

## Eternal Lie

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# Eternal Lie

by [seerstella](#)

## Summary

The town of Iwatobi buried their 19-year-old sweetheart.  
Thirteen years later, it buries another and Sousuke Yamazaki suspects they may be connected.

## Notes

Disclaimer: I do not own anything in this fandom except the OCs and the story below.

Rating: R

Warnings: Character death, slash, OCs, possible OOCness

A/N: Written in Cold Case style, but unlike my Takumi-kun crossovers (posted on FFN), this is a pure Free fic, with a certain character as the cop. I actually have had this in mind since April 2018, but just started to do it now.

All songs are taken from Poets of the Fall's 2012 album *Temple of Thought*. Title's based on one of the songs, and the chapter titles are lyrics from *Cradled in Love*. Anyways, enjoy! ^\_^

# you had the blue note sapphire eyes

## Chapter Summary

Still, what he finally sees make his breath caught.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

### **(Opening Song: ‘Running Out of Time’ by Poets of the Fall)**

“Haru-chan! Haru-chan!”

Haruka Nanase rose from the bathtub, grunting. “Drop the -chan, Makoto,” he grumbled, more likely out of habit because he knew it was futile.

“C’mon, Haru-chan! We’re going to be late!” Makoto Tachibana, his friend since forever, half-yelled. “And please don’t cook today, we don’t have much time!”

“I do what I want.”

“Haru!” Makoto whined, but then lifted his hand. “Look! Mom made lunches for us at school, so please get going, Haru-chan! *Please?*”

“Whatever.” Despite his evident hesitation, Haruka stepped out from the bathtub and went to his bedroom. Within five minutes, he reappeared in front of Makoto, wearing his school uniform. He looked irritated that he couldn’t cook his own mackerel, but a glance at the two bentos his best friend was holding changed his mind. He took one of them, the one wrapped in blue cloth, and went towards the door. “Let’s go, Makoto.”

Makoto brightened. “Yeah! Ah, Haru! Wait up!”

They were walking next to the sea as usual, with Makoto filling in the silence occasionally. But at some point he stopped. Haru didn’t mind, because keeping up with his chattering needed effort that he was reluctant to give.

But then Makoto also stopped walking.

Haru didn’t realize it until he was a few steps ahead. He turned and saw his best friend standing there with an unrecognizable expression on his face, staring right at him. It made him frown in confusion. Reading Makoto, and vice versa, was something both of them excelled at.

“Makoto?”

It was enough to snap the taller boy from his daze. “Ah, nothing! Sorry! Sorry! I’m just a bit tired.”

“Aren’t you the one who told me to hurry up?” Haru asked, huffing.

Makoto laughed nervously and took several steps to stand next to Haru. “Yes, yes, sorry, Haru-chan!”

“Drop the -chan.”

They continued walking. Makoto resumed his monologue and didn’t stop until they arrived at school.

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The cliff was quiet. No rain, no storm. Nothing. Not tonight.

Only the sounds from the sea crashing against the rocks were the only source of voice. Iwatobi was a small town near the sea, and the chance to find someone out from their houses at this time of day was close to zero. There were only a few cars passing by the street right above it, quick and uncaring.

But today was different.

At the bottom of the cliff, held back by rocks so it couldn’t float freely to the sea, was a body of a teenage boy. His head was bleeding and his eyes were closed. Yet, there was a small smile on his face. He looked strangely peaceful.

A week later, a teenage girl’s ball slipped from her hand and fell to the cliff as she walked on the small sidewalk next to the street. She grabbed the railing, looked down to see where her ball was going, and called the police.

She didn’t get her ball back, but the town’s sweetheart was finally found after a massive search was conducted. The death broke the whole neighborhood. Police investigation was done and concluded the death as suicide.

Makoto Tachibana, nineteen years old, killed himself by jumping off the cliff in an isolated area not far from his place of residence.

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*Thirteen Years Later*

*This should have been a quiet morning*, Detective Sousuke Yamazaki thought to himself, rubbing his tired eyes as he walked into the familiar beach of Iwatobi. *But I guess I cannot have everything.* “What’s going on here?”

“We just found a body, sir,” Aoki, a rookie cop, replied as he brought Sousuke towards the crowd. He sounded nauseous and Sousuke couldn’t blame him. It was a rare occurrence that a dead body would be found in such a small, quiet town. They spotted the small group of police officers and paramedics. “A fisherman on his way to work reported it two hours ago.”

“Cause of death?”

“Drowning, most probably. His body was swept ashore, and they said he’s been dead for at least a day. But, uh...”

Sousuke stopped walking and stared hard at his subordinate. “What?”

“We found his bag, and there’s only this letter inside.” Aoki handed him a piece of paper, put securely inside the clear evidence bag. “I think you’d like to read it.”

Taking it, Sousuke skimmed through the words. It was short and the handwriting was strangely familiar.

*Makoto died because of me. I killed him and it took me thirteen years to understand that.*

*Tell his family I’m sorry. I love him.*

*Please don’t tell anyone about my passing, especially Rin. He’s still competing.*

Almost right after he finished reading, Sousuke threw the letter back to Aoki and rushed forward. As he tried to get through the crowd, he could hear words like ‘male, thirty-two years old’ ringing in his ears. He knew exactly why they could find out the deceased’s age really well, and why they were in the same age.

Still, what he finally saw made his breath caught.

In the middle of the crowd, inside an open black cadaver bag, laid no other than Haruka Nanase, an ex-gold medalist swimmer.

## Chapter End Notes

There goes the Prologue! Do you like it?

Sousuke is a sergeant, just like Takagi in the Japanese Cold Case.

He also no longer wears police uniform like in Future Fish. Gold Evolution!Sou is more likely as his outfit reference, maybe with no handkerchief in his chest pocket :D

Reviews are much appreciated! ^^

# take my soul off to faraway places

## Chapter Summary

*What made him so... peaceful?* Sousuke wonders.

## Chapter Notes

Warning: Some descriptions of gore (corpse). I don't think it's very explicit, but still, please read with caution.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

*There's no way Nanase killed Tachibana.*

That thought was enough to send Sousuke to the archives, or a room filled with cabinets and folders of cases that happened in the town. Even though Iwatobi was small and cases were equally minimal, the archive room was actually pretty big. When Sousuke finally found Tachibana's old folder, he settled on the only desk in the room, installed for the officers who wanted to study cases.

Opening the folder was like opening a can of worms. It brought memories for Sousuke, back to their high school days. He wasn't remotely close to Tachibana, but Rin was and even though Sousuke had a beef with Nanase—who he'd never really liked—he had nothing against the tall boy. Hell, even Rin never badmouthed the guy when they were still at odds with each other. *A literal angel*, he'd said in Tachibana's funeral, between all the snot and tears that soiled Sousuke's suit as he cried in his embrace.

Sousuke continued opening the folder and examined the contents. He saw the pictures of Tachibana's bloated, bloody corpse, both on the bottom of the cliff and in the cold morgue. Since he'd been dead for a week before he was found, plus the fact that sometimes a little amount of seawater hit his body, his condition wasn't ideal to begin with.

Yet, there was a small smile on his lips.

The smile made Sousuke wonder. *Why's he smiling like that? What made him so... peaceful?*

Not wanting to stare at the photos any longer, he turned to the files. There were some testimonies, spoken by Tachibana's friends and families, giving more insight about the teen and his condition up to the day of his demise. According to his parents and homeroom

teacher, he'd been depressed because of the university entrance test, and everything just went south from there.

*Well, that explained the suicide part.*

Sousuke continued reading. He recognized the names of the remaining Iwatobi swim club members, with Nagisa Hazuki claiming to be the last Iwatobi High School student who talked to Tachibana, a few hours before he disappeared. He stopped when a thought hit him.

*Where was Nanase?*

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The zoo wasn't crowded when Sousuke came after work hours. Plus, it was a weekday; there weren't many visitors to begin with. It took him longer than necessary; despite the fact that Rin had forced him to learn to use digital maps, Sousuke sometimes found himself in a wrong road here or different stop there. This was one of the cases, which made him fifteen minutes late from his original prediction.

"I'm sorry, but we just closed. We'll be open tomorrow—"

Sousuke flashed his badge, silencing the receptionist. He didn't want to be stopped just because of closing hours. "Yamazaki from the PD. Can I see Nagisa Hazuki?"

"Hazuki-san? He's at the back, sir. The penguins section, most probably. Turn right on the path over there and follow the direction."

"Thank you."

"Yamazaki-san, that's the left."

"Oh, sorry."

Thanks to the clear directions afterwards—Sousuke swore he could hear Rin snickering—he found the section he was looking for rather quickly. The penguins were chilling in their icy area, with some of them swimming happily. On one of the stones put on the corner, sat a blond man, watching the animals with equal happiness.

Sousuke knew full well who that was, even though they hadn't met for years. "Hazuki-san?"

The man looked up, and for a flash, he looked just like when Sousuke remembered him: a petit blond boy with bright magenta eyes and unlimited energy. Judging the way his mouth opened and his expression brightened with recognition showed Sousuke that he hadn't changed at all. Even his wavy hair didn't change much, only shorter under that white hat of *Iwatobi Zoo and Aquatic Center*.

"No way! It's Sou-chan! *Sou-chan!*" He looked at the penguins nearby. "Look, everyone! It's my old friend Sou-chan!"

Yes, he surely didn't change at all.

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After graduating high school, Hazuki moved out to study marine biology in a university in Tokyo. Both the subject and the destination shocked almost everyone, but apparently he did just fine. With said bachelor degree, he finally moved back home to work at the nearest zoo, wanting to do something he loved and contributing to the community he grew up in.

Now Sousuke found himself on the bleachers, where people usually sat on to watch the penguins performing. After around twenty minutes of waiting, Hazuki sat next to him, having taken a bath and changed to dispel the smell of fish and animals from him. He looked as cheerful as ever, which was comforting.

“Hazuki-san—”

“Shut it, Sou-chan. We know each other. Don’t act as if I didn’t want to beat Samezuka’s ass back in high school, when I still wanted to swim. I’m Nagisa.”

“*Hazuki*, then.” Sousuke’s tone was final, and Hazuki leaned against his seat, pouting. “Wait. You don’t swim anymore?”

“It’s not like I can come to my old school every time and I don’t really have time to go to the swim club. You know...” he gestured to the penguins’ area. “Work.”

Sousuke nodded in understanding. “Speaking about work... I actually came here for that.”

“I knew it. Otherwise, why would you come after we’re closed? What’s going on, Sou-chan?”

“It’s about Tachibana.”

Hazuki’s expression darkened instantly. Sousuke just wished he wouldn’t cry anytime soon. “Mako-chan? What’s with Mako-chan?”

“You said you were the last one who saw him before he disappeared, and that he was depressed.”

“Uh-huh.”

“In the reports, it’s said that he was depressed because he failed university entrance test.”

“Uh-huh. He had to take a gap year because of it. It’s so sad... watching him like that.”

“I noticed something strange, Hazuki. Where was Nanase?”

Hazuki flinched at the name. “You might not remember, but Haru-chan was with Rin-chan when Mako-chan died.”

Understanding dawned on Sousuke as another detail came into mind. “I see. He also didn’t attend the funeral.”

“Rin-chan did it for both of them. He said Haru-chan was preparing for a competition or something. I don’t remember.”



“And not attending his best friend’s funeral? Even Rin flew here for that.”

A long silence followed. “Well, Sou-chan,” Hazuki finally spoke. “They weren’t friends anymore at that time. They sort of drifted apart after Haru-chan left for Australia.”

“You were okay with that?”

“Of course not.” Hazuki rolled his eyes. “But both of them were just so stubborn, Sou-chan! Rei-chan and I could only cheer Mako-chan whenever we could.”

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**(Song: ‘Kamikaze Love’ by Poets of the Fall)**

*“Mako-chan, please! You cannot just hole up in your room like this!”*

*“Nagisa-kun is right, Makoto-senpai,” Rei-chan added from the floor he was sitting on. “Haruka-senpai wouldn’t want to see you like this either.”*

*“Hush, don’t tell Haru-chan about this,” Nagisa said. “Mako-chan hates bothering him and Haru-chan doesn’t reply much anyway!”*

*At the mention of Haru-chan, Mako-chan sat up on his bed slowly from under his thick blanket, as if wanting to add to the conversation. Nagisa wanted to hug him so badly, but he just looked so... sickly looking. His face was really pale and it was obvious that he’d lost weight, but not in a healthy way.*

*“I’m sure there’ll be other universities that’ll take you in, Mako-chan!” Nagisa exclaimed happily, settling on a loose embrace. He bounced on the bed a bit, trying to make some movement that would add some excitement. “You’re smart. You will do just fine!”*

*“Thanks, guys.” Mako-chan managed a smile. “It’s just... I’m so tired all the time.” He sighed. “But you’re right. I shouldn’t be like this. Haru would hate to see me like this, too.”*

*“THAT’S THE SPIRIT!”*

*“Nagisa-kun!” Rei-chan protested. “Keep it down a bit, will you? You’ll bother Makoto-senpai’s family.”*

*Not so regretfully, Nagisa grinned and scratched his hair. “Oops! Sorry, Rei-chan. Anyway, Mako-chan, do you want to go somewhere with us today? It’s very beautiful outside.”*

*“Now that you mentioned it, I actually want to go to the library.”*

*“I thought you’re taking a gap year, Makoto-senpai?”*

*“Yes, but I just don’t want to forget anything once the tests start again.”*

*“That’s a good idea! A repeatedly trained brain is the key to success! I will surely help you in that!” Nagisa elbowed Rei-chan before he could babble more motivational speeches. “It hurts! Stop that, Nagisa-kun!”*

*Nagisa ignored him. “What’s your intended major, Mako-chan?”*

*“I’m thinking Sports Education, Nagisa. I like teaching.”*

*Something dawned on the bespectacled boy. “Hey, I have a good idea. Makoto-senpai, my brother actually is in a study club. I think there’s a Sports-Ed student there. Do you want me to ask him in case you want to join them?”*

*“Eh?” Mako-chan was flustered now. “But I’m just a high-schooler—”*

*“Totally not a problem!” Rei-chan was now just as excited as Nagisa had been, which made the latter pout in mock-annoyance. Nagisa was actually happy to see his friends full of energy. “I sometimes join them and I’m younger than you! I’m sure they can help you in things!”*

*Mako-chan smiled. “I’d appreciate it very much, Rei. Thanks.”*

*“Great!” Nagisa intervened before the conversation turned full-blown academic. “Can we go play somewhere now? Or swim?”*

*“Nagisa-kun, you haven’t done your homework.”*

*“Nooo!”*

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*“Why didn’t Nanase reply any of his messages?”*

*“Haru-chan’s like that, Sou-chan,” Hazuki replied. Sousuke noticed that he looked annoyed and wondered why. “He never uses his phone. Sometimes Mako-chan had to contact Rin-chan just to reach him. But basically Mako-chan just didn’t want to bother Haru-chan a lot. He needed to concentrate.”*

*“Yes, Rin once told me that.” Sousuke thought about it a while. “What about the study group? It wasn’t mentioned in the files.”*

*“I don’t know much about it. Rei-chan did everything about that one.”*

*“I see.”*

*“Hey, Sou-chan?”*

*“Hm?”*

*“Why asking about Mako-chan now?” Hazuki’s magenta eyes stared deeply at him. “Is everything okay?”*

“Listen. Nobody knows about this yet, because... he specifically requests not to tell anyone about it. But I think you deserve to know, as long as you don’t tell anyone else. Do I have your word, Hazuki?”

“I swear!”

“Especially Rin.”

“Huh? Rin-chan?”

“Yes. Do I have your word?”

“Yeah, yeah.” Hazuki looked like he was going to explode from curiosity. “What is it, Sou-chan?”

Sousuke sighed before dropping the bomb. “We just found Nanase’s body on the beach this morning.”

The effect was immediate. As Hazuki cried on Sousuke’s lap for a long time, the police sergeant could do nothing but stare at the happy penguins swimming and paddling in their low glass cage with no care of the world outside their artificial pool.

## Chapter End Notes

Our penguin boy is here! He’s so hard to write, ugh. It’s been years since I last wrote him.

Tbh I headcanon him to look more like his dad as he gets older. I always love thinking about him as a penguin researcher/caretaker.

Reviews are much appreciated. ^^

# **i'll never be alone 'cause you're right there**

## Chapter Summary

“To be honest... I think that’s the major reason of his depression.”

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Finding Rei Ryugazaki, one of the youngest professors in Seshika Kyoritsu University, was harder, with less clear directions. Poor Sousuke had to ask a dozen students and almost got into the wrong classroom twice. Still, almost everyone, especially those in the Chemistry department, knew who he was. Not everyone could be an established professor at the age of twenty-six, after all.

Ryugazaki just finished one of his lectures when Sousuke finally found him. One of the students stayed to help him with the papers. She was a petite young woman with shoulder length brown hair and a sparkly blue butterfly hairclip on one of her temples.

“Thanks, Sato-san,” Sousuke heard him saying, and turned at the door. Their eyes met. “Yamazaki-san!”

The way Ryugazaki said his name made him chuckle. He was as formal as Sousuke remembered, down to the way he dressed, but he certainly had the same awkwardness he showed back when he was still the captain of Iwatobi High School’s swim club. That was proved right when he suddenly flustered for no reason.

“Hey there, Ryugazaki.”

Ryugazaki hurriedly made his way over, fixing his already neat shirt and glasses for nothing. He was still wearing his red framed thick specs, which sent Sousuke into nostalgia. “Is there anything I can do?”

“I need to talk to you privately. Is that possible?”

“Well, it’s my last class for today.” He smiled, for some reason looking grateful. “So, yes. Do you mind waiting for a minute?”

“Sure.”

After finishing his business with the student, telling her that his schedule was full for today, Ryugazaki brought him to his office. It was slightly smaller than the archive room, but much tidier and brighter. Books filled every single part of the shelves on the walls. As expected from such a prodigy.

When both of them were settled, Sousuke decided to start. “I’m here to talk about Tachibana.”

“Makoto-senpai?”

“I’ve talked to Hazuki. He mentioned something about you suggesting Tachibana to join a study club?”

“Yes, I did. Makoto-senpai failed his university entrance test, so he decided to take a gap year. I asked him to join the study club so he could keep up until the following year. But...” he trailed off, sadness taking over his expression.

“But he died before he could retake them,” Sousuke finished.

Ryugazaki nodded, unable to speak.

“That wasn’t in his case report.”

“Makoto-senpai no longer attended it when he died. Maybe that’s why.”

“Why did he stop?”

“I don’t know. Since my brother graduated not long after, I stopped coming too.”

“I see. What kind of study club is this?”

“It wasn’t official to begin with. Just some students from different colleges studying together and having fun. My brother was a member and I occasionally joined him in study sessions. One of them was in the same major as the one Makoto-senpai wanted to go, so I tried to get them to meet.”

“Did they?”

“Yes. They actually got along really well.” Ryugazaki sighed. “What do you expect from someone like Makoto-senpai, anyway?”

“Indeed. What do you know about this guy?”

“His name is Takeshi Nakayama. I think he takes over the swim club after Goro-san retires. Should’ve been Nagisa-kun, but he declined.”

“Really? *That* swim club?”

“Yes.”

“I see. So, he was close to Tachibana. Was there anything else you noticed about him? Maybe something... related to Nanase?”

“Don’t think so. They didn’t tell me anything.” But Ryugazaki leaned against his seat and thought about it for a while. “Uh, I... I actually know why they drifted apart. Makoto-senpai

and Haruka-senpai.”

Sousuke was taken aback. “You do?”

“Yes. Makoto-senpai didn’t tell Nagisa-kun because he didn’t want anyone else to know, so he decided to tell me. He... he was a wreck, Yamazaki-san. To be honest... I think that’s the major reason of his depression.”

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*“Makoto-senpai, how was your study session with Nakayama-san?”*

*Makoto-senpai turned at Rei, smiling. His face was illuminated by the street lamps. They were walking towards the train station, because Rei wanted to see his senior off before going home himself. At first, he wanted to accompany him home, because it was pretty far—just like Rei’s commute to school, only on the other way around—and it was late, but Makoto-senpai insisted he would be just fine.*

*“It was wonderful. Thanks for introducing us, Rei.”*

*Rei cleared his throat nervously. “You know, I’m glad you took my offer. It’s not beautiful to see you sad, Makoto-senpai.”*

*Makoto-senpai laughed quietly. “Sorry for making you guys worry. I’ll try to be better in the future.”*

*“Have you told Haruka-senpai about this?”*

*Silence. “Well... not yet.”*

*“Should I? You need every encouragement you can get, Makoto-senpai! Or maybe I can ask Nagisa-kun to tell him once he gets through—”*

*“Rei!”*

*It stopped Rei’s words. “Sorry, Makoto-senpai.”*

*“No. It’s fine. Sorry for lashing out. But I will tell him myself.”*

*“But, Makoto-senpai, you didn’t even ask for Haruka-senpai when we talked to Rin-san.” Rei didn’t mean to pry, but he realized that there was something really wrong with his former teammate. He was sure Nagisa-kun sensed the same. “Did you... did you two fight?” Imagining those inseparable friends fighting was scary for Rei, but he didn’t have any more hypotheses in his head right now.*

*Makoto-senpai was silent for a long time. “Can you please keep this from Nagisa-kun? I’m afraid he’ll tell Haru right away if he knows.”*

*“Well... okay. I can keep a secret.”*

*“We did fight, Rei. Remember Haru’s blank phase?” After Rei nodded, he elaborated. “Just right after graduation, I pushed him too hard and he snapped at me. So I told him I’m going to Tokyo and asked Rin to take him to Australia so he could rethink his decision.” He let out a sad laugh. “It works. At least he’s living his dream now. I’m glad.”*

*Rei was stunned. “Makoto-senpai, you never want to go to Tokyo. I’ve seen your college applications.”*

*No answer. When Makoto-senpai finally smiled at Rei, he just looked so... sad. “Keep this from Nagisa-kun? Please?”*

---

“So, Tachibana deliberately lied to Nanase to push him away? Is that what you’re saying?”

“Weird, right? If Makoto-senpai wasn’t the one who told me himself, I’d never believe it, too.”

“Why would he do that? And what’s a blank phase?”

“Nagisa-kun came up with that term. Haruka-senpai didn’t want to do anything about his future before Rin-san took him to Australia. I think he never returned since then, and you know how many medals he’d won.” Ryugazaki repositioned his glasses. “My theory says that Makoto-senpai pushed him away so he could be independent. Or, if one wants to be more extreme, *both* of them could be independent.”

*They did*, Sousuke thought bitterly. *They were alone when they died, so there’s that.*

“Sadly enough, it happened to them. Alone. Even in death.”

Sousuke took a second to understand, and at first he thought he had accidentally spoken his mind out loud. “What?”

Ryugazaki smiled thinly and that was when Sousuke realized that his violet eyes were glassy. “I live with Nagisa-kun, Yamazaki-san. There was no way he wouldn’t tell me about Haruka-senpai, especially when he came home crying so hard yesterday.”

*Damn Hazuki.* “Please don’t tell anyone else. This far, only his parents and the police know about his death. Just keep it down for a while, Ryugazaki.”

“Nagisa-kun did promise not to tell anyone else but me. Still. Why?”

“Nanase asked for it in his suicide note. He specifically told us not to let Rin know because his team is competing. I guess he just wanted Rin to concentrate.”

Ryugazaki sobbed. He took off his glasses to wipe his eyes with the back of his hand. “So selfless.”

“Like Tachibana.” Sousuke voiced his unsaid remark.

“Yes. Just like him.”

## Chapter End Notes

Yay, Rei-chan is here! He's my fav boi.

(Ian Sinclair's 'Ryugazaki' in the OVA dub is also fav thank you sir XD)

Seshika Kyoritsu University (might be referred as SeKyo sometimes) is actually Sousuke's university in canon. But since he's a cop here, he decided to enroll in the police academy instead after graduating from Samezuka.

MH Firework Fight Scene is put right after their graduation instead of in the middle of their school year. Bear with me please :')

Do you like it? Reviews are much appreciated! ^^



# like sailing to the storm

## Chapter Summary

“No buts. You don’t play with solved cases.”

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Sousuke no longer swam after high school graduation. Despite the surgery, he wasn’t able to compete without the risk of wrecking his shoulder once again, so he decided to retire completely and tried something different. It took years, but it was now safe to say that he was finally able to make peace with his past. Swimming was still a touchy subject for him, but now he was able to talk about it as long as his past accomplishments weren’t mentioned.

So, when he arrived at Iwatobi SC Returns, he was surprised to see that it barely changed. It brought him so many memories, despite the fact that he was never a member. The only major change was the photos of the members on the wall, which includes the old Iwatobi boys and even some newspaper clippings of Nanase and Rin’s victories in the Olympics.

Not wanting to dwell for too long, Sousuke decided to get this over with. Luckily, Takeshi Nakayama was on his break, so they decided to talk in his office. He was a friendly man, as tall as Sousuke, which was a rare occurrence. Save for his black hair and eyes, he actually reminded Sousuke of Tachibana himself.

“Do you remember Makoto Tachibana?”

“Yes. He was a member of this swim club when he was a kid.”

“That’s not what I mean. He was your friend in the study club, right?”

“What study club?” Before Sousuke could elaborate, his face brightened. “Oh, yeah. Yeah! I remember now. He was a high school kid who wanted to take the same major as me. I think Atsushi’s little brother introduced us. Rei, I think?”

Sousuke nodded. “What do you remember about him?”

“Great kid. Very gentle, very nice.” Nakayama sighed. “He actually wanted to teach here because he loved kids.”

“How long did Tachibana attend the study club?”

“Not too long, as far as I can remember. Since we were the only ones related to Sports Education, we decided to do private study sessions. I basically taught him some of my first

classes and the old subjects he might need for the entrance test. We became pretty close and he was pretty comfortable to tell me about things, including his best friend.”

“Haruka Nanase? You know him?”

“Who doesn’t? He’s such an amazing swimmer. When Makoto started to talk about him, he just couldn’t stop. Sometimes he even cried and broke down.”

It interested Sousuke. “So he told you about how they were separated?”

“Yes. And that was terrible.”

---

*“Makoto, I think you need to see someone. You know, get help or something.”*

*The boy just wiped his eyes. He stared guiltily at the tears that had dropped to Takeshi’s table before him. “Why? I can handle this.”*

*“No, you cannot.” Takeshi tried so hard to hold the urge of shaking him, just to wake him up. “Please? I just want you to get better.”*

*“Sorry for bothering you like this.”*

*“No, that doesn’t matter!” Takeshi made his way around the table to sit next to him. Study sessions could be forgotten for a while. “It’s the third time you cried this week. Please?”*

*Makoto finally nodded. Takeshi felt his heart soar. Finally! Progress!*

*“Listen, Makoto. I know someone. I’m sure she can help you! I can contact her and ask whether she’s available.”*

*“Right now?”*

*“Right now. You need help.”*

*“You don’t need to do it for me!”*

*“Too late!” Takeshi teased, dialing a number on his phone. “I’m doing it!”*

*A few hours later, they found themselves in the hallway, outside Yuka Eguchi’s room. “Don’t worry, Makoto. She’s very nice, and if you don’t like her, you can just tell me and we’ll find another way, okay?”*

*Makoto took a deep breath. “Okay.”*

---

“Yuka Eguchi?” Sousuke had heard of that name, which surprised him at first. “You brought Tachibana to a shrink?”

“Eguchi-sensei is one of the professors in the SeKyo. She is a licensed psychologist and actually my aunt, so I know she could be trusted.” Nakayama sighed. “I just thought Makoto needed help. Those breakdowns have to stop.”

“How many sessions did he get with her?”

“I don’t know. He did seem better, though. But we kind of lose contact after he went to her because I got busy with classes. I just hope he stopped pining over Nanase, though, it ruined his life.”

“Since you know about Nanase, have you ever met him in person?”

The older man shook his head. “Unfortunately, I haven’t. I would love to, though. He can make a good example for young swimmers from this place.”

“One more thing. Where were you when he died?”

“You mean Tachibana?” For some reason, he looked surprised.

“Of course,” Sousuke replied quickly.

“Ah. Sorry.” Nakayama frowned. “I don’t remember, honestly. It was a long time ago. Maybe I was with Eguchi-sensei, but I’m not sure. There was a cultural festival that day if I’m not wrong. Probably I was busy with that.”

Sousuke nodded and stood. “Well, if you remember something else, just ask for Yamazaki in the PD.”

“Sure.”

“Thanks for your time.”

---

“Yamazaki, come with me for a second.”

It was weird to see the oldest Mikoshiba siblings with a cheap suit of a cop, but his expression was so grim Sousuke failed to be amused by the former fact. He merely stood from his desk and followed him to one of the empty interview rooms.

“Sit down.”

Sousuke obliged. He watched as his superordinate walking around the table, obviously struggling to start the topic. Eventually, he settled on some news. “Nanase’s parents just contacted Chief. They want to hold a private funeral for their son this Friday, and then they’ll have a press conference to publicly announce his death.”

“I see.”

“Do you want to attend it?”

“Well, someone has to represent Rin, right?” *And Nanase’s other friends. Wonder if I can sneak Hazuki and Ryugazaki somewhere...*

Mikoshihara looked pained. “Speaking of Matsuoka, he’ll kill us when he knows we don’t tell him anything.”

Sousuke shrugged, trying to ignore the pang in his heart. “We have to honor Nanase’s death wish.”

“That, and his parents don’t want media to interfere with their mourning. Not until they’re ready. I’m sure his death would’ve been on headlines everywhere if we’re not keeping things shut about it.” He paused. “Well, there’s something else I want to talk to you about.”

“What is it?”

“I heard from the rookies you’re reopening Tachibana’s case.”

There was no other choice but to tell the truth. “Yes, Cap.”

A sigh. “Why?”

“I think his death might be connected to Nanase’s.”

“As much as I hate saying this, Tachibana’s case is closed. He was a depressed kid who killed himself because he failed to get to the university he wanted. It wasn’t uncommon, sadly.” He was lost in nostalgia for a while. “Such a nice guy, though, gone too soon.”

“How do you explain Nanase’s note?”

“He might feel guilty, but that’s it. Your boyfriend himself confirmed that he wasn’t in Iwatobi when Tachibana died. He didn’t have anything to do with his suicide case.”

“I just think there’s more to it.”

“Who can prove it to you? Listen, Yamazaki. I know Tachibana and Nanase were your friends and all, but if any of the witnesses you interviewed file any complaint because they think you’re harassing them—just *one* complaint—I’m sure it’ll get you suspended. So, just stop. Got it?”

Sousuke rose from his seat. “But—”

“No buts. You don’t play with solved cases. You may leave.”

Huffing, Sousuke walked towards the door. “Wait until your wife hears about this.”

For a moment, Mikoshihara looked like he wanted to laugh. “She will have my head if you tell her, whether you’re guilty or not.”

“You know it.” Sousuke couldn’t help but smile himself.

Mikoshiba grinned but then he was serious again. “But I mean it, Yamazaki. Just don’t go out asking people about past cases. It’s not going to help anybody. We have expiration dates for a reason.”

“Tachibana’s death was thirteen years ago. Nanase’s recent. I still have at least two years.”

“I know. But nobody will like it, Yamazaki. Nobody likes being reminded of past cases that have been closed. Plus, we don’t want Gou-kun’s unofficial older brother suspended, do we?”

Sousuke didn’t reply anymore. He merely nodded and left the room.

*We shall see, Captain. We shall see.*

## Chapter End Notes

Yes, I ship SeiGou ;)

Atsushi as Rei’s older brother’s name comes from me. I don’t remember him having a name yet, so here you go. It’s taken from Atsushi Kisaichi, Nagahisa Aikawa’s seiyuu from Warui Koto Shitai Series. My fav <3

Sousuke calls Sei ‘Captain’, like the team captain Ishikawa in the Japanese Cold Case.

Statute of limitation in Japan is 15-30 years. I write this a bit like a CC episode, so feel free to check those out.

Do you like it? Reviews are much appreciated! ^^

# we took a gamble with this love

## Chapter Summary

“Love can be destructive, Yamazaki-san. You should remember that.”

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“So, how was your day?” Sousuke asked the screen.

*“Wonderful!”* Rin’s voice was clear from the lower side of the world. He looked great, as usual. After retiring as an athlete two years prior, he started coaching an Australian junior swim team, with impressive results. *“You should see Wally’s time today! His freestyle is great. Not as amazing as Haru’s, but don’t tell him, okay? Kid’s improving and if he keeps it up, he’ll be able to strike for gold next month.”*

“No worries. Your secret is safe with me.” Sousuke gestured zipping his mouth, making Rin laugh. It wasn’t like he wanted to talk about swimming with people who weren’t Rin Matsuoka to begin with. Plus, the mention of Haru was enough setup for his intended topic for the night. “How’s Nanase, by the way?”

*“Hey, hey, it’s not every day you ask about Haru. What’s in it for you?”*

“Just... just curious.”

Rin needed more than that to be convinced. *“You’re never curious about Haru since we moved in together years ago.”*

It was indeed suspicious. As much as he hated to admit it, Rin was brighter than him. “Well, you usually tell me about him whether I asked or not,” Sousuke rebutted, forcing a smile. “What’s going on? Did you two fight?”

*“You know how things go between me and Haru.”*

“You didn’t answer the question, Rin.”

*“Ouch! Sorting to interrogation, now? Please don’t arrest me, Sergeant!”* Sousuke smiled at the remark but held his ground. Rin could see that, too, for he relented. *“Well, actually... I kicked him out.”*

“What?” It was genuinely surprising.

*“He started acting weird, so I kicked him out until he’s making sense again. I don’t mind if he’s freeloading or anything, but he didn’t even come out from his room. Even for Haru, that was concerning. What else should I do?”*

---

*“So, what now, Haru?”*

*“Leave me alone.”*

*“Haru, you haven’t eaten for almost two days. What the hell is going on here?”*

*Haru wasn’t a messy person, but seeing the state of his room now was surely debunking that fact. Rin’s clean freak nature rebelled at the sight. Papers were everywhere, also books and clothes. Even Haru in his drawing mode was never this atrocious.*

*“Nothing.”*

*Rin sighed. “You know, Haru, I think you shouldn’t stay here for a while.”*

*“Huh?”*

*“Yes. Maybe clear your head or something. You haven’t even stepped out of your room for days!”*

*“So what?!” Haru suddenly jumped to his feet. “Leave me alone!”*

*“What the hell?” Rin was surprised, but anger took over. He did try not to mention the fact that Haru was a freeloader since he wasn’t even doing anything since he retired three years ago. He did pay for his share of the apartment, but that was it. “This is my house! I’m just trying to help you!”*

*“Well, you’re not helping anything!”*

*It was enough. “Out! Get out!”*

*Haru glared at him, his blue eyes looking clear yet so tired with the bags under them. He passed Rin and slammed the door behind him.*

---

*“He returned on the next morning, took his bag, and left. Just like that.”*

*“Did he say where he was going?”*

*Rin shook his head. “He never does, so I’m not worried. He knows the way back. Unlike a certain someone.”*

The last sentence was a clear mockery, but Sousuke missed it due to his concentration on the case. “What did he read? Or whatever those papers were about. Do you have any idea?”

*“Not really. I think it’s about meds. Project Mind or something. Most of those papers were old newspaper articles, though.”*

“Project Mind?”

*“Never heard of it myself. To be honest, I’d never seen him being interested in such a thing.”*

“Did he... contact you after he left?”

Rin burst into laughter, but it sounded rather sad. *“Haru? Contacting me? Sousuke, he never even contacted Makoto for years when he’s here, you expect him to contact me after going off for a week?”*

Sousuke nodded. “You have a point. Hey, can I see any Project Mind you just told me about? Did Nanase leave any of it in his room?”

*“I don’t pry over Haru’s things, Sou.”*

“Please? Just this once?”

*“Promise me first. Do something for me.”*

Seeing the wicked grin on his boyfriend’s lips made Sousuke groan. “What?”

*“Swim with me when I get back?”* Before Sousuke could reply, Rin continued. *“Not racing! Just swimming. Leisurely. Or whatever. Please?”*

“Rin, you know I don’t swim anymore.”

*“Please? Or you won’t get any of Haru’s files!”*

Sousuke smiled. It was hard not to while looking at Rin’s cute expression, to be honest. He tried so hard to plea and to look tough at the same time, which was typical of him. “Alright, fine. It’s not like you’ll be home soon.”

*“I kinda wish I will so I can wipe that smug grin off your face.”*

Sousuke burst into laughter. “Says someone who calls me his sunshine! Now, do your part.”

*“Fine, fine! You sure are demanding today, Sou. I’ll be right back.”* Rin made true of his words, even though it was slightly disappointing. He returned in five minutes, a crumpled brown envelope in his hands. *“Sousuke, uh... unfortunately Haru takes them all with him. But I remember seeing this envelope along with those papers. Will it help?”*

“It depends. Anything you can see on it?”

Rin smoothed and examined the big envelope, grumbling all the way. *“This is from his trashcan. Trashcan! You’re lucky I love you, Yamazaki.”* But then his expression brightened and he showed something to the camera. *“Here. Can you see it?”*



Sousuke could, but he needed a while to understand Latin alphabets, however neatly they were written. When he did, he leaned against his seat in shock. As if on cue, Rin put the envelope down and eyed his boyfriend with a worried frown on his face. “*Sousuke? Hey, you okay? Sousuke!*”

“Yeah,” Sousuke managed to answer. “Yeah, I’m fine. Just kind of surprised, that’s all. Sorry, uh, Rin, can you put it up again? I need to take a picture of it.”

“*Sure.*” Although suspicious, Rin obliged. Sousuke saved the picture of the writing on his computer, making a mental note to ask the writer as soon as he could.

*To: Mr. Haruka Nanase*

*Sydney, Australia*

*From: Mr. Rei Ryugazaki*

*Chemistry Department, Seshika Kyoritsu University*

*Iwatobi, Japan*

---

Yuka Eguchi was the best psychologist in town, or that was what people were saying. Sousuke never worked with her, but some of his colleagues in the precinct had because she helped in profiling at least twice. She was better known as a Psychology professor and sometimes opened sessions for people who needed her service. Sousuke actually had to make an appointment to interrogate—no, *interview*—her, much to his chagrin.

“Hello, Yamazaki-san,” she greeted politely. “Please come in. Have you received my email for the session?”

“Yes, I did. Do you always do that?”

“Since I started around twenty years ago,” Eguchi replied. “It’s how I keep track of all my patients. If they’re not in my database, it’s hard to deal with them. Making offline appointments is difficult for me to archive.”

“I see.” Sousuke followed her into her office. Her office was tidy, but unlike Ryugazaki’s, it was bigger and felt much warmer. He sat on the nearest couch and let her sit across from him.

“Tea, Yamazaki-san?”

“No, thanks. I’m fine.”

“Okay, so what do you want to talk about?”

“Can I talk about anything?”

Eguchi smiled. “Of course. I have a code of ethics related to confidentiality, so your secret is safe here. Do not worry.”

*Great.* “Well, do you remember Makoto Tachibana?”

She blinked, obviously taken aback by the sudden question. “Yes, I think so. Wasn’t he the boy who jumped off the cliff?”

“Yes. I heard he went to you a while before he died, recommended by a fellow SeKyo student Takeshi Nakayama. Your nephew.”

“Wait, wait. You only made an appointment. For a *session*. Not an interrogation.”

“This isn’t an interrogation. I’m just using my time,” Sousuke replied, trying not to sound triumphant. “Just answer, please.”

She glared but had no choice. “Ta-chan wanted him to see me because he has breakdowns. But I’m not sure I can discuss Makoto-kun with you, Yamazaki-san. It’s a breach of medical ethics.”

“He’s *dead*, Eguchi-sensei,” Sousuke pressed. “He’s been dead for *thirteen years*.”

“There are several things I prefer to take to the grave.” She looked offended. “I assume you don’t know about patients’ confidentiality. If you don’t, I hope you do now.”

“I see.” Sousuke wanted to use more force but decided against it. He knew he couldn’t push too far. “Can you at least tell me how he acted around you or something? I’m sure it’s not a breach of ethics.”

She still looked annoyed but finally answered. “The only times when I see him without sessions was with Ta-chan, so I can tell you about that.”

---

*“Eguchi-sensei, Makoto’s having another breakdown.”*

*Ta-chan didn’t need to say it. Yuka could see it clearly from how Makoto-kun sat on her couch, and how hard he was shaking. If Ta-chan wasn’t bigger than him, she couldn’t imagine how he brought him here.*

*“Keep him company. I’m making tea.”*

*When Yuka turned back to the two boys, a tray of tea in her hands, she could see Ta-chan reaching out to Makoto-kun, whispering soothing words. She smiled. Ta-chan was indeed a wonderful kid.*

*“Makoto, please calm down. Focus on my voice. Take a deep breath. Inhale.” Ta-chan did so himself, and Yuka could hear Makoto-kun obeying as she put down the cups of tea on the table before them. “Now, exhale.”*

*It took him several more minutes to calm him down. Strangely, when Makoto-kun was stable, he began to cry at the sight of the other boy.*

*“Makoto-kun?” Yuka called, alarmed that he was crying over another reason entirely. “Are you okay?”*

*Makoto-kun didn’t reply. He only cried silently and refused Ta-chan’s touches. Yuka glanced at him, frowning. Ta-chan didn’t even look at her. He was too busy talking to Makoto-kun with the same tone to notice.*

*“Makoto, listen to me. It’s just a small step up your road of healing. You have to face your demons to move on. I helped you in that, right?”*

*“But—”*

*“No, no, Makoto. You need to understand. It’s for your own good.”*

*Makoto-kun just wept, and he sounded worse than earlier.*

---

“That kid’s messed up. It’s so sad to see him like that.”

“Why didn’t you intervene?” Thinking about Tachibana crying didn’t sit well for Sousuke. “I mean, he was clearly distraught.”

“I wanted to observe how Makoto-kun interacted with people first. If I did, it’d be hard to find the trigger that will make him open up to me.”

“And it wasn’t because Nakayama is your nephew?” Sousuke asked before he could stop himself.

Eguchi glared at him. “If you imply that I prioritize a relative more than a patient’s well-being, you’re gravely mistaken, Yamazaki-san.”

Sousuke decided to backtrack. “Alright, I apologize. What did Nakayama mean with the road of healing?”

Calmer but still obviously annoyed, Eguchi leaned against her chair. “Quite literally. He just wanted to help that boy heal. Sometimes he talked to me about his concerns of that boy.”

“So, they were close?”

“Pretty much. I can see Makoto-kun as a very sensible kid and I understand why Ta-chan likes someone like him.”

“Alright.” Sousuke stood and gave a small nod, wondering why Nakayama didn’t tell him any of these things. “Thanks for your time, Eguchi-sensei.”

“No problem. You see, love can be very destructive.”

The remark stopped Sousuke. “What?” he asked, turning from the door.

“You might want to know *why* he was like that, to begin with, and that’s all I can tell you.” She stood as well, yet stayed in her place. “Love can be destructive, Yamazaki-san. You should remember that.”

Sousuke regarded her for a second, then nodded and left.

## Chapter End Notes

Rin calling Sousuke his sunshine is from the Drama CD about them and Kisumi.  
Reviews are much appreciated! ^^

# we were battling against the tide

## Chapter Summary

Nanase's funeral is as quiet as the person himself.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Nanase's funeral was as quiet as the person himself.

Sousuke, dressed in his usual suit, stood in the middle of the small crowd, together with some other cops who found him at the beach. As far as he knew, neither of them, save for himself and Mikoshiba, knew Nanase in person. Unsurprisingly, Tachibana's parents were there too. It was easy to recognize them because Tachibana had his mother's features and his father's picture was on the top of his case file. Sousuke watched the two sets of parents embracing and crying together.

Another proof of how close the two families were was the fact that their family tombs were side by side, which means they were buried next to each other.

*Finally.*

Sometimes, he glanced at Mikoshiba, wondering how he kept this from Gou, and then realized that he had done the same to her older brother. That thought wasn't comforting for him.

*Rin, please don't kill me.*

---

Hazuki and Ryugazaki showed up fifteen minutes after the funeral ceremony ended when almost everyone had gone home. If someone asked, they'd say they came to visit Tachibana's grave but were lucky that nobody noticed. Tachibana's parents had gone earlier, and Sousuke doubted Nanase's knew them, for they merely walked past them with no sign of greeting or even recognition.

Sousuke, who had waited nearby, led them to the place. At the sight of the grave and Nanase's name engraved on it, Hazuki fell to his knees and started crying his heart out. Ryugazaki joined him not long after, embracing him tightly and was weeping as well. Sousuke couldn't help but remember how Rin cried on his shoulder back then and felt guiltier that he didn't even *know*.

He looked up to the sky. As if mocking them, the day was beautiful. Just like when Sousuke and his colleagues found Nanase's lifeless body on the beach. Just as beautiful as when

Tachibana's bloody corpse was discovered under the cliff.

Sousuke hated himself for the mental comparison, and could only stand there awkwardly as the two other men mourned their old friends next to him.

---

"Rei-chan, can you leave me for a while?"

They'd stayed there for half an hour, and Ryugazaki was perplexed. "Nagisa-kun, we should go."

Hazuki looked up at him. He still stayed in the same position since he arrived. "Please, Rei-chan? I want to talk to Haru-chan, *alone*."

Ryugazaki was going to object, but Sousuke decided to seize the moment. "Ryugazaki, can I talk to you?"

"What?" For some reason, he looked at him as if he didn't know Sousuke had been there since the start. He regained composure almost immediately. "Oh, okay. Call me when you're done, Nagisa-kun."

"Okay, Rei-chan."

"Alright. Let's go, Yamazaki-san."

Sousuke took the professor outside the cemetery and they sat on the stone steps that led to the place. "I have something to ask you."

"Go ahead."

"Look." Sousuke showed his phone, which was displaying the picture of Nanase's envelope Rin had found. "You sent this to Nanase before he died, right?"

Ryugazaki didn't deny it. "Yes."

"What was that? Was it about Project Mind, or whatever it's called?"

A brief pause. "Yes, for both your questions. I sent those to Haruka-senpai once I found enough evidence."

"What's a Project Mind?"

"Like its name, it's an experiment about people's minds. This project deals with how you can mess that up by design, which involves a lot of mental manipulation." Rei's nose curled in disgust. "It's very much not beautiful."

"Really? What does it have to do with Nanase?"

"Not Haruka-senpai." Ryugazaki shook his head. "I think it had to do with Makoto-senpai instead."

---

*Rei didn't know what he was getting into. But if there was something he really, really, needed to solve, it was this.*

*Before he was Ami Sato, one of his students, sobbing on her seat. They were alone in his office, and Rei's desk was full of gifts from her. Those things were destroying Rei and Nagisa-kun's home life, and Rei was determined to stop all those fights.*

*"Alright, Sato-san, please explain this," he began, as firmly as possible, gesturing at the gifts.*

*"I like you," she managed to say eventually. "You're smart, Ryugazaki-sensei. You're a great person. I want to be with you. I'll do anything to be with you!"*

*Rei had to admit he was flattered. Beauty had been his weakness since forever, and whatever Sato had for him was nothing if not pretty. She even gave him a bouquet made of shiny papers, all flowers shaped like a butterfly. If Nagisa-kun was the one giving it to him, he'd parade with it for sure.*

*Nagisa-kun.*

*His partner's tearful face was enough to stop Rei from being carried away. "Listen," he replied. "They're beautiful, and I appreciate your... feelings, but unfortunately I cannot return them."*

*She suddenly looked up, grinning. "You appreciate it! Wonderful!"*

*"Huh?"*

*"It's a good sign, Ryugazaki-sensei! If you appreciate it, why don't you go out with me, just once? At least as a sign of gratitude? I'm your best student, after all. I do my best to be your most beautiful student!"*

*The press on the word beautiful didn't escape Rei's notice. "Sato-san, it doesn't mean I like you the way you do."*

*A groan. "And I thought Project Mind is going as planned!"*

*"Project Mind?"*

*Sato clasped her hands on her mouth. "Oops! Sorry, Sensei! I really, really like you, so I know I have to do everything to be yours. Believe me, I just want the best for you. You're the best person I have ever known, and I know I'm in love with you!"*

*Rei tried to focus. "No, wait. What project is it?"*

*Sato refused to tell him and decided to babble about what she planned to do with him if he accepted her invitation, along with great compliments. Rei, who always fell hard for good words, struggled to tune her out and eventually asked her to leave. After she finally did, still*

*with the awed look on her face, he threw away all her gifts to the trashcan. Yes, even the bouquet.*

*He took his journal and wrote down the name: Project Mind.*

What's that?

---

"So basically you almost became a guinea pig on this project."

Ryugazaki let out a bitter smile. "Almost cost me my relationship. Sato was crazy, let me tell you that. Sending me all those gifts, being the best student in the class, basically doing everything to win my heart. We spent some time together and she wanted to know everything about me. I almost wavered, you know, if Nagisa-kun didn't notice it in time." Sousuke could see his hand shaking as he repositioned his glasses. "So, when I found enough evidence, which wasn't much to begin with, I sent those to Haruka-senpai."

"Why?"

"The oldest news of Project Mind was written twelve years ago, about a guy threatening to sue Eguchi for doing it to him without consent. I just cannot shake off the feeling that those might be connected. Makoto-senpai once mentioned that he was going to therapy, and Nii-san once saw him in SeKyo, so... I just put two and two together."

"Why didn't you tell me this earlier?"

Ryugazaki sighed. "You came to my workplace. Walls have ears."

It took Sousuke a while to understand. "You think Eguchi-sensei was involved in his death?"

"No!" Ryugazaki looked around nervously, not wanting someone else to hear them. Even though they were alone, he still lowered his voice. "Okay. Maybe not directly. I have come up with several theories, but the most solid one was Makoto-senpai was part of the project. He resisted or something... so she had him... you know."

Sousuke had to admit he was impressed. "Why do you think so?"

"Makoto-senpai was so weird before he died."

"Weird?"

"Yes. We did lose contact with him for a while, Nagisa-kun and I both. When I last saw him a few months before he died, there was something weird about him. I couldn't really tell, but it's like he always felt something was watching him. I caught him flinching over nothing a few times."

"What does this have anything to do with his therapy?"

"He didn't look better. If anything, I think his condition *worsened*. But he never opened up to me anymore. It was... It was so sad."



“I see. But why sending all those to Nanase?”

Ryugazaki sighed and stared at the sight before them. Sousuke followed his eyes. The beautiful, tranquil Iwatobi, as if the town hadn't buried another sweetheart just a few hours ago.

“I just... I feel selfish... but well, it's my last resort. I always want them to forgive each other, Yamazaki-san. If Haruka-senpai knows what truly happened, whatever that was, he might find some closure. I was pretty sure he needed it. But now...” He gestured to the cemetery behind them, suddenly looking like a sad, flustered teenager Sousuke had known for years. “I'm not so sure anymore.”

---

Mikoshiba's solemn face was something that greeted Sousuke when he arrived in the precinct two days after that, and it didn't mean good. The feeling worsened as the redhead gestured him to follow to the same empty interrogation room. Aoki and some other guys regarded Sousuke curiously, obviously wanting to know what was going on.

*No wonder, Sousuke thought. Cap never calls me this often.*

“Sit down.”

If Mikoshiba had been bothered when he called Sousuke at first, this time he looked downright upset. Not furious, just upset and frustrated.

“What is it?” Sousuke asked when none of them had spoken for several minutes.

“Did you listen to me?” he blurted out from where he was sitting. “Since Chief scolded me right after I woke up today, I know the answer is no.”

Sousuke eyed him blankly. “What?”

As a response, Mikoshiba slid a piece of paper to him. The first word that caught Sousuke's eyes surprised him. “I'm *suspended*?”

“Yes. Congratulations.” The sarcastic tone was evident, but then Mikoshiba sighed. “Someone filed a complaint against you, claiming that you've been harassing them while asking questions about Tachibana's death.”

“I know who she is. It's that shrink. But she didn't resist! I thought she's fine with it!”

“She said you lied to her because you wanted to have a session, not an interview.” Before Sousuke could protest, he continued. “Still, you're playing with fire, Yamazaki. No wonder she can get you off that quick.” His words reminded Sousuke about the good relationship Eguchi had with the cops. “Why are you still pushing this?”

“There's a theory that she might be involved in a project that abused Tachibana's mental state.”

Mikoshiba eyed him as if he had three heads. “Come again?”

“There’s a theory—”

“No, I heard you. I mean... what kind of theory is that? Even if Tachibana was seeing Eguchi-sensei for a therapy session, that didn’t mean she killed him. It doesn’t make sense.”

“That’s what I’m trying to find out, Captain.” *Because apparently it’s more than just a depressed kid who failed to get into his dream university.* “Some sense.”

“Not anymore. One month suspension, Yamazaki, remember?”

It was Sousuke’s turn to groan. “So, I’m leaving now?”

“Your suspension starts tomorrow, so you can take your time. I suggest you stay here, but since Aoki has been hanging on the door like that...” Mikoshiba gestured at behind Sousuke, who turned and saw the rookie’s blond hair from the small window on the door, obviously trying to know what was going on. “Maybe you should go patrolling with him. You can give me your badge before you go home today.”

Resigned to his fate, Sousuke took his suspension letter and stood. “Alright.”

“Yamazaki, I’m sorry.”

*I’m sorry, Tachibana.*

He reached the door and sighed. “Me too.”

*Sorry, Nanase.*

---

The day was slow. Sousuke decided to take the offer and went patrolling with Aoki, who looked so ready to nag him. “I am suspended for a month,” he said before his subordinate could ask. “That’s all I want to say about this matter.”

“Oh, I understand, sir. I’m sorry to hear that.”

“Thank you.”

It silenced Aoki, but not long after he decided to cheer him up. He asked questions, trying out some new routes around the city, and even bought them lunch when it was midday. To be honest, Sousuke appreciated it, for it was a good distraction. So, he went with it and at the end of the day, he felt better.

“Do you want some ice cream, sir?” Aoki asked at one point. “I know a good place. It’s in the same direction as the precinct. My wife works there part-time, even though she’s off today.”

“Why not?” Sousuke looked outside, at the clear blue sky. “It’s a good idea.”

It was indeed a good place, with the owner, an old woman, casually referring to Aoki as ‘Officer Michio’ and treating Sousuke just as cheerfully. She even gave them extra topping, despite Sousuke’s polite rejection.

“Nonsense! Good law enforcers like you deserve some sweetness on their day!”

Aoki nudged him. “Sir, she doesn’t take rejection well.”

“See? Even Officer Michio knows.”

“Fine.” Resigned to his fate, Sousuke watched as she added more chocolate chips to his mint ice cream. Still, it tasted pretty good and refreshing, so he couldn’t complain.

They returned to the precinct at three in the afternoon, with Sousuke eating the rest of his ice cream in hand. Aoki was next to him, complaining high and low about how his own ice cream dripped and stained his uniform. Sousuke expected the day to go as... okay as this.

Until something hard hit his face, making him fall backward.

“Officer down!” Aoki’s voice rang on his ears. “Officer down!”

*What?*

“Shut up! I am entitled to hit him!”

*Why is that voice so familiar?*

As his vision cleared, Sousuke looked up at the person that had knocked him down. *The only* person who could. Despite the pain on his cheek, he managed a smile, which infuriated that person even further. He was so mad that he was even crying now.

“Don’t smile at me, Sou! You didn’t even tell me—”

“Hello, Rin.” Sousuke rose to his feet and pulled him to a hug, ignoring how he tried to push him away. He knew the resistance wouldn’t last long. “I’m so, *so* sorry.”

## Chapter End Notes

Officer Aoki starts to grow on me. His given name, Michio, is taken from Michio Yoshizawa in Takumi-kun Series.

I’ve been wanting to put that ‘officer down!’ part since forever :D

Finally the shark is here! Sousuke’s suspension and Rin’s arrival is actually for another chapter, but I think it’s too short so I combine both here, which is why this chapter is long.

Reviews are much appreciated! ^^

# you were my beacon of salvation

## Chapter Summary

“Makoto, sometimes your blind faith scares me.”

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Neither Sousuke nor Rin spoke as they walked back to their apartment; Mikoshiba sent the former home immediately after the ruckus. Sousuke noticed that his luggage was there, which meant he'd had dropped by first before causing a scene on the doorway of Sousuke's workplace. He watched as Rin sat down on the couch and decided to sit next to him. Rin stood and left right after he settled on the cushions.

“Rin—”

No answer, but the redhead appeared not long after, still looking angry but he had a bag of ice in his hand. Sousuke accepted it without question and put it gingerly on his bruised cheek. *What a way to start your suspension.*

“What about your team?” he managed to ask.

Wrong question. Rin fell to the couch and resumed his crying, but at least he didn't try to attack his boyfriend anymore. “Do you seriously *think* I'd pick them over... *this*?”

“Actually Nanase thought so. He specifically asked that nobody told you.”

“Stupid Haru.” Rin sat up, wiping his eyes. “What a dumbass.”

“Who told you?”

“Gou. She found out herself after Sei accidentally let it slip after the funeral. I asked Dave to take over the team and took the first plane I could get.” He turned to Sousuke. “The fact that they know... *you* know and I don't—”

“I'm sorry, Rin. I really am.”

“Yeah, you really should.” Despite his remark, Rin slowly leaned against his boyfriend, seeking warmth that Sousuke was more than willing to give. He circled his arm around him and put his head on top of the red hair, lightly playing with the long ends. He always loved the fact Rin kept his hair the same way since childhood. “I heard you are suspended, Sousuke.”

“Mm-hm. A month without pay, to be precise.”

“Because I hit you?”

Sousuke shook his head. “I kind of deserve it.”

Rin sighed and his hand blindly reached Sousuke’s nearest one, which was on his hair, and squeezed. “I’m sorry, though. I was just so angry.”

“I know you are. Don’t worry about that.”

“So, why are you suspended?”

“One of the witnesses I interviewed filed a complaint. She thought I harassed her.” Sousuke sighed, tightening his arm around Rin. “Cap warned me but I didn’t listen. Apparently, I cannot do anything because Tachibana’s case is closed.”

“You were suspended because of Makoto’s death? What are you looking for?”

“In his suicide note, Nanase blamed himself for his death. I’m just trying to find out why, and I think something happened to him.”

They sat in silence for a moment before Rin suddenly sat up again. “Hey. I just remembered something.”

“Hm?”

“I actually talked to Makoto around a month before he died. He did a great job calming my nerves before my first meet as a pro.”

Sousuke was genuinely surprised, and for a different reason. “Whoa. You didn’t even call me that day.”

“Don’t be a jealous idiot.” Rin turned and pinched his nose jokingly. “You’re my only sunshine, Sou. But swimming was still a touchy subject for you back then. I didn’t want to bring that up to you, but I needed someone to talk to and Haru wasn’t exactly helping.”

“Right. So, why telling me this?”

“Wait. I’ll be right back.” With that, Rin stood and left for the bedroom. Sousuke used the time to go to the kitchen and dumped the now melted ice into the sink. When he returned, Rin was back on the couch, with his laptop on the table before him.

Sousuke occupied his previous seat. “So?”

“I took a picture of him. I think I still have it in my cloud storage.” He stopped clicking for a moment. “If only I knew it was the last time—”

“But you didn’t,” Sousuke interrupted firmly. “Now, can I see the picture?”

“Fine.” Rin didn’t say anything else until he was able to load something. “Here it is. I took it because he looked so ridiculous wearing those pajamas.” He paused and Sousuke noticed the slight blush on his cheeks.

*It was so easy to read him. “You’re not telling me the whole story.”*

“We haven’t talked for a long time.” The blush deepened as Rin scratched his neck in nervousness. “I just... I didn’t want to lose him as I lost you back in middle school. The fact that he drifted apart from Haru was bad enough.”

---

*“Hey, thanks for staying up on short notice.”*

*“No problem, Rin!” Makoto smiled, but still eyeing him worriedly. “I should be the one who said that. It’s almost midnight here. It must be even later over there.”*

*“Yeah, but I cannot sleep.” Rin grinned. “Don’t worry, I won’t be long.”*

*“I don’t need to wake up early tomorrow, so it’s fine.” Makoto’s gaze softened. “You know you can talk to me, Rin.”*

*“I know. Thanks, Makoto.” Rin leaned back on his seat. He looked around the room Makoto was in and noticed a small statue on the corner of the screen. “Hey, what’s that?”*

*“What’s what?”*

*“That.” Rin pointed at the side of the screen. “Is that... Iwatobi-chan?”*

*“Oh! This thing!” Makoto picked the statue and showed it to the camera. “Yes. Something small I took from our high school days.”*

*Rin knew Haru was the one making that—he’d never forget how he forced him to accept ten of those back in Samezuka—but tried not to mention it. “Lady Samezuka is much better.”*

*Makoto smiled. “I can imagine them being friends.”*

*“If Haru’s making my school mascot too, I’d take it.”*

*Silence. Rin cursed himself at the sight of Makoto’s crestfallen expression. Fuck. So much of keeping my mouth shut about Haru. “Sorry about that. Force of habit.”*

*“Don’t worry.” Makoto’s voice was strained. “I appreciate your apology, though. Moving on is never easy. There’s always something that reminds me of the past.”*

*Rin nodded, more as an obligation than agreement, but was still unable to break the tense atmosphere. “Hey, can I grab something to drink? I’ll be back soon.”*

*“Okay.”*

*When Rin was back, he saw Makoto playing with Iwatobi-chan in his hand and frowned. The look on his eyes... it was so, so easy to see.*

*Makoto looked at the statue exactly like how he looked at Haru; full of unashamed adoration and pride. As if Iwatobi-chan was its maker and now Makoto was staring from the edge of the pool, impressed by his swimming just like everyone else.*

*Rin let him be, but somehow it made him uncomfortable, and finally couldn't bear it himself. "I cannot sleep, but maybe it's just nerves."*

*"Well, I know you'll make it just fine tomorrow." Makoto looked up and put Iwatobi-chan back in its place, obviously relieved at the change of topic.*

*"Why?"*

*"You're Rin, that's why."*

*"Makoto, sometimes your blind faith scares me."*

*Makoto burst into laughter. Rin grinned and was so fascinated at the sound he missed so much. It was when he realized that he'd never heard Makoto laugh like that since he and Haru left for Sydney. He stared at his friend's face and realized that he'd lost weight.*

*Rin was worried.*

---

As he told his story, Rin had returned to the couch and Sousuke circled his arms around him once again. "You know, Haru was so hurt that Makoto just pushed him away like that. That's why he didn't want to return to Iwatobi and decided to start his professional career over there with me."

"Hazuki and Ryugazaki said he didn't even want to talk to them."

"He knew they'd just push him to talk to Makoto, so he avoided them altogether." Rin let out a bitter laugh. "I got tired of being the middleman, and with those races taking all my time... all of us just drifted away, I guess."

"Tachibana was a wreck."

"I know. I talked to him, too. I once asked why on earth they decided to drift apart like that, and Makoto just said it was time for Haru to be away from him for good. Moving on, he said." Rin sighed. "They were just so stubborn sometimes."

"Why didn't Nanase try to contact him?"

"He actually tried." Rin straightened, releasing himself from Sousuke's embrace. "Yeah, I remember now. After that call, I pushed Haru to talk to Makoto first. So, yes, they did talk. It didn't end well at all."

---

*“Rin! Rin!”*

*Haru was someone who prioritized privacy above all else, so when he barged into Rin’s room without even knocking was alarming for the redhead. Still, he reflexively resorted to dramatics, as he usually did when surprised.*

*“What the hell, Haru? It’s almost midnight! I’m trying to sleep—” Rin stopped when he saw tears running down his best friend’s cheeks. “Whoa. Haru, you okay?”*

*“No, no, I’m not.” As he said this, Haru fell to his knees right on the doorway.*

*Alarmed, Rin jumped out of his bed and approached him. “What’s going on?”*

*“I... I called Makoto earlier. We finally agreed to talk, so I called him.” He buried his face on Rin’s shoulder, wetting his shirt. “He doesn’t love me.”*

*“What?”*

*Haru was nearing hysterics, which was so strange to see in itself. “That’s what he said. I told him I love him, Rin! He didn’t even apologize! I just told him what I’ve been feeling all these years and he said no! He said he’s in a better place and it’s time for us to go our separate ways!”*

*Rin was speechless. It sounded so callous and uncharacteristic for Makoto, but he knew he couldn’t say that right now. He could only pat Haru’s back, for the time being, trying to calm him down as much as he could.*

---

“When Haru finally gathered enough courage, it was what happened. That was the last time he talked about Makoto. That was the last time *we* talked about Makoto. He didn’t even want to hear his name.”

“What do you mean ‘a better place’?”

“I don’t know. I didn’t ask. Should’ve, though, but I just didn’t want to hurt Haru any further. Seeing him like that was scary.”

“Did you ask Tachibana?”

“I didn’t have the time. He disappeared a few days after that and then he was found dead.” Rin sighed, returning to Sousuke’s arms. “But I can imagine his answer. He’d say he’d moved on and wanted Haru to do the same. Once, he even asked me to stop contacting him if I just want to talk about Haru. It’s just so weird.”

“Yes, it is. Hey, can I see the picture again?”

Rin handed his laptop to Sousuke’s lap. “Sure.”

Sousuke zoomed the picture and examined it. It was a candid screenshot, showing Tachibana in the middle of laughter and Rin grinning on the small screen on the corner. His pajamas, a



neon green one with teddy bear patterns on it, indeed looked silly on someone as huge as Makoto Tachibana.

Nothing looked out of the ordinary, so Sousuke leaned back and gazed at his boyfriend. “Why are you showing me this?”

“Oh, right. You’ve never been to Makoto’s house.” Rin gestured to the background. “I haven’t been there for a long time, but I know it wasn’t his room.”

“Did you ask him?”

“No. I thought he was having a sleepover or something, but when I found out he died... I just felt it wasn’t right. Maybe he had other friends, but I’m not sure. Rei and Nagisa’s rooms surely don’t look like that.”

“I see.” Rin’s words made Sousuke examine the picture more meticulously. It seemed like a normal bedroom, with beige walls and some posters behind Tachibana. Sousuke couldn’t make out most of the words, but one of them made him stop. It was the only words written in the Latin alphabets, and it was a bit blurry he couldn’t make it out.

“Rin,” he called, pointing at the one behind Tachibana’s shoulder. “What’s that?”

“Damn, I need glasses.” Rin narrowed his eyes and bent forward. “I think it’s something like *road of*... something. I think that’s a ‘*he*’. *H-e-a* something. Makoto’s body covered the rest of the word, so it’s a lost cause.”

“Road of Healing?”

Rin turned at his boyfriend. “Yeah, maybe. Why?”

Sousuke leaned against the couch, suddenly feeling hollow. “I might have an idea where he was.”

## Chapter End Notes

Rin’s contributing!

Reviews are much appreciated! ^^

# i was your starlight

## Chapter Summary

He just feels... nothing.

Empty.

As if the man he is staring at weren't his best friend and older brother figure for years.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Sousuke's frustration stayed for the rest of the day. It was obvious that Rin felt the same, especially after Sousuke told him about Nakayama and Tachibana's strange attitude in Eguchi's session, which was understandable.

"I don't know Makoto moved in with whoever that guy is. Rei and Nagisa certainly didn't. Otherwise, they'd have told me."

"Should we call them?"

"First thing in the morning." A devious smirk appeared on Rin's lips, showing his trademark shark teeth. "Let's hope they don't know you're suspended."

"I hope so too."

As if on cue, Sousuke's phone rang. Sousuke frowned when he saw that it was an unknown number, but he was intrigued. "Hello?"

*"Sou-chan?"*

It stunned Sousuke. There was only one person in the whole world who called him that. "Hazuki?"

Rin, who was eating his dinner across from him, looked up sharply. He gestured at Sousuke to put it on loudspeaker, which he obliged. He put the phone on the table between them, making sure Hazuki's voice was loud enough for both of them to hear.

*"Yes! How do you know it's me?"*

"You're the only 30-year-old man I know that still calls people that way."

Hazuki laughed but didn't deny it. *"I'm thirty-one, Sou-chan!"*

"Whatever. Where did you get my number?"

*"I asked Rinrin-chan once. It was a long time ago, so please don't kill him, yeah?"*

Sousuke lifted his eyebrow at Rin, who rolled his eyes. "Don't worry. Rin's not worth killing over small matters like this. Anyway, why are you calling?"

Hazuki's tone turned serious. *"Well, can you meet me at the train station tomorrow? I want to take you somewhere."*

"Where exactly?"

A sigh. *"I want to go to Haru-chan's house."*

Taken aback, Sousuke and Rin eyed each other. "Why?"

*"It's not the crime scene, right, Sou-chan?"*

"Since Nanase died in the sea, with a suicide note nearby, we didn't search his house." Rin paled at the explanation, but Sousuke was too preoccupied to care. "Why?"

*"Rei-chan just heard that Haru-chan's parents are going to sell it. Before then, I want to... I want to find something there."*

Hazuki wasn't telling the truth, or at least not all of it, and it was clear as day. Sousuke decided to keep it for later. "Alright, I'll go with you. Is ten okay?"

*"Of course!"* Hazuki's voice turned cheerful again. *"And if Rin-chan's not jet-lagged, he can come too!"*

Rin mouthed a 'what?!' on his boyfriend, who shrugged. "Well, I'll ask him."

*"This is such a small town, Sou-chan. People know immediately when someone hits a cop, even if it's his boyfriend."*

Sousuke struggled not to laugh at Rin's dumbfounded expression. "Alright, alright. If he's fine with it, we'll see you tomorrow."

*"See you then, Sou-chan! Don't get lost!"*

"Hey!"

The protest was ignored. *"Tell Rin-chan I said hi. Bye!"*

Rin burst into laughter after the connection was over. "We sure are lucky, huh?"

Albeit still wondering about Hazuki's intention, Sousuke couldn't help but feel the same.

---

"I actually asked Rei-chan to come with us, but his schedule is packed and today is my only day off in two weeks." Hazuki smiled. "So glad you can come, Rin-chan. I miss you so much."

“Yeah, yeah, you’ve said that ten times since you saw me at the train station.” But still, Rin patted his friend’s shoulder and answered with the same words. “Same here.”

The train was practically empty. Save for them, only a few people sat pretty far from them. Sousuke focused himself on sightseeing, enjoying the view despite the fact he returned home pretty often. Shortly after, Rin followed suit, and when Sousuke glanced at him, he was caught in nostalgia and he decided to let him be.

“It doesn’t change much, huh, Sou-chan?”

Hazuki’s words returned Sousuke to the present. “Yes, indeed.”

“It’s been a while since I go here. Since graduating high school, I rarely returned. Rei-chan did some studies around here, but I never come with him. Too boring.”

“I see.”

“You and Rin-chan lived on the other side, right?”

“Yes, closer to the port, where most fishermen work.” Sousuke glanced at Rin, but he didn’t seem to be listening. “Sano schools were there. Since it’s still in the suburbs, it’s closer than your place.”

Hazuki nodded. “I miss this.”

Sousuke needed a moment to realize that he didn’t only mean the path. “Yes, I miss it too.”

---

Not long after, they reached the train station that led to Iwatobi High School. After a while of walking, they arrived at the cliff where Nanase and Tachibana lived. For the first time, Sousuke saw Tachibana’s house, a big one located on the lower part of the hill. Hazuki pointed upwards from that point, and he could see a smaller one, built on a higher part, that was obviously empty.

“Are you sure we can just go inside?” Rin asked. “We’re not teenagers anymore and this isn’t the old swim club.”

Hazuki grinned nervously. “Well, no.”

Rin eyed Sousuke worriedly, which he immediately understood. “Breaking and entering is against the law, Hazuki.” *And I don’t want to be in trouble more than I already have.* “Do you have a better idea?”

“Yes!” The grin was now wider. “Wait here. I won’t be long!” He turned and ran towards the direction of the Tachibana residence.

Being left alone, Rin sat on the stone stairs, patting the empty space next to him. Sousuke obliged and settled. “So, you and the old swim club.”

“Now that I think about it, I was such a dumbass back then. I’m grateful people are patient with me.” Rin laughed and put his head on Sousuke’s shoulder. “Good old times. I miss that.”

Sousuke leaned his head to Rin’s as well. “Same here.”

---

Hazuki returned around fifteen minutes later, grinning at the sight. “Sometimes I forget how sweet you two can be,” he commented.

“Shut up, Nagisa,” Rin said without malice, standing up. Hazuki pouted at him.

Before a banter could start, Sousuke hurriedly interrupted. “So, what did you do?”

“Well, Haru-chan’s parents don’t know me, but Mako-chan’s do, so I just tell them I want to visit Haru-chan’s house so if something happens, they can vouch for me. They even lent me a key.” He sighed. “Haru-chan and Mako-chan might’ve stopped being friends, but their parents are still in touch with each other.”

---

It was easy to get into Nanase’s house after that, which was actually very tidy. Other than the dust that layered the items in the house, nothing seemed out of ordinary. Sousuke could hear Rin taking a deep breath. “Typical Haru,” he muttered. “So neat.”

“Come on,” Hazuki said.

“What exactly are we looking for?” Rin asked.

Hazuki stopped walking and turned at them. “A box. With a dolphin sticker on top.”

Sousuke was the person who found that box, which was put on top of Nanase’s cupboard. When he handed it to Hazuki, he became so happy he hugged him for quite a while. It never ceased to surprise Sousuke that the blond had so much energy in him.

Rin merely watched them, grinning. “Okay, so what’s inside it?” he finally asked after Sousuke managed to pry the smaller man off.

“I don’t know, Rin-chan. Mako-chan gave it to me and I never open it.”

“And I thought you’re the nosy one, Nagisa,” Rin teased.

Hazuki threw him an annoyed look. “I left for Tokyo shortly after, Rin-chan! I was busy preparing for college I didn’t manage to see it.”

“Really?”

“Really! I never open it, but since there’s that dolphin sticker on top, I thought it was for Haru-chan.” Hazuki sighed as if tired of spouting reasons. He joined Sousuke and Rin on the bedroom floor. “I was angry at Haru-chan, too, so maybe that’s also why I never open it.”

“When did you give this to Nanase?”

“I saw him back home after all these years, so I tracked him down.”

---

*After thirteen years, Nagisa saw Haru-chan by accident.*

*He couldn't believe it at first. He was feeding the penguins when a visitor kid came forward and asked to be taught the same way. As he obliged, he felt like someone was watching him silently, much closer than other people on the bleachers.*

*When Nagisa turned, their eyes met. There he was.*

*Haru-chan.*

*He wasn't on the bleachers; he was standing not far from the pool. Not like he could jump in anytime soon—the glass gate could hold him back just fine—but the fact that he was there was enough to figuratively throw Nagisa off. He looked so out of place for some reason. Haru-chan! The guy who would jump to any body of water whenever he saw one!*

*Nagisa was filled with a strange feeling. He wasn't happy; he was sure of that. But he wasn't angry either. He just felt... nothing. Empty. As if the man he was staring at weren't his best friend and older brother figure for years.*

*“Hazuki-san, it's all finished!”*

*The kid's voice snapped Nagisa back to reality. He turned at the kid and grinned. “Really? Good job! Now, what do you want to do?”*

*Nagisa entertained the kid for several more minutes before he could turn to where Haru-chan stood earlier. He was gone.*

*The strange feeling returned and it turned to something worse.*

*Anger.*

*That evening, Nagisa texted Rei-chan, telling him he was going to his parents' house and would be home late. He couldn't say anything else; the feeling was so overwhelming it was practically suffocating him. Rei-chan, bless his pure, beautiful heart, immediately replied with his usual understanding tone.*

***‘Don't worry, Nagisa-kun. I'll buy dinner tonight. Would you like some bread?’***

*It quelled the anger a bit, and Nagisa replied yes with a smile, genuinely impressed by Rei-chan's sensitive nature. But he still went with full speed. Simply put, he jogged all the way from the zoo to his old house and walked straight to the bedroom.*

*His parents left it the way it was before he went to college, for which Nagisa was grateful. It was easier to find what he was looking for. When he did find it, hidden beneath his bed, Nagisa blew the layer of dust off the lid and took off.*

*On the train, he called his parents and apologized for not being able to stay the night; he just wanted to get this over with.*

*It took around forty minutes to finally reach Haru-chan's house. As Nagisa had expected, the lights were on. He panted and impatiently hit the doorbell several times, wondering whether it still worked.*

*Judging from the sound of footsteps from the inside, it still worked.*

*The door slid open and Nagisa was now face-to-face with those deep blue eyes, widened in shock just like a few hours ago.*

*"N-nagisa?"*

*Those eyes.*

*Mako-chan loved those eyes the most.*

*Mako-chan is dead.*

*The anger returned.*

*"Mako-chan left this for you! Take it!" After shoving the box to Haru-chan's body, Nagisa turned and ran down the stone stairs.*

*"Nagisa! Nagisa!"*

*Haru-chan didn't run after him, but Nagisa didn't—couldn't—stop until he reached the train station.*

---

*"I know I shouldn't have done that, but..."*

*"You were angry and surprised. I understand," Sousuke replied, softly patting his back. "You weren't thinking straight."*

*Rin turned at his boyfriend. "Sou, do you think whatever is inside... caused their deaths?"*

*Sousuke shrugged. "Let's find out," he said and opened the box.*

## Chapter End Notes

Sorry it's a cliffhanger.

The next chapter is a bit too long if combined, so I decide to make it two separate chapters.

Reviews are much appreciated! ^^





# so don't cry for your love

## Chapter Summary

*I'll try to be better next time and explain it to you properly.*

*Stupid Makoto. You never do.*

## Chapter Notes

Warning: emotional abuse/gaslighting. If it's triggering for you, please do not proceed.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

### Letters.

It was all letters. Sousuke looked at the stack of envelopes, arranged neatly inside. The one on top was the biggest and the only brown envelope. It had the same handwriting as Nanase's suicide note and was written in both kanji and Latin alphabets.

### To Rin

"Give me that!" Rin snatched the brown envelope from Sousuke's hand and rose to his feet. "Hope you don't mind, but I'm reading this alone."

Hazuki looked like he *did* mind, but Sousuke beat him to it. "Go ahead, Rin."

With that, Rin left, presumably to the living room. Sousuke and Hazuki started to rummage through the old letters, opening all those blank envelopes that were already yellowed with age. They were written by Tachibana, with another paper—newer ones—attached on the back, written by Nanase. Mostly it was just one sentence or so, showing how bad he was with words, both written and spoken.

"Haru-chan's replying to all these letters."

Sousuke nodded and started to pick one of them randomly. Judging from the date, it was the oldest. The more he read the letters, the more he could imagine Tachibana's life, leading to his death, and how he actually felt towards Nanase.

---

*Dear Haru,*

*It's very hard to deal with all of this. Sometimes it feels like I'm losing balance. I try so hard to move on because I know you're doing great over there. But it's just so hard. If I cannot distance myself from you, you'll never bloom.*

*I'm sorry. I'll try to be better next time and explain it to you properly.*

*Stupid Makoto. You never do.*

---

*Dear Haru,*

*I failed my university entrance. I broke down like crazy. I was lucky Mom and Dad were out with Ren and Ran. I don't know how to break this down to them. Sometimes I just want to talk to you, but I don't want to bother you. Rin told me you have the best time. Congratulations! You might not believe it, but I'm so happy for you.*

*Thank you, Makoto. It's too late, though. I actually felt bad not asking you about it, but no use crying over spilled milk.*

---

*Dear Haru,*

*Rei introduced me to his brother's friend from a study club. His name is Takeshi-san, three years our senior. We get to know each other because I want to take his major next year, and he seems to be a very nice guy. For the first time, I feel like there's hope for me.*

*I have suspicions about that guy, Makoto.*

---

**(Song: 'The Lie Eternal' by Poets of the Fall)**

*Makoto didn't know how he could survive.*

*There were times he'd wake up sweating and shivering from unexplained fear. Sometimes he'd stare at his phone for a long time, wanting to contact Haru so badly his hand would start shaking. But then he remembered that he was doing the right thing. That he was doing this for both his and Haru's good. Takeshi-san said the same, too. He was the only person who could put up with him. Sometimes Makoto felt so guilty for breaking down in front of him in their study sessions.*

*"Don't worry, Makoto," he always said.*

*Takeshi-san was gentle and warm. He was a friend that Makoto needed the most at this time, a sign that he should've moved on from Haru, who was out there with his own dream.*

*Meanwhile, Nagisa and Rei were busy preparing themselves for graduation and university entrance tests. Makoto didn't want to bother. Look what happened to him when his own entrance test was bothered.*

*That being said, he was practically alone if Takeshi-san wasn't there with him.*

*"Are you sure you're okay with me hanging around all the time?" Makoto asked at one of their study sessions. "I mean, I'm just a high schooler, and you—"*

*"Nonsense! In fact, I think... I think you need to be somewhere else."*

*"Eh?"*

*"Somewhere new. Since I don't have a roommate, do you want to move in with me?"*

*Taken aback, Makoto couldn't answer right away. "What?"*

*"You heard me." Takeshi-san paused. "You come to my house pretty often; you know how big it is. If you're worried about burdening me, you can pay half of the rent. Isn't that wonderful?"*

*"I... I think so."*

*"Nice!" Takeshi-san beamed at him. Before Makoto could answer, he had taken his hand, distracting him. "I'd really appreciate it if you come and stay with me."*

*Makoto smiled nervously. "Uh, okay. But can I think about it first? I need to talk to my parents first."*

*"Well, of course. But as soon as you get your answer, tell me, okay?"*

*"Okay."*

---

*Sousuke put down the letter Tachibana had written, telling him that he'd moved in with Nakayama two days after the offer, and also describing some of the chaos on the moving day. But at the bottom of the page, the cheery tone turned sadder.*

*I told Mom and Dad I'm moving out. Takeshi-san even came over and introduced himself. I like the fact that he clicked with Dad and Mom seems to really like him. Unfortunately, Ren and Ran were at school by the time he came, so I don't know what they think of him yet, even though I have told them about our study sessions and they seem to like him too.*

*I think my parents are glad someone is looking out for me since you left and the others were busy. ~~Maybe they're tired of me.~~ Maybe that's why they accepted the proposition so quickly. Takeshi-san even asked them not to tell anyone else about it until everything is settled; he didn't want me to be overwhelmed with friends just yet.*

*So, basically, nobody knows I'm here. I feel a bit lonely, but Takeshi-san said it's good because I can focus on myself for once. Now that I think about it, he's right. For some reason, I feel kind of free. I can start focusing on my studies and maybe find new friends when I get together with the study club again.*

*Haru, these letters are the last thing I have for you. Whenever I heard the news of your victories, I know we're good now.*

*I'm not sure, Makoto. If we're good, you'd still be here now.*

“It's weird.”

“What is?” Hazuki asked.

“I think Nakayama said they lost contact after a while. Why didn't he tell me Tachibana moved in with him?”

“Red flag!” Hazuki looked worried. “Maybe we should read more of Mako-chan's letters first!”

“Maybe, yeah,” Sousuke said absently and watched as Hazuki opened another. He glanced at the one that was still in his hands. *Oh well*, he thought. *That explains the different room Rin saw.*

“Hey.” As if on cue, the swim coach peeked into the room. “Sou, can you come with me for a moment?”

“Sure.” Sousuke stood and followed him to the living room. “What is it?”

“I need some air. Can I go?”

“Fine by me,” Sousuke replied, staring hard at his boyfriend's agitated face. “Are you sure you're alright?”

“Of course not!”

“Come here.” Unceremoniously, he pulled Rin into his arms and they sat on the floor. As expected, it was when the dam broke and Rin began to sob on his shoulder. “I'm so sorry, Rin,” he whispered, stroking his red hair gently. “I really am.”

“Haru said sorry, too.”

“I'm sure he did.”

“You should read it. He actually wrote a bit about you.” Without releasing himself from Sousuke's embrace, Rin managed to hand him Nanase's farewell letter. Sousuke picked and

read it over Rin's head.

Rin,

If you are reading this, it means I am no longer here. I might be with Makoto. I don't know. But if you want some solace, just think that I finally find some peace.

After thirteen years, I finally know that Makoto died because of me. I didn't try hard enough to let him know how much I actually love him. I was too angry and stubborn to admit it and it's too late now. I didn't even know he was with someone who might've emotionally abused him. Maybe if I pushed harder, he'd still be alive right now, and you wouldn't be the only one speaking on the screen all the time.

I've read all his letters for me, and realized that even though pushing me away is his fault, he did it with good intentions and I just went with it, which I really regret. I did what he wanted me to do because, at some point, I think it was for my own good, too. After Makoto died, I tried my hardest to win all those medals, knowing that up there, he was looking at me, proudly. It was the only thing that could keep me going.

Rin, I'm sorry. I'm sorry for being such a bad friend all this time. We weren't always on the same page, but you're a good person. You're certainly very good to me. Thank you for kicking me out. It wakes me up. I cannot keep living with all this guilt anymore. The least I can do now is getting some truth, the last ones, but to be honest no damage control can fix this.

Yamazaki, if you're reading this too, I wish you well. I'm glad Rin has someone he can be with for such a long time. After all, trust is important. He cannot stop talking about you, by the way. I think he has a thing with your old officer uniform.

Haru

“Sou, let me go, please.”

“Okay.” Sousuke watched as Rin stood and took Nanase's letter from his hands. “Where are you going?”

“I need some air.” He sighed. “Maybe I'll go visit my parents. You know, while we're here. If I'm not back yet, just... just call me when you're done, okay?”

Sousuke nodded. He noticed that Rin took the brown envelope with him and knew immediately it was more than just a walk for fresh air.

*Whatever. He'll tell me if it's important.*

Important.

Nanase's words returned to him. *After all, trust is important.*

## Chapter End Notes

I decided to break this scene into chapters because it might be too long if combined.  
Reviews are much appreciated! ^^

# i kept the love you gave me alive

## Chapter Summary

*“I love you too, Nagisa. Rei. H-haru.”*

## Chapter Notes

Warning: emotional abuse/gaslighting. If it's triggering for you, please do not proceed.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Not long after Rin left, Sousuke returned to the bedroom, finding Hazuki still reading the letters with teary eyes. Silently, he joined him in opening and reading them. One of the letters stood out the most.

*Dear Haru,*

*Takeshi-san is amazing. After I moved into his apartment, he helped me a lot. We do things together. When he has classes, I'd wait for him in the library or somewhere, and then we'll hang out. I really, really enjoy his company. Even my parents love him, and they are grateful he pushes me to go to therapy.*

*But sometimes I'm confused...*

---

**(Song: 'The Lie Eternal' by Poets of the Fall)**

*“Makoto!” Takeshi-san barged into the room. “You okay?”*

*“I'm sorry for waking you up. I had nightmares about Haru.” Makoto sighed, wiping sweat on his brow with his hand. “Can you please stop asking about Haru right before we go to sleep? Maybe if we stop talking about him before bedtime—”*

*“No. It's important to face your demons, Makoto.”*

*“Haru-chan isn't my demons!”*

*Takeshi-san pulled him into his arms. Makoto was shaking so badly he didn't even resist in the embrace. "He destroys you, Makoto. You're the one who wants him away, so you're the one who has to move on. Remember what Eguchi-sensei told you?"*

*"Show him that I've won'." Makoto recited the words from one of his sessions.*

*"Right. Hey, I like you, okay? I want you to be better. I want you to win over him." Takeshi-san released Makoto and gently stroked his sweaty brow with a handkerchief. "Changing your feelings to the opposite is a good start, you know."*

*"But I don't hate Haru. I cannot hate him."*

*"I didn't say that. You're the one who came to that conclusion."*

*Makoto shook his head vigorously. "I don't want to. I don't want to."*

*"But you have to, or you will live like this for a long time. You know why you moved in here, right? You need a separate place to heal, away from those who remind you of Nanase." Takeshi-san hugged him again. "I'll sleep with you here tonight, okay? We'll talk more about this in the morning."*

*The younger man stared sadly at him. "Okay."*

---

*"Gaslighting."*

Sousuke looked up from Nanase's reply to the letter. "What?"

"Rei-chan told me about it. Gaslighting. He confused Mako-chan with kind words but he actually made him even worse." Hazuki pointed at the words. "It's exactly what this guy was doing and Haru-chan knew it too."

*Makoto, if only you were still alive now, I'd have taken you away from there. That guy's dangerous. You've always been too trusting.*

"You sound so sure of that."

"I speak from experience." Hazuki paused. "Rei-chan thought I was just jealous but it was clear that he was being led on. I almost lost him, you know. "

"Because his student keeps making passes at him?"

It rattled him. "Whoa, how do you know that? He told you, didn't he?"

"Hazuki, don't be mad."



“I’m not mad at you, Sou-chan. I’m mad at *him*. It should be our secret! Why did he tell you?”

“Well, when Ryugazaki realized his student was actually trying to do this gaslight thing, he found out that she came to the same shrink as Tachibana. He just gathered evidence and explained his theory to me.”

That was enough to make Hazuki understand, but he still looked irritated. He picked another letter and the contents made him gasp. Sousuke watched as he put down burnt papers on the floor and picked another piece of letter.

When his expression turned from annoyance to anguish, Sousuke was alerted. “Let me see.”

Hazuki flinched as if he didn’t realize that Sousuke was there. He bit his lip and handed the letter. “Here.”

The first thing Sousuke noticed was the fact that Nanase didn’t reply to this one. But some parts of the writings were blurry as if someone was crying on top of the paper. The wet spots looked relatively new, so he knew it wasn’t Tachibana. He couldn’t help but wonder how Nanase looked like crying.

*Dear Haru,*

*I’m scared. Remember when I usually jump behind you whenever I feel that way? Please don’t be mad, but I no longer do now. It feels blurry. I woke up today feeling worse than ever and I don’t even know why.*

*It’s been two days since I last coming out of my room. Takeshi-san said it’s not healthy and I want to believe him so badly! I hate myself for being mad at him because of what he did in the pool, because I know he was doing it for my own good. He even helped me move on from you, Haru-chan, before you called me.*

*I think this is my last letter to you. I have promised myself that I won’t write again after our phone call. I might even give this to someone safe, so I can take it again if I miss you. What urged me to write is that Takeshi-san just told me...*

---

*“Makoto, don’t be mad.”*

*Makoto didn’t answer from where he was lying on the bed. Couldn’t, more likely. He was so hurt yet so confused that he wasn’t able to speak. Takeshi-san sat down and the bed dipped down slightly, accommodating his weight. “I brought you some food. You should eat, Makoto.”*

*“No.” Makoto was surprised at how croaky he sounded.*

*“You haven’t eaten for one and a half days. Now sit up and eat.”*

“No.”

*“You’re lucky I love you. Sometimes you’re just so stubborn.” Takeshi-san chuckled and stroked Makoto’s hair before he rose to his feet. “I have to help out in the festival today, so please stay here and eat, okay? You can be mad at me, but I won’t let you starve yourself.”*

*“Takeshi-san?”*

*“Hm?”*

*“Do you think... I did well?”*

*A short silence followed. When Makoto looked up, Takeshi-san was hovering next to the bed and he felt one of his hands stroking his hair once again. “You passed the test, Makoto. You told him off well, just like what I’ve taught.” He smiled, and Makoto was filled with warmth. “Good for you.”*

*“Does this mean I don’t need to go to Sensei anymore?”*

*The hand stopped moving. “Why don’t you want to see her?”*

*Makoto sighed. “I’m tired. The sessions are very draining and I’m scared she’s trying to make me forget—”*

*“No one is making you forget, Makoto,” Takeshi-san interrupted. “No one ever says that. She just wants you to stop focusing on him. I want the same, too, so you can go on with your life. Please understand that this is for your own good.”*

*“Okay.” Even talking like this drained his energy.*

*Yes, this is for my own good. That thought swirled in his mind and refused to leave. It scared him shitless, to be honest.*

*“Listen, Makoto. I’ll pick you up later and we’ll see her one more time.”*

*“What?”*

*“After this, we’ll find another way. But it’s the end of the road for you, Makoto, don’t you want to finish it?”*

*Makoto nodded, suddenly wanting him gone as soon as possible. If it was what it took for him to leave, he’d agree as quickly as possible. Maybe he’s right; maybe finishing it can make me feel much better than now.*

*“Even your parents love the idea that you’re going to therapy. At least do it for them. You don’t want to disappoint, right?”*

“No.”

*“Good boy.” Takeshi-san kissed his hair. “I’ll see you later, okay? Maybe around 5 PM. Eguchi-sensei just returned from a conference, so it’s so nice of her to allow us to come. I promise it won’t be long.”*

*“Okay.”*

*When he was sure Takeshi-san was gone, Makoto knelt next to his bed and pulled something from under it: a box with a dolphin sticker on the lid. He eyed his desk and the small Iwatobi-chan statue looked back at him.*

*For the first time since he was separated from Haru, he felt his spirit was back.*

I have to do something!

*Writing something was hard, but Makoto managed. An idea came to his mind as he glanced at the clock. He stood and took the box with shaky hands; for some reason he didn’t want to eat the toast Takeshi-san had made for him. He took his phone and dialed a number.*

*Not long after, Makoto heard the voice he hadn’t heard in months. “Hello?”*

*“Nagisa,” he called, feeling even more energized than earlier despite the fact he hadn’t eaten in two days since the pool incident. “Can we meet?”*

---

*I hate myself for being mad at him because of what he did in the pool.*

“What he did in the pool?” Sousuke asked, more to himself than Hazuki nearby. “Did they go to the pool?”

“Hey, Sou-chan, do you have pictures of this Takeshi-san? I want to see how he looks like.”

Sousuke looked up from the letter. “I don’t, but maybe we can see it on the swim club’s website.”

“What?”

“He’s actually in charge of the swim club now.”

Hazuki’s expression went immediately blank. When he reached for his phone, Sousuke could see his hands were shaking. “I can look it up for you, Hazuki,” he said in sympathy.

“No. I can do this, Sou-chan. Please.”

“Well, okay.”

It took a while for Hazuki to finally get what he wanted. “I knew it. His hair stays the same.”

“What?”

“I’ve seen this guy years ago. It wasn’t even that clear.” Sousuke saw him pointing at Nakayama’s picture. “But I’ll never forget him.”

“Why?”

Hazuki picked the burnt letter and waved it in front of Sousuke. “Because I saw *this*.”

---

**(Song: ‘The Lie Eternal’ by Poets of the Fall)**

*Other than at school with the first-years, Nagisa no longer swam as much as he used to. Exam preparation and all stole most of his time. Study sessions with Rei-chan also weren’t as fun as they had been, for ‘Serious Mode Rei-chan’ was totally different than ‘Serious Mode Rei-chan that Nagisa can Tease’. It was understandable, though, because even the cheery Nagisa found himself on the verge of giving up sometimes.*

*So, when he was (finally!) able to swim, but it was too late to do so at school, he made his way to Iwatobi SC Returns. It was almost six in the evening, and the kids that were part of the swimming classes surely had gone home. But good for Nagisa, he had Goro-chan’s permission to swim as long as he wanted, as long as he sent the key first thing in the morning. The fact that Rei-chan came with him was what made the coach finally agreed to do so.*

*Unfortunately, Rei-chan was held off by a classmate, and Nagisa decided to go first. Even though both agreed to it, Nagisa wasn’t too happy. He was the only one who could stop Rei-chan from overworking himself with too much biology and such. If Nagisa weren’t there, who could guarantee that Rei-chan would arrive in fifteen minutes like he’d promised?*

*Still, Nagisa’s will to swim was stronger, so he decided to leave earlier. A good decision, really, for the pool was empty now. He just finished changing and was heading to the pool when he heard voices.*

“Can I... can I...”

*Nagisa recognized the voice. He wanted to jump towards that person—because he hadn’t heard that voice for so long—but his agitated tone stopped him.*

“No, Makoto. We’ve been through this.”

*This time, Nagisa didn’t know whose voice that was. He decided to sneak near the glass so he could see more clearly. Luckily, neither Mako-chan nor the person he was speaking to seemed to notice.*

*Now, Nagisa could at least see their figures. The man speaking to Mako-chan was tall, perhaps even more than Sou-chan, with straight black hair long enough to cover his nape. He had his back on Nagisa, thus he couldn’t see more of his physical traits.*

*But Mako-chan’s was pretty clear.*

*Nagisa just noticed that both Mako-chan and the guy weren't wearing swimsuits. They were wearing normal clothes as if neither were going to get into the water. Nagisa could see he was holding a piece of paper.*

*"Please, just once more?"*

*"No. I want you to watch. Please, Makoto."*

*"O-okay."*

*Mako-chan's horrified expression when the man lit the paper on fire broke Nagisa's heart. He'd never seen him so scared. "No! Please!"*

*The man lifted the burning letter higher as if not letting Mako-chan reach it. Mako-chan didn't, though. He fell to his knees, instead, and was obviously crying.*

*"Look up here, Makoto. Please. You can look down when it's already on the floor."*

*Weirdly, Mako-chan obliged. He didn't even say anything, yet tears were sliding down his face. Nagisa gasped when the man dropped the burning letter and stepped on it to put the fire out.*

*"See, Makoto? You're the one who decided to come here because you want to burn the memories and your... past love. You win."*

*"I don't decide—why doesn't this feel like winning?"*

*The man knelt as well and touched Mako-chan's cheek. "Because you're still rejecting your true feelings. But close your eyes, take a deep breath."*

*Mako-chan did what he was told.*

*"How do you feel? Calmer, right?"*

*Slowly, Mako-chan nodded. The man hugged him briefly. "Now, let's go home. You said he's going to call you tonight, right?"*

*"Yes."*

*"Let's go. I'll help you get ready for that."*

*When they left, Nagisa moved and ran from there. For some reason, he didn't want to be seen. Not even by Mako-chan.*

---

*"I've never seen Mako-chan crying like that before. It hurts me so bad whenever I think about it." Hazuki groaned and buried his face in his hands. "If only Rei-chan and I weren't so busy with ourselves. We failed him. I failed him."*

*"Did you swim that day?"*

Hazuki shook his head. "I called Rei-chan. He was still at school, so I returned there and begged him not to swim as well. I just wanted to go home, so we did."

"Is this... is this why you stopped swimming?"

"Yes. I just cannot stop thinking about Mako-chan and that incident. I still swim sometimes, though, just not there. It was the last time I went there." Hazuki sniffed. "Mako-chan would've convinced me to swim there again, regardless of how he feels."

"Tachibana was too selfless for his own good."

"Yes, Sou-chan. Hey, there's one more in there." Hazuki, obviously desperate to change the topic, flipped the box and another letter fell to the floor. "I'll open this one."

When Sousuke peered from behind his shoulder, he realized that it was slightly different than the others. It wasn't addressed to Nanase, for starters, even though he also wrote on another piece of paper attached to it.

*Dear Nagisa and Rei,*

*Thank you for being such good friends to me. I don't deserve any of you. You guys and Haru are the best teammates I've ever had, and I'd never trade it for anything.*

*Rei, I heard you're going to stay in Iwatobi because you earned a scientific scholarship to SeKyo. And with a chance of a double degree at the end of your study! Amazing! You're the smartest guy I've ever known, and I wish you all the best. I know everything will be great for you.*

*Nagisa, is it true that you're going to Tokyo? To be honest, I didn't expect that. Maybe it's just me, but I am too used to see you around that it's hard to imagine you'll go far. Good luck! You'll be just fine, Nagisa!*

*Maybe you two have realized that we've grown apart. That's fine! I'll always be here. Anything may happen, but you two are irreplaceable. I'd love to see both of you, but I've moved out and now I'm living with a friend. Don't worry. I'll try my best to arrange some time before you two go. And maybe when all of this is over and I am healed, as they said, I will have enough courage to face Haru, too.*

*Love, Makoto*

"But he didn't," Hazuki said between his sobbing. "He died before we could even contact him! He died before he could talk to Haru-chan!"

Offering comfort as much as possible, Sousuke awkwardly circled his arms around the smaller man's shoulder. Slowly, Hazuki slid down and ended up with his head on Sousuke's

lap, like their first meeting back in the zoo. Sousuke let him. He merely turned the letter and saw Nanase's handwriting.

*Nagisa and Rei, thank you for being my friends.*

*I appreciate it so much.*

*I've seen how far you two have become, still strong together.*

*Keep it up. I'm sure Makoto is very proud.*

*Haru*

"Hazuki, there's something I haven't known yet."

"Yeah?"

"When did Tachibana give you this box?"

The man looked up, tears still streaming down his face. "The day he disappeared."

---

**(Song: 'The Ballad of Jeremiah Peacekeeper' by Poets of the Fall)**

*"Nagisa, please, can you help me?"*

*Nagisa was surprised when he saw Mako-chan, standing not far from the school gate. He was holding a box and his phone, which he had used to call Nagisa earlier. "Mako-chan? I miss you so much! It's been a while! What are you doing here?"*

*Mako-chan looked like someone was going to attack him. "I'm just dropping by." He forced a laugh. "You know, seeing how you guys are doing."*

*"Well, why don't you get inside then? The first-years are still practicing."*

*"Maybe not now. I'm in a hurry, actually." Before Nagisa could ask more, he'd continued. "How about Rei? Where's he?"*

*"He's not coming, Mako-chan. He's doing something about the upcoming university entrance test." Knowing that it might be sensitive for Mako-chan, Nagisa hurriedly changed the subject. "Well, it's also my last practice today. It's more to see the first-years, so that's why I can go home this quickly."*

*Mako-chan nodded, looking dazed. "I see. I heard you're going to go far?"*

*“What?”*

*“The university. My mom met Ama-chan-sensei and she told me.”*

*“Oh. Yeah! I’m thinking Tokyo, Mako-chan. I applied for marine biology.” Nagisa smiled at him. “I decided to learn more about sea animals and Rei-chan suggested that for me.”*

*“I see. Good luck.”*

*“Thanks, Mako-chan!”*

*Mako-chan smiled but then he held up the box in his hand. “Since you’re going away, can you please hold this for me? I’ll take it back when we meet again.”*

*“What’s this, Mako-chan?”*

*“Some memories. Please?”*

*Still surprised, Nagisa took the box. “Mako-chan, are you okay? You look... pale.”*

*It was an understatement. He looked thinner, which was concerning enough, but the weirdest thing was his gaze. He looked like he was nervous, or downright scared, even more than his usual scaredy-cat self. And the fact that Mako-chan looked like that after finally contacted Nagisa in months didn’t sit right with him at all.*

*“I am okay, Nagisa, don’t worry. Please keep this for me?”*

*“Well... okay. Where are you going, Mako-chan?”*

*Mako-chan smiled and patted his head. “I’m going to be healed, Nagisa. Just you wait. I’ll be back stronger than ever.”*

*“With that guy?”*

*The smile vanished. “What guy?”*

*“I saw you, Mako-chan! I saw you and that guy in the swim club!”*

*Mako-chan looked like Nagisa had struck him. “No, no, Nagisa, you got it all wrong. He’s a good guy. It... it was a test for me.”*

*“Test?”*

*“Yes, to see whether I’m healed enough.” Mako-chan smiled again. “And I passed. Aren’t you happy for me, Nagisa?”*

*Nagisa didn’t like thinking of Mako-chan’s pleas as the paper was burned as ‘passing a test’, but he didn’t push it. “Yes, yes, I am,” he replied. His voice sounded hollow. “Mako-chan, you know we’re still your friends, right? At least me and Rei-chan?”*

*A nod. “When I’m much better, I’ll see you again, Nagisa. Tell Rei that, too.”*



*“I will!” Nagisa put the box on the ground and pulled Mako-chan into a tight hug. “I promise I’ll do my best, Mako-chan! I will!”*

*Mako-chan started stroking his blond hair. “Of course you will. I believe in you.”*

*“Thanks! We all love you, Mako-chan!”*

*“I love you too, Nagisa.” His voice suddenly cracked and when Nagisa looked up, Mako-chan had tears in his eyes, streaming down his cheeks. “I love you too, Nagisa. Rei. H-haru.”*

*“Haru-chan too!” Nagisa didn’t mean to bring him up, but he was carried away. He gently pushed Mako-chan’s head to rest on his shoulder. It was an awkward angle, and he was sure that his taller friend was uncomfortable, but neither changed positions.*

*When Mako-chan spoke again, he talked more like to himself than to his petit friend in his embrace. “Yes. I love you. I always do. Yes.”*

---

“That was the last time I saw him. Apparently, I was the last person who saw him alive, too,” Hazuki wailed. “If only I pushed him harder! Forced him to leave that guy! Or something!”

“Or something,” Sousuke parroted. “It’s too late now. Are you sure he said healing?”

“Yes.” Hazuki sat up and wiped his eyes. “Yes. Why?”

“If he gave you this box on that day, it means he had written this letter earlier.” Sousuke stared out the window, at the clear sky that was starting to darken, trying to distract himself from the realization that didn’t sit well with him. “It means he might’ve had a feeling something would happen.”

## Chapter End Notes

Longest and hardest chapter to write. I’ve planned to rewrite this chapter and the earlier one, but found myself unable to because even though this is therapeutic for me, I found it very difficult to do.

Hopefully it’s okay for you. Reviews are much appreciated! ^^

# cry tears of joy 'cause you're alive

## Chapter Summary

“I feel guilty whenever I see him.”

“Guilty? Of him?”

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Rin, who showed up half an hour after Sousuke and Hazuki finished opening all the letters, didn't say anything about what he'd done. Sousuke was curious, but he let it be. Plus, he was hungry and Rin came with dinner, so it was distracting enough.

After eating in Nanase's dining room, they decided to go home. Sousuke took the box with him, considering that it could come in handy. But he let Hazuki go home with Tachibana and Nanase's letter for him and Ryugazaki, much to his happiness.

“Rei-chan will love this,” he said, pulling both Rin and Sousuke to a group hug. “Thank you!”

“No problem, Nagisa.”

Hazuki released them and turned at Sousuke. “Thank you, Sou-chan. I'm sure Mako-chan and Haru-chan are very proud of you.”

*It's not like I can do anything else*, Sousuke thought but decided not to say. “I'm not sure about that, Hazuki,” he replied instead. “But you're welcome.”

The smile Sousuke saw as a reply was the brightest one he saw all day.

---

“Hey, Sousuke.”

“Huh?”

“I'm going for a run. Coming?”

“What time is it now?”

“Four-thirty.”

“Don't you have jet lag or something?” Sousuke groaned, sitting up on the bed, and saw his boyfriend in his usual jogging suit. Rin always did that before the sun rose. It was a habit he

never changed, but he just arrived *two days ago*!

“Sydney is just two hours ahead from here, dumbass.” Rin shoved him playfully, making him fall against the pillow. “You coming or not?”

“No. Maybe tomorrow, Rin.”

“Huh. Fine.” The bed felt subsequently lighter as Rin stood. “By the way, someone just called.”

“What?” That woke him up almost immediately. “Who?”

“Who knows, mate. See you.” Without waiting for any response, Rin had left the room.

“I’m not your mate,” Sousuke grumbled sleepily as he reached out for his phone on the nightstand. The name on the screen made him sit up in surprise. “Why would Captain call me this early?”

---

The answer came a few hours later when Sousuke was awake enough and finished his breakfast. Rin still wasn’t back, but he texted earlier to say he was going to be late and Sousuke didn’t ask. Instead, he decided to call Mikoshiba.

*“Hello?”*

“Captain?”

*“Yo, Whale Shark!”*

That threw Sousuke off. “Cap, you haven’t called me that since I stopped patrolling.”

*“Yeah, yeah, Detective. Sergeant. Whatever.”*

“Rin told me you called. What’s happening?”

*“Listen, can I come over today? Maybe at lunch break?”* A pause. *“I know my brother-in-law is back in town.”*

“No way. Rin hasn’t talked to you for years.”

Mikoshiba’s next words sounded exasperated. *“Can I just come, Yamazaki?”*

“Fine, fine. See you then.”

---

When Mikoshiba came, Rin still wasn’t back. *Now* Sousuke started to worry, but when he voiced it to his superordinate, he burst into laughter.

“Yamazaki, sometimes you’re just unbelievable.” Still grinning, Mikoshiba patted his shoulder from across the dining table. “Matsuoka still hates my guts. He surely doesn’t want

to see me here.”

“Rin knows you’re coming?”

Now Mikoshiba looked genuinely surprised. “Didn’t he tell you he went to see me yesterday?”

“He did? That explains why he went for so long!”

“You need to ask him why he didn’t tell you, though. That’s kind of strange.” Mikoshiba turned serious again. “Anyway, I come here because he asked me to, but this should be kept confidential or Chief will kill me.”

“Wait, what?”

“Plus, Aoki actually agreed to help, too. That kid really looks up to you, for some reason.”

Sousuke’s mind finally caught up with him. “You’re kidding, right? You actually want to continue Tachibana’s investigation?”

“Hey, those two were my friends too. You weren’t there yet, but Iwatobi swim club often came to Samezuka when I was the captain. We weren’t close, but I worked with Tachibana a few times. And Nanase was amazing. I heard Hidaka was actually going to scout him if he weren’t leaving for Australia. You know, the university in Tokyo? Famous of their sports clubs.”

“But why the change of mind?” Sousuke pressed. “You couldn’t just continue after what happened to me.”

Mikoshiba leaned against the chair and sighed. “Matsuoka actually came with your theory yesterday. Ryugazaki sent articles about the project you mentioned. He found it in Nanase’s house and came to me with it.”

“Really?”

“Yes. It’s not enough to deem Eguchi-sensei as the doer, but it sure gives us something to look about. I actually talked to one of the guys in the article, who wanted to sue her because his ex gaslit him as a part of her project.”

“How did it go?”

“He no longer wanted to press charges because Eguchi’s close to us, but he still wants justice if there’s something new to the case. He’ll contact some other victims he’d gathered twelve years ago.” His expression brightened as if he remembered something. “Actually, prior to Nanase’s death, Ryugazaki contacted him and offered some help as a fellow victim. He said no, though.”

“Why?”

“He just wanted to move on and forget. What his ex-girlfriend did on Eguchi-sensei’s order was really traumatizing to him.”

“When was this? I mean, when did Ryugazaki call him?”

“That guy didn’t remember the exact date, but I reckon it’s sometime before he sent all those articles to Australia.”

Sousuke suddenly remembered Ryugazaki’s words back in the funeral. *I feel selfish... but well, it’s my last resort.*

“Wait, wait. Maybe *that’s* why he sent all those articles to Nanase,” Sousuke concluded. “He wanted to stop Eguchi but no one else can help him here. Maybe he hoped Nanase could do something.”

*But he ended up feeling so guilty he committed suicide instead,* Sousuke wanted to say but refrained himself.

His superior thought about it for a moment. “That makes sense. The reason this guy agrees to help is that we mentioned Tachibana’s death and that he might be a victim too. I think he was shocked to know someone could *die* because of this. So, that’s why he wants to come forward after a dozen years.”

“This is getting interesting.”

“How about you, Yamazaki?” Mikoshiha smiled and Sousuke could see a determined look in him. “Since you went with Matsuoka to Nanase’s house yesterday, what else did you find?”

---

Rin finally returned two hours after Mikoshiha left. “He’s gone already?” It was his first question.

“Yeah, yeah,” Sousuke replied from the couch. He turned to see his boyfriend carrying a large cardboard box in his hand. “What is it?”

“My things. Or Haru’s, to be precise. You see, when I heard Haru died, I decided to clean his room and send his pictures home. They just arrived downstairs.” With that, Rin joined Sousuke on the couch and opened the box. “Haru was as great at drawing almost as he was great in freestyle swimming.”

Sousuke watched as Rin pulled out the pictures and sketchbooks and spread them on the table. “Wasn’t that what he did after retiring? Drawing?”

“Uh-huh.” Rin laughed. “He wasn’t a good coach, after all. I think he just didn’t know what else he could do, so he turned to the second thing he did best. He actually had his art exhibited, you know, and some journalists called him ‘a water artist’. Whatever that means.”

“Have his parents released a public statement?”

“No. I think they’ll do it soon.”

“Why stalling? People will start asking if he doesn’t show up anymore.”

“Sou, seriously. Haru never showed up anymore even when he was still alive and kicking. You know that. The fact that he killed himself surely will stir up some news and I just think his parents aren’t ready for that yet.”

“You have a point there.”

“After retiring, he basically lived in the dark. People aren’t interested in his personal life, just his paintings. He made money on those exhibitions, enough to cover his part of the rent, but that was all.” Rin stopped organizing the contents of the box and stared at his boyfriend. “I think... he just lost interest with anything else after Makoto died. He still won and all that, but he just... he wasn’t himself anymore.”

“Rin, why didn’t he attend Tachibana’s funeral?”

“He wasn’t in Australia when Makoto’s body was found. Maybe he was racing in Rio or something, I don’t remember. I did tell him as soon as Nagisa told me, but Haru didn’t actually use his phone and Makoto wasn’t someone worth international media coverage... so it was too late for him. He did text me about the nightmares shortly before that day, but told himself it was just nerves.”

“What did he do when he found out?”

“He didn’t come out of his room for days. I had to break the door to get to him and we got into an argument on why I got to see him and he didn’t. They hadn’t talked in months, but it was still very bad.” Rin rolled open a painting and Sousuke could see he was trying not to cry. It consisted of both Iwatobi and Samezuka’s high school swim clubs, enjoying themselves in Iwatobi SC Returns’ indoor pool. Sousuke felt he was back there for a second, *swimming with no care of the world...*

Rin’s sob returned Sousuke to reality. He gently pulled his boyfriend up to the couch and Rin ended up resting his head against his chest. “He was good,” he commented, just to break the silence.

“Yes, he was. Hey, Sou?”

“Hm?”

“What did you talk about with Sei?”

“Oh.” That reminded Sousuke of their earlier conversation. “He agrees to take over Tachibana’s case, even though it will be done in secret.”

Rin sighed in relief. “Glad he finally does.”

“Why didn’t you tell me you went to see him yesterday?” Sousuke stroked the red hair and he felt Rin playing with the fabric of his shirt. “I’d like to go with you.”

“I don’t want to give you false hope. He might not take it.”

“Thanks, anyway. It must be hard to finally talk to someone you hate.”

Rin chuckled. “I don’t hate him, Sou. Or I’d be the first person who objected to him marrying my baby sister.”

“So why don’t you talk to him all these years?”

“Well... to be honest, I feel guilty whenever I see him.”

“Guilty? Of him?”

“No.” Rin paused for a long time. “Of you.”

That was the first time Sousuke heard him admitting that. “What?” he asked, straightening his sitting position. Rin copied him, making them now face to face. “What do you mean?”

Rin didn’t look up at him when he answered. “Whenever I see him, I always remember my dad. He left his dreams to settle down with my mother, remember? Meanwhile Sei stopped swimming, got to the police academy, and asked to be stationed here in Iwatobi to be with Gou after Mom died.”

“And?”

“And? *And?* And I cannot do that, of course!” Rin exclaimed. “I see him and Gou together and I keep remember that I’m in Sydney and you’re here and—”

“Rin.”

“Whenever I think about this, I really want to leave everything and return here! Sou, believe me, I really do!”

“Rin!”

“If he can leave his dream to be with the person he loves, why can’t I? But—”

“*Rin!*”

“Huh?”

“Calm down.” Sousuke patted Rin’s cheek and felt wetness there. “Do you *seriously* think I hold a grudge against you for that? After almost fifteen years we’ve been together? *Really?*”

“Well, not every time, but I still think about it sometimes.” Rin shrugged. “Sometimes, when we talk, telling each other about our days, I just want to stay here with you.”

“But you love Australia,” Sousuke finished the unsaid remark. “I can see that. And I love you. I won’t stop you from doing what you love.”

“Sou, you don’t even swim anymore.”

“But that doesn’t mean *you* need to stop. Really, don’t worry.” He grinned. “After all, I’ve found my other calling. Catching bad guys.”

Rin smiled weakly. “You’re unbelievable, Sou.”

“Yeah, yeah, Coach Shark.”

“Shut up, Sergeant Sunshine.”

Sousuke burst into laughter and tackled his boyfriend on the couch. They rolled off of it and eventually Sousuke landed on the floor, with Rin on top of him. “Ouch.”

“What? What is it?” Rin looked worried almost immediately. “Is that your shoulder?”

“No.” Sousuke smiled up at him, whose face was obscured because he blocked the lamp above them. He tightened his arms around Rin’s waist. “I just miss you.”

“Stop being such a hopeless romantic.”

“That’s your habit, rubbing off on me.”

“If you keep holding me like this, it won’t be the only thing rubbing on you.”

“Oh, Rin. Seriously?”

Rin grinned, showing his famous shark teeth. Sousuke pushed their hips together. “Nanase said you have a thing for my old uniform. Should I do something about that?”

Now Rin’s face became as red as his hair. “Shut up!”

“What? You’re the one who asked me to send that thing to Sydney once you know I’m no longer a patrol cop.”

“You’re unbelievable, Sou. Really.”

“But you love me.”

At that, they laughed and Sousuke released Rin so he could climb back on the couch. Not long after they were back on the cushions. “I think I’ll ask for a holiday.”

“Alright.”

“A *long* one.”

“Are you sure?”

“You don’t want me here?”

“Of course I do. I just don’t want you to be here because you feel guilty.” Sousuke picked his hands and squeezed them. “Please, Rin. I was *forced* to leave my own dream. I don’t want your own feelings to ruin what you really love.”



Rin smiled and he looked like he was going to cry again. “Then it’s settled. I might be back for the competition, but then I’ll be here.”

“Alright.”

“Remember, you still owe me, Sou.”

“Huh?”

“I looked for Haru’s envelope for you, remember?”

Sousuke groaned as he remembered.

“*Sou.*”

“Fine. But after this case is done, okay?”

“Deal.” Rin kissed his cheek. “Thank you.”

“No problem.” Sousuke knew exactly what he meant.

“Let’s go back to this. I want it done before dinner.” Rin returned to Nanase’s pictures on the table and began to sort them. Sousuke watched as he took more and more paintings and sketches from the box and spread them on the table. He stopped at one of the drawings and hurriedly flipped the paper back so Sousuke couldn’t see.

It didn’t go unnoticed. “What’s that?”

“No, you cannot see this one!”

“*Rin.*”

The deep blush was back as Rin tossed the paper over to his boyfriend behind him. “Look for yourself.”

A pair of teal eyes were the first thing Sousuke saw.

His breath caught. It was himself, hugging Rin, who was grinning next to him. Behind them, there was a view of Sydney Opera House. It was so detailed he almost mistook it as a photo at first. He realized that it was a painting when he remembered he never went there recently.

“It’s beautiful,” he whispered.

“I missed you so much but I couldn’t go home, so Haru drew it for me as a surprise last year.”

“We should frame this.”

Rin turned and smiled sadly. “Yes, we should.”

Suddenly interested in Nanase's work, Sousuke put down the painting and took one of the sketchbooks. The cover's color was green and there was a small orca sticker on it. When he started to go through it, sketches of Tachibana doing various activities filled the whole book. Reading, swimming, studying, *everything*.

All of them were smiling. Tachibana was indeed captivating.

Eerily, the smile reminded Sousuke of the photo of his body when he was found. Even in death he was *that* peaceful.

*Wait.*

"Rin."

"Huh?"

"I have a theory."

"You sound like Rei." But then Rin stopped sorting out Nanase's pictures and sat next to him.

"What is it?"

"This might sound weird, but Tachibana was found smiling."

"Huh?!" Rin repeated, more loudly this time.

"I mean his body. I saw his... pictures."

As expected, Rin looked aghast. "Why are you telling me this? I don't need to know this."

"What if he saw Nanase when he died?" When Rin was going to protest, Sousuke shushed him. "I mean, in his mind or something."

"As if someone was reminding him about Haru?"

"Yes." Sousuke stared at the sketch of smiling Tachibana in his hands. "But who would do such thing before killing him? Sounds so... cruel."

"Someone possessive? Twisted love? Jealousy?"

"Good one, hopeless romantic." Sousuke looked up at Rin, who looked like he was ready to punch something. Nakayama, hopefully. "But yeah, that's possible."

## Chapter End Notes

Love me small Sourin moments please.  
Reviews are much appreciated! ^^



# but in it i can hear a dolphin sing

## Chapter Summary

“You want to see where Nanase was found?”

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“What are you thinking, Sei?”

“Whoa!” At the question, Sei jumped from his seat. “Gou-kun! You almost gave me a heart attack!”

His wife snorted. “You deserve it. How many times do I have to tell you to call me Kou?”

“Since I proposed to you ten years ago, I guess?”

“Whatever. I’m making dinner.”

“What are you making?”

“Steak with French fries. Not every day you can go home on time without dealing with dispatchers and all, so we need to celebrate. Help me out here.”

“Aye-aye, Ma’am!” Sei followed Gou to the kitchen and they worked in silence. Sometimes he stole kisses whenever she went past him, and they’d laugh together. “How’s your day, by the way?” he asked.

“It was fine,” Gou answered, still frying the potatoes. “I took the students to the zoo today and met your sister in Nagisa’s penguin place. She said she’s staying here for two days and then she’ll be off to Hokkaido. Al’s waiting for her there.”

“Ah, typical Isuzu. Once she turns gaming champion, she never tells the big brother whenever she’s in town.”

“Momo-kun’s just the same.” His wife laughed. “Remember how shocked you were when he said he’d been staying in Iwatobi for a month and didn’t even tell you?”

“You mean when he wanted to take a break over those book deals even though he was the main author?”

“Yeah!” Gou smiled. “He had the audacity of leaving Nitori-kun alone to deal with those publishers.”

“Stupid boy,” Sei admonished jokingly. “Nitori might be the main photographer and assistant researcher, but that’s about it.”

“Yes. Well, he told me it was because Nitori-kun was the one who can speak Russian and it was about Russian wildlife, so he thought all was well. But do you remember when Nitori-kun knows your brother didn’t tell us?”

Sei grinned at her as he started to cut the onions. “Nitori apologized to me so many times I thought he was crying. He made a special call from St. Petersburg just to do that! From *St. Petersburg*! Poor kid gets dragged to all Momo’s nature adventures around the world and even when they are apart, he still cannot stop looking out for him.”

“And he came to Iwatobi almost immediately just to give Momo-kun an earful. Mikhail-san wasn’t happy. He was too used to see Nitori-kun around the project. Remember what he said?”

“Yes. He couldn’t stop screaming on that video call. *‘I didn’t agree on you two marrying just so my nephew can leave me alone all the time! You owe me borscht, Mr. Nitori!’*”

“And then Momo-kun said, *‘Which Nitori? We’re both Nitoris!’*” Gou laughed even louder. “He’s so embarrassing sometimes.”

“I feel bad for Mikhail-san. He just wants to see his nephew at least once a year. I might be Momo’s brother, but sometimes I think he doesn’t deserve that kid.”

“Nobody deserves Nitori-kun. Not even my brother.”

“Matsuoka certainly doesn’t.”

Gou glared at her husband. “Why don’t you call him Rin like everyone else?”

“*You* certainly don’t call him Rin. Ouch!”

“You know what I mean, stupid,” she replied, hitting him with the spatula once again for good measure.

“Sorry. Old habits die hard.”

“To be honest, I’m glad he reached out to you, even though it’s about Makoto’s case. You two haven’t talked for a long time.”

Sei shrugged, not really wanting to tell his wife that her older brother wasn’t really fond of him for some reason. Instead, he changed the subject. “Yamazaki’s rookie wants to help on the case, you know. So don’t worry about me doing this alone.”

“I’m glad.” She smiled at him. “Hopefully this gives Makoto’s family closure. Too bad Haru didn’t.”

“But his death actually pushed Yamazaki to reopen the case.”

“That makes sense. I’m still mad you didn’t tell me.”

“I’m sorry, Gou-kun. You’re the first person who’d tell your brother, and that’s what Nanase was trying to avoid.”

“And it was exactly what I did. I have this weird feeling that it was some kind of revenge.”

“How’s that?”

“He missed Makoto’s funeral, so he wanted my brother to miss his.” Gou huffed but didn’t press it further. “Well, it’s not like we can ask him now. I just hope both of them are finally at peace.”

“Yeah.”

They didn’t talk anymore until the dinner was ready and the table was set. “I’ll call Ayana,” Gou said. “She’s been studying since you came back home.”

“Alright.”

As Gou left to call their daughter, Sei’s phone rang. He frowned when he didn’t recognize the number, but took it anyway. “Hello.”

*“Is this Lieutenant Mikoshiba?”*

“Yes. Who is this?”

*“I’m Atsushi Ryugazaki. Uh... Rei’s older brother. I think you know him. He’s now a professor in SeKyo but he used to be in Iwatobi High School swim club.”*

Sei couldn’t help but chuckle. “Yes, I remember him. The only guy who couldn’t swim.”

*“Yeah!”* Atsushi laughed out loud. He sounded relieved. *“Rei never lives that down, even after he quit swimming after university.”*

“Right. What is it, Ryugazaki-san?”

*“I called Yamazaki-san about Tachibana, but he directed me to you instead.”* A pause. *“When Rei mentioned the case, I decided to take a look at my old stuff from college and got something from one of our cultural festivals.”*

“So basically you have some evidence.”

*“You can say that. Well, I didn’t know Tachibana personally, but he was in the study club and my little brother talked about him a lot. I really hope this helps.”*

“Why didn’t you come forward thirteen years ago? You might be the last person who saw him alive.”

Atsushi was silent for a moment. *“As I said, we weren’t that close. I know I should’ve, but like everyone else, I thought he killed himself.”* He sighed. *“I kind of have regrets about it now, so I’m trying to make things right.”*

Sei thought about it. Chief had a day off tomorrow, so it was a good moment. He himself had to see the dispatch until late afternoon, but the thought of Aoki put him on ease. That rookie would have a field day; he was sure of that. “I appreciate it. Come to the precinct tomorrow and we’ll talk about it. Does after lunch work for you?”

*“Sure.”*

“Find Officer Aoki, okay? Don’t tell this to anyone else.”

*“Okay, thanks. See you.”*

When Sei put the phone on the table, he felt he was doing the right thing. He just hoped Chief wouldn’t notice any of this.

---

Two days after Nanase’s paintings arrived, Sousuke agreed to go with Rin on his morning jog. He had to admit it felt different jogging alone with doing it along with someone, even though it was in silence. There was a comforting presence that lifted his mood for some reason.

“Sou,” Rin called at some point. “Do you want to go to the beach?”

Sousuke regarded him for a moment. “You want to see where Nanase was found?”

Rin grimaced. “Sometimes I hate you for reading me that easily.”

A shrug. “Let’s go, then.”

Despite the darkness, it was easy to find the spot where Nanase was found. At some point, Sousuke realized he hadn’t been here since that day. The area where his colleagues recovered the body was now a small raft filled with flowers, balloons, and candles. There were even some dolphin plushies in there. On the front, there was a framed photo of Nanase, staring blankly at the camera. It was taken on his last race, with a gold medal hanging in front of his bare chest.

“A memorial?”

“Haru’s parents just announced his death and funeral. Nagisa and Rei made this, and then everyone just came. I didn’t expect people to react this quickly.”

“Yeah. I think there’ll be more when more people know about his death. Maybe even international fans will storm this place.”

“I certainly can see that happening.”

“Why is it on a raft?”

“They plan to push it to the sea on Haru’s 33<sup>rd</sup> birthday. That guy loves the sea. Rei suggested we make it to some kind of sea burial.”

“Yeah?”

“Yeah. Burning it once it goes to the sea.”

“I see.”

Sousuke felt Rin scooting closer to him and they stood there in silence, letting only waves being the only source of the sound. They stayed like that for a long time until another voice was heard from the distance.

“...-san? Yamazaki-san? Yamazaki-san!”

Sousuke turned and saw Aoki jogging down to the sand. He was wearing his uniform, so it was obvious that he was doing some morning patrol, like Sousuke used to do when he was his age. “Hi, Yamazaki-san! I didn’t expect to see you here.” His expression brightened when he saw Rin. “Oh! Good morning, Matsuoka-san!”

Rin blinked, looking puzzled. Sousuke took over and introduced them. “Rin, this is Michio Aoki, one of the rookies in the precinct. Aoki, this is my boyfriend Rin Matsuoka.” He couldn’t help but elbow him playfully. “You were too busy hitting me and crying to notice him.”

“Shut up, Sou!” Red-faced, Rin turned at Aoki and smiled sheepishly. “Hello there, Officer Aoki.”

Aoki nodded politely at him. Sousuke feared that he would start gushing over how he loved seeing Rin’s races or even mentioning the incident in the precinct, but surprisingly he didn’t. Instead, they just shook hands formally before Aoki turned back at him. “Since we’re here, do you mind if I talk to you for a while?”

“Me?”

“Yes, sir.”

Sousuke and Rin exchanged glances. “Go ahead, Sou. I need some rest, after all.”

“Alright.”

Sousuke followed Aoki to the stone steps that led to the street and they settled there. From there, he could see Rin sitting on the sand right next to the memorial, staring at the sea. “So, what is it, Aoki?”

“I think Captain Mikoshiba has told you we agreed to help with Tachibana-san’s case. I was around when he was re-examining it and he asked for my help.”

“I bet you hung out around the place when Rin came,” Sousuke mumbled. “Nosy ass.”



Aoki grinned. "Sorry not sorry, sir."

"So, what did you get?"

The grin widened. "Do you remember Nanase-san's letter? About 'damage control'?"

Sousuke didn't, to be honest. "Maybe. Okay, not really."

"I thought to myself, 'What did he mean by that? Did he come to see the suspicious guy that was on Tachibana-san thirteen years ago? What did he do before he committed suicide?' When I knew Nakayama-san works at the swim club, I decided to find out."

"Did you?"

"Yes! Actually my wife went to the swim club the other day, so I dropped by and asked whether I could see their surveillance camera, telling them that she lost her wallet and it might be there. She didn't, though, it was all an act."

"And did you get anything?"

"Uh-huh. There were indeed footages of Nanase-san coming, so I asked Nakayama-san about it."

---

*"Wait, was this..."*

*Nakayama-san regarded Michio gently. For some reason, it sent chills down the young cop's spine. "Yes?"*

*"This is Nanase-san, right? Iwatobi's swimming champion who died recently?"*

*"Yes, it was him. Were you one of the cops who found him?"*

*Michio nodded and returned his gaze at the screen, showing Nanase-san passing his wife on the way to Nakayama-san's office. "What was he doing?"*

*"Why do you want to know?"*

*"If I do, I want to see him!" Michio lied. "Would love to take pictures with him or something."*

*"Seems like you're a fan."*

*"You can say that." Michio, who knew almost nothing about swimming, quickly zoomed on the picture as a distraction. "Too bad I wasn't there."*

*"Yes, too bad he came."*

*"What?"*

*“Well, it was the day he died, so if only someone could prevent his death or something...”*  
Nakayama-san shrugged. *“I certainly couldn’t.”*

---

“I didn’t press because I was afraid he wouldn’t answer anymore, so there you go. But I did get the footage. I’ll send it over in case you want to see it. I hope this helps a bit, Yamazaki-san.”

“You did. Thank you. It’s proof that they indeed saw each other before Nanase died. Nakayama sure lies a lot.”

“Maybe they talked about Tachibana-san? That’s what we need to find out. I’ll tell you if I get anything else.”

“Why are you doing all this?”

Sousuke’s question was answered by a laugh. “Why, can’t a rookie help out his senior?”

“No, it’s just—”

“Don’t worry, Yamazaki-san. Tokitsu students have to help each other, right?”

That wasn’t something Sousuke expected to hear. “You went there too?”

“Four years after you left, yes. I wasn’t even in the swim club, but everyone knows Sousuke Yamazaki, that swimming prodigy. I actually couldn’t believe my eyes when I saw you in Iwatobi on my first day working.” Aoki laughed again. “And I thought working in such a quiet town would be so boring.”

Sousuke still couldn’t believe it. “What a small world we live in.”

“Yes, indeed.” Aoki stood and yawned. “Well, I should head back. We got a noise complaint at five in the morning, so that was why I’m around this early. Some beauty sleep in the archive room seems like a good idea for now.”

“Wait.”

“Hm?”

“I still don’t understand why you risk your job to help me. This can get you suspended... or even fired.”

The rookie stopped walking up the stairs and stared at him. “Maybe it’s just the idealist in me, but... people shouldn’t be forgotten.”

It's a bit of filler chapter, but hopefully that's fine.

I like to think of Nitori and Momo as wildlife reporter/author duo that go all around the world for nature TV shows. Momo does all the writings and Nitori does all the photos (a nod to his Day Off merchandise series).

I once watched a movie with a scene of pushing a memorial (?) to the river/sea and burning it. I don't remember the title, but that's the scene I was talking about here.

Tokitsu is Sousuke's high school in Tokyo.

'People shouldn't be forgotten' is actually one of Cold Case's catchphrases.  
Reviews are much appreciated! ^^

# **you know how flames can hypnotize**

## Chapter Summary

“My poor, poor boy. Heartbroken.”

“I did everything I could!”

“Apparently it’s not enough. You didn’t do enough.”

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“Good morning.” Eguchi smiled pleasantly. “Thanks for coming on time. I really appreciate it.”

“You’re welcome,” the woman who was supposed to be her patient replied. “I’m so glad I can make an appointment with you. You seem very busy and your schedule is packed. It feels like I have to refresh your appointment webpage hundreds of times to get to the right schedule.”

“It’s totally fine. Please, sit down.”

The woman obliged. She sat down on the couch and put her medium-sized handbag right next to her. Eguchi offered her tea, which she accepted. Not long after, they have made themselves comfortable in the office.

“So, before we begin, can I know whether this is your first time having a session?”

“Yes.”

“Alright. I just want to tell you that you have my word that everything we talk about here is confidential.”

“So we can talk about anything?”

Eguchi nodded.

“Okay. Let me start.” The patient took a deep breath. “Basically... I think my husband is cheating on me and I don’t know what to do.”

“How do you deal with it?”

“I don’t know!” Suddenly she began to cry. “I really want him back! Do you have any suggestion or anything?”

“Why do you think I have one?”

“Uh... because you’re a shrink?” The woman stared nervously at Eguchi. “I need answers. Or suggestions, at least. I just want him to come home!”

Eguchi stared at her crying for a moment, which was unnerving, but finally she spoke. “My main objective here is actually getting you to know the methods yourself.”

The woman’s stare turned helpless and she wanted to reply, but Eguchi lifted her hand. “But if you’re that desperate and stuck... I guess I can... nudge you in the right direction. I know how much some people need that.”

“What is it?”

“You know, I actually am conducting a long-term social experiment. It’s effective—”

“My husband is not an experiment!” the woman protested reflexively. “Sorry.”

“That’s fine. Almost everyone says that in the beginning, but when they know what I mean, they’re on board immediately.”

“And what do you mean?”

“What do you feel when you first realized your husband is cheating?”

The woman glared at her. “Shocked, of course. I want to kill him.”

“Whoa, not so fast, lady,” Eguchi replied and they laughed. “First, you should start talking to him. Not directly, but make him think that you have an idea what’s going on. Get him to think the way you want him to.”

“How’s that possible?”

“Get him back on track, basically. How did you know he’s cheating?”

The woman looked surprised as if not expecting such a question. “Uh... his phone! He uses it much more often now!”

Eguchi bent forward on her couch. “Then ask to use his phone many times. Be as innocent as possible. Ask about his friends as nonchalantly as you can.”

“Alright!” The woman pulled out a small notebook from her bag and started writing it down. “What else?”

“Do it lots of times. Tell him you’re worried and just want to know him better. Tell him it’s all for his own good.”

The woman kept writing down. “Alright, got it. What if those things don’t work?”

“Why do you think this won’t work?”

“My husband is smart. I don’t want him to suspect anything.”

“Just be as normal as possible.” Eguchi smiled sympathetically at her patient. “Well, there are indeed some exceptions. You can bring him here. I can help him get back on track.”

“So you’re also a marriage counselor?”

“Not really, no. A mediator, more likely. You two are the main parties here, but I will help you. There might be some hypnosis included, if necessary. Some of my patients can get things straight that way.”

“Hypnosis? Why?”

“Some things are buried too deeply and needed to be coaxed out, hence the method.”

“How effective is this?”

“It depends. It can take a long time, but it’s worth all the effort. Hopefully, we don’t need to use hypnosis, but I’ll tell you that first just in case.”

“Did you ever fail to do it?” She looked sheepish. “Sorry for keep asking. I just want to know how much this will work to save my marriage.”

The shrink sighed. “That’s fine. It’s normal to be curious about something you will do.”

“This project?”

Eguchi lifted her eyebrows in suspicion. “Project? What project?” she asked, feigned confusion. “I didn’t tell you anything about any project.”

The woman sighed and pulled out a folder from her bag. She put one of the papers on the table, which was a copy of the old article Rei had sent to Haru before he died. “Project Mind, Eguchi-sensei. Or should I say, your so-called ‘social experiment’ that mentally abuses people?” She gave her a lopsided smile. “Your scientific paper, which confirms that you’re mentally abusing your patients as an experiment, was revoked, right? It took Rei a while to find.”

“Rei?”

“Oh, I mean Ryugazaki-sensei. The youngest chemistry professor. We’ve been friends for years.”

Eguchi stared at her open-mouthed. “Who are you exactly?”

“I’m surprised you don’t know me, but maybe it’s because I’m using my maiden name to register,” the woman replied. “You might know my husband, though, since you occasionally work together with his superiors. But tell me, how much money did you pay this guy to not sue you and make you lose your license?”

“You don’t need to know.”

“Alright, maybe we don’t.” The woman cowered slightly but still tried to hold her position. “But we all know what you did to your patients with similar problems. You teach them how to gaslight people. That’s the correct word, right?”

Eguchi looked furious. “Please leave. Our session here is over.”

“No, it’s not. But oh well.” The woman stood and pulled something out of her bag. At the sight of it, Eguchi’s eyes widened.

It was a wire.

“My husband doesn’t cheat, by the way. Who’d love his muscles more than I do? Just so you know, he’s nearby, listening to all of this.”

“What exactly do you want, Matsuoka-san?”

Gou Mikoshiba, née Matsuoka, sat back down. She pulled out several photos and a piece of paper from the folder before putting it on the table, next to the earlier article. “Tell me what happened to Makoto.”

Eguchi closed up. “He was a patient. It’s confidential.”

Gou burst into laughter and gestured at the old photos. The photos showed Makoto walking around the campus with Nakayama, candidly taken by Atsushi Ryugazaki at the cultural festival. All of those photos showed the same outfit Makoto wore the day he died.

“Look, Eguchi-sensei!” She picked up the paper, showing the list of Eguchi’s patients around the day Makoto died. It was hard to control her own voice. “Makoto wasn’t a patient on that day! He wasn’t registered, yet he was seen coming here! He was lucky he came when there was a festival, so he got to see some people’s pictures.”

“Your point?”

“My point is no, he wasn’t your patient that day, so you’re not under such confidentiality.” Gou’s voice softened. “What happened to him?”

Silence.

“Did you kill him, Eguchi-sensei?”

“That’s ridiculous! I never cause anyone’s death!”

“A few hours after he left this place, he was on that cliff! Dead! What else do you want to—” Gou leaned back on the couch and stopped her own question. “Did you... hypnotize him?”

Eguchi didn’t answer.

“We can do this all day, Eguchi-sensei. We actually managed to gather some of your victims. They might call you out for breaching your own ethics, you know. Ryugazaki-sensei will love

to lead all of them.” Gou crossed her arms. “So, accessory to murder or revoked license. Your pick, Sensei.”

Still silent.

“Weren’t you the one who told Sousuke-kun that love is destructive when he asked about Makoto? Did you tell him to commit suicide?”

“No, I didn’t.”

Gou smiled thinly. “So he didn’t?”

“I don’t know, Matsuoka-san. I really don’t. I just said what was needed.” She stopped, suddenly looking tired. “Maybe Ta-chan interpreted it the wrong way.”

“Nakayama was there?”

“Of course he was there. He’s the reason why I did all of this.” She gestured at the papers in front of her. “I needed to write more academic papers and I wanted to see how constant words affect late teenagers’ minds, and the experiment started from there. When he came to me with his love problem, I found my answer.”

“Love problem?”

“Yes. Ta-chan’s head over heels with Tachibana. When that kid’s condition worsened after what happened, he panicked. It wasn’t the plan in the first place.”

---

*“Now, let’s start. Lay down and relax, Makoto-kun.”*

*It was obvious that Makoto-kun was shaking as he laid down on the couch. Yuka couldn’t blame him. It was a normal reaction, after all. “Will this help me?” he asked miserably.*

*Ta-chan took his hand. “It’s the end of the road, Makoto,” he said gently.*

*“Road of healing?”*

*“Yes. Now, just lay down and be still.”*

*Makoto-kun still looked restless. “What’ll happen to me after this?”*

*“You’ll be just fine. You’ll be able to move on.*

*Yuka eyed her nephew worriedly. “Do you think he’s calm enough for this?”*

*Ta-chan nodded, looking desperate. “Just try it, please?”*

*“Alright, Makoto-kun, now take a deep breath.”*



*Even before he obliged, he still looked nervous. Still, Yuka decided to proceed. She put her fingers in front of him. "Focus on my voice. On the count of three, I'll snap my fingers and you'll fall asleep. One, two, three."*

*Makoto-kun visibly relaxed and his breathing slowly turned stable. "Alright, now can you hear me? You can answer."*

*"Yes."*

*Yuka sat next to him, and Ta-chan was still on the floor. He didn't give any indication that he would move anytime soon. "Now, let's start. What's your name?"*

*"Makoto Tachibana."*

*"How old are you?"*

*"Nineteen."*

*"Are you happy now?"*

*Makoto-kun started to fidget. "No. I'm sad."*

*"Why?"*

*"I'm in love."*

*"With who?"*

*A long silence. "Haru-chan."*

*Ta-chan's expression was immediately full of anguish. Yuka felt bad for him. "Makoto-kun, what if Haru-chan doesn't love you?"*

*No answer, but there were tears running out from his closed eyes.*

*"What if I say there's someone who loves you, who's not Haru-chan? What would you do?"*

*"I... I don't know."*

*"Haru-chan doesn't love you."*

*"He said he did! On that phone call!"*

*"But he's not here," Yuka said soothingly. "He's far away in Australia. He's in the better place, and you should too."*

*Makoto-kun didn't answer. He slumped on the couch and couldn't stop crying.*

*"Can you forget him?"*

*"No," he moaned. "No."*

*"It's for your own good. You can heal."*

*"No..."*

*"Yes, you can. You can forget everything because he has forgotten you too."*

*"But—"*

*"Hush, calm down. He's not here, only Ta-chan is here for you. Do you understand? It's time to move on, Makoto-kun."*

*"Okay."*

*Between them, Makoto-kun started to fidget even more. "Calm down, Makoto-kun," Yuka ordered quickly, and he stopped moving.*

*"Now, listen to me. After we're done, this is what I want you to do. Move on. Leave this place if you need to. Be with someone new. Forget Haru-chan. Forget whoever is associated with them. Anything."*

*Her words were met with a scream that shocked the two of them. "I can't! I CAN'T!"*

*"Is he okay?" Ta-chan asked, panicking. "Makoto!"*

*Yuka glared at him, because he wasn't supposed to be speaking at all. But there was no use crying over spilled milk. "Makoto-kun, someone is here to talk to you."*

*Makoto-kun went still again. Yuka gestured for Ta-chan to speak.*

*"Makoto?" he called softly. "I'm here."*

*The reaction was surprising because Makoto-kun began crying again. "I don't want you here! Go away!"*

*"Hush, don't cry. I'm sure you don't mean that."*

*"You burned my letter to Haru-chan! You did that in the place where I cherish him the most! You told me to leave him when he finally called me!"*

*Yuka was surprised. She did suggest that to him in one of their sessions but didn't expect him to do it for real. Now that she saw Makoto-kun's reaction, she made a mental note to revise that advice for her next patients.*

*"It's because I don't want you to break down again. I'm sorry that I'm hard on you, but it's necessary."*

*"Why are you doing this to me?"*

*Ta-chan's expression hardened. "No, you did this to yourself, Makoto. You were the one pushing him away on the first place, remember? You don't want him to know how you really*

*feel, right?"*

*"Yeah, but—"*

*"No buts, Makoto. Listen to me. I will graduate next year. You can try out on other universities outside Iwatobi by then. Stay with me and we can leave everything behind. We'll figure this out, okay?"*

*Makoto-kun sobbed. "Why are you doing this to me?"*

*Ta-chan was going to stroke his hair, but Yuka shook her head, forbidding any physical touch. Instead, he settled on words. "Because I love you, Makoto. I really do."*

*"You said that so many times."*

*"But do you love me?" No response. Ta-chan grew hysterical. "Makoto-kun! Answer me!"*

*"I'm sorry! I'm sorry! But I only love Haru-chan!"*

*Yuka decided to take over. "Alright, alright. Stop. Makoto-kun, you can rest now. You will wake up after I count to three."*

*"Okay." Makoto-kun wheezed. He sounded exhausted.*

*"One, two, three."*

*Makoto-kun's eyes opened. He looked confused as he sat up on the couch.*

*"Hello, Makoto-kun," Yuka greeted warmly. "How are you feeling?"*

*"Tired, but lighter."*

*Yuka forced a smile. "See, that's how healing feels like. You just told us how you feel."*

*Makoto-kun smiled nervously and glanced at Ta-chan. "I'm sorry, Takeshi-san," he said, blushing. "It must've been very embarrassing."*

*"Don't worry, Makoto." Ta-chan grinned and stroked his hair as if the contrary didn't happen a few minutes ago. "I know you love me."*

*"Yes, indeed."*

*"See? I'll never get enough of that."*

*Yuka understood the nature of their relationship almost immediately. She gestured for her nephew to follow her to the next room. It was her colleague's, but it was empty for the day because there were practically no classes during the festival.*

*"It seems like he doesn't love you."*

*"Now I know the truth!" Now that they were alone, Ta-chan looked like he was going to cry himself. "It's not fair."*

*"Indeed. Love can be destructive. Unrequited is much worse."*

*"He's such a nice guy..."*

*"What are you going to do now?"*

*"I don't know."*

*Yuka pulled him to a loose embrace. It felt weird. Ta-chan used to be a very small kid, and he was now this tall... "My poor, poor boy. Heartbroken."*

*"I did everything I could!"*

*"Apparently it's not enough," Yuka replied in all honesty. "You didn't do enough."*

*"No one else is allowed to have him."*

*Yuka released him in surprise. "What?"*

*"Not that Nanase kid, not anyone."*

*"Good luck with that, now that you've heard his subconscious." She eyed him sympathetically. "But I have to admit he's regressing. I didn't expect that. He was doing much better in our last session before I had to leave for that conference."*

*"Do you know why?"*

*"You went a bit too extreme. I shouldn't tell you this, but he admitted he liked you in our last session. He was very grateful you followed my advice and get him moving in with you, and now things are back to zero."*

*Ta-chan frowned. "Maybe? I thought he was ready for that. The letter burning, I mean. Something must've happened when I left him today."*

*"You left him alone?"*

*"Yeah. You know he hasn't eaten for two days. I want to come to you sooner, but Atsushi and the others need me at the festival. By the way, he doesn't want to see you anymore."*

*"So how did you get him here?"*

*"I mentioned his parents. They really like me and he doesn't want to disappoint them."*

*Yuka nodded in understanding but didn't say anything else.*

*"This means your project failed too," Ta-chan suddenly spoke, breaking the silence. "I guess we're both at loss here."*

*“Makoto-kun’s my first patient for this stage,” Yuka rebutted. “I’ve been trying with the others too. If they also need hypnotization, we’ll see how they cope with it.”*

*“There’s nothing I can do now. I’ve done everything I can and he’s still pining on Nanase.”*

*Yuka felt bad for him. “Maybe you should let him go.”*

*Ta-chan eyed her as if he’d never seen her before. “What?”*

*“Yes, let him go.”*

*“I can’t.”*

*“But you should. I will say the same to you as I did to him. Get rid of him if necessary.”*

*Ta-chan didn’t say anything for a moment, but then he sighed. “Yes, you’re right. I think I should.”*

*They returned to the other room, where Makoto-kun was waiting.*

*“Let’s go, Makoto,” Ta-chan said, helping him stand. “Sensei said our session today is over.”*

*Makoto-kun smiled and bowed at Yuka. “Thank you, Eguchi-sensei. Goodbye.”*

*“Goodbye.”*

*Ta-chan circled his arm around Makoto-kun and they left the room.*

---

“And there they went. It was the last time I saw him. I’ll never forget his smile.”

“So, you are saying he was still alive when they left.”

“Yes.”

Gou eyed the shrink in disgust. “But you still told Nakayama to get rid of him. Apparently, your license is more important than lives.”

For some reason, Eguchi looked calm. “And I’ll lose it anyway.”

---

When Sei heard his wife’s words, he picked his phone and dialed a number.

“Captain?” the voice on the other side sounded alert.

“Aoki, find Takeshi Nakayama. Now.”

“On it, sir.”

Sei hung up and glanced at Ryugazaki next to him. He didn’t say anything, but his glasses were foggy and tears were streaming down his cheeks. Feeling awkward, Sei looked around

the professor's office, trying to find a box of tissues. When he finally did on one of the full bookshelves, he handed it to him.

"Finally," Ryugazaki whispered, taking off his glasses to wipe his eyes. *"After thirteen years."*

---

*Don't worry, Rin. No need to come back. Take all the time you need.*

A short message from Dave, sent from Australia, made Rin smile. *Sousuke will be over the moon when he knows!*

Thinking of Sousuke made Rin glance at the closed bathroom door and sighed. His boyfriend sometimes took ages in the shower for some reason, and the fact that he didn't have to work for a month worsened his habit. He put his phone next to Sousuke's on the coffee table and decided to take a nap on the couch. *Who knows when that guy's out from the bathroom.*

When the phone rang, Rin had been half-asleep. He blindly reached for the noisy phone and brought it to his ear. "Hello?"

*"Yamazaki-san?"*

*Shit.* It was when Rin realized that he'd taken Sousuke's phone instead of his. Feeling stupid, he forced a laugh. "Sorry. It's not him."

*"Matsuoka-san?"*

"Yeah."

*"It's Aoki from the PD."*

Well, *that* woke him up. "What's up, Aoki-kun?"

*"Is Yamazaki-san there? It's urgent."*

"He's in the shower. He takes ages in there. What's going on? I'll relay the message."

*"I know I shouldn't tell a civilian this, but since you are the one requesting this case, I'll tell you too. We got a lead on Nakayama and I need to find him."*

"What?"

*"Problem is, he's nowhere I can find. Not at home and the swim club. Yamazaki-san might have an idea because they talked once."*

Something clicked. "I think *I* have an idea. Where are you?"

*"I just left the swim club. Where are we going?"*

Rin told him and Aoki agreed immediately. “Well, Aoki-kun, meet us near our apartment complex in fifteen minutes. It’s quicker to go with you instead of meeting there.”

*“Alright. See you, Matsuoka-san.”*

Rin hung up and rushed towards the bathroom door, going past the Haru’s framed painting of him and his boyfriend in front of the Opera House. “Sousuke! We need to go! *Now!*”

## Chapter End Notes

Final chapter next. I cannot believe we’re this far already.  
Reviews are much appreciated! ^^

# do i even dare to speak out your name for fear

## Chapter Summary

It's the last straw.

*This is how heartbreak feels like. Get rid of him if necessary.*

## Chapter Notes

500 hits! You are all amazing. Thanks for sticking up with me this far.  
This is the final chapter. Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The cliff was silent, but as expected, Nakayama was there. His back was facing the street and he was throwing something to the sea far below them. Aoki pulled over and Sousuke jumped out, followed by Rin. “Nakayama-san!”

Nakayama turned to the three of them, and it was when Sousuke saw a small bucket in his left hand and flower petals on his right. “I know you’ll find me here,” he said calmly, putting the bucket next to his feet. He looked resigned to his fate as he released his grip and let the wind blow the flower petals down the cliff. “Since cops began asking me and my aunt, I cannot help but return here. Out of nostalgia, more likely.”

“Nostalgia?” Sousuke asked, unable to catch up fully just yet.

“Remembering a beloved friend.”

“There's no way Makoto's your friend, you son of a bitch!” Rin launched himself at the older man, but Sousuke quickly held him back. “Let me go, Sou! He needs to learn his lesson!”

“No, Rin! Stop!”

“He killed two of our friends!”

“I know! But beating him up won’t solve anything! Now stop struggling!”

At Sousuke’s order, Rin glared but finally obeyed.

“Nakayama-san,” Aoki called out. “We all know Nanase-san visited you the day he died. What did he say to you? What did you say to him?”



Nobody spoke for a moment. When he felt Rin had relaxed, Sousuke released him. “Did you tell Nanase you killed Tachibana?”

“I just told him what he wanted to know.”

“Ha!” Rin suddenly yelled. “You didn’t deny you killed him!”

“Should I, though?” Nakayama suddenly looked sad. “Thirteen years. A long time for a heartbreak, huh? It’s a long time to tell yourself that it’s alright.”

“That you’ve done the right thing.”

Nakayama eyed Sousuke appreciatively. “Yes, Yamazaki-san. I believe I stopped his misery. But then the person that broke Makoto’s heart appeared and everything just... collapsed.”

---

*“Are you Takeshi Nakayama?”*

*“Yes, I am. And you are?”*

*Nanase’s glare could’ve frozen the desert, but Takeshi wasn’t scared in the slightest. He actually knew who this was; he just wanted to hear the name of the person Makoto had been head over heels with. “I’m Haruka Nanase.”*

*“I should’ve known. Sorry, I didn’t recognize you earlier,” Takeshi lied, gesturing to the chair before his desk. “What can I do—”*

*“You killed Makoto.”*

*“What?”*

*“You heard me.”*

*“Nanase-san, if you just want to barge in here and—”*

*“YOU KILLED HIM!”*

*That shut him up. Nanase had his fists ready, but when Takeshi glanced at his face, his eyes were glassy. He smiled despite himself. “Why would I kill someone I was in love with? Why would I kill someone who has stolen my heart since I saw him teaching my little sister to swim, right in this place?”*

*Nanase didn’t respond. Takeshi sat on the edge of his desk, staring at him. “Weren’t you the one who left him?”*

*“He pushed me away.”*

*“That’s because he wanted the best for you. Makoto told me a lot about it.”*

*“I didn’t want to leave him.”*

*"But he did want to leave you. Sacrifices have to be made." Takeshi gestured at the door. "Out there, we put on all your victories. Haruka Nanase, The Swimming Legend from Iwatobi."*

*"I don't need such things."*

*Takeshi nodded. "But Makoto did. Otherwise, why did he push you away from him?"*

*"He thought it was for my own good. He was stupid."*

*"And it is." Takeshi leaned closer to Nanase, who was as still as a stone statue. He hated how Nanase could call Makoto stupid and got away with it. "Perhaps it's better if you don't call someone who died because of you 'stupid', you know."*

*"What?"*

*"Everything he did was for you, Nanase-san, and you know it."*

*"That's why I cannot live with myself anymore." Tears started to roll down from those blue eyes onto his cheeks. "Thirteen years. For thirteen years I convinced myself that I don't love him. That he's moved on and I should too."*

*"But you're not moving on, right?"*

*The ex-swimmer shook his head. "I'm so confused right now."*

*"That's fine." A smile crossed the man's lips. "Confusion is the best start. Makoto was confused too."*

*"You confused him." Nanase suddenly looked up. He looked like he had lost every single thought of hope. "I have nothing else to live for, Nakayama. I won't even turn you in."*

*"Why?"*

*Nanase stepped closer to him, his eyes narrowing. "I want you to feel how I feel all those years after you killed him!"*

*"Whoa, wait. You killed him, remember?" Takeshi was getting tired of this, but he knew very well that repetition was important. Makoto was stubborn too, but weeks of isolation and repetition were enough to put him on the track Takeshi wanted, even though it was ruined in the end. "Why didn't you try harder when he didn't want to speak to you? Why didn't you go home even once, when he was still alive? Were you that mad at him because he chose your well-being over his own feelings because you couldn't do it yourself?"*

*Nanase glared at him but didn't answer. Takeshi knew he had hit a nerve. "This won't bring Makoto back." His eyes turned pleading, exhausted. "Just tell me what you did. Please. I need to know."*

*"Why?" Takeshi repeated, feeling a strange tinge of triumph. "He's in a better place now." He deliberately used those words, because he knew how much it'd affect the younger man*

*before him.*

*As expected, Nanase's fist flew. It was clumsy and Takeshi caught it before it could land on his face. They stayed like that for a few seconds before Nanase pleaded once again. "You said he died because of me! Tell me why! I have the right to know!"*

---

For a while, Nakayama didn't speak. Instead, he stared coolly at the three men before him. Rin looked like he was going to attack, so Sousuke gripped his shoulders to keep him grounded. It wouldn't do any good if a physical confrontation was involved.

"Did you tell him?" Aoki asked, breaking the silence.

"He was right. He indeed had the right to know." Nakayama nodded slowly. "You should see his eyes when I was done. He just stared at me and walked out of my office. He didn't even try to hit me again or anything."

"Haru couldn't hit people to save his life," Rin whispered, more to himself than to the man before him. Then he raised his voice. "You told him to off himself!"

"No, I didn't. I just told him his worst fear. Nanase's been living with the guilt all those years."

"So do you."

Rin's remark shocked him. "What?"

Sousuke tightened his grip on his boyfriend when he tried to move once again, but Rin looked up at him. "I promise I won't attack him," he whispered, and Sousuke released him. Yet, he still kept himself close because Nakayama was already at the edge of the cliff and he didn't want Rin to do anything he'd regret.

"So do you," Rin repeated, inching closer. "Otherwise why are you doing what Makoto wanted to do all his life: teaching in the swim club?"

"I want to keep his legacy."

"Why? People barely know your relationship. You're not Haru."

The name apparently set him off. "Don't say his name, please."

Rin laughed in total mockery. "I will say my best friend's name anytime I damn please. Why are you living—"

*"Because he's mine!"*

Silence. Rin froze on his spot, clearly not expecting that.

"Happy now? You know the answer already." Nakayama let out a derisive laugh. "You see, Nanase was wrong. I've been living just like he did by the time Makoto was at the bottom of

this cliff.”

Aoki gasped softly. “Are you here... because you want to end it the way he did?”

Nobody answered the question, but Nakayama suddenly leaned back over the fence.

“Stop!” Sousuke exclaimed, launching himself forward.

Rin was faster since he was closer. He reached the closest thing of Nakayama he could grab, which was the sleeve of his shirt, and managed to grip his wrist and pulled him back. It happened in a matter of seconds, and Sousuke couldn’t help but sigh in relief when he saw nobody was going to jump over the cliff.

“I am not letting you die before you tell me what you did to Makoto,” Rin hissed near his ear, loud enough for Sousuke to hear. Even though they were safe, their position was still dangerously close to the edge of the safety railing. “You don’t even deserve to *die* the way he did!”

“Rin, let him go!” Sousuke commanded. “Bring him to me.”

“Not until he tells us what happened!” The redhead glared at him, his eyes wild. “Don’t you dare telling me what to do, Sousuke, or I’ll push this scum to the sea!”

“Alright, alright, calm down.” Seeing no way out, Sousuke decided to relent. “Nakayama-san, just tell us what you told Nanase.”

When he answered, Nakayama sounded calm enough as if he was ready. “Just the truth. When it came out... it was the last straw. Nanase couldn’t live with it anymore.”

“‘*No damage control can fix this*,’” Aoki suddenly spoke, citing Nanase’s letter.

“Exactly. Nobody can fix my broken heart. *His* broken heart. The least I can do is to let him go.” Nakayama looked over Rin’s shoulder, at Sousuke and Aoki both, with tears now running down his face. “It turns out I couldn’t. After I did it, I tried to make sure... that it was... it was quick for him. He didn’t feel any pain.”

Sousuke couldn’t see Rin’s face, but he could imagine how he looked right now. Kudos to him, he didn’t say anything even as Nakayama continued.

“I thought everything was okay after Makoto told him off in that phone call. I thought I have healed him alright. I just... he’s mine and no one else’s.”

---

“*Why do you bring me here, Takeshi-san?*”

*Takeshi pulled over and they were out of the car soon enough. “I just need some fresh air. I like being here.”*

*Makoto stared at the sea far below them. “I can imagine that. It’s so peaceful here.”*

*"I like coming here with my little sister. You know her, right? Rika?"*

*"That's your sister?" Makoto laughed in surprise. "I never saw you around when I taught her. It was always your mother who picked her up."*

*"Yeah, I was busy with classes, but I dropped by a few times." The memory of Makoto's teaching felt painful for some reason. He gently stroked the olive-colored hair. "I really, really like how you handled her. How you handled all those kids. I might be the Sports-Ed kid, but children aren't really gluing themselves on me like they are to you."*

*Makoto didn't answer, but there was that nervous laughter again.*

*"I guess that's what makes me fall in love with you."*

*"Takeshi-san..."*

*The pain was back; driven by how he said Haru-chan's name in their session earlier. "Don't say anything, Makoto. Just don't."*

*"Did I do something wrong?" Makoto suddenly looked anxious. "I'm sorry if I did but I don't remember anything—"*

*Takeshi sighed. "Just close your eyes, Makoto."*

*"But—"*

*"Please."*

*"Okay." Makoto closed his eyes. His back was facing the railing now, and Takeshi swore he could hear the sea water hitting the rocks below.*

*"Calm your mind, Makoto. Do not think of anything else but someone who you really, really love."*

*"Yeah," Makoto breathed. His voice was almost inaudible.*

*Takeshi kissed him. Soft, short. A small peck, but warm nonetheless.*

*A very, very peaceful smile crossed Makoto's lips. A smile that even Takeshi had never seen; and Makoto smiled almost all the time. "Makoto," he whispered, his voice was so low he wondered if the younger swimmer could hear him. "I love you."*

*He doesn't love you, his aunt's voice boomed in his head. Get rid of him if necessary.*

*"Haru-chan."*

*Oh.*

*It was the last straw. After lightly squeezing those broad shoulders for the last time, Takeshi shoved the unaware boy off the railing and down below.*

This is how heartbreak feels like. Get rid of him if necessary.

## Chapter End Notes

The epilogue is next. Spoiler alert: it's basically a Cold Case type of ending ;)  
Reviews are much appreciated! ^^

# it sounds like, like a lover (epilogue)

## Chapter Summary

The sight makes his breath caught.

## Chapter Notes

Thank you so much for reading this far!

I love every single one of you.

I wanted to post this on Free's 8th Anniversary but I was so busy. Happy anniversary, Swimming Anime!

This epilogue is basically Cold Case closing scenes, with a song playing in the background.

Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

### **(Closing Song: 'Morning Tide' by Poets of the Fall)**

*Rise with me now, and we'll walk to the shore*

*We'll look over the waves to the break of day*

*I'll hold your hand, I'll hold you close*

*I'll wipe away your tears, and no one will know*

As Nakayama fell onto his knees, a disgusted Rin pulled him back up and let Aoki took over. The rookie moved towards the culprit and took him to the car. Sousuke gave a nod at his subordinate and let him leave.

Rin didn't even look at the car as it left. Instead, he bent down and took Nakayama's forgotten bucket and pulled something from inside. Sousuke stepped forward and saw Rin staring tearfully at the small Iwatobi-chan wood carving Nanase had made years ago.

Sousuke felt his heart broke a little, in both relief and sadness, as he hugged Rin and let him cry on his shoulder.

---

*On the morning tide*

*We'll hoist the sails to brave the crashing waves*

*Won't you come with me*

*And hear the ocean sigh*

*And into its depths it called us by our names*

*Won't you sail to the shore with me*

Sei looked up from his feet when he heard the door being opened. His wife walked out, and one of his subordinates followed not far behind, ushering Yuka Eguchi who was bringing a cardboard box filled with her items, a sign that she was no longer welcome.

He wondered how many people she had done this to.

Gou joined him and together they made their way out the professors' headquarters. As they walked away, Sei caught sight of a girl with a butterfly hairclip on her hair. He watched, in bewilderment, as she ripped her hairclip and crushed it in her fist.

She didn't notice him, though. She was busy staring at Eguchi as she was taken away.

---

*Come to me now, and together we'll go*

*Where the clearer winds blow, far and beyond*

*Leaving behind all our sorrow and pride*

*Kissing them goodbye, into another life*

In the archive room, Aoki moved Tachibana's files into a new folder. He stopped as he noticed that Yamazaki-san had added the photo of Tachibana and Nanase in high school after practice in their school swim club. He couldn't help but compare that photo and when he was found on the bottom of the hill.

The smile wasn't that much different.

It made Aoki smile as well. Even in death he still had a contagious smile.



A piece of paper suddenly appeared in his field of vision, and Aoki looked up. Atsushi Ryugazaki stood at the other side of the desk, still holding the article, cut from today's newspaper. It was an article of Tachibana's case and how Nakayama was arrested, including a photo of the latter being escorted into the PD.

### *SUICIDE TEEN TURNS OUT MURDERED*

With a proud smile at the fact it was his first time in a newspaper, Aoki put it inside Tachibana's folder, with *MURDER, CLOSED* already written beneath. Then, he started to sort Nanase's case files and photos before marking his folder as *SUICIDE* and putting it inside their respective drawers.

He stopped when he realized that he missed something. One of the photos was left on the table, and Aoki could clearly see the longing from Atsushi's face as he stared at it. He joined the older man and found out what he was staring at.

It was a selfie of his old study group.

Aoki could see Atsushi's little brother Rei in the picture. According to his story when he first brought the evidence over, it was Tachibana's first day, so Atsushi wanted him to feel welcome with the selfie. Tachibana was laughing and looking comfortable, sitting between Rei and Nakayama.

The genuine laugh now felt bittersweet. Atsushi wasn't close to Nakayama, but they were on friendly terms. It was hard to think of him as a murderer.

Aoki knew what he had to do. He picked the photo and gave it to him, shrugging off the surprised expression. The surprise changed to a smile filled with genuine happiness and Aoki smiled back as Atsushi put it inside his shirt pocket.

They turned to the door when something was heard from outside. Aoki had left the door open for a reason. Captain Mikoshiba said something would happen today, and he didn't want to miss anything. From the open door, Aoki and Atsushi could see Captain giving Yamazaki-san his badge back. He took it and bowed, officially ending his suspension.

When Yamazaki-san turned at him and nodded with a small smile, Aoki felt like his heart was going to burst.

Yamazaki-san's appreciation was worth it.

---

*On the morning tide*

*We'll hoist the sails to brave the crashing waves*

*Won't you come with me*

*And hear the ocean sigh*

*And into its depths it called us by our names*

*Won't you sail to the shore with me*

The swim club was closed for today, but Rei came anyway. He had talked about it with Sasabe-san, who decided to come out of retirement to take over the swim club, and he got the permission to get in. The weight of the item in his hands was a reminder: there was something he needed to do.

It took him a few minutes to hang the painting on the top of their photos. But when he was done, he stepped back and admired the fact that it was so beautifully positioned, with the rest of the wall filled with photos and accomplishments of their past and current members, including newspaper clippings about Haru and Rin's victories.

The sounds of footsteps made Rei turn and smile. He'd expected that.

Nagisa walked into the club nervously, looking around to see any changes since he last left it thirteen years ago. Their eyes met, and Rei opened his arms.

They were embracing almost immediately, and they were both weeping, mourning for the loss of their best friends. When Rei was finally calm enough, he released his boyfriend and looked up, at Haru's painting of the Iwatobi and Samezuka swim club members. For a fleeting moment, they felt like they were back there again, having the time of their lives.

At least that memory wouldn't change.

---

*Won't you come with me*

*Sail to the shore with me*

*Won't you come with me, come with me, come with me*

*Sail*

Nanase's birthday finally came.

Sousuke and Rin walked down to the beach to see that everyone was there already. Rin glared at him, blaming his lack of directional sense on the fact that they were late.

Sousuke merely shrugged and let Rin join the group ahead. Being left behind, he took his time to look around and recognized almost everyone. Captain's family, Captain's little sister with her foreigner fiancé, Momo with Nitori, Hazuki and Ryugazaki, Kirishima brothers with their respective partners... even Kisumi came from Tokyo with his red-headed boyfriend, who was wearing a Hidaka University jacket for some reason.

Sousuke watched as Rin pulled out something from his bag to be put on the memorial. It was a framed painting of Nanase and Tachibana in their high school uniform, enjoying their

popsicles. It was one of the best paintings Nanase had ever done of himself and the person he loved the most. He also noticed that Hazuki had put the box of letters there as well.

Rin threw his bag at Sousuke before rolling his pants and ran to the sea. He caught it on time and sling it on his shoulder. As so he stayed back and observed, his fingers absently playing the Iwatobi-chan carving Rin had turned to his bag's keychain.

The remaining Iwatobi High swim club members pushed the raft to the sea, assisted by Kisumi, his partner, and the younger Kirishima. Rin and Hazuki, as the oldest friends of the deceased, had the honor to light it on fire.

*Love is still here*

*Never will it leave*

*You're always with me, and I'm always with you*

*On the morning tide*

*We'll hoist the sails to brave the crashing waves*

*Won't you come with me and hear the ocean sigh*

*And into its depths it called us by our names*

*Won't you sail to the shore with me*

Sousuke watched the fire with a smile. When he glanced to his right, he saw Tachibana, as young as nineteen, standing not far from him and the crowd. They stared at each other, and Tachibana smiled sweetly, just like in the pictures. He watched as the ghost walked towards the sea, where Nanase was waiting in his swim trunks; his old ones from Iwatobi.

The sight made his breath caught.

Tachibana was still smiling but it was obvious that he was nervous. Nanase extended his hand and gently took him into the waters until the sea pooled around their knees. Sousuke watched them holding hands for a few seconds before Nanase looked at him and gave an approving nod. Sousuke nodded back and they finally disappeared; leaving the burning memorial that was sailing away from them.

After a while, it, too, was no longer than a puff of smoke. It was captivating.

A hand suddenly touched his shoulder, and Sousuke's gaze returned to the beach and saw Rin. Suddenly filled with affection, he couldn't resist placing a kiss on the redhead's brow, making him protest at the unexpected move. Sousuke merely smirked and lifted his eyebrow, wanting to know his next reaction.

Instead, Rin stepped back and pulled out something else from his bag. Sousuke's eyes widened as he pulled it out and recognized the familiar pattern of the fabric. He would never forget it, after all. It was the similar swimsuit that he'd worn back in Samezuka, but obviously newer.

When Sousuke looked back at his boyfriend, he was staring at him expectantly. He sighed and nodded, fulfilling their promise.

*Now, we're even.*

Despite his glassy eyes, Rin's toothy grin that followed could light up the whole world. Sousuke lifted his fist, wanting to do their usual fist bump, but Rin rushed forward and hugged him instead. It was surprising; it wasn't every day the ex-swimmer liked such display of affection. They did a fist bump, though, after Rin released him, and he left him to change. Sousuke watched him returning to his friends; some were laughing, and some were still looked pensive, but none of them were crying anymore. Rin was even already in his swim trunks, ready to race against the older Kirishima and Kisumi's boyfriend.

Sousuke turned to look at the spot where he'd seen Tachibana and Nanase. They were no longer there, and the sea looked practically still.

It was so calm.

He smiled. He was surrounded by many of his loud friends but had a strange feeling that this morning would be a peaceful one.

*And we'll hoist the sails to brave the crashing waves*

*Won't you sail to the shore with me*

**FIN.**

## Chapter End Notes

Done!

And I thought I couldn't write an even longer CC fic.

Even though this is the end, the next chapter will be the credits, which I always do in my CC themed fics.

It will be up soon.

Reviews are much appreciated! ^^

# credits

## Chapter Notes

Since this is based on an animation series, the actors named here are their voice actors.  
For the OCs, they're my own fancasting results.

First completed multichapter fic in years. Yay!

This starts as a self-indulgent fic, and a self-indulgent fic this is. Hope you liked it!

Disclaimer: I own nothing but the story and the OCs. The songs, characters, and voice actors aren't mine.

Warning: **Spoilers!**

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

### *ETERNAL LIE*

A Free! Iwatobi Swim Club, Cold Case AU fanfiction

Written by: Seer M. Anno

Flashback/Time Skip: 13 years

Flashback style: Color

Cause of death: Fatal Fall, Drowning

New lead: Body (Suicide)

Object used: None

Victims:

Makoto Tachibana: Tatsuhisa Suzuki

Haruka Nanase: Nobunaga Shimazaki

Doers:

Takeshi Nakayama: Takumi Yasuaki

Relationship: Friends

Motive: Jealousy

Murder type: Murder 1

Confessed: Yes

Status: Locked up

Yuka Eguchi: Toa Yukinari

Relationship: Acquaintances

Motive: None (Accessory)

Murder type: Murder 1

Confessed: No

Status: Revoked License

Ghost: Makoto Tachibana and Haruka Nanase appeared to Sousuke Yamazaki.

Other Characters:

Sousuke Yamazaki: Yoshimasa Hosoya

Rin Matsuoka: Mamoru Miyano

Nagisa Hazuki: Tsubasa Yonaga

Rei Ryugazaki: Daisuke Hirakawa

Seijuurou Mikoshiba: Kenjiro Tsuda

Gou Mikoshiba (née Matsuoka): Akeno Watanabe

Michio Aoki: Tetsuto Furukawa

Ami Sato: Ari Ozawa

Atsushi Ryugazaki: Kazuya Murakami

Songs used (taken from Poets of the Fall's 2012 album Temple of Thought):

**Opening Song: 'Running Out of Time' by Poets of the Fall**

'Kamikaze Love' by Poets of the Fall

'The Lie Eternal' by Poets of the Fall

'The Ballad of Jeremiah Peacekeeper' by Poets of the Fall

**Closing Song: 'Morning Tide' by Poets of the Fall**

Chapter End Notes

So... yeah, this is the end. I'll see you in another story!

Love,  
Seer M. Anno

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!