

Mutual Wish [Akatsuki no Yona]

Yona der Morgendaemmerung, Hak x Yona

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Deep down, buried in his heart, Hak knew that one day he would have to face Soowon once again, after he somehow managed to swallow down his pain and rage during their encounter in Sei. But who would have known that he would be the one to meet up with him?

In any case, Hak decided to fully concentrate on defending and protecting his princess on her self-chosen path, tossing his hurt feelings aside.

Now, here they were in front of Hirayuu castle - after a long journey back from Xing across the kingdom.

Soldiers were standing at the places that Hak used to remember guarding. Nothing had changed except the fact that this time, they were the ones outside its solid walls. Hak felt as if he was having a long terrifying nightmare that he finally woke up from, almost as if he could go back and meet King Il once again in his chamber, welcoming him with a bubbly smile and a warm dumpling.

„Hak, are you alright?"

He flinched his eyes. It seemed like he unconsciously got lost in his thoughts. Hak moved his head to his right side, where his princess was looking up at him with a concerned face.

„Yes I'm fine, princess", he obediently answered, „I'm more worried about you." Hak lowered his eyebrows and placed one of his hands on her head, scruffing through her crimson hair.

Yona immediately felt relieved. Blushing a little bit, she smiled back at him.

„That's funny. Because there's no need to worry about me, since you're here."

Hak stared at her sudden words. But before he could think into the princess' words more, they already had arrived in front of the castle's gate and were interrupted by its guards.

„Who are you? And what is your intention at Hirayuu Castle?"

Yona looked up to them with a stern expression. „I am Yona, the former princess of Hirayuu Castle and the only daughter of the late King Il. I wish to talk with King Soowon about a political matter for the kingdom's safety."

She tried her best to sound earnest, but they didn't believe any word she said.

Yona's face quickly turned desperate and dumbfounded, looking down onto the ground. However, Hak took over immediately, taking the princess' hand in his, lending her his warmth. Yona quickly raised her gaze at Hak, smiling a bit and returning a light squeeze.

„I am the former Wind tribe General and Commander of Hiryou Castle, Hak, also known as the Thunderbeast, whatever you prefer. If you don't believe me, shall I present you my skills and you volunteer?" Hak looked down on them, showing no mercy in his cold sharp eyes.

The guards fret at his view. Was he truly the Thunderbeast of Kouka? He was definitely emerging the suffocating and menacing aura you would expect of a man feared by the entire kingdom. Stripped of their cool attitude, being completely agitated, they hesitated to act or answer him.

„What is this uproar?", a low voice questioned from the distance.

Just as simple as that, that man appeared in front of them.

„Your Majesty!", the soldiers yelled.

Yona, Hak and Soo-won were exchanging surprised expressions. After all, it was always a shock for them to meet, and for some reason it always happened so suddenly.

„They claim to be Princess Yona and General Hak, requesting an audience with you to speak about a so-called political matter".

Not long before Soo-won could answer, General Joo-Do came running from behind, sheathing his blades and positioning himself in front of his Majesty. „Here you are off my watch for a second and I find you confronted with the enemy again! Let's settle this once and for all!"

Enraged and aggressively, he glared at the Thunderbeast, ready to finally pierce his sword through his sworn enemy's heart.

„General Joo-Do, please put back your weapons. I'd like to hear them out."

„Are you crazy? You're willing to let the enemies into the castle just like that? This is obviously a trap!" he shouted back, being completely shaken.

„They would not expose themselves and go into the enemies' lair just like that if they were scheming something. They might have important information we need."

Once again, General Joo-do found himself beaten. He let out a huge sigh, forced himself to obey and put away his swords. However, he didn't leave his watch off Hak for even one second. If necessary, he was ready to kill him even with his bare hands at any moment.

Yona and Hak followed Soo-won silently along the inner paths within the castle, the two of them still connected by their hands. They were well aware of each other's anxiety as they walked, but they gave one another the strength they needed in order to go on.

The group finally entered a meeting hall with walls decorated with fancy paintings. Furthermore, there was a huge table offering space for many people. Hak knew this room, he has been here several times for military meetings. To Yona however, this place was a new territory. Being slightly nervous by the fact that even though she had spent 16 years in those walls and still did not know every corner of this sheltered place, she forced herself to focus on what was important right now.

Soo-won offered them to sit down. Hak and Ki-ja positioned themselves next to the Princess, while Jae-ha sat down in front of her on the other side of the table, with Yoon to his right and Sin-ha to his left. Soo-won placed himself at the peak of the table, and their argument began, starting right off the bat. Yona tried her best to convey her feelings and intentions, Hak supporting her as much as he possibly could. As the warm afternoon slowly went past, they finally left the castle grounds behind them, having accomplished their goals successfully.

„That went unexpectedly smooth" Yona said in a relieved tone.

„It's not over yet. He said he has to discuss it with the other generals first." He answered.

Yona noticed that somehow, Hak seemed to be unsettled. She took his hand, squeezing it gently as they walked away from the place they once called home.

Hak's eyes widened as he looked at her, questioning her action, but Yona turned her head slightly away, trying to hide her blushing cheeks. They used to hold hands at various times before, so why did it suddenly seem so embarrassing to her?

Hak was uncertain how to deal with this situation, but surely he wouldn't miss out this chance to come near her, so he intertwined his hand around hers closely. Quickly realizing that he maybe went too far by that, he looked into the other direction, also trying to hide his embarrassment.

After walking a few steps in silence, Yona decided to break the innocent moment.

„Are you okay, Hak? You seemed unhappy".

She still wasn't looking at him.

„Ah, no no, I'm just fine", he answered.

Now she quickly moved her head towards him, smiling greatly.

„Really? You're not lying? If you're truly okay, then I'm relieved."

„So that's why you suddenly took my hand. Seriously, you don't need to worry and comfort me, Princess." he replied, and sighed. He had to admit that he was disappointed... just a bit.

„No, I just want to be near you, that's all..." she muttered in response, clearly answering while listening to her heart instead of her head.

Hak stunningly gazed at her and blinked with his eyes at the unreal words which left her mouth just a second ago. Did he perhaps have an imagination again? And even if not, it probably didn't have the meaning he wished for. Nevertheless, Hak was happy that she took his hand. Even he could feel the desire to get pampered by her once in a while.

Yona took a short moment until she realized what she had said parallel to her face turning completely red. Feeling somehow tense and shy, she shouted at him in a hurry, while hiding her face.

„N-No, nevermind!"

Yona was all flustered about how Hak would react, but he surprisingly stayed silent. Being curious, Yona secretly looked up to him, noticing how he was smiling genuinely towards the ground. He looked happy. Somehow, it also made her happy as well.

Both squeezed each other's hands more tightly in a similar pace. Strangely, even though they were shying away as they held each other, they felt as if they finally had become one.

They could feel their mutual wish to support and protect each other very clearly now, as they walked towards the mountains they once climbed in despair on that fateful day during the upcoming evening.

„What do you intend to do from now on, Yona?" Yoon asked.

„We should stay on stand-by for the following days. We will have to continue the discussions with Soo-won and slowly plan everything out together", she answered.

„Shall we set up our camp over there, then?"

Yoon was already looking forward to put an end to this tiring day. It had been very stressful and everyone was worn out from the alarming incidents in the past week.

As soon as Yona nodded to his propose, Yoon and the dragons picked up the pace from the leisure walk and began to prepare the tents and dinner together.

Hak and Yona felt a bit flustered, as they stood there fossilized, still holding hands, in

contrast to everybody else getting to work right away. Should they just casually part and start helping out where it was necessary?

But somehow, Yona didn't want to separate yet. If possible, she wished that this moment could last forever.

However, she was unsettled by not entirely understanding how Hak felt about the situation as he retained a composed expression, as he secretly forced himself to calm down. Just before she could let go out of uncertainty on how to act from this point on, Yoon interrupted her.

„We lack some fresh vegetables for tomorrow's breakfast. Jae-ha, could you--"

„We will go!" Yona shouted.

Even though that made her blush, she desperately hoped that thanks to this opportunity, she could continue the stroll together with Hak, her hands remaining united, without making the situation too awkward. After all, she was too shy to openly tell him that she wanted to stay close to him. On the one hand, she could also take notice of her emerging selfishness. If she wanted to be completely honest, she easily realized that it was her hidden desire to occupy Hak entirely, despite wishing for his happiness and freedom on the other hand.

Nevertheless, everyone was surprised at the princess' sudden outcry, and of them Hak the most of all, but nobody opposed her wish.

Both Yoon and Jae-ha could secretly read Yona's intention, as they had pretty sharp minds. Although they had mixed feelings, in the end, they simply wanted the best for both Yona and Hak, so they decided to grant them this moment.

After Yoon explained the way to the nearest village to them, they quickly left off without ever separating their hands. Both of them were still shy and insecure about the fact that they kept on holding hands the entire time, but none of them would dare to let go, either.

The way Yoon pointed out led down a narrow path throughout the forest. It was the same forest they once escaped into, back to the time when they were trying to search for shelter from the guards that were following them, yearning to seize and kill them according to Soo-won's command. Hak knew this place well as it was close to the castle, so they didn't have to worry about getting lost.

„This brings back memories", Yona reminiscenced unrestrained. But Hak's face only darkened towards her statement, as he looked far into the distance. Yona quickly realized that Hak must have hated to be remembered of it. But what about her?

Somehow, she didn't feel as much pain as she used to. Rather than of her own misfortune, she was more worried about Hak's condition. Despite him usually trying to cover it up, Yona was clearly aware of Hak's unbearable grief and agony caused by Soo-won's betrayal.

Her grip on his hand tightened as she was lost in thoughts. If she could just be useful to him and heal his wounds...

„Again, Princess, you don't have to worry about me", he said, „you are safe and doing well in the present, and that is all that matters now."

Yona stared at him disbelieving, just as his words left his mouth. Shortly afterwards, she felt happiness fill her body, caused by Hak's endless kindness. But on the other hand, she also felt a hint of sadness.

„Thank you, Hak. Really, thank you so much." she replied as she expressed her utter gratitude towards him.

„But I wished that you would take care of yourself more, instead of spoiling me all the time-" She suddenly paused for a brief moment.

„You know what? In that case, I'll just have to be the one taking care of you!", she shouts in an enthusiastic manner. Her eyes sparkled, as she finally thought that this way she could return him a little bit for all he had done for her.

Once again, she managed to surprise and bring Hak out of his composed state, which he desperately tried to maintain in order to hide his excitement from them holding hands. Obviously he couldn't help but smile from the bottom of his heart. He felt pleased by her words, despite being a bit worried that she might overdo it.

„I'll look forward to it", he answered while letting out a carefree smile.

Yona loved it when he smiled like that. She made up her mind. From now on, she will take care of him as much as she possibly could.

After a few more minutes of serene walking towards their destination, the couple finally reached the village Yoon wanted them to visit.

„Princess, please make sure to hide your hair. This village is near the castle, so it's not impossible that there might be people who could recognize you." While smiling cheekily, he raised his free hand and pulled her hood over her head, mocking her a bit.

„Geez! I will be careful", she pouted, „And what about you? Won't they recognize you as well, Mr. Thunderbeast?"

Hak quickly returned to a serious stance.

„....Let's just hope for the best. If anything happens, run back without m-"

„No!", she shouted, „Didn't I just tell you that I'd take care of you?!"

Yona quickly felt depressed and powerless. It was frustrating. She knew she couldn't possibly protect him like he protects her, but why did he always have to say these heartbreaking things?

Hak, affected by her helplessness, kissed her on her head; on the hood which he just previously put on her.

„Just by your presence, you are already taking care of me. That is... enough for me."

Her heart started to ache. But it wasn't enough for her.

„I can't accept that", she replied while releasing a tear, „you're too precious to me to leave you behind when you're in danger. No matter what you say, I'll stay and try what I can." She raised her head at him with a stern but hopeless expression, crying openly now.

„I'd rather die than to abandon you!", Yona yelled at him, placing her free hand on his cheek, caressing him gently.

Hak couldn't help but have mixed feelings. The princess he loved so deeply said that she would protect him no matter what. Even though his head was objecting to it, his heart felt infinite happiness.

He was completely captivated by the moment and couldn't even bring one word over his lips, as he stared into her violet eyes.

„We will protect each other. Okay?", Yona asked in a reassuring tone, sobbing but smiling.

„...Okay", he replied with a tender smile.

The thunderbeast was beaten. He felt as if he could melt in her strong but gentle touch.

Yona sensed that Hak could faint any second. He was too shaken. During their hardships, she came to realize that Hak was much more sensible and emotional than he would appear from the outside.

Carefully, they both moved their arms up, lending each other support, as their light embrace slowly transformed into a tight hug.

They needed each other so desperately. They didn't need to say it. They could feel it

just in this moment.

Having found peace in each other's arms, they loosened their grip and slowly disclosed their hug after a short while.

Hak sighed slightly as he removed a remaining tear on her cheek.

„Please, don't cry anymore...”

„....I won't. Because from now on, we will work together", she replied, exchanging a bright smile to which Hak nodded.