

Uncertainty and Hope

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When Seishiro is involved in a serious accident one day, how will this change his life, and those of Subaru and Hokuto? AU (First time posting here, minna, so please don't laugh at all the mistakes, okay?)

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Uncertainty and Hope Subaru Sumeragi was awakened by a knock at the door. Considering where he was and who he lived with, his sister never knocked; she almost always barged into his room without announcing herself. "Come in." Subaru called, sleepily, as he sat up. He was even more surprised when Hokuto walked in, but concern was quick to take hold when he saw that she was crying. "Hokuto-chan? What's wrong?" Subaru asked, now fully awake. "Subaru.....it's Sei-chan. He was in a traffic accident early this morning. Got a call from the hospital just a little while ago.....Subaru, they say he might not make it....." Hokuto sobbed, as she rushed forward and hugged her heretofore-stunned twin brother. Seishiro? Dying?! With a shake of his head, Subaru then looked his sister in the eye. "Hokuto-chan, get ready to go. I'm going to get dressed, and then I'm going to cancel all of my appointments for the day. Do you know what hospital Seishiro-san has been taken to?" Subaru asked. Hokuto nodded. "Then we'll go as soon as I have rescheduled the appointments." Subaru said, as he gently ushered his sister out of his room, then quickly got dressed. About three hours later, the Sumeragi Twins found themselves on their way to one of Tokyo's best hospitals. On the way, Subaru tried to comfort Hokuto as best he could. In the back of his mind, he knew that Hokuto's relationship with Seishiro had been a little more than just friendship, but he hadn't dared himself to say that it was a crush. He could tell just by the way Hokuto acted that she often wished she had been the head of the Sumeragi clan, just so she could pursue a relationship with whom she thought to be the leader of the Sakurazukamori. "I know there isn't anything I can say right now that will make things better, but I wish there was something I could do that would make this a little bit easier on her." Subaru thought, as he gently hugged his sister, allowing her to bury her face in his shoulder as he did so. When they arrived at the hospital, they were aware of the looks they were getting, but Subaru paid the onlookers no mind. Let them think what they wanted about Hokuto's choice of clothing; right now, nothing mattered except getting to see Seishiro. "Excuse me." Subaru said, as he and Hokuto approached the front desk. "Yes? How may I help you?" a nurse asked, amiably. "We're looking for the room of Sakurazuka Seishiro. Can you tell which way it is and what floor it is on?" Subaru in turn asked, watching as the nurse checked to see what room the man in question had been taken to. "I'm sorry, kids. He's still in surgery.....but I think he'll be taken to a room in the Intensive Care Unit afterwards. If you'll have a seat over there, I'll let you know when he comes out. Okay?" the nurse asked. Subaru nodded. "Hai. Thank you for your time." Subaru murmured, as he politely bowed, then led his sister to the nearby waiting room. Hours passed slowly as the Sumeragi twins waited for news on how their friend was doing. Hokuto spent equal time between pacing in front of Subaru, and crying her heart out into his shoulder. And, even though Subaru himself felt like crying, he kept up a brave front for Hokuto's sake. Finally, the words they had been waiting for came. "All right, you two. He's out of surgery. I'll take you to his room now." The nurse from before said, gently, as she led the way into the ICU and to the room where Seishiro had been moved. Subaru and Hokuto were not prepared for what they saw next; there was Seishiro, but he was no more than a ghost of his usual self. He was pale, and was attached to so many machines that it made Darth Vader look naked. His chest and abdomen looked like a warzone with its bruises and stitches where pieces of glass from the windshield had gone into his flesh. Seishiro's face was in a little bit better shape in that there were no stitches there (by some miracle, his face had escaped relatively unscathed). But there were bruises and a few small cuts, nonetheless. "I'm amazed that's he's still alive, considering the condition he's in. He'd lost so much blood before arriving here that we were sure that he'd die before we could get him to the operating room." A doctor said, as he joined the trio in Seishiro's room. "Sei-chan is stubborn.....he

won't let go of life easily." Hokuto murmured, her voice almost lost amidst the sounds of the life-support machines. The doctor nodded, as the nurse placed a hand on her shoulder and looked her in the eye. "Listen, we'll let you know if his condition changes during the night. You two go home and get some rest. It's been a trying day for the both of you." The nurse said, in an ever-gentle tone. "Can we come back to visit him tomorrow?" Hokuto asked, her voice wavering. The nurse and doctor both nodded. "Miracles have been known to happen in cases like this. Sometimes patients in similar conditions react to the presences of their loved ones or to their voices. Don't give up hope yet. There's still a chance he might wake up." The doctor said, encouragingly. "Arigato." Subaru said, breaking his silence for the first time since that morning (by this time evening had fallen), and quietly ushered Hokuto out. Almost three weeks later found the twins back in Seishiro's room. They visited their hospital-bound friend as often as they could, and, even though he didn't awaken during any of those visits, they found some sort of comfort in that. In uncharacteristic silence, Hokuto took her usual seat by Seishiro's left hand side, gently holding his hand as she sat there. Subaru took the seat on the other side, propping his top half on the bed and putting his forehead to Seishiro's arm. Even though his position looked odd, Subaru found that this was the most comfortable he could be in the hospital room. "Subaru, do you think Sei-chan is dreaming and doesn't want to wake up?" Hokuto asked, startling Subaru somewhat. "I don't know. Why? Do you think that is what is keeping him from regaining consciousness?" Subaru asked, in turn, as he looked up at her. Hokuto nodded. "He could be like that friend of yours' from grade school. You know? The one you had to reach by going into her dreams?" Hokuto said, reminding Subaru of that case. "Maybe. But then again, maybe not. Seishiro-san is in a coma, not asleep like Kaburagi-san had been." Subaru stated. "I know. I don't want to ask you to risk your life, Subaru, and I wish I were strong enough to do it myself.But, I'm afraid I must impose this on you, if nothing else. I just want to see Sei-chan wake up, that's all. I hate seeing him like this. " Hokuto sobbed, as tears threatened to spill down her cheeks. Subaru sighed softly. He knew this would happen; he had been considering doing that same thing himself. Yet he remembered the tough time he'd had trying to convince Kaburagi Mitsuki to regain consciousness, and that Seishiro had had to help him then. "What would happen if I need help in Seishiro-san's mind? I can't count on him to help me there. And Hokuto-chan isn't strong enough either. The only one who could help is Obaa-chan.....but she's too far away to be of any help if I get into trouble here." Subaru mused, then shook his head. What did he have to gain or lose by not trying? "All right, Hokuto-chan. I'll try. But you'd best stay by the phone in case you need to call Obaa-chan for help." Subaru ordered. Hokuto nodded, then gave him a hopeful, if somewhat tearful, smile. "All right. Be careful, Subaru." Hokuto said, as she vacated her seat and stood by the phone, and as he took up a position by Seishiro's left-hand side. "Here goes....." Subaru thought, as he took a deep breath, then started chanting. Little did he realize just what he was going to find in Seishiro's mind..... It was dusk at Rainbow Bridge. A twenty-five year old man stood there, smoking, waiting for someone to arrive. Stiff breezes blew the man's white trench coat around him, flaring it out at some points to make it look almost like wings. Bandages hid his right eye from view, hinting at an injury he'd suffered only recently. He jumped slightly when a hand gently grasped his own, holding it and the cigarette away from his face. "Look out. The ash is going to fall on your hand." The twenty-five year old muttered. "How very kind of you....to take such care. But you've always been the good sort, eh?" the owner of the other hand said, smoothly. "Not always. I've changed of late. And you.....You were the one who changed me, made me into the man I am now. But I'm sure that doesn't really matter to you." The younger man replied, coldly, as he wrenched his right hand away from the older man. It was at this point that Subaru arrived on the scene. He was shocked when he beheld the scene for two reasons; one, the older man was definitely Seishiro, and the younger one was an older version of him! "What in the world is this?!" Subaru wondered, as he watched the confrontation from the spectator viewpoint, stunned by what was said and done next. He watched with wide eyes (as did his double) as 'Seishiro' took the cigarette

from his older self and took a drag, noticing, with a sick feeling in his gut, that the hand that now held the cigarette was drenched in fresh blood. "You just killed someone.....Killed them right here, didn't you?" the older 'Subaru' asked, with a trace of anger in his voice. 'Seishiro' smirked."Well, I am the Sakurazukamori, after all." 'Seishiro' sneered, as lightning split the sky, causing Subaru to jump. Things were about to get ugly. Moments later, Subaru was forced to leap away as a tremendous explosion rocked the bridge, and the battle between the older 'Subaru' and 'Seishiro' began in earnest. With anti-scrolls flying, both men fired off psychic attacks, unaware that a third party was watching their altercation. Subaru could only watch in wonder and horror as his other self formed a star-shaped shield, then continued fighting. He let out a yelp when one of the sections of the bridge started to collapse, and he started to fall. He didn't fall far, however; his confusion was added to when Seishiro's hawk grabbed his arm and pulled him up and out of danger."Seishiro-san's shikigami! Then his consciousness must be around here somewhere! But where? Where is it?" Subaru wondered, as he glanced around, desperately. The fight was getting more violent, as the older 'Subaru' started using stronger attacks, and as 'Seishiro' countered them easily."I might have to call on my shikigami, if this keeps up.....I can't sense Seishiro-san's consciousness yet." Subaru thought, just barely shielding himself when 'Seishiro' used his trench coat to repel yet another attack. It was when 'Seishiro' started using illusions that Subaru finally located the older man's consciousness. "It has been right in front of me all along! Why hadn't I been able to sense it till now?!" Subaru wondered, as his other self fought his way free."You can stop using illusions against me. There's no point. I've been held captive by the sakura for so long.....ever since that day....." 'Subaru' said, emotionlessly, as the real Subaru moved in closer to them."Kamui, the Dragon of Earth, told me that I'm the only one who can grant your heart's true desire. And, what's more, he also told me that it won't be what I think it is. So your one true desire....It isn't to kill me and avenge your sister?" 'Seishiro' asked. Before the other 'Subaru' could reply, however, the real Subaru spoke up."What did you do to Hokuto-chan, Seishiro-san?" Subaru asked. For a moment, 'Seishiro' froze, his eyes getting a distant, dream-like look in them before he responded."I killed her." 'Seishiro' said, softly."No you didn't. In fact, she's waiting for both of us to wake up in the hospital. This is just a dream, Seishiro-san." Subaru informed, hoping he was getting through to the other onmyoji."Is it? Is this just a dream? Or is it a horrible reality I can't escape from?" Seishiro asked, as the dreamscape started to crack and crumble from all around them."It's a dream. A terrible dream,.....but a dream nonetheless. I'm the real Subaru standing before you, and I want to help you find your way back." Subaru stated, as Seishiro's appearance reverted into the one he was used to seeing, complete with glasses."Subaru-kun?" Seishiro asked, sounding as though he was becoming aware of the younger onmyoji for the first time."Hai?" Subaru replied."You've won." Seishiro whispered, as the dreamscape of the Rainbow Bridge vanished completely, leaving only Subaru and Seishiro standing there."Won what?" Subaru asked, now very confused. Seishiro smiled, warmly."Just a little bet, that's all. You'd best go.....Hokuto-chan is waiting for you." Seishiro said."What about you?" Subaru asked, hesitant now to leave his friend's side."I'll be along shortly. Go on." Seishiro urged."I'll take your word for it, Seishiro-san." Subaru murmured. With that said, Subaru carefully withdrew from Seishiro's mind."Thank you, Subaru-kun." Seishiro thought, before he did as he had promised. Hokuto snapped to attention when she heard her younger brother groan."Subaru!" Hokuto shouted, overjoyed that he had returned safely."Ouch.....not so loud, Hokuto-chan.....I've got a headache." Subaru muttered, wincing when the afternoon sunlight struck his now-sensitive eyes."Sorry." Hokuto murmured, lowering her voice so she wouldn't inadvertently make Subaru's headache worse. They both froze when a soft chuckle was heard from the man on the bed."That is a sound I have missed.....Hokuto-chan's voice...." Seishiro whispered, as he slowly opened his eyes and smiled at the twins."Sei-chan! You're awake!" Hokuto said, as tears of joy started to cascade down her face."Yes.....and glad to be out of that nightmare.....Thank goodness it was only a dream.....and you're really here, alive." Seishiro murmured,

molasses-brown eyes showing a hint of relief as well."I should be saying the last part, Sei-chan. I didn't think you were ever going to wake up! I'm so glad you didn't die on us!" Hokuto gushed, too relieved at this point to wipe away the tears that were still running freely down her cheeks. She was surprised when Seishiro gently put a hand to her face, brushing away her tears."Don't cry. I'm here.....I am not going to die anytime soon. You have my word on that." Seishiro vowed, quietly."Good. If you did die, I'll just call you back and make you my shikigami." Hokuto warned. Both Seishiro and Subaru arched an eyebrow."Hokuto-chan, shikigami are always animals.....you know that." Subaru said, matter-of-factly."Shut up!" Hokuto shouted, getting a flinch from Subaru and a snicker from Seishiro. Some things just never changed.....and that was how Seishiro preferred it.Owari