

Fading Away

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Kurama's thoughts on the death of a close friend. (non-yaoi)

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paper. I held you up as I watched Yusuke and Kuwabara kill the demon.

When we brought you back to Genkai's temple, she told us that you had been poisoned. The poison would devour your youki from the inside out. If there wasn't some kind of miracle, you would probably die a slow, very painful death. I knew there would be a miracle. I was so hopeful. You wouldn't die. Knowing you, that seemed almost impossible. But even Yukina's healing powers combined with my own did nothing. We couldn't even lessen the pain.

After that, Yusuke and Kuwabara came to see you almost every day. I, however, only came once after that. Seeing you the way you were was too much for me. Knowing you were in agony, but I couldn't help you. You were a fiery creature in more ways than one. Feisty, arrogant, and rude. Hell, I liked it that way. You were strong and

lightning-fast. I'd only even seen you injured a couple times in all the years that I've known you. But that time I came to see you... You could barely move or speak. You seemed so helpless. You...weren't yourself. You were fading away.

I run up to the door of Genkai's temple and bang on it. Yusuke opens it. He looks at me, but says nothing. As I walk in nervously, he walks out and closes the door, leaving me alone with you. I look over at you. You don't seem to be moving... I run over to you and place my hand over your heart.

There's no pulse...

Hiei...

Are you...

dead?

I unwrap the bandages from your cold arm. The tattoo of the black dragon is gone. All the heat of being a living fire-demon has left your body. I look at your face. Your natural eyes are still open, but your Jagan eye is sealed shut. Your expression is the most peaceful I've ever seen on you. I run my hand over your eyes, forcing them shut. I can't bear you staring at me like that.

My eyes fill up with tears as I think about you. Damn it all! I'm such a jerk! I was wrong when I thought I couldn't help you. I *could've* helped you. Just being there would've helped! But I was too stupid! I should've been there for you. You had wanted me there. You'd told me that. That was why I didn't come

