

Every time I See an Alarm Clock I Remember Something Vol 1:

Chapter 4: The Ticket Check

I kept on running.

I kept on running.

-I kept on running.

-And in the middle of my fast footsteps, images of my memories with Kyouhei-san came to flash all over my entire mind.

I first met him during summer the moment when we transferred to Shioiri. I really do not have friends that time as I enjoy myself being alone reading books about aliens and stuffs. I rarely gets out of my room since the beginning those sorrowful summer days. Well; not until I saw that boy reading the most interesting book while under the shades of the tree. I decided to approach him.

“Uhhh.., a-about that book...,”

A hesitation suddenly comes down to me.

“...”

That boy looked at me.., seemed a little wondering.

“-about this book? Aliens....”

He continued as he lets out a sigh.

Sigh*

“It surely is interesting isn’t it? I wonder if aliens are real..., just by thinking about their probable existence is really wonderful right?”

That was the first time I’ve found someone who can understand me, someone with the same curiosity as I am.

I’ve come to think of it.., that was actually the day where I started to get outside more often. He was the one who led me to such amazing adventures. He almost turned my world into a different way. To put it simply, he changed me.., he changed my life.., he; -changed my world.

Every day was interesting, and my entire life was given with colors. My monochromatic world had given colors, those are colors that even radiate in the night sky. Each second was filled in with excitement..., and each laughter was filled in with good memories.

Though the end was something that I didn’t expect myself. We can’t really help it all along. No one can make the time stop. No matter how long we hold on..., the days will continue. The days will end...., autumn will begin once again. I still remembered our last farewell..., we’re really not sure if we can see again each other that time..., the only thing that I’m certain is that “it’s quite sad.” The tears that I hold back..., what does it really mean?

I remembered watching the train that he is riding run off. It was really sad.., it feels like I’ve felt lonely once again..., is he really my only friend? I wondered. If he really is, then it must be the reason why I’m crying all the way out without his presence.

“I can’t hold back anymore” –I said to myself..., the seemingly trivial days are finally over. Now; I’ll return to the person I’m supposed to be. Will he come back?

-haha...,

That’s certainly a question that no one can confidently answer. What am I talking about..., really.

Our first day is already composed of thousands of adventures within our vast imaginations. Thinking that the world is strange, mysterious, and interesting. Thinking that life would never be boring in our way.

Days had passed until our farewell,

-farewell; huh...,

Those are days that can easily be counted by our fingers. It's quite too short for a long term of good memories. That day I said to myself: "I must be strong until he comes back".

-I must change this weak personality of mine that he witnessed in the first place. I must be independent. I must grow up. I must be strong. I must be reliable. I must be trustworthy. One day, he must see a developed kind of me.

That was the day when I decided to change for the better. I must depend on myself. Yeah; that's right.

After we arrived to Kyoto, my father left me to Grandma. He entrusted me to her, and left to work overseas. My parents is really not that close to Grandma's, actually it is the first time that I've seen my grandmother on my father's side. I really don't know the whole story, what I'm only sure, is that my father isn't that close to Grandma. Even so, she admitted me without any second thoughts. Perhaps she's only becoming considerate to my Dad after that sorrowful experience of his.

"-it's okay, Yoshida, we'll take care of her. After all, I actually wanted to take good care of one of my granddaughters. You really don't need to worry, first of all, you need to move on. And I know that keeping yourself busy on work is a really big help."

Those are the words that Grandma had said. Though it isn't the exact phrases still; I admired her for accepting me with all her heart's content.

Gramps haven't said a word in regards with that issue. He just carefully watching us from afar distance with a serious facial expression.

From that day on.., I decided to change myself. They have no idea of my crybaby personality from before. That's why this time, I will never show them that persona. I will be strong. I will prove to them that I'm reliable on many things. The moment I entered this household, I made a commitment to myself that I must never be a burden to anyone. I must not be a nuisance or else Dad will be discouraged of my attitude.

I must prove something! Moving forward and be productive for each and every day –that is my goal.

-that could be my goal for now. And perhaps one day, I will show to Kyouhei-san the different me. Is he my inspiration from that start?

Who knows..., maybe he is supposed to be, after all, he is one of the other reasons why I became strong.

Now that I've think of it, am I really fooling everyone? Based on the fact that I changed my persona in the nick of time, does it mean that I'm trying to deceive everyone? Am I really fit to this cynical and arrogant personality?

-that's what I thought months after I live on to Grandma and Gramps' house. Now, I'm not really taking that topic in a serious way. First of all, no one can change the fact that people change through time. I can't escape that fact myself, that's why..., no matter if this change of personality is a fake or not, still; I'll live on and carry all of me along. There is no way I'll give up on life just for that stupid reason.

I spend most of my time studying aliens..., anyone could simply judge that I'm wasting my precious time because of that. But honestly.., that is a hobby..., and a hobby cannot be removed that easy. It is the same as a writer having a writer's block..., he must said to himself that he should quit writing. But as the time passes..., he just cannot remove that addictive sense on him. He will write again and again..., and no one can stop him. Just like me..., no matter how many people thinks of me as different, I wouldn't care. No matter how many times I say to myself that I should give up..., I'll never stop. That's how it supposed to be.

Every dreamer has a goal..., and every goal needs a proponent who can achieve it. Giving up..., is never an option.

Somehow..., my hobby of searching for aliens isn't productive at all. But at least I've found a time traveler right? I know that's a different story..., but I think all of it is fated for me to meet again the only person who can understand me. I certainly believe that every action has a corresponding outcome or consequence. This might be called as the 'Butterfly Effect' in many time travel movies. For sure.., meeting with Ichinose-san, being settled into Grandma's house.., and anything else that involves me is a part of the cycle.

I met Kyouhei-san for the second time because of that reason.

Although this time I've felt like I made a mistake. Instead of having fun with him..., I decided to play evilly. I haven't even realized that he might leave for anytime.

-just like what exactly happened this time.

Will he say goodbye again?

I kept on running.

I kept on running.

-I kept on running.

I just don't want to get tired, but my body is giving up. How long will it take to get to the train station? I'm not really fit on this marathon.

At last..., I had a vision of the site. It's just a few steps away.., do your best Sora.

I kept on running.

I kept on running.

-I kept on running until my one last breath.

I've finally reached it! I was consistently panting while very tired and exhausted. I stopped for a bit as I wiped my sweat with my handkerchief. I bended my knees as I held it tightly with both hands.

-I'm really tired. But this isn't the right time to rest. I must find him first.

I took a deep breath, and then slowly exhaled it.

It's time to search for Kyouhei-san.

Without a sudden expectation, I accidentally took a glance towards him. This is truly called "luck". Just in a single move of my neck, I've found out what I'm looking for.

He wasn't that surprised when he found me.

He really is expecting this turnaround of events.

"-hey."

He said while half-raising his hand.

"..."

I just couldn't make a reply.

Then suddenly, the train that he is about to ride run off. He was left by the vehicle as he closed his eyes.

We're really up close to each other.

"I guess I just need to wait for the next train.., well; let's have a drink."

He says so as I quickly nodded.

He bought me a drink from a vending machine. It was a pure 100% orange juice. Though I don't exactly believe on that advertisement fact.

"I'm glad that Satoshi-san bring you here...,"

"Just how long have you been friends with him..., you seemed really close?"

I said while lowering down my head and seated on the bench next to the vending machine.

"Ah.., that! Actually I just talked to him recently for that favor."

So he really insisted to have a chat to someone whom he doesn't know just to let me come here. The Kyouhei-san that I know is not that good for handling simple conversations, that's why I think he also changed. He also grown up, just like me.

"So; is your mother alright?"

He looked at me, then he also seated beside me.

"I still don't know the details. That's why..., I'll head to the hospital she placed in to look after her."

"Do you actually need to leave?"

I muttered with a low voice so that he cannot hear it even up close.

"hmmm?"

He wondered.

“You know, I’m actually happy for knowing that you are still the way you are back then.”

What does he mean by that? Doesn’t he realized that I’ve totally changed?

“You’re still very optimistic, and I admire you for having that behavior. There’s no need to worry Hana-san, everything’s gonna be alright. I’m positive of it., I will return to Kyoto as soon as possible. And starting from that day..., we must share each of our stories okay?”

He said with delight.

-Optimistic huh..., I really don’t know that I possesses that behavior to myself. I just thought that my personality is all filled with cynism, arrogance, and strong wits. I really don’t know anything about being optimistic.

Thus, afterwards..., our conversation continues until train that Kyouhei-san will ride comes in. I haven’t even realized to myself that couple or several minutes had passed since then..., and this moment, it’s certainly the time to make my promise.

-I will never hold back.

“So, Hana-san..., I guess this is the time to part ways. We are about to be separated again starting this point..., so; never hold back okay?”

He straightforwardly said it to me as he turns back and heads to the train.

So he also expected this scene right from the very beginning. So he hasn’t forgotten that lonely scenery long ago.

-he is expecting this to happen that’s why I should never ruin his expectations.

Right!

I must never ruin his expectations!

“Kyouhei-san!”

I shouted as I clenches my fists at the same time.

My loud voice grabbed his attention as he turns around towards my direction. Then I run straight through him until I gets close. I grabbed the edge of his coat’s sleeves and casted my head downwards. This time for sure-

-I will never hold back my tears.

I lifted up my face to look at his facial expression.

Ah...,

I’m certainly right. Just by looking at my face right now..., he was a bit shocked, and afterwards satisfied.

I dropped out my tears. That’s right, this is the promise that I made to myself once the same scene happens again.

I will cry until my eyes dries out.

-that’s my promise.

By doing that action, I accidentally remembered the past. It was the same as this..., our last farewell after summer. It was the time that Kyouhei-san will leave. I really hold back my tears that time, and that action saddens Kyouhei-san. That’s why this time..., I will be different. I will change for the better, I will change for his sake.

Right now, he is showing a very satisfied facial expression together with a contented smile. My weak persona had returned, the crybaby “me” is back. All of it is for him to understand that I am me and nothing else.

“Holding on your tears back then is lonely..., isn’t it?”

That’s right; he is definitely right. The way I hold back my tears at the train station during he left is kind of lonely. I cannot truly show him how precious and important he is for me. So that’s how it is..., crying doesn’t mean you are weak, instead., you are considered strong because you can face your problems. Crying isn’t a form of giving up., it is a form of moving on. It isn’t a form of a loss, instead; it is a form of acceptance.

Right; I will cry this time. I will prove him that I’m strong, moving on, and having the acceptance of this situation.

“Promise me that you’ll return soon okay?”

-it’s okay if I show him my weak personality.

-because I know that I can trust him..., I know that he believes me.

Considering the things going along in our way, this should be a piece of cake. There’s no problem.

“Don’t worry, I’ll return soon. This is no big deal., so Hana-san; I’m glad for the effort that you’ve shown for today. I’m happy that you’ve become my friend. This is just a simple reminder, whenever you feel alone..., just look the same and one and only thing that any person could see in each and every corners of the world....”

I really cannot get what he meant..., but then he continued:

“-just look at the same sky, whenever how long the distance we’re apart, just look at the same sky. Let’s do that together, and for sure we will never forget each other.”

Ah..., so that's what it means. It is really a fact that there is only a single sky in the whole world, so just by looking at it at the same time..., our hearts can connect to each other just like the stars in the night sky.

"So; I'm heading off Hana-san."

He says so as he turns around and heads to the train's door.

I made a single wave of goodbye as a response.

I'm glad. I'm glad because I came to see him. This will be again another part of a memory that I can truthfully share.

In a broad daylight, I heard the train loudly sounded as it gone far away from my peripheral vision. I'm sure that I'm gonna miss him for a while.



It's already too late to return to school, that's why I decided to go home and have a rest. Grandma was quite surprised by my early dismissal, and so..., to make things clear, I told her a lie..., or somehow an excuse for this unexpected situation. I told her that I'm not feeling well that's why I head home. Of course she will be worried of my condition, she thinks that I'm sick after all.

Now, I am inside my room while lying down my bed. She wanted me to take a rest for a while so that I could quickly recover. Though this is a form of excuse., making a lie to my Grandma really brings me guilt to myself. This fake illness just made things more complicated.

But setting that aside; in regards with Ichinose-san's goal. What will we do for the time being? Will I directly say to her that her father is Kyouhei-san so that she can be prepared once he returns? That could also work, but first things first. Will she believe me right away? I'm not so sure to myself either, honestly., I'm not certain if Kyouhei-san really is Ichinose-

san's father in the future. Most of them are mere theories. Theories that needs a concrete proof or convincing evidences.

Nuhhh..., what should I really do....?

The only supporting evidences that I have right now is the fact that Ichinose-san's father and Kyouhei-san's hobbies are the same. I'm also certain to a possibility that Kyouhei-san could be related or linked to the Ichinose family. Their facial features also matches.

So only the hair color didn't matched huh...,

Will Kyouhei-san marry a foreigner someday? I'm just curious.

Ah...

Just by thinking about that fact can make me rest at ease. Everything means that I'm not the person fated to be Kyouhei-san's love interest in the future. So we won't be together eh..., that's okay for me..., because I don't really have any intimate feelings for him on the first place. I'm busy with my very own slice of life..., I don't have time to take my genre of romance.

First of all, how can I manage to look over to someone if I can't even take responsibility of myself? That would be a trouble on the making. For me, alien's discoveries is even better than finding romance. I'm likely compared to the anime otakus who prefers 2D girls than 3D.

Oh..., here I am again with my train of thought. I was clearly off topic. So, where did I left?

Ah.., it's about the next succeeding actions while Kyouhei-san isn't yet here.

Ah..

-an Idea suddenly come up to my mind.

Based from the obvious fact that Kyouhei-san preferred to be a realist, it will be clear that he will never believe our propositions if we do not have a proof. That's why, tomorrow's goal is to find one, and if we cannot find one, then we will create a proof ourselves. 'To see is to believe'; that was his perception in life. So in order to sustain a proper reasoning behind that perception we need to create a convincing evidence.

An evidence that will likely satisfy him.

-a time machine.

Now that I've think of it, I think I will really get to the point of fixing Ichinose-san's time machine as soon as possible. 'Easier said than done' –I just copied what she said that day. So this is going to be my flawed plan.

I really don't like how that sounds..., but it can't be helped. I admit that this plan would be kind of flawed all along. This is just a hypothesis, a mere assumption.

I'm still not a hundred percent sure. But this could be my plan. To keep things busy, we just need to use our free time on fixing Ichinose-san's time machine. Really! That's absolutely 'easier said than done'! But I still have this hope.

-optimistic?

I recalled what Kyouhei-san said before he leaves. Am I really becoming optimistic? I'm not really sure if he's playing dumb with me or telling the truth. Perhaps that could also be his way to manipulate my behaviors. Of course if he believes that I'm optimistic., then I could also believe to myself that I'm optimistic. That way..., even though I'm not really optimistic from the start I can just quickly become one. It's because I believed in his words.

Right! That's right!

So I admit defeat this time. I think he successfully manipulated my personality just like what Ichinose-san did.

I'll believe in you Kyouhei-san. This time I'll be optimistic!



[April 10, 2015]

I already talked to Ichinose-san that we need to have our maintenance to her time machine until we successfully fixes it. But in the end it felt like she didn't took me seriously. The information about Kyouhei-san still remained hidden for now. And so, to thoroughly convince her, I came up to a one-sided plan.

While we are walking on the same route headed to the school I said:

"Kyouhei-san said to me that he really is curious about you."

That certainly grabbed her attention as she looked at me.

"You know, I already told him that you're a time traveler. You would have thought of a reason why I told him right?"

"-and the answer would be simple. It's because I trust him."

"..."

She was suddenly out of words.

"I was surprised even to myself that Kyouhei-san instantly believed me. He said to me that he is really interested on time travelers in the first place. Actually he was excited to talk to you. But unfortunately, he has his own priorities for now."

“He said to me that he wanted to be friends with you once he return. He is really excited on how a time machine works, that’s why; he really is looking forward through it.”

Then I paused... then continued.

“-I’m sorry but, I accidentally promised one thing to him.”

“...and what’s that?”

She questioned out of curiosity.

“I promised him that I will let him use your time machine once he returns.”

“...”

She became speechless for the second time.

Does this one brings her a negative effect? I really don’t know, first of all, she hates time machines. She says so herself--- ‘Time machines are the worst inventions’. Of course from that point of view, it would be hard for her to agree that she will let her use Kyouhei-san this seemingly worst invention.

“-but my time machine is totally broken, haven’t I said this to you the other day? It would take months just to finish fixing my time machine even though there are already prepared materials. That’s why..., your promise would be impossible to come true.”

I know, that could be her answer. That’s why; I need a follow up reply.

“-but we should at least try right? Please Ichinose-san, this’ll be my first favor to you.., so please..,”

I says so with a pitiful facial expression.

She’s in debt on me..., that’s why for sure she’ll return the favor. Yeah right.., she’ll return the favor, because once she doesn’t, her conscience will always be following her like a shadow. That could be my trump card for the time being.

She'll accept as long as I tell to her that it's a favor.

"O-Okay..,"

She answered with hesitation.., but really; how could she refuse?



And so, the days passed by as we kept ourselves busy for most of the time. I was certainly fully booked. I'm somehow filled with tasks that is perfectly scheduled. There's studying, Time machine maintenance, alien observation, and search for Ichinose-san's father. Yes, though I'm positive that Kyouhei-san is Ichinose-san's father, we still continued our days to find for other clues. Ichinose-san has no ideas of my own investigation about Kyouhei-san's whereabouts and continues on finding new ways for searching her beloved father. I kept her busy from time to time, and at the same moment I wanted to observe her from the possibilities of suspicion. So far, until now..., we couldn't find the 'Ichinose Kyouhei' that she's been speaking of.

-and that fact basically proves that Kyouhei-san could really be Ichinose-san's father.

Months had come over since then. Kyouhei-san hasn't returned yet and we haven't even finished fixing the time machine. Everything seemed hopeless this time. Will my optimism work until the end? Not so sure really;

Now I wondered..., will he ever return again?

[AFTER TWO MONTHS]

-still; nothing happened.

[AFTER THREE MONTHS]

-nothing special happened but it's the start of summer break. For a while I think the daily maintenance for the time machine will be faster.

-except for the several black-outs that I've experienced once again. But this time..., there are no any message from my other self (if there really is).

[AFTER FOUR MONTHS]

-the same days goes on...,

-and then...,

I received a news before the homeroom started.

"I'm happy to tell you all that Koudai-san will finally return."

Our homeroom teacher said as a form of announcement.

Everyone except me, Ichinose-san, and Michiru-san didn't made a seemingly loud chatter about that news. We just smiled to each other.

-at last; Kyouhei-san...,

-returned.



[August 24, 2015]

It was the day Kyouhei-san returned! I'm pretty excited. By the way..., though it's also kind of unbelievable to myself but..., whether you believe it or not, me and Michiru-san a.k.a "The Wicked Eye" are finally in good terms. We are likely getting along, but we're not that close. And still; he can never hope for my assistance regarding his one sided courtship towards Ichinose-san. We are just friends and there's no anything beyond that.

Of course., he is really a total nuisance in the first place. He is the future classification of the word 'trouble'; that's why I must stay out of his bounds.

Setting that nonsense background story behind..., I'm really excited on his arrival. Actually Ichinose-san and I decided to wait for him at the train station after school. Though we haven't really exchanged e-mails since the day he left..., I'm really glad because Michiru-san has one. Michiru-san was actually the person who informed me of the exact time of his return. It was 18:00. The time where the sun might have already set.

At last, the train finally had its stop over. Now., we need to only count for several seconds before his arrival. The train's door opened as the barrage of people gets out of it., of course we'd probably lose track on finding him, but it's like it'll never happen this time.

-because the moment the door opened, he was luckily the first person that I've seen. He might be very excited to return. The two of us watched him from afar distance.

Ah., am I the only person thinking about this?

The Kyouhei-san that I am seeing right now is smiling right after he unexpectedly watched us from the same distance. He might say to himself that he is glad because someone waited for him. It certainly proves that we care for him at all. We cared for his existence...,

-but what's this?

Though that smile is clearly showing his charming side still..., it's like that smile is fake.

-More like-

-a way to hide his true feelings....

-that man..., is sad; there's no doubt about it.

"Hey, "

He half-raised his hand and welcomed us after getting close.

"..."

I just cannot think of anything to reply. But I just cannot let this go on just as it is that's why I should make a move.

"Welcome home, Kyouhei-san."

I calmly said to him.

"What took you so long, Kyouhei-san?"-that was actually the thing that I'll say. But in this situation, I've felt like I won't have the will to say it anymore.

"I know that you're tired, so I think it's better to furtherly talk you for tomorrow."

That's right., I need to make things cool off before anything happens. Though I'm not absolutely certain that there's something wrong. Yet I'm just aware of it. First of all, one false move and might become the entire class's enemy.

If I hurt Kyouhei-san's feelings, then the rumors formulated by that damn Michiru might be connected at some point.

And so, we decided to head to our respective homes. Tomorrow is going to be that day huh, will I still say to him that he is Ichinose-san's father? But most importantly, how can I prove it to him? This is just not making any sense.

I can clearly visualize myself of the situation for tomorrow. I will have a private talk with him..., and thus afterwards, I will tell him that he is Ichinose-san's father in the future. Just how apathetic is that? I can see him laughing in front of me and say this: "I know that you're just trying to cheer me up."-I'm sure that's what he'll say to me.

Wait; will it be alright if he interprets it as a joke at first? That way, he'll never take my proposition in a serious manner. I might turn out to be an airhead but it's okay. And later, once the time machine becomes presentable (even if it's not yet fixed) and Ichinose-san is ready, then I'll try to seriously explain to him everything.

-but that's way too easier said than done.



[August 25, 2015]

I marked my calendar to make the most frustrating conversation on my entire life. By the way, right after the summer break, the seats have changed. And whether anyone else could believe it or not, but Michiru-san was unfortunately seated right behind me. I'm said to tell but..., he is really annoying, more annoying than Ichinose-san for the very least.

[Lunch break]

I quickly talked to Kyouhei-san as we again headed to the rooftop of the first year's school building. I strolled forward and held the grills of the rooftop's side as I looked up the summer-blue sky.

“Hey Kyouhei-san; do you believe on time travelers?”

I said to him out of nowhere in which it also serves as an introduction.

“Time travelers? What’s that supposed to mean?”

I sure he’s dumbfounded by my question.

“If there’s one terrible regret in your past, are you willing to turn back time just to correct all of it?”

His eyes wide-opened after hearing my words.., now it’s definitely clear that’s he has regrets in life.

Then he lowered his head...,

“Of course! I’ll do everything to change my mistakes.”

He says so in a lower tone of voice.

I guess.., this is the right time to say that!

“I know you’ll think that I’m fooling you but, if you wanted to see an actual time traveler then we should head home together.”

Is my words convincing enough.., not really I think!

-but he stayed silent.., as if he had really taken me seriously.

“-okay.”

He said.

That was really unexpected. Is he planning something or what?!

But no matter how you look at it, still; everything turned out to be a success.



As what we've agreed, we really walked home together. He is really serious that time, he almost never speaks a word. Then we finally reached the sunflower fields where the time machine was hidden. Now that I've only think about it, Ichinose-san said few months ago that someone really messed up with her time machine. That could also mean that there are other people that have seen it? Yet it feels like the person/s who broke Ichinose-san's time machine isn't interested on time travelers at all.

Most importantly, no one came to look over that time machine on the past months of our continuous maintenance. That is really kind of weird., but really! My train of thoughts came over again as I forgot my true intention of bringing Kyouhei-san to the fields.

Ichinose-san happens to be already waiting for us at that spot. She suddenly waved her hand once she had a vision of us in a far distance.

As we gets close Ichinose-san welcomed:

"Hello! Koudai-san."

It seemed like she finally developed her confidence on having a straight conversation with Kyouhei-san.

"..."

But Kyouhei-san remained speechless and nodded instead.

"This is the time machine that I've been speaking of."

I said to him as I was crossing my arms.

"Ah, so this is it....,"

That reaction though..., it feels like he's fooling us because of that obviously fake facial expression.

Then he looked at me with a displeasingly irritated face.

“Are you making fun of me?”

Right! He’s indeed so serious while saying those words. Of course he might think that we are fooling him, but it certainly became way too overboard as it resulted for an insult to him.

“...”

Ichinose-san was aware of that seemingly loud tone of voice. It’s like she’s a little scared of Kyouhei-san right now.

“It’s true! That really is a time machine!”

I says so to defend myself.

Then he showed a sign of madness on his face.

“Then can you prove it to me?!”

Just what is the meaning of that? Oh no..., it can’t be...,

-his last regret.

“Help me bring her life back!”

Right;

-my eyes wide-opened as I lowered down my head and the tips of my hair are all pointed to the ground.

Is he planning this all along? Or else..., is he that desperate to change his past getting to the point that he easily believes on my words about time travelers? Of course for this current time only an impossible miracle and extraordinary occurrences are the things or options left for him.

“So you’re just fooling me after all? Hey! Ichinose! Are you listening to me? Are you really my friend?”

He’s becoming hysterical.

“You’re a liar!!!”

He shouted.

That word..., really hits directly straight through my heart. He just called me a ‘liar’. Of course, he would call me that..., but it isn’t true right? Because that metallic engine right in front of us is a real time machine. He is an absolute realist right now, that’s why..., believing in things such as time travels is really absurd. However, he took out his pride just for one single chance like this.

But-

No matter how real my reasons could be., I just can’t make a move. The time machine isn’t working from the start.

**What-Will-I-Respond? What-Will-I-Respond? What-Will-I-Respond? What-Will-I-Respond?
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My questions to myself really placed me very unease.

What is going to be my proof?

Ahhhhhhhhrrrgggggghhhhhhhhh!!!!!!!

I just wanted to scream so loud but I just can’t do it!

“She’s not a liar!!!”

My uneasiness was suddenly placed with relief.

That voice should be gentle..., that voice must be coming from an idiot and stupid time traveler but..., she lighted my atmosphere a bit.

It’s been so long since someone came to defend me. She wasn’t forcing herself, that’s why her actions made me twice happier. This is some sort of an unbelievable outcome, but really; after all this is over, I should give thanks to her.

“Then give me a proof that she’s not lying!”

His loud voice erased my appreciation towards Ichinose-san’s effort.

Just what’s really wrong with him?

-my eyes wide-opened as I recalled something.

[Help me bring her life back!]

-that’s what he said recently... don’t tell me..,

No;

-his mother.

As I suddenly looked at him, he started to cry. He is grieving for his mother’s death. So that’s the meaning of his unparticular terrible mood right after his arrival.

I closed my eyes. I'm so pathetic..., how come I never thought about this possibility? Am I way too focused with my goal getting to the point that I've never pointed out what's actually happening?

I mean..., am I this stone-hearted?

Huh!!!! This is the worst!

What should I do? Will I make an apology?

This is my worst mistake..., a mistake that will humiliate me.

I lowered down my head. And slowly said:

"I'm sorry."

-right; this is the best that I can do.,

Ichinose-san looked at me. It seemed like she don't get it yet.

"My mother..., right after I returned she was still on a coma..., I never lost hope that time. Each and every day, each and every day.., I'm reading her favorite book right beside her. Hoping that I could reach her feelings, hoping that that way, she'll wake up."

His tears are consistently falling as he continues:

"-but my efforts is useless, months had passed and nothing changed. There's no sign of hope on her condition. I'm helpless, I can't even prove to her that I could be a son that she could be proud of. And then.., a day came when her body degenerated."

He kneels down the ground...,

“-I know.., she’d given up for some reason. I cried most of the time I visit her. Perhaps she could hear my weep all along. I was weak.., that’s what she thought for sure, and in order for me to move on.., she decided to give up.”

Then he looked at me...

“But really.., she’s wrong, I’m weak after all, of course her death is something that I will never escape from my memories.”

This was the first time that I’ve seen this side of him. The first time I saw him shed all the tears, this may be a proof that were just friends for a short period of time. I don’t know him.., I don’t know the true nature of the person named Kyouhei Koudai. This time I saw him in his break down, and it hurts that it’s giving me guilt to myself down under.

I’m really the worst friend.

“-of course her death is something that I can’t take am I right?”

He said while looking at me.

Ichinose-san and I just can’t make a response. Will we comfort her.., but how?

He stood up with his face casted downwards and gazed at Ichinose-san.

“Hana-san said that I’m gonna meet a time traveler here. Then that means you’re the time traveler that she’s been speaking of.”

He said as it was directed towards Ichinose-san.

“Help me turn back time. Everything might be absurd but..., what are the options that are left for me really?”

“...”

Ichinose-san was bereft of speech.

“No!”

She shouted.

“No matter how you beg., no matter how force you can show I will never change my mind., time machines are never meant to be used by anyone!”

Ichinose-san is trying to fight back as hard as she can.

Those words were strong enough to stop Kyouhei-san.

“-are you being selfish?”

Kyouhei-san is indeed serious. He is willing to be against to anyone just to fulfill his goal. He really did believed on my statements on the spot. Somehow., despite being a realist, there is still a part of him that could be compared to his childhood memories filled with different fantasy worlds. However, this turnaround is quite different..., it’s like there’s just no options left for him this time. He is just desperate, after all, returning one’s life is a thing that realists will never believe.

Soon after., tears also came out of Ichinose-san’s eyes. Maybe the word “selfish” directly hurt her feelings.

Seconds came as she clenches both of her fists as she answered with a loud voice:

“Yes! I’m selfish! I know that better to myself. But really., this is all for your sake. This is all for everyone’s sake...,”

Then she tilted her as her tears falls to the ground.

“I guess it is called selfishness that way right?”

Right., I really got what she said. She’s becoming selfish of herself for giving care and importance to others. She is selfish on giving help., she is selfish on giving everything for

everyone's sake. That is her selfishness., she really is different. Even though people decides to hate her., she will still care, she will never falter.

I really appreciate that side of her, that's why;

I will support her! I will defend her!

-but before I let out my words, she run away fast. More like she's trying to escape this scene and cry all the way she can from a corner whom anyone couldn't find.

I clenched my fists, breathes deep., and then shouted:

"Airi-san!"

I called out her first name.

As she turns around., it happened again.

“...”

How long have I been standing here?

I really cannot comprehend these emotions inside of me. Why am I here in the first place?

Then I suddenly noticed.., Kyouhei-san is also in here.

-what?

He is crying...,

Why?

“Oh.., Kyouhei-san; why are you?”

He wiped out his tears.

“I don’t even know to myself..,”

This is certainly a kind of mysterious situation.

Kyouhei-san crying out his tears.., we; together in the middle of the sunflower fields. I just can’t understand at all. What are we doing here in the first place? There’s nothing special to be seen from this view.., but why are we here?

There’s nothing here.., neither an alien aircraft nor a time machine, there’s nothing in here.

Wait..,

-time machine?

Why did I expect a time machine here? If it's going to be an alien aircraft that I'm expecting., then it's supposedly a given. But why time machine?

-my eyes wide-opened.,

I suddenly recalled some images., an image of an alien aircraft-like machine came to pop up in my mind. What is the meaning of that?

-and then suddenly.,

I recalled an image of a girl turning around to face my direction..., she was about to smile but then.,

My eyes wide-opened for the second time.

I felt like that situation was just a while ago., and before that girl turns around, she disappeared. Is that a mere delusion or something?

"Huhhhhhhhh!"

I was startled by that voice.

Kyouhei-san shouted as hard as he could, he quickly scratches his hair until it is fully messed up.

"I don't get this at all!"

He says as he is still messing his hair.

Then he turns around and commenced some steps away.

"I've had enough., I'm gonna leave!"

He really cannot cope up to this situation as he decides to walk away from the scene.

This is really messed up! I better also take my leave!

I walked away and directly headed to my home. It's really hard to analyze the situation.

Ah.., I come to realize one thing.., this happens often to me in this year.., there comes an abnormal occurrence wherein I just can't comprehend the situation.., more like I'm trying to remember something that I just can't.

Hopefully someone could answer these in the future.

As I crossed the game center, I suddenly stopped. Though.., being certain is not an option, I'll give it a try. I just have a gut feeling to myself that I can somehow recall some memories inside the game center that's why I decided to play for the mean time.



As I returned home, Grandma was kind of worried. Ah.., so it's already dark.., how come I've forgotten the passing of time? First of all, playing such games didn't helped me much.., it just made me remember my memories with my dad.

"Hana-san.., where have you been..,"

Grandma says with a half-raised eyebrow.., she's really worried.

"Uhhh.., I just had a long chat with a friend.., that's all..,"

I says so as an excuse.

"Really..! You already had a friend?"

No! My excuse is quite mistaken..,

“Is she the girl who just came here? It’s really unexpected that that girl knows my name, which is why., I simply assumed to myself that she is a close friend of yours.”

A girl who knows Grandma’s name?

Just who is that girl? Then I suddenly remembered her supposed image the moment when she tries to turnaround and suddenly vanished. Is she the same girl that Grandma’s speaking of?

It could be.,

“You know., before she heads home., she said to me that you’re doing great., it’s kind of weird but, that girl gave a formal thanks to me as she bowed her head. Sora-chan, your friend., I know that she’s good, so never let her go okay?”

-I-CHI-NO-SE.,

My eyes wide-opened.

Ichinose-sa..!

“...”

The black –outs happened again.

Ichinose-san., what happened to Ichinose-san?

It’s already dark., is she home yet?

“Have Ichinose-san already returned?”

I asked Grandma.

“Hmmn., Ichinose? She’s not home yet., is something wrong?”

Right! Just what exactly happened during those black outs?

I grind my teeth., and then turns around.

“I’m going to look for her.”

As I turns around and made a single step, I looked back to grandma.

“Don’t worry Grandma., everything’s alright. I’ll just look for her a bit.”

I ran fast –headed to the sunflower fields. The last memory that I’ve recalled before my black-out is the moment when she turns around and tries to convey a smile to me., there’s nothing that I can remember beyond that.

Just what is really this abnormal occurrence?

Argggghhhhhh!!!!

This is no fun at all!

The moonlight is radiating the night sky. I was running as fast as I can., what is she doing right now? What happened after that? After she turns around to look at me while trying to convey a smile, what happened next?

Ichinose-san! Just what is really happening? Each time I had those black-outs, what is happening to the current 'you'? What's happening to the current 'me'? What's happening to the current 'world'? Hopefully you can give me an answer once I decides to ask.

Hopefully., I can still find you., hopefully you are still at the sunflower fields while waiting for things to cool off a bit.

I'm still hoping that you are alright, Now that I think about it, it seemed like I'm missing your carefree smile all along.

At last; I finally reached the sunflower fields. I held both knees by both hands and bended my body. I was so exhausted and tired., but then I stand straight and retains my composure. Clenching my fist so hard, I walked straight to the site where the time machine is located.

I stared at her., I was looking her back, with her head casted downwards, she was definitely lonely.

"Ichinose-san!"

I called out her name with a loud voice.

Then she turns around., it seemed like it was the same action that she did before the black-out happened.

She turned around and conveys a smile.

Ah., so this is supposedly the next thing that happened.

Her smile., her smile has tears in it.

Is she faking her smile? Did she already breakdown?

I wanted to know for myself.

“Ichinose-san., are you okay?”

She closed her eyes then opened it afterwards.

“I never really expected these turnaround of events. Say, Hana-san, did I made the correct decision to myself? Does returning to this time to find my father made things worse?”

She sighed., and thus continued:

“My father would’ve hated me so much.,”

I came closer to her.

Yeah right..., I don’t want to prolong this charade., this will never end until I make a move. There’s no need to doubt myself of what could possibly happen once I fully come up to this decision. I just need to express the ‘me’ who had liven to Grandma and Gramp’s house. I need to show her the straightforward Sora Hana that she knew in the first place.

There’s no need to hesitate. I must do this.,

“Ichinose-san, do you know Kyouhei-san’s whereabouts?”

“I saw Kyouhei-san going home while he’s clueless of the situation he came in.”

She answered.

“Well; in regards to Kyouhei-san.., I wanted to tell you something.”

Then surprisingly she looked at me and smiled.

-she suddenly giggled.

“I know what you’re gonna say Hana-san..,”

“..?”

What is she pertaining?

“You’re gonna tell me that very important thing in regards to Kyouhei-san right? I’ve already figured it out myself.., I knew all along that you’ve been having your personal interest of what Kyouhei-san really is.”

Is that true? Does she knew already?

“You’re gonna tell me that.., Kyouhei-san is supposedly my long lost father right?”

My eyes wide-opened upon hearing her words. So she knew it!

“I first had the point of interest on him for being my father right after you started your uncommon actions towards Kyouhei-san. Actually it’s quite unbelievable that time, who would have ever thought that he is my father all along? I never really imagined it to happen, that is probably the reason why I can’t make a proper conversation towards him. You know; it’s kind of strange.., now that I’m watching my father, having a chat with him.., it’s really sad.”

Her tears falls out of her eyes as she continues:

“That was the first time I’ve experienced to myself being scolded by my father.”

Then she held a grin.., I just can’t tell her proper emotion anymore, she’s really mixed up.

Now; I think I don’t need to think of certain explanations, it’s kind of easier this way, but really.., is Ichinose-san happy right now? Does reaching her goal of finding her father worth

it? Now that everything is a mess., is it really the outcome that she's looking forward from the start?

No! That's not it., this is not what she's trying to see all along., she needs to smile., right now she might be smiling, but so far that smile isn't honest at all. It's very purpose is to hide her true feelings.

I clenched my fists.

"Ichinose-san!"

-then I shouted.

"Are you happy with this? Tell me., is this supposedly what you really wanted?"

She lowered down her head.

"Just like what I said to you right at the beginning., I'll leave it this way., I'm contented right now., just by seeing his face from a far distance., I'm already satisfied from it."

Right! Is that really true., she's starting to get down to my nerves.,

Because-

...- she's obviously lying.

"Stop fooling me out...,"

I said straightforwardly., this is a part of me after all.

Her eyes wide-opened for a split second.

"So since the beginning you're trying to fool me? You even keep some secrets, tell me Ichinose-san., are you really happy?"

“Yes.., I’m happy.”

Just by hearing her answer makes me upset as I lowered down my head.

“Liar..,”

I replied to her with a seemingly loud voice which resulted for her eyes to wide-open for the second time.

Then I breathes deep.

“Stop fooling yourself you idiot!”

I shouted with the loudest voice that I can bear.

“Tell me! Just what is going to be your next plans after achieving your goal? Will you go home and say to your mother that you’ve succeeded? And then what.., are you really satisfied to yourself? Ichinose-san.., there are chances that only happens once in a lifetime.., though you can just return again and again because of your capabilities still, please treasure this moment. It’s unfair.., you know, I’m actually kind of jealous to you because you can return to the past for anytime.., you can have the possibility to see your father again.., unlike me, I cannot see her anymore, that’s why..,”

As I recalled some memories I stopped.

Ah.., this memories seemed starting to become vague, but I still remember it.

“-Unlike me.., I can’t return to the past anymore.., I will not always have the time to tell to my loved ones what I actually feel.., to Grandma.., Gramps, and even Dad.., that’s definitely the reason why I was so happy when the second chance had given to me in regards to Kyouhei-san. So.., Ichinose-san; please don’t waste your time okay?”

It seemed like my words reflected to Ichinose-san.., she was in a shock.., more like realizing to herself that she’s not really happy on how things worked out this day.

“Okay; if it’s your request.., thanks’ Hana-san for making me realize one very important thing.”

That was her reply, finally.., she accepted it to herself.

“Well..,”

I reached out my hand towards her.

“-let’s go home.”

Of course..., accepting to yourself the sadness is hard, but we just can’t help it.., everything is still a part of moving on. People will learn from their mistakes, and that learning will only be attained once acceptance is granted. After all; acceptance must be the final stage of everything. Acceptance is right after giving up, that’s how it is.

And so; the next mission will begin.

----- END OF CHAPTER 4 -----