

In Return

Von yamina-chan

Hikaru

I never noticed how quiet it is inside my room. When I was younger, I would always listen to some music or play video games during the day. Every now and then Akari would come over and we'd do something to have fun. The only time it had been quiet in my room was at night, when I've been sleeping. Or when I was not at home. After I met you Sai, there was no silence either. We would talk about school, about something that happened earlier the day, about things we would face in the future, about things you did not understand since they didn't exist in your time, about Go... Yeah, most of the time it was about Go. And even when neither of us would say a word, it was different from what it is now. Right now, every time I am in my room there's something missing.

Not only inside here of course, but when ever I listen to this silence I feel my heart ache.

Maybe it is because we played here. I am used to your happy cries when ever I set up the Goban or your whiny begging if I won't. It sure annoyed me a lot, but compared to the silence...

I want them back. The annoying, whiny, childish, curious, naive comments you made. The strange behavior of yours, I never quite understood it. In one minute you could glare at something with a seriousness that could be frightening, in the next you'd wave your arms in excitement. How could you be so childish in some moments and then be so wise in others? Was it because you were a ghost? A thousand years old one even! Or did you always behave like that?

I can't imagine you clapping your hands together with a happy smile on your face when you still were at the court. Even I know that you'd get wired looks then. Come to think about it: that's actually something which is not much different from today. Have you been hiding this part of your personality when you were still alive? Probably yes. I don't think I would have been able to act polite and serious all the time. But you had to. Maybe your emotions seemed extreme sometimes because you were finally allowed to show them. The years you spent in the Goban must have been lonely too, I think.

You never talked about it. And I never asked.

It was enough that you were here, I didn't care much about your past. You had told me a little bit about it and that was enough for me.

I should have asked.

I don't know much about you. I know your name and I know that you loved Go. And that you hate toads. That's pretty much all I can say. Not much, considered the fact that we spent more then two years together. I thought I knew you well, and maybe I

did but I don't know much about your life. What else had there been aside from your Go?

Go. Man, you really loved that game. You even got me into playing! Not that I regret it, I have lots and lots of good memories connected with it. But if someone would have told me that I will become a Go Pro one day a few years ago...

Well, if it weren't for you, I would have never started to play. In fact, if it weren't for you, I'd be totally different from what I am now.

And I don't say that because hanging around with a ghost is something really strange, you know. The thing is, you were always with me. Every time I did something that you thought was wrong, you'd always complain and made me correct it. Like when I was insulting someone by mistake. I don't mean to offend people, it just...happens sometimes. I wouldn't even realize it, if you hadn't said something about it.

My parents let me do what I wanted to do most of the time and just get mad about a bad score in a test or stuff like that.

I thought it was great that they didn't control my actions like some parents would.

Then I met you and BAMM! Everything changed. You were there the whole time and would witness my behavior and my actions. Always. Everyone else knew just parts of my life, you knew all. There was no way I could fool you in that case like I would do with others every now and then. And when I got into some trouble, you were always by my side to support me. Helping me remember names was one of the things you had to do quite often. I could always rely on you for that. And when I was struggling with some homework. I still remember the deal we had at first: You would help me out on that and I would let you play somehow. And even after we started playing regularly with each other you still would give me hints every now and then, so that I could figure the answers out of my own. At least you would do that in subjects you understood.

Or when I was playing a though game. It was good to know that you were there for me. Not interfering of course, but just knowing that I wasn't alone helped me a lot.

For some reason, you always knew what I needed. Whether it be encouragement, comfort or a lecture. I think it had something our minds being connected. What ever the reason was: it was great. Not the lecturing part, but I guess it was necessary every now and then.

Before I met you, I wasn't serious about anything, just drifting along, spending day after day with randomness. I didn't care much about my future. All I cared about was how to enjoy the actual day the most. With you there, I started planning. Without me noticing I started to spend more and more time with Go and therefore I started to do something with me and my life.

In that case you did a better job parenting me then my parents did.

That makes me wonder what you actually were for me. Once I said you were some kind of 'pet'. I was teasing of course, but I remember you took it seriously. If the circumstances had been different, I think you would have gotten more angry at that comment. But when Shinoda-sensei said that I passed the Insei Exam we were to happy to bother about that and later there was no time either, since I got myself into trouble again. Ah, that's an other good example where you have been there for me. But that aside for now. If our places had been reversed, I think I would have been mad at you longer.

I consider you my friend, and in a way I think of you as my teacher as well. Or as some sort of role model, but that counts only in a few matters!

It's not like I don't accept you the way you are, but...well, you weren't perfect Sai.

Okay, no one is. Hell, I am far from it! -And Tohya isn't THAT great either, though some people seem to believe it.

Tohya...he became my rival because of you. The fire in his eyes when he played you was so intense! And his father...he was YOUR rival, wasn't he?

You always wanted to play, but it was different with him. I didn't realize it right away, because I was so caught up with my own businesses that I just didn't notice yours. Just as I said: you always wanted to play, therefore I couldn't see that he was special at first. Or why you wanted to play him so badly.

I mean, you're Sai! You always win, as long nothing disturbs a game.

But playing a really strong opponent is without doubt amazing! And you can improve so much because of that. So of course you wanted to play him.

For a long time I thought it would be enough if you just played against me. And even though I've become a lot better, compared to your skill... There is no way you could improve from just crushing me. The first time I got a glimpse of your determination to play him was just after I got the phone call with the information about my Shinshodan game.

I'll never forget the look in your eyes when you asked to play instead of me. Determination, mixed with longing and sadness. And the day when the game was hold you took my seat and didn't even hear me when I told you to leave it. And when you finally DID hear, you looked so heartbroken. You tried to smile and turned away, so that I wouldn't see the sad look on your face. I still remember how you stood there, facing the wall and not sitting down behind me like you usually did. And even though I still wanted to play, I couldn't stand seeing you like this. And then we came up with this stupid 15 Moku Handicap that you had to give yourself in order to play Tohya Meijin. I was just thinking, not really serious with this, but you agreed right away to these conditions. So big was your desire to play him. Like it would be your last chance ever to play against someone.

It hurt too much to see you so frantically, I couldn't say no anymore, even if I wanted to. But the game was so chaotic! Nothing like your usual style. And you lost. Or we. I didn't get my first game as a pro and you didn't get the game you deserved. It was a mess. That time I felt sorry for you. No one but me knew about the ghost of Fujiwara no Sai. No one was able to see you. And because of that you had to play such a stupid way, so that no one would notice your strength in me. If you had been a real, living human it would have been a lot easier for both of us. You were stuck with me and could only play if I would place the stones for you, and I had this incredible player with me, who was way too strong to let him play if I wanted to play for myself.

The only time I was able to let you play without fearing someone would connect us in one way or another had been that one summer online. Back then you had been happy the whole time. And you could do it with your own name, not with mine. That was the reason that the game "Tohya Koyo" vs. "Sai" was possible. It was over the Internet but this game was freaking amazing! I am grateful, that I could arrange it for you.

It was the first time I told someone that I know you. Know what, Sai? I was totally scared and nervous because of this. But I just had to ask Tohya Meijin that time, since it was the only chance I saw.

And I know that you were thankful for this. But after that game...

How could I have been so stupid to not notice what you wanted to tell me? I don't get it! After all the time we spent together...

And I don't even know WHY it happened. No...maybe I do.

You returned to this world as a spirit, to play Go. But yet, with me, you couldn't. I

always told you, not to be selfish when you asked for a game. But that was all you could do. I totally ignored the fact that you had nothing left beside it. And I refused your begging so often, because I might get in trouble. You weren't the selfish one, Sai. I was.

I reduced the reason of your existence to a minimum. You could only watch most of the time. And all the games we played...somehow I feel like I used you to get stronger, not really caring about your feelings.

What kind of friendship is that?! I totally screwed it up!

You were there for me when I needed you, but the other way around...

I am sorry. I really am. I didn't realize how much I must have hurt you all the time.

Fujiwara no Sai.

You...you gave me so much, but what did I give you back in return?