

The Bet

Or such a thing called Love

Von mie-van-cha

Kapitel 19: Chapter 19

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He was sure. It would be the best after all.

He could see Ryo suffer after all, how it killed him everyday to endure the hours they spent together in NEWS. He didn't have the right to make poor Ryo suffer that hard. That's why he decided to quit. To finally cut this agonizing bond. He had thought a lot about it. NEWS was one of the most precious parts in his life. But it would be unfair if he would torture Ryo and everybody else just because of his selfish behaviour.

He still had Yamapi. That was more than he actually deserved. He didn't want to be greedy. At least he could give NEWS back to Ryo....He knew that was a lame act of showing his gratitude. But it was the only thing he could do. The only thing which wouldn't hurt the three of them, and especially either Yamapi nor Ryo that much. It would be the best. And maybe he would find back to his usual self again.

The door bell made him twitch. He looked up, hadn't even noticed that he had tears in his eyes. With some light moves he slapped the blood back to his cheeks. He took a deep breath before he opened the door to the apartment.

"Eh?" He looked down the empty hallway. The elevator blinked, just arrived the ground floor seven staircases beneath with a 'bling'. With narrowed eyebrows Tegoshi wanted to close the door again when he noticed the black little thingy at the doormat. Curiously he picked it up. It was a voice recorder with a little cassette in it. Again he looked down the hallway, but there was still nobody who could have dropped it there by accident. "I wonder who this did..." he murmured to himself and took the little Dictaphone with him into the apartment. He sat down at the sofa and pressed the green 'play'-button. First there was silence, just the sound of the cassette running. And then he heard it. This low soft breath he would know under a hundred of breaths. His heart cramped as this breath started to sing – as Ryo started to sing.

Dore dake aruite kitan darou?
Furimuitara namida no ato

How far have we walked?
If I turn around, you'll see the path of my tears

The clear husky voice which filled the room, his ears, his head and his heart and everything else brought back the tears into his eyes. And with them this not bearable pain which he tried to oppress with all his might.

Kizu tsuke kizu tsuki tadoritsuita basho
Ima koko ni kimi ga iru

Arriving at a place where we hurt and get hurt
You are here now

He sobbed. He sobbed unstoppable wetting his shirt, his hands, his lap.

Ai nante kimi dake sa itsudemo motome sugite
Ai nante kimi nashi ja imi nai yo ikirarenai
This thing called love, it's only you, I always demanded too much
This thing called love, there's no point without you, I couldn't survive

His throat began to burn; his eyes swam away in a sea of tears. And he felt so lost. Ryo's voice, singing this wonderful A cappella , made him want to cling onto him so much.

Asa no hizashi ni kimi no negao to
Tereta egao de ureshiku nareru kara
Sonna hibi wo kanjitai yo eien ni

The morning sunlight on your sleeping face
Because the way it shines on you smile makes me happy
I want to feel those kind of days forever

A pause. Ryo's gentle breath again, heavy now, as if it had to endure a flood of tears. Tegoshi knew what would come next. He didn't prepare himself for the great burn-out though. Instead of that he just sat there, shivering defencelessness in order to let the overwhelming impact of the final hit hit him hard right into his chest.

Ai nante kimi dake sa itsudemo motome sugite
Ai nante kimi nashi ja imi nai yo ikirarenai
Ai shitemo ai shikirenai
Mirai nante kimi nashi ja mienai yo iranai yo

This thing called love, it's only you, I always demanded too much
This thing called love, there's no point without you, I couldn't survive
Even if I love you, I can't love you enough
This thing called the future, I can't see it and I don't need it unless you're in it

The cassette still ran, but there was this silence again. Tegoshi trembled. He bit his lips, cried so hard he could hardly breathe. It hurt so much. Everything inside him hurt so much. A sore sob left his wounded throat.

"Yu-chan..." Tegoshi twitched again, then stared at the voice recorder in pure fear. "Yu-chan...Please don't quit." The last words echoed in his head. Ryo's painful, heartbroken voice, pleadingly, over and over again.

And Tegoshi broke down. With a desperate whim he threw his hands around his legs and rolled himself together into a ball. There he laid – this soft, helpless creature, left alone.

"Fuck!" he spit out in a sob. "I still do love him after all."

And he spoke out what he'd denied to himself with all his might, what he'd tried to forget in order to not hurt Yamapi. "I still do love him."

Yamapi found him on the sofa. He didn't expect little Tegoshi to lay there. After he tried to call him various times he thought he would have already gone to bed. But there he was, his little Tegoshi, and looked as lost and hurt like two weeks ago in the hospital.

"Tesshi..." he whispered and knelt down next to him. He saw the dried trace of the tears and stroke his pale, cold cheeks. "What did you do?" he asked in a quiet voice, but Tegoshi didn't wake up. Yamapi feared to change the structure of this question into the actual more proper version. What did we do to you? "Did you cry yourself into sleep again?"

Yamapi sighed. "I thought I would have finally won your heart, you know. I really thought that- And now...Look at you. You're still confused. I can tell by your painfully sleeping face that you're still torn up between us...But what should I do? ... Ne, Tesshi, tell me...What should I do with you...?" His voice was nothing more than a low hoarse whisper. "It hurts me as well to see you like this. And Ryo. He's my friend after all... I've never seen him so desperate, Tesshi...My poor little Tesshi..." Yamapi felt the tears rising up within him. "I thought it would be my great chance when Ryo let you go...And you were happy with me. And now I see that I am still not enough. It breaks you. I don't to be condemned to just watch you being destroyed. I don't want to...I can't stand it anymore..." A teardrop was rolling down Yamapi's cheek and fell down onto the floor where it disappeared in the thick, fluffy rug.

"Kei-chan told me you want to leave. Is it my fault? Tell me, is it my fault?" He watched Tegoshi's sleeping face in silence. The hours passed and nobody moved. Just their heavy breath, heavy of sleep and exhaustion and grief and sadness and despair and tears, between them.

The alarm clock of Yamapi's cell phone woke them up in the morning without any harm. Yamapi's muscled hurt because he sat the whole night on the uncomfortable floor by the sofa.

"Eh, Yamashita-kun? When did you come home?" Tegoshi asked as he sat up.

"Tonight. I didn't want to wake you up, so I just stayed here." Of course Yamapi noticed that Tegoshi addressed him the formal way. And it stitched his heart.

"Oh..."

Yamapi forced himself to smile and tousled through Tegoshi's hair. "Don't make such a face." He said and squeezed Tegoshi's face into an awkward grin. Tegoshi reminded this of the scene where he had to say Yamapi that they couldn't share a hotel room. It seemed so far away...This sudden realization nearly brought back the tears. But just nearly. "We should get ready for the last concert today..." He said instead and wrenched himself out of Yamapi's arms.

"Mh, you're right." Yamapi followed Tegoshi with his eyes, how he didn't had the courage to look into his eyes as he tidied up some stuff in the living-room. "I'll change my clothed. You can take a shower." Tegoshi left the room before Yamapi could say something, so he just sighed sadly and walked into the bathroom.

15 minutes later they were ready to leave for the concert which would start in 6 hours.

They hardly spoke anything with each other and both felt the change through the awkward atmosphere which seemed to stand between them like a big fat marshmallow. Though Tegoshi tried to prevent it. But whenever he looked up at

Yamapi he felt his smile crackle and whenever he wanted to say something the words faded away into nowhere.

As they arrived at Tokyo Dome and in the NEWS dressing room both of them were quite happy to already see Koyama, Shige and Massu there. Kei-chan sensed the tense and immediately involved Yamapi into the conversation between him and Shige, so that Tegoshi could settle down next to Massu.

"Holy crap, Tegoshi! You look like been smashed by a roller-coaster!" Massu shouted and pointed at the deep rings under Tegoshi's eyes.

"I don't feel so well." Tegoshi admitted with a tiny smile. "But I will be okay. Tons of make-up and a pot of coffee will probably raise my appearance and mood."

"You sure?" Massu asked with worry. Tegoshi smiled. It felt good that even one person cared for him without causing any trouble. "Yeah, I'm sure. Thanks, Massu." He said with as much sincere as he could bring up.

Shige in the other corner of the room left for the toilet, so Yamapi and Koyama were alone. "What happened?" Koyama asked and Yamapi dug his hands deep into his pockets. "I'm not quite sure, but looks like I've lost..." he said and Koyama lifted up his eyebrows in confusion. "Eehh?"

"When I came home tonight I found him in the living-room. He'd been crying and as far as I know from my talk with Ryo yesterday he wanted to convince Tegoshi to not leave NEWS. And that he mumbled something about 'Ai nante'...Tegoshi hasn't talked to me so far. But I'm sure he finally decided. And that he has decided against m. He whispered Ryo's name tonight..."

Koyama patted Yamapi's back. "Maybe it's better that way."

"Maybe? I would be glad when this would finally end? I can't stand seeing him like this, Ryo either. We can't help him without making it even worse. Whenever we want to cut the bonds he breaks down into this deep dark hole. I don't want to see his far-away eyes. I don't want to see him hiding his grief. I know we caused him all this trouble, but all I want now is that he is finally happy. I love him, but I have the feeling that I'm better with not loving him anymore. Don't get me wrong...It's just that...I don't know what to do..."

"I understand, Pi...I fully understand you. I already got the thought, don't be angry, that Tegoshi is better with Ryo."

"I'm not angry." Yamapi said honestly. "For a long time I really feared to lose him, but now...He smiles when he's with me, the sparkle comes back to his eyes, but it doesn't reach his heart. When he's with Ryo-chan, his whole body, his whole aura shines. Does this sound stupid?"

"Mmh, no. It sounds right."

"Maybe it's wrong to push him back and forth between us like an out-worn teddy bear. But this time I made my final decision."

"I'm proud of you. I really am proud of you."

"This doesn't help me a bit."

Koyama sighed. He thought for a moment, stroking Yamapi's back, who seemed pretty down. But then he got a brilliant idea. "But I know what would help you. All three of you!"

Yamapi looked up, his face a mixture of confusion and curiosity. Koyama smiled brightly. "It's Shige!"

"Shige?!"