

Not Well

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by [honooko](#)

Summary

Reiko is feeling unwell. Kageyama understands why. Aimless gen fluff.

Reiko wasn't feeling well. Actually, that wasn't quite it. She wasn't sick, at least; no fever, no sore throat, no sniffles. She was quite certain if any of these symptoms had developed, Kageyama would have already swooped in and hurried her off to bed with tea and some herbal drink made of dried I-don't-want-to-know.

But she wasn't sick. She just wasn't well. No wonder, considering the day.

She adjusted the napkin in her lap. Kageyama had outdone himself with dinner, as always. There was a cold pumpkin soup, a fresh salad with handmade vinaigrette, a spinach quiche, and grilled chicken with rosemary seasonings. It smelled wonderful.

She didn't want to eat any of it.

Kageyama poured the wine, and after one sip she realized she didn't want to drink it. It was light and fruity, perfectly matched to the dinner, but she couldn't stand the thought of putting another drop on her tongue. She set the glass on the table, folding her hands neatly in her lap.

"Kageyama," Reiko said primly. "I'm not hungry."

The soft clinking sound of him carving the chicken halted. Kageyama was by her side instantly, a concerned expression on his face. It made her blink for a moment; she wasn't used to him making that face during dinner. Sometimes when she called him to pick her up late she saw it. If she'd been doing paperwork or interviews long after everyone else had gone home, she'd see his slightly worried glance in the rearview mirror. Usually she was too tired at that point to really care what he thought.

Reiko could admit to herself that she did, on some level, care what Kageyama thought of her. His quiet reminders to her of what was important in life always had an air of gentle reassurance to them. When she caught on to his interpretations of crimes, he seemed pleased with her ability to follow his line of thinking. And sometimes he just randomly watched her with a soft look, as if her very presence was enjoyable.

'Of course it is,' she thought. 'My radiant presence is appreciated by all.' Reiko didn't really care about 'all' though; just Kageyama. Kageyama had no business saying some of the things he did, but it did make his approval that much more gratifying.

"Is the meal not to your liking, my lady?" Kageyama inquired. "I can prepare something else immediately."

"It's not the food," Reiko said. "I'm just not hungry." Kageyama opened his mouth, probably to probe further, but she wasn't in the mood for it. "I'm going to the library to read. I don't want to be disturbed." She swept the napkin off her lap, onto the table top, and glided out of the room. She didn't see Kageyama's eyebrows knit in genuine confusion.

In the library, she wandered through shelf after shelf, searching for one book. There was a system here, but she'd long ago forgotten what it was. She only read certain kinds of books, so she only really knew where those sections were. Everything else was a mystery. She

dragged her fingers across the spines as she walked through the aisles; they came away clean. Someone dusted in her regularly. Of course; the Houshou family's library was probably worth a small fortune.

Reiko saw what she was looking for ahead of her. It was tucked away in a corner, but each spine had been painted. The first ones had clumsy flowers and hearts; the later ones had handwriting that progressively improved. She went for one in the middle, pulling it out and sitting on the floor, her expensive dress utterly forgotten. She could buy a new one anyway.

She cracked open the book carefully; everything inside had been carefully glued, but earlier volumes had an overabundance of sticky adhesive. The first page had the date written in slightly-smeary fountain pen.

'Papa's Birthday', it read, although the 'y' was a bit difficult to make out. There were photos on every page: Reiko in a pink dress and a pink bow, her father wearing a pink silk tie she had demanded he wear so they matched; a picture of them standing in front of a mountain of gifts; a picture of them sitting on the floor together as he opened a poorly-wrapped box, also suspiciously pink. The next photo was her father proudly holding aloft what appeared to be a kiln-fired clay clip of some kind. It appeared to be heart-shaped, but one of the hearts was a bit lop-sided.

"It's a tie-clip," Reiko said a bit defensively. Kageyama was behind her; she knew it without having to check. "I said I didn't want to be disturbed."

"A butler's presence in his lady's life should never be disturbing," Kageyama replied neatly.

"No," she agreed. "You're not, are you?" She turned another page. This one showed her gleefully shoving cake into her father's smiling face with her hand.

"The master looks as if he is having an excellent time," Kageyama said.

"Wonderful," Reiko agreed. "Which is why he's never been home for one since."

There was a slightly uncomfortable silence from Kageyama at that; Reiko suspected he wasn't quite sure how she would respond to anything he might say. She closed the book.

"He's very busy, of course," she said. "He usually comes back for my birthday. I send him cards, wherever he and Mama are. It's fine. It's all fine." She stood up, brushing off her skirt briskly. "I'm an adult, Kageyama. I don't need my father around all the time, having silly parties for silly things. He'd just be underfoot anyway."

"Of course," Kageyama said graciously. Reiko hugged the photo album to her chest, her back still turned to him.

"Kageyama?"

"My lady?"

"I think I am hungry, actually."

“...I shall prepare a cake immediately,” Kageyama said. Reiko turned, not surprised that he’d made the leap before she said it. Kageyama always made the leaps.

“I want to decorate it,” she said firmly. “We’ll need lots of fresh kiwi; Papa loves them.”

“Of course, my lady,” Kageyama agreed, holding out his arm for her to take. “And fresh strawberries, for you.”

“Of course,” she agreed, taking his arm with a smile. “It might be his birthday—“

“But he’s my lady’s father,” Kageyama finished, warm.

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