

Alchemy of Hearts chapter 10

Chapter 10: Puzzled

After what seemed like forever, but a few seconds, Naoki's lips parted finally, "Does she usually bring worry to her family?"

That question was unexpected for him. He seemed tongue-tied about what kind of reply to give.

Was it right to report the bratty nature of his would-be wife even though he asked?

While he contemplated the matter, he made an abrupt decision not to speak of it.

His master would have to find out on his own. It would give him time to catch up on those long-gone 18 years.

Peeking at his master, he gave him a vague answer before bowing slightly and leaving the room.

"Miss Ito is interested in samurai activities."

"..."

There seemed to be some things he knew nothing of that concerned her. And from the half-based answer he got from Daisuke, Naoki could easily picture what kind of trouble she was.

Naoki's dissatisfaction knew no bounds as his brows furrowed and the corners of his lips tugged downwards.

His destined bride whom he has been waiting for, for 7 centuries, grew to be unladylike in his 18 years of absence. 2

What did that mean?

He did not know if he should be happy or not.

The sheer thought of a lady and a katana proved her boldness, still, it spoke volumes of the invited troubles that awaited him in the future.

Sigh!

Outside the castle, Daisuke helped Haruka to mount his horse before pulling the reins to leave the vicinity on foot.

Haruka blinked as she stared at him wide-eyed. 'Does he plan on sending me back home on foot?'

His actions were odd and surprised her greatly, forcing her to almost bore a hole at the back of his head.

Daisuke felt the long stare behind him and briefly tilted his head to see her staring straight at him. He could see her elevated eyebrows which were accompanied by protuberant flashbulb eyes.

Feeling that she had something to say from her gaze, he asked with a curious expression on his face, "Is something the matter?"

"Mr. Suke, won't it be tiring to walk this long distance when you could join me on the horseback?" she asked with her gaze still on him, waiting to read every expression his face would portray, but he didn't give her that opportunity.

Daisuke stared at her briefly before averting his gaze back to the path before them.

"I will be fine walking. It will be good if I could stretch my limbs for today." He lied.

Although Haruka found his response weird, she didn't go on with her questioning. Believing him, she finally shifted her gaze back to the road ahead of them, with her palms resting on the horse's neck.

But what she didn't know was that Daisuke wouldn't dare to ride on the same horse with his future mistress without his master's consent or the situation being dire.

In the Tatami room, Naoki's gaze followed them till the hill more than two hundred steps away blocked his sight.

He didn't look surprised to be able to see that far.

Since waking up from the coma, he could feel the great surge of energy swirling inside his body.

Also, he could feel he had the powers to do more unimaginable things and couldn't wait to explore the depth of his new abilities.

As thoughts flooded into his mind, the more dominant one was about his bride Haruka. He became very curious about her.

She didn't grow the way he was expecting her to, although she still had the beauty that could cause heads to turn.

It would be a great lie to say he wasn't shocked by her taste as a young woman.

Naoki got all riled up in his spirit the more he reasoned about her development and couldn't sit still.

He gathered his long black ink hair that fluttered behind him in his hands. Rolling it up, he snatched a thick metal pin that could pass as a hairpin from the shelf in the room with the simmering purple light that emitted from his fingers.

After securing his lengthy hair at the top of his head with the pin, he didn't continue to linger in his abode and immediately teleported away.

At the same moment, he reappeared in an empty corner tucked away at the end of a quiet street.

While escorting his future mistress as they approached a busy street, one disturbing thought remained in Daisuke's mind. How did Haruka get into the castle?

Knowing that she wouldn't dare to venture off into a dangerous place by herself, he remained curious as to how she made it into the wrecked castle.

Even as they left that place, his illusion was still intact, forcing him to become more restless.

Unable to continue to allow his curiosity to eat his mind up, he turned the right side of his face to glance at the woman enjoying herself on the horseback.

He could see how the corners of her lips curled upwards and her eyes shone brightly as her gaze darted around their surroundings.

"Miss Ito, how did you come to the castle?" He asked casually.

Haruka's attention was immediately drawn by that question as she withdrew her gaze from the busy inn in front of them.

The smile on her face quickly disappeared and was replaced with scorn.

The memory of how she ended up going to the castle, was not pleasant, and Daisuke could tell from how her brows knitted together.

Letting out a heavy breath, her eyes met him as she began to recount how everything played out from the time she stole the katana from her brother's room and escape, to the time she met the three drunk men and fled from them.

Listening to her, he could tell the danger she encountered from the time she met the drunkards to the time she fell off the small hill.

Daisuke sighed in relief that nothing terrible happened to her otherwise, he would feel guilty for eternity for being incompetent.

Haruka continued with her story as her gaze drifted past his face to the busy street. It was as if the scene from before was playing out right in front of her.

"... It was after I failed to find the sheath that I saw the castle. Thinking about it now, I think I was drawn to it." She said as lines appeared on her forehead.

Daisuke was shocked at the huge tip that was dropped as he felt his eyeballs nearly pop out from their sockets. 'She felt drawn to the castle? D-Did S-She by any chance... W-Wake Master up?'

At that thought, he felt an electrifying current flow through his veins as goosebumps appeared on the exposed part of his skin straight away.

A few thoughts appeared in his mind, but he shook them off and masked the shock on his face as he asked with his full attention on her.

"Why do you say so?"

In response to his question, she retracted her gaze from the distance to stare at him.

"Why would I ignore my senses and go into someone's castle without fear and manners? Thinking about it now, I have realized that seeing the difference in the castle setting from others, was not enough reason for me to wander into it."

At this juncture, Daisuke was able to put a few jumbled pieces together. She didn't see his illusions.

He was getting a little excited within him, but his facial expression remained unchanging as he continued to listen to her.

When he heard her talk about how Naoki suddenly appeared behind her while she was checking the tatami room out, he felt his heart stop.

'Master's awakening has something to do with her presence?'

The rest of the words spewing out from Haruka's heart-shaped lips disappeared into thin air as the puzzle that has left him confused for a while was suddenly put together.

She could see beyond his illusions and she was probably the one that resurrected his master.

Although he has come to this conclusion, he still had to speak with his Master about it to level down the small doubts surrounding this deduction.

Haruka currently had no powers, so how was all of this possible?

AT THE IMPERIAL PALACE...

In the middle of a dimly lit corridor with transparent sliding doors along its path, twelve young girls in the same attire formed two rolls.

The sounds of their rushed footsteps against the nightingale floor resounded in the silence of the hall.

Their fingers were tucked in front of their lower belly as they walked with their heads lowered.

Their black long hair was rolled up in twin peaks at the top of their heads and only a simple ribbon decorated it.

In front of these young girls were two older women with a different hairstyles and dressed in completely contrasting colors of kimonos.

Each of them held a rectangular steel tray and a medium-sized round bowl with the edges and bottom forming a seamless curve.

These high-ranked servants in front led the younger lesser ranked ones whose faces displayed their fear and anxiety towards a particular room at the end of the hallway.

The large room was decorated with intricate wood carvings and some antiques that were mostly in gold and jade.

The walls were masterfully covered with intricate designs plus the exquisite paintings that hung on most parts of it.

There were four lighted oil lamps on the four corners of the room which were kept lit all night. And next to a stanchion, an incense stick burned in a silver-clad censer.

In the center of this luxuriously furnished room that was befitting for a female ruler, a slim young-looking woman of about 5 feet 3 inches paced on the exotic tatami flooring with her gaze on the sliding door in front of her.

A scowl beautified her ashen face. Her lips were stained bright red as if fresh blood was intentionally smeared on them.

Her dark brown hair was styled traditionally and the expensive hairpins used to decorate it made the hairstyle look even more ceremonious.

Her hands were tucked in front of her elegant red kimono as her fingers fiddled together.

The official attire she was putting on looked very heavy as it was composed of many kimono-like robes, layered on top of each other.

The outer robes were cut both larger and thinner to reveal the layered garments underneath.

Without warning, she stopped pacing and walked straight to the translucent sliding door, and pounded on it with her palms lying flat on the screen.

“How much longer do I have to wait?!” She screamed, in large contrast to her demeanor.

A woman of that beauty standard who was also the female ruler of a country was supposed to be naturally poised.

But it looks like whatever made her lose her composure was indeed a strong driving force.