

He was being shamelessly leched at by hundreds of eyes and shamed brutally by their ruthless words. He stood amidst all that, almost-naked, in tears, waiting for it to get over. But it didn't. He only wondered what went so wrong. "I lost a bet, that was it," his brain slowly seized to blame himself, Asami, and everybody else. He could feel his nerves giving way and his heartbeat slowing down. One man after the next ascended the stairs and molested him, rather brutally. All the watchmen could do was to keep them from raping FeiLong. Until further orders, they could do no more.

Having done away with his driver, Asami drove like he never had before. He forgot the use of clutch and break, his feet never left the accelerator pedal, his hands swerved as fast as they could to avoid traffic. But by the time he got to Shion, it was too late. The guards had shot down one man who was adamant on raping FeiLong. The latter had fainted from the constant sexual assault and was shifted to the guest room.

He had felt this kind of despair and apology very rarely the way Asami felt it in that moment.

"Shift him to my room," was all he managed to say to Shou before he left the club.

When FeiLong awoke, he felt rather fresh, apart from a little nagging pain in his lower abdomen, he felt fine. He opened his eyes to a beautiful mosaic ceiling very high above, with a golden rose chandelier hung down, and to the sweet smell of scented candles. He knew immediately where he was, he tried to hurriedly sit upright. He was pushed down by firm hands on his shoulders.

"Take rest," the gentle voice of Asami sounded from behind him.

FeiLong didn't respond, he only looked up into his face. Trying to remember where they had last met.

- "How're you feeling?"

- "Why am I here?"

- "Answer me, first," Asami said as he knelt down beside his bed and gently removed his hair from his forehead and checked his temperature.

"I— I was molested, wasn't I?" FeiLong's memory seemed to be suddenly triggered by Asami's touch.

Asami remained silent.

FeiLong smiled. "Yes, I remember now. You had me tied up to the pole in you Shion Club and wanted to punish me by getting me molested. You watched me for some time and then got up and left me to my fate. I remember it now."

Asami softly stroked the hair on his head, "I'm sorry, I— I didn't mean to—"

"Its okay, don't apologise. It does not suit you anyway." FeiLong said in his slow, halting dialect that people so often mistook for a sarcastic note. But Asami knew him too well to misinterpret.

"I am alright," he said as he tried to sit. This time Asami helped him. As he sat, Asami left his bedside and sat beside him on the bed. He then touched FeiLong's hair and slid his hand down its strands.

"I really am sorry, FeiLong, I shouldn't have done to you what I did," he said at last.

"It's okay," FeiLong replied slowly, "every dog has his day."

He tried to leave the bed, Asami gave him his hand and slowly helped him come down. He couldn't keep balance and fell back into Asami's arms. He held FeiLong around him for some time. In his grasp, strangely, FeiLong felt safe, like he always imagined he would. Maybe at the back of his mind he knew that it wasn't possible. Even if it did ever happen for real, for all one could ever feel in the hands of a man like Asami was the awareness of being his captive. It seemed to him then that he was mistaken. He didn't struggle and let Asami hold him for as long as he wanted.

Deeply regretful as he was, he wanted to hold FeiLong in his arms like that for ever. He always wanted him, to possess him and make him his property. But FeiLong proved to be self-dependent and established himself as an isolated underworld figure. Maybe that hit Asami as a rejection and he couldn't handle it, bad as he was at handling rejections. That's where all his anger and vengeance emanated from. From his inability to have FeiLong all to himself. From his inability to make him his own, and have him for a lifetime as his property. He pulled him back and gave his lips a long, fond, wet kiss. FeiLong didn't resist. He let Asami have his way with him.

After being satisfied, he pulled FeiLong even closer and held him by his waist while stroking his raven locks,

“I shouldn't have done what I did to you, FeiLong, I'm sorry.”

FeiLong looked into Asami's eyes for a quiet while then betrayed a soft giggle.

Asami was taken aback, since he was conveying his apologies wholeheartedly and sincerely, he wasn't expecting FeiLong to take it that lightly. Before he could protest, FeiLong said, “I didn't mean to aggravate you, sorry, but it's really very funny.”

-“What is?” Asami demanded to know.

-“You haven't apologised to me so much in all these years, and now, all in a day, you even kiss me out of sympathy, by now, I'm pretty glad I got manhandled.”

FeiLong softly undid Asami's grasp around his waist and walked slowly toward the shower.

“I hope you don't mind if I take a bath, I'm as dirty as you always said I am, perhaps a bit more now.”

He stopped suddenly and looked back, a something glistened at the corner of his left eye,

“Eversince you called me dirty, I clean myself with scrub and expensive soaps everyday, you have seen me naked several times, you know the marks on my body are from something sharp, they are from scrubbing too hard,” he paused to smile, “but I think I am still too dirty for you. So please let me have a hot bath, make it as hot as you like, maybe burning my skin will finally purge me of all my sins.” He turned away to hide the tear drop in his eyes.

“Go inside, I'll heat up your water,” Asami replied in a low tone.

FeiLong gave him a smile, “Thank you.”

As FeiLong looked down at the bathtub, smoke emanated incessantly from thereon. At first he thought of complaining about making it cooler, but then he

considered what he last told Asami, *maybe burning my skin will purge me of all my sins.*

Maybe he's just trying to help,

FeiLong considered, before he slowly undressed and got into the bath tub. He had expected the experience of being burned in boiling water to be a bit more painful. The bath felt perfect, as warm as it has any possible need to be, not too prickly, not too thin, just perfect. He sat in it for several minutes before he left.

When he came out in a bathing robe he found the room empty, the table was laid with lunch covered and a small handwritten note on top,

*"Be ready in three hours, I'll come to pick you,
Please have lunch, don't go hungry,*

*PS. It wasn't sympathy, but opportunity.
Never scrub again.*

-Asami"