

Love Me Till Death

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Prolog: Emotional Landscapes

"Mission accomplished!" Omi used to say...with such a warm smile on his face that made her like him even more. But now all of that is gone and it made her impossible to come back. Now she was all alone, lying in her bed, staring at the dark sky and thinking. It was a restless night and she didn't sleep well in this new "home". Though Burman had decided to stay even if she would feel uncomfortable and alone. Nevertheless she couldn't get along with the feeling of being here, in *this* house. Around *these* people. It was totally absurd...

The weather was stormy and on the other side of the street she could see some trees swaying in the wind. Then a thunderbolt crashed down the earth and she finally awoke. Sitting up and looking through the room, realizing that it wasn't a dream would have made her cry. It was a hopeless situation and eventually she couldn't understand in what state she must have been to decide for this. A life with Crawford, Schuldig, Nagi and Farfarello.

Actually they have always been in her life but now it was different. Now she should cooperate with them and not fight against the "evil beasts of the darkness" as Pershia used to call Schwarz.

Schwarz. An organization of SZ. The most hated persons on earth, Burman had once thought and now she should change that attitude?! How could it be possible...Right now she felt like an animal chased in a cage, not able to do anything.

Suddenly somebody knocked on the door, disturbing her thoughts and apparently wanting something from her. However she wasn't ready for visits and she didn't want to see anybody. But the stranger has already entered the room.

It was Schuldig, the red-haired devil in person. She had read so many pages about him and still she didn't know anything - only what he had done to his victims - how he had tortured them and how they had fallen into eternal sleep.

When he walked down the hall, skulking in the dark and not being able to sleep, her thoughts did flash into his mind and he couldn't help reading them.

Hmm...she is doubting... that won't please Crawford... he thought and decided to enter the room.

And now he stood there, looking at her with this smile on his face which made her melt. Schuldig didn't even say something but the simple fact that the telepath was looking at her made Burman suffer. She felt ashamed and embarrassed, how she laid there on the bed - with unmade hair and merely conscious. When it was enough for her and she couldn't stand the glance anymore, Burman looked down to the blanket, away from his narrow green eyes, and stroke shyly through her hair.

"How was your first night?" he said and broke the silence. His voice sounded soft and calm. Totally untypical and she felt like she had to open her heart. As if he cared about her and she couldn't reject him.

Despite she didn't know what to answer or even to think because she knew that he

was reading her mind. He always did. And whenever she would say something or not he would already have know it. Accordingly Burman wanted to avoid thinking but it was harder than she has imagined. She simply wasn't able not to think at all. And it was also hard not to believe Schuldig that he meant it good... in any way.

"I...I am fine." she stammered and the feeling of discomfort and humiliation increased. In fact she hated how he played with her but she wasn't capable to break through his control. Schuldig has been doing this so many times before and nobody could escape his mental torture. Why should it be different with her? But actually something was different... He felt like he couldn't control if he wanted to read her or not. Like her mind had his own will and wanted to be read.

He didn't answer because he knew that she was lying, of course, and it made him grin and sneer that she thought she could get away from it.

Men are so easy to rumble...

Thus Burman stood up, hoping to ignore the voice in her head but the pressure he exposed her grew and she finally collapsed onto her knees. Gasping and trembling as if she could not breath or somebody would strangle her. She shored on the floor and hung her head. Struggling inside.

Schuldig loved to see her like this - how she was afflicted by doubts. How she suffered through him and that he even made her crawl like an animal on the ground.

To have power over somebody is really satisfying. he grinned.

Then he went some steps forward, kneeled next to her and ran with his fingers over her shoulder. Burman opened her mouth as if she wanted to say something but only a short breath came out and she closed her eyes in fear.

Why are you doing this with me? Why? What did I do?

He laughed. Every nerve inside of her ached.

"You gonna have your fun with us, I'm sure..." he only whispered into her ear and stroke over her velvet cheek. This feeling of power made him go crazy and he totally enjoyed it.

But finally the German let her go, recognizing that it was enough and more would only get him into hot water. Burman broke down. Exerted and merely aware of the situation. Sweat on her forehead and pain in her eyes.

Schuldig didn't care about her anymore and abandoned the scenery. He had his fun and now she was bound to him. His property and he could play with her whenever he felt like.

"You were really good, sweetie" he said when leaving the room, looking back once more. *Under control.* But Burman was too unconscious and paralyzed to understand his words and at last her mind went black. Falling into unconsciousness.

Kapitel 1: Color Me Blood Red

Chapter One - Color Me Blood Red

"Are you totally insane?" Crawford shouted and slapped Schuldig's face. "Obviously you have no idea how important she is." He said a bit calmer because there was no sense in getting angry. Mastermind wouldn't care about his words and he could say millions of them in vain.

Actually Brad was right and the Red haired only gave a shrug and walked away. It was not one of his problems if she would feel insecure or not. He had his fun and that was all that matters. If Crawford overreacts he won't lose his nerves.

A smirk streaked his soft face. Schuldig remembered the last night and again the feeling of power flew through his body. *We have to repeat that.*

But Oracle was serious and wanted to make clear what the point is.

"I think you should know that she will be your secretary." He said unemotionally.

"Your unpunctuality and reluctance displeased us and there was no other way to be rid of it. There has to be somebody organizing your life. Maybe it would be better if you change your mind. Unless you will bear the consequences."

The telepath stopped and thought. Shit.

Back in Burman's room she laid unconsciously in her bed and rested. She didn't realize that Nagi has been sitting all night long beside her bed and was worried if she would ever wake up again. He felt sorry for her. It was not easy to get along with Schuldig because he likes to play jokes with others. Especially when they are young and weak.

Prodigy knew about that. His first days were unbearable hard and he wanted to go back, to get away from all the people here but Crawford had saved him and he had to stay. For his own good. Nagi only hoped that she would pass the test as well.

Now he stood beside the window and watched the clouds flowing by when there was suddenly a noise. Burman woke up - moaning. Her head ached terribly and she wanted to die if this was possible. Slowly she opened her eyes. The glaring sunbeams hurt.

He quietly walked next to her bed and sat down on the edge. Looking at her and knowing that she was alive calmed him and he sighed softly.

"How are you?" Nagi said tenderly. Burman didn't answer. She was too tired and unconscious to realize what was going on. He touched her hand and glanced at her velvet face. She was very beautiful.

Schuldig should be grateful that he could have somebody like her - as a secretary. *He* would be. But that was not of Prodigy's concern. He had to be satisfied.

Schuldig was in his room - standing at the window and smoking a cigarette. He

thought about Crawford's words. It didn't worry him much but there was a weird feeling inside of him. It was strange but this time he couldn't control if he wanted to read her mind or not. Her thoughts had their own will and he feared it could be dangerous for him. Losing control can't be good.

He turned around and looked. Everything was dark and darkness surrounded him. He loved to be like this. In the sanctuary of the night. There was nothing he could not see and nothing could see him. But doubts grew inside. Crawford finally made it. Schuldig sighed. He felt a bit hopeless and there was nothing he could do against it. He put out the glimmering light and left everything behind.

On the floor again Mastermind walked through the corridors and watched the things passing by. Since 2 weeks it has been the same - every night he was damned to wander around, to be restless and not able to sleep. It was helpless. Sometimes he wished to be like everybody else - be ordinary. But what does it mean to be normal? Losing his gift.

When he passed her room there was still the feeling of pain and fear. A soft sigh left his lips - *how can she still think that I wanted to kill her. If this was my goal she wouldn't rest in that bed.*

But in this case Crawford would have banished him to hell. Not that he feared it but there was a certain respect towards him which deterred Schuldig from doing anything reckless - sometimes. Nevertheless he desired for power and the common rush with each killed person. He often starred at his hands covered with blood and wished to repeat every scene having flown through his mind. Every nerve tickling and always the present smell of -

He went on and walked down the stairs when suddenly the door behind him opened. Nagi left her apartment and looked serious at his co-partner. Mastermind didn't care and followed the path downstairs. If there's something Crawford will talk to him. Same procedure.

"Schuldig, wait."

"What do you want?" you couldn't miss his anger coming trough but still he remained calm on the surface.

"She woke up... and wants to see you." The last words didn't find there way so easily out of his mouth. She had begged him to tell the telepath and he wanted to do the best for her. Even if this means to suffer agonies. Everybody had his problems with the red haired devil. For Nagi it wasn't easy to look in his eyes because he always feared to be read. His thoughts were his own and nobody dare to know them. Despite he couldn't do anything against being read. Schuldig had improved very much during several trainings and now could read without recognition from the outside or by the prey itself.

Though the taller man only nodded and walked past the telekinetic. With a slight look he caught the emotion on Nagi's face but it didn't worry him. He closed his eyes in disgust and entered through the open door Burman's room.

And there she was. Lying on the bed, a bit more composed than the last time. But still not ready enough for him. Actually the Red haired expected her to say something or even think. But there was nothing.

"What do you want?"