

## Chapter 14

### And the conclusion is...

#### Hinata-sou

#### Tuesday, 9th of March

It was dinnertime and Keitaro wasn't particularly hungry. Most people noticed this around the table. Shinobu-chan was the first to speak.

"Sempai? Are you feeling okay?" She had a worried expression on her face. Keitaro didn't answer for a short while, eating whilst focussing on some faraway object. "Sempai?"

"Huh?" Keitaro tuned back into reality and saw everyone looking at him with curious expressions on their faces. Turning to Shinobu-chan he smiled, "Oh don't worry Shinobu-chan, I'm fine." Keeping up his new lightened demeanour he continued to eat just as though everything was normal, but he still felt uneasy. *I couldn't remember anything that happened on the second day. I knew that I wrote down the answers, but I didn't truly focus on them... What is wrong with me? Why do I feel an overwhelming sense of doom?* Unbeknownst to him two pairs of eyes watched his every move, and by the end of the meal, Naru and Motoko knew that he was lying.

Everyone retired to their rooms after that, relaxing, reading, training, and jumping about, whatever took their fancy. Keitaro though was alone in his room, lying down, his legs under the furnace table. He sighed as he stared at his ceiling. *What am I getting so down about? It's over and done with... There's nothing more to think about.* Yet, Keitaro did not move from his position until a few minutes later.

"Hey you!" He angled his head back to see a Liddo-kun staring at him from the hole in the ceiling. "Why are you so down?" Strands of auburn hair replaced the stuffed toy a few moments later.

"It doesn't matter..." Keitaro acted normally, but this didn't convince Naru, who promptly jumped through the hole into his room.

"No, something is the matter Keitaro." She sat down opposite him placing her own legs under the furnace table. "You weren't your usual self at dinner this evening."

"I guess so," He sat up to face her, "I'm just feeling down from the exams, I just feel that I did badly in them..."

Naru was silent, thinking of a suitable reply. "Keitaro," she started, "there's not much I can say to stop you feeling this way. However," she paused to emphasise this point, "I do know for a fact that you tried your best, and you should be proud of that."

Keitaro was a bit dubious of this. "Maybe... I'm not sure if I did my best though..."

Naru sighed, "Keitaro, I can't help you any more, you are the one that has to get yourself out of this..." Naru stood up and left the room via the doorway.

Keitaro was shocked. *That was a bit cold of her... Maybe something's bothering her also...* He put that out of his mind as he picked up one of his books and began to read. The old feelings of anger became to resurface themselves; it had been around a year since they last emerged. This anger was not directed at Naru or with anyone in Hinata-sou, but with himself. He couldn't get rid of this feeling no matter what he focussed on. Frustrated, he threw his book at the wall, where it landed with a dull thud, then falling to the ground, the pages crushed beneath the cover.

Standing up he began to pace around in his room; he was frowning and not focussing on anything in the room. This continued for a while until he began to fume whilst sitting down. Tragically, someone chose to knock on his door at this time.

"Who is it?" He sounded irate.

"Umm, Motoko..." came the hesitant reply.

"What do you want?" He was still fuming to himself.

"C... Can I come in please?" She tried to ask him gently. *Why is he being so hostile?*

"Fine..."

She opened the door to see Keitaro glowering at something. Worried for him she walked into the room, noting the book to her right as it lay on the ground. She sat down opposite him.

"Keitaro, what is wrong?" She had a rare look of concern on her face, "Are you okay?"

He looked at her angrily, "Why do you ask that?"

*This is very odd* "It's just that you didn't seem to be yourself at dinner..."

"Why is everyone so interested in me all of a sudden!" He began to raise his voice slightly.

"It's... It's just because we care for you Keitaro." She was getting nervous.

He was shaking now, his voice barely audible, "Please, just leave..."

"But..." She began, almost desperately.

"Leave before I say something I regret, Motoko!" He shouted.

Motoko was stunned; he didn't use his usual term of endearment to her. *This must mean he no longer has any feelings for me...* She stood up respectfully and walked to the door to his room. Bowing slightly she opened the door and spoke.

"G... Gomen Urashima, I did not mean to disturb you. Goodnight to you." She left quietly, sliding his door shut as she entered the corridor.

Keitaro was aghast. *What have I done! Why did I say such things to Motoko-chan? What in Kami's sake is wrong with me!* He grabbed the sides of his head, scratching his head furiously, almost tearing out hair and placing pressure on the sides of his temple. A few

minutes later he released his self-imposed punishment, resulting in a pounding headache and a burning sensation on his head. Sighing, he realised something.

"I'd better apologise to her, I was out of order." He stood up and opened his door, making his way up to Room 302. Knocking on her door, he heard no reply, trying again, this time more forcefully, no reply was forthcoming. Disheartened, he returned to his room. *Where could she be?*

Walking down the stairs at the front of Hinata-sou was a lone figure, that of Aoyama Motoko. Feeling the wind ruffle her clothing, some of the cool breeze permeating to her skin, she walked down towards the street below. *I need to clear my mind of what I thought I had with Keitaro.* Going straight into the town she walked by the few late night restaurants that were open. Walking by a couple who were laughing together Motoko began to feel her heart break, then they kissed each other, which only worsened it for her. It looked like everywhere she walked, every street corner, there was a happy couple. *Is this a test for me? Am I merely imagining all these things?* She began to run faster through the streets, not paying attention to all the looks that she received from people walking by her. She eventually stopped after having run through the entire town. Panting slightly she looked back to see Hinata-sou towering in the skyline. *Should I go back? What is left for me to stay for?* Then she thought of her sister, the way she ordered her to go to Hinata-sou, no reasons as to why, but just that she needed to go there. *I cannot defy my sister... I must return to Hinata-sou...* Walking back she was about to pass by the teashop when a voice from within startled her.

"Motoko-chan, what's the matter?"

Turning towards the voice, Motoko saw Haruka walk outside with a cigarette, the tip glowing.

"Nothing of any importance Haruka-san. I must go now, goodnight." Turning back she walked up the stairs, the older lady watching on.

"Keitaro... what have you done now?" She mumbled to herself before returning inside.

## Posting Day

Wednesday, 10th of March

### Morning

Breakfast was subdued, Naru and Keitaro were going to find out whether they had passed or failed. Everyone attended except Motoko. They all pondered over why but only Keitaro knew what this meant. *She hates me now; she doesn't want to lay her eyes on me any more.* Finishing his breakfast Keitaro stood up and thanked Shinobu-chan for cooking it. He returned to his room wondering over what to do. *Is it too late to apologise? Would she kill me if she saw me?* He didn't have time to act however, since Naru knocked on his door.

"Well?" She had her satchel with her, "Are you ready to check the results?"

"Err, yeah..." He looked at his room, it was a complete mess, "Just give me a minute..."

"Keitaro... I don't care how dirty your room is, it is a guy's room after all..." After a pleading look from Keitaro she walked back out exasperated, "Fine, but not too long okay!"

Under the pretence of cleaning his room he packed a few things he might need in his larger than normal bag. *Let's see now, clothes, underwear, toiletries and money, I think that's about it...* opening his door he walked out of Hinata-sou with Naru, waving goodbye to everyone except Motoko who was still not there. Seeing the bag he was carrying she spoke.

"Why are you carrying such a large bag?" She looked confused.

"Umm..." He struggled to think, "No reason... I was just... bringing my notes with me... for luck!"

"Gees..." Naru couldn't believe it, "Whatever you think is necessary Keitaro."

## **Tokyo University**

### **A short while later**

They had arrived at Toudai. The atmosphere was chaotic. There were many scenes of people happy, jumping with joy with friends, to the other extreme of people who could barely speak, clouds over their heads as they had failed to get in. Keitaro checked his student ID to memorise his number to look for. As they approached the imposing boards, he and Naru looked at each other.

"Here we go." She said. They began to move apart as they went to look for their numbers.

Keitaro stared up at the board, hoping for his number to come up. *A10461... A10463... A10464... Please come up... A10467... A10470... A10474... Huh?* He wiped his eyes and checked again. *A10473 isn't there...* He sighed.

"I failed... I didn't make it..."

He looked over, past the scores of people cheering and crying to see Naru looking over a board, then seeing her eyes light up as she started smiling like never before. *So Naru has passed... I might as well go now...* Keitaro walked off the grounds of Toudai, making his way through the streets to his destination. Meanwhile Naru was still at Toudai wandering around the boards. *Where is Keitaro? I told him to wait for me!* Remembering his number from the time he dropped his pass she looked up to the boards and began scanning down the numbers. *Oh Kami... he failed... where could he have gone?*

## **Tokyo Railway Station**

### **Around noon**

**"Train 112 to Osaka will be arriving in five minutes on Platform 4. Next alighting city will be Yokohama. Train 112 to Osaka will be..."**

A figure stood on the platform alone, the wind whistling around him, the sun's rays lazily creeping over the cloud edges to blind Keitaro. Wincing, he removed his glasses to try and wipe away the white spots. Once he had his vision back, he gazed around the empty

platforms opposite him. Short-sighted, all he could see was a shade of whites, greys, browns and blues. He sighed. *Time to go home now... I can't believe that I have to return a failure to my parents...* His thoughts were cut off as his train pulled into the platform. Keitaro stepped back as the wind picked up due to the express slowing down.

Once it had stopped he began to move forwards to where he thought the door was. He didn't take into account the large bag in his way, which resulted in him tripping over and slamming his head into the window of the train. Reeling back from his fall he held his head with one hand, squinting his eyes to try and see the door. He wasn't prepared for an object that flew in front of his face towards his left. Turning to that direction his vision faded once again, making it harder to see what the object was.

Meanwhile a confused girl stood about on the platform, looking at the signs above and at the train, she was sweating slightly. From behind her, a small green-shelled turtle landed on her shoulder.

"Myu myuu myu mi!" It pointed to the train with its right fin.

"Ara, so this is the train to Osaka?" She sounded glad, "I'm glad I arrived in time! Arigatou Tama-chan." She stroked Tama-chan's head and skipped into the carriage nearest her.

A few metres back, a fumbling Keitaro managed to find his glasses in his jacket pocket and put them on. He looked around the platform but could find no sign of whatever flew by him. He laughed to himself.

"Hehe, it must've been my imagination, it has to be the stress that made me see that." He looked over to the train and saw that he was a metre off from the door, his faceprint still visible on the glass. Checking he had everything he walked onto the train, a few seconds before it began to pull off the platform.

### **Hinata-sou**

#### **One hour later**

"Where could he be?"

Naru was not alone in her worrying over Keitaro's absence from the impromptu party Mitsune had planned for the two of them. All but Motoko were worried for him.

"What happened to sempai?" Shinobu-chan had her hand near her face; she was desperately worried for him.

"I don't know Shinobu-chan..." Naru replied, unsure of herself. "He did fail..."

"Yes... but still!" Shinobu-chan was near tears now, "Where is he!"

Mitsune put a hand on the junior high student's shoulder, "Don't worry yourself kiddo, he can't have gone far..."

### **Meanwhile**

#### **Train 112**

Keitaro stared out of the window, marvelling at the beauty of Fuji-san as it towered over the Japanese Alps. *I have to go visit there one day, Hina-obaachan always spoke highly of the goraiko (sunrise) when on the peak.* He returned to reading his book as the view changes to one outside his window, to a landscape view with Mount Fuji and the train, to an overhead view of Japan, a small blinking red dot signifying Keitaro, now inside Shizuoka prefecture. The view pans right and we see another blinking dot inside Kanagawa prefecture. The view zooms in on a small town, then to a hill on top of which lies...

### **Hinata-sou**

#### **1 second later**

"You may be right Kitsune..." Naru pondered, "But where?"

Suu-chan was on Motoko's back, who was saying nothing.

"Motoko, aren't you worried about Keitaro?" Suu-chan inquired.

Motoko was quiet, keeping her emotions to herself in her corner of the room. Her eyes were drained of life as she watched the others fret about Keitaro. *Why are they so worried about him? He's nothing but a perverted, idiotic, and now a third-year ronin. He has no redeeming qualities...* She tried to lie to herself, but knew that she couldn't overlook his kindness to her at times in which she was less than welcome.

"Well, we can't do anything here but wait I guess." Naru sighed.

"Wait!" Suu-chan jumped off Motoko's back and ran to the others, stopping once she reached their circle. "I can build a device to track Keitaro down!"

"Really Kaorra-san?" Shinobu-chan lightened up, "You think it'll work?"

"Of course it will!" said Suu-chan reassuredly. "Now I must begin my masterpiece!" Jumping lopsidedly about the others in circles for a few moments, she ran in the general direction of her room.

Mitsune sweatdropped. *I hope she doesn't blow up Hinata-sou in the process.*

"Well, there's nothing we can do for the time being, so lets eat our lunch now." Naru stated. They all agreed and took their seats at the table, their thoughts private as they ate the meal in silence.

#### **30 minutes later**

#### **Train 112**

Keitaro broke away from his gaze outside the window and looked at his watch, a lot of time had passed since he left Hinata-sou. *I suppose I'd better let them know where I am...* He got out of his chair, leaving his bag where he sat in the seat and walked over to the front of his empty carriage where there was a phone. Looking over the instructions he realised he needed a phone card, which he knew he didn't have. A bit annoyed he checked the floor and was happily surprised to see a card there. Smiling he bent over to pick it up, only to

bump into someone walking his way from the other adjoining carriage. The person landed on the ground with a loud fwump, getting Keitaro's attention.

It was a woman wearing a plaid light brown top, a while long sleeved shirt underneath, the skirt a beige colour and the brown boots were fairly high. Her long dark hair managed to remain in a ponytail despite not being tied up together; it naturally twisted around itself. Keitaro looked to her face and saw that her pupils were missing.

"Waaah!" Keitaro put his hands on the sides of his head, his hair standing on end.

*I... I've killed her! What am I going to do now? I'm going to go to prison.* The headline "Dorm kanrinrin kills on train" loomed over his head as he went insane thinking. Meanwhile, the pupils instantly returned to the woman's eyes, and she sat up straight.

"Ara... Good afternoon!" She waved to Keitaro, who at once facefaulted to the floor.

"Are... are you okay miss?" He said, helping her up.

"Hai, I must've fainted again." She placed her palms together, smiling at him, "Arigatou."

Turning she skipped away from him down her carriage, Keitaro looked at her to make sure she didn't fall again and looked back to the phone, not seeing the intrigued look on the woman's face.

He placed the card into the phone and began to input the number for Hinata-sou.

## **Hinata-sou**

### **A few minutes earlier**

"Finished!" Suu-chan bounded around the living area in Hinata-sou excitedly.

"Where is it Suu-chan?" Mitsune asked.

"It's in my room, it needs to be charged up with the fusion reactor first before it can be used properly." She replied matter-of-factly.

"Fusion reactor...? Never mind, I don't want to know..." Mumbled Mitsune as she rubbed her temples, the sake getting to her again.

The phone in the reception began to ring. Suu-chan ran over and picked up the phone.

"The number you have dialled has not been recognised." Shinobu-chan gasped at this and ran to her, "Please hang up and..."

A flash of white light and Suu-chan was flat on the ground; a kettle planted on her head as the others watched her in mild astonishment.

"Hello?"

**"Is this Shinobu-chan?"**

"Sempai is that you!" Shinobu-chan was so nervous; she wondered why the voice on the other end was so far, she didn't notice that he was holding the handset upside down. "Where are you?"

**"I'm on the Super Express, I feel like taking a break from it all."**

"When will you come home?" She wasn't able to hide her emotions easily and sounded very worried for him.

**"I don't know Shinobu-chan. I'm going somewhere far away and I don't know if I'm coming back. Tell the others that I'll miss them."**

"What?" She sounded more despairing now.

The line quality suddenly became poorer, **"Yeah I met ... and bumped into ... I ... dead, but..."** A click and the line went dead.

"Sempai?" She shook the phone, "Sempai! What do you mean you're leaving us? And who's dead?"

Giving up she replaced the handset and looked to the others, replaying as much as she could remember.

"Super Express? Is it tasty?" Drooled Suu-chan.

"I see..." Mitsune remarked, ignoring Suu-chan, "So Keitaro has become completely depressed and decided to kill himself alone..." she surmised rather quickly.

"What!" Shinobu-chan then fainted.

"He wouldn't do that Kitsune!" Naru exclaimed, "He wouldn't..." She suddenly became doubtful, not sure of herself, remembering the way she spoke to him a day earlier.

Everyone was quiet, except Suu-chan who was trying to wake up Shinobu-chan, who was still unconscious. Motoko began burn inside, her heart beating erratically. *What is wrong with me? I feel nothing for Urashima!* She defied her body and refused to move or make a sound.

## **Meanwhile**

### **Train 112**

Replacing the handset Keitaro removed the card, "Oh well, the phone card was bound to be nearly empty. At least they got my message now."

Walking back to his seat he sat next to the window, his chin resting on his hand. The view then changes to that of outside the train and pans across right a few more windows until we see a familiar woman looking outside the window, pointing out things to her pet turtle. Becoming stationary, the view watches all the carriages go by as the train continues on its long journey.

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## Author's Notes

cough Well, I'm back, and no I'm not dead as some of you might imagine. The last few months have been hell on earth for me with the amount of assignments, revision and exams that I have had to go through, the second year of my course is nearly finished, the hard work out of the way now, leaving me summer to do more writing.

First a few issues with this update. I will explain later why Keitaro gets like this, his completely strange anger. Let me assure you that it is not uncommon to get angry over having done exams, I went through it many times myself. Although you might not think it possible for him to get angry, I decided to make Love Hina a bit more realistic in this respect, and I hope you all don't kill me for doing so.

Fuji-san is the term that Japanese people use to call Mount Fuji, as a term of respect. The sunrise on the peak is one of the main attractions of the mountain, and a great tourist attraction.

Also, I love reviews, please feed me more reviews

Until next time,

Jason