

The Dance

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[Yaoi][One-shot]*

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Chapter 1 - The Dance

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Title: The Dance
Rating: T
Genre: General/Romance
Summary: "A lost soul among humans; A lost reflection among mirrors." Time changes everything, including the affairs of two opposites. Takes place when Hao is 18. [Yaoi][One-shot].
Disclaimer: Inspiration song "The Dance" © Tangerine Dream. "Shaman King" © Hiroyuki Takei. "I'm not a little kid. I can look after myself, Manta!" 17-year-old Manta Oyamada sighed as his young sister ranted for independence. She was only nine, but she still was determined to break away from his protective guard. Not that it surprised the young man. Mannoko had always been independent, and she loved carnivals twice as much. He even was tempted to give into her demands, understanding her fascination with the rides and activities. When he was young, he would have given anything to come to the carnival and have fun, but their father was strict and cast Manta's desires aside for the good of his company. Which was why Manta had decided to take Mannoko that night to the carnival. Though she was certainly a brat towards him, he also didn't want her to grow up the way he had. "Manta!" Mannoko cried while stomping her foot. "Hmm?" Manta looked down curiously to his sister, and then smiled slightly. He hadn't always been able to look down on her, but the years had granted him extra growth. True, he would never be as tall as even his mother, but he was contented with himself, now that he was much taller than his father. Thinking on this momentarily, he chuckled and lifted his sister onto his shoulders, and then looked up at her. "Mannoko, we came together. Let's have fun together," he stated matter-of-factly. "Oh, poo," Mannoko replied with a pout. "I wanna go by myself." Manta sighed some. He might have given in to her demands if they were back in Funbari. Most of the people there were trustworthy; but he was far from trusting an American carnival where he knew nobody, and with a shake of his head he began walking. "What do you want to do first?" he asked with a smile. Mannoko sighed irritably while looking around, unsure of what she wanted to do. A moment later, though, her eyes brightened up when she saw a large, silver sign posted on a building that read 'House of Mirrors'. She grinned devilishly, forming her plan of escape, and then looked down. "Manta, I wanna go there," she said while pointing to the building. "Hmm?" Manta looked ahead with a thoughtful frown, and then looked up. "You sure? If we get lost, you're stuck with me." "I know. I wanna go there," Mannoko pouted, not liking how he spoke to her as if she were some little child. "Alright, then," he replied with a smile. He didn't like his sister's attitude, but at the same time he was happy to be spending time with her. He walked to the building and offered the man who stood outside two ticket stubs, and then placed Mannoko on the ground and walked into the building with her. Once they were in, he stared at the many reflections within the room. He smiled slightly, remembering how lost he had been the first time he had went into a house of mirrors. He couldn't find his way, but his friends had no problem getting through it, and finally escape the maze. He blinked as Mannoko ran ahead, and then frowned. "Mannoko," he called with a worried frown, and then began walking after her. "Mannoko, don't get lost." "How do you get lost in a house?" she laughed from ahead. Manta frowned quietly. He didn't want his sister to get lost. Although when he was younger, he did manage to strengthen his sixth sense, which helped him have a better sense of direction, but he hadn't been around shamans in four years, and as a result his sixth sense had become lazy again. As he walked through the maze of mirrors, he frowned sadly. He hadn't seen or heard from his friends since he left. He hadn't even been able to say good-bye to them. His parents just arrived one day, told him that he had to come back to America, and that was that. He missed his shaman friends, and he had never been able to completely fit in with anybody. Other than Midori, Mannoko's caretaker, Manta never had anybody to talk to, whether it be about recent events or his adventures with the people who lived with spirits. As he came into an enclosed area of mirrors, he frowned slightly, being

pulled from his thoughts. "Mannoko?" he called while looking around, and then he froze, a feeling of being watched washing over him. Slowly he looked to his side, and then stared confusedly at a mirror that didn't reflect him. "Huh?" he asked confusedly, and then slowly he began to walk towards the mirror. Once he was near he reached his hand out to touch it, and then drew back with a startled yelp when eyes seemed to appear out of nowhere. "H-Huh?! What's going on?!" he cried, and then let out a muffled whimper when something closed over his mouth. "Isn't it amazing how you can play?" a voice asked with a child-like amusement. "With enough time, you can mask yourself like a lizard." Manta shook lightly as the person stepped forward and slowly became visible, and then he stared at the young man who wore an oversized poncho, his dark hair long and bangs falling freely in his face. A sense of familiarity became aroused in Manta's mind, though, when the man's dark, intent eyes gazed into his own. "Aren't you happy to see me, Manta?" he asked, and then slowly removed his hand from the smaller's mouth. Manta stared up shakily, his heart wishing to all that was holy that it was Asakura Yoh; the one who had promised to bring him back to the shaman world. However, his mind knew better, and he drew back quickly while bringing his arms into a semi-defensive position in front of him. "H-Hao... What are you doing here?!" "I've been watching you for some time now," was his reply, a small smile plastered on his face. "I see you've gained some of your mother's beauty. I suppose that's more than enough hope for your sister?" Manta's eyes widened, and then he looked around frantically. "Mannoko, get out of here!" he cried, and then let out a muffled yelp when an arm wrapped around his midriff while another hand came to rest on his mouth. "Shh...." The shaman hushed quietly, and then turned Manta to face him, and then removed his hand from the blonde's mouth and took one of the smaller hands into his own. "Don't draw her here," Hao said quietly, and then began stepping back and forth in a slow waltz. "There's no need to be afraid, Manta." For a moment Manta stumbled as Hao began the dance pattern, and then he looked up with an angry expression once he finally regained his footing. "That's funny. Last I checked, any human in their right mind would be afraid of you." "Tsk," Hao replied with a light smile. "Always so emotional, Manta. I thought you would be happy to see me." "About as happy as if I found a hole in my head," Manta snapped while trying to pull away, and then yelped when Hao pulled him closer, and then grumbled when the shaman continued to dance. "You should really stand up to your family," Hao commented. "After all, you're better than them. You understand the true world." "Hao..." Manta growled, and then inhaled sharply in surprise when Hao's arm came to rest around his waist. "You understand your feelings for other men are natural," Hao continued, and then smirked lightly at the look of surprise on his partner's face. "So many secrets, and from your own family. Why not free yourself from silly human restraints?" "I don't know what you're talking about," Manta muttered quietly, and then looked up nervously when Hao came to a stop. "Then let me enlighten you," Hao replied, his expression and eyes unreadable. "You like men. How many names are there, again?" He mock-thought for a moment, and then looked back to Manta. "Oh yes. Gay, queer, prick, fairy, co..." "I get the point!" Manta snapped, while looking away with a bright red face, and then froze when Hao tilted his head. "You look more spirited now," Hao said with a smile. "Isn't it nicer to let others know?" "You made a lucky guess," Manta replied, and then sighed quietly when Hao began to dance again. "What do you want?" "You are worthy of more than those tiny creatures you call a family," Hao replied. "And after my last encounter with brother dearest, I just can't stand to see a worthy soul go to waste." He stopped his steps for a moment and leaned Manta backwards in a dip, and then smiled down at him. "Especially one so cute." "You bug me about my feelings," Manta said with narrowed eyes. "What about you? At least I'm decent in presenting them!" Hao pulled his partner up again and smiled at Manta as he resumed the waltz. "You don't present them at all," Hao replied to Manta's accusation. "I'm at peace with myself because I can present my feelings to any boy or girl I choose. You fear discovery, so you can't be at peace." Slowly he lifted Manta off the ground, letting one arm support the blonde's bottom like a seat, while his other arm supported Manta's back, and then he continued to move. "Admit it. You've been lost

since you came to America. You're glad to see somebody who understands you." Manta, now eye-level with him, scowled at the shaman, though he knew his eyes were also showing a mix of feelings. "I don't need you or anybody else to understand me. I'm happy as I am." "Which is why you cry at night," Hao stated calmly, and then came to a stop and pressed Manta against a mirror, continuing to hold him up. "A lost soul among humans; A lost reflection among mirrors." His eyes narrowed, yet remained soft as he leaned forward and placed a tender kiss on the blonde's thin lips, and then he pulled back and looked sternly at Manta. "You're too old to live with childish fears. Those who won't find themselves will fade. Brother's sickening feelings make the idea of you fading unpleasant." Manta looked with nervous eyes at the shaman. "Yoh-kun's feelings?" "He never did like to see a lost soul fade," Hao replied, and then leaned his forehead against the smaller's. "Our encounter changed both of us. Otherwise I would have killed you the moment I laid eyes on you in the graveyard, two years ago." Manta was still as Hao kissed lightly at his throat, and then took a shaky breath while squeezing his eyes shut. "H-Hao..." "You need a hug," the brunette interrupted, and then looked quietly at the blonde. He smirked with amusement at the questioning look he received, and then spoke again. "Go ahead. You've needed it for a long time." Manta remained still, considering Hao's offer, and then swallowed nervously. He certainly didn't trust the shaman, but at the same time he feared that Hao still maintained his temper. Deciding it was the lesser of the two evils, slowly he leaned forward and wrapped his arms around the shaman. He bit his lip nervously when he felt Hao's hand move under the back of his shirt, and then squeezed his eyes shut as the hand ran smoothly up and down his back. After a minute, the blonde was greeted with an unexpected feeling. It was comforting how he and Hao were at that moment. And like the shaman had said, he did feel better now that he was with somebody who understood him. He let out a small sigh while resting his head on the strong shoulder, and then blushed brightly with a small whimper as Hao's hand came to rest on his belly. "Mannoko's waiting outside," Hao's voice suddenly breathed into Manta's ear. "There are many bad men here. Don't leave her alone." And with that he placed Manta on the floor again. He smirked as the younger took a moment to regain his senses, and then walked with Manta towards the exit. He came to a stop a couple of meters away from the door, and then looked to Manta. "Go ahead and look after her. I'll see you later tonight." Manta was still as the shaman spoke, and then spun around to tell the shaman to leave him alone. He was stunned, however, when he found Hao was already gone. He stared confusedly for several minutes, and then sighed while walking to the exit. "Took you long enough," Mannoko snapped irritably as her brother emerged from the building. "You couldn't have gotten that lost." Manta stared at her for a moment, and then sighed while giving her his usual, small smile. "I guess I did," he replied, and said nothing when she went on about how stupid he was for getting lost. After a moment, he lifted her into his arms and smiled at her as she glanced confusedly at him. He was silent for a moment, and then sighed while hugging her tightly. "I love you, Little Sister," he said quietly. Mannoko stared at him for several moments with a stunned expression, which became a bright blush a moment later while she glanced away with a stubborn expression. "I know, Manta," she said quietly. She hated when he did that. He always seemed sad, but he would always hug her and tell her he loved her, as if she didn't know. She wondered if she would ever understand her brother.