

Chosha no Koutougakkou

Declaration of the story to all readers.

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents are either a product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual people living or dead, events are entirely coincidental.

Chapter 1

Royce Hampton gazed down at the empty page with his pen in hand. He knew what he wanted to write, but when the time came, he could not find the right words.

He surmised that it was the move from his hometown of Brainerd, Minnesota to Japan that might have given him writer's block. As he gazed up and looked through the small window of his hotel room, the young author wondered if moving to this small town was way out of his league.

He knew the answer before he could contradict his own thoughts. He wanted to learn more about his competition: research about her and find out what she knew and how she did it.

The paper with the pale grid lines remained empty, begging to be filled with text, a responsibility that burdened him day after day. For a young man in his teens, he jumped into the big wide world and now had to pay the price, no matter how mundane it might seem.

"Geezzz... writing nothing is a pain in the ass," Royce exhaled, staring at his transparent biro. "But I suppose someone has to do it."

Royce strolled over to the room's window and looked at his own reflection against the glass. He wondered what problems his appearance might cause at the local senior school in the town. After all, he had yet to start and being in a school full of Japanese students did bring a bead of sweat to his head. Then again, the thought of looking at all the hot Japanese girls in their mini skirts and stockings would make the whole experience unique.

But at least he could get away from his family and the trouble back home. His decision to leave home and take up residence in the small town of Naka was not a difficult choice to make. He went through the normal pitfalls of school, but it was just recently his family life went from bad to intolerable.

To say he ran away from home would have been a little harsh. His mother split from his father, his only brother ended up in the middle of the conflict and when he found the opportunity, he ditched his home and moved away.

His personal life was not much to be desired. Royce was always on the sidelines when all his mates talked about girls and football. He was too chicken to even talk to the members of the opposite sex. Then when one finally showed a little compassion and talked to him, he froze up like a popsicle on a hot summer day.

Was he gay? No, Royce asked himself that question again and again. Not just to confide in himself, but to think of a good answer when someone did ask him that question. After all, he did not want to be left out when that question is blabbed out in an alcohol infused debate.

Still, despite his carefully fought out plan, that question never came up and two years later, during the time he lived with his rocky family, arguments turned out to be more debated than a raging talk show. But Royce was not sitting in the

shadows doing nothing; he had been carefully planning his future and it was only recently his fortune changed.

The sun shone behind the valley's mountains and the small Japanese town looked surreal and blissful. It swept away all doubt and closed the chapter on his hard life back in the states. But memories still resided and even though he looked much healthier than he did then, the mental scars were still there.

Royce could hardly believe how far he'd come. When he hit the coming – year to do what he wanted – at sixteen, he packed what little he needed and moved out of his home before his family knew what happened.

With no clear destination in his mind, he decided to investigate the wonderful opportunities Japan had to offer. Of course, he did not choose this country on whim. He had been working non-stop online, which eventually led to his cash windfall. Going to Japan was part of his project and a mission to find out who his rival was. The battle had been raging for many years and Royce had been one step ahead. Now it was time to face his archenemy face to face.

Royce liked private parties, or battles. Before he got the writing bug, the young man would play online games all through the night, acting like a normal teenager with nothing to do.

A call comes through what was left of the intercom, bringing him back to reality. "Sir, your food is ready and your clothes have arrived."

Royce acknowledged the call and tried his best to reply in Japanese to the only help he could get on short notice. He was a good old man, used to help out around the village and worked in the mansion before the owners died and left the place to the state. His interest in the house went around in circles until he missed the sell by one day. The butler who worked in the place then became unemployed and Royce took pity on the man when he met him in the local coffee shop.

He talked about his old master, the town, the school and even the pets that wandered around the woods at night, looking for homes. Young girls loved the local park with its vast collection of animals and he even told tales of risky boys who used that as an excuse to fulfil fantasies. These were interesting facts and he keenly wrote them down in his black notebook. The old man continued to spill the beans until Royce could not wait any longer and finally employed him.

Royce knew it was better to have someone close to him that knew the layout of the town and the people in it. But when he questioned him on the author of the famous manga, the man didn't know. In fact, he seemed distant and bewildered, as if he did not know what the word 'manga' really was.

Royce pushed aside thoughts of the past and moved forward with pressing matters. Speaking clearly – and with little Japanese he already knew – Royce replied to the butler on the intercom. "Thanks. Tell me, have you been able to get more information about my new school?"

After a brief silence and an idle cracker, the butler replied, "Yes sir, you are to be in class 1B. But the headmaster would like to see you before you start. It's the first time they'll have a foreign student in the school and she wants to go over a few ground rules with you."

"She?" Royce replied with a slight hint of interest, the application to the school said it was a bloke.

"Y-Yes sir."

"Good, one final thing, how long until the air conditioning system is operational? It's getting stuffy." Royce asked, pulling back his collar and feeling the heat from within. One thing the brochure forgot to mention was Japan intense heat. He never experienced temperatures like this before.

"They should be in tomorrow to fix the unit...Sir?" The butler asked.

"Yes, go on."

"My shift is due to end now. If there's nothing else. I'll see you tomorrow."

"Thank you for your help, Samuru, I'll see you later." Royce finished with a few more words before he watched the dark-clothed butler walk down the road and out of sight. Now he had the whole place to himself, but what was more nerve racking was his new day at school.

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Even during the night, the heat was intense, and he'd been in this town for one week. Without the air-conditioning and insect nets to catch the pesky mosquitoes, all the windows had to be closed and only a few fans worked. They were just as useless as having no fans, only moving air around the room. But the butler promised action with the air-conditioning.

Again, this was his big day and Royce was about to start high school.

The walk to the high school took half an hour on foot and he used that time to scout out the blissful land and examine all the necessary shops for supplies. It was a quiet town, one that he'd seen on television, but it was much more than he imagined.

His hometown in the states was always a bustle with activity. If he was lucky to run into anyone, they were normally a bunch of Goths who would scare off the locals. But the town of Naka was completely different. His first signs of civilization came when he walked past the local plantation. Royce had no idea what was being made in that field. For all he knew the old man with a white hat and overalls could be planting weed. It smelt like it, that pungent smell unmistakable by police, but the leaves did not look like the ones he'd seen in the newspapers or television. With a hearty smile, the old man waved his trowel and Royce walked on into the built up area.

The local mall was nice to look at and Royce was impressed at how well the Japanese looked after the shopping centre. It was a homey place with cafes and stores that sold everything from food to hardware. The weather was pleasant too and not too stuffy and hot as the day before.

Getting closer to the school area, Royce began to notice more students walking up the back allies, across fields and along the roads towards his common goal. The prominent black and red school uniform was somewhat attractive with some girls wearing pink ribbons in their hair and others looking rather mature for their age. Royce was unable to determine what age they were, and their skirts were so short it would only take a gush of wind to expose their panties.

This was unacceptable behaviour to him and Royce made sure not to expose himself to that kind of thought or position. The last thing he wanted to be portrayed as was a pervert who bent over and looked under girl's skirts. When he looked across the road and into the bushes, he noticed a trio of boys lounging in the lush green bushes up to no good. With cameras hissing in their hands, he watched as they darted from one bush to the next, taking snap shots of nature's quick opportunities. A quick snip of some panties as they walked and other snaps of cute girls sitting on benches. He carried on with his bag behind his back, no care in the world.

One thing was certain, by the time he walked through the school gates he became the centre of attention. From his observations he had not seen a single foreigner in the village and he surmised that he would be the only one in the school for a while.

As his butler said, this might pose a challenge, but it was nothing compared to the challenge of getting away from his parents back at home.

Already the friction was on. As he walked closer to the prominent brick and motor building partly covered in some kind of paper-constructed walls, he grew nervous at every step. The school dominated the skyline as clouds puffed through the deep blue sky. Birds of all species fluttered in and out of the trees as crickets and incomprehensible buzzing sounds delighted his ears from all around. It was a symphony of nature and Royce already began to mentally taking notes for his next project. He slowly grew to like the idea of moving to Japan, but he wondered what the cost would be. What would he have to sacrifice for this paradise of nature and harmony?

The school gates were almost upon him. Royce could see the light iron-grey pillars, marking the school grounds from the outside world. Children from all ages lounged around, some leaning on the fence, others walking in with their mates. He too was about to enter the zone and already, Royce could see the surprised glances from several students who passed him saying, "Is he going to our school?" or "That's our school uniform, he must be the senior exchange student."

Royce knew this would cause some heated debate because Japanese schools were a tight knit community of students with a leadership based on trust and students alike. All classes had someone pointed as class president and individual parties always huddled with each other. So Royce thought, anyway.

But as he learned from time to time, all was not what it seemed.

The heat boiled now as he approached the school gates. The beady eyes of the students continued to glare at him from all directions and Royce felt like a goldfish in a bowl. Still, looking forward, he walked into the abyss.

The gates had an interesting crest that caught Royce's attention. Inside a circle was a dove and three snowdrops, and the words Naka High was written in Japanese below. Royce did not know how to write or read Japanese properly; it was not an issue when he was in the states and certainly not an issue when he was writing because publishers had their own translators for that type of job. So being face to face with real words, in a real environment fascinated him and he had no problems speaking it.

He continued to look at the school crest as a means to avoid eye contact with the many students, who were now staring at him. The idle hum from the entrance suddenly dimmed and Royce felt the beads of sweat trickle from his brow. He managed to find the will to hold back his fear and he knew what must be done. Before beginning his school life, he had to see the head teacher. At least with an adult, he could find some comfort in knowing his case would be dealt with in strict confidence.

Chapter 2

The office for the principal was down the corridor to the left. The school appeared to be a pleasant place to be in and the uniform itself carried a hint of professional pride. But he could not get around the feeling of being an unwelcome foreigner in a strange land. He did not expect this kind of reaction or this kind of rejection; anywhere he went, students from all wakes of life rejected his presence, as if he was some kind of ghost.

Royce edged closer to the principal's door and he could hear voices speaking in Japanese with a slight hint of sexual desire. It wiped away all memory of his unpleasant trip and he listened intently to the conversation.

"That's not how you do it. Look."

"But sensei, if you hold it like that I can't control it."

Already Royce was hearing the start of some hentai movie, porn more likely. But it still did not make sense.

"It's okay. If I use my full grip and use perfect, rhythmic movement, I'm sure it will be dazzling."

The tone was mature, the nature explicit, and even with his ear pressed to the door, he could hear the quivering sigh of excitement in the young student's voice.

"Shinobu...Oh, sorry...Sensei! Its not meant to be used like that, it will explode if you do that," blurred out the young man's voice as its pitch hit a high note.

By this time, Royce had his ear pressed hard against the door that teetered on the edge of breaching. But Royce needed to know more; he had to know what was going on. Was the head teacher really teaching her students the art of sexual pleasure? Is all the perverted behaviour he researched in Manga true?

"Ahhh, p-please, no-no-no-no, don't lick it!" cried the male voice.

CRASH!

The door gave way and Royce came tumbling like a bundling spy in a bad B movie. Exposed on the floor for the world to see, he immediately got up and found his bearings. Now he was in trouble, but he was more interested in knowing what was going on inside the principal's office. Expecting to see a student and teacher performing an act of forbidden pleasure, Royce was partly confused to find the student holding a Cake as an older, and somewhat attractive, woman attempted to squeeze icing from a tube.

In his haste to learn the secrets of the conversation, he forgot the golden rule: never jump to conclusions until you have all the facts.

"What? Who do we have here?" The older woman teased by rubbing the tube. Royce assumed it was the principal.

"H-Hi?" Royce asked awkwardly, rubbing the back of his head, like an idiot standing out in the open. He had to act fast; he knew the teacher would want to know what he was doing barging in and he could not act like all the perverts he'd seen many times in Japanese shows. He was in this school as a professional student and he wanted to keep that image. But all he could do was stand there in silence as nothing came to mind.

Thankfully Royce did not have to wait too long because the principal straightened her back and stood to face Royce, holding the tube of icing as if—at any moment—she would squeeze the contents all over the poor first student, who was still dazed at the sudden interruption.

"Do all foreign students spy on their superiors in England?"

"Excuse me?" Royce exclaimed, puzzled.

"Do foreign students behave like you when they're at school?" She edged closer gamely, waving the icing tube in the air. "I know British schools are far more 'out there' than ours, but surely they must have some kind of privacy."

"You mistake me, Miss. I am not from England."

"Oh." The teacher walked over to her desk, not before giving a warm smile to the student and telling him to leave, and rummaged through the files on her desk. The moment the student left, Royce felt a sudden change in atmosphere. It was the way the principal carried herself that brought up alarm bells in his mind.

"But I have it on good authority that you have emigrated from the United Kingdom. Your file also states that you will be completing your studies in our school."

She placed the paper tentatively on the desk and fiddled with a pen she held in her right hand the entire time. To add more pressure, the principal then sat on the end of her table, exposing her slender legs. Royce swallowed a lump that had built up in his throat. Sweat began to form on his brow.

"I don't know how my origin is incorrect, I'm from Minnesota."

"My, my. You're very sophisticated for a young teenager. Tell me, can you speak Japanese as well as English?"

Royce wiped his forehead with his free hand. He was currently one foot out the door, ready to make a run out of the office if the need arose.

"I know enough to get by, but it wasn't easy."

"Do you like my English?"

Royce gazed at the floor and did not know how to reply. She spoke all right, but that Japanese accent still made her words funny to hear. Most Japanese people are funny to him, unless they could pronounce words fluently. He tried his best to hide the smile the whole time, an act he knew he had to get used to.

"You speak well."

Royce waited as the principal stood up from her desk, smelled the air and strolled over to the window. "You have no idea how excited I am to have you here."

"I can imagine," Royce muttered to himself.

"It's not often we get the chance to welcome a new foreign student to our school."

"That was a warm welcome the students gave me this morning when I arrived," Royce pointed out sharply, although he had expected that kind of response.

"Oh, never mind them," She smiled. It was not the normal smile Royce had become used to over the years. This was a more wide, surprised and happy smile; it appeared to be a little too happy.

Before he knew what was going on, the principal rushed over to Royce hugged him heartily and rubbed her huge breasts into his face, feeling the excitement boil over all around her. "This is wonderful, my very first overseas student, we'll have to look after you perfectly."

By this stage, all focus was on the teacher's huge breasts that had accidentally become wedged between his nose and eyes. Warm, firm, round. The young man could hardly control himself, and he was unable to breathe.

Pulling himself back from the unexpected and sudden embrace, Royce gasped for air and waved his hands in defence. "Principal," he cried.

"Oh, call me by my first name, Koomah." She said candidly.

"B-b-but, I don't think that's how you should behave with new students."

"Don't be silly. We're all friendly in this school. This is one of the things you'll soon discover. Our school strives itself on the excellence of its pupils, and this is a marvellous opportunity to expand our influence to other countries. It's just wonderful you are here." The Principal, Koomah Shinobu, extended her hands for another hearty hug, but Royce interjected with more distractions before he was swallowed up by the woman's huge cleavage.

"I am right to understand that I will be starting in class 2?"

Nothing soured Royce's mood than to have an overenthusiastic teacher smothering him. It would be disastrous to be caught red handed by a student in the midst of an embrace.

Glancing at the large windows in the principal's office, Royce knew that any opportunistic eyes could have seen the inappropriate embrace. But he was still unsure.

Completely oblivious to the topic the principal was talking about, (something about the school and its goals) Royce remembered the time he searched through the website listings, looking for the perfect place to study. Secretly he had to find his opponent. He was looking for someone, and it wasn't until a friend leaked documents about a certain person, who turned out to be his nemesis. Enrolling in this school was no coincidence. It was planned.

"So tell me, my little cherry boy, why did you come to Japan and why did you choose this school?"

That question hit home and brought Royce right back to reality. "I-I came here to get away from home, and learn something new."

Royce watched the principal's expression change to that of interest, and he did not want Shinobu Sensei digging further into his past. In a desperate bid to change the subject, he targeted the next issue in the sentence. "Cherry boy?"

"What about it?" The principal replied quickly, teasing her words just so she could enjoy them more. "Do you know how many virgin girls we have at this school? A small community town like this and a stranger suddenly walks in from a far off land. Do you know the friction you'll cause?"

"N-No." Royce stuttered, sweating throughout his body.

"The harmony of this school is like a cherry tree, lush, ripe and ready for picking. It surprises me how brave you are to come into an environment like this. English boys are so brave!"

"I am not English, I'm American."

"You can't fool me with that innocent look, my fragile student." She rubbed a skinny leg around Royce's ass and he felt one step closer to sexual excitement. Royce was almost certain the principle was setting him up for a sting. *Perhaps this is what she intended from the start. To get me trapped in an undisputed conundrum and I'll be hers forever.* A thought he did not relish as he had his own personal mission to complete. Royce could almost smell the trap a mile away and assumed some snot-nosed geek was hiding in the shadows, waiting to take a picture.

With a stealthy gaze, he scanned the room and saw no sign of entrapment.

"We must introduce you to your new school. I know the students will be overwhelmed to see you."

The principal moved away from Royce, grabbed a brochure from an assortment of documents on her desk and directed him out of her office. Royce knew the Japanese were eccentric in their own way, but he did not expect this level of chaos. He knew the day was just beginning.

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Royce had packed a few things into his bag before he set off to school. Only essential items like pens, notebooks and some standard text books went with him. He also carried his gym gear and extra American food just in case the school cafeteria served unfavourable food.

Royce had never ventured away from his own country before. Sure he imagined what it would be like and with the advances in today's technology he would use the Internet to research and gather all the information he needed for his

work, and his personal imagination filled in the rest. But this was the first real attempt and Royce felt the pressure even before he reached the airport.

When he boarded the plane bound for Japan, even the roar of the engines did not faze the young man from returning home. He was determined to leave all his troubles behind and start fresh. No matter how dangerous or problematic his choice might be. He prided himself on his ingenuity and bravery on getting this far. Then when he saw the deep blue ocean for the first time, from that height, he almost lost himself in the moment of his plan.

The small plane he ventured on had a fair share of Japanese returning to their homeland. Royce did not have any company and he sat on his chair alone with only a glass of juice in one hand and a small notebook in the other. His attempts to learn Japanese were hindered by one huge obstacle: no one to practice with.

Now, looking around the entire school, Royce had all the students one could possibly wish for. But the shoe was on the other foot; he was the only one out of place. He was the only one not where he was meant to be.

Royce surmised, as he edged closer to that classroom door, that if he were in his own country and face to face with a Japanese person, he would perform reasonably well (even if he was not good at it). Making a mistake now would mean hell on earth. He was basically swimming with sharks and one cut would spell disaster. Royce wondered if this is why so many foreign people prefer not to talk when in school over in America.

But all thought was now on what was behind that door. What would his class look like? Who would be his friends? What would his teacher be like and would he be able to understand the subject the class was teaching?

The principal placed a slender hand on the copper handle and opened the door. Almost immediately a whiff of fragrant air blew past him and it was not what he expected. Most school classrooms would have an undertone of students, sweat, pen and rubber odour that mingled with the old vintage style of the building. Perhaps if the room were old, that old fashioned wooden smell would drown out the rest. But this classroom was scented with the pleasurable aroma of perfumes, cleaning ointments and nature at its finest.

The sun shone through the large windows, blinding Royce's initial view of the room's inhabitants. With a hand to his face, protecting his eyes from the blinding sun, he hung back while the principal jumped into the ray of light and made his entrance far more embarrassing than if he just walked in himself.

"Hello, everyone!" she shouted in Japanese. Royce could understand the fundamentals of what she was saying, and thankfully she was not speaking too fast as to bewilder him.

"We have a fabulous new student who will be joining this school and this class."

Apprehension of the room was high, and Royce could see some of the students excited at the prospect of a new student. Young lad, around his age looked toward the door with hopeful eyes of a new female student who would be incredibly attractive and cute. Royce smiled at the thought; he felt a moment of sadistic pleasure, as he knew of their disappointment. Others held high hopes that this new person might be a good friend and too stared on with admiration. But Royce knew what the outcome would be. Although he wished the school and its pupils would accept him, the unexpected welcome from the school gate was less than warming.

"So where is this student?" someone asked.

"Now, now, now," said Koomah. "He is waiting outside. But before I introduce him, I must be assured this class will be calm."

Already the sighs came in droves as male students suddenly realised it was a boy waiting outside. But that did not stop the stampede of excitement as the young girls now looked on with admiration at the hope of a young, attractive lad. Royce saw himself as a ladies man and accepted the challenge. With a confident pose in his stride, on queue, he marched forward toward his destiny.

Chapter 3

Every classroom had a story, every building had a memory and in this school, memories were what kept the youth in the adults while they travelled to work each day. Their school life reflected what type of adults they'd become and the friends they would make. It might even decide the lovers they'd eventually choose. They say that all of us must make our way on the road called life, and when that road eventually comes to a fork we must rely on instinct to make a choice and decide which way to go. For Royce, this was a path to the unknown.

Stepping across the threshold of the corridor and the classroom, the first wave of sighs hit him like a tidal wave. The students were now able to see their new class member and Royce felt his pulse skyrocket with the unknown. Next came the incomprehensible murmurs as words darted around the classroom like bees trapped in a room.

Then the tide rapidly changed. No more shocked sighs, no more idle gossiping; just outrage and anger.

"What is that!" One female student shot to her feet, pointing a perfectly formed iron finger at him.

"This is your new class member, Royce," principal Shinobu replied, grinning from ear to ear.

"I can see that! But what is *that* foreign student doing in our school! I did not know this school has opened its doors to viruses from the outside world!"

Royce almost felt the insult hit home like a hammer blow. This dark haired woman really knew her stuff. She wore the same dark and red clothing, but a yellow armband indicated she might have some status within the class, probably the class President.

Great, Royce thought. *Looks like I'm not going to have an easy year.*

"This student is a last minute acceptance from our new sponsor. If we are to get extra funding for actives, we have to accept him."

Royce knew what the Principal was talking about. Before he came to Japan on his quest, he set up a small company outside the US and offered to sponsor the school. Then he could use it to enrol. It worked perfectly, and the company was only a name, a technique he researched on his own.

"I don't care what our *new* sponsor says; you can't pollute our school with *that*!" Her finger appeared much closer to Royce and he automatically flinched backward into another table – disturbing a young silver haired girl – who shot to her feet, waved a pleasant thin like hand into his direction and struck him across the face. Royce, already battling with gravity from tripping over the desk, felt the striking blow and could not control his balance. Like a baby learning to walk for the first time, he tumbled to the ground in an upheaval of fury; smoke bellowing everywhere although there was no obvious cause for it.

Then again, from the intense heat of the day, it was probably steam that had exploded from everyone in the room. If the school were to explode, now would be a good time.

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After the dust settled, Royce found his seat at the back of the classroom and ignored the huge physical gap that suddenly formed between him and the other students. If there was one thing the Japanese knew how to do better than anyone, it was how to compact so many people into a small room. But he did not blame the Japanese people for that; it was just the general attitude of this school. He could sympathise with them. They only knew how to live along with each other, and to have some outsider in their midst was a threat to the very fabric of life. The town had never seen a foreign tourist, let alone a young lad setting up.

But there was one thing for sure; this school definitely had its fair share of attractive young ladies. He analysed them from afar, and even though he looked like a pervert glaring from one student to another, he was completely oblivious to the trouble he was getting himself into.

Royce was not going to give up on his first day. He had invested too much to throw it all away and besides, everyone will soon warm up to him eventually. But there was one person that caught his eye, that person who caused him to come to Japan in the first place, the class president.

From what Royce was able to find out on his research was the class president, Rina Matsuyama, was a boisterous young woman who acted more like a tomboy than your average shy girl. She had long hair, liked to dress up to suit her personality for that day and preferred to stay away from young men. Anyone who was foolish enough to come face to face with this iron maiden would have more than a few bruises to contend with. She became the class president not because of her popularity; it was because no one wanted the post. The class she was shoved into was at the bottom of the tables and it was her job to make an impression. It was her first year and although she tried her best to hammer the work out of the excited lads who preferred to chase after girls and steal their underwear, her results slowly began to improve the class. Royce watched Rina leer at the principal, imagining the hateful thought she had for her.

"Now, I want you all to be friendly to our new student and show him just how lovely our little school is." The principal glanced over to the new student and suddenly remember something. "I don't know how customary it is in England to introduce yourself, but in this school the new student would come to the front of the class and say something...come on, don't be shy."

Royce knew what was asked of him. He thought that by entering the classroom and hiding in the back would cause everyone to forget he was there. Perhaps he could slowly blend in as time went on. But that principal always had a flare for the dramatic. Not only did she try to flirt with him in her office, she now turned the spot light onto him once again.

With his blood beginning to boil, the young man thought long and hard about his choices, contradicting his previous thought. But the simple act now was to wait for the principal to leave. She seemed to have asserted herself into the class for a whole ten minutes and the original history teacher was sat at her desk almost asleep. If she had a cigarette in her hand, Royce thought she'd probably smoke it by now.

Then he was coerced to the front of the class.

"Come now, all your friends want to know your name; stand up and introduce yourself. That's it..."

Royce had no choice. He slowly rose to his feet, bowed down in the traditional sense, as is custom in Japanese culture when showing respect and acceptance, and said the words he'd practiced time and time again in his hotel room the night before.

"My name is Royce Brooks, please accept me into this school. Thank you!" Royce growled deep thoughts in his belly. He hated those words. It made him sound like a mummy's boy wet under the ears and still in diapers. He could not be caught dead saying anything like that in his hometown but things were different in Naka and he had to blend in.

A few giggles later and some shocked murmurs, the principal spoke out, "Isn't this wonderful, our lovely new student already has mastered the art of respect."

She rushed over to Royce and he could do nothing but watch as the busty woman ran towards him, boobs bouncing like huge melons.

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At lunch, when all the students were basking in the sun and strolling around the grounds, Royce sat in a secluded spot and sighed at his own misfortune. That incident in class might have just scarred him for life. He did not know how to present himself now after that strange principal mothered him like a retard. That action in itself was probably the best deterrent to keep him away from the principal's office. She was perhaps the worst head teacher he'd ever researched. But he did survive that hurdle and learned a little more about the school and its operation.

His mind went into overdrive and Royce began to see himself as a James Bond wannabe who's on a secret mission to find the spy. Well, he is on a mission, but it's nothing to do with the government or cooperation espionage. It was a simple case of finding out all he could possibly know about his competition so he could get the upper hand.

A girl was staring at him from across the small park in the school grounds. Royce had noticed her leering at him for some time now and every minute she would sneak her way over to him. First she was just a blip in the backdrop of green and blue; then she slowly formed into someone from his class. It was the same girl who hit him. Cream coloured skin, lovely brown eyes, silver hair and nice slender legs. Royce could tell she was well fed and exercised regularly by the muscle town in her legs, but he did not know what she wanted, or why she was spying on him. She was not the target in his personal campaign.

Perhaps she likes foreign students? Perhaps she might have some hidden attraction that only came on the spur of the moment. Perhaps the slap in the classroom was a mistake, or the cause of her affection for him. Royce was getting ahead of himself and he knew it.

Still perched on his spot beside the tree that dominated the school grounds, he kept a watchful eye on this individual. He was confident in himself. All manner of thoughts went through his mind as he tried to work out what this girl wanted. Perhaps she was about to confess her love; *a confession this early...I must be really lucky!*

She edged ever so close to his location and Royce waited with anticipation on what would happen. The gentle breeze swept through the area uplifting her lovely

hair, and she seemed too timid in her school uniform and black stockings. So nice and yet so innocent, this beauty of nature can do no harm.

Within earshot, she shouted one brief word, "Baka!"

Then, to much of Royce's surprise, she ran off into the crowd of shocked students who happened to be loitering around the area.

It only took a few moments for the word to settle, but Royce instantly knew what she said. In English it means *Idiot!*

Royce shook his head and stared at the individual strands of crisp green grass in the park beside him. He knew about the experiences characters had in Manga and anime and his scenario was about to become reality.

The village school was just a normal campus building built to the standards of the day. Mostly square and flat, it resembled the letter H and L on the same part of land. The school did boast wide-open spaces and fresh air that rolled in off the town's limits. Farmland from as far as the eye could see made this a prime location, and Royce soon discovered why people were so protective over their little community. Visitors to this town were sparse, and even if some did arrive, most of them only stayed a few hours before moving on. Royce surmised the local tourist did not know the beauty they were missing and knew they only had interest in more modern attractions that encourage people to Japan in the first place. No one knew of the town's importance or its significance in the country.

However, his first day at school continued to advance, and there was nothing Royce could do to stop fate as it careened forward with no brakes.

Lunch was upon him, and although Royce had prepared his own food, he still wanted to see what the school meals tasted like. If it was edible for him, he would no longer need to bring his own food and he could also enjoy Japanese culture.

Glances hit Royce like a secession of death sentences. He joined the queue to fetch his lunch, and even though it was busy, he was met with fierce resistance. People deliberately shoved past him and even sneered comments at him from all corners of the room. Royce knew what had to be done and he continued on his way regardless.

The food was laid out in pre-made trays and contained an assortment of fish, rice and fruit from the local land and sea. If Royce was in any other town beside the ocean, then the menu would suit the situation; but Naka was located in the middle of the country, in a secluded spot and far off the map. But the grub looked inviting none-the-less.

Cost was not an obstacle, even if the cashier saw his western look and added a five hundred percent tip, he could pay it. He would, of course, need to experience Japanese culture right down to the food and when he tucked into the meal, it was rather good.

"So, you are the new student the whole school's talking about?" Asked a scruffy lad who spun around from the table in front. Royce had been so preoccupied at ignoring the idle slander that he missed the comment for a moment.

"You're not going to say something weird to me too, are you? Perhaps call me an idiot like the other person?" Royce murmured once he found his bearings.

"No, no, no, my friend. I'm Shôta Kishi, the school's delinquent and No.1 guide to everything you need to know about this place." He edged closer, as if revealing a juicy secret. "This school is not what it seems. Everyone may act hostile towards you now, but given time, they'll love you."

Royce looked up from his food tray and looked the Japanese boy in the eyes. His dark eyes, embedded in a golden tanned face, showed a personality hidden from view. He allowed the character to continue.

"See that girl over there?" Shôta gestured with his finger. "She absolutely loves foreign men. Can't get enough of them. Not to mention she's a very daring character."

"What do you mean?" Royce questioned.

"She had a shipment of sexy laundry transferred from America just because she could not find what she was looking for here. Her friends are terrified that if she bends over, the boys will spring into action and take snapshots on their mobile phones." Shôta grabbed his mobile phone and began shifting his finger, waiting for that opportunistic moment as he stalked the girl with his tiger sharp eyes.

"I don't understand." Royce picked a sliver of fish with his chopstick and struggled to wedge the slimy object into his mouth. Not sure where his new perverted friend was going, he allowed him to continue. After all, looking busy and appearing to make friends always looked good.

"There's even a secret underwear club dedicated to the discovery and cataloguing of all the panties girls wear to school. So far, that girl has been the most resistant." He stared into Royce's eyes with rock solid determination. He knew he was not going to like this.

"Please...we desperately need someone with experience in matters like this. You're English are you not?"

Royce raised a shocked hand and exploded, "Eehhh~? You what?"

The lunch hall fell into silence and all eyes were trained on the two lone people sat at the table. Royce imagined the sad sight; shouting, alone, two men, what next!

Royce sat back down, Shôta expressed his remorse for the disturbance and once the hum in the hall returned, the conversation heated up again.

"We've trained an army of professionals who plan out and execute strategic manoeuvres to peep up girl's skirts and catalogue every brand, size and colour. We need an elite team to come to the girl's locker room and obtain samples for our club's collection."

"You lot are strange," Royce rightly said.

"What do you mean?"

"What do you mean? What do you mean? All this strange shit you just told me, it's insane!"

"What do you mean strange? Are you a young lad?" Shôta questioned.

"Yes!"

"Are you are young lad in the prime of his youth?"

"Y-Yes..." Royce stuttered, wondering where this line of questioning was taking him.

"Are you a young lad who wants adventure and to take risks beyond his wildest imagination, explore lands previously unexplored by man and solve one of the greatest mysteries that hinder man's movement?"

Royce had no idea where this topic was heading, but the excitement in Shôta's voice made him want more.

"Yes!"

"Well, our club can only go so far. We have learned and mastered the art of deception on our own and our skill can only go so far. There is a wide plain of unexplored skirts out there, and now we need someone with outside knowledge on how to get closer. We need that underwear. We need freshly used, scented aromas to

complete the collection that has taken years to accumulate and the entire fate of our club depends on it.”

The whole comment must have passed miles away from Royce’s intelligent thinking. From the moment this young lad spoke, nothing but perverted words vomited out of his mouth, dwindling his defences. Royce did not know how or why, but he reluctantly agreed to the challenge and he was now a fully-fledged club member.

“By the way, I am not English, I am American.”

“Even better, I heard they learn everything from the English, your skills should be unmatched!”

*

Royce slumped on his elbows and wondered what he just got himself into. He was only supposed to eat his food and return to class, something that failed to happen thus far. Now it looked like, in his haste for a quiet lunch, he’d joined a strange underground club and had now made a name for himself. Royce guessed that, if news about his acceptance into the club got out, his reputation would spiral down the toilet and any hope of recuperation would be gone. But again, this could provide him with the perfect opportunity to explore the underground movement of this school and see what all the fuss was about. He needed all the information he could get. Learning how these people worked would better help him understand the way to write his characters.

“Excellent, I will tell the other club members, they will be ecstatic.”

“I can’t wait.”

“You have no idea. We all heard from the principal that there was a new student arriving from abroad and we already made preparations to ask you to join. Thank God you did, otherwise we would have to force you!”

Royce raised his eyebrows at that remark. He did not like idle threats; he did not like them at all.

“And what do you mean by that?”

“Oh, the principal has her ways.”

“So the principal knows about the club?” Royce asked, although he did not feel surprised.

“Oh, hell no. She thinks we run a perfectly legitimate club protecting girls from wandering eyes. She even funds our cause. Our very first prize was her pink laced G-string in the alter of the club. That’s our inspiration for every failure, to carry on!”

Royce’s attention suddenly shifted to the dark haired student who wondered into the food hall, that student who drew his attention in the first place, the reason he came to Japan.

Glancing at her from afar, Royce watched her like a hawk. The golden, fair skinned maiden wandered through the crowd of waiting students in a pendulum type fashion, weaving her way like a mysterious interloper until she reached the counter. Elegantly selecting what she wanted, she slithered to the till, paid for her food, and left before anyone knew she’d jumped the line. So fragile and so skilled, Royce almost admired the skill she possessed, and she looked even more thrilling than her Internet images.

“Ah...that’s Rina Matsuyama. Forget about her. She’s nothing but trouble and she’s our greatest enemy, the one girl who always gets in our way. If she spots us looking at her, she’ll kill us.”

“Tell me about it,” Royce muttered under his breath in English.

“What was that?” Shôta replied in Japanese. Royce had almost lost himself in the moment and reverted back to Japanese and carried on the conversation. “I’ve already had a confrontation with her when I arrived. She’s in my class. I understand she’s the class president.”

Shôta shot back in his chair in surprise and Royce watched as the expression on his face turned to stone cold terror.

“What is it?” Royce asked.

“S-Sh-She’s coming!”

Royce turned to gaze back at the class president and sure enough, Royce felt some level of annoyance as he watched her march through the crowded tables with one thing on her mind. Him!

“What’s *that* doing here?” She demanded.

The hum of students subsided, like the eye of a storm before all hell breaks loose. Royce decided to answer on his own accord, deciding to be cocky, that sometimes worked. He surmised she might be one of those control freaks who has their hand in the cookie jar and will not take it out, no matter how strict the parents were. She might just be his biggest challenge yet to break her strangle hold.

“I’m exercising my right to eat my meal. This is a free country the last time I checked.”

Surprised murmurs erupted and the president appeared angered by that remark.

“From where I am sitting it doesn’t appear to me that you’re doing your job correctly.” Royce stared into the air, waved his chopstick around as he continued on with his sentence. “From my understanding and the understanding of the rules, the president’s job is to help and assist the students in their everyday tasks and resolve disputes that might arise in class or privately. Since I have been here, the only one that seems to be hindering my education is you. If you keep pestering me I will have no choice but to report your actions to the principal.”

Royce almost kicked himself for a perfect speech, but he did not intend those words to come out the way they did. He only wanted to say the minimum, keep his head down, watch, observe and make his move in little steps, not jump into the deep end without knowing how to swim.

Royce had never seen a Japanese girl change to a crimson shade of red before. Her skin was so hot; one could cook bacon and eggs on the surface of her skin. Unable to defend himself, or to escape the sudden attention he’d drawn, Royce waited to see what would happen. Would she simply ignore his idle ramblings and vanish? Royce doubted that; he just insulted and threatened her. She appeared to be a woman who wanted to keep up her image. She would probably let loose with a flurry of kicks and punches, a result that seemed reasonable and well fitting for this situation.

Time moved in slow-motion, each second felt like minutes, the future uncertain. He deliberately refused to make eye contact and could hear the commotion all around him. The smell in the room changed too, not full of fragrances from food, but the stained aftermath of a nuclear disaster; burning tar, furniture on flames, people burning, he smelt it all and there was nothing he could do to stop the onslaught.

But, and just before Rina could let loose with hurtful remarks and explosive action, Royce got to his feet, bowed and showed some level of respect to his new friend and placed a quick, but firm, hand the woman's smoking head. "You know, you should really control your temper, a cute girl such as yourself should not burden herself with trivial matters and enjoy life."

Royce made a swift exit and when he was out of eyeshot, he ran out of the area before Rina could recover from the sudden and unexplained action this foreigner showed her.

*

Too be mocked and insulted was not a nice way to begin the day. All through her life Rina had grown in a poor family and worked her way up the food chain to where she stood today. She had the ability to cook meals thanks to her mother. She had the strength to take on any man, thanks to her brothers; and had the attitude of a bull, thanks to her father. But one thing she could not tolerate was that snot nosed English freak who weasled his way into her class, wrapped the principal around his finger and now assaulted her own body. Rina felt his lingering touch on her straight raven black hair. It was as if someone placed a hot water bottle on her head. It began as a warm mark, then heated to an annoying itch and then became so hot she thought her head was on fire!

He touched me!

Never before had she been insulted in such a way. No man, or woman, had even come close to touching her, and when that westerner laid his hands on her carefully manicured hair, he just gave her permission to decapitate him. There was nothing more embarrassing than being touched by a new student, by a man, and in front of the whole school.

With complete disregard for her own feelings, this new student challenged her to a fight and there was no way she would allow him to live after this.

Scanning the food hall with her terminator vision, she plotted his exit route, planned his course to salvation and marched her way through anyone who got in her way. Every student knew the blank expression in Rina's eyes. All eyes were on the young man who made a run for it. She almost grinned at his futile attempt to run from the exterminator. She would enjoy his demise; she'd waited all day for this.

Rina Matsuyama had one thing Royce did not: knowledge. While Royce had been in the high school for the entire morning, she had been enrolled here ever since she was little. The town's people knew her family and they had a close interaction with the school. She had family, knowledge and ties. Royce did not. Rina even quivered at his very name. She now had his name embedded in her mind, a virus that would not go away.

There was nowhere to escape. She knew all the hiding spots and safe havens in the school, even the odd crazy student who might shelter him.

With her nose to the air, like a dog hunting for some treats, she moved forward, bulldozing through obstacles, closed doors and even through crowds of idling students. She was hot on his tail.

That damn English boy touched my hair!

Swearing under her breath, she imagined the pain, the suffering she would give him. *Perhaps holding him by the scruff of the neck and kicking him in the genitals would be too kind. He deserves something far more sinister.* She thought to herself. She

moved from building to building, clearing the school grounds like a precision search team.

Perhaps I could strap him to a table, run a few thousand volts through his body, peel off his skin like an aborigine and feed his intestines to the fish in the kitchen. She shook her head. *That would still be too kind.*

She moved through the music class and into the sports hall. Wide and clear, the sun shone through the glass roof, reflecting off the immaculate floor. She found no trace of him there. Rina moved on.

She darted from building to building, keeping eyes on the places she already searched and hounding students who could give up information. But with a foreign student hiding in the school, how could he vanish without a trace. Rina searched her mind. There was one thing she did not anticipate and this was no normal boy she was dealing with. The current class members were simple in their plans. If they were caught, up to no good, they would always hide in classrooms or on the school grounds. Rina always found her man. But this new student had a whole new range of thinking. He was not bound by the petty limitations of this village and he could use surprising techniques to conceal himself, and even vanish without a trace.

He touched me!!

One hour later she still could not find this said individual and it was when she finally returned to her class, she found her man inside the class room, as if he'd been there the whole time. Then it suddenly struck her.

As she entered the room, the teacher murmured to her. "You're late Rina. It's unlike you to be half an hour late for your class, what have you been doing."

It was some kind of set-up! In forcing her to search the school, looking for him, this foreigner only had to wait until class started and then return to the lesson. He could then mock at her stupidity when she arrived late. Rina found no comfort in his stone cold expression; he remained calm, as if mocking her from afar. Now she had to face the music and the teacher's questions.

"So, do you mind telling me why you, of all people, are late for your class? You are the class president after all; shouldn't you be setting an example?" The teacher's words came like stabbing knives in her back. She could not offer an excuse and she sizzled with anger.

Chapter 4

To stir up trouble with Rina certainly was uncalled for, but Royce loved to stir the pot and see what flavours came out. He wanted to whisk up trouble, and he knew his method would be a sure success.

Running around the school, trying to avoid the iron lady's tight grip, was simple in the short term but in the end, Royce knew he would have to stay at the school for many years, and to have her as an enemy was not wise. But she was his target and the reason he moved to Japan in the first place.

Back at home, Royce walked up to his hotel window and gazed solemnly over the town that shed a few more of its secrets. It was more than he wanted to know and his sudden acceptance in *that* club only made him cringe.

A club called the Secret Underwear Club only meant trouble. *What kind of tasks would I be expected to do?*

This question always lingered in the back of his mind, but he did enjoy the day's activities. He got to know Rina a little bit more. He managed to get the once over and as an added bonus, he got her into trouble with the teacher. *Yeah, get out of that.*

But Royce had to be careful; he would not be able to learn what he needed to know by always fighting with his target.

He walked over to his computer and looked at the blank word document. His next series was due soon and Royce was no closer to a story than he was the moment he opened that file. He needed ideas.

With the deadline weighing heavily on his mind Royce used what little experience he gained today to begin the next part in his story.

The next morning the sun shone high in the sky as songbirds chimed out soothing melodies for the town's inhabitants. It would have been a new productive day for Royce, but being up half the night writing down what he'd experienced so far had placed him in a tight situation. He'd overslept.

Under normal circumstances, an image of him waking up late and rushing to school with a piece of toast in his mouth was not an image he wanted to portray. Of course, it would look cute if he were a girl. But Royce was no girl and he was not going to rush to school like that. Instead, he did the next best thing: grabbed himself a good old-fashioned blended shake of goodness he made the night before and drank it on the way. He knew that someday his long walk would hinder his progress, and knew the school would probably close its gates at the scheduled time. So with that in mind, he fetched his battery powered scooter and made his way at relatively good speed.

Dodging in and out of traffic and avoiding any rough and tumble moments with the residents, Royce controlled the vehicle perfectly until he came face to face with Rina.

"Fancy meeting you here!" Royce began.

"It's not coincidence, its insanity. Why are you here?" She asked, leering at him from afar.

"You speak English well." Royce manoeuvred his bike for a swift exit but waited to see what would happen first.

"It's a requirement for all class presidents to learn foreign languages. You would know if you were not so pig headed."

"Pig headed?" Royce replied in anger. "That's another mighty fine word you know there."

She stared into his eyes and even though Royce's eyes often lost women in its blue glowing haze, this iron woman failed to be lost at all. He continued with his line of questioning. He had to know the reason for her hostility.

"Why are you so hostile towards me? I've done nothing to you."

"You touched my head, and shamed me in front of my class!" She exclaimed, standing ramrod straight.

"Touched you? What are you talking about?"

"Yesterday, you touched my head!"

"What? That?" Royce remembered the incident well, that moment of gesture, that harmless pat on her head seemed to have hit a nerve.

"I did not know you liked me that much to remember a moment like that!" Royce decided to let loose all his wise cracks. It was time to show this girl what it's like to be American.

"In my culture, that's considered rude and inconsiderate. You just can't touch a girl's head like that." She edged closer, "But I guess all English men are the scum of the earth."

Royce felt his anger well up from within. How many times did he have to explain that he's American, not English!

"Tell you what, keep out of my way and I'll keep out of yours."

"How about you leave my school and never come back?" She exchanged ideas, not what Royce wanted to here, no matter how good the day was.

"I can't do that."

"Why not?"

"I have a lot invested in this town and the school. I came here to start a new life, away from my deranged family."

"So you admit you hate your family?"

"I did not say I hated them."

"But the tone of your voice says otherwise."

"Your understanding of English is limited to its basic characters and punctuation, not the meaning of words."

"What's that supposed to mean?" Rina exclaimed, placing her hands on her hips, angry.

"It means you are narrow-minded and noisy. You dig into other people's business without their consent or consideration." Royce knew he was heading for a jackpot. He loved to wind this girl up; after all, she humiliated him at the beginning of class on his first day. Speaking of which, Royce took a quick glance at his watch and realized all his free time had almost gone. He had to enter the school gates or be locked out.

Moving like he was some well-disciplined military soldier, he ran into the school grounds and ignored Rina. She fell behind and Royce adopted the 'strongest wins' attitude. He saw her silhouette in the corner of his vision as the gates closed, trapping her outside the school. Standing out in the open, she fumed with fury as Royce waltzed into the building, whistling to himself. His day had begun on a positive note.

Chapter 5

"Are you sure we should be doing this?" Royce whispered as he crept under the bushes with the club members in sight.

"Don't worry. With your experience in England, I'm sure we can score a perfect hit!" Shôta said, grinning mischievously.

"But why are we here? I'm sure this is not authorised by the school or the governing bo..." Royce stopped dead in his tracks as the trio of lads finally made their way to the destination. Peeking through the window, young girls of all teenage ages stripped down to their bear essentials and changed into their sports gear. Royce felt the heat from behind as the level of testosterone rose.

"Look at that, Yamoto is wearing a silk lace thong today. Look at her huge breasts; I would love to rub my cheeks in there!"

More whispers erupted from Royce's left. "Look, that one's wearing very daring underwear. Black pandered, stripped, cute, innocent, and sexy lingerie... this is amazing!"

Eyes zigzagged across the windowpane as each bloke ogled the attractive sight. It only took a few minutes, but once the women changed into their black striped tops and tight gym shorts, the lads were left alone with piles of clothing neatly stacked.

Royce looked at the members and it was almost as if he was staring at a pack of dogs drooling over a rabbit. He could feel perverted thoughts seeping to the surface, their minds so clear even an idiot could read their body language.

"Look!" Shôta announced. "The girls have left their clothing on the benches. Not in the lockers as they normally do."

Royce sensed a hint of perversity in the young man's voice.

"What are you guys going to do?" Royce asked, dreading the answer.

"We are going to steal all the underwear. This'll be our biggest robbery in the school's history. After this, our names will go down in history as the *Greatest Knickers Robbery!*"

The Japanese have a real warped sense of humour. What have I gotten myself into?

Royce crept further into the bush. He knew the devil himself had come to Earth to cast his medieval spell upon him. He saw no way to escape and the perverted looks on the club member's faces grew more dangerous by the second.

Shôta's eyes beamed with pride. "You'll be our guide, Royce. Show us what to do. How can we break in and steal the prize without getting caught?"

Royce looked up in surprise. There was no way he would do something so degrading, and of course he flatly refused.

"But you are our last, best hope for success Royce! We need your foreign strength and intelligence. You must do this. It's your duty as a man!"

"But Americans don't do things like this. I'm a decent person. I can't fool around like this."

"You're English, no? You should know how to break in without getting caught. You know, James Bond and stuff!" said one lad, begging for help.

Suddenly the door inside the changing room opened and the group of adolescents ducked behind the bushes and spied through the leaves. To Royce's surprise, Rina strolled in, found a spot near the window and placed her bag on the bench.

Royce felt some level of pleasure when he watched Rina undress into her gym kit. Never before had he seen perfection in a human form. Rina slowly slid down her skirt and bent over, waving her bum towards the window. Her creamy stripped knickers snuggled her butt cheeks perfectly and Royce saw the outline of her womanhood perfectly in the clear sunlight. Her breasts flopped out as she removed her bra and when she finally slid off her knickers, the bush of pubic hair was tightly cut to perfection, a sign that she looked after her body. With pain in his groin, Royce watched with sizzling temptation as she slipped into her tight shorts and shirt, both rounding around her body. He really wanted to hold and caress that woman. Then, before he knew it, the room was empty.

The aftermath was the show and now he saw an opportunity...revenge!

"Okay, I'll do it!" Royce said as he mustered up his courage. This would be the only way he could seek revenge and learn about this hard-fisted woman who always bullied him for no reason. He knew this person existed long before he came to the school.

"This is going to be great. I feel like James Bond on a quest to steal top secret information!" Shôta exclaimed.

"Will you keep your voice down! We don't want to attract any attention!" Royce barked. He wondered how many times this team of bandits had been caught

and he almost blabbed out that question when the window moved upwards, gaining them entry.

“Perfect,” Shôta said. “What do we do now?”

“One of you sneak over to the entrance and keep watch, while the rest of us pile up and collect as much as we can. Then we’ll all return to the window and leave.”

“That plan sounds perfect,” muttered one student.

Royce gestured with his hand and the army of looters crammed through the window to steal underwear and bras. Royce only had to get one thing: he wanted to know what it would feel like to touch Rina’s personal belongings. An item of clothing that had been placed upon her skin, an item of clothing that had soaked up her sweat juice from down below.

The sheer audacity of it all weighed down his mind like an anchor and the young American found himself hesitant. The sexy striped underwear was right in front of him, Rina’s personal property. It was a symbol of her sexual being. It was trapped, caged like a wild animal ready to be released into a man, something only a bloke could feel; something that edged him closer.

The sweet smell of her scent lured him in. Even from his standpoint, he was forced to pick the forbidden fruit. He placed a hesitant hand over the silky fabric of her garments and his mind went wild. *The bra underneath, the underwear, the used underwear!!! It was all within striking distance. One tug and I’ll have her in my hand... The experience all men desire... the touch of her private parts upon my skin... all mine!*

Royce took his eyes off his own prize and glanced around the room to see how the other members of the club were doing. Operating like professional spies, they swooped in and picked up bras and underwear like they were shopping in the local supermarket. Royce was surprised at the efficiency of the club. The way they climbed through the window could break the world record; the way they dived into the bushes was just precision perfect... *but wait! Why did they leave? Why did they run?*

Royce suddenly felt the texture of something under his palm, a warm silky feeling, a feeling of life and a soul. He looked down and saw his hand resting on the top of Rina’s underwear. Then his heart began to beat frantically. A voice deep within his mind told him that someone was right behind, but his intelligence challenged this fact because all the girls had already gone to gym class.

But he could not shake the feeling he had just jumped into a pot of boiling fat. He turned his head, slowly, and shot back in terror... *Oh my god!!!! Rina!!! She’s here! I’m touching her underwear... She’s watching! I-I’m dead!*

Chapter 6

Rina must have some kind of sixth sense because there was no reason for her to return to the girls changing room so suddenly. But that was not at the forefront of Royce’s mind. He had inadvertently placed his hand on her warm knickers and the president of the class returned to witness the horror. He immediately realised his mistake, stepped back with his hands waving in surrender, “Now, now, now, this is not what it looks like!”

What an idiot... Royce thought to himself. Everyone, everywhere, would say that line, as if it’s embedded into the stupid psyche of humans unable to chat their way out of impossible situations.

“ROYCE!!!!” She screamed. The lightening flashed and the pillars of heaven shook with the very words Rina shouted from the bottom of her lungs. No amount of armour or army could help him now.

For a normal girl, it would have been the right choice to question what he was doing in the girl’s changing room with his hands on her knickers. In most circumstances, a cool calm approach would have been ideal to get the information she needed. But the thought of having his sweaty, perverted fingers on her sacred possession was too much to bear. Her flamboyant striped underwear had been special, her property, and now they were defiled, used, contaminated.

Rina could not hold back her anger and let loose with a flurry of kicks and punches that would make any boxing match pale in comparison. If there was a hospital nearby, it would be seeing the foreigner very soon in intensive care. He could not come up with a good excuse to explain his presence. His fate was sealed.

Rina conjured up moves that struck Royce with immense pain. Unarmed and unprepared, Royce fought with every kick and punch. His club members escaped and the commotion had brought the attention of the rest of the girls, who later discovered their personal belongings missing and the only culprit was standing right in front of them.

Once the dust had initially settled, they asked one question. “Where’s our underwear?”

Royce was unable to answer that question. He vowed to keep the club a secret. He found himself thrown into a hailstorm of hell and suffering just for doing his part and blindly walking into trouble. He should have seen it coming, but it could have been a sick twisted club initiation the members give to all their newbies.

He stepped back as the horde of women closed in on him, the darkness covering him in an endless shroud...

“You’ve made yourself quite the reputation my friend,” the doctor said as Royce woke from his coma.

“What? Where am I?” he asked, distorted, hurt and confused.

“You’re in Naka’s Local Hospital.” The doctor strolled around his bed and took a quick glance at Royce’s bedside chart. “Looks like you’ve joined the *Secret Underwear Club* and bit off more than you can cope.”

“Chew.”

“Excuse me?” The doctor asked.

“The expression is: bit off more than you can chew.”

“Oh. Anyway, yes, looks like you bit off more than you can chew in that club.”

“Were you in the club, doctor?”

“Of course I was. Every teenager who passed through that school gets enrolled in the club. It’s how we met our wives and developed our relationships.” The doctor pulled out his wallet and showed a small picture of a woman holding a baby. She seemed young and prime, and Royce assumed by the position of the picture that she was his wife.

“So, what did the club ask you to do?” the doctor asked, checking Royce’s blood pressure.

“They asked me to help them gather...things from the girl’s locker room and...I got distracted.”

“I see. Did that special item hypnotise you into a trance-like state?” Royce looked at the doctor in innocent surprise. That is exactly how he was caught.

“How do you know?” Royce asked.

"I've seen cases like yours before. You are looking for someone, or something. Resolution in your life and that someone is part of the puzzle. You may have found what you are looking for, but judging from the rumours now spreading around the school, I think your days are numbered."

"Yeah, I gathered us much." Royce looked down at his battered form. Being beaten up by fifteen girls would pose a challenge to restore his reputation, if it was indeed recoverable.

That night Royce licked his wounds and returned to his hotel room that overlooked the entire village. He was glad he owned the place, because when noon came, he was able to see the black-and-blue state he was in. How he lived through that moment was beyond him, but it looked like someone or something was out there protecting him. But in the end, he did manage to feel her underwear. That warm afterglow of her spirit glided through his hand like running water from a tap. She still lingered there; on the very surface of his skin and now his question of knowing what it would be like to touch a girl had finally been answered. But he had a bigger problem to contend with. He had ruined all hopes of a successful settlement into the school.

"Sir, do you need anything else?" The butler asked as he handed Royce a warm towel.

Royce began to rub down all the bruises on his chest and face before answering. "No, I am okay. Just have my uniform ready for tomorrow."

"Are you sure that's wise, sir? Shouldn't you wait until the incident has settled down?"

"Hell no. This is exactly the kind of material I'm looking for in my story. It's like one person said, 'If you can't take a little bloody nose then you might as well get out of the game.'"

"Those are wise words, sir." The butler finished, "is there anything else?" "No, that will be it for today. You can go home and enjoy the rest of the evening." Royce always showed that man respect. He helped him out in his time of need and he needed the hotel to himself, he needed the solitude. Now with the hotel completely silent, he thought about the day and how he would cope through tomorrow.

Chapter 7

Royce had no choice but to walk to school today. His bike had mysteriously disappeared from the grounds on the day of the incident, but he had no sentimental value in the machine. The young man could purchase another one, but the walk allowed him to think.

Every street had a story and every story was a child's dream. He could feel the excitement and pain on each corner and now his experience was being added to the town's soul. He might not have been a welcomed guest; but he was beginning to connect with the town.

The school sat in its prominent place overlooking the fields of vast open land. He wondered if he should skip school and rest on the grassy hills and enjoy the sunset. Perhaps a revelation would come to him, a means to create that perfect chapter. However, he had to face the music and see what his presence would cause back at school.

Royce did not have to wander too far into the school property before he was summoned to the principal's office. This indeed was going to be his unluckiest day.

*

The office door was slightly cracked and at eight o'clock in the morning, it was certainly an invitation to enter. Royce stared at it for a long while, wondering if he should subject himself to the onslaught of the principal's sexual harassment. He knew how wild she could be and his latest incident would make the situation worse.

But he had no choice.

He took a deep breath and swung the door open. It creaked every inch of the way to its apex and Royce saw the principal behind her desk.

"Please Royce, come in and close the door."

Royce gradually walked into the principal's office and closed the door. He thought—for a split second—if closing the door was such a good idea. Sitting down, he brushed his left hand over his ear and waited patiently.

"My, my, my Royce. Haven't we been an adventurous little foreigner this week?" She leaned both elbows on her desk and held her playful expression a little bit more. "It's only been a few days and so far you've managed to piss-off Rina Matsuyama, the class president, sneak into the girl's locker room and affiliate the disappearance of all the girl's underwear and send everyone into a frenzy. What do you have to say for yourself?"

Royce knew the *witch* was enjoying every little bit of this interview. He knew the Japanese had a warped sense of humour and the principal was using that legend to its full potential.

"It's not what you think!" Royce exclaimed with an innocent smile. "I, I was only..."

"Yes...you were what?" She teased some more.

"I-I was only..." Royce could feel the hole deepen with every word he muttered.

"Seems to me like we have ourselves a young lad who is just as devious as the young men in this school."

The principal bent over her desk and her short silky black skirt snaked up her thighs and became so impeccably close to exposing her underwear, the teenager could barely control his urges.

He crossed his legs and gazed away from the hot woman who wiggled and teased. Royce was not sure, but he surmised she was deliberately inflaming the moment.

Moments later she turned around and she must have been reaching for something because she bent right down, her back covered by her nice round bum. Her skirt was so tight; Royce expected the blossoming of a flower at any moment, the golden moment.

She finally stood straight after teasing him and turned back. "Did you like what you saw? I had no idea English boys were so naughty."

Koomah sat on the end of her oak table and crossed her slender legs, giving Royce a peek up her skirt. For some reason, he could not keep his eye off her. The principal's butt-cheeks were round and firm, bursting at the seams with secrets only a lover should feel. If she did anything, or came close, he would explode with excitement.

Royce took two deep breaths to control his pent up aggression. That method of self-control worked in the past and he did not want to end up in anymore trouble.

"You've caused quite a stir in this school, young man," she said, walking so slowly with a slight wave in her stride. "The school cannot accept behaviour like yours. Your actions in the girl's changing room are completely inexcusable."

"I know principal. I am *soooo* sorry about that. I only wanted to leave and before I knew it, my hand was on Rina's underwear. I mean no disrespect."

"And what happened to the rest of the underwear?"

Royce had to think. *Can I really turn over my new friends? Can I really confess the truth?*

Hell yeah!

"The club I joined, *The Secret Underwear Club* asked me to help them steal the garments."

The principal glanced at Royce for a long moment and appeared to have an idea. "So, you have joined *The Secret Underwear Club*?"

"I had no choice," he shrugged.

"Why would a man like you join a club like that?"

"It was a spur of the moment."

"Spur?" Koomah asked.

"Yes, it means something that happens fast. Normally too fast to make a proper judgement or an incident that requires action and not thought."

"You seem to handle your Japanese well."

"I try my best." Royce replied.

"So, why did you learn our language fluently?"

"I would not call it fluently. I just learned what I could." Royce frowned, not knowing where this conversation was heading.

"I see. Are you sure you didn't learn Japanese...just to talk to girls?"

"No! What do you take me for?" Royce snapped, denying the allegation.

"I take you for a young man who'd just been caught red handed trying to nick panties. That'll class you as the biggest pervert this school has ever seen. Even the other male students are not as crazy as you."

"I guess it takes skill."

"Oh," She stood up creeping around her desk towards him, desire filling every pore in her face, nipples erect. "You have skill."

"What's that supposed to mean?" asked Royce. When Koomah pointed a finger at Royce's groin, he noticed his trousers unzipped, exposing his own black underwear.

Unprepared for the sudden exposure, Royce covered himself up and re-zipped the offending moment. He had battled the broken zipper on his way to school because it always unzipped itself while he walked.

"You are building up quite the reputation. I am sorry Royce, but Rina has reported your actions and your class also filled a case of grievance against you. I have no choice but to punish you!" She used the word *punish* with great enthusiasm; Royce was almost thrown from his chair by her excitement.

"After school, you are to report to the pool side to scrub it down." She pulled out a case file and shifted papers this way and that. "Then you're to report to Rina and apologise, as well as the rest of your class."

The principal dismissed him with a wave of her hand and Royce stood from his chair. But before he could go, a voice called out for him once more. "Royce, watch yourself with the pool. Lots of students get wet in after school activities."

The supervisor at the poolside was an elderly gentleman with half a head of hair and the rest balding on the top. He looked as though someone had woke him up from his Sunday nap and called him into service. He was shouting orders this way and that, stomping his feet and stretching his authority way too far. Then, when Royce reached the poolside, he recognised the five individuals who were solemnly scrubbing all the green algae off the side of the pool walls.

So the elite team of the Secret Underwear Club did not escape.

"You must be Royce, the resident delinquent?" The old man began.

"Geez~...I am not." Royce shouted his disapproval.

"I don't care what or who you are," the old man shouted. "I want you in that pool scrubbing. Now get to it!" He pulled out a mile long whip and cracked it in the air, like a Roman in a great stadium. "Do you want me to show you, boy?"

Reluctantly, Royce hopped into the pool and grabbed a brush and joined the army of disobedient students.

Half way through the hour, Royce finally spoke. "This is a fine mess you got me into. What was all *that* about?"

"What?" Shôta asked.

"You lot left me at the changing rooms for dead. What happened to teamwork?"

"Do you know the trouble we'll get into if we were caught with girl's underwear in our hands?" one lad exclaimed. Another joined in with words like, "Our reputation in this school will be severally damaged, our parents ground us for one hundred years and we would be added to the great Hall of Shame!"

"That's a little excessive," Royce replied. "I don't think the situation would have turned out like that. If you lot rescued me, we could have escaped this punishment we're in now!" Royce threw his brush on the bottom of the pool and the old man jumped from his chair, as if a firework was shoved up his butt. "Get back to work! No one said you could stop."

Royce stared at the old man and unenthusiastically picked up the brush and carried on. But one thing was for sure; his carefully planned entry into the renounced school was rapidly going off course.

Chapter 8

It was dusk when the trio of bad asses finally finished the punishment they were assigned by Koomah. Royce never felt pain like this until he made his way home. He did hear idle chatter from his club friends about his adventures, and he surmised that tomorrow would be the biggest challenge so far.

But for the moment, he was back home – if he could call his hotel a home – with some rudimentary ideas for his next tale.

His rival had already released the next in the series of her Manga called *Princess YuYu's Colourful BomBom*.

Battling neck and neck, his Manga and that of his competition had been taking the top spot for more than one year.

It had to stop.

Royce was determined to blow open that author's box of tricks and find out her secrets. He was determined not to lose this time and continued with the competition.

Her manga was targeted to girls and she seemed to do a good job at it. Or rather, too good, as he found out on reviews and recommendations. Royce could not understand the story line, or the pull it had on all the young girls in Japan; but his own work attracted the men in the droves. From then, it was a battle of who would win the week's top prize money and be crowned the greatest author in Japan. But Royce hated Rina's Manga and she hated his, even though she did not know he was the author of such a fierce periodical.

Royce liked to keep his secret to himself. Due to his work being so popular in Japan, he'd been racking in the money and it provided him the perfect opportunity to leave his home in America and embark on his big adventure. At first, it was a simple task to infiltrate the school and learn Rina's secrets, perhaps find a moment to knock her out of the race, get rid of the competition. But in the few days he'd been here, more had happened to him than the two years he spent at America's secondary school.

"Sir, the builders will arrive tomorrow to repair the rest of the Hotel."

"Thanks Samuru, it will be good to make this place habitable. You never know when the extra rooms will be handy." Royce spun on his chair and looked at the butler. Although the hotel was only meant for him, he knew it was a good gesture to restore this place. Perhaps when he left, someone might take over and use it for what it was designed for. But for now, it was his home; a place where he could work without being harassed.

That night, his latest story came to him without any problems. The incidents today were a good lesson for Royce and he learned much from it. But it was the problems he would have to contend with the next day that concerned him.

Royce sighed as he held a mug of hot tea in his hands. It was hard enough to find normal tea, because the town had its own supply of tea. When he did find some, it was labelled Red Tea. He spent many hours rummaging through the local shops trying to find the right type. Luckily, he'd done this before he started school so all the students who shopped in the same place did not know who he was.

The town appeared slow that day compared to when he just moved into town. He guessed that some kind of festival had finished. It would have been a good experience for his latest story. But he knew there would be another celebration next year. For what, he did not know, but he wanted to learn.

Royce raised the mug to his mouth and enjoyed another slurp of tea. It didn't exactly match to what he was used to, but it was close.

He picked up his pen in his hand and began to jot down some notes on his writing pad. It had been empty for a few days, nothing worthy to write until the recent spectacle at school. Royce sighed again. *Looks like tomorrow will be an interesting day.*

*

On his initial drive up to the school on his new electric scooter, Royce finally found out what happened to his last one. He glared at the cute silver haired girl, who reminded him of a character in an old anime he'd seen many years ago. Not much of an avid watcher of anime but he had gained enough knowledge to know what goes on and how to adopt his Manga accordingly.

But watching the silver-blue haired girl ride his old bike into school did stir up a little bit of anger. The scooters were brought in from abroad and not available in Japan. Red in colour, they used electric batteries to run and were easy to use. Light to manoeuvre and handled well. Very rare vehicles and Royce knew of a good supplier. But having one nicked from right under his nose was rude; she didn't even ask.

Royce approached the girl, ready to give her his piece of mind on the art of politeness.

"Like the bike?" he asked, beginning the argument.

The girl didn't answer. She didn't appear scared or remorseful at all; just a cold figure, stood there in her glassy black and red highlighted Pinafore dress with a cardigan.

"I wondered where my bike went to yesterday. Glad it fell into elegant hands." Royce placed a weary hand to his forehead and could not believe he used the word elegant. He sounded like a fool chatting up the girl of his dreams.

She glared right back, said nothing, then wandered off, holding the keys in her hands which had a few extra accessories added: home keys, a key ring doll, mobile phone gadget and a few ribbons. Royce rolled his eyes and moved on.

*

It wasn't the heat that bothered Royce this time, unlike all the other days. It was the leering glances from the students. Everywhere he walked, Royce was the star of the show. More so now than he was before, thanks to the stunt he pulled. He hoped that the whole incident would blow over so he could enjoy the school life and discover what this town had to offer.

That was not going to happen as the screaming of a few huddled together girls indicated.

"Arrrr, it's the pervert! Help!" They held their skirts down while handbags flailed around with their panicked movements. Shortly after they quickly bolted away from him.

Royce scratched his head, wondering what that was about; but he already knew the answer. The news must have spread all over school by now, so he braced himself for more little surprises.

Royce did not have to wait too long. Before he got into the park grounds of the school -which had a symbolic water fountain bubbling in the background- three women pounced on Royce. The first woman, whom Royce surmised to be the leader, was tall and lean, with strong facial features and yellow tied back hair. Her uniform was a mix between a school swimsuit and an army outfit all coloured to the school's uniform theme. She looked threatening, and he assumed she was the local enforcer.

The other two were your normal run of the mill characters that looked like they'd seen too many action movies and space adventures. They huddled behind the leader, assuming she was the leader of the group.

The yellow haired stunner moved forward, chewing on a stick like a cowboy in an old western. "Looks like we have a bonafied pervert out on the school grounds, yeah girls?"

The two girls replied in agreement, and Royce felt a bead of sweat trickle down his face.

"Me thinks this boy needs to be taught a lesson. What do you think, girls?"

As expected, the two agreed, not in a shy or shallow tone, but it was just barely audible, as if they were dreaming of wicked evil things. Royce could only imagine what was in store for him.

Being dragged into the school building, up the stairs, along the second floor and shoved into a small room was not the best way Royce wanted to spend his morning. Sure, there might be three cute girls all around him, and the thought of a foursome did cross his mind. But that burning sensation of something more evil was paramount in his mind.

Tied to the chair and staring at the blonde leader, who stood over him with a spotlight in his face.

She interrogated him like some prisoner of war. "Tell me Royce... Tell me all I want to know, or I will turn on this light."

"I'll tell you anything if you just release these straps," he said gamely.

Royce studied the few people in the room. He surmised that they would not hurt him. But there was little he could do while being tied up. So there were only a few things the girls could be up to. His first idea was that they wanted information. What information was beyond him, but they probably wanted to know everything about the so called "man's club" he joined and who else was involved. His second idea was that they were planning some form of revenge. It stood to reason and Royce shifted nervously in his chair as the stuffy air tickled his nose.

The three maidens of justice stood around in a group and muttered in an incomprehensible language that only women could understand (or Royce's language skills did not reach that far).

The leader, the blonde woman, left the group after they appeared to agree on something. With an evil smirk, she walked up to Royce and leaned over, her cleavage bouncing behind a loose bra.

"What kind of punishment would be fittin' for an English man like you?" she asked.

"I am American, not English."

"Really? That's not what the school records state."

"The records are wrong."

"That's what they all say," the woman replied in Japanese. Royce understood, barely.

"You, Royce, have been a very naughty boy; sneaking into the girls changing room, nicking underwear. I expected this much from ordinary boys in this school, but not from English, or American!" Royce guessed she added the last comment to cover all her grounds. His record might state he was from England, a matter that he couldn't seem to rectify, but he was from America.

"Like I tried to explain, I was only trying to convince the club members not to commit this heinous crime. But they left, standing there with no hope of defence." Royce nudged forward, desperate to plead to the leader's humanity. "You must believe me, it was only a misunderstanding."

"Oh, we all believe it was a misunderstanding, don't we, girls?"

The group cheered and laughed before the leader continued. "You, Royce must be the worst liar in the history of liars. Not only have you desecrated the female sacred area, you placed your hand on one of my best friend's underwear, tainting its purity and forcing a good pair of knickers to the incinerator. I can't think of any other punishment than that..."

The leader pointed to a dark corner of the room and Royce shivered with terror. It was pitch black, darker than the shade of ink. He could not make out

anything for the initial second until the woman pointed in its direction. A spotlight came on and Royce required a few moments to adjust to the brightness.

Once the item was shown, Royce erupted in a fit of fury. "What the hell are you going to do with that?"

"Me?" The leader of the pack asked, her yellow hair waving in her excited moment.

"Yes, is that some kind of medieval torture device? Are you going to wear that to sexually entice me?"

The yellow haired woman smiled, leaned on her left leg and chewed on the end of the wire she was holding in her right hand. "No, I will not be wearing that. You are!"

Royce's eyes threatened to jump out of their sockets. "You got to be fucking kidding! There's no way in *Hell* I'm wearing that!"

"Oh yes you are!" She pulled out an automatic 9mm pistol and pointed it toward Royce's groin. "You'll wear it if you know what's good for you!" The situation suddenly turned dire and Royce had little, if any choice, but to surrender and follow her demands.

Chapter 9

Royce's classroom was in front of him and being dressed in his new costume would make him the laughing stock of the whole school. Because the door was closed, no one had seen him. But all of that would change in a few seconds. His life depended on it.

With her weapon nicely tucked between her breasts, the yellow haired warrior—called Akina Oda by her friends—warned him again. "This is your punishment," she gestured with a long stick. "You're to go into your class, bow down and ask for forgiveness."

"A-And if I refuse?" Royce had to ask, even though he knew what the answer might be, he had to try to escape this embarrassing situation. He felt the draft from below, but all that would change once he stepped through the threshold.

"If you don't..." she un-sheathed her katana from the long stick she was carrying and gestured it towards his groin. "...I'll cut off something important to you."

She directed him to the corner of the door so she could announce his speech to the class. "Remember, after the apology and the traditional bow, you are to Meow like a cat! Do I make myself clear?"

Royce swallowed hard...the terms were like stabbing needles through his throat. He could not do it. It was too embarrassing. *Why do the Japanese have to torment me this way?*

"Get a move on! You made this mess, now you have to ask for forgiveness."

Akina opened the door and walked in, announcing her presence with a hearty "hello", waking up anyone who might have been two snoozes away from sleeping. Now Royce waited anxiously outside the classroom.

"Please forgive my interruption sensei." She waited for approval.

The teacher gave it and she continued. "As you know, a new student, Royce has been caught red handed trying to steal our underwear from the locker rooms - a crime that will not be accepted in a school like this. It's my duty to protect the

livelihoods of all the girls and send a clear signal to all the would-be knickers pinchers. It took great care and skill to hold back my murderous desires, but I decided on a fitting punishment for our foreign student. I know my punishment might be severe, but I can assure you, it's completely necessary. Our school is finally improving and we can't have the likes of him ruin it for us." She pointed her weapon at the dark shadow trying desperately to hide.

Royce placed his hands to his ears in an attempt to stifle the horrid speech. He had to escape! He was only held prisoner by two women, both of whom looked weak and unable to hold their ground. He could slip past, escape, put his own clothes on and remain anonymous. In fact, it looked like his mission within this school was compromised and he should leave the town. He could find his information elsewhere and it was clear he'd messed up big time.

Yes! Royce thought. Time to escape this town!

He decided to make a run for it...

Suddenly a sharp object was placed to his throat. Unknown to Royce, one of Akina's team members had been hiding out behind a corner and when she saw the scurrilous individual try and escape, she jumped out and put him to the floor in hand to hand combat. She didn't even break a sweat and broke the silence only for a moment. "You are not going anywhere."

Royce shivered... His name was called... He had no choice. He had to enter the classroom.

"Come on Royce. Seek your forgiveness from your class."

Akina's voice changed to that of a threatening general. Royce felt the pain she inflicted by holding his hand and that was enough to force him into the class.

The room erupted in an uproar of laughter. Never before had Royce been humiliated like this. With his hands crossed and standing pigeon-towed, holding down his cosplay cat costume like a virgin girl, he glanced around the room with watery eyes. Sudden flashes from all corners of the room signalled pictures were being taken, and he saw himself on the mirror that was attached to the back wall.

Dressed in a black cat skirt, with cat hair-band and clip on tail, he shuddered at the makeup and female extras forced on him. By this stage the class was so wound up, even the stale atmosphere had changed and Akina nudged him into action. "Come on Royce, what do you have to say for yourself?"

The class went silent, as if Akina shot them a threatening pose.

Royce closed his eyes, thought happy thoughts and bowed. "I am sorry, please forgive me. I have no excuse for what happened yesterday..." He paused...

"Go on!" Akina threatened. "You know what to do!"

"M...M...M." Royce could not say it!

One of the students knew exactly what he was going to say and found herself overwhelmed with excitement. "Go on! Say it! Please! I have the camera rolling."

"M...M..." Royce stuttered and felt his hand being twisted into positions never felt possible. "Meow!" Royce raised a hand to create the paw gesture of a cat. Everyone erupted in a frenzy and the young man knew the only way to escape was to kill himself.

"HAHAHAHA," cried Rina. "Purr for me kitten, come on. Let's see that cute ball of wool... Purrrrr for me!"

Royce could not hold back the boiling cauldron of anger. He exploded! "This is humiliating! All of you shut up, get me out of here!"

Royce tried to escape the classroom but found the exit blocked by Akina's minions. With nowhere to run, he crouched on the floor and laminated to himself, "this is the very definition of misery."

Royce was ordered to wear the getup for the rest of the day. The material of the dress was comfortable, but it was anything but stylish. The costume would have looked perfect on a girl, and even Royce knew he would not be able to control his manly urges if one girl wore this dress. But that was just wishful thinking as he fought off the lustful glances from odd students in the class.

All through the day, students took pictures, teased from afar and even gave him cat toys to play with. Royce was not even allowed to remove the cat ears or tail. The band of enforcers was always near by, making sure he wore his punishment for the rest of the day.

Walking down the corridor, Royce ran into the silver haired girl again. She glared at him, smiled and then whispered, "Meow."

Royce had never heard a human create the perfect combination of purr and meow at the same time. It almost made his day worthwhile, but it was the flash from her camera phone that brought him back to reality.

"I hope you like the picture."

"I will treasure it always." The silver haired woman clutched her camera and stepped back, as if she feared Royce's actions.

"Tell me about Akina and her band of terrorists?" Royce asked.

"She is the leader of her club, the girl protection club. They are a secret club that monitors everything that happens in this school. It's their job to make sure that girls who come to this school have a carefree experience without being harassed by boys or having their underwear stolen. You have severely damaged their reputation with your stunt."

"I told you, I have nothing to do with that!"

"So you keep saying!"

"That's because it's the truth."

"The truth will set you free and the sooner you tell them, the sooner you can get out of that dress."

"I think I'll wear it for the rest of the day!"

Royce walked off and the conversation was over.

*

For the rest of the period, Royce received odd looks and smirks from the class. When he arrived in the canteen or explored the school grounds, there would be an uproar of activity. Men came in close to look at Royce, who stood glumly under the tree, trying to remain as unobtrusive as possible.

It failed.

Girls came to see the cuteness for themselves and with technology being the hype in the town, it was a good opportunity to take pictures and fraternise with friends. Royce knew he would never live this down; it would be with him forever. But there was one good thing that came out of it. They forgot about his bad behaviour. Sure, he was caught doing the deed, but he was not the type of man to own up to that. Then again, he was a fool to fall into the trap and end up being forced to wear the dress and cat accessories.

Never mind, Royce thought to himself. When the days are over, I can go home like a normal person.

*

When it was time to finally go home from school, all the students waited at the front gate especially to see him. It was a spectacle he'd never seen before. So at the first opportunity, he quickly escaped into the school and changed into his normal uniform, never to look back at that incident again.

As the days progressed, pictures of our wondrous adventurer appeared all over campus and Royce turned out to be the laughing stock of the whole school.

The weekend was upon him and Royce was glad to be away from the school. It was a constant battle to outwit the mobs and avoid any more embarrassing situations. But everywhere he went, the club members would find him and incite him into more crazy missions. The latest one was to record all the girls in the school shower. A mission he understandably declined. It did not earn him any good points, but his skill at negotiating paid off this time.

The only time he felt at ease was when he was at home, the hotel. Much of the building had been restored and Royce decided to take a much-needed break from the smell of strong paint and wood chippings.

*

The local open-space was a paradise of green grass and chirping birds. Fountains fizzled in the background as clear blue streams snaked through the centre of the park, splitting the area. The only connection was a bridge that joined the paths together. With carefully planted flowers all the way up the path, Royce found himself at ease, kicking the loose gravel under his feet. Butterflies fluttered in the air and residents sat on benches, talking about their day's events. Their language might be Japanese, and Royce was able to understand some of it. But what he could not understand was some of the slang or words heavily covered by years of culture and ascent.

A familiar voice chirped from behind. "How's our famous guest with the cat outfit doing?"

Royce turned and saw Rina walking up in her gorgeous blue dress frilled out with ribbons and fancy stockings. It did not match her personality at all.

"R-Rina...Matsuyama-san...Surprised to see you," Royce looked surprisingly at her and then his gaze changed to that of fear. "You're not here to make more fun of me are you?"

She smiled and showed a part of herself that was non-existent in school life. "No, I saw you wander into the park and decided to take this opportunity to talk to you."

"Talk to me? Why would you want to do that?"

"Because there's something I need from you."

"Something you need from me?" Royce glanced around, puzzled. *Perhaps this was a trap like last time.*

"Yes, well, not need, but something you owe me."

"I don't owe you anything," Royce replied with firm resolve.

"Oh, yes, you do," Rina replied, shaking an angry finger.

"And what would that be?" Royce asked, admitting to nothing.

"I had to destroy my favourite pants. Now I want compensation!"

Royce stepped back in astonishment. He did not expect this woman to suddenly announce her problem in a stile like that. She placed her hands on her hips and posed, much like a child would do when they know they were right and now showing off.

Royce blew a puff of air towards the sky. "Isn't my punishment enough of a payment for you? I walked around school all day in that costume."

"Yes, I think it was a waste of a good costume if you ask me."

"I wasn't the one who put it on voluntarily."

Rina grew tired and Royce knew she had other places to go. Fine by him, he did not want to talk to the dark haired girl anyway. So she put forth an ultimatum, "I want you to pay me what you owe tomorrow in class, or I will have Akina and her team tease you again. She's a very good friend of mine, you know."

Royce cringed at the thought of that yellow haired commando and what tricks she had up her sleeve. She only fired the first little shell and now Royce was the laughing stock of the school; surely there must be a way to keep out of their way.

"You don't like me that much?" Royce asked.

"You got that right."

"Fine. Go away and I will see you in class tomorrow." Royce waved a dismissive hand to her and waited for her to get out of earshot. *What was that all about*, Royce muttered to himself as the woman left the scene.

*

As he approached the end of the park, Royce had been thankful for the peace he earned for the rest of the hour. Rina had turned up un-expectantly and reminded him of the hardships awaiting him at school. He just wanted to be alone.

The sun shone high in the sky with the odd plane flying overhead from other countries. Clusters of clouds in all shapes and sizes gently hovered overhead and Royce could not have wished for a finer day. But he could feel a dark presence slowly sneaking up on him, as if fate still had more hardships to dish out.

The park had been freshly cut so he could smell the scent of fresh grass, and when he gazed across the park, a girl caught his attention. She sat by herself on the park bench, content in her reading. But despite her cute and innocent appearance, Royce could tell by the girl's aura that there was more than met the eye.

He did not want to talk to the girl, or get involved. To Royce, she seemed like someone who wanted to be left alone and he knew the feeling. But Royce could not miss the opportunity to study the girl. She did not appear obsessed with gadgets and trinkets or appear over dressed for the occasion. She seemed your typical high school girl; graceful in her appearance and the young man almost admired her tomboy appearance under her short chin length green hair.

Her skirt fluttered in the southeasterly breeze and he mentally took notes. He needed a new character in his story and this person matched the profile perfectly: lean, sturdy, spunky and sure of herself. She would make a perfect sidekick or fighting woman.

Yes, Royce whispered to himself.

But he could not hound her like a stalker. That would only make things worse for him. Instead he made his way over to the bench just outside of her line of vision and took a few moments to draw her image on his sketchbook.

As well as writing Manga or Anime, Royce had the trouble of instructing the designers on the type of characters he wanted for his books. They all had their ideas of the perfect, perverted protagonist. But this was Royce's project and he had to stop the overexcited artists in their tracks before his project was completely ruined. After all, he was one of Japan's most popular authors, even if he used a fake pen name. Still, work had to be done, money had to be made and he owed it to his readers to

continue with the reality he created. It was annoying, time consuming, and he always limited his tales to several same subjects, 'love, romance, school life and perverted heroism.'

The sketch of the girl took longer than he realized, but once he was finished, it was almost an exact match of the woman sat at the bench. Of course, the artists would have to change some of the details, but at least he could march into the Tokyo office and tell them, *this is the girl I want for that part.*

He would wrestle with the creators; change a few things around before the project would see the light of day. Royce was rather excited to see the offices in Tokyo anyway because it would be the first time he would set foot there.

A disturbance brought him back from his daydreaming and as if fate had a cruel side, Royce watched as two mad dogs ran through the park, causing chaos. Girls ran in all directions, property chewed and thrown around and the dogs, black in appearance, larger than a child, ran rampant towards anyone they saw.

Royce shot to his feet as the dogs found their next target, the young girl he'd been drawing!

As if some mighty command was given, the two raging beasts hurled themselves toward the girl who by this time was unaware of the danger. Reading a Japanese textbook, the name unknown to Royce, he began to shout at her. First he shouted, "Look out!" in English, but then he switched to Japanese.

That caught her attention, but she was staring at him as if he was the star of the show.

"Don't look at me, you daft woman," Royce waved his hands in the direction of the approaching dogs. She gazed over, look of terror enclosed her face and she stumbled back and fell over the chair, exposing her yellow underwear.

Royce had to act. He could not let an innocent girl get harmed by the dogs. Without thinking, he leapt towards her location like a superhero, picked her up and offered himself as a shield for the girl.

The dogs charged to a halt, just meters from Royce. He stared at them in the eyes, he did not blink, he did not flinch. It was a test, he knew it was a test and it would only take one mistake to bring the raging beasts upon him.

The lead dog continued to stare right back, growling, razor sharp teeth dripping with drool, waiting for some fleshy meat. Royce knew by instinct that these animals had eaten something they should not have. They wanted human flesh. The growling continued and Royce stood his ground. Any moment of weakness would spell disaster. He could not look back, he could not check on the girl. He wanted to instruct her to leave, but that might distract the standoff.

Stalemate. That's all everyone saw. Royce could see a small crowd of people gathering far off in the distance in his peripheral vision. He saw dots of people scattered around. He wondered how long it would take for the authorities to come. Sure he could fight, but he would surely get bitten and run the risk of catching a foreign disease.

The dog stepped forward, mouth frothing around its lips. Growling, Royce knew this animal was almost ready to pounce. He knew he had to stand his ground so as a gesture of warning he clenched his teeth and showed them to the dog. The dog did not move, it stepped forward some more and Royce held his ground.

The second dog barked and Royce felt the young woman shiver with fear behind him.

Suddenly, gunshots were fired from across the park, killing the two dogs. Men in uniform came running to Royce's location, covering the two rabid dogs.

Royce still needed time to process the situation and with his heart frantically beating in his chest, he stepped back as the officers inspected the scene. There was a heavy stillness in which Royce and the girl slowly recovered from the shock. She clung onto his hand, but once she discovered the danger had passed, she quickly found the will to strengthen her personality. She stepped away from Royce and one of the officers took her away for questioning.

Chapter 10

Questioning continued back at the local police station and the officer in charge learned about the events leading up to the dog's execution. In the end, an English officer arrived to finalize all the documents because Royce knew little of Asian text.

He walked home that night to a perfectly finished hotel and looked over the plans and the final invoice. The butler left a note saying the man was overly excited about the payment and would love to work for him again sometime. Royce crumpled the paper and took it with him to his room. Now with the hotel finally up and running, it boasted twelve rooms, kitchen, garden, meeting room, large dining hall and bath with local hot spring, although Royce saw no point in bringing that back into service.

Inspecting the premises was no small feat. It took over an hour to make sure everything was in working order, because when he would finally move out of the town after a few years, he expected to get a good deal of money for the property, a long term investment he called it.

A small shadow moved across the distance and Royce grabbed the nearest object and sort of waved it in the air. It wasn't much of a weapon, but the shadow was not big either.

With his sights firmly on the object hiding behind a stack of boxes, he leapt out to deliver his decisive blow. But much to his surprise, a small puppy yelped innocently at him.

Cute, cuddly...damn bloody dogs... Royce swung the brush, to get rid of the animal. But it moved out of the way and he came tumbling to the ground in an upheaval of fury. The sketchbook he drew in fell to the floor, and the picture of the maiden he'd been drawing in the park spilled out. The dog snuggled up to the picture, looked down and then yelped quietly.

"Like that girl? Do you, boy?"

The dog panted and wiggled its tail.

"I don't think she'll like dogs after today."

Royce got up and made his way to his room. But before he entered, he had a few words of wisdom for the small animal. "Go back home."

*

Monday crept up on the lone individual and the only alarm clock to wake him was the constant licking of the dog. First, he felt the warm slimy texture of a woman's tongue, an image that happily played out in his mind for sometime, and then the smell of an animal. If he was going to be interrupted like this each night, Royce needed to find the dog a home. But first he decided to keep the animal

temporarily because it would be bad if someone found out he kicked a defenceless animal out on the street, and it would be a good image for the girls; or perhaps he could do with the company.

The walk to school was the same as always. Royce forgot about the incident where he dressed up as a cute girl to please *the girl protection mob*.

But the smiles and leering glances hit Royce like a succession of death sentences as he stepped through the gates and onto the school grounds.

His ability to remain unobtrusive had been lost.

"Now, care to sample the text that's on the screen. Remember to change the font to bold before you send," the teacher said as she continued with her class, pointing at the text on the projected wall screen.

After a few more comments and instructions, the teacher left the classroom to attend to some important matters. Asked to be quiet and finish the rest of their work, the class waited until the teacher left.

Like clockwork, the class split up into two individual groups, halving the class in a battle line of men and women. Royce glanced at the middle of the room while the two separate groups leered at each other, as if a battle was about to take place.

What the hell's going on?

The leaders of each group emerged. Both stood: one, brown haired girl, cute round face, but that cuteness was washed over by strong determination and confidence.

"This is a war! A war between the men and women of this class! I'm telling you...this month's issue of *Princess YuYu's Colourful BomBom* is far more classy and expertly written than yours!" The brown haired student waved a periodical in her hands. Royce recognised its pink stencil covering anywhere...it was the latest issue created by Rina Matsuyama.

Royce clenched his teeth. Another student stood to his feet, waved a black and gold magazine in his hands. Royce fought hard to hide the embarrassment.

"This issue is packed with action. The invaders will not know what hit them. The imagery and storyline is outstanding, the planning perfect. 'Buster Writer' has done a splendid job in this issue. They even contracted a second season mini series."

The crowd of men cheered with delight. An anime television contract was like firing their big weapons and the girls did not stand a chance.

"They might not have accepted a contract yet for the episode, but *Princess YuYu's Colourful BomBom* has sold more copies than *Magnesium Fluoride Galactic Battleship's* done in 24 hours. Give them time."

Royce watched in amazement as the insults zigzagged between the two factions. Sure, Royce had heard of classroom fights and even disturbances at festivals. But he never expected it to be over his work and on a scale such as this. Normal students really liked his work.

"Go on Royce, which one do you support?"

Another lad interjected, "He'll probably choose the girly mag. He likes to dress in girl's clothing."

Royce placed his head in his hands. "I-I'm not interested in this... Anime stuff," he said evasively, as if he wasn't any more obvious. "I'm American; only interested in *normal* stuff!"

Good, that should divert all attention away from me. But Royce was confused. How many people in the class actually followed anime anyway? Anime was classed as an underground movement, quietly shifting through boy's bedrooms, infecting

people quietly as it went. Like a silent predator fortifying the dreams of girls and boys.

Royce surmised that there must be a small group of people devoted to the cause and the rest of the class only followed because of peer pressure. It stood to reason and he had fuelled the fire with his own Manga.

Just imagine if the school found out he was the author of the most popular anime and Manga out there. What would they do if they found out Rina Matsuyama was the famous author of *Princess YuYu's Colourful BomBom*.

Royce smiled with malicious intent. He had ammunition to fight her with, and she did not know he was the author of *Magnesium Fluoride Galactic Battleship*. He knew her secret and he felt drugged up with ambition.

"So... Rina," Royce smirked with merciless pleasure. "Where do you stand with this Manga?"

Rina turned crimson, but quickly removed her embarrassment and replied in a strong, motherly tone, "I have no interest in that filthy stuff. Anime...Manga...is not for me."

"Well said," Royce snickered, as if he knew a juicy secret.

She scrunched her nose and looked away from the spectacle, concentrating on her schoolwork. She appeared to hold a great deal of respect and earned her role as the class president. Something Royce would love to destroy if an opportunity arose. It almost reminded him of several anime's he'd seen in the past. A high-ranking student, respected and loved, had a hidden ripe secret from her friends or family. How ironic this situation would be repeated in this very school.

Royce could almost imagine himself browsing through the school library and accidentally – using the term loosely – watching her spill the entire collection of anime books onto the floor for him to see. He would love to see her cheerful face turn cherry red with embarrassment. Her pleas for help and willing to do anything to keep her secret. Or a scenario where she was caught red handed working in a cosplay café in the next town. How cool would that be?

Royce had already been humiliated by Akina and her horde of bandits and he could see them leering at him from outside the class windows. *How's that possible?* The classroom was located on the second floor, high up off the ground.

Royce gazed back into the classroom and watched the class wage it out in an all out war. They fired insults and fan knowledge, each giving as well as they could take. He was impressed about the amount of information they possessed. Even he would have to glance back at his notes to keep the story on track.

Royce stalked Rina with his eyes, watching her cover her embarrassment of what she'd written. The brown haired student who began the debate had been quoting lines from her magazine to perfection, which seemed to spook the author. How anyone could remember every line in every issue was beyond Royce, but it was fun to watch her suffer, much like the way she made him suffer. If only she knew he was the author of *Magnesium Fluoride Galactic Battleship* she would probably go crazy. Royce could almost imagine it.

*

The war continued for a few minutes, with one side waving the magazine through the air and the other side threatened things like: pulling hair, squeezing boobs and so forth. No one did these things of course, but it was enough to cause a little bit of chaos.

Then the teacher came back to her class and restored order. Not much order to restore really. Royce smiled as a lookout kept guard and when the teacher came down the corridor, all was quiet; like in an old prisoners of war movie in which all the prisoners worked as a team to escape and they scramble to put everything back to order before the guards showed up.

Later, the foreign student looked through the windows and gazed at the skyline over the school grounds. The hills basked in the sunlight and the trees swayed too and fro in the gentle breeze. When he laid eyes upon the school gardens that were directly in front of him, he spotted a familiar figure walking through, enjoying the area. Royce watched as she ran her hand through her green wavy hair. She looked divine in her school uniform and suddenly it hit him. *She goes to the same school!*

It was obvious. All the students in this town would go to the same school and Royce cursed himself for being so dense. But as the class continued in Japanese, he found himself more interested in looking at the scenery than studying in the class.

When the class was over, Royce took it upon himself to sneak past all the crowds of students lounging around the hallways and locate the garden where the girl once walked. It was a nostalgic feeling as he retraced her steps and followed the exact path she took through the gardens. He wondered about the things she looked at, the problems she faced and the memory of the incident back at the park.

"I never got the chance to thank you," said a voice from behind. Stunned Royce leapt back and excitement flushed to his face. He suddenly came face to face with the bright and vibrant young lady from the park.

"Are you okay? Sorry there wasn't much I could do to save you." Royce scratched the back of his head while he hid his embarrassment.

"No, you did more for me than anyone else did. You took a great risk." She spoke Japanese with such clarity; she could almost be mistaken for a voice actor.

The girl looked into Royce's eyes and appeared to dredge up a hidden memory. Suddenly, she spoke again. "Do I know you from somewhere?"

Oh, shit!

The ball suddenly dropped. The deadly question. The insanity of it all. If there was one thing all these girls knew, it would be...

"What are you up to, Royce?" a second and much firmer voice bellowed. He tracked its location from behind the far off trees that bordered the garden. Sure enough, in her combat gear and weapons of mass destruction, Akina Oda marched up like a commando smoking a cigar. The look of death radiated from her eyes.

"You were ordered never to talk to another girl in this school again."

Royce had to answer. "You never said I could not talk to girls."

"I thought that would be obvious. But it's no surprise a guy like you would have more sense than a cicada about to be eaten by a bird."

"That's harsh..."

"Look at my baby!" Akina pointed a huge M16 at him. "I have this...just for you!" She slowed her words just so she could enjoy them more.

Royce analysed the weapon with his eyes. *Must be fake.*

"And if you are wondering if it's fake...it's not. The principal has given me unlimited power to protect girl's virginites anyway I see fit."

That was believable. Royce knew how crazy the principal was, but to have weapons in the school was going too far. In the end, there was nothing he could do about it; he was a simple student going through the motions of life and his experiences in Japan were far more interesting than the mundane existence he had in America.

Akina teased the trigger with her index finger and raised Royce's temperature some more. She released a merciless laugh at the mere thought.

Royce was not amused.

"I was merely talking to someone who I risked my life to save. I don't appreciate being interrupted by an adolescent imbecile like you!" Royce was so caught up with his rambling, it took him a moment to realize he was speaking in English and Akina did not understand a word.

It almost brought a smile to Royce's face, although he didn't know how to say these words in Japanese. It did give him a sense of power that he could curse without the other person knowing.

Still Akina replied to the remark. "Saving her life? Ha, don't make me laugh."

She turned to the green haired woman, "Are you sure you want this pervert talking to you? He's got quite the reputation as a new student."

Again more pain struck Royce in the heart. If the young woman (who he saved in the park) could not remember his details from the posters splattered all over the school the day before, she would surely remember him now.

Royce gazed into the girl's deep eyes and gauged her reaction to Akina's words. For a brief second – although Royce thought it was doubtful – the girl appeared willing to look past the incident. But she quickly froze her emotions and left the scene without so much as a word.

Royce stood out in the open like a tree, all alone in the field. He felt the icy chill of the wind and knew Akina was relentlessly breathing down his neck. He wanted to smack that bitch right in the face, but he did not want to ruin his already damaged relationship with the school and the town's people. How could he escape Akina's relentless hounding? She was ruining everything.

Chapter 11

As expected, rumours about Royce's little adventure spread around town like birds flocking to another continent. There was no avoiding it; it was all down to nature. Even when the young man went to the local store to fetch supplies, he noticed the subtle changes in people twice his age. Strange glances and murmurs echoed all around, *someone's been spreading stories about me!*

On the way home to his private hotel, Royce had the company of insects and nightlife filling his ears with rhythmic tunes he'd never heard before in America. The sky was clear, the air clean and Royce stopped to take in the sights.

The hotel he restored had the use of an old road that travelled up the village's local hill. It was a long trek to the place and a simple path, which cut through the local forest, would have halved his journey, but he required the time to wind down after his traumatic experience at school. Akina Oda was a problem, but Royce had no remedy at the moment. His thoughts of revenge were those of pouring water over her uniform to expose her undergarments in the middle of class, but that seemed unrealistic. But the thought of embarrassing her in class was the perfect idea.

Moments later, he thought of the perfect scenario for his nemesis in combat gear. He knew what had to be done, and he jotted down notes on his black notebook he always kept inside his deep pockets.

The thought of being watched hindered Royce's movements. Every time he heard a twig crack or some unknown sound, he would pause and frantically look

around. But the area was clear, only the road was before him. But the road was dark and Royce could not see past the dark veil that lingered ahead of him. The road led to the hotel, unused for some time, weeds and plants had begun to grow through the cracks. Old tracks in the dirt, from the workforce, were the only signs of recent life. Royce was not bothered about repaving the road; the hotel would serve its purpose without the need for spending more money. The rate things were progressing within this town, Royce knew his days were numbered. *I wish there was some way to make the bad luck disappear.*

Royce reached the entrance of his hotel and the place was in a cascade of blackness, no lights, no life. It appeared like an old haunted hotel stranded in the middle of a hilltop, forbidding entry to any would be person seeking salvation from the elements. Royce shivered as the cold dead of night rolled in. He moved forward towards his home. But the thought of being watched still lingered and the young man could not pinpoint its origin.

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The entrance to the hotel was restored to a moderate standard, although Royce did not care either way. He just wanted a good strong door to keep the animals out and the heat in.

The door was equipped with three locks and a basic handle to open. But before he stood in front of the door, all thought was now on the bike that was parked in its original spot. It was the same blue bike that had vanished several days ago. That same bike the silver blue haired girl had been using. *But why was it back at the hotel? Did she have a change of heart? Did she find no use for it?*

Royce parked his bike at the side of the path and returned to the front door to tackle the horde of locks.

It must have been about midnight when Royce got into the hotel because the butler would normally greet him in English or Japanese. Royce always instructed him to spend more time with his family when all the chores were done and he could use the private time to check the premises and see how well the builders had restored the place. So far everything seemed to be in order, walls painted in standard colours for a hotel of its country nature, old panels replaced with new ones, paper thin walls remade, pipes and electrical wiring restored, everything seemed fine but Royce could not shake the feeling of being watched.

It was possible for the hotel to be haunted, but during the paperwork back at his hometown in America, it did not state any deadly deeds or incidents back in history. It was a normal run-of-the-mill hotel, nothing special about it.

As he stepped onto the top floor, Royce noticed a shadow hovering in the far distance. The whole area was not lit and he regretted not hunting for that light switch. The lights never worked and it became a swift habit not to turn them on until he reached his room. Still, the moment he blinked, the shadow vanished.

Curious to know what he'd seen, Royce did what any foolhardy man would do; he investigated. Walking forward, towards the object's last location, he held back the urge to shiver and put the whole experience down as a test. He had never seen anything supernatural and even that faint white shadow at his grandmother's house turned out to be the moon filtering through the curtains, casting an image onto the wall. This was no different, *probably a window around the corner.*

Royce had to reassess his reasoning when he turned that corner, because there was no window but another dark passageway with three rooms on the end. It

slowly crept upon him like a lion in the night. *What if something was lurking in one of those rooms?*

He hadn't noticed it before, but the hallway had an unknown scent, as if a woman had just walked past and her perfume was the only evidence of her presence. It was odd. Then Royce had an idea. What if Akina was stalking him at his own home? That would be a serious twist of fate and a dangerous move by her.

However, upon closer examination of the perfume, Royce recognised the scent as blueberry mixed with lotus blossom. It wasn't strong and he faintly remembered smelling that scent before, but he could not pinpoint its location.

Royce grabbed his master keys from his pocket and they rattled with excitement. It was time to check the rooms.

He grabbed the first key in the chain of keys and began searching through the numbers. Then he suddenly had an idea. If this person was a normal intruder in his hotel – probably squatted before he arrived – then it would stand to reason he or she... (Royce wished)... would have broken the lock and it would only require a turn of the handle to open the door. The others would be locked. So with that idea firmly placed in his mind, and unarmed, Royce weighed the risks and decided he could defend himself against any intruder.

The excitement was on and the first door was locked solid, as he expected. Fate never made things easy. The next door was to room twelve. He had never been in these rooms before; they were on his next to-do list, when he got around to doing it.

The handle to the last door looked smudged as if someone had already used it. The copper finish to the handle had faint fingerprints on it, a mark that could have been made by one of the workers who cleaned out all his junk before leaving. But he placed his hand on the cold handle anyway.

With a turn of the handle, Royce cracked open the door, unlocked! In the pool of darkness, he studied the room and remained motionless. He held his breath and waited for any sign of movement.

There was none.

Perhaps the intruder was hiding in one of the side rooms? Royce thought.

Building up his courage to investigate further, he walked deeper into the darkness. He wondered who it could be. Who would be crazy enough to stay in a place like this, and who would want to share accommodation with him.

The red bike brought ideas into his mind. Perhaps that girl was the squatter, but she did not look the type to be homeless. Royce dismissed that idea and he scanned the dark kitchen. He had never been inside this room before, so he would not know where all the utensils had been placed previously. But spotting a used pan and some plates in the sink did raise his suspicions. There could be a perfectly reasonable explanation for such a discovery. The workers could have left the dishes when they finished their work. The place did smell of fresh paint and they could have even left the door unlocked.

However, this was not the case. When he stepped into the bathroom the young adventurer noticed a few strands of light blue hair caught inside the drain. The shower had been used and water droplets dripped from the showerhead. Someone had definitely been in *this* room.

A disturbance from behind forced Royce to spin sharply. A figure leaped through out of the room and into the hotel. Giving chase, Royce followed despite the time difference between them. The last thing he wanted was a spy monitoring his secrets. It must have been one of Akina's minions attempting to subdue him, perhaps to find something incriminating...or it could be some twisted game.

Understandably, she would have more knowledge of the place than he did. Royce had lost sight of his prey only after a few corners. Glancing back over the balcony to the main entrance hall, he found the light switch and brought the glory of the hotel to life. It took him a moment for his eyes to adjust to the sudden brightness, and the pain that screeched through his eyeballs was bearable at best. No more shadows, no more hiding spots for the spy to hide. If the illumination didn't scare it away nothing would.

Once his eyesight adjusted, Royce looked at the entrance hall in all its glory. Lights reflected off all the polished beams, red curtains hung immaculately and the carpet was soft and vibrant, adding to the overall theme of the entrance. A small office was wedged in the corner offering reception to any would be customers, but it would remain locked for the duration of his stay. This hotel was only a home for him and him alone.

Royce searched the hotel from top to bottom, familiarising himself with the layout and the placement of each room. If he was not an expert before, he would be now. Even a few hidden passageways used for food transport and maintenance failed to go unnoticed. But there was still no sign of the intruder. Either she had kept her distance and watched from the sidelines, or she left the grounds, never to come back.

Royce had mixed feelings about the intruder. If it was someone from the school, he would not mind her staying in one of the rooms if she had family problems. But his secret might get out, if she did not know already. He concluded that she must be a girl from the perfume he smelled in the corridor. No bloke in their right mind would wear something so girly. But this town did have its surprises and Royce was not sure if there were any cross dressers, or would be girls out there. This gave him an idea for his revenge.

He immediately left the search and headed back to his room, the feeling of being watched no longer haunted him.

Chapter 12

Royce needed a plan that would have a lasting effect on Akina and inflict the desired level of revenge he craved for. He did not want this woman to harass him every second of the day, and an idea had finally come to him. It was perfect.

So, in preparation, he pulled out his cell phone from deep within his pockets and dialled his agent's number.

"Hello?" a voice answered in Japanese.

"It's Royce."

"Ah Royce, how's the new issue progressing?"

Royce let go of a long sigh; the first thing his agent said was about his story, not *Hello Royce how was your day*. Then again, he should have known better. Every time he called, that gravel voiced agent would always ask one thing: the next chapter of his famous Manga.

"You know, *Prosperity Angel* has released news about the release of her new story due in a few days. The fans are already queuing outside the shops. We're lagging behind."

"Don't worry about it."

"So, you have something extra special for the readers. Is it something to tell the media?"

Royce had already lost track of the topic and it was not about his Manga. He needed something only a man of his position could get on short notice.

"I did not call about the progress of my book, although I am nearly finished with a new chapter."

The agent sounded excited. "Excellent. When can we expect the draft?"

"Draft!" Royce felt his anger boil over, how can his agent want a first draft when he still had details to put in it? Then again, Royce did not put it past him to publish any rubbish that happened to be made by a famous author. "I still have edits to do on the manuscript. You'll have the final copy when I am good and ready. Not now."

"So why did you call me?" The agent finally got to the point.

"I want you to get something for me as soon as possible. I have run into a problem at school and I need to punish them. It could also prove beneficial for my studies."

"So, what do you need?"

*

Tuesday was unlike any other day; bright, sunny and bustling with activity. Royce had been up all night planning his latest move. But he had to take it one step at a time and with caution. This yellowed haired combat woman was the leader of the *Girls Protection Club* and close personal friend of Rina. Oh, how he enjoyed his little plan!

On the way to school, he thought about his deadly plan, the mental preparation he would have to endure to keep a straight face and the secret he could not tell anyone. But the moment he entered the gates of the school, idle eyes still gazed upon the lone wanderer, judging him every second of the day. As he entered the school's internal park, he retraced the steps the green haired girl took before the moment was ruined by Rina and her horde of misfits.

Royce used all his willpower to hold back his anger and he could almost feel the lingering aura of the green haired girl. He looked up and gazed at the spot the young woman had stood and wondered what she thought of him now. There was no hiding the truth; she now knew his identity and the misbehaviour he caused in the school. Granted, he knew his actions were partly to blame, but the constant harassment and backstabbing was uncalled for.

He strolled over to a bank of flowers in bloom in their small part of the garden and he held the gentle petals in his hand. They too reminded him of the woman, fragile and beautiful. But for some reason the blue flower reminded him of the blue haired girl and the possibility that she could be the person who had been sneaking around his home. Royce would confront her later, but he had to take care of Akina Oda.

Still, no matter how much he thought about it, Royce knew he could not do it alone. He needed help.

*

To match such an enemy would require careful planning. Sadly, it also included the help of his newly acquired friends, the *Secret Underwear Club*. They owed him and Royce was on his way to collect his debt.

The club was a secretive society of misfits and young hopefuls who would do anything to protect their little corner of the world. So it was understandable that their base was hard to find. Royce barely found the place the first time around, but once he knew its location, finding it a second time should be easy.

With a firm location in mind, he snaked his way through the underbrush, behind the school grounds, through the forbidden forest and towards the deadly river. With so many names, it was just normal town the club members preferred over-excaudate on.

Once he crossed the deadly river, which posed no obstacle, he strolled up to a disused shack well hidden in the shrubbery. He knocked five times on the door, paused, then knocked five times more before waiting.

A flap opened and a chubby faced lad leered at him.

"Password!" he said after a short pause.

Royce deliberately stared at the young man sarcastically as if the person behind the door should recognize him from the last encounter. Giving in to demand, he said the password.

"Boobs," his voice was shallow, as embarrassing as the word.

The man behind the door examined Royce for a moment; stepped back from the door, as if he was checking a notebook and then returned. "That's yesterday's password. What's today's?"

Royce waved his hands in annoyance. "I don't have today's code!"

"You should have, it's been sent to all the members today."

"I am a member. Can't you just let me in, I have something important to talk about."

"Not without the password. Now give me the password or leave."

Royce felt the onset of danger, even though he did not know where it would come from or who would inflict it. By staring at the door, Royce knew that one kick would probably dislodge the whole thing from the hinges. It was a pleasant thought and one he almost followed through, until he remembered his mobile vibrating on the counter this morning.

He reached into his pocket, pulled out his phone and sure enough, in black and white, he had received a text message with the next day's password on it. It seemed his phone's memory was becoming full of passwords for the club. It did not take a genius to figure out the pattern. Royce liked that about the Japanese, so dramatic.

Armed with the new pass code, he moved close to the door. "Thong!"

The young man on the other side of the door smiled and then immediately opened the door.

"Thank you, Royce. You can never tell who might be listening these days; the girls have ears everywhere."

"So you're the one who changes the code?"

"Oh, no. That's not my job. It's the president of the club who is supposed to update the code."

The young man pointed to a strong, tall individual who Royce recognized instantly. Feeling firm, and with the need to get to the point, he approached Shota Kishi. "You sure have a way with the passwords. What's next, bra?"

"Simple things are often the hardest. You know how narrow-minded women are."

Royce kept his mouth shut, there's one thing you never do when around women and that is slag them off. Obviously this young man had not been around

them very long. Probably from a boarding school...all boys boarding school. Nevertheless, he had to lay his plans out on the table and hope his team would help.

"Are you ready for the next phase in our grand secret plan?"

"No," Royce said sternly.

"No... You'll deny yourself the need to satisfy that manly urge?"

"I don't see how stealing women's underwear would cure one's urge."

Everyone gasped in shock, as if his blunt explanation of their secret plan was blown way out of proportion.

"H-How did you know?" Shota stuttered.

"What? That's your master plan you've been talking about?"

Royce waved his hands in the air before Shota could respond. "Anyway, I have an even better plan; one that would require your help."

"Oh, I see. The English has a far better plan for us?"

"This is not a testosterone pissing contest to see who's the top dog. Someone damaged my reputation and I intend to damage hers."

"Hers?" Shota asked, interested.

"Yes, that yellow haired bitch who is always harassing me. You know the one?"

"You mean Akina Oda, the leader of the *Girls Protection Club*?" The leader of the club stood and appeared worried. "Do you intend to start a war with her?" he confirmed.

"No, not with the group. Just with the leader."

"I don't understand," Shota replied, puzzled.

"It's simple," Royce pulled out his black notebook and began shuffling through the pages looking for his master plan.

"I intend to plant some incriminating evidence on Akina's possession and I need you lot to create a distraction while I do this."

"Oh, I see. This is some kind of English master plan, like James Bond!" one scruffy individual interjected. He always remained quiet, so Royce assumed that if he appeared excited by the whole plan, the rest would surely follow.

But even though the young man was American, it would not harm him to pretend he was English, just for this mission at least. It might just buy him some cooperation.

"Yes, just like James Bond. But unlike his mission to save the world, we'll start small and show this woman she can't go around terrorising men who want to follow their own path." Royce smiled at his own genius speech.

"You intend to use my group to exact a personal vendetta, start a war? Do you know what you are asking?" Shota stood fast, arms crossed over his thin chest.

"I don't think it's much to ask for. You all owe me big time."

"What do you mean?"

"Remember the girl's changing room? While you were all pinching frilly underwear, you all left me to take the heat. Who was it keeping this place a secret from the hordes of hot ladies out there? Who was it protecting your asses and your panty shrine from the army? WHO?" Royce raised an angry finger at Shota. His memories shot back: the pain, the torment, the posters. Oh the posters of him called a pervert plastered all over the school campus. He spent many hours cleaning that mess up only to have fresh copies back up hours later.

Royce watched Shota's expression, un-wavered until he removed his hand from his chin. With a huge grin, he continued. "We will be glad to help. It's about time someone showed those girls they don't mess with the *Secret Underwear Club*!"

The occupants of the room cheered like a mass crowd at a football match. A blast of heat swept through the room, confetti fell from the ceiling and the place erupted in an uproar of manly cheer.

When the cheering stopped Shota turned and faced Royce. "So, how can we help?"

Royce sat down at the table and laid out the plans. It was simple, but he decided to simplify it even more so even a child could understand.

The plan required several people, and Royce knew that when an arrangement involves more than one person, things get complicated fast.

His plan was to work in two stages: The first stage was to plant the offending evidence in Akina Oda's bag without her knowing about it. He would use the club members to distract the girl and once she was off battling whatever his team created, he would slip in through the background and plant the material. The next part of the plan was more complicated, and Akina must not know what's in her bag. If she found out early, then his ingenious arrangement would be ruined. No amount of planning would prepare them for that.

With all eyes on Royce, one of the lads spoke up about this daring plan. "So how will you make sure she does not look in her bag and discover the material?"

"Simple," Royce smiled. "We're going to spring this trap all at once. Complete two stages in one go. Team one will provide the distraction in English class, and team two will strike before she leaves the class. We will all strike when the class ends at the chime."

Royce knew the chime all too well. It was a soft melody that played through the school. He'd heard it countless times in Anime, but it was a real thrill to hear it in person at a real school in Japan.

"This is such a daring plan. What if something goes wrong?" one shy lad asked.

"Nothing will go wrong. Team one will wait for the chime, Takashi Kataoka will deliberately bump into Akina and cause her to get angry, while I slip the material into her bag and team two will trip her over and force the bag to spill its contents all over the hallway." Royce grinned with sadistic pleasure. "Everyone will see what a traitor she really is."

Obsessed in his own brilliance, Royce was unable to see the doubt in his club member's eyes. But his reassuring words brought them back from the brink of despair. "We are men; men who fight for our cause. We can't have this woman dictating our actions or exposing our club. We must take a stand and I am here to help you. After all, I am English."

Chapter 13

The class was on and all the members of the *Secret Underwear Club* were ready to strike. Royce sat at his desk at the back of the room and checked the clock almost every minute. He knew the saying: '*the more you look at the clock the slower it'll go.*' Fate seemed to have a prolonged way of teasing him.

With ten minutes to the end of the lesson, the young man pulled out the unbranded plastic bag from his desk and inspected its contents. The item was perfect, ready...and brand new. All he had to do was wait for the right moment and then pounce. He also knew the class would rush out today because the cafeteria was putting on some special food that would be for the festival tonight. The young man

almost forgot about that. But as he looked around the class, Shota glanced back and nodded.

Three rows down, Akina carried on as normal, as if nothing happened: chatting, giggling, not a hint of that cruel cast-iron bitch Royce had grown to know. He was about to shatter her perfect world.

With one minute to go, Royce placed his hands on the contents of the bag and prepared himself for the kill.

The teacher stood in front of the chalkboard and continued to write incomprehensible Japanese. The teacher suddenly looked in his direction and startled Royce momentarily. She continued. "Don't worry, Royce, a student has translated the work for you to do tonight. He did not want you to loose out on anything."

Shota nodded, said something under his breath and scratched the back of his head. It was very nice of Shota to do some translating. Murmurs scattered around the class. Some insults, then the tone bellowed out through the speakers, signalling the end of class.

ACTION!

Every student in the class got up like some predetermined mob ready to make tracks. Royce was suddenly caught off guard, as he scrambled into action to plant the incriminating evidence. It would be a disaster if the class left before the damage was done.

Watching from his vantage point, Shota signalled for his comrades. With people stationed in strategic points around the class, everyone made their move.

The first wave of the attack began. Takashi, with his team of people, deliberately pushed Akina into the wall, causing her to lash out. Royce felt guilty, but he knew sacrifices had to be made. With the distraction now in place, he slipped in from behind, dodged the woman's wavy yellow hair and skilfully slipped the offending material into her open bag, which one of the club members conveniently managed to open during the argument.

Now with the bag open, armed for firing, Takashi offered his apologies and Royce signalled his success with a slight nod. Now it was time for phase two.

Royce stared at Akina Oda outfitted in combat school gear. He almost felt sorry for the girl; sorry for what she would now endure. But now was not the time to go back on his word. Countless young lads were now counting on his ingenious plan and he had a reputation to uphold. If he could pull this off and strike a decisive blow against Akina, he would be heralded a hero or a martyr. Royce could hardly keep track of the girl while his daydreams rolled around in his mind. Never had he been exposed to an environment where everything was blown out of proportion.

The second stage was on! Two beefy boys from the *Secret Underwear Club* ran like a freight train, out of control and unstoppable. They bolted towards the yellow haired maiden who was about to be bulldozed to the floor.

With mere seconds to impact, Royce held his breathe in suspense. The world moved in slow motion as the two young lads mowed Akina Oda forward. A third man, who Royce forgot about, placed his foot in her way and deliberately tripped her over.

Coasting forward and unable to rebalance herself, the devious man watched with uncontrollable excitement as his plan unravelled to perfection. Still in slow motion, Akina tilted past the point of no return and went tumbling to the hard classroom floor. Her bag fell out of her hands, flew forward and Royce smiled at his own good fortune as the periodicals tentatively peeked out of the bag. Following gravity like a duck on a pond, the magazines slid right out as if someone had just

spread a pack of cards with perfect symmetry. By this time, Akina looked up to see the shocked expressions and sighs from her friends. Confused, she looked at the periodicals, fell towards the floor and looked on in horror as her bag hit the floor, tossing the three unknown magazines in plain view for all to see.

Royce shivered with uncontrollable excitement. It was something he was looking forward to. The crowd of onlookers fell into an uncanny silence while disbelief filled the faces of every student able to see the periodicals.

Ecstatic, Royce moved forward, to see what he and his team had done, to shine the polish on an already perfect plan.

Out in the open, and exposed for all to see, three magazines shone proudly. One was the rare issue of the famous Manga: *Princess YuYu's Colourful BomBom*; nothing extraordinary about that, nor would it warrant the shocked murmurs that were now spreading around the school. It was the second issue, which had spilled onto the floor, which drew in the crowd. It was a gay love story with two of the lead characters in a tangled love embrace. So mushy, anyone found with this issue was considered an ecchi lover. No questions asked.

The third periodical to fall from the bag was Royce's personal favourite and one he prided himself on for obtaining at such short notice. It was called *I love Manga. How to create your very own issue and become a superstar*.

Royce could have left the embarrassment there. But he had to go a step further and get a fourth and final periodical called *Long Thong Dazy: Assault of the Galactic Nakedness*. Its black glossy shine and deep high-resolution image of a sexy battle-ready woman resembled her own persona perfectly, it was a perfect match, Royce was proud of himself.

Akina got up from the floor. Embarrassment plastered all over her face. "I-I-I-I-I It's not mine...I have no idea how..."

"Akina's an anime lover?" one person from the crowd shouted, followed by many others.

"How can this be? She's such an upstanding class member."

"Oh! I can't believe she's the leader of the Girls Protection Club."

"An ecchi lover..." One of the boys shouted... Excited.

From then, the shocked comments roared past like a swarm of angry bees. The young man, who started it all, could not keep track of the chatter and smiled at the chaos he caused.

Sneaking out from the crowd, Shota patted Royce on the back. "I don't know how you did it, but your plan worked perfectly."

"She's been a thorn in my side for a few days now. I had to draw the attention away from me somehow."

"I don't know about you, but the *Secret Underwear Club* hasn't had this much fun in ages." He paused, placed his hand on his chin, and thought hard. "To tell you the truth, I can't remember when we had this much fun at all."

Royce stared at Shota for a long moment and then turned back to the spectacle in the hallway.

"So, what do you think Akina will do now?" Royce said, nodding in the direction of the commotion.

"We'll follow your advice and all members are acting normal. It's very hard not to claim victory on the school's most hard-ass woman, but even you have cracked that shell."

"I was simply collecting a debt you lot owe me."

"Yes, but this little commotion you created will be top news for months. Long after your perverted adventure gets forgotten."

"I hope so."

"I know so," Shota explained, taking a cheeky swig from his bottle of Japanese soft drink.

Royce felt a change of subject, "What the hell is that you are drinking?"

"It's coconut milk." Shota handed the bottle over. "Want some?"

It wasn't so much the drink that spooked Royce, but more like the glob of slaver all over the top of the bottle.

With a kind gesture, Royce pushed the bottle away, "No thanks, I'm not thirsty."

"Suit yourself."

Royce and Shota both continued to watch from the side lines as Akina dug herself into a deeper hole with the evidence they'd planted.

"W-Why don't you believe me!" Akina exclaimed. "I don't read this filth, I don't even like Manga..."

But the magazines spoke for themselves!

Chapter 14

The day passed with no incidents; Royce could not have hoped for a more perfect day. None of the usual students looked at him with leering eyes, nor did they talk to him behind his back. They still avoided him, but the hot topic of the day was Akina Oda.

Royce had not seen her for the rest of the day and although he knew he should feel pity, he did not care one bit. Instead, he waltzed through the warm park and took in the scenery.

This time, the park appeared more appetising than before. Colours were enhanced and the smell was as vibrant as ever. He could hear the individual tunes from the birds and the fresh perfume scent of the flowers. It was calmness on a scale he'd never felt before. No bullying from the students. No interaction from Akina. It was bliss.

But it was still too late! The damage had been done and the one person he really wanted to be friends with saw him as the most perverted human on Earth. That green haired woman had proven to be a good character for his book, now that chance had gone.

Or had it~!

Royce spotted her across the park with her head embedded in a bed of flowers. Her short school skirt hung precariously close to her butt, threatening to expose her secret. Royce stood like a man and ignored his manly urges to peek under and see. He was American after all; they don't do things like that. But he was a man. Perverseness was in his nature and he knew it.

Swallowing a knot in his throat, he made his move and approached. The time it took to move a few feet was like crossing a hot sweltering desert in the middle of summer. Sweat threatened to drop from his face and his own body was working itself into a state. It was supposed to be pure research, so why did he feel this way?

He was much closer now and the fresh smell of warm water—from the fountain to his left—pleased his senses while the water vapour moisturised his skin.

Strong flowery fragrances became obsolete against the woman's own perfume and Royce recognised that scent as the one from the park when he saved her from the rabid dogs. But he did not know her name.

Now he was impeccably close. *She must know I am here*, Royce thought to himself.

But when he wanted to talk, he faltered, unable to speak. He was stuck, like a virgin asking his first love on a date. *Damn, what do I do in a situation like this?*

"Is it true what they say on the posters?"

Royce jerked back in shock. He'd been doing it a lot recently and he began to doubt if he would survive through his golden years. Then again, he should have known she'd say something after he stood so close like an idiot.

"The posters don't explain the true story."

"So what's the true story then?"

Royce felt himself backed up into a corner. How could he explain the uncontrollable situations that lead him into the girl's locker room? How could he explain that he was forced against his will to steal woman's knickers and accidentally fell into some perverted scenarios that seemed unbelievable even for his standards?

When Royce moved forward to meet the woman head on and as if fate had a cruel side, he suddenly tripped on a boulder and came crashing to ground...well, not the ground, something soft...

After recovering from the blunder, he moved his hands around, heard some pleasurable moans and then opened his eyes to see what was going on. With the soft warm sensation of bliss all around him, he soon discovered he was holding onto something resembling a soft cushion.

Then it suddenly dawned on him. *Could it be possible that an anime moment happened?*

Royce pushed his hands on the floor and pulled his body right up to get a clear view of what he was lying on. Shock hit him like lightning as he discovered he'd inadvertently landed on the hot young woman.

With legs wide open and panties exposed to his groin, Royce had come to rest in the missionary position with just inches to spare from her breasts.

"Please, be gentle with me!" She yelped slightly like a puppy. "I know you saved my life and I'm yours forever. If you want to take me here then you can."

She closed her eyes and pointed her rosy lips in his direction, ready for a kiss. Royce shivered as his arms began to turn to jelly. At any moment, he would collapse and land his lips on hers. Her succulent juicy saliva invited him like alcohol to an addict. He wanted to take advantage of the situation, but with all the trouble he'd been in and his mission, he could not do something so...easy! Any man would probably damn the whole convenience of the situation and jump right in.

He rolled to the side, stood to his feet, and bowed down at the audacity of it all. *How could something like this happen so randomly?*

Luckily no one was around to witness the spectacle; otherwise the young man would be back in the limelight again. The incident had gone unnoticed.

"Please forgive me!" Royce exclaimed. "It was an accident."

"It's okay. You saved me from the dogs in the park, I owe you my life."

Royce stared at the woman in disbelief. Although he did save her life, he did not expect this kind of treatment.

"But, what about the stories about me? What about my behaviour?"

"It's true that your actions have forced me to think about my loyalties." She sat up from the grass, legs tucked behind her skirt. Royce thought her green hair

looked cute against the backdrop of highlighted school uniform. He was not sure of her age, but she couldn't be too young, perhaps sixteen.

Royce crossed his fingers and looked into her eyes. She carried on after a brief pause and he was eager for what she had to say.

"When I thought about the value of my life, I realized what you did for me could never be repaid. No matter how bad that person could be."

"You have a strong sense of loyalty," Royce replied, mentality taking notes.

"And since you proclaim your innocence, I can't take rumours to heart." She looked down towards the grass and crossed her fingers over her dazzling breasts, almost praying. "Tell me, are you a good man?"

Royce shrugged his shoulders. He could not confess every secret he'd preformed in the past, but he knew she was being broad in her question. Then again, he did join the Underwear Club and was caught red handed in the women's dressing room with his hands on Rina's underwear. So in answer to that question; he did what any self respected man would do:

"Yes, I am a good person."

"So what was that you tried to do to me just now?" She asked, with a frown.

Royce shot to his feet in shock. This innocent woman suddenly showed her teeth.

"T-That was an accident. I only wanted to talk to you, ask you if you were okay after the incident with the dog. I was unable to ask you because Akina interrupted me."

"I'm fine," she replied, shy in her tone. She stood to her feet and faced the young man. "You're not trying to do lewd things to a shy Japanese girl are you?"

Royce felt the heat well up around his temples. How did this conversation suddenly change with a hostile aura in the air?

"And what about you?" Royce diverted the questioning.

"What do you mean?"

"Your actions just now?"

"My actions?"

"Yes. When I was on top of you, you asked me to be gentle. Is that how you greet or treat all your friends?"

"We're not friends."

"Yes, but I would like to be!" Royce replied with a smile.

"Why would I want to be friends with you?"

"Because, I am ruggedly handsome and I could do with someone who trusts my good will and will help me around school."

Royce was running dry on remarks and he did not know how this line of questioning began or how it would end. All he knew was this person would make an interesting friend and he could learn much from her. He wanted to emulate her in his character and there was no better way to do this than to become friends with her.

The green haired woman stood up and began walking along the gravel path towards the large water fountain that was the centrepiece of the whole school park. Everywhere Royce looked, students roamed the paths. Some picnicked on the grass and others continued their studies. It was large and Royce knew by the great care of maintenance that this park was important to the school.

Royce followed behind the woman, still unsure of her answer. Nevertheless, he needed information from her.

"So, how long have you been in this school?"

There was a moment of silence before she spoke. "Two years."

"I see. Do you know many students here?"

"A few. Most of us have transferred from individual junior schools around the country because this is the only senior school in the town. Once we finish our education, we move on to work or to university in the big city."

"Do you have any plans to move to the city?"

"I've not made up my mind yet."

"So you're afraid of city life? Have you been to the city?"

"You ask a lot of small questions," The green haired woman replied.

"If I'm to be friends with you, I should know a little about you."

"I never said I wanted to be friends."

"So you don't want to be friends?"

There was silence and Royce grabbed at the last string he could play with. He needed this woman for his new character and he was not going to let her get away this time.

"I did save your life in the park a few days ago." Royce hid the cocky accent from his voice. No time for it now. "I hope that warrants some good points."

Although Royce's Japanese was not bad, he seemed to translate well enough for the person to understand. She spoke clearly and she could probably speak English fluently. But Royce did not want to push the vial too much.

"I suppose you are right." She shied away and he could not make out the two words she spoke.

"Excuse me?" Royce asked in return.

"Thank you for helping me in the park," she replied, slightly raising her tone. He could tell by her shy body language she rarely thanked boys.

"That's okay," Royce said candidly.

"You speak Japanese well."

"I have an interest in Japanese culture."

"Are you sure it's not their perverted behaviour and borderline anime that drew you to this country?" she asked coldly, looking away from him.

"That's cold of you. Is that how you treat me after all the help I gave you?"

"You must understand, a girl needs to be assured about the people she will become friends with. Your first few days at school haven't been very... professional."

"I was coerced into that scenario," Royce replied sharply, getting his point across clearly.

"That's what all the boys say when they are caught red handed with women's underwear. So did that woman smack you?"

"Who?" Royce asked, evading the subject by looking away in embarrassment.

The green haired woman continued. "You know, the person's underwear you were fingering."

"Amm, that's, not what you think... Anyway... What's your name?" Royce asked, red in the face, clearly feeling the pinch from being cornered into a tight spot.

"Oh, don't try and change the subject," she said mischievously. "You need to answer my question first."

"But I have to know the name of the person I am about to admit everything to," Royce said defensively. He was quite surprised at how intelligent this woman was and the way she was throwing questions back at him like they were confetti at a coronation show. It all proved invaluable information for his character for his story, but he did not want her diving too far into his life.

"So, did she slap you? What punishment did you get yourself into?" the green haired woman asked, bringing Royce back to the moment, and not a moment too soon.

He gazed past her shoulder and spotted Rina Matsuyama walking along the park, past the fountain. He knew he had about ten seconds before she saw him.

"Speak of the devil!" Royce murmured, not realizing he spoke out loud.

"Who? The devil? Whom are you talking about?" The green haired woman looked behind and the young man almost saw the grin on her face. How could Rina appear so calm in the park and so daring in the school? She had to be inside her own element to be this calm.

Royce jostled to action and decided to make a run for it. Before he left, the woman spoke up. "Hey, where are you going?"

"I have to go; I'm not in the mood for trouble." Royce turned around and made his move in the opposite direction. Just before he got out of eyeshot, his phone beeped and he got a Bluetooth message.

My name is Tani Namiko now you must tell me what happened later, k?

Royce looked back towards Namiko. She smiled as she flipped her pink phone and placed it back into her pocket. The thing was, Royce always kept his word and he would definitely see her again. Not for the character profile, but because she was a charming, cheeky person.

Chapter 15

While the days merged together, Royce felt his existence become mundane. Day in and day out, he would go to high school and battle the mob of students only to return home and do the same the next day. Nothing new and certainly nothing to write about. His quest to find out Rina's secret appeared more difficult by the day, much like the mystery guest who stalked the hallways of his hotel at night.

As night fell upon the town, Royce had just successfully installed CCTV cameras all over the hotel. Located in strategic hotspots, he could monitor anyone entering or exiting the place. All he had to do was wait and see if that mystery person showed up.

He did have an idea as to who his guest could be, but it was so far fetched, he might as well get a bus to the moon.

As he checked the kitchen, he noticed more food missing and used dishes in the large industrial sink. *How rude of someone to leave such a mess.*

Running the hot water through the tap, he cleaned the mess and made his way back to his room to keep an eye on the hotel. But before he got the chance to walk down the corridor, a cloaked figure darted past at the far side of the hallway.

"Gotya!" Royce exclaimed.

The young man was determined to catch the intruder this time. With his hands clutched into fists, he ran towards the marked shadow. He could now see the blue tint in this person's cloak. Royce knew there was no point in shouting stop, because the intruder would not understand English, and even if he took the time to shout it out in Japanese, the assailant wouldn't stop anyway.

Rushing down the stairs (in almost the same location as the intruder did two nights ago,) Royce was much closer. When he turned the corner, the assailant disappeared. But this time Royce found a slit in the wall, a doorway that failed to close properly.

"So, that's how you vanished!" He murmured to himself. Royce edged open the secret door, holding an empty vase he picked up from the table at the beginning of the stairs.

The darkness filled the unknown void inside the room and he saw nothing but the inky shadows. Squinting to get a better look, Royce was suddenly attacked by the cloaked figure as it shot out from the hole. Losing his balance, Royce struggled, flapped his hands around for support and felt himself tumble backwards, down the last set of steps.

After impacting the floor, Royce slowly regained his vision and it was at that precise moment he realized he had torn off the person's cloak. Rubbing the back of his painful head, the young man rolled over on his belly and frantically looked around for the intruder. *I don't want to be murdered today!*

Crawling up the wall and back onto his feet, Royce shook off the pain and began his search. He didn't have to look far. Lying on the floor just a few meters away, a figure in the local school uniform slowly got up. Royce gasped as he soon discovered who he was looking at. With silver hair, fair skin, and a cute, round face, it was the girl who stole his bike, called him an idiot in class and had been eyeing him from a distance. Fearing she would escape without so much as a word, Royce rushed up to her.

To his disbelief, she crawled back to the ground, sobbing, asking for forgiveness. "Please...don't force me out! I don't want to go back home. Please help me... I can't go...back to that place. I must stay here!"

She pleaded at him from the floor, tears streaming down her face, body curled up as if someone was going to hit her. Her fear boiled the air and Royce recognized the aura of a troubled girl anywhere.

There was nothing he could do. There was no way he would let a defenceless girl like this walk home in the dark. Judging from what state she was in, he could never allow her to go home. She was safe here and it was where she lived, before he even came to town.

Royce reached into the key booth and pulled out a key for one of the rooms.

Once he strolled up to the sobbing girl (who had covered her eyes and appeared to be praying for a miracle) he hung the keys in front of her.

She slowly gazed up, watery eyes stunned.

"These are the keys to room 12. You can stay there for now until we have a proper chat tomorrow about why you're here. It's better than snooping around like a ghost...scaring me."

The girl remained quiet and took the keys in her hands as if they were the elixir of life. Finally her stomach rumbled.

"Hungry?"

Royce knew nothing of the girl's name so the first thing he did once he entered the kitchen was to ask for it.

"So, what's your name?"

Without too much effort, the girl replied in a kind way and Royce got to work, making any food that came to mind.

"Yumi Kosaka."

"So, Kosaka-san, what do you want to eat? I am hungry too, so don't worry about making me cook."

"Why are you doing this?"

"Why? Because I am a good guy!"

Royce's smart remark did not go unnoticed. Yumi smiled slightly but returned to the topic at hand. "I want some Ramen."

"Ramen, I see, pretty basic. I am sure I can whip up something filling." Royce got to work, washed his hands, pulled vegetables out of the cooler and dragged a few chunks of meat from the freezer. With pinpoint precision, he grabbed the flour, all the necessities ready to make the noodles and began.

Half way through the preparation, Yumi had to ask, "How can you cook like this?"

Royce grabbed the knife and began chopping the vegetables. "While I was on summer holidays in the States, my family made me work for my uncle on his cargo ship. Because they travel all over the world, his crew was a diverse range of people. He shoved me into the kitchen mainly to keep me out of the way and during that time I had to help the chef prepare all kinds of food for the crew. He taught me a lot."

Royce placed all the chopped vegetables into a bowl and got started on the meat, chopping them wafer thin for the ramen.

"I don't think you add chopped vegetables into the pot."

"Normally you are right, but the way I cook will be fast and tasty." Royce began mixing the dough and rolling it out wafer thin before using the cutting knife to chop it into noodles. Once ready, he placed it all into a pot of boiling water and allowed it to simmer.

"You don't look capable of cooking..." Yumi said out of the blue, almost causing Royce to drop his cut meat into the pot of boiling water.

"And you don't strike me as the type to break into other people's homes."

"I was here first."

"Yes, but do you own the place?"

Yumi remained silent while leering at him. She then strolled around the large kitchen, touching items with her hands. "Why did you move here?"

Royce stirred the pot and glanced back at Yumi, who by this time was rummaging through the fridge, as if she owned its contents.

"Somebody had already taken the Mansion from me, so this was the only place left."

"So you're rich?" the woman asked.

Royce remained calm and was not surprised by the question. Most women ask for a man's status before considering if he is worth the effort. But he had to keep his personal life secret, especially the news about his fame as Japan's No.1 anime author...

"I'm okay for money."

"You live alone?"

Royce felt like the questions were getting a little personal for his taste and there was something he wanted to ask her. So in a bid to halt any more awkward questions, he rushed the cooking and before the woman knew it, he was pouring the noodles into a soup of rich vegetables. He lined up several portions of meat, which floated elegantly on the top.

Yumi immediately stopped her questions and hurriedly rushed over to the table to await her prize. Royce had to smile; she was almost like a starved puppy wiggling its tail, begging for food, although there was no way in hell he would convey that information to her in person.

Tucking in, as if it was her last supper, Royce watched with satisfaction as the colour returned to her cheeks and her soul raised from the depressed girl he saw in class and in front of him today. It was a side he hoped to see again and despite her problems at home, he would do his best to help her. She did not deserve whatever was happening to her.

"You're welcome to stay here if you wish. I won't let anything bad happen to you. You have my word."

She stopped sucking up the noodles with her small juicy lips and the young man saw the telltale sign of her beginning to blush.

"I hope you do. You have a lone woman in your home; I trust you'll behave yourself."

Royce was not sure if he should take that comment as a joke or give it some serious thought. Then again, he always blew things out of proportion, which always gave him a headache.

He peeked at the clock that hung over the entrance of the kitchen - half past twelve at night - and he decided to return to his room. He had a busy day tomorrow and the last thing he wanted was to act like a deranged zombie.

"I've got an early start tomorrow, so I'll be off now. Make sure you turn off all the lights before you return to your room." Royce walked over to the door and did not look back. He decided to give the young woman some privacy; he would ask her some tough questions tomorrow.

*

It was apparent that she was suffering from some serious issues back at home and he could not sit by and do nothing. Other people would comment on it being a foolhardy gesture, and one he should stay well clear off, but she was staying at his place now, eating his food, and she looked awfully inadequate and defenceless to look after herself in a scenario that was clearly beyond her abilities. He'd never seen a woman act so scared before, not like that. Something was awfully wrong.

Royce turned on his computer and added the finishing touches to his huge story that would outsell his rival's by millions. Even his story had been getting international support, far more than the *fairy and witch* crap his competition has been shoving down the throats of all the would-be Anime fans. *Serves the bitch right; I'll show her just how pathetic her pink heroes really are.* Now all he had to do was to print off his story and deliver it.

Royce sighed at the mountain of work that had to be done before he returned to school.

Not only does he have to look forward to the daily battles at school, the scolding looks and the judgemental glances; but he now had to deliver his manuscript, in person, to his publishers in Tokyo. That was, if he could find the place.

He'd never been there before and the dodgy map pinned to the wall in front of him offered no help whatsoever. All the text was in Japanese and it was supposed to be an easy map to understand. He remembered the first moment he came face to face with his fans while looking for some directions.

The map was a simple document he picked up from a local shop while he was on the bus travelling to the Naka. The bus stopped to refuel at a distant town and he left for a few minutes to stretch his legs. While he was browsing in the shop, he came across an assortment of books and the map. When he took the map off the shelf and turned to pay for it, he was suddenly met face to face by a bunch of girls who were idolising over the recent release of his latest Manga. He felt a mix of emotions that day. It was the first time he'd come face to face with his fans, even though they had no idea who this mysterious foreigner was. He wanted to glance

from a distance and see what the girls thought of his latest work, but he ran the risk of being a pervert so he decided to leave the shop and return to the bus.

The map might be a reminder of his first encounter with his fans, but that still did not stop the flood of mail and E-mails that came his way.

Luckily most of the mail came from Japan, so chances for him to have a stalker (or stalkers) were few and far away. But now as he looked out his hotel window, that scenario had changed dramatically. He had to be careful.

The young man made a mental note to tell his new guest not to enter his room under any circumstances. It would be hard to explain the pinup images of his Manga and the mountain of anime. Even his Manga figures he'd collected over the years would be impossible to explain. If news got out that he was the author, Royce would be inundated with fans, or even worse, heralded the laughing stock of the whole school.

As the last of the printouts came out of the printer, he made plans to travel to Tokyo and see his agent and inspect the latest Manga project. His life was finally on track and nothing was going to derail that.

*

The night appeared peaceful and the wilderness hummed with the charming melody of nature at its finest. Royce hoped that the rest of the night would be uneventful, despite an attractive young woman in his home. It was every young man's dream and he would have to keep that a secret too.

But he wondered about Yumi. He wondered about the friends she could tell at school. He knew very little about her and her interactions within the school. Was she part of something larger? Did she have many friends? Royce began to see this as an opportunity to introduce another character to his story; she was, in other words, an interesting person. Royce had to find out what was troubling the young woman.

Chapter 16

The mansion Rina purchased was a property she always had her eyes on.

Since she was a small girl, born in this small town, the huge house at the top of the hill had always fascinated her. It had been abandoned three times in the past and had an assortment of famous people living there for a short period of time to escape the chaos of city life. The stately house also had an assortment of ghost stories, but that did not sway Rina from owning this beautiful home.

The property spanned several acres with a huge mansion in the middle. Split into two wings, most of the place had been renovated to her liking.

The majority of the rooms were pink, all themed to the Manga she wrote. She might be the author of her own stories, but she fell in love with the characters just as much as any other fan. She even bought herself the model figures.

But there had always been one problem. That one obstacle which always hounded her no matter how hard she worked. That was the author of *Magnesium Fluoride Galactic Battleship*. At every review period, both parties would slag each other's work off and try and battle the rising tide of competition. Neither of them gave way and she saw it as a continuing war. She frowned as she sat in her womb-like chair and scanned the latest review created for her recent Manga.

“Standard publication of a bimbo princess who loves to dance in the realm of fairies and elves. Prosperity Angel’s creativity brings us yet another copy of her dreary, heart wrenching pile of slush that would fail to make even the hard boiled reader turn the page.” Rina roared as she threw the magazine to the floor. At least the reviewer got her name correct this time.

“I don’t believe it! That fucking author, Buster Writer, and his shitty reviews...Just wait until his issue comes out. I’ll show him just how useless his Manga really is!” Rina waved her magazine in the air as she swivelled the chair.

“I’m telling you...when I find out who this author is, I’m going to kill that asshole!”

There were many variations on what method she liked to use to kill that author. Many bordered on the extreme and she loved going over the top. She felt the onset of an evil plan and she quickly jotted down some notes, waiting for a reply.

Her butler of the mansion stood in the background and tried to remain unobtrusive. She saw him in the corner of her peripheral vision. “You’re supposed to agree with me!”

“But ma’am, don’t you think you’re taking this a little too seriously? I’m sure you can create your own review when his work’s published.”

“You’re right, and he’s not going to get any mercy from me.” She grinned at the very thought.

“Shazaki-kun, I’m taking my bath now, have everything ready. It’s going to be a long day at school tomorrow and I want to look my best.”

“Very good, ma’am,” he replied.

After a moment of silence, Rina gazed at her own reflection in the mirror and felt the breeze on the back of her neck. She reached out and picked up a golden necklace on her dresser and it brought back memories about her parents. The necklace was a gift from her mother before they left to work in America. It would be several months before they came back, but in the capable hands of the butler and helpers around the estate, she had everything she needed and only had to ask if anything was amiss.

But as she looked solemnly around her over decorated room, all the dolls and accessories could not fill the gap of being alone.

Then her attention turned to the new lad who appeared in the school. She might be mad at all the problems he caused for her, but it was nothing compared to the author she hated.

She giggled slightly at the thought of Akina and the sudden accident that happened at school. Her accidental trip – although she was sure there was a more sinister plot at work – the whole situation was rather funny and it did draw the attention off the young English lad who joined the school.

She still could not get over the fact a new foreign student joined the school. For as long as she could remember, the town had rarely seen a new person, let alone a foreign student from a far off land. This indeed was a strange phenomenon and Rina had even considered that he could be part of a government conspiracy to take over the town or enslave all the girls in some kind of strange English experiment to impregnate everyone with babies.

She shook her head with disgust and threw the dark glossy magazine that had her unfavourable review in it.

“That boy. I don’t know who’s worse; him or the author.”

By this time, the butler had left the room and Rina suddenly discovered she’d been talking to herself. With nothing left to do, and stuck on what to write, she decided to leave the confines of her room and walk around the grounds.

*

Evening had been creeping up on the mansion and the sky had a steady cloud that cast strange leaping shadows upon the area.

But venturing around the grounds was bewildering to a woman who enjoyed a shady life; way beyond the prying eyes of the public and her friends. Outside the massive windows in the hallway, groundkeepers moved from one bush to the other, carefully pruning roses and cutting grass. Her family was wealthy and they kept their daughter's place in top condition. An army of servants attended to the house and her every need.

Rina even had a group of young men who performed more difficult tasks on the property. But they seemed more interested in helping her bathe or assisting her on the toilet. Such a perverted bunch, she often threatened to sack the whole lot and keep the maids. But her father wanted a strong presence, so no adventurous local man from the village would intrude and take her virginity.

Her father was a sturdy man, business class, who didn't want his daughter to mingle with the lowlifes in the town. Her decision to stay in her hometown baffled her father, but Rina knew her little secret of writing anime was the main reason to stay. The town was isolated and everyone knew her since she was a baby. There was no better place to hide and carry on with the work she loved so much.

She did try and visit the big city from time to time, but the overcrowding and chaotic movement of the city was too much for the young girl to stand and she shivered at the thought of a city school.

Rina was not interested in boys; she never had a romantic thought in her mind except when it came to her Manga. Well, okay, she might have liked the odd star or even seen handsome people in magazines, but that was as far as her fraternisation went.

She walked down the stairs into the main hallway and the maids stood to attention.

"Ma'am...is everything okay? Do you need an escort?" said one of the maids. She could see the excited butlers on the balcony opposite just waiting to jump down and offer their services.

"No, I'll be fine. I'm just out for a walk until my bath is ready." She walked through the front door to get some air.

*

The air had an undertone of wet grass, probably from the surrounding lands as sprinklers sprayed a cool mist over the lawns. It smelled pleasant, mixed with the rose petal aroma. A still calmness reassured a lady who had a chaotic day and she locked herself inside her little world as she trudged along the land, shutting everything else out.

She glanced at her left shoulder and touched the student vice president band that signalled her authority throughout the school. She did have a small team in her council ranging from intelligent students, who she personally picked, and a few oddballs the principal placed on the team to keep an eye on things. So far they remained on the sidelines and did not cross her path. The one thing Rina hated the most was a spy and she was sure the two unknown students were planted to keep the principal apprised.

Most of the presidents in the committee were female, just the way Rina liked it, and the rest were males. She made sure they stayed in the sidelines and if they ever crossed the line, she would often stamp on their heads.

Crazy suggestions always popped into the committee meetings and that is when she relied heavily on the suggestion box

Rina strolled further out of the grounds of her home and remembered the suggestion box she set-up. Any student was allowed to submit a personal letter of any problem or issues that should be dealt with. She made a promise to everyone when she was elected, and that was to sort out the schools growing pervertedness problem. She was determined to clean up the grounds and make *Naka High School* the best school in all of Japan. She had a goal and she was determined to reach it.

By the time Rina reached the end of the flower garden, she had reached the border of the large woods that surrounded the estate. There had been times in which intruders tried to gain entry into the mansion.

Big mistake.

The woods were equipped with state of the art, military laser guided bullets. Machine guns and land mines armed the perimeter with teams of military snipers set up in strategic points just ready to punish any hot-headed boy. She was determined to protect her virginity and there was always a chance that her little Manga secret would get out. But the real reason the defences were set up was to keep the other author away. She heard rumours from the student council that the author was intending to discover her secrets and even visit the town.

She laughed out loud, that evil laugh that she coughed up from deep within her scheming heart. She could not wait to have his head at the end of a pole and display it at the front of the school gates like some medieval castle punishment. Then again, Rina always had the flare for the dramatic and she cackled even more at the thought.

Still in her school uniform, Rina thought back to the time she was eventually elected for the role. The speech of cleaning up the school had hit home and many students now had hope. The school was not always bad. The principal, although somewhat wild herself, kept things in check and the last president failed to uphold her promise. Her eventual involvement within the student council came in a succession of stages.

Her blunt attitude towards boys helped to a degree, then it was her high score in classes that increased her success. Being a child of this town, she was well known and well liked. She knew everybody and they all played with each other as they grew.

Then when it came to high school, she used her charm and contacts to wiggle her way up the student chain to the position she now held. All it took was good speeches and her overwhelming attitude.

But all of that was thrown out of the window when that foreigner showed up and defaced her whole program by his simple perverted actions. Although she shouldn't burden herself with that man, Rina could not keep her mind off the scruffy alien.

She smiled at the mere thought, alien...yes, *that's what he is. An intruder.*

Although he was not on the top of her list of things to remove; she would have to keep an eye on him and not to mention the strange club that seemed to have been around since the school began.

The *Secret Underwear Club* was a team of students who plagued the school from the moment it was constructed. Passed down through the ages, one member of the opposite sex would be in charge of the club and recruit new members. The

permission for such a club was never given, but how they gained their funding and foothold has always been a mystery.

All attempts to find this 'hide out' failed. But Rina was not going to give up without a fight.

Tired from all the walking through the grounds of the mansion, Rina wondered if her bath was ready and she suddenly realised that she'd forgotten to take her mobile with her. Then again, she was sure the maids were more than capable of finding her. They had a knack for finding her no matter where she went. It was almost as if they were their own military unit and that was one of the reasons why she hired them. If her fame did become public knowledge, their help would be needed.

Shortly after walking past the newly installed fountain, Rina watched as one of the maids trundled up the path in her short French maid dress and white apron. It was required clothing and she preferred them looking pretty. After all, the house was to her liking, all fashioned out in pink and extravagant colours, even more extreme than a stately home from England.

Once the maid was in earshot, she spoke up. "Ma'am, you have a visitor at the main gate!"

Rina was not expecting any guests today and news of someone at the gate was frightening and exciting at the same time. Did someone find out about her secret? Was it a die-hard fan that could expose her secret just by standing outside her front door for all hours of the night? Was it a close friend who wanted to see her?

The third question was more likely the realistic one, but she always kept an open mind, just in case it wasn't.

Rina looked towards the maid, who continued to pant furiously. She was partly bent over; round firm breasts heaving too and fro behind her silky dress and the odd peek of her purple underwear would be the ideal eye-candy for any would be pervert. She looked around to make sure the area was secure from men and approached her with her answer. "What does this person look like?"

"She's tall, yellow hair, very fancy clothing and has such firm round breasts that fit perfectly with her round a-"

Rina cut the young girl off before she got too excited with the description. She knew exactly who the visitor was. The unexpected meeting was a surprise.

She released the already hot young maid and issued orders. "Really, I don't know who's more perverted, you or the average teenager! Okay, once you calm down..."

The maid interjected, "Oh, no, I am not perverted. I am just a boy in a woman's body. But I must admit, I do feel very excited to wear this uniform. I even wear it in bed, feel myself over and I even have the desire to snuggle up to my friends beds and feel-"

Rina placed a firm hand over her mouth and tried again to issue orders. "Like I said, I want you to return to the mansion and prepare my public room! Do you understand?"

Rina made sure her voice carried as much authority as possible. This stage of her plan was vital and it followed a few simple steps: The first would be to lock away any trace of her involvement with the anime. This would be done by locking up her real living space in the south wing. The mansion was so huge guests would not bother going there, and even if they did, the unsuspecting guests would be met with a locked door. Her excuse would be that it was un-renovated and dangerous. That always worked.

The second stage of the plan would be to open up her fake living space. This would consist of respectable bedding arrangements, a smartly decorated room and no sign of anime involvement. She was the class president and a highly respected member of the town. Her parents were millionaires who would never understand her passion. If they did find out about her secret, life on earth would not be worth living. Even for a teenager in her final years of school.

To make the set-up look authentic, she would instruct the maid to make the room appear that it was recently used. She would place used dishes in her room and scruff up the bed little. Every maid knew her or his duty and this would be their first practical test.

After hearing the order, the maid suddenly sprang into panic mode, dashing around in circles muttering, "What shall I do, what shall I do?"

Rina placed her left hand on her forehead and wondered how this girl got the job. It was supposed to be a carefully constructed plan where everyone knew their place. Teams of maids would be assigned a task; the internal staff would look after the rooms and staff on the outside would make sure no intruders entered the grounds. Even when friends came around for a visit, each maid was specially trained to hide in the background and spy on the guests. If they got too close to a hot spot—the north wing with all the anime items—they would spring into action, often sacrificing their lives to protect the secret. Sacrifice anything; every butler and maid swore an oath to Rina. Her family never visited and if they did an independent plan was set up for them.

It took a few minutes for Rina to reach the front gate, but once she did the all-clear was broadcasted through the intercom and she sprang into action. Hiding all doubt and knowing this would be their real test, she opened the gates to her long-term friend, Akina Oda.

"Rina-San you won't believe the hell I've been through. Ever since that incident at school, I've been the laughing stock of the whole place."

For a girl with a strong military background and strong will, her ability to hold back tears was almost terrifying. Rina had never seen Akina behave in a manner that was terrifying.

Rina gestured her into her mansion and away from prying eyes. The poor girl had been through enough already; she did not need the town to leer at her from afar.

"If you take material like that to school, than sooner or later someone will find out!"

Akina stomped her feet on the floor, "I don't read that filth! I never have and I don't have the desire to make any M-M-Manga." She fought with the last word before collapsing on the freshly brushed floor.

"I have no idea how the books got in my bag, I know someone framed me...I just know it."

Rina walked behind Akina and heard her stomach rumble. There was only one thing left to do.

Chapter 17

The Mansion's dining hall was just that, a hall. Rina was unable to comprehend the sheer size of the place, even though she was inside the room with a huge meal in front of her.

Five crystal chandeliers hung over the unrealistic table and fine works of art hung between the windows while the colour of deep red added a warm effect accompanied by the dark red carpet and white ceiling. She found it to be a daunting place and she remained silent for most of the meal.

Annoyed with the silence, Rina spoke up. "You can talk you know. I am not the queen who'll chop off your head."

"N-N-No, its okay...sorry." Akina stuttered. She did that sometimes when nervous, although Rina knew her mind was trying to fit twelve words through her mouth at the same time.

"This is amazing. Do you live here by yourself?"

Rina had prepared herself for that question from the moment her friend entered the place. Normally she lived with her parents in a nice home on the outskirts of town. But when her parents moved abroad to work for a prestigious company, she remained and her Manga career took off, providing her with unlimited funds and respect.

She demanded that she remain in Japan and study at school. She proved her worth and her parents finally caved in to her demands. Although she had threatened to run away and come back to Japan, so there was nothing they could really do to stop her.

She looked at her maids and butlers who stood at the entrance and various locations around the hall and rehearsed the perfect answer.

"Well, as you can see, I do have people here who look after the estate until my parents come back," Rina lied.

"I can see that; lots of young boys to be adventurous with."

Rina's cheeks turned cherry-red and she exclaimed in a high pitched tone. "No, no, no, no. I don't. You're a wicked friend. You are almost as bad as the newest maid we have. She's always obsessed with her own body and believes she's a boy."

"Sounds confusing."

"It's a conflicting matter. I hope she grows out of it. Such a pretty girl too, I would hate for anything bad to happen to her."

"So you are close to your staff then?"

"Just what are you implying?" Rina demanded.

"Looks to me like you have a secret club going on behind everyone's back; big house, lots of maids and butlers waiting for your every command. I wonder what happens when the doors are closed?" Akina said gamely.

"I-It's not like that at all!"

Rina looked around the room and saw rosy cheeks on all the servants. She was holding a secret, but it was hardly a topic she could talk about. Whatever Akina made up was much better than exposure of her hobby or project. Rina knew her friend was playing around and it would be very easy to derail the conversation.

"I think it's more important to get down to the subject of your incident. After all, I am the class president and it's my duty to help those who are in need, no matter how small the problem is."

"How can you fix my problem? The whole school knows about the books. But they're not mine. Someone planted them."

"Okay," Rina said objectively. "Who would stand to gain from taking you out of the picture?"

Rina watched her friend analyse the remark for a moment with no sigh on resolution.

"Umm, I don't know. I suppose there's a lot of people I've treated badly in the past."

"Well that narrows it down," Rina replied sarcastically.

"I am doing the best I can."

"Perhaps a bath might clear your mind?"

"A bath?" Akina asked inquisitively.

"Yes, this mansion has a hot spring included. I was going to have one before you arrived, would you care to join?"

*

The hot spring rolled through the clean rocks and slowly trickled into a deep pool of crystal warm water. An assortment of plants and grass grew around a wooden bamboo fence that segregated the small enclosure to protect the inhabitants from any prying eyes; although Rina had always caught the odd man peering at her through the holes in the fence. She could never identify the culprits so she would punish all the men who worked for her. It never worked.

Steam slowly rose from the surface of the water and Rina could smell the enchanting aroma of fresh scented flowers inviting her in. Satisfied that no one was around to peek, she slipped off her white gown and slid effortlessly into the warm water. The sensation of warm liquid pressing over her body, cleansing the day's grime and worries away, never grew old. Rina always made it a habit to clean herself this way almost everyday. The minerals from deep within the Earth flowed with the water and it had a regenerating effect on her skin. She found it very therapeutic and she could resolve any difficult situations with ease and clarity.

Gentle footsteps patted the wooden floor as she welcomed her friend into the pool. "You made it, come, the water's perfect."

Although she was the strongest woman at school, Akina looked more timid than a small kitten in a downpour.

"Are you sure nobody's peeking? I would hate for my body to be eye-raped by strangers."

Akina did have a point. But the latest security features had not been triggered yet. She knew the area was clear.

"Don't worry, it's safe, the only person here is me and we're all the same," Rina said gamely.

Suddenly a small voice boomed from the trickle of water, startling the two.

"Wait for me!"

Rina and Akina glanced over to the changing rooms as a third woman ran completely naked into the pool and drowned the area in an upheaval of fury.

"Aoi! What the hell are you doing here?" Rina demanded.

"Who's this?" Akina exclaimed, hiding her firm round breasts, sinking even further into the water with embarrassment.

"Just ignore her! She's the maid I was talking about, the one that wants to become a boy."

"That's not right, I want to be a boy, not change into a boy!" Aoi replied cheerfully, eyeing up Akina's breasts, not realizing that her secret had just been exposed. After a moment of pause, she grasped her master's mistake.

"So you are the mysterious person who wants to change sex," Akina interjected.

The young maid stared at Rina. She just exposed the young girl's most sacred secret.

"Is it common practise for maids to enter the hot springs with their masters?" Akina asked quietly, stirring the pot.

"Only if their boobs are the size of yours!" The little woman, sprang forward like a coiled spring, and collapsed on top of Akina and began massaging her breasts like a perverted boy.

Akina yelped in return, "what are you doing!!! Get off, get off!"

*

As the minutes passed, Rina grew suspicious of the butlers. There would always be an incident each week involving the young men. Itching for some eye candy, and with three hot women in the spring at the same time, this was one opportunity she knew the butlers could not pass up.

True to her word, half way across the mansion, the trio of men planned their move in secret.

The butlers were recent members from the school who graduated with honours but never ventured away from town. When employment became rare, they jumped at the chance to work with an old friend. The men knew each other well and they participated in the underwear club, before leaving the school. In the age-old tradition with holding up that honour, they had to expose themselves to as many women as possible. The moment of manhood was upon them.

The shortest of the group called himself Ren. The Leader of the group called himself Takumi and the others went by the names of Kaito, Daiki and Shun.

Armed with detailed knowledge of the mansion, and the whereabouts of all the security features leading up to the spring, the men made their move...somewhat subtly, in their own mission control.

"This is a huge problem!" voiced Takumi.

"Awww, I really wanted to see my favourite maid, Aoi, all naked and hot, mixed in with our master and her friend!" cried Kaito.

"And you will," Shun reassured the rest with his quick level of thinking and off the shelf logic. "The new security system she had installed might be state of the art anti-pervert proof, but all it takes is a little will power and we will find a way in."

"So you found a way into the hot springs?" Takumi asked, scratching his head and looking solemnly at the new security feature that had them completely stumped.

"Ammmmm, yeah. Come on men, our eyes are waiting to see some young hot women!"

With a hearty cheer, the group gathered their scraps of paper and slipped into their black ninja outfits to begin their mission.

*

Life in the mansion would be boring if nothing happened. Rina employed over 20 people and there was hope that her friends would visit from time to time. With this being the first visit, the young lads had to get their bonus, without anyone knowing. However, blocking their way to the young succulent girls and a night of pure bliss was the mother of all security systems. Rudolph the dog!

"Who the hell would name a dog 'Rudolph'?" exclaimed Ren as he appeared out from behind one of the many shrubs that were hidden under the immense canopy of the forest.

"You know how our master's is, she has flare for the dramatic," Shun replied, dressed as a commando with his face painted for war.

"Do you have to be the odd one out? Look at the rest of us. How are we supposed to be the dark force tonight if you're all dressed in green?"

Shun looked at himself, pondered over the question, remained silent for a moment and then forgot about it. *No point wasting time over silly matters.*

Shun decided it was time to show his stuff. Since he left the mansion with the group, everyone had been interested in what he was carrying in the bag. Its red tint should have been a dead giveaway, but the darkness hid the deadly secret and now it was time to release the deadly weapon that would finally put down the master's security system.

"Now, I don't know how long this will work, but we should get five minutes to sneak past the dog. You all got it?"

Everyone agreed in perfect military unison as the sounds of girls playing and talking behind the bushes pucker their interest.

With a deep breath, Shun reached into the plastic bag and pulled out a huge joint of bloody meat. "I sure hope no one notices that expensive meat missing," Takumi murmurs.

"Don't worry," Shun said. "I made a note showing the meat had been contaminated with a foreign substance. We should be in the clear."

The small group huddled together like a bunch of Meerkats ready to cause mischief. The jet-black dog, drooling at the mouth, twice the size of a small child and claws the size of demolition shears stood to attention, waiting for any sign of intruders.

Shun edged closer, just inches away from his field of vision. He did not know what would happen. Was the dog trained to stay in one spot and not move? Or would it charge like a juggernaut and kill him on the spot? There was very little he could do about it now.

Standing out in the open, and with two black eyes firmly planted on his body, the dog growled with intense fury as the lone man held the dripping red meat.

Froth began to develop on the dog's mouth and the growling grew louder, but Shun could only stand there solid, unable to move, as if his feet were locked in a trap.

The rabid dog stood on all fours and continued to stare at them. Shun wasn't sure if it was sizing him up or the meat. It was easy for him to throw the meat and make a run for it, but reality hit him like a bus on a busy street. He was terrified. This beast was all muscle and no fat, its legs were the size of construction cranes and its mouth had razor sharp teeth that could cut through anything with ease.

Shun knew he'd bitten more than he could chew and his instinct was to remain frozen on the spot.

Suddenly Takumi snatched the meat from his hand, tossed it at the dog and lead the way. "Come one, females waiting for us."

The philosophy of 'boys will be boys' stood true to this moment. As they approached the bamboo fence, Takumi had to make a few changes to the electrical surveillance system and disable the trip wire explosives and land mines they had planted to ward off intruders. The advantage of working inside the mansion was the access to all the resources used to keep perverts out.

Cheering and splashing grew louder the closer they got. Once over the final boulder, they stopped at the final hurdle, the bamboo fence.

This was probably the most delicate and difficult obstacle to overcome. If they touched the fence too hard, it would rattle and alert the girls to their presence. But it was too hard not to make a noise. This indeed was a conundrum. So with all eyes on the construction of the fence, they hunted like a dog for a hole to peek through.

Moments later Daiki, a red haired individual with green eyes and a slim figure, spotted a small hole that allowed access to the eyes' most sought after medicine.

Peering through the hole, Daiki could almost make out the shadowy outline of a body. "Oh, you guys should see this, they are naked behind here..."

Kaito scurried to the opening and attempted to shove the first guy away from the hole. But that hasty action alerted the girls to their presence. Fearing for the worst, the group slowly turned their eyes towards the tiny hole. There was no more laughing or giggling, no more splashing, just silence.

Peering closer to the horizon of the hole, the silence on the other side filled the young men with terror, as well as mixed emotion of pleasure if the women were indeed up to some sexual act. Staring back at them, the hole offered wonders of delight and horror, but the group could not wait, they could not stand down. They moved forward, peeked into the hole and then...

The angry eyeball of one Rina roared with unbearable anger as she bulldozed her way through the bamboo fence, collapsing the whole structure on the trio of lads who fought valiantly to escape.

Outfitted with disguises that hid their identities, Kaito enjoyed his moment with the girl he liked so much, Shun battled his way past Rina and Akina handed down her justice in the form of punches and kicks.

It might have been a painful experience, but being beaten to a pulp by a group of naked girls was a memory they would never forget. Girls touched them. Hand and foot, goddesses touched them!

With an opportunity to escape, the group legged it through the woods and out of sight, but they were lucky. If the girls had been dressed, they would have been chased all the way to hell.

Beaten, bruised and full of pride, the group lounged around their base, enjoying the experience.

"I don't believe it. I was touched. Rina touched me. I fell over and felt her tender breasts, this is a dream come true," Kaito muttered as his mind drifted into the world of dreams, just so he could escape the painful reminder of reality.

Shun licked his own wounds as he felt the kick and punch of Rina, but in the end, he was the one that felt the proudest. He was the one that hacked Rina's highest level of security and demonstrated that men were, once again, a force to be reckoned with. He could only imagine what the women were doing once the dust settled. His primary mission in proving to the women that men were needed to protect the grounds was too important to dismiss. Perhaps now, Rina would acknowledge his request to stay on the grounds and perhaps she would take his advice fatally. After all, Shun had often helped Rina through the hard times and good, even when no one else was around to help her.

With a smile on his face, he hung up his ninja uniform, painfully slipped back into his butler uniform and returned to work.

Chapter 18

Despite the knowledge of having an unexpected guest staying with him at his hotel, Royce still slept like a log and even felt some level of satisfaction that he was helping a young lady through some difficult times. But today was the day he wanted to know what happened and why she was so terrified to go home.

Royce walked down the corridor, past the girl's door, straight on and down the stairs. He pushed open the secret door under the stairs and investigated the hidden room more closely.

From what he could see, it was a simple room with four walls, floor and a ceiling. He had no idea what it was used for, but surmised that it was part of Japanese culture to build over things, through things and even under things. There was bound to be some kind of kink in the design. Then again, it could have been a simple utility cupboard forgotten over time. How fitting it turned out to be the perfect place to hide a young woman who was still battling through her teens.

Royce gave up his investigating after the small room had nothing interesting to shift through. He had to prepare breakfast and although he knew exactly what to cook for himself, he had no idea what to make for the young woman.

Still, something soft, warm and not too hard on the stomach would probably go down well and quick to eat from what he gathered. He always got up an hour before school and it took him half an hour to travel by foot and fifteen minutes by bike. He assumed she would accompany him with his second bike that she nicked and that should provide enough time to eat, providing she got up.

Royce stirred the pot and liked how his thinking went. He had everything planned perfectly and when it was time to eat, the girl was nowhere to be seen. He carried on, placing the food onto plates and when he finally finished dishing up, he decided to find out where she'd gone.

The washing was piled neatly in the sink and he was glad he did not have to worry about cleaning up the mess. Normally the butler would arrive after he left for school and he was instructed to clean the place and have food ready for when he returned. Royce gave the butler a lot of leeway and he always respected the man. But now he had more pressing matters to attend to.

Walking back along the dark passageway, Royce approached the girl's room and gently knocked.

No reply. So with time ticking away, he knocked again, but harder.

This time, only a grunt was his reward. Royce recognised that tone; she was still in bed.

One of the things the young man learned when he was with his uncle during the summer holidays was that when the lights came on, you had ten minutes to get up, otherwise the head chef would bring a pot of cold water into his chambers and throw the contents over him. A lesson he learned the hard way...twice.

Of course, he could not do such a thing to a cute silver haired girl who appeared to be struggling with family problems. But perhaps he could convince her some other way to get up.

After no response for more than a minute, he let himself in. Perhaps the presence of him in her room would be enough to wake her up. That normally

worked in the Anime. An innocent boy falls into the girl's dorm and they all wake up and smack him to bits. *This has got a work* Royce thought to himself.

He placed his weary hand on the handle once again and threw caution to the wind. He was not scared this time.

Expecting the door to be locked, Royce was surprised to find it unlocked. Pushing further, a fresh smell of female perfume blew past in the breeze and it took a moment for his eyes to adjust to the dim light.

Taking two steps in, Royce almost stumbled when he saw the girl half naked, exposed and partly covered by the warm blanket. Never before had he seen such soft clean skin, firm round breasts and thin legs that curved all the way up into the mound of blankets. Her hair draped across the pillow and her tender lips continued to pulsate, inviting him in.

She immediately opened her eyes, like she had some built in alarm clock, and stared at Royce. She slowly covered the rest of her body with the blanket.

Royce did not want this to be one of those awkward moments where he could be seen as a pervert about to pounce on a sleeping girl. He took a step back and said, "Your food is ready down in the dining room. You better hurry up before you're late for school."

He left her room and closed the door behind. Swallowing hard he believed he'd escaped that situation on a good note. The girl could think anything and that was fine with him. He was about to ask her some serious questions later and he could find no better way to wake her up other than throwing cold water over her.

The girl took another ten minutes before she showed up, and wearing her uniform in immaculate condition, he could understand the time she took.

"How do you get your uniform so clean while you're hiding under the stairs?"

"It's not difficult," she replied, eyeing the food and sitting down at the table.

Royce felt glad his cooking had created a good impression on her. She began gulping down the food and enjoying every moment of it. It was only a simple rice porridge with some herbs and cut vegetables. Nothing special, but for her, it was classed as a good day's meal.

Royce carried on with his line of questioning. "So you've been cleaning your clothes with the machines I have here?"

"Yes."

Royce raised his brow in surprise and nodded, impressed. "You have the skill to live normally without anyone knowing."

"I had to learn a lot of things to survive."

"Survive?" Royce asked. He noticed the young woman slow down on her eating. She appeared to be holding back a deep secret that was burning away at her soul. Royce was finally digging a tunnel to take away her pain.

"Yes, I had to do many things and hide." The word "hide" was common for Royce. He too had to hide his secret from the media, from his fans and the town he was in right now. But somehow, Royce knew that the word "hide" was more severe to the young woman than a simple title hiding game. This was a matter of life and death.

Royce continued to dig further.

"So you don't live with your parents?" That was a logical question. No one should fear their normal parents and he was sure any parents with a child like this would never do anything cruel or devastating to her.

"My parents died in an accident when I was young."

"I'm sorry to hear that," Royce replied with sympathy in his voice. The story was coming together; she must be fostered or someone in the family could have adopted her. The risk of abuse or neglect would rise quite a bit.

"So did family members look after you or did you get sent to a home?" The girl kept her silence and it became hard for Royce to pry any more. Her concentration suddenly diverted to her hands and she began to shiver with cold. But the place was warm.

"Are you okay?" Royce asked.

The girl looked down at the table and tears began to stream from her face and drip into what was left of her food. She tried her best to keep silent and not cry, but he could hear the gentle sobbing from behind the wall of hair.

"I'm sorry to dredge up the past, Kosaka-san. I only want to understand what happened to you so I can protect you from the ones that hurt you. I want to heal your wounds. I want to protect you. You will always have a place here and I will make sure no one takes you away."

Although he said nice words it did not stop the girl from crying. She controlled her emotions with great will, but whatever happened to her was traumatic, which burned itself deep into her soul.

Royce's wristwatch beeped, which signalled it was time to leave for school. He gently walked over to the girl, pulled out a handkerchief and handed it to her. He would have to find out her secret another way because talking to her directly was too painful. He knew news about her demise would have been public knowledge and her friends would know something. He did not know who her friends were, but he was good at research. He could watch from a distance and learn. The question was, would he really want to know what happened to her? Was it so cruel that he would not control his anger and take it out on her foster parents? If it was what he thought it was, he could lose his temper.

After a moment of peace, Yumi managed to calm herself down and moved outside to set-up the bike to travel to school. Royce jokingly made some remarks, to force her not to think about the past.

"You know, I was out looking for that bike a few days ago. I looked all over town, across the bridge, through the mountains and even in the cave."

"Cave?" she asked.

"Well, I don't know if it was a cave or tunnel, but once I saw that dark hole, I could not enter. I ran away like a chicken."

The girl giggled and Royce could see colour back in her cheeks.

"But then to discover that you were looking after it the whole time...you could have told me. I have never felt so tired and exhausted. But I guess a handsome man like me needs exercise from time to time. You know, girls love a handsome, strong, man."

She blushed as she wedged her helmet onto her head and mounted the motorcycle. Royce could not help but catch a glimpse of a cool girl riding something so manly. It was erotic and beautiful at the same time. He resisted the urge to look up her skirt, which would have been easy with her position. But now was not the time.

The woman saw this action and decided to play on it. "Don't act like you didn't see my panties. I've been watching this whole time."

"Who, me? I didn't look." Royce waved his hands in an exaggeratedly innocent surprise.

Half way down the dirt road to the school, Yumi slowed down and Royce held back to find out what the problem was.

The local animals chatted in the background and some kind of insect kept on making a high pitch buzzing sound that drowned out all rational noise.

"Are you okay?" Royce began, bringing his bike to a stop beside hers.

"I'm sorry to ask, but could we split up from here? My friends at school still have a bad image of you and I don't want them to think we're dating or staying together at the hotel. They think I am still living with my foster parents and turning up with you would be difficult to explain."

Royce nodded his head and he smiled. "Good thinking. I would not want you to get a bad image from me...after all, the principal wants to see me today...again." Royce sighed with regret. The last time he saw the principal, she almost teased him to death and he was sure she wanted to do...sexual acts with him...

"You should be careful with her. I heard she's a little extreme in her ways."

"Don't worry, I have it all covered."

"That's what all the boys say."

"Don't you have faith in my ability to control myself?"

"Indecent acts with members of staff are strictly forbidden. Everyone knows that and given your impressive start at the school it's doubtful you could resist her advances."

"Just what are you implying?" Royce stopped walking with her, annoyed.

"You need to take extra care when dealing with people in this school. Matsuyama-san is doing all she can to improve its bad image and you've just appeared on her radar. She will do anything to achieve her goals and she will walk over anyone who stands in her way."

"So you know Rina..." Royce stuttered and corrected his mistake. Japanese people call strangers by their family name, he should do too. "...Matsuyama-San the long blue haired girl?"

"Yes. We grew up together..." Yumi suddenly paused, as if she just realised that she was talking casually with a boy, something she'd never done before. Royce could see a slight pink tint in her cheeks.

"Are you okay?" Royce asked, stirring the pot. He knew exactly what happened.

"Yes...we should part ways. I will go first."

Royce watched from a distance as she rode the bike down the track to school. Analysing the conversation he had with the woman, he now knew more. Yumi was friends with Rina. If he could find a way to talk to Rina, then maybe he could finally understand what happened to his new guest.

Chapter 19

The door to the office was ahead. The white painted gateway to hell, or heaven, was just moments away and Royce could not decide if it was worth entering or leaving. After all, he often left matters alone back at America, and there his problems would fester until the other party forgot about them, or the problems escalated so badly they had to talk to him. But this was a situation he did not want to deal with, so with a second thought for seeing the principal, he decided to leave.

With his foot poised to leave the reception, the security, a man who appeared far too large and normal to be anyone capable of such a job, leered at him from afar. It was not a normal glare like, 'if you go now, I will only make a note of it.' No this was a plain and blunt, 'don't you even think about leaving, boy. You'll have a ten ton bodybuilder on your back.'

Royce reconsidered his actions and faced the door of his demise. Such a simple invention, used to separate the outside world from all the elements, but this door protected the outside world from the crazy principal.

"Helllllooooo..." Cried the principal as the door flung open like a blade of a fan. "I hope you weren't thinking of running away?"

"How could I? I was summoned here and your guard made sure I didn't escape."

"Oh, that's *Butch*" She said with a hyped tone. "He makes sure everyone behaves before entering my office."

"What about inside your office?" Royce muttered under his breath."

"What was that?"

"Oh, nothing, nothing. Now, why do you want to talk to me, Principal?" There, he said it. He was sure his question was harmless and he hoped for a simple straight answer. After all, he was taken away from his studies in the middle of class. Having his name shouted out over the intercom was a little embarrassing and to add salt onto the wound, the teacher even said the whole thing out in English just for good measure. How typical.

"You know, if you make an effort to see me when I leave a note in your locker, then I don't have to get all angry and summon your cute butt over the intercom. Do you know how difficult it is to track every student?"

"I can only imagine..." Royce muttered to himself. He could almost imagine it now; the principal questioning every Japanese student, sending his picture around, setting up gangs to find him. He knew that he had a knack for hiding, but surely it couldn't be that difficult to find a foreign student in her own school.

Royce released a long sigh and the teacher walked around her table with a paper fan in her hands. The air-conditioner was not on and the principal had beads of sweat dripping all over her clothes.

"Boy, its really hot in here..."

"It would help if you turn on the air-conditioning."

"Are you trying to be smart, Royce?" She questioned with a sly tone.

"No, just stating the fact." Royce turned his back toward the principal and continued. "Not only was I taken out of my class and embarrassed in front of everyone, but you have the audacity to stick me in your office without working air-conditioning. I mean, look at me, I'm already sweating. And what do you want from me?"

Royce turned around snappishly.

Jumping back, he partly covered his eyes at the sight he suddenly saw.

"P-P-P-Principal! You can't take your clothes off when a student has his back turned to you."

"Why not?"

"This is not the way a student should be seeing his teacher..."

"But I am not a teacher."

"Then what are you?"

Royce's mind raced with thoughts of inappropriate sexual acts. Her large round breasts, nicely packed butt and the purple and black laced knickers flashed

into his mind and his hands automatically moved away from his eyes, exposing his mind to the full flesh of an erotic, although somewhat mature, woman.

"It's so hot. I can't take it anymore! Wow...this is much better." She walked over to the rotating fan and the air blew through her parted legs, around her breasts and through her hair, carrying it in the air like a silky wave. Bending to the rhythm of the air current, Royce could not take his eyes away from her butt and the silky pink underwear, which filled out over her butt cheeks. Her womanhood filled out beneath the soft under-fabric and Royce felt a rush of stabbing swords to his groin.

"I hope you are not thinking indecent thoughts about your principal?" She said curtly.

Royce could hardly control his sexual desire and the need to scream. All mixed in like a cocktail; he ejaculated his words, "How can I *not* think perverted things when you are bending in front of a fan enjoying the rush...you are too cruel!"

"But that's the role of the principal."

Royce stumbled back as the principal leapt for him, but because he did not move fast enough, or perhaps his body refused to move, the principal landed her body in perfect unison with his, knocking him to the floor and landing right on top of his already out of control manhood.

"What are you doing?" he said anxiously.

"I am teaching you a lesson." She rocked her pelvis over his groin.

"What lesson is that?"

"I am going to show you how much pressure I can take. I will show you how to ease your rock hard pain. I will allow you to release all your built up tension into me."

The erotic words continued to rain down from her hot ruby lips and Royce panicked with desire. Was he going to lose his virginity to a mature woman, the principal?

"I don't know what you're talking about."

"Sure you do." The principal grabbed a long baseball bat and got up. "I think it's good training if you join the PE class and learn all the sports available in Japan."

"What?" Royce stood up, eyes still glued to the principal, who was walking over to her desk, her underwear firmly tight, rolling between her cheeks and begging to be plucked.

"You have not selected any physical exercise classes for this semester. You must tell me what you are interested in so I can put you down on the list."

"Swimming," Royce said, without thinking.

"Oh, I see, you like to watch all the girls in swimming costumes. Do you know how erotic that is?"

Royce panicked and stepped back towards the door; he could not take the punishment any more.

"Perhaps I should slip on my school swimsuit. But it's a little small from the day I was in high school. I am sure all my features will fill out perfectly."

As the flurry of sexual comments hit Royce one after another, he saw no choice but to flee the principal's office before he exploded himself.

Rushing past the heavyweight secretary guard and to the outside, he bent over under the school canopy and took in several deep breaths. Students strolled past in the background; unaware of the overwhelming pleasure he was under. It could have been called a horror experience, but he would find it impossible to get the principal and her purple kinky underwear out of his mind.

"It's James Bond... Beer and martini, stirred and shaken right?" asked someone from behind.

Royce turned to face the source of the voice.

"I think you have the statement wrong."

"I have it on good authority that James Bond says those very lines..."

"Whatever, what do you want?" Royce snapped. He was not in the mood for small talk. He'd just escaped the principal's office and been forced to endure acts of unimaginable sexual tension that he could do nothing about. It was as if someone placed a juicy cake topped with fluffy white whipped cream, succulent tender fruit, cherries, strawberries, passion fruit, sprinkled with chocolate beads and locked in the cell next to him with no hope of eating the most exotic cake in his life.

"Oh, you must be as excited as we are. I see..."

Royce frowned and looked at Shota "What are you talking about?"

"You know. The *thing* that all boys want to see."

"I still don't follow."

Shota grabbed hold of Royce's hand and rushed him into a large square building that looked like it was constructed the same time as the school. Probably constructed around the same era and appeared more like a sports building than a collection of classrooms.

Royce was right. Upon entering the facility, the smell of chlorine water and sweaty socks filled his senses to bursting. The odour of rubber and string was quick to follow as to the rest of the aromas associated with the sport.

"This way, Mr. Bond!" Shota cackled. "You're going to see something no woman has seen before. You are about to see things only gods can see." After a few doors and ducking past checkpoints, the smell of chlorine got much stronger until the sound of running water could be heard.

Oh, god...not more women in bathing suits, what's wrong with this town!

Before Royce could escape another explosive situation, he was dragged into a dark hole with a gang of already red-hot men and they breathed heavily with anticipation.

"What the hell is going on? Why are you all huddled together?"

"Okay everyone... Get ready for the show of your life."

The blinds were lifted and suddenly the dark room shone with the still blue atmosphere of the pool water above. Connected to the poolside, Royce was surprised that the Secret Underwear Club had installed some kind of spy room next to the pool and had a window under the water. The lads could then huddle together and watch the girls swim in the water without any fear of being seen. Since the young women could only see over the water, and a few rarely dived under the water, they had a clear view of breasts, butts and all the above.

"Don't worry, men, this is the Secret Underwear Club's secret weapon. The glass is shatter proof, can only be seen one way and we have this."

Shota activated an LCD screen and by moving a simple joystick, hidden cameras popped up all around the pool, taking close up images of girls in swimsuits. Everyone exploded as noses bled profoundly and Royce felt himself drown in blood. If he did not escape, he would drown in simple perverseness.

How Japanese.

Before Royce had the chance to climb the ladder and escape, many hands reached forth and dragged him back down.

"What's wrong with you, Royce? We're showing you the golden jewel of our club and you want to escape. Are you interested in women?"

Everyone gasped in shock, "Are you GAY?"

Damn, there was the word! The word he always practiced and had a good answer for. A word he could not believe crept up in a time like this.

"No-No-No-No!" Royce exclaimed. "If you must know, I was stuck in the principal's office and she stripped naked in front of me."

The whole room went deadly silent. Shocked murmurs danced from one person to another until one yelled!

"Look!"

Like in a horror movie, two young women were hovering under water, carefully examining the glass window. Prodding the glass with their finger, the horny group could not believe how close they came to touching the perfectly round tender breasts.

Fondling the window with her finger, one of the swimmers continued to peer into the secret room.

"Don't worry," whispered Shota. "She can't see us..."

Suddenly Rina Matsuyama swam down due to concerns brought up by her fellow classmates and she too began to prod the window. Out of control like a group of animals during feeding time, the horde of boys pressed close to the glass to get an epic experience of Rina's breasts and body.

She examined the glass carefully.

Shota voiced his concern!
It was too late!

Chapter 20

Some force of nature must have given the game away, because Royce was now hard pressed against the far wall as Rina prodded the window. She cupped her hands around her left eye and attempted to peer into the small room. But despite repeated warnings from Shota, the group of horny men would not move and Royce dreaded the consequences.

Rina studied the window for a moment, realized that it was a secret room filled with perverted boys and immediately swam to the top of the pool. As if some divine power had come down from the heavens to help the girls, Rina dove back down and began assaulting the window with her mind-blowing kicks...

Yelling at the top of her voice underwater, bubbles boiled up to the surface and she landed a decisive kick to the thin layer of glass. Royce gunned for the ladder and attempted to flee, but with a small enclosure full of panicking young men, none of them made it out alive.

*

Wringing down his drenched cloths, Royce contemplated the trouble he'd found himself in. Now his fate was concreted in cement and there was nothing he could do to remedy the situation. He was branded a pervert and added to the long list of depraved students.

It was the renowned *Perverted Wall of Shame*, which the women on the town created centuries ago. It was dedicated to the boys and men who acted in indecent ways.

Guarded twenty-four hours a day, any girl, or woman, can enter the sacred temple and check to see if their boyfriend, or future husband, was added to the list. This hall was vital for the success of marriage, or the downfall to failure; destined to be single without the hope of feeling a warm woman who could remove their virginity.

It was a mess and one of the Secret Underwear Club's longest enemies.

"We must do something about our names on the Perverted Wall of Shame. Any hope of us getting married is ruined!"

"I don't understand." Royce said, looking puzzled. "What's this Wall of Shame?"

Shota stood, dripping with girl-infused pool water. "In this town, before we're allowed to date a girl, get married or even give our love letter to a girl we like, they will check the Wall of Shame. If that person's name is on the list, that person will be rejected and never permitted to go near a woman again."

"My god, do you remember Rai?" Someone interjected.

The room hummed for a short time like a bee's nest.

"Yeah...single for the rest of his life. Poor fella, I saw him on the outskirts of town. Smelled very bad, testicles swollen and completely crazy. Being added to that Wall of Shame turned him into an animal, God only knows how he lives in the wilderness."

"I don't believe it! My name's on the list! I don't want to be single for the rest of my life! I can't take it..." another club member cried in anguish.

Royce needed more information. He needed a solution to the problem. This Wall of Shame suddenly became the biggest threat and he'd only been in the town for a very short period of time. He spoke up, back straight and confident. "What about moving out of town? We can find a girl in the city or something. There are more ways to kill the cat, so to speak."

Everyone looked at Royce, puzzled. "Why would anyone want to kill a cat?"

"I thought you people eat cats?"

"That's the Chinese! They always eat cats..." Shota corrected.

"Just get back to my question! What I said was purely a metaphor."

The crowd continued to stare at Royce and Shota finally spoke, answering his question. "It will be no use. Have you heard of the Japanese Perverseness Database or JPD for short?"

"No..."

"Yeah... Set up by women from all over Japan, it holds the names, addresses, images and occupations of all the perverts in Japan. Even if you were to leave the town, any girl you date, or ask out has an instant app on their phone that allows them to check the honesty of any man. Once you're on the Wall of Shame, it won't be long until an agent comes and adds you to the JPD."

"Something's got to be done!" cried another club member. "I can't live the rest of my life as a virgin! I want a girl! I want to have children!"

Royce assumed that moving back to America would work because American girls are just as bad as the blokes, and that database is probably none existent. But he knew all members of his group could not leave Japan. They were really stuck between a rock and a hard place.

"Have no fear!" Shota reacted with delight. "We have the one man that can help us..."

Shota stood on the table, like an announcer in a circus show. Excited and ready to start, he began. "We have one man who has the skill and ability to clear our names!"

"No!" Royce instantly reacted.

"We have a man who defies all the odds!"

"No~!" Royce said again...firmly...

"We have a man who stands in the face of danger, waves his fist at the very essence of death."

"NO!"

"We have an agent of England... Even James Bond trained him himself... We have Royce, the secret agent who will save us from this tyranny..." Royce stumbled back as his name was cheered around the group, the mob of desperate men huddled, pleading for any sign of hope. All hope rested on his skill to mess things up. If he messed up his entrance into the town and ruined his image at school, surely he could ruin the great Wall of Shame!

"Like the master plan in the class room, Royce will put together another plan to remove our names from the Wall and our destiny will be free... Yes?" Shota stared at Royce with his puppy dog eyes.

Royce could hardly refuse.

Royce was assured that all the resources of the Secret Underwear Club were at his disposal and it was no joke.

State of the art computer systems lined the walls, projection boards stood in strategic positions and CCTV cameras scanned every exit and entrance to the chamber of hope. A plan would have to be formed and Royce had no idea what to do. But he had to do something. He reluctantly agreed to the mission and he could not let his team down. Again, this was all new material for his new story. Everything was perfect, although, he did prefer his name not on the Wall of Shame, too. He might want a Japanese girl in the future; they were fun and playful. But completing this task was almost impossible...almost.

"You see, each name is added alphabetically to the list and nailed in its own slot on the wall. Guards rotate on a twenty-four hour basis and the chamber is never left alone. CCTV cameras monitor every corner of the room and we can't get within two feet before being spotted and dragged to our dooms."

The group listened to Royce's speech as they watched girls on the hacked security feed walk into the chamber, scan a name they're looking for and decide if they were accepted or not.

The seriousness of the situation hit Royce as one man interrupted his speech and stared intently at the monitor. "Hey, look. Isn't that Mami-San. Didn't Jun-San confess to her?"

"Erm...I remember that, he kneeled down and handed her his love letter. She accepted and said she will get back to him...look!"

The group watched in horror as she examined the name on the letter to the thousands of names on the wall. With a disappointing sigh, she found the matching name, ripped up the sacred love letter and left the gold plated chamber.

"Eehhh~? Even the popular Jun-San has been added to the list. He's been without the company of a girl since he was a first year at this school." Another student exclaimed. "If he's on the list, what chance do we have now?"

"How did he end up on the list?" Royce asked inquisitively.

"Apparently he'd touched a girl accidentally while waiting in the dinner queue. He said he was innocent, but you know what girls are like. Once they've made up their minds, you're history."

"So, how do we get around this, Royce?" Shota asked, practically begging.

All eyes stared at Royce for the state of the art answer. They were looking for that spark of control, that moment of reassurance from the British agent of a highly trained profession. The hero of the hour, the might of the British Empire was standing right in front of him. They saw him as a god because the situation demanded it.

Royce still told everyone he was American, but they were so deep in fantasy and hope, he had to rely on his many hours of anime to create a plan.

Royce did what any man in his position would do; make it up as he went along. Pointing to the screen with his index finger, he continued. "From what I can see, the girls have Jun-San embossed on a gold plaque and added to a peg on the wall. Simply removing the name would not work, it will be noticed and they will simply add a new one."

"So how do we get around it?" one member asked.

"We cause a mistake."

"A mistake?" Shota pushed his chair back and walked over to the screen, allowing Royce to continue.

"You see, we can alter the writing so no one will notice it from a distance. When a girl of your dreams enters the chamber to inspect the names, your name will not match and they will not find you."

"So you are removing our names, but inserting something fake in its place?"

"Exactly! The girls will see a perfect gold wall without holes and we will be free to cherry pick any girl we want." Royce felt the excitement in his own voice. It'd been a long time since he formed a daring plan and from what he could gather, no one had ever ventured close to creating such a complex and daring scheme. He began to wonder if all the men in the town were just as intelligent as cows.

"But how do we get into the place? You've seen the patrols and security systems in place, how do we get past that?"

Suddenly Royce felt like a cow. He did not think that far. "That's a good question."

He placed his right hand up to his chin and thought hard. "Its true the place is fitted with security cameras. That can easily be hacked."

"Yes, that's right. I can hack into their surveillance system and cause a loop to fool the security teams back at the school." A bi-speckled boy with short black hair and chubby cheeks stood to his feet. Royce praised the man for being so brave, but he hoped his skill was not limited to games. "You do realize this is no game. Are you sure you can pull this off?"

"Of course I can. I hacked Area 51 and downloaded documents of extraterrestrial life. I also hacked into the pentagon and discovered that they are paying the terrorists to keep the companies busy with trade and war. I've even hacked into banks to give this club money to afford all this technology."

Royce froze on the spot. He did not expect a confession like that. If he was a copper, that would have been the statement of the century.

"Yeah... Very good. You'll be our computer hacker," Royce replied slowly with doubt layered over his tone. "Now all we need to do is take care of the females who patrol the grounds and the guards inside the hall."

"Leave that to me."

Royce looked across the room and saw a shady guy in sunglasses who looked overly cool of himself. He carried himself with a slight style and it seemed his left hand was dominant by the stick he was probing his teeth with.

Royce knew this man would be more trouble than he's worth, and he would have to show him who's in charge.

"And what's your idea?" Royce asked inquisitively. He had to give the man his chance and then step on him when he overstepped his mark.

"I will talk to the ladies, and I'm sure they will fall for my good looks and charm. They will follow me out so I can drug them with this!" The mysterious stranger pulled out a handkerchief doused in chloroform.

"Ahh...No! First, you will not get within two feet of those women. Second, you could kill someone with that drug and third, look at that guy foolishly trying to remove his name."

Everyone in the room did not understand what he was talking about until they looked at the screen and saw one hopeful man brave all the odds and rush into the chamber to find his name. His biggest mistake was not researching the area beforehand, and within seconds five strong girls pounced upon him.

"Do you think you'll manage with odds like that?" Royce interjected, while looking at the cool guy.

"Erm...well, I think," he rubbed his nose with the handkerchief and fell to the floor.

Royce allowed the silence to portray the absurdity of the situation before moving on to the names on the wall. Without knowing the exact location of their names, it would be hard to remove them quickly, even if they did break in successfully.

“Our first priority would be to memorise the location of our names, okay?”

Although Royce was speaking in Japanese, he was pleasantly surprised at how far he’d come. So far almost every word he said came out clearly and the words that failed to come out right were still understandable. He did not expect any glitches in this mission and he certainly did not want his name plastered on the Wall Of Shame.

But when he was caught inside the swimming pool spy room, Rina was more than happy to add his name to the list, although he was surprised she did not do it sooner.

He scanned the individual monitors, which showed different parts of the Wall, and could not make any sense of the Japanese writing. *How the hell can I find my own name in this mess?*

Embarrassed, he carried on the conversation and made a note to include his own problem within the discussion. “I know we have a lot to do, and I am counting on every man to do his best. But in the end, everyone must act professionally and understand that our livelihoods are at risk if we fail.”

“Well said!” one of the members shouted from the back of the crowd.

Now it was Royce’s turn to ask for help, slip it in the sentence without it being obvious, a smooth transition, so to speak.

“Our next mission is fairly easy. Each one of you will have your name on that wall, and we all know what will happen if we do nothing. Now, each club member will use these monitors and scan the wall and locate your name. Once you know where your name is located, you will mark it down on the map and memorise its location. We’ll then flash mob the place and each member will exchange its name for the fake one, do you understand?”

All the club members agreed and began researching the location of their names. Royce used that opportunity to get some help.

“Shota!” Royce called his name and pulled him over to the side for a quiet chat. “I need your assistance.”

“You can count on me, Royce, our livelihoods are in your hands. I’ve never felt so nervous. So, what do you want me to do?”

“I want you to compile a list of everyone in this class and double check their names with the locations on the map, make sure no one is left out. I will need you to search and locate my name because I can’t read Japanese. Do you think you can do that?”

Having the whole thing added to the sentence was one way to hide the embarrassment and make sure it was one block of orders. Thankfully it sounded professional and Shota happily obliged. Royce could finally see his plan coming together and he almost saw the moment he would stand up and smoke a cigar, quoting *I love it when a plan comes together*.

He loved it when a plan came together.

After hours of searching, the school day was coming to an end and Royce studied the monitors closely. As the boys made their way to the door to go home, he stood firm and issued orders. "Excuse me! Where do you think you're all going?"

The club members stared in dismay. "We're going home. Our school time has finished."

"Oh, no, its not! This is club activities. No!... This is a mission to save your livelihood. If you go home, who do you think will finish your work? You don't see secret agents packing up for the day and going home, do you? Look..." Royce pointed to the screen and the female guards still remained at their posts, protecting the chamber and all the names listed.

"Even when the school is closed, they still have a hoard of students operating through the night to keep an eye on the names. If they do that, what hope is there for us if we pack our bags and go home?"

Shota stood up, firm in his resolve. "He's got a point. We are men after all. Do you want to live the rest of your lives as virgins, unable to get a touch of breast?"

The manly group cheered their resilience and then stormed back to the monitors and began to look for their names. Even if this mission was to take all night, Royce had to find his name and remove it from the list. He could not allow his name to be listed, because if his author status was to be made public, then being listed in Japan's hall of shame would be disrespectful for his family and title. The odds just went up: *How could I be so stupid and get caught in the first place?*

It was midnight and mobile phones had steadily been ringing all night. Worried parents and siblings called in to discover why their brothers or sons had not come home. The men explained the situation and were given one hundred percent support from their guardians. The parents knew the risks and felt some level of hope that someone was working with them to clear their names. Being on the Wall of Shame was a one-way ticket to hell. No one should be written on it and Royce was surprised at how fast his name was added.

Chapter 21

The stakes were high and Royce knew there was no room for mistakes. If he had to clear his name, *this plan must succeed at all cost*. But one problem remained, how to disable the few women who guarded the place.

As it stood, Royce knew nothing about the women's capabilities. Sure he could use a tranquiliser gun and shoot them all to sleep, but as soon as they woke the place would be closed and they would have no hope to complete their mission. This plan had to be foolproof and silent.

"But how are we going to get in there?" Shota quizzed while studying the footage.

"I suppose we could bribe a girl to do this? Someone who updates the names on the hall wall?"

Mr. Cool Guy – who sat in the corner minding his own business during the whole operation – stood up and offered his advice. "That won't work. My sister helps in the hall of shame and she updates the names from time to time. She's taken an oath to uphold the pride of girls all over Japan and she will never falter to pressure, even from family members. My sister is more relaxed in her ways, so you can only imagine how strong the others will be."

Royce looked back towards the screen and scrutinised every detail. At the moment he watched with growing interest as the girls changed shifts. Even women needed a toilet break from time to time and when they were at the end of their shift, new people would take their place. Royce surmised all the girls belonged to a club.

His phone vibrated in his pocket and he flipped it open and answered.

Murmurs failed to catch Royce's attention and a familiar voice spoke clearly over the phone. "Good evening, sir. I trust everything is okay?"

It was Samuru, his butler.

"Samuru, you're still at the hotel?"

"Yes, your guest has arrived home and I took the liberty to feed and watch her until you return. It's late and she is worried about you."

Royce felt a level of warmth grow inside his heart for the person. She cared for his well-being despite the problem that was looming over her head.

"I am currently in the middle of an operation at the moment that requires my attention. Tell her to do whatever she wants, warn her about my room and you are free to go home. You might want to turn up a little early to prepare food as I don't think I will be returning home tonight."

"Is everything all right, sir?"

"Yes, nothing to worry about, just some school matters that need attending. It will take longer than I thought. Good night, Samuru." Royce hung up the phone.

*

The young men had been staring at the screen for hours and Royce had ordered several of the club members to create profiles on all the women who were guarding critical positions. He called them all over to the chalkboard and began.

"I don't want anyone to leave this room unless I give the word. The last thing we need is for one of you to get caught red handed. There is too much at stake."

Everyone nodded in agreement and Royce pinned the first picture on the board.

In total there were sixteen girls that alternated their shifts to keep the place secure. All were members of the 'Kento Club' and they possessed more strength than the average Japanese woman. They could pick up a man with one hand and cut him up with the other. These were formidable opponents and despite their cute appearance and radiant hair, they were deadly.

"I don't think we can win a direct confrontation with the girls," Shota pointed out after studying the pictures. Blood type, body mass, sexual preference; everything was listed on the dossier.

"We will not assault the girls. We don't stand a chance. These are like the hit men for drug dealers."

Royce rattled his thoughts and could only come up with one solution, but that required everyone to do their part and when the time was right, everything had to run like clockwork without mistakes.

*

"Men, I know you have all been up all night, but we must get this down to perfection." Royce stood outside in the warm sun before school started. The mock-up exercise resembled the hall of shame and it allowed the men to practice their moves

to perfection. Royce set a limit of two minutes before the window of opportunity closed permanently. It was a tall order and very risky, but their lives depended on it.

"Okay! Ready..." Royce activated the stopwatch and the horde of men rushed into the small clearing, jostled each other, fell over, kicked and screamed. It was a bloody mess.

He rang the whistle and glared at the group with great disappointment. "Is this how you all treat your lives? Do you want to be free from this madness?" Royce held up a gold name tag and everyone looked on in amazement.

"How the hell did you get that? Is that yours?"

"No. I had this made in the art department." Royce waved the gold-leafed nametag in the air and allowed everyone to examine it. "Yasahiro created this by using card and gold leaf paper. After cooking the whole thing for a few minutes, it looks just like a gold-plated tag. All we need to do is add a few bits of straw to make alterations to the name and voila, ready to be planted." Royce knew that despite the carefully planned move, the trick was to get it into the chamber without anyone knowing.

Staring in awe, the group of daredevils found inspiration and finally got their act together. Teams arranged themselves for the perfect deployment. Perhaps seeing the gold nametag in his hands finally confirmed this mission was real and there was hope for them. But first they had to exchange all the nametags in fewer than two minutes, a task that seemed possible now.

Rushing into the makeshift clearing, the trio of men placed their tags on the ground and rushed back to the exit. Royce found his place and completed his task within the allotted time. By the time the school opened, most of the students had already completed the missions.

Now all Royce had to do was find the perfect means to make the guards vanish, or dispose of them.

"So, how do you intend to deal with the guards?" Shota asked as he ushered the last member out of the door.

"I have a few ideas."

"Want to tell me?"

"Not at the moment. I need to collect the supplies first. Don't worry, you can trust me." Royce finished the conversation with a smile and made his way to collect breakfast from one of the local shops.

Chapter 22

In the early hours of the morning, the sun shone high in the sky and the phone rang too early for Rina's liking. It was from the school and one of the lookouts, which monitored the activity within the grounds, called about the sudden appearance of men.

Normally the male population of the school would arrive much later than the girls and this was a call for concern. The caller called up like a concerned overexcited critiquing and filled Rina's ear with so much rubbish, she almost hung up.

"Don't you know it's not abnormal for the boys to turn up ~~at~~ this early? They've probably got some kind of early morning club, you know, something to impress the girls. Why don't you calm down and keep an eye on them? It's probably nothing serious," Rina assured.

“Oh, but I think there is cause for concern. I’ve been watching the boys for some time and I have never seen this kind of behaviour before. It’s like they are up to something serious. I must admit, in my times at school, I recognise the expressions on all the boys’ faces when they are up to terrible deeds. I should not have to remind you that as the head of the student council, and entrusted to uphold the safety of all the female students, that it’s your job to investigate this strange act of-”

Rina moved her mobile away from her ear and attempted to flip the thing and end the dreary conversation. The complaining woman was the type who talked too much, spread gossip like a publicist and had a flare for the dramatic. Even a dropped sweet wrapper in the hallway was enough to spark a flurry of comments. No wonder the boys stayed well clear of her. They probably arrived at school early just to get in before she was on their case!

“Kyouko-San, I will be in school soon. Give me half an hour, then I can investigate this matter further.”

Reluctantly Rina heard a joyful agreement and she hung up her mobile before Kyouko had the chance to flood her with more useless dribble.

Rolling over to the other side of the bed, Rina remained motionless and enjoyed the warm sensation of the bed sheets layered over her naked body. With the strong desire to remain in bed, she fought the urge and stepped into the icy chill of the room.

She had to go to school.

She draped her dressing gown over her body and made her way to the shower to freshen up for the start of the day. To her knowledge and past experience, this day was going to be difficult.

*

Breakfast was a feast for her friend, Akina, who stayed the night and made things awkward. Rina was forced to sleep in her show room, which was cold and uncomfortable. But it was the price to pay to keep her secret deeds hidden from her friends. Now as they dined in the great hall, Rina watched her friend dive into the feast she had prepared.

As Akina scarfed down a whole muffin she had to ask, “How the hell do you keep your figure? If I ate like you, I would be so huge; I wouldn’t be able to fit through the doors.”

“I don’t know...” Akina stated as she grabbed hold of another hand full of Japanese exotic food. “I can eat as much as I like and I still look like this. See...”

She waved her huge boobs in the air and showed off her butt to the amazement of the butlers who were standing to attention like the Queen’s royal guard. Rina knew the butlers deadly game the night before and she grinned inside at the teasing atmosphere. *Oh how pleasing it must be to see but not touch.*

“School is about to start in half an hour, we better get ready.” Rina ignored her friend’s performance and headed to the door.

“Already? I haven’t even finished this soup. Would the cook be angry if we didn’t eat all the food?”

“Don’t worry about it, he doesn’t get paid to think, he gets paid to make food.” She opened the front door. “Are you coming?”

*

As the school chime sounded, Rina barely made it onto the school grounds. She had been thinking about what Kyouko said over the phone. Her observation about the boys starting school earlier than all the girls was strange. She overlooked the seriousness of it when she woke up this morning, but after she allowed the information to settle, she concluded that it was very bizarre indeed. In all the years she'd been enlisted in the school, nothing like this had ever happened before.

Something must be going on.

In a valiant attempt to find out what was going on, she called an emergency student council meeting.

"Now, I am sure you all know why you are here." Rina looked around the girl-dominated room and waited for one of them to give her the correct answer. When no one offered one, she lashed out. "The boys are up to something. This morning I got a call from one of our observers here in the school. She states that a large number of boys had been in the school earlier than any of the normal students. Now as we all know, the boys always arrive late and we are forever dealing with that issue. So I ask the question - Why did they arrive in school earlier than the rest of us?"

Rina placed her hands on her hips and looked into the crowd of stoned students.

"Perhaps we should ask them?" The room fell into an eerie silence as everyone stared at the small woman with green pigtails.

"You know what the boys are like, they will say anything to avert suspicion and I don't want them knowing what we know," Rina said as she strolled over to her small desk in the corner of the room. She pulled out a brown folder filled with diagrams and instructions for each member.

While she was in class for most of the morning, she used that time to devise the perfect mission for her group of worthy opponents. She vowed to smash the boys' act of indecency and knew they were up to no good.

"In front of you, you will find detailed instructions on what to do. Every member is to keep a close watch on the boys in their class. If you see anything out of the ordinary, you are to report it to me immediately. I know they are up to something, but I don't know what. That's where you come in."

Although it was a simple plan that required virtually no skill, Rina knew just how cunning and skilful the young men could be. There had been countless times she'd caught them taking pictures up girls skirts, whizzing through changing rooms and even climbing trees to spy through dorms. This had to stop and it was one of her campaign goals she had to uphold if she got into power.

She had a lot of responsibility.

Once she handed the final candidate her files, she explained the plan in detail and the meeting went on until the next class was due to start.

*

It was half way down the corridor that Rina decided to take a stroll to the school library. She read the notice board about new magazines coming into the school and she could not resist the urge to get her hands on the latest important work books, text books and everything else related to school. Two new novels by famous authors had been selected for the school and she wanted to read the rest of the love story series. But her main reason for visiting the library was to purchase the latest Manga comics and check up on the number of times her own Manga had been

borrowed compared to her opponents. So far she had taken the lead but that all changed when she stood in the quiet section of the library shouting, "I don't fucking believe it! He's beating me by two people. Seriously, these pupils have no sense of pride!"

Seconds later, she realised her blunder at shouting out in a quiet library and curled up behind the nearest desk and blended in with the others.

Rina looked up towards the gloomy bookshelf filled with black and grey professional bound editions and spotted the odd one out. Edged between two volumes, a light blue and pink periodical could be seen slightly hanging out, taunting her, teasing her. She could not resist the urge and grabbed it. It must have been an overwhelming sense of curiosity to cause her to leave all her personal belongings on the desk because when she finally touched that glossy magazine, she slid it elegantly out of its place.

To her surprised, it was a gay love story, very strong, very...Hentai, Porn. Her hands froze as she reached the centre page. Not because of the naked men sprawled over the pages, but because of the breathing she could hear over her left ear.

How could the school allow such material in the library? She thought with anger!

Suddenly a hot, honey-over sand voice sent electrifying sparks up her spine. "We learn something new everyday. I did not expect someone with your level of authority to be into that sort of stuff."

Rina's heart filled with dread. That accent! That smell of his clothes. Even though he spoke Japanese in a below average tone, there was no mistaking it, it was Royce!

She spun on the spot, dropped the magazine on the floor and clasped her hands around her mouth to hide the scream.

"No-no-no-no-no-no, this is not what you think!" She hesitated, holding her own as her left eye twitched with dreadful anticipation. "I-I-I-I-I-I found this book on the flo-oo-o-o-o-r and was just p-p-p-p-p-picking it up!"

"We learn something new everyday, don't we, R-r-r-r-r-r-r-ina!" Royce drawled, dragging out the syllables just so he could enjoy them more. "Just think what would happen if news about your fascination got out?"

Frozen on the spot, unable to speak or resist Royce's comments, she could only stare and watch as the terror unfolded. Royce walked over to her desk, casually examined all the books and magazines. He appeared even more surprised than before.

"You have quit the collection of anime DVD's, Manga pictures and...Hentai!"

Breathing heavily and with a million terrible scenarios flowing through her mind, Rina could almost fall to her knees and weep. But she was not the type of person to do that. She had to take control of the situation but knowing someone else had the upper hand made her feel more vulnerable than before.

Royce gently collected all her material, placed it into a plastic bag, and strolled over, as if his posh attitude could force the young woman into nonnegotiable agreement.

"Just think what would happen if everyone found out about your little secret Rina-San!" He deliberately called her by her first time, and she knew he was deliberately cementing their relationship to something more personal. Her nightmare began to take hold; she began to believe he was a sexual predator.

She now had a stalker.

There was nothing she could do to stop him.

He could enter her house at will and do anything he wanted.

The thought about him touching her large breasts, rubbing her stomach and venturing to her womanhood made her sweat with disgust. It all began to make sense: On the first day Royce arrived, he kept a close eye on her. She knew by the quick glances in the corner of her peripheral vision that he was watching her.

Then it was the incident with her underwear. He had been fondling her items. Now this...what devastating ideas did he have? Rina could do nothing but stand pigeon-towed and hide her virginity far more revealingly than if she erupted in a rage of fury. She was caught red handed, reading a perverted Hentai book, who would believe him?

That's right! She thought to herself.

She was all alone in the library, with nobody around, except the clerk, who was partly asleep at her desk. No one knew what had happened, no one will know. She now had the upper hand and she felt the blood rush to her brain, kick-starting the furnace that would melt away his iron fisted confidence.

"No one will believe you!" She folded her arms in defiance, looking away.

"Oh, you think so?" Royce said gamely.

"Yes. If you say a word about this, I'll make sure your life at this school is not worth living."

"It won't take much to spread the rumours."

"But you have no proof."

Royce sort of waved the bag of books around and winked with his left eye.

But that was not going to faze her. "I can easily deny all knowledge of those books...Really, Royce, when you jump into the lions den, you should expect a little bloody nose and not cower in the corner with mundane excuses like that."

Royce rolled his eyes, and handed the bag back over to her. He seemed more concerned about something else, not about her little secret. "I'm not here about your extracurricular activities."

"Then why did you come?"

"I want to know more about Yumi Kosaka."

Rina's defences immediately activated and she brought up more walls than a child would do when a stranger says hi. "What do you want with her?"

But before Royce had the chance to speak, she interjected again with a strong warning. "I'm warning you, if you do anything to harm that girl, I will kill you."

From the look in Royce's eyes, he appeared shocked at that remark and shuddered.

Strange, Rina thought. *I have not seen Royce shudder, even when he was caught red handed in the girl's changing room.*

Royce appeared to search the sky for an answer. "She asked me to deliver her scooter to her home yesterday, but when I knocked on her door no one answered. I could not leave her scooter out in the open like that so when I went to park it in a safe location, her family and home seemed odd."

From the initial comment, it appeared that Royce had pulled the answer straight from the sky. But she was not going to talk about personal affairs about her friends to just anyone, even this joker.

"She's a very good friend of mine and I am warning you. Stay away from her, or I'll be dealing with you personally." She made fists with her hands to demonstrate her resolve. With a cool wave of his hand, Royce pocketed his hands and casually strolled out of the library leaving the bagged up books on her table. Rina wondered what he would do with that information. Would he really spread rumours around school that she's an anime addict? Would he really tell everyone her secret?

But that was not at the forefront of her mind. She wanted to know why he asked about Yumi Kosaka? Why her of all people?

Chapter 23

Battling two conflicting tasks every step of the way, Royce had to baby-sit each one with value. He had to deal with the *Hall of Shame* issue, but the main issue that stood out above the rest was Yumi's issue with her family. He attempted to speak to Rina and gather information from her, but she refused to give any details and Royce was back to where he started. The young man was surprised to learn that she had an anime fetish, although he did understand that if you write manga, or anime, then you must have some interest in the genre. Then again, she didn't look like the type to go into hentai porn.

He guessed that his next course of action would be to see the principal at the school. However he shivered at the thought of her trying to take his virginity in the process. Perhaps it would not be a bad thing, she was one hell of a knock out and he could use the experience!

"Damn, what am I thinking?"

"Yes...what are you thinking?" A soft voice broke out from behind.

Drowsy from the workload last night, Royce casually turned and came face to face with the star of the show, or the star of his next Manga chapter, Tani Namiko, the girl he saved in the park. "Wow, this is a surprise."

"Really, you don't look surprised."

"It's a metaphor. Something I always say when confronted by unexpected events."

"I see." Tani brushed her left hand through her hair and removed the individual strands that had been hovering in front of her eyes. She smiled casually at Royce. "I've heard a lot of stories about you."

"Good things I hope?" Royce gave a stealthy smile. A cute girl was just in front of him and all he could think up was a horde of small talk that would not impress any American at a bar or night club.

"I've heard conflicting stories; some bad, some good."

"So why are you talking to me?"

Royce credited himself for inventing such a witty question. It would demonstrate how she thought of him and how far she would be willing to go.

"You saved my life in the park a few days ago. So, I would be happy to have you as a close friend." She stood pigeon-toed, cheeks slightly pink from embarrassment. Royce had no idea that saving her from a bunch of inbred dogs would warrant this kind of surrender.

He glanced around the corridor, could see no one and thought long about her statement. He did not have to think hard though; he had already made up his decision way before she even talked to him. She was a nice attractive girl, strong in her own appearance and contained a deep-rooted secret that he desperately wanted to know. She was an enigma.

"Have you eaten today?" she asked with a fidgety voice.

Royce looked into her lovely sky blue eyes and – for the moment – did not understand what she was talking about.

He guessed that his blank expression must have prompted the girl to continue regardless of his answer and she suddenly produced a bento box wrapped in a cloth.

“Here! I made this for you.”

It took a moment for Royce to register what just happened. In a scene acted out countless times in anime movies and series, that fateful moment when the protagonist is confronted with a girl holding a bento box came as a complete shock.

In all his life, Royce had never expected someone to hand over food that they spent all morning preparing. Royce raised a quivering hand and gently picked up the perfectly formed box as if it was a delicate baby. Thoughts raced through his mind about what wonderful food she prepared for him.

Flooded with excitement and panic, his overwhelming need to hug her passed as she continued. “I’m not much of a cook, but I had to show my thanks in a way that is traditional to us. You may be from a different country, but I want you to experience all the joys Japan has to offer.”

She sounded like a tour guide. How dreary. The moment drained away like water down a drain.

“I know all about Japan,” Royce said absent-mindedly.

“I don’t think so. Japan has a diverse culture and long history. I’ve studied it for years in my class and at home. You know, I can teach you back at my house if you like? There’s a history class that makes up part of your grade and I am sure with my help and private tuition, you’ll pass with flying colours,” she said confidently, waving her hand as if she was talking to a close friend.

She quickly placed her hands to her mouth to stop the words from pouring out. She had done several things that shocked even the likes of her: First she asked Royce if she could teach him history. Second she asked him back to her home and third she suggested they learn in her bedroom. This slip of the tongue sent Royce’s sex drive into overdrive.

Looking at the fine fabric on the box, he wondered what surprise he might find inside. *Would the word ‘Love’ be written over the food in sauce?*

Royce began to notice leering glances from female students who wondered past. Holding a bento wrapped in a white and pink fabric was admitting love far more effectively than if she had just written him a letter. *But surely she can’t be in love with me already?* Royce gestured her forward to the canteen and they shuffled past the crowd of students lining up to collect bread rolls and hot food.

The atmosphere in the canteen mainly smelled of mixed herbs, boiling of rice, aromas of meat, vegetables and cooking oil. Mixed together, this made Royce hungry and Tani sat happily opposite.

“Do you know what rumours say about me? I am not the best person to be around with right now.”

“I know, but I believe you are a good person. Once you settle in I believe everybody will accept you as one of their own.”

Royce looked down at the box and allowed her words to settle in.

“Why don’t you open your bento?”

Royce focused on the moment and tentatively moved his hands over to the small box and gradually peeled off the covering, as if he was gently removing clothes off a girl. Tani waited with wide eyes as he unfolded the last of the many wrappings she folded around the box. Once open, he peeled back the lid and a wash of spices flooded his senses.

He sighed with relief. No huge love signs. No embarrassing gimmicks, just a girl’s first attempt at cooking. A gesture Royce felt honoured to bare witness too.

With chopsticks firmly in his hands, he tucked in to the food and began eating with some level of care, not wolfing it down like an adolescent teenager.

Tani watched every mouthful and he assumed that she was waiting with high hopes for some sign from him on the quality of her food. He would do the same if he cooked for a girl. Then again, he did. Back at the hotel when he first discovered the lonely girl living in his home, he cooked for her and she seemed just as content.

Then his mission flashed before his eyes like neon lights in the inky darkness. He had to find out as much information about Tani as he possibly could and find a way to have his name removed from the Hall of Shame.

Obviously, Tani had not checked the Hall of Shame yet, and he decided to keep that information to himself. No point in worrying the poor girl over nothing, especially if the Secret Underwear Club was going to remove their names anyway. But Royce did not like simple plans. He wanted a backup plan, just in case something went wrong, which it normally does.

The young man continued with the small talk, knowing the green haired girl a little bit more. He did not harbour any romantic interest in her at the moment. He was still trying to settle in to a foreign country and falling in love would cause a lot of complications. Royce knew his main reason for visiting Japan was to study up on his competition, Rina Matsuyama. Once he found out all he could from her and wrote his future manga that would kill her products, he could return to America and continue his career, perhaps write proper novels and move on.

But Royce could not be rude about it. He wasn't the type of person to reject a girl's advances, but make them think long and hard, study their own feelings and discover the truth about what they really feel. Nine times out of ten, it would have been a passing interest that would have lasted a few months. In that time, his secret could be exposed and if the relationship did break down, that information could be used as a revenge attack; the Japanese have a somewhat un-subtle approach when it comes to revenge.

Royce rested his head on his hands and looked into the girl's deep blue eyes and almost lost himself. The only thing capable of bringing him back from her hypnotic gaze was the class announcement.

"Looks like class is about to start," Tani mused, looking at the crowd of gloomy students on their way to class. "It's a pity I'm not in your class."

"Why's that?" Royce asked inquisitively.

"Because I would like to see what type of person you are. There are a lot of perverts around this school lately. I often catch them trying to do undignified lewd things to me without my knowledge."

"Yes," Royce replied, he knew exactly what she was on about. "There's a mixed bunch of people in this school. But don't worry; you have done all right so far. I doubt anything will happen."

*

The rest of the lessons went ahead without a hitch. Royce caught the odd sporting glance from Rina, but he did not make an issue out of it. Yumi sat at her own table near the entrance of the classroom with her silver hair fluttering in the breeze, but she carried a burden that seemed to weigh heavily on her. Royce wondered what traumatic experience happened to her and what he could do to solve it. How could he not know her disturbing secret, even when she was living right under his nose? What a mess he was in.

As the class drew to a close, Royce packed his books into his bag and checked his cell phone for any messages. As usual, he got the daily password, and an extra message to see Shota after school. Royce felt the tiredness well up from within and knew he could not pull another all-nighter like before.

Suddenly a memory flashed in his mind, he was due to leave the school today...He had to travel to Tokyo to deliver his latest manuscript to the publishers.

Tiredness, fatigue, guilt, and secrets...everything hit him at once.

Everything.

Why does it have to happen to me?

Chapter 24

Like all good things, Royce had to learn when to put his foot down. Walking out of the classroom, he thanked his lucky stars that he packed his manuscript a few days in advance. His manuscript and disk, wrapped up in a sturdy envelope, suddenly became the top priority. But he still had time. He could talk to Shota and tell him he would be out of town for most of the night and the weekend. The *Hall of Shame* could wait for now and prying into Yumi Kosaka's life too early would only alienate the girl more.

This task could not have come at a better time. He could escape the pressures of the small community and venture into the city to see the difference in lifestyle. It was all research, mind you, and Royce was good at practical exploration.

Walking though the school grounds, Royce got the feeling that he was being watched. No matter which direction he looked, he could feel the piercing eyes of strangers looking at him.

But he saw nothing.

The weather looked gloomy and clouds hung low in the sky threatening to release rain upon the small town.

He took the standard route to the club and followed all the rules to make sure no one followed: Through the path, under the trees, down the river, through the river and under the mud tunnel that would scare even the strongest of women. Then when he reached that lonely shack in the middle of the forest, he knocked on the door and said his password.

"You're expected," said the same individual who always guarded the door. Royce did not know what good the young man was, if a bunch of women did turn up, a simple flash of their boobs would be enough to coke the man out of his defensive hole. Sometimes he thought the entire club was a joke.

The club looked the same as it always did, moderate, but not as hygienic and fresh as his own home. But then again, what did Royce expect? The place was overrun by overexcited young men and without a woman's touch. But the tardiness of the place was not the issue.

"We have gathered all the information you asked for and have timed our invasion of the *Hall of Shame* to within two minutes."

"Good, good," Royce confirmed, looking over his notes and deciding his next move.

"So, are we going to strike tonight?" Shota asked.

"No, we will do it next week on Monday."

Everyone erupted in anger. "What? We trained heavily for this night; we anticipated our names being removed today."

Royce looked over all the nametags and shook his head in disappointment. Quon-san might have done a good job in creating the nametags, but the names everyone glued to the tag did not match the authentic font used in the *Hall of Shame*.

"These name tags don't even match the theme in the *Hall*. How do you expect to get away with this if the name tags don't look like their neighbour?"

The class huddled around Royce and they examined the tags. They may look professionally done, which caused a moment of confusion. "I don't understand," cried one student. "They look great!"

"Look," Royce walked over to the banks of computer monitors and enhanced an image of the nametags. "See how the symbols are formed? You have to give the names a girly touch...if the tags don't match the theme, how do you expect to get away with this?"

Royce demonstrated this fact by pressing a modified tag with the ones on the screen and the style was obvious, even to an idiot. Even the girls took the time to create smiley faces and dog symbols to spice up the worst names. Royce's name had nothing on the tag except his name, but in his own opinion, his own tag needed improvement and that's exactly what he would do when he returned from Tokyo.

"Unfortunately, I have business to attend to in Tokyo, so I will be away for the weekend."

Suddenly everyone sprang to life.

"Tokyo? Why are you going there?" Shota asked.

"I have family matters to attend to. Just improve the nametags and when I get back, we can begin the mission."

"What happens if something goes wrong?"

Royce banged his fist on the computer table. "You lot have been doing fine without me for years. It was your fault that I ended up in the mess in the first place. So I don't care how you do it, just work it out amongst yourselves."

Royce left the shack and the meeting was over.

*

"Sir, will you be absent for the entire weekend?" Samuru asked as he picked up the used glasses from the hallway's table and also moved Yumi's school uniform to the laundry room.

"Yes, I have to hand in my manuscript to the publishers. I find this as a good opportunity to learn about anime construction. I hope they are not a bunch of perverts as I was led to believe."

"I'm sure they will not disappoint you, sir."

"Yeah...What an adventure it's been. I never expected a small Japanese town like this to be so audacious. I think it is time to venture into the big city and see how different life there really is."

"You're going into Tokyo?" said a female's voice. Royce looked up at the top of the stairs, tracked the handrail to the silver haired guest standing in her long silk dress and tight cardigan. She looked refreshed and at peace, like a new woman.

"Yes... Kosaka-san," Royce replied with a slight pause in his answer. "I've got some business to attend to, so I'll be away for the weekend. Don't worry; Samuru will take care of you. Although you are sixteen, I'm sure you can look after yourself."

"Can I come with you?" She walked over to the stairs and began descending. "I've never been to the city before. I would like to visit it."

Damn!!! Royce cursed himself. Not only did he not want company, but also he could not risk Yumi learning his secret.

"I won't be a bother, although, I won't be able to afford my ticket or place to stay."

The rejection column in his mind was filling up fast, although money was no obstacle and he did not want to hold that against the girl.

"I've just been in this town all my life. I've never adventured out and my stepfather..." She paused, closing herself from the truth.

"Don't stop now, if I'm to take you I need to know your condition and why you've never been to the city. You can tell me that much, can't you?"

She nodded and offered what little information she could, adding to an already grim childhood Royce thought she had. "My stepfather would not allow me out of the house on weekends, or holidays. He would demand I stay and keep him company and supply him with beer and food. He depended on me, and... and..." She hesitated, tears forming in her eyes. "I can't... I don't want to remember the terrible things he did to me!"

Clutching Royce as tight as she could, the young man could do nothing but comfort her. He knew it was cruel to open old wounds, but a wound only covers the damage done inside. If he could not peek inside and see the damage, he could not fix the problem and help the wound heal properly.

Now he had some insight into her plight and armed with that knowledge, Royce knew that he had to show this girl what a city could really be like.

But doubt filled his mind. Not only did he have to protect a delicate flower, but also he'd never been to Tokyo before and he had little, if any, information about the good spots to visit. This was going to be a long and once in a lifetime experience he would never forget.

"Samuru, I'm going to take Kosaka-san with me to Tokyo. I think you should come with us and keep an eye on her while I'm away on business."

"Very good, sir, I will begin packing items right away."

Royce escorted the young woman into the dining room, where he decided to lay down a few ground rules. After all, he was carrying his important manuscript and he did not want his secret falling into the wrong hands. Then again, Royce knew he could trust the girl with his secret, but more importantly, he wanted her to forget her past and move on.

Chapter 25

Akina Oda had never felt this level of humiliation before. For two days, she had to endure the torment of being the biggest Anime and Hentai lover out there. But she was not the type of person to involve herself with that type of nonsense.

How the offending material came to be in her bag was a complete mystery and as she sat on her bed at home, she slowly went through all periodicals in order.

The first glossy magazine she held was called *Princess YuYu's Colourful BomBom*. It was a pink issue with a cheerful princess who possessed some magical powers. Written on the front was the issue number and words; *No.1 bestseller*.

She had never heard of this publication before and despite her overwhelming anger at its appearance, she could not help but flip open the first page and see what type of reputation had been bestowed upon her.

The first page exploded in her face with an over-cheerful princess who had been locked away inside a castle for most of her life. Suddenly she broke herself free to roam the world. Given magical powers to do good, the cute heroin posed erotically on the pages and explored the land with a cute dog-shaped creature that morphed into a dragon. The evil gambler, who moved from one town to another, stealing lives and gambling them away for immortality, confronted her on occasion and tried to steal her life.

But before she knew what she was reading, to her horror, she had already read half the manga and was completely hooked. Realizing her mistake, she tossed the magazine to the floor and glanced down at the bed with blurred vision.

She found herself crying and with a flurry of indecent texts beeping continually on her phone, she saw no way out of her devastating predicament.

The second periodical showed – anyone who bought the magazine – how to create Manga characters and she quickly flipped through those pages before she tossed that to the floor as well. The last item on her bed quickly found its way out of her hands!

Her bedroom door sprang open and to her horror, her tall elegant blond-haired mother entered the room.

“Honey, you have not come down for your meal.”

Akina stared with wide-eyes as her mother gazed directly at her without noticing the manga magazines sprawled over the floor.

Holding her breath, she projected her thoughts, demanding her mother not to look at the floor. But after a few moments of silence, she glanced down.

Few seconds later, her mother walked out of her room and closed the door. Silence!

Silence was the biggest killer and Akina did not know what to make of her mother’s sudden discovery. But all doubt was cast aside as she looked closely at the pink themed magazine. A small white sheet of paper, no bigger than an A5 card, was partly showing out of the pages. On it, written in English was a note to Royce Hampton.

Alarm bells rang in her head and her mind built up pressure like a steam boiler on overdrive. She only knew him for a short time, but from what she had seen, he was just as perverted and devious as any male teenager. She was sure he had something to do with this and payback was called for.

She reached down to the note hanging partly out of the pink periodical and studied the writing on it.

Managed to get you an exclusive copy of this Manga, I got some strange looks when buying it. I'll be waiting in Tokyo for the manuscript, hope to see you then!

Akina looked at the date and realized he would be leaving for Tokyo tomorrow. She had been there many times in the past to visit her parents; she remembered those days well. Her father would spend weeks at a time working and her mother would commute, with her, on random days just to surprise him at his hotel. Once in the city they would explore, see the sights and as she grew older, she travelled to meet her friends she gathered over the years. It was a simple journey to Tokyo and she wondered if it would be possible to confront the scandalous individual and beat a confession out of him.

She carried an assortment of weapons that she always kept by her side. Mostly knives and the odd gun from time to time. School only permitted these items when on duty. The Principal allowed her to carry a katana to protect all the girls. Even that weapon was kept on school grounds and when the principal introduced the new clothing to her club, it was obvious in what she was to be.

The uniform was like a symbol, a status to the person wearing it, just like superman wore his blue and red cape. She wore her uniform with pride, but now, the uniform hindered the aftermath of humiliation that was bestowed upon her. How could she wear such a thing after being exposed like that?

But knowing Royce had something to do with her misfortune helped to some degree. She was no longer left in limbo and the only question remained was how did they plant the incriminating evidence on her?

She collapsed on her bed and looked at her clean coloured ceiling; mentally forcing her mind back to the incident and reliving the whole ordeal. It was painful and it continued to bring a tear to her eye, but the evidence of tampering was there, she just had to think about the moments leading up to the fall.

She remembered someone bumping into her...a distraction, someone pushing her over...then...Royce.

She remembered the shady character holding a bag full of what looked like papers. But perhaps it was not papers.

Then the answer hit her. She remembered the impact by two other boys. She remembered her outburst and then a slight tug on her bag. She dismissed it as the crowd of students racing to the canteen, but now she was not sure. It could have been the moment Royce slipped the offending material into her bag.

But this only brought up more questions. *How did he get his hands on stuff like that? And what was he doing with them in the first place?*

The question to the second answer came shortly after she took a big breath. The first question turned out to be the most challenging, and the most enjoyable to answer.

She grinned under the glow of the round-tubed florescent light that was buzzing on the ceiling. She could not be sure, but perhaps Royce was a huge anime fan as well as a pervert. This would change the whole course of the attention back to him and bestow a new level of curiosity on western interest in anime. For now, it was lead to believe that all anime was related to Japan and anyone interested in it would be Japanese. This new discovery would mean that Royce and his country were no better than the sweaty four eyed freaks who sit in front of their computer playing with themselves over Hentai.

She shot up from her multicoloured bed and almost puked on the floor. That vivid image burned through her mind and she could do nothing to remove the thought. She cursed herself for having such a vivid imagination and it wasn't until a knock at the door that she was brought back to reality.

"Sis, are you coming down for lunch?"

"Yeah," she replied, stifling the vomit that threatened to shoot out.

"Are you okay sis? Mother looks worried."

"Mum will be okay. She just needs to learn to knock on the door before entering her daughter's room."

"Eh~? Why does mum have to knock before entering your room?" said the young child.

"You are too young to understand. Just go and have your lunch, I will be down shortly."

"Eehhh~? Why, are you doing something you shouldn't?"

Akina's cheeks shot bright red and she could not believe her own twelve-year-old sister would ask such a question.

"Are you sure you're not masturbating in your room and your mum caught you, Ehehe?" continued the little exodontist.

Akina cheeks grew so red; it would be hard to distinguish it from the red borders of the mirror. She had her legs crossed on the bed and the scented smell of hot spicy food caused her stomach to rumble.

Suddenly the door sprang open and a springy young girl jumped into the room, bounced off the floor and landed directly on top of her. "Sis...I never knew you did that kind of thing. Unyaa!"

"W-W-W-What...I-I-I-I Don't! You are as evil as the devil himself."

The young bubbly girl looked around the room for any incriminating evidence, saw the pink magazine, leapt from the bed and held the edition in her hands, as if it was gold. "Waah! Do you know how much this edition is worth? How did you get this? Are you an anime fan? Are you?"

The questions continued to roll off her tongue like waves licking the shore of a beach, too excited for her own good. Akina crossed her legs, scooped up the two remaining magazines and plopped them in the bin. "These are evidence I obtained from a troublesome young man who tried to terrorise young girls at the school. You know what my responsibilities are. Occasionally, I may have to take evidence home in order to determine the correct punishment!"

"So, who do you need to punish?" The little girl asked, shifting through the pages, eyes widening at every page.

"Some stupid boy called Royce. He's from England you know, the rudest, harshest place on Earth. God, their weather changes faster than I can change my underwear."

"That's funny."

"I never said it was funny, just bizarre. Someone has to control these foreigners."

"You go girl!" She cheered as Akina left her room and headed down to the living room.

*

The silence was dull, only the clicking of chopsticks and the slurping of noodles. Akina could not read her mother, and she *had* seen the offending material on the floor. Could it be possible that she's ashamed of her daughter? Ashamed at what she has become?

Impossible, she thought to herself. *I've done nothing wrong; it was that man who placed the material into my bag. It was him who set me up and he must pay for what he did.*

Akina continued to sit at the table and dream up plans to exact her revenge.

She knew this much: Royce was heading to Tokyo later and she knew the city from all the times she went there as a little girl. Perhaps she could ask a few of her friends to corner him, confess his guilt and she could have the whole lot on video as proof.

Yes, she thought to herself, *that sounds the like perfect plan.*

After finishing her meal, she excused herself, went to her room, kicked her sister out and tucked in to her phone. "Rina! I have something to tell you..."

Chapter 26

Naka did not have a train station and the only way to get to Tokyo was to travel by bus through the farmland to the neighbouring town. Even then that town was not much to look at and when Royce stood on the platform with his companion, he wondered if he was doing the right thing.

The shy timid girl, Yumi Kosaka, belonged to the country and she did not fit the atmosphere of a city.

The bright blue moon was high in the sky and Royce could see the silhouettes of several people on the other side of the platform loitering around. They were teenagers, that much was certain; up to no good and probably bored. If they made themselves noticeable then the deviant group might show Yumi some unwanted attention.

"Sir, we should be careful," Samuru began, spotting the two lowlifes throwing empty bottles at each other.

"I know, Samuru-kun, do you know much about this town?"

"Not much, sir. Just that students from this town commute to Naka on foot from time to time to cause trouble. They live in this town; the lowlife central to the whole area."

"How did this place get so bad?"

"Some believe it was the *Hall of Shame*. Young lads who could not get into relationships during school had no place in our town and moved to this dark forgotten place. If they saw Kosaka-san, they would certainly cause trouble."

Royce looked towards the young woman who wrapped herself in a hooded sweatshirt and trousers. She knew how to dress for this occasion.

"Hey..." spoke a clacked voice from the other side of the platform. "...you three..."

Royce chose to ignore them.

It did not work. "Yeah...we're talking to you," one of the lowlifes shouted. "Give us your money or anything of value. NOW!"

That threat sounded empty as they continued to stare at each other across the multi lined tracks. The bells began to sound and the whole incident looked rather embarrassing when a high-speed train suddenly shot out from nowhere and split the two parties up.

Once the doors sprang open, groups of people disembarked and Royce wasted no time in ushering his guest and Samuru into the carriage. Looking through the window, the two louts carried on lifting chairs and throwing them across the platform.

Royce thought how terrible this *Hall of Shame* must be. It's power to strip a man of all hope and pride. It's ability to create weaklings from strong-minded people. Those people could have been productive members of society if they experienced first time love and hope. Now they were torn between love and desperation; unable to feel the warmth of a loving woman: unable to marry and have children in which to continue their legacy. They were lost souls, travelling towards the darkness, unable to escape.

Royce watched solemnly as the carriage sped up and the dimly lit platform was left in the dust. Now he began his journey, the journey to Tokyo.

The trip into Tokyo took several hours and Yumi Kosaka slept all the way.

When the train station came into view, he gently woke her up and her eyes instantly glued to the scene outside the window, examining everything.

Rolling into the train station, the announcement boomed through the carriage and they both got up and went to the nearest exit. Upon entering the platform, people bustled in all directions, completely unaware of Royce's existence. It was a step in a different dimension from when he walked through the previous town.

With some sort of map to guide them in his mind, Royce began the search for a taxi.

Walking through the station, Yumi Kosaka examined all that was on offer. Royce was sure that if she was alone, she would visit every shop and bring home lorry loads of goods that were not useful or rubbish.

The cabs were lined up outside the train station like links in a chain. People waited in an organised line and when it was their turn, the three were bundled into a cab and the taxi raced off to the hotel.

Royce remained silent during the duration of the journey. Sitting next to him just, inches away, a cute innocent girl relied on him for support and he knew no one knew where she was, or what she was doing. If he wanted to, he could do anything he wanted and probably get a way with it. But Royce was not that type of man to rape an innocent girl.

But he would take the opportunity if she gave him one, all it would take would be a gentle kiss, touch of his groin or even a sexual stare to get him going and he would walk through her gates and show her the path to womanhood willingly. But she was too much of a gentle flower to pluck and he hoped she would control her desires and enjoy the journey. Again, even the journey might cause her feelings to blossom further. He knew something terrible happened in her past and he could not abuse that trust.

The taxi pulled up at one of the more popular hotels in Tokyo and they walked inside with Samuru holding most of the bags. Royce was only interested in staying a few nights, but being a woman, Yumi took her entire clothing collection. It wasn't much, but God only knows what she would take home. Again, Royce encouraged her to go shopping. The clothes she had were not perfect and old. They were too tight and unhealthy for her body. He gave her a wad of cash to look after and her eyes nearly fell out of their sockets.

"Your family must be rich."

"My family has nothing to do with it," Royce said indifferently as he opened the door to her room.

"Then how do you make all this money? I have not seen you work and you are only a student."

"I do work, but only behind the scenes."

"And what do you do?"

"It's a secret."

"So you will not tell me?"

"Is this small talk?" Royce said, trying to change the subject.

"I have no interest in you...that way." Yumi blushed as her body clearly explained the situation.

"Yeah, right. You're a good liar."

"I am not lying."

"Then would you like to visit my room?"

"I don't think that's a good idea."

"And why is that?"

"Because I am a lonely girl in this big hotel. It will take very little for you to jump on me."

"Assuming I want to jump on you."

"Do you?"

"Do I what?"

"Jump on me?"

"It depends on what we're doing."

"Playing games."

"What type of games?" Royce asked tentatively. His lips were ever so close to hers, her head tilted to kissing position, one jolt and they would be linked by instant contact.

"You are very close to me." She quivered.

"You are very close to me!"

"Why am I like this?" The girl asked, shaking at the knees. Royce could feel her body shaking through his clothes.

"You are touching me as well."

"I can't help it, my legs are tired," explained the girl.

"Then do you want to go into your room?"

"Will you come with me?"

"But you wanted me to go away a moment ago."

"Yes, I do."

"So which is it?" Royce could not distinguish reality from fiction. He came so close to the girl's lips, her breathing matched his and they inadvertently breathed each other's air. Royce felt her moist particles enter his lungs, popping in his chest, filling his body with her essence. The pull was exceedingly strong, but he could not take advantage or use the girl this way. He needed a reality check. Just one jolt and lips would be locked. He took her to Tokyo to have fun, not lose their virginity.

He placed a compassionate hand to her cheeks, massaged her soft white skin and he walked in harmony into her room.

To any outsider, this act of compassion and contact would clearly show the two were ready for intimate actions. But that's not what Royce had in mind; he used his charm and manly skill to place her into the room and he strolled back towards the door, fighting the unrelenting urge to grab and take her right there on the spot.

With his task firmly in his mind, he made his excuses and left the girl to settle in her room. Once he entered his room, he dropped himself on the nearest chair, felt an unrelenting headache and had no idea how to deal with the incident that nearly gave him a girlfriend with someone from a different country. He could not afford any ties with Japan; she was still a stranger to him.

The room was dark, it smelled fresh and clean. He was now alone and he could do nothing but wait until Saturday.

*

The one thing Royce hated the most in the morning was a screaming alarm clock. The journey to Tokyo took two hours on train and they did not get to the hotel until half past three in the morning. Perhaps tiredness is what caused them to get so close.

Royce could not shake the close moment from yesterday and he hoped that she was fit enough to hold back her desires. Royce still had a lot to learn about her. But he could not get the image of her cute, soft lips away from his mind. It was so inviting he had no idea where his resistance came from. It was the most perfect set-up for a kiss he'd ever seen. Her soft white skin, silvery blue hair, warm gentle eyes and picture perfect lips throbbing to be kissed; even her mouth looked full to bursting with juice inching to invade a new body and implant it's seed of love.

Something must have shoved a white hot sowing needle up his ass because it would take something deadly to pry him away from that temptation. Thankful for the moment, it would be a memory he would cherish forever, he now must continue with his mission to drop off his manuscript with the publishers.

Royce looked over the maps and could not work out for the life of him where to go. Listed in poor English, he was to follow directions to the bus stop and take several buses to the publishing building.

Great, Royce thought to himself. *I can just see myself getting completely lost now.*

So, to take his mind of the problem he walked over to his front door and attempted to see if Yumi was okay.

But the moment he opened his door, she was already standing there.

"H-Hi!" She quivered, pigeon-towed with her hands clasped together.

"I'm glad you are up. I have something to tell you." Royce allowed his thoughts to race ahead before the obvious question hit him like an avalanche. "Why are you waiting outside my door?"

"U-Um, I wanted to talk to you."

"Me...Why?"

"Umm, about last night. I...I," she stuttered, under stress, Royce could tell by the way she struggled to speak and her body shivered with conflicting interests. "I...I know you have been very kind to me. I don't know how to repay your kindness but to offer myself to you."

She unzipped her blouse and Royce could see her soft tender breasts neatly tucked behind her pink tight bra. He forgot what he was doing for a moment and could not allow this girl to commit acts of this magnitude. *Does she even like me? Am I forcing her to do this?*

Royce knew that honest men would not take advantage of a young girl like this. He'd seen this scenario in the movies many times before. He gently placed his hands over her hands, prevented her from undressing and said, "You don't owe me anything. It will be wrong for me to take advantage of you like this. I don't want to do this with you..." Royce caught himself cold, how could he blab out a sentence like that, it was almost telling the girl she was ugly and he would never touch her. He had to correct his error.

"No, I mean, I would do you, Love to do things to you..." His corrective attempt suddenly spiralled downhill into an avalanche of words that depicted him a desperate pervert. He had to think properly, he was an author for God's sake.

He took a few deep breaths before he made a mess of things. "Look... I know you are lovely and beautiful. If destiny has it, I will gladly fall into your arms and be with you forever. But I can't take advantage of you. You had a very bad childhood and you have a deep-rooted secret that makes you vulnerable. I want to protect you until you are strong enough to know what you want."

"I don't know what I want," she said timidly, looking down at the carpet and examining the clean hallway. "I don't know why you are so kind to me. Why are you doing this to me? No one has ever done this for me."

"Don't worry about that, when the time comes I will ask you for help."

Royce suddenly realised something. In all this time, Yumi had been walking around aimlessly without a goal, or a purpose. Her situation at home might have been life changing, but without a purpose or goal, she was just a single woman with no path. Now, by saying those few simple words, Royce had created a road for her to follow, a feeling of need. This gave her the foundation to stand on her own two feet and he immediately felt a strong will spark to life. He stepped back, marvelling at the invention he just created. Colour went back into her cheeks and her body was no longer droopy. She had life.

"I'm glad I opened your mind."

She smiled the smile of angels.

"You want my help?" she said, holding on to those words with utmost admiration.

"Yes. Not right now, but I can't let an innocent person suffer. And there will come a time in which I will need your help." Royce acted all serious, boosting her resolve. "Tell me Yumi, will you be there for me?"

"Y-Yes..."

Royce felt like he was some desperate pimp demanding something from the girl, but if it gave her hope, he could live with it. In the end, it was nothing major. He was not asking her to sacrifice herself, and there might come a time he could use her help in defending his title, even escaping the village if things went wrong. In the end, he was happy Yumi was happy.

"Go on, take Samuru with you and enjoy your shopping experience. I have work to do, and it's not going to wait." Royce smiled and she responded accordingly. Now all that was left was the trip to the publishing office.

Chapter 27

It was a rare for Rina Matsuyama to take the train to Tokyo, but what Royce was doing demanded her attention. She sat at the train station and stared at the two rowdy individuals on the other side of the platform.

"Do you think they will come over here and cause trouble?" Rina began, talking to her friend.

"They better, I'm waiting to kill someone," Akina mused staring at the two men.

"Look," Rina pointed discreetly. "Looks like your wish will come true."

Knowing the two men could not resist the attractiveness of two lone women, they watched tentatively as they crossed the tracks and closed the gap. Rina wished for a train to come speeding past and perhaps rid the world of some lowlife scum. But as they came closer, fate was not on her side.

"Hello sexy ladies!"

Rina sighed and made a rude noise with her throat. "Looks like the clowns are in town!"

"Who are you calling clowns lady?" The man argued, slurring his words in an alcohol infused fit. "I will teach you the proper way to talk to men!"

Akina failed to contain her outburst of laughter. She could not resist the urge to insult some more. Standing to their feet Akina insulted more. "Man, you're no more than the shit at the bottom of my shoe!"

The two men jerked back in shock, "Did she call us shit?" one of them asked.

"I believe she did," the other boy mused, smiling wickedly.

"Then I guess we'll have to show you what shit tastes and feels like inside your body."

The first man began to unzip his trousers. Rina watched and the second individual walked behind and grabbed her by the head. Forcing her to her knees, Rina's silky skirt became dirty by the geese on the floor and she was forced to watch as the first man opened the pit to gut wrenching hell.

Finally Akina let loose with a flurry of kicks and punches. Her first direct punch landed directly in the first man's family jewels, disabling him instantly. He cowered on the floor like a muted dog. The second man, who had filthy hands firmly placed on Rina's shoulders went flying through the air and landed on a hardback chair.

"You took your time," Rina replied in anger.

"Relax Rina-san, he only touched your head."

"That's one touch too many!" she replied with a squinted look.

"Looks like the trash was not much of a challenge at all." Akina mused. "I took all my anger out on them and it's didn't even satisfy me. Perhaps if I kill them, I'll feel much better!"

Both men shook in terror and used what little strength they had to flee the scene.

"Perhaps you should save some of that for Royce. He has a lot of explaining to do," said Rina, remembering the conversation at one in the morning.

*

01:00am

"Why do boys always send me love letters?" Rina laminated to herself as she threw another standard love letter in the bin. With still 398 letters to shift through, each one said the same thing over and over again.

My angel Rina I am completely in love with you. Every time I watch you on the school hall, I can't help but be mesmerised by your charm and beauty. I am desperate to know you better and would love to be your boyfriend. I will be at the school park beside the fountain at noon, I hope we can join together and be together forever.

"Yuck!" She exclaimed, crunching up another letter and throwing it into the bin. The rest were no better than the first and she had yet to find a letter that would knock her socks off.

She was pleasantly surprised when there was knock at the door and she happily trotted over and looked through the intercom. No boys had her address and the only people she trusted were her friends. She always had an open door policy and they could visit whenever they wanted. This was the first time someone actually visited her home.

"Ah, Akina, come in." She opened the door and a frustrated Akina stormed in waving her hands like clothing in the wind.

"Can you believe it? That devil of a man, that scheming little shit."

Rina took a moment to calm the raging tiger, but all the patting and calming could not control the boiling caldron that was inside her.

"Calm down...what the hell's wrong with you?"

"I don't believe it. I was set-up, set-up, I'm telling you!"

"I know this already. But how do you explain the Manga in your bag? You do know how bad those things are?"

"It was Royce!" She handed over a card with the note written on it.

"His publisher sent him all the magazines and he'd forgotten to take this letter out."

Rina took the letter from her friend, held the card in her hands and analysed the poor English written on it. Everything slowly began to fall into place and she began to formulate a plan.

"It says his meeting is tomorrow at a publishing house."

"Yes. He must be some kind of writer or something."

"I've never seen any of his work, and why in Japan? I thought England had hundreds of publishers. Why here?" Rina placed the card down on the table and ordered a drink from one of the maids who were waiting patiently in the corner of the room.

"Perhaps he's writing something in Japan? Something perverted!"

Rina suddenly had an idea. "Perhaps he's writing a Manga!"

"Manga! You can't be serious? Why would the Japanese want a shitty Manga from an English person who knows nothing about it?"

"Beats me, But it seems he's very close to the publisher. Perhaps he'd had something published already. An internet search should bring up all the details."

Being an author for Manga herself, this sparked her interest. What were the odds of a Manga writer being in the same school as her? What type of stuff has he written and why did he come to Japan? Finally Rina could have something to wave over him and naturalize his hold over her. But more importantly, she was too curious to let this go.

"Found nothing under his name," Rina replied as she entered his name into every major search engine around the world. "Perhaps he's using a pen name? It would make sense."

"You know a lot about this stuff."

Rina panicked, she was acting way too keen and knew too much. She could not allow her close friend to find out her closely guarded secret. Let alone an entire wing of her home dedicated to her deeply loved Manga.

"Ahh, you know, I have to check up on all the boys and class problems. You know, once you done it a hundred times, you become a pro." Rina laughed lightly as she felt pride at her own ability to improvise at such a short notice.

Still, after all the searching, she could not find anything that might indicate Royce was a writer.

"Look at this letter. It has some details on the postal address as well as the instructions on getting there. Perhaps we should visit this place for ourselves," Akina explained as she picked up the card from the bin.

"It's all the way in Tokyo."

"Do you have anything better to do?"

*

Tokyo

It was morning in Tokyo, clear skies, warm steady breeze and people milling around travelling too and from work with streets bustling with vehicles of all makes and models.

With only a few hours sleep, the two girls made their way to the publishing house but Akina had other ideas.

"I have to tell you something."

"Go on."

"I know Royce framed me for the incident at school and I have a plan to clear my name."

"And how do you do that?"

"I have made arrangements to meet a old friend of mine."

"Old friend?" Rina asked inquisitively. I did not know you had friends in Tokyo."

"I made friends while my parents travelled to this city. Being alone at home, I made friends with the local children. Some of them quite attractive and fit."

"So, did you become close to anyone?"

"Excuse me!" Akina exclaimed, staring at Rina who stopped in her tracks.

"I may have gone out with a few of them before." Akina confessed, rosy cheeks.

"I knew it. All those times you were wearing thongs and sexy undergarments. You are not a virgin...are you?"

Akina smiled, that secretive smile, like the cat that just munched on a canary and enjoyed every inch of it!

"Tell me, what's it like?"

"What's what like?"

"You know...to have a man inside you?"

"Rina, how could you ask a girl things like that?"

"Oh please tell! You know how curious I am. I really want to know!"

"Perhaps I could introduce you to a few of my friends. They know how to satisfy a woman's needs!"

"You are very bold today Akina-san!"

"I just want to get my mind over that devilish man. The one who framed me for something so evil...making me look like an anime lover. How low can someone be?"

Rina agreed to change course and visit her friends although, she felt slightly uneasy at meeting the city boys. She'd never been to a city school and she had no idea how these lads would behave and in her own way. She had a feeling that she might regret that choice.

Chapter 28

The time it took to travel most of the way to the publishing house took two hours or less, if you followed the complicated transport routes and constant traffic jams that plagued the city. Royce was confident that if he walked, he would have arrived at the building far sooner than he estimated. But he did not want to get lost, so he plodded along like a man singing in the rain.

He packed a few things into his backpack and stashed a wad of money into his left pocket; Nothing worth nicking, just enough to pay for some drinks and food if he could find a place that served edible English food. But this was Tokyo, of course they had something and walking past an American fast food chain put all his worries to rest.

After a few minutes of walking through the commercial area of the city he slowly worked his way to the high-rise building that he assumed was rented out to different independent companies. Air conditioning units were plastered all over the outside and the building looked like it had not been cleaned in years. With all that money his magazine had produced, he thought that the company would be in some

crystal palace with millions of dollars in the bank. He suddenly found himself with a new question, but first he still had to know which floor he was supposed to visit.

The note was as vague as one could get; building name, number and some digits on the end. Looking for the right floor was like playing battleship with a kid. But it only required some extensive research on the Internet to find out where he needed to go.

The entrance to the building was metallic and Spartan in design. Not much of an impression, but the only two things in the small entrance hall were a bank of lifts and a staircase that doubled as an emergency exit.

He waited for the doors to open and slipped inside the lift and faced the controls. The numbers were all written in normal characters and Royce pressed the button for the 7th floor.

The lift vibrated up as the old rust driven motors pulled his small room to the desired floor. With a classic bell, the doors finally opened to a new floor.

As he stepped of the lift, the entire floor was a maze of cubicles all bunched next to each other. Mountains of boxes stacked ceiling high littered the place in a chaotic mess of dangerous obstacles. Royce slipped past the first hurdle without incident, but nearly knocked over a small stack of magazines that had remarkably appeared out of nowhere. Phones rang and people jostled from one cubicle to another exchanging papers and equipment. Dazed at the spectacle, he stood around like a complete fool, getting in the way and with no clue on where to go.

“Konnichiwa” Someone said.

Royce stared at the short brown haired woman, dazed. It had been his first time in seeing a working environment like this and having someone pop out of a side corner and challenge him was a surprise. The woman spoke again and he remembered his Japanese.

“Oh, hello...I’m looking for Yoshio Publishing Co.”

“You’re American, yes?”

Royce felt a smile grow on his face. It was the first time someone got his origin correct. His entire school continued to believe he was English; it was a nice to be asked the right question for once.

“Yes, I’ve come here to talk to Mr Yoshio about one of my stories.”

“An American writing Japanese Manga?” The woman replied, sort of waving her pen and looking sceptical. Royce knew the error of his statement and assumed the woman did not believe him. Royce was not surprised; he would probably not believe that comment too.

“I do have a matter to talk to him about. Could you tell me where I could find him?”

She pointed into the field of cubicle and said, “cubicle 14A.”

Finished, she trotted off and Royce took a moment to admire her thin yellow top and creamy short skirt. She looked mature, young and probably just out of university. Oh, how he wished he could have some fun...

Strolling through the cubicles, like some guilty prisoner on death row, Royce checked the numbers carefully until he came across 14A. Sat at his desk, a young shady looking character, with big black glasses analysed his findings on his computer screen. It wasn’t even a LCD screen, an old-fashioned tube screen that flickered at every interval. Making himself known, Royce coughed slightly and the man jumped, startled.

“Ah, hello there... You caught me at a bad time, I’m just waiting for someone.”

Royce needed a second to process the information and wondered if this person was as thick as he just sounded.

"Perhaps you are looking for me?"

The man let out a lazy laugh, placed his hand behind his head as he just realized his mistake and stood up from his hardback chair. "Are you Royce Hampton by any chance?"

"Yep."

"Oh, so glad you could make it! I've been waiting for you." The man stood up from his chair and over-enthusiastically shook his hand.

"I must admit," Royce said. "I thought this office would be in a better building. With all the money my Manga is creating for you, I would have thought the offices would be in a better place."

Yoshio placed his hands on his desk and smiled. "This is a family owned business I do in my spare time. My main work is further in the city. I thought this would be a good place to meet up and for you to give me the next manuscript because you said you would like to keep your identity secret."

Royce wasn't interested in a long history lesson about the publishing house or the people involved with it. One thing he learned from the past is being careful of what you ask for. So he smiled his approval and handed over the thick brown envelope. "The next issue is in there. More text this time because I have a lot to portray and there's going to be some new characters in the next issue."

"I'm sure the fans will like that. But tell me, are you getting closer to finding that person who's challenging the top spot? She's been gaining momentum since the release of her new issue."

"I've found her and don't worry, this issue of mine will overshadow anything she has to offer. I already know a little about her and that's influencing my writing already. She will not stand a chance when this is all over. But what I would really like to do is get her out of the picture altogether. Make her give up."

"How do you intend to do that?"

"I don't know yet."

"Well," said Yoshio. "Each issue she creates will cost you millions in US dollars. There're many Japanese citizens, youngsters that is, who can only afford one copy. It's a war for them to choose which one to buy."

"I know. I am working as fast as I can, but she's the school president and it's not easy finding revealing information. Also I'm having difficulties at that school."

"I see, you moved to a town called Naka, if I remember?"

"Yes, that's where she's staying. Nice town once you get past the crazy people."

"This is Japan, some schools are like that, enjoy it while you can."

Royce shrugged his shoulders and watched Yoshio open the brown envelope and spilled its contents over his desk. The manuscript was bolted together by paper tags and he seemed impressed with the first couple of pages.

"I was hoping to get a look at the publishing offices so I know how it's done."

"You sounded very adamant about keeping your identity a secret from the public. Arriving here is taking a risk. Are you sure you know what you're doing?"

Royce knew all too well the risks, but he really wanted to know how the process was done and how his characters were made, who made them.

"I think there's a way for you to visit. I could always say that you are a reporter for a newspaper in America looking for a story. I'm sure they'll accept that."

"Sounds good," Royce muttered, and after collecting their things, they both left the office without anyone noticing.

*

As the two left the office, Royce could not help but catch the feeling that someone, or something just walked over his grave. It was as if destiny was trying to connect him with some other person. Who, Royce did not know, but he got the feeling that he was going to run into them soon.

They exited through the stale exit and walked over to the man's silver BMW that was parked in the parking lot amongst all the other cars.

It wasn't until they left the parking lot that Royce felt an overwhelming sense of an incident about to happen. He'd never had this feeling before and it put him on edge.

"Are you okay, Royce?" asked Yoshio leaning close to him.

"Yeah," he muttered, looking at the dashboard, admiring the polish on the wooden highlights. "I just get the feeling that--"

Royce pointed and shouted as they began to leave the car park. Sudden braking, a crash and then a sudden halt brought horror to his face.

"You just ran someone over!"

"It's not my fault, she just ran in front of my car!" Exclaimed Yoshio, hands shaking on the wheel.

Royce immediately rushed outside the passenger side and went over to the woman's aid. Expecting to see a bloody mess, he was stunned to discover the terrible truth. He stepped back, mouth agape in shock. "You got to be fucking kidding!"

But this was no time to be swearing or standing there like an idiot. He put aside all rational thought and moved to treat the stricken woman.

He pressed his index fingers to her neck and found a pulse, placed his ear to her mouth and watched her chest, not— not breathing — probably some kind of shock. He knew the risks of doing CPR, he knew what he was getting himself into with all the witness around and this was an action he would regret.

He placed his lips on her, blew life-sustaining air into her lungs and watched her chest rise. Releasing his lips from hers, the air escaped and he performed the embrace once more until the girl finally coughed back to life, wincing and crying at the pain from the impact.

She leaned on the bonnet of the car and quickly recovered. She must have been knocked out slightly. She stood to her feet and stared right at him.

Almost immediately she touched her lips, knew the person who brought her back and Royce watched at her colour whiten out of shock. But she grabbed his hands in defence, "Quick, we must get out of here, they're after me."

Royce only had his imagination to play with. He did not know her predicament and what little he did know of her, it was clear that she followed him all the way to the city and had landed herself into trouble. With the two of them sitting uncomfortably close in the back seat, Royce began. "So Rina-san, why did you come to Tokyo?"

Her cheeks went red. "Y-y-you can't call me by my first name! We-We-we're not that close."

"Now, now, be nice!" He said gingerly, trying to forget the surprise circumstance that bound them together. Her lips still lingered on his mouth and he too knew she was feeling the same.

"I-I had some family matters to attend to."

"What happened just now? Why did you run in front of this car? Who's chasing you?"

"Please, you got to help me, we got ourselves into trouble, very serious trouble, Akina Oda has been taken by the group...I escaped...I don't know what to do."

Royce looked at Rina's shocked face. He had a lot of questions to ask her and it would take a lot more convincing for him to believe she was in Tokyo to visit family.

Royce knew something was up and it definitely didn't have anything to do with family. Her location was just so coincidental. But he could not ignore the girl's cries; he could not let a classmate suffer just because of the commotion she caused him back at school.

He looked down at the clean car floor and nodded his head.

"Tell me everything."

Chapter 29

1 hour earlier:

The plan was simple, even though the two of them were meeting Akina Oda's friends in a shady part of the city. Rina had no idea who these individuals were, but her friend reassured her, "Don't worry about it. These people are the best at what they do and they won't stop until they get a confession out of him."

"Are you sure this is a good idea?" asked Rina, she glanced around the area and felt small compared to the complexity of the situation. She began to wonder if there was any merit in coming all this way, just to satisfy her friend's urge to punish the new student.

"I am so excited. Once I have the support of my friends, we'll make him pay."

"Yeah," Rina replied softly.

"Look, here's the group!"

Rina looked ahead and saw a bunch of lowlifes loitering around on the street corner. One was perched on the fence with others around him like he was some kind of king. Rina felt a level of fear crawl up her spine and although she felt uneasy at the situation, there was nothing she could do.

They approached the group and Akina began. "I see you got my message."

The guy perched on the fence turned his head and smiled, shifting a toothpick from one end of his mouth to the other. "Your message sounded urgent."

"Damn right. Some little shit set me up. I want you to take care of it for me."

"Seems very serious. It's been a while since we last saw each other. How long has it been? Two years? Three?"

"Three years."

"And are you living comfortably in your new town? Was it the paradise you left our city for?"

Rina could hear the mocking tone by the curl of the man's lip, it was as if he was deeply hurt by the past and wanted for this very moment to exact his revenge. She could see it in his eyes, but it turned out her friend was blind to the problem.

"You know I had no choice. My family moved away from Tokyo."

"Yes...I know, your family moved you away to keep you away from us. Isn't that right?"

His tone turned threatening, "You know little lady, we still haven't recovered from your departure. I've been dreaming of this moment for a long time."

"What do you mean?" Akina asked, beginning to understand that perhaps returning to this city was not a good idea.

"Since we were in school, I often wondered what it would be like to penetrate you in the classroom. We were young at the time. Too young to have that kind of fun, but it did not stop me from dreaming."

"So?"

"So...now that we have come of age, me thinks that it's time for my fantasy to be fulfilled."

Rina heard enough and grabbed Akina's hand and stepped back. She watched as the group stood to their feet drool their desires from their mouths.

"I don't think these people are going to help us."

"I think you're right," Akina finally confessed.

"Akina, who's your dark haired friend?"

They strolled closer and the two women stepped back, into the shadows of the alleyway.

"Come on, we're only after a little bit of fun..."

Rina was able to see one of the so-called friends more clearly now. At six foot tall, ring in the nose and hair gelled up in a spike, this individual was someone she would not want to meet in a dark alley. But she kicked herself for thinking something so reckless. She had just backed herself into a dark alley even though it was a warm summers day.

The shadows leapt out of the corners and surrounded the young women who stepped further into the darkness, the more they stepped back, the darker it got.

The grinning boy stepped forward, licking his lips and waving his hips from side to side. He and his friends began to chant, incomprehensible to her, but the chants were of sexual nature.

"Is this what you call long term friends?" Rina barked, staring at the mob from a distance.

"I don't believe it. I never knew he would turn out like this. I'm so sorry."

"Come on little ladies. We're going to show you the path to womanhood. Akina I've been dreaming of this moment since you left school... You are mine now." The criminal announced, licking his lips, eyes ablaze with desire.

The two women did not take anything to chance; they turned and ran, with the mob hot on their trail. Crashing through the streets –banging into anything they came in contact with – Rina and Akina held hands as they made there way in down random streets. Each alley looked the same, each turn gave them a dead end and it wasn't until they jumped over a closed gate that they managed to meet a crowd of people in a busy shopping centre.

"They must be the delinquents of the school. Just the type of people you would hang out with. What do you think would have happened to them after you left middle school? Do you think those freaks would have been the same?"

"I-I-I" Akina stuttered, her strong persona was completely gone. She was no longer the strong idol Rina had gotten used to. The woman who carried a sword, the protector of girl's virginity had been turned into a fidget frail old woman fearing for her life. *How ironic how things change so fast.*

The shopping centre was a bustle with activity with people from all wakes of life moving from different shops. With only one floor it seemed the perfect place to hide, only, that was not the case.

Hot on their trail and with the eyes burning with sexual lust, the heavy metal leader was sniffing them out like a hound. Each shop they entered the gang would wait outside for them, leering through the window. They would have no choice but to exit through an emergency exit at the back of the store. It was a basic cat and mouse game and Rina had grown weary of the chase.

Her friend, Akina followed her even though she had detailed knowledge of the city so Rina wondered why she did not take the lead. "You should know every detail about this city, where can we hide?"

"Tokyo's always changing..." Akina exclaimed. "Look, perhaps someone can help us."

They gunned for the car park in the hopes of finding someone who could help them get away.

But this was not the case.

As Rina looked ahead, the gang of youths walked causally along the entrance of the car park with sticks in their hands and grins on their faces. She shivered with revulsion. She did not want to give her virginity to some lowlife punk. When the two tried to turn back into the shopping centre, they suddenly realized the group had split up and the second half was now standing in their path. The only option left was to fight. Akina put up her fists and made her mind ready for the fight.

"Are you crazy? Those people will kill you." Rina whispered.

"It's not like I got anything else to do. They will pin us down and rape us one after another. I won't let them have it easy."

"Perhaps we can negotiate with them?" Rina was now grasping at straws, panicking at every second.

"I don't think they will negotiate. Quick, I will create a distraction and you run back into the shopping centre."

Before Rina had the chance to argue about how crazy the plan was, Akina dived right in and let loose with a flurry of kicks and punches. She managed to bring one person to the ground, but the second assailant grabbed her slender arms and prevented her from swinging more deadly blows. The first guy, who gradually picked himself off the floor, declared some payback and hit her in the face.

Brutal and completely uncalled for by the likes of men, Rina looked on with disgust and it wasn't until Akina shouted for her to go that she stumbled back and ran off.

Worried about her friend, Rina looked back and saw the angry mob of guys all around her, licking their lips at the prize they just captured. Now the extra men in the group turned their hungry eyes towards her and she had no choice but to leave.

With several sex hungry predators on her trail Rina ran to the only place she knew; the address that they were originally going to meet up with Royce.

Their original plan was to question him outside the building and with the help from Akina's friends, entice a confession out of him. She had the map of the location and where to go. But she was never very good at reading maps and despite Tokyo's complex and chaotic night life, she was confident at locating her man.

The location was much quieter now and when she looked behind, the small number of strong men slowly made their way past the street and into the multi-story car park.

She kept moving, cars whizzed in and out of the place. She was sure there must be someone who could help her. She knocked on the door of someone's vehicle, but they ignored her. She saw herself in the mirror and she was surprised at how messy she'd become. No matter how many doors she knocked on, they all must have thought she was some homeless girl, or worse, struck down with some disease. No

one was willing to help, but the more she progressed, the lonelier the area had become. It would not take long for the gang to find her again.

Seeing them much closer now, it brought her to the edge of complete despair. She knew they would catch her if she did not do something radical. Without thinking, and with the after image of the horrid group still lingering in her mind, she turned around and bolted in any direction.

She saw a car.

It was heading straight for her.

She froze on the spot as if her feet had been encased in cement,

The car failed to stop.

Rina felt the impact of the bonnet upon her stomach and the sensation of flying through the air. *What is this...flying...but I can't fly.*

Darkness engulfed her like a shroud and her eyelids could not stay open any longer. Drifting into the abyss of darkness, a familiar voice spoke in a foreign tongue.

She did not know what was happening, but a warm sensation filled her body with life sustaining essence. It was a blissful dream that gently cradled her soul and carried her away from the pool of darkness. The surrounding land became light. Not blinding bright, but light. She felt her own body float on water. *Was this a dream? Was I dead?*

More warmth filled her from within; Rina could not understand why this feeling was so personal. She felt warm around her lips, hot, juicy... She could not find the right words to describe this sensation, but she felt an intimate contact with an entity, something trying to bring her to life. She could only see the glowing area of white and the darkness forever vanishing below her body. It was a blissful aurora of hope and life. She was being filled, filled with the very essence of life. Then the world dissolved around her.

She felt her closed eyes and had the power to open them. She felt the power of warmth air pushed down her thought and the expansion in her chest. Warm, soft and pleasant. It was blissful. She had to know what was going on.

She opened her eyes.

She saw the outline of someone's face, too close to get a detailed view.

She noticed warm lips upon her.

She noticed the succulent substance ebbing into her mouth.

She saw the short hair, it was a man. She felt a sense of pyramidal arousal, physical contact with another person. Rina did not know what to make of this moment. Her mind was part asleep, still recovering from the shock of darkness. The cold, empty darkness of nothing. She could almost reach the inner recesses of her mind; she knew her soul would fully awaken to the sudden reality of life.

Click, her mind switched on, memories, details, her own thoughts came to her as if she was just asleep, the few vital moments where someone would be lost before they finally awake.

Wait!

Rina suddenly realized that she was being kissed...

She opened her eyes fully and understood the full extent of the situation. With a sudden urge to breathe, he could not help but cough up her disagreement of the stranger giving her air.

But after a few moments of breathing on her own, and gaining her vision to perfect clarity, she suddenly realised it was Royce who was giving her mouth-to-mouth.

But suddenly a bellowing call from across the street made her reconsider the insults she was about to throw at him. Looking up at Royce, she grabbed hold of his arms and said, "We have to get out of here."

"What are you doing here?" Royce asked.

Rina did not have to wait long until Royce discovered the reason. In the second it took him to glance across the street and analyse the situation, he shoved her into the car and they took off.

After a brief pause, the car was on the move and Rina sat up on the back seat, with Royce. Breathing was difficult, pain stabbed her lungs at each breath and she found it hard to keep balance, although she was sitting down.

"Are you okay?" Royce asked, concerned.

"It's not my fault. She ran in front of the car!"

"I think we should take her to the hospital."

Rina shot out of her pain-induced trance and grabbed hold of Royce's left arm. It was becoming a close habit, but she had to rescue her friend.

"Akina-San has been captured. We must save her."

She looked into Royce's eyes and pleaded him to do something. He was a man after all and perhaps he could get her back.

"Forget the hospital, I think we need to talk to the police," the man in the car said, as he drove past the main junction and along a light street.

She caught Royce's gaze again and pleaded with his humanity. "The police are too slow, we must find Akina-san before it's too late!"

She looked past the driver seat and out the front window. As if fate was throwing her some good luck, she saw the shady group of people tackling a woman to the ground. It was Akina.

She could not believe what she was seeing. In all the streets, in all time on the clock, she would be in a car, with Royce and travelling straight for the group who took her friend.

"She's over there, quick, you have to do something."

Royce looked through the window and had an idea.

"Quick, drive straight for the people and scare them into moving."

Royce leaned on the right back door and made himself ready. Rina was not sure on his plan, or how he was going to rescue her friend but she continued to watch regardless.

The car raced to the mob of people and the prominent leader, with his spiky hair and black leather clothes, looked directly at the BMW speeding towards them. Rina prayed hard that he would get run over, that bastard did not deserve to live. She growled in anger as the car came within striking distance. In the unsteady confusion, the mob dispersed giving Royce the chance to spring into action.

Royce shouted, "Quick, pull up to that woman." He opened the door, leaned out and grabbed her frightened form, shoving her into the car like a bag of coal.

The driver hit the gears and sped off into the darkness leaving the disoriented group behind. Royce waited a few moments to catch his breath and when he was ready he continued. "I think you two should report this to the police. You were almost raped."

Rina did not know what to say. Although fate had been on their side, she could not forget the lingering touch that still resided on her lips and the lifesaving action of one man. But first, they had to recover from the ordeal of almost being raped by a group of yobs.

She glanced down towards the floor and noticed the half open file on the floor. She did not know whom the file belonged too, but a picture of a cute anime girl caught her attention.

Chapter 30

Royce sat back in the vehicle with two women as company. Not only did he receive a shock of them being there, he also had to deal with the aftermath of what he'd done.

In an effort to save her life, he had pressed his lips to Rina's mouth and breathed air inside her. It should have been an intimate act between two lovers but it also served another purpose. It was widely acceptable to do such an act in open-minded countries to save someone's life, but how would a Japanese woman see such action?

But Royce knew he could not let the girl suffocate, and although she tasted nice, he could not get around the morbid shock of it all. He helped the very person he was supposed to study and destroy. It would have been easier to act stupid and left her there for dead, but he could not let a beautiful woman like that die after being hit by a car.

His plan to travel to the publishing office was put on hold until they could take the two victims to the local hospital.

As the car diverted from its original path, Yoshio asked the burning question, "Do you want me to deliver the manuscript to the publishers? If the picture for the new character suits you, I can have them proceed with it."

Royce knew he had to keep the information strictly limited and he hoped the two young ladies in the back seat would be too traumatised to notice the discussion. Royce did catch Rina glancing quickly at the open file on the floor and he quickly picked it up to stifle any more curiosity. Handling the file over to the driver, he said "everything's in order. I'll accompany these ladies to the hospital. I'll arrange another time to visit the offices, I really want to see what goes on."

"Okay, I'll wait for your call."

The car drove for a few more minutes and Royce kept a watchful eye on Akina. Although she was the enemy, he felt sorry for what had happened. He shook his head and Rina spoke out in response.

"Are you okay?"

Royce smiled slightly. "I should ask you the same question. So, will you tell me why you travelled all the way to Tokyo? I don't believe it's family business, it's too much of a coincidence."

"I saw Yumi-san board the train with you. She's my friend. I was concerned for her safety."

Royce saw Akina preparing herself to say something, but she faulted at the last minute; either she was in too much pain to speak or she could not tell and risk exposing whatever secret she was holding back.

A sudden outburst shocked Royce.

"I know what you did to me. You set me up!"

Royce straightened his back and felt puzzled. "Excuse me? I don't understand."

"I know it was you that placed the magazines in my bag. I know you asked your friends to deliberately trip me over."

It took a few moments for the information to settle, but once he realized what she was talking about, he could neither confirm nor deny her suspicions.

"I think you should concentrate on your recovery, that was some nasty blokes you were hanging around with."

"Don't change the subject. I would not have been in that situation if it wasn't for you."

"That's right, everything's my fault, blame it on the foreigner."

Rina interjected, "I would like to know what happened to Yumi-san. She's not in the car with us. Where is she?"

Royce thought about the answer for a moment. Should he tell her that she is out shopping in the city with his butler, enjoying the high life and having mountains of fun while they are in the back seat of a car injured and on their way to hospital? Or should he just say she was back at the hotel waiting to go back home? Royce felt an evil smile grow on his face, but he did not let it show. Instead, he took a lung full of air and answered her question.

"She told me she'd never been to Tokyo before so I invited her along. She's probably out shopping and spending money."

"Spending money? She's only a teenager, I didn't know she has that kind of money."

"I gave her some."

"You what?" exclaimed Rina. "Why would you do that?"

"Because I'm a kind person."

"I find that hard to believe," Akina interjected sarcastically.

Before the conversation could progress further, the car pulled up to the hospital and Royce pointed, in hopes of diverting the conversation. "We are here."

Once the vehicle stopped in a designated space, several nurses came to their aid. Dressed in immaculate white outfits, they came to the door and Royce watched Rina guide her friend out of the car.

"I'll be on my way Royce, I'll talk to you over the phone, yes?"

Royce said his farewells to Yoshio and followed Rina into the hospital as the emergency staff attended to her friend.

It was a clean and sterile place. Fairly calm and full of attractive nurses going about their daily routines. Rina had been taken to a separate room for a check up while the police arrived one hour later on his order. He called them and while he was checking up on the two guests, Rina stared at him in shock. "Why did you call the police?"

"That group of louts almost killed you and your friend. I could not stand by and allow them to do this again. You're very lucky someone like me was around to help you."

Rina remained quiet, like a timid school child who'd been told off for the first time.

"I am sure these officers can guide you back home. I'll have to find Yumi-san and return her home. This was supposed to be a productive trip, but as always, you lot interfered with my plans yet again."

"Since when are you on first name terms with her? Just what have you done to her? Don't tell me you have done lewd things to my friend?" Rina clasped her hands to her mouth in shock and Royce shook his head at the typical conclusion this woman came to at such sort notice.

"I can faithfully say that I have been the perfect gentleman. I have not lured her all the way to Tokyo to have my way with her."

"So you admit that you would want to have your way with her?"

Royce frowned; her questions began to get more direct and even to begin to trick him into saying something he shouldn't say. But he was much smarter than that. Even if he was speaking Japanese with a few English words thrown in for good measure.

"It's all in your imagination."

"Oh, the sanity of it all," Rina knelt down and wept, milking the scene for all it's worth in front of all the hospital patients and staff. "You, a monster of a man, all the way from England lured a sweet and innocent girl into the depths of the city and encouraged her to sleep with you in one of the many love hotels in Tokyo."

She pointed to him again, firm, demanding. "Tell me...is that what you did? She's not out shopping. She's in that hotel with her legs open, virginity gone! Did you commit such an act?"

Yumi could not resist. She decided to join the fun.

"We all know the rumours, the rumours of you stealing women's underwear from the school gym. Come on...confess your sins in front of all these adults. Confess that you placed a whole load of Manga into my bag, confess that you're a Hentai lover!"

Royce could feel the caldron deep within his stomach boil dry, his face felt white-hot and his hair almost sizzled to nothing. He was one step closer to becoming a naked chicken all shrivelled up ready to be eaten.

"That's preposterous. I am not a Hentai lover and I don't do things like that." He placed a dismissive hand on his forehead and looked towards the floor. The two girls he tried to save had just embarrassed him and now everyone in the hospital looked at him with lewd thoughts. Again, it was lucky he was not well known or lived in Tokyo. This little problem would only be a local incident.

Rina idle ramblings brought him back to reality.

"I don't believe it, stuck in this hospital with the pervert next to me has to be the last straw. God only knows what you have done to Yumi-San...Gezze. Did you force her to go shopping? Did you force her to get lewd things to satisfy your fetish for Japanese girls in cute clothing." Royce watched in amazement as this woman continued to split the realm of reality and accuse him of more sinful events.

"Did you force her to buy a maid uniform? My god! You are the most perverted individual I've ever seen." She placed her hands to her face and looked away, muffling her voice, but Royce could still understand. "My, what will you do if she's in a maid consume...oh think of the insanity."

Royce could not keep silent, "I think *it's you* that's left the realm of sanity. You have a very active imagination."

Royce glanced over to Akina, who was fiddling with her pen and making herself completely useless. He was surprised she did not join in the bashful conversation, but Royce assumed she was tired due to the injuries she sustained from the incident.

"What else do you intent to make her do? Make her wear glasses and dance around school in that maid consume?"

Are we still on that subject Royce thought to himself. Perhaps she would like to dance around in a maid consume. But he did not dare tell her that. In fact, he thought it would be better for him if he let her continue in her idle ramblings.

"I have contacts in high places that can spell the end of your little English campaign. I know what you're up to Royce, coming all the way to Tokyo and being the only foreign exchange student in our school. Mark my words; you will pay if you hurt Yumi-san.

Royce suddenly had an idea. So subtle and great that he was surprised he did not ask her sooner.

"So, what's your relationship with Yumi?"

"We are close friends. We grew up together since Akini High and I know everything about her. Which is why I am watching you. She would not have come all this way on her own. You did something to her."

Her idle winging started to become annoying.

"So you must have been to their family house. Seen her parents and siblings."

Royce knew he hit a nerve when he did not get an instant reply. She remained silent, staring at the floor.

"She told me something very strange a few days ago," Royce asked, risking everything to get the truth.

"What's that?" Rina asked, intrigued.

"A few days ago she was hurt," Royce lied, hiding what really happened at the hotel. "I went to help and offered to take her home. She screamed and cried and said something that confused me."

Royce paused, adding suspense to the mix. "She begged me not to take her home. However, when I asked her why she refused to tell me."

Royce watched, as Rina remained motionless and silent. She appeared in deep thought, then she continued. "She lives with her uncle."

"What happened to her parents?"

"They died in a car accident. She was sleeping with a friend when the incident happened just on the outskirts of town. When the funeral arrangements had been settled, and her parents laid to rest, she was given to her uncle to raise."

"Is that what she means? She does not want to live with her uncle?"

"It's more complicated than that. Her uncle is a member of the town's board that approves funding for the school and other causes. But Yumi-San's reluctance to return home has caused friction with the town's people."

"So what happened between Yumi and her uncle? Why does she refuse to go home?"

"There're rumours that he...punishes her."

There was a silence.

"What do you mean?" Royce said, not getting the whole picture.

"Her uncle has...forced her to do things...things I have not been able to protect her from."

Royce watched as she held her head in her hands, ashamed of herself.

"I should have been there to protect her, I should be there to take her away from all of this... But her uncle, he's such a powerful man, no one could stand against him."

Royce looked towards the clear white sterile wall and its whiteness gradually turned red of anger. He wanted to punish her uncle and his lewd acts. It wasn't until a few moments ago he realized what she was talking about. He's seen many cases like this on television and once in real life at school. He could tell the signs of an abused girl anywhere.

Now he could finally understand her reluctance to return home and he was even more determined to keep her away from the hands of her uncle, that animal.

The doctor gave everybody a clean bill of health and the small group were ready to return to the hotel. Rina and Yumi had not booked a hotel and this made Royce curious as what their reasons for being in Tokyo were. Perhaps they were really seeing friends or family and would stay the night?

But despite that being a highlight of the minute, Royce still had the problem with Yumi. How was he going to help her?

Royce flipped open his cell phone and called her butler.

"Yes," said the mature voice, slow, clear and professional. Royce thought it was rather odd for the situation.

"Are you still with Yumi?"

"Yes, she is currently eating at a restaurant."

"Can you take her back to the hotel? Something's come up and it is time to leave."

The butler confirmed the request and Royce hung up the phone. There was only one thing left to do and that was to return to the hotel.

*

The hotel was some first class establishment around the popular areas of Tokyo. Well-lit rooms and good staff reassured Rina that he did not take her friend to some backwater sex hotel to perform indecent things on her. But that still did not avert suspicion.

Royce arrived at the entrance to his room and he took a few moments to clear up a few things. "Don't worry, we're not sharing the same room, she's right next door. We were planning on spending a few days in Tokyo on business before I return to Naka, but your presence has not changed that."

He opened his door, turned on the lights and Rina took a tactical stand between the doorframe, snooping her glance into the room to get the lay of the land. When Royce told Akina Yumi's room number, she immediately rushed off.

But no one answered.

"I guess she has not returned."

Royce held his keys in his hands and walked into his room. "You are welcome to wait with me until she-"

Trotting up the stairs and along the hallway, Akina and Rina looked on in horror as Yumi walked down the corridor wearing a skimpy maid uniform, complete with hat and ribbons.

"You said you would not force Yumi-San to wear that kind of clothes!" Rina yelled in anger.

"I don't believe it. All this time, you have tricked me. I knew you dragged Yumi to Tokyo to get her perverted clothes. What wrong with you?" She placed her hand to her mouth and the plot thickened. Royce watched her glance over the other packages of clothing.

The allegations continued. "Hwwww. This can't be happening. You tricked us down here? What else is in those bags? More clothes of sexual fetish? Are you planning on dressing us up too? What are you, a wannabe girl who wants to play with dolls?"

Royce liked the idea of them dressed up in revealing clothing, he could almost imagine Akina in a tight commando vest and very short pants that would provide unlimited eye candy. But that would not do, he had to think big. Akina was the type of woman he would have to fantasize to the maximum. His next thoughts were of her in a sexy bunny costume, long sights, tightly cut to perfection complete with bunny ears. All she had to do to complete the fantasy was to bend over the desk with a pen in her mouth acting with some sense of authority.

Royce shivered and the erotic thoughts continued one after another, not helped by Yumi stood there in her erotic maid costume, which barely covered her knees. But this was no fantasy, she was wearing a maid uniform, and he wondered why?

"I'm sorry, its not Hampton-San's fault. I walked past this shop and they had lots of beautiful dresses and costumes. I've never had the chance to try anything like this. But since I bought so much stuff, I lost my clothes and had to wear this."

"Who paid for this?" Royce muttered under his breath, imagining the long lines of O's eating away at his fortune, women were very expensive.

"I should have stopped when I had the chance, but I just could not help myself..." She bowed her head in shame. "I'm sorry everyone, I just could not resist. Especially you Hampton-San, I am the one who got you into so much trouble."

"You can call me by my first name," Royce replied, he knew it was Japanese tradition to call strangers or people you just met by their family name, but after knowing the girl for some time, it was getting tedious and it would be nice to hear her call his name.

She blushed slightly and replied kindly. "Okay Royce-san."

Royce turned and pointed to the two other women, who have been in his life, the two troublemakers who always seem to harass him. "But you two can still call me Hampton-San. In fact, it might be better if you call me sensei, master or even God!"

*

The journey back to the town of Naka should take a few hours, more or less if you pay the direct fare or take several other trains that will take you on a detour around the countryside. Royce was not in any hurry to return, but he did want to rid himself of the extra baggage he collected while on his adventure.

Glaring at him from the other side of the carriage, the two women, if he could call them that, remained silent for the longest time. It was unusual for these two to go two minutes without insulting him, but it was the subtle voice from Yumi that broke the veil of silence.

"I'm sorry for causing all this trouble." She apologised again, but Royce did not mind. Her maid outfit was stunning on her, but he had to control his thoughts just in case the two guards sitting opposite might jump to action.

Too late!

"Are you thinking perverted things again Royce?" Akina exclaimed. "I told you what would happen if you did."

Royce looked away and analysed the floor of the train. He knew he looked as guilty as possible, but could anyone blame the young man? How could anyone keep his thoughts in check, especially sat next hot succulent woman in a maid outfit?

He controlled his primordial lust and acted in a respectable manner. "You don't have anything to worry, I am the perfect gentleman."

"Sure, I heard that one before, but every time we look at you Royce, you're always up to no good. I don't know about you Akina-San but if someone begins his school life stealing panties, then he is destined to fail for the rest of his life," Rina highlighted, crossing her slender arms and asserting her authority. She clearly loved every moment of it.

"I told you...it's not what you think."

"Then explain it to us."

"Don't worry Yumi-San we'll escort you home safely. I won't let this pervert do anything to you." Rina changed the subject, extending her arm and grasping Yumi's free hand.

Her voice almost hit the high note, but it was a worrying tug at his trousers that distracted him. Shivering with fright Yumi signalled her worry by pure body language alone. It was unmistakable and even Akina picked up on it.

"Yumi-San? What's wrong?"

Royce interjected. "I thought you said her uncle was still home."

"He's not, after we reported him to the principal, the local police took him away." She looked thoughtfully at Yumi. "Are you telling me he's back?"

Yumi remained silent in her black French maid costume, worry clearly over her face. She shivered slightly despite her obvious will to freeze it.

"I don't believe this," Akina snarled. "I thought we got rid of that asshole. Why didn't you tell us?"

"I'm sorry," she apologised again. "I didn't want to bother you and he said he'd really hurt me if I told anyone."

Royce stood to his feet in defiance. "Right, that's it, I'm not going to allow that creep to abuse you anymore."

Chapter 31

The reality struck hard now once they were back in Naka. While on the train talking about Yumi's problem it was obvious action had to be taken to keep the poor girl safe from the clutches of that animal.

Royce had never seen anyone abused before and seeing it first hand and the damage it caused made him that much determined to keep her in a safe environment.

"You might be a pervert with the things you have done, but I believe you care enough to do something about this."

Royce looked up, surprised. She said something good this time. Rina actually praised him, albeit, somewhat subtly.

"Can't she stay at your house until this uncle is dealt with by the police?" Yumi asked.

"She is welcome to stay with me," Rina replied. Royce was sure her uncle would be out looking for her but being at that hotel on the outskirts of town would be out of his way.

The three walked along the narrow country path through several playgrounds, before walking along the high path that followed the river. It would have been the perfect setting for a couple to go out on a walk, but Royce was more than busy with three girls and his reputation to boot.

"You can go home now!" Rina said, hinting with her finger for him to get lost. "What do you think this is, a date through the dark?"

Yes, it was dark. It took them the whole night to finally return to the town and Rina tried all she could to make him feel unwelcome in their little group.

"I was just making sure you girls got home safely. It's dark out after all." Royce smiled but it went unnoticed. Rina started to ball her hands into fists at his lack of movement and Royce quickly got the message. Saying his farewells, he quickly departed from the group, feeling happy at his level of accomplishment. He

knew that his interaction with the dilemma, his advice about the abusive uncle and his willingness to help might install some trust into Rina and Akina.

Tired, Royce walked onto the start of the long path that would see him to his hotel eventually. As if his prayers were answered, a small car rolled up with his butler behind the wheel.

The car was packed with the girl's goods.

"Good evening sir." He said candidly.

"Samuru, I see she left you with her shopping?"

"Miss Kosaka-San asked me to deliver her shopping to her room and ordered me to leave the moment she spotted you and the women. She explained that my presence might be awkward to explain to her friends. Sir, if I may be so bold."

"Go on." Royce replied, interested.

"She's a very smart and lost woman. I've seen her around town a few times and from my initial observations, she's improved dramatically."

Royce thought the words sounded creepy, an old man spying on a young woman. But then it dawned on him; Samuru was not like that. Despite his tired mind getting the better of him, Royce requested the butler to return to the hotel by himself and unpack everything. He knew the walk home would be more beneficial than a car ride.

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Ten minutes later, when Royce looked at his watch, the nightlife still clicked, chirped and rattled all around him. There were no streetlights, although he could see signs of metal poles sticking out of the ground that once showed street lamps lining the old road. They had succumbed to years of neglect, paint peeled of the poles and some had even fallen over. Taking a closer inspection at one of the damaged lights, he wondered how long this hotel and its surrounding land had been abandoned. Then again, its remote location did pose a challenge to get to.

An old shack that was partly covered by vines and disguised in darkness almost made Royce miss the place. He'd never noticed it before and upon closer inspection, he found the windows blown out and the door on the floor, moulded into the ground, completely useless. The roof was covered in moss, holes allowed the water into the structure and the darkness pulsated the closer he got.

Curious, he moved into the small den and found a table with a matching set of chairs, or what's left of them. The table still had objects on it, but due to the years, the elements had rusted everything through. Royce did not know the significance of such a find, or why he entered the place but he could not ignore his idle curiosity.

It's only a room. He thought to himself. *But I like adventure.*

Royce was always the adventurous type. Back in his hometown, when he was younger, he would often venture into the wilderness to find new and interesting places. He would make dens and see who was lurking in the great unknown. It was a habit and a function of his personality. It was probably the driving force that helped him travel all the way across the world to Japan. Glancing at the unused glass on the table, he noticed it was still intact, although filled with dirty rainwater. Moss had partly grown around its rim and he decided to take the glass home with him as a souvenir.

Ten minutes later he carried on up the road and thought about Yumi and the predicament she must be in. He wondered why he was paying the girl so much attention. He did not know her and it was only a few days ago that he had the

uncanny experience of her being his houseguest for the rest of his stay. If news about their little arrangement got out, it sure would be flying news all around school.

The truth could be bent. They could say that he forced her to stay with him and he was free to do whatever he wanted. That thought did not go down well and he did not want to damage the reputation he had with the school already, despite it being rock bottom already.

Then his mind drifted to the club he joined without a choice. He knew it was a bad idea to involve himself with such a place, but with the obligation to help all the single men and the *Hall of Shame* issue he knew it was his number one priority.

Damn! Royce forgot all about the mission. I have to arrange the huge mission.

Any failure in that mission would see them all doomed. Royce was surprised he did not crack under the pressure during the day, he simply forgot all about it.

Before he knew it, Royce strolled around a bank of trees and saw the hotel in sight. It was a sight for sore eyes and he quickly made his way to the front door and entered the place. He hoped for a good night sleep and school was about to start tomorrow, with the mission in tow.

*

Morning came and it was the same routine as always: get up, put on the school uniform, tidy up the mess he made on his desk the night before – or in this case the same day – head of to clean his teeth, have breakfast and leave for school.

This was not what happened. Most of his daily routine happened as normal, but it was a knock at the door that changed everything today.

“So this is where you’ve been staying!” Royce stumbled back in shock, tripped on the laminated flooring and came tumbling to the floor.

“T-This has to be some kind of nightmare!” He exclaimed, staring at Rina’s eyes.

“Yep, and I am your darkest fear...can we come in?” Although it sounded like a question, it didn’t turn that way. It was more like an announcement, ‘We’re coming in, stand clear.’

Unable to stop her deadly advance, Royce watched defencelessly as this dark haired juggernaut walked right in and surveyed the area.

“What’s this place, a hotel?”

“Something like that,” Royce explained, trying to hide all the important information from her.

“Do you own this place? Do you live alone?”

Royce was about to use a wise crack and ask which question she wanted answered, but he decided against it. Instead, he moved onto the next subject.

“W-Why are you here?”

She strolled to the middle of the room, spun around and waved her hands, “Yumi-San *finally* told me that you’ve allowed her to stay here.” Royce surmised that the word finally might have carried a slight hint of mischievous behaviour behind it. He could only imagine the kind of torture she must have endured to relinquish that information. He looked towards Yumi for an answer.

“I’m sorry, I had to tell her, Rina was concerned for my safety, she wanted to know where I would stay after I left school.”

Royce looked back to the woman standing in the middle of his reception hall and braced himself for the next wave of difficult questions.

"I have it on good authority to check every inch of this place for any signs of ill behaviour. Yumi-San told me that you have been the perfect gentleman, but I don't trust you. I know what English people are like and watched many programs on television."

Royce could not hold back his anger that built up due to her insults. "Now wait just a moment. Who the hell do you think you are? You blatantly ignore my presence, barge into my home and insist on snooping around. Do you have any sense of decency?"

"No!" She replied sharply. "I intend to make sure my friend is treated with the utmost respect."

Royce watched as she contemplated her next sentence. He could see that she was struggling with reality. "I'm going to stay here until this matter is resolved!"

"What!" Royce exclaimed, rattling some of the china plates in the room with his loud voice.

"You heard me, I'll be staying right here. This is a hotel right, you must have plenty of rooms. I heard stories about this place. Strange though, why did you choose such a place?"

"Because it was available." Royce replied sarcastically.

"So you must be rich then? This place must have cost you a fortune?"

"That depends." Royce stepped back from Rina, intent on hiding his true motives and trying to derail the conversation and lead her onto another topic. "Listen, why can't she stay with you until we have settled the problem with her uncle? I am sure she will be more settled at your place."

Royce stepped over to the small booth that was wedged inside the wall and fidgeted with the keys, trying to look busy and providing a distraction for the difficult questions ahead.

"I would like to do that, but I have work going on at the mansion and I can't have visitors for a few weeks."

"You are living at the mansion?" Royce remembered the moment he tried to buy that place. He placed a down payment, but lost it at the last moment when someone paid for the property outright. Something Royce was going to do first, but money transactions, tax and transfer regulations held him back. He lost the place and now he finally knew who bought it. This town was getting very interesting and Royce could finally solve that piece of the puzzle.

"Yes, some dork tried to steal the place before me, but I had my eyes on that place ever since I was a young girl."

"So," Royce stepped out from behind the booth with a mischievous smile as if he knew a juicy secret. "You must have a very wealthy family?"

Royce watched her at the central staircase that climbed to the first floor and then spiralled towards the second final floor. She looked cute in her short skirt and sporty blue top, but he still knew how dangerous this girl was.

"My family's wealthy. But I make my own fortune," she replied, sticking her nose to the air, thinking highly of herself, but it was that subtle regret in her face that made her reconsider her answer. Royce knew she'd just created a more personal question.

"You make your own fortune? So, what do you do to make all that money?"

"None of your business." She snarled.

Royce edged closer, fiddling with one of the keys he'd picked up from the counter. "Oh, come on, you must have some kind of high class job. Let me see."

Royce placed his free hand up to his chin and acted mischievous. "You look like a singer, perhaps you're some sort of idle." Royce knew he was close to the

mark. He knew exactly what she was and he wanted to tease her as much as he could, it was his moment after all.

She blushed, feeling the heat, but Royce continued.

"No, I don't think you are an idle. I would have seen some evidence that." He walked over to the first step; she was on the sixth, climbing backwards to keep away from him. "Perhaps you sell illegal material."

Royce felt the heat of her anger, but he carried on regardless. "I know, it would not surprise me if you sell yourself at all hours of the night. Perhaps you could give me a discount for your services."

Royce felt the long arm of the law. In slow motion, he watched her foot rise up from its temporary location on the floor, glide through the air and plant itself firmly on his face. He caught a glimpse of her black pants and the whole encounter was worth it. He'd never seen so many curves filled out in complete harmony.

"You pervert, you asshole," she shouted, she alternated from Japanese to English so fast, Royce could not keep up with her sentences. "You snivelling excuse for a human. How dare you insult me like that? I am not some cheap hooker. I'd never do anything like that!" She exclaimed.

It was obvious that he could not chat to the woman now after that assault, so he pulled himself together and walked over to Yumi, who appeared to be enjoying the whole show. "Listen Rina, are you sure there is no other place you can take her? It might be best if she's with someone she knows."

"No."

Royce looked up at Rina and tossed her the room key. He knew he would regret that decision in the future, but he saw no choice and despite her reasons being unjust, it might prove to be beneficial to her friend. But the ground rules had to be the same. Unable to believe he was allowing this to happen he made his choice. "Okay, you can stay, but there are a few ground rules you must follow." Royce continued with the rules, even though he could tell from the boredom in Rina's eyes that she was not interested.

After he explained about the hotel, the location of the facilities and gone over the rules a second time, he walked over to the front door and departed on his long quest that would take most of the night. There was one thing left to do. Meet up with his club members and begin the operation to remove their names from the *Hall of Shame*.

It was going to be a huge task and Royce grunted as he closed the door behind himself.

Chapter 32

The local train shot past Royce at high speed as he drove his scooter down the main road towards the town. He would have to arrive at the school, break into the grounds and trek through the forbidden forest and into the club hut that would have been buried conveniently out of sight.

But nothing was convenient about it, its location was a nightmare to get to. He was sure that if he took the main path, he would reach the club far quicker than trekking through the deadly swamp, but the club members insisted he stuck with the plan, they said that you never knew who would be following.

Glancing around the wooded area, he suddenly realised that the muddy path – created by the club members – had suddenly vanished. Without any markers or familiar surroundings, Royce was lost.

“Looks like you’re lost.” A voice startled him from behind.

Royce spun on the spot and saw Shota Kishi grinning from cheek to cheek.

“It’s lucky we patrol these grounds from time to time.”

“So, you have your own team out on patrol?” Royce asked, feeling like a twit because Shota had already said so.

“Yep, a few people patrol the grounds to make sure the girls do not stumble upon our base.”

“So, this is quite the war zone you have here? The girls have their armies out patrolling the grounds around the Hall Of Shame, and the boys are out prowling the woods. Sounds like they have something more valuable to protect.”

“And you’re saying we don’t?”

“Exactly.”

“But you are forgetting one thing Royce,” Shota said with confidence.

“And what’s that?”

“We have our panty shrine! The biggest one in all Japan! The girls have been after it for years, but it’s the inner sanctum for our most perverted members. Every girl that went to this school has had their pants taken and added to the shrine. It’s an oasis of complete womanhood.”

Royce felt himself snake around the tree to make his exit. But the thought of being part of this strange club began to take its toll on him.

“Don’t you think all of this is a little extreme?”

“What? Hell no! It’s the Japanese way!”

That explained everything; all the hours of watching Anime, Japanese shows and reading news papers did confirm that Japan was not just a fun place to live in, but it was crazy too.

“I should have known,” Royce muttered to himself as he got down to business. “Okay, I think we should clear our names from the Hall Of Shame as soon as possible. What do you think?”

“I think you might be right.”

*

The meeting took place as planned and all the young lads huddled around the long table like their life depended on it. Royce knew this was going to be a long night, and with all the activity back at his hotel, he was partly glad to be away from it. But he still had the lingering fear the women he offered sanctuary too might find his secret. Then again, secrets were being dished out like candy to children. He had secrets, she had secrets and everybody had secrets. He wondered how long it would take before the bubble burst.

“We will split the team into two groups. Team A will have the responsibility to infiltrate the Shrine. Team B will keep watch and then split into two smaller groups after ten minutes. The first group will enter the shrine and help change all the names. While the second keeps a look out.” The whole plan looked very simple, but everybody knows that nothing goes as smoothly as one hopes.

“Has group A managed to get their time down?” Royce was referring to the first group of lands who will enter the Hall Of Shame and change most the names to the fake tags.

“Yes, our time has been reduced to the minutes you have selected. We’re ready to go.” Royce looked at the trio of men who were ready to go into battle. They stood, traditional Japanese battle ribbons around their heads, ready to sacrifice their lives for the success of the group. They knew what was at stake and Royce could not have asked for a finer group of men.

He spread out a map on the table and pinned down locations of interest.

The Hall of Shame was located on the edge of school property, with access to the outside world. It was a tall building with a pyramid in the middle surrounded by individual clusters that dubbed as offices and training facilities. High security fences and state of the art security systems protected the area from would be intruders, but it wasn’t that hard to locate the codes to disarm the system. If they failed however, a young lad by the name of Lee Kenta would be perfectly capable to disable the system. He was a fifteen-year-old bi-speckled boy who liked to spend most of his time in front of computers increasing his skill at hacking and other activities of misbehaviour (The type that got him listed in the Hall of Shame in the first place).

Once everything checked out, Royce turned to the group and continued. “Looks like we’re a go. Does anyone have any questions?”

“Umm, what happens if we get caught?” someone said.

Royce looked at the individual and decided to have a little bit of sadistic fun. “I’ve had experience with these cases before. In the old days of *England* if one were caught doing something like this they would normally lose their head.” Royce made a point to heighten this word by follow up actions in explicit detail. “Snap, clean off. Now, however this punishment wasn’t practical. So the women who caught their perpetrator would torment his very soul and unleash ultimate terror that would be impossible to describe. You see, women in England are strong...just as strong as men! But not only that, if you piss off the wrong type, they’ll make sure you pay for with your life.”

Royce edged closer, just to add show to his tale. “Just imagine being tied to a tree, naked, covered in honey and a bee’s nest thrown below your feet. You can move a little, but that’s just enough to provoke the bees...Have you ever been stung by a bee?”

The young man was hesitant, but he nodded. “I was stung once.”

“Now imagine that bee sting a hundred times over, All over your body...even down below!” Royce glanced down to demonstrate his words, making sure there was no mistake. “Painful yeah?”

He suddenly backed away and changed the subject away from the bees.

“Of course women in England are far more worse than a hundred bee stings...” Royce walked around the room, putting his imagination to use.

“Imagine being sexually rubbed and stroked to the very edge of ecstasy and then being left to hang by yourself tied up, unable to release that ecstasy.” Royce scanned the room slowly. “These are just a small portion of what women can do and I heard that Japanese women can be even worse. So, in answer to your question: expect to be punished beyond your wildest imagination. Some of you will regret this choice, but your livelihoods are all at stake.”

Shota stood beside Royce, placing his left hand on his right shoulder. “We’re all behind you. We’ll not fail in our mission. You can count on us.”

A cheer erupted from the army of young lads it was so loud the girls would be able to hear the war drums of the approaching army.

With firm resolve, Royce marched to the front with his army in tow.

Chapter 33

With all the club members in place, the plan was ready to go. Royce knew how important this mission was and he could not allow anything to interfere with that. So when he looked down at the building that contained the *Hall of Shame*, he could not help but feel a slight sense of apprehension.

The external team, consisting of Shota Kishi and a few others were scouting the fences for a good spot to sneak in.

Even though the fences were electrified, a simple glove was all that was needed to cut the wire and create a hole just big enough to slip through. It had just rained a few hours ago and the grass smelled fresh and the droplets of water sizzled faintly on the electric fence. It sounded therapeutic, but Royce had a mission and lounging around, listening to nature at it's finest was not the best thing to do.

The group sneaked into the grounds and dodged a few ladies who happened to walk past. The hole they created in the fence was located in a dark part of the fence and was easily hidden. Royce was thankful his team made the right move.

Once the team members had crept through the gap, they split off into their respected groups. A slight clank was heard. Royce decided that one man should carry all the replacement nametags. He changed his mind at the last moment because it would be chaotic if everyone suddenly rushed in and tried to change the names on their own. Thankfully one of the lads had more intelligence than the rest of the team put together. Royce memorised the place before they embarked on their incredible journey.

Royce and his group arrived at the entrance of the *Hall of Shame* and they sighed quietly as two armed guards stood outside the entrance. Two women walked in through the gate, showed the armed women their credentials and were ushered into the shrine.

"Oh my god, that's my sister and her friend. What are they doing here?" one lad whispered from behind. Royce glanced at the small-eyed man and felt confused. "Why would your sister come here?"

"I'm sure she's checking out a friend I introduced to her. But if she sees my name on the list, or her friend sees my name..."

He broke down in tears. "I really like her friend. I was going to ask her out, but, but, but...if she goes in there."

Royce pulled out a pistol, aimed and let loose with tranquilliser darts. His secret all along, which confused his teammates and cast leaping shadows over the plan, was how he would disable all the women around the shrine. Now Shota finally understood and smiled at the thought.

"You never told me you have a tranquilliser gun."

"This was not easy to find. It's filled with animal tranquilliser, quick acting and will keep the ladies out for a few hours. Tell your men not to do anything creepy."

"What about the people watching through the surveillance cameras?"

"Takumi is taking care of that. He has already caused a feed back loop on the surveillance system and we should be good to go for twenty minutes. But I can't stress how important this situation is. It will only take one gunshot to bring the rest of the women charging. Do not let anyone fire their weapons and be careful they have live ammunition. They will kill you!"

Royce felt his heart race with the thought. Seems like the women would not take any prisoners. It was kill or be killed, a very narrow-minded philosophy if he did say so himself.

With the two guards disabled, Royce and his team moved forward towards the entrance. The arch to the door was painted in a gold paint that glowed with radiant beauty. The majestic light above almost hypnotised the rest of Royce's team. He was almost hooked until it flickered, breaking the bond. Once Royce realized what was happening, he smashed the light; it was a booby trap set to hypnotise young lads into starting at it until they were caught.

"Watch out. This place is full of booby traps."

They carried on. The first line of defence was a keypad that prevented the door from opening. Royce was unable to obtain the code so they had to use old-fashioned spy tactics to hack past the lock and into the building. Removing the protective cover from the lock, one of the computer hackers of the group went to work. He prodded this and that, caused a spark and then a green light appeared next to the reader's mechanism. Royce assumed the door was now unlocked and he slowly turned the handle.

Glancing through the crack of the door, his eyes laid upon cute young women lying in erotic positions as they fell to the floor knocked out by the temporary gas that was released by the second team. He could have allowed lustful thoughts to run rampant in his mind, but this was not the time, he had a mission to complete.

The first group marched through the door and into an open room that was obviously the reception. Everything was written in Japanese of course and several members of the team rushed in and took their stations.

"Looks like the gas knocked out all the women. You got to love the chemical club, they know how to make an agent capable of knocking out women," said Shota

"The girls would not expect an attack by the boys," Royce replied. "But don't let your guard down, anything can happen and I'm sure the gas will not work a second time."

Suddenly a slim elegant woman jumped out from a shady corner, swings her foot around and began disabling the first man. Shocked at the sudden appearance of this person. Royce backed away, stunned and watched the sporty woman in black hair swing around for another blow. With him now in her crosshairs, Royce backed away in terror. He did not expect someone to dodge his carefully laid plan and no one was supposed to be on duty until the morning. Still, with blazing eyes coming for him, Royce almost forgot he had his weapon. He quickly raised it and fired.

"Shit," Royce exclaimed. "The gun's empty."

The woman spoke while flying through the air, preparing to land a decisive blow. "I hate boys!"

Royce covered his eyes and prepared for his doom, but when he felt no impact, heard no noise, he slowly uncovered his eyes and saw a Shota standing before him with a smile on his face.

"Don't worry, I've taken care of her!" he announced proudly.

Royce looked down and saw the slim figure huddled on the floor, unconscious.

"Waah! I guess James Bond could do with an assistant."

Royce offered a smile as his gratitude and padded down his top after it became wrinkled by his sudden panic attack. He never felt so small.

"Here," Shota said as he walked over to the second sealed door. "I think this door leads to the shrine."

The young man walked over to the door and attempted to satisfy his idle curiosity. It would stand to reason that the organisers of this place might have locked this door too. But when he pushed the door with his index finger, it just opened.

“Eh~?” Royce said with confidence. “Looks like it’s an easy ride from here.”

“As if they had just stepped into a hidden crypt of gold, gold plated tickets glistened as the team walked into the room. Reflecting from all directions Royce wished he brought his sunglasses because the brightness of the room was of fiery gold.

Several walls lined the centre of the room and the floor was also covered in a reflective surface that was so perfect, one could see the intricate detail of their face on it. Polished to perfection, this must be the cleanest place on Earth.

“Look at this place,” one club member gawked; arms open, spinning at the size of it all. “I would not have believed it.”

“Believe it,” Royce said. “The girls have the names of everybody who ever attended the school. Look.” He pointed to the gold nametags that contained Japanese characters and the perverted behaviour they were originally caught for.

More information was available in the computer database, but that would only take a computer hacker to change the records. All of that would be useless unless they can physically remove their names from inside the building.

“Come, we must hurry, there isn’t much time.”

Royce went off and searched for his own name. He knew the general location of where his name might be located and he searched around for any familiar surroundings he saw from the CCTV footage.

First he began by locating all the cameras in the room. Once he found the correct camera, he was able to point to his nametag that was hanging on the wall.

It was an odd feeling seeing his name on the wall. Its golden leaf matched sea of names that stifled everybody’s chances of a successful life. Royce grew mad at every minute that passed. This whole place was wrong.

“Change of plan.” Royce stopped the young hopefuls from removing their names. “We’re going to burn the place down, destroy everything!”

Chapter 34

“What!...Are you crazy?” Shota exclaimed. “You can’t be serious?”

“Look around you.” Royce extended his left hand and slowly moved it around the unlimited number of gold plated nametags. It was the ultimate destructor of life, a force that damaged men’s reputation and killed any chance for a future.

“Burn this place down? How can we do such a thing?” Shota asked, glancing around nervously, as if a horde of women could rush in at any moment.

“It looks like this place is heated by gas fires. With all this fabric and paper everywhere,” Royce touched the fine silk hangings and paper notes that were piled on the tables. It provided the perfect fuel for the fire. “Then all we need to do is rupture the gas pipes, set a timer on the cooker and wait for the whole place to explode.”

“Do you really think it would work?” One member asked.

“I’m not sure. But when Kenta-san hacked into the CCTV system and update the records, he said the main server for the database was located here.”

Royce felt the pressure of time weigh him down. He knew time was rapidly running out and there was no cause for a mistake. He could recommend everyone to

stick to the original plan but what would happen to all the lost souls who would have to live by themselves for the rest of their lives. He could not let one small mistake punish them for the rest of their lives. Royce balled his hands into fists and stood by his resolve.

"We're going to do it. James Bond would blow this place up." That's what he does anyway in the movies...

As expected, some of the members agreed, while others glanced around with no idea what to do. But Royce was not going to let them stand by and do nothing. There was still work to be done and with ten minutes left before someone noticed the loop on the CCTV. He issued orders, he had to.

"Everyone, change your name plates and keep the originals with you. If the fire does not melt the gold plates, they will destroy the fake ones."

Smashing gas lines and spilling fuel all over the place they obtained from the emergency generator room, Royce and the club members took pity on the female guards and carried them off to safety. With their plates changed, gas filling up the Hall of Shame, Royce set the timer for five minutes and legged it out of the building. In theory, the fire would engulf the main hall and everybody else would have time to escape. But just for good measure, he activated the fire alarm before setting the timer. By the time the men had escaped the building, lines of women stood at the fire assembly point dazed.

Rina Matsuyama spoke up and Royce recognised that annoying voice anywhere. "Who set the alarm off...whose idea of a joke was this?"

BOOM!

The pyramid segment of the dome exploded in an awe-inspiring show that sent shrapnel high into the air, causing the dazed women to fall to the ground. The burning building was spectacular to watch; Shota's team watched in amazement as their hopes and freedom suddenly came back to them. With no records of their past deeds, the club members clapped hands, hugged and cheered over the roar of the fire.

Royce stood up, feeling the burning heat on his back. He smiled, that smile of success, but he also hoped no one was injured in the blast.

"You have done an outstanding job. The database is destroyed and the Hall of Shame is gone forever. The authorities have put it down to an accident, but even if they knew it was arson, the investigating police forces were on the Wall Of Shame anyway. They're just as happy to see the lot go up in a ball of flames than we are. I bet they would even thank us for such a daring move if they knew who did it."

Royce slid further into his chair and hoped that his little mission was now over. He could get back to the job at hand and perhaps leave the club and return home. It was still late and he had grown weary of the whole ordeal.

"If it's all the same I would like to go home and catch up on some much needed sleep I've been denied over the past few days. I'm sure the rest of you could do the same."

"I guess we all had a long week and with the Hall of Shame now destroyed, we can now rest easy at night. But I would like to arrange a celebration for tomorrow. I think this calls for a victory celebration against the girls."

Royce had a feeling that if this celebration was not regulated (and fast) the women could know about what they'd done and seek revenge.

"I suggest we all keep the party quiet. We don't want to attract too much attention otherwise we could be back to square one."

“Square one?” Shota asked, confused.

“Yes, back to where we began...the women could rebuild the Hall of Shame and put our names at the very top. At least if they rebuild the place, our names have a high chance of being missed out completely.”

Royce suddenly had a horrible thought. What if his excellent idea only made things worse? What if they kept a copy of the database off-site and had recorded footage that was sent down the Internet? What if they rebuild the place again and restored all the names? He hoped the women did not have the money or the will to build a new facility, but he always underestimated women.

“Don’t worry about it Royce. The women in this school are idiots. They won’t suspect a thing,” Shota said with a huge smile on his face. He walked over to plans pinned to the wall and gladly tore them down.

Royce stood at the bottom of the road that snaked its way to his hotel. In all the excitement, he had forgotten about the people staying at his private home. How he forgot that little fact was beyond him but thoughts about that small abandoned shack that was hidden from sight halfway up the road suddenly became a good place to stay. But his new story was waiting to be written and the events of today would provide the ideal plot. He could only write his adventures back at his hotel and he had no choice but to trudge along the path up to his invaded home. He wondered what he would find at the place, but even his assumptions would not brace him for what was around the corner.

Even from a distance, the sea of light could be seen breaking the dense underbrush of the forest and Royce already had terrible feeling about what was waiting for him. Was Rina throwing a party? He knew Yumi could not do such a thing because she wanted to remain unobtrusive, but his new guest was completely different.

The light grew brighter the closer he got, and when he finally turned the corner on the dirt road he became wheezy at the sight of his home. It had been completely invaded by women!

“What the hell is going on here?” Royce exclaimed as he glanced at the many horny eyes staring back at him. It would have been an unbelievable sight that could only exist in the world of Manga, but it was right in front of him.

Royce lost count of the amount of women who walked in and out. The place was a bustle with activity like a busy hotel.

“All my comrades have decided to stay here for a few days! What does it look like?” Rina snapped back, crossing her arms over her huge breasts.

“But why are they in my hotel?”

“Somebody blew up our home beside the Hall of Shame, and now the team have no place to stay. Since they were enlisted for this week, they no longer have a place to stay. They come from all over Japan to protect the sacred site, now it’s all gone.”

Royce knew exactly what was going on. He was the individual who led a strike team into the forbidden place and blew it up. He had no idea this would be the repercussion.

“But you can’t stay here? This is my home!”

“Your home? It looks and feels like a hotel, besides, you’re not going to leave all these women stranded are you?”

"Please, can we stay for a few nights?" A short blonde woman, in a skimpy tank top and shorts rubbed her breasts, accidentally, over Royce's ramrod body. It was only a moment ago he'd been battling these maidens of darkness.

Royce bowed his head; there was nothing he could do. Obviously they made themselves at home and unless he wanted a riot, or kicked out of his own place, he decided to back down.

"But what about your mansion, Rina-san?" Royce remembered her own home. It should be perfect.

"I told you not to call me by my first name!"

"Sorry, force of habit. So, your home should be perfect?"

"My home is being renovated, it's uninhabitable at the moment."

"What, the whole place?"

"Yes."

"What happened to your home? Did it burn down?"

"That's two questions. Do you have any more or will that do?"

"Don't side track me," Royce warned.

"Oh, I am so sorry, we're getting a little sensitive today aren't we?" Rina said sarcastically.

Royce ignored the comment and picked up his bag he dropped on the floor the moment he saw the army of women at his home. The boy to girl ratio was very wide and he was able to count approximately 8 females in his line of sight already.

"How many guests will be staying?"

"About twenty five?"

Royce's mouth was agape in shock. In any normal circumstance, any young man would be overwhelmed with excitement when they learn that number of women who would be staying in their house, however, even if Royce had some level of satisfaction with the large number, he had secrets he wanted to keep to himself.

With his rules clearly explained, Royce decided to leave the women to their elements and he quickly made his way to the safety of his room. He thanked the builders for their work in the reconstruction of the place, but he wondered if it would have been beneficial to only have a few rooms refurbished and the rest of the hotel left in tatters. At least the army of women would not have stayed in his place.

Royce sat on the edge of his bed and heard the incomprehensible chatter through the walls. His room was on the second floor and despite its isolation and protection from the elements, he could still hear them talking. It added to the living sounds of the house and he wondered what they were talking about. It was a nerve-racking experience to be living under the same roof as so many young ladies, but he had to get his brain in gear and continue with his latest story.

The sun shone through the window and a cool breeze of fresh air travelled through his open window, cleaning the night's hard atmosphere away.

Birds sang in the trees and the rustling of nature created an orchestra of enchanting delight that gently woke him from his slumber. Or it could have been the horde of cute young beauties getting ready for school down on the front entrance that could have woken him up. All he knew is that the fresh scent of aromas from women's perfume mingled together to create a universal fragrance of delight he'd never experienced before.

Half naked, he walked to the window in a partial daze. Suddenly he saw the army of around thirteen women huddled together waiting to travel down the long path to school.

He kept silent and watched from a distance as Rina rallied them up and left. Royce surmised they must have gotten up early because they looked well fed and satisfied. He was sure the kitchen was not that fully stocked to cater for the army and he quickly put on his school uniform and inspected what was left of his home.

Expecting a huge mess, something he always witnessed in America when a large group of people visit someone's house for a party, Royce was pleasantly surprised to find the hallways clear, dining room scrubbed and sparkling and even the washing neatly stacked and clean. It looked like this group of rowdy teenagers operated differently than the adolescents in America.

"Are you okay?" a voice from behind said.

Royce spun in the spot and calmed down once he saw Yumi staring at him in her school uniform.

"Y-Yes, I'm okay."

"I'm sorry, I brought them all here. I only told Rina-san and when she came back from work, all her friends turned up."

"There's nothing you could have done," Royce said candidly. "The incident with your family is to blame. Although Rina-san is always blunt and annoyed with me, she's only looking out for your best interest. However, I'm wondering."

"Yes?"

"Why haven't you gone with your friends to school?"

Yumi looked into Royce's eyes, "I overslept and the others wanted to investigate the explosion."

"Explosion?" Royce asked. He knew what they were talking about, but like he said to the others in his club, it would be wise to deny all knowledge of the events last night.

"The Hall of Shame was attacked last night by a group of unknown individuals."

"Hall of Shame?" Royce replied, acting like he didn't know anything about it.

"Yeah, its something set up by the women of the school. But now its burned to the ground. Everyone is up in arms about it."

"So, what do you think they'll do?"

"I don't know," Yumi said as she walked over to the front door. It was already partly ajar letting in the fresh air. "But the people who burned down the place will be sorry when she catches up with them."

She left Royce with that thought as she gracefully left the building. Although he did everything possible to keep his presence out of the incident, Royce could not shake the feeling that he'd missed something.

Chapter 35

Activity at the school was not what Rina expected. The boys were more excited than usual. Even the lads who appeared down with lost hope for living seemed to have a new lease on life. She knew it had to do with the burning of the Hall of Shame and despite her best efforts to find out who was responsible she could find no clue. Everything was burned, including the security footage. Of course she had copies

stored offsite on an online server that could be used in an event like this, but when she logged in to retrieve the files, they were deleted with no hope of recovery.

Rina was trapped and she saw no way to escape her predicament. It also angered her that the hard work of all the girls had now gone to waste. The Hall of Shame was set up one hundred and fifty years ago, a heritage that was passed down from group to group, who were trusted to look after the place and update all the records. Even the international database was stored inside the building complex.

Not just her, but other members of the pact faced great shame and outrage. The elders, who entrusted the legacy, now wanted answers and she had none.

The room was black with darkened curtains. The only light came from twelve burning candles in the middle of the room. Six elders, covered in robes, faces disguised by blank masks stared at her. Rina was unable to tell what they were thinking.

"Do you understand what was required from you?" Said one of the masked women. Her voice was dark and hollow, like a queen talking down to one of her subordinates.

"Yes, I do."

"Do you know who committed this act?"

"I'm sorry, they eluded us."

"Don't worry my child." One of the masked women spoke as she stood to her feet. "We'll launch an investigation and punish those involved. Youthfulness learns as time goes on. We have years of experience in matters like this."

One by one, the candles magically went out in a systematic order. When the room fell into darkness there was a moment of silence before the blackout curtains dropped to the floor. With a wash of light illuminating the room, the masked people had vanished without so much as a trace.

Unable to contemplate what had just happened she stood to her feet and glanced around the room in awe. Baron and empty, the classroom, from which she was summoned too, now felt like an after echo of what could have been. Rina feared she would be swiftly punished for her lack of ability to defend the priceless Hall of Shame, but thankfully she was given a second chance. Or so she thought. She even felt sorry to the people who committed this terrible crime. The culprits might be celebrating their luck at the moment, but you can't suppress one hundred years of elder experience.

*

Rina arrived at her math lesson to begin when she noticed a disturbance in the classroom. It had nothing to do with the Hall of Shame being bombed to hell, nor the normal commotion that followed when a young girl trips over and shows her underwear in front of everybody. A new Manga, which was just released by Buster Writer, caused the disturbance and everybody was all hyped up about it.

Wondering what all the fuss was about, and angry at the fact her own Manga failed to create a level of attention this high, she merged through the group of boys and confiscated the glossy black magazine in her hands.

She glanced at the front cover and saw a familiar character she saw somewhere before, but no matter how hard she tried, she could not remember where the image of the cute anime girl came from.

It was a new character added to the story and when Rina began shifting through the pages, the whole plot seemed vaguely familiar.

Even the scene where the young man sneaks into the girls changing rooms, disguised with black shades, professional suit and the overexcited drawing of this individual grasping at a single, pink laced underwear on the top of some towels sparked a moment of outrage. It almost reminded her of the time Royce was caught stealing her own underwear.

Then her mind entered a phase commonly known as puzzle mode. Sparks would fly, and light bulbs would switch on at this stage. She was rapidly putting pieces of the puzzle together and it was at that very moment, she suddenly remembered where the image of the cute anime girl came from.

It was back in the car at Tokyo that everything fell into place. When she was rescued with her friend, Rina saw the file fall to the floor. It was an odd experience at the time. *Why would Royce have an image of an anime character when he's not Japanese and can't draw?* She thought it was some drawing he brought, but she recognised the blueprints for a drawing concept anywhere because she made them herself for her own Manga. It all quickly fell into place.

By holding the Magazine in her hands, she finally understood who the author was. It was Royce. His ability to afford the hotel, the story in this issue that depicted himself getting caught, although in this story he got off scot free, and the strange behaviour he'd been showing towards her.

Oh my god! Does he know who I am?

The mystery was growing ever so thicker and she began to wonder what his real reason for being here was. She could not accept the fact that he was just a transfer student wanting to experience a new culture. It was obvious now that he came to her country to check her out, perhaps find out how she writes her Manga, discover her own secrets and use them against her. Rina scrunched the magazine in her hands, angry!

She glanced around the room, and sure enough, at the corner desk she saw Royce hiding away.

"That scheming twat, I'll have my way," she pledged to herself.

Chapter 36

Royce Hampton knew all the tricks and the perverted behaviour the young lads would pull when a new copy of his Manga came out. He'd seen it thousands of times; he will see it some more. But he enjoyed every moment of it and today was no exception.

With the introduction of his new character, thanks to the girl at the park about to be dog meat, Royce listened secretly as the young lads talked about how hot the new character was. He always had a way of introducing new characters and she was no mystery. His Manga hinted a new person would arrive, but he could not find the right person to do the job. That was until he discovered the girl in the park and merged it with Rina's personality.

His efforts seem to have paid off.

But as he glanced around, he saw Rina stare at him from afar. It was a familiar sight he recognised from time to time and he'd soon learned that ignoring these subtle changes could land him in trouble.

But just as Royce assumed that nothing could possibly spice up the school life any more, the principal walked in wearing her skimpy outfit – which he was more less certain she should not be wearing – and addressed the class.

"Aww, hello everybody," she announced, in her normal overexcited tone. "To celebrate the school's one hundred anniversary, I have decided to put on a celebration that will involve all the classes participating with their own chosen subject. It can be anything you wish, even a Cosplay café for the ones bold enough!" She waved her body in an innocent manor, clasping her hands and appearing overly excited in the thought. Royce thought it would be a good idea too, but he hoped he would not have to dress up like a cat again!

"That's an excellent idea, principal," Rina exclaimed. The class fell into an uncanny silence, as they never expected her to agree to something so crazy. "Our class could perform a cosplay class and Royce can dress up as a cat!"

They class fell into hysteria of laughter and Royce sank so far into his chair, he could see the chewing gum attached to the underside of his desk. How she read his mind was a wonder in itself, but her sudden idea to drag the class into performing a cosplay café was something he did not expect.

"I won't be doing something like that." Royce made his point firm. But no one listened. They never do.

*

During the whole class season, Royce saw Rina stare at him throughout the whole hour, as if she knew a juicy secret.

She held the magazine in her hand, and just before the bell rang, as if on cue, she waved the periodical discreetly in front of her desk. It was a clear indication that she might know who made it. Just for good measure, she opened the page to the new character and pointed at it, then to him. If that were not a dead giveaway, Royce would have thought there was something wrong with the girl. But just on the off chance that she might be randomly pulling some tricks, he decided to play it safe and keep quiet.

His rules had to be followed, even more closely now than before because she was staying at his home. It was a strange game of cat and mouse.

"Fabulous, I'll make the arrangements right away," chirped the principal as she exaggeratedly left the classroom, exposing just a small sample of her purple underwear to the class.

Royce could see the shocked looks on the pupil's faces and he too could not believe the extreme the school had become. One moment everybody was enjoying the release of his new Manga, and the riches he would make, then the next, the principal was gesturing a slick celebration. Royce was almost sure the principal arranged for this celebration just so she could have the cosplay café and see how cute the students looked.

So, with knowledge about what the class would be up to in the coming weeks, he knuckled down and completed his studies. But he wondered about the deep lingering thought that his secret could have been leaked.

*

Escaping the classroom when the chime sounded, Royce headed to the cafeteria to get some much-needed food. He did check out the vending machines down the hall and he could not quite understand the Japanese obsession with vending machines in the middle of nowhere. Sure there's an unprecedented number of them in the school. The school in his hometown only had one machine for the whole place; this school

however had over 20 of them all in seemingly random locations. Then, when he did find a machine, the sheer number of strange beverages for sale baffled him. Oh, how he would love to have a plain old coke without the different flavours added to it.

There was also coconut milk that he tried once; it tasted completely different, very sweet and warm, compared to the other crap he bought. Something that resembled urine was on sale, but he quickly walked past that, as with other bizarre and strange goods.

On the way home he would often stop by a small bank of vending machines just to see what was added. Everyday was the same and he slowly went through the list of available products. Experimenting with different types of beverages would sometimes put his life on the line. Who knows when he might taste that fatal drink that might send him running for the toilet? He'd gotten half way until all those women invaded his home from the *Hall of Shame* facility.

"Royce, James Bond...77..." A character spoke out through the chatter in the hall. Royce recognised it as Shota Kishi.

"You got it wrong, it's 007."

"Only details, you need to relax more. When you first came to this school, I thought you were going to be a boring dull and lifeless student. Being a foreigner we even planned to get you kicked out. But now, you're our greatest asset!"

Royce felt insulted, almost sad he joined the group. He spoke in a low voice, very low. "I feel honoured. Glad you changed your mind."

"Did you see the new Manga out? It's the best. I especially like the new character. She's super cute and has a butt of a goddess. I want to marry her!"

"She's a cartoon character."

"She's my one and only love..."

"But she's a cartoon character..."

"And she's the one for me. I will keep her on my wall right next to all the members of AKB48."

"AKB48?" Royce questioned.

"You don't know?" Shota exclaimed in surprise.

"Yeah."

"They are one of the most gorgeous girl bands out there. If you haven't heard of them, then you're in for a treat."

Most people would think Royce, of all people would have some idea who this girl band, AKB48, might be. In the past Royce did follow a girl band and he did all the crazy things one does when following a girl band. He was shamefully heart broken when they broke up and did their own thing.

That was until today.

"Hay, I know. You are the most successful person we know in creating plans and executing them. So far we have obtained so many panties for our little shrine that it's now overflowing out of the room."

You also helped us in the impossible mission to destroy the *Hall of Shame*. That was incredible. I don't know how you do it, but maybe we should organise a new plan to invade AKB48's house and steal all the band's underwear, we can even create our own shrine for that too."

Royce picked up his tray of food and quickly made an exit from his table. He vanished so fast, Shota lost track of him at a blink of an eye.

Royce could not believe his luck. From one perverted mission to another, and a girl band of all things. Sneaking into the girl's locker room, destroying the *Hall of Shame* was one thing, but this? Royce knew Shota was in serious need of help.

After completing his meal in silence and listening in to other people's conversations he jotted down more notes and moved to the next table. He just managed to move table again when someone sat down beside him and began. "I know who you are," Rina blackmailed.

"I-I don't know what you're talking about," Royce replied cautiously. He did not want to offer more information than he really had too. This was turning into be a heated argument and one slip-up could spell the end of his little campaign. He wanted to research Rina. Not have her research him. He prayed she would slip up, or say something that he could use to clear his name. Perhaps deny the whole incident and she would believe him.

"I know exactly who you are!" She pulled out the same magazine she'd been teasing him with back at the classroom. "Do you know what this is?"

Royce shrugged his shoulders. He knew the little witch was enjoying every moment of this. She slowly flipped through the pages, glancing at him, waiting for him to flinch, or smile, any kind of reaction that might signal something to her. He did not know what, perhaps she wanted to see the flush on his cheeks, embarrassment of his work laid out in view of everyone who walked past.

It only took just a few words to bring the horde of spectators. The little bitch knew this.

But Royce was not going down without a fight. Anticipating this kind of act, he too pulled out a rolled up magazine and rolled it out across the table right next to his copy. Royce could almost see the sparks fly as he opened the pink Manga and teased the characters with his finger. *Right, I got you now.*

Rina did not appear amused by this and flipped to the next page. She could not keep her mouth shut and Royce listened intently to what she had to say.

"This series, the author does not have any original ideas. He has to steal the experience from other people to get the fortune he does not deserve."

Royce almost wanted to slap the bitch. It might be experience from another person's viewpoint, but he had to go through hell to get it. Then again, there was another, even equal comeback.

"Well, at least he does not dream about pink bitches flying around the air with wands the shape of stars and some lame excuse of a school girl who could hardly do her own shoe laces let alone go to the toilet on her own. I mean look at this, what kind of dribble is this author trying to tell. Oh, its okay to wave a pink stick around and hope magic comes out of it."

Royce could almost see the pressurised steam ready to explode in a cataclysmic upheaval that would demolish the school. "But you know what's the worst, I feel sorry for all the people who have to waste their hard earned money to buy this girly trash."

The young man knew he was pulling all of her strings, what would she do next?

Biting her bottom lip, Royce watched as she shuffled slightly in her chair and sweat began to develop under her armpits. "Typical boy drabble. Who would want to buy a complete fantasy about spaceships, cute girls dancing around with strange pets as weapons and then randomly introduce some bimbo that does not add any movement to the story? If you ask me, the author of this Manga does not understand or wish to learn how a proper Manga is made. Look at this. Does this author even

know how to spell Japanese correctly, or draw the correct characters? His story plot does not even compare to the more famous Manga around."

Royce looked at the periodicals and added in defence. "But these two are the most successful stories in the Japanese market. The author must be doing something right. Think of all the money they're making. But I can't think much about the girly magazine. The author is probably some spoilt little twit with nothing better to do. Hell this magazine looks like it was made by a complete retard!"

Royce's words hit home. She stood, slapped him across the face and stormed out, carrying the magazine in her wake. Royce found the experience soothing, but the pain from the slap stung his face. "Ouch." He muttered as he watched Shota stroll on up.

"You really know how to upset a girl. What did you do? Anything perverted?"

"I asked her to wear a bikini and dance in the middle of the class for us during the celebration. I guess she did not like that," Royce lied. He could not volunteer any information about his status or that of his rival.

Yet.

"I thought you went off to attend something more important than chatting to me?" Royce asked, remembering the moment he lost track of Shota.

"I had to chat to a friend in the club. He says that since we took out the *Hall Of Shame*, he's finally managed to find the girl of his dreams and she's now going out with him."

"Congratulations!"

"It's been a total success. So far, our club has been herald heroes of the century and it's all thanks to you."

Royce grimaced at the remark. He only *went with them* on the mission and had a crazy idea to burn the place down. He did not expect this level of gratitude. He also feared his popularity rising from the gutter due to that incident. He put a lot of effort to hide his identity from the publishing world and he did not want to gain fame by being the one that destroyed a building.

Not only could this put him in mortal danger of being punished severely by the women of the school, but this could expose his involvement with one of the most popular Manga's in Japan.

When he started writing, he never imagined success this level of success. It might come with its riches, but it also came with its flaws.

Royce glanced away from his food that consisted of rice and fish and looked Shota in the eyes. "So, what are you planning on dressing up like at this Cosplay café?"

The young man looked towards the sky, placed his finger to his chin and smiled. "I think I'll be the character in this magazine you're holding."

Royce grumbled.

Chapter 37

The preparations for the school's celebration continued without problem and Royce did everything possible to keep out of it. He refused to be part of this silly gimmick but his lounging around in the corner of the classroom did not go unnoticed.

After insulting Rina, he was now on her hit list. Staying out of her way would have been a good idea, if the class did not involve him in the festivities.

"I think this would fit perfectly," Akina Oda teased. She held out the fancy consume and Royce flinched at the outfit. He waved his hand in defence.

"No, I'm not wearing that!"

"Why not? You looked so cute in it last time. Those big blue eyes of yours. The strong cheekbones. It makes you look like the perrrrrrrrrrfect candidate to dress up like a cat. I'm sure we can get you to lick some milk from a bowl. I believe all the customers will go wild seeing you on all fours bent--"

Royce could not stand the insult anymore. It might have been funny the first time, but he would not do it a second time.

"I *will not* put on that cat dress!" Royce shouted. He paused as he suddenly had an idea. He turned to all the men in the class and said, "but I would love to see Rina in that outfit!"

He glanced at her with malicious intent and Royce felt the cheer erupt in a fury behind him.

"Yeeeessss!!!" Everyone cheered. The prospect of seeing him in a cat dress suddenly felt completely obsolete compared to Rina, who the dress was suited for. With a sudden stampede of feet, smoke and a herd of girls joining the fun, everyone helped out in creating a lovely piece of art.

Dust. Smoke. Upheaval. That's all Royce saw. But he didn't know how Rina would look in a cat costume. With her screaming, and later weeping, he waited with anticipation while the dust settled.

Slowly, a faint outline of a feline human size person could be made out. All the young lads in the room held their breath in high hopes. The tense atmosphere was so thick; a simple knife could have cut it. As more of the dust settled and the sunlight beamed over the figure, the slim silky costume snuggled Rina's form perfectly. Royce looked at her soft tender legs, not a mark of hair on them. He slowly gazed up her body with his hungry eyes and the moment he passed her womanhood, sparks began to fly in his mind.

His waist began to buckle with something growing beneath, and as his eyes set upon the fabric of the dress that hid her undergarments. His perverted glare continued with such ferocity, she could have felt his piercing hot gaze upon her body.

Moving on, he continued to admire Japanese perfection. He looked past her gentle soft stomach, up to her large breasts that filled into the pockets of the costume and then her shocked face that was layered over by shyness. The catlike ears completed the sight perfectly. He wanted a camera; he wanted to take a picture of the moment. He never would have thought Rina would look so beautiful and excitingly erotic.

The highlighted red markings on the edge of the frilly skirt and around the breast pockets brought out her eye colour. Her pigeon-towed posture made her completely open to suggestion. She glanced around and he felt some level of pleasure, knowing she was now wearing the very dress he'd wore, naked. His smell,

hard pressed on her body. She probably didn't even know it. The last time he checked, the dress had not been washed. It was as if he'd just pressed his naked body upon hers while she slept. It was bad!

Royce looked to his right and saw Shota drooling over his desk at the sight before him. Royce looked to his left and saw more lads drooling all over their work. The girls who forced the dress on Rina stood back in shock, completely unprepared for the result. Gasping with delight, the young lads marvelled at what was before them.

"Wow! Rina you look wonderful in that dress. It certainly is a surprise to see you in a different outfit other than your school uniform," a class member said. Royce did not know whom, everybody was murmuring at the same time.

The crowd of ladies came closer to smother the new beauty in her prime. Royce could only glance at a distance and the class cheered on their new mascot.

"I know," another voice spoke out, over excited. "You must wear this to the celebration. We must have you there. With you wearing this costume at the cosplay café, we're sure to have all the boys in the school lining up to get in."

It was after that sentence Rina finally returned to reality and tried to escape from the embrace the girls had over her. Fighting off the herd she yelled, "I will not wear this damn dress, it's disgusting. I don't want to wear it. I am the class president, I have a reputation to keep up, how can I possibly do my job if my reputation is ruined?"

She managed to get herself free and scrambled to the far side of the classroom, falling over as she went. With her butt in clear view for everyone to see (although the dress was just short enough to cover everything while she stood but the moment she bent over, or fell over in this case, it was amazing how short it became.) a string-like garment was seen clearly. It's the first time he'd seen Rina wear a thong.

Brought to the brink of almost crying, Rina got to her feet and made her escape. Her clothes neatly piled on the ground. Royce knew there was only one place she could run off too. However, running home in a cat costume was dangerous and embarrassing: *What was she thinking?*

Royce was not completely heartless. He did have a small amount of compassion for the girl. She did look after Yumi Kosaka and he decided to leave the class and accompanied her back to his home. She might not be his friend, but standing by while her world fell apart was an experience he was used to and he would not want that to be bestowed upon his worst enemy.

With that mode of thinking, he decided to leave the classroom and rush off and catch up with the cat girl.

*

The weather was scorching hot and even wearing the bare minimum of school uniform made no difference because the heat his body produced made him sweat badly.

Royce made every effort to find Rina. She might be hard willed, but dressed like a cat would be dangerous for her especially if she strolled down the side streets of the town. Even the blistering sun could not keep the darkness away from those shady places. Royce was sure that despite this town's kind and caring appearance, he could tell by his manly senses that this town had a small net of bad people who would not hesitate to cause trouble. Besides, the town had the *Hall of Shame*, a club

dedicated to women's underwear and even a perverted teacher who would wonder the halls looking for any unsuspecting male to pounce on. *Surely there must be a law in Japan for this kind of behaviour?*

He stepped on the path that would lead him up to his hotel and followed the many footprints in the dirt. That same muddy track leading up the hill kept an interesting record of all the people who ventured to his home. Not only that, since he had his privacy invaded by all the women from the Hall of Shame settlement, he found it rather amusing at how dirty everyone's shoes became. His guests tried their best to keep up appearances, but brown dirt always had a way of showing how poor the richest brat was.

"Are you looking for Rina as well?" A soft gentle voice spoke up from behind the shadows.

Yumi walked forward in her black uniform highlighted by red stripes along the edges, she looked incredibly cute in the backdrop of green.

"I wanted to see if she was okay."

"But you don't like her," she said bluntly, or was it jealousy?

"Well, even I have some slither of compassion for the girl," Royce rightfully said. He was not a monster.

"I don't think she'll appreciate your comments. She might kill you."

"Why would she do that? I thought we were getting along."

Yumi almost snickered at that remark. Royce sure had a way to make even the toughest of girls smile, and it was very rare to see her smile.

"You said some nasty things to her."

"We only had a friendly debate," Royce replied smartly. He scratched an itch on the back of his neck and continued to walk up the path. With the ground now hard from the intense sunlight, tracks that were made in the muddy rain were now obstacles to avoid. Yumi on the other hand appeared to float over the hardened tracks. Her graceful movements seemed perfect for a girl of the country.

"What will you do once you see her?"

"I would love to get a picture of her in that costume," Royce immediately replied. "That was a joke."

The girl did not agree so he told the truth.

"I would like to know if she's okay. She left her bag and belongings back at school and she would be lost without them. Also, she should not be touring around the country in that outfit, she could get kidnapped by a passer buy."

"I think she went home." Yumi pointed to a figure sat solemnly outside the main entrance to his hotel. The door was locked and the only way in was with a key. But Yumi knew of her own way in. Since she was now officially staying at the place, the need to sneak around had vanished.

Royce and Yumi walked up to the front of the hotel and her seated position turned the young man on. It was very erotic. He kept his eyes on her body, analysing every curve until he reached the bottom of her skirt and saw the magical silky line of underwear she was inadvertently showing. Once she noticed their approach, she stood, dress filling out perfectly over her form. She even forgot to take off her cat ears. Royce wanted to say: *Purr for me kitty!* Oh, how he would love to hear her purr!

"You left all your belongings back at the school" Yumi said. She walked forward and handed a plastic supermarket bag with her clothes and items inside. Royce stayed back, out of the way.

"Do you think it's wise to get all upset over an outfit?" Yumi continued.

"They embarrassed me in front of the whole class."

"You did have it coming. How long did you think everyone would respect you by the way you shout and bully everybody?"

"I don't bully people," Rina exclaimed. She snatched the bag and looked at Yumi sourly

"I'm surprised you would say such a thing."

"I'm only looking out for your best interest."

"My best interest!" Rina laughed out loud. "That's a first."

Royce stood in the sidelines as the two girls battled it out. It seemed a strange scenario that took him by surprise. On one side of the coin you have a woman who is shy and quiet, keeps herself to herself and would not get involved with arguments. But she was clearly arguing with her friend who was the more mature and iron-fisted type when it came to matters of pride and operations. After all, they did not call her the class president for nothing.

As the topic heated up, Royce was not going to stand outside in the heat and listen to the boring debate. The school was going to be busy tomorrow with preparations. He'd read many Manga's about behind the scenes group-gatherings, fixing things and preparing for the next day. He was looking forward to it because his next Manga was going to have such a feature, a class celebration.

*

If there was one thing Royce knew how to do well, it would be the ability to stand in the distance and observe the surrounding area. Even from his room, located on the second floor of the hotel, he could hear the debated discussion below. Yumi and Rina were friends so the conversation was concerning and compassionate. He guessed that Yumi was worried her friend left the school so dangerously, especially looking erotic as that. Royce enjoyed the view and the longer they argued; the longer he could watch the beauty in her cat costume.

Then there was that flashing cursor on his screen. He was asked by a few representatives of the publishing house to write a review about his latest Manga. He had written his own negative review about Rina's work many days ago and as expected, she returned the favour.

What the publishers wanted was his response to the whole development. It wasn't just the Manga's that caught the public's attention, but the ongoing battle between the two authors. It was a cat and mouse game, with each author flogging each other off. The public thought it was funny and it drummed up sales way beyond everyone's imagination. It was a family matter and fun to read in the newspapers.

When he had something to write, he would dash off to his computer and write his report. He wanted to use this moment to pass a secret message on to her. He knew she knew about his secret and it was probably one of the reasons she would not talk to him again. If he could get the last word in, it would make him feel good. So he began typing, sipping a hot cup of tea as he wrote.

Rina should be avoided, as well as crossing paths with Shota. His comments were detailed and crucial. Too much detail and the entire class would know he was referring to Rina. Too little and she might not get the message. He had to use something she was close too and he knew exactly what to use. *Perrrrrrrfect...*

Once he closed the word processor and sent the E-mail, he could no longer hear Rina and Yumi outside arguing. He assumed they'd sorted out their differences

and moved on. Royce needed a hot cup of tea and made his way down to the kitchen, it wouldn't hurt to see what the two were doing.

*

The place was quiet because the horde of women had moved on to their own homes. Since the *Hall of Shame* was destroyed it was now pointless staying there, the girls felt uneasy staying with a man!

He walked down the first flight of stairs and heard muffled chatter in the meeting lounge. Laid out in random order, the expensive chairs he bought from the Japanese house-wares store looked like they had seen better days.

Having a whole gang of women sitting all over them would introduce a level of wear, but he could smell the female aromas associated with life. He would love to sit there all night, all alone, but Rina and Yumi were having a heart to heart so he decided to sneak past.

He found his way into the kitchen and as expected from his butler, the place was pleasantly cleaned and his food in the fridge. He wondered how his butler coped during the great female invasion but he would have to ask tomorrow. Every day at 9:30pm, the butler would leave the home and return to his family. He would return at 8:30am in the morning to begin his duties. He was a good man, always on time and never a disappointment.

As he stirred the pot of milk and began pouring its contents into his man size cup a few moments later, a sharp voice broke out from across the room. "I'll be returning to my home after tonight. I would like to stay longer, but I can't stand the sight of you."

Royce poured the milk and turned to face her. "Can't take the heat yeah?"

"I had no idea you're the author of those magazines! How pathetic."

"What did you expect honey? The Manga market is not only exclusively for the Japanese."

"Don't call me honey."

"You're the one who slapped me. If you don't like what I call you, don't hit me."

"You insulted my work."

"And you didn't insult mine? You did a good job at it love!" Royce pointed out by pointing the pint of milk in her direction before placing it in the fridge.

He was about to assault her with more words of wisdom but when he turned to face her again, she had already left. "Shit, did she hear my comment? I bet she believes she'd won the conversation."

Chapter 38

The next morning was uneventful as always. The two ladies were down in the lounge preparing themselves for the school fiasco later that day while Royce used the time to stay in bed as long as possible. But it would be the heat that finally got to him. Today he decided to have pancakes and a sausage for breakfast as he prepared himself for the day's events.

His home was empty, thank god, and the only signs of life were the odd raccoon and insects buzzing in the nearby tree.

Today was to be a busy day. The school was going to perform a celebration and his class was elected the lovely opportunity to be the only cosplay café out there. He had no idea what was installed for him, but there was no way he would submit himself to that kind of torture. But the thought of seeing Rina in that cute cat outfit brought back perverted memories. But seeing it in the bin confirmed she would not wear it today.

His mobile rang and holding his fork in one hand and the phone in the other, he used his nose to press the answer button. "Yes?" he asked, shovelling a mouthful of pancakes.

"Our club is going to make an appearance today."

Royce nearly choked on his pancake, "You can't be serious? In my own class, what kind of stuff are you doing?"

"Do you know how much money we could get for photos of cosplayers up skirt shots?"

"Not much, they are commonly available on the internet," Royce replied absent maidenly.

"So, you have been prowling the internet late at night looking for cosplayers?"

Royce could tell by the slight sarcasm tone he was being shifty. *Nasty little shit!*

"I was working on a project."

"Yeah, right... Anyway, when are you coming in?"

"I'll be at school in one hour. The first period will be organising the plays, the costumes and set-up of the event. I'm not part of it, not interested."

"But you must come," exclaimed Shota. "All the girls are walking around in their cosplay outfits, so many, Angels, Demons, Space cadets, the list is endless."

"I think I'll stay here," Royce muttered, gulping down his tea before the conversation heated up.

"But your help is urgently needed. Remember the chat we had back in the cafeteria?"

"No," Royce lied. He remembered the conversation well. In fact, he remembered every second he'd been in Japan.

"Of course you do. Listen, Tani Namiko will be there. She's hosting the scuba club today."

Royce was suddenly interested. At last, he had a moment to finally learn something about his star character. For this past week, he'd looked for any excuse to mingle with this new person and now he might have found that perfect opportunity.

"Is she really?" he said, keenly.

"I thought that might pique your interest. Do you have some interest in that girl?"

"What do you know about any interest I might have?"

"I am the president of the Club. They don't call me club leader for nothing."

"That's still not going to change my question," Royce projected, staying on topic.

Royce heard a sigh then the sudden and final change in topic. "So, I take it you're going to school then? Great. I'll see you there."

The call ended before Royce had the chance to ask any more questions. He liked the way he managed to change the conversation around. First it was Shota asking the questions and then it was him.

There was no excuse now. Even though he knew Shota would be there – up to his perverted tricks – he would have to brave the risk for the reward of talking to Tani.

*

The route to school was the same today, but it lacked one important person, Yumi. Normally he travelled with the young girl and it became a novelty, a thing they did together. It was rather sweet and he enjoyed the company of a beautiful young woman at his side, someone he could look after while on the way to school. Sure lots of young lads gave here the *can I walk with you* stare. But he was the lucky man to have the privilege.

But his deepest need for walking her to and from school was the off chance he could run in to her step-uncle and demonstrate the American way to him. The man should not beat up children, certainly someone as timid and valuable as her. Royce decided to do something about it, when he had the chance.

The bike ride to the school took roughly fifteen minutes through the roads, past the river, along the plantation fields and through the town. Traffic was not an obstacle and he often stopped by the local store for his daily dose of strange drinks. To walk was more complicated, slower and much more personal.

He had the time to think, plan and enjoy the scenery.

There was much to see in Naka and lots of people to watch. The start of his walk was the same as the bike ride. Down the track that wended through the forest from his hotel. Once he was on the pavement, he could take the road into town, or travel through the fields and riverside. He preferred the banked up riverside because the fresh smell of water and the aromas from the plantation field cleared his mind and opened up the creative spark that was so hard to find. Then when he finally came to the outskirts of town, a simple walk through the gardens and parks finished the blissful peace when he joined the small crowd of teenagers on their way to school.

The first time he came to this town he was not sure on which route would take him directly to school. So he looked at the map and went directly there, but on his travels around the town, he found neat little pathways that snaked through side streets and he could spy on people performing their daily routines. He found the town interesting and the townsfolk friendly.

Often he would stop by an old person's teahouse on the way home and sit for long hours talking to the old man. He was hunched well in his eighties and had lots of stories to tell. He knew all about the *Hall of Shame* and how the school failed from grace. He was pleased about the community's spirit in raising the status of the school but he hoped business would pick up.

His Japanese was slow and easy to understand. Of course there were some odd words he had to pause for a moment as he typed them into his translator and soon, the old man was teaching him how to speak Japanese. He always thought the old people had much to tell and this person was no exception.

Every time he approached the black school gates Royce always felt a sense of nausea before he went in. He could only relate it to excitement, filled with apprehension on what might happen today. So far his experience in Japanese life had been extreme to say the least. From the moment he stepped foot through the gates he's been rejected and humiliated.

Then he was forced into a club to perform perverted acts that only fuelled his manly desires. He felt much more of a pervert than when he came to the school to start with. Instead of learning good things, he began to pick up on the bad, but he could not complain, he was old enough to decide on his own.

Due to the extreme heat of the day, most if not all the windows in the school were open and most of the classes were out in the lush green playgrounds, enjoying the sunshine and the brisk wide-open sky. Not a single cloud could be seen and Royce regretted not putting on sun cream, although the amount needed would probably plaster his skin white.

For half an hour he spent his time pudding around the different set-ups, gauging the area and trying to locate his own class. Classes mingled with each other. After half an hour he still could not find them. Finding a bunch of people in cosplay costumes should be easy.

It wasn't.

Instead, he bumped into the principal who offered her gratitude in a far too revealing manner.

"Oh, its, my favourite foreign student," Royce braced himself as a bikini clothed principal gunned for him like an addict on cocaine. Her long slender legs galloped in front of each other and before Royce knew what hit him, the young man was feeling her scorching hot body all over. Skin contact with skin, her feminine sweat and essence instantly mixing with his. The whole incident made him rock hard and excited. Her skimpy red and yellow striped bikini, with a hat only added fuel to the fire as he battled to control himself.

"My, my, my. Aren't we hard today? Don't you know if you want me, all you have to do is ask?"

Royce swallowed hard. It must have been the heat effecting her judgement because the last time he checked, she was not *that* direct with him. But then again, his memory could be playing tricks on him.

"O-Okay," Royce muttered as he slipped out of her embrace and rushed off to freedom.

*

Trying to be normal, Royce took a long walk around the school to find his class. He shook off the incident with the principal; her sweat still lingered on his arms. He explored the inside the school one last time. He decided enough was enough and he trotted over to his classroom and waited there for any activity.

Then he heard a voice.

"What are you doing?" Royce glanced up from his desk and saw Yumi staring at him from the doorway.

"I'm staying out of trouble."

"Our class is outside."

"I know, but finding them is difficult. They're all mingling with other students." Royce stared at Yumi oddly and she quickly picked up on it.

"Why are you looking at me like that?" She asked.

"All our classes are supposed to be preparing themselves for the festivities. I thought you would be wearing your cosplay costume. What will you dress up as?"

Royce did not receive an answer, just a cold-hearted glare. After a moment of awkward silence, she finally spoke.

"Rina has become very agitated with you. What did you do to her?"

“Do?” Royce asked, surprised. He thought everybody knew of their little chat and what *she* did. “I didn’t do anything to upset her *that* much.”

“She’s always talking about you. Revenge, hate, that sort of stuff. She also mumbled something about you being that author. Do you make books Royce?” She asked with a smile, as if she loved to read books. But he knew his work would be something she should never want to read, even if her burning curiosity got the better of her.

“I have dabbled in writing. You know, done a few things, nothing much.” He rubbed the back of his neck, so hard it almost bled.

“Oh, what kind of things do you write?”

Royce hoped she would not ask *that* question, but he knew all too well she would ask that question. Now he had to find a reasonable answer to avert her interests. The only thing he could do was to be evasive and that never worked.

“Nothing much. You wouldn’t be interested,” he mumbled.

“But I’m interested now. I would like to read what you write. Is it love? Is it adventure?”

Royce looked to his past and remembered the very first chapter of his Manga. It was supposed to be a proper professional edition that would gain him respect. But it turned out just as perverted as all the other Japanese stuff. He might as well call it *The Biggest Perverts in Space*. All he needed was aliens that wore knickers. He could not tell Yumi this. She would go nuclear.

“N-Nothing that would interest you,” he said evasively. He needed a topic to change to, something quick. “So, the celebration is tomorrow?”

“Are you changing the topic?” she asked in Japanese. Royce thought – for a split second – that he could use the language barrier as an excuse to escape her line of questioning. But he was not so lucky. He understood and spoke Japanese well and Yumi knew this. So the only way he could get out of his predicament was to chat until someone interrupted them.

There were lots of people in the school and surely someone would be looking for her. The as on cue, Royce saw Rina stroll up the corridor, look into the classroom and immediately rushed into the room.

“There you are! What are you doing with the freak? How many times have I told you never to go near him?” Rina shouted, like a mother to a child.

“The class is waiting for you. You will be the star maid. You must come!” Rina rushed into the room and grabbed Yumi’s hand. Confused, she hurried out and both vanished from sight.

Royce sighed. He was saved from that moment, but what about the next time? Odds were that she would forget about their little chat and everything would be normal. However, no matter how he looked at it, nothing was normal.

*

The scorching heat continued throughout the day and because the school was preparing for the festivities tomorrow, most of female populace decided to take a dip in the pool. Lucky the school had a huge outside pool, provided for by the *Hall of Shame* club many years ago. The organisers did under-the-table blackmail to high-ranking officials in Japan who *accidentally* landed on the Hall of Shame list and donated a considerable amount of money to the school and its cause.

Royce glanced through the hallway window and soon found encouragement to venture down to the poolside. All around young lads and girls were dipped in the

cool water, showing off what little of swimming costumes they had on. There were a variety of mixes, from red bikinis to bloomers that ordinary students carried to school. The situation was odd to Royce; as if everyone knew today would be a holiday.

"Do you know what day this is?" asked one perverted lad who glanced from one girl to another like he was window-shopping. He didn't even make an effort to look discreetly.

"I have no idea?" Royce replied, not because he wanted to strike up a conversation and chat to the scruffy individual, it was just an involuntary reaction to the question.

"It's the best day of my life," he replied, rushing off down the hall towards the girls at the poolside. A few moments later Royce watched the same individual rush over to the pool and dive-bomb right in the middle of the unsuspecting women. Their disappointed glances and angry slaps told him everything. This was going to be an untypical day.

*

Rina was there, that much was certain. From his viewpoint, he could see the nervous looks on some of the student's faces and he knew whenever she was around, the class would grow some level of uncertainty. She was the class leader and she wanted to improve the image of the school. Having a gang of women pouncing around in bikinis and showing off was not the type of behaviour a respectable school should show.

Royce strolled down the corridor and kept a close eye on the students. The sun reflected off the rippling water, often blinding him to the eye candy. Oh, how he would love to snuggle next to some of those young ladies, or extend his warm firm hands over their soft delicate skin and massage the lubricating oil into their backs-

"What are you doing?"

Shocked, Royce jumped from his leaning position beside the window and faced Rina head on. Equipped in a stunning wavy blue bikini with a frilly skirt Royce would have certainly fallen out of the window if there had been no glass. Shocked to the point of unbelieving, this marvel of beauty stood before him like a towering God.

Her hands were placed on her hips and the fact she'd appeared angry escaped him. "Ho. Hello Rina. What are you doing here?"

"I could ask you the same question. I've been watching you from the poolside spying on the students. What daydreams have you been having?"

Yeah, like I was going to tell her I was daydreaming about girls in bikinis and dreaming about rubbing my hands over their golden skin. He might not be the brightest spark in the school but he was not that thick.

"Umm, I...I..." Royce stuttered, pulling words out of the air. "I was just admiring the landscape."

There, surely she must believe that remark; after all, my improvisation must be excellent.

"Admiring the landscape? The landscape is up that way, not down at the pool," she exclaimed, not believing a word.

Royce had to say something smart. He felt as if Rina could reinvent the Hall of Shame just by the pure perverted behaviour he was showing. But then again, he was terribly distracted by her lustrous body. She was very fit, well built and

stunning. He felt a slight tingle through his body and the hairs on the back of his neck stood to attention. He didn't know what this feeling was, but her lips suddenly became juicy and he really wanted to kiss them.

Royce shook his head; *what the hell am I thinking...this is unbelievable!*

One moment he hated the woman then the next he wanted her. His mind became clouded and his judgement impaired. *It must be the heat*, he convinced himself.

But no matter how hard he looked at her, she was an overwhelming beauty who sucked him in and become hypnotised by her exotic looks.

"Why are you staring at me like that Royce? You better not have any perverted thoughts!" she hissed, moving closer.

Royce tried to stay away, but his legs suddenly turned to jelly and he felt his heart race into his throat. Small droplets of water glistened off Rina's body and her odour slowly ebbed his way.

Royce looked at the end of the corridor and decided he should make his escape. After all, he did not want to develop any more problems. He glanced back at Rina and gained some sense of dignity. "I've been trying to find our class, but it appears everybody has scattered all over the place. Is this common practise in Japan?"

Rina glanced at him for a moment and appear to study his remark. "This school's always like this; disorganised, childless and receiving poor marks. It's my job to put an end to it. I want this school to be successful."

"Why do you try so hard?"

"Why?" she asked, confused.

"Yes. You put a lot of effort in supporting students and the school, but no one shows any appreciation for your work. Look at them."

"No, you have it wrong. They care, but change takes time." Rina edged closer to him. "It's the same principle when they accept a new student."

"Even to this moment? You can work this hard and they still don't appreciate you."

"And you do?" she said snappishly.

"Off course I do," Royce said with some level of truth. It was unusual for him to be nice to her, but he could not treat a stunning woman like that in a bad way. It was his nature to be nice, no matter who the person was. "I also went out looking for you when everyone made fun of you in that cat costume, which, by the way looks very cute on you."

"Don't you start..." she said with a sigh. "Why did you go looking for me?"

"Because I am a nice guy."

She almost held back her disbelief and stared towards the corridor window, surveying the landscape with her eyes. The sun glistened off her tanned skin and her folded arms added to the surreal moment. Royce could almost mutter the words *I want you so badly* but the end result would probably be him hurt badly. He decided to keep his personal feelings to himself. He was supposed to study this person, find out how and why she writes.

Though there was little chance of him obtaining any more information about her, other than what she already knew, he could not help but be captivated by her majestic beauty, until a dark menacing voice boomed from the distance.

"Is this troublemaker causing you problems Rina?"

Royce turned to face the source of the voice. The sight he saw just made him fall over.

How a moment could turn into a raging inferno, Royce did not know. Outfitted with a ranger hat, military patterned bikini, ammunition belt and a fake cigar placed between her lips, Akina Oda acted like Clint Eastwood. She held her M16 rifle in the upright position as she stood in all her glory.

His eyes instantly fixed on her round firm breasts, hard nipples and then he glanced down to her butt where the bikini was so tight against her skin, and he could make out every outline. He did not know if it was sweat, or pool water that dripped off her body, nor why she was holding all those weapons.

"Akina-San, out on patrol?" Rina said moving towards her.

"You know me, someone has to keep all the boys in check. Do you know how many of the pesky lads I had to shoot with rubber bullets today? They can't keep away from the hot springs."

Royce interjected, mouth agape in shock. "This school has a hot spring?"

"Yes, of course it does. It used to be the highlight of the school many years ago, but it lost its popularity since the Matsu Bathhouse opened its doors a few towns down."

Royce could not believe the story. How convenient the school had a hot spring with naked girls segregated from the boys. It was almost a recipe for a perfect perverted show. Then again, this did give Royce some new ideas.

"So, why hasn't anyone told me about it?"

"Ha! Tell you?" Akina laughed out loud. "Why would we tell a perverted person like you? This school is already filled with perverted teenagers, we don't want another one knowing our personal space, especially a foreigner like you!"

"Surely the male population of this school can't be all perverted?" Royce asked. It stood to reason, the school had a lot of students, all mixed and even though the uniform for the women was very attractive this school had to have a band of normal teenagers.

"Don't you believe it? That's why Rina's working so hard to fix the school, get all the boys in shape. Now if you excuse me, I have some skulls to crack." Akina cocked her rifle and chewed on the end of her fake cigarette. Her hat and bikini were the only things Royce saw as she marched off towards the poolside. From the chaos down below, he knew the boys were going to get their medicine. But then again, Royce was analysing her from behind and enjoying every wiggle her butt checks made. *Oh, gotta love the young women at this school. I've died and gone to heaven.*

Chapter 39

The school swimming pool was not the only thing to surprise Royce. As he stepped outside into the blistering sunlight. He just learned the school had a hot spring nearby and the students would take turns to use it outside school hours...for a small fee of course. This provided the perfect time for the lads to plan their great peepshow. As always, the Underwear Club was the heart of the matter.

But today Akina was on the prowl looking for trouble.

Stood out in all her glory, Akina stood with legs apart, her right hand on her hips and her left on the M16, aiming it at the lads who slithered around like maggots from one cluster of girls to the next.

With a fake cigarette in her mouth she spoke and used great care not to muffle her words, "I have come here to chew bubblegum and punish bad boys."

A pause was followed by silence as all the lads stared in complete horror. "And I am all out of bubblegum."

Cheeky little bitch. Royce watched as Akina unleashed her definition of cleaning up the mess. All around him, young teenagers scattered in all directions panicking.

What possessed Akina to do such a thing was beyond him, but as she reloaded another magazine, terror filled the faces of the lads already injured.

Words of, "why is she doing this?" and "what did we do to her?" echoed from one end of the pool to another, but it was no use. She roared at the top of her lungs.

With calamity unfolding all around him, Royce felt the mood of the atmosphere change. He could stay and see what happened, but as usual, something out of the ordinary began to happen at the school. Akina was back in her element, going commando on everyone. Rina was all bad attitude and hard on him and even Yumi had vanished.

With the ruckus continuing, Royce left the area and explored the lands while a gentle cool breeze blew in from the south. His next stop was to wait beside the fountain in the school park. He didn't know why he was drawn to this place but the nausea of retracing his steps with the Tani was still a powerful memory, unhindered by the irregularity of time.

He remembered meeting her near the fountain, talking about her experience in the park all those days ago. He wanted to learn more about her, but he began to realize, he was beginning to like too many girls, which was not a good thing.

Royce had a simple mission; one he repeated to himself time and time again: Find Rina and learn her secrets. Once done, leave the town.

But in each instance, he grew close to his target and began making friends, even his enemies treated him differently then back at the states, it was as if they were slowly becoming a family.

Royce sighed. He enjoyed the company, loved the fact he was helping Yumi and her problem.

Royce saw a person approach through the left gate and once she got into range, he was pleasantly surprised to see Tani in all her glory. She wasn't wearing a swimsuit, but a normal school uniform.

"What are you thinking?" She moved her head to her left and analysed him intensely.

Royce decided to answer after reconnecting with the moment. "I was thinking about tomorrow."

"Tomorrow?"

"Yeah, our class is doing something typical," Royce replied sarcastically before waving his hand for no reason. "A cosplay café. I guess you already know."

"Yes, it's the talk of the school," Tani sat beside the fountain, straitening her dress before she sat down. "Everyone wants to see what type of costume Rina's going to wear. Her strong behaviour towards you has caused a bit of a stir around school. There is even talk that she likes you."

Boom! Those were the words that hit Royce hard. Someone else had just opened the door to something outrageous and even Royce felt his eyes open for the first time. He might have been a mortal enemy with the president of the class, but it appears she has finally gotten under his skin.

Then there was Yumi. Oh, that cute innocent girl who stayed at his place. She was an angel in her own right but Royce could not abuse his position.

Then there was her, Tani. Even though she stood in front of him in all her glory, she looked completely beautiful with her dark school uniform against her green hair. Her round curves and boisterous attitude only added to his fascination. He saved her life and he was recognising the signs of attraction anywhere.

“And what about you? Do you like me too?”

Royce saw her face grow bright red. She fluttered in her footsteps and stuttered a little before she bowed her head, apologised and ran off before answering his question. Royce was touched, and then came to the conclusion that nature was serving him up a nice harem scenario with three girls. He could not choose between them, and he was sure it was only a passing thing. After all, he was just a foreigner, *why would anyone like me?*

*

As usual the underwear club, run by one Shota Kishi, was up to no good. But not everybody was as perverted. On his adventures, Royce found five individuals who seemed as normal as the everyday people in the town. Kuma was studying science and his club gained the respect of most of the science division of the school.

His high grades and intriguing inventions earned him some attention from the teachers and the wider community. Royce spent half an hour talking to the well-dressed lad whose sleek appearance would be the envy of any girl.

His second normal student was Fukuda. He loved to read all day long and his chosen subject was history. He had strong opinions about Japanese involvement in the war and the current state of affairs. His constant babbling slowly soothed Royce to sleep until a third party interrupted them. He went by the name of Luong.

Appearing as a normal student with nothing to hide and down to earth Luong was your typical student with dark brown hair and hazel eyes. His sudden interruption in Royce's boring discussion with Fukuda was a welcome relief and it provided the perfect opportunity to escape the dreary subject.

Luong was close to his secret though. With a copy of *Magnesium Fluoride Galactic Battleship* in his hands, Royce kept the subject short and allowed the lad to speak. His Japanese was clean and understandable, however, when he spoke English, Royce could tell his English needed more work.

Then, just when he thought his luck would change for the worst, a fourth lad turned up to offer his friendship.

Expecting some kind of sinister reason for wanting to be friends, Royce approached the subject with caution. It was not because he wanted to make more friends. No, he just did not want to be forced into a situation that was similar to the one he was thrust into when he just joined the school.

No one knew he was part of the Underwear Club and he wanted to keep it that way. It appeared to be an invitation to join the movie club, something the enthusiasts decided to open a few years ago. They required Royce's appearance for a shoot they were making tomorrow during the festive celebrations and he would fit perfectly. With no real workload he agreed and that was the end of that. Then that's when the final lad showed up and fate finally convinced Royce not everyone was perverted in the school.

Lost in some part of the school and unable to find his way back to his class that was spread out over the school's playing field, a young man by the name of Haruki strolled around the corner with his hands in his pockets, happily accepted Royce's call for help.

With his stable attitude and none perverted words, Royce finally managed to find a common ground with the school. He might have only met five normal students, but upon initial observation, they would provide detailed information for his next issue of his Manga. However, with normal people come big problems. He suspected that his hidden agenda could not be well hidden from these people and they seem very sharp indeed, not like the dense intelligence of Shota or the typical behaviour the girls show around him. When he was near these people, he had to watch what he said and keep an open mind on how they approached a sudden subject.

From his initial observations, only four out of the five people he met didn't show any interest in Manga or anime. In turn, they showed normal interest in girls, but would never sneak out of class and attempt to look into the girls changing rooms.

It was so weird in fact they never mentioned his little adventure when he just joined school and Royce thought it was strange. Everyone who met him always reminded him of his cat costume he wore in the school and his perverted action on the few days he arrived. So when he bumped into Fukuda for a second time in a day, he forwarded that question before he could spill more of his propaganda on western society.

"Tell me, why are you talking to me right now?"

"I don't understand," Fukuda replied in his deep mature voice layered over with youthfulness.

"Well, everyone in this school knows what I did at the beginning of my term. My reputation turned bad and everyone avoided me like the plague. So why are you talking to me?"

"It's not a problem for me. I don't judge people on what they did in the past. And so far, everything you've done does not have any direct effect on me. In fact, hanging out with me might improve your image."

"Really?"

"Yes, as you know the image of this school had been badly damaged in recent years. We voted Rina into power to correct the problem."

"That's a tall order, so everybody who's not a pervert voted for her?" Royce caught a glimpse of the man's shocked expression as he stepped back in shame. He should not have used that word bluntly, but it was a habit that was quickly formed in his vocabulary.

Acting fast he said, "Sorry, I did not mean it like that."

"It's okay," Fukuda said. He walked around the classroom and peered out of the window. Royce looked back to the table he was sitting at and saw his packed bento on the table. He often wondered who made these small packed lunches. Did they buy them ready made at a store or did they make them themselves?

"In a mixed school like this you would expect a certain number of perverted people in it. I've seen many girls who act the same way too," he said smiling as he turned and faced him. Fukuda put a small cup to his mouth and slurped down the contents. Royce assumed it was some form of tea. He did not have any tea for a long time. He was beginning to miss the stuff, the proper stuff.

"Have you brought your own lunch?" Fukuda asked.

"No, I normally eat at the cafeteria."

"Perfect, why don't you come with me then. Lunch is about to start and I could do with the company."

Royce stepped closer to the window and looked out over the school he was lost in. It might be simple to say no and continue on his walk about, but it was about time he

talked to a proper student for once. Gain more knowledge about the school and the town, proper information.

Chapter 40

After spending much of the day with his new friend, Royce left his company in search of his own class. There were no sessions at the moment because everyone was preparing their own class for the celebrations that would take place tomorrow. Royce tried his best to stay out of trouble, but no matter how hard he tried, trouble always had a way of finding him.

As he strolled around the gym building on his way to the school playing field – where his class was last spotted – he bumped into his old troublemakers again.

“Royce! Oh my Royce,” Shota exhaled heavily. “We’ve done something terrible!”

“Terrible?” Royce looked on with wide eyes. *Should I even be near him?*

“We were out on our latest mission and everything worked perfectly until one of our members sneezed and caught the attention of Oda-San.”

It took Royce a moment to realise he was talking about Akina Oda.

“What exactly were you lot up to? Stealing more underwear?”

“Nooooo, we were trying to take some pictures of the girls in the spring. Do you know how much money we could get from the men in the school if they could order snaps of their favourite sweetheart? They were practically begging us to do it.” He pulled out a roll of names and it tumbled to the floor and rolled along the ground. It finally stopped when someone stepped on the large roll. Royce and Shota looked up and stood before them in her military bikini and M16 was Akina.

“You boys want to surrender now,” she cocked her weapon, again. “Or do you want to play?”

Her last statement almost sounded sexual, but when she aimed her weapon right at them, he soon discovered the seriousness of their plight.

She glanced at Royce and sighed. “I knew it. When there’s trouble around you’re always at the centre of it all.”

“What do you mean?” Royce asked.

“You may have saved our lives back in Tokyo, but that will not save you this time. You are the most perverted individual I’ve ever met.”

Royce stepped back. What, was he being blamed? “Now wait one moment. Why are you pointing that thing at me? I wasn’t with these guys, I was only trying to find my way back to my class.”

“Class...Class... do you honestly think I believe something like that?”

Royce looked over her body as beads of sweat dribbled from her crisp golden skin, soaking into her fine bra. She must have chased this group for some time.

“What are you looking at?” she shouted catching him eyeing her over. She put her finger on the trigger, begging to shoot her load into him.

“N-Now wait one minute,” Royce’s Japanese cracked under the pressure. “I wasn’t looking at anything.”

“What! I’m not good enough to look at?”

Royce felt like he'd just been tricked into a corner. After a few seconds of silence, she let loose with a torrent of rubber bullets as if she wanted to release some pent-up anger.

Pain, impact after impact caused indescribable pain. Both lads tried in vain to escape the armed woman, but she kept coming, strolling closer in her high-heeled leather boots and tight bikini that pleased his eyes, but her actions bruised his body.

Escaping, by dropping down a ditch that drained away flooded water, Royce and Shota crawled through the entrance of the drainage pipe and deep into darkness. A loud roar echoed from once they came, a roar so haunting it chilled them to the bone. "Royce-San...Kishi-Kun. My team is coming for you. You'll all die!"

Those were her last words. Royce hoped she would not follow them into the damp dirty pipes. He saw them on the school's plan when he was researching the place on the Internet. The long abandoned water system still worked to this day. On days of extreme weather, water would run off the hillside and floor parts of the town. So the authorities built a network of tunnels under the town to channel this excess water away. It was supposed to be grated off, no one able to enter. But after years of neglect and poor maintenance, the entrance was easy to remove.

All Royce had to do was to direct them out to safety. But he knew very little about the tunnels, there was no way he could help.

"Do you know these tunnels?" he asked Shota. Since it was his town even a delinquent like him should know something.

"No, I didn't even know the existence of these tunnels."

"What!" Royce exclaimed. "You live in this town, you should know!"

"I don't. Do you know every little detail about your town in England?" Shota barked back.

"How many times do I have to tell you? I'm from America, not England."

Shota stopped in his tracks, "I don't believe this...w-w-we are lost, trapped and will die in this damn place..." He began to sob. "I haven't even lost my virginity with a girl yet...what are we to do? You must do something Royce..."

"There you go again, expect me to be some kind of superman. What do you think I can possibly do?"

"I don't know, haven't you memorised a map of this place? You know, like all secret agents do?"

"For the last time," Royce sighed heavily, he wanted to shout but he didn't want to draw any attention. "I am not a secret agent and I am *not* James Bond. Will you get that through your thick skull?"

Royce saw a light up ahead, "what's that?"

Sort of waving around in the distance, Royce and Shota stopped dead in their tracks and remained silent. So silent the scurrying of rats could be heard ahead. The small torch continued to wave slightly as if someone was moving towards them.

"Do you think the girls have entered the pipe?"

"I don't think so, they are all in bikinis and they'll get filthy."

"I don't know," Shota quivered doubtfully. "You don't know Oda-San like I do, once she sets her eyes on someone, she will never let go."

Royce saw the small white light grow larger by the second. The sound of sloshing water echoed down the pipe as the two lads froze on the spot, as if there still forms would fool the person in thinking they were part of the decor.

"What are you two doing here?" a voice boomed from the source of the light. The beamed suddenly focused in there direction. "You're not supposed to be in here!"

The voice was not female, but could have been a worker down in the waterways. It stood to reason and Royce acted calm in the moment. "Sorry, we were being chased by a gang and got ourselves lost. Can you help us out?"

"I should call the police. You are trespassing and it's dangerous. Don't you know we're getting prepared to flush the system?"

Shota kept himself quiet.

As the stranger came closer Royce was able to see the man in question. Wearing a yellow boiler suit and hardhat, his light was nothing more than a hat LED light used for inspections.

"So, you're both from Naka High School?" He questioned after shining the light at the uniforms the two students were wearing. Royce was glad he was not wearing any cosplay outfit, which would be hard to explain.

"Yes."

"That explains it all. If they're not studying, they would be chasing each other around like criminals."

"Did you attend the school?" Royce asked. This man might have more local knowledge, next to his butler.

"Yeah, I went there. Lots of conflicting memories. Who the hell are you, I didn't know the school accepted foreign students?"

"The school's branching out."

The man stared at Royce as if he was some intruder and gestured the two to follow him. "We should go this way, I know the nearest exit. You're lucky you found me, it's very easy to get lost in here."

"Find any dead bodies?" Royce asked jokingly. He then regretted making the sly remark a few seconds later. *How stupid of me.* But it was said.

The man looked back and carried on moving. "Yes. We find one from time to time. You know, the usual, children who get lost, people who have fallen into the river and been sucked in during a storm. You have to have a strong stomach for this line of work. After the insects and animals had their fair share of the meat the smell alone attracts our engineers to the problem."

Royce felt himself teetering on the edge of vomiting.

"When I get back to school I want to have my delicious bento my mother cooked for me. I want to forget all of this," Shota moaned. He fell behind before Royce gestured him on with a left kick from his foot. "Stop acting like a baby, nothing's going to happen to us."

"But even if we get out of this mess Oda-San will still hunt us down."

"You!" Royce corrected. "She will hunt *you* down and kill you. I've done nothing wrong."

"Ahh, my sister Oda-San," the stranger announced, pausing. Royce's eyes widened. "She'll never give up unless she has her men. So what did you two do?"

"He took pictures without permission in the school's hot spring." Royce pointed.

"You lot sure know how to cause a ruckus. I heard the underwear club was getting bold, but I never believed it. Since Matsuyama-San took over, I heard very little about that school from my younger sister. But it looks like things have heated up recently. Would you have anything to do with it?"

Royce waved his hands in an exaggerated innocent surprise. "Who, me? Nononono, I would never do anything like that. I only joined the school to learn Japanese culture, food and what goes on behind the scenes that we see on television."

"But you have to admit. The trouble escalated since you joined the school?"

"Well...I wouldn't put it quite like that," Royce stuttered, trying to find a way out of this difficult situation.

"So how would you describe it then?" the man said, edging forward towards an opening that had a ladder on the far side of the wall. A small beam of light penetrated a manhole and the stranger climbed, slowly, waiting for an answer.

"I would call it coincidence. Now can we get out of here?"

The man smiled, that smile that he knew he had backed Royce into such a tight corner he would say anything to get out of the subject.

"This will lead you to the west side of the town. I suggest you all go home until my sister has finished her little hunting parade." The stranger walked down the ladder and carried on down the tunnel they just exited from. Before he left, the man turned and said some final words. "You two really helped my sister. She hasn't had this much fun since she was a little girl bullying her friends in the local park."

With that, the man vanished.

Royce and Shota hurled themselves out of the stinking manhole and the atmospheric heat hit them like a sauna. Even with the sun trapped behind the clouds, Royce felt the beads of sweat form on his arms and face. But at least they were not being hunted.

"We should be safe."

"Oh!" Shota sobbed. "I dropped my digital camera in the water. It's all broken, the images!!!"

"It should be okay, the images will be stored on a flash stick and you just have to dry it inside and out before connecting it to your computer."

The young lad cheered up. "Royce you are truly a British spy...how can I repay you?"

"I am not a British spy!" Royce exclaimed.

Suddenly Shota became very agitated, as if he'd just seen a ghost. Royce developed a bad feeling by the look on the young man's face it could only mean trouble.

"Oh, shit...I don't know how, but they found us." Shota's voice was very low, on the brink of panic.

"Don't tell me?" Royce replied, although he already knew the answer.

"Matsuyama-San and Oda-San are running this way."

"Oh, no," he glanced in the distance and saw the two women rush towards them. They were trapped. The drain exited in a U shaped building and their only exit was blocked.

"I hope you got life insurance?" Royce sighed solemnly.

"I'm too young to die!" Shota cried.

"Stop being a pussy, get up. Act like a man. It's only two of them."

Royce heard shouting from the girls, they spoke Japanese and their words said nothing about the school's spa incident, but it was something far more sinister.

"Royce, Shota...quick we need your help!"

Royce lowered his guard and allowed the two girls to approach. Thankfully they were no longer wearing their bikinis and were back in uniform. But the situation seemed dire from their actions and heavy breathing.

"What wrong?" Royce asked.

"It's Yumi Kosaka. Her uncle had kidnapped her. We've tried to stop him but he grabbed her from the school gates then took her away in his car... I am so scared, I think he's going to do terrible things to her!"

Royce balled his hands into fists. He knew this moment would come eventually and his knowledge about the girl's uncle was very limited. But to suddenly come and kidnap her out of school in broad daylight was a new definition of low. Only horrid images went through his mind. How could anyone hurt an innocent girl? How could anyone ruin her life? She did not deserve such treatment.

Royce looked at Shota, "grab all the members, we've got a *real* mission now."

Chapter 41

Yumi Kosaka was forced into the back seat of a large station wagon and dragged away from all her friends. She had no idea her uncle would show up at the school and she only came back from the local store with some items she volunteered to obtain while her class was preparing for tomorrow's event.

Unknown to her, her uncle had spotted her inside the store and stalked her from a distance. His eternal rage boiled every day until it got to a point that his constant drinking could no longer hold back his temper. She might be his only responsibility but he did not like betrayal.

When Yumi collected her items and walked back to school, she managed to pass the school gates just as the sun began to hide behind the clouds. A gust of wind blew from behind and it carried a hint of strong alcohol, which she immediately spun around and to her horror, her uncle stood there in his tattered clothing with just a few words to say.

"I've been looking everywhere for you sweetheart. Time for you to come home. The house is a mess."

She stumbled back in terror, eyes wide with complete anarchy. She shivered, trembled at the same time and even the colour of her silver hair changed to terror white.

Falling back towards the school grounds she prayed that the boundary between adolescent and adulthood would be strong enough to keep the monster at bay. By this time all the students paused and stared at the raging man at the gates. *Surely my uncle would not enter the school?*

The further back she trembled, the angrier he became.

"Come with me sweetie. I have a little surprise back at home. You're my responsibility; I never said you could go to school. Now come!"

He shouted his last few words but she remained rooted to the spot. Even the insects that buzzed in the background stopped singing; everything was a deadly silence. Only the gentle howl of the wind timed his movement. When it howled again, he darted forward, past the sacred line of the school, grabbed Yumi's pale hand and dragged her along the rugged ground.

Resisting as much as she could, Yumi fought with every breath, clawed at his hands and kicked with her feet. She was unable to control her balance and came tumbling to the ground, no hope of recovery. He grabbed Yumi by her feet and dragged her along the ground like in some cowboy western. She whelped in pain as the gravel scuffed her clothes; her shirt un-tucked from her skirt and the stones scratched and penetrated her delicate skin. With gravel in her hair, she could do nothing but scream.

Two young men jumped from the school's shadows and challenged the man head on. Shouting at the top of their lungs, hurled cans of drink at him and attempted to free Yumi.

It was no good. His immense bulk of muscle whisked the two insects away and she was once again in his claws. With tears streaming down her face, Yumi dug her fingernails into the hard floor, hoping her fragile hands could create an anchor to save her life. Her fingernails tore from roots as he grabbed both her legs, exposing the swimsuit she was wearing. After a moment of fighting, she gave in as she bundled into his station wagon.

With the back door closed and locked, she pressed her face to the window as shocked students cried and shivered at the terrible sight they just witnessed. The principal, who had a duty to protect all students, rushed to the front gate, but Yumi was helpless as he hit the accelerator hard and raced down the road to her oblivion.

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Her uncle's house was located in a dark side of the town that had been neglected for years. With sewage leaking through the ground and rubbish piled up along the dirt roads beside the attached houses, she sobbed more as the house of despair came into sight.

"Stop your crying bitch."

She obeyed and cried in her heart. Memories of the fun times raced through her mind. She hoped he would stay in prison forever, but his return only hastened her demise and sent her spiralling into insanity. She had never been exposed to so much hate and resentment, but she could tell by his glances through the mirror that he planned a fate far more terrible than death.

The house was a run down cul-de-sac that had been boarded up while he stayed in prison for one year for bad behaviour. His darker crimes had gone unnoticed and he always took it out on her.

Dragging her from the back seat, her already damaged skin was further dragged across the pavement. The weeds that grew through the cracks stung her to her bones. The only way she could camouflage the pain was to scream and cry as much as she could.

But it was not good. This part of the neighbourhood had been abandoned for years and was a dark spot on a lovely town, much like the hotel she was staying in until Royce moved in and restored the place. The memory of him and her experiences at the place sent Yumi into an imaginary world in which she could escape the pain and suffering.

Hurled into the front room, he tore off her shoes, dragged her into the living room and pointed her to the kitchen.

"Make me some food! And clean up this place. It's a mess... When did you last clean it up?" he yelled, his words made her face flinch as she stared at him.

"I-I-I-I" She stuttered, unable to control her bodily function she began to wet herself. Shivering, he leered at her and strolled over to the dusty unused couch. "Make me something special. I'll take good care of you now. Daddy is home!" he said with a sexual sneer.

She followed his orders to the letter and tried to make something from the gone off food and dirty cutlery. She remembered the last time she was in the kitchen. He had hit her so bad she fainted on the floor. When she awoke, Yumi ran for her life, half conscious and very ill. Once she ran through the forest in her old tattered clothing, she found the hotel and was relieved when her uncle failed to locate her.

He was later arrested for indecent behaviour and assaulting a police officer. He vanished for a year and she was able to restore her life, hide at school and return

to the hotel that would provide protection from the elements. Her deranged uncle never heard of the hotel and she felt safe even if he left prison. She hoped he would leave the town and move on.

"This food is shit!" he yelled in Japanese. "Where did you learn to cook like that?"

He threw his bowl of rice flavourings across the room and hit Yumi in the chest. Her uniform spoiled even more.

"You look very cute in that school uniform. You never told me you went to that place. A lowlife like you shouldn't even go to school. When your family died, I resented looking after you. A child born from a cheating father, a whore of a mother. You're nothing more than offspring of garbage."

His heartfelt words continued to batter her like an unrelenting tidal wave of stones. She covered her ears; her uncle stood to his feet, stumbled over broken bottles and rubbish then shouted some more for good measure.

Unable to cope with the calamity that had fallen before her, she ran upstairs towards her bedroom. Her bedroom was often her sanctuary when things got bad. She knew her uncle would be very nasty when drunk and hiding in her room was the best course of action. The walls were thick and the door made from hard wood. It would often come under abuse from her uncle, and the moment she closed it, he began pounding on the other side. Each blast sent her further into despair, she prayed. He thumped, chanted words like, "Come on sweetie, I want to see you in your uniform."

He sprouted degrading words like. "When I get my hands on you I'm going to play a game of how much cum I can give you. You're mine baby."

She did not understand the words. His actions had gotten really terrible. Something must have happened to him in prison and now he was desperate to release all that anger.

Ten minutes later the words and banging stopped. She looked around her room. The sun began to set and she could see everything. Her toys, cuddly teddy bears all destroyed, heads ripped off, wool all over the floor. Her old school work tossed around and exposed to the elements for a year and even her bed was damaged beyond reason. Her posters of favourite pop bands destroyed. Even some anime characters Yumi loved when she was little failed to escape unscathed. She curled on the floor, her uniform was the only means of warmth for her as the wind blew in and whisked away the heat. The night would be cold and there was nothing she could do to stop the pain. So much pain, she cried silently as to not disturb her uncle.

Chapter 42

If there was one thing Royce hated was an abusive parent. It seemed that no matter where he lived, the same human nature would always veer its ugly head and Japan was no different. Although Japan had its wonders, it also had its fair share of terrors. But that terror was localized to the town of Naka and Royce decided enough was enough.

Not because he hated abusive guardians, no, it was because Yumi was too kind and gentle to be abused in any form.

From the moment he learned Yumi had been kidnapped, Royce jumped into action, mentally anyway. He still didn't understand what he could possibly do and

why Akina and Rina rushed over to see him. Royce was sure her own friends were quite capable of dealing with this lowlife.

"I don't know why you've come to me, but I will give you my word, I will save her. Do you know where she is?"

"She never told us her uncle's home address," Rina replied. "She was always quiet about that, but we need access to her room at the hotel. There might be clues to her whereabouts."

It stood to reason she might have something in her room that indicated her address. But one thing Royce could not understand and he turned to face Rina.

"You're supposed to be close friends with Yumi right?"

"Yes," she answered.

"So shouldn't you know her address by heart?"

"Yumi has always been a quiet individual and since the incident with her family five years ago, she wanted to leave behind the past and move on to the future. That is why she ran away from her uncle and was staying at your hotel."

"So you knew she was in danger and did nothing about it?"

"No!" Rina snapped. "I did all I could, her uncle was convicted and sentenced to prison for one year. But he's just been released. I had arranged for her to stay at my place until she was old enough to defend herself, but you showed up and she seemed really happy to stay with you. I-I"

Rina stuttered, face growing red every second. She tried to say something against her better judgement. Royce waited, but he wanted to get a move on and rescue Yumi.

"I trusted your judgement. Yumi likes you a lot, she told me about your kindness."

"Look, we can talk about this another time, right now I want to find that asshole's address and break down the door." The group of Shota's club members picked up tools that could be used as weapons and headed off, on foot, to the hotel.

*

It took longer than expected to reach the hotel Royce used as a home. With a whole gang of people crowded in the foyer, Royce had to settle matters down.

"Everyone, calm down. We'll divide up in groups, but I don't want to risk Yumi's life needlessly. From what I heard about her uncle, he's strong, ruthless and won't hesitate to hurt her."

"So what do you plan to do?" Akina exclaimed.

"Well you know. I figured I would walk right up to his door, smash it in, grab the asshole by the scruff of his neck, bash him around a little and take Yumi out of there.

"Are you insane?" Rina barked. "He will definitely hurt Yumi!"

"That's why we're going to trick him first. Come, we're all going to do our best. I won't let anything happen to her."

Royce knew his plan was nothing short of a miracle. Everyone else had their views but no one had a good solid plan to get Yumi out of there. Some people suggested they run right in and grab her. Akina offered to storm the house with her military gear but Royce convinced her that blowing up the house would only kill her in the process.

The obvious course of action would be to find her uncle's address.

"This is the master key for all the rooms in this hotel. I've never used it before." Royce placed the skeleton key to the lock and slid it into the chamber. Locks tumblers clicked into place and all that was required was a turn of the handle.

Turning the handle, Royce felt the beads of sweat roll down his neck and into his clothing. He wanted to change his shirt once this was over.

The dark swallowed up all light in the hallways and some members of the club went off to find the light switch. Once the lights came on, he turned the handle and the door clicked open.

Pushing the door open, a fresh scent of fragrance rushed past the open door. Royce opened the door further and felt apprehension in entering a young girl's room. Sure he'd seen her little hole under the stars and he felt guilty seeing that. But this time it was different. She was not hiding and her room was given to her. She had every right to be given a private room and he was now entering her domain.

Hesitant, Rina grew impatient and pushed open the door. She reached in for the light.

The colour scheme of the room was the same as all the others, Royce was expecting a pink paradise of girly things, but she kept the room intact from when the builders left it. Her bed was neatly cleaned, stuffed toys and figures from various anime series and Manga placed professionally on shelves, her kitchen space was nicely clean and she even had a computer, although Royce did not remember her bringing one into the hotel. He was pleased she settled so quickly and even felt some level of success of his kindness. But the thought of her all alone in her uncle's house was too much to bear.

Rina and Akina rushed in and began rummaging through her documents and files. They kept everything in order and it wasn't until Rina checked Yumi's mobile that she found the address.

"Look, I found the place."

"What does it say?" Akina asked, placing a textbook back on the shelf.

"It's an announcement from the local news office. They said Yumi's uncle was released early from prison yesterday and was sighted in the lower part of the town. The address is here." She handed Akina the decorated phone of allsorts and she studied the text message that was an early warning system to warn victims of potential prisoners of concern being released. She obviously did not get the text because she left her mobile at home and was completely unaware of the threat.

Royce saw the message, "can you get me there?"

"Yes, but he's a dangerous man, you can't just go in there and take her."

"Watch me!"

"No, he might hurt her."

"All I need is a distraction so we can sneak her out the back door or window. Everybody thinks this place is abandoned and as long as no one has any wild parties she should be safe here."

"Then what do we do?" Rina asked and she had a good point. Once they rescued the young woman and have her safe it will not take a rocket scientist to wait for her outside school and grab her again.

"We have to get rid of him." Royce said coldly, without emotion.

"W-w-w-what! Kill him?" Shota stuttered, stepping close to Akina who did not like his presence anyway.

"No you moron. We have to find a way to run him out of the town."

The argument could continue for another few hours before they decided to do something, but Royce was not the type of person to sit around and let that girl suffer. He would do it alone if he had to. With that firm thought in his mind and a good

idea at where she was taken, he marched out of her room, opened his own door and collected a few things from his bedside drawer.

Chapter 43

Yumi Kosaka could do nothing but lie on her dirty futon and wait for the hell to start. It had been quiet for two hours and there had been no sign of her uncle. But she knew it only took one bang, or knock to stir him from his sleeping state. When he was drunk, he was bad. When he was sober, he was worse.

She clutched what was left of her long loved toy given to her by her mother. She never knew the true story about her parent's demise, or the disappearance of her brother. But from her viewpoint, she was the only family member to survive. She only knew her friends and none of them came to rescue her.

She felt alone, betrayed and scared.

Footsteps caused her to shiver. The animal was on the prowl again. He knew where the lamb was sleeping and she was completely defenceless to stop him. What kind of punishment would she have to endure to make up for the year he'd been in prison? She tried her best to make food to please him. It failed. She tried to search the house for any beer. It failed.

Then he fell asleep in front of the broken television and left her alone to fend for herself. She could sneak out the house and gain her freedom, but she could not be certain he was asleep. The only thing that protected her was the door and the barred window. It prevented her from escaping but also kept him out of her room.

But as the footsteps came impeccably close, they stopped outside her door. A faint voice spoke. Cold cracked, covered in gravel that was close to terrifying the young woman. "My precious niece. I have something for you. Why don't you open your door and I can show you?"

She didn't trust him. She remained still, curled up, hugging her only warm memory, the futon.

"Please sweetheart. Daddy's sorry for what he's done. Open the door so we can make up. I promise I won't hurt you."

She looked up towards the door. Could she really trust him? Has he changed his mind?

She didn't know.

Slowly rising to her feet Yumi walked over to the door and placed her ear to the cold wood and listened.

She could hear him clearly.

His heavy breathing.

The scratching at the door like a raging spirit...wanting to get in.

No, she thought, I will not open this door.

BOOM!

"Open this door now, or I'll break it in"

BOOM!

The door cracked at the hinges and threatened to give. With the relentless beating throughout the years the door could not hold up against the onslaught.

Shivering, Yumi stepped back from her only wall of defence, Yumi watched as the door buckled and came down in an upheaval of fury. With water pouring down her legs and the chills shooting up her spine, her raging uncle stood at the frame of the door, smoke bellowing, anger steaming from his ears.

He took one step forward, into her domain; the very room that protected her from his grasp.

It was now unable to protect her.

She screamed, she never screamed so loud before.

"Shut up!" he yelled, slapped her across the face and sent her to the hard floor. "You're as weak and defenceless, just like your brother. Even he was easy to take out."

Yumi eyes widened with disbelief. She always thought he ran away from home and made a life for himself in some other town or country. She felt some comfort in his safety and now this shocking revelation only installed new fears.

She feared death even more than the next person because she believed that once one dies, that's it, they fade out of existence. She had no faith because no god or higher being would allow her to suffer as much as she did.

She leered at him. Even though she understood what he said, she wanted to hear him say it in plain Japanese.

"What do you mean?" she asked, holding back her sorrow.

"Your brother was a useless freak, just like you."

"What did you do to my brother?" she demanded, desperate to know the answer, although she already knew.

"I killed him. The peasant tried to run away. I grabbed a bat and beat his head in. Are you satisfied? Or would you like me to tell you more? What I did to him? How I disposed of his useless body?"

Yumi began to cry. Kneeling on the floor. "You murdered him...you monster."

His voice was almost infuriated with rage, "how dare you call me that! Who do you think you are?"

He swooped down from his tall podium and grabbed Yumi by her silver hair, dragged her across the floor and onto her bed. He flung her over like a rag doll and spread her legs. "I think its time daddy collects his payment for all the trouble you caused."

Yumi squeezed her eyes tight and bowed her head to the ground, praying for a miracle.

Then as if fate heard her call there was a knock on the outside door.

"Who the fuck is that?" He cursed as he stood, stretching his muscular frame for the pleasures of a fight.

Alone at last, Yumi peeked around her doorframe to see who was at the door. Upon closer inspection she saw her uncle and Rina, along with Akina, stood outside her door.

"Excuse us for interrupting you. We are looking for our friend, Yumi Kosaka. She was supposed to come to school and help with the cleaning. We need her now."

"She's not available," he said, snappish.

"But it's a requirement from our school," Rina directed, trying to keep her cool. Yumi became worried that her uncle's heavy-handed tactics might hurt her friends. She could see his anger and they were only making matters worse. By trying to be heroes, her friends were creating the perfect recipe for a night of pain.

She knew what her uncle was about to do; he was going to rape her, an act that she never thought possible. It might have stopped because her friends came, but if she tried to escape he might do something terrible to her friends. But as Yumi watched the terror unfold from the crack in her bedroom door, the situation got worse.

"I will not leave until our friend is with us. We're worried about her," Akina interjected, hands on her hips, uniform clean and brisk, a big mistake, Yumi already imagined the perverted thoughts her uncle must be having.

"I told you girls, she's not available. Now get the hell of my property!" He yelled, hands balled into fists and Yumi felt even more protective of her friends.

Desperate to do something, she climbed out of her room and ran over to her uncle, "please uncle, they don't mean any disrespect, please come back in and leave them alone. Rina-San, Akina-San, thank you for your concern but I won't be able to come to school. Please leave now..."

She tried to display her concern with her own body language. She stared hard into Rina's eyes intent to send her a secret message: *Please leave while you have the chance, my uncle will hurt you.* "I'll be okay. Just leave..."

Her uncle resolved the situation by closing the door on her two friends. Yumi felt some level of comfort that her friends came to her rescue, but in the end it was no good. Her uncle was an adult, a monster of a man, they were just teenagers.

As she stepped back to face her fate, she gazed into her uncle's terrifying eyes. He was about to punish her hard for the inconvenience.

"Your mother was a bitch. She cheated on your father, fell pregnant with *you* and then ran away to this stupid town." Yumi's uncle walked over to her, sweat dripping from his face due to the heat inside the house. His eyes ablaze with perverted lust.

"I'll show you how you can make up for your mother's past indulgencies." He grabbed hold of her arm, wrenched her into her room and tossed her back onto the dusty bed.

He stared evilly at her, eyes ablaze with built-up desires. "Your brother was pathetic...just like you. I suppose someone has to rid this family of all its mutants. I put him away just like I'm going to put you away. His shallow grave in the woods, the perfect spot for you."

She held her hands up to her face and screamed. He confessed to burying his body in the woods.

All the screaming would not wipe away the sorrow she felt. She loved her brother, they were born the same time and although he was not a girl, or identical twins, she loved her brother very much. She found it hard to understand why her own uncle would do such a thing.

The overwhelming grief stifled all rational thought. She could not scream anymore, she could not fight; her only anchor to the world had been dead for many years and now he was going to violate her.

Yumi coughed the shock out of her and raised her weary hand. She wanted her uncle to end her life swiftly. But that wish was far fetched as he began to un-belt his trousers. He sniffed the air, prised to take the only fresh young woman in the room. But another disturbance broke out in the garden.

A muffled voice could be heard. Yumi's uncle tied up his trousers, cursed the wall and turned to investigate who was prowling around outside his property.

The voices grew louder.

"Lovely girls, lovely boys!"

It was Royce!

Yumi climbed to her feet, felt some level of hope and rushed over to her window once her uncle was out of sight. She could not see much because of the overgrown shrubs and trees, but the young man could be seen. He was chanting something in English, loud, very loud to catch her uncle's attention.

"Lovely girls, lovely boys!" Royce blurted out drunkenly. Yumi had no idea what he was doing.

"Lovely boys, lovely girls...Stand by your man!" He waved a bottle of alcohol in the garden. Spoke some more and then threw the contents at the house, enraging her uncle.

He blabbed out words in Japanese, but Royce continued to chant his lines, enraging him more. "Lovely ladies come down to the houses of parliament... Hay, see the queen and love the country. Stand by your man, your love for your country..."

Suddenly there was a little voice. "Yumi...come on, we're here to help you."

Yumi glanced down from her window. Rina and Akina hid in the bushes after they managed to remove the bars on the window. Their arms were stretched forward ready to catch her.

"Come on silly, Royce's risking his life to save you. Come one. You must come with us."

Yumi could hardly hold back the overwhelming tears that threatened to burst from her eyes. All her friends, even Royce banded together to save her life.

"Stand by your man...Ho, ho, ho, ho... Lovely girls, Lovely boys... Hay my man... How'ya doing this fine night?" Yumi glanced over at the front garden as she made her way through the glassless window and onto the hard grass in her stockings.

Her uncle barged out.

"Get the hell off my property you drunken freak. How many times do I have to tell you kids, she is not available for school, now get lost!"

Royce walked over to her uncle and waved around like a drunk man...although, Yumi was not sure if he was drunk or not.

"Is he drunk?" Yumi asked.

"No, he's putting on a show to save your life, now come one, we'll get you back to the hotel."

Yumi felt slender hands around her waist and she was instantly whisked away from her old home. Glancing back she caught a glance of her uncle fighting with Royce, then suddenly everything went hazy as the bushes hid the commotion.

She called out, but she did not know if Royce was safe or injured in the rescue. One thing was sure, no man has ever taken a risk to save her life and innocence and she began to find some level of affection to his heroism.

*

Three hours passed and Yumi still heard no sign of Royce. Akina and Rina were all huddled up inside the hotel on the outskirts of town. She knew this location would be safe from her uncle if things got bad, but she found it almost impossible to digest the information her uncle confessed to her. Somewhere in the woods her brother was buried. But where and how would they get rid of her uncle? He could always turn up at the school and take her away.

"Don't worry Yumi. If I see that uncle of yours back at the school, I'll make sure to squash him like a bug."

"Yeah, don't worry about it. I've alerted my team to his location and appearance. He won't be going near you again," Akina boasted, feeding information via mobile phone.

Yumi curled up into a ball on the sofa and looked towards the fireplace that was burning steadily in the background. This hotel did not have a fireplace originally and Royce had it installed to remind him of home. It added warmth to the lounge and offered her a means to lose herself inside the bright orange overlapping flames.

"What about Royce?" Yumi whispered, shy. "I don't want him to get hurt. My uncle is very nasty."

The room fell into an uncanny silence. Nobody knew the answer. This spooked Yumi because it would not be hard for a fully developed adult to hurt him...

Finally Rina replied solemnly, "I'm sure he'll be all right."

Akina agreed and the room fell into its silence once more.

*

The solitude of a late Friday morning was broken by the alarm clock. Yumi slept late, still trying to shake off the fatigue from the traumatic night. It had been a long time since she'd faced such terror and being inside the hotel offered her security and comfort. A breakfast and green tea later the group of girls were fully awake. They searched the hotel for any sign of Royce but he wasn't home. Worry was at the forefront of their minds.

The night before Yumi learned the whole plan to rescue her was Rina's idea and Royce was not happy with the current way her uncle would be distracted. He believed it was his duty to distract the uncle and give the other two girls a window of opportunity to rescue. It worked, and now he was missing.

Yumi was adamant in returning to her uncle's home to confront him on Royce. Of course this was a bad idea, which was quickly turned down by Akina and Rina. So there was nothing left but to wait and find out if Royce escaped unharmed.

The school festivity was the last thing on her mind. It should be a day of celebration and happiness, but since Royce took that deadly stand, she could not stop worrying about him. He was absent all day and on the way home, they took extra time to find him, to no avail.

Once they stepped foot back into the hotel Rina had to speak. "Don't worry Yumi. I'm sure he's already at school. Do you really think your uncle could stop him from doing all those perverted things he likes to do at school, and besides, he's escaped far more dangerous situations."

"I suppose you're right, but I'm really worried about him."

"ummm, so you have some kind of crush on him?"

"W-What?" Yumi exclaimed, hiding the pink that flushed into her cheeks.

"Oh, my... we do have an interest. Don't tell me you're in love with him?"

Rina teased someone, trying to distract Yumi's mind from the constant worry she had put herself into. But it was inappropriate and cruel and she had to strengthen her resolve.

"Umm, that's such a daring question and I don't think it's appropriate at the moment. Royce is still missing and I-"

At that moment all reality suddenly escaped the young girl. All her fears and worry had now been squashed like an insect under someone's boot. Royce, the man that sacrificed so much to save her, was now inside the classroom, as if he'd just spend a day at work.

In a moment of complete lapse, she forgot her composure and allowed her overexcited body to race for his embrace. It was all in the moment, her saviour was

safe. She just wanted to hold him, find out if he was real, and not some trick of the mind.

She felt her heart race beyond capacity as his touch was real, she could finally lie to rest her worries. The terrible fate she played over countless of times through her mind was now over. It was pure bliss to be in his arms.

"Yumi you don't have to thank him like that! What's gotten into you?" Rina interjected.

Royce got to his feet and brushed himself down. "Don't worry about me. I had a few words with your uncle. And I also heard everything he said about your brother. I've alerted the police and they'll be conducting an investigation soon, so you won't have to worry about your uncle anymore."

"Still you didn't have to take such a big risk, what would we do if something happened to you?" Rina caught herself slightly as she suddenly realized her mistake, she had commented on his well-being and quite possibly signalled her affection for him.

"Oh, so you care about me then?" he questioned with a hidden grin Yumi could just make out.

"N-No," Rina replied, red-cheeked. "I'm always concerned for the well-being of everyone in my class, that includes you."

"Oh, you make that sound so basic. And I thought I was your special case."

Royce and Rina continued their little conversation while Akina remained silent in the corner of the lounge. With the fire burning in the background Yumi could not help but wonder why she was upset.

"Are you okay?" Yumi asked.

"Yeah, it's been a long day."

"But that can't be the only reason as to why you're upset?"

"I suppose it's how you understand this situation. We just learned that your uncle did some terrible things. We all knew about your uncle and his past, but we had no idea he murdered your brother and attempted to..." She paused, hesitant. "...Rape you."

She looked back at Royce who was still chatting to Rina. She felt relieved. "If it wasn't for Royce, who knows what could have happened."

Yumi glanced over at Royce and she too wondered the same thing. But it would be pointless to dwell on the past or to enquire about what if's. She had to look to the future and with her uncle out of the way, she could now prepare for what lies ahead.

Chapter 44

The solitude of his room was a pleasant reminder of how peaceful he wanted his life to be. When he was back home in America Royce was always thrust into family feuds. This was one of the reasons he left in the first place. Now however, he seemed to be thrown into a different kind of battle, but this time it was enjoyable, albeit dangerous.

When he signed on his computer and opened up his word program, he began to jot down notes on the whole experience thus far, Yumi's kidnapping and the events that led up to it. He wrote everything down, without forgetting any detail. Then when he was finished he carried on with his day; the school activity was due to start and this provided him the perfect opportunity to explore the wonders Japan had to offer. His excitement began to build as the day progressed.

*

He decided to walk to school, which was all right in its own context. He would have preferred to travel with Yumi and protect her on the way but Akina already beat him to the goal and took her off with her band of security in an armoured car. Still, it was one less matter to worry about.

Later the police had cordoned part of the woods with cones and masked tape. Several uniformed men stood by at key points as they attempted to recover Yumi lost brother. It was a grim task, something Yumi would have fainted if she were to walk with him through the woods.

With reality like that hovering over the poor girl, Royce wondered how she would react when they did exhume her body.

After walking for what felt like half an hour, Royce heard singing from all directions, birds chirped and a cool south-easterly wind blew in through the many layers of trees and shrubs that lined the forest floor. If he listened closely, he could hear the melody of the forest and see its rhythmic movement as it danced all day and night. He liked this place, and just at the bottom of the long path was the abandoned one room house that reminded him of all the days he spent in Japan.

Occasionally, at night, he would hear the forest in all its glory and if he listened hard enough Royce could hear the howling cries of someone in the forest. He put it down to imagination, but after learning the terrible truth buried beneath the depths of the forest, he began to doubt his memories.

When he walked deeper into town the festive cheer could already be heard all the way across town.

“For a small town, they spare no expense,” Royce muttered to himself.

He looked up towards the school in the distance and saw ribbons and banners plastered all over the place. It was as if he stepped into a coronation festival and the only thing missing was the fireworks.

A large portion of the students who walked past smiled, waved and huddled together. The young lads of the school glanced at him in surprise, pointed and whispered words to their friends. The more he looked around, the more apparent it became that something was amiss.

Upon entering the school grounds he was amazed by the preparation everyone took in getting the day’s festivities underway. Food of all sorts was displayed in stalls all over the school land, a fountain bubbled majestically in the background. The younger children danced and played around dressed in eye-catching clothes. Some groups had picnics in the sunshine and Royce began to see a structure between the set classes, almost like a cast system within the school itself. All around people that belonged to certain clubs wore T-shirts that had their club emblem proudly broadcasted for all to see.

He casually walked up to the first stall and analysed the food on offer. It appeared to be eel. He preferred not to eat something slimy, but the woman behind the counter gave him such a look of warning, that he decided to take his chances and gracefully accept the black slippery food.

It tasted better than he expected and he decided to move on before he was made to take something he would regret.

The festivity was supposed to celebrate the next year of the school. Students prepared for this moment long before he joined the school and it was only now he

was beginning to appreciate the hard work everyone committed to. It almost made him feel guilty that he never helped out.

*

After chasing the day's festivities all around the school, he finally found his class hauled up in a far of corner away from everything. Royce knew why they hid themselves from the rest of the school because the Cosplay café would attract lots of attention and that's exactly what it did.

Overexcited teenagers queued up down the hall just to get a glimpse of all the girls in their cute costumes despite the hush, hush.

Royce thought that the young ladies were cute in their school uniform; his eyes nearly fell out of their sockets after he stepped across the threshold and into the room.

Strange glances followed him around everywhere he went but he put that down to his past endeavours and also his involvement in rescuing Yumi from her uncle. An act of heroism, especially from the classes biggest talked about pervert would spark some kind of reaction. But he had yet to see some good from all o fit. Mesmerised by the sudden scene, he decided to tuck himself into a quiet corner, as to not interrupt anyone and carefully watch from a distance.

Chapter 45

While he was in the classroom minding his own business, Royce was partly stunned and anxious about the call. It was from the principal, needing his company. Why, he did not know, but it could only mean one thing: More perverted actions.

Did his heroics really turn the principal into a love-crazed frenzy? He would soon find out.

The principal's door was right in front of him *again*. He'd been here many time before and the outcome always made him that much older. He grew tired of the visits and she always revved up his testosterone to bursting point. If she was going to do something, she better finish it. There was no bigger torture than being pumped to the max with blue balls.

He placed his hand on the door handle and walked in.

"Full of surprises aren't we Royce Hampton!" she cackled evilly.

"You asked to see me?"

"Oh, come now Royce. There's no need to be formal. Call me Koomah. You've been at this school for many months? You should know better." She sneaked her way out from behind her desk.

"Exactly, only a few months and a principal should not act this way in front of her students."

"Oh, you got that right."

"Got what right?"

"You are *mine*!" As if possessed by some divine sexual predator instinct, the principal dived away from her location and wrestled Royce to the floor. Then, as if a wild animal had taken over, she began to wiggle her fingers into all corners of his uniform, desperate to find a crack, or hole to penetrate. Royce waved his hands,

pushing back, but she was on top and the mature woman utilised her full body weight to her advantage.

Losing gamely to the advance, Royce contemplated giving up and letting her take him and his virginity. But he saw the open window and used up his final trump card.

"K-K-Koomah the window is open, people can see you."

"Don't worry about that," She stood up, and trotted over to the window to close the blinds. She deliberately allowed her pink frilly underwear to be seen under the tight skin-tight skirt.

Royce was about to use this opportunity to run, but as he began to get up, he neglected to realize his hand was cuffed to the underside of the table. She glanced back, sexual lust burning over her body. Her eyes fixated on his groin.

"You didn't think I would let you slip away that easily." She teased by waving the keys in the air. The whole situation became stranger by the second.

"You never told me you're that big and brave to save Yumi from her deranged uncle... If I knew that sooner, I would have given you special treatment."

"What special treatment?" Royce asked, dreading the answer already.

"I would have popped your cherry long ago."

"But don't you know I'm underage, it's illegal for a student and teacher..."

She put a disappointing finger to his lips, enticing him to remain quiet just so she could talk. Her hot sweaty body was all over him and her womanhood hovered impeccably close to his man beast.

"That would be age discrimination and that's also prohibited in this school."

"You're playing with rules now."

"So what if I am, don't you want me?"

That question hit home. How this situation suddenly became so serious was beyond him and her erotic form just gave him the ammunition to rise to the occasion.

"Where is your class uniform?" she asked, rubbing a menacing hand over his chest.

"W-What?" Royce stuttered, trying hard not to explode as he felt her slender hands venture into places they should not.

"You know, each club is given their own uniform to represent themselves in this celebration. So where's yours?"

"I-I don't have one," he replied.

"Don't be silly, everybody has one, it's the general way of the festivities."

"B-But Sensei -" She cut him off with a finger to his lips.

"Just call me Koomah."

"B-B You can't -"

"Oh come now. Are you aware of the game they are playing in the senior year?" She teased with a pencil to her mouth.

"N-No."

"They call it the *pipe* game." She wiggled her bottom around his groin and nestled her womanhood right over his zipper. "The contestant stands in the middle and answers a bunch of questions. If he gets them wrong a bucket of water is thrown over them, if he gets it right, he can win a prize by grabbing one of the four pipes that slide down the *poles*."

"S-sounds like an interesting game."

"Yeah, I would love to get the questions wrong so I can get all wet. I love to slide down a long hot pole while water drips from my -"

The room shook violently, as if an earthquake just disturbed the place. If the room was not already crowded and steaming hot, Rina Matsuyama's colourful entrance certainly added more spice to the commotion!

"What are you up to now Royce! You're trying to hit on the principal? Get you ass out of here now, we have work to do you pervert!"

Principal Koomah leered at Rina before slowly unwrapping her slender legs from around his groin. She removed her bottom, releasing the pressure inside his pants. If she did not interrupt the moment, Royce would have considered allowing the older woman to show him the art of wild sex, it probably would have been a once in a lifetime experience and he suddenly resented Rina for rescuing him. But he could not have it both ways. He could either resist or be conquered, but he took too long and now he would have to wait for the next encounter, by then he might fight her again.

*

Strolling down the school corridor toward the staircase Royce turned to his saviour. "Thanks for saving me, she was about to slid down my pole."

Rina grunted at the comment. "Don't worry, I knew she was up to no good the moment she called you to her office. But I have a few questions for you."

"Oh?" Royce stopped beside an open window. The fresh breeze blew through and ruffed up his hair. "What is it you would like to ask me?"

"I've been thinking..." She stood pigeon-towed, nervous, playing with her fingers. "Since you saved Yumi from her uncle I wondered if I could-"

Royce stared at Rina's black robe and wondered what was underneath; she should be in her costume but his curiosity got the better of him. Rina's voice was suddenly an after echo as the need to explore finally exploded, with no help from Principal Koomah of course. So with a flick of his wrist, he quickly yanked the jacket off and Rina suddenly blossomed like a beautiful flower.

Outfitted with a red and white French made costume, she cramped her appearance, stood shocked at his sudden perverted action. She yelled, "You asshole, why did you do that?"

"I wanted to see what you looked like."

"Pervert!" she yelled.

"But you look stunning."

She was about to insult him some more until the words sank into her mind and she suddenly registered the compliment. But she could not let his action go unnoticed. She slapped him across the face, picked up the robe and then rushed off. Royce managed to catch a glimpse of her rear end as she ducked behind the wall, over stimulated the poor lad, perhaps going back to the school principal could help him relieve the weeks of pressure all the young Japanese women had on him.

*

Night came swiftly and the school festivities went unhindered. The underwear club were up to their old tricks, taking pictures of girls in swimsuits, underpants and up skirt shots, while Akina's team marched around shooting them all.

Royce found the whole entertainment pleasant and the fireworks at the end were staggering to look at. But it was the news at the end of the day that sent a chill up his spine.

Overhearing the security forces at a checkpoint on the border of the town, Royce learned the police finally found Yumi's brother in a old disused shack at the bottom of some driveway. It turned out to be the very driveway and shed he explored many days ago. Spooky and sick at the same time. To think Yumi's uncle was about to bury a beautiful young woman there was too much to comprehend. But thankfully the police arrested the man and locked him away for all eternity. But no matter how much he thought about it, he could still hear the faint cries in the woods, the cries of a ghost, a ghost that succumbed to a grizzly death, but with Yumi still alive, her presence at the hotel kept her dead brother's sprit away. Royce hoped that someday he could move on in peace, glad that Yumi was now safe.

*

The stars flickered in the sky and the night was as clear and warm as it has always been, but a misty feeling of disaster always haunted Royce the more he walked up to the hotel. He inspected the derelict house that was the final resting place of Yumi's brother and he always paid his respects. He even had a headstone placed as a permanent reminder of his resting place. The feel of the place changed, and the building appeared to have life inside its walls.

But when he walked up to the hotel to inspect the lonely light that was still on he did not feel comfortable. Was someone there? Was it an intruder?"

Royce rushed up to the front door, inserted his key and unlocked it for his destiny. With one hand on the door handle, and the other on the doorframe, he came face to face with his biggest enemy. Someone who chased him from the ends of the Earth. Someone who disliked his role in the world. A stone cold businessman burning with hate from within.

Royce swallowed a knot in his throat, stepped back and said, "Hello father."

Thoughts raced through his mind. How was he going to deal with this man, a man who hindered his every move?

But Royce was a man of many talents and this was not the only time he slipped away from his father. With no plans at the moment, it would not take him long to devise a way to escape, even if that meant leaving the town and all the people he considered friends.

He'd done it before and he can do it again. Perhaps it would be a good thing, not many people regarded him as a good person anyway. To start again would be like turning over a new leaf. But could he leave all the girls he'd grown attached too? Perhaps it was time to get the Underwear Club involved and spark up a new mission to expel his farther from Japan.

The End