

## your boat in my sand

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# **your boat in my sand**

by [91frogs](#)

## Summary

Asirpa can't sleep, and Saichi tries to lighten the mood with a secret he's been storing for just this kind of moment.

## Notes

My first contribution to the Golden Kamuy fandom; nothing can beat the relationship between Sugimoto and Asirpa, and it deserves all the attention. My fiance-gay and I have been dying over this since we started watching/reading, and we live for the moments they get in the quiet together, so I wrote this for their birthday.

(almost a month late, but it's the effort that counts, right?)

thanks to jojotier on discord for the beta!

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

The night is a quiet one; even Retar's howls have quieted in the distance, probably eating with his family after a successful hunt. The image warms Saichi more than the dying fire in the centre of their camp - he had been more than a little endeared to discover Retar's children, though Asirpa swore that he couldn't go near them. Shiraishi's snores fill the kuca, his toenails digging awkwardly into Saichi's calf, and he frowns, rolling over, and then he sees another reason the night has been so eerily calm. Normally Asirpa's snores would threaten to drown out Shiraishi's, a chorus that Saichi has learned to sleep through but can't join, trained out of his own bad habits by weeks spent hidden in dugouts close to enemy lines. Tonight, though, Asirpa is silent, and her blue eyes stare up at the branches that form the ceiling, lost in thought as she chews on her lip.

The worry in Asirpa's eyes is painfully familiar - he's seen it on her features far too often for someone her age, and he'd seen it in himself, too, before the war - and Saichi's chest tightens. He feels, as he always does, a very specific yearning: to simultaneously give Asirpa all of the answers she has been searching for and take her far, far away from everything that they have found themselves entrenched in. There is no saving any of them, and Saichi has known this since the start, but each day it seems less and less likely that Asirpa will make her way out of this uncorrupted, and he knows that she fears it even more than he does.

Saichi sighs deliberately, and when Asirpa's eyes turn to fall on him he smiles and searches for a way to distract her.

"...You're not the only one in the kotan that speaks Japanese, you know," he says quietly after a moment. He doesn't think that Shiraishi would wake up for anything less than gunfire, but he wants to treat the night gently, at least while he has the chance. Asirpa stares at him, brow furrowed as she tries to figure out where his teasing tone is leading.

"Of course," she says, and he can detect pride in her voice; the same pride that she always speaks about her people with, even when she declares herself different from them. "Most of the children speak both now, and even the adults who deal with sisam in the city. My uncle speaks it; you've spoken to him."

She says all this slowly, as if Saichi might be going senile, and it's all he can do not to laugh at her condescension.

"Right," he continues. "So when you're not around, your uncle translates for your grandma so we can still talk."

"That's nice of him," Asirpa says mildly. Then, after a few moments of staring at Saichi's unfaltering grin, "What did Huci say?"

"Why didn't you tell me that your grandmother has been asking me to marry you?" Saichi asks, laughter bubbling over into his voice at the reveal. Asirpa sits upright, her blanket flying off her shoulders, and then she grabs it again, rolling over and pulling it over her head to hide her reddening face. "I had no idea what to say to your uncle, considering he was convinced I'd already talked about it with her."

“You didn’t have to say anything to Uncle, or to Huci,” Asirpa mumbles from beneath the blanket. “You don’t have to say anything now, either.”

“If you’d translated the first time she asked, then I wouldn’t have been stuck like that.” Carefully, Saichi extracts himself from Shiraishi’s dozing grip, looming over Asirpa’s huddled form as he coos. “What, were you afraid I’d say yes and abandon our quest in favour of whisking you away as my child bride?”

“I’m not a child!” Asirpa says hotly, tossing the blanket aside so that she can glare at Saichi, and he sees that even though she is still blushing, her expression is one of stone. Saichi sits back on his haunches, pursing his lips into a pout; it seems like his attempt at teasing has backfired.

“I know that,” he concedes her point without needing to lie - Asirpa is like no child he has ever encountered, at least, and she is considered adult enough by her community to be allowed to travel with him. “I was teasing, Asirpa-san. I’m not going to whisk you away, I promise.”

“Of course,” Asirpa says. She’s recovered herself, colour fading from her cheeks, but she still sounds hurt, and Saichi searches her face for what he can do to soothe her. “I’d be a terrible bride, anyway. That’s why Huci was trying to pawn me off on you - I can’t weave, and I like hunting too much. She thinks you’re too dumb to realise.”

“Oh, right...” Saichi says, unsure how much of what she’s saying Asirpa means. He keeps his tone light, “What’s hunting got to do anything? I’d love a wife who could bring food for me.”

“...Anyway, I’m nothing like the women Shiraishi likes, either,” she continues, eyes on her blanket. Now Saichi is torn between laughter and concern; Shiraishi’s tastes are nothing that Asirpa should be paying attention to. He ducks his head, but Asirpa avoids his gaze, and then the penny drops.

“Were you worried I’d say *no* ?” Saichi asks, a little incredulous, and Asirpa finally meets his eyes. She’s frowning, and her face is unreadable.

“I don’t want to marry you,” she says, but she sounds uncertain. She shakes her head, and then says more firmly, “I’m not in love with you.”

“Okay,” Saichi nods. She’s being honest, and the knot that had begun to form in his stomach immediately releases - he’s not sure how he would have dealt with that situation. Whatever this is, though, it’s not romantic.

“You - there’s someone in your hometown, right?” Asirpa asks. Saichi’s heart leaps, but he shouldn’t be surprised, really. He’s never mentioned her, but Asirpa is nothing if not observant. “Will you marry her after all of this?”

That, at least, is an insecurity Saichi can lay to rest. He laughs, sighing and running a hand through his hair.

“No, I won’t,” he tells her. “If you’d make a bad wife, then I’d make a worse husband. It’s too late for me to consider that sort of thing, now. She deserves better than me.”

He means it as a joke, but his throat tightens as he speaks, and before he can finish he is thrown backwards by the weight of Asirpa throwing her arms around him. He hesitates before placing his palms on her back - even though they touch often, they have never hugged before, and Saichi isn’t sure what to do with this uncharacteristic display of affection. Asirpa’s nose is buried in his coat, and for a moment all Saichi can think is that it’s been far too long since he last washed his clothes, and that they must stink of blood.

“No one could deserve half as good as you,” Asirpa says fiercely into the fabric, and Saichi can’t help but smile, the tightness of his throat loosening as his eyes dampen. He laughs, because if he doesn’t, he’s fairly certain he will cry.

Even now, Saichi has a big heart, and he has always been drawn to the weak and helpless. He has no idea how he became entangled with someone so strong.

“There, there, it’s okay,” he says, patting her back gently. She pulls away from him, and he moves his hand, palm resting heavy on the top of her head. It covers her hair like a helmet; he is always struck by how small she is. “I’m not in love with you either, you know.”

“Good,” Asirpa says, wrinkling her nose as if she’s known it all along - because she has, of course.

“I wouldn’t mind marrying you though, if that’s what it takes to show you I’m not leaving,” he continues, half amused. The idea is almost ridiculous, and almost pleasant. “We could be a terrible husband and wife together.”

Asirpa snorts, turning up her nose at him. “No way. If you can’t weave and you’re a lousy shot, I’d end up doing all the work. I need a good *wife* if I’m ever going to marry. I already know you’re not going anywhere. I just...wanted to know if someone was going to try to take you.”

Saichi laughs loudly at that, and Shiraishi wakes up with a snort, yelling before falling immediately back into a deep sleep. When they have finished giggling, Saichi tucks Asirpa back into her blanket, and when she finally closes her eyes he squeezes her shoulder, jaw set.

“Nothing on this earth could take me away from your side,” he tells her quietly, and he has never been so sure of anything in his life.

## End Notes

I have no one to talk to about this fandom please hit me up on [twitter](#) or [tumblr](#).

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