

# Fallen swords

Von Yaten

A loud bang resonated as Masamune Date pulled the trigger of his gun, the hat of the soldier before him breaking apart into two parts, the dead body falling backwards, sword clattering to the ground, eyes still wide in surprise.

Many would call Masamune's head-on charge on the castle, holding his mother and brother, foolish and hot-headed.

The poison was still running rampant in his blood. Only the night before had his very own flesh and blood, the person giving birth to him, attempted to take his life.

When he'd realized it, he'd been furious. How DARE she stab him in the back like that! HE was the one making the Date clan big. HIM.

Not his brother.

His retainers had been instantly at his side, still that woman and the other traitor somehow managed to escape with the help of some of their own loyal followers.

They had all found their dead, their blood still splattered over the ground of his castle.

Foolish. The whole lot of them.

He had been asked to rest, to wait until the poison was less lethal, but he'd ignored that. He wouldn't allow them to escape, to endanger what he'd built up.

They'd either have to surrender, accept their place and punishment, or find peace in death.

His one eye seemed to be burning his opponents with intense rage.

A rage that came from the pain of the poison... and from the deep wound left by betrayal.

Of course he'd been aware, that his mother still somehow considered him inferior and unfit as ruler, just because he'd only one eye. He'd also known that she'd shown obvious favor to the younger one and wished for him to take over the clan.

But...

But... he'd worked so hard. Had done everything he could, hoping she'd see how wrong she was. Hoping to find her approval again.

Despite their differences, he hadn't even considered once, that she'd make a move like this. A move, that could cause the whole structure, that made up their clan, to crumble.

He'd been looking forward to that dinner like nothing else before, hoping that finally, FINALLY his mother would see reason.

Another body felt as the blade of his sword was stained with more blood.

These people really intended to stop him?

"Morons.", he hissed to himself, before breaking into a sprint, taking down a few more soldiers left and right.

A bit later he made wood splinter under a final kick of his boot. Inside a group of soldiers stood before his brother, who'd taken up the sword himself.

"You really dare standing against me?", he asked haughtily, looking down onto them despite being smaller in size than most.

"The head position of the Date clan belongs to ME!", his brother, Kojiro hollered. "Not some cripple like you!"

"Hn. Pretty pathetic for someone's dying words... Oh well, whatever...", Masamune shrugged and headed straight for them.

He didn't even needed to lift his own weapons as the retainers fell over left and right.

"W-why?!... You coward!!!", the younger Date cried out, actually taking a step back.

"Coward? You dare calling ME a coward? YOU, who need our own MOTHER to POISON me? Heh.... Now that's a bad joke if I ever heard one. Your retainers are down, they died for you, just like mine would do for me... This fight, however, will just be between you and me, my 'dear' brother. Lift your blade and face me! Show the spirit of a warrior and fight for those that would fight for you!"

The rant was all the time he gave the other one to prepare.

The moment the last word was spoken, he went straight at him, bloodied blade glinting in the light.

At least this time Kojiro managed to prove that all the hours he'd spent training weren't just to make him look good, but actually had made him capable of putting up a decent fight.

Still Masamune could only mentally shake his head at the other's lack of finesse. And their mother had wanted THIS ONE to rule? He, who hadn't even managed to put up a proper defense of the castle he had retreated to?

"Pathetic.", he mumbled, while side-stepping a blow, kicking the other in the stomach and watching him stumble and stagger, almost hitting the floor but managing to steady himself.

He could have taken the other's head three times already, but had refrained from doing so so far.

"You really are... PATHETIC!", he suddenly roared.

The move was straight forward and the other SHOULD have been able to block it, had he not been so stunned by Masamune's sudden raise in voice.

Neatly the blade slid into the chest and back out on the back.

Stupified the younger sibling looked down onto the sword stuck in him, then looked back up at his brother, his mouth opening to say something, but only blood spilled out.

The sword fell to the ground and the body sagged, Masamune taking a step back and pulling his weapon out as he did so, avoiding the body falling on top of him.

Kojiro was not dead yet, that he knew, but it was only a matter of time.

Flickering the blade, he made most of the blood land on the floor before he sheathed it.

"Sayonara, foolish brother.", he mumbled, before turning his back towards the youth,

ignoring the hand that reached out for him.

A large figure stepped up as he neared the door, shadow shrouding the face, but Masamune knew who it was anyway.

"The inheritance of the Date clan is secure and without doubt. Spread the news among the enemy. Those that wish to surrender may live. Cut down everyone else.", he growled out, bypassing Magoichi.

"What of your mother?"

The youth stiffened for a moment, then forced himself to relax again. "She has most likely already escaped. Let her. She should understand now where she stands. And should she be inside the castle after all... you already have my orders."

He didn't give the older male a chance to reply as he hurried off.

After all, he'd done what he'd come for. Securing the Date clan.

His sight blurred a bit and he felt himself stumbling and leaning against the wall, breath going hard.

Damn.

Perhaps he had underestimated the poison after all.

"Masamune..."

He flinched and glared hard at Magoichi who'd followed him. "What?!", he snapped.

"Don't overdo it.", the gunner lightly smiled, before moving in.

"HEY! What?!", the younger protested, while the Saika simply grabbed one wrist and pulled it over his own shoulder, other going around the other's middle.

"I'll support you outside of course.", the other grinned and started tugging him along, despite the Date lord voicing his disagreement.

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Masamune felt worse than he'd felt in recent years.

The heat running through his body was unbearable and a few times he tried to kick the blanket covering him off. But each time there was someone there, putting it back, waiting for him to exhaust himself and calm down.

Every once in a while the cold cloth on his forehead was replaced, giving him a chance to catch a bit of sleep before his temperature would skyrocket again.

He was well aware that the weird and twisted images flashing before his eyes were only in his head, yet he couldn't help the urge to fight the 'enemy' off.

Once he actually hit something in his struggle, granting him some satisfaction.

Bright sunlight hitting his eye made him flinch on the next morning.

"Masamune?", a familiar, deep voice asked, a bit of worry evident in it's tone.

It took some willforce for the youth to force his eye to open again, blinking a couple of times against the bright light, before he finally saw Magoichi lightly bend over him.

"... What happened to your eye?", the younger couldn't help but blurt out.

The gunner snorted and lifted his hand to cover the blueish bruise around his left eye for a moment. "I was looking after a certain, feverish someone and got hit as thanks.", he commented dryly, before getting comfortable. "That aside... How are ya feeling? You gave me quite a scare last night, ya know?"

"It's too bright... and I got a headache... and I'm thirsty.", the boy slowly listed up the things annoying him in the order he took notice of them.

The Saika merchenary chuckled, before pouring some water in a bowl and reaching

over to help his friend up, but Masamune slapped the hand away.  
It was a slight struggle for the Date heir to sit up on his own, but he managed.  
Only then did he accept the water offered to him and slowly sipped it down, knowing better than to drown it all at once.

Magoichi patiently waited until the other looked at him again.

"Any difficults last night?"

"You mean after you went out like a candle all of sudden and I had to carry you back to camp like a fair maiden in need of help? No."

The cup just barely missed the older one's head as Masamune jumped to his feet in rage despite his weakened state.

"YOU WHAT?!", he ragged, his remaining eye burning with murderous rage.

The Saika merely chuckled, raising his hands in defense. "I was kidding, Masamune. Just kidding... Geeze, don't take everything so serious. Lighten up!"

"Why, you... You... ARGH! You are so annoying that no word in existence would be enough to describe it!!!"

"Aww... But you know, that that's what you love about me."

This time, the pillow hit it's mark, straight in the face.

"Ohh... I smell... Ewww... Masamune, no offense, but you could use a bath."

Stunned the smaller male stared at the other, who held the pillow as far away as he could.

Feeling his temper raise again, he snatched it out of the other's head and threw it back onto the futon. "Of course it would smell! I sweated all night long due to the poison! No one asked to sniff at it like that anyway, you pervert!"

Suddenly the world before him blurred and he felt himself lose his balance as he swayed on his feet.

Strong hands grabbed him by the shoulders and in the next moment he leaned against Magoichi's shoulder. "Whoha... Easy there... Your just recovered..."

Feeling his heart pounding fast in his chest, the Date heir waited for it to calm down somewhat, before pushing against the hold.

The older one merely rolled his eyes, but let the younger one escape.

"Why don't you lay down again and I'll tell the servants to bring some breakfast and draw you a bath, hm?", he suggested with a smile.

Suspicion was clearly visible in Masamune's eyes, before he let out a heavy sigh. "Fine! Whatever. Just be quick about it.", he grumbled, waving with his hand for the other to scurry off.

Once alone, he allowed himself to fall back onto his sheets and starred up at the ceiling.

He'd done it.

Killed his brother. Made certain him being the leader wouldn't be questioned anytime soon.

It had been the right thing to do. He was certain of it.

His hands clenched into fists and he threw one arm over his face.

Then why the hell... did it hurt so much in his chest?!

Gritting his teeth he struggled against the tears, that threatened to collect and spill.

In the end his pride won and he somehow managed to swallow all the bitter and sad feelings down, but it still didn't help the painful tightening in his chest.

By the time he heard Magoichi returning - why the heck was HE returning anyway? - he'd managed to regain his composure and look just like usual. Annoyed and ready to bite off heads, if the owners were imbeciles.

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"Sorry, Masamune, it seems most of your servants are still busy cleaning up the remains of yesterday. You'll have to do with me as your helper today.", Magoichi grinned weirdly at the younger.

"You?! Hah!", the other shook his head. "Thanks, but no thanks. I don't need an old man like you to help me."

As the younger tried to stand again, his left knee suddenly gave in.

Making contact with the floor was only avoided thanks to the Saika gunner managing to grab hold of his clothes and pulling him upright again. "You were saying something?", the older grinned cheekily, making the one-eyed dragon groan.

"Fine, fine! You can play servant, if you want it so much! Now get me some fresh clothes and help me over to take that bath! Afterwards I expect breakfast to be ready."

"Yes, yes, young lord.", the other laughed and offered the smaller his arm to hold onto, seeing as the other's pride wouldn't allow him to give him a piggy-back ride or worse - carry him in his arms.

As Masamune relaxed in the hot water a bit later, Magoichi's face suddenly appeared over him, startling him.

"What the heck are you doing in here?!"

"Why, don't your servants help you getting clean?", the other asked curiously.

"No.", grumbled the other. "I'm neither an infant nor incapable of washing myself, so I don't have a need for helpers."

"I see...", the sniper pondered, before breaking into a sly grin, that instantly made Masamune wary and back a bit away. "What now?"

"Why, Masamune... Could it be there is an entirely different reason for you to not have any helpers?"

"What are you suggesting, you moron?!"

"Aw, c'mon, Masamune... It's not such a bad thing you know... It's not the size that matters, it's..."

He didn't get any further as Masamune glared at him lividly and a bucket of water hit his face a moment later.

"Oi! I'm not in need of a shower!", protested the older, now drenched and shaking himself to get rid of the water in his face and hair, before suddenly whistling. "Okay, okay, I'm taking it back. You got me fully convinced that you aren't lacking in 'that' department."

Only then did the teenager realize how much of a mistake he'd made by standing up to throw that bucket and glare at the other.

Feeling the heat go to his cheeks, he instantly plopped back down into the water.

"Get the hell out of here! You are absolutely useless as a servant!", he ragged, absently looking for more items to throw.

Magoichi better be glad he hadn't his gun with him, or the heaven's help him, but he WOULD shoot at that... that... that imbecile!

The older one chuckled as he escaped the wrath of one angered young dragon and took to whistling to himself.

When he returned, Masamune had just left the bathing room wrapped in a white yukata, that had a green and golden dragon embroidered.

As he stepped up to him, the young lord whipped his head around, eye narrowed, but blinking in confusion and befuddlement upon spotting him.

"Magoichi?", he asked, just to be sure.

"Yeah?"

"... You look quite different in that."

The man looked down onto the dark green kimono he'd gotten from a servant, before slowly breaking into a grin. "Dashing handsome, don't you think? But if I wore this all the time I wouldn't be able to fend off all the ladies going after me."

"Hn.", snorted the younger one, while walking on, heading back to his room.

Two tablets were already set aside, along with a big pot of tea.

"I thought you said the servants were all busy?"

The Saika shrugged. "They are. I just used my charm and the fact that you are their boss to get them to make something for us. I also told your retainers to only disturb you, if it was absolutely urgent."

One eye glowered at him from the floor. "Why did you do that?!"

"Because if I didn't, they'd all come to bother you because of small stuff, the moment they heard you woke up and are capable of talking. And you need to rest.", Magoichi shrugged, pouring both of them a cup of tea and then bringing his own to his lips.

"Hmph!"

The two enjoyed their breakfast in silence, before Masamune retreated to his futon, pulling the blanket over him and rolling away from the other, apparently intending on actually sleeping.

The gunner was about to clean up, when he suddenly heard the other mumble something. "Huh?"

Some muffled curses were his answer, making him sweatdrop, before the other spoke in a much clearer voice, yet through gritted teeth: "I said: Thanks. For everything.", grumbled the other, before pulling the blanket over his head.

For a few moments Magoichi was stunned by surprise, then he had to smile softly and shake his head.

Masamune would never change. And he wouldn't want him too either.