



Therapeutic Relations

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Chapter One

Dr. Takashi Nakamura was a damn good sex therapist. He had helped countless people get over sexual hang-ups, open up to partners, and resist having gratuitous sex with strangers. He could handle a little crush. So why was it all he wanted to do was join his current patient on the crushed velvet divan?

Technically, she wasn't really his patient; she was his partner and friend. It had been his stupid ass idea for her to talk with him as if she were a patient. That didn't really mean all the same rules applied, right? Looking over at her as she poured her heart out, his dick hardened to the point of pain. She had no idea how she looked, reclining on the divan, eyes closed, that luscious mouth moving. He was having one hell of a time trying to concentrate on what she was saying, something about her ex-husband, Dave the Dumbass.

Takashi had known Tanya Morris since medical school. Both had decided to go into psychiatry in their third year and had gone through their residency together. If he wanted to be honest, he had to admit he'd always had a little crush, but Tanya had married her high school sweetheart right after graduating from med school. Dave hadn't made it through med school. He hadn't been able to keep a job, or keep his dick in his pants. It had taken Tanya five years to see what everyone around her already knew. The Dumbass was dead weight, dragging her down.

Takashi had been there for her when she finally let the loser go. Unfortunately, that had released a mountain load of emotions *he* had been holding back. Now that she was finally free, his psyche let lose all the pent up desire he had harbored for years. Too bad he could never let her know all that, not while she was depending on him to help her rebuild her self-confidence.

"I just don't feel sexy anymore," Tanya was saying.

Takashi's eyes lingered down the soft curve of her body. Did she not have a mirror? At five foot eight, blessed with the perfect hourglass shape, Takashi had to admit Tanya wore it – damn she wore it well. Much to his mother's lament, he had never been into the petite, tiny figures associated with most Asian women. He was above average for a Japanese American man, standing slightly over six foot two, and he wanted a woman who fit into his arms. Race didn't matter as much as heart and Tanya had one hell of a heart. Even his mother grudgingly admitted she would be perfect for him. She was together, aside from these self-image issues – compliments of her ex. She had one hell of a head for business, far more than he, despite the stereotype. He would never admit it aloud to anyone other than her, but their practice was such a success because of her business model. If only she could see herself for the sexy, smart, sassy woman that she was.

What he wouldn't give to stride over to the divan she was currently occupying right now. He wanted to grab her by the hair, forcing her mouth open to accept his tongue. He wanted to mold his hands over those lovely breasts that taunted him day after day. He wanted to scrape his teeth lightly across those nipples that dared him to notice them through those silky shirts she liked to wear. He was dying to see if her bra was made of lace or satin. Her bras could not possibly be those sturdy padded kind; her nipples were way too visible for that. Were her panties thongs, boy cut or bikinis? There were no discernable panty lines, so he was guessing thongs. There was no doubt they matched of the same alluring fabrics of her bras. She was just that type of woman.

Tanya dressed professionally, but she dressed as a woman proud of her femininity. All too often professional women hid under severe pant and dress suits and sensible shoes. Tanya wore clothes that fit, hugging her curves without being raunchy or suggestive. She wore vibrant

colors and pastels that complimented her rich, dark caramel skin. She looked like a delightful candy confection, and damned if Takashi didn't want to take a bite. Even now, his mouth watered at the brief glimpse of skin revealed at the base of her throat to the swell of her breasts. Allowing his eyes to wander, he slowly gazed once again down the full length of her body. She was wearing a light peach silk shirt with capped sleeves and pastel colored tweed skirt, stopping right above her knees. Her legs were bare, smooth and sleek, and his hands itched unbearably to caress them. Did they feel as soft as they looked? What would they feel like clamped around his waist, or better yet, resting on his shoulders?

“Takashi, are you okay?”

“What?” Damn! He was so lost in his fantasies he hadn't heard a word she said. Now, she was looking at him with more than a little concern. Had he said something aloud? Surely not. Takashi prided himself on keeping a firm wrap on his emotions. It was one thing that allowed him to play the best friend for so long without jumping all over Tanya. It was the only thing now.

“You moaned,” Tanya told him, eyes wide, sitting straight up. “Are you feeling sick? Or are you tired of hearing me complain? I don't blame you. I am tired of complaining. I must sound so pathetic to you. Honestly, I should be grateful I found out Dave was a cheating bastard when I did, I mean, before we had kids. I am just feeling sorry for myself. I am not getting any younger and the chances of me, a Black woman looking at forty, and having kids is slim to none now. Especially since I am now a divorcee, I mean, we are good for a meaningless roll in the hay, but no man wants real commitment from a woman like me. Used goods and all.” The words rushed out nervously.

The thing that never failed to both amuse and distract him to the point of madness about Tanya was her tendency to chatter. She could go on and on about her supposed shortcoming for hours. She never talked about others, well except for Dave, but she could bash herself to death for eternity.

The more he thought about it, the madder he got. What the hell was the matter with this woman? She had to be one of the most intelligent, desirable women he had ever met! And pushing forty? She wasn't even thirty-two! Used goods? Used fucking goods?

Takashi was on his feet and standing over her, looking down with hell in his eyes before he realized what he was doing.

"Damn it, Tanya! This has got to stop!" he thundered before he thought better of it. Grabbing her hand, he placed it dead against his swollen cock, rubbing it around for good measure. "Does this feel like you are undesirable? Like you are used fucking goods? I have been sporting one of these every day since I first laid eyes on you!"

Takashi stopped, looking down at where his hand held hers against his aching cock. Despite the fact her slender hand felt so damn good, so damned right against him, he could not believe he had lost it as he had. Dropping his hand, he waited for the explosion he knew she was capable of. She might be insecure behind the closed door of his office, but to the world, Dr. Tanya Morris was something to behold.

To his surprise, she didn't move her hand. First staring at it and his grotesquely protruding bulge, then she lifted shocked eyes up to his. Her mouth opened several times, but nothing came out. She looked so lost, so...turned on? Takashi was afraid to believe it, but then she moved her hand. Not to move it off him, as he expected, but rather to grip him tighter. She moved back and forth, exploring his length and girth. He knew he was a bit larger than average,

something of a shock to most women he had ever been with. *By all that is good and holy, please, please, please don't let her be afraid of the size.*

Tanya didn't say a word, but the small, needy moan that escaped from her lips said everything that he wanted to hear. Dropping to his knees brought him face to face with her. He didn't hesitate to grasp her by the neck, not too harshly, but firmly, and brought her lips to his own. True to his fantasy, his fingers slid into the lush, thick silken strands of her hair, gripping firmly to tilt her head back. Even as his tongue invaded the hot, wet cavern of her mouth, his other hand seized her breast, kneading the round, pliable mounds. Lace. He could feel the texture through her blouse. With a groan, he lifted his head, placing a lingering bite on her bottom lip as he did so.

"If you don't want this, you have to stop me now," Takashi growled. "I won't be able to stop, Tanya. I have wanted you for so long. So long."

He waited, holding his breath as he did so. He couldn't bear it if she said no. *Please, don't let her say no.*

Chapter Two

Tanya couldn't think. Hell, she could barely breathe. Takashi Nakamura wanted her? It boggled the mind. But Akashi never lied. He was the one person she could depend on to give her the unvarnished truth no matter what, one of the things she loved about him. And there was a lot to love about him. But right now, right now, tall sexy Takashi had one hand going from one breast to the other, rubbing, squeezing, even pinching and twisting her sensitized nipples. Who knew such a little pain could bring such pleasure?

“Answer me, Tanya. Is this what you want?”

Was this what she wanted? He was her friend-her best friend. She shared everything with him. She couldn't very well come into the office tomorrow morning and tell him all about the wild night in the office of her friend. This might ruin their relationship.

When she didn't answer, he buried his face in her neck, nibbling all the right spots. Oh, sweet heavens she just couldn't think clearly. She wanted this. Hell, she needed this. Every touch made her feel desirable, and she hadn't in so very long.

“Yes.” She was afraid to utter her answer in much more than a whisper. If she said it too loud, she would have to admit to herself what she was doing. She would have to face that she was about to sleep – no, fuck, her best friend. Then she would have to admit this was not the first time the thought entered her mind. She would have deal with the fact she had lusted over Takashi for years, and that she creamed just a little every time he smiled that crooked half smile of his.

Before she could blink, she found herself flat on her back, her shirt open. She felt the cool breeze of the office air conditioning caressed her exposed flesh, puckering her nipples even further. They were so erect it was painful, the hypersensitive points rubbing against the suddenly

too tight lace of her bra. Takashi hadn't moved. He crouched over her, transfixed at the sight of the darkened areolas against the pale peach of her bra. It was a little quirk of hers to wear lingerie to match her outfits. She had never told anyone about that, but Tak wouldn't need to be told. He knew her well enough to notice things like that. She shivered at the thought. She knew every time he looked at her from this moment forward he would be imaging what she wore underneath. Her panties got just a little bit damper. What an erotic thought.

His eyes didn't leave her bosom, even as he removed his shirt. His chest was beauty. All finely sculpted with well-defined abs and not a trace of hair. She watched as he threw the shirt, heedless of where it landed, and then carefully placed his chest against hers. Nothing could stop her moan as he slowly stroked his chest against hers, increasing the friction to her poor nipples. She wanted to get closer, with nothing between them. He must have felt so too, because he began to frantically remove her clothing. Taking his lead, her fingers fumbled with his belt and the closure of his slacks.

This was really going to happen! It was unbelievable. Sexual tension that had simmered just beneath the surface, always there but never acknowledged burst forth, making the air thick and sultry. Every nerve ending in her body felt as if they were just coming to life, electrifying her skin, heightening her senses. Once the clothes that had stood between them were gone, Takashi stopped again, leaning back too far for her to touch him. When she tried to get up, just to pull him down on top, he pinned her arms above her head on the arm of the divan.

Every movement she made to get closer, to just touch him skin to skin, caused her to rub against the soft velvet of the divan. It was like a massive soft, yet firm feather was stroking her backside, driving her out of her mind with need. When she arched her body, he simply moved his body higher, out of reach. Why wouldn't he touch her? Was he driving her crazy on

purpose? She had never wanted anyone as much as she did him right this second. Forget foreplay, forget soft romantic words. She wanted all of Takashi Nakamura inside....

Oh, sweet merciful heavens, the man was huge! Tanya hadn't had a heck of a lot of experience. In fact, she had only slept with one man, boy really, other than her ex-husband, and that completely horrific experience was in high school. But she was a medical doctor. She had worked in a major hospital. Never in her life had seen anything like that reddish-purple tree he had between his legs.

“Tanya, look at me!”

Her eyes snapped to Tak's without hesitation. Generally not into the whole 'alpha' male bullshit, she found his forceful tone was, well, a turn on.

“I am not going to fuck you. I am going to make love to you. I am going to treat you like a woman who deserves to be pleasure from the top of her head, to the toes on her feet. I want you to feel what a sexy, desirable woman you are. I want you to know how much *I* desire you, how much I have *always* wanted you. Can you handle that, baby? Because you're not leaving this room until I have accomplished my goal.”

Chapter Three

“Yes.”

It was hardly any louder than her first “Yes” had been, but he heard it, and his eyes crossed at the simple, one-syllable word. Finally! Years of wanting, yearning, lusting, and more importantly, loving had come down to this. He would make this night last forever in her mind, and the next night, and every other night for the rest of her life. He didn’t let go of her hands as he ravished her mouth, lingering in the taste of her. Their tongues dueled, but there was no question of supremacy. Tanya was finally his woman, and there would be no doubt in her mind to that fact after this. Without ceding her mouth, he moved his much bigger body to lie between her legs, rubbing his hard as steel erection against her steamy core. Although she wiggled and squirmed, trying frenziedly to force him into her opening, he would not allow himself to slip inside her. Not yet.

Takashi’s lips moved from her mouth to trace suckling kisses along her jaw line, to her neck, then stopping to concentrate on the delicate skin where her neck met her shoulder. Her mewling pleas and excited gasps hardened his resolve to drive her higher, making her frenetic with need. Her nipples elongated, brushing against the burning skin of his chest as her movement beneath him increased. He wanted, no, he needed to taste every inch of her.

He allowed his hands to slip from her pinned wrists to her elbows, effectively keeping her hands and arms restrained as he moved down her body, licking, kissing and every so often, biting. Her breasts were a feast to his senses. He took his time, circling her areola with his tongue, then blowing gently, enjoying the way they puckered as if begging for more. Catching her nipples between his teeth, first one, and then the other, he flicked his tongue back and forth, before suckling the luscious gumdrop deep and long.

Her pants and moans grew in volume, music to his ears. When her body began to shake, Takashi felt like pounding his chest with his fists. *His woman!* He knew for a fact she rarely experienced an orgasm with her ex, and her only other sexual experience had been less than gratifying. The fact he could drive her over the edge just by lavishing attention on her poor, neglected breasts made him want to shout for joy. He wanted to spend the rest of his life teaching her how good it could be, the way it was designed to be. Buoyed with confidence bordering on conceit, he redoubled his efforts.

“Oh! Oh, my – DAYUM!!!!”

Only after the second mild explosion did Takashi lift his head. Well, mild as compared to what he planned to do shortly.

“Did you like that, *kanojo*?” He gave her nipple a long, leisurely swipe of his hot tongue as he watched her try to come up with a coherent answer. With none forthcoming, much to his not-so-secret delight, he lifted a single brow. “No answer? Perhaps you would like me to stop?”

“No! Oh, hell no!” The tormented reply came as he slid even lower, now gently biting around her belly button before dipping into it for a taste.

Would he ever get enough of this woman? With every nibble, every kiss, every swipe of his tongue, he wanted more and more. By the time he made it to her mound, he’d stopped breathing. His legs actually started shaking as he beheld the most beautiful pussy it had ever been his pleasure to behold. She was all smooth except for the barest of little strip of hair, shaped and cut like a tiny airstrip leading the way home. He was momentarily jealous of her clippers. Heaven forbid someone did this for her! He would have to kill them, male or female. This treasure chest was all his, from this moment until forever.

“Damn, this is beautiful!” He followed the softly spoken praise with a long, lingering kiss right above the crease that housed her clit. “Would like for me to kiss it, *kanojo*? Would like for me to caress it with my tongue?”

As he spoke, soft breezes of his warm breath blew across her lips. He watched in a mixture of tortured fascination and heart-stopping anticipation as her clit began to firm and rise. Determined to see it fully erect without touching it, he continued his verbal assault.

“I think you would like to feel me there, wouldn’t you? You want my mouth on you, my tongue inside you, my fingers, my cock – don’t you, baby? Tell me.”

Tanya’s thighs fell heavily apart as her hips lifted in a quest to find his mouth. He almost didn’t want to move back, but he did. Just a little while longer, then he would taste her.

“Tak! Yes, Tak! Please!”

“Please what? What do you want me to do?”

“Eat me, fuck me...I don’t care – just do it now!”

Finally releasing her arms, Takashi sat up on his knees and gently took her chin in his hand. Tanya’s eyes were tightly shut, her head slightly back, she was groaning in her frustration.

“Look at me, Tanya!”

Her eyes snapped open at his domineering tone. He was momentarily transfixed by the heaving of her breasts before he remembered his purpose.

“I am not going to fuck you, at least not tonight,” he told her in slow, concise terms. “I already told you, I am making love to you, so there is never any doubt about how I feel. So that you will always know *I. Love. You.* I have for a very long time. Now I am going to show you what it is like to be loved, really loved by a man who adores and cherishes you. Is that clear?”

Chapter Four

He had said as much before, but this time, Tanya was more inclined to believe him. There was something in his eyes, a kind of feral purpose she would have to have been blind not to see. Oh, sweet merciful heavens, he was serious! About all of it! He loved her? How did that happen? When did that happen? She should say something; she should stop this right now!

Only he dipped his head and swiped her needy pussy, taking his time, just inside her crease. Her eyes crossed; all words ceased to have any real meaning. One lick after another, unhurriedly, but purposely not giving her what she needed the most. Grabbing his shoulder length, silky black hair, she tried to force his face closer, but he was having none of it. If he was trying to drive her insane with longing, well then, he was doing a damn good job!

“Damn it, Tak! Please, please!”

Never in her life had she experienced all the sensations rioting through her body. Her skin felt far too tight, as if she was going to burst out of it at any minute. She was ready to combust if he didn’t do something soon.

Finally, his attention switched to her clit. She really did begin to weep as the combination of the tongue lashing and suckling on her sensitive pleasure nubbin drove her higher and higher, but didn’t give her the release she needed so badly. All too soon, his tongue was gone. Though she had a firm grip on his hair, he managed to get untangled and sit up. Just as she was about to protest...

SMACK!!!

Tanya’s mouth fell open in a wordless scream as a sharp slap landed against her pussy. She should have been shocked, outraged, livid even. Instead, the stinging burn hurt so damn

good, all she could do was fall back and moan. A tongue kiss followed the wicked smack. The man actually tongue kissed her pussy! Just when he had kissed most of the hurt away...

SMACK!!!

The second slap sent fireworks throughout her body, sending her higher than she had ever been before.

“Tak! Oh, damn, Tak!”

Before allowing her body a chance to settle, he was diving between her thighs once more, eating like a mad man. He licked, he sucked, hell he even bit. Tanya’s eyes blurred as she tried desperately to catch her breath. It was too much! There were too many fabulous sensations running through her body, a violent storm of pure bliss tossed her about. What woman could survive this? When those fabulously thick, long fingers joined that devious mouth, she actually howled, clutching on to Takashi’s hair like a madwoman. Who knew she was multi-orgasmic?

“You taste delicious,” Takashi murmured against her pelvis, finally allowing her to calm down. “I could stay down here for days.”

Oh, mercy, please no! She would surely never survive that!

Thankfully, he didn’t return to the scene of the crime. Instead, he kissed his way up her body, sending tiny shockwaves all up and down her spine, snaking throughout every part of her. Goose bumps broke out all over her skin, yet she was sweltering. Oh, how she wanted him to finish it, to drive that leg he called a penis right into her core.

“I think you’re ready now, aren’t you, *kanojo*?”

“Yes, please Takashi. I want you so bad!”

There was no hesitation, no demur, quiet agreement. What would be the point of that now? She craved him worse than she had ever craved anything in her life. If he didn’t finish

this, she would be bereft. Feeling his searing, heavy cock against her thigh, she tried to pivot slightly to place him against her now dripping mons. She didn't know what would happen tomorrow, but she no longer cared. In one day, Takashi had blasted all her misconceptions not just about sex, but about true intimacy. There was very little he didn't already know about her, now there was nothing.

“What do you want me to do, Tanya?”

Unable to look away from those soulful deep brown eyes, all she could do was tell the truth.

“I want you to make love to me, until I scream, until I cry. Show me.”

Something between a shocked pant and a groan escaped her lips when she felt the fat, bulbous head of his cock entering the mouth of her pussy. He was so very thick. Would he fit? Would it hurt? Did she even care? No, it didn't matter. She would adjust. She was a doctor. She knew her body would stretch to accommodate his size. At this point, she welcomed a little edge of pain, especially because he was making her hurt so damn good.

“So tight,” Takashi grunted in her ear. “So good, so tight.”

Tanya could feel the strain in his muscles. He was trying to hold back, moving slowly to give her time to get used to his size. Forget that! She wanted it all, and she wanted it now! Bracing her feet as best she could on the divan, she took a deep breath, then slammed her hips upward, forcing him deep inside until their pelvis' met.

“Fuck!” Takashi yelled, holding his body completely still.

Tanya blinked back the tears welling in her eyes. Yeah, it had hurt, but she had never felt so deliciously full, so complete physically and emotionally. Even while she panted, her nails dug into his shoulders and she began to slide her hips up and down, experimenting with the feel of

the exquisitely heavy tool inside her. Despite the small sting, she could feel his cock hitting the place she had read about, studied, but never come close to having stroked. The famed g-spot, the elusive pleasure button deep inside every woman she had begun to believe was just a myth. Surprise, surprise, it seemed it did exist after all. Bracing one foot firmly in the divan, then wrapping her other leg around his waist, Tanya found the perfect leverage. Takashi stayed blessedly still as she experimented, moving her hips back and forth, up and down. Who knew sex could feel this good? It was better than chocolate and peanut butter!

Ten strokes; that was all it took. Nothing could have prepared her for the overwhelming orgasm that swept through her body. It started in her toes, shooting like a freight train up her legs, swirling in a whirlpool of electric sensations before flashing out to every nerve cell in her body. She heard a high-pitched scream coming from somewhere, then realized it was her. Too bad it felt too good for her to care.

“Did you like that?”

Tanya nodded her head weakly to the growled question without really comprehending. Opening her eyes, she gulped at the fierce look aimed directly at her. Takashi’s face was all harsh lines, beads of sweat gathered on his forehead. He looked as if he were in pain. Still, he hadn’t moved a muscle, though she could feel the faint tremor of the muscles in his arms.

“Glad you liked it. Now, my turn.”

Chapter Five

The last thing Takashi had expected was for Tanya to grab a hold of the reins. When she had slammed up, burying him balls deep inside, he thought he had died and gone to heaven. It took everything within him to stay perfectly still and let her find her own pleasure. Damn, but she clutched every inch of him beautifully! Control was something he usually prided himself on, but there was no way he could hang on after feeling her spasm all around him, bathing his cock in her juices. He held on, albeit by a very thin thread.

As soon as her spasms began to dissipate, he repositioned them. Moving to sit up on his knees, he was careful to keep them connected, he moved her to his lap. Placing her arms around his shoulders, he held on to her hips, lifting her ever so slightly, before bringing her down over his full length. Using the muscles in his thighs, he surged upward as he brought her down, their skin slapped together in a steady, measured rhythm.

He wasn't going to last very long, not with the way her pussy sucked him inside like a vacuum, demanding his essence. He felt her shift slightly, bringing her feet to dig into his flexing buttocks. He felt her next orgasm in moments, tightening around him, choking his cock. He buried his face against her neck and bit down. It was too good, too tight!

"Bite me!" he growled, holding her close, but not breaking his stride. He wanted more. Deeper, tighter. He wanted to be so far inside her he no longer knew where she began and he ended. Cliché as hell, but nonetheless true.

"What?" Tanya looked down at him, all gorgeously disheveled and glassy eyes.

Oh, to put that look on her face very night! It was so much more than he had ever fantasized about, jacking his dick until it hurt. Nothing could compare to the real vision of the woman of his dreams looking at him with eyes clouded with passion. And he had done that to

her, not her ex, or any other man. He was the one who had given her multiple orgasms in such a short time. Oh, fuck yeah, life was sweet.

“Bite me, like I just bit you.”

Heaven love her, she didn’t even hesitate. Fastening her sharp little teeth on his shoulder, she bit down, hard. Takashi concentrated on the small pain to keep him from going over the edge. The sound of the slapping of skin against skin, the pungent smell of love making heavy in the air, it was quickly becoming too much. Smoothing his hands up and down her sweat slickened back, he knew he would have to let go soon. He was determined to hold on as long as he could – until he could stand no more. She was rocking hard against him, answering him stroke for stroke. He wanted her on her back, on her knees. Hell, there was no way he could ever even contemplate being with another woman again. Not after this.

When the quivers of her body started once again, he knew he was a goner. His balls tightened, squeezing unbearably tight. When she clamped down on his cock, much, much more forceful than before, it was over.

“Fuck, fuck, fuck!” he yelled out in chorus with her broken cry. “Yeah, baby, just like that! Come all over my cock.”

All careful coordinated rhythm flew out the window. Takashi was like a mad man, banging into her as deep as he could possibly go for all he was worth. He hoped and prayed he wasn’t hurting her, but he couldn’t stop. Even as he began to flood her passage with his cum, he couldn’t stop pistoning in and out. It was so damn good!

“Not enough,” he snarled, throwing her down on the divan and bringing her legs to rest on his shoulders.

He might have just come, but he wanted more. He had to have more. He was still rock hard and throbbing, wanting desperately to stay inside. If she said no, he would back off. It would have been damned hard, but any indications she didn't want this just as bad had to be said right away. He would have stopped. Instead, she lifted her hips, grinding down on him in greedy little circles. His eyes rolled back in his head. Surely, he had to have been born under the luckiest star in the universe. So passionate, so perfect, and all hidden. He would walk taller every day forward knowing he had opened this door for her. Knowing without a doubt karma had decreed her all his.

Grabbing her plentiful buttocks, Takashi plowed into her, determined to make her scream just one more time. Perfect. Her back arched just right, those fabulous nipples pointing directly at him. He needed to taste them. He needed them inside his mouth like yesterday! Letting her legs fall to his waist, he leaned down to feast on those magnificent globes.

"So beautiful, so perfect. I love you so much, baby. I need this, I need you." He truly hadn't meant for the declaration to slip past his lips, but it was easy to lose his head.

All too soon, he felt the telltale shudders race through Tanya's body. He tried to steel himself against what he knew was coming, but it was impossible. Her pussy clamped down like a vibrating vice; he was powerless against her.

"Takashi! Oh, shit! Tak, I can't, I can't..."

"Let it go, *kanojo*. Let me feel you."

It was far too late to stop it, he wanted to enjoy every second.

Together, they crashed over the edge again, clinging to each other, skin to skin, heart to heart.

Even before drifting back to earth, one disturbing thought snaked through Takashi's consciousness. As soon as Tanya came to her senses, she would want to run. She would run from this, and what they both knew what this night meant. She would fight him and the change in their relationship with every fiber of her being. He was going to have on hell of a fight on his hands. Luckily, she couldn't run away from their partnership. Not that she would, but she would try to place walls between them in every other way she could.

This was destined to be one hell of a fight, but Takashi was more determined now than ever before to win his woman. He was no fool. A connection like this just didn't come along more than once in a lifetime. Most people went through life never knowing true fulfillment – mentally, emotionally, and physically. They settled for two of the three and hoped for the best.

He would get Tanya to see she never needed to settle again. They were perfect for each other; all she had to do was let go of her insecurities and doubts and believe. He wasn't about to take no for an answer, not after tonight. Settling next to her on the divan, he pulled her close, listening to the deep steady breathing that declared her to be asleep. Tomorrow was Saturday, so there was no fear of the staff finding their bosses naked and entwined. Tomorrow and all the troubles it would bring would come soon enough.

He had just better be on his toes when it came. One thing was for damn sure, Tanya was his. She would fight him, she would deny him, deny this. Too bad she had no idea just how stubborn *he* could be. Tanya was going to find herself answering to the name of Tanya Nakamura very soon. Smiling, he allowed his body to rest and fall into a light slumber, holding his precious prize close. Yes, life was unquestionably, undeniably sweet.

Chapter Six

“Oh, hell,” Tanya whispered through a thick gauze of cottonmouth. She rose up on one elbow, shielding her eyes against the soft glare of early morning slipping between the blinds. Dust motes swirled in the beams of sunshine, dancing in their glee and bliss. A sense of disorientation rippled through her before it all came rushing back in a flood of crystal clear clarity. Emotions, flashes of skin and echoing shrieks of deep, hardcore fucking all on the sensual divan she now rested.

“Goodness!”

She bolted up and managed to loosen Tak’s rather stiff embrace. He clutched her as if she was precious cargo, a treasure he was loath to be parted from. With a careful glance over her shoulder, she spied Tak’s leveled breathing, a soft smile on his face, his delicious body bearing her sole bite mark. She blushed, heat rushing to her cheeks at the animalistic act. Without thinking, she carefully removed his hand and eased quietly off the divan relishing one last velvety caress. The next time she entered his office, she’d stand. Her memories remained invisibly traced all over the furniture. Each time she gazed upon it, her heart would race, her clit would beat wildly, and her nipples would pucker. This she knew without doubt.

Moving across the room as quietly as possible, she began snatching up articles of hastily discarded clothing. She found her purse, right where she left it beside the divan next to the neat set of shoes. Redressing went smooth and swift and in a matter of moments, Tanya stood in the doorway pretty much in the same fashion in which arrived – at least on the outside.

In her heart, her body, and her mind would never be the same. She admitted that much to herself. Tak’s soft, sensual snores caught her eyes and like a magnet, they went directly to the sleeping god. Her fantasy made real, Tak had everything she wanted in a man – last night sealed

it. But she knew without doubt, he couldn't have wanted her for the long haul. Last night had been a bout of pity on his behalf, a friend helping another out. A physical version of a pep talk. Nothing more. Her eyes traced his tight tanned buttocks, across the well-sculptured back and the lean calves. Her stomach burned with the tendrils of desire once more.

I've got to get out of here. How am I going to face him in the morning come Monday knowing full and damn well what wonders he kept tucked into his boxers? Still, he's my best friend! Sure, it felt wonderful, and I know I'm never going to feel like that again, but, but... this can't happen. I know Tak felt pity for me. He's my BFF, but I can't allow him to do that again, to try to make me feel better. He's a sex therapist for Christ's sake. It's his job to get people over their humps. He just took a little hands-on approach with me because he knows me.

Tak stirred on the divan, and she witnessed him patting the spot where she had been. Her breath caught in her throat. If he woke up... what would she say? Do? Act? Yes, she earned a medical degree, but making hasty decisions without all the information could lead to serious consequences. That's why it took her so long to divorce Dave.

I need to think about this.

Not daring to look any longer, Tanya put her hand on the doorknob. Hoisting her purse strap tight against her shoulder, she scraped the passion mark Tak inflicted on her. Still tender, she hissed at the sting of pain, and automatically her stomach tightened.

"Tanya?" she heard him call. Her body answered at once, nipples stiffening at the sound of his voice, and her clit tingling for more of his mouth. "Tanya?"

She pushed through the door with all the restraint she had remaining and fled. After two steps, she couldn't hold back any longer. Suffocating, Tanya bolted down the hallway. She stopped trying to be careful or polite. The vacant office remained so and she ran, heart

hammering inside her chest as if protesting her escape down the corridor, by her office, and out the exit doors. Cheeks hot with shame, Tanya slowed to a trot through the lower level exit doors and into the parking garage. Parked next to Tak's BMW sat her sleek, ivory two-door Lexus coup. Theirs were the only two cars, Tanya swallowed, not liking the implications of her thoughts. Seeing the BMW's slick black finish resurrected thoughts of Tak's hair and how wonderful and thick the silken strands entwined in her fingers.

Her hand trembled as she unlocked the car. She threw her purse into the passenger side and hugged herself tight. Without Tak's strong arms wrapped around her, she suddenly shivered against the still chilly morning. It had all been her fault. Going on and on and on about how unattractive she felt and complaining again to him. No doubt he'd sexed her down to halt the onslaught of self-pity she poured out of her mouth.

He'd never done it before, though, not even when I went through the fire with Dave. Tak had been a great guy, supportive, helpful, my rock. He'd never tried anything like last night. Surely, he, he didn't mean... no, he couldn't.

She closed her eyes and took in several moments to compose herself.

Quiet except for the roar of blood in her ears, Tanya put her forehead against the leather bound steering wheel. She couldn't get away from him. They were partners. Running today only gave her a reprieve for today, hell maybe the weekend. But come Monday....

By Monday I'll have it together again. Nothing has changed. We're still friends and we're still partners. What I need is distance – air to breathe. Being near him clouds my logic, smokes out my lust and makes me cream for him.

As these words skipped across her mind, tears welled up behind her closed lids. It hurt to walk away from something so fantastic and so *right* as what she felt with Tak last night. It

couldn't be real. No one could sustain that type of intensity forever, despite all his pillow talk. She knew it would sour. Sweet milk left out in the sun. Sushi left to spoil. And spoiled sushi was a true waste.

She slumped back against the seat and slipped her keys into the ignition. Before she could start the vehicle, the ringing tune of *Bleeding Love* cracked the fragile silence, shooting a burst of fear through her. Startled and her hands trembling, Tanya fumbled for her cell phone through the dark depths of her purse. She knew at once who it was, even before she checked the caller ID.

Tak.

As her hands closed over the vibrating and singing instrument, Tanya's heart pounded and her stomach whirled. To answer or not? Could she withstand listening to his quiet, musical voice caressing her ear, dropping little seeds of sexuality into her libido? Obviously, he noticed her missing and in minutes, for all she knew, *seconds*, he would burst through the parking garage doors wearing that stern expression of immense displeasure he sometimes delivered to his administrative assistant. She could endure it, but his smoldering pits of dark desire burning in his eyes hit something deep inside her. Wanting and panting after her business partner shot a new wave of adrenaline through her bloodstream. She wouldn't be able to stop herself from falling into his arms, or worse, dropping to her knees and wrapping her lips around the smooth, bulbous head of his cock.

No. No, I can't take seeing him right now. Not so soon after, after... No.

With that terror trembling up her spine, she threw the cell phone back into her purse and started her car. Like an experienced racecar driver, Tanya tossed the car into drive, and peeled

out of the parking space, with all intentions of putting as much distance between herself and Tak as humanly possible.

If only she could do the same with her heart and memories of last night.

Chapter Seven

The warmth lining Tak's torso had vanished and in his puzzlement, his eyes cracked open, not wanting the dream to be over. His long held emotional torch for his best friend, Tanya, had finally been passed. She'd given herself over to him and together they'd connected in a manner most people fantasized about and he knew because they ended up on his divan, complaining about how far out of reach the brass ring remained.

He patted at the spot, wishing to connect with her supple skin, but finding nothing but air. Leaning up, he forced himself to relax. Maybe she went to the restroom. He yawned and smiled. Years had passed since he'd slept as peacefully and in such contentment as he had last night. Humming to himself, he sat up, and stretched.

Already his phallus throbbed, seeking the snug core of his mate, for what else could Tanya be, but his soul's twin? He'd known it forever, and last night confirmed it. At least in his mind, and as for Tanya's, well, he would convince her of it – in time.

The last of his patience began to ebb away. He gave his office a swift visual sweep and noted to his mounting dislike, the absence of Tanya's clothes.

Relax. She could've dressed to go to the restroom. Tanya's self-conscious enough to not want to stroll around in the nude. Heavens knew why with a body like hers – it could stop traffic and most men's hearts.

He glanced at the spot beside the divan. Her purse was gone too.

He scowled.

She may have needed it too. Cosmetics, a comb, and any of the other feminine items and menageries a woman kept in her purse.

His face relaxed into a smile. His woman. The sound of it made his lips spread wider and his heart expand until it pressed against his ribs. Seeing Tanya this morning was like the sun appearing after a week-long downpour.

And so he waited.

Pulling on his boxers slowly, Tak's gut rumbled in warning. Moments melded into minutes and before long ten had inched by.

What is she doing in there? Frozen to the spot in front of the mirror contemplating her decision? Afraid to face me?

Their coupling had shattered all perceived notions and pretense of remaining only friends. Surely Tanya understood she belonged to him, now, body and soul. Deep inside his mind confessed his secret fear. Tanya had fled from the raw intensity of his love and from her own fear. Fear that she mattered and deserved every drop of his affection and devotion until death parted them.

Hell, she'd best get over that little phobia.

"Damn."

Tak yanked on his slacks, leaving the belt unbuckled.

Relax, Tak. There's a reasonable explanation. Tanya gave every inch of herself last night. Our souls joined and now we remain as one.

She felt it. *He'd* felt her experience it – each orgasmic quake, every audible cry, each pleasure-filled plea they'd shared. He headed toward the women's restroom. Making a left and then a right at the corner, he arrived in the plush, leather-draped lobby. The hunk of hope hung heavy in his throat.

If she's not here...

He shuddered as if someone had placed ice on his naked back.

Pushing through the numbing chill, Tak shouted into the restroom.

“Tanya! You in here?”

No response.

“Tanya?”

Nothing.

Now, where had she gone?

The thread of hesitation – no, worry, reverberated against the vacant stalls. He opened his mouth to call once again, but the heat of his rising annoyance burned his worry to emotional cinders. In its wake, like a phoenix, Tak’s determination was reborn. He would convince her. If it took the rest of his life, he would convince Tanya she was *his*.

Stomping back down the carpeted hallway to his office, Tak’s mind settled into devising a plan, a course of action. He’d been rash last night, led by his long-held desire for her. He couldn’t afford to be so with her again. Not with her. Sometimes he hated being right. Like now.

Tanya had bolted from him, his love, and his unconditional acceptance.

As he’d known she would.

He had to stop her, to talk to her. He meant every word he confessed to her, but he knew her. Disbelief and doubt wouldn’t let his words through to her heart. If his actions failed to convey his feelings, what more could he do?

Something. Everything. They’d known each other for far too long to end it like this.

So engrained in his life, Tak couldn’t be without her.

Bare chest and feet, Tak grabbed his cell phone from his desk's gleaming cherry-finished top. He hastily scrolled through the Ts until he found her name.

"Come on. Come on," he pleaded to the phone's continuous ringing. "Pick up. Come on, baby, don't shut me out. Not now."

It seemed an eternity crept by before Tanya's soft husky voice met his ear and announced that she was unable – more like unwilling – to take his call at this time.

Beep.

"Tanya. Tak. Listen baby, I understand why you left. I do. I'm not mad, but I wish you would talk to me. Trust me, Tanya. It's me. Tak. Call me. I love you. You. All of you. Every inch and every piece of you. The funny thing you do with your eyebrow when you have an unspoken question. Yes. The fact you like ice cream and French fries. Yes. I've always loved everything about you. Talk to me. Call me back."

He pressed the scarlet *end* button and prayed to all that was holy and good she listened to the message and not delete it the second she heard his voice. Impulsive and head strong, his Tanya made him smile.

Tak finished dressing, his movements sluggish and unhurried. Why hurry? The love of his life was halfway across the city, out of his physical reach. For now. She needed space to sort out the traffic jam of emotions flooding her usually sensible mind.

Once dressed, Tak gave the office one final glance before tossing his car keys in the air. Dejected, he wrestled the urge to storm over to her loft, tear open the door, and force a confrontation.

Mentally weighing the pros and cons of such action, Tak made his way to his sleek BMW. Pausing, Tak blew out a heavy sigh. On the one hand, he was glad she revealed that she

wanted him, too. One the other, his assumption she'd flee from it only served to annoy him. Not that he didn't understand it. He *did*.

Tak, long her friend and confidante, knew that Tanya really feared the new label on him – lover. New, unsettling at how right, how connected they were together sent her whirling.

Let me steady you, baby.

He unlocked the car with a keyless *beep beep* and sat his briefcase onto the passenger side. Removing his suit jacket, he hung it carefully on the back seat's hook. All this he performed in habit. He unclipped his BlackBerry and ready to turn it off—another part of the routine.

What if she called back?

The BlackBerry returned to its clip.

Dubbed his sanctuary, the vehicle lured his stress away with its smooth ride, soft heated bucket seats, and dark reflective tint cradled him, a womb on wheels.

Silence as he drove home helped quiet the storm. But not today.

The hushed interior seemed only to intensify his thoughts. Gritting his teeth, he cruised out of his spot, his heart beating wildly at the thought of Tanya. She'd been everything he'd ever jacked off to and more. A bundle of passion released, Tanya simply rocked his galaxy, placed his heart in orbit around her.

I'm going to get you to see your worth and your place at my side.

Chapter Eight

Monday arrived too fast for Tanya's tastes. Saturday swept by in an agonizing numbness and frustration, tears and tantrums. Fatigued, Tanya dressed carefully in her bedroom's huge walk-in closet. Her loft laid out each area of living space with artful screens segregating the huge space into chunks. She moved sluggishly, because despite the peace and quiet, she'd been unable to rest. Sleep refused to claim her and as she artfully decorated her eyes to hide the deep bluish circles, she sighed.

Going to face down Tak today. Must be ready to be cool, professional. It happened but we don't have to relive it.

Though at the very thought of his name, her stomach tightened and her damp permeated her panties. Again. It'd been like this all weekend. Her body craved his touch, his mouth, his lips, and his cock in her, on her, pressed hard and fast against her.

Stop it. Concentrate. Got to get a grip. Sex like that wasn't ever going to happen to me ever again. It's a lingering taste of something yummy I know I'll never consume again.

Dressed, hair snatched back into a bun, conservative earrings and necklace on, Tanya gave herself a once over in the mirror. Ready.

She retrieved her purse and her cell phone from the mahogany coffee table. Her heart began to gallop as she clutched her cell phone in her palm so tightly the short antenna burrowed into her flesh. Tak's message weighed heavy against her heart. Hot flashes warmed her and she couldn't believe Tak's words. A ring of sentiment swept across each hoarsely whispered word, and she knew he wouldn't lie to her – not Tak. The words found refuge in her heart. Blinking back tears, Tanya slowly put the cell into her purse.

Dazed, she stumbled into the sofa, sinking into the soft Italian leather with confusion, and struggling to control the tide of feelings Tak set crashing over her. *Come on. Get it together, girl. Let's show him.*

Holding her breath, she rushed out of the closed in space and down the flat metal stairs to the garage. In minutes, she zipped out of the still rising door. A decision hovered on the seesaw of indecision. Oh, she loved Tak – truly, madly, deeply. The two days of soul searching and meditation bore that out. Yes. He meant so much to her.

But how could she tell him what she believed inside? As he knew her, she knew him too. The type of woman he required bore no resemblance to her at all. Traditional Japanese Americans, Tak's parents would never accept her as anything more than a close acquaintance. And they'd done that with trepidation. Her presence as his lover would mar his reputation in the community and dishonor his family's name. All this he'd confessed one late study night while they were undergraduates. Back then his honor, his family's good name and standing meant more than anything – everything.

She couldn't do that to him. No woman was worth shunning and exclusion from a culture.

Tak had dated outside his ethnicity many times before, but somehow his parents had accepted the Caucasian ones with a little more ease than the darker skinned ones. She marveled at their pickiness when it came to skin tone, being a minority as much as she, Tanya failed to comprehend their racist attitudes.

Before she knew it, the glass high rise appeared before her, scraping the overcast sky. Tanya maneuvered her Lexus down into the underground parking garage and into her designated spot.

Tak's messages had been cautious, only contacting her via cell phone, leaving brief bouts of lust and love on the line. She took in a breath and let it out in a slow, steady stream.

What should I say to Tak? What would I do when our eyes meet?

Already her clit hardened and throbbed for his whirling tongue, his soft lips, and regal nose.

Keep it professional and aim above his belt.

Yes. That's what she'd do. Easier said than done, but her determination grew longer roots.

Tak fidgeted against the warm streams of heated air. His office door remained cracked just a bit. He wanted to hear Tanya's husky voice greet the staff. The moment she stepped into the office, he had to know. A taut wire ready to snap, Tak had paced a nice line between his desk and his door most of the morning. Unable to sleep most of the weekend, he did sit-ups, Tae Kwon Do and meditation, but none of it repelled the tension winding around his neck, his heart, his cock.

"You have a good weekend, Dr. Morris?" came the coarse rasp of Debbie, the one-hundred year old receptionist. "Mine was too quick as usual."

His breath caught in his chest and refused to move out or in until he heard her voice.

"It was an interesting weekend," Tanya replied. "And yes, they do tend to go rather quickly."

Tak frowned. His weekend seemed to stretch on forever and three years. But then it was all about perspective. He refocused his thoughts and reminded himself to breathe. Concentrate. The biggest day of his life arrived prepackaged today and it was up to him to assemble it.

It began with black, velvet-draped box with the diamond ring inside on his desk.

“Dr. Morris, uh, hang on a minute,” Anne, the administrative assistant called as Tanya’s shadow hurried by his door. “There’s a message here from Dr. Nakamura. He wants a meeting today at 3 p.m.”

Tak fought to suppress the smile itching to explode onto his face. He knew her schedule and no one was penciled in after 2:30 p.m. Neither of them saw patients after that time. They would discuss business issues and address other concerns found in running a business. Truth be told, he only nodded and agreed at those intimate four person meetings. His head, both the one on his shoulders and the one stirring awake in his pants, paid more attention to the swerve of her hips and the smooth long legs than any of the numbers.

“...as it’s Monday. That’s our typical business meeting day, but not today, Anna,” Tanya was saying, sobering Tak’s dreamy attention at once. “I have other appointments after 2:30.”

What? No, she doesn’t.

“Would you like for me to add those times in as busy, Dr. Morris?” Anne asked, and Tak smiled.

Great idea!

“No, I think I can handle it. Don’t schedule anything after 2:30 as usual,” Tanya replied coolly, not even a hint of anxiousness seeping in her tone.

*How can she pretend like it never happened? She hadn’t even asked Anne if I was in yet?
Did she see the car? Did she see my light on?*

He rushed back to his desk as quickly as possible and picked up his Monte Blanc pen and pretended to take notes on his legal pad. Any minute she’d come waltzing into the office and pretend that their sensual joining never occurred. As if under a spell, Tanya would act as though

it had been a dream. She'd deny his bite mark bruising her shoulder, the still sore, stinging hurt of her nipples where his lips had pinched them hard, and the deep, resonating ache inside her.

But he had the disarming spell right there.

He picked up the box and hastily shoved it into the top drawer.

No sooner had he done this, than the door to his office creaked opened wider and in walked...

Anne.

His disappointment spilled over his face.

"Oh, good morning, Anne," he said, adjusting the notepad on his desk. "Any cancellations this morning?"

Anne's thick braids shook in their high ponytail as she said, "No. This time of year brings out all kinds of blues."

Tak gave her grin that felt both tight and temporary on his face. As if it didn't belong to him. He realized to his dismay he was using his placating patients-only smile.

"Ready, Dr. Nakamura, for the 9 o'clock appointment?" Anne peered at him over her square goldenrod frames. "You feeling okay?"

Tak fumbled to sit straighter in his chair and said, "Of course."

Of course not!

"You may begin when ready, Anne," he said a little more sharp than he intended. He cleared his throat and gave her the patient-only smile again. "Please."

Anne's smooth, arched eyebrow rose, but she said, "Before we start, Dr. Morris said she can't meet today at 2:30."

Tak's eyes glazed over and he nodded. He tried to focus on something beyond Anne, to wrestle his anger back down to manageable. It wasn't her fault Tanya skipped out on him. No, it was his. He underestimated her stubbornness. Why would she make this easy for him when it was so difficult for her?

As Anne read off the names of his upcoming patients, Tak began to formulate the last measure of his plan.

Tanya won't be able to outmaneuver this one.

Chapter Nine

The rest of the morning dragged by in a series of endless complaints, bellyaching, and finger pointing. Tanya suppressed yet another urge to reach across, slap her patient, and tell her to suck it up. Life sucked for everyone from time to time. She held the thin reins of her patience with all she could muster. Shocked at her slippery grasp on professionalism, she crossed her legs and leaned forward, pretending to be interested in the prattling story of the female patient's mother.

When the onslaught ceased, Tanya gave the woman a grin she prayed was warm and understanding all the while shuffling her out the door. The clock inched ever closer to 2:30 and she longed to bolt through the thick oak doors and out into crisp air. Before Tak caught her. Thanks to Debbie's efficient booking, the day had been a series of patients strolling in and fumbling out of her office. Now the lull in activity would only serve to entice Tak to her door.

I'm not running from him. I'm being strategic. Yes. That's it.

She shoved a rough handful of papers into her satchel, grabbed up her purse, and ignored the trembling in her hands. With a brief glance over her office, she shut off the lights and inched out of the office, making sure to look both ways for Tak. Finding the hushed hallway empty, she sucked in another breath of courage, stood up straight, and stalked into the uncertainty.

Not that she hadn't seen Tak today. Oh, she had. The image of him seared right into her eyelids. Whenever she closed them, she saw him in rigid clarity. That silky thick black hair lying carefully against the cobalt blue of his Brooks Brothers button down shirt, and the midnight slacks that draped across those hard thighs – thighs which pinned her on the divan, thighs which supported her as she bucked upward and onto his rigid rod. He'd flashed those dazzling white teeth that had marred her shoulder and inflicted a tiny love wound which throbbed under his

heated gaze. Yes, those hands fondling papers in the same slow swirls they'd loved her breasts, swatted her tenderbox and made her whimper with want.

Yes, she'd seen Tak today, and it for that very reason she had to get the hell out of the office now.

She nearly made it rear exit and down the back stairwell when Anne appeared at the end of the hallway, touting a huge bouquet of flowers, balloons, and a gigantic card.

"Uh, Dr. Morris? Are you leaving?" Anne asked, spying around the huge spectacle. "I mean, now?"

Tanya sighed.

"What do you need, Anne?" Tanya asked instead of answering. Obviously, she was leaving.

Whose birthday, wedding, or baby shower did I forget? This one must've slipped by me.

"Dr. Morris, ma'am, these are for you." Anne hoisted them forward as if about to pitch the entire assortment to her.

Tanya frowned at them. It wasn't her birthday either.

The puzzle fell into place the moment she walked closer and noticed they were Japanese cherry blossoms. Hard to get, expensive to fit in a contraption like this, and to Tanya's surprise all the items had been separate. Anne had simply been carrying them as one, but the balloons had Japanese ideograms Tanya knew as meaning love, hope, life, and unity.

Tak.

Tanya opened her door and waited while Anne placed the gifts on her round bistro-styled meeting table.

“Whew! Someone sure likes you, Dr. Morris,” Anne said with a wipe of her damp forehead. “You’re finally moving on past Dave. I’m glad, uh, even if that is a bit too personal.”

Tanya blinked at Anne, finally hearing the words. So focused on the cherry blossoms she’d hardly heard Anne’s little spill. When she realized the other woman remained, watching her, Tanya said, “Oh, yes. Lovely. Thoughtful. Thank you.”

Anne left, closing the door behind her with a soft click.

Tanya reached for the card with her hands slick with anxiousness. Butterflies flapped about her belly and she tried to get a handle on the emotions. Tak had sent her stuff before, birthday, happy divorce, and graduations to name a few. But this, this went beyond friendly bonds.

And she knew why.

A solitary line in perfect placed script read...

Follow your heart and speak true. As mine has done.

Speak true.

It had been in their freshman year of college when they’d been the subject of a group of skinhead teasing and taunting. Well, it wasn’t just Tak and her. There had been a group of about twenty of her friends, and about twenty of the skinheads. Tak had stood up to the bullies and received a pretty good bruising for his efforts. But not before he’d sent a few to the emergency room. Charges pressed and dropped, Tak ended up having to pay the hospital bills which came out of his own pocket. His parents refused to pay. There went his money for Europe that summer.

Later she had asked him why he hadn't lied to the police about beating the skinheads. Any number of students could've done the damage. No cameras, everyone pointing the finger at someone else.

Tak's dark raven eyes had met hers and as he brushed his then-long strands of bangs from his face, he said, "To betray oneself is the gravest of all human sin. It begins by lying to others. Follow your heart and speak true."

Which is how she knew he never lied to her. Ever. Tak always spoke true.

Tanya dapped at the burning sting of unshed tears in her eyes. *I'm a fool.*

Leaving the items on the meeting table, Tanya's throat closed over the lump of emotions and feelings. She snatched up her belongings once more and fled.

What's done is done. My mind is made up. I'm not good for him. Not enough for what he must give up in return.

These hot words buzzed around her mind as she slipped out of her office once more and out of the rear exit. Her heels made a horrible clatter as she scurried to her Lexus, but she didn't care. Tanya couldn't hear anything but the coursing of her blood in her ears and the galloping whine in her heart.

Dr. Nakamura watched with mild fascination as his woman, yes his woman, nearly broke her heels racing to her car. He remained hidden behind the fall of shadows in the centralized stairwell. So consumed by getting away from him, from the blossoms and the declarations in Japanese, Tanya hadn't thought to discover his whereabouts. He knew the over-stimulating gifts would be too much and had in fact planned to set her over the edge. Counting on Tanya to act

predictably, he counted to thirty, until her car vanished into the bright sunlight before sprinting to his BMW and hurrying in.

No ritual today. Not even a seatbelt until he'd breached the upper deck. There at the light! He pressed the accelerator and landed about two cars behind her. Following her home might spook her more, but judging by her body movements, Tanya thoughts were too emotionally muddled to think rationally.

Enough cat and mouse. Enough running. He enjoyed a good hunt like any other man. He'd already declared her his—a point he reinforced today.

Fully.

Chapter 10

The long shadow fell over Tanya a brief moment before she inhaled the Calvin Klein scent. Heart hurling one hundred miles an hour in her chest, she closed her eyes and clutched the door's handle.

Tak. He's right behind me.

His scent charged the cologne, infusing it and making it his own unique aroma. No one carried that rawness quite like him. Despite taking deep breaths, her hands clutched the handle and trembled.

His breath brushed the back of her neck and she slumped.

"Tak..."she began, not turning around.

"Tanya," he said, cutting her off. His tone was as soft as velvet against her skin, like his divan. It stroked her ears and raised goose flesh across her arms, her bellybutton, her nipples. "Hello, baby. Remember me? I'm the guy you spent all day avoiding."

She grinned in spite of herself. *No way had I forgotten you. But I was avoiding you.*

Suddenly, her eyes flew open as strong hands whirled her around and gently pressed her against the door.

Like a stealth predator, Tak's face appeared inches from hers. His lips, those luscious lickable lips, barely moved as he said, "I want you."

Tanya flushed, unable to meet his eyes. "Tak, about that, I..."

"Shut up."

She stiffened and swallowed the hot retort on her tongue. After placing both hands on her hips, she muttered, "What?"

“I said to hush that gorgeous mouth and open those equally beautiful ears,” Tak purred against her throat, leaning ever closer – close enough to breathe her breath.

“Tak...”

“No!” he growled and took the liberty of kissing her throat. “I love everything about you. The way you walk, dress, talk... everything. Conversing with you is a pleasure. My life is to be *your* everything.”

“You’re crazy. Your parents...” Tanya declared, trying in vain to push him away so she could think. Being this close to her put him deep into her personal space. He’d infiltrated her defenses. Her well-crafted argument eroded against his warm, minty breath. “You can’t be serious.”

“Do you know me?” he replied, before gliding his lips down her throat and biting her at the juncture of her shoulder and collarbone.

Her libido rose, body arching and aching for more. Her hands wrapped around that cobalt blue shirt and yanked him *toward* her. Betrayed by her body, Tanya melted into him.

“I can’t be what you want, need...” she confessed lips quivering from her own want and fear. “Tak, please...”

“You *are*,” Tak whispered, sucking her earlobe in between his teeth. Her diamond stud clinked against them. “Listen to your heart, and speak *true*.”

“Tak,” she breathed into his ear, her hands winding their ways upward and into his hair. “Please...”

“Please what, baby? Tell me,” he moaned, pressing the rigid hardness of his body against hers, setting her points to peaks and puckered pleasure.

Tanya stiffened.

Damn if this isn't the exact position I found myself in last Friday night with him. Begging for his body, his heart, and I can't do it again.

Tak grew still against her. His body language posing the question his lips refused to ask.

"I, we, I need to be alone," Tanya said, the cold, sobering words falling from her mouth awkwardly. "I mean, I, I, can't be the person you need."

Tak stepped back from her, eyes full of something Tanya couldn't quite catch or read.

Wordlessly, he removed his hands and allowed them to drop to his sides.

Quiet. Not good. He's pissed.

"I know this isn't what you want to hear, but you need a good Japanese woman. Your parents have been pining away for that for decades. As their only son, it is your family duty. You told me that. Your honor."

Tak's blank face held the tiniest hint of emotion though his voice did not.

"I was in my third year of medical school."

"I was too."

"I have since matured and have become my own person," he explained, eyes burrowing into hers.

"I'm sorry, Tak," she whispered, and hurriedly slipped her key into the lock and turned. Entering her loft, she immediately felt his presence behind her once more.

"Go home," she called over her shoulder.

The door clicked closed behind him and as it did, Tanya sighed.

She glanced over her shoulder and to her surprise, he hadn't left, but had dropped to one bended knee.

A tremor rippled through her stomach and she hesitated a bit before spinning around completely to face him. There, on her hardwood mahogany floor, Tak raised a raven jewelry box toward her in one hand. Across his heart he'd draped his other hand. Eyes shone with unshed tears and his Adam's apple bobbed nervously.

"You can't be serious," Tanya gasped before she realized the words were out of her mouth. She clasped a hand over her lips.

"Oh, but I am," Tak said, clearing his throat. "So, here goes. Tanya, since the day I laid eyes on you in med school, I have known without doubt you were my soul's mate. Throughout these many years, I have loved you from afar, much too far. Please, I love you. I always have. I always will, because we are meant to be together as one. Listen to your heart and speak true. Be my wife. Please."

He held the position flawless, unwavering like a stone statue. Only his eyes shimmered with the uncertainty he felt, and Tanya marked those flashes of fear on his behalf with a growing awareness in her own. He did love her, true. She had always loved him too and the words he spoke could have easily come from her about her adoration for him. Tak had always been his own person, and she knew deep within how his parents would react to their union.

Still...

After last Friday night, Tanya understood too. No one would ever make her feel the way he did. Ever. Emotionally or physically. He had been her BFF and who better to share her life with until death? The man who already knew and loved her quirks. The man who she trusted and found faithful, dependable, trusting, and nurturing. He had been her rock, her salvation, and her friend.

How could she not be with him forever?

“Are you sure about this, Tak?” she asked, hands twisting in front of her.

A grin spread across his face.

“I have never been more certain of anything in my life, Tanya.”

And Tak would never lie to her.

“Yes,” she said quietly, studying the expression on his face.

Tak’s eyebrows rose.

“Was that a *yes*?” he inquired, standing up.

She nodded.

“Hell no, baby, I need to hear it,” Tak said excitedly, eyes locked on hers. “Say it!”

“Yes,” Tanya repeated, the reality crashing down on her. She was going to be Tak’s wife. His bride! “YES!”

“Hell, yes!” Tak shouted and scooped her up into his arms. He spun her around and she giggled from the quick twirl.

When he sat her down on the sofa, the room was spinning, but Tanya didn’t care. She held out her hand and watched, somewhat loopy with happiness, Tak slip the diamond onto the finger of her left hand. He kissed each finger and her palm and her wrist and on up her arm until his lips met her cheeks.

“Congratulations, Mrs. Nakamura,” he said, low and hot against her cheek. “Let’s consummate our upcoming nuptials early.”

“Absolutely,” Tanya replied.

The end