Rejuvenation

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Rejuvenation

by flightless_pigeon

Summary

She tells herself it doesn't matter, because everything about her that others see is a lie anyway.

It's one of several excuses she gives to herself, but then she remembers that life's supposed to be fun. And if anyone tries to take her fun away from her, she'll wreck havoc on them for the rest of her days, in true evil fashion.

She steals thigh highs from Nanami's closet and fabrics to craft a skirt from Shirogane's lab, as well as a few ribbons while she's at it.

"Good morning, my beloved classmates of Hope's Peak Academy!"

Notes

(Editing note: Originally published on AO3 on 13/04/2023. The version I have saved on my notes do may not be the most up-to-date version and didn't include tags, so I will update this post-AO3pocalypse with the official version, and the publication date will be changed accordingly.)

Hi there. Please be mindful of a few things before diving into this fic:

- The Unreliable Narrator Tag. A lot of the first half of the fic is hypotheticals in Ouma's head, and may not reflect actual events or characters.
- Some unintentional deadnaming/transphobia - no characters are directly portrayed as being transphobic, but due to Ouma being Ouma are disbelieving or not realising that she's trying to come out as trans. Most of it is avoided given the fic is from Ouma's POV and she blocks it out
- (This bulletpoint was a long ramble about how I thought this oneshot was a mess when I published it, but on reflection, I was imposter syndroming hard. This fic bangs)
- I am trans. Ouma's mindset is different from my own, but I still mixed my own experiences with how I think Ouma would process this sort of thing. Her character intrigues me and I don't know if I can do it justice in a oneshot, but I'd like to think the topics are tackled in a way that's both true to the character and respectful.

See the end of the work for more notes

She tells herself it doesn't matter, because everything about her that others see is a lie anyway.

It would do her no good to give them leverage, inform them of a vulnerability. The Ultimate Supreme Leader doesn't blink an eye at any insult thrown at her, because it's not *her* that they're yelling at. It's the persona she gives them to beat down instead. To tell them about *her* would be as stupid as telling them about her organisation, her childhood, her compulsive lies, her greatest fears - just shit they could use to wound her. She doesn't want that.

There's a good chance they wouldn't believe her anyway. Sometimes she tells honest from-the-heart truths, and they spit them back in her face like she didn't put the thought and effort into speaking it, and that hurts, sometimes, even though it's a grave she's dug herself. She can imagine the scenes if she did tell them - phrases like *'You're the most degenerate of all the males!'* and *'That shota bitch has a crossdressing fetish? I knew it!'* and *'That's weird, dude, real men aren't supposed to like feminine shit!'*

She grimaces internally. Man, her classmates are assholes, even in her imagination, and she likes to think she gives them a bit of liberty. How was *she* the designated cunt of the class?

She's considered pretending not to care how she's referred to, like Kiibo, but not caring means that everyone just picks one, and they'll most likely stick with what they already know. She'd debated stopping calling the robot Kiiboy a while ago, but the whole point of it was to make him feel more humane, and he's never expressed an issue with being referred to as a boy, so she leaves it as something to balance out the robot remarks. If he ever decides he *does* have a problem with it... well, she knows what that feels like.

Though they despise her, she knows her classmates well enough to guess how far she could go with it before they start to question her. She bets Momota wouldn't punch her if he knew she was a girl, conservative as he is, but he'll never *know,* because he's the last person in the class to believe her, even when it's been proven as fact.

Chabashira would be sceptical and think she's just a pervert looking to peep into the girls' bathrooms. She's so focused on her own attraction to women she can't see when other people aren't, and it would be amusing if it wasn't so tiring. Yeah, she'd get her ass kicked by the Ultimate Aikido Master, never treated the same as the other girls. Like an outsider. And she's used to that, of course, but never for her gender, never for a real part of her. She won't let them.

Harukawa terrifies her, and she's happy to admit that to herself any day. It abhors her that they let an assassin into Hope's Peak - how on earth does she cultivate a killing talent here? Mannequins? Or were human sacrifices sent to her lab regularly? How did they even recruit her to the school, and who let her accept the position? Killers don't have a place in Kichi's world, that's for sure, especially if they're so good at it they can get away with it easily. *Ultimate Murderer.* It's ridiculous. And Harukawa despises her with every fibre of her being, always sure she's up to something awful. She wants Kichi dead, she's well aware. Something like this is a perfect excuse to choke her out for real, in the name of protecting others or whatever.

Damn, her classmates suck. The popular ones, at least. Always out to get the losers, just like the real world. And while she's not claiming to be a good person at all, she's never pretended to be one. They're all liars, and she's the only one that doesn't lie about being a liar. The one truth she gets smote for. The only truth they'll get, because her entire life and existence and identity are lies, and the truth is that she's a loser and she can see what the world, what her peers, do with losers, freaks.

They outcast people like Iruma, who poorly buries her insecurities under a thin veil of overconfidence, and when the charade fades they look at her just as disgusted, uncaring that she's showing them her true feelings. She's a bit like Kichi, to her disliking, and seeing those reactions to Iruma is enough to convince Kichi that she's fine keeping herself locked deep inside her own charade.

They baby Gonta like he's incapable of thinking for himself and think it's *oh so noble* that he's trying to become a gentleman, yet she hasn't seen a more obvious sign of someone being bullied into acting 'correctly' and to stop being themselves in her entire lifetime. Poor guy.

They avoid Shinguuji like he's going to sic a demon on them if they get to close, because he talks about humans with a fascination that even Kichi will admit she finds a tad creepy. For the people who claim to give everyone a chance to outcast him and then let someone like *Harukawa* into their little crew... well, it speaks for itself, really. Because *she* doesn't look like an outcast, is just an asshole who hates everyone but *couldn't possibly hurt her classmates, of course not* (despite the fact that she *has* hurt Kichi, and on multiple occasions, at that), and in return they pretend it's okay that she murders people on the regular.

Shinguuji with his long hair and unique fashion sense and Gonta with his barefoot, wild-maned demeanour and Iruma with her hypersexual mannerisms. Kichi with her lies. None of them are really welcome, don't fit into what the big crowd think proper men and women should be like, and that's the issue.

That's why she doesn't see the point in even trying. Not when she's so successfully fooled even the most observant in their class, even the intuitive geniuses. It's the best part of her mask - if so much of her is a lie, they'll never be able to pick out something as specific as the fact that she hates being called a boy, actually.

The indulgence starts with Shirogane, of all people, when she asks her to be a cosplay mule. It's not the first time she's been asked, and she refused each time because she knows once she gets a taste of it, she's going to want more and more and living without it will get much harder. Almost like an addiction, but more of... a hunger. Having food after starving for so long, and not being able to go back to that deprivation. Growing accustomed to food in your belly, a basic need for survival.

"Ew, no," she answers, and then she remembers that's what boys are *supposed* to think, and it was delivered like a lie. "Juuuust kidding! That sounds super duper fun!" She has to cover up the hidden truth with something even more animated, and now, she's going to have to go through with the cosplay.

It's nice, wearing a dress. She acts overly flamboyant and awkward to make it seem like it's unfamiliar and unnatural to her, but it's a lie, because it feels like she's finally able to breathe. Even if Shirogane is overly intense about the poses and acting.

Watching her alter the measurements of outfits like it's nothing, Kichi wonders if she'd be able to sew up her spare uniforms herself. She's good with needles, not just for picking locks, but for doing up stitches. It can't be too different. And now - it's just how she feared it would be, consumed by the taste of being *real* for a change, and she can no longer carry out her intentions to forever abstain and live a full life coloured with lies that hurt herself more than anyone else.

She knows Amami has sisters, and wonders if he views her as another little sibling. Though she's not hopeful enough to believe he likes her, he's the most tolerant of her, maybe finds her childish antics nostalgic, and having so many younger sisters means he's utterly equipped for anything Kichi throws at her. Getting her hair brushed and nails painted by Amami is always nice. She feels a bit like a princess, and that makes easy to warp her enjoyment into the guise that she's a matriarch being served by her most loyal underling, could probably get him to feed her grapes and carry her everywhere if she desired.

He'd be accepting of her, anyhow, and good enough to keep it a secret given he's so secretive himself, to the point where she gets paranoid he's actually the Ultimate Spy and claims to be an adventurer to explain his frequent trips around the globe, listening in on people. He's rarely here, because of that, which is probably why he's the least annoyed by Kichi's antics.

She's never really had to pretend too much around Gonta. He never viewed her as someone that could teach him to be a gentleman from the start (more an example of what not to be, which is hilariously euphoric in a way), and his social expectations are limited enough that nothing Kichi does really raises suspicion beyond the norm. Animals are like that, non-judgemental and uncaring of human society's expectations. She tries to return the unintended favour, and only brings up his gentleman complex when it's for her own gain, and never to try and force him to fit in. She's a firm believer that everybody's free to act how they want if it doesn't cause serious harm to others, in any case.

Ah. That makes her a hypocrite, which is the second worst thing after liars who lie to themselves. A supreme leader shouldn't take shit from her underlings, and while it's difficult to guide D.I.C.E. all the way from campus, she made that choice because she thought school would be fun. Life's supposed to be fun. And if anyone tries to take her fun away from her, she'd wreak havoc on them for the rest of her days, in true evil fashion.

She steals thigh highs from Nanami's closet and fabrics to craft a skirt from Shirogane's lab, as well as a few ribbons while she's at it, because the belts hanging from her trousers are a cool fashion statement, but don't really have room to go anywhere else. The rest of it's fine. The loafers are practical, the jacket is comfy and the kerchief is a symbol for her organisation - no way that's coming off. Plus, it looks a bit like an ascot, so it's important for the charade too.

The last thing to do is corner Fujisaki and force her to alter Kichi's school records. Though she claims it to be for a prank the entire time, Fujisaki does so without much of a fuss, unoffended. And Kichi, of course, knows about her because, though Fujisaki isn't exactly

lying, it's easy to figure out her hesitant behaviour and the truth beneath it. To claim it a prank should bother her more than it appears to, and Kichi entertains the thought that this is the sort of thing that can't be lied about between people like them; a gaydar - a transdar? She snickers at the thought - and scampers off, ready for her transformation the next morning.

"Good morning, my beloved classmates of Hope's Peak Academy!" She skips through the classroom door a little later than usual, just to be sure that everyone is there. The surprised comments and murmurs start up immediately.

"Good morning, Ouma-kun," Akamatsu greets her hesitantly, and Kichi's smile remains stable. "What's with, uh... the new outfit today?" *What are you up to now?*

"I'm so glad you asked, Akamatsu-chan!" Kichi scans the faces of everyone methodically before deciding her target. "You see, last night I went to the cafeteria to for a quick midnight snack, and bumped into Yumeno-chan whilst I was there. I prepared a glass of water and left it unattended with her whilst I raided the pantry for Mom's leftovers, and when I woke up this morning, I was all like this! It appears that witch has finally shown her true colours and cursed me to become the next delusional magical girl!"

Naturally, it causes an uproar of comments like "Yumeno-san would never break into into cafeteria until after curfew!" and "I don't have enough mana to unleash a curse like that so late at night!" and "How much effort will you go to just to bully her?" and Kichi isn't surprised at all. It's almost boring, their reactions, even though she made up the story entirely on the spot.

"Weeeell, I'm stuck like this right now so I'm going to have to act the part until Yumeno-chan gives me the counter-curse to my magical girl transformation! My name is now Ouma Kichi, it's nice to meet you all-"

"Kichi? That's fucking stupid, at least put some effort into your damn lies!" Momota roars, and a small, pathetic part of her appreciates *it* being spoken into existence by somebody else for the first time, even though it's shot down immediately after.

It only hurts a little bit. She liked her birth name, after all, thought the duality of it was funny, and she'd even thought about just switching the kanji around to make it more feminine, but Kichiko seemed a little *too* unbelievable in comparison.

She instructs Yumeno to think of a counter-curse, talks around and bites back at anyone who isn't yet tired enough of her antics to argue with her, and gets on with her day like it's perfectly normal.

Not once does she claim it's a lie. She can't bring herself to.

By the end of the day, she gets called in and scolded for changing her records - no doubt because someone ratted her out, they don't do checks on these things (though to be honest, she's shocked her classmates actually bothered to check the e-handbook - perhaps their teacher noticed when calling the register?), and they tell her the new name and gender aren't staying until she provides legal documentation. Boo.

She stays up that night in the IT area, in the middle of falsifying a name change document to upload to the school system when Fujisaki interrupts her.

"If... if you did want it to stay, couldn't you just do it legally? If you don't want to change it back, that is." Knowing even Fujisaki can't tell the truth for sure isn't as satisfying as it should be.

"Where's the fun in that, Fujisaki-chan? It'd take aaaages, and I'm in the middle of my magical girl transformation now! Yumeno-chan hasn't found the counter-curse yet, so I'm stuck like this forever, and it'd just be a hassle to go through all of that, right? She might even find the antidote by the time all the legal papers go through. That's a lie, of course. Yumeno-chan's never bothered to find a spell whenever someone begs it of her!"

"N-no, it's pretty easy, actually..."

Kichi looks at the form Fujisaki prints off for her, and quickly decides it looks more counterfeit than the bullshit she was trying to come up with in the first place. Just one signature? One, and it would be all good? Well, that should be easy. She knows an adult, even if said adult is a classmate that got held back a few years because of his slower social integration.

"Ouma-san just wants Gonta to sign here, then?"

The honorific's a bit too serious for her, but she has no one close enough to want to call her Ouma-chan, and she'll take what she can get. Gonta never thought she was lying, of course. He's a good underling; never questions his leader too much.

"Yuppers! Then I can fool the whole school!"

"...Is that fraud?"

"Huh? Says who?"

"Gonta had to fill in forms when he left forest. Lots of tests to make sure he not lying about being Gonta."

She clicks her tongue irritably. *Of course he'd know about this.*

"Gonta can't help Ouma-san do illegal things, so please tell Gonta that Ouma-san definitely being truthful."

"Boo, you got me. It's actually a contract to sign your life away to my secret organisation! But the fact that you saw through such a lie means you're truly worthy after all, Gonta, so instead of being a fall guy, how about I hire you as my muscle man? I totally won't make you sign any more death pacts, promise!" She forces a giggle.

Gonta frowns and looks down at the form, obviously a little bare-bones for such a contract, reading it once more. "No, this name change-"

"Of course on the surface it looks like that, but the real contract is written in invisible ink!"

She hates herself. It's only three words - *I'm not lying*, or *It's the truth*. But she's utterly unable to do it, for some reason. Even to Gonta, who she doesn't need to hold a mask up for because he can't tell when she's lying anyway and if he ever shared anything she confided in him with to the others, they'd think it's another one of Kichi's lies and dismiss it, forever believing she does nothing but manipulate him. It's easier to tell the truth when it doesn't make her vulnerable, but this appears to be out of her league.

"C'mon, Gonta, this is no way to treat a lady, is it? Accusing me of being deceitful," she sniffles, "*How could you?*"

She bursts into crocodile tears, causing Gonta to panic in an effort to calm her down until he decides that the most effective method is just signing the document and feigning ignorance if it turns out to be false. Of course, as soon as he's finished, she snatches the paper out of his hands and springs up as if nothing happened.

"Yaaaay! Thank you for being an accomplice to my nefarious crimes, bug man!"

Running off wouldn't work if Gonta decides to take the lie at face-value; he'd catch up easily. She opts for a suspiciously-affectionate hug, but can't manage to slip out of his grip before he snaps out of his confusion and envelops her with his arms.

"Gonta happy to help. Is Ouma-san happy now!"

That's far too loaded of a question for a Tuesday lunchtime, so she blurts out something about gentlemen hugging women too close to fluster him enough to release her, then sprints back to the printer set up in her room, stolen from Yonaga.

It takes a week, but she finally sees *'Ouma Kichi'* on the electronic records and a lovely *'F'* for *'Fucking Finally'*, fully approved. It's not entirely unexpected given the girls' changing room and toilet key cards delivered to her mailbox that morning, but she still can't contain the glee spreading across her face, swinging her legs as she plants herself on her desk.

"Has Kami-sama blessed Kichi today?" Yonaga is the first to notice her good mood.

She pouts. "Actually, I'm grieving. Following my magical girl transformation, the school have decided it's not a good image to have a little boy trapped in a girls' body, so they've renounced my manhood. Yumeno-chan was waaay too slow trying to find that counter-curse, so I guess I'm stuck like this forever now! Well, I was prepared for the worst," she inspects her nails. "I knew she couldn't do magic anyway."

"That's not true!" Both Yumeno and Chabashira yell.

"If you believe that, why claim she put a curse on you in the first place?" Saihara sticks his nose into the conversation.

Kichi pretends to think about it. "Oh, you're right, Saihara-chan! The truth is, my super evil twin brother has been coming to school in place of me so I can spend all my time leading my secret organisation. However," she tears up, "I received intel that an assassin within this very school murdered him - a classmate, at that! How awful."

"Can it," Harukawa mutters with a glare that sends a tremor down Kichi's spine.

"I'm not lying! I did receive that intel, but that's just a cover-up story. I actually sent one of my underlings to... take him out, if you know what I mean," she smirks and puts a finger against her lips. "He's been tarnishing my reputation too long, making me out to be a liar. Can you believe it? Anyways, my secret organisation is well on its way to world domination, so I've taken the liberty of gracing you all with my appearance and a personal warning to join my cause before it's too late. We don't tolerate naysayers and rebels, you know."

"Why are you doing this?" Saihara sighs wearily, and she resists the urge to glare at him.

She misses Amami. He'd at least attempt to play along. When is he coming back again?

"You're boring, Saihara-chan. Here I am, blessing you with confidential information that could save your life, and you're being ungrateful. If you don't join the cause, I'll have to kill you, okay? Before you inform the government of my evil plans, of course. In fact, I'll hire the same killer as the one who took out my dear older brother - they happen to be in this very classroom right now!"

Saihara gives up and turns back to his loser friends, all gossiping about her, no doubt, given the e-handbooks in their grasps.

Around the class, she can hear Iruma laughing her ass off, Momota muttering, Chabashira calling her- god, she hates it, really. No matter how much she pretends she doesn't care. The key cards to the girls' facilities will go unused. Gonta can't protect her in there, and no other girls in her class care enough to prevent Chabashira or Harukawa beating her up if they find her using them.

"Who murdered Kokichi-kun?" Gonta asks at lunch whilst she's commanding him to piggyback her around the outskirts of the school grounds, far away from everyone. She winces. "Gonta don't think classmates could do it."

"Oh, Gonta, don't you know? Harukawa-chan-"

"Harukawa never listened to Kokichi-kun. Wouldn't do it for Kichi-san even if she joined school recently, because of relation, Gonta thinks."

"She'd jump at any chance to kill me," Kichi mutters, and can sense Gonta frowning up at her. "It was a metaphor anyways. The name is dead. Not alive and used by me anymore."

"Oh," he replies hesitantly.

Well, whatever. He doesn't need to understand.

"Just kidding! You killed Kokichi nii-chan!" She cheers jovially. "You signed the murder contract, after all."

"What?!" Gonta exclaims, horrified. "But Gonta read it - that was name change form... right?"

"Nosiree! It was a transferal of leadership for my organisation. I lied earlier, about running the organisation from behind the scenes. I actually rose to power in secret and stole the position for myself while he was messing around at this pathetic school of losers, then I murdered him, as is tradition for inheritance of the Ultimate Supreme Leader title."

"What - what did Gonta do?" He looks horrified, and she swallows the guilt settling in her stomach with such ease it's shameful.

"Oh, the official transfer requires a signature from outside of the organisation to keep it completely fair and neutral. We hate cheaters, and so I decided you were the easiest one to trick into signing the life of my brother away. Thanks, Gokuhara!"

Gonta tears up, and in a moment of especial cruelty, Kichi whispers that he'll be dead too if he speaks a word of their conversation to anyone else, then jumps off his back and scampers off.

Just like that, she severs the cord between herself and the last of her classmates once more.

It takes another week before Amami returns. Kichi jumps right into his arms the minute she sees him stroll through the classroom door, calm and collected as always.

"Amami-chan! My sources told me you'd tragically passed in a burning shipwreck last week, I held a funeral for you and everything! Are you here to haunt me from beyond the grave, or am I gonna have to dispose of my dear lying informants?"

"I've returned in the flesh, thankfully. Perhaps your informants misunderstood." As usual, he plays along, and that's why she favours him. He never questions her lies, and in turn, she doesn't point out his obvious aloofness. "I hope the funeral wasn't too expensive."

"Oh, that was a lie. Truthfully, I don't know anything about you, so I didn't bother." She pauses and lets him overthink the statement before reluctantly tearing herself from his waist. "After all, this is our first time meeting! I, Ouma Kichi, had to take over my twin brother's position as Ultimate Supreme Leader last month when I took over the organisation and murdered him. Oh, but there was no funeral for that either, so don't feel sad that you missed out, Amami-chan!"

She watches him take in the skirt and the socks and the lies. She can hear her classmates yelling out the lies they have convinced themselves of, trying to correct her story into what they think is the truth - that it's all a farce. Amami scrutinises her, and she holds a big, fake smile that doesn't wobble at *all* at the words surrounding them.

"Well, good to meet you, Ouma Kichi-san." He holds out his hand, and Kichi's smile fades into something more real. "My name is Amami Rantarou."

"So good to meet you, Amami-chan," she shakes his hand vigorously, gripping it a little too tightly, too desperately, and she covers it up by making a show of wiping her hand on her skirt with disgust once she lets go. "What's your Ultimate? So odd for a student at Hope's Peak to introduce themselves without mentioning, which makes you super sus. Only

government lackeys try to avoid that subject. Are you a spy for the PSIA? Or - don't tell me - *you're* the informant from my organisation that gave me false info? That's treason, Amami-chan!"

"Hey, nothing like that. I'm just an adventurer, nothing more," he holds his hands up in mock defense.

"Boo. Anyways, I'm distraught over my dear brother's passing, and so I'm declaring you my new onii-chan! Feel honoured. I promise I won't murder you too!"

While the other students catch up with Amami, Kichi takes the opportunity to slip out of the classroom in favour of staying in her room all day, deciding she is entirely uninterested in hearing her classmates tell their own versions of the story she's woven into place these past few weeks.

Instead, she pulls out her Switch to challenge Nanami, who is predictably online, at Smash, ignoring the prickling in her eyes. She spends hours watching Kirby, then Jigglypuff, then Isabelle, smack down Rosalina again, and again, and again. *Not even Luma can help you now.*

It's impossible. She knew it from the start when she first took on the challenge, but a part of her still hopes it will work out.

If Nanami is in class, perhaps she'll get caught out by her teacher or distracted with something. Not much would cause the Ultimate Gamer to lose, and Kichi wonders whether online chess is within her calibre or instead something she can secure a victory in against the endless tally Nanami has against her.

At the sound of knocking on her door, she puts the console away and wipes her face before skipping up to the entrance with a casual smile. It nearly falls off when she opens to find Amami with an uncharacteristically troubled expression, but she manages to maintain it.

"Ah, my beloved new Amami nii-chan? How dare you interrupt a supreme leader's beauty sleep!"

Amami does not ask to come in, simply steps forward and brushes past her arm. Kichi allows him, and takes her sweet time in closing the door, pretending to fiddle with all three fake locks she installed earlier in the year for causing a scene whenever someone comes over.

"I feel like every time I return here, I have to do damage control," he says lightheartedly, trying to gauge her reaction. She doesn't give him an inch. "You're far more trouble than any of my other sisters were."

She's already cried her eyes out getting her ass beat by Nanami, but there's still a sharp tug at her heart and a lump forming in her throat. Amami can't see those, however, so she considers herself safe and flops down onto her bead, cuddling a cat plushie she stole from Hoshi.

"Nuh uh, Amami-chan, I've never caused a scene in her life," she murmurs weakly. Not softly. Too brash for that, too hoarse, deep, *evil*. "It's the demon that possessed my fetus," she muses aloud. "Have you heard about that one from Shinguuji-chan? It likes to relive its

childhood over and over again, so it takes over the bodies of unborn children and possesses them until puberty, then it jumps to the next one. The poor souls that used to be forced down within are suddenly aware of the bodies they inhabit and... and they..."

She doesn't like where that one's going, so she trails off, waiting for the demon of silence to swallow her body whole and never give it back to her.

"I don't suppose you can bring yourself to tell them without all the flourishes or stories to go with it, can you?"

"Haha, no way! I like playing on hardcore mode. It's no fun if you don't go through the worst of conditions trying to win!"

"Well," he hesitates. "That's one thing if it affects you, but none of your classmates asked to go through education on hardcore mode with you. It's unfair on them."

"Ouch. That's cruel, Amami-chan."

"So are you, sometimes. I know you're good, but everyone has their own lives they're dealing with, y'know? I can-"

"Ew, whatever, I get it," she deflects. "I wanted a cool older brother that lets me do drugs and gets in fights to protect my honour, not a square that lectures me about my social habits. I've got Toujou-chan for that. Bye-bye, Amami-chan."

He sighs and makes his way to the door. "I'll talk to them. But it works both ways, okay? Take care of yourself, Ouma-san."

"Of course!" She responds cheerfully with her fingers on both hands crossed up in the air.

"And give that back to Hoshi-kun!"

"Totally!"

Amami, to his credit, does seem to do something between afternoon classes that day and the following morning, because she goes to class and sits down for the first time without anyone bugging her about it, no *'What, still?'* or nothing. She doesn't need the confirmation that he delivered on his word, but gets it anyway when Gonta confronts her.

"Amami-kun said Ouma-san not meaning somebody died. Ouma-san's same person as Ouma-kun, but pretending to be boy before? For protection."

"Eh, sure." Pretending before for protection, huh? Not the worst breakdown, she supposes.

"Okay. Gonta's sorry he's stupid. Didn't know what Ouma-san meant."

Of course you didn't, she wants to spit. *Nobody else did either*.

"Usually members of my organisation walk on hot coals and kneel on boiling metal plates for forgiveness, but your big body probably won't register that as pain, so I guess I'll let you off the hook for now," she says noncommittally, inspecting her chipped nail varnish.

"Thank you very much!" He smiles jovially. "Gonta glad he didn't agree to kill anyone."

In the future, she hopes the entomologist has enough faith in himself to believe in his own deductions. He's spent however many years of people correcting him on things he doesn't need to be corrected on, and, though he can think for himself, it doesn't take anything to sway his mind, because he puts full faith in the well-civilised people to know better than him. It's ridiculous. Kichi doesn't particularly like being called out on lies she tells specifically to obscure her true feelings, but waits with bated breath for the day she lies and lies about something Gonta saw with his own eyes and he knows not to buy a single word of it.

It takes about a week of people stumbling over honorifics before a sense of normalcy is felt again. Chabashira glances at her warily, but is tactful enough to say nothing. It's a fair assessment; Kichi will still pick on Yumeno, will never be in Chabashira's good books, so the amicability is alright with her. Iruma calls her a flat-chested bitch, and Kichi accuses her of paying for her tits instead of being perfectly authentic like her. She tries a few slightly irritating pranks and is relieved to find that, no matter how pissed off anyone gets towards her, they don't bring *it* up, not once.

Part of her thought people would be willing to say anything to her face if they knew it would upset her, even a little. She would do it to them, after all. Perhaps they're being tactful of others in the class. There aren't any like her, as far as she knows, but plenty of them are queer and on the way to learning more about themselves, so it's more likely a preventative measure for others feeling validated, rather than actual respect for Kichi. It doesn't matter either way.

For the shenanigans conducted to test the waters, she spares Amami. He deserves a little peace, given he always seems a little down after returning from his travels. Kichi destroying any remaining social standing she might have had with the class probably wasn't a fun situation to come back to. And his little sister shouldn't be causing him so much trouble on his break, right? No matter how much of a menace she can be.

She disagreed with Amami when he said she was good - she's not, and not deluded enough to believe otherwise. It's nice to have someone who doesn't know she's rotten to the core yet, though, so she's decided that she's going to enjoy it for as long as it lasts. Maybe even try and prolong it a little, if her pride lets her. Yeah, that'd be nice.

End Notes

Now you're here, I'd like to propose to any DR writers looking for ideas: A fic where Ouma jokes about Toujou and Amami being his family, but then they actually try to better him as a person and teach him how to socialise and lecture his bad behaviour like actual parents/siblings, and Ouma slowly becomes a better person and more likeable to his classmates over time. Character development piece. (It's been three years, no one has written this, and I'm devastated.)

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!