

Uncrowned King

Von abgemeldet

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Kapitel 1: Chapter 1 - Toma's view

Chapter 1 Toma's view

There was nothing that Prince Toma hated more than being stuck in the castle all day. Sometimes

he wished he was like everyone else. When he studied in his room, he watched the people down on the streets of the capital. How the children were running around freely. The women were doing the daily shopping and chatting. Toma had no one to talk to... at least not about interesting stuff. Interesting for him. So he spent every and each day in his studying room, reading old fashioned books about whatever a prince must know. It was terrible, not to say unbearable. Toma felt like a bird in a golden cage. He desperately wished for a miracle to happen, but he knew, that it wouldn't. Because there wasn't stuff like this. Life was life and no more. No fairies or goblins. No princesses to rescue, nothing like in the stories that children hear when they go to bed. Toma knew that most of the people thought that the life of a prince was comfortable and thrilling. With a lot of adventures. But those were really just stories. Well, he couldn't deny that his life was indeed comfortable in comparison to the life of the normal citizens, but it wasn't like he was enjoying it.

After his mother's, the queen's death, there was no one who could protect him from his father's opinions and wishes. He had to follow whatever his father wanted. He would exchange his life for one of the normal people, like down on the street, immediately, if he could. He sighed as he came back to reality from his daydreaming. His teacher had just stepped into the room. "Toma-sama, what are you doing?", he asked with a strict voice. "You're supposed to read that book, not daydreaming!" There it was again. Studying, studying and more studying. He was sick of it. "Sensei, when do I get to do something interesting? Like fighting lessons?", Toma asked. "Fighting lessons? Young master, you don't even have the theoretical knowledge, how do you want to fight like that?", the teacher seemed merely amused. Toma sighed. So it was useless... he grabbed the book and tried to concentrate on the text again. His teacher left the room to do whatever he had to do and Toma's thoughts wandered back to unnamed heroes and their adventures. Suddenly he heard some cries and shouting. His gaze went out of the window to the market place, where a great deal of people were gathering. Due to his good view from above he could see that there was someone standing in the middle of the crowd. The young, blonde man was clothed in a red costume, which Toma identified as those of a gleeman. He watched in awe when he began to juggle with some balls. Then he switched to sticks with flames burning on each end. Toma was amazed by the prestidigitation and grace of the young man. How much he wanted to see this from nearby. Before he realised it, he got absorbed in ideas of sneaking out of the castle to see this man perform his show. But his thoughts were interrupted by a knock on the door. "Yes?", he shouted out annoyed. "Master Toma, the king is calling for you", said one of the maids, keeping her eyes lowered. "Alright,

thanks!", he answered smiling brightly. Another thing that differed him from the rest of the royal family. He tried to be kind to all of their employees. Because they deserved it like other people, too. The maid's face flushed and she bowed, leaving quickly as he stepped out of the room. He walked into the throne room and bowed in

front of his father. "You called for me", he asked politely. "Yes, you'll be turning 20 this month, won't you? So I thought it was time to think about your future. There was a request by the lord of the neighboring kingdom, you see. They have a daughter right your age. It would be a good engagement, if you married her." Toma's face fell as he heard the word "marry". He still didn't feel like he was ready for that kind of thing. And also, if he married, he wanted to marry someone he loved, and not someone his father wanted him to marry. Again he cursed his life as a prince. "You'll be meeting her tomorrow. There will be a ball, so I hope you know how to behave around a girl!", he got hold by his father's gaze and had no option other than to agree. "Kashikomarimashita", he said in a low voice. So tomorrow he would meet his fiancée... "Good, you can go now. Get prepared for tomorrow. The tailor made a new suit for you, make sure you try it on by tomorrow evening. You can go now." "Hai", and Toma headed back for his room, head tilted to the ground.

He sat on the table and watched out of the window again. The young man was still there. If I really have to marry a stranger, then at least I could have a bit of fun on my own... He called for one of his servants and asked him to tell everyone who asked for him that he's busy with preparations for tomorrow. Then he took his cloak and searched for a safe way out of the castle. Fortunately he had read much about the castle and the kingdom itself, so he knew one or two secret passages, which hopefully no one of the other people knew. Toma went down to the kitchen. There should be a passage under a carpet in the storage room. He sneaked into the room without being noticed by the kitchen staff. He rolled up the carpet and found the old trap door. He opened it carefully so that it didn't make much noise. He slipped through it and began walking down the old stone stairs. Soon he was in a cave which looked like he was hundreds of meters under the ground. He walked quite a time, but then there were stairs going up again. He hoped that there wouldn't be any people on the other side. He climbed up the stairs and opened the door slowly. He observed if it was safe to come out and found no one near the door, so he slipped through it and closed it carefully. He seemed to be in an old storage room, which looked unused. He saw a window, which was open, so he pulled himself up and disappeared out of it. As he landed on the street he could hear the shouting from the market place. He followed the noise and soon stood on the street in front of the market. Toma pulled the cowl over his head and slowly approached the crowd. Most of the people around the gleeman were women, so he had no problems to see the man in the middle. He seemed very young, maybe as old as himself. He had a smooth face and soft-looking blond hair. His slender fingers twirled the sticks around like they were light as paper. Toma never thought that a man could look so beautiful. He was amazed by the young man and stood there watching him in awe. Then the gaze of the young man went over the faces of the audience and for a second or two he met Toma's gaze. It was like he was drawn in by those eyes. But suddenly the noise of hooves approached and some guards began to shout. "You, what are you doing there? You aren't allowed to do that here!" Toma's body stiffened. What if one of the guards would recognise him? He would be done for it if the king found out that he sneaked out of the castle. The crowd disbanded hastily now. Toma also ran in some random direction, afraid to be seen by the guards. When he turned into a small street, he suddenly got gripped from behind, a hand on his mouth and someone whispered: "Shhh." Just then a brigade of guards rode along. As they were gone the stranger released Toma from his grip. Toma turned around to face the unknown person and was taken aback to see the young gleeman standing in front of him. "I don't know what you have done, but you looked

like it wasn't good if they found you", he concluded. Toma nodded. "Thanks", he said. "No problem, we're comrades right? We have to help each other in order to survive!", he smiled. „By the way my name is Yamashita, but everyone calls me Yamapi! What's your name?“ „Uhm.. my name is Toma.“

Kapitel 2: Chapter 2 - Pi's view

Chapter 2: Yamapi's view

It actually had started like any other day. Yamapi had started his act on the streets of the capital with some juggling and playing with fire. As he went on, he became aware of a young man his age who was amazed by this uncommon sight. The man was fully covered with a coat and the only thing Yamapi could see were his boots and his beautiful face. This man didn't look like the rest of Yamapi's audience. Yamapi had been staring at the stranger and juggling at the same time, but suddenly he saw the king's guards coming closer. He jumped off his little stage, which actually was a small trailer, and vanished into the crowd so the guards wouldn't get him. But he couldn't forget the stranger's face as he saw the guards. He didn't look uncomfortable, but horrified. And there he was again, standing right in front of him. Pi couldn't see his face but he recognized the coat and the boots and the guy was running from the guards. So he grabbed the man's shoulders and put a hand on his mouth and drew him behind the corner, so the king's men wouldn't find them. "I don't know what you have done, but you looked like it wasn't good if they found you", he concluded. The stranger nodded. "Thanks", he said. "No problem, we're comrades right? We have to help each other in order to survive!" Pi smiled. "By the way my name is Yamashita, but everyone calls me Yamapi! What's your name?" "Uhm.. my name is Toma." So that was the stranger's name. But wait... Toma? That's why this guy was so different from the others. The beautiful face, his graceful walk, the clean boots and a coat covering his whole body. "Wait, you're... You're the prince. Oh, forgive me, my lord. I didn't mean to touch you." "W-wait... don't apologize. I thank you, Yamapi. For rescuing me from my father's men. But... let's go somewhere else. I don't like this place." Of course he didn't like a muddy ground behind a small cottage. He was the prince after all! He had to be used to a ground that was so clean you could eat from it. "Of course, my lord. Let's head over there." As Yamapi went ahead he couldn't help but stare at the prince. Why was he out of the castle? Why was he alone? And most importantly: Why the hell did he try to avoid being seen by the royal guards? He had no answer to those questions and it wasn't his right to ask the prince. After a while the two reached a beautiful little spot near the forest and a small tent was there. Yamapi went to the tent and brought a three-legged stool for the prince so he could sit down. "Douzo." "Arigatou.", the prince answered and smiled at him. This was strange. Yamapi had never seen a royal person being nice to common folks. Pi stared at him in wonder. The prince's eyes wandered around. His gaze fell on some small balls that were lying on the ground.

"You... have skills in juggling, don't you?", the prince said. "I admire that. I wish I could do it myself."

Pi's face turned red. "Thank you, my lord. I... I can teach you...?"

The young lord stared at Yamapi as if in disbelief.

"I-I am so sorry, my lord! I didn't mean any offense..." While Pi's face turned even more red, Toma interrupted his speech.

"No... you didn't. I'd love to be taught by an artist like you."

Never had Yamapi thought of something like that. Teaching juggling to the crown

prince of the kingdom! "It's an honor, my lord!", Yamapi said, smiling brightly.

"Please... don't say that... 'my lord'... I'm out of the castle, so would you mind calling me Toma instead? Just Toma.", the prince said. "I don't want anyone else to know about my whereabouts."

"Sure.", Pi answered. And the smile didn't want to vanish from the young gleeman's face.

Not as he picked up two of the balls to show Toma how juggling works. Not as he did the same thing with three balls. And also not as one of the balls fell on the ground and the whole rhythm was off and the other balls followed their comrade to say hello to the mud. And still Yamapi couldn't stop smiling because of Toma's even brighter face. It seemed like the young prince enjoyed this lesson in juggling. He reached out for two of the balls to try it by himself and after some misses the young prince was able to juggle with two balls. [A/N: don't you dare thinking what I think right now xD!]

"You're talented, my... Toma.", Yamapi said in admiration.

"Thank you. That's because you're a great teacher." Toma really was having fun doing this little trick that Yamapi was almost able to do while sleeping. "I have never done anything like this before. Back in the castle... I'm not even allowed to get fighting lessons because I don't have the theoretical knowledge. But I like this way of learning better. Just doing it, that's how it should be. I... envy you, young gleeman. You're free, at last."

The young prince looked to the ground. His boots were covered in mud from walking to this unroyal place. "I... I'm sorry to burden you with my worries. I have to go now. There are some... special preparations I need to do. And the sun is already setting. I'm sorry for having stolen your time." Toma got on his feet again and started to head back to town. Yamapi was slightly confused as he got up as well and said to the prince: "Toma... prince, you don't have to apologize. It was an honor meeting you." Yamapi bent down deeply. "You are really talented with juggling and I believe you will become a better juggler than I am now." He looked up into the young royal's face. A angel-like face against the red sunlight. Yamapi was amazed by the view, like the prince must have been earlier. "M-my lord, will I... see you again?"

Kapitel 3: Chapter 3 - Toma's view

Chapter 3 Toma's view

"M-my lord, will I... see you again?" The prince was taken aback by this sudden question, he turned around to face the young artist once again, his face unreadable. "...it would be a pleasure...", he could see Yamapi's face brighten. "...but I don't know if it will be possible", he added sadly. The young gleeman's face fell. "Oh... of course... My apologies... I know you have better things to do...", said Pi hastily. Toma felt bad for disappointing him, he wanted to explain why it was so difficult for him. "No, that's not it.. you see...I will meet my...fiance... tomorrow... it will be a great festival...", he tried to explain. "I don't know if I can sneak out again...." He sighed, head lowered. "I envy you for your freedom, young artist... I wish I could be like you. Go wherever I want to, do whatever I like... marry... whom I truly love...", his voice got lower with every word and the sadness flooded his whole body. He looked up to meet the eyes of the young man again and saw something like shock in his eyes. Of course it wasn't what you expected from a prince, he thought. He didn't really know why he told him what he never dared to speak out aloud to someone else. "Well.. I have to go now... I'm sorry...", so he continued his walk back to the castle and left the artist behind.

He didn't sleep well this night. Somehow he couldn't forget the young man's disappointed face. It was early as he got up, he looked out of the window to the trailer on which Pi had stood yesterday. He really wanted to see him again, but he knew that it was impossible to sneak out a second time. Especially today. He sighed and got dressed. The lord and his daughter would arrive soon. After he ate he went into the throne room and sat next to his father. The king eyed him closely. "You have rings under your eyes. Didn't you go to bed early yesterday?" "I did....I was too... nervous to sleep...",he answered slowly. His father seemed to be satisfied by that answer. Suddenly the door opened and one of the messengers hurried in and bowed in front of the throne. "My lord, the earl and his daughter arrived!" "Alright, let them in.", Toma could hear him smirk. Then the great gates opened and a small man with an even smaller young woman entered. They both bowed and said their greetings. Toma observed the girl, she was small and pretty, kept her eyes down. So this was the girl Toma had to spend his life with? "Welcome to our kingdom, please make yourself at home! I'm so glad to meet you and your wonderful daughter. She really became beautiful.", the king said. Toma hadn't heard him talk like that his entire life. "This is my son Toma!" Toma stood up and took a bow. "It's a pleasure to meet you." His gaze went to the girl and for a second their eyes met. There was something in her eyes which confused him... maybe it was affection? Toma wasn't sure, maybe he had even imagined it. Her eyes went down very fast again. "And this is my daughter, prince Toma. Her name is Maki!" And she bowed once again. After the greeting the guests were shown to their rooms and Toma also got back to his room to relax a bit. Tonight would be a ball and this afternoon would be a festival on the court... The prince sat on his bed, his head pillowed in his hands. Why did he have to endure all of this, he was sure that Maki was a nice girl, but he wasn't sure if he could love her... why couldn't he be free like Yamapi? Once again his thoughts drifted to the young man. How disappointed he had been, it was heart aching... he sighed. It was noon already and he

had to attend the royal lunch. Somehow he didn't feel like eating at all...

It was after the lunch when the four of them sat in the throne room, when the minstrels began to sing. They were 5 men colored in red, blue, green, yellow and violet. Toma always liked those singers and was happy to see them perform again. It raised his mood at least a bit.

Later on were some random joke tellers, Toma listened without great interest. Suddenly he felt something and looked to the side and found Maki observing him. When she noticed that he caught her, she turned around quickly and her face went red. Toma sighed once again. After the joke teller came a group of jugglers and fire-breathers. Toma watched them, still with little interest until he found a pair of deep brown eyes that were fixed on him. His heart began to beat faster in an instant. He thought he couldn't believe his eyes as Yamapi stepped forward, now dressed in a more expensive looking costume and started to use his juggling skills. He smiled like it was the most common thing to be here right now. It was hard for Toma to not call for him and ask him, what he was doing here. Wasn't it dangerous? Toma knew perfectly well that Yamapi wasn't one of their castle entertainers. So how did he manage to sneak in here... The prince's thoughts went in circles as he watched the artist do his job. He was relieved in some way and happy to see him, but also afraid, that if his father found out that he originally didn't belong here, he would be imprisoned. After the performance the entertainer went out of the throne room, to one of the servants' rooms. Toma couldn't sit still, so he excused himself for a moment, earning an unpleasant but allowing glance by his father. He headed for the room immediately and found Pi sitting in front of the room, again juggling with the balls. Toma caught his breath. "What are you doing here?", he whispered out of breath. Yamapi's face brightened when he saw the young prince. "I thought, when it is difficult for you to come out, then I could come in", he answered brightly. "Or shouldn't I have come?", he asked, unsure if he had made a mistake. "Of course not! Isn't it dangerous for you? If they find out then you'll be thrown into prison without any questions!" The young gleeman smiled. He was happy that the prince was worried about him, but he was also afraid to be a burden to him. "I'm sorry... I shouldn't have come. I just...wanted to see you again..", he said in a low voice, avoiding the prince's gaze. Toma's heartbeat went faster again, without him understanding why. "...thank you...", he whispered. "That you put yourself in so much danger, just to see me...", he said softly. The young gleeman looked flustered now, his cheeks went red and he didn't know what to say. Then they heard voices coming closer, Toma recognized the voice of his teacher. He panicked and grabbed Yamapi's hand and pulled him with him behind a tapestry from which he knew that there was a small notch in the wall, where originally had stood a statue years ago. [A/N: yeah the castle is pretty much like hogwarts xD]

There wasn't much space for two grown up people so they were practically pressed against each other, trying not to make any noise as the voices echoed from the stone walls. When they were gone, they sighed in relief and Toma noticed just then how close he was to Yamapi. He looked down to the smaller man, now also flustered, but he couldn't turn away from those deep brown eyes.

Kapitel 4: Chapter 4 - Pi's view

Chapter 4

Sneaking into the castle might really have been a bad idea, Pi thought. But... he didn't regret it yet. Knowing that the prince wouldn't be able to come back again he tried to find a way to get into the castle. And then he had remembered the party. So he was a gleeman... and who was more needed on a party than an entertainer? Sneaking in was quite easy as he just followed the other entertainers inside. He followed them through various gangways into an enormous hall that was filled with graceful people wearing expensive clothing. Pi's eyes wandered around the hall and there he was: The prince. Toma. Looking bored. But only until he answered Pi's gaze, who was strangely excited although he never was before his shows. He would have been able to stand there the whole evening watching those beautiful eyes, but suddenly he got a light punch in the back and he stepped forward heading towards the space in front of the royal family and their guests. He thought how awkward it was being here and juggling in front of the royal family. Normally he would have been too nervous to even hold one ball, but with Toma watching him everything was so easy. He remembered the day before, when you watched Toma against the orange sunlight and how... perfect this picture had been. So perfect that Pi started smiling during his act, never taking his eyes away from the prince's. To early his act was over and he had to leave the great hall, but didn't lose hope that Toma would come after him. Even if it was more that unsure that Toma wanted to see him as well or even had recognized him. Waiting, he sat down in front of the servants' room and juggled. But only until suddenly Toma left the room came after him. Pi dropped the balls and got on his feet quickly.

The prince didn't seem amused as he started talking, and first Pi thought Toma was annoyed to see him again but then he realized the prince was worried. Worried that Pi got caught and imprisoned. And suddenly Pi was happy, but also sorry at the same time. "I'm sorry... I shouldn't have come. I just... wanted to see you again.", he said in a low voice, avoiding the prince's gaze. "...thank you...", the prince whispered. "That you put yourself in so much danger, just to see me..." And then Pi wasn't sorry any more. But he was more and more unsure why he had come here. He actually hadn't known in the first place. He wanted to think about what the reason was, but he was interrupted by voices coming closer. Without knowing what happened, he got drawn behind some tapestry and found themselves in a small space between the tapestry and the wall. Toma was nervous, he listened carefully to the voices until they faded. Pi's thoughts instead were all about Toma. Being pressed against each other, feeling the prince's warmth, smelling him. Pi should have been frightened that he was put into prison and still he couldn't think of anything but the young prince. Then their eyes met. Paralyzed Pi felt every cell of his body heating up.

But fortunately Toma had more self control than Pi had. He squeezed himself out of the little space they had been trapped in and stepped into the gangway. "Come on, get out. I'll help you leave without being seen.", the prince whispered. "No, don't... If someone notices, you'll also be in danger. I'll find a way out. Don't worry, sire." Pi

wasn't sure if he would make it without being seen, most of all because of that colorful dress he wore. "But if they find you...", the prince started, but Pi interrupted him. "Be sure they won't. Please don't worry. And one more thing. Please... close your eyes for a moment." Pi wasn't sure if he did the right thing. "Close my eyes?", Toma answered surprised. Pi nodded. The young prince seemed unsure, but finally he did as he was told. Watching Toma with eyes closed he took a step towards the prince and lifted his hand. He wanted to touch him. His hair, his face. Touching the air, Pi's hand followed the outlines of Toma's face. Pi wanted to stay with the prince, but he also knew that this was impossible. So he took off his most important ring, took Toma's hand and put it in his palm. Then he whispered into Toma's ear: "Please keep this, my lord. And remember, that there'll always be someone who will put his life in danger to save you... and not only because you're the prince." And so Pi turned around and followed the corridor without looking back.

Kapitel 5: Chapter 5 - Toma View

Chapter 5 Toma view

For a few seconds they looked into each others eyes, then Toma took a deep breath, pulled himself together and squeezed himself out of the notch. "Come one, get out. I'll help you leave without being seen.", he whispered. "No, don't... If someone notices, you'll also be in danger. I'll find a way out. Don't worry, sire", answered Pi. Toma was scared. "But if they find you...", started Toma but was cut off by Pi. "Be sure they won't. Please don't worry. And one more thing. Please... close your eyes for a moment." Toma was surprised. "Close my eyes?" He was nervous as he closed his eyes hesitantly. He didn't know what was happening, he didn't feel something and he also didn't hear something. He wanted to open his eyes to see what Yamapi was doing, but couldn't somehow. Suddenly he felt how Pi grabbed his hand and put something cold on his palm. His skin began to prickle where Yamapi touched him. Then he felt his breath on his ear as he whispered hastily: "Please keep this, my lord. And remember, that there'll always be someone who will put his life in danger to save you... and not only because you're the prince." Toma opened his eyes in surprise and saw Yamapi running away from him now.

The prince stood there and looked after him, the words Pi had spoken still echoing in his mind *And remember that there'll always be someone who will put his life in danger to save you.* His heart pounded fast and he clenched his fist. Then he remembered that Pi had given him something. He opened his fist and saw that it was a small silver ring. It looked like it was very old. It seemed like Pi had worn this ring for years. He was touched that Pi would give him something important like this. Suddenly he felt an indescribable pain in his heart and he hoped that the young man made it out of the castle without being caught. He wanted to see him again no matter what... "Toma-sama what are you doing down here?", the voice of his teacher was right behind him. Toma hadn't even heard him coming. Then he remembered what was actually happening. Today was the great ball... "You should get dressed soon, the ball will start in some time. And don't forget the dance steps!", he lectured him. "Hai", Toma headed for his room, on the walk he put the ring on his finger and examined how it looked. Quite nice, he had to admit.

Back in his room he stripped off his clothes and put the special suit on. He wasn't in any mood to dance or whatever right now. But he had no choice, yet again. His thoughts drifted back to the young man and the short moments he had spent with him. Toma sat on his bed, staring at the ring on his finger and turning it around until he recognized that it was indeed weird to daydream about a guy. What was happening to him? Why was he focused on this young man so much? He tried to think about it clinically. He admired him, he wanted to be like him. That must be it, he thought. But then the beautiful face and the smile came to his mind. The way he spoke to him. There must be more to it... Toma was confused, he never had been so confused his whole life.

"Toma-sama are you ready?", asked a voice from outside. "Hai, I'm coming!" His gaze fell on the ring again and thought that he shouldn't wear it. If anyone would see it, they would start asking questions. So he took one of his necklaces, put the ring on it and hung it around his neck, carefully hiding it under his clothes. He could feel the

cold silver on his skin, it calmed him down. Now he had to dance with his fiancée. He put on his mask, because it was supposed to be a fancy ball. The ballroom was already filled with people in magnificent clothes. All of them were wearing masks to hide their faces. It was useless, thought Toma. Cause once he entered the hall everyone would be staring at him, knowing quite well that he was the prince.

Then a girl in a wonderful dress approached him. "Toma-sama... can I have this dance?", asked the little girl, avoiding his gaze shyly. It was quite unusual that a girl would ask for a dance herself. He figured out that it must be Maki. He tried to concentrate on her and smiled. "Of course." The face of Maki brightened and so they started their dance. She was a good dancer, thought Toma. It was really easy to dance with her, he even enjoyed it a bit. Every now and then their gazes would lock and Maki would turn red. In her way, she was cute. "Ano ne Toma-sama...", she seemed nervous. "... do you remember when we first met?", she asked warily. When they first met? Toma was shocked, did he meet her before? If that was the case, then he couldn't really remember. "I'm afraid... I don't", he answered slowly. She looked hurt, but continued talking. "Well... it's no wonder... it was a long time ago... my father and I were here... and I was playing in the garden of the castle... I remember how you helped me when I fell and got hurt. You were so kind and your smile was so warm", she turned even more red. "... since that day... I always loved you...", she looked at him shyly. Toma hold his breath when she confessed. What was he supposed to say now? He didn't want to disappoint her, but he knew that he didn't love her and maybe never would..."...well, I feel honored... really.. but I ...", Toma started. "...it's okay!", she interrupted him. "It's ok if you don't love me now.. we have our whole life, don't we?", she smiled but Toma could see tears tingling in her eyes. "Would you excuse me now, Toma-sama?", she said and walked into the crowd.

The prince stood there alone feeling like crap. Toma didn't want to marry her, even if she was really nice. But he didn't love her...and she... , she loved him and was now also in all this mess, which Toma called his life. He pitied her as well as himself. Then he felt a tip on his shoulder. He turned around and found a young man with a mask smiling at him. At first Toma asked himself who this was, but then he looked in the eyes of his counterpart. A weird mixture of happiness, fear and confusion formed inside his body. "Wha-what are you doing here? I – I thought you ran...", Toma asked upset, totally swamped by the whole situation.

Kapitel 6: Chapter 6 - Yamapi view

Chapter 6

Yamapi was following various corridors and didn't know where to go. It actually had been a bad idea to search the exit on his own. He really had no idea where he was right now. He felt like he ran deeper and deeper into the palace and he pleaded that he wouldn't be found. Running deeper and deeper into the stone building he had no idea where he was or where he went. All he knew was that he still was inside, not outside where he should be.

Suddenly there was a strange dull noise. Sounded like pigs. As Pi cautiously went on and looked around a corner, he saw two guards sleeping on their wooden chairs. That's what the noise came from. And those two really somehow looked like pigs. At least they were as fat as such.

Pi wanted to turn around and go back, but suddenly there came voices from behind. So no going back. And those two fat ones were sleeping. So the only option left was going through that door beside the guards. Pi sneaked through the door as silently as he could. The corridor in front of him was lighted by some torches on the walls. He went on, afraid that the source of the voices came after him. This was the jail. He knew it by the voices coming from the cells. He could see faces. Horrifying faces which were pale and skinny and looked frightened to death. And Yamapi was frightened himself. This view really was scary. But since this was the jail, those people were to be here. Pi went on.

A hand – a hand coming out of one of the cells, reaching out for him. Startled, Yamapi jumped back, desperately trying not to scream. The arm that was still reaching out for him belonged to a middle-aged study man with a unreadable look on his face. But Yamapi knew this face. The face he had been searching for for so long.

“Father? Is this you?”

He didn't really believe it. Didn't want to believe it. After all those months he had found the person most important to him. One day four years ago his father was gone, leaving Yamapi and his sick mother behind. Shortly after that Yamapi's mother had died and so nothing would hold Pi back from trying to find out about his father's whereabouts.

“... Tomohisa?”, the man answered.

“Father! It's you! Why... are you here? ... I have to get you out of here...” Yamapi got up quickly and closed the distance between them. He had so many questions he wanted to ask him, so much he wanted to know. But first of all he had to get his father out of here.

“Son... my son... I'm innocent. You believe me, don't you? Help me! Please!” His father sounded desperate. And The young one was desperate as well. Desperate to get his father out of that cell, putting him into freedom again.

"What happened?", he wanted to know.

"They say I killed someone, but I didn't! You believe me, don't you? I would never kill someone!"

"Yes... yes, I do believe you. I... I'll think of a plan to get you out. Just wait a bit longer, okay?", Yamapi said. "I'll come back. Wait for me."

Yamapi went back to the door he had come through. Those fat ones were still asleep and no other voices so far. Maybe he could steal the key and free his father right now? Cautiously he opened the door, trying not to make any strange sounds. He approached the key but did an unconsidered step and kicked over a steely cup and the cup skipped cheerfully over the stone floor. "Sh*t...", Yamapi whispered. Of course the guards woke up, but luckily it took them some time to realize that there was someone who was trying to steal their precious key. They got on their feet and shouted for him.

Yamapi hurried down the corridor and ran until he couldn't hear the heavy steps anymore. But he recognized the gangway. He was somewhere near the great hall where the ball was taking place right now. Out of breath he sat down in a dark corner and thought about what to do next. He had to get his father out of here. But going back was impossible now that the guards were on alert. He had to think of a plan, a good plan.

His gaze fell on his hands. His finger felt awkward without his precious ring that he had gotten from his mother years ago right before she died. He had given it to the prince and he didn't regret it. The prince...

The... prince... He could use the prince to reach his goal.

No, he couldn't. He just couldn't do it. Imposing on the prince's kindness was impossible. But how else could he help his father? "Hello, my name is Yamashita Tomohisa and I want you to let my father go." Of course, it would help to just go to the guards and explain the situation, they would surely be nice enough to open the door... and imprison Yamapi as well.

So, the only solution was the prince, huh?

Although Yamapi hated to do this, but he had to help his father. And the prince? He had known him only for some hours right now. He would make him help and free his father and then take the ring back and then Yamapi would vanish and everything would turn back to normal again. It should be easy right?

With trembling knees Yamapi got on his feet. He had to find the prince. On the floor some meters away was a green mask. It absolutely didn't fit his costume but whatever. He took it on and stepped into the great hall. It wasn't very hard to make out the prince. He was the one everyone was staring at, despite the fact that he wore a mask. He was talking to a young lady but she seemed somewhat disturbed and hurriedly left the hall. This was Pi's chance. He approached the prince and hesitantly put his hand on his shoulder.

Toma looked confused and upset as he turned around, paused and then asked: "What are you doing here? I – I thought you ran..."

Pi didn't bother to answer. "Come with me... please.", he said before he turned and slowly left the hall. He went back to the same dark corner he had been thinking in before and waited for the prince to come after him. And he came.

"Answer my question... why are you still here? I don't understand this..." Now Toma looked really confused.

Yamapi took a deep breath. "I... I couldn't leave. I want to... see you again."

'You are such a great actor,' Yamapi thought, disgusted by what he was doing.

Toma tried to answer, but somehow no words left his mouth as he moved it.

"Meet me tomorrow at my tent. I will wait for you."

Pi laid his hands on the prince's shoulders, pressed him against the wall and kissed him passionately.

He was amazed by those feelings, wanted to continue until eternity but still he broke their contact.

"Good-bye, my prince."

Yamapi hurried and left, leaving a numb Toma behind.

He felt as if his heart was torn apart. But he knew he deserved it.

Kapitel 7: Chapter 7 - Toma's view

Chapter 7

Pi's face was unreadable.

"Come with me...please", he said and left the hall without any further explanation. Everything in Toma was in uproar right now. He looked around and sneaked out of the hall and followed Pi, who was standing in a dark corner now.

"Answer my question... why are you still here? I don't understand this...", Toma said, more and more confused. He waited until his counterpart took a deep breath and said: "I... I couldn't leave. I want to... see you again."

The prince's eyes widened and something in his stomach was purring happily. He wanted to answer him, but when he tried to speak, there were no words left.

"Meet me tomorrow at my tent. I will wait for you." Then Pi laid his hands on his shoulders and a second later he was pressed against the wall, another second later he got kissed passionately.

It was so strange and yet so nice and it felt so damn good. But too fast Pi parted their lips again and said: "Good-bye, my prince."

Then he left hurriedly. The young prince still stood there, unable to move. A hundred of butterflies flying around in his belly. And he couldn't believe what just happened. He stared at the spot where Yamapi disappeared into the darkness. Suddenly everything was so clear within him. The warm feeling which was now spreading all over his body was more than obvious. Toma couldn't believe it and maybe even didn't want to believe it. But now he could name what was bothering him about the young artist. And it hit him with such a great might that his feet couldn't hold his weight anymore. With his back still against the wall, he slid down and came to sit on the ground.

He was in love with Yamashita.

The ball had ended fast after this. Toma had been in a trance-like state for the rest of the evening.

Later, back in his room he sat on his bed, his back leaned against the wall and let the necklace with the ring on it swing in front of his eyes. How is it possible?, he asked himself.

Didn't he only know the young gleeman for a few days? How could he fall in love with someone he hardly knew?

And also: It was a guy! How could a guy fall in love with another guy? If someone would find out it would be a scandal! Not that HE cared so much. But his father would... he would never allow something like this. In his eyes and in the eyes of society it was wrong. But how could something that felt so right be wrong?, he asked himself as he thought about the kiss again.

He wondered if Yamapi loved him too. But why should he kiss him if it wasn't like that? Everything was so damn confusing. Plus it was the first time for the prince to fall in love. He hadn't ever met someone who captured his heart as much as the young artist did. So he didn't really know how to deal with that kind of things.

Tomorrow... he didn't know how to sneak out of the castle, when the whole city was going crazy for this damn engagement. There would be tons of guards... but he had, he just had to go and see Yamapi. He had to be sure about his feelings...

This night he couldn't sleep much due to his nerviness. It hadn't even dawned when the prince, clothed in some old clothes he lent from his servant and the black coat. Toma tiptoed through the corridor and down to the kitchen. Fortunately the whole castle seemed to be still asleep this early. He took the same secret passage he had taken the last time. As he came out in the city he got more and more nervous by every step he did.

As he could see the river he couldn't nearly breath. He stopped his pace and took a deep breath. Then he crossed the river and could already see the little tent standing in the grass near the forest. His lump in his throat seemed to grow every time he breathed. He never had been so nervous in all his life.

As he stood right in front of the tent, Yamapi came out. Toma held his breath, when he saw his face. It was over and over full with little scratches and marks. Even his hands looked like this. Toma took a step closer to Pi. "Wha-what happened to you? Where did you get all those marks from?", he asked worried. "It-it's nothing... I just... got beaten up, that's all...", he answered, avoiding Toma's gaze. "Be- beaten up? By whom? Was it when you escaped out of the castle?", Toma got more and more worried and his remorse was now slowly calling in his head. Pi's face softened. "It doesn't hurt as bad as it looks, don't worry anymore", he answered. "But-", Toma started but then Yamapi already knelt down and held a hand out to him. The prince's face looked questioning. The young man smiled. "You see on the ball, we didn't get the chance to dance right?" Toma couldn't even reply as Yamapi already grabbed his hand and pulled him close. He began to lead a slow waltz, his eyes always focused on the prince's face. Toma thought that he was a god dancer but Yamapi was even better than him. He felt very secure and thought that every girl he danced with must have enjoyed it. His heart twitched as this thought crossed his mind. As he looked a bit down he found Yamapi staring at him, their gazes locked and Toma could feel the tension between them.

Kapitel 8: Chapter 8 - Yamapi view

Chapter 8: Yamapi's view

Yamapi left the castle in a hurry through the front entrance. He still wore the mask so nobody would notice he didn't belong here.

Right, he just didn't belong to this world. He belonged to the dark side of life, from now on until forever. How could he even think of such a cruel thing? Toma wasn't only the prince any more. He was someone different from anyone he ever knew. He was warm-hearted, fair, with a smile that would melt any frozen heart away. His smooth skin, his beautiful hair, his eyes - oh yes, those eyes. Yamapi was afraid that if he was looking into those eyes for too long he would lose himself in them. He didn't want to imagine how they would look like when Toma found out that he was just used by Yamapi. Right, he was the bad one in this cruel game that he couldn't stop anymore. He regretted ever coming to this city.

And the kiss. He had stained those beautiful lips with this tainted kiss. But still... it had felt so unbelievably right that it hurt. His whole body hurt, but most of all did his heart. He felt like someone wanted to rip it out of his chest. But he also felt he deserved it for deceiving the person he longed for, wanted to be with so much that he couldn't breath from just thinking about him.

He was outside of the castle already but he didn't really realize where he went. But he was heading for his tent, the only save place in this cursed world. When he reached his plain home, his feet didn't want to carry him any longer, so he sank on the bare floor. When had he started crying? He hadn't noticed, but it didn't even matter to him. He didn't stop the tears as they ran over his cheeks. When had he become like this? Probably when his father had left home. Or after his mother had died. Or probably it was both that had influenced him so much? His mother was as warm-hearted as... Toma was and she had always looked after him, even when she was too weak to leave the bed. God, how he missed her right now. She would tell him the right thing to do and dry his tears with a lovely song. But she wasn't here so the only thing he could do was fail.

Pi was so angry with himself. He was a bad person, a fraud, a traitor. He was going to free a person, who was imprisoned for murder. He was going to deceive the crown prince, fake true love to make him free his father. He slapped himself in the face, again and again. He wasn't worth living. That's what it was about. He hit his own face again and again, fell on the ground, got up again and continued bruising his hands, scratched them until he could see blood coming out of his right. And all the time he cried. When his face and his hands hurt too much, he stopped, lying down on the floor and continued crying until there were no tears left. And finally he fell asleep.

Early in the morning he woke up again. It was cold, because he was still lying outside in the grass. He wanted to heave himself up again, but somehow failed. His hands still hurt so much that he could barely touch anything. So he rolled on the back and on the third try was able to get up without using his hands but only his elbows. His face also still hurt. He got on his feet and knelt beside the little river that was right next to his tent. Wow, he really looked awful. All over his face were bruises and scratches, his lower lip was swollen and his hands were full of dried blood and mud. He carefully started to wash off the blood from last night, although it did hurt like hell. But it didn't matter to him. He didn't have to face the prince like this. If he actually came. Yamapi wished he wouldn't but he had no idea of the prince's mind, so all he could do was to be prepared for what could happen today. So he went into the tent and put on some more decent clothes, since he'd worn the fancy dress all night long.

And then there were footsteps. Something he didn't want to hear. As much as he didn't want to go outside, he wanted to be with the prince. Stay at his side and protect him from any evil. But he was the evil, wasn't he? And still, there was no option left but to go out and face him. He would be confused, maybe even disgusted when he saw his face and his hands and immediately take a turn and leave. But Yamapi couldn't do anything but go outside. For his father's sake.

When the cold air hit his face again, he hesitated to look into the prince's eyes. He felt like he still wasn't prepared at all.

When the prince saw Yamapi's injuries, he came a step closer. Yamapi wanted to take a step back, but it felt like his feet were tied to the ground. "Wha- what happened to you? Where did you get all those marks from?", Toma asked. It-it's nothing... I just... got beaten up, that's all...", Yamapi answered, his voice trembling. "Be-beaten up? By whom? Was it when you escaped out of the castle?", the prince asked again. There was something in his voice that made Yamapi lift his eyes.

Toma was so close to him right now. He wanted to touch him, to kiss him again and tell him how much he wanted him and that he didn't mean to harm him but that all of this was for his father's sake. No, not all of this. His feelings for the royal boy were sincere. He'd fallen in love with him the second their bodies touched in the castle. Or maybe even before that. But time didn't matter, did it?

He'd fallen in love with Toma, once and for all, and he couldn't help it. Didn't want to. But still they didn't have a chance from the beginning. So Yamapi had to try to make the best out of it.

"It doesn't hurt as bad as it looks, don't worry anymore", he said. "But..." The prince wanted to protest, but he was cut off by Pi.

"You see... on the ball, we didn't have the chance to dance, right?" Pi smiled. Make the best out of it, he thought to himself. And so Pi closed the distance between them, lay one arm around Toma and took Toma's hand with the other. Carefully he pulled Toma closer and started to dance a slow waltz, the only dance he was able to dance thanks to his mother. He wanted to say something, keep up the conversation, but he couldn't. All he could do was stare at Toma's angel-like appearance.

And then Toma looked him in the eyes. It was as if the world had stopped turning, giving them the time they wanted and needed so much. They danced as if there was no tomorrow and neither of them knew if there really was one for them. Suddenly Toma bumped with his back into a tree. It didn't hurt, but they both stopped moving. Continued looking into each other's eyes.

"I... missed you...", Yamapi whispered, right before he closed the distance between their lips once more and kissed his prince.

Kapitel 9: Chapter 9

Chapter 9

And they danced and danced. Toma didn't know how long they were moving like this, but it didn't matter to him. He wanted to continue like this forever. Suddenly he bumped against a tree and they stopped moving. But they still continued to look deep into each others eyes. Toma was about to loose himself in them as Yamapi spoke, whispering the words he wanted to hear so much. "I... missed you."

And this time the prince was prepared for Pi's kiss, he had been waiting for it desperately. This time he enjoyed it to the fullest. He put his arms around Pi and pulled him closer, never leaving his lips.

Unspeakable feelings rushed through him, it felt so good to be here with him and he wished he would never have to leave him. If only he could be with him forever...

It was as if all of his hopes had materialized into one person, someone who would save him from his gray life. Someone who gave him what he needed so much. Someone who could give him security and love, someone that Toma could trust no matter what. And he felt that Yamapi was all this and even more.

Suddenly Pi broke their kiss and breathed rapidly. Toma also had to catch his breath, but then he looked at Yamapi tenderly. "You know.. I can't really believe it...", he said smiling mild. "What?", asked Pi frowning. " This all.. that I can be here with you...I thought.. I would be stuck in this castle forever... But now.. I feel so free like I never felt...thanks to you", he smiled brightly and held Pi tight.

But Pi squirmed himself out of the embrace and walked back to the tent."W-would you mind... helping me with the... bruises?", he asked in a voice that Toma couldn't interpret. He guessed that the injuries must still hurt more than Pi wanted to admit. "Sure, do you have alcohol?", he asked cheerfully. Pi pulled a bottle out of his tent and Toma took some of the cotton that Pi had also found in his tent. They sat down facing each other and Toma opened the bottle. "OK, I have never done this before, but I've seen the doctor do it over and over again. It could hurt a bit though...", he said and eyed the young man in front of him. "I don't mind", answered Pi, his gaze fixed on the ground.

The prince soaked a bit of the cotton in the alcohol and took Pi's hand gently in his own, careful not to hurt him anywhere. Then he slowly touched the scratched skin with the alcohol soaked cloth, he could feel how Pi's hand twitched in his, but he didn't withdraw it. "Did it hurt? I'm sorry...", spoke, continuing with his work even more careful.

After some time Toma had disinfected the wounds on the hands and had dressed them. He continued with the face, in order to do so he approached closer to Pi. He dabbed the little scratches on his face.

Yamapi sat there, not moving, he had already closed his eyes and didn't even twitch a bit as the alcohol came in contact with the open wounds. "Ok, done!", said Tom and stood up to wash his hands in the river.

He could hear Yamapi whispering "Thank you" behind him and turned around again and smiled. "Your welcome."

"Your life must be very interesting, right? The life in the castle is so boring... I wished... I could come with... you instead.", he said hesitantly, waiting for Yamapi's reaction. After some seconds he answered. "You could..." The prince's face brightened. "Really? Then... I wouldn't have to marry her... I told you about her, didn't I? My fiance... maybe you saw her at the ball." "Don't worry. I ... won't allow that you have to marry some stranger...", Pi said seriously. Toma blushed a bit as he heard his serious tone. But he felt very happy that Yamapi also seemed to want to have him by his side. He sat down next to Yamapi again, leaned on his chest and closed his eyes. He could hear Yamapi's heart beating fast. He also felt his heart beating happily in his own chest, maybe they were even , beating synchronous. Maybe, he thought. Maybe everything will be good at last.

Kapitel 10: Chapter 10

Chapter 10

This kiss was better than the one before. It was a gentle, warm kiss and Toma was into it as well. He wasn't as unmoving and shocked as he had been the first time they kissed. And this time it was more passionate than anything else. He felt Toma's arms around him, smelled, tasted him. He was about to lose himself in it, but then his mind told him it was wrong and he immediately broke off their body connection, starting to shiver. This situation was too awkward. And the fact that Toma suddenly confessed to him that he'd never been so free before only made things worse.

While Toma cleaned Yamapi's wounds, Pi tried not to tremble too much. The scratches hurt as hell when Toma put the alcohol-drained wool on them but Yamapi felt like he deserved it.

Pi tried his hardest to avoid Toma's gaze. He couldn't bear looking into the prince's eyes right now. But he was thankful. Thankful that the prince was the one hurting him right now. Even if he was just hurting his body. It didn't make Pi feel better, but it calmed down his nerves.

"Ok, done!", Toma said cheerfully. Oh, how Pi wished he could be as happy as Toma was right now.

"Thank you...", Pi answered. It wasn't a thanks for cleaning his wounds but for anything Pi had been able to experience with him so far.

Toma got up and went to the river to wash his hands in it. Pi's eyes followed the young prince. Even Toma's back was beautiful.

"Your life must be very interesting, right? The life in the castle is so boring... I wished... I could come with... you instead.", Toma said.

Toma wanted to come with him? But he was the prince, the one everybody's eyes lay on right now. But Pi wanted him to leave together with him as well.

And if he came with him, this would be the chance to finally free his father. Everyone would be looking for the prince, once they found out he was gone, so probably no guards in front of the jail entrance. And there it was again. The inner fight. Wanting the same for two so different reasons.

"You could...", he finally managed to say. The prince's face brightened. "Really? Then... I wouldn't have to marry her... I told you about her, didn't I? My fiance... maybe you saw her at the ball." "Don't worry. I... won't allow you to marry some stranger..." No, he wouldn't. At least not until he had rescued his father.

Toma came closer and sat next to Yamapi. Yamapi's heart started beating faster again. So close. There wasn't much time for them left to be so close. And Pi wanted to taste all of it.

"You... are wearing my ring, don't you?", Yamapi said. "So you're mine now. And nobody will take you away from me." And if somebody dared to try, he would smash their faces on a rock.

Automatically he laid one arm around the other one's back. He wanted to be with him forever, wanted to possess him, to take Toma with him when he escaped together with his father. But it was just too dangerous. He couldn't allow this to happen to Toma. So he had to keep his mouth shut about the situation. And their relationship would be destroyed soon enough, so he should just smile and enjoy the time they had together.

"Yes, I do wear the ring.", Toma said, smiling. "It would be too obvious wearing it on my finger, so I put it onto a necklace instead. And now it's closer to... my heart.", the prince said, blushing.

"You... are beautiful, when you smile, you know?" And finally Pi managed to smile as well. "You are, too.", Toma answered. They felt like they had so much to say and didn't know where to start. But looking into each other's eyes was enough for both of them right now. And again, Pi leaned over and kissed Toma gently. He lay one hand on Toma's, the other on Toma's cheek. His skin was so smooth that he couldn't help but stroke him over and over again. After some time Toma leaned into the kiss so much, that suddenly Pi lost his balance and fell off the small chair he sat on, pulling Toma with him.

So Pi lay on his back, Toma on him and both looked at each other in surprise. And then they had to laugh. Laugh so hard they couldn't stop for a whole while.

After a while Toma went serious again, saying: "You know... that time in the castle... that was my very first kiss." He smiled. "And I'm happy you took it. Yamashita."

Pi smiled as well. "I like the way you say my name. You should stick to the long version, so I can listen to your voice longer." "Okay!", Toma answered, grinning. "But aren't I heavy?" "Uh, no. I like this just fine." Pi grinned as well. And how he liked this. Again he took Toma's hand and intertwined it with his own. Even though his hands and face still hurt, he didn't mean to keep his hands off the prince. Not now, when almost everything was just so right. He turned around, putting Toma under him.

"What a feeling, sitting on a prince. Maybe I should apologize to you later." Pi laughed. He took Toma's necklace from Toma's neck, took off the ring and pulled Toma up, so he would sit as well. Then again he took the prince's hand and with slightly shaking hands he put the ring on Toma's finger. "Just for now, okay? I promise... my heart... will always be with you."

Kapitel 11: Chapter 11

Chapter 11

Toma watched how Yamapi taking the ring off.

Pi pulled him up, so he was sitting as well. Then he put the ring on Tomas finger.

As if even this gesture wasn't enough, Pi said: "Just for now, okay? I promise... my heart... will always be with you." Toma blushed but smiled softly. He couldn't tell how much this meant to him. Instead of saying something he leaned in and kissed Pi again. He didn't want this to end...He wanted to stay with him forever.

Forming out of this wish an idea came to his mind and he pulled back. "What if you work in the castle?", asked Toma.

Yamapi looked confused and Toma looked at him seriously. "If you work in the castle... then we could see each other more often...", he concluded still thinking. "I think they are searching for some people because of the... engagement.", he said. "That... that would be great!", answered Yamapi. The prince smiled. "Then we can be together every day and night.", he blushed, but the smile wouldn't vanish from his face and he pulled Yamapi into a tight hug.

Oh, how much he wanted to be with him every day, every second. And if everything went well, he could have Pi by his side always... until they would escape together. And then they could be together forever and nothing could ever part them again. The young royal sighed satisfied as he still held Pi in his arms.

The next day started early for Toma. He had to attend lessons in preparations for the wedding and Toma went along with them happily, knowing that it wouldn't come to said wedding. As he had some spare time between two lessons, he thought about the public application which had started this morning. He hoped that Yamapi made it through and he would be able to work in the castle.

After lunch he got taken aside by Maki. "Toma-sama... would ...would you meet me in the garden this evening... I heard that there will be a shooting star shower. I think it is interesting..." She blushed. "Well...", Toma hesitated. If Pi made it, then they could spent the time together. Suddenly he heard his father say: "Of course he will come to see you, right, my son?", he smiled widely. "I'm sure he is just too shy to say how much he wants to spend time with you." Toma caught his father's gaze, he had no other option than to agree. "...yeah... of course...:", he tried to sound just as shy as his father made him just now. "Really? That's great, then until tonight!", she smiled sweetly and hurried to her room, leaving the prince and his father alone. "My son, I hope you know what to do, right?", said the king in a menacing voice. "I know", he said in a low voice. Yes, he knew, he just had to play his role a little longer. Although he had remorse because he had to be so nice to the girl, although he didn't want it. But he had no choice.

He went back to his room and sat on the desk. Shortly after he heard a knock on the door. "Yes?", he asked. The door opened and his sensei stepped into the room. "Young

Master, this is your new servant", he said. Toma's eyes widened as Yamapi stepped into his room. The young man bowed. "It's a pleasure to meet you, Toma-sama", he smiled politely. He plays his role very well, thought Toma. "Pleased to meet you, too", said the prince smiling widely. "His name is Yamashita, he will take care of any of your issues from now on, so please rely on him", the teacher told him. "Thanks. I will, be sure of that", nodded Toma and gazed at Pi. "You can go now", he added to his teacher, who excused himself.

"You really did it!", shouted Toma after he was sure no one could hear him. "Yes, although I was really nervous. I don't even know how I made it through...", admitted Pi. "It doesn't matter...", grinned Toma and pulled Pi closer. "... now that you're here", he smiled softly and then kissed Pi passionately.

The prince was so happy, he had Pi right there, with him. And he wanted to have him by his side forever. His kisses felt so good and right. He began to stroke Pi's cheeks and his neck. His skin was so smooth...

The young prince was amazed by the feelings which Yamapi was causing him. He wanted to feel more of them, to feel more of Yamashita.

And as they kissed and tried to get closer and closer to each other, they suddenly stumbled over each others feet and landed on the bed.

Kapitel 12: Chapter 12

Chapter 12

Getting into the castle wasn't a big deal for Yamapi, and so was the casting. There were so many people applying, but most of them were merely able to carry a plate safely. So it wasn't a problem to become part of the staff as well.

After the casting was over, someone who supposedly was Toma's private teacher announced who had to do what kind of job. Luckily Yamapi was announced as the prince's servant and so he was to follow the teacher into Toma's room, where the teacher finally left them alone.

"You really did it!", the prince shouted excited. "Yes, although I was really nervous. I don't even know how I made it through...", admitted Yamapi. "It doesn't matter...", grinned Toma and pulled him closer. "... now that you're here", Toma smiled softly and then kissed him passionately.

Pi had longed for this so much. He had been waiting a whole night to be able to feel him again and now he had him again. It had just been one night but to Pi it had felt like one year. He could feel Toma everywhere on his skin, smell him, taste him and he didn't intend to let go of him now. Trying to get closer to his prince Pi moved forward, but moved too fast and so they both lost balance and fell onto the bed. But actually they didn't really mind. Or maybe they did?

Pi broke their connection and looked at Toma.

"My prince,", he began. "What are your intentions?" He grinned.

Toma smiled as well, though Pi could see a slight red shade on his cheeks. "I... I'm not sure,", Toma said. "I've never done anything like this before, so..."

"Then please leave it to me. I'm quite fond of my skills regarding this kind of action."

And Pi was REALLY fond of that. He continued to kiss the royal one again and let his finger slide to the first button of Toma's shirt and finally broke their connection again.

"Please let me undress you, since I'm your servant and you should not do this yourself." And he kissed Toma again. When he had removed Toma's shirt, he wanted to continue with the prince's trousers, but Toma stopped him, holding Pi's hands tight. "Wait a second... please."

"Of course, my prince.", Pi answered and stopped moving. "What's the matter?"

"I-It's nothing... I just... don't want to rush this." Toma smiled and stroke Pi's hands.

"We don't have to rush, if you don't want to. Actually I... don't want this to end as well..."

And again he kissed Toma gently. After some time he continued removing Toma's trousers and this time Toma didn't stop him. When he was done, he wanted to unbutton his own vest as well, but again Toma grabbed his hands to stop him.

"Wait. I... want to do this.", he said shyly.

"Certainly,", Pi answered smiling and slowly got off Toma. The prince got up and hesitated. "Don't worry, your highness. I'm sure you'll do just fine."

Encouraged by Pi's words Toma got in top of his servant quickly and pushed him down onto the bed. "I'll try,", he said, before he carefully and very slowly unbuttoned Pi's shirt. Pi's eyes meanwhile lay on Toma's face and he tried to memorize every

expression the prince's face made while he was on top of him. It took Toma some time to unbutton the shirt and as he was finished he removed the shirt carefully. He looked so serious that Pi almost started laughing, but luckily he was able to hold back and so he just smiled and said: "My prince... don't worry so much. You are able to unbutton your own shirt, aren't you? So it's no big deal to remove mine. Please have more self-confidence. You're the prince of this country still. And mine as well."

Encouraged by these words Toma bent down and kissed his servant. Pi could have only kissed him the whole night through, if they weren't already gone that far. So he hesitantly touched Toma's chest, stroking over the smooth skin.

"Yamashita... I... think I love you...", the prince whispered.

Pi looked up into Toma's serious face, shocked by what he had just heard.

"Prince... Toma...", he murmured. He had just said he loved him. And he was so serious. Pi didn't know what to answer. He knew the answer already but he was scared. Afraid if he spoke it out aloud, he had to admit to himself that it wasn't just a game. That he really cared for the royal one and that his whole plan might be destroyed by these 3 words. He just couldn't say it.

So he pulled the prince down into a tight hug and kissed him passionately. While he kissed him, he hastily removed his trousers. He wanted so much more, even if he knew he didn't have the right to. Yamapi rolled over Toma, pressing him onto the bed and began to remove the royal underwear. But he rushed. And Toma began trembling.

"Wa-wait... Yamashita...", he said and again held his hands. "That's too fast... Please..." And Pi realized what he just had been about to do. He wasn't focusing on Toma any more. He was soaked into his own thoughts. And he was about to get it over with. Although he didn't want it to end, he'd acted so fast that Toma was scared of him now. And he didn't want this. He wanted Toma to love him, to stay by his side.

And so he got off the royal one.

"My apologies... I... I'm sorry...", he mumbled and sat down on the floor, his back against the bed. What the heck was he doing? Yes, his father was imprisoned and he somehow had to get him out. But was that the kind of thing you thought about when you spend your time with someone like Toma doing such an important thing?

Toma got off the bed as well, stared at Pi for a second and slowly sat down on his servants thighs, facing him.

"Listen...", he started. "I... want to do this... with you, okay? You probably haven't done anything wrong, but since it's the first time for me, I don't want to rush. I want to savor every touch, every gaze by you so I can remember everything even when I've grown old. So... please go on..."

Toma bent down and kissed him again. It was a light, soft kiss but it was full of love and Pi could feel it. And he knew he wouldn't rush any more. He wanted to enjoy this like Toma did. And he would make love to him.

He kissed him back, his one hand caressing Toma's neck while the other was sliding over Toma's back. He softly pulled him closer, felt Toma's skin on his and the places where their bodies touched became as hot as fire. It burned but still felt so good that Pi couldn't stop. He felt Toma's fingers on his chest, touching him with care.

The air around them became hotter with every touch and every adoring word they whispered. And they didn't care for anything but the here and now.

They enjoyed every second and while Pi was in Toma he was sure that there was no better place than here with his prince. "Toma... Toma..." he whispered all the time and he didn't want to say anything else ever again.

When their love making had come to an end, Pi still didn't let go off Toma. He wanted to stay like this forever, even when the floor wasn't probably the most comfortable place in this room. Toma was still on top of him. He looked exhausted but he still smiled. A smile filled with love and happiness.

"I love you...", he said again and Pi leaned in and kissed him tenderly.

He pulled the blanket off the bed and wrapped it around them.

"I want to stay like this a little longer... please...", he whispered. And again he pulled Toma into a tight hug and didn't intent to let go off him until the sun lit the next unbearable day.

Kapitel 13: Chapter 13

Chapter 13

Toma woke up as the first sun rays began to shine through his window. He opened his eyes sleepily, the ground of his room was hard and his back hurt. But he felt Yamashita's warm body, still clinging on him, as if for dear life. He shifted a bit, so that he could see Pi's sleeping face. The prince smiled as he saw the calm expression on Yamapi's face, he looked so peaceful. It was like heaven, being here with him. Having him in his arms, feeling him.

Then he remembered the last night and his face turned a little red. It had felt better than he had imagined it. And he was happy that Yamapi was the one he had done it with first. He would never ever forget this night, he swore to himself.

Then the clock tower announced that it was already 8 o'clock. As much as he wanted to keep lying there with Yamashita, he didn't want to get either of them into trouble. So he took a long glance at the sleeping face of the young man and then gently touched his cheek. "Yamashita", he said softly. "Wake up."

No reaction.

Toma stroked Pi's cheek and pinched him softly every now and then. But still no reaction. "Yamashi~ta", he said in a sing-sang voice. But the latter still wasn't showing any sign of consciousness.

"Mou!", pouted the prince. Then suddenly an idea popped into his mind. It was actually rather stupid, but he found it funny.

He leaned over Yamapi's head and blew into his ear.

With a soft moan Pi opened his eyes and held his ear. "What are you doing?", he asked confused, but to Toma's satisfaction, he looked utterly flushed. The royal one hugged him. "You just wouldn't wake up", he answered grinning and getting up, pulling Pi with him. "We have to get ready now. It's almost time for breakfast!", he said with a genuine smile and walked towards his wardrobe.

He took out some clothes and turned around, finding Pi staring at him. His face turned red immediately and he got clothed hastily. Pi also got into his servant uniform. Toma had to admit that it fitted him really well.

As they arrived in the great hall for breakfast almost everyone was already sitting at the table. Maki, her father and the king. The prince greeted them and sat down, Pi standing behind him.

Toma shot a glance at Maki, who were eying him with an unreadable expression. The atmosphere was awkward, uncomfortable, at least Toma felt so. The king and the lord were talking cheerfully, while Maki was very quiet. Not that Toma had heard her speaking much, but now she didn't even say a word.

So they ate their breakfast and after that the king and the lord retreated for some chess game. Now only Maki, Pi and Toma were left in the great hall and the air seemed to get thinner every time Maki looked at him.

"Toma-sama?", asked Maki with slightly shaking voice. "Y-yes?" "Why didn't you come last night?", she asked keeping her eyes lowered. "Eh?- ah!", Toma had to think a

second but then it hit him, he had promised to watch the falling star shower together with her. But what should he say now? He cleared his throat. "Well.." There was no one in the hall except for the three of them.

The prince didn't want to lie to her, but could he tell her the truth? Also about that he didn't intend to marry her? Would she tell his father? Her father?

She looked at her again, her eyes were full of sadness... but he didn't want to make her false hopes anymore. She deserved better than that and without hesitation he said: "Well... I was with someone else.", he said and could hear how Pi gasped hard.

Maki looked confused. "What do you mean?", she asked. Toma sighed. 'Now or never', he thought. "The truth is... I already like someone else...and it's a man...", he whispered and watched Maki's reaction. Her eyes grew wide and she looked at the the prince in shock.

"You- you mean... A man? But... ", she stuttered, trying to understand the situation.

"Yes, that's how it is. I'm terribly sorry, really. I don't intend to break your heart, but I fell in love with him before I could even realize it... and... I won't marry you. I'm really sorry", he told her and tried to be as kind as possible. But how kind can you be when you break someone's heart with these words?

Maki's eyes watered. "I-i understand", she said sobbing.

"I'm really sorry. You deserve a better man than me. You really do...", the young prince almost also began to cry, but he pulled himself together.

"I know I'm asking for too much, but would you please not say anything to my father or yours yet? I-i want to tell them myself... I don't know how they will react but... I have to do it."

"Yeah... I -i won't say anything... I promise... if that's it what makes you happy", she said in a low voice. Toma tried to smile. "Thank you so much! And I'm really sorry...", he raised. "Let's go Yamashita." "Yes, sir."

So they headed towards the door, Maki watched hem leave. It was short before the door closed that she saw how the prince took the hand of his servant...

Kapitel 14: Chapter 14

Chapter 14

Soundtrack: JUJU with JAY'ED – Ashita ga kuru nara

Pi was more than happy. Never had he thought that Toma would tell her the truth. It wasn't the whole truth, but still. As Toma took his hand after leaving the room, his skin was soft and smooth, but cold and his hand was shaking.

"Don't worry, everything's going to be alright.", Pi said, smiling. With his thumb he was drawing small circles on Toma's hand.

"I don't. I'm just... excited. And... she's going to be alright...right? I didn't want to hurt her. I like her. Somehow. But only as a friend!"

Pi grinned. He knew the prince didn't like her that way. Or else he wouldn't have spent the night with his new servant but with the little princess.

"She'll be alright, I promise. She's cute. She'll find another man who will make her happy.", Pi reassured him and kissed Toma's forehead.

Suddenly Toma stopped. "Wait.", he said, laughing.

"What is it?" Pi wondered if he wanted to do it a second time right here in the cold corridor.

But the prince said: "We got lost." He laughed again. "Let's go back and take the right way to my room. I... want to be alone with you." Pi smiled and kissed Toma, locking him with light pressure onto the wall. He actually didn't want to wait until they got back to the bedroom.

But then there were voices. "Oh, dammit...", Toma hissed. He took Pi by the hand again and pulled him into another corridor. It was dark and cold, only a faint light from the torch at the end of the tunnel.

Pi remembered the tunnel. He'd been here before. When he met his father.

And suddenly there were voices in his head.

~

"They say I killed someone, but I didn't! You believe me, don't you? I would never kill someone!"

"Tomohisa, come here. Come to mommy, sweetheart."

"I'll think of a plan to get you out."

"I'm ill, son. I'm probably... going to die soon. Will you promise me to search for your father?"

~

There were voices in Pi's head and they didn't want to vanish.

He had to get his father out of here. He knew it. He'd known it before he had made love to the prince. This was the reason why he was here. He couldn't help it.

"I'm sorry... my prince."

"Hmm? What are you talking about?", Tome asked confused, but Yamapi smashed his fist into Toma's stomach and the latter dropped down to the ground, unconscious. Pi caught him, before his face hit the cold stone, and placed his back gently against the wall.

"I'm so sorry, my prince... I'm sorry...", he whispered and kissed him one last time, before he went off and headed towards the jail.

Yamapi was lucky, he could not see any guards and could hear no sounds. He took the keys and sneaked into the dark dungeons, searching for his father.

When he'd finally found him, he tried to open the door in a hurry but dropped the keys and had to search for the right one once again.

In the meantime his father had gotten up and stood at the other side of the door, telling his son to hurry up. When Yamapi had finally opened the door, his father smashed it open, sending Pi's bottom to the ground.

The old Yamashita ran down the corridors, behind him his son to whom he hadn't paid any attention since the door was open.

Outside the castle they ran into darkness. They ran and ran and Pi wondered when they would stop, but they were still too close to the castle. But then Pi could hear footsteps. They were close and loud and he could hear them clearly. Pi turned around.

It was Toma.

What was he doing here?

He wasn't supposed to see him like that.

Why was he chasing them? Hadn't he hit him unconscious only minutes before? It was dangerous for him here outside the castle.

Pi wanted to go on thinking, but suddenly he bumped into something. As he looked up, he saw that his father had stopped running and was looking at Toma.

"Father, hurry. We don't have time to...", Pi started, but his father interrupted his talk.

"No, this is the prince, is he not? It's his family's fault that I have been locked down there in the dungeons. His father sentenced me to lifelong imprisonment and now he will suffer as much as I did."

"What... what do you mean? Father..."

Dark thoughts came into Pi's mind.

"No... no, father, you can't..." But once again he was interrupted by his father.

"Oh yes... I can..." And the expression on the man's face were even darker as Pi's suggestions were right now.

The old Yamashita moved towards Toma, and as Pi wanted to stop him, he bumped him away.

Was this man really innocent? He had said so, but still...

"Toma, run!", Pi shouted, trying to save his beloved.

But Toma didn't listen. Or he didn't want to. He kept chasing them and coming closer. And he was merely impressed as the old Yamashita slowly moved towards him as well.

"Toma, please! Run!", he cried out once again, but still no reaction.

And finally the old man reached out for the prince, and the prince did so as well. But it was an uneven fight. Toma eventually became weaker and weaker and it was only a matter of time until he was lying on the ground, the older one on top of him, strangling him.

Pi was watching the whole scene, unable to move. He couldn't believe this. He had just rescued his father, wanted to just run away and never see the prince again, and now his father was about to kill the man, his son couldn't have. Pi watched Toma becoming weaker with every second, and finally he moved towards them.

"Father, let go of him!", he shouted.

"No... he shall suffer like I did all these years... suffer...", his father said, pure madness in his eyes.

"I won't... allow this... get off of him!", Pi cried and pulled his father from the beloved prince.

Toma coughed, rolled on the floor and eventually came to his mind again.

But his father didn't. He started to fight his own son, and he fought like a lunatic. Pi saw in his eyes that he would kill him if he had to, to get to the prince. He didn't only want to make Toma suffer... he really wanted to kill the prince. And so the truth came to Pi's mind: It was true. His father had killed someone and he had been imprisoned rightly. Even if Pi didn't want to believe it, his father was a murderer and he wouldn't stop. Unless someone else stopped him. And if it had to be him, he would do it. Do it for Toma. Or else his life would come to an end.

So Pi fought with all his power and eventually got back on top.

"Father, stop it! I don't... want to...", he stammered.

But his father wouldn't stop. He fought and fought, and so Pi fought back. Until this

one ending hit.

They were close to the cliff, and Pi's last hit was so powerful that his father tripped and like in slow motion fell off the cliff. He was waving with his hands, hoping for help, but Pi couldn't reach out for him.

Somehow he didn't want to. And so it was too late to save the old man.

Crying out Pi's first name his father fell and fell, until he couldn't be heard any more.

Pi looked down. It was going deep down, so there was no chance that his father would still be alive.

He felt a warm hand on his shoulder and turned around. Toma was standing right next to him, looking into his eyes with a warm smile.

"Why... are you still here?", Pi began. "You should run. I... betrayed you, you see?"

"No, I don't. You saved me, didn't you? There still a chance for us to..."

"No, there's not!" Pi shook off Toma's hand and took a few steps away from him. "Don't you understand? I..." Pi took a very deep breath. It was hard for him to say all this, but he had to. To keep himself and Toma from danger. He had just bumped his father off a cliff and didn't

reach out for him when he was about to fall. And he was his father's son. So maybe... he didn't want to go on thinking. He couldn't bear the thoughts.

"I did never love you, you see? I just said this so I had better chances to free my father. It was never because of you that I came back into the castle that night. And last night... was fun. But that was all there was to it. Don't... follow me, okay? It's better for both of us. Sayounara... your highness."

[dammit, i'm almost crying *sitting in public* |D']

Kapitel 15: Chapter 15

Chapter 15

Soundtrack: "Because of you" by Kelly Clarkson

Toma laid a hand on Pi's shoulder, he was still looking down the cliff, where his father had disappeared into darkness. Toma knew that it must have been hard for him to do such a thing to his own father. It's not like Toma approved of what he did. But he did it to save him didn't he? He smiled at Pi warmly.

Then Yamapi turned around, his face in a mixture of shock and guilt? "Why... are you still here?", Pi began. "You should run. I... betrayed you, you see?"

Toma didn't know what Pi was talking about. 'He must be confused', he thought.

"No, I don't. You saved me, didn't you? There still a chance for us to...", said the prince slowly.

"No, there's not!", answered Pi rather angry, shaking Toma's hand off his shoulder. He stepped away and his face was expressionless, even cold. "Don't you understand? I...", began Pi, then he paused.

"I did never love you, you see? I just said this so I had better chances to free my father. It was never because of you that I came back into the castle that night. And last night... was fun. But that was all there was to it. Don't... follow me, okay? It's better for both of us. Sayounara... your highness.", he said coldly.

Toma stared at him with wide eyes. It hit Toma, and every word felt like an arrow in his heart. At the end he felt like something was breaking inside of him. "What...?", he murmured. But Pi just walked around him and tried to escape.

A sudden anger got Toma and he shouted after him. "Wait, you!" He pulled the ring off his neck and held it in his hand. "Why did you even try so hard? It was all useless...", he laughed bitter, his feelings were a total mess.

Pi still stood there and watched him. "Why aren't you saying a word, you traitor?!", he shouted and approached him angrily. Pi didn't move and still didn't say a word. His face was still emotionless and Toma got so angry. With the ring still in his fist he punched Yamapi in the face and the latter fell down on the hard rock.

"Do you even know how much you hurt me? Do you have ANY idea, what you did to me?", he shouted as loud as he could and threw the ring hard on Pi's chest.

Suddenly it began to rain, but Toma didn't care. "I... loved you... with all my heart... dammit... I trusted you! How... how could you do that to me?", he spoke with tilted head, his voice almost breaking.

And then he began to run, as fast as he could. He ran, not caring what direction. He just wanted to leave Yamapi behind, get as far away from him as possible.

It wasn't long until he found no other place than the castle to come back. So he went straight to his room. But even there, he could get no rest. The room and everything reminded him of Yamapi and the night they had spent here....

Toma had barely entered his room when he turned around and walked back to the hallway. Finally he settled down in the last corner of the library in his favorite seat...

"I did never love you, you see? I just said this so I had better chances to free my father. It was never because of you that I came back into the castle that night. And last night... was fun. But that was all there was to it. Don't... follow me, okay? It's better for both of us. Sayounara... your highness."

Toma could still hear Yamashita's voice echoing in his body, which felt utterly empty. He felt so lifeless... he didn't know for how long he has stared at the wall, but he was sure, if he moved, everything would break down on him.

How could something like that happen? Why? Didn't he love Yamashita? And didn't Yamashita love him? That was what he had thought at least...but he got tricked.

Everything was fake. His gentle smile... his soft touches, his pretty words... everything.

The prince touched his chest, where the ring had been some time ago. Somehow his skin, where the cold silver had touched it, was burning...

He thought about the moments they had shared, how they had kissed and hugged and just were together. All this time... He had felt so secure... he had trusted Yamashita, he had thought that he could become truly happy together with him. Finally get what he searched for so desperately... but all these things were fake... He couldn't believe it... he had even slept with him! Pi had just used him... It was just a game for him. A cruel one...

Toma couldn't hold it any longer, the tears started to pour out of his eyes and the flow just wouldn't stop. He was angry, with himself and with Yamashita. How could he get fooled so easily? And how could Yamashita fake those gentle words and this warmth?

He stood up, not knowing what to do... he ran through the corridors between the book cases, the tears still running down his cheeks. He wanted to punch him, to hit him, too hurt him as hard as he could.... He pushed the books from the nearest shelf to the ground. Then he punched

against the wall until his hands began to hurt. He leaned his head against the wall and continued crying silently.

No matter how angry he was, no matter how much he hated Yamashita now... he still loved him...

His heart was aching with love.

It was unbearable... and he continued crying until there weren't any tears left....

It was early in the morning when a small figure walked through the dusty gangways of the library. Maki loved to read a good book in the morning. She still felt hurt and in pain because of the prince's words. She needed some distraction... As she strolled through the corridors she read one or two titles of the books in the shelves.

Finally she reached the last shelf, and as she looked closely, she saw a book lying on the ground. When she turned around the shelf she found a bunch of books on the ground and in between was the prince. Sleeping... dead?

Maki panicked. "Prince Toma!", she hurried over to him and shook him. He opened his swollen and red eyes and looked at her. "Maki-san...", he murmured confused. But then the memories came back...

"Toma-sama, what happened? Were you.... crying?", she asked cautiously.

Suddenly he hugged her tight and began to sob. Maki was taken aback, but she had no time to get excited or something. The prince was crying and sobbing in her arms. She couldn't resist, so she hugged him back and whispered reassuring words into his ear. "Shh... I don't know what happened to you. And I won't ask if you don't want to tell me...", she said softly. "But... I will be there for you if you wish, Toma-sama....", she whispered.

She was glad that she could do something for him.

Toma cried a little longer. He should be embarrassed, he thought for a second, for crying in front of a girl. But he didn't care at all. All he wanted was that everything was just a bad dream...

And he felt safe in Maki's arms, it somehow reminded him of his mother.

Maki was gentle and kind and that although he had hurt her that bad. Now he knew how it felt... and he really was sorry about it.

This all and even more circled around in his head, as he clinged on Maki for support.

Sometime, he didn't know when, he let go of her and looked at her.

"I am sorry... for breaking down like that...", he said, his voice sounding hoarse.

"Don't worry... I'm happy when I can be there for you, Toma-sama", she said and wiped away his tears gently.

"Thank you... so much... for everything, Maki-san... I ... I don't

deserve your kindness....", he spoke.

"No, don't say that. I told you that I love you, didn't I? I will always be there for you when you need me, Toma-sama...", she said and blushed lightly.

Toma hugged her again. It was a miracle that she still was so kind to him, after what he had said.

"Thank you so much...", he whispered and sighed.

It felt good to have her there with him. It didn't ease his pain much, but it was better than being alone. And it was good to know that she cared for him and his pain... and all at once it crossed his mind... She loved him, she cared for him, no matter what. She wanted him to be happy and she would stay with him... all he wanted... maybe, he thought... he should stick with her...

He was sure that he could never forget Yamashita and his love for him. But if he would stay with the little princess, he wouldn't be alone and he wouldn't ever be hurt again.

He knew that she would never leave his side and would be with him forever....

After all, he should have listened to his father, he thought. He should have never sneaked out of the castle... he should have married Maki right away when she confessed to him...

If he had done so, he wouldn't have to experience that pain...

And it was that moment, when he knew that he wouldn't search for dangerous adventures again... he would marry her and be happy with her... get children... grow old and have someone by his side, who loved him and cared for him...

He would choose the save path...at last...

[A/N: And I am crying too now, OMG...]

Kapitel 16: Chapter 16

Chapter 16

Soundtrack: Switchfoot – You

Toma said something, but Yamapi tried to get away fast. He wanted to get as far away from Toma as he could, even if it broke his heart. But then Toma told him to wait, and he couldn't but do as he was told. Pi wasn't sure if he should look at him, but he had to. How else would Toma believe his words?

He saw Toma rip the ring off his neck. And it felt like Toma had ripped Pi's heart out. He wanted to cry, but he wasn't allowed to. Toma talked to him, furious, but Pi didn't get a word. Toma came closer and Pi watched him still. He wanted to hug him, wanted to tell him that he didn't want to leave but it was already too late. When Toma punched his fist into Pi's face, Pi didn't even try to defend himself and sagged to the ground. Toma continued to scream out what he had in mind, while Pi didn't even feel his back. He could hardly keep his eyes open, so that he was able to absorb Toma's hurt expression and his whole face. But then it started to rain and Toma threw the ring at Pi. He wanted to get up, to feel the cold metal between his fingers, but before he was able to move, Toma turned around and ran as fast as he could.

Pi slowly lifted his hand, groping for the ring, but he didn't find it. He fought to get up and saw the ring and Toma's necklace lying beside him in the grass. Hesitantly he reached out for the precious metal and looked at the ring in his palm. And then he couldn't hold it any more. He started crying like there was no tomorrow, clinching the ring in his hand and cried Toma's name into the rain. How could he live without him? How was he supposed to go on when he knew that his only reason to live hated him now and he would never be able to reach out for him again? Toma was gone and there was no doubt about this fact.

Where should he go now? There was no one close to him any more. He had killed his dad and driven away the love of his life. And his mum had already died years ago. Was there actually any reason to go anywhere anymore? But then he heard his mother's voice in his head, saying "Hora, there's always a reason to live. And if you don't know how to go on anymore, come talk to me and I will help you, alright?"

Yes. He would go to his mum. He would go to her grave and pray. Maybe he would get an answer. He tried to get up, but trembled and fell down again. So he tried for a second time

and finally got on his feet. He began walking in the rain, heading for the opposite direction of which the prince had taken. He walked the whole night and half of the next day through, until he finally reached the grave.

And then his feet couldn't hold him any more. He kneeled down and read the text on the gravestone. He couldn't read that well, but he knew how to write his mother's name, because he was the one who had written the name on the stone that day.

"Mother... I'm back..."

He smiled.

"And I'm desperate. I've met... my special someone. And then I met dad, and I had to decide between both of them and I made the wrong decision and took the wrong path and now it's all too late and I don't know what to do... I know this may sound confusing, but... I've fallen in love and now there's no chance for us to stay together. Please, help me..."

Pi felt tears running down his cheeks again as he talked.

"Don't worry, son..."

Pi looked up, confused. Was his mother talking to him?

"Behind you, son.", the voice said.

Pi turned around. There was an old lady standing there, watching him with a warm smile.

"I don't know your story and I don't know your problems, but... I believe there's always hope when you're in love. Try to get your second chance."

Pi was confused. Did he deserve a second chance?

"But I... have said terrible things... I don't think that person will ever forgive me.", Pi said, looking to the ground.

"Have you tried to apologize yet?"

"N-no... I have not..."

"Then go and try. I also... have done terrible things ages ago. But the person I loved would forgive me every time I did something wrong. Saying I would learn from this to be a better person one day. And he was right. I was afraid I would hurt him if I stayed with him, but I didn't. And I still believe he knew."

The old lady looked at a gravestone only meters away from the one Pi sat in front of and smiled. Then she looked at him again.

"Now get up, son. Tell your mother good-bye and run. I believe your special someone is still waiting for you."

Pi hesitated, but then got on his feet again.

"I wish I could show you how grateful I am, but...", Pi said and bowed deeply.

"Don't bother, boy. Just run, before it's too late." The old lady still smiled.

"Alright. Good-bye." Again he bowed to the old lady. "Good-bye, mother. Until next time."

And Pi even managed to smile, before he started running again. He bought something to eat, because he was so hungry and drank from the water in the river and then he headed for the castle again.

And prayed for a second chance.

Kapitel 17: Chapter 17

Chaper 17

Soundtrack: Only hope – Mandy Moore

Later that day Toma went to his fathers room, he knocked and was called in immediately. He stepped in front of the table the king was sitting at and cleared his throat. "Was is it, son?", asked his father, rather annoyed.

Toma had to collect all his courage to say the following words, even it was hard for him, he knew he had to do it. "I... I don't want to wait any longer... with your agreement Iwould like to...marry Maki-san as soon as possible.", he mumbled. His father stared at him in disbelief, then he smiled. "I already thought you wouldn't like her!", he said jubilantly and smiled. "Good choice, my son, of course you have my agreement. I'll let them prepare the wedding for tomorrow since it's also your birthday. It's a bit fast but we had already prepared some things." Toma sighed. His birthday, huh? He already forgot about it, but he couldn't care less now. He knew he was doing the right thing, and his father was overly pleased as well. But why did he feel like he would betray Yamashita? "Thanks, Otou-sama.", Toma said, bowed and left the room.

Once back in his room, he leaned his back against the door and slid down, burying his head in his hands. Everything within him was a total mess. His heart said it was wrong what he was doing, and was complaining with all the pain it could come up with. And his mind said it was the best solution for him, his only way left.

He wished he could stop the pain in his chest. He wished his mind could tell his heart that the battle was already lost, that it didn't have to fight anymore.

But he knew it wouldn't work. His heart was still beating for that man, the one who had betrayed him.

Why couldn't it just stop beating? It would be better if it did. It would save him from a life of pain. And the tears came again. He jammed his hands together and pressed the fist at his forehead.

Tears running down his cheek, he cried: "Yamashita..."

After all there was just one thing he wanted more than anything else: To hold him again, to kiss him again, to be with him again. He wanted him back so badly...

But it was impossible. He might have been in some other country already. It was useless to think about it, but Toma just couldn't stop thinking about the young man.

Suddenly a knock on the door, Toma got up hurriedly and wiped away his tears. Then he answered: "Come in."

It was Maki.

"Good day, Toma-sama", she said shy. "I heard... you decided... to marry me?", she asked, blushing. "Yes...", he said, avoiding her gaze. "... if you still want to...", he added. "Of course!", she answered happily. "But there is one thing I want to tell you beforehand. You probably wonder... why I changed my mind, right?" He didn't wait for

an answer, he had to tell her, he wanted to tell her. Maybe deep within he wanted her to be disgusted, maybe he wanted her understanding, he didn't know.

He just felt like he had to tell her. And so he did. Everything.

And she listened carefully. When he had finished she looked at him with an unreadable expression. Then she hugged him shyly. "What a cruel story... it must be so hard for you...", she said, stroking his back gently.

Suddenly he remembered Yamapi's touches, he couldn't hold it anymore and pushed her away. "I'm sorry...", he said.

She stepped away. "It's okay." But Toma could hear that she was totally not okay. "I'll leave you alone now." He wanted to say something, but she already stepped out and closed the door behind her.

The rest of the day went past as he was coached in all kind of things for the marriage the

next day. The whole castle seemed to be in a hurry.

In the evening he was exhausted and he lay down on his bed, waiting for sleep to come... But somehow it wouldn't so he just lay there in the pitch dark room and thought about everything.

Some hours later he finally found sleep.

Had he ever run that fast? Pi didn't know for how long he had been running now. He was exhausted. And he was thinking all the time.

What was he supposed to say to Toma? Would Toma really give him a second chance? Did Toma still love him? All Pi knew was that he did love Toma and he always would. And if Toma didn't want him, he would leave and never come back. He would promise to him to leave him alone if he wanted him to. Oh, why had everything to be so difficult? Maybe Toma was already in love with the little princess. Maybe not.

It didn't matter what could or could not be. Pi had to try. He had to try hard to get back the love of his life. Now that he thought of it... He'd never told Toma that he loved him. He'd told him that he wanted to stay with him forever or that he would defend him from anything, but never had he said those three little words, which did mean so much. At least they did to him. He'd felt like his heart had stopped pumping as he'd heard Toma say it.

Just thinking of Toma's voice made Pi endure the long run. He only stopped when he was close to breaking down, and continued running when he was able to stand on his feet again. When he sat down he thought of Toma, when he got up he thought of Toma, and also while running the only thing he could think of was Toma. His prince. The person he wanted to be with the most. And the only person he wanted to be with until eternity.

When he reached the city early in the morning, he wondered if he should enter the castle through the secret entrance he had taken last time. No, this time he would do it properly. Go through the front gates, in clean clothes and he would his way to the prince. Even if he got caught by the guards. He would and could not find peace without telling Toma how he really felt. And most of all he wanted to know Toma's answer, his heart.

Toma woke up early that morning. He hadn't slept much that night. He felt awful and he knew the day wouldn't get any better... but he wanted it that way, right?

He got dressed and walked to the great hall to eat breakfast. The wedding was supposed to be at noon... Just his father was on the table in the great hall. Of course Maki wasn't there, since the groom mustn't see the bride on the wedding day till she shows up in the church.

"Today is your great day. Are you ready, my son?", asked the king, gazing at Toma. "... yes, I am.. I guess I'm a bit nervous", he answered slowly and he felt the big lump in his throat. Suddenly it hit him. He would really marry Maki.

When he reached his small tent and saw that it was still untouched by burglars and such, he took off his dirty clothes, placed them near his small home and got into the river to wash all the mud off. The water was cold as ice but he didn't want to look like a beggar when he stepped in front of Toma. As he saw his reflection in the water there were still some scratches from when he had hurt himself that night. And he would not hide them. He would tell Toma the truth, everything that would make him understand Pi better – and maybe make him forgive.

When he thought he was clean enough he got out of the river, got himself dry and dressed himself in clean clothes. By each second passing he got more nervous and wished everything was over already. He thought back of when he had met the prince for the first time. He'd seen him in the crowd of people that had gathered around him that day, and still his whole eye focus lay on Toma. He'd seen how the prince had looked at him and he's recognized the craving deep inside these eyes. The longing for something the prince didn't have and that he possessed. And he'd seen the admiration. Both had made him look like a lost child that wanted to be saved by a shining hero. And Pi still didn't know why, but he'd wanted to be his hero from the very second their eyes met. And he wanted to stay his hero, rescue him from this golden cage and lead him into another shining future, a free future that was predetermined for the two of them.

As they finished breakfast Toma got back to his room and was awaited from his teacher. "Happy birthday, Toma-sama!", he said and smiled. Toma managed to fake a small smile and thanked him. Could his birthday become even worse? Wasn't it supposed to be the best day of his life? His birthday and his wedding day? He just couldn't get himself to be happy about it.

Then everything went very fast, he got dressed and instructed again and some hours later he already found himself in the church, dressed in a fancy white suit. He felt like he was in trance. Like his mind was turned off...

He stood in front of the altar, waiting for his bride-to-be. The whole church was filled with people, nobles, family and god knew who else. Toma didn't really care.

As the music started the lord and Maki came in. She wore a wonderful dress and looked very beautiful...
Soon she was next to him, looking at him shyly. He tried to smile.
Then he realized it. It was the end of his first love right?

So, while Pi headed towards the castle he heard the people talk about important happenings in the castle. They were talking about the prince's birthday, which was today, and that a big party would be held inside the castle with lots of guests and food and wine.

"And did you get the news?", he heard an old man say.

"What news?", another asked curiously.

"Rumor has it that the prince will marry the little princess by now. Seems like the prince wants to hurry things up a little. Can't stand just watching any longer, huh?"
The old man laughed.

But Pi's body froze. Wedding? What was all of this about? Was it really just a rumor? Or did the old man speak the truth?

But there wasn't any time left for Pi. If the rumor was true, he had to hurry up and stop the wedding. But where should he seek for Toma? Well, since this was a wedding, they would be in a church of course. And that was on the other side of the city.

So he started to run. He didn't care if the old men stared at him or if he dripped and fell. He had to hurry or else Toma would do the wrong thing.

The pastor began with his speech. "...will you, Maki Horikita, take Toma Ikuta as your husband, in good as in bad times and love and care for him with everything you have?", asked the priest.

Maki looked at Toma and smiled. "I will", she said.

Pi ran across the big market place, where he had met Toma for the first time and prayed. Prayed that it wasn't too late already and that all his hope was lost.

Toma's chest felt like there was something inside of it, holding the air away.

"And will you, Toma Ikuta, take Maki Horikita as your wife, in good as in bad times and love and care for her with everything you have?", asked the priest.

Toma gulped, the lump in his throat felt so big...

He took a deep breath and looked at Maki, who smiled lovingly. This was the moment everything would end and would start anew....

And so Pi opened the gates.

Toma opened his mouth and said: "I-"

"STOP!"

Kapitel 18: Chapter 18 (alternate ending)

Everyone stared at the man in the open gates. Toma's eyes widened when he saw him. He was breathing heavily and looking down to the ground. Toma wanted to say something but then the young man spoke up.

„I... Please don't... don't marry her.”

Pi looked at the couple in front of him. They were quite far away, but Pi was sure they heard him since everyone was staring at him quietly.

“I... I love you, so please don't. She's the wrong one, and you know it.”

As Toma heard his words, he was speechless. Soon enough tears were tingling in his eyes. Could it really be...? He looked at Maki and back to the panting man at the door.

“You know, it was hard for me... to let you go. And now, to see you with her like that, is even harder. Please... forgive me for what I did to you. I'll make it up to you... if you'll let me.”

Pi was desperate. There was so much he wanted to say but his brain was a total mess and so the words came out, totally uncoordinated.

Tears were flowing down Toma's cheeks already. How could he make him feel all that? His words were so ... sincere. Was he really telling the truth? Toma wanted to believe in them... if it really was what he wanted, how could he not agree?

Pi moved towards the groom and suddenly there were people trying to hinder him from getting closer. But Pi didn't look at them. He looked at the young man in front and tried to fight his way through the crowd. “Please!”, he cried out. “Please don't! I love you!”

Suddenly the guards came from the sides and tried to capture the young man. He tried to fight them but they were stronger. Toma stepped away from the altar. “STOP. Let him free, thats a command!”, he shouted angrily and stepped closer.

Pi's body froze as the young man ran towards him. The crowd had stopped their attack already and Pi was watching closely at the young man in the black suit.

Toma faced the young man and lay his hands on his shoulders. "If you 'really mean it...", he said. "Then how could I be the one who's against it? Do you love Maki that much?"

The man looked at him confused. "Maki? I don't want Maki!", he answered furiously.

Pi couldn't believe his eyes. Who was this guy standing right in front of him?

"Who are you?", the man asked.

"I... actually wanted to ask the same." Pi was so confused.

The man still looked at the prince confused. "I... I wanted to stop someone else... I want Keiko! Damn it!"

And so he rushed out of the church without another word. Toma stood there wordlessly for some seconds. Then remembered what he was about to do when the wedding was disturbed,

He got back at his place in front of the altar and looked at Maki.

Then finally they proceeded with the marriage.

"Isn't this... the wedding of the prince?"

"No, it's not. Now get out of here!"

Pi was so shocked that he couldn't move. The people around him pushed him outside and closed the gates again.

And so he stood outside until the bell rang and then he went to his tent crying, packed his things up and went away without ever returning again.

And so Toma and Maki got married and lived quite happily ever after.

A/N: Actually this chapter was just a joke, but you can see it as an alternate ending

Kapitel 19: FINALE!

The REAL last chapter!

Pi was standing in the entrance, panting. He didn't know if this was the right thing to do, or if he would succeed. All he knew was that he wanted that man in the front who looked so utterly beautiful in that white suit. Once again Pi thought that Toma looked like an angel... no, he didn't just look like one. Toma WAS his angel. And Toma belonged to him and no one else.

Pain struck his whole body when he heard that voice. It was so beautiful and cruel at the same time. Toma turned around, slowly, afraid to face him. What was he doing here? Hadn't he hurt him enough already? Did he have to destroy his last hope that he had in life?

Then he heard his words...

"Toma! Please... don't marry her.", Pi said, his voice shaking in discomposure.

"I know I've done so many things so terribly wrong, but... I can't live without you. I've realized that long before THAT night. You know... what we did... it wasn't just fun as I made you believe. This was so much more... I know it's hard to believe after all I've done to you but... please believe in me..."

Pi was watching Toma closely. But there was no movement in his expression. Nothing that made Pi believe that he would get Toma back.

The prince couldn't believe his ears. Everything what he said sounded just like he what he wanted to hear. As wonderful as in his dreams..

'I must be hallucinating', he thought and watched Pi still, his face stiff

'It must be a dream', he thought once again. And he wished that he could dream that dream along, until eternity. He didn't want to wake up into the cruel reality.

If only THIS was reality...

Eventually the guests' voices raised, but Pi didn't listen. His whole self was focused on Toma.

"You know...", he started again, his voice louder than before. "You know, I... couldn't stop thinking about you the whole time. I started crying when you left and I was so

disappointed... in myself, my whole actions ever since I met you. But there's one thing I will NEVER regret... I love you. Falling in love with you was the best thing that has ever happened to me before, and I will not give up that easily!"

Toma's eyes widened at Pi's words. Each and every word cried out to him. He couldn't say anything, couldn't move. Did he really mean it? Was his confession sincere? Then he remembered that Pi never said those 3 words to him, not when he had confessed. So maybe, maybe he was allowed to believe it? To get lulled by those words and the sound of his voice?

In the background, somewhere, which seemed far away from him, Toma heard his father shout something. The next thing he saw were the royal guards, which were capturing Yamapi.

It felt like a bubble that bursted and suddenly Toma saw everything clearly.

He could see how Pi got held by the guards and how he struggled against them, how his eyes were on him the whole time. And then he knew it was the right thing to do. If Pi fought, he would fight too.

"Stop. This is a command. Let him go"

Pi didn't recognize the king yelling or the guards approaching him. His mind was fixed at Toma. He stared into his eyes, which looked so terribly confused and unsure. But Pi was searching for hope in his eyes. And when he just thought he'd found it, the guards grabbed him and wanted to push him outside. Hard metal beat against Pi's head and stomach, but still Pi fought to stay inside, to not lose his focus on Toma. All his hope would die if he gave up now.

But then he heard that voice again. It was loud and harsh, but he had longed for it so badly. And the guards did like they were told. Pi still stood in the entrance, his eyes fixed on Toma, and he waited. Waited because he wanted to hear Toma's voice again. Even if he told him to go, Pi would be grateful for every word that was meant for him alone.

The guards did as they were told, luckily, he didn't expect them to. He looked at Yamashita, and even through the wide hall he could clearly see his eyes. Eyes full of hope. His heart began to beat faster again, god how had he missed that beat.

As he was just about to say something, the king rose and went over to him. "What are you doing son? What is his all about?", he said, his voice shaking with rage. But Toma just looked at him and smiled. Then he took the first step and another and another. He wanted to be right in front of Yamashita and hear him say these words again.

But then: "Toma-sama!"

This time it was Maki. He turned around slowly and found her gazing at him. He knew, how much he would have to hurt her, but he couldn't help it. "Maki-san I...", he began, but was interrupted. "Go", she said, tears in her eyes, but she still smiled.

Pi was watching the whole scene. He wanted to approach Toma, wanted to be by his side when he made his decision but the guards wouldn't let him.

Then suddenly Toma went down the long gangway slowly. Pi's heart beat louder and and louder with every step Toma took. Toma came closer and closer, but it still wasn't close enough for Pi. As Toma took his last step towards Pi, the little princess shouted his name. And for the first time Pi didn't only look at Toma. He saw the small lady cry and he was so sorry, but as he told the prince to go Pi knew they had her blessing.

And so Pi didn't wait any longer.

He took Toma's hand, bumped some of the guards out of his way and dragged his prince outside. They ran and ran until the voices behind them eventually faded. They didn't look back, afraid to be captured if they slowed down.

Panting, the two men stopped at the place where Pi's tent was set up.

They stood there for a long time, just watching each other, catching their breath again.

Then again Pi spoke up.

"I... actually wanted to bring you to the place where we kissed first... But to me this place seems more real. And I... want to explain everything in whole. If you let me."

Pi was looking at Toma, unease shaking his whole body.

Toma couldn't even react. It happened so fast. Suddenly he felt a warm hand clutching his own and in the next moment he was out of the church. They ran and ran until they reached Pi's tent. Everything felt so weird and yet so right as Toma looked at Pi who looked at him also.

Then Pi told him that he wanted to explain everything.

But did he even want that Pi explained everything?

It was the second when Yamapi touched him that he had already forgotten about the pain, and everything bad he had caused him.

"I don't want to hear it", said Toma after a long time. He could see Yamapi's face hardening and turning away slowly. "I don't need to hear it", Toma said again.

Pi turned around again and looked at him, confusion all over his face. And Toma decided that they had waited enough, suffered enough. They already lost enough time.

So he took the last step forward, raised Pi's chin and kissed the young man softly.

Pi just wanted to start explaining as Toma said he didn't want to hear.

Pi'd been afraid of just that reaction. He'd better not come here. He looked down to the ground, didn't want Toma to see his face.

"I don't need to hear it", Toma said then.

Pi looked up again. What did he mean? Hadn't he just told him he didn't want to make up with him? Pi was searching for an answer in Toma's eyes but he was too puzzled to even drink a glass of water without spilling it all over the table.

Then Toma approached him, Pi could feel Toma's finger touching his chin and finally Toma kissed him.

Pi didn't know what to do at first. Too long had his heart missed this very kiss.

He raised his hands slowly, touched Toma's cheeks, pulled his prince closer and suddenly started crying. Now all the fear and loneliness was gone and they were one again.

Pi broke their connection and whispered "I love you, I love you" over and over again against Toma's lips.

Toma pulled a bit apart, but just so that he could wipe away Yamashita's tears. It sounded so good to hear him say these words. Tears began to tickle in his eyes too, but he didn't care.

All he wanted was to hold Pi forever. He kissed his forehead, then his eyelids and then his lips again. How he had missed him!

Then he hugged him tight and nuzzled against his neck. Now the tears were running down his cheeks as well. "I love you too, I love you so much! I always did.", he whispered.

Pi could feel Toma's hands wiping away his tears and as he looked in Toma's face, he saw Toma's eyes turning red and watery as well.

"Don't... don't cry... From now on everything's gonna be alright, right? We're together and we will be forever.", Pi said, hugging Toma tightly.

As Toma whispered those most perfect words again and again, it was causing showers running through Pi's whole body. And Pi was enjoying them to the fullest.

"Toma, I... want you to go with me... to my mother's grave. I told her about you. She'll be very happy to finally meet you in person." Pi smiled.

Toma looked up. "I'd love to.", he answered and smiled as well, kissing Pi again.

"But first... let's sit down for a while...", Pi said and dragged Toma to the tree where they had kissed once.

Pi sat on the ground, pulling Toma down and into a tight embrace.

"I've been running all night and day to tell you that I love you... and there's no need to worry anymore."

"You're right.", Toma said, huddling up against Pi.

"Oh, and I forgot something!", Pi suddenly remembered, watching the most beautiful sunset in his life.

"Hm?", Toma looked up.

"Close your eyes, please."

And when Toma did as he was told, Pi got the ring once again and put the tiny metal on Toma's finger.

"Happy Birthday, my angel."