

## Nothing Stays

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# Nothing Stays

by [Dreamtiel](#)

## Summary

"We were a perfect fit for each other, both prodigies in the fields of dark magic, both bad with people, both invested in our craft. I never wanted our days as lab partners to end.

But...

Nothing stays forever...

A person can dream all they want for the good times to never end.

But nothing stays."

## Notes

I was kept awake late one night by an idea that suddenly came into my head. This is my rather underwhelming attempt to write it down. I would like to see, though, that this takes place in a different continuity than my usual setting for Shida and Yuura's story. As such, I don't know if I should add this to my series for them...

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

*I see it in your eyes*

*We could've ended differently*

*But when we reflect on past regrets*

*We see a new possibility*

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The more I look back, the more I cherish the times I spent working in a quiet little lab on the edge of the Bariurian capitol with my dearest friend, Shida. He immigrated from Atharva to study and perfect the dark arts, in the empire famous for such, and came to work under my tutelage at the age of 22. Although he was only two years younger than me, he quickly proved to be a fast learner, and a much-appreciated assistant. By the age of 24, he was no longer my right-hand man, but my equal. It was just us in our little facility. By 26, he was offered a position as a head magician, but he turned it down to continue working with me.

I was honestly thankful to have him around. No other magician could tolerate my sense of humor or my disorganized nature. He kept the lab tidy without complaint, and even without me asking him to. He was the kind to take initiative but keep to himself. Although he never did completely ditch the quiet, introverted part of his personality, he eventually loosened up, and I could tell he was comfortable to be around me.

Soon, we began to spend time together after work. More often than not, we'd stop by this one noodle shop just around the corner of our workplace and grab a bite to eat. He'd never get anything different from the usual, always plain rice noodles with some beef cuts. I asked him about it once.

"Is it a problem that I always order the same thing?" he chuckled in response. To hear him laugh used to be as rare as a blue moon, until he grew truly comfortable with me.

"Well... no," I shrugged. "But doesn't it ever get boring?"

He had looked down at his bowl, gently stirring the broth with his spoon. "Not really... If it isn't broken, why fix it, after all?"

"A little change wouldn't hurt..."

He smiled as he took a sip of his soup. "You do have a point... Fine then. Perhaps next time I'll try something new."

And he kept his word. That was something I liked about him. Most people would ignore or flat out "forget" my words, probably because it was sometimes hard to distinguish my suggestions and jokes. But Shida was a good listener. He was a good... friend. A close friend, even, but nothing more.

We were a perfect fit for each other, both prodigies in the fields of dark magic, both bad with people, both invested in our craft. I never wanted our days as lab partners to end.

But...

Nothing stays forever...

A person can dream all they want for the good times to never end.

But nothing stays.

It all started the day I noticed the patches of white hairs on Shida's head. They stood out like poppies in a field of rye, alarmingly bright enough to be seen amongst the dark gray hairs. It bothered me, to the point where I wanted to pluck them out individually. Was it normal? To already have white hairs at such a tender age?

I couldn't help but bring it up to him. "Hey, Shida..." I began. He lifted his head up from the row of flasks in front of him only slightly. "You've got some white hairs. Have you noticed?"

I was met with an uninterested side glance. "No, actually." He left it at that, not a care or concern to the oddity. Still, it bugged me to no end. I couldn't place a finger on why. It simply wasn't natural, and we both knew it. More white hairs popped up each week, I noticed. His gray hairs fell and gave way to new white ones, white as the moon.

Yet he didn't look worried. On the rare occasion where I felt bold enough to bring it up to him, he would act as if I were talking about something meaningless and boring, like the weather. He found it unimportant, even as the healthy sheen of dark gray faded in a matter of months. You could hardly tell it was him if you looked at him from the back.

It was around that time when I realized how tired he was becoming. Now, Shida was no picture of health when he became my assistant, or even when we became equals in the lab scene. But back then he didn't have dark circles under his eyes, nor was his skin beginning to become pale either. But as the weeks went by since my first observation, it became clearer and clearer that something was wrong with him.

He began to cough one day, filling the silence that sometimes invaded our lab. At first it sounded like he was merely clearing his throat. Over a matter of day, he sounded more like he had a sore throat. I could do nothing but offer cough drops and suggest he get rest, over and over, yet I knew he didn't want to rest even when he took the drops. Eventually it escalated to him sounding as if he were dying in a fire, as if his lungs were filled with smoke and he was suddenly having difficulty breathing.

He must've seen how afraid I looked, and suddenly he'd hold back as if he was aware and ashamed that he was making a scene. "Pardon me," he muttered, letting out one last coughing fit before returning to work. That was when I could see the worry on his face. He definitely knew something was wrong.

As I said before, we were close, but not to the point where he'd tell me every little detail about his life outside of work. I suggested to him multiple times to see a doctor, yet every

time, without fail, he'd refuse to acknowledge my concerns. He never told me whether or not he did seek help. It wasn't like him.

"I'm fine, Yuura." That was all he'd say. He was driving me sick with worry at that point, yet he acted like he were only suffering from a mild cold, even in the early summer months. Was he really fine...? I didn't know. I began to seriously doubt it.

I didn't know whether to feel relieved or scared when he suddenly took a series of vacations in the fall, when the trees began bearing red leaves. For spans of days or weeks, he'd send in a notice to our lab, saying that he had to take a leave. Said note would never say why, and it drove me insane to not know the particular reason. But I had a hunch it was for health reasons. It couldn't have been for any other reason. Shida was not an outwardly-emotional person, but working with him for years allowed me to notice the little details about his character.

He rarely smiled, but his lip would curl at the edges when he saw results he liked. He never yelled, but his eyebrows would furrow on the rare instance when he'd nick his finger with a scalpel. It was near impossible to tell sometimes when he enjoyed something, but it was clear as day in the lights of his eye that he truly loved his work, and he loved coming to work each and every day. He'd look me in the eye, and although there were no signs of excitement in his body language, I could see that sparkle in his own maroon eyes when said, "Good morning, Yuura."

Whenever he wouldn't answer my questions, it was usually because he knew I wouldn't like the answer he had in mind.

During one particular long absence of his, I felt the urge to check up on him at his home, in an old apartment not too terribly far away from my own apartment. He wasn't there the first time I decided to pay a visit, nor was he there the second or third time. That only served as evidence that he had probably gotten help. But... why wouldn't he tell me? I couldn't stop wondering. But at the same time, I feared the possibilities.

The lab was barren and bleak without him during his leaves. It was only the two of us who worked in that particular branch. We were a more secretive facility because of our shared interest in the dark arts, particularly involving necromancy and resurrections. Those specific fields of magic were gravely looked down upon by magicians everywhere, but thankfully the Emperor of Bariura-- that bastard-- was willing to fund our facility as long as we kept our experiments on the down-low. Perhaps he was only willing to do so in the event where he died and needed a second chance. Shida and I both agreed that was the only reason he would support our endeavors.

Yet it became boring to toy with undead lizards and mice alone. I perfected the art of reanimating their little dead corpses, only when their bodies were still intact and in a working condition. And even then, they were merely puppets with their original souls thrown out into Hell. Maybe I did feel bad, but they were such little creatures that I couldn't care less for. Still... it was more fun to mess around with them with Shida there to tell me to stop fooling around before he'd crack and try his hand at corpse puppetry himself.

I could only look forward to the day when he'd suddenly return to work, but whatever ailed him refused to let up. It became worse over time. He didn't try hiding it anymore. He'd apologize for every coughing fit, lean on the edges of tables as if he were about to lose balance, sit down in-between experiment phases... It broke my heart to see him in such a state.

It all came to a climax late one night. He had already suffered most of the night with his forehead slicked with sweat, coughing weakly every now and then. I tried to lighten the mood, I really did, with jokes and stories from my lone lab adventures. It took me a while to realize he had a far-off look in his eye, like he wasn't completely there.

"Shida...?"

That snapped him back to reality. "P-Please excuse me, Yuura..." He shook his head and made his way to a nearby chair to sit down.

Suddenly, he fell forward.

I reacted with alarm and caught him before he could hit his head on the cold, polished floor. But I broke into a panic as I held his limp body. "Shida?! Shida! Are you okay?!" His forehead burned against the back of my hand. His eyes began to glaze over like he was falling asleep, his complexion pale like his hair.

I took him to the capitol's hospital.

It was there that I learned the truth... and I wished I hadn't.

"Your friend hasn't told you?" the doctor had asked.

"He hasn't told anyone. Please, what's wrong with him?"

He gave a sigh, before deciding to talk. "You see... he's suffering from an illness we've yet to identify. We haven't seen anything like it... but we fear it may be terminal, seeing how his condition has only worsened, even with the treatments we've been giving over the course of the past few months..."

I felt my heart sank just looking over at Shida, resting on the bed, still passed-out. He was dying. Shida was dying and I had no idea. I thought it wouldn't become that bad and yet... if I had known... if I had even considered such a possibility...

I began requesting more and more days off, even with the threat of termination of our facility if we couldn't make progress. Shida was more important. He was the other half to our operation and I refused to work anymore with him nearing death.

"Yuura..." he sighed when he saw me walk through his room's door one day. "You shouldn't be worrying about me. You need to keep working..."

I shook my head. I didn't know if he was told that I knew about his illness, but I suspected he did from the guilty look on his face. He never apologized for hiding it. He didn't need to.

There was less and less hope each day. Every day I'd walk in to find him staring blankly at the ceiling, hands folded over one another. Sometimes he kept staring up when I walked in. Other times he'd look at me with a faint smile. He was glad to see me. I'm sure of it. As far as I knew, he didn't have anyone else to visit him.

I tried to make conversation with him, and thankfully he'd entertain me by letting me entertain him. We'd mock the sad-sack doctors quietly, talk about the current affairs of the Empire and the looming God War, sometimes make grim jokes about his health state if I knew he'd be in the mood, although I felt reluctant to.

There was one day when he smiled continuously, although he looked tired and therefore his smile must've been forced for my sake. "Yuura..." he began.

I already felt fearful of whatever he was going to say. "Yeah?"

"I'm sorry." He looked out the window. I looked out with him. The sun was shining through the few clouds in the sky. The lilies growing just outside the window were blooming, swaying gently in the wind alongside the tree branches above them.

"Why sorry? You don't have anything to be sorry for." I looked at him with pity. There lay a man who used to have a sharp but calm tongue, and more passion hidden beneath his stalwart exterior than anybody, now apologizing for something that he wasn't at fault for, reduced to a mere skin-covered skeleton and a head of messy, white hair.

"For not telling you... I didn't want to tell you out of fear. I didn't want you to worry for me."

"Shida... I was going to worry either way."

He turned his head more. I realized he didn't want me to see him cry. Yet I still saw a tear or two slip down his cheek. "There are many things still left unsaid, Yuura." He spoke in the same tone he spoke with before, although I could've sworn his voice cracked. "I... I'm afraid, Yuura. I've already accepted my fate, and yet... I... I tried to distance myself so that you wouldn't get hurt when you found out, but you still came to visit me..." His voice devolved to a whisper the more he spoke. "I'm so sorry, Yuura. I'm so, so sorry you have to see me like this..."

I didn't know what to do. I could barely keep my composure, barely keep my own tears from peeking out. I had to hold it together for him. Gently, I squeezed one of his hands. He looked at me in surprise, allowing me to finally see his tear-streaked, tired face.

"Shida, it's going to be okay..." I lied in a whisper. "Y-You aren't guaranteed to... to..." I couldn't will myself to say it. I took a deep breath. "Listen, I'll... I'll keep visiting, okay? You hear me? I'll keep visiting and I'll keep you company until the day you get better, so just wait for me, okay? I'm not going to leave your side... I'll come see you as much as possible."

“You don’t have to...” he said softly, akin to a small child. It was the first time I’d heard him sound so vulnerable, so weak and small.

I managed to smile for him. “I will.”

His feeble hand held onto mine tighter. “Yuura... I... There’s still so much left unsaid and...”

I shook my head, knowing deep down what he wanted to say. “It’s okay, Shida. You don’t have to say it...” He knew that I knew. I felt words bubble in my throat, words that should’ve been said at that moment. I couldn’t bear to. I don’t think I needed to. I wanted to believe he already knew.

“Yuura...”

I smiled once more, letting go of his hand. “I have to go now. I’ll see you tomorrow, okay? And the day after that, and the day after that. So don’t be sad, okay?”

He wiped the tears from his face and gave me a real, genuine smile. I don’t think I could ever forget that smile. He nodded and watched me get up and turn to leave the room. “... Goodbye, Yuura...”

It was cloudy and gray the next morning, a threat of rain looming above. Still, I made my way to the hospital in just a jacket that I hoped would be enough to cover my head if it started pouring. I was too eager to see Shida. I had the funniest story to tell him about work from the night before, and I even planned to come back later that day with his favorite order of soup from the noodle place. I even bought a bouquet of roses for him.

I went up to the front desk, a nervous smile on my face as I approached. The lady there was sorting papers, but greeted me with a smile. I asked to see Shida.

The nurse suddenly faced me with a look of grim worry. Something was wrong. I felt my heart already begin to sink. My hands felt numb holding the bouquet. She looked back at a fellow worker, who glanced at me anxiously, before looking back at me. She stilled, collecting her words for a terrifying moment.

“I... I’m sorry, but... he passed away this morning.”



## End Notes

Bleh hh abrupt ending. There was originally going to be a lot more to this story, but I decided I should probably just end here for now and add another chapter later one. Just one more, because the problem is I don't like to stray from the implied main continuity too much. And only if I feel people would like to see more. So thank you for reading!

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