

## No More Mirages

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As I always do, I want to give a SPOILER WARNING that if you haven't read my novels CONQUEST and NO FEAR, this story is a huge spoiler with one of the characters. If you have read them or don't mind spoilers, by all means, proceed and enjoy :-)

“Brandon, stop. I think...” Christopher paused, running his fingers through his light-brown hair, streaked in gray. “There’s something we need to talk about...”

Brandon brought his blue and white Suzuki GSX-R1000 to a halt at the traffic light, balancing the bike with one leg on the ground. He stared blankly up at the red light. Even though the memory was over a month old, his throat would still tighten, choking him each time it flashed through his mind. How could he not have seen it? How could he not have known? How stupid had he looked, his lips lingering near Christopher’s stomach from the gentle kisses he’d been giving him, when Christopher told him he shouldn’t go there, he should get tested because he wasn’t the only one in his life anymore? He hadn’t been for a long time.

Brandon gave the memory a hard mental shove, trying to force it away from the front of his mind. He reached in the back pocket of his jeans, pulling out the directions he’d printed out to the Miyamoto Dojo. He glanced at the light to make sure it was still red, then double-checked the directions. Considering he had lived his whole life in Chicago, he figured he probably should know his way around the Lincoln Park area better, but he rarely came this far north, and when he did, he went even farther to visit his brother near Evanston.

Brandon flicked his gaze up from the directions to the light just as it turned green. He folded the paper, shoving it back into his pocket, and launched the motorcycle through the intersection. He didn’t even know why he was doing this. His brother, Jesse, gave him the dojo’s business card, telling him because of the passion he once held for karate, it might be good for him to get involved in it again. But when a person’s life came crashing down, they were supposed to do something drastic to move forward, not regress back to a hobby from when they were a teenager, weren’t they? The problem was, he wasn’t sure how to move forward.

He thought he had finally reached that new level in his life with Christopher, a point where the open relationships and one-night stands were finally over, where no matter how many times they made love, they’d still always want each other.

Made love? What a freakin’ joke. How could he even think that Christopher had cared enough about him to call what they did making love? The only things that had separated him from all of Christopher’s other screws was the other screws knew there were other screws and he was good enough in bed that Christopher didn’t want to part with him. But Christopher didn’t

want to be faithful either, so he gave him no choice but to part with him. At least the asshole had told him he was a cheating bastard before he caught something from one of his little sluts.

Brandon took in a deep breath, trying to bring his anger down. It seemed like he warped between three moods lately; anger, hurt, and numb. Actually, there was one more. Fatigue. He was tired. Tired of the bullshit games. Tired of trying to find someone to be with. Tired of putting everything he had into a relationship, only to have it returned halfway. Was it too much to have someone he could trust? Who would respect him? He wanted to be able to look into a man's eyes and see a love so clear and piercing it could make his breath catch in his throat. So long as it was true, and not another mirage like what he had seen every time he looked into Christopher's eyes.

Then again, maybe he had brought it on himself, and karma was determined to return the favor of the heartbreak he had dealt out when he was younger by delivering the same pain right back to him. It didn't seem fair. Sure, maybe through his teenage years and early-twenties he made a few mistakes, but he didn't imagine that anyone who went from trying to be straight, to bi, to screw it, men are the way to go, wouldn't have made a few errors along the way, too.

Brandon slowed his bike, leaning into a turn. He began checking addresses now that he was in the right area, then he no longer needed to look at the numbers. He saw his destination and stared in amazement at it. An expansive lawn stretched out before the dojo. The building itself was made of wood and looked as though it'd been lifted from 17<sup>th</sup> century Japan and dropped in the middle of Lincoln Park. Tall stalks of bamboo lined the wraparound veranda while lavender rhododendrons added dots of soft color. The roof of black tiles curved down to the eaves. Though despite its classic architecture, the building was touched with the modern.

Brandon swung into the gravel driveway and rolled to a stop in the small parking lot filled with cars. He pulled off his helmet, shaking his fingers through his hair while continuing to gaze at the structure. It looked like the driveway wrapped around to the right side of the dojo, past a tall privacy fence, to maybe a home.

Through the large front window, he saw white shadows moving and knew a class was going on. Brandon lowered his gaze to the ground. So much time had passed since he practiced karate in a formal setting. Over ten years. He still practiced on his own occasionally, but he knew his stances, punches, kicks and blocks were all off. He wasn't even sure if he still had the time to start it back up again, or if he really wanted to.

Brandon hopped off the bike and jogged up the three stairs to the veranda. Two wind chimes hung by the stairs, adding a whisper of music to the light breeze. He creaked open the door as quietly as possible, trying to not disturb the lesson. He stepped onto the foyer, and seeing a wooden rack for shoes, slipped out of his Nikes, then straightened and turned, catching the dark eyes of the sensei.

Brandon blinked in shock. That was the sensei? There was no way. He looked too young. What was the headmaster's name? Shunichi. Shunichi Miyamoto. But that couldn't be him.

Maybe he was an assistant master. Headmaster, assistant master, or a freakin' white belt, what difference did it make? The man was beautiful.

A blinding white gi wrapped around the sensei's torso, showing a hint of his smooth, defined chest. His loose karate pants were the same brilliant white, and around his waist was a black belt. He was slender, lithe, and looked like he was just a touch shorter than himself. His Japanese features were soft with elegantly raised cheekbones. He stood barefoot on the white mats, his dark eyes, nearly as jet as his hair, never leaving Brandon's blue ones.

The sensei was in the middle of *kumite*, sparring with one of his students. His attention snapped away from Brandon an instant before his student landed a punch. His right hand flashed, blocking the student's move while sending a blow with his left hand to the student's stomach. He pulled his strike, delivering hardly more than a tap. The student jumped back, turning with amazing speed in a high kick, but the sensei moved faster. He blocked again and swept the student's leg out from under him, sending him to the mats. The student hopped up and bowed to him, which he returned. He signaled for the class to stop sparring, and the class of twelve lined up in two rows of six, facing him.

Brandon took a breath as if it was his first since walking through the door. Every move the sensei made was pure, fluid grace. He became painfully aware of how hard he was from watching him and decided he needed to sit down.

Brandon moved away from the door to a chair in front of the window. He watched the sensei address the class about an upcoming tournament, but Brandon hardly heard him since he was going over the basic fundamentals of karate in his head. Rule One: Due to the sacred nature of the relationship between master and student, the student should try to avoid getting hard over his sensei. Rule Two: If the student lacks the discipline to avoid getting hard, he should practice mental control in not imaging his sensei throwing him to the mats and screwing his brains out. Rule Three: If the student is unable to master control of mind and body, and he's already dripping in anticipation, he should get his ass up and walk out of the dojo.

The sensei dismissing the class interrupted Brandon's thoughts. He sat still, trying to not blatantly stare at him, and focused his attention on the students instead. One by one, they picked up their bags of gear, slipped on their shoes, and filed out the door. He watched the last student walk out, and felt the sensei's gaze on him. He slowly turned his head, meeting his eyes once again.

"Hello," the sensei said. "What can I help you with today?"

Brandon stared at him for a second. He opened his mouth, trying to find his voice. "I...uh..." he paused, wetting his lips with his tongue. "I just came by to check things out."

"A prospective student? That's wonderful! I'm Shunichi Miyamoto, Headmaster." Shunichi held out his hand to him.

Brandon took it as he stood up, feeling the strength in Shunichi's grip. "Brandon Alexander."

Shunichi kept Brandon's hand in his. "Did you say Brandon Alexander?"

Brandon nodded. "Yeah."

Shunichi's gaze intensified as he studied him. "You're not the Brandon Alexander I think you are...are you?"

"Well, that depends on which one you think I am."

"The stage actor."

"Then yeah, I am."

"I knew it! You're an amazing talent. I saw *The Phantom of the Opera* three times. I was living in Japan while it was running, but every time I was getting ready to come back home here, I made sure my sister had tickets waiting for me. You were absolutely phenomenal as the Phantom. And I went to see *Chicago* the second I heard you were playing Billy Flynn, and you didn't disappoint, which of course, I didn't think you would."

Brandon found himself speechless by Shunichi's praise. He cleared his throat, using the moment to gain some composure, and managed a hushed, "Thank you."

Shunichi laughed softly. "I didn't realize you were so young. I've seen your picture in the play bills, but they were black and white, and with how you present yourself on stage, I thought you'd be older."

"I get that a lot, actually. People are always surprised when I say I'm coming up on twenty-seven. I think a lot has to do with in *Chicago* right now, I get make-upped so I'd look older, and in *Phantom*, obviously the mask covered half of my face."

"Which was a shame," Shunichi said.

Brandon felt his cheeks flush, which startled him since he never blushed.

"I can relate to people being surprised at your age. I get the same thing when I say I'm the headmaster."

Brandon couldn't help but feel a rush of gratitude, knowing Shunichi was being gracious by changing the subject to himself and not acknowledging his blush. "I'll admit I was surprised."

"Technically my father is still the headmaster, but he's in partial retirement, actually, almost full retirement now. He really doesn't do much except the occasional aikido lesson and teach classes on Japanese culture." Shunichi's smile widened and he winked. "And I'm not as young as I look. I'm two years short of thirty."

Brandon's breath caught in his throat, his voice truly lost thanks to Shunichi's beautiful smile. He didn't know what was wrong with him. He had never acted like this around anyone. Never in his life had he been so inarticulate. He inhaled a slow breath. No matter how breathtaking this vision before him was, he needed to pull himself together.

"So, you were saying that you had stopped by today to check out the dojo," Shunichi continued. "We teach karate, aikido, and kendo. Which were you interested in?"

Brandon couldn't help but notice how it seemed Shunichi was able to read him, knowing when he was flustered or humbled, and how Shunichi would then work to move the topic to something that might put him more at ease. It was almost too amazing to believe that Shunichi could be that in tune with him, and maybe even more amazing, that he could be so considerate.

Brandon turned his mind away from his thoughts and brought his attention to Shunichi's question. "Karate. I used to practice it when I was younger, and I've been thinking about getting back into it."

"What discipline did you study?"

"Shotokan."

"Then you're certainly at the right dojo. What belt did you hold?"

"Well, I had practiced it for about ten years, from the time I was seven years-old until I was almost seventeen. I achieved Shodan, but then I gave it up because I needed to start taking more dance lessons for theatre."

Shunichi nodded slowly. "With holding a first level black belt, you're already quite advanced."

"I was, but not anymore. Just as I practiced it for ten years, it's been around the same amount of time that I've been away from it."

"It doesn't matter. Having practiced the art for so long, the memory of it's permanently ingrained in your muscles. It'll just take a few lessons, and your body will begin to remember again." Shunichi flicked his head toward the mats. "Let's see what your body remembers so far."

"What? Right now? But I'm not ready. I'm not even in the right clothes."

Shunichi smiled. "Don't worry. I'll try to restrain from throwing you around too much. Just take your socks off so you don't slip."

Brandon stared at Shunichi's back as he walked away. *Was that a flirtatious remark?* It seemed like a flirtatious remark. He closed his eyes in a long blink, reminding himself, no more mirages.

He opened his eyes and his gaze fell on Shunichi's ass. Not even the white pants could hide its perfect curves. Brandon's heart started to beat a little quicker. He snapped his gaze away and bent to pull off his socks. Before stepping onto the mats, Brandon faced Shunichi. Shunichi bowed to him, and he dipped forward, returning the bow.

Shunichi moved to the center of the mats. "Let's start off with a few stances to get you going. Do you remember the Japanese names?"

"Probably if I heard them, but it's been a long time."

"Then I'll say the names in Japanese and English to help you remember. We'll start with something easy. Try *heiko dachi*, parallel stance."

Brandon stood with his knees slightly bent, hands clenched in loose fists at his sides. Shunichi circled around behind him. Brandon kept his eyes focused ahead. It took all his control to keep still and not shift under Shunichi's assessing gaze. He glanced down, hoping the issue going on between his legs wasn't too visible. He nearly jumped when Shunichi rested his hands on his shoulders.

Shunichi chuckled, giving him a couple rough shakes. "You're so tense. You need to relax. Tension leads to friction, and friction slows your movements. You have to be loose, but alert."

Brandon nodded. That was *not* going to happen. Not with this beauty patrolling around him.

"*Zenkutsu dachi*, front stance," Shunichi said.

Brandon shifted his right leg forward and bent his knee, keeping it directly over his heel. He kept most of his weight on his front leg with his left leg stretched back, his feet about two shoulder widths apart. His right arm was straight, pointing toward the floor at a forty-five degree angle with his hand in a loose fist, while his left arm was pulled back, cocked at the elbow with his hand balled in a fist.

Shunichi gripped Brandon's shoulders again, pulling his posture back. "Keep your back just a bit straighter."

Brandon swallowed hard and nodded.

Shunichi reached around him, resting his hand on Brandon's abdomen. "Remember, breathe from here," he touched Brandon's chest, "not here."

Once again, all Brandon could do was nod. Shunichi was so close to him, he could feel the warmth of his body, hear each soft rustle of Shunichi's gi.

"Perfect." Shunichi moved around to face him. "*Kiba dachi*, horse stance."

Brandon controlled himself from grimacing. Of all the stances, this was the one he disliked most. He always felt awkward doing it. He brought his left leg forward, matching it to the right one, then moved the right one out until his legs were spread wide as if straddling a massive barreled horse.

Shunichi walked behind him again. He put his hands on Brandon's hips, turning them slightly and pushing them forward. He leaned close to him, his lips to Brandon's ear. "Move your hips in more."

Brandon noticed how much softer Shunichi's voice was, the throaty tone of it, the way his breath tickled across his ear. He could smell the spice of Shunichi's cologne lingering around him, and couldn't stop himself from inhaling deep to breathe it in.

Shunichi's hands slid up Brandon's back to his shoulders, giving him a massage. "You're still so tense. You need to relax more. You'll never..."

Brandon jumped out of the *kiba dachi* and stood up straight. He couldn't take it anymore. Having this exquisite man touch him, coach him, gaze at him, it was too much. "I've got to go."

Brandon turned away.

Shunichi caught his arm, pulling him to a halt with a gentle tug. "Please, don't go. I'm sorry if I made you uncomfortable." He gave him a soft smile. "I think I just got too excited at having you walk through my door. Sometimes my enthusiasm takes over my common sense."

Brandon stared out the front windows. So that's what it was. Shunichi was just excited about possibly gaining a new student. He should have known. One more mirage, one more slap from karma.

Shunichi pulled his hand away from Brandon's bicep. "And I can see now my wishful thinking was making me see signals that weren't there. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to offend you."

Brandon paused, making sure he was fully understanding the comment. He slowly turned toward him. "You didn't offend me."

Shunichi breathed out a sigh of relief. "I didn't?"

"Far from it." He tried to look calm as he met Shunichi's gaze, but his pounding heart made it practically impossible to keep still. He shifted his weight from one leg to the other. Folded his arms across his chest, then unfolded them and shoved his hands in the back pockets of his jeans.

Shunichi watched him fidgeting. "Then, if it'd be okay, I'd like to show you the rest of the dojo, since that's what you came here for."

"That'd be great."

“Follow me.”

Brandon trailed behind Shunichi as he led him from the front sparring room toward another door in the back. He couldn't help but feel that yet again Shunichi had noticed his uneasiness, and like before had come to his rescue and offered him a way out.

He wished he could figure out why he was acting like a virgin schoolboy, why his heart wouldn't stop pounding. He knew the answer. It was hovering in his mind, waiting to be acknowledged; for the first time since Christopher, he was feeling something other than the anger, hurt, and numbness, and feeling again frightened him.

“This is where we hold the kendo lessons most of the time,” Shunichi said.

Brandon walked into the room, seeing it was almost a clone of the front sparring room, but instead of having white mats covering the floor, the polished hardwood was bare. Hanging on one wall were a number of different sized bamboo *shinai*.

“Hiroshi Yoshida, the assistant master here, instructs most of the kendo lessons.” Shunichi faced Brandon with a smile. “He's unsurpassed at kendo, but take a *shinai* out of his hand, and he's virtually helpless. He teaches intro level aikido every now and again, but for the most part I instruct all the aikido and karate, and occasionally a few kendo lessons when Hiro needs a day off.”

“You must be extremely skilled,” Brandon said.

Shunichi glanced away. “Thank you for saying that. From what my mother and grandmother say, my father and grandfather were instructing me in martial arts almost as soon as I could walk, so I've been blessed that it's always been part of my life.”

Brandon saw in Shunichi's expression he was the one made shy now. He glanced away to give him a moment and saw a sliding glass door that led out the back of the dojo. An awed breath left him as he gazed out at the Japanese style garden. A small pond was centered with a trickling waterfall rolling over black stones. Three cherry trees, green with the full bloom of summer, were spaced around it. The blossoms of the peonies had faded with the end of spring, and the chrysanthemums had yet to bloom, but tall blue-violet irises and delicate lotuses added a hint of color to the rich green flora. Beyond the garden, he got a better look at the single story house, built in the same exotic style as the dojo.

“Amazing,” Brandon whispered.

“It's more beautiful up close.” Shunichi slid the door open and stepped outside. “Come on.”

Brandon followed him out on the veranda, then down the steps to the garden. His eyes moved slowly, drinking in each plant and flower. He stepped up the edge of the pond and bent down to a lotus, placing his fingers under the silken white petals. “This has to be the most perfect lotus blossom I've ever seen.”

Shunichi stood back, watching him admire the flower. “It’s yours if you want it.”

Brandon snapped his gaze toward him, then back to the lotus. He shook his head. “I couldn’t. It’d die if I took it. At least here when the blossom fades, another will grow to replace it.”

Shunichi laughed under his breath. “You talk like a Buddhist. Respect for all life to grow, blossom, fade, and be reborn.” He gestured wide to the flowers and pond. “This garden was my mother’s pride and joy. It still is to some extent. She comes over about once a week to tend to it. This used to be my parents’ house, and my grandparents’ before. My grandfather and father built it when they built the dojo, but it’s all mine now. My parents moved out to a condo on the lake a year ago, and my grandparents are in Florida.”

Brandon stood and turned toward him. “It’s incredible. It’s like you have your own private little sanctuary here.” He turned in a circle, taking it all in. “This has to be worth a fortune with its location.”

“I never really thought about it. The mortgage is paid off. The taxes are ridiculously high, though. One more reason why I work six days a week. Maybe I should start blaming the government for me not being able to find a decent boyfriend. I’ve tried everything else.”

Brandon choked out a shocked gasp.

Shunichi grinned. “I’m sorry. I was being too bold again, wasn’t I?”

Brandon stared at him, and not knowing what to say, looked away again.

Shunichi took a deep breath and let out a slow sigh.

Brandon glanced up at him standing by the edge of the pond, gazing down at the koi fish milling about in the sun warmed water. The sunlight made his immaculate uniform look an even more dazzling white, and he could see the hard lines of muscle in Shunichi’s chest. He knew without seeing it the rest of his body would be just as firm, corded with fine muscle from years of martial arts training. A light breeze drifted by, carrying the mingled scent of flowers and Shunichi’s cologne to him.

Brandon gazed at Shunichi’s profile. Despite the strength of his body, there was such softness to his face, but it was more than just his gorgeous features. There was tenderness in his eyes, honesty to his gaze. Before he fully realized it, Brandon took a step closer to him. “You weren’t being too bold.”

Shunichi turned his head toward him, looking into his eyes.

Brandon diverted his gaze to the koi. “I’m just a little jumpy about being close to someone right now. I just got out of a relationship, and it ended pretty bad.”

Shunichi's gaze moved over Brandon's face and body. Through his dark blue T-shirt, he could see Brandon's chest and stomach were well-toned, leading down to his slender hips. His biceps were curved with sinewy strength. His blue eyes framed in thick lashes as ebony as his hair. His voice soft, Shunichi said, "What kind of fool would let someone as beautiful as you slip away? And then to have hurt you in the process, it's unforgivable."

Brandon stood motionless. He wasn't sure he could move if he wanted to. First mirages of the eyes, now of the ears. His desperate need to hear such words coming from a man like Shunichi was making his ears play tricks on him.

"He betrayed you," Shunichi said more than asked.

"It's that obvious, huh?" Brandon whispered. "I'm sorry if I was putting out signals inside. I didn't mean to lead you on. I just...I have so much emotional baggage right now, I wouldn't want to make anyone put up with it."

Shunichi reached out, touching his fingertips to Brandon's hand. Brandon's breath hitched at the touch. Shunichi moved closer to him and placed his fingers under Brandon's chin. He lifted Brandon's head, forcing him to look into his eyes. "We all have baggage. It's how we carry it that defines our relationships."

Brandon stared into Shunichi's dark eyes. "What baggage do you have?"

Shunichi silently met his gaze for a moment, then lowered his hand from Brandon's chin. He turned away, moving toward a small stone pagoda. He pulled off the top, revealing it was hollow inside, and pulled out a bag of fish food. He took a few kernels and tossed them in the water, causing the fish to dart to the surface. Brandon watched him, thinking he wasn't going to answer, when Shunichi let out a soft sigh.

"The guy I'm seeing is in love with someone else, but he refuses to fully admit to it. He thinks I'm oblivious to it, but I see it in his eyes and hear it in his voice. He really only comes around when he wants sex, and like an idiot, I keep giving it to him."

"Sounds like an ass," Brandon blurted out, then reached toward him, but stopped before touching his arm. "I'm sorry. I didn't mean to say it like that."

Shunichi shook his head. "It's okay. That's not fully untrue." He took a deep breath and forced a smile. "So you see? We all have baggage."

"Yeah, too bad mine's gotten so heavy, I can hardly carry it."

Shunichi stopped feeding the fish and set the bag on the ground. He straightened and rested his hand on Brandon's cheek. "Then maybe you just need a helping hand."

Brandon's breath caught in his throat from the way Shunichi was looking at him. The warmth from Shunichi's hand filled his whole body.

“Are you...offering?” Brandon asked.

Shunichi kept his eyes focused on him and nodded. “Absolutely. Especially since you’ve already helped me with mine.”

Brandon shook his head, confused. “What do you mean?”

Shunichi caressed Brandon’s cheek. “If I tell you, you’ll think I’m insane.”

“No, I won’t.”

Shunichi gave him a skeptical glance with a smile curving one corner of his mouth. He looked up at the sky, as if trying to decide if he should say what he wanted.

Brandon laid his hand on Shunichi’s forearm. “Please.”

Shunichi looked down at Brandon’s hand, then looked at him. “I don’t think it’s a good idea.”

Brandon rolled his eyes. “Come on. Tell me.” He gave Shunichi a gentle shove and smiled. “You can’t just open a door, then close it like that.”

Shunichi stared at him.

Brandon smiled wider. “Oh, now you’re gonna play the silent game.”

“No, that’s not it. That’s the first time I’ve seen you smile. I just wanted to remember it.”

Brandon felt heat rise to his cheeks again, but didn’t glance away. “Keep saying things like that, and you’ll be seeing it a lot more.”

“Then that’s what I’ll do.” A smirk touched Shunichi’s lips. “But just so you know, I’m not going to make love to you until I hear you laugh.”

Brandon burst out laughing. “Oh really? Well just so you know, I’m not going to let you until you tell me what you meant.”

Shunichi chuckled. “Well, since you’ve already fulfilled your end, I guess I better too so we can get at it.”

Brandon laughed harder, thinking even though Shunichi sounded like he was joking, he couldn’t help but believe there was some truth behind it.

Shunichi slowed his laugh. “I’m not even sure how to say this, because it’s an emotion, and they’re so hard to put words behind. But, when you rode up in front of the dojo, even before you took your helmet off, I felt something stir in my heart. All my concentration suddenly slipped away. I couldn’t focus on my student. The only thing I could do was watch you. And when you

pulled off your helmet, and I saw how gorgeous you were, my whole body went weak. Every part of me was crying out to talk to you, to be close to you. I guess that's why I got carried away during the lesson. I couldn't stop myself from touching you. I wanted to feel the warmth of your body under my hands so badly." He let out a nervous laugh. "And now that I'm saying it out loud, it sounds more crazy and ridiculous than in my head. I guess I should've just said, all I know is every instinct in me is drawing me to you, screaming to not let you walk away, and my instincts are never wrong."

Brandon took a half-step toward him and reached out with a tentative hand, resting it on Shunichi's cheek. "Thank you. I don't think what you said sounds crazy, because for so long I've been living stagnate, but since seeing you, I feel like I'm moving forward again." He glided his fingers over Shunichi's cheek, across his jaw, down his neck, and traced along his collarbone. His eyes followed the movements of his fingers, then he met Shunichi's and smiled. "So, do you want to make love now?"

"That was the deal, wasn't it?"

Brandon nodded. "Actually though, I think I'd like to buy you dinner tonight first."

"I'd like that."

Brandon grinned. "I'll buy you breakfast, too."

Shunichi lifted one eyebrow, a grin of his own on his lips. "I'll agree to that."

"Then I'll buy you lunch, and dinner tomorrow night. Breakfast the next morning, lunch, dinner again..."

"I can see where this is going to lead! I'm going to be trading in my black belt for a sumo belt."

"Sexy."

Laughing softly, Shunichi wrapped one arm behind Brandon, resting his other hand on the back of Brandon's neck. Brandon embraced him, burying the fingers of one hand in Shunichi's hair. He tipped his head toward him, still smiling as he touched his lips to his.