

The logo for the publisher KEY, featuring the word "KEY" in a stylized, handwritten font with a red underline.

Summer Pockets Short Story [Mizuori Shizuku]

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A detailed illustration of the character Mizuori Shizuku. She has short, layered purple hair with bangs and long purple pigtails. Her eyes are a vibrant purple. She is wearing a white sailor-style dress with a dark blue collar and a light blue apron with white bows. A blue butterfly is perched on her chest.

Summer Pockets

サマー ポケッツ

Amidst the Summer Brilliance

Chapter Mizuori Shizuku
The Supple Feelings That We Hold
Dear In Our Chests

It was a certain summer day. I had been waiting for Hairi-kun and Tsumugi at the lighthouse.

“Maybe they’re out shopping for snacks at the sweets shop...”

It was rare for the atmosphere around the lighthouse to be so quiet. That said... it was an abandoned lighthouse, I guess. Perhaps that silence is actually closer to what the lighthouse should have been.

Whenever I looked up at the lighthouse, though... I couldn’t help but think back to the day when I had first met Tsumugi. And, whenever I thought about that... that word would come leaking out of my mouth.

“...Boobs.”

The gentle rustling of the waves slowly washed the word

away, into the depths of the sea...

As I was quietly whittling my time away thinking thoughts of the past, I heard two sets of voices approach me. One of them was a bit of a surprise.

“Oi, Takahara. Stop lying.”

“I’m serious! The best way to get close to Shizuku is to talk about boobs, really!”

“There’s no way I can trust you on that...”

“Then just pretend I tricked you into it or something.”

“Isn’t there a bit too much of a risk associated with that!?”

The owners of those voices were Hairi-kun and Kanou-

kun. Hairi-kun was one thing, but seeing Kanou-kun together with him as well was certainly unusual.

“Yo, Shizuku.” Hairi-kun called out to me.

“Morning, Pairi-kun. And welcome, Kanou-kun.”

“Y-Yes, ma’am! I have arrived on the premises!”

For some reason, Kanou-kun always seemed especially tense around me—he would always make sure to correct his posture and speak formally whenever I was around. Perhaps he was trying to pay special attention to the fact that I was the student council president or something?

“Alright, Tenzen. Make some conversation about boobs.”

“R-Right now!?”

“If it’s Shizuku we’re talking about, even your greetings should be centered around boobs.”

“R... Right... I can... trust you on that, right...?”

“What’s wrong, you two?” I inquired quizzically.

“Ah, uh... Apparently, Tenzen wants to talk to you about something.”

“Oho, is that so? What would that be?”

When I turned towards Tenzen-kun, he shifted his eyes away from mine and said this.

“I-I believe that... the body is a consequence of daily perseverance and attention, you see... I think that diligence, negligence... everything you do shows on your body.”

“I suppose. I think so too.”

“S-So... You see... Mizuori-senpai, I think that your motherly instincts and your kindness are truly wonderful! Your superbly endowed chest must be the result of those traits manifesting on your body, isn't that right!?”

“Huh? T... Thank... you...”

The sudden compliment to my boobs made my heart skip a beat.

“Also...! By complimenting your chest, I am not trying to express any kind of sexual implication! Instead, I am trying to venerate the beauty of the human body, or, you know... I'm trying to say that it's art!”

“My boobs are art...!? W-Wait a second, Kanou-kun... I really won't know what to do if you just hurl

compliments at me so suddenly...!”

I could feel the tips of my ears beginning to heat up.

“T-Takahara! D-Does that mean she’s embarrassed!?”

“I’m pretty sure, yeah. I mean, look at how red her face is.”

“...!! I thank you, Takahara! Alright! I’m gonna go ahead and say it, alright!? I’m gonna say the most important words of my life...!”

Kanou-kun turned to face me directly, a bit of a bashful look on his face. He then opened his mouth, as if to steady his resolve.

“M-Mizuori-senpai!”

“Y-Yes!?”

“Y... Your chest... is like two pure white ping pong balls.”

“Ah...”

“Please give me... the right to serve!”

Kanou-kun stared straight into my eyes as he said that.

In response, I...

“...Grand ping pong.”

“Huh...? ...What?”

“Kanou-kun... Kanou-kun, what do you think about the name ‘table tennis’? Doesn’t it make ping pong just sound like a downgraded version of tennis?”

“Y-You’re right...!”

“Doesn’t that name frustrate you? If anything, tennis should be the sport that’s just a spinoff of ping pong. In fact, doesn’t it just seem like ‘grand ping pong’?”

“...!!”

“It’s the same kind of thing. You called my boobs white ping pong balls, but... Boobs, you see, are boobs. You should never call them anything other than that.”

“What... What have I done...!?”

Kanou-kun collapsed to the ground in front of me.

“...Everybody makes mistakes. But don’t worry—boobs are characterized by such softness that even mistakes won’t be able to escape their embrace.”



“Such... Such mercy...!! You are indeed right... The world will embrace anything and everything.”

“Uh, no, Tenzen. Shizuku isn’t talking about the world, she’s talking about boobs.”¹

“There’s no way anything that vulgar would ever come out of Mizuori-senpai’s mouth, isn’t there?”

“Uh... But... That’s what she’s been...”

“Still, Takahara.... thank you. Mizuori-senpai... I shall go reevaluate my life choices.”

“Yep, see you later! ♪”

After saying that, Kanou-kun returned home.

¹ In Japanese, “boobs” and “world” sound slightly alike.

“Hey, Shizuku... Just now, you were talking about the softness of ‘boobs’, not the ‘world’, right?”

“Yep, I was.”

Hairi-kun watched Kanou-kun walk off into the distance with a thoughtful look on his face. He then sat down on a nearby bench, which I joined him in doing.

“That reminds me, Shizuku—why do you like boobs so much? Since when have you been ‘Boobs’?”

“Hehe... Pairi-kun, you’ve got quite the interest in boobs, huh? Very well, I’ll teach you all about them~! ♪”

“No no no, I’m not interested in boobs. I’m interested in you, Shizuku.”

“Huh? Ah... T-That’s a little... embarrassing...”

Perhaps having just realized what he said, Hairi-kun stutters out a flustered apology as his face blushes somewhat red. I turn away slightly as well, looking towards the lighthouse.

...It comes back to me. The day when I had first met Tsumugi...

“The day that I became ‘Boobs’... was the day when I had first met Tsumugi.”

“Is that so?”

“Yep. That really brings me back...”

“...Huh? But... if you only started liking boobs since you met Tsumugi, that means it’s only been...”

“Two months.”

“...That’s a surprisingly shallow history.”

“Time is nothing more than a number when it comes to boobs.”

“...I see.”

Hairi-kun was wearing a bit of a doubtful expression on his face. Nevertheless... I still wanted him to tell him a little bit about boobs. That, in itself, was one of the conclusions that had resulted from my story...

“Could I tell you a bit about that time?”

“Sure. If anything, I’d like to hear about it myself.”

“In that case...” Saying that, I began to tell my story.

It was a couple weeks before the semester's closing ceremony, around when the rainy season had finally begun to let up.

“Naruse-saaan! Umm... Could I talk to you for a...!”

“...!!! I don't have anything to talk about, bye!”

“Ah...”

A white shadow dashed across the rocky outskirts, almost as if it were skipping from one stone to the next. In other words, I had been evaded.

Naruse-san—a girl who rarely ever seems to come to school. I was here on Torishirojima because the teachers had asked me to try and talk to her. Naruse-san was my junior, so we never really had many opportunities to interact or speak. At least, that's how it seemed to me.

So why had I been tasked with the job of talking to her?

That would be because I'm the student council president, who is extremely approachable and friendly... or so people think.

"That's not true at all..."

In fact, that image of me was more of a complex than anything else.

Oddly serious, and unable to reject anybody's requests. Can talk to anybody, but doesn't really have any close friends. That was the real me. My life wasn't particularly hard or anything, but I certainly did feel a little lonely.

"I guess I'll go back."

Glancing at my watch, I saw that there was still some

time before the next ferry. Places on the island where I could kill time... There was only one I could think of.

“Oh, Mizuori-senpai? What are you doing here?”

“Hello, Sorakado-san. And Mitani-kun, Miki-chan, too.”

I made my way over to the island’s sweets shop. Kanou-kun wasn’t around, but that was probably because he was off somewhere practicing table tennis. More importantly...

“Those are some pretty troubled expressions you’re wearing... What’s wrong?”

“Ah, it’s really nothing important. We forgot what the name of this pattern was, you see. We were racking our brains to try and figure out what it was.”

I took a glance at the face towel that they were looking at, which featured an intricate pattern of some sort.

“If you’re talking about the pattern on this towel... isn’t it paisley?”

“Oh, yeah! That’s right, this is paisley isn’t it?”

“Yeah, you’re right. That’s what it was.”

“Eh!? W-Wait a sec, Mizuori-senpai... Where did that come from!? Ryouichi, Nomiki, you too... I’m honestly shocked the two of you can say that with such a straight face.”

For some reason, Sorakado-san started acting all bashful, covering her chest with her hands.

“Ao, why do you look so nervous?”

“I mean, you all started talking about pa... paizu... you know, out of nowhere!”²

“We did not!”

“Look, we were talking about patterns, weren’t we? What we mentioned was paisley.”

“I don’t think I’ve ever heard that word before. What is it?”

“E-Errr, don’t worry about it. In my opinion, I don’t think you need to know about anything like that, Mizuori-senpai.”

“Y-Yeah. It’s a bit too vulgar.”

² *“Paizuri”* – Titty fuck.

“Is that so?”

...For some reason, I couldn't help but feel somewhat alienated from the rest of the group in times like these. Because I always seemed so proper, people would try their best to be considerate around topics like these. On top of that, I was never all that great with lewd stuff either, so I would be quick to drop the topic as well.

I believe that there needs to be ‘a certain level of mutual embarrassment’ between people for them to really connect with each other—however, the me who had been unable to expose herself to that condition found herself also unable to close the distance between herself and others. There were four of us there, but... instead, it actually felt like there was a group of three and a group of one.

“Okay then, I'll be heading off now, alright?”

“Huh? There’s still some time left before the next ferry, you know?”

“Yeah. I was just thinking I’d do some exploring.”

“Got it. I’ll see you at school then!”

After saying my goodbyes to the three friends, I headed towards a place I knew didn't get very many visitors. For some reason, I just wanted to spend some time alone.

Once I arrived at the lighthouse, I spent some time waiting for the hours to pass. There was nobody there but me.

Or, so I had thought, but... apparently, somebody had already beaten me to the chase.

“Good afternoon... Do you mind if I sit here?”

On the bench, was a worn-out, old teddy bear. It looked like a fairly expensive antique of some sort... Maybe somebody forgot it here? Not lingering for too long on that thought, I hoisted it onto my lap and gave it a gentle squeeze.

“It’s sure been a while since I’ve last held anything like this, huh...?”

One day, when I was little... having shown some relatively early development, the genre of my presents suddenly changed.

“You’re starting to get a little too old for plush toys, aren’t you, dear?” My parents said.

I remembered saying yes and telling them that I was already a big girl. Even though I actually wanted plush toys, I started asking for the kinds of things that I thought would make my parents happy. That was when my role as the good girl who always listened to others first began.

For example, my juniors would sometimes ask me to teach them methods of making their chests grow larger.

Whenever anything like that happened, I would always go research the topic at hand so I could answer their questions.

I couldn't betray anybody's expectations.

That personality of mine, that well-developed body of mine, that inability to engage in any kind of lewd conversation... I hated it all. Even if it was just for a moment... I wanted to break myself out of that mold, no matter what.

And so... I put the stuffed animal aside and moved to stand in front of the wide ocean.

The lewdest words I could bring myself to say at the time, in the lewdest way... so I could break myself out of the trap I had dug myself into as much as possible. With those thoughts in mind, I took the deepest breath I could

possibly take, before letting it all out in the biggest shout I could possibly manage.

“Boooooooooooooooooooooobs!!!!”

So embarrassing...!

So lewd, so indecent...! How could I say something like that...!?

But... for the sake of changing myself, I'll...!

“Boooobs! Boooobs! Boooooooooooooooooobs!”

I shouted as loudly as I possibly could.

“Whew...”

Perhaps with that, something might finally change, I



thought. That said, if anybody had happened to see me doing that, I might actually die of embarrassment.

At that moment, I turned back towards the bench I had been sitting on previously, and...

“.....”

“...Mugyu.”

...I had been seen.

“A-Are you a ghost?”

It was a blonde-haired girl I had never seen before. Looking slightly frightened, the girl asked me that question. Normally, one would be pretty quick to deny being called a ghost, but... instead, I couldn't help but find myself caught up in something else entirely.

“...Such pretty hair...”

“Mugyu!?”

An appearance that almost befitted that of a doll... Those three words were the only thing I could manage to get out of my mouth. I stared at that stream of golden hair, which almost looked like a diluted version of the evening sun itself.

“Ah... Sorry about the sudden outburst. Umm... Ghost...? You mean that spooky, scary thing?”

“Yes, that’s right.”

“If I really were a ghost, what kind of ghost would I be?”

“...A boob ghost.”

Apparently... Or rather, unsurprisingly... I really had been seen after all...

I really wanted to run away and bury myself under a rock as soon as possible, but... somehow, I managed to keep myself calm and continue conversing with the girl.

“Don’t worry, I’m not a ghost of any kind. There’s no need to be scared.”

“I see. Umm... The person that I thought was a boob ghost was actually not a ghost, so...”

The girl gave that a little bit of thought, before suddenly nodding energetically. She seemed satisfied with herself.

“I see. Then, in that case, you must be boobs, right?”

“I-I’m not boobs!”

“Mugyu? Then, you are...?”

“My name is Mizuori Shizuku. That uniform you’re wearing means you’re from our school, right? You probably know this already, but I’m the student council president there.”

“I do not.”

“Huh? I’m a little surprised there are students at the school who don’t recognize the student council president...”

And I’m pretty sure I know most of the students at school, too...

Huh...? Wait...

“Um... Have you been coming to school? I can’t help but

feel like I haven't seen you around before..."

"I have never been to school before, huh?"

"That's not good, you should really come to school."

"Understood. In that case, please bring me to school with you next time."

"Huh? Are you saying you've never been to school even though you're perfectly willing to go?"

"Yes. Up until recently, I have had many things that I have had to do. However, because that has changed now, I would really like to give it a try!"

Her situation seemed fairly complicated, so I didn't try to dig any deeper. That said, asking somebody to 'bring her with them' right from the get-go, huh...? What an

amicable, amusing response.

“Hehe...! ♪”

“Why are you laughing?”

“It’s nothing, don’t worry. You just seem like a really interesting girl, that’s all.”

“Mugyu?”

“Finals period is just about to start at school, and once that’s over, the only thing left is the closing ceremony. If you want to get along with everyone, you’d probably be better off waiting until after summer vacation ends, I think.”

“When would that be?”

“The first of September, I believe.”

Once she heard me say that, she started ‘mugyuuu’ing with an awfully lonely expression on her face. Perhaps she had already made some kind of prior arrangement on that day or something. That said, it might not be something that she wanted me to pry into, so I decided not to ask.

“Ah... It’s almost time for the next ferry. I should start heading back.”

“Is that so...? I did want to talk a little more, but there’s not much we can do if you have to catch the ferry, huh...?”

She wanted to talk a little more...? With me...?

“There are a bunch of kids that are much more

interesting than me on this island, I think. Why not try chatting with them?”

“But you’re a very kind person, so... I want to talk with you.”

“That’s... I’m honestly not all that great of a person, really...”

“You are a very kind person.”

“What makes you so confident about that?”

“You hugged the stuffed animal.”

“...So you saw even that, huh?”

“People who are not kind will kick and toss it around and stuff.”

“I doubt anybody does that... Huh? Speaking of which, I don't see that teddy bear around.”

“Mugyu! ...T-The ferry! Shizuku-san! The ferry is almost here!”

“Ah, that's right. Well then...”

I rarely ever came across any reason to come to this island. On top of that, even if I did happen to have some business over here like I did today, I had even less reason to come visit this lighthouse. I knew that, and yet... I still said those words.

“See you later.”

While I was on the ferry, I couldn't help but think back to those words I had said. I found it a little odd myself—there was no reason nor rhyme for me to ever go back there, and yet I still told her that I would see her again. Perhaps I had been infected by her friendly attitude.

“What a strange girl...”

For some reason, I couldn't help but smile to myself as I said that. Perhaps I'll pay her another visit the next time I have business on Torishirojima as well. That girl, who...

...Huh?

“I forgot to ask for her name...”

The next day, I made my way over to the island once more.

On my way over to the lighthouse, I stopped by the sweets shop, thinking I'd buy the girl a bit of a cordial present or something. There, I met Sorakado-san and Miki-chan. When I tried asking them about what the girl usually buys from the sweets shop, they...

“Huh!? You met that blonde girl!? The one that looks kind of like some kind of western zashikiwarashi!?”

“Ah, yeah, she did have that kind of an atmosphere around her. She's really friendly and kind of bubbly, right?”

“Wha!? You managed to talk to ‘Tsumugi-chan’? Well, I guess, in some sense... that doesn't seem all that surprising considering it's you, Mizuori-senpai.”

“W-What? ‘Tsumugi-chan’? Is she not from this island?”

“Mmm... That girl a bit of an urban legend for us. From time to time, she pops up out of nowhere and shouts ‘It’s Tsumugi-chaaaaan! Please don’t forget about Tsumugi-chaaaaan!’, before disappearing off somewhere again.”

“But she never mentioned anything like that...”

“Is that so? Now that you mention it, I haven’t seen her at all ever since the rainy season ended.”

“Huh...”

After that, I asked Mitani-kun, Kanou-kun, and a bunch of other people I bumped into as well... They all gave me the same answer. For some reason, none of them seemed to have any kind of particularly scary or annoying impression of her, though.

I continued my journey to the lighthouse. I was headed to pay her another visit because I had told her that I would see her again.

...No, that's not quite right, I thought to myself. I'm sure it's actually because I wanted to chat with her a little more, as well. That's why I came all the way over to this island even without having any particular business here.

“Helloo!”

“Mugyu! It's Shizuku-san!”

“Hehehe, mugyuu~ ♪ Tsumugi-chan!”

I returned that little greeting-like phrase of hers in kind.

“Do you already know my name?”

“Indeed, somebody told me at the sweets shop. In kanji, it’s the character with the *ito* from ‘string’ and the *yu* from ‘freedom’... right?”

“‘String’... ‘Freedom’... I see. That’s right, that is the kanji for my name.”

“Right. Then, that’s what I’ll call you, alright?”

“What are you here for today, Shizuku-san?”

“I’m here because you told me that you wanted to chat with me a little more yesterday, Tsumugi-chan.”

“Ohh! You really are an extremely kind person after all, Shizuku-san!”

“That’s not true, honestly.”

In actuality, I had just wanted to come meet her myself. I wasn't really being considerate of her or anything.

“~~~♪”

“What's that song you're humming?”

“It's a song that you are supposed to sing when you are happy! My bestest best friend used to sing it all the time.”

“I see, it certainly does sound so.”

So this girl had them too... People that she could call friends, that is.

...It made me a little jealous... and a little bit upset.

“Does that friend not come visit you here?”

“Hmm... It seems like she should but... she hasn't come in a long time, I think.”

“I... I see...”

It seemed like a pretty complicated situation, one that I probably shouldn't try and pry into. Yet... for some reason, I couldn't help but really want to ask. But, after a moment's contemplation, I mentally shook my head no.

“Anyways... Should we go ahead and get started with that chat you had mentioned?”

“Please! In that case, I would like to know more about you, Shizuku-san!”

“Me? I'm... Hmm...”

She didn't have any particular topic that she wanted to

talk about, nor did she have any particular questions that she wanted to ask. It might have been a little overfamiliar of her, but... talking with me was really all she wanted to do.

Even when we did sink into a bit of a momentary silence after having exhausted a topic, something about it just felt... comforting. We talked about meaningless things, laughed at inconsequential jokes... All while slowly letting the hours slip away.

“Shizuku-san. Why did you come here today?”

“Huh? Why, you ask...”

“Also, why were you shouting ‘boobs’ the other day?”

She hesitated slightly before she said that. I thought back to how I wanted to break myself out of my shell and my

story about how I had gotten to become me. She probably wasn't going to find my trivial worries all that interesting, but... still...

“I guess... I really just wanted to let everything out, I think.” I said.

I'm sure that all I had wanted was actually just to talk to somebody. I had probably been waiting... waiting for someone who would be willing to set foot on those insignificant thoughts I kept harboring.

“Does shouting ‘boobs’ make you feel better?”

“Hehehe... Just a bit! ♪”

“In that case...”

The girl moved to stand in front of the ocean, just like I

had done yesterday. After inhaling as deep of a breath as she could...

“Boooooooooooooooooobs!” She shouted.

Then, she turned back around to face me.

“...I do not feel anything.”

“Really? You’re making a pretty relieved face though, you know?”

“...Now that you mention it... I feel like my frustration is going away...”

“Ehehe! ♪ Just kidding!”

“Mugyu!? So that was just a lie, huh...? Mugiigiigiigi...”

“Sorry! ♪ But, that said... is there something that’s frustrating you?”

“I suppose, yes. But, I feel like it has gotten slightly better.”

“What were you frustrated about?”

My own words came as a shock to me. Up until now, I probably would have dropped it there, thinking that it wasn’t something I should pry into, but... Whether it was because she had set foot onto my worries, or because I had wanted to set foot on hers, at that moment...

I began to like her. I began thinking that I wanted to become her friend.

“What I have been frustrated about, you see... is that, since the number of people I have been able to talk to

has decreased, I have been feeling a little lonely recently.”

“I see. Umm... What about the people on the island?”

“Mugyu... I do not want them to say weird things about me, so... I do not really want to meet them.”

“Weird things? Have they said something about you before?”

“...A long time ago... they called my hair color and eye color weird...”

“Ah...”

A distinctive set of brilliant blonde hair, and emerald green eyes. They were probably quite the spectacle for both the elderly of the island and the children who had

never been outside the island before.

“In that case... I’ll become your friend!”

Or, so I had wanted to say. However, for some reason, that didn’t feel quite right.

I had no doubt that if I said that, the two of us would have been able to become very good friends. From time to time, I would stop by this lighthouse, and we’d spend our time together alone. We’d talk about meaningless things and spend our time doing inconsequential stuff.

Our ages were probably quite different, and so were our home countries. However, the two of us would get along perfectly here, next to this deserted lighthouse where nobody else was around.

Yeah... That certainly did sound like a best friend, but...

For some reason, it didn't quite feel like enough.

I wanted to be able to show Tsumugi-chan the good parts of all the islanders, to be able to tell her that all my cute little juniors were kind people. I wanted to be able to show everybody on the island just how nice Tsumugi-chan was, to be able to brag about how cute of a best friend I had.

And so, instead, I decided to do a little meddling.

I took a step and set foot onto that girl's... onto somebody else's worries.

“Um, you see... Actually, I... I don't really like my chest very much.”

“Mugyu? Why?”

“Like, how do I describe this... Maybe it’s because people tend to see me in a bit of a weird light because they’re so big? Like, they see me as someone who is very mature... Someone who’s supposed to be very dependable.”

“That’s just like me, huh...?”

“I suppose, yeah. We’re comrades-in-arms when it comes to being viewed weirdly, huh?”

“Being told that makes me a little happy.”

“On top of that, there are times when they just feel like a huge pain. Like, they’re large, but it feels kind of pointless, like they’re just a huge waste of space.”

However, the meaningless time that I had spent together with that girl, on the other hand... had been extremely fun.

“You see... I think that both your hair and your eyes are extremely pretty. If anything, I’m even a little envious.”

“Mugyu! T-That’s embarrassing...”

“There have also been times when people have been envious of my chest, too.”

“Yes. I thought they were really cool as well.”

“Yeah. I’m sure that’s what it’s about...”

“.....”

The girl nodded a couple times, before stopping and cocking her head to one side.

“What is it about?”

She hadn't quite gotten it after all.

“To everybody around us, our features are objects of envy, you see. But to us, they are actually sources of anxiety. Even though it all just depends on how you look at things and all.”

“In other words... What does that mean?”

“Hehehe... ♪ It means that, no matter what you say about yourself, I'll always like your hair. And also that I'll always want to share just how pretty it is with everybody else.”

“Ohhh! I see!”

“Hey... Can I touch it?”

“I do not want my eyes touched, but I would be fine with

my hair.”

“Hehe... ♪ Don’t worry, I won’t touch anything other than your hair.”

“In that case... Go ahead.”

Saying that, Tsumugi-chan sat herself down next to me and stuck her head out in my direction. I reached out and gently ran my fingers through her golden hair.

“It’s so pretty, so smooth... Running my fingers through your hair feels great.”

“T-Thank you very much.”

Tsumugi-chan beamed a smile at me, looking slightly ticklish and embarrassed.



“I’m sure that... everybody else would tell you the exact same thing, you know? That your hair is pretty.”

“Mugyu. But still... I am still a little scared, after all.”

“They’re all really nice people, you know?”

“I am okay with just having Shizuku-san come here every so often, like this.”

She looked a little anxious as she said that. In response, I told her—and my old self—this.

“That won’t do, you know?”

“Mugyu?”

“Um, you see... I’ve decided to live with my head held high about my chest from now on.”

I looked straight at her.

“I’ve decided to wholeheartedly believe in what you said, about how pretty and cool my boobs are.”

“...Mugyu.”

“That’s why you should do away with your complex about your hair and eye color as well.” I said. “...Won’t you try believing in what I said?”

“.....”

After a couple moments... the girl nodded, still looking a little nervous. As I watched her, I couldn’t help but feel a huge smile beginning to form on my face.

“In that case, shall we try going to meet everyone?”

“U-Understood... But, before that, I have a request.”

“Sure. What is it?”

“I want to... I want to touch your boobs, just like how you were touching my hair while calling it pretty.”

“Huh? T-Touch...? ...My boobs...?”

“Yes, I want to touch them... to rub them.”

“You’re planning to really feel them up, huh!?”

If I had still been the me from a couple moments ago, I would probably have said no, but...

“Go ahead.”

That was how I had decided I wanted to live. From today

onwards, I wanted to be both positive and assertive about my boobs. In order to encourage her, I needed to show her proof of that resolution I had made.

“Then... I will be touching them, alright?”

The girl placed her hands directly on my supple chest.

“H-How are they...?”

“I wonder why...? For some reason, I feel... really happy.”

“My boobs... make people happy when they touch them, huh?”

“They do.”

“I see. In that case, I should have everybody else touch them as well.”

“I think that is a great idea.”

“After that, I took Tsumugi to the sweets shop, you see. Of course, they took an instant liking to her, and they’ve all been good friends ever since.”

“.....”

“That’s why, as long as I’m together with Tsumugi... I will be ‘Boobs’. In order to keep that girl confident in her own appearance, in her own beautiful hair and eyes... In order to keep her smiling, I’ll stay ‘Boobs’ for however long it takes.”

“...I see.”

“What’s wrong?”

“Err, it’s nothing. It’s just... I was a little surprised about how wholesome that story was, that’s all.”

Hairi-kun was making a fairly complicated face.

“Also, I’m a little curious about one more thing... Did you really let everybody else touch your boobs after all? Like, Ryouichi, and Tenzen too...”

“Back then, I was still a boob amateur, so I never actually ended up having anybody else touch my boobs.

“...I see.”

“Yep, that’s right.”

“Then, like... you must have been trying pretty hard to force yourself into saying boobs up until recently, right?”

“I suppose, yeah. Well, it didn’t really take for the boobs to start taking off by themselves, I guess.

“R-Right. Although I’m not really sure what that’s supposed to mean.”

“But, seeing as boobs are what first brought you and me together, Pairi-kun... I guess I really do have to be thankful to them after all.”

“I don’t think I’ve really been giving off that much of a boob-like atmosphere, though... Was there something else related to boobs that brought us together?”

“Oh? I mean, you were staring at my boobs when we first met, weren’t you?”

“...So you knew, huh?”

He glanced off towards the side, his face a little flushed. It was a very boyish reaction, one that made him look a little cute.

Then, Hairi-kun suddenly stood up and walked over towards the ocean. Just as I had been wondering what he was doing...

“Booooooooooooooooooobs!!”

Hairi-kun suddenly shouted ‘boobs’ at the top of his lungs as well, just like the two of us had done back then.

Could that mean...

“Pai-ri-kun, is there something that you’re frustrated about as well?”

“Yeah. I’ve been keeping a couple things to myself because I wanted to get along with you two, too.”

“Ehehe~ ♪ In that case, let’s hear it, shall we?”

“So... I was actually a part of the swimming club, you see...”

“Right, right.”

Tsumugi, who had been looking for herself. Hairi-kun, who had lost his purpose in life. Me, who had been forcefully suppressing my own desires. Those of us who had lost our identities had just so happened to gather here, around this lighthouse.

Then again, perhaps it was only natural that we had congregated here—I mean, this is a lighthouse, after all. Even if it could no longer guide any boats to land, it might still at least have the ability to guide three lost little souls to their proverbial shores.

“So something like that happened to you, huh...?”

“I guess.” Hairi-kun said. “...Has that ruined your image of me?”

“Nope, it only feels like we’ve gotten even closer.”

“Is that so...?” He said. “...Thanks.”

Now then, where are those of us who have been saved by this lighthouse headed? I’m sure that’s something that only we ourselves can decide. I’m sure that that, in itself, is what it means to be us.

“Then, Hairi-kun... I think I’ll tell you a bit of a special story about myself, one that I haven’t yet told anybody else.”

“Ohh, please.”

“Yes, but... it looks like it’s almost time for the sun to

set... Shall we leave that for tomorrow instead?"

"Huh? Are you really just going to leave it at that after teasing it so much?"

"Why not? I mean..."

As the number of meaningless conversations and inconsequential memories pile up between us... our relationships will only grow stronger and stronger. What will happen to us from now on, I wonder? I couldn't even begin to imagine what our future will be like, but... is there really any reason for us to fret?

I mean...

"We've still got plenty of summer ahead of us, don't we?"