

The Dead of the Night

Von abgemeldet

It was still dark, when he woke. The rain was still falling and thunder was still rolling. He felt thirsty, dizzy and disorientated, the usual side effects of his talent. At least the last settled pretty soon; he was lying very comfortably in his bed. And concerning the thirst, he could act. Slowly, he forced himself upright to struggle to the bathroom. A thunder was slowly dying in the distance.

When he left the bathroom again, carrying another glass of water, he realized that the door to Crawford's room was open. Which usually it wasn't. And that the clairvoyant was standing at the window, staring into the dark of the night. When Schuldig entered, Crawford turned around. He was wearing nothing but boxer shorts, not even his glasses and looked strangely unfamiliar. Another lightning struck as Schuldig stepped closer so that he was able to see the scar on Crawford's back where the bullet had left his body. He remembered the incident very well but not that he had ever seen the scar.

Crawford turned back to the window. The rain had stopped and for a doubt of a second the gibbous moon showed its faint and hidden light. It was reflected by the puddles on the street and sent a faint light into the room. Schuldig stepped next to him, both of them staring into the dark night, dark as their future. Neither a lightning nor the moon anymore, just darkness.

And for the first time in his life, Schuldig felt something like fright around Crawford, hidden as quickly as the moon as he leant forward, one hand on his hip, the other on the rim of the window. As he hadn't known what Eszett was up to, he had not feared them much... though he still remembered experiments they had done when he had been a boy but then, one day, he had met Crawford. Crawford had never seemed to be afraid of anything, even in the hell of Rosenkreuz... if he was afraid now... Schuldig decided not to think about it.

But suddenly, he realized something else, while the moon was looming through the clouds again, this time for more than just a second. If Crawford was afraid now and if he knew the future which surely he did, he must have been afraid of this moment for a very long time:

"That was your plane today, wasn't it?", he asked, slowly.

Crawford turned his head, looking at him and knowing perfectly well which plane he was talking about. Nagi's. "Yes. It was."

Schuldig nodded.

Silence for the night again.

None of both moved, both just stood there, staring outside.

"What is going to happen to us? Are we going to die?"

Again their eyes met. Or rather just the white of it for the rest was in darkness.

"No, we won't die."

"Why are you afraid, then?" Carefully.

Crawford jumped and Schuldig asked himself whether he had been too bold.

"There are things worse than death, Schuldig." He pronounced 'Schuldig' the Japanese way, incomprehensible for any German. Something which usually drove Schuldig mad but which Crawford used quite often, as to madden Schuldig or maybe just as a nickname. But this time Schuldig did not really care.

Both of them returned to silence, none of them thinking friendly thoughts. Schuldig traced the pronunciation back and decided that it strangely sounded more familiar than the German way of pronunciation. He traced it back so that he didn't have to think about what was awaiting them. He could have gone to bed and surely the sleep would have taken at least some worries away from him, but strangely he didn't want go to sleep, wanted to stay where he was standing, strangely, he seemed to fear the sleep.

The silence crept through the room, nothing but the rain against the windows and the sounds of the house in the refreshing storm. The sound of trees being beaten by the wind outside.

Somewhere, inside the house, the construction cracked, a sound barely heard.

The wind was howling around every corner outside.

Suddenly, Crawford turned towards him. "Do you know what we are doing here?"

Schuldig wasn't really sure what he meant. "Staring into the darkness?"

"Hoping that by standing here, we will not have to go to sleep and tomorrow will not come." Darkly.

"But it will."

"Sure as hell."

A moment of just storm.

"I don't believe in hell."

Crawford didn't answer and both of them staid, staring on into the darkness.

The darkness continued, the storm returned with rain but without thunder.

Then, a new lightning struck.

"I am going to bed."

Schuldig looked at him and nodded but staid at the window while the wind started howling again. There was no thunder but the rain thundered enough against the windows, minute after minute.

"Are you asleep?" After what seemed to be eternity.

"No." He was in fact sitting on the side of the bed, staring maybe into his own darkness.

"Will you fall asleep?"

"No."

Schuldig sat down next to him. "Will I?"
"No."

Silence fell again. Another lightning struck, a thunder rolled, the rain continued beating against the windows. Coldness was creeping through their bodies, followed by mechanical tiredness. But they just kept sitting, waiting for the next day. Sometimes a word was spoken but it grew less the longer they sat and the darker tomorrow was eering closer.