

White Lies

Von ichfressemenschen

The land of snow

In the Land of snow, in a little known village, a young woman was sitting near open shoji screens and staring silently at the falling flakes of frozen water. She wore the traditionally long dresses of the nobles, and her long brown hair fell in silky threads down to her waist. With her ivory skin she melted into her snowy surroundings, and her deep blue eyes turned to follow a young man with a little bag in his arms.

All around her in the regally built palace was a lot of ruckus, servants were hurrying around packing clothes, nourishment and her most prized possessions into wooden chests, before loading them onto a beautifully crafted carriage.

One of the younger servant girls approached and addressed the hime timidly, breaking her wistful stare: "Miss Aya, your entourage has arrived."

"Thank you, Mai." Aya responded with a warm smile. "I will be with them in just a moment."

The little girl named Mai hesitated a moment, before she threw herself into the ladies arms and hugged her as hard as her small arms would allow.

"Why are they sending you away? Can't your future husband come here and live with us? This palace is definitely big enough! I don't care who he is, he doesn't have the right to take you away from us!" She sobbed with her face pressed into Aya's slim waist.

Aya gently stroked her back, while answering firmly: "Because he is a Daimyo. I'm honored to be selected as his future bride. Don't cry, you can always come and visit me. Actually, I insist you do." She ended with a small smirk on her lips, before gently loosening the girl's hold.

They were disrupted when the shoji screens left to them opened with a harsh shove, and an middle aged man regarded them with a disapproving glare. Mai jumped up guiltily, and threw an apologetic glance to Aya, before hastening past lord Tadao.

"The ninjas we requested have arrived to escort you to the land of water. They are waiting for you." He addressed his adoptive daughter.

"Yes, I apologize if I left them waiting." Aya replied plainly, before sliding to her feet and striding toward the Lord. She gave him a loving smile and tilted her head down. "Thank you. Not only for taking me in when nobody wanted me, but for giving me a future and a purpose in life." Lord Tadao placed his hand on her hair and responded: "Thank you for being the daughter I have always wished for."

When Aya entered the receiving room, four pairs of eyes immediately focused on her. Smart, breathtakingly green eyes belonged to a young girl with candy colored hair, who seemed not much older than Mai. Next to her were two boys, one with a screamingly orange attire, and one with black hair and lifeless eyes.

After mustering the children, Aya's eyes fell on the only other adult in the room. He had light grey hair and hid most of his face behind a mask and a headband, which covered his left eye. The other eye was fixated on her, and she felt her stomach flutter under his dissecting stare. She knew that her father had not told them the ultimate purpose of this mission, only that she had to be delivered safely into the land of water.

"My name is Aya Hirabayashi, daughter of Tadao Hirabayashi. I would like to thank you for accepting this mission. You are probably exhausted from your journey to this village, it would be my pleasure to show you to the baths and your rooms. Dinner will be served in the dining hall in two hours, so you have plenty of time to refresh yourselves." Aya conversed, her eyes lingering far too often on the grey haired man, who had not taken his eyes off her since she entered the room.

"That sounds great! Do you have ramen?!" the blonde boy chattered excitedly. Aya couldn't suppress a smile, but before she could reply a deep voice stated: "I apologize for his behavior. Naruto's stomach is often louder than his brain. My name is Kakashi, and these are my students Naruto, Sasuke and Sakura."

Aya looked into his eyes and smiled more broadly than was appropriate for a hime, before replying: "I'm honored to meet you.", then, with a wink to the bubbly boy: "Our cook is said to make the best tonkatsu ramen in the land of snow. I'll be sure to tell him to prepare some for you."

After she had shown them the lavish baths, their rooms and the dining hall, Aya sat in her own room contemplating whether to take another bath. Since all her belongings and books had already been packed, there was little else for her to do, so she started to make her way towards the baths.

When she stepped into the steaming pool and felt the hot water hug her skin, Aya let out a satisfied groan. The prospect of leaving all her friends and loved ones had been filling her with sadness and tension for weeks, but the weight on her shoulders always felt lighter in the warm water.

With closed eyes, she started to calmly wash her hair with one of the many scented soaps, before she heard the shoji screen slide open. She turned to see the pink haired girl enter the room, before Sakura spotted her and stopped uncertainly.

"Please come in." Aya encouraged her, while continuing to wash the soap out of her hair.

"Thank you. The boys are also taking a bath now, so I thought I would as well to make sure they don't have to wait for me at dinner." Sakura bubbled when she slid into the water.

Aya unsuccessfully tried to squish the thought of the grey haired shinobi soaking naked in the water. To get her thoughts in reign, she abruptly changed the topic: "Are your rooms to your liking?"

To her luck Sakura didn't notice and excitedly proclaimed: "They are beautiful, I love the view at the snowed over gradens! We never have snow in Konoha, it's rarely below 10 Celsius."

While Sakura excitedly described her home and the forests surrounding it, Aya's thoughts drifted off to the journey ahead of her. They planned to arrive at the village of Lord Dayako in two weeks, and her marriage was planned to take place three weeks from now. Even though she knew that there was no alternative to the political union, her heart got heavy at the thought of her much older future husband.

The Lord Dayako was a nice, elderly man whom she had met when she was eleven years old, just one year after Tadao had adopted her. It was spring and she was playing in the garden, as so often, when a soft voice disrupted her game with two of the servants children. "Hello little lady. I apologize for disrupting your game, but I wished to introduce myself before I left. My name is Dayako Miyazaki." The white haired Lord had addressed her.

She hadn't known back then, that before her stood one of the most powerful daimyos of this time, when she retorted: "I'm Aya Hirabayashi, daughter of Lord Tadao."

When she was done with washing and Sakuras chatter had died down, Aya excused herself to get dressed for dinner. As was expected of her, she encased herself in the dark blue kimonos of her house, before she started to make her way towards the dinner hall.

Musing about the next two weeks in which she would be allowed to wear far more comfortable travelling garments, she didn't notice Kakashi standing in the hall before she came to an abrupt stop right in front of him. Her eyes found his, and she felt the flutter in her stomach come back to life.

"Good evening lady Aya." His deep voice sounded, before he signified for her to accompany him down the hall. "I worried I would be too late for dinner, but it seems I'm not the only one." He continued with a smirk.

Trying for her usual aloof attitude, Aya grinned: "But Kakashi-sama, didn't you know it is fashionable to be a few minutes late? All the noble ladies I have met so far made sure to be the last ones to sit down at the table."

"Is that so? Then I hope we will not be scolded for our late arrival." Kakashi replied, before shoving the shoji screen open for her.

Aya still had her eyes fixated on his enigmatic face while she moved to enter the dining hall, when she missed to lift her dress over the threshold and lost her foot in the lines of fabric. Before she could react to the approaching ground, two strong arms encompassed her and pulled her back against a warm chest.

As swiftly as Kakashi had grabbed her, he let go and when she turned to him, she imagined to make out a light red undertone on his face.

"Aya, please sit." Her fathers voice disrupted the moment, and Aya felt her face grow hot.

The rest of the evening passed slowly, with Aya concentrating on keeping her eyes anywhere but on the masked man opposite from her.

Kakashi didn't seem to have such troubles, he was politely conversing with the lord while every so often scolding Naruto to eat properly and answering Sakuras curious questions. As early as politely possible, Aya got up with the excuse of being tired from the preparations of the day.

Kakashi threw her a unreadable look, which made her even more nervous of the journey ahead and stuck to her until well after she had closed her eyes for the night.