



# The Cat Lover's Circumstances

## Chapter 6 *Transcript*

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Illustrations by Aiwa and © Chromatic Press

### Cast:

Misaki: Tara Burke  
Aina: Elissa Park  
Nishida: Anthony Sardinha  
Ayukawa: Sarite Harris  
Rina: Courtney Lunn

### **Special Thanks**

Alex O'Shea  
Leena Soussi  
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Ramsey Soussi  
Babette Hodi  
Jennie Fiddes  
Aya & Elias

*Note: Due to last-minute changes, transcript may not match final audio exactly.*





[Open on urban neighborhood: a bus is dropping people off and driving away.]

NISHIDA: Here we are. Casa de Nishida.

MISAKI: Wow, it's nice. When did you move here?

[Misaki and Nishida walk up the stairs.]

NISHIDA: My dad set us up with an apartment when Rina ended up at the same college as me. Though he's been starting to give us hints.

MISAKI: About what?

NISHIDA (uncomfortably): That we're probably going to have to fend for ourselves in a year or so. You know how it is... Business is bad.

MISAKI: Oh. I'm sorry.

NISHIDA: Nah, how were you supposed to know? My poor father. Economy's getting worse, his daughter's a dropout, and his son's a good-for-nothing... Yeah, Dad must be pretty depressed.

MISAKI: You're not a good-for-nothing.

NISHIDA: If you say so. Come on in.

[Nishida unlocks and opens the door.]

MISAKI (meekly): Pardon the intrusion...

NISHIDA: I'm home! Rina!

[pause]

[silence]

RINA (from down a hallway, quiet): Who's with you? Are they girls again?

MISAKI: Girls, hmm?

NISHIDA: [nervous laugh] (quietly, to Misaki) Hang on, she doesn't mean, like... Uh, look, I've had club meetings here. (louder) Rina, it's okay. Come on out. It's...

MISAKI: Rina? It's me.

[After a pause, Rina shuffles out the door and into the living area.]

RINA: Misaki.

MISAKI (shyly): Um... hi again.

VOICES (RINA): *Surprised! Nervous!*

RINA (flustered): I-I'm so sorry, my hair's a mess, and...

MISAKI: No! No no no, it's totally fine.

RINA (to Nishida, annoyed): Hey, Haruka! Why didn't you warn me?

NISHIDA: I said I was bringing someone over!

RINA: You made it sound like I should hide! Every time you invite those martial arts girls...

MISAKI (curious): Does he do that a lot?

NISHIDA: Hey now.

RINA: I-I need to change clothes. Would you like some tea? Or crackers, I think we have some...

MISAKI: It's okay! Ugh, please, no more food... You don't have to change or anything, we can take it easy!

VOICES (RINA): *Nervous, anxious, embarrassed...*

RINA: This is terrible, I'm in my pajamas and...

MISAKI (getting irritated, trying to sound casual): Oh please, I don't even put on *pants* half the time! You're really fine!

[pause]

NISHIDA: [stifled snort-laugh]

RINA: Oh. Um, okay.

MISAKI (a little embarrassed): Right, so we can all just relax, no problem. Heh, I remember when you were just a little kid, crying and following your brother around.

RINA: That...was a long time ago.

NISHIDA: Let's sit, yeah?

RINA: Is...there a reason you came over, Misaki?

MISAKI: Yes, well... I delivered the last page.

RINA: You did.

MISAKI: She said...

RINA (excited): What?

MISAKI: She said it's really good.

RINA (pleased): I was hoping she'd like it.

MISAKI: *And...*I know about you two.

RINA (apprehensive): Know what?

MISAKI: I mean, I... I understand. How close you are to Ayukawa-senpai.

[long pause]

NISHIDA: What? You're both looking at me like I'm supposed to say something.

[awkward pause]

NISHIDA: I was wrong, okay? Confronting her like that at the festival...I shouldn't have done that. I screwed up.

MISAKI: Um...actually, I think we'd like some time alone...

NISHIDA: What, can't talk with me around?

MISAKI: Well...

NISHIDA (trying to be friendly): Aw, come on. Rina, what can Misaki know that I can't?

RINA: It's not like that.

NISHIDA: What's with all the secrets all of a sudden?

MISAKI: Look, Haru, just give us a--

[They're interrupted by the sound of a collar bell. Claws scratch and a cat meows from behind a window.]

RINA (pleasantly surprised): It's Yuki! Hello, baby!

MISAKI: Yuki?

NISHIDA: It's a stray.

RINA: She's not a stray! Yuki's an indoor-outdoor cat.

[Rina opens the window. The white cat from Chapter 1 hops in and onto the floor with a meow.]

RINA (baby talk): Yes hello, Yuki darling! Welcome back!

MISAKI: Ah! Hey, I know that cat!

RINA: Hmm?

MISAKI: It's Sebastian's... My cat... His secret lover. (nervous, hopeful) Um, can I pet her?

RINA: Sure! She doesn't scratch. Go ahead.

[Misaki and Rina pet the cat. Yuki purrs as they engage in dual baby talk.]

MISAKI: Aww, so cute and fluffy, aren't you?

RINA: Such a sweet cat, yes, you make friends easily. Don't you, Yuki?

MISAKI: Precious! Yes!

[Yuki yowls with displeasure and jumps away, back toward the windowsill.]

NISHIDA (amused): I knew that was gonna happen.

MISAKI: Haru, you had a cat all along?

NISHIDA (a little bitter): Yeah, well. Now we're *all* keeping secrets.

RINA: Don't be like that...

NISHIDA: Like what? You and Misaki are hitting it off, I'm glad.

VOICES (NISHIDA): *Annoyed. Annoyed. Resentment.*

MISAKI: Oh god.

NISHIDA (gradually more serious): But you know, to be fair. *You're* the one who kept saying everything was fine, that I didn't need to get involved...and then all of a sudden you go out on your own, *outside*, and I find you and Ayukawa together. That's weird, right? How could I not be suspicious?

MISAKI: Haru, wait a sec--

NISHIDA: No, Misaki. It's nice of you to care, but this has been going on way longer than just last night. (to Rina) So what's the music thing about? That's the note you gave Misaki, right? If Ayukawa isn't blackmailing you, then what are you doing this for?

RINA: I'm just trying to finish what I started. That was the song we made together.

NISHIDA: Yeah, I know. It's not that I don't believe you, I just don't get why there's all this skulking around if she's really innocent...

RINA: The people keeping this alive don't care if we're innocent or not.

NISHIDA: But she isn't even *trying* to deny anything.

RINA (upset): Would it have helped me if she did?!

[silence]

NISHIDA (backpedaling, trying to calm her down): Whoa. Wait a sec--

RINA: You didn't even give her a chance. *That's* why I didn't want to talk about her--because I didn't want you to crucify her even more! [uncomfortable pause] Kiki isn't responsible for anything that happened. I swear it.

NISHIDA: But if that's true... All this time I've been trying to help you. What did you *want* me to do?

RINA (quietly): I wanted you to believe me.

NISHIDA: I... (quieter, humbled) Okay.

MISAKI (nervously): [clear throat] Um, Rina... I'm sorry. I actually have a request.

RINA: Yes?

MISAKI: Ayukawa-senpai wants to play the song with you. At the recital.

VOICES (RINA): *Afraid. Afraid! Wanting...*



RINA: I know. But I can't do that. They won't let me, and...I'm out of practice. It would sound terrible.

MISAKI: She doesn't think so.

RINA: It just can't happen.

MISAKI: But what if we could convince them?

VOICES (RINA): *Afraid! Scared!*

RINA: I'm telling you, it's impossible! I haven't picked up a violin in ages. Every time I try, there's just...a block, and I can't do it.

MISAKI: But--

RINA: Misaki, thank you for delivering the last page. I'm in your debt. But what you're talking about is... It's a *fantasy*. Everything's already set now, and...if I went back there, who knows who'd be watching.

VOICES (RINA): *Afraid! Scared! Help!*

MISAKI: Rina.

[From far away, in the silence, music suddenly plays in another room. It's the same music in Misaki's room since Chapter 1: Fantasy Quest Online.]

MISAKI (confused): Uh...

RINA: [gasps] Wait, where did Yuki go? Yuki!

NISHIDA: Did she walk on your keyboard?

RINA: Oh no!

MISAKI: (at the same time) Oh no! Cat!

NISHIDA: We'll be right back.

[Rina and Nishida head for the other room, leaving Misaki alone. The music continues. Yuki meows.]

RINA (from the other room): Go on! Out!

MISAKI: That music. I'd know that BGM anywhere.

[Misaki leaves to walk down the hall. She pushes open the door to the other room (Rina's bedroom) gently, revealing the music loud and clear.]

RINA: Misaki!

MISAKI: That's Fantasy Quest Online. I play it, too!

RINA (nervous): Ah, um, yes, I've been spending a lot of time playing lately... I'm sorry, but my room's kind of a mess, would you mind just--

MISAKI: Whoa! Wait a minute, that's your character?

RINA: Yes?

MISAKI: What's your username? That's the rare armor that dropped... (slowly realizing) that...one...time...before the party...

RINA: Um, what is it?

MISAKI (carefully): ...Buddy?

RINA: Huh?

MISAKI: Is it you?

RINA: Um...

MISAKI: I told you that armor would look good on you! Right?

RINA: [realization] Are you...my in-game wife?

NISHIDA: Uh, in-game wife?

[Both girls scream excitedly.]

MISAKI and RINA (together): Oh my god!

MISAKI: Where have you been, buddy?!

RINA: I've been...playing on a different server, I'm sorry!

MISAKI: Whaaat, why?! You traitor!

RINA: I'm just so stressed out, I wanted to play by myself for a bit. I'm so sorry, I was going to respond to your messages... But I got the armor! I wanted to show it off to you later.

MISAKI: It's okay, I understand! I...I thought you were a guy.

RINA: Because I play berserkers all the time? You play healers and I thought you were a guy, too!

MISAKI: Really? Even with all the tildes and smileys?

RINA: [laughs] Aww, the smileys! I like those so much!

MISAKI: Wow, this is unbelievable...

NISHIDA: [clears throat]

RINA: Ah.

MISAKI: Right, um. Haru...

NISHIDA: So this is who you've been playing with, Rina?

RINA: Apparently...?

MISAKI: She's really good, okay!

RINA: You're awesome, too, Misaki!

NISHIDA (clearly not interested): Ah, really. Great. Okay.

[Misaki moves closer to the screen.]

MISAKI: Hey. Is that another rare drop?

RINA: Yeah... I've been camping here. It's a special staff that increases fast-casting. It's really good for healers--I wanted to get it for you.

[long pause]

MISAKI: Let me help!

RINA: Huh?

MISAKI: Yeah, I can run back to my dorm *really fast* and...

RINA: No, no...!

NISHIDA: Yeah, don't do that. I've got a laptop. Just play here.

MISAKI: Really?

NISHIDA: And I'll join you.

MISAKI: Huh?

RINA: Haruka, you play?

NISHIDA (slightly offended): What? I do try to pay attention to... I mean, just casually.

MISAKI: Okay... (suddenly very formal) Thank you for letting me use your laptop! I will gladly partake!

NISHIDA: Hey, come on, bowing is a bit much...

RINA: [clicks her mouse] If we're gonna do it, we have to hurry!

MISAKI: Okay!

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[Transition to all three of them sitting on their computers in Rina's room, playing Fantasy Quest together. Yuki is padding around and meowing. Game-related talk moves quickly over the sound of clacking computer keyboards.]

RINA: Hey, Misa.

MISAKI: Yeah, buddy?

RINA: Are you all set for revives?

MISAKI: Yep, all good! You've got your light armor on, right?

RINA: Ooh, you're right, good idea. Okay, hang on... (sheepish) This is so weird, talking to you directly.

MISAKI: Are you kidding? This is awesome!

NISHIDA: Man, I look like such a scrub.

MISAKI: Leather armor is okay! At least you won't die.

RINA: Just follow my lead, and keep attacking the weak spot when the time comes.

NISHIDA: Got it, boss.

[clacking on keyboards]

RINA: Oh, and Haruka.

NISHIDA: Yes?

RINA: Kiki... I mean, Ayukawa was framed. By the same people who were stalking me.

NISHIDA: I see. [clacking on computer]

RINA: We've been trying to work out a plan. So we can both... ome out. Safely.

NISHIDA: So...I almost ruined everything, huh?

RINA: Um, well...

MISAKI: Like a bull in a china shop.

NISHIDA: Oh, shh.

MISAKI: Okay, okay...

[long pause with only the sound of clacking computers]

NISHIDA: I'm sorry.

RINA: It's okay. You were trying to protect me.

NISHIDA: Not doing a good job of it.

RINA: You sound like her when you say that.

NISHIDA: [winces] Ooh. Comparing me to her. That's going to...take some getting used to.

RINA: She's really nice.

NISHIDA: Okay... Well, I don't think I've asked this until now, but... How can I help?

RINA: I don't know yet. But I'm not *trying* to leave you out. I promise. You'll know everything soon.

NISHIDA: [sighs] I guess that'll have to do.

[clacking on keyboards]



NISHIDA (suddenly frustrated and angry): Aaarrghh, I can't believe I'm such a *freakin' idiot!*

RINA (calmly): Shh. Settle down.

MISAKI (calmly): Focus on the game, Haru.

NISHIDA (defeated): Fine.

[A cell phone buzzes.]

NISHIDA: Whose phone is that?

MISAKI: I think that's yours, Rina.

RINA: Yeah...

[Rina flips open her phone and taps it. Pause.]

MISAKI: You okay?

RINA (surprised): It's...Kiki.

[silence as everyone stops playing]

MISAKI: Take it. It's okay. We can idle in the town square for a bit.

RINA: Okay. [opens her phone] Hello?

RINA: Hi, Kiki.

[pause]

RINA: No, it's okay... I was just in the middle of a game with my brother.

[pause]

RINA: No, it's fine...

[pause]

RINA (a little nervous): You played through the ending I sent you?

[pause]

RINA (happy): I'm really glad!

[pause]

RINA: Misaki? Actually...she's here, too.

[pause]

RINA: Yeah, sorry, there's a lot going on... Kiki? I'm going to play the recital.

AYUKAWA (excited, tinny, loud enough to be heard through the receiver): *Really?!*

MISAKI: Whaa?

NISHIDA (whispering, annoyed): Zip it, Misaki!

RINA: Yeah. I will. I mean, I'm out of practice, so I'm sure it won't sound any good...

AYUKAWA (through the phone, exaggerated frustration): *Ugh, not this again!*

RINA: [laughs] Sorry! I'll work on my confidence.

[pause]

RINA (trying to hold back tears): I know. I... Me, too.

[pause]

RINA: Okay, I'll talk to you later. Bye.

[Rina hangs up the phone. After a moment, she softly starts to cry.]

NISHIDA (tentative): Did she say something to you?

RINA (while crying, wiping her face): No, nothing like that! We were just...totally *normal*.

[pause] I can't believe it.

NISHIDA: Well... Good.

RINA: Thank you, Haruka. Misaki.

VOICES (RINA): *Happy... happy...*

VOICES (NISHIDA) (quieter, more faint): *Uncertain... happy...*

MISAKI (surprised): There it is. Finally.

RINA: What?

[After a moment, Misaki yelps.]

MISAKI: Gahh! We're gonna miss the event!

RINA: Oh no! We gotta go fast!

NISHIDA: Don't worry, some jerk in leather armor's here to save the day!

MISAKI: Don't die, Haru!

RINA: That's why we got those revive potions!

NISHIDA: Pfft. Oh, ye of little faith...

MISAKI: Hey, are you guys hungry?

[Yuki meows and purrs as the scene fades out.]

**To be continued in Chapter 7, December 2015.**