

Matchmaker

"Mommy? Why are you and Daddy always so happy?" Gwendolyn asked. Yumi smiled, and hugged her five-year-old daughter.

"Because we love each other! And we have a darling girl to love together!" She replied, as if it was obvious.

Well, maybe it should have been, Gwen mused, watching the other couples at the party mingle. Uncle Shuya and Aunt Musashi were obviously happy together, and Uncle Akito and Aunt Yayoi were too... Aunt Miyoko seemed pretty happy too, although not as happy as everyone else. It was only Uncle Miyabi who was always grumpy. She didn't know why, that was just how Uncle Miyabi was. It made her kind of sad, to see one of her beloved 'Uncles' so sad and angry all the time. Maybe if she could figure out why all the other grownups were happy, she could find a way to make Uncle Miyabi happy too.

Mommy had said that she and Daddy were happy because they loved each other, and because they loved her. But Uncle Miyabi didn't have anyone he was in love with... Maybe there was more to it? She abandoned her juice box, and walked over to Uncle Akito.

"Uncle Aki?" She asked, tugging on his pants.

He looked down, and smiled at her. "Hey Gwen-chan! Did you want another juice box?"

She shook her head. "Uncle Aki, why are you and Aunt Yayoi always so happy?"

He laughed. "Because we're in love, and being in love makes you happy!" He reached out and snagged Yayoi's hand, and they shared a smile.

Gwen smiled faintly at them, and wandered off, now puzzled. Being in love made you happy? But mommy had implied that just love made you happy... And that still didn't help Uncle Miyabi; he wasn't in love with anyone. Well, she hadn't asked everyone yet... She glanced at Aunt Musashi, and went over to tug on her skirt.

"Aunt Musashi?" She asked.

"Hmm? What is it Gwen-chan?" Musashi asked with an affectionate grin.

"Why are you and Uncle Shuya always so happy?"

"Because we have a big family to love, and good friends to share good times with." She replied with a smile.

Gwen nodded thoughtfully, and wandered over to Uncle Miyabi. But she didn't ask him anything. For a minute she just stared at him, trying to puzzle out the three different answers she had gotten, and pluck from them the answer to Uncle Miyabi's unhappiness. She watched his eyes flit moodily from the couples talking in the room, to the other children playing out in the yard, and decided.

She didn't know what to do about Uncle Miyabi being unhappy, but he seemed lonely right now,

so he could play with her. Aunt Musashi and Uncle Shuya's kids were being mean anyway, and telling her she was too little to play with them. Well, then she'd play with Uncle Miyabi. He'd never played with her before, but she was sure that was just lack of her asking.

"Uncle Miyabi," She said hesitantly, "Mai, and Touya, and Shaku won't let me play with them. They said I'm too little. Will you play with me? Please?"

He glanced at her. "Why don't you ask one of them?" He asked, jerking his head towards the other adults.

She shook her head stubbornly. "I *always* play with them. I want to play with *you!* Pleeeeease?" She begged, pouting just a little.

Miyabi sighed. "Oh, all-"

"Yay!" She grabbed his hand and pulled him towards the front door. "C'mon, I want to see if you can really dig a hole all the way through to America like Touya said!" She dragged him outside and grabbed a couple of shovels. She pushed one into his hand. "Here Uncle Miyabi, you can dig with this one, it's the good one. The other one has a wobbly handle."

"Err... thanks." He muttered, blushing.

"Oh... Hi, Miyabi-san..." A voice said from behind them. They turned.

"Hi Aunt Miyoko!" Gwen said cheerfully, waving.

"Hi Gwen-chan." Miyoko said, not really looking at her. Gwen glanced between the two adults, puzzled. Why were they staring at each other and blushing like that?

"Hi, Miyoko-san." Miyabi muttered. Gwen looked back and forth between them again, and suddenly understood. *He looks at Aunt Miyoko like Daddy looks at Mommy... Like Uncle Shuya Looks at Aunt Musashi... Like Uncle Akito looks at Aunt Yayoi...* She thought.

Does Uncle Miyabi love Aunt Miyoko? She wondered. If Aunt Miyoko loved him back, would he be happy? She didn't know. But she did know that right now, she was in the way.

She tugged the shovel she had handed him out of Miyabi's hand. "Thanks for offering to play with my Uncle Miyabi, but why don't you go play with Aunt Miyoko instead?" She asked, dropping the shovels and pushing him towards her. She ran around to the side of the house, and peeked around the corner.

"I haven't seen you in a while." Miyabi said softly, so that she had to strain to hear.

Miyoko rubbed the back of her neck nervously. "Yeah. I, uh, didn't know you were going to be here."

Silence lapsed between them, and they both looked down. Gwen fretted. What if she'd been wrong? Finally Miyabi said, "Listen, Miyoko, about last time... I'm sorry."

"I'm not." Miyoko told him firmly. Miyabi's head jerked up, and he looked at her in shock.

"You're... not?"

"No." She blushed, and edged a little closer to him. "I know I always give you a hard time, but... all those years dating Eizo, listening to how in love he was with you... I guess some of that rubbed off on me."

Miyabi placed a finger under her chin. "If Kazuki hadn't warned me off of you before we even started Orochi, I would have kissed you a lot sooner." He told her seriously, before leaning in for a kiss.

Gwen giggled quietly and ran around to the backyard. Maybe now Uncle Miyabi wouldn't be so grumpy.