

“Yukarin...” says a gentle and soothing voice, followed by the sipping of tea.

“Chouka please, I told you to call me Maribel.” Replied the Youkai Sage of Boundaries, Yukari Yakumo, though preferring to go by Maribel, at least from Chouka.

“Heh, I know. You trusted that name to me, but it feels wrong to call you that as you aren’t exactly Maribel anymore. You’re Yukari now.” Chouka explains, taking another sip of her tea. She looks up into the sky, her pink hair flowing softly in the wind. She truly is a beautiful woman, though the bags underneath her eyes indicate that despite her beauty, something ails her.

“I know that but... I just... want to be called Maribel again, at least from you.” Maribel said as she hugs Chouka from behind and gives her neck a love filled kiss. “Do this for me... let me be selfish...” She utters into her ears.

“Very well my love... though try not to get too intimate... I still need to finish my morning tea, plus I’m still a bit sore from last night.” Chouka giggles softly as she rubs the back of Yukari’s hand, gasping softly at the youkai’s sweet delicate kisses.

“Can’t help it... I love you too much and I’m not afraid to show you how much I love you.” Maribel coos, gently nibbling on Chouka’s ear before separating from the embrace. She sits next to her beloved before laying her head down on her lap. Her white mob cap falls off, revealing her gorgeous blonde hair that was tied up into a bun, the older youkai clearly not being in the mood to do her hair this morning. “Being with you, it makes me feel like I can be who I once was, even if just for a little bit. A moment where I can take off my mask and truly be me, even despite the guilt that weighs on my shoulders.”

Chouka hums softly as she undoes Yukari’s bun, allowing her hair to fall freely. She starts to gently play with her hair, running her delicate fingers through it while stroking the youkai’s cheek every now and then. It took a long time for Yukari to open up to Chouka about all this, not even her shikigami Ran knows. Chouka feels honored to have such a privilege to know that the infallible Youkai Sage of Gensokyo was once an ordinary human girl in love. Which makes what Chouka plans to do all the tougher on her. “I know my love. I know.” Chouka comforts the youkai, humming her sweet tune as she does so.

The two women sit in silence, enjoying the atmosphere together. Chouka takes two strands of Maribel’s long golden hair and ties a red ribbon at the end of each one before giggling softly at how beautiful it made Maribel look. Maribel giggles back before she leans back up as she senses someone approaching them.

“Here’s your snack my lady.” Says a young samurai with ghostly white hair and green eyes. He has a small developing goatee, looking to be no more than his early 20s, though of course, his actual age is far higher than that.

“Thank you, Youki. I love the way you make these sweet rolls. If you ever decide to have kids, you must teach them this recipe.” Chouka smiles, taking a bite of the sweet roll before giving Yukari a bite too. The two women hum happily from the deliciousness of the doughy snack.

“I will consider that my lady. Is there anything else you need me for? Or for you Lady Yakumo?” Youki asks.

“Feel free to start your gardening duties and Yukari here is fine. You know she typically gets things herself.” Chouka giggles, dismissing her servant. Youki gives her a bow before leaving to attend to his duties.

The two women go back to holding hands again as they both look up into the sky. “The best part about spending the nights with you is that I get to see the morning rise in the Netherworld.” Maribel utters softly, giving Chouka a quick kiss on the lips.

“I thought it was all the passionate love making that you give me? Even if you are a bit too rough.” Chouka says with a knowing wink, trying to catch her love off guard.

Maribel blushes brightly before giving a smug smirk. “Well of course, but that doesn’t count as I will always love that. Though, anything I do with you, I will always love.” She professes, love in her voice.

Chouka’s eyes trail down to the ground as her smile falters. “Right...” She says to herself. She looks back up to the sky again and sighs. “Yukari... if I should ever come back as a ghost, I have a favor to ask of you.”

Maribel looks at Chouka, a worried look on her face as she doesn’t like Chouka’s tone. “Chouka... please don’t talk like that.”

Ignoring what Yukari was saying, Chouka continues. “Don’t call my ghostly form Chouka. Chouka is the name of someone who loves you, the human princess of the Netherworld, the woman who is cursed with the ability to invoke death on any living being just with a mere wink. I ask of you this, my beloved. Don’t call me Chouka as I won’t be her anymore. The memories and experiences that made me, me, will be gone.”

“But your personality and what makes you Chouka will still be there! I can make you remember! I know I can!” Maribel pleads as she grabs Chouka by both hands, her eyes watering up slightly.

Chouka simply shakes her head, staring into Yukari’s sorrowful eyes with tired yet relaxed gaze. It seems that she has already made her decision. “You know that’s impossible Yukari. My memories will be a part of the Collective Unconscious, fully separated from my spirit. The two will never be able to meet again. And I know you. You will simply go to the Collective Unconscious and merge my memories with my spirit, but you know that can’t happen. Memories that leave the Collective Unconscious will slowly fade away, to be forgotten. Not even Gensokyo can save them. I know that one day, you will figure out a way, but for my sake, please don’t. Let my spirit be someone else. Give me new memories.” She says serenely.

Maribel looks at Chouka, lets out a big sob and buries her head into Chouka’s chest. She cries loudly while the pink haired woman gently comforts her love. She knows that Chouka has made her mind and that she won’t change her course. She knows that, but she can’t accept it. She feels so helpless, so powerless... just like the time with Renko. She couldn’t do anything then to prevent her love from perishing, and she can’t do anything now. Well... there is something she can do, however, to do it... would require methods that Maribel doesn’t want to use on the person she loves more than anything else.

The two women sat together in a warm embrace, only the sounds of Yukari's crying and Chouka's soft comforting words. "There there Yukari. You made me love you once, I'm certain you can make me love you again. It's okay Yukari."

"Yukari, I love you..."

"Yukari..."

"Yukari..."

"Yukari? Is everything alright?"

Yukari snaps out of her daze, as she stares at the ghostly pink haired woman. Yukari looks down and sees the tea cup she was holding, her hand trembling softly. Yukari gives a smile and takes a tea, putting on another mask. "Yes, everything is fine Yuyuko. I was just remembering something of the past, don't worry about it."

Yuyuko gives a small grumble as she crosses her arms, fanning herself. "Well... okay. But I'm your friend Yukarin. You should be able to tell me everything that bothers you, alright?"

If Yukari had a heart, it would've stopped by this point. "Don't worry my dear. I'm able to handle myself, but I appreciate your concern dear friend. Now, shall we get back to our tea party?"