

Love murder basketball  
Kurutta Hito

**Camping Trip- Short story from** *Love, Murder,  
Basketball.*

*Featuring Saitama and Goro.*

*Written by: Kurutta Hito*

The summer air was thick with humidity, clinging to Goro's skin like a second layer. But this summer felt different—because it was different. He was finally eight years old. It wasn't a huge leap, but to him, it meant something. He was getting older.

Standing at the grand entrance of his family's mansion, flanked by two maids and a butler, he watched intently as Saitama packed his car. The trunk filled with gear—strange equipment Goro had never seen before. His curiosity stirred, but he said nothing, simply observing, a quiet tension settled in his chest.

Saitama let out a deep sigh as he shut the trunk of the SUV. He turned, walking toward Goro, then bent down on one knee to meet the boy's gaze. A faint smile tugged at his lips before he asked,

"All ready?"

Goro raised a brow, confusion flickering across his face. "Where are we going?" he asked. "You never told me... and it's really hot."

"You'll see when we get there. Don't worry too much, it'll be fun."

Saitama straightened up, planting his hands on his hips as he cast a firm glance at the household staff. His voice took on a commanding edge.

"We'll be gone for about a week. Everything has already been arranged, so just keep the place in order." He paused before adding, "I expect it to be just as tidy when we return. Understood?"

The maids and butler bowed in unison. "Yes, sir."

Saitama led Goro toward the car, pulling open the passenger-side door with a playful grin.

"Let's go, young master," he teased.

Goro hesitated, staring up at him in confusion. His brow furrowed as he asked, "The passenger seat? Why would I sit there?"

Saitama chuckled, the sound light and amused. "It's not much of a fun road trip if you're stuck in the back like always," he said. "Wouldn't you agree?"

Goro stared at the open door for a moment, considering Saitama's words. It was true—he always sat in the back, usually with a book or a handheld game, while a driver took him wherever he needed to go. But this? This felt odd.

With a small nod, he climbed into the seat, the leather cooled against his skin despite the summer heat. He glanced around, taking in the unfamiliar dashboard and the faint scent of coffee and cigarettes lingering in the air.

Saitama shut the door and walked around to the driver's side, sliding in with relaxed ease. He turned the key, and the engine rumbled to life.

"Comfy?" he asked, giving Goro a quick glance before shifting gears.

Goro huffed, crossing his arms. "It's... different."

Saitama smirked as he pulled onto the road.  
"Difference is good. Trust me."

The SUV hummed down the long driveway, the towering gates of the mansion swinging open as they approached. Goro leaned against the window, watching as they passed through, leaving behind the pristine estate and stepping into the unknown.

Minutes passed in silence, broken only by the soft hum of the AC and the rhythmic sound of tires on the road. The city stretched out ahead of them, buildings standing tall under the scorching summer sun.

"So," Goro finally spoke, his curiosity getting the better of him. "Are you going to tell me now, or are you just going to keep me guessing?"

Saitama chuckled, keeping his eyes on the road. "Where's the fun in telling you everything right away?"

Goro sighed, slumping in his seat. "At least give me a hint."

Saitama tapped his fingers on the steering wheel, pretending to think. "Alright, one hint." He glanced at Goro with a smirk. "It's somewhere you've never been before."

Goro rolled his eyes. "That doesn't tell me anything."

"Exactly," Saitama said with a laugh.

Goro huffed, but he couldn't deny the flicker of excitement bubbling up inside him. The unknown was unsettling, sure—but it was also a little thrilling.

As they drove further from the city, the tall buildings gave way to open roads and endless green fields. The air smelled fresher, the sky stretched

wider, and the hum of city life slowly faded into something quieter, something calmer.

Goro glanced over at Saitama, who looked completely at ease, one hand resting casually on the wheel.

Goro stared out the window, his eyes widening slightly as endless rice fields stretched before him. The lush green paddies shimmered under the afternoon sun, rippling with the breeze. He had never seen so many before, never seen this much open space. It was almost surreal, like stepping into a different world.

"We're not in Tokyo anymore, are we?" he blurted out, turning to Saitama in disbelief. "No way."

Saitama kept his gaze steady on the road, a hint of amusement in his voice. "Yes, you deduced correctly, young master."

Goro leaned forward, pressing his hand against the window. The sheer openness of the landscape was mesmerizing. Back in the city, everything felt compact buildings stacked high, streets packed with people, the sky barely visible between towering structures. But here, everything stretched wide and free.

"Where *are* we, then?" Goro asked, still watching the fields roll past.

Saitama smirked. "Somewhere new."

Goro sighed, already used to the vague answers, but he couldn't deny the flicker of anticipation growing in his chest.

The car rolled to a stop at a small gas station, the soft chime of the fuel pump signaling Saitama as he stepped out to fill up the tank.

Goro remained in the passenger seat, his gaze fixed on the road ahead. The stillness of the countryside felt different—quieter, slower. Then, out of the corner of his eye, he noticed the movement.

A boy, who looked to be about a year younger than him, walked past wearing a lightly colored yukata. His dark hair shifted slightly with the breeze. Just as he was about to continue, he suddenly stopped, turning his head.

Their eyes met.

Goro, still seated, looked down at the boy through the car window. The boy stared back, his

expression unreadable, as if trying to place him—  
figure him out.

For a moment, neither of them spoke. The world  
around them seemed to slow.

The boy rolled his eyes before turning away,  
walking into the small shop attached to the gas  
station without a word.

Goro frowned, his annoyance bubbling up as he  
muttered, “What the heck was that about?”

Leaning back in his seat, he crossed his arms and  
huffed. “What was his deal?” He glanced toward  
the shop’s entrance before scoffing. “Anyway,  
who’s that pale during summer...?” He shook his  
head. “What a weirdo.”

He tried to brush it off, but something about the  
brief exchange lingered in his mind.

Saitama slid back into the car with a tired sigh, the  
warmth of the day evident on his face. He reached  
into the cup holder, grabbing a water bottle before  
handing it to Goro.

"Here you go," Saitama said, his tone casual. "You  
must be thirsty."

Goro took the bottle, unscrewed the cap and took a long drink. The cool water was a relief against the heat, and it gave him a moment to clear his head.

"Thanks," Goro muttered, wiping his mouth. He leaned back in his seat again, his thoughts drifting back to the strange encounter with the boy.

As the car began rolling again, the quiet hum of the engine filled the air. Goro couldn't shake the encounter from his mind. He glanced over at Saitama, a frown tugging at his lips.

"Hey," Goro said, breaking the silence. "What was up with that kid back there? The one in the yukata?"

Saitama kept his eyes on the road, his hands steady on the wheel, but he gave a small shrug. "Not sure. It didn't seem like he wanted to talk."

Goro huffed, crossing his arms. "He didn't even say anything. Just stared at me like I did something wrong." He paused, then added, "Who's that pale during summer anyway? Freaked me out a little."

Saitama chuckled lightly; his gaze still fixed ahead. "People are different, Goro. Some stand out more

than others, just like you do. But you're right—he was kind of odd."

Goro leaned his head against the window, staring out at the passing fields. The encounter was still nagging at him. He couldn't shake the feeling that there was something more to it, but he wasn't sure what.

"So, you think he knows us or something?" Goro asked, not fully expecting an answer.

Saitama gave a casual shrug. "Could be. Or maybe he's just someone who doesn't see a lot of outsiders. Either way, not worth stressing over."

Goro fell silent, but his curiosity lingered, the mystery of the boy sitting just beyond his reach.

"I understand," Goro muttered, though his thoughts were still clouded by the encounter at the gas station.

They drove a bit longer, the scenery slowly changing. Goro's gaze wandered out the window, watching the occasional house or shop blur past, but there was a sense of quiet that kept tugging at his attention.

Finally, after what felt like an eternity, the car slowed, the road becoming more uneven as they approached an open lot surrounded by thick woods. The air here was so different—fresher, cooler—but there was something strange about it. Goro frowned, staring at the gravel lot.

Saitama turned off the engine and gave Goro a look. “We’re here.”

Goro blinked, confused. “Here? But this is... just a dirt lot. Where’s the hotel?” His voice had an edge of irritation.

Saitama didn’t answer immediately. Instead, he opened the door and stepped out, stretching his legs.

Goro sat there, still staring at the area around them. It was well-kept, yes, but there were no grand structures, no signs of luxury. His eyes landed on a lake just past the lot, its water shimmering in the late afternoon sun. A few fish swam lazily beneath the surface, but that didn’t make it feel any more inviting.

“What are we supposed to do here?” Goro muttered, glancing around. “There’s nothing here... and what’s with all the trees?”

Saitama looked back over his shoulder, clearly amused. "You'll figure it out. This is camping, Goro."

Goro's face scrunched in confusion. "Camping? You mean like... roughing it?" His voice was filled with disbelief. "I thought camping meant, like, going to some kind of resort. I didn't think it was... this."

Saitama chuckled lightly and shrugged. "Guess you're about to find out."

Goro crossed his arms, clearly uncomfortable. He'd been to resorts and private villas with all the comforts money could buy, but this was completely different. "This isn't what I imagined at all," he muttered.

Goro sat there for a moment, still in disbelief. At eight years old, he had seen plenty of luxurious vacation spots, but this? This was nothing like what he'd expected.

After a few seconds of hesitation, he finally unbuckled his seatbelt and climbed out of the car, looking around with wide eyes. The smell of fresh pine and earth filled the air, and the rustling of leaves was the only sound that broke the quiet.

“Where are we going to sleep?” Goro asked, his voice laced with confusion. He glanced around at the lack of any sort of building. “There’s no rooms, no beds... Are we just sleeping on the ground?”

Saitama was already unloading some bags from the back of the SUV, looking unfazed by the lack of comfort. After all, he camps every summer. “Yep, that’s the idea.”

Goro’s face scrunched up in distaste. “The ground? Isn’t that... dirty? What about bugs?”

Saitama shrugged, moving over to a nearby picnic table and setting down the bags. “You’ll survive. It’s all part of the experience.”

“But what are we eating?” Goro asked, his stomach growling a little as he thought about the long drive. “We can’t just eat dirt, right?”

Saitama chuckled, clearly amused by Goro’s questions. “No, we won’t eat dirt, young master. I brought some food.” He pulled out a couple of cooler bags, revealing some simple meals. “We’ll also cook, make a fire, and roast stuff. It’s not gourmet, but it’ll do.”

Goro raised an eyebrow. "Roast stuff? Like marshmallows?"

Saitama gave him a sidelong glance, a hint of a grin on his face. "If you're lucky."

Goro stood there, arms crossed, still staring at the surroundings like they were some kind of alien world. The trees, the dirt, and especially the lack of anything resembling luxury made him feel out of place.

"So... how exactly are we supposed to sleep here?" Goro asked again, his voice tinged with concern. "There's no beds, and no... pillows."

Saitama, now busy unpacking a couple of large bags, paused and turned to Goro with a small smirk. "Well, we'll make a tent."

Goro blinked. "A tent? What is that?" His voice was more curious than skeptical now, as he truly had no idea what Saitama was talking about.

Saitama walked over to one of the bags, pulling out a rolled-up piece of fabric. He unraveled it to reveal a collapsible structure. "It's a little like a portable house. You set it up, and it keeps you dry and safe from bugs."

Goro stared at the object, his eyes wide. "So, we sleep *inside* that? But it's just... fabric and sticks."

"Exactly," Saitama said, his tone amused. "The sticks help hold it up, and the fabric keeps the rain out. It's not as comfy as your bed at home, but it'll work."

Goro's nose wrinkled. "I've never slept in anything like that. What about a mattress?"

"No mattress," Saitama said with a grin. "Just the ground and maybe a sleeping bag to make it softer."

Goro frowned. "Sleeping bag? You mean like... a big blanket?"

Saitama chuckled. "Kind of. It's a blanket that you can zip up to stay warm." He paused for a moment, glancing at Goro. "You'll see. I'll show you."

Goro crossed his arms. "And what about fire? You said we're going to cook... but I don't see a stove or anything."

Saitama nodded, his expression turning more serious. "For a fire, we need firewood. We'll gather it, make a fire pit, and cook over it."

"Firewood? But... how do we make fire? I can't just *make* fire."

Saitama raised an eyebrow. "You don't need to make fire from scratch. We'll use matches or a lighter to start it, then just keep adding wood to keep it going."

Goro was silent for a moment, trying to process all this. "So, we *gather* wood from the ground... and then make fire out of it?"

"Yep," Saitama said with a small nod. "It's all part of the fun. Just follow along, and you'll figure it out."

Goro glanced around again, his curiosity battling his discomfort. "This is all so... weird. But, uh, I guess I'll try it."

Saitama gave him a knowing look, a small grin tugging at the corners of his lips. "That's the spirit."

Saitama worked methodically, setting up the tent with ease, his movements practiced as he hammered stakes into the ground. Goro watched intently from the sidelines, still skeptical but oddly fascinated by the process.

“Young master,” Saitama called without looking up, his voice calm and patient. “You might want to stay back a little. Don’t want you to get hurt while I’m setting things up.”

Goro grumbled but nodded, stepping back a few paces, though his eyes stayed glued to the process.

He watched as Saitama stretched the tent fabric and pulled it taut, his hands moving with ease, setting up the poles.

“Okay, but... don’t tents have, like, walls? Why doesn’t this one have any?” Goro asked, his brow furrowed in confusion. “Isn’t the point of a tent to have walls so bugs don’t get in?”

Saitama glanced at him with a faint smile. “Well, this tent’s a little different. It’s more like a shelter than a room. You’ll be okay. Just keep the door zipped up, and no bugs will bother you.”

Goro tilted his head, still unsure. “So... it’s like a room without walls? But we’re still outside.” He scratched his head. “How is that supposed to keep us safe from the weather, though? What if it rains?”

“Good question, young master,” Saitama replied with a chuckle. “The tent’s waterproof. We’ll be

dry inside, even if it rains.” He finished securing the tent, standing back to survey his work. “I’ll show you how to zip it up, and you’ll see for yourself.”

Goro nodded, though he still wasn’t convinced. “Okay, I guess... but what about the floor? It looks so... lumpy.” He pointed at the uneven ground under the tent. “How are we supposed to sleep on that? Are you sure we shouldn’t have a mattress or something?”

Saitama chuckled, amused by Goro’s questions. “The ground’s fine. It’s just part of the experience. If you’re worried, we’ve got sleeping bags to make it more comfortable.” He tossed a sleeping bag onto the ground inside the tent. “Think of it like an adventure. It’s not a luxury hotel, but it’s an experience you won’t forget.”

Goro looked at the sleeping bag warily, as if it might bite him. “But... where’s the bathroom? What if I need to go in the middle of the night?” His voice was filled with genuine concern.

Saitama smiled and shook his head. “That’s another part of camping, young master. We’ll have to go ‘in nature.’ Don’t worry, it’s all easy to get used to.”

Goro's face scrunched up in distaste. "So, I'm supposed to just go in the woods? But what if there's... animals?" His voice wavered with unease.

Saitama couldn't help but laugh at that one. "There's no need to be scared. Just take a flashlight and make sure you're safe. It's all part of the experience of camping."

Goro crossed his arms, looking more than a little skeptical. "I don't know about this..."

Saitama stood up, dusting off his hands. "Trust me, you'll get the hang of it. Just relax and enjoy the fresh air. It's not something you will get every day."

Goro sighed, glancing around at the vast wilderness. "I guess so," he mumbled, though his tone still held a hint of uncertainty. He wasn't used to feeling out of his element like this.

Saitama's voice softened as he looked at Goro with a fatherly smile. "It'll be fun, young master. You'll see."

After a while, the tent was set up, and Saitama motioned for Goro to follow him. "Alright, young

master. Time to gather firewood for tonight's campfire."

Goro hesitated for a moment, then followed reluctantly, his eyes scanning the woods around them. He had never ventured this far into nature before, and the unfamiliar sounds of chirping insects and rustling leaves made him feel uneasy.

Saitama walked ahead, his steps sure and steady. Goro trailed behind, trying to keep up, but he stumbled over the uneven ground more than once. "I'm not used to this," Goro muttered as he tripped over a hidden root and almost fell. He caught himself at the last second, his face flushed with embarrassment.

"Careful, young master," Saitama called back, not even turning around. "Watch where you're stepping."

Goro grumbled, brushing the dirt off his pants. "It's not my fault the ground's all bumpy." He looked around again, trying to make sense of the trees, the underbrush, and the strange plants growing everywhere.

It wasn't long before something caught his eye, something small and moving. He stopped dead in

his tracks. “What’s that?” he asked, pointing to the ground.

Saitama turned to see a beetle crawling across the forest floor. “It’s just a beetle. Don’t worry about it.”

Goro took a step back, a disgusting expression crossing his face. “Ew. What if it bites me?”

Saitama shrugged. “It won’t. They’re harmless.”

Still, Goro couldn’t help but take a few cautious steps away from the insect, as if it might leap up and attack him. He glanced up at Saitama, who was already moving on, looking for firewood.

As they continued walking deeper into the woods, Goro’s eyes widened at every new bug he saw. A dragonfly buzzed by his ear, and he swatted at it frantically, nearly knocking over a small bush in the process.

“Woah! Careful!” Saitama called, half amused and half concerned. “You’re going to knock something over and hurt yourself while doing it.”

Goro, flustered, shot Saitama a look that could kill. “I can’t help it! There are so many bugs here! What

are they all even doing?” He shuddered, making sure to stay several feet away from anything that looked like it might fly.

Saitama chuckled. “They’re just doing their own thing. The bugs are part of the whole ‘nature’ experience, young master. We are in their home, so let’s do our best to respect it.”

As Goro stumbled along, trying to navigate through the underbrush, a particularly large spider caught his attention. He froze; his eyes locked on the web it had spun between two trees.

“That... that’s huge!” Goro exclaimed, taking a cautious step back.

Saitama glanced at the spider and raised an eyebrow. “It’s just a spider. Don’t worry. It won’t hurt you unless you mess with it.”

Goro was now taking exaggerated steps to avoid any low branches or bugs in his path, his movements clumsy as he tried to keep his distance from everything that crawled or flew. He couldn’t remember the last time he’d been so bothered by something so small.

“Do we have to go *all the way out here* for firewood? I’ve never seen so many... *things*,” Goro muttered, his face scrunched in distaste as he cautiously picked his way through the forest.

“You’ll have to get used to it,” Saitama said, clearly amused at Goro’s discomfort. He bent down to pick up a few branches. “The longer we’re here, the more you’ll understand how everything works.”

Goro sighed and reluctantly bent down to pick up a stick, though he looked at it like it might actually bite him. “This is just weird,” he muttered under his breath. “So, what now? We just start a fire on the ground?”

Saitama smiled at him, tossing a branch onto the small pile he’d already started. “Yep. We’ll gather enough, then make a fire pit.”

Goro glanced at the pile of firewood with a frown. “This just doesn’t feel like anything I’ve ever done before, I’m not good at it at all,” he admitted, still eyeing the bugs around them.

Saitama looked over at him, his smile softening. “It’s not supposed to be like what you’re used to. But that’s the point. You’re learning something

new. You don't have to do everything perfectly, but you'll get better at it."

Goro hesitated for a moment before picking up another stick. "I guess you're right," he muttered, though it was clear he still wasn't entirely convinced. He added the branch to their growing pile and looked up at the trees again, trying to focus on the task at hand.

"Alright, young master. Let's grab a little more and then we can head back," Saitama said, tossing a few more logs onto the pile.

Goro nodded, though his eyes were still warily darting around the woods, half expecting something to jump out at him. "This better be worth it..."

As they made their way back toward the camp, Goro was still on high alert, his eyes darting around at every rustle in the trees and every buzzing insect. He was getting used to the idea of gathering firewood, but the wilderness still felt like a strange and unfriendly place.

Saitama, noticing Goro's unease, walked ahead a little, leading the way back to their campsite with effortlessness. Goro, however, couldn't stop

glancing over his shoulder, his mind preoccupied with all the bugs and unfamiliar sights.

Then, out of the corner of his eye, something caught his attention. Near a small pond just off the path, he saw a flash of movement. He squinted, trying to make out who it was.

There, partially hidden by the trees and low shrubs, was the same boy he had seen earlier at the gas station, the one who had given him that odd, dismissive look. The boy was still alone, this time dressed in full camping gear, with a backpack and a hooded jacket, crouched by the water's edge. He was staring at the pond, barely visible through the brush.

Goro froze, his eyes widening. He instinctively pulled on Saitama's sleeve, pointing toward the pond. "Hey, there's that kid again!" he whispered urgently. "What's he doing here?"

Saitama glanced over at the boy, who, for the moment, seemed completely unaware of their presence. "Oh, that kid? What do you think he's up to?"

Goro tilted his head, still watching the boy from a distance. "I don't know, but he looks like he's camping too. Alone. It's kinda weird, isn't it?"

Saitama squinted at the boy for a moment, then shrugged, his expression relaxed. "Doesn't look like anything to worry about. Maybe he's out here for the same reason we are."

Goro kept his eyes fixed on the boy, his curiosity piqued. "But why's he all by himself? Shouldn't he have someone with him? Like an adult? Also, why is he dressed like that? It's like he's trying to hide or something."

Saitama gave a light chuckle. "You're overthinking it, young master. Maybe he just prefers some peace and quiet. Doesn't mean there's anything strange about him."

Still, Goro couldn't shake the feeling that something was off. There was just something about the boy's solitude and the way he blended so perfectly with the surroundings that felt... unusual.

The boy suddenly stood up, looking in their direction for just a brief moment, before quickly turning away and heading deeper into the woods, disappearing behind the trees.

"See?" Saitama said, oblivious to Goro's lingering doubts. "He's probably just going off to explore. Everyone needs a little alone time."

Goro watched the spot where the boy had disappeared, his mind racing with questions. "That was... weird," he muttered, still not entirely persuaded. "Do you think he's... hiding from something?"

Saitama smiled, ruffling Goro's hair lightly. "You worry too much, young master. Let's just focus on getting this fire started."

But Goro couldn't let it go. Something about the boy, the way he had just vanished into the woods, didn't sit right with him. As much as he tried to push the thought away, the encounter had left a lingering sense of unease in the pit of his stomach.

Still, he followed Saitama back to the campsite, the scene near the pond replaying in his mind.

Saitama and Goro arrived back at their campsite as Saitama laid the firewood on the floor, in the middle of their site.