MYSTERY OF LOVE, CHAPTER 1

"I remember those beautiful times when I used to serve my fellow sisters and brothers of the Empire in the war... when the enemy didn't verge unfought in our lands to raid and steal our goods" - Yuri continued her tale.

It was late night in the village of Delimon and the sun had already set behind the mountain ranges that delimited the valley.

The inn was almost empty, except for a few villagers who drank wine beyond any accepted limit and took advantage of the lack of quarrelsome foreigners to start muttering her stories about the war.

She was a little bit dizzy at the sixth glass of mead that she greedily gobbled, but no one could blame her.

Since her sensational return along with a few survivor knights of the Keyali army from the hostile lands she had been a little bit bewildered, as if the inhuman battles that she had witnessed her deleted forever her already questionable sanity.

She wasn't totally weirded out... there was just the old playful and attractive Yuri who used to joke around, but the vice of getting drunk was turning into habit and the younger girls often had to escort her home.

"These are dark ages" - Yuri blurted out - "Thou can't pick up a trail without encountering a dirty invader who looks at thee with hate and disgust, as if we were the one who invaded a pristine land of others!"

The dark-eyed girl was nearly falling asleep as her voice was almost getting a whisper and her arms were laid wearily on the table.

"Hanazelai..." - Yuri whispered to the younger girl, yawning - "Have thou ever fallen in love with someone who truly makes thy heart lighter than a feather whenever thy gaze would fall on them?"

Hana was doubly embarrassed by the question.

First of all, nobody called her 'Hanazelai', not even the Wisemen who taught her, and even if she had told Yuri not to call her with her birth name, many times the girl just seemed to ignore her and just use it.

It was just the way Hanilian people addressed us.

They always had those strange and long names and in the many times we got named after their deities there were no way they could just shorten it and make it sound more Keyali...

The second reason she was embarrassed for was her question about love.

They were taught about the most diverse fields of the arts, literature, alchemy and combat by powerful knights and cultured Wisemen, but love wasn't a theme chatted about by most people and she had never had direct experience with that mysterious thing.

It was something that she looked at with modesty and a little bit of shame too.

The only time she had read a book about passion was a Hanilian story about a virgin princess who lived in a far village of Hanilia and a fighter who were the daughter of an enemy leader, but she hadn't liked it.

She understood the complex mechanisms of the union between two individuals; she just didn't understand the reasons why.

"Yuri-mei shouldn't call me with my birth name..." - She whined, trying to hide the reddening of her chicks with her hands - "And why does Yuri-mei question me with such an improper demand?"

The older girl's expression was unreadable, maybe because of the excess of alcohol, maybe because of her thoughts.

There were moments she was just as mysterious as a magician and as beautiful as a demon and words couldn't just be enough to express how sweet and intoxicating the sight of her features was.

Somewhere behind the wounds still shone the old Yuri, who scented like lavender and whose hair was still the color of the darkest amber.

"Sometimes I just miss those years I used to love, Hanazelai..." - She replied, ignoring the younger girl's invitation to use her shortened name.

"When I was young I didn't want to join the army. I loved the literature and I spent whole hours reading the essays of the philosophers who wrote the history of my motherland, my beloved Hanilia..."

Yuri sketched a smile on her tired face.

"...thy name in Hanilian means 'with the hope of a flower'. This is the reason why I refuse to take out the last part out of thy name; I don't want to leave a flower without hope.

Hana frowned a little bit, hearing those harmless and yet painful words.

Sometimes they ignored how wise and deep could Hanilians be, and the Keyalians kept ignoring their powerful ability to use words. She had never wondered what her name really meant.

Hana wasn't very educated, and even if everyone was taught the basis of Hanilian, the girl just failed to see a point behind all that study, as she was going to join the army soon and she saw no benefit in the scriptures for a fighter.

"I am sorry for my ignorance, Yuri-mei... I didn't know how important was for you" - She weakly said.

"Thou are excused, Hana" - Yuri replied, interlacing her fingers with the younger girl - "I always bore thee with my frustrations, my pain and my regrets, and the truth is that thou are the only flower who really scents hope to me..."

Hana felt her heart flutter when the older girl held her.

It was the first time she felt it was lighter than a feather, as Yuri described that kind of sensation. She was heated throughout all her body and her dark hair slightly sweat for the embarrassment.

"I can't hide my feelings for thee, dark-haired beauty..."

Their faces neared, and those luscious lips touched hers in a fluid movement.