Summary

Some surprising news from his parents causes Koushirou to become curious of his real ones and raises some insecurities that hadn't consciously come to mind for the boy in years. Along with Mimi's help, what will he discover? Read on to find out.
Koushirou is given an assignment that he's not very enthusiastic over.

Hi everyone. I decided to share this story here, which is currently being rewritten. This story was originally written and started August 24, 2001 and was finished July 20, 2002. This rewrite is from 2010 and now I'm updating it again to correct a lot of mistakes I've noticed, such as some inaccuracies.

This story was based off of something that I had wanted to write about for a long time. A story involving Koushirou (Izzy) finding out more about his biological parents. The catch to this is that he knows that he is adopted, but his adoptive parents still don’t know that he does. The conversation that the three of them had in Digimon Adventure never occurred for this story’s continuity and that will create quite a bit of conflict. As for those to show up for this story, Koushirou is a definite candidate. Mimi too, of course, since she will be in his class.

Like I say for all of these, anything shown in italics indicates that it is a flashback (only for short sequences, anyway). Any dialogue using single quotation marks indicates that the character is thinking, unless used in a grammatically correct fashion. Anything with an asterisk by it means that there is a note about it at the end of the chapter.

Oh yes, just so you know, this story takes place March 12, 2004 – March 19, 2004, July 2004, November 2004, and then March 2005, which is why the ages are the way that they are. When the story starts, they’re in whatever year is listed, but in July, they would be in their next year because of how the Japanese school year works.

Now, as always, I do not own any of the characters or places in this story. Bandai and Toei have that honor, and here are the ages of everyone.

Jou: 16-17 (Year 10-11; First/second year of High School)
Taichi/Sora/Yamato: 15-16 (Year 09-10; Last year of Junior High School/First year high school)
Koushirou/Mimi: 14-15 (Year 08-09; Second/Last year of Junior High School)
Miyako: 13-14 (Year 07-08; First/second year of Junior High School)
Takeru/Hikari/Daisuke/Ken: 12-13 (Year 06; Final year of Elementary/First year of Junior High School)
Iori: 10-11 (Year 04-05)

Chapter 01: The Assignment…

A bird chirped cheerfully as it flew through the clear blue sky of the innovative island of Odaiba, which was located in the Minato ward of the country’s capital. Odaiba was known for its leisurely activities, such as attending musical performances at Zepp Tokyo, or even heading over to Aqua City to do some shopping. Of course, on such a bright afternoon, one would expect to see many people
out and about, especially with spring approaching, and the snow from the winter months melting away, but not for the children of Odaiba. This was definitely a school day, and at Odaiba Junior High, there was a Japanese History Class already in session…

“Okay class,” a young, dark-haired man in his late 20s wearing thin-rimmed glasses began, “it’s time for your mandatory extra credit assignment.”

All of the students of class 2-B groaned. One student in particular waved his arm around wildly, calling, “Ishidzuka-sensei, Ishidzuka-sensei!”

“Yes, Tomokazu-kun?”

The boy with the medium-lengthened black hair stood. “Since when is extra credit mandatory?”

“Since the majority of you scored low on the last test I gave out, which means that you all won’t get to be third years without it!”

“Are you serious?” asked the boy fearfully. The majority of the rest of the class looked a bit worried as well. This was definitely out of the ordinary. “Not all of us are making bad marks!”

“It doesn’t really matter now, does it? The extra credit could probably do most of you some good, you included,” he responded sternly.

Seki retook his seat, embarrassed. A few of the students were whispering to one another, saying things like, “Would the PTA allow something like that?” and “Isn’t this like high school work?” Another student, though, was laughing loudly at his cousin’s embarrassment.

“Ueda-kun!” The man glared at the boy. “Is there something amusing you as of the moment?”

Yuuji stood up at the speed of light, his face partially red, and his somewhat long, shiny, jet-black hair swishing. “No, sir.”

“If it isn’t your cousin acting up, it’s you,” the man mumbled under his breath while massaging his temples. “You can sit now.” With an embarrassed grin, he took his seat quickly, while Seki silently laughed. “Now, for your assignment, I would like for you all to tell us about your true family. I’m interested in your ancestry. How you decide to do this assignment is entirely up to you.”

Most of the students wrote down the odd teacher’s instructions, as he continued explaining his expectations of them. He was pretty well-known for his…modern way of teaching, as he wasn’t all about lecturing and constantly insisted, and demanded, that his students give their input and opinions. Most attributed that to the fact that he had once studied overseas.

One 14-year-old student frowned over the assignment. He’d always disliked doing anything which would involve his having to volunteer information on his family or his parents. He didn’t dislike his family, but he did feel like he was lying whenever having to speak about his “true” family.

The redheaded student was none other than the computer whiz, Izumi Koushirou. He remained seated, deep in thought over the assignment. His train of thought, though, was soon broken by that of a young girl’s voice. “Koushirou-kun! Koushirou-kun! Come on! It’s time to go home.”

He looked up to see a girl wearing their school’s dark-green autumn and winter fuku, who of which he considered a pretty good friend. He’d known her for years, anyway. “Oh, hey, Mimi-san.”

The young girl with the long, wavy light-brown hair, was Odaiba Junior High’s popular, outgoing Tachikawa Mimi. She’d moved back to Odaiba months earlier, right after the spring break. It was
tough transferring in at that time of the year, but she managed to do so thanks to the family she was currently living with...the Nishimuras, which consisted of her aunt, Sué, her husband – Mimi’s uncle, Kichibei – and their two children, four-year-old Isako, and one-year-old Ton.

Sué was Mimi’s father’s younger sister by nearly ten years, who worked at a local Kindergarten near her home. At first, she was hesitant and skeptical on moving back to Odaiba and living with her aunt and her fairly new family, as she felt she would be intruding, but she really wanted to return. She enjoyed America fine and had learned a lot, but she had grown homesick and missed her friends back in Odaiba.

When she passed the idea along to her aunt and uncle, they were both thrilled to have her, as she was her aunt’s favorite niece and despite the age difference between Mimi and her cousins, she got along with the two very well. Seems that the only ones who had objected to the idea of her moving back, were her parents. They were against her going back and living there without them, but Mimi insisted that it would be good for her. It took a while, but they gave in, as they did want what was best for their daughter.

“Koushirou-kun, why are you still sitting there? School’s over.”

Koushirou stood up, grabbing his book bag, which was hanging on the side of his desk. “Well, I---”

“Mimi-chan!!” a person called before the redhead could finish.

“Wait up, Mimi-chan!” another voice chimed in.

Mimi turned to see two familiar boys slightly taller than Koushirou, running up to her. “Seki-kun, Yuuji-kun…”

“Hi, Mimi-chan,” Yuuji greeted. “Would you like for me to walk you home?”

“You?” Seki scoffed. “I was going to ask if she wanted me to walk her home!”

“Don’t you have to stay after school for a punishment or something?”

“Me? You’re the one who gets in trouble all the time, and our homeroom teacher keeps you back!” the boy retorted heatedly. “Besides, Mimi-chan wants to walk home with me!”

“No she doesn’t,” Yuuji intensely argued back, his face turning red, “she wants me to walk her home!”

“No, me!”

“Me!”

“I said me!”

The two continued to argue. Koushirou just stared at the two, surprised at their display, while Mimi gave the two an uneasy smile. “B-boys, please don’t fight.”

“Who do you want to walk you home?” Yuuji asked while flashing the girl a toothy smile. “Would you like for the handsome, wonderful me to walk you home,” he glared at the boy beside him, “or my annoying cousin?”

“Annoying!?!?”

“That’s a perfect description for you.”
“Why, I should---”

“I’m sorry you two,” interrupted Mimi, motioning to the computer genius, “but he’s going to walk me home.”

Dumbfounded, both boys stared at Koushirou. “Huh?!”

The redhead blinked in stupidity. “I am?”

“We better get going,” Mimi motioned while giving Koushirou a sweet smile. “I promised to get home to help Sué-bachan with dinner tonight.” She grabbed Koushirou’s arm. “Bye, Seki-kun, Yuuji-kun.” She pulled the boy out of the classroom, leaving behind a surprised Seki and Yuuji.

“Izumi?! Why would she rather walk home with him than with the handsome me?”

“You probably scared her off,” sniggered Seki.

“Hey!” the boy growled at his cousin.

Seki backed off. “I’m just joking,” he insisted while waving his hands. He knew how easy it was to push his cousin’s buttons, and usually enjoyed doing so. Content with his cousin’s temperament being back at a normal level, he stared at the door. “I don’t understand Mimi-chan. She’s one of the more popular people in school, but she hangs around Izumi a lot.”

“I don’t remember them being good friends before,” Yuuji pointed out while scratching the back of his head. “We’ve always had classes with those two, even back when we were all in Odaiba Elementary School. I don’t remember Mimi-chan hanging out with Izumi much at all in year 4. Doesn’t seem she did that until after our summer break that year. That was still...” the boy counted out on his fingers, “…1999. They seemed to become good friends after that.”

“I’m actually surprised they managed to remain good friends, especially since Mimi-chan was gone for a couple of years.”

“That’s just weird.”

“Well, Yuuji, we better get going. We promised to help my father at his store this afternoon since most of the clubs aren’t meeting this week.”

“Aww.” He kicked at the floor and shoved his hands into his pockets. “I wanted to play you in a game of Table Tennis.”

“It’s not like you’re in the actual Table Tennis Club like I am. I’d cream you anyway.”

“That’s because I’m not good enough for it.”

“What about baseball and basketball? You like both of those, and you play them a lot; why don’t you join one of those clubs? I don’t know why you haven’t gotten in trouble yet for not being in a club, unless helping out at pop’s store counts as volunteer work or something to make up for it.”

“I’m not good enough for those either,” he grumbled.

“You know,” the boy started with small laugh, “you really shouldn’t let Mimi-chan ever hear you say something like that. She’d persuade you into joining in an instant, and then probably give you a speech about how you can succeed and all that good stuff. She’d then seal the deal with her beautiful, signature smile.”
“Yeah, Mimi-chan is like that,” Yuuji sighed dreamily. “She always tries her best to cheer people up.”

“What she says is probably true, though.”

“I still wouldn’t mind playing a game before we leave.”

“Too bad, you promised to help me, let’s go!”

“I’m coming, I’m coming…”

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After escaping the two cousins, Koushirou and Mimi continued their walk down the emptying school corridors.

“So, what’s the matter?”

He just shrugged and mumbled, “Nothing.”

“I know something is wrong!”

“No, really, it’s noth—”

“Izumi Koushirou-kun,” the girl firmly cried while stopping her pace, and putting her free hand on her hip, “you do not sound convincing, sincere, or pure with your feelings right now! I can tell that you’re lying! Now, what is it?”

Koushirou knew there wasn’t much he could say or do to persuade his friend otherwise. It was surprising how he’d yet to learn his lesson whenever it came to her. She was always the type to try and get down to the root of a problem and seemed to like things to be harmonious and didn’t care for pessimistic views. He hadn’t noticed that about her when younger, but he definitely did since she’d been back for almost a year. He resumed walking. Mimi took suit.

“If you must know, I’m just not up to doing this history research assignment. It’s out of the ordinary as it is, and I’m surprised that Ishidzuka-sensei is even allowed to give such assignments and teach in the way that he does.” *The threat of their being failed was the biggest oddity of the situation.

“You know, the way Ishidzuka-sensei teaches, is similar to how it was for me when in America. I’m glad he’s like that. It makes learning more fun, and I know you like the way he teaches too, and most of the others do too. I look forward to his history lessons, even if some of it is boring. Anyway, maybe you can get excused from doing the assignment.”

“Wait, you were exempt from having to do the assignment?”

She nodded. “I spoke with Ishidzuka-sensei while you were staring off into space. Since I have ok test scores for his class he said that I didn’t have to do it.”

“But he made that threat of the assignment being mandatory.”

“But, I really can’t do this assignment to its fullest. My parents are abroad.”

“But what about the family you’re staying with and your other Japanese family?”

“I’d rather talk to my parents, to be honest, and some of my older relatives are no longer with us. He did say that if I wanted to go on with it that I could.”

“Hmm, maybe I should talk to him.”
“He’s probably in the teacher’s room.”

With the task set, the two detoured from their walk to leave the school to head to the teacher’s room. Once arriving at the door, Koushirou hesitated. “What are you waiting for? Go on in.”

“I’m not sure if I should…what if he’s not even there? What if we’re not even allowed in there?”

“Why wouldn’t we be allowed to go in? We’re students with questions! It’s perfectly allowed and you know it! You should know that better than anyone being head of the Computer Club!”

Not waiting for a response, Mimi knocked, opened the sliding door and pushed Koushirou inside, saying, “Shitsurei shimasu”. To the surprise of both, they saw the lavender-haired, 13-year-old Inoue Miyako. Koushirou pretty much considered Miyako to be one of his best friends, as he did Mimi, to some extent. He felt that both were his best female friends, currently. Mimi was very good at cheering one up, and Miyako was good at giving pep talks to get one motivated to do almost anything, but seemed she was only like this with friends and family.

When he was younger, he would’ve definitely considered his best female friend to be Sora, since he’d known her for such a long time, even before his first adventure in the Digital World. Now that Sora was older, and busy with a various amount of other school related activities, he rarely had the time to speak with her much. When he was in his final year at Odaiba Elementary, and Sora had graduated to Odaiba Junior High, the two still didn’t spend much time together due to their different years, and the same applied to his best male friend, Taichi. Due to this, Koushirou started to spend a little bit more time by himself, until Miyako and Mimi both came along.

“Hey there, Izumi-senpai, Mimi-oneesama,” the girl greeted brightly while pushing her slipping glasses back onto her nose. “What are you two doing here?”

“We’re looking for our history teacher,” Mimi explained.

“How come you’re here?” asked Koushirou.

“I have *classroom duty this week. We needed some more cleaner for the desks, so I came to ask my homeroom teacher where I could find some more.”

“Isn’t it a bit late to still be cleaning?” asked Mimi. “We usually have cleaning time after lunch.”

“I know, but, one of the guys in my class spilled some stuff, so we're cleaning it again. I don't like it, but what can I do? Either way, I better hurry up and finish if I want to join up with Ken-kun and the others this afternoon since we don't have any club meetings.” The girl waved to the two. “See you later.”

After Miyako was long gone, Koushirou and Mimi continued on, realizing that the room was empty, with the exception of the vice-principal who was busy writing up something. Koushirou just figured that most of the other teachers had other things to deal with at the moment. They made their way towards the spot that Mr. Ishidzuka usually sat, and saw him there. The man was seated contently, while reading a paper and sipping on a cup of tea. “Go,” hissed Mimi.

“Um...hi there, Ishidzuka-sensei,” Koushirou managed to get out, as it felt like his voice wanted to leave him.

The man took his attention from off of the newspaper, and looked over the rims of his glasses. “Hey there. Two of my good students. So, what’s the problem, Izumi-kun?”

“Well, um...you see...it's just...er...”
“Yes?”

“It’s about our assignment.”

“Yes, what about it?”

The boy looked down at the floor, fumbling and shifting his shoulders. “I-I was wondering if I could, possibly get out of doing the assignment like Mimi-san. I have decent scores as well and have kept them there all year.”

The man took off his glasses, and gave him a curious look. “Is there any specific reason why you want to get out of doing my assignment? I know it’s different, but you all should be used of that by now.”

Dejected, Koushirou sighed out, “No, sir. I don’t have one.”

“Well, I can’t allow it.” He slipped his glasses back on, and sat back in his chair, making himself more comfortable. “The situation of Tachikawa-san is a bit different since she’s not currently staying with her immediate family, but with outside family. Her living arrangements are special. She’s the only person I’m giving the option on whether to do the assignment or not.”

“Yes sir.”

“To be honest, Izumi-kun, I would really like you to work on this project. I’ve noticed it through our discussions in class. Anything involving the past of anyone, you get unusually quiet about it. You don’t participate to your full extent, and I’m hoping this assignment will help to open you up a bit. In a way, you could say that you were the inspiration for the assignment.”

‘Why did I have to get this new age teacher?! I don’t want to do this assignment! I can’t! It wouldn’t be right…’ Koushirou nodded slightly. “Yes sir. You’re right, sir. That’s why I didn’t want to do this assignment. I’m very bad at history that involves stuff like that.”

“I just want you to work to your full potential. Tachikawa-san here usually does well on assignments and in discussions involving this type of subject.”

“Thank you, sir.”

“I’ve been observing the whole class, so don’t think I’m singling you out, Izumi-kun.”

“Yes sir,” he responded dully.

Koushirou turned to head out, along with Mimi, when the older man called to them. The two turned to see what he wanted. “Izumi-kun, since you don’t have much of a knack for this type of thing, I would like for you to have a partner.”

“A partner, sir?”

“Yes, I want Tachikawa-san to be your partner on this. Since she’s the only person who is exempt from this assignment, she could help you with yours.”

“I would be honored to help out, sir. I was going to maybe talk about my aunt’s family, but helping Koushirou-kun sounds like it’d be much more fun.”

“Good. Now, you two better head home and get some work done.”

“Yes, Ishidzuka-sensei.”
“Shitsurei shimashita.” Both walked out, Koushirou partially scowling, as a couple of other teachers entered the room. His teacher noticed this and shook his head. He just didn’t understand the boy, and pulled out his mobile phone…

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“That didn’t do any good,” the boy grumbled, while changing into his outdoor shoes.

“Aww, stop worrying!” Mimi opened up her shoe-sized locker very cautiously. One thing she was known for, was receiving love-letters from the boys of the school. There were a few of them just that morning. Relieved there weren’t a bundle of letters waiting for her, she put in her school shoes, and took out her outdoor shoes. “I’m sure you’ll do a good job on your assignment, especially since I’m helping you.”

“Yeah, I guess so.” The two had finished, and headed out the school.

“So, when do you want to start the project?”

The redhead inwardly rolled his eyes, and huffed annoyedly. “You know, I don’t feel like talking about that now. Do you still want me to walk you home?”

“No if you’re going to have that cranky attitude,” the girl snapped.

“I’m sorry. I just have a lot on my mind. I’ll accompany you home.”

“Oh-kay,” she began slowly, wishing he’d speak a little less formally, “but you don’t have to if you don’t want to.”

“I honestly don’t mind.” Mimi liked his response, as he sounded truly sincere this time around. “It’s very nice out, and it’s good that I don’t have a club meeting today.”

“Oh yeah. There’s no Computer Club meeting for you or Miyako-chan today. Too bad everyone else seems to be busy. Both Sora-san and Taichi-san are busy with the Tennis Club and Soccer Club, even though they’re finished for the year, and Yamato-san has his own band to worry about and practice with. At least one good thing is that their clubs should all be ending early this week.”

“What about your club meet?”

“I’m just going to skip it this once.”

“Wait, why? Are you allowed to do that?”

“The Volleyball Club can miss me this once; besides, I promised to help my aunt today. I talked with coach during gym today.”

As the two continued the long walk, they managed to talk about most anything they could think of, which consisted mostly of their other friends of the Chosen Children (Digidestined), but every time Mimi got on the topic of their history project, Koushirou would abruptly change the subject. Mimi gave up on trying to get him to discuss it, and came up with a craftier idea. She knew of one of the boy’s weaknesses, and was going to use it to her advantage.

“Well, you’re home.”

The Nishimura family lived in a big house, which had a gate, two floors, five bedrooms, and even a spacious attic. The suburban neighborhood was also very nice, as each house there was built in similar fashions. It was evident to most that the Nishimura family was well off financially, as owning a house in a place like Odaiba was usually expensive, unless in a rural area, which Odaiba wasn’t
known for.

Mimi’s aunt loved her job and children. Since she was a teacher at the local Kindergarten, both Isako and Ton could attend the school. Isako and Ton were students there so she didn’t have to worry about staying home to watch Ton. As for Mimi’s uncle, he worked for a successful law firm, and was just recently promoted to partner.

“Want to come in?”

“I don’t think that I---”

“I could make you a snack,” Mimi told him coyly.

“A snack?!”

“Yes, some nice *ohagi. I made some last night, and I just know how much you love it. I got the recipes hands to Iori-kun. Miyako-chan told me how much you loved them so I asked Mrs. Hida about it. It took me a long time to make them I could sure use a taste tester since I added some things to it.”

“Ohagi?!? R-really? You made ohagi?” He shook his head. “No! I have to pass.” He felt like crying, since he loved the dessert treat. “I really have to get home.”

“W-well, if you have to go,” she blinked. ‘I was going to get him to talk! So much for my plan.’

“I’m sorry, I really am.”

“Don’t worry. I’ll bring you some tomorrow to have with your lunch. You will taste them,” she told him playfully.

The boy grinned in spite of himself. “I look forward to it.”

“Neechan!!” both heard a voice call. They turned to see a small girl run up and smother Mimi in a big hug.

“Isako-chan! Hi there!”

After getting out of Mimi’s embrace, the small child with her long, bright hair in two pigtails, turned to face Koushirou. “Konban wa, Kou-niichan,” Isako said with a bow.

“She really is polite.”

“Yeah, she’s very polite for her age,” Koushirou complimented. “Hello there, *Isako. How are you today?”

“I’m doing great! I had a lot of fun at school today!”

“That’s very nice, but I have to get going. I’m sorry. Bye Mimi-san. I will see you in school tomorrow. Isako, please say hello to your mother for me.”

Koushirou walked off, while the girl waved to him. “Bye bye Kou-niichan! I’ll say hi for you!” Mimi could only stare at her redheaded friend as he exited through the gate. She still couldn’t help but wonder why he was reacting to the assignment in such a way. “I’m so glad that you’re home, neechan! I learned how to read a new word today! Can I show you?”

“Of course, but I have to help your mother first just like I promised.”
“Okay! Mama is making sweet treats for after dinner.”

The girl grabbed Mimi’s hand, and both entered the luxurious home…

Author’s Notes

Note 1: In Japan, the students are given the responsibility of keeping the schools clean. Everyday, the students have to clean it up, and that includes the teacher's room and the principal's office. The time of the day that the classroom gets cleaned depends on the actual school. This not only keeps the school clean and tidy, but it also is used to teach the children responsibility and how to get along with others, somewhat.

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Note 2: The description of Ishidzuka for this story is an interesting one, eh? Anyway, this is one of the “changes” for this story. When this was originally written, I didn’t know too much about how the schools worked in Japan as far as assignments were concerned. With Ishidzuka’s character, I am trying to establish that he is far from being your traditional Japanese teacher, hence his teaching methods. Traditionally, such a class would consist mostly of lecturing. Also, in Japan, students can’t really be failed, which also shows how out of place the threat he made was. Now, in high school you can technically not pass, since high school in Japan is optional and the students test into it. There’s a lot of emphasis on doing well if one is planning to head off to college someday. Oh, and also, in Japan, they don’t use a grading scale with letter grades…instead, they go by percentages.

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Note 3: “Shitsurei shimasu” pretty much means, “please excuse me for entering” or “sorry for intruding/interrupting”. That's the best I can come up with for that phrase. I guess you could say it's another, more formal way of saying, “excuse me”. “Shitsurei shimashita” is just past-tense.

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Note 4: In the very first US dub episode of Digimon Adventure 02, Koushirou (Izzy), Iori (Cody), and Miyako (Yolei) were eating “brownies”. In the original, they were eating ohagi. Ohagi is pretty much a sweet rice ball. In the original version of the show, it was referenced that Iori’s mother was a very good cook.

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Note 5: “Neechan” is one way of saying “sister” and I only used it in this particular way since the girl is so young. “Oneesama” is another, as well as “oneechan” and “oneesan” and “neesan”. Miyako uses “oneesama” with Mimi at times, which shows that she really respects Mimi and sees her as a sisterly figure. Miyako also sometimes call her Mimi-sama. In the beginning, though, she would use Mimi-san.

It’s pretty common for younger children to use an honorific that can mean brother or sister with an older person, and the person doesn’t have to be family for it to be used. If I’m remembering it correctly, Takeru’s even done so with Taichi. In the episode where Yamato abandoned him, in Takeru’s eyes, he clung onto Taichi, and referred to him as brother since he was the only one around.

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Note 6: Koushirou’s character is the type to use honorifics with everyone. To be honest, I’m not sure how he’d actually address a girl as young as Isako. His using the -chan honorific here, seems like it’d be out of character for him based on this fic’s portrayal of him. Now, for Tri I kind of could since he uses –chan with Hikari for it as opposed to –san, like he used to.
Koushirou's Surprising News...

Chapter Summary

Mr. and Mrs. Izumi finally reveal the information which prompts Koushirou to wonder about his real parents.

Hi again everyone. I hope that the last chapter wasn’t too boring. I suppose that this particular story falls under the “drama” genre with a little bit of angst in some parts later on. Also, as a reminder, the ages and school grades of the children are their Japanese ones. The dub was a bit inconsistent with them. For instance, in the dub of Adventure 02, I’m pretty sure that “Joe” was in his last year of high school for it and other times, I heard that he was in medical school. Like I said, the ages and grades were much too inconsistent to even consider using.

Now, as always, I do not own anything dealing with the Digimon series or franchise. Bandai and Toei have that honor, and as a reminder, here are the ages of the characters once again:

Jou: 16-17 (Year 10-11; First/second year of High School)
Taichi/Sora/Yamato: 15-16 (Year 09-10; Last year of Junior High School/First year high school)
Koushirou/Mimi: 14-15 (Year 08-09; Second/Last year of Junior High School)
Miyako: 13-14 (Year 07-08; First/second year of Junior High School)
Takeru/Hikari/Daisuke/Ken: 12-13 (Year 06; Final year of Elementary/First year of Junior High School)
Iori: 10-11 (Year 04-05)

Chapter 02: The Surprising News for Koushirou…

Koushirou made his way home, taking his time, tuning out the world and the cars zooming by. He headed to the same place he’d lived since the Hikarigaoka (Heighton View Terrace) incident nearly ten years earlier along with his “father” and “mother”. The more he thought of his parents, the sicker he felt as far as the assignment was concerned. He was usually always up to a challenge, but this time was different for him. He knew that if he worked to his full potential that everyone would discover his secret. A secret he never purposely intended to keep. The only reason he kept this secret, was because his own parents had kept it secret from him…a secret that had been haunting and plaguing his mind since he’d unintentionally discovered it as a young child. Here he was, nearly 15 years old, about to enter his final year at Odaiba Junior High, and his own parents kept an important fact about Koushirou secret…about his not being their real son…

He’d finally made it to his apartment complex, and climbed up the stairs to the floor of which his family was on. He wasn’t in the mood to take the elevator. Once reaching his door, he took in a deep breath, and entered. “Mother, I’m home…” he called out routinely as he stepped out of his shoes and into his slippers, which were left by his female caregiver. He was anxious to get to his room to just be alone with his thoughts, although he didn’t get too far.

“Koushirou, wait a minute.”
The boy stopped and turned to face the woman who claimed to be his mother. Even though the shorter woman wasn’t, he loved her as well as her husband very much. They were the only parental figures he’d ever had in his life, but at times, he felt as if he didn’t belong to this family, especially when it came to strange food combinations. Even the way he preferred his toast was out of the ordinary for the average Japanese individual. Some used condiments such as strawberry jam or something tangy like marmalade or just ate it plain with butter. Koushirou, on the other hand, liked his toast with slices of avocado and apple topped with imported honey.

“Yes mother?”

The woman fidgeted with her apron, while looking everyplace except the boy. “Well, I…erm…”

“Is something wrong?” Koushirou asked in alarm. “You said something about getting a check up today. Is everything okay?”

The woman shook her head. “I can wait to share this,” she told him uneasily.

“Are you sure?”

“Yes, I’m fine,” she insisted with her signature smile. One thing she was known for was her bright, bubbly personality, which was usually accompanied with a warm, gentle smile. Growing up with Mrs. Izumi made it easy for him to hang around with Mimi, who was similar in that particular way, as she too was bubbly. “Just make sure you unglue yourself from that computer of yours for dinner later.”

He nodded. “Do you need help with anything?”

“No, not at all, but I did make you a snack.” The woman rushed back to the kitchen, and returned with a tray which held a glass of a dark substance and a plate of about three round shaped balls. “I made you some onigiri and some oolong tea, two of your favorite things.”

“Wow, thanks!” He took the tray. “What filling did you use for the onigiri?”

“Now now, it’s a surprise,” she winked to him, “but I will give you a couple of hints. It’s a sweet filling, since I know how much you love sweets, and there’s no avocado in it.”

Koushirou looked a bit put out. He loved avocado, but he soon smiled again. It was something sweet, after all. With that, the boy headed to his room, where he set down his tray, and tossed down his book bag.

‘I think I’ll talk to Masami about Koushirou’s behavior and that phone call later,’ the woman decided while making her way back to the kitchen. ‘Right now, I have more pressing things to worry about, like how I’m going to break the news to Koushirou about my doctor’s visit…’

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Meanwhile, over at the luxurious Nishimura home in the somewhat larger than average Japanese kitchen…

“Mimi-chan,” an older woman with dark, short hair called, “could you slice up two more carrots and chop up one more small onion please?”

“Sure thing, Sué-obachan.”

The once sheltered city girl was now quite the cook, and to her surprise, she really enjoyed baking and cooking very much. There was one thing she still didn’t like doing too much, and that was the chopping of onion. She didn’t know anyone who actually did.
“Thank you so much. With making such a big stew like this, help is always appreciated.” She kept watch over the rice for she and Mimi’s *Hayashi* rice dish, which the family simply loved. “Let’s see, everything is cooking nicely, and this beef I bought on the way home should bring out a really good flavor, I feel.” The woman was always grateful that even though she worked, she was able to come home earlier than most people, as she worked part-time at the Kindergarten.

Isako, during this time, was sitting down at the small table of the large kitchen, coloring in one of her *Pokemon* coloring books. Curious, she looked up from her work, and asked, “Doesn’t cutting up onion hurt your eyes, neechan?”

“Not if you cut the onion just right.”

Isako jumped out of her chair, and followed Mimi, who had walked over to the stove with a knife. She turned on the burner, and held the blade of the knife over it. “What are you doing that for?” she asked.

“The fumes from the onion won’t be as strong if you cut the onion with the heated blade of a knife. Another way is to wear a mask, so that you don’t inhale the fumes from the onion. I would just hold my breath, or try not to breathe through my nose whenever I have to chop up onion.” She started to chop up the onion. “See, no tears, unless it’s a really strong onion, then there’s nothing you can do about that,” she added on with a laugh.

“Wow, I never knew that. Where did you learn that, Mimi-chan?”

The girl placed a finger on her chin, while trying to recall where she’d come across those tips. “I’m not even sure. I probably saw it on television someplace. While in America, I watched a lot of television. I watched way more than I ever did when here since I didn’t have much to do when first getting to America.”

Sué turned off the rice cooker. “I don’t know how my brother or your mother does it. I don’t think I’d last one day there, let alone years. I’d have to learn so much just to ask how to get to the bathroom. Was it really difficult for you to learn English to the point where you could speak decently?”

“Yeah, it was at first, but my friend Michael helped me with it. He gave me lessons after we all first moved there. He’s one of the people I miss most about New York, and of course some other friends,” she put the chopped onion into a frying pan to sauté them, and started slicing up the carrots to add to it as well, “but I do try to keep in touch through mail, e-mail, and phone, especially since Michael has a very good international calling plan for his mobile phone, so he calls me fairly often.”

The older woman nodded. “It’s really nice to make good friends. Those types of bonds usually last a lifetime, regardless of how far apart you are.” She took off her apron, and laid it down on the counter top. “Mimi-chan, I have to go check up on Ton. He should be waking up pretty soon from his nap. Could you keep an eye on things here?”

“Sure.”

She thanked the teen, and took off, leaving Mimi and Isako, who had gone back to coloring. Mimi went over to the pot, and added in the sautéed onions and carrots she’d cooked up earlier. After stirring them in, she tasted it. “Hm, this is okay, but it could use a little bit more salt and pepper.” She added a couple of pinches of salt and a dash of fresh black pepper. She tasted it again. She smiled in satisfaction. “Perfecto!” she said in English while flashing the victory sign.

“Neechan,” began Isako, who had once again, took her attention from her coloring book, “how
Kou-niichan looked sad today?”

Mimi returned the lid to the pot. “Sad?”

The four year old nodded. “When I came out to see you, he looked a little sad, even though he was smiling.”

“It’s nothing you should worry over. He just doesn’t want to do his homework.”

“Why?”

She walked over to the table, and sat down, and sighed. “I don’t know.”

“Is it hard big kids work?”

“No, it’s easy work. We have to talk about our mothers and fathers and our brothers and sisters.”

“Ooo,” Isako clapped in excitement, “that sounds like a lot of fun! I could do that!”

“I know,” she smiled to the girl. “It’s still strange that he’s acting so stupid over it. Why is it bothering him so much anyway? I wonder if I should even bother him about it when I see him later on tonight…”

“Tadaima!” both girls heard someone call. Isako’s eyes lit up as she rushed from the kitchen. Mimi followed behind. At the front door, a somewhat tall man, with dark hair, a slim build, in a dark blue suit, was taking off his shoes.

“Papii!” Isako rushed up to give the man a big hug.

“Hi there, ojisan,” Mimi politely greeted. For some reason, she felt she had to be extra nice around her uncle.

“Hello girls,” he greeted. “It’s great to come home early.”

“Guess what, papii!! I learned how to read a new book today, and I can read it all by myself! It’s a really long book too!”

While Isako talked her head off to her father, Mimi couldn’t help but smile at the warm scene. She felt it was so cute how excited Isako was about reading her first book in full, even if the book was pretty short, but, for a child her age, it probably did come across as being “a really long book”. Mimi headed back to the kitchen with her uncle and cousin. Pretty soon, Sué walked back into the kitchen with Ton, surprised to see her husband home so soon. It was nice having him home for a change.

“Isako-chan, do you want to help set the table?” asked Mimi.

“I’d love to neechan!”

The two set up all the places at the table, while Mimi and Sué set the foods on it. Once all was said and done, everyone sat down to their meal… “Itadakimasu!”

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Meanwhile, over in the Izumi kitchen, after the Nishimuras had started their meals…

“So, is it true?!” the man with the glasses anxiously asked his wife.

The petite woman shyly nodded with a small smile. “It’s affirmative, like Koushirou would say.”
“That’s great!” Mr. Izumi hugged her. “They really did get through those tests quickly.”

“Yes, they did. The doctor called me earlier this afternoon with the results since I had to hurry back here.”

“I guess you could say that modern technology is amazing.”

“I guess,” she began, her smile slightly faltering.

“What’s wrong?”

“Well…it’s Koushirou. How do you think he’ll take the news?”

“I hadn’t really thought of that.”

“The timing isn’t really good. First I got that call from the doctor, and then I received a call from his history teacher.”

“Really? A teacher of his called?”

“He was a strange one. I never knew he was, though. We've met him. Seems that his class is doing an assignment for history, and mentioned how Koushirou didn’t seem very enthusiastic about doing it. I think he just wanted me to try and help persuade Koushirou into doing the project.”

“I guess we’ll have to talk to him about it at dinner. What’s the project?”

“You know, he never did say. He sounded as if he were in a hurry, so I guess he didn't realize that he left that information out.”

“Either way, we’ll have to talk to him about it.”

Mrs. Izumi nodded slowly, as she started filling bowls and plates with the contents of dinner. Her husband noticed the lack of fervor she had while doing so. After the last place was set, she sighed.

“Don’t let this bother you. I’m sure what whatever is going on with Koushirou and his school assignment can be resolved.”

“It’s not that,” the woman admitted somberly, looking down the hall towards Koushirou’s room, “it’s the other thing.”

“He’ll take the news fine, I’m sure of it.”

“But how long can we actually keep it a secret from him? He’s going to start noticing some changes sooner or later. Maybe we should have told him a week ago when we first suspected it.”

The man grabbed his wife by the shoulders and gave her an assuring smile. “You’re worrying over nothing.”

“I just don’t know. I-I still feel strange about all of this. I have this odd feeling that it may actually upset Koushirou. I just don’t understand why I am expecting the worst of things to happen if we share this news with him.”

“You’re probably feeling this way because you’re his mother, and---”

“That’s just it! I’m not his real mother! Maybe that’s what’s bothering me! I’m starting to feel guilty more and more each day since we haven’t told him yet.”
He turned his head away, and darkly murmured, “There isn’t any reason for him to know.”

“There has to be some reason! I-I suppose I’m starting to feel awkward now that we know for sure since the doctor called.”

“We’ll work everything out, don’t worry.”

Not fully content with her husband’s answer, she muttered, “I’ll go get Koushirou for dinner.”

She walked slowly down the hall to the redhead’s room, still unable to shake that bothered feeling she had concerning her son. She took a deep breath, put on a smile, and knocked on the door.

“Koushirou, dinner.”

Hearing the knock, Koushirou jumped up from his computer and opened the door. He was definitely ready to eat. The snack from earlier was already gone. After opening the door, he got a weird vibe from her. Sure she was smiling, but it wasn’t as cheerful or as bright as it usually was. “Mother, are you okay? Are you certain that you’re not sick?”

“Now now, don’t you worry about me,” she told him as nonchalantly as she could. “I’m fine.”

Suddenly, she hugged the taller boy tightly. He was confused by her actions, but let her do so anyway. “Koushirou, remember that I’ll always love you no matter what, and that you’ll always be my son, and how nothing can ever change that.”

He could only shrug and nodded out a questionable, “Okay?” After the hug, he walked to the table and took his seat along with his parents.

“Wow, all of this looks good! There is white miso soup, *negitorodon, *goma-ae…I can’t wait! You did a good job with this meal!” the boy exclaimed.

He could hardly wait to dig into the meal. Mrs. Izumi gave him a half-smile, but Koushirou was much too distracted to fully notice. After blessing the meal, he started to eat, going for the soup first. When done, he headed to the goma-ae and the negitorodon.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Izumi hadn’t really touched their meals, as they watched their teenage garbage disposal shovel the food down like it was nothing.

Koushirou gulped down the juice in his glass. Noticing the glass was empty, Mrs. Izumi poured him some more. “Thank you.” At that moment, he noticed that his parents’ dishes were still close to full. “What’s wrong? How come you haven’t eaten much?”

“We’re fine,” his father insisted, as he took a drink of his beer.

“Are you sure?”

“Positive,” he looked over at his wife, “but there is something we wanted to discuss with you.” Mrs. Izumi shook her head. She wasn’t ready yet.

“What did you want to talk about?”

“Um, school. How was school today?”

“It was okay,” he answered dryly.

“I suppose you should be getting some exams and interesting assignments right about now, right?”

“Yeah, it’s the same old stuff.”
“What about Japanese History?”

“Um, I just have to do a research project on any famous historical figure of my choice,” Koushirou answered quickly. He was surprised he was able to come up with something so quickly.

“We won’t lie to you,” his mother began gently. “Your teacher called me this afternoon.”

Koushirou nearly choked on the spinach salad, but recovered quickly. Since when did teachers call home for something so trivial? “What?”

“He said that you didn’t seem to want to do the assignment. Is that true?”

“Well, I’m just not into history too much…that’s all. No point in living in the past, right,” he laughed slightly.

“Well, we don’t want you slacking off on your assignments. If you want to get into a good high school and university, you must work hard in all of your subjects.”

“Y-yes sir. I’m sorry. I guess I wasn’t taking it too seriously since I already have decent test scores in that class.” Koushirou still couldn’t believe that his teacher had called home. That just wasn’t the norm, just like the assignment in question. What partially surprised him though, aside from the fact he’d called in the first place, was the fact that his mother never once pointed out that what he said was the assignment was different from what was actually assigned. ‘Did he even tell her what it was?’

“I guess that’s understandable, but your father and I want you to do every assignment that’s given to you.”

He nodded, and started to eat slower, ignoring the fact that it was still pretty quiet at the table, but he was too drowned in his own thoughts to even notice. ‘I really don’t want to do this strange assignment, but I now know that I can’t get out of not doing it because he’ll probably call here again. How can I actually do this type of an assignment if I don’t know much about my supposed ‘true family’?

‘I don’t want to seem ungrateful towards my parents, as they’ve always taken good care of me, but doing an assignment about those two would mean that the information would technically be false. She neither physically nor biologically give birth to me.

‘What does it truly matter anyway? They, apparently, don’t want me to know that I’m adopted, and in a way, I’m not too surprised. If they did, I’m sure they would’ve mentioned it to me by now if it wasn’t slightly bothersome.’ He inwardly sighed. ‘What do I do?’

He looked over at his mother, who was now eating her meal. He still couldn’t help but feel that there was something off about her. ‘I wonder what’s going on with her. Today was the most noticeable, but she’s been acting strangely for a while now. Sometimes she may seem cheery, which is normal for her, but then she may act a bit emotional, like how she was before dinner. I’ve also noticed how fatigued she’s been, even though she seems to try to hide it.

‘I really feel she’s keeping something from me, and I doubt it’s about my adoption.’ After taking another sip of juice, he decided once and for all to get down to the root of the problem. He had promised himself to not meddle, but it was getting to be a bit too much for him now. “Mother…”

“Yes?” The woman sipped some of her hot green tea.

“What happened when you went to see the doctor? You did go today, right? You never told me of
your diagnosis. Is everything okay? Are you healthy?”

“You did a really great job with the soup.”

“Koushirou, would you like some more?” his mother asked abruptly.

“What?”

“You know, I think I just heard your mobile phone ring, Masami-san.”

“Yes, I should probably go and answer that.”

“I didn’t hear anything. What’s going on you two?”

The two gave each other a look and nodded, realizing that they had to be up front with the boy with their news.

“Well, Koushirou, yes, as you were asking earlier about a diagnosis, I did receive one.”

“Oh no!” the boy panicked. “You’re not dying, are you? Is that why you’ve been so depleted of energy lately?!”

“Calm down, Koushirou; your mother is not dying.” his father told him in surprise. ‘Only he would go with the worst-case scenario.’

“Then what’s wrong with her? Why are you two acting so anxious over a routine doctor’s visit?”

“Um, Koushirou,” the woman began slowly, “how would you feel if another person moved in with us?”

“I guess that would be fine, but what does that have to do with your doctor’s visit?”

“Well, that’s exactly what’s going to happen. A child is going to be moving in with us.”

Koushirou’s eyes went wide in shock. “Your doctor is a child?!”

Mrs. Izumi laughed in spite of herself over Koushirou’s naiveté. It was like the most obvious hadn’t even crossed his mind. “Oh Koushirou, you are just too adorable.”

The boy scratched his head. “I’m sorry…I don’t understand.”

“Yoshie is having a baby. That’s the ‘child’ who will ‘be moving in with us’.”

“What?!!”

“You’re going to be a big brother,” his father told him proudly.

At that moment, Mrs. Izumi grew teary-eyed as she looked at her husband. “It’s like a blessing, my having a child of my very own.”

“E-excuse me?” Koushirou questioned, his right eyebrow arched.

Realizing what she’d said, she added on quickly, “This is going to be a wonderful experience, Koushirou,” she replied nervously. “You’re going to have yourself a younger brother or sister to bully,” she joked in an attempt to ease the tension. In a way, it was pretty much a natural reflex to say something like that, as she hadn’t had much of an opportunity to experience being the mother of her
very own newborn. She and her husband did have a son before Koushirou, but he died shortly after he was born. Yoshie thought of that a lot, realizing that if the baby had survived, that he’d have been a little older than Koushirou. The last thing she wanted to do, though, was offend Koushirou.

“A sibling?”

Mr. Izumi noticed the look of complete and utter shock on the boy’s face. “Are you okay, son?”

“How did this happen?” he asked distantly.

“Weren’t you paying attention during our talk a few years ago when I gave you that book?”

Mr. Izumi was pretty open on the subject, unlike most parents he knew of. In his case, though, the answer to that was literally “no” since he knew about it before his father even approached him. During the talk he just nodded and pretended to read the book. It made him feel awkward.

“I’m sorry, rhetorical question,” he muttered. He then set down his chopsticks on the holder, and rose from his seat. “May I please be excused?”

“But you haven’t had seconds yet.”

“Don’t worry about that, mother. I’m not all that hungry anymore since I ate your onigiri and had a big lunch. I think I should start on my project. The sooner I start it, the sooner I finish.”

With that, the boy made his way to his room, closing the door behind him, still in partial shock that his mother was going to have a baby of her own…

Author’s Notes

Note 1: Yes, I made this up. Originally, I had that “he preferred avocado flavored applesauce” since that was the only strange thing I could think of from off the top of my head. Besides, I doubt there’s such a thing as avocado flavored applesauce. I also like the idea of Koushirou having a strong fondness of avocado for some odd reason.

I also decided to go with a strange food combination for him because of the episode of Digimon Adventure where all the children were talking about what they liked with their eggs or how they liked them prepared. For the dub episode, Izzy said he liked his eggs topped with jellybeans and mustard and the other characters thought he was weird.

For the original, he said he liked his eggs topped with ponzu, and the reactions were similar. Ponzu is a citrus-like sauce made with rice-wine vinegar. His combination was strange (I think Takeru went on to say it was “gross” or “nasty”), but Mimi’s was stranger…somewhat. In the dub, she mentioned how she liked her eggs topped with maple syrup, not too strange, eh? For the original, she went on about how she likes her eggs prepared with sugar and then topped with natto, hence the reactions. Natto is an acquired taste, and since it’s implied she loves the stuff, it wouldn’t surprise me if she were the type who’d even eat the stuff on toast. The main thing I found interesting about the episode was how out of all of them, Koushirou and Mimi were the only ones out of the group perceived as strange for their tastes.

If you’re wondering what natto is, it’s a strong, poignant smelling, sticky, snotty looking, fermented soybean type mixture. It’s supposed to be healthy and good with rice and a traditional breakfast side. Personally, I had a hard time tolerating it my first time, genuinely liked it after that. I had it with rice and soy sauce. I only tried it since I’m one of those, “Don’t knock it until you try it” types. lol

Note 2: Onigiri is pretty much a rice ball wrapped in nori (sort of a seaweed wrap), although there
are some types of onigiri that don’t use the wrap and the shape can vary. It can be round and it can be triangular. Just depends on who’s making it. The filling can consist of almost anything, though. For instance, the ones I made, I used a tuna, avocado, mayo mixture for my filling and it was quite tasty. Umeboshi is one of my favorites, though.

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Note 3: Hayashi rice is similar to curry, only Japanese style. It consists of beef, a various amount of vegetables, and a red wine and tomato type sauce, and it’s served with rice. I guess depending on the person, the rice can either be boiled or steamed.

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Note 4: I was going for donburi dishes for this. Donburi pretty much means a rice-bowl dish. There are many types, and the one I chose was negitorodon…mainly because I like it. lol Anyway, negitorodon is pretty much chopped or diced toro (which is fatty tuna, which you may be familiar with if you’ve had sushi) and negi (known as spring onion) on rice.

Goma-ae is pretty much a Japanese spinach salad with sesame dressing and a bit of soy sauce. Pretty good.
Koushirou's Thoughts...

Chapter Summary

This chapter is just about Koushirou’s feelings on the entire thing and the doubt he’s starting to feel over his mother’s being pregnant.

Chapter Notes

Some of the others show up this chapter, Taichi and Yamato being two of them. The two have a slight discussion in this chapter about girls, and I personally found Yamato a bit out of character for it. In my mind, I just can’t picture a character like his speaking openly on the subject to the extent of mentioning which types of girls he’d reject and which types he’d take looks wise.

As always, I do not own anything dealing with the Digimon series or franchise and please remember to leave a review. Bandai and Toei have that honor, and as a reminder, here are the ages of the characters once again:

Jou: 16-17 (Year 10-11; First/second year of High School)
Taichi/Sora/Yamato: 15-16 (Year 09-10; Last year of Junior High School/First year high school)
Koushirou/Mimi: 14-15 (Year 08-09; Second/Last year of Junior High School)
Miyako: 13-14 (Year 07-08; First/second year of Junior High School)
Takeru/Hikari/Daisuke/Ken: 12-13 (Year 06; Final year of Elementary/First year of Junior High School)
Iori: 10-11 (Year 04-05)

Chapter 03: Koushirou's Thoughts...

‘A baby? She’s going to have a baby?’

The boy, who had been in his room close to a half hour, continued to pace back and forth, his mind on all that was said over dinner. The main thing that stuck in his mind, though, was from his mother’s slip up earlier...“It’s like a blessing, my having a child of my very own.” That statement had hurt him more than he’d let on. To him, it felt as if his “mother” was already rejecting him. He wasn’t certain as to how he should feel. He didn’t know whether or not to be thrilled over the soon to be new addition or not. Old thoughts and doubts started to resurface in his mind that really hadn’t for years pertaining to his being adopted and of what his true place was within the Izumi family.

He paced back and forth a bit more, pondering over the idea of an infant being in the home and the set up he’d grown accustomed to over the years. He stopped circling his room, and felt the need to apologize. He felt it was out of place to have left dinner so abruptly. That aside, he was still a little hungry since he had left without having any seconds.
“I guess I could get myself a bite to eat,” he laughed lightly while holding his growling stomach.

Walking down the hall, he overheard a couple of voices coming from his parents’ bedroom. He was about to keep going, until he overheard his father mention something about the “new addition”. Curious, Koushirou peaked through the slightly ajar door to see his father sitting in a chair, while his mother was sitting on the bed comfortably. It was pretty much similar to when he’d overheard his parents talking about his adoption years earlier.

“Yoshie, I really can’t wait for you to have the baby.”

“I can’t wait either!” Mrs. Izumi patted her not-yet showing pregnant tummy. “According to the doctor, I’m about three weeks along. We have just a little over eight months to go until the big day and I’ll have a baby of my very own.” Tears formed in her eyes, as she giggled like a school girl from happiness. The woman stood and went over to her husband, giving him a big hug. “Masami-san, I feel so much closer to you right now since we know for sure. We’re going to have a child of our own…after all of these years. Who would’ve guessed that it would be possible?”

He nodded. “We just have to come up with names for him.”

“Or her,” Mrs. Izumi added, letting him go.

“That’s right, but whether you give me a son or a daughter, I’ll love the child just the same.”

She retook her seat on the bed. “How about I come up with the name if we have a girl, and you come up with a name if it’s a boy?”

“That sounds fair.”

“Oh, and as a rule, we must both agree on the name chosen.”

“Right.”

Koushirou frowned and didn’t stick around for the rest of the conversation. To him, it felt as if the two had disowned him already or had disavowed any knowledge of his existence. He sighed and sulked while heading back to his room, his hunger suddenly gone.

“How do you think things will be around here with the upcoming change?” asked Mrs. Izumi after Koushirou had left. “How do you think Koushirou will adjust to having a younger sibling? He doesn’t really have much experience with younger children.”

“He’ll probably do fine. He did grow up around Hikari and Takeru and then there’s also Mimi. Her aunt and uncle have two small children and Koushirou hangs around there every once in a while.”

“You’re probably right. I’m confident that Koushirou will be a great older brother, as he’s our son. As far as I’m concerned, he will always be my son, and I’ll always love him as if he were my very own, even if I didn’t physically have him.” The woman stood.

“What are you going?”

“I’m going to go check on Koushirou since he did leave dinner so quickly. I’m going to see if he’d like any type of a snack.”

With that, the woman exited the room…

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Koushirou was back in his room, lying on his back staring blankly up at the ceiling in thought over
what he’d just heard.

‘They don’t want me around. If the two of them have a child of their own, they’ll have a good reason to reject me as an Izumi. I’ve never seen mother so happy before, father either for that matter.

‘I sometimes wonder what my biological parents are like and where they live.’ Something else then came to mind, which caused him to sit up. ‘I wonder why I was put up for adoption in the first place and how the Izumis came to adopt me…’

His thoughts were soon broken by that of knocking. He asked who it was.

“It’s me, dear.” Koushirou opened the door. “I just wanted to make sure everything was alright since you didn’t finish your dinner earlier.”

“I’m fine mother. I was…um…just anxious to start my history assignment.”

“Are you sure everything is okay?”

“Y-yes. I’m thinking of maybe going to bed early too since I am home earlier than usual.”

“But it’s barely 19:30 (7:30). It’s so early.”

“What was that old English proverb I learned from Mimi-san…’early to bed and early to rise makes the man healthy, wealthy, and wise’.”

“That’s a very good philosophy to go by…I think,” she answered slowly since she didn’t understand the English used. “I’ll leave you to it then. I’ll see you at breakfast, unless you do decide you want a snack or either some of the leftovers from dinner.” The woman found that odd to say, since they usually never had leftovers due to Koushirou’s massive appetite as he’d grown older. “Just let me know.”

“Don’t worry, I will. Good night, mother.”

Mrs. Izumi walked away as Koushirou started to close the door, but heard her singing lightly about the new baby. He just sighed and threw himself back onto his bed, lying face up once again.

‘What exactly should I do? They’re ignoring me already, and this child hasn’t even been born yet. I wonder if I should move so that I won’t get in the way. Maybe I should go find my…real family.

‘I would hate to burden them with my being around. At least that way, they’ll be able to spend even more time with their real son or daughter—a true Izumi…’

****

Mr. and Mrs. Izumi had moved back to the living room, talking about going out for a short while to celebrate and maybe bringing Koushirou along, if he felt up to it, despite the fact that he’d said he’d wanted to go to sleep early. Before they could get into it, they heard a knock on the front door. Mrs. Izumi rushed to open it and smiled cheerfully to the group that stood before her.

“Hello everyone.”

“Hello, Mrs. Izumi,” the five teenagers greeted.

“Taichi-kun, Yamato-kun, Sora-chan, Miyako-chan, Mimi-chan, it’s wonderful to see you all again. It’s been a while.”

“It’s nice to see you as well, Mrs. Izumi,” the short-haired Sora said.
The big-haired boy of the group spoke up next, asking, “Is Koushirou around?”

“Yes, he promised to join us tonight at the new karaoke place in Palette Town,” Sora explained.

“Well, it’s not actually new,” Mimi corrected, “it’s just finished being remodeled. It looks really good now!”

“Of course it was her idea to go there,” Miyako pointed with a laugh. “Mimi-sama loves to karaoke, and the only other person who was fully willing to go along with her on the idea was Yamato-san.”

The blonde-haired boy crossed his arms coolly. “Do you want my great singing talent to go to waste? I have to keep my voice fresh for my fans when the band and I take a break from performing.”

Taichi just rolled his eyes at his friend, and impatiently asked, “Is he coming?”

“I’m not entirely sure. He did mention wanting to work on his history assignment.”

“His history assignment?” Mimi asked in surprise. ‘Why would he start it without me? I’m supposed to be his partner for it.’

“Mimi-chan, you’re in his class, right?” She nodded. “So what historical figure did you choose to do your report on?”

“Historical figure? Are we talking about the same assignment? The one that’s due a week from now?”

“Well, that’s what he told us.”

“Mimi-chan, what’s wrong,” whispered Sora.

“I’ll tell you about it later,” she whispered back. “Can we go see him now, Mrs. Izumi?”

“Oh yes, how rude of me. Come on in.” She moved aside for the teens to enter. “I’ll go back and check on him to see if he’s willing to come out of his room. He didn’t even finish his dinner tonight.”

“Thank you,” they all said.

While the kids made themselves comfortable in the living room with Mr. Izumi, Mrs. Izumi rushed to Koushirou’s room and lightly knocked on the door. Already in his bed clothing, he, reluctantly, answered.

“It’s me again.”

“What is it, mother?”

“I know you said you wanted to get started on your history assignment and then go to bed, but your friends are here to see you.”

He opened the door. “My friends?”

“Yes, they are here to fetch you.”

“Fetch me? What friends?”

“Let’s see. Taichi-kun, Sora-chan, Yamato-kun, Mimi-chan, and Miyako-chan are all here to get you
and go with them out for group karaoke. You didn't hear them? Your room is right near the front door.”

He shook his head coming to a realization. “I forgot all about karaoke! How could I have forgotten about that!” the boy cried out while slapping his forehead in stupidity. ‘How in the world did I let them talk me into going in the first place? I’m not very good at karaoke compared to Yamato-san or Mimi-san, but the food is good, and it is still fun.’

“You should go talk with them. They’re waiting for you. Your father and I are going to go out for a little while, so if you do decide to join them, just make sure you lock up.”

“Yes ma’am.”

“Oh, would you like your allowance early just in case you do decide to join them?”

“Not to worry, mother. We have a reserved room thanks to Mimi-san, and I already gave my share about a week ago when she came up with the idea to go. Mimi-san is one of their most loyal customers and even though we did have to pay, it was a very small fee. Everything is going to be unlimited.”

“Alright,” she told him while giving him a quick hug. ‘I’m sure spending time with his friends whether it’s here or out would be more fun and interesting for him instead of spending that time around his father and me.’

She left and told her husband how she was ready to go out, even if it was just for a brisk walk. The children said goodnight to the two, and they then left. Time the front door slammed shut, Koushirou made his way towards the living room. He had changed out of his bed clothes and back into his street clothes. “Hey everyone,” he greeted halfheartedly.

“Come on Koushirou! Let’s go,” Taichi urged.

“Yeah, the place is going to be filled with those about our age, since it’s a special teen night and we’re going to be allowed to stay late if we want,” Yamato pointed out.

“Which means cute, and single, girls, and we all know how much girls love to karaoke,” Taichi finished up with a toothy grin while wrapping an arm around the slightly shorter Koushirou’s shoulder. “It’s our duty as Odaiba’s best looking bachelors to show up so that all of the girls can run over to me with open arms and invite me to karaoke with them for a private session.”

Yamato scoffed. “You?! They always run over to me.”

Taichi stepped up to Yamato, giving him an arrogant smirk. “Just a minor detail, my friend. You see, they may look as if they’re running over to you, but they’re really just trying to get to me, the great Yagami Taichi…soccer genius extraordinaire.”

The musician barked out a laugh, as he enjoyed winding Taichi up. “Yeah, right! They all run to me. I would know that better than anyone. You can have the satisfactory ones while I take the extremely beautiful ones.”

The three girls rolled their eyes at the two over their stupid conversation.

“I hope you two don’t get noticed by any girls at all,” Sora told the two resentfully.

Taichi turned to his childhood friend, and gave her a crafty grin that usually always softened the young girl’s mood. “You’re just jealous.”
“Of-of what! You’re nothing special!” she insisted heatedly, her face slightly red.

“As leader of this group…”

“We’re not in the Digital World,” Sora muttered under her breath.

“…I order you to work on your history report later! Mimi-chan is waiting and we all finished up with our clubs early to be able to actually go.”

“More like snuck off,” Sora, once again, muttered under her breath.

“History report?” He thought for a moment and finally realized what Taichi was referring to. “Oh yes, my report! Wow, I guess all of that writing and researching really takes it out of a guy.” He put his hand behind his head and gave off a tense laugh.

Mimi shot the boy a disapproving look, her arms crossed. She stared him right in the eyes, which caused Koushirou to feel strange. “I bet it can, if you actually write one,” she grumbled.

“Um, w-well, maybe I’ll join you guys after all,” he told them quickly. “I did promise, and I did already put my share in to rent the room at such a discount price thanks to Mimi-san.”

“Great! Let’s get going, Izumi-senpai!”

“Oh yeah, Koushirou-kun, I’ve been meaning to ask this since we got here, but why was your mother so happy?” asked Sora. When the woman had let them in, she wore a smile the entire time. She was almost giddy about it. “I’ve seen her in a cheery mood before, but this time seemed almost different.”

Yamato rubbed his chin. “You know, she did seem more cheerful than usual, and your father seemed extra happy too.”

“It’s nothing to worry yourselves over. Like Taichi-san said, we really should get going.”

Koushirou walked towards the front door to step into his shoes, while his friends followed suit. Mimi noticed that he was once again avoiding another subject involving his family. This just made the girl even more concerned as well as curious. ‘What’s going on with him...’ the girl wondered in thought as she followed behind her friend…

As soon as the last one was out, that being Mimi, Koushirou locked up, and the group headed out to have a fun night of karaoke in Palette Town...
A Dull Night of Karaoke

Chapter Summary

The children head out for karaoke...

Chapter Notes

This chapter will bring in another character, which we all know and love, maybe, and introduce two original characters. There’s no need to worry about them, as neither will play much of a role in this story. I just wanted more people for the group to karaoke with. I will apologize in advance, though. I felt that this part was a bit on the dull side since it pretty much consists of background information on the characters and a lot of discussion. I call it a filler chapter just to have an excuse to have Taichi and the others in it since this story focuses around Koushirou and Mimi so much.

Now, as always, I do not own anything dealing with the Digimon series or franchise. Bandai and Toei have that honor, and as a reminder, here are the ages of the characters once again:

Jou: 16-17 (Year 10-11; First/second year of High School)
Taichi/Sora/Yamato: 15-16 (Year 09-10; Last year of Junior High School/First year high school)
Koushirou/Mimi: 14-15 (Year 08-09; Second/Last year of Junior High School)
Miyako: 13-14 (Year 07-08; First/second year of Junior High School)
Takeru/Hikari/Daisuke/Ken: 12-13 (Year 06; Final year of Elementary/First year of Junior High School)
Iori: 10-11 (Year 04-05)

Chapter 04: A Dull Night of Karaoke…

Palette Town was one of the busiest places in Odaiba as far as entertainment went. It was probably best known for the Daikanransha, the giant ferris wheel, which allowed its riders to get a grand view of in-land Tokyo, which included Tokyo Tower near Shiba Park and even farther than that, like the tall buildings of the skyscraper district of Shinjuku. The ride was at least fifteen minutes long, and the best time to ride was definitely towards the end of the day when the sun was setting. One of the main reasons that both Mimi and Miyako enjoyed Palette Town was for Zepp Tokyo, which was one of many music halls located in Japan, where many music groups and artists performed. Miyako was really into pop music, as was Mimi.

The ride on the train to Palette Town didn’t take too long. As they entered the area, Mimi leading the way to the karaoke place she’d had in mind, they saw a certain tall, blue-haired boy wearing glasses in the front of it. Along with him were two other people. “Hey guys,” he waved to his friends, “I thought you weren’t going to show up,” he laughed. It was none other than the slightly clumsy math
and science whiz, Kido Jou. He had agreed to hang out with them for the karaoke session and had promised to just meet them there, as he had someplace else to go prior.

Jou introduced the group to his two friends from school he’d brought along, who of which he asked Mimi first if it was okay to. She informed him that the owner didn’t mind, and that everything will still be unlimited for her group and the other select few being allowed to join. Jou was still considered nerdy in some senses, but he was a bit more outgoing and social compared to when he was younger. As a matter of fact, Jou was never all that shy, just had a lot of doubt when it came to his abilities. One thing that hadn’t changed much over the years, was his tendency to study the majority of the time.

Koushirou, compared to Jou, was an entirely different story. It seemed that the older he got the more invested in his work he became. He would still hang out with his friends, but he still came across as quiet, private, and extremely mysterious whenever it came to himself at times and seemed the most social when heading the Computer Club or chatting online. Even though Taichi and Sora knew Koushirou best, there were still things about him that they just didn’t know, as he never volunteered much about himself unless directly asked something.

Beside Jou was a girl with long, auburn hair. “This is my friend Malissa Smith. She moved here from America last summer, and was transferred into my school in September for the fall semester.”

“I’m very pleased to meet you all,” the girl responded shyly.

The 16-year-old girl was wearing a thin jacket, a white, short-sleeved blouse, a dark navy-blue skirt, white ankle socks, and black dress shoes. Her outfit looked as if it could’ve passed for a typical high school uniform, minus her casual jacket, but this was just the way she liked dressing. She had her hair hanging straight down, but it wasn’t plain and straight. It had a bit of body to it. The girl was also wearing perfume, which Mimi, Miyako, and Sora noticed. The perfume definitely had a sea theme to it, as the girl loved things associated with water.

Jou had met Malissa during their summer break. She had moved there with her family back in mid-July of the previous year, and was enrolled in the same private academy that Jou attended. How she managed to get into such a prestigious school as a foreigner was beyond everyone. The entrance exam for the school was very difficult and challenging, but she had to take a transfer exam as well. Her class is different from Jou’s, but he sees her during their lunch hour. He saw her studying at the Tokyo Metropolitan Library one day, and saw the book she was attempting to study, and recognized it right off as he’d used it himself. He offered to help her study so that she could pass the exam. After that, the two became instant friends.

Malissa, as a friendly gesture, was also tutoring Jou in English, just as he would sometimes inform her of certain things in Japanese. The girl was very advanced, as she’d studied Japanese for years, but there were still some things she just didn’t know or understand right off, such as proverbial sayings and different slang terms used by the youth of the country.

“The guy beside Malissa-san,” he pointed to a handsome boy whose looks could have rivaled Yamato’s, “is Tezuka Eijiro.”

“Hello, Tezuka-san,” the others greeted.

“Meh, call me Eijiro.”

Jou’s blunt 17-year-old buddy was wearing a pair of plain, light blue jeans, a pair of plain white sneakers, and a dark blood-red T-shirt. His dark hair was pretty long, and he had it tied back into a ponytail. He was tall and slim, but not too slim. All of the girls at the academy thought he was
incredibly handsome, so getting a date for any type of an event was never a problem for him.

Aside from Yamato, Eijiro was probably one of the most popular guys Jou associated with. Despite all of that, though, he was pretty smart, and scored one of the highest entrance exam scores in the history of their school and the teachers seemed to ignore anything Eijiro did that wasn't fully acceptable, such as his hair. High school entrance exams have always been a huge challenge, and for private schools and private academies, it was even more challenging. His score was nearly perfect. Even Jou didn’t get a score close to Eijiro’s, and Jou had studied like mad to get into the school. During that time, Jou was like a literal hermit with occasional panic attacks, as he was determined to get into the school.

Jou met Eijiro through his homeroom. The two just happened to end up in the same class and just started up a conversation. Both were very interested in science. With the rebellious way Eijiro came across and the way he carried himself, one would’ve never guessed that the boy was a bit of a genius. Most adults, who saw him, when not in his uniform, always assumed he was a delinquent.

“Let me introduce you two to everyone else. The boy with the big hair is Yagami Taichi. He’s a third year at Odaiba Junior High. He’s one of the best players of their school’s soccer club and sometimes helps out the co-ed tennis club. How he can manage both clubs is beyond me, though.”

“I'm a genius,” he grinned. “Practice pays off.”

Sora shook her head at the boy. He rarely ever helped up whenever both clubs met on the same day and his game was average at best, although, she did have to admit that whenever partnered with him, they worked very well together and seemed to always be in-sync.

“The boy beside him is—”

“Don’t tell me,” Eijiro interrupted exasperatingly, “that’s Ishida of the Teenage Wolves. My sisters have posters and stickers and whatever else that’s out for the group all over their rooms. They also drive me crazy with the music, not that the group is bad or anything, I just don’t feel like hearing it all of the time…no offense.”

“None taken.” Yamato didn’t care if the boy liked his band’s music or not. He just liked the fact he was able to creatively express himself. “A younger friend of mine has an older sister who drives him mad with our music too, since she’s such a fan of the group.”

“Yeah, continuing on, the lavender-haired girl wearing the glasses is Inoue Miyako. Miyako-kun is a first year at Odaiba Junior High, and she’s an active member of the computer club. She’s probably also one of the smartest students of her year.”

“Arigabingo, senpai!” Miyako smiled proudly while flashing the “v” for victory sign.

“The girl with the long, wavy, light brown hair is Tachikawa Mimi. She’s a second year at Odaiba Junior High, and knowing her, she’s probably the star everything,” he joked with a laugh. “She’s in her school’s volleyball club, and is a very skilled singer, that’s for sure, and as I told you, this karaoke trip was definitely her idea.”

“Thanks, Jou-senpai.”

“Hmm,” Eijiro gave the girl a sly smile, which all the girls of his school loved, “Tachikawa-san, how about you and I go out sometime? Jou’s been holding out on me here, keeping all the cute girls to himself,” he finished, looking from Mimi to Miyako to Sora, but his main focus was on the karaoke princess.
“Erm,” the girl started with a sweat drop, “I’m flattered that you would ask me, but I don’t think I’m ready for that type of thing right now. Oh…you can call me Mimi if you’d like.”

“Ahh, Mimi-chan has such a nice ring to it.” He stood in front of her, and gave her another one of his signature smiles. “Are you sure? I am one of the coolest guys at my school, and a pretty, charming girl, such as yourself, would look great being with someone like me, and---”

“Calm down, Eijiro,” sighed Jou. “Don’t you have a girlfriend already?”

“Not right now, but Mimi-chan would make a nice one.”

“I wouldn’t let that happen. Mimi-kun doesn’t deserve that kind of torture.’ Jou shook his head, slightly embarrassed of his friend. “Eijiro….come on…”

“What? Can’t blame a guy for trying.” He then whispered to Jou, “With that hot body of hers, she’s definitely ready for high school.”

Jou then did something that was almost atypical for a person like him. He punched Eijiro in the top of the head while rolling his eyes. Everyone else was too stunned to say anything. None of them had ever seen Jou resort to violence, not even jokingly, unless shaking Gomamon while hysterical counted. “Cool it!” he hissed.

Mimi didn’t know how to react to the boy’s advances. Compared to the boys of her school, Eijiro seemed a bit more charismatic…or had the potential to be.

“Continuing on,” he pointed to a girl with short hair, “the girl beside Mimi-kun is Takenouchi Sora. She’s in her third year at Odaiba Junior High. She is one of the best female players of the co-ed tennis club. She’s also an ex-soccer player and played great during her Odaiba Elementary days when in the soccer club along with Taichi.”

“P-please to meet you, Eijiro-san.”

“Jou was right about our being great at soccer as kids.” Taichi put an arm around the tennis player’s shoulder. “We were the best and worked well together as a team, right Sora?”

She nodded, her cheeks turning a faint shade of red. “We-we sure were and still are with tennis.”

“And last, but not least, is Izumi Koushirou. He’s a second year at Odaiba Junior High. He’s also head of the school’s computer club this year.”

“H-hello. It’s a pleasure to make your acquaintance,” he answered routinely.

“Damn he's formal,” muttered Eijiro. “So, Mimi-chan, is the redhead your boyfriend?”

‘Boyfriend? Mimi-sama and Izumi-senpai?’

“Whoa,” Taichi partially laughed.

“Eh?! K-Koushirou-kun, my boyfriend?”

“Well, he’s in your year and class, isn’t he?”

“W-well, yes, he is, but he’s just a friend.”

“Yeah, just a friend,” Koushirou echoed dully. After saying that, he got a strange, unsettling feeling. Saying that they were just friends seemed to really bother him, but he just didn’t understand why
something like that would.

“I just figured that a nice girl like you had to have had a boyfriend to reject me so openly,” he flirted.

“No, we’re nothing more than friends,” Mimi made clear.

“Well, now that that’s out of the way, how about that date…”

“I should’ve left you at home,” Jou muttered. Malissa just laughed uneasily. The others felt the same as Jou, especially Koushirou who was actually growing annoyed, minus Mimi who was a little fond of the attention the older boy was giving her. It didn’t last too long, though, as Mimi was anxious to get started.

The group entered the place, walking up to the front desk. “Hello there,” Mimi greeted. “We have a reservation for the grand reopening.”

“Oh, Mimi-chan!” the older woman behind the counter exclaimed. “So you managed to come after all!”

“Yes, sure did, Sakamoto-san. I wouldn’t have missed this for the world.”

“We have the perfect room for you and your group.” The chubby woman escorted Mimi and the others to her reserved room and let them in. The room was definitely one of the best in the place, and also one of the biggest. When entering the room, there were slippers situated for all of them to use. The woman told Mimi that she and her friends could order anything they wanted food wise free of charge. Same applied to drinks. Overall, it was a really good deal. Everyone thanked the woman, who left, while making themselves comfortable on the wrap around couches surrounding the table and in front of the monitor and stage area.

After looking over the menu, Mimi picked up the phone and called in their orders. Their drinks were brought in almost instantly. As for foods, they had decided on different dishes. For instance, Yamato had a taste for takoyaki. Miyako mainly wanted all of the cake and custard she could eat. Sora, Jou, Mimi, and Malissa, wanted one of those large platters that had a little bit of everything that could feed 3-5 people. Taichi, Koushirou, and Eijiro wanted pizza, and ordered two of them. All three boys had big appetites. Regardless of what was ordered, though, all of it was going to get shared in some way.

“Jou-san, you have a lot of friends,” Malissa noted in English. “It’s surprising that you all are still friends considering how you all go to different schools and are in different years. Back home, most friendships are lost because of that. You all must have a very special bond in some way.”

“Yeah, we are all pretty close and these guys are pretty much my best friends outside of school. Years ago, all of us, minus Miyako-kun, were grouped together at the campgrounds of Mikami Keikoku for summer camp. That’s how we all became such good friends. It was one unforgettable summer. It’s funny how I was in charge of them since I was the oldest.”

“Wow, Jou-san was in charge? You probably did a very good job.”

“I wouldn’t say that…”

“So tell me, how long have you all been friends?”

Due to the fact that all Malissa had said was in English, a habit she had at times when speaking with Jou, he was about to answer her and then translate for the others, but Mimi beat him to it.

“We’ve been friends for a long time,” the girl responded in English.
“Wait, what did she say? I know she said something about friends,” Taichi said.

“She asked how long we’ve all been friends and was surprised over how Jou-senpai has kept his friendship with us.”

“I do apologize,” the girl bashfully told the bunch, going back to Japanese. “I guess I’m a little nervous and I sometimes become tongue-tied when trying to speak it. I understand it well enough, as Jou-san mentioned, but I’m still not as comfortable with speaking sometimes in front of new people.”

“It’s fine,” Yamato complimented. “I understood it fine, as I’m sure everyone else did too.” They all nodded in agreement, even the mute Koushirou.

“W-wow. Thank you very much.”

“Malissa, you’re always like that. You just need to calm down and relax,” Eijiro told the girl as a couple of servers came in, setting up all that had been ordered. “Now, how did you all meet? Did either of you know each other before that summer?” Eijiro asked while going towards the pizza. The others were also going towards their respective orders.

“I know all of them through Izumi-senpai,” explained Miyako, who was sipping on fruit juice.

“Like Jou said earlier, we were all grouped together for our summer break almost five years ago,” Taichi continued on. He started to eat the sweets that had been laid out for them.

Yamato ate some of his takoyaki. He really did enjoy the quick-fix treat. “And yeah, some of us knew each other before that time, except with my younger brother, Takeru. They didn’t know him, and he didn’t know them.”

“Just as Yamato-kun said, some of us were friends before our summer camp trip. Taichi and I were friends way before then.”

“Yeah, Sora and I have known each other for a long time, way before Odaiba Elementary School. Back then, we both lived in Hikarigaoka (Heighton View Terrace). We went to *Daisan Elementary School. We were both in class 1-2 and we even lived in the same building. Our folks then moved to Odaiba and we just happened to end up together again and remained good friends.”

“We were also pretty good, I guess you could say, acquaintances with Koushirou-kun since he was in the Soccer Club with both Taichi and me when at Odaiba Elementary. *He played goalie. He didn’t really talk much back then,” Sora smiled at him, “but the more time he spent with us, the more slightly open he became, and he really proved that he was capable of talking our summer together. He had lots to say.”

“We just knew of the others because we went to school together,” Taichi added, his mouth full of pizza. “You know how it is. We would see them around school or for school assemblies, stuff like that, but didn’t really know any of them personally or anything.”

Miyako, who was on her third slice of cake, spoke up next. “I only knew of Izumi-senpai because he was leader of the computer club at Odaiba Elementary his last year. We became instant friends, and met the rest here through him and the younger sister of Taichi-san, Hikari-san, and Takeru-kun.”

“Hm,” Mimi began, “I knew of Taichi-san, Jou-senpai, Sora-san, and Yamato-san, but I’d never spoken with either of them. I just knew that Sora-san and Taichi-san were well-known athletes of our school, especially Sora-san, *since she was the first girl to join the soccer club. It was an all-boy club before.
“The girls of my class were usually always talking about the older, ‘handsome Ishida-senpai’, but that was all I knew about him. I still had never actually met him directly. I didn’t know of Jou-senpai at all until that summer. He was so tense and scared. I’ll admit that I had doubts about him when I found out that he was going to be our cabin leader. I do remember him walking around school, though, with his nose always buried in a book.

“I met Miyako-chan through Hikari-chan and Takeru-kun. *As for Koushirou-kun, I’ve always had classes with him, but I’d never spoken to him much before our summer trip. When we were all grouped together, he was the only one I semi-knew since we were classmates.” She looked across the table, the redhead eating some cake quietly. “Koushirou-kun, did you ever go to the *Wakaba Kindergarten with principal who went by Suteki-obaachan? I don’t remember if I ever saw you there or not.”

Sora laughed. “Grandmother Suteki? Strange name.”

“Yeah, I guess that does sound a little strange. We all called her obaachan and I know some called her Suteki-baachan. She liked for us to. She was a very kind old lady. So, Koushirou-kun, did you go there?”

“Oh, I’m sorry, Mimi-san. What did you say again?”

Mimi mentally rolled her eyes. When it came to food, and computers, seems he could tune the whole world out. “I asked if you’d ever attended the Wakaba Kindergarten when Suteki-obaachan was in charge. I remember some more teachers too, a younger one and she was her real granddaughter. I can’t remember her name though. Obaachan was a bit plump, had graying hair, a little short, now that I think about it…”

Koushirou nodded, as it all came back to him. That part of his life was content…a part of his life when he was genuinely happy with himself and his carefree life. He smiled. “Yes, I used to go there before my family moved to Odaiba, and I remember Suteki-baachan! She used to always come up with new games for us to play when we were good. I used to like how she read us stories before nap time, despite being our principal. She always seemed to make time for all of us.”

“Oh my gosh!” Mimi clapped. “I remember her doing that! She used to act like the characters in the stories! I could never actually go straight to sleep for nap time because I’d want to hear more of her stories!”

“Thinking about it now, I wonder if I did meet you back then. There was a girl who would always play with dolls during our recess time. During art, she seemed to use pink for everything she painted and seemed to always wear shoes that were pink or either kept pink bows in her hair. That girl would seem to befriend everyone and would try to play with everyone. She even had your hair color.”

“I wonder if it was me. I did like pink a lot when I was younger.”

“So Mimi-san and Koushirou-san lived in Hikarigaoka too?” asked Malissa, trying some takoyaki from the platter.

“We all did at some point,” Jou explained.

“Yeah, we all even lived in the same building, yet we didn’t know each other,” Yamato said. “Of course the exception is Taichi and Sora, and we now know that Koushirou may have indirectly known Mimi prior to Odaiba Elementary.”

“To make things even more ironic, when they did move from there, they all ended up in Odaiba!”
Miyako told the two. “They all moved after all that weird stuff that happened there back in 1995. A lot of people moved after that incident.”

“Koushirou-kun and I would’ve still been in Kindergarten when our families moved.”

“I was a year 2 student at Daigo Elementary School when my parents, brothers, and I made the move. The move wasn’t too hard on me, but it was a bit tougher on my brothers since they were in higher years. Shuu-niisan had just started his first year at Hikarigaoka Junior High and Shin-niisan had just started his first year at Hikarigaoka Senior High School.”

“Wow, Jou-san, you all have such history together!” Malissa exclaimed in English.

Eijiro was equally impressed. “It’s amazing that you all are still friends after all these years.”

“Actually, we all became really close after our adventures in the…camp that year. We learned how to get along with each other and all that other good stuff.” The boy stood. “Forget all this talking! We should be singing! I know we can stay as long as we want, but come on guys, you know we can’t! It’s time to take advantage of this great deal and start karaokeing! Wait, is that even a word?”

Jou laughed. “Not that I know of!”

“Save the best singers for last!”

Yamato gave the younger girl a smug smile. “Don’t hate me because I have such a wonderful, deep, sexy voice.”

“Who says I was talking about you?” Miyako playfully taunted.

Everyone pretty much laughed, minus Koushirou who gave off a small, forced chuckle. It was like he was only half listening. Mimi, at that moment, glanced over at the redhead to notice the distant look on his face. She decided to just ignore it. She was there to have fun and to make sure everyone else did, not worry about Koushirou.

“Yo, Jou, why don’t we sing a song together?” Eijiro asked his friend.

“Senpai, you like to sing?” asked Miyako in surprise, who had started eating on her gigantic parfait.

“Well, um, y-y-eah. I really like karaoke and singing.”

“Yeah, Jou, Malissa, and I karaoke a lot over at my place and sometimes we go to karaoke boxes when we have some free time.”

“It took a lot of getting used to, as karaoke isn’t very common where I’m from.”

“Taichi,” Sora whispered to the boy beside her, “isn’t Jou-senpai a horrendous singer just like you are?”

“Well yeah, but…HEY!!” Sora giggled.

“Hey, Malissa, I know, how about you and Jou sing together,” Eijiro pointed to the two. “You guys sound really nice together when we come for karaoke, unless you want to sing by yourself first.”
The girl was a bit shy to sing in front of all of Jou’s friends, but they urged her to. “Okay, I’ll do it!” Malissa got up on the stage, the lights shining down on her, and looked through the book for songs in the list. It had a nice variety of music. Some songs were from across the sea, some were older, and some were new releases. She decided to try her luck with a Japanese song. She was glad when coming across something she knew. She noted the number, punched it into the karaoke machine and the lyric screen lit up.

“Oh, I remember this song!” Miyako bopped her head to the music. “It’s *always by Mai-K (Kuraki Mai)!”

“Wow, that song is from a couple of years ago,” Mimi noted thoughtfully.

“There seems to be a good variety,” Sora stated simply, while looking through the book of songs available.

Malissa sang the song gracefully, and didn’t mess up a single lyric as she watched the words flash on the screen. After she was done, everyone cheered. She blushed and bowed.

“That was great, Malissa!” Taichi complimented. “You look like you were having a lot of fun.” Taichi raised his glass of soda. “A toast to Malissa! Kanpai!”

“Kanpai!!” everyone saluted.

“She has a really good voice,” Yamato said.

“Was there any doubt?” Ejiro gobbled down another slice of pizza.

“E-Ejiro-san…” The girl’s face went an even deeper shade of crimson.

“Didn't you think she sang well?” Mimi asked the redhead.

The boy came back to slight reality and nodded, as if he were supposed to. He did do the toast Taichi had initiated, but he was still only half listening.

“I don’t think I could top that,” Sora commented.

“Get up there and sing!” Taichi ordered playfully. “You know you like singing.”

“Oh shut up,” she joked back. She stepped on the stage. “Hmm, what song should I sing…”

“Hey, you should sing that old song you’re always listening to,” Taichi suggested. “That song *Shiny Days.”

“Oh, that’s a good idea! What made you think of that?”

“I’m not sure,” he admitted. “It just suits you, I guess. Anything that’s slow by Mizutani Yuuko seems to remind me of you.”

Sora nodded, her face slightly pink as she looked for the song. Luckily, she found it. She didn’t need the lyrics screen, and sang it perfectly. Taichi could only stare at Sora admiringly throughout her entire performance. She looked like a true idol to him, especially with the way the stage light shined down on her. After it ended, everyone rooted for the girl.

“Just like with Malissa-san, you didn’t mess up one single note or lyric,” Yamato commented like an expert.
“Thanks. So, Taichi, how was that?”

“Well, um…it could’ve been better,” he grinned. Sora hit him playfully and retook her seat.

*Everyone else sang songs as well, whether it was as a group or as a solo performance. Yamato sang the song *Walk on the Edge* which was well known because of his band covering it; Miyako sang the song *Crash de Bingo* which was by Natsuki Rio; Mimi sang an older song by the name of *Himawari*, which was by AiM; Taichi sang to a song by the name of *Atarashii Taiyou*. Mimi, Sora, Miyako, and Malissa sang to a song by Morning Musume called *Tomodachi ga ki ni Itte Iru Otoko kara no Dengon*. The boys, with a reluctant Koushirou who partially refused, and just watched, all sang *Pikanchi Double* by the boy-band Arashi.

The girls, who were seated shaking maracas, playing triangles, and tambourines, laughed over how silly the boys looked trying to do the dance steps like the boys in Arashi would. Jou seemed the most enthusiastic about it, though. Even Koushirou cracked a small smile at the sight of his older friend dancing around. They had no idea that Jou was so into singing and performing in such a way.

“What should we sing next?” Sora was pumped up. “Has everyone sung yet?”

“Hey, Mimi and I never got the chance to sing our duet together.”

“That’s right, Yamato-san and I were supposed to sing,” Mimi said. “We didn’t think of a song, though. Oh, I know! How about Taichi-san and Jou-senpai sing too! We could all sing *I wish*…”

Taichi and Jou thought back to when they’d tried singing that song before years ago, and how terrible they sounded.

“That’ll be ok,,” Yamato nodded, “but it’ll be more fun as a group song.”

“Okay, how about this then! Let’s have Jou-senpai, Taichi-san, and Malissa-san with us too!”

Malissa thought for a moment, when it came to her. “Oh yes, I know that song. I like it.”

“That’s good for a solo.”

“Yamato’s right,” Eijiro said while pouring Mimi some more to drink.

“Thank you, Eijiro-senpai. Anyway, how about we sing *Keep On*? I know that’s in the list.”

“That’d be perfect!” Sora cheered.

“Yeah, I really want to do another group song with Sora-san, Miyako-chan, and Malissa-san! We girls rule!”

“Wait, Izumi-senpai hasn’t been up on stage yet.”

“Come on, sing a song,” Eijiro urged. “You have to have something in mind.”

“Um, well…no, not really,” he admitted bashfully. He did want to join in, but he just wasn’t up to singing at all. There was nothing that could get his mind off of his current, what he considered, predicament.

Miyako pouted, her arms crossed. “Come on, Izumi-senpai!! Sing a song. Why don’t you sing something about computers! Or better yet, how about singing that song *Version Up*? I know you like that song. Whenever you make a playlist, you always include it! The song *Open Mind* too! I’m pretty sure I saw those songs in the book!”
“I’d rather not…”

Mimi looked Koushirou in the eyes. “Please?”

He turned his head away quickly to avert her gaze. “Erm…um…th-that’s okay.”

“You’re no fun today!”

“I’m really sorry about that.” He stood. “I think I’ll head home now. I did want to get up early. Mimi-san, I thank you for inviting me along. I apologize for any problems I may have caused you and the others.”

“Th-that’s okay…” Mimi managed to get out.

After a few “goodbyes” the boy took off.

“Izumi-senpai sure was acting strange. He didn’t talk much, but he sure did eat the majority of the food.”

“Miyako-chan is right, he was acting a bit strange,” Yamato nodded slowly in agreement.

“Is your friend always like that?”

“Well, he isn’t usually,” Mimi explained to the older boy. “I mean, yes, he’s a little quiet, but he’s not all that shy. He’s done karaoke before and he’s always seemed to enjoy himself with us and has sung along with all of us.”

“He’s the only person I know who has no interests outside of his computer work. He doesn’t even notice girls!”

“Taichi! Not all people are as loud and as obvious as you are. Besides, if he did have an interest in a certain girl, he probably wouldn’t be so obvious about it. This is Koushirou-kun we’re talking about here. He’s very discreet about his feelings, seemingly.”

“As usual, Sora, you make a good point,” admitted the defeated soccer genius.

Mimi frowned slightly. ‘Koushirou, what’s wrong with you? Why won’t you open up to us even though you’ve known us for so long?’

**Author’s Notes**

Note 01: Takoyaki is small dumpling filled with octopus, onion, and some other things, to my knowledge, and can either be fried or baked. You then top it off with a sauce and katsuobushi, which are those little fishy flake things that move when heat is added to it. One thing I do know, though, is that one has to be skilled to prepare takoyaki in one of those takoyaki pans. It can burn pretty easily. That aside, it’s pretty tasty.

~*~*~*~

Note 02: For the record, there are no such places as Hikarigaoka Elementary School (to my knowledge), Odaiba Elementary School, or Odaiba Junior High School. Seems that most fictional series may use real places or have the characters going to real places, but not when it comes to schools, and yes, Sora and Taichi did have the same class when living in Hikarigaoka (Class 1-2), and yes, the two did attend Daisan Elementary School. Yamato mentioned that he went to Daiyon Elementary School. The only character whose school wasn’t mentioned was Koushirou’s because he didn’t live in Hikarigaoka long compared to the other characters, and when asked why, he couldn’t give a straight answer, but for the sake of this fic, we’re going to change that. lol Makes me wonder
where his family lived before the apartment in Hikarigaoka.

Note 03: Yes people, Koushirou was in the soccer club with both Taichi and Sora. Those two were acquaintances with him prior to their Digital World adventure. I know it’s surprising that he played soccer, given how his character was portrayed (even though, in the episode where the kids first returned home in Adventure, he did have a bat, ball, and mitt in his closet and he owned a bike, which means that he does, at least, play like a normal child would). Anyway, his reason for being in the soccer club is beyond me as later on, he was a Computer Club member and became leader of it when in his final year at Odaiba Elementary.

Note 04: I’m not sure if I mentioned this earlier, but “preschools” in Japan are pretty much referred to as Kindergartens (youchien/幼稚園) or Nursery Schools (hoikuen/保育園). Elementary school starts at 1st grade. Also, in episode 32 of Digimon Adventure, Mimi mentioned going to Wakaba Kindergarten/Nursery School (forgot which she said) before her family moved to Odaiba. Koushirou mentioned that he was in Kindergarten too in episode 29, after Mimi mentioned it, but didn’t say which one he went to, so yeah, for the sake of this fic, I’m tossing him in there too. lol I hate the fact that it wasn’t mentioned when he gave his school annual (or whatever you’d call it) to Jou to call all the students.

Note 06: Something else that’s true. Sora was definitely your typical tomboy. The soccer-club was all-boy, but Sora was the only girl in it, which lead me to believe that girls were always welcome, most just weren’t interested. Anyway, I just pretty much added more to it, like her being the first girl to play in it.

Note 07: This is also true. Mimi knew of Koushirou and Koushirou knew of Mimi before their adventure, as they were in the same class. In the novel, it mentioned how they had never really talked. Also, in the novel, when Mimi’s friends first noticed Koushirou, they were laughing at him because he was bringing along his laptop to the campgrounds, but Mimi didn’t laugh at all and didn’t really get what was so funny. That says a lot about her character. Adding on, when she first saw a nervous Jou, she did have doubts about whether or not he could actually be a good leader (for the novel). Yamato and Taichi also didn’t seem to like Jou much at first for the novel.

Note 08: Hikarigaoka Senior High School is a real school in the Nerima area, everyone, so nope, this one isn’t made up.

Note 09: The songs originally mentioned for this chapter were out at the time this story was originally written. For instance, always by Kuraki Mai came out in 2001. As it was mentioned earlier, this fic was written between August 2001 and July 2002 and this fic takes place in early March 2004. This is a lovely 2001 chapter. lol

Note 10: Okay, time to give information on the songs used for this chapter.

Shiny Days: This is Sora’s Digimon Adventure 02 image theme, which is very ballad-ish. Kind of a mild tempo and is a really good listen. It was performed by the late Mizutani Yuuko, who was Sora’s seiyuu (voice actress), as well as Mrs. Yagami for Adventure and 02. Mizutani Yuuko also had a radio show, and it was referenced for the series in the form of one of the character dramas to come out. Sora was doing a radio show for it.

Walk on the Edge: This is Yamato’s Digimon Adventure image theme, and is harmonica heavy, you could say. It was performed by Kazaama Yuuto, who was Yamato’s seiyuu for Adventure and 02. He also performed this song in the show with his band in 02.
Crash de Bingo: This is Miyako's image theme, which is pretty catchy, in my opinion. It is performed by Natsuki Rio, who is Miyako's seiyuu.

Himawari: This song is the b-side track to the My Tomorrow single. My Tomorrow is the first Digimon Tamers ending. It is performed by AiM, who was Mimi’s seiyuu (was changed for Tri), only when singing as Mimi (or any other character she may voice) she is always credited as Maeda Ai.

Atarashii Taiyou: This is Taichi’s Digimon Adventure 02 image theme. It’s a very optimistic, positive song. This song was performed by veteran seiyuu, Fujita Toshiko, Taichi’s former seiyuu.

Tomodachi ga ni Itte Iru Otoko kara no Dengon: This song replaced Koi o Shichaimashita, which is by the group Tanpopo, which came out in early 2001. At the time that this fic takes place the band would’ve still been in its indefinite hiatus (2003). The group didn’t make a comeback until 2009. Tanpopo was sort of a branch of the group, Morning Musume. It seemed to have former MM members in it.

Pinkanchi Double: This song replaced Yuuwaku, which was by the J-rock group Glay. The Pinkanchi Double single came out February of 2004. As for Yuuwaku, that came out sometime in early 2001.

I wish…: This is the first Digimon Adventure ending theme song performed by AiM. At that particular time, she was still going under the name, “Maeda Ai”. This is also the original song Mimi had to sing to awaken Tonomasa Gekomon (Shogun Gekomon) in the episode, Princess Karaoke. I had Taichi and Jou thinking back to this since they did try singing it in the episode, and boy did they sound horrible. For Taichi, sounded like someone choking a cat. Jou sounded like he was in pain. With all the microphone feedback for Gomamon and Agumon…well, never mind. They sounded terrible too. lol

Keep On: This song is performed by Maeda Ai (she was still going by this when releasing that single). This is the second Digimon Adventure ending theme.

Version Up: This is Koushirou’s Digimon Adventure image theme. The song seems to reflect on Koushirou wanting to open up more. In other words, he wanted to “upgrade” himself. Koushirou’s former seiyuu is Tenjin Umi. Ironically, this song is what really made me like his character. The lyrics drew me to his character, I guess, because of his wanting to better himself.

Open Mind: This is Koushirou’s Digimon Adventure 02 image theme, also performed by Tenjin Umi. I like this song too. This song, to me anyway, is like a sequel to Version Up. The lyrics seem to pick up where Version Up left off. He’s more open now, although, not completely, but he has people around him to help him become stronger, and went on about how he’ll be able to open his heart up fully someday due to his facing the things he wants to know, etc. Yeah, I’m really showing my favoritism here, right? lol
Koushirou's Nightime Discovery

Chapter Summary

For this chapter, as the title implies, Koushirou makes a discovery, and since it’s nighttime, I tossed that in the title too. lol The discovery is going to be the start of answers to some of Koushirou’s many questions.

Chapter Notes

Hi again everyone. Once again, I apologize for the last chapter. I could’ve just cut the entire thing out, but, I felt it wouldn’t have worked given how this chapter is. The last chapter was sort of needed because of Koushirou’s leaving so abruptly.

Now, as always, I do not own anything dealing with the Digimon series or franchise. Bandai and Toei have that honor, and as a reminder, here are the ages of the characters once again:

Jou: 16-17 (Year 10-11; First/second year of High School)
Taichi/Sora/Yamato: 15-16 (Year 09-10; Last year of Junior High School/First year high school)
Koushirou/Mimi: 14-15 (Year 08-09; Second/Last year of Junior High School)
Miyako: 13-14 (Year 07-08; First/second year of Junior High School)
Takeru/Hikari/Daisuke/Ken: 12-13 (Year 06; Final year of Elementary/First year of Junior High School)
Iori: 10-11 (Year 04-05)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 05: Koushirou’s Nighttime Discovery!

The train ride back didn’t take him long, but Koushirou managed to get himself back home. Luckily, the trains ran a little past midnight, although, it was nearing 23:00 (11:00) by the time he’d arrived home. He saw his parents’ shoes by the door, but given the time, figured they were in deep slumbers. Lately, both had been heading in to bed rather early, especially if his father returned home at a reasonable time.

Leaving the others behind at the karaoke box was unfortunate, but he just wasn’t in the mood to fully socialize, no matter how much he tried to get his mind on it. This mood of his wasn’t just a current occurrence, but had been becoming slightly common even before the project was assigned.

Even though the boy had had pretty much two dinners and dessert he was still in the mood for a light snack. He rummaged through the refrigerator and saw the onigiri his mother had prepared earlier.
There were still four of them left. He took out the small container and a can of juice, and headed to the table to eat them.

‘What should I do?’ the boy asked himself once again. ‘They’re having a child of their very own. They’re going to have a real child worthy enough to be called Izumi.’ He fidgeted around with the onigiri. ‘If they have a child of their very own, where does that leave…me?’ He took another bite of the sweet onigiri. His eyes lit up. ‘Ooo, this is so good! I wish she’d make it like this more often!’

He gobbled down the rest of the strange snack, guzzled down the remains of his juice, put the container away, and tossed out the can, making his way to his room. He fell down onto his bed and lay on his side, trying his best to think up a solution to the problem that he would eventually have to face. He wasn’t able to do so for long, though, as he felt his phone vibrate from in his pocket. He checked it and saw that it was an e-mail from Mimi, which read, “Please come to the front door.”

Surprised, the boy jumped out of bed and hurried to the door as he heard a light knock. With his mother’s fatigue lately, she could sleep through an earthquake if one hit, and his father was always a pretty heavy sleeper.

“Mi-Mimi-san…”

“Hi!” the girl greeted brightly. “I figured you'd still be up.”

Surprised to see the girl at his door, he asked, “What are you doing here?”

“Silly, can’t I come by and visit you if I want to?”

“Well, yeah…I suppose so,” he responded slowly. Realizing how discourteous he was coming across, he hastily invited the girl in. Mimi stepped out of her shoes, and headed straight to his room without question. Koushirou followed behind her hesitantly. Once there, she shut the door and took a seat on his nicely made bed, while Koushirou remained standing, his back against the wall.

“So,” the boy began, eyeing her suspiciously, especially since she’d closed the door, “what brings you here?”

“I’m not going to lie to you; I was just a bit concerned about you and since this is on my way home, I just decided to check up on you.”

“Oh, well, there’s nothing for you to worry about,” he told her with a smile so forced, that even an unobservant one like Daisuke would’ve noticed it wasn’t genuine.

“Oh no you’re not!” the girl argued. “Koushirou-kun, what’s wrong? Why do you seem so distant now? You’re even quieter than what you usually are. Tonight, you seemed down the entire time. Sure you would laugh or chuckle or attempt to join in every once in a while, but to me, it didn’t feel as if you were having fun or that being with us was a chore to you.”

“No, no! It’s nothing like that. I don’t feel that spending time with you all is a bother! I enjoy your company. You’re my friends.”

“Then what is it?”

Koushirou felt like a heel. “Well, I---”

“Did you have an argument with your parents? Oh yes, and speaking of ‘parents’, when are we going to start our assignment and when are you going to start being truthful about the contents of it to them?”
“Mimi-san, I assure you that all is fine.”

Mimi got up from the bed, and stepped up to the taller boy, getting into his face. “Even when we first became genuine friends during our Digital World adventure, I could tell when things seemed to bother you, but I never made much of an attempt to get you to open up!” She turned her back to Koushirou, who seemed to breathe out in relief, as having her that close to him made him feel edgy. “Maybe I never tried because I was selfish or maybe I didn't because we weren’t as good friends at that time, and never had much of an opportunity to try until coming back here, but I feel we’re great friends now.” She turned back around to face him. The look in her eyes had sort of a pleading gaze to them. She also now wore a small grimace on her clear face. The redhead averted his eyes so as not to get caught in the gaze of her big, innocent brown eyes. He was feeling uncomfortable again and bad that he was, in a way, causing Mimi's current state. “It’s not good to hold things in. It just makes you irritable and cranky.”

“I am not irritable and cranky!”

“Case and point! You sounded irritable and cranky when saying that you weren’t irritable and cranky.” Koushirou gave off a bashful laugh. “So, what’s the matter,” she asked, retaking her spot on the bed.

He sat at his computer desk. “Well, it’s not really much, but I was just focused on the history project.”

She gave him a look of skepticism. “Really?”

“Yes,” the boy answered wearily, adding on to his half-truth. “I just want to make sure that I work up to the expectations Ishidzuka-sensei has.”

“You’re not lying are you?”

“No, no, of course not!” he insisted while waving his hands.

“Alright then,” she smiled gratefully, “what would you like to do now?”

“Do now? Do what?” he asked suspiciously as he mentally punched himself for what had inadvertently popped into mind.

“We could work on our project and get some of it done tonight.”

“You know, I feel that we should wait on that. I still have some planning to do. So, would you like anything to eat or drink?”

“I’m fine. I’m still stuffed. Hey, where are your parents?”

‘I guess she didn’t notice their shoes at the door,’ Koushirou concluded. “They’re asleep, but both sleep heavy.” He then forcibly joked, “I could blast the music incredibly loud, and they’d still remain asleep, but I couldn't say the same for the neighbors.”

“So you mean we’re alone?”

“Figuratively speaking, yes, we are alone.”

She just “hmm’d”. Koushirou was about to ask what she had in mind, when she patted the spot beside her on his bed. “Have a seat here where it’s more comfortable. All I want to do is talk for a while.”
“Um… I’ll be fine right here,” he told her flustered. Regaining his composure, slightly, he asked the girl, “So, what’s on your mind?”

“I was curious about your parents.”

Koushirou’s expression slightly hardened, which Mimi noticed, unsure if it was intentional or not, but decided to dismiss it for now. “What about them?”

“Is everything okay with them?”

“Yes, they’re okay. Why do you ask?”

“Well, I can’t put my finger on it, but you seemed a bit put off by them. Almost hostile. I noticed it when we left this evening.”

“Well, um, I was just overwhelmed by that history paper on Sakamoto Ryouma that I’m writing,” he responded with a nervous laugh and grin.

“That’s not funny!”

His grin faded. ‘Since she is my partner for this assignment, I’m going to have to tell her sooner or later that I’m actually adopted…’

“I really wish you would just let me know what’s going on. It’s better to talk about things that are bothering you than to keep them all bottled up inside. Does your mood have anything to do with why both your parents seemed so extra happy this evening like Sora-san and Yamato-san pointed out?’

Koushirou was a terrible liar, and Mimi, as well as Miyako, knew it. Taichi could also usually tell when the redhead was fibbing. Koushirou knew that he wouldn’t be able to come up with anything believable so he decided to stick with the truth. He knew that he couldn’t keep his mother’s news secret for long, as she would definitely start showing sooner or later, unless she were to lose it early in the pregnancy, but he didn’t even want to think of something so gruesome. A thought like that made the young computer whiz feel selfish and was surprised that it had even made its way to his mind in the first place.

“Yes…it does…”

“I knew it! What’s wrong? Why is their being happy upsetting you so much?” The boy took his time before answering. “Koushirou-kun?”

“Well, my mother had a doctor’s visit today. For the past week or so, she’d been coming across as weak and tired, had been having strange emotional episodes, like how she’d be very happy one minute, but maybe a little sad the next moment, and she had even been eating differently. She received her diagnosis today.”

“Oh wow!!”

“What? What?”

“Is your mother going to have a baby?! Ooo, this must be so exciting for you! You’re going to have yourself a baby brother or a baby sister! Oh, what if she has both!”

The idea of his mother giving birth to twins literally terrified him. “Yeah, exciting,” he muttered.
Mimi noticed how unenthusiastic he was being, and couldn’t help but be puzzled over it. “Why are you upset over them having a baby?”

Koushirou stood abruptly. “Mimi-san, it’s getting a bit late. You should probably get home.”

“But I---”

“It’s nearly midnight and we do, unfortunately, have school tomorrow.”

“But why is having a baby such a big deal to you? I figured that you of all people would enjoy having a brother or sister since you’ve been an only child for so long.”

“Mimi-san…I’ll tell you about it later, I promise,” he told her sympathetically. ‘I don’t have much of a choice…’

The girl could only nod. She didn’t understand what the big secret could have been or why he was having such a difficult time accepting the fact that he was to be an older sibling soon, but she did feel that he was being honest with his promise.

The two exited his room and headed back to the front door. “Would you like for me to walk you home? It’s the least I could do for you since you came over to see how I was. You didn’t really have to.”

She smiled sweetly at him. “I wanted to. That’s what friends are for.”

“R-right. I’ll go get my jacket and walk you home.”

“You don’t have to.”

He gave her a playful smile. “I want to. That’s what friends are for.”

Mimi couldn’t help but feel happy over his ironic words. ‘At least he does see me as a friend too.’

Koushirou went back to his room to get his jacket, but soon remembered that his mother had sent it out to the cleaners for its weekly cleaning. Earlier that evening, he hadn’t bothered wearing one. He’d worn a thin, long-sleeved shirt, but it was much cooler compared to earlier. He then considered wearing his uniform blazer, but decided against that. His shirt was thin, but his uniform jacket was much too thick for such a night. He hated the fact that it wasn’t time to switch uniforms from winter to spring yet, as wearing it to school during this time of the year caused him to always feel overly warm.

The boy finally decided that he’d wear his old “play coat”. He normally only wore this thin coat whenever he couldn’t wear any of his others for some reason or another, but it rarely came up for him to have to wear it. His mother usually kept this dingy grey coat in the hall closet, a place he rarely ever went to. The closet was mostly used for storing cleaning materials, a spare futon for guests, and boxes of documents and other things, but his jacket was probably there due to its being rarely used. He opened the door and searched through the closet for the article of clothing. It had been about a year since he’d seen it last.

‘I hope it’s still here and I hope mother didn’t get rid of it. I would hate to wake her up for something so trivial.’ Another thought then came to mind. ‘Wow, I hope it actually still fits. I haven’t worn it since last year.’

Koushirou looked up on the top shelf, and saw a box, with what looked to be a sleeve hanging out of it. He recognized it instantly. He reached up effortlessly for the partially-opened box. Luckily for the
once-short boy, he didn’t need to use a step ladder or a step stool as he’d grown quite a bit within the past year or so. He was taller than Mimi and Miyako, and those two were currently the tallest of the girls out of their Chosen Children (Digidestined) group.

He saw that on top of the box with the jacket, was another box, but it was filled with different papers. He grabbed the box with his jacket, trying to take out both at the same time. He maneuvered it well enough, and opened up the box with his jacket. He slipped it on, glad that it still fit, for the most part, but was a bit shorter from when he last wore it, since he was taller now.

He put both boxes back on the top shelf. “I found my jacket, Mimi-san. I’m ready to go.”

“Okay,” the girl called back.

Koushirou started to close the door of the organized closet, when he heard something drop. It was the box of papers he’d put back onto the top shelf. He, apparently, hadn’t put the box back on the shelf all the way and it fell, its top flying right off. He kneeled down and started to pick the papers up, and stuffing them back into the box, until one paper caught his eye. He read over the paper’s letterhead. His eyes went wide. ‘Nerima Children’s Institute!?'

Curious as to what had happened, Mimi walked up. “Is something wrong?”

The boy took all of the papers and stuffed them back into the box quickly after he was called. “Clumsy me,” he slightly panicked. “Well, let’s get going.” He shut the closet door.

“Huh? What?”

He grabbed Mimi’s shoulders, and led her back to the front door. “We really should get going.”

After stepping into their shoes, both left. Koushirou was definitely in a hurry, and was anxious to return home. Those papers could have the answers to the questions that had been in the back of his mind for the past eight years of his life…

Chapter End Notes

Fic Chapter Changes

There weren't many changes this section, other than the fact that Koushirou's parents weren't originally home. The other change, is the way Mimi greeted Koushirou. Originally, she just showed up and rang the bell or knocked. As you can see here, Mimi messaged him first telling him to come to the door. I felt that was better than just having her show up and knocking on the door so late at night.
Surprising Origins...

Chapter Summary

Hi again everyone. I hope this is getting interesting for you. Koushirou searches for the adoption papers he came across before walking Mimi home and will discover something very interesting pertaining to them. Mimi also briefly talks to her friends about her visit with Koushirou, before going to bed.

Chapter Notes

Now, as always, I do not own anything dealing with the Digimon series or franchise. Bandai and Toei have that honor, and as a reminder, here are the ages of the characters once again:

Jou: 16-17 (Year 10-11; First/second year of High School)
Taichi/Sora/Yamato: 15-16 (Year 09-10; Last year of Junior High School/First year high school)
Koushirou/Mimi: 14-15 (Year 08-09; Second/Last year of Junior High School)
Miyako: 13-14 (Year 07-08; First/second year of Junior High School)
Takeru/Hikari/Daisuke/Ken: 12-13 (Year 06; Final year of Elementary/First year of Junior High School)
Iori: 10-11 (Year 04-05)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 06: The Surprising Origin of Izumi Koushirou...

Mimi was lied out on her bed comfortably, content, with a cordless phone attached to her ear in a three-way phone conversation, since her mobile phone was charging. “I hope it’s not too late for you, Sora-san, Miyako-chan…”

“It’s no problem at all, Mimi-chan since we were expecting you to call.”

“It’s so cool how your aunt and uncle have three-way calling!” Miyako squealed.

“It really is. It was my uncle’s idea. He overheard me talking about three-way calling and surprised us with it. It surprised my aunt too.”

The three girls, for a while, talked about their night at the karaoke box and how much fun they’d had and thanked the girl many times for inviting them. The conversation then changed to that of a certain redhead boy.
“So, how was Izumi-senpai? Did you get the chance to go? You said you were going to drop by his place before going home since he was pretty much a bore for all of tonight.”

“Yeah, and he was acting really strangely, you two.”

“In what way?” asked Miyako.

“Well, remember how we all noticed how Mr. and Mrs. Izumi were acting? Well, it had something to do with that.”

“Is that what’s affecting the mood of Koushirou-kun?”

“Yeah, but the thing that’s puzzling me is why. I just don’t understand why he’d act in such a way over his parents’ news.”

“Ooo, what’s the news?” asked an anxious Miyako.

“Is it good news or bad news?”

“It’s normally considered good news to the average couple.”

“So, Mimi-chan, if this news is so good, why is he acting so peculiar?”

“I don’t know. I tried to get that information out of him, but I wasn't able to. I could only figure out what was bothering him, not particularly why,” Mimi inwardly sighed. ‘I even gave him the ohagi I made that I was going to give him tomorrow at school before he left. Maybe by tomorrow, he’ll say something about it.’

“Oneesama, don’t leave us in suspense! Tell us the news!”

“So it definitely does have something to do with his parents?”

“Yeah…” Mimi told her simply.

“They were so happy when they left us, but Izumi-senpai wasn’t fully. He almost seemed distracted. I wonder what the news is…” Miyako hinted, ready to burst from not knowing.

“Mr. and Mrs. Izumi are going to have a baby!”

Miyako’s eyes went wide. “Are you sure?!?”

“Wait, wait, Mimi-chan. Did he come right out and say that their having a baby is what’s bothering him?”

“Well...he didn’t really say anything, but he did have a negative reaction to it, in my opinion.”

“It’s never come to mind, but I never would’ve guessed that Koushirou-kun would have a problem with having a younger brother or sister.”

“Maybe he’s been an only child for so long that he doesn’t want to change that.”

“I sometimes wondered what it would be like to have a brother or a sister, but living here with my aunt is enough for me. My cousins are like the younger siblings I’ve never had, and I really enjoy being around them. I wonder why my parents never had any other children.”

“Maybe one of you was enough, for them,” Sora giggled.
“Very funny,” Mimi laughed.

“I used to always wonder what it would’ve been like if I’d been an only child, but after a while of thinking about it, I realized that I’d go nuts without my brother and sisters. I’ve gotten so used of having Mantarou-niichan, Momoe-nee-chan, and Chizu-nee around I couldn’t imagine my life without them. I wouldn’t trade them away for anything, no matter how much they drive me crazy at times.”

“Well, look on the bright side,” Sora began, “you’re the youngest. Pretty soon, you’ll have the entire place to yourself if your sisters decide to go to universities abroad or those in another city. Is your brother still at home?”

“Yeah. He takes the bus back and forth. He’s actually going to be graduating soon. Momoe-nee-chan is going to be graduating high school soon, and Chizu-nee is about to graduate too. Sora-san, do you have any classes with her?”

“No, Chizuru-san and I don’t share the same classes. I’m in class 3-B along with Taichi; I’m pretty sure she’s in class 3-C, with Yamato.”

“I forgot about that! I think I do remember Chizu-nee talking about Yamato-san and how the girls act all silly over him.”

“I’m sorry guys,” Mimi cut in, her eyelids growing heavy, “but what about Koushirou-kun?”

“Well, there really isn’t much we can do about him,” Sora told her regrettably. “If he wants to act all stubborn over his mother having a baby, then there really isn’t much we can do to stop him from feeling that way or change his mind. He’ll have to do that himself.”

“You're right.”

“Mimi-chan, I wouldn’t worry too much over it I’m sure he'll eventually come around to the future change.”

“I guess, but I do intend on finding out why, and this history project we have to work on will be the perfect opportunity for me to!”

“How?”

“Yeah, I thought you and Koushirou-kun just had to write a report or something.”

“No, we were paired to do a research type project. I was just surprised when he said he’d already started it.”

“That’s weird. Why did Koushirou-kun lie about something like that?”

“The mystery is thickening, isn’t it Sora-san?”

“Yes, it really does seem like it. Don’t you agree, Mimi-chan?”

There was silence.

“Mimi-chan?”

“Mimi-sama?”

“Oh, I’m sorry. I was just thinking about him again. I don’t know why, but I’m a little worried about
“It’s probably more so your curiosity over his peculiar behavior than worry,” Miyako wisely input.

“You two, I think we should call it a night.”

“Yeah, I am a bit tired. Sora-san is right; we should all get some sleep since we have school tomorrow. I’m going to bed. If I find out anything more about Koushirou-kun, I’ll let you know.”

“Right.”

“Good night Mimi-chan.”

“Good night.”

“Good night, Sora-san, Miyako-chan…”

After hanging up, the girl bathed quickly, changed into her pajamas, and put in some hair curlers, so that her hair could keep that wavy look. When done, she pulled on her night cap. ‘Koushirou is acting way too weird for my liking,’ the girl thought as she headed to her bed. ‘Koushirou, what’s wrong with you? Why were you so anxious to get back home? He didn’t even get the chance to taste my ohagi…’

She lied in her bed restless, thinking about her walk home with Koushirou…

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Koushirou’s plan was to walk Mimi to the front door of the Nishimura home, so that he could see her in and leave quickly. Those papers were much too intriguing to him.

The two were now walking down the block. Surprisingly, the Nishimura home wasn’t too far from Mimi’s friends’ apartment complexes. All of them could pretty much walk there within 30 – 40 minutes, and even faster by bus or bike. In Koushirou’s case, he was about 25 minutes away from her on foot, but could make it there in about 15 – 20 minutes by bike. Due to how late it was, the buses weren’t running, but Mimi didn’t mind the trek with the boy, who seemed to be speed walking.

“Um, why are you in such a hurry?”

“Well, um…the sooner you get home, the better, right?” he responded shortly.

“Is that really all?”

“What do you mean?”

“Slow down and I’ll explain what I mean.” Koushirou, reluctantly, slowed down. “There, that’s better. Now, ever since you got your jacket, you’ve been acting stranger than what you already were…”

He couldn’t help but laugh. “Me, strange?”

She smiled weakly, giving off a small laugh herself. That had to sound outlandish. “Yep, strange.”

“Well, I just want you to hurry and get home, so that you’ll be safe, that’s all.” Mimi found the excuse a lame one, as there was nothing unsafe about the walk to her home. “I also don’t want you to get into any trouble because you were visiting me.”

“You still seem to be in a rush.”
Without realizing it, the boy’s pace had, once again, quickened. “Oh, I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to.”

“That’s okay, I guess,” she stated calmly. ‘At least you’re talking to me.’

The two continued the walk in a deafening silence after that, pretty much, only speaking seldom, Koushirou giving one-word responses to much of what Mimi had to say. Koushirou just wasn’t in a talking mood, which wasn’t a full surprise to Mimi, as he always seemed to be drowned in his thoughts, but she could definitely tell that the boy had a lot on his mind this time, as even he’d never been quiet to this extent before. She knew that the walk was going to end soon, as her aunt and uncle’s place grew nearer. She decided that she was going to definitely speak up once arriving at her doorstep.

“Well, here we are, but before you go, hold on a moment.” Before he could protest, the girl rushed into the house and headed straight for the kitchen. The tin she had left on the countertop was still there. She picked it up and went back to the front door, handing it to Koushirou. “I forgot to give this to you earlier.” She blushed slightly. “This afternoon, you didn’t want to come in, and when we came by, I forgot to bring it with me. It’s the ohagi I made.”

“Wow, thank you, Mimi-san. Well, um, you’re home now,” he told her quickly. “G’night.”

Mimi stared at the boy in surprise as he started back down the walkway. That was all? She definitely couldn’t let this go. “So, what exactly is bothering you, Izumi Koushirou?” she called to him.

“What’s so wrong that it’s causing you to act so distant with me? Something that you’ve never done before!! Even Taichi-san and the others noticed that you’re acting out of the ordinary.”

He was caught off guard by the question, and turned around to face the girl, who had made her way towards him and was now in front of him. He didn’t know what to say to her or how to respond to such a query. He had done a good job of avoiding the subject earlier, but didn’t think that she would bring it back up, but then again, this was Tachikawa Mimi; she always tried to cheer her friends up no matter what problem they could be having or what discrepancies they could have been going through or experiencing.

At the moment, the two were just standing there, caught in each other’s gaze, underneath a clear, moonlit sky. Koushirou was still trying to think of a way to respond to Mimi’s question, but being caught in her gaze, staring into her clear, innocent brown eyes, had distracted him tremendously. He usually went out of his way to avoid looking at the girl directly in any type of way, unless he had no choice, as it always gave him a funny feeling in the pit of his stomach, especially lately, but this time, he hadn’t prepared himself. Mimi looked pretty to him at the moment, but it was strange how he had never really allowed himself to consciously notice it before. He did admit to himself, at that particular moment, despite how much he didn’t want to, that Mimi was a pretty young girl, but he soon shook off the thought quickly, mainly because of Mimi’s breaking his train of thought.

“Well?” the girl demanded, her arms crossed, and her foot tapping.

“Oh, uh…um…sorry.”

“What’s with you?”

Trying to get the girl’s pretty image out of his mind, he asked, in forced annoyance, “Why do you care, anyway?”

“Why? Why?” Mimi asked in disbelief, throwing her arms up in the air. “Isn’t it obvious ‘why’?! It’s because I’m your friend! I’m worried about you! I care about you! Something is bothering you, and I want to figure out what that something is so that I can help you! I wouldn’t be me if I didn’t!”
The boy stood there, staring down at the tin of ohagi Mimi had given him. He didn’t know what to say. He knew he needed to tell her, but for some reason, he just couldn’t bring himself to share his secret with anyone, Mimi included.

“I-I-I have to go, okay. G’bye.”

He turned and ran away from Mimi as fast as he possibly could. He couldn’t bear to see that hurt face of hers again, especially since he had, once again, caused her such dismay. ‘I’ll tell you soon, Mimi-san, but not yet. I’m just not ready to yet, but why is this bothering me so much? It’s such a simple task…’

She stared at the boy running down the pathway leading away from her home. She just didn’t understand the boy, or what he was going through.

‘Koushirou, stop being so secretive all of the time!’ She turned over on her side, and mumbled, “Just tell me what’s bothering you…”

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At the same time as Mimi said, “Just tell me what’s bothering you…”

‘I’ll tell you everything, Mimi-san,’ he unlocked the door of his home, ‘I promise!’

The boy had finally reached his home. He took the long way home, thinking about Mimi’s nice gesture of giving him the tin of one of his favorite treats, and of how he was pretty much upsetting her. After entering the home, he focused once more, his destination the hall closet. He took off his jacket, and tossed it aside, and left the tin with it.

He took down the box, and searched through it ferociously. ‘Where’s that paper, c’mon, where’s that blasted paper I saw!’

Apparently, when Mimi startled him earlier, and he rushed to put all of the papers back, he had put them all back out of order. So far, all he was seeing were old sales receipts, ticket stubs, and other important looking documents. He didn’t bother reading or looking over any of them. He just glanced at them, and if he didn’t see either the word “Nerima” or “Adoption” or “Children’s Institute”, he wasn’t giving it any mind.

He looked and looked, but he just couldn’t find the paper he had come across earlier. Normally, when in a rush, he understood how it was easy to overlook things, but at the moment, he wasn’t applying that logic. Frustrated, he threw some of the papers down onto the floor. ‘Where is it!!!’

Right at that moment, an important looking document, which had written on its letter head, “Nerima Children’s Institute and Adoption Agency”, caught his eye. His eyes lit up as he started to read the paper over.

*Nerima Children’s Institute and Adoption Agency, page 2

Adoption granted to: Izumi Masami, 29 & Izumi Yoshie, 26
Name of Adopted Child: Izumi Koushirou
Sex: Male
D.O.B: 1989.11.17
Age: 18 months
Hair Color: Red
Eye Color: Black
Blood Type: AB
Koushirou stared down at the paper in disbelief, ignoring the rest of the information, which was of no use to him. First, he was disappointed that he couldn’t find the other pages, which would have probably contained the information involving his biological parents, but on this page, it didn’t say he was born at Nerima General Hospital or the Nerima Hikarigaoka Hospital or even Seibo Hospital, which was a well-known maternity hospital in the area, like he’d always figured.

“New York?” he uttered. “I was born in an American hospital? This Mount Sinai place? Would that mean that I’m part American? Was my mother American? Was my father American? Am I... half?”

The boy sat on the floor and tried to process all of the information. It just wasn’t making any sense to him. Sure he didn’t have all of the typical features associated with the average Japanese person, but he always considered himself to be a true Japanese by blood.

“Japanese American?” he said again. “Is Koushirou even my real name? Does this mean that I’m not really an Izumi?” He mentally slapped himself. ‘No kidding! Of course not! I’ve known I wasn’t an Izumi for years. This paper just confirms it now.’

Koushirou stood up and started to put the papers back, and was planning on taking his time to search through them more thoroughly, but felt he needed a break. He had been shocked enough for one night. He picked up his jacket, and put it back in its appropriate spot and closed the closet door. He then grabbed the tin Mimi had given him, and headed to his room. He took a seat at his computer, setting the tin on his desk. Sleep was definitely out for him. There was too much going through his mind for that. After a short while, he decided to try his luck again with his search.

Time he got to his door, he heard a noise come from up the hall. He opened his door just a tad, and ducked his head out slightly to see his mother and father leaving their bedroom. “We sure did have fun tonight, didn’t we?” Mrs. Izumi said with a yawn.

“Yes, we sure did. I know I have to go to work, but we really haven’t spent time like that in years. I almost feel like a teenager.”

“A romantic walk along with two ice creams was perfect.”

“When was the last time we’ve spent time like that together?”

“Not since we were first married and not since we lost...” The woman went quiet and lowered her head, unable to finish.

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‘Lost what? What did she lose?’

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“Don’t get too upset over it,” Mr. Izumi told his wife. “Maybe this baby will be reborn from him. You know, like a reincarnation.”

“Do you really think so?”

“Of course, it was just meant to be. Now, what was it that you wanted that you woke up almost instantly for?”

“I apologize for that, but I wanted to get everything together so that I can go over the monthly budget tomorrow. I wanted to do so while I still remembered. I have been a bit forgetful lately.”
“Nothing wrong with that,” the man yawned deeply, as he recalled how she had been during her first pregnancy. She was incredibly forgetful during that time.

“Where are all of the receipts?”

“They’re in the usual place; the white box on the top shelf of the hall closet.”

“Okay, I’ll get it.”

“No, I’ll get it. You shouldn’t be doing any reaching or lifting anyway. I don’t want you to over-exert yourself. If you need anything, just let either me or Koushirou know.”

“Alright. Thank you so much.”

“No problem.” The man went to the closet and took out the box Koushirou had been rummaging through earlier.

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After hearing the closet door slide open and close from his room, he cursed himself. ‘Why me? How am I going to find out more about my birth parents, if they have the papers?’

He sat back down on his bed and tuned his parents out, trying to come up with a solution to his current problem. His mind was also on what his mother had said earlier, about “losing” something.

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“I remember when we were pregnant the first time,” Mrs. Izumi laughed slightly. “I proved to you that I could take care of myself, but I do appreciate the offer you made to help me whenever necessary, but I’m not far enough along to have to be treated like some kind of a delicate flower.”

“I guess I’m just out of practice, but you’re older now and you should be very careful.”

“I know I am and I promise not to overdo it. Anyway, now that you got the box for me, we can head back to bed. At least if I see it sitting next to the bed, I’ll remember.”

The man yawned again. “Y-yeah.”

The two cut off the lights, and headed back to bed for a well-deserved rest….

****

Koushirou started to pace back and forth in his room. ‘What do I do now?’ He continued to walk around his room, when it hit him. ‘I’m so stupid! Why didn’t I think of this before?! I could try breaking into the adoption agency’s database, and once I’m in, I could probably find the information I’m looking for, especially since I know the date my adoption was finalized.’

Koushirou hopped into his chair and booted up his desktop computer. He searched the web and managed to get to the adoption agency’s page. He started to type in commands and such to try to get into the network, which he managed, but was having difficulty getting past that part. The encryption was so strong on the files that he needed, that he couldn’t manage to find a way to bypass it.

‘Wow, I don’t know what kind of a program they’re using, but it must be highly advanced since I’ve never encountered anything like this before. I better make sure I’m very careful so that it won’t be traced back to me.’

He muttered something under his breath, and kept trying. He had yet to come across a program that he couldn’t break or a database he couldn’t hack his way into. He’d always considered himself to be a professional when it came to these types of things, yet, if one were to accuse him of being a professional hacker, he would jump down that person’s throat, and strongly insist that he wasn’t.
Almost an hour passed by, and he still was no closer to breaking his way through. ‘Seems there’s only one thing I can do. I’ll have to go there directly to find this information myself, but I’m not going to quit yet! There has to be a way to get through this!’

Koushirou kept at it, trying hacking trick after hacking trick, none of which actually worked or helped him out in any way possible, but, his determination and will kept him going for the rest of the night…

Chapter End Notes

Author’s Note & Fic Chapter Changes

In Japan, a person who has a Japanese parent and a non-Japanese parent, would be referred to as “haafu (ハフ)” or “half”. Some kids and people are treated differently in Japan because of this status and stereotyped. Not all do.

Now, as for this section’s changes, for the most part, aside from my apologizing as to what goes on an adoption form, weren't too major. I was just assuming as to what would be on one, so yes, please forgive me if I’ve shown anything that’s inaccurate or off, in that regard. Oh, I did change the year of the adoption from 1990 to 1991.

The other changes are Mr. and Mrs. Izumi's ages (I originally had both as 25) and Koushirou’s blood-type. I didn’t use one originally. I can see a bit of A and B in him, which is why I went with AB type (ironically, Miyako is an AB type, as it was mentioned in the series, and that she was a Gemini). I also, when originally writing this story, had considered making him a Virgo, but decided to stick with Scorpio for a very interesting reason, which you will see later on. I also added that Koushirou was born at Mount Sinai hospital. I didn’t have any hospital mentioned originally.
Mimi's Two Invitations...

Chapter Summary

Hi again everyone. Mimi for this chapter will be receiving two invitations, as the title suggests. Which will she accept? What exactly are the invitations for?

Chapter Notes

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Takeru/Hikari/Daisuke/Ken: 12-13 (Year 06; Final year of Elementary/First year of Junior High School)
Iori: 10-11 (Year 04-05)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 07: The Two Invitations and Mimi’s Decision!

Morning had finally arrived, and people all over the city were preparing for work or school, bright-eyed and bushy-tailed. In the Izumi home, it was a somewhat different story, as everyone was tired or sleepy that morning…

“Today is definitely going to be tiring for the both of us,” Mrs. Izumi said while pouring out a cup of coffee for her husband and putting down a plate which consisted of toast. “This coffee should help.”

“Thanks.”

“We sure did act like a couple of teenagers last night,” she winked to him as she put down a plate of toast for herself. “I was even more energetic,” she teased, setting a jar of marmalade down onto the table.

“Yeah, but it was really fun, and you really were,” the man said with a small chuckle while reading through the morning paper.

She took a seat at the table. “Do you think we should have brought something back for Koushirou? I
didn’t even think about it.”

“Nah. He likes too many strange combinations for ice cream toppings, like avocado, chocolate, jelly bean candies, and who knows what else. Besides, it would’ve melted before coming home.”

“That’s definitely a strange combination. He would have had to have come with us for all of those toppings, even though most ice cream shops don’t have those type of choices.”

“I can’t help but wonder where he could have gotten that from…” The man stopped short, realizing what he’d said.

The woman frowned. “Yeah…I wonder…”

The man coughed. “W-wow, seems that most of the stocks are down today,” he said as he shuffled through the newspaper, stopping at the business section.

“Yeah…”

The man put his paper down. “Um…shouldn’t Koushirou be up by now?”

“Wow, you’re right,” she said while looking at the clock. The woman got up from her seat, and shouted down the hall, “Koushirou! It’s time for breakfast and you need to hurry up and get to school!”

“I’m surprised he isn’t up yet. He must’ve come in later than we thought.”

“I don’t remember hearing him come in…”

“That wouldn’t be a surprise, ‘Miss Energetic’,?” Mr. Izumi sniggered.

“Oh stop! Maybe he didn’t hear me. I’ll go get him.”

****

Koushirou was sleeping soundly. His laptop’s alarm went off, but he was in such a deep sleep, he didn’t even hear it. His mother heard the alarm from the other side, and rapped lightly on the door.

“Koushirou! Koushirou! Is everything all right in there?”

Hearing the knocking and the alarm, the boy finally managed to sit up and rub his eyes. It then hit him that his alarm was blaring, and that the knocking sound, was coming from his door. “Hi mother,” he yawned and stretched. He then looked up at his wall clock and literally screamed, “OH NO, I’M LATE!!”

The boy gathered a few things and rushed out of the room. All Mrs. Izumi saw was a reddish blur open the door and zoom right past her to the washroom. She couldn’t help but smile at the scene.

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“Well?” the man asked after the woman retook her seat.

“Seems he overslept.” Mrs. Izumi grew a bit worried and her smile faded. “That’s unlike him. He’s always been quite punctual. What if something’s wrong? What if it’s the pregnancy? What if he really disapproves of our having a child? What if---”

“Yoshie, you worry too much. I’m sure it’s nothing. Are you feeling guilty again?”

“Very guilty,” she sighed. “A part of me wants to tell him about his adoption, but---”

“If we told him about his adoption, we would probably lose him.”
“What do you mean?”

“Like I said, we would probably end up losing him. Knowing him, he’d probably go off in search of his real family, especially his biological mother’s.”

“But they’re dead!” the woman hissed.

“He would still probably go out looking regardless. He may even feel unwanted by us, especially with this child coming along. This is Koushirou we’re talking about here, who has the tendency of wanting to know everything. He’s always been the highly curious type, and knowing his luck, he just may find some other blood relative that was somehow overlooked when they were trying to place him. That boy was a blessing to us, and I love that boy like he was my very own son. I don’t want to lose him!”

“But…”

Mr. Izumi grabbed Mrs. Izumi’s hand from across the table. “Let’s wait a while longer before we tell him. At least let’s wait until after he’s gotten used to the idea of having a younger sibling. Let’s wait until he graduates from high school in a few years. I personally would feel more comfortable waiting a little while longer before revealing that to him.”

Mrs. Izumi wasn’t all that thrilled of the idea, but she did agree with him over how Koushirou was a blessing to them. Once again, she complied with her husband’s request and nodded slowly. “I guess you’re right. We should wait.” She sighed, while nibbling on her toast. ‘I know this is wrong. We really ought to tell him about his adoption. The longer we wait, the more difficult it’ll be when the time does come for us to tell him.

‘What if he ends up hating us for not telling him sooner? What if we do lose him?’ She shook off the thought. ‘No, I can’t think that way. I’ll just do as Masami says. If he feels we should wait, then I will have to go along with it, no matter how much I may disagree with him.’

Right at that moment, Koushirou entered the room, dressed in his uniform and holding his book bag, oblivious to the conversation that had just taken place between his parents. Seeing the boy, she went off to the kitchen, and came back, setting a plate down in Koushirou’s usual spot.

“Good morning, mother, father. I’m sorry, but I can’t eat breakfast today.”

“But I made your favorite, eggs topped with ponzu.”

“I’m really sorry,” he apologized again, “but I’m really late.”

“Sit down now!” Mrs. Izumi ordered sternly.

Mr. Izumi looked up from his paper, his mouth hanging while Koushirou sat down almost instantly. The tone his mother had used was downright scary.

“Eat something! It’s not good to go to school on an empty stomach!”

“But I could pick up something along the way or-or something,” he told her timidly.

“I guess…” she murmured, while sitting down herself.

Noticing how upset she was getting, he decided to eat. He didn’t want to hurt her feelings, even though, honestly, he was planning on eating Mimi’s ohagi due to how late he was. He was hesitant on eating them due to the way he had left Mimi the previous night.
“Son,” Mr. Izumi coughed, still surprised over how irritable his wife had gotten, “how come you slept in this morning? What time did you get in last night?”

Koushirou thought for a moment. He had spent the entire night trying to hack his way into the adoption agency’s database, but was still unable to get through. Not wanting to tell them that, he came up with something else. “I’m not sure, but you two were already asleep when I did. If it helps, the trains were still running. Anyway, I spent my time last night researching. I stayed up later than I anticipated.”

“Hm, well your schoolwork is important. Now, go on to school.”

“But he didn’t finish his breakfast!” In reality, Koushirou hadn’t even started it.

“He’ll be late.” The middle-aged man pulled out his wallet. He went through it, and pulled out a ¥2000 note and handed it to the boy, who was very surprised, especially since snacks were about ¥50 to ¥100, and that a ¥2000 note was rare, but figured he didn’t have anything smaller than that. “Here, take this and keep the change. Pick up a snack for breakfast today and if you want, you can buy something for lunch instead of carrying. You could call this an early allowance for you.”

“W-well, um…th-thank you.” He pocketed the bill.

“But I like to prepare his lunches!”

‘She’s going through those crazy mood swings already? I thought it would have been too early for that. If she’s like this and it’s just her first month, what in the world is she going to be like weeks from now?!” He didn’t want to think about it and shuddered at the thought. During the first pregnancy, she wasn’t as irritable or touchy. Her mood changes weren’t all that bad either, even though it was very spontaneous whenever she did have them. The only thing that had been consistent from the first pregnancy was her bouts of fatigue and slight forgetfulness. He wondered if it had anything to do with her being older this time around. “Don’t worry about it. Let him buy today. It’s not often he buys lunch.”

“Okay, fine, if you say so. I’m a bit tired.” She stood. “I think I’ll go back to bed for a while.” She then put on a smile, which looked a bit forced. “Have a nice day at school, Koushirou.”

The teen didn’t know what to think, but he looked to his mother apologetically, and just nodded to her before rushing off towards the front door. He stepped into his shoes, and hurried out the door to avoid being later than what he already was.

“Yoshie, what’s the matter?”

“I-I don’t know. When you gave him that money, I felt as if he…he…”

“He what?”

“That he didn’t like my cooking!”

‘Oh brother,’ the man thought dubiously. “Koushirou does appreciate you and your cooking! He was willing to sit down here and eat just to show how much he cares about you.”

“I didn’t mean to get upset,” she sniffled. “I just don’t know what’s wrong with me! Sometimes I’m really happy, and then there are other times where I want things done my way or just don’t want to be bothered.”

“Well, I could take some of my vacation time from work to stay here with you.”
“No, you go ahead. I already had plans for today, like the budgeting and I have to prepare a special dinner tonight for both you and Koushirou.”

“That’s nice of you, and I’m going to buy lunch today since I have a lunch meeting.” He hugged the woman. “I’ll see you tonight at dinner.” He grabbed his briefcase and headed out the door...

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Koushirou made it to school just in time. Picking up a snack was definitely not on the agenda. He had run pretty much the entire way. By the time he arrived, the gates were closing. He slipped in just barely. Ignoring his growling stomach, he took his seat. Since arriving at school, he had been fighting sleep the entire time.

At the moment, he was sitting through his math class with Ms. Konishi. Having to sit in the same classroom all day, despite the breaks in between, was boring, so that wasn’t helping Koushirou much. He only had a few more minutes until their lunch break, but his eyelids were closed, his book was propped up, and his head was resting comfortably on his desktop. Sleeping in class was something he definitely didn’t do. Taichi, sure. Daisuke, definitely. For him, no. Luckily, for the boy, they were on a little break since everyone had finished up early. Ms. Konishi told the students to keep busy, the class rep in charge, while she ran off to get something. That pretty much meant that the classroom was without a teacher as of the moment and the students were up and about socializing.

“Yo, Izumi, wake up!”

“I really enjoyed the snacks you prepared for me, Mimi-san,” the boy muttered incoherently. “Thank you for sharing this with me.”

“Izumi!” The person shook him awake.

“Huh, what!” the boy snorted, awaking from his slumber. He looked up to see who had addressed him. “Oh, Ueda-san,” he yawned sleepily, while Yuuji took a seat at the vacant desk beside Koushirou.

“What’d you just say about Mimi-san and snacks?” he asked him suspiciously.

He shrugged, his eyes still slightly droopy. “I don’t know.” He tried to remember his dream, but couldn’t due to how he was startled awake. The only thing he could remember was that he was eating for it due to his intense hunger.

“You nodded off, and I couldn’t hear anything that Konishi-sensei was saying over your snoring,” the boy joked. “You’re lucky she didn’t catch you.”

“Yeah, whatever,” the boy grumbled, not really paying attention.

“Seriously, though, what’s wrong with you? I’ve never seen you sleep in class before.”

“Oh, no need to worry.” He thought for a second, as he wanted to get Yuuji off of his case. He wasn’t in the best of moods, and his stomach was empty. He hated the fact that their school’s lunch hour was late compared to the other schools. Their school’s lunch hour was from 12:30 ~ 13:30 (12:30 – 1:30). Forty-five minutes for lunch and fifteen for cleaning time. “I suppose I’m a bit tired from hanging out last night for karaoke and missed breakfast, and wasn’t able to eat the homemade snack that was given to me.”

“You went to a karaoke box?” the boy asked in shock.

“It wasn’t my idea to go. I was invited.”
He, once again, gave Koushirou another suspicious look. “Then *whose* idea was it to go and *who* made you the snack?”

“Mimi-san.”

“Mimi-chan!?! What about me!?! Why didn’t she invite me! Why did she make you a snack?!” the boy wailed, tears streaming down his face.

While Yuuji was busy wallowing in self-pity, which was Koushirou’s main objective, even though mentioning the snacks was more of a sub-conscious remark, his mind wandered again. ‘So, I was born in America. Did the Izumis know this prior to adopting me? Why was I never told that I was born in New York? I don’t understand why they wouldn’t tell me that at least...then again, I never questioned it, so maybe that’s why. Either way, I still can’t help but wonder why they’re keeping all this away from me. It just doesn’t compute...’

“Izumi!”

“Oh, I’m sorry.”

“What’s the deal?”

“The deal with what?”

“The deal with Mimi-san?!” he asked in confusion. “What are you talking about?”

“Don’t play dumb with me, Izumi,” the boy told him harshly. “What’s going on with you two?”

“Going on with us? I still don’t understand...”

“How long have you and Mimi-chan been a couple?!”

“A-a what?!” the boy loudly cried. All the students of the class looked back in Koushirou’s direction, which caused the computer whiz’s face to turn red from the unwanted attention he was now receiving. He lowered his voice some, and said, in surprise, “A couple?! You’re joking, right?”

‘I wasn’t expecting him to react like that,’ the boy silently noted. “What are *you* talking about?”

“I do *not* like Mimi-san in that way. We’re friends, and nothing more,” he managed to get out. Once again, it somewhat bothered him to have to say something like that, but he still couldn’t help but give off an exasperated sigh over the accusation. “Why do people keep making that assumption anyway?”

“Well, you just said that Mimi-chan invited you out for karaoke *and* that she made you homemade treats!”

“It was a group activity,” Koushirou informed him irritably, but racked his brain trying to recall when he had actually mentioned the ohagi Mimi had given him.

“W-well, people probably still think something’s going on because you do spend time together a lot!”

“We’re *friends*, that’s all,” he stated firmly. “Anyone else who thinks otherwise is obviously blind.”

With that, the boy grabbed his book bag, which still held the tin Mimi had given him, stood up, and left the room. It was almost time for lunch anyway. When Koushirou was walking out of the room,
his math teacher was entering it.

“Izumi-kun?”

“I need to be excused to the toilet, Konishi-sensei. I just can't wait any longer,” the boy lied. With that, he left the petite-sized teacher, who looked after Koushirou confusedly. "Um, well, I know the clock hasn’t chimed for lunch yet, but you all may go. It’s only five minutes anyway, so enjoy your lunches everyone.”

After officially ending the class, the students rushed out of the classroom to the lunchroom or some other part of the school, as it was allowed. Some students would eat out on the school grounds while some chose to eat on the school’s rooftop. Koushirou headed to the lunchroom, just as most of his class did.

Odaiba Junior High was one of the few schools in the area that actually had a lunch room. The norm for most of the elementary and junior high schools without them was for some students of the classroom to head down to the cooking area, pick up the lunch contents, and serve it to their class, and the students would just eat lunch in the classroom with their homeroom teachers.

Mimi sat down to lunch with her usual group of friends, but was unusually quiet. She kept staring over at a certain redhead computer whiz - whose lunch seemed to consist of snack foods - still puzzled over the way he had acted the previous night. She didn’t notice that he’d been slumbering for most of their math class, as she was trying to grasp the material herself, but the other reason was that her seat wasn’t close to his. Koushirou was by the window in the last seat of the fifth row. Her seat was in the second row towards the other side of the classroom, as she was closer to the door. ‘Koushirou, what’s wrong with you? Why won’t you confide in me or the others?’

“Mimi-chan, Mimi-chan!” called a girl seated across from her with shoulder-lengthened copper hair, with some of it pulled back into a ponytail while the rest hung loosely down on either side of her face.

“Huh, what?” She shook her head. “Oh, I’m sorry, Ayame-chan, what did you say?.”

This girl, who of which Mimi was good friends with, was Shinohara Ayame. She, along with their other friends, Sasaki Yuuko, and Fujiwara Chinatsu, whom were also in the Volleyball Club, were all eating lunch together.

Eating the rice of her bento prepared by her mother, a skinny girl with freckles, with the long, straight dark hair looked to the left of her curiously at Mimi. “Is there something wrong?”

“I’m fine, Chinatsu-chan,” she replied distantly, as she stared down at the lunch she’d prepared earlier that morning. She was sleepy and tired as well, but due to her natural ability to be energetic, it had gone unnoticed by those around her. She came across as her usual self. “I was just thinking of about some things.”.

“Or should we say someone,” teased Mimi’s curvy, auburn-haired friend, who was seated next to Ayame, Yuuko.

“Wh-what do you mean?”

“I saw you,” the girl continued on, slyly smirking. “You were staring.”

“I was not staring at anyone!”

“Yes you were,” Ayame vouched. “You were staring over in the direction of Koushirou-kun.”
Koushirou was seated a few tables away, eating lunch by himself today, by the looks of it. He didn’t always eat by himself, but at times, he seemed to not have any issues eating alone. Mimi had offered for him to sit with her and her friends many times, but he would seldom take her up on the offer, or anyone else, unless they were computer club members, but if someone offered to sit with him, he never refused the person.

“Mi-chan likes Izumi-kun, Mi-chan likes Izumi-kun,” Yuuko sang.

“Be quiet!!” Mimi hissed, her face going pink. “I do not like him! He’s just a friend!”

“Why were you staring over at him just now?” Chinatsu sensibly asked. Compared to Ayame and Yuuko, Chinatsu was definitely the most serious, and levelheaded of the three.

Putting her mocking nature aside, which was a rarity with the girl, Yuuko asked, “Is there anything wrong with him?”

“To be honest, I don’t know. He’s been acting a bit differently lately.”

“No offense, but I’ve always found him a little strange.”

“Ayame-chan, how could you say that? He’s not strange,” Mimi said in defense of her childhood friend. “He’s just quiet, and at times, he does come across as not being social, but that’s not fully true.” Mimi sighed in thought. ‘I feel that it’s just hard for him to get close to anyone or to let anyone get close to him I’ve noticed. I wonder why he's like that, though...’

Before either of the girls could respond, the four of them heard someone call out, “Hey, Mimi-chan!” Ayame laughed. “Oh no, here comes Mimi’s Fan Club.”

“Seki-kun and his cousin, Yuuji-kun,” Yuuko identified.

“Yes, and of course her biggest admirers, Takamatsu-kun of my class, and Hashimoto-kun of 2-A,” Chinatsu added on. “Takamatsu-kun is in the Drama Club, if I remember right, and I think Hashimoto-kun is in the Shougi club and studies Judo. It’s almost hard to believe that he takes Judo since he’s so small, short, and timid-looking. He's even won Judo tournaments I’ve heard.”

“Lucky,” Yuuko cried in jealousy. “I wish I had a fan club dedicated to me and every boy in school enamored with my charm and beauty!”

“What charm?” laughed Chinatsu.

Yuuko shot Chinatsu a look. “Quiet you!”


“Why not join us,” Ayame sarcastically offered.

All four boys sat down at the table, trying to get close to Mimi. Seki managed to snag the seat next to her. The other boys, dejectedly, sat across the table beside Yuuko and Chinatsu. The four of them talked over one another to try and get the girl’s attention, but she ignored them while glancing over at Koushirou still. She was still anxious to find out what was bothering him, and helping in any way possible, but how could she help him if he wouldn’t allow himself to be helped…and why did she feel so compelled to help him in the first place? Unable to answer her own question, she glanced back over at him again.
'He’s leaving. I wonder where he’s going.'

The tall, round-faced hefty Misao called to Mimi. Usually, whenever people saw this boy, they would wrongfully assume that he was your typical bully due to his size, but he was generally pretty nice. “Mimi-chan?”

“Huh? Oh, I’m sorry,” she replied quickly. “I think I’m going to cut my lunch hour short. I’ll see you all back in class.” Mimi turned her attention to the shiny, jet-black-haired boy. “Oh, Yuuji-kun, do you have any idea what was wrong with Koushirou-kun right before lunch?”

“No, he just slept through most of class.”

“Wow, Izumi-kun was asleep?” Chinatsu asked in surprise.

“Yeah. He said it was because he was out late because of karaoke!” Yuuji cut Mimi a look. She didn’t say anything.

“Wow, I didn’t know Koushirou-kun liked karaoke,” said Ayame. ‘I didn’t think he’d actually go.’

“To think you know a guy,” Yuuko laughed.

‘Strange, that doesn’t sound like Koushirou, unless he got home later than I realized, and he didn’t get much sleep because of me! Oh…but he’s still not the type to sleep during classes either. He even stays awake during the boring ones, like science.’ She returned the lid to her lunch container, with her half-eaten lunch, and tied her pink, flowery bento cover around it. “Well, everyone, I’m going to go now. I’ll see you later.” Mimi rose from her seat, and rushed off, hoping to catch up with Koushirou.

The shougi-loving boy with the straight shoulder-lengthened light-brown hair stared after Mimi, and then asked the others, “What’s wrong with Mimi-san?” Ukyo was one of the few “Mimi Fanboys”, as Yuuko called them, who didn’t seem as overbearing, or as annoying, as the other three dominant members of the club. There were more, but they were the main ones who didn’t mind publicly displaying their affections for the girl. The others were much too shy, and were the ones to leave anonymous notes in her locker.

“Something about Koushirou-kun is bothering her,” Yuuko told him simply, returning to her meal. She, just like Ayame, bought lunch today, and she wanted to hurry and eat her soba before it got cold.

“Eh? Koushirou?”

“Yes, Izumi Koushirou-kun of class 2-B. He’s a Computer Club member,” Chinatsu informed him.

“Wait, you mean that really quiet red-headed guy?” asked Misao in surprise.

Ayame nodded. “Yeah, she’s concerned about him.”

Unable to remain quiet any longer, Yuuji started to cry again. “She’s always hanging out with Izumi! How can one of the most popular girls in school spend time with someone like him? There really isn’t anything wrong with Izumi,” Yuuji added, even though he didn’t want to admit it, “but seems like they’d be from two separate worlds! Mimi-chan is outgoing and social, and Izumi is, well, not!” He stood up and spoke louder. “She even went out with him for karaoke last night and she made him homemade snacks!!”

“It’s not like it was just Mimi-chan and Koushirou-kun,” Ayame muttered in embarrassment. “Now
sit down and be quiet!"

“Yeah, and Mimi-chan makes snacks for people all the time, even us,” Chinatsu added on, while Yuuji retook his seat.

“She keeps turning down dates with me!” cried Seki.


“Oh shut up!” Seki glared at Yuuko.

Yuuji sighed. “You guys are just too persistent.”

“Persistent?” asked Misao.

“Or maybe neither of you is her type.”

“Fujiwara-san,” began Ukyo, “how would you all know?”

“We are her best friends you know,” Yuuko told them smugly. “Of course we’d know of these things.”

Seki’s look grew to that of a worried one. “Are you saying that Izumi is her type/”

“We didn’t say that,” Yuuko smirked.

“Tell us!” Yuuji demanded. “Tell us what she likes in a boy!!”

“Hmm, I don’t know if we should…” Ayame began cruelly.

All four boys rose from their seats and bowed deeply. “Onegai shimasu!”

Everyone in the lunchroom looked at the four, curious as to why they were bowing. “Um...let me discuss this over with my friends here,” Ayame told the four. She motioned for Chinatsu to join their side of the table. “Huddle!” Chinatsu kneeled in front of the two girls, while Yuuko and Ayame remained seated.

“So, what do you guys say?” Yuuko asked in a whisper. “Should we have fun with these four idiots?”

“Exactly what I was thinking!” Ayame giggled.

“Sure, why not. It’s not like we can tell them the truth anyway,” Chinatsu pointed out. “Even we don’t know what Mimi-chan truly likes in a guy. She’s never really shown interest in any particular one openly, now that I think about it.”

“Okay, let’s make stuff up to make them all look silly. Since they’re head members of the Mimi Fan Club, making them look stupid will be a blast!” Yuuko said.

“But what should we say?” asked Chinatsu.

“We should make up stuff based on her ‘Summer Camp Friends’, or whatever it was she called them,” Ayame suggested.

“One time I think I overheard her say something about them being the ‘Chosen Children’, Yuuko said. “You know, I think she said ‘Digidestined’ one time too.”
“What does she mean by that anyway?” asked Chinatsu.

“Well, she never did say. Koushirou-kun just happens to be one of them, which is probably why he went along with her last night for karaoke. It was a get together for her and her ‘Summer Camp Friends’,” Ayame explained.

“I can’t believe Mi-chan is friends with Ishida-senpai of the Teenage Wolves! She is so lucky, and he is so hot!!”

“Yuuko-chan, we’ll continue are daily discussions about cute boys later. Now, we’re all set, right?” asked Ayame. The other two nodded. “Okay! Break everyone!”

“Well?” Seki eagerly asked.

“Sit down first,” Chinatsu told them while moving her lunch to Ayame and Yuuko's side of the table. The four boys sat across from the three girls. “Okay, now we'll tell you what Mimi-chan likes, but don’t let on that you guys know,” Ayame told them discreetly.

“And if you choose to do this, you have to do it at the upcoming gathering,” Yuuko added. Ayame nodded. “Yeah, it'll impress Mimi-chan most if you do it there.”

“We promise we will!” Misao said. “Just tell us!!”

“Well, first, you have to be able to play the…um…*pianika!” Chinatsu told them, while trying not to laugh.

“I can play the violin,” Ukyo said. “I’m sure the pianika won’t be that much of a challenge. I’m sure I can remember how to play at least one song by then.”

“While standing on your head!” Chinatsu added on quickly.

“Eh!?” all four boys exclaimed over the outrageous act.

“And you have to wear blue goggles as an accessory, and they must be the round kind, not the boring square kind. You must also have big hair!” Yuuko smiled evilly. “Mi-chan loves that.”

“And she likes boys who wear glasses who look very intellectual and those who can use a computer,” Ayame continued. The four gave them looks of skepticism. “Hey, you asked and that’s what she likes. She likes unique, mature, sophisticated types.”

“I bet I’ll get Mimi-chan to like me before any of you guys!” Yuuji challenged.

“As leader, she’ll definitely like me best!” Misao told the shorter boy.

“You’re both delusional, she’ll definitely fall for me,” Seki insisted smugly.

“Girls, I think our work here is done,” Yuuko told her companions. “Let’s go find someplace quieter to eat our lunch.”

“Sure thing,” Ayame said, picking up her tray.

“They are so pathetic,” Chinatsu said while shaking her head.

“But fun,” Ayame pointed out.
“True.”

Yuuko giggled. “I can’t wait to see them at the party. This is going to be hilarious!”

The three girls stood, leaving the four bickering boys behind, who had been completely oblivious to the girls’ conversation…

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Mimi wandered around the hallway, passing by many students in search of Koushirou. He was faster than even she realized and decided to drop by her class first to put her lunch aside, and then go back in pursuit of him. She thought for a moment, and figured that if Koushirou was anyplace, aside from a place like the toilet, it would either be their classroom or either the computer lab, but figured he was in the latter since she didn’t see him when dropping off her lunch.

Once arriving, she peaked through the door. The room was empty, except for Koushirou, who was sitting at one of the computers, his back to the door. She couldn’t fully tell what he was doing, but to her, it almost looked as if he could have been in deep concentration over something. Seeing him like that, she wasn’t sure if she should approach him or not, and was actually starting to wonder if she was becoming a burden to him, always pestering him for information that he wasn’t fully comfortable giving…information about himself.

For as long as she had actually been friends with him, Koushirou wasn’t known to show emotion much aside from the obvious ones, like annoyance, amuse, frustration, and happiness, but he usually didn’t seem to show or share what he was truly feeling if something was bothering him. Figuring him out was a great mystery to her and she figured that even a great detective like Sherlock Holmes would probably have had a difficult time getting Koushirou to fully open up. It had only been recently, since she returned to Odaiba, that she had become determined to get him to open up more. At times, she still felt that she didn't truly know Koushirou like she did her other friends and it inexplicably bothered her.

‘Do I approach him or do I just stand out here looking silly?’ She shook her head, a look of determination on her young face. ‘Come on Mimi! Fight! You have to face him!’

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‘Wow, Mimi-san is a great cook! I must definitely thank her for these.’ the boy thought, downing the last of the ohagi. He originally wanted to leave the lunch room to think, but he mainly wanted to eat Mimi’s treats without any questions being asked of him, especially since Yuuji knew about it somehow. He stared at the computer screen, as he’d been surfing the net. He then gave off a heavy sigh as he looked at the web page he’d stopped on. ‘What should I do? I know what I have to do, and what I plan to do, but what about Mimi-san? She’s probably going to want to know what’s going on. I’m definitely going to Hikarigaoka tomorrow! It’s the only way I can find out more about my real parents as well as myself.’

It took Mimi a little while longer, but she finally got the nerve to enter the room. She opened the sliding door and slowly walked in. Hearing the faint footsteps, Koushirou asked in alarm, “Who’s there?” He definitely didn’t want to get in trouble for eating in the computer lab, which was strictly forbidden.

“Howdy there,” the girl greeted nervously with a warm smile. He glanced back. “It’s just me.”

‘I’ve never seen a girl who can always manage to smile. It’s almost like she doesn’t have a care in the world sometimes, but I guess it’s just in her nature.’ He turned his chair around to face her. “Hi there Mimi-san. You startled me.” In some ways, Koushirou had been inadvertently avoiding the girl. He still felt bad for causing her distress the previous night and wasn’t fully ready to face her yet.

“I’m sorry. I saw you in the lunchroom, and then you just suddenly l-left, and I was wondering what
was wrong, since it kind of looked like something was bothering you. Is it about our project?”

The main bother was that he was anxious to eat that ohagi since he’d only had a can of juice and a couple of snacks from the vending machine for his “lunch”. He had a little bit of spare change in his pocket, and didn’t want to take out the money his father had given him and didn’t feel like buying a lunch, as he wasn't in the mood for soba. He stood up and walked over to her. “Um…Mimi-san…”

“Y-yes?” She was growing exuberant, like a child about to open up a Christmas gift, but was still inexplicably nervous and her current, speedy rhythmic heartbeat confirmed it. ‘Could he finally be confiding in me? Is he finally going to tell me what’s bothering him so that we can work on it together?’

“Well, first and foremost, I must get this out to you.” The boy bowed deeply to her. She stared down at him in pure bewilderment.

“K-Koushirou-kun?”

“Mimi-san, I want to apologize for my appalling behavior last night. I probably came across as very rude, and because of that, I caused you a lot of anguish.” He stood upright again. Mimi was too stunned to reply at how formal the boy was being with her still after all these years. “Please forgive me.”

“Erm…y-yeah, you’re forgiven. You were in a hurry. No hard feelings.” That’s what she had to keep telling herself after he’d left.

He gave her a half smile. Even though she didn’t hear what she wanted to, seeing his smile made her happy for some reason. “Also, Mimi-san, I really appreciate the ohagi you prepared.”

“This is another reason why I came in here. I wanted to eat in peace. It was very good, as always. Thank you very much for preparing these for me.”

‘Is he trying to butter me up?’ He handed her the tin. “Thank you…”

“Now, there’s also something else I must share with you, as I promised you I would yesterday.”

‘YES!!’ the girl screamed in her head.

“We have been paired up for this assignment, but I, unfortunately, have to do a little bit of research first.”

“Um, okay, but what kind of research do you have to do? It’s just a project about your family. What else is there to research that you don’t already know about your own family?”

“You’ll see. As I said, I already promised you that I would share everything with you, but not right now.”

“Yeah…I…see…”

He turned his back to her and retook his seat while closing out the browser window, which had the adoption agency’s webpage up. Even though he’d apologized, which seemed to let everything else come out a bit easier and naturally, he felt the need to hesitate again. “If-if you really want to know what’s going on then you can come along to help me with my research tomorrow.”

“Wait, go with you tomorrow? Go with you where?”
In a voice barely above that of a whisper, Koushirou murmured, “Hikarigaoka.”

“Wait, where?”

“Hi-Hikarigaoka...”

“Hikarigaoka?! Why do we have to go there?!”

“You'll see...I promised to tell you everything...,” he repeated somberly as he stood up, heading towards the door, “…since, for the most part, I don’t have much of a choice.” He stopped in front of the lab’s door and stared upwards. “It’s been bothering me for a while, and it would make me feel better to tell this...to get this information about myself off of my chest and to test a theory, in a way...” He grabbed the door’s handle. ‘It’s a bit embarrassing, but would Mimi-san think of me as strange or unworthy to be her friend because of it? Would anyone?’

Still confused, the girl raised an eyebrow up at him. “Okay, whatever you say, but why do we have to go all the way to Nerima?”

“Because the answers I’m seeking can only be found there...about who I really am...” Mimi was more lost than ever now. All she could do was nod. “Our break is almost over, so we should probably head back before we’re considered late. We wouldn't want to burden our classmates, especially with only two classes left to go.”

“Um...yeah...r-right,” she managed to get out. She felt a headache coming on.

Mimi wasn’t sure if she’d made any progress with Koushirou or not. It seemed that he was starting to open up, but then quickly withdrew, as he was still acting mysterious about what was wrong with him or why such a simple assignment was causing his edginess. The two walked back to class for history, which was scheduled for 5th period that day instead of 6th, but were late. The clock chimed right when they reached the door. Mr. Ishidzuka let them slide since it was their first time ever being late from something like lunch, and Koushirou used the excuse that the both of them had been brainstorming on how to present their project. Mr. Ishidzuka was really glad that Koushirou was getting into his work. Mimi just smiled weakly and went along with everything Koushirou had said.

After being dismissed, the students prepared for the mandatory school cleaning. Part of their class was assigned the teacher's room for that week, while the rest were responsible for their classroom and other parts of the school. Once done, everyone went back to their assigned areas, which included Mimi and Koushirou heading back to their seats, Koushirou back to his seat near the back row, and Mimi’s seat a bit in the middle row. Her seat was right in between Yuuko and Ayame.

When Ishidzuka started lecturing, the two girls started drilling Mimi, since they didn't have much of an opportunity during their cleaning time due to the fact that the three girls were assigned to different cleaning groups.

“Mi-chan,” whispered Yuuko, “what happened?”

“What do you mean?” asked Mimi.

“What happened with Koushirou-kun,” Ayame asked from her left.

“Did you confess to him?” Yuuko teased.

“Wh-what!” Mimi’s face turned a slight shade of red due to the accusation. “That’s crazy! Why would you think something like that?”
“Mi-chan, you’re blushing; besides, you worry about him way too much, so you must be in love with him!”

Mimi found herself smiling. She knew how Yuuko had this tendency of blowing things out of proportion as well as exaggerating things. “Well, I guess I can’t hide anything from the two of you.”

“What do you mean?” asked Ayame.

“I do love him. I love Koushirou-kun a lot!” she said in English.

The two girls’ jaws dropped. “What!??”

“I love Koushirou-kun and I love you and Ayame-chan too,” she continued in English.

“Wh-what?” asked Yuuko, eyeing the girl suspiciously. ‘Is she really into that sort of thing?’

“I don’t understand.”

“I like him just like I do you two,” she smiled sweetly. “He’s my good friend; I like all of my friends.”

The two nearly fell from their seats from the response, but it was enough of a distraction to garner the attention of the young man currently giving a lecture on the Feudal Era of Japan. “Shinohara-san, Sasaki-san!”

The two stood up quickly. “Yes sir?”

“Is there anything wrong?”

“No sir,” the two responded.

“Good, now pay attention. This material is going to be on your upcoming test.”

“Yes Ishidzuka-sensei.”

Mimi lightly laughed as the two returned to their seats. Yuuko gave Mimi a disapproving look. “That was a mean trick! You said love!”

“In America, people say love for many situations, which includes friends,” she giggled.

The day continued to drag on. Mimi, and most of the other students, wished that their school didn’t meet on Saturdays for a full day, and were more like other schools in the area, but since it was the last day of the week, and no club meetings, most were glad to head home and relax. While at her shoe-sized locker, Mimi ran into both Sora and Miyako.

“Mimi-chan, I'm so glad we found you!”

“Why, what's going on?” the girl asked while changing out of her school shoes.

“Sora-san is having a party tomorrow and she’s invited everyone! Since you missed your club meet earlier this week, we weren’t sure if you had gotten the invite or not and it just hit the both of us that you never did mention anything about it when we went out for karaoke.”

She slipped her school shoes into her locker. “Is it a celebration just for us, or is it one for everyone?”

“It’s a combination of the both,” Sora explained. “I guess you could call it an end of the year
celebration. I know it’s not the norm, but I figured, why not! I’ve invited everyone, and that includes the younger ones too: Iori-kun, Ichijouji-kun, Hikari-chan, Takeru-kun, and Daisuke. Taichi was supposed to have passed it on to Hikari-chan and she was supposed to pass it on to the rest. Miyako-chan informed both Iori-kun and Takeru-kun since they all live in the same building. I also mentioned that they could invite anyone they wanted from their class or their clubs.”

“So, what are you going to wear and when are you going to get there?”

“Miyako-chan, why do you want to know what I’ll be wearing?”

“So I can try to find something that’s nearly as nice as your outfit of course!”

Mimi laughed. ‘Same old Miyako,’ she thought.

“The party will start tomorrow at 13:00 (1:00) and will end at 19:00 (7:00)!”

“Wait, how long have you had this planned out? Where will it be?”

“I’ve been planning it for about a month now, with some help from Taichi, but things weren’t finalized until last week. My father rented out the *Ageha Dance Club! He made very good sales with his latest book, and asked if I wanted anything special. Since I’m heading off to high school soon, I asked for a party where I could invite many people. Since the Ageha Dance Club is closed during the day, we can have it for the entire afternoon, and of course, you know that the bar will be closed to us,” she laughed. “I know that the location is kind of out there, but at least we’ll still be in Tokyo and it’s fast to get there if on the Rinkai line. You’d just have to transfer once and get off at Shin-Kiba and the ride, in all, is only about 15 minutes.”

“Wow! I’ve heard about that place from Yuuko-chan! She always talks about her older cousin hanging out there almost every weekend, especially in the summer. The place is still pretty new. Wait, does Koushirou-kun know about the party?”

“Yeah, Taichi said he mentioned it to him and according to him, Koushirou-kun seemed really interested in going.”

“So, are you going to get there early?”

“Well, I’m not too sure if I’ll be able to go…”

“What do you mean you might not be able to go!?” Miyako asked in shock.

She fidgeted a little as the three exited the school. “I-I can’t.”

“But why?” asked Sora. “I can’t have a party without one of my best friends there.”

“It’s because I have to go to Hikarigaoka tomorrow,” she sighed.

“You have to go all the way out to Nerima!” Mimi nodded. “Oneesama…what’s happening there? Why do you have to go there?”

“I…promised to go there with Koushirou-kun tomorrow.”

“That doesn’t make any sense, though! Why does Izumi-senpai have to go there? Why do you have to go with him?”

“It’s for our assignment,” she answered shortly.
“You mean the history project that Koushirou-kun lied about?”

She nodded. “He also told me, ‘the answers I’m seeking can only be found there…about who I really am’, when I asked him why.”

“That’s strange. What kind of a project are you and Koushirou-kun working on again?”

“We have to pretty much do a family history project. I was excused from the assignment since my parents aren’t here, even though I could’ve just gotten information from my aunt and work with that. Anyway, as a way to make up for it, Ishidzuka-sensei asked if I could work with him.”

“I don’t know Mimi-chan. Going all the way to Hikarigaoka to find answers seems a bit extreme. Why doesn’t he just talk with Mr. and Mrs. Izumi to get the bit of extra information he needs, instead of making a day-trip out of it? It’ll save him time and money.”

“I don’t know, but I’m still a bit worried about him, or probably just curious. He did promise to tell me everything if I went along.”

“I wonder what type of a secret Koushirou-kun is keeping.”

“You know, maybe you could talk Izumi-senpai out of going to Hikarigaoka tomorrow and then that way, both of you can come to the party. Maybe you guys can postpone your trip.”

“I don’t think he’d go for something like that, especially since this assignment is due Friday. Tomorrow would be our last full free day to work on it or to do any out of town traveling.”

“Well, I guess it just can’t be helped. It’s a shame that neither one of you will be coming to my party, though. We’ll miss you.”

Miyako frowned, which Mimi noticed. “Miyako-chan, what’s wrong?”

“I guess I’m feeling a bit left out. I’m just wondering why he isn’t really saying anything to me. I always felt that I was a good friend too.”

“It could be due to the fact that Koushirou-kun talks with and sees Mimi-chan more now compared to you. Both share all of the same classes. You two only have the Computer Club.”

“That is a good point, but it still wouldn’t hurt for him to open up his mobile phone and call me or even send an e-mail. He does have a D-Terminal he could use too.”

“He’s probably only doing this anyway since we’re paired up for this assignment.” The three girls came to an intersection. “Well, this is where we split up. I’ll see you guys later, and don’t worry; I’ll try to find a way for us to come to your party.”

“That’d be great, Mimi-chan! I hope both you and Koushirou-kun can make it.”

“See, told you she’d try to go,” Miyako laughed.

With that, the girls parted ways, and Mimi continued her walk home. She had quite a few things to get together if she wanted to go to Sora’s party…

Chapter End Notes
Note 1: Ms. Konishi. This isn’t original. Konishi Hiroko just happens to be Adventure Takeru’s seiyuu (voice actress). His seiyuu (voice actor) for Adventure 02 was Yamamoto Taisuke, since he was older and all. Also, in Japan, the students don’t change classes, the teachers do. Also, it’s true that most elementary and junior high schools in Japan don’t have cafeterias or lunch rooms. It'd probably be more commonly seen in some high schools. Anyway, the students eat their lunches in the classroom with their homeroom teachers. After the meal, the students then clean up the classroom...maybe. As pointed out earlier, when a school has its cleaning time varies from school to school. Sometimes they do it after lunch, sometimes after school is over, maybe right before their final class, etc.

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Note 2: In Japan, students go to school on Saturdays, but it's usually just for half a day. There are some schools opting out of having classes on Saturdays, though.

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Note 3: A pianika (ピアニカ) is a melodica.

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Note 4: The Ageha Dance Club is a real place. It’s known for being one of the best places to go and the place is really big and has great entertainment which includes performers from all over (in other words, not just those from Japan). It opened in 2002.

Fic Chapter Changes

There's only one significant change, if you could call it that. The melodica was originally an autoharp.
Trip Preparations

Chapter Summary

Hi again everyone. This chapter just shows what Koushirou and Mimi are doing the night before leaving to semi prepare. This is another “filler chapter” like the karaoke one.

Chapter Notes

Now, as always, I do not own anything dealing with the Digimon series or franchise. Bandai and Toei have that honor, and as a reminder, here are the ages of the characters once again:

- Jou: 16-17 (Year 10-11; First/second year of High School)
- Taichi/Sora/Yamato: 15-16 (Year 09-10; Last year of Junior High School/First year high school)
- Koushirou/Mimi: 14-15 (Year 08-09; Second/Last year of Junior High School)
- Miyako: 13-14 (Year 07-08; First/second year of Junior High School)
- Takeru/Hikari/Daisuke/Ken: 12-13 (Year 06; Final year of Elementary/First year of Junior High School)
- Iori: 10-11 (Year 04-05)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 08: Preparing for Departure!

Koushirou slowly made his way home from school. He had left school time the clock chimed, and rushed off before Mimi could catch him. He really was a bit down, and hated the fact that he was going to end up dragging Mimi along on this venture, and was tempted to leave her behind, but he knew better than to do that. He would’ve never heard the end of it if he had.

His long walk finally came to an end as he approached home. After walking up the few flights of stairs, he opened up the door to his home, stepped out of his shoes, and put his book-bag in his room. He then left, and headed up the hall to see his mother watching television in the living room, sipping on what looked to be tea. “Tadaima,” he greeted dully.

Mrs. Izumi hadn’t heard the door open and close earlier, but after hearing the boy's, “tadaima”, she hurried over to him. “Koushirou!”

She had a big smile on her face, one Koushirou was grateful to see, compared to how she was that morning. “Good afternoon, mother.”

“I’m so glad that you’re home! I really wanted to apologize to you.”
“Apologize? What for?” he asked in surprise.

She looked down at the floor, a sad look about her face. “I’m sorry for the way I acted towards you this morning.” She looked back up at him. “It seems that I wasn’t myself fully.”

“Oh, that?” Koushirou forced on a smile, which his mother obviously didn’t notice, as it seemed genuine to her. “That’s okay. I just figured that you were tired. People can’t have a good day everyday.”

The woman sighed in relief. “I’m so glad that you feel that way. How did I end up with such a wise son? Would you like a snack or anything?”

“S-sure,” he answered vaguely. For once, a daily after-school snack wasn’t on his mind.

“Oh, come on now.” He followed his mother. “Right before you came in, I had just sat down to watch television after preparing a nice yummy snack for you. Have a seat.”

Koushirou sat at the table, and sniffed the air. The aroma had kind of a fried, doughy scent to it. His stomach started growling. Mrs. Izumi returned with a plate of round, dumpling confections about the size of one’s hand. She set it down in front of him along with a glass of oolong tea. “Ta-da!” she said.

“Wow! Manjuu! Thank you, mother! And it’s so fresh! I always thought this took a long time to prepare.” At times like this, Koushirou was glad that his family owned a decent oven, even though manjuu was more of a stove-top treat.

“Now now, it didn’t take that long. I’d planned on making it today anyway, so I started preparing yesterday by making sure I had all of the right ingredients. Enjoy!” She took a seat and grabbed one for herself. Noticing the time, Koushirou started to eat the manjuu faster. “Slow down, Koushirou.”

“I’m sorry,” he said after one big swallow. “I have to get ready for my trip tomorrow.”

“Your trip?” He nodded. “Don’t you mean our trip?”

“Our trip? What trip?”

“We were all going out tomorrow as a family.”

“We were?”

“Yes. We all decided to go to the National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation and then out to dinner afterwards. Your father and I know how much you like going to the museum.”

“Yeah, I really like the exhibits involving the robots and the technology. I’ve always been curious how the scientists manage to get the robots to function properly.”

“Don’t tell me you forgot.”

“Yes, it did slip my mind, and I do apologize for that.”

“Couldn’t you take your trip another time?” she asked him sweetly.

“I’m sorry mother. I really can’t join you tomorrow. I have a very important errand to run.” His mother looked a bit forlorn, and went back to her drink. “I’m sorry, I really am, but, um…” he began. ‘Come on Koushirou, think think think…’
“What do you have to do?”

“Well, um… like I was saying…I promised Mimi-san that---”

The woman lifted her head and gave the boy a proud smile. “Don’t say another word. I understand completely.”

“You do?”

“I was young once too, you know.”

“So you don’t mind my not joining you and father tomorrow?”

“No, I don’t mind, and I’m sure your father will understand it too.”

After finishing the last of the manjuu, Koushirou stood up and thanked his mother once again. He still couldn’t help but scratch his head over his mother’s sudden change of heart, but decided to dismiss it and head off to his room to prepare himself for tomorrow.

Nearly an hour later, a man with a briefcase in hand entered the Izumi home. “Tadaima,” he tiredly called.

The woman went to greet him. “Hi there! How was your day?” she asked while hugging him.

“It was pretty hectic,” he told her with a small laugh.

“What made your day so hectic?” the woman asked, heading back to the kitchen.

He followed behind her. “Spending the majority of my time worrying about you,” he joked.

“Masami-san, I told you not to worry about me.”

“I know,” he said while sniffing the air. “Wow, something smells nice. What’s for dinner?”

“You like favorite, *nikujaga, but I have some bad news and some good news for you.”

“Oh-oh, did Koushirou’s teacher call again?” She shook her head and coyly smiled. “He didn’t accidentally crash one of the school’s computer lab computers again, did he?”

“Nope.”

“Then what’s the problem, and why are you smiling?”

“He can’t come with us to the museum tomorrow.”

“Wow, I was really looking forward to having the day off to spend it with you two.”

“Same here, but I guess we can plan a trip for next Sunday, like maybe an onsen trip.”

“You’ve been talking about that for a while, and I’m going to assume you want to go to Odaiba Onsen Monogatari, right?” She nodded as he leaned up against the counter. “That’d be a nice, fun trip, even though it’s more like an amusement attraction than an actual traditional onsen. That aside, it’s not often we spend time together like we did when Koushirou was younger. Did he mention why he can’t go with us tomorrow?”

“He said something about taking a trip, and that’s the good news.”
“A trip?” She nodded. “And you’re okay with this?”

“Yeah.”

‘And yet, she nearly chewed my head off for giving Koushirou lunch money.’ He gave his wife a confused look. “I don’t find anything ‘good’ about this news yet.”

“Our little Koushirou is growing up,” she said in excitement.

Mr. Izumi, at this particular point, was trying to sneak a peak at the stew Mrs. Izumi had prepared. “I still don’t understand where you’re going with this.”

“You’re going to be out of this kitchen if you keep trying to sneak tastes,” the woman warned playfully.

“Okay, okay,” the man backed off while Mrs. Izumi scooped rice from the rice cooker and dumped it into bowls.

“Anyway, he's taking a trip tomorrow with Mimi-chan!”

“Mimi?”

“Yeah, isn’t that great!”

“I guess it is,” he muttered, not really getting what the big deal was.

“Don’t you get it? Our young Koushirou has finally settled on a girlfriend! He is going to be spending the day with a charming girl he’s known for a long time. That must mean something, especially since tomorrow is March 14.”

“Maybe you’re right, but what if it’s something else?”

“Hello! March 14!”

“I know, I know, but I’m still just saying…what if it’s something else.” The man crossed his arms, realizing that he had forgotten that Sunday was March 14.

“Well, given the day, I don’t know what else it could be.”

‘Not if Mimi invited Koushirou out someplace and not the other way around.’ He cleared his throat. “You really seem sure of yourself. Where exactly is he going?”

“Well, um…I…sorta didn’t ask.”

“Yoshie…”

“I was so happy when he mentioned it, I forgot to ask.”

“Well, I guess we can get that information out of him at dinner,” he replied sneakily.

“Of course, which is why I prepared another treat for him after he went to his room. Usually, after school, once he goes to his room, he doesn’t leave it until dinner time. The treat I prepared is an absolute favorite and strange sweet snack for him. That should make it even easier for us to weasel that information out of him.”

After everything was ready, Mrs. Izumi set the table with a bowl of rice, a bowl of miso soup, and
the stew while Mr. Izumi went to get Koushirou. The teen walked slowly to the table and took his
seat. The boy did his quick, obligatory prayer, and started to dig into the meal. He was so busy
eating, that he didn’t notice his parents inquiringly staring at him. They just couldn’t see how a boy
his size could eat so fast or so much. He didn’t always eat so much, though, until his last year of
elementary school. It was surprised to both of them.

“So,” Mr. Izumi started after swallowing down some of his steamed white rice, “your mother told me
that you won’t be able to join us for our family outing tomorrow.”

“Nope,” he answered plainly as he gulped down the soup. He’d already finished off the rice, and he
was now starting to devour the stew. “I have something to do tomorrow, and I’m unable to
reschedule it.”

“I see,” Mrs. Izumi responded simply.

“So, where will you be going tomorrow?”

“You already mentioned something about spending the day with Mimi-chan.”

“I can’t tell them that I’m going to Hikarigaoka. They’ll probably ask a bunch of questions that I
really don’t want to have to answer.” Mrs. Izumi smiled knowingly, and headed to the kitchen. Mr.
Izumi called to Koushirou. “Oh, I’m sorry, father,” he hastily apologized, “did you say something?”

Before Mr. Izumi could respond, Mrs. Izumi walked back to the table, holding a small bowl. She set
it down in front of Koushirou. “Here, have some. It’s one of your favorites, sweet onigiri with an
avocado apple-cinnamon honey paste filling.”

Koushirou’s eyes lit up and started to eat the marvelous dessert treat. Mr. Izumi wrinkled his nose
over the unusual combination. He just couldn’t understand the tastes Koushirou had when it came to
foods. They were just downright strange at times, but didn’t seem to fully start until the previous
year. Koushirou thanked his mother as he hurried through his dinner. Once done, he started to stuff
his face with the onigiri. “Oh, this is so good! Thank you mother!”

“Anyway, back to what I was asking earlier…where are you going tomorrow?”

“Well, I…” He took a bite out of another one of the rice balls. His mother had made 10 of them.
“What should I tell them?”

“Koushirou, don’t eat so fast,” warned Mrs. Izumi, “you might give yourself indigestion or a really
bad stomachache.”

The boy slowed down and nodded, as he was still partially stalling to come up with something
plausible. “Well, we’re all going to head over to the Yagami place to study for our upcoming tests,”
the boy blurted out. After saying that, though, he mentally slapped himself as Sora’s party came to
mind, and how he could’ve just gone along with that.

“Oh, so it’s pretty much a study date?”

“Y-yes, even though Taichi-san, Yamato-san, and Sora-san have already taken their entrance exams,
those three are going to help us underclassmen.”

Mrs. Izumi looked disappointed. “Well, school is important, and we wouldn’t want to get in the way
of your lessons.”

“What time are you heading out tomorrow?”
“First thing. We have quite a bit of material to cover, especially the English that's usually on the entrance exams. I know we have a whole year, but it's never too soon to start preparing for something as strenuous as that, so Jou-san says.”

“School sure seems more difficult compared to when we were young,” Mrs. Izumi pointed out.

“Yes, it does, but with each generation, the material becomes more challenging.”

Koushirou gulped down another one of the rice balls, and left three in the bowl. All of a sudden, he didn’t feel hungry anymore. He just couldn’t bear it. “May I please be excused?”

“Is something wrong?”

“No mother, I’m fine. I’m just…full.”

“Well, sure, okay. You can go if you’d like.”

With that settled, the boy rose up from his seat and headed to his room, holding his now, incredibly nervous stomach. He had lied to his parents. His guilt had ruined his appetite. For the most part, he had never lied to them before…not to this extent, and it really bothered him. He tried his best to shake off the feeling, and hopped onto the computer to send an e-mail to Mimi, letting her know when and where to meet him the following morning.

“I guess you were jumping to conclusions,” Mr. Izumi said after Koushirou had left.

“I guess so. I was just so sure that he and Mimi-chan were going to have a romantic day together.”

“I guess Koushirou isn’t ready for a girlfriend yet due to how serious he is about his school work,” the man plainly stated. He finished his meal. “Yoshie, as usual, this was delicious.”

“Thank you.” Mrs. Izumi was almost done with her meal too. When she finished, she cleared the table, putting the remaining onigiri into a container for the next day for Koushirou to eat, and took all the dishes to the sink for washing.

Mr. Izumi joined her. “I’ll help you.”

“Thank you.”

Mrs. Izumi was grateful for her husband. He wasn’t the stereotypical one, and actually helped her on occasion whenever he was home early, but she felt he was really being more helpful because of her pregnancy. While washing the dishes, she looked to be deep in thought. Mr. Izumi waved his hand in front of her face.

“Hey, is something wrong?”

“I’m sorry, I don’t get it.” She handed the clean dish to her husband to dry. “I just don’t get it.”

“Don’t get what?”

“I just can’t help but feel that Koushirou's keeping something from us. I’m also not sure if he was telling the truth about spending his time studying tomorrow.”

“I’m surprised at you! Why would he lie about something like that? Koushirou isn’t the type to lie.”

“I don’t like this feeling, but I can’t help it. It’s the way he was talking when he first got home. He said something about a promise and it has something to do with Mimi-chan. Why is a promise about a study date important? The way he was talking made it sound as if it was something important, and he also sounded very serious about it.”
“Well, I feel you’re making a big deal out of nothing.”

“Maybe I am,” she sighed. “Maybe I feel as if I’m being shut out of his life more and more everyday and I’m just desperately trying to find my way back in. I know he isn’t my little boy anymore, but I sometimes wish that he still was. It’s like I want him to grow up to become a respectful, responsible adult, but at the same time, I want him to remain the little boy we grew to know and love, forever…”

“I’m sure all parents have those types of moments.”

“I guess you’re right,” the woman murmured as she scrubbed out the last dish.

“Of course I am. It’s probably very natural to feel this way. I’m sure at some point in all parents’ lives they feel that they’ve grown slightly apart from their teenage children as they have more friends and activities going on in their lives.” He dried the last dish and put it away. “Now, let’s get out of this kitchen and watch some television to get your mind off of everything. I’m sure there's probably a nice drama on that you’d enjoy. You could definitely use the rest and relaxation.”

“I’m actually a bit tired and drowsy from the lack of sleep I got last night, as you know,” she said with a knowing smile, “so I’m going to take an early bath and head in, but what really caused it was sorting through all those papers so that I could do the budgeting. Everything was out of place.”

“That’s odd.”

“Yeah, but nothing to worry about. It took most of the morning to straighten all of it out and to reorganize it, but it’s fine now.” She yawned.

“Alright then.” He gave her a kiss. “Good night, and have a nice rest.”

“Good night…”

****

Over at the Nishimura household…

“Yes, that’s right. There’s a chance I might not make it, Chinatsu-chan,” Mimi told her friend over the phone. She was currently sitting on her bed on the cordless. “Miyako-chan told you?” Mimi laughed. “No, I don’t plan on missing the entire party….Wait, Miyako-chan told you I might be going out of town tomorrow?….No, my aunt and uncle don’t have anything planned for me, and I’m going to Hikarigaoka….I was invited, that’s why I have to go….I know you want to know why I’m going, but I really can’t tell you since I’m not entirely sure myself.” Mimi laughed again over Chinatsu’s dramatic crying. “Chinatsu-chan…that was terrible! Have you been getting lessons from Yuuko-chan?….Well, I could tell because she never sounds convincing when she fake cries either. Anyway, why didn’t either of you guys brought up the party to me?” Chinatsu went on to explain how she figured Mimi would’ve heard about it through “Sora-san” or “Taichi-senpai”, and didn’t think to bring it up.

Chinatsu truly adored Taichi a lot. She looked up to him and had great respect for him. She pretty much idolized him for his athletic abilities and, at times, he had actually helped her prepare for a couple of her volleyball matches through encouragement.

“That’s true. I really wish I’d known about the party sooner, though, then I might would have turned down going to Hikarigaoka tomorrow…..I don’t know what I’m going to do yet, but I might do a little shopping while there….Yes, you are so right! That’s our motto! If the trip is going to be a downer, then definitely find a way to make the best of it….Okay, I’ll talk to you later….You, Ayame-chan, and Yuuko-chan are going to Venus Fort to look for boys?….Oh, I’m sorry, Ayame-chan and Yuuko-chan are. You’re only slightly less boy-crazy than them.” She laughed again.
“Have fun. Sorry I can’t come with you to help Ayame-chan pick out something new to wear for the party since I am, apparently, your fashion consultant….I’m babysitting my cousins….I know, it’s a little weird, but I mentioned to my aunt how common it was in America for kids our age to babysit, so I said that I could do it…Yeah, she took me up on the offer. My aunt and uncle decided to go out for a while since he was able to get home from work early tonight….Alright, talk to you later. I have to check on Ton since it sounds like he’s crying.”

Mimi put the phone back on the hook, and went to check on her younger cousin. It turned out that the boy had wanted something to eat. After she fed him, she sat him down in the living room to play with his toys while she sat down on the couch to look through a fashion magazine. “Hmm, which should I get next once I have the extra money…oh, that skirt looks kind of nice, and it’s the latest fashion!” She circled it with her pen. “I wouldn’t mind wearing something like this to the party tomorrow….oh, and that blouse would go perfectly with it!”

“Neechan!!”

Mimi looked up from her magazine to see an energetic preschooler staring up at her. “Oh, Isako-chan, you’re finally finished watching television.” The girl slumped down on the couch beside Mimi and frowned. “What’s the matter?”

“I’m bored!” she complained with a whine. “Can’t your friends come over and play?”

“I don’t think they’ll be able to come over just to play with you suddenly,” she logically told the girl.

“I like your friends. They’re fun! I want to be just like you and them when I grow up!”

“They’re probably all hanging out just like most everyone else since we’re going on our last week of school and most of us don’t have any extra work or clubs to deal with. Why don’t you play with your brother?”

“Ton is boring! He’s just a baby!”

“You have to show him how to have fun,” Mimi said while trying her best to humor the girl.

“But babies can’t learn how to have fun.”

“Why do you say that? Of course they can learn how to have fun.”

“No they can’t!” the girl insisted. “Babies aren’t as smart as us big kids.” Mimi could only sigh, and give up. “Neechan, what are you doing?”

“I’m looking through a fashion magazine.”

“Ooh! I always like your clothes, neechan! They’re always really pretty!”

“Thanks. I’m trying to get some ideas on an outfit for the dance our school has just started sponsoring for the third year students, and since I’m going to be a third year student soon, I need to plan ahead for mine. I just hope the upcoming one goes over well so that there’ll be one for next year since dances aren’t common here for public schools, then again…Odaiba Junior High runs like a private school. Back in America, we had them all the time and I really enjoyed them, which is why I suggested it to the student council.”

The dance idea was Mimi’s. Not only was the girl popular amongst her peers, but she seemed to have a bit of an influence. As mentioned, dances in Japanese schools were out of the ordinary, then again, OJH was no ordinary school in general. It seemed to be very student focused, as the faculty
was always open to suggestions to make the school run more smoothly or ways to keep the students focused and happy. They took the harmonious thing to the extreme, but wasn’t too against handing out punishments when it was called for.

Back in October, Mimi had been talking to her friends about the school dances she’d been to in America, and how much fun they were. She really wanted to share that with everyone at OJH and actually brought up the idea of having a school dance to the student council. After considering it, and not fully minding the idea, the student council went to the faculty to argue Mimi’s case. Her argument was that students will work even harder on their tests and exams if they knew they were going to be rewarded in the end with a big celebration. After it was approved by both the faculty and the PTA, the planning for it went underway.

The third years were very appreciative of Mimi’s suggestion, and during student council meetings, the third years recruited students to form a Dance Committee Club, which Miyako’s older sister, Chizuru, was a part of, and the teacher head of it was Mr. Ishidzuka. Many gave various suggestions of how the dance should be. They even asked for input from Mimi, the unofficial member, who had suggested a formal, westernized dance, where the girls dressed luxuriously and the boys handsomely. The idea was voted upon and everyone agreed that it might be interesting to do and would constantly seek out the girl for ideas or suggestions, due to her experience with formal dances.

“Is Kou-niichan going to get new clothes too?”

“I don’t know what he’s going to do.”

“Is Kou-niichan still having trouble doing big kid’s work?”

“A little bit. He seems a bit sad.”

“He’s sad?”

Mimi nodded. The girl thought for a moment. “I know!” she clapped. “Let’s go out for some soft-cream to make Kou-niichan happy!”

Mimi couldn’t help but playfully laugh at the smiling girl. “How is that going to make him happy?”

“I don’t know, but it'll make me happy!”

“Maybe another time, it’s time for bed.”

“Aww, do I have to go to bed?”

“Yes. When you become big like me, you can stay up later.”

“But what about Ton? He’s just a baby, and he gets to stay up!”

“No he doesn’t. He’s going to bed too after our bath. He always gets sleepy after bath time.”

“Okay, I like that idea!”

“Okay, now go get your pajamas and head to the washroom, while I get your brother’s things and mine.”

Isako rushed off to get her bed clothes while Mimi picked up Ton, who was laying his head on her chest, falling asleep in her arms. “Looks like you’re already getting sleepy,” she whispered as she gingerly walked up to his room, which he seldom used. It was shared with Isako. The young girl had
pretty much beaten Mimi and Ton there.

Once she was done with that, Mimi headed to her room and got her bathing things and then down to the washroom. Mimi drew up the bath, and began to help bathing the kids under the shower. Once done, she made sure they were rinsed off thoroughly, tied up Isako’s hair, and put them into the deep Japanese-style tub, while she cleaned herself off. Ton splashed around playfully along with Isako. Once done, she stepped in as well, enjoying the soak.

When done with that, she helped the two out out of the tub, and dried herself and them off, although the teen’s hair was still wrapped in a towel. Mimi was grateful that both were actually well-behaved during the entire bathing process. Ton had fully awoken, though due to the change. He'd never taken a bath with Mimi before. It had always been either his mother or father.

Mimi finally had the two dressed and went to the kids’ room. Isako wanted to be read to and Ton wouldn't stay in the bed. The boy was starting to become cranky. The teen could only sigh as she went to her aunt’s room to find the baby carrier. She tied it around her front and slipped the boy in. She definitely wasn't going to volunteer to do this again anytime soon. This was definitely more suitable for someone like Sora.

After reading the girl one of her *Anpanman books, she finally fell asleep. Ton was starting to drift off as well, his head resting against Mimi’s chest. She was unsure of what to fully do since Ton still slept with his parents.

“Guess I'll go back to the living room.” Before she could fully settle down, she heard the doorbell ring and rushed to answer it.

“Hikari-chan, Miyako-chan, Chinatsu-chan, Yuuko-chan, Ayame-chan! Everyone! What are you doing here?!”

“Surprise!” cheered Ayame.

“I can't believe it was true!” exclaimed Yuuko.

“Mimi-chan,” Chinatsu pointed to the sleeping toddler resting on the karaoke princess’ bosom, “are you still babysitting?"

“Yeah,” she answered bashfully. “This was the only way I could get him to sleep since my aunt is still out.”

“Mimi-san looks very motherly,” Hikari complimented with a small giggle.

“Oh, stop that,” she laughed. “Come on in.”

She let them all in and they headed to the living room and took a seat.

“What brings you all by?"

“We heard you were babysitting, so, like Yuuko-san, we decided to come over to see it to believe it,” Miyako told her.

“We also decided to visit you since there’s a chance that you won’t be able to attend the party that Sora-san is throwing,” Hikari added.

“Yeah, because you’re going to Hikarigaoka tomorrow,” Ayame continued.
“Good thing this trip wasn’t a secret!” Mimi laughed while giving Miyako a look. The glasses-wearing computer whiz couldn’t help but laugh at herself.

“Miyako-san and I were at the station and while there we ran into Ayame-san, Chinatsu-san, and Yuuko-san. They started talking about you and how you weren’t able to go to hang out with them, so we all decided to come over here.”

“Yes, we decided to leave all those hot, good-looking guys for your sake.”

Mimi laughed at Yuuko. “I’m really glad you guys came over.”

The group just sat there, pretty much chatting and gossiping way, like really good friends. Miyako then suggested that they all play card games, as Mimi’s uncle had a deck of playing cards. The girls played until the Nishimuras returned home, Mimi’s aunt apologizing for returning later than expected, seeing Mimi with Ton strapped to her torso. Miyako and the others left shortly after. Mimi then explained to her aunt and uncle how she was going to be spending the day with Koushirou in Hikarigaoka Sunday and to go on with whatever plans they had.

Once done, she headed to her room, and checked her e-mail. Once done, she soundly fell asleep…

Chapter End Notes

Author’s Notes

Note 1: Manjuu is similar to the treat, mocchi (which is a pounded rice cake type treat). The outside part of manjuu is made with rice powder, buckwheat, and flour, while the filling can vary, but seems the most commonly used is an azuki-bean and sugar mixture or some other red-bean paste. I don’t care for azuki or anko much. Too sweet for me. Anyway, you put in the filling, knead the dough, fry it up.

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Note 2: I made the comment about the oven because in Japan, most Japanese homes in general lack one, compared to say the US where all homes have an oven, regardless if it’s a house or an apartment. You have to buy them, which are usually the microwave/oven combination type. I don’t know where I heard or read it, but it was said that, “The Japanese don’t bake!” It's not too surprising, eh?

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Note 3: Nikujaga is a Japanese beef-stew made with beef, onions, potatoes (sometimes people use pumpkin), peppers, a sweetened soy sauce, and vegetables. It’s very tasty.

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Note 4: I added more information about the dance thing. In Japan, they don’t have dances or social events like that in school. At the time I’d originally written this, I had no idea that they didn’t.

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Note 5: I added in Mimi bathing with her cousins, as it wouldn’t seem strange for her to. It’s pretty common in Japan. I also added the info about Ton still sleeping with his parents. Co-sleeping with kids is also super common in Japan and other Asian countries compared to places like Canada and the US. Originally I had Mimi put Ton in a crib in his own room, which is more common in western countries.
Note 6: I added in the babysitting information. Something else not particularly common in Japan is babysitting done by teens.

Note 7: Anpanman is a famous character in Japan that appeals to very young kids. He has a book series that ran for 40 years up until the creator's death and an anime series that's been running since 1988. The character's creator, Yanase Takashi, came up with the concept because of his WWII days. He was nearly starving during that time, and missed eating anpan.
Koushirou's Search

Chapter Summary

For this chapter, Koushirou and Mimi finally head to Hikarigaoka and unintentionally sightsee…sorta. Will the two find the adoption agency, or will they end up wasting their time?

Chapter Notes

Now, as always, I do not own anything dealing with the Digimon series or franchise. Bandai and Toei have that honor, and as a reminder, here are the ages of the characters once again:

Jou: 16-17 (Year 10-11; First/second year of High School)
Taichi/Sora/Yamato: 15-16 (Year 09-10; Last year of Junior High School/First year high school)
Koushirou/Mimi: 14-15 (Year 08-09; Second/Last year of Junior High School)
Miyako: 13-14 (Year 07-08; First/second year of Junior High School)
Takeru/Hikari/Daisuke/Ken: 12-13 (Year 06; Final year of Elementary/First year of Junior High School)
Iori: 10-11 (Year 04-05)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 09: Koushirou’s Search!

It was finally March 14, the day of the Hikarigaoka trip. A slightly unenthusiastic Mimi was waiting around for her redheaded companion at the entrance of Daiba Station, which was known for having an elevated train. It took a while for Mimi to get there, given where its location was, but she managed to arrive at 9:00 sharp, despite having overslept. Koushirou had wanted to head out early.

‘Maybe if we hurry and do whatever it is he has to do, we’ll get back in time for the party!’ She started to pace back and forth in front of the station, growing slightly annoyed, as it was a bit chilly out. She walked amidst the crowd up the stairs and walked to the end of the tunnel, right before the area where one could buy a ticket. It was slightly warmer there, and didn’t have as much of a breeze. “Where in the world is he!” she grumbled while tapping her foot. She looked down at her watch to see that it was nearly 9:30. “I could be sleeping right now!”

Right at that moment, Koushirou showed up looking for his friend. He didn’t see her at the front, and entered the station with a large group of people. The station was surprisingly crowded, so he didn’t see Mimi at the end of the tunnel right away and actually walked past her. Mimi noticed Koushirou from where she was and saw that he was wearing a green jacket, a red and grey long-sleeved shirt, grey pants, and black sneakers. What really caught her eye, though, was his signature red hair. She realized that he obviously hadn’t seen her, so she did her best to get his attention.
“Koushirou!! Koushirou-kun!” she called while jumping up and down, waving her arms wildly as best as she could. “I’m over here! Koushirou-kun!!”

Hearing his name, vaguely, he turned to see the elegant girl jumping, and made his way over to her. Mimi was dressed very nicely, which Koushirou couldn’t help but notice. Her hair seemed wavier than usual, with some of it tied back, while the rest hung loosely down her back, past her shoulders. She was wearing a dark-red skirt, a close-fitting, short-sleeved yellow blouse, a white jacket, with a big matching handbag, and a pair of expensive looking brown boots. This was definitely flashy for the girl now-a-days. She dressed more casually compared to when she was younger and realized that one’s internal beauty was just as important as one’s outer beauty, if not more. She normally wore jeans and midriff shirts, or if she did decide to wear skirts or dresses outside of school, which was more than when she would wear pants or jeans, they weren’t too dressy looking.

Mimi had definitely matured in that sense and wasn’t so self absorbed when it came to outer beauty or what everyone else thought of her, and her choice of friends showed that. Some of her peers thought of her as a bit strange since she was such good friends with Koushirou. She was still pretty popular, but she was never looked down upon for her choice of friends who weren’t particularly with the “in” crowd. Mimi was friendly with pretty much everyone. Another reason why her popularity probably never waned was more than likely due to the fact that she was good friends with the local celebrity, Yamato, and he was also friends with Koushirou. This was probably also another reason why Koushirou was never bothered or bullied. “If Ishida thinks he’s cool, then he must be all right”, most would assume.

“Hello, Mimi-san. I-I’m very sorry for being late. R-ready to go?” the boy asked hesitantly, once again distracted by the girl’s beauty.

“Yeah, sure, I guess so,” she responded simply.

“Okay.” Koushirou looked away from Mimi quickly and took out a train schedule. “We-we’re going to have to go by way of the Oedo line, which can take us all the way to Hikarigaoka station, which is the stop after Nerima Kasugachou, but since we’re at this station, which is on the Yurikamome line, we’ll definitely have to transfer once we reach Shiodome station, and then…”

Mimi tuned Koushirou out. She had no idea why he seemed anxious or even why he was explaining how to get to Hikarigaoka to her as if she’d never been before. It wasn't necessary. Right now, she was questioning herself as to why she agreed to such a thing in the first place. For once in her life, her nosiness, which was definitely inherited from her mother, had gotten her into a situation she’d rather not have to deal with, as she would’ve preferred to do something else. She wanted to spend the morning getting ready for the party, or sleeping in a little later at least. ‘I guess I could do a little bit of shopping while I’m there, like I told Chinatsu-chan.’

“Mimi-san?”

“Oh, um, sorry.”

“You don’t have to come with me, and I would understand completely if you would rather spend the day doing whatever it is you would normally do on a day off.”

“Oh no you don’t! You’re not getting rid of me that easily. I’m going and that’s final,” she told him firmly.

“Whatsoever you say,” he sighed. “Let’s go. I have to charge my train pass.”

The two made their way to the automated ticket kiosk. The price wasn’t too high, given that they
were both students. Once done, the two headed to their designated platform and waited for the train, which wasn't long. The train wasn’t too crowded, despite the crowd in the station, so the two were able to find vacant seats beside one another. Mimi did notice, though, the amount young people on the train. Having only one free day a week was pretty stressful, and one thing Mimi missed about her time in America, aside from her friend Michael and the other Digidestined children she'd met, was the school system, but only because the students there all over the country were granted both Saturday and Sunday off, as opposed to only some schools not meeting on Saturdays.

‘Well, let’s see…what places in Hikarigaoka are good for shopping…’

‘I wonder where my biological family is now and why they put me up for adoption. What if I find out that they did so because they really didn’t want me to begin with, and that my chances of reconciling are pretty much low? If that is the case, then I’ll have no true place to truly belong…’

The two continued their ride in silence, drowned in their own thoughts: Mimi’s thoughts being fun and playful, while Koushirou’s were serious and somber. They made their transfer, just as Koushirou had explained earlier, but the two still seemed to keep quiet during the trip. The usual sociable Mimi wasn’t too social because Koushirou wasn’t making much of an effort to be social with her.

After what seemed like a lifetime to Mimi, the train finally stopped at Hikarigaoka Station. After both got off the train and exited the station, Mimi twirled and cheered. “We’re finally here! I’m definitely hitting the mall or either one of the department stores! Hikarigaoka have nice places to shop.”

“The mall? The department stores?”

“Of course! Like I said, Hikarigaoka has some of the best places to shop here in Tokyo! Mama and I used to come here all the time whenever we wanted to do some shopping.”

“Whatever you say,” he shrugged. Mimi wasn't sure, but the boy, to her, came across as a bit apathetic after her shopping declaration. She hated to purposely upset or annoy anyone. “I-I-I mean after we finish researching of course,” she added on quickly.

“Yeah, I guess that’s okay,” he tediously replied.

‘Way to go, Mimi,’ the girl sarcastically scolded herself. “So, where are we going first?”

“To be honest, I’m not too sure yet.”

She didn’t question him and just tagged along anyway. The two ended up riding a good ways on the bus, until Koushirou insisted on getting off and walking. He was going by the directions he had written down, but, unfortunately, he’d written them down wrong.

Riding and walking around Hikarigaoka was fun, at first, but it was now getting frustrating. Mimi was starting to grow a tad bit annoyed with Koushirou and his dragging her around, as they were back near the station.

First off, she really wanted the two of them to attend Sora’s party, and she didn’t get to do any type of shopping done. She was also growing hungry. It was nearly 12:00 and she hadn’t eaten anything that morning before leaving to meet up with him.

“Koushirou-kun, I’m getting hungry,” the girl unintentionally whined while holding her growling stomach. “We’ve been sightseeing all day! Couldn’t we stop someplace to at least get something to snack on or something to drink?”
The redhead inadvertently ignored Mimi, pretty much, like that time when the pair of them, along with their Digimon partners, Tentomon and Palmon, were trapped in that ruin in the Digital World when they were children. By his inadvertent ignoring her that particular time, she ran off and got herself lost in the temple’s labyrinth with Koushirou’s Tentomon by her side. He was so busy trying to figure out the mechanics of the strange place, that he ignored pretty much all around him. This was turning into another one of those times.

“Koushirou-kun!!”

He continued to study the map he’d picked up earlier once he realized he was lost. Mimi wished he’d just go to a police-box and ask for directions to wherever it was he needed to go, but as usual, he was trying to do everything on his own. If she knew where they were actually going, she would’ve asked a police officer herself.

“Are you ignoring me you computer-geek pipsqueak!”

Mimi had finally grown annoyed to the point of resorting to such a childish tactic like name-calling, especially “computer-geek pipsqueak”. It was a bit inaccurate due to the fact that he wasn’t much of a pipsqueak anymore, as he was taller than she was, and he wasn’t really much of a geek. Even with all of that, Koushirou still managed to ignore her.

“Koushirou-kun no baka! Baka, baka, baka, baka!!” she furiously shouted. She stormed off angrily, taking off in the opposite direction.

“Okay, I think I finally understand this,” Koushirou said, completely oblivious to Mimi’s trying to get his attention. “I actually misread this and mixed up the city blocks. Pretty silly of me, huh?” When he didn’t receive a response, he looked behind him to come to the realization that he had been talking to himself. “Mimi-san?” The only thing the boy saw were other people walking the streets by him going to various shops. ‘Where did she go?’

He started to walk around, calling out for the girl some more. After a while, he stopped to think for a moment. “Where would she go? When did she leave? Why did she leave?” He scratched his head in confusion as he tried to recall the last time he had spoken with her directly. ‘She did talk about shopping and wanting to eat or something. I should just leave her and go to that place by myself…’ He sighed. “I can’t leave her behind. It’d be rude; besides, I know Mimi-san pretty well, and I have an idea where she may have gone since she mentioned wanting to shop. I suppose I should head towards the IMA Hikarigaoka Shopping Center. I’m not too far from it according to the map, but where I have to go is closer! I can’t just not go there! That information is much too vital to avoid!” He frowned slightly over having to go to such a place. He wasn’t much of a shopper, unless it was for something specific. “I’m sorry, Mimi-san, I’ll just have to look for you later…but, I should probably go to the shopping center anyway.”

A person nearby, who had just come from a nearby vending machine, overheard the redhead and frowned slightly at her own selfishness. ‘I shouldn’t have stormed off, but I was hungry and thirsty and we’ve been lost all day. I feel like that character from that old show Ranma 1/2 or those three kids on that Pocket Monsters show!’

The girl saw Koushirou walk off, so she decided to follow behind him at a bit of a distance, which was easy to do as the walkways were pretty busy. Holding her bottled water, she continued following, curious as to what he was going to do and if he was really going to the shopping center, a place he wasn’t fond of, just to look for her. She actually found the gesture commendable.

The walk lasted a long while, and Mimi continued her hidden pursuit of the boy who was definitely headed in the direction of the grand department store. She constantly glanced down at her watch. She
saw that it was now nearly 13:00 (1:00), almost time for Sora’s party. Koushirou only had one more block to go, but, he stopped abruptly at a big, plain looking building compared to the modern ones around it. It actually resembled an old boarding school to her. Koushirou stared up at it. To Mimi, it almost looked as if he were debating with himself. In the front of the building, there was an area filled with young children playing.

The girl took a big gulp of her drink. ‘Why did he stop here? The mall isn't too much farther.’ She tried to get a little closer, but not by much.

“I found it!”

‘What did he find?’ She looked up at the sign on the building. ‘Nerima Children’s Institute and Adoption Agency, Hikarigaoka branch. Why would he want to go in there?’

Chapter End Notes

Author’s Notes

Note 1: Everything I used for when Mimi got upset and left was from the original Digimon Adventure episode already mentioned. Mimi calling him a “Computer Geek Pipsqueak” was a dub addition, though, so, that’s not original, of course. She yelled at him, “Koushirou-kun no baka!” when fed up with him, which pretty much translates to “Stupid Koushirou!” Out of those batch of episodes, this was one of my favorites, along with the one where the Bakemon were terrorizing Jou and Sora, and for the record, Jou wasn’t going, “Bakemon lose your power”, but I guess that’s as close as the dubbers could get. For the original, Jou was actually using a Shinto mantra chant to drive the Bakemon away.

Anyway, getting slightly back on topic, I liked the original episode much better than the dubbed one. One thing I liked in a general sense was that Koushirou was partnered up with Mimi’s Palmon and Mimi was partnered up with Koushirou’s Tentomon. I found it interesting how it was set up that way, and, to my knowledge, this wasn’t done for any other characters (at the time). I also liked it better mainly because Koushirou came across as being a bit more concerned over the welfare of Tentomon and Mimi when compared to how “Izzy” acted, imo. Also, when Tentomon was going on about something being wrong after Izzy stopped talking abruptly for the dub, originally, Koushirou was still talking to them and warning them of something else being in the maze with them. For that entire scene, Tentomon didn’t speak at all because Koushirou was doing all of the talking. For the dub, it seemed as if Izzy didn’t fully care too much whether they got out safely or not - even though we know it isn’t true - whereas in the original, Koushirou was tossing out suggestions to help them more.

Something else I found interesting about this episode concerning the two regarding their partner switch, was the fact that Palmon was trying to get Koushirou to understand Mimi and Tentomon was trying to get Mimi to understand Koushirou. I just found that incredibly ironic because I’m almost positive (for the Adventure/Adventure 02 group) that this has never been done for any of the other characters.

Another change about that episode deals with with Kentarumon (Centarumon). For the
dub, Centarumon spoke throughout the episode when in pursuit to kill Izzy and Mimi. Kentarumon for the original episode didn’t speak until the Black Gear was removed. He didn’t speak until he explained about the history behind the Digivices the children received. That was pretty much how it was with most of the Black Gear Digimon the children encountered for that arc. For instance, the episode where Gomamon evolved to Ikkakumon for the first time, they had encountered an Unimon. That Unimon didn’t speak at all. The gear was just removed, and it flew away. Even when returning at the end of Adventure as one of the allies Mimi brought back, Unimon still didn’t speak.

~*~*~*~*~*~

Fic Chapter Changes

When I originally wrote this story, as I mentioned, it was between 2001 and 2002, and if I’m remembering right, this was a 2001 chapter. At the time that this story takes place the traveling group wouldn’t have been ‘three’ as the character of Kasumi (Misty) was dropped as a main character in 2002 (in Japan). During this time, Pokemon Advanced Generation would’ve been airing and the group would’ve been extended to four (as Takeshi stayed, and the characters of Haruka and Masato were added). I didn’t even know her character was gone until years later. I never figured they would’ve permanently dropped a main character.
Chapter Summary

Hi again everyone. For this chapter, Mimi makes a discovery, like the title of this chapter insinuates, so, please enjoy.

Chapter Notes

Now, as always, I do not own anything dealing with the Digimon series or franchise. Bandai and Toei have that honor, and as a reminder, here are the ages of the characters once again:

Jou: 16-17 (Year 10-11; First/second year of High School)
Taichi/Sora/Yamato: 15-16 (Year 09-10; Last year of Junior High School/First year high school)
Koushirou/Mimi: 14-15 (Year 08-09; Second/Last year of Junior High School)
Miyako: 13-14 (Year 07-08; First/second year of Junior High School)
Takeru/Hikari/Daisuke/Ken: 12-13 (Year 06; Final year of Elementary/First year of Junior High School)
Iori: 10-11 (Year 04-05)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 10: Mimi’s Discovery!

The walk lasted a long while, and Mimi continued her hidden pursuit of the boy who was definitely headed in the direction of the grand department store. She constantly glanced down at her watch. She saw that it was now nearly 13:00 (1:00), almost time for Sora’s party. Koushirou only had one more block to go, but, he stopped abruptly at a big, plain looking building compared to the modern ones around it. It actually resembled an old boarding school to her. Koushirou stared up at it. To Mimi, it almost looked as if he were debating with himself. In the front of the building, there was an area filled with young children playing.

The girl took a big gulp of her drink. ‘Why did he stop here? The mall isn't too much farther.’ She tried to get a little closer, but not by much.

“I found it!”

‘What did he find?’ She looked up at the sign on the building. ‘Nerima Children's Institute and Adoption Agency, Hikarigaoka branch. Why would he want to go in there?’

“Wow, all of the answers I have been searching for are right here in this building.” Mimi overheard Koushirou say. She was surprised that he was speaking his mind out in the open for all to hear. Mimi noticed the boy getting a few looks from those passing by him, wondering why he was talking to
himself aloud. “I can finally get those answers that have been on my mind for years, but what about Mimi-san? I really should continue on since I’m so close.” The boy shook his head. “No, I really need this information! I’m going to go in. Mimi-san will have to wait. If I can’t find her after this, I can always send her a message through her mobile.” His mind set, he made his way up the walkway and entered the building with the tinted glass doors. ‘I’m sorry, Mimi-san, but this is more important than your shopping.’

‘He went in? I wonder why? Maybe he does volunteer work.’ Her curiosity taking over, she decided to follow him in, but made sure to keep her distance.

“I wonder where I’m supposed to go,” Koushirou muttered aloud.

The boy seemed to be in the lobby of the building, if one could call it that. There were lots of potted plants around as well as religious objects around on pedestals and Christian-themed paintings on the walls, like angels, but there were children inside as well, who looked to be playing or socializing.

A little ways behind, after tossing her plastic bottle into a trash bin after entering, Mimi was still snooping, highly interested in finding out what business Koushirou had with this place.

One of the children was sitting near one of the potted plants in the carpeted area, but once the child saw Koushirou walk by her, she rushed up to him to greet him. Something about the redhead drew her to him. The child had long brown hair, tied up into two neat pigtails, big clear bright brown eyes, and a warm smile. She looked to be no more than three or four years old.

“Hello.”

“Um, hello.”

“Are you going to be my new brother?” she asked innocently.

Koushirou was taken aback over the forwardness of the question. All he could manage to get out was, “Wh-what?”

“Are you going to be my new big brother?”

“Your new brother?”

She nodded anxiously. “Can you be my new brother? You seem like you’re really nice.” The girl lowered her head, and her warm smile slightly faded. “I don’t have my real big brother anymore,” she explained while a frown made its way to her face. “The orphan people here told me that he is never going to come back and neither is my mommy or daddy and that I’m going to get a new mommy and daddy and maybe even a new big brother, but to never forget my real mommy, daddy, and big brother.”

Mimi noticed that Koushirou was starting to look uncomfortable. “I’m sorry, I can not be your brother, I’m afraid…” The girl looked as if she were about to cry. Slightly panicked, Koushirou added on quickly, while getting down on her level, “…b-but I can be your friend.” He put on a smile. “My name is Izumi Koushirou.”

The girl smiled again, and then out of no where, hugged Koushirou. He didn’t really know how to react to the girl’s sudden show of affection. He just hugged the girl back awkwardly.

‘He’s warm, just like oniichan,’ the girl thought contently, not really wanting to let go.

Mimi, who had been hiding behind one of the potted plants, ducked her head out a bit more to get a
better view. She couldn’t help but smile. The sight of Koushirou with the young child was touching, and his expression when the girl jumped into his arms was just plain entertaining. She couldn’t wait to get back home to share this information with Miyako and Sora. She was almost tempted to take out her phone and get a picture of it.

After the embrace, Koushirou looked to visibly relax, and stood back up. “My name is Shimizu Kimiko and I am four years old. Are you going to take me home with you? It would be nice to have a big brother and a mommy and a daddy again.”

“I-I would,” Koushirou began sympathetically, “but I can’t.”

“Oh.”

Once again, Kimiko looked like she was about to cry, which caused him to, once again, panic. “No, wait! Please don’t get sad. I, um, promise that I will visit you every Sunday from now on until you finally manage to find a home. I can act as your big brother until you get a real one again.”

“I would like that. I would have a big brother again. I loved my big brother. He used to play with me and spend time with me whenever mommy and daddy were away or whenever mommy and daddy were busy with their cooking work for the people of the whole town! One day, when my friend, Mitsuo-chan, and I were being walked home by his mommy, Yoko-bachan, and got to my house, our entire home was gone. The place where mommy and daddy worked to cook for people and our home that was over it.” She sniffled. “Keichi-oniichan was there too.”

‘That poor girl. Her family must’ve run a restaurant or something like that and a fire must’ve broken out somehow.’

Before Koushirou could comment on the sad tale Kimiko had just told, another small child ran up to the girl. He looked to be about six or seven years in age. “Kimiko-chan, we were thinking about playing either hide-and-seek or *darumasan ga koronda. We could use another player.”

“Oh, I like both games! I’d love to play, Motoki-chan!” The girl turned her attention towards Koushirou. “Do you want to play too, oniichan?”

“No thank you. You should go play with your friend.”

“Okay, oniichan! Bye bye!” With that, the girl ran off with the dark-haired boy.

‘That was really sweet and kind of Koushirou to promise that girl that he’d come back here every week. I’m sure that really made her day. Being all alone like that, a friend would be the most helpful to have.’

“Who was that guy?” Motoki asked as the two headed outside to the play area.

“He’s my new big brother!”

“Are you leaving?”

“No, he’s only going to be my pretend big brother until I can get a real one again.”

“That’s really nice. I hope I can leave someday too.”

While the two were running by, Kimiko noticed Mimi standing behind the potted plant. “I wonder what that girl is doing there.”
“Who knows,” shrugged Motoki, “but let’s hurry. Everyone else is waiting.”

“Okay!”
****
Koushirou finally made his way to the front desk of the large area. There were three people sitting there: two women and one man. The oldest-looking one of the group looked to be the least busy, so Koushirou went to her.

“Good afternoon,” the woman greeted cheerfully. “I am Karen Mitsuishi. How may I help you?”

“H-hello there, Mitsuishi-san.”

She gave the boy a look. “You look a bit young to be adopting or fostering a child.”

****
‘I’ll say…’
****
“No, no, it’s nothing like that,” the boy assured her. “I just need some information,” he replied slowly.

“Information? What kind of information?”

****
‘I was wondering about that myself…’
****
“Well, I--”

“Oh no!” Mrs. Mitsuishi interrupted. “I hope you’re not here for what I think you’re here for.”

“Huh?”

“There do seem to be more young people coming here more so now-a-days in hopes that their families never find out about it, afraid of bringing shame to their families and not truly wanting to take the other drastic route.”

“They do?”

She nodded. “I should have this paperwork ready since some of you children just don’t know how to control yourselves now-a-days. Seems it was the same back home, too,” she tsked while shaking her head, pulling out some papers. “Well, I suppose you should be commended for trying to be responsible about this, and in a way, I wish more people did come here as opposed to going with the more severe option. It’s not often we see stuff like that.

“Ahh, here it is. This is the paper work that you will need for your situation, and it should explain everything that you need to know.” She handed the paper to Koushirou. “Now, where is the girl?”

While waiting for him to respond, a certain girl peaking from behind a tall potted plant caught her eye. Mrs. Mitsuishi smiled knowingly. ‘That girl's been back there for a while now. She looks to be about his age, so I can’t help but wonder if that’s the girl. She almost looks as if she’s waiting to be invited up here.’

“Girl?”

“Yes, the girl whose baby you fathered that you now have to put up for adoption because, due to certain circumstances, you are unable to care for it.”

****
Mimi’s eyes went wide. ‘WHAT!?!’
“What!?!” Koushirou’s face had gone completely red.

“That wasn’t the response I was expecting. Where are the child and the girl? If your families didn’t notice the child, then the mother must be a really stout girl who didn’t look as if she were pregnant or either she was the very small type who only looked to gain a small amount of weight. How old is the child and how long ago did the mother have it? That information is vital for us to have so that we can help you, unless she has yet to have the child and you’re just trying to make arrangements early.”

‘Koushirou is a father? Is that why he’s here? Is he here to get information on putting a child up for adoption?’

She got out of her shocked mode temporarily to logically think the situation over, or try to at least.

‘I never knew Koushirou had it in him to actually do something like that. He’s more experienced than I thought when it comes to girls. Does he have a secret lover? No, he can’t have one! It wouldn’t be right for him to have one! I mean, what kind of girl could she be? She’s probably horrible if she’s a secret girlfriend…but what do I care if he does have a secret girlfriend that he shouldn’t have? It’s no business of mine…AHH, never mind!

‘He got someone pregnant! Mr. I put computers and problems first before everything else got someone pregnant!!’ She shuddered. ‘Why does that somehow sound wrong and disturbing to me…’

It took the boy a short while, but he finally managed to come back to reality, his face still glowing red.

“No, I am not a father! I do not have any children! I don’t even have a girlfriend!” he said in defense. ‘That’s common?!”

After hearing Koushirou say that he wasn’t a father and that he didn’t have a girlfriend, she breathed out in relief. She seemed to be more, pleased, though, that Koushirou wasn’t dating.

‘Koushirou getting someone pregnant would’ve been very disturbing, but-but I probably would’ve felt the same way if it had been like, Taichi-san or Jou-senpai too, and even more so if it were someone like Takeru-kun or Daisuke-kun or Ichijouji-kun.’

“Oh, my mistake,” the woman apologized embarrassingly. She took back the paper she’d given Koushirou and put it away. “I’m very sorry for making that assumption.”

“That’s okay.” He was still a bit flabbergasted over the accusation. He literally couldn’t imagine himself in the situation for either the action or the surprise result.

“Now, what type of information do you need?”

“I need information about an adoption.”

‘Why? I wonder if one of his parents are adopted and just hates talking about it. Maybe that’s why he came all the way here. Maybe either Mr. Izumi or Mrs. Izumi was adopted from here. It wouldn’t be surprising if most of Koushirou’s family lived someplace in this area.’

“I’m sorry, but I can’t give out such confidential information unless those involved with the adoption itself is present.”

“I am more involved than you know,” he muttered under his breath.
"I have worked here for 20 years and this is the first time since I’ve been here that someone your age has come in here requesting confidential information."

"I’m sorry."

"Cheer up. You seem to be a good kid,” the woman smiled to him. ‘I’m sure that I could help explain the procedure of how one is adopted.’

"I didn’t mean to cause any trouble."

"I can tell that. Anyway, I may be able to tell you something based on my knowledge. I do remember some adoption cases better than others."

"I guess that would be okay. I’m curious about the Izumis. Do you know anything about them?"

‘I wasn’t expecting him to actually give a name. I wonder if I should actually tell him anything about them.’ She turned her attention back to Koushirou. “The name, Izumi, is familiar, but the name is a rather common one around here.”

“So you don’t remember any cases involving any Izumis?”

“Well, now that you mention it, I do remember this one case dealing with a couple who had wanted to adopt a child badly and luckily for them, they managed to find one. I mainly remember their case because I dealt with it personally and as I mentioned earlier, some cases are more memorable than others, and their particular case was very memorable, especially with the child they eventually adopted. Those two were Izumis.”

“Very interesting.” Koushirou sounded intrigued to Mimi.

‘I remember them fairly well. I always did wonder what happened to them and how they got along with that child they adopted. I can’t remember the child’s name, but I might know it if I hear it. Their names were…man what were they…oh yeah! Izumi Masami and his wife, Yoshie. That case was also memorable since I was acquainted with the adopted child’s real parents…’

“Why were the Izumis so anxious to adopt a child?”

“It was a pretty sad story, but I feel that it is not my place to say. You are technically not connected to this case, after all. I know I’m saying more than what I should right now.” She looked at the boy suspiciously once again. “Who are you and why are you so concerned about the Izumis?”

“Izumi Koushirou.”

“Koushirou?!” She thought for a moment, coming to a realization. ‘That was the name of the child they adopted! I remember that now!’

“Yes, Koushirou is my given name.”

“Are you the son of Izumi Masami and Izumi Yoshie?”

“Yes.”

“If it’s okay, would you mind verifying that please? Do you have any identification?”

“No, I don’t mind at all.” He went through his wallet, and took out his school identification card and handed it to the lady.
“So, you really are who you say you are, even though I could take more measures to verify this, but you seem to be legit.”

*I wonder what’s going on.*

“So, you're curious about that adoption,” she muttered while handing back Koushirou’s identification. “What have they told you?”

Koushirou lowered his head. “Nothing. They do not know that I know.”

“Oh.”

“I want to find my real parents. I feel that it is time I meet them face to face…”

*Real parents!?! Koushirou’s adopted?!?*

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**Chapter End Notes**

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**Author’s Note**

Note 1: Darumasan ga koronda is similar to the game Red Light Green Light. The person who is it sings the song with his back to everyone and when done, turns to catch the person who didn’t freeze.

**Fic Chapter Changes**

I gave Kimiko a full name. Originally, I just had her introduce herself as “Kimiko”. I was also almost tempted to change her name to Kiyoko (which would mean pure child), but changed my mind since I use the name for a main character in this fic’s sequel (I may go back to it someday).

When Kimiko is telling her story, I changed one main thing, and that was the person who had brought her home to the burned down home. I originally had that it was her “Aunty Yoko”, but in Japan, they usually place orphaned children with blood relatives, hence Koushirou’s situation, even though his “adoptive father” is a distant relative of his. If there was an “Aunty Yoko” around, I doubt the girl would even be in such a place when there’s a relative right there to place her with.

I changed the name of Kimiko’s brother to Keiichi. I also added in the character of Mitsuo and changed “Aunty Yoko” to a neighbor. I know that Yoko-bachan can translate to Aunt Yoko, but in this regard, she’s just using it because she’s an older woman.

I implied that the family ran a restaurant. Maybe a place that may specialize in preparing yakisoba or some other dish that may require a grill to prepare the food.

I originally only mentioned hide-and-seek. I decided to add in darumasan ga koronda
too. When I did write this story, I was curious of there being a game equivalent to Red Light Green Light, but didn’t know of any back then at the time, which is why I stuck with only hide-and-seek.

Originally, Karen’s name was Kiyoko Mitsuishi, but I decided to make her a foreigner, hence the name change.
Questions and Answers

Chapter Summary

For this chapter, Koushirou will end up learning more about his biological parents, but will it be enough to satisfy his curiosity?

Chapter Notes

Now, as always, I do not own anything dealing with the Digimon series or franchise. Bandai and Toei have that honor, and as a reminder, here are the ages of the characters once again:

- Jou: 16-17 (Year 10-11; First/second year of High School)
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- Iori: 10-11 (Year 04-05)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 11: Questions & Answers…

“So, you're curious about *that* adoption,” she muttered while handing back Koushirou’s identification. “What have they told you?”

Koushirou lowered his head. “Nothing. They do not know that I know.”

“Oh.”

“I want to find my real parents. I feel that it is time I meet them face to face…”

****

‘*Real* parents!?! Koushirou’s adopted?!?’

****

“Mr. Izumi, would you like to go someplace so that we may talk more thoroughly?”

“Yes, I would,” he nodded resolutely. “I’ve found out a couple of things about myself that I would like to have verified.”

“Could one of those things concern your place of birth?” He nodded again. “There are a couple of conference rooms here; we could go there.”

Koushirou was ready to take the older woman up on her offer, but didn’t move from his spot. “Well,
I have a bit of a situation here. I was really on my way to the shopping district nearby to look for my friend and I came across here by coincidence…somewhat,” he mumbled.

“Hmm, please tell me what this gir…er…friend looks like. Describe your friend.”

“Well, she’s a little shorter than I am, has long light-brown hair and was wearing some of it tied up, I think, she was wearing a skirt, but I don’t remember the color right off…oh, she was carrying around a big white hand-bag…but that doesn’t help much since most girls carry those things around…”

“I’m sure that you will find your friend as soon as she wants to be found.”

****

‘I get the gist that that woman knows I’m here. She did keep glancing back here earlier. They’ve also gotten too quiet and I can’t hear them as well anymore.’ She stepped from behind the tall plant. ‘I guess I’ve been spying long enough.’ The girl started to walk towards Koushirou…

****

“What do you mean?”

The woman leaned over the counter and whispered, “Look behind you.”

“Look behind me?” he asked, puzzled.

She nodded to him and sat back in her seat. She was grinning widely. Koushirou turned around to see the girl he had just described standing a little ways in front of him now. “Mimi-san!”

“Hey there,” she said while walking up beside him, his eyes glued to her. “How’s it going?”

‘She’s being so casual,’ the boy noted. “How long have you been here?”

“She’s been here for a while. I noticed her shortly after you came in, but didn’t say anything given what I was originally thinking.”

“Wow, you were here the entire time,” said Koushirou in astonishment.

“Y-yeah, I’m sorry I didn’t say anything earlier.”

“Forget about it.” He sighed, and grew quiet. “So, I suppose you heard…”

She nodded. “You came to Hikarigaoka to find out more about your birth parents.”

“Yeah…”

“If you really want that information, we could go to one of the vacant rooms, and I can gather it for you.”

“I would really appreciate that, Mitsuishi-san.”

The woman spoke with the other two at the counter with her, to let them know that she was going to work with a technical former resident. Even though she could have had one of them do so, as it was obvious that Mrs. Mitsuishi was the most experienced worker there, she wanted to deal with Koushirou’s case. She rose from her seat behind the counter to join Koushirou. “Okay, let’s go. It’s right this way.”

The redhead followed behind the woman, while Mimi watched them off. Koushirou soon realized that he was the only one following Mrs. Mitsuishi and that a certain karaoke-loving girl wasn’t by his side. He stopped in his tracks. “Mitsuishi-san, please wait a moment.” He turned back towards Mimi.
"Mimi-san, you’re my partner, so you should probably come along with me.” He gave the girl a look, wondering, ‘What does she really think of me now that she knows?’

"Koushirou-kun…"

The girl nodded awkwardly. She wasn’t sure if she should hear what Mrs. Mitsuishi had to say or not, and figured that the information was probably highly confidential. She walked up beside Koushirou and gave him a half smile. He turned his head quickly. “L-let’s go, Mimi-san. We’re ready, Mitsuishi-san.”

She led them to an office as opposed to one of the vacant rooms she mentioned. It consisted of a desk, which held a computer with a flat-screen monitor, two seats in front of that desk, a window, with the blinds closed, and the lights of the room were a bit dim. Mrs. Mitsuishi left them both to retrieve all the files they had on Koushirou’s adoption.

During their short time alone, Mimi was incredibly nervous and neither one of them spoke. She had a multitude of questions for Koushirou, but she felt that it might offend him in some way, especially the generic, “What is it like to be adopted?” question. Another question that racked her mind was how he had found out about his adoption in the first place if neither of his parents had ever mentioned it to him.

Mrs. Mitsuishi returned with a folder filled with many documents. She took a seat behind her desk, and slipped on a pair of glasses. She then started to look through the folder.

“After a while, I started to remember your case a bit more. It was one of the ones I handled myself. The only reason I remember your case is because you were one of the fastest cases I ever dealt with and was also one of my firsts when I started working here full time.”

“Eh?”

“In other words, it didn’t take us too long to find a couple that was willing to take you in.”

“So, what happened? Is there any way I can locate my real family?” he asked. He then grimaced, ‘The sooner, the better. . .’

“Is there something the matter?”

“No, it’s just that our place is going to be a bit crowded in about a year, and I would like to contact my birth parents just to see what they’re like.”

****

‘The baby! He’s doing this because of the baby! He isn’t all that fond over the addition his family is going to get. Could he actually be…jealous?’

****

“That’s going to be difficult to do.”

“Well, why did my birth parents leave me here? Was I born to an unwed mother who couldn’t take care of me or brought shame to her family because of it and was threatened to be disowned or disinherited by them? Did the two of them dislike the idea of becoming parents and preferred to leave me in an orphanage than to actually try to care for me? Please tell me. I have a right to at least know of that and of my true place of birth as well as the names of my birth parents. Please, Mitsuishi-san,” he pleaded. Seeing Koushirou like this was painful to Mimi.

Mrs. Mitsuishi was reluctant to answer these questions, as she looked over in Mimi’s direction. Mimi got the hint and started to stand.
Without realizing it, Koushirou grabbed the girl’s arm, but didn’t look her way. “No, wait! I want her to stay. She’s my partner through all of this,” he glanced over at her, and quickly let go of her arm, “and my…friend…”

“No, if you insist.” She ran her fingers through her short, stringy blonde hair while Mimi retook her seat.

****
‘That was very nice of him to insist that I stay. I’m even gladder that he genuinely sees me as a friend. It’s like he’s opening up more and finally letting me in to share something so personal.’ Mimi was growing a bit overwhelmed, and felt like crying, but held back. ‘Thank you, Koushirou. I’m now curious as to what his real family is like. I wonder if they like computers a lot too.’

****
“Okay, let’s continue on then. Now, your parents were married in 1987, but your mother kept her maiden name. Seems, that they had been together for a long time before marrying and unless you can manage to find people who were close friends to the two, then they could probably tell you why your mother seemed to use her maiden name, but I suppose it’s not any of our business or all that relevant.”

“No, it really isn’t…” he stated bluntly.

“Anyway, I actually remember them.”

“Wait, are you saying that you knew my birth parents on a non-professional level??”

“In a way, but I didn’t know them personally. I just knew of them, for the most part. I used to be an English Language Teacher at their university. I was just starting out here in Japan. I was in my late 20s at the time.”

****
‘Wow, she must be older than she looks…’

****
“Your father was a very smart individual and was very talented when it came to mathematics and technological related things.” She laughed a bit. “All of that was way over my head. In my home country, I was certified to only teach math (and other subjects) on the elementary school level, English Literature at the secondary level, and English Language for all levels internationally. If I also remember correctly, your father seemed to be fairly well-known amongst his peers. I remember his constantly being invited for karaoke.”

‘Popular, eh? That’s the complete opposite of me. I may be known, but I’m not popular.’

“You know, now that I look at you, you seem to resemble your father a little bit. I don’t know how I missed it! I can’t put my finger on it exactly, I think it’s your eyes, but there is something about you that reminds me of your father, but I’d have to say you’re a clone of your mother from what I remember of her. You seem to have a lot of her features. Well, never mind that. I’ll continue. Both your mother and your father must have met during their time at Toudai, but I’m not too sure.”

“Tokyo U?!” the two asked in surprise.

“Yes, one of the most well-known schools internationally, as well as one of the most difficult schools to get into. I’ve translated the entrance exams for Tokyo U, and the exam is very difficult,” she confirmed. “I think your father was there for mathematical engineering or something like that. Anyway, both of them graduated. Even though your father could’ve definitely ended up in a career to put all of his mathematical and engineering genius to use, he seemed to find the university life exhilarating. He decided to make a career out of it and, eventually, became a lecturer at Odaiba University.
“He was very well-known there. I got to know him after a while. I had a job there in the university’s international department. I taught some of the subjects in English required for those coming from English-bound countries as most were still learning Japanese or taking Japanese language courses.

“I dropped out of the teaching profession about….14, 15 years ago and moved here to Nerima to work at this orphanage that my husband and I had taken over just a couple of years prior, so compared to other orphanages and agencies, this place is still fairly new. After coming here to work permanently, I realized how much I enjoyed helping children find homes and caring for them. I found it to be more of a calling than teaching children or young adults. As for this particular orphanage, most here don’t have any family at all or can’t be adopted for other reasons. It’s a small number, but still more than there should be.

“Now, I know that you’re probably wondering about how, on paper, it may come across as saying you’re not really a citizen of Japan, I guess you could say. You do understand, right?”

Koushirou nodded. Mimi just looked from Koushirou to Mrs. Mitsuishi in confusion.

“Your father, along with some other university professors of the Tokyo area, was asked to attend a conference in New York. I was invited as well, given that I’m from there, but was unable to attend mainly due to work that needed to be done here. I can only assume that your mother really wanted to go as well. She was already pregnant with you and had to have been in her final weeks, or either you were an early birth. How she managed the flight is beyond me. I’m pretty sure that she was very healthy, but I know that if it had been me I would’ve been miserable flying such a long way while nearly 9 months pregnant. I didn’t even like taking the trains when I was pregnant. That aside, all I know is that she and your father left it only being the two of them, and returned with an addition. They stayed in New York for an extra month or so before returning with you.

“Every faculty member of the Odaiba University staff went out for a big celebration after your father’s return. I was still there too, even though I was about to resign from the business.”

“Koushirou-kun…”

“Yes, he was born in Manhattan, New York at Mount Sinai hospital, not here in Tokyo or even Hikarigaoka or Nerima since you were living here with the Izumis.”

Koushirou nodded slowly, while Mimi took in all of the information. She found it interesting how she had a friend who was born in America, but didn’t know a thing about the country.

“Up until recently, as you said, I always figured I had been born here in Hikarigaoka since I had lived here at such an early age, even though before the age of four, I don’t have many memories. I’ve known for years that I’d been adopted, but didn’t realize that due to a technicality, that I’m not a citizen.”

“Well, given the circumstance, you do qualify to be an American citizen, even if your parents weren’t, but, your parents moved back here with you and as you know, Japan doesn’t recognize dual-citizenship. You have until about the age of 20 to choose which nationality you want, but since your parents had no intention of remaining in the US for living purposes, they chose it for you.

“It seems that on the adoption paper, it said Japanese-American due to your being born there, so, like you said, it’s just a small technicality and it seems they forgot to change this on paper.”

“I guess you’re right, but it was still surprising to see that.”

“How long have you known about your adoption?”
“I don’t know. I guess ever since I was about...eight or nine…”

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‘That would’ve been either our second year or third year at Odaiba Elementary.

‘Maybe that’s why he’s so distant whenever he has to talk about anything dealing with family history, like Ishidzuka-sensei pointed out. He’s been carrying around that secret for a long time now, and I guess it bothered him more than he truly let on, but I’m still curious as to why he’s making such a big deal out of it. He’s adopted, so what?’

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“That’s a long time to carry that type of a secret around, Mr. Izumi,” the woman stated. ‘Usually with the adoption of infants or really young children, the parents never reveal the fact since they wouldn’t remember it anyway.’

Koushirou didn’t even want to get on that subject, and changed it almost instantaneously. “You’ve mentioned all of these things, such as accomplishments, about my father, but have mentioned nothing about my mother, aside from her and my father probably meeting at Tokyo University, that she’d unexpectedly had me in America, and that both were married when they had me. What exactly is she like?”

“She was very knowledgeable, just like your father, but I don’t recall her being as popular as your father. She was one of my best English-Language students and I don’t think she was there for a science-related major and was there for probably one of the arts. Like I said earlier, you do resemble her, only she wore glasses. She was a pretty woman, but quiet and probably led a lonesome life, I’d say.”

“Lonesome in what way?”

“Sadly, she grew up in an orphanage too. She was abandoned.”

“Really?”

“Your mother wasn’t from Odaiba, but wasn’t too far from there as she was still in Minato. She was from the Shinagawa area. She lived at the orphanage, but was, unfortunately, never adopted. She managed to get into the University of Tokyo, and to pay for it, she’d applied for a scholarship through the JSA (Japanese Scholarship Association) and won a full one which was a blessing for her since she had no family to help pay for the expenses and she also didn’t have to worry about working to pay school expenses, not counting stuff students would do outside of school of course, like trips and all that.”

“Mitsuishi-san, how do you know all of these things?” asked Mimi, who had finally grown tired of remaining quiet. “If you manage a lot of cases, how come this one is so memorable to you?”

“Like I mentioned before, this was one of my early cases and the case of Mr. Izumi here was a fast one, and I guess it’s a bit more memorable because I knew his biological parents somewhat, due to their being former students of mine and because of my working with his father.”

“I understand that, but it just seems like the stuff you’ve mentioned is something a close friend would know, not a teacher or a co-worker.”

“Hm, just call me observant,” she smiled. “Those two were one of the more well-known couples around the Toudai campus, and it was a real pleasure working with Mr. Izumi’s real father.”

“But how did you know about his birth mother having to grow up in an orphanage too?”
"Well, when a child is brought in, it is customary to find out the parents’ history and even though we
don’t know her history fully, we did find out where she was from at least."

"So, what else do you know about my real mother?"

"She moved to Odaiba with your father, and she became a grade-school teacher. She always seemed
to enjoy children. She was a teacher at Odaiba Elementary School."

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'Wow, she was a teacher at our school! This is like too much of a coincidence.'

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"So both of my parents are teachers?"

"Yes, but I’d say for different reasons. Your father just wanted to share his knowledge of
mathematics with everyone, which is why he chose to become a mathematician, but your mother
seemed to enjoy helping others. While at Toudai, in her spare time, she’d actually go to the Tokyo
Metropolitan Hachioji Children’s Hospital to do volunteer work as well as some orphanages, despite
most being a bit of an inconvenience given where the university’s campus was. She really did seem
to love children due to how faithful she seemed to be when going. That was her extra curricular
activity. I’m also assuming that’s why she taught at an elementary school, to be with younger
children."

"At least we now know why math and all that technological stuff seem to come easily to you."
Koushirou nodded, but seemed to grow a bit bothered again. “What’s wrong?” Mimi asked.

He ignored the girl’s query, as he had one of his own. “You still haven’t told me why I was left here,
Mitsuishi-san. You’re going on about how my mother loved being around children, and yet, she left
me to complete strangers…”

“Sorry,” she apologized. She was purposely trying to avoid giving the inevitable answer. She heaved
out a heavy sigh. “Poor Satoru-san and Miki-san…”

"Those were their names? My father’s name was ‘Satoru’ and my mother’s name was ‘Miki’?"

“Fukami Satoru and Misayoshi Miki were their names.”

“Misayoshi? It's not Masayoshi?” asked Mimi.

“No, it was Misayoshi. Maybe she kept the name due to how exotic it was, but regardless of that, it
was pretty sad, their situation.”

“It couldn’t be helped, their having to leave me here, could it?”

She nodded sadly. “You see, you will never be able to locate them. They’re both…”

“They’re both what?”

“Maybe I’m not the right one to divulge this information to you. Since you already know of your
adoption, maybe you should speak with the Izumis ab---”

“No!” Koushirou uncharacteristically shouted as he stood, pounding his fist down on the slick desk’s
surface in frustration.

It was at that very moment where Mimi truly felt sorry for him. She had never seen him get upset
over pretty much anything to the extent that he’d raise his voice. She couldn’t even recall an instance
where she’d witnessed him losing his temper out of all the years she’d known him.
“They haven’t told me anything after all of this time! What makes you think that they’d share that with me now? They had their chances and blew all of them! I had to find out for myself that I wasn’t really their son and I just found out a couple of nights ago that I wasn’t even born here in this country!”

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‘That’s the night he walked me home…maybe that’s why he was in such a hurry to leave. He must’ve discovered that he wasn’t born here and wanted to get back home to check it out. Maybe that’s also why he was acting so peculiar when we were out for karaoke. That was probably weighing on his mind. Wow, and for all of our sakes, he still came along with us.’

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“I have a right to know all of this! I don’t even know my real name!”

“W-well, your given name is Koushirou, but your family name was changed to Izumi. You had your mother’s name. The Izumis changed it when they adopted you. Now, as for your parents, they are both…deceased. They were both killed in a terrible auto accident.”

Mimi gasped. Koushirou looked as if the entire world had collapsed down on him. He really hadn’t been expecting news so drastic, nor did it come to mind, as he was the type to usually point out the obvious, even though Mrs. Mitsuishi had hinted at it earlier about how all the children of this particular orphanage usually had no family what-so-ever.

“They’re d-dead?” he asked slowly, sitting back down.

“It was caused by someone driving under the influence. I can’t recall the sentence that the person received for such a crime, but it won’t do you much good given that he died a good while back. Either way, it was a blessing that you survived the crash.”

“I was with my parents when they died?!”

“The papers mentioned an infant was with them, and I doubt reporters would make something like that up. If I’m remembering right, one of the officers or either the medics interviewed said something along the lines of its being ‘a miracle that the child survived the crash’ since your mother was sitting in the backseat with you. Your father died instantly, but your mother died in the hospital a few hours later, I think. Some said that she was clinging onto life to make sure her child was safe.”

The woman started to type something up on her computer.

“So…my mother saved my life?”

“It really looks that way, given that she was found with you.” The woman frowned. “Dam, looks like I can’t find it.”

“Excuse me, but what are you looking for?”

“Well, um…Mimi,” it hit the woman that she didn’t know the girl’s full name, “I was looking for the news article about his parents’ deaths. I can’t seem to find it, but I’m sure that the library might have a copy of it. It happened sometime back in April of 1990.”

The woman put the computer into standby mode, and went back to Koushirou, who had been quiet for a good while. “You were originally sent to the Tokyo Metropolitan Child Guidance Center after your release from the hospital for about a year, due to where your parents lived, but given the situation, you were transferred here. At first, we thought that we would never find a family for you, until I remembered a couple who came in almost every week in search of a child to foster or possibly adopt, but seems that every time they were willing to adopt, turns out a relative was found, the
parents returned and wanted custody again, and the child ended up being sent to live with said relative or parents. It’s a rarity for this particular orphanage, but in their case, seems the actual child they would show an interest in kept lucking out.”

“My adoptive parents?”

“Yes.”

“ Didn’t you say that with adoptions, you place orphan children with blood relatives anyway? Asked Mimi.

“Yes, that is usually the case. We always search for family first but we were having trouble finding one for him. As I mentioned earlier, Miki-san grew up in an orphanage herself. Her parents and full background are unknown.”

“How come she was left at an orphanage?”

“I’m afraid I can’t answer that one. I honestly don’t know, and it’s not listed here. You could always try going to the Tokyo Metropolitan Child Guidance Center and ask there. All cases start off there, but it says she was abandoned in the file we have.”

“There was nobody on my father’s side who could take me in?”

“Well, your father’s parents had passed away many years ago and your father had no siblings or any other close family. We couldn’t even find an aunt or an uncle, but we did manage to find someone coincidentally. The person we found was Mr. Izumi.”

“Wait, do you mean that he’s related to me by blood?”

“Yes, he is. He was a distant cousin of your father’s. When we first confronted the Izumis with this, Mr. Izumi mentioned how he knew of your father and that he’d married, but nothing else. He didn’t even know that he’d died or that he’d had a child. We were all very surprised when we found out that Mr. Izumi was a relative of yours and was very willing to take you in.

“The two had been looking to adopt a child for a long while at the time. I’d say at least two or three years. See, before getting you, they were registered foster parents and would foster children regardless of the child’s background. Mrs. Izumi would even volunteer here on Saturdays and Sundays. After they were blessed with you, they stopped fostering children. You should’ve seen the looks on their faces when they found out that you were going home with them.”

“Wow, I never realized I was that important to them,” Koushirou said in amazement, ‘but I still wish they would’ve told all of this to me directly. Why did they keep it secret from me?’ He shook off that particular thought. “Mitsuishi-san, I know this may come across as an odd request, but do you have any photos of my biological parents?”

“I’m sorry. I don’t have anything like that. We have nothing left back by them, and that includes photos. If it helps any, you could always try to find some information or class photos of them from the university they attended. They were both high-ranking students of their year.” Mrs. Mitsuishi stood.

“Okay, I will.” Koushirou stood up, Mimi took suit. “What year did they graduate from Toudai?”

“Let’s see, both were postgraduate students at the time, so they would have been in…the Class of ‘85…”
“Mitsuishi-san, first, I would like to apologize for the inconvenience and my outburst earlier…”

“It’s no problem, Mr. Izumi.”

“Also, I would like to thank you for all of the help you have given me. It is because of you that I now know of my biological parents and have an idea as to what they were truly like.”

“Well, in a way, I was at liberty to share this information with you. I was technically obligated to. With these types of cases, the files aren’t sealed off.”

“Meaning?” asked Mimi.

“I think Mitsuishi-san means that I could come and get this information at any time I wanted, as I had the right to.”

“That’s correct.”

“It still would be nice to know what my parents looked like.”

“I know this isn’t going to help much, but all you have to do is look in the mirror. You resemble your mother, especially with your red hair and those plain, black eyes of yours, I think, belong to your father. The main difference, though, is that your mother wore glasses and you obviously don’t.”

Koushirou forced on a partial smile. He didn’t find that response all that flattering, as he would rather see it for himself.

“Thank you very much,” Koushirou bowed.

“Y-yes, thank you,” Mimi bowed as well.

With that, Mrs. Mitsuishi showed them back to the lobby, where they thanked her again and walked out of the building, only in silence. They just continued their brisk walk, Mimi had no idea where her friend was headed, but just followed along anyway. Koushirou still had one question that remained unanswered that he knew Mrs. Mitsuishi couldn’t answer. ‘Why were they so eager to adopt a child and what made them foster children to the extent that Mitsuishi-san was implying?’

“Koushirou-kun?”

“Oh, what?”

“I-I’m sorry about what happened to your parents,” Mimi spoke up, not knowing exactly what to say. She just felt obligated to say something.

“It’s okay Mimi-san. I am just glad that I found out the truth about them. I can now rest a little better knowing.”

“Why do I have this feeling that there’s more to this situation than you’re letting on? Is being adopted the reason you seem to be upset over your future brother or sister?” The question caught the young computer whiz off guard and definitely wasn’t expecting that type of a question from the girl. “I can tell that you’re bothered by the Izumis having another child. The fact that you’re willing to move out showed me that.”

“Move out? I’m not planning on moving out…yet.”

“But you made that random comment about how the place was going to be crowded in about a year and how you’d like to get in contact with your real parents.”

“I just feel like I’m going to be in the way and want to give them their space which would be perfect
for the new addition.” He sighed. “I’m not even their real son, why would they bother with me when they can have a child more worthy of carrying on the family name of Izumi?”

“Izumi Koushirou!” Mimi bellowed, her hands on her hips. Koushirou stopped walking while other people passing them by glanced over at the two curiously. “You stop that right now! Mr. and Mrs. Izumi love you very much and having a baby is not going to change the years of love they’ve always given you! I would expect this attitude from a child, but not someone your age!”

“You don’t know what it feels like!” Koushirou nearly shouted at her, irritated by her criticism of him. “You don’t know what it’s like knowing that you’re in a family that you don’t even fully belong to! You don’t understand the mixed feelings that I constantly have because I appreciate them and all they do for me, but then feel a bit of resentment towards them for not telling me that I’m not really their son and then feeling like a spoiled ungrateful brat for feeling any type of negativity towards them at all! And now, all of a sudden, they’re going to have a child of their own—a real child for them. One who will know and understand his place along with his real mother and father. I’m not even a real Izumi…I only have the name!” After saying all of that, his heart ached. He didn’t even understand what had come over him to even say all that he had. He just felt emotionally drained. “sorry for yelling, it’s not your fault…” he muttered, quietly.

“No. I-I’m sorry,” Mimi hastily apologized. “You’re right, maybe I don’t understand and I’ll never be able to, but I do know one thing…”

“What’s that?”

“I know that you should just give it a try and stop jumping to the conclusion as to what your life will be like with the baby. It would make Mrs. Izumi very happy. Having a child is one of the most important and meaningful times in a woman’s life. Try to be happy for her and stop worrying.”

He took in her words, and slowly nodded. He knew deep down that she was right, but he still couldn’t help but feel a bit insecure over the entire situation. There was still that tiny fact that he wasn’t really the Izumis’ son and the fact that they still hadn’t told him about it. They did take him in, they did care of him, and he really did appreciate that, but at the same time, he still felt out of place when around them and as the years were going by, he was feeling more and more awkward around them.

The two continued their walk and ended up back at Hikarigaoka Station. Koushirou mapped the route, laughing slightly over the irony of the situation of when he and the others were trying to get back to Odaiba from Hikarigaoka before, and missed their stop to transfer and ended up in Shinjuku. After mapping the route he told Mimi, “Let’s make sure we’re awake this time so that we can make our transfer.” Mimi laughed a bit.

When the two finally arrived back in Odaiba, it was nearly 15:00 (3:00). Mimi hadn’t even noticed. After exiting the station, she stretched her arms out due to sitting for so long, even if the train ride was only about an hour. “Here we are back in Odaiba. What should we do next?”

“Well, I wanted to go to Toudai and Odaiba University to learn more about my birth parents,” Koushirou simply stated. ‘I really wish I wasn’t so curious about them now, but I mustn’t share what I’m doing with mother or father. It’ll probably make them feel bad.’

“But aren’t all of the schools closed on Sundays?”

“It shouldn’t be. I’m sure the campus is open all year round, and some students are still studying or participating in club activities, even though most universities are already in their spring vacation.”
“Oh.” She looked down at her watch. “But, um, I…”

“You don’t have to come along if you don’t want. I know you’re anxious to get away from me,” he told her half-jokingly.

“No, that’s not true!”

To Koushirou, she’d obviously missed the joke. “Well, you’re coming across like a person who has something else to do.”

“Well, I was planning on going to…”

“…the party Sora-san is throwing?”

“W-well y-yeah.”

“No surprise there. I knew about it too. Taichi-san invited me. I was planning on going until, well, you know. You should really go, though. Your friends will be there and you really shouldn’t waste your time on me…”

“Waste my time? I chose to spend my time with you! Just for that, we’re going to that party later! Now, since we’re back in Odaiba, why don’t we head over to Odaiba University and then we can go to Tokyo U and while we’re at it, we can go by Odaiba Elementary to learn more about your real mother! They’re bound to have photos of past instructors.”

“That’s a great idea, Mimi-san! Odaiba Elementary School probably would have something like that! I didn’t even think of that!”

“Let’s go see what we can find out!”

Koushirou smiled…it was a genuine one. “Right.”

The two started to walk away from the station, when Koushirou asked, “Mimi-san, are you sure you don’t want me to take you to the party? I’m sure that going there would be a lot more interesting and fun than spending time gathering information with me.”

“I’m sure. We can go later, now let’s head over to Odaiba University since it’s the closest.”

‘Hmm, if going to the party, I should definitely apologize to Sora-san for the late arrival, but there’s still that chance that we might not make it, due to how adamant Mimi-san is on going to all three places,’ Koushirou concluded in thought. He then remembered something else. “Oh, Mimi-san, I forgot to apologize for earlier.”

“Apologize for what?”

“For when I ignored you. I’m sure that’s what caused you to leave in the first place. It hit me while riding back that that was why you probably left.”

“I was just hungry and thirsty.”

“Oh yeah, it was getting late. Well, after Odaiba University, if we don’t make it to the party, since I doubt we’ll be able to head back to in-land Tokyo to go to Toudai, I will treat you to a meal.”

“Y-you don’t have to.”

“No, I insist. I really want to, given the day and all.” Mimi had no idea what he had meant by that,
but nodded. ‘This is a nice day to me, and it’s our last free full day off; also, the company of Mimi-san made it even nicer. I should do something for her to show my appreciation.’

The two then went back to the station to pick up a map to find a route to Odaiba University…

Chapter End Notes

Author’s Notes

Note 1: Toudai is short for Tokyo Daigaku (Tokyo University). I had Koushirou and Mimi react in the way that they did due to my, at the time, having started up with the series Love Hina. It was an indirect Love Hina reference. The main character, Keitaro, was trying to get into Tokyo University, but he kept failing the university’s entrance exam. I just assumed that getting into the school was very difficult, given the way Love Hina made it seem, and it is one of the more prestigious universities in Japan.

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Note 2: The only thing I know is that Mr. Izumi and Koushirou’s father are distant relatives. They never once explained how, but I’m going with the whole cousin scenario. It makes the most sense, thinking about it.

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Note 3: There wasn’t an asterisk for this, but I do feel that I should explain how orphanages work in Japan. The adopting of children isn't done as much as you would think in Japan. It seems that adult adoption is more common, but that's mostly for business reasons. For example, maybe a president of a company doesn't have an heir to take it over and adopts a valued worker into the family to do so…that kind of thing.

As for kids, they are left at children institutes. Now, many children grow up in these facilities until adulthood because of the koseki (戸籍) system. Koseki means “family registry”, which lists births, deaths, marriage information, where you’re currently living, etc. All Japanese citizens are listed on a family registry, which makes it difficult for kids in orphanages to get adopted. If they are sent to the orphanage because they were being abused, were unwanted, unable to be cared for, etc., and are still listed on their family’s registry, then legally, that child’s parent(s) or caregiver(s) still have rights to the child and can swoop back in and take them back home at any point. It’s a sad case when an abusive parent comes back for their child just to end up abusing again. Anyway, these particular kids can also only stay with foster families, which Japan doesn’t seem to have a lot of. Unless the child is completely taken off of the registry by the child’s family, then the child is free to be adopted.

Also, unfortunately, it seems that most kids that end up growing up in an orphanage in Japan don’t end up succeeding in life as there are cases where some kids end up becoming homeless and such. I’ve written Miki’s character as a “success story” type.

In cases like Koushirou’s, his parents both died, so he wouldn't have had family registry issues and would've been legally allowed to be adopted. Same with Miki’s character. No information regarding her family since she was literally “abandoned”, meaning no registry, but even then, some people don't adopt because of the blood purity thing.

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Fic Chapter Changes

Mrs. Mitsuishi’s job at the university that Koushirou’s birth parents attended was changed slightly. I wrote that she was an English Language Teacher at the university. Originally, I had that she was just a student teacher. I also gave the woman a bit more concrete background.

I gave a name to the children’s hospital that Koushirou’s mother volunteered at and added that she volunteered at orphanages as well.

I changed the given name of Koushirou’s birth father from Hiroaki to Satoru, mainly for its meaning. Hiroaki was a random name I chose. Satoru, depending on the characters used, can mean “fast learner” and “knowledgeable”. Oh, and everything mentioned about Koushirou’s biological father is true (the name is still made up though, as it was never given). He was a genius mathematician who was a lecturer “at the university”, but I don’t think it was ever mentioned as to which university. There was virtually no information given on his mother, other than his father married her in 1987.

I changed Miki to being an abandoned child and pointed out how unusual her name was.

For the record, there is no such place as Odaiba University.

Originally, I had that Koushirou’s biological mother grew up at the Odaiba Adoption Agency and for Koushirou to go there to get more information on her, but instead, I had Mrs. Mitsuishi mention the Tokyo Metropolitan Child Guidance Center, which is a real place.

I had Koushirou more willing to attend Sora’s party compared to how I originally wrote this.

The ending was changed. This does occur in the story, the dinner thing; I just have him asking her in this chapter as opposed to a future one.
Sora's Party

Chapter Summary

Hi again everyone. This chapter focuses on everyone else, which will also finally bring in the rest of the younger group (Takeru, Daisuke, Ken, and Iori). This chapter also features Koushirou and Mimi, but very briefly, so enjoy this filler chapter which I feel is probably one of the weakest chapters of this story so far.

Chapter Notes

I hope you enjoyed the last chapter. As you saw, Koushirou has mixed feelings, but his curious side is slightly taking over. How will that work out for him?

Oh, I do apologize for the length. Practically every single character shows up for this chapter.

Now, as always, I do not own anything dealing with the Digimon series or franchise. Bandai and Toei have that honor, and as a reminder, here are the ages of the characters once again:

- Jou: 16-17 (Year 10-11; First/second year of High School)
- Taichi/Sora/Yamato: 15-16 (Year 09-10; Last year of Junior High School/First year of high school)
- Koushirou/Mimi: 14-15 (Year 08-09; Second/Last year of Junior High School)
- Miyako: 13-14 (Year 07-08; First/second year of Junior High School)
- Takeru/Hikari/Daisuke/Ken: 12-13 (Year 06; Final year of Elementary/First year of Junior High School)
- Iori: 10-11 (Year 04-05)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 12: The Other Chosen Children…

It was a little past 14:00 (2:00), and there was still no sign of Mimi or Koushirou at the luxurious, futuristic, dimly-lit Ageha Dance Club, the music blasting loudly. Sitting at one of the bars, drinking soft-drinks, was Yuuko, Ayame, and Chinatsu. All three girls had chosen to sit at that particular spot since it was closest to the club’s entrance.

“Oh, I guess Mi-chan couldn’t make it,” Yuuko whined, while scanning around.

“I guess not,” Chinatsu agreed while drinking some soda, “but it is still a little early.”

“It’s not fair!” wailed Yuuko. “I wanted her to see those admirers of hers make fools of themselves, especially since one of them obviously blabbed - probably Yuuji-kun - and more stupid supporters of
Mi-chan showed up besides the main four idiots!”

“Oh, you mean more than usual?”

“Not to worry, Yuuko-chan, I brought along my digital camera, and Chinatsu-chan has a camera phone.”

“Yeah, I’ve already gotten pictures of them. The digital camera is for our main four, who still haven’t shown up yet.”

Yuuko was giddy. “This ought to be really good!”

“Right at that moment, a loud boy with spiky maroon hair, wearing a bright red jacket, baggy blue-jeans, a plain blue t-shirt, and white sneakers walked in through the club doors. “The party can really start now that the handsome Motomiya Daisuke is here!”

With the boy was a quiet looking girl with short brown hair wearing a faint pink blouse, a yellow skirt, and black dress shoes. “Daisuke-kun, calm down,” Hikari told him calmly, even though over the loud music, it was doubtful anyone had even heard him.

“Eh…*wari wari,” he apologized.

Beside Hikari stood a tall, blonde boy wearing a white cap, a long sleeved yellow shirt, khaki pants, and sneakers. “Yeah, calm down. Don’t make a scene. There are older kids here. We don’t want them to think of us as a bunch of annoying grade school kids.”

“Okay, okay, I’m just so excited and all fired up!” He started to move his body to the upbeat music. “I’m ready to have fun!” With that, Daisuke moved away from Takeru and Hikari, and spotted some of his friends from his Soccer Club. He went to join them.

“There’s never a dull moment with Daisuke-kun around,” Takeru laughed lightly.

“Yes, but you must admire him for that. He always seems to make people happy and bring out their good side.”

“Yeah, I guess,” he muttered. “S-so, Hikari-chan, would you like for me to get you something to drink or eat?” he asked her nervously.

Hikari smiled at the boy. “Oh, Takeru-kun, I can get my own drink, but you can come along with me, of course.”

The girl started off, while Takeru let out a small sigh, and followed behind her to the bar that Mimi’s friends were sitting at.

It was still pretty early, and guests were still arriving. There were students in elementary, junior high, and senior high school at the party. Yamato and his band arrived early to perform some of their songs, as Sora had asked for them to. They gladly accepted the offer. While playing, though, Yamato kept his eye out for Mimi. When he got the chance, he was going to join her.

More and more guests seemed to arrive, those the three girls knew of, and then those they had never seen before.

“Ichijouji-kun, Miyako-chan, Iori-kun, hi!” Sora greeted as she saw them enter.

“Hi Sora-san,” all three greeted back.
“I’m glad that you were able to make it. I’ve been trying my best to greet everyone who comes in, but I keep getting pulled away.”

“That’s okay, but I’m glad that I was able to come too,” the tall, slim, dark-haired Ken responded. “I really do enjoy getting together with everyone. It’s very relaxing.”

“I’m glad that Sora-san decided to have a party where everyone was invited,” Miyako said in excitement.

“Well, yes, this is pretty much a celebration for everyone, especially us third years that are still stuck in school, even though we already finished our entrance exams. It’s very stressful at this time of the year.”

“I am grateful that taking entrance exams aren’t needed for junior high school,” said Iori.

“Not unless you do what senpai did,” Miyako pointed out.

“I really do respect Jou-san, but I do not feel that I will attend a private school once entering junior high and just stick with public school.”

“Even during our first adventure together, Jou-senpai was always studying. Even after we returned from camp before we returned to fight the Dark Masters, Jou-senpai was attending juku and studying, but that’s just like him. He always works hard on his school work since he wants to become a doctor.” Sora smiled at the thought of Jou finally achieving that dream. “Now, let’s not worry about school or studying today. Please, enjoy yourselves and have fun. There’s plenty to do around here.”

The three nodded and went off to find something interesting to do. Iori spotted some fellow classmates of his, who of which he had invited, and went to join them.

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“I wish some nice, handsome guy would come over and ask me to hang with him,” Yuuko complained while stuffing her face with cake.

“You aren’t the only one,” Ayame sulked while drinking. “A nice, handsome sophisticated boy would be nice.”

“Like a high-school boy,” Yuuko smiled dreamily.

“Yuuko-chan, we shouldn’t get our hopes up,” Ayame grumbled. “What are the chances of a high-school boy coming over here?”

Crestfallen, Yuuko sighed, “A zillion to one!”

“There they are! There they are!” Chinatsu said while pulling on Yuuko’s sleeve.

Yuuko started to look around frantically. “What? Did you see some cute boys?”

“Where, where!”

“No, something more amusing!!”

The other two laughed along with Chinatsu, who saw Sora greeting the four male guests in the strange attire. She had given up on trying to understand the strange way some of the male guests were dressed, though, as there had been a few others dressed oddly, asking for “Mimi-chan”.
“Look at Yuuji-kun! He’s actually carrying a melodica,” Yuuko barked out, while holding her stomach.

“Oh man, his hair is an absolute mess! These four look the dumbest so far compared to the other few supporters of Mimi-chan.” Ayame started taking photos with her fully-charged digital camera.

Chinatsu started taking pictures with her camera phone. She had made sure her slots were empty so that she’d be able to since she’d already taken photos of the other Mimi supporters that had randomly popped in. She pointed to the boy beside Yuuji. “He’s not as bad looking as Tomokazu-kun!” Seki’s hair was extremely messy, he was wearing a pair of glasses, which looked broken at the bridge, and along with that, atop his head was a pair of square goggles.

Yuuko sniggered. “We specifically said round goggles!”

“The other two are with them,” Ayame noted.

Misao had a briefcase in hand, a brown wig with unkempt hair, glasses, and actually had a pair of round goggles hanging around his neck. The only problem was that they were those small black ones that most anyone could find. Ukyo was carrying around a toy computer laptop, glasses with blue frames, normal hair, as he couldn’t get his naturally shoulder-length straight hair wild like, and had a melodica with him.

Noticing the four girls at the bar closest to the entrance, they made their ways towards them.

“Brace yourselves, girls,” Chinatsu whispered to the other two.

“Where is Mimi-chan?” demanded Seki.

“Mimi-chan, I dressed up for you!” Yuuji called out loudly over the music.

“Why don’t you guys back off,” Misao told his friends. “We all know Mimi-chan likes me best, and that she’ll like me even more once she gets a good look at me.”

“No she won’t! Mimi-san will more than likely go for me, since I’m wearing glasses,” argued Ukyo.

“But I have a melodica!”

“It’s so obvious that my dear Mimi-chan likes sophisticated looking men,” Misao told the three smugly.

“No way! I’m the real man around here!” Yuuji retorted.

Misao held up his briefcase. “But I’m carrying this! That shows I’m a real business man!”

‘No it doesn’t,’ all three girls thought in unison.

“Calm down, boys,” Ayame muttered.

The four stopped arguing with one another, and shouted to them, asking, “Where’s Mimi-chan/Mimi-san!”

“We haven’t seen her,” Yuuko told them, “but we have seen more people like you around.”

Ignoring what the girl had said about other admirers dressed up to impress Mimi, Misao asked, “What do you mean you haven’t seen her?!”
“There’s a chance that she might not even show up,” Chinatsu told them.

“Yeah, she went on a day trip with Izu---oooh,” Yuuko started, but was interrupted by Ayame elbowing her hard in her side.

“Um, like Chinatsu-chan said, there’s a chance that she might not even come.”

All four boys nearly fell over from the response.

“Stop worrying,” Yuuko smiled to them, “there is a small chance that she may show up later. That’s what she told us.”

“For the sake of Mimi-chan, let’s hope she doesn’t,” Ayame whispered to the other two.

“I know what you mean. I wouldn’t want Mi-chan to see how pathetic these four are being. I didn’t think they would’ve actually gone along with it, to be completely honest.”

“Yeah, I know what you mean,” said Ayame.

“How do you think Mimi-chan would react, though?”

“She would probably giggle all cute and sweet like, like she always does, which would make the boys want to become her slaves even more. Oh how I wish I had that power!”

Chinatsu and Ayame laughed. After the four boys finally stopped harassing them for information on Mimi’s whereabouts, Yuuko took notice of someone entering the dance club’s doors.

“Oh my gosh!!” Hearts formed in Yuuko’s eyes. “Who is that handsome boy that came in with Kido-san!”

The two couldn’t help but look and agree. “He’s cute!”

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“Eh, I wonder where Sora-kun is,” Jou stated after entering the dance club.

“I guess she’s very busy,” said Malissa.

Jou turned his attention to his other companion, giving him a warning look. “Do you think you can go without hitting on any girl here?”

“Let me think about that for a moment…No!” Eijiro laughed.

‘Why am I not surprised…’

“You actually expect me to? How can I not when there are a lot of cute girls here, like Mimi-chan?!”

“Eh, let’s go,” Jou grabbed Malissa’s hand, “let’s not stick around here with him. Who knows what’s going to happen with all these girls around.”

“R-right.”

The two decided to get some drinks and snacks, but along the way, the two grew a bit disturbed over the strangely dressed boys walking around with goggles, glasses, and other wild attire carrying around, ‘I love Mimi’ signs on them. ‘Cosplayers?’ Jou just shook his head at it and stuck to the task at hand, but he did find these strangely dressed boys more disturbing than anything he’d ever encountered in the Digital World…
The party continued on, neither Mimi nor Koushirou showing up for it. Mimi’s admirers stuck around for the entire party, of course, in hopes of the girl showing up. Ayame managed to get plenty of photos of Mimi’s main four admirers, while Chinsatsu managed to get photos of others who obviously heard of the leaked news on her camera phone. When not taking photos, the girls enjoyed themselves immensely, especially when they were approached by some first year boys from Odaiba High School.

Eijiro, of course, was approached by many girls at the party, all of which were drooling over him, when not gawking at the handsome, “Ishida Yamato” on stage. Malissa spent all of her time with Jou, mainly because she didn’t know anyone else, aside from whom she’d met through karaoke. Although Sora and Taichi invited a lot of people, the majority of them attended public schools; Jou, Malissa, and Eijiro all attended a private school.

The party started to wind down at around 18:30 (6:30) and all of the guests had already left. Miyako, though, had remained behind to talk with both Sora and Taichi, who were making sure everything was in order.

“This was a really nice party! The music was great, especially when the Teenage Wolves were playing and the house music by the Deejay too! This place was perfect for it, especially since it’s so big and you had a lot of guests! Too bad Chizu-nee couldn’t come since she had to help out at the mart today.”

“Now, Miyako-chan, was there any doubt with me being the second planner of it,” Taichi asked the girl smugly.

“Thank you so much,” replied Sora sarcastically, with a hint of playfulness in her voice, “I don’t know what I would have done without your help.”

“Too bad we couldn’t have had this party at night or used this club at night.”

“In some ways, you and I may be on our spring breaks, just as Yamato-san, Jou-senpai, Malissa-san, and Eijiro-san, but we had those from junior high school and elementary school here who aren’t technically on their breaks yet and you know we’re all too young for that kind of stuff.”

“Those are just minor details,” he smirked. “I definitely would’ve found a way. Hm, and speaking of kids, where’s Hikari?”

“I thought I saw Hikari-chan talking with some boys, but then she left with Daisuke,” Miyako explained. “I didn’t get the chance to spend any time with her with all the activities in the club.”

“Boys were hanging around Hikari?” Taichi crossed his arms stubbornly. “I don’t like the sound of that at all.”

“Taichi, you have to face facts,” Sora told him gently, “your sister is growing up. She’s about to enter junior high school after this term is up.”

“I still don’t like it,” he muttered. He calmed down a bit, and realized he shouldn’t worry over something like that or either grill Hikari later on about it. “So, Sora, want me to take you home?”

“No, that’s okay. I have to return the key to the manager,” Sora explained.

Taichi looked a bit put out. “Yeah, okay. Well, I should get going, and just to let you know, I’m still planning on having a barbecue party for us third years once spring vacation officially starts, and it’ll be at night! I was thinking that if the weather was okay, we could have it at the beach.”
“If you’re worried about boys being around Hikari-chan at an afternoon party, what makes you think that it would be any better at night?” laughed Sora.

“You make a very good point, and the solution would be to have no kids her age allowed.”

Sora gave Taichi an incredulous look, and put a hand on her hip. “Like that’s going to work! They could still find a way to attend it, unless your mother forbids Hikari-chan to go.”

“You like to ruin my fun, don’t you?” the boy asked with his signature lopsided grin.

Smiling back teasingly, she responded, “Yes, I find it quite fun.”

He stuck his tongue out at her, while Sora laughed at how goofy he was acting. “Well, I’m out of here. I might as well get home and find something to do with my evening. You know, since Koushirou and Mimi-chan never showed up, why don’t we all get them, and go find someplace to hang out that’s not too expensive.”

“I don’t know…” Miyako started.

“Aww, come on. It’ll give us something to do.”

“It actually doesn’t sound like a bad idea. It’s sad that both missed my party.”

“And if Miyako-chan and the others can’t make it, we can just hang out, Sora,” he added on slyly.

“I guess so.” Sora shrugged. “I’ll send you an e-mail or call you later to let you know what’s up.”

“Yeah yeah. See you later.”

Taichi headed off, leaving the two girls behind.

“Strange about Mimi-oneesama. Do you think that their trip to Hikarigaoka took them longer than what they originally planned for?”

“It must have. Mimi-chan usually never misses a gathering.”

“I know, and this was one of the best ones. There was a really good turnout.”

“I still really wish that she and Koushirou-kun could’ve made it, though.”

“I noticed Yamato-san was asking about her whenever he wasn’t performing. He kept asking if anyone had seen her every chance he got.”

“I didn't really notice,” the tennis player admitted. “Hm, Miyako-chan, why don’t we both go to the Nishimura home to see how she’s doing?”

“Oh, we could just send an e-mail.”

“Or that,” Sora laughed.

“If we go over there, we can tell her about the invite Taichi-san made and can finally find out what’s wrong with Izumi-senpai!” Sora laughed again at Miyako’s nosiness, who couldn’t help but laugh along. “Hey, what can I say? I really want to know.”

“Okay, okay. You send her a message to let her know we’re coming over, while I go turn this key in.”
With that, Miyako sent out the message while Sora returned the key to the manager. She thanked him promptly, who was grateful that she and her guests had had a good time. After she was done, she met back up with Miyako, who explained that she hadn’t received a message back from Mimi yet and that she’d also sent one out to Koushirou. They then both decided to catch the train back to Odaiba and just swing by there anyway.

Once exiting the building, they were surprised to see Taichi still there, but standing along with him was Yamato, Ken, and an exasperated looking Takeru. The four looked to have been in deep discussion over something.

“Wow, hi guys. I thought Sora-san and I were the only ones still around.”

“Takeru-san was looking for Hikari-san,” explained Ken. “We’re trying to figure out where she could have gone.”

“She left with Daisuke-kun and didn’t even tell me!”

“Aren’t you over-reacting? What’s wrong with her leaving with Daisuke?” asked Miyako.

“I don’t know,” Takeru answered the older girl. “I just figured that since we all came together, that we would all leave together.”

“I suppose he’s a bit bothered because she didn’t let him know that she was leaving in general,” Ken responded simply.

“They left hours ago,” Miyako recalled. “They left round about the time Ken-kun and I saw Iori leave.”

“That’s what I told him.”

“I guess they had something else more interesting to do, like Iori-kun and his classmates,” Sora mentioned randomly. “Anyway, did you guys try checking at home for either of them or calling or sending a message using your mobile or D-Terminal?”

They all shook their heads.

“Oh yeah, I didn’t really think of that,” Takeru said with a nervous laugh.

“I’m surprised you didn’t think to do those things first!”

“Sora-san, we better hurry if we want to go over to the Nishimura’s.”

“Hey, any idea why Mimi didn’t show up?” asked Yamato.

“She had to go on a day trip. I guess she got back too late to come.”

“Yeah, if oneesan misses a get together then she has to have a good reason for it.”

With that, the group headed towards the station and caught the train back to Odaiba...

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Earlier that day at the party…

“Takeru-kun, where are you rushing off to?” asked Hikari.

“I was just going to go over some plays with a couple of the guys. I promised them that I would, even though it’s kind of tough to talk in here with all this music,” he laughed. “You don’t mind, do
“Why are you asking me this?”
“I was hoping to check out one of the other areas of the dance club together.”
“Oh, we still can.”
“That’s true. Go on ahead.”

With that, Takeru left to meet up with his basketball buddies whom he’d noticed.

‘I shouldn’t be too upset. They are his friends after all, but he promised to spend time with me too. He’s always so concerned about the team just because he’s a good player and the soon-to-be former team captain.’ She smiled, but was still disappointed some, but felt a bit disgusted over how selfish she was being. ‘Well, Takeru-kun is very kindhearted, and I shouldn’t be thinking like this.’

A bunch of boys approached Hikari, who knew her, since Takeru had left her. People had always assumed that both she and Takeru were an item since they were always seen spending time together. The boys were all trying to get her attention. Hikari didn’t particularly care for that kind of attention and felt a terrible headache coming on due to how annoyed she was becoming over the current unwanted attention. The loud music wasn’t helping her headache much either.

She walked away from the boys and found a small, vacant table, which had a lit candle in the center of it. At the table, she found Iori with some friends of his there, which consisted of a skinny girl about Iori’s age with messy, yet pretty hair.

“Ah, Hikari-san. I didn’t see you earlier. Have a seat.”
“Hi there, Iori-kun. Thank you.” Hikari greeted brightly.

“Who is that?” the girl with the messy hair asked.
“I’ve seen her at school.”

“Eiji-san, Ikue-san, Shiko-san, Murai-san, Narumi-san, this is Yagami Hikari-san. She is an upperclassman and is about to graduate to Odaiba Junior High School.”

“Cool!” the five said.

“Is there something wrong, Hikari-san?”
“No, not really. I’m just a little tired,” she told the young martial artist.

“To be honest, I am very grateful for Sora-san inviting me and allowing my classmates to come along too, but there really isn’t too much to do here. There is the possibility that we’ll be leaving soon, but I’ve yet to see Sora-san again since we’ve arrived here.”

“Yeah, I agree,” Iori’s friend, Narumi said. “I don’t mind leaving, and when we do, we can go back to my place! We can watch movies!”

Everyone else reluctantly agreed with the pushy girl, except for one. The skinny, energetic girl seated beside Iori stood up. “No way!” the tomboyish girl named Eiji protested. “We can go on a hike since the weather is so nice today!”

A dark-haired, chubby boy spoke up next in agreement with Eiji. “A hike actually sounds like more fun than watching movies,” Shiko said.

A tall slim, black-haired boy spoke up next. His name was Murai. “We could even go fishing if we pick the right place to go.”
“Wouldn’t it be nice to go swimming too?” Eiji added.

A petite-sized freckled-faced girl with long, wavy red hair spoke up next. She was very plain and ordinary looking, just like Eiji, the only difference being their hair colors. “That does sound like fun,” Ikue mumbled. “This is the perfect day to go hiking or swimming, like Eiji-chan said.”

The other girl who had suggested they go back to her home shook her head, her long, shiny, bouncy, beautiful brown hair flowing down her back, which matched her clear, brown eyes. “No way!” Narumi objected. “Eiji-chan, you are such a tomboy! I do not want to mess up my pretty dress and what about my hair? Hiking and swimming would be terrible for it! Doing things like that is so unlady like, and anyway, it’s still too cold to go swimming!”

“Aww, Narumi, lighten up!” Murai argued. “We just want to find something more interesting to do.”

“This party is nice, like Iori-kun said, but it is getting a bit boring with all of these older kids around,” Shiko said.

“Meh, ever since you spent all of last summer with your older sister, you’ve been acting all extra girly and boring,” Murai complained.

“What have they done to you?! You’re trying to become a model like your sister?” asked Eiji.

“Hey, I just feel that it’s time for us to grow up and to start acting like proper young men and proper young ladies!”

“Narumi-san, we’re still ten and eleven years old!” Shiko pointed out. “We’re still kids!”

“Hey, Iori hasn’t said anything yet. What do you think we should do?”

“Well, um, Murai-san, I’m not exactly sure,” Iori answered bashfully.

“Come on, Iori-kun,” urged Eiji, “we know how you like hiking and swimming.”

“It does sound like it’d be fun given how warm it is today. It feels more like late April as opposed to late March, but, as Narumi-san mentioned, it is probably not wise to go out swimming this early in the season. Maybe we could head over to the park or go bike riding.”

“So, all in favor of my idea raise your hands!” Everyone raised their hands, minus Narumi. “All opposed of going and would rather sit around the house just to watch television or movies, raise your hands!” Narumi raised her hand stubbornly. “Okay, Narumi-chan, it’s five to one. We win! Watching movies inside is boring and if we’re going to be stuck inside, we could at least play video games or something! So, are you coming with us?”

“Okay, fine, I’ll go,” she huffed, “but I’m not going to promise you that I’ll have any fun!”

“Okay everyone! Let’s head back home and get our bikes and go riding!” Eiji instructed.

“I wish we could go camping,” Ikue said.

“Too bad we’re not on our spring holiday yet. Maybe we can plan a camping trip,” Iori suggested.

“I love camping!” Eiji cheered. “I can hardly wait for spring break now!” Narumi frowned. She hated doing “boyish” things ever since she learned how to be a proper lady from her older sister that previous summer. “I bet Narumi-chan wouldn’t want to come, since she’s an adult,” Eiji teased.

“I, of course, will come! I may be a sophisticated young lady, but I can handle one camping trip.” In
reality, the girl actually did enjoy biking, hiking, swimming, and camping, but felt that she had
outgrown such activities.

“Yeah, yeah. Anyway, let’s go guys. We still have the rest of the day to play.”

Hikari dismissed herself from the group, and left them to discuss. The same boys that bothered her
earlier, started to approach her again. She was tempted to go and tell Taichi about the persistent boys,
but decided against it, as she saw him laughing along and having fun with his school and soccer club
mates. She knew she had to stop being so reliant on her brother, but when it came to situations like
this one, she knew that he would be best. In a way, she really wished that Takeru was still with her,
but she noticed that he was still talking with his basketball buddies. She saw him gesturing as if
making a slam dunk and then laughing.

She decided to do the one thing she felt she could do…tell them to leave her alone, no matter how
rude she may end up coming across. She knew that the normality to this type of a situation was to
ignore those who bothered her or was interested in her, but for once, she just couldn’t take it, and her
head was starting to throb.

“I’m sorry,” she apologized sweetly, “but I am not in the mood to dance or anything at the moment.”

“Aww, come on, Hikari-chan, please dance!” one of the boys begged.

“You’re way too beautiful to stand around by yourself,” another one said.

“No thank you. I really don’t want to.”

Before either of the boys could respond to her rejections, they heard someone coolly say, “Didn’t
you hear her? She doesn’t want to be bothered.”

“Motomiya!” one of the boys identified.

“The one and only,” he smiled. “Now why don’t you all just leave her alone?”

“Sorry,” one of the other boys apologized. “We just hate seeing Hikari-chan by herself.”

“Believe me, I don’t mind.”

The group of boys walked off in annoyance. They all knew not to mess with Daisuke, as he was pals
with Taichi and both together could probably really hurt them if they were caught bothering Hikari.

“Are you alright, Hikari-chan?”

“Thank you, Daisuke-kun. I’m fine thanks to you. I thought they would never leave her alone. I
know they mean well, but I’m not in the mood to party right now.”

“Some people just don’t get it,” Daisuke randomly stated thinking back to when he was younger and
would persistently pursue Hikari.

Hikari left Daisuke, and found a place to sit down again. She felt both annoyed and stressed. She
saw Daisuke walk off with some girls and boys from their class, talking with them, laughing, and just
having fun. She was surprised that “Ichijouji-kun” hadn’t joined him, but figured that he was in some
other part of the huge facility and just missed one another. One thing Hikari noticed about Daisuke
was that he could always find a way to have fun and make the people around him happy. He had a
warm demeanor to him.
Hikari noticed Takeru again, who looked to be, once again, laughing over something. For some unusual reason, even though earlier she’d told herself that she wouldn’t think anything of it, the scene upset her. In a way, it had been a while since Takeru had carried on like that with her. Their conversations were usually quite serious and not all that playful. Takeru was a nice, happy-go-lucky boy and a great friend, but he seemed to have a whole different personality whenever around her. It was nice that Takeru was so serious and mature, but it wasn’t good to be that way all the time. She couldn’t recall a recent time where Takeru had made her laugh.

The two were a lot alike and sometimes she found herself growing bored with Takeru because of their similarities, but she was still inexplicably drawn to him and did seem to have some type of feelings for him. Unlike Daisuke, Takeru wasn’t persistent with trying to get with her, but even she realized Daisuke had eased up a lot from their younger days. He didn’t act like that much anymore, but he was still his same, playful, friendly, energetic self and his crush on Hikari was still pretty much apparent.

She stood. Hikari was ready to leave, especially since most of her female friends were off someplace, her male friends were busy talking with other people, and her fellow Chosen Children friends were nowhere to be found. Aside from those she’d come with, Sora, her brother, and Iori, she hadn’t seen much of anyone else, not even Miyako. She held her head. ‘I don’t feel very well…’ She started to wobbly make her way towards Takeru, but someone else caught her eye. “Daisuke-kun…” she uttered weakly.

He was still hanging around with a group of their classmates. Daisuke definitely wasn’t shy, and was actually dancing to the music and was trying to urge one of the girls to dance. The song Yamato’s band was playing was a fast one. You’d definitely never catch the boy moving to a slow song. “Too boring” he would say.

A couple of other guys joined in to talk with Daisuke and the girl he’d tried to get to join him. Hikari recognized all of them. She feebly made her way up to them.

“Hi,” everyone greeted.

“Hi,” she replied back plainly. Daisuke looked at her curiously.

The short dark-haired girl Daisuke had been trying to dance with noticed the somewhat somber look Hikari wore on her face. This girl’s name was Romi, and she was known for her rhythmic dancing, as she took lessons. “Hikari-san, is something wrong?”

She put on a smile and told the girl, “No, I’m fine, but thank you for asking.” Romi left it at that, but Daisuke wasn’t fully convinced by it. He’d known Hikari for far too long. Her smile didn’t seem genuine to him.

The other girl of the group, whose long hair was fixed up in the latest style, who was known to show off, which was no surprise to Hikari since she’d always been that way, was known as Tara. “Where’s Takeru-kun?”

Another girl who had overheard Takeru’s name, made her way up to the group. This girl was very well known in their class, and it was extremely obvious that she liked Takeru, just like the majority of the girls of their year. Her name was Shigeko. Overall, the girl usually came across as being blunt and rude. “Ooh! I’m going to go see if Takeru-kun wants to spend time with me!”

She rushed off to find Takeru, while Hikari held her head again. Daisuke noticed. “Hikari-chan?”

“I’m sorry. I’m fine, honest I am.”
“Hikari-chan…do you have a headache? Are you getting sick?” The boy had heard stories about how Hikari was when younger from both Taichi and Takeru, like the time she had a fever and passed out because she didn’t want to bother anyone over it.

“Well, it’s just a small one,” she told him quietly.

“I think you should go home and rest,” Daisuke told her urgently.

“Well, maybe I should…”

“I can take you home if you want,” the soccer player offered.

“No, don’t do that. I’ll be fine.”

‘Selfless as always.’ A determined look made its way to Daisuke’s face. “I don’t mind. Let’s go!”

Hikari felt it would’ve been pointless to argue with him, and just nodded. “Hey, do you want to go get Takeru?”

“No, that’s okay. He’s busy right now. I wouldn’t want to worry him.”

The two left, which was a little while after Iori’s group had left.

“Daisuke-kun,” Hikari started while heading to the station to catch the train back to Odaiba, “thank you for offering to take me home.”

“It’s no problem.”

“What about your friends, though? Weren’t you going to go back and talk to some of those from your club?”

“Don’t worry about them. They would’ve only talked about having a practice game anyway. You aren’t feeling well. It’s more important that you get back okay,” Daisuke told her. ‘I wouldn’t want to disappoint Taichi-senpai if something happened to Hikari-chan.’

Hikari smiled weakly to him. During the walk and the eventual train ride, Daisuke seemed to keep making jokes or trying to do something to get her to smile, which he succeeded in doing. It was so effective, that her stress-filled headache had gone away.

“Daisuke-kun, thank you for cheering me up.”

“No problem,” he winked to her.

“I feel much better.”

“Glad to hear it.”

Once at their stop, the two got off and began to walk away from the station. It was a really nice day, and the slow walk seemed to bore Daisuke to Hikari. She knew that he probably would’ve rather been at the party than seeing her home.

“Daisuke-kun…I’m sorry,” she suddenly apologized.

“What for?” he asked in surprise.

“I’m sorry for ruining the party for you. I hate to be a burden on anyone.”
“You didn’t ruin the party for me and you’re definitely not a burden.” He stared up at the clear blue sky. “You’re a selfless person, Hikari-chan, but if you’re not feeling well, you shouldn’t keep it to yourself. We all care about you, and would hate for something bad to happen to you.” He looked over at her and gave her a thumbs up with a wink and a grin. “You’re one of my best friends, I’d hate for anything to happen to you.”

“Daisuke-kun…”

“I don’t mind this walk, as long as you’re better, it doesn’t matter.”

‘He has really matured since we were younger. I can’t really explain it or put my finger on it, but he really has. It’s like in some ways he’s grown up, but he still has his same, easygoing, optimistic, simple-minded personality. I truly understand why he was suited to have the Digimental of Friendship,’ Hikari concluded. “Daisuke-kun, instead of going home, since we have a little bit of daylight left, would you like to go someplace else instead?”

“Like where?”

“I don’t know, maybe a game center.”

“Only if you want to.”

She smiled and nodded. “I feel 100% better, thanks to you, and I would like to.”

“Okay! Let’s go! There are some games I’m dying to play that I wanted to challenge Takeru to!”

“I guess we could head over to Venus Fort…”

“Oh, yeah!! I love that mall for the three floors of arcade games!”

Hikari wasn’t much of a gamer, but knew Daisuke was. He and Takeru played video games all the time. She and Ken usually always just watched them go at it. With that, the two headed to Venus Fort…

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Over at the Nishimura home, after Miyako and Sora had split from the rest of the group…

“I hope it was okay to come over here, especially since she still hasn’t answered your message and neither did your message to Koushirou-kun while riding over here.”

“I hope she’s actually home,” Miyako said while ringing the bell.

The two heard a young voice ask who it was, and Miyako answered. They heard the doorknob turn, and the owner of said voice rushed out to hug them. “Miya-nee-chan, Sora-nee-chan!”


An older woman came to the door before Isako could respond. “Yes, she’s home,” she replied distantly.

“Good evening, Mrs. Nishimura,” both girls greeted.

“Did you say that Mimi-chan was home?”

“Yes, come on in.” The girls entered and Mrs. Nishimura closed the door behind them.

“So, where is Mimi-chan?”
“She seems to have locked herself in her room,” Sué told them sadly. “She almost seems depressed over something.”

“Depressed? Mimi-chan?”

‘Onesama is upset? Could something have happened with Izumi-senpai?’

“I’m not sure what to do with her. We came home and found her that way.” Sué was a bit distraught, as she’d never encountered Mimi without her usual optimism and friendly, warm smile. “When we first got here, she was in the bath, and it seemed that it took her a long while before she left it. I did keep checking on her and asking what was wrong after she’d left the bath and went into her room, but she kept insisting that it was nothing and that she was just tired, but I know she’s lying. I could tell by her voice that she was trying not to cry.”

“This is very serious. Mimi-chan usually isn’t the type to get really upset over something, unless death is involved…or when she’s overly frustrated with something.”

“I think I might just give her mother a call to see if she has any suggestions on what to do when Mimi-chan is feeling down. She would know how to deal with her better than I would.” She turned to her daughter. “Isako, go tell Mimi-chan that her friends are here.”

“Alright, mama!”

The girl ran off to Mimi’s room and knocked on the door.

“Neechan, Sora-chan and Miya-chan are here!”

The brown haired girl, who had been lying on her bed, clinging onto Koushirou's jacket for reasons unknown to her aside from feeling comfort and security from it, sat up in her dark room, rubbing her tear-filled eyes. She didn’t feel like socializing with anyone. “Isako-chan, I’m not feeling well.”

She kept begging Mimi to come out, or even open the door, but it was no use. Isako failed, and headed back to her mother, Sora, and Miyako.

“Is she going to come down?” asked her mother.

Isako shook her head. “First Kou-niichan is sad and now Mi-neechan is sad.”

“Isako, your father is in the kitchen; ask him to prepare a snack for you. I’m going to call Satoe-san and hope she’s around. It should be morning right about now over there.”

“Miyako-chan and I should get going ourselves.”

“We’ll see you later.”

With that, the two girls left the big house.

“How could one trip affect her like that?”

“That’s what I’d like to know, and it’s strange that neither one of them has sent a message back with at least an apology for missing the party. Koushirou-kun would’ve at least done that given how he is. I say we go pay him a visit. He probably knows what’s going on! I’ve never seen Mimi-chan like this before in all the years I’ve known her.”

When the two got to the Izumi home, they saw a police motorcycle parked in front of the apartment complex. The two didn’t think anything of it, and just figured that someone called for something
trivial, like maybe a lost pet. The two girls were surprised to find a young, female cop exiting the Izumi’s apartment when they were about to knock on the door. The woman smiled at them and left.

“Remember, anonymous!” Koushirou called to the officer. “Keep us both anonymous! Please make sure they remember that!”

The lady nodded, and continued on. Both Sora and Miyako gave Koushirou a questioning look.

“Yes, that was a police officer,” Koushirou told the two irritably.

“No kidding,” Sora sarcastically muttered.

“Izumi-senpai, they finally caught you,” joked Miyako, who was trying her best to ease the thick tension that seemed to form the moment Koushirou opened his mouth. “They finally caught you hacking your way into secret government databases!”

Both girls laughed, but Koushirou just remained distant. Miyako knew that whenever she joked about that, Koushirou would usually laugh along. He never denied it, which always made her a tad bit suspicious of him, but she always dismissed it. She was expecting him to say something like, “Not so loud, Miyako-kun, they might hear you!”

“Oh-kay…” Miyako abruptly stopped laughing. The tension was making her feel even more uncomfortable.

Koushirou, routinely, stepped aside to let them in and closed the door behind the two. They took their shoes off at the genkan and entered the home fully and headed straight to the boy’s room. “Where are Mr. and Mrs. Izumi?” asked Sora.

“Out,” he answered in slight annoyance. “Is there something you need?”

Sora was taken aback from the boy’s tone. He’d never spoken to her in such a way before. “Koushirou-kun…”

“Senpai, don’t get all cranky and don’t get mad at Sora-san!” argued Miyako. “We’re here because of Mimi-sama and we want to know why that police officer was here!”

“What’s going on with the police is none of your business, and if you want to know what’s bothering Mimi-san, then you should go ask her yourselves.”

“We tried sending both you and Mimi-chan messages, but didn’t get a response, so Miyako-chan and I went over there, and it seems she’s feeling terrible.” Sora looked away from Koushirou, her heart aching some over what she got out next. “What did you do to her?”

Koushirou grew angered, and shouted to her, “I didn’t do a thing to her!”

“I-Izumi-senpai… why are you acting this way towards us?” Miyako asked, almost wanting to cry herself. “We’re concerned about her and she won’t even talk to us.”

“Then don’t expect anything more from me!” he snapped at her. He noticed the looks on their faces. They actually looked frightened of him. He sat down in his computer chair and frowned. “I’m very sorry you two, I’m a little edgy right now and I shouldn’t have taken my frustration out on you two. I’m also very sorry for missing your party, Sora-san.”

‘This is a little better. This is the Koushirou that I know.’ She waved her hand. “Th-that’s okay. So why are you edgy? We were worried about you two.”
“I’m sorry, but I can’t really say,” he quietly responded. “If Mimi-san doesn’t wish to discuss it, then I really shouldn’t. It wouldn’t be fair to her.”

“Did something happen in Hikarigaoka?”

Koushirou gave Sora a look, his eyebrow arched. “How did you know about Hikarigaoka?”

“Mimi-sama told us that she was going there with you today, but didn’t say much more other than that.”

“So, did something bad happen in Hikarigaoka, like Miyako-chan asked?”

“No, something almost happened here in Odaiba after we returned. We had one more errand to run and then we were going to head over to your party, but seems things didn’t turn out that way,” he told them. ‘What if I wouldn’t have made it in time? I don’t even want to think about that!’

The two girls looked to one another in extreme confusion. None of what Koushirou was saying was making complete sense, which made them even more curious. Before either could ask anything else, Mr. and Mrs. Izumi walked in, and noticed Koushirou’s bedroom door was open.

The boy stood up and rushed out to see his parents. Sora and Miyako followed behind him. “Hi, welcome back,” Koushirou said to the two, as if nothing had been wrong.

“Hi there son,” Mr. Izumi greeted. “Hi there Miyako, Sora.”

“Hi there!” Mrs. Izumi greeted. “Good evening, Mr. Izumi, Mrs. Izumi,” both greeting back.

“How was your study date today with Taichi-kun and the others at his place today?” asked Mrs. Izumi. ‘Study date at Taichi’s? What’s she talking about?’

Koushirou noticed the looks that both Sora and Miyako had, and felt it would’ve been safer to get them out of there before they got him into trouble.

“Um, we studied a lot!” Koushirou told her anxiously. “I’m sure that I will ace whatever exam that my instructors throw at me and I’m ready to take my entrance exams thanks to Taichi-san, Sora-san, and Yamato-san.”

Mrs. Izumi smiled. “My my, I’m sure after all of that studying, you must have worked up a big appetite. Would you all like some snacks?”

“Awww, mother, we’re all very tired from the studying, and what we need now is rest. Sora-san and Miyako-kun were actually on their way out when you two came in.”

They got the hint, and started to leave. Koushirou gave them an apologetic look and mouthed out “I’m sorry” before closing the door.

“Koushirou-kun is definitely hiding something,” Sora murmured as the two walked away from the apartment complex.

“Why did he lie about where he was today? Why did he say he was at the Yagami’s all day when he was really in Hikarigaoka?”

“That’s a good question. My assumption is that maybe he didn’t want his parents to know that he was going to spend the day there, but that doesn’t make any sense since the Nishimuras knew about
Mimi-chan going there today. It wasn’t really a big secret.”

“Maybe the Izumis don’t like the idea of Izumi-senpai traveling outside of Odaiba by himself?”

Sora laughed. “Now I know that’s not it. They didn’t object to his returning to the Digital World when we had to go against the Dark Masters. Anyway, we should probably just go home and leave Mimi-chan and Koushirou-kun alone for now, but I’m more concerned over Mimi-chan. Maybe one of us could speak with her tomorrow.”

“Maybe you’re right, but I still don’t like this.”

“I don’t like this any better than you do, but there isn’t much more we can do. Something obviously happened with Mimi-chan, and Koushirou-kun is covering for her since she didn’t give us any information herself and how he’s holding back on sharing because, ‘it wouldn’t be fair to her’.”

“I hate secrets and being left out of things! They’re my good friends! They’re like my mentors and here they are keeping a big secret away from me!”

“Now now, Miyako-chan, maybe we could figure out some of this on our own.”

“Well, so far, all we know is that whatever happened to her, happened after they got back here to Odaiba.”

“Hm, that really doesn’t tell us too much, but we can add in that the police are involved in some way.”

“We’re at a dead end already and we just started!”

“It would probably help if we knew why Koushirou-kun had to go to Hikarigaoka in the first place. That could clue us in as to what all of this is fully about.”

“The only way to find that out is if we ask him, but I have this feeling that he wouldn’t tell us if we did. Even she didn’t know why.”

“Well, I’m sure she must know now, but for the moment, we should just stick with our original plan.”

Miyako sighed. “Try to talk with her either tomorrow morning or after school or during break. I’m going to be busy during lunch.”

“Yeah, same here, especially since we third years are still doing graduation rehearsals before school every morning and there’s no way I’ll be able to see her at lunch because of a club gathering.”

Their future tasks set, the two made their way home by bus…

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Back in the Izumi home…

“They didn’t have to leave so soon,” Mr. Izumi said after Koushirou had shut the door.

“Oh, it was okay. They were both already on their way out anyway.”

Koushirou left the two, and headed back to his room, shutting the door behind him. He sat down on the bed, resting his head in his hands, sighing heavily.

‘She’s worse off than I thought! I really want to go over there and help her, but what good would that do? She obviously doesn’t want any help. I really should talk to her about what happened today.'
It’s starting to bother me now, more than what it did earlier. Yes, it bothered me, but it’s like reality is starting to set in more now since talking with the police officer. I’m starting to feel guilty over what happened.’

The boy lifted his head and scowled. He then started to punch his pillow in anger.

‘I should have never gone there to begin with!’ He punched the pillow harder to release his anger and sadness, while trying not to cry, but it failed, as the anguished tears poured out anyway. ‘It’s my fault! I should’ve been paying more attention to her! Why do people like that exist?! Why do filthy disgusting bastards like that creep exist in this world? Why…’

Koushirou laid back down on his bed, his mind wandering back to all that had occurred after he and Mimi left the station after returning home to Odaiba…

Chapter End Notes

Author’s Note & Fic Chapter Changes

“Wari wari” is a slang way of saying, “Sorry” and is sometimes used by Daisuke in the show. Now for the changes…

One major change in this chapter was the use of e-mail and telephones and messaging. When this was originally written, I’d totally forgotten that the kids had D-Terminals and didn’t even think along the lines of text messaging or sending e-mail using a mobile/cell phone since the concept, at the time, was still pretty foreign to me. Japan had been using them for years.

I had Miyako mention her sister and how sad it was that she didn’t show up for the party. Originally, I’d forgotten all about her, even though I knew she was a third year with Taichi, Sora, and Yamato. Also, I changed how Miyako addressed her. I actually have no idea how Miyako addresses her older siblings, but, I like the sound of “Chizu-nee”, which is why I used it.

Daisuke and Hikari didn’t go to Venus Fort for the original version of this fic; instead, they went to the movies at a made-up theater. The arcade seemed more appropriate given the time restraints and their age.

I added in Sora and Miyako being concerned about both Mimi and Koushirou. Originally, I only had the two girls curious about Mimi and not thinking anything of Koushirou. I changed that because of how out of character that came across. I also had Miyako send Koushirou a message too as opposed to just Mimi. Originally, I didn’t have her send a message out to anyone, for the reason stated in the first change here.

Other change concerned Sora’s character. I had her more blunt and accusatory towards Koushirou originally. That didn’t strike me as very “Sora” like.

I never had Koushirou apologize for missing Sora’s party originally. I just had him apologize for being jerky towards Miyako and Sora. I’d meant to, but forgot.
The other change is that I set up the ending for a “flashback” chapter. I didn’t do that originally.
Close Call

Chapter Summary

This chapter shows what exactly happened after Koushirou and Mimi returned to Odaiba.

Chapter Notes

Hi again everyone. The ending was pretty interesting, eh? Something bad happened with Mimi and Koushirou is beating himself up over it. Well, this chapter shows exactly what happened. I guess one could say that this is a PG-13 chapter, compared to the previous ones, which is why the entire fic has that rating to begin with. This will, like it was mentioned in the summary, explain why Mimi is so down, but it’s not going to be all that graphic. I definitely wanted some more conflict and tension between the two and this chapter actually leads up to it. Something else interesting to note, I had actually written this chapter before the last one.

Now, as always, I do not own anything dealing with the Digimon series or franchise. Bandai and Toei have that honor, and as a reminder, here are the ages of the characters once again:

Jou: 16-17 (Year 10-11; First/second year of High School)
Taichi/Sora/Yamato: 15-16 (Year 09-10; Last year of Junior High School/First year of high school)
Koushirou/Mimi: 14-15 (Year 08-09; Second/Last year of Junior High School)
Miyako: 13-14 (Year 07-08; First/second year of Junior High School)
Takeru/Hikari/Daisuke/Ken: 12-13 (Year 06; Final year of Elementary/First year of Junior High School)
Iori: 10-11 (Year 04-05)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 13: Mimi’s Close Call!

Koushirou and Mimi were still in front of the station, trying to determine the best way to get to Odaiba University due to the fact that Tokyo University was a bit far from where they currently were.

“We should probably just take the bus,” Koushirou suggested.

“But taking a taxi would probably be faster since it’d go straight there. No stops in between.”

“That’s true, but cab fare is a bit more expensive compared to the bus. At least we can show our student cards for the bus and get a lower price, just like with the trains. We can’t do that with a taxi.”
“But it’ll be faster for us!” Mimi wanted to hurry and get the trip over with. “I’ll be happy to put in some money for the fare if you promise to, too.”

“Okay, if you insist. It’d only be fair.”

“At least it’ll be easier than hitching a ride,” laughed Mimi.

*Koushirou also laughed, recalling how they, along with the others, were trying to get back to Odaiba from Hikarigaoka years ago, but due to sleeping through their stop to transfer, they ended up in Shinjuku with no money. This resorted in their hitchhiking. First up was Taichi, who had no luck and was nearly hit. When he and Jou tried, a taxi stopped for them, but realizing they had no money, took off. Yamato tried, and a pretty woman stopped for him, but was much too shy to get into the car, which was a two-door convertible and lacked the space they needed. When Sora and Mimi tried, by holding up signs, a young man stopped for them due to how cute they were.

Koushirou and Mimi made their way to the section of the station where one could either catch a cab or either hop on one of the many buses. There were no taxis parked out front currently, and the ones that were around or pulling up had their “off duty” signs on, but some were driving by, so he put out his arm to try and wave down a taxi, but his efforts seemed to go unnoticed.

Mimi giggled playfully. “That’s not going to get a taxi to stop for you.”

“Okay, what do you suggest then?”

She winked. “Just watch me.”

The girl walked a little ways into the street. She put out her right arm, her thumb extended, while her left hand rested on her hip. She made herself look as graceful and as beautiful as possible. “Oh taxi, I need a ride,” she said in a cutesy voice, while blowing a kiss.

Koushirou rubbed his eyes in disbelief as he saw all of these taxi drivers trying their best to stop for Mimi, and that included some of the off-duty drivers. All of the men driving looked to have hearts in their eyes and spoke in a love-struck manner.

'It’s a sin being this cute sometimes,’ Mimi thought triumphantly.

“I’ll be happy to drive you someplace!” the first driver said.

“You don’t want to go with that driver, come with me instead!” the second driver said.

“I’ll drive you around for free and then we can go out sometime!” the fourth, and the youngest looking, driver offered.

“I’m the fastest driver!” the third one said. “I’ll drive all the way to China for you!”

“I’ll drive you all the way to England if you would like, and I know that’s not possible, but I’d find a way!” said the fifth driver.

‘These drivers are pathetic! It’s just Mimi-san, it’s no big deal.’ He shook his head at the group. “Mimi-san, please choose one. They’re starting to block traffic.”

Sure enough, there were cars backing up behind them since they’d taken up most of the area to stop for Mimi. Each driver kept giving reasons as to why Mimi should choose him. In the end, Mimi chose randomly, and decided to go with the cab driver who had offered to drive them around for free.
The other drivers grumbled in annoyance and drove off. The taxi pulled up closer to the curb so that Mimi could get in. The lanky man, with the clean-cut hair actually stepped out of the car and opened the back passenger door for Mimi and let her in, completely ignoring Koushirou. After Mimi was in, he closed the door and rushed back to the driver’s seat.

“Where would you like to go?” he asked, love-struck.

“Um…you shut the door on my friend.”

“Friend, what friend?”

She pointed to Koushirou. “That friend!”

“Oh…”

“Well, open the door for him.”

“My button is broken,” he admitted bashfully. “That’s why I opened the door personally for you.”

Mimi sighed, wondering why the man hadn't gotten back out to let Koushirou in. Realizing the man wasn't going to move, she opened the door for Koushirou from inside and he hopped into the back behind the passenger’s seat, since Mimi had scooted over for him to get in. He looked annoyed.

“So, where to?” he asked again dreamily.

“Odaiba University, please.”

“Yes, my beautiful goddess.”

“Uh, ehehehe,” the girl nervously laughed. She was used of boys her age acting that way towards her, but not adults.

Koushirou rolled his eyes over the way the guy was acting. ‘Why do guys always act stupid whenever it comes to her? This guy is worse than Sukamon and Chuumon when they were asking Mimi-san for a date…’

The driver pulled off in the direction of Odaiba University. He kept smiling and glancing back at Mimi, even though it was a bit difficult since she was now sitting behind him. Either way, neither Mimi nor Koushirou noticed.

“I see you’re a university student. I’ve always found intelligent, university girls stimulating.”

Koushirou felt a bit disturbed. ‘What’s with this guy? This is getting weird…’

“You know, I could drop your younger brother off someplace and then we could have a nice, lovely dinner at a nice, fancy restaurant in the area.”

“Erm…no thank you, and Koushirou-kun is not my brother.” Mimi was starting to grow a bit unnerved by the man now. “He’s the same age as I am, and we are not university students. We’re junior-high students!”

The man seemed to ignore all Mimi had said and continued trying to get on her good side. “Would you like to listen to some music?”

“No thank you.”
“Excuse me, sir, but it would be quicker if you were to make a right at the next light,” Koushirou instructed. He wanted to cut this ride as short as possible. He was growing extremely agitated with the man and his attempts.

“I know what I’m doing,” the man growled.

“Hey! If he says that you should turn at the next light, then you should turn at the next light!”

“Yes, ma’am!” He promptly turned at the light.

“I hope we get there soon, I never cared much for riding around on nice days. Now I’m all for riding around on summer days.” Even though Mimi had grown up and matured over the years, she still preferred to be in a setting where she’s comfortable and at times, she still liked being *“dainty”*. 

“It shouldn’t take us too much longer,” Koushirou said while looking over the map he’d picked up earlier. While looking over the map, he pulled out a pen, and started to write some calculations on the back of it as a way to check if what he had come up with in mind was correct. “According to the remaining distance we have, and the speed that this driver is going, from what I can see, we should be there in about ten minutes, especially since he turned at the light back there.”

“Ugh, distance equations! I never liked that type of math much.”

Koushirou could only shrug. Solving distance equations was a breeze for him. He really did seem to enjoy math, and it was definitely one of his best subjects, but Jou had all of them beat. He could do pretty much every kind of math calculation in his head, a skill he’d shown at a very early age.

“Hey, Koushirou, did you really mean what you said back at the orphanage?”

“Hm, what did I say?”

“You said that you would try to visit every week to act as that young girl’s older brother.”

“You were around for that too?!”

“Yeah, and I was also there when you temporarily became a father.” Koushirou turned red while Mimi laughed at his priceless expression. “Okay, okay, I’ll stop teasing you. Now, did you really mean what you said to her?”

“I suppose so,” Koushirou said while ridding himself of his slight blush. “That was the only thing I could think of at that moment to keep her from crying. A promise is a promise, and it would be very disappointing to her if I broke a promise like that.” He grew quiet and stared out the window. “I would hate having to grow up in a place like that, never having a real home…like my mother…”

Mimi thought back to how lonesome Koushirou’s birth mother’s life had to have been before meeting Koushirou’s father, but figured that she had led a happy life once marrying. The car came to a halt in front of the school. The driver, though, kept staring at Mimi through his rear-view mirror. Neither noticed as they were both preoccupied by the vastness of the school. “Here you are,” he replied dully, “Odaiba University.” He gave Koushirou a look. “You can open the door yourself.”

After the man announced the price, Koushirou rolled his eyes and dug through his pocket to give Mimi his half for the fare. He gladly stepped out, as he was sick of this guy. He walked a little ways away from the taxi cab, staring up at the building and the beautiful school grounds, completely mesmerized. He’d actually never been on a university campus before. He was pretty much wondering what type of computer equipment the place probably had.
After Mimi finished counting out the money, she put it into the little tray. The taxi driver, on the other hand, remained looking face-forward, and stuck to watching her through the mirror. She smiled to him. “Here you go, sir, and thank you for the ride.”

“You don’t have to pay. I did promise you a free ride.”

“You were serious about that?”

“Of course,” he winked to her.

“That’s very kind of you,” she responded hesitantly.

“That’s the kind of guy I am, so why not stay back there while I join you? My schedule has just opened up.”

“Um…that’s okay. I’m fine paying…”

“How about paying me with a little kiss?”

‘Gross! This old geezer can’t be serious! He has to be at least 40 or something!’ The girl shuddered at the thought. “Aren’t you married or something?”

“What’s your point? Even if I were married, I would still find something better. I prefer pretty young girls. They’re so pure and innocent.”

“I’m getting out of here!”

“If you would like, we could find something else to do to compensate for this free ride.”

The man turned around, giving Mimi a look. He almost looked like he was a beast ready to pounce his prey. Koushirou was still a little ways off so he didn’t know what was going on, and to those walking by, unless close up, it just looked like the two were discussing something. The driver just smiled dementedly as he saw Mimi, frantically trying to open the door on her side. The door wouldn’t budge. That particular side had a special lock on it, which Mimi had forgotten. Usually, one would get in and out from the back passenger side, not the driver’s.

Realizing that getting out on her side wasn’t going to work, she tried to go for Koushirou’s door, but the man used his free arm to push her back into the seat and closed the door..

“Y-y-you said that the button was broken!!”

“I lied. Now, save all of that energy for later,” he told her with an evil grin. He pulled out a long object, the sun shining off the top part of it. Mimi gasped. He only had the knife out enough for just Mimi to see, so that he wouldn’t draw attention to himself. “If you don’t want to get hurt, you’ll stay put, and don’t even attempt to try and get the attention of your friend out there, or I will definitely use this.”

She didn’t know what to do, and was too frightened to scream out. With the girl too scared to even speak, the man put the car into gear, and took off. He only drove a few blocks and then turned off. Koushirou had heard the car screech and turned to see what it was. He saw the cab make the turn around the corner. He didn’t really think much of it. “I wonder why he’s in such a hurry.” Realizing that he was speaking to himself, he turned around. “Mimi-san?”

He asked a couple of people nearby if they’d seen a girl that fit Mimi’s description, but they shook their heads. The girl’s not being around, caused slight worry in Koushirou. He was positive that he
hadn’t done anything to offend her this time, and he couldn’t figure out where she could have gone so fast. He thought for a moment, when something hit him. He looked down the road in the direction that the taxi had gone. He thought back to his map, realizing that the taxi had gone down an alleyway with a dead end.

“I wonder if she stayed in the car.” He shook his head. “If she did stay in the car, why?”

He didn’t know why, but he started to get the feeling that something wasn’t right. He decided to head towards where the taxi had gone, but sent Mimi an e-mail first. When he didn’t get a quick response, his sixth sense grew even stronger and tried calling. Still no answer. Not sure what to do, he decided to phone the authorities, who of which said that they’d be right there. He was surprised that they’d even agreed to it, given the vague information, but that didn’t matter too much to him at the moment. With Mimi on his mind, he continued running towards where the taxi had gone…

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The lecherous driver was now in the back with Mimi, but he had left the knife in the front seat. He had taken something else out, but he had dropped that when he jumped into the back seat with Mimi. Whatever it was, it made a loud clanking sound. To Mimi, it sounded like something metallic.

The man had gotten in on Koushirou’s side, leaving the door slightly ajar. He also cut off the engine, so that Mimi wouldn’t try to let the powered windows down to escape. Mimi was now trying her hardest to get away from the dark-haired man, but he just wouldn’t let her, and she had no way out.

“Don’t act like that,” he told her gently, as he gingerly dragged her from out of the car, even though she struggled the entire time. “You ought to be glad that I chose you.” He carried her in front of the car, so that he wouldn’t be seen, and laid her on the rough ground. “You have such a radiant beauty that I couldn’t wait any longer. I must have you now! It’s like I’m staring at Aphrodite!” He stroked her hair. “Please forgive me for these unprepared surroundings. I just want a kiss, my love goddess,” he said while going towards his belt buckle with his free hand.

“Let me go!” she screamed and kicked at the man. “Leave me alone!”

The man pressed her down onto the ground, holding her arms, and forced a kiss on her. This angered the girl, and she broke one arm free and punched the man on the side of his face after he’d stopped kissing her. He just smiled at her. “I like energetic girls. That makes you even more attractive,” he told her darkly. “The other girls never complained, but they weren’t as worthy as you, either. This alleyway is one of many I use when I can’t be bothered with going home, but I never expected I would come across such a lovely creature. The gods are blessing me. You were saving yourself just for me.”

Mimi tried to scream again.

“My love goddess, just go along with it. It will all be over in just a moment.” His grin grew wider as he started to rip Mimi’s blouse open and positioning himself better, while trying to get Mimi positioned in a way he felt comfortable with. She continued to struggle as he started to slightly hike up her skirt. “You’re so nice and pure…you’re obviously untainted…and untouched…just what I love…”

He kissed her again muffling out her cries. Realizing that she was doomed, the girl closed her eyes as tears streamed down her face. She wanted it to be over and was telling herself that it was all just horrible nightmare and that all she had to do was wake up.

After what felt like the millionth forced kiss to the girl, he was about to try something a bit more daring, but he felt a sharp pain in the back of his head. After the quick pain, it caused him to slump down right on top of Mimi, a small trickle of blood dripping onto Mimi’s blouse. The pain had
caused the man to lose consciousness. Mimi felt very awkward with the older man on top of her, especially with what he was about to do to her, and it was quite obvious that he was definitely “ready”. That’s what disturbed her most.

She started to push the heavy man from off of her while she felt someone pulling. She saw a certain redheaded boy doing the pulling. After pulling the man off of Mimi, he let him roughly slump to the ground.

“K-Koushirou-kun!”

“Mimi-san, are you all right?” he asked her urgently.

She didn’t say anything, but accepted the boy’s hand as he helped her up. After doing so, Koushirou turned his head abruptly, his face going partially red. “Um….Mi-Mimi-san….y-your shirt.”

She looked down and realized that her pretty blouse was ripped in the front. She tried her best to cover herself by holding the torn blouse closed, but it didn’t help. Her underclothing was still visible. Koushirou took off his jacket and without looking at her, handed it to her since her white jacket was a bit ripped as well. It was a little bigger on her, and she was able to close it to cover herself up better. “Thank you,” she murmured. The girl shook as she stared down at the immobilized man. She wasn’t sure how to react to the situation she was almost in.

Koushirou really wanted to say something to her, but didn’t know exactly what given the situation. He didn’t know how he should react or approach the situation either. Should he tell her that everything will be okay now? Should he act as if nothing happened at all? Should he hug her? The last thought made him a bit tense…hugging the girl. Either way, he still didn’t really know what to do. The two remained standing there in silence until it was broken by police sirens.

“Good, the p-police is here.”

“The police?”

The officers ran down the alley towards the two. “Are you the ones who called us?” the first officer asked.

“I was the one who called, sir. I sensed something was wrong and by the look of things, I was right. I noticed that the taxi that my friend and I had taken drove off and went to a deserted area. I then noticed that my friend was missing, so I called it in just in case something had happened.”

While Koushirou was telling the story to the first officer, the three other police officers were investigating the scene.

“Hey, it’s him!” the second officer exclaimed.

“Y-you’re right!” Sergeant Manabu confirmed.

“It’s Doppo Fumio!” the third officer said in surprise. “We’ve been after him for a while!”

“You’re looking at a reward,” Sergeant Manabu told the boy.

“A reward?”

He nodded. “I know it sounds strange, but there was a bounty put out on him and a reward offered for his capture. We’ve been chasing him for months, but he would always get out of our reach. Every time we received a good tip or lead, he would disappear before we could catch him. With
what you told our officer over the phone, who then reported it to me, I found it very suspicious, which is why we took your call so seriously.”

“He always abducts young girls and attacks them in the most unpleasant of ways,” the first officer explained. “His posing as a taxi driver just to abduct unsuspecting girls sounds like something he’d actually do.”

“It’s quite sickening if you ask me,” Sergeant Manabu said angrily. “Thank goodness he didn’t get the chance to kill this girl. He always kills his victims after he’s done with them or when they are ‘no longer pure’.”

“Excuse me, but was this man attacking you?” asked the second officer.

She nodded slowly and muttered out a barely audible, “Yes.”

“We better take you in to check you over,” the sergeant told her uneasily.

“No, no, I’m fine. He didn’t do anything to me.” She looked over at Koushirou. “He got here just in time.”

“Young man, you should really consider yourself a hero!” the sergeant said proudly. “What you did showed true heroism and that you are, indeed, a great citizen and asset to our city!”

“Um, y-yeah…” he managed to get out, unsure of how to react to the praise.

Doppo Fumio began to stir as other officers arrived on the scene to make the arrest. His speech was a bit slurred due to the hit he’d taken. “I-I didn’t do anything. She is my love goddess! I was showing her my love! She offered her services to me to get out of paying, but now she’s lying!

“Anyway, you should arrest that boy for interrupting our love session for battery and assault! He hit me with something!”

Hearing this angered Koushirou tremendously. He literally wanted to hit him again. When he first arrived at the alleyway, he heard the girl's echoing muffled screams, and once he saw what was happening to her, all the boy could see was red. After hitting him that first time, he wanted to continue and had to literally stop himself. Seeing Mimi in such a way made him want to protect her, although granted, he figured that most anyone would have in that moment. Mimi during all of this remained quiet, staring out into space.

The thing Koushirou had hit him with was a large, metal object, which was on the ground by the car. It was a big, heavy wrench that had fallen out when he’d opened the door earlier.

‘I’m glad that I managed to go with my gut and I’m glad that I managed to knock him out, even if it was temporary, but I didn’t realize I had the strength to even do that. I do know that if he ever touches or harms Mimi-san again, that I won’t hesitate to hit him again! I don’t usually resort to violence, but it was extremely necessary and what he was about to do was unforgivable!’

“You be quiet!” the sergeant told Doppo with a hateful look. He then instructed his officers to search Doppo’s car for any other weapons. “I’m going to make sure that you never seen the light of day ever again!”

“You liar!” Doppo screamed at Mimi as he was forced into the squad car. He kept shouting obscenities about Mimi and how she’d deceived him.

After he was dealt with, the sergeant turned to his second officer. “Lieutenant Tsuya, I want you to
take care of that girl over there. It would make more sense for a female officer to deal with this type of situation.”

“Yes sir!”

She took Mimi aside, who got her statement, and explained how she didn’t agree to any of what Doppo had accused her of, and during that time, the sergeant was still speaking with Koushirou. After all had been discussed, Lieutenant Tsuya offered to take both Mimi and Koushirou home, as their statements had already been taken, and that given the situation, it would’ve been better to talk in a more comfortable atmosphere to ease the tension and to relax the victim. Koushirou figured that given the circumstances how going home was definitely the best idea suggested. Unfortunately, before they could leave, news reporters had fled to the scene, bombarding them with many questions.

A lot of nearby people and Odaiba University staff and students gathered around, curious as to what had happened, but were blocked off by the police, given that it was a crime scene and asked to disperse, although many didn’t leave. Mimi was still quiet over the entire incident and didn’t give much of a statement outside of “yes” or “no”. Koushirou, on the other hand, gave statements when asked anything, but made it absolutely clear that he wanted to remain anonymous, meaning no photos of him and no mentioning of their names in any of the articles written, and that it would be a good idea to keep Mimi anonymous as well.

After they left the crime scene as discreetly as they possibly could, which wasn’t easy given the crowd, in a vacant squad car driven by Lieutenant Tsuya, they rode in a deafening silence to the Nishimura home. Koushirou was the one to give her the directions. They all stepped out of the car. Lieutenant Tsuya wanted to speak with Mimi’s guardians about what had gone on, but Mimi told the officer that she didn’t really want to get them involved and that she would tell them in her own time. That aside, her folks weren’t even home since they’d all went to visit her uncle’s parents in nearby Saitama. No one seemed to be home in the other houses around either.

“I’ll be fine, Lieutenant Tsuya. I’ll be fine by myself.”

“Are you sure?”

She forced on a smile and nodded. “I’m sure I’ll be okay.” Koushirou wasn’t very convinced.

The woman pulled out a card and handed it to Mimi. “This is my card. If you ever feel the need to talk, please feel free to call.” Mimi nodded. “Now, Mr. Izumi, I’ll escort you home.”

“I can stay here. I can walk since I don’t live too far from here.”

“Are you positive?” He nodded. “If you insist,” she finally said, realizing that having a friend around would probably be very helpful to Mimi. “Now, remember, we will have to speak further, Mr. Izumi, so an officer will be sent over to your home either later on today or sometime tomorrow. We have to discuss your reward.”

Koushirou glanced over at Mimi, who was, once again, lost in thought. He was wondering if it was actually worth it. “Um, you know, I don’t really need any reward.”

“Nonsense! You helped to capture a major criminal! Young women and girls can now walk the streets feeling a little bit safer since our main attacker has been caught and put behind bars, and given the evidence, there’s no way he’ll get away with what he did and will definitely receive some type of a conviction!”

“Y-yeah, okay,” he answered her hurriedly. “I’ll just go down to the station and speak with you
“No need; like I said, we’ll come to you since, at your request, you wanted to remain anonymous. We will contact you before coming over to your home with the number you provided.”

“My home?”

“That is okay, isn’t it?”

“Yes, that’s fine.” He was unable to come up with anything convincing for her not to come by.

“Great, we’ll see you later then.” With that, the lady returned to her car and pulled off, leaving Mimi and Koushirou in front of the Nishimura home.

“Thank you for sticking around,” Mimi softly uttered to Koushirou lifelessly.

He didn’t know how to respond to that and just nodded weakly. He couldn’t understand what was going through her mind. He wanted to try to comfort her, but didn’t know what to do still. He couldn’t even give her a pep talk, as it was usually her to give the advice and pep talks.

“Well, um…Mimi-san, how about I treat you to that meal now or we could either go catch the rest of the party.”

“No thank you. I would rather sit around here for right now, if you don’t mind,” she told him sullenly.

“Okay, if you really feel that’s best.”

He reluctantly walked away after Mimi had entered the big, empty house. He hated to leave her in such a state, but it was her wish, and decided that he’d grant her that at least. Koushirou couldn’t help but wonder how Mimi would’ve reacted if the guy had actually gone a lot further with her. ‘She probably wouldn’t be speaking at all…’

He, eventually, made it home. His parents were out as well. Since he had plans to go “study”, they decided to have a romantic outing together, given the day, and at Mrs. Izumi’s insistence. Koushirou went to the living room, and slumped down on the couch, deep in thought over all that had happened that day…

Chapter End Notes

Author’s Notes

Note 1: I just described the hitch-hiking scene, and just thought I’d point out a couple of things. That man wasn’t Sora’s “cousin” in the original. The man actually picked up “Sora-chan” and “Mimi-chan” because they were cute. The boys he considered to be unnecessary baggage and treated them like crap because of it. He was also nameless for the original version.

When the rest of the boys failed at catching a ride, and the girls put up their signs (which was dropped from the dub), the others were talking about how having those two trying to get a ride was a good idea because the guys would be all over them, or something equivalent to that, and I think that Motimon was the one to say it.
Note 2: In Japan, the taxi drivers control the back passenger door. The driver has a button he or she pushes which opens and closes the door. The customer isn't supposed to open and close the door.

Note 3: This is just something random. In Adventure, in the episode when the children are back home and trying to find the eighth child, and Mimi and Sora were in Shiba Park and went to Tokyo Tower to cool off from the extreme summer heat, Mimi pretty much said that she likes to be “dainty” and relaxed and all that. In other words, she prefers to be comfortable, not “roughing it” if she can help it. Probably true for most people.

Note 4: I know, odd that I would have a note about rewards. At the time, I didn't know that rewards for information or capturing criminals wasn't much of a thing in Japan and a bit of a foreign, dishonorable (to my understanding) concept until about 2009 for the 2007 Lindsey Hawker murder case. Apparently, this was when it became more commonplace and utilized. To my knowledge, it may have been used prior, but maybe it was a rarity.

Fic Chapter Changes

No real changes, just changed up the way the cab was set up, the way the assault was done, changed some dialogue, and, like previous chapters, had the characters use their mobile phones. I also had Koushirou try calling Mimi as well as messaging her. He didn't try calling originally.
The Secret's Out...

Chapter Summary

For this chapter, we will see how Mimi and Koushirou try to move on from what happened the previous day. Also, Koushirou gets confronted by a few disgruntled admirers.

Chapter Notes

Hi again everyone. Sorry about the long wait. I hope the last chapter was okay. I still feel it could've been better written. Anyway, at least now you all know why Mimi was depressed when visited by Sora and Miyako and why Koushirou was snappy with them and also why he was blaming himself for Mimi’s dire mood. One more thing, Taichi, Sora, Miyako, and Yamato show up for this chapter along with Koushirou and Mimi’s classmates. Hope you enjoy it and sorry about the length. Seems school chapters always end up longer than I mean for them to.

Now, as always, I do not own anything dealing with the Digimon series or franchise. Bandai and Toei have that honor, and as a reminder, here are the ages of the characters once again:

Jou: 16-17 (Year 10-11; First/second year of High School)
Taichi/Sora/Yamato: 15-16 (Year 09-10; Last year of Junior High School/First year of high school)
Koushirou/Mimi: 14-15 (Year 08-09; Second/Last year of Junior High School)
Miyako: 13-14 (Year 07-08; First/second year of Junior High School)
Takeru/Hikari/Daisuke/Ken: 12-13 (Year 06; Final year of Elementary/First year of Junior High School)
Iori: 10-11 (Year 04-05)

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 14: The Secret’s Out!

It was the next day and everyone was in their respective classes in school. Sora had called Taichi the previous night and let him know that all plans to hang out were out and how neither Koushirou nor Mimi was up to doing anything. Sora had tried to get in touch with Mimi earlier that morning, but she never crossed paths with her. The same applied to Miyako.

Mimi’s aunt did get in touch with her sister-in-law and talked to her about Mimi, and Mrs. Tachikawa found it very strange that Mimi of all people was coming across as depressed. She asked to speak with the girl. Even though she wasn’t in the mood to talk with her mother at that particular moment, she took the call. Her mother acted frantic over the phone, wondering if she wanted to return to New York, but Mimi insisted that she was okay, and gave her the excuse that she was upset...
because she didn’t get to do any shopping. Satoe wasn’t all that convinced, but also believed that whenever Mimi was ready to talk, that she would do so in her own time, but that didn’t stop the middle-aged woman from trying to get some information out of her.

Right now, it was almost time for Koushirou’s lunch break, and he was also glad that he wouldn’t have to worry about cleaning time after lunch, as they cleaned up the school earlier because of visitors, but even during that, Mimi just didn’t seem to be herself. She was quiet and didn't say a word to him and came across as incredibly distracted.

Koushirou was surprised that Mimi had mustered up the courage to come to school at all. She’d come into homeroom just as the clock chimed and just took her seat without saying hi to anyone. He closely observed her all throughout their classes, and noticed how she seemed lackluster as opposed to outgoing and cheery. She was also fairly quiet and noticed how she wasn’t whispering to Ayame or Yuuko or taking advantage of the breaks in between their classes. He knew right there that she was still upset, and wondering how she was going to cope with lunch coming up soon where she would have to be the most social.

After a while, their teacher dismissed them, and everyone went off to their respective areas. Koushirou wasn’t in the mood for lunch, and had left his bento in his book bag. He headed straight to the computer lab. He was too depressed to eat. He was still felt that he was at fault for what had happened to Mimi. He was so concerned about himself and a “stupid school building” to notice fully what was going on. ‘How could I have missed all the signs? That man was hitting on her the entire time…but…I never would’ve imagined him doing what he did…’

Meanwhile, over in the lunch room…

“Oh, and this one is the funniest!” Yuuko said while pointing to one of the pictures on Ayame’s digital camera. “Look at his hair! Yuuji-kun looked hilarious and he was literally going to try standing on his head while playing the pianica for you!”

“How, we don’t know, but thanks to Chinatsu-chan, he didn’t try it.”

All three girls laughed, expecting Mimi to laugh along with them, but she didn’t even crack a smile.

“Mimi-chan?” called Ayame, who was seated across from her and beside Chinatsu.

“Oh, I’m sorry,” she apologized. She forced on a smile and looked at the camera’s photo. “My, Yuuji-kun looks funny.”

The three girls gave one another a look, and realized something was definitely wrong with Mimi. She’d forgotten her lunch and claimed that she wasn’t hungry when offering her some of their lunches, and all three had tried calling her the previous night but she’d refused to speak with either of them.

“Mimi-chan, what’s wrong? You still haven’t told us about your trip to Hikarigaoka yesterday with Izumi-kun.”

“It was fine,” she responded somberly. “It’s beautiful place, especially Hikarigaoka Park.”

The three girls joined together and huddled to discuss Mimi’s current state. Mimi was in such a daze, she didn’t notice that Yuuko had risen from her seat beside her to join the other two.

“So, what do you think?” asked Chinatsu.

“I don’t know, but it’s not like her to act like this.”
“I know, I know!” Yuuko started excitedly. “She told Koushirou-kun that she was madly in love with him, expecting a White Day gift from him, but he didn’t return her feelings and didn’t give her a gift because he sees her as only a friend, and whenever she goes to Nerima, she will always avoid going to Hikarigaoka because she’ll only feel heartache and pain.”

The other two girls gave Yuuko a look meaning, “Are you serious?”

“Didn’t she give him tomo-choco like she did with pretty much everyone?” Ayame asked, her eyes slits.

“Oh…yeah, I think she did…”

“You’ve been reading too many romance novels and romance manga,” muttered Chinatsu.

“Well, sorry for being a hopeless romantic.”

“Hopeless is right,” murmured Ayame.

Finally realizing that Yuuko and the others were discussing amongst themselves, Mimi came out of her trance and asked, “What are you three doing?”

“Um, nothing,” Yuuko insisted, retaking her seat beside Mimi.

“We were just planning on what we should do since our spring vacation is coming up,” Ayame said.

“Yeah, aside from our having to go to the senior graduation ceremony at the end of the week,” Chinatsu added.

“This is our last week as second-year students,” Yuuko cheered. “Aren’t you a little excited?”

“Sure, why wouldn’t I be?” she asked bluntly.

“I don’t know; maybe it’s because you haven’t smiled a decent smile all day,” Yuuko pointed out. “What did Koushirou-kun do to you to cause your mood to be so off today and for you to miss the gathering yesterday?”

Hearing that, Mimi grew defensive. “He didn’t do anything!” She stood up. She felt like crying. “Koushirou is a great friend! I would give my life for him!” She rushed off to the restroom to calm herself down, leaving her friends with looks of bewilderment upon their faces.

“She would give her life for him?” Chinatsu blinked. ‘She didn't call him Koushirou-kun…’

“I wonder what’s going on…”

“He must have done something to Mi-chan and she’s just covering for him.”

“Come on, Mimi-chan is a good judge of character,” Ayame reminded Yuuko. “Koushirou-kun is a decent person and I doubt she would’ve said something as serious as that if he wasn't.”

“Who knows what he's like behind closed doors when one is alone with him! He may have lots of faults that no one else knows of or he may actually be some kind of an animal! Rawr!” Chinatsu and Ayame shook their heads at Yuuko in disbelief. “S-sorry…I just like a good scandal every once in a while. Hehe.”

The three continued their conversation about Koushirou and Mimi’s trip, not realizing that their conversation was being listened to…
In the computer lab, Koushirou was surfing the net…

‘Since going back to Odaiba University is out, unless I go by myself, I’ll just stick to checking out the school’s webpage. I wouldn’t want to put her through the trauma of actually going back there.’ He typed in the webpage’s address, which loaded without any difficulty. ‘That didn’t take me long at all.’

Before he was able to do remotely anything, he heard some disgruntled voices come from behind him.

“Hold it right there, Izumi!”

“I knew we would find him here since he’s in the Computer Club,” the second responded.

“We want some answers!” demanded the third.

“And we want them now!”

Startled, as he didn’t even hear the door to the room open, he got up and turned to face four of his fellow classmates.

“Takamatsu-san, Hashimoto-san, Ueda-san, Tomokazu-san…”

“What did you do to upset Mimi-san?!” Ukyo asked the boy.

“We know that you’re the reason she missed the party yesterday and how she was all happy Saturday before the party according to…um, our three sources we happened to overhear during lunch!”

Seki rolled his eyes at his cousin. “Way to go for giving out too much information!” he told him.

“Those three would kill us if they knew we were eavesdropping.”

“If you don’t tell us what you did to our poor Mimi-chan, who hasn’t graced us with her beautiful smile all day, then we’ll find a way to get it out of you!” Misao threatened.

The other three boys nodded in agreement, Ukyo only partially. The four, like many others, really hated seeing Mimi upset or distressed and would always try to find the source to fix it, but it had never really come up before since it was rare for Mimi to be upset to the point of its being noticeable. She was usually happy and outgoing whenever in school and around her friends.

“I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

“Stop lying!” Yuuji told him. “We know you did something to upset Mimi-chan yesterday! She even forgot her lunch today because of you!”

‘She forgot her lunch?’

“She’s been down all day,” Ukyo pointed out.

Just referencing yesterday was enough to annoy Koushirou, and these four weren’t helping his mood any at all. He stood his ground. “I’m not going to tell you anything. I’m not obligated to.”

“Don’t make us beat a confession out of you!”

Koushirou was surprised at the threat Misao had just issued to him. He knew of the boy, and yeah,
he was pretty big and did look like the type one wouldn’t mess with, but he didn’t seem like the violent type or the type to resort to violence, and neither did the other three, although Yuuji was questionable. Yuuji was usually quick to lose this cool.

Koushirou kept his resolute composure, despite the threat. “I told you that I didn’t do anything to her! We were working on our history project yesterday, now if you guys will excuse me, I have some work to finish up regarding it!” he snapped at them.

Koushirou retook his seat in front of the computer he had been working on, until he felt his collar being pulled, forcing him to stand back up. The one to pull him up, and then turn him around, was the giant Misao. He was holding his collar with both hands and was in Koushirou’s face.

“You don’t work until you tell us what you did to Mimi-chan!” He shook him slightly.

“No!” Koushirou shouted back defiantly to the bigger boy. “Like I said before, I didn’t do anything to her!” He then murmured under his breath, “not on purpose…"

Misao kept hold of Koushirou with one hand, while bawling up his other into a fist. “I’m sorry to have to do this to you, Izumi, but we gave you a lot of chances to cooperate and come clean with us and you just ran out of them.”

Yuuji, Seki, and Ukyo were surprised at the serious threat. Neither expected Misao to go that far. They figured that his threats were as empty as all of theirs were.

“Misao-san, I don’t think you should---”

“Quiet, Ukyo!”

“Seriously, stop! This isn't going to solve anything! Don’t make me hurt you!”

“Shut up! I’d like to see you try it!” Ukyo could definitely immobilize Misao, but was very hesitant on showing off his skills in general, especially since they were in school. Misao put his full attention back on Koushirou. “I’m going to get a confession out of you whether you want to give us one or not since you didn’t cooperate earlier, like I said! You’ll regret causing Mimi-chan all of her pain!”

The redhead closed his eyes, awaiting the punch. In some ways, he felt he deserved it. He couldn’t feel the pain Mimi was in, so he figured that maybe a punch to the face would make things even. The punch started to come, but he never felt anything, as all five of them heard a light voice shout out, “Stop!” Misao stopped his punch mid swing to see who it was that had given the order, and hoped that it wasn’t a teacher, or even worse, their vice principal or head teacher. The other three boys looked back, and Koushirou opened his eyes to see a very angered looking Mimi tapping her foot with her hands on her hips.

“How dare you! What are you four doing to him!? Let him go!”

Misao quickly released Koushirou’s collar and gave off a nervous laugh. By releasing the redhead, it caused him to fall roughly to the floor, but he recovered quickly and stood.

“Well, I’m waiting!”

“We-we were just having ourselves a little fun,” Misao insisted, his face growing hot.

“It didn’t look that way to me! I heard you threaten him before I walked in here, Misao-kun! How dare you four try to invade my personal life and then act like this to get information about it!”
“Mimi-chan,” Seki begged, “don’t be mad at us!” He pointed to Misao. “This was all his idea!”

“Yes, we’re not proud of it, but we just went along with him,” Ukyo added.

“We didn’t know he was going to really hit him! We just thought he was making empty threats, like the rest of us were! We just wanted to scare the information out of him!”

“You idiot, when are you going to learn how to shut up!” Seki told his cousin in annoyance.

“I wasn’t going to really hit him! I was just trying to scare him, like Yuuji said!”

“You four…just go…will you? Please?”

“B-but Mimi-chan,” Yuuji cried.

“Please…leave!”

The four boys frowned, realizing that they’d definitely made a mistake by threatening the computer whiz. They, reluctantly, left, but decided to stick around and listen through the door.

“Are you okay?”

“Yeah, I guess so.” Koushirou brushed himself off and gave Mimi a questioning look. “What are you doing here anyway?”

“I was looking around for you and figured you would be in here since I didn’t see you at lunch.”

“Oh, lunch! Ueda-san said that you’d forgotten it!” Koushirou went to his book bag and pulled out his bento. “Would you like mine? I didn't make it, you know, like the ohagi you made for me, but I hope it’ll be okay for you.”

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Outside of the door...

“So Mimi-chan did make him a snack,” Yuuji grumbled jealously underneath his breath.

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“No, that’s okay. I’m fine.”

“Are you sure?”

“Yeah, it's okay.”

Koushirou put the bento back into his bag. He was feeling a bit discomfited with the girl. “So, what did you want t-to talk about?”

“Well…I was wondering when…we could go back to Odaiba University and when we’ll be able to go to Toudai. We’re running out of time.”

“Wh-what? You actually want to go after…after what happened yesterday?”

She nodded. “Nothing happened.”

Koushirou noticed that the girl’s voice was completely void of emotion. “Are you feeling okay?”

“I’m fine,” she told him as confidently as she possibly could. ‘I have to be strong for Koushirou and I have to get over this. Nothing happened! That’s all that matters. I can’t walk around sulking. That man is behind bars and he won't be attacking any other girls!’
Even though she was insistent on being okay, Koushirou wasn’t very convinced. “Mimi-san, you really don’t have to go if you don’t want to, and given the circumstances surrounding what happened, I wouldn’t blame you if you didn’t.”

“I’m going whether you want me to or not, and that’s final!” Mimi retorted stubbornly. “There’s nothing to worry about and I want to go…”

“But, Mimi-san,” the boy began sensibly, “the quickest way there if leaving from our school would be by taxi.”

“So what? There’s nothing wrong with riding in a taxi.” Mimi continued on. “No,” her voice started to quiver, “there’s nothing wr-wr-wrong with riding in a taxi.”

“Mimi-san?”

At this point, Mimi’s eyes were starting to water and sting. “It’s nice and quick and can sometimes cost less than the train and the bus depending on where you want to go, but you do get to where you have to go and you can always tr-trust the dr-dr-driver!”

After she said, “you can always trust the driver”, Mimi burst into tears, and sat down in one of the computer lab chairs. The four boys on the other side of the door didn’t know what to make of it. It was now obvious to them that Koushirou really didn’t have anything to do with her mood and felt a bit bad for accusing him in the first place. Meanwhile, back in the computer lab, Koushirou was trying to calm Mimi down as best as he could.

“It could happen to anyone,” she wailed. “Why?!”

“I don’t know, but thankfully we don’t have to worry about that anymore.”

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“Worry about what?” Seki wondered.

“Mimi-chan is crying!” Misao said in alarm.

“But Izumi-san isn’t the one at fault,” Ukyo muttered.

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“I’m not strong,” she continued to cry. “I’m trying my best to be strong and go back, but I still can’t! I had nightmares all last night about what could have happened to me and what would have if you hadn’t have shown up when you did! I just couldn’t sleep at all last night because of it. I felt dirty after I got home yesterday. I still do in fact! I bathed and I bathed and I scrubbed, but I still can’t get that disgusting feeling to go away!

“I want to go with you, but I still feel bad because of what happened!”

“Mimi-san, you’re one of the strongest people I know.”

She looked up at him. “Wh-what do you mean?” she hiccuped between sobs.

“You’re still willing to go after all that’s happened. I’m sorry that I cannot understand how you’re feeling completely, and you know that I can’t because it didn’t happen to me, but…I’ve been feeling really bad over it too…”

“Wh-why?”

“Because it was my fault.” He turned his head and looked down at the slick shiny computer lab floor. “If I hadn’t been so wrapped up in myself over this project and my selfishness involving my
parents, it would have never happened!”

“What would have never happened?” wondered Ukyo.

“I wish they’d be more specific,” complained Seki.

Misao grew tired of listening, and decided to peek into the room through the crack of the sliding door. When they left earlier, the door hadn’t been shut fully. The other three decided to do the same, but definitely remained quiet. They didn’t want Mimi even more cross with them.

“It wasn’t your fault.” Mimi wiped away some of her tears. “It was mine!”

Hearing that ludicrous statement, Koushirou sat down in the other chair, grabbed her by the shoulders gently, and looked the girl dead in her eyes. “No! This is nowhere near your fault! You shouldn’t blame yourself in any way or form for what happened! You’re the last person who’s at fault! I can’t believe you would actually say something like that!” Realizing what he was doing, he awkwardly let go abruptly and stood.

“But you kept trying to persuade me to go to the party instead of going with you after we got back, but I went along anyway because of my stubbornness!”

“Mimi-san…don’t. Please don’t. It wasn’t your fault and I refuse to let you believe that it was!”

“B-but you said it was your fault for not paying attention…”

“I should have been more observant and protective,” he told her in a soft voice, “but, it definitely wasn’t your fault!” he finished up firmly.

Mimi slightly frowned. “Maybe we should agree that it was neither of our faults?”

“I guess I could accept that. I-I guess it really wasn’t when thinking about it. Just…bad timing I guess. Neither one of us needs to be beating ourselves up over this.”

“But you had good timing.”

“What do you mean?”

“Koushirou-kun, you know what I mean.”

“Y-yeah, I think so…”

“I guess it was meant to happen, but…it just bothers me that stuff like that happens.”

“It bothers me too. It shouldn’t be allowed and I can't help but wonder what makes people like that.” Koushirou understood that it had to have been very difficult for Mimi to accept that not everyone could be kind. It was in her nature to try to find the good in everyone. She was also still somewhat trusting like in the past during their Digital World adventures. Aside from Daisuke, Mimi was the only other person to fully trust Ken after his stint as the Digimon Kaiser, despite the fact that he’d killed and abused helpless Digimon. ‘Mimi-san…you really were best suited for the Crest of Purity…’ he silently noted.

Mimi started to cry again, but wasn’t wailing like she had earlier. She just continued shedding tears, sniffing every once in a while.

“Mimi-san, what’s wrong?”
“I don’t know. I just feel a little better talking to you about this now. I wasn’t even planning on coming to school today since I was so down, but realized that I couldn’t stay home and have to be brave!”

She stood up and walked over to Koushirou and gave him a big hug. Koushirou nervously, and awkwardly, returned it. His heartbeat started to quicken some, and his stomach got that same strange feeling he always got whenever the girl was much too close to him for comfort. The hug was warm to Mimi, which she enjoyed. As odd as it came across, she felt safe being embraced with him in this way, and he had a pleasant scent that she just couldn't place, but it was still nice. She almost didn’t want to let go.

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‘Eh!!?’ all four boys gaped.

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Without warning, Mimi leaned up and kissed Koushirou on his right cheek. The boy felt his face go incredibly red, and his heart started to beat so erratically, that it felt like it was going to beat right out of his chest. He had never received a kiss from a girl before, and he never fathomed in a thousand years that someone like her would give him one.

The four boys stared at the display, completely mortified at the sight and didn’t know what to do or say. They just stood there…staring…their eyes bugged out...

“Um…wh-what was that for?” he asked, still obliviously hugging on the girl.

“For being a great friend and for all you did to help me yesterday,” she told him gently.

The two remained embraced like that, Mimi hugging onto the boy tighter, burying her head into his chest...

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The four boys walked off, finally, still in a bit of a stupor over Mimi’s actions.

“She…she...”

“Misao, don’t say it!” Yuuji shuddered.

“I’ve lost her,” Seki frowned.

“But technically, you never had her.”

“Well, you didn’t either!” the boy shot back at Ukyo.

“Wait guys! Maybe there’s still hope!”

“Misao’s right,” Seki agreed. “It was a friendship kiss and a hug, not a romantic one! Mimi-chan would know about that stuff.”

Yuuji wiped his brow. “That’s a relief.”

The four continued on, until they were stopped by a certain history teacher.

“Hi there, Ishidzuka-sensei,” the boys all greeted.

“Hey there boys.” He put his attention on Yuuji and Seki. “Trying to get back to class early I see,” he said while staring down at his watch. “You still have a couple of minutes left until the lunch hour is over and until my history class starts.”
“Yeah, we were on our way there,” Yuuji told him.

“Yes, it’s very intriguing, your history lessons,” Seki added on lamely.

“Yeah, very interesting, the material.”

Ukyo was the only one who didn’t have Ishidzuka for any of his courses, so he didn’t have to worry about him, and let Yuuji, Seki, and Misao handle all of the discussion.

“I’m glad to hear that. I’ll be right back. I have to print some papers off for class. It’s the first part of your four-part exam. I really shouldn’t be such a procrastinator,” he laughed. “I waited until the last minute to try printing them and the faculty computers are all being used, so I have to use one of the student computers.”

With that, the man strolled away.

“I’m glad he didn’t ask too many questions,” Yuuji breathed out in relief.

“Yeah, same here.”

“Too bad we actually have working computers,” grumbled Yuuji.

“I know what you mean, cuz. I wouldn’t mind getting out of that exam!”

“I really dislike this new experimental curriculum,” Ukyo complained. “What person decided to make us take exams during this time of the year? We usually take exams like this in May and then finals in July.”

The other three could only shrug.

“It’s almost time to get back to class,” Misao told the others. “We better go…”

“Yeah, he’s right.” The group started to walk off, when something came to Seki’s mind.

“What’s wrong,” Yuuji asked.

“Mimi-chan!”

“What about her?” Tears started to stream down his face. “She’s with Izumi!”

“Ishidzuka-sensei said that the computers in the teacher’s room were all being used. He was headed to the student computer lab. Mimi-chan is going to get into trouble if Ishidzuka-sensei walks in there to find her and Izumi hugging and stuff. They could get into trouble or something. I know that’s not allowed in school!”

“We can’t let the perfect record of Mimi-chan be tainted!” Misao declared. “What can we do to keep that from happening?”

“Nothing,” Ukyo said while pointing down the hall. “He’s already there.”

“Uh-oh,” both cousins said in unison.

Mr. Ishidzuka opened the door of the computer lab to find both Koushirou and Mimi sitting at one of the computers. The boys had snuck behind Mr. Ishidzuka, curious as to what was going to happen, but to their surprise, the two weren’t embraced.
“Ah, Tachikawa-san, Izumi-kun! It’s nice to see that you’re looking into universities. It’s never too early I always say.”

He saw that Koushirou had Odaiba University’s webpage up. Both had broken their embrace a short time after the fearsome foursome left, but kind of stood there in silence for a short while, many thoughts running through their heads. When they heard footsteps growing closer, they acted as if they’d been working the entire time.

“Hello, sensei,” the two greeted nervously.

He took a seat at one of the computers, logging into the school’s server. The clock then chimed.

“You two better hurry back to class, and don’t worry; you won’t be marked late if you don’t make it back in time.”

“Yes, sir,” the two obeyed, Koushirou closing out the browser window. They then started out of the computer lab.

“Izumi-kun,” Mr. Ishidzuka said, while staring at the boy, “is something wrong?”

“Wrong, sir?”

“Your face is red.” He laughed. “I hope you’re not getting a fever before my exam.”

“I’m fine, sir,” he answered quickly. “I can’t wait to take your exam!”

“Well, if you insist you’re okay, I guess there isn’t much I can do about it, but if you do start to feel bad, please go see the school nurse.”

“Yes, sir.”

“Anyway, you two better hurry. I hope I’m not late myself.”

The two didn’t question him and hurried themselves along. Since their talk, Mimi was a bit more calm and collected. Crying really did help her release some of the pent up stress she was holding in, and she was also glad that she had talked with Koushirou. She could tell from the previous day that he really wanted to try and help her in some way and he had just by talking things out and putting up with her crying.

While walking down the emptying hall, Mimi was surprised at herself. She had hugged and kissed Koushirou. The hug was so gratifying to her that she would’ve remained that way with him if realization hadn’t set in for the two. She was still trying to figure why she had, though. She’d never given any boy a kiss before, surprisingly, and that included her friend Michael, and she considered him a very close friend, and a romantic interest at one point before moving back to Odaiba.

Koushirou was just as surprised over Mimi’s actions as she was. He was wondering why Mimi had kissed him and why they hugged for so long. He didn’t want to let go, and that’s what bothered him most, and due to these feelings being so unfamiliar and intensified, it also scared him. Thoughts raced through his mind as he tried to figure out what had just happened. It just didn’t “compute” to him as they continued their walk, Koushirou trying to rid himself of his obvious, deep blush as well as those, what he considered to be, unnatural thoughts regarding his embrace with Mimi.

When the two finally reached the classroom, both took their seats. Yuuji glared jealously at a still slightly red Koushirou as he sat, while Seki was in deep thought over all that had occurred earlier between the two.
When Mimi sat down in her usual spot in between Ayame and Yuuko, they noticed how she looked a bit more content, despite her true feelings regarding Sunday. Both girls were relieved to see that Mimi was acting more like her usual self. Since their teacher was, indeed, running late, Ayame pulled out her small, digital camera, and started to show photos of the four boys from the party. Mimi couldn't help but laugh, and called all of them, “cute”.

After school was over, Mimi asked Koushirou to wait for her while she got herself situated to go, such as stopping off by the restroom. While preparing to leave, she ended up running into the sleuthing duo, Miyako and Sora.

“Okay, talk to us,” Miyako begged. “What was wrong with you yesterday?”

“Huh?”

“You were very down yesterday, Mimi-chan. How come?” asked Sora, only a little less hysterically than Miyako, and more so in her typical, motherly way.

“Oh, yeah…that…” She lowered her head. She didn’t want to get back into it. She’d finally gotten out of her slight funk, partially, and definitely didn’t want to have to go back to it, especially with where she was headed.

“Mimi-chan, we’re your friends. We care about you and worry about you. When you’re not acting like yourself, we can’t help but wonder what’s wrong and if we can help fix it.”

“Sora-san…” Mimi uttered.

“Like she said, we’re worried about you. You were nice and cheerful before you went on that trip, and then completely out of it afterwards!”

“I really don’t want to talk about it right now. It would make me sad again.”

Miyako threw her hands into the air and whined. “Come on, you didn’t even tell us what was bothering Izumi-senpai or why he had to go to Hikarigaoka in the first place! I’m worried about the both of you, but you more so than him right now, especially since you didn’t return our calls or answer our email.”

“I’ll get into that later. Right now, I have to meet up with Koushirou-kun.” She started to feel a bit anxious, but concentrated and tried not to think about Sunday. Mimi could tell by both girls’ looks that they really wanted to know something, or at least be clued in. “Well, I really don’t want to talk about it again…not now, but maybe you can check the evening news or read over this morning’s paper. It should be in there. Like I said, I’m going to tell you myself, but if I did that right now…I wouldn’t be able to face Koushirou-kun.”

Miyako was about to protest, but Sora put up her hand. “No, Miyako-chan. If she insists, we’ll just go check the paper.”

“Thank you for understanding.” Mimi hugged Sora. “It’ll probably be a feature story, and I really could use the talk. Please call me, both of you, at around 20:00 (8:00), or maybe you could come over and stay the night. Sué-bachan always said that I was allowed to have company over, no questions asked. It’s your choice.”

The two agreed as Mimi headed to her shoe locker in a rush, leaving the two, but ended up bumping right into Taichi and Yamato.

“The invisible girl finally reappears,” laughed Taichi.
“Invisible girl?”

“We were all worried about you yesterday since you didn’t show up for the party,” Taichi explained. “We haven’t seen you much since we went out for karaoke. It was also weird how Koushirou didn’t show up either since he seemed so interested in going. I tried giving him a call and sending an email, but I didn’t get an answer from him.”

“I was hoping you’d show up,” Yamato stated simply.

“Something kind of came up after I got back to Odaiba…” she trailed off. “Have either of you seen Koushirou-kun?”

“Not lately,” Yamato said.

“Oh, never mind. I see him. He’s standing outside the school doors. I have to go. Bye guys!”

The girl ran off, changing out of her shoes, and quickly joined Koushirou, who had been waiting around for her before Taichi could get his real question out…if she’d seen Sora. Mimi and Koushirou had decided that they’d give Odaiba University another try, regardless of all the uneasiness they were currently feeling amongst one another. It was a combination of feeling awkward from the hug and kiss and the other was definitely because of what had happened the previous day…

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Meanwhile…

“Come on,” Miyako urged, “let’s go to the library. The librarian should have a copy of this morning’s paper.”

“Yeah, she should. Let’s go.”

Sora followed behind Miyako, and both ran into Taichi and Yamato.

“Hi,” Miyako greeted.

“Nice, we found you,” Taichi said.

“Found us?” asked Sora.

“I was looking for you, but you rushed right off after class,” Taichi explained.

“Miyako-chan and I wanted to catch Mimi-chan so that we could ask her about yesterday.”

“What’s going on with her anyway?” asked Yamato curiously. “She said that she missed the party yesterday because something came up after she got back to Odaiba. Where did she go?”

“She and Izumi-senpai spent the entire day in Hikarigaoka yesterday.”

“Mimi-chan and Koushirou went to Hikarigaoka…alone…yesterday? Like a date?”

Yamato crossed his arms coolly and shook his head. “I doubt it. There’s probably more to it.”

“That’s because there is,” Sora confirmed. “Something did happen. When we went over to her place after we split with you guys, she seemed to be incredibly down.”

“Hm, so it’s like you said. She spent the entire day with Koushirou,” Yamato muttered while taking in the information. “Why did she have to go to Hikarigaoka with Koushirou?”
“Isn’t it obvious! It’s a date! I mean, she was on her way to meet up with him when she bumped into us.”

“Wrong again,” Sora laughed. “Both of them are working on a history project that’s due at the end of the week. Mimi-chan is paired up with him, so there was something that Koushirou-kun had to check out in Hikarigaoka and Mimi-chan tagged along. They both just got back to Odaiba late, and were unable to come to the party.”

“Something seems off about that since Hikarigaoka is about an hour away from here and Shin Kiba, meaning they would have had to go out of their way to miss the party since it ran until 19:00 (7:00)…”

“Aww, Yamato-kun…”

“Let’s hurry to the library. She said that she didn’t want to tell us what happened and to just look it up!”

“Alright, calm down, Miyako-chan. Bye Taichi, Yamato-kun…”

“Wait, I thought you said that she was with Koushirou working on a school assignment.”

The two girls left and headed off to the library, not even hearing Yamato. Taichi just kicked at the floor in annoyance.

“So, why didn’t you ask her?”

“She’s obviously too busy.”

“You have to ask her sooner or later before someone else does.”

“Like who?!?” Taichi looked worried.

“Well…maybe me, for instance…” Yamato slightly blushed.

The look of worry left the soccer player’s face. “Yeah right! This is kind of difficult, you know? We’ve never had this type of school function before and the girls seem more excited about it than anything else. There are a lot of people nervous about this dance thing that Mimi-chan came up with, and speaking of her, why haven’t you asked her along yet? You had the perfect opportunity just now and you blew it.”

“She’s been pretty busy herself…and, it’s like you said, it’s a bit nerve-racking since this dance stuff is new. It’s a formal thing and the boys are supposed to ask the girls to join them for it. What in the world was she thinking…”

“Well, it can’t be too bad if the PTA agreed to it.”

“Yeah, I guess,” the blonde murmured.

“Anyway, at least you don’t have to worry about anyone else asking Mimi-chan since she’s a second year. The dance is for third-years only, but then again, there probably are some boys in our year who aren’t too shy about asking her to the dance, especially since it was her idea.”

“I was thinking about doing that yesterday at the party. Mimi is one of the few girls at this school besides Miyako-chan and Sora, that I actually don’t mind hanging around with. Neither of them treats me like a celebrity and they give me attention because they’re my actual friends, not like some
crazed fan who hangs onto my every word and would go along with anything or everything I say no matter how unreasonable or stupid it is. Hm, well, I guess Chizuru-san is okay too.”

“Inoue Chizuru?”

“Yeah, I’ve always shared classes with her, but didn’t really know much about her until a few years ago after Miyako-chan was chosen. She treats me like her sister does, like any other student, but there’s the possibility that she’s been asked already.” He sighed. “Who knows, I may just offer to have my band play the entire time and not worry about it at all…that is if the other guys are up to it.”

“Good idea.”

“Thank you for all of your support,” Yamato sarcastically responded with a sweat drop.

“Glad to have helped.” Taichi didn’t even notice the cynicism in Yamato’s voice, and stuffed his hands into his pockets. “I better head home. I’ll call Sora and try to ask her again later.”

“Well, okay, but before you go, whatever happened with Hikari-chan? You never told me.”

“Nothing much, really. She told me that she wasn’t feeling well and that Daisuke offered to take her home, and on the way, she started to feel better, so the two hung out at Venus Fort and went out for ice cream or something. I also think I remember her mentioning something about going to the game center, even though it’s almost impossible not to at Venus Fort…”

“That almost sounds like a date to me.”

“Hikari isn’t old enough to date yet! I won’t let her! Who knows what’s going on through the minds of some of these crazed boys?!?”

“Taichi, you’re being way too protective of her!” Yamato knew that Taichi always wanted what was best for his sister, but this time seemed different from the other ones. ‘Something must be going on.’

“W-well, what if a mugger or murderer tries to attack her just because she’s a pretty girl?! What then?!”

“T-Taichi…what are you talking about? Why are you thinking like this all of a sudden? You’ve never worried like this before. Where is this all coming from?”

“This morning, my father was reading the paper and one of the main stories was about some guy being caught. He was known for attacking young girls, and yesterday he went after some girl and he was about to…do stuff with her,” he told his friend awkwardly. “Luckily, someone called it in and actually fought the guy off and saved her. I was just thinking, what if something like that happens to Hikari?”

“Only those who have issues do that type of thing and I doubt that Hikari-chan would get into that kind of trouble. She has friends. If it isn’t my brother or Daisuke, then others will probably be around. I’m sure the person who attacked the girl is being punished. Did they say what her name was? I hate just calling them ‘the girl’ or ‘the guy’ and stuff.”

“From what I remember, they’re keeping it quiet. The girl is keeping her identity secret and wants to remain anonymous, and the person who rescued her is also remaining anonymous.”

“I wonder why…”

“Yeah, I was wondering that too…”
“In a way, I can understand why the girl might not want the attention, but her rescuer? The person must be a genuine Good Samaritan, unless they're both minors.”

“Who knows, but I’m out of here. No practice and I plan on relaxing! Bye, Yamato.”

“Yeah, bye, good luck with Sora.”

‘Feh…I can play my best in front of this entire ward, but I can’t ask out Sora. Does she even like me? She only gave me tomo-choco last month for Valentine’s…just like she did for Koushirou, Yamato, some of the guys from our clubs and of our year… I just have to get the nerve to ask her before somebody else does, like Yamato said.’

****

Over in the school library…

“Feature story, feature story, feature story,” Miyako muttered while thumbing through the newspaper. “One thing I always hated about the newspaper is that there could be more than one big story. Like this one here about some man.” She looked at the picture and frowned. “He doesn’t look like he can be trusted.”

‘Typical of Miyako-chan to judge someone by looks.’ She took the paper. “I’m sure that it’d probably make front page news if it’s a big story.” Glancing through the paper, she decided to try her luck. “I think I found it.” She read the title, “Attacker Finally Captured!”

“Attacker?”

“That’s the most emphasized story on the page. The guy was ‘caught and apprehended’ yesterday over near Odaiba University.”

“Hurray…a burglar,” Miyako yawned. “That can’t be the story.”

“No, it’s not a burglar,” she told her while skimming the article. “It’s something much worse!”

“A bank robber?”

“No, seriously! This guy, apparently, targets and attacks young girls, defiles them, and then normally kills them once he’s done with them.”

“That’s awful! I hope he stays in jail for a long time!” Miyako thought for a moment. “Wait, what does that have to do with oneesama?”

“I’m not sure, but this does seem to be the main feature story.”

“There must be another story that has something to do with her.”

“Who knows,” Sora shrugged, as she started to read bits and pieces of the article out loud…

Attacker Finally Captured!

Yesterday, at about 16:15 (4:15), Doppo Fumio, age 36, was finally caught and apprehended. He is known for targeting young school-aged girls and killing his victims if either provoked by them or when he’s “done with them”. Doppo Fumio attacked again, only this time, he was unable to carry through with the horrendous attack. A young girl was attacked by the man. She owes her life to a young man who “sensed something was wrong” and contacted the authorities before investigating himself.
“He got there just in time,” says police officer, Tsuya Masuyo, lieutenant at the Odaiba Police Station of its Special Investigative Team. “We would not have gotten there in time if it weren’t for this young man. He saw what was happening and attacked, saving the girl’s life. We do not advise one to approach a person of this nature, as it’s very dangerous, but in this case, we are grateful that this boy did.”

When asked about what the rescuer was thinking at the time of the attempted assault, the boy responded, “I wasn’t thinking. I just knew that I had to help somehow. He was about to hurt her and who knows what else.” This brave young man didn’t care about the reward and actually turned it down, seeing as how he was more concerned with the victim getting to safety…

Sora stopped reading and gasped. “Oh no…”

“Oneesama was the girl and…”

“…Koushirou-kun was the boy who saved her,” Sora finished up, shedding a few tears. “He wanted to remain anonymous. That’s why that police officer was at his home yesterday. It must’ve been this Lieutenant Tsuya person.”

“How could she be attacked? It was still light out! People are usually out.”

“According to the rest of the article, he doesn’t care whether it’s day or not and seems to like girls who have long hair. Once he’s found a girl he wants, he abducts the girl, takes the girl to a location, keeps the girl there and does unspeakable things to her. It also mentions that it’s rare that he pursues a victim who has someone else with her.” Sora shuddered over the thought. “Both Mimi-chan and Koushirou-kun could’ve been killed yesterday. The two must have ended up separated somehow. I now understand why she didn’t want to talk about it.”

“Should we tell her aunt and uncle about what happened and why she was so down yesterday?”

“No, let Mimi-chan do it. It’s not our place to.”

“I guess you’re right, but I hate it when people act like that!” Miyako said angrily. “I would make sure that he never sees daylight again if I were judging him so that he never attacks another girl again!”

“I agree, and I don’t feel I could judge objectively due to the seemingly overwhelming evidence stacked up against him, and his attacking someone close to me. I now wonder how far he’d gone before Koushirou-kun showed up…”

“You mean…you don’t think…” Sora nodded. “No, it couldn’t have gotten that far! She probably would’ve missed school today if it had.”

“You’re probably right. She probably would have been much worse off if he had. I really can’t imagine something like that happening.”

“But why didn’t she talk about it with us when we came over yesterday?”

“Maybe she was still in shock.” Sora stared down at the photo of Doppo Fumio, which was a mug shot and, ironically, the photo Miyako had openly complained about earlier. “Both are going to have to testify to this, since they’re both directly involved, and I have this strong feeling that Koushirou-kun is once again keeping this away from his parents.”

“I wouldn’t be surprised if he was too. He’s been keeping secrets a lot lately. He lied about his history project to the Izumis and they didn’t know that he was in Hikarigaoka yesterday.” Miyako
smiled slightly, as something came to mind. “Do you think that if Izumi-senpai were to get married, that he would tell them about it?”

“I hope so,” Sora laughed. “It would be very strange if he were to show up with a wife and a family and their not knowing about it.”

“Yes, that’s true.”

“I guess we’ll just have to wait for Mimi-chan to fill us in on everything else dealing with the attack. I wonder where those two were going this afternoon anyway. They should be studying.”

“Maybe they already know the material, but yeah, I wonder where they’re going. Either way, now that we know, we can go now.”

The two girls walked away from the library.

“Sora-san, don’t you have to get prepared for Saturday night?”

“Oh, that dance thing. To be honest, I’m really nervous about it. It’s supposed to be formal, almost ball-like. We girls are supposed to wear gowns and the boys should be dressed in suits or tuxedos.” Taichi, Koushirou, and Yamato dressed in tuxedos flashed into mind. She felt that all three would look handsome if dressed in such a fashion. “I know everyone was psyched about it, but I’ve noticed how tense it’s getting for some of the other third years. I am going, I would like to…somewhat, but according to Mimi-chan, with those types of dances you’re supposed to have a date or an escort.”

“But shouldn’t you be getting ready for it?”

“It’s only Monday, and I haven’t been asked by any boy yet…sort of.”

“Why don’t you ask a boy to go?”

“W-well, um…I’ll just worry about that later.”

The two girls changed out of their school shoes, and headed home, glad to know Mimi’s secret, and at ease understanding why her mood was so disheartening…

****

A while after class let out…

“Come on, let’s go practice,” Chinatsu urged, already in her gym clothes.

“I don’t feel like practicing today,” Ayame yawned.

“Yeah, we don’t have any club meetings at all this week since we’re spending it studying for all those exams and then having to take them!”

“I want to be one of the best senior members of the Volleyball Club! Others are practicing,” Chinatsu argued. “What’s wrong with that?”

“We’ll have to practice during our spring break anyway, since it’s mandatory,” groaned Yuuko. “There’s nothing wrong with wanting to practice, just go practice by yourself. We’re leaving.”

The three girls were sitting in the school gym in the top bleachers. Chinatsu had asked Ayame and Yuuko to meet her there and to bring Mimi with them.

“What I want to do is relax,” Ayame said while standing up. She stretched. “Let’s go, Yuuko-chan.”
“Hey look,” Chinatsu pointed, “the boys are playing basketball!”

“You know, we really should practice,” Yuuko said while sitting back down, staring at the basketball players.

“Yuuko-chan!”

“Aren’t they cute,” she said, hearts in her eyes.

“I knew that would get her,” Chinatsu snickered.

“You know, sitting around watching wouldn’t hurt,” Ayame began, also retaking her seat just to stare at the basketball players.

‘So much for my idea, they’d rather watch the boys play.’

“Ooo, you see that boy over there!” Ayame pointed. “I think he’s the former co-captain of the Boys’ Soccer Club!”

“Yeah, the position has been open for a while since he’s a third year,” Chinatsu explained. “The position of captain should be open too, but I’m not sure if any decisions have been made yet. The captain was Yagami Taichi-san and he’s graduating. I wonder who will replace Taichi-senpai…”

“That person there I think is the star player of the Boys’ Tennis Club!” Yuuko drooled.

“I bet he’s about to go out and practice! He has his tennis gear with him!”

“Ayame-chan, we should probably go out and jog by the tennis courts too!”

“Here I am wanting to improve my game, like the other members of our club are doing, and you two want to sit around and gawk at the boys here.” Chinatsu crossed her arms in annoyance. “Besides, we have more important things to discuss anyway.”

“Like what?” Yuuko asked while keep her eyes glued to the former third-year co-captain of the Boys’ Soccer Club.

“Like Mimi-chan, for one. Where is she and what happened after lunch? You never said. I was too busy in my own class to come by after our final class of the day.”

“She acted as if nothing had bothered her at all,” Yuuko told her. “She laughed at the pictures Ayame-chan showed her. As for where she is now, she said she had to leave, and took off before we could question her about it.”

“I don’t know what she did after she left us at lunch, but she seemed really different when she came back to class with Koushirou-kun.”

“Izumi-kun?”

“I guess she went to talk to him after leaving us,” Ayame concluded.

“He looked a little red after coming back too…” Yuuko absentmindedly pointed out.

“So, I guess whatever happened to her yesterday has been fixed if she was acting more like her usual self after lunch,” Chinatsu said.

“I guess so and I was really glad for that. I hate seeing Mimi-chan all depressed.”
“Hey, whatever happened to her main four admirers? It just hit me that they weren’t bugging us today over where she was during lunch earlier,” Yuuko realized.

“Hey yeah, you’re right,” Chinatsu nodded. “They almost always insist on eating lunch with us to try and weasel information out of us whenever Mimi-chan isn’t around.”

****

“We have to do something to get Mimi-san to forgive all of us!”

“But how?”

“How about a present?”

“She doesn’t seem like the type who likes presents to me…”

“SHOWS HOW MUCH YOU KNOW! MIMI-CHAN WOULD FORGIVE US IN AN INSTANT IF WE GAVE HER A NICE GIFT!”

****

“Well, what do you know, there goes our favorite four supporters of Mi-chan now,” laughed Yuuko. “Yuuji-kun is so loud, though. I wouldn’t have noticed them if it wasn’t for his big mouth.”

“Sounds like he said something about forgiveness,” noted Chinatsu. “I wonder what happened.”

Ayame smirked. “There’s only one way to find out.”

Yuuko caught on, a sneaky look finding its way to her face. She cupped her hand over her ear. “This is the best way.”

The other two did as Yuuko, and tried their bests to listen in on the boys’ conversation...

****

“I feel really bad that we upset Mimi-chan during lunch today,” Yuuji sighed.

“Misao-san, this is all your fault.”

“My fault?! What do you mean it was all my fault?!”

“It’s just like Ukyo said,” Seki scolded. “It’s your fault that Mimi-chan is upset with the four of us.”

“You were too convincing!” Yuuji yelled at him.

“I really thought you were going to hit him,” said Ukyo.

****

“I wonder what they’re going on about,” Yuuko muttered.

“I wonder what Misao-kun did to upset Mimi-chan.”

“It couldn’t have been that bad since you two said she came back to class feeling much better than what she was when leaving us at lunch.”

****

“Don’t blame me because I have great acting abilities,” the boy smugly responded. “I’m in the Drama Club, which obviously pays off!”

“At what cost, though!” cried Yuuji. “We lost Mimi-chan because of you!”

“I’m surprised at you three. We’ve known each other for a long time. You know I’m not violent and that I’m not a fighter. I was only trying to scare him!”
“Too bad Mimi-chan didn’t see it that way,” Seki bluntly remarked.

“Why don’t we all just face facts and admit that we, as well everyone else in our club, have lost our chances with Mimi-san,” Ukyo suggested with a dejected sigh.

“No, we can’t give up yet!” Yuuji came across as a coach trying to inspire his team to play better or play well. “We aren’t quitters!”

“Oh come off it! Mimi-san came into the computer lab, defended Izumi-san, and then asked…no…told us to leave! We all found out that whatever was causing her bad mood didn’t have anything to do with Izumi-san when they were out together yesterday after they returned to Odaiba, I’m assuming based on the conversation. We might as well give up. You heard what she said and you saw what she did!”

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“Ooh,” Yuuko nearly squealed. “I love juicy gossip!”

****

Seki crossed his arms, and sat back a bit. “I’m with Ukyo. There really isn’t much we can do now,” he responded slowly. “Like he said, you saw what she did with Izumi.”

“I’m no quitter! I’m going to get back in good with her again!” Misao insisted stubbornly.

“Me too!”

“That’s good and all, but let’s just face the facts here. She has no interest in either of us, or any other boy, seemingly. It’s all platonic,” Seki explained. “We should have never threatened him, and you, Misao, shouldn’t have pretended to get ready to punch him.”

****

“Wow, there was almost a fight…and I missed it!”

“Yuuko-chan, that’s not important,” Chinatsu chastised, wishing that, for once, the girl would calm down. “They pretty much said that they made empty threats. What I want to know is what she did to make them all so gloomy.”

****

“You guys just watch,” Ukyo cautioned wisely. “This time next year, Mimi-san and Izumi-san will probably be an item. I can actually picture those two walking around together, Izumi-san maybe having his arm around her shoulder, or the two walking hand-in-hand.”

“No!!” Yuuji and Misao shouted out in fear.

“You two are delusional!” Seki argued. “She’s already hugged and kissed him and they’re just friends! If Izumi doesn’t fall for her after that, then he just isn’t right!”

“Can we hope that he just doesn’t like girls?” asked Yuuji hopefully.

“I’m all for it being true!”

Seki and Ukyo gave Misao and Yuuji looks of disbelief.

****

“Ehh?!?” all three girls exclaimed in surprise.

The three ended up falling over, and landing down to where the four boys were.

“What do you three want?” asked Yuuji.

Yuuko picked herself up quickly, grabbed Yuuji by his shirt and started to shake him. “Did you say
Mi-chan and Koushirou-kun kissed?!

“You’re…choking…me…” Yuuji gagged.

“Hey, stop listening in on our conversation!” Misao told the three.

“That’s why we came to the gym since it’s kind of noisy in here,” Seki said.

“What you’re doing is technically an invasion of privacy. How do you know that we weren’t speaking of something confidential?” asked Ukyo.

“We could say the same about you four!” Chinatsu pointed accusingly. “We overheard you and we were listening in, since we heard you mention Mimi-chan and the yelling Ueda-kun was doing didn’t help, but how did you know that Mimi-chan and Izumi-kun were on a day-trip yesterday away from Odaiba? We never mentioned it to you or anyone else. Only a few of us knew what her plans were for Sunday and what she was really up to because she told us, and that didn’t include either of you.”

Yuuji, who was still rubbing his neck, said, “Hey, we weren’t purposely listening! We were just listening when we weren’t supposed to!”

The other three boys nearly fell over. Seki smacked his cousin in the back of the head. “Baka!”

“So you were eavesdropping on our conversation during lunch!”

“And the reason we didn’t see either of you rejects earlier was because you were off threatening Koushirou-kun for the bad mood Mi-chan was in!”

“You idiots!” Chinatsu yelled at them. “See what happens when you jump to conclusions!”

“W-well, you were thinking the same thing!” Misao argued back. “We heard you say that you thought Izumi had something to do with her bad mood too!”

“Come on now, everyone. We’re all friends here.” Yuuko stood and clapped her hands, hoping to regain the peace somewhat. “I just want to know one thing…is it true about what you said about Mi-chan and Koushirou-kun in the computer lab? You all were standing right there when it happened?”

“No, we were watching from the hall. They thought we’d left, but we were curious why Mimi-chan was so upset.”

The three girls gave the four death glares, while the boys gave Yuuji a disapproving look. “You definitely talk too much,” Misao muttered. ‘He’s way too honest.’

“Anyway,” Seki began, “she started to cry because of something that happened yesterday, and, apparently, Izumi was feeling really bad for her and was blaming himself for whatever it was that happened. The two came to a mutual agreement that neither were at fault.”

“Mimi-san also mentioned something about wanting to go to Odaiba University and the University of Tokyo, but Izumi-san was hesitant on going and didn’t seem to want her to go along with him. Either way, after mentioning both places, that’s when Mimi-san started to cry.”

“It was so upsetting hearing her cry, but she did calm down enough, saying something like crying helped to get rid of her stress, or something,” Yuuji continued.

“She then did the most unthinkable…” Misao shuddered.

“…the most unspeakable thing after cheering up!” Yuuji frowned.
“She kissed Izumi!” both cried.

“How did he react to it? Do not leave out one single detail!” Yuuko instructed.

“First, Mimi-san hugged him, and then she kissed him on the cheek, and then seemed to go back to hugging. He seemed a little nervous, and I remember his face being kind of red.”

“No wonder she was so happy after lunch today,” Ayame said.

“And that's probably why Koushirou-kun looked red when coming back with her!” Yuuko added on.

“It was a friendship kiss,” Misao interjected adamantly. “It wasn’t a romantic one! It was just on the cheek!”

“I wonder if it would be considered one in America given the situation…”

“Shut up, will you Seki! Stop telling lies! Mimi-chan lived in America for a while and has even visited there during school vacations before! She knows the customs, and kissing is one of them… I think.”

“Hey, don’t blame me for you and Misao’s stupidity! Ukyo and I are moving on. You two, and the others, are the ones after a girl who is obviously taken, even if she doesn’t realize it yet!”

“Unless it turns out Izumi doesn’t go for girls,” Yuuji said again hopefully.

“I seriously doubt that,” Ayame said, her arms crossed. “Just because he doesn’t act interested in girls doesn’t mean that he isn’t.”

“He’s just inexperienced when it come to girls, just like how you four are when it comes to brains!” Chinatsu reprimanded.

Yuuko started to rub her hands together greedily. “Ooo, who to tell first!”

“No one! If Mimi-chan didn’t tell you, Ayame-chan, or even me about what happened with Izumi-kun, then why would she want the whole school to know about it?”

“Yeah, try to keep your mouth shut, for once, Yuuko-chan!”

“Couldn’t I tell Miya-chan at least?”

“You mean the first year, Inoue Miyako-san?” asked Chinatsu.

“Yeah. We get along very well.”

Ayame rubbed her chin. “Well, only if you’re discreet about it. Maybe you could hint around, and if she already knows, then go ahead. If it’s obvious that she doesn’t know, then don’t say anything.”

This pleased Yuuko. “Bingo!”

“Aww, because of our talking all of this time, we don’t have much time left to practice since all the areas of the gym are being used. I have to go home and study for the third part of Ishidzuka’s history exam! How Mimi-chan has time to not study is beyond me.”

“Wow, your class is already on the third part of the exam?” Ayame asked in amazement.
“Yes, since our class has been finishing early, he’s allowed us to take two parts each day, so that we can finish sooner,” Chinatsu explained. “Takamatsu-kun can attest to that, since we have the same classes. Ishidzuka-sensei seems to have a lot of confidence in us, and is very positive that we will all receive passing marks. I really hope so. I would hate to come back here and find out that I’m still a second-year junior-high student, even though I don’t think that can actually happen.”

“That’s not why your class is ahead! Your class ranks high when it comes to tests! We’re technically all in competition with each other,” Yuuko pointed out. “You have a lot of brainy people in your class!”

“We just finished up the second part of his exam,” Seki said. “Hey, since we’re all in the same boat, want to study together at my place?”

Yuuko, who had started to admire Seki more so since he’d pretty much come to his senses about Mimi, eagerly agreed for everyone. The surprising thing about her admiration of Seki was that for the longest time, she’d always had a slight romantic liking towards Yuuji, but would never admit to it. Hanging around Seki, even as just a friend, who wasn’t going on and on about Mimi would be nice for a change, even though she wished that Yuuji would come to his senses too.

“Having a study group would actually be a good idea, especially since most of us have the same instructors,” Chinatsu said.

“Let’s see, I have Konishi-sensei and Tanaka-sensei,” Ukyo said, “which means that tomorrow, I have a math exam to take and my English language one.”

“English class is so hard sometimes,” Ayame complained. “I’m studying a lot! The only person I know, who’s not a natural born brain and isn’t studying for the tests is Mimi-chan. She has a really high score for all the tests she’s taken for that class.”

Seki laughed. “She has an advantage since she lived in America for a few years and actually used English in everyday situations, unlike us, who can only stick to boring book exercises.”

“No kidding! Mi-chan is making us all look bad!”

“Misao, Yuuji, are you guys coming with us for a study session?”

“Nah, I’m going to go home and try to think of a way to get Mimi-chan to like me again,” Misao told him. ‘Besides, I already know the stuff. No need to study.’

“I’m with him!”

“Suit yourselves then, but you do know that apologizing to both her and Izumi is on the top of the list, right?”

“Yeah, yeah,” Misao muttered.

“You know, I have this feeling that Mimi-chan isn’t really mad at you four,” Ayame pointed out.

“Yeah, after lunch, Mi-chan saw our photos of you from when you were at the party, and she mentioned how cute you all were,” Yuuko smiled mischievously.

Stars formed in Yuuji’s eyes. “Wow! She called me cute!”

“Nice, nice, but I’m still going to try and think of a way to get Mimi-chan to like me!”
Seki and Ukyo sighed and shook their heads. They just couldn’t believe that the other two didn’t understand that Mimi was already taken and that no matter how hard they tried, she’d never see them as anything more than friends.

The group exited the gym, and headed to their lockers to change out of their school shoes. Once done, they exited the school to head over to the Tomokazu home, Seki leading the way.

“Wait a minute, *what* photos of us?” asked Ukyo, after realizing what they’d said earlier.

The three girls just looked to one another and giggled, as they continued the walk to Seki’s neighborhood…

Chapter End Notes

**Fic Chapter Changes**

I added that Koushirou brought lunch from home and I wrote in that Mimi had forgotten her lunch. Originally, I had that she bought lunch, but didn’t have an appetite and was playing with the contents of her meal.

I added more to the conversation between Koushirou and Mimi in the computer lab.

I added in the chocolate thing. For Valentine’s the girls give boys chocolates. There are three types: Giri Choco, Tomo Chocó, and Honmei Choco.

Giri Choco = Obligation Chocolates, the types that girls may give to their male colleagues, co-workers, etc. This is generally store bought.

Tomo Choco = Friendship Chocolates, the type that girls may give to their male friends, but more recently, girls may give them to friends in general…meaning both male and female.

Honmei Choco = Sweetheart Chocolates. These are usually given to guys of romantic interest or guys in a relationship. So usually wives and girlfriends give these types to their partners. Some girls may give them to their crushes as a way of confessing their feelings. Honmei Choco is also homemade. They sell chocolate making kits in the stores during January and early February for the occasion.
Chapter Summary

This chapter shows Koushirou and Mimi once again visiting Odaiba University.

Chapter Notes

Hi again everyone. Now everyone knows or have an idea as to why Mimi was gloomy the entire day. I really did have fun with the last chapter, especially towards the end where the boys were reflecting on what to do about their situation with Mimi and the girls overhearing about the hug/kiss that Mimi had given Koushirou. Anyway, I probably won’t go back to the others for a while as the chapters are already kind of long. Now, the reason this chapter is long, is due to an original character that constantly has a lot to say.

Now, as always, I do not own anything dealing with the Digimon series or franchise. Bandai and Toei have that honor, and as a reminder, here are the ages of the characters once again:

- Jou: 16-17 (Year 10-11; First/second year of High School)
- Taichi/Sora/Yamato: 15-16 (Year 09-10; Last year of Junior High School/First year of high school)
- Koushirou/Mimi: 14-15 (Year 08-09; Second/Last year of Junior High School)
- Miyako: 13-14 (Year 07-08; First/second year of Junior High School)
- Takeru/Hikari/Daisuke/Ken: 12-13 (Year 06; Final year of Elementary/First year of Junior High School)
- Iori: 10-11 (Year 04-05)

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 15: University Mishaps…

It only took about thirty minutes in all for both Koushirou and Mimi to reach Odaiba University, both coming to a silent mutual agreed to not even bring up what had happened in the computer lab earlier. The two had gone to the nearby train station and caught a cab from there. Mimi was willing to keep herself calm during the entire ride and to try her best not to lose her composure. Koushirou kept glancing over at her for the duration of the ride, feeling incredibly sorry for her, and also a bit worried. He wasn’t sure if the way Mimi was acting was normal or not. It was one thing he just wasn’t knowledgeable in. Math, puzzles, and computers were his specialties.

“Here we are, Odaiba University. That will be ¥1220,” the driver announced while pushing the button for the door to open.

“Thank you, sir.” Koushirou handed the fare to the driver.
The two hopped out of the taxi while Koushirou made sure to stay there until Mimi was out. After she was, Koushirou once again took notice of her. She was obliviously holding herself, her look seemed a bit distant, and she even looked a bit paler, as she was staring in the direction where she’d been forced to yesterday.

“Um, w-well, we probably should head on in, that is if you want to, but if you don’t---”

“Stop talking crazy!” Mimi cut him off, coming back to reality. “Let’s go!”

The girl stomped off, leaving Koushirou behind. Right now, the girl reminded him of a determined Miyako. ‘Mimi-san, please don’t overdo it…’ With that, he followed behind her and entered the building.

“Wow, this place is huge!” Mimi exclaimed.

“It looks much bigger on the inside than it does on the outside.”

“Now that we’re here, where do we go?”

“When I was looking up information on Odaiba University’s website, before your four boyfriends showed up…”

Mimi blushed slightly. She had always semi-liked the attention, as it felt natural, but she wasn’t sure if Koushirou was saying that in a joking manner, out of annoyance, or even out of possible jealousy from all the attention she received from boys in general, but felt it was safe to rule out the last possibility. She didn’t feel that it was too likely, and really didn’t want it to be. This was Koushirou here. This was the boy who would rather crack a computer code than to voluntarily associate with a person of the opposite sex outside of its being something dealing with business or a school assignment or something dealing with his club. That's how she viewed him anyway. She figured for general things, he was shy when it came to them.

“…I’d read that we would have to go to the information desk. It should be right in front of us since we came in through the front door.”

“I don’t think that door we came in was the front. I just rushed right in. I wasn’t paying attention. There sure are a lot of students just lounging around here, seemingly doing nothing…”

“And eating! Look at all of the places where you can buy food! It’s like a food court!” His stomach growled. “I should’ve eaten lunch after all.”

A student with short light-brown hair wearing a pair of long khaki shorts, an orange hoody, and thin-framed glasses clumsily bumped into Koushirou and Mimi, dropping his book bag in the process. He turned to apologize.

“I’m so sorry! I’m such a klutz!”

He picked up his book bag and slung it over his right shoulder, but all of his books fell out of it. He sighed as he began picking the books up to stuff them back in before either Mimi or Koushirou could offer to help.

“I was in a hurry, and here I am late again! I hate taking late classes, but I have to if I want to graduate! I can not go home a failure. My family will disown me if I do!” he openly complained. “Damn those three older brothers of mine, always doing well in both their academics and their sports,” he grumbled, “and now my parents are expecting the same of me! To graduate with all honors like they did!”
He lifted up his book bag, about to strap it around his shoulder again, but noticed that one of his notebooks was still on the floor. When he kneeled to pick it up, the books he had just spent his time putting into his bag fell out again. He groaned as he went back to stuffing the books and ranting about his family.

“I actually feel sorry for my younger brother and sister. They’re probably going to be tortured just like me, although, maybe my brother won’t since he’s already favored by my father and maybe not my sister since she’s the youngest of us. I wouldn’t be surprised if they expect her to do something boring and traditional since she’s a girl, though. I know I remember my parents talking about *omiai for her, which would really be bad on her, given how she is! Either way, they’d probably want her to marry and be a housewife and provide children and heirs or maybe become a nurse or a Kindergarten teacher or something like that. My parents are so old-fashioned! They really need to join the 21st century! They should understand that I don't want to become an engineer or a doctor or any of those things! I want to take up art or either become a professional writer of fiction works!” He stuffed in the last book, and grumbled, “Stupid parents…”

Koushirou and Mimi looked a bit worried, and started to back away slowly.

“Oh, I’m sorry about that!” the boy apologized. “I didn’t mean to scare you or anything. Just ignore my complaining. I’m just a little stressed.” He noticed their attire. “You two aren’t from here, are you? Those uniforms look a bit kiddy. You’re junior-high students.” They nodded. “Well, I’m very pleased to meet you. My name is Fujitani Keisuke, but you can call me Keisuke. You almost look like you’re lost. Do you need any help?”

“We’re trying to find the information desk,” Mimi explained.

“Wow, you two are a little ways off from there. This is the commons area. Everyone comes here to hang out or relax before heading off to class or when they’re finished. You guys ended up lost pretty quickly.”

“I guess we were so busy admiring the school, that we lost our way,” Koushirou said with a small, embarrassed laugh.

“It’s no problem. I can take you there.”

“No, we don’t want to trouble you,” Koushirou said.

“I don’t mind. Who cares if I’m late…again,” he laughed. The two thanked the boy and followed him. “So, what brings you to Odaiba University anyway? Do you have an older sibling who’s a student here?” Mimi shook her head. “Are you part of a group and just got separated from it?”

“Well, no, actually,” Koushirou told him, while making mental notes of the path they were taking to the information desk.

“So you came here on your own?! I know you’re supposed to start looking into universities when young, but you don’t have to literally visit them.”

“We’re just trying to obtain some information,” the redhead explained. “Toudai is next on our list.”

“There too, eh?” He whistled. “Are you two a couple of geniuses? The entrance exam for Toudai is terribly hard.”

“No way!” Mimi pointed to Koushirou. “He’s the genius out of the two of us.”

He shook his head. “I’m *not* genius.”
“What are you talking about?! You always get high scores on our tests!”

“*I’m no genius,” he repeated, “I’m just passionately curious,” he finished bluntly.

“I guess so. You do seem to be your smartest when you get curious over something, and then try to figure it out, like a certain time when you ignored me because of that!”

Koushirou laughed uneasily, recalling the situation well. It was when he’d ignored her in the temple, and how neither Mimi nor Palmon let him forget it. He cleared his throat. “I kind of hate it when people just assume that I’m some kind of a genius when I’m really not. I just have a good memory and am curious about a lot of things which makes me knowledgeable about those particular things, because I purposely seek out more information about them. That doesn’t make me overly smart in any way. I’m not the type to constantly study nonstop. I do not read the dictionary or the encyclopedia or try to solve unsolvable chemical equations as a past-time.”

Keisuke laughed in agreement. “Yeah, only a super brain would probably do those things.”

“Oh yes, the information we are seeking is incredibly vital.”

“If it’s not too out of place of me, mind if I ask what kind of information you’re looking for? Maybe I could help you out with it or at least point out someone here who could help.”

Koushirou shook his head. “I don’t really think you could help since you’re so young.”

“I’ll take that as a compliment,” he smiled. “I did have three older brothers who attended this university. My oldest brother is about…33 or 34 now. Maybe I can answer your questions based on the boring stories they used to tell me.”

“Well, we’re trying to find information on one of the old instructors.”

“What year?”

“He stopped teaching here due to unavoidable circumstances in 1990.”

“My older brother would’ve been here at that time. I have a big family, as I already mentioned.”

As Keisuke started to go on about his family, he stopped walking and went through his wallet, showing photos to the two. “Let’s see…this photo here is my oldest brother Kyuwa-niisama. He’s turning 34 this year. He’s married and is a doctor at the Osaka Medical Center. He finished up his residency a while ago. He started here in about…let’s see, I was about seven at the time…oh yeah, 1988. He graduated from here in 1992 and then he went to the Osaka Medical School to finish up. He sent me this photo not too long ago.”

Mimi always liked looking at photos, and was very anxious to see the ones Keisuke was sharing. The man in the photo had the same kind of hair like Keisuke, only it was a bit longer. He also seemed short compared to Keisuke. In the photo along with Kyuwa, was his wife, Mimi figured. She had long auburn hair, and in front of them, they had two small children, a boy and a girl. The girl looked to be about three or four, and the boy looked to be about seven or eight.

“It was very challenging for him, but he never gave up! Something we Fujitanis are known for is our devotion and never giving up, no matter how difficult the situation may seem!” Keisuke looked through his wallet again, and pulled out another photo. “Next in line is my brother Masaki-niisan, and he’s turning 32 soon. He isn’t married. He started here in 1990 and graduated in 1994 and then went to study abroad to work on his Masters and PH.D at Harvard University and teaches Japanese language. He lucked out getting the job at a nearby school.”
The man in the photo was dressed up in a suit, and looked to be very neat to Mimi. His hair was perfectly trimmed, his tie was in place, and there wasn’t a single wrinkle in his suit. Compared to the tall, slim Keisuke, he too seemed short. Masaki also looked to be a bit husky compared to the other brothers so far.

“Let’s see, now this one is Toru-niisan, and he’s 26. He’s not married either. He came here in 1996 and graduated back in 2000 with lots of honors, just like my other two brothers. He was considering becoming a professional soccer player, but finally decided to focus on anthropology and archeology. Other than soccer, he’s always been into history, ancient civilizations, and geology. He’s in graduate school now in England at the University of Cambridge.”

Toru had long brown hair, slim and tall just like Keisuke and was standing in front of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, also known as the Round Church, which was one of the oldest buildings in all of Cambridge. He also had a round baby face, like Keisuke, and also wore glasses, but, he didn’t really look like Keisuke. Mimi couldn’t put her finger on it, though. His hair was tied back into a single ponytail, like most guys with long hair. To Mimi, Toru was extremely cute. A small tinge of pink made its way to her cheeks. She couldn’t help but wonder what someone like Yuuko would’ve thought of Toru if seeing the photo.

“This is my younger brother, Yeijiro. He’s 20 and started here almost a year ago. He’s probably in his apartment studying. So far, he’s making high scores, like always. He's into researching and science. He’s majoring in chemistry. I’m not sure which branch of chemistry he’s interested in, though, or what he’ll get into once he’s done here. I have this feeling that he’s going to end up going abroad too…probably someplace in America. Just like with Toru-niisan, he’s always wanted to live abroad.”

The photo of Yeijiro was a very nice one, in Mimi’s opinion. It was a high school graduation photo and on either side of him was an elderly man and an elderly woman. Mimi figured that they were the Fujitani brothers' grandparents. He had short brown hair and didn’t look like either of the Fujitani brothers. The other brothers seemed to share some features, but Yeijiro was definitely the odd one out looks wise. His height seemed average and seemed to be a normal size. Mimi figured that Yeijiro took after his mother more so than his father or vice-versa.

“Now, this is my younger sister, Izumi-chan. She’s 19. She hasn’t started university yet.” He rolled his eyes. “My parents haven’t fully decided her future yet. My sister and I are the black sheep of the family, seemingly. We’re constantly threatened of being kicked out by our family because of what we enjoy.”

Izumi had long brown hair, the same round face as Keisuke, and a very pretty smile. Izumi and Keisuke could’ve been twins. She was a bit tall for your average girl, but still looked to be a nice, normal size.

“And, as you know, I’m Keisuke. I’m 23 and started up here two years ago. I spent my year after graduation arguing with my family about majoring in something more humanities related, but ended up majoring in something more science-based. My sister is going through the same hell as me. She wants to become a songwriter and a musician, but my parents won’t allow it, unless she gets into something more dignified, like *enka, not rock or pop or maybe a preschool teacher. I really sense something like that or *ikebana in her future. She was taught all that stuff over the years, much to her dislike for it.

“I just don’t understand my parents. With Kyuwa-niisama, they were fully behind him because he was pursuing a career in medicine, and went on about how it’s a respectful profession, and good because, ‘you are helping people’. The same goes for Masaki-niisan, whose choices they were also
behind. What was really surprising was how they were with Toru-niisan.

“They weren’t thrilled about him going abroad, but at first, he wanted to become a professional soccer player! Do you know what the chances are of anyone going professional in anything is? They were even supportive of him, but were more approving of him when he decided to take up some form of a science. It’s just not fair!

“With me, they constantly say, ‘What are the chances of your becoming a professional artist’, and ‘There is no future in becoming an artist in this day and age. They all starve’, or ‘What are the chances of your becoming a published author if you become a writer?’ It’s the same for my sister. She has a lot of musical talent, and would do great if in a rock band. She can write music, play instruments, and has a great singing voice!”

He was about to continue on with his rants, when he noticed the looks on Koushirou and Mimi’s faces, which clearly meant, “Why is he telling us all of this?”

“Oh, I’m sorry for rambling.”

“Erm, that’s okay,” Mimi said while giving him a sympathetic smile. “We don’t mind listening to you ramble.” Koushirou minded, as he felt it wasn’t any of his business to know how the Fujitani family managed things.

“I really shouldn’t be. It’s a bad habit I’ve always seemed to have, talking more than what I should. Well, let’s get you to the front desk. I’m sorry for holding you up by giving you my life story.”

The three, once again, started off towards the information desk.

“Hey, you never did tell me who the teacher was that you were trying to get information on.”

“His name was Fukami Satoru-san. Do you know anything based on your older brothers’ stories?” asked Koushirou.

“Hm, sorry. It doesn’t ring a bell. Kyuwa-niisama or Masaki-niisan might, though. What did he teach?”

“He was a lecturer of math.”

“I was so young when he attended here. Kyuwa-niisama did used to complain about his math and science classes sometimes to Masaki-niisan, but I don’t remember if he ever mentioned the names. Kyuwa-niisama and Masaki-niisan all went back and forth to school as opposed to staying at the apartments nearby, which is why I remember that bit at least. Still ironic how niisama became the doctor of the family.”

The three had finally arrived at the information desk. The two had somehow managed to come in on the other side of the school. How was beyond either one of them.

“Here we are. The front desk is right over---uh-oh.”

“Keisuke-niisan, what’s wrong?” asked Mimi.

“Good luck getting any useful information out of her,” he warned. “It’s Anje’s shift, and not the other woman’s.”

“So what’s wrong with her?”
Keisuke frowned at Mimi’s question while eyeing the woman. “She isn’t the nicest person in the world. I actually heard a rumor that she was fired for insulting one of the students’ younger siblings recently. I guess they’re letting her finish out the week or month or something. She’s been snapping at everyone, but I’m not sure if that’s the reason for her being fired. I also heard that she’s had a bad romantic life and lost her husband or boyfriend or whatever to a much younger girl, which is why she treats everyone so badly in general. She also seems to really dislike children, though, based on the rumor.”

“If she’s so mean, why is she allowed to be in a position where she has to talk to people?” Mimi stared at the woman curiously. ‘I wonder why he only calls her Anje...’

“I have no idea. She must know someone who works here for her of all people to get that type of a job or maybe, at one point in her life, she was actually a nice person. It’s too bad that I’ve never seen her being nice before. She’s evil, spiteful, and downright unpleasant. Did you two hear about what happened near here yesterday? Some girl was attacked, and Anje just scoffed over the entire thing, saying that ‘the girl probably deserved it’.”

Mimi stared up at Keisuke and then back to the woman, her face going partially red in anger. She definitely didn’t want to meet this woman face to face if what Keisuke was saying was true. She’d have to use all of her restraint to keep from saying something unnecessary or rude to her. Koushirou couldn’t believe that someone could even think that way.

“It’s a real shame. I don’t know all of the details, but I feel sorry for the girl that was involved. When the commotion started up, I headed out there, but I didn’t get a good look at the girl or the other person those around claimed was there. I only saw the guy who attacked the girl. The only thing I know about the girl was that she was supposedly young according to my friend, Yutaka-kun. That aside, I really hope she’s okay.”

“I’m sure that she’s fine,” Mimi uttered softly, with as little emotion as possible. She was trying to keep herself from crying as she was going out of her way to not think of the previous day.

Koushirou looked to his friend sadly. “Mimi-san...”

“I’m sorry. I’m okay, just the thought of someone saying something so heartless and cold upsets me,” she stated rather quickly.

“Leave it up to one guy to make us decent ones look bad, but thinking about it, that’s something you two shouldn’t have to worry yourselves over.” The clock chimed. It was now 17:00 (5:00). He sighed. “I better get going, but before I do, what are your names? I spent so much time scaring you with my life story, I never got the opportunity to ask and I didn’t give you much of one for you to.”

“Izumi Koushirou.”

“Tachikawa Mimi.”

“It was nice meeting you, and once again, I’m sorry for boring you with my twisted family with their messed up, out-of-date priorities.”

“That’s okay, Keisuke-san. Mimi-san and I thank you for showing us here.”

“It was no problem at all and good luck with Anje. Oh yeah, I know you’re probably wondering about the name. Well, that’s what we all call her, so don’t worry about it. Oh yeah, if you ever need help with anything, just ask around for me. I could always ask my brothers about that instructor you were looking for information on.”
With that, the boy rushed off, leaving the two at the information desk.

“Keisuke-niisan is a very nice person, and I’m willing to bet that Toru-san is too!”

“How would you know if you’ve never even met him?”

“Ooh, the desk! Go on and ask your question!”

Koushirou gave the girl a look, almost wondering why she seemed to change the subject so abruptly. With that, he walked up to the desk where a pretty woman, who looked to be in her mid to late 30s, with bouncy black hair, sat, filing her nails, and seemed semi-annoyed while doing so. Due to the woman’s focus being on her nails, she’d yet to notice either Koushirou or Mimi. When she blew on her nails, she looked up to see the two standing there. She rolled her eyes at them, as if preparing herself for the worst.

“Um, hello there…O-Oguchi-san,” Koushirou began hesitantly, hoping that he wasn’t misreading the woman’s name plate. ‘Big mouth Anje? Is that right? Her whole name is kind of strange.’

“Yeah, whatever, that’s my name.”

“Well, yes, Oguchi-san, I am trying to obtain some information about a former instructor.”

“That helps me so much,” she sarcastically replied.

Mimi didn’t care for this woman already, and was even more irritable than what Keisuke had described.

“Why are a couple of kids snooping around here anyway? What makes you think that I would know about the person you’re looking for information on?”

“Maybe because this is the information desk,” Mimi shot back smartly, though unintentional.

“Whatever,” she huffed. “Who do you want this information on?”

“Fukami Satoru-san. He was a lecturer of math here, but stopped teaching here almost 14 years ago because—”

“Why do you want this information on him?” she rudely interrupted.

“I guess I could say for my own personal use. I’m working on something and I need more information or a photo or anything you can find on him so that I may finish it. It’s very important that I obtain this.”

“You sure are pushy,” the woman muttered sourly.

“Old hag,” Mimi muttered under her breath in English.

“What did you say?” demanded Anje.

“Oh rad!” She wasn’t sure if Anje knew any English terms or slang, and decided to cover up just in case.

“Whatever,” she growled. She was growing to hate Mimi more by the minute. “Why in the world do you want a photo of a man who no longer works here?”

Growing annoyed over being questioned as if he were on trial, he nearly snapped back at her.
“Because I do, that’s why!”

“You have no right coming in here acting all disrespectful to me! Don’t you know that you’re supposed to respect your elders, boy?!”

“It is very difficult to respect or consider you an elder when you are acting like a child yourself,” he responded coolly before he realized it.

“Ugh! That does it! I can’t stand kids, especially ones like your kind! I came here so I wouldn’t have to put up with brats!”

“But that’s not fair!” the redhead protested.

“Not so cool now, are you?” she sneered. “It isn’t fair that kids like you exist! Whatever happened to controlling the pet population! There are too damn many of you!!” The woman raised her voice, and began shouting at them. “Now get the hell out of here you redhead, and take your bimbo of a girlfriend with you! I hate her kind the most! Probably nothing but a slut! A hussy who steals men from more deserving women!”

Some of the students who had passed by, heard what the woman had said to the two, and muttered amongst themselves over how the woman shouldn’t even be allowed in the building. Others were surprised that she was allowed to associate with fellow human beings given her attitude problem, and how that definitely made the school look bad.

Amongst the students was Keisuke, who had actually forgotten that his class wasn’t meeting and wouldn’t be for the next couple of weeks. Since he had no class, he decided to come back to see how Koushirou and Mimi were doing with Anje and to get a bite to eat in the commons area. When he walked up there, he’d heard what she’d said about Mimi being a ‘bimbo’ and even worse, ‘a slut’ and a ‘hussy’.

Koushirou and Mimi were too stunned to say much of anything. Keisuke walked up to the two. This woman wasn’t just rude, she was downright impossible. Keisuke definitely hadn’t prepared them for that. Mimi was really at a loss as to how she should respond to the insult, seeing as how she’d never received one before…not in the way Anje had delivered it, anyway. She was almost ready to blow her top at the lady and to give her a piece of her mind. She was already upset over how Anje felt that Doppo’s victim was deserving of it, but the other insult was just as bad. One advantage of living in New York for a while was that she had toughened up slightly.

Mimi was just about to argue, but Keisuke spoke up first. “Anje! How could you talk to them like that?! Just because you dislike children doesn’t mean you should take it out on them! Not only is it unfair and disrespectful, it’s unprofessional of you too!”

“Stay out of this!” the woman snapped at him. “Stop getting on my case for stating the truth! That boy is a redheaded brat and that girl with him is an annoying ugly bimbo!”

Keisuke, as well as the other students around, were starting to get upset with this lady. Koushirou on the other hand had nearly reached his limit, and was so annoyed over her attitude that he dropped that polite and courteous guise that he was well known for.

“Look here lady,” he pointed a finger at her threateningly, “I don’t care if you dislike children or not, but you have no right insulting us just because we are still children to you! Also, how dare you insult Mimi-san! She’s prettier than a person like you could ever be…”

Mimi stared at Koushirou briefly, taking in what he’d just said. ‘Did he just say that I was pretty?’

“…because she’s kind and caring and always mean well. She has a great personality and she is
definitely not a bimbo because bimbos tend to be brainless and dumb! She’s definitely not a slut or a hussy, because she’s pure and innocent! You are quite ugly yourself with that attitude of yours! Ten times it in fact!"

“Koushirou-kun, don’t waste your time.” She gave the lady an arrogant look. “Anje-baba is just jealous because I actually have people who care about me, unlike her!”

Everyone who was gathered around clapped for the crack delivered by Mimi, and for the way both Koushirou and Keisuke had stood up to Anje.

“Why you little…” she huffed under her breath. The lady picked up the phone on her desk, about to call in security, when a heavyset man cut through the crowd to get to the front desk.

“Is there some kind of a problem here?” the man asked.

“Yes, Watanabe-san! There are,” she gagged while pointing to Koushirou and Mimi, “children on the grounds and they’re causing trouble.”

“She was insulting towards us. I asked her for help and just because of our ages, she treated us disrespectfully.”

“Children are meant to be seen, not heard!” she hissed.

“You know, Oguchi-san,” began Keisuke, who only called her as such because of the man nearby, “that’s what we call discrimination. You can get into trouble in some places for doing something like that.” He gave her a smug look.

“Why don’t you go back to whatever class it is you’re here for that you’re probably failing anyway? You’re one of those Fujitani brothers, aren’t you?”

“Yeah, I am; what of it?”

“You’re the one that’s shaming your family, aren’t you? You’re the big disgrace of your family!” Those around gasped at the woman’s harsh words. “I know all about you since your brothers have a legacy here. The Fujitani family, one of the oldest around in this area, have always had high praise! Now, you on the other hand, stand out like a sore thumb with all of your brothers being successful and worth something, but you’re the complete opposite! You have a younger brother who attends here too, and he has all honors, great at sports…and then there’s you. I’m surprised you even passed the exam to get into this university, and it wouldn’t surprise me if you don’t even graduate with your class, unless you bribe your way out!”

Keisuke managed to keep his cool, though it was difficult, and grew pretty defensive. He couldn’t help but wonder how his younger brother would’ve reacted to the statement.

“Don’t get mad at me just because you can’t seem to get along with people! I may be the outcast of my family, but at least I’m choosing my own path! Just because my brothers were great in all that they were interested in doesn’t mean that I will be in something that doesn’t interest me at all!” he spat back. “That does it! I’m going to switch my major and I’m going to study literature, even if it does mean I’ll have to retake the entrance exam. I hate science! I want to become a professional writer, and if mother and father disapprove and threaten to kick me out of the family, then too bad! At least I’ll be happier pursuing something that’s actually interesting to me!”

“Another child that would be better off not existing…”

“I’m an adult!”
“Look here you runty four-eyed---”

“That is enough!” Mr. Watanabe bellowed before Anje could get another word out. He then turned to all of the people who’d gathered around, bowed, and apologized. He then instructed everyone to disperse.

Keisuke remained after the others had gone. The man apologized even more so to the boy for the things Anje had said about his family. He then turned his attention to Koushirou and Mimi, and pulled them aside.

“Please, on behalf of the university, we are truly sorry for the way Ms. Oguchi acted. This was supposed to be her last week here, but the way she just carried on was very uncalled for. I will definitely report her to the head of the board. I am sure they will be in agreement about letting her go earlier than expected.

“That aside, I am Watanabe Toshika, head of the Admissions Department here. What’s the problem?”

Mimi crossed her arms heatedly. ‘That woman!’

“Are you two considering attending here once you’re finished with high school?”

“No sir. We haven’t looked into that yet. We are here to gather some information on a past instructor.”

“A past instructor?” He rubbed his chin. “Hmm, I might be able to help you with that. I’ve been here a long time and I got to know the staff as if they were family.”

“Thank you sir! I’m Izumi Koushirou, and this is my friend, Tachikawa Mimi-san. I’m trying to find some information on a former math lecturer by the name of Fukami Satoru-san. He taught here up until his unexpected expiration back in April of 1990.”

“Oh, yes, Fukami-san. I remember him,” the man frowned. “He was one of the youngest instructors here. He was a great man, Fukami. He was a really dedicated teacher. The last time I really associated with him was at that party that the faculty threw after he and his family returned from a conference in America. He stayed there a bit longer because of his wife at the time.

“I don’t know what kind of information I could give regarding him aside from the obvious.” He scratched his balding head. “Both he and his wife were killed in a car crash. The couple also had a child, but who knows whatever happened to him. Fukami-san didn’t have any other family aside from his wife, and I’m not sure if she had any. I also heard that the boy was with them when the two died, but managed to survive the crash unharmed. I don’t know anything more than that.

“Other than what I said, is there anything else I can do to assist you?”

“Well, I was wondering exactly why Fukami-san decided to teach here and how he came here or maybe photos if you have anything like that.”

“Well, I feel he came here for two reasons, the first one being that we had an opening and the second was for his love of mathematics. Seems he wanted to share his knowledge with others. His teaching methods were also kind of different. He wasn’t the type to just have you open up your textbook while he worked from the chalkboard, writing up different equations and all that. If the students couldn’t figure out one of his math problems, he would let the students test him and his work wasn’t always right when he worked them out, but I think he purposely did that so that the students would have some confidence. I only think so because when the students took it, they would always brag
about how they scored better than ‘Fukami-sensei’ or ‘Fukami-kyouju’, who would turn around and give the students even more challenging work. I’m sure the students caught on, though, but that did challenge them.

“As for photos, no, we don’t have any. I don’t have any, and the ones that were around at the time were damaged in a small fire. We didn’t lose much, but photographs and old publications were damaged. We did used to have a memorial dedicated to him but that was taken down many years ago. Who knows where all of that stuff is now.”

“Thank you, sir, for that information. It was very helpful.” The look on Koushirou’s face was a bit resolute, filled with a bit of disappointment.

Mr. Watanabe stared at Koushirou closely and started studying him. ‘This boy reminds me of Miki-chan a little bit. It’s that hair of his…’

After the formalities of thanking one another, he slowly walked off with Mimi a short ways behind him. They started past the information desk, noticing Anje scowling at the two of them. Koushirou was going to ignore everything dealing with the woman as he just wanted to leave. Keisuke was a little ways away as well. He had been waiting for them, and was going to offer treating them to a meal since they’d had such a rough evening.”

“Koushirou-kun, Mimi-chan…” He ran over to them. Before he could ask anything, Anje started up.

“Did you get your worthless information on your old teacher,” the woman asked presumptuously while filing her nails.

“Anje is still at it,” muttered Keisuke. He was about to defend the two, but a certain redhead beat him to it, as the comment had irritated him immensely.

“Yes, I managed to get some information on my father, which I tried to get when coming here yesterday, but of course some idiot had to cause trouble by being sex crazed, which hindered our search even more!” Koushirou continued on with his rants, which, more than likely, consisted of mostly pent up anger and irritation that had been building up for the past day. “Yes, I managed to get information about a man I never had the honor of meeting because I never knew of his existence, as that fact was kept away from me for years! About my not being their real son! Living a lie for all of my life about who I really am and about where I really come from! Yes, I did find out about him. I now understand why I have a love for math and working with computers and why I have this yearning to obtain and retain knowledge! Yes, I obtained some of the information I was looking for that I’ve been seeking for a good while now, no thanks to you…you, you…”

Koushirou refrained from finishing and gave off a frustrated yell to keep from saying something that would make Mrs. Izumi ashamed to associate with him.

“His father…yesterday?” Keisuke blinked, slowly putting two and two together.

Koushirou ran out the front door, leaving the puzzled looking woman behind.

“His father?” Anje wondered.

Mimi gave Keisuke an apologetic look, and then rushed off after Koushirou.

‘Poor Koushirou-kun. Hey, wait a minute! He mentioned something about yesterday. Even though that attack caused a lot of commotion, that shouldn’t have kept him from coming here to get the information he needed and I’m assuming Mimi-chan was with him, since he said ‘our search’, not ‘my search’. Could that mean…that… No, could it? Mimi-chan must was the one attacked
yesterday! Her reaction to Anje was a strong one after I told her about what she said about the victim! I just had to go and talk about it! That probably made her feel terrible!’ He smacked his head in stupidity. ‘Keisuke you dum-dum!’

“What in the world happened?” asked Mr. Watanabe.

“Father?” Anje said again. “That redheaded delinquent said something about the teacher he wanted information on was his father…”

“His father?! That’s the child?! That boy was the child that Fukami-san brought back after the conference! No wonder he resembled his wife so much! It’s her son! That boy can’t be any older than 14 or 15 years old. Of course I wouldn’t recognize him. The last time I saw that child, he was under a year old and I barely remember what he looked like from then.” He turned to Anje angrily. “You really messed up! We’ve tried to be lenient since you’re the President’s niece, but you had no right to treat that boy and his friend like that! That boy’s mother and father were both killed shortly after they returned from America years ago.”

‘The parents of Koushirou-kun died in an accident? Does that mean that he grew up as an orphan?’

“Who cares…people die,” she jeered. “At least they died together as a loving couple,” she cynically mocked.

Mr. Watanabe shook his head. He just didn’t understand why this woman was filled with so much hatred and disdain…

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“Koushirou-kun!! Chotto matte yo!” Mimi called out in a slight whine while trying to catch up to him. The last thing Mimi wanted was to walk around on the streets, especially within the vicinity of the school, by herself. Even though the occurrence was a rare one, she still didn’t know if she’d ever fully feel safe due to what had happened. It was after 18:00 (6:00) and the sun would soon begin setting.

Hearing his name being called, he stopped running, trying to keep his angry tears from flowing. “That old…ugh!” the boy nearly cursed. “I should give her a computer virus so extreme that it’ll wipe out her entire hard drive, and no matter how hard she tries, she’ll be unable to retrieve or restore one single piece of data! Not even a tiny, pathetic 1kb midi file!!”

Mimi grabbed the boy by his arm, which calmed his resolve some. “Koushirou-kun, please calm down. At least we know what your father was like. You learned a lot from Mitsuishi-san.”

“One photo, that’s all I ask. Why in the world can I not find one?!”

Mimi let go of his arm and gave him a small smile. “We will, you just have to remain positive. I know that we’ll get all the information that you need to find out more about your real parents and I promise to help you in the best way that I can.”

Koushirou smiled in spite of himself and nodded to her. “Thanks.”

“We do have a lot of information already thanks to Mitsuishi-san. We even found out how you were born in America.”

“That’s true.” Right at that moment, Koushirou’s stomach growled. “Mimi-san, would you like to grab a bite to eat for dinner? I never had the chance to treat you yesterday like I originally promised.”

‘He was serious about that?’ the girl thought in surprise. “W-well, um, s-sure, if you still want to.”
“O-okay. Well, let’s go.”

Koushirou started off, Mimi joining him. She had no idea where he was going or if he was just going to go to the first place he came to.

“Ne, Koushirou-kun, what’s your opinion on Misao-kun, Yuuji-kun, Seki-kun, and Ukyo-kun?”

“They’re okay, I guess.”

“Do you really think that they were going to hurt you?”

“Hm, not entirely. I do know that Takamatsu-san isn’t the type to fight. He didn’t even seem to be swinging hard,” he told her. ‘I’m not going to let her know that I felt almost the complete opposite.’

“I’m glad to hear that. I think I’ll forgive them. They were just concerned about me.”

“I guess…”

“B-but I’m not going to say or do anything until they apologize to you first, of course!”

“That’s nice…”

Mimi realized that the conversation wasn’t going anyplace, and really didn’t want to walk in an awkward silence either, like the time a few days earlier when he walked her home.

“You know, we’re getting all of this good information for the project, but we haven’t come up with a way to present it. We only have until the end of the week.”

“Oh yeah, you’re right!”

“Not to worry though, I’m sure we can come up with something.”

Koushirou and Mimi continued walking until the boy stopped in front of a cozy looking place, with a semi-full parking lot. “In the mood for Italian cuisine?” he asked coolly. ‘I saw this on the map earlier. I’m sure she’ll be okay eating at a place like this and the prices are pretty reasonable.’

“Oh, it's Saizeriya. It's ok, but I don’t have that much extra on me.”

“Don’t worry about it,” he told her confidently. “I said that it was my treat.”

Mimi couldn’t argue, and the two entered the family-style Italian restaurant with all of the Italian decorations and pictures throughout the place. They were led to a booth and given a menu.

The two looked over the items on the menu. Mimi saw a lot of tasty looking foods and decided on a spaghetti dish with a gorgonzola white sauce and the drink bar. Koushirou was actually in the mood for pizza, but decided to get a pasta dish instead. He also decided to order an appetizer for them, an order of garlic toast, which came in four pieces. For his meal, Koushirou ordered spaghetti and also decided to stick to the drink bar. The two were given moist towels to wipe their hands off and headed to the drink bar. Koushirou filled his glass with oolong tea, while Mimi went with melon soda. After a short wait, the garlic toast was served. The toast was left in the middle of the table and two smaller plates were set in front of the two. Koushirou put two on Mimi’s plate and the other two on his.

“I can’t believe how rude that woman was,” Mimi complained while nibbling on her toast. “She had no right to insult us like that!”
“Most definitely,” he nodded. “Just to think, she’s supposed to be our role model and mentor since she’s our elder. I can’t help but wonder how she ended up like that in the first place.”

“What knows, but are you going to go back and apologize to her?”

Koushirou finished his first piece of toast and shook his head. “I have nothing to be sorry for,” he firmly told her. “She was rude to us and the worst of all was her treatment of you. She had no right to refer to you in such a manner. I apologize for being out of character there, but I couldn’t hold back. Something just…snapped in me.”

Mimi gave him a coy smile, noticing the embarrassed look on his face. “In a way, I kind of like that side of you. It’s a side that I don’t think I’ve ever seen before. I’m glad that you defend yourself when it’s necessary.”

“Th-thank you, but, I think I'll go back and apologize to Watanabe-san for making a scene.”

“Hm, either way, I feel that it’s very admirable that you stood up for me. I was also glad that Keisuke-niisan came back to defend us too. I wonder if Toru-san would have done the same…”

Koushirou cut her a suspicious look. “What is it with you and Toru-san?”

She began to nibble on her second piece of toast, and abruptly changed the subject. “So, what are you going to do to present your project?”

“I haven’t really given it much thought. I suppose I could do something nice and simple, like a Power Point presentation. Ishidzuka-sensei never did specify what he wanted; just that it couldn’t be something boring, whatever that means.”

“I know about that program a little. You can do slide shows and stuff on the computer. Don’t you usually need pictures for that?” Mimi guzzled down some of her soda.

“Yes, but I’m sure I’ll manage to find something.”

The two were silent again. Koushirou gulped down more of his tea. Mimi found it amazing how this boy could drink oolong tea with pretty much anything. Either way, she still hated the fact that they were both quiet again and figured mentioning the project was the cause of it.

“So, um, Koushirou-kun…you never did tell me what happened yesterday with-with the police.”

He looked across at her surprisingly. “I didn’t think you’d want to get into something like that.”

“You’re right, I really don’t, but I feel that I should know everything and what we’ll have to go through later.”

“If you say so,” he sighed. He ran his hand through his short red hair, trying to determine where to begin the story. “Well, Lieutenant Tsuya came over yesterday as opposed to the sergeant. Luckily, my parents weren’t around…”

“Why was that lucky?”

“I don’t really want them to know. They don’t know why I went to Hikarigaoka or where I went yesterday, and given the circumstances, I don’t feel that I should tell them,” he explained wistfully. ‘I don’t want them to feel that I’m trying to replace them…I just want information and that’s all. I refuse to let it go beyond that…”
“Oh…”

“Well, all she did was talk about the reward that I specifically said I wanted no part of, but she kept insisting on it. I finally told her I’ll get back to her on that, and only after I talked to you about it. We also talked about the press and I asked her to remind them that whatever they write and print to make sure that the two of us remain anonymous. I’m sure that you wouldn’t want something like that publicly known, especially at school. I also wouldn’t want that type of attention, but I really insisted because of you and your state. I feel that you should talk about those types of things when you are ready to, not by force from the inquisitive ones around you…I know I would dislike it.”

“That was really nice of you,” the girl responded slowly.

“I wasn’t sure what to do. I just felt it would be better for you if we weren’t directly mentioned. Even if I were mentioned and you weren’t, I’m sure someone would’ve put the pieces together and determined that the other person was you, especially since you probably mentioned you were spending the day with me.

“I’m pretty sure that they can’t release our information anyway since we’re both minors, but I still wanted to make it clear.”

’He’s right. That was really thoughtful of him.’ She took another sip of her soda. “So…how much was the reward?”

“What?”

Before Mimi could ask again, the server came back with their orders. The both of them thanked her. It was now nearly 19:00 (7:00). It took a while to get their dishes prepared because there was a lot of business that evening, which the server apologized for. After the server had walked off, Koushirou was ready to jump into his spaghetti, but stopped and waited for Mimi.

Mimi’s eyes seemed to light up to the boy. “Oh!! This is so delicious!!! You really do pick good places to eat.”

“I wouldn’t mind a pizza after this,” the boy said while rolling up the spaghetti on his fork. He hadn’t even heard what the girl had said, as he just knew that the meal wouldn’t fill him up completely. ‘Hm, guess I’ll eat my lunch from earlier today after I get home..’

Mimi could only sweat drop over the statement. ‘He has a big appetite for such a small guy. He’s like a-a-a bottomless pit! The strange thing is that he never seems to gain any weight,’ the girl thought as she watched the boy consume the food. “So, how much was the reward?”

“The reward was actually somewhat high. The families of the previous victims had pooled together a lot of money for his capture and it came to ¥10,000,000 which is close to about…$65,000 from what I figured after converting it over. It seems that all of the victims picked up by that guy, coincidentally, came from well-to-do families. The girls were also the types who’d always dress really nicely and would go to spas and get many beauty treatments, which made them even greater targets, along with their long hair.

“Before you say anything, I researched the guy. I’m not going to go beyond what I just said, though. It’s too horrendous to continue it.”

“I understand, but why did you waste the time to convert it over to American currency?”

“After looking up that Doppo guy, I felt I needed something to do to get my mind off of everything, so I decided to convert it over. It was also good practice for me. We have to take our English test
soon.”

“That's true,” the girl agreed, ‘even though converting yen into dollars wouldn't be on something like
that…’

“I still can’t help but wonder why we first and second years are doing all of this testing. We don’t
normally do so at this time of the year.”

“It’s even more unfair that only our school is going through this!”

“I wonder if it’s their way of compensating for agreeing to the dance idea.”

“Who knows…”

The girl had been eating pretty slowly, and had grown quiet. For once in Koushirou’s life, he
noticed. Normally when it came to food, he tuned the rest of the world out. He saw that her plate was
still nearly full, while his was almost empty.

“Mimi-san, is something wrong?”

“Well, no…not entirely,” she slightly frowned. “I was just thinking about yesterday again, even
though I promised myself I wouldn’t, but I just feel very guilty over it.”

“Guilty? Why are you feeling guilty?”

“For not telling my aunt, mother, father, or uncle about what happened. My aunt was very worried
about me last night, and even called my mother. I spoke with her for a while, but didn’t really get
into what had been bothering me.” She sighed. “For once, since I’ve come back here, I’m homesick
for America. I wish my mother were here. I really feel that I need her…my father too, but not as
much as her right now…or if I can’t see her…maybe Palmon. She would always listen to me and
lend an ear…”

The redhead noticed that Mimi was trying to keep herself from crying, and was uncertain as to how
he should even respond to what she’d said. He was starting to miss the times when they would talk
about fun things, even if he couldn’t relate to everything she found fun and vice-versa for her when it
came to figuring out how computers worked, but they did usually enjoy the company of
one another. He felt it was sad how one incident could cause so much tension and unease.

“Well…um…what do you want to do?”

“A part of me wants to share it, but another part of me feels ashamed if I do because they would
worry and probably try to shelter me again as a way of protecting me. I don’t want that again. My
own parents made that mistake with me, and look at all of the trouble it caused!”

“What do you mean? What trouble did it cause?”

“Our first time in the Digital World.” She continued eating her pasta.

“Oh, that. Well, I don’t think that should really count. None of us were prepared for such an
adventure.”

“But it took me a much longer time to grasp onto the reality of our situation, like Takeru-kun in some
ways, because of how sheltered I was! Moving back out here has been good for me. I just feel that if
I share this with my aunt and uncle, that they’ll start treating me like my younger cousins, who
actually do need to be watched over given their ages.”
“I really wouldn’t worry about that. I know of your aunt and your uncle, and I don’t think they’d try to keep you in the house against your will just because something so unfortunate happened.”

“I hope so…”

After that, Koushirou decided to steer the conversation away from such a depressing topic, and started to talk about something more fun-filled. For Mimi’s sake, he started to talk about her four admirers, which prompted Mimi to tell him about how they’d dressed for Sora’s party. Koushirou was really surprised that they’d done something so silly and actually couldn’t help but laugh at the thought. Their looking like “fools” was apology enough for him. Mimi laughed as well, going on about how she should get “Ayame-chan to print out the pictures”.

Once done with their meals, Mimi asked Koushirou if he was full. He just lied and told her “yes”.

“So, Mimi-san, would you like some dessert?”

“D-dessert?”

“Yes, and I have the perfect thing in mind.” He pushed the button on the table. “The food server should be returning soon; I’ll order it for you.”

“B-but…”

“Mimi-san, this is my present to you for yesterday. I had already had this in mind. Please enjoy it.”

“Oh-okay…” She wasn’t sure how to respond.

After the food server returned, Koushirou ordered Mimi one of the restaurant’s latest seasonal specialties, a slice of their white chocolate cheese cake. Mimi was surprised at the combination, but the boy recalled Mimi going on one time about New York style cheesecake every time she would talk about foods from having lived there and how she preferred it to Japan’s.

“Thanks…”

After a while, the server returned with the exquisite looking slice of cake. Mimi offered Koushirou a piece, but he turned it down and kept reiterating that this was his gift to her for yesterday. After the first taste, her eyes sparkled. It was very good.

Once done, the server gave them their check, which came to ¥1720.

“That’s a lot. Let me pay at least part.”

“It’s no problem. I already offered to pay.”

“But with that amount, it’d be unfair to have you pay the entire bill.”

“Don’t worry, it’s no problem…besides, I really want to…”

“Thank you.”

He smiled to her. “You’re welcome, and I’m really glad you enjoyed the meal.” He pulled out the ¥2000 note that he’d received from his father just a few days earlier and paid the bill. After receiving his change, the two headed home. Given that it was nearly 20:00 (8:00), they took a taxi back, though Mimi was a bit reluctant to do so.

Koushirou paid the cheap cab fare after arriving at the Nishimura home, and hopped out along with
Outside of the Nishimura home were Miyako and Sora. They had just been let in by Mrs. Nishimura and were upstairs in Mimi’s room. Sūe was surprised over how Mimi hadn’t even arrived home yet and how Miyako and Sora were there before her. Miyako noticed an a car pull up from the corner of her eye. She looked through the window, and motioned for Sora. The two saw two familiar figures exiting the vehicle.

“Is that Mimi-chan?” asked Sora.

Miyako tried to get a better look. “It looks like both her and Izumi-senpai.”

The two watched Koushirou and Mimi as they talked, curious as to what they could have been saying.

“I’m sorry that we didn’t manage to find out everything that you wanted to today.”

“That’s okay. It’s like you said, we learned a lot from Mitsuishi-san.”

“So, what are we going to do tomorrow night?”

*RP cues the Pinky and the Brain Theme*

“The same thing I try to do every night, Mimi-san…try to take over Microsoft!” He laughed diabolically.

“Huh? What?” She started to look around. “Where is that music coming from?”

*RP cues the music to stop*

“Erm, I guess we go to the next school on the list, which is Toudai.”

“So, I guess we’ll go there after school lets out.”

“If you’d like. We can take the train there and the fare would be pretty cheap too for that distance. Let’s see,” he began to mutter, “the main campus is in Bunkyou and the closest station there would be…Hongo sanchome, but since we’re on the Yurikamome line, we’ll have to transfer a couple of times, since Hongo sanchome can be reached by way of the Oedo line or the Marunouchi line …” He looked back to Mimi. “It’d be faster than taking the bus and I’ll plan out a route for us later.”

“Okay. That could work.”

Meanwhile, back in the house…

“Oh, I can’t hear what they’re saying from here!” complained Miyako. “I’m going outside.”

“Miyako-chan, we shouldn’t…”

“It’ll be fine. We’ll just open the front door and stand there so that we can greet her when she comes in.”

Sora didn’t protest, as she knew it wouldn’t have done any good, and followed Miyako outside.

The two stood there for a while in a tense silence.
“Well, I guess this is goodnight,” Koushirou responded awkwardly. He didn’t understand why he had knots in his stomach, or why his heartbeat seemed to become more rhythmic than earlier. One thing was certain, for some unusual reason, he wasn’t ready to part ways with Mimi yet. He wanted to spend more time with her. ‘Why? She’s just Mimi-san…’

“Y-yeah, I’ll see you during lunch tomorrow. I’ll meet you in the computer lab…okay?”

“S-sure thing.”

Mimi walked backwards up the walkway, waving. “Thanks a bunch for dinner! I enjoyed it very much, especially the cake.”

“It’s no problem,” he called back to her. “If you want, we could go out again, my treat. You can also choose the place if you’d like, since tonight’s place was somewhat spur of the moment.”

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“Dinner!?” both girls exclaimed.

“They went out on a date!?”

At that moment, Sué joined the two, overhearing Miyako. “Did you two say something about a date?”

“Oh no. We were just trying to…”

“…decide on a date when everyone’s free during spring vacation,” Sora said. Miyako looked at her older friend in slight confusion. “Date in Japanese is ‘nengappi’,,” she explained. “We just recently learned it.”

“Well, that’s nice, but I still wish Mimi-chan were here. It’s not really late, but she’s usually home by now and she usually always tells us if she’s going to come home later than usual so that I don’t prepare too much for dinner. I guess it’s okay though since you two mentioned she was spending the evening with Koushirou-kun again.”

“Take a look. Mimi-chan and Koushirou-kun are here now. They’re at the end of the pathway.”

****

“I can’t wait! I’ll see you tomorrow at school.”

The girl couldn’t help but smile a little. She was really looking forward to spending time with Koushirou again. She whimsically turned around to walk up the pathway. Once reaching the front door, she ended up facing an exasperated aunt, a curious Sora, and a nosy Miyako.

“Well, that’s nice, but I still wish Mimi-chan were here. It’s not really late, but she’s usually home by now and she usually always tells us if she’s going to come home later than usual so that I don’t prepare too much for dinner. I guess it’s okay though since you two mentioned she was spending the evening with Koushirou-kun again.”

“Welcome home, Mimi-chan,” Sué told her.

“Oh, I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to worry you or anything. I really lost track of the time.”

“Oh, it’s not a problem but please let us know whenever you’re going to come home later than usual. If I know ahead of time, I can know how much I should prepare for dinner.”

“Yes, ma’am.”

“No need to be so formal,” the woman laughed. “Would you like anything to eat?”

“No thanks. I’ve eaten, but I do promise to let you know if I’m going to be late.”

“That’s all I ask,” she smiled. “Now, you three girls get along. I’m sure you have lots to talk about.”
Miyako nodded vigorously, and grabbed Mimi’s arm, pulling her up the stairs. Sora couldn’t help but laugh at Miyako’s display, as she joined the two in Mimi’s room…

Chapter End Notes

Author’s Notes

Note 1: Omiai or miai is the practice of arranged marriage in Japan. Even though it’s not as common as it once was, it’s still practiced.
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Note 2: The quote, “I’m no genius, just passionately curious”, isn’t my quote. One of the readers of the original version of this fic, Guardiannon, passed it along to me and I still thank him for it, as it’s a very good description of Koushirou’s character, imo. He isn’t a genius, just very curious about things, and the things he’s curious about, he tries his best to learn everything he can about it. In a way, you could compare that description to the fictional character, Sherlock Holmes. He was only smart when it came to things that truly interested him, but when it came to things like astronomy or politics and other such subjects that were common knowledge to those around him, he was very ignorant of them. For some reason, the dub made “Izzy” way smarter than what he originally was, imo, as I never found him to be a “genius” or whatever, and I think it was because of his being a “computer nerd”, but even that was exaggerated for the dub. In the original, he’s not viewed as a “nerd” or a “geek”.
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Note 3: Enka is a traditional style of Japanese music. If I could describe it, I’d say it’s like Japanese folk music. Oh, another tidbit of information…in the episode where Palmon evolved to Togemon for the first time, and they were walking in the sewer and Mimi sang, she was singing in an enka style and, mentioned that her father liked enka.

Ikebana is “the Japanese art of flower arranging”. A very traditional skill that is still practiced to this day. It’s even an option to study in school. There’s a lot to mastering the art, so to speak, as everything has to be harmonious and balanced. I personally feel that it’s a cool skill to have. Ironically, seems Sora was trying to learn more about it because of her mother, who runs a flower shop.
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Note 4: There isn't an asterisk for this, but ¥10,000,000 (2004), would be equivalent to about $85,000 in 2016 and about $65,000 in 2004, if I’m getting that right.

Fic Chapter Changes

I gave “Anje” a full name. Originally, she was referred to as just “Anje”. Anyway, Oguchi, if using the right characters, would mean, “Big mouth”. Well, that’s what I was going for anyway. I would write it, 大口 (Oguchi)アンジェ (Anje). The kanji for big + kanji for mouth = Oguchi. Anje would be written in katakana (Anjye). Also, her name was inspired by the actress Anjelica Houston who was in the film, The Witches. The character Houston played hated children and found them repulsive.
Mimi was the one to initiate their going out to eat for the original version of this chapter, which I forgot. Mimi teased Koushirou for his stomach growling and then asked if he wanted to get something to eat and then he offered to pay for the entire meal. Changed it so that it was Koushirou doing the asking. I also added in a real place for them to eat at, as opposed to a random pizzeria and since I was finally able to visit one, I corrected the things I got wrong.

The line where Miyako started and Sora finished after Sué questioned the date thing was changed. I originally had Sora mention the dance, not the spring vacation. I also added in the “date” explanation since date in the context it was being used in isn’t the same in Japanese. “年月日” is how you say date in Japanese.

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