

Memorie Rotte : Broken Memories

By Shinigami-no-Kaze

Submitted: November 29, 2005

Updated: November 29, 2005

Shyam Margor reminisces about the only woman he has ever truly loved. Moonless Age short story.

Provided by Fanart Central.

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Chapter 1 - Untitled

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1 - Untitled

This is a side story from Moonless Age. A single chapter of Moonless Age used to be posted here, but I got rid of it because it was terrible. You need no knowledge to comprehend this story.

A soft wind blew gently across the crystal waters of the lake. Sitting quietly, a Shyam stared at the waters, his unseeing eyes focused on something that only he could see. As the wind swirled softly across the water, it turned to him, dancing down his arms and over his cool face. Shyam didn't seem to notice as it danced over him; he didn't seem to notice anything at all.

Raising his hand, a sudden movement where there had been none, he pushed his red-lined black sleeve up to his elbow. Shyam regarded the simple, woven bracelet that rested on his wrist and the simple, teardrop garnet that dangled from it. He brought the gem to his lips and kissed it.

"I want you to have it," she said to him.

Shyam looked curiously at the simple bracelet. It was made of dyed hemp. The colors were dull and unimpressive reds and oranges. The weave was boring. Hanging from the weave, though, was a small, teardrop gem. It was brilliant red, shining and warm to his touch.

"It's a garnet," she said, folding Shyam's hand around the bracelet she had made. "It has the warmth of fire in it," she added as she closed his hand.

Shyam nodded, feeling the heat spread through his hand and into his arm. "Thank you, Maiya."

She flushed, her sepia colored hair falling into her face as she ducked her head. "You're welcome," she replied.

There was a small crack in the gem, now, from the years he had worn it. From the years of battles he had put the small gem through. It was a simple, hairline crack. It didn't go deep at all, but he sensed the fragility in the small stone.

His thumb rubbed over the crack as his eyes fell on the white horse that had come to drink on the other side of the lake. The animal's mane whipped about its head as the wind picked up slightly, making it look ethereal and surreal.

Had he been any other person, Shyam probably would have found an Earth mage to heal over the crack. But that crack was something special. It was another reminder of days he couldn't have again.

Wind rushed through his black hair as Shyam galloped across the field, heading for the city of Westminster. He traveled swiftly, having felt the tug he had come to recognize as Reina. With her, however, there was something else.

As he crested one hill, the walls of the city still small and insignificant, he caught sight of the Lady Worldwalker, her mahogany hair whipping about her face; her deep purple dress fluttering about her small body. Beside her stood another woman, her hair the light color of tree bark—sepia—and dressed in simple olive corduroys, a gray jacket, and a brown T-shirt. Beside Reina, the girl looked small and lacking in vitality and substance. Shyam found himself thinking her more alive than even the vibrant Lady.

He pulled his horse to a stop, the magnificent white Aeronwen coming to rest beside Reina and her friend. He looked down at the two, first meeting Reina's rather annoyed hazel eyes, then the stranger's pewter ones. He turned back to Reina. "You called to me," he said simply to her.

Reina nodded. "Maiya needs a ride to Westminster. You were nearby, so I figured it wouldn't be too troublesome to get you," she replied to him.

Shyam shrugged and backed his horse up. He reached out a gloved hand to Maiya. "I am Shyam Margor," he said. "Would you like a hand up?"

Maiya glanced hesitantly at Reina, who smiled. "Go on," Reina instructed.

Nodding, Maiya turned back to Shyam and slowly took his hand. He tugged her up, using his limited control of Air to help him hoist her into his saddle.

"Comfortable?" he asked her.

She nodded, hooking hair behind her left ear as the hair behind her right spilled forward, hiding her face. "What about Reina?" she murmured.

Reina smiled. "Not to worry. I can make it on my own." Reina turned from them, launching herself into the sky, her ghostly, white-feathered wings unfurling from her back. "I'll meet you two at Westminster!" she called down before vanishing into the clouds.

Maiya stared at the place where Reina had vanished as Shyam smiled. "You'll get used to it," he said softly. "Hold to the pommel if you feel like you're going to fall." He placed her hands for her. "Try not to grab me. If I need to make sudden movements, you'll hamper me."

She nodded and he nudged his Aeronwen's sides, urging the beast forward. The horse started forward, reaching a gallop quickly.

As they flew across the fields on Aeronwen's back, Shyam shifted the reigns to one hand to wrap the other around Maiya's waist. She was sitting so stiffly in the saddle that she would hurt herself. If she felt that she could relax, he figured touching her wasn't so bad. The moment he wrapped his arm about her, she stiffened more.

He recognized the frailty in her immediately, but didn't let go. It was as if something had been beating at her for years and years and she hadn't seen it; and slowly it had rent a small crack in her. Shyam found himself wondering how deeply the crack went and how easily it would be to repair, something he did only for a few people. Outsiders weren't his concern most of the time, but this frail woman was, it seemed.

"Have you never been here before?" he asked her.

"No. Reina brought me here from my world," she replied, her voice a whisper he had to strain to hear. "She thought it would be relaxing."

"Reina's definition of relaxing is far different than most people's," Shyam replied, "but I believe you will enjoy yourself here."

Maiya nodded.

Shyam frowned as he rode behind her, wondering what would prompt Reina to take this woman from their home.

It was little wonder, really. So fragile, so breakable. Maiya could have shattered so easily, and he could have been the one responsible. Reina had known that, and had entrusted Maiya to him anyway. The Lady was a strange woman; she could always see beneath a person's exterior. They had been good for each other.

Maiya was always quiet and reserved; Shyam held his tongue for no one. Maiya was sweet; Shyam was coarse. Maiya told no secrets, but Shyam guarded each one that she unknowingly bestowed upon him. They had complimented each other so well. She needed protection, and he was a protector. She had found her strength in the Fire he commanded, and he had found his salvation in her sweetness. She was his saving grace.

His only saving grace.

Reina could hold him back. Reina could control him.

Only Maiya could calm him from rage and fury that rose too fast and too hot.

Reina held the leash he had given her.

Only Maiya held his heart.

She had gone too soon.

A year had passed since Shyam had ridden with Maiya into Westminster, bringing her to stay with Reina and her husband, the Master Worldwalker. The city was having a goodbye party, of a sort, for Maiya. The people figured they would see her again, but no one knew for sure. Reina's friends came and went, sometimes returning, and sometimes not. Sometimes, their world became a dream to the visitor; sometimes, their world remained something solid and real. But they could never be sure how the person would react.

Reina had taken Maiya to buy the week before, and she was sitting in it now, in a chair off to the side. Her hands were folded in her lap, hidden by a white shawl. Her rose-colored dress fell in a liquid pool around her body, appearing to be Mercury instead of silk. A silver necklace was draped around her delicate neck, a simple red gem hanging from the end. Garnet teardrops fell from each ear, and small garnet stones encircled her wrist.

Shyam came up to her and bowed, his red and black formal clothing making him appear larger than he was. "You look lovely, Maiya," he said to her, reaching for her hand.

She no longer hesitated to touch him like she once had. Her hand rose immediately and fell into his.

Smiling, Shyam raised Maiya's hand to his lips and kissed it gently.

She flushed, bowing her head, and removed her hand from his. "Thank you, Shyam," she murmured.

He slid into the chair beside her, sitting close to her. "It's a lovely night," he said.

Maiya nodded. "Yes, it is. Everyone looks so elegant."

"Everyone goes all out for Armande's parties," Shyam agreed, watching the beautifully dressed women and handsome men twirl around the dance floor. He looked up as a haunting melody began to make its way through the hall, and the people stopped dancing, moving to the sides of the dance floor.

He stood, helping Maiya up, and they walked to the front of the ring of people just as Reina began to sing.

Together, the Master and Lady Worldwalker spun across the dance floor, Reina's voice rising above their dancing forms. A smile lit her face as Armande spun her about and she sang.

Shyam smiled as the two spun about. There was something wonderfully sensual about their dance, as restrained and chaste as it was. Perhaps it was just the way they moved when they were together. They were always aware of the other's body, constantly shifting and flowing to accommodate their partner.

At the violin solo, other dancers began to move onto the floor again, and Shyam turned to Maiya. "Would you like to dance with me?" he asked her softly.

She flushed. "I can't dance," she said to him.

Shyam clucked and she smiled. "Of course you can. Don't worry, I'll lead."

She shook her head. "Honestly. I'd step on your toes."

"And I insist. I promise, my toes will survive you. They survive Reina's shoes on a daily basis."

Maiya smiled. "Well... Okay. Just one dance," she told him.

Shyam didn't wait for her to change her mind. He took her hand and swept her onto the dance floor, spinning her before pulling her against him, leading her in the waltz Reina was singing.

He looked down at her as they moved across the smooth marble floor. He knew the song Reina was singing well; he had written it so many years ago. Bending his head, he whispered the soft, Spanish words into her ear in his deep voice.

Maiya's cheeks flushed at his voice, and she leaned her head closer to his, against his shoulder.

And she had never come back.

Oh, she had wanted to. He knew she did. She had loved him as much as he had loved her.

But she had been killed.

Butchered.

He had gone to find her at Reina's request.

Reina never requested the Destroyer of Worlds until that day.

"Lord Shyam Margor," the Lady said softly, her eyes cool. Emotionless.

She was wearing a red dress. Her hair was pulled from her face by garnet clips, falling in sensual curls to her throat, which was graced with a garnet on a silver chain. He could feel the magic pulsing around her.

Dangerous. Feral.

This was the Lady the Universe trembled at the sight of.

"My Lady," he replied, bowing to her.

"The expertise of the Destroyer of Worlds is required."

Shyam's body had flooded with ice. "May I inquire why, my Lady?" he asked.

Reina said nothing for a moment, her eyes filled with something he couldn't place. "Go to my home," she told him after a moment. "Go to the park near to where I live when I visit my family."

Shyam bowed and left, traveling to the place she had told him to travel to.

He strode across the pavement of the parking lot, looking around for something out of the ordinary. Looking for something that would require Death coming for it.

As he stepped onto the grass near the playground, he saw a form laying in the dirt of a baseball field. The stench of blood suddenly filled his nostrils, and he found himself becoming giddy. It was a delicious smell. He strode over to the baseball diamond, up to the pitcher's mound.

The arms were on opposite ends of the mound. The legs had been tossed carelessly over towards third base. The midriff was in too many pieces to count. Bloody fabric lay in tatters all around. But the head was untouched.

His blood ran cold.

Slowly, Shyam reached out and turned the head so that he could see its face.

“No...”

He fell to his knees, reaching for the head of the only woman he had ever loved, pulling it tightly to his chest, bending over it protectively.

“No...”

As hot tears stung his eyes, his mind furiously tried to understand why she had been killed and who was responsible. There was a strange residue on the ground, one that shouldn't have existed in Reina's home. Shadow. The murderer had killed her with the element of Shadow.

He understood why the Lady had requested the Destroyer of Worlds now.

Standing, he summoned the Fire that was a part of him and spread it over Maiya's body, burning her into ash. He opened his arms, and the wind caught the ashes he had held, spreading them out over the earth.

Shyam released the dirt he had fisted in his hand, the wind catching it and carrying it away. The garnet on his wrist shimmered in the light of the setting sun. Shadows stretched across the ground behind him, teasing the light.

He turned at the sound of soft footsteps behind him.

"I thought I would find you here," Reina said quietly. She walked up to his side and sat beside him, her cream colored dress folded beneath her. "You haven't found them yet, have you?"

Shyam said nothing. He didn't need to. They both knew the answer.

"Do you really want to find them?" she asked him. "What if you don't like what you find?"

Shyam said nothing as the sun dipped behind the trees, filling the world with shadows. "I don't have to," he replied softly, raising his bracelet to his lips. He kissed the gem tenderly. "I don't have to."

Memorie Rotte is Italian for Broken Memories

This story is dedicated to, in a backwards sort of way, a friend of mine. She was my model for Maiya.