

The Missing Shirt

Von Saoto

The <missing> shirt

„When we first met you, you didn't wear a shirt.“

Three pairs of eyes were looking at Karis.

“Yeah... so?”. The young man in question looked at her in confusion.

“Oh, I was just wondering... Your uncle was wearing nothing but trousers and accessories, and so did you when you were the crown prince. But now that you are the king, you're still wearing the same kind of clothing you were wearing when we traveled across Weyard...”.

Amiti, the youngest king Ayuthay ever had, finally understood what Karis meant. She was wondering why he wasn't wearing his royal clothes anymore. Well, in fact, he didn't know it himself.

“I guess you're right.”, he responded and shrugged, “I just didn't give it a thought. It's not like it's a commandment to wear those clothes, it's rather a tradition.”.

Tyrell snorted in amusement. “What a weird tradition.”.

The ayuthayan king threw an angry glance at the red-haired Mars-Adept and let out a not-so-kingly growl.

“I'd rather *not* like you to say something like this about our ancient traditions, my friend!”

Then suddenly, both Tyrell and Amiti turned their faces towards a young man who had been standing there in silence for the whole time.

“Say, Matthew: What's *your* opinion about this?!”, Tyrell roared.

“It's not *weird*, isn't it?!”, the king of the city of Ayuthay asked particular enraged.

Matthew winced at the abrupt questions – he hadn't expected to be pestered with questions all of a sudden! But on the other side, hadn't it been always like this? Though Matthew never talked very much, they had made him their leader and were always asking for his opinion. He did not like to talk too much, so he just answered “Yes” or “No” most of the time. So this situation was not special at all.

“...Umm...”, Matthew mumbled, “It's not weird.”. With this, the situation should be cleared.

Tyrell turned his face away and stared at the walls of Ayuthay in disappointment, but he didn't complain. He trusted Matthew's positions; Matthew had always made the right choices - so if he said it wasn't weird, it probably wasn't... was it?

“Thanks, Matthew!”, Amiti said smiling and looked triumphantly at Tyrell, “And you know what? In honor of my late uncle and the previous kings I'll wear the royal clothing from now on.”.

The king turned to Matthew for a second time. "Will you help me put on the dress, please?", he asked politely, remembering how difficult it was to attire himself in the royal clothes all by himself.

The only thing his previous party leader did was nodding, and then he followed Amiti towards the king's chamber.

"See! Because you always say such mean things, almost nobody likes you! You idiot!", Karis yelled at Tyrell behind their backs, while the two men were walking away.

Matthew couldn't help but smile. What Karis said was not the complete truth – pretty much people liked the fact that Tyrell was always honest, other than Matthew himself. Nevertheless, Tyrell should probably try to keep it down a bit.

"Tyrell hasn't changed at all.", Amiti said and sighed. He walked towards his closet and opened it. "Where was it again...?", he mumbled to himself and almost disappeared into the wardrobe while looking for the clothes. Then he took a step back and pulled out a pair of beautiful traditional trousers and lots of shining and golden accessories.

"Let's see...", he muttered again as he laid down the clothes and his crown, and started to undress behind a curtain.

Matthew was sitting on a chair, waiting until he would be of any use. "In fact, none of you has changed at all.", he suddenly returned to the topic, "Neither Tyrell nor Karis... nor you."

The blonde man sighed and stared at the curtain. Yes, that probably was the true. They hadn't seen each other for quite some time, but somehow they had all stayed the same. Even Amiti hadn't changed that much. Well, he wore a crown on his head, for he was the new king of Ayuthay after his uncle Paithos had died, but except that he looked just like the Amiti Matthew had met back then. And he, himself, hadn't changed either. He still was the chary young man he had been when they had parted. He still didn't talk to anyone, if it wasn't really necessary.

He wasn't quite sure if it was a good thing that none of them had changed...

"Matthew?" Amiti was suddenly standing right in front of him. Matthew, who had been caught up in his thoughts for a moment, raised his head in surprise and looked at the beautiful king wearing his shirtless clothes. Matthew couldn't help but turn his face away in order to hide the fact that his face was heating up out of embarrassment. "Could you please bond these strings together at my back?", Amiti asked and gave him a type of ornament Matthew had never seen before. Nevertheless, Matthew took it, giving it a bewildered look, and tried to tie it as the king wanted it.

Amity, who tried to put on some necklaces at the same time, moved a bit, and therefore it couldn't be helped: Matthew unwittingly tickled the young king.

"Wah!". Amity flinched appalled – he did not like the feeling of being tickled, it felt too weird! Matthew, who looked kind of shocked by himself, just stared at Amity for a moment, and then he started to apologize, though he did not even know what he had done.

Amity started to laugh at him, realizing that he had overreacted. "Stop that, you just kidded me accidental. It's no big deal!".

Matthew stopped apologizing just as prompt as he had started. He looked at the ground, being uncomfortable with feeling the blood rushing into his head again.

"Nrgh, but now... it's itching...", Amity moaned ungracefully and tried to scratch his back on his own. Of course, he didn't manage it with all those necklaces and ornaments put around his body and clothes.

"Ehm... I'm sorry to ask you something like this, Matthew, but... could you please...". Amiti's face showed his plain embarrassment, but Matthew thought it would be best not to think about this awkward situation and just scratch his friend's back – as peculiar as this might be.

But as soon as the young man touched the king's back, he was extremely glad that he wasn't standing in the Ayuthayan's sight – or otherwise the very person would have seen his blushing face.

I know it's kinda weird, but... ever since I've met him, I've adored his beauty... Matthew clenched his other fist and tried his best not to think about this.

To be honest, I even desired to touch this beautiful skin of him, but... Now that he could do it, it wasn't as he wanted it to be. It was awkward, nothing else.

"Hmm... it feels good."

Matthew almost choked. Amiti had said those words while Matthew had those strange thoughts.

Well, thanks. That's not helping at all!, he thought, sighing.

And then, before he had even realized it, Matthew had placed both of his hands on Amiti shoulders, standing close behind him, almost leaning onto him.

"...not helping at all...", he mumbled despaired, while Amiti was just standing there, not moving a muscle.

"Hey, guys! Why do you take so long...?!".

Suddenly, the door was opened wide, and Tyrell was standing in the doorway with an impatient look on his face. But as soon as he saw Matthew and Amiti standing there, his jaw flapped down.

"Wha-?! Am I interrupting or something?", the not-so-sharp Mars-Adept asked in confusion, since none of the guys moved a bit. He obviously was overstrained with this situation.

"Tyrell! I told you not to open the door without aski-! Oh, hey...".

Karis, who had troubles with following her male friend, stopped right beside this very friend, and stared at the two young men in front of them.

As soon as Matthew realized that both of their pals were gaping at them, he drew back from Amiti and opened his mouth in order to apologize – but he couldn't say a single word. He was too embarrassed to say something.

"Could you please... go ahead and wait for us in the dining-hall?", Amiti requested with a kingly air, and the two unwanted guests didn't even hesitate for a second. Matthew couldn't even count to three before they were out of sight.

Amiti sighed and closed the door behind them. And after that, he turned around to face Matthew.

"Well, who knows what they are thinking about us now...", he said while letting out another sigh, and sat down on a chair next to his silent friend, "Matthew, this question may sound rude now, but could you please tell what this was all about?".

Matthew's face turned red again, as he tried his best not to show his face to the young king.

"I don't know... maybe I was just... amazed...", he mumbled.

"Amazed by what?". Amiti seemed pretty calm, but Matthew couldn't see that he looked just as embarrassed as he did himself.

"Your beauty, I guess...", Matthew mumbled without thinking, and then suddenly realized what he had said just now.

"Eh?". Finally, Amiti had lost all royal dignity: He just stared at Matthew, the mouth wide open and his face as red as it could be.

"I'm sorry, I shouldn't have said this. I don't want you to feel awkward. I'm sorry...", Matthew responded agitated.

"Ah... no, that's not it!", Amiti rejoined astounded, "I was just surprised. I'm not used to you being so blunt...". He didn't know why, but he suddenly felt very happy. Even though it also felt kind of weird being called "beautiful" by another man.

"Anyway, thank you for the flattery.", Amiti continued, "But we should follow the others to the dining-hall, or they might think whatever.".

Matthew sighted as Amiti turned to leave the room. "That wasn't *flattery*...", he mumbled, "I meant it!".

Amiti just smiled and looked to the ground. "I thought so...", he said. But he didn't turn around nor looked at Matthew. He just opened the door and waited for Matthew to follow him.

"But... you know what...?", the beautiful king mumbled, as they were walking through the corridors of Ayuthay, "Since I'll keep wearing those kind of clothes... I wouldn't mind you to... *help* me again tomorrow.". He stopped walking for a moment und took a look over his shoulder, smiling shyly at Matthew. "And if you want to, you may also embrace me, since you almost did that the last time.".

Matthew simply nodded in silence.

He had never even dreamed of being able to get closer to his crush due to a simple shirt which wasn't worn.