

Ocean Avenue

Von Makikolgami

Kapitel 9: Twentythree

Mamori stared at the man sleeping soundly beside her and shuddered, pulling the blanket closer around her naked body. For a heartbeat she wondered how things had come to this, but then again, it had been a sequence of logical events.

The evening had started with her and Musashi studying together at his place for a test, the last test of the semester. They had taken up a habit to study together because they had taken mostly the same courses. Hiruma sometimes joined them in, when he felt like it, but most of the time it was just the two of them. The girl had never thought anything of it, it was just her and a good friend studying. Of course she had admired Musashi for his looks, his personality and friendliness, but it was nothing than a deep friendship to her. Of course she had played his girlfriend once when he was visiting his fatally ill father to give an old man the illusion that his son had found a woman to produce the next heir, but in her mind he was off-limits.

Then, a few hours prior, Musashi's telephone had rung. He had answered it and while he did, all the color slowly vanished from his face. Worried, Mamori walked over silently, putting a gentle hand onto his shoulder, but he did not seem to notice here, just talked mechanically into the phone. From what she heard though, she gathered that his father had died. It was a relief really, because of his long sickness, his weakened bones and all, but still it seemed to be a shock to this otherwise so calm person.

Gently she had rubbed his back, soothingly, when he had ended the phone call, his face as white as chalk, his hands shaking and cold as he hugged her close and started to cry. It was both a terrifying and heart-rending scene to see Gen Takekura cry over the loss of a close family member. It was even more terrifying because he was literally soaking her blouse.

She had tried to calm him down, she had done her best, really, but he kept shaking and crying until Mamori had no idea anymore what to do and started to kiss away his tears. Alas, this did not have the wanted effect and instead of calming Musashi down, he kissed her. On the mouth. Deeply, so that she had to gasp and give way to her mouth.

Overwhelmed, she realized what Musashi was up to as he made quick work of her blouse and was surprised to find that she did not mind. She knew that this had

probably no meaning the next morning, but it was not like she was averse to having sex with him at that moment, if it helped to calm him down...

Maybe her wild side had not really died down after her relationship with Hiruma that had ended with a disaster. Luckily though, they had started talking again and while Musashi was around, they could be described as good friends, too. Still, things were a little chilly between them and they ensured to keep a safe distance from each other most of the time.

So, being touched and loved by Musashi the way he did right when he led her to his bed, felt a little blasphemous to her, but it was more than just easy to ignore it while it lasted. Now, that the waves had calmed down though and she was alone with her thoughts, all that she could think of was, "Oh my god! Hiruma is going to kill me!"

It was like an unwritten rule; nobody who was in his right mind laid a finger on anything that was precious to Hiruma. The only exception was Musashi, who was allowed to do a few more things than an average person could. For a few months, Mamori had been in that favorable position, too, but after that, Musashi had moved up in that list again, just above her.

Therefore, she had done the unthinkable; she had slept with the only person that Hiruma still loved. She felt somehow blasphemous, dirty and as if she had just defiled the purity Musashi meant to her, namely that Hiruma was the one and only for him and she was only the coverage.

But wait, it had been him that had attacked her. She had tried to convince him otherwise, even if it had been – admittedly – a little half-heartedly, but he had not stopped. So, her conscience supplied, it was not her fault at all, it was entirely Musashi's.

Next to her, the young man stirred, rolling from his front to his back as he sleepily rubbed his eyes. "What'cha doin' there... Get back t'sleep," he mumbled, making a lazy movement with his arm to signal her to lie down on his chest.

She blushed again, but no reason to refuse the offer came to her mind. Thus, with a deep sigh, she crawled back under the covers and rested her head on his broad chest, listening to his strong and steady heartbeat, that soothed away her fears and worries until she finally fell asleep.

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The next day he asked her with a cute little blush to accompany him to the hospital and the necessary places to take care of his father's funeral. Being as faithful and nice as she was, she did all these things with a smile, even as her worries because of Hiruma grew. However, these days they were so busy that she was not even able to look back on everything herself, and when she was finally able to breathe again, she realized that a whole year had passed and that there was only one semester of

university left for her, Gen and Hiruma.

Naturally, she indulged herself into studying more, along with Gen and also Hiruma, who seemed to take this thing that was going on between her and Gen easier than she had expected, he even encouraged them once to hold hands in public to keep the picture. With no sadistic stab behind it, like he usually like to include. Mamori suspected that it had something to do with the fact that the two have them had just spent the better of a weekend together.

Gen was always better at explaining things to Hiruma than she had been, mostly because Hiruma actually bothered to listened to his words whenever he said something, unlike to her. Sure, they talked, he reacted to what she said, but he never *listened* to her. Over the time she realized that it had always been like that and that – despite everything that had happened – this was the *real* reason, why she had broken up with him. He was all right as a friend, very loyal, too, but the fact that he knew everything *better* than she did got so much on the nerves that it became unbearable to her.

She still wondered where Gen took all his patience from concerning Hiruma. However, she understood better and better each day why these two felt drawn so much towards each other. It was as if they were two opposite sides of a magnet. The other could not live without the other, but there was just too much in this world that stopped them from being together.

One, Gen thought it was impossible to be successful in this world if you were openly gay, even though there were a few examples from other countries. Two, Hiruma did not want to be open. He wanted to be together with Musashi, but nothing steady, just some simple kiss-and-run relationship that went so much deeper than he let on. Mamori honestly thought that it was sad that they happened to agree that their relationship had no future when it was all that they wanted.

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“Maybe we should just marry,” Gen said during a vacation – courtesy of a company that was impressed by Takekura Constructions’ good work and its CEO – with his ‘fiancée’ on Hawaii.

Mamori looked at him with wide eyes. “Is that a proposal?” she asked, incredulously.

The other just shrugged. “A suggestion, maybe. To be honest, I... have to marry soon. Somehow, my life has already attracted too much public interest as it is, everything else... Everything else I could do from now on would just harm the success we both have worked for so hard. And... it’s not like I have the time or energy to look for another woman to share my life with.”

She looked at him for a long time, sea-gulls shrieking in the air above them. The sea washed against the shore in soothing movements, the sky was blue, but Mamori’s mind was on only one thing. Or rather person.

"What about-"

"You know about... him," Gen interrupted her rudely. "It's not like I could marry him. Unless he was a woman, would not run around with his weapons as he loves to and would not do all the things that he does because he can't change who he is."

"...I understand."

Gen looked up at her from behind his shades and sat up straight, apologetically caressing her cheek. "...I'm sorry. I didn't mean to sound so harsh."

She shook her head, smiling wryly. "No, no, you're right. It would be easy for you to marry Hiruma... if he was not what he was... the demon we both like so much."

Gen smiled back at her just as wryly. "I just... want to assure you that I don't see you as a substitute for him."

Laughing out loudly, she patted his arm. "I'd never thought you'd do that, really. Hiruma and I are just too different to serve as some kind of substitute for the other."

"Oh, there *are* some similarities, really," Gen chuckled. "You're both very motherly."

Her laughter increased. "Oh, oh! I just had the greatest picture in my head: Hiruma in a pink apron in front of the oven with kids hanging at his arms while he desperately tried to prepare something to eat. And-" she laughed harder, "he's wearing make-up!"

Gen chuckled slightly, agreeing on the fact that the sight would be very funny. "Add a skirt and he would have a very happy husband," he mumbled lowly, just so that she could hear it.

Her laughter bubbled away to something softer, but her eyes showed a deviousness that could rival Hiruma's. "Oh, so that's your secret fetish? ...Wait! Is that the reason why you 'borrowed' my uniform during High School before that one Halloween?"

As the man did not answer, but bit his lip sheepishly, a little blush gracing his cheeks, she hit him playfully. "How many times did you two do it that night?"

"...You don't want to know," Gen mumbled as he recalled the angry look she had given them when they arrived at the Deimon's Halloween party. He also felt as if he was suffering a heatstroke as he recalled just how irresistible Hiruma looked when he was wearing a skirt...

He looked down onto the sand and hoped that no blood was dripping from his nose.

"Is... is that a nosebleed?" Mamori asked, sounding incredulously amused. "You're not bleeding from your nose, are you? Yes, you are!"

She could not stop her laughter after that anymore, and she laughed so hard, that Gen

had to shut her up in the most elegant way that he knew.

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One month after that vacation, Mamori stood in front of Gen's door, looking not very happy. He let her in, worried about what was wrong and promptly asked her. He was never one to waste much time with pretty words and she respected that. So she simply said those three little words.

"I am pregnant."

"..." Gen stared at her with wide eyes.

"..." Mamori did not dare to look up, remembering the last time she had said these words.

"Really?"

She nodded feebly.

"Well, then, we've got no other choice," Gen sighed and took out his cell phone.

"...What are you doing?"

He just grinned enigmatically and kissed her forehead. "Stupid. We are going to marry."

"...Really?" She thought that she was dreaming.

"Remember what I said to you on Hawaii? I meant it," Gen said, "and now that you're... that you're carrying our child it's even more important. I can't let my child grow up without a family."

Mamori just stared at him, totally baffled. "But... but... What about-?"

"That's not important right now. Right now, everything that matters are you and the child," Gen said.

The young woman still stared at him, her mouth hanging slightly open. Once again, it showed that Gen and Hiruma were just the complete opposite. She was moved so much that she did not notice how a tear ran down her cheek.

"So, what's your answer?"

"Huh?"

"Will you marry me?"

One year later, Takekura Constructions' rise to one of Tokyo's biggest constructions companies started.