

## a stray four leaf clover

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# **a stray four leaf clover**

by [aikotters](#)

## Summary

Motomiya Daisuke doesn't meet Ichijouji Ken for the first time as the Kaiser, but it's on opposite sides all the same.

## Notes

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

## A Winning Smile

Motomiya Daisuke came to with a monster's jaws held mere centimeters in front of his face. V-mon was keeping it there, of course, his body trembling with the weight of it. He still grinned, all pain and fear forgotten in the face of something to protect.

Daisuke pulled his brain to work as if from the center of the earth and scrambled away. "V-mon! What happened?"

"You're in the Kaiser's playpen." The voice that spoke wasn't V-mon's, and it wasn't very loud either. Someone sat on a tree above. Their face was cloaked in shadow as they sat and watched, head resting on their hands. "He doesn't like you much, apparently."

"Yeah, cause we all want a jerk liking us," Daisuke spat before he could think about it.

The speaker smiled, then laughed outright. "I guess that's true."

"Daisuke!" whined V-mon, managing to clock the monster in the face. "Little help please!"

Daisuke immediately reached for his D-3. Despite only having it for a matter of days, the little device was a comfort. So when his hands caught empty air, he reflexively glared up at the person in the tree. "Where's my D-3?"

"Oh, you call them that?" The person tilted their head. "That's interesting!" And they were genuinely interested too until the monster roared so loudly that their hair floated up. The person made a face like a scowl in the dark. "Ah, well, he's getting in the way. I'll just have to tell you later." The person vanished, with Daisuke's D-3 hitting the grass. Daisuke wasted no time in grabbing it, calling a Digimental Up and letting Fladramon take the opportunity to beat the ring off of that monster, whatever it was. And then the others had arrived, all aglow with armors and power. In that fuss, he quickly forgot about the stranger who had held his D-3, who had smiled earnestly through the danger and looked right at him.

But when he got close to home, like a soccer ball slamming into his chest, he did remember.

"Daisuke?" Chibimon's red eyes looked down at him from the safety nest of his goggles.

Daisuke made to grin, to brush it off, but then he paused. Hikari-chan had said very seriously that your partners were an extension of yourself. "Did you know who that guy was? Were they there the whole time?"

"I..." Chibimon swallowed, trying to remember. "Yeah, he was. He didn't do anything. He didn't even look at me when the Tyrannomon showed up. Didn't really look at you either. Or, well, he did, but not for very long." He could feel Chibimon tug on his hair to help him stand up. Which was very inconvenient. He was going to have to convince Chibimon that other people's heads weren't for standing on. Later, when this wasn't a very confusing situation.

And he wasn't the Kaiser either. He had seen the Kaiser for an instant. Blond hair and a strange, black visor that admittedly looked completely stupid, with lanky limbs and a casual, playful smile. Nothing like that other guy, who while he hadn't quite seen their face had looked right at him as if seeing him. Not Motomiya Daisuke, the Chosen-for-Just-a-few-days Child or the soccer player with a grudge against windows, but Motomiya Daisuke the kid, whoever that was. His smile was something like a cautious puppy dog and that was weird.

Because if he was in Kaiser territory, which Daisuke found out he had been, he was either really good at dodging or he worked for the Kaiser, which was more likely. That was... well, he didn't know what it was.

"We'll just have to stop him too," Daisuke mused, both to himself and Chibimon.

After all, why would someone who smiled like that be fine with rings and Digimon, creatures just as smart as he was, being torn around for amusement and boredom, like a bully.

Daisuke wasn't fond of literally kicking people in the butt, but well, he would do it if he had to.

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Ichijouji Ken met Motomiya Daisuke and only barely knew his name.

He wasn't interested in him, not specifically. He was, in the end, another person the Kaiser would have to take down. It was convincing the Kaiser that he had to do it that was the problem.

"You really need to stop playing with your food," he told him plainly.

The Kaiser grunted in acknowledgment. Ken smiled softly, amusement playing at the corners of his mouth. "They're not all geniuses, it shouldn't be hard."

"You said that about conquering the inner workings of File, " Ken reminded him. "And we still haven't done that."

"You didn't tell me there was a Jijimon that lived there," the Kaiser countered, glaring at him.

Ken sighed. "Because I didn't *know* there was a Jijimon on File, Will."

Something flew in the direction of his head and Ken dodged it gracefully. There was an admonishment somewhere in that action, but the Kaiser had thrown things at him in his irritation enough times for him to honestly not care what it was.

"Rude," Ken mused. "You know I'm right."

"Soft is what you are," the boy sneered. "You had one right in your sights and you let him just take a Ring. What was that, *Ken*?"

Ken smirked now, a positively wicked expression on his face. "What indeed?" he agreed.

"That's not an answer."

"I hope you didn't expect one." Ken got to his feet, having been lounging on the soft, fuzzy sofas he had insisted the Kaiser make when he helped him with this base. He was not sitting on hard chairs for disciplinary sake. Sports were quite enough for that. "Good night, Kaiser. Sleep well."

He got another grunt and tried not to roll his eyes. He was just trying to help, honestly.

The soft sound of scuttling pods reached his ears in record time and Ken knelt, letting Wormmon crawl up his arm. "All done for today?"

"Mm!" Wormmon leaned against his cheek. That familiar twinge made itself known in his gut and he ignored it, quite happily, choosing instead to rub his head. "All done, Ken-chan?"

"Yep. Let's get going. I think Mama made your favorite!"

Seeing that expression so much like a smile sent the painful twinges far far away.

Until tomorrow of course.

## Battlefields

The second time Daisuke met the mysterious stranger he was at their school. He didn't go there, the Tamachi grey uniform that destroyed all individuality (mom's words, not his) was stark against the bright colors of his much more ordinary classmates. And he was talking with his coach, which sent his hackles rising as the man turned to him.

"Oh, Motomiya!" he greeted, watching the boy turn with him, with no recognition in those eyes, a deep and uncompromising blue. Different from Takeru's he noted. They were somewhere in some deep murk, unlike Takeru who had left it behind. Strangely poetic but it did its work. "This is Ichijouji Ken-kun. He got an injury in a previous game so he can't play for a while, but he wanted to volunteer with another team in the meantime."

"I don't want to get rusty," said the other boy in that exact voice, the voice that had felt no fear inside the bowels of a monster. "And they don't like having non-players show up on the field. So I figured I could help out here!" He bowed a little. "My name is Ichijouji Ken, it's a pleasure to meet you."

"Uh..." And Daisuke didn't know why he was bowing back or being nice or anything. "I'm Motomiya Daisuke. So you're... what, our water boy?" He didn't mean to sound rude but that was... it right?

The coach's eyes went wide, but Ken just *laughed* like he'd told an awesome joke. "I can be, but I was hoping to help with footwork and balance issues. Soccer is one of the only things I can beat my brother at, so I'm pretty confident in myself there." He winked.

And Daisuke... didn't know how to take that, but a part of him rose at the challenge buried in that good-nature, honeyed voice. "Think you can keep up with a bad leg?"

Ken's smile matched his, all sharp teeth. "I'm looking forward to it."

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"So," Takeru said, one eyebrow high on his forehead. "You're telling us, you saw a guy when we were in Kaiser territory... and now he's volunteering at your soccer club?"

Daisuke huffed. "Yeah, at least I *think* it's him. He's got this kinda... weird vibe." He looked up from bouncing the soccer ball he'd 'borrowed'. "Reminds me'a *you* a bit Takaishi."

Takeru blinked. "Me?" He glanced at Hikari-chan, who had just been listening quietly, perched on her chair. "Do I seem like a villain to you?"

She smiled at him in a way that made Daisuke's cheeks burn with envy, soft and warm and also playful like a candle. "Some of the time, yes."

It was always like this. They were always close like this, and Takaishi made Hikari-chan smile like she could put down her guard in a way Daisuke could never get her to. It was just so annoying.

"Rude," he said with a little smile of his own. It burned. "Anyway, Daisuke-kun...this is awesome! We might have an ally to the Kaiser we can get information out of."

For a moment, Daisuke wanted to preen, because hey, he'd done good without trying very hard. But there was that very hardwired part of him annoyed with Takeru that was saying 'don't make fun of me you ass'. But he just shrugged it off a bit and said, "I guess. I'll be able to talk to him or something." Slowly, the idea warmed up to him. "Hey, maybe I can convince him to join us! Not work for that dirtbag!"

"If anyone could do it, Daisuke-kun," Hikari said with such conviction it set his heart ablaze. "It's you."

And if that wasn't motivation, nothing was.

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Ichijouji Ken did not feel the same.

"I can't believe you think you can invade anything."

Kaiser-kun was being particularly ornery today, which considering the quiet trampling of the world around him meant people would be too much because success would be tainted by people, and the one rabbit wouldn't try to dye himself in brown and pink paint again. Small victories, and large complications. Kaiser-kun liked when things followed the programming.

"I can't believe you don't think of these things yourself," Ken shot back without heat. The ghost did not follow him, nor did it make any noise. So he ignored him. "It's not my fault you don't interact with people your own age, Wallace."

The whip cracked close to his ear, followed by the green form of his partner *leaping* to his defense, screeching "How dare you attack Ken-chan?" until Ken pulled him off the other boy's face with a laugh.

"It's okay, Wormmon," he said, bringing him close before Wormmon could get whipped. The ghost made a sound at his ear. "Kaiser-kun is just grumpy that I'm right and he's wrong."

"Child of kindness, my right food," muttered the Kaiser. "Get out."

"Going, going!" Ken left at once, practically skipping. Wormmon seethed in his arms, taking twice as many antennae strokings to calm down. "It's okay, Wormmon, don't worry. He's just embarrassed that he didn't think of that."

"He could be nicer to Ken-chan," muttered the caterpillar with a huffing sound. "You're helping!"

"I know, I know," he soothed gently. "But Kaiser-kun is very tense right now, since we're so close."

"Still," he mumbled. Then he straightened in Ken's arms. "We're being followed, Ken-chan."

Ken glanced behind him. Nothing. Then he smiled. "Don't worry Wormmon," he said again. "That's just Nii-san, worrying about me like always."

Wormmon clacked his mandibles. "But Ken-chan-"

"Don't worry," Ken repeated, still smiling steadily. "I'm fine, Wormmon, but thank you."

He went through the portal.

Osamu didn't come along. But that was fine. He couldn't for now, and soon he would.

"Don't worry, Nii-san," he said, steady as a river in spring. "I'll save you soon. You'll be free of this place."

And it didn't matter what he had to do, or *who* he had to use, to get it done.

As the light faded away, leaving the tunnels of the Kaiser's base to darkness once more, Ichijouji Osamu let out a heavy sigh and faded away, blurring once more into butterflies the color of pitch and took to the world again. Eventually, they alighted at the sight of a yellow dinosaur, snoring sweetly in a failed attempt to guard the television fizzing out of signal just behind a tree stump.

Osamu solidified once more, as much as he could, and pressed his hand to the screen.

"Please," he whispered. "Work this time."

The scientific method could suck a lunar rock.

But he tried again anyway, and again, and something clicked.

And he stared out to bedroom dimly lit and a boy and a girl settled at a desk with a cat at her side.

"I swear I'm missing a number, Hikari-chan," said the boy with a huff.

"I'll check when you're done okay?" she said in a distant, distracted voice. She was looking at the computer.

She was looking *at him*.

Perfect.



# Playtime

"He's not so bad, you know. The Kaiser, I mean."

That was the weirdest sentence she had ever heard. But then, it was coming from a ghost with messy purple hair, and that was strange enough. Still, she didn't change her facial expression even once. Hikari was good at putting on a brave face, even when it might seem stupid to someone else.

"He's not great," continues the ghost. "But he's helping my little brother out and that's enough for me right now."

Still no answer, but then, she can't really answer with Daisuke in the room. Which was fair, he wouldn't want her to.

"Mostly he's a stupid kid, just like me. Just like you. He lost something and he doesn't really know how to get it back, or even if he can. "You know how it is right?"

She did. She knew very well. But she said nothing because Daisuke was here.

"Going to play quiet while your friend's out here? That's fine. I can wait a long time."

And he did. The cat was watching him too, even if Daisuke's digimon was sleeping through it. Maybe that digimon just didn't remember. It was for the best then. Ryo was very much gone.

She studied with Daisuke until he left. He wasn't unobservant. He saw the way her eyes would flick towards Osamu but wouldn't see him. Maybe he thought she was looking at the clock. But the clock was far away.

But he let it go. Maybe people didn't push the child of light as much as they should have. Oh well.

Once she returned to her room, she looked Osamu in the eye and said, with surprising firmness for such a quiet girl. "Who are you?"

"Ichijouji Osamu," he says. "And you're Yagami Hikari, the Chosen Child of Light?"

She nodded. She didn't seem surprised that he knew. Then again, the Chosen were famous to the digital world and its denizens. "You're related to Daisuke-kun's new rival in soccer aren't you?"

"Ken? Yeah I'm his brother."

"And he's not the Kaiser, is he?" Hikari's voice was steady, much like the cat on her bed.

"No, but he's working with him."

"Why?"

Osamu wanted to say that he told her already, but being mysterious and vague was this girl's way of doing things to keep herself safe. It wasn't for fun or anything like that. "To bring me back to life. I got into an accident. I got caught in the digital world in the process. You know, what happens when a person who isn't chosen yet tries to interfere with one who is. He blames himself."

Hikari was eleven years old and haunted by the horrors of fighting monsters and near death. She didn't say "that's not right" or "I don't understand". She simply closed her eyes for a moment and breathed slowly to keep her temper. She closed her eyes to compartmentalize the sound of bats running to eat her down to her bones. She closed her eyes to remember hundreds of gross, suffering poop monsters being eviscerated because they took a single moment to be brave and kind instead of running away and living.

"I'm sorry that happened to you both, to all of you," she said eventually, voice solemn, eyes still closed. "But that doesn't mean there can't be consequences to their actions."

"I know." He had to accept that fact, that was just life. "There have to be consequences, but I want them to be alive to have those consequences."

"We don't intend for it to go that way."

"You may not be able to stop them. At least not by yourself."

"Mm."

He could tell she didn't believe that. And neither would her friends. Which was fair enough.

"Do you think they'll kill to get what they want?"

"I don't think they'll consider not to. Because they don't want to understand what you already know."

Ken and the Kaiser did suffer from "it looks like a game and I can do what I want in it, so it is a game" disease. People did that in real life all of the time.

Hikari brushed her cat's fur. "How did you get caught in the digital world?"

"I stole his digivice and locked it away." He shrugged. "The digital world wants who can save it, who will take care of it. If we get in the way, it needs to be stopped so we can, unget in the way. That's my hypothesis anyway. Do you think it's true?"

"That sounds too much like destiny for my taste," Hikari replied.

Osamu laughed. "You're a chosen one. You love destiny when it loves you back."

"Destiny made me a liar to everyone around me for a solid four years then," she said, rising to her feet. "I'll try to help you and your brother and everyone else, but please don't try to

manipulate me into feeling guilty. The digital world is ugly and beautiful just like earth. The only difference is who can get in. You can love it either way."

"That's an optimistic way of seeing that place."

"Only because you're not an optimist."

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The third time he met Ichijouji Ken, Daisuke was running for his life once more. It was not a fun run. It was not a happy run.

It was on the soccer field, and he was getting his butt handed to him.

For someone who was injured, Ken could hecking run.

He was careful about it, not pushing himself too far, but he managed to stride well to block Daisuke whenever he tried to pass the ball, and could cut in better than most. It was hard to believe he was an elementary school student.

That said, it did explain how he could be so calm in a digital world full of monsters that likely hated his guts now. If he could handle a bunch of kids at their worst while injured, they were probably fucked.

Still, Daisuke was not a quitter. The next move he did, he sidestepped and kicked the shot back. His teammate swiped past, making Ken pause and Daisuke laughed.

Ken to his surprise, laughed back, watching the goal get through. He moved to go past Daisuke, not even breaking stride.

Then he paused, grinning a bit too cheerfully. "It's a shame that we're not on the same side. I think you and I would be great friends."

It was a line straight out of every comic Daisuke had ever read but it stung a bit. Maybe it was because Ken was fun and didn't look down on him.

"Why can't we be?" he asked instead.

Ken shrugged. "That's not how these games work."

Daisuke's stomach dropped to his knees as Ken went to get a drink.

## End Notes

And Higuchi! You came out of nowhere! But lucky me I've had some stray thoughts floating around.

Challenges: The Presents Under the Tree!, Novella Masterclass 02 list 3, What If Challenge, AU Diversity boot camp - friendly, season rewrite boot camp prompt - smile, Mega Prompts Quote Prompts 239., Trick or Treat day 16

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