

Beyond Love Existence

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Chapter 4 – Emperor’s palace

The gate and the walls surrounding Zhaomay were getting bigger and bigger for each step the horse took. Ling Chang had never been outside Shinobe before but her father Xiao Chang had told her many storied about the town while her mother had told of her time inside the palace as a concubine for the emperor. A few tears ran down her check as she thought of them but she smiled too because she had reached the completed her mother’s last request. “We are here” Hui Wen said and pointed at the gate. Since the attack on the stranger, there had been silence between them but the road had become more alive making up to their silence. The rain had stopped too and the sun had reappeared. “How is your belly?” Hui Wen asked suddenly and Ling Chang could feel it rumble a bit of hunger as it had been 2 and half day since her last meal because she did not have time for breakfast before the escape but the injuries had upper hand and every time the horse hit the ground, it all hurt like hell. “Just fine” she lied because she wanted to seem strong to Hui Wen after he had promised her to help her get revenge. “Just a bit hungry now after not eating for days” She continued. The road was now full of people and the guards was working hard making sure that no one entered without the right papers. Hui Wen stopped and stepped of the horse before turning against Ling Chang “Stay here, while I go talk to the guards so we can get inside” and turned back and started to walk against the guards. Ling Chang watched as he walked without care about the other people in the queue and just pushed himself forward. “Excuse me, please good sir, excuse me” he said and most people did not care much but suddenly a man yelled “You have to wait like everyone else” and the man took a hard grip in Hui Wen who tried to walk on but the man was too strong. “I said you have to wait like everyone else” the man repeated with the same volume of voice. Hui Wen looked at him and nodded “I am sorry, but have to reach the emperor as I have very important news for him so please let me go” the man looked at Hui Wen before letting go. “Sure, why not but you still have to wait like everybody else” he yelled once more and the guards who was busy with the man in front of the line started to watch the two men. Hui Wen wanted to say something but the man continued “If you are such important to the emperor himself then why are you waiting in the line with us, Your Majesty” which made the nearby people laud of them and another man said “Yeah, would you like this apple” before throwing it against Hui Wen and Ling Chang could not make herself watch anymore but suddenly hiss between the people was heard and when she looked again Hui Wen had drawn his sword and cut the apple in half. The men stood speechless and the man who

had thrown the apple even stopped breathing as he suddenly got nervous about what would happen next. The guards noticed the silence between the people and looked directly at Hui Wen who still had the sword pulled but slowly started pointing it back. "Now my dear friends, would you mind allowing me to reach the guards a bit quicker than before our little fight" Hui Wen said with a gentle but deterrent voice. The apple man just nodded gentle and the people who had watched the scene made an opening all the way to the guards who finally have understood what had happen. "We do not tolerate such tricks" the leader of the guards said with a firm voice while Hui Wen came closer to them while the line closed behind him. "I know you do not, but I have an urgent matter to the emperor and before you tell me to explain it to you, I cannot discuss the matter with you as you will know soon enough" The guard looked at him with eyes as firm as his voice "I do not care if you was the emperor's lost brother back to conquer the world, you are not getting past here without giving me info or that the emperor demanding for you and since he is all the way at the palace there is no chance he will come down here for a little ant like yourself" Ling Chang could see as Hui Wen got more and more red in his face and suddenly she remembered the medallion and started searching for it in the pocket while hoping she would not be too late. In the meantime was Hui Wen looking at the guard leader directly in the eyes while opening the mouth a few times but no words left his mouth before a last time, he opened and almost yelled directly in the face of the guard. "Do you have any idea of who you are talking to?" He asked but before the guards had any chance of answering he answered himself. "I am Hui Wen, the grandmaster for the emperor himself and I am sure he is expecting me if he knew what info I hold, so for the last time, let me and my follower enter the town and palace now" The guards looked at each other for a second before the leader nodded and they all pulled their swords, making the surrounding people take a few steps back and talking loudly of who Hui Wen was and how he was going against all they knew. Back at the horse had Ling Chang found the medallion and she tried to get the attention of Hui Wen and the guards but the noise from the people around them made it impossible to get through. She yelled louder but it did not help at all as the people just taking it as screams for fight so they too started yelling. Ling Chang fell back on the horse back and rested for a bit but before she were ready to yell again, she got an idea, she had to get to them before the fight broke out. She took a deep breath and was about to step down from the horse when a loud yell from a nearby man scared the horse and in the progress made Ling Chang drop the medallion down on the ground. Ling Chang

forgot all about her injuries or her surroundings and jumped down from the horse to get the medallion. In the next, the time almost stood still as she picked upon the medallion from the ground and was about to move her body against the fight when she felt a shadow above her and turned around only to see a horse rearing in front of her. The time started again and before Ling Chang could block and save herself the owner of the horse landed directly on top of her. She watched the man for a few seconds and his look made her heart beat run faster than rain on a stormy night. He tried to say something but there were no sound and her mind wanted to make her scream or move but instead of any her body filled with pain from the landing and the bandages became red as the evening sun before she blacked out. "Help her" the man yelled loud when he noticed the blood and his voice penetrated the mess and soon the guards and Hui Wen was at the scene. The leader of the guards caught the medallion in her hand and replied "Why did you not show us this?" And blamed Hui Wen while being busy bowing to the crown prince Jun Chen who were the stranger who had landed on Ling Chang. "I forgot all about it because of the important news I am bringing" Hui Wen said before bowing himself. Jun Chen looked at them "We do not have time for this, take her to my room in the palace and let us here what important news you bring" Ling Chang opened her eyes and felt something heavy at her legs, making her want to scream but she managed to remember what had happen before her voice went loud and instead she started to look down at her bandages, they were not red and her pain was almost gone too. She looked farther down and noticed the course of the heavy was a stranger but he was fast asleep so she did not mind much. He looked good at what she could see from the evening sunlight. She tried to move but the pain in her chest grown so she decide to go back to sleep when suddenly her belly rumbled loud. The man who had been sleeping at her legs woke up laughing loud "Sorry, I know it is rude to laugh" he managed to say while still laughing which sounded so funny that Ling Chang started laughing too even that the pain tried to stop her. They stopped laughing and the man yelled "Guards" and before Ling Chang could say a word two guards entered the room. "Our guest has awoken so let Hui Wen and my father know... I also want you to bring us food as she sounds very hungry" the guards nodded and left the room in a hurry leaving the all alone in the room again. "That was the second important things, now for the most important thing, who are you? The man said and looked directly at Ling Chang who started to become more and more red in her face as she was far from used to talking to men around her age. Still the adventures so far had harden her and she returned his look and replied "I am Ling Chang, the emperor's most

trusted general was my father, Xiao Chang while my mother was a former concubine of the emperor” she held a break before continuing “I have never been at the palace before and after your commanding I think I am there now but who are you?” The young man could not stop laughing by her way to speak but replied “No need to call the emperor for the emperor as he is my father Jiang Chen and I am Jun Chen, the only heir to the throne if we don’t count my father’s brother but he is long gone so no worries about him.” Ling Chang did not know if she should be happy or sad as a feeling told her that the emperor’s brother was all behind this but before she could say anything a servant came running inside with a noodle soup for her and her belly rumbled loud again. “Thanks” she managed to say before the servant was all gone again. Normally she would care about things like that but today she were to hungry so started to fill her mouth with the lovely noodles. “How long since your last meal?” Jun Chen asked while almost laughing again of acting. “ 2 days I guess, the last I remember was you landing on me” the words made her set down her soup for a while, as she started searching for the medallion and got a trouble face as she could not find it anywhere. “Are you looking for this?” Jun Chen said while holding the medallion in the broken strap. Ling Chang took it quickly with out a word and returned to her noodles before it finally hit her to say something “Thanks for keeping it while I was out” He looked at her and wanted to know more but the doors opened and in came the emperor and Hui Wen.

Ling Chang almost choke on the noodles and only a quick hit in the back from Jun Chen made her breath again. The noodles flew out and a few landed in front of the emperor who looked down at them before bending down and picked it up. Hui Wen looked chocked at Ling Chang who almost tried to hide that the noodles was hers before the emperor smile and replied “You most be starving when I can follow a trace of noodles from the door to the bed you are in, Ling Chang” Ling Chang looked at him and wanted to say something and almost did before she remembered to swallow her food first. “I am sorry, my emperor... I ” more did she not manage to say before he held up a hand to silence her. “While you are here, I don’t want you to call me, my emperor, but rather Jiang Chen as your father and mother was very respected here and I am very sad to hear that they have left this world and travel to the Isle of Gods. Please allow me to give you the same respect as your parents even it is your first time here” Jiang Chen said with the sweetest voice Ling Chang had ever heard. She looked at him and could see tears had slowly started to run down his checks which made Ling Chang want to say something but no words left her mouth and she found the silence awkward and

before she knew it, she were eating again. Hui Wen was the first to break the silence “I have told the emperor, your story that you told me when we meet and I am sorry I know this will be hard for you but we have to return to the past once more” Ling Chang looked up from the noodles and without any pressure replied “How do you want me to return to my past once more when I have already told you all I know?” She returned to her noodles and suddenly started to feel more sleepy than before she started. “What have you done to my food?” She managed to ask before dropping the last of the noodles on the ground which scared Jun Chen a bit as he did not know the plan. “If you hurt her, I will kill you” Jun Chen trying to hide his feelings for her but still enough for him to pull his sword and look directly at Hui Wen. “Sorry you had to see this Jun Chen, but rest assured I would never hurt Ling Chang and this is only so we can know who our enemy are” Hui Wen said with a calm voice looking directly at Ling Chang and not minding the sword at all. Jun Chen removed the sword and put it back in its palace before leaving the room. “Will it hurt?” Ling Chang managed to say while not any fear in her voice as she believed every word of Hui Wen. Hui Wen started to gently and lovingly stroke his hand over her hair while she closed her eyes. “No, my child” he said before her eyes closed.

“I hereby call for Oryu, the lady of the underworld to guide Ling Chang to the past of her parents so we can get a glimpse of our enemy” Hui Wen spoke with a deep voice, making Ling Chang open her eyes again but she were not at the palace anymore. She were inside a forest and she watched the sun slowly rising but no shadow. A noise from men was heard and she walked against the sound and scared birds until she came to a circle of men. Suddenly a bird flew right against her, making her close her eyes and cover her head with her arms. Nothing happened and she opened her eyes and noticed the bird was already past her and far away. She turned around again and watched the men yell louder and louder, making her interested in what was going on. Luckily there was a small opening between the men and she watched two men fight against each other when a sudden cold feeling flashed down her back. One of the fighters was her father and the fight was not going so well and she started cheering for him as she hoped that it would turn the match around. The rain started to fall but Ling Chang did not feel the water and yelled even louder when suddenly an arrow flew through the air and more started to follow, killing the men around her like flies. A young man she did not know went over and cut the thought of her father making her scream loud but to her surprise no one care or even noticed her. The army started to march on from the screen and Ling Chang knew it was on the way

to attack the town now but a strange voice kept her at the screen. "Over here" it dry voice repeated over and over. She followed it until she were directly above the body of her father and she wanted to scream again when she noticed the his mouth was moving and saying the words. "It is good to see you, my little lotus flower" he suddenly said changing from the "Over here" he had repeated and she knew he were speaking to her even it was impossible,. "I am sorry that I did not get to meet you on the hill, but I will always be in your heart" he caught a bit blood before continuing "I know you have been sent here by my old master Hui Wen to find out who the enemy is" Ling Chang could feel tears growing in her eyes. "I do not care who the enemy is, I just want to be with you and mother" Ling Chang almost yelled of him. Xiao Chang's arm moved gentle and slow up to her eyes and dried to first tears off before continuing "I know you want to be here, but trust me, you are more important alive" Ling Chang eyes started to run just as fast as the rain falling "I am sorry, lotus flower but time is running out and the enemies you are looking for are the Chensiblings, daughter and sons of Shi Chen, the emperor's brother, I just fought who they killed together with me and my men... Remember that when you wake up" and suddenly all went dark and Ling Chang wished to be staying but a voice appeared "Close your eyes and return to the land of living". She wiped her tears and remembered her fathers words before closing her eyes as commanded. The voice returned just as she had closed them,"Opened them now" and she did but instead of being back at the palace, she were inside her mother's bedroom and weird noise were coming from the bed together with screams. "No... NO... NOOOOOO, please stop" a voice yelled and she knew it were her mother, getting raped by a man. Ling Chang looked around and noticed a sword from the soldier and went over to pull it but her finger flew thought it like air. Once more tears started to run down her cheeks like it was not enough for her to see her father's death. The screams from her mother made her try again and again to pull the sword from the ground and she had almost given up when a tear hit the sword, making a tiny metallic sound. In the next she grasped the sword by the handle and without much thought she penetrated the rapist, making her mother get a small shower form the blood. "I saved you mother" Ling Chang almost silence but the joy was short as in the next the house started burning and Ling Chang closed her eyes because of the heat. She wanted to scream in the heat but as fast as it came, it were gone and she opened her eyes again and noticed her mother standing in front of her with all her burn marks. "You was not supposed to see this and like your father said you are most more important alive than death so please leave and return to the earth again"

her mother's gentle voice spoke and the voice who had demanded her to close her eyes returned. She nodded to her mother and for a second she could see her father beside her mother, kissing her forehead before Ling Chang closed her eyes again. She opened her eyes and with a quick movement, she managed to get a sword from a guard who had been at the opening to the room. The movement had surprised Jiang Chen, Jun Chen and even Hui Wen who all stood with open mouth when she pointed the guard's sword against them and yelled "Promise me that I am never going to be sent back like that again", Hui Wen tried to say something, making her yell even louder "I said promise me, if not you can forget all about the enemies or whatever you sent me back to figure out" Hui Wen looked at Jun Chen and Jiang Chen before returning his eyes at Ling Chang before clearing his throat. "I promise, I mean we promise" and the others nodded in agreement. Ling Chang stood for a moment thinking if she should end her life and return to her parents or live the important life that they thought she had. She shook her head and dropped the sword "I have the answer for the question and there is not one enemy but three, Mei Chen, Gang Chen and Li Chen, the kids of your later brother, my dear emperor" and just as the words had left her mouth, she fell to the ground in pain, barely missing the sword in progress. Hui Wen was the first to be next to her "Sorry my child, I did not mean to hurt you in anyway" he said with sadness in his voice before he left her up gently while the bandages turned more and more red. They reached the bed and a servant came running with new bandages, making the three men and the guard leave the room for her to have some privacy. Outside they started to discuss their new knowledge and emperor Jiang Chen was the first to start "I thought it was your job to kill my brother so we would have peace in the country" he snapped at Hui Wen who was wise to return the words with kindness "I am sorry I have failed you my lord but I have searched entire countries the past 20 years searching for him and beside he is the least of our concerns now" he replied. Jun Chen wanted to say something too but emperor Jiang Chen came first and snapped again "I know but still he killed my beautiful wife after you almost caught him doing the escape after my father's death and now I don't have the pleasure of killing myself" this time Hui Wen was less kind and snapped back "I know, but look at this" he pulled up and showed a scar from the fight he had gotten the day many years ago. "I know I failed you back then and I might have failed you again but I did my best my lord and more importantly you are my friend" He continued while a single tear ran down left his cheek. Emperor Jiang Chen closed his eyes for a moment and returned to his calmness before the discussion. "Sorry my friend, I just lost a good man today

to my brother and I cannot do anything about it because his own kids killed him, so let focus on them” Hui Wen nodded but Jun Chen was exploding instead “Why were you lying to me, father?” He almost yelled at Jiang Chen who for a moment looked confused before his face changed back and replied “Now is not the time to discuss that” he tried with a mix of firm and sweet voice but Jun Chen was almost red as blood and snapped back “I asked you, why father?” Jiang Chen stood for a moment before he took a deep breath and started “I...” he managed to say before he started crying and continued in the most soft voice all evening “I wanted you to protect you from the tragedy that hurt me so much, I am so sorry my child, please forgive me” Jun Chen looked at his father and the crying returned him to his calmness and tears started running down his cheeks too. “Sorry father, I could not handle it in my head” he said almost voiceless. The servant left Ling Chang room and after the air cleared between the men they all entered the room again. The emperor took the word first “Sorry I force you to find out our enemies without giving you a chance to say yes or no” Ling Chang looked at him but did not say anything. He continued “Long ago, I lost my wife to my brother because he killed her as he escaped this palace and since then I have searched for him as I feared what would happen once he returned” Ling Chang opened her mouth but did not say a word before closing it again. “Your father was the one saving me as you might know already” he continued and this time Ling Chang did not stay silent “That gives you no right to perform this, whatever you did against me was without asking” she yelled loudly and wind blew through the window killing most of the lights except for strongest flames. “I understand your reaction but we had no time to spare, as we needed to know who we were up against.” He continued while trying to sound calm. Jun Chen broke in “We are all sorry about it” but his decision to join the talk backfired as Ling Chang yelled back “I thought you care about me and all you did was making me sleep with the help of my hunger and don’t get me started on you Hui Wen” as her eyes caught the movement of Hui Wen. Suddenly a white pidgeon landed in the window and Ling Chang was about to yell of it to make it disappear when Jiang Chen almost fell over the bed in attempt to catch it. The pidgeon jumped just as he was close to catch it and as he hit the ground with a little bang, it just landed on him and started acting like it was laughing off him.

“Get that bird” Jiang Chen said a bit gentle while not moving much and Hui Wen took a noodle from Ling Chang’s noodle soup and tried catch the pidgeon’s interest and soon it jumped against him. It quickly caught and ate the noodle which quickly made it fall asleep there were still sleeping powder left in the soup.

“What did that poor bird, do any one of you” Ling Chang yelled from the bed while Jiang Chen stood up from the floor and looked at Ling Chang before answer. “I know you are angry but would you mind stop yelling of us, as I have explained why we did it and that we are sorry about the way we did it” he tried to say with a calm voice and then he looked at Hui Wen who had figure out what was wrong and had already found the small note at the birds left foot. It was only one word but the eyes of Hui Wen told them everything they needed to know. “War” he said with a low voice and the others looked at him with seriously eyes, and as he caught them starring he became confused if they had heard him or not so he repeated himself “The note is saying war” and held his breath while Jiang Chen almost teared the note in pieces by reaching out after it and in the next, it felt like the time itself slowed down as soldier came running inside the room yelling loudly but no-one understood a single word from his month before the time became normal again. “We are under attack” he yelled again and this time the emperor reacted and yelled to the guards in the room “Don’t stand there, go defend the palace” and they ran out following the soldier. Ling Chang watched some lights from outside the window and was suddenly getting flashbacks from the escape from the hill to her home not long ago and every bone and muscle in her body froze. “Get her out of here” Jiang Chen yelled and Jun Chen took a firm grip in her and started pulling her out of the room while Hui Wen and Jiang Chen force their way between the soldiers running to their places. “Wake up, Ling” Jun Chen yelled while pulling her with him and when she finally woke up they were in the throne room, in the centre of the castle with the ministers yelled in fear of their lives. “I did not expect them to be able to control the army and attack us that fast” Jiang Chen said while looking like he had seen a ghost. Hui Wen just nodded and pulled his sword so he could defend them in case, it became necessary. Ling Chang suddenly felt a rage inside her just as the time in the forest where they had been attacked and Hui Wen had been captured. ”Give me, my sword” she yelled in a strange voice and Hui Wen looked confused at her but quickly threw her the sword before pulling a new one from his belt. Suddenly scream started to be heard and Ling Chang tried to attack but Jun Chen held her back and she almost tried to cut off his hand but returned to her normal self and dropped the sword. Jun Chen held her harder in her hand while he manage get the sword back, just as the first enemy soldier appeared in the room, making all the ministers yell louder and run around like headless chickens. The soldier did not managed to do any harm before he were cut down by Hui Wen but the blood flew and hit Ling Chang in the face which turned on her rage once more, just in time

for the group of enemy soldiers. This time, her powers was too strong for Jun Chen to hold her back and soon she was fighting one soldier after another. "We have to get to the stables to escape" Jiang Chen managed to say while watching the blood off enemy soldiers giving the floor a darker colour. More and more soldiers appeared in the room and they started to attack the defenceless ministers while Hui Wen started to fight a way to the doors leading to the stables. "Follow me" he yelled and all but Ling Chang started running against the exit. "You too, Ling Chang" he yelled again but her rage against the enemies made her seemly deaf and she just kept fighting like it was some sort of game for her. Hui Wen thought for a moment before he pointed at the doors "Jun Chen, Jiang Chen... you have to escape now" Jiang Chen started to run across the room against the doors, Hui Wen had pointed out while Jun Chen watched Ling Chang fight soldier after soldier. "Come on" Hui Wen yelled loudly and Jun Chen looked at him before yelling back "I am not leaving her here, all alone" and before Hui Wen could do anything had Jun Chen pulled his own sword and joined the fight with Ling Chang. A group of soldiers appeared in the door opening to the stables and Hui Wen feared the worst but Jiang Chen nodded while smiling "The backup is here" and the men started to run inside the room before started fight the enemy soldiers that came from the other side of the room leaving no soldiers for Ling Chang and Jun Chen. "No... do not take them all" a dying voice from Ling Chang managed to say before she fainted once again. Jun Chen and Hui Wen ran fast over to her and started to transport her to the doors while the soldiers around them started fighting harder and better than before. "Don't loose my sword or medallion" a drowsy Ling Chang said as the four of them exited the doors and were now in the halls on the way to the stables. "I will protect them with my life" Jun Chen replied her before taking them both and held her even more tightly. "Don't worry you two, we will escape soon" Jiang Chen managed to say from behind them, just as a major explosion destroyed the hallway. In the next was Jun Chen busy trying to get remove wood and tiles from the hallway to save his father while Ling Chang was all blacked out and Hui Wen tried to pull both of them away from them screen. "We have to escape now" Hui Wen yelled but Jun Chen resistance grew tougher for every attempt he did and he knew what had to do. He slapped Jun Chen in the face so hard that he movement and resistance died so quickly that they almost landed on top of Ling Chang who was laying lifeless on the ground. "We cannot save him now, and you know you are the next in line so we have to escape now" Tears started to run down the cheeks of Jun Chen who knew what Hui Wen was saying was true but still it was hard for him to lose his

father especially after the argument about his mother not long ago. "I cannot leave" he yelled loudly back at Hui Wen who prepared himself to slap again as he did not want to watch more time or energy on him resist. "I know, it is hard, child but believe me, your father did not want you to die for him like he just did for you" Hui Wen said while some soldiers could be heard screaming from inside the throne room. Some tiles started to move and Jun Chen almost race over to start removing them but just as he had managed to make a hole, a face appeared on the other side and it was not his father. The man yelled something he did not understand and Jun Chen knew that it was the good men who was coming but more likely the enemy so he ran back to Hui Wen and Ling Chang. "Sorry..." he managed to say before Hui Wen broke in "We don't have time for this now... Help me carry her so we can escape and no more resistance" Jun Chen just nodded and started carrying as he were ordered to and soon they were at the stables. A lightning started to cross the sky, showing them the few horses left in the stables who had not ran away in the explosion. "Take care of her and protect her with the sword you are carrying while I prepare some horse" Hui Wen said before running over to the nearest horse and started to get it ready for the trip away. Jun Chan looked at the way they had arrived there while the rain started to fall drop by drop until a major thunder rolled loudly. A soldier appeared but Jun Chen managed to fight him off easily before he yelled to Hui Wen "They are started to arrive, hurry" he yelled as Hui Wen ran over to the second horse without replying. Jun Chen turned back around and this time, two soldiers appeared but luckily a good one appeared too and they managed to finished them but off when an arrow penetrated the chest of the good soldier. "They have bows" Jun Chen yelled just as he felt a hand on his shoulder. He turned around and almost attacked when he noticed it were Hui Wen on a horse. "Get on the horse boy" Hui Wen said and turned the horse around while Ling Chang started grasping a bit as the rain hit her face. "Faster boy" Hui Wen yelled as an arrow flew between the two horse and as soon as Jun Chen were up, they started to run away from the palace which now had flames here and there.