

The Bet

Or such a thing called Love

Von mie-van-cha

Kapitel 18: Chapter 18

It was raining. The streets were under water and lightnings lit the sky for seconds nearly every minute. Bursting loud thunder was following them immediately. Hundreds of people, hidden under their umbrellas ran as fast as they could to reach their homes. But there was somebody who ran against the flow of people. Somebody who didn't know where his home was, where he belonged to.

The tears were invisible under the raindrops for a while now. He didn't know his destination. After Ryo had left Tegoshi didn't know where he could go to. Staying alone at Ryo's apartment till he got back? Impossible. He feared the loneliness of the empty room's, now Ryo has gone.

He felt the weight of the little key inside his pockets. It's for Yamapi's apartment. He's waiting for you.

Was he really waiting? They haven't spoken with each other since...then. Tegoshi was afraid. Was it okay to simply go back to Yamapi like this? Would he send him back? Ryo said he belonged to Yamapi, but why hadn't tried to get in contact since then even once?

Since that fight Yamapi had with Ryo Tegoshi hadn't spoken a word to Yamapi, though they had been even in the same room several times for a NEWS-Group discussion. Yamapi had always been busy when Tegoshi was around, so there had been no chance for them to even exchange some verbiage. It had seemed as if Tegoshi was pure nothing for him. If it would have not been for Ryo's presence always near and caring for Tegoshi, then...Tegoshi didn't even want to think about all the mess of emotions that would have arose again.

But now...He had no other place to go to. Well, he was sure Massu or Koyama would take him in, too, but that was nothing where he could stay for a longer period of time without explaining his situation. Koyama would have the sympathy, of course he would. Bute he wouldn't be able to give Tegoshi what he needed. That would be impossible for him. Actually it was impossible for everyone. Except for those two persons, of whom one had left him a while ago and the others one just a few hours.

Tegoshi stopped and looked up. The rain was dripping down his hair, his nose and his clothes. He was wet and his throat sore. The steps up to Yamapi's apartment seemed too high for him to climb and he feared what would await him up there. He gulped the fear down though and forced himself to walk up the stairs. But then he stood there sopping and shivering from the wind, lost by his courage and didn't dare to knock or ring the bell. Of course he could use the key. But wasn't it, though Ryo gave it to him with the permission of use, too rude to simply walk in there, all like "Honey, I'm home! Did you miss me?"

So Tegoshi did nothing, except sinking down onto the cold floor, his knees pulled against his chest, and trembling he waited for...Yeah, for what? Someone to fetch him, to care for him, to comfort him.

He didn't notice the cold breeze, the rain and his mood overcame him and he laid his head with a little 'plong' against the door of Yamapi's apartment and closed his eyes.

Yamapi looked up from the script he was just about to read. He thought he'd heard something. There had been a noise at the door. Or had he just imagined it through the steady whisper of rain?

He stared at the door for a moment and listened. Nothing.

He decided to concentrate back on the script. But no matter how hard he tried, his thought always drove off. Off to Tegoshi. How much did he wish to hold him in a close embrace....But he knew that the decision of leaving him with Ryo had been right. Yet his heart was still stronger than his mind. And the desire of wanting Tegoshi back grew bigger and bigger with every second he wasn't with him. But the moments when they had to spent time together as NEWS were far more worse. He had the chance to be with Tegoshi, but also he was not allowed to. He had cherished the time Ryo had pleaded him to stay at Tegoshi's bedside in the hospital. And he was grateful for Ryo letting him have those moments. But he wished he would have not been doomed to leave Tegoshi after some short hours again. Every time he had turned around, facing his back to Tegoshi he felt as if he had cut out a part of himself. Every time again and again, until he was just a fragmented broken piece of nothing. Yamapi had never know before the meaning of the word "heartache". Now he knew it was the term for a hungry, hurting, biting monster which ate him up from the inside non-stop.

Yamapi twitched up from his soda. He had heard the noise again. This time he was damned sure that there was something outside at his door. He looked out of the window. Heavy clouds were throwing big raindrops through the stormy night. Who the heck would deliberately take a step out of his own warm home during this weather? Maybe it was just his neighbour asking for some coffee to borrow. But wouldn't be nearly 11pm a bit too late for a fresh batch of caffeine? Curiously Yamapi went to the door and looked through the peephole. The hall was empty. Strange...Yamapi wondered and opened the door. Immediately he felt a jerk at his legs and he looked down.

"Dear, Holy Crap!" He shouted in surprise, finding Tegoshi at the doormat, exhausted, completely wet and tear-stained. "Tesshi, what's wrong? What happened?"

But Tegoshi just sobbed having his head laid against Yamapi's knee. He wasn't able to say a word. Overwhelming emotions have been taking him over since the moment he had heard Yamapi's voice. There was grief, sorrow, despair, qualms – and most of all relief. He hadn't heard that familiar beloved sound of Yamapi's voice for how long now? He hasn't noticed how much he has missed it.

"Tesshi...Ssh....Calm down." Yamapi put his strong warm arms around him and pulled him tightly to his chest. Tegoshi could hear his heartbeat. "Everything is okay."

"No..." Tegoshi pressed out between two hoarse sobs. "Not, it's not. Ryo is away. I'm alone....And I who abandoned you...am here now...Nothing is okay."

Yamapi patted Tegoshi's head. "Everything is okay now." He said with emphasis, laid his index finger under Tegoshi's chin and lifted his face up. He deeply looked into Tegoshi's round wet puppy-eyes.

Tegoshi swallowed. "Why are you doing this?"

"Doing what?"

"Being so nice to me. I...I thought you wouldn't care about me anymore..." Tegoshi's voice broke off.

Yamapi sighed, a sigh full of grief. "I've tried so." He whispered. "I thought it would be easier for you that way. I thought it would help you if I start to ignore you. All I want is for you to be happy. And in order for that one of us had to give up...Ryo's my best friend after all."

"I've missed you..." Tegoshi's voice was trembling. Yamapi stroke his cheeks.

"I've missed you far more." He said and Tegoshi didn't dare to deny it. He knew that Yamapi had been alone the whole time while he had spent his days happily with Ryo.

"I'm sorry." Tears were rolling down Tegoshi's face again.

"Everything is okay now." Yamapi repeated and then he leaned down his head to kiss Tegoshi.

Is it really okay...Ryo?

The days passed by and Tegoshi got used to living with Yamapi. It was comfortable. Yamapi was mature and calm, he cooked for him, cared for him, he washed his clothes and Tegoshi noticed that they lost Ryo's scent and turned into Yamapi's. It was the third night when Tegoshi wore one of his favourite hoodies and he felt kind of

puzzled as he nestled down into the soft cloth and couldn't find any of Ryo's scent in there anymore. Realizing that fact gave him a painful twitch.

Yamapi hugged him often and Tegoshi felt that he needed the physical contact. It felt good when Yamapi stroke along his waist when he assed him in the kitchen. He got goose bumps every time they kissed. He slept like a baby in Yamapi's arms during night. They lived peacefully together and though Yamapi was always around him in order to not let Tegoshi get sad, the little one missed his Ryo-chan a lot. Of course he was happy that Yamapi took him in without hesitating. But Tegoshi wanted to know why Ryo had left him. What did he do wrong?

And then the days came when their days off ended and they had their first days as NEWS during their concert tour again. Due to Tegoshi's break-down they had postponed the last concert for two weeks, so the final was now just 2 days away. Tegoshi felt nervous even before he entered the dressing room. He knew Ryo was in there, he had to be, this was work after all.

Yamapi's hand shove into his one and squeezed it gently. "Don't worry." Yamapi whispered encouraging and smiled at him. "I'm right behind you."

Tegoshi opened the door and immediately 3 persons ran up to him. Kei-chan hugged him. Massu patted his back with his warmest Pooh-Bear-Smile and Shige grinned: "Oh, our Mr. Big Mouth is back." Tegoshi laughed. "I knew you missed me" He said with the arrogant voice he so perfectly mastered. Secretly he was looking around the room. And there he was, sitting on the sofa, deeply sunken into the pillows, his hands in the pockets of his worn-out-jeans. Ryo. He was different from the way Yamapi had been. Yamapi had tried to ignore him, but Ryo sat there and stared at Tegoshi. Simply stared at him. He didn't say a word, he didn't move a bit. He just stared with his bitterly, painful sad eyes.

Tegoshi felt about to cry again, wanted to run to him, cling onto his arms and say how much he wished him to take him back. But he felt Yamapi right behind him, just as he'd promised him some minutes ago, which held him back. So Tegoshi just nodded "Hey, Ryo-chan." He said in a low voice and carefully stepped nearer. He knew Yamapi was watching while Koyama, Massu and Shige tried to open a conversation. "Hi, Tegoshi." Ryo whispered in his husky voice. "How are you?"

"I'm fine." Tegoshi answered, knowing that Ryo's actually question behind that was something like "Does he take good care of you?" Tegoshi hadn't noticed how well he had gotten to know Ryo in this short period of time.

"That's good."

"And...How about you?"

"As the circumstances demand." Ryo replied for which Tegoshi was grateful. "Thank you." He said. Ryo looked at him. Puzzled.

"For your honesty. Thank you for not lying to me."

"I've never lied to you." Ryo's eyes were so full of sorrow Tegoshi could hardly bear it. He so wanted to cling onto Ryo. But he couldn't and he was glad when the staff-san came into the dressing room to get whole NEWS for the rehearsal.

For the rest of the day they didn't exchanged a word, but as often as their eyes met Tegoshi could feel Ryo's pain. He could see it through the whole Dome.

And he knew Yamapi was aware of that. But Yamapi didn't lose a word about that, yet Tegoshi could see it in his eyes as well. It brought back the guilt and made him realize how he must mean to Yamapi. He even lets be so near to Ryo though he knows I haven't given up on him yet...And if I'm honest...I don't want to. I don't want to lose Ryo.

Tegoshi sighed. He'd never thought that being honest with oneself could be so painful.

After the rehearsal was over everyone went back to the dressing room. But nobody noticed, that half-way Yamapi pulled Ryo away and into another hallway.

"What?" Ryo asked provokingly. "Are you going to beat me up again?"

"No, of course not...At least not now."

"Oh, that makes me totally glad."

"Stop the irony, Ryo." Yamapi scolded him seriously. "I have something to talk to you about."

"If you want me to stay away from Tegoshi then I can promise you that I'm already doing my best."

"It's not that. Though it concerns Tegoshi." Yamapi sighed. "Why did you leave him?"

"It doesn't feel right." Ryo said, suddenly calm and sad. "You don't know but Koyama told me that Tegoshi was in love with you even before our bet. You won."

"Maybe I did. But the situation changed. Tegoshi's feelings now are important, Ryo. And he still can't decide."

"That's why I try to get some distance. If I'm ignoring him like you did...No, that's impossible for me. I could never ignore him."

"Thanks for your nice method of making reproaches."

"That's actually not my intention, but I'm happy that it worked out that way thought." Ryo said in a sarcastic voice. "Did he stop thinking about quitting?"

"Quitting?" Yamapi looked puzzled.

"Tesshi wanted to quit NEWS. Did he give up on that thought?"

Yamapi stared at his best friend. "I wonder...Did he?"

"That's what I'm asking you."

"I don't know..."