

18 For adult only



その花びらにくちづけを

二人のクリスマス



Presented by
LIPARTY & ふくり屋

**A Kiss For The Petals
Our Christmas Together**

Presented by Luminocity and Fuguriya

Foreword

Good day to you, ~~and welcome to the Yamayuri Council.~~

Welcome to St. Michael's. I'm Peko.

This book serves as a supplemental story to the circle Fuguriya's doujin game "A Kiss For The Petals".

With Shin'ichirou on the script, this book goes beyond splendid, into "This is actually official now" territory, as brought to you by the joint efforts of Fuguriya and Luminocity.

Now sit back, relax, and enjoy.

God's Cruel Sense of Humor

December. The streets glow with lights, and the strains of Jingle Bells begin flowing from every storefront. The season when just the sound of that song is enough to make impatient people all the more anxious. Being gripped by a feverish excitement that only grows stronger each day as the harsh cold worsens. Letting out a depressed sigh at the thought of spending that one night alone. Or perhaps living a life completely isolated from such things in the first place...?

As it happens, I, Oda Nanami, fell into that third category until just last year. But as of this year, I get to participate too. That's because I have a partner to spend the night with! No, it's not just that. This year, by some random fortune, my father and mother won't be at home. If this isn't divine intervention, then I don't know what is. It must have been a done as a blessing for me and my special someone!

That's why, while the large letters on the calendar continued to read 'November', I restlessly spent my days consuming all the specials from TV and magazines, coming up with all sorts of ideas. The blinking lights at the station that until last year I had complained hurt my eyes now appeared to me as beautiful jewels. And the present was the icing on the cake! Who knew the act of selecting a gift for my beloved someone could cause my heart to beat so strongly!

Ahhh... That night. Christmas Eve. There isn't a girl alive whose heart doesn't go into fits at the mere mention of it. So it would be a natural inevitability if someone like me, who has a reputation for being absent-minded already, were to become just a teensy bit more so now...

No, this has to be God's cruel sense of humor.

December 20th

"Aaaah?!"

My best omelette of the day tumbled from the ends of my chopsticks as I cried out. I was fully aware that my mouth was hanging open in a manner completely unbecoming a young lady, but I was powerless to close it. For something that was a part of me, it was being awfully ungrateful. Who does it think is the one shoveling delicious things into it three times a day?

...All right, calm down. I needed to regain my composure... or else I was going to completely embarrass myself. No, wait, it was too late for that.

[Image from page 7.]

"Is something the matter, Nanami-chan?"

The one asking that while giving me a worried look was my classmate, Otsuki Aoi.

"No, not at all."

"But you just screamed, 'Aaaah.'"

"Uh, that was because..."

Rats. As I tried to explain myself to Aoi, my head was preoccupied with the realization of what I had just done. Argh, what am I going to do...

"This is Nanami we're talking about. She probably just realized she forgot something."

The one speaking so rudely while brushing her beloved curls out of her face was Shitara Misaki, another classmate of mine.

"I don't think we had any homework today..."

And murmuring that to herself was Asou Rin.

My relationship with the three of them essentially consists of us pushing our desks together like this during our lunch break and spreading out our lunches together. We noisily spend our noisy lunch hour trading our favorite sides and taste-testing one another's homemade lunches.

"I keep thinking about those tako-san wieners," Rin mumbled quietly while eyeing my lunchbox.

"Oh, sure. You can have one."

Rin immediately reached for one with her chopsticks. The weenie mercilessly impaled at the end of my fork went into Rin's tiny mouth.

"Heh-heh-heh... Here, for you."

"Uh, thanks."

She gave me a cherry tomato. Tomatoes being in the top three on Rin's list of most hated foods... I politely declined her unfair trade.

"So, what's got you so worked up?"

Nothing escapes Misaki's sight. Actually, in this case it would be more like nothing escapes her hearing.

"It was nothing, really."

"Liar. People don't yell like that over nothing."

"Errgh..."

I'm sure all eyes in the classroom were now on me.

At Saint Michael's Academy for Girls, the cafeteria food is pretty good for what it costs, so relatively few people bring their lunches from home. For that reason, the handful of us at our little man-made island stood out in the classroom. Furthermore, that island was populated by a rather conspicuous crowd. Obviously there's Misaki, who tries to set herself apart from everyone. There's also Rin, the straight-A honors student, and Aoi, who looks like she could be our class mascot. I should add that strangely, I too seem to have acquired somewhat of a reputation myself lately. However, I had nothing to do with that. Rather, it was my beloved special someone...

"Come on, tell us the truth."

This was bad. How should I explain it to them? I think giving a believable reason for my stupid slip-up is going to require every last ounce of my strength.

"Is there something the matter?"

"I- It's nothing like that."

Seeing Aoi's genuine concern for me made it all the more difficult to say anything.

"We were just talking about Christmas."

"I see. So it has something to do with Christmas."

Like two detectives solving a mystery, they began their analysis. They had hit the nail right on the head. The situation was now beyond my control, since there was no doubt they would close in on the truth like the Great Sherlock himself.

"...That's it."

Crap, did my expression give it away?

The worried look on my face was as clear as day to Rin.

"Oh-ho-ho. Your face betrays you, Nanami."

"Come on, tell us the truth."

"Errrgh..."

Misaki, with a frightening look on her face, and Rin, wearing an expression that was as blank as always, put the squeeze on me. This wasn't an investigation, it was an interrogation. When these two joined forces, there was no hope for mercy.

"You guys, lay off poor Nanami-chan..."

"Don't worry, she'll be fine."

"She can take it."

...Were their responses to Aoi's chiding.

"Now, what were you doing for Christmas again?"

"I told you, nothing special."

"Liar. Look, even now you're getting nervous, like you're thinking of running away."

Like I said, nothing escapes Misaki's sight.

"Nanami, didn't you say that you were going to be home alone for Christmas?"

"That's true, she did."

"I'll bet she's going to invite her mysterious lover over."

"And it will be just the two of them, all night."

"The two of us... All night..."

A Christmas Eve alone together.

Just hearing that made my heart throb in anticipation.

"*Nanami, your cooking is so delicious,*" that person says, tilting a wine glass while smiling gently...

And when I try to bring out the cake for dessert, I hear "*I would rather feast on you than cake.*"

And then we collapse into a heap on the bed. Outside, the snow is falling softly. The world shrouded in silence, as though we're the only two people in it...

"*Nanami, I'm not going to let you get any sleep tonight.*"

Our silhouettes project on the wall under the glow of flickering candles. Then slowly, those silhouettes merge into one...

"Eeeee! Eeeee! What am I gonna do, what am I gonna dooo?!"

"Na- Nanami-chan, get a hold of yourself!"

"Hwa?"

When I came back to Earth, I found Aoi peering at my face with concern.

"You were off in your own little world just now."

"Did I say something weird?!"

"...I'm not going to let you get any sleep tonight."

"Whaaa?!"

I did it again. I'm always daydreaming...

Accidentally saying what I'm thinking out loud was a new one though.

"Heh-heh-heh... That was pretty entertaining."

"Rin, I'm begging you... Please forget about this..."

And besides, this was no time to be fantasizing. I had a much more pressing personal matter to deal with.

"Anyway, I just remembered something important I need to do."

Seeing me hastily trying to stand from my seat, Misaki suddenly made a face as though something had dawned on her.

"I see... you completely forgot to get a present, didn't you?"

"Of course not."

That much was true. I had prepared a present weeks ago. I began making it at the start of October, spending every night painstakingly knitting a scarf by hand. A tad unoriginal, I'll admit, but I figured it's the thought that counts more than money, so I went with this.

And besides, I put all my heart and soul into it! So much so, that it actually ended up being a super-long scarf...

"But then, I can always just have myself be the present."

"Hehehe... This is pretty entertaining too."

"No, you misunderstood..."

Ignoring my protests, the two of them proceeded to give an impromptu performance of 'Nanami's Christmas Eve Secret'.

"Nanami-chan."

"Aoi?"

"Those two may talk like that, but if something's bothering you, you can tell me, okay?"

"...Okay. Thank you."

I appreciated Aoi's concern, but there's no way I could talk about my little outburst earlier, even with friends.

But... It was only four days until Christmas, and I just realized that I still hadn't made plans with that certain someone...

Nanami's Responsibilities

I swear I'm not that dumb.

It's not like I could forget that Christmas Eve falls on December 24th, let alone forget about Christmas. It's just... I've been so busy between studying for exams and my work for the committee that certain things have slipped through the cracks.

If you'll allow me to explain:

For someone like me, who possesses but the most ordinary of brains, finals are a matter of life and death, so to speak. I cram my head full of words from my textbooks just so I can finish the semester without having to worry about extra exams or make-up

work, let alone worrying about getting good grades. It would be nice if that was all I had on my plate.

This year, I have a new responsibility as well. I'm on the Campus Beautification Committee. Just as its rigid-sounding name would imply, it demands a broad variety of work. Of course there's preserving the environment at school, plus basically every kind of job imaginable to organize the student body, from presiding over school events to consulting with teachers as a student representative. Naturally, my duties have decreased dramatically during test time, but it's not as though they've disappeared completely. During this time there are still meetings and duties associated with test time. For someone who by her own admission is neither particularly bright nor coordinated, this time is absolutely hectic. As I was being swept away by this wave of responsibilities, I may have forgotten something important...

Could anyone blame me?

Onee-sama!

As the Campus Beautification Committee's regular meeting came to a close, we were the last ones to remain in the club room. With it being just the two of us, we reverted to using our secret names for each other that no one else could know about.

"What's wrong, Nanami?"

Placing the files back on the shelf, my special someone turned her head, swinging her soft hair.

Matsubara Yuuna-sama.

Not a single person at our school is unfamiliar with that name. But I'm the only one who calls her 'Onee-sama'.

Translucent in the evening sun, her chestnut hair possessed a beautifully natural wave, appearing as though she had stepped directly out of a painting. Not at all the frizzy mess she claimed it to be. While staring captivated by my Onee-sama, whom I could never tire of looking at, I gathered up my courage for what I was about to say.

"Onee-sama, do you have any plans for the 24th, four days from now?"

"The 24th?"

Placing a finger on her cheek, Onee-sama tilted her head slightly. She has a habit of doing this.

"My family holds a Christmas party every year. Father's clients and all of our relatives will be in attendance."

"I see..."

I felt the strength drain out of me.

I shouldn't have been surprised. Onee-sama's family comes from a long line of doctors with a number of practices throughout Japan. As large as their family is, it isn't even a fraction of the number of clients they have. As the lone daughter of the people hosting such an extravagant party, Onee-sama's attendance was surely mandatory. (*Sigh...* I should have known not to let myself get so carried away.) Onee-sama's Christmas was going to be some sort of high-class affair.

"However, it seems we won't be having the party at our house this year."

"Huh?!"

Then, could that mean...?!

"I believe we've reserved a hotel assembly hall this year."

"Haaa..."

In an instant my hopes were dashed, and I suddenly felt myself hit rock bottom.

"Each year the number of attendees grows larger, so you can imagine our house was becoming quite crowded. The preparations and cleanup were also getting to be quite a burden, so we decided it would be preferable to rent out an assembly hall."

"I see."

"I'm rather concerned that this is quickly turning into an overblown affair."

Onee-sama spoke so nonchalantly, but from this commoner's point of view, it was far beyond overblown. I was once again acutely aware of the different worlds in which we lived.

"I had thought of inviting you, Nanami, but..."

"What? Invite me?"

"After all, Christmas comes but once a year."

That made me so happy... Onee-sama really was thinking of me. Not at all like me, who had been off on in her own world, frantically spinning her wheels. But...

"I, uh..."

"Oh, I know. I'm going to be so preoccupied running around all night, greeting people and the like, I'm certain you would just be bored to tears, Nanami."

"That's not what I was going to..."

I couldn't say it. There's no way I could selfishly ask Onee-sama to miss her family's party. But this was our one chance to spend Christmas Eve alone together. If I let this opportunity slip by, I wouldn't have another chance until next year... No, who knows when my next chance would be? Please forgive me, God. I'm going to be a little selfish here.

"You know!"

I summoned up all my courage and raised my voice.

"On Christmas Eve, both of my parents will be away on business. So... I thought... maybe we could..."

I desperately tried to squeeze out my words. Just before I could say it, I realized that suddenly blurting this out would only put Onee-sama in an awkward position. But it was too late to turn back now.

As though sensing what I was about to say, Onee-sama made a pained face and said, "I'm afraid I cannot possibly miss the party. Not only will I get to see Father, but this is one of the only times during the year when our whole family gathers together."

"I see... I'm sorry. I shouldn't have asked for something so unreasonable."

My greedy, childish behavior had hurt my Onee-sama. As she looked at me apologetically, I felt shame and remorse well up inside my chest, bringing me nearly to the verge of tears. But crying would only cause her to fuss over me even more. I couldn't let that happen. Never mind the added shame, Onee-sama might actually resent me for

it. In spite of that, once I felt that twinge in my nose, there was nothing I could do to stop it.

“However, I believe I may be able to sneak away in the middle of it.”

“Huh...?”

“The party begins at 4:30 in the afternoon. After an hour, the greetings will more or less be over with. Everyone will be filling up on alcohol, so I doubt anyone would notice if I were to disappear. Yes... How does around 6:00 sound?”

As she said the words I had longed to hear, Onee-sama flashed her usual Goddess-like smile.

“Onee-sama!”

After seeing her smiling face, my gloomy mood instantly shot into orbit.

[Image from page 11.]

“I’m going to cook you the best dinner!”

“Your home cooking? I can’t wait.”

Actually, I had been practicing my cooking for months in preparation for this day. Today’s boxed lunch had also been a part of that effort. It wasn’t much, but I had gained faith in my cooking abilities.

“Spending Christmas Eve together... Just the thought of it is enough to send my heart aflutter!”

“You’re so dramatic Onee-sama.”

“Christmas Eve, just the two of us! How lovely it sounds!”

Onee-sama, already off in her own little world, began to twirl in place.

“A colorful feast spread out upon the table, a room under the glow of candlelight, and through the window, snow quietly blanketing the Earth. In this romantic atmosphere, our lightly perspiring bodies will fall into one another, and we’ll make passionate love.”

“Onee-sama, let’s at least wait until after dinner.”

“Oh, of course. Then I’ll slather your naked body in buttercream like a *Bûche de Noël*...”

“Onee-sama!”

“Eee! You’re making a scary face, Nanami!”

“Why do you have to make everything about sex, Onee-sama?!”

“Oh pooh... What’s so bad about that?”

My sulking Onee-sama puffed out her cheeks and turned away from me.

“Since this is a special night, I want it to be extra romantic.”

“But that was extremely romantic...”

“What’s so romantic about covering me in chocolate frosting?”

“Hmm... well it would certainly be cute.”

“Good grief...”

As usual, Onee-sama’s train of thought had jumped the rails somewhere. I’m not sure I can ever keep up with it.

“Then what do you think of this?”

“Now what do you have in mind?”

“You tie a ribbon around your neck that says ‘I’m your present’.”

“Absolutely not!”

“Awww, whyyy?”

“That should be obvious!”

Why, of all things, did it have to be the same thing I said to Misaki...

For someone who’s so mature intellectually, Onee-sama sure says some strange things around me. A traditional girl of Saint Michael’s Academy is supposed to be nothing but the most pure, innocent maiden. That’s what I was taught at least, but then there was Onee-sama...

And so I found myself shouting, “Geeze, Onee-sama, you’re such a dirty girl!”

December 23rd

Three days have passed since then, and it’s now December 23rd. Although today is nothing special according to the calendar, it holds a certain meaning for the girls of St. Michael’s. For one thing, it’s the final day of the second term. After being made to patiently endure our principal’s boring speech, we spend twice as long as usual cleaning the entire school building. The concept of the half day doesn’t exist here at St. Michael’s, so once we’ve finished that, we all happily rush out to begin our winter vacation. I don’t know whether it’s out of sheer joy, but everyone is particularly enthusiastic in their cleaning.

There’s also one other thing. It’s not directly related to today, but I think it would be obvious to anyone who sees that the date is December 23rd. Tomorrow is Christmas Eve!

* * *

Like always, we had pushed our desks together to have our lunches. “We” would naturally be me, Misaki, Rin, and Aoi.

“Heh... Hehehe♪”

While toying with my prized creation of the day – taro boiled in soy sauce – with the tips of my chopsticks, a stifled giggle escaped from my mouth.

“What’s with you? You’re acting even stranger than usual today. Has your brain finally melted?”

Misaki screwed her face up into a scowl tinged with a hint of scorn. I didn’t get the slightest bit angry as she leveled her snarky comments. In fact, nothing she did could wipe the smile off my face.

“Nanami-chan, you seem awfully happy.”

“Hehehe. You noticed, Aoi?”

“Anyone could tell from that smile you’re wearing.”

“Welll... Ehehe.”

I tried to retain my composure, but my facial muscles wouldn’t listen.

“Did something good happen?”

"Aoi, that's a silly thing to ask..."

Rin patted Aoi on the shoulder as she sipped at her carton of coffee-flavored milk.

"Anyway, I'm sure she's just gotten herself worked up thinking about tomorrow..."

"Tomorrow? Oh, that's right, tomorrow is Christmas Eve, isn't it?"

"Honestly, Nanami, you're so transparent."

Rin and Misaki could mouth off all they wanted. There's no way they would get to me. I was very forgiving today.

Ahh, Christmas Eve with Onee-sama...

"Here's your present, Nanami."

She lovingly presents me with a box with a giant ribbon on it.

"Onee-sama, you shouldn't have..."

"Go ahead. Open it."

As though I'm racing the clock, I tear off the wrapping paper, only to find another Onee-sama inside, this one wearing nothing more than a giant ribbon around her neck, just like the one on the box.

"Nanami, your present is me!"

"Oh boy! It's just what I wanted, Onee-sama!"

"I hope it brings you many years of joy, Nanami♪"

"I'm going to treasure it for the rest of my life!"

I'll eat dinner with it, bathe with it, and dress it up in all sorts of fancy clothes. And then at night, we'll share the same bed, and we'll... Eeeee!

"Eeeee! What am I gonna do, what am I gonna dooo?! If something like that happened I would just die... Wait, huh?"

As I suddenly snapped out of it, I found Misaki and the others staring at me.

"If this is what you've been like these past few days, what on Earth are you going to be like tomorrow?"

Misaki shrugged her shoulders as if to show just how annoyed she was.

"Oh, no, you see, I was just..."

I had been off in another one of my little daydreams. When it comes to Onee-sama, I'm always rushing off into fantasy land. But the meaning behind this one was more cryptic than usual... There had been two Onee-samas.

"If you get too worked up, you'll catch a fever... Heh-heh-heh."

"Come on, Rin. I'm not some excited little kid the night before a field trip here."

"You say that, but you're already having trouble sleeping, aren't you?"

Erg... Misaki is sharp.

"Th- That's just because I've been practicing my cooking for tomorrow."

"No way, Nanami, you're going to cook? I feel sorry for your little friend."

"Misaki!"

I had just run out of patience for the day. My loud voice echoed through the classroom, but Misaki, unaffected by my wrath, just shrugged it off with a laugh as she bit into her sandwich.

"That sounds wonderful. A dinner for two on Christmas Eve."

"It's not really that... Wait a minute. Aoi, do you have any plans for tomorrow night?"

"Y- Yeah... A little..."

Aoi immediately blushed and lowered her head.

“Well, it’s easy to imagine Aoi being with someone, so who cares about that...”

As she gracefully dabbed around the edges of her mouth with her napkin, Misaki shot me a dubious glance.

“The one I’m curious about is Nanami’s partner.”

“Uhh... I don’t...”

“Nanami never seems to want to tell us who it is. This has me *veeery* interested.”

Misaki stared at me intently through half-lidded eyes. The emphasis she put on the ‘*veeery*’ carried a kind of indescribably ominous nuance.

“Rin, aren’t you curious as well?”

“Not really...”

“Huh? Rin, I’m surprised to hear you say that.”

“I think I can imagine.”

What?!

“Hey, what are you talking about?!”

It was both Misaki and I who had gotten worked up over that. She can imagine, she says... Are you serious?! This was Rin we’re talking about, so assuming she didn’t hit it on the head, she was at least going to be damn close...

Wh- What am I going to do?! I had always thought it might come out eventually, but I hadn’t prepared myself for it to happen this soon.

“...It’s someone older.”

“Huh?”

The words that escaped Rin’s mouth were unexpectedly vague.

“What is that? You may as well have not said anything at all!”

Misaki formed her lips into a disappointed pout. Had I guessed wrong? I thought for sure Rin had figured it out though.

That’s when Rin nodded her head and shot me a knowing smile.

“It is someone older. Isn’t it, Nanami?”

“Y- Yeah.”

“Heh-heh-heh-heh...”

She really had figured it out after all...

* * *

“...I can’t believe that happened.”

It was after school. Onee-sama and I were walking home together, and I had told her right away about what happened at lunch. I just had to let her know how much stress I was under when it came to her.

“Well, I think it’s fine if people find out,” she said as though it were something trivial.

“It’s not fine at all.”

“Why not?”

My completely incomprehensible Onee-sama placed her finger on her cheek and tilted her head like she always does.

"I thought I already told you this. You're the object of everyone's desires, Onee-sama. If they knew that you had this kind of relationship with someone as plain and ordinary as me... There would be a rash of girls being hospitalized from shock!"

"Nanami, what did I tell you about saying such silly things?"

"There's nothing silly about it! You're just oblivious to your own charms, Onee-sama."

"No, that isn't what I meant."

"Huh...?"

"The silly thing I was referring to was you describing yourself as 'plain and ordinary'."

"Ah, but..."

"You're extremely cute, Nanami."

As she said that, Onee-sama gently stroked my cheeks.

"Your big, round eyes, your soft cheeks, and your petite little nose are all unbearably cute."

"Onee-sama..."

Just hearing her say those words filled me with happiness. I wanted to savor the touch of her hands forever... When I closed my eyes, I could faintly hear the beating of my heart. Soon, her hands moved from my cheeks down to my chin, slowly descending the sides of my neck, past the large, heaving ribbon on my chest, to the two modest mounds beneath...

[Image on page 14.]

"Hey, where do you think your hands are going, Onee-sama?"

"Hmm... To your chest, perhaps?"

"Agggh, and just when things were starting to get romantic!"

"Eeee! Nanami is angry!" she said teasingly. Honestly, I always have to be on guard with her. She'll grab my chest or my butt if I give her half the chance.

"Why do you always have to try and push things towards sex, Onee-sama?"

"But, but, I don't think there's anything wrong with sex."

When I puffed out my cheeks and turned away from her, she frantically tried to justify herself.

"When two people are in love, that sort of behavior is only natural, from a biological standpoint. So when I unconsciously try to touch your chest or something, you could say it's just my natural instincts taking over..."

This spiel again... Onee-sama is so cute when she's flustered, but why was she giving me the impression of a little kid trying to talk her way out of trouble?

"Waaah... Nanami is mad at meeee..."

"I'm not mad. I'm just disappointed."

"I don't want that either..."

I may have taken this a bit too far.

"If you want to do that badly, then you'll have the chance to do it as much as you want tomorrow."

"Wha... Nanami?"

"After all, tomorrow is Christmas Eve. It's a night meant for lovers..."

I got embarrassed saying the words myself.

“Hehehehe. That certainly is true.”

“I’m going to have a feast waiting for you.”

“Of course. I’m looking forward to it,” she said with a gentle smile.

I wonder if I’ll be greeting Onee-sama at my door by this time tomorrow. The thought of that made the temperature inside my coat go up as though someone had turned up the heat.

December 24th

Beep-beep-beep-beep-WHAM!

The sudden blaring coming from my alarm was abruptly cut off as I forcefully silenced it. The time was 8:00 A.M. Now that it was winter break, I no longer had to worry about being late, nor did I have to wrestle with my unruly hair. But that didn’t mean I had time to lie around. After all... In a certain sense, today was the final battle.

* * *

After a quick blow dry, I threw on some clothes and went into the living room. My parents had already left hours ago.

“Now let’s see...”

First, I had to run a few necessary errands. I needed to go out and pick up some things, and then spend the morning doing lots of prep work. I didn’t expect to have any time to eat lunch, so I was planning to get by just sampling my efforts. Oh, I also needed to go to the cake store to pick up the *Bûche de Noël* I ordered.

“Gah, there’s so much to do.”

I wondered if I could really get all this done myself... No, I’d never finish if I thought like that! Come on, Nanami! You’re going to make this the best Christmas Eve of your lives, right?! Then you’ll have to follow to your plans to the letter.

“All right, let’s do this! First comes shopping.”

Ready to get down to business, I burst out my front door.

11:00 A.M.:

I had finished shopping and was headed home. It was an uphill battle holding a bag in each hand while desperately trying to protect the cake. I nearly gave myself a heart attack when my bicycle almost tipped over halfway home.

1:00 P.M.:

As anticipated, there wasn’t any time to make lunch. Who was the one who thought I could finish all the prep work before noon? *Sigh*... Looks like buying that onigiri at the convenience store was a smart move after all.

2:00 P.M.:

I just got a text message from Onee-sama!

'Are you hard at work in the kitchen? I'm getting fed up over here having to change clothes for the umpteenth time trying to pick out a dress for tonight. I can't wait to see you. P.S. You aren't getting so flustered you're going to burn or cut yourself, are you?'

While being distracted by my cell phone, I let something burn.

"Eheheh..."

If this was a big party, I'll bet the preparations would be murder. Just getting things ready for two people was bad enough.

"Oh yeah, I need to reply."

I quickly pounded out a reply to Onee-sama. Actually, I really wanted to take the time to write a well thought out message, but I just didn't have the luxury of that kind of time today. Anyway, the content was basically this:

'Onee-sama, thank you very much. I'm incredibly busy here. I'm working hard to earn your praise. P.S. As of now, I have yet to screw up or hurt myself.'

3:00 P.M.:

Somehow, I managed to finish getting the appetizers ready. Now all I had to do later was serve them.

I was seriously behind schedule. I needed to make the soup fast... If I had made everything myself, including the cake, there's no way I would have had enough time. I definitely have a greater appreciation for cooks and pastry chefs now.

4:30 P.M.:

The soup was finished! Now all I had left to do was take the roast chicken I had prepared at the same time, and pop it in the oven to cook! For a while there I wasn't sure I was going to make it, but I just needed a little can-do spirit.

I planned to put the chicken in the oven later so it would be ready when Onee-sama arrived. All that was left between now and then was getting my outfit ready. I wonder if Onee-sama is starting her party right about now.

Now... I need to take a shower and get dressed. Maybe I should put on a little makeup? No, I'm way too nervous.

5:00 P.M.:

...Just when I thought I was in the clear, I realized I forgot to preheat the oven. Argh... Get a hold of yourself, Nanami. If I heat the oven while I'm getting dressed... Ah, but I still hadn't set the table! There was only one hour left until Onee-sama arrived. I'll make it somehow!

Bit by bit, the second hand on the clock crept forward until, along with the big hand, it was pointing straight up at the 12. It was 6:00 on the dot.

"...I made it."

I managed to overcome my last obstacle, and somehow finished getting everything ready just in the nick of time. Candles had been placed at the center of the table, and place settings for two had been neatly laid out on either side. I was expecting the roast

chicken to be ready to come out of the oven at any moment. If I had one complaint, it was that due to my hurried blow drying, there was an unruly lock of hair on the back of my head jutting out like a horn.

“Aww... Why won't it lay down...”

I didn't have a mirror handy, so I went to check out my reflection in the living room window.

“Maybe it's not as bad as I thought.”

In that case, maybe it would fix itself if I just left alone.

Suddenly, I thought I saw something white in the pitch black outside the window.

“Ah... Snow...”

Falling faintly outside, there was no mistaking it.

“A White Christmas.”

I had thought God had a cruel sense of humor, but perhaps the opposite was true. If all the hardships I had suffered the past few days were for the sake of tonight, I was actually grateful. While I was pondering that, and just as I was on the verge of praying, the cell phone that I had left in my apron pocket pierced the silence.

“Coming, coming!”

Without even bothering to look at who had called, I snatched up my phone.

“Yes? Hello!”

“Ah, Nanami?”

The voice coming from the other side of the receiver was the one I most wanted to hear in the world.

“Onee-sama! I just finished getting dinner ready! I don't mean to brag, but I really outdid myself this time—”

“Nanami...”

I was interrupted by a flat sounding voice.

“I'm sorry, Nanami, but it doesn't look like I'll be able to get away from the party for a while longer.”

“Wha?”

“So I'm afraid I'll be a little late.”

If I strained my ears hard, I could hear the sounds of a boisterous crowd over Onee-sama's voice. In other words, she was still at the assembly hall where the party was being held.

“I truly am sorry...”

“D- Don't worry about it, Onee-sama. Please don't sound so upset.”

“I'll be leaving some time after 7:00... No, I'll definitely leave no later than 7:00.”

“Okay. That's fine. I'll be waiting for you.”

Having said that, just as I was about to hang up the phone, the voice of an unfamiliar girl reached my ears.

“Yuuna-san, what are you doing on the phone? Let's go—”

I couldn't hear anything past that, but that sickeningly pleasant voice had become lodged in my head, and I couldn't get it out.

* * *

[Image from page 17.]

I absentmindedly stared at the clock as it relentlessly ticked onward. It was now 8:13. The snow outside had become a blizzard.

“...”

I couldn't even sigh anymore.

On TV there was an announcer out on the street doing interviews, going on about the unusually heavy snow, and how we were having a White Christmas. His cheerful mood would have complemented mine perfectly just two hours ago, but now I just thought he looked ridiculous.

“Onee-sama... Where are you...”

I'd lost count of how many times I had murmured those words. Each time I did, horrible visions would swirl inside my head.

What if Onee-sama had decided she would rather stay at the party? Maybe she had made friends with the owner of that voice I heard earlier, and they were out hitting it off as we speak. Why else wouldn't she have shown up by the time she promised? My head was filled with these kinds of negative thoughts. For some reason, in the scenarios running through my mind, the owner of that voice was wearing a deep red dress and drinking a glass of equally red wine. And she was holding chicken in one hand.

Couldn't I imagine something more pleasant? For one thing, Onee-sama wasn't the type of person to be able to happily enjoy a party like nothing was wrong after having broken her promise. When I thought about it rationally, I arrived at the conclusion that the snow must have been the reason it was taking her so long to get here. But the instant I thought that, my head shot up with worry that Onee-sama had been in an accident. In that case, I would much rather have her be off at the party neglecting me. If it was between that and having Onee-sama hurt or in pain, then to hell with me!

“That's right! It's better if she's having fun at the party... But...”

The image of the red dress crept into the back of my mind again. If she ended up liking that person more than me... No! Onee-sama isn't like that! She must be out in the snow right now...

“*Nanami... I'm not going to make it... Nanami... I always loved you... *collapse**”

“Noooooooooooooooooooooooooooo!”

Wait! Get a hold of yourself! There's no way you could freeze to death from the snow in Tokyo! I needed to calm down. Of course she was fine.

Onee-sama is popular, so I'll bet she's just getting held up by everyone, and that's keeping her from leaving.

And there was that damned red dress again, resurfacing in the back of my mind. Curses. I was going around in circles here.

“*Sigh... Dinner is ice cold by now.*”

The chicken, having missed its cue to come out, looked depressed sitting there in the oven. Just like I felt.

Suddenly, I heard the sound of the entryway buzzer.

“Wha?!”

There was only one person who could be paying me a visit in this snow.

“Onee-sama!”

I excitedly dashed to the front door and opened it to find Onee-sama standing there, dripping wet.

“Haah... Haah... Sorry to keep you waiting, Nanami...”

She was wearing just a thin coat over her party dress, and still had on her high heels.

“Onee-sama...!”

I found myself wrapped around her.

“Sorry I’m late.”

“Don’t worry about it! Please don’t worry about me.”

I held my chilled-to-the-bone Onee-sama tightly in an attempt to warm her up.

“I had just managed to leave, but goodness, this snow! It took everything I had just to keep from falling down. And on top of that, my cell phone got wet and stopped working, so I wasn’t able to get in touch with you... I’m terribly sorry.”

“Ohhh... *sniff*”

I must have been the biggest idiot on the planet. How could I have doubted her, even for a second, when she went through all this just to get to me...

“I’m sorry, Onee-sama...”

“Whatever are you apologizing for, Nanami?”

“...For a little while there I doubted you. I thought you had decided you would rather be at your party than spend Christmas Eve with me.”

Onee-sama didn’t say anything. Instead, she just gently stroked my hair in silence.

[Image from page 19.]

“I’m sorry, Onee-sama... I’m so sorry...”

“Silly Nanami... There isn’t a single thing more precious to me than the time we spend together.”

“Onee-sama... I love you.”

“I love you too, Nanami.”

She gently cradled me in her arms. Her body was freezing cold, probably from having walked all the way here in the snow. Despite that, I felt an indescribable comfort in her arms.

I decided the first thing to do with my freezing Onee-sama was to get her into a hot bath. For now she would just have to put up with wearing a spare set of my clothes, but I wasn’t about to let a lady like her spend Christmas Eve in sweats. I went back to my room and ransacked my closet until I found a light, flower-patterned dress.

“Hmm...”

I pulled out the article of clothing that had been collecting dust in the back of my wardrobe and laid it out in front of me.

“...Is this really the best I’ve got?”

Yeah. This could pass for a dress. I kind of had to squint when I looked at it, though.

“Nanami!”

Oops, that was Onee-sama calling me. I guess I'd better hurry up and bring the dress to her. If she sat down across from me wearing nothing but a bath towel, I would be too distracted by her sexiness to even touch my dinner.

Now, 30 minutes later, Onee-sama was wearing the flower-patterned dress and sitting across the candle-lit table from me.

"Oh yes, I forgot to say. Merry Christmas, Nanami."

"Merry Christmas, Onee-sama."

Although things hadn't exactly gone according to plan, my Christmas Eve with Onee-sama had finally begun. The cold soup, now reheated, and the chicken, nuked in the microwave, were set out on the table.

"Ohh, it all looks so delicious! I'm truly starving."

"Onee-sama, didn't you have anything to eat at the party?"

"Well, I was so preoccupied greeting guests that there was really no time for me to eat. And besides, I knew your home cooking was here waiting for me, Nanami."

That made me so happy. She was actually looking forward to tasting my cooking.

"Now then, let's hurry up and eat! I'm so excited, my chest feels tight!"

Onee-sama... I'm pretty sure that's just my dress being too small for you...

It wasn't as good as if it had been fresh, but the reheated chicken and consommé were better than I expected.

The hors d'oeuvres didn't go over quite so well. I must have used too much salt or something, because they were so salty they burned my tongue. Nevertheless, Onee-sama happily exclaimed, "They're delicious!" and proceeded to devour her portion, as well as mine. I think she may have just been really hungry though.

Anyway, after three helpings of soup, we polished off the entire chicken between the two of us, and after all that, she still had room for cake. I don't know whether she was really that hungry, or if my cooking was just that good. I may be giving myself too much credit, though.

* * *

"Nanami..."

Seated on the bed, Onee-sama beckoned to me with a pale finger.

"Right..."

Tilting my head down slightly, I undid the hook at my back. My dress slid from my body and fell to the floor in a heap. Onee-sama surveyed the scene intently from her seat on the bed. Now dressed only in my underwear, I began to squirm a little from embarrassment.

"Don't stare like that..."

"Why not? You look absolutely gorgeous right now, Nanami."

"Aww..."

That's not it, Onee-sama. Do even know how embarrassing it is baring my childish figure to someone whose body that would put even models to shame? You have no idea what it's like having to resist the temptation to get a beef bun from the convenience

store on the way home, or frantically doing exercises in the bath every night to increase the size of my bust. Aww... Now I've made myself depressed.

"Nanami, how long are you going to stand there like that?"

She beckoned again to my dejected figure with a pale, slender hand.

"Come join me."

Onee-sama gently placed her hand on mine. I could feel the heat from her body at the point where our skin made contact. Just as I was thinking that, she gave a sudden tug on my hand.

"Ah..."

The next thing I knew, I was falling gently onto the bed. The sheets lightly tickled my bare skin.

"And now, I plan to have you for dessert, Nanami."

"Onee-sama, don't be silly."

"Heh-heh."

Onee-sama gave a mischievous laugh as she brought her lips close.

"Mmm..."

She kissed me with a warmth and sweetness many times stronger than usual.

"Nn... Nanami... Nnn..."

"Hahm, Onee... sama... *Nnnch...*"

We shared a kiss so strong and passionate, it felt as though our lips were going to melt into one. It was as though one of us would vanish if we didn't... I even began to believe it was true.

"It's like I'm in a dream... Spending Christmas Eve alone with you, Onee-sama."

"I feel the same way, Nanami. Being able to be with you like this is like a dream come true."

We stayed that way for a while, gazing at each other as we embraced. Before long, with neither one of us wanting to look away, we kissed again. This one was even longer. It almost made me forget to breathe...

* * *

"Hehe... No matter how much I see it, I can't get over how beautiful your skin is, Nanami," Onee-sama murmured absentmindedly as she traced a finger around my stomach and belly button.

"No, your skin is so smooth and white, Onee-sama... you're the one who's beautiful."

"Thank you. But I much prefer your skin, Nanami. Because..."

The movement of her hands on my bare skin turned into a soft caress.

"Ah..."

"Look, any place I touch this way turns pink."

"That's because of the strange way you're touching me..."

"Oh, you're so mean. I suppose you're going to call me a dirty girl again."

"I won't. Because..." I stammered an explanation to her as she puffed out her cheeks in a pout.

"Because, I'm the same way..."

I felt my cheeks burning. I'm sure I was uncontrollably blushing a deep red right now. Come to think of it, it seems like my face has been in a perpetual state of embarrassment since the moment I met Onee-sama.

"Nanami... you're so adorable..."

Wearing a thin smile, she began to run her hands over my entire body. Her touch became delicate and gentle. If I had to compare it to something, I would say it was as smooth as silk with the softness of down. And yet, every place she touched, I could feel the heat rising from under my skin. I see... It must be because of Onee-sama's fingers. The very core of my body was reaching out to feel her touch.

"Onee-sama... Please, touch me more. Let me feel you all over."

"What's this? Are you begging now?"

"Onee-samaaa..."

I feebly protested her teasing.

"Hehe, just kidding."

"...Meanie."

She always seems to have me in the palm of her hand. No matter how tough I try to act, a single word from my beloved Onee-sama, and I'm helpless to resist. I think that's what gives me the greatest joy of all.

[Image from page 20.]

While I was contemplating that, I suddenly found my bra had been removed. Before I even had a chance to be surprised at her quickness, she began sucking and kissing the tips of my breasts. A gasp escaped from my mouth before I even knew what was happening.

Watching my reaction, a smile began to form at the corners of Onee-sama's mouth as the tip of her tongue tenderly caressed my breasts. She slowly moved her hot, soft tongue across my modest bust as though she were tracing circles with it.

"Ahh... Hnng..."

Although she was being gentle, her movements felt extremely erotic. With a shiver, I felt a pleasant sensation concentrate in my chest spread throughout my body.

"Ahh... Nnn, ghh... Haah..."

In no time at all, I became like a ship being tossed about on the crashing waves. Nearly at the breaking point, I called out.

"Your chest has always been your weakness, Nanami."

"That's... Haah... Hnn..."

It's not as though my chest was particularly sensitive. It's just that Onee-sama's hands and tongue knew exactly how to extract pleasure from my body, as if by magic.

"Fwaah, Onee-sama!"

"Hehe. Look at how stiff your nipples have gotten, Nanami."

Having said that, she began to roll the tip of her tongue around my nipples, as though they were candy.

"Yah, haah..."

Hot, heavy gasps were flowing endlessly from my mouth. I realized even her faintest of movements were bringing waves of pleasure over my body.

“Ahh, Onee-sama... No more... I’m starting to feel strange...”

I’m certain my mind and body had been transformed specifically to receive Onee-sama’s touch. Otherwise, how else...

“Ahh... Nnaah!”

...How else could she have such a powerful effect on me? I hope that she’s the same way. It may be selfish, but I want her to feel me throughout her entire body too.

“Onee-sama, let me have a turn...”

She nodded her head in agreement. Now I was draping myself over her. Although actually, we were inverted, with our faces at each other’s bottoms.

It had been many months since we became lovers, and in the beginning I had never been the one to take the lead, but somewhere along the line I had begun taking the initiative like this to pleasure her as well. I wanted to make my Onee-sama feel good too. Using my fingers and tongue, I tried to extract tantalizingly sweet sounds from her. Just picturing it in my head made me hot and moist. It was a luscious scene to behold.

“Mmm...”

With great embarrassment, I wordlessly brought my face close to Onee-sama’s nether regions. Her thicket, the same shade as her hair, completely filled my vision; her lightly pink petals visible just beyond. I tentatively extended my tongue towards the center of her flower.

“Ahn...”

As my tongue seized upon her tightly closed bud, Onee-sama’s charming voice leaked out.

“Onee-sama...”

“Ahh... Nanami... your tongue is right on my most sensitive spot... Nnn...”

That voice again. Proof that she was feeling it.

“Let me hear your sweet voice again, Onee-sama.”

“Hnn, aha... Ahh...”

My tongue crept intently over her moist, heated private parts. I traced its tip around the base of her soft, quivering folds, occasionally flicking at the tiny protrusion within. I did everything I could imagine to pleasure my Onee-sama.

“Hnnn, Nanami... It’s too much...”

“Your pussy is getting so hot, Onee-sama. And there’s so much sweet nectar flowing out... *Mmm, nnlch.*”

I lapped up the translucent honey flowing out of her pussy. A slightly salty, faintly sweet aroma tickled my nostrils.

“Nanami... Don’t say such strange things...”

“There’s nothing strange about it. *Nnn... Nslch*, it’s so good.”

“Ah, Hnn... Don’t slurp so much...”

I wanted to make her feel better still. I felt that by doing so, our bond would become ever stronger.

“Nnn... Take this, Nanami... *Schlp.*”

“Eeyah?!”

Onee-sama had delivered a surprise kiss to my defenseless pussy. I was caught so off guard that I completely forgot my ministrations and nearly leapt to my feet.

“It hardly seems fair that I should be the only one feeling good, now doesn’t it?”

As she said that, she brought her lips to the entrance of my vagina as though she were giving it a deep kiss.

“Nnn, yah... If you do that, I... Aaah!”

Her soft tongue was stirring up my insides, moving about as though it had a life of its own. My thoughts began to dull.

“Ah! Hwaaa...”

What is this? Everything below my waist feels like it’s floating. It’s as though my whole body is being taken somewhere.

“Onee-sama... Onee... sama...”

Undeterred, I delivered a kiss to Onee-sama’s pussy as well, with the intent of drawing the two of us even closer.

* * *

[Image from page 24.]

“Nanami... Nanami...”

“O- Onee-samaaa!”

How long had we been at it? My lips had been over every millimeter of Onee-sama’s body during our intense lovemaking. Our legs entwined and genitals rubbing together, I was trembling from the mind-numbing pleasure. As we repeated this action, over and over, my mind began to cloud as if in a fog. All I could think about at this point was the person before me. How could I become one with her?

“Onee-sama... Your pussy is so hot, Onee-sama!”

“So is yours, Nanami. I’m squishing around in your hot, flowing juices!”

“Yah, ahh, ahn... O- One-samaaa! I can’t take much more!”

Flesh, grinding against soft flesh, I would occasionally feel a sudden hardness. Coming to the realization that it was Onee-sama’s most sensitive feature, I instinctively began to grind my hips more furiously.

“Ah, yaah, aaah!”

“Your clitoris is rubbing on my pussy, Onee-sama!”

“Yours too, Nanami! I can feel your hard little button against me!”

The thin patch of hair concealing my private parts was sopping wet, plastered against my skin. Because of that, my engorged inner lips were laid bare, wriggling lewdly against hers.

“Onee-samaaa...”

“Nanamiii...”

In a delirium, we called out each other’s names and locked together in a kiss.

“Ahm, nn, nsch... Nnhaaa, Onee-samaaa...”

“Ahn, nnn, Nanami, schlp, schlrp...”

In like fashion, our mucous membranes below the waist were also passionately entangled, rubbing furiously. I wasn't even aware of the strand of saliva slovenly hanging from the corner of my mouth. Both our bodies and the bed sheets had become saturated with sweat and love juices long ago. The sensation of being completely soaked in our combined fluids made it feel as though part of my body had begun to dissolve, and was being absorbed into Onee-sama.

We couldn't actually merge together like this... could we? No. I wanted us to become one. If I became a part of Onee-sama, we would never again be apart, and I could always be with her. What a divine temptation. If we pressed our bodies together like this, we might actually become one. I was so far-gone, I actually believed such a foolish thing was possible.

"Onee-sama... I feel weird... My mind is going blank..."

"Nnaaah! Me— Me too! I can't think straight!"

A blinding light began to fill my head.

"Hyaaaah, O- Onee-sama, I'm almost—!"

"Aahh! So am I, Nanami!"

Increasingly obscene sounds were squelching from between our genitals, but even those were unable to reach my ears. A pleasure welling up from deep inside me was stripping me of my capacity to think.

"Ah, Ahh?! I- I'm coming! I'm comiiiiing! Nnh, hnng, nnaaaaaaah!"

"Me- Me too, Nanami! I'm coming too! Ah, ahhhhh!"

As I climaxed, riding it out with my back arched, Onee-sama reached her own climax. We embraced one another so tightly that our nails dug in to each other's flesh as we gave in to our spectacularly long mutual orgasm.

* * *

At some point, the snow had stopped.

"...Onee-sama?"

When I opened my eyes, I saw Onee-sama's face right in front of mine.

"Are you awake, Nanami?"

"Wha... Ah! Did I fall asleep?!"

"Indeed you did. You were out like a light."

"Awww..."

How humiliating.

Onee-sama was a guest in my house, so I felt I should at least offer her something to drink.

"Onee-sama, I know it's late, but would you like something to drink?"

"No thank you, I'm fine."

"I see..."

I was a little disappointed. I really wanted the two of us to lie across the bed as we tipped our glasses, like you always see in movies.

"It seems our Christmas Eve has drawn to a close," Onee-sama said, looking at the clock on the wall. The hour hand was pointing between the 12 and the 1.

"But, you know, today is actually the real holiday."

"Christmas Day, right? Well in that case, I would say that Christmas Eve lasts from sunset on the evening of the 24th, until sunrise the next day."

"What? Really?"

Then that meant...

"Certainly. So officially, it's still Christmas Eve."

I don't know if she had read my mind, but Onee-sama gave me a gentle smile.

Hmm, thinking it through, shouldn't a lady of St. Michael's be having a moment of prayer right now? No, I guess I could set my prayers aside for Christmas Day. After all, Christmas Eve wasn't over yet, was it?

"Ah, I just remembered, I forgot something important!"

"Wh- What is it, Nanami?"

"Your present, your present! I totally forgot to give it to you!"

Ahhh, with so many unanticipated things having happened, I had completely forgotten about it.

"Oh, that reminds me," Onee-sama said, and began rummaging around in her bag.

"Here, Onee-sama!"

Beating her to the punch, I presented her with a wrapped package.

"Goodness, what could it be... May I open it?"

"Of course you can!"

Her eyes lit up like a child's as she unwrapped her present.

"Oh my... A scarf?"

"Yes! I put all my heart and soul into knitting it!"

"You made this yourself, Nanami...? Hehehe, it's marvelous."

I used orange yarn for the scarf, so it would match her uniform. This way she could to wear it to school.

"Isn't it a bit long though?"

"Doh... I knew it."

I had gotten a little overzealous making it, so it ended up kind of on the long side for a scarf.

"But I still couldn't be happier."

"Onee-sama..."

Thank goodness... She seemed to like it. That alone made everything worth it.

"Now, I believe it's my turn..." Onee-sama said as she brought out a small box and placed it in my hands.

It was a square box, wrapped in simple wrapping paper. It couldn't have been more than five centimeters on each side. A tiny ribbon had been delicately fastened to it. But I wonder why? The wrapping paper was slightly wrinkled, and it also felt fairly heavy for its size...

"What is it?"

"Why don't you open it and find out♪"

With that said, there was nothing left to do but open it. Taking care not to tear the wrapping paper, I meticulously undid the tape and removed the square box from inside.

“Wh- It can’t be...”

It would have been obvious to any girl my age what a box like this contained.

“I actually dropped it along with my phone on the way over here. It was so small that it disappeared into the snow and I couldn’t find it. At the time, I had no idea what I was going to do.”

Onee-sama was speaking so casually, but I had the feeling this wasn’t the sort of thing you would take dropping so lightly. The reason I say that is because inside the box was a shimmering silver ring.

“O- Onee-sama! This... This is...”

“Would you care to try it on?”

“Can I?”

As I hesitantly asked, she let out a sigh as if to say “What kind of question is that?”

“Of course you can. You’re the one I had it made for, after all.”

She had it made for me...

But now what do I do? Which finger should I put it on? I mean, I had never owned a ring in my life, let alone been given one.

“Umm... Onee-sama...”

“Yessy?”

“Wh- Which finger should I put it on?” I asked timidly.

And of all things, Onee-sama replied, “I don’t know. Perhaps you should put it on the finger you think is best?”

What a cruel thing to say.

All right, fine then! Without a second thought, I put it on the ring finger of my left hand.

“Hehehe, are you sure that’s where you want it?”

“Yes!”

“If it’s all right with you, then it’s all right with me.”

Our first Christmas. And my first present from Onee-sama...

“I love you, Onee-sama!”

“Eee, Nanami!”

I had unconsciously latched on to her. The scarf I had just given her felt a bit itchy.

“Nanami, Christmas Eve still isn’t over, if you’ll recall.”

“That’s right! We have until sunrise!”

“Hehehehe.”

“Hehehehe.”

It looked like the drinks we shared would end up being our morning coffee.

* * *

I don't know how, but the ring Onee-sama gave me fit the ring finger of my left hand perfectly.

Fin.

A round-table discussion on the launch of *A Kiss For The Petals*, also known simply as *The Petals*.

Participants:

Peko – In charge of the art. Professional erotic game artist.

Sano – Sano Shin'ichirou. In charge of the script.

Fuguriya – Direction, debugging, and other miscellaneous tasks. Also, the circle's representative.

Peko:

Good day to you.

Sano:

Good day to you.

Fuguriya:

Howdy.

Peko:

.....

Sano:

.....

Fuguriya:

...What?

Peko:

I don't get him. I just don't get him.

Sano:

What a letdown.

Fuguriya:

Huh? What? Why are you two looking like that?

Peko:

This is what I've been telling you about, Onee-sama.

Sano:

Honestly. And yet he's the one representing the yuri-only doujin circle, Fuguriya?

Fuguriya:

Wait a second. Since when have we been a yuri-only circle?

Peko:

From the moment the group was founded.

Sano:

Since mankind first crawled from the ocean.

Fuguriya:

Since prehistoric times?!

Sano:

I mean, obviously you would introduce yourself with "Good day to you," right?!

Peko:

It's as common sense as holding your breath when you pass a graveyard.

Fuguriya:

Common sense...? Okay, fine. But just so all of you out there reading this know, we are by no means a yuri-only circle.

Sano:

What a lie...

Peko:

Onee-sama, please control yourself!

Fuguriya:

Hold on, you two...

Sano:

Peko... I have one last request. Can you take this rosary...

Peko:

Rosary? Why do you have a rosary?!

Sano:

...and strangle that man?

Peko:

Yes ma'am! Right away!

Fuguriya:

Hey!

Peko:

Die! Die so that Onee-sama and I can be happy once and for all!

Sano:

That's it, Peko! Pull it as tight as you can! The Virgin Mary is watching!

Peko:

Yes. I'm going to squeeze until his head pops off!

Fuguriya:

Ca- Can't... breathe...

Sano:

Mwahaha. Now Fuguriya will truly be a yuri-only circle... not to mention, all of Fuguriya's DVDs will become mine!

Peko:

Onee-sama, can I have the Samurai Giants box set?

Sano:

Then I call dibs on the Discovery Channel ones.

Fuguriya:

You can't just call dibs!

Sano:

Oh, he's still alive.

Peko:

...Bah.

Fuguriya:

Uhm...

Sano:

So, the first release did quite well, I presume. Would the meat I see before me be in celebration of that?

Peko:

But when you said we were going out for meat, I was expecting beef. Why is this lamb? What kind of curveball is this taking us to a Mongolian place?

Fuguriya:

Look, life would be boring if you always got what you were expecting.

Sano:

Oh well. Lamb is good too (said while biting into a hunk of meat with the bone still in).

Peko:

Onee-sama, you've got some lamb's blood and grease around your mouth.

Sano:

Oh dear, how unladylike of me... Speaking of which, Peko, your clothes have some of the recently slaughtered lamb's innards on them.

Peko:

Oh no, I hadn't even noticed!

Sano:

Hehehe, oh, you...

Fuguriya:

Please stop, you're grossing me out. You're like a couple of hyenas on the savanna.

Sano:

By the way, why are the three of us here together again?

Fuguriya:

That would be to discuss the launch of *The Petals*, as well as the book we're releasing at the Winter Comiket.

Peko:

What? A book?

Sano:

This is the first I'm hearing about this...

Fuguriya:

You guys were the ones who brought it up! It was right after *The Petals* went on sale!

Sano:

Well, even if I did try to mention it, I'm too busy with my regular job...

Peko:

Same here.

Fuguriya:

Well, I procrastinated in writing the draft, so I'm about to get really busy myself.

Sano:

Ergh...

Peko:

This is the reason people in this industry...

Sano:

I'm going to use this rosary after all...

Peko:

Onee-sama, you're not going to...?!

Sano:

Yes... Using one of the 13 Sœur Techniques, '*The Sisterhood Pact (Death Cross)*', I'm going to...

Fuguriya:

This bit is getting old.

Sano:

Well, we would like to release a book, but we still don't know what's going to happen between Yumi and Touko.

Fuguriya:

That's got nothing to do with *The Petals*!

Peko:

I think they're going to keep it going for another volume.

Sano:

What are you talking about?! They're obviously going to hook up in *Crisscross* next!

Peko:

No, no, the way they're going, they're going to stretch it out for at least one more book.

Sano:

You also think they're going to revisit the nightmare from *Rainy Blue*...

Peko:

Hahaha. That's because I'm a fan of Noriko and Touko.

Sano:

Gah! So you'd rather continue Touko's friendship plot with Noriko than have her hook up with Yumi?

Fuguriya:

Hey, this conversation has derailed again.

Sano:

We're done... I'll be severing my bonds of sisterhood with you now, if I may.

Peko:

Heh, so will I... Here's your rosary back!

Fuguriya:

Oh, not this again. I can see you two really enjoy *Marimite*.

Sano:

Yes.

Peko:

Between my operation and Onee-sama's competition, I'm going to have more than enough to keep me excited after this.

Fuguriya:

I don't need that kind of excitement.

Sano:

Now, what were we talking about again?

Fuguriya:

The launch of *The Petals*, and our meeting regarding the Winter Comiket. And the future of Fuguriya.

Sano:

We're working our way up the yuri ranks as it is. I'm thinking we'll be able to do away with penis entirely.

Peko:

Sugar, and spice, and everything naughty, that's what little girls are made of.

Fuguriya:

I'm sorry. I was obviously mistaken in believing that you two could provide serious commentary.

Sano:

Say whaaat?

Peko:

We've been doing a lot of thinking, you know.

Sano:

We should make our next story about warrior girls. A pair of them, who slay evil monsters with the power of yuri.

Peko:

And they kiss when they use their special attack.

Fuguriya:

That sounds like *Pretty Cure*. Also, *Simoun*.

Sano:

What?! How did you know that?!

Fuguriya:

Come on, your inspiration would be obvious to anybody.

Sano:

But, but! No company will come out with anything like that! They say it won't sell if there's no penis in it!

Peko:

Our game didn't need any men in it!

Fuguriya:

All right, all right...

Sano:

That's why Peko and I plan to keep forging on down the yuri road. I'm currently hard at work on the next installment of *The Petals*. You can follow up on our website.

Peko:

As long as you're plugging things, *The Shopping District under the Madder Red Fall Sky*, for which we provided the story and art, respectively, goes on sale January 26th. We would be incredibly happy if you'd buy it.

Fuguriya:

We hope to have the book out in time for the Winter Comiket...

Held at a Mongolian restaurant in Tokyo on the last day of November.

Afterword

Did you enjoy it?

Right now we're hard at work at Fuguriya on games for Mai and Reo, and Kaede and Sara. Be on the lookout for them.

And so, I bid good day to you all.

A Kiss For The Petals – Our Christmas Together

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