

## Chapter 13

### The Examinations

#### **Entrance to Tokyo University**

They had arrived. Naru and Keitaro faced the memorable clocktower of Toudai, directly opposite them as they waited at the gate. After a few moments, they began to walk in. the grounds were full of people, young people. *'All examinees no doubt'* Keitaro thought. They were all as nervous as each other, few making any noise above casual chatting; some were even flicking through notes of theirs. Making their way indoors Keitaro began to rifle through his bag to find out which room they had to be in; thankfully Naru had hers in hand already. Some current students at Toudai wore special shirts that would enable others to see them to ask questions. Naru walked up to one such person

"Excuse me," He turned his attention onto her and smiled, albeit a bit forcedly. He was rather tall and his hair was dyed blonde, "where can I find room 1-A?"

"Walk to the end of this corridor, turn left and it's the last door on your right." He spoke in a robotic fashion, sounding bored also, just as though he had repeated the same information several dozen more times.

Thanking him the two went on their way; they were both in the same exam hall so Keitaro was glad that he didn't have to speak to the somewhat unfriendly student for his room. Once they had turned the corner, a commotion went up in the corridor they left.

"Gomen..." A short pause until, "She's got no pulse... AAAH Kami, she's DEAD!"

A number of people crowded around the person, trying to see what was happening, including the helper student that spoke to Naru. A collective gasp went around as a pair of antennae could be seen over the heads of the people.

"Ara... what just happened?"

Dust flew up in the air as everyone around her facefaulted to the ground. As the mysterious girl looked around confused, she walked towards the helper student.

"Are you okay Miss?" He began.

She looked back to see most people glancing her way worriedly before walking away. "Ara..." She held a hand to her head where a double plaster was on her forehead, "I must've fainted again..."

"I see... Is there any help you need Miss?" He was getting tired of this.

"Gomen..." She rummaged through her bag to bring out a tattered piece of paper, "Do you know where Room 1-B is? I have an exam today."

*Yes, I can tell just by looking at you...* "Go down the end of this corridor, turn left, and it's the last door on your left, opposite Room 1-A."

She placed her palms together before speaking, "Arigatou." The girl then happily walked off to her destination. The helper student frowned as he swore he heard a sound in her bag.

Once she turned the corner she opened her bag, a small turtle popping its head out and waved to her.

"Tama-chan, I'm going into an exam now, so no noise for the next 3 hours, okay?" She said this all light-heartedly.

"Myu!" The turtle positioned its fin over where its forehead should be, in a military salute.

"Good." She smiled and closed her bag placing it back on her shoulder. *Now, to fulfil the promise...* She opened the door to Room 1-B and entered.

### **Two and a half hours later**

"Well, that was embarrassing..." Keitaro mumbled as he left the exam room, a hand behind his head.

"You idiot! I can't believe you, the way you fell apart in that exam room!" Naru followed him as the crowd of people began to pile out of the room. "I'm just ashamed to be near you!" Her face was red with fury, but then she began to chuckle, "Still, it was funny, at least you managed to continue relatively quietly."

"Yeah," He began to recount what happened, "I was about to leave as the last piece of lead fell out of the top of my pencil, until I just calmed down."

"But how!" Naru couldn't believe it, "What made you so calm?"

*Motoko-chan, I remembered her face, her words, and most of all her smile.* "I... don't know."

They walked around the grounds for a short while until the time for the next exam of the day came about, and they walked in together. The entire day passed without any more events, and sooner than they expected, they left Toudai for home.

### **Hinata-sou**

#### **Late in the afternoon**

Shinobu-chan had made food and was fully prepared for anything. She had made two banners depending upon how well they did. Suu-chan kept asking if they were to use the one saying 'Too bad you didn't pass. Hope you do better next year.' This scared Shinobu-chan, because she didn't want them to think that all they expected was their failure. Mitsune had bought several bottles of champagne and sake using some money she earned the week before. They were for celebrations, but she knew that most of it would be left to her. Motoko, not knowing of how to help prepare, sharpened her katana unconsciously. Shinobu-chan became alarmed, wondering what Motoko would do if Keitaro failed.

"What do you assume I'd do Shinobu-chan?" Motoko asked, completely clueless.

"Y... You're not going to hurt sempai, a... are you?" She held her hands together, balled together.

Deciding to humour herself, she thought she'd torment the junior high student, "Well," she held her katana up, the sun glinting from the bottom of the sharpened edge up until the tip, "I will help him to cut his head off if he fails, don't worry."

"Nooo! Don't do it Motoko!" She waved her arms about and unfocussed her eyes. *Sempai might die! I have to stop this...*

"Shinobu-chan," A hand was placed on her shoulder, "I won't hurt him, trust me." She looked up into Motoko's eyes and saw the sincerity in them, and Shinobu-chan smiled at her.

"They're back!" Suu-chan shouted as their heads appeared over the top step.

The first signs weren't good; an ominous shadow underneath Keitaro's hair betrayed nothing, not even his glasses visible, Naru's glasses were also glossed over so that her eyes couldn't be seen. Everyone was worried, even Suu-chan.

*Oh boy, this is bad.* Mitsune stepped up to Keitaro and put a hand to his shoulder.

"Keitaro, don't worry, there's always next year..."

"IT WENT WELL!" He interrupted, rather loudly.

"Eep!" Mitsune drew back from it as he lurched forward, tears flying out of his eyes.

"I think it was good! It seems that it won't be a dream for me to get into Toudai now!" He stood there, fist clenched in victory, tears pouring over his cheeks.

"Congratulations sempai!" Shinobu-chan was smiling from the bottom of her heart, happy at seeing him do so well.

"Well done!" Suu-chan held out the wrong banner, making Shinobu-chan concerned again.

"And Naru," Mitsune continued, "how about you?"

"I think it went okay." She gave a small smile.

"Well, this calls for celebration!" Mitsune broke open a bottle of champagne along with Suu-chan, the corks flying off with a bang.

"Wait!" Everything in the entire room stopped moving for a few seconds, even the corks paused mid-flight. Keitaro continued, "We still have another day of exams tomorrow, we can celebrate then..."

"Here." Mitsune handed him a glass filled with champagne, obviously not hearing what he was saying.

Sighing he took it and drank it slowly, he and Naru relinquished to the others as they began to drink with them and eat the food Shinobu-chan prepared. A few hours later they felt a bit woozy and decided to leave the party for a short while, taking a walk outside.

"It's a nice night." Naru took in a long deep breath of the cool air, "Very peaceful."

"Yes, it is nice, I hope it remains sunny tomorrow..." Keitaro replied.

Before they realised it, they were walking through many staircase and paths until they reached a certain point.

"T... That sandpit!" Keitaro pointed at the offending item. "I remember that from my childhood!" He walked over in that direction, Naru close behind him.

"It seems familiar to me too..." Naru was trying to think of where she last saw it.

"Naru..." Keitaro was hesitant in asking this, "you know your diary?"

Her eyes narrowed and an anger cross appeared on her forehead. She replied through clenched teeth, "Yes, what about it?"

Keitaro took a step back, "Well, I want you to recall that I only read one line, but only because it was to do with a promise I made to someone here 15 years ago."

Naru looked slightly bemused, "The promise about meeting up in Toudai?"

"Yes, that one, well I was wondering if it was you by any chance."

Naru began to think, "I don't think so, I was only two years old then, and couldn't have made that kind of promise to someone."

"Ah well..." Keitaro sighed, "Just had to ask, that's all." He crouched down and picked up some sand and let it pour out through his fingers.

"One more day to go..." Naru was looking over Keitaro, staring at the night sky, the stars glinting back at her.

"Yep, then we wait..." Keitaro stood up and stared at the stars with her.

Standing there in silence, they kept quiet, left alone with their thoughts. After what seemed like a few minutes, they chose to walk back inside. The sight that they were met with was rather amusing. Mitsune was sprawled over the floor in a rather odd position, her limbs splayed in every direction, Shinobu-chan was in a foetal position, using a pillow as something to cuddle. Motoko was lying on her back, arms by her side holding her katana and Suu-chan was attached to one of her legs, drooling all over it.

"We'd better take them back to their rooms before they catch cold." Naru began.

"Yeah..." Keitaro looked around, "I'll take Suu-chan and Motoko-chan back whilst you take Kitsune and Shinobu-chan."

"Okay."

She began to wake up Mitsune, who needed help walking due to the amount she had drunk. Keitaro pried Suu-chan of Motoko and then carried her to her room. Waking her up gently as he reached her door, because he had no idea where her futon was, he told her that she would need to change into her pyjamas before sleeping with someone. She yawned and went into her room to do so. Walking back, he went to wake up Motoko but saw that she was sleeping soundly. Carefully he picked her up, still amazed at how light she really was. Walking upstairs to her room, he opened the door and walked in. Opening her futon with his foot he gently cradled her head as he placed her in there. Taking off her slippers and putting them outside the futon, he made sure that she looked comfortable before leaving, watching her as he slid her door closed. Turning around he almost jumped with shock as Suu-chan stood there.

"I think you'd better stay with me tonight imouto-chan." He recovered quickly, "Motoko-chan looks exhausted so we should let her sleep."

"Okay Keitaro," She smiled back drowsily, "I won't place too much pressure on you because you have an exam tomorrow."

He smiled back and walked away from her, glad that she jumped on his back soon after. Getting down to his room he placed her alone in his futon for a minute as he got changed behind a partition. He returned to find her nearly tearing his pillow in two. Slightly panicked he coaxed it out of her grip before assuming his normal position with her, and slept the night away.

## **Day 2 of Final Stage Toudai exams**

**Friday, February 26th**

### **Early morning**

The second day was here, as was the final chance to do well in the exams for entry to Toudai. Keitaro woke up on time, managing to stop his alarm from ringing any longer than necessary. He woke up Suu-chan and told her they would need to go downstairs for breakfast. She nodded and went to her room to change into some clean clothes. Keitaro watched her leave and then began to change himself. Everyone else woke up around the same time again. Motoko woke up, perplexed at how she managed to get back to her room; the last thing most people remembered was falling asleep in the dining room.

Shinobu-chan, despite drinking a little alcohol, had managed to cook breakfast for everyone. The examinees as well as everyone else thanked her and began to eat the rice she had made. Keitaro and Naru knew that eating something heavy in the morning might lead to cramps later on in an exam hall, so they opted for a more Western style breakfast of cereal with milk and a glass of orange juice. Now fully sated they got ready to leave, everyone else wishing them luck again. Smiling, they left Hinata-sou.

### **Entrance to Tokyo University**

"Well, here we are again..." Keitaro said, staring at the clocktower again.

"Yeah..." Naru spoke longingly.

"The last day... I wonder how it will pan out." He kept staring upwards.

"We can only do our best Keitaro." Naru turned to smile at him, "Shall we go in now?"

"Yeah," he smiled back, "why not?"

Walking in together they walked past the same bunch of people who were waiting outside the building. Getting inside the building they found another helper student; he seemed to find them through a whole crowd and went straight for them, or more precisely, Naru. His dark hair was unkempt and long, four bits of hair served as his fringe keeping his thin eyes under a shadow; he too was taller than Keitaro.

"How can I help you Miss?" He purposely addressed Naru alone, ignoring Keitaro completely.

"Gomen," She checked a piece of paper, "we need to find Room 2-C. Do you know where that might be?"

"Of course." He put a hand behind her back to move her, making her face a staircase. "Go up these stairs to the floor above and then you will find that it is the first door on your left."

"Arigatou..." She was still blushing slightly from his touch.

"Sure, no problem." He smiled, and Keitaro could've sworn that he heard a 'Ting!' sound, whereupon twinkling stars of light surrounded the helper student's head.

They left the helper student, and Keitaro walked alongside Naru.

"You do realise what he was up to Naru?" He sounded concerned.

"Huh? No, but I thought he was rather handsome myself..." She drifted back to the helper students' serious eyes.

As they reached Room 2-C and were about to walk in, Keitaro spoke.

"Good luck Naru-chan." He smiled at her.

"You too Keitaro-kun." The doors opened and in they went.

### **Around midday**

#### **Room 2-A**

"Miss... Miss wake up." A lecturer, one of the people overseeing the exam spoke to a girl who had her head lying on the desk assigned to her. He assumed she was sleeping.

"Hello?" He began to shake her awake, but she wouldn't respond. Letting her go she dropped to the ground, and from the lecturer's point of view he could only see the whites of her eyes. Alarmed he picked her up, much to the surprise of the other students and took her to the door where some other lecturers were standing, wondering what he was up to.

"Call an ambulance, she has no pulse." He walked outside the room, one of the female helpers running to the end of the hall to a phone. He attended to her, making sure her head was secure and that she was as comfortable as can be. Going back inside, leaving

her with one of the other lecturers, he picked up her bag and had a look at her student number. He adjusted his glasses while looking down a list.

"A10035... A10035... Ah, here it is, Miss..."

His voice was drowned out by the paramedic's arrival. The lecturer couldn't leave the exam as yet, but gave the paramedics her name and told her of her current condition. They took her away on a stretcher, oxygen mask on her face. As she left he looked at her face. *So calm. I hope she stays alive.* He dusted off his lab coat and was about to light up a cigarette before he remembered that the building was no smoking. *Ah well, maybe later...* Going back inside he told the others that she would be okay and asked them to continue as normal.

### **In the ambulance**

The girl woke up almost immediately scaring the two paramedics who were close by her.

"Ara?" She said, looking with interest at the paramedics.

"We have to take you to the hospital, you had no pulse back there for a few seconds."

"Really? I must've just fainted again..."

"Fainted!" He was incensed, "This isn't normal behaviour for a minor fainting, for precautions we're still taking you there."

Another minute passed and they arrived at the nearest hospital. The Emergency Room staff was ready for a near death, but was surprised when a girl came out the back walking very delicately. Knowing they had a job to do, the paramedics explained the situation, giving the ER doctors her pulse, oxygen levels and so, including the state of the patient. Leaving her in the care of the ER, the ambulance left on another emergency.

### **3 hours later**

The doctors checked her over but were baffled at her lack of fatal injuries. They weren't sure so they did any test they thought would've worked, but could find nothing. Tired, they allowed her to discharge herself later that day.

"Ara, I'd better back and finish my exams..." She looked around the hospital but didn't recognise any buildings.

"Myu!" The small turtle popped its head out again from her bag

Smiling at him she spoke, "Tama-chan, do you know where Toudai is?"

The turtle known as Tama-chan flew up in the air very high, much to the shock of most people around her, a few moments later it flew down to her shoulder and began to talk.

"Myu myu myu!" He used a fin and pointed in some direction.

"Ara, I see, go down this road and take the fifth road on the right..."

The girl then began on her way, but no sooner than a few steps she walked straight into a lamp post.

"Gomen!" She didn't notice what she had hit and continued.

After many incidents and causing a multiple car pile up, she arrived at Toudai, plasters all over her face and hand, dirt covering some of her clothes. The clocktower read 5pm.

"Ooooh... I missed it." She put a hand to her head, and Tama-chan did the same. "What to do now?"

As she stood there facing the clocktower, two familiar figures had already left the building prior to her arrival. Naru and Keitaro were now happier, no more exams for a long while. They had finished the exams for Toudai, now the wait for the results begins...

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### **Author's Notes**

Well, what can I say? Thank you for all the lovely reviews, I didn't realise how many of you read it. My decision is now made, Naru will pass, but many more events will happen. Remember how Naru was jealous of Mutsumi and her relative closeness to Keitaro? Well, who is in Naru's shoes now? That should stir up some good debate. Keitaro will need another way to study... who will he turn to? What technique will he use? (You might guess by now what I have been planning)

Although I said no ACC's, I have left two openings for some in this chapter. It wouldn't be Love Hina if new characters didn't have some outside influence upon the people there. They will not play any major role, nor will they be SI's (God, I hope not...). They will just be some typical people you might expect to find. I'm still debating whether or not to bring in Kentaro from the anime... though it might be too late now. I also regret not bringing in the old men from the council; their moments of wisdom would've been well at home in the fic TT

Hope you recognised the two new people in this chapter (not the helper students). I thought it would be nice to see how her time went. Sorry for not focussing on the exams, they are rather boring you must admit (and I'm going to be in some very important exams for my second year at uni).