**Learning and Loving You**

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# Learning and Loving You

by GreenGoddess

Summary

Byleth is trying to learn about sensuality, and is doing a very good job of it. Little does she know, Dimitri is there. She learns a lot more than just sensuality.

Notes

This is after the time skip and after Dimitri comes back to his senses and after A support. No feralmitri. I headcanon Byleth as nonbinary but there will be explorations of femininity from her perspective. Direct definition came from here:
https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/sensual
Yes I am here because of ao3 being down

# Chapter 1: Sensual

Slamming the door behind her and locking it swiftly was the only way to guarantee her bath time was hers alone. It had been a fight to stay clean since coming back to Garreg Mach. Everyone had tried to follow their old routines, but unfortunately, the past three years were not kind to the plumbing, nor anyone else. Hot water, tea leaves, lavender soap and rose water became a welcome addition to her bathing habits, and the smell of it was gently filling her nose. Bubbles towered in the tub in big cloud-like shapes, threatening to spill onto the tiles below. Candles illuminated one corner of the room. She remembered someone described it as ‘romantic’, that a candle lit bathtub was very ‘sensual’.

Nothing was sensual about freezing. Admittedly, she didn’t know what qualified as sensual, at least to her, but not this. Every new step onto the once pearly white tiles were dreadfully cold, sending chilly shockwaves up her legs with each quick, jumpy step. A draft licking at her heels made her undress in a blink, throwing clothes without a care. Finally, her feet found the solace of a bath mat in front of the sink. Cupping the sink bowl, her eyes met another pair, just like hers- only there were 4 or 5 of them in the mosaic of shattered glass that once was a pretty ordinary mirror.

Skin creamy and unmarred, eyes clear and unnaturally green- like a firefly deep in the grass, and like a tuft of grass, was a mess of green, possible clumps of dirt and other debris right above those eyes.

It’s a strange thing- to look at oneself and to feel a pit form at the bottom of your stomach. To look at oneself with a certain melancholy and undeniable deja-vu. Her hands always found themselves on her face, feeling the smooth, truly porcelain skin, with many fingers gliding over soft lips and unblemished noses. Then, they trailed down to her neck and shoulders, just as perfectly pearly and pristine, gliding effortlessly down to her breasts, which cut off halfway in the mirror. She shuddered and turned away before she could dwell any further on the matter.

Pushing herself away, she swiped the nearest comb and began to tease sections of her hair apart. Something had dried up and now easily broke apart in her fingers as she worked at the mats in her mossy mane. It was a grounding experience, the smell of the dried blood and old leaves a lovely reminder of evenings with her father. It didn’t take long to break up the hard, lumpy clumps of tangles, thank the Goddess, and she sighed a deep sigh of relief. The warm air was lovely, contrasting with the cold outside. The smell of sweet flowers mingling with the wet earthy smell of the past battle was… nice? Maybe this is what it is to have a sensual experience, she thought as she daydreamed. Making her way over to the bathtub, the night sky has filled the window panes with glittering stars. The moon was perfectly round, showing off its beautiful face. She's heard people talk about it- ‘Drink it in,’ she recalled hearing before, and now it made perfect sense.

A waste of time, another thought chimed in. All of this was simply more time that could’ve been used elsewhere- training, polishing, inventory, prepping. Grains of sand slipping from her fingers, falling into a deep abyss of time, never to return. The swirls of her crest were

always at her fingertips, a strange thrum that never seemed to stop. It still didn't make up for all of the missing time she was losing just dwelling.

But it felt so good. Just staring, breathing deeply and drinking the sights of the cloudless night. Like a curious toddler, her mind followed whatever and wherever her train of thought took her. It carried her through seasons, battles, devastation, grief, love and the wonders of life she had no words for just yet.

"Life…" she muttered quietly, voicing her thoughts.

"...so beautiful" she whispered as she mindlessly drew circles in the water.

Being alive, a gift you don't know the importance of before it's too late. Living beyond the animalistic desire to live, below the surface of need and want is appreciation, and in that thought, faces flashed of people- young and old, dead and alive. One face lingered, with gentle eyes and a rugged face. How long has it been since…? It still left her chest feeling heavy all the same, and she watched as the face vanished slowly. Another face emerged, bright and youthful.

Her hands sunk deeper into the water as she reflected deeper. Moments like this, the precious few, like halos on the sun. Warmth rose up her body deliciously. She brushed a clump of hair that had fallen into the tub.

The supposed clump of hair thrashed, bubbles shot up into the air in a flurry. Arms shot up from the mass, wet and warm and even more pale than she was.

This bubble covered monster rose up from the water.
Her hands reached for their throat, or what she assumed was their throat, only to be met by more empty space and bubbles.

Flames danced wildly, casting strange shapes on the walls. A pair of hands reached for her throat and pinned her to the ground, all in one swift motion. Her head smacked into the tile, shoulders and backside following suit.

She gasped for air and swiftly grabbed the strong forearms holding her down, then brought her legs up to their neck, readying a strong push and choking them with her calves in return.

The bubble monster was quickly melting off, revealing their true form.

Blonde hair.

Blue eyes.

She gasped again. The grip was gone.

"Pro… Professor?!"

"Dimitri..?"

Sensual: adjective. Expressing or suggesting physical, especially sexual, pleasure or satisfaction.

Ah.

That evening.

It all came back to her at once.

The hand-holding, the hand around her waist, the sky above awash in many colors.

The stray glances from across the room, the redness of her face in the mirror, the ‘accidental’ brushes past each other.

The look she couldn’t make sense of, the longing that soon followed.

A candle within her burned so brightly.

He was already turned away, ducking out of her leg lock swiftly.

“Sorry, I did-” “I want to-"

Oh.

He wasn’t looking, neither was she. The bubbles were deflating quietly, pooling onto the floor.

He was the first to speak.

“Professor..?”

That evening flashed in her mind again a second time. A warm embrace. A gentle smile. His words. ‘It's rude of me to keep you all to myself’

“No. Call me Byleth.” She spoke firmly.

“...Byleth.” He replied quietly.

“I’m so terribly sorry. I thought the bath was prepared for me and I, somehow, fell asleep. I didn’t intend to hurt you or see you in this state. I’m leaving immediately.”

She hugged herself as she sat up, a new kind of warmth spread as she crossed her legs. He was already wearing his trousers and rushing his way to the door when she grabbed him by one of his pant legs.

“Wait.”

He seemed to be a perfect statue of himself.

“Yes?” His tone was different, but she couldn’t put her finger on it, like he had swallowed before he spoke.

“I have a selfish request. If that’s okay with you.”

“A… selfish request? Why not tell me later, my friend?”

It was time to spit it out, five years in the making.

“Please stay.”

“Pro- Byleth. Not the most appropriate time or place for me to stay.”

“No, it’s not, but...”

“...Is there something deeply troubling you?” Worry tinged his voice.

“…Yes, but you can leave if you’re uncomfortable. I’ll cover up.” She grabbed a towel and wrapped herself in it as she spoke.

“Understood. This, admittedly, is strange to say the least, but I know you must be very troubled right now. Please, tell me.”

There was an urgency in his voice now, his pleading eyes softening her.

“.... I’ve had some… very intense emotions lately.” Her words were oddly timed as she spoke.

“I see… I am… grateful you confided in me. It must be difficult to navigate something so new and intense, but I know you can overcome it.” He turned to face her, his eyes never straying from hers, burning with a new intensity. “You helped me when my own emotions were turbulent, though it is a constant uphill battle, yet still you help me now. I would like to be there for you as well.”

“I… am grateful for you, too. Very grateful- for all that you’ve done for me.”

“You flatter me, but I’m not deserving of it. I’m just a man, no, maybe even lower than a man.”

She stepped closer and closer, reaching to gingerly hold his hands as if he would topple over and shatter. A new kind of feeling blossomed in her chest, sprouting into a gentle smile. Closing the distance with a single step, she had to look up to meet his eyes, now mere inches away.

“Dimitri.” She called.

“Byleth.” He answered.

“I want to be your equal.”

“We… Are we not equals?

“Dimitri, I…”

Silence.

“Tell me. "

“This is very hard for me to say. I’ve never felt this way about anyone before.” Looking at his eyes suddenly became impossible, her reddening face turned away. But from the corner of her eyes, she saw it.

Those begging, pleading eyes. The puppy dog eyes she saw many years ago. The tower. The ball. After sparing. After finding his gloves. The air seemed to change around them, but she couldn’t describe it. The towel was the only thing keeping their bodies apart, yet she could feel the beating in his chest grow faster. Is this…?

“Please, please tell me, and I’m yours.” he whispered a quiet plea, leaning in while cupping her face gently and turn her to face him

Well, this was probably the right time, but a new emotion was bubbling in her stomach, a kind of chill going down her spine.

“I… Dimitri, I love…”

A brush of his nose against hers, a gentle tickle of his eyelashes against her cheek. Every touch sent jolts down her body. Goosebumps soon followed.

“You.” She whispered at last, and the last vowel was swallowed by his lips.

Lips pressed against another pair, a weird new sensation but it was strangely delightful. Her hands found themselves on his face, copying whatever she could remember couples doing- and pulled away from him to just stare.

His face seemed to warp, from the young man with bright eyes and a stern, but gentle face to this unrecognizable one. A hollow face with dull skin and prominent bags under duller, uneasy eyes, one slightly shut with a prominent scar staring back at her. But that sparkle in his eyes was the exact same.

They were one in the same.

“It’s strange.”

“What is?”

“We’ve changed so much, you and I. But I also feel like nothing has changed at all.”

“You really think that?”

“I feel like I’m back at the Goddess tower, when you said we’d be together forever.”

“Ah, I brushed it off like it was a joke, I was admittedly ashamed of myself.”

“No more shame, no more regret. Let’s be together forever.”

“I’d want nothing more.”

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