

Hairclips

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Hairclips

by [spaceyfish](#)

Summary

Suddenly he didn't want to sleep anymore and dragged himself down the stairs. He heard Gou's voice and let out a small breath of relief.

He began to greet the boy only to pause in shock. He'd never seen Pikachu sit with anyone like that. He'd never seen Gou let anyone but Cinderace that close.

He felt faint jealousy burn its way up his throat, which of course Pikachu noticed immediately and made himself more comfortable in Gou's lap.

[[The premise of "What if Gou's hair grew out and he wore red hairclips" got away from me]]

Notes

CW: Depression, dissociation, anxiety

If you want to skip the descriptive depressive/dissociative episode stop here:

"Yeah, it's okay. I'll find Cinderace."

"Okay."

And skip to here: "He's intending to go out"

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

Prologue: Goh

Gou was in a pickle.

Satoshi was training. He normally did this but he wasn't sure if the...intensity of his training was normal.

He ate, slept, trained, rinse and repeat.

Gou supposed this wasn't different from how he himself acted but he still worried when it was someone else.

When Gou brought it up, others said the same, and in the end he ended up scolded for his own habits. But, this in itself, was Gou's issue. He'd somehow found himself surrounded with people who kept him in check, but who did that for Satoshi?

He didn't want to come off as too pushy and have the other trainer ignoring him. But he also didn't want to seem uncaring because he cared, to an embarrassing degree.

He supposed it was Professor Kukui who kept tabs on Satoshi. And Satoshi had a habit of not calling the man enough. Before Gou knew what he was doing, he had a surprisingly compliant Pikachu bringing him Satoshi's phone and perched in his lap as he called the Professor.

"Satoshi! Alola! Wait- Gou? Is everything alright? Why do you have Satoshi's phone? Is he-"

"Hi professor! I'm sorry, everything is fine, I just didn't have your number and..."

There was a moment of silence as Gou lost track of what he was trying to ask, trying not to look too out of sorts while on video call with what was basically Satoshi's dad.

"Um. When Satoshi-" Pikachu tapped his knee with his front paw, "When Satoshi- *kun* lived with you...how did he train with his Pokemon?"

Kukui was surprised at the question but responded easily enough.

"How did he train, huh? I don't know what he was like during other leagues but when he was with me he worked with his team every second he could when he wasn't helping his friends with their jobs, doing his own job with the ultrabeasts, or going to school-"

" *School?* Satoshi went- Satoshi-kun went to school? All the time? Wait, he had a job? Oh, sorry for interrupting Kukui-sensei I..."

Kukui gave him a shrewd look.

"I haven't known you for long but there's no need to be so formal with me. I can tell you and Satoshi are close. You definitely don't have to call me Professor."

Gou looked down at Pikachu, betrayed. Pikachu patted his knee as if he was aiming for the Professor to react that way. Gou would deal with the manipulative little mouse later.

"O-okay."

"And yes. I guess that wasn't too clear since you two were only here for the weekend. He went just like all the other students, so that took up a good bit of time. Why ask? How is he?"

"Well he's been training for the world championships...but that's *all* he does. And I'm worried. And he seems fine but all he does is eat, sleep, and train- and. And everyone says I'm like that too and it's fine if Satoshi is like this for a bit but it- it's not good for him. He shouldn't be like me, right? Were there any other things he liked to do while he was in Alola? He's acting kinda like I do and I mean *look how I turned out!* "

Pikachu pressed against Gou's belly, a comforting weight as Gou trying to squash down his emotions.

"Satoshi tends to focus and focus hard on whatever he's working on. I don't think you need to pull him out of it...just, find other things for you two to do on the side, okay? He'll definitely take breaks for his pokemons' sake. Go out to eat, travel a little to train. Variety helps! I guess that's how I kept him in one place for so long- actually when he first got to Alola... he was completely different from when he left. He seemed-"

Kukui cleared his throat, realizing it wasn't his best idea to bring up Satoshi leaving in front of Gou.

Gou was hugging Pikachu to himself, and the mouse allowed it, worry only shown by his shifted ears.

"Okay, thank you professor."

"And Gou?"

"Yes?"

"You turned out great. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise."

Gou lets out a pained noise at the compliment.

"And you can call me anytime. Make sure to take my number from Satoshi's phone. It's late, go get some sleep."

"Okay, Kukui-hakase. Bye, thank you."

Kukui lets out a startled laugh at the address before waving goodbye and something like 'So much like Sato' as he hangs up.

"Pi?"

"Ah. Sorry Pikachu."

He loosens his grip, but Pikachu merely curls close, taking his trainer's phone back and doing...something.

Since when did their partners know how to use a smartphone?

Maybe just going somewhere not related to research or catching or battling once a week would be good.

There was going to be a fair near the port this weekend and Gou thought that sounded good. They both liked to eat and they could take Koharu maybe.

"Pikachu...the Professor said I turned out fine..."

"Chuu. Pi. Pika chu pi pi chu. Pikapi chu pichu ka."

"I don't know what you're saying," Gou felt like crying as he had the past few months. Was his breaking point really going to be because he couldn't speak Pikachu?

"Chuu." Pikachu pat his knee again, consolingly this time. His ears rose in alarm for two reasons. He heard Satoshi, also known as Pikapi, approaching. And he felt tears on his fur. He let out a comforting wave of electricity and decided not to move.

Chuu also known as Gou by his silly trainer, was more important than hiding his stolen phone. Plus Rotom would rat him out.

"Pikachu," Satoshi called groggily, "Have you seen Rotom? Or my phone? Or both?"

Rotom itself was asleep, it had been helping Satoshi with training regimens earlier and wasn't used to using so much energy at once. But it was still in the phone.

"Pikapi," Pikachu called as Gou scrubbed at his face.

"Oh! There you are..."

Satoshi seemed to wake up quickly, taking the sight of Pikachu sitting on an upset looking Gou.

"Gou? Are you okay?"

Gou hated how attentive Satoshi was when he didn't want it. He really didn't want to explain that he wasn't used to people thinking he was fine, especially not other people's adopted dads. It was one thing when his family did. It was another when all the amazing people around him did. He didn't want Satoshi to see him, because then he'd get to know him, and then he'd hate him.

"Yeah, I'm fine, what's up?"

"Well," Satoshi seemed to put a lot of thought into what he said next, "It's almost one in the morning." He didn't mention Pikachu but he did try to pick him up off his lap. The mouse refused to move but did relinquish the phone.

"Pikachu, what the hell..."

"We've stayed up later."

"... you're sure you're okay?"

Gou looks away quietly.

Satoshi tries to move Pikachu again, but the mouse merely bats his trainer's hands away.

"Pikachu? You never get near other people like this."

"Pichupi. Chupi. Kapi."

"No. You *sit* with them. Not on them."

"Chu?"

"I'm not *jealous*."

Gou shifts slightly, eyes wide. Pikachu thinks highly of him? Pikachu thinks Satoshi would be jealous for some reason?

"Gou?"

"Chuu?"

"I'm okay, really. I was just worried."

"Worried? Did something happen? I know I've been training a lot but I can help-"

"A lot doesn't even cover it. You've been training every single day. Which is fine for your pokemon, they have a schedule after all, but what about you?"

Satoshi looks like he's about to argue before he thinks about it.

"Has it really been every day?"

Gou nods, now looking at his friend, "You should take it easier. I'm sure your Pokemon are fine but you need to be careful."

"Hm. No wonder I feel like a Machop hit me. It didn't feel this bad during the Alolan challenge...sorry Gou! I'll try to be better about it."

Gou blinks. That's it? He wasn't going to tell him to mind his own business? But of course Satoshi wouldn't. He wasn't that kind of person and Gou knew it. Why was he expecting Satoshi to act like everyone else? Why was being worried about his best friend a terrifying experience for Gou?

"Gou...? You seem kind of out of it. Maybe we should both get some sleep."

Probably because Gou didn't want to be worried about.

"Chuu."

"Is that your name for him? You *named* him?" Satoshi sounds a bit mystified and a bit jealous. Gou definitely doesn't want Satoshi to think he's trying to steal Pikachu's friendship. But worse, Gou hopes Pikachu isn't about to start a fight.

"Pikapi, pi chuka. Pi ka chuu ka chupi."

Satoshi makes an outraged noise Gou has never heard from his friend before but Pikachu ignores his trainer, giving Gou a little affectionate shock through the hands still buried in Pikachu's fur. He barely feels it but he does get up, almost sending Pikachu tumbling to the kitchen floor before he catches him.

Gou apologizes to the mouse then mumbles something about bed and begins to go back up, a now concerned Satoshi trailing behind him.

Pikachu climbs to his shoulder, looking back at Satoshi smugly before nuzzling a cheek against Gou's.

Pikachu gives a little vindictive smile as Satoshi scowls.

Pikachu hops off Gou once the two are in their room. Satoshi is already in his pajamas and absently gives Gou a quick but tight hug before climbing into bed, falling asleep almost immediately once Pikachu settles on his side.

In the morning, Gou barely remembers getting into bed, merely waking up with Cinderace wrapped around him, his own hands buried in the soft fur, his eyes aching a bit.

He tries to move but the hare merely pats him on the head and shushes him.

Gou grumbles, feeling oddly small, before pushing Cinderace off him to climb out of bed and stumbles straight into Satoshi.

"Oof. Morning Satoshi."

"Morning!"

Satoshi spins around, looking Gou over before clapping him on the shoulder.

"You look better. Let's go get breakfast."

"Eh? Better?"

"You were being weird last night. I was kinda worried."

"I was? I mean. Don't worry, I don't remember being weird anyway..."

"Don't remember? Hm. Don't worry, I guess."

Gou looked blankly at his phone. He and Koharu never worried after each other like this. It was...nice. It was new and scary.

"I'll worry if I feel like it!"

"Well! So will I!"

Satoshi's smile was wide as if he understood something as he gently pushed Gou out of the way to run down the stairs.

"Hurry up Gou, or I'll eat all the pancakes!"

Gou was browsing on his phone while Satoshi finished eating, making up energy lost from the day before.

"Oh. I borrowed your phone to call Professor Kukui last night."

He stopped eating.

"Oh?"

Gou didn't look at him. Pikachu was laughing, a small chittering noise escaping the mouse's mouth.

"Yeah."

"Uh. What did he s-say?"

Gou glanced up, eyes hidden behind his hair that he hadn't clipped back yet. Satoshi's face was red and he was glaring at Pikachu. Odd.

"I just had to ask him a question. Actually can I get his number?"

Satoshi nods and passes his phone over. Gou unlocks it and grabs the number as both Rotom's play.

Satoshi snatches the phone back once he's done, looking out of sorts.

"I'll be right back. *No*. You stay here, Pikachu, with *Chuu* . Traitor."

"Ka! Pikapi kachu."

Satoshi practically runs out.

"What was that?"

Pikachu shrugs and goes back to his own breakfast.

When Satoshi returns five minutes later, he seems to be pretending nothing happened.

"Wanna go somewhere today?"

"No..training?"

"You're right. Days off are good. Maybe I'll be able to think better with breaks anyway! Wanna go to that new place that opened near the port?"

"Sure! Now?"

"Yeah!"

That one friend

Chapter Summary

Satoshi's POV, followed by Gou, Koharu, and Satoshi all having a crisis.

Chapter Notes

If you want to skip the descriptive depressive/dissociative episode stop here:

"Yeah, it's okay. I'll find Cinderace."

"Okay."

And skip to here: "He's intending to go out"

Satoshi needs to get better, to think up strategies earlier.

This wasn't the same as Alola. Battles in Kanto didn't have Z-moves granted to them, an ace in your pokemon's fighting power, or casual battles. Everything was competitive.

At least that's how he saw it when he first started his journey.

He should be used to this.

He *was* used to this.

But he'd always travelled with gym leaders or other people who were experienced. And he had to be there to help Gou too. He *wanted* to be there. Gou was catching up, his pokemon were no pushovers and he couldn't feel useless again, not like in Kalos.

Never again.

He swallowed against the crushing feeling and ignored it as he and Dragonite worked on wing power. Dragonite got nervous about close combat so having the option of a strong wingflap to get away or produce a strong hurricane was attractive.

Days passed in a blur like this.

A small part of him wished he could go curl up on the couch with Professor Kukui, and just do his training before dinner and bed like he used to. Spend the day time exploring. But things weren't quite so simple and Kukui was too many kilometers away.

Gou was busy during the day, compiling research notes on pokemon growth, running errands, and Satoshi made sure all the pokemon in the park were alright. The lab was busy so they couldn't tackle things as a team like usual.

Before Satoshi knew it, it was the end of the week and he felt like if he didn't make it to bed soon, he was going to sleep on the floor in the hall.

But Pikachu had disappeared while he was in the shower and he couldn't find Gou. Actually, he had barely seen Gou all week. He missed him. Satoshi found he hated being alone ever since he had to pull himself out of Kukui and Burnet's arms that last day in Alola.

He reached for his phone to see if Gou was even home or not and found he couldn't find that either. Had Rotom flown off too?

Suddenly he didn't want to sleep anymore and dragged himself down the stairs. He heard Gou's voice and let out a small breath of relief.

He began to greet the boy only to pause in shock. He'd never seen Pikachu sit with anyone like that. He'd never seen Gou let anyone but Cinderace that close.

He felt faint jealousy burn its way up his throat, which of course Pikachu noticed immediately and made himself more comfortable in Gou's lap.

The jealousy washed away when he noticed Gou's slightly puffy eyes and distant expression. He hadn't seen that look in a while. He hated it and he guessed Pikachu did too as he gave the boy a light shock.

Gou looked incredibly small so he gave him a hug and got him into his bed.

In the morning he was happy to see his friend looking refreshed and attentive. It seemed the busy week had gotten to both of them.

"Oh. I borrowed your phone to call Professor Kukui last night."

Satoshi stopped eating.

"Oh?"

Gou didn't look at him. Pikachu was laughing, a small chittering noise escaping the mouse's mouth. They could have talked about anything. Why did his pokemon like to bully him?

"Yeah."

"Uh. What did he s-say?"

Gou glanced up, eyes hidden behind his hair that he hadn't clipped back yet. Satoshi felt his face go red and he glanced down at Pikachu, frustrated. Gou was cute with his hair down.

"I just had to ask him a question. Actually can I get his number?"

Satoshi nods and passes his phone over. While Gou gets the number he wonders where Gou's hair clips were. His hair had grown out a lot since they'd become friends. He needed to put them on because Satoshi couldn't handle watching him push his hair out of the way like this all the time.

Pikachu stared at him looking like he was going to burst out laughing. Satoshi restlessly drank his tea and worried that if Pikachu was giving him this much shit about his embarrassing reactions to Gou, then there's no telling what the professor could have said.

Satoshi snatches the phone back once Gou's finished, almost tripping over his chair.

"I'll be right back. *No*. You stay here Pikachu. With *Chuu*. Traitor."

"Ka! Pikapi kachu."

He misses Gou's perplexed expression on his way out.

"Hello?"

"Professor!"

"Satoshi! How are ya?"

"What did you tell him?" Satoshi whined, leaning against the railing outside the lab.

"Tell who?" Kukui said. He sounded innocent but his face looked mischievous through the camera.

"Gou," Satoshi hissed, "He called you last night!"

"Oh! Gou, huh. He's a good friend for you."

" *Hakase!* "

Kukui stares at his kid's face, starting to look a little worried and Satoshi takes a deep breath while Kukui answers him.

"He was just worried about you, asked if you always trained the way you are now. I just told him what your training was like over here."

The tension Satoshi was feeling practically evaporates and he hunches over his phone.

" 'm not used to...staying around every day like this."

"Hm. You were running around a lot when you were here. I did mention you two should go do something."

"But the championship..."

"Will still be there. But...he doesn't know when you're going to leave. And I don't think you know if you are later. Life's all about trying different things right? Try just living there for a bit, will you?"

Satoshi wanted to ask what it looked like he was doing, if not that. But he knew what the professor meant and held his tongue. He jumped at the opportunity every time they got to go to another region but he didn't hunt for much to do in Vermillion.

"Okay," he answered quietly, "How's the baby?"

"Sleeping and growing faster than a Caterpie in spring."

Satoshi laughs. He wants to see him again.

The silence drags on and Kukui lets out a little sigh, "Call me this weekend."

Satoshi blinks, startled. The man had never tried to push him to contact him.

"Satoshi. I'm worried about you. That battle we had...I've never seen a trainer use themselves like that to battle. Don't get me wrong, it was amazing. *You're* amazing," Warmth rushes through Satoshi at the praise from the man he admires, "And...I know you don't like to talk about it much but in Kalos you..."

"I'll call," Satoshi bursts out, startling both of them in his desperation to avoid Kalos. Kukui grins anyway, knowing when to drop it.

"Thank you. Don't worry if you can't. I don't want you to feel like you have to. A text or a photo will do. But these video calls are the best cause I miss you."

Satoshi finally grins back, he agrees. These calls eased the longing for his family more than the man knew. It hurt to hear the sea in the background, Burnet watching TV, his pokémon playing or taking care of the new family member. But it also felt like coming home.

When he goes back in, he hurries Gou to get ready so they can go out and make the most of the day.

"Where's your hair clips?" He asks out of nowhere.

Gou raises a hand to his currently untamable hair, "I dunno...I misplaced them last night somewhere?"

Satoshi looks extremely troubled and Gou doesn't understand why. Satoshi looks to Pikachu and the mouse nods at him before scampering off.

"Is Pikachu not coming with us?"

"He'll meet us outside, don't worry."

By the time the two are making their way down the hill, Pikachu bursts from the bushes, landing on Satoshi's shoulder, looking sullen.

Satoshi looks a little disappointed but pets Pikachu, the mouse immediately cheering up.

He hops onto Gou's shoulder, pulling at his hair.

"Ow, Pikachu! If that worked I would've done it years ago."

"Pikachu you can't just groom him."

"Pikapi ka chupi ka Chuu pichu?"

"What? I actually have no clue what you're saying, Pikachu?"

"I thought you understood him?"

"Kind of? There's some stuff he has words for, and um...he says it different?"

"Intonation?"

"Yeah, that! But if it's something we've never spoken about before then...no clue."

"So this is the first time he's tried to fix someone's hair? Is it...that bad?" Gou questions, a bit self conscious.

"No! It's cute!"

Words Satoshi didn't actually mean to say. He speeds up so he can walk in front and not look his friend in the face.

Gou finally let his hand stop fidgeting with his hair, Pikachu giving an encouraging squeak.

They are quiet the rest of the walk, Satoshi's face firmly in his phone, and Gou's in the clouds.

When they finally get to the port, shops are starting to open. Tourist traps getting crowded quickly.

Eventually Satoshi spots something and runs off, placing Pikachu in Gou's arms as a makeshift bodyguard and a guarantee that he was coming back.

The two sit on a bench in comfortable silence. Gou wishes Cinderace was around but the hare was helping Lucario for the day.

"...I've never really thought too hard on how I look Pikachu. This is weird."

Pikachu headbutts him under the chin, making a firm yet annoyed noise.

"Right, right. I guess no use worrying about it. It's just hair. Doesn't matter while looking for Pokemon anyway."

Pikachu nods sagely.

"Oh, Satoshi's back."

"Pikapi!"

"Oh- you say that one a lot. Is that your name for him?"

Pikachu cranes his head up, wide eyed, but doesn't get the chance to chatter at Gou before Satoshi is thrusting something into the other boys hands.

The plastic crinkles and Gou unwraps them to reveal two sleek hairclips.

"Y-you look fine, but you seem uncomfortable and you've been fixing your hair alot so....there. I'm hungry, let's get lunch!"

Gou thanks Satoshi before putting them on, making the other boy bask in his own awkwardness of giving a gift.

The whole walk over Satoshi stares at Gou, to the point that Gou notices.

When they get a seat he finally asks, "What is it?"

Satoshi groans, "Don't worry about it."

"...You're acting weird now."

"You should wear your hair loose more."

"But you just gave me new hairclips?? Honestly I'm just thinking about cutting my hair again. It was a good length back when we first met."

"Shut up."

"I do look good no matter what don't I."

"You got over your shyness fast."

"I adapt quickly."

When they get back later, Gengar gently places the old pair of hairclips in Gou's hand, petting the trainer on his head before disappearing.

Gou wondered if he would be adopted by all of Satoshi's pokemon. At least his own Pokemon didn't seem intent on acting like older siblings. But still. It was nice. He felt warm and uncomfortable all at once. He wasn't used to this.

He meets Satoshi on the grass. They clean Dragonite's scales until they shine. The dragon curls up around them, a comforting warmth.

"Satoshi, close your eyes."

"Huh? Okay."

He hears Gou shift next to him and feels a hand pulling at his hair.

"Okay, all done!"

When Satoshi opens his eyes, Gou is holding his phone out towards him, camera active so he can see himself.

"Gou?"

"Gengar found my old ones."

Satoshi reached a hand up, shifting his cap back to poke at them.

"No good?"

"No it's fine... just... different," Satoshi looked away.

Gou smiled, "You don't have to keep them in, it's a bad trade but you can have those in exchange for these new ones. You didn't have to do that, I really appreciated it. I can't stand the feeling of my hair on my face like that."

Satoshi, suddenly shy, mumbles a thank you.

"No problem. I'm beat, bed time for me."

Satoshi lays in the grass for a while. Dragonite shifts curiously, poking at his hair with a gentle claw and an approving grumble mirrored by Aerodactyl who had perched in a nearby tree at some point.

Satoshi thought it was nice to wear something that was someone else's. He flopped down onto the grass and kicked his feet at the surge of happiness he felt.

The next day they slept in.

Gou's large confidence came in waves. He was either extremely sure of himself or certain he was worthless.

That morning was the latter and he was extremely grateful to Cinderace for shielding him from the world.

He was warm, safe from the cold winter air, and ignored Rotom trying to wake him with alarms, even though Gou set them. He knew the ghost pokemon would be annoyed later but he couldn't help but bask in the cocoon feeling of being wrapped in blankets and the sounds of sleeping pokemon and trainer.

When Gou finally got up, the sun was shining directly into his eyes, Satoshi was still dead to the world, buried under two blankets and three Pokemon, and the smell of coffee was drifting into the room.

He knew if he was quiet enough he'd be able to sneak an extra cup so he got Cinderace moving with the promise of brushing his fur and were downstairs in no time.

A few minutes after Gou makes his way through his first cup and is halfway through his second, Satoshi stumbles into the kitchen.

"Morning"

"Good morning. You got up early?"

It's a fact but Gou can't help but phrase it like a question. Satoshi usually isn't up until he's actually started eating breakfast. He claims he doesn't want to be rude and eat while Gou is still drinking coffee and *not* eating.

Gou knows better. Satoshi just wants the extra half hour to hour of sleep.

Satoshi just grunts back at him, and Gou stares at his back. Pikachu seems to be playing with something in front of him from his perch on Satoshi's shoulder.

Satoshi sits down, hat slightly askew, plate piled and eats as if nothing is wrong with the world.

Gou stares more.

He stares and continues to drink his coffee because his brain doesn't have enough space to think about how worthless he is in that moment.

Cinderace sets a plate down in front of him.

His cup is empty but he continues to hold it until Satoshi is half done with breakfast and his is cold.

"You're not hungry, Gou?"

"Oh yeah."

Gou makes no movements to eat so Cinderace cuts a piece of egg and holds it up to his trainer's mouth.

Gou eats it before he realizes what he let Cinderace do. He snatches the utensil, embarrassed, but finally broken out of his daze.

Satoshi is wearing his hairclips. He's wearing his clips and his hat is tilted to account for them and Gou thinks he looks incredibly cute. Especially so when Pikachu keeps poking at them and Satoshi keeps batting his partner's paws away.

Why is he wearing them? Gou understands that he's free to do whatever with them, he did give them away after all but he thought Satoshi would keep them somewhere.

"Morning, Gou. Morning, Satoshi. Aren't those Gou's?"

Satoshi glances at Koharu, "Yeah, he gave em to me yesterday after I got him new ones."

Koharu throws Gou a shrewd glance, "I see. They look cute on you."

"Thanks!"

"I gotta go feed my Pokemon."

Gou runs.

"Alright. You two gotta get it together."

"What?"

"Really. Hairclips?"

"W-why do you look so mad? He gave me his 'cause I bought him new ones 'cause we thought he lost these uns!"

Koharu blinked at she tried to process the sudden appearance of his accent. He usually tried so hard to cover it up. His face was kind of red too.

"You have a crush on him."

"What?!"

"And you're pretending to be stupid about it!! Why?!"

Pikachu looks at Koharu like she is Arceus in human form.

"I'm not pretending anything!! I was really happy when he gave me these, I... I-"

Satoshi's breathing gets heavier as he tries to continue but fails to and pulls his feet up onto the seat.

"Listen. Anyone else and I'd be okay with the coy act, but you two mean alot to each other and I don't want either of you accidentally getting hurt."

Satoshi didn't want that either, "It's disgustingly cute that you two are like this but Gou is gonna overthink his way to something really stupid and bad if you don't just- Satoshi?"

Satoshi had curled up towards the side of the booth, his arms wrapped around his head, "I didn't mean to do anything bad I didn't, I just don't want him to get hurt because of me, he didn't look okay last night, he doesn't need to hear anything from me I always say the wrong thing anyway I-"

Hearing Koharu talk about her best friend scared Satoshi. He was usually pretty upfront about how he felt about a person. He'd told Gladio within the day when he realized, but nothing came of it, they were both too busy, the feelings died out, and they became great friends.

But for some reason, he'd been hesitant to tell Gou. He knew why. It was because of the looks he'd see sometimes, the way he looked the night when he found him with Pikachu. He didn't want to make Gou feel worse. He knew it could happen if he said anything, it's how he felt in Kalos when everyone was being so nice to him after all.

Koharu was used to Satoshi rambling, but usually about a Pokemon he had just met or his training or Gou.

"Satoshi. Satoshi. Ash."

He flinched as he felt the seat dip next to him.

"Satoshi, you wouldn't want to hurt him right?"

"No! I'd never."

"Then it's fine. Just talk to him when you can. It's healthier than this. I know we're not that close but I don't like seeing you like this either. Honestly you're both made for each other as friends or best friends or boyfriends-" "Boyfriends?!" "Or whatever. You both overthink things way too much."

"Pikapi ka Chuu pi."

Satoshi takes a deep breath and Koharu is actually rather disturbed when she finds he looks nothing like he was about to have a mental breakdown.

She shakes her head and passes him a donut.

"Thanks."

They say nothing else about the topic.

When they wander outside to find Gou, he too, looks perfectly fine and it is Satoshi's turn to feel disturbed. The worry he's been feeling has been eating at him ever since the night he herded Gou into bed, being able to let some of it out in front of their mutual friend helped.

Satoshi did take Koharu's words to heart, he would show how he felt a little more. He was still worried. He wouldn't be quite as *loud* about it as with others but he'd try.

Koharu felt stressed just looking at them, but she shrugged and pet Pikachu as he sat on the grass next to her.

"Has Satoshi always been like that?"

Pikachu's ear twitched but he didn't respond. Maybe he didn't understand the question.

He looked up at her.

"Like...he flips emotions really quick. Normally I saw him as this energetic guy who hangs out with my best friend but...does he always go from happy to whatever that was and back?"

Pikachu didn't answer. Koharu thought he understood but didn't want to answer.

Koharu stared at Gou. She'd leave Satoshi to Gou and Pikachu, Gou was enough for her to take care of.

Gou did *look* fine but he was doing that thing. The thing that made her nervous before he quit school. He was wearing long sleeves. With anyone else it was an innocent action but Gou liked to fidget when he wasn't feeling okay. And he was fidgeting.

Even while he was talking to Satoshi he was fidgeting. So maybe Satoshi's worries weren't so far fetched. But she could see Satoshi holding himself back. He kept his hands in his pockets

instead of suffocating Gou with an arm over his shoulders while they talked to the Pokemon.

Satoshi said something before leaning in and wrapping his arms around Gou in a quick hug and running off. Pikachu got up to run after him.

Koharu guessed he was going to go train.

She watched as Gou stood still for a moment, looking severely unhappy as he took a deep breath, playing with his sleeves.

"Gou!" She called as she wandered over. He recovered admirably as he looked over at her.

"Hey, are you helping your dad today?"

"Nah, just bored."

They drifted into their usual silence, but it didn't seem as comfortable to Gou.

She decided she should just ask.

"Are you okay?"

"Huh? Yeah. I mean. No. Don't give me that look."

"I'm not giving you a look."

Gou rolls his eyes.

"How could you tell?"

"Long sleeves."

"That's it? What the hell."

"You get all fidgety and wear them to pull at when you're off. What were you gonna do? Or did you do something crazy again."

"I've never done anything crazy- ow!"

Koharu slaps his shoulder.

"You quit school, ran away from home, got lost in the woods, got chased by-"

"Ok! I've just been thinking. Arceus."

"..."

"What! I'm not lying."

She sits down on the grass again, dragging Gou down with her.

"You're being weird today."

"I'm worried."

"Why? You know I get like this sometimes."

"Yes but you always do *something* . You never just think. Thinking sounds worse. What's on your mind. Or...what started all this?"

"I've always been like this haven't I?"

Koharu shakes her head.

"No. This is different. It looks *worse* than your usual bad days."

"Hm."

"See, usually you'd have an argument ready. So. What is it?"

"Maybe it's because Kukui-hakase said I was fine."

"Huh?"

"I talked to him the other night. He's like Satoshi's dad or something? He said I turned out great."

"Is that...a problem?"

Gou shrugs, "No one aside from my family has ever really..."

"..."

"Not that anyone needs to! I'm not *that* self centered. But it was nice."

"I'm such a shit friend."

"What?!"

"I should've told you first. Of course you're doing great Gou, you-"

"No! I'm not! I don't wanna hear that from you! You should know better! I haven't done anything, gotten anywhere, it's been what, six years or something since I dropped out of

school. I can't talk to people and I always fuck up somehow when I do, and I can't even treat my Pokemon well, and Satoshi. Satoshi is just."

"Just what?"

"He's just wasting time on me. He's gonna leave anyway and he can make better friends."

"That's stupid. You're stupid. Did you tell him that? Please tell me you didn't."

"It's not stupid!"

"Did you?"

"....no."

"Talk to him when you feel up to it. Do not phrase it like that. Arceus you're both idiots. No wonder you got so close."

"We're not.."

"Can't hear you. You're close. I'm still keeping the bestie spot though."

Gou elbows her in the side and on a day like this, it's like getting a hug from the boy.

She sees him pulling at his sleeves.

"If you feel badly later...I know you won't call but, you know you can right?"

"Mhm."

"You know you can talk to Satoshi, right? If I know that, please tell me you know that."

"..."

"Gou."

"I know! It's just embarrassing. Also...he'll hug me."

"You should let him. You cry like a baby when you get hugs on your bad days."

"Shut."

"I'm sure he'd love to comfort you."

"Shut up!"

"If you don't want that then your other options....your Pokemon. Me. You could come sleep over, I'm sure dad wouldn't mind. Or you could just yknow. Call me."

"Argh."

"Does it bother you so much? When people are nice to you? How come I don't bother you?"

"...you've been around forever. But they don't really know me."

"Dang. Harsh."

"Not...not like that. Just."

"Don't worry, I get it."

"...that's why. Thanks Koharu."

"I'd say anytime, but next time please give me a sign you're spiraling this hard."

"I'll try."

"Cool. Do you want some space, wanna go take a nap? I can help clean out here. Satoshi's gonna be training for a while right?"

"Yeah. Is that okay? Aren't you busy?"

"Yeah, it's okay. I'll find Cinderace."

"Okay."

When Gou gets back to their room, he changes into comfier clothes and wraps the blankets all around him. There's a sinking feeling in his chest now that he's alone but there is also relief.

He doesn't have to think about anyone else and he doesn't have to act any kind of way for anyone and it's like he doesn't exist. It's comforting and he can breathe again. He lays like that for maybe an hour or two but doesn't fall asleep, just basks in it.

He hears the door creak open. He stiffens expecting to hear a voice but instead he feels a paw pat his back twice before retreating and something thunks down on his desk.

He relaxes. It's just Cinderace and it's like his safety has doubled. He doesn't think the rabbit has ever seen him like this but he doesn't want to move or speak or think.

When Cinderace just moves around the room for a while, probably cleaning up, not bothering his human, Gou feels the comfort he was feeling come back tenfold.

Cinderace places another blanket around him, the one from Satoshi's bed and Gou almost wants to come out to hug him.

He pets the little bit of his human's head that is sticking out and leaves the room, closing the door and sitting in the hallway.

Gou falls asleep. When he wakes up its dark and he feels more stable. He's mildly embarrassed at his conversation with Koharu, she clearly knew exactly how much he likes Satoshi

But he knows she won't mess with them.

He looks at the time, satisfied it wasn't too late to go get dinner.

He opens the door, accidentally bumping Cinderace who had been sleeping in front of it.

"Why are you sleeping out here, were you making sure no one came in?"

Gou doesn't wait for the nod before wrapping his arms around the fire type.

"Thank you."

He chitters quietly at him, still waking up.

"I'm okay, I think."

He feels a paw jab his stomach, "Yeah, I'm gonna get food, wanna come?"

He's intending to go out, he thinks Satoshi wants to eat with his Pokemon. Team solidarity and such but he's surprised to find him in the kitchen eating flat noodles.

"Gou! Koharu bought dinner!!"

"She did? Weird. Where is she?"

"She bought dinner and then went home. Which was weird but nice? She said she wanted to get out before you found her here with me??"

"Oh."

He pulls his phone out of his pocket.

MH: Thanks for the noods

CK: Ew. Gross. Morning. Never say that to me again

MH: my revenge is complete lol but srsly thanks

CK: u good?

MH: yeah i passed out for a bit now i feel human again

CK: sure. dm me later anyway

MH: sure

CK: if you dont ill find you. if i can't find you then ash will

MH: he literally lives in the same room as me

CK: yeah so pick ur poison

MH: i can't hear you im politely enjoying these noods

CK: hdrydgsodykdm you shitter don't ever speak to me again

Gou laughs and puts his phone down to find Satoshi staring rather intensely at him.

"Uh. Is there peanut sauce on my face?"

"Nah."

Satoshi doesn't look away until Cinderace turns his head with a paw.

"Oookay. Did training go okay?"

"Yeah. Are you okay?"

The question strips away a little of the good mood Gou had found and he responds quietly, "Yeah."

"Okay. If you need anything, I'm here"

"...kay."

Gou can tell Satoshi is worried. And maybe even frustrated.

When they head to bed, he considers messaging Koharu like she asked him to, but it's late so he just sets the phone down to charge by the window while Rotom sleeps.

"Gou?"

"Yeah? Oh sorry, I think Cinderace stole your blanket."

"Oh, that's fine. I uh. Just say no if you want to.

"Say no? To what-"

Satoshi wraps Gou up in a hug for the second time that day. The first time was quick and Gou didn't have a chance to think about it before Satoshi was gone.

This time he wasn't moving and Gou couldn't help but hug him back. He loved hugs but also they were too warm, he didn't deserve them. But he really wanted it so he wasn't letting Satoshi go so easily.

He'd wanted a hug like this for days but the idea of giving one himself made him want to throw up, and he was too scared to ask for one.

It wasn't that complicated was it. He wasn't going to cry this time. Last time he cried all over Koharu and wasn't that the worst.

Not this time. Definitely not.

"I know you said you're ok but I was really worried when I found you with Pikachu the other night, and Cinderace wouldn't let anyone into our room today, and..yeah. I just care about you alot and want you to be okay."

And feeling Satoshi's fingers creeping into the hair at the back of his neck did it.

"Gou?"

"Ugh. I'm fine. I told Koharu I'm fine. I'm fine. I just," Gou tries to pull away from Satoshi but Satoshi just sits them down on Gou's bed.

"I don't like when people are this nice to me. It feels bad."

"Oh. Sorry?"

Gou clings to Satoshi "B-but I like the hug."

"You're crying though?"

"Ignore it."

"I can't? You are so weird." Satoshi uses the edge of his hoodie sleeve to wipe Gou's face and the gentle action only makes him cry more.

"P-please stop. This is really embarrassing. I don't know why I'm like this."

"I'll stop if you let go of me."

Gou doesn't move.

"Am I allowed to be happy about this? You actually do want to hug me and I get to take care of you."

Gou feels his face twist into something that must look horrendous. He's crying his eyes out, bitter that Koharu was right about what would happen if he didn't text her, embarrassed at his own drama, and sick of himself, and trying not to laugh at Satoshi.

Satoshi, to his credit, just pulls Gou close and rubs his back.

"Do hugs always do this to you? I've hugged you before right?"

"Just when I'm l-like this," Gou snuffles and it sounds gross even to him, but Satoshi pays it no mind, "Koharu calls them my bad days. You've seen it before. Like when I rode Lugia. I usually do whatever shit comes to mind to shut my head up."

"Oh. What did you do this time."

"Took a nap."

Satoshi is quiet until Gou hears him snuffle. Oh no.

"Can you talk to me next time? I was really worried, I just wanna help."

"Are you crazy? Isn't this annoying to deal with-"

"No! I wanna know. Please."

"...are you crying? Why are *you* crying?"

"I was worried about you! You kept randomly getting really quiet. Especially this morning!"

"This morning?...hey, hey it's okay. I'm fine. This is the usual for me, don't worry. Really, Satoshi...everything's fine."

"No it's not! You're never quiet! Why do I suck at this, I was supposed to be helping you."

"You don't suck at this I just...didn't think- ugh. Okay Koharu said I should talk. So just listen. I don't like myself. So when people say nice things about me it sometimes...messes me up. The other night Kukui was really nice to me and no one was ever like that with me. It was nice. And then it wasn't because I kept thinking about it."

"So...you just need to get used to it?"

"...no."

"I'll tell you how awesome you are every day."

"Please don't. Also please stop crying, I'm okay."

"What about this morning? You left the kitchen really quick."

"Irrelevant."

"I don't believe you."

Gou mumbles, "You looked nice. Shut up."

"Oh. That's so-"

"Shut up."

Satoshi sniffles.

"Aw, Satoshi really I'm okay."

Gou hated crying but he hated seeing Satoshi cry even more.

"Y-you've been a really good friend and I really like you, I wish I could help more."

Gou hugs Satoshi tightly intending to let Satoshi know he helps plenty, but instead says, "I like you too."

It's quiet before they realize what Gou had said.

"Satoshi."

"Yeah?"

"Let's talk about that later. I said nothing. I don't exist."

Satoshi sniffles.

They fall asleep squeezed into one bed and Gou wakes up with their legs tangled together and Satoshi clinging to his front like a Mankee.

Gou can't move, not even to reach for his phone, so he tries to relax and ignore where Satoshi's legs are pressed against him. He can't believe what he said to Satoshi.

He lays there wide awake for who knows how long. Eventually signs of life appear on his roommate's face as he wakes up.

"Gou," he grumbles, "wha time issit..."

"Dunno," and Satoshi cuddles closer, making Gou full on a warmth he's never felt before.

Eventually there's the ringing of an incoming call and Pikachu appears with Satoshi's phone, stepping all over the two of them.

"Ah shit, it's Kukui, I'll call him back outside, go back to sleep, it's really early still," and before Gou can even process what Satoshi has said, he feels a flash of warmth against his lips and a gentle hand against his neck and then the door is closing behind Satoshi like it never happened at all.

Gou slowly sits up, his face burning. Did Satoshi just randomly kiss him?

He grabs his phone quickly typing out a message.

MC: fck you gsjusos b s

CK: ??????????

CK: good morning to you too bitch

CK: Hello???

CK: Gou?????????

CK: what happened did you cry all over him

MC: yes but who cares about that!!!!!!

CK: ???????

CK: YOU?

CK: me??? My whole family????? Satoshi????? Satoshi's whole family?????????

MC: there's more important issues how could you do this to me

CK: WHAT DID YOU DO?

MC: I told him i like him

CK: what are you 5

MC: im 20 years old, pansexual, genderqueer, and i told him i like him and he fell asleep in my bed

CK: Oh

MC:

CK: are you ok you sent a bunch of space bars

MC: and he kissed me i

CK: OH

CK: Hold on

CK: ill come through

Somehow Koharu got there while Satoshi was still on a video call with Burnet and Kukui.

She finds Gou laying in bed and she immediately climbs on top of him to hug him.

"You're shaking."

"You're sweaty"

"I ran here you jerk, are you okay? "

"Why would he do that?"

"Tell me, in detail. Not the kiss. Everything else."

And Gou does.

"Wow. Satoshi just goes for what he wants huh. And in this case that's you. He probably didn't even think about it after you said you liked him."

"But I'm not good for..."

"You can't decide that for him."

"Okay. Do you want me to make you breakfast?"

"Sure. I wanna watch the moment Satoshi walks into the kitchen. He looked like he was losing it on the phone out there. His dad is probably teasing him."

"What do I do?"

"Just act normal."

Koharu does not regret her decision to stay.

She has never seen Satoshi more of a mess than in the moment he meets eyes with Gou in the kitchen.

"Morning Koharu! Gou, I- um breakfast, thanks. You. Uh. Cool."

Gou, to his credit, shows none of how flustered he initially was and drinks his coffee.

"Um, we should go to Alola!"

"Huh?"

"Kukui invited us. You too Koharu."

"Me?"

"Yeah something about a champion appearance."

"Oh cool, he wants you to see an exhibition match or something?"

"Oh! Uh, haha well, I am the exhibition match?"

Koharu squints at Satoshi, "Against the champion??"

"Not...exactly?"

And then it clicks, she remembers her dad going crazy over this one match on TV a while back, "You're the Champion?!"

"Yes?"

Satoshi is strangely shy and awkward about this and Gou thinks it's cute.

"Huh. I can't believe I got a kiss from the Alolan Champion-"

"Ahhhhhhh!!! What? Bye! See you later!! I'm going to go! Train! I'm so sorry Gou!!!"

Koharu can't hold in her laughter anymore as Satoshi flees.

"I don't think I'll ever get to see that from him again so thank you- wait. Why is your face red, did you not mean to say that?!"

By the time her dad walks in she is crying from laughter and Gou has his head on the table.

Sometime between breakfast and dinner the information that Satoshi really does like him settles in. He keeps remembering all the random nice things the other does for him and he's not one to deny facts.

Satoshi is right, maybe he does just need to get used to it. He got used to it with pokemon, maybe it's time for humans.

So maybe he should go to Alola with him and do other things and talk to more people.

Later that day he corners a red faced Satoshi in the park between some trees.

"Alright, I accept."

"What?"

"You. As my boyfriend or best friend or whatever you want."

Satoshi laughs, "Boyfriend sounds nice."

"Why are you so shy now even though you kissed me this morning without a second thought?"

"Cause now I had time to think. Sorry, I should've asked first. That was unacceptably rude of me. "

Gou leans forward and gives Satoshi a peck on the lips.

"There, even. Don't worry, I liked it."

".... in a good way?"

"In a good way."

End Notes

I only wrote this because I was thinking about drawing Gou with slightly longer hair and hairclips to match the little red in his hair. It turned into character analysis as usual. This had been sitting in my files for a while, I only just managed to clean it up to where I feel comfy posting it. "Boketto" a much shorter one shot went up around the same time, and there's a few similarities between the two.

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