

Cherry Blossom Petals: Dates 2 and 3

Empty Pockets and Giant Robot Wars

Ages 16+



Amusement parks are magical places. They also magically vaporize every single yen you own in under three hours.



Ren fished through his hoodie pockets and struck gold: one solitary coin, two paperclips, and a fuzzy piece of lint.



Luckily, five hundred yen is the exact market rate for survival in the neon alleyways.



The transaction was executed with solemn dignity. Two piping-hot taiyaki, secured.



Dinner had officially moved to the waterfront park. Scenic, romantic, and completely free of charge.



Hana pulled out the first fish pastry and immediately initiated a critical psychological debate: head first, or tail first?



She chose head-first without mercy. Red bean paste steam erupted like a tiny volcano.



Ren took the custard one, completely forgetting that molten custard operates at the temperature of the sun.



They claimed a wooden bench under a solitary lantern. Who needed fancy restaurants when you had warm pastry grease and good company?



There was only one crispy tail-fin fragment left in the bag. A duel of honor commenced.



Hana snapped it in half and fed him a piece. The crisis was averted, and Ren's face turned pinker than the blossoms.



With stomachs warm and wallets fully hollowed, they strolled toward the train, completely content.



'Next time,' Ren promised, 'I'm taking you to a real dinner.' Hana grinned. 'You better not make it boring.'



A parting fist bump sealed the deal: Date Three was going to be dinner and a movie. Classic. Unbeatable. Foolproof.



Friday arrived, and Ren chose dinner: the most romantic culinary establishment known to high schoolers—a budget fast-food beef bowl shop.



Ren ordered the sensible medium beef bowl. Hana studied the glowing vending machine and made her fateful choice.



The trays arrived in thirty seconds flat. Ren got beef and rice. Hana got a mountain of meat and one perfectly smooth hard-boiled egg.



Instead of eating it, Hana carefully perched the hard-boiled egg on the very peak of her beef hill, cheering when it didn't roll off.



Then she crushed the egg with her chopsticks and inhaled the entire bowl in four minutes. Ren was both deeply impressed and mildly terrified.



Full and energized, they arrived at the cinema for 'The Multi Power Rangers Experience'. Ren expected popcorn and comfy reclining chairs.



This was not a normal movie. The theater was filled with hydraulic flight cockpits, heavy-duty joysticks, and safety harnesses.



The mechanical harnesses clamped down with a menacing clack. A computerized voice droned: 'Prepare for planetary defense.'



The massive screen flashed crimson. A horde of howling space barbarians in jagged spiked starships dropped out of hyperspace right on top of them.



The hydraulic platform lurched violently. Ren screamed, desperately wrestling the steering yoke while Hana slammed the booster throttle to maximum.



'Sync your controls to punch!' the screen roared. Hana shouted battle cries, throwing real hooks into the air while Ren scrambled to match her rhythm.



Barbarians swarmed the windshield. Hana discovered the big red missile button and began hammering it like a drum solo.



The theater's 4D fans blasted hurricane-force winds into their faces along with artificial theatrical smoke. Date night had become a cardio workout.



'Dual-Core Overload!' flashed the display. Together, Ren and Hana slammed the center activator down at the exact same instant.



Ninety minutes later, the house lights clicked on. Two battered galactic warriors stumbled out of their cockpit seats, dripping with sweat and adrenaline.



Stumbling down the quiet cinema hallway, Ren groaned, 'I think I tore a muscle defending sector seven.' Hana burst into uncontrollable laughter.



They reached the night train station platform. The city was quiet, but the air still felt charged with cosmic victory.



Hana stepped through the train doors, turned back, and gave a triumphant two-finger salute. 'Good flying, partner.'