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# STORMY EYES

LYNN HAGEN

*The*  
**ManLove**  
*Collection*



BRAC PACK 5

## Brac Pack 5

# Stormy Eyes

When Storm Wishfall is sent on an errand for his alpha, he doesn't expect to discover two young Asian men hiding on a boat in fear for their lives. He definitely isn't expecting one of them to be his mate.

After encountering the young men's captors, the alpha devises a plan to rescue the three other men who were kidnapped along with his mate, Kyoshi, and Kyoshi's cousin, Keata, and the pack must band together to curtail a human trafficking ring before any more innocent lives are ruined.

In the meantime, Kyoshi must come to terms with his new life. Storm searches for a way to convince the cynical human they're destined to love each other, but something lurking deep inside Kyoshi is forcing its way out. Are these two as different as they believe, or can they find a way to share their lives?

**Genre:** Alternative (M/M or F/F), Paranormal,  
Vampires/Werewolves

**Length:** 22,456 words

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**A SIREN PUBLISHING BOOK**  
IMPRINT: Everlasting Classic ManLove

**STORMY EYES**  
Copyright © 2011 by Lynn Hagen  
E-book ISBN: 1-61034-323-9

First E-book Publication: March 2011

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# **DEDICATION**

To my niece Dorianne, the smallest of the pack.

# STORMY EYES

*Brac Pack 5*

LYNN HAGEN

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## Prologue

Kyoshi huddled close to his cousin as the cargo box doors swung open, the light blinding him after days of darkness. Along with his cousin, there were three other men with him. They whimpered as they were pulled roughly to their feet. Kyoshi stepped in front of Keata. He wouldn't allow any of these men to harm his cousin.

"Take them to the van." A gruff-looking American yanked the other three men out of the box. Kyoshi was gripped with fear with wondering why he and Keata were separated from the others.

Keata gripped the back of his shirt, shaking uncontrollably. A whimper escaped his cousin's lips, his grip growing tighter. Kyoshi reached back, squeezing Keata's hand, trying to give him some sort of small comfort.

Being kidnapped off of the streets of Japan was terrifying. The kidnappers had no idea Kyoshi spoke fluent English. They talked as if the five men weren't even of consequence. They talked of how the five were to be sold off, how buyers were already lined up.

Kyoshi knew that every year, millions of people were trafficked and sold for profit to greedy people who cared for nothing but money and power, but he never thought he or his cousin would be a part of that.



The thought of his world no longer existing—that he and his cousin were to become slaves of sex for some pervert—clenched the muscles in his stomach. He had to keep a cool head for nothing else but to keep his cousin safe.

“I want these two for my own personal use.” The ugly American pointed to a large boat and ordered the fat guy to put Kyoshi and Keata in his quarters.

Kyoshi fought the fat man, trying desperately to save him and his cousin. He was only five two, and not a muscle to him, but tremendous fear made him fight for their lives. The fat man slapped Kyoshi and threatened to kill Keata if he didn’t behave. The ugly man who must be in charge laughed, yanking Kyoshi’s chin to examine his face. Under those sausage-like fingers, Kyoshi’s skin burned with disgust. Knowing he had no choice, Kyoshi relented.

As they neared the big boat, Kyoshi bit the man, tearing flesh from his arm as he fought like a crazed man. The American howled in pain and released Kyoshi. Grabbing Keata, he fled. He had no idea where they were. This was a foreign country, a place he had never been before, but even jumping into the water and risking drowning was better than what awaited them if they were caught.

Keata cried as he ran fast behind Kyoshi, who knew his cousin had no clue what was going on. Kyoshi tightened his grip on Keata’s hand as he weaved along the pier. There must be somewhere they could hide.

Fearful of being caught, and of those Americans catching up to them, Kyoshi pulled at Keata as he jumped onto the closest boat to them. He grabbed the tarp lying on the floor, pushing his cousin to the ground as he crawled next to him, covering their bodies and praying he hadn’t jumped from one mess into another. He prayed that whoever owned this small boat didn’t want to traffic them as the Americans did.

“Hush, little one.” Kyoshi pulled his smaller cousin into his arms as they waited for a miracle.

## Chapter One

“I need you to head down to the marinas. There’s a fisherman there that has some information I need. Talk to him.” Alpha Maverick tossed an envelope onto the desk, waiting for Storm to grab it.

“What’s with the envelope? I feel like I’m in the mafia.” Storm picked it up and bent the clasps up.

“Don’t. It’s not for you to open. Give it to Paul. He’ll know what to do. Wait for him to give you the information.”

Storm shrugged as he headed out to his truck. He needed a damn decoder ring to understand his Alpha sometimes.

Storm walked out to his truck, opened the door and climbed in. He sat back for a moment, remembering the last time his Alpha acted squirrely. Alpha Maverick had sent Beta Kota off on a mission. The wolf had traveled four states away to find someone only to find out later that Maverick had sent him on a dummy mission. But the end result was Kota finding his mate.

Alpha Maverick had told a select few that since he claimed his mate Cecil, he had been having dreams. That dream made Maverick send Kota on his path.

Storm wondered if this was another of Maverick's dreams. The Alpha hadn’t told Kota about the dream until after the Beta returned home. Maverick said the dream swayed him not to mention anything and to get Kota to where he needed to be under a guise of searching for someone.

Was this the same thing? As tempting as it was to open the envelope, Storm knew he wouldn’t go against his Alpha’s order. He would just have to head down to the marina and find out what this

was all about.

The thought that his mate may be there had Storm's heart racing. He started the engine, pulling his truck out of the gravel drive and onto the paved road.

It didn't take long, fifteen minutes. The shifters didn't live far from town. The estate the pack resided in was nestled deep in the forest off the main county road, but it was well hidden from view. They needed land to run free on and space to allow their wolves to patrol the grounds.

Their pack was small compared to others. There were only fifteen of them in all. Twelve Sentries, one Commander, one Beta, and the Alpha. They had a gay-only pack, one Maverick formed centuries ago when Alphas called a hunt on heads for being gay. Thank god they lived in a more civilized world now.

Storm pulled into the parking lot, shutting his truck off. He walked down to Pier Six to Paul's boat. Shouting out for the fisherman, Storm waited. It was rude to just board someone's private boat. He himself would get pissed if someone came aboard his uninvited. If he had one.

Paul came up the from below, stepping off the deck and shaking Storm's hand.

"Glad to see you, Storm."

The guy was middle-aged, around forty-five with a salt-and-pepper beard, friendly man.

"Maverick sent me. He asked me to give you this." Storm pulled the envelope out and handed it to the guy. His eyes darted around the marina, looking for another soul, but they were alone. He scented the air but felt no pull drawing him to his mate. Storm was discreet about it.

Paul helped them out from time to time but had no clue they were shifters, a secret Maverick and the pack guarded close to their chest. No human, aside from the mates, knew they existed, and they planned on keeping it that way. Less complicated.

Paul took the offered envelope, opening the clasps as he looked inside. The human hurriedly closed it and looked around.

What the—? Maybe Maverick had lost it and decided he was Mafiosi instead. Shit did get boring around home.

“Follow me.” Paul glanced around one more time before he took Storm down to his galley. Storm leaned against the small kitchen counter as Paul went to his sleeping quarters. He could hear Paul speaking quietly and two Asian voices responding. Being a Timber wolf, he had exceptional hearing, and Storm listened closely.

Paul spoke. “I promise he will not harm you. I have not harmed you, and I would not give you over to anyone that would.”

A heavily accented voice replied, “But he is stranger. I will not let harm come to Keata.”

Paul again. “No harm will come to Keata or you. Go with him. He is a brave warrior that will protect you.”

The same accent voice again. “Promise?”

“I promise, young friend.”

Storm straightened as he heard them approaching. Paul emerged with two young Japanese men behind him. They looked frightened and, and, *shit*. Storm leaned down at one of the men, and he sniffed closely, feeling a thousand thunderstorms wash over him.

*Mine.*

The young man leaned back, staring from Paul to Storm.

Maverick had sent him on one of his dream missions. Why the hell couldn't the Alpha just come out and say *go get your mate*? What was with all the cloak and dagger crap? “Who are they, Paul?” Storm had to know if this was Keata, if not, he needed to know what his mate's name was.

“This is Keata.” Paul's hand gently touched one man's shoulder. Not his mate.

“And this is Kyoshi.”

Kyoshi. The name sent a shiver down Storm's spine. Storm felt twitchy, knowing how much he was restraining himself. The muscles

were locking into place, preventing him from lunging forward and snatching his mate into his arms. He swallowed, trying to add moisture to his throat.

“How old are they?” Storm needed to know what he was dealing with. Would he have to wait for his young mate to come of age to claim him? The thought hurt his brain, the cells rejecting the idea of not binding the small man to him was painful.

“Keata is eighteen years old and Kyoshi is nineteen.”

Storm exhaled. He didn’t have to wait. All he had to do was get Kyoshi to agree to sweaty sex and biting. Yeah, no problem for a human to accept him as a shifter. Piece of cake...hopefully.

Kyoshi stepped forward, craning his neck back to look into Storm’s eyes. Storm wanted to grab him up and claim him right there on the spot. God, he was so tempting. His heart raced, and his blood pounded through him. Finally, after one hundred and seventy years, he had found his mate. The rush was heady as he stared into his mate’s eyes. The warrior fought the pull. It would only frighten his mate if his canines extended while his eyes shifted to crimson.

What the hell was happening to him? This out of control feeling of emotionally flip-flopping around was maddening. He wanted to claim his mate and give him space at the same time. Someone just shoot him now and put him out of his confusion.

“Your eyes. They...change.” Kyoshi looked at him with a mixture of awe and fear. Storm had to close his eyes momentarily. Just being near Kyoshi and hearing his voice was risky to his sanity. He knew he had abnormal eyes as they constantly swirled and changed colors. Was it frightening to his mate?

Storm also noticed that fate had a nasty little sense of humor—emphasis on the word *little*. Kyoshi was shorter than his commander’s mate, Johnny. Johnny was five four. Storm was six seven. What the *fuck* was he supposed to do with this guy? He had an urge to put Kyoshi on his lap and stick his hand up his back. “Genetics.”

“I don’t understand that word.” Kyoshi took a step back while

entwining his hand with Keata's, pulling him close.

"Uh, Paul. Are they like, boyfriends or something?" Storm was *not* sharing his mate. They looked comfortable with each other, like two other Sentry wolves in his pack, Cody and Jasper. They weren't mates, but they sure as hell acted like it.

"Cousins."

Thank god.

"We go with you?" Kyoshi asked.

"Yes. Come on, guys." Storm turned to head upstairs then remembered Maverick's request. "You have information for me, Paul?"

"I found them hiding on my deck under a tarp. Seems big, ugly Americans stole them from home and carried them across the sea in a big cargo box. There were three other men with them, but they were taken away in a white van. The ugly American wanted to keep these two for himself."

Storm growled. "Human black market? Sex slaves? What?"

"Don't know. They don't know. Hell, I'm just glad I found them. Good luck, Storm." Paul shook his hand as Storm ushered his mate and cousin up on deck. He watched around him as he led the men to his truck.

"I need you to lie down." Storm pointed to Keata and Kyoshi. Storm hunkered down. "In the back of my truck." He tapped the backseat as he reached into the cab.

Keata stepped forward, tilting his head all the way back. He looked peeved. "Bad English. Not retarded."

Storm smiled as he put the two in back. "Sorry, didn't mean to offend you. I need you to stay down till we are away from the docks. I don't want the ugly American to spot either of you."

"Roger that." Keata beamed as he squirmed around to get comfortable.

Storm was really getting to like the little guy. His mate, though, was very quiet. A cynic it seemed. The little guy watched Storm

warily.

After making it out of the marina safely and steering through the small town, Storm pulled into the gravel drive, opening the back door on his extended cab as he gently lifted Kyoshi up by his waist and set him down. Keata jumped from the back seat, landing on his feet.

“Hello, America.” Keata spread his arms wide and turned in a circle. Kyoshi spoke to him in their native tongue. He looked angry.

Keata dropped his head and clasped his fingers together in front of him.

Storm liked Keata’s attitude and spark. He didn’t want Kyoshi dampening it. “He’s fine, Kyoshi. He’s allowed to act that way, love.”

Kyoshi’s eyes widened as he took a step back, grabbing Keata’s hand. Storm couldn’t figure out which part of what he said bothered his mate.

He led them inside, where the noise in the den was deafening. The den was where *everyone* hung out when not on patrol. There were a dozen shifter warriors who patrolled the estate grounds, keeping the mates of the shifters safe from harm.

The Den was the *it* place to be. Big screen television, video games, pool table, bar and couches to lounge on. Maverick had decided that since he couldn’t ever get rid of his house guests and he had a gazillion rooms, everyone should live under one roof. Fine by Storm. He got tired of running back and forth between his apartment and The Den.

Keata ran behind Kyoshi when he heard the screaming and whooping. He looked up at Storm. “War?”

Storm chuckled. “No, big men playing kids’ games.”

“Oh. Like kids’ games.” Keata walked over to Storm and slid a small hand in his. This little guy was definitely outgoing. He was going to fit right in. His mate, Kyoshi, glared at Keata but said nothing.

Storm gently clasped Kyoshi’s hand and led them into the chaos.

“Hey, Storm. Kids from the rec center?”

Storm growled. Everything became quiet.

“Uh, okay. Kids from the neighborhood?”

“Shut the fuck up, Remi.” Damn, the guy was a loudmouth sometimes. Storm exhaled deeply as he turned his attention to the warriors in the room. There were five mates, as well, who belonged to the five warriors lucky enough to find them. “Everyone, this is my *mate*, Kyoshi, and his cousin Keata.”

“Remi, you’re an ass.” The redheaded warrior, Jasper, laughed.

“Fuck you, Jazz,” Remi shot back. “Sorry, Storm. Am I allowed to curse around them?”

“Fuck you, Remi.” Storm growled.

Johnny, Commander Hawk’s mate, ran over to the two, his honey blond curls bouncing on his shoulders. Keata reached out and poked at a curl.

“You have sunshine on head.” He smiled.

“I like him, Storm. Can I keep him?” Johnny bounced up and down, big puppy dog eyes pleading with Storm.

“They are human beings, pretty baby. You can’t *keep* them.” Hawk lifted his pretty baby up into his arms.

“Can I play with them then?” Johnny looked over at Storm, hopeful.

Hawk chuckled, kissed his mate, and then put Johnny down on his feet. “They’re not dolls, either. Show them around. Introduce them.”

Johnny grabbed Keata’s hand and reached for Kyoshi’s, but Kyoshi pulled away. Johnny shrugged and pulled Keata over to the other mates.

Kyoshi stepped forward, raising his hand slightly then lowered it, stepping back. He watched his cousin with eagle eyes, following his every move. Storm observed all of this as he knelt down and said, “You can go in there. No one will harm Keata or you.”

Kyoshi eyed him for a moment then nodded his head as he joined his cousin.

“You have a wary mate there, Storm.” Commander Hawk stood



next to him.

“Yeah, he and his cousin were smuggled into America. Still don’t know if it was for human trafficking or sex slaves.”

“Sounds the same to me. Glad you got to them in time.” Hawk patted Storm on the shoulder.

“Me, too. I just don’t know what’s going on with Kyoshi. He’s very quiet and very protective of Keata. How do I approach him?”

“Very cautiously,” Hawk warned.

Storm blew out a breath as Hawk went back to his game of pool. Keata was all over the place, chatting it up with everyone as Kyoshi watched him.

The warrior Gunnar walked into the den, looking around. “We’re being overrun with the little people. I feel like we should open up a KinderCare.”

“I hope your mate is four foot tall.” Storm bit out as he walked over to Kyoshi.

“You okay?” Storm sat down next to his mate, taking in the striking beauty. His black hair was bone straight and to his shoulders, and his eyes were the color of midnight. He was slim and delicate looking. Storm was afraid he would break the man. His eyes, though, his eyes said he wasn’t as naive as he led people to believe. They were sharp, intense.

“Yes. Just strange country. Miss home. Scared for Keata.” Kyoshi heaved a sigh.

“I can promise you that you two are in the safest place possible. Any one of these men in this room would protect you two with their lives.” Storm wanted to reach out and run his fingers through the silky strands lying against his mate’s shoulder. It looked like a waterfall running down from his scalp.

“Why? You don’t know us. We strangers.”

Storm watched Kyoshi jump. Keata had fallen onto his bum. His mate’s face became enraged. “Keata, come!”

Keata looked devastated as he came over to his cousin and sat

beside him. He reminded Storm of a guy having his hot rod taken away. Keata's bottom lip jutted out as he watched the men shooting pool. It wasn't his place to tell Kyoshi how to handle his cousin, but Kyoshi needed to lighten up.

"We protect those who can't protect themselves." Storm looked over at Keata and smiled.

"Like superheroes?" Keata's eyes lit up. "You fly?"

Storm's head fell back as he laughed so hard tears ran down his face. Keata was becoming attached to his heart very quickly. "No, Keata. I can't fly."

Kyoshi snapped at Keata again in their native tongue, and Keata's eyes brimmed with tears. Storm was becoming angry. Why was Kyoshi admonishing Keata like that? The guy was outspoken, and Storm loved it. He was funny, excitable, and downright cute as a puppy.

"I sorry, Storm, for asking... how you say...silly question."

That's it. Storm was not going to sit here and watch the spark leave Keata's eyes. "Mates, please come over here."

Cecil, Johnny, Blair, Drew and Oliver walked over to Storm.

"What's up, Stormy eyes?" Johnny giggled.

Storm smiled at his buddy. "Can you gentlemen please entertain Keata while I have a talk with Kyoshi?"

"Sure. Come on, Keata." Cecil held his hand out as Keata took it, looking back at Kyoshi as if asking permission. Kyoshi nodded, and Keata raced off with them, not giving his cousin a chance to change his mind.

"This way." Storm led Kyoshi to Maverick's office.

## Chapter Two

“I understand that this is a foreign country. I understand that you two are scared. I even understand the love you have for your cousin. What I *don't* understand is why you are trying to cage his innocence, his excitement, his happiness. It's just as scary to him as it is for you, but he chooses to deal with it in a different way, like a new experience. And don't give me that damn broken English because my instincts tell me you're far too intelligent for that.”

Kyoshi stood to his full five foot two height, not letting Storm intimidate him.

“Fine! We were grabbed off the street, shoved in a van, tossed in a cargo box, and hauled across the ocean without even having a toilet. Feces and urine lay in a goddamned corner. The doors swing open, and not only are we *not* in our own country, but we have perverts trying to fuck us! I grab my cousin and run, the nice man Paul finding us, only to hand us over to mountains that want to pat Keata's ass. Hell fucking no. Ain't happening! English good enough for you?” Kyoshi shouted.

“Wow. You're a real pistol, aren't you? Who patted his ass?”

“Hell if I know his name. All you Americans look alike.” Kyoshi smirked at him.

“Real smart ass, ain't ya?”

“Smarter than you.” Kyoshi came back.

“I wouldn't go that far, squirt.”

“At least my brain isn't oxygen deprived in that high altitude your head's floating in.”

“At least I can reach the toilet seat.” Kyoshi was caught off guard

with that one. His mind went blank. He couldn't think of a snappy comeback to save his life. Storm was affecting him in ways no other man had before. He leaned back against the leather chair in the office, trying his best to come up with something fast.

"Fucker." That was the best he could do? Kyoshi mentally smacked his forehead, feeling like he should crawl under a rock.

"Little shit."

Kyoshi burst out laughing, and Storm joined in. He may have gone brain-dead for a moment, but Storm seemed to be enjoying himself just as much. He had a glow to him now. Kyoshi could feel a blush creeping up his neck. Embarrassed, he lowered his head, playing it off by bending slightly and wiping at his pant leg.

"Seriously, who patted his ass?"

"Big dude."

"Kyoshi," Storm called his name in warning.

"Fine. Black hair, goatee, black eyes, little shorter than you, and muscles poking out of his ears."

Storm walked to the door. "LUDO!"

\* \* \* \*

Oliver stood in the kitchen watching as everyone laughed. He was slowly working through his anger and was grateful the mates didn't hold grudges. It was nice to be included, to feel wanted, and to be accepted by them.

He still had a lot of issues to work out, including coming to terms with being gay. After many talks with Micah, he was ashamed of the viscous way he had acted. It was all a part of his lashing out, his pain. But these men didn't deserve it.

Johnny was laughing as Cecil shook his head. "No, Keata. Americans do *not* grow money on trees. That's just a figure of speech."

"I wish," Blair mumbled.

Keata was staring at the rod piercing Oliver's bottom lip. "Why you bite pole?"

Johnny was crying he was laughing so hard. Drew grabbed his side in his fit of laughter.

"I didn't bite a pole. Someone stuck it there."

"Why?"

"Cause I thought it looked cool." Oliver tried not to smile, but the small man was comical.

"It cold?" Keata's brows pulled together.

"No, cool. Hip."

"You have pole in hip?"

"Jesus, someone help me out here."

Cecil had the giggle fits. He was trying to help Oliver out, but he couldn't get two words strung together before he started laughing again.

Kyoshi walked into the kitchen, and Oliver immediately asked him for help. Kyoshi spoke to Keata in their native tongue as understanding lit Keata's eyes. "Oh, is young man style. I see. Still shouldn't bite pole."

\* \* \* \*

Kyoshi smiled at his naïve cousin. He had reminded Keata outside that they were to behave as guests. His cousin never listened. Everything was exciting to him. He swore the guy had ADD, but he loved him more than life itself. They were raised together like brothers, but Keata was just too naïve for his own good. Kyoshi had pulled him out of too many messes he had trustingly walked into.

He loved his innocence. Growing up, Kyoshi had tried very hard to make sure Keata retained it. He looked at the world through a child's eye. Very few were pure like Keata. Most people grew up too fast and became jaded. Not Keata.

"Hey, Keata." Storm ruffled his hair.

“Hey, Stormy eyes.” Keata winked at Johnny.

“I want to show you and Kyoshi were you will be sleeping,” Storm said as he pulled Kyoshi into his arms. Kyoshi didn’t fight it, it felt right, good.

“Oh, goody. I get own room.” Keata clapped his hands together.

“You want your own room?” Storm asked. Kyoshi was wondering when Storm was going to inform him where his room was.

“No. I like saying goody. Funny word.” Keata beamed.

“How about an adjoining room?” Storm should have known as soon as he said it that Keata wouldn’t understand. Kyoshi was going to have to translate everything, or Keata was going to have to learn real fast. Kyoshi shook his head. If only Keata had paid attention to the lessons.

“Huh?” Keata’s face blanked out. Kyoshi smiled. His cousin’s face often did that when it went into incomprehension overload. It was too funny. Storm looked at Kyoshi for help. Again, Kyoshi translated.

“Oh, goody. Still own room.”

“Where the hell did he learn to speak English?” Blair asked.

“American television. I tried to sit him down and teach him. But I think my cousin has ADD.”

The five mates stared at Kyoshi with open mouths.

“What?”

“You speak good English,” Oliver sputtered.

“No speak good English. Broken. So sowwy.”

“Smart ass.” Storm smiled.

“Fucker.”

“Little shit.”

\* \* \* \*

Kyoshi looked around the bedroom, amazed at how luxurious it was, and how huge. Storm had told Keata that he would get his own

adjoining room, but he hadn't mentioned where Kyoshi would sleep. He had a feeling he knew.

"Keata, this will be where you sleep." Storm opened the door to a smaller bedroom attached to the larger one. It was just as luxurious. Kyoshi felt like he was in a five star hotel, if he had ever seen one. He and Keata had been poor growing up, but they had been happy. Keata's mother died giving birth to him, so Kyoshi's mother had taken on the responsibility. She passed away last year, and that responsibility had fallen to Kyoshi. A responsibility Kyoshi cherished and took very seriously.

Keata walked around the smaller room in awe. Rolling on the bed and pushing the buttons on the remote to the television. He even bounced on the cushion to the window seat.

"He's safe from falling out of that window, right?" Kyoshi couldn't help but worry.

"He's fine. The window is double-paned." Storm closed Keata's door, leading Kyoshi to their bedroom

"I'm a top," Kyoshi blurted out.

Storm raised an eyebrow down at him. "Excuse me?"

"I'm a top all the way. Hope you like bottoming out." Actually, Kyoshi had no damn reason why he was saying this. He hadn't even experienced sex yet. He was too busy raising Keata and keeping him out of trouble to have a relationship with anyone.

Part of him thrilled at the tongue sparring with Storm, he hadn't had that much fun in forever. Part of him was scared shitless.

"I don't think so. There's no way *you* are topping *me*." Storm crossed his arms over his massive chest. Kyoshi stared at the muscles bulging just from that simple act. The man was a mountain. Kyoshi felt like a kitten next to a lion. He was extremely handsome though. And that thought scared him the most.

Kyoshi walked over to the window seat, climbing up and flopping back. "Well, I guess that settles that. Where do I sleep? Hmm? With Keata?" *Please say no. Please say you want me.*

“In my bed. And nothing’s settled, little shit.” Storm pulled Kyoshi up in his arms, carrying him to the bed and depositing him on the mattress.

“Fine. I hope you don’t hog the covers or roll over on me.” Kyoshi’s nerves were getting to him. Would Storm want to have sex? Tonight? What should he do? Act like he was worldly or tell the guy the truth? He was attracted to him. Who wouldn’t be? Especially all that blond hair streaming down his back. Kyoshi hoped he was allowed to play in it and brush it. Maybe Storm would let him braid it. Kyoshi wanted to feel it against his bare skin. He bet it felt like spun gold.

Storm stripped down to his underwear and climbed in the bed, getting under the blanket. Kyoshi lay stiff and fully dressed on top of the covers. He didn’t know what to do.

“I won’t bite...hard. Get some sleep, little shit.” Storm rolled over and Kyoshi relaxed. He lifted his hips and pulled his pants off. Sitting up, he pulled his shirt off, folded his clothes and laid them on the night stand. Praying Keata was okay by himself.

\* \* \* \*

Kyoshi woke to a furnace wrapped around him. Blond strands covered his face, sealing him in. It took him a moment to remember where he was.

Keata.

Kyoshi wiggled his way free and ran to his cousin’s room, cracking his door open. Keata was fast asleep. Kyoshi watched him for a moment before he climbed back into bed.

“He okay?” Storm reached out and pulled Kyoshi back into his arms.

“Yes. He’s sleeping.” Kyoshi snuggled down, dozing back off.

“I’m really sorry your first experience with our country was a shitty one.” Storm was rubbing his hand over Kyoshi’s hair.



“Not your fault. I’m just glad we got away and Paul was kind enough to help us. I cringe at the thought of what could have happened to Keata. He’s a virgin, ya know. His first time shouldn’t be traumatic.” Kyoshi hoped his wouldn’t be either. For some reason though, he felt safe with Storm. His instincts told him Storm would be gentle with him, careful. He felt a connection he couldn’t explain, and that scared him. All he’d ever had was Keata and his mother. He never had a relationship. How were you supposed to act? He’d already started feeling attached to the warrior.

“He’s safe, Kyoshi. No one’s going to hurt him. I’ll have a little face-to-face talk with Ludo today. The other men would tear his limbs apart if he was being forward with Keata. Promise.”

Kyoshi turned to face Storm. He ran his hands over the blond strands he had been dying to touch. They really were soft as spun gold. “Can I brush it?”

“Of course.” Storm sat up, rolled off the bed, and grabbed the brush from the bathroom. He sat on the edge of the bed with his back facing Kyoshi.

Kyoshi brushed the long strands out, pulling them back in his hands to braid. The amount of hair this man had was ridiculous. His own hair was silky but thin. Storm’s was so thick he wasn’t sure he could do this. His mother often asked Kyoshi to tend to her hair. Hers was much longer but thin like his. Kyoshi parted it into three sections then asked the one question that was bugging him.

“What are you, Storm?” His fingers continued at its task.

“What do you mean, Kyoshi?”

“I see in your eyes something...different. Not the changing of colors, but an old soul. My mother believed that everyone’s soul belonged to a creature of nature. She believed mine to be a dragonfly. What’s yours?” The gentle tugging continued, only further down this time. It was hard, but he was managing.

“Wolf.”

“I believe it. You are fierce. But...still. Does your wolf truly

exist? Truly live within you?" Kyoshi had sensed something different with not only Storm, but the other large men as well. It was in their eyes.

"Yes," Storm answered.

"I thought so. And the men downstairs?"

"Wolf also."

"Are Keata and I in any danger?"

"Never."

"This is good."

Keata had heard of shifters in old tales. Only, in Japan, it was a tale of Xiamen tigers, shifter cats that lived in the southernmost part of Japan. He never believed them, but with Storm's revelation, he was beginning to wonder.

"There, I am finished. You have beautiful hair."

Storm reached and pulled the braid over his shoulder, he looked impressed. Kyoshi had plaited his hair, and he was damn good at it. It was tight and smooth, no little hairs sticking out of the sides. Storm reached around and pulled Kyoshi onto his lap, holding him in his strong arms.

"Uh-oh. Stormy eyes try to kiss Kyoshi. Naughty, naughty."

Kyoshi looked over to see Keata standing in the doorway.

"*Haven't I spoken to you about knocking?*" Kyoshi gently chastised Keata in their native tongue.

"You aren't yelling at him, are you?" Storm looked from Keata to Kyoshi.

"No, just reminding him to knock." Kyoshi sat up straighter in Storm's lap.

"*Sorry, Kyoshi. I just got scared when I woke up alone.*" Keata stood by the door, waiting for Kyoshi to forgive him.

"Come, Keata." Kyoshi held his arms out as Keata embraced him.

"There is no need to be frightened, okay?"

Keata nodded. "Roger that."

Storm chuckled as he ruffled Keata's hair. "Come on, squirts. I need to buy you some new clothes."

## Chapter Three

“I need to have a talk with you, Ludo.” Storm entered the den, spotting Ludo by the bar with a few other Sentries. If Ludo did actually take advantage of Keata, he was going to break his fucking arm.

“Yes, Storm?” Ludo turned to welcome his friend, until he saw the look on his face.

“Did you rub yours paws on Keata’s ass yesterday?” Storm got right up in Ludo’s face.

“Never!” What was Storm talking about? “I brushed him off when he fell. That’s it.”

“Well, I have a mate who it afraid for his cousin to be here because he thinks your hand lingered a little too long on Keata’s ass.”

Blair and Oliver shot daggers at Ludo. The brothers had been molested by their own father, and they didn’t like to hear about anyone else being taken advantage of, especially someone as sweet as Keata.

A few of the Sentries stood a little straighter, coming closer. Storm could hear a few low growls.

“I never would do such a thing! I would never touch another wolf’s mate!” Ludo yelled.

“What did you just say?”

Ludo curled his lips in, shaking his head.

“Who?” Storm looked around the den to see what Sentries were there. Who was Keata’s mate? Who was the scumbag that would have to answer to him if they wanted near his mate’s cousin?

“I would never tell, but I do want to thank you for handling a

delicate situation... delicately.”

It took a moment for Ludo’s words to register. Storm cursed as he looked around to see five angry Sentries ready to rip Ludo a new one and five mates looking at Ludo like a registered sex offender.

“Shit, Ludo. I’m sorry. All I thought about was Keata and making sure he was safe here. I’m truly sorry.”

“Yeah, Storm? I think it’s a little too late to close the door. The damn horse is already gone.” Ludo left in a rage.

\* \* \* \*

Storm had to find a way to make it up to Ludo. He couldn’t believe he went off half-cocked like that without hearing the wolf’s explanation. Now he’d annihilated the guy’s good name.

All he was trying to do was protect Keata. Not only did his mate love him dearly, Storm was growing fond of him as well.

“What no anal fee mean?”

Storm was trying to figure out what Keata just said. Anal fee? “Kyoshi, need your help.”

Kyoshi walked away from the mates as he talked with Keata. They were at the mall shopping, trying to make sure Kyoshi and Keata had everything they needed to make their stay here as comfortable as possible. The other mates wanted to tag along except Drew.

The mall was a trigger for him, so Remi took him out to dinner instead. The mall was where Drew used to buy his drugs from a drug dealer who hung out in the food court. Storm and Tank took care of that problem though.

“He is talking about no annual fee. Someone must have offered him a credit card.”

“Could you please tell him not to talk to strangers, to stay with you guys, please? We would hate to have to rip this mall apart...again.” They tore it apart when the Commander’s mate,

Johnny, had been kidnapped by his own brother. Storm didn't want Keata near anyone but those he came with.

"Will do. I'll hold his hand to make sure the little escape artist doesn't get away." Kyoshi winked at Storm before grabbing Keata's hand and leading him back over to the mates.

"Got your hands full, don't you?" Maverick smiled as he slapped Storm on the back.

"Yeah. One guy that trusts *everyone* and one who has the sharpest tongue in the west." Storm shook his head as he watched his mate take Keata from store to store. Maverick, Hawk, Kota, Micah and Storm all kept a keen eye on the guys. No one was kidnapping a goddamn thing today.

\* \* \* \*

"But I want. It twinkles."

Johnny looked from Keata to Kyoshi. "What does he mean *twinkles*?"

"Sparkles."

"Oh, I like twinkles, too, Keata." Johnny grabbed Keata as they ran through the craft store.

"You guys feeling devilish?" Cecil had that look.

Blair leaned in and whispered, "We aren't stealing another car, are we?"

"You guys steal cars?" Oliver and Kyoshi looked at the two in shock.

What had he gotten himself into? Kyoshi thought.

"Long story," Blair and Cecil said in unison.

"No. I was just thinking that your mates should get matching wallets like mine and Johnny's have." Oh yeah, Cecil was feeling real devilish.

"Uh, okay." Kyoshi had no clue what the nutty little American was talking about, but Storm had given him and Keata spending

money. Shouldn't cost too much. It was just a wallet.

\* \* \* \*

"Uh, thanks?" Storm looked at the very pink wallet Kyoshi had just handed him. What the heck?

"Yeah, uh, thanks." Micah had no clue what he was going to do with a pink wallet with Tinker Bell on the front.

"Um, is this a joke, sunshine?" Kota opened his wallet, jumping back like he expected paper snakes or something to jump out.

Maverick and Hawk were laughing their asses off. Maverick remembered when Cecil handed him one with a unicorn on it. He said it was Johnny's idea. Yeah, right.

"No, babe. Johnny thought they were great gift ideas." Blair smiled up at Dakota, trying not to laugh, failing miserably. He bit the inside of his jaw trying to keep the hysterics at bay.

"Oh...Johnny." Storm glared at Hawk.

"You don't like my mate's idea?" Hawk lost it again. He fell against Maverick he was laughing so hard.

"What's so funny?" Johnny asked as he and Keata raced up to the guys.

"Nothing," all eight men said at once. Hawk pulled Johnny up in his arms for a kiss before setting him back down.

"Come on, guys, we're supposed to be shopping for clothes. Kyoshi, grab Keata so we can hit the department store." Cecil turned to lead the way when he heard a curse.

"Where is Keata?" Kyoshi spun around. Panic was setting in. His cousin would be too trusting and walk away with anyone.

"KEATA!" Storm bellowed as everyone turned, and Keata came running at once.

"What wrong, Stormy eyes?" Keata panted.

"Kyoshi, tell him to please stay with us. No wandering around," Storm begged his mate.

“I know what Stormy eyes say. No wandering.” He smiled a big goofy smile as he grabbed Kyoshi’s hand and raised the entwined fingers for Storm’s approval.

“I don’t want to lose you, Keata.” Storm rubbed his hand down the side of Keata’s face.

“No lose.” Keata turned to run off with the mates.

“He’s gonna knock three hundred years off of us, isn’t he?” Kota mumbled.

“You know it.” Storm shook his head as they followed behind their mates and Keata.

\* \* \* \*

Johnny and Keata ran upstairs with their treasures, babbling excitedly with each other as Kyoshi and the other mates lounged on the couches in the den, talking of their day at the mall.

The warriors went straight to the bar, all tossing back a shot after spending the afternoon with Keata. That guy was going to turn them all into raging alcoholics. They had to search for him three more times that afternoon when something twinkly caught his eye. Storm was tempted to buy one of those human kid leashes.

\* \* \* \*

“So, Kyoshi, are you excited about Storm claiming you?”

“Claiming me?”

“Oh, shit.” Blair clamped his mouth shut, looking at Cecil and Oliver for help. It was strictly forbidden for anyone to mention to Oliver about the claiming process. He was too young for Micah to mate. Micah didn’t want Oliver to inadvertently or purposely start the process, so Oliver had no clue what Blair was talking about either.

“Spill it, bro.” Oliver leaned into Blair.

Blair shook his head, shooting off of the couch as he ran to

Dakota to hide behind him.

“What’s wrong, sunshine?” Kota grabbed his mate in his arms, kissing his neck. He could feel the anxiety coming off of Blair.

“I have a big mouth, that’s what.”

The warriors all looked from Blair to Kota.

“What did you do?” Kota leaned back, searching his mate’s eyes.

“Well, Micah. Sorry, but Oliver is going to be hounding you about what the claiming is.”

Micah cursed. “Oliver could bug the fur off of a beaver.”

“Sorry.” Blair lowered his head and tucked his hair behind his ear. Kota cursed. His mate only did that when he was extremely nervous or extremely embarrassed. He didn’t like Blair to be either one. His mate had been through enough already.

Micah sighed. “It was bound to happen, Blair. Don’t sweat it.”

Kota wrapped Blair in his arms as he rubbed his mate’s back, talking softly to him.

\* \* \* \*

“Everything okay?” Kyoshi walked over to Storm, standing nervously.

“Yeah, I’ll explain later.” Storm grabbed Kyoshi’s hand, holding it. Kyoshi felt safe when he was around Storm. Just that small act had an effect on him. He felt calmer, more at peace.

He prayed Storm couldn’t feel the sweat in his palms from nervousness. Kyoshi studied their clasped hands, noting the size difference. What would it feel like to have those large hands skimming his body?

“Storm?”

The wolf bent at the waist down to Kyoshi.

Kyoshi whispered in his ear. “What is the claiming Blair speaks of?”

Wow. Kyoshi had never seen a large man blush such a deep



crimson color before. He wanted to laugh but felt it would be an inappropriate moment to do so.

“Can I explain that later also?”

Why did Kyoshi get the feeling sex was involved?

\* \* \* \*

“I enjoyed myself today. Thank you for taking us. My cousin had a wonderful time.” Kyoshi knew he was babbling as he climbed onto the bed, nervousness seizing him once again. He wondered if it would be like this every night. He almost wished Storm would go ahead and make love to him so his stomach would stop fluttering. It felt like a thousand dragonflies were flapping their wings.

“Thank you for the nice things you bought me and Keata.” Why couldn’t he just shut up?

Storm crawled into bed and pulled Kyoshi in his arms. Kyoshi could feel Storm’s erection pressing against his butt. What would it be like? How would it feel? His mother had told Kyoshi and Keata that touching oneself was a shameful act, and since he respected his mother greatly, he never did.

That didn’t mean he hadn’t heard the other guys in school talk about it. He wondered what an orgasm would feel like. Kyoshi pushed his butt back slightly to try and feel how large Storm was. From what he felt, he really began to worry.

Storm leaned into Kyoshi, pushing his erection further into his butt. Kyoshi stayed still. He wasn’t sure what he should do. Should he push again?

“I want you, Kyoshi.” Storm began skimming his hand down Kyoshi’s body, kissing him behind his neck. Kyoshi tilted his head, wanting to feel more of Storm’s lips on his skin. When Storm grabbed his erection, Kyoshi panicked. He pushed Storm’s hand away and wiggled until he was free.

## Chapter Four

“What’s wrong, Kyoshi? Did I do something to offend you?” Storm was confused as all hell. He thought Kyoshi wanted him. He had given Storm all the right signals.

“I, uh, need to check on Keata.”

Storm watched as Kyoshi ran into Keata’s room. He turned over onto his back staring at the ceiling, a rock hard dick jutting against his underwear. After a half an hour had passed and no Kyoshi, Storm decided to check on him.

He cracked the door to Keata’s room to find Kyoshi on the floor with his back to Keata’s bed, his knees pulled up and his arms wrapped around them. He quietly walked over and snagged Kyoshi into his arms, closing Keata’s door and taking his mate back to bed.

“Talk to me, Kyoshi.” Storm sat on the edge of the bed, Kyoshi in his arms.

“I...I have never done that before.” Kyoshi stared down at his hands, twisting them around in his lap.

“Done what, Kyoshi?” Storm asked in a whispered tone.

“Made love. I haven’t even experienced the feeling the body produces when done by oneself.” Kyoshi turned into Storm, hiding his face in his massive chest.

“Do you want me to not touch you?” Too many emotions were racing through Storm. Love, tenderness, confusion, lust, and protectiveness. He needed Kyoshi’s answer so he knew better how to handle this.

Kyoshi shook his head, and Storm sighed in relief.

“Just relax. I promise to go slow. Okay?”

Kyoshi nodded.

Storm smiled and laid his mate down gently. Tugging Kyoshi out of the ball he was in. He began at his feet, licking a path between each toe and circling around his ankle. Storm's tongue licked the back of Kyoshi's calf and around to his shin. He nipped behind his knee, pulling a moan from Kyoshi. Storm pulled back and started on the other side. When he reached Kyoshi's thighs, his mate started to spread his legs a little further open. Storm kissed both thighs as he slowly pulled Kyoshi's underwear off. Kyoshi tensed for a moment, but Storm continued to lick his way around his mate's legs. Kyoshi relaxed again.

Storm flicked his tongue on Kyoshi's balls, and his mate's hips bucked. His tongue explored Kyoshi's sac, perineum, and his crease. Kyoshi was mewling softly, his hands clenching the sheets. When Storm kissed the head of Kyoshi's cock, his mate cried out and seed splashed onto his body. "Damn, you're so responsive." Storm licked Kyoshi's come from his belly and chest. He tasted better than the finest wine.

"That was an orgasm, wasn't it?" Kyoshi panted.

Storm smiled at his mate. "Yes, Kyoshi. You want to feel another one?"

"Please."

Storm engulfed his cock, swallowing to the root as Kyoshi bucked and pulled at his braid. He fucked Storm's mouth in a passionate frenzy. Kyoshi came again, crying Storm's name.

"I want to give you more, mate." Storm leaned over and grabbed the lube from the side drawer. He stood and pulled his underwear off as he lubed Kyoshi's hole, trying to decide what position would be the gentlest for the claiming. He decided to lay Kyoshi on his side. Although he wanted to look his mate in his eyes as he accepted him, he had to put Kyoshi's needs first.

"Push out as I push my finger in, dragonfly." Kyoshi nodded and Storm slowly breached him. He knew the only way to get Kyoshi

through this in as much of a painless way as possible was to find his prostate quickly. He found the gland and stroked it. Kyoshi pushed his hips up as semen shot out again.

“You are the sexiest man I have ever seen.” Storm stretched him for a little while longer before adding a second finger.

“Storm.” Kyoshi called his name in rush of breath.

“Yes, dragonfly?”

“More.”

Storm nodded, adding a third finger very carefully. He crooked his wrist and moved his fingers in a scissor-like motion. Once he felt he’d stretched his mate to his fullest, he removed his hand and lubed his cock.

“I’m going to make love to you now, Kyoshi.”

Kyoshi nodded.

“Lay on your side, baby.” Kyoshi rolled to his side and waited.

Storm crawled behind him and pulled Kyoshi’s right leg up, laying it over his thigh. “Ready?”

Kyoshi shook his head then nodded it.

“Is that a yes or no?” Storm teased.

“Yes.”

“Again, push out as I push in.” Storm pushed the head of his cock past the ring of muscles and stopped, waiting for Kyoshi to adjust.

“It feels...different.”

“Good?”

“Different.”

“Can I move?” Storm was dying, but he locked all his muscles in place. He wasn’t moving an inch until Kyoshi was ready. When Kyoshi nodded, Storm pushed further in.

“So full.”

“Gets much better, dragonfly.” Storm pulled back until only the head of his cock remained then pushed back in further than before. He began a slow rocking with his mate.

“I can take more, Storm.”

Storm quickened his pace, still being gentle. He pulled out and turned Kyoshi to his back. "Wrap your legs around my waist."

Kyoshi did and Storm slid back in as he pulled Kyoshi's hips up his thighs. He pulled his mate up into his arms as he grabbed his hips and impaled Kyoshi up and down on his cock. His canines dropped, and his eyes shifted.

"My wolf." Kyoshi leaned back, baring his neck for Storm.

"Do you accept me as your mate, Kyoshi?"

"Yes, Storm, always."

Storm sank his teeth into Kyoshi's neck as his mate cried out once again, hot seed painting Storm's stomach. He pumped faster as he drank from his mate, tasting a piece of heaven. He felt the ribbons of their life force unwind separately and entwine together, their hearts synchronizing to bind them.

"I can feel your soul merging with mine, Storm." Kyoshi tilted his neck further to allow Storm to take what was now his.

Storm's head fell back as he cried out Kyoshi's name, his sperm bathing Kyoshi's tight channel. He fell forward, sealing his mate's wound and rocking him gently. Storm didn't want to ever leave his body. It was home.

Kyoshi wrapped his arms around Storm's neck as he caught his breath.

"Am I now your mate?"

"Yes, dragonfly. Mine alone." Storm kissed Kyoshi in a deep, searing battle of tongues.

"Uh-oh."

Storm's head snapped around to see Keata standing in the doorway, and he quickly covered them, hiding Kyoshi behind his massive frame.

"Kyoshi no more virgin?"

"Go to bed, Keata," Storm commanded him in a gentle voice, trying not to laugh.

"Okay, Stormy eyes." Keata turned and closed the door.

“Oh, no.” Kyoshi groaned. “I’ll never be able to look him in his face again.”

Storm laughed as he kissed his bound mate.

\* \* \* \*

“So, you wolf?”

Maverick was walking down the hall with his hands clasped behind his back. He stopped and looked down at the pint-sized human. Storm must have explained to the two about the warrior’s being Timber-weres. Well, at least explained it to Kyoshi and then translated to Keata.

“Yes, Keata. I’m a wolf.”

“You have long teeth?”

“Yes.”

“I see?”

Maverick elongated his canines, smiling at Keata.

“Hip.”

Maverick chuckled as his canines receded.

“Stormy eyes wolf. He lay naked on Kyoshi. He say *Kyoshi* really loud.”

Maverick stared at Keata, trying to figure out what the hell the guy was talking about. *Oh, shit!* Keata must have caught Storm claiming Kyoshi. Oh man, he was going to have some fun with this little tidbit of information. He watched as Keata veered off and walked toward the den. Poor Storm.

\* \* \* \*

“I think we should have one of the men stay with Keata and show him around.” Storm hugged Kyoshi tighter to his chest. He was still in awe that this man was his mate, forever.

“You mean like a babysitter?”

“No, I mean like a, uh, sponsor.”

“Why?”

“Well, because when we need our time with each other or to make love, I would feel better knowing someone was watching out for him.” Storm hoped Kyoshi wasn’t taking offense to his suggestion. Keata really did need a full-time *sponsor*.

“Will they pat him on his ass?”

“I’ll kill them.” Storm took a deep breath. He still hadn’t convinced Kyoshi that Ludo hadn’t been making a pass at Keata. “I have the perfect person in mind. He’s mean as hell but has the softest spot in his heart for mates. You’ll see.”

“I trust you to know what is best for me and Keata, mate. I just worry for my cousin.”

“No worries.” Storm pulled Kyoshi under him.

\* \* \* \*

Keata was leaning against the pool table, watching the two wolves hit the balls with the stick. It was a funny game, and he really liked playing it.

“You two wolves?”

Caden and Murdock stared at the man then at each other. Caden shrugged and took his shot.

“Yeah, Keata. Caden and I are wolves.” Murdock didn’t see any harm in telling him. Someone must have in order for him to ask.

“You have long teeth like Stormy eyes? He lay naked on Kyoshi and say *Kyoshi* really loud.” Keata blinked up at them.

Murdock tilted his head, scrambling his brain trying to figure the guy out. Caden fell into him, laughing, as a light went on in Murdock’s head. He leaned over the table, pool balls rolling around as he cried tears of hilarity.

Keata shrugged and walked over to the bar. Why was Kyoshi’s name so funny? He crawled up on a stool and slapped the counter as

he had seen Johnny do. The man with red hair walked behind it.

“What can I get you, Keata?” Jasper asked.

Keata tapped his chin in thought as he had seen Johnny do. “Orange.” That’s what Johnny said.

Jasper grabbed a can of orange soda as he popped the top and poured it into a glass for Keata. He added a few ice cubes and slid it across to the little guy.

“You wolf?”

Jasper looked over at Caden and Murdock. They were watching him with wide grins on their faces. What the? Jasper tilted his head, looking between the two before giving his attention back to Keata.

“Uh, why do you ask, Keata?” He wasn’t volunteering if Keata was clueless.

“Stormy eyes wolf. He have long teeth. He lay naked on Kyoshi and say *Kyoshi* really loud.” He blinked up at Jasper.

Jasper’s eyes grew wide as he looked down at Keata then over at Caden and Murdock. They were laughing hysterically, falling into each other.

“I don’t think you should tell people that, Keata. It’s private.” Jasper knew right away Keata had accidentally seen Storm claiming Kyoshi. Storm was gonna shit bricks over this.

“Why private?”

“Ask Kyoshi.” He wasn’t going to have Storm pulling his intestines out through his loud mouth.

“Okay. Roger that.”

Cody stepped into the den, stood there for a moment looking toward the bar, then lowered his head and walked out. Did Cody blame him for finding his mate? Did he hate him now? There was no way Jasper could have prevented this. No way. With a heavy heart, Jasper shrugged his shoulders as he chatted with the bizarre little human.

\* \* \* \*



“Loco, can I talk to you a minute?” Storm walked into the kitchen, spotting the wolf messing with the buttons on the microwave.

“I think it’s broke.” Loco slammed his palm onto the digital pad. The thing didn’t even display any numbers.

“Well, if it wasn’t before, it is now.” Storm grabbed a juice from the fridge and downed half the bottle in one gulp.

“What’s up?” Loco finally took the bowl out and tossed the food in a pot on the stove to reheat. “Gonna have to do it the old-fashioned way.”

“Can you take Keata under your wing? Show him around and make sure he stays out of trouble?”

“Depends. You gonna accuse me of touching him? I heard about Ludo. He’s treated like a leper now. I don’t give a shit what people think of him, as long as it’s the truth.”

“I keep trying to apologize. Ludo won’t even listen.” God, Storm wished he could go back and do it over. He tossed the bottle in the trash and crossed his arms over his chest. Not only had he alienated Ludo, but everyone was afraid to be in the same vicinity as Keata for fear of being called a pervert. He screwed Ludo and Keata with his temper.

“Some things you can’t apologize for. Give it time. I’ll watch over the guy. I don’t want any static though. I’m not as passive as Ludo.” Loco glanced at Storm with a warning look before dumping the pot over onto a plate. “Someone needs to get a new microwave. Warming leftovers in a pot takes too damn long.”

“Yeah, I’ll get right on that.” Storm rolled his eyes. “Thanks, Loco. I’ll go get Keata and introduce you two.” Boy, was Loco in for a surprise. He just hoped Keata didn’t make the man want to pull all his silver hair out. Volunteers were scarce around here as far as Keata was concerned. He really did screw things up this time.

## **Chapter Five**

Kyoshi sat on the front steps enjoying the warm weather. America was different. He found that there were things here that he really enjoyed. The people in the house he now lived in were kind. He shuddered to think of what he and his cousin escaped. What had started out as a nightmare was taking a different path for the Kia family.

When he and Keata were grabbed from the marketplace, Kyoshi thought life as they knew it was over. With what he had overheard the bandits saying, sex would become the only thing they would know for the rest of their lives. Thank goodness for kind strangers.

Keata had cried to go home when the wolves shied away from his cousin. Keata had begged to return to the box, telling Kyoshi it would return them. If only things were so easy. His mate was here now. Their home was here now. The life they had been living back in Japan was hard, struggling just to survive after his mother's passing.

Though his cousin was having a rough time adjusting, Kyoshi knew the life they had now was beneficial to Keata and himself.

"You all right, dragonfly?" Kyoshi turned to see his mate standing in the doorway, his eyes looking sad. He was proud to call this wolf his. Storm was beautiful and gentle. He had made Kyoshi's first experience with sex amazing. He felt foolish now for fearing it so much, but he was glad he had waited for his wolf.

"I just hate to see Keata so heartbroken. I wish I could take him home, but this is home now. He will adjust with time." Kyoshi wanted Storm, wanted him to make love to him again. He was still too shy to outright ask for it or be seductive with his mate. So how did he let

him know he wanted him to fuck his brains out? Did he bat his eyelashes? Flip his hair back? Giggle at him? No, that was what he had seen females do. He was a man. So what did men do?

He followed Storm to their room, closing the door behind them as he sat in the cushion window seat. *Just say it.* Why was it so hard? He had been ballsy when he spoke of being a top, why was he biting his tongue off now?

“Um, Storm...what time is it?” Ugh. This shouldn’t be so hard. Taking a deep breath, Kyoshi blurted out, “Iwantoutofuckme.” Okay that was brilliant.

“What was that, Kyoshi?”

Great, now he had to repeat it slower. Maybe he should just get naked. That *had* to work. Kyoshi turned his back to Storm. With shaky fingers, he removed his button-down shirt, folding it carefully and setting it on the dresser, patting it to make sure it stayed. *Stop stalling.* His hands reached for the snap on his slacks but were shaking too much to get them unfastened. *Relax. You’ve done this before, once. No biggie. He is your mate, so just go for it.*

He toed his shoes off, setting them together and making sure they were neatly paired and straight.

Kyoshi tried once more to unclip his pants, and finally they cooperated. He slid the zipper down and hesitated. Cool air brushed his ass as his slacks pooled at his ankles. *Step out of them dummy.* Taking a deep breath, Kyoshi pulled his feet out and bent to pick them up. Folding them, he patted them as well. Okay, socks and underwear were the last things remaining. He pulled the socks off, pairing them as well, and sat them on top of the shoes. No, they shouldn’t go there. Maybe he should walk them to the hamper? Later.

Okay, only the underwear left. Kyoshi took a deep breath, letting it out in one long exhale. He hitched his fingers in the waistline and...*I can’t do it. Yes, you can. Okay, here goes...again.* Kyoshi pulled them off and folded them as well, patting them in place.

*Turn around. Just turn the hell around.* Kyoshi began to walk

backwards to the bed, covering his penis. He sat on the bed and took a chance, peeking at Storm.

Storm stood there smiling. *Okay, does my nakedness not tell him I want to have sex? Why is he just standing there?*

“Could you repeat what you said?”

Crap. Storm was going to make him ask. Oh, man. Kyoshi’s lips moved but nothing came out. Maybe Storm would lip read his desire. His mate just stood there waiting.

“I, uh, want you to...well, that is to say...can you?” Yeah, broken English all the way.

“Can I what?”

“Um, make love to me?” *There, I did it, yippy for me!*

“All you had to do was ask.” Storm smirked at him. “Come here, dragonfly. Undress your mate.”

Kyoshi slid off of the bed, reaching unsteady hands up as he unsnapped the denim, slowly pulled the zipper down, reached into his waistband and pulled the jeans to his ankles. He got on his knees as he removed the boots, releasing the jeans from his ankles and slid the socks off. Storm was naked from the waist down. Kyoshi was dying to take a good look at his mate’s cock. It felt enormous, but what did it look like? On shaky legs, he stood. His eyes slowly lowered to the prick jutting out to greet him. Holy cow! *That* was inside of him? How?

“Teach me how to please you, mate.” Wow. Kyoshi patted himself on the back. He was getting bolder.

“Get on your knees, and take my cock into your mouth.” His wolf yanked his shirt over his head, tossing it aside.

Kyoshi did as told, opening wide to take in the plum head. He had never done this before and hoped he pleased Storm. His tongue licked around the bulbous head, tasting his mate for the first time. He tasted delicious, tangy and sweet at the same time.

“Suck the head, Kyoshi.” Storm instructed between clenched teeth.

Kyoshi wrapped his hand around the base and sucked the crown, laving his tongue at the clear liquid that was escaping from the slit in the top, Storm moaned, and his hips hitched slightly. Encouraged, Kyoshi swallowed another inch.

“I didn’t tell you to take anymore.” Storm groaned.

Kyoshi pulled back. A musky, manly smell flooded his nose. Storm’s cock jerked, and Kyoshi sucked harder to keep it from dislodging.

“That’s it, dragonfly. Suck it. Cup my balls in your hand.”

Reaching his hand up, he felt the weight of Storm’s sac as he palmed it. He rolled them around, gently pushing them up then letting them weigh back down. Storm’s hips began to move, his cock sinking further in. Was he supposed to take more? Storm was pushing, so it must be okay. Kyoshi opened wider, allowing the shaft to go deeper.

“Suck my cock, baby.” His mate ran his hands through Kyoshi’s hair, and electricity shot through him at the gentle touch.

Kyoshi began to bob his head, taking in as much as he could. Saliva ran down his chin. He became bolder, squeezing the sac and relaxing his throat muscle. Storms prick slid further back, Kyoshi concaved his cheeks, sucking hard and bobbing faster.

“Gonna come.” Storm’s head fell back, his hips snapping and his fists clenching. His mate roared as his seed shot out and down Kyoshi’s throat. He was trying desperately to swallow it all.

Storm pulled Kyoshi up, kissing him deeply like a desperate man.

“*Watashi ni wa ookami no toriko ni sa seru.*” Kyoshi moaned.

“That sounds beautiful. What did you say?”

“Make love to me, wolf.”

His mate growled as he lay Kyoshi down on the bed. Kyoshi scooted over to accommodate the large wolf as he climbed on.

“Get on your hands and knees.” Storm instructed him.

Kyoshi rolled over, his hair falling down in his face as he slightly shook with excitement and nerves. They had done this before, but it still felt so new to him. This position was at least. His hole quivered

when a finger brushed up against it. He felt his cheeks separate then the finger push in.

His head lowered, the feelings washing through him. He tensed when the second finger breached him.

“Relax, dragonfly. Just relax. I have you.” Storm’s strong voice became a hypnotic spell in Kyoshi’s mind. His body relaxed, his hands unclenched. He let go of the fear and allowed the sensations to flow freely through him.

“That’s it, baby.”

Kyoshi’s shoulders touched the mattress, allowing his backside to rise higher. He wanted it, wanted that feeling to expand, encompass another finger. “More.” He breathed out in need.

The bed dipped as Storm moved around behind him. A hand touched the inside of his thigh, encouraging him to spread them wider. Kyoshi’s eyes widened as he was entered for the second time in his life.

“Mine.” Storm licked at Kyoshi’s shoulder. Kyoshi fragmented, his seed erupting as Storm pushed deeper. “Storm, please.” Kyoshi cried out. The feelings spiraled out of control. He felt as though he were tumbling with his arms outstretched and nothing to grab hold of. “Too much.”

Storm wrapped Kyoshi in his powerful arms as Kyoshi cried out. Storm bit into his shoulder, locking him in place as he sawed in and out of Kyoshi.

“I need,” Kyoshi begged. He wasn’t sure what it was he needed, but his body was on fire. A maelstrom of sensations and emotions assaulted him, barraging his mind and body.

His mate reached under him, grabbing his engorged penis, pumping it rapidly as Kyoshi shouted out his name. Storm was blanketing Kyoshi, keeping him grounded as best he could, but it still wasn’t enough. Kyoshi bucked as his come exploded from him in a dynamic firestorm of heat.

Storm grunted into Kyoshi’s shoulder, his pelvis rapidly pounding

his backside. Kyoshi knew the moment his mate came. Storm whined into his flesh that still had canines embedded into it.

Kyoshi's hands grabbed the forearms that were wrapped around his chest, holding on as he panted and came back down to earth. He had to blink a few times to regain focus.

"Mine." Storm purred it this time, lapping at his neck. Kyoshi closed his eyes. The only thing he wanted right now was to snuggle against his wolf and sleep.

\* \* \* \*

Kyoshi and Storm were in the kitchen with Kyoshi sitting on his mate's lap as Storm fed him spoonfuls of ice cream, licking the side of his mouth when dabs of the treat smeared onto his lips or chin.

"Now that's how you eat ice cream." Cody chuckled as he grabbed a bottled water from the fridge then walked out.

"Why is he so sad, Storm?" Kyoshi opened for another spoonful. Storm watched the little pink tongue snake out to lick his mate's bottom lip. He wanted him again.

"It's complicated. He and Jasper have been longtime lovers but not mates. Jasper recently discovered who his mate is, and Cody is having a hard time with it." Storm felt for the warrior, but there was nothing anyone could do about it. Once a mate is found, no one interfered. Cody would have to step aside and allow Jasper to be with his mate. If the redhead ever left. His mate was the Alpha of the Eastern pack, a tall, dark-skinned warrior named Zeus. He was the largest wolf Storm had ever laid eyes on.

"It is a shame to lose a love. I hope things work out well for Cody." Kyoshi draped his arm over Storm's shoulder, his hand caressing the braid.

Storm stood and placed Kyoshi on his feet as he took the bowl to the sink. "I was thinking about having a day with the warriors and mates, maybe go to the city to visit Chinatown. It would help Keata.

He would be able to talk with the people there, and maybe it would help with his homesickness.”

“That is an excellent idea.” Kyoshi hugged Storm around his waist.

Storm pulled his mate close. He would do anything to keep that smile on Kyoshi’s face. He loved him the instant he had laid eyes on the small man, and the more he got to know him, the deeper that love grew.

It felt unreal at times that his mate was finally in his life. Too many years he had wondered who he was, where he was, or if he were even born yet. Storm searched for his mate just as any other shifter, he was one of the fortunate ones to have found his.

Just staring into Kyoshi’s beautiful eyes reminded him of that fact every day. He wanted to kill the men who had kidnapped him with the intent to harm his small mate, but glad at the same time because the horrific event brought his mate to him.

Storm leaned down and kissed the top of Kyoshi’s head, inhaling his scent, thankful that they had escaped what would have been a living hell.

\* \* \* \*

“This is amazing,” Kyoshi whispered as the mates exited the trucks. He almost felt as though he were back home in Japan. The sights and smells were familiar, making his heart ache for the land he would never see again.

Keata was at his side bubbling with excitement. He ran from one stall to the next, talking to anyone who could speak their native tongue. Storm had to haul him back a few times when he wandered too far ahead. Kyoshi giggled at his cousin’s excitement.

“Where the hell do they sell those kid leashes around here?” Storm grumbled.

“This is cool.” Drew smiled as he and Blair sampled dumplings



and chicken at one of the vendor's stands.

Keata begged Storm to buy him Chinese lanterns and calendars and even a wok. Kyoshi watched as Storm paid for anything Keata grabbed.

Kyoshi was amazed earlier when his mate yelled at the other warriors about laughing at his cousin, telling them how it had hurt Keata's feelings. Of course, they all apologized for it. They said they would stop shying away from Keata if Kyoshi and Storm promised not to peg them as perverts. Kyoshi was glad his cousin would be accepted again but still had one eye on the warriors. Family was supposed to look out for each other. And Keata needed a *lot* of looking out for.

Loco finally made it and took charge of Keata's hyper state. Kyoshi laughed as his cousin dragged the big warrior around.

The mates chatted about the sights, and Kyoshi was dubbed the honorary guide, explaining to them the different foods and customs. They purchased souvenirs and ate at the small restaurant where Johnny and Cecil ordered half the menu. The owners had to slide three long tables together to accommodate the large size of the warriors.

Kyoshi watched as Johnny giggled at the dish called *happy family*. He ordered it just so he could say the name. He was stuck on the words *moo goo*, thinking it was the funniest name. Johnny kept leaning into Hawk and extending his lips out to say the phrase. Hawk leaned down each time, allowing his mate to have fun with it.

"Is my pupu ready?" Cecil asked the waitress every time she walked by. After the second time of telling him no, she just rolled her eyes. Kyoshi knew how she felt. Maverick pulled on Cecil's sleeve to try and hush him, but Cecil was having way too much fun.

He pulled Storm down to him, gazing into his eyes, he had never been happier. "*Watashi wa anata o aishite.*" He kissed Storm on his lips.

"I love you too, dragonfly," Storm whispered across his lips.

Kyoshi was shocked Storm understood him. He guessed the words, no matter what language, were recognized when spoken from the heart.

"I know guys. They take us." Keata pointed across the room.

"Sit," Maverick commanded as the six warriors turned and growled. "Don't alert them that we know who they are. I want them followed so we can find the three other men."

"I'll go." Evan excused himself and left.

Storm ushered Kyoshi and Keata into the kitchen, not wanting the ugly Americans to see them. They left out of the back door with Micah and Oliver waiting for them in the SUV.

"The others will meet us at home." Micah informed them as he sped away.

Kyoshi held his shaking cousin in his arms, shushing him and reassuring him that they were safe. It was a long trip from the city, but once they arrived home the warriors Gunnar and Murdock met them outside, scanning the area as they ushered Kyoshi and Keata inside.

The rest of the party arrived twenty minutes later, not wanting to rush out and raise suspicion. Maverick called the warriors into his office.

"Is he okay?" Johnny asked as he sat next to Keata and entwined his fingers into Keata's.

"I fine, sunshine hair." Keata gave him a weak smile. His cousin turned to him. *"All I could see was the box we came here in and the ugly Americans trying to force us to the boat. I don't want to remember that. I was having a wonderful day until then. Did I lose the gifts Stormy eyes bought for me?"*

"No, Blair grabbed our bags." Kyoshi smiled.

"I know the cure for your worries." Cecil slapped a controller in Kyoshi's hands and started the game. Music pumping, everyone yelled and laughed as Kyoshi fumbled to beat Cecil to the finish line. Kyoshi did a happy dance when his race car finished first.

"We should have a party," Cecil suggested. "Just us mates."

"Sounds cool, but isn't that what we're doing now?" Drew asked

as he grabbed a bottled water from behind the bar.

“No, put the bottled water back. I’m thinking something stronger.” Cecil laid seven shot glasses across the bar and poured dark rum into all of them. “Okay, were going to play a game. Whoever’s car loses, takes two shots.”

“Is this going to get us punished again?” Blair narrowed his eyes on Cecil then gave him an evil smile. “Because if it is, I’m so there.” He laughed as he grabbed the controller.

## Chapter Six

“I think you need to go into the den.” Gunnar informed the warriors as he entered the office.

“Why?” Maverick leaned back and pulled at his soul patch.

“Just go.” Gunnar shook his head and walked out.

\* \* \* \*

“Hey, Kyosham. I tink I’m dunk,” Johnny slurred as he chased the straw around with his lips. He giggled then yelled at the straw to stop moving.

Kyoshi tried to lift his eyelids higher to see Johnny, but the batteries must have been died.

“Are you dunk, Dew?” Johnny licked his lips, the straw stuck to the bottom one. He slapped at the plastic menace only to send his orange soda can across the room.

Oliver and Blair fell into each other, laughing, when the can hit the pool table and spilled over the balls.

“Hey, John John, your balls are sticky now.” Oliver fell back with peals of laughter.

Keata crawled across the floor, ushering the little ant to go home before he was squashed. At least that’s what Cecil thought he said—either that or *ga hone ford washed*.

“Damn, I think I’m drunk, too.” Drew blinked. He reached his hands in his pants to scratch his balls but lost the struggle when he fell off of the couch.

“Dorm, Dorm, Dorm. I lub you, Dorm.” Kyoshi was singing as he

took another shot. He burst out laughing but couldn't remember what was so funny. He stumbled over to the couch, tripping over Drew and landing with his face in Oliver's crotch.

"What the hell is going on?"

Kyoshi giggled but couldn't get his face to turn. Oliver was patting him on the head telling him not to cry 'cause the birds would fly back soon.

Storm pulled his mate from Oliver then grabbed Keata around the waist and hauled him up.

"Dorm, my wolfy Dorm. Johnny's balls are sticky." Kyoshi let out a bark of laughter as Storm carried the two upstairs. He sat Kyoshi in one of the cushioned chairs as he took Keata to his room.

Storm didn't know what to make of the situation. The mates were drunk off their asses. He tucked Keata in bed, pushing his forehead down when the little imp tried to get back up.

"Stay."

"Otay, Dormy eyed." He giggled then was snoring in five seconds. Light weight.

Storm grabbed Kyoshi when he caught him running in a circle.

"What are you doing?"

"My zipper won't stay still." Kyoshi wailed. He slapped his crotch yelling at it to behave.

"You are going to bed. We'll deal with your drunkenness in the morning." Storm stripped him down and laid him on the bed, shaking his head. The mates were going to corrupt his innocent man. No, Cecil was going to. Storm had a feeling the mischievous bandit was at it again. He hoped Maverick punished him. A smile crept across Storm's face. On second thought, Cecil didn't deserve such pleasure.

Storm crawled in the bed and pulled the comforter over them.

"Now what are you doing?" Storm threw the blanket back to see Kyoshi sucking his belly button, his eyebrow quirked up.

"I want to suck you." Kyoshi sucked harder as he moaned.

"Uh, dragonfly, you would have to get a little lower for that."

Storm caressed the back of his mate's head.

"Your cock tastes good." He dipped his tongue into Storm's navel.

Storm pulled Kyoshi up into his arms and rubbed his back. Kyoshi was asleep in no time.

"Little shit." He chuckled as he pulled the blanket back over them.

\* \* \* \*

Storm ran between his mate and Keata's room. They were both emptying their stomachs and crying for the room to stop spinning. Loco knocked on the door and stepped in, heading straight into Keata's room. He could hear the little guy crying that his head thumped.

"I don't think I have to punish you, Kyoshi. You're doing a great job of it right now." Storm wiped his mouth then laid his mate onto his back. He gave him two aspirin and told him to rest.

He lay next to his mate, brushing his hair back from his face as Kyoshi's lips parted in sleep. What had he been thinking listening to Cecil? Storm would have to warn his mate not to listen to the man's hair brained schemes.

Storm studied Kyoshi's beauty. He ran a fingertip over his nose, and down to his lips. "I love you, dragonfly." He kissed his mate on his forehead before turning off the lamp on the nightstand.

\* \* \* \*

Kyoshi sat at the kitchen table with his head in his hands, wishing the damn headache would go away. Never in his life would he ever drink again.

"Hi."

Kyoshi looked up to see a Drew zombie walking to the fridge, Remi close behind. Remi guided his mate over to the table and sat him down, grabbing two glasses and the orange juice. He poured them

then sat one in front of Drew and one in front of Kyoshi. Remi smiled at him warmly. His kissed the top of Drew's head before he left them to each other.

"Never again." Drew moaned.

"Me either." Kyoshi burped and prayed he wasn't going to be sick again. It felt as if each temple were being hit with a hammer.

Blair plopped down in one of the chairs and laid his head on the table, moaning loudly when Drew scraped his chair back.

"Drew, too loud." Blair complained as he grabbed his head.

Hawk stormed into the kitchen, glared at them then grabbed a bottle of Gatorade from the fridge, slammed it shut, and then stormed out.

"Wasn't our idea." Blair watched Hawk's retreating back.

"I think one of these days he's going to hog-tie Cecil to stop his antics." Drew laughed then cringed and rubbed his temples.

"But the dude is fun." Blair smiled.

"Wondered where you'd gone off to." Storm pulled Kyoshi up and cradled him as he took him back to their room.

"I'm nauseous," Kyoshi cried.

"That's why it's called a hangover." Storm chuckled as he laid his mate back in their bed.

Storm checked in on Keata. Loco had him in his lap as he cradled a sleeping Keata in his arms. He was sitting on the window seat staring out of the window. The warrior turned and nodded at Storm.

Storm smiled then closed the door, wondering if Loco was the mate Ludo had mentioned. Kyoshi was curled up in the center of the bed, fast asleep.

\* \* \* \*

"I followed them to a dive in the city. I haven't seen any foreign men, but there seems to be a lot of traffic going in and out of the place." Evan reported to Maverick over the phone.

"I'm going to send a couple warriors to you, black ops mission. Get in, take the men if you find them, then get out. If they aren't there, hold your position till they can be followed to a different location." Maverick talked softly into the phone.

"Yes, Alpha." Evan hung up the phone. If he didn't know any better, he would think Maverick was acting like a secret agent. Shit did get boring at home.

\* \* \* \*

Kyoshi walked into the den and punched Cecil in his arm.

"Ow, what was that for?" He rubbed the offended area.

"That's for shaming me. My mate doesn't look at me the same anymore." Kyoshi hissed at him. He punched Cecil in his arm again.

"Will you stop that?" Cecil slapped Kyoshi on his chest.

Kyoshi pushed Cecil back, making Cecil stumble into the pool table. Cecil gained his footing and shoved Kyoshi by his shoulders.

They started slapping at each other, their hands smacking in a cat fight as Blair and Oliver grabbed them both around the waist and pulled them apart.

"I didn't make you drink," Cecil complained.

"No, but you pressured me," Kyoshi bit out.

"Did not, fat liar." Cecil pouted.

"Did, too."

"Did not."

"Enough. You two sound like five-year-olds. Want a sippy cup? Promise to add rum." Jasper laughed. "Now kiss and make up. Mates don't fight. That's what we warriors are for."

"He started it." Cecil crossed his arms over his chest and stuck his nose in the air.

"Did not."

"Did, too."

"I'll put you both in time-out if you don't make up." Jasper



warned.

“Fine, sorry for not making you drink.” Cecil put his hands on his hips and glared at Kyoshi.

“That’s not an apology, doofus.”

“Am not.”

“Are, too.”

Jasper rolled his eyes and marched the two to separate corners.

“You can’t make me stand here,” Cecil griped.

“Yes, he can.”

Cecil and Kyoshi whipped around to see Maverick standing in the archway with his arms across his chest.

“Why?” Cecil whined.

“Now.”

“Fine.” Cecil turned and stuck his nose to the wall. Kyoshi did the same, humiliated beyond belief as he heard the other mates snickering. Dammit.

\* \* \* \*

Keata climbed down the winding staircase and into the den, looking from Cecil to Kyoshi. Ooh, they were in trouble.

He sat next to Drew and leaned over. “What they do?” he whispered.

Drew whispered back, “They were fighting.”

“Kyoshi Kia, you grounded,” Keata admonished his cousin. “Bad boy,” he added.

Drew giggled when he saw Kyoshi turn a crimson color as he stuck his nose further into the corner.

“What the—?” Storm looked from Keata to Kyoshi, wondering why in the hell his mate was standing in the corner.

“Kyoshi bad boy. He fighting.” Keata beamed up at Storm.

“Come see me when your punishment is over, Kyoshi.” Storm left his mate as he hid his smile.

“Wasn’t my fault,” Kyoshi mumbled.

\* \* \* \*

Evan watched the building across the street. He didn’t like what he saw. There were too many men in the past twenty-four hours coming and going. He had a bad feeling he knew what was going on.

Evan looked over his shoulder as six of his pack mates walked through the rented apartment. “I thought Maverick said a couple.”

“I seriously think the dude needs to get out of his office more often.” Gunnar grinned as he shook Evan’s hand.

Murdock, Cody, Tank, and Ludo strolled in behind him. Evan shook his head at all the collective muscle that had come to save three young men. Yeah, his Alpha was losing it.

The warriors watched the building for some time, trying to pinpoint the weakest areas and observe the layout.

“You know, if I didn’t know any better, I would say those were clients coming and going. Please tell me he’s not renting those men out.” Tank growled as he ran his hand over his close cropped hair. He didn’t want to wait. Those men could be going through horrific shit right now. His stomach tightened at the thought.

“We’ll get them out, Tank. Calm down.” Murdock squeezed his shoulder. Tank nodded and walked back over to the window.

\* \* \* \*

Storm watched as Kyoshi tiptoed back into their room. “Not happening, dragonfly.”

His mate turned with a big smile plastered on his face. “Hi, Storm. How’s it going?”

“Nope, not even close.” Storm stood from the chair he had been sitting in, crossing the room and standing over Kyoshi’s five-two frame.

Kyoshi smiled up at him nervously.

“Fighting? My mate was in the den fighting? Can you fill me in on the reason why?” Storm glared down at Kyoshi.

Kyoshi pointed up at him. “Your eyes are doing that funny swirly thing. They’re a deep, beautiful amber.”

Storm glared at his mate. “Don’t even try to change the subject or flatter me. Explain.”

“Uh, yeah, about that.” Kyoshi shoved his hands in his back pockets, twisting his lips and looking as though he were trying hard to think of a good excuse.

“No broken English. Spill it,” Storm warned.

Kyoshi blew out a breath. “Fine. Cecil shamed me in your eyes, and I was angered.”

Storm had no clue what his mate was talking about. Shamed? “No one can ever shame you in my eyes, dragonfly. You’re perfect. A little quirky, but perfect.”

Tears slid down from Kyoshi’s midnight black eyes. “I felt ashamed. I don’t want you to see me in any other light than the brightest.”

Storm pulled Kyoshi into his arms, kissing each runaway tear. “Don’t cry, mate. It tears at my heart to see you sad.” He dropped to his knees and nipped Kyoshi on his chin, licking the sting away. Kyoshi moaned and leaned into him.

“Make love to me, wolf,” Kyoshi whispered.

“Always.” Storm removed Kyoshi’s clothes and leaned back, drinking in the beautiful sight before him. “Mine.” He growled low as he sucked in a nipple.

“Yours.” Kyoshi pushed his chest against Storm’s lips.

Storm cupped Kyoshi’s small rounded globes as he sucked in the brown discs and laved them until they peaked. He kissed a path down to Kyoshi’s belly button then chuckled at the memory of the night before.

“What’s so funny?” Kyoshi panted out.

“Not a damn thing, baby.” Storm kissed the head of Kyoshi’s cock and had to swallow quickly as Kyoshi shouted his release.

“Damn, you make me the happiest wolf on the planet.” Storm admitted against Kyoshi’s cock head. He licked the remaining come and took his mate to bed. He laid him on his stomach as he butterfly kissed him from neck to ankle, his tongue lightly licking the crease of his ass.

“Storm.” Kyoshi moaned as he wiggled his bottom.

Storm licked Kyoshi’s balls then separated his globes, rimming his puckered hole. His thumb slid in as he went back to sucking the wrinkled sac. He pumped his thumb, staving off his need to take him quickly.

“Please. I need,” Kyoshi whined.

“And you shall have,” Storm promised in a low, husky note.

He pulled his thumb out to be replaced by two fingers as he rolled Kyoshi onto his back. “Play with yourself,” he requested as he watched with hooded eyes.

Kyoshi blushed and fumbled with his cock for a moment before jerking it awkwardly. Storm reached over and grabbed the lube, squirting a small amount to aid Kyoshi. He speared a third finger in as his mate shyly began a steady rhythm, his hips hitching as he ran his thumb over the head, moaning.

“That’s it, dragonfly. Enjoy yourself.” Storm watched in utter fascination. He couldn’t have pulled his eyes away if the house caught fire. Kyoshi mewled as his hips snapped, and he cried out Storm’s name, seed falling to his lower abdomen.

Storm leaned forward and ran his fingers through the white-hot mess, painting his name on Kyoshi’s belly. He raised his finger and licked the cream from it.

“That’s hot, wolf.” Kyoshi watched with parted lips, licking them as if he were the one tasting the fluid.

Storm ran his finger across Kyoshi once more then dipped the finger past Kyoshi’s lips, his body shuddered as Kyoshi closed his

lips around the digit, sucking on his own seed. His cock throbbed behind the denim.

Climbing from the bed, he nearly fell over ditching his clothes and jumping back on.

Kyoshi giggled. "Impatient?"

"You're damn skippy," Storm replied as he flipped Kyoshi onto his knees. He dipped for a quick lap at the rosette before drizzling lube down his crack. He tossed the bottle aside and ran his fingers up and down, dipping his finger in to tease Kyoshi.

"Fucker." Kyoshi moaned.

Stormed laughed deeply as he tickled the hole, reaching for that sweet spot.

"Storm!" His puckered hole clamped down on Storm's finger as his back bowed. Storm watched him ride it out as he rubbed his dry hand across Kyoshi's back. When the pressure eased, he pulled out and lined his cock up, pulling Kyoshi's hips back and impaling his mate onto his throbbing cock.

"You're so damn tight." Storm groaned as he pushed Kyoshi forward then pulled him back again. "Fuck me." Storm removed his hands and watched his cock disappear once more as Kyoshi rocked back and forth, taking his pleasure.

Storm's balls drew up tight, and he knew he was close. He reached under his mate and grabbed his shaft, pumping it to the thrusts Kyoshi had set.

"Oh, Storm, Storm. So close," Kyoshi chanted as he impaled himself over and over again.

"Come for me, dragonfly." Storm squeezed Kyoshi's cock, and his hand was bathed in warmth as Kyoshi cried out. Storm grabbed Kyoshi's hips and took over, slamming deep and hard. He grunted as he felt the first spurt shoot from his cock then roared as the wave intensified and exploded, pistoning faster as his body rocketed then floated back.

Storm fell to his side. His skin held a sheen of sweat, and his heart

beat out of control. Kyoshi collapsed to the mattress, gasping for breath.

“I fought for that,” Kyoshi mumbled as he fell asleep.

“I know, dragonfly,” Storm whispered.

## Chapter Seven

Tank signaled Murdock, and Murdock nodded then shifted. He crouched and crawled around back until he sidled up to the back door. Evan scaled the balconies until he dropped down onto the roof. Gunnar shifted as he crawled down through the basement window. Ludo took the east side of the house, slipping through a first floor window, and Cody stayed across the street as a lookout. He was in his wolf form, so a quick bark would signal trouble.

Lights flashed, screams tore through the quiet night, gunfire burst and then there was silence.

\* \* \* \*

Cecil walked into the kitchen as Kyoshi was grabbing a bottle of juice from the fridge, and they stood in silence. Cecil ran his fingers across the table top as he peered at Kyoshi from the corner of his eyes.

Kyoshi shifted his weight from foot to foot.

Neither said a word.

Cecil cleared his throat. "So, was it really that bad?" He stared down at the table, twisting his lips to the side as he traced a circular pattern with his finger.

"Yeah. Afterward." Kyoshi stared at the juice cap.

"You, uh, wanna play video games?" Cecil tapped his fingernail.

"Sure." Kyoshi smiled.

\* \* \* \*

Hawk ran down the stairs as the warriors burst through the front door, Tank being carried by three of the Sentries.

“What happened?” Maverick demanded as he hurried to help carry Tank to the closest bedroom.

“He was hit when all hell broke loose. He has a bullet lodged in his spine. We’re afraid to remove it. We had no choice but to kill the smugglers, and I can’t say I’m sorry about it either.” Cody panted as they made it to the bedroom and laid Tank on his stomach. He was unconscious and pale. “He won’t shift. He thinks it will kill him if he tries.”

“Call the wolf physician. Tell him to get his ass here as fast as he can.” Maverick shouted as Cody pulled out his cell phone.

“What the hell do you mean he’s not available?” Cody shouted into his phone. He slammed his fist into the wall as he threw his phone across the room.

“Go to the nearest hospital and find a doctor that can be bought. Find him quickly, Cody.” Maverick turned back to Tank, his eyes determined and his jaw set. Tank had been under his command for a century and a half. He wasn’t going to lose him.

“Did you succeed?” Maverick asked no one in particular.

“Yes, they’re out in the SUV, too frightened to come in,” Murdock stated.

“Go get Kyoshi. Have his mate bring him outside. I want them in the house and safe.”

Murdock nodded as he left his pack mate.

\* \* \* \*

Kyoshi smiled as Storm washed his back. He always used his bare hands so he could explore more than clean. Kyoshi batted at the suds floating around the tub as his mate groaned. Kyoshi looked over his shoulder to see his wolf laid back with his eyes half closed, touching



his cock and smiling.

“Again?” Kyoshi asked with feigned shock.

“You know it.” Storm leaned forward and grabbed Kyoshi as a knock sounded on the bathroom door.

“Shh, maybe they’ll go away,” Storm whispered.

The knock sounded louder.

“Dammit,” Storm mumbled. “Who the hell is it?” he snapped.

“Murdock. Sorry, Storm, Kyoshi is needed downstairs. Alpha’s orders,” he called through the door.

“Be down in five,” Storm yelled back.

Storm pulled him from the tub and dried him off, cursing the whole time. “One of these days I’m going to get to spend quality time with you alone, uninterrupted.”

Kyoshi and Storm came down the stairs to chaos. His mate pulled him closer as he looked around for Keata. He had a bad feeling about this. Something was definitely wrong.

“I need you to take your mate outside. We found the three men that were brought over with him and Keata, but they are too frightened to leave the SUV.” Maverick told Storm as Kyoshi ran out the door.

Storm chased after him as Kyoshi spotted Keata hanging into the front window, talking a thousand words a minute, Loco standing right by his side.

Kyoshi opened the back door and let out a cry. There were three males naked and sitting in the back seat.

“Loco, can you get something for them to put on please?” Storm asked.

“Just waiting for someone to come out so I could do just that.” Loco winked as he strolled back into the house.

Kyoshi spoke in a low hushed tone, trying to reassure and comfort. He noticed from his peripheral the other mates had gathered at the front door and were watching with curiosity.

Loco gently pushed past the mates and came out with three sets of

jogging pants and T-shirts. The warriors turned their backs as Kyoshi handed them the clothing then turned his back as well. Keata continued to chat it up, apparently oblivious to any modesty the three may have had.

“What’s he saying?” Storm asked as they waited for the men to dress.

“He’s talking about his Stormy eyes.” Kyoshi smiled. “Also about his new best friend, Loco. He is telling them that they have nothing to worry about and this house has great food.” Kyoshi laughed. “He just told them about the great big game room inside where you can play kids’ games or get drunk.”

Storm chuckled as Kyoshi turned around.

He talked the three out then inside to the den where they sat huddled together, a look of terror etched on each face. Kyoshi remembered that feeling. He wished he had gotten them away when he and Keata escaped. They hadn’t been so lucky. His stomach knotted at what they must have endured while in the smugglers’ hands.

Kyoshi listened as Storm was informed about Tank. Storm bit out a curse. Kyoshi followed as his mate picked up his pace to the bedroom that seemed to have every warrior crammed inside. Tank lay flat on his stomach not moving. Kyoshi could tell he was breathing, but his pallor worried him.

Maverick came out of his office and informed them that Zeus had agreed to take the three young men to his pack. He would send over one of his soldiers to introduce to them and have Kyoshi explain what was going on.

“Why can’t they stay here?” Kyoshi didn’t like the idea of the men going somewhere that wouldn’t have an interpreter.

“It’s not their destiny.” That was all Maverick would reveal to everyone before he left.

“Damn dreams of his. I’m beginning to wonder if Maverick isn’t growing pot out back. He sure as hell acts like it sometimes, all this

mumbo jumbo crap,” Storm ranted.

\* \* \* \*

The doctor spent half the night in the room with Tank, the warriors pacing the foyer, waiting.

When the physician emerged, they swooped down on him, questioning Tank’s status. The man backed up into the wall, his eyes darting from one face to the next, a fine sheen of sweat speckled his brows.

“Back away now,” Maverick commanded in a low tone. The warriors stepped back as their Alpha approached with his hands behind his back.

“Is he okay?” Maverick asked in a light, soothing tone. The doctor eyed Maverick then gulped.

“He’s resting. The bullet didn’t penetrate his spine. Lodged a few centimeters to the left. He should recover.” His voice grew steady as he went into his professional mode.

“Thank you, Doctor...?” Maverick asked.

“Doctor Nicholas Sheehan.” He extended his hand to Maverick.

The Alpha shook it then led Dr. Sheehan to his office.

\* \* \* \*

“Do you think the men will be okay in the Eastern pack?” Kyoshi asked Storm as he curled up at his side. He ran his hands through Storm’s silky, golden hair.

“I’m not sure, love. I don’t think Maverick would send them somewhere that they would be harmed.”

Kyoshi fanned Storm’s hair out over his shoulder, his hand tracing the dips and curves of his muscular arm. He leaned up and kissed the bulge of his bicep.

“Kyoshi.” Keata ran into the room only to have Loco grab him

around the waist and haul him back out. He closed the door silently.

“We have got to get him his own room.” Kyoshi laughed.

“First thing tomorrow.” Storm pulled Kyoshi into his arms.

“Why do your eyes change color?” he asked.

“My paternal side is descended from Mage. They are a race that was slaughtered into extinction. No full-blooded Mage exists anymore. My blood is so diluted that the powers to control the elements weren’t even passed on.” Storm explained to Kyoshi.

“I think they are very mysterious. They make one step back and take notice.” Kyoshi smiled up at him and Storm melted.

\* \* \* \*

Keata peeked into the bedroom to see the big wolf sleeping. He crept over to the sleeping form. Keata ran his hand over the ugly puckered hole on his back, and he wondered if the wolf was going to be okay.

“Hey.”

Keata looked up to see the wolf smiling at him over his shoulder. He dropped his hand and pulled it behind his back. His eyes stayed locked on eyes so brown they were almost black.

“It’s okay. You can touch it.” Tank reached out slowly and led Keata’s hand back to his wound.

Keata smoothed his hand down the wolf’s back, his eyes darting back up to make sure he wasn’t hurting him.

“You doing okay?” Tank reached out and ran his finger down Keata’s face.

“I okay. You?” Keata leaned into the touch.

“I’m fine. Just a scratch.” He smiled.

Keata grinned as he laid his hand over the wolf’s.

\* \* \* \*

Kyoshi grinned when Cecil wrestled with his controller, mad because he lost again. He was glad they were talking again. He didn't like animosity among them. Mates had to stick together. They were the runts of the house, him especially.

"Glad to see you guys getting along again." Jasper winked as he grabbed a beer from the bar. He twisted the cap off and took a long swig.

"Just a misunderstanding." Cecil patted Kyoshi as they started a new round.

Kyoshi battled his man until Cecil's lay bloody on the floor. He really liked these video games. Kyoshi turned to grab his juice when he saw Keata quietly close the door to the room that Tank slept in. He watched as his cousin crept up the stairs and disappeared. His anger built at the thought of the large wolf taking advantage of his cousin's innocence. He was getting tired of having to watch these wolves and their roaming hands.

"You playing?"

Kyoshi turned his attention back to the game as he thought about Keata and what was going on. Maybe it was just an innocent visit, checking on the wounded warrior. He may be jumping to conclusions, but Kyoshi couldn't help his protectiveness. It was ingrained in him to take care of Keata.

He finished his game then climbed the stairs to find out what was going on. He found Keata sitting on his window seat, staring out in a daze.

"Keata, are you okay?"

"I fine. Why?" Keata turned his attention to Kyoshi.

"Why were you in Tank's bedroom alone?" Kyoshi saw the light blush as Keata shrugged his shoulders. His head spun with the possibilities of what may have happened.

"Did he touch you?" Kyoshi hissed.

"I grown man. My business." Keata turned back to his window gazing as if dismissing Kyoshi.

“You are *my* business, young one, and I demand to know what happened.”

“No.” Keata crossed his arms over his chest and glared at Kyoshi. He could tell that Keata wasn’t budging on this.

He stomped from the room to find his mate. Storm was in the backyard checking some bricks that had come loose on the path leading to the garden when Kyoshi huffed over.

“I think Tank made a move on Keata,” Kyoshi said angrily.

“Hang on. Tell me what happened before I accuse anyone else. I’m not about to ruin someone else’s name until I have all the facts.”

Kyoshi relayed to him what he saw and Keata’s stubborn stance.

“Sounds to me like Keata is correct. He is grown, Kyoshi, no matter how much you wish it differently.” His mate knelt down to Kyoshi. “You have to cut the strings sometime. But I will speak to Tank privately and ask him about it.”

“No. I don’t have to cut anything except Tank’s balls off if he goes near Keata again.”

“Kyoshi, be reasonable. Keata isn’t a juvenile. He can make his own choices, live his own life—”

“So you are saying he should move out?” Kyoshi stared at him in amazement.

“That’s not what I’m saying. If you calm down, then you would understand—”

“No, he is not allowed to make his own decisions. He needs guidance, he needs protection, and he needs me.” Kyoshi bit back a sob on the last part.

“Come here, dragonfly. I see what’s wrong. It isn’t that you think Keata can’t take care of himself. You can’t give him up.” His mate held him in his arms, kissing him softly.

“He’s all I have, Storm. Please don’t ask me to give him up.” Kyoshi cried into his mate’s neck as the words he just spoke sank in. It was true. He couldn’t give his cousin up. He was a reminder of his childhood, his mother, and Japan—and he was Kyoshi’s

responsibility.

“I would never ask you to give him up. Just give him room to grow, discover who he is, without you shadowing him. Trust him.” Storm carried Kyoshi into the house then upstairs to their room. “I think the first thing you could give him is his own space. I talked with Maverick. He has the perfect room for Keata. He’ll be fine.”

“I don’t know. I don’t think I can do it. What if he becomes frightened in the middle of the night? What if he needs me?”

“Then there is a house full of people to help him, and if he insists on you then he knows where we sleep.” Storm wiped Kyoshi’s tears away, holding him close.

“I’ll try,” Kyoshi promised.

“Come on. I wanted to take you two down to the recreation center.” Storm pulled Kyoshi from the bed.

## Chapter Eight

They found Keata and Loco sitting on the front steps, sharing an ice cream. Storm watched as Loco chuckled, wiping the sticky treat from Keata's chin.

"I wanted to take them to the rec center," Storm said after clearing his throat.

"Sounds good. I'll go see if the other mates want to tag along." Loco stood, ruffling Keata's hair as he walked inside.

"You okay?" Storm asked as he sat where Loco just vacated. He looked around the front yard, the nice plush grass laid out before them. Storm's gaze went to the gravel drive on the side of the house, multitudes of pick-up trucks and SUVs lined the drive. It seemed like a normal house, looked ordinary and human. If the outside world only knew who inhabited it.

"I okay." Keata patted Storm's knee. "What rec center?"

"A place to play with other people." Storm kept the explanation simple, knowing Keata became frustrated when he didn't understand.

"Roger that." Keata looked forward again, as if daydreaming. Storm wondered what Keata dreamed of, what he wanted out of life. Keata laid his elbows on his knees, watching as two squirrels chased each other across the expansive yard.

"All the mates want to go," Loco informed him as he stepped back outside. "Guess we posse up."

"I'll take one of the larger vehicles." Storm stood, brushing his backside off as he went to grab the keys to one of the SUVs.

"Is Keata outside?" Kyoshi asked as he came from the den.

"Yeah, he's out there with Loco." Storm leaned down, an



overwhelming urge to hold his mate encompassing him. “I love you, dragonfly.” Kyoshi blushed and smiled up at him.

“I love you, too.” Kyoshi pulled him down for a quick kiss.

“We’re ready.” Johnny skipped to the door as Hawk followed close behind him. Once the mates met out front, they piled into the waiting vehicles, chatting excitedly about getting out of the house.

Storm felt bad that they couldn’t come and go as other humans could but such was the life of being mated to a were-creature. The luxury of total freedom would no longer be theirs.

Kyoshi buckled his seatbelt in the front seat, smiling at Storm before settling back.

“Guys ready?” Storm looked into the rearview mirror.

Everyone nodded. He pulled away and onto the paved road, two other SUVs following him. They reached the place and parked in the lot.

“Haven’t seen you guys in awhile.” Thomas, one of the counselors there greeted them. “Had me worried for a moment.”

“You can’t get rid of us so easily,” Cecil teased as he ran with Blair over to a corner to start another lesson. Blair had come to them illiterate, and Cecil was teaching him from the basics up. Blair wasn’t ashamed of it. He set his mind to it instead. He was making real progress. Storm was proud of the Alpha’s mate for helping him.

“This is Kyoshi and Keata.” Storm introduced the two.

“Pleasure to meet you.” Thomas shook their hands as he left them to wander around.

Storm watched as Tank lifted the smaller children up, helping them score a basket. He was glad the warrior had recovered so quickly. They had been friends a long time, and he would have hated if anything happened to him.

“Keata seems to be having fun,” Storm said to his mate.

Storm looked across the gym, Keata jumping rope with a bunch of girls. His mate’s cousin seemed to fit right in.

“He’s smiling,” Kyoshi noted. “Keata doesn’t seem to do a lot of

that lately.”

“He’ll be fine.” Storm kissed the top of his mate’s head before joining the other warriors. Kyoshi walked over to the craft table where the rest of the mate’s were sitting.

Storm watched as Kyoshi raced across the gym ten minutes later, grabbing hold of his arm. “Where is Keata?”

This got Storm’s immediate attention. The warriors had been so lax talking to Thomas that no one had noticed Keata disappear. He looked over to the group of girls, but Keata was nowhere in sight.

“Search the building.” Gunnar growled as he went outside.

Storm took the back double doors out, spotting a group of kids by the playground. They were huddled together, which raised his suspicions.

“Just take a hit.” One of the punks was handing Keata a joint.

Keata shook his head, backing away from them. “No,” he stated firmly as he grabbed a bar on the merry-go-round. He stepped onto it, trying to cross to get away from them.

One of the guys laughed as he spun Keata around. “You look like a girl. I should fuck you like one.”

“If you want to have your cock cut off afterward.” Storm growled at the guy taunting Keata.

“Who the hell are you?” The one who had offered his services to Keata asked. So these punks had no fear. Well, Storm would change that. He stood to his full height, Gunnar and Tank coming out to stand at his flanks. The punk swallowed hard, his eyes darting to all three men.

“I’m his brother-in-law. Mess with him again and I’ll make sure the cops haul you in for drug possession. And if that doesn’t scare you...” Storm’s eyes turned crimson, and a wet mark appeared on the front of the punk’s jeans.

They scattered to the wind, and Storm stopped the merry-go-round from spinning Keata around. “Come on, buddy.” Storm pulled him off. He had to carry the young man because Keata was too dizzy

to walk on his own.

“What’s going on?” Loco asked as he pulled Keata from Storm’s arms.

“Some punks tried to get Keata to use drugs.”

“No!” Drew shouted, “No, Keata. Don’t ever do that. It will destroy your life.” Drew pulled at Keata, pulling him from Loco’s arms as he hugged the small man.

“*Tell Drew I’m not stupid. I know drugs are bad.*” Keata hugged Drew against him.

“He’s as he’s too smart for that.” Kyoshi smiled at his cousin.

Storm was proud of him for resisting peer pressure. He grumbled. “I swear I’m going to get a cowbell to put around his neck.”

“Come one, men. Time to grab a bite to eat.” The warriors ushered them out of the rec center and into the vehicles, driving further into town to the local diner.

\* \* \* \*

Storm led his mate over to a booth by the window. He tossed his leather on the back of the booth as Kyoshi took a seat.

“Why can’t he sit with us?” Kyoshi whined.

Storm chuckled at his mate. Keata had run over to Loco’s booth and scooted in next to the warrior. He knew Kyoshi was trying. “Because he chooses to sit with Loco.”

Kyoshi crossed his arms over his chest and stuck his bottom lip out. Storm leaned over and nipped it as he slid into the booth. Kyoshi picked at his nails as he stared over at the other table.

“Leave him in peace.” Storm grinned at his mate. “Room, remember?”

“I remember.” Storm leaned down and kissed the pouting bottom lip.

Storm grabbed a menu, flipping it open as he read the selections. He watched Kyoshi watching Keata from the corner of his eye. His

mate had the motherly strings bad.

“Have you decided?” the waitress asked after grabbing her pad and pen from her half apron.

“I’ll have the steak with baby carrots and a salad.” Storm replaced the menu into the chrome holder.

“And you?” She turned to Kyoshi.

“I’ll have a set of balls on a platter,” Kyoshi mumbled as he glared at Loco.

“Excuse me?”

Storm gaped at Kyoshi. Did his mate really just say that?

Kyoshi blinked at them as if he just remembered he wasn’t alone. “I, uh, said I’ll have a hamburger and fries.” His face turned a deep crimson as he looked away.

The waitress left them to take the other table’s orders. Storm stared at Kyoshi for a moment. “Are you okay?”

Kyoshi shrugged his shoulders. “Fine, why?”

“Maybe because you tried to order testicles.”

Kyoshi narrowed his eyes and pointed secretly to the other table. “I know what men want. If they try to get it from Keata, I’ll be ordering all their testicles.”

“What the hell is wrong, Kyoshi?” He had never seen his mate this diabolical before. It was frightening.

“I—I don’t know. I feel funny.” Storm watched as a shaky hand reached up and wiped dots of perspiration from Kyoshi’s brow. “I don’t feel right.”

“I’m going to get that order to go.” Storm raised his hand to get the waitresses attention.

“Storm,” Kyoshi cried.

Storm snapped his head around to see blood on Kyoshi’s hand. “Shit.” He cursed as he grabbed the glass of water sitting on the table. Storm poured some on his mate’s hand then wiped it with a napkin. There was nothing there.

“What happened?” Storm grabbed Kyoshi’s other hand,

examining that one as well. Nothing.

“I want to go home,” Kyoshi sobbed.

“Come on, dragonfly.” Storm slid out of the booth, dropping a few bills on the table. He had to catch his mate as he collapsed. Storm began to panic.

“What’s wrong?” Loco asked as he ran over to them.

“I’m not sure.” Storm cursed as pain ripped through his bicep. He looked down to see a set of claws embedded in his skin. Just as quickly, they retracted.

“Holy shit,” Loco whispered.

“I’m sorry, Storm.” Kyoshi cried in Storm’s arms.

“It’s okay, baby.” Loco held the diner door open as Storm ran to one of the SUVs. Loco helped again with the passenger door. Storm set his mate in his seat and buckled him in. Kyoshi fell forward, grabbing his midsection and screamed.

“We’ll be right behind you,” Loco shouted as he raced toward the diner.

Storm ran around the front of the truck and jumped into the driver’s seat. Kyoshi had fallen against the passenger door whimpering.

Storm pulled his cell phone out. “Maverick, I need the physician. Something’s wrong with Kyoshi.” He tossed the phone aside and started the truck, ripping it into reverse as he peeled from the spot they were parked in.

His phone rang, but he ignored it. He reached over and grabbed his mate’s sweaty hand. “It’s okay, dragonfly. I’ll get you home.”

“It hurts.” Kyoshi panted in his seat. Storm was terrified something was killing his mate. He was human after all, well, maybe except for those claws. What the hell was going on? Even though he couldn’t get sick now that he was mated to Storm, something was hurting him. But what?

The SUV’s ass fishtailed as he raced up the gravel drive. He tossed the gear into park and yanked the door open, not even

bothering to turn the motor off. Storm ran around to grab his mate from his side.

Kyoshi's breathing was shallow, and he was trembling. He screamed, his hands wrapping around Storm's neck as his body stiffened. Claws dug into Storm's neck, but he ignored the pain, rushing his mate inside. Maverick held a door open to the same room that Tank had been brought to.

Storm laid his mate down gently, cursing and pacing, at a total loss of what to do. The other warriors and mates joined him, all waiting for the doctor.

"Keata, what's wrong with him?" Storm asked in desperation.

"Don't know." Keata shook his head back and forth, crying as his cousin lay there in pain.

"Look." Blair pointed as canines grew from Kyoshi's mouth then receded.

"Is he from a wolf pack in Japan?" Maverick asked as he watched the change fight to come over Kyoshi.

"I think he would have mentioned something by now." Storm looked at Maverick. Kyoshi cried out again, and Storm crawled onto the bed, pulling his mate in his arms. A yowl was wrenched from Kyoshi's chest. The same chest was expanding and collapsing at a rapid rate. He pulled at his clothes, crying out once again.

"Undress him, Storm," Maverick instructed.

The room turned their backs as Storm fumbled to get his mate's clothes off. He covered Kyoshi with a sheet, letting everyone know they could turn back around. Storm ran his hand over Kyoshi's small chest, where he felt the tiniest of hairs under his palm.

"Maverick, he's growing hair," Storm said in astonishment.

Kyoshi's body jackknifed then slammed back down.

"Do something!" Storm yelled at his Alpha, too distraught to care. If he lost his mate to whatever was happening, he wouldn't be able to go on. Kyoshi was his heartbeat.

"What do you want me to do, go grab my magic eight ball from

my office and ask it to tell me what's wrong with him?" Maverick pinched the bridge of his nose, and Cecil came over, wrapping his arms around the Alpha. Maverick sighed. "Sorry, I'm just as worried and just as lost."

"He looks as if..." Remi took a step forward.

"He's going through his first change." Cody finished for him. "But how? He's nineteen. If he is a were-creature, shouldn't he have gone through that by now?"

"I would know if my mate were a were-creature," Storm bit out then turned to Maverick. "Wouldn't I?"

## Chapter Nine

“Depends on what creature he is. It’s not widely known, but there are more than just wolves. All we can do is wait to see what he changes into.”

“What about the herbs?” Gunnar asked.

“We have all we need in the garden. Do you know how to make it?” Storm wasn’t sure if the special tea that helped to ease the pain a wolf experienced with their first shift would work with Kyoshi, but he kept that to himself.

Gunnar nodded, leaving to go brew the tea.

“It will be an hour before it’s ready. Massage his limbs, Storm,” Maverick instructed.

Remi ran back in, an aloe rub in his hand, and he gave it to Storm to use on his mate. Storm accepted it, squirting out a large amount then rubbing his hands together. Next Cody came back in with the menthol. He added a few drops to Storm’s lotioned hands.

Storm rubbed Kyoshi’s wrists. That seemed to be the part of his body that was trying to shift first. He ran the lotion between his mate’s fingers, rubbing the healing balm over the pads of his fingers. Keeping the sheet over his mate’s groin, he began to massage his legs, calves, and ankles. Storm would have preferred privacy, but with his dragonfly changing, he needed his pack.

Storm turned Kyoshi over, massaging his back and shoulders. Gunnar finally brought the tea in. Storm turned Kyoshi back around, lifting him gently as Gunnar tipped the cup forward.

Kyoshi parted his lips and took a sip. His tongue came out and licked a line across his bottom lip. “Come on, dragonfly. You have to



drink,” he encouraged. Kyoshi’s eyes squinted with pain.

“It hurts.”

“I know, baby. We’re trying to make things as painless as possible for you.” Storm had him take a few more sips before Gunnar pulled the mug away and sat it on the nightstand.

They all gasped when Kyoshi’s arms and legs shifted into orange colored fur with stripes before shifting back.

“Was that a cat?” Remi asked in shock.

“I think so.” Storm stared wide eyed down at his mate. The idea of Kyoshi being a cat was a lot to take in.

Storm began to worry. The first shift could be deadly. His throat constricted at the thought of losing his dragonfly. Too many things could go wrong. Maverick reached down to caress Kyoshi’s leg to examine the change, and Storm growled.

Maverick held his hand up to silence him. “I am not touching your mate in a sexual manner. I am trying to figure out what’s going on with him. Relax, wolf.”

Storm pulled Kyoshi tighter to his chest. He knew what his Alpha was doing was normal when the first shift was coming on, but he didn’t have to like it. Great care had to be given. Storm could lose Kyoshi.

“He should be shifting fully soon,” Maverick informed him when he straightened.

Kyoshi screamed to the ceiling, his body twisting as the shift took place. Storm jumped from the bed, giving his mate the room he would need.

“Holy shit,” someone shouted as Kyoshi stared up at the room.

Storm’s jaw hit his chest as he stared at his mate.

“Well, this is interesting.” Maverick chuckled.

\* \* \* \*

Kyoshi blinked up at Storm, trying to speak, but only a yowl came

out. He shook his head back and forth, trying one more time.

“Can you understand me?” Storm asked as he slowly approached him.

Kyoshi nodded his head up and down.

“You’re beautiful,” Storm whispered as he dropped to his knees, reaching out to Kyoshi.

“For a cat.” Remi snickered.

Kyoshi looked over at Remi. A cat? Kyoshi looked down at his feet, which were no longer feet. He had paws!

“Looks like you don’t need me.” A stranger walked into the room. Kyoshi hissed, standing in front of Storm.

“He’s trying to protect you. How cute.” Hawk chuckled.

“Will you guys shut up?” Storm snapped out

“Why didn’t we know, Doc?” Maverick asked.

So this was the wolf physician. Kyoshi tilted his head to study him. He looked human. But then, didn’t they all?

“With this particular breed, the shift happens after they mate and have their first sexual intercourse experience, which I assume has taken place?”

“No more virgin.” Keata beamed up at the doctor. The man smiled at Keata.

“He’s my mate.” Storm was rubbing Kyoshi behind his ears, Kyoshi giving off loud purrs. Kyoshi wanted to make those purrs as he...later.

“That explains it.” The doctor nodded to himself.

“So he had to be a virgin?”

“No, he had to be mated, which involves sex. It brought the change upon him.”

“Here, kitty kitty.” Remi made kissy noises.

“Stop.” Drew elbowed his mate.

“How did he not know?” Storm asked the doctor while they ignored Remi.

Kyoshi licked his paws as he listened to the doctor and the peanut

gallery. He knew he was going to get joked on big time for this, but he thought it was cool. A bit scary—okay, a lot scary—but cool. He rolled onto his side, playing with Storm’s pant leg. His mate knelt down, scratching behind his ear as he continued to talk. It felt so good.

“The male carries the shifter gene. His father was obviously a tiger-were.” The doctor continued as Kyoshi nipped at Storm’s fingers.

Storm sounded uncertain. “Is he okay now? I’m not sure with cat creatures.”

“He’s fine, made it through his first shift. It should be a breeze now. You’ll just have to talk him through his next one, show him how. Well, I’m off. Nothing more for me to do.” The doctor shook Maverick’s hand then turned to Storm with a smirk on his face. “Good luck.”

“A tiger-were, huh?” Storm looked down at Kyoshi. “You’re the smallest tiger I’ve ever seen.” His mate cooed at him. Kyoshi batted his hands. *I’ll give you small*. Figures, not even in a shifter form did Kyoshi have enormity. He was certain he looked like the runt of a litter. His mate grinned. “This is going to be fun.”

“Take him out back. Let him stretch his legs.” Maverick ushered them from the room. Storm led him through the kitchen and opened the back door. Kyoshi hesitated.

“It’s okay. I’m coming with you, dragonfly.”

“Still gonna call him that?” Gunnar teased.

“He’ll always be my dragonfly.” Storm sniffed.

Kyoshi poked his head out, sniffing the air and looking around the backyard before sticking one paw out of the door.

“He’s cautious. Good,” Maverick commented.

A couple other wolves joined them outside, and the mates were told to turn their backs as the men stripped down. They were used to being naked in front of each other. It was no big deal when you grew up in a pack, but these were their mates, and they didn’t want them to

see the other warriors and their goodies.

“Men.” Maverick warned when a few heads slightly turned to steal a glance.

A few growls erupted then faded, the mates snickering.

“Turn around.” Maverick watched as the mates stood there in awe at the wolves in front of them.

“Will Keata be a tiger, too?” Drew asked. “I wish I could shift. But I’m only a half-wolf. Only my canines and eyes turn.” He pouted. Remi pulled Drew close.

“You’re perfect.” He kissed his mate.

Kyoshi rolled around as he watched them. He wished Drew could shift, too. It would be fun to play with another mate. These Timber wolves were so enormous and looked like they would crush him.

“I don’t know. Kyoshi’s father gave him his were-genes. Keata is only his cousin,” Maverick said.

They all watched as Kyoshi pounced, playing around with his Storm. His mate closed his muzzle on Kyoshi’s neck, teasing him.

Keata ran forward, tackling him. Kyoshi rolled him until Keata lay on the ground then began licking him. He loved his cousin more than life itself. He was so innocent that he wasn’t even afraid of Kyoshi in this form. Not that he would ever in life hurt Keata.

“Tickles.” Keata’s peals of laughter filled the backyard. Storm nudged him, making Keata get up. The little man pouted until a wolf came forward, lowering himself so that Keata could climb on him. Keata beamed up at the other mates as he grabbed fur and the wolf trotted around the yard, giving him a ride. They were Timber wolves after all, large enough to carry the small mates.

Kyoshi watched as Cody carried his cousin around. He felt devilish. Storm was too busy watching Cody and Keata, so he was caught off guard when Kyoshi rammed his head into his flank.

Storm growled, tackling Kyoshi and pinning him before running away. Kyoshi chased him. Storm circled back around and nipped him in his flank. Kyoshi yowled and took off.

\* \* \* \*

Maverick watched the scene laughing. A cat and a dog. Go figure. Fate sure had a fucked-up sense of humor. She must be smoking something.

Johnny ran forward, not sure which wolf was Hawk. A very large wolf came forward, lowering himself as well. Johnny giggled as he climbed on, his arms vise-gripping Hawk's neck as his mate took him for a ride. He squealed in delight as Hawk picked up his pace a little, giving him a small thrill.

"I'd crush Dakota." Blair joked but a smile widened his face when his mate stepped forward, lowering himself. "Yeah, right. I told you to put the pipe down," Blair teased as he climbed on. He had to lay supine because he wasn't as small as the others where he could sit up, but it was fun nonetheless.

"Micah's waiting for you." Maverick encouraged Oliver to step forward. Although this particular mate was bristly, Maverick cared about him just the same as the others. He knew it wasn't Oliver's fault for the things he had gone through. He would work them out as each of the other mates had with their demons.

"I don't know." Oliver stepped forward hesitantly. He thought since Micah hadn't claimed him yet that he wouldn't be able to join the rest. The big wolf bowed in front of him. Oliver swallowed a few times past the lump in his throat as he ran his hand over the fur, clenching Micah's scruff before sliding on.

"Looks fun," Cecil said at Maverick's side.

"Would my mate like a ride?"

"Later. Right now I want you to walk around with me on your back." Cecil grinned evilly at Maverick.

"Horndog." Maverick chuckled as he undressed and shifted. Cecil's eyes growing huge.

"That's why he's the Alpha, largest Timber wolf born." Gunnar smiled down at Maverick's mate.

“He looks like a frickin horse.” Cecil jumped up when Maverick bowed to him. “Giddy up.”

Maverick growled but took off across the yard, Cecil yahooing as Maverick ran. The other wolves moved aside as Maverick broke through the brush, taking his mate for a run.

“Show off.” Gunnar chuckled. He stood by the kitchen door, watching the mated couples enjoy each other. What would his mate be like? Would he ever find him? A longing in Gunnar that he hadn’t felt in awhile surfaced, wishing his mate was riding his back right now.

“Soon, my brother.” Tank clapped him on the back. “Soon.”

\* \* \* \*

Storm knelt down in front of Kyoshi. They were back in their room. “Okay, now, dragonfly. Just think of your human form.” He stepped back, giving his mate room.

After a moment, Kyoshi appeared, stumbling forward. Storm caught him as he laughed. “Takes some getting used to.”

“I can’t believe that happened.” Kyoshi held his head. “I feel a little disoriented.” Storm walked his mate over to the bed. “My mother never mentioned my father, never mentioned he was a shifter.”

“Maybe she didn’t know.” Storm brushed his hands through his mate’s hair. “A tiger.”

Kyoshi giggled. “A cat and a dog.”

“Purr for me.” Storm climbed onto their bed, laying down next his mate.

“I’ll try.” Kyoshi’s first attempt sounded as though he were gurgling water. He laughed and tried again, a slight purr coming out. “I’ll need to practice.”

“I’m patient.” Storm pulled his mate into his arms, kissing him down his jaw and neck.

Kyoshi purred.

**THE END**

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lynn Hagen loves writing about the somewhat flawed, but lovable. She also loves a hero who can see past all the rough edges to find the shining diamond of a beautiful heart.

You can find her on any given day curled up with her laptop and a cup of hot java, letting the next set of characters tell their story.

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