

# Five Seconds

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*Insight on Hiro's life. (Shounen ai: YukixShuichi and HiroxShuichi, if you care to see it.)*

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Yuki's house.... This place always makes me a bit nervous.... I can't particularly place what about it makes me wonder if I shouldn't have brought K and his arsenal along; it's just a feeling I get. I try to avoid coming here whenever possible, but sometimes it's inevitable. Like now.... Shuichi insisted that I come over for lunch before we were off to the studio. He seemed so set on it I couldn't refuse. It's actually not a bad scene—the three of us are sitting on the balcony, as it's a balmy afternoon, there's a platter of sandwiches set out on the table along with a pitcher of fruit punch and some cookies, and Shu looks particularly happy, bustling back and forth, playing the host. Unfortunately, when he's not at the table, things tend to fall into a contemptible silence. Yuki and I have never gotten on that well, which makes conversation a bit difficult. However, when Shu is at the table, he sits so close to his lover that he might as well have sat on him. Conversation ensues, but it mostly involves 'YUUUKI~!', 'You're obnoxious, get off me', and a few other choice phrases along the same lines. Currently, Shuichi is wailing about how Yuki hates him.

"Yuki hates meeee!" Shu cried for the fourth time. It was clear from the way Yuki's fingers were pinching the bridge of his nose that he had already contracted a headache.

"I didn't say I hated you, idiot...." At these words his head snapped back to stare at Yuki with hope-filled eyes oozing love.

"Yea! Yuki! I love Yukiiii~!" While shouting this out at the top of his piercing voice, Shu launched himself onto himself onto the rather miffed looking blond man. I had had just about enough of my friend's antics—it was starting to make me a slightly queasy. He just can't find any sort of happy medium.... It's all highs so high he's practically molesting Yuki right there in his chair and lows so low he's bawling for hours about the slightest insult from his lover. Shuichi has always been a very emotional person, but this is ridiculous.

"Hey, Shuichi...don't you think it's time we headed over to the studio...?" I knew it was no use even asking, seeing as how nothing I say is ever taken to heart when Yuki's around, but I suppose it was worth a shot. And...no luck, as usual. At the moment it seems as though the little singer's eyes are going to roll out of his head they are so open so wide with adoration. Ah, well.... I'm used to being ignored. I munch on the last bit of cookie on my plate and wait to be acknowledged, hopefully sometime in the near future. It's not like they're ignoring me on purpose, it's just that...well...I guess I'm incredibly average. I don't have that sugar-high attitude Shu does or the shroud of mystery that surrounds Yuki. I'm not quirky like Touma Seguchi or have the amazing talent of Ryuichi Sakuma. I'm easy to overlook amidst such strong personalities as these.

"Oi, aren't you going to be late for practice?" Yuki intoned, lighting a cigarette lazily. Shu blinked in a

confused fashion at him, instantly all ears. Glancing at his watch, he jumped up with a small expletive and dashed inside to get his shoes.

“I said that five minutes ago.... How come he only listens to you?” I ask Yuki, although I don’t really expect an answer.

“Sorry...what? I wasn’t listening,” he said around the smoldering cigarette.

“Nothing.... Forget it....”

Shuichi skips back out on the balcony, shoes swinging from his fingertips. “Practice, practice for Yuki! Practiiiiice...” he sang and leaned over to give the writer a goodbye peck on the cheek.

“...No, practice for your band, not me,” Yuki growled at him.

“Oh, right....” Shu blushed sheepishly, not really intending to change his motivations just because Yuki didn’t feel like being flattered. I rose to follow him as he bounded back toward the entrance, hearing his voice drift back to Yuki—“I’ll be back for diiiinneeeer~! Wait for me!”

Yuki watched the boy spring away in the direction of the door with some amount of disinterest. Most other days I might have glared at him for not giving Shu the attention he wanted, but I didn’t really see the point today. Yuki ignores me more so than the rest of the world combined. I started toward the door myself, not wanting to get too far behind Shuichi. The pink-haired singer was more than likely to pay little attention to the street signs and get lost.

“What wrong with you?” I very nearly jumped out of my skin when Yuki decided ask me such a direct question. I stared stupidly for a moment before lying through my teeth to him. I rarely complain to anyone, much less cold-as-ice, “I-hate-everyone” novelists that are generally a complete @\$\$ to my best friend, who happens to adore them.

“Nothing, ignore me.” Like always....

“...I almost always ignore you. Now, the one time I pretend to care, you’re not going to take advantage of it?” He was staring at me with unconcerned eyes, jamming the finished cigarette into his plate.

“But you don’t really care—you’re just pretending, so it doesn’t really matter much.”

“Stop analyzing things. What’s wrong?” Yuki leaned his chair back slightly and arched an eyebrow at me. I can’t believe this—why is Yuki of all people suddenly taking an interest in me? I’m considering asking him, but probably wouldn’t get more than a derisive snort in answer.

For some unknown reason, I find myself answering him truthfully. “Well, I guess I’m just tired of being ignored by pretty much everyone....”

“...You’re quiet.” Yuki stopped for a moment to light another cigarette. “If you want to be heard, make yourself heard.”

“Nah, I don’t want to impose on people....” Why am I talking to him about this? I suppose he’s very right, but I don’t particularly like being given advice from my best friend’s lover.

With a nasty scowl Yuki continued, “Then don’t complain if you’re not going to change the situation.” He waved a hand in the direction of the front door and changed the subject abruptly, “He’s waiting for you.”

“I wasn’t complaining! You asked me.” Yuki looks up at me, golden eyes narrowing. He looks sort of feral like that, like a primal cat about to jump for the kill. It’s creepy as hell. Uncrossing his legs, he stands slowly, never taking his eyes off me. Standing close to me he leans forward, “...It bothers you.”

“Er...well...a little...but...” I take a step back, involuntarily trying to escape Yuki’s eyes while he takes a step closer, keeping the distance between us consistent. That man is very good at making one feel trapped and uncomfortable.

“Or, rather...it bothers you that he doesn’t notice you.” The only thing I can do at this point is blush and try to avoid his gaze. Looking at anything else but Yuki, I try to find a hole to escape through, but suddenly I find myself with my back flat against the wall and him blocking the way.

“Then why not make him notice you, instead of playing the martyr and sacrificing the things you want for everyone else’s happiness? That gets you nowhere in life.” He’s so right...damn, why does he have to be right?

“It wouldn’t matter if I did. He only sees you.”

“But you let it be that way. I never asked for him to come into my life. I don’t particularly mind if he stays, however...” Yuki answers. Again, he’s so goddamn right I wish I could smack that superior smirk

off his face. I'm sure close enough....

Instead I just keep talking, the opportunity to get physical retribution for all the silent abuse I've taken from him gone in an instant. "Maybe, but it's too late now. He's not going to just stop loving you and you seem to like him back, so, what's the point?"

After a short pause Yuki formulates another smart answer, ending this verbal battle before I even had a fighting chance. "Mn...and here I thought you were stronger than this." He suddenly leans in very close, our noses nearly touching as he stares at me. How can someone standing this close, at eye level, still manage to look down the bridge of their nose at you? It's very demeaning. Pulling away and lighting a cigarette with his back to me, Yuki cuts the conversation short, "Shuichi's going to get lost if you don't go find him. He had no sense of direction."

"Eh...oh, right...." After stuttering this useless reply, I leave very, very confused. I can feel Yuki's eyes boring into my back as I walk away, but I don't have the nerve to go back and restart the discussion. Besides, Shu has probably managed to find the only road in existence from Japan to Guam, and has decided it would be the fastest way to the studio.

Dazed as I am from Yuki's random desire to stuff his psychological analysis straight down my throat, I nearly tripped over Shu, who was sitting forlornly on the curb at an intersection only two blocks away. "Shuuuichi...why are you sitting in the street?" I inquire, leaning over him from behind.

"Huh...?" He looks slowly up at me and blinks blankly, in the typical Shuichi fashion. I can't count the number of times he's given me that look—oblivious...innocent.... "H-Hiro? Hiro!" Shu launches himself at me, and latches on like he always does when he's upset or overly happy. "I was looking for you, then I got lost, and I was so stupid—I couldn't remember the signs! I'm so glad you're here!"

"You never were very good with directions, Shu chan," I answer and ruffle his hair. A useless gesture, to say the least, as his hair is usually in a fair disarray, but he likes to be reassured—similar to a puppy. "Why did you come back for me? I was on my way."

"You were taking a long time.... I was worried you got eaten by a giant, evil turnip plotting to destroy the world...." Shuichi has a very...active imagination. The whole description was quite amusing, especially coupled with the serious, concerned expression on my friend's face.

"Uhm...well, I was talking to Yuki san a little. Anyway, let's get going or we'll be late." Shu looked a bit surprised that I had been talking to his lover. He's generally naïve enough to believe that all humanity can get along perfectly, but even Shuichi tends to give up on Yuki and I ever giving each other a curt 'hello' out of common courtesy.

We continue on our way, in silence for a short while (Shu seems to be pondering reasons for the

conversation between Yuki and I). The little singer eventually came to some conclusion or another to his train of thought and started gleefully skipping down the road in his usual empty-headed manner.

“...So have you thought of any new lyrics yet?” I ask after a short pause. “We’re supposed to have a new song in two weeks, remember.” A change of subject seemed to be in order, as he had apparently forgotten in ten seconds what the previous topic had been.

“Oh! Erm...well...I wrote a little bit,” he answered with a sheepish little smile.

“How much is ‘a little bit’?” I think I already know how much he’s written, but I’m an optimist.

“Euh...one line....” I knew it. The lazy little bum.... Seguchi san is going to murder us both.

“Euh...heh...heh...?” Shu is grinning nervously at me, scratching the back of his head, which musses his already windblown hair into an irreversible untidiness. The part of me that was gearing up to reprimand him was beat down easily by that look. I’m far too soft for my own good.

“One...line...?” I flash him a weak smile, as if one line of a song that’s suppose to be at least half done is nothing to worry about. “That’s a start...I guess....”

“Yep! And it’s a super-good line!” He’s beaming radiantly again. How does one change moods so fast? That’s something I’ll never understand. Of course, I only allow myself to have one disposition.

“I’m afraid to ask....” Shuichi handed me a crumpled scrap of paper extracted from his pocket along with a lump of lint. He looked incredibly proud of himself—perhaps it won’t be so bad.... He’s written a lot worse, I’m sure. It took me at least half a minute to get the paper flattened out enough to be read. Glancing over it was the worst mistake of my day. In approximately five seconds I felt drained of every bit of confidence I had gained in finding Shu waiting for me on the curb. Hopeless.... That’s what my situation is. Completely, utterly hopeless. The one person in the whole world I want to truly look at me with criticism and care has his head turned the other way by a personality I could never hold a candle to. Ignored, taken for granted.... All I’ll ever be.

“ ‘Sunshine, sunshine...golden eyes, love’...?” I read skeptically aloud. “I knew it! Yuki’s gonna kick your @\$\$ for writing about him!” I suppose I am good at one thing—masking my unhappiness for Shuichi. My mouth twitched into a mischievous grin, which I highly doubt reached my eyes (not that he would notice), and snatched the paper out of his reach.

“Ah! Hiiiiirooooo!” He starts whining and flailing at me in typical Shuichi fashion.

“You’ll have to catch me if you want this back!” I dash down the street, waving the crinkled paper tantalizingly out of reach. He lunges after me, grabbing at the scrap. Yet again, I have not allowed myself to feel, snapping the mask firmly in place. Cavorting down the road, any passerby would never guess my thoughts...and neither will Shuichi. It can’t be any other way.