

Forever Love

Von SephirothCrescent

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Kapitel 1:

„ 10 am – visit cadet training.“ This calendar entry made the great General Sephiroth moan. He had to do that every week and make sure to find new talents for SOLDIER. Today some new cadets would begin their training. He perfectly knew what would happen. Each of them would blush, stutter and get nervous with him being around. But appointment is appointment. He stood up, made sure his uniform looked correct and his Masamune was on the right place and then he went down to the training area. The young boys were already training their skills on the sword and he watched them quietly. Some were really clumsy and he wondered how they made it so far but he even noticed a few skilled ones.

After watching some minutes the SOLDIER who was leading that cadet class called them to greet the great General Sephiroth. They lined up and saluted him.

He began to walk and took a closer look on each cadet. They all looked at him with admiration and yet fear in their eyes. When Sephiroth came to the end of the line he stopped in front of a really tiny cadet who was trying to look away.

“He’s really small. How did he get a proper uniform with those tiny shoulders?”, he wondered.

“Face me.”, he ordered then.

He felt the cadet stiffen and then the young boy looked up to him.

“His face is really soft. Almost girlish. Wait.....?”

“What’s your name , Cadet?”

“Gab....Gabriel, Sir.”

„The voice...sweet. Can it be?”

“Cadet, see me in my office later.”

The eyes widened with a shocked expression and the cadet blushed.

Sephiroth turned around.

“Start your training again.”

He stood next to the teacher and watched them fight. His eyes lay on that Gabriel. He seemed to have problems with the weight of the huge sword but managed not to make it too obvious. Sephiroth was almost sure now. But how could that have happened?

Soon he went to his office again as lots of paperwork was waiting to be done. Before he got himself the folder of a certain cadet named Gabriel. That could be interesting. A small smile crossed his face.

It was late afternoon and he was annoyed by signing too many sheets of papers and putting them into folders while his coffee was getting cold, when he heard a knock in the door.

“Enter.”

A tiny figure in uniform and helmet appeared.

“Ah...Cadet Gabriel.”

The cadet saluted.

“Sir!”

“At ease. Sit down.”

He pointed towards a chair next to his desk.

Slowly the cadet took a seat.

“You can take your helmet off.”

The answer was a shaken head.

Sephiroth got up and positioned himself in front of that small person.

"Take it off. This is an order."

Hesitantly the cadet obeyed and an ocean of dark red hair was visible now. Long hair. And now Sephiroth was able to see the entire face, which was surrounded by cascades of the thick hair. Scared green eyes, almost as bright as his own, but without the Mako glance, looked at him shyly. Full lips were formed into a crooked smile.

Sephiroth walked around the cadet, inspecting every detail. Small shoulders, thin waist, not very muscular.

"Are you sure you aren't called Gabrielle?"

He stopped in front of the cadet to face him again. A deep blush burned on the cheeks.

"But Sir!"

"Do not dare to lie at me!"

"How did you find out Sir? If I may ask?"

"Ever looked into a mirror? I wonder how you made it this far without being recognized as a girl."

"Sir....I....!"

"Didn't your roommates realize it?"

"I live alone, Sir. I was lucky."

"Why did you come here?"

The blush in her face got even redder.

"I.....I wanted....wanted to meet you, Sir."

She was here to meet him? She had risked so much? And she had really made it?

"Why?"

He took his seat again and sighed

"Coffee?", he asked her, not wanting to scare her even more. He had found out about her secret and he didn't want to get furious now. He was too curious.

She nodded then began to explain.

"Well, I wanted to meet you because I could not forget the day I first saw you. I was a child, seven years old, and you came to visit our town. I thought I had seen an angel when you passed the street next to our house and I ran out to follow that angel. You soon noticed me and gave me a smile. Since that very moment I wanted to see you again. I couldn't forget you, Sir."

Slowly the memory came back to the General. He remembered the warm and curious eyes of that girl that was now sitting in front of him again.

"But why didn't you just come here? You don't have to join SOLDIER for seeing me."

She looked up. A somehow sad look was in her eyes, but also a little shimmer.

"You know, I admired your strength, your...uhm...beauty and grace. I wanted to become like you, because I didn't want to have to feel ashamed facing you again. But I failed. I am ashamed now. I was stupid. I am sorry for causing so much trouble, Sir."

She admires me? Wants to be like me?

Her green eyes fascinated him, her strong will. The tiny figure in front of him really managed to touch him somehow. All that trouble for him. He just couldn't be angry. He had to smile.

"It's ok. It's still your first day here. There isn't too much trouble."

"So you will expell me?" Her fearful eyes caught him again.

"Did I say so?"

She shook her head.

"Do you want to leave? I guess sword training must be hard for a female tiny as you."

She nodded.

"It's hard, but I can do it."

Another question wanted to be asked. She really had gotten the General curious.

"What did you do to hide the...uhm..female parts of your body?"

"Bandages."

She carefully pulled a bit of her uniform aside where shoulder becomes body and Sephiroth could see the white fabric.

"I guess it doesn't feel comfortable."

She nodded again. Blushed again.

"So I ask you again. Do you want to leave?"

"No Sir."

Her firm voice surprised him. She really had made her decision.

"So you'll stay. I won't tell anybody. But if someone else finds out there might be nothing I can do."

She stood up, looking at him.

"Thank you, General Sephiroth."

He just could stop himself giving her another warm smile. What happened to him?

She grabbed her helmet and twisted her hair under it again, ready to leave the office.

She saluted again.

Before she left the office she turned back and said in a quiet voice.

"I still admire you. Thank you." Then she rushed out of the room and left a very confused Sephiroth behind. He shook his head.

This girl is strange. Fascinating. Do I like her?

With a sigh he got himself another mug of coffee and sat down again, staring at her folder.

The next day began and against his usual habits he took the path to his office which leaded past the training field of the cadets. They already were fighting. His gaze searched Gabrielle. He was surprised to saw her fighting a muscular and tall boy. Seems that she found her own technique. She might not be as strong as a man but with her small weight she was much faster. With a smile upon his face he walked by, not being able to stop thinking about that girl.

When he came to the cadet homes he remembered her room number. 13. And somehow an odd idea made up itself in his head. He took out a small piece of paper and a pencil and wrote.

"9 pm. Come to appartement 01, SOLDIER quarter." He slid it through the gap between door and floor, then walked to his office, with a weird grin on his face. He was asking himself if he knew what he was doing.

Later that evening he was sitting on the comfortable couch in his huge appartement, now dressed in private clothing – a black sweater and black leather pants- when it knocked on his door. It was exactly 9 pm. He got up and opened the door.

"Sir."

"Come in Gabrielle. And don't be that formal. These are my private rooms, so you can relax. No one will kill you if you don't call me Sir." He smirked when she blushed furiously.

"Why did you want me to come?", she asked shyly.

"Well, I had to think a lot about you to be honest. I can't let a girl do all the hard stuff for the male cadets. So I made a decision."

A decision which he knew he didn't make only out of the goodness of his heart.

"As I almost drown in all the paper work I told the administration I need some help and as your folder says you are skilled with data work, it wasn't a great problem to convince them. So you will take part in the sword training and the classes but you don't need to do that mudd crawling and jogging stuff in the afternoons. You will work here and in my office. Is that ok?"

He pointed to his desk which was definitely overloaded with undone work.

"But... all that trouble for me. Sir, I....!" She blushed again.

"Thank you. I'll gladly accept your offer."

Sephiroth couldn't hide his content smile. He would see her everyday now. Why did this make him feel that happy? And he believed to see a happy glance in those shy eyes of Gabrielle. She did really seem to like him.

She prepared to leave again. Well, he somehow didn't want her to go that soon but he also didn't know what to say to make her stay. And he didn't want to order it. He walked with her to the door and could hold himself from quickly brushing through her hair and whispering:

"Be careful, ok?"

He felt his own cheeks burning and quickly withdraw his hand and stiffened to his General position.

"See you tomorrow, Cadet." He said formally.

"Aye, Sir." She walked away.

The next day, right after the cadet courses Sephiroth heard a soft knock in his office door.

"Enter."

"Reporting to duty, Sir!"

"Cadet Gabriel! That is fine! You can immediately start working!"

The General points to his overloaded desk with a devilish grin on his face.

Gabrielle stared on the chaos and her look told stories – she had no idea where to begin. The silver haired man had to suppress a chuckle.

"Well, perhaps it would be the best to try to sort all the sheets and then try to put them into the folders. I have to finish some reports for the President, but if you have a question please ask."

He sat down again, on another PC table and soon the sound of his fast typing filled the room.

While writing he always had his eyes on Gabrielle. She seemed to be really concentrated on her work and she always had a light blush on her face. Was she nervous being with him?

"Gabrielle?"

Woooooomps.....! She fell off the chair and was buried under the almost sorted sheets.

"NOOOOO!", she moaned as she would have to do all again.

The General had got up fast and was reaching out his hand to help her up.

"Sorry, Sir. Please forgive me for causing so much trouble. I am not worth that you give me such a special work! So clumsy...!"

Now he really had to laugh.

"Did I shock you this hard?"

She nodded.

"What did you want, Sir?"

Yes...what did he want? Um...

"Just wanted to ask what was left." He said too quickly, but she didn't realize that.

They both had to smile as they looked at the new mess of papers that had been created in the last minutes.

Suddenly Gabrielle's stomach made a weird sound.

Sephiroth raised an eyebrow.

"Didn't you have lunch?"

The tiny girl shook her head.

"No. I had to get to your office. But would you mind if I eat a bit now?"

"If you promise to finish the paperwork in a month!"

He got back to his computer, ready to finish his reports, when he felt a soft touch on his shoulder. He turned around once more to see Gabrielle standing behind him with a plate of really delicious looking Oreos.

"Sir, my mom just sent me those today. If you like one?"

Could he eat her Oreos? Self-made, fresh chocolate Oreos? But he was a General.

"I won't tell anyone!", the girl grinned suddenly.

Was his expression so easy readable? He should be more careful.

Quickly he got himself one of these divine biscuits and he really had to admit they were wonderful. But do not show it, Sephiroth!

"They are excellent, Cadet. Thank your mother."

"Aye, Sir."

In the same moment in which the General finished his cookie, there was another knock on the door and a Shinra official entered. Sephiroth had to deal with him in his other office room and Gabrielle got back to work again. When the official finally left again Sephiroth had to realize that it was already late and Gabrielle had finished cleaning his desk and was already gone for today. Well, it actually was late enough to quite work for that day. He sighed, locked the door of his office and went to his apartment.

Later that evening the girl managed to surprise him again. His doorbell rang and when he opened she stood there, still in Cadet uniform, but with a great package in her hands. He stepped aside to let her enter.

"Why and how did you come here?", Sephiroth asked curiously and even a bit annoyed because he didn't expect it.

She took off her helmet and smiled.

"Told the guard I had some folders for you I worked on that evening. And for the reason why I am here....."

She carefully opened the package and a mountain of Oreos appeared before the General's eyes.

"Well, Mom sent another pack this afternoon and these are too much just for me. And you said you liked them so I thought ..." she stopped in the middle of her sentence and blushed.

"Thank you Gabrielle. I appreciate them. Please make yourself feel at home. Do you want a tea? I have just made some."

Wait....he thanked her for cookies and invited her for tea? Perhaps he should go see the doctor soon. These actions weren't usual for him. Not at all. But what's said can't be changed anymore. And the Oreos were really convincing. He had to laugh about

himself.

When they sat together, drinking some hot green tea an odd silence occurred. The girl was just too shy to begin a conversation and the General wasn't used to have company except of other officials and soldiers working next to him. So what should he say to a young girl of whom he knew she admired him?

"So, um, how as your morning? Did class went well?"

Gabrielle looked up to him and slightly nodded.

"I am still alive, so it must have been ok. I know I will get better at fighting someday. If only those swords weren't that bulky. But I will make it!"

He had to grin at her statement and he perfectly knew why he loved his own sword, Masamune so much. It was a powerful and elegant weapon.

Suddenly Gabrielle spoke again.

"Though I must admit I totally failed in fighting without weapons. But I rather tell you myself than you have to read it in a report..." The last sentence was only a quiet mumbling and her cheeks were burning again.

"That doesn't surprise me, Gabrielle-san. You are much more smaller and honestly-you are weaker as you don't have so much muscles a male has. The only advice I can give to you is that you should concentrate on your speed. You can be very fast due to your light weight."

Her cheeks were tomato red again now but her eyes still laid on to his. He still couldn't imagine how that girl made it into the cadets' class. But he had to admit that he enjoyed her company and that the boring paperwork has gotten at least a bit more bearable with her making him smile so much. But was it right what he was doing? Was it even right what he was thinking or even feeling? And why on hell did he care so much? And since when did this happen to him?

He must have been deeply in his thoughts because he suddenly was pinched softly in the arm.

He shook his head and saw Gabrielle's sparkling emerald eyes before him.

"Sorry Sir, I just wanted to test if you were asleep." She bowed and took her seat again.

He smiled softly, though again he didn't know why.

"No, I am still awake. But as I know our days will start soon tomorrow I suggest we both should get some rest."

She nodded, picked up her helmet and prepared to leave.

"Goodnight, Sir."

Kapitel 2:

The next morning a depressed moan escaped from the General's mouth when he emptied his office mail box. A huge sepia coloured letter made an announcement:

" 1st Shinra Dance

Saturday, 20th of September, 9 am, Shinra Aula;

Company required. Please wear appropriate clothing."

He shot death glares at the letter, knowing he had to go there as one of the highest military officials. Shinra Dance. What an idiocy! But what worried him most wasn't that he would have to dance (he was certainly a good dancer) or that he would have to wear a tuxedo in which he would certainly look so good that all the Shinra ladies would stare at him – it was the two little words "Company required." . He didn't want to ask one of that stupid Shinra chicks to be his company and he didn't have that much private contacts.

With that familiar knock on the door an odd idea came to his mind. Could he ask her???

The General had been arguing with himself about that idea for the entire afternoon while Gabrielle tried to get some system into his paperwork.

He couldn't really ask her to accompany him to the dance, could he? What if somebody would recognize her? But on the other hand, there weren't that many females to choose upon. Actually there were none except her. And he needed company. What a vicious circle! What embarrassed him most was that he, the famous General, would have to ask a small girl with cadet rank to do him a favour. He smiled a crooked smile. No way out, Sephiroth!

The evening arrived soon and with it Gabrielle had done almost all the rough work. She put on her jacket and was already about leaving, when she heard his voice calling her again.

"Cadet, please come to see me in my office."

Had she done something wrong? Was he upset with her? She sighed and turned around once more, then walked into his private office room, where he already had taken a seat in the large leather chair.

She saluted.

The tall silver haired man stood up, with the hope not to show how nervous he actually was.

"Gabrielle, I have a request. Not for you as a cadet but for you as a woman."

Gabrielle blushed instantly hearing those words. He could not have been serious!!!

The General saw her blushing and noticed that his words could easily be understood wrong.

He laughed.

"No, not what you think, silly!"

He handed her the invitation to the dance and saw her blushing even more, ashamed for what came to her mind before.

"You really want me to accompany you to this dance? But I'm a cadet, Sir!"

"But no one knows you are female, so no one will think you are a cadet. It's easy. And

honestly, I don't wanna ask one of those blonde Shinras. So, what's your answer?"

His face was very serious now. Concerned.

"General, I would love to be your company, but I....well, I do not have a dress. I am sorry."

She would love to be his company? He was stunned by her choice of words. But after all he had to suppress a huge grin.

"If that's the only problem, nevermind, I'll take care of that."

"Sir?"

"What's your size?"

"Um.....XS to S, Sir."

"You may leave now, Cadet.", he said slowly.

She nodded and walked away, looking even more confused than usual in his presence. He stayed in his seat. Where on hell should he get a dress for her without being recognized? He had acted without thinking over it again. That had never happened before he met that girl. But promise is promise, even for the most famous warrior around.

So he got his notebook out, searching for the number of his private tailor. (One of the boni life as General for Shinra had.)

Life went on as usual, neither Sephiroth nor Gabrielle mentioned the dance anymore until the very afternoon before.

"You may leave earlier today, cadet. I had been informed that you received a packet today." He told the girl, who was buried under paperwork and furiously typing data into the computer, with a sincere grin on his face.

She looked up and gave him a surprised look, then nodded and was gone.

Unwrapping the box in her room she found a dress and a note saying "Pick you up at 8.30 pm in front of the cafeteria. Please make sure not to be seen before."

It was exactly 8.30 pm when a black limousine arrived at the cafeteria and a red haired woman in a long coat entered it.

The General's eyes grew wide when he saw her. She had managed to tame her hair and had put on a bit make up which underlined the depth of her green eyes. She looked older than she was. Mature. He was almost even more speechless when she took off that long coat and he was able to see the dress he ordered for her for the first time.

"Is something wrong, General?", she asked now with a concerned expression on her face. He must have been staring. This was embarrassing. He immediately gained control back and answered.

"No, nothing is wrong. You look beautiful today, Gabrielle."

He hoped that would sound gentleman-like. And he only wished he would have told the tailor to make a long dress in satin or chiffon, but not a black velvet mini dress. No doubt it fitted her perfectly and no doubt it looked elegant as it was required for the dance but he slightly doubted he could concentrate this evening. And he was cursing himself for even thinking about thinking of that. What was happening to him? Why was he always so easily confused when he was around her? And why did he even seem to enjoy it?

"Thanks, Sir. You look gorgeous yourself, if I may say.", she replied and a soft blush made her face even milder. He grinned. Yes, he did look gorgeous. It wasn't arrogant to say that, because it was just true. His long silver hair was cascading down, ending

playfully at his hips and the black tuxedo he wore stressed his trained, elegant body even more. He knew perfectly well that as soon as they entered the hall most of the females would gaze and blush, keeping an eye on him the entire evening.

"Poor Gabrielle. They will death-glare her for being my companion tonight.", he thought a bit amused when the limousine finally reached the Shinra building where a red carpet was waiting for their arrival.

"Are you ready to go?"

She answered with a shy nod and Sephiroth helped her out of the car.

As expected everyone stared at him and Gabrielle immediately. Why had it to be the same everytime? He laid his arm around her waist which made her stiffen a bit and then they walked into the great hall.

The Shinra building had been specially decorated for this occasion.. Chandeliers gave a soft light, the usually grey desks everywhere were now bars, which had been decorated with some burgundy fabric and everyone was dressed very elegantly. Some music was playing in the background and champagne was drunk. The General made his round greeting all the officials and Gabrielle stood shyly by his side, being introduced to everyone as simply as "Gabrielle". Nobody asked in which kind of relationship she and the General were because it was common knowledge that Sephiroth wasn't too fond of private questions.

Eventually they sat down and Gabrielle suspiciously eyed her glass of champagne until she saw the General's grin.

"First time you drink that stuff?", he asked quietly.

She nodded.

"I know it tastes strange, but well, it's official. Just try to avoid too much of it, ok?"

Again a nod.

After the introductory speech of President Shinra the band began playing and soon the dancefloor was crowded with pairs. Sephiroth noticed Gabrielle gazing at them in a longing but desperate way.

Again, to his surprise, she noticed his staring and began to explain..

"I loved dancing when I was younger and at home. But I haven't been dancing for years now." With a little sigh she started gazing again.

Was this an offer to invite her to dance with him? He hadn't much contact with women but out of the few things he knew about them, the fact that women do always speak in riddles, was the brightest one. So should he ask her? He knew he could dance perfectly well, so that wouldn't be a problem. He was almost ready to ask when he heard another familiar voice, now speaking to Gabrielle. Immediately his eyes looked at the man.

"Dearest Gabrielle, would you give me the honor of a dance?", The junior President, Rufus, asked with a smirk on his face. Gabrielle stared at him, perfectly knowing who this was and with a slight blush she shyly nodded.

"General Sephiroth, I hope you don't mind if I kidnap your gorgeous company for a dance?"

He did mind. But he knew he couldn't refuse. He nodded in agreement and when Rufus left with her he shot death glares at his back until he realized what he was doing. His eyes turned towards the glass of champagne and a small inner voice grinned at him.

"Are you jealous, oh great, cold Sephiroth?"

"Oh, shut up!", he told that voice and his gaze wandered to the dancefloor where she was elegantly sliding to the music, leaving Rufus looking like a young boy at his first dancing lessons. He grinned.

While Gabrielle was dancing some other Shinras came to the General, sitting down a bit, making some smalltalk. It was not the most pleasant thing to do but it was good to have someone to talk to, so he could avoid staring at the girl in the ways too sexy dress all the time. Never in his life had he thought she would look that female as he only had seen her in the male cadet uniform, supressing what could have shown her gender.

But eventually he realized that the dance was long over but Gabrielle had not come back. A bit concerned he looked around, hoping to see her in the crowd but he couldn't. Where had she gone?

He got from his seat and went searching for her. When he had walked around the hall once without any sign of her he headed towards the toilets, though it was not the place he tought she would be. Even a woman wouldn't need an hour, would she?

He went down the stairs as he heard a familiar voice. But the tone wasn't familiar.

It sounded scratchy, feared and furious at the same time.

"Get ya dirty hand off of me!"

Gabrielle?! She must be in danger. Sephiroth could feel the blood rushing through his veins faster immediately and his eyes got a dangerous glance as he rushed farther, around the corner where the lights didn't reach to.

"Let me go!Now!"

He could hear the painful cry of a man who had just get kicked with high heels.

Then a slashing sound and a whimper.

"Bitch, that hurt!"

There they were. Gabrielle was pressed against the wall, looking scared and a fat man was pushing himself against her. Anger rushed through Sephiroth.

A hand grabbed the man's shoulder and with a cracking sound he was pulled back, violently slammed against the next wall, now facing the catlike eyes of the General.

"How could you even dare to look at her!"

A fist, a face, a cry.

"I should kill you right here."

Blood.

A limb body on the ground.

Sephiroth turned around where Gabrielle still stood there pinned against the wall.

Her face was even paler than usual and her breathing was too fast and irregular. His look mildered again as he turned to her, carefully touching her shoulders and pulling her towards him in a soft embrace.

"Everything is alright, Gabrielle. I am sure he won't try again, that fool."

He shot a last death glare at the whimpering man on the ground and almost had to grin a bit amused when he saw where her high heel had hit him. There was a hole in his pants where it really does hurt.

"Thank you, Sephiroth.", she mumbled weakly and her head lay on his shoulder.

"No need to thank me. I just hope you're alright."

He softly stopped their embrace and smiled.

"And now we really should leave this scenery, don't you think?"

She nodded.

"Gabrielle?"

"Would you give me a dance?"

Her eyes, which were filled with tears before immediately began to sparkle and a smile conquered her face again.

"I would love to dance with you! Just give me a minute to refresh myself!"

So he stood there waiting for her to return, while his thoughts wandered back to what happened. He had never been in such a rage before. He only wanted to protect her in that very moment. He wanted nobody else to touch that precious soul. What was happening to him? Sure, he would have saved her anyways but the emotions flaming inside him were so unusual, almost frightening in their intensity. Never before had he experienced anything like that.

She soon was at his side again and they went for the dancefloor. And they almost had it for their own as most people stopped what they were doing to gaze at the two, who were flying over the floor to the soft tunes of the music, gaining jealous looks from males as well as females.

Back in the limousine again, on their way home, Sephiroth noticed that this must have been an exhausting evening for the girl. Well, considering that she was death-glared by all the women and had almost been raped, it was only natural that a small yawn was visible.

"Thanks for your company, Gabrielle!", he said softly.

She blushed a bit.

"I have to thank you. I still cannot believe you took me with you and even danced with me! Me, the silly little cadet girl!"

She gave him a gorgeous smile.

He couldn't stop himself from gently brushing over her hair.

"You're not silly, young lady."

But Gabrielle didn't hear those words. She had fallen asleep in a second and her head sunk down on his shoulder. Cute.

But...wait...how should he get her to her room without being recognized? Wouldn't it be very suspicious if the famous General carried a girl in a short dancing dress in one of the cadets' room? Impossible. That would kill her. Or get her fired. But he couldn't take her with him!!!

When they arrived again in front of the General's apartment Gabrielle's head was still resting on his shoulder. The vicious circle had caught him again. As even the chauffeur should not know her real identity he had to take part in this dilemma. Not that he didn't want her to stay, that wasn't it, as actually he heard an inner voice craving for her company, but he was aware of the problems which would occur when

1. a female was seen in his apartment
2. someone realized she was a cadet
3. he would have to stare at that dress the entire night
4. he would have to admit his feelings to himself
5. she woke up next morning with a shock.

"There's no other way out!", he told himself as he lifted her up and carried her to the door, trying to hold her steady while searching the keys in his pocket, praying no one

would see him.

He was lucky and the same moment the door opened he slipped in, quietly closing it after him as he didn't want to wake the beautiful girl sleeping in his arms. When has been the last time someone had been so close? Was there a last time?

He could help but roll his eyes at himself.

Carefully he carried her into his bedroom and laid her down on his large bed and almost blushed when he removed the high heels on her feet as he was quite sure they weren't comfortable, especially not during sleep. A quiet sigh escaped his mouth when he noticed that she would have to sleep in that gorgeous dress. He wouldn't dare to take it off. (He was no pervet and this would have been a contradiction to his gentleman education.)

Sephiroth pulled the blanket over her small body, listening to her regular breathing, losing himself in that view. Her hair laid playfully around her face, which looked so peaceful, almost angelic.

"Stop it, Sephiroth, before it's too late", he told himself again and again but his heart defeated his mind as he couldn't stop himself from breathing a light kiss on her forehead before leaving the room.

"Sleep well, Gabrielle."

Next morning. He had only slept for something like two hours, because he was always aware of her lying just one room away. And another thought had bothered him. How, hell, should he get her out again. He couldn't let her out in that dress and as a girl, because she would have to go to her room at cadet quarters – unseen. But how?

He had had an idea and now he was kneeling in front of his dresser and throwing sweater after sweater, pants after pants out of it. The floor already was in a mess.

"Sephiroth? Everything alright?"

A soft, mild and sleepily voice said behind him. He turned around to see Gabrielle stand there, wrapped in the blanket, staring at the mess he created with a concerned grin on her face.

Finally he found what he had been looking for. His old cadet uniform. Sure it would be some sizes too large, but at least it would hide that she is female and he was almost sure nobody would notice on the way to her room. He stood up and handed her the uniform, only to gain a confused look. She was still so half asleep that he almost had to laugh out loud.

"You need to get to your classes. But I would suggest not going in that dress.", he smiled.

"Some breakfast?"

"If I may use your shower before I'd really like a breakfast, thanks."

He nodded and pointed out where the bathroom was, though he knew she knew it, because she had been helping him here so often.

While he was making coffee he could hear the shower running and Gabrielle's light humming. His mind was drifting apart.

SEPHIROTH, BEHAVE YOURSELF! He told himself. With a little sigh over his own thoughts he didn't like to admit to himself, he opened the door of the refrigerator and took out a plate of fresh and bright red strawberries. It wasn't much a breakfast but usually he only drank coffee. He took another look in a sideboard and found a bottle of chocolate syrup.

If that fits together? Worth a try.

"Sephiroth?" They both sat on his small kitchentable and Gabrielle was happily eating the strawberries with loads of chocolate.

He looked up.

"Thank you for the last evening. Thanks for saving me. And well...I apologize for making all this trouble, I shouldn't have fallen asleep!" She bowed her head.

"It's alright. It wasn't that much trouble. Hey, and my old uniform doesn't fit that bad!" He smirked, making this little joke in order not to have to admit that he himself hadn't had the slightest problem with her sleeping in his bed. And she looked cute in that too large uniform. But also so tiny that he almost had the urge to embrace her and never let her go, so that nobody could hurt her.

Now she was blushing and shyly eating another strawberry. He couldn't take his eyes away. Why was this girl so fascinating? And why did he kiss her in her sleep? Why, why, why?

"You look like your worlds away in your thoughts, General."

Now this time he felt his cheeks flushing a bit pink.

"It's nothing." Nothing...haha...don't fool yourself. You know it's more. But you can never tell her. She is a cadet. She is young. You are a General. You have no emotions. At least towards the outside.

She smiled her warm smile again then stood up and stretched herself.

"Your bed is much more comfortable than those for the cadets!", she stated, grinning. But as she wanted to take a step forward she stumbled. Too large clothing. Balance? Not exisiting! With a high "Wooo!", she fell!

When he opened his eyes again he found himself on the floor, having been knocked off his chair. Gabrielle was lying on him, fumbling with the clothing, blushing to death, apologizing and cursing at the same time.

"I am sorry, General! I.....I.....!"

He grinned and right in this moment, when her green eyes and her red cheeks were right above his face, he couldn't hold himself back. He threw his arms around her, embracing her closely, switching positions, pinning her on the floor.

"It's alright, Gabrielle. "

"General?"

Her eyes widened in a millisecond as she realized where she was.

"Sephiroth."

He slowly bowed his head, his silver hair was coming down in cascades, playfully touching her cheeks.

"Please forgive me, Gabrielle."

Then his lips gently touched hers. Feeling the warmth he closed his eyes. He could feel her stiffen a bit, but not in anger or fear. Her heartbeat was accelerating, as was his. The soft touch of their lips broke the shell around him.

He held her fragile body tight in his embrace.

Then he slowly broke the kiss again. Slowly his mind was awakening again.

"Gabrielle...I..."

He opened his arms again and got up. His face was burning.

"Sephiroth?"

When the man turned around again he saw her standing there with tears in her eyes. Had he hurt her?

But a smile broke those tears.

"I am still dreaming, am I not, General?"

She dreamt of him? Did that mean she actually enjoyed it? But he had lost his control! "Then I might be dreaming, too. Gabrielle, I...I guess I have to apologize...I didn't want to startle you."

The girl shook her head.

"It is actually the best dream ever."

Was this her OK? Was he that lucky?

"Sephiroth?", her voice was suddenly quiet and shy. "Shall I forget about what just happened?"

I will never be able to forget...never forget that feeling...never.

"Gabrielle...I, well, I don't want to forget it. I don't want you to forget it unless you regret it."

He noticed that his voice was more quiet and more soft than usual. That it was almost breaking. What was happening to him?

"Regret? No. I will treasure this moment in my heart. Being close to you...that is what I was forever dreaming of. It will break my heart. It will hurt. But I could never regret. Because I love you, Sephiroth. I have and I always will."

Love. What was love? Was it was he had been feeling lately? NO, he couldn't love. He never learned to love so there was no way that he fell for that girl. But why, why was his heart beating so fast? Why did he want to touch her so badly?

No, this mustn't happen.

"Gabrielle. Please leave me alone."

"Sephiroth?" He could hear her voice crack. God, how it hurt.

"Please. Go."

"But..." A silent sob broke the silence.

What was he doing? Her heels were clacking on the floor. Close to the door. Alone. Love?

Could he just let her go? His heart was acheing. Her green eyes, tears of sadness. Her warm smile. Home. Her love. Salvation.

"Gabrielle!" He rushed to the entrance. Please, make her wait!

She was standing there, tears were running down her face, heartbroken, hurt. He stopped right behind her and, after some time of hesitating, he softly touched her shoulder.

"Please forgive me."

The girl turned around and those green sad eyes stared into his.

"Stay with me. I was wrong. I don't want you to leave. Forgive me."

For a moment she kept staring into his eyes, then suddenly he felt her warpping her arms tightly around him, heard her sobbing and with a stone of relief falling off his heart he replied to this embrace. She was here. With him.

He bend down and buried his face in her hair, inhaling her scent. They stood there for some time, both in a tight embrace, almost like a sculpture never moving again.

"Classes!"

"Hm?", Sephiroth couldn't do more then mumble.

"I will miss my classes! I have to go!"

Gabrielle broke the embrace and with a "See you later General!" she rushed out of the door and was gone.

There he stood, completely surprised by her sudden reaction, still in the position of the hug. The he had to smirk and rolled eyes at himself. He had really forgotten where he was and who he was supposed to be. Only with her being near him. He sighed and

went into his bedroom. He still had one hour left until his duty would start. He collapsed on the bed only to smell her sweet scent again. He closed his eyes and his mind began drifting. She appeared in front of his inner eyes, laughing, giving him that special warm smile, her green eyes sparkling and her tiny body far too sweet in her cadet's dress. How should he behave seeing her again? Could he kiss her? Or hug her? He was aware that this had to stay unknown from Shinra and all others from the military. So they could never show up officially. But they already were spending their afternoons together. But now...he had this urge to hold her tight and to touch her. And he knew it would be torture to stay away. But he had to. Nevertheless he wanted this day to become even more special as it already was. He was in love. He never thought he could be. And he wanted to see her all happy. But how could he do that? He might be a great warrior but he certainly knew nothing about dates and spending time together with a beloved.

Kapitel 3:

He had been right. The afternoon had been torture. But apparently for both of them, as they had barely spoken a word and whenever someone had entered the office both had avoided to look at each other in order not to blush. And for Gabrielle there seemed to be nothing of more interest than folders. It was almost a relief when the clock was going to 6 pm and announcing the end of working day. As the office was busy today Sephiroth had to think of another way than inviting her to dinner openly. "Cadet! As we have been busy all the day I must unfortunately tell you I need your skills again this evening. There are some things that have to be finished by tomorrow. So you might have an hour off and then see me again!" , he told her while some official was making copies.

"Aye, General." She replied, twinkling.

Later that evening he heard a familiar knock on his door and immediately jumped off his sofa and opened the door. Sparkling eyes met his. There she was, still in her cadet uniform, looking rather boyish. Her hair was dripping wet and bound into a ponytail, which let him assume she had taken a shower just before.

"Come in, Cadet!" He said formally, just if some guard was outside and listening.

As soon as the door was shut again the folders were lying forgotten on the table next to the door and Sephiroth's lips lay on Gabrielle's, while he softly brushed through her hair. She seemed to be surprised at first by his intensity, but soon she was gently caressing his cheek and playing with the silver cascades of his satin hair.

Their kiss eventually broke, due to needed oxygen and Sephiroth smiled at her, his cheeks flushing, being a little embarrassed of his behaviour as he was simply not able to resist the longing to be close to that girl.

"Gabrielle, " he whispered, "I...I am not sure if it's ok. It's all so new." He stunned at himself. Did he admit that he was feeling uncertain? Nevermind.

"It's alright. Please be yourself. You don't need to hide underneath the General-mask anymore. It's you I want to be with." Her face went scarlet by saying those words. So cute, so innocent.

"Come with me. Let's relax a bit. I know the day was stressing." He let her to his living room down on one of the sofas. Candles on the table lightened the room and gave it a soft shimmer. He was not quite sure about what to do next. He didn't want to push her to anything and he himself felt not quite ready. It was the first time he had opened his heart to somebody. It was a bit of a relief she seemed to be as uncertain as he was. And she was blushing all the time around him. This was almost driving him crazy.

He sat down next to her and they had a small dinner together.

"Sephiroth? Can I....um...can I hug you?" she asked suddenly with a shy voice, her eyes still showing great respect next to love. He gave her a gentle smile and tipped playfully in her nose.

"Sure you can. Don't be afraid of me. There is no need to."

His voice was low and mild, almost the opposite of the harsh and strict tone he used to have during work. Being with her made him feel just human, not like the machine everyone seemed to see him as. Now she carefully placed herself in his lap and hugged him, her head lying on his shoulder.

"Thank you, Sephiroth. I never thought this dream could come true. I...I almost can't believe this is real."

"It's the same for me, but I promise this is real. Though I am still not able to really say what I am experiencing. It's overwhelming. And I would love to have the ability to stop time now." He gave her another warm smile without even noticing it as he bend his head down to kiss her again. This time more fiercely, more intensive than the last testing kisses. He inhaled her scent and lost his hands in her hair as she embraced him. He felt the heat rising in him, his heart beating fast and also her blood rushing through her veins. Why didn't this urge to touch her just stop? It was only getting stronger every second her sweet lips touched his.

When her hands slipped under his light shirt her touch send shivers down his spine. She ran her fingers over his hard muscles and carefully gave him a little kiss on the neck. He moaned quietly.

"Gabrielle? What are we doing?", he whispered.

"Don't you like it? Shall I stop?" She looked at him in a fearful way, being afraid of having gone too far.

"I...actually I like it ways too much I guess."

He could her her soft chuckle.

"If you weren't the great General I would even call that cute now."

He laughed. It felt good. Seeing her smile. And it felt good to be able to return a smile that freely.

"Me, cute?", he asked sheepishly. "Never."

He kissed her playfully on the top of her nose and she layed her head on his chest, her warm breath was softly tickling his throat. As was her almost dry hair. Her sweet scent was teasing him as well as the fabric of her uniform and again he was reminded on the fact that Gabrielle was doing all this just for him. Pretending, fighting.

Sephiroth could feel his hear burning and he drew her closer to him, whispering into her ear.

"Thank you for everything, Gabrielle."

He ran his hand over her back, feeling the hard bandages under the shirt she was wearing. Didn't they hurt?

"Sephiroth?" She had noticed his mind had drifted again. She was looking up to him, smiling concerned into his eyes. He flushed. Then he gently pulled away the shirt off her shoulders and tapped on the white fabric under it.

"I just was reminded on how you torture yourself. Don't you want to take them off?"

OK, he realized too late that this could be interpreted in two directions when he saw her blushing to scarlet.

"Yes, actually you are right. If you don't mind I'd really like to get them off."

The blush on her face was not to be described in words and as he was and will always be a gentleman the General turned away. He could only hear the shirt being taken off and some quiet mumbling. Then a hand tipping on his back. He dared a look.

"Um...I...um...well, I wondered if you could help me. That stupid thing somehow won't let me take it off." Even her ears were burning red now.

He gulped and stared at her, when it slowly came to his mind what she had just suggested. No way of holding him back then...he worried. Meanwhile she pointed to her back where the fabric had mixed up with itself. He nodded and closed his eyes, trying to concentrate on just touching the fabric, not her pale, all-so-tempting skin. She held a blanket in her arms, hiding the free skin already. His fingers were almost burning when he accidentally touched her shoulder blade and he could feel the blood

rushing into his cheeks. Behave. Sephiroth. Behave. But his hand refused to obey and caressed her shoulders, ran down her spine and he found his lips on her neck again. The bandages slowly fell off. Her hands held the blanket tight on her body. Her breathing was fast as his lips finally touched her bare skin.

She moaned softly feeling his gentle touch and slowly, shyly turned around to face him, still holding the blanket. Her eyes met his, then closes when their lips united in a kiss and he pulls her close to him, on his lap, caressing her tender skin.

"Sephiroth", she whispered out, overwhelmed by the waves of pleasure he sent through her body.

He broke their kiss, he could feel his heart beating fast in his chest and his blood rushing through his body. He wanted her so much. Could he really take her?

He cupped her cheek with his hand and looked into her eyes. So much was in them. Passion, curiosity, fear and most of all deep and honest love that made him feel warm and comfortable. Slowly bending down to her another kiss began while he softly pushed her down on the sofa, lying on top of her, holding her tiny body close to his.

"I love you."

He whispered. Had he really said that out loud? Yes...he, the cold one, had finally admitted his feelings, finally found someone he could trust with his soul. Her arms wrapped around him and pulled him into a kiss this time, so intense it made him gasp for oxygen when their lips separated again and increasing the longing that had built up inside of him. His hands slid down her body, allowing him to finally touch the one that he adored so much.

She was responding to his touch, moving closer against him, breathing fast, letting her hands run over his back, caressing his muscles, moaning softly when she could feel the heat arising between the two of them.

How could he do this on their first real evening together? Sephiroth! He scolded himself for the lust that had taken over him. Yet her body was so tempting, inviting.

"Hey...everything ok?" her soft voice whispered in his ear.

Sephiroth smiled and looked into her eyes once again.

"Yes...you are just so...adorable. I...I got overwhelmed."

Was he stuttering again? Gabrielle chuckled a little. "I am glad I am not the only one!" she smiles, placing a hand on his chest.

His gaze showed how deep his lust was, how much he craved for her yet he had managed to gain control over his body once again, at least slightly.

"Shall we wait?" he asks her, brushing a strand of her red hair out of her face, tracing the lines of her jaw with his fingertip. He could feel her tremble under his sincere touches. Her blush told him that she would give in if he continued, the affection was just too strong. Not on the first date.

"We maybe should." She whispered now then kissed him again, passionately, softly tipping against his lips with the tip of her tongue. When they loosened their embrace they were both breathing harshly, trying to tell their bodies to stay away from the other one for a least a while and even the great General had a flush on his cheeks and a smile upon his face, even if all his body was tensed up, burning. Yet when he looked at her he felt happy and calm just because she was there with him. She leaned her head against his shoulder and started playing with his hair.

"I am so glad Sephiroth. Thank you."

His world had been changed from the moment he saw her. And it would never be the same again. Who ever had thought the General would love someone?

Then a sudden knock on his door.

"General?"

"Get dressed in the bathroom. Hurry." He hissed, changing back to the cold General in the matter of a second, getting up, grabbing his uniform coat from the chair and walking to the door, opening it, looking serious, hiding the anger that someone destroyed his evening.

"Good evening."

"General, good evening to you as well." Said the annoying voice that most likely belonged to someone from the official offices of Shinra.

"President Shinra just wanted to have his thanks delivered as the dance was a sheer success due to your presence there. We got the most applications for SOLDIER in ten years." The man handed a parcel to the General, bowed and vanished into the night. Sephiroth almost rolled his eyes and shut the door again, locking it two times.

A thank you from the President? Now that was something new. Or not.

He unwrapped the parcel and looked at the platinum picture award with the inscription

"To General Sephiroth
the hope of SOLDIER.

Shinra Inc."

He gave a deep sigh and laid the dustcatcher in the next board then walked into his bedroom, staring at the bathroom door.

"It's alright. He is gone again." He said in a low voice, making sure no one who might be standing outside the doors could hear him.

She shyly peeked out of the door, then walked in, dressed as young cadet again with a somehow sad look on her face.

"I am screwing up your life. You will get in trouble if they ever find out. I am sorry Sephiroth." She whispered, looking down on the floor.

He looked at her, truly surprised about that sudden outburst. Yes. If someone ever found out they both would be in a huge dilemma. Gabrielle would certainly be expelled from SOLDIER and the consequences for him? Well...how does one treat a toy that is broken? He sighed again then got up and took her in his arms with the hope to calm them both. A forbidden love. Yes, it truly was. Nevertheless it was also the best and happiest experience he ever made in his life. To feel love and loved. He nuzzled into her hair, inhaling her scent. He could feel her heart beat and he could feel her fear. He did not want her to be afraid. She should be happy.

"Hey," he mumbled, placing a gentle kiss on her hair. "Don't worry right now. Smile for me. You always think you disappoint me...but you don't. You are strong in your own way. Maybe you do not have my physical strength...but you had the power to make the ice melt around my shell. I love you." The words just spilled out of him, faster than he was aware of it. But it did not bother him. "You know...the only thing we should worry about right now is how to get you in your room tomorrow morning...as I won't let you go tonight." He grinned a little mischievously when he saw her blush and smile a little again. He could feel her arms wrapping tighter around him when she cuddled into his embrace.

"I love you Sephiroth. You are amazing."

He brushed through her hair.

"You know...how about I fell asleep over all the paperwork you gave me and that had to be done in one night. I mean...I've already finished that so well..." she stuttered out then which caused him to chuckle about her random cuteness.

"Sounds...acceptable, cadet. "

"You should get some rest, General."

They smiled at each other.

Some minutes later they were lying in each others arms once again, covered with a black satin blanket. Gabrielle was still blushing about wearing one of the General's private tshirts that reached down to her knees almost and the blushing increased even more when she finally was aware that she could spend this night listening to the heartbeat of the one person she had adored for so long and that she loved so much. That she would be able to feel the radiating heat of his body and the soft skin of his chest. It was almost a miracle that she fall asleep that quickly, save in his arms.

Yet Sephiroth himself was lying there, his mako green eyes gazing at her, softly stroking her back with one hand. His thoughts would not calm down. Or his emotions. He did not know how to define it.

It felt somehow awkward sharing a bed with someone. Not a tent on the battlefield, but a real bed. And even have her in his arms, breathing regularly, nuzzling against him.

It felt so awkward to believe he was in love. And yet it felt so good.

Was it right to let her so close? Future. So unknown now.

He gave her another soft kiss on her forehead then drifted off, sleeping the most pleasant sleep he had ever had. Without dreams, without the sounds of a laboratory or a war, without the voice in his head but skin on skin with the one he loved.

The next afternoon Gabrielle was drowning once again in paperwork, as Sephiroth was still a very strict boss, when he all out of sudden got up, grabbed his Masamune and walked towards her.

"Cadet," he said, keeping his tone as official as he could as there were always others around. "I've decided you need to get a special training. You have missed so many classes due to your work here and I want you to be a good member of SOLDIER. Fetch your sword and meet me in training hall 05 in half an hour."

He walked out of the office, graceful as ever, smiling to himself about Gabrielle's stunned face. But it had been a right decision. He wanted her to be safe in this world of corruption and violence and he wanted her to be safe of other men. And if it was him who trained her she would certainly find a special style.

They met at hall 05, her with the big buster sword the cadets had to cope with, making a grumpy face as she still despised its weight. But in his eyes she looked adorable.

"Alright cadet. First lection:

Never only face the weapon of your enemy. You have to sense everything of him, every tension in his muscles so that you can foresee each of his attacks. Most people tend to look at the move of the weapon only which has proved utterly wrong as it is just not possible to see a fake attack soon enough to block it properly."

His voice was low and serious. Gabrielles soaked up every word from his lips and buried it deep inside of her.

"Secondly. You need to become one with your weapon. Ok...I shall admit that might be difficult with the buster sword you have, yet nevertheless I am sure you will succeed somehow. Watch closely. I shall give you an example."

With those words he took his Masamune sword and walked into the middle of the hall, then closed his eyes. When he started to move it seemed almost like a dance, his moves fluent and elegant, never stopping, yet too fast to escape, too forceful to block. If his fight was a dance it would have been the most lethal tango one had ever danced.

His silver hair shimmered and his coat was floating in his moves while his blade cut the air in its wielding, making the high eerie sound of a whip in the air, glancing in the light. The ones who saw him fight were indeed left without a chance. They must have seen an angel dance before they realized it would be the last thing they ever noticed. When Sephiroth finally stopped moving and looked at his cadet she was standing there in awe, lost in her gaze. He knew that moment would be forever saved in her mind and yet he hoped it would help her for her own fighting.

"Thirdly," he continued. "It is my special hope that you will find a special style of your own. If you have that you always have a benefit. Standard attacks are well known. You have to be special. Therefore, take your weapon. Sparring time. Don't be afraid."

He nodded at her, giving her a short, assuring smile before getting into fighting stance again. He let her attack him a couple of times, once again noticing her speed that was certainly hers more than the force of a blade, correcting her on how to make steps and how to wield the sword in order to get more power out of the move one was in.

"Be one with your weapon. You do not guide it. You are it. Entirely. Not only that piece of metal in your hand. That is harmless if you do not know how to use it."

She nodded at his words, practicing the attack again and again. Soon she was covered in sweat while Sephiroth still seemed to be unaffected. But she was already getting better. Her moves had become more coordinated already and she had learned that she could use the power of her fast moves to wield her sword and not to waste more for that than necessary. Sephiroth was a good teacher. Some more lessons and she would be able to win against everyone of her class, even against some of the higher ranks.

When he noticed she was breathing hard, huffing and puffing he smiled gently.

"I think that is enough for today. Please go take a shower. And could you then please try to repair the computer in my quarters? I think I somehow managed to mess it up once again. I should not work that late at night." He winked at her and walked off, back to his office. This had been a nice training. Not alone for once like his usual training he attended everyday before dinner. He hit the button on his coffee machine and took an Oreo. His office had really changed. As much as he was the perfect fighter – the less skilled he was with keeping an office without chaos all around.

From that day on Sephiroth gave her training lessons everyday, watching her grow stronger. He could not suppress a content smile when he saw her graceful moves now, the strength that lay within her elegant and slender body.

They somehow managed to spend most of their evenings together, keeping their secret. Sometimes Sephiroth wondered if they really believed he had so much work to

do that his assistant needed to stay longer every day but nevertheless he was glad no one asked about it. Everyday was new surprise for them.

Gabrielle had found a way to sneak into her room in the very early morning when everyone else was still asleep and thanks to the general teaching her and helping her with her classes in cadet school she was still able to keep up with all her subjects.

Kapitel 4:

Sephiroth however could not help but feel sad sometimes that he could not be with her openly. It was obvious that they both were always struggling to keep their secret safe, they always had to be alarmed, careful. He sometimes wished he could just give her a hug, brush through her hair or just say something to her that did not sound like the order of a General to a low cadet. And he noticed that Gabrielle somehow looked tired – of course, she got up almost one hour earlier than anybody else and had to do lots more actually. School, office, training, secret relationship. He needed to do something.

Some days off would be wonderful and of course he – as always- had almost all his official days of vacation still left to take. Now he just needed to think of a good reason for her to miss her classes for a little while.

But with him being Shinra`s favourite pet it should not be too hard. Why not use the benefits for once?

The next morning, before cadet school started he knocked on the trainee`s office door.

"Come in"

When he entered the room he already noticed that the eyes of the trainee were growing wide noticing who had just walked into his room.

"General!", he jumped up and saluted hastily.

"At ease, lieutenant." Sephiroth simply said without any emotion in his voice.

"Following. I need Cadet Gabriel for a few days. He will not be able to attend his classes as we will stay outside the SOLDIER quarters. I am aware he missed a lot of stuff working for me so I feel it is my duty to offer him a special training so he can keep up with his mates. I am sure you understand?" he explained with a tone that made obvious there was no option of denying.

"Yes, General. I understand."

"Good. Good bye, lieutenant." He waited for the other to salute then did so as well then left the room for Gabrielle`s room.

"Cadet Gabriel. This is General Sephiroth."

The door opened and a half-asleep Gabrielle, already dressed in her uniform but still with messy hair and sleepy eyes stood there, saluting officially.

"General. Good morning."

"May I?" He entered her room, yet kept distance as he could not be sure no one was eavesdropping, yet he could not suppress the amused smile when he saw her in that cute state.

"Please get some things that you need for some days off here in a backpack and see me in front of the cadet quarters in 15 minutes." Then he lowered his voice and whispered.

"You might want to take some civilian clothing, too."

He ruffled through her hair then left the room once again to get his backpack and his motorcycle that Shinra had given him to reach some areas faster than the usual trucks.

He picked her up and drove off, leaving SOLDIER behind for once. Freedom.

She held on tight when he drove down the roads, getting further away from the cities and villages every mile. He could feel her strong arms around him and smiled into the wind. Now – even if it was just for some few days – he could finally be human, he could take off that shell of the perfect SOLDIER that he had to wear every day. He could be with the one he truly loved without worries.

The brisk air was crashing against his skin during their ride and with her by his side he felt more alive then ever before.

After some hours drive they arrived in a place of pure nature where only a small path lead up to a tiny wooden house.

He had rented this place under a false name to make sure no one bothered them.

It was far away from civilisation, a meadow surrounded by forest, with a clear lake only a few meters away from the house. Picturesque, truly in harmony with the planet`s nature. A place, dreamlike and pure, where he loved to be. And reading the look of Gabrielle`s face he was sure she loved it as much as him. Her mouth was opened a little and she was staring at the scenery in awe, taking his hand unsciously when they got off the motorbike.

“It is amazing, Sephiroth.” She whispered.

He squeezed her hand lightly, then walked her to the door, stopping a little in front of it, bending down to give her a gentle kiss.

“I love you. Let`s enjoy these rare days as much as we can.” He looked into her eyes, happy, serious and lovingly. The usual coldness of his ocean blue eyes had gone, replaced by a yet unknown warmth, the robotic soldier had been banned by the human deep inside.

The interior of the house was quite comfortable, maade out of warm wood and some furs as carpets in front of a huge sofa.

They soon had unpacked their few belongings and supplies and the evening sun was giving a warm light.

Sephiroth offered her his hand, smiling gently then leading her outside where the lake was shimmering like a golden crystal in the light of the evening. He kissed her hair, then bend down and took a flat stone on his hand, throwing it, making it jump over the surface of the water.

“Finally I can take you in my arms.” He whispered and held her close, brushing through her hair, soaking up her exquisite scent. He could feel her heart race.

“Hey....you think we can go swimming here?” She suddenly asked, looking up to him with a playful grin.

“What? Um...of course you can!” he answered and watched her dashing off back to the house only to see her return a minute later wearing a green bikini and a towel around her shoulders. Actually two towels.

“Hey...get changed, too!” she laughed, chuckling when she saw his confused look as for once he was not the one to give orders. She placed the towels on the shore and slowly walked into the water that fortunately had a nice temperature still and starting to make some swimming moves, playfully and elegantly sliding through the water.

Yet, she missed to hear him enter the lake and squealed loudly when all out of sudden his arms flew around her, pulling her close to him. Sephiroth chuckled, amused about her reaction, turning her around to face him, adoring the little pout that lay on her lips.

And he adored so much more. It was rare he was able to see her in all her beauty and now she was standing there in his arms, dressed in only tiny pieces of fabric, her strong body and her tender skin touching his. In awe he could not help but let his hands run down her back while he bend down to kiss her, the radiating heat of her body catching his. He could feel his own blood starting to rush through his veins, relieved he finally could touch her and hold her close as no one was here to report them, they could be lovers, freely. The General craved for her, more than ever and he was sure he would not be able to stop this time, when the love and the passion was circulating through him, celebrating their freedom after having been imprisoned in the rooms of Shinra.

"Sephiroth." She murmured, tracing her hand over his smooth chest, placing soft kisses on his skin. Cupping her cheek he pulled her up to him in a tight embrace, crushing their lips together in a fierce kiss, letting his tongue travel over her lips, requesting hers to a passionate dance, that made her shiver in his arms, nuzzling closer, letting her hands explore his muscular body, while a slight moan escaped her lips, dazzling his senses even more.

Never loosening his touch he lead her back out of the water, lifting her up, carrying her into the house, sitting down on the sofa with her on his lap, not breaking their passionate kiss until they needed to breath again. For some moments they just looked into each others eyes that simply mirrored the love and the craving for the other, the deep haze of emotions that would never leave.

"I love you." she whispered, kissing his chest, giving herself into his arms.

And he gladly received her.

Hesitantly he pulled off her bikini, laying her down under him on the huge and soft sofa, then stripped off his pants, bending down in a kiss once more, covering her with his body, skin burning on skin, lovers seeking their embrace.

His hands slowly travelled over her thighs while she pulled him down on her, for a moment breaking their kiss, gazing into his eyes reassuringly.

"I love you, Gabrielle." Sephiroth whispered when their bodied became one, his heart pounding just as fast as hers, the shivers running down his spine. He was feeling like he never did before, like he never thought it was possible for him.

But her gentle moves, her soft moans and her ever loving embrace gave him pure happiness and pleasure, the joy in her eyes putting a smile on his face while he held her in his arms so closely until both their bodies were exhausted from their love.

They cuddled together, hiding under a warm blanket, his arms protectively covering her tiny, oh so delicate figure. She soon drifted off into a calm sleep, with a loving smile on her face, snuggling into his chest, playing with his hair.

Sephiroth watched her breath kissing her forehead softly before he,too closed his eyes to bury the memory of this night deep in his heart where it never could be forgotten.

He was happy.

Kapitel 5:

Their days at the meadow were over far too soon and they returned to the SOLDIER quarters again. Of course Sephiroth had not forgotten his promise and had insisted of teaching her more swordplay and helped her with some stuff she had missed in her classes. Now he could be sure she was best prepared for everything awaiting her back in her life as cadet. Actually he was perfectly sure she would outtake all the others with her fighting by now. She had the best teacher.

Unfortunately their time together decreased again to a minimum when she could sneak into his apartment in the evening. Eyes were on them again in the office, at training, in the classes and the few moments they had they spent in each others arms, not being able anymore to imagine the life without the other.

Sephiroth often wished he had not to hide his love, but there was no other possibility. Making them notice her gender would mean never seeing her again.

Yet there was another thing that scared him.

Of course Hojo had noticed he had let that cadet closer to him than any assistant before and of course that had made it suspicious. When Sephiroth was getting his weekly mako injections by the scientist he was asked a lot about the talents of that cadet.

It was like a vicious circle. If he said the cadet was weak Hojo would insist on firing Gabrielle. If he said the cadet was highly skilled there was the risk of Hojo trying to use her for his experiments.

He was still rambling about this idea in his thoughts when there was a knock on his office door and a lieutenant entered, handing him documents of a mission he had to lead.

Did not seem too difficult. Just killing some monsters that seemed to be produced by a malfunctioning reactor near Nibelheim.

Should not take longer than a few days. And he got to choose his team!

Immediately the thought of taking Gabrielle with him came to his mind.

She was prepared for fights so he would not have to worry too much over monsters attacking her and of course he still would be there to protect her, as he had promised himself that very night he noticed his love for her. And he had renewed that promise day by day, to protect the most precious he ever had and ever would have.

Yes. She would be coming with him.

And who else? Zack. He was a good man and someone he could get along with. A nice sense of humour even if that boy was a little hyperactive sometimes. But he was skilled in any way and had made it to 1st class in such a high speed no one but himself had managed before. Yes. Zack was a good choice. Sephiroth respected and liked him for the way he just was. Oh yes...and offering Zack a mission would mean he probably should take Zack's best friend with them, too. That blonde Cadet Strife that he had seen when he visited the training sometimes.

Small young boy, but at least brave.

Yes, that would be enough to clean the area.

He immediately sent someone off to tell everyone who was assigned to the mission to gather with backpacks at 7pm at the quarter's gates where they would start their journey.

Gabrielle was very quiet on the trip. Well, she always was in the company of others, scared her affection to the General would be audible in her soft voice then.

But at least she sat next to him, knee on knee while he tried to calm the overly excited Zackary and worried that Cloud, who suffered of motion sickness, might throw up in the van.

After a little incident with a dragon they finally reached Nibelheim which turned out to be the hometown of Cadet Cloud Strife, so of course Sephiroth would give the boy some time to see his friends and family even if the Cadet seemed to be somehow reluctant about that.

Yet some weird feeling had overcome Sephiroth since he had entered the small town. It was hanging over him like a dark cloud telling about something evil soon to happen. He wanted to be gone again from here as soon as possible.

The General was glad that he could share his room with Gabrielle without a problem as Zack immediately had asked him to give him a room together with Cloud. So at least no one would ask question as soon as they would not be too loud. He chuckled a little by this thought, receiving a suspicious look of the inn-keeper.

Soon after they had had dinner they went to their rooms and as soon as the door was closed Gabrielle was in his arms.

"This city is creeping me out!" she whispered. So apparently he was not the only one who had that weird feeling about the next day.

"Shhh....everything will be fine, my sweet Gabrielle. We will leave again soon. I promise!" he tried to calm her, softly running his hands up and down her back, rubbing it gently wanting her to feel comfortable with him. He did not like her worried, her smile was so heart warming he could just gaze at it every second.

He bend down and pulled her into a loving kiss, brushing one hand through her hair.

"Hey, I love you."

She looked up to him, fortunately again with that wonderful sparkle in her eyes.

"I love you, too Sephiroth. More than anything. I trust you."

"Gabrielle...if we ever get the chance to live anywhere else but the quarters or if you ever get the chance that you don't have to hide under that uniform anymore...would you like to spend your life with me then?"

What was he saying? Of course he had thought about that before but he never dared to say that out loud. A life without Shinra? That was impossible for him. But... as long as he did his job as perfectly as he was doing it...why should they not let him have something like a private life as well? And he wanted it so much. Wanted her by his side so much, simply as who she was and not as who she had to pretend to be.

"Sephiroth...are you serious?"

She asked him, her eyes grown wide in surprise.

"Yes, for some odd reason, yes." He replied.

Gabrielle kissed him deeply, her entire self beaming with joy.

"Of course I would love to!!!!!" She said, hugging him down on the bed and for that night the suspicious feeling of this place had been fought by their love.

In a very bright moment Sephiroth took his new PHS with camera mode and shot a picture of them, cheek on cheek, both with a wide smile that others never saw.

When they lay in each others arms while the moon softly lit the hotelroom Gabrielle cupped the General's cheek, gently drawing the lines of his jaw with her fingertips.

"Let's live forever. Forever love."

He lay awake for long, just listening to her heartbeat.

"Forever." He whispered.

The next day started early and right after breakfast they met their guide who had been hired to take them safely to the reactor at Mt. Nibel. Of course the entire city was in awe because of the great General Sephiroth visiting them.

Oddly enough Cadet Strife never took off his helmet when the citizens were around but Sephiroth thought it was not on him to ask.

He gave a reassuring and loving smile to Gabrielle who was wearing her cadet uniform once again when they started their walk up to the reactor.

The wind was blowing very harshly, he could see the Cadets shiver in the cold breeze. Zack and him were resistant to the cold due to the mako they had been enhanced with so Sephiroth worried only for Gabrielle, that she might catch a cold. And he was deeply worried that her tiny body was just blown away by the storm.

But they had to walk on.

Soon they had reached a very old and shaggy looking bridge that would lead them straight to the reactor. The guide told them it would be safe.

So they dared.

They should not have.

When they were standing on the already shaky bridge that was trembling under their weight a heavy storm-breeze hit them, snapping of the holds of the bridge. They ran, they ran for their life.

Zack and the guide had already made it.

Gabrielle! God! She was in danger, he could hear her scream and he turned around, seeing a cadet reach the safe side of the mountain.

But where was Gabrielle?

Why could he not see her standing on the side with the others?

Why...just why?

His world turned into slow motion when he saw her tiny figure hanging at the end of the rope, closer to the lethal abyss every moment.

This could not happen!

Gabrielle!

He had to save her!

Her eyes met his, frantic fear in them. The fear of losing him.

Her grip on the rope loosened when another breeze of the storm hit her.

"Forever!"

That was the last thing he recognized before she vanished. Vanished. Vanished.

Gabrielle.

Gabrielle.

Gone.

Love?

Gabrielle.

Dead.

"General Sephiroth."

Dead.

He snapped around.

The others had recovered again and they were staring at him.

Gabrielle. Forever.

"Let's walk on."

"But General...the cadet!"
"Lost. We have to walk on."
Shell.
Cold.
Paradise. Lost.

Somehow they had made it to the reactor. Sephiroth did not know the way they had walked, had not paid attention what they had said. His mind was blank. Everything had vanished. His life had vanished in the matter of a moment. He entered the reactor.
There was no future anymore.
They soon found the reason behind the monster attacks.
Hidden inside the reactor was a room for experiments. Soldiers bathed in mako. Yet with the malfunctioning of the reactor they had turned into violent monsters. Mako experiments. Just like him.
A sign over a gate saying Jenova.
That was the name of his mother, was it not?
A voice, calling him oh so sweet.
Gabrielle. Gone.
This voice was calling him, asking him to serve her. Son, it was calling him. Asking him to destroy this planet to find the perfect world.
Therefore he would just have to be the puppet of this voice, do whatever it wanted. She was gone. Forever gone. Forever love. Forever dream.
There was nothing left for him.
A perfect world?
A perfect world.
This implied Gabrielle. He could see her again?
If that was possible in any way he had to try.
"I give you what I am. You can use me."
He answered the voice. There was nothing he could lose anymore.
Then everything turned black.

Epilogue:

He could hear their voices. They were coming for him. Trying to stop him from seeing her again.

Gabrielle. I want to see you again. That is my only wish for a perfect world.

He looked at the only picture that existed of them, then hid it close to his heart, facing the final battle.

Sephiroth felt cold steel slice through his body.

Was that her smile? Her voice calling him? Her arms, his heaven?

Forever love.