

# Confessed love?

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„AKIRA.“

There she went again. Shouting his name like she was being totally angry at him. But in fact, the girl, nicknamed Nobuta by her two closest friends, was not. Ever since Akira told his friends to call him by his first name, the normally quiet girl shouted it like that for no reason, although she spoke Shuuji's name in a perfectly normal way. He couldn't explain it at all, but it bothered him a great deal.

He turned around to face the girl.

„Haa~i, what is it, No-bu-ta?“, he asked, putting special emphasis on her name.

„D-don't you think that... after all, s-something's bothering him?“, Nobuta began.

„You mean Shuuji-kun? Well, yeah, he's kinda weird lately. Wonder what it is...“ Akira pondered.

„We should try to help him... as his friends I mean.“, the girl stuttered. „Ch-cheer him up or something.“

Somehow, Akira got an uneasy feeling, whenever he heard Nobuta talk about Shuuji in that kind of way. He thought of that one photo locked in a box deep inside his heart, where he desperately tried to erase it from his memory.

„That“, he began to speak, his voice slightly trembling. „I mean... we don't even know the reason why he's so depressed, do we? Don't you think that, as a friend, he should normally tell us about it?“

Akira had a really serious face. And he was quite pissed at the fact that Shuuji was obviously hiding something from them. That just wasn't normal.

It was true that Shuuji deceived practically the whole school by acting as the popular guy who's always cheerful and who doesn't have any problems at all. But that didn't count for him and Nobuta. Shuuji was completely himself around them. He could tell them everything. That was why they were such close friends. So what was wrong now?

The quiet girl next to Akira started to speak again, her head bent down to the ground. „I... I think that he will tell us... when he feels like it. Until then we just have to be cheerful and... protect his smile.“

'Cheerful'... to hear something like that from the girl that even had a hard time just smiling was... weird. But she had a point, that was undeniable.. It just bugged him to hear Nobuta say that she wanted to protect Shuuji's smile. He wondered if she'd say the same thing about him. After all, he was pretty depressed himself. It was just that nobody seemed to notice. And this depressed him even more. It was always 'Shuuji here, Shuuji there...' Wait! He swore not to be jealous. Not to think about it anymore, especially not about that photo...

„A-AKIRA... what is wrong?“ At the sound of his name, Akira immediately looked up. He saw Nobuta stare at him, waiting for an answer. „You look like you're thinking about something.“

„Ano-sa...“, Akira began in a serious tone, „Why is it that you always shout my name like that, anyway?“ Akira scratched his head and looked at Nobuta.

She was confused.

„I-I don't really...I don't know...“ She broke off, not knowing what to say.

Akira looked away from her. „What do you not know? It's strange... It's like you're being angry at me or something.“ He laughed in his typical high pitched way.

„N-NO! I'm not angry at you. It's just... I'm nervous...“ The last part was almost inaudible, but Akira could hear it nonetheless. His heart skipped a beat. He looked at her, hope flickering in his eyes.

„N-nervous? What do you mean? You're not nervous saying Shuuji's name.“

„I-it's different, somehow.... I can't explain it, I guess.“

Akira gulped. Although her face was pointing towards the ground and her hair covered most of it, he was sure to have seen for a second that Nobuta's cheeks were slightly red.

„So you mean... that you feel different towards me than you feel towards Shuuji? Is that it?“

„After a short moment of hesitation and consideration, Nobuta gave a small nod. Her face became hot for some reason.

Akira gulped again. His heart was beating so fast that he was scared it could break his chest.

„Y-you do?“ Gulp. „But in which way? Are you angry at me, after all?“

Nobuta shook her head.

„If it's not anger, then what could it be?“

Akira really wanted to her it from Nobuta.

To hear that she liked him.

„I... don't know this feeling. It's unfamiliar with me, but your name... saying it kind of... makes my heart beat faster... or something... it's strange, but... I can stop it, if it bothers you!“

„NO, don't stop it!“ Akira burst out, his face burning. „I mean... you don't have to force yourself.“ He tried hard not to grin. „You can shout my name all you want, if you feel like it. It's no problem for me at all.“ Suddenly, it really was no problem for him anymore.

„B-but you were bothered by it, weren't you?“

„It's totally ok, don't worry.“ Akira gave Nobuta a wide smile. „I'm happy.“, he exclaimed, looking both relieved and content. „I thought that you liked Shuuji more than me.“

Nobuta looked at him with a shocked expression in her face.

„Wh-why? Why should I like Sh-Shuuji more than you? W-we're all friends, aren't we? So I like the two of you... the same...“ Nobuta got quiet and looked down. She held her hand to her chest Why was her heart beating so fast?

„Nobuta...“ Akira's smile was gone. Instead, he looked serious again. „Do you really feel the same about me and Shuuji? Look into your heart... Is it really the same feeling?“ (Was he really saying this??)

„I-I don't know.“ The shy girl looked really confused. She truly wasn't familiar with this feeling. Suddenly, she remembered Akira taking her hand and placing it on his cheek when they were in the ambulance together, saying that it was not dirty.

Why?

She tried to look at Akira, but found that she couldn't look him in the eyes anymore.

But why?

„Did you find an answer?“ He gulped.

'Why is Akira so serious? And why am I so uncomfortable all of a sudden? It's not supposed to be like this', Nobuta thought. „I...“ She didn't know what to say. She suddenly felt Akira moving closer. Her heart thumped and she didn't dare look up.

He came to a halt just a few centimetres in front of her. He took her hand into his trembling one and asked: „What do you feel right now?“

Nobuta was utterly shocked. She didn't know at all what to respond. Akira continued. „Is it a good feeling? Or a bad feeling? Which is it?“

Nobuta finally gathered the courage to lift her head, only to find him staring at her with a deadly serious face. And he was blushing, too. That only made the girl more nervous.

She felt her hand resting in his.... it was warm and nice, so it was a good feeling, wasn't it?? But what about her beating heart and hurting chest? This clearly didn't feel good at all!

After waiting for quite a long time, Akira said: „Seems like you cannot decide...“

He was disappointed, but he didn't think of giving up. Not when he came this far.

„Then... what about this?“ And at that he closed the remaining distance between them by taking the girl into a close embrace.

Now, Nobuta was completely lost. She couldn't think at all anymore and her cheeks were burning. 'He didn't...'

She could feel the warmth of his body invade her own and it calmed her a bit, somehow. But her body trembled and her heart raced and she didn't know what to say or do.

„Nobuta... you know, actually I wanted to say this to you since a long time ago...“ He held her a bit tighter. „But somehow... I never got the chance, after all. Just when I decided to finally tell you, you punched me in the face and after that... I somehow lost the courage. I really didn't mean to hurt you at that time, you know? ... I was so stupid... being jealous of my best friend...

Anyway, what I wanted to tell you was...“

Nobuta's chest hurt so much.

„I like you.“

Bang. A straight hit.

'Wh-what did he just say???' Nobuta's eyes widened in shock and her left cheek was pressed against Akira's chest. She could hear his heart beat at least as fast as her own.

What was going on?? Nobuta couldn't understand the world anymore.

Why did Akira act like this all of a sudden?

And why did she feel like she never felt before?

And what was this about Akira telling her that he liked her? Wait-

was that...

Nobuta felt Akira's grip tighten on her, just before he let go of her.

She felt the cold air around her again.

'I said it. I said it!' „S-so, what is your answer?“ He gulped, his voice trembling. Nonetheless, he looked at her and examined her expression, which made him blush madly.

Nobuta was flushed. 'So this was- this was a... c-c-c-confession??? Wh-why? Why do I feel so strongly about this? I didn't feel anything like this with Shittaka-kun, so why?? M-maybe, it's, because I'm c-closer with A-Akira?'

„This...“, Nobuta began, her voice trembling heavily from anxiety. „This... I'm...“ But Akira decided not to wait for an answer, since it would clearly take ages until she said it, so he bent down, took her cheeks in his hands, closed his eyes and

kissed her.

Her lips felt warm and soft against his and he could've stayed like this forever, but he realized that the girl he loved would die from oxygen deficiency, if he didn't end the kiss immediately. So he ended it begrudgingly.

Air.

Nobuta couldn't stop her heart from beating madly in her chest.

He has kissed her. He has really kissed her.

Never did she think that something like this could happen to her. Was it normal to feel so nervous?

What was he thinking right now?

What was she thinking right now?

„Nobuta... was... was it alright for me to kiss you? I just thought you-“

„S-stop it!“ Nobuta's voice was shaking, but she sounded serious. She couldn't be... angry, could she? This would be the worst thing that could happen. Akira was scared.

„Nobuta. Did I do something wrong? I shouldn't have... k-kissed you?“

He sounded desperate. He wanted to hear her say it. He wanted reassurance. He

wanted to feel at ease.

„Say it. Please! That you like me, too!“ Ah! He didn't intend saying it out loud, but he couldn't help it anymore. He stared at Nobuta with anticipation.

And she answered.

„I... I like you.“

He couldn't believe his ears.

Did she really say it? Or did his ears betray him? „Y-you mean, you really like me?“

She nodded.

„L-like reeeeeeeaaaally~ really??“

Nod.

Akira felt the corners of his lips move upwards into a wide smile.  
"AKIRA HAPPY!"

He jumped at Nobuta and hugged her tightly. He was so unbelievably, unbelievably happy!

Nobuta tried to think.

Did she just not want to disappoint Akira? Or did she really feel like this about him? To be honest, she did not know. She never felt anything like this before.

Was it love?

„Nobutaa, Nobutaaa, Nobutaaaaaa~~~“

Akira sang her name in such a happy way that it somehow calmed her.

She was... really being loved? By him, one of her two best friends?

She still couldn't believe it.

And she said, she liked him, too. But was that feeling she had really love?

She needed someone to talk with about this. But who...?

tbc~