Caution:

This book has no connection whatsoever to the main story. In answer to the obvious question, "Why is it so short?" just forget about that and enjoy the story.

-Sano

The Bud Has Thorns

"Where... am I?"

Suminoe Takako walked along a path she had never seen before. Due to the thick veil of fog, she couldn't see more than a few steps in front of her. Of course, she had been walking just as she always did, along the same path she always took, to get to her place of work, Saint Michael's Academy for Girls. However, before she knew it, she ended up on this unfamiliar path. And on top of that, the girl she left home with was no longer in sight.

"Runaaa! Are you there?! Don't hide! Please come out!"

Her voice vanished, as though it were sucked up by the fog. Complete silence followed. Suddenly, an uneasy feeling gripped Takako's chest. That's when...

"Sensei!"

"That voice... Runa?"

A voice could be heard calling out for her. When she turned, she could see someone running through the fog towards her.

"R- Runa! Over here!"

It was definitely Runa's voice she heard. Which meant the person running towards her had to be...

"Sensei!"

"Runa! Thank goodness, where did you... wait... huh?"

Takako froze mid-sentence, completely dumbfounded. Somehow, Runa looked a little... no, she looked very different.

"Um, Runa... why are you dressed that?"

She was dressed like an old-timey gentleman, complete with bowtie and a black umbrella tucked under her arm. And jutting out of the top of her bowler hat were a pair of rabbit ears. It seemed intensely familiar. Like she had seen this outfit somewhere before.

"Sensei, come on! We're late, we're late!"

Whether or not she was aware of Takako's conflicted feelings, Runa was in a terribly nervous state, frequently checking the metal pocket watch hanging from her neck. She suddenly grabbed her by the arm and tried to take her somewhere.

"Wait, where are we going?!"

"Never mind, just hurry!"

She didn't seem to be in the mood for answering any questions. Urged on by Runa, Takako ran at full speed through the fog. Before long they came to a ludicrously ornamented door at the end of the gloomy path.

"A door...?"
The sight of an enormous door standing all alone, smack dab in the middle of the road, gave Takako an eerie feeling.

"Come on, go in, go in!"
Without the slightest hesitation, Runa opened the door, pushed Takako on the back, and went inside.

On the other side of the door a starkly contrasting world stretched out before them, exploding with so much color it hurt the eyes.

"What... is this...?"
Takako stood motionless in a daze.
"Well Sensei, go on ahead."
"Huh? Go on and wha- Hwaaa?!"

Thud!
Before Takako could respond, something heavy crashed into her.
"Sensei, play wif me!"
"Whaaat?! Wh- Who are you?!
Looking down, she saw a girl, perhaps about Runa's age, perhaps slightly younger, clinging to her.
"Yuuna! Matsubara Yuuna!"
"Matsubara... Yuuna? I know that name..."
Takako tilted her head, trying to remember where she had heard it before.
"Uh- Um... could you let go of me?"
"Nuh-uh."
"Uh, but..."
"Oooh, soft♪" 

The girl named Matsubara Yuuna had buried her face in Takako's breasts, rubbing back and forth as if trying to determine their texture.

"Onee-sama!"
Suddenly another girl appeared, about the same height as Yuuna-chan.
"Oh, Nanami. You wanna try these?"
"No. And what's wif you acclimatizing to this situation?"
Nanami-chan seemed angry for some reason. While Takako was admiring the fact that someone who chewed her words knew such difficult terms as "acclimatizing," something suddenly occurred to her.

"Wait a second... Matsubara Yuuna... Matsubara Yuuna-san?! Then that must make you Oda Nanami-san? Wh- Why are you two so little?!
Looking closely, she most certainly did bear a resemblance to the formidable president of the Campus Beautification Committee, Matsubara Yuuna. Actually, she appeared to be a perfect miniaturized version of her. Why did this celebrity of a girl, who even Takako knew of despite working in a separate building, look like this...? Before she could even begin to search for an answer to that question, a new girl clung to Takako opposite Yuuna.

"Whoa, they are soft. An' big." 
Takako also knew this girl from somewhere.
"S-Sara! Stop that."
And then there was yet another girl. This one was complemented by a pair of glasses and braided hair. She appeared to be around Runa's age, but her body was more developed. Strangely, Takako somehow knew who this girl was as well.

"Would you two be Kitajima Sara-san, and Kitajima Kaede-san?"

She was evidently correct. The girl wearing glasses over her worried looking face was Kitajima Kaede-san. And the other one having her fill of Takako's breasts was Kitajima Sara-san, the beautiful girl who worked as a model while attending school.

"Hey, look! They're almost as big as normal Kaede-chan's!"
"Soft and waaaarm."
Yuuna and Sara both had their faces buried.
"Uh- Um, I'd really rather you didn't rub against them so much..."
"Sara! Y- You're upsetting Sensei!"
"Onee-sama!"

Takako had no idea what was going on. All these well-known girls from St. Michael's had simultaneously become younger. Wearing a befuddled look on her face as she desperately racked her brain for an answer to the situation, she happened to notice Runa, the one who brought her to this place, casually drinking tea in the corner of the room.

"Runa! What is all this?!"
"...As you can see, they've all gotten younger," Runa said matter-of-factly as she took a sip from her gaudy teacup.
"Please keep an eye on these girls, Sensei."
"At least give me some kind of explanation! Like how did they get this way? Anything!"
"Sensei, you'll never get anywhere if you take things so seriously," she answered bluntly.
"What does that mean?!"
Her expression became even more confused, as though she were being whirled about in a blender. Incidentally, the two girls were still hanging from her breasts.
"Onee-sama, let go of her!"
"Sara, I told you to stop that!"
The two remaining girls each tried to separate the ones clinging to Takako's chest.
"Ow, ouch! You're going to tear my breasts off!"
Their intelligence may have also been lowered somewhat when they turned into children, as they pulled on their companions with all their might.
"Hang in there, Sensei."
Runa offered her half-hearted support while pouring syrup over pancakes... No, it was more like pancake scraps submerged in a sea of syrup, with whipped cream and a mountain of brightly colored jelly beans piled on top.
"Runa, don't just stand there, help me!"
"Onee-sama, let goo!"
"Sara, I'm begging you, please listen to meee!"
As a result of the hard work of the sensible Nanami and Kaede, the clinging pair was removed before they could tear off Takako's breasts. They then became tangled up
with the extracted girls and tumbled backwards. It was just like something you would see in a comedy anime.

"Phew... I thought my breasts were going to come off..."
Takako breathed a sigh of relief. ...For a brief moment.
Now there was yet another girl standing before her.
"Hello!"
Of course this one appeared about the same age as the others.
"H- Hello... And um, who might you be?"
"I'm Sawaguchi Mai."
The somewhat boyish-looking girl gave Takako an innocent smile.
"Sawaguchi Mai... Oh!"
She had heard this name before as well.
Sawaguchi Mai. Right up there with Matsubara Yuuna-san, a girl well-known across all grades.
"I see you've grown younger as well, Sawaguchi-san..."
These girls couldn't all be close relatives, could they? Yeah, that would make sense.
As Takako's brain was trying to reach some conclusion...
"Hey, Sensei."
"Wh- What is it, Sawaguchi-san?"
"Would you mind if I buried myself in your breasts for a minute?"
"No, not at- ...Wait, whaaaaat?!"

It sounded like such a normal request that she almost agreed, but she caught herself at the last second. Regardless, Mai dived face first into Takako's chest without hesitation.

"Whyyyy! Why is everyone so obsessed with my breasts?!" Takako screamed.
"Runaaaa! Runaaaa! Please help, I'm begging youuuu!"
As before, Runa was completely unconcerned with Takako's desperate cries for help.
Finished with her pancakes, she now had out a handheld gaming system.
"I'm hunting right now. Try me again later."
"Whaaaaaat?!"
Unsurprisingly, Runa didn't seem to have the slightest inclination to help.
"Oooh... Sooof... They're totally different from Reo's flat chest," Mai voiced her impressions while going to town on Takako's chest.
"Hi-ya!"
"Guh!"
Delivering a piercing flying kick to Mai was yet another petite-sized girl.
"Who do you think you're calling flat-chested?!!" the attacker screamed angrily at Mai.
"Oh, Reo. You heard that?"
"Of course I heard it! Now apologize for calling me that!"
"Relax. I like big ones and little ones both!"
"How'm I supposed to relax?!"
Mai stuck out her thumb with a *bwish* and winked with a *kashing*!
Takako suddenly had the feeling that something was out of place. The latest girl to appear, who was undoubtedly Kawamura Reo-san, seemed different from all the others. Reo herself soon revealed the reason.

"So how come I'm the only one who's normal when everyone else has gotten younger?!

She let out a roar like a baying predator.
"There there, I'm sure there's some kind of reason. Probably," Mai said patting Reo on the head, who was still shorter, even standing on her tiptoes.

Essentially, while the whole group had turned into children, only Reo remained unchanged. It almost seemed like the whole thing had been done on purpose for some reason.

"What's the meaning of this, you little squirt?!"

Reo thrust her finger accusingly at Runa, who was still lost in her game.

"Ah, I hit its tail."

"Listen when people are talking to you!"

Hearing Reo's hysterical cry, she lazily looked up.

"Oh, well, even if you did get younger, it's not like anyone would be able to tell. Your chest hasn't grown so much as a millimeter in years."

"Wh- Wh-... WHAT DID YOU SAY?!"

Screaming and trying to grab at Runa, Mai held Reo's arms pinned behind her back.

"Whoa, calm down, Reo."

"You expect me to stay calm?!" Reo's rage continued as she thrashed about violently in Mai's arms.

"Sheesh, all right already..." Mai said with a sigh and planted a kiss on the back of Reo's neck.

"Hyaaah?! Wh- Mai?! What're you doing?"

"This is the best way to get you to be obedient... smooch."

"Hyah- aah! Not there... Hnaa..."

Not stopping with just a kiss, Mai began to grope Reo over the top of her clothes and reached her other hand up her skirt. It was a very familiar technique.

"W- Wait... Don't... Hwaaah!"

"Heheh... I think small breasts really are more sensitive."

Blushing bright red at the scene before her, Takako looked away. But as soon as she turned her head...

"Stoop... Onee-sama, not here... Hyaah!"

"But you're so precious and tiny, Nanami. I just can't help myself."

Yuuna already had herself draped over the nearly-naked Nanami.

"Whaaat?! Y- You guys too?!"

And it wasn't just Nanami and Yuuna.

"Kaede-chan, were your breasts this big even at this age?"

"H- Hold on Sara, everyone's watching... Haah, I said don't... Aaah!"

"It's all right. Everyone's already having fun on their own. See...?"

"Doooon't!"

Ridiculous behavior was unfolding all around her, no matter where she looked. Unsure of what to do, Takako simply panicked.
"Ahhh, they've started now."
"Wha... Runa?"
In the blink of an eye, Runa was standing right next to her.
"Wh- What's going on here?"
"They get like this when you leave them alone. That's why I asked you to keep an eye on them, Sensei."

Runa shook her head and shrugged her shoulders. Takako realized she seemed to have failed in her duties somehow, but she wasn't sure if she should apologize. While she was pondering that, Runa said, "Now that things have gone this way, should we have at it ourselves?"
"...Huh?"

The moment she said that, the two of them instantly appeared on a bed. And on top of that, Takako was clad in ridiculously sexy lingerie.
"Wha?! H- How did this happen?!"
"Heheheh... How? Why, it's your Christmas present, of course."
"C- Christmas present...?"

Hovering over her, Runa was wearing an alluring smile, not befitting her age.
"Since you love little girls, Sensei, I made everyone younger for you."
"I- I don't know what you're talking about!"
"Don't worry, it's fine. Let's just enjoy ourselves... After all, today... is Christmas."
"He- Heeeeeeexponential help!!"

* * *

Surprised by the sound of her own shriek, Takako bolted upright to find herself in the familiar bedroom of her apartment.
"I- It was all a dream...?"

Looking around her nervously, there was no sign of the colorful room or any of the foolishness that had been going on.
"Huh... Runa?"

Runa, who she had definitely gone to sleep with in the same bed last night, was nowhere to be found.
"Time to get up!"

Still having trouble distinguishing between the dream and reality, the covers were suddenly stripped from her.
"Eeyaaah?!"

Takako's body, covered only by a thin layer of pajamas, was exposed to the cold air making her instantly lucid.
"R- Runa?! Why are you...?"
"It's morning, Sensei," Runa said with a grin.

At that moment, she never would have expected something even more outrageous her dream was about to happen.

The End