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Unconventional Rules

A Collection of Short Stories



by Jercy Dee



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*This book is dedicated to every nerd
who wishes to pursue fandom in academia.*

It's possible, friends!

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This publication was created for the Publications Capstone class of 2018-2019. It was a print copy (now digital edition) of Jercy's original novella, *Unconventional Rules*.

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Disclaimer: Extensive research has been put into this novella and its accompanying body of work. That said, some information may have been lost in translation or published inaccurately due to the limitations of the author-designer. Apologies in advance for any mistakes.

This is a work of fanfiction. Names, characters, businesses, places, events, locales, and incidents can be traced to Haruichi Furudate's manga series, *Haikyuu!!*, but have been transformed into original fiction for the purposes of an undergraduate thesis project. Mentions of other franchises, articles, companies, products belong to their original owners. Outside of the *Haikyuu!!* franchise, any resemblance to any actual persons, living or dead, or actual events is purely coincidental.

Lakeshore University, Net Blazing, Adopt-A-Character Facilities and all associated names are concepts created by the author and are not real entities.

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Now onto the mushy stuff—

It takes a village to raise a child and this thesis project is very much my baby. I have to express my gratitude to the following people for all they've done for me (mainly putting up with my whining):

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If you weren't specifically mentioned here and helped out in any way, shape, or form, don't worry because I'm probably smothering you in appreciation right now.

Finally, thank *you*, dear reader, for giving this book a chance. I hope you enjoy the stories<3

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*You could say monogamy is like tennis,
two partners, volleying a ball back and forth...*

Polyamory is like volleyball.
*You're still passing a ball over a net,
but with different rules,
different number of players,
a different ball, even.*

*For either game, everyone playing
needs to understand the rules of the game
and agree to them from the outset.
You can't play tennis against a volleyball team.*

—Dr. Zhana (2018)

The Fab Five in 50 Sentences (More or Less)

declaration

Sometimes Sunny thinks about the way anxious Padma stands up for herself, and if she can do it, why can't Sunny?

auditor

Padma ticks off her list, methodically going through the equipment in comfortable silence.

throw

"Typically, when someone throws a basketball at you, you're supposed to *catch* it, not toss it up like a volleyball," Luna sniggers.

(BONUS: Toby glares daggers back—he's just used to setting anything coming at him, okay?!)

polish

"We can't make Padma do it—she just got her nails done!" Sunny stage whispers at Toby, and Padma blushes hard in the corner where she's hiding from them.

fare

Toby jots down answers at random, kept calm only by the knowledge that Sunny is feeling just as clueless one class over.

bargain

“You’re seriously going to try and bribe your way out of studying?”

(BONUS: “Well, it’s not like you have any better ideas!”)

precede

“Why is it ‘i before e except after c’ when so many words don’t even follow it?!” Sunny groans, slamming their head into the table in confusion.

earwax

Luna snarks, “This is supposed to be *simple*, or is your head too full of earwax after your brain fell out?”

basic

Padma puffs out her chest in pride when Tobias and Sunny pour over the advanced problem sets with single-minded determination.

(BONUS: Considering where they started, it’s impressive they got through the regular problem sets at all.)

bite

Dill flushes, furiously trying not to think about the fact that he’s sharing an indirect kiss¹ with Padma.

outlook

Sunny can never understand why Luna always gives up before she even tries.

¹ Indirect kiss = When your mouth touches something that someone else’s mouth has touched recently. e.g. sharing a water bottle, sharing a dessert and eating from the same spoon, etc.

sign

Toby is getting sick of Luna’s brooding about the captaincy: “If you ever needed a sign telling you that you can do this, this is it!”

fly

Sunny loves how satisfying it feels: the weightlessness of being in the air, the smack of the ball against their palm.

addicted

She’ll never admit it, but Luna doesn’t think she’ll get over the shocked faces of their opponents when the Weirdo Duo pulls off their ultimate move: an insanely fast spike that no one can catch.

premature

Luna rolls her eyes, quipping, “I think it’s a little early to say we’re *winners* since the match hasn’t even started yet.”

qualify

The ref calls it as in, and Dill whoops in celebration.

sting

“Please keep still, Luna,” Padma instructs in a low voice, hands soft and gentle, so Luna tries her best not to wince as she applies more disinfectant.

mastermind

Toby watches the way Luna calmly calls their next play and thinks, *This is why she’s captain.*

pioneer

“Well,” Luna muses, “considering you two are the only ones crazy enough to even try your ultimate move in the first place, I don’t see why you can’t pull this stunt off too.”

trust

It’s overwhelming, the amount of trust Sunny puts in him, but it fills Toby with determination.

tournament

Sunny can barely hear anything over their heartbeat, but they keep their eyes wide to watch the ball fall on the other side of the net.

slam

The sound of the ball hitting the court is deafening.

place

Sunny feels like they have a stupid expression on their face, but with the weight of a gold championship medal around their neck, how can they help themselves?

judgment

Toby frowns, lunging for Sunny's throat and growls, "You promised not to laugh, dumbass!"

show

Luna may hide her chuckling behind a fist, but in truth she finds it endearing the dweeb was so obsessed when he was younger that he actually brought a volleyball for show-and-tell in pre-school.

bean

Dill chuckles to himself as he sends Luna a picture of Tobias' adorably confused face: *ur bf is a bean!!!*

tempt

It's almost gross how much Toby wants that dumbass firecracker; who would have thought he'd have a thing for a super sweaty Sunny?

bathtub

Toby has no idea why, but somehow sharing a bath together is even more nerve-wracking than the first time they had sex.

twitch

Sunny is a restless sleeper; some days Toby feels like it's a

miracle that he's gotten any rest at all.

elbow

"It happened because *this asshole* decided to elbow me in the gut."

(BONUS: "I *said* it was an accident!")

coat

Luna looks over to Dillon—whose head is tilted up to catch snowflakes on his tongue—and immediately turns away, burying her face into her scarf and trying to hide the blush on her cheeks.

discreet

Padma bites her lip to hide her giggling; Sunny and Tobias are the least subtle people on the planet, but she appreciates the attempt to hide their birthday gift for her nonetheless.

abundant

When Padma asks why the bouquet is practically bursting out of its vase, Sunny can't help but blurt out, "I didn't know how many to buy for your birthday so I panicked when they took my order!"

implicit

"Read between the lines, idiot," Toby says as he claps Luna on the back, "she *likes* you."

perfume

Padma pretends that she doesn't notice when Luna stops to smell her hair every time Luna leans her head atop Padma's, but it's one of Padma's favourite secrets.

screen

No one can see her face because she's hunched over her laptop, but the paper taped on her back reads: *I have not slept in over 21 hours and I need to meet this deadline. Please do not interrupt me. Thank you. —Padma.*

volcano

Sunny tilts their head in confusion, looking up at the large painting with uncertainty when they say, “It kinda looks like a mountain to me? Is it not?”

(BONUS: It is not, in fact, a mountain.)

artist

Padma hums to herself, her brush painting large swaths of colour over the canvas.

conscious

Luna hates bringing it up, but Dill *loves* that she gets cuddly when they sleep together.

trace

She’d never admit it, and she’s willing to throw a punch at anyone who would ever suggest otherwise, but sometimes Luna likes to watch Dillon when he sleeps, using her fingertips to connect his freckles into little shapes.

lead

“Toby, I know you’re technically supposed to lead the dance, but just follow me, okay?”

dance

Padma makes a mental note about their dance lessons from then on: Toby, is by far the worst dancer, while Luna, surprisingly, is the best of the bunch.

grip

Toby flushes scarlet, eyes flitting away when Dillon’s hand squeezes his.

nose

Dill laughs in between Padma’s kisses, unable to control his blush and giggles as her she pecks his face over and over.

obstacle

Luna doesn’t know *why* the apartment looks like an obstacle course, but she thinks she knows who’s behind it.

disaster

“If I say I want no part in this, will I still be forced to do it?” she calls out, fingers pinching the bridge of her nose, but she has to wonder why she even asked, because the immediate response is Sunny yelling back, “*Duh! No way you’re skipping out on this, Lu-Luna!*”

ban

“I thought we agreed ‘No more volleyball in the apartment’, guys!”

consideration

Dill cocks his head to the side, thinking out loud, “I mean, *technically*, it wasn’t volleyball...”

picture

Between the five of them, it’s a miracle they all fit into the frame, but Padma prints the selfie and hangs it on the fridge door.

ratio

Their relationship is a lot like the sport they play: a strong foundation made with balance, where no individual is valued over the others, and where—most importantly—they always connect.

• LUNA HARUTO •

A User Guide

Is the LUNA HARUTO model right for you?

Before purchasing, first determine if the LUNA HARUTO model is right for you. If you agree to any of the following statements, please reconsider purchasing a LUNA HARUTO unit. Notes and alternatives are provided for each point.

- [] I dislike quiet situations. I value a conversational partner.
 - LUNA HARUTO units greatly dislike noise and are comfortable sitting in silence with their headphones on. Do NOT consider purchasing this model if you prefer otherwise.
 - Alternative: A SUNNY KORDIN unit is the perfect conversation companion.
- [] I dislike sarcasm and teasing.
 - All LUNA HARUTO units include built-in SNARKY personalities. There are no modifications to this.

- Alternative: Consider getting a DILLON PIEPER unit if you desire amiable companionship.

[] I am open to earnestness and commitment without guarantee.

- LUNA HARUTO units are extremely hostile towards goals that do not have guaranteed results. Many customers have returned their models when their LUNA unit has tried to angrily talk them out of plans.
- Alternative: CAPTAIN TYPE units are excellent companions to help work through difficult goals.

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Technical Specifications

Name: Luna Haruto

Accepted Nicknames: Lu (only accepted from DILLON PIEPER units)

Other* Nicknames: Lu-Luna, Four Eyes, Snark Sasser, Bitch Blocker

* WARNING: *Adopt-A-Character Facilities* is NOT responsible for any annoyances experienced by your LUNA HARUTO if called any of these nicknames. LUNA units are only comfortable accepting nicknames from trusted companions.

Date of Production: December 23, 1997

Pronouns: She/Her

Orientation: Doesn't like labels (fine with any gender, though)

Height: 6'1" (187.3 cm)

Weight & Build: 151.8 lbs (68.8 kg), incredibly lanky

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Hair Colour & Style: Blonde with black roots; naturally jet-black. Always mid-back length with bangs chopped straight across her eyebrow line.

Eye Colour: Golden brown

Model Type: Middle Blocker¹, Net Blazing Co-ed Volleyball Team, Underclassman

Personality Traits: Snarky, Tsundere²

Related Models*

- ANAÏS HARUTO: Sister

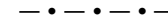
* See “Reactions to Other Units” section for more.

Stats & Specs

| | |
|----------------------|-----|
| Athletic Skills | 3/5 |
| Volleyball Technique | 3/5 |
| Game Sense | 5/5 |
| Academics | 4/5 |
| Snark | 7/5 |
| Tsundere | 5/5 |

¹ Middle blockers = (*Defense*) Players primarily responsible for blocks, meaning they must attempt to stop equally fast plays from their opponents and be able to quickly set up a double block at the sides of the court. (*Offense*) Players who perform very fast attacks that usually take place near the setter. They will usually hit quick sets or serve as decoys to confuse the opponents’ blockers if their passes are good enough.

² Tsundere = A Japanese term describing someone who is initially cold (and sometimes even hostile) before gradually showing a warmer, friendlier side over time.



Additional Info

Name in Japanese: 晴斗 月 (はると・るな)

Name Meaning: “Moon” (月). “Clear” (晴) and “Space” (斗).

Star Sign: Capricorn

Background: French mother, Japanese Father

Origin: Ottawa, ON

Trivia

- Moved around frequently as a child before living permanently in Ottawa, ON. As a result, is fluent in both English and French.
 - Growing up with a very TRADITIONAL TYPE father, LUNA is also familiar with Japanese culture. She is not completely fluent with the Japanese language but can communicate with Japanese relatives just fine.
- Met the DILLON model when the two were ten years old. Both attended private school and became friends after LUNA scared off some bullies who were making fun of DILLON’s freckles.
- Generally does not care for volleyball and competition. Began playing with DILLON to help him train after a unit joined the boys’ high school team, then decided not to waste the training by joining the girls’ team as well. Decided that the exercise was worth keeping up with once entering university.
 - Other NET BLAZING MODELS would really prefer if LUNA could give a crap about playing because it makes a huge difference in her gameplay when she gets excited.
- Was dared to dye her hair at frosh initiation and could not turn down the challenge. Has been growing out the blonde and sports dark, black roots once her hair began growing out.

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- Secretly into astrology and Western zodiac; recently started learning more about Chinese astrology. Also has a (secret) interest in astronomy and knows a surprising amount of trivia about outer space.
- Exceptionally skilled at video games. Prefers old-school consoles over PC and mobile but can adapt easily between platforms. Loves beat-em-ups most.

— • — • — • —

Accessories

Your LUNA HARUTO comes from the factory with one (1) of each of the following items:

- Glasses
- Prescription sports goggles (NEW!)
- Lakeshore University matching hoodie and sweatpants
- Lakeshore University Net Blazing Co-ed Volleyball uniform
- Molten-style volleyball
- Alien plush toy* (NEW!)
- Slice of strawberry shortcake* (NEW!)

* Accessory added by popular demand

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Unboxing Your LUNA HARUTO

Like many units, your LUNA HARUTO will be happy to be out of her crate. Especially because of her height, she will be very grateful to be outside.

How to unbox your LUNA HARUTO:

1. Open the crate. Remove all industrial tape, nails, and packing peanuts as necessary.
2. DO NOT offer to help your unit out of her crate. She will be insulted at the assumption she cannot exit a box on

her own. DO keep an eye on her to make sure she is in working condition.

3. Offer your LUNA HARUTO any of her accessories. To keep busy during shipment, she most likely has her headphones already, so many customers advise offering the slice of strawberry shortcake to placate her.

WARNING:

- LUNA units may be extremely cranky as a result of the tight packaging and varying shipping times. Please exercise patience as she returns to a default mood.
- Wobbliness, disorientation, and similar symptoms after long shipment travel are normal. Contact Customer Service if your unit experiences other symptoms.

— • — • — • —

Programming

Your LUNA HARUTO comes with different actions.

(1) Volleyball

LUNA HARUTO is exceptionally skilled at volleyball. This model was chosen to participate in an exclusive LOCAL VARSITY TRAINING CAMP shortly after its debut, so rest assured that you are playing with a good player. Her techniques need refinement—which will come from practice, stern leadership, and determination to keep her interest—but she can play as a starting member right out of the box! Her height will continue to increase even after breaking the 6’ barrier, so be sure to utilize it well during games.

LUNA is also an excellent partner to practice* volleyball with. She is quick to adapt to new training partners and learns new playstyles quite rapidly.

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* Note: LUNA prefers strict practice times and can NOT be persuaded to stay for free practices unless forced to by team captains or coaches (which is why keeping her interest is essential). She also loses patience easily if she feels like her training partner is not improving. Take caution when practicing with LUNA units; patience is necessary but payoffs are worthwhile to watch her steady improvement.

(2) Companionship (built on sarcasm and wit)

LUNA HARUTO has a SNARKY personality built into the model. Though introverted and antagonistic, she enjoys partners* who can keep up with her wit and sarcasm.

She maintains a reasonable amount of confidence, which may come across as prideful and smug to first-time buyers. Seasoned owners understand that this confidence actually comes from a place of deep insecurity, so it is essential to comfort your LUNA unit even if she acts like she dislikes it.

* Note: Refer to the “Reactions to Other Units” section to see the types of friendships/relationships you can build with your LUNA HARUTO.

(3) Tutor

The TUTOR FUNCTION is the buggiest mode for all LUNA HARUTO units, though she is equipped with one. Despite having keen intellect, LUNA is not good at helping others with their academics. She is even more intimidating when the TUTOR FUNCTION is turned on and will lose patience faster than normal if those she tutors do not improve quickly.

Alternative: Have a DILLON PIEPER or PADMA PERERA unit do the tutoring since both models include a TUTOR FUNCTION as well. Both models also have much more personable teaching approaches.

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Reactions to Other Units

ANAİS HARUTO

- Older sister model to LUNA HARUTO units.
- LUNA units generally look up to ANAİS units.
- Greatly supports LUNA, even if LUNA dislikes it.
- In the past, LUNA units have had issues trusting the ANAİS model after an ANAİS unit lied to a LUNA unit. Currently, the two HARUTO models are mending their relationship.

DILLON PIEPER

- Childhood best friend model to LUNA HARUTO units.
- Has a tendency to repeat “Shut up” and “Sorry” (said by LUNA and DILLON respectively), but is otherwise the best companion to match with LUNA.
- LUNA will not hesitate to throw a punch if she feels that DILLON is threatened.
- LUNA relishes in teasing DILLON over his crush on the PADMA model.

SUNNY KORDIN

- Has a generally antagonistic relationship with SUNNY units; the two have minimal respect for the other.
- LUNA units often find SUNNY units very annoying.
- DO NOT let these models interact if SUNNY must be tutored. LUNA’s TUTORING FUNCTION is not optimal for this situation.

TOBIAS BLAKELY

- DOES NOT get along with LUNA HARUTO units.
- In close proximity, the two models will get into fights with each other.
- DO NOT let these models interact if TOBIAS must be tutored. LUNA’s TUTORING FUNCTION is not optimal for this situation.

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- The two models can actually work surprisingly well during volleyball matches under stressful gameplay.

PADMA PERERA

- Gets along politely with MANAGER TYPE models.
- LUNA admires PADMA’s courage and patience when dealing with the NET BLAZING CO-ED VOLLEYBALL TEAM.

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Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Q: My LUNA and TOBIAS units are fighting! What do I do?

A: *Adopt-A-Character Facilities* is NOT responsible for any fights that occur between these two units. We have updated the “Reactions to Other Units” of our instruction manual as a result of several complaints we’ve received.

Q: It’s in the middle of a match though! They’re both on the same team and they need to cooperate.

A: If required to get along during a volleyball game, have a CAPTAIN TYPE unit demand they stop fighting. Having a STERN UPPERCLASSMAN unit to physically break up the fight will also help.

Q: My LUNA unit suddenly turned very shy. What happened?

A: Another unit has likely tried provoking HARUTO by comparing her abilities to the SUNNY KORDIN model. LUNA will turn shy as a result of her insecurities. If no improvements occur, have a DILLON PIEPER unit confront her (see below).

Q: My DILLON PIEPER unit is confronting my LUNA unit. What do I do?

A: This is a rare occurrence. However, allow your DILLON unit to yell at LUNA. LUNA units often need a kick in the ass.

Q: My LUNA unit just started shouting and pumping her fists! What’s going on??

A: You either received a SUNNY KORDIN unit by accident (please contact Customer Service if this has occurred) or LUNA has just blocked a spike from a DIFFICULT VOLLEYBALL OPPONENT TYPE and is celebrating! If it is the latter, allow her to celebrate* and scream along with her teammates.

* WARNING: If an ANAÏS HARUTO unit witnesses a LUNA unit celebrating during a game, ANAÏS may cry.

Q: My SUNNY KORDIN unit is climbing up my LUNA unit in an attempt to punch her face! Help!!

A: 1) Please ensure that your SUNNY unit is, in fact, trying to punch your LUNA unit. Fights and general roughhousing often occur between SUNNY and TOBIAS units.

2) If it is, in fact, your LUNA unit being climbed on, have UPPERCLASSMAN TYPE units intervene the fight. Nearby MISCHIEVOUS TYPE models will be unhelpful in this situation, and may instead laugh at their brawling.

Q: Can I pamper my LUNA unit?

A: You can try. LUNA generally dislikes being doted on and prefers being independent. However, if offered space-related memorabilia or strawberry cake slices, new* LUNA units will accept both of these offerings happily.

* Note: This function has only been recently included with newer LUNA HARUTO units. Owners of older units will need to tweak their LUNA without *Adopt-A-Character* technical support using FANFIC MODS.

— . . . — . . . —

Thank you for purchasing a LUNA HARUTO unit!

With love from Adopt-A-Character Facilities

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Amicable Amity

They were *told* that the storage room lock was broken, that it was going to be replaced by the end of the week. They were *told* to be careful, to have some sort of door stop ready so people could safely lock away equipment without trapping someone inside. They were told this *multiple times* throughout the week.

The team's ace already had it happen to him. No one wanted to repeat that fiasco again. Luna remembers the captain's tired expression once their star player was finally freed from the closet.

But, of course, misfortune enjoys annoying Luna at every opportunity.

— • —

"You're kidding me," Luna sighs, "the five of us are trapped in here because you two knuckleheads didn't think to prop it open?"

"You didn't do it either, Lu-Luna!"

"Because *I* was busy trying to pull you idiots apart before

you broke something else!"

"Then what about Dillon?" Tobias mumbles. His accusing tone makes Luna want to throttle him again.

"I tried stopping the fight between you and Lu," Dill answers, sounding sheepish.

"It is *not* Dill's fault," she says sternly, "so don't you dare try pinning the blame on him."

"Aw! Thank you, Lu!"

"Shut up, Dill."

"Haha, sorry!"

— • —

The storage room is small, definitely not big enough to fit five people comfortably. Especially when three of them are hovering six foot.

Luna looks out the window, where lights from outside peek through. They talked about shoving Sunny through it, but the tiny moron angrily argued otherwise. At one point, Tobias had the audacity to look at Padma, who was *technically* the smallest, but all possible thoughts were silenced by Sunny punching him in the arm.

In the end, both of them were still too big to fit, so they had to come up with other ways of escaping.

— • —

"SOMEONE OPEN THE DOOR, *PLEASE!*" Sunny screams, fists banging on the entrance. "*WE'RE TRAPPED!!*"

"*Shut up, dumbass!*" Tobias barks, and for once Luna is relieved to see The Dictator's anger come in handy. "Everyone already left to change! Nobody will hear you!"

"You might also break the door..." Padma adds quietly.

"Wouldn't that be a good thing?" Sunny asks. "If we break it down maybe we can get out."

"*No,*" Luna interjects. "The team barely has enough money to fix the *lock*, much less replace the entire *door*, idiot."

Sunny groans, and Luna rolls her eyes at their childish pout.

— • —

Now, they all sit on the dusty floor, the room poorly lit with flickering fluorescents and the smallest bit of streetlight filtering in. Luna and Dill sit cross-legged in front of Tobias and Sunny. Next to them, Padma has her knees brought up to her chin.

Luna isn't even sure how it happened. One moment, she was trying to stop the two morons from ripping each other's faces off; the next, Dill was pulling her away from The (Idiot) Dictator. It wasn't until she heard the door shut with an echoing *SLAM!* that she realized she made a big mistake.

— • —

The weirdo duo begins bickering about who is actually the dumber one.

"Oh my god, I'm going to die here with the two biggest idiots on the planet," she whines.

Dill whispers, "Thanks for not calling me an idiot, Lu." Luna can hear the fondness in his voice, and she rolls her eyes.

"I'm not one of the idiots, Luna?" she hears Padma timidly ask.

"God, *no*," she immediately answers. Padma is the smartest person in this room quite frankly. "Tweedle Dumb and Dumber arguing over there are."

"That's a little mean," she says.

She huffs. "Serves them right though..."

— • —

The Dictator can bite her for all Luna cares.

He's stuck-up, overbearing, and super controlling. Luna is still unsure if Tobias being a prodigy justifies his actions, but for better or worse Luna's stuck with him.

What irritates Luna most is constantly being around him.

It's one thing to be annoyed by how good someone is from a distance, when they're on the other side of the net; it's something else to have him standing right next her on the court.

(Luna pointedly doesn't think about how frustrating it is to be subpar in comparison. She'd rather fight Tobias instead.)

— • —

"S-so, what do we do?" Padma eventually wonders, her voice even tinier than usual.

Luna takes a deep breath, closing her eyes. She thinks for a long minute before asking, "Does anyone have their phones?"

"No."

"Nah."

"Mine's in the lockers..."

"I have mine!"

Luna looks at Dill, grateful for good news. The screen's light illuminates Dill's freckled face when he opens his phone, and he whoops in celebration before typing away.

"I have battery and cell signal! I'll text the group chat and hopefully someone can open the door!"

She sighs in relief when Dill announces, "Okay, it sent!"

— • —

After a moment, Sunny hums, wondering, "Hey, Padma, how did you get trapped in here with us anyway?"

"*Oh!*" she squeaks. "I heard the commotion, then I tried helping Dill break up the fight between Luna and Tobias."

She sighs heavily, sounding upset. It's as if she carries the weight of the world on her shoulders. She sniffs, and to Luna's alarm she realizes that Padma has tears in her eyes.

"I'm so sorry, everyone," she mumbles eventually, throat hitching. "I should have made sure the door was left open before I helped out—"

"*Padma! It's not your fault!*"

— • —

Luna honestly doesn't know how Padma does it.

She could make better use of her time instead of hanging out with the volleyball team, but Padma has endless patience and is unfailingly kind.

Luna remembers when Sunny and Tobias had that weird fight a few months back, how heartbroken Padma seemed whenever she saw them not talking. Luna *would have* cared less if it weren't for the fact that those weirdos' issues translated on-court during games, which meant she was also responsible if they messed up.

She looks up at the ceiling, wondering how she wound up babysitting these fools.

— • —

Sunny smacks Tobias on the back of the head.

"Ow!" Tobias yells. "What'd you hit me for, dumbass?!"

"We should apologize since *this is our fault*," Sunny answers. The two of them begin to bicker again but it isn't long before they look at Padma in earnest.

"*We're sorry*, Padma, everybody. We've caused a lot of trouble for you."

"Sorry..." Tobias adds quietly.

The humility in his voice amuses Luna greatly, so she can't help but quip, "*Wow*, how gracious. It's rare seeing The Dictator apologize sincerely."

Tobias growls, but Dill cuts them off with a warning. "Lu, that's enough."

— • —

Luna isn't good with emotional things, she can admit that. Dill always deals with that stuff easier than she does.

For the most part, Luna doesn't care for others. It's worked for her to mind her own business, to be involved only when it

was absolutely necessary. Dill is the exception to Luna's rule.

Dill needs more confidence—Luna's known this since she met the guy. She meant it when she admitted Dill was way cooler than her after the confrontation they had way back when.

It's nice seeing him stand up for himself—against *Luna*—once in a while.

— • —

Dill nudges her side. "Hey, we should probably apologize too."

Luna sighs before answering with a grunt. She turns, nodding her head in a small nod towards Padma.

"Sorry, Padma!" Dill says vehemently.

"Sorry," she mumbles.

"N-no, *no*, it's okay!" Padma stutters. She sniffs, pulling on her jacket sleeve to wipe her eyes. After, she giggles softly. "I guess we all could have done something differently."

"That's true..." Sunny mutters. Dill hums quietly in agreement.

Luna wants to mention that if the weirdo duo never got into a fight in the first place they'd never be here, but she doesn't.

— • —

Being the moon to Sunny's, well, *sun* is not Luna's favourite thing. She knows that despite their awful technical skills, Sunny's talent greatly outshines Luna's.

It's the same as being around Tobias: it annoys Luna because she *has* to be around Sunny. They're on the same team.

She can admit that Sunny is *much* easier to get along with though. Sunny may be an idiot, but at least they're a personable idiot. Sunny befriended her quickly even though she doesn't have the warmest personality.

Being the prickly night sky to Sunny's affable daylight at least makes sense in that regard.

— • —

Dill's phone buzzes, his face lighting up once again at the screen's brightness when he flips it open.

"Jamie got my text!" he announces. "The captains are on their way to open up the door!"

"Yay!" Sunny hollers.

"Thank goodness!" Padma sighs.

"Good, I want to get out of here," Tobias mutters.

Luna just breathes another sigh of relief. She's eager to have this day over with.

Not even five minutes pass when she sees the team captain whipping the door open, an amused vice-cap chuckling behind her.

"*You guys!*" Jamie bellows.

Everyone begins to apologize profusely for the inconvenience.

— • —

"I can't *believe* Jamie chewed us out after we finally escaped that room," Sunny grumbles, pulling their bike along. "Taylor just laughed at us over her shoulder!"

"Yeah," Tobias agrees with a pout.

"She *did yell at you guys the most*," Dill snickers.

"*Yeah!* How come you and Luna didn't get yelled at as much?"

"Because you two were the ones who started everything," Luna says unhelpfully. She shrugs when they glare daggers at him. She isn't scared of their anger in the slightest.

"Oh well, at least we're out of there now."

Luna is all too grateful for that.

— • —

Luna mildly tolerates the team at best, gets furiously annoyed at worse.

They're all way too loud, incredibly boisterous, and are generally the last crowd she would ever want to hang out with.

The upperclassmen she can at least respect, because despite their overeager enthusiasm they are all kind and accepting. Her fellow first-years are the hardest for her to put up with. The weirdos she calls her teammates (friends?) are some of the most bothersome people she has ever met.

Yet, even though she's had several chances to quit and leave, she still chooses to play by their side.

• SUNNY KORDIN •

A User Guide

Is the SUNNY KORDIN model right for you?

Before purchasing, first determine if the SUNNY KORDIN model is right for you. If you agree to any of the following statements, please reconsider purchasing a SUNNY KORDIN unit. Notes and alternatives are provided for each point.

[] I dislike loudness.

- All SUNNY KORDIN units have built-in ENERGETIC TYPE personalities. There are no modifications to this.
- Alternative: LUNA HARUTO is a much quieter companion for those who prefer silence.

[] I dislike managing other people's problems and drama.

- SUNNY's high UNLUCKY levels cause them to get into a lot of trouble. They need constant supervision and possibly someone to solve their problems should they find themselves in trouble.

• SUNNY KORDIN •

- Alternative: All Lakeshore University First-Year models (with the slightest exception for TOBIAS BLAKELY) are generally able to avoid drama in comparison to SUNNY units.

[] I dislike volleyball.

- The SUNNY KORDIN model's love for volleyball may be as large as the sun itself. DO NOT purchase this unit if you dislike the sport.
- Alternative: Quite frankly, DO NOT purchase any NET BLAZING VOLLEYBALL TYPE unit if you dislike this sport.

— • — • — • — • —

Technical Specifications

Name: Sunny Kordin

Preferred Nicknames: Greatest Ace*

* Note: No one has yet to call a SUNNY unit this.

Other* Nicknames: Dumbass, Simpleton Idiot, Number One Shortie, Shrimp and other variations (Shrimpy, Shrimpo, etc)

* WARNING: *Adopt-A-Character Facilities* is NOT responsible for any outbursts experienced by your SUNNY KORDIN if called any of these nicknames. SUNNY units prefer nicknames that are not insulting.

Date of Production: August 19, 1996

Pronouns: They/Them

Orientation: Pansexual

Height: 5'5.5" (166.4 cm)

Weight & Build: 119.8 lbs (54.3 kg), petite

Hair Colour & Style: Orange (redhead), short and messy

Eye Colour: Green

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via @jercydee

Model Type: Wing Spiker¹, Lakeshore University First-Year, Underclassman

Personality Traits: Determined, Energetic, Anxious

Related Models*

- SUMMER KORDIN: Sister

* See “Reactions to Other Units” section for more.

Stats & Specs

| | |
|----------------------|-----|
| Athletic Skills | 2/5 |
| Volleyball Technique | 1/5 |
| Game Sense | 2/5 |
| Academics | 1/5 |
| Cheerfulness | 8/5 |
| Unluckiness | 6/5 |

— • — • — • —

Additional Info

Name Meaning: “Sun” and “Crow”

Star Sign: Leo

Background: American (German ancestry)

Origin: North Carolina, USA

¹ Wing Spikers = Usually the players who attack the ball and usually scores the most points in the game. Spikers play both the front row and the back row.

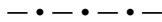
Trivia

- Nth/??? generation German.
 - All SUNNY knows is that they have distant ancestors/ relatives who fought Nazis in World War II so that’s pretty cool.
- Working hard to become an ace² despite their short stature.
 - This became SUNNY’s goal after a unit watched a volleyball tournament where the team’s ace was also someone comparatively short.
- Took a year off school to search for co-ed teams accepting of non-binary players, and eventually found Lakeshore U’s Net Blazing team. They were not expecting to find their volleyball soulmate, but found a TOBIAS BLAKELY unit anyway.
 - Moved to Toronto to attend Lakeshore University and living with an aunt in the city. Brought their baby sister, SUMMER, along. SUNNY’s other siblings still remain in North Carolina.
- Unluckiness during bathroom visits* are usually not because of their gender presentation, but instead caused by unlucky encounters with opposing teams.
 - Once, a SUNNY unit met Net Blazing opponents from three (3) different teams while attempting to visit the bathroom. Fortunately, no fights occurred but tensions were high.
- Favourite mode of transportation is by skateboard.
- Loves to snack on Asian pastries, especially Chinese pork buns.
- Speaks very poor Spanish and German after taking a few classes in high school. Continuing German to complete a language elective at Lakeshore U.

² Aces = Wing spikers responsible for spiking past the blockers with brute force. Although an ace needs a huge amount of fighting power, being an ace doesn’t really require great strength. Some aces have control rather than power and are capable of aiming in the weak spot of a blocker or making a feint spike to throw the blockers off to score.

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* Note: Refer to the “Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)” section for more.



Accessories

Your SUNNY KORDIN comes from the factory with one (1) of each of the following items:

- Lakeshore University matching hoodie and sweatpants
- Lakeshore University Net Blazing Co-ed Volleyball uniform
- Spare Net Blazing Co-ed Volleyball uniform – Trackpants* (NEW!)
- Brown shoulder bag
- Wilson volleyball
- Molten-style volleyball* (NEW!)
- Pork bun* (NEW!)

* Accessory added by popular demand.



Unboxing Your SUNNY KORDIN

Like many units, your SUNNY KORDIN will be happy to be out of their crate. Especially because of their generally energetic nature, they will be very grateful to be doing anything outside.

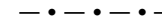
How to unbox your SUNNY KORDIN:

1. Open the crate. Remove all industrial tape, nails, and packing peanuts as necessary.
2. SUNNY will likely accept your assistance should you offer to help them out of their crate. DO keep an eye on them to make sure they are in working condition.
3. Offer your SUNNY KORDIN any of their accessories. To keep busy during shipment, they most likely already have one of their volleyballs.

4. After opening their crate, many customers advise offering the pork bun because SUNNY is likely very hungry.

WARNING:

- SUNNY units may have higher energy levels than normal as a result of the tight packaging and varying shipping times. Many customers advise playing with them to release their pent-up energy.
- Wobbliness, disorientation, and similar symptoms after long shipment travel are normal. Contact Customer Service if your unit experiences other symptoms.



Programming

Your SUNNY KORDIN comes with different actions.

(1) Volleyball

The SUNNY KORDIN model’s primary function is to play and succeed in volleyball. Despite their low athletic stats, SUNNY is very determined to become one of the best volleyball players, especially due to their DETERMINED TYPE personality. They will not relent on their athletic goals to become an ACE TYPE and will work hard to do so. This may result in repetitive monologues on trying their best and constantly idolizing other ACE TYPE units, but their slow and steady improvement in volleyball make listening to them worth it.

WARNING: SUNNY may try to sneak into private training camps uninvited because of their stubborn DETERMINATED TYPE personality and low INTENLLIGENCE level. They will not see the consequences of their actions until they arrive at the training camp and realize they can only assist camp participants in non-training responsibilities instead of joining in camp practices. Refer to the “Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)” section for more.

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(2) Squawking

The easily excitable, high-energy SUNNY model has a very unique cheer when reacting positively. The SQUAWKING FUNCTION very easily lets everyone in the vicinity* know when SUNNY is feeling happy, excited, and shocked, among many other reactions. When triggered, the SQUAWKING FUNCTION features a range of crow-like noises.

* Note: Some (or many) may find this function very annoying. There is no way to turn the program off, but SUNNY’s volume may be adjusted if necessary.

(3) Hypeman

A customer favourite, the HYPEMAN FUNCTION is a result of SUNNY’s high ENERGETIC levels and CHEERFUL TYPE personality. They are the best model to give encouragement and support for other units who are feeling insecure or in need of advice.* This function is perfect for customers who need frequent cheerleading to get through their day.

* Note: Though they are not academically inclined, SUNNY can give solid advice on friendships and goal-setting.

WARNING: This function will likely trigger the SQUAWKING FUNCTION since both actions rely on SUNNY’s ENERGY and CHEERFULNESS levels.

— • — • — • —

Reactions to Other Units

SUMMER KORDIN

- Baby sister model to SUNNY KORDIN units.
- Enjoys being in the presence of SUNNY units.
- SUNNY generally looks after SUMMER and cares for her very much.

- When she wants to play, SUMMER units may sometimes bother SUNNY units even though they are busy. With a gentle but firm warning, SUMMER will acquiesce to leave SUNNY to their business until they are free to play.

TOBIAS BLAKELY

- Has a rivalry fueled with spite and dumbassery with TOBIAS units. The two are usually in the middle of roughhousing due to their competitive partnership.
- Usually calls SUNNY “dumbass”, “idiot”, or similar names. SUNNY does not appreciate this in the slightest and will retort by calling TOBIAS names like “bastard” or “jerk”.
- TOBIAS and SUNNY are the most compatible NET BLAZING VOLLEYBALL models. When working together*, these units will exhibit incredible synchronicity that will baffle both opponents and teammates alike.

* WARNING: Should a serious argument occur, this will cause an error in the units’ compatibility. Refer to the “Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)” section for more.

LUNA HARUTO

- A generally antagonistic relationship occurs between SUNNY and LUNA units; the two have minimal respect for the other.
- SUNNY units often find LUNA units too unpassionate. LUNA doesn’t care.
- DO NOT let these models interact if SUNNY must be tutored. SUNNY finds LUNA’s TUTORING FUNCTION too aggressive/rude and will search for a better tutor model.*

* Note: See “PADMA PERERA” below for more.

PADMA PERERA

- Has a very friendly companionship with SUNNY units.
- Extremely supportive of SUNNY units; PADMA always cheers for SUNNY both in volleyball games and when

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achieving goals. SUNNY units return the enthusiasm and support.

- When assisting SUNNY units with academics, use PADMA’s TUTORING FUNCTION. SUNNY units prefer PADMA’s TUTORING FUNCTION out of all models.
- Allow SUNNY and PADMA units to interact for maximum cuteness between shorter VOLLEYBALL TYPE models.

DILLON PIEPER

- Has a generally friendly relationship with SUNNY units.
- Likes to accompany SUNNY in his free time when not busy with LUNA.
- SUNNY greatly supports DILLON with his athletic goals, and DILLON returns it in kind.

— • — • — • —

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Q: My SUNNY is being too loud/rowdy! What do I do?

A: A direct confrontation works best to control your SUNNY. They will usually* pipe down when told to be quiet, especially by AUTHORATIVE TYPE models like COACHES, PARENTS, or TEACHERS.

* Note: Exceptions depend on who is speaking to them. SUNNY generally ignores TOBIAS units out of spite if a TOBIAS tells them to shut up.

Q: What do I do when my SUNNY is feel queasy from nervousness?

A: Due to SUNNY being an ANXIOUS TYPE model, they frequently experience nausea, especially before volleyball games. First, assist them by offering stomach relief medicine. Then, discuss what the potential worst thing could happen. Depending on how the severe* their nervousness is, SUNNY may realize that the worst thing that could happen actually isn’t that bad at all.

* WARNING: Sometimes, SUNNY’s anxiety levels are too high to

logically talk them through their worries. As a result, they will likely throw up either on themselves or someone else. Just in case, always bring SPARE TRACKPANTS (now included with newer units!).

Q: My SUNNY and TOBIAS units are failing their classes. What do I do?

A: Both SUNNY and TOBIAS models have generally low ACADEMIC stats. The PADMA PERERA model is perfect for assisting SUNNY and TOBIAS units with their studies. Equipped with the VOLLEYBALL MANAGER FUNCTION, a PADMA unit will take it upon herself to ensure that both SUNNY and TOBIAS will pass their exams in order to continue playing on the volleyball team.

SUNNY units prefer the PADMA model out of all units* due to her CARING TYPE personality. PADMA is best paired with a DILLON unit to fully ensure both SUNNY and TOBIAS pass their classes.

* Note: Though equipped with the TUTOR FUNCTION, LUNA units are not preferred for a scenario in which either (or both) SUNNY or TOBIAS units need academic assistance. SUNNY does not enjoy the insulting approach LUNA uses during tutor sessions.

Q: Why are my SUNNY and TOBIAS units no longer in sync? How do I solve this?

A: If this occurs, SUNNY and TOBIAS are experiencing compatibility error. This issue was likely caused by a severe argument.

1) If they begin to seriously fight each other* instead of playfully roughhouse, have an UPPERCLASSMAN TYPE unit separate the two units immediately to avoid major injuries. Then, allow your SUNNY and TOBIAS some time to cool over.

2) DO NOT force your units to immediately get along. Both SUNNY and TOBIAS will need time to reflect on their actions, and to become more independent of one another (see below).

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* WARNING: If a PADMA unit witnesses SUNNY and TOBIAS fighting, she will become distraught. Please ensure that she either isn't in the vicinity when it occurs, or that you comfort her after the fight.

Q: I don't want my SUNNY and TOBIAS units to be independent of one another!

A: That's okay! The two models will actually NEVER grow apart from each other. Rather, SUNNY and TOBIAS simply need time to better their individual skillsets so they have an even stronger partnership. Buffer times may vary, but results are guaranteed.

Q: What do I do if SUNNY snuck into an invite-only training camp?!

A: *Adopt-A-Character Facilities* is NOT responsible for any damages and inconveniences caused if your SUNNY unit has done this. The best solution is to give them a stern lecture on NOT doing it again. If they cannot participate in camp exercises because of their reckless behaviour, encourage them to learn from the experience anyway.

Q: What do I do when my SUNNY unit is having difficulty reaching for things from high places?

A: SUNNY will need assistance either from a climbable object or a taller unit. Ensure that this occurs when neither TOBIAS nor LUNA are around (see below).

Q: Why can't a TOBIAS or LUNA unit watch if SUNNY has difficulty reaching for things from high places?

A: Due to the antagonistic rivalry that occurs between SUNNY vs TOBIAS and LUNA, both models will make fun of SUNNY's height. SUNNY does not enjoy the bullying and may make a fool of themselves trying to prove that they're actually not that short.

Q: My DILLON unit lost sight of SUNNY while they were hanging out. Help!

A: If your SUNNY unit becomes lost, do not worry. First, reassure DILLON that SUNNY did not disappear like a ninja. Due to SUNNY's small stature and quick speed,

the model has a tendency to get lost in a crowd and disappear. SUNNY will eventually find their way back to you and DILLON. Though, be wary of any consequences you may face should SUNNY find themselves in inconvenient situations* while they were gone.

* WARNING: Due to SUNNY's high UNLUCKY level, they are very likely to get into trouble. *Adopt-A-Character Facilities* is NOT responsible for any unfortunate encounters, damages, or any other issues your SUNNY unit has caused. This is especially likely during bathroom visits (see below).

Q: My SUNNY unit keeps attracting trouble at the bathroom! What's happening?

A: If public bathrooms are somehow becoming an unfortunate place of confrontation for your SUNNY unit, it is caused by a known bug (called "FUNNY-N-UNLUCKY 1.0") affecting the model. Currently, there is no perfect solution for this issue other than to have your SUNNY avoid public bathrooms as much as possible if they are without supervision. *Adopt-A-Character Facilities* is aware of this issue and is searching for solutions. We thank you for your patience as our programmers sort this out.

— • — • — • —

Thank you for purchasing a SUNNY KORDIN unit!
With love from Adopt-A-Character Facilities

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via @jercydee

Group Chat: lakeshore coed vball

Group Chat: lakeshore coed vball

(Dillon *has added* Luna to the chat)

Padma [9:23pm]
Luna! :D

• sunshine ace #10 • [9:23pm]
lu-luna!!

Tobias [9:24pm]
...

Luna [9:24pm]
No.
(Luna *has left* the chat)

• sunshine ace #10 • [9:25pm]
rude!!!

Group Chat: lakeshore coed vball

(Dillon *has added* Luna to the chat)

Luna [9:26pm]
Dillon, stop it

Dillon [9:26pm]
aw luna don't be like that!
its a good group chat i promise

Luna [9:27pm]
I do not consent to this

(Luna *has left* the chat)

Padma [9:28pm]
aw (;n;)

Dillon [9:28pm]
ill go talk to her

Private conversation between dillon☆ and luna☺

dillon☆ [9:30pm]
lu stop leaving the convo!

luna☺ [9:31pm]
I refuse to be in a group chat with Dumb and Dumber
Padma is fine

dillon☆ [9:31pm]
well you hurt her feelings both times you left!

(dillon☆ *sent a photo: Screenshot_2291.jpg*)

dillon☆ [9:33pm]
see!!
she sent a sad emoticon!

lunaD [9:35pm]
Ugh

Group Chat: lakeshore coed vball

(Dillon has added Luna to the chat)

• sunshine ace #10 • [9:39pm]
welcome back lu-luna!!

Padma [9:40pm]
hello again luna!

Luna [9:41pm]
I'm here because Dill made me come back

Dillon [9:41pm]
~_ (˘) _~

Luna [9:41pm]
I'm suffering

Tobias [9:42pm]
good
(͡° ͜ʖ ͡°)

Padma [9:44pm]
tobias i don't think you're using that emoticon correctly /)>_>

Tobias [9:45pm]
wut do u mean?

its a happy face right??
(͡° ͜ʖ ͡°)

Luna [9:46pm]
Yes
It's a happy face

Dillon [9:46pm]
luna.....

• sunshine ace #10 • [9:47pm]
idgi it *is* a happy face tho
(͡° ͜ʖ ͡°)
see??

Luna [9:48pm]
Exactly
Please continue using it as a regular, normal happy face

Tobias [9:50pm]
k
(͡° ͜ʖ ͡°)

Group Chat: lakeshore coed vball

• sunshine ace #10 • [11:10am]
all ur names r so boring!!
change them up!!

~ ★ padma ★ ~ [11:11am]
okay! (^-^b

dill potato [11:11am]
done!

via @jercydee
Do not redistribute

Tobias [11:12am]
no

Luna [11:12am]
No

(• sunshine ace #10 • *has changed* Luna's name to snark sassmaster)

snark sassmaster [11:14am]
Stop this

• sunshine ace #10 • [11:14am]
well u wouldnt do it

luna~ [11:16am]
There
Is that better?
-.-

• sunshine ace #10 • [11:16am]
ur so boring

(luna~ *has changed* Tobias's name to the dictator)

the dictator [11:17am]
-.-

luna~ [11:18am]
It was too easy

the dictator [11:19am]
-.-

• sunshine ace #10 • [11:20am]
at least his names diff

the dictator [11:20am]
-.-

luna~ [11:21am]
You're not changing it

the dictator [11:22am]
idk how

luna~ [11:22am]
Amazing
Never learn

dill potato [11:22am]
lol

the dictator [11:24am]
padma pls teach me how to change my name

~ ★ padma ★ ~ [11:25am]
sure, tobias!
next time we see each other, i'll show you (:

the dictator [11:26am]
ty

Group Chat: lakeshore coed vball

• sunshine ace #10 • [07:03pm]
we gotta change the chat name
its too plain!!!
wat r we 10?? y do we need to label it as the team???

luna~ [07:11pm]
Yes, you are 10

via @jercydee
Do not redistribute

Clearly

dill potato [07:12pm]
what do u suggest sunny?

(• sunshine ace #10 • *has changed the chat name to BLAZE IT!!!!*)

• sunshine ace #10 • [07:16pm]
BLAZE WHAT
BLAZE NETS

luna~ [07:18pm]
Goodbye

(luna~ *has left the chat*)

(dill potato *has added luna~ to the chat*)

luna~ [07:20pm]
I'm not staying in a chat named "blaze it"

(luna~ *has changed the chat name to 2 invalids & 3 decent people*)

dill potato [07:22pm]
lu thats so mean!!

(dill potato *has changed the chat name to go go blazing!*)

• sunshine ace #10 • [07:24pm]
awwww its boring again

(• sunshine ace #10 • *has changed the chat name to ~best group chat ever~*)

(luna~ *has left the chat*)

(dill potato *has added luna~ to the chat*)

dill potato [07:30pm]
cmon lu at least this one isnt too bad

luna~ [07:31pm]
I never wanted to be here in the first place

• sunshine ace #10 • [07:33pm]
2 bad ur stuck w us!!!!

luna~ [07:35pm]
Yes, that seems to be my unfortunate reality

the dictator [07:36pm]
lol

Group Chat: ~best group chat ever~

~ ★ padma ★ ~ [08:10am]
is your name okay now tobias?

tobias [08:11am]
yes thnk u

• sunshine ace #10 • [08:12am]
ur so boring toby!!

(• sunshine ace #10 • *has changed toby's name to tobies*)

• sunshine ace #10 • [08:13am]
there thats better!!

tobies [08:14am]
-.-

via @jercydee
Do not redistribute

dill potato [08:14am]
i think its fine!

~ ★ padma ★ ~ [08:15am]
it's very sweet, i agree (^-^)

tobes [08:16am]
rolling eyes emoji

• sunshine ace #10 • [08:17am]
ur not changing it tho
smirk emoji

tobes [08:19am]
if i change it back ull just change it again

(• sunshine ace #10 • *sent a photo: yougotmethere.jpg*)

Group Chat: ~best group chat ever~

• sunshine ace #10 • [07:01pm]
u guys!!!
i need help w hmw!!!!

~ ★ padma ★ ~ [07:03pm]
what is it?

• sunshine ace #10 • [07:06pm]
spell check 4 german vocab list

luna~ [10:08pm]
Learn this yourself
That's the point of homework

• sunshine ace #10 • [07:10pm]
lu-lu shhh
if ur not helping then shhhhhh

luna~ [10:13pm]
You do realize you can also look this up on the internet, right?

• sunshine ace #10 • [07:16pm]
finally!!
thats helpful!!!
ty!!!

Group Chat: ~best group chat ever~

~ ★ padma ★ ~ [09:49pm]
sunny did you ever check your vocab list? i know you wanted
some help
i want to check if you did your work correctly!

• sunshine ace #10 • [09:51pm]
yes i did!!
jst needed 2 make sure the spelling 4 theif!!

~ ★ padma ★ ~ [09:54pm]
...
you mean "thief"?

• sunshine ace #10 • [09:55pm]
no
its theif

~ ★ padma ★ ~ [09:58pm]
sunny: "I before E except after C"

via @jercydee
Do not redistribute

• sunshine ace #10 • [10:00pm]
thceif
????

dill potato [10:02pm]
(>ლ)

~ ★ padma ★ ~ [10:03pm]
sunny your baby sister could get this right
dill potato [10:03pm]
OH MYG OD

~ ★ padma ★ ~ [10:03pm]
NO
I DIDN'T MEAN TO SEND THAT
OH MY GOODNESS
)m(\

dill potato [10:04pm]
HAHAHAHAHAH!!

• sunshine ace #10 • [10:04pm]
PADMA D:

luna~ [10:04pm]
holy shit

• sunshine ace #10 • [10:04pm]
PADMA I THOT U WRE ON MY SIDE

tobes [10:04pm]
lol!

~ ★ padma ★ ~ [10:05pm]
I'M SO SORRY
I REALLY DID NOT MEAN TO SEND THAT!
(TAT)

luna~ [10:05pm]
But you're right

dill potato [10:05pm]
IM DYING
o(≧v≦)o

• sunshine ace #10 • [10:06pm]
IT STILL MEANS U TYPED IT OUT
SO MEAN!!!!!!!
ლ(T ԁ T)ლ

tobes [10:07pm]
lol!

(• sunshine ace #10 • has left the chat)

Private conversation between • sunshine ace #10 • and dillon☆

• sunshine ace #10 • [10:07pm]
pls add me back

dillon☆ [10:08pm]
lol okay!

Group Chat: ~best group chat ever~

(dill potato has added • sunshine ace #10 • to the chat)

via @jercydee
Do not redistribute

~ ★ padma ★ ~ [10:10pm]
SUNNY PLEASE FORGIVE ME!

• sunshine ace #10 • [10:11pm]
im so hurt.....

~ ★ padma ★ ~ [10:12pm]
I'M SO SORRY
TRULY
m(_ _)m

• sunshine ace #10 • [10:14pm]
ok.....ill forgive u.....

~ ★ padma ★ ~ [10:15pm]
i swear i won't do that again!

luna~ [10:15pm]
No, *please* do that again

tobes [10:16pm]
lol yes pls

luna~ [10:16pm]
This is the best thing to happen to the chat

~ ★ padma ★ ~ [10:17pm]
you guys!! D:

• sunshine ace #10 • [10:17pm]
UR ALL MEAN

dill potato [10:17pm]
LOOOOLLLLL
XDDD

Group Chat: ~best group chat ever~

• sunshine ace #10 • [09:40pm]
does any1 kno wat todays hmw is????

tobes [09:45pm]
...
we
have hmw?

• sunshine ace #10 • [09:47pm]
crap

luna~ [10:16pm]
You do realize we're not in the same class, right?

• sunshine ace #10 • [10:19pm]
CRAP

tobes [10:56pm]
wait so do we have hmw?

luna~ [10:59pm]
Oh my god
Yes
You have homework

tobes [11:02pm]
shit

luna~ [11:03pm]
For Stats you need to study for the exam

tobes [11:04pm]
but i dont have the problem set

via @jercydee
Do not redistribute

luna~ [11:05pm]
It's everything

tobes [11:05pm]
...
wut

luna~ [11:09pm]
There's no problem set
Study guide says you need everything you've done so far

• sunshine ace #10 • [11:10pm]
wait rly?????
D:

luna~ [11:10pm]
Yes

dill potato [11:11pm]
lu.....

• sunshine ace #10 • [11:13pm]
dillon do we really have to?!?!?!?

dill potato [11:15pm]
...

luna~ [11:19pm]
Yes
Now go study
You'll probably need all night

• sunshine ace #10 • [11:22pm]
TOBY CALL ME RIGHT NOW
WE HAVE A LOT OF WORK TO DO
!!!!!!!!!!!!

tobes [11:25pm]
k

Private conversation between dillon☆ and luna

dillon☆ [11:11pm]
lu thats not nice!!

luna) [11:12pm]
They need to study anyway
It'll be good for them

dillon☆ [11:13pm]
thats true.....

Group Chat: ~best group chat ever~

• sunshine ace #10 • [09:55am]
LU-LU UR SO MEAN

tobes [09:59am]
asshole

luna~ [10:15am]
~_ (ツ) _ /~
At least you studied

• sunshine ace #10 • [10:31am]
SO MEAN!!!
>_<

via @jercydee
Do not redistribute

Group Chat: ~best group chat ever~

(• sunshine ace #10 • has changed the chat name to BLAZIN TRAILS!!!)

dill potato [07:34pm]
are we doing this *again*?

• sunshine ace #10 • [07:35pm]
this ones cooler!!

dill potato [07:36pm]
well if the others are okay with it.....

~ ★ padma ★ ~ [07:37pm]
i like it! (-u-)b

tobes [07:37pm]
idc

• sunshine ace #10 • [07:47pm]

...
lu-luna???
@luna~

luna~ [07:47pm]
What?
I muted this chat because you all talk too much

• sunshine ace #10 • [07:48pm]
rude!!!
anyway wat do u think of the new chat name?

luna~ [07:49pm]
I don't care

• sunshine ace #10 • [07:50pm]
-.-

dill potato [07:51pm]
well at least no one left

• sunshine ace #10 • [07:51pm]
DONT JINX IT DILLON

tobes [07:52pm]
lol

Group Chat: BLAZIN TRAILS!!!

dill potato [02:25pm]
you guys wanna get slushies after practice today?
taylor told me the caps buying!

• sunshine ace #10 • [02:29pm]
YES

tobes [02:30pm]
yes

luna~ [02:32pm]
Do I have a choice?

• sunshine ace #10 • [02:32pm]
NO

luna~ [02:33pm]
rolling eyes emoji

dill potato [02:34pm]
awesome!!

via @jercydee
Do not redistribute

padma do you want to come with us?

~ ★ padma ★ ~ [02:36pm]
i don't want to intrude...

• sunshine ace #10 • [02:38pm]
nah u wont be!!
come w us padma!!

~ ★ padma ★ ~ [02:41pm]
are you sure?
(T-T)

dill potato [02:42pm]
yes! please come padma!

• sunshine ace #10 • [02:43pm]
im sure the cap wont mind!!

~ ★ padma ★ ~ [02:48pm]
i'll ask the coaches first...
but okay!

• sunshine ace #10 • [02:49pm]
YAAAAAAAAAY

dill potato [02:51pm]
\o/

tobes [02:52pm]
(͡° ͜ʖ ͡°)

~ ★ padma ★ ~ [02:54pm]

...
tobias are you *sure* you want to use that emoticon?

tobes [02:56pm]
yes
its just a smiley face

~ ★ padma ★ ~ [02:57pm]
okay...

dill potato [02:59pm]
~_(\`)/_~

Group Chat: BLAZIN TRAILS!!!

luna~ [09:41pm]
Do we *have* to go to practice tomorrow?
It's *Sunday*

• sunshine ace #10 • [09:43pm]
yes we do!!
n practice is fun!! idk y u always complain :/

luna~ [09:46pm]
Because we have practice
On a *Sunday*

• sunshine ace #10 • [09:47pm]
>:(

tobes [09:51pm]
yo sunny
me vs u
fastr clean up aftr practs
whoevers last buys slushies 4 1 week

via @jercydee
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• sunshine ace #10 • [10:19pm]
noooooooooo

tobes [10:20pm]
lol

• sunshine ace #10 • [10:32pm]
yo toby
im still gonna beat u

tobes [10:34pm]
no u wont

luna~ [10:35pm]
God, you two will be *so* annoying tomorrow

dill potato [10:35pm]
loooll

~ ★ padma ★ ~ [10:36pm]
well, at least they're cleaning up...?

• sunshine ace #10 • [10:37pm]
WELL SEE TMR!!!

tobes [10:38pm]
see u tmr
...
dumbass

• sunshine ace #10 • [10:40pm]
(>_<)
(ノ>益<)ノ≡┌┌

via @jercydee
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• TOBIAS BLAKELY • A User Guide

Is the TOBIAS BLAKELY model right for you?

Before purchasing, first determine if the TOBIAS BLAKELY model is right for you. If you agree to any of the following statements, please reconsider purchasing a TOBIAS BLAKELY unit. Notes and alternatives are provided for each point.

[] I prefer approachable, non-intimidating companions.

- The physical build, personality type, and programming of TOBIAS BLAKELY often makes him a frightening model for first-time buyers. Even if he is not trying to scare people off, he may succeed in doing so.
- Alternative: PADMA PERERA and DILLON PIEPER units are much more approachable models with friendly, but not overbearing, personality types.

[] I dislike volleyball.

- The TOBIAS BLAKELY model's love for volleyball only rivals

that of the SUNNY KORDIN model. DO NOT purchase this unit if you dislike the sport.

- Alternative: Quite frankly, DO NOT purchase any NET BLAZING VOLLEYBALL TYPE unit if you dislike this sport.

[] I dislike dairy/have a lactose intolerance.

- All TOBIAS BLAKELY units love milk. There are no modifications for this.
- Alternative: All other NET BLAZING VOLLEYBALL models are generally indifferent to dairy products.

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Technical Specifications

Name: Tobias Blakely

Accepted Nicknames: Toby

Other* Nicknames: The Dictator, Your Majesty, Simpleton Idiot
* WARNING: *Adopt-A-Character Facilities* is NOT responsible for any outbursts experienced by your TOBIAS BLAKELY if called any of these nicknames.

Date of Production: April 29, 1996

Pronouns: He/His

Orientation: Gave up trying to figure this out

Height: 5' 11.6" (181.9 cm)

Weight & Build: 146.2 lbs (66.3 kg), muscular

Hair Colour & Style: Black, shaggy but usually shaved down

Eye Colour: Dark, dark brown (almost black)

Model Type: Setter¹, Lakeshore University First-Year, Underclassman

Personality Traits: Athletic, Determined, Focused, Controlling

Stats & Specs

| | |
|----------------------|-----|
| Athletic Skills | 6/5 |
| Volleyball Technique | 5/5 |
| Game Sense | 5/5 |
| Academics | 1/5 |
| Tunnel Vision | 7/5 |
| Weirdo | 4/5 |

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Additional Info

Name Meaning: “Tobit” (Book of Tobit hero) and “Black”

Star Sign: Taurus

Background: Unknown (possibly Latine?)

Origin: Toronto, ON

Trivia

- The TOBIAS model was adopted during its extremely early stages as a unit by a white father and mixed mother (Chinese, African-Canadian).

¹ Setter = Players who orchestrate the attacks. They are the play-makers of the volleyball team and are analogous to point guards and quarterbacks. Their responsibilities are to run the team’s attacks and build up potential scoring opportunities for the team.

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- Even if he doesn't know his exact background, considering his skintone, TOBIAS is at least 99.99% sure he is white.
- (Yes, he knows it's ironic considering the meaning of his last name. Blame his dad, not him.)
- Content to live in a multicultural home with his other adopted siblings.
- Experienced a traumatic event in high school and took a year-long break from volleyball for after graduating.
 - Applied to Lakeshore U and its volleyball team because he didn't personally know anyone at the school. He was not expecting to find his volleyball soulmate, but found a SUNNY KORDIN unit anyway.
- Knows he is not the smartest model and doesn't really care either way. Grades only matter when they affect his volleyball career.
- An incredibly talented volleyball player. Though the model was called a "prodigy" since its early development stages, all TOBIAS units work to the bone for the technical skills they have.
- Always trying to seek approval from his superiors in volleyball, even if they find him annoying.
- Secretly pissed that DILLON and *especially* LUNA models are taller than him. Desperately wants to break the 6' barrier already.
- Favourite flavour of milk is strawberry.
- Likes looking after his nails (mostly to improve his volleyball play), and will allow PADMA units to give him manicures from time to time.

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Accessories

Your TOBIAS BLAKELY comes from the factory with one (1) of each of the following items:

- Lakeshore University matching hoodie and sweatpants

- Lakeshore University Net Blazing Co-ed Volleyball uniform
- White shoulder bag
- Wilson volleyball
- Molten-style volleyball* (NEW!)
- Milk Carton* (NEW!)
- Nail file* (NEW!)

* Accessory added by popular demand.

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Unboxing Your TOBIAS BLAKELY

Like many units, your TOBIAS BLAKELY will be happy to be out of his crate. Especially because of his generally athletic nature, he will be very grateful to be doing anything outside.

How to unbox your TOBIAS BLAKELY:

- 1) Open the crate. Remove all industrial tape, nails, and packing peanuts as necessary.
- 2) TOBIAS may or may not accept your assistance should you offer to help him out of his crate. DO keep an eye on his to make sure he is in working condition.
- 3) Offer your TOBIAS BLAKELY any of his accessories. To keep busy during shipment, he most likely has one of his volleyballs.

WARNING:

- TOBIAS units may have higher energy levels than normal as a result of the tight packaging and varying shipping times. Many customers advise playing with him to release his pent-up energy.
- Wobbliness, disorientation, and similar symptoms after long shipment travel are normal. Contact Customer Service if your unit experiences other symptoms.

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Programming

Your TOBIAS BLAKELY comes with different actions.

(1) Volleyball → Setter

The TOBIAS BLAKELY model is exceptionally skilled at volleyball and has been training since its pre-debut. This model was chosen to participate in the NATIONAL YOUTH TRAINING CAMP back when he was in high school, so rest assured that you are playing with an exceptional volleyball player. His techniques are already quite polished and he can play as a starting member right out of the box! Though he is well-rounded in most volleyball positions and techniques, TOBIAS truly excels as a SETTER. As such, TOBIAS units are specially equipped with the SETTER FUNCTION.

Due his is CONTROLLING TYPE personality, TOBIAS may (rudely) boss around his teammates* when the SETTER FUNCTION is turned on. With time and patience, you can train your TOBIAS unit to be more of a team player.

* Note: In one occurrence, a TOBIAS unit was unofficially suspended from his high school team. TOBIAS' teammates refused to play with him because he was incredibly disrespectful towards his teammates. The experience traumatized the unit, so all following models have been slightly modified to ensure this doesn't happen again.

(2) Rival

TOBIAS is the most popular model to have a rivalry with. As a result, newer models* now feature the RIVAL FUNCTION, which can be adjusted according to who TOBIAS' rival is.

* Note: This function has only been recently included with newer TOBIAS BLAKELY units. Owners of older units will need to tweak their TOBIAS BLAKELY without *Adopt-A-Character* technical support using FANFIC MODS.

The primary RIVAL FUNCTION can be calibrated to different actions such as the GLARING FUNCTION.

↳ (2.a) Glaring

TOBIAS' resting face often includes narrowed eyes, a pout, and generally pinched expression. The GLARING FUNCTION now utilizes this expression to its fullest by making TOBIAS look intimidating to any rival* who challenges him.

* WARNING: Some customers have complained that TOBIAS looks intimidating to EVERYONE he encounters, not just rivals. Refer to the "Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)" section for more.

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Reactions to Other Units

SUNNY KORDIN

- Has a rivalry fueled with spite and dumbassery with SUNNY units. The two are usually in the middle of roughhousing due to their competitive partnership.
- Due to TOBIAS' CONTROLLING TYPE personality, SUNNY often calls him out when acting impolitely. Usually calls TOBIAS "jerk" or "bastard" or similar names. TOBIAS does not appreciate this in the slightest and will respond by attempting to injure SUNNY.
- SUNNY and TOBIAS are the most compatible NET BLAZING VOLLEYBALL models. When working together*, these units will exhibit incredible synchronicity that will baffle both opponents and teammates alike.

* WARNING: Should a serious argument occur, this will cause a error in the units' compatibility. Refer to the "Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)" section for more.

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LUNA HARUTO

- DOES NOT get along with TOBIAS BLAKELY units.
- In close proximity, the two models will get into fights with each other.
- DO NOT let these models interact if TOBIAS must be tutored. LUNA’s TUTORING FUNCTION* is not optimal for this situation.
- The two models can actually work surprisingly well during volleyball matches under stressful gameplay.

* Note: See “PADMA PERERA” below for more.

PADMA PERERA

- Has a generally friendly relationship with TOBIAS units.
- Happy to assist TOBIAS with volleyball training, and cheers for him whenever he is successful.
- PADMA’s TUTORING FUNCTION is best suited when assisting TOBIAS units with academics.

DILLON PIEPER

- Has a generally amiable friendship with TOBIAS units.
- Used to be antagonistic towards TOBIAS because first impressions occurred when a LUNA HARUTO unit was being particularly hostile. However, TOBIAS has since come to appreciate DILLON as a reliable teammate on court.

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Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Q: My TOBIAS unit’s GLARING FUNCTION is scaring everyone he sees! What’s happening?

A: Unfortunately, due to the TOBIAS model’s physical appearance, there is no perfect solution if his GLARING FUCNTION works on people/things other than his rivals. Seasoned customers of TOBIAS units suggest adjusting the

function* by toning down the INTIMIDATION level, which seems to work as a temporary solution.

* WARNING: This is NOT endorsed by *Adopt-A-Character Facilities*. We are NOT responsible for any reactions caused by TOBIAS units making strange faces when the GLARING FUNCTION has been tampered with. Tampered GLARING FUNCTIONS have resulted in an error with TOBIAS’ smiling programming, which makes him create even stranger looking facial expressions.

Q: My TOBIAS and LUNA units are fighting! What do I do?

A: *Adopt-A-Character Facilities* is NOT responsible for any fights that occur between these two units. We have updated the “Reactions to Other Units” section of our instruction manual as a result of several complaints we’ve received.

Q: It’s in the middle of a match, though! They’re both on the same team and they need to cooperate!

A: If required to get along during a volleyball game, have a CAPTAIN TYPE unit demand they stop fighting. Having a stern UPPERCLASSMAN unit to physically break up the fight will also help.

Q: My TOBIAS and SUNNY units are failing their classes. What do I do?

A: Both TOBIAS and SUNNY models have generally low ACADEMIC stats. The PADMA PERERA model is perfect for assisting TOBIAS and SUNNY units with their studies. Equipped with the VOLLEYBALL MANAGER FUNCTION, a PADMA unit will take it upon herself to ensure that both TOBIAS and SUNNY will pass their exams in order to continue playing on the volleyball team. TOBIAS units prefer the PADMA model out of all units* due to her CARING TYPE personality. PADMA is best paired with a DILLON unit to fully ensure both TOBIAS and SUNNY pass their classes.

* Note: Though equipped with the TUTOR FUNCTION, LUNA units are not preferred for a scenario in which either (or both) TOBIAS or SUNNY units need academic assistance. TOBIAS does not enjoy the insulting approach LUNA uses during tutor sessions.

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Q: Why are my TOBIAS and SUNNY units no longer in sync? How do I solve this?

A: If this occurs, TOBIAS and SUNNY are experiencing compatibility error. This issue was likely caused by a severe argument.

1) If they begin to seriously fight each other* instead of playfully roughhouse, have an UPPERCLASSMAN TYPE unit separate the two units immediately to avoid major injuries. Then, allow your TOBIAS and SUNNY some time to cool over.

2) DO NOT force your units to immediately get along. Both TOBIAS and SUNNY will need time to reflect on their actions, and to become more independent of one another (see below).

* WARNING: If a PADMA unit witnesses TOBIAS and SUNNY fighting, she will become distraught. Please ensure that she either isn't in the vicinity when it occurs, or that you comfort her after the fight.

Q: I don't want my TOBIAS and SUNNY units to be independent of one another!

A: That's okay! The two models will actually NEVER grow apart from each other. Rather, TOBIAS and SUNNY simply need time to better their individual skillsets so they have an even stronger partnership. Buffer times may vary, but results are guaranteed.

Q: A DILLON unit is wondering why my TOBIAS unit is acting strangely around him.

A: Though the two teammates are generally amiable acquaintances, TOBIAS' TUNNEL VISION TYPE personality often makes him act like a weirdo around other people, including DILLON units. With time, TOBIAS and DILLON will bond over their passion for volleyball and become great teammates.

Q: What if it's not just DILLON units though? What if my TOBIAS is acting strangely around other models too?

A: To reiterate: TOBIAS is a weirdo. *Adopt-A-Character Facilities* cannot emphasize this enough.

Q: Is that why TOBIAS only has an interest in volleyball and milk?

A: Yes. TOBIAS' TUNNEL VISION TYPE personality means he is incredibly focused on the few things he finds interesting, strange or niche as they may be. In most cases, it is volleyball and dairy drinks.

Q: What if my TOBIAS unit has a lactose intolerance?

A: This is a rare bug (called "MILKY-WAY-IRONY 1.0"). The bug will cause typical lactose intolerant symptoms including bloating and indigestion. Other symptoms include TOBIAS units becoming more agitated because they cannot have their favourite drink. Please contact Customer Service if you see any of the of above symptoms in your TOBIAS BLAKELY unit.

— • — • — • —

Thank you for purchasing a TOBIAS BLAKELY unit!

With love from Adopt-A-Character Facilities

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Well, it could have been worse.

It happens like this:

Toby and the other second-years are invited to a special training camp. Since their team's rise to the top in the last Spring Tournament, they were all encouraged to attend by the coaches. The hotel is fancier than the small motel they stayed in last time, and the schedule looks exactly like the kind of intensive training Toby wants. So, he supposes travelling with his teammates, annoying as they are, isn't so bad.

Until he discovers the sleeping arrangements.

Not only is Toby assigned to share a room with Luna, but for some reason their room only has one queen-size bed. With strict instructions not to switch roommates from the camp's coaches, Toby can't even consider arguing with Sunny about switching rooms. What's worse is that the hotel is completely booked because of the training camp, so any spare futons were spoken for by the time Toby had time to ask for one.

"I hate this," Toby grumbles as he throws his suitcase on the bed.

"This isn't a walk in the park for me either."

Well, it could have been worse.

"Why the hell did they think to put a girl and a guy together in the same room?"

Luna glares at him, eyes filled with a mix of rage and calculation. "Are you suggesting you're gonna pull something, Blakely?" she asks in a cold voice.

Toby's pretty stupid, but he's not too much of an idiot to figure out what she's implying.

"Obviously not," he scoffs. He'd be more offended at the thought of harassing someone—his own *teammate*—if he wasn't already so pissed about the whole situation.

They stare at each other in icy silence before Toby shifts his gaze.

Toby glares down at the single bed provided hoping that if he stares at it hard enough another mattress will appear.

Nothing happens.

"Whatever," Luna sighs, "I'll just sleep on the floor."

"You'll be uncomfortable without a futon or a sleeping bag."

"Then, what? We'll sleep on the bed together?"

"Well..." Toby pauses. "Yeah."

She levels him with another analyzing gaze.

Toby sighs, lifting his hands up in surrender. There's no point in arguing tonight—they can talk with the camp's coaches tomorrow about the situation. For now, it's late, and Toby really wants some sleep.

In a soft voice he says, "I swear I'm not gonna do anything."

Luna takes a deep breath before clucking a *tsk* under her breath and rolling her eyes.

"Fine."

Toby breathes another sigh, starting to sort out his belongings. He pointedly avoids Luna as they move about the tiny hotel room. Eventually, he breaks the silence.

"I'm gonna shower first." His tone poses the statement as a question.

"Yeah, go ahead."

Toby makes quick work of his shower, but when he towels off he realizes his mistake. *I should've taken a longer shower to avoid the bed*, he thinks with a groan.

Whatever.

He exits the bathroom with towel slung over a shoulder, freshly changed and his hair still dripping. He meets Luna's gaze and nods. Luna nods back, grabbing her stuff and heading for the shower.

Once Toby's alone with the bed, he groans again. What the hell is he supposed to do now? It's not like they had talked about which of the bed each would sleep on. The shower sprays on with Luna probably blissfully unaware or (more likely) uncaring to Toby's problem. He heaves a deep breath, deciding to sleep on the side where he left his stuff. If Luna wants to trade places with him, *tough shit*. He slips underneath the sheets, tucking himself in with his back to Luna's side.

The bathroom door clicks open. Behind him, Toby can hear Luna rustling around the room.

Then, the bed dips.

Toby carefully breathes through his nose, trying to calm his steadily increasing heart rate. The bed may be large, but the two of them are taller than average, and it's a tight fit. Toby can feel Luna's body heat in the sheets they share.

He squeezes his eyes shut, willing himself to sleep. This, obviously, isn't going to work, and within minutes Toby blinks his eyes open again.

"You can relax, you know," Luna mumbles. "I'm not going to kill you in your sleep."

Toby scoffs, but does relax his shoulders, sinking into the bed comfortably. His racing heart eventually begins to slow down, and his breathing starts to even out.

"Night," he mumbles, too tired to stop himself.

Before he finally drifts off, he hears a quiet, "Night."

— • —

The first time Toby wakes up, he's being squished by something hot and heavy.

He doesn't know how long he's been asleep, just that it's definitely too early to be awake, and that it's uncomfortably warm.

His mind is too groggy to think about anything other than *too hot*, so he starts to kick the covers in the hopes that he can cool off a little bit.

Luna snuffles into his shoulder, arms shifting around his waist, and Toby snaps awake.

Shit. Luna is *cuddling him* in his sleep.

Toby only barely manages to hold in the yelp that wants to escape him, and he shakes his head to try and clear his heartbeat ringing in his ears.

Stupid Luna.

He bites his lip, squinting around him to try and figure what the hell is going on. In the darkness, Toby can't make out anything other than the vague shape of Luna fucking Hotaru curled around him.

God, he hates this. This is almost definitely worse than that time Sunny drooled on him on the bus.

Toby squirms, trying to wiggle himself out of Luna's hold, but Luna holds firm, snuffling quietly at the disturbance. If Toby were a worse person, he'd punch Luna in the face and wake her up.

That said, he'd rather not get kicked out the training camp for fighting his own teammate. The coach would be pissed, and Sunny would never let him hear the end of it. Also, despite his own lack of social graces, even *he* knows it would be rude to slap someone awake.

Frowning, Toby tries something else. He grabs a pillow, and with careful maneuvering, he slips it in between him and Luna. Then, he slowly lifts Luna's arms from around his waist.

The movement makes Luna grumble softly, but with a quick shift Toby successfully frees himself from Luna's hold. Luna takes the pillow as bait and starts cuddling that instead, face burying into its cover. Toby watches quietly from the edge of the bed where he rolled away.

If he were less awake, he would think the sight is kinda cute. A giant asshole like Luna being *cuddly* when she sleeps.

Instead, Toby thinks, *Damn idiot.*

With more careful (and irritated) moving around, Toby

manages to roll Luna back to the other side of the bed, pillow still gripped tight in her arms. Toby would almost be impressed at the fact that Luna hasn't woken up if he wasn't so annoyed by being woken up in the first place.

Once he's comfortable on his side of the bed again, Toby finally pulls the sheets over himself.

Before he drifts off, he decidedly blames the heat on his cheeks on the fact that it's still weirdly warm in their room.

— • —

The second time Toby wakes up, he's horrified.

"Please get off of me," Luna deadpans.

He snorts, immediately backing away from whatever he was leaning on. He gathers enough of himself to realize it's *Luna's shoulder*. Toby automatically wipes his mouth, blushing when he feels drool.

"What—" He puts a fist to his eyes, trying to rub the sleep out of them. "What'd I do?"

Luna looks at him indifferently, gaze as flat as always. "Just had your head on my shoulder. Drooled a bit."

"*Fuck*." Toby flushes. "Sorry."

Luna shrugs. "It's fine, not the first time it's happened."

"*What?*" Toby's mortified—he's done this more than once?

"Dill's slept over at my place since we were kids," Luna explains, and Toby realizes that Luna was referring to herself, not Toby.

Then she adds, "I'm used to it."

He pouts, a bout of jealousy flaring despite himself. Meanwhile Luna seems indifferent to Toby's cycle of emotions, grabbing her phone from the side table.

"It's 7:30 now," she says. "I'm gonna use the bathroom first."

Toby nods. After Luna enters the bathroom, the door clicking shut, he swipes a hand over his face.

Well, he thinks, *it could have been worse*.

At least he didn't punch his teammate in her sleep.

• PADMA PERERA • A User Guide

Is the PADMA PERERA model right for you?

Before purchasing, first determine if the PADMA PERERA model is right for you. If you agree to any of the following statements, please reconsider purchasing a PADMA PERERA unit. Notes and alternatives are provided for each point.

[] I enjoy physical activity and playing sports.

- The PADMA PERERA model is extremely unathletic with low physical stats. There are no modifications to this.
- Alternative: Consider any other Lakeshore University First-Year model, which are more suited for athletic activities. The SUNNY KORDIN, TOBIAS BLAKELY, and DILLON PIEPER models have higher physical stats and are extremely dedicated to volleyball.

[] I am impatient.

- All PADMA PERERA units have built-in ANXIOUS TYPE

personalities. Sympathy and patience are necessary to help her work through her many concerns.

- **Alternative:** While all models have insecurities, LUNA HARUTO units do not tolerate wallowing in frustration. LUNA units also have built-in SNARKY TYPE personalities, so many customers have bonded with their LUNA units by teasing others when patience is tested.

[] I dislike cute things.

- This is NOT the model for you.
- **Alternative:** The TOBIAS BLAKELY and LUNA HARUTO models, while also loveable, do not enjoy being called “cute.” They are also probably too tall to be called cute.

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Technical Specifications

Name: Padma Perera

Date of Production: September 4, 1995

Pronouns: She/Her

Orientation: Bisexual (preference for girls)

Height: 4’11” (150.1 cm)

Weight & Build: 123.4 lbs (56.0 kg), short and stout

Hair Colour & Style: Currently dirty blonde; usually dark brown. Shoulder length with choppy bangs.

Eye Colour: Hazel

Model Type: Creative, Manager¹, Lakeshore University

¹ Managers = Team members responsible for the team’s well-being. They record statistics of team-play, refill the players’ water bottles,

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First-Year, Underclassman

Personality Traits: Anxious, Cute, Caring

Related Models*

- KALAI PERERA: Mother

* See “Reactions to Other Units” section for more.

Additional Info

Name in Tamil: பத்ம பரேரா

Name Meaning: “Lotus” and “Pear Tree”

Star Sign: Virgo

Background: Sri Lankan Tamil

Origin: Toronto, ON

— —

Stats & Specs

| | |
|----------------------|-----|
| Athletic Skills | 1/5 |
| Volleyball Technique | 1/5 |
| Game Sense | 3/5 |
| Academics | 5/5 |
| Cute | 6/5 |
| Art & Creativity | 5/5 |

help with injuries, provide food occasionally, and cheer the players on. Managers attend official matches along with the team.

Trivia

- Second generation Sri Lankan. Parent models moved development to Canada in the early 1980s.
 - The PADMA model was developed in Toronto, ON from its early stages of creation and development. PADMA cannot imagine being anywhere else.
- After much arguing with a KALAI unit, a PADMA unit finally had the opportunity to dye her hair blonde. Since then, the model has maintained the dirty blonde hairstyle with regular appointments for highlights.
- Due to being an ANXIETY TYPE model, all PADMA units have a known bug (called “ANXIETY DISORDER BUG 3.1”) that is unremovable.
 - Allow PADMA to take regular doses of medication should the bug worsen. Otherwise, most techniques to comfort ANXIETY TYPE models usually work to relax PADMA.
 - PADMA takes a long time to find passion for things as a result of ANXIETY DISORDER BUG 3.1, but will dedicate herself whole-heartedly once she finds something she loves.
- Entered university after taking a one-year break to develop art portfolio and skills.
- Joined the Net Blazing Co-ed Volleyball Team* after being enthusiastically encouraged by a SUNNY KORDIN unit.
- All units feature a beauty mark on the left side of the chin.
- Loves the colour pink.

* Note: The model can NOT play volleyball at all and has zero (0) experience in the sport. All volleyball-related functions and programming are under development and in trial. Please contact an *Adopt-A-Character Facilities* representative if your PADMA PERERA unit experience errors related to volleyball.

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Accessories

Your PADMA PERERA comes from the factory with one (1) of each of the following items:

- Lakeshore University matching hoodie and sweatpants
- Net Blazing Co-ed Volleyball Manager Track Suit
- Matching notebook and pen
- DSLR Camera
- Clipboard* (NEW!)
- Volleyball scoreboard* (NEW!)
- Flower hair ties in pink**

* Accessory added by popular demand.

** All PADMA units now come with TWO (2) hair ties!

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Unboxing Your PADMA PERERA

Like many units, your PADMA PERERA will be happy to be out of her crate. Especially because of her easily frightened nature, she will be very grateful to be outside.

How to unbox your PADMA PERERA:

- 1) Open the crate. Remove all industrial tape, nails, and packing peanuts as necessary.
- 2) DO offer to help your unit out of her crate. She will be very grateful for any type of assistance. DO keep an eye on her to make sure she is in working condition.
- 3) Offer your PADMA PERERA any of her accessories. To keep busy during shipment, she most likely has her notebook and pen already.
- 4) Many customers advise talking PADMA through any anxiety she built up during shipment.

WARNING:

- PADMA units may have higher anxiety levels than normal as a result of the tight packaging and varying shipping times. Please exercise patience as she returns to default levels.
- Wobbliness, disorientation, and similar symptoms after long shipment travel are normal. Contact Customer Service if your unit experiences other symptoms.

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Programming

Your PADMA PERERA comes with different actions.

(1) Assistance

The PADMA PERERA model is designed primarily as an assistant to your everyday needs. She is ready to help and will carry out tasks carefully instructed to her. She may be hesitant to assist with larger responsibilities, but once she’s made up her mind, she is very determined to help. PADMA is eager to learn, especially as a MANAGER TYPE model. Even though she lacks knowledge or skill in some areas, she is incredibly committed to a role once she has agreed to it.

The primary ASSISTANCE FUNCTION can be calibrated to different actions as necessary.

↳ (1.a.) Volleyball Manager

With the introduction of MANAGER TYPE to her system, the VOLLEYBALL MANAGER FUNCTION is a calibration of the ASSISTANCE FUNCTION added to the PADMA PERERA model. All PADMA units have zero background in volleyball are actually quite unathletic. However, with the VOLLEYBALL MANAGER FUNCTION, PADMA is excited to learn more about the sport to fulfill her duties as a MANAGER TYPE.

↳ (1.b.) Tutor

Another calibration of the ASSISTANCE FUNCTION, the TUTOR FUNCTION is a customer favourite of PADMA PERERA units. As a result of her CARING TYPE personality, PADMA is exceptional at helping others with their academics. She approaches her tutoring with kindness and patience. As a result, her TUTOR FUNCTION is especially useful when the students she assists are faced with a difficult academic goal.

This function is most compatible with a DILLON PIEPER unit’s TUTORING FUNCTION, especially when assisting SUNNY KORDIN and TOBIAS BLAKELY models.

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Reactions to Other Units

KALAI PERERA

- Maternal model to PADMA PERERA model.
- Is greatly respected by PADMA units.
- Very much supports PADMA, though her approach is quite disciplinarian and seems otherwise.
- Likes to bond with PADMA over artistic activities since both are CREATIVE TYPE models.

LUNA HARUTO

- Gets along politely with MANAGER TYPE models.
- LUNA admires PADMA’s courage and patience when dealing with the NET BLAZING BOYS’ VOLLEYBALL TEAM.
- Best model to assist PADMA units when she has trouble reaching for things on a high shelf.*

* Note: Refer to the “Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)” section for more.

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SUNNY KORDIN

- Has a very friendly companionship with PADMA units.
- Extremely supportive of PADMA units. PADMA units return the enthusiasm and support.
- PADMA’s TUTORING FUNCTION is best suited when assisting SUNNY units with academics. SUNNY units prefer PADMA’s TUTORING FUNCTION out of all models.
- Allow PADMA and SUNNY units to interact for maximum cuteness between shorter VOLLEYBALL TYPE models.

TOBIAS BLAKELY

- Has a generally friendly relationship with PADMA units.
- PADMA is happy to assist TOBIAS with volleyball training, and cheers for him whenever he is successful.
- PADMA’s TUTORING FUNCTION is best suited when assisting TOBIAS units with academics.

DILLON PIEPER

- Has a generally friendly relationship with PADMA units.
- Tends to have crushes on PADMA units. DILLON finds the PADMA model “cute.”
- Since both DILLON and PADMA models both have ANXIOUS TYPE personalities, they try to comfort each other* during nervous situations.

* Note: Sometimes, the advice they give each other may result in errors for BOTH models. Refer to the “Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)” section for more.



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Q: Why is my PADMA unit yelling at the bus station?
A: PADMA PERERA is probably confronting KALAI PERERA while KALAI is on her way to work. PADMA is declaring that she

is becoming a VOLLEYBALL MANAGER TYPE.* PADMA will not go back on her word, and KALAI will be moved to tears over how proud she is.

* Note: A SUNNY KORDIN unit likely encouraged PADMA to stand up for herself. SUNNY will be very excited for her as they watch the declaration happen.

Q: My TOBIAS and SUNNY units are failing their classes! What do I do?

A: This question is included in the PADMA PERERA guide because the PADMA model is perfect for assisting TOBIAS and SUNNY units with their studies. With the VOLLEYBALL MANAGER FUNCTION, a PADMA unit will take it upon herself to ensure that both TOBIAS and SUNNY will pass their exams in order to continue playing on the volleyball team.

Q: How do I comfort my PADMA unit when she is panicking?

A: This is a frequent occurrence with units that have ANXIETY DISORDER BUG 3.1.

First, remind her that whatever scenario she is imagining is outright impossible at best and highly improbable at worst. Second, carefully explain what is mostly likely to happen to ease her anxiety. Be sure to speak in quiet, calm tones to not add to her panic. Even if her worries seem silly or ludicrous, understand that pointing this out will likely make her panic even worse. Therefore, it is important to talk her through her anxiety and allow her to relax.

Q: Can my other units come to my PADMA unit for advice if they’re nervous?

A: PADMA units are free to advise others as she feels comfortable.

However, even if she is confident that she can help due to her own experiences as an ANXIETY TYPE model, DO NOT allow PADMA to attempt comforting other units should they experience stress-induced nausea. This will cause an error that will exaggerate anxiety in ANXIETY TYPE units. For PADMA units in particular, PADMA may claim she will throw up

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her heart.

In one occurrence, a customer’s DILLON unit had an upset stomach over his worries, and a PADMA unit encouraged him to express his feelings rather than keep them in. This resulted in the DILLON unit recalling a time where he unfortunately did not achieve his goal, and he confessed that he was afraid that it would happen again. The story caused the PADMA unit to panic, which resulted in DILLON and other nearby ANXIETY TYPE units to panic over her, accidentally making the entire situation worse.*

* Note: Since all ANXIETY TYPE units were now worried over the panicking PADMA unit, they inadvertently forgot about their own stress. To entirely avoid this situation with your unit, instruct PADMA to ONLY supply pain relief medicine during stressful situations.

Q: What do I do when my PADMA unit is having difficulty reaching for things from high places?

A: Politely ask a LUNA unit get it for her (see more below).

Q: What if LUNA says no?

A: Make sure that PADMA is asking LUNA. Since LUNA generally respects PADMA, she is more likely to handle small favours* such as reaching for things from difficult locations.

* WARNING: This is not a guaranteed reaction for all units. A SUNNY KORDIN unit asking for a similar favour will result in LUNA making fun of their height.

Q: My PADMA unit’s CUTE levels are too high! What do I do?

A: Currently, there is no perfect solution for this issue. You will have to die from too much cuteness if your PADMA unit is being particularly adorable. *Adopt-A-Character Facilities* is aware of this bug and is searching for solutions. We thank you for your patience as our programmers sort this out.

— • — • — • —

Thank you for purchasing a PADMA PERERA unit!

With love from Adopt-A-Character Facilities

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Picnic Date

“Why don’t we go sit over there?” Padma suggests, pointing to an empty bench. Dillon nods, and the two walk over to take a seat.

They sit on opposite ends of the bench at first, but after an awkward pause they laugh, scooting closer to each other until their elbows brush. Padma begins fiddling with her purse, pulling out the curry she helped her prepare. She would have brought pudding too but Dillon insisted on bringing something.

As they unpack their belongings, Padma thinks, *Maybe next time we could make a dish together.*

She peers into the lunch containers, cooing at the set up before her.

“How cute!” she squeals. Dillon lays out a blue and white checkered blanket, piling brightly coloured containers atop each other. When Padma picks one up, she coos when she sees the assorted fruit cut into fun shapes. “Dillon, I didn’t know you could make such an adorable picnic!”

Dillon blushes, scratching his head. “Oh, uh, it doesn’t really

suit me, does it?”

“Of course, it does.” She smiles fondly. “You’ve got a cute side too you know!” She doesn’t realize how enthusiastic that sounds nor does she notice Dillon’s blush deepen, but she still gets flustered herself.

“Ah, um, thank you, Padma.” They blush like they’re middle school crushes until Dillon begins to unpack the rest of the food.

They eat with easy conversation, asking the occasional question about the other’s lives, or getting unnecessarily worried by their surroundings. Padma stops mid-sentence at one point when a man sprints by them, taken aback by his speed.

“Whoa,” Dillon says, after the man passes by, “he reminds me of Sunny.”

“Yeah, I can see it,” Padma replies. She pauses for a moment before continuing, “But, you know, he also reminds me of you.”

“Me?!” Dillon has to hold back a chuckle. “What leads you to say that?” he asks, swallowing piece of watermelon.

Padma takes a bite of curry, thinking about it. “I’m not sure.” She laughs at herself. “I don’t know why I said that now.”

“I know how you feel.” Dillon chuckles softly. “I think I’ve blurted out dumb things in front of you more times than I can count.”

“You have?!”

Dillon’s blush returns even deeper than before. “Of course I have. I-I’ve always thought you were—um—really cute. So I say a lot of dumb things.” His eyes flick away in embarrassment. “Luna likes to tease me about it all the time.”

Padma giggles, unable to help herself. At Dillon’s horrified look, she immediately apologizes.

“Oh, I d-didn’t mean to laugh!” she stumbles, hands flailing in front of her. “I just—I think it’s really cute that you and Luna are close like that.” She bites her lip before whispering, “I-I don’t think anyone’s ever told me they felt that way about me either...”

Dillon grins at her. He reaches for her hand, fingers lacing together between them. “Thank you for coming with me today, Padma.”

Padma cheeks are flushed bright pink. It’s a very cute look on her, Dillon thinks.

“It-it was my pleasure, Dillon!” she stutters.

“You can call me Dill, you know. That’s what Luna calls me.”

“Dill...” Padma repeats, testing the name.

She grins at him, bright and happy, before scooching closer. She pulls on his shirt sleeve, and when he gets the message he leans down. She slowly rises up to meet him halfway and plants a soft peck on his cheek. Sitting like that, they let out soft chuckles and Padma sees her moment to steal a few more.

— • —

By the end of their lunch, they’re practically on top of each other as the distractions around them become more like background noise. They don’t realize how long they end up simply talking, happy to chat the day away in each other’s company, until Padma notices the sun setting in the horizon.

“Oh, jeez,” she says. “It’s getting late.”

Dill looks into the distance, nodding. He wishes he could spend more time with her. He’s about to ask if she would like a walk home when a breeze picks up, and Padma shudders, arms curling around herself.

“*Brr!*” She rubs her forearms, and Dill hides a wince because she’s wearing short sleeves. “It’s chilly now!”

He mentally slaps a palm to his face. He should have brought a jacket for her! He sits for a moment, taking in her warmth, when an idea pops into his head. Surely, he can’t suggest it—it’s too embarrassing...?

“Oh! Wait, why don’t I just sit in your lap?” she shyly asks, “If that’s alright, Dill...?”

He’s startled to say the least, but *god* he isn’t going to protest. He nods quickly and Padma giggles as she stands up. Facing him, she places a leg on each side of Dill’s lap and straddles him.

He’s frozen in place, heart racing in his chest. She slowly snakes her arms into his jacket, circling around his chest and

bringing him into a hug.

“There we go,” she says contently, “nice and snug,” and smiles softly against his chest.

Dill wraps his arms around her, nose pressing into her hair.

He smiles. “Yeah, perfect.”

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• DILLON PIEPER • A User Guide

Is the DILLON PIEPER model right for you?

Before purchasing, first determine if the DILLON PIEPER model is right for you. If you agree to any of the following statements, please reconsider purchasing a DILLON PIEPER unit. Notes and alternatives are provided for each point.

[] I enjoy high-energy conversation.

- DILLON PIEPER units tend to be more soft-spoken and quieter during conversations.
- Alternative: A SUNNY KORDIN unit is the perfect companion for those who like particularly engaging dialogue.

[] I prefer confident companions.

- Though no model is free of insecurities, the DILLON PIEPER features unmodifiable insecurity bugs caused by his personality type.

- Alternative: TOBIAS BLAKELY units are the most self-assured of the NET BLAZING VOLLEYBALL TYPE models.

[] I do not want to own more than one NET BLAZING VOLLEYBALL TYPE unit.

- DILLON PIEPER performs best with a LUNA HARUTO unit around. DO NOT consider purchasing a DILLON unit if not purchasing a LUNA unit too.
- Alternative: In general, DO NOT purchase any NET BLAZING VOLLEYBALL TYPE by themselves because all NET BLAZING VOLLEYBALL models are quite co-dependent on each other.

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Technical Specifications

Name: Dillon Pieper

Nicknames: Dill

Preferred* Nicknames: Potato and variants thereof (tater, sweet potato, yam, etc)

* Note: Only DILLON units have referred to himself as this. No one else has called him any of these names yet.

Date of Production: July 18, 1997

Pronouns: He/His

Orientation: Ace-spectrum (recently has been looking into the “demisexual” label)

Height: 6’ 0.9” (185.3 cm)

Weight & Build: 137.9 lbs (62.5 kg), slim to average build

Hair Colour & Style: Dark brown, curly mop top afro

Eye Colour: Hazel-green

Model Type: Middle Blocker¹, Net Blazing Co-ed Volleyball Team, Underclassman

Personality Traits: Anxious, Determined, Caring

Additional Info

Name Meaning: “Loyal” and “Piper”

Star Sign: Cancer

Background: African-Canadian (unknown ancestry)

Origin: Ottawa, ON

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Stats & Specs

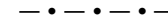
| | |
|----------------------|-----|
| Athletic Skills | 3/5 |
| Volleyball Technique | 3/5 |
| Game Sense | 2/5 |
| Academics | 4/5 |
| Hardworking | 5/5 |
| Friendliness | 5/5 |

¹ Middle blockers = (*Defense*) Players primarily responsible for blocks, meaning they must attempt to stop equally fast plays from their opponents and be able to quickly set up a double block at the sides of the court. (*Offense*) Middle blockers are players who perform very fast attacks that usually take place near the setter. They will usually hit quick sets or serve as decoys to confuse the opponents’ blockers if their passes are good enough.

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Trivia

- Developed in Ottawa, ON from its early stages of creation and development.
 - Has never bothered asking about his ancestry. Simply knows that he's black and is very proud of it.
- Has freckles all over his body, which are more prominent during the summer when he tans.
- Gave up trying to tame his afro a long time ago.
- Due to being an ANXIETY TYPE model, all DILLON units have a known bug (called "ANXIETY DISORDER BUG 3.2") that is unremovable.
 - Most techniques to comfort ANXIETY TYPE models usually work to relax DILLON. Otherwise, allow DILLON to take regular doses of medication if necessary.
- Out of curiosity, a DILLON unit once looked up the etymology of his last name. Though most sources translated "Pieper" and similar variants as "piper", one website listed "Pieper" as "potato" in Dutch. The DILLON unit loved the interpretation and ever since has used variants of "potato" in reference to his "Dutch" last name.
 - Luckily, one of DILLON's favourite foods is the potato.
 - Loves soft, salty French fries.
- Has been best friends with the LUNA HARUTO model since they were 10 years old. Probably knows the LUNA model better than his own programming at this point.
 - Knows that LUNA units are secretly into astrology and astronomy. Will take this fact to the grave if a LUNA unit asked him to, though she has yet to require this of him.
- May or may not have a crush on PADMA PERERA model. DILLON will also take this fact to the grave if asked.
- The friendliest model out of all NET BLAZING VOLLEYBALL TYPES. The first model to ever befriend a LUNA HARUTO unit, and has been able to prove his worth to volleyball-obsessed model, TOBIAS BLAKELY. Overall, a very kind and approachable companion.

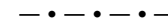


Accessories

Your DILLON PIEPER comes from the factory with one (1) of each of the following items:

- Lakeshore University matching hoodie and sweatpants
- Lakeshore University Net Blazing Co-ed Volleyball uniform
- Dark gray shoulder bag
- Mikasa-style volleyball
- French fries* (NEW!)
- Space-themed fidget toy* (NEW!)

* Accessory added by popular demand.



Unboxing Your DILLON PIEPER

Like many units, your DILLON PIEPER will be happy to be out of his crate. Especially because of his tall stature, he will be grateful to be doing anything outside.

How to unbox your DILLON PIEPER:

- Open the crate. Remove all industrial tape, nails, and packing peanuts as necessary.
- DILLON may or may not accept your assistance should you offer to help him out of his crate. DO keep an eye on him to make sure he is in working condition.
- Offer your DILLON PIEPER any of his accessories. To keep busy during shipment, he most likely has his fidget toy. Many customers advise offering soft french fries to placate him.

WARNING:

- DILLON units may have higher energy levels than normal as a result of the tight packaging and varying shipping times.

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Many customers advise playing with him to release his pent-up energy.

- Wobbliness, disorientation, and similar symptoms after long shipment travel are normal. Contact Customer Service if your unit experiences other symptoms.

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Programming

Your DILLON PIEPER comes with different actions.

(1) Volleyball → Pinch Server

The DILLON PIEPER model’s primary function is to develop his volleyball skills and presence. All DILLON units are very hardworking in order to succeed in their athletic goals. Though the model’s VOLLEYBALL FUNCTION is still in training and development, DILLON’s progress steadily increases over time with noticeable improvements.

The model’s prime calibration is the PINCH SERVER² FUNCTION, which DILLON excels at. When in a pinch, DILLON is the preferred unit to help switch up the game’s flow. In addition to his improving VOLLEYBALL FUNCTION, DILLON’s PINCH SERVING FUNCTION also improves with his skillset.

(2) Assistance

The ASSISTANCE FUNCTION is a lesser-known favourite of DILLON customers. As a result of his CARING TYPE personality, DILLON is well equipped to assist others with tasks.

² Pinch Servers = Players switched into the game to get an advantage over the opponents or at crucial times, usually near match point. They have to perform risky serves to gain points for the team.

The primary ASSISTANCE FUNCTION can be calibrated to different actions such as the TRAINING BUDDY FUNCTION and TUTOR FUNCTION.

↳ (2.a.) Training Buddy

TRAINING BUDDY FUNCTION is a calibration of the ASSISTANCE FUNCTION. With this function, DILLON will not only develop his own volleyball skills, but fellow teammates’ as well. This function is highly enjoyed by SUNNY KORDIN units, who—like DILLON—also seek out extra training.

↳ (2.b.) Tutor

Another calibration of the ASSISTANCE FUNCTION, the TUTOR FUNCTION is a customer favourite of DILLON units. DILLON is well equipped to assist others with their academics. He approaches his tutoring with patience and, as a result, his TUTOR FUNCTION is particularly useful when the students he assists are faced with a hard deadline.

This function is most compatible with the TUTORING FUNCTION on PADMA PERERA units, especially when assisting SUNNY KORDIN and TOBIAS BLAKELY models.

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Reactions to Other Units

LUNA HARUTO

- Childhood best friend model to DILLON PIEPER units.
- Has a tendency to repeat “Shut up” and “Sorry” (said by LUNA and DILLON respectively), but is otherwise the best companion to match with DILLON.
- DILLON gets highly embarrassed when LUNA teases him about his crush on the PADMA model.

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SUNNY KORDIN

- Has a generally friendly relationship with DILLON units.
- When not busy with LUNA, DILLON likes to accompany SUNNY in his free time.
- DILLON greatly supports SUNNY with their athletic goals, which SUNNY returns enthusiastically.

TOBIAS BLAKELY

- Has a generally amiable friendship with DILLON units.
- Used to be antagonistic towards DILLON because the models’ first impressions occurred when a LUNA HARUTO unit was being particularly hostile, but has since come to appreciate DILLON as a reliable teammate on court.

PADMA PERERA

- Has a shy but friendly relationship with PADMA units.
- DILLON units tend to have crushes on PADMA units. DILLON units find the PADMA model “cute.”
- Since both DILLON and PADMA models have ANXIOUS TYPE personalities, they try to comfort each other* during nervous situations.

* Note: Sometimes, the advice they give each other may result in errors for BOTH models. Refer to the “Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)” section for more.



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Q: Should my DILLON unit go to a PADMA unit for advice if he’s nervous?

A: This is a frequent occurrence with units that have ANXIETY DISORDER BUG 3.0+. Generally, DILLON and PADMA units are free to advise each other as they feel comfortable. However, DO NOT allow DILLON to seek comfort from PADMA

units should he experience stress-induced nausea. This will cause an error that will exaggerate anxiety in ANXIETY TYPE units. In one occurrence, a customer’s DILLON unit had an upset stomach over his worries, and a PADMA unit encouraged him to express his feelings rather than keep them in. This resulted in the DILLON unit recalling a time where he unfortunately did not achieve his goal, and he confessed that he was afraid that it would happen again. The story caused the PADMA unit to panic, which resulted in DILLON and other nearby ANXIETY TYPE units to panic over her, accidentally making the entire situation worse.*

* Note: Since all ANXIETY TYPE units were now worried over the panicking PADMA unit, they inadvertently forgot about their own stress. To entirely avoid this situation with your unit, advise DILLON to ONLY request pain relief medicine from PADMA.

Q: What if my DILLON unit is nervous BECAUSE of a PADMA unit?

A: Since DILLON units find the PADMA model “cute”, he may experience more anxiety than usual when he’s around her. This is normal. Allow DILLON to work through his crush* at his own pace.

* Note: The PADMA unit he has a crush on likely has no idea that he likes her. DILLON will take this secret to the grave if he has to.

Q: Why is my LUNA unit teasing my DILLON unit more than usual?

A: Friendly banter between the DILLON and LUNA models is a normal occurrence. However, should the teasing increase, it is likely because LUNA found out that DILLON has a crush on a PADMA unit. DILLON will try to hide this from PADMA at all costs, but since LUNA has a SNARKY TYPE personality, she will likely continue her harmless joking. Side effects may include your DILLON unit becoming as red as a tomato in the face, but he will otherwise live through the experience.

Q: My DILLON PIEPER unit is worrying more than usual over my LUNA unit. What do I do?

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A: Though the DILLON model tends to worry over LUNA units, if the concern seems to be more frequent than normal, allow your DILLON unit to work through it on his own terms. He will ask for advice, and you are free to give them as needed, but DILLON has to learn how to deal with his intrapersonal relationships to become a better person. With LUNA especially, DILLON must learn how to stand up to his best friend (see more below).

Q: Why is my DILLON unit yelling at my LUNA unit?

A: This is a rare occurrence. However, allow your DILLON unit to confront LUNA. This will be a good growing opportunity for DILLON (and sometimes LUNA units need a kick in the ass anyway).

Q: How can my DILLON unit build more confidence?

A: Aside from general growth and improvement with time, patience, and learning from mistakes, customers of the DILLON model suggest pairing DILLON with a SUNNY KORDIN unit. SUNNY's ENERGETIC TYPE personality and HYPEMAN FUNCTION greatly complements DILLON's ANXIETY TYPE personality. SUNNY will encourage DILLON to continue working hard, and DILLON can help ground SUNNY in turn.

Q: Why is a TOBIAS unit is acting weird around my DILLON unit?

A: Though the two teammates are usually amiable acquaintances, TOBIAS' TUNNEL VISION TYPE personality often makes him act like a weirdo around other people. This includes DILLON units. With time, TOBIAS and DILLON will bond over their passion for volleyball and become great teammates.

Q: Why is my DILLON unit acting weird around other units?

A: This depends on what you mean by DILLON "acting weird". Most times, it is because the model's ANXIETY TYPE personality is making DILLON anxious around others he is not comfortable or familiar with. For different situations, see below.

Q: My DILLON unit is NOT acting weird because he's anxious

though. What's happening?

A: If your DILLON is NOT experiencing anxiety around others, it is likely because he has decided to take on a petty rivalry with another unit. The other unit will have no idea that DILLON is holding a grudge against them, but DILLON will act strangely hostile around them. This is usually the result of someone acting aggressively towards a NET BLAZING VOLLEYBALL TYPE model, most often a LUNA HARUTO unit. The rivalry will pass when DILLON feels like justice has been served.*

* Note: This clause is up to each individual DILLON unit. *Adopt-A-Character Facilities* is NOT responsible for any petty damages incurred by your DILLON unit if he happens to look at someone with a funny face.

— • — • — • —

Thank you for purchasing a DILLON PIEPER unit!

With love from Adopt-A-Character Facilities

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Music Shuffle Shifts

Track 1: Summer, pt. 1

Now Playing: Gold Rays – Vinyl Pinups

They go to the beach the first chance they get. Summer heat beats down on everything, water glinting under the sunlight.

Padma brings floaties for her and Tobias because neither of them know how to swim. Luna teases Tobias endlessly about it but helps him out nonetheless when the three of them decide to go swimming.

Sunny and Dill stay on the beach to build a giant sandcastle. The craftsmanship is clearly Dill's doing, but Sunny vehemently insists that they helped with the shovel work.

At the end of the day, Sunny posts a photo on their Instagram:

sunnyace.10 • 3 minutes ago

perfect!!!

Music Shuffle Shifts

(Image: Sunny, Toby, Dill, and Luna surrounding a large sandcastle. Padma sits at the centre with her legs crossed. All of them beam wide at the camera.)

55 likes

— • —

Track 2: Summer, pt. 2

Now Playing: Otter Pop – Shawn Wasabi

“Here you go: popsicles! Blue for Toby, orange for Sunny, lemon for Padma, strawberry for Lu.”

“Thanks, Dill!”

“F’ank yhew!”

“Thanks.”

“Mm.”

“Ah, so refreshing!”

(grin)

“Dillon, are you gonna eat yours?”

“Oh, yes!”

“What flavour did you get?”

“Melon.”

“Aw, lemme try!”

“Okay, just don’t get your slobber over it.”

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“I won’t!”

“They will.”

“Shut up, Toby!”

“Guys, can we just enjoy ourselves, please?”

(sigh)

“Apparently not without a fight.”

— • —

Track 3: Gameplay

Now Playing: Hit That Drum – Red Velvet

Drums pound a rhythmic beat around them, the roar of the cheerleading team hollering their support.

Dill slams the volleyball onto the floor three times. He takes a deep breath, eyes narrowing at the exact space he wants the ball to go.

Visualize it, he hears Coach say in his head. *It will help focus your aim.*

He throws the ball up, legs moving with a practiced run-up after hours upon hours upon hours of training. The ball hits the meat of his hand with a satisfying *THWACK!* and his body instinctively moves into a receiving position on the court. He watches as it floats above the net before dropping exactly where he planned.

Their opponent’s libero¹ dives onto the floor, fingers stopping short where the ball lands inside the paint.

¹ Libero = Exclusively defensive positions. They are responsible for receiving an attack or serve and are usually the players on the court with the quickest reaction time and best passing skills. They also showcase impressive reading skills, meaning they can see/predict where the ball will go.

The drums around him echo throughout the stadium.

— • —

Track 4: Sickly

Now Playing: Cough Syrup – Young the Giant

Luna catches the flu because her partners are awful and spread the infection to her. She stays home from classes for a few days because her head cold is so bad she can’t see straight.

She lies in bed for the majority of that time, sleeping underneath her bedsheets sweaty and uncomfortable, but what other choice does she have? She can barely sit up straight, much less move around like she’d much rather be doing. Anaïs—living four hours away—would probably make the drive down to Luna’s dorm and drag her back to bed if she tried anyway.

She stirs up from her nap at some point, awakening to see four pairs of eyes blinking down at her. Their faces are hidden by medical masks, so their eyes are really all she sees in her fever induced haze.

“Luna?” a sweet voice says. “Are you okay?”

She coughs, which seems to be answer enough for all of them.

“We brought cough syrup, Lu!”

“It’s on the bedside.”

“Sorry for getting you sick, I guess.”

Luna can’t distinguish the voices from each other, but she returns to sleep with the familiar, comforting sounds of her favourite people in the world.

— • —

Track 5: Negotiations, pt. 1

Now Playing: Boy Without A Heart – Jojo

Luna is much colder than Padma ever realized.

Everyone warns her that she missed the awful time when they’d all first met and Luna was the most infuriating person on

the team; that by the time Padma came around Luna considerably dialled down her angst and snark. Dillon tries to defend her, of course, but eventually even his protests are silenced by the others.

“Padma,” Toby says gravely, “are you *sure* you want to date her too?”

“Yeah, we’re happy with Dillon already,” Sunny says.

Luna rolls her eyes, walking out the room. Padma takes this as her cue to follow her. She walks out the door, sprinting to catch up to Luna.

“Luna!” she calls out. “Luna, wait!”

She doesn’t listen, continuing to walk away. When she turns the corner without a word, Padma stops, slightly shocked. Luna’s never ignored her before.

“Told you,” Toby says behind her, and Padma turns around to see her partners catching up to her.

“She just...” Dill begins, struggling. “Needs time.”

Padma bites her lip, unable to help herself when she stares back down the path where Luna disappeared.

— • —

Track 6: Summer, pt. 3

Now Playing: Blue Lemonade – Red Velvet

Padma looks down at the hand softly grasping hers, eyes moving up to meet a narrowed gaze meeting hers.

She blushes and immediately turns away. Luna’s fingers tighten their hold.

“Look,” she says in that flat voice of hers, “there’s a juice stand there.” Padma looks up to follow Luna’s finger pointing towards what is indeed a juice stand. She looks back at Luna when she asks, “Do you want something?”

“S-sure.”

Padma takes a seat on a bench nearby, heart thumping at the way Luna insisted she pay for their drinks. Luna left with a kiss to the top of her head, and it takes Padma everything in her not

to bury her face in her hands.

When Luna returns, she holds two drinks, condensation dripping down the sides of the plastic cups.

— • —

Track 7: Halloween

Now Playing: Peek-A-Boo – Red Velvet

Luna can’t recall right now whose idea this was, but she’s going to kill them once she remembers.

Not even Padma will be safe when she does.

She growls, running down the corridor, stopping to catch her breath once she turns the corner. Once she knows she’s safe, she carefully peers over the wall, looking down the dimly lit hallway with its flickering lightbulbs. Cobwebs cover every inch of the decorations, the old wooden floors creaking with every movement.

She doesn’t see them, but she can hear Dill and Sunny’s laughter down the corridor, their voices growing closer. Luna sighs, heaving another breath before sprinting away.

Why in the world did she agree to play hide-and-seek in this stupid haunted house?

— • —

Track 8: Negotiations, pt. 2

Now Playing: Candy – Red Velvet

The lollipop is sweet on Luna’s tongue, the artificial watermelon flavour so tangy it’s almost sour. She looks out the corner of her eyes where her partners sit next to her with matching lollipop sticks in between their lips.

“Thanks for sharing these, Lu!” Dill says around the candy in his mouth. Luna shrugs, hoping that the blush on her ears isn’t noticeable.

“Aw,” Sunny whines, “I still wanted the orange flavour...”

“Trade?” Tobias says, offering a spit-slick lollipop towards them. Luna winces when they switch candies, sticking the treat in their mouths without hesitation.

“That’s gross,” she comments.

Padma rolls her eyes, crawling over to take a seat in Luna’s lap before popping both the lollipops out of their mouths. She wraps her arms around Luna’s shoulders and kisses her soundly, tongue curling around her. Luna can taste Padma’s cherry flavoured lollipop when she licks into her mouth.

“It can’t be any different than doing that,” Padma teases, grinning down at her when they break for air.

— • —

Track 9: Last Summer

Now Playing: Best Starships Ever (Nicki Minaj vs 1D) – Remix by Mikolo Mashups

They go to the beach after graduation, inviting the entire volleyball team to celebrate the end of the year.

Sunny and Toby are in charge of games and music, Dill and Luna in charge of food and drinks, and Padma covers all planning and decorating. The underclassmen offer to pitch in with the prep but the five of them insist on doing this for the rest of the team. It’s the last time they’ll be in charge, after all—graduation signifies that they’re moving onto bigger things without the team—so it’s the least they can do.

Everyone has a wonderful time by the lake, getting sunburnt under the sky, sand lingering on their skin after playing in the water. They stay until well into the night, lighting up a bonfire at Sunny’s request.

Portable speakers blast the best pop songs of the year, and they dance around the flames with laughter and smiles on their lips.

— • —

Track 10: Negotiations, pt. 3

Now Playing: Reading Letters – P.S. I Love You Soundtrack

Padma opens her old notebooks, reading letters she both wrote and received.

Bittersweet nostalgia hits her like a wave, and she smiles through her tears when she finally reaches the last page:

A photograph of all five of them.

— • —

Track 11: Distance, pt. 1

Now Playing: Wish Tree – Red Velvet

Dill walks down snowy streets, feet shuffling with every block. His boots are probably getting scuffed at the toes, which Padma will admonish him for, but he doesn’t really mind.

Around him, downtown Toronto easily welcomes the Christmas season with sleigh bells, sparkly decorations, and the occasional caroller dotting a street corner.

He looks up when snowflakes begin to fall gracefully from the dark night sky. A few flurries stick to his eyelashes. He brushes them away with a gloved finger, blinking away the moisture. Someone bumps into his side, and when he looks up, he sees a young couple laughing together, caught up in their own world.

Dill hunches his shoulders over, stuffing his hands into his pockets.

I wonder how Luna is doing, he thinks, thinking of his childhood friend. *I hope she’s enjoying herself.*

— • —

Track 12: Distance, pt. 2

Now Playing: One of These Nights – Red Velvet

He makes his way towards the apartment he shares with Padma and Sunny, lights illuminating the suburban street with a yellow

glow. His coat is still wet with the flurries that began falling before he dove into the subway, and he sighs into his lapel, realizing he has to get it dry-cleaned now.

This time last year, he had an arm looped around Lu's, and they laughed about their plans for the holiday season. Tonight, Dill walks home alone, heart heavy with longing.

When he reaches his building, he stops. He looks up at the high-rise with sadness. He thought he'd be over this part by now.

Perhaps another night.

— • —

Track 13: Negotiations, pt. 4

Now Playing: Pretend (Reprise) – Lights

Some days, the anxiety wins.

They each handle those days differently. Sunny and Dillon prefer to have the others doting on them with sympathy. Toby and Luna prefer to seclude themselves so they could sort through their feelings first, careful because they don't want to hurt the others with their angst. Padma prefers a little bit of both.

At the end of the day, though, all of them want their lovers close by so they could welcome a better tomorrow together.

— • —

Track 14: Fun and Games

Now Playing: BG Låten [8-bit Remix] – Spelling Phailer

Sunny naively announces having a video game competition, so Luna easily hands her partners' asses to them. They all knew that Luna was better than Dill, and infinitely better than both Toby and Sunny.

Padma was a true dark horse.

"I, um," she squeaks, cheeks flushed red when she sees everyone's jaws hanging, "I like to play on my phone sometimes? And I'm comfortable with some consoles since I do computer

stuff a lot."

"You beat me." Luna's tone easily conveys her shock.

"*AMAZING, PADMA!*" Sunny yells, jumping onto her.

The others follow Sunny, piling on top of their girlfriend in a giant heap. She giggles, delighted to accept their congratulations.

— • —

Track 15: Date Night

Now Playing: Red Dress – Red Velvet

"Are you *sure*?" Padma calls from where she is *still* hiding in her room.

"Yes," Sunny sighs. "We *promise* we won't laugh at whatever you're wearing!"

Toby would smile at his partner's obvious impatience, but he's equally tired of waiting for their girlfriend to come out. They're already *very* late.

Thankfully, Padma relents. "Okay..."

She emerges from the corner, and Toby can't stop the gasp that escapes his lips.

Padma is absolutely *gorgeous* in the little dress she wears. The fit is tight, hugging her every curve, beautiful legs exposed from mid-thigh down. She wears a pair of shiny black heels, but Toby barely notices it because he can't stop staring at the cut of the fabric, the exposure of her shoulders.

"Wow..." he breathes, reverent, and Padma's blush turns her face as red as the dress she has on.

— • —

Track 16: Negotiations, pt. final

Now Playing: Love Story – Taylor Swift

Their love isn't forbidden like in fairy tales, or soap operas, or the cheesy romance novels they all know Luna likes to read sometimes (no matter how much she tries to deny it).

The five of them grappled with their feelings for a long time before they ever came to any sort of understanding, even longer until they achieved the comfortable relationship they have now. First, there were boundaries. Then, there was the fact that Luna, Sunny and Toby usually wanted to tear each other's heads off if they had the chance. And, of course, Padma and Dillon had their anxiety to deal with. It was a huge mess until they sorted everything out.

They couldn't even consider the larger picture about how everyone else would feel about them, too caught up in their emotions about each other to care about what society would say. But they each knew they wanted this, were willing to put up with whatever came their way as long as they got to do it together.

The day their landlord handed them the keys to their own place—a huge apartment that could fit all five of them, their first ever *home*—they celebrated with a quiet night in.

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via @jercydee

you keep smiling when you look at me (just like me)

It wasn't until their last year in high school that they realized how head over heels they were for each other. In hindsight, they've been that way since they were a couple of kids on the playground.

— • —

Dill never realizes how much he prefers sitting in front of Luna until their desks are rearranged and he has to sit behind her. He now sits behind his best-friend-turned-girlfriend seated next to the window, spending day after day staring at her back.

And it's not that Dill sits directly behind Luna, no. He's placed exactly one row and three desks to her right. A seat in which also gives Dill a good view of Luna's profile.

It's torture.

Luna has distracted him from every lesson they've had since the change. The first lecture Dill missed was on practical calculus. He was too busy staring at the way the sun filtering through the window cast a soft glow around Luna's hair, shining

perfectly around the crown of her head in the shape of a halo. The second lecture he missed on derivatives was because he got distracted by Luna's features. Her pursed lips, narrowed eyes, and the tilt of her head against her fist. Dill could only imagine what was bothering her.

(He would later learn it was volleyball practice that concerned his girlfriend. Luna had to leave practice early because Anaïs suddenly needed her at home, but she was worried about what the team would say. Both captain and coach were, of course, totally fine with it. They were more troubled about whatever was going on in the Hotaru household than they were worried about Luna missing practice.)

Luna puts down her pencil, adjusting her glasses before returning to her notes. Dill very nearly breaks into a soft smile at the way the frames slide down her nose. He only holds back because he's in the middle of class. Dill returns his gaze back to the lecture, hoping that he can somehow fake where his attention truly lies.

He wonders if Luna is truly aware of the way Dill stares at him. Dill really hopes she isn't. He fears the possibility of Luna thinking he's weird, or even worse, breaking up with him.

The two of them only started going out recently, after a confession full of stuttering and cheeks painted scarlet from their intensely flushed faces. They left the gym with hands clasped together after a long back-and-forth filled with Luna's reluctance, but somehow Dill got her to agree to it.

He was over the moon ecstatic.

However, that was all before he realized he used to sit in front of Luna for all their classes. Now, with this new arrangement, he's starting to regret ending up in this position.

Dill loses focus again, eyes moving from the chalkboard ahead of him to gaze at Luna instead. Luna, unlike him, is paying attention to the lecture, looking back and forth between her notes and the professor's demonstration. Dill loves the concentration in her eyes, the way her long fingers curl around the pencil.

It's ridiculous just how easily distracted he is by his partner. It's only been a little over a week since they switched seats, but

Dill doesn't know how he'll last the rest of the year like this.

"Mr. Pieper!"

Dill's attention suddenly whips to Mrs. Park calling his name. She gives him an amused smile.

"Y-yes?"

"Keep your focus in class and not outside, please," she says.

Dill flushes, nodding. "Uh, yes."

Around him, his classmates titter and giggle. He looks down with a frown, pretending to scrawl something in this notebook. At least they don't think he was staring at Luna.

When he finally feels majority of the mortification subsiding, he lifts his eyes back to look at Luna, who meets his gaze. Dill blushes again when their eyes meet, stomach flipping at Luna's fond expression. Luna flashes a smirk, grinning at him with smug eyes. Dill's cheeks flush.

Shaking her head thoughtfully, Luna then returns his attention back to the lesson, and Dill's heart sinks. When he realizes how disappointed he is that Luna isn't looking at him anymore, he lets out a long sigh.

He has no idea how he's going to be able to stay in this seat.

— • —

Luna knows Dill stares at her during class. It's flattering, really. The way he looks at her with total adoration and wonder. If she were more self-conscious, she'd have a constant blush on her face, but she figures that at least one of them has to maintain some form of tact.

Dill gets called out in class by Mrs. Park one afternoon. Luna can't help but snicker with her classmates. The way Dill sinks into his seat, definitely not writing something in his notes as far as Luna can tell with the way he frowns at himself, she's spontaneously filled with incredible fondness.

When Dill finally looks up, Luna beams at him, eyes narrowing with amusement before focusing her attention back to the lecture. She can hear Dill's sigh from where she sits, Luna has to hold back another chuckle.

She's almost certain that Dill is going to ask to look at her notes again because he missed today's lesson. Luna doesn't mind in the least, more than happy to help her boyfriend after distracting him so much.

Luna's right, of course, because Dill does ask for her notes after they leave club that day.

"Are you sure?" Dill confirms. "If you need them tonight I can copy them another time." His eyebrows are pinched with concern, and Luna thinks he worries too much.

She waves a dismissive hand, nodding. "Yeah, it's fine, Dill." She passes her notebook with what she hopes is nonchalance, but she can feel the flush of her cheeks burning up to the tips of her ears.

The answering grin that Dill gives her leaves Luna's heart fluttering like hummingbird wings in her chest. They walk home together hand-in-hand, much to Luna's embarrassment (Dill keeps winning their arguments, and Luna thinks this may be the start of a pattern she is not excited for, but Dill has the sweetest smiles when Luna indulges him and—*god*—she's going to be this kind of girlfriend, huh?), and that leaves Luna's heart fluttering too.

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Dumb Dumb

Extended Track

Now Playing: Dumb Dumb (Japanese Vers.) – Red Velvet

— • —

Padma, Sunny, and Toby are in a comfortable love triangle. Luna and Dillon make gaga eyes if they're in a five-foot vicinity of each other. Padma, Sunny, and Dillon are good friends, but Luna and Toby?

Like fire and ice.

Things are fine as they are until Toby realizes otherwise.

— • —

He notices—finally, hilariously—at the Spring volleyball tournament. They're arguing about the new quick attack they've been developing. Luna missed Toby's set and is furious that he would accuse her of being at fault.

***It's late but here I am, sighing by myself
Look what you've done, you've got my heart going
crazy, oh***

"I don't need a pinpoint set-up!" Luna yells. "I'm not Sunny!"

Toby is well aware of this fact, but he's too proud to admit it. He stands his ground, glaring at Luna with a frown.

"Just—" Luna clenches her fists at her side. "Just fucking toss it to me the way I keep telling you to!"

"I know you keep telling me because you won't stop screaming in my ear about it!"

"It's the only way you'll ever *listen*, genius."

"Hey! Quit it!" Toby whips his head around to see Jamie yelling at them and stomping over. She tries pushing the two of them apart, but Toby strains against the captain's palm, chest puffing out. Luna does the same, and Toby bares his teeth in a snarl.

***Baby baby baby baby baby
You play me play me play me play me***

They always get like this whenever they want to make any progress in their gameplay. Arguing with Luna is different than arguing with anyone else. When Toby and Sunny bicker, it's the comfortable, ongoing banter of rivals turned friends. With Luna, Toby has to stay on his toes, ready to push back at Luna's quick wit. Sometimes, their conversations can even be playful.

Unfortunately, in this case, they're chewing each other out in the middle of a match.

"I said *quit it!*"

The angry tone in Jamie's voice forces them to pause. That, and the captain's fists clenching their uniforms.

"Keep it off the court or you'll both be benched for the rest of the season," she warns in a low voice.

Toby looks back at Luna, who frowns at him before looking away. "Fine."

The players reposition themselves on the court. The other

team serves the ball, and Net Blazing's libero¹ easily receives it, volleying it to Toby with precision. Toby calculates the odds in the split second the ball soars in the air. He frowns; he *hates* when Luna's right. He takes one look at the shithead, who answers with a nod.

Toby sets the ball high, arching just behind the net. Luna easily spikes the ball at an angle, and the crowd roars when the ref calls it as in.

"See?" Luna says in a sickeningly sweet tone. "That wasn't so bad now, was it?"

"Piss off." Toby walks away then sneaks a glance at Luna. She has a triumphant smirk plastered across her face, and instead of supreme annoyance Toby feels a flicker of fondness.

He brushes the blush creeping up his cheeks off as exhaustion.

***Your sparkling gaze has me so dizzy
My calm and collected intuition's nowhere to be found,
oh***

Later that very game, Toby notices again. It's a tight match, but Net Blazing pulls through with a 28-26 win. They use the quick attack Toby begrudgingly agrees to, hollering with his teammates when it lands in the opponent's court and becomes Net Blazing's winning point.

Toby gives Jamie a double high-five. Luna wears a pleased grin on her face, eyes alight with satisfaction.

"Yo," Toby says, offering a raised palm.

Luna's smile drops, but she lifts a hand to match Toby's.

***Baby baby baby baby baby
You crazy crazy crazy crazy crazy***

¹ Libero = Exclusively defensive position. They are responsible for receiving an attack or serve and are usually the players on the court with the quickest reaction time and best passing skills. They also showcase impressive reading skills, meaning they can see/predict where the ball will go.

Toby hits Luna's hand with a satisfying *smack!* and an electrifying shock. He almost gasps, but manages to rein it in. Luna moves on to high-five Dillon, leaving Toby to stare at his open palm with confusion.

— • —

The team's finishing up their meeting in the gym, grabbing the last of their belongings. With the chilly weather, most people, including Toby, are slipping on extra layers: jackets, hoodies, everything they'd need for spring weather. Everyone's packing up slowly, not in any particular rush to leave.

Except Sunny, who's almost halfway out the door.

"I'm *really* sorry!" Sunny whines. "Really, Toby, we'll go together next time, I promise!"

Standing in front of his cubby, Toby rolls his eyes and waves his partner away. "Yeah, sure, just go get your sister."

Sunny gives him another sad look and pecks Toby on the cheek before yelling goodbye to everyone and running out of the clubroom. The others file out in groups as they finish packing up until only Toby and Luna are left to lock up as ordered by the captain and vice-cap.

I'm like a mannequin

Just looking at you turns me into a cringe-y mess

Luna stands in front of her things, clad only in a thin white tee and Lakeshore U sweatpants. She's even taller than Toby was last semester, her gangly frame now more toned with wiry muscle. When she lifts her arms to slip on her hoodie, the t-shirt bares a strip of milky pale skin just above her hips. Toby immediately averts his eyes back to his bag.

They continue to pack away their things in silence. Toby is normally fine with saying nothing, used to Sunny's loud voice filling the space so he and Padma don't have to. For some reason, though, Toby doesn't like the silence between him and Luna. He feels compelled to say something. He purses his lips, considering

his options. He tries to think of how Sunny flirts with him, how Padma approaches him, if there's any way he can possibly emulate them to extend some sort of olive branch. He comes up empty except for the one thing he hates doing: complimenting Luna.

No one can stop me From dancing with awkward steps

"Y-you did good today," he mumbles. He says it so softly he almost hopes Luna doesn't hear him.

"What was that?"

Toby closes his eyes, dropping his head in a defeated bow. He clears his throat when he looks up to meet Luna's gaze. "I said, 'You did good today.'"

Sometimes, it's difficult to tell what Luna's thinking, but now Toby can see every emotion that passes through her face: shock, doubt, annoyance, the tiniest bit of joy, more shock. Eventually it settles into its usual smirk. "Well," Luna croons, putting her hands on her hips, "The Dictator himself is offering me a compliment. What, is it going to snow today, too?"

Toby glares at her, regretting everything. Luna loves to taunt Toby with that particular nickname. She knows it gets on Toby's nerves. Toby turns back to his bag with a huff. "Whatever. Forget I said anything."

Luna chuckles. Toby waits for more teasing but instead is met with silence. This time, he doesn't bother trying to fill it.

It's not until the two of them exit the clubroom together and Luna dutifully locks the gym doors that Toby hears a whispered: "You, too."

— • —

Toby and Luna are the only ones who show up in the library to study another afternoon. Normally all five of them would be together—often for Luna, Padma, and Dillon to tutor both him and Sunny—but Dillon apparently had to help a classmate with something, and Padma and Sunny are nowhere to be found.

If Toby had to guess, he'd say his partners are making out in a secluded, dusty corner somewhere. It's a gamble as to whether they'll show up before the afternoon is over. He doesn't realize he sighs out loud until Luna says, "What now?"

"Nothing," he says, and scratches random numbers down on his worksheet.

After a beat, Luna says, "That's wrong."

Toby glares. "What?"

Luna begins a monotone rant about how she's not going to give Toby the answer, that Toby should learn the material himself or else he's not going to pass his classes again. Toby hears none of it. He finds himself especially distracted by the way the sunlight filters through the library windows and casts Luna in a partial glow. Her glasses glint in the sunbeams, blonde in her hair even more golden under its rays. Feeling like he's staring way too much, Toby looks back at his homework, narrowing his eyes in hopes his embarrassment won't show.

***I can't help
My stiff facial expressions
Or the way I walk***

Luna eventually finishes, and Toby huffs. "Whatever."

She rolls her eyes, dragging her chair closer and leaning into Toby's space. Toby, for some reason, doesn't stop it from happening. "I am *not* going to do your homework," Luna says, "but if we're the only two showing up today, you should at least try to get *something* through that thick skull of yours."

Toby can't even bark out an annoyed reply because Luna starts leaning over his worksheet. She's so close that Toby can feel her body heat. She starts to write what looks like complete gibberish, none of which Toby follows. He's listening to his heart race like he's in the middle of a really good volleyball match.

Dumb dumb dumb dumb dumb dumb

Toby doesn't know what to make of it, feeling like this around

Luna, so he just glares at Luna's pencil as it dances across the paper. Luna is explaining what she did, her voice low and almost soothing, and Toby tries to relax because he really should be focusing on his homework. Eventually, after a particularly calm and understandable explanation, Toby begins making his way through his problem set.

***The drum of my heart
The giddy mood I'm in
They're already out of my control***

An hour later, Toby slams his pencil onto the table with a *thunk* and raises his assignment sheet in the air like a trophy.

"I did it!" he says triumphantly, pushing out of his seat to stand up. Someone shushes him from the other side of the room, and he blushes, taking a seat once more.

"Not yet," Luna deadpans. Her hand reaches for Toby's worksheet, and Toby mumbles death threats under his breath before passing it to Luna for corrections. Luna's eyes rapidly run down the worksheet, and before long she raises a single brow.

"Well?"

Luna hands the homework back. "Not bad, Your Majesty. You finally did good for once."

Toby grins, smug. He's about to say something when Luna cracks the tiniest of smiles. Not a smirk either. An actual, genuine smile. And it's directed at *Toby*.

Toby's brain wipes out for the rest of the tutoring session. He barely notices when Padma and Sunny eventually show up, dishevelled and unkempt, matching blushes on their cheeks. He's too busy thinking about the way Luna smiled at him.

Dumb dumb dumb dumb dumb dumb dumb dumb...

The rest of his homework doesn't get completed that afternoon.

— • —

Toby twists his ankle in a weird way during a practice match against the neighbourhood rec team. It's not bad enough to do any lasting damage, but he's out for the remainder of the match. The back-up setter subs into the game and Toby is left pouting on the bench with an icepack Padma hands him. Their team's alternate isn't *bad*, Toby knows, he'd just rather it was *him* on the court making the plays.

He claps his hands twice, calling out *Don't mind it!* when the rec team's gigantic middle blocker slams a spike in. The teams reset positions for the rec team's serve to some rando Toby doesn't know the name of.

The serve snags on the top of the net, but Net Blazing's libero dives for the ball and saves it with his fingertips. The ball flies up at a weird angle towards Jamie, leaving her no choice but to pass it poorly to Luna.

***I dream about romance movies
But you have me on the edge of my seat, oh***

Toby expects Luna to bump the ball over the net and hope their opponent won't try to pull any fast plays. Instead, he watches Luna sprint towards the ball with what looks to be a hard swing. Toby frowns; it's a shit pass (no offense to the cap), so why would Luna bother trying to spike the ball? The rec team immediately backs up, calling out to watch for a hard receive.

What is this idiot doing? Toby wonders.

Luna jumps, arm swinging with rapid speed, only for her palm to lightly tap the volleyball.

"Fake out!" someone shouts, but it's too late. The libero misses the ball.

***Baby baby baby baby baby
You make me crazy crazy crazy crazy, yeah***

"NICE ONE, LUNA!" everyone around her begins to yell, and despite himself Toby hollers the praise along with his teammates.

Luna hears Toby's cheers and catches his eye. She flashes the

tinest smile and Toby blushes. Before he knows it, the game re-starts, ball passed to Sunny for his serve.

Toby repositions himself on the bench once the next play begins. He hadn't even noticed that he got out of his seat.

— • —

***I'm like a mannequin
Just looking at you turns me into a cringe-y mess
No one can stop me
From dancing with awkward steps***

It's infuriating, really, how stupid Toby feels.

Luna is the most annoying person he knows. He might be even more annoying than *Sunny*, which is terrifying on a whole different level.

***You make me crazy
Hold on a sec, I wasn't expecting this
Things have been happening so fast since the day I met
you***

Luna makes Toby feel exceptionally stupid. She can't go a day without provoking him somehow, and Luna *literally* looks down on Toby with every single inch she has over him.

Which is why Toby is beyond frustrated with himself over his obviously growing crush. It's the same way he felt—feels—about Sunny, about Padma. He doesn't know how he got into this ridiculous position, liking *another* one of his teammates.

***You see right through me,
ready to start at a moment's notice
Don't know why I can't read the vibe
The border's so unclear***

"Hey, Your Majesty," Luna calls after him, and Toby's heart flutters at Luna's voice. He hates this so much. He takes a breath, looking

over his shoulder to meet Luna's gaze. When their eyes meet, Toby can't find any words to reply, somehow dumbstruck at how stupidly attractive Luna looks when the light outside envelops her in a soft halo. "Fine," she snaps, pulling Toby out of his thoughts, "don't talk to me, but practice starts in five." She leaves with the club door slamming shut behind her. Toby drops his head.

He doesn't know how he'll survive this.

***I had my hopes up but you just keep teasing me
Boy, you can't feel me
I'm here next to you hesitating at your smile
And before I know it, I lose control***

Practice passes by unbearably slow. Toby is beyond relieved he doesn't make a fool out of himself by the time everyone breaks for free practice at the end. He claims the net for himself so he can practice aiming his sets.

Padma passes him a bunch of empty bottles when he asks for them, and after she sets them aside she leans up with her lips puckered. He meets her halfway and bends down for her to reach his cheek despite the fact he's blushing hard. Receiving affection from both his partners is still weird for him, but it makes them happy, and he likes when they're happy, so Toby tries his best to let them dote on him.

"Thanks," he mumbles, still flushed red.

Padma smiles at him in reply before walking away.

Toby lines up the bottles by the net with practiced ease, and when he stands up he finds his girlfriend talking to Luna at the sidelines. Padma easily catches his eyes and beams at him. Luna just looks on with a straight face.

Then, it slowly morphs into her signature smirk.

Toby wants to kiss the look right off her face.

***That was when I went numb
You'll be my sweet love***

And now they both beam at him like twin suns illuminating a clear sky. Toby turns away before he does something embarrassing like trip over the bottles he just lined up.

— • —

Sunny and Dillon are still in brushing their teeth the bathroom, but Luna is already in bed, fiddling with her phone with her headphones on.

Toby and Luna's sleeping bags are next to each other at training camp, and Toby wants to die. He can easily ask Sunny to switch places with him, but his idiot partner is as bad as he is at picking up cues and would probably make a big scene asking why. Toby can't handle that tonight.

***Never apart, whether we're asleep or awake
Walking a fine line between loving and hating you***

He sucks up his anguish with a deep breath. He lies down, fluffing his pillow with a hard fist before tucking himself underneath his blanket. He pointedly turns his back to Luna behind him when he pulls the covers up to his chin. Once he's comfortable, he squeezes his eyes shut, trying to calm his racing heartbeat.

"Good night to you, too, Your Majesty," Luna says, but the pet name carries none of its usual malice or annoyance. Her mumble is so quiet Toby almost misses it.

***I stand on my tiptoes with all my mighty
But you treat me like a little kid again, oh***

Almost. He smiles. "Good night."

— • —

***I'm just like a robot
Rigid because I need some oil***

My body won't move
It's almost like I've forgotten how to breathe

Everyday, the five of them have lunch together. Toby and Sunny usually wait for Padma outside of her class, then the three of them meet Luna and Dillon in the campus' café.

Toby texted his partners earlier to let them know he was running late, telling them not to wait and that he'll meet up later. He checks the time on his phone, and when he realizes he doesn't want to waste more time, he goes into a brisk walk down the hallway.

Unfortunately (or not), for some reason Luna is there too.

He catches the unmistakable backside of an unfairly tall blonde, ears covered by familiar headphones.

Toby knows he often doesn't have time alone with Luna, and because his crush is clearly here to stay, he sucks in a deep breath and catches up to her.

"Luna!" he calls, jogging to the other's side.

Luna turns to look at him with ever-judgemental eyes, but she pulls back her headphones, resting them around her neck.

"What do you want?"

Toby frowns at her. "I just wanted to walk next to you—is that illegal?"

Luna rolls her eyes, not offering anything more. Toby grunts, looking away. *This was a stupid idea*, he realizes.

"Well, what are you late for?" Luna asks once they're halfway to the café.

Toby holds back an annoyed groan, coolly answering, "Had to stay behind to talk to my prof."

"About what?" Luna furrows her brows at him. "You're doing fine in your classes aren't you? Or else all our tutoring is a waste."

Toby rolls his eyes. "I just had a question about the assignment, douchebag. I'm not failing."

Luna scoffs a laugh. "And isn't that just a miracle?"

"Asshole."

"Get better insults."

"Maybe once you have better receives."

"Shut up."

They go back and forth in comfortable banter all the way to the café, where their respective partners are waiting for them at their usual spot. Padma spots them first, waving them over.

"Luna! Toby!" she calls. "Over here!"

Toby is a little sad to have their alone time end so soon. He slides into his seat with an internal sigh.

The café's tables are short and rectangular, so it's a tight squeeze to fit all five of them in one table. Usually, Sunny and Padma like to sit next to each other; Toby is fine sitting next to Dillon opposite them; and Luna takes the end seat at the short side of the table. Today though, Toby is pleasantly surprised when Luna takes the seat next to him, making Dillon scoot to the end where she normally sits.

I can't help
My stiff facial expressions
Or the way I walk
Dumb dumb dumb dumb dumb dumb dumb dumb

The other three give them knowing looks, but neither he nor Luna say anything.

Toby eats his lunch with a blush high on his cheeks.

— • —

Sunny tells him to stop messing around with Luna and ask her out already, so Toby worries for almost a week trying to figure out how to confess his feelings to her. Turns out it's a waste because Dillon and Luna corner him after practice one day. No one else is in the gym, aside from Padma and Sunny discussing something at the entrance, and Toby glares at his two teammates before him.

The drum of my heart
The giddy mood I'm in
They're already out of my control
Dumb dumb dumb dumb

“What?” he demands.

After a painful silence, Dillon elbows Luna in the side.

“Ow, Dill!”

“Not sorry, Lu,” he says. “Now tell Tobias what you told me.”

Luna glares at him. “You’re the worst boyfriend.”

“I am the *best* boyfriend,” Dillon clarifies, “and *you* are avoiding the subject.”

The two of them return their attention back to Toby with eerie coordination.

“You’re-you’re not that bad,” Luna finally mutters, looking Toby in the eyes. A blush blooms high on her cheeks.

Toby frowns. *What the hell is that supposed to mean?*

“So?” He crosses his arms; he doesn’t have all day for this.

“She’s trying to say that she likes you,” Dillon supplies with a grin.

Toby’s stomach flips. “Oh.”

When he doesn’t add anything else, Luna glares at him. “Is that all you’re going to say?”

“Well, yeah.” Toby glares back. It’s not like Luna outright said she liked him—*Dillon* was the one to translate things for Toby, so what could he possibly reply?

Luna rolls his eyes. “Jeez, you suck at rejecting people.”

“And you suck at asking people out.” He frowns, lip jutting out. “Besides, who said I was rejecting you?” He tilts his chin up defiantly, unfolding his arms to rest his hands on his hips.

Luna rolls her eyes again. “Can you maybe not be a vague idiot?”

“Maybe *you* can learn to speak like a normal person.”

“That’s rich coming from you, Mr. I-Almost-Failed-English-Again.”

“Shut up, asshole!”

Luna scoffs. “Maybe I should take my confession back.”

Toby growls. “Was it even a confession? Dillon was the one to say it for you.”

“Jeez, shut up and kiss already!”

Toby doesn’t register Sunny shouting because someone pushes him onto Luna, and someone else pushes Luna onto him, then

they tumble into each other and their mouths meet in an awkward liplock.

Dumb dumb dumb dumb dumb

Dumb dumb dumb dumb...

They both gasp, eyes wide at the kiss, and Toby immediately pulls himself away.

“Shit, sorry, I—”

Toby doesn’t finish his sentence because Luna cuts him off with another kiss—more purposeful, even softer. This time, Toby sinks into it, eyes fluttering closed.

They break apart when Sunny yells, “Finally!”

Toby whips around to scowl at them. “Dumbass! Did you push me onto her?”

Sunny’s responding laughter as they run away is all the answer Toby needs. He’s about to pummel his partner into next week when Luna grabs his hand.

“So.”

“So?”

Luna looks away from Toby’s gaze to sheepishly stare at their joined hands. Luna’s other hand scratches at her neck. It’s almost unbelievable how cute Toby finds that.

“Are we dating or not?” she finally asks.

Toby steps into his space, pressing his chest against Luna’s. When she finally looks at him, he leans in to press their lips together.

“Yeah,” he whispers, “we’re dating.”

They break apart again because Dillon starts cheering. Luna doesn’t say a word before hunting down her freckled boyfriend, and Toby smiles after them before sprinting away to teach his own idiot a lesson.

***Baby, dumb
I must be... oh!***

Of Crushes and Clichés

It takes a while for Sunny to realize they may have a thing for their fellow volleyball teammates.

Like, a *long* while. Like over the span of *months*.

It should have been obvious, but Sunny's not the brightest, so they count it as a win that they realized they were feeling things in the first place.

— • —

— 1: For Tobias —

The first time they notice is with Toby. He's always been taller, more built than Sunny, and Sunny tries to reason that they were bound to find that attractive since the two of them hung out so much.

During break one practice, Toby stretches his arms above his head, hands curled into fists. Sunny watches absent-mindedly, drinking from their water bottle when their eyes catch Toby's shirt riding up, flashing a strip of skin. Sunny can see Toby's low-

er abdomen, where a smattering of dark hair disappears below his shorts—

Sunny chokes on their water.

“Sunny!” Padma exclaims. “Are you okay?”

They nod their head despite the coughing. “I’m”—*cough*—“fine!”

Sunny continues to choke, hand slapping at their chest instinctively. Eventually, the coughing subsides, and they clear their throat with an apology.

“Dumbass.”

Sunny turns to see Toby rolling his eyes at them, while noticing that Toby's shirt fully covers his torso once more. When Toby walks away, Sunny forces themselves to tear their eyes away from the setter but fails, drawn towards their partner's ass by their body's own volition.

They try not to think too hard about this newfound fixation.

— • —

— 2: For Dillon —

The next time Sunny notices is with Dillon.

The fellow middle blocker invited Sunny over to his house for desserts, and Sunny was hyped up because, *duh*, free sweets are always exciting!

“Thanks for coming, Sunny!” Dillon says as they step into the foyer.

Sunny mumbles a soft *Mhm!* as they toe out of their shoes.

Dillon continues, “Lu's busy so I'm glad someone can try this cake for me!”

“It's fine! Thanks for inviting me, Dillon.” They smile wide, hoping to show their sincerity.

They take in Dillon's home: neat, small but homey. Dillon walks down the hallway, waving Sunny forward.

“Come in! The cake's in the kitchen!”

Sunny follows Dillon into the kitchen, padding across the living room. When they sniff, they let the sweet smell of cake

lead them.

“You can take a seat,” Dillon chirps, digging into the fridge. As Sunny slides into one of the chairs by the kitchen table, he asks, “Is milk okay?”

“Sure!”

Dillon places two glasses of milk on the table while Sunny eyes the frosted cake.

“It’s strawberry shortcake!” he says. “Lu would usually share with me but, like I said, she’s busy today. Oh! Let me get some plates.”

“She’s missing out,” Sunny mumbles, licking their lips.

Dillon returns with two plates, two forks, and a cake knife. He cuts two even slices, placing a plate in front of Sunny.

“Let’s dig in!”

“*Whoop!*”

Sunny scoops a piece of cake onto their fork, biting into it. They gasp at the flavour.

“*Woah*, it’s amazing!”

Next to him, Dillon moans. Sunny immediately freezes.

“*Mmm*, so good!” he sighs, eyes fluttering closed.

Sunny quietly watches with wide eyes as Dillon eats his cake, tongue poking out to occasionally lick his lips. Sometimes, he lingers with his lips around the fork, as if he can’t get enough of it entering his mouth. And if that wasn’t enough, his cheeks are so full that Sunny starts to notice the freckles spread across his face, peppered like constellations in a starry sky.

Sunny gulps, wincing when they realize that their throat is suddenly dry.

“Sunny?” Dillon says. “Is the cake okay? You’ve only had one bite.”

Sunny snaps out of their reverie, gaze whipping to the milk in front of him. They grab the drink, gulping it down.

“Sorry!” they mumble. “Just, uh, thirsty.” They try not to blush at Dillon’s adorably confused expression. “It’s good though, I promise!”

Dillon beams, and Sunny hopes that their hammering heart-beat isn’t as loud as it seems.

They’re grateful that Dillon doesn’t make any more obscene noises after that.

— • —

— 3: For Padma —

It happens again with Padma.

She’s visiting Sunny’s home for a tutoring session. Normally Sunny and Toby would do them at her place, but with their aunt out and Summer home alone Sunny had no choice but to stay. They’re grateful that Padma agreed to make the trip all the way over to their house, and surprised that Toby agreed to come at all.

It’ll be good training for me, Toby said. *Extra cardio when I walk home*. Sunny only rolled their eyes.

Now, though, Toby’s taking a nap on the floor. Next to him is Summer, Sunny’s baby sister, who was busy having her hair braided by Padma until she also fell asleep. It’s almost gross how cute Sunny finds it.

Out loud, Sunny whines, “*Aww*, I can’t believe that jerk passed out on us!”

Padma laughs. “Well, as long as it doesn’t happen every time we study, it’s okay.” She grins at Sunny. “I’ll make an exception for today.”

When she continues to beam at them, Sunny gulps, averting their gaze before they say something dumb like how pretty Padma is when she smiles.

“Sunny, are you okay?” she asks, crawling over to where they sit on the other side of the table.

Sunny definitely does not squeak. That was totally not a squeak.

“Uh, y-yeah! Just fine!” they blurt out. They make a show out of stretching their arms and back. “I guess I’m tired too, or something...”

Padma hums, considering them. Sunny tries not to gulp under her scrutiny.

“Hm, before she fell asleep, Summer said she also wanted me to do your hair.” She grins again, but this time there’s a hint of mischievousness that Sunny’s not used to seeing on her.

“Padma,” they plead, “it’s fine, seriously, you don’t have to listen to Summer—”

“But *Sunny*,” she whines, and—*oh god, is she pouting now?*—Sunny is not going to be okay after this, “how could I ever say no to her?”

“She’s asleep!”

“When she wakes up, she’ll be very upset!”

Sunny groans, cheeks flushing red. Padma continues to look at them with her bottom lip jutting out, and they sigh.

“Ugh, *fine*,” they relent, “but my hair is nowhere near as long as Summer’s.”

Padma scoots over with a bag of Summer’s hair clips before kneeling behind them.

“That’s okay! I’m not going to do anything drastic.”

She cards her fingers through their hair, and Sunny sits as still as they possibly can. Their heart races at Padma’s soft touches, delicate fingers slightly scraping their scalp. They close their eyes, hoping to get lost in the feeling. She moves around them to place hair clips where she deems fit, not that Sunny notices because they’re too busy trying to control their breathing.

“*Ta-da!*” she eventually announces. “All done!”

Sunny releases a breath they didn’t even realize they were holding.

They slowly open their eyes to see Padma holding Summer’s Hello Kitty mirror in front of them, and they try not to grimace at the pigtails in their hair. Sunny guesses they look cute, definitely a lot like Summer, but that’s kinda the last thing Sunny wants to look like.

“So?” Padma asks expectantly. “Good enough for Summer?”

She’s beaming so brightly at Sunny that they can’t help but smile back.

“Yeah!” they say warmly. “It looks great, Padma.”

Later, when Toby and Summer wake up to find them wearing glittery clips and brightly coloured hair ties, Sunny whines way

less than they normally would at everyone’s teasing because it’s well worth Padma’s satisfied giggling.

— • —

— 4: For Luna —

They finally clue in because of the solar eclipse.

“Oh no,” Luna—the giant *douchebag*—deadpans, “it’s starting.”

She slowly starts to lean back against Sunny, back pressing into Sunny’s face and resting her entire weight onto them. Luna is basically a beanpole, but she’s a 6’1” beanpole, and Sunny can *not* hold up her entire weight.

“Luna!” Sunny screams. “Quit it with this shitty joke about our names!”

“But the moon is eclipsing the sun today.”

“*Luna!*”

They’re *supposed* to be warming up for their practice match, but instead Sunny is trying not to suffocate.

“*LU-LUNA!*” they yell, trying to push against Luna. “GET OFF! YOU’RE HEAVY!”

“But the solar eclipse is happening,” Luna says, and even though she’s drawling in her usual deadpan Sunny can tell that Luna is smiling.

Which would be a whole other problem if Sunny wasn’t being crushed by 151 lbs of Lakeshore’s starting middle blocker.

“*GAH!!* Luna!” Sunny tries again, but the hag doesn’t stop. Sunny growls. “I hate you so much!”

“Sucks to suck, Shorty.”

The only good thing is that Luna smells nice. Sunny doesn’t have a choice but to breathe her in because their face is pressed against Luna’s back, but she smells like tea, laundry softener, and also something uniquely her. Probably sweat, if Sunny had to think about it.

Which they don’t because Luna continues to lean back against them.

“Aah! I’m gonna fall!” Sunny shouts desperately. Their footing is already starting to slip from Luna’s weight. “Luna, I’m serious!!”

“Ugh, you suck,” Luna retorts, but she *thankfully* stands up straight again.

Sunny thought all they’d feel was relief now that they’re not supporting Luna’s weight anymore, but instead they realize they’re kinda sad. They don’t think they ever had that much physical contact with Luna before, and while it was at the cost of Sunny’s dignity, it was also really nice, which is both really confusing and also making Sunny’s heart race.

They glare at Luna, hoping to hide their growing embarrassment.

“You *jerk!*” Sunny groans, straightening themselves out. They quickly smooth over the wrinkles in their uniform where Luna kept squishing them.

Luna scoffs, lips curling upward in a lopsided smile. It’s not quite her usual smirk, more soft and—fond? Which can’t be right because Sunny doesn’t think Luna particularly likes them, much less is *fond* of them.

“*Hmph*, I guess who have more strength than I give you credit for,” she says, and this time Sunny picks up a hint of pride in Luna’s voice, which also can’t be right because all she does is make fun of Sunny. There’s no way Luna is *proud* of them over something dumb like this.

Right?

Sunny continues to glare at Luna, who looks back down at them, and in their stand-off Sunny really gets a good look into Luna’s eyes. Her golden orbs are alight with amusement, kinda like when she gets into those weird, flirty rivalries with an opponent’s middle blocker.

In the middle of Sunny internally exploding at the thought of Luna *flirting* with them, she leaves because Dillon calls her away, and Sunny is left slightly dumbfounded at this new development.

— • —

— 5: For all of them —

Somehow, Sunny makes the connection just before Valentine’s Day.

They have a really hopeless crush on four of their teammates. They don’t know *how* it happened, but it *did* and now Sunny has a choice to make:

Either ignore all of it and continue being stupidly awkward around everyone, or act on their feelings and hope that no one gets mad at them.

They buy Valentine’s Day chocolate insanely stressed out because they actually try to buy something special for each of person. Chocolate chip candies for Toby that apparently go well with the milk he likes; simple truffles for Dillon; a box set for Padma with a really pretty design that Sunny thinks she’ll appreciate; and strawberry shortcake flavoured M&Ms for Luna.

It’s over-the-top and Sunny definitely spent like a month’s worth of their paycheck on four different people.

But Sunny also really, *really* likes their teammates a lot.

On the 14th, they skip down campus with their bag full of chocolate, humming a silly song to themselves as they deposit each gift into a dorm. Surprisingly, Sunny’s way less nervous about giving Valentine’s Day chocolate than they thought they’d be.

Then they finally finish their deliveries, and the panic sets in. Sunny rushes to the bathroom afterwards and hopes for the best.

— • —

— &1: For Sunny —

After a month full of even *more* fumbling and Sunny generally acting like an idiot in front of all their crushes (and their classmates, and the volleyball team, and some of Net Blazing’s opponents), Sunny finds their fellow teammates standing by their locker.

They can see everyone from down the hall, talking to each other about something Sunny can't make out, faces tinted with varying shades of blush.

Walking towards them, Sunny wonders why everyone is so tinkled pink until they notice the box of chocolates in Padma's hand. Sunny gasps when they eye the card taped on and makes out everyone's signatures written on it.

Apparently, the noise makes Sunny's presence known.

"Oh, Sunny!"

"Sunny!"

"Took you long enough."

"Hurry up so we can give this to you, dumbass."

The four of them crowd close, pulling Sunny into a chaotic hug that's all elbows and squeezing, and they're sure their skin is bruising from where the chocolate box is digging into their side.

But Sunny wouldn't have it any other way.

And I promise every day (to make you feel this way)

They're sleeping over at Tobias, Sunny, and Padma's apartment because they have the most space. Despite their living circumstances, everyone agreed they wanted to spend the night together since their anniversary is the next day.

(They have yet to find a place that could comfortably fit all of them living together while also giving them room to breathe. Even though they could prove they were soulmates, apparently it was still rare for places to house a bond with more than two people. Who would've thought finding a home for five would be so difficult?)

"Of course, it's going to be hard," Lu had grumbled. "Nothing this good ever comes easy."

"Aw, Lu!" Dill had cooed. "We're good things in your life?"

Lu scoffed, but the blush painting her face red said otherwise. Sunny and Padma cooed along with him, and Tobias had a sweet smile on his face.

So, until they could find and afford a place in the city, Dill and Lu lived in one apartment, while the other three lived down the hall from them.)

He and Lu arrived a little after dinner with their things in hand. At first, everyone had rolled their sleeping bags across the floor into neat rows. It had been for nothing because they ended up shifting towards each other anyway, limbs overtop one another.

Listening to the soft breathing of his soulmates, Dill looks at his arms. His soulmarks are beginning to fade, like all marks do once a person has found and bonded with their soulmates. Though he's excited to let them settle, part of him wants to have them fresh forever, to see his tattoos as vibrant and bold as his soulmates for the rest of his life.

On the inside of his left wrist is Lu, the oldest and most easily recognizable mark. Further up his arm is Tobias with the simplest yet darkest mark. On his bicep is Padma's beautifully complex design, and at the point of his shoulder is Sunny's sun. All four of their tattoos are connected with intricate lines that remind Dill of tangled vines, weaving and braiding over his skin.

Padma mumbles in her sleep, and Dill's gaze immediately flicks to her. Since most nights she spent with Sunny and Tobias, she's sleeping in between him and Lu tonight. She mutters something else before rolling over. He smiles, pressing a kiss to her hair.

He adjusts his sleeve back over his arm and, pulling the blanket to his chin, falls asleep.

— • —

He wakes up to the smell of pancakes in the morning. He squints an eye open, the world fuzzy with sleep.

He inhales a deep breath. *God*, he hopes that's Padma cooking.

Dill sits up while rubbing his fists to his eyes. Lu and Tobias are still asleep, but Padma and Sunny's sleeping bags are abandoned, sheets rumpled and untidy. He stretches his arms over his head before standing up, making his way to the kitchen.

Both Padma and Sunny are cooking, and he's only barely stepped into the kitchen when Sunny looks over their shoulder.

"Morning!" His partner grins at him.

Padma turns around too, smiling softly. "G'morning!"

"Morning," Dill says around a yawn. He walks up to his partners, giving them each a kiss on the cheek. "Pancakes?"

"Mhm!" Padma hums. "We only started making the batter, but so far we're planning strawberry for Luna, blueberries for Toby, cinnamon for me—"

"And chocolate chip for me and you!" Sunny finishes.

"That sounds *amazing*," Dill moans, an arm curling around Sunny's waist. He pulls Sunny in for a chaste kiss on the lips. "Thank you so much, you two."

"*Bleh*," Sunny whines. "Go brush your teeth, Dill. You still have morning breath."

"Rude," he mumbles while he kisses Padma.

"But it's true." Padma at least has the decency to blush.

"My soulmates are the *meanest*," he complains, but stalks off to the bathroom to brush his teeth anyway.

When he returns from the bathroom, Padma's starting up the rice cooker. Meanwhile, Sunny's meticulously pouring a bag of chocolate chips into a measuring cup, tongue adorably sticking out in concentration. Dill can't help but plant a kiss onto their unruly hair when he passes by.

Then, he walks up to Padma, peering over her shoulder. "Rice cooker pancakes?"

Padma hums again. "They're Luna and Toby's favourite, right? It'll take a little longer to get everyone's done but I think it'll be worth it."

Dill rests his chin atop her shoulder. "They'll definitely love it. Do you need me to help with anything?"

Padma looks behind her, and Dill follows her gaze over to Sunny, who still seems to be struggling with the chocolate chips.

"Maybe give Sunny a hand?" she giggles, and Dill can't help but chuckle with her.

— • —

Toby starts his anniversary with a fall.

“SHIT!”

“OW!”

Grumbling, he tries to take stock of what just happened: he tripped over something—someone—and now he’s lying on the floor again even though he just got up. His brain is still groggy, but he’s figured out that much.

Nothing feels broken though, and whatever pain he’s experiencing seems superficial, so he thinks that’s not too bad.

“Ow...” he mumbles again, mostly out of reflex. “Sorry—”

“What the *fuck!*?” Luna groans, which automatically pisses off Toby.

“Jeez, sorry!” he snaps. What the hell is Luna’s problem anyway? It was obviously an accident...

“*Fuck!* That hurt!”

“I’M SAYING SORRY, DAMN IT!”

“Is everything okay?!” Toby looks up to see a panicked Dillon. “I heard a crash and then both of you were yelling!”

Toby opens his mouth to yell how their complete *asshole* of a girlfriend is being way too cranky in the morning, but instead what comes out is a half-growl, half-yell.

“This idiot—*oof!*” Luna grunts as she tries to push Toby off her.

Toby just growls again, sitting up to glare down at Luna.

“*I said* sorry, damn it!”

“What happened?” Dillon interrupts. He still looks concerned but also slightly annoyed, the way he does whenever he and Luna get into stupid arguments.

Toby huffs, looking away with a frown. “I tripped over this asshole by accident.”

“*God,*” Luna wheezes, “I think you elbowed my gut.”

“I said I was—”

“Sorry, yeah, I know.” Luna grumbles again, rubbing her torso. She turns over to look at Toby, squinting at him with a tired expression. “Just... a painful wake up call.”

Toby hunches his shoulders, biting his lip. It was neither of their faults, and Toby really should have been more aware of his surroundings since he knew that everyone was sleeping over.

“It was an accident...” he eventually mumbles.

“S’alright.”

Luna reaches up to grab his neck, pulling him down for a kiss. Toby sinks into it, morning breath be damned, because he still feels a little guilty.

“Sorry, again,” he whispers against Luna’s lips. Luna just replies with a hum.

They’re pulled out of their world when Dillon says, “Well, now that you’ve sorted yourselves out, breakfast is almost ready!”

Toby whips head to look at him with interest, suddenly picking up the smell of what he really hopes are pancakes in the air. Nodding, he gets up before offering a hand down to Luna, who accepts it easily. Once on their feet, they both walk over to Dillon, where Toby and Luna each peck one of his cheeks.

“You guys!” Dillon giggles, pushing them away. “Come on! Go brush your teeth and the rest of us can wait for you two.”

“Kay.”

“Okay.”

Together, he and Luna pack up everyone’s sleeping bags and pillows before making their way to the bathroom to wash up.

— • —

They’ve been in relative silence since Dill told them to get going, but for some reason apparently Toby feels the need to point out:

“Your hair’s a mess.” With his toothbrush in his mouth though, it comes out more like, *Wur h’ers a me’ff*.

Luna looks at him out of the corner of her eye, mumbling around her toothbrush. “*So’f your’f*.”

“*Wurs is me’ffier*.”

She glares at him, spitting out toothpaste to say, “Shut up, I just got up.”

This makes Toby stick his tongue out at her, which makes Luna push his head, so Toby shoves her back with his hip, and—

Outside, Padma calls out, “Guys! Pancakes are ready!”

They quit messing around after that.

Like many meals they share together, there's more talking than actual eating.

Not that Padma really minds.

"I can't believe we've been together for three years now!" She beams wildly at her soulmates scarfing down their pancakes. It seemed like one moment she was scared out of her mind meeting everyone, and the next she was watching them eat breakfast as their girlfriend.

Sunny grins at her. "I know!"

"Time sure flies," Dill muses with a soft smile.

Sunny giggles. "Can you believe Lu tried to pretend she didn't have our marks?"

Without missing a beat, Luna replies, "Because you guys are little shits." She doesn't take her eyes off her plate when she slices into another pancake.

"But we're *your* little shits," Toby says.

"Forever!" Sunny adds, lifting an arm up to show off their soulmarks.

Padma tries to stifle her laughter when she catches Luna's reaction: she looks like she's trying not to roll her eyes out of her skull.

"We've been together for way longer than three years though," Toby says in between bites.

"That's true," Padma agrees.

Dill chuckles. "Haha, back before we knew."

Sunny hums. "I mean, I've always felt connected to you, Toby."

"Yeah," Toby says around a pancake slice, "and you just had to get my attention by being an annoying dumbass."

"You jerk!" Sunny frowns. "I'm trying to be sweet here!"

Holding back even more giggles, Padma watches Toby completely ignore Sunny. He simply takes another bite of his pancakes, looking at his partner with a flat expression.

"I think it's sweet, Sunny," Dill chimes in.

Padma nods. "You and Luna were like that too, right, Dill?"

Smiling brightly, Dill nods. "Yeah! We've had each other's marks the longest." He looks to Luna sitting next to him, who is still very busy with her pancakes.

"Hey, don't you have anything nice to say, Lu?" Sunny grumbles.

Padma is about to scold him for speaking with his mouth full but Lu replies, "The syrup is sweet enough for both of us without me saying anything."

Sunny grumbles even more. "Jeez, why did we end up with the two biggest tsunderes¹ as soulmates?"

Luna looks up from her plate to glare at them. "I regret teaching you morons that word."

Dill coos. "Aw, Lu, they're just teasing!"

Sunny pouts. "Even though you and Toby are still tsunderes."

She sighs, head tilting up dramatically to look at the ceiling.

"Still love us though," Toby says.

"Forever," Luna adds, using the same tone Sunny used earlier when they showed off their soulmarks. She meets Sunny's gaze with mocking eyes, which makes Dill snort into his next pancake slice.

Padma really can't help herself anymore. She lets out a bright peal of laughter, giggling over her pancakes. Her soulmates have the strangest ways of showing their affection, but she knows that they love each other nonetheless.

Her pancakes aren't finished yet, but she's never felt more full in her life.

(She doesn't notice her soulmates sharing a knowing look with each other, smiling at their giggling girlfriend with loving eyes.)

¹ Tsundere = A Japanese term describing someone who is initially cold (and sometimes even hostile) before gradually showing a warmer, friendlier side over time.

When breakfast ends, Sunny's just about ready to burst from how stuffed they are. They groan, rubbing their stomach in slight agony. They're not sure if they can *move*.

Mercifully, Lu says, "Toby and I will clean."

Toby agrees with a low grunt as he picks up dishes, and Sunny sighs in relief. At least they don't have to worry about clean-up. They mostly want to take a nap now, even though Sunny's only been awake for maybe two hours.

"Thanks," they moan, and Dill says, "Thanks, you two!"

Padma claps. "Thank you! It'll give me time to set up something."

That immediately snaps Sunny awake.

"Set up what?" they ask, wincing at themselves when they sit up a little too quickly. Around them the others also ask what Padma is talking about.

Padma only smirks to herself, pushing herself out of her seat and skipping away to her bedroom.

"You'll see!"

— • —

About ten minutes later (and Sunny feeling slightly better), everyone does see.

"*Ta-da!*"

Padma invites everyone over to her room where a large painting stands.

"It's, um, my gift to you. For all of you."

The painting is beautiful—abstract, with swirls of colours and patterns covering every inch of the canvas. What makes Sunny cry out in delight, though, is that they recognize the shapes:

It's their soulmarks, each and every one of them.

Toby's simple circle, Luna's textured crescent, Dill's constellation, Sunny's sun. Padma's complex flower pattern connects them all like the lines connecting the marks on Sunny's arm. No one is centred in the painting, but they all link together.

"Is this," Sunny asks, "why you didn't want us to come in here

for so long?" She wouldn't let anyone enter her room for a while, and now Sunny understands why.

Padma nods, and they whisper a low, *Wow*.

After another minute of stunned silence, she squeaks, "Um, guys?"

Sunny pries their eyes away from the canvas to see Padma biting her lip, fingers wringing together over her stomach. After, they look around: Sunny can see Dill with tears in his eyes, Lu with a surprised look on her face, and Toby's cheeks flushed red. The quiet must be worrying though, since the only one making any noise is Sunny with their squawking.

They can't help themselves—Sunny jumps on Padma. They pull her in for a tight hug, squeezing their girlfriend with all their might.

"Padma!" they squeal. "It's awesome!"

"Amazing," Toby says, and soon Sunny can feel his arms wrapping around both of them.

"Padma," Dill says, and Sunny can hear how his voice is thick with tears when he crowds close, "it's *beautiful*."

Sunny grins, turning their head to look over at Luna, who's still in shock. Her eyes are comically wide behind her glasses, jaw dropped slightly.

"Lu!" they call. "Get over here!"

Luna finally makes her way over to wrap everyone into her arms. Face buried in Dill's shoulder, Sunny barely hears her mumbling, "It's perfect, Padma."

In the middle of their giant hug, Padma chuckles in relief. "Thank you, everyone! I'm so glad you all like it!"

They all answer together.

"How could we not?"

"Of course, we'd love it!"

"We love anything you make us."

"Padma, it's amazing!"

Sunny sees tears gathering at the corners of Padma's eyes, smiling brightly up at everybody, and Sunny holds on tighter, happy to sink into the moment surrounded by their loved ones.

via @jercydee
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Thank you for reading!

Kind comments given to the author-designer
will be showered in love<3

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Toronto's Lakeshore University features the city's first ever co-ed varsity volleyball team, Net Blazing.

Luna Haruto, Sunny Kordin, Tobias Blakely, Padma Perera, and Dillon Pieper happen to be on it.

Luna and Dillon are childhood best friends. Sunny and Tobias are buffoons and rivals. Padma is just trying to keep them all together.

Five wildly different personalities
over half a dozen relationship combinations,
one happily penta polycule.

Unconventional Rules is a collection of alternative short stories following five undergrads as they navigate volleyball, school, and each other. Some of the stories relate; some of them don't. Throughout it all, shenanigans and bickering abound.

This limited edition copy also includes user guides from *Adopt-A-Character Facilities* featuring exclusive content about each character!



Jercy Dee is a queer, neurodiverse creative who combines publishing, design, and general nerdiness into a multimedia practice. They have been published professionally in several periodicals, community publications, and other media. They also publish independently through various fan-led community projects such as the *Haikyuu!! Manager Zine*.

Unconventional Rules is Jercy's debut novel and first ever completed manuscript of original fiction. It is a synthesis of fanfiction methodologies, radical sexuality politics, and a tribute to Jercy's fandom roots.

Jercy currently lives in Toronto, Canada and love zines, memes, and emojis (>w<)b

