

The Bet

Or such a thing called Love

Von mie-van-cha

Kapitel 17: Chapter 17

Yamapi walked down the hallway with darn sure steps. He knew he was acting out of anger and that he would regret it afterwards, but he also felt the need of it. He found Ryo sitting together with Shige and Massu lobby. Ryo stopped talking even before Yamapi was near enough to hear their talk. "Yo, Pi, what's wrong?" Of course Ryo could see the pissed, furious expression on his best friends face. Yamapi stopped right in front of the arm-chair Ryo was sitting in, the hands clenched into fists in order to not punch him right away.

"Can I talk to you for a second?" Yamapi asked with a serious voice.

"Of course, what's wrong?"

"Just the two of us."

"Oh...okay." Ryo looked confused, yet he stood up and smiled at Shige. "I'll be right back."

Yamapi turned around and walked ahead, followed by a curious Ryo. They didn't lost a word until they found an empty hallway where Yamapi suddenly turned around to face his best friend. His angry face made Ryo twitch a bit. "What's wrong?" he repeated his question, but Yamapi cut him off: "Don't act so innocently!" "E-eh?"

"You know what I'm talking about."

"Bloody hell, I do not know! Why the heck are you shouting at me?"

Yamapi bristled in anger and shook his head in disbelief. "You're insisting?"

"Insisting on what?" Ryo asked impatiently. "Fuck, you called me out and just started to let out your rage or whatever out on me without any reason! I would be very glad if you would tell me why you are that furious. I'm sorry that I'm obviously so stupid to not be able to follow your incoherent reproaches. Shit, what did I do to you?"

"You're the one who's manipulating Tesshi so he will definitely choose on you, aren't you?"

"Why should I do that?"

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

Ryo narrowed his eyes, laughing bitterly. "I can't believe you're thinking so badly of me. I never did anything harming you. Why should I do so now?"

"Mmmh, I'm not quite sure." Yamapi acted like he would seriously think of it. "Well, let's see....Maybe to make yourself looking better in front of Tegoshi?"

"As if I would need that."

"What do you mean?"

"It's obvious he likes me more, deshou? You can't deny that." Ryo said in an arrogant voice and placed his hands deep inside the pockets of his favourite worn-out jeans. A big mistake, because the next moment Yamapi hit him hard right into the face.

"Are you sure about that? I know they're fighting for you, but..." Koyama looked worrying at little sobbing Tegoshi. He couldn't believe what he just heard a second ago.

"I am sure. It's best this way. And I can't stand this situation longer anyway."

"But..." Koyama didn't find any reasons to convince Tegoshi of the opposite. "Did you already talked to Johnny-san?"

Tegoshi shook his head. "I want to tell it after the tour is over. I don't want to leave NEWS in a big fuss right now, so I will wait."

"Tesshi..." Koyama didn't know what to say further. "I will miss you."

"I will miss you, too, Kei-chan." Tegoshi held out his arms and Koyama hugged him tightly. "Can you please hold it a secret for a while? I want to tell it to the others when the right time has come."

Koyama was sure that there would never be a right time for such an crucial message, but he nodded though. "Thank you a lot...Maybe I should look for Yamapi. He's away for a while now for just getting me a soup. I don't want him to worry about me that much. I feel better now. Maybe I should go to tell him that." Tegoshi mumbled more or less to himself than to Koyama and crawled out of the bed.

"Take care, Tego-nyan."

"Mh, I will do my best."

Tegoshi left, a tiny little bundle of troubles, and Koyama let out a sad sigh. "Guess my only chance is to talk to Yamapi and Ryo, ne~"

Tegoshi ran right onto the fist-fight Yamapi and Ryo had in the hallway. They didn't notice him – too important was their desire to punch each other so badly. Yamapi's nose was already bleeding and Ryo's lips were red and swollen. There Tegoshi was, completely overextended with the situation and didn't know what to do. He didn't even feel like asking why the heck they were fighting nor did he have the power to interrupt this hilarious, but serious fight. His brain didn't seem to realize what his eyes saw. But it realized what his ears heard.

"You don't know how it is to be deeply in love with him!" Ryo screamed and his fist bumped into the air next to Yamapi's face.

"How dare you? At least I do care about his emotions instead of always confusing him!"

"The one who is confusing him is you! If you wouldn't always interrupt and swirl around his feelings he already would be mine!"

Yamapi let out a bitter laughter. "You really believe in this stupid shit? Just because you confessed to him before I could do so you think you do have the right to claim him as yours?"

"Hell, yeah, I do!" Ryo boxed into Yamapi's stomach.

Tegoshi's mouth opened in shock, when Yamapi gulped and bent down in pain. Just when he was about to fall down he mobilized his whole power to throw both his fist into Ryo's chest and both of them fell over each other and to the ground. They were a bundle of arms and legs and Tegoshi couldn't tell what belonged to whom. He heard the strained groans of Yamapi and Ryo, which cut through his heart.

They're fighting you...Koyama's voice echoed in his ears and Tegoshi's head began to hurt again. They're fighting because of...me...I am the reason why they're fighting. They're friendship...It's me...

Tegoshi desperately watched the scene in front of him, watched Yamapi and Ryo beating each other up. His thoughts went crazy, the noise was too much for him. "Stop it..." he whispered. "Please stop it..."

Of course they didn't hear him. "Stop it please." He repeated, a bit louder this time. His voice was trembling. "Stop it!!" He shouted with all his might. Finally Ryo and Yamapi let go of each other. They were shocked to see Tegoshi standing there, who did probably watch their whole fight.

"Tesshi..." Yamapi whispered, but then he remembered. "Tegoshi, you're fever!"

"Fever?" Ryo asked with surprise, immediately worried. "Why didn't you tell me he has a fever?"

"As if you would care for him properly."

"I do! I-"

"Stop it!" Tegoshi yelled and Ryo was quiet. "You might be thinking that you hurt each other, but the one who suffers the most is me, deshou? You might be thinking that I can decide, but I have no choice, when both of you are willing to fight till the end. I can't take it anymore. I can't. It's so painful. Don't you know that it's me who's hurt the most? It's me! Not you...Not you..." Tears were falling down his cheeks, his face was filled with despair and he looked from Yamapi to Ryo-chan with his blurred, pain filled puppy-eyes. "It's me." And with a last hopeless gaze his shoulders sank down and he lost his consciousness.

It was completely silent. Yamapi and Ryo sat on the hard, uncomfortable hospital seats in the hallway, not noticing the busy nurses and doctors passing by. They stared at the door in front of them, knowing that their little Tegoshi laid in there.

"I didn't know we causes so much trouble for him..." Ryo whispered.

"All I wanted was to win against you." Yamapi admitted.

"We broke him. I would never forgive myself if I made him unhappy. I mean, I will never forget this look in his eyes."

"It was the worst thing I've ever seen."

It followed another long silence. Then, so quietly it was hardly heard: "I give up, Pi."

"Eh?"

"I give up. He'll be happy with you. He loves you."

"He loves both of you."

Yamapi and Ryo whirled around. Koyama headed towards them. Both looked at him with pure fear. "He loves both of you." He said again. "But his heart is confused. Both of you were pulling at one side of him, trying to win him, but in the end you tore him up right in the middle. One of you has to give up for his sake. You have to. Otherwise, I think, He won't be able to recover."

"I will" Ryo began, but Yamapi simply stood up and left without a word, without looking back. Koyama and Ryo watched him in silence. Just in this moment the door of

Tegoshi's restroom opened and a nurse stepped out. "He's awake now." She said. "He need to rest, but you can talk to him."

Ryo was still paralyzed from Yamapi's sudden left, so Koyama punched him in the ribs. "Ow!"

"Go in!"

"But..."

"He's waiting for you. At least for one."

"But-"

"No 'but'! Go!" And Koyama pulled Ryo up, pushed him into the restroom and closed the door behind him. Ryo stood there stiffened. Tegoshi laid in a bed at the window, the blanket over him and a lot of pillow's stuffed in his back. He looked so pale and weak.

"Ryo..." he said with a husky, scratchy voice. Ryo stepped further. From the near Tegoshi looked even more breakable. His tiny little hands reached out for Ryo's and Ryo grabbed them in fear. "I'm here." He whispered, gulping down the big dumpling in his throat. "I'm sorry, Yu-chan. I am so horribly sorry. I'm sorry I hurt you so much." He felt the tears in his eyes, yet he didn't even try to swallow them down. "Yu-chan... I am a bad human, deshou? I've never intended to make you so sad. I've never wanted to hurt you. I...Fuck, I just wanted you to love me..." Ryo's throat led out some hoarse sobs and he stood there, next to the bed, with trembling shoulders and a broken heart. He didn't know how to calm down, he didn't even want to. He felt so horrible he just wanted to cry out everything for the rest of his life. He didn't dare to open his wining, tear-filled eyes. Then, suddenly and so slight, he felt a warm touch, so gentle and tender at his hands. It was Tegoshi, holding his cramped fingers. "Ryo." He whispered with such an understanding voice Ryo gasped for air just to sob everything out again. "It's okay." Tegoshi said comforting and Ryo twitched back. It was too much for him. He was the wrong one, he was the reason why Tegoshi was so pale-skinned and exhausted in the hospital, and still Tegoshi was the one comforting him. He didn't deserve any consolation at all. Ryo stepped back. "Don't be so nice to me."

"Eh?"

"Don't be so nice to me! What I've done to you is the worst crime I could've committed. Don't you understand? I caused you so much grief. I!" He wanted to leave the room. He couldn't stand seeing Tegoshi's harried, innocent, matt eyes. His body still trembled due to sobbing. He turned around and reached out for the door knob.

"Don't leave me."

Ryo stiffened in the movement. He heard Tegoshi's heavy breath panic. "Ryo...I'm begging you...Please don't leave me..."

Ryo didn't dare to move.

And then he heard it. That weak, heartbreakingly whimper. Tegoshi's whimper. "Ryo...you can't leave me now..." This tiny hardly audible voice of Tegoshi was more than he could endure. He wanted to run out, he felt so darn guilty to have caused so much trouble to such an innocent helpless creature. But it was Tegoshi's pleading, his complete fragile, weak pleading, which stopped Ryo from going so.

"Please..."

With faltered steps Ryo turned back, the eyes stuck to the ground. He knew he would tear apart when he would look at Tegoshi, though he felt it would be a deserved punishment for him. Without saying a word he sat down on the uncomfortable chair next to Tegoshi's bed.

"Thank you..." He whispered, finally breathing a bit calmer. "Ne, Ryo...Look up...Please." Ryo felt Tegoshi's finger at his cheek. It felt icy-cold. "Don't make such a face. It makes me sad."

"A reason more why I should leave you." Ryo mumbled in bitterness. He heard Tegoshi's little sigh. "Don't be stupid." He said. "I'm glad you're here. By my side."

"Though I caused you so much pain? Look at you! You're in the hospital! You collapsed! How can my presence make you happy?!"

"Ryo-chan..."

"Don't touch me!"

Tegoshi stopped in the movement. He never once saw Ryo so furious. And so pitiful.

"You're scaring me..."

Ryo clenched his fists. "Yu-chan...Tegoshi, I'm not suited to be with you. Yamapi is far more better for you." Ryo's throat was sore as he tried to speak out what his heart defended with all its might. "You know he left for your sake? He gave up in order to give you happiness. You loved him for a long time now. He's you prince charming. He's dependable, manly, he has a strong sense of responsibility, he's steady, he is somebody you can rely on. You need a person like him. You need him more than me." Ryo didn't dare to say that he actually had decided to leave first. It was best for his little 'Yu-chan' not to know.

It was completely silent for a moment. And then, with a tiny, fearing voice Tegoshi asked: "Are you going to break up with me...?"

Finally Ryo looked up, his eyes filled with tears. His face showed pure grief as he nodded.

"No..." Tegoshi whispered in disbelief, his eyes widened in shock. "No...No! No!" He

panicked again. His breath became irregular, his heartbeat so fast it hurt. "No, Ryo-chan! No!" Tears fell down on his blankets as he tried to struggle himself out of the bet. He reached out for Ryo's strong shoulders, stumbled over the layers of sheets and blankets. He nearly fell down the bed and Ryo just sat there, did nothing. As much as Tegoshi shook him, Ryo didn't look into his eyes. Finally, full of despair, Tegoshi broke down and leaned limply and powerless at Ryo's chest. He sobbed silently. Out of reflex Ryo put his arms around him. He rocked little Tegoshi, who cried unstable, like a little baby. "Gomen, Yu-chan. Gomen ne..." he whispered over and over, feeling so awful guilty, as Tegoshi cried himself to sleep. Ryo wiped the tears off his wet cheeks with his thumbs. After all he cared for him so much. Little Tegoshi was his one and only. Ryo wanted to hug him so tightly, never let him go, but he feared to break Tegoshi's fragile structure. He has become so skinny. Since when did he stop eating meals properly? Ryo could feel the pure ribs as he stroke Tegoshi's small back. He didn't know how long he sat so, his innocent helpless protégé in his arms, when the door opened quietly.

"How is he?" Koyama asked with worry, and sighed as he stood next to Ryo and looked down at Tegoshi's exhausted face. "What for god's sake did you do to him?" he wanted to know, not reproachfully, but with a slight resignation.

"I told him that I would let him go. That I would break up with him so he can be happy with Pi..." Totally heartbroken Ryo looked with a bitterly, warm smile at Tegoshi, who still sobbed a little, though he was already sound asleep.

Koyama sighed again and sat down on Tegoshi's bed in front of Ryo. "Did you have to tell him that right now? You might think it's best for him, but he's so instable, so weak. He suffered a lot the last weeks. He was in love with Yamapi nearly a half year and was totally hyper when Pi finally responded to his feelings. But then there was also you. You, who made him laugh so easily and forget all his worries. Though he was happy with Yamapi, there was a different happiness when he was with you. You two always fought with each other over his attention. Ryo...Do you know that he'd thought of quitting NEWS?"

Ryo stared at him in shock. "Impossible...!"

Koyama shook his head. "He really considered it, or he still does so. He's told me about it before he..." Koyama looked at Tegoshi totally worn-out in Ryo's arms. "Before...Ryo, he might have looked strong, but inside he felt so much pain, because he loves both of you. And he can't decide. Not yet. But he has to. Do you understand?"

"So...what should I do? I don't know how to handle it. I never thought it would end up this way. All I want is to see him happy." Ryo said desperately. "I don't want to see that broken look on his face anymore..."

"I'll give you an advice." Koyama fixed Ryo's eyes, which longed for a solution like a drowning man for a helping hand. "Take care for him till he gets better. Give him the time he needs. And then you can still break up with him if you want to. But first he needs to be mentally prepared again. If you abandon him now...I really don't want to think about that."

"But..." Ryo didn't finish his sentence. There wasn't anything to say anymore. Koyama's advice was the only thing he could follow now.

"Isn't it like I would lie to him?"

"You love him. Since when is love a lie?"

"Watch out the step!"

Tegoshi rolled his eyes. "I am not blind. And I'm not stupid either." He said.

"But I just..." Ryo began, but Tegoshi cut him off. "I know. And it's cute. But it also annoys me."

"I'm sorry."

"Arrgh, Ryo-chan! You know what annoys me even more than your worrying? It's your steady apologizing."

Ryo didn't answer and just walked ahead with Tegoshi's bag. He had to stay in the hospital for whole three days and was just released. Ryo did as Koyama has told him. He stayed at Tegoshi's side. And Yamapi hasn't shown up once. At least not when Tegoshi has been awake. He only had visited him at night time, short before Ryo had climbed into the bed set up for him next to Tegoshi's. Yamapi then had been sitting there, watching Tegoshi's sleeping face for around an hour, without saying a word or touching him. Ryo had argued a lot with the nurses to get the permission for Yamapi to come out of the visiting hours. He had to promise that it wouldn't cause any stress for Tegoshi. That wouldn't have been Yamapi's intention anyway. When Ryo had called him asking him to come he immediately set up that condition: Tegoshi mustn't get to know that plan. And Ryo agreed. Of course he did. He understood. He understood Yamapi so well. And he was grateful that his best friend was with him at least this one hour at this crucial time they actually should be the most separated. And Ryo knew how hard it had been for Yamapi to sit there, seeing the one he gave up willingly but with a broken heart.

Of course Ryo had told Yamapi that Tegoshi has been discharged today. But he didn't show up. Ryo didn't accused him for that. It was only natural. He was sure he would have done the same. It was killing enough to let Tegoshi go, so why torturing yourself over and over? It would have just being unable to stop Tegoshi going away from him unopposed. Yes, Ryo understood. That's why he has decided to take Tegoshi in again. But just as long as he needed to fully recover.

And then would send him back to Yamapi. It would be fair. He deserved Tegoshi. They both deserved each other. Ryo didn't have the right to disturb their love. Not, not he, he not.

"Where are you again?" Tegoshi asked, stroking away the worrying wrinkle between Ryo's eyebrows. "You're looking so sad..."

Ryo blinked, smiled a bit, before he closed his eyes and lead his head into Tegoshi's hand at his cheek. He took a deep breath and enjoyed the warm, familiar touch. They stood like this for a moment, Ryo with a complete satisfied face and little Tegoshi who marvelled at Ryo's splendid expression. They didn't need to say a thing. It was perfectly fine this moment the way it was. "It's a good feeling..." Ryo whispered after a while with still closed eyes.

"What?"

"Being comforted by you."

"I'll always comfort you." Tegoshi said, lifted up to his tiptoes and gave Ryo a slight kiss.

"Don't be so easy with the word 'always', Yu-chan. It's like 'forever'."

"You talk like you want to get rid of me..." Tegoshi said with a sudden sad tone in his voice. Ryo looked down at his little Yu-chan, deadly serious. "You know this is the least thing I want. So stop talking shit like this." But the fact he didn't want to, didn't change that he had to. Ryo sighed and pulled Tegoshi into a tight embrace. He placed his head onto Tegoshi's and stroked through his soft baby-hair. "Yu-chan...You know there's nothing I wish more than to be with you."

"Mh..." Tegoshi made against Ryo's warm chest.

"And you also know that I love you."

"Do I?"

Ryo chuckled. "Don't be so innocent. This is one of the reasons why I love you." He said and tickled Tegoshi's side. He adored the cheeky squeal that followed due to that. "You simply crack me up..."

Tegoshi giggled. He'd missed this so much. It was so easy to be happy when Ryo was around him. It made him feel light and fluffy. The whole three days in the hospital he'd felt far more better than the last weeks before. "It feels good."

"What?" Ryo looked down at Tegoshi's angelic face, a warm shine in his dark eyes. That was the thing Tegoshi had missed the most. Ryo's gaze resting on him with attentive, caring stare. It was like he was being watched by an overcautious, sensitive, fond guardian. It made him feel important. It made him feel needed. It made him feel loved.

"Everything." Tegoshi answered honestly and smiled. "Everything." He repeated, just because a double vocalizing made it stronger, so this feeling inside his chest wouldn't vanish that fast. And Ryo smiled back at him.

But when little Tegoshi turned around to hop up the stairs the smile fell off his face and in place of that he looked after Tegoshi with his bitter, hurt and sad eyes.

"I am so sorry, but I will have to leave you...my little Yu-chan..."

"Wuaah, out of the way, out of the way!"

Tegoshi opened his eyes in surprise and jumped out of Ryo's way in the last second. "Watch out, dangerous, dangerous." Ryo laughed and threw the pan into the sink. Immediately he opened the spigot and the cold water whooshed in the hot pan. Tegoshi drove nearer. They both looked kind of pitiful at the completely charred rests of their lunch.

"Sorry, Yu-chan. Guess we'll have to starve now, ne~" Ryo smiled whimsically with lifted shoulders and the head laid to the side. Tegoshi chuckled. "I don't mind starving if we would just continue were we stopped before we nearly burned down your kitchen." He said with a slinky smile and Ryo grinned. "Well, that would sate my hunger even more." He replied and gently laid his hands around Tegoshi's slim waist. Tenderly he leaned down to kiss Tegoshi, who cupped Ryo's face with his tiny hands. Ryo pulled Tegoshi closer and he got butterflies in his stomach when he heard Tegoshi's satisfied sigh. He smiled into the kiss.

Then he carefully pressed himself against Tegoshi's body and as they got more and more passionately Ryo navigated himself and Tegoshi into his bedroom.

With a slight -buff- he closed the door behind them with his feed.

The days passed by and Tegoshi really blossomed again. Ryo fulfilled every wish he had, trying to use the bare time he had left with his Yu-chan. He smiled and enjoyed every single second he spent with him. But as soon as Tegoshi wasn't by his side, even when he was just in another room, the smile vanished from his face and he had to fight the tears by gulping them down like an alcoholic a good-tasting wine. He was glad Tegoshi got visibly better every day, but he was also aware that with his better state the time to break up, to say goodbye, came nearer and nearer with huge unstoppable steps. He reared that crucial day. He feared it so much...

Every time he held Tegoshi in his arms – and he held him a lot – he embrace him even tighter, trying to cherish and memorize it for later, when Tegoshi wouldn't be with him anymore.

And then, one morning where he was again awake long before Tegoshi, when he marvelled at his peaceful sleeping face, he knew that day had come. Otherwise he would've just pushed it away in front of him forever. Carefully he moved out of the bed. His naked feed quietly tapped on the floor. He had his things already packed for

nearly a week now. He left a notice and a key at the table. He gently kissed the sleeping Tegoshi on the forehead, on the nose, on his soft lips, whispered: "I love you, Yu-chan", tears were running down his cheeks. But he left. It was killing him. But he left.

When Tegoshi woke up a few hours later he immediately noticed something was wrong. There was no Ryo. The place beside him was empty and cold. Nobody. He was alone. In a matter of seconds he was out of the bed. "No..." he whispered disbelieving, fearing, finding Ryo's closet empty as well. "No..." He saw the notice...saw the key. "No...Please...No..."

His hands were shivering and his world tore into pieces. He already knew what the notice said even before he'd read it.

Yu-chan...I will be away for some days. I won't come back to you. Take this key. It's for Yamapi's apartment. He's waiting for you. He's always waited for you. I'm sorry I'm leaving you that way. But it's the best this way.
Take care. Become happy. Ryo