

LIVE

comment

VTUBER LEGEND: HOW I WENT VIRAL

AFTER FORGETTING TO TURN OFF MY STREAM 2

AUTHOR: NANA NANATO ILLUSTRATOR: SIOKAZUNOKO

- PSHHH!
- THE SMILE I'VE SEEN MORE THAN MY OWN PARENTS
- LOOK AT YOUR PARENTS MORE! REGULARLY!
- ¥ 155
- WHY 155?
- COST OF A CAN OF STROZERO AT THE CONBINI
- LMAO
- THE SACRED THREE-DIGIT NUMBER
- ¥ 1,550
- LET ME IN ON THAT!
- SHE CAN'T SERIOUSLY BE THE SEISO
- ONE OF THE GROUP
- ALICE SOMA: ¥ 50,000
- 2i
- 2i
- HUH? THE REAL ONE?!

Awayuki
Kokorone

#StroZeroWhenTheyOpen

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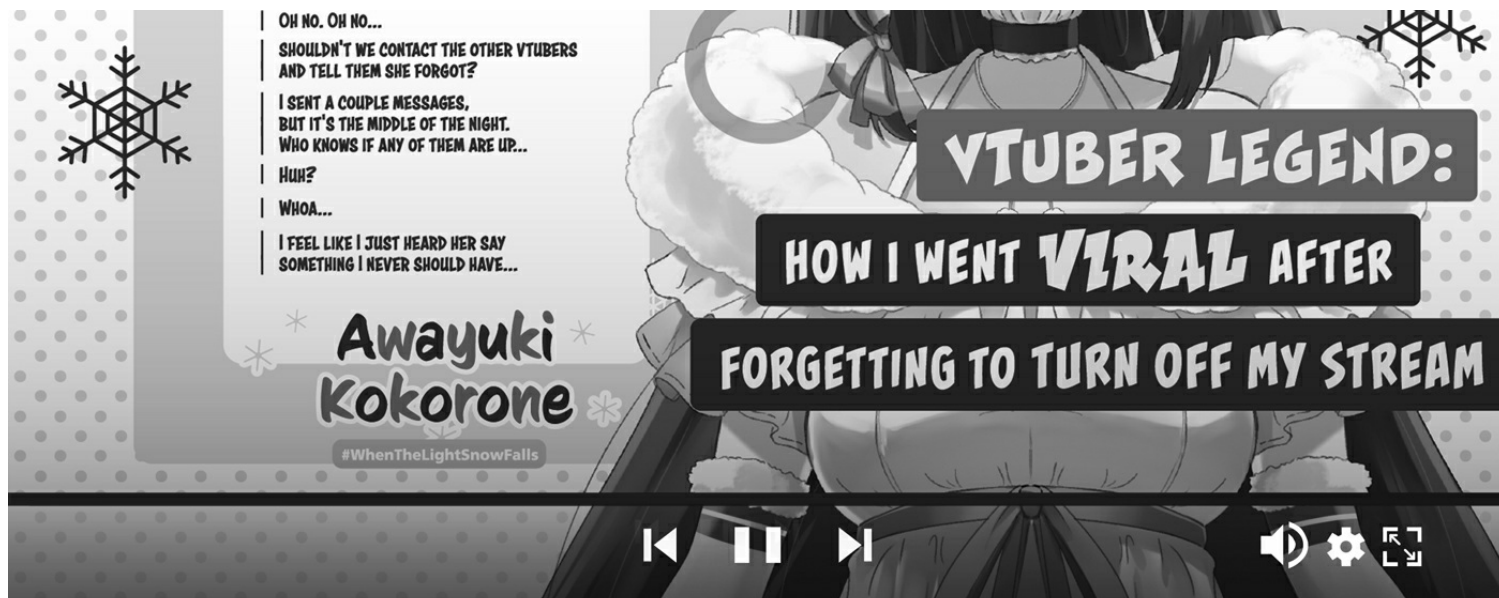
#StroZeroWhenTheyOpen

VTUBER LEGEND:

HOW I WENT VIRAL AFTER

FORGETTING TO TURN OFF MY STREAM 2





Story Summary

99,999 views • May 20, 2021

♥ 9999

💬 155



StroZero Clip ch

25K subscribers

Subscribed

To part ways with her past, **Yuki Tanaka**, once a **warrior** in an **exploitative company**, challenged **Live-On**, the company running rampant like evil spirits in an apocalyptic world.

And by the time she returned home, she'd become the **seiso VTuber Awayuki Kokorone**.

But she was **overwhelmed** by Live-On's exponential greatness, and with her **popularity struggling** every day, Awayuki was at her wits' end...

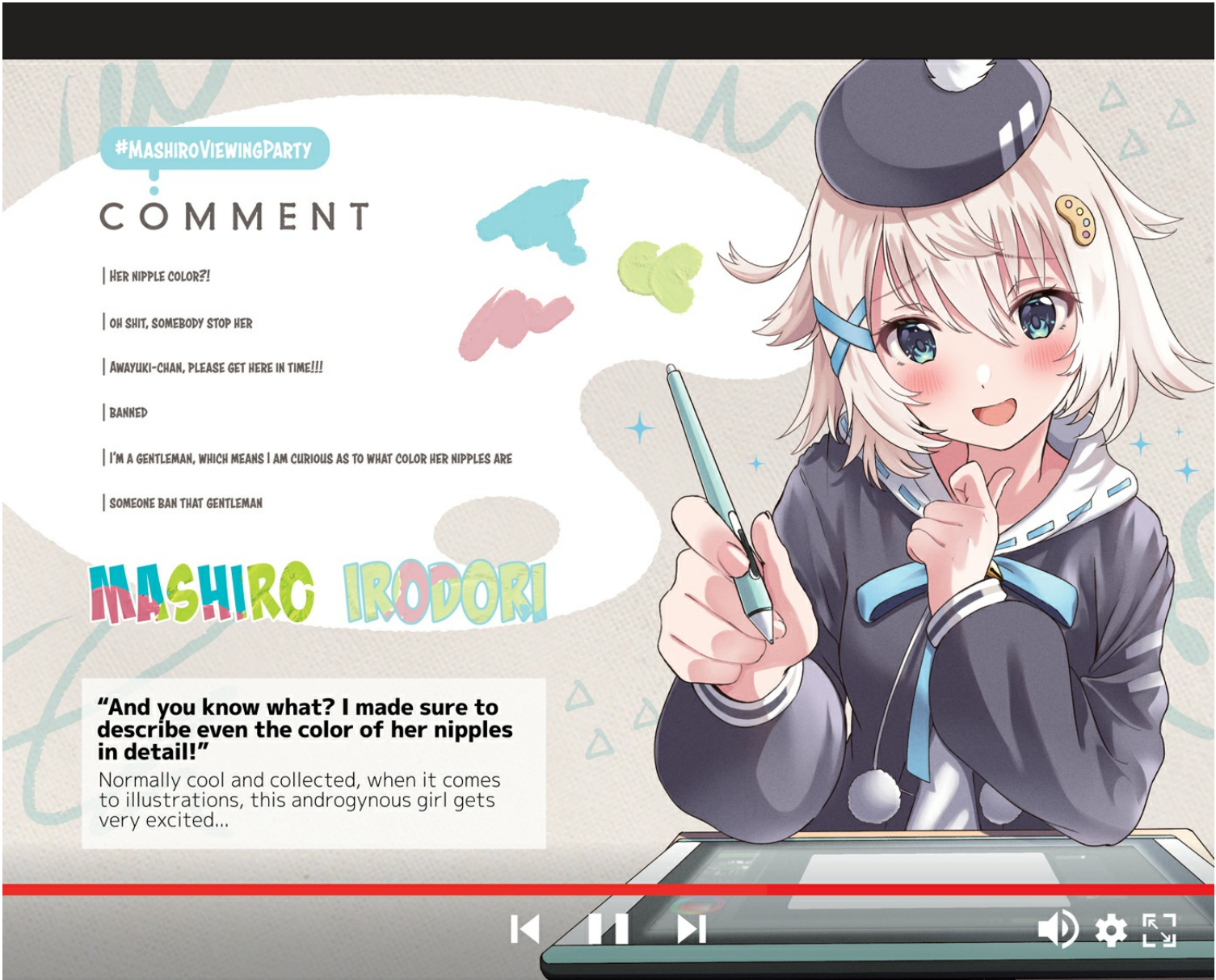
One day, about to conduct her closed-doors ritual called "ending the stream as always," she instead took a ride on the **Galaxy Express 000**—and then **got drunk and shifted it into reverse**.

As a result, her seiso became **seiso (by VTuber standards)**, Awayuki herself had become **StroZero**, and StroZero had become **number one in the world**.

Awayuki, bubbly over the results, eventually decided to embrace the **fizzy** instead.

After blowing off the steam, Awayuki used her genmates as **fap material**, devoted herself to various kinds of training like propositioning her senpais for **sexual acts**, finally mastering her **inner and outer selves**, allowing **Awa and Shuwa to coexist**, and breaking the **shocking 530,000** number of subscribers with Live-On. (This value is far greater than the seating capacity of approximately three Tokyo Domes.)

With everything going her way, she eventually matured into the **ace of Live-On**, and, at last, had her **first kouhai** profess her **undying love** for her.



VTuber Legend: How I Went Viral After Forgetting to Turn Off My Stream 2

2M views • 3 months ago

14046

46



Mashiro Irodori
760K subscribers

Subscribed

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Prologue

“Awayuki Kokorone-dono! I request that you make me your woman.”

At last, it was the day the fourth generation—my first-ever kouhais—was to be revealed to the world. But as my chest was swelling with anticipation of what the girls could be like, the very first one, Alice Soma, professed her love for me.

.....Huh?

“I have always led an average life, but there has always been a place in the depths of my heart that has considered it a bore. My idol activities are part of my strategy to suppress that boredom. But as it happened, my heart was thirsting for much more, leading me to desire something else—something big—that would satisfy me.”



Alice-chan dove deep into a speech, glancing between chat and me—and I was still so confused I could barely think.

Uhh, I thought. Right. My brain is doing an amazing job of short-circuiting right now, but I have figured one thing out already.

“And then, fortune struck! I coincidentally received intelligence on the internet regarding that legendary night when you, Awayuki-dono, forgot to end your stream! All of my previous life could be added up together and still not reach the heights of the impact it had on me. If I had to describe it in brief, ma’am...it was love at first sight.”

She’s completely Live-On on the inside!

: wait, i'm twelve years old and what is this

: You've GOT to be kidding me lmaoooo

: ??? (she's speaking japanese, right? why can't I understand what she's saying)

: <what?>

: wait, what are you actually talking about rn? (believe it!)

: apparently, this girl fell in love at first sight with awa-chan—after she went in way too hard on the strozero after forgetting to end her stream, made a series of dirty jokes that sexually harassed her same-sex vtuber friends, barfed when she woke up as she ended the stream, then still tried to claim she was seiso

: Turns out the world was full of unsolved mysteries after all

“You walked a long, lonely path. But the next thing you realized, so many fans had become obsessed with you. That, too, is the source of my heart’s longing. Ever since that day, my mind has never been on anyone or anything but you,

Awayuki-dono. I have continuously watched both your live streams and your archived ones. I have completely memorized what sorts of things you say and when you say them. And it gave me an irresistible sense of pleasure. And I have, of course, sent supers of the maximum value to you!”

This was too much for me to bear! What was going on?! I’d just gotten a chill up my spine! *I know I said I wanted someone who admired me, but this isn’t what I was thinking! I’m glad she’s a fan of mine, but everyone’s treated me as a comedian—not someone to shower with blind faith and devotion! My brain’s about to overheat...*

: yep. pure cringe. i love it

: This truly is Live-On

: lol, for real, management always goes so far above and beyond

: I bet Shuwa-chan is shaking in her boots

: this must be the yabai one of 4th gen

: Why did they have to lead off with this girl?

: Probably means the later ones are just as yabai

: Holy shit lmao I never would have guessed she'd be an Awa-chan devotee

: I'm a Japanese person living in Japan, and I can't understand what she's saying

: wait, that just makes you a regular japanese person lol

: Whoa! She's crazy! I'm surprised. She's really living in the future, huh? The one thing I can say is that we're already obsessed with her

: please none of the overseas-style reaction videos

: that does it. new oshi right here

: Awayuki, you'd better take responsibility for making

Alice-chan like this :)

“My apologies for talking about myself at length. In any case, I sent in my application to Live-On’s fourth generation in the hopes that I would get closer to Awayuki-dono, and now I’m standing here before you! It truly is bliss to stand on the same stage as the one I admire! Umm. It looks like there’s still some time left, so if you have any questions, I’ll answer them!”

“Ha ha ha...” I was so tired of thinking about it that all I could do was let out a hollow laugh. I, er, I mean, in a very broad sense, she’s cute and looks up to me, so it’s all good, right? Totally not trying to escape reality here. Yep, best to keep an open mind about these things! I’ll welcome Alice-chan with a mind as broad and open as space!

: how did you get hired? what did you say during the interview?

: definitely curious about that

: i have a really bad feeling about it lmao

“The truth is, I failed in the initial screening!”

Wait, for real? I thought.

“But I wasn’t willing to give up. It didn’t say anywhere you weren’t allowed to apply more than once, so I continued to submit essays about how wonderful Awayuki-dono is. On the fifth one, I finally made it to an interview, where I proceeded to talk about everything I love about Awayuki-dono, and they accepted me!”

“What the hell?! You wrote essays about me for the screening phase?! You kept failing because you weren’t talking about you!”

“Since it took so long to get an interview, I considered doing it normally at first. But when I instead decided to display my adoration for Awayuki-dono and bare myself just as she has, they gave me a passing grade! Awayuki-dono truly is my savior!”

“Your steely determination is staggering, but so is how dumb the things you spend effort on!”

W-Wait. Hold on. Calm yourself, Awayuki. Didn't you just say you would accept her? You can't lose your cool over something like this.

Awayuki, do you or do you not love girls? Take a good look at this situation. It couldn't be any better for a cute girl to be so attached to you. You're being handed everything you've ever wanted on a silver platter!

Just look. When you calm down, she's an adorable and loving girl, right? Yeah.

: she's so straightforward with her desires it's like looking at an idiot sister and a light-snow queen

: Live-On brought in this absolute disaster? They're definitely ill. Give us more of this.

: so this is how an Awayuki fundamentalist would turn out...

: a stalker-type yandere who refuses to share?

: oh no, is she gonna do the "oh, there's nobody inside Awa-chan after all" bit?

“Hey! What in the world are you saying? Awayuki-dono's happiness is my happiness. The most important thing is for Awayuki-dono to always be herself. Any fan who tries to get in the way of that is no fan at all!”

“Look! She's a good girl after all!” I knew she'd just come off a little strong with the things she'd said. *Phew. What a relief.*

: If you could get one thing from Awa-chan, what would it be?

“One thing... If we allow things that will certainly never happen, I suppose it would be her uvula.”

“What?!”

: lol

: lmao talk about out of left field

: What's a uvula?

: it's that dick thing hanging out in your throat

: whaaaaa (bewildered)

: But why though LOL

“I mean, a dick’s a dick, right? Even if it’s part of your throat. If I incorporate it into my body, it’d be like we were actually doing it!”

“ ,” I said.

: a triumph of creative thinking!

: more like a disastrous defeat

: lmaoooo

: clip it and ship it, boys!

: oh shit, oh shit...

Sei Utsuki: This has been very instructive.

Shion Kaminari: Is it a comet? No, it can't be. 'Cause comets move like zoom...

: be strong, mind-crushed mom

: The Girl Who Kept Saying "Dick" During Her Intro As Easily As She Breathed, Then Hoped for Sex

“Oh, it looks like we’re out of time! I’d like to wrap things up with the taste of this lemon StroZero! Now then, cheers! Pshhh! Gulp, gulp, gulp! Nnnghhh, feels so goooood!!!”

Pandemonium. Chaos. And with it, Alice-chan's stream ended.

But though the curtains had fallen, for a few minutes, my mouth remained open...

"Heya, everyone! Are you all doing good? I am!"

"Ah?!" Oh, crap, I thought. Alice-chan's intro was so crazy that I completely zoned out. Ugh, and now thinking of her name again is enough to make me start to pass out... Shit, fine! I'll just start thinking of her as "she who must not be named."

Just calm down! This is no time to blow a fuse. The second member is introducing herself now. As her senpai, I have to give her a big ol' welcome! I wonder what the second girl will be like?

I looked at the image on the screen. Yeah. If I had to describe her in one word, it would be big. Seriously, what the hell is with that chest? How many dreams are stuffed away in those?

Now that you've shown me that, I should unsheathe mine as well...or else it would be rude of me...

She seemed to be a little taller than Alice-chan was, and her physique was extremely soft-looking—her breasts first and foremost—and inspired more libido than I could handle. She had a little meat on her bones, though she stopped just short of being chubby. Her facial features were very round on the whole as well, which matched her gentle purple hair that reached her rounded shoulders. It all gave her quite a motherly vibe.

One thing, however, didn't fit into that image—her very visible, very sharply pointed ears.

I see. She's what they call an elf, then. My first impression of her, taking into account her folk-style clothing, was that of a forest queen.

"I'm so pleased to meet you! I'm Ehrai Sonokaze, an elf who usually runs the Ehrai Zoo. I became a VTuber to teach everyone about how wonderful animals are!"

Oh, huh! We've got an elvish zookeeper. The motherly air she's exuding kinda makes sense in that context.

: WE GOT A NEW MOM!

: she beeg :D

: Is she the normal one of the bunch?

: Shion-mama finally has some help!

: wait! we can't assume that just by her appearance. this is live-on we're talking about!

The chat was right—for the moment, she seemed quite normal. Had we finally gotten a regular cute girl for the team?!

"Okay! Since there's a little time left, I'd like to talk about some random animal facts! First are gorillas, which everyone knows about! I'm not referring to those muscle-bound, beach-going men, nor do I mean the glue—or the grip, for that matter—so please don't confuse them!"

"...Huh?"

Wait. It seems like... Wait. Was there a little gap between her appearance and what she said just now...?

Yep. I'd pretty much imagined from what had already happened how this was going to end.

: ah yes the "grip"

: huh?

: The flow changed

: n-no, we're still fine! there's no rule against a pure mom saying the word grip in the context of gorillas!

: i mean, in that case, there's no rule against seiso getting drunk on strozero either

"I know you all know what gorillas look like, but there are probably many things about their biology you don't know! For example, when a gorilla drums on its chest, it actually uses a flat hand rather than a fist. Did you know that?"

"Huh."

: fr?

: I've heard of that

: huh!

: really? but doesn't that gorilla with the necktie do it that way?

: oh yeah, that's right

"There are a lot of movies and games where they use fists, which spreads misinformation about them. But if a gorilla were to beat its chest with closed fists, it would just hurt, and it wouldn't make much noise. None of you would feel good if you were spanked with a closed fist either, would you? It's the same thing!"

"..." Yes, yes, I see.

: a pure, innocent face and world-ending analogies

: why do you even know that's a thing...?

: It's like a regular conversation about a random topic, but every time, she says one thing too many LOL

: she's not taking full swings, but there's bombs mixed in everywhere

: I could probably get used to this...

"Also, while gorillas tend to be thought of as violent animals given their

appearance, they're actually very sensitive and hate fighting! They're weak to stress—it gives them diarrhea a lot. But occasionally they'll just grab their poop! And throw it at people! Sometimes, anyway. It's worth being aware of! I don't like it, of course, but it's very popular with super-high-ranking perverts who lust for both scat play and animals!"



Live-On's human resources really finds the best people, I thought with dead eyes.

: HEY!

: LOL at how she smiled so much when talking about throwing poop

: how the heck do you know about fetishes like that...?

: She said it all with a smile too. I can sense a great darkness within her

: oh! i got it. she's just crazy like the rest of them, that's all.

: hey, did you hear? apparently there's a girl here who started talking gleefully about animals throwing their poop around during her self-introduction

: but there is still good information. what an exquisite balance

: that is true

"Oh, it looks like my time is up! Regretfully, that does it for my introduction of gorillas—scientific name Gorilla gorilla. I hope to introduce more animals to you all in my future streams!"

: Thanks!

: kinda curious ngl

: so she wasn't the sane pick of the group after all lmao

: this makes her the mysterious one, though, right?

: Ah, yeah

: She spent longer introducing gorillas than introducing herself lmao

: I feel like there's still something terrible inside her waiting to come out

“Live-On is starting to seem more like one big freak show at this point.”

Anyway! Time for the last one. How should I put this...? Hmm.

I've given up!

Live-On is just amazing. They're all new, and yet they're all so nuts! There was no way I'd get any kouhais who were immaculate and pure and cute and looked up to me! The third person's gotta be a crazy person too!

But it's fine now. I knew this going in. I'm perfectly calm. For now, for this last kouhai, at least, I want to give her a warm welcome, no matter what fetishes she has or bombshells she drops.

And I'll recommend some stomach medicine to Shion-senpai later. She's got three more handfuls now. RIP her.

Oh, the last one's finally on! Her model is... Oh, it's pretty mature-looking. She might even look the oldest in Live-On so far.

Her long hair was aqua blue, cut to a uniform length, and her features were both sharp and pretty. She had a similar face to Sei-sama, but a little more mild, and her height seemed about the same as Awayuki's model.

Yep. A bewitching older lady! With white and blue clothes that came off as both cool and sexy too. Good, good. But I won't be fooled! Soon as she talks, there's gonna be more to the story!

...Wait. Is she all right? A bit of time has gone by since her model appeared, but she still hasn't said anything. Is she having computer trouble?

“Ah, um... Pleased to meet you... My name is Kaeru Yamatani.”

Oh, looks like she's fine! I thought. But she looks super nervous. Her voice is shaking too. I'm a little worried.

“Um, right from the start, there's something I need to say.”

“Hm?” What could it be? Never heard an opener like that before. But one

thing's for sure—it can't be anything sane!

"Kaeru looks like an adult. But on the inside, she's actually a baby."

"H-Huh?"

"So please pamper me. Mommy me. Spoil me."

"Huh..." *We've got another incredible one here...*

: LOL

: hmm. what i feel now is pure, unadulterated terror

: already she's live-on

: i figure kaeru-chan probably had no brakes to begin with

: one thing's already clear. she's the 4th-gen's seiso-zero slot

"Kaeru's greatest wish is for everyone to be her mommy. Please do baby-play with her for the rest of your life. As I said, I am a baby, after all," she said. She wasn't trying to make her voice sound like a baby's or anything; she was simply claiming in a normal tone that she was a baby.

: what the hell lmao

: she's a baby, after all (said with certainty)

: i see. i understand.

: What do you understand??? LMAO

: How old are you, by the way?

"Kaeru has the body of an adult, but she is quite confident that her mental age is that of a baby. As proof, yesterday, she holed up in her house and did nothing but play Princess Correct all day."

“Aw, hell naw. She’s got a screw loose.” This was bad. This girl was *seriously* yabai. I sensed a darkness from her—and a very modern kind, at that.

: hahahaha

: You wouldn't happen to be that famous age-changing detective, would you?

: she seems like the inverse of him, tbh

: How is she saying these things so confidently lmao

: wait, is she like. doing this for real?

: Huh? If you're gonna call yourself a baby, you'd better be more serious about it! Waaah, waaaah!

: That's right! Don't you think you're being rude to babies?! Goo-goo ga-ga!

: and there's the ones who are super serious about it

: every day, we stray further from god's light

“There is no need to worry. I am properly wearing my diaper under my clothing like I’m supposed to be. My model also has another layer that depicts me sucking on a pacifier. It only makes sense, for I am a baby.”

Stop! Seeing that model sucking a pacifier would be so painful! And seriously, how was she so confident so constantly?! *She’s got one messed-up brain...*

“Kaeru believes that she has thus convinced you all that she is, in fact, a baby. Kaeru is searching for lots of people to go wah-wah and goo-goo ga-ga to her. Kaeru really hopes that all interested mommies in chat will come to her stream.”

: uh, sure...

: That sure was a chocolate-filled intro, right to the end!

: chocolate, huh... (dark metaphor)

: if you're gonna call yourself a baby, then please cry like one

“All right. Ahem. Ahhhhhh, waaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah!”

“Yep. You should have gone to a doctor, not Live-On!”



: lmaooooo

: holy shit lmao

: it sounds so threatening when she does it hahahahaha

: The Girl Who Lost Her Shame

: settle down while you work, please

: This is your mommy! I've purchased a resume for you!

“Nooooooooo! Please, please—anything but that! Don’t employ me! I’ll do anything! I promise!”

“W-Wait, what’s happening?! She’s as resistant to employment as I am!”

I heard feet pattering away. After that, Kaeru-chan never actually returned to the stream. Her self-introduction was long in the past, so that marked the end of the fourth generation’s intro streams.

What the hell did society do to her?

As for my overall impressions of the fourth gen... Well. It felt like eating a Manchu-Han Imperial Feast, then a full-course French meal, and finally an entire sushi boat!

That said, though, I was actually kind of excited for the future.

Chapter 1

Chill Collab (IMHO) With Mashiron

Ever since the fourth generation came in, Live-On had grown to be more exciting—irresistibly so. Expectations were probably high too, given the strong character of its members. Talk about the fourth generation was clearly spreading further and wider than it had for the third generation when it had debuted, as well. I didn't think it was because the third gen lacked charm, but because ever since we had come onto the scene, Live-On had been getting more well-known by the day. Our efforts had led to company growth, becoming a bridge that would allow our kouhais to get off to smooth starts.

And for my stream today, I'd chosen to collab with...

"Skidoo skidoo, we can too (*pshhh*)! Hey all, it's Shuwa-chan! Woohoo! It's time to introduce today's screwed-up character!"

"Hello. I'm Mashiron, a.k.a. Mashiro Irodori, whose facial expression muscles have died after being violated by *that* particular childhood memory. Also, I try to be relatively less screwed up than the other Live-On members."

"No need for modesty!"

"Modesty? Never heard of her."

As usual, I'd gone with Mashiron. *I mean, I'm clearly about to start a big boss rush here, aren't I? I figured I had to build up my energy with my beloved Mashiron. It's a save point and a rest point in one!*

Besides, I naturally hadn't gotten any requests for collaborations from the fourth-gen members just yet. Most surprising was that the idol girl hadn't asked. When she'd debuted, I'd been scared she was about to contact me right away, and my fears coming to nothing just made it even spookier...

There was no point in wondering about what I didn't know, though. *So let's get some of that StroZero today and pump ourselves full of energy like one of*

those younger ladies on morning kids' educational programs! This StroZero hostess is still alive and kicking!

"After answering some Castellás with Mashiron, we've got a seriously screwed-up project for you all!"

"Ah, I see. You think 'screwed-up' is a compliment, don't you?"

"It's common knowledge in our industry."

"You have a point."

: Mashiron is here!

: Shuwashuwa-mashimashi-bonerboner!

: little early to pop one, don't you think? lmao

: I wonder how that little puppy's doing...

: they're doing a reboot actually

: eh? if you're watching this stream, you can't be a young child, so how do you know that?

: It's a trap!

: What's wrong with a little kid watching Shuwa-chan?!
I'm a little kid!

: man little kids these days are amazing. they watch this and drink strozero and everything

: well, Live-On did get a little baby recently, so this must be education for gifted children

: A little baby? More like Mrs. Baby

: Mrs. Baby? More like Mrs. Crazy

: lol we're already treating her like a danger to herself and others

: Wonder if there's any chance she's watching this stream?

: I figure she'd respond if she was here, given the topic, but if she hasn't, she's probably not

: Guess that makes sense

"Anyway! Now that we're all amped up, let's answer some Castellás, woohoo!"

"Woohoo."

Q: Other people might have said this already, but when I tried the drinking method I saw on Cheeper, it was super yabai, so here's my report.

- 1. Bought Red Bull energy drink and StroZero**
- 2. Diluted the StroZero with Red Bull**
- 3. Drank**
- 4. Delicious!**

"I actually tried this out for myself yesterday just to see how it was!" I exclaimed.

"Oh? Cool. What did you think?"

"Yabastic-violence."

"I've never heard that word in my life, but I can tell it means dangerous. Especially since Shuwa-chan, the Batista of StroZero herself, said it."

"But seriously, it's really one of those *danger: do not mix* things. The zero in StroZero goes into the negatives because of the Red Bull, basically. It didn't taste bad, but it's one magic drug the human body simply can't withstand. If you're concerned for your health at all, I urge you not to try it."

"I see. I'm not very good with alcohol, so I'll probably never have the chance anyway. I've never actually drunk StroZero before either."

"Oh, I want to see you going hard on the booze, Mashiron!"

“Not everyone turns into a comedian when they drink StroZero like you do, Shuwa-chan.”

Q: What do you think of Alice Soma-chan? I hope you two will get married soon.

“Oh, the Shuwa-chan fanatic, right? Talk about a running start. I think she got enough speed to get into orbit,” Mashiron commented.

“That kid is some yabastic-violence.”

“Would you mind not comparing our poor kouhai to that magic drug thing?”

“But I felt like my chastity was in danger! It was scary and I don’t like it!”

“I’m pretty sure every VTuber in Live-On has thought the same about you, including myself. Oh, and speaking of—she seems to view me as her rival.”

“Wait. That right?”

“She said something on a stream about me being her enemy in love.”

“I formally request the situation where you’re jealous of Alice-chan and force yourself on me.”

“Is that a hentai tag?”

“I almost can’t believe you were so quick with that one. Then I remembered you’re Mashiron.”

Q: I messed up an order the other day and got 100 boxes of StroZero instead of 100 cans.

I can’t return them, so please, help me. I’ll do anything.

You could handle about 100 boxes, right...?

Q: Sorry if this was already asked.

First, you open a StroZero in the bathtub, and then you soak a VTuber in the StroZero water.

This results in a StroZero-slash-that-VTuber flavor. What VTuber would you say has the best flavor, Shuwa-chan?

Also, I'd like to know Awayuki-san's opinion too, since she says you and her are different people.

Personally, I'd like to soak Awayuki-san in it, but take her out before she becomes Shuwa-chan, at least ten times in a row.

I'd want to taste the StroZero-Awayuki flavor while she's getting extremely mad next to me.

"I got a Castella that gives a perfect solution for the bro with a hundred boxes, so I read them together!"

"I have a lot of questions, but my biggest one is why the second sender thought someone might have asked about that already."

"Wait. I think I just thought of something *incredible*. Assuming the liquid that comes out of my body is StroZero, all I have to do is this. Get into a sauna, collect my StroZero sweat, drink it, then go back into the sauna again... If I keep doing that, I can drink StroZero forever. That'd be a perpetual motion engine, wouldn't it?"

"What an amazing idea. Even Edison would have been shocked—at how stupid it is."

"Anyway, the VTuber I want to drink most would be Mashiron. A truly gentle and mellow flavor!"

"(°\\\°)! Next!"

: hahahaha lmao

: that strozero bath bro was just so casually sadistic
LOL

: huh? you'd do ANYTHING?

: yes! we got to see mashiron being deredere for real!

: You really can't get better than these two

Q: Shuwa-chan, you did an Animal Kart stream before. Are there any games you'd like to play with other VTubers?

Like fighting games, or co-op games, or a gacha stream with Hareru-senpai...

"Right, a game, huh... Oh! Lately I've been curious about horror games, I guess!"

"Huh? That's pretty surprising, actually. Why?"

"Eh, I just felt like it might be a good stream!"

"So you're just going with the flow. I can see that ending poorly."

Q: Hah! *throws aside pickle*

I'll...shake off everything (compliance-related)!

Trial! Ten! Ten! Ten! Teen! Voon!

"I'll show you...the power of StroTrial!"

(Me) "No, stop! You still haven't actually been able to go past 10% alcohol content!"

(Normal person normally passing by) "No. He can do it."

Beep beep beep beep... *throws stopwatch into the air*

Haaaaah! *swings pickle over and over*

Beep! *catches the stopwatch and stops it*

"9.8%... That's the alcohol content until your despair."

(Jarbag) "Uwaaaah!" *explodes*

"So many intense plot twists! I can't stop crying!"

"It's not even a question, but I guess that's normal now. Castellars are just an excuse to write cypypastas. And what is even being fought right now? Nothing's

even coherent. And a normal person wouldn't really do anything *but* normally pass by, so it's redundant to say it twice."

Q: Vweee! Hazard on!

Chuhai!

Lemon!

Super best match!

Dontenkan! Dontenkan!

Dontenkan! Dontenkan!

StroZero gulp! Ahh feels so good!

StroZero gulp! Ahh feels so good!

Are you ready?

33-4 (fweeee)

Uncontrol switch! StroZero Hazard!

Yabaaai!

"You all really like Kamen Rider, huh?" I remarked, referring to the previous two Castellas. "We should have one who transforms using StroZero in the next series! Please hire me to be the lead actress!"

"I don't even know what either of them is from!"

"That's because you're more a PreCure fan, Mashiron!"

"Oh, shut up. So sue me."

: (your brain is) yabaaai!

: But why! It has nothing to do with StroZero!

: Well, they have characters for phones and cards and stuff, right? Why not a StroZero one? And her forms could be StroZero flavors

: seeing a real-life drunk yuri-lover rattling off dirty jokes as soon as i turn on the TV in the morning? take my money already!

: What a kind world we live in

: Her signature phrase would be "Have sex with me! I saved your life, after all!"

: way more evil than the bad guys LOL

: here's some more candidates: "Sex is here!" "Now, it's time for sex!" "I've come here with this old lady." "I'm just a passing Pervert Rider. Remember that!" "My life is on fire (literally burning down)." "Now, shall we start the exam? ;)" "I just felt like it might be good."

: a hero dark enough to make Deadpool look cute

: i love how mashiron has surprisingly maiden-like tastes

: Try imagining Loliron being obsessed with PreCure. It'll really activate your almonds.

"Sweet!" I said. "Think it's time to wrap up the Castellás and get rolling with this little project?"

"Sounds good. What are we doing today?"

"Listen, Mashiron. There are people blessing us with illustrations of us VTubers every day, right?"

"Yeah. I'm an illustrator myself, so I know quite a bit about that."

"So then you naturally know all about the adult illustrations drawn on a daily basis, right?"

"I mean, I guess."

"But there aren't any VTubers who show off adult illustrations on stream, even though they'll do it for normal ones all the time! It makes me sad! I want to see more than the underground stuff—I want to see myself in my birthday

suit, right out in the sun!”

“Is this a new form of exhibitionism?”

“Which brings me to today’s project! Today, I’ll be showing off some adult illustrations that I painstakingly chose from the illustration submission site Pixie!”

“Shuwa-chan, there’s this thing called a ‘ban.’ Have you heard of it? Suicidal VTubers are a little too dark to be popular, I would think. If there’s anything troubling you, you can talk to me, okay?”

“I’m not exactly about to get myself banned! I’m not sick and tired of everything! I pixelated all the yabai bits! But later, the two of us can talk a little smut, guh heh heh heh!”

“This is gonna be exhausting.”

“I’m so infatuated with lewd illustrations that I can’t live without them anymore! You can trust in my choices!”

“They do say a woman’s libido peaks around thirty to thirty-five, after all. Meaning this is gonna keep happening for another two years...”

“I’m not thirty-three! Quit lying about stuff so casually!”

“That’s even more terrifying. I’m scared to think what your future holds.”

“Lust—one of the seven deadly sins. Heh. I’ll just have to go on living while shouldering the burden of this karma! (smug)”

“Guess so.”

“Please deny it... If you just accept it, that makes me look pathetic...”

: ooooookay...

: so, she's gonna show them to us herself, huh. uhh...

: They're literally a comedy duo at this point lmao

: A very surreal straight man/idiot combo

Sei Utsuki: Oh, I'm far from straight when it comes to

Awayuki-kun.

: Sei-sama?!

: You were watching? LMAO

: Sei-sama, you, um, are talking about manzai comedy, right...?

: hint: what are you if you're not straight

: lol

“Oh, hey, it’s Sei-sama! ’Sup?”

“Looking at pornographic illustrations in front of a senpai? This could only happen in Live-On.”

“Anyway, that’s enough of an intro! Let’s start with a relatively healthy one, woohoo! Here’s the first illustration!”

An illustration covered the screen, showing me blushing a little bit, my face splattered with the contents of an open—and much-shaken—can of StroZero. It was borderline, but safe, since it didn’t need any pixelation!

“Ahh, suki suki, slick and sticky! Schlicky?”

“Shuwa-chan, that word’s already a thing, and it’s very yabai, so you can’t use it. Also, please don’t get turned on by a silly image of yourself.”

: WHAT!

: wtf you can't say that on stream lmao

: schlicking to the sticky, what a classic move

: actually, what am I even looking at here...?

: holy crap, her lust is so high-level she even feels it toward herself

“You’re a professional illustrator, Mashiron. What do you think of this one?”

“The expression is well-done. It’s easy to see that she’s both embarrassed and brimming with anticipation and curiosity. Just wonderful—leaving aside the question of why it’s StroZero.”

“It’s StroZero, which means it’s A-OK. We should have a bukkake party together sometime.”

“Oh, well, I’d like to stay human, so no thanks.”

“What does Mashiron think I am? Am I not human...? W-Well, anyway. Let’s go to the next illustration!”

The next one I had in store was one I particularly liked, personally! At first glance, it was just a normal picture of me fully naked—but from my crotch, something awesome stood erect...

Witness it! My Excalibur, shining silver!

“Shuwa-chan, is that... Wait...”

“That’s right! Such beauty... The very idea that I’d have a tall can of StroZero growing out of my crotch shows how amazing the artist’s sense is!”

“Why do you sound so proud about it? I can castrate you, if you want.”

“Am I to interpret that as you implying that you want to do it with me by ‘emptying out my erect can’?”

“No, you are *not* to.”

“Anyway! From your professional viewpoint, what do you think of it?”

“How the heck am I supposed to review this illustration? The drawing itself is really well done, I suppose. Yeah. The skill with which it’s drawn makes it even more surreal.”

“Personally, I prefer the tall cans. I totally get it.”

“I have no idea what you ‘get,’ but I totally ‘get’ that there are things in this world I’m better off not knowing.”

“Was that philosophy?”

“No—this illustration is what’s philosophical. I’m trying to figure out what people will think when they dig it up millennia from now, and I gotta tell you,

it's stressing me out.”

: how am i supposed to hold all these LOLs?

: pls, omg, even the innuendo "I'll empty your can" is strozero

: my theory is that there's zero people who fapped to this

: Objection! Alice-chan would do it!

: Can't deny that...

: lmaooo

: future people: huh? uh... what?

: Imagining it makes me roflcopter! Right out of my crotch!

: This is no time for that!

“All right, let’s move onto our next illustration! Here it is!”

“...Hey, Shuwa-chan, is this...”

18

WE CAN'T SHOW
YOU THIS!



Drawn in the illustration were Mashiron and I, neither of us wearing a single thread of clothing, having a good, old-fashioned, friendly adult pro-wrestling match.

“Oho? (´ω`) This is a masterpiece! It deserves the Nobel Prize for ecchi!”

“Apologize to Mr. Nobel. What the heck kind of reaction do you expect me to have, showing me tangled up in a collaboration with a genmate? I don’t know if I’ve ever seen sexual harassment this novel and this straightforward.”

“Also, behind all the pixelation, my Keyblade of Lust is stuck perfectly in Mashiron’s keyhole.”

“Between the last illustration and this one, you keep having stuff growing from your crotch. That doesn’t feel weird to you? You’re technically a girl, remember?”

“I mean, there’s something growing from there so often that I’ve just gotten used to it. It probably happens to me more than any other Live-On member too. I can’t imagine why.”

“Search your feelings. You know the answer.”

: WHAAAAAT!

: Mashiron responding to this so calmly is pretty impressive too

: well, Mashiron's one of the people who starts thinking about lewd things when she starts drawing, so...

Alice Soma: ¥50000

: ?!?!?

: Wait, the real one?!

: The maximum value lmaooo

: Alice-chan, I knew you were watching

: Everybody's a comedian (seriously)

“Oh, Alice-chan? Pleased to meet you. I’m really thankful for your super, but make sure you can still take care of yourself, all right?”

“You sure are loved.”

Whoa, that scared me! I thought. It was so sudden I had to do a double take. Our first interaction with each other is a silent max-value super? What is she thinking?! That scares me!

Had it come at last? Was this her silent warning to be careful on the roads at night? And after that super, she didn’t seem to be showing up in the comments either. What a mystery...

It might mean something’s gonna happen in the next few days... Anyway, for now, I’ll focus on my stream.

“A-Anyway, getting back to the illustration. What do you think of it, Mashiron?”

“It’s pretty good. You can tell the parts are all properly on the human frames, so it doesn’t give you a sense of something being wrong. Also, it’s very erotic.”

“Isn’t it? I was so impressed when I first saw it. Eee hee hee. Mashiron, can you draw better than this?”

“Oh? I was the one who did your beautiful design, remember? Don’t make light of my skills. I can give you a private demonstration of them sometime if you want, Shuwa-chan.”

“That confidence and pride you have are always so cool—but will Mashiron be able to satisfy me in the end?”

“You’d better look forward to it. When I get serious, you’ll soon find I’m the *only* one who can satisfy you.”

“You utter fool! My mama’s drawing skills are the finest in the woooooorld!”

: What's going on? They're having a normal conversation, but I feel like I'm hearing something I really shouldn't be

: replace art with something else, and you'll achieve true happiness

: The best unconscious seduction Mashiron has to offer
: thanks for the help fantasizing
: Mashiron's pictures truly are art, actually

We kept going at that pace, half serious and half joking around, as we introduced the rest of the illustrations. At the beginning, Mashiron had said this stream would be exhausting, but she ended up getting even livelier as time went on—maybe it was lighting that illustrator's fire in her.

"This illustration is really unique, huh? Pretty cool," said Mashiron.

"Yeah. My face is red for some reason, and I'm counting down—you really have a good eye for this stuff, Mashiron. Only perverted people would understand this illustration."

"Hey, Shuwa-chan, you should give it a try out loud."

"OK. Three...twooo...one...strong...zero..."

"And you ruined it."

: yoooo lmao

: She knew it was wrong, but she couldn't resist the StroZero

: no, she didn't know it was wrong lmao

: the sheer sense behind this illustration is just wow

: What on earth could she be counting down to

"Time to move on to the final illustration! And it's another real good one!"

"Wait. Shuwa-chan, I don't know if you can show this."

"Huh? But I pixelated it."

"Yeah, you hid the important parts, and you're technically following the rules...but that's a lot of skin showing, so it might be in the gray area. I think it

should be fine, though? It's just that recently, moderation's a little all over the place..."

Huh? Wait, despite everything, I've never been banned before! Now I'm panicking! "S-Seriously? Crap, what now? What do I do?! I have to hide it! Um, umm, I'll, uh, hide it with myself!"

"Eh?"

In a hurry, I enlarged my character model and used it to cover up the illustration. "P-Phew. We should be safe now."

"I wouldn't be so relieved if I were you. Don't use your own body instead of pixelation."

"It was the only thing I could think of on such short notice..."

"Well, the stream should be safe, at least, so it's fine."

"I'm really sorry for using the body you gave to me for something weird..."

"Don't worry about it. It was too sudden for you to think of anything better."

"I'll be sure to use my body right next time—in a much more satisfying way for you, Mashiron! Here, look! Up and down—like a piston!"

"Wooow, amaaazing."

: i cannot stop laughing at giant shuwa-chan

: I have to hide them with myself (protective god)

: nice save!

: this girl is seriously funny

: Mashiron, please don't give up on playing the straight man XD

"Well, as much as I'd like to be in every single one of your streams, I logistically can't. So be more careful in the future."

"Okay, I promise. I figured it would be safe as long as it followed the rules, but

I slipped up... Anyway, that was supposed to be the last one, so let's call it here!"

"All righty."

"Thank you for watching, everyone! See you next time! And thanks for coming, Mashiron!"

"You're welcome. Thank you, everyone."

After I closed the stream window, I sent Mashiron a chat message thanking her for the collab. "Oh?" But just as I was about to close the chat window after sending it, I suddenly got a voice call from my manager, Suzuki-san. "Hello?"

"Oh, hello there. It's Suzuki. I called because I saw your stream was finished. Do you have a moment?"

"Hello, Suzuki-san. I'm fine. Is something the matter?"

"Well, sort of. Yuki-san, you have collaboration requests... Well, you've actually had them for quite a while now..."

That stammering, unsure quality to her voice was unlike Suzuki-san. She was reluctant to get to the point. What on earth was up?

"I suppose there's no use beating around the bush, so I'll give it to you straight. You've been getting collaboration requests from Alice Soma-san."

"Ah..."

"Since before she debuted."

"For *how* long?!" So she really *had* been relentlessly aiming for me! This was like deciding you'd be going to a big mixer, then inviting someone to a hotel the day before! Hold your horses! Then I said, "Wait. But you didn't contact me about it until today? Oh—I'm not criticizing you or anything. I was just curious."

"She's the type of person where we're never quite sure what she'll do. According to HR, they said she was a good girl, but just to be sure, I told her to talk to me instead—just at first—and did a little screening of my own."

Look, they're treating you like a dangerous person. You reap what you sow, though. Maybe her empty, max-value super earlier was a way of trying to

convey her feelings to me even though she wasn't allowed to contact me...

“After watching her for a little while, I decided that even though she likes you a lot, she’s not the type to cause trouble for you, which is why I’m contacting you now.” Suzuki-san paused. “What would you like to do?”

“Huh... If you decided she’s fine, Suzuki-san, then I’m sure everything will turn out okay. I’d be happy to collab with her.”

“Thank you for being so generous about this. I’m sure Alice-san will be happy too.”

“Not at all. I’m a senpai now. I just kind of want to look good, that’s all.”

That was the only business she’d had with me, so the call ended there. Apparently, Alice-chan would be able to contact me directly now, without going through a middleman.

Being a senpai... It wasn’t something that felt real yet, but as someone more experienced, I couldn’t embarrass myself. But still... I had no idea what the right way to deal with Alice-chan was.

I’d always been the one going after others, and now someone was after me. It was the fear of the unknown—which stuck with me as I fell asleep that night.

Dark Past Viewing Stream

About a week had gone by after the fourth generation’s vivid debut. All three of them seemed to be performing to expectations, each one playing to her own unique characteristics. As their senpai, I wasn’t about to let them snatch the lead from me, so I was now sitting in front of my computer, having just started another stream. However...

“...Hello. It seems we have a not-so-nice light snow falling today.”

I could say without much doubt that I’d never given such a sullen greeting before. It feels weird to talk about myself, but I *was* making money from this. That meant I was a professional streamer. My mindset was to do my best to entertain my viewers.

But... But still.

“Ma’am! Alice Soma, reporting for duty, ma’am!”

Unfortunately, I was looking at a bomb in front of me—a stupidly enormous one, fit to explode at any moment. How could *anyone* maintain a smile in that situation?

: IT'S HAPPENING! ¥3000

: All my life has led up to this collab

: good collabs lately!

: lmaooooo awa-chan is so depressed

: well duh, she's sitting next to someone who said she wanted her throat-dick in her self-intro ¥300

: Alice-chan is the perfect counter to Shuwa-chan sexually harassing all the other members! Enjoy it!

: I'll pay you back double!

: why would you EVER give back EVEN MORE to her

: I'm surprised this collab got green-lit LOL

“I mean. Well. I’m her senpai, right? I’ll humor her. Naturally.”

The day of our collab was finally here. I’d gone into this with a mindset of “I don’t have a clue how this is going to turn out,” but I’d still never really had the option to refuse. Alice-chan had only just debuted anyway—her real life was probably a hectic mess at the moment. I’d experienced that in the past myself, so I wanted to support her as her senpai.

If I *had* turned down the collab, Alice-chan might have been so shocked that she would’ve been unable to appear in front of people with any confidence afterward. That was one thing I really wanted to avoid.

Which means a collab is totally fine. Totally! But... I just wish she didn’t have to write a thousand-word essay in my Cheeper DMs just to invite me!

When I’d first seen it, it had been quite a surprise. I’d thought for a moment

she'd written a novel at me. Suzuki-san would be cautious about getting something like that in her mailbox too. Alice had written it in a very proper Japanese way, leading with comments about the weather and various other small-talk remarks, but man, it was so long! The preface had been particularly egregious—I'd read over five hundred words before she'd even broached the topic of doing a collab with me.

Please, try to put yourself in my shoes next time. I had to read five hundred words while being constantly afraid you were about to ask for my throat-dick...

"This may be the greatest day of my life!" remarked Alice-chan. "A collaboration with Awayuki-dono—who is, by all rights, a goddess among women!"

"Since when did I turn into a goddess?"

"You are the goddess of StroZero!"

"Sounds too sinful to be holy. Can't I be something else, at least?"

"Goddess of dirty jokes! Goddess of vomiting! Goddess of fetishes! There are plenty! Please, feel free to use all of them as your titles!"

"I feel like Ragnarok would be constantly raging in that goddess's head..."

: she art thou!

: and thou art she?

: Ragnarok? wait, then Live-On takes place in a mythological world...?

: the stories are wild enough that it's hard to imagine any of them happening in the human world

: i'm sticking with my "awa-chan is actually zeus" theory on the basis that they both love women.

: That is the most baseless basis i've ever heard LMAO

: please, stop praying to awa-chan! she's getting too strong! (keep going)

“Anyway, enough of the intro,” I continued. “I’ve left this collab entirely in Alice-chan’s hands, at her suggestion. I still have no idea what she’s planning for this. I’m pretty sure I’m walking into a very obvious land mine, but Alice-chan, would you mind explaining?”

Alice-chan didn’t say anything for a few seconds.

“Huh? Alice-chan?”

“Just one moment, please. I was using a voice recorder just now to record you saying my name, Awayuki-dono.”

“Huh? What do you mean?! For what?!”

“For personal use, ma’am!”

“For *what*, though?! What do you intend to use it *for*?!”

“I hope I’m not required to answer that, ma’am!”

“And it was at this moment I knew—I fucked up.”

: Alice-chan is mental...

: i mean, she DOES talk about Awa-chan more than herself on her own streams

: I watched one of those. I almost died laughing when she started analyzing Shuwa-chan's voice down to the individual hertz

: She's definitely an idol, she's so COOL on her singing streams. and yet...

: Ah, implied context. Language truly is beautiful

“Ahh, haa...” I groaned. “I, um, I think we should really put the intro behind us now! Please explain the collab already!”

“Understood, ma’am! Here is the title: ‘Chitty Chitty Watching the Legendary Birth of Shuwa-chan Together!’”

“Ah. Unfortunately, everyone, the light snow seems like it’s about to stop. I hate to say it, but we’ll have to end the stream here. Let’s meet again when the light snow falls.”

“Stop in the name of love, ma’am! It hasn’t even begun! Is something the matter?!”

“What do you mean *is something the matter*?! Why do I have to go back and watch my dark, regret-filled past?!”

“Huh? I thought the story was that you and Shuwa-chan-dono were two different people. I don’t think your statement makes much sense in that context.”

“Alice-chan, I don’t know if you’ve ever heard of it, but you might want to look up what *tacit understanding* means.”

“Copy that. Ma’am.”

“Great! Then we’re going to pretend this collab never happened—”

“Please don’t do that, ma’am! I’ve spent thirty hours analyzing the precise moment of Shuwa-chan’s birth, all for this collab! I’m certain the viewers will be delighted!”

“Alice-chan, time is a precious resource. It’s limited. Please learn how to use your time properly in the future.”

Alice-chan looked utterly baffled. “What value is there in spending time on anything other than you?” she asked.

“Onions have layers, ogres have layers... My tears have layers too...”

Please wake up, Alice-chan! I begged internally. *You’re idolizing the joke of the Live-On world! Choose someone else, like Shion-senpai, or...or...*

Oh. Oh, no. Shion-senpai is literally the only sensible one of the other eight VTubers from the first three gens.

Ahh, what a pleasant, open office I get to work in. Nobody has any intention of hiding their true selves—there just aren’t any walls in this building at all. I bet I’ll start calling Live-On the polar opposite of my old, exploitative company one day.

Speaking of—Shion-senpai's popularity must be Live-On's greatest mystery.

Anyway, getting back to the main topic...

Hesitantly, I asked, "Are we really doing this?"

"Yes, ma'am!" Alice-chan paused. "But if you really, really don't want to, then we don't have to."

"No, I was just surprised. It's completely fine. I'm sure all the viewers will appreciate it. Don't say I wasn't generous for letting you use all my voice clips in my videos as free assets."

"Huzzah! May I borrow your channel to stream it?"

"Go for it."

At first, the stream where I'd forgotten to turn things off hadn't been archived, of course. But it had been so heavily clipped, and everyone seemed to want it. Eventually, I'd come back around and put it back up on my own channel, partly as a way to accept myself. The view count on it was horrifying at this point, but I obviously hadn't watched it myself yet. *Wonder how this will turn out...*

"Good, my preparations are complete! We'll be watching a highlight reel starting from when you forgot to turn off your stream until the end of the solo stream you did after that!"

I gulped audibly.

Pshhh! Gulp, gulp. "Phew!"

Right, I thought. This was the scene where I'd drunk in front of the viewers for the first time—though I'd had no reason to believe the stream hadn't shut off.

"Ah," breathed Alice-chan, "the first cry of the newborn Shuwa-chan-dono!"

"Wait. How would a newborn say *phew* like that?"

"Perhaps because the amniotic fluid was StroZero?"

"Your ideas are pure, unrestrained genius," I said flatly.

“I first gained intelligence on this stream via online news, so I didn’t see it in person. Those legendary people who witnessed it firsthand are truly a source of envy for me...”

“It wasn’t a legend. It was just a streaming accident. It was just the moment one girl turned into a meme character for life.”

“Please, ma’am, there’s no need to belittle yourself! For me, this was the moment a new goddess was born! Just like Jeanne d’Arc was said to have heard the voice of God, I insist that I heard the voice of Shuwa-chan-dono!”

“Stinky booze breath from a deity? You should’ve just ignored it...”

“Whew, that’s the good stuff! God, I love the sound of cracking open a tall one!”

“That’s your voice right after you finished chugging an entire 350-milliliter can!” exclaimed Alice-chan.

“Now that I look back, I was *really* going hard on the booze back then. I definitely pace myself more now.”

“The hell? Why am I so hard? I’m supposed to be your mommy here, but I’m so hard watching your stream!”

“Ahhhh!” I yelled. “Someone shut this girl’s mouth already!” I couldn’t help but cover my ears at the embarrassment. *What the hell was I even saying?!*

“Your remark about getting extremely hard after calling yourself your genmate’s mommy was so moving! I’ll strive to do my best so that one day, you get hard for me too!”

“Calm down, Alice-chan. You can still turn back. Talk to your parents again and take another look at your future.”

“I’ve already acquired permission from my mother and father! To gain their understanding, all three of us had a party where we watched all of Awayuki-

dono's streams!"

"What are you doing?! People already call me the eternal cringe blizzard of the living room! The number-one VTuber you need to be sure you're wearing headphones for!"

"My mother said, 'Oh, she's like how I used to be!' and my father replied, 'Ha ha ha! You don't need to be so modest!' It was actually a very friendly watch party!"

"Huh? I don't understand. Wouldn't that mean your mom is way out there?"

: None of this makes any sense for the real world we live in and I can't stop cackling

: That is the first time I've ever heard the term "amniotic fluid" used in conversation ¥20000

: if I'm brave enough, will I be able to talk to girls too?

: Why not talk to them every day, starting today?

: just, whatever you do, don't mention amniotic fluid to a girl.

: fr? i figured i could just say something casual like "oh, right, so i've been on kind of an amniotic fluid kick lately"

: Please look forward to the next episode of Virgin Bro (in his next life) ¥1000

: Alice-chan's bloodline... what...

: Holy crap. Genetics are insane

: Is your family all from Live-On?!

"Now then," continued Alice-chan. "When you forgot to turn off the stream, Awayuki-dono wasn't very high-voltage to begin with, so there aren't actually

that many quotes. With that said, I'd like to tackle some of the famous scenes from your solo stream."

"Yeah, I suppose it was just me talking to myself, huh?"

"I originally wanted to include the throw-up clip, but management stopped me, unfortunately."

"Of course they did. Who wants to hear the sound of someone vomiting?"

"Hey, there's a demand for it."

"No. There isn't."

"I edited it into a loop and use it as a lullaby sometimes."

"Then I worry about your ears."

"Anyway, let's watch the famous scenes from her solo stream! There were so many moving performances that it was hard to narrow it down to just a few!"

"Wait. When did I do *anything* during that stream that would make someone cry? And even if they did, it would be from laughing too much, right? Though I guess I'd be crying. From embarrassment."

"It caused my tear ducts to go into overdrive! Shuwa-chan is love, Shuwa-chan is life!"

"Was it? Well, maybe my memory is wrong. I suppose there's a possibility it was an incredibly moving stream, like on a super-fine-particle level or something. Anyway, let's see."

"Yes, ma'am! Here's the first legendary quote!"

"Gulp, gulp, gulp! Nnnghhh, feels so goooood!"

"That's not your tear ducts going into overdrive," I insisted. "That's like, your laughing muscles or your nerves, isn't it?"

"It's still a mystery how you were able to make the sound of drinking *that* incredible. No matter how much I practice, I can't imitate it..."

"Practice it too much, and you'll probably have the police at your door."

“And, if I may be so bold, it’s also a top Shuwafap moment!”

“Wait. What did you just say? It was something insane, wasn’t it?! What on earth is Shuwafap?!”

After a few moments, Alice-chan replied, “Blush. Sorry, I do it daily, sorry.”

“,” I said.

: LMFAOOOOO

: Shuwafap? that's a very specialized fetish, isn't it?

: no, I totally get it. For me, it's usually the moment Shuwa-chan chugs it that I drink StroZero in my son

: I want to believe that's an overseas bro using a translation app that mistook "with" for "in"

: I cringed so hard I came all the way back around the planet

“I’m getting married to StroZero.”

“The moment a powerful rival in love was born,” sighed Alice-chan.

“Wait. They sell cans of chuhai at the convenience store. How are they your rival in love? Did you wander into the *Bobobo* world or something?”

“Shuwa-chan/StroZero is the classic ship! But while it may be an ironclad stronghold, I will breach it! I swear, I’ll have you make me your woman!”

“Right. There is something I’d like to tell all the viewers about that. It’s something I realized when doing the prep work for my collab with Mashiron yesterday. The ship with the most illustrations submitted to Pixie is me and StroZero. What’s going on there? StroZero isn’t even a VTuber.”

“Your pinky finger and the pull tab of StroZero-dono are connected by the red string of fate!”

“What a waste of string. Also, let’s say I—hypothetically, I would never

actually do this—accepted this as a ship at all. I think it’s definitely still weird that there are so many R-18 illustrations of me and StroZero!”

: lol

: haha, it is totally like bobobo LOL

: there's more of them than you with Mashiron? XD

: holy. i didn't know there were that many lol

: Are they making StroZero into a cute girl or something?

: Nah, they mostly keep it in can form

: My brain just can't keep up with this!

: I need more ecchi yuri illustrations of Shuwa-chan and StroZero!

: the sheer amount of power words in that sentence lmao

“And now we have the final four quotes, one after the other!” declared Alice-chan.

“Huh? Well, I love it when girls are totally clueless. It would have been ruder not to pop a lady boner to that!”

“In fact, if a man thinks a woman is charming, he should just pop one on the spot. Women love men who know what they want.”

“Sei-senpai, Shion-senpai, I’ve always loved you lots and lots. Let’s get married specifically so we can have sex.”

“Oh, come on—two of the streamers I’ve always loved are right in front of me. They gave me the strength to live, you know! Of course I’d ask if they wanted to get down and dirty.”

“Oh my God!” I screamed. “What is this girl saying?! What an actual predator! I’ll kill her! I need to kill her!”

Alice-chan sniffled. “Have such straightforward, honest words ever been spoken? Thanks to you, Awayuki-dono, I realized what I want to do! Thank you for being born! Thank you for being alive today! Thank you for drinking StroZero!”

: omg lol she's responding like a certain detective with a serial murderer right in front of her

: Matsudaaaaa!!

: The Girl Whose Roads All Led to Sex

: yikes! is this what they call the chastity reverse world?

: nope this is real life

I know all you viewers have one or two things in your past you'd prefer to remain buried. But you don't need to worry! Because you can always look toward me—a fully automatic dark-past mass production machine whose every word and action turns into something she doesn't want to remember!

Once the stream was over, I repeated “don't look back on the past” over and over to myself, like a mantra.

Quiz: The Mysteries of Animals

The day after my collab with Alice-chan, I very soon received a collab request from another one of the fourth-gen members. It felt so good, knowing my kouhais wanted to collaborate with me. She seemed to have gotten excited about the idea after Alice-chan had done it, and the next thing I knew, I'd gotten an invitation—and written in very proper and commonsense language this time, to boot!

She has common sense... What an incredible kouhai... I'm practically crying here...

Plus, this wouldn't just be me—it would be a mid-sized collab with four

participants! It was time to get hype, woohoo!

“Heya, everyone! Are you all doing well? I am! Apologies for the wait. I’m Ehrai Sonokaze, zookeeper at Ehrai Zoo! And today, three wonderful guests have come to play at that zoo with me!”

“*Pshhh!* Hey there! This is Shuwa-chan, who is in heat all year round! Woohoo!”

“Nya-nyan! I’m Nekoma Hirune, and I feel like I should probably be a resident of the zoo rather than a visitor!”

“Konpika, everyone! The light of the festival is here for all to enjoy! I’m Hikari Matsuriya, and I love animals!”

And there you have it—Ehrai-chan had invited us all to do a collab with her! According to her, she was very proud of the idea she’d had for a collab and wanted her senpais to take part. Since she’d been the one to suggest it, that naturally made her the emcee for the stream.

Yes, I see you there—you, the one who just thought that she, the one who’d spent more time blasting off gorilla details than introducing herself during her debut, could never be the moderator! Ever since she’d started streaming, people had been talking more and more about how she was actually surprisingly quite skilled at wrangling both the straight-man and the idiot roles! Those skills are something I’d like you to pay attention to during this stream!

: The zookeeper is here!

: Pshhh!

: this is quite a lineup...

: It's stacked. So stacked. More stacked than the zookeeper is.

: wait, is this actually a zoo but the only change is the animal cries are in Japanese? LMAO

: Zookeeper, are you ok? I think you'd have to be at least on Shion-mama's level to corral these three

: she kept pace with Sei-sama's conversations during another collab, so maybe she can do it

: I love how she makes the wittiest retorts in the calmest voice ever

: in heat all year round? yep, matches my interpretation

“I’ve already told all the guests about this collab, but it’s time to tell you, the viewers! Quiz: The Mysteries of Animals! I’m going to be introducing animals with strange and wondrous traits, and my senpais here will guess what they are! Oh, and obviously, no looking at the comments during questions!”

“You can leave this in my hands, everyone,” I said with a chuckle. “I have no blind spots once I’ve had my StroZero.”

“I’ll do my best to put my kusoge knowledge to good use!” chimed in Nekoma-senpai.

“I spent all day yesterday practicing my button-mashing technique and strengthening my concentration through meditation, all for this!” exclaimed Hikari-chan. “So today, Hikari is invincible!”

“None of that has to do with animals, though!” retorted Ehrai-chan gently.

: is it over? it's over

: LOL

: I bet you Hikari-chan didn't study up on anything because she wanted a fair-and-square fight

: and the other two are just regular pudding-heads

: There's probably gonna be a whole bunch of times where thinking about it just makes you lose, so I'm gonna drink some StroZero too, while I have the chance

: ah, I see. is that like drinking to cure a hangover?

: No. No it is not...

“I know my senpais are all raring to meme heavily, but I’ve come prepared for what is sure to turn into a comedy act! Let’s get to the first question! Our first animal is this one: a platypus. It’s very cute—it looks like a small sea otter, and has an extremely characteristic, kappa-like beak! Platypuses have lots and lots of strange traits, so if you can guess any of them, you’ll get the point for the question. This is an easier one, so I put it first! If any of you think of an answer, just play the *ding* sound effect I gave you beforehand.”

I displayed the window and hovered my mouse cursor over the icon that would play the sound effect. Apparently, it was set up so that Ehrai-chan would be able to determine who rang it...in which case, there was no time to waste!
Ding!

“Shuwa-chan-senpai, go right ahead!”

“I bet it can do some *extremely* lewd things with that kind of beak,” I answered. “Heh. Got it.”

“Nope, sorry! And if you keep on suggesting perverted ideas, I’ll shove this platypus’s beak into your mouth so you can’t talk, okay?”

Ding!

“Nekoma-senpai!”

“You can actually get its beak to drop, but it’s less than a one-percent chance.”

“Wrong again! And I think it’s better not to rely on that black FFT strategy book, okay?”

Ding!

“Hikari-senpai!”

“If you take off its beak, it actually has a big scar on its face. But it’s an honorable wound that it received while protecting a precious friend. And now, in order to protect that friend once again, it bares its scar and unleashes its true

power!”



“Also wrong! And that wasn’t even an answer, okay?”

Hrm, I thought. All three of us were wrong, huh. This is actually pretty hard.
/monotone

: quit talking about foreplay with your first-time collab
kouhai LMAO

: Got it. (laughter)

: please, please realize that they're sacrificing
something very important in order to get laughs, lol

: Black book... like a Death Note?

: Well, there was death involved--the mental death of
those who believed what was in it.

: Hikari-chan, that was breathtaking!

: None of them gave a normal answer...

“Since we got three answers, I’ll give you a hint, okay? The hint is: *It’s a
mammal, but...*”

Ding!

“Shuwa-chan-senpai!”

“I want to suck on boobs.”

“Wrong again! I was asking for an answer, not your personal desires, senpai.”

Ding!

“Hikari-senpai!”

“But it molts!”

“Hmm, wrong! But you’re on the right track!”

Ding!

“Does it lay eggs or something?”

“Oh! That’s exactly right! Very good! Ehrai-ght you are!”

: really? (respecting the trivia)

: Are you serious? How does one hatch into a mammal then?

: they're actually dojikko! very clumsy. can't open their eyes underwater, even though other aquatic creatures attack them

: they're like living fossils, who the hell even knows how they managed to evolve like that LOL

: tbh they're really cute, I love them

Gah! I let Nekoma-senpai get one up on me at the start. B-But I can get a right answer if I really try! In fact, I, Awayuki, am going to really try, starting on the next question!

“Okay, we’re on to the second question! The next animal is this bonobo! They used to be called pygmy chimpanzees, and they really do look like little chimpanzees. They’re extremely smart, peaceful creatures. Here’s the question! When bonobos are excited, like when they’re fighting with one another, they perform a certain action to lower their excitement level. What is that action?”

Ding!

“Nekoma-senpai, go ahead!”

“They ram into walls over and over again, performing wall-clip debugging to blank their minds out.”

“Wrong! Have you played so many kusoge that you consider wall-clipping common sense in the real world?”

“Nya-nya! Hey, don’t look down on kusoge! A true kusoge doesn’t even have the word *debug* in its dictionary!”

“Kusoge don’t need dictionaries—they need code rewrites!”

Ding!

“Hikari-senpai!”

“They play sports together! People who sweat together can always understand one another!”

“Wrong! But personally, I really like that idea! I like your ideas, Hikari-senpai!”

“Eheh heh! She gave me a compliment!”

Ding!

“Yes, Shuwa-chan-senpai, go ahead!”

“They drink StroZero. People who expose the insides of their stomachs together can always become friends! StroZero makes that possible!”

“Wrong! And why on earth would a bonobo, which lives in the natural world, drink StroZero at all?”

“But still, with StroZero... I’m sure with StroZero, we could...”

“Shuwa-chan-senpai, do you consider StroZero to be holy water or something?”

“A girl’s ‘holy water’ is packed with infinite secrets, you know.”

“Stop throwing the wheel in random directions, okay?”

“Don’t you have anything to compliment me about like you did Hikari-chan?!”

“I do not!”

: Kusoge don't need a code rewrite, they need a specification rewrite

: They don't need a specification rewrite, they need people who actually understand what video games are

: I want to sweat in the morning playing sports with Hikari-chan too

: ^ He's guilty, your honor.

: wait! look more closely--it's not nighttime sports, it's morning sports! Those have plenty of health benefits!

: i'm a morning sports bro. also i have day and night mixed up

: Definitely guilty, no saving you

: why did shuwa-chan think she'd get praised?

: She's a girl too, right? Couldn't you get holy water from her?

: It would just be filtered StroZero coming out of her. Not holy water

: Shuwa-chan still has a filtering organ??

Oh! Crap. I just said I'd be getting serious, and here I am, unable to hold back my inner idiot. Think! Make yourself look good in front of your kouhai! Now's the time to go for the right answer!

Judging by what Ehrai-chan had said, bonobos were probably pretty smart animals. Being able to come up with peaceful solutions made them pretty advanced, for animals. Wouldn't I get closer to an answer if I thought about what a smart *person* would do in a tight situation? (This was the strange logic of a drunken person.) *Okay. I'll try thinking about it along those lines! If I imagine an actual smart person first, it should be easier to puzzle this out. A smart person, a smart person... Who's a smart person.....?*

"Since that was three answers, I'll give you a hint! The hint is 'touching'!"

Ding!

"Nekoma-senpai, go ahead!"

"Do they dance together or something? Like a social dance?"

"Nope, that's not it! But you're getting a lot warmer!"

I think I just arrived at the truth.

The smart person I was looking for—it had been me all along, hadn't it?

I understood the beauty of StroZero more than anyone else. I exposed my desires more than anyone else, in this world where self-liberation was the

trend. I stood at the forefront of the VTubing world...

The answer had been right under my nose this entire time. But now that I'd found what I was after, the rest was easy! I only needed to think about what I, myself, would do in a high-emotion situation! And the answer to *that* was...

Obviously, sex!

Ding!

"Yes! Shuwa-chan-senpai!"

"Sex! Sex like a butterfly! Sex like a bee! Sex we can! I want to have sex with femaaaaaaaales!!!"

"Oh! That's exactly correct! Ehrai-*ght* you are!"

...Huh?

"For the bonobo, sexual acts are actually extremely normal in everyday life! They do it for communication—to ease tension, for example—and will perform sexual acts regardless of their partner's gender! So, Shuwa-chan-senpai, you're absolutely correct!"

"Wow, Shuwa-chan!" exclaimed Hikari-chan. "That was amazing! By the way, what's sex?"

"That's not possible..." groaned Nekoma-senpai. "Is the world bugging out?"

I'd known full well I'd be leaning into the meme if I gave that particular answer—but to think it had actually been correct... "Wait. Did I actually do something smart?"

"I'm not sure what you mean," replied Ehrai-chan, "but probably not, so don't worry about it!"

: Awayuki used Leaf Storm

: Are you serious lmao

: whaaaaaat?!

: wait, are bonobos shuwa-chan?

: Wait. Doesn't this also mean it's possible Shuwa-chan is a bonobo

: i have no idea anymore

“And now it’s time to raise the difficulty level!” continued Ehrai-chan. “Our next animal is the orca!”

“Wait, an orca?” repeated Hikari-chan. “I thought this was a zoo. Aren’t orcas in aquariums?”

“Oh, but you cling to a mistaken preconception, Hikari-senpai! Ehrai Zoo is home to any creatures that move—meaning that, in addition to regular zoo animals, it features a wide array of marine animals, reptiles, amphibians, and even microorganisms! It’s the greatest theme park in the virtual world!!!”

“I... I see! I had a narrow view of the world! I’ve grown a little bit again! Thanks, Ehrai-chan!”

“My, isn’t that convenient,” remarked Nekoma-senpai.

“Don’t say things like that, Nekoma-senpai. For her sake.”

“Nya.”

On the other hand, that meant Ehrai-chan had a pretty wide range of knowledge!

Still... Orcas, huh? I remembered liking how they looked back when I’d been a kid. Unfortunately, there were no aquariums nearby that were raising any, so I’d never actually seen one in real life. Child me had really only been fascinated by their appearance, so I didn’t know anything about their biology. This one was going to be a bit tough...

But that’s what I thought last time, and I ended up getting it right! Heh heh! Time to show everyone how smart Shuwa-chan is by answering two questions in a row!

“Orcas are extremely adorable, like pandas. But they’re very powerful animals said to stand at the top of the ocean’s food chain! Males can grow up to six meters long, and when you compare skeletons, they make great white sharks

look cute. Plus, they're some of the most intelligent marine animals and can work in teams, making them essentially invincible! Now, here's my question! Orcas are already worthy of the title of strongest for the above reasons, but they have yet another tool in their arsenal—a killer move that makes the rest of their traits look cowardly! What is that killer move?"

A-Are you serious? Orcas are really that strong? Wait. That's enormous, though, isn't it? Six meters—that's basically a small whale at that point!

Strong, even though they're cute? They're beyond winners at life! And here I am, starting to be called a subspecies of bonobo by my chat thanks to the last question!

Ding!

"Nekoma-senpai!"

"Their stats are so high that if they use a power-up item, the value overflows and they become weak instead?"

"Wrong! Between this question and the last, you seem to truly think this world is a kusoge or something."

"I'm a seeker of shit, after all; I love shitty games and shitty movies above all else. Wherever there is shit, Nekoma will be there!"

"I wasn't aware you were a fly now."

Ding!

"Shuwa-chan-senpai!"

"They're made to think all those suffering alongside them at work are their comrades in order to stop them from complaining about the unpaid overtime they have to do every single day?"

"Wrong! Though exploitation has been an issue with orcas in captivity in the past."

Ding!

"Nekoma-senpai, go ahead!"

"They do a sideways tackle while distorting space to enlarge their hitbox?"

“Wrong! We can just let the glory-stealing hyenas eat Plesioth’s subspace hip check.”

: nooooo not the comedy act lmaooooo

: the comedy competition was in the other building, girls

: Shuwa-chan's voice was totally dead when she answered
lmao

: must be coming from experience...

: Any bad little boys with unfair hitboxes will be dealt with by four gunners~

“That was three answers, so it’s time for a hint! The hint is ‘ultrasonic waves’!”

Ding!

“Shuwa-chan-senpai, go for it!”

“They use ultrasonic waves that other creatures can’t hear in order to make dirty jokes in public?”

“Wrong! Though I can see why you’d consider that a killer move, when you regularly make whole strings of dirty jokes where people all over the world can hear you.”

“I’ve already thrown away my shame! I have no need for a killer move like that!”

“Well, orcas have even less need for it.”

Ding!

“Nekoma-senpai, go ahead!”

“They ride on a tornado and fly in the air, causing an orcanado?”

“You’re thinking of a *sharknado*, not an orcanado! Also, I gave you a hint already, but you’re not even touching it, hmm?”

“Nya-nyan! You know of *Sharknado*? What skill!”

“If you look at it as a comedy instead of a shark movie, it’s one of the greatest of all time.”

Ding!

“Oh! The long-awaited button press comes from Hikari-senpai! What’s your answer?”

“Heh heh heh! Sorry, you two, but it looks like I’ve figured out the answer.”

What... No...! You mean Hikari-chan, who has been silent this whole time, has secretly been walking ahead of us?!

“The way you said it, Ehrai-chan, orcas aren’t just powerful—they’re some of the *most* powerful. Possessors of true strength. Which means my answer is this! Someone truly powerful doesn’t even have to touch their prey—they can kill them just by looking at them!”

...Oh. Never mind! It’s just Hikari-chan on her usual chuunibyou game! I got a little worried there, since she’d been holding her answer back this whole time.

Heh heh. Hikari-chan, you’ve made one fatal mistake. When you speak so powerfully, it actually makes you look weak...!

“Oh! That’s, well, basically correct, I think! Ehrai-ght you are!”

“Really?! Yay! I finally got one right!”

No... It can’t be...!

“Orcas compress their ultrasonic waves and shoot them at prey. Even if the prey is far away, it paralyzes their senses and disables their ability to swim!”

I see, I thought. I was right—speaking powerfully does make you look weak. Looking at myself, I realize that now. My words were completely true after all. But I was the one getting hit in the face with the big boomerang...

“On to the last question! Since it’s the final one, I’m not going to pull any punches!”

Ugh. If this is the last one, since we each have one right answer, the next winner will win the entire collab. I’ll have to prepare myself (to get people to

laugh)!

“Continuing on from orcas, we have another sea creature—this time my question is about the monkfish!”

Aha. Now there's another name StroZero can do some work on.

“Monkfish, as you might imagine from how they look, are classified as deepwater fish. They hide on the ocean floor, then open their big mouths to swallow up any prey that gets near them whole! And despite their grotesque appearance, they're an extremely delicious sort of fish, and you've probably eaten them several times in meals like hot pot. Ankimo especially is wonderful—it's made from the liver of a monkfish!”

“Ehrai-chan, let's have a hot pot party tomorrow,” I suggested. “I'll take one monkfish, please!”

“Monkfish in a zoo are not for eating!”

“Oh! I have a good pot for it!” chimed in Hikari-chan.

“What else should we put in?” wondered Nekoma-senpai aloud.

“Huh? What's going on?” asked Ehrai-chan.

Now that I've heard that, I can't possibly resist! Tomorrow, I'm having monkfish hot pot for dinner!

: Pshhh!

: all three of them are into it now lmao

: the atlantic footballfish (another kind of anglerfish) gave me a sense of all evolution's possibilities

“Leaving aside the hot pot discussion for now, let's go to the question! Male monkfish actually have a crazy, unimaginable trait! What might that trait be?”

Ding!

“Hikari-senpai, you're first up!”

“Heh heh heh! Time to ride this wave and get two in a row! I'll say it—

monkfish are actually piloted by five people: a commander with a war god inside her, a supportive radio operator who can properly interpret that war god's ideas, the gunner who's famous for her firing skills, an incredibly fast loader, and a driver with the skills of a genius!"

"The Anglerfish Team is in the wrong vehicle! You went full-on idiot for that answer! Why did you ruin your own flow?"

"Because I wanted to pursue tankery."

Ding!

"Shuwa-chan-senpai!"

"I prefer the females to the males. Please change the question so it relates to females."

"You need to give an answer! You can't ask the quiz-giver to change their questions! It's unprecedented!"

"I know what I've done is wrong. But I don't regret it."

"You know, the zoo's saltwater crocodile is probably getting hungry right about now..."

"I regret what I've done. But I don't think it was wrong."

"You just made it worse, for some reason..."

Ding!

"Nekoma-senpai, go ahead!"

"Their optimal means of combat is literally just to level up and physically punch other fish?"

"I want to make some kind of witty comment for that, but I can't say you're entirely wrong! But since that's three answers, here's a hint. The hint is: 'boys and girls of late elementary school age'!"

Ding!

"Shuwa-chan-senpai!"

"I actually quite like *Comic LO*."

“Huh? What’s *Comic LO*?”

“A shoujo manga magazine.”

“Huh! I’ll have to look it up.”

: HEY!!!!

: shit you can't bring that up on stream LOLLL

: i mean, technically "shoujo manga" is a term that describes it...

: a manga magazine featuring shoujo (young girls)

: She likes LO? This girl's strike range is way too big...

: Ehrai-chan, run for your life!

Ding!

“Nekoma-senpai!”

“Nya-nyan! I’m confident in this one! My answer is: the males are smaller than the females!”

“Oh! That’s exactly right! Ehrai approves! And that makes Nekoma-senpai the winner!”

Ack. I lost, huh... The result ended up being Nekoma-senpai, who’s been here the longest, showing her pride and defeating her kouhais.

“Wait!” said Ehrai-chan. “It’s a bit too early to wrap things up! The answer was right—males are smaller. But there are many animals that have the same trait. The important part is how extreme the difference is for monkfish! Take a look at this!”

Nekoma-senpai, Hikari-chan, and I all made surprised noises when we saw the monkfish male-female comparison diagram Ehrai-chan excitedly put on the screen. The first thing I thought was, *Are they even the same animal?* That said it all. The females were what we’d always thought of monkfish as looking like,

but the males were so tiny, like smaller fish swimming around it.

“There are many kinds of anglerfish, but female Atlantic footballfish, for example, are about sixty centimeters, while the males are just four centimeters! Even more surprising is how they mate! The male actually fuses into the female to do it!”

Eeeeeek...

Everyone was too stunned by the shocking truth to even speak. And with that suitably crazy final question, the stream came to an end.

Looking back on it, it had gone very smoothly, and we’d kept the focus on the animal trivia. As I’d thought, this kouhai of mine was turning out to be very skilled. As her senpai, I’d have to step up so she didn’t beat me!

Idle Talk: How I Met Mashiron

One afternoon, Mashiron and I were on a voice call chatting about nothing in particular. We just felt like talking without having any sort of goal in mind.

“I’ve started to feel a sense of fulfillment after ending streams recently,” I told her happily.

“That’s cool!” she replied. “Enjoying yourself is definitely the way to keep something going for a long time.”

Mashiron and I had become good friends after starting our VTubing careers, and whenever we both had a free moment, we would give each other a call. It was a routine at this point. Some people might think that pointless conversations are a waste. But for me, it gave me a chance to let my mind settle down. Whether or not we called each other greatly affected my sense of satisfaction at day’s end. I didn’t know how Mashiron felt about it—I’d never asked—but I thought this was one of those milestones that proved we’d built a friendship.

I remained silent for a few moments until Mashiron asked, “Hm? What’s wrong, Awa-chan?”

“Nothing,” I said. “The memory of when we first met just jumped into my head.”

“So suddenly? We weren’t even talking about that.”

“Maybe not, but I was just thinking that back then, I could have never imagined speaking with someone so naturally.”

“Ah, you might be right about that. Everyone’s always on edge when it comes to people they’ve just met.” Mashiron laughed. “So? Time for a stroll down memory lane with me?”

“I’ve never talked about something like this before, so sure. I might be a little embarrassed, though.”

My days had been so full and rich recently that I hadn't had a chance to think about the past at all. But it would be fine to lose myself in my memories for one day. The first time I'd ever spoken to Mashiron—it had been that call on that day, before our debuts...

"Oh, um, sorry, can you hear me?"

"Yup, I can hear you. Hello. I'm Mashiro Irodori. Let's do our best today."

"Oh! I'm sorry! My name is Awayuki Kokorone, and yes, let's!"

"Hee hee. You're being so formal. I'm your genmate, you know? And in the VTubing world, we're basically mother and daughter, right? We'll be collabing together, so let's be more candid with one another."

"Uh, um, sure, yes, I'm sorry..."

"You don't need to apologize. And you don't need to be nervous either."

"Right. Sorry..."

"I just said... Oh, are you one of those really shy people?"

"Maybe, I guess... I'll do my best to fix it..."

"No, no, it's fine! You can just slowly get used to it. No need to rush."

This was before our debut, so I hadn't known who my genmates were. In other words, Mashiron was the first VTuber I'd ever spoken to. The reason she was first was because she'd worked on the design of Awayuki Kokorone's model and done some rough checks on it.

"Do you like it?" she asked. "Since it was my first time, I followed management's design request to the letter—overall seiso and transient, but also somehow mysterious."

"I'm sorry I don't have enough of a vocabulary for times like these, but I think it's a really, really wonderful design. The moment I opened the files, I was in awe over how good professionals are."

"Really? Hee hee. As an illustrator, it makes me happy when people

compliment my art. Anyway, what else are you looking for?”

“Huh?”

“Don’t sound so confused. This is going to be Awayuki-chan, so I have to ask you if there’s anything you want me to add or revise.”

“O-Oh! I understand! No, it’s all great! I talked to my manager about it already!”

“Oh? That’s good. I asked management if there was anything they wanted me to change, but I also wanted to talk to you to get to know you better.”

At the time, I was, well... I had no confidence whatsoever. The obvious reason for it was the power-harassment slave labor that black company I’d just quit called “hard work.” It had worn me down over a long time until I was a wreck—I hadn’t even known if I still possessed even a scrap of pride. At this point, I’d been wondering if passing the Live-On interview a few months ago was all one big dream. “I’m really sorry for everything... It just doesn’t feel real yet.”

“Nah, I can understand that a little. You’re fine. But this picture is going to be your future, so you should be bolder about it.”

“This is...me...”

Before my eyes had been Awayuki Kokorone, giving off a shining glow, wearing a soft smile that would charm just about anyone. The design was still in its rough stages, but it was still pretty clear that these visuals were a blessing. I was unbelievably lucky that Mashiron had been the one in charge of the illustration. It was just so brilliant to look at... And that was why it had felt unreal, like a fog in my mind—I hadn’t been able to imagine this being *me*.

“Hmm... Could it be that you’re not really that shy, you just don’t have confidence in yourself?”

“Oh... You figured it out, huh?”

“Yeah. You haven’t been picking up any of the cheerful topics I’ve been putting down, so I sort of guessed. But why? You passed—you’re in the third generation of Live-On now. The chances of that were so incredibly low. Isn’t it normal to be proud of it? I know for me, when I got the notification that I’d

passed, I screamed. Even though it's kind of out of character for me."

Mashiron had seemed so confused when she asked, but I couldn't remember much of the interview, so I told her I didn't really understand why I'd passed.

"Huh! Truth is stranger than fiction, I guess. But you got in, right? Can't ask for much more. And it's not like you had a body double or lied about yourself, so I think you can be proud of it."

"That's how I try to think of it, but it's really hard... Mashiro-san, you—"

"You can call me Mashiro-chan. Let's keep it informal between us."

"Oh, okay, sorry... Mashiro-chan, what did you talk about in your interview?"

"Me? Hmm," she groaned. "Hold on a sec. Gotta remember." But then she seemed to manage it easily—unlike me. "I think most of what I talked about was why I wanted to become a VTuber."

"I see. May I ask why you did?"

"Yeah, sure. I wanted more people to see and remember my art, and to make more people understand the allure of art and make the illustrator world more exciting. I thought being a VTuber would give me a good platform for that."

Once she'd remembered, her answer had come immediately. And it had been fluid—showing that she'd obviously been acting toward a clear goal.

I remembered thinking that she was so cool. It made sense to me why someone like her would pass an audition for a place like Live-On—she'd be a shining star.

"What about you? Why did you want to become a VTuber?"

"Me?"

"Yeah. The secret to why you passed might be in your reason."

"Well..."

Unlike her, I hadn't been able to find a single answer—all sorts of thoughts and feelings had mixed up in my head when I'd thought about it. And to this day, I still didn't know what I'd talked about at the interview to draw their interest so much. But I couldn't help what I couldn't remember, so I had

strained, trying to at least give her an answer.

“Because of...life, I guess?”

“Wait, what? Like Cloud?”

As a result, I’d come up with something that had turned into a grand, majestic story. But I couldn’t help it! VTubers had saved me during my life as a wage slave, then released me from that wage slavery! I literally wanted to stake my life on doing the best I could for them, so in the end, I hadn’t come up with any other words to describe it!

“Awayuki-chan, you kind of sound like you have a dark history. Now I’m worried about you... Is there something bothering you?”

“N-No, nothing like that! And anyway, we were talking about the illustration today.”

“Well, I’ve got time, so I don’t mind if our call goes long. And I do want to use this chance to get to know my genmates better. Are you busy, Awayuki-chan?”

“I’m basically a NEET, so I’m fine on time, but I don’t think what I have to say is really worth saying...”

“A NEET? Another concerning word. If you don’t want to talk about it, you’re more than allowed to say no, but I’m concerned. If you’re able to say something, would you do it for me?”

“...A-All right.”

It wasn’t like my old job was a secret, so I’d told her about my life there. The thing I remembered most about this part of the conversation was how I’d kept putting in casual self-deprecating jokes because I’d felt guilty for thinking of my situation as a really bad one. But Mashiron had listened to the whole thing, like someone gently staying close to me. Thanks to that, by the time we were finished talking, my tone had naturally become softer, and a lot of my nervousness had faded. Mashiron was a really good listener.

“Thanks for telling me all that,” she’d said. “Now that I’ve heard it, I can understand why you’ve been acting the way you have.”

“Umm, was I really giving off a negative aura like that?”

“While you were talking, I figured something had happened in the past, and that was why you made a habit of apologizing all the time.”

“Oh...”

When she’d mentioned it, it had all suddenly made sense to me. There hadn’t been a single day at that office when I wasn’t apologizing, and near the end of my time there, I’d always start off with an apology when saying anything at all. It had probably been a traumatizing experience, and that was why, at the time, I’d thought negatively as a force of habit. I thought I’d been released from all that when I quit my job, but apparently some annoying aftereffects had lingered.

“But that’s all the more reason to look to the future, right?”

“Huh?”

“For all you’ve suffered, the happiness waiting for you will shine even brighter. You’ve just taken the first step as a VTuber—you’ve decided to rebel against your previous life.”

“I...suppose you’re right.”

“Become happier than anyone and put your past self to shame! Aim to one day be able to proudly say your name before apologizing. Then you’ll really shine! You’re holding the ticket in your hand—now you just gotta do it!”

“Um, yeah! You kind of turned into a hot-blooded character all of a sudden.”

“Do you know why the kanji for *happiness* is the kanji for *hardship* with a line added near the top? It’s because happiness is built on top of hardship.”

“Is that true? That’s very deep...”

“I thought of it myself, actually.”

“What?!”

“And, you know, I really like people who try their best.”

“...Huh?”

I’d been confused at Mashiron suddenly breaking character, but those last, quietly spoken words blew that confusion away. Her voice had just been

so...gentle and kind.

“Whenever I see someone trying to overcome hardship and change something, I can’t help but want to root for them.”

“Mashiro-chan...”

“As long as you want to put in that effort, I’ll be your ally. I promise.”

I’d never forgotten those words—because they’d truly saved me. Before that, I’d wanted to do my best as a VTuber even if it killed me, but until that point, it had been a solitary determination. After that, though, the ice in my heart from all the trauma had begun to melt away in the face of the reassuring warmth that I had genmates who would watch me and support me.

“...I still don’t know what will happen in the future, but... I’ll do my best anyway, so that I never yield no matter what.”

“Yup. So first, let’s get today’s main topic out of the way. About this rough illustration...”

And that had been my first, vivid meeting with a precious new friend.

“...Great. Way to make things embarrassing. Why’d you have to go there?”

Once we were done reminiscing, back in the present, Mashiron offered that bitter remark, sounding very awkward.

Oh, you! You’re so cute when you’re embarrassed! “Come on! It’s fiiiine. I actually want to hear you say that again—‘As long as you want to put in that effort, I’ll be your ally. I promise.’ Come on, say it! Say, ‘I really love Awa-chan!’”

“You’re acting like a five-year-old. I can’t say it *now*, dummy.”

“Wait, does that mean you’d say it if I was really down in the dumps?”

“I guess I’ll say it when it needs to be said.”

I squeaked. “Wait, you, uh, you will? Ah, aha ha ha, I... Now I’m blushing!”

“Huh? Stop making weird voices. You’re so cute when you’re embarrassed, Awa-chan.”

“Wh-Why you! You tricked me! You betrayed my pure emotions! You’re terrible, you know that? Even though I was so happy you said you’d really say it if I was down in the dumps.”

“Oh, well, of course I would.”

I let out a much longer squeak.

“Hee hee.”

It seemed I was still too immature to get the better of the impish Mashiron. My heart had actually been racing for a few moments there...

Chapter 2

Live-On News

“Oh, and one last thing. Shion-san was saying that she wanted to collab with Shuwa-chan.”

“Huh? Really?!”

I’d been discussing business connections and upcoming streams with my manager Suzuki-san, but she suddenly dropped that on me just as we were wrapping up. My senpai had asked specifically for Shuwa-chan, not Awa-chan. With how serious and hardworking Shion-senpai always seemed to be, I was downright shocked.

“Did she want to do something in particular with me?”

“She said she’d like Shuwa-chan to appear as a guest on *Live-On News*.”

“For real?!”

Live-On News was a popular streaming project Shion-senpai did regularly. Recently, in fact, people had been using its name synonymously with her own. She had come up with the whole thing herself: every Sunday night, she would show the week’s highlights of scenes caused by the Live-On members in news format. She’d started doing it right around when the third generation had come in. Her lighthearted commentary and excellent pacing had made the project popular in the blink of an eye.

It was also famous for Live-On members occasionally appearing on it, although I’d heard Shion-senpai had originally planned to do the whole thing completely solo. As proof, she’d boasted at first to Sei-sama on Cheeper that “I’ve got a solo project ready to go! Serves you right!” But apparently, she’d been lonely on her own, so as early as the fourth episode, she’d had Sei-sama on as a guest.

Shion-mama is so cute! Hooray! I never thought I’d be invited on...

“Collabs are fine to set up between yourselves,” continued Suzuki-san, “but Shion-san took the time to go through your manager. She’s so serious, as always. There was another thing she wanted to do as well, so she wanted to know if you could do the collaboration offline.”

“O-Offline?!?”

“Offline. She wanted me to ask, ‘If it’s all right with you, would you like to come over for drinks?’”

I don’t understand! I keep thinking about it, but I can’t figure out what Shion-senpai is after!

“Do you want to accept it?” asked Suzuki-san.

“Of course, yes! I couldn’t possibly refuse!” This was all very mysterious, but I was so honored to be invited. It’d be a lifelong shame to turn her down! I’d just have to brace myself and show up.

“All right, then. I’ll tell Shion-san. You should get a DM with her address later, so please make sure you save it.”

“Will do!”

The next day...

“Welcome, welcome! Did you get here okay? You didn’t get lost, did you?”

“N-No! I got here just fine!”

Nervous enough that even I’d realized it, I’d taken a short ride on the train and eventually arrived at Shion-senpai’s place. Coming face-to-face with someone I looked up to was always a heart-pounding experience. Plus, when I’d first met her, Sei-sama had been with us, making this our first time on our own. And to add to that, Shion-senpai lived in a pretty gorgeous apartment—where she, amazingly, lived on her own. My mouth was totally dry at this point.

“I’ll go make something to drink, so take a seat wherever you like! Relax and treat this place like home!”

“O-Okay...” We still had about two hours until the stream started, so we were

going to have a meeting to go over what we'd do on it.

Shion-senpai hurried into the kitchen. Naturally, I wasn't relaxing—my spine was perfectly straight.

I smell something really, really good. Is that an essential oil diffuser? The room was huge, tidy, and overall spotless. It was perfect.

“...Hm?”

As I was looking around the room, admiring my senpai's sheer femininity, I found my eyes drawn to a certain bookshelf. The shelf itself was a regular one made of wood—what made me curious were the books on it.

How to Raise a Baby Well

Tricks for Child-Rearing From Veteran Moms

Play With Your Baby!

Take Your Baby's Perspective! The Child-Raising Encyclopedia!

What Babies Actually Think! Change and Expand Your Viewpoint of Raising Children!

There were a mountain of books like that, all with similar titles.

At this moment! A jolt runs through Awayuki! I thought to myself in Tohru Furuya's voice.

...Oh. Yep, that's the yabai stuff for sure.

“Awa-chan? Is something the matter?”

“Sh-Shion-senpai? Just what is that you're carrying?” Immediately turning around at the voice from behind me, I saw Shion-senpai standing there, holding something that did, technically, qualify as a drink. The issue was the container it was in. A bottle, with a wonderful something-or-other that looked like a woman's nipple on it. It was none other than...

“Oh, this? It's a baby bottle with StroZero in it, of course,” she explained as

though it were obvious and natural.

I started to feel a very strange pressure emanating from her. “A-And what are you using it for? ...Oh, I know! You’re gonna shove it up Sei-sama’s ass for always tormenting you so much!”

“No, Awa-chan. I’m going to shove it between those lips that are currently saying such mature, charming words.”

I thought so!!!

I mean, saying “I thought so” is already insane, but I figured this was coming from the moment I saw that bottle. But why?! Why is Shion-senpai suddenly resorting to such violence?!

“You remember when you promised on stream that you’d drink StroZero out of a baby bottle?” asked Shion-senpai. “Wait... Does this mean you’re going to break your promise, then?”

“No, I, um, I’m fine with it, but why are you so into this?!”

“You see, I realized something when I saw the fourth-generation members.”

“Oh... Oh? A-And what was that?”

“I’ve always thought about whether I was okay as I was. Like, did I lack impact? But after seeing those adorable handfuls, I finally realized what I really want. Yes—I want to become everyone’s mommy. And I think that’s the reason Live-On selected me.”

I was at a loss for words. My brain was firing on all cylinders. Had it finally happened? Had the fourth generation been so yabai that it had finally made Shion-senpai lose it too? And this...this *thing* deep down inside Shion-senpai—it must have been her maternal instinct. But she’d already *had* that motherly warmth! Had she been limiting it this entire time, and now those limiters were disengaged? Was *that* what had happened?!

“I’ll take veeery good care of you,” she droned sweetly. “So please, won’t you drink this StroZero?”



“All right,” I conceded. “I get it. I’ll drink the StroZero. I never hated the idea to begin with. I said it in front of my fans, so I’ll do it! But what about you, Shion-senpai? I thought you said you didn’t even drink when at home.”

“Oh, I won’t be having any. If I got drunk, the whole *Live-On News* stream would fall apart!”

Ah. I see, I thought. She never said anything about her drinking, did she? In other words, this is all part of her plan.

“I’ll let you rest your head on my lap, so come over here.”

“Okay...”

“Oh, and I have to inform your viewers on Cheeper, so I’ll be recording your voice.”

“Ahhh!”

And so, I accepted my fate...

“Oh, who’s a good baby? You are! I’ll put this up on Cheeper afterward.”

“Goo ga.”

: ?!

: huh? what...what are you doing, shion-mama?

: All of a sudden, they were exposed engaging in some specialized fetish role-play. I'm extremely confused. I have no idea what's going on, so for now, I took my panties off.

: Always loyal to their fetishes, no matter what. You may not like it, but this is what peak performance looks like

: awa-chan's voice is rapidly going from hopeless to ecstatic thanks to the strozero, i'm laughing so hard rn

: wait, if you're talking about ecstasy, shion-mama's voice has completely become my mom's. like when i would suck on her breast

: please stop, that got real dirty real fast

: oh it's like that expression, like mamma(ries) like son.

: Definitely gonna be seeing StroZero sold in baby bottles soon

: But Shion-mama was the only sensible one in Live-On. What happened...?

The Cheep spread at a terrifying pace until the replies were scrolling as fast as the comment section during a stream. On this day, already possessing perfect room-reading skills, excellent quips, and godlike moderation, Shion-senpai had ascended (?) via the acquisition of an intense new character: everyone's mommy, bursting with maternal instinct.

After that, when I tried to stand up, she pinned me down and straddled me, saying, "Huh? Why is the baby able to stand on her own? That won't do. Species-wise, it doesn't make sense." And when I tried to speak, she continued her unfair comments, saying, "Don't get cultured with me, young lady. No baby so skilled at using her vocal cords could possibly exist."

Eventually, once I'd finished all of my milk (StroZero-flavored), it came time to stream. It began amidst an odd situation of anticipation mixed with worry in the chat, partly due to the Cheep earlier.

"Kon-miko, everyone! It's everyone's mommy, Shion Kaminari! It's time for this week's installment of *Live-On News*! But wait—today, Shuwa-chan is here as a special guest!"

"Pshhh! I'm Shuwa-chan, and I love women and StroZero and three meals a day, woohoo!"

"Don't you mean *more than* three meals a day?"

"I love food, women, *and* booze. And Shuwa-chan would never settle for just one."

“I’m a little worried at her saying something an adult Gian from Doraemon would say, but it’s time to steel ourselves and go to our first headline!”

: yes, it's starting!

: my reason for living

: I really love this segment

: LMAO if you introduced yourself like that in real life it would immediately end your life

: the real speedrun

: who told you to say something clever??

: Gian? That's more like something a character in a certain pirate manga would say

: You want my StroZero? You can have it! I left everything I gathered together in one place. Now you just have to find it

: you're being a nuisance, please return it

: if you're just tuning in, allow me to explain. these two just put strozero in a baby bottle and were pretending to be a mom and a baby

: LOL

: Walking the talk, these girls are! Incredible as always

: Actually I was kinda scared, Shion-mama was really, really into it lmfao

: she had the mommy thing down to a tee

: I could not stop laughing whenever she shoved the baby bottle into Shuwa-chan's mouth whenever she tried to say anything

: She posted on Cheeper that she just found out she was everyone's mommy after all, so I guess something awakened

in her?

: The sensible-person slot is crumbling!

“Our first news headline is this!” announced Shion-senpai. “Hareru Asagiri Turned into a Chimpanzee by a Gacha Game!”

“Hareru-senpai has more than one screw loose, as always.”

“That one will bite you in the butt, Shuwa-chan.”

“I don’t want to hear that from the one who happily shoved a baby bottle in my mouth.”

“Should I get you a diaper next?”

“Okay, let’s move this right along!”

: Wtf is this stream lmaoooo

: shion-mama sounds 100% serious about it

: holy shit, i felt that pressure from here. i love it!

: wait, there's so much laughing in chat just from the headline

: It's definitely a good hook

“To give some more information,” continued Shion-senpai, “Hareru-senpai was streaming a very popular idol-producing game called *Idol Live*, nicknamed *Airabu*. Her pulls were so dreadfully bad that she began engaging in suspicious actions, such as pulling for characters using her tongue, pulling for characters using her nipples, and finally going so far as to pull for characters using her crotch. After feeding enough money into the game to reach the ceiling, she finally pulled her favorite, and it seems she immediately began rampaging about the room making odd, monkey-like noises.”

“I see, I see.”

“We also have a clip taken from the stream itself for you to watch!”

“All right, the first ten-pull! I bet she’ll show up right away. With as much love as I’ve dedicated to the character, she’s sure to come home...”

“I didn’t get her... Well, for me, the first ten pulls are just a warm-up!”

“You can come to me soon, please! Lick, lick, lick.”

“From this point on, I’m pulling for her with my nipple. Ah, I feel it! I can feel the power of destiny gathering into my nipple from my areola!”

“Don’t stop me! My crotch is the only thing I have left! Please, my feelings—reach her! Reach that girl via my crotch!”

“I got her!!! Oooooooooook!!!”

“And that was the clip,” said Shion-senpai. “What do you think of it, Shuwa-chan?”

“Well, first,” I began, “I’d want to buy any smartphone that even had a chance of having any Hareru-senpai stuck to it.”

“There are so many other things to comment on and that was your first thought?!”

“But I’d pay up to a million yen for it!”

“That’s not the problem here!”

: good to see shion-mama's straight-man game is still on point

: But what's this pressure I keep feeling?

: I guess it means Shion-mama was definitely a part of Live-On all along

“I’m not sure what you guys are talking about,” Shion-senpai said to chat, “but I’ve always been, and I always will be, the responsible straight man of the group!”

“But just a little tug at the heartstrings makes you want to turn people into babies.”

“What was that? That was a very strange thing to say, Shuwa-chan. It looks like my only choice is to reeducate you from square one—or would it be square zero?”

“Going back and redoing my babyhood at *this* age? That’ll be tough.”

“What are you talking about? We’re starting from when you’re inside my body.”

“Hwah?! Was that what you meant by ‘square zero’?! That was so unexpected I yelped!”

“Please let me give birth to you!”

“What? I’ve never felt terror like this before. I never thought I’d encounter unknown sensations at my age.”

: THIS IS TOO SCARY FOR ME

: Live-On's horror block

: What?! Shuwa-chan is playing the straight man?!

: new theory: shion-mama is the strongest of them all

: I have no idea what standard you're measuring their strength by

“Anyway, enough of the tangent,” I said. “Let’s go to the next piece of news!”

“Here’s our next headline!” said Shion-senpai. “Hikari Matsuriya gets an excellent time of two minutes, thirty seconds during her speedrun of eating ultra-spicy yakisoba!”

“I see, I see.”

“We have a clip of this one as well. Take a look!”

“I’m definitely not losing today. You want to know why? Because a certain

fiery big bro has given me courage!”

“No matter how spicy the yakisoba, or how much it dries me out! I’ll set my heart aflame! Grit my teeth and take up my chopsticks! Even if Hikari stops and stumbles, time won’t stop for her! The amount of yakisoba won’t decrease for her!”

“There’s a way to breathe—breathe so that no matter how much it hurts, you can withstand it—urgghhhh! Blech! Agh!”

“Thanks for the food... Sniff, it, it was...good... Th-These tears? No, they just happened to start flowing at this exact moment. It wasn’t spicy at all! It didn’t hurt!”

“And there you have it, folks!” announced Shion-senpai. “Shuwa-chan, what are your thoughts on this clip?”

“I think she should calm down and eat slowly.”

“Shuwa-chan, please. You’re denying the entire reason for the existence of speedruns.”

: The Girl Who Challenged Yakisoba More Seriously than Anyone Else in the World

: The super-masochistic breathing technique?

: it's probably more like choking in this case

: Hikari-chan is so stupidly cute (and stupid)

: ^ this

“Aha ha!” I laughed. “I was just joking! Hikari-chan must have literally just come back from seeing that demon-slaying movie though, huh? It clearly had an effect on her... And at the end, she talked about breathing techniques even as she lost miserably to the spiciness...”

“Well, Hikari-chan is nothing if not straightforward! It’s why she’s so charming!”

“I agree completely. And she even gave thanks for the food! She’s such a good girl! I want to be her mommy!”

“Hum? What are you talking about, Shuwa-chan? I, Shion Kaminari, am her mommy, remember?”

“Hum, hum? I’m the crazy one who popped a super hard lady boner for her, remember? I, Awayuki Kokorone, am more fitting to be her mommy.”

“Hum, hum, hum? Shuwa-chan, you’re her genmate, but I’m her senpai, remember? By process of elimination, I think that makes me her mommy by default.”

“Hum, hum, hum, hum? If you don’t understand how wonderful mommies are who are your age or younger, then maybe your mommy-ness has really gone downhill, Shion-*senpai*?”

“Hum, hum, hum, hum, hum? You have some guts to taunt a mommy, Shuwa-chan.”

“Hum, hum, hum, hum, hum, hum? Now you’re flaunting your authority? Finally learned the power-harassment breathing technique, have you, Shion-mama?”

“...It seems we’ll need to settle the score over who truly deserves to be her mommy.”

“I agree completely. For fairness, we should have Hikari-chan be the judge. I’ll give her a call right now.”

“I’m not going to lose to you!”

: why did they suddenly get into a custody battle o_0

: Shuwa-chan, real mommies don't get hard for their daughters

: it sounds at first like Shuwa-chan is making sense, but none of what she said matters for being a mom LMAO

: She's not trying to fool Mom as much as she's trying to bulldoze her way through lmfao

“Hello? What’s the matter, Shuwa-chan? Weren’t you supposed to be on Live-On News right now?”

“Sorry for the sudden call,” I said, “but there was something I really, really needed to ask you. Between me and Shion-mama, which of our wombs feels more like home to you?”

“Huh? Uh, huh???”

“The first thing out of your mouth was *that*, Shuwa-chan?!”

“Oh, Shion-senpai is there too! Wait, this means I’m on Live-On News right now, doesn’t it?! Yes!!!”

“Yes, it was sudden, so sorry about that, okay?” said Shion-senpai. “There was something I wanted to ask you.”

“Oh, you had a question too? What is it?”

“Between me and Shuwa-chan, which of our wombs would you rather be born from?”

“...Hmm? Wait, I think the call must be dropping. I can’t really understand what you’re saying...”

: oh no. it's over. someone do something, and fast

: **LMFA00000 ¥2000**

: Fear of nobody playing the straight-man role

: Hikari-chan isn't familiar with this stuff, so I bet she's actually super confused right now lol

: Why are they judging this based on their wombs???

“I’m not really sure what you’re talking about, but I really love both of you!”

Both of us gave a surprised groan at once. Hearing those pure words from Hikari seemed to awaken me from a deep slumber. Why had I been so caught

up in my narrow, fixed ideas about who was first place? Have some shame, me! Shion must have felt the same way as I did, because we looked at each other for a few moments, then nodded in unison and said, at the same time, “Thank you, Hikari-chan! You’ve opened my eyes!”

“Oh? I’m glad to hear it... But what were you talking about, anyway?”

: They're such good friends

: This is the best

: Acting purely based on the mood of the conversation,
rofl

“Now, we’re on to our final news headline!” announced Shion-senpai. “We’ve saved the best for last: Kaeru Yamatani is almost banned on her very first stream!”

“I see, I see.”

“Here’s how that went down! Apparently, she started discussing which pacifier is most delicious, and began to suck on many different kinds, from multiple eras and from across the world. But apparently, the noises she was making were too much for a video.”

“Perhaps we should all ban Miss Kaeru Yamatani from our minds, then?”

“N-Not at all! Her chat did their best to get her to stop, so she didn’t actually end up getting banned!”

“Still, on her first stream? That’s crazy. Even I lasted three months before doing something like that.”

“I suppose I have to agree on that point. Getting banned on your first stream on the first day of a channel you made can come all the way around and become legendary.”

: All of this news is completely unbelievable, lol. I'm still in Japan, right?

: kaeru-chan is yaba-cute!

: So cute she's yabai?

: no, no! her brain is yabai, which makes her cute

: lmao

“I’d like to play a clip, but I can’t use the part in question, since the sound in it would get me banned instead. I’m sorry...” apologized Shion-senpai.

“Oh, the sucky-sucky part.”

“Don’t make up strange words! And that sounds kind of dangerous! Anyway, let’s go right to the video!”

“Yes, mommy.”

“Konni-chikubi, chat mommies. Kaeru here, and boy, does she love boobs.”

“Today Kaeru would like to go on a journey to test many pacifiers in order to find the greatest one of all time. Kaeru is a baby, after all.”

“This is... It’s not very compatible with Kaeru’s teeth... Oh, but this one is...”

“In conclusion, Kaeru learned that adults are happiest when sucking on something like chicken wings while drinking booze. But Kaeru will continue to suck on pacifiers. Kaeru is a baby, after all.”

“There you have it!” said Shion-senpai. “What did you think of the clip, Shuwa-chan?”

“I want her to suck on *my* pacifier, if you catch my drift.”

“I very much doubt you have anything like a pacifier attached to you...”

“Then let me ask you. What did you think of Kaeru-chan’s clip, Shion-mama?”

“Well, I’ve got plenty of room right here.”

“And you’re pointing at your belly. You sure are special, Shion-mama.”

: it's not just got room in there, it could actively suck you in, i bet

: Wait, there's room? I heard Live-On had a tag-team pair of faceless dick characters in Shuwa-chan and Sex-sama though

: The last clip really set Kaeru-chan's image in stone LMAO

: Wait, she said hello on her first stream by saying "konni-chikubi"? fr?

“She delivers quite an impact, doesn’t she, though?” I remarked. “She’s got that downer mood as she does all these crazy things like they’re nothing, and for some reason very confidently declares that she is, in fact, a baby at every opportunity.”

“Actually, I’ve been getting suspicious of her recently—I think she might be a really good person on the inside.”

“Wait, really?”

“Yep. From what I’ve heard, she’ll casually talk to her followers on Cheeper, and whenever she gets fanart, she sends a word of thanks to the artist.”

“Huh!”

: yeah! She answered a reply I made too

: Just drawing an illustration nobody would ever call "good" is enough to get a long message of thanks. it...it makes me want to cry

: but holy shit, she must self-google constantly. she basically knows everything everyone is saying about her

: She might actually spend all her time not streaming on Cheeper

: wait so she's a cheeper addict lmaoooo

That was actually a little surprising. *Guess you really can't judge a book by its cover. Behind everything, maybe she's an adult after all. Even though she's a baby.*

"She flies into a panic whenever the topic of employment comes up, though," mentioned Shion-senpai.

"Ah. That's par for the course..."

She went really far out of her way to reject the entire notion—which I'd noticed during her intro stream as well. *Could she be a kindred spirit? I might be able to understand a few things she says, in that case.*

The girl was full of mysteries, but if Live-On chose her, then she was sure to be a delight. *I should talk to her when I get the chance!*

"But unfortunately, all good things must come to an end. That does it for this week's *Live-On News*! Thank you so much for coming today, Shuwa-chan!"

"Not at all—it was an honor!"

And with that, the stream was over! Such fun—and over in such a short time. I really had to hand it to Shion-mama for her ability to plan something like this and the pacing she'd kept us going at.

I've gotta do my best too!

After shutting off the stream, behold! Shion-mama offered me the invitation of my dreams: "Oh! Since you're here anyway, Shuwa-chan, want to take a bath together?"

"Yes!!!"

And so I got her to wash my back and my hair! Shion-mama really was the best! *As long as she doesn't go crazy like before the stream, anyway...*

"Oh," said Shion-mama as she was behind me drying my hair, like she'd just thought of something.

“What is it, Shion-mama?”

“I was just thinking that she wasn’t here today either.”

“What do you mean?”

“I’m still thinking about Kaeru-chan. She says she’s a baby a lot, so wouldn’t you think she’d watch my streams? But I don’t think she ever has.”

“Yeah, I don’t remember seeing anyone like that either. Today was the perfect chance for it too. I feel like she has perfect compatibility with you in terms of character.”

“She does! I’m so curious about it that I’m wondering whether or not I should say something to her!”

“Why not? Let’s invite her on sometime.”

Apparently, for Live-On’s mom, the self-professed baby was someone she naturally couldn’t leave alone. Strangely, though, Shion-mama seemed worried about my suggestion. “Well,” she replied, “she hasn’t done any collabs at all yet. In fact, I hear she’s never even shown up on her genmates’ streams.”

“Huh?” I thought about it for a moment. “Oh, you’re right...” I’d known Kaeru-chan had been carving out a solid position with her extreme character, but all her streams had been solo, and I’ve never heard of a single time she’d done something with anyone.

“I’d feel weird butting in and asking for a collab when she hasn’t even done it with her genmates,” explained Shion-mama. “She might not be great with collabs.”

“Yeah...”

Ultimately, she’d only just debuted and probably had a whole lot going on, so I came to the conclusion that I’d keep an eye on her for a little while.

However, the answer to our questions came in a very unexpected way a few days later...

Mommy Spotted

For my regularly scheduled monthly meeting with Suzuki-san, I paid a visit to the Live-On main offices. *Man, the weather's beautiful today. Not a cloud in the sky*, I thought. Everything felt lighter as I walked down the hallway—like this was the day something was going to happen. *Maybe I'll rally my courage and do something I usually wouldn't. Yeah! Like collapsing to the floor like that woman in front of me...*

Huh? Someone's on the floor?

?!?!?

"H-Hey!" I exclaimed. "Are you all right?! Are you conscious?!"

"Don't worry yourself about me..." the woman muttered.

"Why wouldn't I?! And don't say it like you're writing your last message in blood!"

"I'm sorry... That break room back there... Could you help me get over there?"

"Say no more. But you're on the floor—are you sick or something?"

"No, not sick... Just some trauma..."

"Trauma?"

"To tell the truth..."

"Thank you. I think I've calmed down," she said. "I'm terribly sorry for inconveniencing you..."

"No, not at all. Anyone would help someone who had collapsed on the floor. But are you sure you don't need to go to a hospital or anything?"

"I'm sure. My dark past came back to me—that's all."

After laying the woman down in the break room, I informed Suzuki-san of what had happened. For the moment, she was going to adjust our meeting time.

And I also discovered something shocking. The woman herself had told me a little about it while we walked to the breakroom, and Suzuki-san had confirmed

my suspicions. This woman overflowing with mature charms—she was a VTuber in Live-On, just like me.

As for who it was, I'll describe her history first. Apparently, she used to be a manga-ka, but several years of work hadn't amounted to anything. She'd then decided she couldn't do it anymore and made up her mind to seek full-time employment, but she was a little old for many companies to take on as a new hire, and very few of them would even hire her, since drawing manga was the only thing in her skill set. In the end, she'd failed an incredible number of interviews, ultimately leading to her body physically rejecting the notion of employment at all.

She'd come here today for a meeting like me, but upon seeing the offices, she'd remembered her job-seeking trauma and ended up like the leader of a certain mercenary group on Mars. And that brought us to the here and now.

Many of you have probably realized who it is already. It was the most mysterious of the fourth-generation members—Kaeru Yamatani, in the flesh.

"I was surprised to hear from my manager Suzuki-san that you're a VTuber," I said.

"Yes. I'm Kanade Shinonome, aka Kaeru Yamatani. If you have a manager, then does that mean..."

"I'm Yuki Tanaka, aka Awayuki Kokorone. I don't know if you've heard of me..."

Her eyes flew open wide. "O-Of course I've heard of you! How could I have embarrassed myself in front of the great senpai I look up to...?"

"No, I'm not all that."

"What are you saying?! Awayuki Kokorone is one of the most famous VTubers in the world! You were always so high up, so far out of reach, and now that I'm talking to you... My heartbeat is going crazy..."

"R-Really? Eheh, eheh heh heh heh heh heh." Right now, thanks to not having many acquaintances and not hearing things like that very often, I was, in all honesty, going full dere-dere. It felt a little strange to hear it from someone who was clearly older than me, but that didn't mean it didn't make me happy! A

kouhai admirer! This was the best!

“And you don’t need to be so modest—you’re my senpai, after all,” she added.

“Really? But I’m younger.”

“Age is just a number. And Kaeru would be happier with that as well.”

“Whoa, you just referred to yourself in the third person. Did you switch into streaming mode?”

Kaeru chuckled. “Kaeru wants to know how it feels to collab.”

She talked about it in such a gleeful way that it made me wonder if it was really fitting for someone older than me, but it was *extremely* cute. “Is this your first time at the offices?” I asked.

“Yes. My interview was a bit special, so...”

“Special?”

“The managers were nice enough to take Kaeru’s circumstances into account right from the screening phase, so they interviewed Kaeru remotely, using someone Kaeru’s age who spoke like a friend.”

“Talk about flexible.”

“Indeed. Kaeru thought she’d be fine today because of that, but... Maybe she should just get used to it next time instead...”

“No, don’t worry about it. I come from similar circumstances, so I get it.”

After that, our conversation between colleagues livened, and I slowly started to get a better picture of what kind of person Kaeru-chan was.

“Why did you decide you wanted to become a VTuber?” I asked.

“Kaeru was wondering if she’d be able to become a baby.”

“What.” I thought she’d been acting. That was really how she felt?

“Kaeru projected herself into all her manga as baby protagonists. There was even a time when she drew a manga with only baby characters in it.”

“Wasn’t that the problem...?” And it wasn’t an acquired behavior—it was

innate?!

“But now people just call Kaeru things like ‘crazy self-professed baby’ and ‘the anti-employment woman,’ ha ha ha!”

“Ah, I see... And you’re okay with that? Isn’t it traumatizing?”

“Actually, Kaeru is grateful for how it works: she completely rejects something, people laugh, her popularity rises, and employment grows ever more distant. She’d like people to keep on teasing her.”

“Your will to never be employed is incredible.”

“Well, Kaeru is literally betting her life on being a VTuber.”

Ah, I thought. Kaeru-chan was definitely a weirdo, but she was also the type of person who could take a thing very seriously. Her life, huh... Once again, she seems a lot like me. Aside from the whole baby thing, obviously.

Feeling particularly like I was looking at myself from the past, I couldn’t just leave her alone. “In that case, do you want to collab or something?”

This was something I’d been really curious about for a while. I’d checked for myself, but Shion-senpai had been right—Kaeru-chan had never done a single collaboration, even with her genmates. Her chat had been quickly realizing this, and it seemed to be causing negative information to be spread about her on Cheeper.

“Unless you don’t want to,” I added.

“No, I’d really, really like to, but... Well, I’m a huge weirdo, aren’t I? I’m too worried I’ll cause trouble for whoever I collab with,” explained Kaeru-chan, a hint of loneliness in her expression.

“Well, you don’t have to worry about that!” I declared, trying to expel her anxieties. “Live-On would never have hired people who couldn’t handle you. You said you admire me—the one who, if you recall, drank booze on stream and broke character and now hands out dirty jokes like candy. I’m sure everyone would accept you and get excited for you too!”

“Do you...think so?”

“If you’re still not sure, then I, aka Shuwa-chan, will be your first collab

partner to prove it!”

“R-Really?!”

“Yep! Live-On’s crazy, nuts, and very yabai, but I’ll personally show you it’s also warm, kind, and cozy! And then you’ll get popular, and you’ll get back at all those people who didn’t recognize your talents!”

...I feel like someone told me this a long time ago. I was happy to hear those words, but maybe I’m trying too hard to act like a senpai? Well, anyway, it seems like she’d be happy to collab, so it’s whatever!

Because I was lost in thought, I missed Kaeru-chan saying in a soft voice, “A mommy...”

“Gallantly entering the stage at an unusually early hour! The woman who can hear a wild girl drop from one hundred meters away—it’s Stro-Zarma! I am the emissary of booze!”

“Kon-chikubi, chat mommies. Kaeru Yamatani here, a real-life Pampers megafan.”

: wait, what is this...

: your introductions are too strong! please stop going viral with just them!

: **This pairing was completely out of left field lmao
¥2000**

: A collab?! Kaeru-chan's finally having a collab?!

: It's her first collab!!

: i want to see whoever it was who said her darkness ran too deep for anyone to collab with her. they need to be executed

: And the reverb... Is this offline?

: What the heck happened??

: Emissary of booze, emissary of hell...same thing right?

: Boss, this girl just dropped from the sky!

: You have 5 seconds to catch her!

: She already hit the ground though

: I bet she could hear the sound of StroZero dropping from 100 km away

: what do you mean by 'wild girl,' anyway?

: How can you even be a megafan of Pampers...

: The way both of them just introduced themselves makes me wonder if today is earth's last day lmfaoooo

And here we go! We'd decided on a little off-the-cuff collab—and to have it offline, that very day!

And all of it was thanks to Suzuki-san! Once she heard we'd decided to collab, she considerately lent us a full streaming kit and let us stream in an unused room in the offices! Now that the two of us had filled up on dinner and StroZero, it was 7:30 p.m.—time to start!

I had to say that Kaeru-chan held her alcohol astoundingly well. She'd drunk all that StroZero and nothing had changed. According to her, it was “because I am a baby.” *Yep, don't understand that one at all. Can anyone here interpret for me?*

“Okay, so,” I began, “there are probably some people who don't know you very well since you just debuted recently, so would you mind if I did a little interview?”

“An interview?” repeated Kaeru-chan. “...Ah, Kaeru gets it. Understood.”

“Thank you. So, your name is Kaeru-chan. And this is your first time appearing on one of our videos, right?”

“Yes. Kaeru is still new to this.”

“Are you nervous?”

“Yes, a little. Kaeru was an amateur until recently.”

“How did you decide to get into this?”

“Well... To tell the truth, Kaeru was kind of interested in it.”

“Ah, I see. There’s been a lot more girls like that recently! It’s okay! You can leave everything to me! You can feel free to do everything naturally, like you always do!”

“Thank you.”

“Right, so for the next question. Can I ask how many people you have experience with? Collaborating, that is.”

“Actually, this is Kaeru’s first time...”

“Huh?! Then you’re a virgin?! A collab virgin, that is.”

“Yes, this is Kaeru’s first experience. Eheh heh.”

“So it’s both your first performance and your first experience! That’s really something!”

“Kaeru is a little embarrassed...”

“Wait, so then have you done it by yourself before? Streaming, that is.”

“Um... Kaeru does it every once in a while.”

“Oh, that’s great! Do you use any toys or anything?”

“Well, Kaeru does use pacifiers quite often.”

“Huh? D-Do you, now? That’s pretty out of the ordinary, isn’t it?”

“Kaeru is a baby, after all.”

“Ah, so then you enjoy that sort of role-play! I see. This industry attracts a lot of different people. I think it’s good to have something that makes you unique!”

“Thank you! Kaeru will do her best!”

: HEY WTF LOL

: This is totally an adult video interview!

: Kaeru-chan was WAY too quick on the uptake there

: The way you both weave euphemisms into your conversation... What aesthetic! What refinement!

: They're both girls, and yet they did that bit absolutely perfectly...

: What's "really something" is you two for doing this 1 minute into the stream

“Anyway,” I continued, “the two of us happened to bump into each other at the Live-On offices today, so we decided to do an off-collab! I’m excited to stream with you, Kaeru-chan!”

“Likewise. Kaeru believes that’s enough of a hook, and Kaeru actually has something she needs to say to all her chat mommies.”

“Oh?” *What’s this all of a sudden? I wasn’t aware of this development beforehand. Though I guess that interview was also totally ad-libbed.*

“To tell you all the truth... Today, Kaeru had a chance encounter with top-mommy—the one she has been searching for. And that mommy is Awayuki Kokorone.”

“...What?” *Hold on, what’s happening? What does she mean? I’m top-mommy? Wait, what does that even mean?*

: huh?

: Eh?

: naruhodo. wakarimasen.

: another weirdo has latched onto Shuwa-chan, huh...

“Out of respect, Kaeru would like to call her mommy in the future. Kaeru never rejects any mommy that comes to her, but only top-mommy, Awayuki

Kokorone-senpai, will be referred to as simply *mommy* without any prefix.”

“Huh? Wait! Did I have a child without knowing it?! What’s going on, Kaeru-chan?!”

“Today was a wonderful day that changed Kaeru’s life forever...”

Kaeru-chan began to explain in joyous tones how I’d rescued her when she’d collapsed in the office today. And that was perfectly fine. The bad part came when she started talking about things even I didn’t know. Apparently, Kaeru-chan had felt an insanely powerful sense of motherhood from my actions today.

Most of you are probably thinking, “What?” And it’s okay. I feel that way most of all.

But think about it for a moment. This is Live-On. People wonder if we’re trying to get ourselves listed—not on the stock market, but in the Chargeman Ken world.

So I stopped thinking about it.

“Please raise Kaeru well in the future, mommy!”

“Awayuki Kokorone has, on this day, gained a daughter older than she is! Don’t even care anymore.”

I truly regretted the fact that so few humans alive would be able to empathize with how awkward it was for an older lady sitting next to you to call you *mommy*.

: the phrase "birds of a feather flock together" was practically invented for live-on

: Awa-chan is so kind! And she fell into the gap between her and Shuwa

: Oh, shit. I need to start chugging StroZero myself if I want to have any hope of following this

: lmao shuwa-chan just gave up

: imaginary impregnation? no, imaginary CHILDBIRTH

: at first, she was crushing the competition by going full-strength with strozero! but now, a bunch of vtubers have shown up that can't fully be controlled even with the power of strozero. i've never heard of this battle manga

: But when you went viral, YOU were the one who said she was gonna be a genmate's mommy and got hard for her!!! One more kid can't be that bad, right?

: LOL at the family tree being constructed around shuwa-chan

: Yes, I will be your mommy!

Shion Kaminari: Heeey! Kaeru-chaaan! Your mommy is right here!

“Hey! Look! You have Shion-senpai to be your mommy! She’s way more motherly than I am!” I exclaimed.

“Kaeru does, of course, love Shion-mama, but top-mommy can’t be anyone but Awayuki-senpai.”

“I don’t know why I’m just thinking of this now, but don’t you have any doubts about having infinite mommies?”

“It’s a one-child, multiple-mothers situation.”

Shion Kaminari: But why?! The one you're calling mommy is the kind of person who would get drunk and interview her own daughter as if it were an adult video!

: A family where everyone's more like friends with each other?

: It's just forward-thinking sexual education

: Oh, very Scandinavian

: apologize to scandinavia right now lmao

“Well, it’s just that when it comes to Shion-mama,” said Kaeru-chan, “sometimes Kaeru feels terrified.”

“Oh, I get that. She made me drink StroZero through a baby bottle!” I commented.

“That was a *reward*. Now Kaeru is envious.”

“Wait, what?”

Shion Kaminari: I'll take really good care of you! I will literally take care of you from the moment you get up to the moment you go to sleep

: that's exactly what she means, Shion-mama

: terrifying!

Alice Soma: Kaeru-dono is Shuwa-chan-dono's daughter? In other words, if I were to marry Kaeru-dono, I would become her daughter as well? ...I see. Time to draw up a plan!

: stop with the political marriage lmaoooo

: is this the Human Irrationality Project?

“I say, it seems chat has grown quite lively, eh?” I said.

“You announced Kaeru’s childbirth. It’s only natural.”

“Let me tell you what happened! I was trying to drink StroZero, but somehow I ended up with a daughter older than I am. You guys think I don’t know what I’m talking about... You’re right, I don’t know what’s going on at all. It isn’t something scientific like external fertilization or proxy childbirth, though. What I experienced was just the tip of the iceberg...”

In any case, I didn’t want to keep on going with the same topic forever, so I decided to accept it all and get to the actual point of this collab.

We’d decided to collaborate in haste and on the spot, so we didn’t exactly have much prepared for it. What we’d hurriedly come up with was a “Topic

Box.” Inside the box, which was opaque, we would reach our hand in and pull out one of many pieces of paper with a conversation topic on it. We’d take turns drawing, then talk about whatever was on it. It was extremely simple, but things like these were an amazing support for zatsudan and casual conversation. And now that we’d explained it to our viewers, it was time to begin!

“You can go first, mommy.”

“Okey dokey! Let’s do this, woohoo!” I reached in and pulled out a topic. “*What’s something that currently interests you?* Well, that’s a standard one, isn’t it?”

“Oh, Kaeru wrote that one. Is there anything you’re really into right now, mommy?”

“Hmm... Let’s see. My collection of out-of-print StroZero cans has increased lately, so sometimes I take them all out, gaze at them, and grin to myself.”

“Kaeru hopes you’re lying about this interest. That’s a wine thing, after all. Kaeru thinks mommy is the only one in the world who would ever treat StroZero like fine art.”

“I can enjoy StroZero with my eyes too, can’t I? And what’s your current interest, Kaeru-chan? You wrote this one, so you must have one, right?”

“Yes. Kaeru has been watching a lot of anime recently.”

“Oh? Nice! What are you watching?”

“Anpanman. Kaeru has it playing nonstop, all day long. After all, Kaeru-chan is a baby.”

“There’s such a thing as being too in character!”

“Kaeru is madly in love with Batako-san. After all, Kaeru-chan is—”

“—a baby, right?”

“That’s exactly right. You understand—but Kaeru would expect nothing less from top-mommy.”

“I understand *nothing*.” That would have struck fear into any normal adult’s

heart. Even Shion-senpai would have been better...

“Kaeru has also been obsessed with steak, although she can’t buy expensive kinds.”

“Ah, you like meat?”

“Of course, but when one eats steak, one gets to wear a bib, right? People consider it to be only for wiping one’s mouth, so it has allowed Kaeru to engage in the forbidden art of public pseudo-baby-play. It allows Kaeru to fulfill both her food needs and her baby needs at the same time. It is extremely satisfying.”

“I thought you were just eating meat, but it turns out you were indulging in carnal desires. Also, there’s only supposed to be *four* primal desires—don’t add weird baby stuff into it!”

“Wait, primal desires?”

“The desire to eat, the desire to sleep, the desire to have sex, and the desire to drink StroZero! It’s common sense.”

“The apple truly doesn’t fall far from the tree.”

: LMFAO ¥10000

: As a tsukkomi, I have no idea where to even start with this

: yep. neither of those new obsessions bother people! good girls!

: I'd like to suggest the theory that Uncle Jam's brain is just jam

: if you thought of that, doesn't that mean YOUR head is the jam-filled one?

: Bro that was brutal lol

Sei Utsuki: Oh, but you’ve forgotten the desire to hypnotize.

Alice Soma: And the desire for Awayuki!

: This unbelievably unreal isekai feeling is the best part of Live-On

“Kaeru will draw from the box next,” said Kaeru-chan. “Hmm... Here we go. Let’s see... Impressions. Wait, does this count as a topic? Isn’t it just a quick gag?”

“Both of us were serious about it at first,” I explained, “but partway through we just started writing whatever came to mind.”

“Kaeru begs forgiveness. After all, Kaeru is a baby.”

“Shuwa begs forgiveness. After all, Shuwa is Live-On.”

: I can forgive that!

: Okay, even if I VERY hypothetically understand the baby thing, Shuwa-chan is literally just abusing her authority now lmao

: It's Live-On, so it can't be helped

: everyone in liveon is so crazy it makes me start to wonder if they're all actually sane and I'm the crazy one

: This is the real world, with 100% purity, and yet it's like a whole different world where I have no idea what anyone is saying. Sasuga Shuwayuki Kokorone. Her spinal fluid's ABV is on a whole different level

: implying the rest of us have any alcohol in our spinal fluid lmao

“Can you do any impressions, mommy?”

“Sure, I’ll take things into my own hands! I’ll go with... Me, having found a tall can of StroZero—which she loves very much—and needing to advertise it, but ending up drowning in it instead!”

“Kaeru didn’t expect you to do an impression of yourself. And your

description is surprisingly detailed, so nobody understands it. But it seems like it will be fun, so go ahead.”

“Hey! Do you want to feel so energetic? Try StroZero! Alcohol for people who need gratuitous amounts of streaming energy! Sound the alarm! You’re going to be uncomfortably shuwa-shuwa!”

“Okay, that’s the standard cypypasta.”

“Hello, how are you? I am under the StroZero. Please help me. Here too much booze. Wait, I’m drowning in it, *glug glug glug!!!*”

“That veered off the tracks.”

“No, seriously, help me! Chami-chan! Shion-mama! Nekoma-senpai! Seisama! I...I drink your StroZero! I drink it up!”

“Wait, what was that last part?”

“*Glug glug glug glug! Glug!!! Glug!* Help me! I don’t want to die yet! I don’t wanna die!!! *Glug glug glug glug!!!! Glug! Gluuug!*”

“Mommy, you’re yabai. In a lot of ways.”

“This StroZero is just so tasty, so delicious, *glug glug glug glug!* Phew... I managed to drink it all somehow. If that hadn’t been StroZero, I would have died instantly.”

“Oops, looks like she actually returned alive.”

: i am laughing my ass off rn

: Don't lie Kaeru-chan, you're happy about it

: the idiot is too strong! there's nowhere near enough straight man!

: Quit implying StroZero falls from the sky like rain!

: If that actually happened, every animal on earth would get all shuwa-shuwa!

: Wait. I think I just realized a terrifying fact. All of the animals living in this forest--aren't they the later

Live-On members?! I have to report this to the society, ack, wait, what are you doing--

: Live-On: "You know too much."

: i know it's a bit late, but this isn't really an impression?

: I mean, if you're going there anyway, using StroZero as some kind of energy drink makes no sense either

: This is the first time we've met, but I already love you.

: lmao first-time viewers falling in love at first sight

"You're up next, Kaeru-chan!"

"Wait, Kaeru is going to do it too? She would much rather not go after such a disaster."

"Of course you are! I did it, so now you have to!"

"All right. Kaeru will do an impression of mommy during her first stream. H-H-Hello e-e-e-everyone, th-there, um, s-s-s-s-sure is a n-n-n-nice light s-s-s-s-snow f-f-f-falling (shaking madly)."

"Hey! Even I wasn't *that* nervous!"

"Kyaa! ♪"

This impudent little brat! Looks like I'll have to force her to understand! How dare she call herself a baby but have such a mature, sexy body! Prepare yourself!

"Oh, no! Mommy has pushed Kaeru down!"

"You're about to become a mommy! Ora-ora!"

"Kyaa! ♪ At this rate, I'm going to be mommied by mommy! ♪"

"And I'm gonna tell the baby that I'm the mommy of the mommy who was mommied by her mommy's mommy!"

“Oh no! ♪ She’ll be a baby born from a baby who was mommied by mommy who has her own mommy named Shion-mama! ♪”

: SPEAK. JAPANESE

: What are we watching here...?

: It's called gestaltzerfall. They've said the word "mommy" so much that even they don't understand what it means anymore

Shion Kaminari: Is this heaven?

: I want to be born as that baby ¥4545

: oh no. 4545, read shi-ko-shi-ko? like, popping a boner? please stop...

: If you die now, you might be reborn as their baby

: You're a goddamn genius

Anyway, time to leave the silly games aside and go to the next topic! And the body of my daughter who's older than me was amazing indeed! "Next topic, woohoo! Let's see. Favorite books!"

“Oh, Kaeru wrote that one. I’m a serious fan of picture books. Do you read books, mommy?”

“Books, huh? Well, *I Want To Eat Your StroZero* is a famous one!”

“What...? That just makes you an awful person who goes after other people’s alcohol...”

“Mgh. Then what books do *you* like, Kaeru-chan?”

“*I Want To Eat Mommy’s StroZero*, of course. After all, Kaeru is a baby.”

“That’s basically the same as mine!”

“It is *very* different. Mommy’s boobs produce StroZero milk with an ABV of 9%, so Kaeru wants to drink that. In other words, it is simply because Kaeru desires to suckle on her mother’s teat. A perfectly healthy desire for a baby.”

“Wait, for real? Damn, this body is handy. I’m totally self-sufficient!”

“Huh?”

: lmaoooo

: as expected of the woman who drank an entire flood dry.
she never breaks character

: Is that from a myth?

: Despite saying she was a serious fan of picture books,
Kaeru-chan still hopped in the car Shuwa-chan was driving.
I love her so much

: i burst out laughing when she went "huh," she sounded
actually confused there

: I'm with the theorycrafters. For Shuwa-chan, StroZero
is something irreplaceable, something precious enough to
give her life for. Saying she wants to eat Kaeru-chan's is
like asking her for her most precious thing (her life), so
it's actually a profession of love, right? Shuwa-chan is
surprisingly bashful, huh? Anyway, what I'm trying to say
is, "I want to drink your StroZero" = "Have sex with me!"

: ^ I was understanding this bro until the end when he
ruined everything lmaoooo

: if you understood at all, that means the poison has
already taken effect

: **Someone bashful wouldn't say "Have sex with me!" even
in a roundabout way ¥2000**

: Please spend your time thinking about more worthwhile
things

: it's the theory of a new form of humanity! it's more
than worthwhile!

: Then Shuwa-chan has at last escaped the framework of

mankind...

: What, is she a Newtype?

: no, she's a zerotype, right?

: omg she devolved lmao

: She'd probably be able to use the Zero System without a problem, at least

: Shuwa: "Zero... Show me the way."

: Zero System: "Drink StroZero."

: Shuwa: "Mission acknowledged."

: lol, you just wanted to drink anyway

Alice Soma: I want to eat Shuwa-chan-dono!

: Please specify a part of her

: no, if she does that, she's liable to say her uvula again

Sei Utsuki: I want to eat woman.

: Please specify an individual

: oh great, clippers are basically just gonna have to use this entire stream since it NEVER ENDS

: We don't waste any part of an empty can here

"Do you have a favorite line from a book, mommy?"

"Hmm. *Mine has been a life of much shame*, I guess?"

"Oh, Kaeru knows that one."

: me too!

: i know that one

: wow. an osamu dazai quote

: Thank you for the self-intro

: man is it convincing when the real thing says it

“Huh?” I said. “I just named a quote I like... What?”

After that, we talked about a few other books and manga we liked, and once we'd drawn several more topics, we decided to wrap up the stream to keep things from going long. Considering how much everyone was liking it, and how early an hour it still was, I was reluctant to end things. Unfortunately, we were borrowing office space, so we couldn't stay for too long. It was time to get back home.

While we were putting away the equipment and getting ready to go home, Kaeru-chan spoke to me; our backs were to one another. “Hey, mommy?”

“Yes?”

“Thank you for today.”

“Yep! Thank you too. That was a fun stream!”

“Yes... It truly was. Kaeru didn't realize it could be this much fun to be yourself around someone else. Thanks to you, Kaeru gained confidence today. Kaeru will never forget how she met her mommy today.” I hadn't noticed at first because of the noise we were making putting everything away, but her voice was shaking faintly.

“Kaeu-chan...” She was another one who had arrived here after a lot of hardship, and she'd probably experienced so much loneliness during those times. My body automatically placed its arms around Kaeru-chan from behind. She was a little taller than me, but for some reason, her back felt small enough right now for me to wrap it in my arms.

That was probably the moment it fully set in that I was in a senpai position now.

A few minutes later, Kaeru-chan turned around to me and said, with a more

cheerful and happy expression than I'd ever seen her make, "Kaeru accomplished a goal today. She promises she'll become someone you're glad to be called mommy by!"

From that point on, Kaeru-chan was more aggressive when it came to participating in collabs and stuff, and she started to clearly have more fun even in her solo streams. She was riding that wave, starting to pull in some decent popularity.

Maybe I was being conceited, but I'd joined Live-On because I looked up to Hareru-senpai and the second generation, and now the positions had been reversed—a kouhai was now looking up to me. It was an extremely moving moment for me.

Anyway, what I'm trying to say is, I guess...

I'm so glad I continued being a VTuber!!!

Idle Talk: My Friendship with Mashiron

Since Mashiron and I still had time after reminiscing about how we'd met, we decided to keep talking, the topic shifting to our current relationship.

"This might involve some digging around in your own dark past," said Mashiron, "but is there any specific thing you remember really vividly, Awa-chan?"

"Hmm..." I said. "There's actually so many it's hard to choose one."

"Yeah, I guess since it's been a while since we debuted, huh?"

"As an all-around conclusion, I doubt we could have ever imagined back then what we're like now."

Mashiron chuckled. "You got that right. Especially in your case, Awa-chan."

"It's behind me. Just a fond memory now. But this is getting off-topic—you mean a memory from back then, right?" I asked.

Hmm... What's a good one? I wondered. *I was working my ass off at the time, since I was panicking at my popularity not going up. Though I guess my life is still just as tumultuous as back then.* Mashiron was the one I'd done the most collabs with, and she'd helped me with a bunch of equipment issues and other off-stream things. There was so much information tangled up in my brain that I had a hard time picking out any one memory.

"...Oh," I said.

"Hm? What is it, Awa-chan?" asked Mashiron. "Think of something?"

"Well, I guess so, but I'm not sure I should say it..."

"Hey, quit putting on airs. You don't have to be reserved about it with me at this point, right?"

"I... I guess so. In that case, um... It's about something you did on a stream once..."

“But courtesy is important even among friends! Let’s not talk about this!”

“Hey, Mashiron! No take-backs! That’s the coward’s way out!”

“You’re not wrong, but still...”

It certainly wasn’t every day I heard Mashiron refuse something so strongly, given that she didn’t mind always hanging out with the rest of the VTubers, despite all her witty comments about our usual ridiculousness. But I couldn’t blame her. The story *was* about how Mashiron had almost made a huge, uncharacteristic mistake.

“I *am* still sorry about that, you know,” insisted Mashiron. “I still feel guilty, so come on. Give me a break.”

“No, no! It’s all water under the bridge, of course. I wasn’t even angry at the time anyway,” I assured her. “But it wasn’t all bad—it was a good experience for us. That’s when we started calling each other by our nicknames, after all.”

“Urk. That may be true, but still...”

“You kind of embarrassed me before and left it at that, so consider this my revenge! Come on, remember what happened?”

“I kinda feel like you blew up your own ship on that one. But, well, if you insist.”

It was a fond memory—one which, even after all this time, I could recall vividly in my mind. The incident happened about a month after our debut, as we were really getting into the swing of streaming. Nothing that day stood out as a particularly foul omen. Mashiron was doing one of her usual zatsudan streams, and since I didn’t want our streams to overlap that day, I joined her chat and became just another viewer.

As expected from someone who could easily handle my Shuwa mode, Mashiron was a great conversationalist. That day, she was discussing her illustration day job and keeping everything moving along at a good pace. It was right around the time when the greater public had begun to notice how talented a streamer she was, so she’d started to get a lot more people tuning in.

I remembered her voice being somehow happier than usual...and, considering we'd gotten used to streaming, she'd probably relaxed a little too much. I was smiling to myself, happy for her favorable winds, but a certain comment showed up that ruined the peacefulness of the stream.

: your illustrations are so bad nobody's gonna be into that kokorone-whatever person lololol

"Yikes," I said to myself. "A mean comment..." And it was the worst kind of mean comment—it was clearly meant to be mean *and* was even rude enough to use my name as part of it.

There were so many things she could have said in response. Mashiron's illustrations had been widely praised even before she'd become a VTuber, and when the third generation had debuted—when our visuals were the most important, since people didn't really know us yet—I'd been the most popular one. Her art left no room to doubt her level of skill. It was true that I wasn't as popular as the other VTubers afterward, but that was purely because I was the one behind the model.

The commenter had probably just wanted to insult her. Unfortunately, anyone working as a VTuber had to walk a path where they sometimes ran into antis like these. They bothered everyone, including me; in the end, you just had to give up, since you couldn't do anything about it. The conclusion you naturally come to, though perhaps reluctantly, is ultimately to ignore them, since letting every single one bother you would destroy you.

On that day, though, it was a different story for Mashiron.

"What?" she said on stream. "Whoever made that comment, you wanna say that again? It's one thing to insult me, but it's another to insult Awayuki-chan."

"M-Mashiro-chan?" You didn't need to be familiar with her to realize she was furious. But she wasn't just angry for herself—it was mainly for me.

"Awayuki-chan is doing her best, you know. She spends so much time every day thinking about what to stream so that everyone enjoys themselves. And I know because I've been watching her do it. Though, judging by your lack of

forethought with that comment, I doubt you'd understand, being the kind of trash that has never worked hard in their life."

"Mashiro-chan..." I was shocked, both since I'd never heard her voice get that upset before and because she was thinking about me so much.

"...Yeah. Anyway, watch what you say. Make fun of people without knowing anything and you're gonna get your legs swept out from under you one day."

It resulted in a big ruckus appearing in the chat, but since Mashiron was in the right on all fronts, it actually made people support her more, and the anti who had made the comment disappeared.

But things didn't end there—in fact, this was where Mashiron got really out of hand.

"Anyway, that's about all I wanted to say... But that person criticized my art too, right? This is a good opportunity. Why don't I talk about how much passion I put into designing Awayuki-chan? It should be a good topic for this zatsudan."

Mashiron pulled up the completed design of Awayuki, which had all its little particulars written on it. And then she started to talk *all* about Awayuki's body, in minute detail...

It started with the gloss of the hair and the springiness of the skin, eventually turning to things like the ribs and the armpits, all of it sounding like a parade of fetishes. Eventually, it evolved into an explanation of the meatiness of Awayuki's thighs—which were normally hidden—and the size of her breasts...

As Mashiron got more and more passionate, I started to have misgivings. This was venturing into territory it should probably be veering away from—and my prediction was right on the mark.

"And you know what? I made sure to describe even the color of her nipples in detail! Fweh heh heh. You're all interested in her nipples, right?"

"Wh-What?!"

"Anyway, I'm gonna draw them now."

"Whaaaaaaat?!?!"

She'd made the absurd remark with a tenacious, enraptured tone that I

couldn't believe came from the cool, androgynous Mashiron. And she wasn't lying either—she pushed the design to the side for the moment and started opening a new canvas!

“Haah... Haah... Haah...!!!”

“Whoa, whoa whoa whoa?! Wait a second!!!” I shouted to myself in my room. The chat was total pandemonium! Despite my confusion, I could tell this was a crisis! “She won't see a comment in time! I have to call her!”

I hastily called up the still-streaming Mashiron to try and stop her berserk rampage. “Please, pick up!” I prayed, hoping that she'd notice my call so I could protect my private areas. But with Mashiron so zoned in, she didn't notice anything. “She doesn't see it!”

So I continued trying.

“...Huh? Awayuki-chan?”

“Did she notice?!”

My efforts had borne fruit—after about a minute of me trying to call her, she finally picked up. I learned later that Mashiron's manager just so happened to not be watching the stream, so this had been, all joking aside, a life-threatening crisis.

“What's up, Awayuki-chan?” she asked. “I'm a little busy. Can this wait until after the zatsu?”

“Mashiron! Tell me right now what you're about to do!”

“Hmm? I'm about to draw your nipples. Why?”

“How can you say that so casually?! If you know what you're doing, then stop! This is bad! Like, really bad!”

“Hrm. Why do you want to stop me so much? I just want to see your nipples.”

“I'm saying that's exactly the point! What's going on with you today?! What happened to the cool, collected Mashiro-chan?!”

“Aw, shut up! What's wrong with a mama wanting to see her daughter's nipples?! It's weirder to get embarrassed over it! I'm your mom!”

“It’s not about being embarrassed! You’re on stream! People are watching! The whole world can see this!”

“Huh? ...Oh.” At last, Mashiron stopped her unceasing hands. She seemed to finally realize what she was doing. “O-Oh, uh... Sorry, everyone,” she said to chat. “I’m gonna go cool my head for a bit...”

After those words, the day’s stream came to an end. We remained on the call, though, and Mashiron apologized to me so sincerely that I started to be the one worrying about *her* this time.

“I’m so sorry for causing trouble,” she said. “I really blew it this time. What’s going on with me? And also, seriously, thanks for helping me out.”

“Don’t mention it—all’s well that ends well,” I replied. “But what’s wrong? I’ve never seen you lose it like that before.”

“I have a habit of getting too passionate when it comes to illustrations... I guess with that and how relaxed I felt during today’s stream, I was a little too easily riled up... I won’t repeat this mistake ever again.”

From that day on, while Mashiron would sometimes get passionate about illustrating, she never, ever crossed the line. This was purely a result of some unlucky situations coinciding.

But she didn’t seem satisfied yet, so she kept on piling on the apologies. “Again, I’m really sorry,” she said. “In the end, I caused you trouble too. I’m ashamed of myself...”

“Seriously, it’s all good! Please don’t apologize that much.”

“Really? Okay, good... But I’ve been so reliable and dependable in the past that I’m kinda losing confidence.”

“P-Please don’t say things like that!” I pleaded. She seemed really depressed about it, and it hurt to see her blaming herself. She’d done so much for me. Now it was my turn to cheer her up! “People like you are *supposed* to have confidence, Mashiro-chan! Your art is amazing, the voice sounds super cool, you’re great at talking, you’re nice, and you cheer me on!”

“O-Oh? I-Is that so?”

“And to tell you the truth, I was happy you got angry over me. I thought it was really cool! And, and—”

“Okay, okay, thanks. You’ve made your point, Awayuki-chan. Now you’re just embarrassing me, so please!”

I’d never been able to say the right things in these situations, so I’d just started listing off the things I liked about her to try and get her to cheer up a little. Apparently that had made her bashful. But it seemed to pull her out of her depressed thoughts, which was a relief. I wanted to go back in time and pat myself on the back for a job well done.

“Yeah, you’re right,” said Mashiron. “No time to wallow in my depression. First I have to apologize to my viewers, and then I just have to put my nose back to the grindstone.”

“I’ll be there with you when you apologize,” I assured her. “Although I doubt this will cause that much backlash.”

“I hope not...”

(As it turned out, I was right. The fact that she’d started off by getting angry for my sake had worked wonders, drawing many reactions from people who felt like Mashiron was a mom who loved her daughter that much. Criticism was in the minority, and eventually even that disappeared on its own.)

“Anyway, no matter what happens, I’ll do my best,” she continued. “I said I love people who always work hard, so I guess I should work hard myself—that way I can come to love myself. Thanks for cheering me up.”

“No worries. I’ll always be your ally and good friend, no matter what. I might not be that reliable, but still...”

After a pause, she asked, “Hey, Awayuki-chan, since we’re here and all, what do you say we give each other nicknames?”

“What? Nicknames?”

“Yep. I do still love you, after all.”

“Whaaat?! Wh-What do you mean?!”

She chuckled. “I mean as friends. Why are you so ruffled?”

“R-Right, of course! Naturally! Right, right, right!”

“Anyway, nicknames. What do you think?”

“I’m fine with the idea, of course. It kind of reminds me of my school days.”

“Same here. What do you want to call me?”

As someone for whom life hadn’t involved friendship for a long time, nicknames were an honor to me—maybe even too much of one. I strained, trying to come up with something. *Hmm...* Finally I suggested, “What about, like... Mashiron...?”

“Mashiron?” she repeated.

“D-Do you not like it?”

“That’s not it. I was just curious why.”

“Well, you know how Hareru-senpai gets called Harerun? I really admire her a lot, and if you took that same level of admiration but changed it to friendship—you’re on the same level as that, I guess, so I wanted to call you something that sounded kinda like it... Should I change it?”

“I see, so that’s why you put the ‘n’ on the end. I like it! Plus, it sounds like macaron, which is pretty cute.”

“Really?! I’m glad...”

“Next is me, then. I’ve already decided. What do you think of Awa-chan?”

“Awa-chan? I think that’s great! Can I ask the reason?”

“Well, you’re always very awa-awa, so Awa-chan.”

“W-Wait! What is that even supposed to mean?!”

Mashiron chuckled again.

After the call, we both did an apology stream. That must have been around the time we’d started doing way more collabs together. This incident had begun with Mashiron making a mistake, but it had been absolutely crucial to our friendship growing, which is why I’d brought it up as a memorable experience from our past.

Anyway, as for how we reacted to it in the present...

“Ugaaahhh!!!” groaned Mashiron. “No more, please! It’s kinda making me anxious! Stop it or I’m ending the call!”

“Yes, you’re right! Let’s stop—right now! Ahh, it must be hot in here, since I started sweating!”

We’d both ended up being taken down by our own shyness and embarrassment.

Chapter 3

Zoo Visit with Chami-chan Retrospective Stream

This may be a sudden change of topic, but do you remember this conversation happening?

“Chami-chan! In that case, why don’t we go to an amusement park sometime?”

Chami Yanagase: I'll grab my things

“Wait! Too fast! I didn’t mean now. Calm down!”

Well, for all those Chami-chan-lovers who do remember it, I’m sorry for the wait!

“Good evening, everyone. A nice, light snow is falling again this evening. I’ve invited a wonderful guest for tonight’s stream.”

“Hee hee. Good evening. It’s Chami Yanagase-oneesan, always the one who guides you to the pinnacle of healing.”

“Good, good! You said it without stumbling!”

“Thanks. But that was actually just a recording I took of myself so that I wouldn’t slip up saying my greeting.”

“Wow, all you had to do was say one thing, and the audience is rolling...”

: wow such seiso

: ^ said in monotone, i bet lmaooo

: Awa-chan's here today, huh?

: I've been waiting with extreme anticipation ever since the notification two days ago. If I wasn't WFH, it would have been fatal!

: The amusement park story!

: Man, that bro dedicated his life to that notification all for the amusement park thing, huh? LOL

That's right! Just like we'd talked about on a past collab, Chami-chan and I had taken a two-day, one-night trip to the amusement park! And not just any amusement park, but the famous Fuji-Ryu Island! Chami-chan had never been there before, and though I'd been there as a kid, it had still been a fresh, enjoyable experience for me after so many years away from it. Ultimately, though, it had just been the two of us enjoying ourselves there. Which was why for this stream, we were going to do a little retrospective on our trip so that the chat could enjoy it too!

"Okay, everyone, be patient," I said. "We'll be answering some Castellás first. But don't worry—we'll give you all the details on what happened at the amusement park after that."

"And I'm in high spirits today, so don't go assuming I'm my usual clumsy self."

"Given your recording before, I'd say maybe that's too late..."

"No! It *can't* be!"

"Anyway, let's go to our first letter!"

Q: Your resistance only makes my StroZero colder!

"Shuwa-chan responded to this one saying, 'You're making me blush, man,'" I explained.

"I don't get it," said Chami-chan. "Is it supposed to be a compliment?"

"Just the Castella is already a completely nuts thing to send, but I think the

source of the meme is even more yabai than that...”

“Really?”

“It would be too much for you, Chami-chan, so let’s move along!”

Q: Yesterday, I went to a nearby conbini. A conbini.

There were so many people there that I couldn’t get to the cash register.

When I took a closer look, I saw a banner hanging that said that there was a deal for 20 yen off alcoholic drinks if you bought two.

Morons, I thought. Idiots.

Don’t bother coming to a conbini you’d never come to just for the 20-yen discount, dumbasses.

It’s twenty yen. Twenty yen.

And there were college kids there too. There with friends from clubs, I bet. How nice for them.

And they’re all, “heck yeah, let’s get some 500-ml ones.” I can’t even watch at this point.

I’ll give you your 20 yen if you put those cans back.

Convenience stores should let you be more cutthroat.

Wouldn’t be surprised if someone started fighting with the clerk behind the counter.

Stab or be stabbed. Wouldn’t that be fine? Children not old enough to drink can just get the hell out of the way.

Anyway, when I finally got to the register, the guy in the next line was saying something like, “one meat bun.”

That’s when I snapped a second time.

Meat buns? Nobody eats those things these days, you twit.

Looking all arrogant, asking for a meat bun...

I wanted to ask if he even really ATE meat buns. I wanted to interrogate him for an hour, almost.

Ask him if he just wanted to say the word “meat bun.”

From my point of view, as someone who always goes to conbinis, it's the French fries that are popular around these parts right now.

Octopus with wasabi, French fries, and Strong Zero. That's the order you're SUPPOSED to make.

The octopus with wasabi has a zipper that lets you only take out as much as you want to eat too.

And the French fries are the perfect size to eat whole, one at a time. Truly the greatest.

But ordering this is a double-edged sword, because the clerk might flag you next time.

I can't recommend it to beginners.

Of course, for these total amateurs, I'd just tell them to drink juice or something.

“Ah, the famous Yoshinoya cypypasta,” I said.

“Why is this person pretending they know everything when it's just about a convenience store in the end?”

“Actually, starting a fight with the clerk reminds me of postapocalyptic stuff. Also, Shuwa-chan says that we live in a miraculous age for being able to order French fries, octopus with wasabi, and StroZero like that.”

: ILSZ

: don't abbreviate it like that lmaooo

: The octopus with wasabi has a zipper that lets you only

take out as much as you want to eat too. < LMAO this isn't even what's good about it

: And he didn't mention how the French fries tasted either, lol

: Now that's a nostalgic meme ¥2000

: Shuwa-chan's finally grown up enough to be able to have snacks with her drinks T_T

: (really quietly) i love meat buns

: Cutthroat convenience stores... Did that guy get reincarnated from the Fist of the North Star world or what?

: That Time I Was Reincarnated from a Postapocalyptic World, but This New World Was So Peaceful That When I Explained My Way of Life, They Threw Me in Prison

: lmaoooo he got arrested

Q: By the power of StroZero!

I have the Shuwashuwa!

“That’s not exactly a superpower I’d like to have,” Chami-chan commented.

“Together, we defend Castle StroZero from the evil forces of seiso. Says Shuwa-chan.”

“Wait, I didn’t sign up for that side!”

Q: The familiar old Shuwa-Mashi back-and-forths give me life! Thank you!

During your Awamashi collabs, what were you feeling when you resonated like that?

Actually, you should do a stream where the two of you watch an Awamashi collab.

“My impression hasn’t changed,” I said. “I respect her a lot—she just has such good sense. She always gives me advice when I’m having trouble too, so I probably thought of her as an older sister. Mashiron, how about you?”

Mashiro Irodori: I was closest to you out of all of our genmates. I believe I thought of you like a good three-legged race partner.

“And there you have it!” I finished.

“You really are good friends, huh? Friendship is precious.”

“Now let’s get to the main topic—the amusement park!”

“What should we start with?”

“How about when you got lost at the station, Chami-chan?”

“Rejected on account of it not being about the amusement park.”

“But I bet the viewers want to hear about it! Isn’t that right, chat?”

: I wanna hear the story!

: Me too!

: Of course

: Love how Chami-chan just admitted to getting lost

: I turned my ear sensitivity up to 3000x for this story.
Pls help

: Like a dolphin?

: different universe from dolphins, i think...

: did that bro just dragonball z his ears and then ask
for help lmao

“See?” I said. “They want to hear about it.”

“Urk,” said Chami-chan. “If it’s for my beloved viewers, then I have no choice. I’m prepared.”

“Thank you! Time for a little retrospective!”

Unlike the earlier call with Mashiron, we’d have to give the viewers all the finer details. The goal was to speak as though we were reliving the experience. *Oh, and we called each other by our real names when we were there, but this being a stream, we’ll obviously refer to each other by our VTubers’ names.*

The day before our amusement park plans, we decided to meet up at the ticket gates in Tokyo Station and then take the shinkansen to Fuji-Ryu Island. Just to be safe, I asked Chami-chan if she knew how to get there. Her reply was, “Come on. How long do you think I’ve been living in Tokyo? I could get there with my eyes closed.” That was reassuring, but...

She’d announced to her viewers that she’d be taking a break for travel—she streamed pretty much every day. And then the day came...

“Hm?” I muttered. I was already all set to board the shinkansen, and there was plenty of time until it left the station, so I figured I’d kill some time looking up recommendations on where to go in Fuji-Ryu Island when just then, I got a call from Chami-chan. “Hello? What’s wrong?” I asked.

“Oh, hello! Listen to this, Awayuki-chan. I think I’ve been placed under the Izanami jutsu.”

“...I’m sorry?”

“Everywhere I look, it’s the same thing. This is quite the problem.”

“Wait, are you... Are you lost, by any chance?”

“N-No, it’s, um, the Izanami jutsu—”

“You haven’t even gotten on a train yet, have you? You don’t know the layout of the station, so you don’t know where to go.”

“That’s correct... Please help me, Awayuki-chaaan!”

“And after all that confidence from yesterday...”

“When I really thought hard, I realized that while I’ve lived in Tokyo for a long time, I don’t ever leave my house, so I only use stations very rarely.”

“And this is why you get called Ponkotsu-Chami-chan, abbreviated to Pocchan. Because you always mess stuff up.”

“Nobody’s ever called me that! But it does sound kind of cute. Maybe it could work.”

“Anyway, if you can see anything that stands out as a marker, tell me. I’ll guide you over the phone.”

“Thanks! Umm, there’s someone here who is shockingly tall.”

“Chami-chan... No matter how hard I try, that’s not enough to go on...”

In all honesty, I’d expected something along these lines to happen, so I was able to guide her smoothly to where she needed to go. We met up, then boarded the shinkansen together.

“You really saved me,” she said. “This station is like a dungeon.”

“It’s definitely hard to figure out when you’re seeing it for the first time.”

“I feel so accomplished for overcoming that obstacle.”

“We haven’t even gotten close to the actual point of all this...”

Looking at Chami-chan as she sat next to me, she came off as so much more mature than me. And even in her personal clothes, she emanated a businesswoman sort of aura. It all reminded me that first impressions really weren’t everything. Although, if you ask me—or viewers whose oshi is Chami-chan—it’s that very gap between her personality and her appearance that’s irresistible!

...Hold on a minute. Now that I’m looking at her, her face doesn’t seem quite right.

“Chami-chan,” I asked, “are you tired? You don’t look so good...”

“I tried to cover it up with makeup, but I guess you can still tell, huh? I was actually so excited about going to the amusement park with you that I didn’t get a wink of sleep.”

“We won’t arrive for a while, so go to sleep right now.”

“W-Wait! I put together a whole deck of topics to talk about on the shinkansen for this day specifically!”

“We can do hours of that later, I don’t care—right now, go to sleep!”

“Okay...”

“And that’s about what happened!” I finished.

“I’m sorry for bothering you with all that...”

“No, it was really cute. Throughout the trip, I saw you as a kind of silly little sister.”

“Even though I’m older than you...”

: Chami-chan at full power LMAO

: love pocchan

: too excited to sleep? are you actually a grade schooler?

: I love those situations where the younger sister is more mature than the older one

: I want to go on a trip with Awa-chan too!

: same. being with her is probably a lot of fun

“B-But I wasn’t being pon the whole time!” insisted Chami-chan. “Now you’ll get to hear my *real* big-sisterly exploits!”

“Okay! Then let’s move right along and actually get to our stories from Fuji-Ryu Island!”

The moment we finally entered the park that day, we both let out a “wow” of

admiration, overawed by its sheer scale. As I said before, this wasn't my first time here, but it was big enough that I couldn't help but be moved. Popular theme parks—not just Fuji-Ryu Island—were all worlds in and of themselves constructed on these massive plots of land. It was always amazing. Presented with such a fun-looking alternate universe so different from daily life, it didn't matter what age you were—your heart would sing.

Having lived in Tokyo, I'd grown somewhat accustomed to the crowds, but there were still so many people here with delighted expressions walking around. "Super popular as always, isn't it?" I remarked.

"I thought this in the station too, but there are a lot of people in the world, huh?"

"Wanna go to Comiket sometime? You'll be terrified at mankind's power of reproduction."

"Really? I don't know much about Comiket."

"Then listen carefully. Comiket is a type of sex. The visitors are the sperm, and the items they're after are the eggs. An endless stream of heroes walking forth toward a common goal, all trying to get there first. The sight is essentially an embodiment of the mysteries of life."

"Stop talking about weird stuff outside!"

O-Oh, crap! I thought. The liveliness around us had lured me into lowering my seiso filter. I'd have to be more careful. "Sorry, sorry. Why don't we find a good spot to take a picture first?"

"That sounds good." Chami-chan giggled lowly. "The amusement park with a girlfriend—I've gotten infinitely close to normie status!"

I didn't really know what she was talking about, but she seemed happy.

Oh! Just spotted a group of six high school girls! That brings me back. Back to my pure days, before I knew of the darkness of employment...

"Be careful, Awayuki-chan! Their extroversion coefficient is higher than ours! We should avoid them if possible!"

"What is there to be cautious about? This place may be called an island, but

it's not like we're having a battle royale, you know." I tugged on Chami-chan's hand—she was, as always, doing one of her social anxiety things.

Once we'd finished taking a commemorative photo, we finally started discussing what attraction to go visit first. She said, "Well, we have to go to Fujisima first!"

"Wait, first thing?!" Fujisima was a giant roller coaster at Fuji-Ryu Island. It had been a pretty long time since it had been built, but its quality and pure "scream machine" scare factor still made it the top roller coaster in the world. Fuji-Ryu Island was famous for its roller coasters, but suggesting one right off the bat? *Is she actually a roller coaster-lover?*

Anyway, I did want to ride it at some point since we're here, so I don't care. Time to get pumped, woohoo!

"Whoa..." I breathed as the cars rattled their way up a hill—slowly, so that you'd start panicking. I felt a cold sweat break out at the terror that was about to ensue. I was about average when it came to roller coasters, so the anticipation and terror I felt were evenly matched. The scenery was drop-dead gorgeous too, but we were so high up it was hard to appreciate it...

...I felt it coming.

"Awayuki-chan..."

"Hm?"

As the roller coaster was about to get to that part all roller coasters have, Chami-chan—who was sitting next to me—finally broke her silence. "Hewp meeee..." she said, her voice shaking. She looked just like a soldier who had stepped on a land mine, realized it, and was unable to move from the sheer despair.

"Aaaaaahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!!!!!" we both screamed.

"Aha ha ha ha ha ha!!!"

Once Fujisima had made a full go-around and we'd disembarked, we saw how

barfy we both looked and burst out laughing.

“Chami-chan, you’re terrible with roller coasters!” I exclaimed. “Why’d you choose that?”

“As one of my few acquaintances who insists I’m an introverted character with social anxiety, I wanted to be all cocky when riding it to get you back!”

“Not doing anything to help your case, there...”

“Actually riding it, though... Holy cow. I think I threw up a little in my mouth, and also saw a vision of ascending to heaven.”

“You almost crossed the Barf-zu River. With our speed, throwing up would have made a pretty straight river, actually.”

“Don’t compare it to the Sanzu River! Jeez. You’re so excited that your second personality is coming out.”

“Aha ha!” we both laughed.

I felt like I was fully in amusement park mode now that we’d been on one of the attractions. Our voices had gotten louder, and our minds seemed to have reverted to childhood, which clearly meant we were more excited now. *This is great! Winning at amusement parks means having fun with everything! Let’s keep up the pace! Although...*

“We probably shouldn’t go on two roller coasters right after getting to the park,” suggested Chami-chan.

“Yeah, let’s put something calmer in the middle of it,” I agreed.

“In that case... How about the coffee cups?”

“Oh, that sounds nice! Let’s go there now!”

As our turn to ride the coffee cups came and we sat ourselves down, Chami-chan made a worried-sounding “Hrm...”

“Huh? What’s the matter, Chami-chan?” I asked. “Still rattled from Fujisima? Do you want to get off?”

“Oh, no, I’m fine now. It’s just, I was thinking... I might have wanted to use the restroom before this.”

“Ah, I see... Do you want to? I’m totally fine if you want to ride this after that.”

“No, don’t worry, it’s not that bad. I can definitely handle it. And it’s starting now anyway!”

“Yo! Here we go!”

Our coffee cup began to spin at a relaxed pace. Naturally, those around us immediately started spinning their cups faster—so hard it was like they wanted to fling themselves out of the cups—and making merry. *Yep!* I thought. *That’s another of the coffee cups’ true charms!* But having just gotten off Fujisima, our slower pace suited us quite well, so we started having a pleasant chat.

“Hey, Awayuki-chan?” ventured Chami-chan.

“I think I know what you’re about to say.” As we’d discussed what attractions to visit after this, we’d realized the ride was almost over. It had been a very elegant and enjoyable time for both of us, but now a change was happening, and quickly. Our eyes had casually drifted to the other, swiftly spinning cups.

I’ll be blunt. I really want to spin us!!!

And I can’t help it! It’s a common trait of all humans to want to try something they see other people doing!

“Do you, um...” said Chami-chan, “want to do it a little, just at the end?”

“Sure. Why don’t we?”

“Okay. In that case...”

Then we both screamed, “Full power!!!” and mercilessly began turning the cup’s table.

“Holy crap, this is fast!” I yelled. “Way faster than Salamander!”

“Eek! Hee hee, our hair is all over the place!”

Man, this is so much fun... Although... Um. Are we going too fast? Wait. I couldn’t tell just by looking, but now that I’m actually feeling it... Is this the limit of human endurance? I remembered the max speed of coffee cup rides like

these not being quite this high.

“Oh.” Then I remembered—this wasn’t a normal theme park. It was Fuji-Ryu Island. And, being so famous for its roller coasters, even its coffee cups could spin so quickly they seemed to have no limit! “Whoaaaaa, it’s gonna fling me off!” I screamed.

“W-We’re going too fast! Ah, ah, I feel like I’m gonna wet myself if I’m not careful!”

“I see. Lemon tea, being poured into a teacup. In the English-speaking sphere, coffee cup rides are called teacups, apparently. Sure, I would love some lemon tea.”

“I won’t let you have any! Now’s not the time for being silly! Help me stop this thing from spinning!”

Please remember, everyone, that coffee cup rides are scream machines meant for destroying your semicircular canals!

After the ride ended and we climbed out, we went around Fuji-Ryu Island wherever we wanted, having the time of our lives.

We visited a horror attraction...

“Ack!” yelped Chami-chan. “Was that a normie couple screaming?! It’s gotta be extroverts. We need to make sure we don’t run into them. What a terrifying horror element...”

“Chami-chan, that’s not part of this attraction.”

And after that, we took on another roller coaster...

“I-I need a break!” puffed Chami-chan. “Awayuki-chan, you’re...totally fine, huh. You seem pretty good at roller coasters.”

“I don’t think I am, but I’ve gotten stronger since a long time ago. When I get off a roller coaster, it feels kind of like when I drink StroZero. Sorta feels good. Can I have permission to shuwa?”

“You cannot. Stop absorbing StroZero components from roller coasters.”

“Now that’s a sentence if I ever heard one.”

And we truly, genuinely enjoyed ourselves for the rest of the day...

“After we were finished at the park, we stayed over in a hotel we’d booked,” I explained. “Then, the next day, we did a little sightseeing, and then went home!”

“It was so much fun. Thank you so much for coming, Awayuki-chan.”

“Don’t mention it! It was awesome for me too, since it had been so long since I’d been to a theme park. Let’s take another trip somewhere!”

: Tee-tee ¥3000

: Chami-chama, you went outside! I'm so proud of you!

: Next time go with Awa-chan to a love hotel, please

: oh, one of those girls' club meetups in a love hotel?

: I can easily imagine Shuwa-chan drinking StroZero and attacking Chami-chan as soon as she showed up

Kaeru Yamatani: I could probably make Chami-senpai my sub-mommy if I pressed the issue

: Kaeru-chan?!

: Now that's unusual

: All I can sense from the word "sub-mommy" is darkness, please stop

: At first I thought "making someone my mommy" was something R-18, but I bet Kaeru-chan literally just wants to be babied

“I-It’s not going to be easy to make me a mommy, you know,” Chami-chan said. “You should aim to be an independent lady like me.”

“Also, we went to the convenience store for some late-night oden. But when

Chami-chan made her order, instead of saying she wanted shirataki and egg in hers, she accidentally said shirako and onion. It was hysterical.”

“P-Please don’t bring that up!”

: LOL

: Wait but that's adorable

: I can understand her saying shirako instead of shirataki, but where the heck did the onion part come from lmaooo

: Neither of those things are even on conbini oden menus, are they? XD

: and at the very end, chami-chan was extremely chami-chan

All right! With that, our little post-event report stream was over, but...

I certainly hadn’t overlooked that casual comment from Kaeru-chan, you know.

Even though this stream was on my channel, and I’d been the first one she’d collabed with, she’d tried to communicate a little with Chami-chan. There was no mistaking it—she was growing. It made me feel so warm and cozy inside.

...But not because of any maternal instinct, got it? I haven’t fallen to the point of being top-mommy, understand?

Worldcraft Stream

Worldcraft, a world-famous video game, sets you down in a procedurally generated world that goes on almost infinitely with no goals or objectives to accomplish. It’s a sandbox game where you build up infrastructure using cubic blocks and live there however you want. That concept alone is already revolutionary, but what’s even more astonishing about it is that you can have a whole lot of people playing it at the same time just by setting up your own

server. That made it a perfect fit for Live-On, whose members were always actively building up a community, and we'd gotten the notification from Live-On management about a week ago that they'd set up a server for us. Several other members had already played it for a bit.

Though I'd seen people play the game before, this would be my first time actually playing it myself. And since it would involve a sort of community life with the other members, I'd been beside myself with excitement from the moment I'd seen the notification.

That all said, as someone who didn't understand PCs, I'd had a rough time getting it working. Mashiron had needed to show me how to do it, and today, I'd finally gotten it up and running—so from this day forth, I'd be playing my little heart out and making up for lost time!

"Pshhh! Glug glug glug glug! Wait, crap."

: Pshhh!

: ¥155

: **at long last! ¥1550**

: Glug sounds TSKR

: Don't be weird about it lmao

: I mean, StroZero has protein in it, right? So it's basically semen

: LOL

: Has this ever happened to you? You're drinking something other than StroZero, but it has protein in it. Well, help is finally here! StroZero actually has zero protein!

: for real? really doing its "zero" name justice there, huh

: wow, so healthy! i guess that means i'll just have to buy it!

: the kind of advertising that only looks at the good parts

: I mean, StroZero has water in it, right? So it's basically semen

: Do all liquids look like semen in your little world?

: LMAO that's a worse hell than Saya no Uta

: Everywhere I look is a shocking whiteness--a world where even the people look like semen. But amidst my despair, Shuwa-chan is the only one who looks like StroZero. She gives me the hope to live.

: wait, she looks like strozero, not a person? o_0

: Imma need some more StroZero for this one

: huh, what happened to shuwa-chan?

: I think she's muted

: By accident?

: For once we're worried about something normal when it comes to her

“Oops, sorry!” I apologized. “Shuwa has returned! This is actually my second StroZero of the night, and I had to go pee because of the first... I couldn’t exactly let you guys start calling me The Girl Who Flushed a Toilet into Her Mic Before Saying a Word, so I muted myself. Eheh heh!”

: Don't eheheh us... That is one massive gap between your embarrassment and what you're embarrassed about, tho

: Why would you purposely give yourself yet another dishonorable nickname

: Flowing alcohol isn't exactly normal as the first sound of a stream either, so...

: Make sure to rinse the StroZero off the StroZero before drinking

: She's making StroZero Shuwa-chan flavor inside her, right? I understand now

: Holy crap, I never actually thought she was a strozero manufacturing plant

: wonder what it tastes like

: like StroZero, probably

: I can't tell from just that!

: StroZero (Shuwa-chan) flavored StroZero now on sale for a limited time!

Alice Soma: I'd buy that!

: Alice-chan really is in every single Shuwa-chan stream XD

: of course. and i wouldn't be surprised if she listened to multiple Shuwa-chan streams at once using her dual monitors, or hooked up a ton of speakers to get the 3D sound experience

: I'd think it changes depending on what flavor it absorbs (serious answer)

: oh, like Congalala?

: Wasn't there ANYTHING else you could have compared that to...?

“Let’s switch gears. Today, I will finally be setting foot into the *Worldcraft* server! I know you’ve all been waiting for it! Sorry it took so long—it took a bit to get it all set up.”

: ahhh, it's finally here...

: the star always shows up late!

: It will send earthquakes through the VTuber world

: She's sure to do some crazy shit in there!

: bahahaha i love how we're talking like the demon lord has finally arrived

“That said, we have some time before being the hardest partiers on the server, so I wanted to get in a few Castella responses before starting. Stick with me for a bit!”

Q: Is there anything in particular you want to build in Worldcraft?

“If I can’t have anything else, Stro. If I can compromise, then Zero. I can tolerate StroZero—but if I’m being greedy, I’d want to build St***g Zero.”

: but they're all the same thing XD

: Actually, wait. Maybe they're different? Like how Frizz gets powered up to Kafrizz

: you say it like it's so obvious, but wtf would booze power up into?

: Sounds like a job for the theorycrafting team! Leave it to us!

: hello, yes, this is the detective team, our bodies are rock-hard and so are our dicks

: GO HOME

: lmfao

: ok, I'll start working on a mod to add strozero to the game as an item

Q: ay bby want sum strozero

“Oh? You’ve got guts to ask for StroZero from me. Have you finished ejecting all the remaining StroZero from your system? Any prayers for Moontory? Is your heart ready to tremble in joy in front of your computer screen as you *pshhh* that pull tab?”

: hey! put that document down! you don't know where it came from

: I bet that response will trouble the bro who sent that Castella

: If you listen closely, she's basically just asking to drink together XD

: oh, you're right...

: Shuwa-chan can pray properly? I'm so proud

: Father, we thank you for providing us with this sustenance of which we are about to partake, ah-yum

: don't say that like "amen" lmao

: **Samen ¥19191**

: ok, cut it out with the low-IQ comments lol

: hint: read 1919 like "iku, iku"

Q: What do you personally think about alcohol other than StroZero, Shuwa-chan?

I generally only drink wine and sake, so I wanted to ask your expert opinion.

“I think non-StroZero alcohol is wonderful too! It’s just that even if I drink something else, my brain goes right back to StroZero. I’ve basically already lost. I can physically turn my back on StroZero, but my heart will always be looking

directly at it... It's a pretty inexperienced, embarrassing romance, huh?"

: hey, quit acting like you're some wise older woman lol

: That was a shockingly smooth segue into romance LMFAO

: What's embarrassing is what you look like right now

: wait, she's an expert?

Q: Excuse me for messaging you out of the StroZero

goo goo! ba boo ba boo!

waaahhhhhh!!!

wahh... strozero...!

"Wow! Your first word was StroZero! It looks like the future of this baby is bright!"

: Just apologizing for messaging from out of the StroZero at all shows a wonderful mindset!

: Out of the...what? Where would that be? Wait, so then we're inside StroZero...? idgi

: We can't let ourselves be trapped by common sense in Gensok--this stream!

: I've never seen first words rivaling Yuujiro Hanma's before, wow

: I wanted to see my parent's face, and there she is, right on the screen!

: Probably drank a lot of strozero breast milk

Kaeru Yamatani: I am positively green with envy.

: Kaeru-chan is here!

: I'm so relieved you're doing more collabs lately (the

dad in the back)

: Oh sweet! I'll be your Papa! ¥10000

: Wait, but this papa will buy you anything you want! I'm not handing over the top-daddy spot! ¥2000

: Please don't make the chat into a sugar daddy contest, I'm begging you

: wait, this isn't what i think when i hear "top-daddy"

: even the breast milk is live-on!

Q: The Shuwa-chan knows where she is at all times. She knows this because she knows where StroZero isn't.

By subtracting where she is from where StroZero isn't, or where StroZero isn't from where she is—whichever is greater—it obtains a difference, or “deviation.”

The Shuwa-chan StroZero production sub-system uses deviation to generate corrective commands to drive the StroZero from a position where it is (the fridge) to a position where it isn't (her stomach), and arriving at a position where it wasn't (her bladder), it now is (her pee).

: Somehow that almost kind of made sense LMAO

: ow, that hit me right in the nostalgia

: you're the...the man now...dawg...?

: Wait, does it even make sense? I'm pretty sure it still doesn't XD

: WTB strozero guidance system

“Next up... Actually, I think this is a good time to start playing. Let's log into the private server now—it's called Live World, woohoo! For the most part, I'll be playing on Life Mode.”

This game had two modes: Life Mode, where enemy monsters would appear, you had stamina and hunger gauges, and you'd have to stock up on materials yourself; and Build Mode, where you could ignore all of that and just enjoy building stuff. But I figured it would be more exciting for the stream if I never knew what was going to happen, so I'd stick with Life Mode and only use Build Mode for big projects.

"Oh, we're in!"

Under a sunny daytime sky, in what looked like virgin grasslands, my character—complete with its texture—gallantly appeared.

"Check this out! I've got my I Love StroZero T-shirt here! And I can even switch into Awa-chan mode and use seiso clothes!"

I ran around, hopping up and down like a rabbit, but I was like a grain of sand in the vast expanse of nature. The lack of any man-made objects blocking my way filled me with the excitement and solitude of exploring the unknown. Since it had only been a few days since this world had opened, the other Livers were probably still at the stage of creating makeshift bases to live in. One day, I wanted to help everyone create a village—then a town, and then go even further beyond that. Awayuki Kokorone's second life was about to begin in *Worldcraft*!

"Wonder if there's anything interesting around?" I wondered aloud, wandering without any particular goal in mind. I'd just descended upon this world, meaning I didn't know my left from my right. For now, I figured I'd check to see what was around me and started exploring a bit. There were plenty of trees around, and few hills in the terrain, so it seemed like a good place to live. It was time to find a spot I liked and build a temporary base for myself.

"Whoa!" As I was walking the grasslands, asking about things I didn't understand and just generally fooling around with my viewers, the ground changed to something else for the first time. It was sand—but not the desert kind. It was more like a beach. And a little bit beyond that beach was...

"It's the sea!" I exclaimed like in every anime ever. Being able to see that

endless horizon out on the water was amazing! *I guess there's water pretty close by, huh?* I thought. I hadn't gone in real life for several years, so even the deformed version in the game was a fresh experience for me. *Okay! Time to stop here and focus on exploring this area.*

"Oh, there's clay and stuff here too, huh? Wait..." As I was walking along the shore, I saw a building farther down that looked like a wooden cabin. If there was something clearly man-made in this world, that meant a Liver had built it. Considering how little time it had been since Live World had opened, there was a good chance someone was actively using it. "Am I about to have my first encounter with someone?!" I said excitedly.

I ran over toward the cabin, but a moment later, my body stopped dead like a gold-medalist gymnast landing. Another player had just heroically burst out of the cabin. But my body hadn't stopped because of the admiration I felt for being able to finally meet a Liver here.

The woman who had left the cabin had long, crimson hair that fluttered in the breeze—beautiful even in her cubical, deformed state—as she gazed out over the ocean. She looked like the first human to ever be born in this world.

Why would I think something like *that*, you ask? To explain, she was out there, bold, in her natural state, as though the concept of hiding things didn't even exist for her.

Yes. It was all skin color. She was standing in the beach breeze in the nude.

"It's... It's..."

I'll give it to you straight instead of beating around the bush. The sight that had made my thoughts stop was Sei-sama, fully naked.

"It's a perveeeeeerrrrrt?!?!"

: Lmfaoooooo

: You're one to talk!

: yikes, that's bad luck that your first encounter was Sei-sama

: lmao, treating it like a random monster encounter

: Turns out Live World had not one, but several demon lords

: what, is this Ishura?

: Everyone is the strongest. Everyone is a pervert. Everyone is a comedian. Everyone is a demon lord. And not a single one has any common sense.

: That's literally the worst

That was the moment that burned one thing into my mind—the fact that even in the world of *Worldcraft*, Live-On was still Live-On.

“Yikes! She’s coming this way?!”

Noticing me, the naked Sei-sama approached with zero reluctance.

“Wait! This might be a game, but it’s still Sei-sama naked! It’s sensitive content! Won’t this get me banned?! I have to make sure she’s not on the screen!” I very quickly pointed my camera at the ground as Sei-sama messaged me using the in-game chat function.

<SeiUtsuki> Heya! It's me, Sei-sama! If you thought you were seeing me naked now, then what I do next will give you chills!!!

“Wait, so now you’re going to strip off your skin too?! You’re nothing but a pervert exhibitionist!” How dare she continuously do things to threaten my stream! I’d finally found another Liver in here, but now it was just like the comment had said—I’d encountered an enemy! One with a broken ability to cause damage to the channel of any streamer who puts her on screen!

: Got to see Shuwa-chan looking down in embarrassment! she's so cute!

: She's not embarrassed, she just sensed a threat to her life. financially speaking.

: **The One Who Must Never Be Shown on Screen** ¥2000

: Slenderman???

: XD sei-sama is now a horror element

I wanted to complain to Sei-sama, so I typed a message into the chat window at light speed.

<AwayukiKokorone> Put on some clothes right now! You're gonna get me banned!

<SeiUtsuki> Don't worry. I stayed in this state for over ten hours in a temporary world while streaming, and I never had a problem. And it's okay to do in Live World too. It seems it's not sensitive content because we're all just squares.

<AwayukiKokorone> Oh? Okay. That's a relief

<SeiUtsuki> I may be a pervert, but I'm also a gentlewoman. I would never harm any cute little kittens.

<AwayukiKokorone> Please don't say that while fully naked
omg

Well, if Sei-sama herself streamed it without an issue, then she must be right, I thought. Even without having to worry about getting banned, I didn't particularly want to have her on the screen, but she was still my senpai, so I moved the camera back up. She was completely skin-tone, but it wasn't like there were nipples drawn on her, so I could compromise. I got it. I can just pretend she's wearing a skin-colored onesie.

<SeiUtsuki> In any case, welcome to my nudist beach! Take

off your clothes and liberate yourself from the confines of society! Let's feel the full brunt of nature side by side!

“I couldn’t even if I wanted to. Why does she even *have* a naked texture?”

<AwayukiKokorone> I don't have a texture like that

<SeiUtsuki> What?! Listen, Awayuki-kun, and listen well. Nudist beaches have become hugely popular spots where even high school field trips will be held. Being fully naked is a sign of status in this day and age! Now shed those rags and ride the waves of the trends! You don't need to decorate yourself with things like those! In fact, hiding anything is an affront to true beauty!

<AwayukiKokorone> No it isn't! What kind of eromanga world is this?!

How can she even have the nerve to pretend that's common sense? I wondered. Also, she kept jumping around me like some kind of strange ritual. I wished she'd stop. I loved women's bodies, but for some reason, my own was completely rejecting this. She was too far gone—she was fully enjoying *Worldcraft* in her own way now. Supposedly that was the right way to play, but man, it was such a pain in the butt. *Ugh... I should have knocked back some more StroZero first...!*

But just as I was wondering how I would slay this demon lord, another Liver suddenly popped into the chat.

<HareruAsagiri> Hey, you two seem excited! What's going on? I was so curious I came up out of the ocean to see

Hareru-senpai is here!!! I thought, elated. *I know! I'll complain about Sei-sama to her! I'm sure she'll do something about it!* Happy about both that and the fact that I'd met the senpai I so adored in this *Worldcraft* world, my chest

swelled with anticipation as I turned my gaze seaward.

Hareru-senpai was...certainly standing there. But I found myself just as speechless as when I'd seen Sei-sama completely naked.

That wasn't to say Hareru-senpai was fully nude too. She was wearing clothes, but...

Her "clothes" consisted mainly of black belts coiling around her upper body and legs, showing an extreme amount of skin in every area. Actually, I'd seen this before. That fashion sense—the one that had first appeared over twenty years ago, and which the rest of the world still hadn't caught up to—there was no doubting it.



<HareruAsagiri> YO! SAY!!!

“It’s Nishikawaaaaaaaaaaaaa?!?!”

<HareruAsagiri> Ha Ha Ha! What's the matter, Shuwacchi? In this freezing cold season, have you witnessed my orange-colored Coordinator outfit, the bro of deodorants, their barefoot charms, our lonely wings overlapping, and now can't bring yourself to move out of pure admiration?

<SeiUtsuki> Hmm. Sasuga Hareru-senpai. She might be a good match for my fashion sense.

<HareruAsagiri> Yay! Seisei gave me a compliment!

“That was way too many references at once! I have no idea what you even said!” Whew, that was dangerous—the two unpredicted events in a row had overloaded my brain and made me freeze up. “I swear, the two of you take *freedom* to the next level...”

This was truly the moment I was baptized into Live-On. Even after much time passed, these few minutes would continue to have an inescapable impact on my brain.

Calm down, Awayuki. You’re up against the senpais who have been here since the dawn of Live-On, remember? Get that StroZero going in your brain! Rev up that shuwa-shuwa even more!

: It's a parade of girls who are just too funny right from when they show up...

: I don't think a naked woman should be allowed to talk about fashion lol

: Shuwa-chan's been reduced to shouting her retorts like Beauty from Bobobo... So these are the Demon Lands...!

: I owe a lot to that manga

: i've been thinking, hasn't Shuwa-chan seemed more normal lately? (i know i'm deluding myself)

: The reason Shuwa-chan is normal, the reason Live-On is able to manage everyone, the reason mankind exists, the reason the universe was born--it was all because Asagiri-san has been here!

: everything in the world was thanks to Asagiri-san
¥20000

: ohhh, freedom, like in SEED! HA HA HA

: pipe down lmaoooo

<HareruAsagiri> Shuwacchi, welcome to Live World!

<SeiUtsuki> I've been waiting for you, my best friend and wife.

<AwayukiKokorone> Sorry for taking so long to get here... Also, I'm going to beat you up later, Sei-sama.

<SeiUtsuki> But whyyy? I thought I was giving you the warmest welcome, like a long-distance couple getting to see each other in person for the first time in four months.

<HareruAsagiri> Harerun doesn't want you to worry about it either!

<SeiUtsuki> Huh?

Hee hee. I'd been shocked at first, but it set my mind at ease to know everyone existed in every world all the same.

<HareruAsagiri> I have to go get milk from the zookeeper's zoo. Farewell!

<AwayukiKokorone> Understood!

<SeiUtsuki> You be careful now.

This was also the first time I'd felt this close to Hareru-senpai on stream, after all...

...Wait. Didn't that mean something?

: I just realized, but isn't this Shuwa-chan and Hareru-senpai's first collab?

: fr?

: now that i think of it, you're right?

: they were together during Shuwa-chan's monetization stream and the song video, but idk if you could really call those collabs

: the first meeting of the OG main character and the next-gen main character!

: crap, I'm actually kinda tearing up now

"Are you serious?!" Wait, is this my first collab with Hareru-senpai?! It is, right? Which means... Which means...! Ah, crap, it's been a long time since I've been this flustered! I'm even having palpitations... Urgently, I typed a chat message as Hareru-senpai went off.

<AwayukiKokorone> Hareru-senpai! Thank you for our first collab!

<HareruAsagiri> Oh? Oh, you're right! ...But for your first experience with me, don't you think it's lacking something? Would you like to...do something even more amazing at a later date?

<AwayukiKokorone> Something...more amazing...?

<HareruAsagiri> Heh heh heh! I hope you look forward to

it!

Leaving me with *that* implication, Hareru-senpai headed off.

“A collab with Hareru-senpai... A collab...”

While I cut down trees to gather materials near Sei-sama’s HQ, my mind looped around to the same thought for the tenth time or so. I was nervous about it, but more than that, I was excited. Chami-chan had me beat in that department, but I wondered if I’d even be able to sleep.

<SeiUtsuki> Awayuki-kun, it'll be night soon. Do you have a bed?

“Wait, it’s that late already?!” I’d apparently been so absorbed in the task that I’d forgotten that time passed. When night came in this game, all sorts of bad guys started popping up to attack you. I wouldn’t stand a chance against them right now. I needed to make a bed, and since this was multiplayer, if we all went to sleep, we could skip right to morning... Unfortunately, though, I was not blessed with the necessary sheep’s wool to make one, so I couldn’t even if I wanted to. *Could I just log out instead, maybe?*

<SeiUtsuki> If you don't have one, I have a double bed in my house. Want to sleep in it with me?

<AwayukiKokorone> My sincerest thanks

I purposely didn’t ask why she had a double bed as I went into her house and lay down. But then, for some reason, Sei-sama jumped up on the bed and started making small, repeated movements.

Huh? What on earth is she doing? Can’t really tell in first person. I’ll switch to the third-person camera. But I immediately regretted it—because Sei-sama was

hitting the crouch button over and over on top of me.

<SeiUtsuki> Ahn, ahn, ahn, I love you, my StroZero wife! Your pull tab is on so tight that my secret items are leaking out of my four-dimensional pockeeeeeets!

“Lie down and shut up.”

And that was how I lost my friendly fire virginity to Sei-sama.

“Okay! Time to set out for the day!”

The next day in-game, I started looking for a good spot to make my temporary base, since I’d gotten all the materials I needed for it. In fact, Sei-sama had gifted me a bed, which I’d been worried about. “You’ll bother everyone if you can’t sleep at night, right? Please use this a whole lot, and also imagine it’s me,” she’d said. She’d gone a bit too far with that one, but she was still a considerate person. If I found any good items, I’d have to give her some to make it up to her.

For a while that day, I searched mainly in the forests, but it was very cramped with all the trees. Eventually, though, as I walked farther, the view suddenly opened up. “Whoa!”

I seemed to have exited the forested area. The terrain outside of it wasn’t anything special—just grasslands—but there was a hill standing, alone, on the flat plains at a pretty good height. It was like it was drawing me up as I climbed to the top. It was conspicuous, easy to find, had a great view, and there were animals around too! It would be easy to live here!

“I’ve decided! This is where my temporary base will be!”

I quickly started stacking up wood blocks, constructing a building big enough for two people to just barely fit inside. The outside ended up looking like a block of tofu, but that was okay—my first priority was to be able to live inside, and it was only temporary anyway, so the appearance didn’t matter much. I was

getting excited just thinking about how I was going to expand on it.

“Hmm. That’s a pretty good stopping point! I think it’s time to call it quits for today. I want to start doing this regularly from now on, of course, so I hope you all come watch again!”

The real fun of my life in *Worldcraft* starting from StroZero was just getting started!

Chapter 4

AwaMashi Sleepover Collab

Unlike the sunlight, which was beating down from up there in the blue skies, I was still buried in my futon when I got a call on my smartphone and picked up.

“Howdy! It’s Mashiron,” came the voice on the other end.

“Oh, hello, Mashiron!”

Like always, I had a phone call a bit after noon with Mashiron. We weren’t just chatting today—this was mainly a meeting to discuss our next collaboration.

“So I went to this ramen place earlier,” she said. “I ate so much I could barely stand. Have you eaten anything yet?”

“I just woke up,” I admitted.

“Awa-chan...”

“Well, it’s just that I was up pretty late last night doing a *Worldcraft* stream, so I figured I could sleep in a little...”

“Staying up late too often isn’t good for you, so don’t go too far with it. Also, get something in your stomach already.”

“But I’m not really that hungry...” I complained.

“It doesn’t matter,” Mashiron chided.

“Okay...”

We’d been collaborating with each other regularly since our VTuber debuts, so I’d lost count of how many meetings we’d had about them. At this point, we were both completely comfortable with talking to each other naturally.

Mashiron’s voice kinda calms me down, I thought. Recently, I’d been prone to having pretty long phone conversations. And since Awayuki was supposed to

talk in a very proper, ladylike way, I always tried to stick to it. But lately, I'd been seeing glimpses of candor when I least expected it.

For now, though, I had to handle the highest things on my priority list, so I started chewing on some bread I'd bought for breakfast and broached the main subject. "What were you thinking for the collab?" I asked. "Was there anything you wanted to do?"

"Hmm..." Mashiron pondered. "Oh, actually, management told me they actually want to get Awa-chan a new outfit."

"Wait, really?!"

"Yep. I'm raring to draw it soon, so look forward to it. Though we're still at the stage where we're deciding what the clothes should look like."

"Yay!" I cheered. A VTuber getting a new outfit was just as effective as a Kamen Rider getting a new form. My combat power would skyrocket.

"Oh, wait," said Mashiron. "I guess we can't make that the collab. Sorry for the tangent."

"Don't worry about it. That news is going to make me happy every day from now on."

...Wait, hang on. I think I just had a good idea, I thought. An idea that would only work because Mashiron was my mama illustrator.

"Hey, Mashiron," I said, "why don't we do a collab where we come up with new outfit ideas?"

"Oh? Hmm. I can see that..."

"We could gauge the viewers' reactions and use them to help decide the outfit's direction or what accessories I should wear."

"That'd be a pretty novel stream idea."

"But if you don't want to show your work, we don't have to do it, of course."

"Hmm. I think it's fine. It seems fun. And it's always good to try new things. I don't know if any ideas we'd come up with during the stream would be used, but the viewers would definitely have a great time watching."

“Yeah! Then why don’t we go with that?”

“Sure. I might have a condition for you, though.”

“A condition?”

“Yeah. Since we’re having a collab anyway, I wanted to take it offline. You live alone, right? Can I sleep over at your place?”

“A sleep-offer?!”

“I guess that’s one way to mix the two things...”

In truth, the AwaMashi combination had never once done an off-collab, except for when we’d seen each other while recording Live Start. She lived far away with her family, which was the main reason. I couldn’t believe this moment had come... *Ah, crap*, I thought. *We were having such a relaxing conversation, and now I’m super nervous.*

“I’ll bring my illustration tools over,” said Mashiron. “Would that work?”

“O-Of course!” I cried. “It’s totally fine! I’m just a little surprised to hear you want to do an off-collab.”

“Right, that. Well, it’s just that you’ve been having them a lot with other people lately. I started getting a little envious of them.”

Oh my God, why is she so cute? I thought. *She’s usually so coolheaded, but every once in a while she acts so ridiculously sweet. You want to sleep over? Just live with me at this point.*

“I figured I could use the chance to make sure they all know you belong to me,” she continued.

“?!?!?”

“Just kidding.”

Crap, I thought. *She’s cool and calm, and a little devil, and she uses the pronoun “boku,” which makes her come across as even more androgynous. She’s too powerful. This is Armageddon levels of destruction. She almost brought Armageddon down on my mind for a second.*

Mashiron was seriously good at using that contrast in her personality traits. I

could never tell what she was really thinking. It was captivating, and I couldn't get enough of it. I wanted to throw money at her. I decided I'd send her a super on her next stream.

Now that we'd decided on a collab topic, we started going over what she'd need to bring the day of, and what we'd do for the rest of the day.

"Will you be drinking on the day of, Awa-chan?" asked Mashiron.

"Umm, that's one of my sober days, so I doubt it." And more importantly—though I doubted it would happen—I wouldn't be able to forgive myself if I got drunk and did something to Mashiron in real life.

"Okey dokey."

For a little while after that, we chatted about other VTubers until we finally wrapped up our call.

"Anyway, that all sounds good to me," said Mashiron. "I'll see you later!"

"Okay!"

I've gotta start getting ready early for Mashiron coming over! I thought as I hung up. "I guess I'll start by cleaning up."

I never intended for my room to get this dirty, but some parts of it were feeling a little *too* lived-in at the moment. First thing I'd do was make those spots presentable. *Though I guess vacuuming first is the best idea.*

"I think that about does it."

My apartment wasn't very big to begin with, since I lived there alone, so I got all the cleaning done faster than expected.

What else do I need to do? I thought. *Hmm... Oh, I should stock up on drinks and snacks. Let's go take a look in the fridge.*

I walked into the kitchen to do just that, but as soon as one item in particular leaped into my vision, my body stalled for a few seconds.

"Right, that... I see it all the time, but I should probably do something about

that, huh..."

Like a young male student in an anime hiding all his porn mags, I got to work concealing that which I preferred to remain unseen.

"Oh, she's here!"

After finishing up all my preparations, I had been fidgeting restlessly waiting for her to arrive when the doorbell rang. I pattered over to the front door and opened it to see Mashiron in real life—for the first time since recording Live Start—carrying a heavy-looking bag.

"Hello! It's your beloved Mashiron."

"Welcome! Come in, come in!"

"Thanks. I'm still not used to the city yet. It's like everything's squeezed in really tight. Coming from the countryside, I'm a little tired."

This was my first time having someone over to this apartment that I could actually call a friend. *I'm kind of nervous.* "Well, you could probably use a drink, then," I remarked. "I have all sorts of things—orange juice, cola, coffee, tea. What would you like?"

"Do you have StroZero?"

I paused. "Well, sure, but..."

"Ha ha ha! I'm kidding. I'll have some orange juice. Also, I bought a cake as a little gift from my hometown, so we can eat that together too."

"Really? Yay, cake!"

As we picked at the cake, I couldn't help my gaze drifting to Mashiron out of curiosity. *Wow, she's, like, super fair-skinned. I remember this now from recording Live Start. She almost seems like a fairy, with how fleeting the impression she gives is.*

As I was observing her, I noticed Mashiron was throwing glances toward the furniture in the apartment. "Curious about the room?" I asked.

“Huh? Oh, sorry,” she said. “I was just thinking you actually live in a pretty normal place.”

“What? What were you imagining, then?”

“Not telling!” She chuckled. “All the soundproofing, though—I guess it’s pretty common for VTubers.”

“You use it too?”

“Of course. I live with my parents, so I’m really conscious of the sounds I make.”

I’d put up as much soundproofing material on the walls as I could manage. It was a little lacking in the aesthetics department, but it was proper etiquette as a streamer living in the same building as other people.

“With all that,” continued Mashiron, “I could make an attack on you and nobody would ever know.”

“Huh?!”

“Kidding.”

“Come on!”

She chuckled again.

Ugh! That made my heart leap. She really got me back for all those other times. “Anyway, this cake is pretty good,” I remarked. “Where’d you get it?”

“Uh, what was the name again... Hold on, I totally forgot. I’ll look it up real quick.”

When Mashiron touched her smartphone, I saw something that maybe I shouldn’t have. The wallpaper on her home screen had been set to an illustration made to look like a selfie of two people: her model and my model, smiling at the camera. Plus, I was sure she was the one who’d drawn it. She’d given me my body, after all—I could never mistake that style. *And*, to top it all off, the picture wasn’t on the internet as far as I knew. It was the first time I’d seen it. *That must mean—*

“Huh? What’s up, Awa-chan?” asked Mashiron, interrupting my thoughts.

“Oh. Um, that wallpaper...”

“Oh, this? I drew it to use on my phone. Pretty good, huh?”

This was bad. Really bad. I could tell my own face was getting hot. Seeing that, Mashiron grinned devilishly and scooted over to sit next to me. *Wh-What’s she doing?*

“Awa-chan... ♪”

“Wh-What?”

“Say cheese!”

“Huh?”

“Come on!”

“O-Okay.”

“Smile!”

As Mashiron pointed her smartphone’s camera down at the two of us, I did as she said and struck a pose. The shutter noise went off. *And this is for...*

“Nice, got the real version now! Time to set this as my lock screen.”

“!!!?!?!?!” I fell over backward and covered my face.

Oh, and she gave me both pictures afterward. They’re my treasures.

The real Mashiron rapidly started to align with the VTuber Mashiron in my mind, which got rid of a lot of my nervousness. Eventually, I went to the kitchen to prepare some ingredients to make us dinner.

“You’re making dinner for me too?” asked Mashiron. “I could just go on a quick shopping trip in town.”

“It’s okay. I always do this anyway,” I replied. “And you can relax in the other room, you know. You don’t have to stare at my back the whole time.”

“I’m just curious. I can’t cook for myself. Can I watch you as long as I don’t get in the way? I’m really interested in what you cook.”

“You can watch. Just don’t put anything weird into it...”

“Aren’t you gonna add the StroZero?”

“This is just meat-and-potato stew! We don’t need any of that!”

“Sugar, salt, pepper, mirin, soy sauce, StroZero.”

“It’s not an ingredient!”

Cooking was a little more annoying than it usually was, but it was also more fun this time.

“Thanks for the food,” said Mashiron. “Man, you’re a really good cook, Awa-chan. I’m actually pretty surprised.”

“Well, I’m glad you liked it. I mostly just go by taste, so I can’t cook anything crazy. And I’m not really sure why you’re so surprised that I can cook.” We’d just been getting comfortable after finishing dinner, and when I purposely frowned as a joke, Mashiron responded with some exaggerated flattery.

“Ah, how silly of me. Everything was so good that my mouth couldn’t stop moving and it said something it shouldn’t have. I’ll wash the dishes for you in apology.”

“No, I should be the one doing that,” I insisted. “And I’m not angry anyway.”

“Nah, it’s fine. I was planning on doing them to begin with. You’re letting me stay the night, so I figured I had to do something in return.” Mashiron shook off my attempt to stop her, got our dishes together, and began washing them.

I was a little worried that the detergent or the hot water might damage her pretty skin, but I couldn’t argue against that. It was just the two of us, so the work would go quickly. *Still, though...*

“What’s wrong?” asked Mashiron. “Why the troubled face? Oh—was it my body that you wanted in return?”

“Wait, what?!”

“You’re letting me stay over, and that’s kinda what happens, huh?” She

chuckled. “Horny today, aren’t we, Awa-chan? ♪”

“Huh? Uh, um—”

She laughed again. “You’re so cute when you’re suspiciously flustered.”

Crap, I thought. Real-life Mashiron’s Raiser Sword has been a real surprise powerhouse, and it’s got my face all Trans-Am now. At this rate, it’ll turn into a best-selling light novel—My Same-Gen Mama Is Going to Try and Vaporize My Sense of Reason—but remember: you’re currently already writing a best-seller already! How I Got Reincarnated as a StroZero! And it’s doing great! Don’t forget that! Steel your will and hold back the shuwa-shuwa! “D-Don’t tease me like that!” I whined. “I’m gonna go clean the bathroom or something.”

Mashiron laughed. “Okay.”

And so, I fled into the bathroom.

“Ugh, this one won’t come out...” I muttered as I struggled to clean the bathroom. “Didn’t even know it was here.” Now that someone other than me would be using it, I’d started to get fussy about even the dirty spots that people wouldn’t actually see, like ones that were behind other things. But I supposed that, both for people and for objects, beauty was in the eye of the beholder.

“Awa-chan!” called Mashiron from the kitchen. “I finished washing the dishes. Where should I put them?”

The cleaning had ended up taking longer than I’d thought it would. “Umm, the dishes go in the top cabinet, on the right,” I called back, pausing.

“Okay, right side, right side... Here?”

Continuing to clean the bathroom while answering, I realized Mashiron probably wouldn’t be able to figure it out from just words. I called it quits for now and headed for the kitchen to tell her exactly where to put everything.

Wait. Mashiron watched me cook, so maybe she would know after all, I thought. No, wait, I put all the dishes out on the table beforehand, so I guess she wouldn’t.

...Hold on. Why did I put them out beforehand again?

...

“Shit!” I was indoors, but that didn’t stop me—I dashed into the kitchen. That cabinet was where *that* was! “Ah—”

But it seemed I was too late. “A-Awa-chan... Umm... This is, uh, something...” Mashiron’s eyes were glued to the thing I’d hidden away before all this.

And that thing was a garbage bag. But not just any garbage bag—a garbage bag that exuded the same level of tragic despair as a graveyard. If I had to give it a name, it would be the StroZero Graveyard—an amalgamation filled with nothing but endless cans of the StroZero I’d drunk.

“Well...” stammered Mashiron. “You know how in dark fantasy, they always have those monsters that look like a ton of people just stuck together? I feel the same way now as I do when I see that.”

“Look, it’s not what you think! I bagged them all up, but I was unlucky since it’s not garbage day. I didn’t drink that much in a few days or anything. I sure didn’t. Um. Anyway, you’re misunderstanding.”

“Gotcha, gotcha. It’s all good. I understand completely now, so you can calm yourself.”

“Ugahhhhhhhhhhhh!!!” The shame, the hopelessness—with a scream, the avalanche of emotions I couldn’t handle swept into my mind all at once. I couldn’t believe she’d seen it. If someone had told me my homework was to use garbage to replicate empty cans of booze, this would have gotten the best grade in the class!!!

“It’s all right,” insisted Mashiron. “A person’s worth isn’t based on the contents of their garbage. For you, Awa-chan, I can accept it, no sweat.”

“You’re starting to seem like a tragic heroine who destroys herself for the sake of her partner...”

“That wasn’t exactly what I was going for...”

Having fulfilled that bit of foreshadowing from the previous day, I needed about an hour to completely recover.

After we finished cleaning up dinner and setting up the equipment, it was finally time to stream. And as soon as we did, Mashiron went public with everything that had happened up till now. Yes, *everything*—including the StroZero graveyard!

“That about wraps up my assault report on Awa-chan’s place!” she eventually said.

“It’s finally over... Talk about a public execution. I wanted to cover my ears.”

: teetee

: **oh crap that was some serious teetee ¥10000**

: I don't know...if my body can take it... Ara~
(purified)

: I love the se--er, sleepover story, and Mashiron suggesting the whole thing just makes it even better

: Ah yes, the four s's of cooking: sugar, salt, soy sauce, and strozero

: I thought it was gonna be something extremely awful and yabai, but i was relieved it was just cans of strozero

: ^ now that's one bro who's perfectly adaptable to his environment

: why you gotta say it like that lmao

: An amalgamation of StroZero cans... not the Gun Devil, but the StroZero Devil

: That devil would probably have the ability to sexually harass every woman within 1000 meters and every 18+ adult with a chest size of 1500 meters

: LOL chest size of 1500 m. who is even her target

: StroZero: ...please...just let me die...(in the trash

can)

: eek!!!

: Wait, who's this seiso vtuber mashiron's about to gobble up? A newbie?

: she's not new, she went on hiatus for a while and just came back

: **Hi I'm here because I heard the seiso Awa-chan was being made into a woman by Mashiron ¥50000**

: Actually, Mashiron usually was the one who took the initiative before. kinda nostalgic to see it again

: I love both the past version and the version we have now

: The ideal old-timer crew

Alice Soma: I am happy to see my oshi seem so happy! I'd send a super but I've already hit the upper limit!

: alice-chan T_T

There was a *disgusting* number of people watching right now, and it was rough just skimming over the chat given how explosively fast it was scrolling. With this being our first off-collab and our first sleepover, this had exceeded the bounds of a simple collab and become a big event. *Time to do my best to make everyone who came out happy!*

“I think that’s enough storytelling for now,” said Mashiron. “I touched on it before, but we’ll be trying to come up with new outfits for Awa-chan today.”

“I deeply look forward to everyone’s fashion senses!”

“If we see a good idea, I’ll draw a quick rough of it and you can tell us what you think.”

“We should get to thinking too! Do you have any sort of vision for this, Mashiron?”

“Hmm... I haven’t actually decided whether it should be for Awa-chan or Shuwa-chan.”

“Ah...” Come to think of it, I was a contradictory life-form with both comedic and seiso leanings—which was a very large gap to have to bridge with a single outfit. I’d been perfectly separating my use of each of my two outfits thus far to match the situation. And I’d been treated as two totally different people during Live Start’s recording too. *Hmm. Still, though...* “Since you’re going to be drawing ideas anyway, I’d like to have something I can use in as many streams as possible...”

“Oh! One to fit both Shuwa-chan and Awa-chan, then?”

“Yes, but I know it’s really hard...”

“Hmm. You’re right, that would be tough... But why not? Let’s give it some thought. Maybe we’ll get a good idea.”

“Really? Thanks!”

“Chat, you guys try and think of something along those lines too.”

: OK!

: wait, mashiron might draw an idea i have? just take my money already

: Yeah this is an incredible opportunity

: me me me! do a strozero kigurumi! that's the only option!

: Yep, that's the answer for you

: LOL

“No, that’s the exact *wrong* answer!” I cried. “Were you even listening before?”

“Now, hold on, Awa-chan. We’re not perfect creatures. We’ll never know for certain unless we try. I’ll draw it real quick, and then we can make the

decision.”

“Well, you’re sitting right next to me, and I can see it in your eyes. You think it’ll be funny!”

“But there might be a chemical reaction! It might actually turn you into a super cute yuru-chara!” Her eyes sparkling, Mashiron’s hand started racing across her pen tablet. When she was done, Awayuki’s entire body from the neck down was inside a giant can of StroZero, with her face peeking out of the opening.

“Phew,” said Mashiron. “One down!”

“This is no time to feel a sense of accomplishment,” I chided her. “I guess this would be a good outfit for Shuwa, though. Wait, no. We can’t do this! Wearing it would take away too much of my humanity. But let’s say I were to compromise and say fine. But even then! What would happen if I was in seiso Awa mode for a day, then showed up wearing this and saying *there’s a nice, light snow* blah blah blah? It would be a major incident! I mean, even you would be scared of a genmate being made of 85% aluminum, wouldn’t you? I wouldn’t be a VTuber anymore—I’d be an SCP object at that point.”

“Eh, you’d still fit in with Live-On, though, wouldn’t you? Also, you already caused a major incident when you forgot to turn your stream off, remember?”

“Oh, you’re right.”

: that's a big old LOL from me

: aaaand you're convinced already XD

: Dr. Awa-chan, you were murdered! Then you were replaced with StroZero from the neck down and turned into a human StroZero! Forgive me! /dumps you out of the spaceship

: The dumbest body modification ever thought up

: Even Shocker would be appalled at that one

: Now this is art!

: What's a human strozero anyway...

: SCP0000: Shuwa-chan. Object class: Safe

: i can guarantee that would NOT be "safe"

“Okay, Awa-chan. Please, give us your thoughts on this outfit.”

“Wrong! Wrong wrong wrong wrong!” I shouted in response.

After that, it was like a dam burst—ideas started flooding into the chat.

: Completely naked outfit like Worldcraft Sei-sama!

: Reverse bunny girl suit!

: Kamen Rider V3!

: Thicc and sexy, like with short shorts

: seiso=wholesome=pure=refreshing=carbonated=strozero, so maybe a one-piece dress with a bubbly lemon pattern

: Could go with the Baron Ashura format. Make her right half Shuwa-chan and her left side Awa-chan, then show them in profile for whichever side is speaking

But it just devolved into total chaos... All the normal ideas were mixed in with ones meant to get laughs. In fact, you could probably take them all and make a video of just the listeners’ best outfit proposals.

“Wow, I can’t even respond to all of these jokes...” I said. “And if I had to say, ‘completely naked’ doesn’t constitute a costume at all, does it? Or were you going more for an Emperor’s New Clothes angle?”

“Now, now,” said Mashiron. “Could be fun to go for the sexy route.”

“I suppose so. It would fit Shuwa, at least. But how would you match Awa’s seiso to anything sexy?”

“Charms and attractiveness can come from gaps like those too. When you see someone who usually wears conservative clothing showing a lot of skin, it’s way lewder. I think it’s definitely worth trying out the short shorts idea.”

“Oh, I get it!” That explanation was extremely convincing for me. I felt my heart swell with anticipation as I watched Mashiron go about her drawing.

She kept on going, without ever pausing. In the end, she came out with a rough illustration that definitely had a confident sort of power in it. Yep—with the concept being short shorts, the character’s slender legs were very attractive. It gave a better idea of how surprisingly tall Awayuki was. But, that said...

“Mashiron, why didn’t you draw the fabric where the pockets are...?” There was no fabric where the pockets were supposed to be, and inside it, instead, um, well, you could totally see my underwear a little! “These aren’t short shorts! At least not any kind I know!”

“Calm down a moment, my dear Awa-chan. Listen—these are the type of panties you’re allowed to show off.”

“Panty shots are whatever! But there are no panties in the world that someone seiso would be fine with showing off all the time!”

“There are no panties in the world that should go unseen!”

“Now that’s a clip-worthy quote if I ever heard one...”

: Hmm. We can go lewder.

: AHHHH i can see black fabric under there!!!!

: I mustn't fap away I mustn't fap away I mustn't fap away

: I'm disgusting.

: you can only see a little! but they're so well-drawn
LMAO

: Mashiron once again showing why she's the hope of the entire world

“I’ll admit they’re wonderful,” I said. “Inside, I’m happy about it, and if Shuwa were here, I can’t deny the possibility that she’d say, ‘Sweet! New fap material!’

But I'm seiso right now, so I must resist!"

"All right, understood. I just need to make it so you can't see them, right? Which means I shouldn't have had you wear any to begin with!"

"Hey!!!!!"

She erased the modest black fabric and added skin color to what I had to assume was the groin area. Maybe it was fine since this was a front view, but from the side you would totally be able to see inside!

"I'd be arrested!" I cried. "If I went out in those clothes, I'd be arrested!"

"It's fine, Awa-chan. Listen—this is the type of groin you're allowed to show off."

"You just wanted a chance to say that line..."

: Time for radio calisthenics! Exercise one! Let's swing our arms up and down! One, two, one, two!

: My heart just blew up from being so happy

: ¥50000

: I'm Ryoma Ecchi-zen. Currently in Selfless State.

: Awa Breathing, 4545th Form: Cloudy White Liquid

: 4545=shiko shiko again... please don't make boner forms of breathing techniques T_T

: I love how they've traded idiot and straight-man roles XD

After that, Mashiron's hands danced over her pen tablet for several other designs, such as a Strong Girl—like a Bud Girl—and a campaign-girl-type outfit with a lot of skin exposed. But what got the most support was after that: a costume consisting of a lemon-yellow skirt and a geometric polka-dot pattern reminiscent of the fizziness of carbonation. And with snow-crystal earrings and necklace as accessories, it had both Awayuki's seiso and the -196°C factor

expressed in it. The design was a perfect harmony of Awa and Shuwa, and in my opinion, it was flawless.

“Phew,” breathed Mashiron. “I still have to talk to management, so I can’t say for sure this will be the design. But it’s a pretty good one.”

“I agree,” I said. “Mashiron, thank you so much—and thanks to you too, chat!”

Now that we were finished with our plans for the stream, it was time to take baths, brush our teeth, and hit the hay!

“Mashiron, you can take the first bath. Guests first, after all!”

“Huh? What are you talking about? We’re taking one together, aren’t we?”

“...Whaaat?” *What did she just say...?*

“What are you doing, Awa-chan? Let’s get in the bath already.”

“I, no, wait, I mean, you go first—”

“Let’s take one together,” said Mashiron like it was the most natural thing in the world.

I couldn’t even manage a reaction to that at this point. I was just dumbfounded. *Wait, what?* I thought. *Does she actually mean what she’s saying? It’s not some kind of code, right? If she’s being real...then what the heck is going on?!* “Wait, Mashiron, are you drunk?” I asked. “I don’t remember putting any StroZero in dinner. Or...did you receive some sort of poisonous waves from Sei-sama?”

“I think you owe Sei-sama an apology for that one. Have you forgotten? You were the one who invited *me* to take a bath together.”

“Huh?” *What does she mean? I don’t remember that. Wait, is this the work of Sei-sama Kaiba’s Enemy Controller? Bukkake Face White Dragon! Calpico Storm of Destruction!!!*

...Never mind.

“Remember when we streamed Animal Kart?” she said. “You said you sincerely requested a naked association.”

But that was when I was Shuwa!!! I thought. Yeah, she's right. I only said it because I knew she'd refuse, but then she went for the "I'd get in with Awa-chan" bit. I just never thought we'd be tying up that loose end now!!! "I mean, um, my bathtub isn't super large or anything..."

"It's not, but I think it's big enough. Who cares?"

"That's... You're just..."

"Mgh. Are you saying you won't accept my hospitality?"

"It's *my* bathtub we'd be getting into."

"Aha ha. You're right. But I really do want to take one with you. Do you not want to, Awa-chan?"

"No, I was just surprised. I'm fine with it... Just don't attack me or anything."

"It'll be fine. We've known each other long enough. I trust you, Awa-chan."

How was she able to say that with such confidence? In my memory, all I did was throw sexually harassing quotes one after the other... *Still, if Mashiron says she wants to take one together, I guess it's fine. It'll probably just be like a field trip. Nothing indecent would ever happen.*

Ugh... Still a little embarrassing letting someone see my body, though... I haven't been exercising lately, so I hope, um... Oh, right! "In that case, we'll both wear bath towels, and we won't look at each other while we're washing ourselves. If that's fine, then let's do it!"

"Aww," whined Mashiron. "I guess that's okay. Let's hop in! We're gonna mute the stream for a bit."

: Ahh, this is like heaven, desuwa~

: **Godlike episode. ¥20000**

: All I ever wanted was to be a bathtub. /emiya

: I see... Then I'll become one for you! Leave it to me!

: No, I won't give it up! I'm not giving this up!!!

: what???

“Phew,” said Mashiron. “This is a good bath. I’m so relaxed it feels like I’m melting.”

“Y-Yes, it is,” I said. I was frozen stiff with nervousness in here, though!!! Right now, we’d finished washing our hair and bodies, so we were now seriously soaking in the bath together. It was a bit cramped, so we were shoulder-to-shoulder in it. Even though we were wearing bath towels, when I turned to Mashiron, I saw that sexy collarbone—

No, I can’t look straight at it...

“Awa-chan, you’ve actually got some.”

“S-Some what?”

“Assets. Some pretty great ones, at that.”

“Oh, right, I see. I don’t really think so, but...” I replied, turning my gaze back down to the bathwater like always.

“I mean, compared to mine, they’re pretty big. I haven’t forgotten the whole smooth ‘n’ flat comment from the Animal Kart stream, you know!”

“Sure, but I was saying that about your model...”

“Then does the real me have a big chest?”

“...Yes.”

“Hah, you’re lying! You’ve been looking away the whole time. How would you know?”

“I-I got a glimpse of it! B-But what I mean is I only got a glimpse when you had the towel on!”

“Really? Hmm... I’m not convinced. Come on, take a good look and then decide.”

“Wh-what?!”

“Come on already!”

Hrrrm. I have to do it, or she'll think I'm lying... I guess I didn't really look at her long enough to get a good sense of her size. And she has her bath towel on, so it's no problem. I looked over at Mashiron. "Eh?" I grunted.

“Nee hee hee!”

The place that should have been hidden by her towel was now there in front of me—two modest bulges protruding from what was most certainly the supple skin of a human being, not a towel. Said towel had been lowered to about her stomach, and to top it all off, she was grinning devilishly at me... Was this a...

? ! ? ! ? ! ? ! ? !

“Kyaaaaaaaaa!!! Mashiron, you pervert! Lech! Sei-samaaaa!!!”

“Sei-sama’s gonna need another apology for that one.”

We weren't even in the bath that long, but it still made me dizzy...

Mashiron sure seemed more excited than usual today, though. *Wonder what's going on?*

“Okay, let’s get to bed, Awa-chan.”

“All right.”

With our bath finished and the stream over, the only thing left to do was sleep. *Man, that was a really exciting stream. And we're apparently pretty high up in the trends on Cheeper too. We did a good job today, so we should be able to get a really good sleep.* I lay down next to Mashiron and decided to go to sleep myself.

Yep. Can't say I didn't expect it from the bath stuff, but we're just sleeping next to each other like it's normal. There was no point being all flustered about it anymore, so I already decided I'll look forward to it. Yep. I figure today's the day God gave me as a reward.

Gonna sleep together! Woohoo!!!

“Do you think you’ll be able to fall asleep, Awa-chan?”

“Hmm... I’m not really sure, to be honest.”

“Why not?”

“Because of the little devil right next to me.”

“Oh, really, now? That must be rough. I’m pretty sleepy, though. I was really horsing around today.”

“You did seem to be having fun this whole time, Mashiron. I’m glad you enjoyed yourself here.”

“...I apologize if I went a little too far.”

“No, not at all. It was fun for me too. But what’s been going on? Do you have that vacation high from leaving your prefecture?”

“Hmm... Everything I say from here is just sleepwalk!”

“What?”

“All right? What I’m about to say is me talking in my sleep. Just think it’s some weird stuff I’m muttering.”

“O-Okay.”

Mashiron pushed herself all the way under the covers so I couldn’t see her face. *What’s going on? I have no idea what she’s trying to do.*

Ignoring the big ol’ question mark that popped up over my head, Mashiron simply began “sleepwalking.”

“You know, I’ve been keeping an eye out for you ever since our debut,” she said. When she spoke, her voice felt like a soft scarf protecting me from the snow’s cold. “At the time, you—well, I guess it still applies. You’re not really that good with stuff. You’d be so desperate to look for good streaming ideas every day, and every time you did, it seemed like you were wearing away your spirit, little by little.”

“...Mm.”

“I love people who are trying their best. I want them to be repaid for their efforts. I want to live in a world that repays them. Those kinds of people are my absolute favorite. That’s why I’ve always been rooting for Awa-chan. Not

because I was her mama or anything, but just as a regular fan.”

I could feel her heart behind every single one of the quiet words that passed through her lips. Naturally, I closed my eyes and listened, not wanting to miss any of it.

“I’m sure you’ve felt a lot of stuff, like panic, or anxiety, or disappointment. After watching you at the beginning, and when you listened to me whine about stuff, I realized you weren’t really having fun streaming.”

I saw myself from those days on the backs of my eyelids. There had been a large gap between me and everyone else in terms of popularity, and it had eaten away at me, knowing I had to do something about it. I hadn’t been able to think about anything else at the time.

But looking back on myself didn’t give me negative emotions. What I felt was a fondness for those days, and a detached impression of how lost I’d been. In fact, I almost laughed remembering it.

I think...it’s because I’ve been able to accept myself for who I am.

“But you changed all at once after you forgot to end your stream that one time. Day by day, I could hear your voice get happier. You started laughing more. And when I met you for real today, I knew for sure. You might not realize it, but both on stream and off stream, you’re a living, breathing Awa-chan—and you’re having fun with it. I just got so happy about it, and... Aha ha. I guess I was horsing around too much. This isn’t like me. I’m embarrassed.”

“Mashiron...”

“I’m so...so glad...”

At the time, I’d convinced myself that I was all alone, that everyone else was unreachable. But every time I looked back on it now, there had been someone at my side. Whether that was a genmate, a senpai, a manager, or a good friend whose voice was starting to crack because of how happy she was for me.

Nothing much stood out about my student life. I’d eventually gone to work at an extremely exploitative company, and I’d started saying “sorry” all the time. *But I’m happy now, spending irreplaceable seconds and minutes and hours with irreplaceable people.*

“Congratulations, Awa-chan. I’ve always been in your corner. And I’ll keep cheering you on as Awayuki Kokorone’s number one fan. And I’ll keep being your friendly rival to make the VTuber world even more exciting—as Mashiro Irodori.”

“Thanks, Mashiron. For everything.”

“I really love you, Awa-chan.”

“I love you too.”

Our hands drew together as though magnetically attracted, joining together gently but unbreakably. Earlier, I’d said I wasn’t that sleepy, but strangely, all the warm, cuddly emotions I was feeling were putting me to sleep.

“Good night, Awa-chan.”

“Good night, Mashiron.”

I’ll have good dreams tonight...

“Didn’t forget anything?” I asked.

“Nope, got everything! All right, time to get on my way.”

“Be careful. And come again soon!”

“Yep! See you.”

After waking from our slumber, we’d talked to each other the same way we always did until noon came around and Mashiron had to head home. Thinking that the way she’d wrapped up the conversation was very much like her, I watched her go until she was out of sight before going back inside.

“All right! Time to put my best foot forward again today!” I declared.



Epilogue

In the city, in a normal bar you could find anywhere, sat Awayuki's manager, Suzuki; the person behind Hareru Asagiri, Hinata Mogami; and several other Live-On employees. And they were engaged in the kind of after-work drinking party you could find anywhere. A group of friendly employees, getting together to have a few drinks before the weekend—a common sight indeed.

“Hey, Hinata-san, you should do a live soon,” Suzuki said.

“Hmm? But I do one every week, remember? A live stream.”

“Not *that* kind of live. I mean a big live concert at a live concert venue that brings in tons of guests! Can't you do that soon? I just know if you did a solo, you'd bring the house down!”

Although she'd let the booze get the better of her and made the suggestion, Suzuki knew the answer to her question already. She'd suggested the exact same thing at many drinking parties and company meetings before now, and Hinata's answer had always been a big fat “no.”

While Hinata Mogami possessed genius talents, she tended to refrain from ever being the main event. She never let it show, so even her core viewers likely hadn't realized it for the most part. Although she was the main factor that had promoted Live-On's growth, she always turned down every project proposal that would put her in the spotlight by herself or was otherwise for her sake. And whenever anyone asked her about it, she'd deflect and not answer. The commonly accepted theory at Live-On was that nobody would ever get her to agree to any projects like a solo live concert.

Suzuki kept on suggesting it anyway, because she was sure of how successful it would be—and because, as a fan herself, she wanted Hinata Mogami to shine even more. With her potential, she could aim for much, much greater heights. It was so obvious to Suzuki that she'd never given up.

She'd figured the Liver would turn her down again today. She just wanted to

make sure Hinata never forgot that she had the option to do a live event like that. That was the main reason Suzuki kept on proposing it.

However, on that day, Hinata gave Suzuki the exact opposite answer she'd expected.

"Sure, okay."

" "

It wasn't just Suzuki—the other Live-On employees, engrossed in their own conversations, all stopped speaking and looked wide-eyed at Hinata.

"Yeeeeeeeeaaaaahhhhhhhhh!!!!!"

And a few seconds later, their shock turned into wild cheering. Even Suzuki, who was usually calm, let out a big whoop and hugged the coworker sitting on her other side. It was like a festival scene in the bar, which just went to show how many people looked up to Hinata.

Hinata being both a VTuber and a central figure in the company, as well as someone who could do just about anything and with a lot to spare, had earned the respect of a great many people around her. That was why those people felt like it was so tantalizing whenever she acted so unmotivated when it came to herself. And now all of that emotion had been released.

"But I have one condition." Hinata's voice silenced the room once again, and everyone's eyes gathered to her. She grinned, then continued. "If I can have a surprise collab song with Shuwacchi at the end of the show, I'll do it."

And so, Awayuki's tumultuous days continued...

Afterword

Thank you so much for purchasing the second volume of *VTuber Legend: How I Went Viral After Forgetting to Turn Off My Stream*. I'm the author, Nana Nanato.

The contents of Volume 2, from the early parts, were actually written right around the time they decided *VTuber Legend* would get a print version, so I added more parody elements in comparison to Volume 1 and increased the focus on the crazy characters, introducing more events that play to their individuality. I hope you enjoyed the world of Live-On, now that it's added a fourth generation and developed each character's peculiarities.

Going back to after the first volume was released, several things happened in close succession that made me think I was dreaming. Beginning with an insanely well-done promotional video gaining huge traction on a certain major video streaming site—which took me by surprise as much as everyone else—I also got responses from real-life VTubers whom I love, won a light novel award, and saw the starting of a huge number of projects that I'm worried might be too much for the editors.

Ultimately, there were several rounds of reprints; I think it all points to a start that sent shock waves through the light-novel world. People have said that leaving a legend like this in real life is a perfect recreation of the original work.

But I would be remiss if I didn't mention the factors behind such wonderful results: the efforts of those around me. I could never have gotten this far on my own. I want to give a sincere thank-you to all those involved in making the *VTuber Legend* world more vivid, everyone who has supported the web novel, and everyone who purchased these books.

Thank you all so much!!!

Lastly—and this is an advertisement—Awayuki Kokorone now has an official Twitter account. It goes past being just an account for advertising and into some more unique tweets, so please give it a follow if you like!

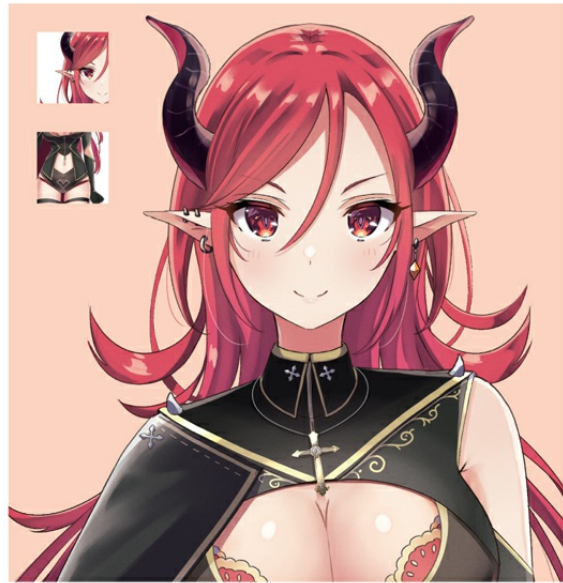
If nothing goes wrong, there should be a continuation. Volume 3 will likely include *that* episode—the one that was so popular in the web version. The VTubers of Live-On, especially the fourth generation, haven't shown everything they have yet, so please continue to look forward to a new volume of *VTuber Legend*!



HARERU ASAGIRI

"Heya! It's me—the sunlight in everyone's hearts, Hareru Asagiri!"

An energetic high school girl who loves putting smiles on everyone's faces. Extremely curious and—carried by her momentum—frequently does or says things that nobody would have ever expected.



SEI UTSUKI

"Hey, ladies and gents! It's your girl, Sei-sama!"

In her past life, she was a succubus who lived off the vigor of men, but died of starvation since she only ever showed interest in other women. She reincarnated, bringing us to today. Her horns are a holdover from that past life.



SHION KAMINARI

"Kon-miko, everyone! It's everyone's mama, Shion Kaminari!"

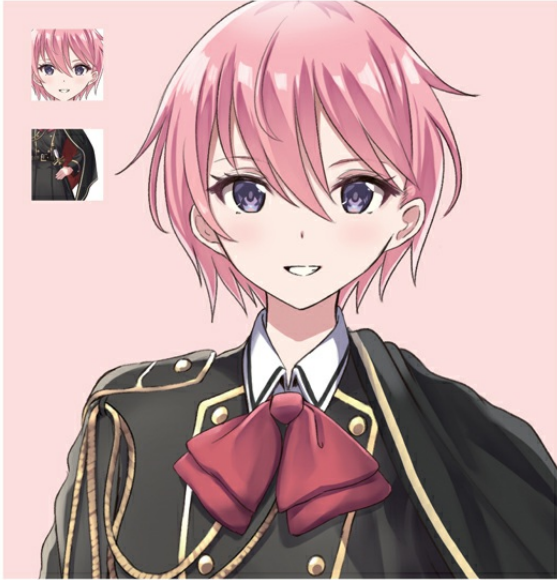
A shrine maiden whose body is inhabited by a nine-tailed fox and who safeguards the people as a servant of the kami. Because of how fiercely her nine fluffy tails swing around based on her emotions, caution is needed when standing behind her.



NEKOMA HIRUNE

"Nya-nyan! I caught a whiff of something great and came running!"

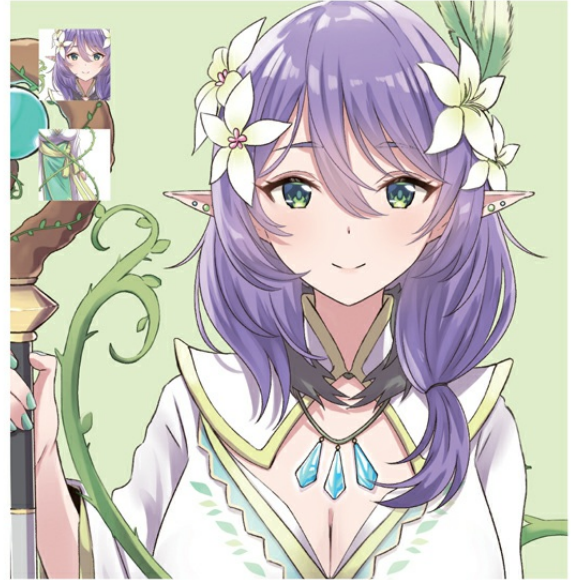
A beast girl with heterochromia who loves naps—but whenever she sees someone close by eating food, she immediately gets up and goes over to them with sparkling eyes. She'll be happy if you give her something. She'll also be happy if you pet her, even if you don't give her anything.



ALICE SOMA

"Ma'am! Alice Soma, at your service!"

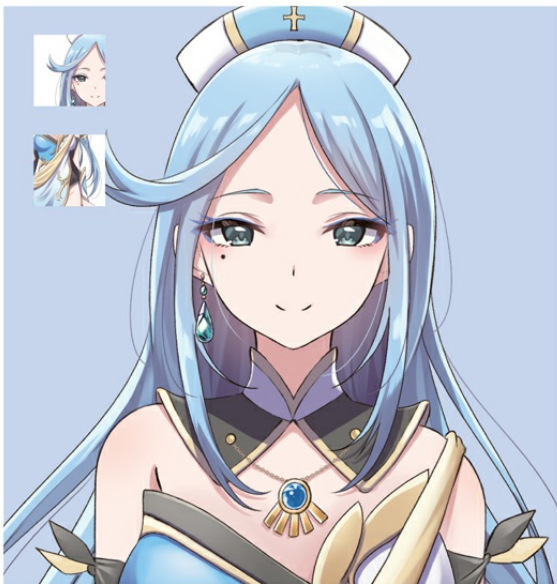
A member of the Resistance, an idol group focused on self-liberation. Her cool looks make her popular with men and women alike, but inside she's somewhat incompetent, so she works hard to protect her image.



EHRAI SONOKAZE

"Heya, everyone! Are you all doing well? I am! I'm Ehrai Sonokaze, zookeeper at Ehrai Zoo!"

An elven zookeeper at Ehrai Zoo, a major theme park featuring every animal under the sun. Respected to the point of complete obedience by all the animals there, for some reason.



KAERU YAMATANI

"You can cross the mountains and dales, but you can always return here. Welcome to Kaeru Yamatani's stream."

A mysterious, mystical woman who is said to appear before kind, loving hearts that have been grievously wounded, grant them her healing, and then return upon the wind.

Live-On Live-On

The Chosen Shining Girls

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MASHIRO IRODORI

"Kon-mashiro, everyone! It's me, Mashiro Irodori, also called Mashiron."

An illustrator who lives to draw. While she can be a little scathing with her remarks, she's actually a kind, friendly girl.



AWAYUKI KOKORONE

"Good evening, everyone. Another nice, light snow is falling tonight? I'm Awayuki Kokorone."

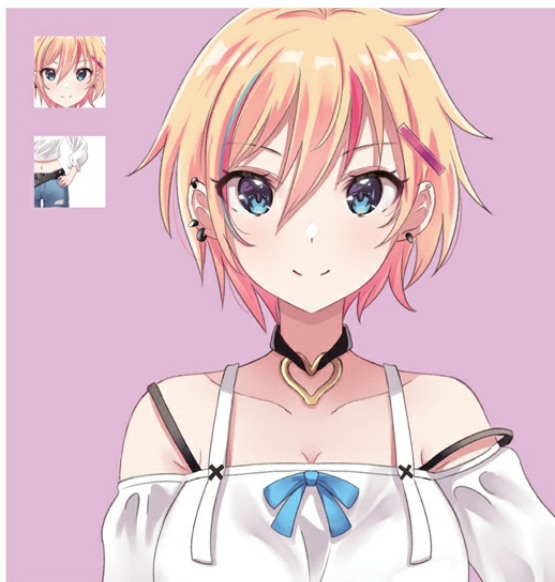
A mysterious beauty who only appears on days when a light snow is falling. Her purple eyes draw you in with the promise of something hidden deep inside them...



HIKARI MATSURIYA

"Kon-pika, everyone! The light of the festival is here for all to enjoy! It's me, Hikari Matsuriya!"

A festival girl who appears at festivals throughout Japan. Some say she's even appeared at the same time in two different festivals held in separate places.



CHAMI YANAGASE

"Hello! It's Chami Yanagase-oneesan, the one who always guides everyone to the pinnacle of healing."

Originally a gloomy character, but rallied her courage and debuted as a sunny one—to thunderous applause. Inside, though, she hasn't changed, making her a gloomy character wearing the skin of a sunny one.

LIVE

comment

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SHE CAN'T SERIOUSLY BE THE SEISO
ONE OF THE GROUP

ALICE SOMA: ¥ 50,000

?!
?!
HUN? THE REAL ONE?!

Awayuki
Kokorone

#StroZeroWhenTheyOpen

AUTHOR: NANA MANATO ILLUSTRATOR: SIOKAZUJUNOKO

VTUBER LEGEND: HOW I WENT VIRAL
AFTER FORGETTING TO TURN OFF MY STREAM 2

VTUBER LEGEND:

HOW I WENT VIRAL AFTER

FORGETTING TO TURN OFF MY STREAM 2

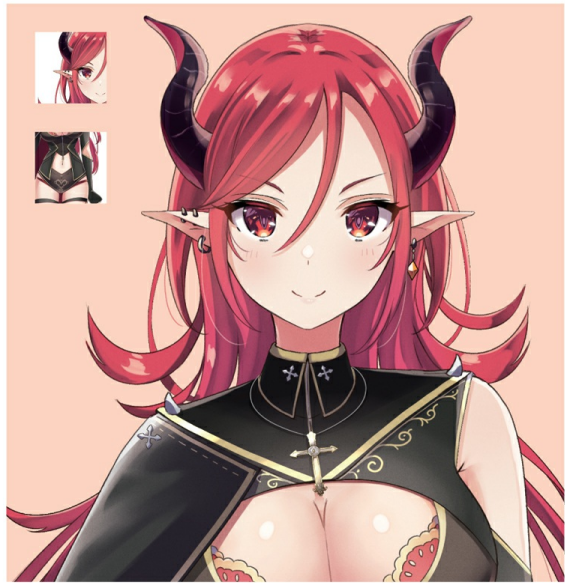




HARERU ASAGIRI

"Heya! It's me—the sunlight in everyone's hearts, Hareru Asagiri!"

An energetic high school girl who loves putting smiles on everyone's faces. Extremely curious and—carried by her momentum—frequently does or says things that nobody would have ever expected.



SEI UTSUKI

"Hey, ladies and gents! It's your girl, Sei-sama!"

In her past life, she was a succubus who lived off the vigor of men, but died of starvation since she only ever showed interest in other women. She reincarnated, bringing us to today. Her horns are a holdover from that past life.



SHION KAMINARI

"Kon-miko, everyone! It's everyone's mama, Shion Kaminari!"

A shrine maiden whose body is inhabited by a nine-tailed fox and who safeguards the people as a servant of the kami. Because of how fiercely her nine fluffy tails swing around based on her emotions, caution is needed when standing behind her.



NEKOMA HIRUNE

"Nya-nyan! I caught a whiff of something great and came running!"

A beast girl with heterochromia who loves naps—but whenever she sees someone close by eating food, she immediately gets up and goes over to them with sparkling eyes. She'll be happy if you give her something. She'll also be happy if you pet her, even if you don't give her anything.



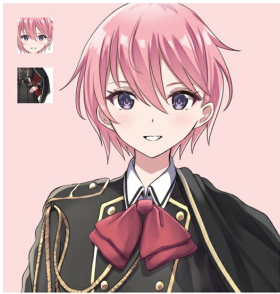
MASHIRO IRODORI

“Kon-mashiro, everyone! It’s me, Mashiro Irodori, also called Mashiron.”
An illustrator who lives to draw. While she can be a little scathing with her remarks, she’s actually a kind, friendly girl.



AWAYUKI KOKORONE

“Good evening, everyone. Another nice, light snow is falling tonight? I’m Awayuki Kokorone.”
A mysterious beauty who only appears on days when a light snow is falling. Her purple eyes draw you in with the promise of something hidden deep inside them...



ALICE SOMA

“Ma’am! Alice Soma, at your service!”
A member of the Resistance, an idol group focused on self-liberation. Her cool looks make her popular with men and women alike, but inside she’s somewhat incompetent, so she works hard to protect her image.



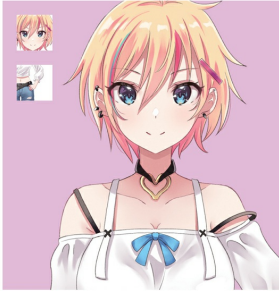
EHRAI SONOKAZE

“Heya, everyone! Are you all doing well? I am! I’m Ehrai Sonokaze, zookeeper at Ehrai Zoo!”
An elven zookeeper at Ehrai Zoo, a major theme park featuring every animal under the sun. Respected to the point of complete obedience by all the animals there, for some reason.



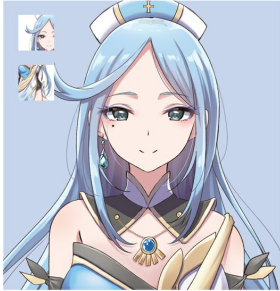
HIKARI MATSURIYA

“Kon-pika, everyone! The light of the festival is here for all to enjoy! It’s me, Hikari Matsuriya!”
A festival girl who appears at festivals throughout Japan. Some say she’s even appeared at the same time in two different festivals held in separate places.



CHAMI YANAGASE

“Hello! It’s Chami Yanagase-oneesan, the one who always guides everyone to the pinnacle of healing.”
Originally a gloomy character, but rallied her courage and debuted as a sunny one—to thunderous applause. Inside, though, she hasn’t changed, making her a gloomy character wearing the skin of a sunny one.



KAERU YAMATANI

“You can cross the mountains and dales, but you can always return here. Welcome to Kaeru Yamatani’s stream.”
A mysterious, mystical woman who is said to appear before kind, loving hearts that have been grievously wounded, grant them her healing, and then return upon the wind.

Live-On
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Volume 2

by Nana Nanato

Translated by Alice Prowse Edited by Alexandra Fresch

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