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without further ado, scroll down to view the samples!

characters: kaveh (genshin impact), alhaitham (genshin impact)

relationship: romantic

What was it like, being in love?

Kaveh imagined it would be different.

Something like hands held right before a moon-framed confession.

Something like those easy words of “I love you” and “stay safe, darling” said gently before departing to work, hearts longing to return quickly to the houses that held their real homes.

Something like fruit-flavored kisses and homemade breakfast on lazily sun-lit mornings and movie nights falling asleep on the other’s shoulder, waking up with a stiff crick in your neck, and “this reminded me of you” notes tucked in the cracked spines of well-loved poetry books.

But, no, it was different. And Kaveh didn’t mind.

Being in love was more like drunken confessions in front of a home they shared, just their own.

More like “take care of yourself, dear” hidden within the lines of “you work too hard, for someone who gets paid so little”, complete with a smile and a kiss.

More like songs sent with no accompanying message other than the lyrics in tangled melodies and lilting voices.

More like a quiet, still night doing work separately yet somehow together, the only music in their ears the soft scratch of pencil on paper and the slow, leisurely flip of the pages of a book.

Alhaitham hums low in his throat, flipping another page. “You’re quiet. That’s unlike you. What’s on your mind?”

Kaveh grins at his sketchbook, the lines sprouting from his pencil like the sweet-scented flowers that Tighnari sometimes brought when he visited. “You. Of course.”

The Scribe shifts closer on the bed. It lets out a faint noise of protest as he leans, peering over Kaveh's shoulder.
"You drew me."

"Wonderfully observant, aren't you, now?" Kaveh teases. Alhaitham rolls his eyes and leans his head on Kaveh's shoulder. His weight is comfortable and warm, achingly familiar. They fit together well, but not perfectly. Kaveh likes this about them.

"You made me all pretty," Alhaitham says. His voice is soft and twice as warm as his body.

"Of course I did. That's just you," is Kaveh's easy reply.

Alhaitham huffs, teasingly annoyed, but he reaches around to turn Kaveh's head towards his. His lips are curved into a smile where his mouth meets Kaveh's.

Yes, it was different. But he couldn't mind in the slightest.

characters: astaroth (oc), alcor (oc)

relationship: platonic (they become best friends)

notes: astaroth can teleport through the shadows (which is what he does to get away from alcor) and she can do the same

The strange girl gave him the stink eye, tucking her rat into her sleeve gently. She gave the little lump a soft pat before rounding on Astaroth.

“I had it under control, princeling,” she insisted, crossing her arms and glaring. He winced, hoping the rat hadn’t just been crushed.

“Don’t call me that.”

“Don’t come up and try to save me. I could’ve handled that stupid punk.”

“Are you kidding— so, what, you wanted me to just stand there and watch?” Annoyance sparked through him. *Ungrateful little—*

“Or turn around and walk the other way. Seriously, it doesn’t matter. I’m fine, and Dookie would’ve been fine, too. You think I’m weak? Is that what it is?” she demanded, her black eyes glinting defiantly. Her hand drifted down towards the bold outline of a knife at her belt.

“When did I say that? And, I’m sorry, Dookie?”

Her face split into a grin, surprising Astaroth. Her hand dropped. “It’s a funny story, really. See, there was this one day I’d had a lot of ice cream, and there was this bathroom, and I-”

“Alright, that’s enough,” Astaroth cut in, mildly horrified. “I’m not standing here and listening to you insult me. Or finish this gods-awful story. Goodbye.” Without another word, he turned and headed back the way he’d come. Next time, he’d truly think twice before sticking his nose in any business involving others.

“Wait, no! Are you serious? You’re gonna interrupt my fight with no qualms but you won’t let me finish my story? You suck, little prince, you know that? No fun, no fun, no fun.”

Astaroth stopped, and the girl bumped into his back with a little *oof*. She grinned up at him when he turned to her.

“First of all, I don’t know you. Stop following me. And second of all, do you ever shut up?”

“You’re no fun *and* you’re mean. And no, I don’t shut up, not if I can help it.” She stuck her tongue out at him, then smiled and held out her hand. “My name’s Alcor, I moved here last week. It’s nice to meet you!”

He sighed, ignoring her extended hand. “Nice to meet you, Alcor. Now, I’m going to go train, if you don’t mind. See you around,” he said, pointedly facing away from her and walking away, faster this time.

“Training? Cool, I’ll come. I haven’t gotten anything else to do, anyhow. Woah, an axe? That’s awesome. Can I hold it? Oh, I know! Wanna trade? You can take my knife if you want. Great Creator, you walk fast. Is this where the training rooms are? I haven’t seen it. Hey, wait up! What are you doing?”

Astaroth walked directly into the shadows flickering across the wall. He winced inwardly at the pain, but forced himself to keep walking, resurfacing in the library.

“Ooh, a library! This is awesome!”

He watched with horror as Alcor emerged from the bookshelf next to him, still grinning.

It seemed that he wouldn’t be getting rid of her so easily.

characters: mu qing and feng xin (tian guan ci fu / heaven official's blessing)

relationship: romantic

“Good night!” Xie Lian chirped. He blew out the candle that lit up their room in the inn, plunging them into darkness.

Awkwardly, Feng Xin did his best to press as far away from Mu Qing as possible.

“Move over. I can barely lie down,” Mu Qing hissed.

“I can’t move over! If I move anymore, I’m going to fall!”

“Then fall!”

“A-Xin? Qing-er? Are you two okay?”

Their arguing ceased immediately. “Yes, Dianxia,” Feng Xin called.

They held their breath until they heard Xie Lian grow quiet once again.

“Look,” Feng Xin whispered finally, “if we both want to fit, we’ll... we’re going to have to cuddle.”

Dead silence.

“Mu Qing...?”

“I hate you,” was the response he heard, before he was yanked closer.

Feng Xin stifled his yelp, allowing Mu Qing to drag him over. He found himself facing Mu Qing’s cascade of unbound black hair, his body inches away from his own. There still wasn’t enough space.

“... I’m sorry. May I...?”

“Shut up and just do it,” Mu Qing snapped. Was it Feng Xin’s imagination, or were the tips of his ears red?

Gingerly, he wrapped his arms around Mu Qing's middle and pulled himself closer until their bodies were hovering barely a hair away from one another. He tried not to breathe in too deeply, holding his body perfectly still.

"Must you lay there like a statue? It's like cuddling with a fucking rock," Mu Qing informed him cruelly.

"You're the one who threatened to off me if I touched you."

"Well, it's a bit too late for that, don't you think?" Mu Qing asked sarcastically.

Before Feng Xin could think of something to say, Mu Qing was moving backwards, his head leaning into the curve of Feng Xin's neck. His hands moved to clasp over Feng Xin's own, and he pulled him closer.

Mu Qing was shockingly warm and his hair smelled entirely too good for Feng Xin's sanity to remain intact. He screwed his eyes shut, trying not to think of the way their bodies fit together perfectly, like two pieces of the universe's evil idea of a puzzle, or that Mu Qing had relaxed almost entirely, his presence softening in a way Feng Xin had never witnessed, or that their breathing was syncing up unconsciously. Mentally, he counted to ten, then back down. Then up again, just for good measure.

"Feng Xin," Mu Qing whispered, and his voice wasn't as sharp as it was before.

"Hmm?" he hummed, eyes opening despite the fact that no one could see him, and Mu Qing sighed.

"I don't... I don't really hate you. You know that, right?"

"Oh," Feng Xin said, then tried to fish around for a response before Mu Qing changed his attitude. "Yeah. I know."

"Okay. Well... okay." Mu Qing went silent.

Feng Xin didn't have anything else to say either, so he closed his eyes.

Silently, he prayed that they wouldn't find a better room the next night, and as many nights as they could manage.

characters: hua cheng and xie lian (tian guan ci fu / heaven official's blessing)

relationship: romantic

Given the noises and scents emitting from the kitchen of their apartment, Xie Lian's cooking wasn't going... conventionally well.

Hua Cheng didn't mind in the slightest, though, humming to himself softly as he twirled his chopsticks expertly around his long fingers. He'd offered his help already, as usual, and Xie Lian had declined, wanting to surprise him with some kind of odd, inventive meal, as usual.

He enjoyed being able to help Xie Lian in every way, but he didn't argue too much about the cooking matter. Xie Lian was the first and only person who deigned to cook for him, and he seemed to take pleasure in preparing meals, so who was Hua Cheng to argue?

Tapping his chopsticks against the wood of their low-set dinner table gently, Hua Cheng tried to contemplate what Xie Lian had made today. It was an impossible endeavor based on smell alone, but he tried regardless, calling out guesses to amuse his husband.

"Is it... stew?"

"Nope," Xie Lian called back over the sound of sizzles.

Hua Cheng considered the noises. "Is it... meat?"

"Wrong!"

"Really? Then, is it-"

A light laugh from the kitchen instantly warmed Hua Cheng's heart. "Stop guessing, San Lang! Let me surprise you for once."

"Oh, I'm always surprised by your cooking," Hua Cheng replied sincerely, earning him another laugh.

"I'm almost done, okay? Just wait another minute or two," Xie Lian told him.

Instantly, Hua Cheng rose from his seat on the floor. “Does gege want help carrying plates to the table?”

“I’m alright!” Xie Lian chirped. A series of sharp clatters met Hua Cheng’s ears and he winced, concerned. “Okay, close your eyes.”

Hua Cheng obeyed, covering his good eye with one hand. Soft footsteps announced the arrival of the martial god, followed by the sound of two plates being set down gracefully on the table in front of him.

“You can open your eyes now,” Xie Lian told him, and he moved his hand away.

The dish was, simply put, a monstrosity. Purple and pink bubbles popped at the surface of a thick, strange substance speckled with starbursts of orange and yellow. Equally horrible was the smell, pungent and awful. Hua Cheng looked up at his husband, seated to his left, with a grin.

“What is it called?”

“I call it ‘Dreams of Summer Nights Passed’,” Xie Lian replied.

Hua Cheng nodded affirmatively, picking up a spoon and stirring it through the plate. Beneath the pink and purple substance was a densely packed white... rock?

“And what’s in it?” Hua Cheng chipped away at the rock for a bite. He brought it up to his lips with a playful smile.

“It’s rice and strawberry curry. I put carrots and corn in it, too. Look, Ruoye helped me cut the carrots into neat pieces!”

Hua Cheng placed the bite in his mouth, chewing slowly. He scraped away at the rice-rock for another bite, mixing it with the curry again.

“It’s good,” he said when he’d finished chewing. “I like it. It’s one of your best.”

Xie Lian beamed at him and pulled his own plate closer to himself. “I’m glad you like my cooking, San Lang,” he told the Ghost King happily, spearing a carrot with the sharp end of his chopsticks.

“Of course I do. What’s not to like about it?”

The god gave him a half-amused, half-exasperated look. “Do you not remember what happened to poor Quan Yizhen?” He popped the carrot into his mouth and chewed thoughtfully.

“Well, it wasn’t your fault that he wasn’t strong enough to handle your food. I, for one, will never ever be sick of, or from, your cooking.”

“Does San Lang promise?” Xie Lian teased.

“Of course, gege,” was his easy response, and he prepared another bite. “I promise.”

Xie Lian grinned at him and Hua Cheng grinned back, savoring the taste of the strange curry and Xie Lian’s happiness.