

Ignorance is bliss

Absence makes the heart grow fonder....RyuuXShuu-
goodness

Von Merilsell

Kapitel 4: An unexpected revelation

One meets his destiny often in the road he takes to avoid it. -French Proverbs Sayings of French Origin

Chapter 4: An unexpected revelation

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It was early in the morning, even before the morning sun had fully gotten up, as Kou Shouka entered the the royal archive. However he wasn't here yet to begin with his work, no he was worried. Shuurei didn't came home yesterday like she promised, so he assumed she stayed at the archive to put another all-nighter for her paperwork. He first checked the desk, she usually used and expected to find her there, sleeping. Though the only thing he'd found was a massive pile of files scattered all over the table. Those papers undoubtedly belonged to her, he could clearly recognized her handwriting on those files.

Still no Shuurei to find at all.

His sorrows grew, it was so unlike her that she left such important documents lying around in the open. No, he knew his daughter, she never would do such a thing, except... for the case something happened to her. He shrugged, *no it was too early to panic, she can watch out for herself quite well. Still it would ease me to know if she's alright.*

"And is she here?" Seiran's worried voice put Shouka out of his thoughts.

"No I thought so, but I had no luck. Though she was here" he said and pointed to the desk.

"I see, well then I'll go around searching the palace for her and asking Shuuei and

Ensei for assistance", Seiran decided and was thankful for the fact he was allowed to move everywhere around in the palace as the new general of the imperial army. "Master, would you mind staying here for the case she comes back here?"

Shouka pondered this option, before answering: "No. You're probably right, you can move around more freely than me here anyway ...oh and I better take care of the documents too, heaven forbids what would happen if those would land in the wrong hands. Make sure to inform me though, if you got any news."

"Of course", Seiran responded, before hastily leaving the archives to seek assistance from the others. Six pairs of eyes would see more than just two anyway.

"What Hime-sama is lost?" Ensei shouted out surprised, as he heard the news. "Not exactly lost -rather missed, she has a good sense for direction unlike Kouyuu, you know?!" Ran Shuuei replied casually.

Seiran rolled his eyes "This makes the situation even worse, don't you think? Yes hate me for being worried, but she would never abandon her work so carefree, with all the papers lying still around"

"Hehe, Seiran, don't worry she'll okay, Hime-sama is smart, probably more than the three of us together" Ensei said.

"Yeah smarter than YOU definitely, thats for sure", Seiran hissed and glared at Ensei. "Enough of our tea-party already, could we please go now and search for Shuurei?" with this words Seiran aimed for the next place where he Shuurei presumed to be.

"Yes my general, at your duty" Shuuei sarcastically muttered, before following him right away.

They went for different places, amongst others the bureau of government inspection, its small file archive and the royal garden, yet no luck. Seiran was frustrated and was not alone with it.

"Any ideas left where she could be? It's not that I would mind hunting after a woman, but it seems kind of pointless here in such a ridiculous huge place" Shuuei sighed. Ensei however went back to the archive once again to see if she has arrived there meanwhile.

Hmm, he has a point here, Seiran thought and was while going through the options left, suddenly struck by an idea. Hold on a second, where the hell is my brother anyway? I haven't seen Ryuuki around yet, what if Ojou-sama...he mentally shrugged, *naah impossible, they haven't seen each other for about two months*. This he knew for sure, because Ryuuki told ...or better said whined about that fact to him constantly. Despite of eliminating this possibility of it already, he wordlessly took the direction to the kings chamber. He could at least ask his brother, if he has seen her, he decided.

Shuuei followed him rather puzzled, knowing the end of the path quite well and was asking himself quietly, why of all places, Shuurei should be there. ...*Oh..* he inwardly

grinned, as this kind of idea flashed to his mind. *Maybe I only overestimate his highness by thinking whatever I'm thinking, but for sure is ...its going to be interestingeither way.*

Soon enough- not soon enough though for the eager Shuuei - they arrived at their destination. The guards objected first but went immediately silent as they saw Seiran. *Authority much, huh?* Shuuei mused mentally.

Hmm, all quiet here, is my lazy brother still sleeping? Seiran thought, not caring to knock he leisurely opened the door a bit, enough to look through it...and froze at the view.

"I....I...think I've....found h--her," he blinked, obviously not believing his eyes.

He saw his younger brother lying asleep in his bed- so far so fine- but what the rather eloquent and hard to shock man caused to go rigor ...was the small figure lying close entangled in his arms, snoozing peacefully.

Shuurei.

And their clothes scattered around the floor was the evidence of what kind of meeting they actually had....

"Huh? answered Shuuei puzzled, before squishing his head also into the door. "Ohoooh. Looks like I didn't overestimate his majesty at all", he said quietly, grinned all over his face. "About time huh?", he looked at Seiran, whose was still trying to figure out what the heck happened. *No WHAT happened was pretty much clear...but still...*

"Come on, give the two love birds some private space, would you?" Shuuei sighed over dramatically and shoved him out of the door, closing it quietly behind him. The guards looked confused at the two men. "Everything is fine, guys, we only had decided to come back later, the emperor is rather...busy now", he declared cheerfully. Seiran only throw him a glare. "Oh Seiran, don't tell me you are jealous after all."

"No way. Its just unexpected. ...I'm...surprised", he confessed, while they slowly departed from this place.

Seiran knew about Ryuuki's feelings for Shuurei too well, he has always been bold with it -maybe too bold- though this was how his brother was ...kind, righteous and when he loved someone he did it with all his heart, he smiled, remembering on Ryuuki's face as a six years old. Aside his surprise about the sudden change of mind from Shuurei he thought, if Ryuuki is the man she'd choose for her life, she would make a good one ...and he definitely could live with it. Ryuuki loved Shuurei more than anything, therefore she would always get treated with the highest respect and receive his unconditional love. Oujo-sama also knew how to handle him perfectly, he grinned on the picture coming to his mind, where she were scolding the mighty emperor of Saiunkoku like a nagging mother. Yeah they complemented one another quite well, but was Shuurei was really willing to become the empress? Knowing her so

well, he wasn't too sure about it ...and only hoped his kind brother won't get heart-broken again.

"Hime-sama hasn't come back to the archive, so have you still any ideas where she could be?" A breathless Ensei informed the two men. Seiran and Shuuei didn't say anything just looked shortly at each other.

"My my catch your breath, old man, don't run if you can't handle it," Seiran sarcastically mentioned.

"How could you stay so calm, Seiran? I mean what if we really can't find her? What if something happened to her?"

"No, she is fine, believe me", Shuuei responded amused.

"So the both of you have found her, actually?" Or have you asked the emperor if she has seen her?" Ensei asked pointing to Ryuuki's private rooms

"Yeees, we have", Shuuei continued.

"What, you have found her or asked him?"

"Both, actually", Shuuei replied dryly.

Seiran threw Shuuei another "shut up or die" stare, however he was elegantly ignored by him. This was too just much fun for the young man to let it pass. Ensei on the other hand looked rather puzzled at his both friends. *What the hell did Shuuei meant with that?*

"My, my a bit slow today, aren't you Ensei? Well let's say she stayed at his highness place ...for err...an important meeting," Shuuei chuckled. He knew he would probably get killed by the furious wraith of Seiran for saying this, but he thought it was definite worth it.

"What a meeting?...oooh..., Ensei grinned as he finally realized the meaning. Seiran remained silent, though. He decided to punish Shuuei later for his disproportionate announcement, but first he had to figure out what exactly he should tell Shouka about it...

"Uuarghhh", yawned Shuuei loudly and stretched her still tired limbs. The young woman needed a moment to realize where she was, as she opened her eyes. Then realization hit her. *Oh right, I came here because Ryuuki had a nightmare and then we...oh god...* she blushed, while thinking on what occurred last night. She could still feel his hands and touch everywhere on her body and recognized that her face burned by now, probably in a deep crimson red. How could she went so overboard like this all the sudden? She never even kissed him back before and now suddenly all *this* happened at once.

Oh my god, she mentally panicked. Though she had to admit all these strange things Ryuuki had done to and with her felt so- so unexpectedly good. Was that the reason she didn't told him to stop? Notwithstanding the sane part of her reluctantly pleaded to her to do so before she tuned that inner voice out, as she got swept away with passion; more quickly than she ever had imagined? Or was this because she felt so strangely at ease in his arms, enjoying his near? She had never acted so emotionally before, never let a person fully seen her more vulnerable side, where she just acted like what she actually was.

A woman.

Shuurei sat up in his bed, bit her lower lip and tried to find a reason how Ryuuki could crumble her walls she constantly had build up around her emotions so instantly down with just one kiss of his. She knew it was wrong what she had done with him, he was the emperor after all. *Why didn't I told him to stop then?* Her mind was searching for a reason to justify her behavior last night - yet failed to find one. She only knew that her actions might have been complicating things between the two. The last night blurred the lines between being his subordinate and the woman he obviously loved even more. Shuurei felt embarrassed and couldn't decide if it was a good thing or not that Ryuuki wasn't here anymore. Maybe it was really for the better in this moment. She didn't know how to face him at the moment.

"Oh, you are awake now, fine", a cheerful female voice startled her out of her thoughts. She looked up to the sound just to find the face of Ran Jyuusan-hime smiling at her. Good morning... or whats left of it, slept well? Shuurei's eyes widened, *oh noo she has seen me, here...naked...in his bed...oh my god..., was the only thought she was able to form in her panic state.*

Jyuusan-hime coolly overlooked the embarrassed Shuurei while saying: "I should tell you that his majesty...or Ryuuki for you, she winked to her with one eye, is terrible sorry he can't be with you now, but his presence were indispensable for an important matter of the court. Therefore he asked me to take care of you," she finished.

Shuurei found finally her voice again "Ryuuki...did WHAT?"

"Don't worry Shuurei, I'm the lady in waiting remember? Its my job to do the tasks the king gives to me discreetly and I'm good in it. So here use these clothes and I also have boiled you some water, you might wanna clean yourself up before leaving".

"Yes...thanks", Shuurei said puzzled, while still sitting in bed.

"Oh, sorry I almost have forgotten about that", Jyuusan-hime nestled shortly in her robe to put out a letter and handed it to Shuurei. "He thought it would be more personal this way" Shuurei stared dumbfounded at the letter for a second before taking and reading it;

My love,

I'm sorry for not being with you when you get awake, my job really can be annoying at times. However as much I would like to now I can't forsake my duty, but I really hope to see you again later. Be nice to Jyuusan-hime, I have asked her for those things.
I love you.

-Anonymous

Shuurei looked absent-minded on the writing of the letter for a moment. *That idiot, how could he do something so careless? What if this falls into the wrong hands?Okay he hasn't written any name on it, but it clearly showed the handwriting of the emperor.* Every minister and official would be able to recognize it. She shortly huffed angry before giving in to the temptation to read it one more time. *On a second thought this is typically Ryuuki, so cute.* She smiled to herself for a split second before gripping the meaning of her thoughts. *Wait... did I thought cute???* She suppressed the urge to hit herself and just let out a silent sigh.

Jyuusan- hime grinned inwardly, she didn't miss the change in Shuurei's face expression from irritation to delightedness as she watched her reading the letter. *It was there for just a mere second but there was actually something like bliss on that girls face for sure.*

„I'm glad for you both, really.“, she stated firmly.

“Huh why? I mean..its not like that, really“, Shuurei awkwardly blurted out.

Jyuusan-hime quirked an eyebrow. *Oh well there she sit, naked in his bed and told me "its not like that"? Yeah right. Is that girl really so hopeless?* For a moment she admired the kings persistence and willingness to suffer so long for the one he loved, although the one seemed still to deny her love for him after all.

Hmm, time to test her a bit, she decided and sat down to her on the edge of the bed.“You know, Jyuusan-hime started, I never actually intended to marry his majesty, even not after the agreement you both made”

Shuurei looked at her surprised “What?”

The Ran princess sighed, “As you might know its a promise I made to my older brother triplet, if they save someone's live I would do anything they asked. So I'm repaying this debt by entering the imperial residence- and now as lady in waiting. Also you probably remember that I love someone else anyway.”

Shuurei nodded “You mean the one-eyed skinny man at the Kyuusai cove?”

“Yes, it may be foolish after all what happened there, but thats how love is; unreasonable. I still can't forget about him“, Jyuusan- hime looked down, “ I even thought about to forsake my family's wish or my family themselves to search for him”.

It was not a lie she was telling Shuurei, in the lonely nights here in the palace she

often thought about him, about the last time when she saw Shiba Jun. It still hurt her to left him behind like that and wished she could search for him, to see him one more time. Though Jyuusan-hime didn't tell her that this was a forlorn, hopeless wish she had. Like Shuurei she was bound to her family name and duty, maybe even more as Shuurei. She was able to do how she please at last, living her dream of being an official and even held the heart of the emperor of Saiunkoku. Her brothers however would never give her so much freedom or even the possibility to search for the man who had fallen so low in the eyes of the Ran-clan. No, she was bound to her promise, bound to the palace and maybe even bound to marry a man she didn't love. A so called political marriage, which would strengthen up her family's position as the mightiest clan of Saiunkoku. Jyuusan-hime however, even she did love her family, her brothers, would gladly pass on the opportunity of this marriage. She actually liked the emperor, he was a kind and righteous man, though both of them would never be able to get happy with each other. Under other circumstances maybe yes, but not when their hearts were already given away to others.

Shuurei was taken aback by her confession, though she had told her a bit about the man she loved before, she never expected that she would go to that extent for him. Love is.... unreasonable? Jyuusan-hime's words echoed in her mind and Ryuuki's mental picture appeared before her eyes, before she inwardly shrugged.

"Do you love him?" The Ran Princess asked.

"Huh?" said Shuurei, startled out of her thoughts.

"I mean the emperor, do you love him?" Jyuusan-hime looked straight to the young womens face.

Shuurei blinked and tried to avoid her eyes, the question hit her unprepared. "Err... what?N-n-n...no, I-I can't", she managed to bring out and felt her heart fluttering rashly. Why is she asking something like that out of the blue? ...loving him? Sure she felt at ease in his arms, that was a fact she couldn't deny anymore. *But was that really.... love?* She noticed that her face began to burn again at that thoughts and failed to calm the wild palpitation of her heart down.

"Aside that I can't marry him anyway." Shuurei added hastily.

"Why?" she narrowed her eyebrows in confusion.

"I have other goals in life, then only being a wife. I love my job. I worked so hard for my dream to become an official and I don't want to give it up now. There is still so much I want to achieve", Shuurei declared.

Jyuusan-hime expected her to say something like that, yet this sounded more convincing at other times. *Good, same Shuurei-chan, always sturdy and unaware of certain things*, she smiled to herself as she thought on her next sentence she would say to her. A sentence which hopefully draw an evidently reaction out of her.

"So then you are fine with me marrying the emperor?" Jyuusan hime asked her with

the most innocent sweet undertone in her voice she was able to.

"Whaaat? But you have sai...", Shuurei blurted out, before quickly covering her mouth with one hand, her eyes widened.

Damn.

She was appalled by her immediate reaction and inwardly cursed her mouth, which was faster than her brain....again.

Oh what an interesting and unexpected revelation we got here, Jyuusan-hime inwardly grinned. Well, congratulation your highness, it seems that she isn't so hopeless after all..., she thought. Jyuusan-hime stood up from the bed, "Err Shuurei-chan, I'm sorry I have to go now, you may get ready if you don't wanna late for your job...or better say even more late. It was nice to have you seen again, though.", she waved to her and leaved nonchalantly.

"Oh my god its that late already?" Shuurei's eyes widened, as she saw the sun was already standing high up in the sky. She rushed out of bed and got ready with the water and clothes Jyuusan-hime prepared for her as fast as she could. She bound the mess of her hair loosely to a ponytail before running down the hall to the department of imperial investigation.

"Arhh, Ryuuki, someday this man will be my death", she angrily muttered, while she was hoping that she now didn't get fired on the spot.

"Oooh if that's not Kou-"sama", nice you that you still honor me with your presence after all..." Ki Kouki sarcastically hissed, as Shuurei breathlessly entered his office.

"I'm...sor...sorry, sir I over...over slept", she stammered, still trying to catch her breath from running here.

"Hmm is that so? Well I don't have use for officials who doesn't take their duty serious", he narrowed his eyes, looking sharply at her.

"No- its not like that-...I-I..."

"Silence I don't care why you late, I don't want to hear it" Before Shuurei could explain herself, Kouki hushed her rapidly. "More importantly, official Kou you were working on a case, right? So what are your results? Where are the documents? You do have the files I've given to you, right?"

The documen....OH NO!!! I let them in the archive, Shuurei's eyes widened in panic, her mind raced.

This is it.... I'm done, now I'm getting fired for sure. She braced herself for the worst.
