Tokiakashi-hen (The Time Revealing chapter)

Posted originally on the fanfiction.lol at https://fanfiction.lol/works/817.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings
Category:	Femslash (F/F)
Fandoms:	Puella Magi Madoka Magica, Higurashi When They Cry
Relationships:	Furude Rika/Houjo Satoko, Akemi Homura/Kaname Madoka, Sonozaki Shion & Houjo Satoko
Characters:	Furude Rika, Furude Hanyu, Akemi Homura, Houjo Satoko, Aki Mabayu, Kaname Madoka, Sonozaki Shion
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2026-10-30 Words: 12,023 Chapters: 3/10

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by Untitled5

Summary

The one who suffered previously, wept

For she knew that she was suffering again

The one who is suffering at the moment, wept

For she is suffering now

And they both wept

Knowing their suffering wasn't at its end

-Frederica Bernkastel

OR

What happens when Rika is thrust back into loops, after she moved to her new high school in Mitakihara.

Chapter 1

"Rika!" called out Satoko as their train was about to depart.

"Rika!" Hanyu followed suit, calling out to their friend.

The blue haired girl in question rushed through the door of the station towards them. "Mii. Sorry I was late, I was speaking with Keiichi-kun and Rena and we lost the track of time."

Satoko sighed out loud. "Honestly, Rika..."

They had gone back to Hinamizawa for the club reunion, and while Satoko was happy to be back, Rika was even more ecstatic.

Nonetheless, Satoko was glad that Rika was happy.

"Rika, have you done your school work yet?" asked Hanyu anxiously as they took a seat I'm the train.

"Why are you asking? Don't tell me that you haven't done it?"

"Auau..." cried out a weakly Hanyu.

This was still weird sight to see for Satoko. After their final battle against Takano, Rika changed somewhat. Not in a drastic way, but change she did.

She started to get a bit more snarky, and sarcastic with Shion, Keiichi, Hanyu and Rena. Surprisingly that behavior didn't extend to Mion and herself most of the time.

That being said, she still helped people with their problems or answered questions even when she was in her snippy mood.

Last year, Satoko asked her why she changed after that battle, and Rika said that she wanted her friends to know her true self and not just a mask.

And when she asked why she and Mion weren't the target of her recent change, Rika replied that she doesn't like how Satoko reacts to them and that Mion never did anything to deserve them.

Satoko was not sure what the others did to deserve them, but she was glad that she had to endure them only in games.

The train soon lurched and they started to travel back to Mitakihara, where they went to school.

"Rika...after we get back, you wouldn't...mind spending some time...with me?" asked Satoko.

Rika raised her eyebrows. "Don't we already do that, weren't we in that game store just last week?"

"I mean without Hanyu."

The horned girl let out a small auau at that as she looked between the two of them with a sly smirk.

Rika looked a bit confused but she accepted the invitation.

This had been a fairly recent development. At first she didn't really understand what had changed, but she started to view Rika differently.

She didn't fully understand it, but she wanted to be closer to Rika, both physically and in her relationship. That was till Hanyu explained that she got a crush on Rika.

At first she started to drop subtle hints, which all seemed to flow over Rika's head. Hanyu explained that she should be more forward if she wanted Rika to notice her feelings, but even those flew over her head.

So, she resigned herself to this; she will confess her love to Rika. This was going either make or break their relationship.

Hanyu had reasured her that even if Rika were to reject her, she wouldn't stop being friends with her, but Satoko wasn't sure if she fully believed her.

"So, what did you want to talk about?" asked Rika as she leaves against the wall just a few meters away form the employee only area of the mall they liked to go to.

Satoko gathered all her courage to finally say this, "R-rika...I-i am in—"

Before she could finish her confession there was loud rustling and crashing of steel chains in the employee only part of the mall.

Satoko peered in, but was unable to see anything. "Rika, would you like to check that out?"

She was just wasting time. She already resolved herself to ask Rika out today, but the further she pushed it back the better it felt.

Rika looked to considering it before she said, "Nipah! Let's."

And so they did, the further they ventured I the darker it got. They then heard feet's running towards their direction, just as Satoko was about to call out, she collided with a person running.

They both fell to the ground. "Sayaka-chan!" cried out the friend of the girl Satoko ran into.

Rika quickly helped her get onto her feet. Meanwhile, the girl, Sayaka, glared at them. "Who are you two, are you with the transfer student?"

Rika replied before Satoko could even process what the girl said, "Mii. Transfer student? We were just nearby and heard something like chains falling to the ground, so we decided to investigate."

During Rika's reply Satoko tried to make out how the two girls looked in the dark. Both appeared to have short hair, one was light blue or cyan colored and the other was pink. But beyond that she couldn't make much out.

The blue haired girl—not Rika—Sayaka glared at the two of them with suspicion. Buy then she seemed to realize something as she grabbed the pink haired girl's hand. "C'mon Madoka, we should leave,"—then her gaze turned to them—"you two should also hurry out if you're no affiliated with transfer student."

Satoko at that point decided to listen to them, so she grabbed Rika's hand—and that action alone caused several butterflies to appear in her stomach—and rushed along with her to the exit, closely following behind Sayaka and her friend, Madoka.

"By the way, what's exactly going on with this transfer student?" Satoko asked as they neared the exist.

"I don't know! She for some reason decided to attack that weird creature in Madoka's arm, while cosplaying!" shouted out Sayaka.

Satoko did a double take at that. She saw no creature in the pink haired girl's arm before, but then she looked and sure enough there was a bundle of white fur there.

I must have missed it in the rush and due to the dark.

It kind of looked like a cat. However, Satoko didn't have enough time to dwell on it as she saw the exit and she speed up.

But before they could reach it the world around them shifted.

"What?" muttered Satoko as the exit disappeared.

The two girls, Sayaka and Madoka hugged each other as they were starting to get surrounded by cotton balls? with mustaches? and chains around them?

They started to advance towards them, and their faces turned more and more sinister as they came closer and closer.

Then one impaled the short blue haired girl's leg with it chains.

"Sayaka-chan!" shouted her friend as the girl dropped to ground and screamed from pain.

Satoko didn't have enough time to process anything as soon she also felt the pain in her shoulder.

She fell to the ground trying to hold back the scream that threatened to come out.

Soon a body hit the ground; it was the body of the pink haired girl, a chain had impaled her brain.

"Madoka!" screamed a new voice.

Satoko barely had enough time to turn to see a a long black haired girl as the chains impaled in the head her as well.

Satoko gasped as everything around her settled down. She was...she was back in the train station in Okinomiya.

What is going on?

"Rika!" called out Hanyu.

Satoko slowly turned her head to Hanyu with wide eyes.

Hanyu noticed this and was obviously concerned. "Satoko, is something wrong?"

Before she could even say anything, Rika rushed through the door.

She looked...panicked.

"Hanyu! What's the date? What's happening currently?!"

"Auau. Rika why do you ask that?" the horned girl asked.

Rika gritted her teeth while she walked up to Hanyu and gripped her shoulder. "Hanyu! I am in a different Fragment, I don't understand how I got here, but I am in a different one, so tell me what happened thus far!"

"I-I don't..." Hanyu cried out.

"Just what is going on?" she suddenly cried out.

They both stopped and looked at her.

"One moment me and Rika were in that weird space, and then...and then Rika was...was...dead!"

Rika stopped dead in her tracks. Her eyes wide filled confusion, worry, and even compassion?

"Satoko," she called out in a calm voice—a disturbingly calm voice, "you remember?"

"I...yes?" said Satoko with a hesitant voice.

Rika went to ask another question; however, at that point the station announcement rang out saying that their train was going to leave.

Hanyu quickly grabbed both of their hands. "We should talk about on the way back to Mitakihara."

Neither of them objected and they sat down on the same spot they did earlier? before?

In any case, Satoko didn't understand what was going, or what happened with those weird cotton balls things with the chains.

"So," Rika began with a cold calm tone, "Satoko you seem to remember everything, even my death, can you explain what happened?"

And so, Satoko explained everything that happened, including the weird shifting terrain, the two girls, the weird cotton balls with mustaches and chains and how Rika died.

During the explanation Rika and Hanyu shared a deep look. "Drugs?" asked Hanyu.

"Most likely," replied Rika.

Satoko faltered as she felt some tears gather in her eyes. "No! I really experienced it!"

Even they don't believe me...

Rika laid her hand on her shoulder. "We believe that you experienced something like that, but we believe that it was due to drugs."

"Oh..." murmured Satoko.

Yeah, that definitely makes more sense than weird cotton balls with chains coming to life...

"Anyway, that didn't really help us clear things up," muttered Rika. "By the way, you said that before that all happened you wanted to tell me something important, what was that thing?"

Satoko blushed and she stuttered out. "I-it's...not im-important!"

Rika shot a curious look at her, but didn't comment.

Hanyu, in contrast, had both a knowning and a dissapointed look on her face.

Rika sighed aloud. "In any event, Hanyu should come with us of we decide to investigate the area again. You said something about two girls being there along with a third girl who

appeared after the pink haired girl died?"

"Eh...yes, I think she was the transfer student the short blue haired girl was talking about...but, Rika, there's still a lot of things I don't understand, what happened to us, why are we back here?"

Rika hummed as she shared a look with Hanyu. "I suppose the easiest explanation would be that we have traveled to a different timeline or Fragment as I call them."

Satoko's eyes widened. "Time travel?" then the cogs in her brain began to twist. "Wait is that why we were able to defeat Takano, is that why you knew so much about that plot against your life?"

There was a depe silence, which was only being filled by the sound of the train, and then Rika replied, "Yes, however, unlike you I don't remember the things that lead up to my death. That being usually 1–2 hours."

Satoko stared at her for a minute straight, not being sure what to say to that. That was till Hanyu interrupted, "Auau, Satoko being able to remember leaves me somewhat uneasy. Who could have given Satoko this power, and why?"

There was a prolonged silence after she asked that question which followed until they arrived in Mitakihara.

"Rika, can I talk to you?" asked Satoko from the other side of the door leading to Rika's room.

Their apartment used to belong to one of Mion's uncles, and so it was quite large, easily able to house the three of them. The uncle was planning to move out, and Mion managed to get them this apartment when she heard that they wanted to go to High School in Mitakihara.

They didn't even need to pay rent, something which Satoko was grateful for when they were looking to move out for High School.

"Yes," came the reply from the room.

The door soon opened and Satoko stepped inside.

The room was fairly minimalist, save for a few things given to Rika by the others in the club.

Rika was sitting on her bed drinking some dark purple tinged liquid from a glass while she stared out the window.

"What are you drinking?" she asked.

The blue haired girl looked down on her drink before she looked at her. "Wine heavily diluted with water. Want some?"

It took a bit for her brain to catch just what Rika said, but when it did, she let out indignant shout, "Rika! We're both underage, we shouldn't drink alcohol!"

Rika only chuckled a bit in response. "It's an old habit of mine...though you're right, I should try to break it. I thought I did it around 2 years ago, but I guess this recent incident caused me to fall back."

There was a prolonged silence after that, and during that time Satoko sat down next to Rika.

It felt nice to sit next to her at home. The problem with this apartment was that at some times Satoko felt it was too large. Back in Hinamizawa they, most of the time, had to share almost everything due to how small their house was, they can had to be in each other's presence all the time.

But here they can retreat into their room, and while sometimes Satoko liked that feeling it was also distancing them at other times.

"Rika, just how many times did you loop?" she asked breaking the silence which enveloped them.

Rika glanced at her, but didn't say anything.

"I mean...it's okay if you don't—"

"For 100 years," Rika said cutting her off.

Satoko stared at her blue haired friend with wide eyes, not quite sure how she should handle, or even react to that information.

"Rika..." she muttered after a some time, "are you...alright?"

"Mii. Of course I am, Satoko," she said with the childish voice that Satoko was used to.

"Rika, how could...how could you endure that?"

Rika was far stronger than she ever could be, just one death was enough to cause Satoko distress, yet Rika went through hundreds of them.

"I could...because I had a future I wanted to achieve," Rika replied as she gazed out through the window.

They stayed like that for a couple minutes, during which time Rika sipped some of her drink much to Satoko's displeasure.

And it seemed someone else was concerned as Satoko soon heard someone running to their room.

Satoko got tense as the door opened, but she soon relaxed when she realized that it was Hanyu.

"Rika!" she yelled at the girl with a fierce glare. "I thought you said that you would stop drinking that! And you're with Satoko-chan, don't tell me you're trying to get her to drink it as well?!"

Rika laughed a little as Hanyu continued to lecture her. Soon, it was time for them to go to sleep, they still needed to see what could have happened in that mall tomorrow.

They were back in the mall, this time though, Hanyu was with them.

Satoko lead them to the where it all started for her.

"Right, it's in the employee only area..." she muttered.

Rika and Hanyu both nodded and headed into it.

"Nothing's here..." muttered Rika as she looked around as they ventured further and further in.

Hanyu sighed. "Looks like whatever happened here in the previous Fragment is not going to happen in this one."

"Is that...normal?" asked Satoko.

Rika nodded. "It's pretty normal. Some Fragments are different than other are. However, if you traveled through enough of them then you will discover that they are only a few ways that the events could happen."

Satoko raised her eyebrows, not fully understanding what Rika was trying to say.

"Ah," muttered Rika as she saw Satoko's confused face, "what I was trying to say is that there certain trends in Fragments as a whole, these trends can sometimes overlap as well.

"In any case, at the moment we have no data other than the Fragment you remember, so we can't draw much from this all."

However, just as they were about to exist the area, it began to change again, just like how it changed the previous time.

The exit disappeared and they were now in the same world.

Hanyu frowned as she looked around. Something about that look in her eyes unnerved Satoko.

"This world...it's..." muttered Hanyu, "this is horrible!"

Then they started to get surrounded by the same cotton balls as well.

Hanyu motioned for them to go behind her, but before they could even take a step towards her, loud shots rang out.

Satoko turned around to see a fellow blonde haired girl wearing a Magical Girl costume.

"Now, I jus need to find the Witch. You three should stay with me," said the blonde haired girl.

"What exactly is going on?" shouted Satoko as she looked around the decimated area.

"My name is Tomoe Mami, and I am a Magical Girl," answered the fellow blonde haired girl Satoko's question.

After her introduction, the girl, Mami dealt with the weird flowers thing in the center of it, and then the weird area disappeared.

They then, made their way to Mami's apartment where she served them some delicious cake. She was being really friendly towards them for some reason.

"Mii, and how does this whole 'Magical Girl' thing work, if you don't mind me asking?" Rika asked, breaking the ice.

She had the fake cheerful tone, but Satoko could tell that she was wary of their rescuer.

The blonde haired girl smiled in response, seeming to not mind the suspicion directed towards her.

"I suppose I should start with what you encountered in that labyrinth, that was a Witch, the being that us, Magical Girls, hunt, we use this." She motioned down to he ring and said, "This is our Soul Gem, the materialization of our wish, with it we can fight Witches."

Rika frowned and Hanyu's eyes turned serious when she saw the Soul Gem. Satoko wasn't sure what got her so serious about, but it didn't look good for these Magical Girls considering how rarely Hanyu has shown that emotion.

"Wish?" Satoko asked after she was done with the cake slice.

Mami blinked up at her and flushed. "Ah, I forgot to explain, to become a Magical Girl you must make a Wish with Kyubey, he's the person who turns you into a Magical Girl, and he'll grant your wish."

"And what do you get out of this?" Hanyu asked. "What exactly do you achieve from fighting these 'Witches'?" she quickly clarified.

She quickly pulled something out from her pocket. "These," she allowed them to see some sort of black jewelry. "They are called Grief Seeds, and with them you can replenish the magic you lost in a fight."

Hanyu looked at both the Soul Gem and the Grief Seed with clenched hands, her expression was even more serious than before.

"Oh?" Rika sounded it out. "And how do these 'Witches' come to be?"

Mami tilted her head to look at her. "They come from the malevolent feelings of humans."

Rika looked less than pleased with that answer. Hanyu, too, didn't seem to like it.

"I think Rika was more asking how Witches come to be," said Hanyu, Satoko winced, Hanyu's tone was far blunter than Satoko ever heard before.

Mami looked a bit embarrassed at the misunderstanding. "In that case, they are born from Familiars that separate from Witches."

That doesn't explain where they originally came from though... thought Satoko to herself.

It seemed like Rika and Hanyu were thinking the same thing. Rika then shared a look with her in the eyes.

"Nipah! I think that it is time for us to leave, right, Hanyu, Satoko?" asked Rika as she inched towards the door, she seemed like she wanted to talk with them without Mami.

The blonde haired girl opposite of them looked a bit pained at that statement, so Hanyu quickly added, "Don't take it the wrong way, Mami-san, we are just tired from this whole ordeal and we would like to go home. Could we perchance come back here tomorrow?"

Mami smiled back at Hanyu. "Of course you can, Furude-san, I can also accompany you home if you want me to."

Hanyu shook her head. "That will not be necessary."

They then said their goodbyes to Mami and left the apartment.

"Hanyu, what did you learn?" asked Rika after they were far away from the apartment building.

The girl in question shook her head. "I'll explain once we get home, but for now, I want neither of you to agree to a contract with this Kyubey. Furthermore, I don't want you to interact with that thing ever."

Isn't that a bit of an overkill, I understand that it most likely benefits in someway from it, but you get your wish, no matter how big it is, according to Mami, and—

"I agree," said a voice behind them.

Satoko swiftly turned around to see the black haired girl from before she died. "You're..." she trailed off, not being sure if she should finish that sentence.

The girl looked at her for a second. "That's right, I am a Magical Girl, and I would advise you to take your friend's words on this to heart. If you don't, then you will not have a future."

Rika stared curiously at her, and then put on very un-Rika like smirk on her face. "Why should we? We get a miracle from it, those things don't come cheap."

The black haired Magical Girl glared at her. And honestly, Satoko wasn't sure why Rik was saying things like that, she was sure that she agreed with Hanyu.

"If you are satisfied with throwing everything you hold dear and your future, then go ahead."

"Magical Girl, I have a question for you. Have you ever heard the tragedy of the great witch Frederica Bernkastel?" Rika asked, totally ignoring what the other girl said.

Who?

It seemed like the black haired girl also didn't know what Rika was talking as she raised her eyebrows. "I can't seem to recall a Witch with that name."

The same smug smirk appeared on Rika's face again. "I thought not, it's an old legend. Frederica Bernkastel was once just an innocent young girl, but then Fate transpired against her. She was trapped in a well from which she couldn't escape, she kept repeating everything over and over again, trying to find a future for herself and her friends, this went on for over a hundred years until she achieved a Miracle against Fate."

Before Satoko could even blink the Magical Girl shoved Rika against a wall. "Who do you're talking about?!"

"Rika!" shouted Satoko as she went to intervene, but Hanyu held her back.

Rika grunted from the pain, but she kept talking, "I am referring to myself. I was the frog in the well, who couldn't climb out until a miracle happened."

The Magical Girls eyes widened, then she let go of Rika who fell to the ground with a grunt.

She picked herself up and dusted off the dirt that was on her clothes. "We'll talk later, I have things to do, here's where I live." She handed them her a paper with her adress written on it. "Come to there tomorrow."

Rika smirked at her. "Of course, we will."

Chapter 2

Infinite shelves with infinite books surrounded her view wherever she looked.

She could not make out anything else. For a moment, Homura thought that this was the afterlife, maybe she should just accept that she couldn't do, that she wasn't strong enough to save Madoka.

The last loop was especially damaging to her her self esteem. Not only did two random people got dragged into the labyrinth and die, but even Sayaka and Madoka perished due to the Familiars.

But then, she heard footsteps approaching her along with something hitting the ground. Homura looked over where the noise came from, and she took a step back at figure she beheld.

What is she? She feels like...she feels like she could just destroy Walpurgisnacht with just a flick of her hand...

The woman who was approaching her wore a sweeping strapless light pink ball gown with a yellow sash-like accessory draped around the skirt. She also had some weird metallic horseshoe-shapped object that levitated around her head.

"Who are you? What do you want from me?" Homura asked. She tried to stop time, but it didn't seem to work.

"How presumptuous! You haven't even introduced yourself, yet you expect to do so? Thankfully, you caught me in a good enough mood for me to excuse that attitude of yours. Very well, my name is Featherine Augustus Aurora, you may call me Augustus Aurora, as for what I want, I have taken an interest in your story."

"What do you mean 'my story'?"

"Precisely what I meant. Your story in the game between, Lady Lambdadelta, and my former Miko, was never finished after they left the game running indefinitely. They since started a new game, and I doubt they'll even remember your game."

Homura growled. *Was my whole life, Madoka's suffering, and everything in Mitakihara just a game to these beings?*

"I don't need your help or help from anyone like you!"

"Don't push your luck. I can be lenient at time, but such cases are rare to last, especially with someone of your additude," admonished Featherine with a frown.

This snapped Homura back somewhat. She didn't need to make an enemy of this being, if anything she'd need her help to save Madoka. All of this was for Madoka's well being...

"Understood, I apologize. Could you tell me more about yourself please and the nature of everything including this 'game'?"

"My nature is that of the closed circle, if that helps you any, as for the game...I am afraid that revealing too much to a piece can take the fun away. That being said, I will say this: It was very rude of my former Miko and her friend to abandon that game without ending it. One should know how a story should end, or come up with various ends a story could have, and even having not planned for an end, one should always strive to end it.

"However, just leaving the story alone without an ending is just disrespectful for the story itself. Thus I have taken the liberty to help you complete your story, with a few pieces I took from another game."

Homura tried to wrap her mind around what she was hearing, but nothing made sense.

What does she mean by taking pieces from another game?

"And how will you complete my 'story'?" she asked agitated. "Even with help—unless they to are Magical Girls—I doubt that I'll be able to defeat Walpurgisnacht. The situation would still be bleak even with help."

Featherine frowned, but at this time it was not directed at her. "You are quite correct in describing your situation against Walpurgisnacht as bleak. And even with Walpurgisnacht defeated there is nothing that could continue to guarantee your future.

"Fortunately for you I want this game to have a satisfying and a happy end and there to be no loose threads hanging on the side. At the moment I want a story with a happy ending after many years of suffering."

She was pondering into the vast library around her. "Very well then, some rules will be rewritten," she got out a calligraphy brush and some paper.

"First, Grief Seeds will now be more efficient, thus less will be needed to clean the darkness from a Soul Gem. Second, Kaname Madoka Karmic potential will start to decrease immediately after the death of Walpurgisnacht, so Lady Lambdadelta's piece will no longer be interested in her. Third, the me on the game board will have something which will be able to help you recover your lost memories."

It all felt weird. It almost felt like everything was always like how Featherine said it was, but that wasn't the case, Homura had more than enough experience to know the ins and outs of being a Magical Girl.

"There, now that we're done, I will be sending you on your way. I told you all this all, for it would be unfair for a central piece to not know, and because the other pieces have already figured it out. Do work on your additude, if we are to meet at another date in the future," she finished sternly.

She was back in her apartment, the day she will go to school. That, by itself, was not normal; she always reset to the hospital even when she cut the the timeline short by traveling back early.

For now she'll just chalk it up to the Featherine being.

Thus, she did her usual introduction in school, warned Madoka, chased away the Incubator and went to check on the mall to eliminate the Witch there.

Unfortunately, by the time she arrived, Mami had already taken care of it, what further caused her some distress was the fact that the two people in the previous loop were also there, along with another girl.

They then started to talk to Mami, who invited them to her place, Homura decided to follow them and waited outside to see what decisions they made.

She was ready to deal with them in any way if they decided to become Magical Girls, thankfully, they didn't seem to have sold their lives away.

And the purple haired one even advised the other two against making a contract with the Incubator, so hopefully Homura would not have to worry about them anymore in this loop.

Nevertheless, she also decided to personally want them against making a contract, just to be on the safer side.

That proved to be far more troublesome and surprising than she expected it to be, she never expected that this would be how she met someone who had gone through loops before.

Her first impression of the blue haired girl, Frederica Bernkastel, as she referred to herself was fairly negative.

Homura didn't like that that girl managed to figure out that she was also looping, she also didn't like how that girl went about telling her, it was like she was trying to get under her skin.

Of the other one, she had more positive things to say about the purple haired girl. She seemed to understand just what the Incubator was offering them, and she even warned her friends against the contract, that alone made Homura like the girl more.

Homura had less to say about the short blonde one, she barely interacted when Homura shown up, and she didn't talk much before that.

Nonetheless, she could tell that the girl could be dangerous. Her looks at the blue haired girl were very similar to the ones that Mikuni's little puppet constantly sent Mikuni's way.

She didn't like that fact the blonde girl reminded Homura of someone Homura so hated, but she would remain neutral on her till she knew her better.

So, she for the rest of the day she did her usual routine, which was killing Witches and making sure that the Incubator couldn't make a contract with Madoka.

She returned late at night to her apartment, and promptly fell into the bed while she thought about tomorrow might hold for her.

Maybe...maybe there's finally someone here who understands what...what I had to go through...maybe...

She couldn't finish whatever she was going to think as she felt sleep overtake her. Homura surrendered to the impulse with a small smile.

Homura was already back home just after school left out, and it didn't take long for the ones she invited to also arrive.

The blue haired girl entered first, she looked a bit taken aback by the projectors that Homura sat up, but the suprise didn't last long on her face.

Behind her were the two other girls, the long purple haired one with a hat on her head, and the short blonde haired one.

Homura stared at them and then motioned for them to take a seat on her couch opposite of her. The blonde haired one was by far the most suspicious and wary of her.

The other two seemed to be far more at ease with her, especially the blue haired girl.

"You can also loop?!" she started the conversation.

The long blue haired girl raised her eyebrows. "No introduction? It feels weird to refer to you as just black haired Magical Girl in my head."

"Akemi Homura, now answer my question!"

"It's good to meet you, Homura," said the blue haired girl with a smirk, as she ignored what she said. "I am Furude Rika, and these are my friends, Furude Hanyu, and Hojo Satoko."

She indicated first to the purple haired girl and then to the short blonde haired one.

Homura glared at the girl, Rika in response.

Rika seemed to become more serious after that. "Yes, I can go to another Fragment, and I have been to quite a lot of them for the rest of my life."

"Fragment?" muttered Homura with confusion.

"What the world you travel to are called," elaborated Hanyu.

Homura didn't quite know what to make of the purple haired girl, she seemed to quite knowledgeable about what being a Magical Girl meant, which was usually not a good thing, but she personally didn't seem to be one, and she was against Satoko and Rika contracting.

She also got a weird feeling from her, almost like she was somehow magical, yet not at the same time.

"Why did you want to talk to me?" asked Homura.

"Hanyu already explained what will happen to us if we are to accept the contact," said Rika. "We just want to hear more about it from you."

"What did she explain?" asked Homura.

The blonde girl, Satoko, was the one to respond. "She said that those Soul Gems and Grief Seeds were one and the same."

Homura stared at her in the eyes. "That's...correct. Soul Gems naturally develop into Grief Seeds with accumulated grief."

"And what becomes of the Magical Girl?" asked Rika.

"They turn into what they hunted, Witches."

Rika looked at her seriously. "And what are your goals?"

"Just one goal, protect a person from contracting."

Rika seemed to appreciate this. "And can you tell us how many time have you looped, if that's not too much? And how much time we have?"

Homura glared at her, but she ultimately relented. "I have looped a little over 90 times, each loop is around 6 weeks long. However, this loop started with around 5 weeks remaining."

Rika looked to be thinking, as if she was calculating how much time she spent in loops. "That's over 11 years."

"Yes," was Homura curt response to that.

"How familiar are you with the rules of this loop?" Rika asked.

"Rules...?"

Rika straightened up. "Yes, rules, I have observed in my loops, that there a few loose rules in every Fragment."

"How do these rules work?" Homura asked curiously, she never thought that they may be rules for time loops.

It was Hanyu who answered her question. "It's not technically correct to say that these rules are rules, they should be called consistent similarities in almost all Fragments."

Homura glanced at her. *She is talking like she was also in loops...*

"Yes," she answered slowly, "there are some things which rarely ever change."

"Would you mind enlighten us about them?" asked Rika

Homura hummed as she thought about it. *I did plan on telling them this anyway, so it makes little difference if I do it now...*

"First, if Miki Sayaka—"

"Who?" Satoko cut her off.

Homura threw a look at the girl. "The blue haired girl you ran into in the previous loop."

Satoko nodded, and Homura continued. "If she contracts, then there is a 98% chance that she turns into a Witch in a month.

"Second, telling Magical Girls about what they become has almost always causes the girl who was told this to snap, and either turn into a Witch or try to kill other Magical Girls. There are other things, but those two are the most important at the moment."

Rika nodded. "Well, is there anything that you want us to help you with?"

Homura raised her eyebrows, she was still not totally convinced that she should trust these people, but against her better judgement, she divulged. "I want you to be friendly to the girl who rescued you three. That way it would be easier to manipulate her in regards to Madoka."

"Madoka?" asked Rika.

"She's the short pink haired girl you saw in the last loop. I want you to stay as close to Tomoe Mami to make sure she's not able to convince Madoka to contract."

"You're asking us to manipulate the person who saved our lives yesterday," said Satoko with disapproving look.

"Yes, that is what I am asking of you. If you can't help me there, then you can't help me in any way."

Satoko went to respond, but Rika butted in before she could say anything. "Is there truly nothing else that we can help you with?"

"No one, I must do everything else by myself."

"What about your friends? Couldn't they help you?" asked Satoko. Rika nodded along to that question.

Homura answered back quickly, "I don't have any friends. The only one I have is Madoka, and I am not involving her in this!"

Rika frowned. "What about Tomoe Mami? She's an experienced Magical Girl."

"She is unstable, too unstable. If she learns the truth about Magical Girls turning into Witches, then she will aim to mercy kill all Magical Girls in the vicinity."

Rika nodded in understanding. "In that case, why do you not try to make her understand you, I had dealt with someone unstable and it will be easier to do things with her at your side."

"No she's too attached to Kyubey, and to answer your question, she would never listen to me. The only uses she may have is for in roughly one month from now. She will never protect Madoka from the contract."

"You talk about this Madoka a lot," muttered Rika, "is she the only you care about?"

There was a bit of dissapontment in her tone. Homura glared at her. "Yes, Madoka is the only person that matters. Ideally Miki Sayaka should also not contract, but she not as important as Madoka, so her contracting isn't an end all be all."

Satoko bristled at that, she went to say something but Rika quickly put her hand on her shoulder, this visibly calmed down the blonde haired girl.

"And how exactly are you protecting this friend of yours?" asked Rika.

"I eliminate threats to her life, which includes making sure she doesn't contact."

Rika's expression turned serious. "Do you also eliminate other people, not just Witches?"

Homura looked her in the eyes before she replied, "Yes, I have already eliminated two Magical Girls who were a threat to Madoka's life."

She had taken care of Mikuni and that freak puppet of hers six days ago, so if for some reason her new starting point was one day before transferring to school, then she would not have to worry about either of them anymore.

There was gasp from Satoko a she stared at Homura with wide and fearful eyes.

Rika let out a deep sigh then leaned forward. "Have you thought about getting help from others in this quest of yours? You must surely realize that you can't do everything by yourself?"

"I do not have any one than I could relly on, and I am not enlisting help from anyone else, only I can do this, and only Madoka is important."

"In that case, I don't think we can work together with someone like you."

"Pity," muttered Homura with a glare.

"You're right, it is a pity," Rika said, then she stood up. "We are leaving, I wish you a good day."

The girl next to her, Satoko, stood up and followed Rika to the door.

"You are coming, Hanyu?" Rika questioned the girl who still remained seated.

Hanyu looked up at her. "I will talk some more with Homura-San, if that's okay with you, Rika?"

The blue haired girl looked a bit taken aback, but she nodded and soon left along with Satoko.

"Why didn't you join your friends?" Homura questioned.

Hanyu took a few seconds to respond. "Because I want to help you."

Homura looked Hanyu critically in the eyes before she sighed. "Why do you want to help me?"

Hanyu replied, "Let's just say that I would not like to leave someone alone who is stuck in a loop like how Rika was, especially given that we ate living in the same city."

"Furude Rika didn't seem to view it that way!"

"Rika doesn't like the fact that she sees the worst or herself in you," explained Hanyu, apologetically.

Homura gritted her teeth. "Well, I also don't like that I see some of myself in that naïve girl."

Hanyu frowned at that comment. "Rika means well, but..."

"I don't care, just don't get in my way, or else!"

"Homura-san, we—I am not trying to be enemies with you."

"If you get in my way to save Madoka, then you will be my enemy," Homura declared.

"In that case we don't need to be. I don't want to harm you or your friend, Homura-san."

Homura glared at her, but didn't respond to what she said.

"Homura-san, I understand that you're most likely really stressed from this whole situation, including us, but I am not your enemy, and neither is Rika. We don't need to be enemies, I understand how you might feel now but—"

Homura cut her off. "You don't understand how I feel at all! And unlike that friend you can't even claim to understand what it's like to live in loops, all you know is—"

Hanyu's eyes turned serious then she was the one who interrupted her, "Do you think Rika was the only one traveling through the various Fragments, I was always with her, always by

hee side."

Homura's eyes flashed with irritation. "Don't tell me that you're just going the repeat the same thing about friendship? Or maybe you will say that I should never kill to defend Madoka?!"

Hanyu shook her head. "I am not going to either of those things. Despite your similar circumstances, you are your own person with her own experiences. Your situation is not the same as that of Rika's. As for telling you against murder...that would hypocritical of me to do."

This seemed to calm Homura down somewhat. "Fine, what do you want to talk about then?"

"There are a few things, but let's start with the most pressing. Mami-san called the creature that grants these Magical Girl powers, Kyubey, but the correct name would be Incubator, wouldn't it?"

Just how does she know that?!

"...yes, how do you know that? And what exactly do you know about it?"

The girl opposite of her grimaced when Homura confirmed her question. Then she reached up to her hat and took it off, and then Homura saw it, horns protruding out of her head.

Homura's eyes widened.

Those horns, they reminded me of that Featherine being's horseshoe like object around her head...is this what Featherine meant by herself on the board?

If so, then are the other those pieces that Featherine mentioned?

"The Incubator is not the only non native being on this planet, as for what I know...it's pretty minimal," Hanyu said as put back on her hat.

"Hanyu-san, does the name Featherine mean anything to you?" she suddenly asked, it was really a spur of the moment question, but Homura needed as much information about that entity as she could.

Hanyu tilted her head in confusion. "Featherine...? Something about it seems...familiar, but I can't really recall it."

Homura gritted her teeth. *Of course, it couldn't be that easy! Why would it be? And what exactly would I even gain from the piece that Featherine mentioned? Some restored memories? What memories?*

"It doesn't matter," muttered Homura with a bite in her voice.

Hanyu looked to be still trying to make sense of what Homura asked of her, but she then shook her head. "Right. Can you tell me why you, in particular, don't like Rika?'

Homura raised her eyebrows. "Why?"

"I just want to know what you think about her, I still want you two to work together in this, even if you can't stand each other at the moment."

Homura took a deep breath as she launched into a tirade, "Fine! Just when I thought that I could talk with someone lile me! Just when I thought that someone could help me!

"It all turns into just another 'trust your friends'! As if I hadn't done plenty of time, as if I hadn't told them my nature plenty of time! They never trust me, the only one who ever does is Madoka!"

She slammed her hands down on the table in anger, breaking it in half.

She took a few deep breaths to compose herself. *I got too emotional, and too attached to the thought that there may be someone out there who could understand what I had gone through.*

It doesn't matter anyway. It doesn't matter, just like how neither Tomoe Mami and Miki Sayaka matter, all that matters is Madoka! I let myself be sidetracked enough with Furude Rika just because she was also a looper. I will never do that mistake again!

In the meantime, Hanyu looked at her with sadness and concern, then the horned girl sighed.

And everything started to blurted around her vision, then she found herself in a weird floating island of some kind surrounded by crystal shards. Hanyu was also there, she was wearing some sort of Miko clothes, though.

"Where are we?" Homura asked. *It kind of feels similar to that library...*

"This is the Sea of Fragments, here I can see every Fragment that a person has lived in and their experiences in it." As Hanyu said that around a ninety of those crystals started to surround her.

Homura glared at her. "I am not showing my earlier loops to you!"

Hanyu looked her in the eyes. "I am not asking you to. What I am offering is for you to take a closer look, I will not see anything unless you want me to."

This seemed to calm down Homura somewhat as she sighed out loud. "...very well, if that's the case, I would like to take a closer look at the previous loop."

Hanyu beckoned with her hand, and one of the crystals floated down to her, she took a step towards it, and then she was engulfed in bright light.

And she then saw the events of the last loop from her own perspective once again.

"I now see, the timeline reset as soon as the blonde haired girl, Satoko, died," she said to Hanyu once she processed everything.

"Did you?" muttered the horned girl.

Homura looked her in the eyes. "Yes, do you think that's important?"

She frowned. "The fact that you transported to another Fragment immediately is...concerning...I should also probably mention that Satoko also started to loop.

"So the fact, that both you and Rika looped right after she looped is truly concerning, and we don't know why Satoko started to loop."

Homura looked curious about something. "I am now curious about something; how do you all loop?"

Hanyu looked over her. "They loop by dying, is that different from how you do?"

Homura flinched a bit at that, she began to feel some sympathy for the blue haired girl; however, she soon crushed those feelings.

She didn't need to feel sympathetic for her anymore, unlike her, she got out of her loop.

"Yes, it's a bit different," she replied to Hanyu. Then she transformed and showed her shield to the girl.

"I use this shield to go back in time," she added.

Hanyu nodded as she examined the shield closely. "Auau, I think I am starting to understand how you your looping works.

"You go back by twisting the clock in the shield, but there is a point that you always go back to."

Homura sighed. "That's correct, I always return to the day after my heart surgery."

Hanyu blinked at her in confusion, before she smiled at her. "Okay, I am glad that you're opening up to me and talking about your experiences Homura."

"You're useful to me, but going over things like this seems...so familiar for some reason, I guess it bringing up good memories..." muttered Homura as she watched the events of the previous loop.

Hanyu tilted her head. "It does?"

"I don't know why, but..."—she shook her head—"nevermind, it doesn't matter."

Hanyu frowned. "Do you want to take a closer at some of your earlier Fragments?"

"How does time pass here? I wouldn't want to waste my time here."

"That depends mostly on my power, but at the moment 1 hour here is roughly 5 seconds out there."

"In that case, let's," said Homura.

Thus, they started to make their way through the various loops till Homura stumbled upon something in one of here earlier loops.

"Who...is..." muttered Homura as she stared at the Fragment.

Hanyu walked closer to her. "May I?"

Homura looked uncertain but she acquiesced, and soon Hanyu saw who Homura was talking about.

It was a girl with messy green hair and violet eyes, she looked a around the same age as Homura, maybe a bit older, but she was at Homura's place for some reason.

"You truly don't know her?" asked Hanyu as she stepped back from the Fragment.

"No...I don't," said an obviously distressed Homura.

Hanyu frowned at that. "How about I allow you to take a closer look at the Fragments then, maybe you can learn who she was from them? I think we should start with the older ones."

The black haired girl toom a deep breath. "Let's do that."

20 of Homura's earlier Fragments gathered infront of the girl in question, and she reached out into the first.

Chapter 3

To say that Rika's mood after that confrontation with Akemi Homura was bad would be an understatement.

She was absolutely livid, she didn't think that this was how her meeting another looper would have gone.

But the long black haired girl embodied all of Rika's worst qualities without there being anything redeeming about her. Not only that, but she kept pushing all of Rika's buttons, almost like she was doing that intentionally.

Honestly, Rika was glad that in spite of her 100 years of looping she never turned into someone as cynical and heartless as Akemi, she could never imagine herself turning into someone that obsessed.

"Rika," called out Satoko suddenly as they crossed a street to get to their apartment.

Rika could feel herself immediately brighten up as Satoko addressed her—she wasn't sure why this seemed to happen to her, but recently whenever she talked to Satoko her mind started to clear up, and she was more cheerful after the fact.

"Yes, Satoko?" Rika asked as she turned around to her best friend with a small smile.

Satoko looked a bit uncomfortable; she kept glancing back to where they came from. "Are you sure it was okay to leave Hanyu there alone with her?"

"It's alright. Hanyu could look after herself," responded Rika.

"I suppose..." muttered Satoko a bit anxiously.

Rika could feel her smile start to widen, Satoko truly seemed to have a special affect on her.

She then grabbed Satoko's hands and said, "Now come on, today was a long day for us, we should go prepare some food for us and Hanyu."

Satoko relented quickly, and they started to walk back home holding hands all the way there.

At their apartment they soon got to work on preparing for dinner. Rika did most of the prep while Satoko handled the cooking, it was how they usually did this if it was just the two of them in the kitchen.

"Hanyu, I am glad that you're..." Rika trailed off as she saw that it was, in fact, not Hanyu who opened the door.

However, she was not at all alarmed by the person who stepped in, for it was someone Rika was deeply familiar with, even if some small part of her still didn't like the green haired girl who stepped in.

"Sorry, to dissapoint you, Rika-chama," said Shion with a cheeky smile on her face, holding a small package in her hand, "but I am afraid that I am not Hanyu-chan, though I did bring her some sweets from Angel Mort."

"What exactly are you doing here, Shii?" asked Rika curiously as she took the small packet of Angel Mort sweets away from her.

"Family business, but I thought that while I'm here I should visit you three, how is high school treating you thus far?" asked Shion with a small smile.

Rika shrugged as she walked over to the fridge to put the sweets away. "Nipah. It has been going well. Satoko is currently preparing dinner if you want to stay a little longer with us."

At that point, Satoko emerged from the kitchen, most likely because she heard her name being discussed.

"Shion-neesan,"—Satoko's face lit up at seeing the girl and she hugged her—"what are you here for?"

"I have to talk to a few distant relatives of mine on behalf of that old demon, but that's not important now, Rika-chama here offered ro have me for the dinner and I would like to the both of you some."

Satoko frowned as they separated from the hug. "That's good, but we only prepared for three people..."

Rika shrugged with a smirk. "I guess Hanyu will have to eat leftovers then."

"My, my you're quite cruel Rika-chama," laughed Shion. "By the way, where exactly is Hanyu-chan?"

"She's staying...with someone...and let's just leave it at that."

"You don't like this person, Rika-chama?" asked Shion with both some curiosity and wonder.

"No, and we should really just leave it at that."

Shion shrugged in response. "Okay, well I can order some takeout from somewhere, no need for me to steal Hanyu-chan's dinner, but you two can dig in."

They proceeded to do that after a bit more probing from Shion.

"There's also something I wanted you ask you, Rika-chama," said Shion after they finished eating and after Rika put the leftovers in the fridge.

She shot Shion a curious look and motioned for her to ask her question.

"Would you mind, if I borrow, Satoko-chan, for a bit?"

Rika shrugged. "Mii. Not particularly, but why do you need her for, Shii?"

Shion smirked at Satoko who started to fidget. "Oh let's just say that we need to have a private talk."

Satoko looked a bit uncomfortable, but she also nodded along to Shion. Meanwhile, Rika frowned, but then she replied. "Mii, yeah, you can, Shii, just when will she come back though?"

Shion waved her off. "It will be a short talk, so in an hour or two at max she'll be back."

Rika nodded and Shion grabbed Satoko and started to drag her along with her.

They made their way to where Shion was staying, it was a small little apartment, with barely anything in it.

"This apartment belongs to the Sonozakis, I am not sure why they even own something so small, but I guess it's a bit better than staying in a hotel," said Shion as she showed Satoko around.

Satoko, of course, knew that Sonozaki family owned quite a lot of real estate around the area —their current apartment was even one—but she expected most of them to be similar to their current large apartment.

"So, why did *you* come here, can you be more exact, Shion-neesan?" Satoko asked.

Shion hummed aloud, then she answered, "Let's just say someone has been stealing from the Sonozaki group, and not just money, but also weapons as well.It is kind of frustrating because no one is able to tell who the one robbing is, or even how.

"That's why that old demon sent me here to figure something and to intimidate my uncles to do something about it all. But that doesn't matter at the moment, can you tell me how you and Rika-chama are doing?"

There was a teasing smirk on Shion's face as she asked her question.

In the meantime, Satoko could feel her face light up bright red. Shion was one of the few people she told about her crush, and ever since she never stopped teasing her about it.

She had also provided her with some advice on how she should act on her crush, something which, while Satoko appreciated, she viewed most of her advice as being too direct.

"It's...going...it's certainly going..." she finished with a pause, not totally sure how she should describe it, especially with the recent revelations about Rika and Hanyu.

Shion looked her in the eyes, then put her hands on Satoko's shoulders. "Listen, to your Nee Nee's advice, Satoko-chan, I am sure that nothing bad will happen if you confess."

Satoko glanced uncomfortably to the side. "I...I don't know...what if she is disgusted by it?'

Shion pulled Satoko into a hug. "Don't be so negative, I am sure that Rika-chama will never not see you as a friend at the least. Even if she doesn't reciprocate your feelings. Don't fall into my trap."

"What trap, Shion-neesan?"

"I deeply regret that I was never able to confess my feelings for Satoshi...sometimes I wish that I could do more...more for Satoshi..." she muttered as she relaxed into the hug.

Satoko nodded along in the hug.

"*Wish you say? I can help you with that."* called out a voice, Satoko skid back immediately trying to locate it till she spotted where it most likely cake from.

It was...it was the Magical Girl making creature, Kyubey, if Satoko remembered correctly, it was standing on the table of the small apartment.

"What...what are you?!" called out Shion as she stared at the thing.

"*I am Kyubey, I have come to investigate the girls with large potentials that I have sensed in the city, and you would be perfect candidates.*"

"Candidates to what?" asked Shion suspiciously.

"*To become Magical Girls, of course,*" it replied swishing its tail back and forth.

"Magical Girls..." Shion muttered with disbelief. "And what do these Magical Girls do, and how would you be able to help me?"

Satoko was dreading where this was going, so she tried to intervene; however, before she could say anything, Kyubey continued. "*Magical Girls put their lives at risk in order to fight the curses of Humanity—these curses are also known as Witches—and in exchange for doing this, I grant one wish of yours.*"

"A wish? Any wish?" asked Shion seemingly skipping over the part where she would have to put her life on the line.

"Indeed, I can grant you any wish."

"Would it...would it include healing a person and waking him up from coma?"

"*That's right, if you wish for it, then I can heal anyone you want."* it replied in an almost cheerful voice, almost cheerful because even then Satoko could tell that there was no emotion in its tone.

"Shion-neesan, this is not as good as—"

"Shut up!" shouted Shion angrily.

Satoko cringed back. Something about that tone frightened her, but she didn't know why.

"I'll do it...for Satoshi..." muttered Shion and stared down the creature.

"Shion-neesan, no!" yelled Satoko. However, Shion didn't listen to her.

"I...wish for Satoshi to heal, and for him to never get that ill ever again," exclaimed Shion. The creature reached out with its long ears into Shion's chest.

The green haired girl let out a loud scream as bright green light surrounded them. Once the light dimmed, Shion stood there shakily with something clutched in her hands.

And Satoko was staring at everything that transpired with horror and fear. Meanwhile, one the side, the creature was swishing its tail back and forth looking at the two girls with emotionless red beady eyes.

Hanyu arrived late at night, clearly exhausted and fell into the soft embrace of the couch.

"Had a long day, Hanyu?" Rika asked.

The girl in question winced. "Something like that. Tomorrow we're going to meet someone here."

Rika raised her eyebrows. "You're not talking about Akemi, right?"

Hanyu shook her head. "No...I doubt she would even consider coming here after what happened today..."

Somehow Rika had a feeling that Hanyu was not referring to their talk earlier.

"Who is this person?"

Hanyu looked uncertain on whether she should reveal more, but soon acquiesced. "Her name is Aki Mabayu, and she is also a looper."

"Does this city have a property that attracts time loopers?" Rika wondered aloud. "That's the third, well fourth with Satoko, no, no, it would if we include you as well. Anyway, what exactly does this looper want from us?"

"I...don't know, I suppose we will find it out tomorrow, I invited her to come here around afternoon."

Somehow Rika got the feeling that Hanyu had a suspicion of what the other looper wanted, but she didn't call her out, instead she asked her next question. "Is she similar Akemi? If she is, then I don't think we will be able to help her."

Hanyu pursed her lips. "No, she isn't, but that reminded me, Rika, I want you to talk with Homura-san again at some point."

"Why?" asked Rika with a tilt of her head.

"I think of you don't, then something terrible could happen to her."

"And?" asked Rika.

"Rika!" shouted Hanyu. "I know the two of you don't get along, but surely you can sympathize with someone who is stuck looping like you were?"

"I am doing that," responded Rika, "if I weren't, then I would have been far harsher on her than I was in our little talk."

Hanyu glared at her, honestly, that was quite unreal to Rika, normally it was the other way around in their relationship. It was...kind of refreshing to Rika in a way.

"What if you get dragged back into looping, wouldn't you want to avoid that possibility?"

Rika threw her a glare at the question she asked. "I would. However, let's just say that I would sooner want to end myself than continuing on to listen what Akemi has to say."

The purple haired girl then sighed aloud as she gave up on this. "Anyway, where's Satoko?"

Rika shrugged as she walked over to the fridge. "Shii, came over and now she took Satoko somewhere else with her. That reminds me, here."

She handed her the box containing the sweets from Angel Mort. Hanyu's eyes lit up when she saw what was in the box, and she started to eat from it right then and there.

"At least have something else before you go straight to the deserts," muttered Rika with a look of disgust in her eyes.

Hanyu pouted at her, and then asked, "When do you think Satoko will come back?"

She then finished eating all her favorite pastries in the box before Rika could comment anything further.

Rika sighed at Hanyu's behavior. "Any minute now, Shii said that she'll bring her back in an hour or two, and that was two hours ago."

"In that case, I'll just go to sleep. Please tell Satoko what I told you."

"At least eat something before you go to bed, otherwise you'll get stomachache tomorrow, also at least welcome Satoko back before you hit the bed," Rika said in a tired voice. "Honestly, can you try to act a little more dignified, and—"

Whatever Rika was about to say was interrupted by the door swinging open. Rika looked to see who it was and was relieved to see Satoko on the other side, along with her was Shion.

However, something wasn't right; Satoko looked to be frantic and in a panic as she looked around. Then she spotted Hanyu and ran up to her.

"Hanyu, please do something!" Satoko yelled then she dragged Shiom into the room.

The green haired girl was also acting a bit strange, almost lifeless. Then Satoko showed Hanyu, Shion's new ring...a ring far too similar to the one that was worn by Tomoe Mami.

Hanyu got up with a groan, and then dragged Shion into her own room, and closed the door behind them.

Satoko felt Rika wrapping her arms around her, pulling her into a hug, and calming her down. She hoped Hanyu would be able to help Shion.

She didn't want to lose Shion just to get back Nii Nii, she didn't want to trade them. She didn't want Shion to transform into of those monsters.

She felt tears gather in her eyes again. *No, I can't think like that. Hanyu surely knows something!*

Her vision began to blur, then a hand wiped away the tears; the hand of Rika. "It will all be alright, Satoko," muttered Rika into her ears.

"But..." she mumbled out, "what if...what if it isn't? What if Shion-neesan will become a monster that kills people?"

"I won't accept this Fragment them," said Rika.

"You...you would do that for me?" she questioned.

Rika grimaced. "Not gladly, but you and Shii are my friends. If this Fragment only has suffering in store for you, then I'd go to another one."

Satoko stared at Rika for a few seconds before she tackle-hugged into the couch, and started to cry into her shoulder.

They stayed there for a few minutes till Satoko realized just how close she was to Rika, she tried to move away, but Rika held her close.

"Stay here, please," murmured Rika as she held her close. Satoko fidget a bit, but complied with Rika's request.

"I...why...?" asked Satoko slowly, not quite sure why Rika was holding her so close. Not that she didn't like the feeling, she was just a bit confused by it.

"I want you to know that you can always rely on me, Satoko," answered Rika with a small smile. "So, please don't try to leave, at least not now."

Satoko started to fidget even more as her face turned a bright shade of red. "I...thank you, Rika...there's also something...something I want to tell you, I-I love—"

"Oh, my, just what are the two of you doing, Rika, Satoko?" asked an all to familiar teasing voice, interrupting Satoko's confession.

Satoko quickly struggled free of Rika without much resistance from the blue haired girl this time, and hugged Shion.

The green haired girl hugged her back with just as much force as Satoko hugged her.

"There, there. Your Nee Nee isn't going anywhere any time soon," muttered Shion into Satoko's ears as she held her close.

Satoko was too distraught to correct Shion's childish nickname for herself that she insisted Satoko use.

Hanyu, meanwhile, looked like she wanted desperately to fall into bed and to never get back up. "If none of you mind, then I would like to go to bed. Have a good night, Rika tell Satoko what I told you."

Satoko could hear her walk away and the door close behind her as Hanyu entered her room.

There was an awkward silence which followed Hanyu's exit, a silence which was not filled till Rika sighed out loud. "I suppose, I should start this by asking what Hanyu has told you, Shion?"

"Not much...just what Magical Girls are, and what they become after their Soul Gems get full with grief, and she also cleansed my one," answered Shion. "By the way, how does Hanyu-chan know all of this? Is she also a Magical Girl?"

Rika giggled at what Shion said. "No, she isn't. What she is, is something I would normally not reveal to either of you, but I suppose I have no other alternative." She took a deep breath to steady herself. "Hanyu is Oyashiro-sama."

The reaction to that statement was instantaneous. Satoko's eyes widened in shock, and in...fear? While Shion's reaction was a bit more subdued, she was, nevertheless, also really shocked by this revelation.

"Does...does that mean...she knows what I did to the statue?" Satoko asked, her voice trembling a bit.

"Wait? That was you?" asked Shion in worry.

Rika waved that off. "Yes, she knows. Don't worry about it though. Hanyu doesn't hate you, you're one of her closest friends."

This calmed down Satoko somewhat, even if she was still a bit anxious about Oyashiro-sama being real, and knowing that it was Satoko who broke the statue's hand.

"Well," muttered Shion slowly, "how should we treat Hanyu-cha... I mean Oyashiro-sama...then?"

Rika turned to her. "Just treat her the same way you have always treated her when you didn't know. Don't refer to her as Oyashiro-sama, especially infront of the others."

Shion nodded along, and Satoko asked something else, "I should probably apologize for breaking that statue, right? Even if she knows and doesn't hold it against me."

Rika hummed to herself. "You can, Hanyu would most likely appreciate it as well. But, there's something else we need to talk about too. There's a Magical Girl Hanyu invited here tomorrow, I'd like for Shii to either come back here around the afternoon, or just stay the night, if you nothing to do tomorrow."

The green haired girl appeared to be deep in thought. "I guess I could stay here, but I...I want to see the results of my wish, so I will have to decline this offer to stay here, Rika-chama."

Satoko blinked up at Shion, and then her eyes widened, as she had just realized something really important.

Nii Nii, he's...he should be fine now. He should no longer be in a coma!

"Your wish was about Satoshi, wasn't it?" asked Rika as she looked between them. Then she sighed. "You should go then, Coach may contact you any minute now, or he might just wait to contact you in the morning. But once you know the results of your wish, please come back here ideally with Satoshi, so that Satoko can also see him."

Shion nodded and quickly went to the front door; however, just as she was about to leave, her phone rang. She looked down and saw from whom the call was coming from, and swiftly picked it up.

"Coach?" Shion asked into the phone.

"..." came a long reply from Doctor Irie, a reply which Rika wasn't able to hear.

Whatever Doctor Irie's reply was, the reaction on Shion's face could not be mistaken for anything else but pure joy. "That means...should I come now, or tomorrow morning?"

"..."

"Morning, okay, okay. Thank you, Coach. Thank you," Shion then hung up on Irie.

Satoko was the first one to ask, "Is...is Nii Nii fine?"

She was still a bit unsure about that Magical Girl creature, Kyubey, being to grant wishes, but if Nii Nii was fine, then the granting Wishes part was at least real.

Shion smiled brightly and embraced Satoko in a hug. "Yes! The doctors in the clinic ran some tests on him before Coach contacted me, and and he got a clean health bill!"

Satoko returned the embrace with tears of joy, then she separated from Shion and dragged Rika into their hug much to the blue haired girl's confusion.

In spite of her apparent surprise, Rika returned Satoko and Shion's hug with smile on her face.

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