a very useful skill.”

Saihara and Akamatsu came a little closer – close enough to notice Momota was actually crying. Not that it was the first time it happened, Saihara knew well that he hated losing.

“So… Can we assume Momota-kun is going bankrupt?” Akamatsu asked.

“He’s so deep in debt that there’s no hope for him to get out of this anymore,” Harukawa replied with a blank face.

“That’s because those two fuckers teamed up against us!” Momota yelled, pointing at Hoshi and Toujou, who exchanged amused glances and did a high five. It wasn’t something Saihara expected of them, but it seemed like their teamwork was going smoothly.

“Against you, Momota. I’m still doing pretty well,” Harukawa pointed out.

“We were supposed to work together too, Harumaki!”

“I never promised you anything like that.”

“That’s the difference between our team and amateurs like you,” Hoshi said with a smirk. “We challenged you to test our abilities, but it seems like we chose wrong opponents.”

“Harukawa-san and Momota-san seemed like one of those teams that get along the best, but it seems like they do not actually understand each other all that well,” Toujou added. “Looks like we’re the most professional here, Hoshi-san.”

“I wouldn’t be so sure about that,” Harukawa spoke up again. “You never tried challenging Akamatsu and Saihara.”

“Right, I’m sure that Shuuichi and Kaede wouldn’t lose to you!”

“Do you really think we want to annoy the people whose mercy we are at? We’re not stupid,” Hoshi replied.

“That’s right. This whole situation is only us getting used to the roles we are supposed to play in our song,” Toujou said with a smile. “Our characters are partners in crime, cheating people, especially when it comes to gambling. I am glad our teamwork proved to be successful.”

“You… So you’ve been cheating the entire time!?” Momota stood up, placing his hands on the table. “I knew it! Something was wrong since the beginning!”
“You’re only realizing it now…?” Harukawa sighed.

“I think we can assume that Hoshi-san and Toujou-san’s work is going smoothly?” Akamatsu asked with a slight smile.

“We’re still far from being done… But everything’s going well so far.” Hoshi shrugged.

“What about you, Momota-kun, Harukawa-san?”

“Us? Oh, don’t worry about us,” Momota said. “Just compose a song for us first, then we’ll write something that fits.”

“Huh? Are you sure about that?” Saihara muttered in surprise.

“Isn’t that how it’s always been?” Harukawa reminded them. “We both usually write lyrics to fit your songs, I don’t see a reason to change that.”

“Well, I suppose that’s only fair… We better write something really good for you then,” Akamatsu laughed. “We might try to gather some ideas now, since nobody seems to need us, Saihara-kun.”

He only nodded and followed her, most likely heading towards her room, since she had a piano in there, just like him. The only other pianist in DAYLIGHT×COMET was Toujou, who was currently enjoying winning at Monopoly.

What they didn’t expect was running into Chabashira and Amami.

“Ah, Akamatsu-san! Hello!” She said cheerfully, and Saihara was surprised to see she didn’t seem upset by Amami’s presence.

“Ehm… Hello. It’s nice to see you two actually trying to hang out,”

“Tenko is just making the degenerate male carry her shopping. At least he’s useful for something.” Chabashira waved her hand, what made Akamatsu reach out and grab it.

“Ah, he also did your nails! I see! Amami-kun is really good at this, he sometimes does that for me too,” she commented, for some reason making the still silent Amami blush.

“Right? Tenko had no idea boys could have such useful skills!” The other girl said. “That kind of earned him points in Tenko’s eyes!”

“It’s nothing special,” Amami laughed half-heartedly. “I’m sure there are people who could do much better than me, but I tried my best.”

The fact that Chabashira even let him touch her hands was far more surprising than Amami being a good nail artist… Since Saihara knew about that hidden talent of his since a very long time ago. To be precise, he learned about it when during the Academy days Ouma broke a nail when playing piano with him and complained about how Amami-chan’s work went to waste. Another memory from that time was tending to Ouma’s hurt hand, as that broken nail was more serious that one would’ve expected…

Now that he thought about that, it was one of those moments when he got to hold his hand for a moment… Though back then he had no idea what kind of feelings he would develop in the future. He missed such a great opportunity…

“You’re much too humble, Amami-kun.” Akamatsu smiled at him. “There’s a lot of things you can
be proud of.”

“Just learn how to take a compliment, Amami-san,” Chabashira sighed, looking a little irritated.
“Anyway, we’ll be going! Good luck with your work, Akamatsu-san!”

Once again, Saihara got ignored. Not that it mattered. He watched his friends wave each other goodbye and waited for Akamatsu to let him inside her room. They usually worked there, so they had everything they needed in there… including all the music sheets scattered around the room.

“Time to get to work then!” She stated, putting her hands on her hips and looking around. “I should probably clean some stuff up though…”

“I don’t think there’s any point in doing that before we’re done…”

“True,” Akamatsu sighed, then glanced at him. “Saihara-kun… You really don’t know what Iruma-san was talking about, do you?”

“If I knew, I wouldn’t ask, right?” He muttered with a puzzled expression. “You could… you know, translate?”

“You’re supposed to be the smart one here, Mister Oblivious!” She pointed her finger at him, then sighed again and walked up to her piano. “Anyway, any suggestions for Momota-kun and Harukawa-san’s song?”

“Not really…”

“Good, because I have one!”

Akamatsu ran her fingers over the piano’s keyboard, playing a fragment of an unknown melody. It was slow, comfortable, and…

“What do you think? I’ve been thinking about it since a while, but didn’t have anyone I could give it to,” Akamatsu said.

“It sounds like a ballad…”

“It is one!”

“For Harukawa-san and Momota-kun…? I’m not sure if it’s a good idea…”

She looked him in the eyes, desperation clearly visible there. “Please, let me have at least one.”

He didn’t question her any longer.

***

Finally, the time when they had to confront the last team came. They were called to Ouma’s room this time and Saihara couldn’t help but worry what he was planning, but…

It seemed like he didn’t actually need to worry. Ouma’s room was a mess, like always, and for some reason they ended up sitting on the floor, ignoring the cluttered table, but it didn’t look like he was up to something bad.

“So… I know I didn’t talk this through with Yumeno-chan, but I’m so busy nowadays… Being so popular has its drawbacks, you know,” he laughed. “They’re always forcing me to do something…”
“Nyeh, it’s your job, so stop complaining,” Yumeno muttered. “And don’t act like you’re the best.”

“But I am!” Ouma whined. “Saihara-chan, tell her I’m the best!”

“Let’s move onto something more important, please.”

“Even you are against me…? You’re terrible, Saihara-chan… What about my feelings?” He looked at him with eyes full of ready to spill tears, but then just blinked and they were gone, like always when he was attempting to tease him. “Anyway, I have this song idea and I thought Yumeno-chan might like it and just roll with it.”

“Why does it sound like I have nothing to say!?” She yelled, moving closer to him, while he just moved away, closer to Saihara, who for a moment wondered if he were supposed to move closer to Akamatsu now, just to continue that.

“Quiet, Yumeno-chan!” Ouma commanded. “Let me explain and then you’ll see that you like it! Gimme a second… Where did I put that…”

Both of the composers just sighed. Even though Akamatsu never worked with Ouma before, she heard enough from Saihara to know what it usually looked like.

“Oh, here it is!” He pulled something out of the pile of notebooks and other stuff lying on the floor, and Saihara recognized his sketchbook. He looked at them, to make sure everyone was watching him and opened it.

What they saw was something that looked like a picture book, with cute, simplified drawings.

“I want to make a song with a story,” Ouma said, smiling widely. “Since we have to work in pairs, it’s even better! Let’s just have fun with it!”

“Nyeh, show this to me,” Yumeno muttered, taking the sketchbook from him before he could protest. She was flipping the pages in silence, but then Ouma leaned closer and started pointing at his drawings.

“Look, this is you, Yumeno-chan.”

“Your drawing skills suck…”

“Well, sorry that I’m not Angie-chan! Look, basically this is a story about a villain and a great mage who’s trying to catch him!” He explained with a frown, and that’s when Yumeno’s eyes sparkled.

“A great mage, you say?”

“Uh, uh! I told you that you’re going to like it, Yumeno-chan!”

They continued to flip through the pages of Ouma’s sketchbook, no longer arguing and actually sitting pretty close to each other… It’s not like Saihara was jealous, of course – when Ouma was with him the concept of personal space never existed.

“I think we’re not really needed today,” Akamatsu laughed quietly, watching the two of them exchange ideas with childish enthusiasm.

“We could write this song in a dialogue form, so it looks like we’re arguing!”

“We’re always arguing, so it should be easy… Hey, Ouma, do you have a pencil?”
“I’m sure there should be some lying around, look for it yourself.”

“You’re such a pain in the butt…”

“Just kidding! Nishishi, I don’t want Yumeno-chan to put her hands on my stuff, who knows what she could find!”

“Tenko was right, boys are terrible…”

When the red-haired girl finally got her pencil, she began sketching something on a free page. After a moment she raised it to show them. “I want my great mage outfit to look like this.”

“Well, you need new outfits to promote this song later on, so I think it’s a can do,” Akamatsu replied. “You could try asking Shirogane-san to draw you a more detailed version.”

“That’s a good idea, Akamatsu-chan! Let’s ask Shirogane-chan later! Now let’s get to actually writing the song!” Ouma exclaimed. “I don’t have that much time to waste!”

“So even now, you still think it’s a waste of time!? Akamatsu, Saihara, I want another partner! Or a refund!”

She said that, but earlier, when Ouma was explaining his idea to her, Yumeno’s eyes were sparkling with excitement. Well, it wasn’t anything new that Ouma exactly knew how to get other people to do what he wanted, so Saihara couldn’t say he was surprised… The reassuring part was that Ouma also seemed to find this fun, despite his words.

When Saihara and Akamatsu left the room, Ouma and Yumeno were still sitting on the floor, doodling their characters and writing dialogues for them, making the impression of elementary school kids.

“At least they’re not trying to summon souls of the dead,” Akamatsu said. “But… What do you even see in him? I never expected you to fall for such a troublemaker, even though you used to be his fan…”

“It’s not like I know the answer myself… W-Wait, what?!”

“You think I can’t see that? Naive, I’ve known you for years and I know how to recognize when you have a crush on someone,” she explained, without even waiting for him to clarify what the question was. “And even without that, you’re like an open book. While you often look at him as if you’re scared of what he’s about to pull off, when you don’t, you look at him as if he’s the most precious thing in the world. What, do you want to deny that?”

“I-I… I wish I could, but that would be a lie,” he muttered quietly, feeling his cheeks heat up.

“Seems like his lying habit didn’t transfer onto you. Good,” she laughed. “I wish you luck, Saihara-kun.”

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“…and then she got mad at me when I said her character can’t win against mine at the end!” Ouma snickered, giving Saihara a report about how his teamwork with Yumeno went. It was pretty late, but the night was rather nice, so they ended up sitting on the garden bench.

“You know her, she’s just as stubborn as you,” Saihara replied. Ouma talked a lot, and that wasn’t anything new. In the past, when he wasn’t used to it, he would often end up with a headache after
hanging out with him, but now he just closed his eyes and listened to the other boy’s soft voice.

“Oh, so you haven’t actually fallen asleep! I thought you weren’t listening to me anymore, so I was already planning on tying your shoelaces together, waking you up and telling you that the president called you. You’d end up on the ground for certain,” Ouma said with a grin.

“You wouldn’t do that,” he laughed as well.

“Oh? And why are you so sure about that?” Ouma narrowed his eyes, turning his innocent smile into a threatening smirk. “I’m pretty sure Momota-chan can confirm that I’m not as harmless as you think.”

“Stop making that face or it’ll stay like that,” Saihara said in response, poking at his forehead.

“That hurts, Saihara-chan! You can’t do that to an idol’s pretty face!”

“You may not be harmless towards Momota-kun, but you are towards me,” he continued. “You had so many opportunities to do anything, but you never actually use them.”

For a moment his face was unreadable, then a whole palette of his nightmarish expressions flashed there, only to go back to that cheerful smile from before.

“You figured me out again! I love Saihara-chan, so I wouldn’t hurt him! Besides, I’m actually just a harmless little clown who lives to entertain. But maybe that’s a lie?”

“Maybe,” Saihara hummed, looking away and hesitating for a moment, but then letting his resting on the bench hand wander to the side, to finally touch Ouma’s. Encouraged by the lack of rejection, he tried intertwining their fingers, and Ouma still allowed that.

He actually expected some remark from him. Like “your hand is sweaty, Saihara-chan”. Or “you think you can just hold hands with a super popular idol like me?”.

But nothing like that happened. When he gathered the courage to look at Ouma again… It was dark, so he couldn’t be sure, but…

Maybe it was just wishful thinking, but Saihara could swear he was blushing.

“A-Actually, I still have something to do, so I need to go!” Ouma stuttered out after a few seconds, freeing his hand and jumping off the bench. “Bye bye, Saihara-chan! Be careful, or I may really pull some evil prank on you!”

“O-Ouma-kun?! We know it’s not tr-“

“I can’t hear you, Saihara-chan, I’m already too far away!”

For a very long moment, Saihara didn’t know how to react, holding the hand with which he held Ouma’s up in the air and watching him disappear in the building.

Something at the back of his mind was telling him that what just happened was another missed opportunity.

***

For the next two weeks everyone was constantly busy. Finalizing the lyrics and music for it, recording, and of course their usual duties like TV appearances, playing in dramas, performing live… Sometimes Saihara felt bad for everyone, seeing them so exhausted, but nobody really seemed
to complain. It’s like Akamatsu’s words actually came true, and they really got closer, instead trying to find each other’s weak points.

Apparently they were supposed to get some more free time when they were finally done with the collab project… and that day finally came.

And Saihara had no idea why he was taking a walk to the girls dorms, even though it was already a late evening. Or maybe rather… He knew why he was doing it, but he couldn’t understand the reason for it.

Basically, Yumeno called him about ten minutes ago and told him she would put a curse on him if he didn’t meet her in their dorms’ garden before she got really mad. Saihara had no idea how much time he had ‘before she got really mad’, so he decided a walk wouldn’t hurt. It’s not like Yumeno was inviting him somewhere often – he was curious what reason she could have.

“Nyeh, so you’re finally here!” She exclaimed upon seeing him, pointing her finger at him. “You made me wait!”

“It’s you who summoned me here at an unreasonable hour and without any explanations, it’s not my fault,” he replied, trying hard not to sound annoyed. “What do you want anyway? Couldn’t you just tell me over phone? Or send me an email?”

“No, I couldn’t! If I could, I would do that! It’s… not something I can talk about on the phone!” Yumeno insisted, but then the confidence vanished from her face, as she mimicked Chabashira’s gesture of sticking her forefingers together in an embarrassed gesture. “It’s… a very important thing… and I realized I need to tell you about it as soon as it dawned on me…”

“H-Huh? Did something happen?” Saihara asked, suddenly even more worried. If he was to believe in clichés, normally a situation like this would mean a confession, but it wasn’t something he would expect from Yumeno, and especially not when it came to Yumeno and himself.

“You’re so dense, Saihara!” Her confidence returned, as she closed her hands to form fists. “So dense that someone needs to finally make you realize that!”

“R-Realize what?!”

Yumeno took a deep breath before speaking up again.

“I… I have evidence that Ouma likes you! Like, really likes!” She said firmly. “No… that’s a wrong word… I’m sure that Ouma loves you!”

Chapter End Notes

Yumeno is here and she's not fucking around

Thank you for all your nice words under the last chapter, and thank you for reading!! I really appreciate it!!
“H-Huh?”

“Don’t ‘huh’ at me, Saihara! I ain’t the smartest person around, but I realized it before you! You should be ashamed!” Yumeno stated in a judgmental tone. “I can’t say I’m friends with Ouma… No, I’m definitely not…but thinking about it makes me feel bad for him. Do something, Saihara!”

“Eh?! What am I supposed to do, according to you?! Don’t be ridiculous, Yumeno-san!” Saihara replied, finally recollecting himself. “Besides, what proof do you have that Ouma-kun loves me? I doubt someone like him would actually leave any solid evidence!”

“Nyeh, he did, and he was doing it the whole time! You’re just blind and oblivious!” She said, pulling her phone out of her hoodie’s pocket. “And I really have a proof!”

“W-What is that, then!?”

“Heheheh… So Saihara actually really wants to know if I’m right…” She laughed with a smug look on her face. “You’re so doomed. To fall in love with Ouma Kokichi of all people…”

“Please, just stop teasing me and tell me the truth,” Saihara begged, knowing his hands were shaking and that he didn’t look very graceful overall, but… he had a reason for this.

“Sure, it’s not like I enjoy torturing you… I’m not him,” she muttered, looking for something on her phone. Finally, she clicked at the screen and extended her arm towards him. “Just listen.”

It was the song she collaborated on with Ouma. It wasn’t released yet, but Saihara kind of expected it to become a big hit – Ouma was already super popular, and Yumeno was quickly gaining new fans. Aside from that, it was a very cute song consisting of fragments of narration and dialogues between a grumpy mage and a mischievous villain.

“Now focus, Saihara,” Yumeno mumbled. “His next line is important.”

_It’s your fault I don’t have time to play with my friends_, she sang in a well-practiced annoyed tone.

_Trust me, I’d prefer to go on a date with that detective over there instead of being stuck with you_, Ouma sang in response, and Saihara could perfectly imagine him sticking his tongue out at Yumeno.
in a playful manner.

“‘And… what about it?’” He asked hesitantly, not sure what conclusion he was supposed to draw from it.

“You really are dumb, Saihara!” She shouted. “He’s singing about you!”

“Again, what makes you say that?”

“Who else could he be talking about, if not you!? You’re the only one who has anything to do with detectives! Didn’t you even dress as a detective for last year’s Halloween party!?”

“Who even still remembers that!”

“Nyeh, if I remember, then I’m sure Ouma does, too! H-He… He doodled that detective character in his sketchbook and he totally looked like you!”

“W-Wait, really?”

“He likes you, Idiothara! Why do you prefer to stay blind!?”

“I don’t! I would be really happy if what you’re saying was true, but…”

“But what!”

“No offense, Yumeno-san, but… I don’t want to hear that I’m blind from you,” he sighed. “Have you ever seriously considered that Chabashira-san may really like you?”

“H-Huh? Tenko may what?”

Saihara used all his willpower not to sigh again, and with a gesture he signaled Yumeno to hand her phone to him. She made a confused face, but complied. He scrolled down the list of her music, then finally found Chabashira and Amami’s duet and played it.

They say we make a good couple, but they couldn’t be more wrong

You being my friend is already good enough

Besides, I need to say

That I already like someone else

That was one of Amami’s parts, but Chabashira’s mirrored it in her next one.

They say we make a good pair, but can’t they see it’s wrong?

Your friendship is just as important as love could be

Besides, I want to say

That I already love someone else

“…and what about it, Saihara?” Yumeno asked, repeating almost the same thing Saihara said a few minutes earlier.

“She’s singing about you! How can you claim such a vague line from Ouma-kun is a valid evidence he loves me and completely overlook this!!”
For a moment they just stared at one another in silence, both frowning and unsure of what to say, but then…

“In my defense… I can only say that Ouma was constantly talking about you, and it really pissed me of,” Yumeno muttered, avoiding his gaze and deciding to stare at the ground instead. “But… okay. Tenko may like me. I’ll deal with it sometime in the future… Right now we’re talking about you and Ouma…”

“Y-Yeah, but…”

Suddenly they heard loud laughter, belonging to someone they both most likely didn’t want to see right now. Someone who could only make things worse.

“You both are stupid as fuck,” Iruma cackled, leaning over the handrail of her room’s balcony. “Really, I can’t believe this shit!”

“W-What…? Don’t tell me you’ve been eavesdropping!” Yumeno shouted at her.

“It’s not like I had to, Tittless,” she continued on laughing. “You’re right under my window, and if you haven’t noticed yet, you’re damn loud. I could hear everything, and let me tell you, it’s a really fucking good comedy!”

Saihara was hundred percent sure he started sweating the moment he first heard her, but now it was even worse. If there was a person he didn’t want to know about his crush on Ouma, it was Iruma.

“W-What is so funny about it?” He asked, already considering running away.

“Even if we leave the useless lesbian for another time, there’s shitloads of funny things about the other gay gremlin,” she replied with a grin. “Listen, Suckhara, I don’t like that little shit you’re thirsting for…”

“T-Thirsting?!”

“…but he’s been pining since the good old days at the Academy…”

“S-Since the Academy?!"

“…so it’s not that hard to feel bad for him, you know,” Iruma finished, not paying attention to his attempts of interrupting her. “I bet he’s getting pretty desperate at this point, just tell him something nice and he’s yours! I’m not in the mood for giving you a lecture about safe sex though, you have to do your own research.”

“W-What are you even talking about?!”

“Eh? So I misunderstood the situation and you’re not interested in seducing that little twink of yours? Make up your mind, Shittyhara!”

“I haven’t even confessed yet!”

“Oh, so you’re going with the traditional way, confessing first, fucking next,” Iruma sighed. “Then do it already. Like that ironing board over there said, it’s getting annoying.”

“Hey, who are you calling an ironing board!?” Yumeno yelled at her, angry blush on her cheeks.

“H-How can you both be so sure he’s not going to reject me? I’m still not convinced… That one line isn’t enough to-“
“God fucking damn it, Shittyhara, you should’ve really become a detective instead of a composer, if you love solid evidence so much!” Even Iruma was getting irritated at this point. “Listen to any of his other solo songs, this kid is gay as fuck, and he’s gay for you! Besides, there’s one more thing that makes you sound all the more ridiculous. Doesn’t he tell you he loves you, like, on daily basis?”

An awkward silence fell between them, and lasted more than it was necessary. Saihara didn’t have the courage to break it, so he just continued to fiddle with his sleeves. He couldn’t answer ‘no’ to that question, because… Well, it was the truth. The last time he heard ‘I love you’ from Ouma was probably… a few hours ago. Thinking about it was turning him into an even bigger nervous wreck.

Was he really that stupid?

“Well, it’s not like he never said that to anyone else…” He finally muttered.

“Haaah? Then who were the other people?” Iruma replied in a teasing voice. “If you’re talking about that one time he called Tittymatsu his beloved, or the early Academy days when he tried to hit on Amami, then don’t even open your mouth.”

“W-Why?!"

“Because he’s clearly trying to get in your bed, not theirs!”

Saihara thought about all those times when he found Ouma asleep on his bed and he could feel the heat rushing to his cheeks. Did she really have to use sexual references for everything?

“I a-already told you, I w-would first prefer us to be in a relationship… The rest is not that i-
important,” he stuttered out.

“Come on, the way to a man’s heart is through his butt!” She snorted, clearly enjoying watching him suffer.

“Nyeh, this is not how that saying goes!” Yumeno pointed out angrily. “Can’t you see he’s embarrassed? You’re just going to discourage him from doing anything!”

“I’m trying to encourage him, Tittless! He’s young, he has his needs too!” Iruma laughed again. “But man, I just don’t get you. Just tell him he’s the love of your life and make out already.”

“I wish it was this easy… I don’t even know how to approach him so he doesn’t run away,” Saihara said.

“What the fuck are you talking about?” Iruma frowned. “Just do what you’re the best at. Aren’t you a goddamn composer? Just write him a fucking song.”

…

…

…

“W-Well, while it does sound like an interesting idea… I’ve never written song lyrics before,” he admitted. “Just the music. I have no idea how to choose the right words…”

“Can you even do anything on your own, Suckhara!? You have two idols and lyricists right next to you! Just ask for help!” Iruma leaned over the handrail even more, so her eyes were pretty much on the same level as his. “I can’t believe a genius like me has to put up with someone so dumb!”
“Then… you mean… you’ll help me write a song for Ouma-kun?” He asked hesitantly. This wasn’t what he expected. He’d sooner expect her to record his conversation with Yumeno and then email it to Ouma.

“Consider it a favor you’ll have to return one day,” she grinned. “You, witch girl. Are you up for pulling an all-nighter to help that stupid virgin get laid?”

“I have no interest in Saihara and Ouma’s private activities…” She muttered, but after a sigh she added something else. “But I guess I should help these losers… Ouma can’t get anything done on his own either…”

“All right then! Hop in!” Iruma straightened her back and pointed at the door behind her. “We don’t have time to waste!”

“Wait, you mean like… through the balcony?!”

“I’m pretty damn sure that Toujou isn’t asleep yet, and we don’t want her questioning our nighttime adventures, right?” She explained. “Yumeno can go through the door, but you have to climb, weak-ass virgin boy.”

Saihara wondered what sins he committed to deserve that. First being mocked by both of the girls, now this, and apparently the whole night wasn’t going to be easier.

He could still run away. He could just tell Iruma that he was actually busy and couldn’t spend an entire night writing a song that might not even come out right, since he was sure neither Iruma nor Yumeno were experts when it came to love songs. He could still give up.

But for some reason something in his head was whispering to him that if he did, then that situation would become another missed opportunity, so… He nodded at Iruma, silently telling her that he accepts her offer. Seeing that, she extended her hand to him.

“Come on, I won’t drop you!” She said with irritation when he sent her a hesitant look. “I’m stronger than I look, you think how much strength idols need to have to dance on the stage? A lot! And you’re just a weak guy who probably doesn’t weight a lot more than me!”

“Okay, okay, I get it!”

He grabbed her hand without hesitating any further, using his other hand to hold onto the handrail and praying for her not to let go of him. Breaking a limb while trying to get into a girl’s room through a balcony would definitely ruin his reputation. To his surprise, Iruma really was stronger than she looked and pulled him up without much trouble… though she had no intentions of helping him with the landing, so he just ended up crushing into the floor and letting out a pained sound.

“See you in a moment then…” He heard Yumeno’s voice, then her footsteps as she chose the roundabout way. He would’ve chosen it too, if he had anything to say.

“Yeah, yeah, hurry up. Don’t let anyone stop or distract you!” Iruma waved at her, but she was already gone. “We’re going to need her so she helps you tone my genius down…”

“Huh?”

“You know, Twinkma looks like that kind of guy who’d pretend he’s kinky, but he’s actually a shy virgin, just like you,” she cackled. “We can’t scare him off too early.”

He had no idea how to respond to that. His dignity had already suffered enough that night, he didn’t
want to provoke Iruma any further.

“Anyway, get ready for a night you’ll never forget!” She exclaimed. “No sleep for us today, so… I guess I should get us some energy drinks… Paper, since we’re going to write… Sorry, Shittyhara, I don’t have a piano, when it comes to music you’ll have to do without it for now. I don’t think asking Idiotmatsu or Touju to let us use theirs in the middle of the night would be a good idea… When it comes to recording… Huh, we have a recording studio, but even if we count the ironing board in, we only have a pianist, that is you, a genius guitarist that is me, and a decent violinist, so keep that in mind. We’re probably going to have to get someone else to help with getting a permission to use the studio and recording and some other stuff… You know how this works, why am I even explaining it to you!”

They didn’t even start yet and she already looked frustrated.

“A-Are we really going to do all of this? It doesn’t have to be that professional…”

“Listen, you little bitch boy, it’s go big or go home. Iruma Miu doesn’t half-ass anything she does!” She said firmly, putting her hands on her hips. “Even if it’s only for that little gremlin to hear, we’re going all out, you hear me?!”

“Y-Yeah…”

That’s when Yumeno opened the door, came inside and closed it with a loud thump.

“Nyeh, I hope you haven’t started without m…” She started, then looked at Iruma with wide eyes. “I get it, you have no shame, but at least wear some clothes when you have guests!”

“Nah, it’s a pain in the ass,” Iruma replied. Earlier Saihara didn’t even pay attention to it, but apparently her pajamas consisted only of a loose t-shirt and underwear… He hastily looked away.

“What, Shittyhara, never saw a half-naked girl before? Oh, right, you’re gay, sorry-”

“I’m bi.”

“Oh, so you admit you find my alluring body more attractive than that little shit’s?”

Saihara’s thoughts went to Ouma. He recalled his smile, his warm, purple eyes and fluffy, dark hair falling on his pretty face… His soft, white skin and sweet smell… and also his voice, the voice he loved since such a long time ago…

“Look, Iruma, he’s thinking about something and blushing again. I bet he’s thinking about Ouma. There’s no way he’d ever find you cuter than Ouma,” Yumeno said, bringing him back to reality.

“For some reason I don’t even feel bad about it, seeing that gross look on his face,” the other girl laughed. “I always knew Saihara is secretly a pervert! It’s always the quiet ones!”

“I-I’m not!” He protested. “Thinking about how much I like him doesn’t make me a pervert!”

“Keep telling yourself this, Saihara, and you’ll never get anywhere. Anyway!” She looked around the room, pushed some pile of clothes aside using her leg, then glanced at them. “If we really want to do it tonight… let’s get this started!”

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“Nah, this won’t do!” Iruma said, reading what Saihara had written so far and frowning.
“Even though I don’t want to… I agree,” Yumeno muttered, rubbing her eyes and doing her best not to fall asleep.

At least two hours had passed since they locked themselves in Iruma’s room and started writing the song that was supposed to be Saihara’s confession for Ouma. It was much more embarrassing than he expected, and also much more exhausting.

Well, it should had been obvious that his goal was to convey his feelings using words, and if the two girls were to help him, he’d have to talk about those feelings with them. The problem was that neither of them was exactly tactful when it came to love. Iruma’s constant mocking was something he was never going to forget…

He just hoped he wasn’t going to regret this.

“Eh? What’s wrong with it?” Saihara asked.

“You need to be more straightforward. That little shit is the exact opposite of it, so at least you need to have more balls!” Iruma replied, ripping the sheet of paper into tiny little pieces.

“You didn’t need to do that… I really am trying…”

“I know, but you need to put more heart into it… if you really refuse to think with something else,” she giggled. “Personally, I think it would be better if you clearly let him know you’re trying to get into his pan-“

“No! We already talked about it!” Yumeno stated, suddenly awake again. “Not everyone is as desperate as you!”

“Then what do you suggest, Tittless!?“

“We were supposed to write a song that is romantic, not gross!”

“If you’re such an expert at this, then show us how it’s done, and write one for the useless lesbian, so I can show it to her later!”

Yumeno fell silent for a moment, but it was clear that Iruma’s words scared her a little. “You… Iruma… don’t you dare tell her anything…”

“Chill the fuck out, I’m here to help you with your relationships, not ruin them,” Iruma snorted. “Going back to the topic, I really think that you should be more straightforward about what you feel, Shittyhara. Both you and the gremlin are dumb, you can count on him to not understand any deeper meanings.”

“Yeah, you have to make it clear that what you want is something other than friendship…”

“Then… what about this?” Saihara took another sheet of paper and wrote a few words at its bottom, then showed it to Iruma and Yumeno.

_I love you, and that's not a lie_

“What, using his catchphrase, Saihara?” Yumeno teased. “That’s a good one though…”

“Well, we probably shouldn’t start from the bottom,” Iruma muttered, then her lips stretched in a wide grin. “Though now that I think about it, Ouma sure does seem like a bottom!”

Yumeno reacted before Saihara even processed her words.
“Enough, you pervert! Stop trying to taint him!” She yelled, making the other girl flinch away.

“Hii…!? I-I was just joking! It was just a joke!”

“I’ve had enough of your jokes!”

Iruma looked like she was about to say something in response, but was stopped by an unexpected noise… Knocking on the door. They immediately fell silent, but the knocking continued on.

“…what should we do?” Saihara whispered to his friends.

“D-Dunno? If it’s Toujou, then we’re doomed,” Iruma replied. “Saihara, you hide on the balcony. Tittless can stay.”

They both nodded, and Saihara moved on his hands and knees towards the balcony door. In the meantime Iruma got up and approached the door. After making sure Saihara couldn’t be spotted from where she was standing, she finally opened it.

“Good evening, Iruma-san, I-“

“Avocado?! What the fuck are you doing here?! Don’t scare me like this!”

“Please, keep your voice down, everyone is most likely sleepi-“

“Get inside, then we can talk!” Iruma grabbed Amami’s wrist and pulled the surprised boy inside, closing the door behind him. “Hey, Shittyhara, it’s only your buddy Avocado, you can come out!”

“Amami-kun…?”

“Saihara-kun…? What’s going on here?”

“That’s what we should be asking! What are you doing in the girls’ dorms in the middle of the night?! Have we spotted another pervert?!” Yumeno said in an accusing tone.

“Another…? N-No, I’m not doing anything shady, I swear…” He laughed nervously. “I was allowed to stay for a sleepover by Angie-san and Chabashira-san… but I couldn’t fall asleep, and then I heard someone shouting. I was worried you’d wake everyone up, so I came to check on you…”

“Tenko and Angie did…?!“

“Maybe they decided to take him as a replacement for you? He sure seems more useful!” Iruma said.

“Tenko wouldn’t! I’m not sure about Angie… but Tenko wouldn’t!”

“Anyway… I explained how things look on my side, so maybe you too…” Amami tried to interrupt them. “What’s going on here and why are you so loud?”

“We’re helping Saihara get laid!”

“No, we’re not!”

“No, you’re not! Amami-kun, I’m really sorry for this,” Saihara said, wondering how much more he was going to embarrass himself that night. “It’s not like that at all… It’s true that they’re helping me, but…“
Amami walked up to the pile of torn and crushed fragments of paper, sat down next to it and started trying to put them back together without saying anything. He spent a while like that, while the three of them were watching. He only looked up after the pieces returned to their place.

“I’m going to assume you’re helping Saihara-kun confess to Ouma-kun… am I right?” He asked. “And that’s why you’re trying to write a song.”

“Wow, Avocado is actually kind of smart!”

“I’ll take that as a compliment, Iruma-san…” Amami sighed. “I’ll also assume it’s not going too well.”

“I wish I could say you’re wrong, but you’re not,” Saihara admitted.

“Wait…” Yumeno fixed her eyes on Amami. “Aren’t that guy’s love songs amazingly popular? I heard you don’t really like writing them, but… most girls love them. I’m right… right?”

“I guess you are,” he replied, bringing his hand to his chin and looking at the fragments of paper he put together. “You could say that… I’m just good with words. Even though I’m pretty awkward in real life…”

“That’s it!” Iruma’s eyes suddenly sparkled. “Join us, Avocado! With you we can finally do it properly!”

“I’m not sure if it’s a good idea… Isn’t it about Saihara-kun’s feelings?”

“I would really appreciate some help, Amami-kun… It’s been a few hours. I’m tired,” Saihara said. “I’m a composer, not a lyricist…”

“Nyeh, you’re going to have to become a singer too… Better warn you in advance.”

“I know and I want to cry.”

“If that’s what you want me to do, I can offer you some advice and stay with you, but don’t expect too much from me. It’s all about you in the end.” Amami gave him a reassuring smile, reaching for another sheet of paper. “Ah, before we start let me say one thing. The lyrics you wrote and discarded were pretty decent.”

“H-Huh?”

“There’s something in them that makes it obvious it was you who wrote it, and that you put your heart into it,” he explained. “Though you need to be a bit more romantic, you know. Ouma-kun may not look like it, but he’s actually pretty weak to stuff like that.”

“Uhm… sure. So I… don’t need to be more straightforward? To make him understand?”

“Not really. I mean… You need to clearly state that you love him, that goes without saying, but other than that… Ouma-kun is really smart. He can read between verses, so don’t worry about not being understood. Just put your feelings to pen, okay? Then everything will be okay.”

“Wow, so what we really needed was… someone who knows Ouma better?” Yumeno mumbled, then yawned. “At least we’re finally getting somewhere…”

Saihara reached for the earlier abandoned pen again, accepting the blank page from Amami. If he was going in the right direction, then maybe it wasn’t a lost cause…
With that, he began another attempt of writing his first love song.

*If I reach for your hand now, will you let me hold it?*

*Will you smile and say “you’re not boring” again?*

*I hope you will*

*Because there’s nothing I wish for more*

***

Amami was much more helpful than he declared he would be. Somehow he managed to guide Saihara in a way that the lyrics still seemed ‘his’, despite someone else constantly helping him choose the right words.

Though it still took a while. Nobody in the room seemed eager to check the time, but it was definitely well past midnight, and the empty energy drinks bottles were only confirming that. At some point, when they agreed Saihara couldn’t do anything more, they just left the technical part to Amami so the three of them could move onto the music.

Ever since the lyrics finally started to come together, Saihara already had a melody on his mind. Composing was definitely a thing he felt more comfortable with, and writing down music notes was coming to him much easier than writing words. Iruma was helping him, playing the parts he showed to her on her guitar, since it was the only instrument they currently had.

“Seems like right now we have a pianist, a violinist and two guitarists in this room,” Iruma muttered with a tired expression. “You think you can come up with something good for the four of us in a short time?”

“Don’t worry about this, I definitely can,” he replied, not even stopping his hand. “Though it’s a shame we don’t have a bass guitar here…”

“I’ve never even seen Akamatsu write music for us… You guys are kinda amazing,” Yumeno said, watching him carefully.

“So I’m permanently included in your support group?” Amami asked. “Also, I think I’m done. This is as much as I can do… You could probably still hone it a bit, but since we’re in a hurry, I think this will do.”

“I don’t even know how I should thank you, Amami-kun…”

“No need for that, Saihara-kun.” The other boy waved his hand with a smile. “I just wanted to help my friends. I’ve had enough of you dancing around each other.”

“See?! Even Avocado had enough!” Iruma shouted. “You guys need to finally get at it! And yeah, Amami, there’s no way for you to back out now. The Desperate Virgins Unit was formed!”

“Who are you calling a desperate virgin!? No one here is desperate, except for you!” Yumeno yelled in response. Saihara never heard her raise her voice so often before, but also never saw her hang out with Iruma for so long.

“Me? No, no, no, it’s clearly Shittyhara who can’t keep it in his pants!”

“Saihara isn’t a gross pervert like you!”
“Hey, I would recommend you to stop arguing… It’s really late,” Amami reminded them. “We don’t want anyone to wake up, right?”

“Shut up!” They both shouted at the same time, causing him to laugh nervously.

“You’re a part of this unit as well, Avocado! Shittyhara has that little shit, Tittless has the useless lesbian, and you? Who are you thirsting for!? Tell us!”

“Stop calling Tenko the useless lesbian!” Yumeno looked as if she was about to attempt throwing Iruma out of the window. “But… That song Amami wrote with Tenko… If Tenko was singing about me, then…”

“Holy shit,” Iruma gasped. “Who is it, Amami!? Who are we writing a song for next!?”

“If I wanted to write a song for that person, I would do it on my own,” he replied with a laugh. “Also… That’s a secret only me and Chabashira-san know.”

“So Tenko knows! When did you become such good friends! I’m jealous!”

“Come on, Amami, don’t be like that! Tell us, your secret is safe with us!”

Both girls jumped towards him, trying to talk louder than the other, and Amami was beginning to look not only distressed, but a little panicked. Saihara would feel bad for him if he weren’t so tired and focused on only one thing.

He also didn’t try to hush them, what turned out to be a terrible mistake. The door suddenly burst open, and this time the person who did that didn’t look as friendly as Amami did a few hours earlier.

“Listen, bastards, it’s three in the morning. If I hear one more sound coming from this room, I will personally slaughter all of you.”

Harukawa’s voice was quiet and calm, but one word was enough to make them all go silent. Something about her tone was telling them she wasn’t joking.

“I don’t care about the love life of any of you. You can even die alone and I won’t give a damn, but if you ruin my sleep, I will have to act,” she continued, glaring at them as if she was really planning a murder. “You’ve been yelling at each other at least for the past five… six hours. I’ve had enough.”

The silence continued on, as Harukawa stared at them with murderous intent in her eyes. Iruma and Yumeno actually hugged each other, clearly terrified. Amami also had no idea what to say.

Only Saihara was sleep deprived enough to speak up.

“Harukawa-san, you play bass, right?” He asked as he looked up from the scattered around him music sheets. “Are you free righ—“

“If you ask me to help you in your plan to steal that little shit’s heart I’m going to snap your neck first.”

“But—“

“I don’t care if you’re going to date him or not, just keep me out of this.”

“Nyeh, join the Desperate Virgins Unit, Harumaki…” Yumeno muttered softly, but Saihara could swear that he’d never seen so much rage on Harukawa’s face before. “W-Why are you glaring at me?! That name was Iruma’s idea!”
“I hope you die a virgin, Iruma. Saihara, Amami, I always knew these two were out of their minds, but I thought you were better than this,” Harukawa said.

“I drank definitely too much of those energy drinks. My hands are shaking. It’s three in the morning and I still haven’t showered. I want to cry more than ever during the past few years, and more than anything I just hug Ouma-kun and tell him I love him without doing all of this, but we’re six hours into writing a song and I can’t give up now,” Saihara mumbled. “Do you really think I still have it in me to care about what I look like in your eyes?”

He expected her to walk out of the room right away. She hated Ouma, and it was a well known fact. Even though she and Saihara considered each other friends, there was no way she’d accept it just like that…

He didn’t expect that sympathetic look on her face.

“At least you know you look pathetic right now,” Harukawa sighed. She stood there for a moment longer, then walked up to him. “Show me that stupid song of yours.”

Saihara didn’t even protest. Maybe he really was desperate.

“It’s not… bad,” she said after a while. “It’s pretty okay. I just wish it wasn’t for him.”

“I know.”

“But I guess I can’t change your mind. If it makes all of you shut up, I will join you.”

“Really?! Holy fuck, I can’t believe Harukawa is helping us get Shittyhara and the annoying twink together!” Iruma let out a cry, but Yumeno quickly put her hand over the other girl’s lips.

“It’s a pleasure to have you on our team, Harumaki…”

“I’m doing it only for Saihara, the rest of you can go to hell. Also, call me that one more time and I’m going to take everything back.”

“Hey, Iruma… I’m hungry. Do you have any snacks?” Yumeno ignored her threat and turned to the other girl again.

“I only have the soup for sluts,” was Iruma’s reply.

“Ehm… What?”

Iruma crawled towards her drawers, and then really pulled out a pack of noodles where the letters read ‘soup for sluts’.

No one questioned that.

***

Morning came much faster than Saihara expected, but it looked like despite being almost on the verge of death, he managed to finish what he was supposed to finish. Not even being able to look at it was another thing.

He could only vaguely register the fact that Iruma was sleeping on the floor in the middle of the room, while Amami fell asleep with his back against the wall and Yumeno’s head in his lap. Harukawa in turn… didn’t even look tired. She brought her guitar from her room and now was practicing her parts of the song, making sure she was being quiet enough not to wake the others up.
As for Saihara himself… He was sitting on the floor and resting his cheek against Iruma’s bed, completely exhausted and ready to fall asleep. It was both the worst and the most fun night in a while.

When the door opened again no one even moved.

“Iruma-san, it’s breakfast tim—“ Akamatsu began, then stopped. “…do I even want an explanation to this?”

“You don’t,” Harukawa replied, and Saihara was grateful he didn’t need to talk. “But you’re going to get one, since we need you anyway. Here.”

And so, she passed a bunch of papers to Akamatsu. There was a moment of silence, interrupted only by the rustling of pages.

“I can’t believe you’re involved in this,” she muttered after a while.

“I can’t believe it either.”

“And I can’t believe I wasn’t invited to the whole ‘let’s make Saihara-kun confess to Ouma-kun’ party. I thought we were best friends.” She gave him a disappointed look.

“I’m sorry… This wasn’t planned…” He muttered sleepily.

“The party isn’t over yet.” Harukawa put her bass away and stood up. “These idiots here need some sleep, but there’s still a lot we need to prepare. Will you help?”

“Who do you think I am? Of course I will,” Akamatsu said with confidence. “But… You should sleep for a bit too, Harumaki. It’s a day off, no one will pay attention if we disappear from their sight.”

“I’m fine, but… I may not be so fine if I have to deal with this useless unit any further,” Harukawa sighed. “I’m not sleeping here though. I’m going back to my room.”

“Sure, but… I have one more question. Why is this sheet signed ‘Desperate Virgins Unit?’”

Saihara had no idea what happened next, as he finally let himself nod off.

***

When he woke up, both he and Amami were forced to go back to their dorms, take a shower, eat something and then come back. It was a reasonable demand, considering the fact that Saihara didn’t even get to do that yesterday… Yumeno promised to take care of explaining Amami’s disappearance to Chabashira and Angie, Akamatsu and Iruma were supposed to get them a permission to use the recording studio, and Harukawa’s task was to wait for him and Amami to return, so they can try to become Saihara’s singing instructors.

After the night straight out of hell ended, an even more difficult day began… At least now they had Akamatsu on their side and having the access to a piano was no longer a problem.

The dormitory building was surprisingly quiet for that time of the day, especially if the fact that they weren’t the only idol group living there was taken into account. Mioda, the composer of the other band, sometimes could be louder than Ouma.

Not that he wanted to run into anyone. Hoshi or Shinguuji would be okay, they wouldn’t ask him
why he’s sneaking around, but if he got caught by Momota or Gonta… all hope to go back quickly would be lost for him.

And just as he was thinking that and trying to sneak out of the building, someone’s arms wrapped around his waist, making him yelp in surprise.

“Saaaaaihara-chan,” Ouma hummed, squeezing him tightly and almost giving him a heart attack. “I was looking for you!”

“O-Ouma-kun? You were? W-Why?” He stuttered out. Now he was even more doomed than if it had been Momota.

Ouma just nuzzled his cheek against his back, making him want to turn around and just pull him into a hug. “You know, you disappeared yesterday evening, and when I asked Momota-chan about it, he just said he hasn’t seen you since then. I was worried about my beloved Saihara-chan! Who knows what might’ve happened!”

Beloved. Something he got called a lot of times, but chose to ignore it. Hearing the undeniable affection in Ouma’s voice was making him feel like an oblivious idiot.

Then Ouma let go, only to appear in front of Saihara a second later.

“That’s a lie though!” He snickered. “Saihara-chan isn’t a little kid. If he got hit by a car, it would be his own fault.”

Saihara was about to come up with some response, but then Ouma gave him his trademark evil smirk.

“It’s a different case if you try to cheat on me with Amami-chan, I might care a bit more,” he said in a low voice. “Running away and avoiding me when I’m so bored, all by myself, only to come back with Amami-chan in the morning? You’re really terrible… Completely awful. I can’t believe I offered my heart to someone like you!”

Before he could even think, Saihara found himself protesting.

“I-I would never cheat on you, Ouma-kun! I’m not like that!” He exclaimed, subconsciously moving closer to him and taking his hands. “Do I really look like a person who wouldn’t be able to cherish the person I love?”

That was enough to make Ouma’s face go red. It was really subtle, but his skin was so white that even the slightest change was easily visible… He really did blush at his words.

And that was pretty damn cute.

“Silly Saihara-chan, we’d first have to be a couple for you to cheat on me! You can do whatever you want with Amami-chan, since we’re not one!” Ouma tried to hide his embarrassment, but failed with a quiet gasp when Saihara simply pulled him closer.

“I’m working on this,” he whispered into his hair, not worrying if he heard him properly. He let go of him after no longer than three seconds, and then…

…just left him there, sprinting towards the exit. Partly because he did all of that on purpose, to distract Ouma and create a way to escape for himself, but also because…

He simply panicked, and now was running away.
I’m sorry, Ouma-kun. Give me one more day.

***

“I’m not sure how I should tell you this, but…” Amami began.

“You suck at singing, Saihara,” Harukawa finished. “Are you even trying?”

“Of course I am! I just… I’m nervous, I guess…” Saihara sighed. “It’s not something I usually do… Actually, it’s the first time I have to take singing seriously, and I…”

“Get your shit together. You yourself agreed to choose the most extra way to confess possible, so now deal with it,” the girl replied. “I get it, an extra way of confessing for the most extra little bastard, he’ll definitely appreciate you stepping down to his level, so just do it properly.”

“You’re just stressing him out more, Harukawa-san…” Amami muttered. “You need to relax, Saihara-kun. Also, try singing a little lower… This song is kinda ballad-like, let’s make it softer.”

“Ballad-like? This is a straight-up ballad,” Harukawa said. “Even worse than the one they forced me to sing with Momota. Know your crimes, Saihara.”

“What am I doing with my life…” Saihara whispered to himself. “I’m going to try again and keep Amami-kun’s advice in mind.”

This time they locked themselves in Harukawa’s room. It was probably the safest place in the dormitory building – if Harukawa said not to come in, nobody came in. It was a rule Saihara heard from Akamatsu a long time ago. And yet…

“Hey bitches, guess who got us a permission to use the studio!” Iruma yelled, bursting through the door, with Akamatsu following her with a terrified face, and Yumeno yawning, as if she didn’t even register the danger.

“Iruma-san, please, wait-“

“Iruma, do you want to die?” Harukawa sent her a glare, immediately making her back off and almost stumble into Akamatsu.

“Eeek! I-I’m sorry!” She squealed. “I-I just… wanted to tell you we’re free t-to do whatever we want…”

“She actually begged the president on her knees…” Akamatsu said with a sigh. “Please, forgive her for interrupting.”

“Cool, now you get to look after Saihara,” Harukawa replied, still glaring at Iruma. “I need to practice playing this goddamn song.”

“To be honest, me, Iruma-san and Yumeno-san should probably practice too. We’re going to need the music first, right?” Amami pointed out. “Akamatsu-san…”

“Leave it to me then! I’m going to teach Saihara-kun everything I can, and we’ll also practice the piano parts! Good luck, Amami-kun, everyone!”

“Come on, DVU, we can do it!” Iruma exclaimed, extending her hand towards them. “What’s with you? We should do the group circle thing like sports kids do!”

“That’s a great idea!” Akamatsu joined, putting her hand over Iruma’s. Soon Amami joined too, then
Yumeno and Saihara.

“Harumaki?” Yumeno gave her a pleading look.

“This is stupid,” she said, watching them as if they were a group of annoying children, but then sighed and joined them too. “But I guess I don’t have anything to say.”

“Okay, if we’re all in…” Iruma started. “It’s all to make the ‘help Cuckhara get in the gremlin’s pant- “

“No!” Yumeno stepped on Iruma’s feet in protest.

“Eeek! Okay, okay, I get it!” To make the ‘help Saihara confess to Ouma’ plan succeed!”

“If it doesn’t succeed I will regret this my whole life,” Harukawa mumbled.

“It will succeed!” Akamatsu said firmly. “It definitely will!”

Their hands went up in the air, parted, then Saihara’s was grabbed by Akamatsu’s, as she dragged him out of Harukawa’s room and pulled towards her own one.

“I figured you might take it easier if you can play and sing at the same time,” she explained with a smile. “I’m not the greatest singer too, but it comes easier to me when I can sit by my piano.”

“I hope you’re right and it’ll work for me too,” Saihara sighed.

“What are you so nervous about?” She asked when they were finally inside. “I’m sure Ouma-kun will be very happy when you show then results of your efforts to him…”

He walked up to the piano and sat down on the bench beside it, already reaching for the instrument. He knew it just as well as he knew his own piano, so he simply placed the music sheets in the right place and began playing the melody he sacrificed his sleep to write.

He stopped after a moment though.

“I know. I know that he’ll most likely be happy, and… that’s all I need, but at the same time… when Iruma-san said we’d go all out, I decided I want to make it perfect,” he laughed a little. “I already made Ouma-kun wait for so long, so… I want to at least make it special, so he forgives me for that.”

“I think… that your song doesn’t need to be perfect. It just needs to come from your heart,” Akamatsu said. “I’m not the one to say it, since it’s you who knows Ouma-kun the best, but there’s a chance he’ll laugh at you no matter how good it is, just to hide how he himself feels. You need to make him want to open his heart to you, not impress him.”

She was right. She was right, and he always knew it, but… maybe he just needed to hear it. It was impossible to write a perfect song and record it in the span of two days, and it wasn’t even the purpose of all of that.

“So, Saihara-kun… Try again. And again, and again… Until you’re satisfied with the result. Harumaki and Amami-kun were probably a little too hard on you,” she said, sympathy in her voice. “We just want the best for both of you, so don’t hold it against them.”

Saihara nodded and placed his fingers on the keyboard again. Hesitating now would be utterly stupid, and wouldn’t give him more time.

***
The whole day passed in a similar atmosphere. After a pretty long while he and Akamatsu decided nothing more could be done and went to look for the rest to finally begin the last phase of their plan, only to find Harukawa on the verge of completely losing her patience, Amami, who was looking as if he wanted to be anywhere but there, as well as Iruma and Yumeno, yelling at each other.

Iruma and Amami probably had the most technical knowledge among them, so the responsibility fell onto them… Especially Iruma, but since she was the one to start all of this she couldn’t complain. If she did, the rest of the group would never let her live with that.

Saihara could say that, without any doubts, it was the worst unit he ever worked with, and at the same time the best.

“Nyeh, Saihara… I know I wasn’t really useful yesterday… and today, too… but good luck,” Yumeno said just before they were supposed to start recording him. “Ouma’s annoying, but he’s not that bad overall, so… I hope it goes well.”

“Uhm… Thank you, Yumeno-san. Without you I probably wouldn’t even make a move, so you were actually really helpful,” he replied with a smile.

“Do you even have the strength left to finish this?” She asked him, probably noticing his exhaustion, but he only shook his head. “You know, right now it all depends on you…”

“And me!” Iruma interrupted, shoving headphones into his hands. “Even if Shittyhara does something wrong I can always fix it later, you know. The beautiful genius, Iruma Miu, is good at mixing too! Also, you think what is autotune for?”

“I don’t think it’ll be necessary, he did pretty well when I was practicing with him,” Akamatsu said. “Good luck, Saihara-kun.”

“Yeah, do your best…” Amami added in a tired voice. “I would like to sleep in my own bed tonight, not on the floor, and if I have to help Iruma-san…”

“Shut up, Avocado, I don’t need your help with putting this shit together! Sleep wherever and with whomever you want!”

“That could be a problem,” Harukawa said quietly, as if to herself, glancing at Akamatsu.

“Huh? Did you say anything, Harumaki?”

“Nothing. Let’s get this over with.”

“Okay then! Saihara-kun, please tell us when you’re ready!” Akamatsu dragged Yumeno and Iruma away from him. Not wanting to drag it out any longer, he put the headphones over his ears and took a deep breath. He was certainly going to have to repeat it many times before they got it right, but he was prepared for it.

Finally, he gave Iruma a sign to begin.

When you tried to push me away
I tried to make you stay instead

When you decided to stay
I decided that it’s still not enough
What’s the next step then?

Chapter End Notes

The soup for sluts it an actual thing I saw on tumblr and I was like 'yeah that's something Iruma would definitely buy'

One more chapter to go... Thank you guys for reading, leaving kudos and comments, I really really appreciate it!! Love you!!
a song about love

Chapter Notes

The last chapter is here!! This is probably the fluffiest thing I've written in a while, so prepare yourselves

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Hey, Suckhara, wake up! We’re done!”

It wasn’t a nice awakening. He fell asleep in an awkward position again, leaning over the table in Iruma’s room, and he most likely didn’t sleep more than three hours. In addition, she definitely threw something at him, but missed and hit the wall instead, making so much noise that the person living in the room next to her would certainly come to yell at them, if it weren’t Yumeno.

“Huh…?”

“Are you even listening, idiot?! We’re done! There’s nothing more we can do!” She said with an angry frown. She was holding a CD in her hand, and it was most likely the effect of their work. “Now you’re free to do whatever you want with it!”

“I didn’t think completing a song in such a short amount of time was even possible…” Amami muttered. He was lying on the floor, still awake, but… he looked kind of dead inside. “You must really be a genius, Iruma-san…”

“O-Of course I am!” She huffed, but her cheeks grew pink. “Anyway, Saihara, take it and get the fuck out of my room. After two nights like this I really need to get some beauty sleep, or I’ll lose my job.”

“Uh, same here…”

“Nobody asked you, Avocado. You get the fuck out as well.”

“What time is it right now…?” Saihara asked hesitantly.

“Around four in the morning. Why are you asking?”

He stood up and took the CD from Iruma’s hands, not even knowing how to thank her. Now it was up to him what to do with it, and when, though he hoped he could get it over with quickly.

Four in the morning… Knowing Ouma’s sleeping schedule, it was both too early to be sure he was already asleep and too late to hope he wasn’t. Even if he wanted to give it to him right away, he would have to wait.

“Hey, you’re not going to listen to it first? To check if I didn’t do anything weird with it?” Iruma asked.

“I trust you enough to be sure you didn’t,” he said. “And… I kind of don’t want to listen to it myself.”
“Worried you still sound shitty, no matter what?” Iruma laughed. “Don’t worry, it may not be on the level of my songs, but we did what we could, and the result is pretty good. Now go, take advantage of the fact that our agencies don’t care about the ‘no dating’ rule and romance your beloved goblin. We all believe in you, so you better succeed, fucker.”

Saihara glanced at the CD once more, looked at Iruma and Amami again and nodded. If not now, then never.

***

Even though everything was telling Saihara it was a stupid move, he ended up standing in front of the door to Ouma’s room at four thirty in the morning. He probably didn’t look the best, as he was definitely exhausted, and his sleep-deprived self was probably making decisions he normally wouldn’t, but he knocked on the door anyway. Actually, he even knocked for the second time when he didn’t receive any response after the first try.

Then Ouma finally opened the door, mumbling something to himself with eyes half-open. “For fuck’s sake, Momota-chan, if it’s you again and you still can’t deal with that air horn taped to your toilet, I’m going to…”

His sleepiness dissolved into thin air immediately after he realized that it actually wasn’t Momota.

“…Saihara-chan? Why would you come to my room in the middle of the night, after avoiding me for so long?” He asked. “Ah, is that some kind of a booty call?”

“W-What?! N-No! It’s-”

“A joke, Saihara-chan. I guess Iruma-chan’s sense of humor rubs off on me! Blame that ugly bitch for that, nishishi,” Ouma snickered, then instantly turned serious. “Anyway, you better have some reeeaaaally good excuse to wake me up at this ungodly hour. Explain yourself and then I will decide if I should get mad and start planning revenge.”

“Uhm… It’s…” Blank. No matter how hard he was thinking, he couldn’t come up with the right words to say. He ended up holding the CD in his sweaty hands and struggling to stutter out something coherent.

“Ah, is my beloved Saihara-chan that scared of me? Don’t worry, your punishment will be quick, you won’t even feel any pain!” Ouma exclaimed, but then a different idea apparently appeared in his head. “Or maybe… is this a love confession? Have you finally noticed how lovely I am?”

“Well… kind of.” Saihara’s voice wasn’t much louder than a whisper, but Ouma must’ve heard him, as he went completely still. “Here. Take this.”

“What… is this?” Ouma asked, hesitantly accepting the CD. “It’s not anything weird, right?”

“You’ll see. Now… I’ll excuse myself, I haven’t slept normally for the past two days,” he replied, turning around and trying to ignore how weak his legs felt. And also the fact that Ouma watched him stumble as he walked towards his room.

The rest depended on how Ouma would interpret his song, so he could only pray for his team’s work to be enough…

Saihara thought he’d fall asleep right away, but for some reason he was unable to do so. He found himself lying in his bed and turning from side to side, thinking about what he’d just done. It all happened so fast… Yumeno summoning them to the girls’ dorms, Iruma overhearing them talk,
Amami and Harukawa joining… and the entire songwriting project.

All of that just made him even more aware of how hopelessly in love he was.

Looking back, that feeling had been following him since quite a while, too. He just brushed it off as simple fascination he, as a fan, felt.

Ouma debuted as an idol when he was much younger than the rest of TWILIGHT☆MYSTERY. Saihara still remembered the fourteen year old himself and Akamatsu watching his lives together, talking about how one day they’d both become composers and write songs for people like him. Initially he didn’t really think it was possible for him… For Akamatsu maybe, but him? He was just a shy kid, and his piano skills were average when compared to her, a young genius.

That’s what he thought, but watching the talented child that was Ouma Kokichi become popular despite his young age was weirdly motivating. Even back then, he was forcing Saihara to do his best…

Giving up on falling asleep fast, Saihara reached for his phone and headphones. He had a playlist for each of his group’s members, but Ouma’s was considerably longer, as he still had even those really old songs from where they were fourteen. He chose one of them and let himself recall how he felt listening to it all those years ago.

*Follow me, take my hand and let me lead the way*

*Let’s have some fun, just you and I!*

*Hey, are you listening? I’m singing for you*

*So let my voice reach you*

His voice sounded a little different, but even back then, Saihara adored him – the hardworking, always smiling kid his age, who already achieved so much.

Maybe that’s why he was so surprised upon actually meeting him for the first time. Ouma during their days at the Academy turned out to be a pretty different person from what he had imagined… Saihara couldn’t deny that he was a little disappointed at first. The Ouma from that time was lying a lot more than now, hiding a lot more than now and generally didn’t resemble that happy kid he expected him to be. Sometimes he seemed to be friendly, sometimes he treated everyone like enemies. He didn’t trust anyone, and it was hard to get closer to him, but…

…if Saihara knew anything about him during that time, it was that Ouma was really lonely. He was just a kid who forced his way towards the top, but for whom staying there alone turned out to be too much. Later he learned that it was Ouma’s friends from his hometown that encouraged him to become an idol, but without them at his side he quickly lost motivation to do it any longer.

Ouma was a people person – that was his conclusion. He needed friends, someone to share his idol life with. Now that Saihara thought about it, that was one of the reason for creating TWILIGHT☆MYSTERY to begin with. There were more of those reasons, but… Even back then, it was all about Ouma.

The song changed to one that was written as a school assignment – the first thing they worked on
I might’ve lost my way, but you helped me find it again

It’s like being handed a map

Of a world much brighter than the one I knew

So this time, I’ll be the one to follow you

Suddenly Saihara felt really dense. It’s not like any of Ouma’s songs were explicitly addressed to someone, but since the Academy it became more clear what he was writing them with someone on his mind. It just never occurred to Saihara that he was the one Ouma was thinking about, even though the hints were pretty obvious.

He really was stupid, wasn’t he?

Well, at least creating the group wasn’t a mistake, he thought, recalling a memory of their first live concert. Ouma was the only one who had any experience with performing live, so everyone was really nervous… It went pretty well though, except for some minor mistakes on Momota’s part.

“We really did it! We did it, everyone!” Ouma yelled happily, dropping any kind of act for a moment and trying to jump onto Momota’s back after they walked off the stage. “Did you hear the crowd?! They liked it! They really liked it!”

“O-Of course they did! There was no option they wouldn’t!” Momota replied, even though he sounded a little surprised that they managed to pull everything off after all. “Also, let go. What are you, a brat?” He freed himself from Ouma’s hands, making him fall onto the floor.

“That’s cruel, Momota-chan! Why are you so mean to me?!” He started crying, summoning his fake, crocodile tears usually no one believed were real. “I knew that I shouldn’t consider you a friend!”

“C-Come on, I didn’t mean to-“

“Don’t cry, Ouma-kun! Gonta will carry you if you want!” The tall boy approached him and helped him get up, only to end up helping him climb onto his back the next second.

“Hurray, now I can look down on that idiot Momota-chan!” Ouma laughed, clinging to Gonta. “I always knew that Gonta is my best friend!”

“Wasn’t it Saihara?” Amami asked, glancing at the composer, who was watching them with a slightly embarrassed smile.

“Oh, my beloved Saihara-chan? He’s on a different level, sorry! You can’t ever reach him, even if you try.”

“I doubt anyone would even want to try…” Hoshi muttered. “Anyway, good job, everyone.”

“Yeah, everyone except for Momota-chan! I saw you make mistakes in the choreography during the
last song. What an amateur!”

“Shut up! It was our first live performance! I’m still learning!”

“Well, it would be troublesome if your process of learning continued to be this slow…” Shinguuji said, and Ouma’s laughter almost drowned out Momota’s angry reply.

Momota was probably the only one who wasn’t in an excellent mood that day… but most likely even he felt proud of the results of their group. Ouma in turn… seemed happier than Saihara ever saw him before. Ever since the group was formed… he was slowly changing. Opening up to them. Learning how to share his success with other people and how to enjoy his job again…

At least Saihara thought it was the case. Ouma was unpredictable after all, and… that was probably one of the features Saihara liked the most about him… Except now it seemed that he liked everything about him. What a strange conclusion.

What was going to be Ouma’s reaction to his song? Was he going to like it? Laugh at it? What kind of face he was going to make?

Saihara was a little glad he wasn’t going to see it. It at least gave Ouma the chance to be honest with himself.

Finally, all the recalling of old memories, combined with Ouma’s voice in the headphones lulled him to sleep. He was going to deal with all of this after waking up.

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He slept at least until noon, and as soon as he opened his eyes, the realization of what he was doing for the past two nights and one day hit him.

The fact that he let Ouma know hit him even harder. All of this could go only in two directions – either ruin their friendship or actually help them get out of that awkward state of being in love with each other and unable to do anything about it.

Though at the back of his head something was still whispering to him that Ouma couldn’t actually love him. Someone like him could definitely find someone much better than the always nervous and shy Saihara Shuuichi.

Hoping to chase those thoughts away, he reached for his phone to check the time. He noticed some new messages from Akamatsu and Iruma, but decided to ignore them for now and check his email instead.

He could swear he stopped breathing for a moment when he noticed a new message from no one else than Ouma himself.

No text, just one attachment. An audio file named ‘my ugly heart’s song’.

Saihara quickly jumped out of his bed to reach for his headphones, abandoned somewhere on the floor, then simply stayed there, downloading the file and holding his breath again as he opened it.

It certainly wasn’t as good as Saihara’s song when it came to the technical part. The only instrument that could be heard was a piano, and Saihara suspected it was recorded in Ouma’s room, using whatever microphone he had there.
It was also definitely a response to Saihara’s confession in a song form, what meant that he either put it all together in one night, or had been working on it since a while. Thinking about either of those options was making him want to cry.

Only ‘want to’ though, because the thing that really made him cry was something else – the song itself.

You found me when I was all alone
And even though my world grew bigger since then
I still haven’t met anyone more precious than you

Saihara didn’t even understand why he was crying, but with every word sang in that soft voice, his sobbing was becoming worse. He recognized some parts of the melody - he composed them himself, and now Ouma smoothly included them into his composition while still making it distinctly ‘his’.

Are you proud of me?
I want you to be
Are you looking at me?
I want your eyes to be on me

That was it. Ouma Kokichi was going to be the death of him. He couldn’t believe he didn’t notice his feelings sooner.

Bored is a thing I never am with you
Ah, does that sound like a lie?
Not this time, I swear
That’s the truth coming from this ugly heart of mine

The words ‘I love you’ were not even once used in the entire song, but there was no need to. Ouma was making sure to tell him that almost every day, so there was no need to include it in a song that was supposed to tell him something new. Even when the audio ended with a quiet giggle, Saihara kept clutching his phone and crying. Was it because he was happy? Or because he was mad at himself for being blind for so long? Or because Ouma’s song was absolutely beautiful? He couldn’t tell.

Did Ouma feel something similar when listening to his confession? He surely didn’t cry… right?

He most likely continued to sit on the floor, cry and replay that song for quite a while, until knocking
on the door brought him back to reality.

“Saihara-kun? It’s only me, Rantarou,” Amami spoke up. “Akamatsu-san told me there’s a festival nearby tonight, so I thought that maybe you’d want to invite Ouma-kun. I’ll slide you the leaflet under the door... Good luck.”

Saihara wiped his face with the back of his hand, got up from the floor and walked up to the piece of paper Amami left there. Even though the songs said more than words alone could ever say...

It was high time they finally faced each other. On the empty side of the leaflet, Saihara wrote a short message and left the room to slide it under someone else’s door.

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Saihara decided not to wait for any confirmation and simply believe Ouma would come to the place he mentioned in that note – the garden of their dormitory. He wouldn’t run away now, right? Not after all of that. If he did, Saihara would have no idea what he should do next. The whole songwriting project exhausted all creativity he had in store.

“Saaaiihaaaarrrra-chan.” A quiet hum broke him out of his thoughts, immediately making them meaningless.

Ouma not only didn’t run away, but also looked absolutely stunning. Saihara didn’t know where he got those clothes from, but he was dressed in a pale-yellow kimono with floral pattern. His hair was tied back, and the loose strands were pinned aside using blue, flower-shaped hairpins in a color similar to those on the kimono. Not that he usually wasn’t pretty, it’s just that it was obvious he put effort into looking even prettier.

“I’ll assume that you making that face means that you like what you see, nishishi.” Ouma gave him a mischievous grin, stopping very close to him. “You can thank Angie-chan for this. She’s the only one whose clothes would fit me, and when she heard I’m going on a festival date, she wasn’t going to leave me alone easily.”

Ah, so it was Angie. Of course, they were friends after all... Saihara should’ve realized, yellow and blue were her colors. He really felt like thanking her though.

“Because that’s what it is... right? A date,” Ouma asked. “Saihara-chan wouldn’t dare to invite me somewhere without making it a date, I’m sure of it.”

Despite saying that, his voice sounded somewhat hesitant, so...

“I really hope it is,” Saihara replied. “Though now that I think about it... Are you really okay with going out like this? You’re famous. I’m sure some people will recognize you and try to bother you... and I don’t want that.”

“Oh, so you want me only for yourself? Wow, Saihara-chan sure is getting bold! Don’t worry, it’s not that easy to recognize an idol without makeup,” he said with a giggle. “And if something happens, you will protect me!”

“I guess I’ll just buy you a mask if things get troublesome,” Saihara sighed. “It’s a festival after all.”

“Right, right!” Ouma nodded enthusiastically, then... extended his hand to him. “You better make sure I have looots of fun today, or else I’ll dump you!”

It wasn’t the right moment to point out that they’d have to be together first for Ouma to dump him,
but it was the right moment to take his hand and hold it tightly.

If everything went well, they had the whole night to sort things out and decide when was the right time to speak up.

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Apparently Ouma decided that Saihara’s remark about buying him a mask was a promise, as he quickly pointed at one, claiming that he wanted it. Saihara couldn’t say that the blue oni mask was attractive in any way, but Ouma’s smile after he got what he wanted definitely was.

Spending time with him was certainly fun and didn’t feel all that different from usual, but the small detail of Ouma squeezing Saihara’s hand whenever they were about to move to another stall was changing the atmosphere just slightly enough to keep reminding them that something was different… And even if it was, it wasn’t a change for worse.

A change that wasn’t for the better wouldn’t make him feel so light and happy.

“Hey, Saihara-chan,” Ouma suddenly spoke up, stopping and pulling at his hand. He raised his mask, just high enough to let Saihara look him in the eyes. “Don’t you feel like something is wrong?”

“W-Wrong? What do you mean?” He asked, instantly feeling himself panic slightly, but Ouma’s grin told him it wasn’t about him.

“I could swear I noticed some dumb blonde bitch following us,” he exclaimed. “And I think she wasn’t alone.”

Oh. So the Desperate Virgins Unit still wasn’t disbanded.

“You know, Saihara-chan, it’s been a while since I last enjoyed my free time like this, so I don’t want any losers ruining it,” he continued. “It’s my first date with Saihara-chan after all! It’s special!”

“Ouma-kun… If you call it a first date with me, then it means there’s also going to be at least a second one,” he laughed. “And if it’s really like this, then… we can make the next one more special. Just leave them be.”

“Every moment I spend with Saihara-chan is special to me,” Ouma said, for a split second his expression completely serious. “Just kidding! It was a lie! I might like Saihara-chan, but I’m not that much of a hopeless romantic!”

He was, and Saihara had a proof of that, in the form of a song saved on his phone.

“Anyway, prepare yourself to run, Saihara-chan!”

“Huh?!”

Without any warning, Ouma let the mask cover his face again and leaned down to take his shoes off. He took them in one hand, still holding Saihara’s with the other, and then… started running, dragging Saihara with him. Soon they left the main path, as Ouma pulled him somewhere between the stalls, away from the crowd, and, most likely, Iruma’s squad. It was surprising how fast he could be, even wearing those clothes.

“Come on, Saihara-chan, we need to be faster than them!”
“S-Sorry, I’m afraid I can’t go any faster!”

“That’s another reason why you wouldn’t make a good idol!” Ouma laughed. “Poor stamina, mediocre singing skills and cliché lyrics! I’m so glad you’re our composer, not a part of the band!”

He didn’t say a word about his composition, so he guessed at least that part was alright. He really was a man of one talent…

“Okay, I think they aren’t following us anymore!” Saihara’s companion decided after a while, stopping by the river banks and finally letting him catch a breath.

They must’ve wandered quite far away from the festival site, as suddenly everything seemed quieter. Not many people were around, and those who for some reason found themselves there also weren’t alone.

“You know, it’s almost time for the fireworks,” Ouma said. “Usually people watch them by the river, so I thought this might be a good spot. It might be a bit far away, but no one should bother us here.”

He let go of Saihara’s hand, took the mask off and walked up to a nearby bench.

“So, until then, let’s sit down and talk!”

There was no use avoiding that moment… Especially if he was the one to initiate it. Saihara simply followed Ouma and sat down next to him. Not wasting time, their hand found each other again, intertwining their fingers without hesitation. It was a calm, comforting and loving gesture.

“Ouma-kun-“

“Saihara-chan-“

They began talking at the same time, then went silent, staring at each other for a moment before bursting into laughter.

“You first, Ouma-kun."

“I love you, Saihara-chan,” he said, just like that, no pause or stuttering. “But it’s nothing new to you, right? I think the first time I said it was about three years ago. Wow, time sure flies fast!”

“Three years…” Saihara repeated, then lowered his head, unable to look him in the eyes. “I’m so sorry… That whole time, I thought you were just teasing me… You should’ve just slapped me and said you were serious.”

“No, no, that wouldn’t be right! You know, it was all planned! I’m good at waiting, so I needed to make you fall for me first, show you that you need me in your life!” Ouma said, puffing his cheeks in a pout, but soon that expression faltered. “But you can see that it’s a lie, right?”

Fear of rejection – Saihara was sure that it was the right answer. Even someone as confident as Ouma couldn’t fight it.

“I’m sorry…”

“Stop apologizing or I’ll get mad! And look at me! I don’t want you to take your eyes off me, ever!” Ouma furrowed his brows, letting go of Saihara’s hand to place both of his on his cheeks. “You know, it’s not a matter of who fell for whom first! What I want to know now is-”

“I love you, Ouma-kun,” he said, putting his own hands over Ouma’s. “I wish it didn’t take me so
long to realize it.”

In the pale light given by the moon and nearby lampposts he couldn’t be sure if Ouma blushed this time. The colorful explosions that painted the sky a few seconds later didn’t make it possible either, so instead of trying to figure it out, Saihara settled for leaning forward and joining their lips together in a kiss. A shy, awkward kiss that neither of them wanted to end.

“More.” It seemed like it was what Ouma said, but the fireworks drowned out the sound of his voice. He confirmed it in a different way, placing his arms around the other boy’s neck to pull him down once again, pressing his mouth against Saihara’s, who didn’t protest at all. They kept coming back for more, clumsily brushing their lips against each other until the lights and sound of the fireworks had died down.

“You’re terrible at this…” Ouma finally muttered, hiding his face in the crook of Saihara’s neck.

“To be honest… so you are,” he replied with a giggle, wrapping his arms around Ouma’s waist to pull him into an embrace.

“How dare you to accuse your boyfriend of that, Saihara-chan! If you continue being so mean to him, he might dump you, and you just got together! Even though he wouldn’t mind some more kissing practice…”

“S-So now we’re…”

“Y-Yeah. I think we are.” It seemed like Ouma squeezed him with all the strength he had in his thin arms. “You know, it might seem like I’m perfectly calm right now, but in reality I just want to scream.”

“W-What a coincidence. Me too.”

“You could sing for me instead.”

“Didn’t you say my singing skills were mediocre?”

“Come on, entertain me somehow, or I might get bored of you!”

“W-Well, if you didn’t get bored after three years, I doubt I have anything to worry about…”

“Wow, I can’t believe you said that out loud! You’re sleeping on the couch!”

“Strong words for someone who’s clinging onto me like this.”

“I would mess with your autocorrect like I did to Momota-chan if I didn’t love you so much, Shuuichi.”

The use of his given name made Saihara even happier, if that was possible. Suddenly he was grateful to Yumeno for summoning him that evening, to Iruma for coming up with that plan, to Amami, Harukawa and Akamatsu for deciding to join and help him out…

And to Ouma, for not giving up on him.

“I love you too, Kokichi.”

“Now you’re not going to get rid of me, you know? Your life belongs to me!” Ouma exclaimed, finally lifting his head from Saihara’s shoulder and looking him in the eyes. “Are you really ready for this? Are you ready for me publicly stating I’m not single anymore?! Are you ready to hold my hand
in front of our friends?! Are you ready to stop throwing me out of your room and let me stay the night when I don’t feel like sleeping alone?! Are you—"

“I am! I really am! I-if you w-want to… we could even share the room from now o-on… I mean, it’s big enough?” Saihara stuttered out, probably making a mistake, but… he just really wanted to see him smile. And he did.

“Nishishi, now everyone is going to think we’re doing dirty stuff together!”

“I bet they already do…” He muttered, thinking about how Iruma surely wouldn’t leave them alone after this.

“Whatever! All’s well that starts well!” Ouma laughed. “Take good care of that ugly heart of mine, Shuuichi!”

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“Nyeh, fireworks sure are nice…” Yumeno muttered after the flickering flowers finally faded from the sky.

“Of course they are, duh,” Iruma said. “We wouldn’t be watching them if they weren’t.”

“I wish I didn’t have to watch them with you though,” Harukawa added, sending them a glare. “This wasn’t what we came here for anyway.”

“Yeah, but that little twink noticed us and everything went to shit,” Iruma sighed. “At least we got to see the fireworks!”

“I wonder if they finally kissed,” Yumeno said in her sleepy voice. “I hope they did…”

“If they did, the road to bed isn’t very long from there…”

“I hate both of you. And I hate Amami and Akamatsu even more for getting lost in the crowd,” Harukawa mumbled under her breath. “Why do I have to be stuck with you?”

“Trust me, you prefer to be stuck with us than with those two. I’m sure they aren’t actually lost and they’re having fun right now!” Iruma laughed. “Anyway, I’m going home! I think this is enough of a happy ending.”

“What ending? This is where the problems are going to start…” Yumeno pointed out. “But home… sounds nice…”

“You finally said something reasonable today. Congratulations, Iruma.”

“Sometimes I wonder how such a gorgeous girl like me ended up in the same band as you.”

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The duet songs turned out to be a great success, and it wasn’t even all that surprising — a lot of fans of one group were also fans of the other, so they welcomed the collaboration project with a lot of enthusiasm. Especially the Ouma & Yumeno and Amami & Chabashira duets gained huge popularity soon after the release. The success was so big that their agencies decided to hold a collaboration event and have all of them perform live.

And that’s how Saihara ended up behind the stage, waiting for Ouma’s turn to walk into the spotlights, with no one other than Ouma himself clinging to him the whole time.
“Hey, Shuuichi, do you still like me?” He asked, looking up at him from under his hair. The hat that was a part of his costume somehow ended up on Saihara’s head, as if to make cuddling easier.

“Kokichi… You asked me about it like three times today. The answer hasn’t changed since the last time,” Saihara sighed with a smile.

“Good. I was just checking,” Ouma said, grinning back at him. “Will I get a kiss then?”

“Well…”

“You guys are gross,” Yumeno cut in. “Nyeh, I can’t believe I helped get you together…”

“Yumeno-san is right! Keep that stuff to your room, you degenerates!” Chabashira nodded, not even looking at them, but… she didn’t look too pleased.

“Nishishi, I bet you two are just envious,” Ouma replied, climbing onto his toes and placing a kiss on Saihara’s cheek before he could even react. “Envious about how we’re soooo in love!”

“This little shit…” Chabashira muttered through her teeth, but Yumeno reacted differently. Saihara could see her blush and look away.

“Well, we can’t really blame them,” Amami laughed a little. “They’re not together for all that long, so they still didn’t have enough time to enjoy being a couple.”

“Amami-chan understands! Such a good friend!”

“Uhhh… Fine… You better be happy together though…” Yumeno muttered quietly, as Chabashira and Amami turned away from them. They were supposed to go on stage next, Yumeno and Ouma still had some time.

Saihara wanted to reply, but his boyfriend was faster, saying something that instantly made him blush.

“Don’t worry, Yumeno-chan, this is the happiest I’ve been in my life!”

“And you’re not lying?”

“Who knows? I might be lying!”

“You… This is what I get for caring about you!”

“Wow, Yumeno-chan, I didn’t expect that you’d actually come to appreciate me!”

“I didn’t! Go to hell!”

“Nishishi.”

Saihara glanced towards the stage, where Angie and Shinguuji were about to finish their performance. Then they would still stay there for a bit, talking with the presenters (Nanami and Hinata from the other group living in their dorms were forced to accept that role) and entertaining the fans, and then it would be Chabashira and Amami’s turn.

When it came to Angie and Shinguuji… They definitely weren’t the most popular members of their respective groups, but their fans were strangely dedicated, despite their idols being quite weird. Or maybe that was the cause…? Anyway, Angie seemed pretty proud of herself, dirty with fake blood and smiling widely at the audience, as she waved at them enthusiastically. Shinguuji, who in their
song ended up being the victim, didn’t look that happy.

“Wait, Chabashira-san, let me…” Amami muttered, reaching out to help the girl fix the ribbon on one of her pigtails. “Ah, sorry for doing it without a warning.”

“It’s okay, thank you, Amami-san!” She replied, smiling at him. Saihara never expected he’d live to see a day when Chabashira would actually get along with a boy, but it looked like they became quite close because of that song. They were even sharing secrets…

*Wait, who was Amami-kun singing about in the end? He never answered that question…*

The only person Saihara could think of was Akamatsu, but… he couldn’t be sure.

“I bet you’re jealous,” Ouma snickered, whispering to Yumeno.

“M-Me? Jealous? Why?” She muttered. “I have nothing to be jealous of… I’m definitely not…”

“Don’t worry, Yumeno-chan, it’s a pretty normal thing! I’m your wingman now, I could help you with-“

“I don’t want a wingman like this!”

She said that, but her face was saying something different as she watched Chabashira and Amami, and Ouma apparently found that funny. In the meantime Angie and Shinguuji walked off the stage, joining then.

“Kokichi!” Angie called out to Ouma, running up to him. They automatically did a high five. “Were you watching?”

“Of course, Angie-chan!”

“You’re lying!”

“Nishishi, how could you tell?”

“Shuuichi is here and there’s no way Kokichi would pay more attention to Angie when he’s around!” She said, but it didn’t look like she held it against him. “It’s okay though, Angie forgives you! She should now go and change her clothes, they stink. Ah, and Tenko, Rantarou, good luck!”

“Thanks, Angie-san,” Amami replied for both of them, about to walk onto the stage, but suddenly someone new appeared between them and stopped only upon reaching Amami and Chabashira.

“I made it in time!” Akamatsu most likely ran all the way there, as she was breathing unevenly.

“Sorry, I don’t want to hold you back…”

“Don’t worry, Nanami-san and Hinata-san definitely can buy us some time,” Amami said. “What is it, Akamatsu-san?”

“Ah, actually… nothing much.” She smiled at him, pushing a strand of hair behind her ear. “I just wanted to wish you good luck. I always do it with the DAYLIGHT×COMET members… I know you’re a pro and you don’t need my blessing, but it’s too late, you have to accept it.”

“And you say it’s us who’s gross,” Ouma whispered to Yumeno. “Look at them. Terrible.”

Yumeno ignored him and ran up to Chabashira instead.
“Tenko! Good luck!” She said, taking her hand and shaking them. “Do you best, okay?!”
“Y-Yumeno-san?!”

“She’s such a simple girl,” Ouma laughed. “Good. It’s easier to guide her the way I want! And before you tell me I shouldn’t do that, I’m just doing it for her sake! We’re friends after all.”

That’s right. Ouma stopped being a loner a long time ago. ‘Ouma isn’t my friend’ was just a thing people would say because they got used to it, not because they really meant it, and Yumeno and Iruma were prime examples of that. They cared. If they didn’t, they wouldn’t be cheering on them.

But that didn’t stop Saihara from wrapping his arms around him in a protective manner, pulling him close.

“Shuuichi? Is anything wrong?”

“Nothing. I just love you a lot.”

“Geez, Shuuichi is such a sap!” Ouma said, but he reached out his hands to place them on Saihara’s neck and pull him down. “Just one won’t hurt…”

Their lips met, and it quickly turned out that it wasn’t going to be ‘just one’ kiss. Saihara really hoped both Akamatsu and Yumeno were watching the performing duet and didn’t pay attention to them, as they exchanged more or less innocent kisses. He probably should’ve deemed that it was enough when Ouma licked at his bottom lip… But damn, he was getting better at it.

“Nyeh, stop making out here, keep it to your bedroom!” Yumeno yelled angrily. “Ouma, we’re up next, leave Saihara alone for a moment!”

“Eeeeh? But I don’t wanna!” He whined, still having his arms wrapped around Saihara’s neck. “I want to be with my beloved Shuuichi always!”

“I don’t care! I regret helping him confess!”

Akamatsu just shrugged, so Ouma took his hat from Saihara with a sigh.

“You’re supposed to look at me, and only at me, you know?”

“Don’t worry, I will,” Saihara replied to that statement. “Just do your best.”

“There’s never a time when I’m not doing my best!” Ouma beamed at him, then let go of him and ran up to Yumeno, taking her hand and dragging her into the spotlights.

“H-Hey, let go of me! I’m going to kick you off the stage!”

“Just try, Yumeno-chan, the revenge will be painful!”

And he continued to watch the duo of idols the whole time, focusing mainly on his boyfriend, just like he promised.

Ouma was really affectionate when it came to people he loved, and liked to be showered with affection. He enjoyed attention, but also liked giving it to those he loved. He was someone who seemed strange at first, but in reality was the most charming being in the world. He was often acting childishly, but was surprisingly mature… A person full of mysteries, and that was probably the thing that attracted Saihara at first, but also someone full of warmth, and that was the thing that made Saihara want to stay by his side.
And is all started with just a song.

Chapter End Notes

Big thanks to everyone who read this fic, I love you all!! Thank you for all the kudos and comments. While I myself liked this AU idea a lot, I didn't expect many people to like it as well. It makes me really happy!!

To be honest, I'm kind of tempted to continue it in some way... a prequel chapter about their school days? An amamatsu or tenmiko sequel, with Ouma as the super annoying wingman? Maybe! Thank you once again!!

End Notes

Originally this was supposed to be a one-shot, but it turned out much longer than I wanted it to be, so I decided to split it into four chapters... They're all already written, but I just didn't want to post them all at once.

If you read it, thank you!!

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!