

## Beyond the Horizon

The sound of the waves running aground on the beach shore is filling the air around me. It is powerful and peaceful at the same time. It washes away the inner turmoil of feelings within me, everything fades in the distance, as if a mist was slowly, gently falling from the sky. I smile, closing my eyes. I can feel the light caress of the sea spray on the bare skin of my arms. It itches a bit once the water dries up...

The Summer breeze flies my hair, playfully tying knots in it, knots I will have a hard time unmaking tonight. Perhaps I should have tied it, but that is not my habit. I am used to letting it flow freely.

Freely...

On impulse, I sit down on the sand, taking off my shoes. The water tickling my toes is cold, but I don't mind. In truth, I almost do not feel it.

He is alive...

I bring my knees against my chest and hug them.

He really is alive.

The fire burning in my heart is so strong, the feeling so intense that it hurts. Distantly, I can feel tears welling in my eyes. I am so happy...

And at the same time so afraid...

I wish I could stop time, I wish I could hold this moment in my hand, and never let it go... My fingers gather a bit of sand and I watch as the wind slowly takes it away from me. An hourglass... If only I could...

But then, I know it must go on. I know this must be carried to its end. It matters not if it is hard for me, if each fight, each pain inflicted on others tears my soul apart a bit more. It doesn't matter if my being, my self is slowly but certainly torn to shreds.

Everything is as it should be.

It is my destiny, isn't it ?

I was born under the guardianship of that constellation. Some would consider that I was born under an unlucky star. I do not think so. When I look beyond my own pain, I can see the good I did for others. I know I put my power to use for justice, in defence of what I believe is right. Isn't this what matters, far more than my own personal feelings and doubts ?

I smile as the wind takes away the last of my grains of sand. It seems that my life has always been filled with questions. Questions without answers...

Perhaps I am not wise enough to see them...

Perhaps I am not wise enough to know how to wait for them...

A wave a bit more powerful than the others reaches my fingers and I bring them up, watching the light of the sunset glinting through the small drops of salty water.

While I am sitting here wondering about questions that likely have no answers, the sea keeps running aground on the shore.

Endlessly.

It has been doing so for uncounted years, and it will keep on doing so until the end of time. It will never give up. It doesn't feel pain, sorrow or doubts. It doesn't think. It doesn't hurt. It simply is. That is what makes it strong.

Sometimes, I find myself wishing I were like that... To immediately shrug the thought away, laughing.

I could never be.

I am not the sea, I am me. Simply me...

Distantly, I hear the slight sound of footsteps approaching, and then silence as a shadow touches my right arm.

"Shun..."

I look up and smile at my brother. His grey eyes search my face.

"Why did you leave the party ?"

I shrug.

"I'm sorry Ikki-niisan... I just felt the need to be by myself for a while..."

He nods suddenly.

"I see... You cannot help thinking about tomorrow, can you ?"

I look at the sea, sighing imperceptibly.

"You're right... I cannot chase the thought away... I would have disrupted the atmosphere, really... Seiya seemed so joyful and carefree... I didn't want to ruin it and besides I am not one for social occasions..."

I feel him sitting beside me, and he asks gently :

"What is it Shun ?..."

I bow my head on my knees and breathe deeply, then look up at the red disk of the sun again. It has almost completely disappeared beyond the horizon now. I have no wish to answer his question. Really none. So I shrug.

"Nothing... It was just a whim that made me come here, nothing more."

He suddenly looks straight at me, and I find it difficult to face him without betraying anything of what I feel inside. I have no right to burden him with my doubts. I just want to be left alone, the time for me to bury them deeply enough so they will not trouble me again. Or at least, not until this is all over. Usually his dark grey eyes would gaze directly into my soul, but this time I will not let them. I will not let him. Long minutes go by, and eventually he is the one who looks away, sighing.

"Shun, the very fact that you refuse to put your wall down tells me there is something. And you know I will not let the matter rest, so tell me."

I chuckle bitterly.

"What for ?..."

I face him.

"You won't be able to change anything, you..."

Suddenly, I hear my own words and bow my head, whispering :

"Gomen..."

How could I raise my voice at him ? How could I throw anger and bitterness at him ? Sweet Goddess, how could I ? I must go, if he will not, then I must go and be alone until I can master my feelings. I shake my head.

"You shouldn't have come, Ikki-niisan..."

I hadn't realised how fragile my control has become... I hadn't felt it. I make to get up, but a hand both gently and firmly rests on my left arm.

"On the contrary Shun, and you won't go. Now, out with it."

I look away, watching the sea without really seeing it.

"It's the usual thing... Nothing more..."

I smile sadly, self-deprecatingly.

"I haven't changed a bit since we were young children you and I... I am still weak and fragile, without strength of will and spirit... I still harbor my doubts, my fears... I haven't grown... People seem to think so, but the truth is..."

I sigh.

"The truth is..."

The fingers of my right hand close into a fist and I bite my lower lip, angry at myself.

"I should be so happy now... So happy to see you, to know that you are alive... I... It's true I am happy, but that feeling cannot eclipse the knowledge that tomorrow will come, and the knowledge of what the dawn will bring... I cannot help always seeing beyond... I cannot be content with the feelings of the moment, not when I know that time will not stop, not when I know that once more we will..."

I cut myself off, fighting the need to cry and scream my refusal to the world.

"Fight..."

I start, hearing my brother's quiet whisper. I turn my head to find him staring at me steadily, a wistful smile on his lips.

"Fight and spill blood. Take lives... Without even the certainty to win, far from it..."

Each of his words claws at my soul. His eyes are watching me, he sees. He knows... But I will not yield. I wish I could focus on anger, but that is much too dangerous, because my anger never lasts, and always leads to guilt and sorrow. So I must keep everything at bay. I must hold on, I have no other choice. Thus I face him, unwavering and he nods, smiling slightly.

"So..."

He stands up, and faces the horizon beyond which the sun has now disappeared.

"You see Shun, I know your heart is clouded..."

He puts his hands in his pockets. I do not see his face, but I can feel his smile, I can feel the sadness that fills him as he speaks.

"For that matter, so is mine, and those of our companions..."

But in him there is no despair, the sadness is there, he accepts it. And goes on.

"But you are making a mistake Shun... You are hurting yourself for nothing..."

Oh... Is that so ?

"You seem to think that everything is determined, and determined for the worst. You seem to think that it will never end, that we do not stand a chance. You fight, but with despair, not with hope... Look at us Shun... Look at me... Fate toyed with us, sent me to Death Queen Island, where I was brainwashed to hate every living being, to be the tool of the Sanctuary..."

I bow my head, whispering :

"I know... It's unfair, you went there in my place, and you had to suffer so much... All for my sake... Because I couldn't prevent you..."

He cuts me off gently.

"That's beside the point Shun. What counts is I won over that, with your help and that of the others, what counts is we both won over the so-called curse on our heads..."

He turns towards me, spreading his arms wide and smiling.

"We have become Saints, and that is why I think that our destiny is what we make of it, we have the power to take it into our own hands, and our will can shape it as we wish. You are Andromeda, true, but your will is stronger than any chain, even though it is hard and taxing to do so, you have the strength to choose. It will end, we have a vision in which we believe and we will make it come true, that is all. Make a bit of place in your heart for hope Shun... Make a bit of place for trust... We will make it."

I can see his confidence shining like a bright aura around him. His trust, his hope and his love... In answer, a smile comes to my lips, and warmth spreads in my heart as I nod :

"Yes, you're right..."

He reaches out to me.

"So, are you coming back with me ?..."

I take his hand and get up beside him. He turns back towards the city, and at this moment the wind blows a small cloud of sand away. His words grow dim, and then their echo fades... Why is it that I cannot relish the moment ? Why is it that I must always see beyond ? What could make me stronger ? I...

"Shun ?"

I suddenly realise that I am facing the sea and the horizon again. The first star is shining in the night sky. He is waiting for me on the edge of the beach. I say with a wry smile :

"I'll join you in a bit."

He nods and walks away. I look at his retreating back, then turn towards the sea again.

There was a time when a smile from him would have been enough, when a word from him would have sufficed to rebuild my universe. It is not so anymore. We have grown, the both of us, we have evolved. I am not a child anymore.

I chuckle derisively.

I am even weaker and more fragile than the child I was. Ikki-niisan was my world, my reason for being... Perhaps he could still be... If he could take me in his arms and hold me close, if I could feel his fingers gently tousling my hair, if..

But it would not be him anymore.

I look up at the tiny dots of light in the sky, and feel tears filling my eyes. This time, I am alone, he is gone, I can let them run down. Why am I looking at the stars ? They will not help me. They watch, merciless, and shape our future...

If we are willing to let them.

I am not, but I wish I could be sure I will have the strength to uphold my wish.

The breeze surrounds me, engulfs me, tenderly closing its arms around me. I smile, for I think I know what I lack.

Ikki-niisan, you can find strength in your own heart.

I find mine in others, in people I care about and love. Loneliness... It is not something I can live with for long.

I smile softly at the stars, a bit sadly.

I will go back now, they must be waiting... I wipe away the tears and look at the sea, listening to the ever peaceful sound of the waves.

Nothing is resolved, and I doubt it will ever be... But I cannot let that matter for now, so I close my heart on the pain, and walk away. One day, I will have to face it. One day, there will be a reckoning. I know... But as long as I can, I will keep the wall around my soul tightly closed.

In the distance, I can see people facing this way.

One, two, three, four, five...

I smile. Yes, this is as it must be. They are what matters, not me and my weaknesses. I walk faster, and break into a run, finding myself suddenly needing to hear their voices and hear Seiya's jokes and laughter.

As for tomorrow...

Well I shall see about tomorrow... Tomorrow.

I can feel laughter rising in my throat.

Isn't that fitting ?

End.