

Fallout

Von Noiyama

Slashing rays of spotlight.

The roaring of distorted guitar chords from the amp in front of me.

The screaming and cheering of a crowd running wild.

Against my expectations the show went quite well, the atmosphere was jaunty, far from how tense it had been lately. Seems like all the hard work I've put into it was indeed worth it. I was running 'cross the stage, laughing, jamming on my guitar, but suddenly I stopped short in my movements. It was hot, so hot, and it didn't seem to cool down, it just increased. Everything was spinning in a whirl of colors. I didn't know what was happening anymore. The black spots in my vision grew larger until there was nothing else but black and then, I fell...

Panting I shot up as if awaking from a nightmare. Immediately my gaze shot around. White? White. Everything was white.

Where was I? Was this supposed to be my room?

I dared to doubt it; it just somehow felt unfamiliar.

I rose from the bed, approaching the huge window, casting a gaze outside. What I saw was a city from high above. A city which felt familiar but at the same time somehow uncomfortable to me. Not having seen enough to recognize anything yet my gaze wandered further around.

A huge car park, bunches of white clothed people in a huge garden, lots of ambulances. A hospital? How come? What happened to me? I tried to remember anything and suddenly realised, that there was nothing. The only thing I felt was this heavy, pressing emptiness lurking inside, just like shock, despair. Surely I've felt this before, but there was no way of telling when and why. Actually I knew nothing.

I must have been standing there for quite some time, just staring down there, trying to remember anything, until I heard a door open and a quiet, not too deep, slightly raspy voice call, "Sugi?".

Instinctively, I spun around. What I saw felt like a stab into my chest.

I was facing a young man, probably around twenty, dressed in a simple black dress, light make up was visible on his face, which was halfway hidden behind bangs of long, black hair, wildly standing up into every possible direction.

Yes, I felt I knew him, but where from? Who was he? I had to wonder.

There was really nothing dangerous in neither his voice nor face, rather confusion mixed with a bit of concern, but somehow there were these odd feelings welling up within me, which I could neither identify nor explain, along with the urge to just turn

around and run away.

It didn't take long until I could no longer resist this urge and so I indeed ran away, past the man and locked myself in the bathroom.

I slid to the floor almost immediately, shaking like mad.

It seemed as if the man was kind of surprised about my reaction, because he didn't follow at first, but then he started talking. Obviously to me, but I couldn't even hear and even less understand what he was saying. I was somewhere completely else.

I touched my cheek and it was wet. Tears. Why was I crying?

I just couldn't explain where all these feelings tearing my heart came from.

As I sat there crying, thinking about nothing, just trying to forget the man's face, I suddenly heard loud voices from the other room. One I recognized.

It was the man from before, but now his voice wasn't soft like before.

Now it sounded bitter and angry. The other voice seemed familiar too, but, how could it be different, I couldn't recognize it.

The two persons outside seemed to be arguing. Suddenly a door banged shut. For a few moments it was quiet.

Then I heard the sound of slightly heavy footsteps approaching the bathroom door. The steps stopped in front of the door as if the person was leaning against the door frame.

"Sugi, it's me, J. Come on, please quit hiding. I won't eat you, you know. Promise", a low voice spoke in a not at all unpleasant way. It wasn't hard, there was no pressure, only slight amusement, but I still hesitated to open the door. 'J' sighed. "Hey, what's up with you? Look, I'm worried, and I'd like to see for myself that you're alright. You know you can tell me anything, I'll always do my best to help. Please come out now, yeah?", he begged in a somehow careful and gentle way.

I didn't know why, but I found my hand slowly turning the lock. Shacking and sniffing I finally managed to open the door.

'J' was a tall, slender man with his hair bleached to light blonde, but even to this and his rather western style of clothing, this face and deeply brown almond eyes left no doubt in his Japanese ethnicity.

A satisfied smile spread on his face as he helped me to my feet.

To my confusion though he didn't let go after I was standing.

He pulled me to his muscular chest in a tight hug and spoke with a smooth, deep bass voice, "Sugi dear, I'm so sorry. If I knew everything would turn out like this, I'd...".

He must have noticed my confused expression, because he stopped in the middle of the sentence, looking at me questioningly.

"What's the matter?", he asked, concerned. I didn't really know what to answer, so I simply looked away and said nothing, but he didn't give up.

He laid a gentle hand on my cheek, turning my head so he could look into my eyes, his long fingers caressing my cheek.

"If there's anything bothering you, then please, tell me so", he pleaded.

I could no longer avoid his eyes and remain silent. I needed someone to help me anyway, and he was there, caring about me, so why shouldn't he be the one to be trusted with this.

Slowly I turned to the window, looking outside.

"I can't remember anything", I whispered hoarsely.

For moments the rain outside was the only noise in the tense silence, that had formed between the two of us.

Suddenly strong arms wrapped around me from behind.

I jumped in surprise, but made not the slightest effort to break out; instead I even allowed myself to lean onto him and close my eyes.

Not that I could explain it, but somehow his mere presence was comforting to me. I didn't even have the chance to wonder in what kind of relationship we'd been as I already felt his warm lips pressing sweet little kisses to my neck.

"No worries", J whispered against the sensitive skin of neck, "It's all going to work out for sure".

I could only indicate a nod.

My heartbeat already about double, I soon gave in to his caresses.

Finally I could let go of all these thoughts torturing me and the desperate trying to remember, which had been so important to me before.

It was a wonderful feeling to be with him, but somewhere deep inside there was something trying to tell me that there was something wrong about it, something missing, but I couldn't care less at that time.

As the glooming passion cooled down and our bare bodies were smoothing against each other.

Laying on J's chest, I listened to his heartbeat, as if it could tell me anything about him. I traced the tough muscles with my fingertips, quietly whispering, "Tell me about you", and he did.

We were laying there, talking until late, but he refused to leave, so we cuddled up to sleep.

He was soon fast asleep, his chest heaving in an even pace, but I was once again too busy with my thoughts to find any sleep.

I'd noticed feelings developing inside me for this man.

A man I've once known for years but forgotten everything about, which meant I knew nothing about him, besides of what he told me, but I wasn't sure if that really was everything.

It somehow felt as if we'd been this way for like the whole time before, but who could tell whether it was true.

There has been this dull feeling inside my chest since I was with him and he'd refused to tell me which way we were related to each other in the past. Actually it should have spoken volumes to me, but I didn't really care.

It was all just too good to lose.

The next day I was released from hospital.

J took me to my apartment in the sure expectation of me remembering anything while looking through my personal stuff.

He was proven wrong. I didn't remember a single thing.

Not even the name on the doorplate told me anything.

Yasuhiro Sugihara.

I'd have said "just another name among thousands", if this wasn't supposed to be my very own name.

The apartment was held in a reddish pink and to me seemed just as unfamiliar as the hospital room before, but J didn't give up.

"Just look around a bit. I'm sure there's something you'll recognize", he said, dragging me through every single room of this big apartment.

I did as I was told without protesting, but I was still totally blank.
Not even the pictures on the walls were any help to me.
But then I found one thing puzzling me.
There was this small, silver framed photograph standing on my bedside table. It showed me and the man I've run away from the day before, in a tight embrace, smiling happily.
I wondered but quickly banned every further thought from my brain.
Most likely we'd just been good friends.
The next room was full of amps, guitars and a lot of other musical supplies.
I was very impressed at the thought of me having been a musician.
J appeared behind me with a promising smile, picking a guitar from the collection, plugging it and carefully laid it into my hands, encouraging me, "Go on, just try it".
Hesitantly I took the plectron he offered me and put the strap over my shoulder.
I was playing indeed, without thinking, just out of my heart, but J seemed to recognize this sweet, but sorrowful melody.
His smile had brightened, his eyes were closed and he hummed along to this tune, that told me nothing while for him it was obviously full of memories.
After a little while I noticed, that I didn't even need to pay attention to what I was playing, so I let my gaze wander around the room.
I noticed a huge poster on one wall, that was showing me, J, the man from the hospital and two other men that I didn't recognize.
So I've had a band.
A very successful one, it seemed, what would explain the size and luxuriousness of this apartment.
All my hope was gone.
Nothing became more clear to me, the more of my old life I was seeing.
It was rather like the more I saw, the more confused I became.
What the heck had been, and why doesn't anyone tell me?
I noticed that I'd stopped playing as I heard J's concerned voice asking me if I was alright. I nodded, even though I felt that nothing was alright.
He showed a slight, sad smile and walked up to me, helping me out of the strap. He laid his hands on my shoulders, looking deep into my eyes.
"Sugi, please don't torture yourself like this. If you find no more boundaries to your past then it might be time for a new start. Some things might be better off finished and forgotten".
I didn't want to disappoint him, so I cast my eyes down, but I knew he won't accept silence, so I admitted quietly, "I don't know if I can".
To my surprise, he was neither disappointedly nor angry, no, he pulled me closer to press a kiss on my forehead and smiled gently.
"Whatever you'll decide on, I'll respect it".
I couldn't but smile back and return the kiss to his lips along with a whispered "Thank you".
I was overwhelmed by so much gentleness and understanding. Maybe he was right...

The next morning J had woken me up early and during breakfast he told me that I should meet the other band members once again before I'd decide on anything I might regret later on.
I agreed, thinking that it won't change much, but I was wrong, terribly wrong.

Sitting in the car, I nervously toyed with my fingers, staring outside the window, and as we arrived, I carefully observed everything as we entered the building, but as expected there was nothing of value to me.

Lively chatter was audible as we approached the practice room, but there was curious silence as soon as the door was opened.

Everyone was staring at me, seemingly surprised at my appearance.

J had told me the most important things about them on our way so I could at least quickly figure out who was who.

The man I'd ran away from in the hospital was Inoran, a guitarist, like me.

He was sitting right beside a well build, orange haired man, that had to be Shinya, the drummer, as I could figure from the drumsticks in his hand.

So the slender man with half long black hair and surprisingly, almost scarily intense eyes was left to be Ryuichi, the singer and he was as well the first one to break the silence.

He jumped up to hug me tightly, cheerfully chirping, "Gee, Sugi! How great to have you back here".

Actually I was a bit irritated by such a boisterous greeting, but the real shock was already waiting.

As Ryuichi let go Inoran stood up as well, approaching me.

I tried a smile, which turned out a little restrained, trying to get rid of this uncomfortable feeling welling up inside me again.

Expecting nothing worse then what Ryuichi had done I didn't hedge as he came close, but I had no clue what was about to come.

He pressed a demanding kiss to my lips, smiling as he let go again, holding my hands, as he asked cheerfully, "Everything fit again?".

Gods, what was _that_?

I was completely flabbergasted.

My eyes went wide, my heart was beating like mad and I started shaking. Something about this was confusing me so badly that my head already started hurting from this overflow of undefinable thoughts.

Out of an impulse I pushed Inoran back and fled back into J's arms, staring at Inoran, horrified. Inoran's smile fell and there was smitten silence floating in the room for a few seconds.

As he'd pulled himself together again, Inoran cast me a gaze from eyes sparkling with anger and hurt.

"As you wish", he hissed and went back to the couch, where Shinya laid a comforting arm around him.

This really was a hard blow to me.

First of all I had no clue what this should have meant, but then I sensed something more behind this Shinya's seemingly friendly gesture to Inoran and even though I couldn't explain why, it hurt me deeply.

My eyes were burning from held back tears.

I couldn't stand it one moment longer, I just broke free and ran without allowing anyone, not even J, to follow.

Back in my apartment I locked myself in the bedroom, rolled myself up in the bed and cried. It felt, as if I hadn't for long.

I hated having these indicated feelings and even more not knowing where they came from and what they were supposed to mean.

What was so difficult about telling me who I and the people around me are?
Over night my life had become a huge knot of a thousand different threads, which no one was able to disentangle.
I didn't want to struggle anymore about what to believe.
What should I do? Should I try to get back into my old life, or should I leave all this behind and walk along a new path?
No matter what I did and how much I thought about what I wanted, I was unable to decide.
If I'd just know what had been before...

Suddenly I had an idea.
Sniffing I stood up and walked to the shelf, which was carrying all the tapes from my band's lives.
Without thinking much I picked the last one from the row and put it in.
Rolling up in my bed like before I was watching the tape interestedly, careful not to miss any details.
It was strange.
The more I concentrated on what was happening on the screen, the more I had the feeling that I indeed knew these situations, just like a chain of dejavues.
The headache I've already felt coming before grew worse as that certain feeling was increasing.
Soon it was so bad that I was squirming on my bed, clutching my head in pain, until I passed out.

As I woke up again, it was already evening.
Suddenly I knew everything about how much I loved Inoran, about how happy I'd been with him, my Ino-chan, and sadly as well about having had this stupid 'accident' with J.
Wait a second, Accident?
Now everything seemed clear to me.
Back then he'd taken advantage of my drunken state to seduce me, and as he noticed that only one night with him wouldn't separate me and Inoran, he'd taken advantage of my amnesia as well, trying to suggest me, that it was him that I've loved all the time.
Finally everything fit together and made sense.
I knew exactly what I had to do now.
I couldn't give up Inoran this easily, not like that. I hurried to my car and drove to his apartment.

A little while after I rang the bell Inoran opened, his hair in a mess, only wearing a bathrobe.
As he saw me a shadow seemed to move across his face and he rudely asked, "What do you want?", moving not the slightest bit to let me in.
I was unsure of how to react.
"I... I need to talk to you", I began, looking around, feeling uncomfortable about the thought of having to discuss this in public, so I went on, "Could I maybe... come in?".
He still didn't step aside, but lifted his eyebrow.
"We ain't nothing to talk about", he rejected me coldly.
I hung my head a little. "At least let me explain!", I pleaded faintly.
"Wouldn't know what there'd be to explain", he countered, but seemingly my sad,

pleading expression still had an effect on him.

"Alright, alright, so get it over with already. Got better things to do as well", he replied quite unfriendly.

This statement really hurt, but I couldn't blame him.

It just had to be pointed out that it hadn't been my fault this time.

"You remember what happened on our last concert right?", I asked carefully. "You passed out", he answered, slightly annoyed.

I continued, "And you know that I fell into the safety distance?".

Inoran rolled his eyes. "So what? Get to the point already!", he snapped.

"Well, there's one thing you don't know. The impact had caused temporary amnesia".

At first his expression was puzzled, but then he broke into laughter.

This was certainly not what I'd expected, so I was very much shocked about that reaction.

He stopped laughing and looked at me, even colder than before.

"This is the stupidest lie that ever slipped across our lips", he hissed, about to close the door.

I fell to my knees, blocking the door with my hands.

"Ino, please, listen to me, it's not the way you think it is! I lost all my memory for real. I didn't even know who I was and J... he, he tricked me! I couldn't do anything, I was totally confused and he made me believe that he had been my lover! Ino, I've never had any feelings for him, really! He didn't even tell me about you! He wants to separate us, don't you understand?!".

I looked up to him in despair.

His usually soft and cute features had hardened, eyes cold as stone, filled with anger and disgust.

"You're bloody incredible, Sugi! I've already tolerated a lot of your garbage, but this is really going too far! First, you promise me the heaven on earth, then betray me, over and over again, with anything crossing your way, and now you even got the nerve to whine into my face that you're oh-so-innocent and dare to blame it all on one of our best friends?! I really can't believe it!! How the fuck can you just say that! Do you even care for what other people feel?! No, not the slightest! You gave a shit about me, so just how'd you get the freaking idea, that I'd want you of all people back?! I'm not gonna take all that shit again! Just fucking get away!! Get out of my life, now and forever!!!", he yelled at me, completely beside himself with rage, giving the door another powerful shove, in the hope that it would finally fall shut.

I jumped up and pushed the door open again.

"Ino, please, believe me!", I cried out, running after him, but I didn't get far. Shinya appeared, like Inoran only clad in a bathrobe, looking as if he just woke up, not even having had the opportunity to fasten the robe's belt.

He quickly caught my arm, keeping me from following Inoran and forced me out of the door again.

"You heard him. Leave him alone and take care about the rest of the mess you made", he said coldly, indicating the big staircase window with his chin before shutting the door practically in my face.

I turned to take a look outside the window and saw J's car moving out the lot beside my own and racing down the road in an insane speed, but I had no clue what that meant yet.

I sank to my knees once again, buried my face in my hands, sobbing, bathing in self pity.

What was I supposed to do? I had nothing left.

J, a friend... Ino had it easy to talk; he wasn't the one J was so keen on ruining!

Suddenly I frowned at the way my thoughts went.

Friend? Ruin me?

This was the strike. Now I really began to wonder.

Yes, why would he actually want that?

We've never had any problems with each other, have we?

We've always gotten along well, quite well to be exact, or maybe too well? Finally I realized that it was right, what I'd denied before.

I had indeed begun to develop feelings for J and it was right as well, that my relationship with Inoran hadn't been going as well lately as I made myself believe.

Everyone knew that I've always loved alcohol and flirting as well as they knew that Inoran hated crowds. So Inoran had trustfully given me the freedom to go out, alone, whenever I wanted.

Now I finally understood what he meant.

It's completely impossible for a loving partner to not start having doubts sometime and trying to find out about what your partner actually does as soon as he's alone.

Even though I honestly never really betrayed him, I'd indeed done a couple of things in a drunken state that I regretted the next day and because of that behaved odd towards Inoran.

He must have found out about what I was doing all these nights, because the past month he'd been very strange towards me as well.

He often went out with friends and if we once were alone he'd try avoiding me.

Now it was also clear to me, that he most likely went to Shinya for comfort, since Shinya's always been something like a mother to all band members.

One could always talk to him whether advice or comfort was needed, because he was a great listener and always had the best solutions for everything, so I can quite well relate.

The next thing I noticed was that Shinya had as well kept a bit of distance to me since the time Ino was acting strange, so who had been there to take care of me back then? Of course, J.

He'd always try to do his best to cheer me up whether I had trouble with Inoran, even if that meant touring through a dozen of clubs in one night and sleeping on a random park bench because of being too drunk to remember how to get home.

Oh yeah, these were times.

We've had so much fun together until that one unfaithful night in his apartment where our fight about the last, half full bottle of Vodka had first developed into a kiss and then into passionate sex.

Inoran had found out quickly and kept me on reserve until I'd be sure, whether I wanted to stay with him, or whether I wanted my freedom.

And then came the concert and the amnesia...

I finally saw that J really wanted nothing, but my best.

He'd taken good care of me and tried everything to help me remember, but he possibly feared that it could stress me out too much, if he told me about the relationship between Inoran and me.

He'd once again been right.

Some things are best to be forgotten and finished.

Just like that broken relationship.

I've been so wrong about everything.

He didn't force me into his arms, it was me who'd run to him.
He'd tried to help me, and I thanked him with practically spitting into his face. My next thought was to apologize to him, so I stood up, wiped my eyes, walked to my car and drove to his apartment.

I rang the bell, but no one answered, so I just tried the doorknob.
The door opened and I went in, calling for him but again no one answered.
I walked straight into the bedroom, thinking that he might be asleep, but as I got there, only the furniture was left.
All his clothing and personal things were gone.
I was standing there in a complete loss.
He had gone away.
Suddenly I noticed an envelope, addressed to me, on the bedside table.
Sitting down on the bed, I took the letter out and started reading.

"Dear Sugi,
I'm glad for you, that you got your memory back, even though that means for me, that you don't need me anymore.
I hoped that you'd once be honest to yourself, but I see that I must have been a fool to even have considered this.
I've heard you talking to Ino, so I see you know what you want.
I promised you to accept whatever you'll decide on, and I'll keep to it.
Please don't search for me, I'll be fine and I don't want to stand in your way.
I only wished I could've seen you one last time before leaving, but I know that I wouldn't be able to say goodbye to you in person.
Sorry for having confused your life like that and I hope you can forgive me someday.
May you be more happy in your future.

In love, J.

Ps: I'd rather die than being dishonest with someone I love, this you can believe me for sure..."

The letter slowly drifted towards the ground, as I sank onto the mattress, sobbing, tightly clutching the sheets, that still smelled of him.
He was gone indeed. Gone away forever.
Now I realised that I wasn't the victim, I was the committer.
I've destroyed everything.
I hurt the man I love, more than everything, so badly, that he can't even stand seeing me again, I brought my once best friend as far as to hate me for what I have done, I routed the man that had taken so loving care of me in one of my life's hardest times, I divided my band that'd been my heart blood to me.
And this all because I'd never managed to be honest with myself in my whole freaking life.
Now that I was honest, this once, it was already to late.
I've lost everything.
Somehow it seems as if anything, that's been touched by me, is destined to break, so that I'll remain alone in the end to expiate my sins and keep my loved ones from any further pain.

It hurts. It hurts more then anyone could imagine, but it's the best way.
For everyone of us...