

Remember Tenshi

By Feye_Morgan

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A nine-year old Dilandau is pushed beyond the threshold of despair when the madoushi destroy the only light in his life. (one-shot)

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Disclaimer: I do not own Escaflowne. I do own this plottline, however, since it originated in one of MY dreams.

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The little girl is dead.

Her broken body lies slumped at unnatural angles where the black robed men had tossed her aside. Her honey-colored hair is streaked with sweat, knotted and tangled. But none of this takes from her beauty. Child-like lovliness still graces her smooth features. She might be sleeping, except that her eyes are open, and lifeless.

"Tenshi!" A desperate cry reaches the girl from another room. But she can no longer hear.

"Tenshi!" The caller bursts into the room. A white-haired boy, young as she, clad in a pair of worn bleached pants and a matching tunic, looks frantically around. He too, is sweat-streaked and pale, as if he had just endured a terrible ordeal. The black robed men still in the room pause, look, take note, and turn away again.

"Ten-," the boy chokes as his eyes fall on the girl.

He slowly approaches her, his movements jerky.

"T-tenshi?" Trembling, the boy arranges her limbs normally. She feels so cold... Shaking fingers reach for a pulse at the girl's pale throat.

"lie. lie." The whisper is hollow and lost.

"TENSHI!" The boy cradles the girl to his chest and rocks back and forth, sobs racking his thin frame.

Many minutes pass before the tears cease to flow, and a blank mask settles over the child's face.

Without a word to the dark ones still busy at their morbid tasks around him, the child stands, and walks out of the room. He does not look back.

Down the long hall he walks. He stares straight ahead, unblinking, unseeing. He acknowledges no one, and no one looks at him a second time. They know that he is a lost one. A Vanished. It is better not to become mixed up in that business.

I have nothing left, he thinks. He had tried to protect her. Tried to protect little Tenshi. She had been his hope, his light in his cruel existence. Now she is gone.

Just let go.

The boy finds himself on a catwalk on the outside of the Vione, a breeze playing with his clothes and hair. He used to go there whenever he had spare time, to muse and contemplate. The clouds always looked so peaceful from up high. Looking down the miles to Gaea's surface, life seemed so much simpler. The child knows now that he had been right. Life is simpler if one just lets go.

The white-haired boy's small hands clench tighter around the safety bars. He carefully places one foot, then the other, onto the first bar. The wind is blowing harder now, whipping his hair into his face.

He steps up one more rung. The child's hands are clutching the top bar so tightly that his knuckles are white.

Soon the child is sitting precariously on the top bar, his thin legs dangling over the side. He gazes down. His feet swing slightly back and forth. Below them are the clouds.

Tenshi is in the clouds now, he thinks. Angels are the ones who weave the clouds together. Tenshi. Angel.

It is a child's story, he knew. But he is a child, isn't he? And he feels a little better now, believing it.

Just let go.

"What are you doing?"

The sharp inquiry takes the boy by surprise. He slips a little, but manages to catch himself. He twists around, now standing on the bars from the opposite side; his back to the open air. He looks up to face the newcomer.

A dark-cloaked man stands there. But he is not clad in the deadly garb of the ones who killed Tenshi. The boy knows the man's face well.

"Folken." The child does not spit out the name in anger, or in fear. He simply says it. His voice is flat and hollow.

They lock eyes. For a long time, they study each other, until each knows what the other is bound to do without even asking.

"Don't," Folken says.

The boy's expression is carved in stone.

Folken reaches out a hand towards the red-eyed child, beckoning him. "Dilandau, you don't want to do this. Come here."

The child does not move, but his eyes lose some of their hollowness. A deep pain and sadness fills the

crimson orbs to the brim.

Folken hisses a sharp intake of breath in realization. "It's Them, isn't it?"

The both know who 'They' refers to. The child is silent, but his eyes have infinite depth.

"Dilandau, come back. I'll protect you from Them. You don't have to worry about Them any more."
Folken smiles reassuringly at the child, and starts to approach him.

The boy freezes. Now his eyes are hard and accusing, as well as anguished. Folken falters in his step, and frowns in confusion.

"Dilandau, I said I will protect you. I will."

The boy locks eyes with the man.

"Like you protected Tenshi?" he asks Folken coldly.

"Ye-" Folken breaks off in horror, suddenly realizing what had happened. He moves quickly towards the boy. But it is already too late.

The child closes his eyes, and slackens his grip on the railing. Just let go.

He does.

Several people on the Vione saw a child fall that day. They also saw an angel swoop down to catch him. Some wondered if the winged man had done the right thing. A lost one beyond the threshold of despair is past all hope of salvation.

They shook their heads sadly and looked away.

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