The Only Constant is Change

by shaysdragon

Summary

It's Haruhi, Kaoru, and Hikaru's final year at Ouran. Dynamics are changing and evolving... What will happen to the Host Club Members?

Author's Note: This story takes place about 8 months after the events in A Faire Shot at Mythology. It can be read as a stand alone, but it references events and items from that piece as well. If you are reading my work for the 1st time, I would humbly suggest reading my other stories The Game and A Faire Shot at Mythology before reading this to completely understand some of the relationship dynamics that I use. I promise that if you like this style of writing you will like those too. =)

Disclaimer: I don't own operate or have anything to do with the creators, publishers or distributors of Ouran High School Host Club. All OC's are my own. This is a work of fiction based on existing characters and my own fantasy.
Haruhi sat on a soft suede couch and stared out the window of the coffee shop, a workshop brochure forgotten on her lap. Her laptop was open on the small table in front of her next to an untouched latte, two soy half-caf double shot espressos, a fragrant white tea, an extra-sweetened mocha with a couple of extra shots of vanilla, and a large black coffee with just a drop of cream. It still felt a bit odd to her to be meeting someplace other than Music Room #3, but since the Host Club activities had officially ceased this year it made more sense to meet someplace off campus, where all of the group could be comfortable talking or studying. Once Haruhi suggested this quiet and secluded little coffee shop about a half-mile from both the high school and University, everyone agreed it was perfect.

The boys will be here soon and it will be great to see everyone. It’s the last of the winter midterms for Kaoru, Hikaru and I and the end of the winter semester for Kyouya, Hani, and Mori. The only one missing is Tamaki, but since he is going to school in France this year, that can’t be helped. Once everyone gets here, I will place a video call to him. The last time we talked he seemed to be excited and kept talking about a ‘surprise’ for all of us.

The soft jingle of bells announced the arrival of the Hitachiin twins Kaoru and Hikaru. Both had cell phones plastered to their ears, though Haruhi could gather from their heated conversation that they were both talking to their mom. Neither looked happy, though Kaoru appeared to be the most flustered. It’s so hard to believe that I have known them for almost 3 years. It’s funny when I think of how they have gone from being my tormentors in those long ago days to being my best friends. Though since Hikaru and I started dating 8 months ago, he torments me in a different kind of way. Snapping their phones shut with a grumble, they flopped down on the couch on either side of Haruhi and each picked up one of the soy espressos with one hand while wrapping the other around her. Kaoru leaned in and kissed her softly on the cheek and laid his head on her shoulder. Hikaru pulled her closer to him and solidly claimed her lips, some of his frustration leaking into the kiss. I wonder what has them both so bothered.

“So before the others get here, are you going to tell me what has you both so upset?” Haruhi asked.

“Mom.” The twins said in unison.

“Ok. I need more clarification than that. Is something going wrong with her Winter Collection? Is Renge driving her crazy yet?” It still amazed Haruhi that Kaoru and Hikaru’s mom had taken Renge as her personal assistant. Renge – the self-proclaimed Manager of the Host Club, had a flair for cosplay, high powered machines, and dramatic entrances. I guess it makes sense with the Hitachiin legacy for fashion and cutting edge design, but having to work with her high strung energy on a daily basis would wear me out in no time flat.

“It is the Winter line. Since we have been helping her with it as part of our 3rd year project, she is demanding that we come and help her with it over the winter break. Or rather, since it’s more about the design aspect, she wants Kaoru to fly over to Paris and help her get ready for Winter Fashion Week.” Hikaru answered her. "He will be gone for almost 2 weeks. Since my accessories line is complete, she doesn’t really need me. It’s just… we have never been apart for more than a couple of days. It’s going to be really weird.”

“And I really can’t get out of it,” Kaoru added, “though a part of me wishes I could. I know that the three of us had plans to spend most of our break together… at least the time that you aren’t spending with Kyouuya, that is. I know you and Hikaru can still do all the fun things, but I am going to miss our last winter break as High School students.” Out of habit, Kaoru flicked a glance at his brother,
but the mention of Kyouna’s name didn’t register even the slightest twinge of jealousy. I guess he really is ok with Kyouna dating Haruhi too. I just know he wishes that Kyouna had a bit more interest in him. Aside from that one night before last year’s faire, they have dated her separately and been exceedingly cautious of treading on the other’s toes. It would be a fun dance to watch if I know my brother didn’t want more out of it.

“Oh I am so sorry Kaoru! We are going to miss you so much. But I wouldn’t worry too much. Tamaki made me promise to start a video call once everyone gets here, because he has a ‘Plan’. I think I know what he is plotting so there may be a very good chance that we will be able to spend a good portion of our break still together. Please smile, my friend.”

“Only for you my sweet,” Kaoru teased.

“Sweets!! Who said sweets?? Is it cake?” A high-pitched voice squealed over the back of the couch as Hani bounced over the edge and into Haruhi’s lap, feet narrowly missing Kaoru’s head. Laughter burst out of four mouths as the unflappable voice of Mori soon followed.

“One way or another, I will have you eating sweets. Sweets!!”

“Who said sweets?!? Is it cake?” A high-pitched voice squealed over the back of the couch as Hani bounced over the edge and into Haruhi’s lap, feet narrowly missing Kaoru’s head. Laughter burst out of four mouths as the unflappable voice of Mori soon followed.

“Like you need more sweets.”

“Wow. Hani!! I know it’s been a couple of months since I last saw you, but when did you get to be taller than me?” Haruhi asked her friend in a stunned voice.

“For whatever reason, I finally hit a growth spurt. I will never be as tall as Takashi, but that’s ok.” Hani replied as he climbed off her lap, and leaned in to give her a proper hug. The light glinted off the charm on his necklace and Haruhi smiled to see that he still wore the gift she had given him months ago. He sat back down in the chair across from her and grabbed his extra sweet vanilla mocha, sighing in bliss at the first sip. “Besides, even short, I can still take him 3 times out of 5.”

“That’s because you cheat.” Mori leaned down and pressed a kiss against Haruhi’s forehead before sitting in the chair next to Hani and grabbing his coffee. The necklace identical to the ones worn by Haruhi and Hani slipping out of his collar, “Haruhi, did you run through your drills this morning?”

“Yes, Sensei,” Haruhi replied formally, “I ran through all of the katas and the routine I will need for my next testing.”

“It’s so hot to picture you practicing martial arts,” Hikaru teased, then leaning close so only she could hear him, “think you could give me a personal demonstration wearing that silk bra and panty set I gave you?”

Choking on her latte at Hikaru’s not so subtle request, Haruhi started coughing.

“I second that request.” Kyouna’s cool voice slid over her skin like satin as he gestured for Kaoru to move and sat down next to Haruhi and picked up his tea. Sliding his hand up her back sent shivers through her as he handed her his tea. “Sip. It will calm the spasms.”

Obediently, Haruhi took a sip of his tea before handing it back to him. The coughing ceased almost immediately. Silver eyes flashing, he leaned in to claim Haruhi’s lips being very careful not to disturb the arm that Hikaru still had around her. The kiss wasn’t subtle even though it was brief, since they were still in a public location surrounded by their friends, but it still rocked Haruhi to the core. I can’t get over how much Kyouna’s kiss affects me. Every. Damn. Time.

A flash of heat and longing flitted over Hikaru’s face as Kyouna kissed Haruhi, quickly hidden
behind his usual bored mask. *It’s not that it bothers me to see them kissing, because it turns me on so fast... I just am having a hard time not telling him that I want his kisses too. I have no idea how he will react. I am so lucky that Haruhi knows what I am feeling, what I want more and more, and she is not only ok with the idea, but just as turned on by the thought of watching us as I am watching them. I just don’t know how to talk to Kyouya about it. I don’t know what I would do if he rejected me.*

“Are they really at it again? Will you stop kissing my darling daughter?!” Tamaki’s voice cut through the sudden silence and broke the tension into laughter as his image appeared on Haruhi’s laptop.

“So sorry daaaaaaaaddyy,” Haruhi drawled as everyone continued to laugh. “I promise to turn the webcam away next time.”

“Wait! No! I... wait. Did you just call me Daddy?” Tamaki’s sputtering made her laugh harder.

*It’s funny. The whole “Father” thing used to drive me crazy. Then we dated and it completely disappeared. I didn’t miss it, but now that we are closer as friends, when he calls me daughter to tease me, I fully intend to call him Daddy right back, just to get even. Once she got her snicker under control, she said, “If you keep insist on calling me daughter, I am going to start calling you Daddy. That should make the sweet young thing you are currently dating incredibly jealous, don’t you think?”*

“I surrender.”

“Thought you might,” Haruhi’s smile brought fresh laughter to her companions as she turned the laptop so everyone could see and be seen. “So now, my dear friend, why did you want to talk with all of us?”

“Well, after talking with you last week about that workshop you said you were interested in, I looked it up and saw there was going to be an identical one here in Paris. So then I thought— Winter Fashion Week is coming up as is the European Martial Arts Finals. What better chance to get all of my friends to visit? We can spend the Holidays at my country home. It’s been snowing, but it’s not too cold and it looks so incredibly beautiful. Everyone would have their own room. Please say yes!! Please, Please PLEASE!!!! I miss all of you so much!”

“I think that’s an awesome idea, Tama-chan,” Hani squealed.

“We can take our plane,” the twins chorused.

“Yes.” Mori answered simply.

“I actually adore the idea and since my father is going to be staying with some friends for a retreat, I would love to go,” Haruhi said.

“I have already told my father that I am going to be occupied for the next few weeks, so I am in favor,” Kyouya replied. “Though I am curious about this Workshop that you and Haruhi were talking about. This is the first I am hearing about it.”

“Oh that’s simple,” Haruhi answered, “I have decided on the focus for my law studies and there is a 3 day workshop that deals with a bunch of different topics that will help me better understand my future clients. I was going to attend the one here in Tokyo, but if there is one in Paris too, I can do it
“You have chosen a field of law and you didn’t tell me?” Hikaru turned and looked at Haruhi with a hint of hurt in his voice. “Kyouda, do you know?”

“Actually, this is the first I have heard of this too. Kaoru, do you know?”

“If I knew Hikaru would know. Hani, did she tell you?”

“Oh Haru-chan wouldn’t tell me because I can’t keep a secret! Takashi, do you know?”

“No.”

Five sets of eyes turned to glare at Haruhi.

“Ummm… well, I didn’t think it was that big of a deal actually,” Haruhi blushed. “I have been giving a lot of thought to the type of law that I want to practice and the type of clients that I want to represent, so I can feel like I am helping people that need it most. When I saw the flyer for this workshop, it clicked. My father is a transvestite. I am dating two different men at the same time. I want to represent those who are in non-traditional alternative lifestyles. Too often people living alternative lifestyles have to hide who they are because they are afraid of how the rest of the world will react to them. They are still people. They laugh. They love. They cry. It’s not fair that they are treated so differently than everyone else. This Workshop focuses on all types of alternative lifestyles – including gay/lesbian, poly or multi-partner relationships, non-traditional religions, and it even has a couple of sessions about different kink lifestyles. It just sounded incredibly interesting to me.”

Silence greeted Haruhi’s statement. Hikaru broke it first. “I understand even more why I love you.” Wrapping his arms tighter around her and pressing his forehead against hers, he went on, “I will support you in any way I can. Do you mind if I join you for the Workshop? It sounds really interesting.”

“We both will support you, any way that you need it,” Kyouda added, wrapping his arms on top of Hikaru’s. “I would like to go to this workshop too. I think it would give me a better view of the world and a chance to see it as you do, without prejudice or judgment.”

“I am totally in!” Kaoru stated.

“Me too! I wanna go!!” Hani smiled.

“Definitely.” Mori answered.

“I told you they all would be excited about it,” Tamaki said to Haruhi as the tears streamed down her cheek. “You bring out the best in all of us, this gives us a chance to see the world like you do. Now then, pack your bags tonight because I expect all of you on a plane tomorrow!!” With a final smile and wave, Tamaki signed off.

Still wrapped in both sets of arms, Haruhi smiled. My devious sneaky little friend - what else are you planning. I know you Tamaki. Getting us all together is your way of making things happen. I just hope that we are all ready for whatever it is.
At 7:30am the next morning, the Hitachiin limo pulled up outside Haruhi’s apartment. Kaoru and Hikaru bounced up to her door, while the chauffer followed more sedately in preparation of gathering her luggage. Haruhi packed normally, which for any of the Host club members meant that she was a few suitcases short. It was this little fact that the twins teased her about after she said goodbye to her father.

“Hikaru, whatever are we going to do with our common friend here? A two week vacation to Paris, of all places, and she has one suitcase,” Kaoru lamented.

“Well, she could always go naked. I am sure the rest of the club won’t mind.” Hikaru responded.

“I wouldn’t complain, but it is still the middle of winter. She might get cold.”

“That’s true. I guess it’s a good thing that we brought these other three suitcases. It is Fashion Week after all, and our favorite Doll can’t be seen out in public in anything other than a Hitachiin original. Think of what Mom would say if she saw her in an outfit from the department store,” Hikaru shuddered with award winning theatricality. “She wouldn’t be able to show her face among the other designers.”

“Her face,” Kaoru answered in a heavily melodramatic fashion, bringing his wrist up to his forehead, “Since half of what is being shown this week is our designs… We could never again go out in public! We would be forced to hide ourselves in shame!!”

“Oh. I get it. Hardy Har Har,” sarcasm dripped from her voice. “I purposely didn’t pack heavy, because I know you two would have something up your sleeve. I have given up on fighting you about my wardrobe. I know when I am beaten. Besides, I have to admit and against all of my willingness to prove otherwise, you make me look and feel beautiful. I guess there is some girl in me after all,” Haruhi grumped, crossing her arms over her chest.

“You mean we actually won the war?!?” Kaoru asked, stunned.

“Woohoo!!” Hikaru cried and with a sudden movement, picked Haruhi up, and started running to the waiting limo with her in his arms, while Haruhi’s laughter echoed down the sidewalk. “To the Victors go the Spoils!!”

Tossing her unceremoniously into the seat Hikaru and Kaoru climbed in next to her, taking their usual positions on either side of her. Tapping the window, Kaoru gave the driver instructions to pick up the rest of the hosts before raising the glass and turning back to his twin and Haruhi. “Oh by the way… Hi!” he said as he leaned over and kissed her deeply, knowing it would set off his twin.

Haruhi knew Kaoru took advantage of every opportunity that he could to tease his brother and lately she had been playing along, just so she could get a little bit back on her lover. It was a game that she and Kaoru could play only against Hikaru, and only because they both acknowledged that while they did love each other deeply, they were not “in love” with each other. It’s fun watching Hikaru’s reactions – most of the time he just laughs, sometimes he’s jealous that Kaoru is kissing me, sometimes that jealousy is because I am the one kissing Kaoru, and on some rare occasions the look is just one of raw lust. I have to admit that last look is one that sends shivers down my spine and wetness spread, because I know it means that as soon as he is able to get me alone, I am going to be pinned down and thoroughly fucked.
Hikaru knew what game his twin and Haruhi were playing, just as he also knew they only played it with him. If they ever tried to play it in front of Kyouya, it would be very bad. I watch our friend and he gets cold and distant if anyone other than me kisses Haruhi. Heck, he doesn’t even particularly like it when the others even hug her. Our Shadow King is just a tad bit possessive. I just hope that it never comes back to bite him, because I know Haruhi won’t tolerate being a possession. I am just glad that he tolerates me. As the kiss broke off, he said simply, “My turn,” and he pulled Haruhi into his arms.

At the first touch of Hikaru’s lips on her, the teasing nature of the Kaoru’s kiss was forgotten and the passion that defined Hikaru flooded through her. Lips pressing, tongues dancing together wildly, her hands caught up in his hair, while his wrapped around her and his body pressed her back into the limo’s bench seat. Time and location was forgotten as the heat raced through their bodies. Hikaru slid his hands under her shirt and started to pull it over her head.

“Ahem. As much as I would absolutely love to watch you both make love here on the limo seat, I thought you might want to know that we are pulling up to the Ootori Mansion,” Kaoru voice was droll, “It may be a bit of a surprise to him if he joins us here in the limo and you both are going at it. Then again, he may decide to join you. If so- I am totally selling tickets to Mori and Hani when we pick them up.”

Gasping for air as Kaoru’s words sunk in, Hikaru broke off the kiss and reluctantly slid his arms out from under Haruhi’s shirt. With a final kiss on her swollen lips, he turned to his twin and said with a wink, “Sorry brother, not this time. Though I will make sure to let you know if we ever manage to sneak in another threesome.”

Haruhi was still a bit dazed from the kiss, but she tried to straighten her clothing as best she could. Not that Kyouya wouldn’t know what she had been doing, he had the uncanny ability to just look at her and it felt like he knew every naughty thought or deed that she had done recently. Though I have to admit it, a good portion of those naughty deeds have been with him. Between him and Hikaru, innovative doesn’t even begin to cover their lovemaking. Gods help me if Hikaru’s wish comes true and we do find a way for the three of us to be completely together, I have a feeling that I am going to be sore in places I don’t even know exist...but such a lovely thought! And seeing Kyouya and Hikaru kiss for the first time will be amazing.

Kyouya slid into the limo, his eyes immediately going to Haruhi’s swollen lips, Hikaru’s rumpled clothing and Kaoru’s wicked grin. Without a word he leaned forward, and brushed a thumb over each of the twins mouths. An electrical current sizzled through him as he touched Hikaru’s lips. Quickly suppressing the feeling, he pulled his hands back and said calmly, “You both are wearing Haruhi’s lip gloss, while she has none left. Dare I ask?”

“We were just saying hello.” The twins chorused as Haruhi blushed a deep red.

“Considering that it’s a 20 minute drive from Haruhi’s apartment to my home, that must have been a rather long greeting,” Kyouya responded coolly. Without another word he pulled Haruhi from her seat between Hikaru and Kaoru and sat her on his lap. Wrapping his arms around her he continued, “Therefore, you won’t mind if I keep her for the 15 minute drive to Mori’s.”

“Kyouya,” Haruhi said as she pulled out of his arms and climbed off his lap, annoyed. “Kindly remember that I am not a toy to be passed around. I finally broke Hikaru and Kaoru of that. Don’t make me do that to you as well. I am a person who chooses her own actions. Hikaru is my boyfriend as much as you are and I can choose to kiss him whenever I like, if you have a problem with that then you need to decide which is more important to you my love or your jealousy. As for kissing Kaoru, it was mainly to tease Hikaru. The three of us laugh and torment each other on a regular
basis. We have since I first joined the Host Club and long before I started dating either of you. That’s not likely to change. You know that all Kaoru and I feel for each other is friendship, we just express that friendship a bit differently than everyone else. You told me yesterday that you wanted to learn to see the world how I do – without prejudice. Do you mean that or was it just pretty words you said at the time?”

Now it was Kyouya’s turn to turn a dark red. “Haru-love, I am truly sorry,” his voice uneven, “I did mean everything I said yesterday and your love is the absolute most important thing in my life. I am trying to work on my jealousy. It just flared hard when I saw that happy-dazed look you get from kissed thoroughly. I want to be the one that puts that look there. I have come to terms with Hikaru also doing that to you, but knowing Kaoru also kissed you triggered the reaction. I know the three of you are close in a way that doesn’t include me and most of the time I am ok with that. But part of me really wants a relationship as comfortable as the one between the three of you, and it bothers me that I don’t have one. Will you please be patient with me as I work it out? I need you to call me on it but I also really need you to forgive me when I do it.”

“Of course Kyo-love,” Haruhi smiled, “I am just really glad you are trying. Now shall we start this morning over?” Breathing the word “Hello” she sat back down on the seat next to him and wrapped her arms around him. He buried his face in her neck, breathing in the soft scent of her skin and shampoo. They stayed like that for a few moments, before he lifted his head and caught her lips. Normally his kisses were possessive and full of a cool fire, this time they contained confusion, vulnerability, and burned with need to be with her. Breaking the kiss slowly and gently, Haruhi slid back into his lap and wrapped his arms back around her. “Feel better?”

“Much. Hikaru, Kaoru, I apologize for acting like the old Shadow King. Will you please forgive me?”

“Of course we will. We love you too.”

“At least we love the person you are becoming. But don’t forget that you have a deep comfortable friendship with someone. Tamaki is your best friend and he always has been. I would be willing to bet that there are things that you have discussed with him, moments of vulnerability on both your parts that we don’t know about. Remember that,” Kaoru said seriously, “You already have access to everything you could want, you just need to acknowledge that you want it, and be willing to let it into your life. It may shake things up a bit, but you will be a better person for it.”

Kyouya was surprised to hear such a deep thought coming out of the normally vain and slightly sarcastic twin. He’s right though. Do I even know what I want? Can I admit it to myself and damn the consequences if my father found out? What if I am rejected? How will I survive?

After Kaoru’s words, the limo remained silent until they arrived at Mori’s home, everyone lost in their own thoughts. Hani had already made arrangements to be there, so it wasn’t long before the last two hosts joined the group in the back of the limo. Immediately on entering they felt the silence and wondered what had happened to make the start of a winter vacation, which should have had everyone bouncing, to something intense and almost broody.

“Ok. What’s going on,” Mori’s deep voice shattered the silence, shocking everyone into looking at him.

“It’s really tense in here,” Hani added. “We are going on vacation, you all should be happy!! I know. I brought cake!!” Reaching into his bag, he pulled out a small pink box which caused all of the others to laugh, finally breaking the tension.

“That’s better!” he said and slid the cake back into his bag for later.
“We just needed to set a foundation for the next few weeks,” Haruhi replied to Mori’s question, “It was a bit tense, but it had to happen eventually and now that it has I think we are all ready for this trip. I know I am really looking forward to it. I have never been to Paris.”

With that admission all the boys started suggesting things that they could all do or go see. The rest of the ride to the airport was completed in casual conversation that grew more excited as they got closer to their destination. Once at the Airport, they bypassed most of the lines on the way to the terminal for private planes. Within 30 minutes they were all seated comfortably on the Hitachiin private plane.

*Just a few more hours and we will be arriving in Paris.* Haruhi thought as she leaned back into the soft leather seat. *After the limo ride this morning the next few weeks should be interesting. I wonder how everything is going to play out. Two things are for certain, though. One- It will be really nice to see Tamaki again. Two – Nothing we could plan will even come close to what his ideas are for us.*

“Hey Haru-love,” Hikaru leaned over and whispered suggestively, “want to join me in the mile high club?”

Haruhi laughed out loud at the outrageous suggestion as Hikaru knew she would. *Maybe I should be worrying less about what Tamaki has planned and more about what my boyfriends are planning. I have a feeling that is going to be more eventful.*
Kyouya stared out the window of the plane as it started its final approach into Paris. He had held Haruhi’s hand through most of the flight but had said little, preferring to idly listen to her and Hikaru’s conversation while his mind was occupied with deeper thoughts. This morning was the first time in a relationship where I felt like I had the rug pulled out from under me. Having Haruhi question my love and call me on my jealousy hurt more than I could ever have imagined. Am I turning into my father? Have I really gotten so used to the idea of manipulating people to get what I want that I don’t even think twice that the object of my desire might have a different plan? I do know I don’t want to ever be like him. He may be the patriarch and a successful businessman, but I don’t think he has ever really felt joy. Satisfaction at a business conquest, maybe… but a pure moment of happiness that has nothing to do with getting what you want but giving someone else their heart’s desire, I sincerely doubt it. Once upon a time, I would have believed that it was always better to get what I wanted, the consequences of the actions that brought about the result be damned. When I met Haruhi that slowly started to change, I saw her getting genuine satisfaction from helping others without expectation of a reward, even as situations were thrust upon her that she didn’t like. The ironic thing is, without even trying she gained something that so many others would kill for – the honest friendship and love of the heirs of several prominent families. All of the Hosts would fight, bleed, go bankrupt, or die for her if they had to, because we know she will do the same for us without even thinking twice. She is so fierce it lets us be vulnerable. She hasn’t had to deal with all the “trappings” of wealth, so she calls it as she sees it without playing the political or social games. She just loves unconditionally, even when it’s unconventional.

Without thinking, Kyouya tightened his grip on Haruhi’s hand. Sensing, he was sorting through something in his head and didn’t really want conversation, Haruhi just squeezed back, leaned over and kissed him on the cheek, before turning back to her conversation with Hikaru.

Unconventional. It’s a word that I seem to be thinking about more and more. My relationship with Haruhi is unconventional since she is also dating Hikaru. So is her relationship with Kaoru, and gods know Hikaru’s relationship with his brother is really unconventional. Even Haruhi’s relationship with Tamaki is unconventional in that when they broke up, they actually became closer than when they were dating. I think the closest thing to a conventional relationship she has is with Mori and Honey as her martial arts instructors, but even that is up for debate because the minute they leave the practice area, all bets are off and the teasing that they do to each other is not in any way a teacher/student dynamic. It shouldn’t surprise me on her choice for a law degree and her future clientele – it’s completely unconventional and yet so perfectly right for her. I just want to be there next to her to watch it happen. I want to do everything in my power to make it happen for her. Kaoru told me this morning that I already have everything I could want, I just need to acknowledge that I want it and be willing to let it into my life regardless of the way it appears to others. He is right. I acknowledge that I am deeply, completely, and thoroughly in love, lust, and fascination with Haruhi Fujioka. I want her in my life in any way I can – even when she is telling me things I don’t want to hear. I acknowledge that I have a true friendship in Tamaki Suoh. It may have started as a requirement from my father to ingratiate myself with the Suoh heir, but his incredibly open heart and honest ability to see the beautiful in everyone he meets, laid the foundation for who I want to be, even though I was far too wrapped up in myself to see it. He listened to me and was there for me without question whenever I needed it. In turn, I was willing to listen when he needed to talk about his frustration with his grandmother and to gently curb his wilder impulses before things got out of hand. That’s what real friends do. I acknowledge that with Mori and Honey, their dedication to each other and the way they support each other unconsciously is something that I would really love to learn. They are the perfect yin and yang to each other. Bright and Bubbly. Cool and Calm. Without
one, the other is lost. I acknowledge that Kaoru is not dismissible. He has a different perspective on life and he loves as fiercely as Haruhi. I would really like to become his friend. No it’s more than that. I really want to be able to treat him like a brother. Maybe not the same type of brother relationship he has with Hikaru, and definitely not the cool relationship I have with my own brothers, but a relationship like I see regular children have when I walk in the park with Haruhi. They laugh and play together. They squabble, fight, and in 15 minutes are back to sharing an ice-cream. I know my father would completely scoff at the idea, but I would really like a younger brother. By thinking of Kaoru first, Kyouya’s thought naturally lead into thinking about Hikaru.

**Hikaru. Gods. Now there is someone that I try my best to not think about other than in the abstract. Why do I fight it? I acknowledge that I am attracted to Hikaru. I am not in love with him the same way that I am with Haruhi, but I can see myself getting there if I am willing to take the risk. I want the three of us to share a bed, maybe even share our lives sometime in the future. I want to be accepted completely for who I am even if it is only by a few people. Because, I acknowledge, there are only a few people that I truly respect enough to let myself be vulnerable and that’s ok. I acknowledge that I am worthy of the love and acceptance of my friends not because I am an Ootori, but because to them I am simply Kyouya.**

A warmth spread throughout Kyouya’s body and before he knew it he was smiling. He felt lighter in an odd way and for the first time he truly understood what Kaoru had been telling him earlier. He wanted to laugh to the sky, be silly, be playful, be mischievous, to be everything that he had been so long denied to him under the restriction of “good breeding and proper behavior”.

Haruhi saw the smile grow across Kyouya’s face and permitted herself a small smile, while inwardly dancing in joy. *I am not sure what exactly he was thinking, but whatever it was, I thank all the gods that it happened. For the 1st time since I have known him, he looks completely and genuinely happy. I know I will do everything in my power to make sure that he feels it more often. Whatever it takes, he is worth it.*

“We have landed. Are you guys going to get off the plane?” Hikaru teased as first Haruhi and then Kyouya woke from their thoughts. Adopting a tour guide tone he added. “Welcome to Paris - The City of Lust and Love. I hope you enjoy your stay.”

“Oh, I fully intend to do so.” Wrapping one arm around Haruhi’s waist and draping the other across Hikaru’s shoulders, Kyouya walked toward the plane’s staircase. The tone of his voice was something that Hikaru had never heard before and it caused a tightening in his stomach.

*Something just changed in the Shadow King. Haruhi said she thought the next two weeks would be interesting. I didn’t really believe her until now. Whatever it is, I think it is going to shake up the way the relationship between the three of us works. Am I ready for that? Hell yes.*
Surprises of the Most Interesting Kind

Haruhi, Kyouya, and Hikaru descended the plane’s staircase and walked into a volley of snowballs. Laughing they ducked and dodged as best they could but several hit their mark, leaving them covered in a fine dusting of snow.

“Serves you three right,” Hani teased, “What took the three of you so long? I know you didn’t have time to play hide the sausage, but really… WE ARE IN PARIS!! Get your butts out here and enjoy it!”

“It was my fault,” Kyouya replied, still smiling as he helped Hikaru brush the snow off of Haruhi, “I was lost in my thoughts. I didn’t even realize the plane had landed, actually.”

“Now those must have been some really interesting thoughts,” Tamaki said, “You will have to tell me about them, but first there is something I have to do.” Without warning he dashed between Kyouya and Hikaru and grabbed Haruhi in a giant hug. Whirling her around in circles, he kissed his dear friend thoroughly. After a minute or so, he broke the kiss and set her down to let both of them catch their breaths. The smile on both of their faces showed their deep friendship, even as they drew in deep breaths of the cold crisp air, but eventually, Tamaki’s curiosity at Hikaru and Kyouya’s reactions overpowered his enthusiasm at seeing her for the first time in several months. Turning to look at them, he was expecting to see the laughter on Hikaru’s face and the jealousy on Kyouya’s. It was rather a surprise then, when it was Kyouya’s eyes which were dancing with laughter while Hikaru was grumbling to his twin about Tamaki’s enthusiasm.

Kyouya seeing Tamaki’s startled look walked leisurely over to them. Wearing a devilish smile, he slipped an arm around Haruhi, leaned in, and planted a kiss squarely on Tamaki’s lips. Pulling back, he saw Haruhi laughing at the dumbstruck expression on Tamaki’s face. Gently he pulled her out of Tamaki’s slack arms and walked back to the others grinning widely at the shocked expressions on the faces of the four other members of the Host Club.

“You don’t look surprised I kissed Tamaki,” Kyouya said to Haruhi.

“Oh I was and I wasn’t,” She replied. “Something happened in your thoughts during the flight that made you happier and when I saw that look of mischief on your face as you walked towards us, I just knew you had something outrageous planned even if I didn’t know exactly what.”

“If I didn’t already love you so much, your insight into my soul would scare me. Not many others can read me.”

“I can only read you because you let me, Kyo-love. Before you kissed me for the 1st time, you were like Calculus – completely confusing and impossibly difficult to understand.” Haruhi teased, knowing Kyouya would appreciate the reference to the many hours he spent trying to tutor her on her worst subject. “I never thought I would get it.”

“Math… really? You compare my love to math?” Kyouya responded just as teasingly, before kissing her softly on the cheek and turning to the others. With a smirk at the still stunned expressions of the others he asked, “What?!? Can’t I greet an old friend too?”
Laughter from everyone followed his comment and all the others turned toward Tamaki.
“Apparently I have missed more than I thought by going to school here this year. I guess I can’t
make Kyouya jealous anymore,” he pouted melodramatically, "Fine. Take away all my fun. I can
handle it. Waaaaah!"

This time it was Tamaki’s turn to get pelted by snowballs.

“Ok. Ok. I give!!”

“Excuse me sirs and madam, but the Control Tower, just reminded us that there are other planes
waiting to descend and they need to clear the area,” The stiff voice of the chauffer cut into the
conversation.

“I am sorry, Barnes. Well my friends, shall we head out to the Guest House?” Tamaki apologized to
the driver as he ushered everyone toward the waiting limo. Once everyone was inside and they were
on their way he continued, “I figured tonight we could stay in tonight and catch up, because I know
tomorrow will be busy for everyone.”

“That sounds great Tama-chan,” Hani said eagerly.

“Yes,” Mori added.

“I know the Workshop doesn’t start for a couple of days, so I was hoping to go to the Louvre and
sightsee a bit.” Haruhi stated.

“I will join you, as I am sure Mori and Hani will as well,” Kyouya confirmed at the nod of two
heads.

“Unfortunately Hika and I absolutely have to go help our mom with preparations for Fashion Week
tomorrow morning, though Hika might be able to get away in the afternoon since his designs are
complete,” Kaoru poked his unusually silent twin and got no reaction, so he went on. “I got mom to
swear that if I helped her and Renge the first couple of days that she would leave me alone so I can
go to the workshop with all of you. Gods. I just realized I will have to spend two full days working
next to Renge. How am I going to keep my sanity? Hika, will you pleeeeeeease help me?”

Hikaru was still slightly stunned. He kept replaying the scene between Tamaki, Kyouya, and Haruhi
over and over in his mind. Did Kyouya really just kiss Tamaki in front of all of us and actually out in
public? Has he done that before and I just never knew? I thought he was completely straight. What
does it mean? Do I actually have a chance? What do I do? I need to talk to Kaoru and Haruhi about
it. They will know what to do.

“Apparently it’s my day to lose both of my boyfriends to deep thought.” Haruhi’s dry comment
finally broke through Hikaru’s reverie, as he realized that a question had been asked and he
completely missed it. I need to focus. I will make sure to talk to them tonight.

“Sorry. What?”

“I said will you please help me with Renge,” his brother pouted. “She drives me crazy. They are my
designs and she keeps trying to ‘improve’ them. We need to present a united brotherly front against
her meddling.”
Shaking off the last of his uncomfortable thoughts and slipping back into the familiar role of twin/protector, Hikaru slipped his right arm around Kaoru’s waist, while cupping Kaoru’s cheek with his left. “Of course I will help you. She can’t take down the Fashion Kings!!” He leaned forward and placed a soft kiss on Kaoru’s lips before sitting back and resting his head on Kaoru’s shoulder.

“Oh Look! We are here!” Tamaki announced excitedly. “The big house is down the main road. It’s where I live, though I will actually be joining you all at the Guest House while you are here. I will give you a tour of it if you want, but it’s not much different than the houses that all of you except Haruhi live in now – big, cold, and designed to show off your wealth. I am excited about the Guest House though. I got permission as part of my University work to redesign the interior and the project just finished last week.”

“I thought you were going to study business,” Hani remarked.

“Or follow your father as Chairman of Ouran,” Mori seconded.

“I am still majoring in business, but after taking a class over the summer, I found a passion for architecture. So I decided that I would do a double major in it as well. When I showed the plans I drew up for a project to my grandmother, for the first time ever, she was impressed. She actually let me do it. It was so much fun.”

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The limo pulled up in front of a beautiful French-Normandy style home, just as the sun was starting to set. The orange red glow bounced off the pristine snow covered ground and bathed the world in color as the hosts left the vehicle.

Gasping at the breathtaking sight, Haruhi paused a moment to stare at the beauty around her. She noticed that all of the others were doing the same, while Tamaki just stood there with an enormous grin.

“It’s like I have suddenly slipped into a fairy tale. It’s just incredible.” Haruhi breathed.

“I can’t wait until you see inside.” Tamaki answered. “I will give everyone a tour before showing you your rooms. I planned for dinner to be ready about an hour after we arrived, since I know you are probably hungry. Your luggage has been taken up to your rooms and put away. While there will be maids and cooks here during the day, there aren’t any servants quarters in the Guest House, so we will be on our own after dinner until breakfast. If we need something unusual, we can always call and have someone come over, but I thought it would be nice to have a bit of privacy for a change.”

“I think that is one of your best ideas yet Tamaki,” Kyouya said.

“Agreed.” Mori added in his usual succinct fashion.

“Let’s go inside Tama-chan. I want to see the rest!!” Hani’s eager voice made everyone walk toward the door. Once inside they all stopped again, jaws dropping at the elegant beauty. The entrance hall was white marble flecked with veins of gold, antique low-boys held beautiful vases of fresh flowers, while an enormous crystal chandelier hung from the ceiling. Off to the left a grand staircase, covered in a rich deep blue carpet, lead to the second floor. Arched double doorways of rich mahogany were open to the left and the right.

“OK. We are never going to get anywhere if you all keep staring,” Tamaki laughed at his friends.
“Color us seriously impressed Tamaki, and we haven’t even gotten far,” Kaoru turned to his friend.

“I think you may have just matched us in the design aspect,” Hikaru added respect coloring his tone, “We do fashion design, you do the architectural design, and we could make a fortune on the photo shoots.”

“I may take you up on that actually.”

“You better.” Two voices chorused. “We want to see Haruhi coming down that staircase in one of our designs.”

Haruhi blushed at the offhand way the twins included her without even thinking about it. I can see that Kyouya, and oddly enough Mori and Hani agree though. I have to admit, it would be fun to be a fairy tale princess for a night.

“Why don’t you continue to dazzle us Tamaki,” Kyouya joked.

“All right I will,” Tamaki answered, opening the double doors to his left and stepping into a comfortable modern room done in warm tones of gold and sienna. The room ran three quarters the length of the side of the house. It had a large stone fireplace along one wall, several soft leather couches, and chairs grouped in clusters. Low slung tables were centered in each cluster. The walls were lined with bookshelves, except for one section that had an enormous flat screen TV hanging from the wall. “This is the Library. I figure this will probably be where we hang out and relax. I designed it to be comfortable but modern. There are two bathrooms down the hall, and a door to the back patio.”

Walking through the room and down the hall, Tamaki pointed out the bathrooms. Turning he walked through another set of double doors which opened into a room that was elaborately styled in traditional French Renaissance. It ran almost the length of the house and one wall was almost completely windows and French doors that led to the back patio. There wasn’t as much furniture in this room, but there was a small raised platform in a corner. “This is the Ballroom or Event room. I am toying with the idea of renting out the room for weddings and such. It’s hard to see now that it’s dark, but the grounds outside the Guest House are impeccably kept up by the gardener from the main house. There is a walking path that twists through a rose garden and small hedge maze with a fountain at the center.” The pride that Tamaki felt for his design was starting to show through in the eager way that he talked about each room. “That white door leads to a large commercial kitchen that can be used to prepare food for banquets. We can walk through it quickly so we know where to find midnight snacks and stuff, but I promised the cooks, that we wouldn’t interrupt their preparations for dinner.”

Even though they passed through quickly, Haruhi felt just a teensy jab of wistfulness at the well organized and well-stocked kitchen. It would be so nice to have a kitchen like this. I would really enjoy cooking if I did.

Tamaki led them through the door from the kitchen into a dining room. There was a long traditional table that could easily seat sixteen and a sideboard along one wall. A set of double doors on the other wall led back into the entry hall. He then led them back out into the entry hall and up the staircase to the second floor.

“I am going to skip the second floor for a moment, because that is where the bedrooms are. I figure we will want to wash up before dinner and it would make more sense to end there,” Tamaki led them around the hallway to the grand staircase leading to the third floor, bypassing several doors. “You can see that all the bedrooms look out on the sides and back of the house. The front section is designed to let all the light from the windows into the house.”
Once at the top of the stairs, Tamaki turned to the right and opened up the double doors. “This is the dojo / workout room. I thought Mori and Hani would like to use it while we are all here.”

“Thank you Tama-chan.”

Continuing down the hall to back of the house, a wall of glass opened into a warm tropical Conservatory. “I know it’s a little over the top,” Tamaki said, “But I once took a vacation in Hawaii and I couldn’t get out of my mind the beautiful colors, amazing scents, and lush greenery of the islands. So I decided to make a place of my own that reminded me of it that I could go to whenever I wanted. You can see there are lots of chairs and places to relax. It’s actually kind of fun to feel like you are in the tropics and see the snow falling on the other side of the glass. There is a door off to the right that leads onto a small outdoor patio that also overlooks the grounds.”

Leading the Hosts out of the Conservatory, Tamaki led them around the corner to the last big room on the floor. With a flourish and the cryptic words “Because I had to”, he flung open the doors. All of the hosts laughed to see a copy of the Ouran Music Room #3, only in this version there actually was a large grand piano occupying one side of the room. “So much of my happiness was tied to this room and the people that it represented that I just couldn’t let it go. I knew I had to include it in my design.”

“It’s perfect.” Haruhi said then made a big show of looking around. To Kyouya’s raised eyebrow and look of curiosity she replied, “I am looking to make sure there are no incredibly valuable vases around. I would hate to break one,” and she dissolved into a fit of giggles that soon had everyone joining her.

“I knew I forgot something,” Tamaki teased. *I am so relieved that everyone seems so impressed with the design. I was worried that it was boring or no one would be interested. I should have trusted my friends.*

“Ok, my friends, now to the very last and most important part of your tour – the bedrooms.” Leading them back down the stairs, Tamaki opened the 1st set of doors on his left. “Mori, this will be your room. All the rooms are pretty much identical. They all have a sunken area with a couch and fireplace, a large canopy bed, and a walk-in closet. Every two rooms share a bathroom and there are French doors that connect all of the rooms. The idea is the furniture could be removed and an Art Installation could be set up. Having the French doors between the rooms allows people to wander freely from room to room, but still allows privacy if needed. You may have noticed that I like to combine traditional styles with modern ones. That theme also follows here. The rooms are decorated in traditional Renaissance style, while the bathrooms are modern granite with separate showers and large Jacuzzi tubs on a dais looking out the bay window.”

“Thank you, Tamaki,” Mori said as he entered his room and looked around before joining the others.

“The room nest to Mori’s naturally is Hani’s and they share a bathroom,” Tamaki continued. “Hani, since part of your room is on the back section of the house; your room also shares a balcony with the room next to it, which is actually the one that I will be using for the next couple of weeks.”

“Thanks, Tama-chan,” Hani replied as he mimicked Mori’s motion of stepping into the room to look at it quickly before joining the others back in the hallway.

“My room shares a bathroom with the one next to it which is Kaoru and Hikaru’s room. I figured you two wouldn’t want to be separated.”

“Our thanks,” Kaoru said honestly.
“So if I have the design idea correct that means that our room shares a balcony, with the room next to it,” Hikaru looked to Tamaki for confirmation.

“Exactly. The next room is Haruhi’s.” He led the way around the corner to her door.

“Which means my room shares a bathroom with Haruhi’s and is directly across from Mori’s,” Kyouya stated. “I have to give you credit Tamaki, the design of the house is amazing and you know I don’t say that lightly. It is large, but small enough to still be intimate, and you have functional rooms for a variety of interests. Plus you are right in that it could very easily be turned into a venue for weddings, events, or photo shoots. I think business and architecture fits you perfectly. Let me know if I can help in any way.”

“Us too!!”

“Mm-hmm.”

“I would love to help out any way I can.”

“We know lots of people who would love to use this location for fashion shoots.”

“Or Movies.”

Tears glistened in Tamaki’s eyes at the comments of his friends. *(I have missed all of them so much. I don’t know what I will do when it comes time for them to go again. But I won’t worry about it until then.)* Glancing at his watch, he turned to his friends. “It looks like it’s time for dinner, should we all go down?”

“Yes. Let’s. I am hungry,” Haruhi said as she linked arms with Kyouya and Tamaki and led the way back down the stairs.

“You’re always hungry,” Hikaru and Kaoru said in unison as they put an arm around each other’s waist and followed the three.

“And after dinner- DESSERT!!!” Hani joked and he and Mori made their way down the staircase after the others.

Chapter End Notes

The inspiration for the outside of the Guest house can be found here: http://www.architecturaldigest.com/AD100/2010/mariette_gomez/gomez_slideshow_122007#slide=1

The inside architecture I made up as I was imagining what my dream house would look like if I had access to the same money that Tamaki does. =)
Tamaki lead the host club in to the dining room. Turning he said, "I know it’s been a long day for everyone, so I kept dinner pretty simple. There is lobster bisque, some fresh baked bread, cheese, fruit, and a berry tart for dessert. I hope you don’t mind. I promise to make it up to you later this week."

“I think that sounds perfect Tama.” Haruhi smiled up at the man on her left, while sitting down into the chair that Kyouya pulled out for her.

Since the table was so large, the group decided to just sit casually at one end, so they could enjoy easy conversation while they ate. Kyouya and Tamaki sat on either side of her, Hani sat at the end, while Mori, Kaoru and Hikaru sat across from her. A maid served them all a bowl of soup before setting the tureen on the table. The bread, fruit and cheese plate were set in the middle of the table so everyone had easy access. Finally she filled their wine and water glasses before speaking, “Master Suoh, if that is everything you need, the staff and I will be leaving for the night. We will be back before breakfast tomorrow morning.”

“Thank you Marion, that sounds perfect. Thank Chef Pierre for the wonderful dinner for me and please make sure that you and the kitchen staff take some home for your families.”

“Thank you Master, we will do so.” She turned and gracefully left the room.

“Tama, I really like the fact that you know the names of your staff and you genuinely seem to care about them.” Haruhi turned to her friend who was slowly blushing at her comment.

“Self-preservation I guess. They are wonderful people and in the last year with all of the challenges of dealing with my grandmother, they have helped me, listened to me, and offered advice when I needed it. If my grandmother ever decides to turn them out, I am going to make sure they come and work for me. That’s why it’s so important to me to get the Guest House up and running as a viable event location.”

“I think that is a noble sentiment my friend,” Mori said quietly.

“We can do it all together Tama-chan!” Hani enthused.

Hikaru and Kaoru leaned their heads together and started whispering to each other intensely. After a minute of the rapid twinspeak only they could understand, they turned to Tamaki.

“We have a plan.”

Tamaki blinked before asking for more clarification. “What do you mean that you have a plan?”

“Today is Tuesday. We are prepping for Fashion Week tomorrow and Thursday. We have the Workshop on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday morning. The Fashion Week Event kicks off on Sunday with a Runway Show and a Press Event. The rest of the week is spent with different shows by designers, but there is always one final Event held on Saturday Night to officially close the Week,” Kaoru answered.

“That event is a Grand Ball. Each year one of the designers hosts it. This year it is Hitachiin Design
Group, Inc. Everything is all ready to go - the band, the caterers, the lighting and all the photographers. We just are going to switch the venue. Instead of being held at the convention center, we are going to have it here,” Hikaru finished smiling at the Host club King, “It will instantly label the Suoh Guest House, as the hottest new location for anything Fashion.”

Tamaki was stunned. “But, but what about the invitations don’t they already say someplace else?”

“Technically yes,” Kaoru replied, “but since the location of the Ball isn’t announced until the Press Event on Sunday, we have a couple of days to have new ones made up.”

“I believe we have a Ootori-affiliated print company here in France, I can have the reprints completely by Friday.” Kyoya added.

“That’s perfect.” Hikaru smiled at Kyoya, feeling a jolt as Kyoya smiled back.

“Yay! This is going to be so much fun!!” Hani bounced in his chair.

“Mmm-hmm,” Mori gave his agreement.

“I am completely overwhelmed my friends, Are..” Tamaki looked up at the group with tears in his eyes. “Are you absolutely sure?”

“Absolutely.” Six voices in unequivocally in unison silenced the last of Tamaki’s protests.

The rest of dinner passed in excited conversation as all of the last minute details were worked out among the six of them. After dinner, the group decided to adjourn to the Library to relax a bit before going up to bed.

“Hika-Chan, I challenge you to a Chess Match!” The gleam in Hani’s eye as he offered the challenge was one that Hikaru couldn’t resist.

“You’re on.”

Mori turned to Haruhi, “Would you like to play?”

“Thank you but no Sensei, I will to watch the start of the games but I actually want to take a bubble bath and relax for a bit,” Haruhi responded, “but I am sure that Kyoya would love to join you in a game,” Gotcha Kyo-love! I saw the look in your eyes as soon as I said I wanted a bath. I want a few minutes to relax by myself. I have no doubt that with our rooms linked together, it’s probably the only time I will have to myself this night.

At the words “bubble bath” two sets of eyes, immediately locked on Haruhi. Hikaru was annoyed that he had already committed to a chess game with Hani. Kyoya saw the look of laughter in Haruhi’s eyes as she all but tossed him into a game with the older Host. Don’t worry love, I will get you back for that. You are mine tonight. To Mori however, he graciously said, “I would be honored. I know a game with you would be a challenge. And you know I can’t resist a challenge.”

Haruhi caught the double meaning in Kyoya’s statement to Mori meant for her and shivered slightly. Turning away, she saw the same fire and possession in Hikaru’s eyes. My room links to Hikaru’s and Kyoya’s too, maybe it won’t just be Kyoya tonight... I really hope so. Gods know I want to be between them both again so much.
“Well Kaoru, that leaves just us. Want to play a game?” Tamaki asked.

“Sure why not. I give you fair warning. If you want a really challenging game you may want to wait for Hani and Hikaru’s game to finish. I know the basics, but the strategy of it has never been my strong suit.”

“Perfect, because I am the exact same way. Kyouya tells me I am just not focused enough. I know the rules and can play a bit, but all the intense strategy bores me. I would rather just have fun.”

“Then lets do it,” Kaoru smiled, “But first I need to run upstairs. Be back in about five minutes.”

“Sure.” Tamaki sat down on the couch next to Haruhi as two sets of chess boards were pulled out and set up. Smiling she laid her head on his shoulder and watched as the opening gambits started. They are all actually well matched. I have played with all of them before. I wouldn’t want to bet money on who would win each game – Kyouya, Hika, Hani and Mori are all amazing players. I can’t win against any of them.

“I am so glad I am not playing any of them,” Tamaki echoed her thoughts, “They are all so good, I would be beaten in 4 moves. At least Kaoru and I are about evenly matched.”

“I am about at the same level as you. I can never win against any of them. So tell me honestly, are you ok with the twins having the Grand Ball here?”

“I am more than ok with it, it’s a dream come true in a way. If I can prove that I can be successful, then maybe all the negative comments my grandmothers continues to throw at me won’t hurt so much and I won’t be tied to her less than generous ‘goodwill’.”

“You are already far better than she gives you credit for Tama-love. One day I hope you will see that and find the faith in yourself that we all have for you. You are amazing even if you don’t see it.” Raising her head she kissed him softly on the cheek. “I see Kaoru is returning, so now is my chance to slip away and have just a bit of time for myself. Enjoy your game.”

“I wager you have about 20 minutes before the idea of you upstairs, wet and wearing nothing but bubbles, drives both of your men crazy and they won’t be able to concentrate on their games. Which gives you about 25 minutes to enjoy your solitude before they act,” Tamaki grinned and winked at her, “Not that I blame them. Seeing you naked and wet is lovely memory for me.”

Haruhi laughed and blushed a bit. “You aren’t too bad to look at yourself when you are naked. I hope you get to find some action yourself this week.”

“We will see,” Tamaki responded as he pulled out another chess board and started setting it up for him and Kaoru.

Haruhi walked over to the others now engrossed in their games. She lightly kissed each cheek ‘for luck’ before saying good night. As she walked by Kaoru and Tamaki, Kaoru turned to her and said, “I drew the water for your bath and set out a nightgown for you. I figured I would try to give you as much alone time as I could. I have a feeling that it won’t be much.”

“Thanks Kao-love. Tamaki pretty much said the same thing. I will appreciate every minute of it. Have fun with your game.” She kissed him lightly on the lips before walking out the door, completely unaware that six sets of eyes followed her.
Haruhi sank up to her neck in the steaming bubbles and gave a sigh of pure pleasure as her muscles started to relax. Not only had Kaoru set up the bath for her but he had also lit a few candles and music played softly in the background. Staring out the wall of windows there was just enough outside light to let her watch the falling snow while she let her mind drift. It really is so incredibly beautiful here. Tamaki doesn’t realize how amazing the work he did actually is. I am just glad that all the others do realize it and are helping him make it come true. The Guest House is going to be so sought after in the future. I wonder how many weddings will be booked here in the first year? Or photo shoots? I can imagine that with the right photographer and models, the pictures would be awesome.

In the background the music shifted from relaxing to sultry. Unconsciously following the shift in the music, Haruhi’s thoughts drifted towards the sensual as well. I wonder if once the spring comes if I could get Hikaru and Kyouya to come out here and do a photo-shoot with me. I would love to have something artistic and different that features the three of us… maybe in the rose garden. I guess it’s funny how far I have come in the last couple of years. If someone told me when I first started Ouran that two and a half years later I would be soaking in a bathtub in Paris, with my two boyfriends are downstairs playing chess with my martial arts instructors, while my best friends – one of which is my ex-boyfriend, also play a game, I would have probably checked them into a mental institution. It’s really funny to look back and realize how much all of those men have impacted my life in so many ways. I can’t imagine my life now without all of them in it some way. Granted, I want Kyoya and Hikaru in a different way than the others- my attraction to them is beyond anything I can explain rationally, but to be honest I am still attracted to Kaoru and Tamaki - which is why I enjoy kissing, teasing and laughing with them so much. I really hope that we will always be able to enjoy that comfort level and that when they both do find someone or some people that they want to spend the rest of their life with, their partners won’t be jealous of my relationship with them. I would never want to cause them grief or make them choose, but a part of me would be heartbroken if I lost them. If I am really really honest with myself, I have to admit that I am so curious about Mori and Hani. Their dedication to each other is incredible – they balance each other so well… and let’s face it from a purely physical perspective they are pretty much perfection. Every time we workout together or they come out of the showers after, I have to bite my lip a little in lust. I don’t want a relationship beyond what we have, but I am curious to know what a kiss from either of them would be like… and maybe I am just a teensy bit jealous of the person who gets to be pulled into their oh-so-strong arms and thoroughly ravished.

Haruhi smiled widely. But only a teensy bit jealous because when Kyoya and Hikaru decide to ravish me, I forget about anyone but them. I am glad that they decided to go to this workshop with me. I am hoping that it will start a discussion between us, because I want more. I love spending time with each of them separately, but I want more time together with the three of us. I know Hikaru and I still have half a year left at Ouran, but when we go to the University, I want to live with both of them. I want to come home to Kyoya sitting at the table typing away on his laptop while Hikaru is sprawled out on the couch sketching a design. I want to spend our nights tangled up together. I want their passion, their lust, their minds, and their bodies. I want to have them hold me when I am frustrated and I want to do the same for them when they need it. I want to walk out into the world and say ‘Look at me! I am a simple girl but I found the love of two incredible men and I won’t let anything or anyone tear us apart.

Slowly Haruhi realized her bath water was cooling, while her libido was rising. I want them. Now. They didn’t come in the bathroom while I was naked. I wonder how they would react if I walked into each of their rooms right now and demanded that they both come to me, make love to me.

She dried off and slipped into the short silk night gown that Kaoru had left out for her. Walking over
to door leading to her room, she opened it. A big smile grew on her face as she realized what was waiting for her. Eyes flashing with heat, she walked toward her bed…

Tamaki’s prediction was off by about five minutes. As he and Kaoru chatted amicably during their game, he kept glancing over at both Hikaru and Kyouya. Both Hani and Mori were watching their opponents closely as well. Ten minutes into the game it was obvious that neither Kyouya’s nor Hikaru’s mind was actually on the game in front of them. Within fifteen minutes both Hani and Mori had soundly beaten them—which lead to their teasing Kyouya and Hikaru mercilessly.

“Hika-chan, I thought you were supposed to be good at this… and Kyouya! What kind of Shadow King are you if you can’t play a simple game of chess. Are you that easily distracted by a girl? Can we wager on the game next time? I could make a fortune from beating you!” Hani laughed at them.

“Distractions cost you. Should I start a tab for you Kyouya?” Even Mori couldn’t resist teasing the Shadow King a bit, since the opportunity happened so rarely.

“I will claim a rematch on another day.” Kyouya said – annoyed at the teasing.

“Ditto. Just it will be on a day that Haruhi is here to referee. I want her to watch me wipe the floor with you. It wasn’t fair to beat you without her here to see it,” Hikaru blustered.

Laughing Hani said, “Just go to her boys. We can see that you want to. We just wanted to make sure she had a little time to herself, since you both have been hovering since the limo this morning. We can discuss a rematch later.” Turning to his cousin, “Mori, would you like to play a real game of chess?”

“Yes.”

Hani set up the game next to Tamaki and Koarú’s. The four of them played companionably for the next hour. Finally Mori made a move that Hani didn’t expect and check-mated his king. Looking up at the clock on the wall and yawning, he realized that it was after midnight. “Ok guys, I am tired so I am going to bed. I will see you all in the morning.”

“I will go to bed as well. Good Night.” With a nod, Mori followed Hani up the stairs.

“What about you Kaoru? You have had a long day as well. Did you want to go to bed as well?” Tamaki asked his chess partner.

Kaoru bit his lip and debated telling Tamaki the truth. Finally trusting in his friend, he admitted something that he normally never would. “I am tired, but after watching Kyouya and Hikaru, knowing Haruhi was up there naked in the bath, and imagining what is happening up there, I am actually horny as hell… but I know that I am going to be going up to an empty bed. It sucks. I really hate sleeping alone. Maybe I should just stay down here and put on a movie. Something to distract me, I don’t know. It’s silly to be jealous because I am alone tonight isn’t it. I want them to be happy – all of them. It’s just usually that after Hikaru and Haruhi make love, she cuddles with both of us. The only night that I spent alone was that one night before the Faire because that was the first night Kyouya and Hikaru both realized they needed Haruhi. I spent the night awake in a guest room staring at the TV and trying not to picture them, because part of me wanted to be there too – and I couldn’t be.”

Kaoru turned away from Tamaki, sighed, and stared into the fire. “I just want to find a passion like that. What I feel for Haruhi is warm and happy, but not the burning that Hika feels. Am I making any
Without warning Tamaki’s arms wrapped around Kaoru and he was pulled back against Tama’s chest. “It makes perfect sense, because that is mostly how I feel about her as well. You know that we made love on occasion even after we broke up, though not since the three of them started dating. She has a definite ability to make you feel warm and happy, and maybe a bit lusty. I can even see it in Mori and Hani’s eyes as well. We all love her… and she loves all of us. It makes it harder for the rest of us because we love her and see the intensity that she has for Kyouya and Hika and we want some of that for ourselves. Maybe not with her, but with someone eventually. But I think we all worry that if we find it with someone else that we are going to lose the connection we have with Haruhi and that both scares us and keeps us from looking too hard. Maybe we need to trust in the fact that our future partners may love her just as much as we do.”

Tamaki’s arms tightened around Kaoru once, then he let go before continuing softly, “I am going to say something and you are completely free to say no. I won’t be offended, I promise. If you want someone to cuddle and maybe help ease some of the tension tonight, I would be willing.”

Kaoru was startled by the suggestion, wanting to make sure he heard it correctly he asked, “Tama… Are you offering to sleep with me?”

“Yes. I promised I wouldn’t be offended if you said no and I meant it. I can see the idea bothers you-“

“Wait! No, it doesn’t bother me. The opposite actually. I just didn’t expect the offer. I know you prefer women as do I. The only other man I have slept with is Hika, but you are my friend, you are an incredibly attractive man, and like with Haruhi, there is a warm and comfortable feeling with you. I just don’t want you to offer because I am mopey.”

Tamaki’s smile made Kaoru’s heart skip a beat, “I promise it’s not because you are mopey or even because I am wound up as you are over imagining what the three of them are doing upstairs, which I am. I am flexible sexually. I always have been. Maybe it’s because I am French and spent most of my youth here, but while I tend to prefer women, I am attracted to some men too,” Now it was Tamaki’s turn to blush, “I have to admit that attraction was part of the reason why I invited you, Hikaru, Kyouya, Mori, and Hani to the Host Club in the first place. I have always been attracted to you – not in love with you, I promise, but attracted to you. So the idea of spending a night with you is …. Well… intriguing.”

Reaching out Kaoru pulled Tamaki in close, wrapping an arm around his waist and using his other hand to slide across his cheek before sliding into his hair. Tilting his head slightly he caught Tamaki’s lips with his own, deepening the kiss after a low groan escaped. After a minute of their tongues sliding against each other – exploring and tasting, Kaoru broke the kiss to whisper “Let’s go to bed.”
After losing their chess matches with Mori and Honey, Kyouya and Hikaru rushed out of the room and started running up the stairs, Haruhi being the only thing on each of their minds. Two hands reached for the doorknob to Haruhi’s room before they both stopped suddenly and turned to look at each other.

Gesturing for Kyouya to join him in his room, since it was further from the bathroom that Kyouya and Haruhi shared and therefore offered less chance of being overheard, Hikaru stepped back and opened the door to his room. Kyouya followed him through and Hikaru gently shut the door behind him. Turning and leaning back against it, Hikaru looked at the Shadow King.

“I think we need to have a talk before anything happens tonight. I know all I could think about was being alone with Haruhi and it didn’t really hit me until a moment ago that you were thinking the same thing. I can guess by the look on your face you pretty much felt the same way. Am I right?” Hikaru asked.

“You are exactly right. I know you are dating her too and that we are both sleeping with her, but that’s on different nights and we aren’t in the same houses when it happens. I really didn’t think about what we were going to do logistically when she was in the same location as both of us for an extended period. How it was going to work.” Kyouya responded, pulling off his glasses and rubbing his eyes. “What do you want to do?”

“Well, we really have only two real options, because the option of both of us avoiding her isn’t going to happen. We can either decide to alternate nights…” Hikaru’s voice trailed off. He couldn’t continue because he was worried Kyouya might hear the longing in his voice. I want him so badly.

“Or we spend each night together with the three of us,” Kyouya finished. Putting his glasses back on he tried to read the expression on Hikaru’s face, but he couldn’t. I wish he would give me some sign of what he is thinking. I know I can’t be the only one who remembers the night before the Faire. We shared her before. I know that I could share her again, especially if it is with Hikaru. “I know what I would prefer, but what would you like to do?”

“I think… I think I need to hear what you want before I answer,” Hikaru looked up at Kyouya and as much as he tried, some of the need he was feeling leaked into his eyes.

Kyouya saw the raw emotion in Hikaru’s eyes and it twisted down hard inside of him causing him to shiver. Does he really want me too? Or does he just like the idea of sharing Haruhi with me? I know I am attracted to him. I came to the decision that I want them both with me. Maybe it’s time to make that first step and let him know. He stepped over to Hikaru’s bed and sat down, disturbing a package wrapped in tissue paper. Pushing it out of the way he said, “I want both of us to share her together. As much as I tried to put it out of my mind, I can’t stop thinking about the night the three of us spent together. It sounds silly to say out loud, but that night really changed the way I think about so many things. It was the night I started to realize who I am and who I want to be. You both helped me see that. I… I even got the dragon tattoo permanently done so I would always have a reminder.”

Letting go of a breath he didn’t even realize he was holding, Hikaru came over and sat down next to a Kyouya on the bed. Silently he lifted his shirt, turned slightly and showed part of his back to Kyouya. The tail of a phoenix was clearly visible. “I can’t explain how relieved I am to hear that. As much as I love making love to Haruhi on my own, that night was pure magic and I have been
dreaming about it for months. Haruhi knows about it of course, but I was too afraid to tell you.” Out of the corner of his eye, Hikaru saw the tissue wrapped bundle with a note in Kaoru’s handwriting. Reaching out and grabbing it, he read it before silently laughing and handing it to Kyouya.

Kyouya read:

_Hika – I packed these because I thought you and Kyouya might need a reminder. Go talk to him and then go ravish that girl you both share. You and I both know she has been dreaming about it for months. Find a way to make it work. That’s an order, my twin! Love you, Kao_

Kyouya was smiling as well as he finished the letter. Without a word, he handed it back to Hikaru. Together they turned to the bundle and pulled the tissue paper apart. Two pairs of leather pants fell out – one black and the other white. With a smirk on his face Kyouya said, ”Sometimes your brother is too smart for his own good.”

“Don’t I know it!”

“I am willing if you are. Shall we ravish Haruhi together?”

“Oh. Hell. Yes!”

“As much as I know we both want to join her in her bath right now, I have an idea. Let’s get dressed and wait on her bed. That way she knows that we can give her the space she needs, but she won’t get away from us that easily.”

“I love it.”

Kyouya grabbed the black leather pants and walked back to his room. Pressing his ear to the bathroom door, he could hear faint sounds of splashing and music. *It sounds like we have a few more minutes, but we do need to hurry. It’s been over a half hour since she went up, that bath water will be getting cold soon. Quickly stripping off his clothes, he put on the leather pants. The soft leather slid up his legs and fit him like a second skin. Oh gods, I had forgotten how leather feels against naked skin. I wonder if I could get a few pairs made.* Once he was dressed, he opened the door linking his and Haruhi’s room, and stepped through, shutting it behind him. His eyes immediately looked for Hikaru.

Hikaru looked up at Kyouya from where he was kneeling in front of the gas fireplace. He finished the preparation and saw cheerful warmth emerge. Standing slowly, he raked is eyes over the Shadow King. *Damn, how is it possible the man looks even better than last time? The dragon tattoo really looks amazing. I wonder if he got it at the same place Haruhi and I got ours.* Shaking the idle thoughts from his head, he walked quickly over to the other man and whispered, “Perfect timing. I just heard the plug being pulled on the bathtub and the water start to drain.”

At Hikaru’s words, Kyouya walked rapidly over to the bed and laid down on the soft comforter, Hikaru following with equal haste. They smirked at each other as they tried to find a position that was both comfortable and sexy as they waited for Haruhi. They didn’t have long to wait, within a minute or two Haruhi emerged from the bathroom into her room. Looking out she saw the two men waiting for her and the smile on her face told both men that they had made the right decision in wanting to share her. She started walking toward them.

“I was just wondering what you both would do if I went to each of your rooms and demanded you both make love to me tonight - together.” Haruhi’s teasing voice made both of them smile.
“Already taken care of love,” Kyouya smirked. “You should know by now that I know everything.” He ducked as Hikaru whacked him with a pillow.

“Oh?! And how exactly did you know what I wanted, since I just realized it five minutes ago.”

“You talk in your sleep.” Two voices said together.

Blushing Haruhi climbed on the bed between them. “I didn’t know. I guess I won’t ever really be able to hide anything from the two of you, will I?”

“Never, Haru-love,” Hikaru rumbled sexily in her ear, “but that’s ok, because you know we can’t hide anything from you either.” He slid his hand slowly up her arm before cupping her face and leaning in to kiss her slowly. His lips bit softly at her lower lip and his tongue flicked out to leave a warm wet trail across it.

“And right now, I can’t hide that the fact you wearing a satin nightgown is driving me crazy,” Kyouya said against her neck as he laid gentle nibbles down it. His firm body pressed against hers and the leather caressed her bare legs as he slid his hand the length of her torso before coming to rest on her thigh. She could feel the hardness of his erection against her hip.

The gasp that slipped out from Haruhi’s mouth as Kyouya’s teeth bit slightly harder was captured by Hikaru’s lips. Pulling back slightly he asked her, “What do you want in this moment? Do you want us slow and sensual or hard and fast?”

“I need you both so much right now, that I might explode if I don’t get it soon. We have all week to take our time. At this moment I need a cock in my mouth and one in my pussy. I need to cum and I need to feel your cum in me.”

The crassness of Haruhi’s words brought a smile to Hikaru’s lips, “Gods I love it when you talk dirty. You know how hard it makes me.” Hikaru’s kiss this time was anything but gentle. His tongue plundering the depths of her mouth as his hands slid down her stomach finally sliding over her clit and diving deeply into the wetness.

“Such a naughty dirty mouth,” Kyouya added. Haruhi’s cry of pleasure as Hikaru’s fingers slid into her quickly turned into a deep moan as Kyouya added his to the wetness. Haruhi’s back arched as they worked inside her, pressing against her g-spot and holding her on the edge of orgasm. Her hands tangled in the sheets to keep from raking her nails across their thighs.

“I want that mouth around me,” Hikaru slid his fingers out of Haruhi, reached down, and undid the fly of his white leather pants, slipping them off, he crawled naked up to the head of the bed. Watching his movement Kyouya also slid his hands out while Haruhi rolled over onto her hands and knees. Crawling to him, the satin of her night gown slid down to hang at her waist, leaving her legs and ass exposed. She settled between his legs and sat down on her knees in front of him. Kyouya removed his own pants, positioned himself behind her and slowly slid the satin up and over her head, exposing her breasts to Hikaru. Tossing it carelessly to the side, he traced his hands up her back causing her body to shudder underneath his fingers. Then suddenly he pushed her down, so her mouth had quick access to Hikaru’s cock. “He said he wanted your mouth. Now suck him.”

Held down by the weight of Kyouya’s hand on her back, Haruhi slid her mouth around Hikaru’s throbbing member and swallowed it whole, making him gasp then moan in pleasure. He reached down, with one hand he grabbed her hair gently and guided her mouth around him, the way he knew
she liked. With the other he started toying with her breast, rubbing lazy circles with his fingers, and then pinching them softly. He could feel her response in the way her breath caught as she continued to tease his cock with her tongue. Looking up, he saw the same passion reflected in Kyouya’s silver eyes. Eyes locked together, Kyouya slipped the arm that was holding Haruhi down to her other breast, teasing it the same way Hikaru was. His other hand slipped to her hip and holding her steady he thrust into her wetness with a long sure stroke. His cry matching Haruhi’s as he still held Hikaru’s gaze. Slowly he glanced away and focused on Haruhi, building a hard and fast rhythm that he knew would bring them both to climax quickly.

Hikaru groaned knowing his own climax was coming. With a full body shudder, he cried her name as he lost it and flooded her mouth. She swallowed it down easily, her tongue still caressing his softening member as it still throbbed and twitched in her mouth. Finally, she released it completely as Hikaru groaned under her and gave her a blinding smile, gasping for breath he said. “Gods, I love it when you do that.”

She didn’t have time to respond before Kyouya’s cock hit the spot inside her that sent her over the edge, her orgasm ripping through her body as she screamed her pleasure. Feeling her inner walls grip him tightly as her orgasm rocked her body sent Kyouya over the edge as well and he collapsed on top of her, pinning her down on Hikaru’s body.

Panting, out of breath and heart beating wildly, Kyouya finally rolled off of Haruhi and pulled her up between them. Wrapping her arms around her lovers, as they wrapped theirs around her, they lay quietly together, just feeling the aftermath of the intensity that had gripped them a few minutes ago. As her heart slowly calmed, Haruhi started to giggle then laugh.

Smiling at her Hikaru asked, “What’s so funny?”

“Not funny – AMAZING. Tonight was simply incredible and I know I get to do it again every night for the next two weeks,” She stifled a yawn, “I am so happy and satisfied right now. I don’t want to leave your arms. I love you both so much.”

“I love you two,” Kyouya smiled at both of them, “The good news is you don’t have to. Now sleep my love, it’s been a really long day.”

“We will be here when you wake up,” Hikaru added before softly kissing her cheek one more time as she drifted off to sleep. He noticed Kyouya’s eyes were closed and he was doing the same. Yawning one more time he settled closer into Haruhi. A last thought ran through his mind before sleep also claimed him.

Tamaki and Kaoru went up the stairs and into the room that Hikaru was supposed to share with Kaoru. When they entered, Tamaki went over to the fireplace to start a fire while Kaoru went to the windows. Looking out he watched the snow fall gently. I can’t believe I am up here with Tamaki. Do I want to do this? I know if I say no, that I changed my mind, he will walk through the connecting door and it will never be spoken of again. He will never hold it against me or stop being my friend. He reminds me so much of Haruhi that way. The thing is part of me wants this and I really don’t want to be alone.

Tamaki noticed Kaoru by the window deep in thought. Silently he walked up, stood next to him and
looked out into the winter night. He made sure not to touch Kaoru, just be present in the moment with him. *It's still his choice. He can say no and I want him to know that. I do want to sleep with him but his friendship will always mean more to me than a one night stand.*

Kaoru became aware of Tamaki standing next to him. Reaching out Kaoru took his hand and pulled him in closer, wrapping his arm around Tamaki’s waist. Pleased with the response, Tamaki turned into him and starting kissing him again, sliding his hands under Kaoru’s shirt to caress across his chest.

Kaoru returned the favor and swiftly removed Tamaki’s shirt completely. The glow of the moonlight danced across one side of Tamaki’s chest while light from the fire played on the other. Kaoru found himself fascinated by the difference and couldn’t resist sliding his hands across the planes, which drew a moan of pleasure from Tamaki’s lips.

“My turn,” Tamaki whispered as he pulled Kaoru’s shirt off and threw it to the side. Pushing him back against the wall, Tamaki pressed his body into Kaoru’s before claiming his lips again. This time Tamaki’s tongue teased the line between Kaoru’s lips, begging for permission to enter - permission which he willingly gave. Tongues sliding against each other, they explored the depths of each other’s mouths finding it a novel experience to be kissing someone new. Finally, Tamaki pulled back slowly and started kissing down Kaoru’s jaw, his hands sliding up to caress Kaoru’s chest and shoulders. Continuing his exploration downwards, Tamaki kissed his way down Kaoru’s chest. Getting on his knees before Kaoru, Tamaki slowly unzipped the fly and undid the button on Kaoru’s jeans. To Tamaki’s surprise, Kaoru wasn’t wearing any underwear and his erect cock sprang free as soon as the zipper was released. Tamaki looked up at Kaoru once more.

“Please Tama, I want this,” Kaoru’s words made the last of Tamaki’s hesitation disappear. He grabbed Kaoru’s cock in one hand and then wrapped his lips around it. Alternately stroking with his hands and sucking with his mouth, Tamaki worked Kaoru’s member mercilessly.

Kaoru couldn’t believe the sensations, it was so different than the way Hikaru would suck him, it was more primal, needier, and in some way it made Kaoru feel that Tamaki was the one in control, even as it was he who was getting pleasured. Needing something to do with his hands, Kaoru slid them into the silken strands of Tamaki’s golden hair, not really guiding him, but wanting the connection. Pressing his head against the wall, he felt his orgasm building. With a final cry, Kaoru’s body bucked and he came hard into Tamaki’s eager mouth.

Tamaki swallowed and then released Kaoru’s cock, sitting back on his knees. Looking up the line of Kaoru’s body, he watched as Kaoru’s chest heaved as he tried to catch his breath. When Kaoru looked down at him and smiled, Tamaki returned it happily.

“That was unlike anything I have experienced before,” Kaoru said while a slight blush colored his cheeks. He stroked Tamaki’s cheek. “Thank you my friend. Can I return the favor?”

Tamaki laughed, “While I may take you up on that offer in the future, if it is still there, what I really want is to have you stroke me. I watch the way you touch Hikaru and Haruhi and I want to feel that kind of connection. It’s been a really long time since I have had that. That is if you are still willing.”

“Of course I am willing, mon ami,” Kaoru grabbed his hand and pulled him over to the bed. Pulling off his jeans completely, he climbed into the big bed. “why don’t you take off your clothes and join me. Skin on skin contact is so much more satisfying than trying to go through layers of clothing.”

“I can do that.” Tamaki said as he quickly stripped off the last of his clothes. Kaoru noticed that Tamaki had a really nice cock. It had softened slightly as Tamaki was pleasuring him, but Kaoru made a promise to himself that he would repay that pleasure, measure for measure. So as soon as
Tamaki had settled, Kaoru rolled over on top of him and pinned him down.

“I promise that tonight, you won’t be alone.” Kaoru’s voice dropped low and dripped sensuality. “You will feel the heat of our bodies combining into one.” With that statement, Kaoru lowered himself on top of the Host King and slowly slid up his chest until their faces were level. Once there, he kissed Tamaki deeply before slipping slightly to one side and freeing a hand to caress Tamaki’s now fully erect cock. Keeping his body in as much contact with the older boy’s as possible, Kaoru worked the cock with his hand in a way that mimicked the motions of Tamaki’s mouth earlier.

Tamaki was surrendering himself to the heat of their bodies and the skilled motions of Kaoru’s hands. I have wanted this closeness for so long. Even with my recent lovers, there hasn’t been this kind of connection with someone since Haruhi. I am really glad that Kaoru was willing. I needed this, I think, even more than he did. Feeling himself get close to his own release, Tamaki slid his arms around Kaoru’s back and buried his face in his neck, wanting to capture the scent of Kaoru’s skin and hold it for as long as possible.

Kaoru felt the throbbing in his fingers and the slick wetness as Tamaki’s orgasm hit. He worked it for just a few more strokes to make sure that Tamaki was completely satisfied before wrapping his arms around him completely and holding him, while Tamaki’s breath and heart beat slowed.

Finally Tamaki lifted his head out from the crook of Kaoru’s neck and smiled at him. “Now it’s my turn to thank you my friend. That was exactly what I needed.” Stretching up one more time to kiss Kaoru softly on the lips, he yawned and stretched. “Do you still want me to stay the night?”

“I think I do actually,” Kaoru answered with his own matching yawn. “You are comfortable. I am comfortable. Why mess with a good thing?”

They both laughed as they cuddled into each other but very soon Tamaki was fast asleep in Kaoru’s arms. Kaoru himself wasn’t far behind and his last final thought as he drifted off was I wonder what Hikaru would say.
Morgning Light

The light streaming through the windows woke Haruhi fully as she fumbled across Hikaru’s body to turn off the alarm on his phone. He didn’t even hear it, which is unusual for him. Moving cautiously and as quietly as she could, so as not to disturb the notoriously grumpy when wakened Shadow King, she leaned over Hikaru and gave him a soft kiss to wake him up. She then whispered in his ear, “Hika-love, your alarm went off. Time to wake up.”

The press of lips against his followed by a sweet murmur in his ear brought Hikaru fully awake in more ways than one. Rolling Haruhi underneath him, he pinned her down and kissed her deeply grinding his lower body against hers. The gasp of pleasure against his lips made him smile.

With regret, Haruhi broke the kiss and reminded him gently, “As much as I would love to continue this, we risk waking Kyouya. Plus you and Kaoru have to go down to the convention center to prepare for Fashion Week.”

Glancing over at the still sleeping third person in their bed, Hikaru nodded with understanding tinged with a bit of regret. Though gods know I don’t want to be the one to wake him. He is freaking scary if he doesn’t wake up naturally. He really is the Shadow King!! Turning back to Haruhi, he gave her one last kiss before rolling off her and heading toward her bathroom.

Haruhi lay there for a moment watching Kyouya. Smiling, she gingerly laid a kiss on the sleeping beast’s cheek, then stretching, she rolled out of the bed as well, grabbed a pair of yoga pants and sports bra from the dresser, and joined Hikaru in the bathroom.

Hikaru was just entering the shower and Haruhi leaned back against the counter enjoying the view. Noticing that she was watching him, he teased, “Are you just going to stand there or are you going to join me?”

“Mmmm… debating,” She laughed at his expression. “I actually am going to go up to the dojo and get some yoga and a workout in this morning. It seems silly to shower only to get all sweaty again. Though I have to admit, you standing naked there with water dripping down your body makes me want to change my mind.”

A wet hand snaked out and pulled her into the shower with him, “Take another later. I have unfinished business with you.”

“You know we don’t have much time. Your limo will be here in forty-five minutes and you still need to wake Kaoru,” Haruhi’s comments were interrupted by a slick body pressing her up against the shower wall, thick hardness making itself known against her stomach. Desire flooded her and she lost her train of thought, “Ungh… ummm… what was I saying?”

“Something to try and distract me,” Hikaru replied as he lifted her and slid deeply into her, the water making paths down their bodies as they moved together against the cool tile. Knowing he really didn’t have much time, Hikaru used a deep rhythm he knew would bring them both quickly without sacrificing the intimacy that he wanted. “I just want to distract you more,” he whispered seductively before thrusting deep and feeling both their climaxes peak together.

“Mmmmmm,” Haruhi felt the pleasure cascade through her body. “Consider me completely distracted.”
With a laugh, Hikaru slid out of her and pulled her under the stream from the shower head. Grabbing a pouf, he quickly soaped it and used it on her, watching as the suds slipped down her body. Dammit, if I keep this up, I will never get out of this shower. I do have to wake Kao and we do have to meet mom, though. With a sigh, he handed it to Haruhi.

“You are incredibly sexy all soapy like this,” Haruhi remarked as she returned the favor, “I really wish we had more time.”

“Me too my love,” With a final sigh, Hikaru rinsed off and turned off the water. Grabbing two towels, he handed one to Haruhi and dried quickly off with the other one. Pulling on a pair of pajama bottoms, he left the bathroom to return to his room, wake Kaoru, and get changed.

Haruhi dried her hair with the towel and then wrapped it around her body. She ran a brush through her wet tangles before pulling it back into a ponytail. I’ll wash it after I finish my work out. As she was brushing her teeth, Hikaru rushed back into the bathroom flustered.

Seeing Hikaru’s distress, Haruhi rinsed and asked, “What’s wrong my love?”

It took a minute before Hikaru could respond, during which time, Haruhi quickly put on her yoga pants and sports bra before wrapping herself around him. “Is something wrong with Kaoru?”

“Not exactly wrong, but…” Hikaru’s voice trailed off.

Haruhi poked him. “What happened?”

“I went into our room to wake Kaoru and he wasn’t there. The bed didn’t even look like it was slept in. So I went to Tamaki’s room to see if he knew where Kao was. He was there. Kaoru and Tamaki spent last night together. Their arms are wrapped around each other and they are both completely naked. I… I couldn’t say anything or wake them, so I ran back here. I don’t know what to do. Tamaki and Kaoru?!?”

“Ahhh…,” Haruhi said, realizing Hikaru was in a fragile state at seeing his twin with someone else, and especially knowing that someone else was Tamaki. “Hika-love, I know you are confused right now, but can I ask you something?”

Hikaru tightened his grip on her before replying. “Yes, of course.”

“You spent last night with me and Kyouya, which meant that Kao would have spent last night and possibly every night for this entire trip alone. I know that neither of you sleeps well without someone there. Are you upset that he didn’t sleep alone? Or are you more surprised to find out that he slept with Tamaki?”

“I’m not sure. I didn’t really think about it. Gods that makes me sound like a horrible twin. I don’t want him to be alone, but I don’t want to give up you and Kyouya. I don’t know what to do.”

“Does it bother you that he slept with Tamaki? Are you feeling jealous of Tama?”

“I am a little bit jealous, because I know the only other man that Kao has slept with is me. But, I don’t want him to be alone either. I know you, Kao and I would sleep together, but I don’t know about Kyouya. I think that would be pushing it too far when we are just starting to figure it out among the three of us.”
Holding him tight, Haruhi continued, “I know you are still confused my love. Just promise me that you will think about something today. Nothing will ever break the bond that you and Kaoru have. I promise that. But like you were able to stretch your bond to include me, do you think you could stretch it even more to include Tamaki, or even Mori and Hani? No one should be alone if they don’t want to be and we all love each other in different ways. Is it really wrong if we offer to share that love with one of us who needs it?”

“I will try to think about that. But what about you? Does it bother you that your ex-boyfriend slept with Kao?”

“Actually it really doesn’t. I know that Tamaki is flexible in his sexuality. He isn’t quite bi like you are, but I know that he is attracted to everyone in the Host Club, similar to the way that I am. It’s not that far of a stretch for me to imagine Tamaki offering to keep Kao company, because if I was in Tamaki’s place I would probably do the same, even though I am not “in love” with Kaoru. You should know that you can still have great and fun sex with a friend. Sex isn’t always about passion and lust. Sometimes it’s about comfort and friendship… and that’s ok.” Haruhi looked up at her lover to make sure he was listening.

“I understand. It’s like you and Tamaki after you both broke up. I know he would stay over on nights with thunderstorms, especially if your dad wasn’t home. He was comforting you.”

“Exactly, though I won’t deny it was still fun too. Tamaki is a great lover.” She held a finger to his lips as he was about to protest. “For me, Tamaki was a great lover. You and Kyouya blow my freaking mind. Repeatedly. In the most interesting ways. Please don’t ever be jealous of him because of me. We really are better as friends and what I feel for him is the same that I feel for Kaoru. I do love him, but I am completely head over heels in love with both of you. I don’t know what I would do without you both in my life.”

Hikaru swallowed his protest. At Haruhi’s words a fierce sense of pride at having her complete love washed through him. I knew this. It’s not a surprise. Just seeing Kao and Tama together threw me for a few minutes. I am still processing it, but I think I am going to be ok with it. It’s not fair for me to be jealous when I have someone and Kao doesn’t. There will be a point sometime in the future where he will fall in love with someone and I need to be able to be happy for him, the way he is happy for me.

“I love you.” Hikaru just held Haruhi for a few more moments.

“I love you too, so very much. Would you like for me to go wake Kaoru, so you can have a few minutes to get collected before you see him?”

“I would really appreciate that.”

“Ok my love,” She stretched up and kissed Hikaru softly before disengaging herself from his arms. He followed her as far as his bedroom, where he grabbed some clothes and then went back into her room to change.

Haruhi went through the French doors into Tamaki’s suite. Seeing that he and Kaoru were still entwined and fast asleep, she smiled. Quietly she walked over to the edge of the bed and sat down. Slowly running a hand up both of their arms, she called gently, ”Kaoru, Tamaki, wake up my friends. Kaoru has to get ready to go to the Convention Center.”
Kaoru heard Haruhi’s voice and felt her touch on his arm, still mostly asleep, he snuggled into the warm body next to him. Opening his eyes a crack he saw Haruhi above him and the golden hair of the man he was cuddling into. A jolt whipped through him. GOLDEN HAIR! Hikaru’s hair was red not golden. The memory of the night before flooded him and he remembered everything, including a very satisfying evening with Tamaki. A deep blush spread through him. Oh my gods, what is Haruhi thinking? Did Hikaru see me like this? What am I going to do?

Seeing the panic on Kaoru’s face, she leaned over and kissed him briefly. “Don’t worry, Kao-love. Everything is fine. Hikaru just needs a little bit of time to process everything, but he is going to be ok as well. I promise. I am really glad you didn’t spend the night alone.”

Tamaki woke up stretching at Haruhi’s words. He also blushed as he realized that she had caught both of them naked in bed with each other, though her words to Kaoru helped calm him a bit. Pulling her down on top of both of them, Tamaki teased, “Hello Princess. I could get used to you waking us up on a regular basis. What exactly are you wearing? And may I say your tattoo looks even better in person than on a video screen.”

Laughing at Tamaki’s flirting, she teased back, “Well I am about to go get stretchy and sweaty, so I thought a ball gown would be a bad choice, though the designer I am squishing may disagree. I am glad you like the design. Remind me to show you the full thing later. Right now, I hate to break up this cuddlefest, but Kao has to get ready to go. Hika will meet him downstairs in 20 minutes.” With a last kiss on each of their foreheads, Haruhi climbed off the bed, walked out the door, and up the stairs to the dojo.

Awake and alone, Tamaki and Kaoru stared at each other for a minute. Each wondered what the other was thinking. Finally, Kaoru leaned in and kissed Tama briefly. “Thank you again for last night. I really did enjoy it… and… and I wouldn’t mind doing it again if the opportunity comes up.”

The smile on Tamaki’s face outshone the sun streaming through the window. “I think that could be arranged. Prince Kaoru.”

Tamaki’s wink made Kaoru laugh. With a final stretch he stood up and went into the bathroom. He showered quickly, knowing that Tamaki would need to use it as well. Going back into his bedroom, Kaoru went through his dresser and found a comfortable but stylish pair of jeans and shirt. I have to work with Renge today… and Hikaru. I know Haruhi said he was ok with my sleeping with Tamaki, but I won’t really know until I see him. Is he going to be hurt?

Knowing he couldn’t delay the inevitable any longer, with a last look in the mirror, Kaoru straightened his clothing and walked downstairs to the waiting limo.
The faint sounds of a piano concerto slowly woke Kyouya from his dreams. Sleepily, he rolled over, expecting to feel Haruhi’s soft body underneath his. The shock of finding nothing but cold empty sheets woke him completely. He reached for his glasses on the bedside table and his hand brushed against a piece of paper. Ah, a note.

Kyouya,

Good Morning my love. Since we both woke up early, we thought it best to let you sleep. Hikaru had to meet Kaoru and head over to the Convention Center to work on the designs. I am heading upstairs to the dojo to do yoga and then practice my katas. Mori thinks that I may be able to test up soon and I want to get as much practice in as I can. Come join us when you wake up. Love always, Haruhi

They know me too well. It’s not like I want to be a dragon if someone wakes me up, I just can’t help it. Maybe this tattoo fits better than I realized. With a self-deprecating smile Kyouya rolled out of bed and went into the bathroom to quickly wash before going upstairs. Getting in a bit of exercise actually sounds like a great idea. Plus I do enjoy watching Haruhi practice. It’s amazing to see how much Mori and Hani have taught her over the last couple of years. She is really pretty good... and maybe I can convince her to shower with me after.

He pulled on a loose pair of workout pants, tennis shoes, and put on a white t-shirt grateful that the house remained comfortably warm even in the middle of winter. Walking up the stairs to the third floor, he decided he would listen to Tamaki playing the piano before crossing over to the other room. He must be in good mood. I haven’t heard him play Vivaldi in a really long time. Silently sitting on a couch across from him and closing his eyes, Kyouya let himself get lost in the music for a few minutes. I need to spend some time with him in the next couple of weeks. It has been far too long since we were able to just sit down and talk. I want to know how he is doing here away from everyone. I know we video chat at least once a week, but it’s not the same. It’s funny how much I miss his enthusiasm when it used to just annoy me.

Tamaki transitioned into a piece by Mozart and Kyouya opened his eyes and as quietly as possible left the room. As he walked down the hallway to the dojo, he saw Hani standing outside the room, but watching through the open double doors. Curious, he walked over and stood next to him. When he turned to look in the room, his breath caught and a tightness appeared in his chest. What is going on?

Mori and Haruhi were in the room together. Mori was wearing loose pants and was shirtless. He was also lying on his back, his feet supporting her body, one arm behind her neck supporting her shoulders and the other on her heart. Haruhi was arched backwards on his feet gripping the ankle of one bent leg as her foot rested against his ankle, and the other leg extended out completely, toe pointed. Her free arm reached down and was flush on his chest. They held the pose for a moment before transitioning into another.

“Aren’t they beautiful together,” Hani’s quiet voice cut through Kyouya’s stunned silence. “They have been doing partner yoga together for the last six months or so, and how far they have come is really impressive. I tried to do it with them at the beginning, but I don’t have the same kind of internal calm and patience that both of them have.”
Partner. Yoga. Kyoya’s mind flashed back to a conversation he had with Haruhi about seven months ago where she asked him if he wanted to do yoga with her. At the time, he was wrapped up in several business deals as well as finishing his finals, so he declined. She seemed slightly disappointed but understood. She asked if he minded if she asked one of the others. He had said that was fine and he didn’t think twice about it. I had no idea this is what she meant. I knew she was still doing yoga, but somehow I was picturing classes and basic sun salutations, not quite this intimate beautiful thing. They are amazing together and it hurts a bit, because I know that she is attracted to Mori and he to her, but can I really justify my jealousy? Mori is probably the absolute best partner for her in this. His calm and steadiness are far more conducive to getting the benefits out of yoga than my cool detachment or Hikaru’s fiery passion. Can I acknowledge and accept that?

“Kyo-chan?” Hani’s voice rose in a question.

“I knew that she was doing yoga and that you and Mori were doing it with her, but I never imagined anything quite like this,” Kyoya answered. “You are right. It is beautiful and I am realizing I am both slightly jealous and really disappointed in myself that I turned her down all those months ago, when maybe I could be in Mori’s position right now.”

“Kyouya, may I speak honestly for a moment?”

Hearing a warning tone in Hani’s voice, Kyouya looked away from the pair in front of him and focused completely on the older Host. “Of course.”

“I know you want to be jealous and you may even think you have a bit of a right to be, because you are dating Haruhi, but you need to remember that you are not the only one of us who loves her. We all love her in our own way and she loves us as well. She turned to you and Hikaru first with the idea and you both turned her down. Maybe you didn’t realize fully what she meant, but deep down the idea of yoga didn’t interest you and you really didn’t want to do it. That’s perfectly fine. Yoga isn’t for everyone. Haruhi knew this and accepted it. She asked us because we were already her teachers when it came to martial arts. There is a similar mind state you can get into with both Aikido and Yoga even though the process of getting there is quite different. It’s an almost meditative state of complete calm, reflex, and inner strength. Takashi and I have been practicing martial arts since we could walk. We know how to achieve that state through it. Haruhi is coming into Aikido and Kendo late – we started teaching her when she was sixteen. She knows the moves, but the mental state was more difficult for her to achieve. Takashi’s sister practices yoga on a regular basis and suggested the idea of it to him to pass along to her as an alternate path to reaching that mind state before she practices her martial arts. The results have been amazing. Her skill level has increased dramatically and she is ready for testing at a level that she probably wouldn’t have been able to achieve for another year on her own.” Hani glanced at Kyoya’s face to judge his reaction and satisfied that Kyoya was truly listening, he continued. “It started as all three of us doing basic Hatha yoga, but I got bored. Like I said yoga isn’t for everyone. Takashi has always been and always probably will be far more patient than I am, so he continued to do it with her. They started the partner yoga as a way to help each other get into the positions and then it morphed into what you see here under Takashi’s sister’s guidance. They share energy when they are in partnership. She gets his calmness, his patience, and his determination to push through when something gets tough. He gets her drive, her passion, and her love of life in all its many forms. There is love in there too, but it is different than the love you and Hikaru have for her or the kind of love that Takashi and I have for each other. I am happy that he has someone to share this aspect of his soul with, because I can’t completely understand it, but Haruhi does. Do you think that you could learn to accept something similar?”

Kyoya had listened closely to Hani’s speech. Realizing that it echoed with some of his thoughts earlier and his new desire to open his eyes to different points of view, he was able to answer
honestly, "I think I can try. I do understand so much of what you are saying and I am trying to adopt Haruhi’s way of looking at the world through different perspectives without placing my judgment on them. I can’t promise the jealously won’t flare up, but I can promise that I will acknowledge it and discuss it, rather than locking it down into a place it will fester.”

“That is a very fair answer, my friend.” Hani’s smile lit up his face, “and it is all I could ask for.” Together they turned back to watch. A minute or so later, Tamaki joined them outside the dojo.

“How on earth can she hold that? I know Haruhi is stronger than she looks, but it looks like she is supporting most of Mori’s weight.” Tamaki’s incredulity at the pose Haruhi and Mori were currently in made Hani laugh.

“That’s because Haru-chan is a goddess.”

“I think that I could believe that, actually.” Tamaki responded, still in a bit of awe as Mori did what appeared to be a backward arched handstand while holding onto Haruhi’s ankles, While she arched in cobra pose while reaching above her head to grip his ankles. Tamaki continued to watch as she released Mori’s ankles, he transitioned into a back walk-over and stood up, before lifting her to a standing position and turning her to face him. Together they each stood in tree pose, right hands flat together, left hands over each other’s heart, and their eyes locked. Breath in perfect syncopation, they stayed like that for a full minute before saying together the word “Namaste” and then breaking apart to move over to their towels and water.

“Looks like they are done,” Hani said, “Shall we go in. It’s time for our Aikido practice and it looks like both of you want to get in a workout as well.”

“Let’s go,” Kyouya eagerly entered the room.

Haruhi turned to see Hani, Tamaki, and Kyouya entering the room. I wonder how long they have been standing outside. Oh gods, what must Kyouya be thinking. I know that looked really intimate and it was, but in a completely different way than the intimacy I have with him. Is he going to be jealous or cold?

Kyouya saw the thoughts flickering across Haruhi’s face and hurried over to reassure her. Wrapping his arms around her and ignoring the slight sheen of sweat covering her body he said, “That was amazingly beautiful. My only regret is that I turned you down all those months ago, but after watching you and Mori together, I know that you have a better partner in this than I could ever be.”

Haruhi relaxed completely after hearing Kyouya’s words. “Thank you my love. The yoga really helps me focus on my Aikido. I may even be able to test for my next belt next week. Mori and Hani are judging a Regional Competition, but there will also be part of the time set up for level testing. I am both excited and nervous about it.”

“You will be fine,” Kyouya kissed her softly before Hani’s voice interrupted him.

“Kyo-chan, please release Haru-chan. It is time for her to practice her drills and sparring.” Guiltily, Kyouya let Haruhi go.

Turning to her instructors, she bowed and said, “My most sincere apologies Takashi Sensei and Hani Sensei. The delay was necessary to find balance in my bond.”

“Understood.” Takashi ‘Mori’ Morinozouka responded before giving her a smile.
“Understood,” Hani repeated, then added, “Since we are on a delay for a moment, Haru-chan, will you show me your full tattoo. I can see parts of it, but I am curious to see the whole picture.”

“I would really like to see it all as well.” Tamaki piped in.

“Of course my friends,” Haruhi responded before moving to the middle of the room, turning around to show Hani, Takashi, and Tamaki her back, pulling off her sports bra, and pulling her pants down slightly. On her right shoulder blade was the kanji for friendship, on her left hip was the kanji for strength, and in the center of her back was the kanji for love. Arched around the kanji for love on the top of her back and left shoulder was a phoenix, while on the bottom and around her right hip was a dragon.

Kyouya started to say something, but the look that Hani gave him silenced him before more than a breath came out. *If I am honest, everyone in here has either seen her naked or mostly there. There is nothing to be jealous about and it’s silly to be so over her showing them her tattoo.* Haruhi saw the look on Kyouya face and silently mouthed I love you, which made him feel better about his decision.

“Wow. That is gorgeous,” Tamaki gushed.

“Very Pretty,” Takashi added succinctly.

“Could you explain the symbology to me?” Hani asked.

“Of course. Basically this tattoo is my way of carrying all of you with me forever, when I can’t wear the jewelry for some reason. It ties in all the elements of the necklace, bracelet, and rings into one whole. I know that whatever happens, I have the love of all of you, and that makes me complete.” Smiling she turned to her friends, while keeping her arms crossed modestly over her chest. “I know once I explained the idea to Kyouya and Hikaru, they also got tattoos. You should check out Kyouya’s dragon. It is incredible.”

Three sets of eyes turned to him, as Kyouya pulled off his shirt to reveal an elaborate dragon. The head started on his chest over his heart, the body wrapped over his left shoulder, down his back, and with the tail finally wrapping around his right hip. The gasps of surprise made him laugh.

“Kyouya, just wow…,” Tamaki said respect coloring his tone, “I thought Haruhi’s was insanely detailed. Yours is even crazier. How long did it take for both of you to get those? How did you survive the pain?”

Laughing Haruhi said, “Well it wasn’t exactly pleasant, but I seem to have a high threshold for pain, so while it hurt, it wasn’t unbearable. I just made sure to get it when you and Mori were out of the country for three weeks, so it would have time to heal before you pummeled me in the name of ‘practice’. Mine took 6 sessions at about 4 hours each session. Kyouya and Hikaru’s both took 8 sessions at 4 hours each. I think they just wanted to prove they were tougher than me.”

“Hika-chan has one too?”

“Yes. He has a phoenix over the right shoulder the way Kyouya’s dragon curves over the left.” Kyouya responded.

“That is just awesome. But how are Hikaru and Haruhi sneaking it past the teachers at Ouran? They are both eighteen and of legal age, but are still in high school. I know my dad as chairman would
throw a fit if it was found out. ” Tamaki asked.

“We are hiding it and hoping that if it’s found out, we can persuade the school board to look the other way. We made it a point to make sure that it cannot be seen in any way under the uniform. Neither Hikaru nor I have a gym class this year, so we don’t have to worry about changing in front of others,” Haruhi answered. “It’s a risk, we know, but one we were willing to take.”

“I also have a back-up plan if absolutely necessary,” Kyoya added, though he said no more beyond that.

“That’s good to know. I would hate for Haru-chan to be kicked out of Ouran after working so hard to be there,” Hani said with relief in his voice.

“That definitely won’t happen. There are advantages to being a ‘rich bastard’”, Kyoya smirked at Haruhi as he responded, “and I will use them all if necessary. I don’t think it will ever come to that, since I happen to know at least ten other students currently enrolled at Ouran have tattoos.”

“I don’t particularly like breaking the rules, as all of you know, but in this case I will bend them a bit,” Haruhi stated as she slipped her sports bra back on. “It is a meaningful symbol and has significant importance to me and I will fight for the right to wear it.”

“In other words,” Tamaki teased, “Don’t mess with the pre-law student who is dating one of the heirs to the Hitachiian empire and the most valued son of the Ootori empire. Who also happens to be learning martial arts from and is under the protection of the Haniozouka and Morizouka families, AND is best friends with the heir to the Suoh empire.”

“All because I broke a vase!!” Haruhi laughed and the other’s joined in. Soon though she turned to Hani and her tone became serious, “as much as I appreciate the delay, I would really like to work on my form. Takashi let me know this morning that he thinks I am ready to test up a level at the Competition next week. I would like to have you confirm Sensei.”

Bowing to her, his right fist tucked under his left hand, he responded. “Of course. We will clear the floor. Please demonstrate the testing routines for the six levels you have achieved and show me the seventh. I also want to see how your sparring is coming along.”

“Yes Sensei.”

Without another word, Tamaki and Kyoya stepped over to the free weights and started stretching, while Mori stood next to Hani.

“Takashi, since I haven’t seen her practice in a couple of months, is she really ready,” Hani whispered to his partner and friend. He watched as Haruhi started the first routine, then transitioned smoothly into the second and then the third. Each one getting progressively longer and more difficult.

“She is. She has been for a month, though I waited to tell her until today because I didn’t want to make her nervous. How did Kyoya react to seeing her and I together this morning? I know that is the first time that he has seen it, though Hikaru has watched us a couple of times.”

Hani was expecting the question. He knew that even as focused as Takashi was with Haruhi in their yoga positions, his training would not have let him miss Kyoya out in the hall watching. “He was startled at first, but after watching the connection between the two of you and listening to me talk for a bit, he calmed down. He knew that you were doing yoga together, but he really didn’t understand
what that meant. He will be ok with it. I think that he is just regretting a bit that he didn’t take her up on it when she originally offered it to him.”

“I know it may be wrong to say, but I am really glad that he didn’t. He has so much of her already, I am glad this piece is mine alone,” Takashi answered and then looked down at his lover, “You know that it does not detract from what I feel for you, but a part of me will always love her.”

“I know lover,” Hani answered a fond smile on his face. “I feel the same. I just hope that I can find that piece of her that is mine alone as well.” His hand reached out and briefly touched Takashi’s, though his eyes never stopped watching Haruhi’s routine. She was now on the fifth level routine. “Before I forget, I wanted to share with you a juicy little tidbit from this morning. I popped my head into Tamaki’s suite this morning just to confirm that it was ok to use the dojo up here and I saw him and Kaoru, naked and fast asleep in each other’s arms. So even though there are six rooms, only half of them are actually being used to sleep. I find that really funny.”

Mori had glanced quickly at Hani as he relayed that juicy tidbit before looking back at Haruhi. Silently he shook with laughter. Yes that is rather funny, but then again most people do not know about Hani and I, though I am sure Kyoya knows and Tamaki may suspect. Haruhi knows and has known for years, but I don’t know about the twins. Given the nature of their relationship, they may just assume we have a similar one.

Mori noticed that Haruhi was now starting on her next testing routine and focused on her. Next to him Hani did the same. Even Tamaki and Kyoya stopped their weight reps to watch. The routine was complicated and involved several twisting jump kick maneuvers as well as a back handspring. He knew that the handspring had been giving her some problems in the last couple of weeks, but he had confidence that she has worked out her difficulties with it.

Haruhi executed the 10 minute routine flawlessly. Even her handspring was perfectly timed and landed solidly. At the end of the routine, she turned to her teachers and bowed, chest heaving as she tried to draw in enough breath, as sweat dripped down her face and neck. As one, Hani and Mori bowed back. The room erupted in spontaneous applause as Hani brought her a towel and bottle of water. “That was perfect Haru-chan. Takashi was right, you are ready to test. I am so proud of you.”

“That was seriously impressive my love,” Kyoya said the support strong in his voice before turning teasing, “Remind me not to piss you off.”

“At least we will now know when Hikaru or Kyoya does something to piss her off,” Tamaki joined in the teasing, “We will see the bruises.”

Laughing she walked over and started to grab the padded gloves to spar, breath still a little heavy. Mori stopped her. “Enough for the day, Mitskuni and I can spar today and the three of us can do it tomorrow. Please go stretch out.”

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“Thank you Sensei,” She said formally before slipping back to normal and saying quietly, “Takashi, if I haven’t said it enough before, I really appreciate how much you have worked with me the last few months. Doing the yoga together has helped me become so much more focused. It has been hard but incredibly rewarding. I am so grateful to have you and Hani in my life. I love you both so much.” She stretched up and placed a soft kiss on his cheek before turning away and walking over to a clear spot to stretch out.

Mori kept his back turned for a moment longer, so no one other than Hani would notice the faint blush on his cheeks. Taking a deep breath he grabbed a couple of mitts and tossed another pair to his
partner. Hani had also stripped down to just a loose pair of pants and was doing a quick warm up.

Kyouya and Tamaki joined her on the floor, doing their own stretches. In unspoken agreement, they all wanted to watch the match, knowing that very few people got to see the champions spar together. Without consciously realizing he was saying it out loud, Kyouya blurted, “Wow, both of their bodies really are machines. They are perfect. It is so impressive the way they move.”

“Yes they are.” Tamaki agreed.

“Aww… are my boys getting all hot and bothered?” Haruhi couldn’t resist tweaking them both. “I could probably arrange a play date if you want.”

“Thanks but I can arrange my own,” Tamaki replied, while Kyouya just turned the full intensity of his gaze on her causing her to shiver. Oh my, that was an interesting response to my teasing. Not that Kyouya would do anything with either of them without me there, but the fact that part of him is starting to acknowledge his attraction is very intriguing and we haven’t even gone to the workshop yet that was going to try and help him open his world view. Now I really can’t wait to see what happens.

Within a few minutes Mori had Hani pinned. Hani tapped the floor to acknowledge the point and have Mori release him. Popping up, another bout began. This time within 5 minutes Hani had Mori pinned.

Laughing at her friends, Haruhi slowly stood up. “They will be going at it for at least another forty-five minutes. I need a shower and something to eat. Feel free to stay and watch though. It’s worth it.”

“I will do that,” Tamaki said as he turned back to the match.

“I think I will join you in the shower instead,” Kyouya said as he also slowly stood up. Reaching for her hand, he entwined his fingers in hers. “Besides we promised to go meet Hikaru and Kaoru this afternoon to see the prep for the show.”

Together they left the dojo and walked down the stairs into Haruhi’s room and the shared bathroom. Kyouya turned on the water before undressing. Stepping into the stall he made some minute adjustments to the water temperature and beckoned for her to join him.

Getting undressed and pulling her hair out of the ponytail, Haruhi stepped into the warm spray. Déjà vu. This is exactly where I was a couple of hours ago, only with Hikaru. I wonder how he handled the drive over with Kaoru and how their preparation is going. I know we are heading over there this afternoon but I also know how flustered he was this morning. I hope they worked it out.

“You are lost in thought Haru-love,” Kyouya whispered, “What do I need to do to turn those thoughts to me?”

“That’s easy, you just have to speak to me,” she replied before kissing him deeply, “but before we head to the convention center, there is something that you need to know. It’s not urgent but it is important. But in this moment, I want to be soapy and wet with you. Make love to me, please.”

“As you wish.” Kyouya responded quoting a movie he knew that Haruhi loved before capturing her mouth, pressing her body against the glass, and showing her exactly how much desired her.

The water ran cool before they finally turned it off.
Hikaru sat in the limo and waited for Kaoru to come down, Haruhi's words echoing in his mind. _Can I stretch our bond to include the others? I don't know. A small part of me wants to grab Kao, tell the limo driver to take us somewhere where no one will find us and keep him for myself. But if I did that I would lose Haruhi, Kyouya and all of the others. I can't do that. They have come to mean too much to me and I know Kao feels the same. The days where he and I alone were enough for each other are gone. It started to fade when Tamaki asked us to join the Host Club and it disappeared completely as soon as we realized that Haruhi could tell us apart. I don't want to go back to that isolation but I don't know what I would do if I lost Kao. Am I losing him?

Touching his chest to alleviate the sudden ache, he tried to reach along the twin bond. A feeling of worry, love, and a faint twinge of guilt met his query. _No. I am not going to lose him. He is part of me and that can't be lost. A few months ago, I challenged Kyouya, point blank, to see if he could accept the idea of sharing Haruhi with me. I knew that the Shadow King would have a hard time doing it and I wanted to see if he was really strong enough to change his deeply ingrained idea of ownership and possession. He did it and aside from a few moments where I can see the jealousy flare, has completely changed the way he looks at the world. Today Haruhi asked if I could stretch the bond that I have with Kaoru to include the others. It's not even as drastic a step as my challenge to Kyouya and yet still it is hard. I need to be fair though. Haruhi taught me that. Kaoru deserves to find the same happiness that I have found with whomever he desires. At least I know Tamaki and I like the person he is. Is it really a stretch to accept they made love to each other when there was already love and friendship there to begin with?

The limo door opened and Kaoru slid onto the seat across from Hikaru. The pensive and worried expression on his face made Hikaru's heart clench. Without a word, he opened up his arms to Kaoru, who flew across the seat and into them. Arms locked around each other and tears streaming down both of their faces, they held each other for a few minutes in silence. Finally Hikaru reached up and wiped the tears away from Kaoru's cheeks and kissed him softly.

"I am sorry Kao. I didn't even think about you having to be alone. I was selfish and I am sorry."

Hikaru's words made a fresh stream of tears slip down Kaoru's cheeks. "No Hika, I knew that you wouldn't be there with me. You needed to be with Haruhi and Kyouya. You still need to be with them to build the bond that you three have together. I know that and I am so very happy that you are building it with two people I care about so much. Last night I just realized how turned on I am by watching the three of you together and I didn't know what to do. I knew that I couldn't join you so I was going to just stay downstairs and watch TV to try and distract myself. But then I started talking to Tamaki and I realized that he was in the same headspace I was. Our conversation was really interesting and enlightening. I think that is the first time I have talked to anyone other than you or Haruhi about something that personal. I also realized how alone he has felt the last few months. He has been here in France while all of us are on the other side of the world. I know we still talk text and video chat, but it isn't quite the same. When he offered to spend the night with me so I wouldn't have to be alone, it made me realize how much he needed the contact too. We both needed the comfort of another person there. I just didn't realize that we both would sleep that deeply."

"I do understand that. Haruhi guessed that was pretty much what happened and talked to me a little bit about it after I saw the two of you together. I have to say it was a shock at first, but I really do understand why it happened. I am glad you weren't alone."
"You know, that girlfriend of yours has come a long way from the oblivious girl we first met," Kaoru said, "though I guess even then she always seemed to have a unique point of view which is what made her fascinating to all of us. She was just completely clueless to anything relating to relationships or love if it involved her. When I think how much that has changed, it is kind of funny. She is the one now that helps us all understand our own feelings or sees the other side of any situation."

"I like to think that we brought her out of her shell, but I guess I am willing to concede that the others may have helped just a bit," Hikaru smiled. "Tamaki taught her that it was ok to love. Kyouya strengthened her ability to challenge any situation, which I think he may actually regret just a teeny bit because, now she voices her opinion rather than swallowing it and just doing what she is told. Mori and Hani helped her realize that she is vulnerable but she can take measures to reduce it. Of course, we made her realize that she is beautiful to us, even if she doesn't always think she is."

"I think the same could be said of us too, my brother. Tamaki accepted us for who we are and included us when no one else would have dared, which opened the door for friendship. Kyouya was a challenge we had to learn to deal with. Hani and Mori taught us respect. Haruhi taught us how to actually let others in." Kaoru added. "I for one am really glad we decided to join the Host Club. I can't imagine our lives without everyone in it now."

"Me either. It's been a really interesting journey and I don't see it ending any way but happy." A sly smirk crossed Hikaru's face as he realized that he had a prime opportunity to tease his twin. "Speaking of 'happy endings', I noticed that both you and Tamaki were naked and wrapped up in each other this morning…"

Kaoru saw the smirk and knew it was exactly the moment that everything was back to normal between them. The double meaning in his statement just confirmed it. "Are you asking for details, brother? Aren't Haruhi and Kyouya enough for you?"

"You know they are, just as you know I still haven't even kissed let alone fucked Kyouya. I haven't even touched him beyond the casual. So technically, you are the first of us to be with another man. Details are required. Now. Especially as I know you aren't bi like me."

"You know Tamaki used the word flexible to describe himself and I have to admit that it pretty much applies to me too. I am mostly attracted to women, but occasionally a guy will catch my attention for some reason or another and I wonder what it would be like. Though mostly I admit it's the guys in the Host Club that seem to do that to me the most often."

"I understand and you are stalling. DETAILS!" The impatience in Hikaru's tone made his brother burst out laughing.

"Ok. Last night Tamaki got on his knees, pressed me up against the wall, and while the firelight and the glow from the snow danced across his chest, gave me a blow-job. It was freaking amazing and different than anything we have done. I offered to return the favor, but he wanted more skin contact so I gave him a hand job instead. We both fell asleep satisfied. Does that answer your need for the details? Now can I hear about the three of you? Because I wasn't kidding when I said watching all of you yesterday made me horny."

For the rest of the limo ride, Hikaru related both the conversation he had with Kyouya while Haruhi was in the bath and the resulting actions. By the end of the tale, both he and Kaoru were smirking in self-satisfaction and laughter, their bond completely renewed, and plans underway to make the rest of the trip even more satisfying to all of the Hosts – whether they wanted it or not.
Exiting the vehicle, they linked arms and walked through the glass doors into the Carrousel du Louvre, the premier venue for Paris Fashion Week. Part convention/exhibition center and part shopping mall, it was a buzz with reporters, shoppers, and fashion devotees who were clamoring for a glimpse of some of the famous designers who would be featured in a few days. The fabulously wealthy and undeniably attractive Hitachiian brothers walking in together arm and arm, caused a minor riot as they waved, blew kisses to the crowd and played up their ‘twincest’ act for any camera’s that happened to be around.

Murmuring so only his brother could hear, Kaoru said, "I wonder what they will do when we bring Haruhi out for the public events and you link arms with her and Kyouya. Are you sure they are ready for such public exposure?"

"I don't know," Hikaru replied sheepishly, "I kind of haven't talked to them about it just yet. I was waiting for the right moment."

Kaoru whipped his head around to look at his brother, "you haven't mentioned it at all? Dear gods Hika, mom has the red carpet all planned and Haruhi is on the bill as going out on the catwalk with us when we are introduced. Please tell me you have mentioned that at least to them."

"Well…"

"Hika!"

"I was planning on asking them this afternoon, when they come by to see us. I was hoping that after they see the excitement of the event they would be eager to join in."

"Right, because being the absolute center of attention is EXACTLY what both Haruhi and Kyouya crave," the sarcasm dripped from Kaoru's voice. "Good luck brother, I have a feeling that you are going to need every ounce of it in the world to get them to do it. Just don't think about what mom will say if they don't."

"Thanks, like I needed to be reminded of that." Hikaru looked up and saw Renge standing in the entrance to the area reserved for Hitachiian Designs, one hand on her hip and her foot tapping impatiently. "Maybe I need to share the luck, Renge looks pissed. We are only a half hour late. I may have to convince my lovers to stand in the spotlight with me, but I have a feeling it will be easy compared to having to work with her for the next week."

"Gods. Don't remind me." Taking a deep breath, Kaoru muttered under his breath as the twins walked over to the waiting girl. "I can do this." Renge's light brown hair was pulled back into a functional ponytail and instead of one of her normal cosplay outfits, she was wearing a simple pair of jeans and fitted button-up shirt. Wow, Kaoru thought, I didn't realize how pretty she actually is when she is not trying to be someone else.

"You both are late," Renge's no-nonsense tone held no room for argument, "I don't really care about why, but your mother is starting to work herself into a panic and it's not fair to her that you don't take your responsibilities seriously."

"Wait a minute, Renge," Kaoru stopped and grabbed her arm, before Hikaru could let loose the scathing words that formed as he heard her disapproving tone. "It was my fault. The alarm didn't go off, so when I was woken up, I didn't have much time to get ready. We are here now and I will talk to mother and make sure that she calms down. This is your first fashion week as her assistant. We
have been going since before we could walk. There is a reason it is called 'fashionably late.' You better get used to it. Fashion never runs on exact time unless you are on the catwalk. I know you are eager to help, but you need to lighten up."

"We take our designs very seriously. Don't you dare question that. You may be think you are impo-"

"Hikaru!" Kaoru sharply cut his brother off in an attempt to reduce the tension that had spiked the moment Renge had opened her mouth. With a slightly softer tone, he continued, "Why don't you go into the area and check to make everything is ready. I will go greet mom and give her our apologies."

Turning abruptly and without saying another word, Hikaru left them, while Kaoru watched his brother's stiff back. He started walking to the lounge area he knew his mother used every year. When he heard Renge breathe a sigh of relief, he turned to her, "I stopped Hikaru because I don't want to be even later to mother, not because I disagreed with what he was going to say. So don't think that I am going to let you call into question either of our integrity for our designs."

"But Hikaru just does Accessories – hats, purses, belts, and jewelry. It's not as important as the dresses."

"Now you are showing your ignorance. Think back to your cosplay. Is the outfit complete without the shoes, the ribbons, or the jewelry? No. It is just as important to the overall design as the fabric. One without the other is incomplete just like Hika and I. I know you are eager to try to show off your design skills and mother has graciously allowed you to create a design and show it under the Hitachiian name this week, but if you want to make it memorable, you need to work with Hikaru. Right now, you are making that difficult."

Fully chastised, Renge put her hand out and stopped Kaoru before he entered the lounge area. "Kaoru-sempai, I am sorry. You are right, I know that. I didn't mean to make you and Hikaru-sempai angry. I am just so anxious to make everything perfect. I want to start my career in fashion and I know that I can learn so much from all of you. I know I can get bossy, but I will try to watch it, I promise. I can be like Tohru in Fruits Basket, eager, sweet and willing to help out any way I can!"

"First Rule. Be yourself, Renge," Yuzuha Hitachiian's cultured voice came out of the room as an elegant woman followed, her stylishly short silver hair floating around her head as her smile lit up the hallway. "If you really want to succeed in Fashion you need to be yourself completely. Fashion is about revealing yourself to the world in the most intimate way. What you find beautiful, intriguing, exciting and sexy. If you are trying to copy something else, you won't make it as a designer."

"Yes ma'am."

"Kaoru- darling," Yuzuha continued as she embraced her son. "Which one of you over-slept and where is my darling Haruhi-yoshi?"

Smiling as he warmly returned his mother's hug, "It was my fault this morning. I was the one who overslept. Haruhi had to wake me. She and Kyouya will be joining us a bit later this afternoon. I sent Hikaru over to the work area, but I came directly over to give my apologies for our tardiness."

"Nonsense, fashion is about being late." Kaoru stifled a smile at the look on Renge's face as his mother echoed his earlier comment. "I am ready to head over to the workspace myself. Shall we all go?"

"Of course, mother." Kaoru linked arms with her and together the three of them walked back down
to the working area. Hikaru, upon seeing his mother, came over immediately to give her a hug.

"Hika-darling, how are you? How is the relationship between you, Haruhi, and Kyouya going? Have you told him you want more yet?"

"Mother!" Hikaru turned a bright red in embarrassment as Yuzuha just laughed. His mother had an uncanny ability to see right through him, even as she offered him her full support. She knew that by falling in love with more than one person her son had chosen a tricky path. It was an interesting dichotomy that in the Fashion World, the idea was unusual but much more easily accepted, whereas to the rest of the world, it was a difficult concept - especially the world in which Kyoya Ootori was raised. Haruhi and Kyoya complete him in a way that not many will ever understand. I just worry about how Kyoya's hidebound and conservative father will take the information when it becomes public. Haruhi is resilient and can bounce back from anything. If the three of them can make it through the issue together, I doubt there will be anything that will be able to break them.

"I will take that as a not yet, though I have a feeling it will be soon. You have been far more patient than I would ever have guessed. Well, the world will find out on Sunday at any rate. They are still accompanying you down the red carpet, correct?"

"Well… I still need to ask them," Looking up into his mother's eyes, Hikaru let the fear that they would deny him show, "I was going to do it this afternoon. I know Haruhi will be willing, it's Kyoya that I am not sure of."

"Just ask him, darling. I know you want to. If for some reason he won't, then we will make it work and he can join the other hosts in the VIP area."

"Speaking of other Hosts, mother," Kaoru interjected, "I hope you don't mind, but we made a change to the venue of the Grand Ball." He went on to describe how Tamaki had redesigned the Suoh Guest House and turned it into an Event venue, and their idea of a way to make it a pillar of the Fashion community.

Yuzuha listened closely as Kaoru explained. *I would help any of the members of the Host Club without thinking twice. They were the ones that were able to finally bridge the isolation my sons were in and gave them the gift of true friendship. Those boys and Haruhi are all like my own children in some ways, I will support all of them any way I can. Though it is interesting to note a faint blush on Kaoru's cheeks at the mention of Tamaki Suoh's name, I wonder what has happened between them.*

"Whatever you need, it is done. I think it sounds like a fabulous idea, and we will be that much more popular for introducing a new venue. I would like to come by next week to look at the house, if I may. Renge will accompany me to take notes for any last minute details or changes."

"Of Course, mom," The two voices in unison never ceased to cause a bit of a smile and a proud warmth in her chest.

"Yes ma'am." Renge's eyes glowed at the opportunity. She and Tamaki had casually kept in touch over the last year, and she remembered his telling her about his plans to alter the house. This would be her chance to really see it. She daydreamed for a moment about descending the grand staircase, while the flashbulbs of a sea of paparazzi waited in the entry hall.

"Earth to Renge," Kaoru voice shattered her daydream as she blushed furiously, "We need to get to work. Why don't you shadow me for a few hours so you can ask questions and get tips, then we can
look at your design. Hikaru is going to be meeting up with Kyouya and Haruhi this afternoon, so we can use the afternoon to finish off any details and he can accessorize it tomorrow morning."

"That sounds like a good idea," she responded and gestured for him to lead the way.

Hikaru watched Kaoru and Renge walk over to the rack where several designs were hanging, choose one and place it on a mannequin. *I hope he is ok working with her. She really annoyed me this morning with her comments about our lateness and her implications that we don't take our work seriously. But Kao must have said something, because she is quiet and actually appears to be listening. Maybe mom didn't lose her mind when she agreed to take Renge on as an assistant. She still bugs me, but I will try to let it go for the sake of harmony. I know that's what Haruhi would tell me to do. Speaking of Haruhi, I am 95% certain she will walk the carpet and the catwalk with me, but will Kyouya? I don't want to admit how much it would mean to me if he did. I know I love them both and want them both beside me, now I just need to trust that they want to be there too. I just wish that wasn't so difficult to do.*

With a sigh, Hikaru turned back to the jewelry he had spread out on the table. *He had three and half hours to make sure everything matched perfectly and was neither too overstated or understated, before Kyouya and Haruhi arrived. Three and half hours before I get to swallow my pride, my fear, and just ask. Gods, give me the strength to do this.*
Decisions

Haruhi explained the situation between Kaoru and Tamaki to Kyouya as they drove to the Carrousel du Louvre. Kyouya listened carefully as he slid through the Paris traffic in the silver Aston Martin DBS. He was still surprised that Tamaki tossed him the keys as they were walking down the stairs, trying to decide if they wanted to take a limo or get a car, since they knew they would be running around this afternoon. Well, Tamaki knows I can't resist slick cars, but now that Haruhi told me about finding them together this morning, I am wondering if this is his way of distracting me from asking questions. If so, Tamaki my friend, you are not getting off that easy. I am going to corner you sometime this week for a conversation and that will definitely be a topic.

"So what do you think?" Haruhi's voice cut into Kyouya's reverie. "I think Hika will be ok, but he was in such a state of shock this morning."

"I think Hikaru is stronger than we may be giving him credit for. If I know you, you talked him down and gave him something to think about. Why are you second guessing yourself now?"

"I don't know. I think that I may just be worried that he will decide that he needs to spend more time with Kaoru and want to stay with him tonight." Haruhi blushed a bit as she continued, "That probably sounds awful. I want him to do what he needs to do for himself, but I am also feeling a little selfish, because I have wanted to have you both with me together for months. I love both of you so much and waking up between you is incredible. I guess I just don't want that to end so soon."

Kyouya smiled as he reached over and took her hand. "I can absolutely understand that, my love. I never thought I would ever get to point that I wasn't at least a little of jealous of Hikaru and you. Now, I can honestly say I am not anymore. I absolutely love watching him make love to you. I love the way your body reacts to him because it's different than the way you react to me. I love watching the way he reacts to you." Coughing a bit to cover up his own blush, "I know this is so far from where I was a year ago, but I am getting curious about the way he would react to my touching him. He is attractive to me in a way I never expected to feel about another man. I just don't know how he feels."

"He would absolutely love it if you touched him," Haruhi smiled back as she stroked the back of his hand where it was entwined with hers. "You have to know he has had a crush on you for a couple of years. He just thought that you would never be interested in him in that way, so he let it go. He is fully bisexual. I know Tamaki and Kaoru consider themselves flexible, but they still prefer women as partners. Hika would be equally happy with a woman or man, regardless of how the rest of the world saw him. I have to really give Yuzuha credit for accepting both her sons for who they are and not who she wants them to be."

"I wish my father had even a fraction of Yuzuha's tolerance." The smile faded as Kyouya thought about the domineering and unrelenting head of the Ootori family. I doubt he will ever accept it if I have a relationship with Hikaru as well as Haruhi. As it stands, he already disapproves that I am willing to share Haruhi with someone else, even if that person is a part of the well-connected as the Hitachiin family.

"I know my love," the love and sympathy evident in her voice. "I wish I had an answer for you on how to deal with your father, but I don't. I will just enjoy every moment I can with you and hope that he never decides to take you away from me."
"I won't let that happen." The firmness and resolve in Kyouya's voice helped alleviate some of Haruhi's fears. Further discussion was curtailed as they pulled into the valet area for the Carrousel du Louvre. After giving the keys to the Aston to the valet, Kyouya linked his hand in Haruhi's and they walked into the convention center toward the hall where they knew the Hitachiin design team was working. Since they were not known to the paparazzi that covered Fashion Week, they were largely ignored as they walked by.

"I think this is the first time that I have ever been ignored by the paparazzi," Kyouya commented quietly to Haruhi as they walked by the line of photographers.

"Ahh… the price of being rich and famous," Haruhi teased her lover, "Funny. I don't have that problem."

"Ha-Ha… Just wait Haru-love, as soon as you are out of high school and we go out in public together in Japan, you too will be front page news. Probably even more than me, actually. I can see the headline now – Wealthy Ootori son caught by Commoner. Article on page 14." he teased right back before getting serious, "Don't worry about it, though. For the most part, they are harmless. They want the juicy tidbits and especially if our relationship with Hika comes out, we WILL be juicy for a while, but it will quickly fade into old news."

"I never really thought about it, but you are right," Haruhi responded, "though, it may come out sooner than you realize. Unless you plan on avoiding me and Hika completely for the next week and a half, the chances of us getting caught on camera at some point are pretty high. I know there will be photographers at the Ball, but at least there we will be surrounded by the other Host club members, so the relationships that we all have may be a bit more muddled. I know, for example, that I will likely be dancing with all of you at some point, which will make it harder to determine if I am specifically dating one of you."

As Haruhi finished her statement, they reached the security guard protecting the entrance to the working area. Kyouya gave their names and the guard called for a member of the Hitachiin group to come and escort them in.

"I am actually impressed at the level of security here," Kyouya commented to Haruhi. "Hika mentioned in passing that it was tight, but I may have to make some suggestions to my family's police force about what I have seen. I know it may seem annoying to wait for and escort, but it also means that someone from HDG will visually identify us as well as having our ID's checked. That way someone can't slip a fake ID past the guard and sneak into the restricted areas."

"I agree," Haruhi answered. "I also sent a text to Hika earlier letting him know we were on our way, so it shouldn't be too long before someone comes to get us."

Just as she finished making her statement, Renge came up to the guard station to identify the couple. She had full identification badges already made up for them and without any further fuss, the guard let them into the restricted area, while telling them to keep their badges on at all times.

Once through the door, Renge turned and gave both Kyouya and Haruhi a hug. "It's so good to see you both! Sorry it is me greeting you instead of Yuzuha, Hikaru or Kaoru, but they thought that since I am still a bit less conspicuous than they are, it made more sense in case some of the paparazzi were watching. I will take you to them."

"I appreciate the consideration." Kyouya said formally.
"Of course," Haruhi answered with a smile for her friend, "So tell me, how is it going as Yuzuha's assistant? I am so excited for you that she is letting you show one of your designs at such a prestigious event."

Renge’s excited chatter kept both Haruhi and Kyoya amused as they traversed the hallways to the working area for Hitachiin Design Group. As soon as they entered Yuzuha, Kaoru and Hikaru immediately came up to greet them. Yuzuha claimed the first hug by pulling them both into her. "Hello my darlings! I am so excited that you are joining us." Turning to Kyoya she said, "Kyoya-yoshi, Hika and Kao were telling me all about the Suoh Guest House and the change in the venue, but I wanted to thank you for using your connections to get all of the last minute details organized and printed."

Kyoya was stunned for a moment before he felt unusual warmth spread through him at Yuzuha's affectionate use of the phrase meaning adopted son. "I have heard her call Haruhi her adopted daughter, but this is the first time she has called me son. I know she knew that I was dating Haruhi too, but her complete acceptance means more to me than I ever thought it would."

A small smile crossed Haruhi’s lips at Kyoya's stunned expression. "He needs to learn that others can accept him for who he is even if it is different from the norm and Yuzuha is the perfect person to get him started. She warmly returned Yuzuha's hug as the older woman turned her focus from Kyoya to her.

"Haru-yoshi. What are you wearing?! That outfit is so three months ago!" With a dramatic wave of her hands, Yuzuha teased the girl her sons cared so much about and who brought such joy to their lives. "I have a wardrobe for you being sent to the Guest House, but right now you need to get changed into that outfit over there, because I am stealing you from the boys. They can go take care of the printing, we are going to lunch. You my darling are going to cause a stir this week."

The stunned look on Kyoya's face was nothing compared to the look that now graced Haruhi’s. Hikaru chuckled as he addressed his mother, "Mama – can I at least say hello before you whisk her off?"

"I suppose so, but make it fast." She winked at her son.

Hikaru pulled Haruhi into a tight hug and whispered in her ear "Whatever my mom tries to convince you of, remember you can say no. She may pout, but she only does it for attention. She really won't make you do anything you aren't comfortable with, including facing the press." Pulling back slightly, he kissed her deeply, "I love you."

Haruhi felt a bit of relief at Hikaru's comment and decided to test his theory. "All right Yuzuha-dono, I will change, but we need to have lunch somewhere relatively private. I am not ready for the cameras just yet."

Yuzuha pouted then laughed as she saw the stubborn look on Haruhi's face, "I see my son warned you before I could work my magic. Of course we can stay out of camera range for now. It will actually stir up more excitement for next week, if we play hard to get."

Kaoru groaned at his mother's words. "Mama, do you ever get tired of manipulating or twisting the press to do whatever you want them too?"

"Never. They are tools to be used to stir up interest. I want them completely interested in our designs this week. I fully plan on winning my bet with Allegra Versace."
"Mama," Kaoru warned, "What exactly did you bet Allegra and what happens to the loser? Hika and I need to know what we are up against."

"Nothing much," Yuzuha waived her hand airily as she continued, "I just bet her that Hitachiin Designs would cause more of a buzz at Fashion Week this year than Versace does. The loser has to wear a gown of the winner's design on the night of the Grand Ball."

Hikaru, Kaoru, and Renge all groaned.

"Thanks mom," Hikaru grumbled, "like we weren't under enough pressure to present designs that the critics will receive. Kaoru, Renge, and I are still in high school and you are putting us up for comparison with the leading Italian designer and reigning Queen of Fashion Week."

"You may still be in high school, but you are Hitachiin and you have been doing this since you could toddle over and grab the fabric I was working on. Fashion is in your blood and I fully intend to showcase that. You my dearest sons have been ready for two years – Now it's your chance to show the world what you can do and shape Fashion for the future." She smiled at both of her beloved sons. "Besides, you have something that Allegra doesn't – friends that love you for who you are, not what you can do for them. Your friends are your biggest advantage. Don't be afraid to let them help."

Haruhi reached out and took a hand of both Hikaru and Kaoru. "Your mother is right. We will do whatever we can to help you, because you deserve it. Whatever you need, we have it covered." She kissed first Hikaru then Kaoru lightly on the lips, before turning back to their mother. "Ok Yuzuha, I will help you win the bet, because not only do I believe in my friends, but I want to see the infamous designer Allegra Versace walk down the staircase wearing one of Kaoru and Hikaru's designs. Show me what you want to change into."

With that, Yuzuha led Haruhi over to a dressing area. Kaoru and Renge turned to go back to the design they were working on, while Hikaru turned to look at Kyouya.

Quietly Kyouya spoke. "I want you to know I am completely with Haruhi on this. Whatever I can do, please let me know. You and Kaoru mean a lot to me. Your friendship has helped me see the world through a different perspective. I … care… about you."

Still not quite what I want, but I will take it as a start. Hikaru took a deep breath and responded, "Let's call for the car and go get the printing completed." He reached into his pocket and called the valet service, telling them to bring the car around to the side entrance. Once that was complete, he gestured to Kyouya to follow him. While they were walking Hikaru turned to Kyouya and hesitantly added, "I care about you too and there is something that I both need and want to talk to you about. I am just scared because I don't know how you will react."

Startled by the statement, Kyouya stopped in mid-step, his silver eyes looking deep into Hikaru's golden ones. "Of your reaction to this," Hikaru glanced quickly around to make sure they were completely alone in the hallway. Seeing that they were, he reached out with one hand to cup Kyouya's face before raising his lips slightly to meet Kyouya's. The first brush was light, tentative, as he half-expected the shadow king to pull away from him and shatter his hopes completely. In fear, he started to retreat, already planning his apology.

Kyouya's mind raced as the feel of Hikaru's lips jolted through him. Gods, I really have wanted this.
I want him. Sensing that Hikaru was about to pull away, Kyouya gave a deep growl and wrapped his arms around Hikaru, one hand sliding into his soft auburn hair while the other slid around his waist. He deepened the kiss, lips wanting more as he traced his tongue across the seam of Hikaru’s lips. It was a request for entrance rather than a demand.

Hikaru was lost in the sensation of Kyoya's mouth on his and eagerly opened to receive Kyoya's tongue. Slowly he slid his against the other as they twisted, teased and tasted each other for the first time. He slid his arms around Kyoya's back holding them together as they explored this new passion. Finally they pulled apart and looked at each other, breath heavy and hearts beating wildly, arms still wrapped around.

"Wow… ummm… yeah. I am not scared anymore." Hikaru laughed shakily.

Kyouya smiled. "I have wanted to do that for a while now. I just wasn't ready to admit it until this trip."

Hikaru's body felt lighter at Kyoya's comment, though his jeans definitely got a bit tighter. He returned the smile while saying, "Haruhi will be so disappointed that she missed it."

"We can't disappoint our princess; we will just have to give her a repeat performance."

"I think I could handle that." Hikaru placed another quick kiss on Kyoya's lips before reluctantly letting him go.

"Good. Because I fully plan on making it a habit."

By mutual accord though still a bit out of breath, both men turned and finished walking down the hall. Upon seeing the car that Kyoya was driving, Hikaru let out a slow whistle as he slid inside. "Wow. Now that is a flashy car. I didn't know you had access to an Aston here."

Kyouya started the car and pulled out onto the road. "I didn't actually. Tamaki tossed me the keys this morning as Haruhi and I were trying to decide if we wanted to take a limo or rent a car. He knows I like fast cars and I have a thing for Astons." Kyouya glanced over at Hikaru as he said Tamaki's name. "Speaking of Tamaki, if you don't mind my asking, Haruhi told me that he and Kaoru spent last night together. I want to know how you are feeling about it."

"Honestly, I was a bit upset this morning, but Haruhi calmed me down and after talking to Kao on the ride over, I am doing a lot better. It really isn't fair for me to be jealous that he spent the night with someone else, when I shared a bed with you both. So yes, I was surprised that it was with Tamaki, but let's just say that as of about 5 minutes ago, I am far less jealous than I was earlier this morning." Hikaru winked at Kyoya.

Kyouya smirked, "Hmmmm… I wonder why." Absently, he stretched his arm out slightly and captured Hikaru's hand with his own as they lapsed into a companionable silence while they sped along the Parisian streets.

Hikaru sighed in contentment as Kyoya's hand curved around his. I have seen Kyoya hold Haruhi's hand like this when we all are driving somewhere. It's really nice to be the one holding his hand, even if there is no one around to see it. After that kiss, why am I still afraid? I need to ask him if he will go on the red carpet with me, but I still don't know if he is willing to go public with me. I have to be willing to accept that our relationship may always be in the shadows. He is the Shadow King after all as well as being an Ootori. Gods, his father! I didn't even think about how hard it
would be for Kyouya to tell his father about a relationship with me. I am so used to my mom accepting everything about me that I can't understand how cold and distant Yoshio Ootori is to his son. I want a relationship with him as much as I want one with Haruhi, and I think I could accept if it had to stay hidden from the public, as long as the ones I care about most knew about it. I don't want to be a guilty secret.

Kyouya saw that Hikaru was deep in thought and decided to stay silent until they reached the print shop. Pulling up to the front of the shop, Kyouya quickly found a parking place and he and Hikaru ran inside to complete their errand. The shop owner was thrilled to be able to help out such prestigious customers and assured them that the banners, flyers, and invitations would be complete in three days.

Satisfied with the completion of the errand they decided to stop for lunch before heading back to the convention center. They found a quiet little sushi restaurant. Sitting across from each other in a booth, they ate and chatted about a number of different topics, before a stray thought crossed Hikaru's mind which made him suddenly laugh out loud.

Looking at him in puzzlement Kyouya asked, "What's so funny?"

Waving his hands around to include the restaurant, Hikaru replied, "This. I think this is the first time that you and I have actually been alone for any length of time without at least one of the others with us. It's like our first date happened and we didn't realize it until we were halfway through it."

Kyouya laughed with him. "Apparently is a day for firsts. My father would be disappointed. Let's see… since waking up less than 8 hours ago, my firsts have been – Seeing Haruhi doing partner yoga with Mori, not having my photo taken by the paparazzi, kissing you and now our first date. How about you?"

"Watching Haruhi and Mori do yoga always gives me chills, they are so beautiful together. I am always just a teensy bit relieved that every time I have watched them, she immediately comes over to me after. I am too scared of Mori to be jealous, but damn, the two of them together in that moment are just so perfect, it makes my heart ache a little bit. I am just thankful that she loves me and not him. Well, she does love him, but at least she doesn't love him the same way she loves us. Does that make sense?" At Kyouya's nod and emphatic agreement, Hikaru continued, "Let's see, other firsts. Kaoru beat me in the sleeping with another man category, but I think that first for me may be remedied soon, so I won't worry too hard about it, so kissing you and our first date round it out."

"I think you are right, you don't need to be jealous of Kaoru."

"And you don't need to worry about what other's think of you." Hikaru responded as he reached across, grabbed Kyouya's hand and brought the knuckles to his lips. Still holding the hand, he continued, "Haruhi and I, along with all of the others in the club love you for whom you are. Not who others expect you to be. I just wish there was something I could do about your father. I want you to know, right now before anything happens between us, that if you need to keep our relationship quiet and out of the public eye, I will make sure it happens. I just ask that we not keep it a secret from the others in the club. I can handle the world not knowing, but I can't handle being a guilty little secret kept from the people I care about most."

"I would never ask you to keep our relationship a secret from the others. Hell, it wouldn't surprise me if Hani, Tamaki, and Mori have a bet on when we announce it to them. If you think about it, all of us have unique relationships with the others, and for whatever reason, it works. I know that I can be completely myself with any of you and I won't be judged for it. That is so far from the way I was
brought up, that I treasure it far more than the wealth of my family." He reached across the table and stroked Hikaru's cheek. "I don't know what I am going to do about my family. Once upon a time, I couldn't imagine wanting anything other than proving that even though I was the third son, I would be the best heir to the Ootori Empire. Now... I am starting to think that maybe instead of following an ideology I don't agree with and cutting out everything that makes me happy to be a 'dutiful son', I can find a way to build my own empire. I am not worried about the money. I made sure that I have wealth and power without him, just to prove that I could. I just don't know if I stepped away if I would still have the Ootori honor."

"I think you have far more honor in your actions and interactions with others than your father does. For him it is only about what can be gained. For you, it is about how you can make the world a better place for those you love. That, to me at least, is the far more honorable path."

For the second time that day, Kyouya was stunned at the words of another. He couldn't speak. Quietly Hikaru got up from the table, paid the bill, and came back to get Kyouya. Wordlessly he climbed into the driver's seat and drove both of them back to the Carrousel du Louvre. I hope he finally heard what all of us have been trying to tell him for years.

Do I really have more honor than my father? I know the workers and vendors prefer to come to me, but I just assumed that it was out of the respect for him, that they didn't want to burden the Head of the family with their petty problems. Kyouya's thoughts kept looping until he looked up and realized that they were back at the convention center and the valet was waiting for him to exit the vehicle. Blinking rapidly, Kyouya focused on the moment and turned back to Hikaru, noticing they were still far away from the area with all the paparazzi. He then realized that Hika hadn't spoken a word since his declaration in the restaurant. Smiling in relief he said, "Thank you."

Hikaru breathed his own sigh of relief and returned that smile with a grin of his own. "Shall we go back inside? I figure Haruhi will need rescuing from Mom, right about now."

"Let's go." Kyouya linked arms with Hikaru as they walked back to the working area.

Sure enough, Haruhi's eyes lit up in relief as she saw her two lovers stroll back into the workspace. She approached both of them, kissed them both on the cheek and ironically said, "Bye."

"Huh?!!" Two puzzled expressions looked at her.

"You guys left without saying goodbye."

"We are so sorry Haru-love!" Both sets of arms wrapped around her as she laughed.

"So does this mean that you will do it?" Yuzuha clapped her hands as she saw the three laughing together, their arms wrapped around each other's waists.

"Do what, Yuzuha?" Kyouya inquired.

"Mom! I didn't get a chance to ask yet!"

"What did you want to ask us Hika-love?"

"I was trying to work up the courage to ask you both if you would join me on the red carpet for the opening ceremonies." Hikaru blushed as he rushed through the rest of the statement. "I just didn't want you to have to openly admit your relationship with me, if you didn't want to. I mean there are
"I think you have far more honor in your actions and interactions with others than your father does."
"I want you to know, right now before anything happens between us, that if you need to keep our relationship quiet and out of the public eye, I will make sure it happens." Hikaru's voice echoed in Kyouya's head. Suddenly the internal debate about honor was resolved in Kyouya's mind. Turning to Haruhi he said, "You did miss something, but it doesn't really matter now. You already know, you just haven't realized it yet."

"I will proudly walk the red carpet with my lovers. I will make that statement for the world and I will answer it with the ones I honor the most beside me." With that final statement Kyouya pulled Hikaru into his arms and kissed him deeply, while Haruhi, Kaoru, Yuzuha, and Renge stood by smiling.

"I am SO going to win my bet with Allegra!"
Tripping and Falling

The rest of the afternoon passed quickly for the group at the Carrousel du Louvre. Plans for the Red Carpet opening aside there were still a ton of final details to complete before Hitachiin Design Group was ready to show their fashions to the Paris scene. Hikaru, Renge, and Kaoru ran around like madmen tucking, tacking, and making sure that every line, crease and fold was perfect. For their part, Haruhi and Kyoya went wherever they were needed, did whatever was asked, and once again became "dolls" for the frantic trio. It was during one of those mad dash runs to get more crinolines, when Kaoru and Renge collided into each other, both falling backward. Kaoru managed to regain his balance, but Renge went sprawling across the marble floor, her cry of pain sudden as her ankle twisted underneath her. Tears immediately sprang to her eyes as she sat on the cold floor and held her ankle.

"Renge! Oh my gods! Are you ok? I am so sorry!" Kaoru's worried voice brought everyone in the area running.

"What Happened?" Yuzuha demanded.

"Renge and I collided and she fell." He knelt down and addressed Renge directly. Caressing her cheek with one of his hands and wiping away the tears with the other he continued, "Renge-chan, are you ok? Where are you hurting? Do you need me to take you to the hospital? Do you want me to call an ambulance?"

"I … I don't think I need an ambulance, but I may need to go to the hospital. I can turn it slightly so I don't think it's broken but my ankle really hurts. I think the rest of me is ok, but I can barely feel my toes."

Before Kaoru could say anything else, Kyoya walked over. "I have called the valet and he is bringing the Aston around. While you are on the road, I will call the hospital and make sure there is an Ootori Group doctor available as soon as possible. I can't guarantee that it will be immediate, because this is an emergency room and life-threatening illnesses always are given priority, but I will make sure you are seen as quickly as possible."

"I will call Tamaki and make sure that he knows that Renge will be joining us at the Suoh Guest House. We really aren't using all the rooms, so there will be more than enough space for her. Besides it will be really nice to have another girl around." Haruhi added.

"I don't want to be a bother, really," Renge started to protest but it was caught off midstream as Kaoru chose that moment to slide his arms around her and pick her up. "Put me down. I can hop to the exit."

With a smile, Haruhi couldn't resist saying, "Good luck with that. If you ever find a way to get any of the Host Club members to not coddle you when they think you are in pain then I will pay you whatever you want for the secret. I haven't found a way to change any of their minds when they have gotten it into their heads that I am helpless. Even though I am not."

Renge was able to summon up a feeble smile at Haruhi's comment. *I do have to admit it feels kind of nice to be coddled.* She looked up into Kaoru's worried eyes. *His eyes are so golden with little flecks of amber. I never really noticed it before. He is gorgeous.* "I can think of worse things than having a hot guy worry about me." A shooting pain in her ankle caused her to gasp in pain. "Please take me to
the hospital. I want to be able to finish Fashion Week - hopefully without crutches."

"Don't push yourself Renge-dear," Yuzuha warned. "You are a part of it but we don't want you hurt worse than you are. Kao-love, I just heard the car pull up."

"On my way," Kaoru carried Renge out the door, while Hikaru cleared the path. Once they were gone, Hikaru returned to the work area.

"Well mom, I think that's the end of the day for us. I think we just have some finishing touches left and those can wait. I was going to go sight-seeing with Kyoya and Haruhi tomorrow, but if you need me here…"

"I think we will be ok. If I know Renge, she will be back tomorrow, come hell or high water. I will make sure she doesn't overdo it. I also saw that look in your brother's eyes and he feels responsible for her injury, so there is a very good chance she will have a Kaoru-shaped shadow tomorrow. We can finish up any details. Go and have fun the three of you. Enjoy your last few days away from the cameras."

"Are you sure mom? I know I don't quite have Kao's eye for clothing, but I am not bad."

"I am positive, and while you may not quite have his clothing eye, he doesn't have your eye for jewelry or shoes. That, my dear son, is far more important to most women than a scrap of cloth. Together you are complete Fashion Kings. Now I want you to have some fun with the other people that complete you."

"Thank you Yuzuha," Kyoya said as he kissed her cheek, while Hikaru blushed. "We will check in tomorrow and see how it is going. If you need us, we are only a phone call away."

Haruhi walked up and grabbed Hikaru's hand before pulling him with her so she could grab Kyoya's as well. She threw a saucy wink at Yuzuha over her shoulder while the other woman laughed as she watched the trio walk to the waiting limo.

True to his word, Kyoya called the hospital and arranged for a doctor to look at Renge as quickly as possible. Closing his phone he looked up to see Haruhi sitting across from him her arms folded and a smirk on her lips. Hikaru sat next to him and looked guilty.

"So my darling lovers… Are you going to finally tell me what I missed?" She challenged as she stared directly at Kyoya before pinning Hikaru with the same light in her eyes.

"I can do better than that," Kyoya answered her challenge by turning and pulling Hikaru into his arms. His lips crushed those of the younger man and demanded that his mouth open to receive his questing tongue. Hikaru groaned in passion as he willingly opened to let the other man in but drew the line at his submission to the other. Their tongues battled for dominance as their hands followed suit – alternating between caressing and pulling at their clothing to allow skin contact.

Haruhi just watched her two lovers for a few minutes, enjoying the view of two incredibly attractive men making out in front of her and knowing that both of them had been wanting it for months. I am really happy for both of them and I can't wait to see what this does to our dynamic. A giggle escaped her lips as she started fantasizing as she watched. She fidgeted in her seat as a warm tingling started between her legs.

Her giggle broke through the erotic dominance game that was happening between Kyoya and
Hikaru. Breathing heavy they pulled apart, looking at each other before turning as one and looking at their lover. Neither had conceded defeat, but there was one person they both knew would willingly submit to the passion that was coursing through them. With a quick glance and a slight head nod, both men pulled off their shirts and stalked across the limo toward their lover.

Haruhi felt tiny and cornered, like a rabbit under the gaze of two hungry wolves. The fire in their eyes told her that she was about to be devoured and she would enjoy every moment of the torment. They pinned her to the seat, each trapping one of her knees between their legs and one arm at shoulder height pressed into the seat.

"We want you."

"We are in a limo on the way back to see the rest of the group."

Hikaru pushed a button on the intercom and told the driver to drive around for another half hour before taking them back to the Guest House.

"We want you. Now."

"I don't know Kyouya, she seems to need to be convinced a bit more." Hikaru slid the free hand that wasn't pinning her to the seat across Kyouya's chest and down his abdomen to caress the bulge that was very apparent in Kyouya's pants. He watched as Haruhi's eyes were glued to every movement of his hand. She bit her lip as Hikaru scratched his nails lightly over the taut fabric and Kyouya let out a slow moan of pleasure. He leaned in and breathed against her ear "are you enjoying the show, my princess? You aren't leaving this limo without giving us your orgasm. It's just a matter of time."

Haruhi shivered at the delightful threat in Hikaru's voice, as he kissed his way down her neck. He pulled his hand from the back of the seat and slid it up her leg under the skirt his mother had made her change into. Feeling the dampness that was spreading through her panties he flicked his fingers against the satin as he continued to caress the hardness of Kyouya's erection.

She couldn't resist any longer as she slid her hands under her skirt to remove her panties, before reaching over and unzipping the fly on Kyouya's pants. "I want Kyo's fingers in me, while yours are wrapped around his cock."

"That can be arranged," Kyouya murmured as slid his pants further down his legs and repositioned himself to give Hikaru easier access to his cock and to give his fingers the best angle to hit all of the sweet spots inside of her.

"I can do better than that," Hikaru grinned wickedly as he leaned down and took Kyouya's cock in his mouth. The Shadow King's breath caught before it released in a low deep moan. Haruhi leaned over and captured his mouth with hers as she drank in that moan, her own building as Kyouya started thrusting his fingers in and out of her. He knew the rhythm, hard-fast-deep, then out slowly caressing across the sensitive clit, back in again fingers curved to put pressure on her g-spot. He knew exactly how to make her cum in less than two minutes... he just hadn't counted on the distraction of a warm wet mouth sucking and teasing him as he was trying to do so. The sensations were overwhelming, and Kyouya was rapidly losing the battle on his own control.

Hikaru smiled to himself as he continued to work his tongue and hands around Kyouya's hard member. Each lick was sweeter than any lollipop and he relished the feel of the satin skin over iron as he took Kyouya deeper and deeper into his mouth. He knew the shadow king couldn't hold out much longer and it became a sort of game to see who would find their release first - Haruhi or
Kyouya.

Haruhi was on the edge, one hand gripped Kyouya's shoulder while the other was tangled in Hikaru's hair as he went down on Kyouya's cock. Her body craved the release she knew was coming, the slightly offbeat rhythm of the fingers delving deep in her held her on the edge for far longer than she was used to. Finally though, a simultaneous caress of her clit and the pressing of her deep spot sent her crashing over the edge with a scream. The deep walls gripping his fingers as they throbbed in time with her heartbeat and her body floated on the wave of each beat.

Kyouya lost the battle with his own control the moment that he felt the first throb of Haruhi around his fingers, groaning deeper than he had ever before, his hips bucked and jerked as his seed flooded Hikaru's waiting mouth. Swallowing every drop, Hikaru countered each pulse with a caress of his tongue stretching the orgasm out for as long as he could. Finally he let go as Kyouya slid his fingers out of Haruhi. But he wasn't quite finished, before Kyouya could react, Hikaru's mouth clamped down on the fingers that had been getting Haruhi off. Sucking every drop of her sweet muskiness, Hikaru hummed around Kyouya's fingers before finally releasing them and licking his lips in pleasure.

"Greedy man, I wanted that." Kyouya said while Haruhi laughed at Hika's expression.

"You get the next one. I wanted to be the first to taste both my lovers."

"I guess that's fair since you did help bring us both without getting the same release in return."

"Oh I fully intend to be the center of attention later," the mischievousness on Hikaru's face was enough to set both of the others into a fit of giggles.

"Why wait until later?" Haruhi said as she crawled across him and kissed him deeply, tasting both herself and Kyouya on his tongue. "Mmm... that's a tasty kiss."

"Now I am feeling left out," Kyouya followed Haruhi's example and drew back with a smile at Hikaru's heavy breath. He reached out to caress the hardness that was still in Hikaru's jeans.

"Unfortunately, we just turned into the driveway for Suoh house," the regret was evident in Hikaru's voice.

"We will make it up to you. I promise Hika-love. Such sacrifice needs to be rewarded," Haruhi teased.

Hikaru just smiled as he handed his lovers their discarded clothing. By the time they reached the front door of the Guest House, all traces of their activities had been erased and the limo was back to its normal state.

"I wonder how the others spent their day?" Haruhi asked idly.

"I know Hani and Mori were heading to the hall where the tournament is going to be held to oversee the last minute preparations. I am not sure what Tamaki did though." Kyouya answered.

"I am sure we will find out." Hikaru added.

The door to the limo opened and the three of them exited, pausing once again to look at the beauty of Suoh Guest House before entering the building. Once inside they walked over to the Library to see if
the rest of the guys were over there and to give them the update about Renge.

Hani and Mori were entranced in a chess game, while Tamaki was watching a soccer game. He looked up at their entrance and said, "I just got a text from Kaoru. Renge sprained her ankle pretty badly but she will be fine in a few days if she rests and elevates it. He is bringing her back here, since we have the space."

"That's good to hear." The relief in Haruhi's voice was clear.

Mori looked up at the sound of Haruhi's voice and looked at the trio. Blinking twice he looked again before saying, "Mitskune, Tamaki, you owe me $100."

Hani looked at his cousin then looked at the puzzled expressions of Kyouya, Haruhi, and Hikaru and at the slightly smug expression on Tamaki's face. "Damn, you are right. I thought for sure it wouldn't be until Friday night."

"At least you came closer than I did. I had it figured for Sunday night."

"What exactly are you talking about and why do both of you owe Takashi $100?" Kyouya's voice held every ounce of his Shadow King persona.

"You and Hikaru finally got together, of course, Kyo-chan" Hani replied using the full force of his lolita-shan cuteness to counteract the coldness of the shadow king.

At that Haruhi burst into a fit of the giggles, while both Hikaru and Kyouya turned beet red.
Haruhi couldn't stop laughing at the expressions on her lovers faces. Glancing at the others, she saw equal glee on the faces of Takashi, Hani and Tamaki mixed in with just a touch of wistfulness on Takashi's. She caught his eye and winked at him, which made one of his rare smiles spread across his face.

"Only $100 Takashi? I would have thought that you could do better than that. I was sure that knowing Hani's competitive side that it would have been more as well as some horrible deed the losers had to perform."

"It was all that I could get Tamaki to agree to. He insisted that it wouldn't be right to wager more because you are all our friends. But the losers do have to do some unspecified task of the winner's choosing, so I will need your help in coming up with something creative."

"I can't think of much that we wouldn't normally do, Takashi," Hani replied impishly, "you will have to get REALLY creative to make it difficult."

"Please don't give Mori any ideas," Tamaki pleaded, his violet eyes looking over at the other golden haired angel. "I don't know if I could handle it."

"Oh Tama, you know I will happily help Takashi make you do any number of uncomfortable things. Payback for all those years of dreadful cosplay that you put me through, you know," Haruhi teased her former lover with an evil grin.

"I will take you up on your offer, Haruhi," Takashi grinned at her, "Though it may be fun to have your lovers input as well, since they were the object of the wager."

The high color had slowly subsided on both Hikaru and Kyouya's faces and they were following the conversation with enjoyment and good nature. It hadn't surprised Kyouya that there was a wager, knowing as he did how much all of the host club members enjoyed competing with each other on the rare opportunity they all stood on a level playing field. In anything related to Martial Arts, Hani and Mori had the definite advantage. In anything research or analytical, he and Haruhi were hard to beat. For anything that required trickery or misdirection the twins were the undefeated and the reigning kings. Even Tamaki had the advantage when they needed to coerce or wheedle information or something more substantial out of another. *We all have our strengths, which is why it is so rare that the opportunity to bet on each other arises. I am very curious about what Takashi will come up with. I would be willing to offer some suggestions.*

Hikaru just nodded. A random thought crossed his mind and he voiced it out loud. "I also want to help Mori, since I was part of the bet. But I have a question that is probably totally random, but one I just noticed." Turning to Haruhi he asked, "I noticed that you are now calling Mori – Takashi and I can completely understand why, since the bond you share is obvious when you are doing any sort of martial art or yoga. Plus he talks more around you than anyone else. But you have the same closeness with Hani, but you don't call him Mitskune. In fact the only one who does is Mori. Is there a reason that I am missing?"

"Good catch Hika-chan," Hani answered for all of them. "Takashi asked Haru-chan to call him by his given name, because to the rest of the world he is "Mori" and we call him Takashi because we mean more to him. For me, to the world I am 'Mitskune" and the nickname Hani was one that Tama-
chan gave me and I really like." He blushed a little as he continued, "it sounds the same as the word Honey, which in English means "sweet one" and I kind of like being the sweet one of the Host Club. I know Takashi still calls me Mitskune, but there is a different reason for that."

"That makes sense. Mori-sempai, what form of address would you prefer that Kao and I use? I know we are not as close to you as Hani or Haruhi, but you are our friend."

"I would prefer that all of you call me Takashi, actually. You all are the family I would choose. We all have a bond that cannot easily be broken."

A glimmer of tears threatened to fall, as Haruhi watched her lovers and her dearest friends all openly say what had been implied for years. We have all come a long way together.

"Aw, my family is all together, Daddy is soooo happy!" Tamaki's teasing tone cut through the emotion that was building and brought them all back to normal in a light-hearted fashion. Bringing the conversation back around, he added. "So Takashi, what are you going to make Hani and I do?"

"I think I will need a couple of days to plan and discuss. Whatever it will be will happen this Saturday night. Just to be fair, is there anything that you absolutely wouldn't do?"

"Takashi, I think you are being more than fair and you know there isn't much that I wouldn't do," Hani answered with a wink at his secret lover.

"I can't think of anything short of murder or other illegal activity, I wouldn't do… and I know you wouldn't ask us to do something that was truly against our values." Tamaki answered.

"OK then. Saturday night I will have something for both of you."

"Oh I have a feeling I am really going to enjoy watching this!" Haruhi giggled.

"Me too." Kyouya said as he came up behind her, wrapped his arms around her waist, and set his head on her shoulder.

Hikaru just looked at them and smiled. Walking over, he kissed them both on the cheek and settled down on one of the couches. Checking his phone for messages, he saw one from Kaoru that posted about 20 minutes earlier. "It looks like Kao and Renge should be here any moment."

No sooner had the words left his mouth, then there was a rustle at the front entrance and Kaoru came in helping a limping Renge. He cautiously guided her over to one of the couches, pulled over a coffee table, placed a pillow and gently put her ankle on top of it. Only after he had her settled, did he look up and say hello to the rest of the club. "Hey everyone, sorry we are late. What's for dinner? Renge's feeling a little limp." Everyone groaned at the bad pun.

"Since last night was simple French, tonight is simple Italian – lasagna, salad, antipasto, fresh bread. Everything is set up in the dining room, but I can have it brought in here if we want to be really casual."

"Please, don't go troubling yourself about me," Renge responded, "I can hobble over to the dining room if all of you would prefer to eat in there."

Sweeping his arm into a deep bow, Tamaki got down on one knee, took her hand in his and said, "Princess, it is no trouble at all. We live to please and it would break out hearts to see you in more
Renge stared at Tamaki for a moment, completely struck dumb by his gallantry. It was only when she looked up and saw Haruhi mouth the words "I TOLD YOU" that her paralysis was broken and she burst out laughing.

"Oh Haruhi, I see EXACTLY what you mean!"

"Hey!"

All the rest of the hosts laughed at Tamaki's feigned expression of hurt. Bouncing back up, he quickly organized the others into getting the food from the other room and setting it up in the Library. Soon they were all sitting comfortably on couches or sprawled on the floor eating dinner and enjoying the casual conversation. Topics ranged from Fashion Week, to the upcoming Martial Arts tournament, to the Workshop the group was still planning on attending. It wasn't until they were all enjoying a delicious tiramisu that they noticed that Renge was trying to stifle her yawns. After the fourth one however, Kaoru caught her.

"Renge, you must be exhausted. I know the adrenaline from earlier has to have worn off and the pain killers too."

"Well I am a bit tired. I was up early this morning because I was so excited to get to work. I know it's only 10pm, but would anyone mind if I went to sleep?"

"Not at all, Renge," Tamaki replied. "Yuzuha sent over some clothes, so you have things to change into."

"Why don't you put her in Hikaru's and my room? That way she is close to and can call Haruhi if she needs help with anything personal – like assistance changing or getting to the bathroom. I will sleep somewhere else." Kaoru rushed through the last part, looking up at Tamaki with a half-formed unspoken request.

"I think that would be a great idea and I am sure we can find someplace else for you to sleep." The deep undertones were picked up by all of the other host club members, but were completely lost on Renge. Haruhi, Kyouya, and Hikaru smirked to each other, while Hani and Mori shared a look.

"Are you sure? I really don't want to kick anyone out of their room."

Haruhi saw Renge's look of earnestness and hastily reassured her that she wouldn't be troubling anyone. "I actually think it is a great idea. I am close by if you need, but the walls are well insulated, so just send me a text message in case I don't hear you when you call. I will have my phone by the bed and I set it to beep whenever I get a message from you. I promise you that it really is no trouble. If you want to go up now, I can help you get undressed and ready to sleep."

"Thank you. I would really like that," Renge's shy response was so different from her usual boisterous self that the all of the others were a little bit surprised. Haruhi was less so, having spent several days with her over the summer and genuinely gotten to like the girl. I think she is finally learning how to be herself, rather than trying to be one of the characters from her favorite Anime. If she keeps it up, she is going to have all the men of the club eating out of her hands before she or any of them realize it. I will watch it, but it doesn't bother me too much. The real Renge is a very sweet person who deserves to find happiness and if it is with one of the other members of the Host Club like Kaoru or Tamaki, I will be happy for her and them.
Without a word, Takashi walked over, picked her up and started carrying her up the stairs, Haruhi following in his wake. Kaoru started to protest, but shut up at the look on Mori's face. *He's stronger than I am and can better carry her up the stairs. I just... I don't know, it was kind of nice having Renge in my arms earlier.* Looking up, he caught Tamaki staring at him, smoldering fire burning in his violet eyes. A quick shudder ran through his body. *I am guessing Tama won't mind my sharing a bed with him again. I could always sleep alone in what is technically Kyouya's bedroom since he and Hika will be in with Haruhi again, but if I am honest, I want to be with Tamaki again tonight. He is a really considerate lover.*

"So Kao-chan, are you going to share a bed with Tama-chan again?"

The knowing look that Hani gave him, coupled with the direction his thoughts had turned, completely startled Kaoru. He looked quickly at his twin who held up his hands in complete innocence. He also glanced quickly over at Tamaki, who was turning a faint shade of pink, before mouthing the words "It wasn't me, I swear!" Finally turning back to the older boy, he stammered, "Wha.. What do you mean exactly?"

Hani was thoroughly enjoying teasing Kaoru and Tamaki. The blushes on both of their faces were priceless and completely made up for his losing the bet on Hikaru and Kyouya to Takashi. "Well, let's see... I was referring to walking into Tamaki's room this morning to see if it was ok to use the dojo and seeing both of your lovely naked bodies wrapped around each other. Neither of you wanted to let the other go."

Both Tamaki and Kaoru turned beet red at Hani's blunt words. Kyouya just leaned back in his chair and smirked. He knew about the instance from what Haruhi and Hikaru had told him, but he also knew that Hani and Mori were lovers as well. It never bothered him, but he realized that aside from Haruhi, none of the others had really put two and two together. It appeared that Hani was about to enlighten them.

"Ummm..."

"I didn't want to be alone and-"

"I am not judging you my friends," Hani said with a much softer tone, "In fact, quite the opposite. If either of you are interested in sharing mine or Takashi's bed you would be welcome. As Hika, Kyo, and Haru-chan know, these beds are more than big enough for three or four. I would extend the offer them as well, but I am afraid that they are rather wrapped up in themselves, right now, and justifiably so."

The stunned look on Kaoru, Hikaru and Tamaki's faces made Kyouya shake in silent laughter. Hani saw the not-so-surprised look on Kyouya's face and raised an eyebrow in a silent question. Still smiling and wanting to give his stunned friends a few more minutes to recover, he decided to answer. "Oh, I am not surprised. Both Haruhi and I have known for years that you and Takashi were lovers," three sets of eyes swiveled to him as he continued, "I am honored by your interest, but as you say, for right now at least, the three of us need to work out our own dynamic, before we open up to others. I just kissed Hikaru for the first time today. Is it wrong that I want him to myself for a bit?"

"Not at all Kyo-chan and I appreciate your honesty." Breaking out into a fit of giggles, he continued, "I think it's funny. We are all going to this Alterna workshop in a couple of days to learn about alternative lifestyles, while in actuality we have been living them and just hiding it from everyone." His tone turned serious again. "I just don't want to hide anymore from the people that I care about the
"What are you hiding Mitskune?" Takashi returned to the room, followed almost immediately after by Haruhi.

Kaoru looked up at Haruhi and before he could say anything, she forestalled him, "Renge fell asleep almost as soon as her head hit the pillow. I helped her get changed, while Takashi got her pain medication ready. She took it and was out. Poor thing must still be in a lot of pain and hiding it. This brings me to echo Takashi's question. What are you hiding, Hani?"

Hani looked up at the two and grinned mischievously. "I was actually saying that I don't want to hide anymore and I let both Kaoru and Tamaki know that if they were ever interested they would be welcome to share either my or Takashi's bed. I also told Hika and Kyo, that the three of you would also be welcome, but he declined for the moment – something about needing to build the dynamic among the three of you."

Haruhi threw her head back and laughed heartily, "So that is why Kyouya looks smug, Tamaki and Kaoru look stunned and Hikaru is trying to decide whether he wants to take you up on the offer or not."

Hikaru flashed a guilty look before blowing her a kiss and winking. *It's odd having a lover who knows you that well. I am just grateful she isn't concerned or jealous.*

"You could have waited until later this week Mitskune," Takashi gently chided. "There have been a lot of revelations today, and I am not sure that Tamaki, Kaoru, and the others were quite ready."

Mori's gentle voice finally broke through the stunned silence of Tamaki and Kaoru. Kaoru went over and cuddled into his brother, needing the familiar contact to process through the revelations in his head. Hikaru just kissed him briefly and held him, while he sorted out his thoughts.

Tamaki was quicker to recover. "Revelations. That is one way of putting it. I had no idea that Hani came into my room this morning. Not that I was trying to hide anything. I offered to keep Kaoru company last night since I knew he was going to spend the night alone and he took me up on it. I was going to offer the same tonight as Renge is sleeping in his bed. I know I am flexible sexually, but while I really enjoyed our time together and would happily do it again, his comfort is more important to me. If he doesn't want to join me that is completely ok."

"I think I do want to join you," Kaoru's voice was muffled since his head was still buried against his brother's chest. Turning it slightly to look up at the others before focusing on Tamaki, it became clearer, "I really enjoyed last night and I take your offer at face value. I want to do it again. It just seems like an extension of our friendship. It's not really even odd or uncomfortable. Hani, Takashi, I also take it as an honor that you offer this aspect of your friendship and that you trust me with that side of you, since you don't share it with others. I don't know if or when I will take you up on it, but I know it is there."

"I probably will take you up on it, eventually," Tamaki winked at the other two. "I don't know why it was a surprise to me that you are lovers because it makes so much sense, but since I have been attracted to both of you since the very beginning, I can't resist the offer now that it is in front of me. Though, like Kaoru, I can't promise that it will be anytime soon."

"Mitskune wanted to put it out there and I agreed. When or if, timing doesn't matter. It will happen when it is supposed to."
"Not wanting to interrupt, but is anyone else suddenly really horny?" Hikaru couldn't resist saying.

"Hmm… let's see. At some point in the last fifteen minutes all of us have pictured everyone else in this room having sex with various other people in this room. Quick glance around also reveals several distinct bulges, and while I may be immune to a visible physical response, I promise that there is still a definite response occurring. I would say that it is safe to surmise that we are all a bit horny."

"I love it when you talk nerdy," Kyouya bit into her shoulder causing her to gasp and stifle a moan.

"I think that means it's time for bed." Hikaru reached out and caught her wrist, laying a kiss and a gentle bite across it causing her to attempt to quell yet another moan of desire.

One by one, the others gave each other hugs or quick kisses and headed upstairs to the various bedrooms. Saying goodnight at the door, Haruhi watched as Kaoru and Tamaki went into Tamaki's room and Hani and Takashi entered Hani's room. Stepping into the room and toward her lovers, she smiled. "I think it's time we rewarded Hika for his patience. What do you think Kyo-love?"

"I think that tonight is going to be the start of a series of very interesting days, not only for us, but everyone else in the Host Club. I can't wait to see what happens."
Kaoru stretched and reached out to caress the warm body sharing his bed. This morning, unlike the one before, there wasn't any surprise at finding a golden haired god in the bed next to him. Well, flopped on him would be a more precise term, since most of Tamaki's torso and legs were pinning Kaoru to the soft cotton sheets. *He definitely is a cuddler. It's nice because Hika is the same way. I kind of like waking up pressed between the sheets and muscle. A smile flickered across his face. I don't know how long this thing with Tama is going to last, but I will enjoy it while I can.*

He tilted his head slightly and gently kissed the lips of the Host on top of him. Deep violet eyes lazily opened and looked deep into his amber colored ones, the truth of deep friendship and joy shining brightly in their depths. The happiness spread from violet eyes to soft pink lips as they stretched into a smile, before descending to the matching pair below. The kiss was shared joy, desire, and companionship and it left both a little breathless when it concluded.

"Damn Tamaki. You really know how to kiss."

"Thank you, my prince. I do enjoy it."

"It shows, mon ami. But it has put me in a quandary…"

"Oh?"

"I have to get ready to go back to the Convention Center today, but part of me would far rather spend it lying naked in bed with you."

Tamaki smirked, "I think that's the best compliment that I have heard in a long time." He rolled over and looked at the clock. "But you still have a little time…"

"I know, but I wanted to beat Hika downstairs this time. I also wanted to see if I could sneak up and watch Haruhi and Mori do yoga for a bit. I have heard everyone say it's something else, but I haven't actually seen it."

"It really is beautiful to see them together, but I don't think even she is up yet, though it wouldn't surprise me if Takashi was. " A mischievous smile crossed his lips. "So what do you think about Hani and Takashi's statement last night?"

"I think I feel a little silly for not figuring it out. But otherwise I am flattered, and maybe a little curious. You?"

"Intensely curious and like you a bit silly that I didn't figure out that they were lovers, when it should have been pretty obvious by the care they showed for each other both in the Host Club and when they were outside of it."

"But part of the Host Club was all about the illusion or the fantasy. I know the twincest act that Hika and I did was very much that – an act. Even though we do have a rather taboo relationship when you compare it to what is considered normal, what we did in front of others was mostly for dramatic effect." Kaoru's voice got softer, "I don't know if either of us have ever said it outright, but thank you for not judging us, when so many others did."
Tamaki tightened his arms around his lover, "You are welcome. I knew that it was mostly an act, but I also know that you both are bonded and share your emotions – whether it's happiness, sadness, anger, mischievousness, and lust. To judge you because you happened to be brothers instead of strangers just seemed wrong to me. I am just so very glad that Haruhi was able to get the two of you to stretch the bond to include her, because it meant that you might be able to let the rest of us in as well."

"I would say the bond has been completely stretched. All of you have become so important to both Hika and me. It's really nice to be able to share our world with others, and to be able to explore things without being told that it's "wrong."

Kaoru returned the pressure of Tamaki's arms, closed his eyes, and just relaxed into the openness there. He stayed in that position for a few more minutes, just listening to Tamaki's heartbeat and enjoying the warmth of his body. The vibrations of a silent giggle, finally made him open his eyes again and stare at his lover questioningly.

"I just had an idea. It's a daring and potentially deadly idea, but one that could be very fun."

"I'll bite. What's your idea?"

"I think we should sneak into Haruhi's room and wake up the three of them. After all, Haruhi woke us up yesterday."

"You want to wake up KYOUYA?! You must have a death wish. That man scares me when he is waking up."

"Oh he's not that bad. I have woken him up before."

"And you are the only one who has lived to tell the tale."

"Scared?"

"Absolutely. But I like the idea of it even more." Now Kaoru's evil grin was a match for Tamaki's.

"Let's do it."

*****************************************************************

A very soft creak, like a door opening, woke Haruhi from sleep. Tangled as she was in the arms and legs of her lovers, she could barely move her head to see what had made the subtle noise. Looking up her eyes met two other sets – a deep violet and a golden amber akin to the ones that were firmly closed and snuggled up into her back. Immediately she understood what was going on and braced herself for the impact that she knew was coming…

Three, Two, One, Tamaki silently mouthed the words to Kaoru. On "One", both of them jumped onto the bed occupied by their three friends and bounced around shouting "Wake Up Sleepy Heads!"

Haruhi laughed and succeeded in ducking the swinging arms as both Hikaru and Kyoyua sat bolt upright in the bed and threw punches at their unconventional alarm clocks, breath heavy and hearts racing from the adrenaline.

"What the FUCK!"
"We thought it should be our turn to wake you up, since Haruhi woke us up yesterday."

"You missed your alarm, while ours hasn't even gone off yet. Not fair brother."

While Hikaru and Kaoru bantered back and forth, Tamaki maintained eye contact with Kyouya, trying to read what his best friend was going to do. *I haven't had this much fun with him in a long time. I missed that so much. I hope we get a chance to hang out together.*

"Tamaki Suoh, if you wanted to spend time together, all you needed to do was say so." The chill in Kyouya's voice sent a shiver down Tamaki's spine. *Damn. I forgot how he ALWAYS seems to know what I am thinking.*

Haruhi, hearing the coldness in Kyouya's voice and knowing that it was only a by-product of the abrupt awakening, not a reflection of his real feelings toward Tamaki quickly sat up, pressed her body against his back, and wrapped her arms around his neck, completely forgetting that she was naked. The heat of her body and the soothing noises she murmured in his ear, soon relaxed the shadow king and his dragon disappeared into the ether. Looking over she noticed that Hikaru was also slowly stroking his hand up and down Kyouya's arm in an attempt to sooth him.

Finally the humor of the situation hit Kyouya and he started to laugh. Still maintaining eye contact with his best friend, he said, "Why is it, Tamaki, that you are the only person who insists on waking me up at ungodly hours of the morning?"

"Because it's fun!" He squeaked as three large pillows came flying at him, knocking him off the bed. Undaunted he continued a huge grin on his face, "Besides, how else am I going to get a chance to gawk at all of you naked?"

Blushing Haruhi dived back under the covers, while her men did the same. Still laughing at Tamaki's comments, Kaoru snuggled up next to his brother and slipped his arm around him. "I missed you." Hikaru smiled as he returned the embrace, returning the snuggles with affection.

Rising from the floor, Tamaki stared at the four people in the bed in front of him. Trying to hide his wistfulness at the cozy scene, he bent down and picked up the pillows they had tossed at him. He looked up at the sound of Haruhi's voice.

"Tama, did you want to cuddle?"

Blushing he replied, "I would but … Are you sure?"

"Always, my friend." Kyouya responded and made room for Tamaki to slip in between him and Haruhi.

Sighing in bliss, he laid his head in the space above her breasts and below her neck as Kyouya spooned him from behind. Kyouya's arm reached across Tamaki's body to Haruhi's heart where it met Hikaru's and locked.

Not surprisingly it was Hikaru who broke the silence with a teasing tone, "Well Tamaki, thanks to you we have proven that Hani was right about at least one thing."

"What's that?"

"The bed is currently holding five people. It's a bit squished but manageable… Now who is going to take them up on their offer?"

Groans and grins met his comment.
A buzz followed by a short beep woke Haruhi for the second time that morning. The surrounding warmth of four young fit male bodies caused her to stretch languorously, while Tamaki snuggled into her shoulder. Kyouya's arm was around Tamaki's shoulder and his hand rested just below her collar bone. Hikaru was cuddled on her other side with Kaoru curled around him. A second and more insistent buzz on her phone made her look up and meet Kyouya's eyes as he handed her the beeping device. She could see the look of both love and lust as he trailed his fingers lower to trace the top of her left breast as it peeked above the sheets.

Wresting her eyes away from the liquid silver ones that held her complete attention, she quickly checked the two messages that had appeared. With a sigh, she texted back to each and handed the phone to Kyouya. The movement caused the violet eyed angel to angle his head and smile, while one ginger head popped over the shoulder of the other. Her phone buzzed again and with a raised eyebrow Kyouya handed it back. This time the message made her laugh and she sent back a quick reply.

Unable to resist breaking the silence, Tamaki said "Good Morning Princess." As he slid his arm over the blanket and around her waist, his hand resting lightly against Hikaru's hip. "So this is what you have been waking up to, I may be just a little bit jealous."

"Why is that Tama?"

"Because I can see the hardness of Hikaru under the blanket and feel Kyouya against my back. Knowing how perfect Kaoru's cock is, I can make a guess that Hika's is similar, which ultimately means that you are one absolutely lucky woman."

"Yes I am," she responded as the others all turned a slight shade of pink. "Though I think you are embarrassing everyone. I have a feeling the others didn't realize that when you first wake up, you are horny as hell, and you forget how to hide it. Once you are dressed, you are the perfect gentleman, but before that, you are a letch."

"Hey, I am wearing more clothes than you!"

"Still doesn't stop you from being a horny morning person, or are you trying to tell me that if I reached down right now and felt you up, you wouldn't be sporting a major erection?"

"Oh he is." Kyouya said as Tamaki yelped, not expecting Kyouya's hand to move from Haruhi's breast to his cock. "But that is to be expected. There are five of us on this bed and three," He lifted his head, "Check that, four of us are naked."

Tamaki whipped his head around and discovered that at some point before they all fell back asleep, Kaoru had undressed completely and snuggled under the blanket next to his twin. Shaking his head in bafflement, he leered, "Well maybe I should fix that."

"Sorry Tamaki, but I think that is going to have to wait for another day. I am guessing that Haruhi is about to get out of bed." Hikaru joined the conversation. "Or were those texts for another reason?"

"Now you are right, Hika-love, the first text was from Renge. She is awake and needs help to get ready to go back to work."
Kaoru's head swiveled at Renge's name, "Is she really planning on going back to the center today? I can manage without her since her ankle must still be bothering her."

"Renge isn't one to let a sprained ankle stand in her way. She is definitely planning on going back and finishing up. Since you and Hika are going to be out for two days at the Alterna Workshop, she wants to make sure everything goes smoothly when you aren't there."

"Oh." The wheels in Kaoru's head started turning in different directions. Without really realizing he was doing so, he rolled over and started to pulled his pajama bottoms on. Muttering to himself, he walked out of the room. Hikaru seeing his brother distracted, just smiled.

"So that explains one, but what was the second message you received. The one that made you laugh before replying?"

"Are you jealous my Shadow King?"

"No. Just interested."

"It was from Hani. His first text asked me if I was going upstairs to practice with them. When I said that I was just waking up and we were still in bed, he offered to help us test out how many the bed could hold. I didn't tell him about Tamaki and Kaoru also being here, but it wouldn't surprise me if he somehow figured it out."

"I see." Kyouya's smile lit up his face. "Takashi is almost as good as I am about knowing everything that is happening, so you are right. They probably know already." He sat up and deliberately leaned over and pressed his body into Tamaki to kiss Haruhi and then Hikaru. He chuckled at the expression on Tamaki's face before sitting up and pulling on his own pj bottoms.

"Not fair Kyouya," Tamaki whined, "You know I am already turned on, and then you HAVE to go and kiss them both, while lying across me! Not nice. Not nice at all. I am going to have a fucking hard-on all day and it's your fault."

"Good. Perhaps next time you will think before trying to wake us up." His smirk was evident both on his face and in the tone of his voice as he reached across to the nightstand to grab his glasses.

"Yes. I need to get some sparring in, since I didn't do any yesterday. I will grab a quick shower before I go up, but unless I make it ice cold, I don't think it's going to help. Tamaki isn't the only one who is turned on by waking up next to all of you hunks."

"We can help you with that." Hikaru leered.

Haruhi laughed as her phone buzzed again twice in quick succession. Responding quickly to both she spoke, "Sure - as long as you take the blame for my tardiness to BOTH of my Martial Arts Masters and the impatient otaku in the other room." Her real fondness for Renge showed in her voice as she spoke of her anime-obsessed friend.

"I could deal just let Kao deal with Renge, but that's not fair to him. Since Takashi and Hani in full Master-mode still intimidate the hell out of me, I guess I will have to wait until later. Unless Kyouya is willing to take them on?" Hikaru eyed his lover hopefully.
"Not a chance. After yesterday, I want to watch the sparring."

"Damn."

"So let me get this straight," Tamaki interjected, "All of you are as horny as I am, but you aren't going to do anything about it at the moment. Instead you are all going to get up and go to the dojo and watch Haruhi grapple and try to best two gorgeous men, who even though they are devoted to each other, have made it clear that they would enjoy having sex with any of us, including Haruhi."

"Pretty much." Haruhi flashed him a saucy wink over her shoulder as she climbed naked out of the bed and walked toward the bathroom, three sets of eyes following her.

"Why did we break up again?" Tamaki said jokingly and a little bit wistfully as both Kyouya and Hikaru's eyes shot daggers into him. Holding up his hands in a peace gesture, he added, "I am kidding. I am kidding. Really! I love her and probably always will, but we wouldn't be here, right now, if we were still together. The two of you have made her happier than I ever could. Together the three of you have something, the rest of us envy a bit. If we hadn't broken up, she wouldn't have gained the confidence, sassiness, and ease that she has. Kyouya – you gave her the confidence to be herself. Hikaru – you showed her how to unleash the sassiness and mischievousness. She never would have gotten those from me and I am far happier seeing her like this than I was when I was with her. I swear to you, that I will never do anything to jeopardize your relationship with her. I am willing to follow any rules or boundaries that you decide."

Kyouya had felt his chest tighten and lost his breath when Tamaki started talking, but by the end of it, he had relaxed. I didn't realize that I was still affected by the thought of the time that Haruhi and Tamaki were together. I know he is sincere in wishing us happiness. I know she flirts with him - he taught her that. I also know that she is ours, even if my jealousy is playing 'what-if' games. I also think I understand what Tamaki is feeling more than he really knows.

"I appreciate that my friend. But don't think that your time with her didn't have an impact. You were the one who taught her how to open up and more importantly – how to flirt. It doesn't sound like it would be a big thing, but for Haruhi, and how quiet, reserved, and clueless she was when we first met her, the ability to lighten up, laugh and flirt was her turning point into becoming who she is."

"You taught all of us how to open up, light up, and flirt, sempai." Hikaru added as unshed tears glistened in Tamaki's eyes. "That's just who you are… and we love you for it. I know Haruhi still loves you the way you love her. I can accept that and, in time, if she decides that she wants to bring you into our relationship, I would probably be ok with that." He looked directly at Kyouya, "I have learned to share, but I will never let anyone take her away."

"Agreed." Kyouya felt the weight of an oath behind Hikaru's words.

"What are you agreeing to now?" Haruhi's voice cut through the sudden tension, as she walked back into the room dressed in her standard workout gear – sports bra and yoga pants.

"That we all want to watch you kick Takashi and Hani's ass at Aikido." Hikaru quickly changed the subject.

"Yeah. That's not likely to happen anytime soon."

"We still want to watch… and maybe you will let us kiss the bruises to make them better."
"You can kiss more than that." A wink followed as she walked toward the French doors to the room that Renge occupied. "I better help Renge get ready. She just asked me to put her clothes and stuff in the bathroom. If I can help her there, she thinks she can get a shower and changed on her own. Though she may need some help getting down the stairs to the car. Hika-love, are you going to work today or going out sight-seeing with us?"

"I am all yours today. Even though he hasn't specifically said it, I know Kao is going to go with Renge today. I wanted to go sight-seeing with you and Kyo."

"Do you need a tour guide?" Tamaki asked. "I can show you some less crowded places as well as the usual ones."

"That would be wonderful Tama. Thank you." With that Haruhi left the room again.

A sly grin slid over Hikaru's face. "So… we are all going upstairs. Are you guys up to testing Haruhi's focus?"

The puzzled look on Tamaki's face spoke volumes. "What do you mean exactly?"

"Well… we all know that bare chests turn our Haruhi on. I know for sparring Hani and Mor-Takashi will usually wear their gi's when they spar with her, though they don't when they are sparring with each other. I propose we all go up there shirtless and do a quick workout while Haru and Takashi stretch."

"That is delightfully evil. It may actually help her work on her concentration, since I know she does get distracted by our tattoos."

"Who wouldn't get distracted by them," Tamaki muttered under his breath. "I am in. Though you do realize that we may also be distracting Hani and Takashi."

"Even better."

After getting Renge settled in the bathroom, Haruhi walked out to her room and went to the closet to pick out something for her to wear. As she was digging through, she was surprised to see a shadow walk up to her and an arm reach in, grab a dress, and hand it to her.

"Have her wear this," Kaoru said. "It will be warm and comfortable all day and she won't need to try to pull a pair of pants over her ankle."

"Thanks. I am sure she will appreciate it, though she is moving a bit better today. She can put some pressure on the ankle, just not for long. She is refusing crutches though."

"That doesn't surprise me. I hated crutches too when I broke my ankle in the 4th grade. Thankfully we deal with sprains all the time on the catwalk – so many models in high heels. I can watch her and make sure that she is not overdoing it, but still able to get the movement back quickly enough that she will be able to walk unaided on the red carpet on Sunday."

"I take it that means you aren't going to go sight-seeing with us today then?"

"No. I still have some things to finish up. Have fun though."
"We will." Haruhi kissed him softly before grabbing the dress and starting to walk toward the bathroom.

"Hey Haru," Kaoru said shyly, "Can you let Renge know I will be waiting for her out here? I will help her downstairs."

"Sure."

Then because he was a Hitachiian and couldn't resist a moment to tease his best friend, "How did you feel waking up with the four of us in your bed?"

Blushing furiously she responded, "It was definitely a unique experience."

"And…"

"I enjoyed every minute." With a wink similar to the one she gave his brother, Haruhi turned and walked back into the bathroom to relay the plan to Renge.

_I am glad. I am also glad I was able to cuddle with Hika for a bit this morning. Waking up with Tama was nice, but I still needed Hika. Though I have to admit, Tamaki's idea to wake them all was pretty fun. We can't do it again though, because they will be expecting it. Kaoru heard the shower shut off. Suddenly his mind turned to Renge. I am not sure why all of a sudden she interests me so much. I have known her almost as long as Haruhi and until this week she has been nothing but a pain. Maybe it was the hint of vulnerability or her obvious desire to succeed, but she is changing too. I think I would like to get to know the new Renge better._

Smiling to himself, he sat down on the edge of the bed and waited for her to emerge from the bathroom.

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Haruhi half expected the sounds of a piano concerto to greet her as she climbed the staircase to the dojo on the third floor. Instead she was greeted with the clink of weight machines and a rock station on the radio. _Ok, this is new._ Walking through the double doors, she froze completely stunned. All of the guys minus Kaoru were shirtless and either working out on different machines or using the free weights. _Oh great gods, I can't tell if this is a dream or a nightmare. The sex appeal in this room is completely off the charts, how the hell am I going to be able to concentrate. It was bad enough having all of them in my bed and knowing that I couldn't really do anything, but now I have to work out with all of them in here with me. I seriously don't know where to look, when all I want to do is go up to each of them and demand that they fuck me. Right here. Right now. Closing her eyes against the temptation, Haruhi took three deep breaths. Breathe Haruhi, you can do this. You are supposed to work with Takashi and Hani today. Just focus on them. It's not like you haven't done this a thousand times already. Just don't focus on the fact that they offered to share their bed with the three of you. DAMN!_

"Haruhi, is something wrong?" The concerned voice of Takashi broke into her less-than helpful thoughts. Looking up into the eyes of her Sensei, she expected to see the cool calm that she had come to rely so much on the last few months. It was still there, but behind it burned a fire that she hadn't noticed before. It made her catch her breath and turn a slight shade of pink. Mentally slapping herself, she quickly looked around. Seeing the smirks on Hikaru and Tamaki's faces, the smug laughter on Kyouya's, and the knowing looks that Hani and Takashi kept sharing, she finally realized that the group was playing a joke on her. _HA! I can play that game too. Let's see who breaks first._
She arched an eyebrow at her lovers and gave them a look that let them know in no uncertain terms, the game was on. To her Sensei she responded, "No. Just startled for a moment."

"You seemed lost in thought," the laughter in his eyes teased where his words seemed coolly normal. A towel was draped around his neck and his chest glistened with a sheen of sweat.

"Haru-chan," Hani's sweet voice held the same hint of desire that Takashi's held, "Are you sure you are ok? You seem … distracted by … something." A drop of sweat slid down his neck and traced a path down his chiseled chest.

Of their own volition, Haruhi's eyes flicked down to watch the droplet in one blink and back up into the eyes of her other Sensei the next. Hani had caught the movement and stood grinning at her. He waited patiently and she realized he was expecting a response. Loudly enough so the others could clearly hear, she said with a smile of her own, "I was just remembering how much I like a challenge." She caught and held the eyes of every male in the room. Hikaru and Kyouya blew kisses at her. "So the game is Distraction, I take it?"

"Yes. Though we are still going to spar since you will need to be up on that skill for the demonstration next week," Takashi said.

"Wait. What demonstration? I thought I was just going to take the leveling test for my next rank."

"The Commissioner begged Takashi and I to do a demonstration to open the Ceremony, since neither of us can compete. We decided that the best demonstration would be showing how to work together with a less experienced practitioner to take down an opponent. Naturally, we thought of you."

"Naturally." The sarcasm dripped from her voice.

"We were going to ask you this weekend, since we didn't want you to stress and not enjoy the activities that are planned. However, plans change," Takashi's voice was completely serious, "Mitskune and I can do this on our own, but we would really like to do it with you."

Taking a deep breath and letting it out slowly, Haruhi answered. "All right."

"Thank you Haru-chan. This will make it so much more interesting." Hani's genuine smile erased the last lingering bits of worry.

"So we need to practice sparring today, since we are all going to be out tomorrow and Sunday."

"We can still work in yoga every morning to keep the focus," here the gleam in Takashi's eyes returned, "though from what I understand you are finding multiple ways to find your center. Four people in your bed this morning and Mitskune and I were up here all alone."

"I got Hani's text."

"I know. I saw the response." Takashi continued to tease her gently. "Are you up to the challenge of yoga this morning? Or are you too distracted?"

"Oh I am completely and happily distracted by the sight of five incredibly gorgeous guys shirtless, hot and sweaty. But I happen to know that I am not the only one distracted. Or have you forgotten, my dear yoga partner, that I can read you as well as you can me in this. You and Hani are enjoying the view as much as I am, as are Tamaki and Hikaru. Kyouya won't admit it, but he is getting turned on by watching everything and trying to figure out who will break first."
Kyouya arched an eyebrow at her as she gave him a saucy wink.

"I see a game in our future, but it's not fair to play without Kao-chan too," Hani pouted slightly. "Oh well, we can play this weekend. Winner gets a prize of his or her choice. Until then, are you two going to stretch or just tease each other? We have to practice soon or we are never going to get out to sight-see this afternoon."

"Yes Sensei." Turning to Takashi, Haruhi motioned for him to lead the way, while the others turned back to their workouts. She heard Takashi mutter under his breath something about getting turned on when Mitskune gets commanding. Smiling she put her hand on his bare chest above his heart and tried to set aside the sexy images of her partner and the others in the room. By mutual accord, they agreed that it would be a short ten minute warm-up and stretch, so that the focus could be on the sparring practice. Very quickly, they were in the groove of their movements and flowing easily from one to the next. If the position of a hand or the brush of an arm was more sensual than it had been the day before, it was understandable, though both tried to set it aside and focus. They finished in a double child's pose – Takashi on the floor and Haruhi holding the position on his back.

Stretching and climbing off his back, Haruhi went over and grabbed the padded hand protectors while Hani and Takashi cleared a space on the floor.

"This is what I have been wanting to see," Hikaru sat down on Kyouya's left side, while Tamaki sat on the right.

"I agree. This will be interesting."

"I hope she doesn't get hurt." The worry in Tamaki's voice leaked out

"Haru-chan can hold her own. After all, it was Takashi and I who taught her."

Spacing themselves out in a large triangle, they each bowed to one and then the other. Within a heartbeat of completing their bows, Takashi and Haruhi stalked Hani, throwing punches and kicks with deadly accuracy. He was able to block deftly and slip out of the corner they had him pinned. Moving again, they repositioned themselves and started a new sequence of movements. After a few minutes of teaming up on Hani, Haruhi suddenly switched sides and started fighting with him. Because he wasn't much taller than she was, they were able to coordinate their movements easier and they often struck together.

"She is really getting good," Hikaru murmured to Kyouya. "I hate to say it, but I am getting even more turned on by watching this. You can almost see her planning her moves, but it doesn't matter if she is partnering with Hani or Takashi, she moves like an extension of either of them."

"They are very fluid together. I can see why Hani thought this would be a good exhibition demonstration." Kyouya remarked, his heart pounding as he watched his lover.

By this time, all three of the participants were breathing heavy, and Haruhi was visibly getting tired, thought she refused to give up. Tamaki watched as Hani flipped allegiances and sided with Takashi.

_I know I made a flip comment to Haru yesterday about finding my own partners, but I would be lying if I said I didn't want to take Hani and Takashi up on their offer and soon. Hell, I would do it right now and screw the fact we have an audience. Watching them move both with and against each other is one of the sexiest things I can imagine._
Takashi caught Hani's eyes and with a final nod they executed a final move that took Haruhi down to the floor and pinned her under the combined weight of their bodies. Finally realizing she was beaten, Haruhi tapped out. They climbed off of her, but knelt beside her, each taking one of her hands and holding it, while all three of them tried to catch their breath. All three turned to the sound of spontaneous clapping and cheers. Hani smiled at his friends as he got up, pulling Haruhi and Takashi up with him. Our friends really did enjoy watching that, which makes me feel good. I was worried that the distraction game would backfire when Hika mentioned it this morning, but it seems to have worked if the look in Hika and Kyouya's eyes is anything to go by. I have to admit I enjoyed the view almost as much as she did, though catching her in the act of ogling me was a first and something I won't forget.

"Ok. I really need a shower now." Haruhi's voice was firm. "Are we all going sight-seeing today?" At the nod of five other heads she continued. "Can I suggest that we meet back downstairs in about an hour and a half? That will give us all plenty of time to get ready."

"Works for us, Haru-chan."

"Me too. That gives us all enough time for ... whatever" Tamaki answered with a wink, before turning and trying to nonchalantly catch a last glimpse of Takashi's bare chest. I so need to release this load. Waking up with Kaoru, then in the bed with Haruhi, Kyouya, and Hikaru, and now watching Hani and Takashi has me so hard.

"I think you need a shower and some company," Hikaru laughed as he swept her off her feet and took off running with her in his arms down the hallway, Kyouya laughing as he followed them out. At the top of the staircase, he lowered her to the ground and the three of them linked arms to walk downstairs to their bedroom.

Hani gathered up his and Takashi's things and started to head toward the door, when a look from Takashi stopped him. With a significant look at Tamaki who was watching the others go, and a nod to his lover at the bulge in loose pants Tamaki wore, he knew his lover caught the suggestion. Takashi nodded his head in agreement.

"Hey Tama-chan," the oldest host slid his hand up Tamaki's back to rest on his shoulder, while Tamaki tried to hide the shiver that ran through his body at the touch. "I am worried about over taxing the hot water heater with three showers going at once. Do you think you should shower with us?"

Tamaki turned at the heat in Hani's voice, which was echoed in his eyes. Looking up, he saw that Takashi's held the same. He broke into a lusty smile. "I think that is a really smart idea. After all, we don't want to waste all of this heat."
Tamaki followed Hani and Takashi out of the dojo, his towel around his neck and the hard bulge in his pants rubbing against the smooth rayon of his workout pants with each of his steps. His eyes were glued to the two well-muscled backs and tight asses of his friends as they walked a pace in front of him. By the time he had reached the stairs, he was in line with them. Together the three of them walked down the staircase. No one spoke as they entered Takashi's room and went directly to the bathroom that he and Hani shared. Immediately after stepping onto the cool tile, both Hani and Takashi, dropped their pants and walked naked over to the shower, turning on the spray to a comfortably warm temperature, before stepping in.

Tamaki undressed as well but paused for a moment before joining them. Muttering to himself about getting fresh towels for all of them he walked over to the closet. Hugging three soft cotton towels to his chest, he stared at the two men who shared the water. Am I really doing this? I have wanted it for so long, but never thought it would actually happen. I just hope that this doesn't hurt our relationship. I care about their friendship too much. Suddenly he realized that the two men were staring back at him, each holding out a hand, and nothing but desire and friendship burning in their eyes. Taking a deep breath, he set the towels down on the counter and walked into the spray. The two hands that had been reaching for him, pulled him closer, and he found his back pressed against Takashi's chest while Hani stood in front of him, running a hand up his chest.

Blue eyes stared deep into violet ones, wanting to make sure that the desire was still there. "Tama-chan, we don't want to do anything that you aren't comfortable with. Your friendship is more important."

"I was thinking the same, actually," Tamaki answered, "But I want this. If I am honest, I have wanted it for a very long time, I just never really thought it would happen. Hell, I still feel silly for not realizing that you both were a couple."

"You had others on your mind," Takashi murmured at his back, "Not that we can blame you for loving her, since we do too. But I kept hoping that one day you would really see us too."

"We both hoped," Hani added as the hand that had been caressing Tamaki's chest slid up to cup his face. "Last chance to escape… Do you want this?"

Tamaki's response was to pull Hani in for a kiss with his left hand, while his right slid behind him to caress Takashi's cock. The gasp that escaped from Takashi's lips as Tamaki's hand slid around his hardness was quickly replaced with a growl as he reached around to return the favor. Tamaki's moan of pleasure was swallowed up in the aggressive movements of Hani's tongue against his own. Their kiss wasn't delicate though it was elegant, like the sparring match he had watched earlier. Takashi, always in tune with his lover's moments, stroked Tamaki in a way that enhanced the desire flooding through Tamaki's body. Finally Hani pulled away, to let Tamaki catch his breath.

Staring into the passion drenched violet eyes, his own voice ragged with desire Hani asked, "Have you ever been pegged?"

"I…," The rest of Tamaki's response was lost in a groan as Takashi sunk his teeth into the meat of the area between his neck and shoulder. His knees buckled slightly before he was able to catch himself. Breathing heavy, he was shocked at the intense reaction to Takashi's bite.
"Takashi. I didn't get my answer."

"Sorry. I couldn't resist."

"Tama-chan?"

"I…," Still breathless, he tried again, "Only with toys. Until this week, I hadn't found anyone I was attracted enough to."

"Do you want to be?"

"Gods yes."

"Good." The devilish smile on Hani's face made Tamaki's heart skip a beat. Turning slightly to look at Takashi, he saw the same intensity on the other man's face, and he shivered despite the heat from the water.

Slowly Takashi removed his hand from Tamaki's hard cock and moved it over to his hip, while his other hand echoed the motion. Sliding both hands up Tamaki's rib cage he continued until he had both of Tamaki's arms raised above his head. "Bend over and brace your hands against the shower wall. Spread your legs."

Obediently, Tamaki complied. He could feel the water cascading down his back and running in swift moving rivulets down his legs. Opening his eyes and looking down, he was surprised to see Hani positioning himself on his knees below his chest, out of the direct spray of the water.

A wicked smile was the answer to Tamaki's questioning look. In the space of a heartbeat Hani had wrapped his lips around Tamaki's cock and was using his tongue to tease it in a way that had Tamaki throwing his head back in pleasure and slipping a hand down to slid it into the blond hair of the man beneath him.

"Put your hand back on the wall." Takashi growled next to his ear, reminding Tamaki that there was more to come. Tamaki quickly returned his hand to its former position. Using the water and a drop of soap as a lubricant, Takashi slid his fingers into the crease of Tamaki's ass and started fingering the tightly puckered hole; the low groans letting him know that Tamaki was enjoying every moment. Slowly Takashi inserted his index finger. He let Tamaki get used to the sensation of it sliding slowly in and out before adding another. Finally as Takashi scissored his fingers open and closed, stretching the tight space, Tamaki's low groans grew more frantic and eager. Watching Tamaki's body react to his fingers and Hani's talented tongue, Takashi stroked himself for a few moments to make sure he was completely hard.

Positioning himself behind, he spread Tamaki's ass cheeks wide and slowly guided his rigid member into the tight hole. The initial push caused Tamaki to tighten briefly in a flash of pain before pleasure became the dominant sensation. Takashi groaned as he let himself fall into the angled rhythm he knew would cause pleasure quickly for both him and Tamaki.

Tamaki was on fire. His hands were clenched against the cool tile trying to find some anchor in the storm of emotion that was washing over him. The sucking feeling of Hani's mouth around his cock coupled with the powerful sensation of Takashi riding him left him completely adrift. He couldn't focus on either and the combination was rapidly making him lose control. Finally he resist no more and with a sound close to a scream, he shot his load deep into Hani's throat as Takashi grunted behind him, his own orgasm filling Tamaki with a warm gush. He felt the strain on his arms as
Takashi collapsed against his back for a brief moment. Rising slowly, Takashi wrapped his arms around Tamaki and pulled him back against his chest.

With a sigh of regret, Hani slid his lips off of Tamaki's softening member and stood up. With a few quick hard strokes from his fingers, Hani shot his load across Tamaki's abdomen. After the throbbing eased, he stepped forward and wrapped his arms around Tamaki, to rest on Takashi's hips. The three of them stayed like that for a few moments, while the water slowly cooled.

Tamaki let Takashi and Hani support most of his weight as he felt himself gradually come back into his body. That was beyond anything I could have imagined.

Tilting his head back, he sought out Takashi's lips to place a soft kiss on them, before doing the same to the man in front of him. "Thank you both. That was incredible."

Hani's laughter caused Tamaki to smile. "It was our pleasure Tama-chan. I know I enjoyed watching how you reacted. Knowing that I was causing some of it made it even better."

"I thank you for letting me be your first." Even though he couldn't see the smile on Takashi's voice, he could hear the warmth in the older host's voice.

"You are welcome, though I still think I should be thanking you both." Tamaki smiled as he continued, "This week has been a series of experiences that are completely making up for not being with all of you at Ouran this year."

"And the winter break isn't over yet," Takashi added. "Speaking of which, should we get out of the shower and get ready to meet up with the others?"

"Probably. But maybe we should actually get clean first," Hani teased the others as he soaped up a pouf. Running it quickly over himself, he handed it to Tamaki, who did the same before passing it finally to Takashi.

"I wonder if we will beat the others downstairs?" Tamaki asked idly as he dried off. He enjoyed the camaraderie that was evident as the conversation turned to places the group could go that afternoon.

"How much time do we have again before we are supposed to meet up with the others?" Haruhi's voice echoed slightly as she leaned back against the tile of the shower to watch her lovers rub each other with soapy poufs. I love watching the way they tease each other. It's so interesting to see the way they are learning each other's sensitive spots and are exploring what turns them on. I have to give Tamaki some credit, because I don't know when this would have happened without the little push of being away from all of the little stressors of Japan. Not that it affects Hikaru or me that much, but I could see the tension really starting to build between Kyouya and his father over my relationship with Hikaru. I know Yoshio Ootori disapproves of the fact that his son accepts that his girlfriend is also dating another man. It flies in the face of tradition and is not socially acceptable in the circles Yoshio Ootori operates in. Thanks to Tamaki and his honest open relationship with his father, I know that Kyouya diffused the tension by reminding his father of the business ramifications of getting on the "bad-side" of the Suoh empire, but I wonder if Yoshio put more pressure on his son to remind him of his "duty" after Tama and I broke up. I don't question that Kyouya loves me for who I am - not because his father wants up together. If he was only in our relationship to please his father, he..."
would never have accepted my dating Hika or ever acknowledged his own feelings toward him. I can see how Kyouya's actions displease his father and I have a feeling that the situation is going to come to a breaking point soon. A sudden faceful of water instantly brought Haruhi out of her increasingly dark thoughts. She looked up to see her lovers laughing at her and cupping their hands to prepare to splash her again.

"Earth to Haruhi," Hikaru teased. "We asked you a question, but you were lost in your thoughts."

"And they didn't appear to be happy ones." The concern in Kyouya's voice made her shake off the last of her brooding.

"So sorry my loves," She answered them both, "Just a nasty turn of thought that really isn't helpful or relevant to the moment. I was enjoying watching you wash each other. Please continue. I promise to pay more attention this time."

"Do you want to talk about it?"

"Thank you Kyo-love, but not right now. It can wait and I would rather enjoy my time with the two of you."

Kyouya gave her an assessing look. He turned to look at Hikaru. The glint of concern was also apparent in his golden eyes, but they also contained the flashes of desire that had been building between them. The desire won out and Kyouya filed the concern away to discuss at a later time. "All right. That was our comment though. You looked lonely leaning up against the wall."

"Since you technically hadn't gotten a chance to wash yourself, we had an idea."

"Oh really?!" Haruhi arched an eyebrow at the red haired devil.

"Really." Hikaru replied.

"I think we need to show her, Hika." As one they reached out and grabbed her, pulling her between their soapy bodies. Haruhi could only laugh as they rubbed their soapy bodies against hers. Her laughter quickly turned into desire, however, as they added their soapy hands to the equation and slowly caressed her body.

Hikaru stood in front of her and slid one soapy hand up to caress her left breast, while his left hand slid around her hip to caress her butt. With ease, Haruhi slipped her left arm across his shoulders. Kyouya, behind her, brought her right arm up to curve around his neck, before adding his own soap covered right hand to her other breast. Feeding the spray of the water rinse his left hand clean, he teased it down her abdomen and into the crevasse between her legs. He pinched her nipple slightly to cause her to gasp, before sliding two of his fingers deep into her warmth.

Haruhi's head fell back against Kyouya's shoulder as her body arched into his fingers. Hikaru, not to be left out, circled her nipple with his thumb, let the water wash away the soap, and then replaced it with his mouth – eliciting another gasp from her. Using the hand that his mouth replaced to steady her, he slid the other from cupping her ass to the crack between her cheeks. Feeling the motion of Kyouya's fingers as they worked in and out of her, Hikaru started to rub small circles on the untouched rosebud of her back door in time with the movement of his tongue on her nipple.

Crying out in pleasure at the unexpected sensation, Haruhi couldn't help herself and raised her leg placing her foot against the shower wall, to allow her lovers easier access; Hikaru's steadying hand moving from her waist to her leg to keep her in place. Once opened, Hikaru and Kyoyua soon found a compatible rhythm that had Haruhi struggling to keep her moans from increasing in intensity.
Finally Haruhi couldn't hold back any longer and a loud deep moan escaped from her lips as her body clenched around the fingers invading her deepest places, and throbbed as her orgasm flowed through her body.

Hikaru and Kyouya shared a look of mutual amusement, love and desire as Haruhi struggled to calm her wildly beating heart and regain her breath. Her lovers slid their fingers out of her and just held her against their bodies, while the warm spray relaxed them. With only a trace of breathlessness left in her voice and a whole lot of amusement, Haruhi said, "I could get used to getting clean that way."

"So could I," Kyouya breathed against her neck. His still hard erection pressed into the crack of her ass.

"Me too." Hikaru echoed.

"I think there is still one more thing, well, two more things that need to be done."

"What's that love?"

In response, Haruhi slipped out from between them. Each gave her a slightly confused look as she stood in front of them, completely naked and hands on her hips, but with a sort of commanding presence that they had not seen before. Taking one step forward, she placed a hand on each of their chests and pushed them back up against the shower wall. A mischievous smile spread on her face as she reached over to squirt a little soap on her hands. Stalking up to them, she grabbed each of their erect cocks in her now soapy fingers and started working them. "Like I said – two more things still need to be done." The throaty growl in her voice turned them on even more.

Soon Haruhi had her men arching into her hands as they shot their loads across the shower. This time, they were the ones gasping for breath and trying to calm their heartbeats as she slipped her arms around their waists.

"I think I will borrow a line from you Haru-love and say 'I could get used to a shower like that'" Hikaru teased as he leaned in to kiss her shoulder.

"Agreed."

Haruhi laughed in delight, her lovers joining her, and they all stepped back into the rapidly cooling water for one last rinse to make sure all the soap was off.

"Yikes, this water is getting cold!" Hikaru complained.

"We have now determined the expiration point of the hot water in the shower. Perhaps we should hurry."

"I wonder if the others were able to get their showers in?" Haruhi added, thinking of Hani, Takashi and Tamaki.

"I am sure they did, though if we don't hurry, they will be waiting downstairs for us tapping their feet." Kyouya answered her.

"Hey! You boys are the ones that take forever to get dressed. I just put on whatever Hikaru or Kaoru has deemed appropriate," she winked at her lover, "and put on a touch of make-up. Once upon a time, I didn't even bother with the make-up part. All of you have been a bad influence on me."

Hikaru grinned at her teasing. "We know. You are beautiful without it, but stunning with it, now that Kao and I taught you how to wear it."
"So it was Hikaru and Kaoru that taught you how to wear make-up. I will have to let the others know, Hani and Tamaki owe me and Takashi $50. They thought it had to be Ranka."

Haruhi groaned at Kyoya while Hikaru just laughed.

As it turned out, the six members of the Host club all met at the bottom of the staircase within seconds of each other. They began to discuss their plans for the afternoon.

"I don't know about everyone else, but I am starving," Haruhi commented after several ideas had been tossed out.

"Good idea Haru-chan," Hani agreed. "Let's get lunch and then we can decide where we want to go. Tamaki – what would be the best place to go for a good lunch?"

"I think we should head to Montmartre. There are several wonderful cafes and a lot of interesting tourist areas and shopping close by. There is even a small exclusive winery, though we may not be dressed appropriately for a visit. I could easily get us in by name, but I thought the idea was to try and be as inconspicuous as possible."

"I appreciate that Tama. I know the paparazzi will be mainly congregating over by the Carrousel de Louvre, but there will still be a fair amount in the normal tourist areas, hoping for a glimpse of a famous designer or two." Hikaru said.

"Unfortunately, the only vehicle big enough to take all six of us is the limo, so we may draw some attention at first, but once it drops us off, we can always take a Taxi or two from one location to another."

"Excellent idea, Tamaki," Takashi smiled as Tamaki flushed a light pink - thoughts of the shower they shared still fresh in his mind. "Though, this week, the people most likely to be recognized would be Hikaru, Kaoru, and you. The rest of us are relatively unknown in Paris. Kaoru is at the Carrousel de Louvre with Renge so they may assume Hikaru is there as well."

"Hikaru came up with a solution for that problem," Kyoya added coolly.

"Ta-da!" Hikaru pulled out two hats, two scarves, and two pairs of large dark sunglasses. He put on one set and handed the other to Tamaki.

"Disguises? Won't that make us stand out even more if no one else in the group is wearing them?"

"That's why I got a couple more hats, scarves, shades for everyone. Only these are a little bit more fashionable. Since everyone is dressed casually, we will look like just another group of tourists." Hikaru explained. "I will keep my hat on, when we go inside to hide my more distinctive hair, while Tama can leave on his sunglasses to hide his violet eyes."

"That should work Hika-chan. Great idea."

"Awesome. Now can we please go? I really am hungry!" Haruhi complained jokingly while the others laughed.
Tamaki bowed at her, "your wish is our command Princess," and led the way out of the house into the waiting limousine.
Sight Seeing

Letting Tamaki play tour guide, the hosts listened to him point out specific landmarks on the way to Montmartre. The mood in the limo was comfortable and casual. Haruhi was in her usual place between Hikaru and Kyouya as Hani sat next to Takashi. The difference was now that they had officially announced their relationship to the hosts, they felt comfortable holding hands while they engaged the others in conversation.

"So Haru-chan, I know lunch is your first priority, but where would you like to go otherwise?"

"Honestly Hani, I have no idea. I was kind of hoping that Tamaki or Hikaru would have suggestions since they are more familiar with the city. I still want to see the Louvre, but after seeing the chaos for Fashion Week in the convention area surrounding it, I may have to just save and come back another time. I know there are other smaller art and history museums around the city and I am content with seeing those."

"I will make sure you get a chance to come back and see it," Kyouya leaned over and kissed her cheek.

"WE will make sure," Hikaru mock-glared at Kyouya who promptly threw hands up in apology.

"I think that's a wonderful idea for all of us, actually," Takashi's quiet voice joined the conversation. "Since Tamaki is committed to finishing up University here and we are all still back in Japan, it would be nice to gather together more often. We are lucky in that we can afford to be able to do so."

"Bu-" Haruhi started to say.

"And before you even say that you can't afford it Haru-chan, you better just stop. While you may not, all the rest of us can and there is no way we would leave you behind. It's not charity and it's not us trying to manage you." Hani's voice was stern. "If you are still uncomfortable with the idea, look at it this way. We are selfish, rich, bastards," he winked at her, "and not having you here with us, would mean that we wouldn't have as much fun."

"If you simplify the calculations, it really isn't that expensive," Kyouya saw the stubborn set of Haruhi's jaw and made another attempt to explain. "Think of it this way - If you were going alone to visit Kyoto for vacation, you would have to pay for a train ticket, hotel, food, activities, and any souvenirs. Am I correct?"

"Yes…," Haruhi's response was cautious.

"But if you were visiting your cousin in Kyoto, you may pay for the train ticket, but you wouldn't have to worry about a hotel room or food, because you would be staying with your cousin. If you and Ranka were visiting, you likely wouldn't even be paying for the train ticket, because you know your dad would never accept you paying it yourself. So you are really just paying for any activities and souvenirs. But realistically, even if you were going out every day with your cousin, she would want to treat you to the places she enjoys, because she knows when she is visiting you, you will do the same for her… Which means that when you break it down, you are really only paying for half the activities and your souvenirs."

"I am still not seeing your point. My cousin would be my family and that's different, plus her lifestyle
is not nearly as extravagant as yours."

The others exchanged looks, since it was obvious she still did not understand. It was Takashi who gently corrected her. "Haruhi, are you saying that we aren't a type of family? I know that for most of us, we are far closer to each other than we are to our biological families. Our lifestyle may seem extravagant to you, but it is simply part of who we are. You take a train; we take a plane. In the end, we are still getting to the same location. We want to do this because to us, you ARE family and it would be wrong not to."

A tear slipped down her cheek as she finally understood what the others were trying to say. "I love all of you. I will try to stop being stubborn, but I need to feel like I am pulling my own weight and not just relying on all of you to take care of me. Can you understand that?"

"Princess, I know what you are saying and I do understand. I am pretty sure the others do too. But we rely on you for so much, maybe you could rely on us a little bit more." Tamaki stretched across to take her hand. Giving it a squeeze, he placed a kiss across the knuckles in a time honored tradition.

"But you don't rely on me…"

"Bullshit," Hikaru' voice held a hint of annoyance. "I know you can be clueless, my love, but I know that both Kaoru and I rely on you. You tell us the truth always – even when it isn't what we want to hear. It may surprise you to know we were just a bit conceited before we met you." Haruhi snorted as Hikaru continued, "Once we understood that we couldn't charm, coerce, or tease our way into making you do what we wanted, we had to learn how to be unselfish, and in the process, learned what real friendship meant. We still rely on you to keep us humble. Without you, I have no doubt that we would quickly slip back, because it is so much easier to manipulate others to do what we want."

"You challenge me," Kyoya said softly. "I rely on that. If you didn't challenge the way I look at the world, I would slip back into the shadows. Like Hika said – It is far easier to manipulate others to get what you want."

"I rely on your natural enthusiasm," Takashi added, "I need that push to break out of the silence that is far easier for me to maintain."

"Haru-chan, I rely on you to help me be quiet and responsible. Takashi tries, but he loves me too much to succeed. You love me in a different way, so I can do it."

"I rely on you to keep everything from falling apart." Tamaki's voice was just barely above a whisper and he couldn't meet her eyes. "I have watched it happen too many times. I don't know if I could handle it happening again. I … care about everyone too much."

Haruhi was unable to resist the vulnerability in Tamaki's voice, she leaned forward and threw her arms around him, while the others wrapped their arms around the two of them in a large group hug. Everyone felt the need for reassurance. They stayed like that for several minutes until the driver pulled up to the curb in front of a quaint café.

In the center of the hug, Haruhi felt the car stop and gave a little giggle, as she tried to dry her eyes on Tamaki's shoulder. "Ok. Now we are all a bunch of emotional loonies. I do understand – you rely on me as much as I rely on you. I really will promise to try and be better about it. But I have one small request…"
"Anything my love," Kyouya smiled.

"Can we PLEASE eat now?" Haruhi smiled to take the sting out of her words. "Otherwise I may be relying on you to carry me as I faint from hunger. I can smell the fresh baked bread from inside the limo."

The others laughed as they exited the car and entered the Café. Avoiding the curious glances of the other patrons at the group that piled out of a limo, they quickly made their way to a table near the back that would accommodate all of them. Tamaki ordered for all of them, as only he and the twins were fluent in French, though the others understood enough to get the gist of the conversation. With just a little bit of flirting on Tamaki's part, they soon had a wide array of fresh breads, cheeses, fruit, and meats in front of them. The waitress also brought over a couple of bottles of wine and poured for all of them. With a final flirtatious smile at Tamaki, she left them to enjoy their meal.

Once half the food had been consumed and the gnawing hunger pains had eased, the group returned to discussing what they wanted to do for the rest of the afternoon. They agreed to visit the Musee de Monmartre and then take a walk through the grounds of the Basilica Sacre-Coeur, before finally heading down to the shopping district and possibly grabbing dinner.

"You haven't experienced 'dinner' like a dinner in Paris," Tamaki said eagerly, "It generally takes two to three hours to complete. I know some of the really nice restaurants are going to be booked, but if you trust me, I know I can get us into my favorite one. I just need to call for a reservation."

"Great idea, Tama," Haruhi said, "Why don't we have Hika send a message to Kaoru and Renge to meet us there?"

"That sounds good. I will have the reservation set for eight." Tamaki called the restaurant, while Hikaru sent the text. Within moments, both were completed and the plans were set. The group finished their lunch, went outside and waved down a couple of taxi's. They naturally split into their normal pairings, with Hikaru, Haruhi, and Kyouya riding in one and Tamaki, Takashi, and Hani riding in the other.

Even though Haruhi was in the middle, she kept leaning over first Kyouya and then Hikaru to gawk at the old buildings as they wound their way through the Parisian streets and over to the Musee de Monmartre. After about the fifth time Haruhi said "Oh look at that!" Hikaru couldn't contain his laughter anymore and had to tease her a bit.

"Haruhi the tourist! Now I know what you felt like when we were gawking at the grocery store, the farmer's market and the shopping mall."

Haruhi blushed a bit before agreeing with him. "It is just so exciting."

"Not to worry, love," Kyouya said. "Enjoy the view. I know we are." The tone of his voice indicated that it wasn't the sight of the buildings that he was enjoying but the way her body would brush against his as she bent one way or the other.

"Speaking of view. Can I just say again, that the view of all of you this morning, shirtless and sweaty, was almost more than this poor girl could handle?"

"It was almost more than this poor boy could handle," Hikaru laughed. "I know Takashi and Hani were having a hard time. I think I actually saw Hani take a teeny step off balance."
"Tamaki too. He really is attracted to everyone. I can say it now, but it was one of the things that he told me so long ago and asked me to keep to myself. At first he was worried that it bothered me, but after I assured him it didn't he was more worried about any of you finding out. He didn't want to ruin the friendship that had developed among all of you by admitting his attraction. Little did any of us realize that a few months later, I would start dating two of you and we would end up here." She smiled at both and laid a quick kiss on each.

"There is something that I always wondered about and this may be my best chance to find out… If I may ask," Kyouya said, "Why did you break up? All Tamaki would tell me is that you both agreed to separate and that he wouldn't be offended if any of the rest of us dated you. Honestly, I didn't want to believe him for a very long time. He always told me everything and that was the first time he didn't."

Hikaru held her hand and gave it a gentle squeeze, as she took a deep breath to answer. He and Kaoru had been privy to Haruhi's break-up and knew that she took it harder than she had let on to the others, even though it had been a mutual decision between the two of them.

"We just started to drift apart. He was taking summer classes and I was working. When we were together, it was great. But after a few months, we realized something wasn't right. It started with a day of not talking and then turned into two and three more. We were both so busy and focused on what we were doing that we forgot to make the time for each other. Eventually, we just both agreed that it wasn't the right time for us to be a couple and we ended it." Haruhi paused before continuing, "it hurt more than I thought it would, and I was really glad that Hika and Kao were there to listen and distract me. Ironically, I talk to Tamaki more now, than I did at the end of our relationship."

Kyouya took her other hand and gave it a squeeze. "Thank you for telling me. Part of me still thinks Tamaki was a fool to let you go, but since I have you now, I can't complain. I wouldn't have you or Hikaru if you didn't break up with Tama." He reached across and caressed Hikaru's cheek, knowing that any other gesture of affection could draw more attention from the cab driver than they really wanted, but the heat in Kyouya's gaze was enough for the moment.

"Do you still love him?" Hikaru blurted in a rare moment of insecurity, his grip tightening on her hand. He could see the same question in Kyouya's eyes. Both were remembering Tamaki's off-hand comment of the day before. "Wait, forget I said that."

She leaned in and kissed him again, letting all of the love she felt for him come through. Turning she did the same to Kyouya, to hell with the curious driver and passerby's. Finally she broke it off and said to them both. "Part of me will always love Tamaki. He was the first person I ever fell in love with and that will always have a special place in my heart. But I was able to overcome the sadness of our break-up pretty quickly. I will be miserable for a very very long time if I lost either of you. I love you both in a way that is different than what I felt for Tamaki, or even what I feel for Kaoru, Takashi, or Hani. I do love them too. All of you have very different pieces of my heart. I don't want to be without any of them. Is that wrong?"

"I know and I am sorry I blurted that out. I know how you feel. You have told me before. I just had a moment of worry, because I remember what you were like after you broke up with Tamaki and a tiny part of me occasionally worries that you will leave me for him. In my head I know you are mine, but…"

"It's a little bit of self-doubt that will never really go away." Kyouya added. "I finally realized it isn't really jealousy but more a tiny worry that my father is right and that I am not worthy of the joy I have in my life. Correct me if I am wrong, Hika-love, but for you is it a tiny worry that everyone else is right and you are somehow flawed?"
"You can say the truth, Kyouya. Everyone else is right and I am a freak - because of my sexuality and my relationship with Kaoru."

"I see," Haruhi answered. "All I can say is that I accept and love you, flaws and all, because I know you love mine. Kyo – I KNOW that you are a far better man than your father gives you credit for and you are worthy of so much more. Hika – you are NOT flawed or a freak. I know that there will always be people who don't understand you or the relationship you have with Kao but I do. He is part of you in a way that no one else can ever be. I don't know if it helps, but no matter what happens, I will always be willing to stand next to both of you and show the world that you are incredible. If society can't see it; it's society's loss. I have never been a Society girl, so the petty gossip that goes around really doesn't bother me. I know that I won't please everyone and that there are always going to be people who think I am a jumped-up gold digger enslaving the hearts of heirs of some of the Elite Families. I know you don't see me that way, so I can stand against it."

"Gods, I love you." Kyouya breathed against her neck as he wrapped his arms around her.

"Our fierce Haruhi," Hikaru smiled as he did the same.

A discreet cough from the taxi driver let them know that the vehicle had stopped and the others were peering in the window at them curiously. Laughing as she pulled out of their embrace, she beat the others to her wallet and paid for the taxi.

"You shouldn't have done that Haru-love," Kyouya said as he exited the vehicle.

"Please." A hint of sarcasm laced her voice, "to use your own example earlier, I want to pay for some part of the activities. I can definitely afford paying for a taxi, even a Paris taxi, since I know you won't let me pay for dinner."

"Fair enough."

"Cool. That means I get to pay for the tickets into the Musee de Monmartre." Hikaru smiled and skipped up to the window to pay for everyone, while the others just laughed at his uncharacteristic exuberance.

"Are you guys ok." Turning to Kyouya, Tamaki asked quietly, still slightly concerned, "I know we are trying to stay 'on the down-low' and that was a pretty intense embrace for a public vehicle."

"We are fine. Really. Hikaru and I just had a moment of insecurity that Haruhi snapped us out of."

Now Tamaki was really concerned. "You don't get insecure."

"You know I do. I just rarely let it out."

"Are you sure that you are ok?"

With a genuine smile, Kyouya put his hand on Tamaki's shoulder and looked him directly in the eyes. "Yes. I am. We both are actually. Haruhi just reminded us how fiercely protective she can be of the ones she loves."

Tamaki rested his hand on top of Kyouya's and answered the smile. "I do know."

"Kyo-chan, Tama-chan, are you coming in?" Hani's voice made both of them turn and join the group entering the museum.

Haruhi had a great time at the museum. There were several tourist groups in there besides their own,
but it wasn't overly crowded and they were able to blend in. She really enjoyed listening to the debate that Tamaki, Kyōya and Hani got into about who was the better Monmartre artist – Monet, Van Gogh, or Renoir. Each took a position and didn't waver; the discussion remained friendly but started to take an intense turn.

Finally Haruhi could take it no longer, turning to Hikaru and Takashi, she said, "Shall we leave them at it? I want to go up to the Basilica and walk the grounds."

"I agree," Takashi answered and offered her his arm.

"Completely." Hikaru added, "Besides anyone worth his salt would know that Picasso was the best of the Monmartre artists." He made sure the last part was said quietly enough that only the two of them could hear and with a quick glance to make sure the others weren't paying attention. They took off at a stroll and it wasn't long before the others followed still engaged in their discussion.

Despite it being the middle of December, only a light snow covered the ground and the day was clear so they decided they would walk the mile or so to the church at the top of the hill. Together they strolled casually up to the well-known landmark, through the well-tended gardens, before pausing for a moment to look out over the city.

"Wow. That is just breathtaking." The awe in her voice was undeniable. Even the others paused their conversation long enough to stand and stare for a moment.

"We should come back up here one summer night for a picnic, just to see the city lit up." Kyōya said.

"I completely agree Kyo-chan. It would be really romantic." Hani glanced over to his lover and smiled.

"I am just excited about the idea that 'next time' won't involve Kaoru or me working a good portion of the time."

Tamaki looked at his watch before turning to the others. "Our dinner reservations are in three hours. Did you want to head into the Monmartre shopping district or try to find another museum to visit?"

"I vote shopping!" The enthusiasm was apparent in Hani's voice.

"That actually brings up a point I was going to talk to all of you about. I know we don't really celebrate Christmas back home in Japan, but I thought since we are in Paris, it might be fun to celebrate this year, since we are all together. We could do stockings, play games, exchange gifts, and have lots of mistletoe. Oh and hot chocolate! We could even decorate a Christmas tree!" Tamaki's voice grew more excited as he went on.

"I think that sounds like a very fun idea Tama," Haruhi said. "But I have one rule to add if we are going to exchange gifts – You can't spend more than $50 on any gift."

Everyone groaned.

"But that's not fair Haru-chan!"

"Actually it is," she smiled at Hani. "It can be really fun trying to find something perfect for someone else when you have a limit. It makes you really think about what they would like, rather than just getting them something as a show of wealth."

"I am willing to try," Takashi said. "It will be interesting."
She could see the others still wanted to protest, but Takashi's acceptance made that difficult. She stared at each one of them until they gave a nod of acknowledgement. Her smile when they all finally agreed lit up her face. "Ok then. Let's go shopping!"

She started down the stairs of the Basilica to the line of taxi's waiting at the bottom. Secretly she was thrilled that she was able to win that discussion without much of a fight. *It's not because I have far less money to spend on each of them than they do on me, but more that I want to see what they will come up with when they are given a limit. I have a feeling their creativity will surprise me… and that will be fun!*

Haruhi paused at the bottom and waited for the others to catch up. Without consciously thinking about it, she started walking over to Kyouya and Hikaru. She squeaked as a pair of arms belonging to the tall and muscular Takashi picked her up and started carrying her over to one of the taxis, with Hani bouncing behind him.

"Tama-chan. Send me a text with the address of the restaurant. Our reservations are for 8pm, correct?"

"Yes, but…" Tamaki was still blinking in shock at Takashi's completely unexpected action. He turned to look at her two lovers, who were also wearing stunned expressions as they watched the taxi drive off with Hani, Takashi and Haruhi. They could see her laughing in the back window as they disappeared around the corner.

Kyouya, predictably, was the first to shake off his startled expression. "It appears that we will be riding together. Do you have a suggestion for someplace we can shop that meets Haruhi's rule?"

"I just thought of an idea for my gift to Haruhi. Tamaki – are there any silversmith's in the area?"

"I know of a couple that do business in an open air market. Kyo, do you have someplace you want to go?"

"I have no idea. The market sounds like a great idea to start." Kyouya replied. The three of them climbed into another cab as Tamaki gave instructions to the driver and chattered about finding something fun for Takashi and Hani. *Oh Haruhi, I know you really set that rule down just to torment me. Creativity is not something that I am generally known for unless it's a creative use of numbers. It shouldn't shock me that Hikaru was able to think of something quickly, but now I really have to come up with something different and unique. Maybe something will catch my eye at the market.*
Haruhi couldn't stop laughing as the taxi turned around the corner and left her lovers behind. Turning to Hani, she asked, "So why am I being kidnapped and how long have you been planning it?"

Hani grinned as he answered, "Since we got on the plane to Paris. This was just the first chance that we got. Takashi and I wanted to equip you for your testing next week. And no… this is not part of your Christmas gift, so we aren't sticking to your asinine $50 rule. We have been planning this for a while, since this is your last belt step. As your Sensei it is tradition that we provide you with the traditional garments."

"My $50 rule isn't asinine," Haruhi blurted mildly annoyed, "I purposely raised it to $50 since I know all of you would complain. Among my old friends the limit would have been $20." She continued in a calmer tone, "but I do understand that for the training, you want to do this and have tradition on your side, so I will accept it gracefully and gratefully. I have been trying to hide the hole that is developing in the seam of my gi pants. I have patched it; I just haven't had the time to replace it."

"You should have told us," Takashi said as he took her small hand in his.

She squeezed his hand while she replied. "Like I said earlier, I need to feel that I am not a burden or a toy to be played with. Hika and Kao have already filled my closet with things that are pretty but aren't practical and I can't refuse Yuzuha when she creates a design for me, it would be disrespectful. Both of you have taught me kendo and aikido, and you have never charged me for a class, though I know what the cost of being trained by you would be if I was anyone else walking in the door. I can afford my own uniforms. It's the least that I can do. I actually was going to do that this month, but Tamaki's plan to bring us all to Paris pushed back my shopping."

"I can see your point of view," Takashi responded, "but I want to remind you of ours. You are NOT a burden. But I don't want to get back into that discussion. There is another reason that we wanted to get you alone, and it is such a recent development, we needed your insight."

"Oh really?"

"Yes," Hani replied with a faint blush pinking his cheeks.

"Hani… blushing? This should be good." At her words even Takashi turned slightly pink. "Now Takashi too? Damn… Good… this should be seriously entertaining!" The teasing note in her voice let them know that whatever they told her, she would listen. Arching an eyebrow at Hani she stared at him until he started talking.

Fidgeting in his seat, Hani complained, "When did you learn that look? It's not like you."

"I have been taking lessons from Kyouya. Now spill…"

"Apparently Hikaru's impatience has also rubbed off…"

"Still waiting..." She smirked.

Taking a deep breath, Hani started hesitantly, "You know how last night, we offered our bed to any
of you… and this morning we played that prank on you that kind of backfired…"

"Oh yes. Like I told Hika and Kyo earlier, I seriously had a hard time concentrating with so much yummy hunkiness around me."

"Us too, which is why the prank backfired," Takashi said quietly as Haruhi smirked at him.

"Well after the three of you left, it was just Takashi, me and Tamaki…"

"And we were all sweaty and needed showers…"

The grin on Haruhi's face threatened to spilt it in half. "So the three of you took a shower together. I can assume from the lovely shade of pink that you both currently are, that more than just a shower occurred." She grabbed Hani's hand and squeezed, before laying a kiss on each of their cheeks. "Congrats. I know you have wanted it for a long time and I know Tama has been secretly daydreaming about it for years."

Startled at her quick and easy reply, Hani asked, "Haru-chan, has anyone told you lately how incredible you are?"

"Huh?"

Hani laughed loudly as Takashi did the same silently on her other side. Puzzled she asked again, "I hear it from all of you, but I can't figure out why all of you keep saying it. I am just me."

It was Takashi's turn to lean over and kiss her cheek before enlightening her, "because you are the only women that we know who wouldn't throw a fit on learning her ex-boyfriend has taken another lover, let alone two others of the same sex."

"But that's silly. Tamaki and I haven't been together in almost a year and a half. Why would I begrudge him another lover?"

"Most women in our circles are incredibly possessive and jealous; it is always about status and keeping what you have. The men are the same way. Even if they broke it off with someone, they would not be pleased to find out the other person has moved on."

"I still think that's silly. I want Tamaki to be happy. You all are such good friends of mine that if you have found happiness with each other, I am happy for you. I like seeing the people I care about happy. Is that really weird?"

"It's unusual and part of the reason we love you so much," Hani answered honestly. "But I can't say that we are in a relationship with Tama-chan, just that we had sex. I don't know if it is something he will want to continue long term."

"You might be surprised."

"We hope so."

The taxi turned down a street and dropped them off at the entrance to an open shopping area. Haruhi smiled as she looked down the block and saw a number of local artisans and craftsmen selling their wares. Seeing a coffee vendor, she walked over and ordered three cups of coffee, while Takashi paid the driver before joining Hani as he watched a group of children having a snowball fight in a small
park on the corner. Walking up to them, she handed each a steaming mug, and quietly enjoyed the sounds of laughter coming from the park.

"Shall we go walk down the shops?" Takashi said after watching the merriment for a few more minutes. "I thought this would be a good place to find some of those Christmas gifts for the others. After we are done shopping, we will go to a special shop in Japantown to get your gi, since it is on the way to the restaurant. We should have plenty of time."

That sounds like a great idea Taka-,

"CAKE!"

Hani started to reply when a very familiar scent wafted across the street. Haruhi burst out laughing as Hani took off running toward the scent, while Takashi just shook his head. Looking down at her, he offered her his arm, and they strolled into the bazaar together, companionably.

Haruhi was delighted with all of the beautiful craft wares, silks, and trinkets that the merchants were selling along with a wide variety of baked goods. A sudden burst of heat on her back drew her around to a tent set off to the side an artist working in blown glass. By mutual agreement, they wandered over to his stall. Haruhi was excited by the delicate intricate figurines and vases. Some were clear or tipped in gold, while others were multiple colors that sparkled in the afternoon sunlight. Spying three specific pieces, she immediately purchased them and had the sales clerk wrap them carefully. She turned to find Takashi and noticed that he was completely entranced by the artist and asked questions about techniques and methodology as the artist worked. The awe on Takashi's face while he watched the artist gently blow into the glass and roll it into shape, gave Haruhi an idea for a fourth gift. She quickly turned back to the sales clerk and asked her several questions. Getting the answer she wanted, she quickly tucked one more thing into her bag, before walking over to stand next to Takashi. Now I have four of my seven gifts completed. I just need gifts for Tamaki, Kaoru, and Renge. I know the others probably aren't factoring Renge into the mix, but I just have a feeling that she is going to be more of a part of our group in the future than everyone suspects. I see the way Kao looks at her – like he is trying to figure her out. But this time, he is actually interested in the answer, whereas, two years ago she wouldn't have gotten more than a passing thought... But he is also very interested in Tamaki, and now there is this new development with Tama, Takashi and Hani. I am intensely curious to see how this turns out, but I don't want to see anyone hurt.

Giving the artist a farewell, Takashi slipped his arm around Haruhi's waist as they walked over to the bakery that Hani had run to, only to find him walking back toward the two of them. Handing them each a small bag, he said, "Strawberry tarts. I couldn't resist. I know how much you like strawberries, I thought you would enjoy it."

"Thank you, Hani." Haruhi smiled. "Have you gotten any of your shopping done? I have four gifts done."

"FOUR!?!"

"When did you manage to do that?"

"When you weren't paying attention, of course," she grinned up at Takashi. "It's not often I catch you unaware."

He smiled back at her, while Hani, slipped an arm around her from the other side. "Well, I guess we better get started. So now that we have you captive, will you please (here he gave her his best Lolita
"Of course. Want to walk some of the other stalls?"

"Yay!"

Haruhi, Takashi, and Hani spent the rest of their afternoon together, enjoying the camaraderie, the laughter, but most of all having fun going through the stalls to find the perfect gift for the others.

So this is what she meant by the fun of finding something small that is perfect for the others. Hani thought to himself. As usual she is right. It's a new experience and one that I am really happy she is sharing with us. This week is changing all of us Hosts somehow. For the better I think. We still have almost two weeks before we go back to Japan. I wonder what else is going to happen.

Hikaru, Tamaki, and Kyouya climbed into the backseat of the other cab. Tamaki leaned forward and gave directions to the driver to take them to Rue Cler open air market. Sitting back in his seat he glanced over at Hikaru, who was texting frantically on his phone, before turning to look at Kyouya. He noticed that Kyouya was smirking at him. Unable to resist – he asked, "What?"

"So how was your shower after working out this morning?"

Sputtering, Tamaki flushed a bright red. "How? Gah! Really?! How the FUCK do you know these things?"

Kyouya just sat back and gave him one of his inscrutable Shadow King stares. Hikaru, finishing his text, closed his phone with a slight sigh, before deciding to come to Tamaki's rescue. "I think I have finally figured it out. In Japan, he has his network of spies. Here he doesn't have anything, but he has a reputation to maintain. So he unleashes his ability to read body language and get you to confess before you realize its happening. He thinks something may have happened, but he isn't sure, so he gets crafty with his phrasing. If something happened, it will get a reaction; if not, it will be just general conversation."

"Huh?"

Kyouya smiled at Hikaru and gave him a wink. "I know now it won't work with you any more Hika."

Hika blew a kiss at his lover, while Kyouya licked his lips slowly and flirted back, "Later."

"Ok. I am still confused." Tamaki looked at first one or the other.

Hikaru tried again. "Kyouya suspected that something may have happened after the three of us left you this morning to take our shower, since the sexual tension in the room was off the freaking charts. But he wasn't sure."

"So I asked a question – How was your shower? If nothing had occurred after we left, you would have said something like Fine, Refreshing, Etc., but instead you turned scarlet and started stammering. This can only mean that something DID happen after we left, and we want to know the juicy details."

"Shadow King you definitely still are." Tamaki responded, slightly calmer, but still mortified at having been so easily read.
"I have to practice when I can. It's not working on Haruhi or Hikaru anymore. It never worked on Takashi."

"So Boss, are you going to tell us what happened?"

"Well… I don't know... I am still trying to process it really…"

Seeing that Tamaki was genuinely flustered, Kyouya backed off. "You don't have to tell us Tama. It was just fun to tease you a bit."

"I do actually want your opinion and advice, but I am a bit nervous of the reaction."

"I can promise I won't judge."

"Honestly its Hika's reaction I am worried about…"

"Mine?" Hikaru sounded puzzled, but comprehension soon dawned. "I get it. Let me guess, you had sex with Takashi and Hani, and are worried about how I will react because you have also been sleeping with my brother this week."

"Ummm…" The guilt was evident on Tamaki's face.

Hikaru smiled, "its ok Tamaki. I was startled at first when I went to wake up Kao and you were sleeping together, but I talked about it with him. I am glad that you were keeping each other company. I know he enjoyed every moment." He paused to gauge the reaction. "I also know that he doesn't think that you two are a couple because if it. You are still friends, if you want to explore a deeper relationship, then that is a discussion you will need to have together. As your friend, like Kyo and me, Kao would want to know that you are happy. If you got to explore the option that was offered to all of us last night, then he definitely wouldn't want you to refuse because of him. Hell, he would want the details too. We are a horny bunch. While he really isn't bisexual, he is attracted to some men; you are one of them as are Hani and Takashi to a lesser extent. Picturing the three of you together would be guaranteed to be spank bank material for sure."

"I do really like your brother. I enjoy his company outside of the bedroom. I am realizing that this is the first time I have really gotten to spend time with each of you separately. You are always together. It's kind of odd to see you separate. I know you are separate people, but you are also one. That probably sounds stupid. Forget I said anything."

"No you are right. This is the first week that we have been in the same city, doing things, just not together. It feels odd. But it is odd in a good way, I think. We need to become our own individuals too. We will always be twins and part of us will always need to be together, but we also need to find what we like and who we love outside of each other. I have found mine… I think he is in the process of finding his."

Kyouya reached across Tamaki to caress Hikaru's cheek. "I am honored that you have chosen me."

Hikaru laid a kiss in his palm and closed his eyes for a moment, enjoying the love in Kyouya's voice. When he opened them again, however, the mischief was back. "Now Kao may not be as attracted to other men, but I am. I am practically chomping at the bit to find out the details, because I seriously would have jumped at the chance to fuck them, if I wasn't already occupied in my own triad shower fuck. Not that I am complaining, mind you. We were having an excellent time."

Kyouya laughed out loud at the expression on Tamaki's face as he digested Hikaru's words and grew red again. "Hika-love, you may want to stop teasing Tama or there isn't going to be enough blood left in his body. It keeps rushing to his face."
"Sorry." The unrepentant note was clear.

Taking a deep breath and a moment to gather his thoughts, and hoping to deflect at least a little attention off of him, Tamaki asked "That brings me to a question that I have wondered about. I KNOW you are in love with both Haruhi and Kyo, but you talk of wanting to have sex with Hani and Takashi. Plus you do it in front of one of them. How is that possible? Isn't there any jealousy?"

Hikaru paused a moment before responding, so Kyouya started the answer. "Once upon a time I was consumed with jealousy. It wasn't even really that long ago, since the last big jealous moment happened at the beginning of this trip. But Haruhi reminded me of something that I needed to hear. I don't own her or Hikaru for that matter. They are both separate people with separate needs. It would be completely selfish if I ignored that only focused on what I want. Do I want to be with them? Absolutely. I am still in awe that they want to be with me, knowing my tendency to coldness and withdrawal. I love them, but I know that to be completely whole, I can't be everything for them. Hika will always need his brother. That is a role that I can't fill. He also is very, and if you think about it-always has been, extremely sexual. We watched he and Kao play it up for the club, but it's a part of him. He feels the passion of connection in lust as well as love and he needs to be able to experience and share it. If he can't do so, it kills a part of him. I love him too much to want him to suppress his desire, especially since it is helping me realize so many of the things that I have suppressed over the years. Haruhi has the same kind of passion, but she shows it differently with each of us. It's the reason that we were ALL drawn to her."

"Haruhi told me something the other day and it actually revolved around you, Tama. She reminded me that it was possible to have amazing sex with a friend. There is lust involved, but it is also about sharing the closeness you feel for the other person. It's a different kind of love and comfort. The example she gave was after you both broke up and before we started dating, you would still comfort her during thunderstorms. She needed the closeness and connection and I have a feeling you did as well. I am actually really glad she told me. It was the same reason you asked Kao if he wanted company that night. Haruhi broke me and Kao of being jealous long before any of the rest of you. When we finally understood that it was either maintain our jealousy or have her in our lives, we learned to let go of the jealousy and opened up to so many amazing opportunities. This is also why Kyo and I can see your need for rekindling some kind of connection with her. Like she said to us earlier today – Part of her will always love you. But we also have parts that no one else can touch."

"Wow. Um. I don't know what to say." Tamaki said as so many thoughts ran through his head. "I think I need to say Thank You."

"You are welcome."

Then gaining his own equilibrium and enthusiasm, Tamaki added. "And for the record, Takashi's cock feels amazing and Hani could suck start a leaf blower under water."

All three men burst out laughing. They were still chuckling when they reached the market. Tamaki paid for the cab this time and they got out to walk through the stalls. Hikaru immediately walked over to the silversmith and engaged in a deep discussion with him. Kyouya sighed under his breath as he and Tamaki kept walking.

Tamaki heard the sigh and had to question it. "What's wrong mon-amie?"

"It's this $50 limit and the creativity thing. Part of me thinks she put that restriction in place just for me. I can think of a ton of things I would buy her, but having to keep it under $50 makes them all impossible."

"I don't think, it was meant specifically for you, if that helps. I am feeling the same way, but I kind of
like the challenge. Think like a commoner."

"You know she would smack you if she heard you say that."

With a cheeky grin, Tamaki answered. "Oh, I know. Which is why I said it."

Kyouya laughed as Tamaki's attention was caught by a stall selling silk scarves. Leaving Tamaki to haggle with the shopkeeper, he continued to wander. Before he realized it, he was enjoying himself and he had picked up small items for everyone in their group except Haruhi. Her gift still puzzles me. I want it to be completely unique. Thankfully I still have a week. Maybe inspiration will strike this weekend.

Looking up he saw Hikaru walking up to him grinning, a few small bags held in one hand. Unconsciously, Kyousa reached out and captured the other one, before leaning in to kiss him on the cheek. "Did you find something for everyone?"

"Everyone except you and Kao. How about you?"

"Everyone except Haruhi. I want to get her something really unique. I just need to figure out how to do it cheaply."

"Oh I do understand. I picked silver because I knew I could get what I wanted for less than $50, even though I really wanted to make it platinum."

Tamaki bounced up to them, his arms completely overflowing with packages. He was grinning. "I am done! You are all going to love my gifts!"

"Boss… somehow I have a feeling we will. Even as we groan over whatever you have picked out."

"What do you mean?" Tamaki pouted.

"You have a tendency to go crazy." Hikaru teased. "But it's one of the things we love about you."

Kyouya sensing a potential return to the early Host Club not-quite-pleasant bantering between Hika and Tama, quickly changed the subject by suggesting that they needed to hurry or they would be late for dinner. The thought quickly made Tamaki's mood change as they jumped into the first available taxi and rushed off towards the restaurant.

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Despite Kyouya's urgency in rushing them to the restaurant, they were the first to arrive. Haruhi, Takashi, and Hani were five minutes behind them, and Kaoru and Renge arrived less than two minutes later. It was the arrival of the last two that sparked the most interest and excitement among the others. As Kaoru assisted Renge out of the cab, the glint of the marquis noted a slight change that had not been there when he left that morning. As Hikaru turned towards the others, he silently laughed while the others just stared.

"I take it you forgot to mention it to everyone else?"

"What and miss the fun of seeing everyone stare in shock?"

"You do know we can't play the Which One is Hikaru Game anymore?"

"Let's face it, after the last time we played the Game, not much could beat the enjoyment we got out of it. Besides, at this point, I am pretty sure everyone can tell us apart."
"True… and there is your whole tattoo thing. Since I haven't gotten one yet all anyone needs to do is see us shirtless and they could easily tell."

"And since there are several people here who absolutely love to see you shirtless, you both tend to show off. Hedonists," Haruhi cut into their banter with her usual aplomb. "Kao, I absolutely love your hair. The gold highlights and the new style really fit your personality. You are going to be absolutely stunning on the runway on Sunday." She linked her arm with his, so he was escorting both her and Renge. She gave a wink to Hikaru as they walked into the restaurant, knowing that the others would shake off their surprise if they were moving.

"But you absolutely adore our hedonistic ways!" Hikaru grinned as he followed her.

"Oh absolutely! I wouldn't change you for the world."

Once inside the restaurant Tamaki gave the maître de his name and the party was soon seated at a secluded booth in the back. Still in amazement at the change that had come over Kaoru, he couldn't resist asking, "So what made you decide to change your look?"

With a wink and a completely bland expression, Kaoru replied, "I decided I wanted a little more blond action in my life," as Tamaki spit his water across the table and the others started laughing.

Renge was confused by the undertone and the laughter that Kaoru's comment caused, so she decided to respond earnestly. "We were discussing the red carpet event on Sunday and Yuzuha made a comment about how it was too bad that everyone still couldn't tell Hikaru and Kaoru apart. Kaoru came up with the idea to make a change and we just ran with it." Her voice got meek as she added, "I think it looks really good."

Haruhi took pity on her friend. "It does look good and you are going to look stunning on his arm on Sunday."

"What?" Renge looked blank.

"Please tell me I didn't spoil the surprise?" Haruhi looked mildly embarrassed. "Yuzuha and I were talking about it the other day. Kaoru will escort her and you, while Hikaru escorts Kyouya and me. The rest of the group will be waiting inside the VIP area."

"Really?" The look of pure joy on Renge's face made her light up. "This Fashion Week is going to be the best yet. There are so many new things that Hitachiin Design Group is doing. I am so lucky to be a small part of it."

She really is pretty when she is happy. I see Kao staring at her and trying to figure her out. Soon, my friend. I can see you slipping under her charms very soon; just like I see her slipping under his. I am slightly curious to see how he will react when she actually tells him and lets him know her secret. Haruhi thought idly. There is so much more to Renge than meets the eye. She can play the ingénue, but she is one smart cookie.

Renge's enthusiasm soon swept up the others and they spent the rest of the evening eating and indulging in conversation that ranged across several topics. Tamaki filled her and Kaoru in on the Christmas idea and both thought the idea sounded fun. Hani described the incredible bakery that they had found. Hikaru teased his brother by making subtle comments about Tamaki and Renge, though the latter didn't seem to notice. Kyouya went into detail about the various museums. Haruhi talked a bit about the workshop they were still planning on attending the next day and was glad when Renge asked if she could join them for the Friday, though she already had a commitment for the Saturday. Takashi, unsurprisingly, remained mostly silent and observed the rest, though he did add a few pithy
comments that had Tamaki blushing.

Tamaki was correct in his prediction, and it was a very happy and very full group that finally exited the restaurant 3 hours later. They groaned as they all climbed into the limo that had been called to pick them all up. Once inside the limo, silence seemed to be the order of the night, though no one had specifically requested it. The excitement of the day gave way to exhaustion. Hani laid down on one of the bench seats, put his head in Takashi's lap and promptly fell asleep. Renge, seated between Kaoru and Tamaki, fell asleep on Kaoru's shoulder as he stretched it out behind her, ghosting his fingers across Tamaki's shoulder. Tamaki's head was pressed back against the seat and his eyes were closed, his fingers reaching up to link with Kao's.

Across from them Haruhi lay across Kyouya and Hikaru's lap. Their arms around her and their hands linked across her chest. Kyouya's silver eyes were closed behind the glass lenses. Only Hikaru and Kaoru's eyes remained open and they stared at each other across the dimly lit limo. Their legs were stretched out across the distance and locked with the others as their eyes met. Speaking without words in the way they had been doing from birth, they were checking in with each other and giving each other support in the best way they knew how.

As the limo pulled up in front of the guest house, they all climbed wearily out. Immediately Takashi picked up Hani, Kyouya picked up Haruhi, and Kaoru grabbed Renge. While they carried their fragile loads up the stairs, Tamaki and Hikaru opened doors and assisted where they could.

Hani and Takashi quickly disappeared into their room. A fraction of a moment later Hikaru and Kyouya quietly shut the door to Haruhi's room.

Tamaki held open the door to the room being used by Renge, while Kaoru carried the sleeping girl in, removed her outer layers of clothing and pulled the covers over her. On impulse he leaned down and whispered, "Thank you for helping me find the way to let 'me' out" and kissed her gently on the lips. The soft sigh in her sleep at the action made him smile. Looking up as he walked away, he saw Tamaki looking at him with an unreadable expression. He went over to Tamaki and wrapped his arms around him before lifting his head up and kissing him deeply.

"I am too tired to do much beyond sleep, but if you still want company, I would love to share your bed again." Kaoru whispered quietly. They tiptoed out of the room and shut the door behind them.

"I want you next to me. I was just worried that you may not want me anymore."

"Because you had sex with Takashi and Hani?"

"Did Hikaru tell you?"

"No, Takashi did actually." Kaoru smiled at him. "You are my friend first and I knew you wanted it. I am happy you got to experience it. You will have to tell me about it later when I can enjoy the imagery."

"Your brother thought you would feel that way, but I didn't want to hope."

Kaoru yawned, "You should have believed him. Hikaru is usually right. Now come get naked with me. I want to hold you as I fall asleep."

"As you wish."
The muted light coming through the window woke Kyouya before the others. Enjoying the novel experience of being the first one awake rather than the beast that everyone avoided, he looked over at his sleeping lovers. Haruhi was curled into his chest, while Hikaru spooned her from behind and threw his leg over both of them. I really could get used to this. I don’t know what I am going to do in a couple of weeks when we go back to Japan. This thing with Hikaru seems to have progressed so fast in just a few days, but at the same time it feels like it has been a lifetime. I want them both with me. I know they still have a few more months at Ouran, but maybe I can convince them to share an apartment with me when they start University. I know I wouldn’t mind being out of the Ootori mansion, especially as my father is going to throw a fit when I ‘come out’ publicly. He may even disown me. It’s funny – the threat of disinheritance no longer seems like a fate worse than death. Losing Haruhi or Hikaru does.

“You know, if your father throws a public fit about our relationship, you still have options,” Hikaru’s voice was quiet as he tried not to disturb the still sleeping woman between them. “You could always move in with any of us until the end of the semester, and then next year, we could move back here to Paris.”

“How did you know what I was thinking about?”

“I am starting to understand your looks. As Haruhi would confirm, you get a certain expression when you are thinking about your father. I just wanted to remind you that you have options that don’t involve him. I know part of your conflict revolves around the Ootori name and not wanting to dishonor it. Personally, I think if you give it 10 years – no one will remember your father as anything other than a disagreeable hard ass, while you have a chance to change the world and make the Ootori name synonymous with Progression and the future. There will always be some old fogeys that will try to stick to the ‘traditional’ to the exclusion of all else; you take the best parts of tradition and combine them with innovation and progress.”

Kyouya smiled at the passion in Hikaru’s voice and bathed in the warmth of the idea that it was directed at him. “How exactly am I going to do that?”

“Please. You know you already have. I don’t know your entire stock portfolio, but I do know that you are a decent sized shareholder of both Hitachiin Design Group and Suoh Enterprises. It wouldn’t surprise me to know you also hold stock in the Haninozouka and Morinozouka Security companies, just like you own a good portion of your father’s stock.”

Now slightly alarmed, Kyouya’s voice was harder than he intended, “Have you been going through my accounts?”

“No he hasn’t, love and neither have I. He knows about HDG because his family still owns the majority stock share and any large purchases flag in their systems. I am pretty sure Tamaki mentioned you owning some of his family stock in passing on a video call a few had months ago. The rest is an educated guess, since it makes sense if you own stock of some of your friend’s families companies; you likely own some of all.” Haruhi yawned and stretched before continuing, “Now can we please change the subject? It’s too early to be talking about business portfolios and starting arguments.”

Kyouya pulled her hand up to his lips and gently nipped the fingers, before looking at Hikaru and
apologizing. “I am sorry. I shouldn’t have accused you. I am just not used to people reading me… that’s usually my department.”

“Kiss me and I will accept your apology.” Hikaru’s grin was wicked.

“Easily done.” Kyouya sat up and leaned over Haruhi to lock lips with Hikaru. Their kiss was lazy-lips pressing and moving gently together. They only broke apart when Haruhi made a small sound beneath them. They turned to look down at her.

Seeing them looking at her, she sat up and leaned in to kiss them both at the same time. It was slightly awkward, but the silliness brought a smile to all of their faces. “I could really get used to waking up to both of you like that.”

“Me too.”

“Me three.”

Smiles were shared again, before Haruhi commented. “Since we are all awake, should we get up and ready?” glancing at the alarm on the nightstand, she continued, “We have about an hour before we are supposed to meet the others downstairs.”

Kyouya grinned, “A full hour. Whatever are we going to do?”

“I can think of a few things,” Hikaru answered as he flopped down on both of them, his hands bracing his impact on strategically placed areas of his partner’s bodies.

“I just bet you can,” Haruhi laughed as Hikaru proceeded to show them both exactly what he meant.

They made it downstairs with exactly a minute to spare.

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The mood in the limo was excited. Tamaki and Hani were barely containing their enthusiasm, while the rest of the group looked on and laughed.

“This is going to be so much fun!”

“I agree Tama-chan! It’s so different than any other conference that I have been to.”

“Now I really hope you won’t be disappointed. You guys know it’s not like Comic-Con where there are thousands of people, right? The average attendance is about 500 people. It’s mostly panels and discussions.”

“Oh…,” Tamaki enthusiasm dampened for a millisecond before returning. “But the brochure said there was a marketplace with different vendors and booths. That will be fun to see.”

“You forget Haruhi that the purpose of the conference is to educate on different lifestyles, perspectives, and alternative paths. To be able to see through another’s eyes, is a skill not many develop.” Takashi intoned seriously.

“Yes Sensei,” she said formally before winking at Takashi.

“I am just curious about the kink lifestyle they mention as a topic,” Hikaru commented.

“Takes one to know one.”

“You wish.”

“I don’t wish. I know.”

Kyouya decided that he wanted to join in the banter. “I think at this point, after the revelations of the last few days, we are all a little curious to see if there is anything that hasn’t come up already.”

Haruhi answered, “Well according to the schedule of events, today’s topics are centered on gender and religion; tomorrow the topics will be sexual orientation, alternative lifestyles, and alternative sexual practices. I think that last one is the ‘kink’ that Hika is referring to.”

“Yup. That’s the one. I want to know how much I have already done.” Hikaru’s smirk spoke volumes.

“Hika-love..?”

“Yes Haru?”

“Kao is right. You are a perv.”

The others started laughing, Hikaru included. Without missing a beat, he added, “but I am your perv. Kyouya’s too. So all of my perviness must be intriguing to you, or you would have ditched me long ago.”

“He has a point love,” Kyouya added with his own wicked grin,”And I seem to remember a certain leather dress…”

“Thanks to Kaoru and his impeccably kinky design abilities,” Haruhi blew a kiss at Kaoru, who returned the favor.

“Wait. A. Moment.” Tamaki interjected, “This is the first I have heard about Haruhi and a leather dress.” Turning to Hani and Takashi, “Do you know about the leather dress?”

“Not us, Tama-chan.”

Haruhi, Kyouya, Hikaru and Kaoru exchanged knowing looks with each other, while the others crossed their arms across their chests and glared. Finally Kaoru broke down and started the story. “Remember last year and the last Ouran Fair that we did as a Host club. The one with the Andromeda/Perseus myth?”

“Yes.” Three voices answered.

“Well you know the costumes we all wore…”

“Again. Yes.”

“Well, there were these ‘other’ costumes that I designed and Hikaru, Kyouya, and Haruhi were willing to help me try out.”

Haruhi blushed a deep red as she remembered that night. Glancing quickly at her lovers, she saw they were faintly pink as well, also no doubt remembering the first time they were all together.
“So why didn’t we see them?” the curiosity in Tamaki’s voice evident.

“I am guessing that was the night that Haru-chan, Kyo-chan, and Hika-chan first started dating.”

“So? … OH!” Now it was Tamaki’s turn to go fuchsia. However, his eagerness soon overcame his embarrassment. “Too bad you don’t still have them. I know I would like to see them… purely from an artistic perspective, of course.” He winked at Haruhi.

“Both Kyouya’s and Hika’s costumes are here, but I don’t have mine. Sorry. It’s worth seeing them in their outfits. I promise you.” Haruhi grinned at Tamaki’s less than subtle curiosity.

“Actually Haruhi, I packed your costume too. Just in case you might need it,” Kaoru said with a sly smile.

“Oh Goody!” Tamaki practically bounced in his seat before turning to Kaoru, “Please tell me you brought your part too?”

“I did not, but in my wardrobe gray leather pants aren’t hard to find, so I could fake it.”

“Perfect.” Kaoru could read the barely hidden lust behind Tamaki’s eyes. Haruhi couldn’t help it and burst out laughing. “It seems like every conversation this week has started out innocently and turned into a discussion related to sex. The thing is- I can’t even decide who is the bad influence on the others, because every one of us including me has turned it there at some point. Some outsider would probably think we are nothing but a group of sexual deviants.”

“Umm… Haruhi,” Kaoru said trying to put as much blandness as possible into his voice, “We are eighteen to twenty years old. Most of us are male. Sex is pretty much on our minds 95% of the time… Except Kyouya. He only has sex on the brain 90% of the time.”

The group burst out laughing as Kyouya found a discarded lumbar pillow and threw it at Kaoru. “It’s 87% of the time, I will have you know.”

“Haru-chan, are you saying you don’t want to show us the dress?”

“It’s kind of revealing, but I guess that was the point,” Haruhi mumbled turning pink again, “Oh hell… in for a penny, in for a pound. If Hika and Kyo agree, I will also put on my costume and the four of us will show you what we staged. NOT necessarily what we did after, but what the scene looked like.”

“Yay!”

Takashi interjected quietly, “May I make a suggestion. Tomorrow night would be a fitting time, since it marks the end of the workshops and Mitskune and Tamaki still owe me for losing the bet. We could make a kind of game out of it.”

“Takashi, that is a fabulous idea. I LOVE games.” Hikaru grinned as Haruhi groaned. Takashi looked sideways at the noise she made, so she quickly interjected, “Sorry Taka. I think the idea of having a kind of ‘game night’ tomorrow sounds like fun, especially since I still owe ALL of you for the game of Distraction you played on me yesterday morning. I was groaning at Hika, because I KNOW him and games. Fair Warning – He cheats.”

“I do not. Besides, you like my games Haru-love. I know it. It was a game that started it, after all.”
“Yes. It was.” To the other’s surprise, it was Kyouya who answered not Haruhi as he winked at Hikaru.

“So let me get this straight,” Tamaki said. “Today we go to the conference and learn about gender and religion, though I am not exactly sure how gender can be alternative. I mean, there is just male and female, right?” Tamaki paused for a breath before continuing, ”Then tomorrow, after spending the day learning about sex and different kinds of sex and let’s face it, probably getting totally wound up, we are going to go back to the House and have some sort of twisted game night that will probably drive us crazy with lust.”

“Yeah Boss. That about sums it up.” Hikaru grinned.

“Perfect.”
“Ok. I know feel like an idiot for my earlier comment regarding gender,” Tamaki said to the eight people currently sharing a table in the hotel lounge. “Male, Female, Trans, Gender Fluid, Gender Queer… I am still confused.”

“You aren’t the only one,” Mai Nakasaki added with flirtatious wink at Tamaki. To the group’s surprise, when Renge had joined them at the hotel before the first session she had brought along a friend. Mai was a runway model for Hitachiin Design Group, Inc. and as such was well known to both Hikaru and Kaoru, though neither had much contact with her outside of work. She was tall and willowy (both required traits in a fashion model) but her hair was dyed a bright red at the roots and graduated into a deep purple at the ends. She called the look “Caribbean sunset” and it was striking to see. So striking, in fact, that Yuzuha had asked Kaoru to design a specific outfit around the color scheme and Hikaru to find the right precious stones to make a necklace and bracelet set. Presently she sat at the end of the table next to Renge, and flirted mercilessly with Tamaki whenever she got a chance.

Haruhi was amused by Mai’s flirting but instead of watching her and Tamaki she focused more of her attention on watching Renge and Kaoru, who was sitting on the other side of her. They keep trying not to look at each other and would twitch if they brushed up against each other. It’s highly amusing. When Kaoru caught Renge looking at him out of the corner of her eye, she blushed. Though knowing what I know about Renge, watching her and Mai purposely act casual is its own kind of entertainment. I wonder how long it will be before anyone realizes they are a couple. Not that she isn’t attracted to Kao, because she definitely is, but Mai and Renge have been together pretty much since Yuzuha hired her as an assistant.

At that moment, Renge looked up and caught Haruhi’s eye. Guessing part what her friend was thinking she gave Haruhi a big smile and a wink, which Haruhi returned before turning back to the conversation. She started to answer Tamaki, but Hani held his hand up to stop her.

“I know you know the answer Haru-chan, but I want to make sure that I have it straight as well. So please correct me if I am wrong.” He looked at her and getting her nod in response, continued with his observation. “Gender is the way you feel about yourself outside of your sexuality; the way you identify yourself. Male and Female are generally defined by society’s definition of their roles and are the most common. Trans is like Haruhi’s father – Ranka. He is biologically male but he also identifies as a female.

“Let me clarify just a bit more,” Haruhi interrupted gently, “My dad is a transvestite. Meaning he is biologically male and acts with male attributes part of the time, but he also identifies with the female and acts with female actions part of the time. So in some ways he is both, but he still identifies as male most of the time. Transgender is when a person is biologically one sex, but identifies completely as the opposite sex. Transgender people may seek out hormone therapy or a sex change to turn them into the biological sex they identify with, which is where you get male to female or MtF transgender or female to male FtM transgender. Does that make sense?”

“Much more sense than it did fifteen minutes ago Haru-chan,” Hani said with a smile as the other’s nodded around the table.

“I can see why you are interested in learning about different lifestyles, my love,” Kyoya added, “It is actually kind of fascinating to realize there is more out there than what we learn in school or are
brought up in elite society to know. I can also see how it would be very difficult for people who identify as outside the mainstream to find lawyers, doctors, and other professionals who won’t judge them on their lifestyle.”

“Let me take a stab at explaining gender fluid, though I am still a bit confused,” Hikaru entered the conversation. “Gender Fluid is where the person really feels that they are a mix of both male and female. Some days they may be more one than the other, or both equally. It can be different than a transvestite because a transvestite may view his male and female sides as separate aspects of his personality, where a gender fluid person sees both aspects as part of the same personality.”

“Exactly Hika-love!” Haruhi’s smile was huge as she leaned over and kissed him quickly on the cheek.

“So a Gender Queer person is someone who feels that they don’t fit into the traditional male or female gender?” Kaoru asked. “Wouldn’t that also mean that someone who is gender fluid, a transgender, or transvestite could be considered gender queer?”

“Absolutely,” Haruhi responded. “Gender Queer is kind of a catch-all phrase, but it can be broken down.”

“OK, I think I understand a bit better now,” Tamaki said. “I still want to take back my earlier comment, but at least now I know the differences. It’s funny. If I think about it, I can probably name a few people other than your father who match one of those descriptions, including a couple of my cousins. My grandmother just calls them “odd” and disassociates from them, but they are really cool – just different.”

“Your grandmother is very much like my father. He would not tolerate any difference beyond the traditional in the Ootori family. So if anyone did meet an alternate definition, they hid it behind traditional roles.”

“The Morinozouka and Haninozouka families have long held the belief that a warrior’s spirit is not limited to the gender that the body is, so in a way, Mitskune and I were lucky growing up. We didn’t have definitions or terms to use, but we saw people who fit them. It didn’t matter as long as their heart was true to their martial art.” Takashi said quietly.

“Of course our families only really recognized that after some kick-ass women in our lineage a couple of centuries ago proved they could fight as well as any male samurai,” Hani giggled. “What I wouldn’t give to witness the Emperor being protected from a military assassination attempt by the handmaidens of one of his wives.”

“Now that’s something I could stand behind,” Mai raised her glass of water and said to Renge and Haruhi, “Here’s to kick-ass women who break boundaries!”

Both Haruhi and Renge clinked their water glasses with hers, while the guys chuckled. After taking a sip, Renge turned the conversation towards the afternoon’s lectures. “So this afternoon is devoted to alternative religions and medical practices?”

“Yes,” Kaoru responded rifling through his bag to pull out the brightly colored paper listing the day’s events, “As far as the schedule says. For the religion part it looks like there are classes on Paganism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Wicca, and Shamanism. For the medical practices it appears to have classes on Reiki, Acupuncture, Reflexology, and Homeopathy.”
“Does anyone else find it kind of amusing that Buddhism is considered an alternative religion, when pretty much all of us practice it? Or the fact that Acupuncture and Reflexology are considered alternative medical practices, when it’s just part of our normal health care?” Hikaru asked.

Haruhi laughed before answering, “I completely agree Hika-love, but this conference is put on by a “western” company in France, so all of our “eastern” practices are considered alternative. I am pretty sure that western culture defines alternative religion as anything outside of Christianity, Judaism, or Muslim.”

“I know that many western medical practitioners are starting to include acupuncture and reflexology into their practices, but it is amusing to be considered “alternative” when in our culture we have actually been practicing them for hundreds of years.” Kyouya couldn’t resist adding.

“So basically we have all been living “alternative” lifestyles from the very beginning!” Tamaki chuckled. “No wonder my grandmother is so against western culture. She is too much of a snob to admit that someone else may have a different point of view. Hers is the only right way to do something.”

Takashi looked at his watch. “It appears the next sessions are starting soon. Is everyone going to the same session or are we splitting up? I want to look into the sessions on Paganism, Shamanism, and Reiki.”

“I think that might be best Takashi,” Hani replied. “It does look like the “Marketplace” will be open after the last session, so it may be fun to meet back up there and wander through it. Some of the vendors look interesting and there is an I-Ching fortune telling booth. I haven’t done that in forever!”

“Oooh… I want to get a tarot reading done! Renge, you HAVE to do it with me!” Mai’s said eagerly as she linked her arm with Renge’s. Her enthusiasm was catching, and it wasn’t long before the group dispersed to go to several different sessions. All agreed to meet back at the opening of the Marketplace.

Several hours later it was an excited but tired group that climbed back into the limo headed toward Suoh House. They chatted amicably about the colors of their auras captured on film and printed, the various fortune-telling readings that were done, the different candles, books, and music that they purchased and their excitement to see what the next day would bring. Tamaki in his generosity had invited Mai to join them at the Guest House, but she declined stating that she had to remain close to the Fashion Week venue with the other models. Renge (much to Kaoru’s disappointment) also told the others that for the next several days, she would also need to remain near the venue as she was also acting liaison between the models and Yuzuha. But both agreed to go back to the Guest House for dinner that night, saying that since they were having such a good time, they would stretch their day off as long as they could.

Once they reached the Guest House, Haruhi, Kyoya, Hikaru, Hani and Takashi started setting up the meal that had been left for them in the Library, while Tamaki and Kaoru offered to give the girls a tour, since it was new to Mai and Renge hadn’t really gotten to see much while she was recovering from her fall. Agreeing quickly, Mai latched onto Tamaki’s arm and started flooding him with questions as they walked. Kaoru, shaking his head at Mai’s exuberance offered his arm to Renge as they followed along.

Kaoru was conflicted. He couldn’t decide which he liked more – the view of Tamaki’s ass as he walked in front of him or the warm sweet smell of the woman on his arm. Deciding to just enjoy
both, he leaned over and spoke quietly to Renge. “How is your ankle doing? You seem to be walking with only a slight limp. I don’t want to tire you out, so please let me know if you need to rest.”

“I am actually doing pretty well. I have it wrapped well and the swelling is almost all gone. You saw yesterday how much your mother is requiring me to take breaks and rest it. I think I will actually be fine for the red carpet Sunday night as long as I wear ballet flats rather than high heels.”

“That’s probably a smart idea. I know you wanted to wear heels, but some of Hika’s designs for flats are incredible.”

“I know. I am really sorry about what I said the other day. His designs are just as important as yours and I am really happy that you are both willing to help me with mine. I am so excited and nervous at the same time.”

“That’s understandable. Just be yourself. Your dress is quirky and fun – just like you. I have a feeling it will go over well at the show.”

“Thank you.” Renge blushed at the compliment before turning her attention back to Tamaki’s description of the rooms. Kaoru seeing her slight distress made no further comment, but steered the conversation back to the house and Tamaki’s idea of what he wanted to achieve.

Both Mai and Renge declared themselves in absolute love with the Conservatory and decided that after dinner, everyone should go up to it for dessert. Laughing, Tamaki and Kaoru agreed and ushered the girls back down the stairs to the Library to eat.

Dinner that evening had a Spanish flair with paella, tapas, and gambas ajillo, and with montecados and flan for dessert. The dinner conversation mostly focused on Fashion Week, as they finalized the plans for the Red Carpet and the Grand Ball. Soon everything was finalized and the only thing left to do was wait for the actual events to occur. The group energy was still high after the discussion, so when Tamaki shared the girls’ idea of going up to the Conservatory to eat dessert, everyone readily agreed. Grabbing plates, silverware, napkins, wine and glasses, they all made their way up to the greenhouse on the top floor.

Haruhi felt the moist warm air and could smell the lush tropical scents as soon as she walked through the glass doors. *I have walked by this room every day and I keep forgetting to come inside. It is so beautiful in here. I know why this room is one of Tamaki’s favorites.*

Tamaki led the group over to a cluster of low slung couches centered around a square table. He directed them to put all the food on the table, while he stepped over to a panel to fiddle with a few switches. Finally he found what he was looking for and with a chorus of ooh’s and aah’s from the others, small hidden LED lights light up the area, adding a fairy twinkle to their surroundings.

“Tama-chan, it is absolutely beautiful up here. The lights, the smells, even the couches are comfortable. Why did we come up here the last couple of nights?”

Laughing Tamaki replied “Well… Tuesday night you all had just arrived and had other things on your mind,” he said this with a wink and a grin at the Hosts. ”Wednesday Night Renge hurt herself, and last night we were all exhausted from sight-seeing and shopping.”

“I vote we have dessert up here every night, from tonight on. You are going to have cake as a dessert one night, right Tama-chan?”

‘Hani-sempai, I wouldn’t forget cake for the world.’
Haruhi giggled at Tamaki’s gallant response, while Mai just looked confused. Renge leaned over and whispered to her, explaining Hani’s obsession with cake.

"Hani is right though, Tamaki. It is really beautiful in here. I wouldn’t mind having dessert up here either.” Kyouya said.

“We agree.” Hikaru and Kaoru chorused.

"Mmmm…” was Takashi’s response as he reached for a plate of flan.

Taking that as a signal, most of the chatter ceased while they enjoyed the sweetness of the flan and cookies, the lushness of their surroundings, and the soft hiss of snow on the glass above them. When they were finished eating and sat back to relax, Tamaki poured each a glass of Spanish wine.

“Spanish wine from a Frenchman?” Kyouya teased his friend as he sat back on a couch next to Hikaru, with Haruhi lounging across them both in what was fast becoming their favorite relaxed position.

“Yes but Tama-chan is only half French, so that may mean something,” Hani joined in the teasing from where he sat next to Takashi on the couch adjacent to where Kyouya, Hikaru and Haruhi sat.

“Hey!” Tamaki grinned. “It’s a Spanish wine, because that was the theme of tonight’s dinner. Because I am French, I know a good wine when I have it and I am not stupid enough to think that France has the market cornered on the only good wines.” He finished his glass and poured another before sitting back down next to Kaoru. Casually, Tamaki slid an arm along the back of the couch he shared with Kaoru, fingertips just barely brushing the other man’s shoulder. He hid his smile as he felt Kaoru’s body react.

“Now that’s unusual to hear a Frenchman say!” Mai giggled. She and Renge shared the last couch.

“Ahh… But I am an unusual Frenchman, Princess,” Tamaki’s flirting can as naturally as breathing to him.

“In some ways not so unusual. This bottle is empty!”

“Well that could only mean one thing…”

“We are going to play Spin the Bottle?” The words escaped Renge’s mouth before she had a chance to think about what she was saying. When she realized what she had said, she turned a bright red and clasped her hands over her mouth.

Once he got his laughter under control Tamaki replied, “Well I was going to say, I would open another bottle, but I like Renge’s idea better.” He winked at her and she blushed even deeper.

“I can’t believe I just said that. It must be the wine talking. I mean, I have always wanted to play, but I never have and it just popped out after such a fun day today with all of you…” Renge’s babbling ceased when Kaoru leaned over and placed a finger against her lips.

“Why not?” Kaoru said with an evil grin. “We haven’t played Spin the Bottle in a loooong time, right Hikaru?”

“Oh I agree brother, this could be very fun.” Hikaru responded with a smirk.

“Oh why not?” Haruhi shocked the others by saying. One by one the others agreed, fully realizing that it was, in essence, foreplay for most of their group.
With a mischievous grin, Kaoru handed the bottle to Haruhi to take the first spin. Laying it down in the center of the table, she spun. When it slowed to a stop, it was pointed at Takashi. Grinning at her chance to do something she always dreamed of, she looked over at her Sensei, partner, and friend. He met her eyes and smile in them burned deep. Crossing the space between them, she held out her hand. He took it and stood up, holding it to his heart. He placed his other hand on her hip, while she slid hers up his neck and into his hair. Stretching onto her tiptoes, she gently placed her lips on his.

Takashi, feeling the so soft lips teasing at his, couldn’t resist for long. With a primal sound he opened his mouth and deepened the kiss, plumbing the depths of her mouth and sharing in the energy that had been building between them for months. Slowly the sound of catcalls and random commentary reminded him of where he was and he reluctantly broke off the kiss. Heart beating heavily, he looked one last time into Haruhi’s eyes, before turning to see the wide grin on Mitskune’s face.

“Wow. You guys really know how to play spin the bottle!” Mai said her tone impressed.

As Haruhi walked back to her spot between Hikaru and Kyouya, she glanced quickly at their expressions, since that was a much more intimate kiss than she had planned. She was relieved to see the lust and not the jealousy on each of their faces. Hikaru even whispered once she was seated “Damn. That was HOT!”

“I think if I remember the rules right, that means the next spin is mine,” Kyouya said. Taking the bottle and spinning it landed on Hikaru. “HA! That’s an easy one.” Kyouya leaned across Haruhi and laid a scorching kiss on Hikaru. Haruhi, of course, caught between them had an up close view of her lovers as they teased each other.

“You are an evil man, my love,” Haruhi whispered to Kyouya after he broke off the kiss. “I want you both right now and we still have to sit through seven more turns!”

“Patience, my love,” Kyouya responded with a smirk.

Tamaki’s turn was next and the bottle landed on Mai. With a gallant bow worthy of his Host Club days, He swept her off her feet and dipped her backwards, while placing a sweet kiss on her mouth. For all of the flirting that they had done throughout the day, it still remained a relatively chaste kiss. But Tamaki’s charm was legendary, and it was a blushing Mai who returned to her seat.

Kaoru was the next to spin and it landed on Haruhi. Laughing, he jumped across the table and landed on top of Haruhi. Pinning her to the seat, he kissed her soundly, while his brother faked a sigh. Grinning, Kaoru looked up at Hikaru and playing up the twincest act, even though everyone but Mai knew it was just an act, he said, “Brother, I know by the rules of the game, I had to kiss Haruhi… but I wish the bottle had stopped just a bit sooner, so I could have kissed you instead.”

Twin sighs from Renge and Mai at that little speech made the group burst out into laughter, while Hikaru and Kaoru just grinned at each other.

Still slightly pink, Mai grabbed the bottle and spun it quickly. She was surprised when it landed on Hani. Deciding to be bold, she marched over to Hani, pushed him back in the seat, sat on his knees and pressed her lips firmly against his.

Hani was a little shocked, but decided to get into the spirit of the game and kissed her back thoroughly. He gave her the full force of his Lolita smile and a wink when she broke it off, so she was a little unsteady as she sat back down.

Renge felt slightly confused. She was enjoying the game, but she was still trying to process how it was making her feel, seeing people that she was attracted to kissing others. She knew it was her idea
for the game in the first place, but part of her was at war with herself. It took Mai prompting her a couple of times to realize that it was her turn to spin. Reaching out, she spun the glass. She couldn’t decide if she was relieved or eager when it landed on Kaoru.

Kaoru saw the bottle spinning and his heart gave a little flip when he realized that it landed on him. He had admitted his growing curiosity for the girl approaching him and now he was going to sample her lips. He just knew that somehow he had to make this first kiss memorable. When she stopped in front of him and looked up at him with those big brown eyes, he held her gaze. Slowly he let his lips descend as he cupped her face. Teasing her lips gently with his, he swallowed the soft sound of pleasure that escaped before deepening the kiss. He flicked his tongue softly against her lower lip and nibbled gently at the edges before pulling back with a smile to see the completely dazed look on her face.

Renge had never been kissed quite like that before and she was dizzy from it. When she opened her eyes and saw Kaoru smiling at her, it was a moment of magic that she didn’t want to end. She smiled back at him, before turning back to her seat.

Takashi was next. His spin landed on Kyouya. Still feeling a little bit guilty for kissing Haruhi so deeply earlier he wasn’t exactly sure how to respond, but he knew the rules of the game and had agreed to play, so he approached Kyouya. Letting a little of the lust that he felt show on his face, he turned to the man who was nearly his equal in height and pulled him in for a kiss. It was shorter than the kiss he had given Haruhi, but it’s intensity was close. It became a challenge, with both trying to take the lead and neither quite succeeding. Both of them were breathing a bit heavy when they broke apart.

This time, Hikaru who leaned over to Kyouya and said, “I want to see that again! So fucking hot!” Hani grabbed the bottle as he gave another knowing glance at his lover. Giving it a quick spin, he smiled as it landed on Tamaki. A slight smirk settled on his face as he walked over to the other blond man, as he remembered exactly how Tamaki had tasted in the shower the other morning.

Tamaki for his part was also remembering the morning in the shower, so when Hani stopped in front of him his smile matched the one on Hani’s face. Together their lips met as they savored the memory and gave an unspoken promise that it would need to be repeated soon. A discreet cough from Kaoru, reminded them of their present state and they broke apart.

“Finally it’s my turn!” Hikaru complained jovially. “I have had to watch all of this kissing and I have only been kissed once. It’s not fair. I am making up for it now.” With that he spun the bottle for the last time, surprised to see it land on Renge. Glancing swiftly up to first see the stunned expression on his brother’s face and then glancing at her – seeing the confusion still evident, Hikaru made a quick decision. Walking over to her, he gently lifted her head and placed a soft kiss on her lips before walking back to his seat. Once he sat down, he gave her a wink which caused her to blush even deeper.

The game over, the hosts started to say their goodnights and a car was called for Renge and Mai. Within 15 minutes, Tamaki was shutting the door behind them and walking back up the stairs to his room. Seeing the gold-streaked redhead naked in his bed, he couldn’t help but smile. “I take it the game didn’t make you jealous.”


“I think I can do something about that.”
Haruhi sat between Kyoya and Tamaki in the conference room as the rest of the hosts found seating to either side. She kept glancing discreetly to either side as she sat back amused; she took in with hidden delight the rapt expressions on the faces of her friends. They are fascinated and I find that actually funny. For a group of guys who pretty much run the complete range of sexual orientation the panel is speaking about, they seem far more interested in the concept than I would have thought. She gave a small smile, which of course Kyoya caught her at.

Leaning over he whispered, “Oh what I wouldn’t give to hear your thoughts, right now.”

“I am just laughing at how interested everyone is in the topic, including you my love. I don’t want to keep your attention, so I will tell you more later.”

“Fair enough,” Kyoya turned back to the front as he linked his fingers with hers.

Sitting back in her seat she felt Tamaki’s arm brush against the back of her neck. He gave her a quick wink, but didn’t speak. Haruhi listened to the discussion for a few minutes, before her mind wandered again. If I understand the panelists correctly, there is really a sliding scale of sexuality which is different than “gender identity” which we learned about yesterday. If I drew it linearly it would look like this homosexuality – homoflexibility – bisexuality/pansexual – heteroflexibility – heterosexual. I know Tamaki has identified as flexible, but it is interesting to see how the others fall. I really don’t think at this point there is anyone in our group who is completely homosexual unless you count Mai, but she isn’t really a part of the group just yet. I know I thought Hani and Takashi were at one point, but their recent statement has me pushing them into homoflexibility. They still prefer the same sex, but they are attracted to select members of the opposite sex… I still can’t believe that they casually mentioned they wanted me in their bed. I mean I know I have had fantasies, but I had no idea that they did as well. I do wonder… Stop it Haruhi!! Focus!! She mentally gave herself a slap on the head before deliberately focusing on her mind back on the topic of discussion. Renge is also homoflexible, though no one at Ouran would have suspected. Once she stepped away from her obsession with that anime video game, she started realizing that she was more attracted to the host club princesses rather than the hosts themselves, though she never spoke of it. It’s part of the reason she was able to peg the clients’ needs so accurately. Granted, it took her a long time to acknowledge it. It wasn’t until Mai started flirting with her before she let herself accept it. At that point she told me and swore me to secrecy. I think her growing attraction to Kao is causing her some confusion, though. She knew him before and didn’t see the attraction, but something has shifted here in Paris; maybe being with Mai has allowed her to open up to new possibilities. I just know she needs to tell Kao about her relationship with Mai soon. I don’t want to see him hurt. He deserves to find someone that will accept him and his relationship with Hika.

At the thought of her other lover, she glanced over to where he was sitting on the other side of Kyoya. His right hand was linked with Kyoya’s as well and his left arm brushed against Kao’s as they shared the armrest. Hikaru is definitely bisexual, that pretty much goes without saying. I know Tamaki has called himself flexible, but I have a feeling that after this class, he will just start calling himself bisexual. He is starting to accept that he could have a real relationship with any sex rather than just a night or two of “fun”, in much the same way Hikaru could. I can see it in the relationship we had, and also in his interest in the others. Kaoru though is still definitely heteroflexible; the only males he really is only attracted to are Hikaru and Tamaki. Hani’s offer may cross his mind as idle curiosity, but I honestly don’t expect him to take them up on it. He just isn’t attracted to them in a way beyond friendship- much the way he feels about me. But he is really attracted to Renge…
Kyouya is the one who has changed the most actually. Two years ago, I would have firmly placed him in the heterosexual category; now he is definitely heteroflexible. He is in a fully acknowledged and committed relationship with both me and Hikaru. Making sure the object of her current thought was wrapped up in the discussion at hand, she smiled inwardly. He isn’t quite ready to acknowledge it yet, but now that he has accepted that he is attracted to and in love with Hika, I can see the way he occasionally watches Tamaki too. It will be intriguing to see if anything develops there.

As if they somehow knew her thoughts were centered on them, Kyouya briefly squeezed her hand while Tamaki softly stroked his thumb once down the nape of her neck. The combination was enough to cause her to shiver slightly. Haruhi could tell they felt her reaction and watched as they quickly looked at each other and grinned. Dear gods, I don’t know if I could survive being the focus of Tamaki, Kyouya and Hikaru’s combined attention. The experience would be off the charts… and amazing … and… FOCUS HARUHI!! This time it was harder to turn her mind back to the discussion, for some reason.

Ok. So the last of us on the sexuality scale is me. As it stands right now, I am heterosexual. There haven’t been any women that have interested me in any way other than friendship, even though I have technically kissed a couple. Of course, the fact that I am daily surrounded by some of the most gorgeous men in the world may have something to do with that. I just can’t see myself attracted to anyone outside the group. Each one has let me see a part of him that no one else knows. It is an honor I don’t take lightly.

The sound of applause broke through Haruhi’s thoughts and she realized the lecture was finishing. Quickly, she joined in the clapping trying to hide that her thoughts had only superficially been on the lecture. Rising from her seat, she accepted Kyouya’s hand again as she turned to file out of the aisle, while Tamaki gently guided her with a hand at her back.

Tamaki was still trying to process all of the information that had just been presented. Despite the fact he thought of himself as open-minded, the workshop coupled with the things that had happened among the group because he had invited them all to Paris for the workshop, were far more enlightening than he could ever have anticipated. It started with that completely unexpected and wicked kiss Kyouya gave me at the airport. I know I was too shocked to respond at the time, which I have to admit, I regret completely. But I know I wasn’t the only one surprised by his actions. I think it started a chain reaction he could not have anticipated; if the Shadow King and unquestionably most “proper” of us could let down his guard, do something unexpected and outrageous, then the rest of us could do the same… and here we are. A few short days later and the relationships between all of us have shifted. I never would have had the courage to start it for fear of losing the only people outside of my parents I have ever cared for. But instead of breaking us apart, it seems to be drawing us closer together.

“Earth to Boss,” the twins chorused.

Blushing slightly at being caught unaware, Tamaki answered “Yes? Devil twins…”

Hikaru and Kaoru both grinned at the old nickname. Kaoru winked at him before responding, “We were discussing what we wanted to do for lunch and you nearly walked into Kyo, so he asked what you were thinking of.”

“That it is his entire fault actually.” Tamaki replied with a smirk.

“Oh really?” Kyouya asked with a raised eyebrow and a cool voice. “Do tell us what exactly my fault is. I am dying to know considering I haven’t done anything to you that I know of.”
“Ahh… but you have mon ami,” Tamaki was thoroughly enjoying teasing his best friend. He slipped an arm around Kaoru’s waist and smiled as Kao leaned in. He then nodded first to Hani and Takashi openly holding hands, and then to where Kyouya, Hikaru and Haruhi stood. Hikaru stood behind Haruhi with his arms around her waist and his head on her right shoulder. Kyouya stood slightly askew with one arm around Hikaru’s shoulders and his other around Haruhi’s waist as well. The three of them had locked their fingers together. “We would not be standing here, in a public place, like we are right now, if you hadn’t kissed me at the airport.”

Haruhi’s laughter pealed out and echoed off the walls, while everyone except Kyouya bent over in laughter. The Shadow King was turning a very deep shade of red.

“He’s right Kyo-chan.” Hani giggled. “I don’t think any of us would have said some of the things or done some of the things we did if we hadn’t seen you leap out of your normal reserved self. Heck, even Renge sensed something was different and felt comfortable enough to blurt out the comment about Spin the Bottle.”

“Agreed.” Takashi’s quiet voice held amusement.

Hikaru looked at his new lover and saw that while the red was fading, he was still uncomfortable. He caught Haruhi’s eyes and smiled as she nodded, knowing what he wanted to do. Turning to Kyouya, Hika gently laid a hand on his cheek, before leaning in to place a soft kiss on his lips. He whispered against them, “Personally, I am so happy you did. I have wanted this for so long.”

Kyouya looked into the golden eyes of the man in front of him and felt his embarrassment fade completely. *Maybe it is my fault… but if I hadn’t, I may not have Hika and Haru together now. I wouldn’t change that for the world.* Smiling he decided to continue the joke. “I can see your point, but I have to contest it.”

Sensing Kyouya was up to something, Tamaki played along. “Oh really? Whose fault is it then?”

“Haruhi’s.”

“Wait. WHAT?!?” Haruhi blinked in astonishment. “How is it my fault?”

“I wouldn’t have kissed Tamaki at the airport if you hadn’t scolded me on the way over, which caused me to think about how I see things.”

“There is a flaw in your logic. I wouldn’t have scolded you, if you hadn’t gone deep into jealous Shadow King mode. So I still don’t see how it’s my fault.” She grinned so he would know she was teasing.

“I apologize. You are right. I went that way because Hikaru and Kaoru were wearing your lip gloss and it was obvious they had kissed you senseless. Therefore, it must have been their fault.”

“HEY!!”

“Damn devil twins!! You are always causing trouble!!” Tamaki tried to maintain a stern tone, but failed miserably. “How should I punish you?”

Both Kaoru and Hikaru tried to find some way to shift the blame onto someone else, but couldn’t come up with a way, since their kissing Haruhi was a pretty common occurrence. Finally conceding defeat, Kaoru responded cheekily to Tamaki’s question. “Well, Daddy, I think you may just have to give us a good spanking.”

Tamaki sputtered a minute before giving them both an evil grin. “I may just have to do that.”
This time it was Hikaru and Kaoru who turned a faint shade of red.
Interlude

Hani silently watched the teasing exchange among Tamaki, Kyoya, Haruhi and the twins. Glancing over at Takashi he saw the faint smirk on his lover’s face as he listened to the conversation; a smile that was all but invisible to everyone else. *I love watching Takashi enjoy himself. I know he isn’t flashy or obviously demonstrative in his enjoyment, but I can see it.* Hani eyes were caught by Haruhi as she looked first at him, nodded over at Takashi, then held his eyes with a smile and a wink. *So apparently can Haru-chan. It’s not surprising really considering how close they have gotten in the last year. I am happy that Takashi has at least a part of her that no one else does. I don’t think anyone but me saw the heart break in his eyes when Kyoya and Hikaru announced they were both dating her. Takashi has loved her almost as much as he loves me for years. He just didn’t know how to tell her or show her. Hell, I have loved her too, but she never ‘saw’ either of us until recently. To be fair though, neither of us told her how we felt and we were careful to keep to the friendship line with her as a balm to the overly enthusiastic actions of the twins and Tamaki. Then we became her instructors in Aikido and it felt like telling her would be breaking the covenant of teacher/student. I could kiss Takashi’s sister for suggesting yoga as way to help her develop her mental focus, because that allowed their teacher/student relationship turn into an equal partnership. I just wish I had the same focus to do it with them… and I wish there was something that I could claim Haruhi for – something that was mine alone. I know she cares about me just as much as she cares about everyone else, but…*

Hani realized that Takashi was looking down at him, the love shining deeply in his eyes. *Of course, even if I never get that piece of Haru-chan to myself, I still have her friendship. I also have Takashi’s absolute devotion and whatever this new strange and oddly exciting thing building with Tamaki is. I really can’t complain. The gods will see that whatever happens is what is meant to and I just need to follow my path.* Smiling back at the man who knew him better than anyone, he squeezed his hand before turning to the others. “Not that the idea of Tama-chan spanking Hika-chan and Kao-chan doesn’t sound like fun to watch, we may want to grab lunch soon or we are going to miss the afternoon lecture.”

“Since I have been looking forward to this one since I saw the brochure Haru had, I second that motion,” Hikaru grinned at Hani. “I vote we grab something quick and get in the room early. I have a feeling this class is going to be crowded.”

‘I have a better idea brother, why don’t you, me and Kyoya go grab food while the others get us all seats. We can eat in the room’

“Works for me,” Hikaru turned to look at the others who nodded.

“I will go with you guys,” Tamaki added. “Another set of hands to carry everything couldn’t hurt.”

“Agreed. We will save everyone seats. Would you rather be up front or toward the back?” Takashi asked.

“I have noticed that we seem to be drawing some attention in the other classes, so perhaps it would be better if we sat towards the back of this one,” Kyoya responded while the others confirmed. “I do not believe that we have been recognized, but it is still possible that the twins or Tamaki would be since they are well known in Paris.”

“…and the reason you might be drawing attention has nothing to do with the fact that you are a
group of six gorgeous men who obviously love to flirt…” Haruhi muttered under her breath.

“Besides if we sit in the back, we can watch how the audience reacts,” Tamaki smiled with a wink at her. “I think this is going to be an enlightening discussion.”

“I have no doubt Tama-chan,” Hani answered with a sassy grin and a voice so full of innuendo that Tamaki turned a faint pink.

“Perhaps it will give me ideas,” Takashi couldn’t resist adding when he saw Tamaki’s blush. “You and Mitskune still owe me since you lost the bet on when Kyouya and Hikaru would get together.”

“Speaking of bets,” Kyouna interjected, “Tamaki and Hani owe you and I another one, Takashi. It was Hika and Kao who taught Haruhi how to do her make-up not Ranka.”

Hani and Tamaki groaned in unison.

“I never win!!” Tamaki pouted. “So now it’s $150 and humiliating task…”

“Well Tama,” Hikaru said with an evil grin. “I have a feeling Kyouna could be persuaded to give up the $50 you owe him for another task.”

Tamaki blanched a bit while Hani got a mischievous glint in his eye. “I would be willing to trade my debt for a task. I have a feeling Kyouna could get quite creative… if he put his mind to it. I have a feeling it would be fun to service… um I mean serve… Takashi and Kyouna.” He grinned as Kyouna winked at him.

“Is that a dare?”

“Absolutely.”

Haruhi grinned as she saw where Hani’s mind was heading and Kyouna’s willingness to play along. “I still owe all of you for the prank you played on me the other morning.

“But you always distract us, Haru-love, so us getting some back is really payback on our part,” Hikaru laughed.

“I agree with Hika, though I have to admit I am feeling left out. I wasn’t part of the bets or the winnings,” Kaoru pouted.

“Ahhh, how quickly you forget!” Haruhi teased as she stepped between the twins and put her arms around both. Leaning in, she kept her eyes on Tamaki as she purred, “It was decided, not 10 minutes ago, that everything that has happened this week was both of your faults, so Tamaki needed to spank you both. I can’t wait to watch that.”

Tamaki brightened considerably as he remembered, while Hika and Kao turned a faint pink again. However, their embarrassment faded even quicker the second time as the intrigue set in. Wrapping his arm back around her waist as well, Hika whispered with a smile before nibbling on her neck.

“When did my sweet innocent Haruhi turn into such a voyeur?”

Tossing her hair back with a laugh, she responded with a grin at both her lovers. “When two studs in tight leather pants stalked me as I was tied to a bedpost by another leather-clad hunk.”
“Which reminds us, Haru-chan,” Hani said with lust barely contained behind his huge blue eyes, “The four of you promised to recreate that scene, since we didn’t get to see it.”

“That will be arranged.” Kyouya’s cool voice still held heat before it tinged with regret. “While I hate to break up a most interesting discussion, we are rapidly losing time before the next session. If we are going to get food and make it back in time, we need to go now.”

“Go. We will save you seats,” Takashi said with a grin as picked up first Hani, then Haruhi and took off running down the hall, accompanied by their laughter.

As their laughter faded, Kyouya linked his hand with Hikaru’s and started walking to the cafeteria. Tamaki and Kao did the same and followed immediately behind, their discussion turning to the possibilities of what could be easily brought back and consumed during the lecture.

 Haruhi, Hani and Takashi walked into the room for the last lecture of the day (well Takashi walked, Haruhi and Hani dangled from his arms) and took a good look at the way the room was set up. All of the other classes had a generic lecture format of chairs lined up in front of a small podium where the panel sat. This room was twice the size of the other rooms and had movie-theater styled seating centered in front of a good sized stage. Instead of the normal table for a panel there were 5 chairs. There were also a few pieces of furniture that Haruhi had never seen before – what looked like a giant wooden X, a wooden frame with a round hoop suspended from it, and what looked like a padded sawhorse with runners. Setting his friends on their feet, Takashi turned to look at Hani and grinned.

An answering grin and wicked smirk appeared on Hani’s face, while Haruhi looked puzzled at the contraptions on the stage. She turned to see if there was seating when she caught the exchange of looks between her friends. “What am I missing? I take it you know what that stuff on stage is used for.”

“Umm… you could say that Haru-chan.”

“Are you going to tell me?”

“No.” Takashi’s smile was wicked. “If you still have questions after the class, then we will answer them, but until then… Let’s find some seats.”

Knowing it was useless to try and get more information out of Takashi when he had made up his mind, Haruhi led the way up the seating to the top center. She made sure that they could see everything on the stage. The room was filling up quickly though, so she was only able to grab five seats in a row and two in the row below them. “Wow, this is going to be a really full class. I am glad that we got here early.”

“I saw that is was going to be a discussion and demonstration class, so I wondered if there would be a crowd,” Takashi said on her far right.

“So I am guessing from Takashi’s comment, that you both know what some of this stuff is for,” Haruhi turned to Hani, who sat next to her, hoping to wheedle some information out of him to appease her growing curiosity.”

“We do, Haru-chan, but it will be more fun to watch your reaction when it is in use. I don’t want to spoil the surprise.”
“No fair.”

“No fair.”

She laughed, “Hika and Tama have definitely rubbed off on me, because I don’t want to be patient.”

“I could distract you…” The tone in the voice, unlike anything she had heard out of Hani’s mouth, caused her to shiver. Asking permission with his eyes, Hani slid his hand slowly up her arm to cradle the back of her head. Without warning, he fisted his hand, pulling tightly on her hair, and holding her head in position as she gasped. With his other hand, he traced his fingers lightly from her ear, down her neck, and over her collarbone. A sensation unlike anything she had experience before flooded her, rendering her speechless. It was akin to a slow electric current sizzling down her body to pool low. An odd kind of desire built inside her.

Gently Hani released his hold on her hair and slid his hand down to squeeze her hand lightly before letting it go completely. His normal Lolita grin replaced the intensity of a moment before. “Oh look, here come the others!” Then because he couldn’t resist the still slightly dazed expression on her face, he said impishly, “Distracted?”

Haruhi released a slow breath before giving him a huge grin. “Yeah, I think you could say that… Wow. You and Takashi have been hiding something from all of us.”

“Maybe a bit, but we don’t want to do so anymore, which is why we are here now. We love all of you and want you to accept us as we are. If you want to play with us, that would be awesome, but we know that what we do together is not for everyone. Hell, it’s not even for most people. Like being lovers, we have had to keep everything a secret because it’s still not considered ‘normal’ to most people. But it is normal for us. It’s just a part of who we are. We need the people we care about the most to know all sides of us… We just hope that at the end of the demonstration you won’t judge us or think differently about us.”

Without thinking about it, Haruhi leaned over and kissed Hani lightly on the lips as the others walked up the steps to the seats. “Whether we find something that interests us, or we decide that the whole thing is not for us individually, I am completely confident in saying that I don’t think there is anyone in this group that will judge you. It doesn’t matter what we see. You are still our friends.”

“Hey Hani,” Hikaru teased as sat down on the other side of Haruhi and handed the older men stuffed pitas, “Stop disagreeing with my lovers and listen to what they are saying. Or if you can’t do that, then focus on this – You just got your first kiss from Haruhi. Enjoy it. I know she did.”

Haruhi immediately turned a deep red before she turned and punched her boyfriend in the shoulder.

“OW!”
The group burst into laughter as Hikaru rubbed his shoulder. Haruhi grinned and said “Suck it up,” which made them laugh even harder.

“We have taught her well.” Takashi grinned.
The house lights dimmed in the lecture hall, while the lighting above the stage remained. Four men and three women walked onto the stage. Their clothing varied dramatically - jeans, leather, corsets, and a red haired woman in a latex dress and 6 inch spiked heels leading a man wearing a leather harness across his chest, a collar around his neck, and a leather mask with ears. She sat on the end and he kneeled on the floor next to her, placing his head on her knee. Two of the men sat next to her with a woman sitting on the floor between them, and a fourth chair was occupied by the final woman. The last chair was left empty as a man dressed only in leather pants approached the front of the stage. He was tall, fit, bald, handsome in a rugged way, and both of his nipples had rings through them. He wore a wireless mic headset, to make sure he could be heard as he greeted the crowd and introduced himself as Dominic or to his friends – Dom the Dom.

Haruhi could faintly hear Kaoru whispering to Hikaru about the woman in the latex dress. She could only make out the words “hot” “fashion” and the phrase “I wonder if we could do something with that, which caused her to smile. Some things don’t change. Kaoru gets inspiration in some of the strangest places. Though I think I would like to see a line that he developed in latex and leather. She glanced down at Tamaki and Kyouya sitting below her and then to her right at Hani and Takashi before turning her attention back to the stage. All eyes were glued to Dominic as he greeted the crowd.

“Welcome and thank you for coming. I know this is a going to be a session that will cause you to think. You may come out of it with ideas, or you may run screaming out of the room halfway through. Either response is acceptable.” The crowd laughed. “I want to introduce my fellow panelists Mistress Raina and her pet, Sir Collin and his submissive Jenna, and my partners - David and Kara. You will be hearing from them all in a bit as they talk about the different types of relationships they have, but I wanted to first discuss the basic concepts of kink and BDSM. They can be linked, but they don’t necessarily have to be. A lot of people consider themselves kinky who don’t necessarily think they fit the ‘BDSM lifestyle’ though most BDSM’ers will tell you they are kinky. Either way, both term the mainstream or societal concept of sexuality as ‘vanilla’. Here’s the thing though – societies view on sex changes through the years, so what is considered kinky in one decade is considered normal in another. Example – If a woman chose to go out in public wearing shorts and a tank top in the Victorian Era, she would have been labeled as a harlot and a prostitute. Now, we just call it summer wear. The concept of what is considered normal has changed. Now don’t get me wrong – the Victorians were quite kinky in their own way even by modern standards. If you are curious, look up Victorian methods for treating menstrual cramps or PMS; doctors would treat ‘hysteria’ as it was called at the time by applying an intense vibration to the affected area to provide relief. In other words, the doctor would use a vibrator to bring a woman to orgasm, because it was the most effective relief of cramps.”

The crowd laughed, while the women in it cheered. Kyouya turned and looked up at Haruhi with a grin before saying, “I think we will need to test that method.”

“Can we watch?” The twins said together with wicked smiles.

Haruhi blew a kiss to each of them and said only, “We will see,” before paying attention again.

“So modern concepts of what is considered ‘normal’ in sex is different today than 100 or even 50 years ago when missionary style was considered to be the only proper way to have sex. If you did anything different you were ‘wild’. See the pattern here? Modern sex is pretty tolerant of different
positions and is getting more tolerant of monogamous homosexual relationships. But add in multiple partners or toys and you start to skirt a line into what could be considered kinky. Now let me ask you a question – How many of you have ever had or been given a hickey?” 95% of the room raised their hand. “Next question. How many of you enjoyed that experience – either in giving or getting?” This time it was 75% of the audience who raised their hands including all of the Host club members, which made Hani giggle. “Congrats, according to some mainstream concepts you could be considered kinky. You just admitted that you enjoyed it when someone bit and sucked hard enough on you to leave a mark. Finally the question to start you thinking – what about it did you enjoy? Did you enjoy the sensation of the sucking? Did you like knowing you left your mark on your partner? Did you like knowing your partner marked or claimed you?”

A murmur ran through the crowd. Haruhi leaned over and whispered into Hikaru’s ear “How about a yes to all three?”

Hikaru caught her lips in a brief but passionate kiss that set her toes tingling. “Yeah, I could agree to all three too. It’s been too long since I left a trail of hickeys down your body. Remind me to correct that soon.”

“I definitely will.” She kissed him quickly one more time before turning back.

“Kink is defined as anything outside of the mainstream. BDSM are six aspects that define it further. The six aspects are Bondage and Discipline, Dominance and Submission, Sadism and Masochism. Most activities fall under at least one of the categories and a good portion fall under multiple categories. Here is where I pause to tell you the most important thing about BDSM – it is about consent. Consent and Communication. You can do anything you want if you consent to it and your partner is willing. If you don’t want to do something, you can say no. If you are being forced into something without your consent – it is ABUSE, plain and simple. It is not BDSM. It is hard for some to accept that there are people who actually enjoy turning pain into pleasure, or giving up control and letting someone else make your decisions, or that there are people who enjoy finding the limits of what they think they can do and pushing past them in a way that is not always pretty, but is always done with someone they care deeply about. So in many ways BDSM is about wish fulfillment. It is a way for those who are ‘wired differently’ to explore their fantasies and experience things that most other vanillas consider shocking.” Dominic paused a moment to let that sink in with the audience.

A hand was raised in the auditorium. Nodding at him, a man called out “Is there anything that is considered too wrong or taboo even for BDSM?”

“Good question. While BDSM get a bad reputation in the media and popular culture as a bunch of sexually depraved perverts and pedophiles, 99% of the time there are some boundaries that even the most open BDSM’ers won’t cross. They are children, bestiality, scat, and permanent disfigurement or dismemberment. Notwithstanding the ick-factor for many, children and animals cannot give consent. The squick factor is just too high for many for scat play, and permanent disfigurement or dismemberment goes along the line of not being able to give rational consent. There are two terms commonly used in the community RACK – Risk Aware Consensual Kink and SSC – Safe, Sane and Consensual. If you aren’t aware of the risks, if it is not safe or sane, and above all if there isn’t consent - It isn’t BDSM. It is torture, abuse or rape. Does that clarify for you?” At the audience member’s nod he continued.

“That was a good question, but let me get back to what I was going to say. I wanted to define the terms. Bondage generally means physical restraint, though it can be a mental restraint as well. Some examples are handcuffs, boxes, leather cuffs, straightjackets, and my personal favorite – rope. Just out of curiosity, do we have any other shibari or rope lovers here?” Scattered throughout the room,
several hands went up. However, five sets of eyes swiveled to their friends as they realized that both Takashi and Hani were included in the group that raised their hands.

Now that is very interesting… Haruhi thought to herself as Hani winked at her while wearing his Lolita mask.

“Discipline is pretty much what it sounds like. If you cause trouble then you get punished for it. Of course, I know several people who like to cause trouble JUST so they can be disciplined.” Here Dominic glared at his partners, who grinned back at him. “Spanking is the most common form of discipline, though there is also flogging, caning, and a myriad of other ways a Dominant or Top can use to punish. The limit here is your own creativity. Dominance is the term for the person doing the act while Submission is the act of receiving. There’s some tighter definition needed here. There is a difference between Dominance and being a Dominant just as there is a difference between submission and being a submissive. Generally speaking, a Dominant or Dom is someone who identifies with wanting to be in control. They direct all activities and rarely consider outside ideas, preferring to use their own. A Submissive is the opposite of a Dom. They are the ones who give up control and do whatever their Dom wants or directs them to do. Doms and subs can be any gender. D/s can be for a single scene or play time or it can be a lifestyle choice. There are also people who identify as Top or bottom. This is similar to Dom or Sub, but it is usually only for the time of a single scene and they may switch from one to the other. Speaking of… there are also people who identify as Switch. Meaning they can willingly bottom or submit to some or they can Dom or Top to others. They completely enjoy both roles and it becomes for them more about how they are feeling at any particular time, while a Dom generally wants control and a sub wants to please. Of course all of these definitions are EXTREMELY broad. Just like people, there are different types of Doms, subs, and Switches. How you identify is what defines you not how someone else defines you. I know plenty of Doms who welcome input and feedback (myself included) and I know several subs that won’t do specific things – usually called hard limits – for various reasons. One of the aspects of this lifestyle I love is that allows for the release of stress and power exchange in a safe environment. I know several high profile high powered business men and women who come to my dungeon and are bottoms or subs. For them, they have to make hard, stressful decisions on a constant basis and the ability to give up control on occasion is what allows them to stay sane. It also allows them to make clearer choices and look at both sides of a discussion. Some of the most successful Doms I know have rather mundane daily lives, but they have a desire to serve as well as control. It’s important to note that if you think about it, submissives are actually the one in control, by giving up that control to the Dom. A sub knows that in a scene, if at any point he/she can’t take it any more for whatever reason, he/she can call out her safeword (a word that is determined BEFORE play that will end everything, no questions asked) and the scene will end. Doms or Tops are responsible for making sure the sub or bottom is safe and relaxed, even as they doing what the Dom wishes. Of course part of the thrill can be the idea that the Dom won’t stop, even if they call it… but back to what I said earlier – if you don’t consent, it is abuse not play. So in this situation, if the sub called her safeword and the Dom continued the scene, she is no longer consenting to the actions that are happening and it can be defined as abuse or rape. Those of us in the BDSM community don’t tolerate violations of consent and often the ones who do so are quickly driven out of the community. They are the abusers and the ones who continue to make mainstream society shocked by us. We don’t want to be associated with that.”

Several shouts of “Here, Here!” rang through the audience.

“Ok, back to my original topic – Definitions. The last two are Sadism and Masochism. Sadists like to inflict pain. Masochists like to receive pain. Sadomasochists like both. Like everything else in the BDSM world there are differing levels to which sadists and masochist operate and one person’s hard limit is another person’s tickle. Also you can’t know what a person is by looking at them or even
how they act in the vanilla world. I know a confirmed sadist who, if you were introduced to her at a
daytime, you would think was the sweetest person you will ever meet; but in a scene with her partner,
she will leave him bruised, battered, and in tears. Her partner needlessly to say is a masochist. He
enjoys the pain and the ability to work through it. He is the yang to her yin and they balance each
other.”

_They balance each other. That’s something that can be pretty much said about all of us if you think
about it… though it’s a different kind of balance for us._ Haruhi glanced over at Hani and Takashi.
Then again, maybe it is not that different. I still want to know more about this side of them and what
they have been keeping from us.

Takashi caught her staring at them and gave her a small smile. As if he could read the direction of her
thoughts, he whispered the word “later.”

Dominic’s lecture continued, “I mentioned the term power exchange earlier. I want to clarify it a bit
because it is a kind of ‘woo-woo’ concept, even if it is a very real thing. Let me go back to that early
example of getting or giving a hickey. You lean in close to your partner. You can smell the scent of
their skin. You can feel the heat of their skin against your lips and you can taste them as you lick and
suck. You are pouring energy into what you are doing, and if your partner is enjoying it, you will get
that energy back. The return of energy may be in the way their body reacts, cries, moans, clenching
of hands or heavy breathing. The same thing happens in a really good kiss or when you are enjoying
sex. It is a mutual power exchange. If only one person is active and the other person is a cold dead
fish, is just isn’t pleasurable and there is no exchange. Does that make sense?” When most of the
audience could be seen nodding their heads, he continued. “BDSM by its very nature implies a
power exchange from one person to another. Dom to sub, Top to bottom, Sadist to Masochist, etc.
The thing that makes it different is that it doesn’t necessarily have to be a sexual exchange of energy,
though it does require intimacy. You can’t trust someone completely to push your limits if they are a
complete stranger. Even pro-Dommes like Mistress Raina have detailed conversations with their
clients before they work with them. Raina, do you want to take over here for a bit?”

“Sure Dom,” the latex clad woman answered as she delicately rose and walked to the front of the
stage adjusting her mic. The man in the leather harness crawled after her and returned to his knees at
her side. “Like Dominic just mentioned, I am a pro-Domme. This is what I do for a living. I am paid
to dominate others, though I also have a few friends I also play with on a regular basis. I do get paid
to dominate my clients, but I do not have sex or any sort of sexual release with them. It would be an
ethical violation as well as an actual violation of my contract. Though I have had clients who
attempted to push the boundary and they have been dismissed and blackballed. But that’s a different
story. What I basically do is wish fulfillment. I become a fantasy object that is safe. I can be their
mother, boss, sister, teacher, police officer, whatever the need desire is, and I make them do what I
want them to do. If they don’t do as I command or desire they are punished. I want to clarify
something here which I think is what Dom was leading up to. I do a different kind of power
exchange. It’s not sexual like in his example, but don’t doubt that both my client and I are
exchanging energy. Of course, each session with me is carefully negotiated before and ground rules
are set. Even today and my darling little pet,” she walked over and caressed the ears of the kneeling
man. “He identifies as a puppy and he has a humiliation fantasy and exhibitionistic tendency, which
basically means he gets a release by being treated like a beloved pet dog. But like a pet if he
misbehaves, he needs discipline. This is where you can get creative. If he was really an animal, I
wouldn’t dream of spanking or hitting him, because an animal doesn’t understand the connection
between misbehaving and discipline. However, he is still human, so certain things, like being
spanked, talked down to, and having others watch him as it is happening, are exciting to him. In a
situation like this lecture series, it gives him a chance to experience it and not hide it away as
something shameful. It is simply one of the things that he enjoys. It may also surprise you to know he
is an accomplished cellist and musician as well as a owning his own business. We all have different activities and parts of ourselves that have different tastes. When we find the people that accept them and share them, is when we are truly happy. After the class today, my pet will go back to his girlfriend and be a completely different person than he is with me. I will go home to my wife and pull on my pajamas and fuzzy slippers.”

A hand rose in the audience and a middle aged woman asked the question, “Does his girlfriend know that he comes and does this with you?”

“Actually in this case, yes she does, because she is my best friend and she is the one who introduced him to me. Unfortunately, I cannot guarantee the same level of honesty with all of my clients thought I absolutely try to promote open communication as the best path to getting what you want out of a relationship. It is a sad fact of human nature that we find it easier to sneak around then to talk with our partners about what we may want or need.”

Several other hands shot up, but before Mistress Raina could respond, Dominic cut in. “I apologize at interrupting here, Raina, but I wanted to let the audience know that there will be a question and answer period after the demonstration, where you can talk to all of us openly.” She smiled and nodded at his apology. “Would you like to continue?”

“Actually, since you mentioned the demonstration, I think this would be a good segue. Want to explain what these pieces are and what we are going to do?” Raina responded. She started walking over to the padded sawhorse. At her movement, the others seated on the stage walked over to the remaining pieces of equipment.

“I can do that,” Dominic replied. “Mistress Raina is taking her pet over to a spanking bench. Sir Collin is going to flog Jenna on the Saint Andrew’s Cross, while David and Kara are setting up a rope suspension. I am going to act as Dungeon Master. As DM, I am in charge of observing everything that is happening and making sure that all play remains safe. I want to remind all of you again that all of us have consented to do this. It rarely happens, but occasionally a Dom or sub can go so far into headspace that they do not consciously realize that they have crossed the boundary of what their physical body can handle without significant damage. I act as an impartial observer and can stop the play at any time. The safeword for the afternoon is Red. If we hear that from anyone on this stage, all play will cease immediately, even from the groupings that didn’t call red. I also need to give a general warning - because, for some of us, our play is sensual, there will be some nudity, though we will not be actively having intercourse on stage.”

“Booooo!” several audience members yelled, while the rest laughed.

“Sorry guys. We are still in a public place and subject to public decency laws here. Trust me; we are stretching them as much as we can as it stands.” Dominic grinned. “We do know that this is not for everyone, so we are going to take a two minute break and ask anyone who wishes to leave to do so quietly and quickly. We promise not to chase you down and drag you kicking and screaming back in here… unless you tell us to do so.”

The audience applauded as about a third of them got up to leave. Kyouya and Tamaki turned around in their seats to look at the others. Tamaki naturally was not able to contain his enthusiasm. “Oh my gods. This is so exciting!!”

“I thought Dominic’s discussion was quite interesting and I am looking forward to watching the demonstration.” Kyouya said with a small smile as he pushed his glasses higher on his nose. “I need ideas for tonight.”
Tamaki shivered, “Why do I get the feeling that you don’t need ideas as much as you say you do? Between you and Takashi, I am a little panicked thinking about what you may do.”

“But is the panic a true fear or is it anticipation of the unknown and therefore a bit scary? You know that neither of them would make you do something against your morals or wishes.” Hani asked curiously. “I know I am eager more than scared… but I have wanted this for a long time.”

Tamaki thought about that for a moment. Seeing the thoughts flying across his face, Haruhi couldn’t resist leaning in and kissing him briefly. “I know what you are feeling, Tama. Trust in them.”

“Do I get a kiss too, love?” Kyouya teased.

“A kiss and a whole lot more to be negotiated later,” she replied with a saucy grin before kissing him deeply, enjoying the feel of his lips and the way he always made her body feel electric. Only the sound of the music starting overhead caused her to pull back into her seat and lean into the arm that Hikaru had slung across the back.

“I really enjoy watching you do that,” Hikaru murmured into her ear before nipping at her neck again causing a low moan to escape her lips.

“Hika-chan – Behave!” Hani’s scolding made them turn back to the now lighted stage.

The activity on the stage held the interest of all the Host club members. They watched as Mistress Raina ordered her pet up onto the bench. It was the perfect height to give her access to his derriere. Tracing the tip of her riding crop down his back with one hand she administered several swift slaps against his right butt cheek with the other hand as he gasped.

Next to them on the stage, but far enough away so they wouldn’t interfere, Sir Colin had ordered Jenna to undress down to her underwear and remove her bra. He then roughly turned her to face the cross and grabbed her wrists, putting them into the leather cuffs that dangled from rings near the top. Grabbing her hair, he whispered something in her ear which caused a visible shudder to run down her body. Stepping back he walked over to a small table and picked up a matched pair of deerskin floggers. He ran the soft leather lightly over her skin, before starting to hit her softly with it. Without warning, he struck hard against her shoulders, the crack resounding through the hall and her cry heard even above the music. Mercilessly he moved the floggers to the beat of the music – sometimes hitting lightly across her shoulder and ass, other times cracking them hard. In between strikes, he would stroke her warming flesh and whisper into her ear.

“Gods that is really freaking hot,” Kaoru whispered to his brother. “I know you flogged me once on a whim, but damn. I wouldn’t mind being in her position right now.”

“I wouldn’t mind it either. Though I can also imagine you in her position with me flogging you…” Hikaru whispered back. “I have been five days without you. I am going through withdrawals.”

“Me too. I am sure the others would understand if we took a day together – just us… and maybe Haru.”

“We should talk about it later tonight.”
In agreement, they turned back to the demonstration and the scene that now had Haruhi leaning forward in her chair in rapt fascination. David had bound Kara in an intricate pattern of rope and knots. Looping another rope through the hoop dangling from the wooden frame, he suspended her off the ground. The look of bliss on her face was something that Haruhi could see, even from the distance. Gently he swung her back and forth, while making sure that she was comfortable as possible. After a few moments, David untied one rope and pulled on another, causing her position to shift. She squeaked as he made a carefully calculated move to let her fall face first towards the floor, stopping a foot or so before she would have hit. Pulling her back upright, she laughed as he put her into yet another position.

“That looks like so much fun,” Haruhi whispered under her breath to no one in particular.

Hani though caught the statement and the wheels started spinning in his head. Leaning into Takashi he quickly whispered some suggestions for later that evening. Takashi for his part hadn’t missed her reaction to the scene and was already planning on making an offer if the opportunity arose. I could tie both her and Mitskune up. It would be fun to see them struggle together.

Kyouya, for his part, was torn between watching the scenes below him or the reactions of his best friend. I think Hani is right. It’s not fear that Tamaki feels, it’s anticipation. I can see that this interests him. It definitely intrigues me. I am not sure that I would enjoy being on the receiving end, but I could absolutely dominate most of the others if I put my mind to it. Especially if that domination required them to crawl to me and suck me off... Hmmm...

The audience silent as they remained fascinated by the different scenes on the stage and time passed quickly. It wasn’t until the music shifted and the scenes obviously started to come to an end that there were the first faint murmurs as people started to talk to their neighbors. On the stage, different things were happening. Mistress Raina kicked off her shoes and spread a blanket on the floor. She sat down gracefully. Her pet curled up in front of her, head in her lap, as she gently stroked up and down his body. Sir Colin had wrapped Jenna up in a soft fuzzy blanket and cuddled her on his lap. David had released Kara and both had walked over to Dominic. The three of them stood there for a moment, arms wrapped around each other, just holding on. After a couple of minutes, Dominic kissed each one and withdrew to put his microphone back on. At that point David and Kara returned to their seats, David’s arm around her shoulder while she leaned into his chest.

Dominic walked back to the front of the stage and spoke. “What you are seeing now is called aftercare and it is just as important to a scene as what happens in the scene. It is a time to reconnect back into your body and share the energy of the experience. Aftercare can take on many different forms depending on the intensity of the scene and the people involved. Some people are fine with a quick kiss or hug and others require an hour of silent cuddling. Like everything in BDSM, it is based on the needs of the people involved in the scene.” He looked around at the others and got a nod from each of them before he continued. “Ok. It looks like everyone is back in a place where we can start our Question and Answer period. We will stay as long as you need to answer any questions you may have. Kara and David will be running around with microphones. If you want to leave at this point, that’s fine too. I just want to thank all of you again for spending the afternoon with us. Have a kinky afternoon!!”

The applause echoed throughout the room. Most of the audience stood and started to leave, but several stayed as hands shot into the air. One by one, they started asking a variety of questions.

Tamaki and Kyouya turned to look at the others sitting in the seats behind them, trying to gauge whether they should stay for the Q&A or leave. Finally, Tamaki put the question to Haruhi. “Haru, since the workshop was your idea, do you want to stay for the Q&A or do you want to head back to the Estate?”
“That’s a hard one. I am interested but I am overwhelmed and I can’t think of a single thing to ask or say at the moment.”

“I think most of us can relate to that feeling Haru-love,” Hikaru agreed.

“Here’s an option,” Takashi said quietly. “We can leave and if you think of any questions you want to ask, you can talk to either Mitskune or me. We can probably answer most of them or we can get the information from a reliable source if we don’t know the answer.”

“Then I think that I want to head out. I feel like all of us have a lot to discuss and we need privacy to really do it justice. Let’s go back to the Guest House.”

As one the hosts stood up and slowly made their way down the stairs and out of the room as Dominic and the group on the stage continued to answer questions. They talked quietly to themselves as they left, but tried to make sure they were not disturbing the others.

Hani and Takashi were the last to exit. Before they did though they turned, bowed, and smiled at Dominic and the others. From the stage Dominic turned and said directly to them. “Karr [he bowed to Takashi] Auriel [he bowed to Hani]. It was a pleasure to finally meet both of you. I hope we can get together again soon and I hope you enjoyed the demonstration.”

“It was wonderful Dominic-san. We give our love to Kara-chan, David-chan and the others. Talk to you soon.”
Arriving back at the Suoh Guest House, the group decided to take an hour to relax and unwind before meeting in the Conservatory for dinner. Climbing the stairs to their bedroom, Haruhi smiled at her lovers and said, “I don’t know about you, but I want a good soak. This evening is likely to be filled with a lot of excitement and surprises and getting a chance to get my mind focused before would be a good thing – especially after all that we have learned over the last couple of days.” She gave them a wicked grin. “I won’t turn down company though, if you want to join me. I know the tub is easily big enough for three, if we get cozy.”

“I think I can be persuaded to relax in a hot bath with a couple of gorgeous people.” Kyouda answered with an equal smile. “Hika, what about you?”

Hikaru was lost in his thoughts, his body moving on autopilot up the stairs and into their room. It took Kyouda calling his name a second time before he responded. “Oh sorry. What were you asking?”

Haruhi’s voice held concern as she answered, “We are going to take a bath before dinner and wanted to know if you wanted to join us. Are you ok, love? You seem lost in thought.”

“I am good… and I will definitely join you in a bath,” Hikaru tried to force his usual smile, but his lovers weren’t fooled. With a look at each other, they decided to wait until they were all in the bath to press the issue.

Haruhi twisted her hair up into a knot so it wouldn’t get wet, while Hikaru gathered towels, soap, and washcloths and Kyouda adjusted the temperature. Within a matter of minutes the tub was full and the three were sitting and soaking comfortably. At a nod from Kyouda, Haruhi reached out a hand to caress Hikaru’s cheek. “Tell us what is wrong, Hika-love. You are distant tonight. Did we do something?”

Startled at the question, Hikaru quickly responded with reassurance. “Oh NO!! Gods no. I have been enjoying every moment of the last few days spent with both of you. It has been heaven and something I have been dreaming about for years. I can’t complain at all. But…”

“You miss Kaoru.” Haruhi said gently.

“Yes. Does that make me a bad person? I am in a relationship that so many would envy and I am still not satisfied. I don’t want to give up my time with you both, but I am missing Kao. I know I still see him when we all go out, but aside from the other morning, I haven’t been able to be near him, and even then, there were three other people there… Gods… I probably sound so selfish.”

Kyouda shifted his position to sit behind him and wrap his arms around Hikaru. In a voice as gentle as Haruhi’s he said quietly, “You aren’t selfish. Both Haruhi and I know that your relationship with Kao is unique. You are so closely attuned to each other and you need to be in constant contact with each other. Part of that may be the fact you are twins and part may be the way you grew up – shutting everyone out except the other. It’s the two of us that have been selfish. We have kept you from him all this week, because we wanted you with us.”

“Hika-love,” Haruhi shifted her own position so she was in front of Hikaru, facing him. “If you need to stay with Kao tonight, that is ok. We understand. We really do. We don’t think you love us less
and we won’t judge you. Kao needs you too.”

Hikaru was overwhelmed by the love in Haruhi’s voice, with a little cry; he pulled her in close, so he could wrap his arms around her. For a while he just held her as Kyouya held him, breathing deeply and enjoying the feel of being surrounded by people who understood his conflicting need and still loved him despite it. Finally, he lifted his head and said “I love you both.”

“I love you too.” Haruhi smiled as she leaned up to kiss him.

“I love you too.” Kyouya said from behind him as he laid a kiss on Hikaru’s neck.

Turning so he could reach Kyouya’s lips, Hikaru kissed him deeply – letting all of his love shine through. With a much lighter heart, Hikaru broke it off when he heard Haruhi giggle next to him. Looking over at her he asked, “What is so funny?”

“I just love watching you two kiss. It’s so freaking hot. I was thinking that it might be fun to see the reactions of the others, if the two of you were to make out in front of them. Then I remembered that we promised to put on the Andromeda myth costumes sometime tonight… which led me to imagining their reactions when they saw you in the outfits.”

“But Takashi, Hani, and Tamaki saw my tattoo the other morning. It shouldn’t be much of a surprise to them.” Kyouya replied.

“Seeing it paired with gym pants is very different than seeing it paired with a pair of tight leather pants.” Haruhi responded.

“I don’t see how.”

“Hika… want to try and explain?” Haruhi looked at her other lover.

“Kyo, you need to trust Haruhi on this. She is right. It’s the difference between seeing Haruhi in a dress (which is nice) and seeing her in a satin nigh… Both are nice. Both are sexy. But of the two, which turns you on more?”

“The satin nigh… of course,” Kyouya responded without thought. “I think I see what you are getting at. Which leads me to an idea… if you both are up to it?”

Haruhi saw the devilish glint in Kyouya’s eyes, “What are you thinking, love?”

“I am thinking that it would be fun to really tease the others. Really turn them on. So instead of just putting on the costumes, we give them a show.”

“Kyouya, I never knew you had this exhibitionistic streak in you. I LIKE it!!” Hikaru grinned. “I am totally up for it. Haru, what about you?”

Haruhi paused for a moment, weighing what she wanted to do with what she should do. Kyouya saw the conflict on her face. “We don’t have to. It was just an idea.”

Taking a deep breath, eyes downcast, she voiced the conflict in her mind. “It’s not that I don’t want to, because oddly enough, I really do. After everything we saw this afternoon, after everything that has happened, I seriously want to – my own inner exhibitionist is screaming to be let loose. Which is funny, because I never knew she was there until this week. I guess my conflict comes in the question
— How far are we ok going with the others? I don't want to damage the relationship that the three of us have, but I would be lying if I didn't say that I am at least a little curious about fooling around with Hani or Takashi or that part of me would really like to sleep with Tamaki again.”

Hikaru lifted her head and turned her in his arms so she was forced to look at both of them, tears shining in her eyes. “I love you both so much, and I feel absolutely horrible for saying that, but it's just a curiosity. After hearing the discussion on communication and consent earlier, I felt I needed to tell you. I just hope you aren't mad at me.”

Both of them leaned in and placed soft kisses on her cheeks. Hikaru spoke first, “How could I be mad, when I have had the same thoughts myself and I am planning on staying the night with Kao? I love you beyond all reason, Haruhi. I absolutely understand the curiosity and I would be ok with you exploring it as far as you need to.”

“I thought I would be a lot more jealous about it, but now that it has been said out loud, I find that I am not.” Kyouya said with a hint of wonder in his voice. “Maybe it was the workshop, maybe it was the open revelations that have occurred, or maybe it was some conversations that made me think about perspective; whatever it was, something changed this week and for the first time, I am intrigued about so many things that I would never have dared do two weeks ago.” Here it was Kyouya’s turned a faint pink. “I actually had the thought cross my mind earlier that it might be fun to make some of the others crawl to me and suck me off.”

Hikaru threw his head back and laughed, “Oh that is not something that I EVER dreamed I would hear you say out loud. I think I would pay to watch you do that to the boss… because I just know that he would actually do it.”

Haruhi felt as though a weight on her chest had lifted. “Yeah, I think that is definitely something that Tamaki would do.”

“Good to know,” Kyouya said with a smirk, “Though it’s Hani who owes me an unnamed task not Tamaki, since he didn’t want to trade in on his bet.”

“But he does owe Takashi one, so you may be able to talk to him about it.” Hikaru said with a smile. “That reminds me,” Haruhi said a curious note creeping into her voice. “Tamaki threatened to spank you and Kao. How do you feel about that?”

It was Hikaru’s turn to turn pink. “I actually like the idea… It’s kind of a turn on for both Kao and me. We have alternated doing it to each other in the past. That and the flogging. It’s an amazing sensation. Sharp then warm.” He shuddered.

Kyouya leaned into say in his ear in a low voice, “Good to know.”

Haruhi grinned at the expression on Hikaru’s voice as Kyouya whispered in his ear. “I agree. But back to the subject we started to discuss. I am in for putting on a show in front of the others. I am also in for watching either of you get spanked, sucked, or fucked by any other member of the Host Club. I don’t know if I would be comfortable with anyone outside our group though. It would just seem wrong.”

Kyouya took in her serious expression and answered. “I also agree with that, though I would also like to add that for any penetration, condoms are used. I know you are on birth control, but there is always a chance and while I do want to be a father to your children someday, I don’t think any of us wants that in the immediate future.” He softened his voice, “I know you love the others and they
each love you in their own way. I also know that you are mine and Hika’s. Nothing is going to change that.”

Haruhi threw her arms around his neck. Hikaru stroked her hair before saying, a teasing note in his voice, “Not that anyone seems to care, but I completely agree to watching either of you play with any one of the others… and I am putting in a special request to have a front row seat if Kyoya ever decides to have sex with Tamaki or if Takashi ever ties Haruhi up and makes love to her.” He grinned, “Cuz, I happen to think either of those would be incredibly fucking HOT!!”

Both Kyoya and Haruhi laughed. “I think we can honor that request.”

“Good! Now that we have spent 40 minutes talking and missed completely the relaxing part, could I interest either of you in an orgasm?” Hikaru wiggled his eyebrows at them lasciviously.

“I would normally ask if we had enough time, but I know that if the two of you put your mind to it, you can make me cum within two minutes. Which leaves me five minutes for each of you and 8 minutes to get dressed and upstairs. I think that can be done… Eek!”

Haruhi’s squeak was quickly lost in a gasp of pleasure as four hands lifted her out of the water and when combined with two sets of lips, proceeded to make her prediction come true. True to her word, Haruhi returned the favor.

They made it upstairs with a minute to spare.
When Haruhi walked into the conservatory with the others, she couldn’t believe the sight before her. The plants were the same as was most of the furniture, but it had been subtly changed and rearranged, not unlike the transformations that used to occur on a regular basis in Music Room #3. The tropical feel of the room was still there, but it had been enhanced - twinkle and multicolored mood lighting cycled gently through the foliage, causing a warm glow that managed to be intimate without being too bright. The Hawaiian Awapuhi and Plumeria flowers scented the air with a light fragrance and a small pool complete with waterfall took up the corner of one wall.

Tamaki stood at the entrance with an arm full of flowers and a cheesy grin. As they walked up to him he greeted them. “Welcome to my tropical paradise,” He couldn’t hide the teasing note in his voice as he said the next part, “Tonight, in the Conservatory … Everyone gets Lei’d.”

Hikaru and Kyouya groaned at the bad pun, but gracefully accepted the ring of flowers as Tamaki placed it around their necks and kissed their cheeks. For Haruhi, however, after placing the flowers around her neck, he swept her backwards and placed a teasing kiss on her lips. She was laughing as he returned her upright.

“Seriously though, come on in. We have food set up in the corner. The couches have been replaced with a cabana big enough for all of us to lounge on. Takashi, Hani and Kao are waiting to eat until we all walk over.”

“Well, then we shouldn’t keep them waiting any longer,” Haruhi linked her arm through Tamaki’s as they started walking towards the others. “I, for one, am rather hungry.”

“When aren’t you hungry, love?” Hikaru teased from behind her where he walked with Kyouya, arms around each other’s waists.

“Hmph.” Haruhi turned her head and stuck her tongue out at Hika.

“Later darling.” Kyouya teased.

Haruhi’s eyes widened when they approached what looked like a huge four post canopy bed. The frame was solid oak and the canopy was wrought iron in a swirl pattern. Long sheer curtains in a vibrant red, soft cream, and pale orange twisted through the iron work and down the posts, complimenting the colors of the flowering plants that stood around it.

“Haru-chan! Come join us on the bed… sorry… cabana. I thought the beds in the room were huge. Trust Tama-chan to find a bed big enough for all of us to lounge on.”

Tamaki grinned, “Technically it is meant to be an outdoor cabana, like you would see at a resort, I just had it made to fit inside the Conservatory. I was hoping that I could get all of you up here to relax one day.”

“Great idea boss…” Hikaru teased.

“But we are pretty sure that relaxing is not what is on everyone’s mind.” Kaoru finished with a wicked grin.
Tamaki flushed a light pink. To cover it, he ran over to the table and grabbed a platter of food. Bringing it back to the bed, he set it in the middle so it could be reached by everyone. Meanwhile, Kyouya and Hikaru helped Haruhi climb on the bed and then did the same.

Once everyone was settled, they all started to eat. Takashi poured a rum punch for all of them that complemented the tangy fish, spicy rice, and crisp vegetables. Their conversation remained casual at first, as if by unspoken agreement they wanted to wait until after they ate to get into the conversation they really wanted to have. But soon enough they declared themselves full and Tamaki removed the tray.

Haruhi was the first to stretch out across the center of the bed, her head resting on Kyouya’s hip. Kaoru lay on his back with his head in Hikaru’s lap. Tamaki pulled Haruhi’s knees across his lap as he leaned back against the headboard – Takashi next to him with Hani’s legs across his lap. Hani’s head was down by Haruhi’s waist.

“Oh, I am so full,” Haruhi rubbed her stomach. “But that was delicious. Thanks Tama for another great feast. Now to keep us all from passing out, what should we do? I don’t think any of us want to move for a while.”

“I second the not moving for a bit,” Hani agreed. “But I have an idea. What if we play Truth?”

“Truth?” Kyouya queried.

“Basically Truth or Dare without the Dare part,” Hani grinned. “Only we each ask a question and everyone has to answer it before we go on to the next one.”

Haruhi smiled as she craned her head down to look at Hani. “I’m in.”

“So are we.” The twins chorused.

“In.” Takashi added.

“Why not.” Kyouya said with a smile.

“So Hani. You should go first since it was your idea.” Tamaki said.

“Ok.” Hani turned his head toward Kyouya. “Aside from your current lover or lovers – who would you most like to make out with? Kyouya – you get to start.”

“Hmmm…,” Kyouya pretended to think for a moment. “It would be fun to make out with any of you.”

‘Ok –that’s kind of cheating as an answer, Kyo-chan. Just pick one to start. The rest of us promise not to be offended.” Hani grinned, “Though I have a feeling a few of us, at least wouldn’t turn you down.”

“OK. If I can only pick one – Tamaki.”


“Simple. You are my best friend. You are incredibly attractive and you probably have the most practice out of all of us at kissing, so I am making an educated guess that all of those princesses in the
host club couldn’t have been wrong.”

“Now I don’t know if that’s a compliment or an insult.” Tamaki teased. “But I will take it anyway. And since my answer to the question is you, Kyouya. I will leave it there.”

“I see a potential Dare for later this evening.” Kaoru grinned.

“So Kao-chan,” Hani asked. “What about you?”

“Not that I wouldn’t have fun kissing any of you, but tonight there is one person’s kiss I want above all the others and that is Hika’s.”

“I am all yours tonight, brother” Hikaru smiled down into Kao’s eyes.

“Hika-chan, is your answer the same?”

“Pretty much, though I am also really curious about kissing you, Hani. Somehow I think you are going to taste like cake.” Hikaru flashed a wicked smile at Hani.

“Of course I do. Cake is awesome,” Hani giggled. “I would kiss Haruhi, since the peck I got earlier was nice, but not what everyone else has gotten to experience. I want a real kiss.”

Haruhi smiled, “I think I could be persuaded to do that. Takashi – who would you kiss?”

“You.” Takashi’s voice was quiet but the passion was clear.

Haruhi blushed and tried to cover, “Ok – next question. Since I was the one who originally wanted to go to the conference – My question is what did you find the most intriguing or fascinating about the conference?”

“Nice try love, but you didn’t answer the first question,” Kyouya smiled at her. “It’s ok. You can say it.”

She glanced first at Kyouya and then over at Hikaru who gave her a wink and a nod. Taking a deep breath, she said in a rush. “Takashi. The kiss during spin the bottle was too short. It made me want more. I am curious to see if we could share the same energy through a kiss that we do when we do yoga… because in those moments our heartbeats match, I feel like I am flying. Now can we go on to the next question…” Takashi sat stunned for a moment before a huge smile grew on his face. Stretching over Hani, he leaned down and placed his lips briefly on hers, scorching them with his heat before sitting back up. “I think that is an experiment that I would be a willing participant in. For the record – I fly too.”

Hani grinned at both of them for a moment before deciding to keep the conversation going in the very entertaining bent it had turned. “I’ll start Haru-chan’s question. For me the most interesting part of the workshop was the way, Haruhi reacted when I grabbed her hair.”

“I really enjoyed watching that too.” Takashi smiled.

Haruhi blushed a deep red. “Yeah, that was not something I had ever quite experienced before.”

“Wait, when did this happen?” Tamaki pouted. “How did I miss it?”
“You guys were grabbing food. Haruhi was getting impatient and I offered to distract her. It was fun.”

“Yeah, boss,” Hikaru added. “We saw it happen as we were walking in. Her expression was priceless… and hot!”

“Totally.” Kaoru grinned.

“It definitely was something that was worth seeing.” Kyoya said with a wicked smile.

“Am I the ONLY one who missed it?”

“Yes.” Six voices said together while Tamaki pouted, which made the others laugh.

“Sorry Tama.” Haruhi said with a wink.

“Kao-chan, what about you?” Hani’s eyes lighted on the younger twin.

“Hmm…,” Kaoru thought before one particular image jumped out. “The flogging scene was super-hot. I wanted to be in her place on the cross. Though Mistress Raina’s dress was pretty epic.”

“Trust you to turn fashionista in the middle of a BDSM lecture,” Hikaru teased his twin. “But you are right – that dress was pretty epic. We could totally do a line of leather and latex.”

“Before this turns into a fashion discussion, I have to say I found the whole thing fascinating, though I was absolutely entranced by that rope demo. It just looked like fun!” Haruhi gently interrupted Hikaru.

“Rope is a lot of fun, Haru-chan, if it is done by someone who knows what they are doing. Otherwise it can be really dangerous. Takashi has been suspending me for a few years, but we have been learning Shibari since we were children as part of our martial art training. There is a subset of samurai culture that values beautiful knots on captured prisoners of war. The more intricate knots showed more skill and therefore gathered more respect. It wasn’t until we started exploring the BDSM culture that we realized that it could be used in play as well. Since then, we have had a lot of fun with it and we can blame any bruises on Aikido and Kendo.” Hani giggled.

“I still want to know more about you and Takashi being into this culture that none of us knew about,” Kyoya said, “but it can wait until the next question. Tamaki, what about you? What did you find interesting?”

“The whole BDSM lecture was so interesting especially in the definition of roles, but I had to admit what I actually found most interesting was the discussion on sexual orientation. I always said I preferred women but I could be flexible with some men in some situations. The discussion and some of the things that have happened this week have made me realize that I could be just as happy being with a man as I could being with a woman. So I think I am realizing I am actually bisexual.” Tamaki turned a faint pink.

“Welcome to the club, Boss!” Hikaru raised his glass in a toast. Then turning to his lover with a wicked smile, he said, “Kyo, why don’t you tell the others what you told Haruhi and me earlier about what the demo made you think of.”

Meeting the challenge in Hikaru’s eyes, Kyoya said, returning Hikaru’s wicked smile. “I think what
my darling lover is hinting at is I found the descriptions of what BDSM stood for to be the most interesting. I started thinking of things that I would like to do, not the first of which is domination. I want to see someone crawl to me and suck me off, merely because I told him to do so.”

This time it was Hani’s turn to toast with his punch, while a couple of the others licked their lips and tried to hide their interest. “Welcome to the world of Domination, Kyouya. I have to say it doesn’t surprise me that you identify most as a Dom/Top.”

“That leads to my question,” Takashi said. “Based on the descriptions of sexual orientation and BDSM where would you classify yourself? I am a flexible submissive, though I will Top for rope play. The only woman who has ever really attracted me is Haruhi. When Mitskune and I are playing either together or with others, I prefer to serve.”

“Which naturally leads to me as a Dom, though I love to bottom for rope play,” Hani chirped. “I also think of myself as flexible, since like Takashi, Haru-chan is really the only girl I have been attracted to. I like girls – they are fun to talk to and they like to give me sweets – but I don’t generally find them to be sexually arousing. I do love to be in control though, especially in the bedroom.”

“I am and pretty much always have been bisexual,” Hikaru commented. “Not that it should be a surprise to anyone. I am also a Switch. When Kao and I play, we occasionally alternate roles and I love being in both. Sometimes I like to take charge and sometimes I like being told what to do. I do like topping while flogging, though. Knowing I am making Kao gasp in pleasure is awesome.”

“I guess I am technically flexible,” Kaoru mentioned, “Until this week and Tamaki, the only other male I have been attracted to is Hikaru. I still prefer women and no offense meant to anyone, but I can’t see myself settling down with another guy. Playing around with, yes. Forever-type of relationship, I don’t know. I just like the soft curves and boobs too much.” He grinned as the others agreed that boobs are fun. “But I do have a bit of a masochistic streak and I love to bottom more than I like to Top.”

Tamaki went next. “Well I just determined that I am bisexual, but as for the roles, I think I would be more of a submissive. Like Takashi, I get more pleasure out of making sure everyone has a good time, than being the one to control what is happening… Though I do need to feel like my ideas are listened to, even if they are over the top.”

“We can do that, Tama,” Haruhi said with a smile. “Well, for me, I hate to say it, but I am completely heterosexual. I just haven’t been attracted to any women sexually.”

“Bummer. That would have been fun to watch.” Hikaru teased.

“I am not sure how I would classify myself. I do like it when Kyouya or Hika takes control, and I liked it when Hani did earlier, so I guess I would classify myself as a bottom. Though I am rapidly realizing I also really like being the center of attention of several gorgeous men at a time, so I don’t know where that would fall, but I thought I would toss it out there.” She grinned.

“Then it’s probably a good thing that there is a group of men right here that are willing to indulge that fantasy, isn’t it?” Hani giggled, reaching down and stroking down her neck. Pulling a strawberry out of thin air, he wriggled down so his head was level with hers. With a sassy smile he placed it on her lips, encouraging her to take a bite. As she was biting down on the succulent fruit, Hani covered her lips with his, consuming the other half of the strawberry. After chewing quickly and swallowing, he again pressed his lips to hers, encouraging them to move underneath his. Tracing his tongue lightly across her upper lip, he smiled as a small purr escaped. Deepening the kiss even more, their
tongues slid across each other, tasting the sweetness of the strawberry and the unique flavors that were each of them. With a small sigh, Hani pulled back and ended the kiss with a smile. “Much better.”

“I think our game of Truth is officially over,” Hikaru laughed. “Now the fun starts.”

Haruhi was still in a bit of a daze from Hani’s kiss, but she looked at the others with a smile. Turning to Tamaki she asked, “So what’s up next on the agenda, oh Host King?”

“Hmm…,” Tamaki thought for a moment. “Well, I think Takashi should finally tell Hani and me what he wants us to do. You, Kao, Kyouya, and Hikaru need to show us the costumes from the Andromeda myth, and I am going to spank the devil twins at some point, because they have needed it for years.” He grinned widely as he said the last.

“If you can catch us, boss!” The two said together.

“If you want I can also do a rope suspension, so you can see it up close. I am sure I could get Mitskune to be willing to be tied.” Takashi added.

“I think I would like to try the rope bondage, if that’s possible too.” Haruhi said. “I want to experience it and I trust you completely.”

A rare devilish smirk crossed Takashi’s face. “I can tie you and Mitskune together if you like and suspend you both. I verified the strength of the beams overhead earlier this week, figuring I would tie up Mitskune at some point, knowing he would like to be suspended in such a beautiful place.”

“So that’s why you asked me what the beams were made of!” Tamaki commented. “It never even crossed my mind until now.”

“I think I would enjoy that, Taka.” Haruhi said with a grin. “Thanks!”

“It will be my pleasure, I promise. Now here is my other idea and it goes along with the bets.” Sitting up straighter, Takashi continued, “Since both Kyouya and I have both won two bets off of Tamaki and Hani, and Kyouya has expressed an interest in domination, which it is not usually something that appeals to me, I suggest that Kyouya be in charge this evening. Hika, Kao, and Haruhi can negotiate with him as to what they are willing to do or not do, but as for Tamaki and Hani, unless they use a safeword to pass, they need to do whatever they are told. If they want to do something, they need to ask permission first of Kyouya and then of the person they want to play with. The safeword for tonight will be Red.”

“Takashi, my lover, you are cruel…” Hani pouted unconvincingly. “I don’t like being told what to do.”

Arching a look at his lover and wearing another smirk, Takashi replied. “I know. That’s why I want you to do it. You lost the bet. You agreed to a task. Are you going to safeword out of it before it even begins?”

“Of course not. I can handle a night of bottoming. I just want it known that I may require recompense later.”

“I wouldn’t have it any other way, lover.” Takashi grinned before kissing Hani quickly. “So how do the rest of you feel about the idea? Tamaki?”
“I like idea a lot, actually. It’s something that is right up my alley, which I have a feeling you knew.” Tamaki smiled in pleasure. “Being told what to do by several attractive men and a gorgeous woman? What is not to like in that?”

“Now that you put it that way Tama-chan, I think I like the idea after all.”

“I have no problem with being in charge tonight. I relish the chance. I have a fair knowledge of what Hika and Haruhi would be willing to do, but I want to know what Kaoru thinks.”

“I am game. I actually trust you to take control, more than I would anyone other than Hika. Since I am not exactly shy and I have been hornier than hell, pretty much all week, I can’t think of anything off the top of my head that I am not willing to at least try tonight.” Kaoru grinned at the others.

“My loves, How do you feel about it?” Kyouya asked.

Hikaru looked at Haruhi who nodded at him. Speaking for both of them he responded, “Of course we are in. You in charge is seriously sexy.” Hika paused and then added with his trademark devil smile, “Just remember our conversation earlier… and the fact that we both like to watch.”

Kyouya laughed and gave them both a steamy look. “It’s settled. Let’s do this. Kaoru – go grab the costumes. We will get dressed while Hani and Tamaki get undressed. My first requirement for our subs tonight is complete nudity. Despite the cold outside, it is comfortable in here, so they will not be cold. They both have lovely bodies and I think all of us would appreciate seeing them. Takashi – you can choose to remain fully clothed or undress. It is your choice.”

Takashi inclined his head in a nod as Hani laughed, “Oh yes, Kyouya. You are definitely a Dom. Is there anything else you wish of us, Sir?”

A light entered Kyouya’s eyes as Kaoru pulled out a large bag he had stashed on the side of the cabana. “Yes there is actually… I know what is coming next and I know Tamaki. Second requirement – neither of you are allowed to touch yourselves unless you ask permission of everyone else first. If anyone says no, then you have to wait five minutes before you can ask again.”

Tamaki groaned as even the requirement caused his lower body to tighten and he started to get erect. “Kyouya…”

Looking at both Hani and Tamaki, Kyouya said with a warning note, “Last chance to opt out of these requirements.” Both looked back at him, the first stirrings of lust forming in each of their eyes as they shook their heads.

“Ok then. Let’s get this party started.”
Kyouya, Haruhi, Hikaru, and Kaoru stepped into the Dojo to give them enough room to get changed and to develop a strategy. Within moments, the boys were stripped down to nothing, and started slithering into their leather pants – Kaoru in gray, Kyouya in black, and Hikaru in white.

“Andromeda Revisited

Damn. I just can’t get over how good all of you look in leather pants. It’s probably a good thing that you don’t wear them often or I would be tossed into the loony bin. Cuz’ all I want to do when I see you like that is drop my jaw, start drooling and melt into a little puddle of babbling Haru-goo.” Haruhi joked as she zipped up the front of the blue leather corset over-gown. She already had on her sheer paneled petticoat and glimpses of her bare legs kept sliding into view as she wriggled to get the top straight. “This was easier to get into last time.”

“You had a maid to help you,” Kaoru said. “Here. Stop! You are going to damage my creation. Let me help you with the ties.” Winking at her to take the sting out of his words, he quickly went over and with deft efficiency, tightened the laces on the back of the corset, and wrapped the leather ribbons in a quick design around the front.

Kyouya watched, amused, as Kaoru fussed over the fit of the dress. Turning to Hikaru, he said, “How does Kao manage to separate himself, like that? If I had to touch Haru right now – in that dress, we wouldn’t make it back into the other room.” He squirmed a bit as the leather tightened over his groin.

Hikaru saw what was happening and laughed, “Trust me, he isn’t unaffected by her. It’s just over time we have learned how to separate the lust from the fashion. It’s a survival skill when you are surrounded on a constant basis by beautiful half-naked women.”

“Wow. That sounds like a rough life.” Kyouya said drily.

Hikaru turned his most devilish grin on his lover before physically turning him around. Grabbing the waistband of Kyouya’s leather pants, Hikaru shifted it slightly then ran his hands down the leather making sure to smooth it perfectly.

Kyouya shuddered under his hands and the slight bulge grew rock hard, while Hikaru stepped back and laughed at his lover. “You did that on purpose.”

“Absolutely.”

With a growl, Kyouya reached out and grabbed the waistband of Hikaru’s pants and pulled him roughly forward. As Hika stumbled forward, Kyouya reached up and grabbed a fistful his hair, crushing Hika’s lips under his. Forcing Hika’s lips open with fury of his tongue, Kyouya claimed his mouth. Deliberately, he teased, stroked and guided Hika’s tongue with his until whimpers of pleasure escaped Hika’s lips, and the red-haired man melted into Kyouya’s embrace.

“Oh my…” Kaoru breathed in a whisper as he and Haruhi stood watching the scorching kiss happening in front of them. Never letting his eyes leave the tattooed and shirtless men in front of him, he asked Haruhi quietly and with absolute sincerity in his voice. “Dear gods. I could watch that for hours, please tell me I can join you guys sometime. I’ll just watch – I promise.”

Haruhi smiled up at her dearest friend. “I would welcome you anytime, Kao-love and you wouldn’t
have to just watch. I promise.” Clearing her throat loudly, she startled her two lovers out of their kiss. Both looked a little dazed as they turned to her. “Kao and I were just wondering if we were going to go back into the Conservatory or if we should just go get the others and have them come in here.”

Kyouya saw the smirk on Haruhi’s face and an answering grin spread on his. He realized that he still had a grip on Hikaru’s hair and let go, tracing his fingers down Hikaru’s neck to rest on his hip. Hikaru still clung to his chest breathing heavily. “Oh I think we are ready to go in and torment them for a bit. Are you ready Hika-love?”

“Kyo-love… I swear your kiss is a drug and should come with a warning label - will cause breathlessness, dizziness, and an overwhelming desire to do anything to please.” Taking another breath, this one less shaky thankfully, he continued as he stepped slightly to the side to put his arm around Kyouya’s waist. “I may fight you for dominance another night, but tonight… I am yours to command.”

Haruhi laughed. “I second that.”

“Which part?” Kyouya asked curiously, “The drug comment or my command?”

“Both actually.” She slowly licked her lips, knowing it would entice him. “Now, should we go show the others what they missed. I do have an idea though…”

Gesturing for the others to come in closer, she quickly outlined an idea that had the others smiling in glee. *Tamaki, Hani, and Takashi aren’t going to know what hit them.*

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Following Kyouya’s request, Tamaki and Hani had stripped down completely, while Takashi had removed his shirt and sat lounging comfortably in a loose pair of drawstring workout pants. The three of them bustled around putting the food away and then grabbed the pillows and cushions from the bed and couches. They spread them on the ground in front of the cabana, so they would have something comfortable to sit on. The end result was a sort of modified bed on the ground, which made Hani giggle.

“I guess we could have stayed on the bed, but from the way Kyo-chan was hinting they need to use the posts on the bed, so we wouldn’t actually see anything if we sat there.” Hani was completely comfortable in his nudity as he sprawled out on a couple of cushions; his head on Takashi’s lap.

Tamaki was not nearly as comfortable in his skin. He sat on a cushion with his knees drawn up to his chest, arms wrapped around them.

“Relax Tama-chan,” Hani said soothingly. “This is going to be fun. Besides at this point everyone has seen you naked, except maybe Kyo-chan or Hika-chan. Enjoy it. You don’t know when you might get this chance again.”

Calmed a bit by Hani’s reminder, Tamaki relaxed and shifted position. “You are right. I wouldn’t have agreed to it, if I didn’t want to do it. Just a sudden fit of nerves, I guess.”

Hani crawled over to Tamaki – an intriguing sight for both Tamaki as he watched the naked man come toward him and Takashi as he watched the muscular butt move with the motion – and placed a quick kiss on his lips, knowing he was stretching the rule that Kyouya had set down, but figuring a moment of reassurance would calm Tamaki’s fears. He was right as the fire lit in the violet eyes.
With a wink he crawled back the other way, making sure to roll his body just enough to keep both men interested.

“Mitskune, do you ever stop teasing?”

“No until my last breath, lover,” Hani grinned. “Besides you asked for this when you gave control to Kyouya for the night.”

Tamaki smiled as he watched his two friends openly tease each other. So different than two years ago when we were still at Ouran. They were always close, but they never let us see this side. I am glad they opened up to us and I am even more glad that they opened our eyes about everything else. Hani is right. This night is going to be epic and I don’t know when or if I will ever get another one like it. I am going to enjoy every moment, even if I am naked and everyone can literally see what I am feeling.

The opening of the Conservatory door alerted them that the others had returned. All three of them craned their necks around to catch a glimpse of their friends, but Kyouya, Haruhi, Hikaru, and Kyouya had purposely remained out of line of sight. Haruhi’s voice rang out like a narrator:

“The Captain of the Guard was heartbroken as he led the Princess Andromeda down to the shore and tied her in place as a sacrifice to appease the god Poseidon. Unable to leave her unprotected, he slipped behind the rock, his presence a comfort to her as she waited for the end. Meanwhile, both the Hero Perseus and the great sea dragon Cetus had seen Andromeda and vowed to claim her…”

Kaoru took Haruhi’s hand and with a wink he led her through the foliage to the cabana and the men sitting on the floor in front of it. She watched the expressions on their faces as they caught their first glimpses of her. Gratified to see the immediate passion that burned in the eyes of Tamaki, Takashi, and Hani, she grinned at the more visible sign of interest on Hani and Tamaki. Turning she focused her attention back on Kaoru as he smiled wickedly back at her.

Kaoru positioned her so the others would have the best view of both Haruhi and the other two men when they came in. He slid an arm around her waist, pulled her close and kissed her. He let all of his love for her, his eagerness for the evening, and his delight in being able to torment the others into the kiss as he danced his lips across hers and twined his tongue around hers.

“Your kisses always make me think of summer – sunlight and fun.” She whispered into his ear as he slid his hands around her back to untie the ribbons.

He grinned at her comment before the devilish gleam took over. He slowly started winding the soft leather around her arms as he had done so many months before, before binding her wrists together.

“Wait!” Tamaki’s voice was in a near panic. “I thought you were just going to show us the costumes.”

“Change of plans, mon ami. We thought it would be way more fun to show you the costumes and the use we put them to.” The hard passionate glint in Kaoru’s eyes made Tamaki gulp as he finished wrapping Haruhi’s wrists and raised them above her head, looping the ends through the wrought iron. Sliding his hands down her arms and looking into her eyes, he checked to make sure she was comfortable before he proceeded. At her nod and smile, he continued to trail his hands down over her hips, winding two more leather straps down her legs to mimic the way her arms were wrapped. Spreading her legs open wide, he pulled the end behind the posts and tied them off giving her very limited ability to close her legs. Finally he stood back up and leaned in to kiss her again. This time, while one hand tangled in her hair to angle her mouth for his kiss, the other slowly slid the zipper partly down on the corset exposing the curve of her breasts and causing Tamaki to groan. With a
wink he stepped away and around her to climb on the bed behind the post.

Haruhi let the fire in her eyes show as she asked innocently, “Tama, what’s wrong?”

“You are evil… You know this right?”

Haruhi’s laughter pealed out. She openly looked all three of them up and down and licked her lips appreciatively at the expanse of naked flesh on display. “Tonight. Hell yes I am. I am going to love watching all of you watching us, knowing you can’t touch us or yourselves unless you ask permission.” Her inner devil grew in her smile. “I just have to say… You think I’m sexy… You haven’t seen anything yet…”

“Hmm… I think that’s our cue.” Hikaru’s voice rumbled sexily from the right. He stepped into the middle of the room. The warm lighting hidden in the plants casting colored shadows over his tight white leather pants as they molded over his firm ass and bouncing off the phoenix tattoo across his bare chest and back causing it to appear to be engulfed in flames.

Haruhi could hear Kaoru mutter under his breath behind her and she smiled to herself. She watched Tamaki struggle to close his mouth and a Hani openly rake his eyes up and down Hikaru’s body.

“I agree.” Kyouya’s cool voice came from the left. He walked in – danger and sex personified. Kyouya’s tight black leather pants accented his dragon tattoo and hugged every muscle like a second skin. The bulge in his pants was evident and the swagger in his step was unlike anything the others had seen in him. The aura of command just rolled off of him in waves.

“Oh. My. Gods…” The sound that broke the wave of silence came out of Takashi’s mouth as every muscle in his body locked up and the blood rushing to his groin left him dizzy. Setting a hand down to keep himself from falling over, he tore his eyes away from the minor god before him to look at Haruhi. She was staring straight back at him and her eyes held both sympathy and something else.

“It’s like she knows exactly what I am feeling… Then again, she may. I wouldn’t be surprised if she felt like this the first time she saw him like THAT! Great gods in all heavens…”

A wink from her brought Takashi back into his body and he glanced down to the others on the cushions. Hani’s eyes were slightly glazed in lust, but that was fading into a smirk as he recognized a fellow Dom. Tamaki’s expression was priceless though. It was shock, lust, eagerness, annoyance, and more lust. It was also the look of a person who had just received the best birthday present ever. Takashi watched Tamaki’s lips move in slow motion to breathe the word.

“Fuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuck.”

Kyouya heard the word slip out of Tamaki’s mouth and turned to him with a look that sent chills through the blond. “You haven’t seen anything yet. Remember Tamaki. No touching, unless I say you can.” With that he turned to look at his lovers and saw the heat blazing in their eyes. Only they also had smiles to match the heat. Kyouya watched Haruhi lick her lips and dip her head slightly towards Hikaru. He caught her meaning the same moment that Hikaru did and they came together in front of her, locking their lips together in a kiss reminiscent of the one they had shared earlier in the dojo.

Haruhi heard a whimper come from the cushions and though she couldn’t see who did it, she was pretty sure it came from Tamaki. He has to be going crazy right now.

As if in answer to her thought, Kaoru leaned around the pole and whispered against her neck “Tamaki looks like he can’t decide if he is in heaven or hell. He’s literally shaking like a leaf, trying to control himself. Not that I could blame him, I probably would be too if I was seeing this for the
first time. But since I am not, even though I am enjoying the view as I am sure you are, you look a little lonely.” With that Kaoru traced one hand across her collarbone while he bit down on Haruhi’s neck in exactly the way and place that would have sent her to her knees, if she wasn’t tied upright.

A low moan escaped her lips and her head fell back against the post. Gently Kaoru soothed the bite spot with his tongue before nibbling up and flicking his tongue against her earlobe. This time she gasped in pleasure.

The moan and then gasp were enough of a sound to break Hikaru and Kyouya from the kiss they were locked in. Pulling apart, as one, they turned and walked over to Haruhi and Kaoru. Within the space of a heartbeat, Kyouya had captured Haruhi’s mouth with his own, while Hikaru did the same with Kaoru, both of their bodies pressed up against hers and their hands roamed freely over the corset still covering her breasts and the thin skirt that covered her ass.

Hikaru slowly slid the zipper on the corset down, exposing her flesh to the others. He followed the path of the zipper with kisses, nipping at her stomach when the zipper parted to release her breasts. Carefully, he folded the leather back, so her chest was completely free. One of his hands slid up to grab a breast and hold it to his lips, while the other slid lower, dodging through the strips of her petticoat to find the warm wetness waiting for him.

Kyouya didn’t want to release her lips, but he let his hand trace down her skin to meet with Hikaru’s in the warmest place imaginable. Every sigh, every breath, every moan that escaped from her as Kaoru ravished her neck, while Hikaru swirled his tongue against the soft flesh of her nipples and delved his fingers deeply into her wet tunnel, while Kyouya flicked his finger against the super sensitive bud at the entrance to her wetness, was savored like the finest wine.

Haruhi was on fire, lost in sensation and completely oblivious to the audience watching every movement. Eyes closed tight, all she could feel were Kyouya’s and Kaoru’s lips holding her in place, Hikaru’s teeth as he bit harder at the flesh of her breast, leaving faint marks behind, and the magic of both of her lovers fingers as they plundered her depths and teased her body higher.

Kyouya sensed she was close to the edge, pulling away from her lips, just enough to let her take a gasping breath he looked down and met Hikaru’s eyes. As Hika stood up slowly, his fingers never ceasing their motion, he also met Kaoru’s eyes.

As one, all three men leant in and said “Cum for us, Princess.”

The words were a trigger that sent Haruhi flying, her scream as the orgasm ripped through her shattering the silence and cascading in waves down her body as it bucked and rippled underneath their hands. They held her, keeping her safe, as her great gasping breaths eased and her wildly beating heart calmed. As she came back into her body she started to giggle, then laugh in pure joy, as the men around her smiled.

A small voice caught their attention. “Hika-chan, may I please lick your fingers?” The lust in Hani’s big eyes was obvious and his erection was standing straight out from his body, hard as steel.

Quickly Hikaru glanced at Kyouya, and receiving a slight nod, answered the blue-eyed blond by extending out the hand still glistening with the remains of Haruhi’s orgasm. With a grin, Hani crawled over and took each finger in his mouth, sucking every drop and flicking his tongue around each one in a way that was having a visible effect on the older red-headed twin.

“Damn, I wish I had thought of that.” The disgust at not thinking of the idea first was evident in Tamaki’s tone and it made the others smile.
“Don’t worry, Tama. The night’s not over yet.” Kyouya’s cool voice held a note that made everyone shudder in anticipation.
While Kyouya was talking to Tamaki, Hikaru and Kaoru were working on releasing Haruhi from the cabana post. By mutual agreement, they were taking their time, making sure that every loosening was coupled with a caress of her skin. Haruhi enjoyed every moment; it reminded her of the way they would tease her together her first year and a half at Ouran. In the last several months as she, Hikaru and Kyouya had started dating, Kaoru had respectfully stepped back to make sure that he wasn’t interfering in the blossoming relationship. Well, he did and he didn’t I guess. Even after Hika and I started dating he would still kiss me to tease Hika and if I stayed over, he would come join us in the bed and sleep cuddled up next to us. I think the difference here is focus. When he usually kisses me, it is to tease Hika. I know we are both enjoying it but it wasn’t about us – it was about him and I teasing Hika or Hika and I cuddling him. This moment is about their teasing me. She looked at both of them and watched them make eye contact often and their hands brushed over the others often. OK- so maybe it’s about them teasing each other as much as it is about teasing me… Maybe I should just forget the analysis and focus on the sensation.

Hikaru saw the small smile on her face and whispered, “Bout time you stopped thinking and just enjoyed the moment.”

“Oh I am, trust me love,” she said. “I was just thinking how much this reminded me of our first years at Ouran, when the two of you would team up and use any excuse you could come up with to touch me.”

“That was fun,” Kaoru smiled as he finished unwinding her arms and pulled the leather corset dress off of her completely. “We would tease you and each other in the process. Especially when you started coming over for those make-over sessions that summer before you and Hika started dating.”

“So all those sessions were basically foreplay for you?” She grinned to make sure there was no sting to her words.

“Exactly.” They chorused.

“We kept dreaming that someday we would be able to get you to join us, but you were with Tamaki and then when you broke up, you were so heartbroken that we couldn’t. It wouldn’t have been right. But that is all the past.” Hikaru kissed her to make sure the conversation stayed light, He leaned in close to make sure that only her and Kaoru could hear before continuing in the husky whisper he knew she loved, “To answer the question, I know you wanted to ask but didn’t… Yes. After you would leave, Kao and I would fall on each other and fuck until the morning.”

Haruhi shivered at the deliciously depraved words and tone in Hikaru’s voice, goosebumps visibly appearing down her arms and across her chest, while the twins just looked at her with eyes full of lust. An idea occurred to Kaoru. He leaned in and since it had caused such a lovely reaction in Haruhi’s body, said in the same husky whisper that Hika had used, “Hikaru… Since you are mine
tonight and we both know what is coming up next. I want to take your spankings from Tamaki. May I?"

Hikaru grinned and let the lust shine into the gold eyes that matched his own. “Oh yeah.”

The smile on Kaoru’s face at the response was devilish, to say the least. Eyes still burning, he reached behind him and rummaged in the bag that had held their costumes. He handed Haruhi a short thin silk cami. “I know the rest of us are topless, but I thought you might be more comfortable a little bit less exposed.”

She kissed him quickly in thanks. “I appreciate it. You guys have killed most of my modesty but I would rather be covered.” She quickly put it on and then laughed. The cami fit like a silken second skin and stopped about 4 inches above her navel. She could see her still hard nipples poking through the cloth. “Not that this exactly covers much. Between the cami and my lace panties, I am not exactly decent.”

“Oh trust me, love – you are more than decent.” Kyouya’s cool voice slid into the conversation.

“Hikaru, Kyouya, I have loose pants for you as well if you like,” Kaoru added as he shimmied the leather down his firm ass and slid into a pair of pants similar to the loose ones Takashi wore.

“I think I will stay in the leather for a bit longer,” Kyouya said while Hikaru grabbed a pair of the loose pants and changed. “I know Haruhi likes it.”

“Oh I do, Kyo-love. You are drop dead gorgeous in them, but that’s not the only reason you are keeping them on, is it?” She laughed at him.

“Really Kyouya, we know how the feel of them turns you on – soft leather rubbing against you as you walk. You get a semi… and you have from the very first moment you put a pair on.” Hikaru teased his lover as a faint flush crossed Kyouya’s face.

Kaoru grinned at the momentary discomfiture on the Shadow king’s face before shifting the topic and asking loudly enough for all to hear in a formal tone. “Kyouya, I know that Hikaru and I have caused so much trouble for the Host Club over the course of the last few years. We want to make amends. I am asking that I take all the punishment that you think is necessary. I know it would normally be meted out to both of us, but I have asked Hikaru if I may take his on as well and he has agreed to let me, if it is ok with you.”

Kyouya caught the wink in the middle of Kaoru’s request and quickly understood what was happening. His eyes smiled back at Kao while his face maintained his normal cool expression. “Thank you for acknowledging the trouble that both of you have caused. Since you did so, I will let you take on the punishment for your brother. However, I also believe that the person who has most often been the target of that trouble has the right to punish you.” He looked over at Tamaki, whose eyes were still on fire from watching the previous scene and whose cock showed no signs of softening anytime soon. “Tamaki, would you like to be the one who administers the punishment to Kaoru?”

“Yes I would.” Tamaki’s eyes locked with his lover’s and he licked his lips as he caught Kaoru’s cheeky grin directed his way.
“Good. Then I think you should administer as many spankings as you see fit for all the trouble that Kaoru and Hikaru have caused the Host Club over the years. You may use your hand or another implement of your choosing.”

“Oh look,” Hikaru’s voice was suspiciously bland as he pulled an object from behind his back, “I found a wooden paddle in the bag that held our costumes.”

Tamaki grinned and stood up, his nakedness completely forgotten as he walked over to Kaoru. With heat in his eyes, he said, “Are you willing to be punished by my hand?”

“Oh HELL yes.” Kaoru shivered at the heat in Tamaki’s eyes.

“Good. I am going to require that you lose those pants you just put on.”

Without a second thought, Kaoru stripped naked. He felt the world around him and Tamaki fading into nothingness. The room disappeared, the hosts disappeared, all that remained was Tamaki. All he could see was the lust in Tamaki’s eyes and he shivered in anticipation of the sweet sharp pleasure/pain that was going to be his in a few short moments.

Tamaki saw the shift in Kaoru’s eyes and body language. Wow. He really does want this. Actually, it’s more than that. It’s almost like he needs this. I can do that for him. I can give him what he needs. He walked over to the younger man. He traced a hand across the planes of Kaoru’s chest, caressing lightly. Turning Kao’s body to face the others and in his best commanding voice, he said “Face the others and apologize for all of the pranks and trouble that you have caused the Host Club over the years.”

Eyes downcast, Kaoru said clearly and sincerely, “I am very sorry for all of the trouble that Hikaru and I have caused all of you over the last few years. I will accept any punishment you choose.”

“Good. Now bend over and brace yourself on the edge of the bed. Spread your legs.”

Kaoru did as he was bid, a distant part of his mind thrilled that he was exposed and on display to everyone in the room, even as he was focused on what was going to occur between him and Tamaki.

Taking a deep breath, Tamaki walked over to stand on the side of Kao. Raising his arm, he delivered a loud SMACK! to Kaoru’s left ass cheek, watching in fascination as a faint red imprint of his hand appeared almost immediately, and feeling a deep rush down his body as Kaoru’s gasp echoed throughout the room. Bending down, he whispered in Kaoru’s ear, “Do you want more?”

Kaoru moaned out, “Yes please. More. Much More. I want to have a hard time sitting tomorrow because of your punishment.”

The rush that Tamaki had felt at hearing Kaoru’s first gasp, intensified and he drew back to stand upright. He rapidly delivered four hard sharp spanks to Kaoru’s right ass cheek then caressed down it slowly.

Kaoru gasped then moaned loudly as the sharp stinging sensation of the hard spanks was followed by the soothing caress of Tamaki’s hands. The pain quickly turning into a deep pleasure as his body processed the sensations and sent him flying on a rush of endorphins.

For several minutes, Tamaki continued the assault of his hands on Kaoru’s ass – alternating between hard sharp spanks and soft caresses as Kaoru’s ass turned a bright shade of pink and he could feel the heat starting to come off of it. He continued to check in periodically to make sure that Kaoru was ok, but it was soon clear to him that Kaoru loved every stroke and was limitless in his desire for more. Finally to spare his hand, which was starting to ache from all the spanking, he grabbed the wooden
paddle. Not sure of what would happen, he held back a bit on the first swing, though he soon realized that he didn’t need to, as Kaoru eagerly pushed back for more.

A few feet away from the scene in front of them, the others lounged on the cushions and pillows, Tamaki and Hani had placed there earlier. Hani was once again sprawled across Takashi, while Haruhi sat between Kyouya and Hikaru, leaning up into Hikaru’s chest and with her legs folded over Kyouya’s lap as he absently caressed her inner thigh.

Haruhi couldn’t decide which was more interesting – watching the scene in front of her or watching the expressions on her friends faces as they watched. Takashi eyes were glued to Kaoru and she could faintly hear his breathing echo Kaoru’s after each spank. Hani, on the other hand, had his eyes glued to Tamaki and she could see his fingers twitch with every spank that Tama gave. Kyouya’s eyes kept alternating between the two, though they seemed to linger a bit longer on Tamaki’s naked body rather than on the action of Tamaki spanking Kaoru.

Hikaru saw her watching everyone and tilted his head down to whisper in her ear, ”are you enjoying yourself?”

She craned her neck upward to breathe against his ear, making sure that their conversation remained so quiet that even Kyouya in his distracted state wouldn’t hear, “Very much. I loved being on display for everyone earlier and now I am seeing a side of Kaoru I never knew was there. Though I do have a couple of questions for you. How is it you never mentioned that you and Kao were familiar with BDSM and why did Kao want to take your share of the punishment?”

“Well… honestly, like Hani and Takashi, we didn’t know how everyone would react. We thought we might already be stretching all of your acceptance with the kind of relationship we have, as it is. We should have trusted all of you sooner.” He placed a soft kiss on her cheek. “As for the punishment thing – Kaoru is a masochist. The pain actually causes his body to release endorphins and turns the pain into pleasure, which is why you can see that he is flying at the moment. For me, I can handle a little bit, but I am just not a masochist. Pain just hurts me after a while. I would have lasted for about 10 spanks before I was done, whereas Tamaki will stop before he hits Kao’s limit. But the main reason I agreed to it, goes to the fact that I know that I will be spending the night with Kao and we are both Switches. The difference – Kao can only go from bottom to Top, where I can go from Top to bottom. Right now Kao is bottoming to Tamaki, but watch what will happen when they are done with aftercare. Kao’s energy will shift and he will get aggressive and Toppy. Once he is there, he won’t be able to bottom to anyone else. He simply can’t get back in the right headspace. It will take anywhere from a half-hour to an hour, but when he is there, he will give Kyouya a run for his money as Dominant. For me, right now I am feeling aggressive but once I get that release, I will want to be on the bottom. Which will be perfect for what Kao will want later.”

Haruhi nodded her head in understanding, as she responded, “I can totally see that and I look forward to getting a chance to experience it in the future. I could bottom to both you and Kyo and then watch him Top you. Not tonight though, but hopefully soon.”

“As you wish, my princess.” He caught her lips in a quick passionate kiss before they both turned back to the scene in front of them.

Tamaki noticed several things at once. Tears were running down Kaoru’s cheeks, but the expression on his face was one of pure bliss. The paddle had started leaving raised red welts across Kaoru’s ass and upper thighs. Lastly, Tamaki’s arm felt like it was going to fall off. All of which caused him to
decide that he needed to end the scene. Setting the paddle down on the bed, he started caressing down the heated skin of the man in front of him, focusing intently on causing only pleasure. From out of nowhere, he saw a hand holding out a jar. Turning slightly, he saw the hand was attached to Hani who gestured that he should use the cream on Kaoru. Nodding his understanding, Tamaki took the jar as Hani returned to the cushions. Dipping his fingers in, he noticed a cool and slightly numbing sensation. He smiled and started gently rubbing the lotion into Kaoru.

Kaoru hissed at the first sensation of the cold lotion on his superheated skin, but after a moment he sighed in bliss as Tamaki slowly and lovingly worked it into the skin he has so recently abused. Once he was done, Tamaki set it on the bed. Kaoru reached for it, made sure to grab a good sized dollop and proceeded to rub it into the Tamaki’s right shoulder and arm. “You probably need this too. It’s been a while since I was spanked that well and I know you don’t do that often, so your arm will probably be sore tomorrow.”

Tamaki was touched at the care Kaoru was showing him. After Kao had completed his ministrations, Tamaki reached out a caressed Kao’s face with both hands, wiping away the last of the faint tear stains on his cheeks. Looking deep into his eyes, Tamaki pulled the younger man into a kiss. As their tongues danced together, they both shared the intimacy of the moment and savored the energy that had been created between the two of them. Pulling back slightly, Tamaki whispered, “Thank you for letting me do that.”

“It was my pleasure. Literally,” Kaoru arched his hips into the blond so he could feel the erection now solidly in place. “I should thank you. I wasn’t lying when I said that you spank well. It was incredible. So much so that I will voluntarily offer to take any punishment for any trouble ANY member of the Host club causes. Hell, I may just have to cause more just so I can feel this again.”

Tamaki threw his head back and laughed. “You are welcome… and I will happily discipline you whenever you need it.”

Reaching his hand out, Tamaki locked his fingers with Kaoru’s and they walked back to the cushions together. Smiling at them, Hikaru reached over and passed Tamaki a soft blanket. Tamaki wrapped Kaoru up in it and wrapped his arms Kaoru, cuddling him close as he continued to come back into his body from the heights it had been soaring a few minutes before.
As Tamaki and Kaoru settled into the cushions to cuddle after the intensity of their scene, Takashi turned to the small blond laying across his lap and the woman whose feet kept brushing against his leg. “Mitskune, Haruhi, I want to know if either of you would be interested in doing a rope scene with me. It would be simple since this would be Haruhi’s first experience with rope, but I would love to share my knowledge.”

Haruhi wriggled against her two lovers, who gave their approval to the suggestion in different ways. Hikaru nibbled on her neck and said “Do it” in her ear. Kyouya caressed the soft skin of her inner thigh, laid a kiss on her wrist, and gently pushed her toward Takashi. Giggling at both of them, she turned to Takashi with a smile, “I would enjoy that very much.”

“Takashi, you know I would happily be tied up by you at any time, but I think this is something that Haru-chan needs to experience on her own the first time.” Hani’s voice started serious, but quickly turned into the amusement that was integral to Hani’s personality. “Now if she wants to do it again later. I will absolutely love to be tied to her and suspended together.”

Haruhi blushed faintly at Hani’s words, remembering the sweet strawberry kiss that he gave her earlier. Licking her lips in an unconscious reminder, she climbed off of Kyouya’s lap and accepted the hand that Takashi extended out to her. The faint sizzle of energy she always felt whenever she touched Takashi, echoed in the dark eyes that stared down at her.

“Mitsune, would you set up the hard point? You can see the support beam running across the framing.”

“Of course lover. Leave that to me.” With a smile, Hani bounced up and grabbed a bag hidden on the other side of the bed.

Unable to help herself, Haruhi started giggling. Seeing Takashi’s patient silent question, she answered, “Everyone keeps pulling large bags of stuff out from random places, when I swear the spot was completely empty a moment before.”

Takashi smiled, “Ahh… we have learned to be prepared for anything. Especially when we have wanted it for a while.”

“So what else is going to magically appear?”

Takashi just smiled at her and gave her a wink. Still holding her hand, he led her to a spot near where Hani was setting things up. Saying in the flirty tone Haruhi still wasn’t used to hearing out of her yoga partner and Sensei, Takashi started explaining what he was going to do. “Normally, I would have you get completely naked, but since this is your first time, what you are wearing [he eyed her
appreciatively) will actually be better. It will offer some protection against marks but I can’t promise that you won’t have them tomorrow. I know tomorrow night is the red carpet, are you sure you want to risk possible marks?”

Haruhi thought for a moment, “Honestly I had forgotten that tomorrow was the kick-off for Fashion Week, but I think I will be fine. Any marks can be covered by make-up.” A wicked grin spread across her face. “I kind of like knowing that while I can feel the marks and know exactly where they are, no one else can. It makes me feel sexy and claimed.”

“You sound like you have done that before, Haru-chan,” Hani teased.

“Obviously the make-up worked then,” Haruhi teased back. “I have lost count of the number of hickey’s I have hidden from the rest of you. I was always sure that either of you or Tamaki would catch me covering one up. Thankfully the make-up holds even through my workouts with you, which as you know, leave me dripping in sweat and washes away most of the rest of any make-up I happen to be wearing.”

“That’s good to know,” Takashi said, trying desperately to keep his voice neutral, “your choice then – clothed or naked?”

Haruhi thought about it and then looked over at the others, who were all staring at her with various degrees of interest. Turning back to Takashi, she put her hand on his heart and asked quietly, “What would you prefer?”

Looking down into her deep chocolate eyes, Takashi found it hard to swallow as his mouth instantly dried, the words tripped on his tongue, and his heart beat furiously under the softness of her hand on his skin. “Truth. I want you naked underneath my hands, but I don’t know if I can control myself right now if you are… too much stimulation from the first two scenes and the knowledge that you will be helpless before me when I am done.”

Haruhi blushed faintly at the quiet intimacy of the words. “Shall we compromise then? How about if for tonight I am topless, but keep my panties.” Takashi nodded slowly. “Truth though my partner… I hope that someday I will get a chance to be completely naked and at your mercy.”

Gently removing her hand from his chest, Haruhi stepped back a pace and slid her hands under the edge of the cami. Slowly she pulled it over her head, maintaining eye contact with Takashi as she did so, smiling slightly at the audible gulp he made.

She stood in front of him, almost naked, and it took his breath away. He didn’t want to break eye contact. As long as she was looking at him, everyone else faded into the background. Reaching down, he picked up a 30 foot length of hemp rope and untied it blindly, letting his fingers work on autopilot while she stepped forward and placed her hand once again on his heart, letting herself slip into the half-trance she felt whenever they did yoga together. Heartbeats matching perfectly.

Takashi held the rope in his left hand, and with his right, mirrored hers by placing it on her heart. Stepping into her, he slid it up to cup her cheek. Never breaking eye contact until the very last moment, he tilted his head down and let his lips meet hers, catching the soft sigh that he knew only he heard. Teasing her lips with his he deepened the kiss, before pulling back to trail more along her jawline. Whispering against the shell of her ear, he said, “Put your arms around my neck.”

Slowly she did so, making sure to take the time to really feel the heat from his skin and the solid muscle underneath. Hands finally reaching their destination, she played with the hair at the top of his
neck with one hand while drawing lazy circles between his shoulder blades with the other; just enjoying the sensation of his skin on hers.

A low rumble built at the base of his throat and it was all he could do to turn his attention back to the rope in his hands, rather than picking her up and carrying her the few feet to the bed, where he just wanted to sink into her soft skin. *Rope scene. Rope scene. He repeated inside his head like a mantra until he was able to bring his baser urges back into control.* *Must Tie Haruhi up. Make it Sensual. Make her crave more and you may get to fulfill the other desire another time.* The base part of his brain inserted the idea, even as the mantra continued.

Finally he was able to slide his hands behind her back and grab the rope, looping it around her rib cage, twisting it over itself and through. His long standing practice and familiarity with the knots soon took over and within a matter of moments Haruhi’s upper body was wrapped in a rope harness. Even though he was working quickly, Takashi made sure that every movement of the rope was a sensual caress against her skin and every knot that tightened, causing her immobility, was finished with a caress of his fingers. Grabbing another length of rope, he traced his hands lightly up her arms and brought them down on level with her heart, palms together, before wrapping the rope around her wrists binding them together. He then raised them above her head and looped the rope through the large ring Hani had set up earlier, tying them off.

Takashi watched as the realization dawned in Haruhi’s eyes that she was trapped. She could struggle against the ropes binding her wrists, but Takashi knew his craft too well and there was no way she could wiggle free. She was bound until he chose to let her go. Fear and shock gave way to first resignation, followed quickly by interest and then the flush of desire spread over her body.

Takashi moved behind her and murmured low into her ear, “You can wriggle, but you won’t get free. Only I can free you. Tell me now, do you want me to let you go or do you want more?”

Haruhi’s voice was a moan as she answered, “More please.”

With a smile, Takashi picked up a few more lengths of rope.

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Hani watched the pair with both fascination and desire. Glancing quickly at the others, he saw the same reflected in theirs, and thankfully, a complete lack of jealousy in Kyouya’s. *He was the one person I was most worried about. Tonight he seems to have embraced the role he set and opened up completely to just enjoying the moments as they happen. I hope we can keep it that way. He may need his own one-on-one time though, soon. He’s not there yet, but pretty soon I expect that his insecurities around Haruhi and Hikaru are going to rear their ugly heads. It’s natural. For all of his outward confidence, he still has a part that can be very insecure – it’s the part that wants to say that he doesn’t deserve the love of Haruhi or Hikaru or the friendship of the rest of us. We just need to show him that he is worth all of it and more.*

Kyouya’s body was in a slow burn and his mind was lost in a haze of passion, lust, and control as he watched Takashi essentially seduce Haruhi with rope. From the moment that Hani had laid the strawberry on Haruhi’s lips and claimed a kiss, the fire was lit. Then when Takashi made the suggestion that he should be in control this evening, the burn started to grow and it was slowly consuming him. He was getting such a rush out of directing the activities and watching his lovers enjoy themselves. Jealousy was the furthest thing from his mind as he was getting so turned on by the energy that was flowing smoothly from one person to the next. For this moment in time, he
absolutely understood Haruhi when she said that she loved all of the Host club members in different ways, because tonight he felt the same. Tonight he was bonded to all of them and they were bonded to him. He could feel their pleasure, their lust, and the love that wrapped around them all securely. Suddenly he felt Hani’s eyes on him though he was completely unaware of the thoughts of the older blond. Meeting and holding them, he sent a silent query.

Hani just gave him a blinding smile and mouthed the words “thank you for this” and nodded slightly to the couple to his right.

Kyouya nodded and let the fire burning in him show in his eyes as he responded silently. “More to come.” Seeing the older man shiver slightly to the intensity of the words was a reward that Kyouya never thought he would receive.

Hani held his eyes for a moment longer - letting Kyouya see the lust that he felt for the Shadow King he had kept hidden for years. This time it was the Kyouya who shivered.

Hikaru had been watching the exchange between Takashi and Haruhi but he caught the intensity between Kyouya and Hani out of the corner of his eye. Unobserved by either, he watched the interplay, which ended, interestingly enough, with goose bumps forming on his lover’s arm. Now THAT’S interesting!! Unable to resist, he leaned back against Kyouya’s chest and angled his head to whisper in his lover’s ear, “One more thing that I want a front row seat for… You and Hani in a sexual dominance battle. I have never seen anyone give you goose bumps with just a look. The same goes for Hani, actually. You made him shiver.”

Kyouya’s response was to slip his hand into Hikaru’s hair and ruthlessly crush his lips. The burn needing an outlet before it exploded. Hikaru melted under the onslaught, immediately opening his mouth to Kyouya’s demanding tongue and lips. The searing intensity instantly made both of them hard and their hands sought out the hard flesh of the other’s cock. Only hearing a soft moan from the third member of their triad, begging for more, brought them back into the moment and stopped them from ripping off their clothes and fucking right there on the pillows. Breathing heavily, they stared deeply into each other’s eyes as their hearts slowed. Kyouya wrapped his arms around Hikaru as they both turned back to watch their lover experience rope for the first time. Whispering in Hikaru’s ear, he said, “I will grant that wish, but not tonight. Tonight I will grant another one, though. I want you ready for Kao. But I promise you this, my lover, very soon I am going to finish what we started and bury myself deeply in your ass, while you fuck Haruhi senseless. I want to hear both of you crying out under me.”

Now it was Hikaru’s turn to feel the goose bumps race down his skin.

Tamaki was torn between watching two different erotic scenes playing out in front of him – one, literally within hands reach. What I wouldn’t give for Haruhi to be moaning like that under my hands again; Hell, I would give about the same to have Kyouya kiss me the way he is kissing Hikaru right now. I promised I would never interfere, but damn, it is going to be a lonely bed for me tonight. Kaoru will be spending it with Hikaru. He hasn’t said anything, but aside from when I was spanking him, his eyes haven’t left his twin all night. Even now, I can feel the energy change in him. He doesn’t want to cuddle anymore, it’s almost like he wants to pounce on someone and make them a quivering little pile of goo underneath him. I would be happy to be pounced, but again there is only one person he wants tonight. Haruhi’s voice begging for more brought him back to the scene in front of him, or rather to the small blond watching the scene with unconcealed hunger in his eyes. Staying with Takashi and Hani is out tonight as well. I know that look. They would welcome me if I ask, but Hani obviously needs to have his way with his partner after being forced to play submissive for the
evening with me. I am just not quite ready for that level of D/s yet. He sighed quietly making sure not to disturb the others. Oh well, Tamaki, you can survive a night alone. You have done so for the last year. Now stop moping and just enjoy the moment you have. How often do you get to see or do this?

The scolding voice in his head (which sounded suspiciously like Haruhi) finally broke him from his dark thoughts as he looked around the room. A shirtless Takashi was tying a topless Haruhi’s leg back into a position that would have been uncomfortable for anyone else, but just looked beautiful because of the flexibility she has attained while doing yoga. A naked Hani was standing to the side, cock erect, watching and making sure that nothing would go wrong. A naked Kaoru had pushed off the blanket Tamaki had wrapped around him and pulled out of his arms, but he kept one hand on Tamaki’s thigh and idly caressed the smooth skin; wanting to maintain contact of some sort with his lover and friend. Hikaru was still in his loose pants leaning against Kyouya’s shoulder, but the tenting of the fabric, belied how much he was enjoying the scene. He had reached out and grabbed Kaoru’s other hand. Then there was a shirtless Kyouya in his tight leather pants that left nothing to the imagination, and whose tattoo made him look like some kind of fallen angel, commanding everyone to explore the darkest fantasies that they had kept hidden. Yeah. Now I am fucking hard as a rock again. He grimaced and tried to discreetly touch himself to relieve the ache.

“Tamaki!” the word was quiet as not to disturb the scene still playing out in front of them, but the tone in Kyouya’s voice suddenly made the Host King remember the second part of Kyouya’s earlier command – Neither he nor Hani were allowed to touch themselves without getting the permission of everyone present first. Tamaki flushed bright red and if possible grew harder. Now I know Kyouya is going to do something to me for that. I just can’t decide if I really forgot the requirement or if a part of me didn’t want to remember, because being punished by Kyouya in his current mood is going to be something that I will not forget.

Kyouya stared at Tamaki for a moment more before gesturing for Tamaki to sit back and tuck his hands behind him, so as not to be tempted anymore. That done, he turned back to the scene in front of him and it was all he could do not to grab his own throbbing cock and start stroking it.

Takashi had tied up Haruhi’s other leg and she was now completely suspended in the air. She looked breathtaking, like a living work of art as she swung slightly as she wiggled her body, adjusting to the feeling. But Takashi wasn’t done, yet. After a minute of letting her wriggle and seeing the huge smile on her face as she did so, he whispered into her ear one more time. Kyouya couldn’t hear what he asked, but the flush that darkened her skin gave him a pretty good idea as did her breathless “Yes.”

With a wicked smile that Kyouya had never actually see cross Takashi’s face before, he slipped a single rope between Haruhi’s legs, nestling it tight over the thin lace of her panties, separating the folds, and pulling it taut between her ass cheeks. She gasped as the sharp sensation was different than the sensual caressing feeling he had been using earlier. It reminded her that he was in control and she was at his mercy. Only he didn’t stop there. Takashi pulled out a blindfold and tied it over Haruhi’s eyes, making her moan a little as another memory of a blindfold surfaced. Cupping her cheeks once more, he laid another soft kiss against her lips before breaking away.

Haruhi whimpered as the warmth of Takashi’s lips left hers. She was suspended, she could barely move beyond a slight wiggle and now the warmth of Takashi had left her. A faint buzzing noise intruded into her consciousness, but she couldn’t quite place the sound until it touched the rope between her legs and caused her to scream in surprise and overwhelming pleasure.

Takashi held the vibrator against the rope, adjusting the position to give her more or less stimulation as her screams faded into moans, got louder, and became full screams again. Finally knowing she was reaching her breaking point, Takashi stepped behind her, sliding one hand across her skin to rub at the hard nipple of her small breasts, while the other held the vibrator away from the rope. Saying
the words she was fast considering a command, “Cum for me, Princess.” He thrust the vibrator back directly under the rope pressed against her clit and held her body as it bucked wildly, while the orgasm washed over her in fiery waves of heat, sensation, and color, leaving her floating in a warm ocean of satisfaction.

Still floating, Haruhi could distantly feel the bindings holding her loosen, and two sets of hands sliding the rope off of her. The blindfold was removed, but Haruhi refused to open her eyes trying to hold on to the feeling as long as she could. She felt herself being picked up and cradled close in a pair of strong arms – the same arms that had tormented her and sent her flying the moments before. A giggle started low in her throat and bubbled out, soon she was laughing. The joy infectious as the others started to smile with her.

Kyouya stood and walked up to Takashi still cradling a laughing Haruhi in his arms. Smiling fondly he looked down on her and kissed lightly on the forehead. He then cupped Takashi’s cheek and laid a soft kiss on his lips before saying with honest gratitude, “Thank you for giving that to her.”

Takashi released the breath he didn’t know he was holding, at Kyouya’s words. His last fear that Kyouya would be upset disappearing. With a smile and gratitude of his own at being given the chance to live a fantasy, he replied simply. “You are welcome.”

Their exchange over Takashi carried Haruhi back over to the pillows and nestled her on his lap; just letting the energy between them help her find her center and bring her back down from where she was still flying.

Kyouya stood and watched them for a moment longer, his erection hard against the soft leather, before deciding that it was time. Turning to the blond man still sitting with his hands tucked behind his back he said in a commanding voice that sent chills through almost everyone present. “Tamaki. You broke the rules. I think it’s time for your punishment.”
“Tamaki. You broke the rules. I think it’s time for your punishment.”

The blond in question wasn’t sure if those were the sweetest words he had ever heard out of his best friend’s mouth or the most terrifying. It didn’t help that Kyoya’s tight leather pants and dragon tattoo were driving Tamaki to distraction and had been all night. Even now, as Kyoya leveled “that look” on him as he awaited Tama’s response, the blonde was still fighting his body’s reactions. His cock was hard in anticipation, but the voice of fear and self-doubt kept whispering insidious things which were undermining his confidence – especially where his best friend and the person he had been attracted to the longest were concerned.

Hani could see the struggle on his friend’s face and knew exactly what Tamaki was going through. On a few rare occasions, he had come across another Dominant that for some reason had the right kind of energy to make him want to submit. What Hani found amusing was, Kyoya seemed to be fast becoming one of those rare exceptions for him, even though the man had little experience in the BDSM world. *He’s a natural at being a Dom, the way Haruhi was a natural member of the Host Club. It’s their aura, energy, whatever hokey word you want to use to describe it, but it is a very real thing. It’s the balance. No matter how Dominant you are, there will always be at least one person you would be willing to submit to. No matter how submissive, there will always be one person you want to dominate.*

“Tamaki, are you listening?” Kyoya’s voice was still cool and full of command, but there was a slight softening of the tone, this time as if he knew some of Tamaki’s conflict.

“Ye-es.” Tamaki stuttered. The words just barely escaping his lips.

“Kyoya sir,” Hani cut in, hoping to buy his friend a bit more time. He asked respectfully as befit his role tonight, ”If I may ask, which rule did Tama-chan break? And how are you going punish him?”

Kyoya saw what Hani was trying to do and let go a small sigh of relief. He really didn’t want to make Tama do something that would cause him harm, either mentally or physically, and he really didn’t think his idea would. In fact, he had a feeling Tamaki would enjoy it very much, if he could get past the fear and ask. Hani asking for him, would give him a chance to hear it and decide if he wanted to call Red or not.

“He broke the second rule that he wasn’t supposed to touch himself, unless he asked permission from all of us first. His punishment will be to crawl over to me and beg for forgiveness. He will need to show me exactly how far he is willing to go to please me.” Kyoya casually brushed a hand over the bulge in his leather pants, before resting it on his hip, knowing Hani would understand his meaning.

A wicked smile grew on Hani’s face. *Oh that is something that Tamaki will like for sure. Hell, I want to do it too.* An idea popped in his head, one he didn’t think Kyoya wouldn’t challenge him.
on, if he worded it right. Making sure his eyes were downcast and his voice carried an apologetic tone, he said, “Sir, I must confess that Tamaki wasn’t the only one who broke that rule.”

Tamaki head whipped over to look at the other blond as he said the words, before staring up to Kyouya to see how he would react.

“Is that so Hani? When did this occur if I may ask?” Kyouya laughed quietly as he saw the mischief in Hani’s eyes even as they tried to look contrite. “We all saw you behave over the last two scenes.”

Thinking fast, Hani replied, “It was after the Andromeda scene when I was sucking on Hikaru’s fingers. He had turned to look at Haruhi and Kaoru and you were talking to Tama-chan. My back was to Takashi so he couldn’t see me and I thought I could get away with a quick stroke. I was wrong. It’s not fair for you to punish Tamaki for touching himself and not punish me too.” Lifting his eyes, he put the full force of his Lolita personality into the gaze.

Kyouya grinned. “Fair enough. You broke the rules as well and you will share the punishment. Since you broke them while you should have been paying attention to Hikaru, I think you need to beg his forgiveness.”

Hikaru threw a smoldering glance at Hani, which he returned easily.

“I will DEFINITELY show Hikaru how sorry I am and how much I want to please him.” Hani’s words held not a drop of remorse but a whole lot of undisguised heat. He faintly heard Kaoru whisper into Hikaru’s ear “Top to bottom, my twin. After this you are mine.” So that’s the way Hikachan’s Switchiness works! Top to bottom, while Kao-chan’s is obviously bottom to Top… and since Kyo-chan knew that, he also knew that basically having Hika top me for this, would have him exactly where Kao needs him later. Damn that man is devious.

Kyouya caught Hani’s eyes and saw his wink of respect. He knew Hani had grasped the game at play. Now he had to make sure Tamaki did. Turning to Tamaki he asked again. “Now that you know what is going to be required. Are you willing to accept your punishment?”

The paralysis that held Tamaki had loosened as soon as Hani had admitted to breaking the rule as well and accepted his punishment. He hadn’t missed the subtle motion of Kyouya’s hand across his groin and the desire to finally get a chance to taste his best friend overrode any fear of rejection, pain, or humiliation. Letting the lust show through his eyes, he responded. “Yes. I am.”

“Good. You may begin at any time.”

Tamaki immediately got onto his hands and knees and slowly started crawling his way across the floor to where Kyouya leaned back against the cabana, one leg crossed lazily over the other. He held his head up high and stared directly at Kyouya as he made each movement count, showing off the naturally flexible body that had made all those girls back in the Host club faint. On a whim, he decided to play the scene up to the absolute maximum and turned the full weight of his Prince-Charming-sex-god charisma on the one person he never thought would appreciate it.

Kyouya had never been on the receiving end and was stunned by the force of Tamaki’s personality. He desperately tried to maintain his cool even as he mentally apologized to all the girls he had dismissed as “silly” who had succumbed to it. Without thinking, he looked up from Tamaki and sought out Haruhi, where she was still sitting wrapped in a blanket on Takashi’s lap. Only when he met her eyes, he discovered hers were laughing at him even as they held a hint of commiseration and understanding. Seeing her grin, in a flash he realized that his lover had probably been pinned under
the full weight of a turned-on Tamaki before, while none of the others had really experienced the full intensity of the experience. How could they? Tamaki never fully let this part of his personality show. He saw her whisper the words “Enjoy it.” Taking her advice, he licked his lips and smirked down at Tamaki. *Fine, he wants to play that way... I can play his game.*

Tamaki watched as Kyoya broke his gaze first, a flash of something like panic flitting across the silver eyes so quickly, Tamaki wasn’t sure if it was really there. But when silver eyes met violet ones again, the heat was back and burning at full force, holding a challenge Tamaki was quite ready to meet.

Finally reaching the feet of the Shadow King, Tamaki sat back on his knees and looked up. “I am sorry I broke the rule you set, but I am not sorry for this. I have wanted this for far too long.” Slowly he slid his hands up the supple leather, caressing the muscles – up Kyoya’s calves, thighs, then around the sides to caress the back of his thighs and the tightly muscled ass. Just the barest hint of a smile crossed his lips as Kyoya released a breath that wasn’t quite a sigh, but definitely was something Tamaki hadn’t heard from his best friend before. Leaning forward, he pressed his face into the bulge at the front of the leather pants and slid his hands upward, letting the nails scratch lightly up Kyoya’s back, as he rubbed his face like a cat across Kyoya’s erection. “Let me pleasure you. Please. I want so badly to taste you. To run my tongue across this hardness. To feel your release against the back of my throat.”

Kyoya’s body was smoldering and Tamaki’s words flipped it into a full blaze. With a growl, he slid his hands into the silky tresses and locked them in place, pulling on the hair hard to cause the same pleasure/almost-pain sensation that Hani had done earlier that day to Haruhi. It had the same effect – Tamaki froze and a low moan escaped his lips. Unable to hold out any longer, he said roughly. “Suck me, Tamaki. I want you to make me cum.”

As if the words caused the last barrier to fall, Tamaki slid his nails hard down Kyoya’s back, ripped open the fly on the leather pants and took the erect member fully into his mouth in one swallow, causing Kyoya to gasp, throw his head back and groan loudly as the warm wetness enclosed him. He loosened his grasp on Tamaki’s hair, but kept his hands tangled in it, the silk of it against his skin just one more sensation he let himself feel. He was grateful for the cabana behind him, so he had something to lean against, otherwise Tamaki’s first assault would have dropped him to his knees, and Tamaki’s current use of his tongue and hands would have kept him there. *My gods, Tamaki has a talented tongue.* The idle thought was soon chased away by pure sensation as Tamaki, sucked, kissed, and licked his way around Kyoya’s cock and balls, causing the groaning sounds that Tamaki had been waiting a lifetime to hear.

Across the room, Hikaru wasn’t far off from Kyoya in terms of sensory overload. Hani had pressed him back into the pillows and was alternating between sucking his cock, and stroking it while he bit his way up Hikaru’s chest, leaving faint red marks where his teeth had been. He never bit hard enough to cause Hikaru to cross his pleasure/pain threshold, and as a consequence was rapidly making the younger man arch and moan into the hands and mouth that were causing him so much sensation. When Hani circled one index finger and thumb around Hikaru’s balls at the base of his cock, slowly sliding the other hand up and down the rigid member before replacing his hand with his mouth, tongue and the lightest grazing of his teeth, Hikaru nearly jumped off the floor as the scream of pleasure flew out of him. Reaching out blindly to grab Hani’s hair, he barely managed to gasp out, “Swallow me” before flooding Hani’s mouth with the force of his release.

With a smile around the hard pulsing object in his mouth, Hani obediently did so and was rewarded with Hikaru’s long slow groan, as the action of swallowing squeezed his still throbbing cock a few more times. Finally the throbbing eased and he was able to look down into the laughing eyes of the
older man as he slowly and deliberately slid his mouth off Hikaru. Taking a shaking breath, he sat up, leaned forward and kissed Hani lazily, tasting himself and the sweetness that was just naturally Hani. With a smile, he said, “If that’s how you bottom, I am damn curious to see you Top!”

Hani started laughing. “Oh, I think that can be arranged Hika-chan.” With a smile he snuggled up between Kaoru and Hikaru to finish watching Tamaki and Kyōya.

Haruhi was quite content and she cherished the feeling. She could feel the warmth of Takashi’s skin through the thin blanket and the rigidity of him under her hip. She could still feel their heartbeats in perfect time. It was a comfortable feeling, though the way he had made her feel a few minutes before could never be described as anything close to mundane or comfortable. *Takashi would be an amazing lover. He knows when to push, when to control, and how to give exactly what his partner needs, even if that partner doesn’t know it themselves. Hani is so in tune to him and vice versa. They function so perfectly together it reminds me of Hika and Kao…* Thinking of Hikaru made her turn to watch the way Hani was tormenting him. *Oh yeah, Hani is good. Hika is practically levitating. He isn’t going to be able to last much longer. She watched the way Hani circled Hikaru with his hands and the result. Hmm… I may need to remember that move. It definitely got a response out of him. She giggled as she felt the heartbeat behind her intensify and the breathing of the man holding her get a bit more labored. It got a response out of *Takashi* too. Gently she slid off of his lap, and removed the blanket from around her shoulders. Instinctively Takashi’s arms tightened around her, but when she leaned back onto his chest they relaxed again. *OK, so Taka is not quite ready to let me go, though obviously watching Hani suck Hikaru is turning him on. Not that I am complaining, I will enjoy every moment I can get with my partner.* She quickly lifted her eyes and saw that a small smile was on his face as he watched his lover with hers. But after it was obvious Hikaru was coming down from his release, Takashi focused again on Kyōya and Tamaki. *They are definitely worth watching.*

*I can’t believe how much of a turn on it is being able to watch my lovers and friends enjoy themselves. It doesn’t feel odd or wrong, it feels perfect… and Tamaki and Kyōya together are damn near perfect themselves. Like I tried to impart to Kyōya, I know exactly how it feels to be pinned by the charisma that is Tamaki at his most kingly. He is impossible to resist. But my Kyōya has his own natural ability to hold out endlessly, so it is quite entertaining to watch the battle of wills unfold. Suddenly something from the lecture earlier clicked. *Tamaki will win the battle by his submission. I understand it now. For all that Kyōya demanded it, it was Tama’s choice to respond how he did and dear gods is he giving it all to Kyōya.*

Kyōya was fast losing all control. One hand was still locked in Tamaki’s hair while the other had a death grip on the bed behind him – the only thing that kept him upright. Tamaki’s mouth had worked him to the very edge and Tama’s eyes as they stared up into his let him know Tama knew it. *Give in. Give it to me.* The violet eyes begged as the tongue did another series of swirls around Kyōya’s rock hard cock. With a growl, Kyōya lost it; shooting his load like a bullet at the back of Tamaki’s greedy mouth. His cock throbbing almost painfully at the force of it, as his heart threatened to beat its way out of his chest.

Tamaki sighed in happiness as he swallowed every drop, continuing to let his tongue slide up and down the now throbbing but still rigid member. He was determined to make Kyōya’s orgasm last for as long as he possibly could, his own hard and pulsing cock forgotten in the joy of pleasing another. After an eternity, he felt Kyōya start to soften and with a last murmur of regret, he released it, looking up to meet the silver eyes shining back at him.

Slowly Kyōya reached down and pulled Tamaki up against his chest. Hard, ready cock pressed against recently satisfied cock as Kyōya claimed Tamaki’s lips in a devastating kiss, one hand
gripping the tight ass of the blonde man and the other gently holding the back of his neck. Kyouya let all of his emotion be present in the kiss as he tasted the faint traces of the saltiness of his cum on Tamaki’s tongue. Slowly, languorously, he ended the kiss and just held the other man to his chest as his heartbeat calmed.

Tamaki was lost in the moment, lost in Kyouya’s kiss and the feel of his naked body pressed against Kyouya’s semi-nude one. As the kiss broke and the raven haired man continued to hold him, Tamaki smiled. A sense of mischievousness, stole over him as he asked, “So did I please you? Do you forgive me for touching myself?”

“Yeah. I guess you could say that.” Kyouya grinned down at his friend. “I apologize to all the women that I dismissed because they fell under your spell. I had no idea until it was turned on me. You are fucking amazing, my friend. I hope that you know that.”

Tamaki blushed as pretty much everyone else in the room agreed with Kyouya. Turning to the others, he saw them start to shift positions and get up off the cushions. Hani pouncing on Takashi and Hikaru and Kaoru linking hands. “Wait… what’s happening? Is everyone leaving?”

“Sorry Tama-chan, but if I don’t get Takashi under me soon I am going to explode. I’ll come back up tomorrow morning and clean up.” At his words, Takashi picked the smaller man up and started walking to the door rapidly, throwing a hurried ‘Goodnight’ over his shoulders at the others.

Hikaru and Kaoru walked over to where Kyouya and Tamaki still stood by the cabana. Hikaru gently pressed his lips to Kyouya, while Kaoru did the same to Tamaki. They then said in unison, “We will see you tomorrow morning.”

The men watched as the twins engulfed Haruhi the way they always used to, causing her to giggle. Both planted deep teasing kisses on her before they gave her a saucy grin and started walking away, wiggling their butts at her as they did so. With a sassy smile, Haruhi smacked Hikaru’s ass, while Kaoru grinned at her. She said with a wink, “See you tomorrow loves!”

Tamaki looked at the two remaining people and panicked. He knew that they also were ready to go to bed, but he wasn’t ready to end the night… alone and with only his hand to release the pressure that had been held in check all night.

Haruhi saw the emotions rushing across Tamaki’s face. Slanting a questioning glance at Kyouya she smiled as he nodded in response. Walking up to her ex-boyfriend, she caressed a hand up his chest and asked, “Tama, what’s wrong?”

Tamaki leaned into the caress and looked down at the small woman in front of him. Realizing she was still topless and her nipples were reacting to their closeness, he stammered a bit as he responded. “I don’t want the night to end… I… I don’t want to be alone tonight.”

“Then come with Kyouya and me. Stay with us tonight.”

Blinking in astonishment, he asked, “What? Are you sure? I don’t want to intrude and I don’t want to be there if you are only feeling sorry for me. It sounds bad, I know, but I have wanted to be with you both so badly for so long and it will break me if you are only being kind and humoring me. I would rather just stay alone.”

Kyouya stepped behind Tamaki and drew him back against his chest, while Haruhi stepped closer, closing the last of the distance and winding her arms around Tamaki’s neck. With a purr against his lips and the grinding of her lace clad hips against his cock, she whispered. “Not a pity fuck, I promise you. I have missed you, more than I wanted to admit, watching you and Kyouya together
tonight brought it home. I want you both, tonight and for as long as I can have you.” Stretching up, she closed the difference between their lips and teased his with her tongue, before slipping it inside his mouth, while Kyouya laid small bites up and down Tamaki’s neck to show his full compliance with her words. Pulling back slightly she said in a low tone, she knew that Tamaki adored, “Now as I see it, Kyouya just had an orgasm that blew his mind. You on the other hand have been so very patient and so very hard all night long without any release. What do you say to finding that release in me? I know I have cum, but I haven’t had a hard cock in me at all tonight. I want to come one last time. Will you help me with that?”

“Dear gods, yes. Yes. YES. Whenever, wherever you need.” Tamaki let his love for her shine in his eyes. “Your wish is my command Princess.”

“Your wish is OUR command.” Kyouya corrected with a smile and led them both downstairs to Haruhi’s room, where a soft bed waited.
The early morning winter sunlight filtering through the window woke Tamaki, but he refused to open his eyes. Instead, he let his other senses explore. He could feel the warm softness of the girl he thought he had lost as she cuddled into his chest, bare breasts pressed across his abdomen, one leg draped over his, her head cradled in the hollow of his shoulder. He could smell her strawberry shampoo, body wash and the faintest traces of sex still lingering on her skin. He could feel the weight of the arm of the man he never expected to have, as it lay across her slight body and across his chest, his leg the one pushing hers forward, his foot resting on Tamaki’s ankle. I can just make out the barest traces of Kyouya’s cologne. It’s the one I got for him for his birthday last year. It smells so good on him. He breathed deeper trying to memorize all the smells; imprint the feeling of the two naked bodies pressing on his. Gods. Last night… Start to finish – just incredible. His mind flitted through the conversations, his spanking Kaoru, crawling to Kyouya, and finally lingered on the image of Haruhi above him, sliding down his cock, rocking her hips and taking him deep, the way she knew he loved. Kyouya behind her, leaving kisses and small bites down her neck and back, while his hands met with Tama’s on her small firm breasts. The feel of his release and hers as the tightest muscles inside her worked him relentlessly, her voice calling out his name; the weight of two people collapsing across his chest as he tried to find his breath and calm the heart that was threatening to race out of his chest. The memory of the night caused another organ to rise, hard and ready, eager for a repeat. What was it that Haruhi said the other morning? Something about my being hornier than hell in the morning, I think. She’s right though. It’s not even four hours since the last time and I want them again. I just don’t want to wake them. They need the sleep. A voice that sounded suspiciously like his grandmother burrowed its way into his head. Who says they would want you again even if they didn’t need the sleep. You aren’t worth their love. Kyouya has loved her as long as you have. You knew that and still you pursued her. Then - You let her go. Why does it surprise you that she went to him or to Hikaru? They were honest in their pursuit. They adapted to meet her needs. You just walked away.

A single tear leaked out of the corner of his still closed eyes and the organ so hard only moments before, slackened. That isn’t true. Tamaki directed his thoughts against the voice that had pushed him down for so long. Haruhi and I both were in the wrong place to make it work. We have both changed and because of the break-up we are both stronger people. We are more sure of what we want and we are willing to say it now. If we had stayed together, none of this weekend would have been possible. Slowly Tamaki became aware of a small hand tracing circles on his chest, above his heart. A stronger hand traced softly up and down his thigh. Letting himself enjoy the comfort, he cracked open his eyes, to see both silver and chocolate eyes watching him, letting the love they felt for him shine through.

Haruhi leaned up and kissed away the trail left by the tear. “Don’t let her voice win.”

Startled, he blinked at them in surprise. How did they know?

“The two of us know you better than anyone else, remember?” Kyouya’s voice was gentle. “We know your fears and we know when the voice of your grandmother is trying to belittle you. We won’t let it.” Kyouya gently climbed over both of them so they were bracketing Tamaki. “You are worth so much more than she gives you credit for. Let us show you.”

Another tear slipped down, but this one wasn’t made of despair.

“Tama-love,” Haruhi whispered in his ear as she kissed it away again. “What do you want in this
moment? Tell us. What do you need? You can tell us. No judgment. Just love.”

Taking a deep breath, Tamaki said shakily, “I want to be in the middle of you both. I want to feel you, Haruhi underneath me, as Kyouya takes me from behind. I don’t want to lose your love.” The last came out as a whisper.

“Our love is not easily lost once it has been earned, and you have earned it countless times over, mon ami. But as for the other, I definitely think that can be arranged.” Kyouya smiled wicked as he moved his hand from Tamaki’s thigh to the member rapidly regaining its strength and loomed over his as he pressed his lips against Tamaki’s.

Haruhi leaned over and pressed her lips in as well, in a three-way kiss that was awkward for only a moment before slipping into something organic and sensual. Three tongues teased each other, before sliding down jawlines and returning to press again against soft lips. Hands roamed freely as well, caressing, teasing, tormenting until the three bodies could not resist anymore. Latex slid onto two erect members, a slight moan from two mouths as the tightness amplified the hardness. Lubed fingers slid into Tamaki and stretched him open. A pillow was placed under Haruhi’s hips to lift them higher, knees falling open to reveal the warm wetness waiting. With a groan Tamaki slid deep into Haruhi causing an answering moan in her. Within a heartbeat it was Kyouya’s turn to groan as he slid into the almost unbearable tightness of Tamaki’s ass, working himself in as deep as his body would allow. Tamaki’s moan at being entered was captured by Haruhi’s lips as she arched up on her elbows to meet him. Slowly the three of them found a rhythm that enflamed the desire. Where the previous night’s activities had been about lust, this rhythm was about love and a deeper friendship that couldn’t be easily dismissed. Tamaki gave himself up to the energy and let go of all his doubts. As their climax built, Tamaki came first the double sensation having pushed him over the edge. Haruhi came a heartbeat later, her inner walls gripping Tamaki’s cock as it rippled around him. With a last grunt, Kyouya pushed into Tamaki and let himself go – collapsing on the two people underneath him, cock still buried and his breath labored.

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Hikaru had woken up with Kaoru cuddled on top of him. He smiled as he remembered the way Kao had topped him last night - carelessly, frantically and with a need that had quickly escalated into the kind of mind-numbing sex that left them both dripping with sweat and thoroughly satisfied. Lightly stroking his nails down his twin’s back, he heard Kao hiss slightly in pain when his nails slid across the meat of Kao’s ass. Worried for a moment he looked down into the golden eyes that mirrored his own and asked, “How are you feeling?”

“Glorious.” Kaoru replied with a smile. “Tamaki did a good job on my ass last night. I really am going to feel every welt today.”

Hikaru grinned. “So my darling masochistic twin, you do realize that we are walking the red carpet tonight. You are going to have to hide the bruises from mother.” He rolled Kao over and really looked at the other man’s ass. He let out a long slow whistle as he took in the amount of damage. Kaoru’s ass was nearly purple and had hard red welts crisscrossing it. “Wow. Damn. I have never seen you take that much.”

“Because my darling brother, you don’t like to inflict pain as much as I like to receive it.” Kaoru kissed his twin lightly to convey there was no sting or hidden meaning in his words. “I loved every moment and I actually begged Tamaki to hit me hard enough so I would feel it today. He took me at my word. Only I don’t think he actually realized how far he went. I am just a teensy bit worried that he is going to freak out when he sees what he did. He got lost in the moment. I could have stopped
him, but honestly, I didn’t want to.”

The grin on Kaoru’s face as he was talking went a long way to easing his Hikaru’s fears, still he added, “We may be able to ask Hani and Takashi if they have any more of that salve. It seemed to work well last night.”

“We can do that. The sun is up, which means that unless they REALLY hit it hard last night, they will be up. Shall we go pay them a visit? Maybe I could get Hani to rub it in.” Kaoru grinned as he remembered the way Hikaru practically floated under the hands and tongue of the older blond.

At the mention of Hani’s hands, Hikaru had a visible reaction – his cock hardened and goose bumps appeared on his chest. He glared at Kao who laughed at his obvious lust. Unable to hold the stern expression, he giggled. “Watch it Kao. If you think Tamaki was punishing, I have a feeling Hani would be 10 times harsher. So sweet and innocent to look at 99% of the time, and with one glance able to make you want to drop to your knees in front of him and do whatever he wishes.” He idly stroked his cock. “Seriously, for all that I was supposed to be in control last night, he did exactly as he wanted with me and I enjoyed every fucking moment. He is too Dom for me to really Top, though Kyouya may be able to manage it.”

“Now that would be fun to watch. Your lover is seriously hot, too bad he’s just Dom and not really sadistic. I would totally let him punish me.”

“Kyouya’s idea of punishment would be to make you do research or type in data for one of his reports.” Hikaru giggled.

Kaoru groaned. “Ugh. You are probably right. So why are you in love with him then? No fun at all.”

“Kao are you blind? The man is practically a god. He’s so sexy it makes me ache and his kiss turns me into mush. Plus that whole stern-professor-melt-you-with-a-look thing just flat out does it for me. I started out wanting to corrupt him and now I think he may have corrupted me.” Hikaru fake-whispered with a slightly embarrassed look, “For the love of gods, don’t tell Kyouya, but I actually enjoyed writing up a marketing plan for Tamaki and Suoh Guest House.”

Kaoru fell back on the bed laughing hard and unable to stop, while Hikaru watched him with a grin as he slid on a pair of workout pants. It took Kao rolling over and a twinge of pain to recall him to his senses. Moving gingerly, Kaoru took the pair of pajama bottoms that Hika handed to him and slid them on. Reaching out his hand, Hikaru said with a smile, “Shall we go find the others?”

Still giggling at Hikaru’s confession, Kaoru took his twin’s hand and they left the room.
After a quick shower, the twins set off to look for Hani and Takashi. Just as they had expected, Hikaru and Kaoru found them upstairs not in the dojo, as they had half expected, but in the Conservatory. They had obviously finished cleaning up from the night before since everything was back to its original place and there was no evidence of any debauchery from the night before. No evidence, that is, except for Hani wrapped up in rope, suspended from the same anchor point that had held Haruhi, giggling as he swung himself back and forth by shifting his weight. Takashi just stood by on the side and watched him with a tender smile.

Not wanting to interrupt what appeared to be a private moment between the two, the twins started to walk away, but Takashi caught their eyes and gestured for them to come closer. Quietly, so as not to disturb Hani, they did so; smiles growing across their faces as the obvious joy that Hani felt in being suspended spread to them.

A few minutes later, Hani opened his eyes and looked at Takashi. Seeing that the twins were there next to him, Hani giggled, “Oh Hi! Sorry, just hanging around.”

Hikaru laughed. “No worries, we didn’t want to interrupt, but we were wondering if you had any more of that cream you handed to Tamaki to use on Kao last night.”

“Of course,” Hani answered before directing his next statement to his lover. “Takashi, if you could let me down, please?”

“Of course.” With a few deft moves, Takashi supported Hani’s weight, lowered him to the ground, and began unwinding the rope from him.

As Takashi was working, Hani turned his head back to Kaoru, “I wondered if you might need it again this morning. It was a really intense scene and both of you and Tamaki were feeding off the other’s energy. Which is good… but I have to admit I was about ready to step in, because neither of you have much experience with BDSM yet, and I know it’s possible to get lost in the experience and do actual damage without meaning too.”

“Umm… yeah. I think that may have happened,” Kaoru said shifting his weight as the bruising on his ass became increasingly uncomfortable. “I did tell Tama that I wanted to feel it today and I loved every glorious moment of the experience, but I have to admit that I am hurting more than I like. Especially since tonight is the Fashion Week red carpet and I am supposed to be escorting Mom and Renge. I kind of don’t want them to know about this part of me just yet. I don’t want to hide it, but I don’t think it’s the right time to mention it. Does that make sense?” Kaoru turned a faint pink and unconsciously reached a hand out to Hikaru for support. He was reassured by the love he felt in their bond.

“Absolutely makes sense,” Hani said supportively. “Just know that Takashi and I support you both and will do anything we can to help or to ease the way.”

“Agreed.” Takashi said. The friendship he felt obvious in his charcoal eyes.

“Thank you. That really means a lot to both of us. We both feel the same,” Hikaru replied letting the honesty come through in his voice.
They all smiled sappily at each other for a few moments, before Hani said briskly, “Takashi, please grab the cream from my bag. Kao, if you would remove your pants and lie down on your stomach on the cabana, I want to see how much damage we are looking at.”

Both quickly did as they were told. Hikaru climbed up on the bed next to his brother and held his hand. Hani leaned over and with a clinical detachment, inspected the bruising and welts on Kaoru’s butt and upper thighs. After a moment he said, “Good news and bad news – which do you want first?”

Gripping Hika’s hand tightly he said, “give me the bad.”

“You are definitely going to be bruised for at least a week and it will probably be uncomfortable to sit for at least 3 days. Good news – There isn’t any permanent damage, the welts are already fading, and the cream and some ibuprofen will help alleviate some of the pain. Also – your ass is awesome.” Hani said the last with a wink to try to make the younger man smile.

Kaoru laughed as Hikaru said, “Well I could have told you that!”

Hani laughed with them both before adding. “We should rub some of this cream in though. Do you mind if I do it or would you prefer Hika-chan or Takashi?”

“I don’t mind if you rub it in,” Kaoru answered.

“Okey-dokey.” With that comment, Hani scooped out a fair sized dollop and rubbed it between his hands before slowly massaging it into the muscles. He worked methodically - covering every place that showed evidence of bruising as Kaoru tried to stifle his moans. Finally out of curiosity he asked, “Does it hurt or is it feeling good?”

“Both.” Kaoru blushed as he tried to stifle another moan into the mattress.

Hani giggled, “Yeah, you definitely are a masochist. Not that I am trying to flirt or come on to you, but just for informational purposes, especially after everything you learned yesterday and saw last night… If you want to explore more in a safe environment, let me know. Takashi can endure pain if it pleases me or if it was earned in a fight, but he doesn’t have the same ability to turn pain to pleasure that you do. It’s also perfectly ok if you don’t want to do so. I just wanted to give you an option.”

“I was actually thinking about that a little bit this morning,” Kaoru responded. “I think I would like to explore more of the scene and I know I would be safe with you. But it is going to have to wait until after Fashion Week. There is still so much that has to be done for it.”

“Of course! Whenever you are ready and not before,” Hani said with a smile. “There. I think I have it all rubbed in and you should start feeling better soon. I would suggest reapplying it before you walk the red carpet. The cream is non-greasy so it shouldn’t stain any of your clothes. Your ass will look gnarly though for a few days, so you might want to make sure you aren’t naked in front of people who don’t know or come up with a really spectacular story like you fell while trying to rescue a trapped puppy on a snow skiing trip to the Alps.”

Kaoru giggled as stretched gingerly, expecting searing pain and was pleasantly surprised to find only a minor discomfort. “While I like that story, the details will be exhausting to remember especially since everyone knows I have been in Paris all this week. I will just avoid being naked with people I don’t know well.”
“Probably the smarter idea. It would be a hard sell any way.”

A thought crossed Kaoru’s mind which made him blanche slightly. Hikaru saw the mild look of panic in his twin’s eyes and asked, “What is it Kao? What’s wrong?”

“Tamaki. Since we have been sharing a bed most of this week, it will seem odd if I suddenly stop and I really don’t want to. But I know he is going to freak out when he sees what he did. I asked for it, begged for it, but we all know him well enough to know that he really doesn’t like hurting people and I am afraid that the bruising will make him feel like he went too far and blame himself.”

“Takashi and I can be there as a buffer for questions, if you like. We actually should check on him, anyway because his hand and arm ARE going to be sore after the workout he gave them last night. The cream should help with that too, actually.”

“What is that cream exactly?” Hikaru asked curiously as Kaoru nodded his thanks to Hani.

“It’s a secret Morinouzouka family blend,” Takashi answered. “Our families have been using it for generations to aid in healing and relieve muscle pain after a strenuous fight.”

“It is amazing.” Kaoru breathed a sigh of relief as he slipped his pants back on. “Thank you!”

“Our pleasure Kao-chan. Now shall we go find Tamaki?”

“If I am remembering Kyouya’s expression last night right, I bet you will find both Tamaki and Kyouya in Haruhi’s room.” Hikaru grinned.

Unable to stop his question, Hani asked curiously, “You aren’t jealous about that Hika-chan? Once you would have been…”

“Once upon a time, I definitely would have been… Now, I just want to see if I can catch them doing something, so I can watch. Both are so sexy when they are ready to cum.”

The devilish look on Hikaru’s face made them all laugh as they left the Conservatory and started down the stairs.

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Much to Hika’s disappointment Kyouya, Haruhi, and Tamaki had already finished by the time the four of them made it into the room. In fact, they had all gotten up, showered, and were in the process of getting dressed when the others entered the room.

“Damn.”

The disappointment in Hikaru’s voice was evident as Haruhi walked out of the bathroom in her workout gear. She walked up to him immediately and gave him a lingering good morning kiss before asking curiously, “Damn? Damn what?”

He grinned at her and responded, “Damn not getting here soon enough to see you, Kyo, and Tamaki all naked and tangled up in the sheets.”

“You have to wake up earlier for that lover,” Kyouya grinned back at him before also pulling him
into his arms for a kiss.

“Did the Shadow King, known to be a dragon and flay alive any who happen to breathe in his
general direction before noon, just chastise me for not getting up early enough?” Hikaru teased.

“You and Haru are rubbing off on me. I am sure I will go back to sleeping in late and being grumpy
when I don’t have you both to wake up to.” Kyoya responded, “However, until that horrible time
two weeks in the future, you will have to get used to a chipper Shadow King.”

“Aaaand… the world just turned on its head,” Kaoru teased while the others laughed.

“So now that everyone is here, what is the schedule for the day?” Haruhi asked as she climbed back
onto the freshly made bed and motioned for the others to join her. She noticed Kaoru’s slight wince
as he sat down carefully.

“Sex, sex, more sex, and then the three of us watching the four of you get mobbed by the
paparazzi?” Tamaki joked as he rotated his arm slowly, just now aware of the ache that worked its
way down his arm. “Ow!”

“Tama-chan your limitless morning horniness aside, we actually figured your arm would be sore this
morning and wanted to know if you needed anymore of the cream you used last night. Also, I know
Kao-chan wanted to talk about something with you.”

“I would love more of that cream. That stuff was amazing.” Turning to Kao he asked curiously,
“What did you want to talk about mon ami? Or would you rather talk in private?”

“No. Here is fine. There isn’t anything that I would have a problem with the others knowing or
seeing,” Kaoru started as Hani sat down on one side of him and Hikaru moved to be on the other.
Takashi moved behind Tamaki to start rubbing the cream into his arm. Taking a deep breath, Kaoru
said, his eyes never leaving Tamaki’s “You know I had an incredible time with you last night
spanking me, right?”

Tamaki blushed slightly, “I hoped so. I’m not really used to spanking people, so I don’t know if I did
it right or not. I hope I didn’t get too carried away.”

“Actually, I remember telling you to make me feel it today and you succeeded.”

“Oh… Sorry!”

“That’s just it. I don’t want you sorry for it. I really really wanted it and I never told you to stop.”

Tamaki winced as Takashi worked the cream down his arm and into his hand. Suddenly looking at it
in surprise, he noted that there were faint bruises developing on his fingers. In confusion he held out
the hand to Hani.

“Yes, Tama-chan, you actually bruised your hand and arm while spanking Kao last night. Your hand
isn’t too bad and will fade in a few hours, but your arm might be sore for a day or so.”

“That’s just unreal,” Tamaki said still puzzled by the bruises, staring at them wonderingly.

“Yes… well… ummm… your arm isn’t the only thing that’s bruised. I just wanted to let you know
before you saw it and freaked out.” Kaoru said his eyes focused at a spot on the bed about a foot in
front of Tamaki.

“How bruised are you?”
“Ummmm…,” Taking a deep breath, Kaoru climbed off the bed, turned around and dropped his pants.

“OH MY GODS!!! I AM SO SO SORRY!! I HAD NO IDEA!!!” The panic in Tamaki’s voice was enough to make Kaoru hastily pull his pants back up and turn around to face his friend to reassure him.

“Tama! Please!! Don’t!!” Kaoru rushed over and grabbed Tamaki’s hand before the other man could do anything and pressed it to his heart. “I know it looks really bad right now, but please, please, remember that I asked you for it. I ASKED for it. You were only doing what I wanted. It’s going to be fine, I swear!!”

“But but but… I hurt you – really, really badly!! How can you even look at me, let alone forgive me?”

“Tamaki,” Kaoru reached up and made the violet eyes look into his own golden ones as he replied, “I asked you to do this. I love the fact that you did this. My body turns pain into pleasure, remember. I wasn’t feeling the pain in the moment; I was flying. Today I am sore, I will admit that, but I wouldn’t trade it for the world. I mean it.”

Slowly Kaoru could see the panic start to recede in Tamaki’s eyes, though the uncertainty still lingered. Helpless as what to say to convince him, Kaoru looked to Hani.

“Tama-chan, Kao-chan is right. It really does look worse than it is. He was really enjoying himself last night. All of us here can confirm that. You didn’t do anything wrong – in fact, you actually did something very right.”

Startled Tamaki looked over at Hani. “What do you mean?”

“You gave Kao-chan exactly what he needed last night and you didn’t judge him for asking for something that was outside most of society’s comfort zone. I promise you, Tama-chan, it is a gift and a rare one. He asked and you answered his need. Can you understand that?”

Tamaki looked over at Haruhi and Kyouya as Hani’s words reminded him of his own earlier that morning. Both Haruhi and Kyouya gave me what I needed this morning without questioning or judging me for the need. Is it so different in Kaoru’s case? Did I mean to bruise him that much? No. Would I have kept going if he asked me to stop? Absolutely Not. Did I even once consider that Kao was wanting something wrong or immoral? No. Did I do what Kao asked of me? Yes. At this moment, after seeing the aftermath, do I think that Kao is messed up for wanting it? No. No I don’t. It’s a part of him and he trusted me enough to be the one he let his guard down for. I can see how in a way it was a gift… on both our parts actually, he gave me the gift of his absolute trust and I gave him exactly what he craved.

Taking a shaky breath Tamaki answered Hani’s question, “Yes. Yes I think I can.” He crawled over and kissed Kaoru lightly. “I am honored that you trusted me enough to let me do that to you.”

“I am honored that you did it for me.” Kaoru kissed him back. The others remained silent as they watched the forgiveness pass between the two.

“I don’t know how everyone else feels,” Haruhi said quietly not wanting to spoil the mood, “but I thought last night was simply amazing. Doing all of those things, watching all of those things, it was scary and exciting, so incredibly sexy and satisfying at the same time. I just wanted all of you to know that and that I love all of you so much in so many ways. I never imagined that I would be here or that you all would change my life so dramatically. Now that I am living it, I can’t imagine my life
without all of you in it in some way. I know you will all find others to be with in the future, but I really hope that we can at least remain close friends for the rest of our lives.”

“Giving up on us already, love?” Kyouya teased her gently as he pulled her into both his and Hikaru’s arms. “I promise you that neither I nor Hika will find someone that we love more than you.”

“If anything, you will be the one kicking us to the curb as my brattiness and Kyouya’s detachment finally cause you to snap.” Hikaru added with a smile. “We will drive you to absolute distraction and we will enlist the help of every person in this room. Just watch!”

Haruhi giggled a bit at Hikaru’s words.

“If Hika is going to hang around you forever, then I guess that means I HAVE to too,” Kaoru rolled his eyes, but exaggerated his tone to show he was joining in on the joke.

“You are our student, so you are forever linked to the Haninozouka and Morinozouka family lines. The only student we have ever personally taken on together, as a matter of fact. You can’t get rid of us, that easily. Our families will hunt you down if you ever disappear.” Hani grinned.

“Or disown us, if WE do. You have met my sister.” Takashi added with a soft smile.

“Pffft,” Tamaki said with a wave of his hands, “I jumped off first a cliff and then a bridge for you. Do you seriously think that you can get rid of me that easily?”

Finally the giggles burst as the absurdity of her statement hit her and she looked at the cheesy grins on all of her friends’ faces. Wanting to prolong the silliness for a bit longer she said flippantly and with a laugh, “So does that mean I am dating everyone now?”

“You know… that IS an interesting idea…” The words come out in Kyouya’s cool tone.
Six heads whipped around and stared incredulously at Kyouya. Haruhi's heart skipped a beat. *Did he really just say that? What does he mean? I know I am officially dating two men and now may be occasionally sleeping with another, but could I really be comfortable dating all six of them?*

"What exactly do you mean Kyo-chan?" Hani asked carefully.

"Hikaru said something earlier this week that I have been thinking about off and on for the last few days. Based on how much the intimacy has evolved between all seven of us, it would be logical to continue to explore the curiosities and desires that we all seem to be feeling, as long as everyone is comfortable with the idea. Once we return to Japan, we will be required to return to a much stricter sense of formality which will make opportunities to explore without observation much rarer." Kyouya looked into the faces of his friends and saw their expressions still bordered on shock, though Hikaru and Hani's faces also held contemplation. However, no one said anything. Feeling a faint blush creep up his skin, he continued awkwardly, "Haruhi, Hikaru, and Kaoru still have five more months of school until they graduate, which means they will HAVE to maintain all appropriate decorum publically or risk being kicked out of Ouran. Thankfully, the Hitachiian family is probably considered the most progressive and liberal of the aristocratic families, due to their strong artistic heritage, even as they are still well respected for their shrewdness in business. I know the Morinozouka and Haninozouka families have a strong ethical and moral code that they follow, though it seems to be slightly more adaptable than that of the Ootori family. I know I am already being constantly watched and reported on to my father. He already strongly disapproves that I am willing to allow Haruhi to date Hikaru. After tonight, I fully expect a confrontation with him in the relatively near future." Kyouya took a deep breath and finished his thought, "I am actually far more prepared for that now, than I ever expected to be, mostly because of everything that has happened between all of us this week. It may be slightly selfish of me to ask or appear slightly desperate, but I want to take these weeks and be free, while I still can."

The vulnerability in Kyouya's voice, having never been heard by most of the others, stuck them all deeply. Haruhi wrapped her arms around her boyfriend, while both Hikaru and Tamaki grabbed one of Kyouya's hands, squeezing gently. After a moment Hikaru said gently, "I will help you experience anything you want, need, or secretly desire." He wiggled his eyebrows suggestively at Kyouya to make him smile. "I am curious though about what I said that started this idea in the first place."

Kyouya smiled at his lover and said, "It was when we were at the Sushi restaurant and you made the random comment that it was the first time we had ever really spent any time alone together. It made me think that the same probably goes for everyone else, since we generally do everything as a group. When Haruhi made the comment about dating everyone, it sparked the thought that we could all 'date' each other this week by spending some time each day in pairs with one group of three."

"I understand what you are saying, Kyo-love, and I think it's a great idea. It lets us all dig deeper into our friendships." Haruhi smiled up at her boyfriend.

"And if we all agree to be completely honest about our actions, what we are feeling, and what we might secretly be fantasizing about, we could find that there is someone in the group willing to help make it happen in a safe, loving way." Kaoru added. "For example – I really do want to explore more of my masochistic bottom side…"

"Which Takashi and I can help you with," Hani answered. "While I have something that I have never admitted to anyone but Takashi, but Hika-chan and Kao-chan might be willing to help me
"Of course we would," the twins chorused. "But what is it?"

Blushing Hani said, "I want to keep it a secret for now and maybe do a big reveal to everyone, if we all decide to 'date' each other this week. If we decide not to, I promise to share it by next weekend."

"That's fair," Haruhi said, giving her Sensei a gentle smile and wink, "though our curiosity might kill us."

"Tamaki, Takashi, what do you both think of the idea?" Kyouya asked.

"I like it a lot actually," Tamaki answered. "But what would be the limits or rules. I don't want anyone to feel jealous or left out. I really don't want to hurt our friendships in any way."

"I agree," Takashi said quietly, "But so far, nothing we have done this week has hurt our friendships, only made them stronger. We haven't judged anyone, yet, for anything that they have wanted to do; we have talked openly with each other about everything and made it happen."

"I have to admit I really like the idea of spending a day alone with each of you," Haruhi said with a hint of embarrassment in her tone. "Not that I am complaining about being surrounded by a group of sexy men all the time, I promise." She giggled. "I am not even sure I would know how to act with just one person anymore. But since I have had fantasies about each of you before Tamaki and I ever started dating - let alone Kyo, Hika, and I - I am curious. I also suspect that my darling lovers have had similar fantasies, though they might not have admitted it before. I want them to be able to experience everything they desire too." Letting her breath out in a slight sigh, she added. "Plus Kyo is right about what will have to happen when we get back to Japan. I want to experience everything while I still can."

"Then let's do it!" Hani grinned. "We still have some activities that have to happen for Fashion Week including the Red Carpet tonight and your Aikido testing on Tuesday..."

A look of panic flashed across Haruhi's face, "I thought that was next week. No... You are right it's this week. I just am really nervous about it. I don't want to disappoint you or Taka."

Takashi leaned over and laid a swift kiss on her forehead. "You won't disappoint us. I promise." He exchanged a look with Hani, who nodded. "In fact, I was debating making you an offer, but I wasn't sure how to bring it up before and I didn't want to offend or make either Kyouya or Hikaru jealous. But there is a small monastery just outside of Paris that I was thinking about visiting. They are a sect that focuses on different types of meditation practices and energy exchange. If you like, we could go there tomorrow and spend the day doing yoga and practicing your routines."

Haruhi looked at her lovers, who smiled back at her. Kyouya answered the unspoken question, "After having watched the way you two share energy together, I think that is a great idea. It would be good for both of you, I suspect." He leaned over and kissed her briefly on the lips before whispering in her ear. "I know he loves you in his own way as you do to him. The beauty you create when you are together is breathtaking. You share energy in a way I can't with you. Don't be afraid of it. Embrace it and let it help you through the testing. I will still be here for you, I swear." Saying louder to the group, "I was actually trying to find a way to steal Tamaki away for a bit, since there is something that I wanted to discuss with him. I can spend Monday with him, as long as he doesn't mind, that is."

"I am all yours, mon ami," Tamaki said with a grin and a wink. "Any way you want me, in fact."
The others laughed at Tamaki’s outrageous comment and attempt to lighten the mood.

"Which leaves us Hani in our hands," Hikaru said mischievously. "We get to learn the secret first!"

"You may not want to do it Hika-chan," Hani warned.

Kaoru looked over at the other blond, "Yes we will. Trust us."

"Oh that I do, or I wouldn't have brought it up in the first place," Hani answered. "So now that tomorrow is set, what is the plan for the rest of the day?"

"Weeeelll… The make-up artist and hair-stylist is going to be here at 3pm. We need to leave for the Louvre by 5:15pm to make the Red Carpet." Hikaru responded.

"Renge will be coming over at 2:30 and getting ready here. We will pick up Mom on the way. The plan was we would all ride in the limo, but when we get there – mom, Renge, Hika, Kyouya, Haruhi, and I will get out at the red carpet. The driver will then take Tama, Hani and Takashi over to the VIP entrance, where they will head to the Hitachiian box. All of us will join them there after going through the paparazzi and pomp to watch the event." Kaoru finished.

"I am sorry that all of you can't walk the carpet with us," Hikaru said apologetically.

"Oh don't be," Tamaki said, while Hani gave a visible shudder. "I HATE being in that kind of limelight and it looks like both Takashi and Hani agree with me. We all want to support you both, but I am much happier doing it from the box."

"Agreed." Takashi said with obvious relief.

"OK. The afternoon is scheduled," Kyouya looked at his watch. "It's 10:15, what do we want to do for the next five hours?"

A huge grin spread across Haruhi's face. "How about a little tactical training?"

Puzzled, Kyouya said, "What do you mean, love?"

Gesturing to the window, where all of the Host Club members could see the snow drifts laying pristine on the gardens of the Suoh estate, Haruhi said eagerly, "Snowball fight!"

"Oh Haru-chan, you are ON!"

Ten minutes later all seven of the Hosts were bundled up against the cold and running out the door from the Ballroom onto the back patio. Quickly rules and teams were set up Haruhi, Hani, and Takashi against Tamaki, Kyouya, Hikaru and Kaoru. They determined that it would be a "capture the flag" style of game.

"But what do we want to use as flags?" Haruhi asked.

"I have an idea!" Kaoru said mischievously, "Be right back." He ran back inside the house. Within two minutes he came back down with two items hidden behind his back. Adopting a formal air, he bowed to Takashi and handed over the item to be used as the team flag for Hani, Haruhi, and Takashi.

"HEY! That's my underwear!" Haruhi blustered as she recognized the scrap of lacy pink in Takashi's hands, while he blushed hotly once he realized what he was holding.
"It's incentive for the other team to capture." Kaoru said while giving her a wink. "All of us are pervy enough to want to steal your panties."

"When we win them, I think you are going to have to parade around in them, just for us," Hikaru taunted.

"And when we win, I am going to make you do the same," Haruhi replied with a smirk as Hikaru blushed and the others wolf-whistled.

"And for the other team's flag - something we ALL have been dying to get our hands on for the last three years… Kyouya's Notebook!"

"Hey! Where did you find that? It's private. I don't want it to get wet. Give it here." Kyouya demanded as Kaoru danced around him holding it just out of reach.

"Don't worry; I also brought a plastic bag to put it in, so it doesn't get damaged." Kaoru laughed as he demonstrated. "I figured the notebook is also something that all of us wouldn't mind getting our hands on. If only to find out what the elusive Kyouya was writing about all those years."

Kyouya glared. "If it gets ruined, I am coming after you."

"Deal." Kaoru grinned impishly. "Ok. Are we set? Boundaries are the walkways. First team to capture the other team's flag wins. On the count of three, we will run to opposite sides and set down our flags. After that it is game on… One… Two… Three!"

The count had barely crossed Kaoru's lips before Takashi was off like a jack rabbit to place the flag on a hedge that was peeking out from the snow, visible to the other team. Kaoru followed suit quickly and placed the notebook on a similar hedge on the opposite side of the area. Meanwhile, Hani and Haruhi split off to take up offensive positions, while Takashi set up a defensive position around the flag. On the other team, Tamaki was put as the guard over the notebook, while the others started to form a ready supply of snowballs.

The first snowball to make contact, hit Kyouya square in the chest. Looking up, he saw Haruhi laughing and scooping up snow to form another. Adjusting his glasses, he quickly formed a snowball and with a war cry, chased after her, tossing it midway. Haruhi however was too quick and dodged out of the way before it could hit, taunting him the entire time.

Soon enough there were snowballs filling the air as all the hosts pelted each other and chased each other down laughing the whole way. Very quickly the ground became a maze of trampled paths as each team tried to approach the other's flag but were turned away by a barrage of fluffy white powder.

After about forty-five minutes of it looking like Team Hani might win the battle by using strategy rather than numbers, but Team Kyouya had a trick up their collective sleeve and used their sneakiness in a blitz attack on Haruhi. Kaoru and Hikaru snuck up behind her as she prepared another volley to lob at Tamaki. Picking her up, Hikaru tossed her over his shoulder and started running back to his flag, Kaoru behind tossing snowballs at Hani who had run after her instinctively. This left Takashi alone to deal with both Kyouya and Tamaki throwing snowballs at him, but he wasn't quick enough with forming them to be able to keep up. For every one he got in, Tamaki and Kyouya had two on him. They started edging closer to the flag, all the while pelting Takashi.

Haruhi wiggled enough on Hikaru's shoulder, that she was able to off balance him, and they both fell laughing into a snow bank. Seeing how close she was to their flag, she started to run to it, dodging the snowballs Kao and Hika threw at her. Hani seeing that she didn't need rescuing and might, in fact
be on her way to winning the game, turned back to Takashi and realized the trick that the others had played on them. By distracting Hani with Haruhi's abduction, Team Kyouya had launched an attack on the flag. Immediately, he started making his way back to his lover, but it was too late. With a triumphant yell, Tamaki snatched the lacy pink panties off the hedge as Takashi ducked away from a snowball thrown by Kyouya.

Standing up and bowing in surrender, Takashi smiled as Tamaki danced around the garden waving the frilly lace around like a token. Grinning, the others regrouped and laughed as they watched Tamaki's antics. All were breathing heavily after the energetic game.

"Good game, Tama-chan!" Hani said sweetly, "You won fair and square."

"Thank you." Tamaki grinned. "We knew we wouldn't be able to beat you if we couldn't find a way to distract you. I am just glad it worked. Two more minutes and we would have been sunk."

"I almost had it," Haruhi smiled as she handed Kyouya the bag containing his notebook. "Good game, though. I am just bummed that we will never know the secrets hidden in this innocent looking notebook."

Giving her a swift kiss, Kyouya responded with a grin, "You already know my secrets. You don't need to see my notebook for that."

"Mmmm…" Haruhi responded to the pressure of Kyouya's lips on hers by clutching the lapels of his jacket and pulling him closer. Snuggling her head against his chest, he wrapped his arms around her, just content to hold her for a moment.

A flash of pink dangling on the end of a finger, recalled Haruhi to her senses. "Ummm… Tamaki, can I have my underwear back now?"

"Not a chance, Princess." Tamaki grinned. "To the victor go the spoils and I fully intend to keep this souvenir. However, I am not a heartless victor. What do you guys say to lunch, relaxing in the Jacuzzi, and taking a nap before we have to get ready for the Show tonight?"

"Sounds good to me Tama-chan." Hani linked his hand in Takashi's.

"Completely. We are hungry." The twins bracketed Tamaki and started propelling him towards the house.

"I can think of another way to relax, but food and the Jacuzzi will do," Kyouya said with a meaningful stare at Haruhi who smiled back at him.

"Sheesh, Kyo since when did you become the sex-obsessed one?" Hika mock pouted. "I thought that was my job."

"Oh don't worry. You were fully included in my comment." Kyouya smirked.

"I better have been."

Haruhi's laughter echoed through the hallway as the group stomped off the snow, removed their outer layers and proceeded to the Dining Room where a hearty lunch was set out for them.
Caught

Renge arrived at the Suoh Guest house a few minutes early. She tried knocking several times, but no one answered, so she was grateful that when she tried the door handle it was unlocked. She glanced around as the winter sunlight filtered through the windows and cast a warm glow across the marble entry. *This house is really incredible. I can’t believe that Tamaki designed it. He really isn’t the shallow charismatic idiot that he used to come across as. There is a depth there that I am just starting to realize. I guess that could really be said about all the Host club members – Hani has to have far more depth to be a master martial artist and I have actually seen Mori smile and do what could almost be considered flirting when Haruhi is around. Kyouya will probably always be a mystery to me, though. There has to be more to him for Haruhi to love him as much as she does and for him to allow Haru to date Hikaru as well, but I probably won’t see it. He always keeps himself a little distant from me, probably because of that whole video-game-obsession-thing I did to him when I first got to Ouran. Not that I can blame him really, but if he only knew how completely I have changed since then, including switching sides. She giggled to herself. Hikaru has mellowed from his old standoffish self-centeredness, but that has far more to do with Haruhi than anyone else. Kaoru… well… I am not even sure what to think about Kaoru anymore. Kaoru used to be a blip – a shadow to his brother, but this week I am seeing something more and I have to admit I am curious. After falling in love with Mai, I never thought there would be a guy who caught my interest, but somehow he has. I have talked to Mai about it and our relationship is open enough that she is encouraging me to figure out if there is anything there, but I don’t know how he feels. I could be fantasizing about something that has zero chance of happening. Maybe I should talk to Haruhi. She is in a poly relationship, maybe she could help me figure out what to do, or tell me honestly if I have absolutely no chance with him.*

Shaking herself out of her reverie, Renge started walking into each of the rooms, saying “Hello?” into each of them and getting no response. She walked up the staircase to the second floor, since that was where the bedrooms were located and where they would be getting ready for the Red Carpet in less than an hour. She set her purse down in Haruhi’s room, and started peeking in the other rooms to see if any of the hosts were there. Finding every room empty, she walked up to the third floor. The Conservatory door lay open in front of her and music could be heard faintly in the background. *Maybe they are in here and didn’t hear me knock… though I don’t hear anything that sounds like conversation.*

Walking in, she was greeted by a sight that made her catch her breath and turn a faint shade of pink, before breaking into a wide smile. On a large bed in the center of the room, surrounded by flowers and the faint bubbling of the hot tub in the corner, all seven Host club members were cuddled up together fast asleep. What really intrigued Renge was the positions they had taken and what they were either wearing or “not wearing” as the case stood. From left to right – Tamaki was spooning Hani, who was sleeping with his head on Mori’s chest and had his leg thrown over his cousin’s. All were wearing basic swim trunks, though Renge did spare a brief moment of artistic appreciation for the chiseled chests that she could see. Far more interesting to Renge was that on Mori’s other side, a topless Haruhi was sprawled over the other half of Mori’s chest her hand grazing against Hani’s. Kyouya was spooned against her, while a pink-panties clad Hikaru held tight to him – their hands locked together on Haruhi’s hip. On the far end, a naked Kaoru was melded to his brother, his arm curled up with his hand near Hikaru’s heart. She could see a faint purple on his hip, but her mind quickly dismissed it as an odd shadow. *Well, well, well, my darling bestie… What HAVE you been up to? Smuggling half-naked with Mori-sempai? Tamaki and Hani? When did that happen? And why on earth is Hikaru wearing a pair of pink lace panties?*
A giggle burst out of her mouth at that last thought. Quickly she tried to stifle the sound by covering her mouth, but it was just loud enough to cause Haruhi’s eyes to open slightly.

Haruhi felt the warmth of Takashi’s chest under her cheek and the heat of Kyoya on her back. She could hear the breathing of all of the men around her. For a moment she just let herself enjoy the sensation of being surrounded by the people she loved. Hmmm… Tamaki was right, a nap was definitely needed after the snowball fight, and soaking in the Jacuzzi was enough to relax us completely. I wonder what time it is? I should probably wake the others; Renge should be here soon…

A sound like a quickly stifled giggled caused her to open her eyes in startlement. Chocolate eyes met golden brown ones as Haruhi realized the subject of her most recent thought was staring at her and the compromising position all the others were in, while holding her hands across her mouth to keep from laughing out loud. Feeling her face and body turn a deep shade of red in embarrassment, Haruhi mouthed the words to her friend, “Meet me downstairs. I need to wake them up.”

Her body shaking in suppressed laughter and merriment still shining brightly in her eyes, Renge nodded and turned to leave the room. She couldn’t resist turning back one last time though to imprint the scene on her memory.

A slow sigh escaped Haruhi’s lips as she stretched and prepared to wake the others. Renge is NEVER going to let me live this down.

The movement of Haruhi’s body as she stretched immediately woke both Takashi and Kyoya. Angling his head down so he could place a kiss on Haruhi’s neck, Kyoya asked, “What time is it?”

Takashi answered, looking across the room to a clock by the wall. “It’s 2:35.”

“Hmm… We should probably get up. Isn’t Renge supposed to be here soon?”

Haruhi blushed again. “Umm… yeah. She’s here.”

Kyoya was instantly fully awake and his body tensed, while there was a sleepy moan of protest from Hikaru behind him. “What?!”

Sighing because she knew there was not going to be an easy way to break it to her lover, she said gently, “Yes she is here. Her coming into the room is what woke me up initially. I guess all of us forgot to set an alarm of some sort. I told her to go downstairs and wait for me, while I woke the rest of you up.”

“So Renge saw all of us like this,” Takashi said quietly.

“Yes,” Haruhi confirmed quietly, “though I trust her enough to know that she will be discreet and won’t say anything to anyone else. However, I also know that I am in for 20 Questions the minute I go downstairs, not the first of which is why I am half-naked in bed with all of you.” She sighed again. “Not that I am complaining about the being in bed part… but why on earth did none of us remember to set an alarm?”

“We got caught up in our snowball fight and then the Jacuzzi relaxed us so much that all I really remember is all of us deciding that we needed a nap. Honestly, though I am not thrilled that Renge saw us like this, it is preferable to having the make-up artists or hair-stylists that should be arriving in 20 minutes be the ones to wake us. The rumors would have started the moment they left the Guest
“Very True,” Takashi said. “Haruhi, I know you are loath to go downstairs, but if you would go down and talk to Renge, Kyouya and I can wake the others. You and Renge will require the most preparation for the events tonight.”

“You’re right.” Taking a deep breath, she asked, “Anything that either of you absolutely don’t want me to tell her?”

“Be honest, but don’t go into detail unless she specifically asks.” Kyousya said quietly.

“I can do that. I also know Renge well enough to know how to deflect a lot of her questions.” Sitting up, she started to wiggle out from between the two of them. She paused and looked back at them both, so sexy and rumpled from the nap, with an impish smile she said, “Kiss for luck?”

Kyouya grinned. “Always.” He captured her lips, teasing them with his love and passion before breaking it off slowly.

Takashi tried to look nonchalantly away as they were kissing, pretending not to notice. But Haruhi caught his attention with her next words.

“I meant both of you.” Haruhi leaned back down over him and placed another soft kiss on Takashi’s lips, letting him know without words, how much he meant to her.

“Not fair if you give them a kiss good-bye and I don’t get one Haru-chan,” bright blue eyes full of laughter looked up at her.

“Playing possum, Hani?” she questioned with an arched eyebrow. “I take it you heard the conversation.”

“Most of it,” Hani replied. “I agree with the others. Go down and talk with Renge. We can wake up the others.”

“Ok.” She bent over Takashi and gave Hani his kiss before finally wiggling her way out of the cabana. Grabbing a robe, she wrapped it around herself and walked out the door.

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Haruhi walked into her bedroom and saw Renge lying across her bed, on her phone, texting. Warily she said, “Please tell me you are not telling Mai what you just saw.”

Renge looked at her friend with a mock scowl, “Please give me a little more credit than that. As absolutely fascinating to see as it was, I know the others are generally private people and that it is already going to be a huge buzz this evening when Hikaru comes out with you and Kyousya. The three of you will cause a buzz that will be slightly scandalous but will ultimately be seriously good press for HDG. Three the press can get used to fairly quickly – it’s avant garde, it’s trendy and it’s happening with very beautiful and extremely wealthy people. Coming out with seven at once would have all of you immediately blackballed, as ignorant and completely unfair as that may be… and as much as I love Mai, she is a huge gossip and could not keep that juicy of a tidbit to herself.” Here Renge blushed a little as she admitted, “I just told her I could finally confirm that wasn’t just you dating both Kyousya and Hikaru, but all three of you dating each other, as I saw all of you cuddled together taking a nap. I am sorry… She has been pestering me about it since the Spin the Bottle game and I thought it best to tell part of the truth, if not the whole truth.”

Haruhi let go of the breath that she had been holding and rushed over to the bed. Sitting down, she
pulled Renge into a rare hug and said, “You are incredible. Has anyone ever told you that? Thank you. Thank you so much for your understanding and your silence.”

“So does this mean that you aren’t mad at me for telling Mai about the three of you dating before you officially announce it tonight?”

“Not at all. A few hours won’t make much of a difference, especially since Yuzuha has known for a while that Hika has wanted to date Kyo, even if they have only actually gotten together this week.”

“Good.” Now Renge said with a sly smile, “Now since you know I can keep a secret, will you please tell me why it was Mori-sempai you were cuddling with and why on earth was Hikaru wearing pink lace panties?”

Grinning Haruhi replied, “I promise to tell you the answer to both, but I have to take a quick shower to get the chlorine from the Jacuzzi off of me. I know the make-up and hair stylists will be here in about 10 minutes, so it may have to wait until later so you can listen for the door.”

“Tell me while you shower,” Renge responded. “I just saw Tamaki walk by, so the others are up and can answer the door. I will not be put off indefinitely.” She stomped her foot in mock-emphasis. “I promise not to peek.”

Laughing Haruhi responded, “Oh I know you don’t think of me that way, so I don’t care if you are in the bathroom, I just wanted to make sure that the professionals weren’t kept waiting outside in the cold.”

“Not going to happen. Now stop stalling.”

“Only if you answer one question for me…”

“What?”

“What did you think of seeing Kaoru naked?”
Preparation

Renge sputtered as Haruhi hid a grin and stepped into the shower. *I figure that I just managed to delay the inevitable questions for at least a good three minutes. I wonder if I could distract her completely.* Making sure her voice was full of innocence, Haruhi asked again, “oh I am so sorry Renge! I didn’t hear your answer.”

“Umm… Kaoru is… well… I didn’t really see… I mean… I did see, but I wasn’t really paying atten-“A sudden realization dawned on her, and Renge’s tone quickly changed to curiosity tinged with suspicion, “Wait a minute! All of you were either half naked or naked, including you my dearest best friend, so why are you asking about Kaoru specifically? How do you know I wasn’t checking out how your boyfriend looked in your pink lace panties or how chiseled Mori-sempai’s chest is?” She crossed her arms over her chest in emphasis, even though she knew that Haruhi wouldn’t be able to see her.

Haruhi peeked her head around the shower curtain and grinned at her friend, enjoying the chance to tease her a bit. “Well, for one – you couldn’t see much of Takashi’s chest because both Hani and I were covering most of it. Two – You have never been interested in Hika, and while you may appreciate his body as an abstract, he doesn’t ‘do it’ for you sexually. You are far more interested in the story behind the pink panties than you are with fantasizing about him.”

“Hey!”

“Which leads me to number three – I KNOW you and you have been covertly staring at Kao every chance you can get. Even when Mai was flirting heavily with Tamaki, you showed no sign of jealousy or really even interest in their conversation, which I have never actually seen you do before. Plus you kept drifting back to wherever Kao was,” Haruhi continued, “I take it you have talked with Mai about this?”

With a sigh, Renge leaned back against the counter, before responding, “I have. She is open enough to let me figure out exactly how I am feeling and what I want to do. I don’t want to give her up.” Renge blushed and got a slightly dreamy look in her eyes. “I really am completely in love with her, which is why this sudden odd feeling for Kaoru feels so out of the blue. Back at Ouran, I never really paid more than passing attention to either him or Hika other than to try and keep myself from being the butt of their jokes. Even when Yuzuha took me on as a personal assistant, I didn’t really think much about them. Then suddenly this week happened and I find myself fascinated with him in a way I never anticipated. It doesn’t make sense.”

Haruhi turned off the water and reached for a towel. Wrapping it around her body, she stepped out and grabbed another for her hair. Looking directly into her friend’s eyes, she answered honestly, “There is something about this trip that is changing everyone. What you saw today was just one example. I don’t think it a bad thing at all, but I needed to not exactly warn you, but make you aware. I have a sneaking suspicion that Kaoru is feeling the same way about you right now. I know he is attracted to you, though he hasn’t yet admitted it to either Hika or me. Personally, I think you would be a good match, and as I care deeply about both of you, I am secretly thrilled at the possibility.” Haruhi paused and took a breath, letting it out slowly before continuing, “However, there are some things that you both need to discuss openly with each other before you even start to get involved. It’s not my place to tell either of you what the other’s secrets are… but you need to ask yourself a couple of questions. You know that he has a very unique relationship with Hikaru. It may change over time but it isn’t likely to disappear completely. Can you accept that there will always be
a part of his heart reserved only for his brother? A lot of women wouldn’t be able to accept that, which is a good part of why he doesn’t date often. Are you going to keep seeing Mai? Are you willing to let him see other people if he has a need that you can’t fill?"

Renge tilted her head and really considered her answer before responding to Haruhi. “I don’t think I could give up Mai to be in a relationship with Kao. She fills part of me in a way no one else really can. Which probably is what Hika does for Kao… so I think I could accept that, actually. If I were in a relationship with either Kao or Mai and I couldn’t fill a need for either of them for some reason, I think I could learn to be ok with them going to someone else if I knew about it ahead of time and knew it was something that I really couldn’t do. If we talked about it before it happened. I would be really upset if either of them did something behind my back without telling me or giving me a chance to try to meet that need. Does that make any sense?”

Haruhi pulled Renge into a brief hug. Letting her go, she answered, “Perfectly… and it also explains why I was snuggled between Takashi and Kyouya, not Hika and Kyo. I love them both beyond belief, but I also love all the others in their own way. Hika and Kyo understand this and honestly this week are discovering aspects of themselves that they need to explore as well. We are all talking about it openly and because we are doing so, there isn’t the same jealousy or worry. I don’t know if this is how all poly relationships work, but it is working for us. Communication is the key. Just like it should be in ANY relationship.”

The sound of clanking and murmured voices in Haruhi’s room alerted them to the fact that the make-up artists had arrived. Knowing that she only had a minute or two left before they had to go in there, Haruhi added, “You also need to tell Kao about your relationship with Mai.”

“I thought he knew.”

“I don’t think any of the Host Club knows, actually, including Kyouya. It wasn’t my secret to share. It is yours… though I can pretty much guarantee that while it may surprise them for a moment, they absolutely won’t be shocked by it.” Haruhi started to walk toward the door to her room, but Renge’s hand on her arm stopped her.

“Thank you for keeping my secret. I knew you would so I am not sure why I said that.” Renge smiled in apology, then grinned mischievously, “So you kind of explained Mori (and omg does he have a nice chest!!) But before we go in will you PLEASE explain Hikaru and the pink panties? I am dying here!!”

Haruhi giggled. “We were playing capture the flag earlier. Takashi, Hani and I were on one team while Kyo, Hika, Tama, and Kao were on the other. Kao ran inside and grabbed a couple of items to use as the flags. He grabbed my pink lace panties and Kyouya’s notebook.”

“Oh my! Kyouya must have been pissed.”

“He definitely wasn’t happy but Kao put it in a plastic bag so it wouldn’t get harmed. As the game turned out the guys beat us by a split second. I almost had the notebook. Now I may never know what was inside it.”

“Oh. I can see why Kao would grab those items, since all of them would think of it as a great joke to get your panties and Kyouya’s notebook is legendary… but if you lost, why was Hikaru wearing the panties and not you?”

Haruhi laughed, “So Hika bantered something about making me wear them if his team won and I
countered I would make him wear them if my team won. After the game, we were all relaxing in the Jacuzzi and Hika whipped them out and tried to get me to put them on, but I joked that we only lost by a fraction of a second so it could be said it was too close to call. Long story short we bantered back and forth a bit and I challenged him on something else – winner would have to put on the panties. The other guys were to be the judges. They determined that I won but as a penalty for losing the capture the flag game, I would have to lose my bikini top. So while Hika grumbled and submitted slightly less than gracefully, he put on the panties. About that time we all decided that we needed a nap before the craziness tonight, so we dried off and moved to the cabana. Honestly I think Hika forgot he was wearing them. The next thing I knew I was waking up to your giggle.”

“You have a very interesting life, you know that Haruhi!?!?” Renge said amazed. “The fact that the others are right there with you is either really cool or really terrifying. How on earth is anyone supposed to get close enough to any of you to join your circle?”

“We all share something unique, it’s true, but we are all still very different people with very different things we like to do. Just be willing to have real conversations and get to know them without judging them on their wealth, positions in society, families, etc. They are still just people and so many forget that. They are my friends, just as you are.”

“Got it – people not the social elite… You do know that I am a socialite too, right?”

Haruhi laughed, “Of course. But you are still friends with me even though I am a commoner and can’t do anything for your social standing. Why?”

“Because you don’t cater to me and are an awesome person in your own right.”

“Exactly. The guys are the same. Treat them like you do me and you won’t have a problem… Though, I think you are closer to achieving that than you realize. Just be yourself – you crazy otaku!”

Renge giggled at the fondness in Haruhi’s voice. “I think I can do that.” Then she said slyly, “Are you sure that you aren’t at least a little but bi?”

“Positively. Unfortunately. Sorry. Trust me the guys were bummed. Something about thinking it would be really hot to see two women make out with each other. Since I feel the same way about watching them, I can kind of see their point, but I just don’t feel that way or at least I haven’t found a girl yet that made me want to explore that option.”

“Pity.” Renge grinned then winked at her best friend. Linking her arm she said, “Thank you Haruhi for being you.”

“Umm… You’re welcome?”

Laughing at Haruhi’s obvious confusion, Renge led them out of the bathroom into a bevy of stylists anxiously ready to transform them to red carpet worthiness.

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For the next hour and a half both Haruhi and Renge were poked, prodded, airbrushed, taped, and pinned into perfection. Two rooms down, they guys of the Host club had gathered to get ready as well. However, since it didn’t take them nearly as much time to get ready as the girls did, they were
able to relax and joke around a bit. Hani was having a grand time teasing Hikaru about the pink panties, while Kyoya and Takashi set up a chessboard between them to play a quick game, and Tamaki wandered the house making sure everyone had what they needed.

Kaoru was restless. He tried to focus first on the banter between Hikaru and Hani and when that didn’t work; he sat down and tried to watch the chess game. Soon enough though, his heavily bruised ass started causing him discomfort, despite the fact that Tamaki had rubbed in another thick coat of Takashi’s wonder cream. Thank gods for that cream. Tama really did a good job on me. Not that I am complaining, of course... and now Hani has offered. Somehow the naughtiness of the idea that Hani, who looks so sweet and innocent could make me black and blue with delicious torment is really appealing. Hika wants to screw him and Takashi both. I just want them to beat me until I am flying in bliss. It should sound fucked up, but it is what we want and for the first time we don’t have to hide it from the others anymore. That, in itself, is amazing... and Tamaki as a lover? Not something I would ever have expected but it also feels right in its own way. He’s the only one I feel that kind of sexual attraction to other than Hika. Part of me wishes that I could fall for the others too or at least feel something deeper than a close friendship with them, but if I am honest, I don’t. I just can’t picture having sex with Kyoya or Takashi or Hani. Even Haruhi - I would rather cuddle with her after making love to Hika or Tama, than have sex with her with just the two of us. She is just far more my friend than my lover. The thing is - I know she feels the same for me. Maybe if the others weren’t around then we could have made it work as just her, Hika and I, but as soon as Hika pulled Kyo in that game, I knew it wasn’t meant to be. I wonder if I will ever find a woman that I can fall in love with the same intensity that Haru feels for Hika and Kyoya or that they feel for her and each other. I want a family someday. Renge’s face flashed to his mind. Renge. Now that’s a woman who is a mystery to me. I have known her for three years, but I don’t feel like I really KNOW her. But part of me wants to. Really. I have watched her laugh and joke with Haruhi, so I know that she can be genuine and I have to admit that mom did well in picking her as her assistant. A whisper floated across Kaoru’s mind. She felt really good in my arms after she had twisted her ankle. She showed a hidden well of strength by not letting the injury stop her from preparing for tonight. She even showed that she was comfortable enough with us to suggest that Spin the Bottle game, so she has a fun side too. But would she understand if I wanted to be in a relationship with Tamaki? Or Hika? I can’t give him up completely. Gah! I just don’t know what to do!!

Sick of the arguments in his head, Kaoru decided that the best distraction would be to sketch for the next 15 minutes or so until it was time for all of them to get into the limo. Walking briskly into his bedroom, he stopped short at the sight of a very shapely derriere covered in slinky deep aqua knit dress that shimmered in the lamplight, poking out from under his bed. Without warning his stomach flipped and a tightness started in his groin, as a laughing Renge crawled carefully backwards from underneath the bed, making sure that she didn’t mess up her hair and revealing the front of the dress as it clung like a second skin against her hips, crisscrossing across her chest and down her arms in long sleeves, baring her shoulders and ending at a point on the back of her hand. Around her neck was an emerald and diamond choker that combined Hikaru’s edgy design with the brilliance of pure gems. With her head turned away from him, and still unaware of his presence in the room, she called to Haruhi, “Found it! I thought I might have dropped it when I stayed here the other night.”

Turning to walk back into the room where Haruhi was finishing her preparations, she finally saw Kaoru standing shell shocked about two feet from her. Blushing faintly, she said, “Oh hi! Ummm... I dropped my earing when I stayed here the other night. I was just getting it.” She held up the piece, her voice trailing off at the look on Kaoru’s face. When he didn’t say anything but just looked at her, she started to get annoyed. “What? Did I pull something out of place? Do I look funny? Am I not doing your design the justice it deserves? Tell me!”

Kaoru slowly walked forward and brushed a stray hair off of her forehead. He was amazed to feel the faintest tremor under his fingertips at the soft caress. Is she attracted to me the way I am to her?
Unable to help himself, he let his fingers trail down the sides of her face, to the nape of her neck, never letting his eyes leave hers. Inside them a question burned. So very slowly Kaoru stepped up to meet his hand, bringing his face in line with hers. Whispering against her lips, “You are breathtaking,” Kaoru closed the distance and claimed her lips.

A faint moan escaped Renge’s lips as she surrendered into the kiss she had wanted for days. Pressing deeper she opened her mouth to invite the silken slide of Kaoru’s tongue against her own, her arms winding themselves around his neck and holding him against her. He obliged. The silken caress of his tongue as it twisted around hers caused bolts of electricity to shoot down her body and pool low in her stomach.

A sound from the other room brought both to their senses and they pulled apart, reluctantly letting each other go. Her breathing uneven, Renge said, “I have to go help Haruhi finish getting ready… but there is something I want. No… need… to talk to you about. I know it’s forward of me to ask, but since I know that we won’t have a chance to talk tonight or tomorrow, would you be willing to meet me on Tuesday for lunch or coffee or something?”

“Renge, are you asking me out on a date?” Kaoru smiled at her, letting his impish personality show through.

She blushed faintly. “Yes. I think I am. Do you mind? I understand if you have other plans.”

Swiftly Kaoru claimed another kiss, this one just teasing enough to show his delight. “I would love to meet you for whatever you want. I will pick you up. Say 12-ish?”

“I would like that.” Her smile was blinding, causing the tightness in his groin to increase. Turning, she gave him a wink over her shoulder.

Feeling the need to get the last word in as well as reassure her, Kaoru said, “Oh and Renge… I didn’t realize it, but I think I designed that dress specifically for you. I don’t think anyone else could do it justice. You look perfect.”

Renge was almost dizzy from pleasure as she walked back into the other room. Who needs grand entrances down huge staircases? Nothing could be better than the look in Kaoru’s eyes as he kissed me.
Red Carpet

Haruhi stared at her reflection in the mirror and had a hard time recognizing herself. The shoulder length brown hair the guys had practically begged her to grow out was now swept up into a sleek updo, with a few tendrils to fall around her face. Fiery red extensions were woven through her hair and the wisps around her face to add a color accent to match the elegant but edgy style of the dress she wore. Unlike Renge’s long dress whose style was more classically elegant made trendy by the slightly sheer shimmery material and Hikaru’s Avant Garde styling of the emerald choker, Haruhi’s dress was much edgier, explaining the bright red accent colors in her hair. The dress itself was relatively simple – a satin strapless A-line with a sweetheart neckline ending mid-thigh. It was black, but had red satin ribbon trim around the neckline, crisscrossing across the front, with a corset tie on the back. Haruhi would have been mortified at the short length, if she wasn’t also wearing shimmering red tights that matched the color of the ribbons and thigh high lace-up leather heeled boots. I think Hika may have some secret fantasy that he manifested in these boots. They are seriously sexy and I have never really considered myself to be a shoe fanatic, but with these, black lace boy-shorts, and a lace bra, I could totally make my lovers do anything I wanted. Hell, I could probably get all the guys to do anything. She smiled to herself. Not that I really have that much desire to take control, but damn these boots feel good. Even the heel, which is far higher than I am used to, feels comfortable and sexy. I am not used to thinking of myself that way. Topping off the dress was a black velvet almost-bolero styled jacket. It had a mandarin neckline that covered her shoulders, but was completely open across her chest. The sleeves ended in a slightly bell-shaped cuff. It attached discreetly to the dress in a couple of points, so it completely covered her back and stayed exactly where it was supposed to. Kaoru and Hikaru are incredible at this. I don’t have the body of your standard runway model, but this fits my body perfectly and even I can admit that it looks incredible.

A low whistle brought her attention back to the present, as Renge walked back into the room, slightly flushed, but grinning in delight. “Dayum Haruhi, you look fucking fantastic and I say that with all possible connotations of the words.”

Haruhi burst out in laughter at Renge’s shocking words. Any sort of fear that was threatening to creep up, completely disappeared. She looked her friend up and down. “So do you as a matter of fact. That dress looks like it was designed for you.”

Interestingly enough, that comment made Renge blush even deeper, but before Haruhi could comment on it, the hair stylist Pierre interrupted, “Mon Dieu! Together you two are fantastique! But I have an idea to make you better!!” Imperiously he pointed at Renge, “You!! Sit!! I need to add one more thing to your hair.”

Within moments, Renge had aqua extensions threaded through her updo in a way that complimented Haruhi’s, but still worked perfectly with the dress she was wearing. The aqua was striking against her honey blond hair.

“Wow.” Renge breathed as she looked in the mirror once Pierre had finished working his magic. “That does look incredible!” Turning to look at her friend, she saw that Haruhi was nodding her head in agreement. We are wearing totally different designs, but they still share similarities that completely label them as Hitachiin Designs. It really is incredible that Kaoru and Hikaru are still in their last year at Ouran and they have come up with this line. I really think that HDG would blow the fashion world out of the water this week even without all the other press that is going to follow. Allegra Versace doesn’t have a chance at winning the bet with Yuzuha. She grinned evilly, the pride
at being even a small part of the group that was going to reign over Fashion Week taking hold. Looking back at Haruhi in the mirror to see the same smile reflected on her friend’s face, she noticed something odd. “Haru, you don’t have any jewelry. That seems really odd.”

“Hikaru has it. He wanted to put it on me.”

“Aww… He really does have a romantic streak in him, doesn’t he?”

Haruhi blushed. “He doesn’t like to show it to the world, but it’s there. It’s one of the reasons I love him so much.”

“Well then, we shouldn’t keep him,” the sly smile worked its way back across Renge’s lips, “or shall I say ‘them’ waiting any longer, because all of the boys are going to be drooling. Oh, I can’t wait to see the expressions on everyone’s faces. This is going to be so much fun!” Linking her arm with Haruhi’s, Renge guided them out the door to the staircase.

After Kaoru had left the Renge, he let the others know that the girls were almost ready. Setting aside their game to finish later, Kyouya and Takashi, as well as Hikaru and Hani, stood up and straightened the cuts of their suits. In true Hitachiin Design Group fashion, the suits hinted at the traditional, but were brought to the edge of Avant Garde fashion. All of the guys were in black leather pants, which had made Kyouya smirk to himself when they first put them on, and the suit jackets were a warm wool blend, but the cuts were slightly different on each of them, designed to highlight the unique shape. They wore open collar shirts of different colors and textures, skipping ties completely. Kaoru’s was of the same material as Renge’s, but it was more of a gray than an aqua, though the pendant he wore around his neck matched the vivid color of her dress. Takashi’s and Hani’s shirts were a crisp white satin and they were adamant about wearing the necklaces that Haruhi had given them so long ago claiming that they wouldn’t be visibly on display, so there wasn’t any real need to go overboard on dressing them up. Kaoru had started to protest, but a quelling look from Hani stopped him immediately, while Hikaru smirked at his brother. Tamaki wore a light lavender shirt made of the same material as Kaoru’s, which also managed to make his already stunning violet eyes even more vivid. His necklace was similar in style to Kaoru’s but held a smoky grey diamond rather than an aquamarine. Hikaru’s jacket was made of the same velvet as the top of Haruhi’s dress and the shimmery red shirt also matched the color of the ribbon on her dress. Around his neck he wore a black onyx pendant set in a platinum base. Kyouya wore all black – black leather pants, black satin shirt, and black wool jacket with a vaguely militaristic cut. The only splash of color was a deep ruby pendant around his neck that was a twin to the one around Hikaru’s.

Damn, all of them look amazing. Hikaru played with the necklace in his jacket pocket. I would happily screw any one of them, but Kyouya is driving me to distraction. How can that man make black look so damn good. I swear I am half tempted to say screw the Red Carpet. I just want to drag him upstairs and make him make good on his promise of fucking me senseless.

As if he had heard Hikaru’s thoughts, Kyouya walked over to his lover and slid an arm around waist, pulling him back against his chest before whispering in his ear. “You look fucking amazing and you know these pants are going to drive me crazy all night. How the hell am I supposed to keep this hard-on from showing, when all I want to do is drag you and Haruhi off to someplace that no one could find us, and fuck until we all collapse from exhaustion?”

The dirty words whispered so seductively in his ear, made Hikaru instantly hard. Nonchalantly, he slipped his hand behind him to caress Kyouya’s solid cock through the leather pants. His reward was
hearing Kyouya growl under his breath. He was about to turn his head and capture Kyouya’s lips with his own when he heard a startled exclamation from the three he least expected.

“Oh!” Tamaki was the first.

“My!” Hani continued the statement.

“Gods!!” Takashi finished in a voice that managed to combine amazement, lust, and joy.

It was the last that caused Kyouya and Hikaru to look toward the staircase.

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Haruhi felt dizzy and was grateful for Renge’s linked arm as she descended the staircase. So much masculine beauty in front of me – Tamaki, Takashi, Hani, Kaoru – oh Yum!! Kyouya and Hikaru – oh dear gods!! How the hell will I be able to keep my hands to myself through this event? They are beyond incredible.

Both Kyouya and Hikaru were completely pole-axed. They couldn’t move as the dangerous beauty that Haruhi had become walked toward them; the leather thigh boots causing her hips to move in a way that screamed sex and dark pleasurable things. Kaoru was the first to approach the women, bending over and kissing Renge’s hand gallantly, before picking up Haruhi, swinging her around, and planting a kiss on her lips to make her laugh.

“You both look abso-fucking fantastic!” Kaoru exclaimed as Tamaki, Hani, and Takashi walked up to confirm and greet them. Hani and Takashi following Kaoru’s example and kissing both on the hand before pressing it to their hearts in the time honored Host Club tradition.

Tamaki followed Kaoru’s other example and kissed Haruhi soundly after gallantly placing a kiss on Renge’s cheek. Whispering in her ear, mischievous delight in his tone, “I think your lovers just had a stroke at seeing you. I never thought I would see the day when Kyouya was speechless, though you do look beyond amazing.” Louder so the others could hear and with a teasing tone he address the two who were still frozen in place in his best Host King voice. “Hey you two! Get over here and greet our princesses properly, or I am going to steal them away forever.”

Tamaki’s voice finally broke through the stasis holding their bodies and both of them rushed forward. The stasis on their tongues was not as easily broken. They were unable to speak but the love, passion, and desire they poured into the kisses that they gave her and the way that once they started touching her, they couldn’t let her go gave Haruhi all the information she needed to know her lovers were pleased with the way she looked.

Finally finding a moment to come up for air, even as she was still pressed between two very firm male bodies, Haruhi laughed, “It’s a good thing I insisted on the kiss proof lipstick!”

The other’s started laughing again and it was enough to finally loosen both Hikaru and Kyouya’s tongues. Finally remembering their manners, they both approached Renge and bowed over her hands.

“You do look amazing, Renge.” Hikaru said. “The emerald and the streaks in your hair are perfect. It totally makes it look like a HDG design and matches Haruhi without actually matching. You both are going to cause quite a stir tonight.”

Renge flushed at Hikaru’s genuine compliment. “Thank you. It feels amazing. And both of you look wonderful as well. I have no doubt your mother is totally going to win her bet this week and I am proud to be a part of Hitachiin Design Group, even in small way.”
“HDG is glad to have you Renge,” Kaoru answered with a smile just for her.

“Excuse me sirs and my ladies, but the limo has just arrived,” one of the maids said as the chauffeur approached the group.

“Thank you, Amanda,” Tamaki said with a smile. Turning back to the others, he gestured to the door, “Shall we go?”

With a final tug and brush of their clothing and glance in the mirror to make sure everything was still perfectly in place, the Host Club filed out of Suoh Guest House and into the waiting limo.

As Hikaru handed her in, he murmured in Haruhi’s ear, “Please tell me that sometime soon you will wear just a pair of panties and those boots for me. I can’t stop thinking about it.”

Haruhi’s laughter increased as several voices piped up from inside the limo.

“That’s an excellent idea.”

“Oh please, Haru-chan?”

“Agreed.”

“Maybe with a feather boa?”

“Dear gods, bestie, I think you are in for a night of trouble. Maybe several nights. Can I watch?”

The laughter and ease remained in the limo, throughout the drive to pick up Yuzuha and then to the Carrousel du Louvre. Yuzuha was elegant in a black backless sequined dress that flashed an underskirt of vibrant purple. As she sat in the limo with her sons and their friends, she radiated smug contentment, especially as she saw Hikaru and Kyouya’s linked hands on Haruhi’s lap as she sat between them. Tamaki’s hand brushed up against Kaoru’s shoulder and didn’t move as it rested across the top of the seat as Kaoru tried to lean nonchalantly into it, while discreetly giving Renge’s hand a squeeze or two as she started to exhibit feelings of nervousness.

So Kaoru and Tamaki as well as Kaoru and Renge… Hmmm… Yuzuha’s sharp eyes didn’t miss anything even in the dimness of the limo. But it’s not openly acknowledged between any of them yet. I wonder if Renge has told him about Mai. Probably not, though it looks like she will soon. He definitely hasn’t told her about Tamaki though. Likely he will tell her when she tells him… Speaking of Tamaki, he also seems to be giving covert lustful glances toward Hikaru, Kyouya, and Haruhi. Scratch that, it’s more geared to Kyouya and Haruhi. Even more interesting – Kyouya has glanced back a few times… Well, well, well… this is a VERY interesting turn of events!! She turned her head to Haruhi, curious about what her reaction was and found the chocolate brown eyes staring back at hers with a slightly challenging smirk and an acknowledgement. She watched as Haruhi’s eyes slowly slid to Takashi and Hani before returning to capture her own. So Takashi and Hani are also in the mix somewhere. Dear gods, what are these children up to? Not that I have room to throw stones, I made sure that Hika and Kao always saw the love their father and I had for each other and our solidarity in raising them. They never knew that our relationship was also an open one and both of us had several lovers on the side including same-sex lovers. Maybe that is something that I could share. Hika already understands; I can see that in his relationship with Haruhi and Kyouya. Kaoru may need just a bit more encouragement to know that it really is all right and that he won’t be judged, at least in this family, for loving who he wants. This time Yuzuha caught Haruhi’s eyes and let the pride, acceptance, and love she felt for her adopted daughter and her sons fill them.
Haruhi smiled and basked in the warmth of Yuzuha’s total acceptance. She knew she was taking a slight risk in letting Yuzuha in on the secret about Hani and Takashi, but she calculated that Yuzuha would have figured it out eventually. She was just relieved to see the absolute acceptance and determination to protect in the golden eyes. *Yuzuha is an amazing woman and I am so incredibly glad that she accepted me. I feel like I am a real part of the Hitachiin family and it’s not just because of Hikaru and Kaoru.*

“Wow. It’s really quiet in here,” Hani stated.

“Sorry Mitskune, I am sure the excitement has just gotten a bit overwhelming,” Yuzuha answered smoothly. “Fashion Week can be crazy. Speaking of, do all of you know the plan for tonight?”

“I believe so,” Tamaki answered. “The limo will drop the six of you off and then bring the three of us to the VIP area. Kyouya and Haruhi will join us after walking the carpet.”

“Exactly. Though there is one thing that I think I want to change, because it seems the right thing to do,” Yuzuha responded. “At the end of the Highlight’s Fashion Show, all of the designers and the models walk out together for one turn around the catwalk. I would be honored if all of you would join Hikaru, Kaoru, Renge and I. After all, you are all wearing HDG designs, but more importantly, your friendship and support are keystones of this collection and it seems appropriate to share that.”

Half the limo was stunned by Yuzuha’s announcement, while the other half grinned. It was Takashi who finally answered for them. “We would be honored Yuzuha-san.”

“Good. Now Haruhi, I think you are still missing something,” Yuzuha gestured toward her throat. Hikaru blushed. “Oops! Sorry!! I completely forgot!! Thank you mother for reminding me.” He pulled out a necklace with an intricately designed pendant that matched the intertwined dragon and phoenix tattoo on her back perfectly, only in the center instead of the kanji for love, there was a yin-yang made of ruby and onyx. Leaning close he attached it behind Haruhi’s neck where it fell perfectly in the open space provided by the dress.

“It’s beautiful!” Haruhi said with tears glistening in her eyes. “It’s perfect.”

“And it matches the edgy style of the outfit perfectly,” Yuzuha said. The approval in her voice apparent.

“Almost perfectly,” Kyōuya smiled and reached into his pocket. “There are still two things that are missing, well technically three, but there are only two that I can do anything about. As long as you don’t mind my potentially affecting the design slightly.”

“You have me curious Kyōuya-yoshi.”

Kyōuya pulled out three titanium rings with a dragon and phoenix engraved in them, three thin silver bracelets, and a necklace the mirror to the ones that Hani and Takashi wore.

Her breath caught in her throat as Haruhi reached out a trembling hand and gently took one of the rings, one of the bracelets, and the necklace. Slipping on the ring and bracelet felt right and she looked forlornly at the necklace. Meanwhile - Hikaru grabbed his ring, while Tamaki and Kaoru grabbed their bracelets. All three slipped them on the same time Kyōuya did with the last ring. They turned to Yuzuha for approval.

“I think you are right, Kyōuya,” Yuzuha said quietly, “Now you all look perfect… Except Haruhi. There is still something missing.” Carefully leaning forward to make sure she didn’t mess up her dress, Yuzuha took the necklace from Haruhi’s lap and wrapped it twice around her booted ankle.
Making sure the pendant was showing on the outside of the boot. “Now. That’s better.” Yuzuha returned to her seat with the same casually elegant care she left it. She smiled at every one of the men in the car before turning to Hikaru. “I think my darling son that we are going to have to add anklets to our Spring Collection. It matches perfectly with your and Kaoru’s style.”

The rest of the limo ride was spent in casual conversation and relaxed gratitude. It was only when the limo pulled up in front of the Carrousel du Louvre that Hikaru felt a spike of nervousness. He looked over at Kyouya, terrified that he would change his mind and knowing that he needed to give the Ootori heir the opportunity to do so.

Kyouya felt the nervous energy spike through him as the limo stopped and tightened his hold on Haruhi’s hand. But at the look of fear in Hikaru’s eyes it disappeared. He is my choice. They both are. I won’t let my father stand between what I love and what he deems appropriate. I make my own choices and I choose to be with them both. If that means I am disowned, I can handle it. My real family is here in this limo anyway. Family is supposed to love and support. My biological family other than my sister Fuyami never really loved me and only supported me out of duty. I don’t want to be ‘a duty’ any more.

The chauffer opened the rear door to the limo and assisted first Yuzuha, then Kaoru then Renge out of the limo. With a cheeky trademark smile, Kaoru bowed first to his mother then Renge and offered his arms to both. The crowd awww’d appreciatively and several flashbulbs went off as Kaoru could hear the commentators in the background noting the design and style of the outfits each wore. They seem complimentary. That’s a good thing. Mother will be happy.

Taking a deep breath, Hikaru stepped out of the limo and heard several wolf whistles, which made him grin. Plastering the same trademark Hitachiin smirk, he handed Haruhi out of the limo and heard the murmurs start – Who is she? Are they dating? Grabbing Haruhi’s hand and kissing it, he linked it with his, showing the media without a doubt that she was his girlfriend. He gave her a smile as they both turned once more to the limo and Kyouya stepped out. The murmurs started again, more puzzled this time.

Hikaru expected Kyouya to step to Haruhi’s other side and capture her other hand. Therefore it was a surprise when the normally reserved and staid Ootori son gave both his lovers a mischievous wink and grin. Stepping over to the two of them, he moved to Hikaru’s other side and caught his hand instead, linking their fingers inextricably.

The flashbulbs of the paparazzi blinded them.
Fashion Week Begins

Kyouya couldn’t see anything beyond the spots in front of his eyes; his glasses did little to shield him from the onslaught. I thought I was prepared for this. I am not sure that I am, but there isn’t any going back now. He felt Hikaru squeeze his hand in tightly in a gesture of support and understanding. It’s ok though. Hikaru needed this. It means so much to him and he has never asked me for anything before. I will get through this as long as I still have both of them at my side when it is over. I just wish I could touch Haruhi now. It was my choice to go to Hika first, and I don’t regret it but I need her calm right now.

Hikaru was a bit more used to the flashbulbs, so after a few moments, he started walking forward tugging slightly on Kyouya’s hand to lead him, while placing his other hand on Haruhi’s back to both guide and offer a bit of support, so she could navigate the carpet in the boots without stumbling. He could hear the questions being yelled at him by the curious reporters – Hikaru who are your escorts? Are you dating them both? What are their names? Are they part of HDG? Do they go to school with you? Hikaru ignored each one, knowing that they would find out the answers soon enough. He just plastered his trademark Hitachiin smirk on his face and continued walking, every once in a while throwing a wink toward a reporter.

Haruhi was grateful for the support of Hikaru’s hand at her back. Hika is ignoring the questions so I can too. It will come out when it comes out. She glanced swiftly at Kyouya and saw the stoic mask on his face. She could tell he was trying to process the overload. Thinking quickly she tilted her head toward Hika and said as quietly as possible. “Is there any way we can shift positions delicately? I need to touch you both.”

Hikaru understood the need and knew Kyouya was having the same thoughts. He replied, “I agree. Kyo showed his support of me, by taking my hand, but he needs you too. I am also familiar with the Red Carpet etiquette, where you two aren’t yet. When we get to the end of this path, we will need to turn around and face the photographers one last time. I will shift to your other side then and put you in between us. It will look better for the photos and will give Kyo the reassurance he needs. I can’t tell you how much I love you both for doing this. I promise it is almost over.”

Kyouya heard Hikaru’s low comments and felt a wave of relief wash over him. He squeezed Hikaru’s hand in thanks. Softly he said, “It is more overwhelming than I anticipated, but I am still proud to be here with both of you.”

They reached the end of the carpet, and true to his word, as he was turning them; he put Haruhi in the middle. She put her arms around the waists of her lovers and they did the same for her, hands resting on her hips and forearms pressed tightly together at her back. Holding their smiles in place for another wave of flashbulbs, all three of them took comfort in the ability to touch each other. After what seemed like an eternity to Kyouya and Haruhi but Hika knew was only about 45 seconds or so, they were able to turn and Hikaru led them into the convention center.

Much to the relief of all three, there were far less paparazzi in the hall, though they knew they were not completely in the clear just yet. Spying Tamaki, Takashi, and Hani already seated in the Hitachiin Box, Hika led the way over to their friends. Handing in first Haruhi then Kyouya, Hikaru said, “I really love you both and I can’t thank you enough for doing that with me. I have to meet Kao, Mom, and Renge in the back, but I will come get all of you for the end walk.” Swiftly he placed a quick kiss on both of their lips.
Kyouya had recovered enough to give him a sly smile. In a teasing tone he said, “You are welcome. I know we both wanted to support you. But that doesn’t mean you can’t make it up to us later… After all, you know what happens when I have been stuck in leather pants for several hours…”

Hikaru grinned at him, “Oh I am completely looking forward to that part. I promise you.” With a final wink, he blew a kiss back towards the box and walked away.

Haruhi watched him walk away with a smile and slid her hand into Kyouya’s. Turning slightly she looked up at her other friends. Both Takashi and Hani winked at her while Tamaki surreptitiously laid a hand on her shoulder – all giving her their support. The hard part is over. Now the aftermath occurs. I can get through anything as long as I have my friends at my side.

The Winter Fashion Week Highlight’s Event was in full swing as Hikaru and Kaoru bustled about backstage. It was a familiar kind of stress and excitement since they had been present for it for years, but the tension this year was more apparent since this was the first year they had any of their designs going out on the runway. Both knew that their mother had approved the designs and though she loved them unconditionally, she was still a fashion designer and shrewd business woman at heart. She would not have approved them for the collection if they didn’t meet her exacting standards.

Kaoru felt the most pressure, since the dress designs were mostly his and would be the first to be noticed and commented on. Not that Hika doesn’t feel the pressure too, but his designs are more likely to be actually purchased and used regularly, so there is a comfort in that for him. Haute Couture, as much as I love it, is not the kind of thing you can wear every day, though our designs are trying to change that concept a bit. He tried to picture Haruhi going to the grocery store in the outfit she was currently wearing and started to giggle. Definitely not for everyday wear, even if she does look stunning in it. She could get a lot more use out of those boots and that necklace, however, and not just as costuming for the sexual fantasies of my pervy brother and equally pervy friends.

The announcement of the first of the Hitachiin Design Group designs shook Kaoru out of his thoughts and he rushed back to the changing area to help Hika usher the models into their places. He saw Hikaru standing ready on one side gesturing for him to come join him. Kaoru mouthed at Hika, “Where’s Renge?” At Hikaru’s shrug, Kaoru turned around to look. A flash of aqua disappearing around the corner caught his attention and he started walking to find the person he knew was currently wearing that particular dress.

“Renge-“Kaoru’s words froze on his lips as he stepped around the corner. Renge stood there in a passionate kiss with Mai Nakasaki. From the intimacy in their body language, Kaoru could tell that this was not a first kiss, but something that showed a long and deep relationship. Renge and Mai?? What?? How Long? How did Hikaru and I not know?? His confusion caused him to step back around the corner. He pressed his back into the wall for support. He heard the softly spoken words from Renge’s mouth and they twisted something in his stomach. “Bonne chance, mon bien-aimé”. Good Luck, my beloved.

Mai hurried around the corner to take her place at the back of the line of models waiting to go onstage, her status as HDG’s premier model apparent in the placement. Renge followed a moment after, patting her hair and smoothing her hands down her body to make sure that everything was in place. She was so focused on the line of models that she didn’t see Kaoru as she walked past.

Kaoru was trying to make sense of what he saw. Renge and Mai were kissing and it definitely looked like this was something that was ongoing, for perhaps a really long time. They must be a couple. It’s
just... I never knew Renge swung that way. She had that crazy interest in Kyoury for a long time and then she kept telling us what the guests of the Host Club would like, so I assumed that she was trying to help us get their attention. Didn’t she date one of her classmates for a time? And what about the kiss I gave her earlier? Unless I completely misunderstood her response, it seemed like she enjoyed it and that she may be attracted to me. Was I wrong? An internal voice (once again sounding suspiciously like Haruhi) responded to his questions with one of its own. So what if she is in a relationship with Mai? You are also sleeping with Tamaki and Hika. Were you planning on giving them both up on the off chance that Renge wanted to date you? ... Well, no. I was hoping Renge wouldn’t mind about Hika and I wasn’t really going to tell her about Tamaki. He realized how cold his response was before his inner voice blasted him. You weren’t going to tell her? How is that fair to her? How would that be fair to Tamaki? You know he won’t be a guilty secret. He would immediately end the relationship that is just forming between the two of you and likely he would step away from you. He would probably step away from Hikaru too, and by extension Haruhi and Kyoury, because he wouldn’t want to hurt their feelings or put them in a potentially awkward position. It would fracture the group. You KNOW this. Do you really want this to happen because you are too afraid to tell the truth? Are you so selfish that you want your relationship with Tamaki, but would deny Renge one with Mai? Especially since it’s obvious they have been a couple a long time.

“Kao?” Hikaru’s concerned voice brought Kaoru back to the present as he touched Kao’s arm. “What’s wrong brother? I can feel you hurting.”

Shaking it off, he gave his brother a watery smile. “I am ok, Hika. I just saw something that is making me question myself. I realized something that I didn’t want to admit and I am feeling rather scummy because of it.”

“What about Hika?”

Pulling his brother into his arms, he said, “I promise to tell you, but I can’t do it right now. I need to have a discussion with someone first and while I know you will support me 100%, I need to do this on my own first. To prove to myself I can. Can you understand that?”

“Yes, but I don’t like it.”

“I know. I love you my twin.” Taking a deep breath and putting on a real smile, he continued, “I have a feeling at the end you will tell me I am being silly. But for right now, let’s make sure that our models are perfect to walk and then go get the rest of our friends. Mom was right. They are our foundation and they deserve to walk with us as part of HDG.”

“Ok.” He gave Kao another hug and a kiss on the cheek. “I love you too. Whatever it is, you always have that. But you are right about mom and our friends. They do deserve to walk with us.” A shy smile crossed his face. “I still can’t believe that they love me. I never believed they could.”

Kaoru grinned. “You are one lucky dog, brother.” Then thinking of Tamaki, he added. “So am I brother. So am I.”

Hikaru grinned back, “Let’s capture the Fashion World and make Allegra Versace walk into the Ball wearing one of our dresses. Mom was totally right to make that bet. We will win.” Linking arms, they walked back to the others, smirks firmly in place.

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In the box, the rest of the Host Club watched the as several designers put out a sample of the designs they were going to be showcasing that week. Tamaki and Hani were fascinated and kept asking
Haruhi questions, since she was the closet to the twins and therefore this ‘world’ they had never really seen. Takashi and Kyouya watched the show with polite interest, but grinned inwardly in amusement at the rapture with which their blond counterparts were enthralled. Finally, Haruhi saw Hikaru and Kao walking toward her and breathed a sigh of relief.

“Why don’t you ask Hika or Kao that one? I really only have the faintest knowledge of fashion and I have no idea why feathers are apparently ‘in’ this season.”

Hikaru’s heart skipped a beat when he saw the love in Kyouya and Haruhi’s eyes as he walked toward the box. However, the tone of Haruhi’s voice as he got close enough to hear the tail end of her comment, made him grin. It was one part exasperation, one part patience, and one part fondness, though it was looking like the exasperation was going to increase if he didn’t do something. Swooping in to answer the question for her, he said, “Because fashion is whimsical like that. This year someone decided it is feathers. Next year it could be snakeskin, for all we know.”

“My hero!” Haruhi mouthed to Hikaru, who grinned.

“We are here to escort all of you backstage.” He gestured to the stage. “You can see the groups doing their final presentation now. HDG will go last since we are the group that is hosting the Grand Ball at the end of the week. We do need to hurry though.”

“On our way,” Tamaki said making sure to let his glance linger a bit longer than absolutely necessary on Kaoru, as he exited the box with the others. He smiled to himself as he felt Kaoru’s hand linger on his back for just a moment.

The whole of HDG including the Host Club walked the runway to the sound of applause and fanfare. The men of the Host Club were in their element, being no strangers to applause and approval. Yuzuha smiled to herself as she watched the boys offer arms to the different models and assist them in the turn around. *Hmm… I wonder if I can talk them into modeling for me in the Spring Collection. They are naturals at this.*

As all the designers gathered on the stage in one large group, Yuzuha stepped forward to do the official closing of the night and the opening of Paris Winter Fashion Week. Grabbing a wireless headset, she hooked the earpiece around her ear and adjusted the microphone toward her mouth. “Greetings Friends, fellow Fashionistas, and darling Press. I want to officially welcome you to the gorgeous city of Paris for Winter Fashion Week. Over the next five days, you will have a chance to see the collections for 20 different top designers and enjoy the marketplace filled with over a hundred more. As you all know, at the end of the week, one of the leading designers hosts the Grand Ball, and I am pleased to announce that this year that honor goes to Hitachiin Design Group. Traditionally the event is held here at the Carrousel du Louvre, but as we at HDG like to break from convention, both professionally and personally, we are going to be holding the event at another location. Tickets are, of course, sold out so those of you that thought this year would be the same as all the others are in for a huge disappointment.” Yuzuha paused to enjoy the grumblings of the crowd that hadn’t bothered to buy their tickets in advance. “I can promise you that nothing you will see from Hitachiin Designs this year will be what you may have grown accustomed to… After all, it is the nature of Fashion to change and evolve and we as fashion devotees must change and evolve with it. We are passionate. We love intensely and we appreciate beauty in all of its many forms. Therefore, the Grand Ball will be held at a brand new venue. Just as this year my sons have demonstrated their singular ability to hold their own in the world of fashion, a dear friend of theirs has turned his passion for architecture into something bold, stunning, and a worthy partner of HDG. It is with my absolute pleasure that I announce that the Grand Ball will be held at the Maison des Roses on the Suoh Estate just outside Paris.”
The crowd burst into thunderous applause.

Kaoru and Hani each slipped an arm around Tamaki to support him as his legs gave out in shock.

Yuzuha is as brilliant as she is devious. Kyouya couldn’t keep the respect from coloring his mind as he watched her work the crowd. In one fell swoop she implied that our triad was perfectly normal since Fashion breaks from convention all the time, so why can’t love, and also implied that those who can’t handle the novelty aren’t true followers of Fashion. Dear gods, I am glad that Yuzuha’s calling is Fashion, because if it were politics, she could easily be running the nation. Leaning toward Hikaru, he let some of his thoughts emerge, “I think I love your mom. She just manipulated the press and everyone else in a way and with an ease that many politicians would kill for.”

“I know,” Hikaru said. “Isn’t it awesome?!”

“Completely, Hika-chan,” Hani piped up from the side that was still gently supporting Tamaki. “She is something else.”

Taking a final bow, Yuzuha turned and walked back toward the rest of the group. It was the signal for the group to exit the stage and prepare to leave. As she got closer a wide smile lit her face, “So how was that boys?”

“Brilliant.” Hikaru answered.

“Devious.” Kaoru echoed.

“Perfectly Hitachiin.” They said together and each gave her a kiss on the cheek.

“Thank you my loves and thank you Kyouya, Takashi, Hani, and Tamaki for walking out with us.”

Turning to a still slightly stunned Tamaki, she added, “Tamaki, I hope you don’t mind the way I announced the venue change for the Grand Ball. I felt it needed a bit of flair worthy of the Host Club.”

At the mention of the Host Club, Tamaki straightened. Taking Yuzuha’s hand he bowed over it and laid a kiss on the back. “It was most appreciated. I am honored that you were willing to change the venue to highlight my humble home.” Then with a puzzled grin, he looked up, “I don’t think I actually ever asked, but what is the attendance going to be for this Ball?”

“500 tickets were presold, and there will be about another 100 people from different media outlets.”

Tamaki felt panicked and dizzy again. Six HUNDRED people!! However, he recovered quickly as his mind went into overdrive. “The ballroom can hold about 200, so I will make sure to open up the library, Music Room, and Conservatory.”

“You can also open up all the bedrooms. We will make sure all our clothing and stuff is locked in the closets. The back patio can also be swept, tented, and space heaters brought in to warm it,” Kyouya added in the brisk voice Tamaki associated with the Shadow King and Host Club. “I can help you organize it all tomorrow.”

The panic slowly left Tamaki’s face as his friends nodded their agreement. “Ok. We can do this. It will be a big crowd, but we will manage.”

“And it will be the best advertising for the space to hold events.” Hani said. “Do you have a website set-up yet for people to go to and an email so they can inquire?”
“Eeep… NO! How soon will it take someone to design one?” panic crept back into Tamaki’s voice.

“Actually Tamaki…” Kaoru started.

“You do have a website.” Hikaru finished.

“What?!” Tamaki whipped his head around to look at the twins. “I do?”

“Yes.” The twins said together. “You do. We built it for you.”

“What? When?”

“Well it was going to be our Christmas present to you,” Hikaru started.

“It’s really simple in design right now, mostly because we were trying to keep in the limit of $50 each for gifts that was set. But the domain name is yours for the next two years at least and it comes with unlimited email.” Kaoru finished.

“If you know of a good graphic designer, we can turn it over to them and have them take photos this week to add to the site as well as finesse it into something professional.” Hikaru said with a smile.

“Yes! Leave that to me,” Yuzuha said with a smile. “It will be my pleasure and my treat! I know the perfect photographer and he will be thrilled at having the first glimpse of the venue. I will also have my graphic designer look over the website. I am sure she can do something spectacular in a short amount of time, especially since she has worked with Hika and Kao before.” She looked slyly at the six young men and two young women standing in front of her.

Haruhi laughed at the expression on Yuzuha’s face. “Out with it Yuzuha. I have seen that look on your sons’ faces enough to know you are plotting something.”

“Oh Haru-yoshi, you are my darling darling girl. I was just thinking that every good event photo shoot needs models… and since we have six amazing male and two gorgeous female specimens right here it would be a shame to let it go to waste. We could even add Mai for a flash of color with that hair of hers. Hitachiin Design Group would be glad to supply the clothing for such a shoot…” She gave all of them a look of pure innocence.

“I can definitely confirm that I now understand where Hikaru and Kaoru get their deviousness and ability to manipulate from. Their mother is an unparalleled master at it,” Kyouya smirked.

“Kyo-yoshi,” Yuzuha pretended to be affronted. “I would never try to manipulate my son’s friends!”

“I meant no offense, only my sincerest appreciation of an art form I have observed since I could walk. It is a brilliant idea. It helps Tamaki greatly. It gives HDG a leg up and bragging rights. Having six males and three females in the photos will also subconsciously imprint the idea of unconventional relationships and help spare Hika, Haruhi, and I a great deal of bad press.” Kyouya bowed and kissed her hand as well.

“Not to mention gets all of the Host Club to be your models, which is something that I KNOW you have wanted for some time, mother,” Kaoru teased.

“Of course I want all of you as models! You are all gorgeous!! Any designer would give their left kidney to be able to work with such beautiful raw material.”

“We will do it.” Hani said. “It sounds like fun. It just can’t be tomorrow or on Tuesday since that is Haruhi’s testing for her next belt.”
“Oh Haru! You didn’t tell me that you were testing this week!” Renge pouted, “I want to watch and cheer you on.”

Haruhi squeezed Renge’s hand, “Honestly, so much has been happening that I just forgot to tell you. I am doing a demo with Hani and Takashi around 11 and then I will be taking my test around 12:30. Are you free?”

Renge looked over at Kaoru who nodded at her. He responded for her, “Renge and I were going to meet for lunch that day to discuss some things, but I can pick her up early, we can watch your demo and testing and then we can grab a late lunch.”

Hikaru arched an eyebrow at his brother. You have a date with Renge? When did this happen and when were you going to tell me? What about Tamaki?

Kaoru could feel the questions burning in the twin bond and mouthed the word ‘Later’ to Hikaru, who crossed his arms and looked stubborn.

Renge however was completely oblivious to the interchange between the Hitachiin brothers and said with a squeal, “Oh that’s perfect!”

“Well, then let’s plan for Wednesday. We will want to give the photographer and GD as much time as possible to edit and post the photos and website.” Yuzuha said briskly. “We will plan on starting early, so we will be at the House by about 7:30 to set up. I will bring a variety of clothing. I believe Renge told me there was a tropical conservatory – it will be perfect for swim wear. For now, go home. I am going to make a few phone calls and then I am going back to the Hotel. Renge darling, did you need a ride?”

Renge looked up and saw Mai discreetly standing across the room, leaning against a pillar letting her lust show in her eyes. She always does get horny after a show, not that I am complaining. She said out loud, “No, but thank you for the offer. I am going to grab a ride back with Mai.”

“Not a problem. Now then… Boys! Haruhi! Get yourselves back to the house and get some sleep. You are going to need it for the next week.” Yuzuha shooed them towards the exits. “And remember – Smile for the cameras!”

The whole group laughed as they made their way out the door to where their limo was waiting.
The mood in the limo for the trip back to the Maison des Roses was excited. Everyone was still riding an energy high from the end of the Fashion show and the announcement of the Grand Ball.

“Tama-chan, why did you decide to change name for the Guest House?” Hani asked curiously.

“I thought Suoh Guest House didn’t sound formal enough. I was trying to think of a good name that could define it as an event space but stay true to the concept that I wanted. I started thinking about the roses in the back gardens and how important that flower was to all of us in the Host Club, so House of Roses just seemed to fit perfectly. In French that translates to Maison des Roses. I just can’t figure out how the twins knew.”

“I heard you muttering it under your breath when looking out the window the other morning,” Kaoru said. “I took a risk and secured that domain name with the option to change it to another later if needed. I just didn’t realize that mom was going to jump on it so fast. I hope you like the name, because it is now going to be permanently ingrained in the press.”

“It is perfect. I can’t believe all of this is happening. It is a complete dream come true and I can’t thank you both enough for everything you have done. I don’t know what I did to deserve you as friends, but I am so grateful.” Tamaki leaned his head against Kaoru’s shoulder and smiled at Hikaru as he sat across from them.

Uncaring that the others were in the car, Kaoru lifted Tamaki’s head and kissed him, letting his lips speak for him. Tamaki responded eagerly to the kiss and it was only the wolf-whistles from the rest of the group that made him break it off. Realizing that he had pressed Kaoru back into the seat and had slid his hand underneath Kaoru’s shirt, he looked at the others sheepishly. “Sorry…”

“Don’t be boss,” Hikaru grinned. “It’s hot to watch. But I think what Kao was trying to say is that you accepted us even when we drove you crazy. You are our friend and we would do anything we could for you. This was just the first chance to do something where we had the perfect skills for it.”

“I still thank you.”

“And we accept your thanks.” They chorused.

The limo was silent for a few moments as the entire group got lost in their minds, but soon Hani broke the silence once again. “I was just thinking. Tomorrow we are all splitting up, but what time should we meet? Also… I am not sure how to ask this so forgive me as I just blurt it out, since seeing that kiss reminded me how turned on I am right now and ‘dating’ you this week will have me riding a knife edge of lust. So I guess my question is, how long are we spending together and are there any rules that we need to know going in?”
“What do you mean, Hani?” Tamaki asked.

“Well for example – tomorrow I am spending the day with the twins, Takashi is with Haruhi, and Kyouya is with Tamaki. I know we have all hinted at it and maybe even played around some, but we have all pretty much gone to bed in our normal groups. Are we going to continue that or are we going to spend the night with our dates? Is that too far out of everyone’s comfort zone? Would that potentially cause jealousy?” Hani looked around at the others, unable to read the expressions on their faces.

Kyouya sighed and ran a hand through his hair before pushing his glasses up his nose, “That is a good question and since I am probably the one most likely to be jealous, all I can say is I will try not to be. Part of me wants to say absolutely not but another part of me is very open to the idea. I said the other night that I want to experience everything I can before we go back to Japan and I meant it…”

Haruhi leaned over and placed a kiss on his cheek, “I know exactly what you mean Kyo-love. I am eager and scared a bit at the same time. What if we tentatively say yes, but leave in the right for anyone to change their mind? That way no one is forced to do something they aren’t comfortable with. It isn’t a blanket yes but it isn’t a no either.”

“I think I could be ok with that.” Kyouya said. “I hope that doesn’t offend anyone. I really am excited about spending time with each of you and I am just as turned on at the thought of sleeping with you but I don’t know if I will freak out in the middle.”

Hikaru leaned over and kissed him in reassurance. “If you freak out, we go back to what we were doing before, no questions asked. I am curious about the others but not at the risk of losing you and Haruhi. I know she feels the same.” He saw Haruhi nod. “As for other rules, the one that the three of us discussed together but I don’t remember if we talked to the rest of you about was using protection. I know we are all clean and Haru is on the pill, but still there is the tiniest chance and none of us are ready to be parents yet.”

“That is fair and a good idea actually, Hika-chan. I have no problem with that if it comes down to it.” Hani smiled, impressed with the mature attitude Hika presented.

“I agree as well,” Takashi said quietly. “But I also think it would be a good idea for everyone to meet up in the mornings, so we could discuss what we did the day before and we could spend some time in our pairings. It is important to reconnect and ground with each other before flying off to do something new.”

“I have no problem with that, “ Tamaki smiled at everyone.

“Me neither,” Kaoru responded. “Though I do have to say this is going to be a very interesting week. I for one am planning on taking full advantage of what is offered. Let’s get wild.” He wiggled his eyebrows suggestively to break the tension and make the others laugh, before pouncing back on Tamaki, pinning him to the seat, and resuming the interrupted kissing.

“Tamaki – I should have warned you that Fashion Shows make Kao horny. Something about all the sexy models wearing our clothes and not being able to touch any of them in anything other than a strictly professional way.” Hikaru grinned as he watched Kao slide his body up Tamaki’s.

“And it doesn’t to you?” Kyouya asked Hikaru with a devilish grin.

Haruhi laughed. Grabbing Kyouya’s hand she placed it on Hikaru’s crotch, causing Hika’s breath to
catch and a small moan to escape. Both Kyouya and Haruhi grinned at each other at the sound. “Trust me, he is every bit as horny, if not hornier, than Kao is now.”

“That’s it love, you are losing those tights if I have to rip them off of you,” Hikaru growled as he pressed her into Kyouya, similar to the way Kaoru had Tamaki. He almost lost his mind as Kyouya continued to stroke the bulge beneath his leather pants. “I want you in those boots tonight and nothing else. I want you pinned under me, screaming my name.”

Kyouya glanced up at Hani and Takashi, curious about their reaction, but Hani was straddling Takashi, pinning his hand above his head with one hand and stroking his cock with the other - his tongue down the dark one’s throat. Ten points to Hani for getting Takashi’s pants open without any of us noticing. Takashi has a nice looking cock. A moan escaping Haruhi’s mouth at something Hika mumbled brought him back to the two in his arms. He leaned down to whisper in both their ears, “While Haruhi is screaming your name Hikaru, you better be screaming mine. I am fucking you tonight.” He was rewarded by feeling Hikaru shudder over him.

It took the limo driver several minutes of knocking on the window to let them know they had arrived at the house. As they hastily straightened their clothes and exited the vehicle, Tamaki swore he heard Hikaru say under his breath. “I predict a limo orgy in our future.”

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Haruhi wasn’t sure which group made it up the stairs the quickest. One minute she was in the limo with Hikaru pressing her into Kyo, the next she was being tossed on her bed. She grinned as she watched her two lovers stalk over to her. They stood at the edge of the bed looking at her with a heat that they didn’t bother trying to hide. Feeling bold, she matched their look with one full of equal heat. I am not holding back this week. I want them. Anyway I can. Always. But tonight, I want to be wild. She got to her knees on the center of the bed. Slowly she reached up the dress and unfastened the top from the rest of the dress. She slid it over her head and sensually down her arms, letting the softness of the velvet cause her skin to bump slightly with the sensation. Her eyes challenged her boys. They met the challenge, slipping off their jackets and tossing them across the back of the couch.

Haruhi let a small smile cross her face. Standing carefully on the bed in her boots, she walked to the corner with a bedpost, holding one hand out for balance while the other followed the iron work to keep her steady. Once at the corner closest to them, she held on to the post with her right hand and slid down the zipper on her side with the left. The dress fell, pooling at her feet as she carefully stepped out of it. She then leaned her body against the pole, letting it support her weight, as she put herself on display for them.

Holy Fuck, those aren’t tights - they are thigh highs!!! Kao how the hell did you manage to keep that a secret from me when you were designing that outfit. Hikaru gulped audibly as he stared at the vision of Haruhi wearing only a pair of black lace boy shorts, red thigh highs that stopped just at the top of her thighs – offering only an inch or so of exposed skin, and the boots that had been giving Hikaru a hard on anytime he thought of them that night. “Fuck you are sexy.”

Haruhi colored slightly but it was barely noticeable on the already heightened color of her skin from the arousal she was feeling. She did respond to Hikaru’s comment though. “So are you. But you are wearing far too much clothing. I want to see you both in just those pants; I want to feel the leather on my skin. Tonight I feel on fire. I want to be wild. I want to be free… and I want to fuck.”

Growling Hikaru ripped off his shirt scattering buttons across the floor. He launched himself at
Haruhi tackling her to the bed and pinning her hands above her head, while he thrust his eager tongue deep in her mouth, sliding it around hers and pressing his erect cock, still encased in leather, against the flimsy lace of her panties. He heard her gasp underneath him.

Kyouya watched the two of them for a moment as he undid the buttons of his own shirt, thoroughly enjoying the view and completely turned on by it. *I will join them in a moment; I just need to get a couple of things to have ready.* He walked to the nightstand and pulled out a small pair of scissors, lube, and a condom. He set them in easy reach on the bed, but still far enough away from the action where they wouldn’t be disturbed. Only then did he climb on the bed and approach his lovers.

Hikaru had moved from her mouth to trailing kisses down her neck and was now fully occupied laving one nipple with his tongue while he pinched the other firmly with his hand. Haruhi was squirming under him in pleasure, her hands tangled in his hair as her body arched in pleasure, her legs wrapped around his.

Kyouya knelt behind Hikaru, and slowly bent his body down so his bare chest was pressing against Hikaru’s back. Immediately one of Haruhi’s hands left Hika’s hair and sought Kyouya’s. He looked down at her, so beautifully flushed under them, and whispered darkly in Hika’s ear. “Are you almost ready to scream my name?” He then sank his teeth into the meat of Hikaru’s shoulder at the base of the neck.

Hikaru hissed out his name in pleasure at the pressure of Kyouya’s teeth, barely remembering to pull his own off of Haruhi’s nipple. Kyouya held the exact pressure to make the adrenaline flow through Hika, leaving a perfect impression of his teeth without breaking the skin. His already hard cock managed to get harder… almost overwhelmingly so. Kyouya’s next words brought home the fact that Hika wasn’t sure he was going to be able to last long.

“Get Naked. NOW.” The command in Kyouya’s voice caused Hika to immediately roll off of Haruhi and struggle with the pants that had suddenly become too tight. Finally managing to remove them, Hikaru looked back to see that Kyouya held a pair of scissors. He watched as Kyouya loomed over Haruhi and said with the same hint of promise and threat, “You are going to be fucked completely tonight princess. I want you screaming Hika’s name and mine as you climax. I want to feel your nails on my back and the heels of those boots pressed into my thighs as you come underneath us.”

Haruhi shuddered under him, unable to speak, but nodding her agreement.

“Good, now there is one more thing I want to do before we begin.” Kyouya slid the scissors under the lace of her panties and cut them off of her, stifling her protests with a look, as he threw them across the room and tossing the scissors to the floor. He stared down at her naked body for a moment before sliding his hands across her breasts and down to her hips, enjoying the faint moans. Sitting back on his heels, Kyouya lifted her hips with his hands and buried his face in the warm heat between her legs.

Haruhi screamed “Kyouya!” as his mouth made contact with the sensitive bud. As turned on as she was it only took three solid strokes of his tongue on her clit to send her over the edge, cumming hard on his tongue as she twisted her hands in the sheets, moans rocking through her body.

Kyouya licked the sweetness and savored the pulse of her orgasm on his tongue. Too soon, he lowered her hips back to the bed and pinned her body under his for a kiss, letting her taste her own essence as the tongue that had plundered the depths of her womb only moments before claimed her mouth with equal demand. Pulling back, he sat up and loosened the sheets from the death grip of Haruhi’s hands. Smiling he said, “That’s better. I wanted at least one of your orgasms. Now you can last until Hika can claim another.” He looked over to where Hikaru was standing, slowly stroking
himself as he watched the scene. “Hika. She is ready for you. Are you ready for me?”

“Hell the fuck yes.” Hikaru growled as he joined them on the bed again. This time he let his naked body glide up her body, pressing his cock against the warmth still faintly pulsing from the aftereffects of Kyouya’s tongue. He reveled in the heat of her skin and the way her breathing immediately accelerated once his skin touched hers.

“Hika, please…” Haruhi moaned. “I need you in me.”

“Your wish is my command, princess.” Hikaru laid a soft kiss on her lips before thrusting deep into her with one stroke, knowing that her wetness and the relaxation after that first orgasm, would allow him be rougher than he would normally. The sound of his name on her lips let him know that it was exactly what she wanted. Tonight is not the night for slow and sweet. Tonight it is all heat, lust, and fucking. Dear gods… where is Kyouya. I need him in me as much as I need to be in Haru right now. As if the thought conjured him, Kyouya pressed against Hikaru again, only this time there wasn’t any leather between them. He could feel Kyouya’s erection pressed against his back, hard and eager.

Kyouya slipped on a condom and lubed up his fingers. Letting them slide down the crack between Hikaru’s firm butt cheeks, he teased the tight puckered hole. Sliding one slick finger in first then another he cherished Hikaru’s moans of pleasure. There was no resistance or hesitation on Hika’s part which let him know Hikaru was very familiar with having a cock buried in his ass.

“Kyouya, please. I need you to fuck me. Don’t be gentle, don’t take your time. I am ready and I have craved this for so long… Claim me.” Hikaru pleaded even as he thrust deep into Haruhi again, making her gasp.

Needing no further encouragement, Kyouya knelt behind Hikaru, catching his hips as he pulled out of Haruhi, spread his ass open and guided his cock into Hikaru’s ass. He hissed at the tightness – so different from Haruhi’s warm wetness, but it felt so good. Hika is mine, just as Haruhi is mine. I won’t let anyone take them from me. Adjusting to the feeling, Kyouya started to move, rubbing the head of his cock over the firm nub of Hikaru’s prostate.

Hikaru screamed his name as the first nudge against that sweet spot buried deep inside him made contact. Yes Yes YES!! His mind screamed while he tried to keep his body from exploding on that first touch. Focusing on Haruhi underneath him, he matched the rhythm that Kyouya started. Kyouya would thrust deep, causing Hikaru to thrust as equally deep into Haruhi, then as Kyo would pull out Hika would do the same, and the cycle would repeat.

Haruhi could feel the weight of both of her men and her body was reacting to it hard. She was floating on the edge of another orgasm and it was only a matter of moments before it would rock her again. The two of them together are undeniably hot. I know Hika has wanted this for years. If I am honest, I have too. There is no going back. Whatever happens, I will fight for them. Another thrust ripped through her and she lost her train of thought. Angling her body up so she could kiss them both, she wrapped her legs around both of them, the heels of her boots pressing into the meat of Kyouya’s butt. She felt Hikaru brace himself against the bed, so she let him support her and slid her arms around both of them, coming to rest on Kyouya’s back, sliding with each of his thrusts into Hikaru.

Kyouya couldn’t last any longer, the tightness as it squeezed around his cock, bringing him faster than he had intended. With a final grunt he thrust deep and held. He cried out “Hikaru…” as he felt his orgasm rush out in a throbbing pulsing beat that caused his vision to black out. A sharp scratching pain down his back only enhanced the pleasure and he let himself drown in the sensation.
Hikaru screamed Kyouya’s name and then Haruhi’s as Kyouya’s last thrust caused his own orgasm to shoot deep into Haruhi. He could feel that his orgasm triggered hers and it was only a heartbeat later that she was crying out his name, internal muscles tightening and milking him for everything he had. He rested his head on her chest for a moment, breath heavy, before he slowly lowered himself on her, still managing to prevent their combined weight from crushing them, but connecting them to each other as their heartbeats slowed.

With a sigh, Kyouya pulled out and rolled off of them to remove the condom, tossing it into the trash can under the nightstand. Hikaru pulled out of Haruhi with another sigh and rolled off to the other side, pulling her up to cuddle on his chest. She snuggled in - one hand above her head and the other resting on his chest. Kyouya rolled back over and spooned up against her, now soft cock nestled in the cleft of her buttocks. He linked one hand with the one above her head and rested the other on Hikaru's hip. Hikaru mirrored Kyouya, raising his hand and tangling it with theirs, all three entwined, while he rested the other on Kyouya’s hip.

Still slightly out of breath, Kyouya whispered, “I love you. Both of you. No matter what happens – this week, next week, ten years from now – I want you both with me. I can handle anything if you are both by my side.”

“We will be.” Hikaru said quietly. “I can’t imagine my life without you. I don’t want to.”

“I will fight anyone or anything that tries to separate us.” Haruhi promised fiercely. “I love you. I am yours. You are mine.”

Kyouya held fast to that fierceness as exhaustion sucked him under.

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Takashi was naked. His hands, cuffed together at the wrist, were attached to the headboard by a 12 inch chain. Currently he was on his back, trying to hold in his moans as Mitskune worked his tongue and hands down his fully erect cock. Mitskune had given the command that he had to be quiet. Not something that he usually had a problem with, but in this instance, Mitskune was purposely pushing every button he knew to drive Takashi crazy with lust and make him want to scream. So much for my legendary calm, if Haruhi could see me like this, she may think twice that her calm in training comes from me. Thoughts of his yoga partner calmed him a little bit, but caused another type of desire to manifest. Tomorrow I am going to be completely alone with her… A pinch at the base of his cock snapped his attention back to the moment as he saw Mitskune staring down at him a mix of mischief, lust, and control in his eyes.

“I know you get her tomorrow and the what-ifs are driving you crazy, lover, but right now I don’t want you to calm yourself by thinking of her. I want you struggling to control your orgasm and begging me for the release.”

“Mitskune… I… gods… I am on that edge. I want to give you your orgasm before receiving mine. Let me pleasure you.”

Hani grinned, “Normally I would let you, but tonight I want your cum on my tongue before I bury myself in that tight ass.” He moved his mouth back down to the hardness and circled his fingers around Takashi’s balls, pulling it taut and causing Takashi to stifle a groan.

Takashi gasped, “Mitskune… please. Let me scream. Let me cum.”

Hani swirled his tongue again, “You need to beg prettier than that, my lover.”
“Please… oh gods PLEASE!!”

“Scream for me Takashi.” Hani said as he clamped his lips around Takashi’s erection again and slid them all the way down to the base. The hot salty warmth hitting the back of his throat almost as pleasurable as the way Takashi screamed his name and bucked underneath him. He worked his tongue just a bit longer prolonging Takashi’s orgasm to the point where it was on edge of painful, before releasing it and sitting back with a satisfied smile. “You are so hot when you come.”

Takashi was gasping for air as the orgasm still rode his body in slow waves of pleasure. “Thank you lover.”

“My pleasure… and my turn. Flip on your knees. I want to fuck you until I flood you… and I want to see if I can wring another orgasm out of you. After all, knowing I am the only one that can break your legendary calm is far more of a power rush. Besides, weren’t you saying last week that you wanted to work on your endurance more?”

“You are evil, lover.”

Hani pouted then grinned, “No. I am slightly sadistic… but only as far as you need me to be. Breaking you wouldn’t be fun, but pushing you to your limits… Oh hell yes. It is fun watching you writhe underneath me.”

“Just let me watch when Kyouya manages to do the same to you.”

Hani wasn’t surprised that his lover guessed at the desire/need that was just starting to form in his mind. They were far too in tune with each other to keep anything hidden. Any time some thing, some desire, some need, came up they discussed it. It was the reason Hani knew and approved of Takashi’s previously hidden passion for his yoga partner and female Host Club member. Still… Hani smirked, “Only if you are an exceptionally good boy, lover.”

Takashi grinned as he positioned himself exactly as Mitskune demanded, “I am always a good boy. It’s one of the reasons I have kept you for so long.”

“Very true.” Then with only pause to smear a bit of lube down his cock and a put a dab on Takashi’s hole, Hani thrust deep enjoying Takashi’s groan of pleasure. Shifting his position to slide in and out, Hani whispered to his lover, “Now shall I make you prove it again?”

Takashi’s cries muffled in the sheets were the only answer Hani needed.

Kaoru winced slightly as he pulled off the leather pants. He tried to hide it from Tamaki but was unsuccessful. However as he looked at the man who was fast becoming more than a casual lover to him, he didn’t see the guilt he was expecting. Instead Tamaki’s face held only sympathy as he held out a familiar jar.

“Want me to rub in another layer?”

“Yes please. It isn’t nearly as bad as it was earlier this morning, but …”

“I did a number on you,” Tamaki held up his hand to stop the words that were about to spill out of Kaoru’s mouth. “I am not feeling guilty about it anymore. I promise. Actually, it’s kind of the opposite. I really am kind of turned on by the fact that you let me do that to you. You were flying and that is a serious rush that I could put you there. Now… if you would indulge me…”
“What is it Tama? I would do pretty much anything for you.”

“Well… I am actually turned on by the thought of caring for you, after. It probably sounds silly, but I love the idea of comforting you after you have been beaten. Taking care of your injuries. Massaging your sore muscles and feeling your body come alive under my hands in a different way.” Tamaki ducked his head to the side as he said the last.

Kaoru approached Tamaki and turned his face so he could look deep into those violet eyes. “I think that is the sexiest thing anyone has ever said to me. My own private aftercare given by a seriously sexy man who could have anyone he wanted.”

“Really?”

“Really.” Kaoru pressed his lips against Tamaki’s letting him feel the sincerity in his actions. The kiss didn’t stay soft for long though as the heat that has been flaring in the limo rushed back.

Tamaki lost himself in Kaoru’s kiss, enjoying the moment for as long as he could. It wasn’t until he heard Kao hiss as Tamaki’s hand grabbed his naked ass that he remembered the jar of cream in his other hand. Breaking off the kiss with a smile, he said, “Lie down on the bed. I will rub in the cream.”

“Only if you promise to be naked as you are doing it,” Kaoru said with a frown as he realized that Tamaki was still wearing the leather pants. “Not that you don’t look completely fuckable in those pants, but I would hate it if the cream stained them.”

Tamaki laughed out loud, “Spoken by a true fashion designer.” He quickly stripped off the pants and joined Kaoru on the bed. “You know the others probably aren’t going to be as considerate of the clothing.”

Kaoru sighed in bliss as the first sure strokes of Tamaki’s hands on his abused buttocks and thighs felt delightful. Still keeping up the conversation he said, “Oh, I figure. The only one that I am really worried about is Haruhi’s dress. Hika looked about ready to rip it off her completely.”

“If I know Haru, she will manage to save the dress, but the tights are probably toast. I have to give your brother credit, those boots were fucking hot.”

“Yes they were and they fit her perfectly, but I slipped a bit of a quick one by Hika, and I am really surprised that none of you noticed. Those weren’t tights. They were thigh-highs.” He grinned to see the stunned expression on Tamaki’s face as he was obviously picturing Haruhi wearing nothing but those boots and a pair of red thigh high tights.

Tamaki gulped, “Thigh highs?!?”

“Yup… and having seen her in them as she was getting ready, I can tell you they look as good as you are imagining, right now,” Kaoru teased.

Tamaki blushed. *It’s bad form to fantasize about someone else when there is a very naked and willing person in front of you.* He looked down at Kaoru, with a hint of accusation in his tone. “You just told me that on purpose didn’t you?”

“Yes. I wanted to see your reaction. I have a confession. I know you are still hung up on Haru and I wanted to let you know that I am ok with that. Honestly, with the way she and Kyoyua look at you, I will bet you $100 it won’t be long before you are in some kind of relationship with them both. I am ok with that too. ” Now it was Kaoru’s turn to look off to the side. “The thing is, I know we started this just as a casual thing between us, but I am finding that I want your company more and more. I…
I think…” Kaoru took a deep breath and blurted it out, “I think I want an actual relationship with you Tamaki… but I don’t want it if you don’t. I don’t want to screw up our friendship.”

Tamaki pulled Kaoru into him for a kiss, which Kaoru returned for a moment before breaking it off and continuing, “The thing is – I do want a relationship with you, but I also want to explore my submissive side with Hani and Takashi… and I am also very attracted to Renge. It’s funny. I never noticed her before but somehow this week, she has completely captivated me. I don’t know how she feels or even if she likes me at all, but I wanted you to know.”

Tamaki held tight to Kao for a moment before responding, “I absolutely understand everything you just said. I have also been feeling closer to you than I ever have before but I didn’t want to pressure you into something that you didn’t want. I really think that you should explore more with Taka and Hani. I can tell you from experience it will be incredible… and I have seen the way Renge looks at you. She may be just as puzzled as you about what is happening between you, but I think it could develop into a real relationship. If you needed me to step away, I could do that for you.”

“I don’t want you to step away!”

“Good. Because even though I could do that for you, I really don’t WANT to. I want a relationship with you… but like you – I also want one with Kyouya and Haruhi. I am not sure how Hika will figure into it, but while he is definitely hot and could be fun to play with, I don’t know if I am attracted to him the same way I am you, which is weird considering you are twins. For Takashi and Hani – I would definitely have sex with either of them again, but I don’t want a relationship with them. They are such a self-aware unit; it would feel odd to be a part of it. I don’t think I could keep up.”

“I don’t think anyone could, outside of Haruhi and maaaaayyybee Kyouya. But I think I could be in a bdsm related relationship with them, since it’s a different kind of relationship.”

“I could see that… and if they get you all black and blue, I could take care of it for you,” Tamaki grinned, bringing the conversation full circle.

“Yes you could… though there is something else I am dying for you to take care of right now,” Kaoru rolled back over, showing Tamaki the hard-on that had been raging all evening.

Tamaki grinned. “I can definitely take care of that. Hand or mouth since your ass is too bruised.”

“Mouth. But lie down with me. I want to suck you off as you suck me.”

“As you wish, my prince.”
The seven friends met downstairs for breakfast on their first “date” day. There were varying degrees of excitement, nervousness, desire and curiosity emanating from each of them, though they all tried to squash their feelings, hoping to make it easier on the others. However, by the fifth time Tamaki picked up the sugar container absently to add another spoonful to his coffee, Hani giggled. “Tama-chan, I hope you are making that for me, because I know you don’t like your coffee that sweet.”

“‘Huh?” Tamaki blinked up at the blond in confusion. Absently, he brought the coffee cup to his lips and took a swallow. “BLECH!! UGH! What the…” The others started grinning as his face contorted in several hilarious expressions and he stared down into the cup mournfully. Without a word he passed it over to Hani who just smiled angelically.

“Here,” Haruhi immediately passed him another cup.

Tamaki took a sip. It was perfect. “Ahhh… much better. Thank you. How di-?”

“By the time you put in the third spoonful, I knew it was going to be too sweet, so I made it the way I know you prefer.”

Tamaki gave her a patented Tamaki grin. “Thank you, Princess.”

“You are welcome,” Haruhi smiled back. “Now what has you so distracted?” She looked at all of the others. “Ok… scratch that. I know what has you distracted. So let’s just get the discussion started. I know that Takashi and I are going to some sort of monastery today to meditate, maybe do some yoga, and prepare for my testing tomorrow. Hani has some mysterious thing that only the twins can help him with, so they are spending the day together. Kyouya, what are you planning to do with Tamaki?”

“I wanted to take Tamaki to a winery that I was thinking about buying. I want his opinion on the area and the investment potential.”

“What? Really?” Tamaki swiveled to look at his best friend. “I had no idea you were interested in wine.”

“I am trying to look at potential investments outside of the normal Ootori group endeavors of medical and security. A French Winery would be a good start.” Kyouya answered. I am just not going to mention that the reason I am looking outside the normal investments, is the fact that I fully expect to be disherited in the next couple of weeks. After so publically coming out last night, my father will be contacting me. I can only ignore him for so long before he will fly out here to confront me himself. He will demand that I give up Hikaru and possibly even Haruhi to marry someone of his choosing to ‘restore the Ootori honor’ or he will threaten to disown me. Even if I were willing to do so, I would never regain my status in his eyes and likely I will be shuttled off to an oversea school to finish my degree and be put to work on one of the lesser Ootori ventures. Kyouya blinked as he realized Haruhi was staring directly at him, in both sympathy and determination, almost as if she was reading his thoughts.

Hikaru saw the exchange between his lovers and understood far more about the situation than either of them realized. It was the reason that he had purposely snuck downstairs and hidden the morning newspaper. His mother had done a good job of burying the relationship underneath the sweeping
rhetoric and excitement of her press statement, but the large photo on the front page was still of that moment when Kyouya grabbed his hand on the red carpet and the caption was ‘La mode n'est pas la seule chose qui sort du placard!’ Fashion isn’t the only thing to come out of the closet! He knew that there was no way to completely hide it from them, but he wanted to delay it as long as possible. Still, he wanted to offer his support. “I think that’s a great idea. The Boss does know architecture and could probably give you some good feedback on the condition of the property.”

Kyouya smiled at his lover, “That is what I was hoping.”

“I can definitely do that.” Tamaki grinned. “I may also be able to suggest a couple of good winemakers if the location is viable. Just let me know what you need.” He reached in his pocket and tossed a pair of car keys at Kyouya. “You are going to need these… and though I don’t dare attempt to tread on the twins toes when it comes to fashion, if I may suggest changing into something that says ‘casual, rich, and eccentric while still being professional?’”

Kyouya glanced down at his crisp suit, jacket pressed and on a hanger near the door, before glancing up at Tamaki. “Something other than a power suit you mean?”

“Yes.” Tamaki blushed. “Trust me on this. The French hospitality business is radically different than the Japanese. You will be better received if you come off as completely in command while showing a careless regard/disregard for the rules, game, transaction… Ummm… Help me out here, devil twins.”

“French business is about appearances as much as profession.” Kaoru responded with a grin at the floundering Tamaki. “The ultra-rich and powerful French man carefully cultivates the illusion of disregard of clothing while simultaneously presenting air of command. It’s a contradiction. It says, my clothes aren’t important – only my ideas. In Japan, you need to have that uniform/power suit to even be considered to present your ideas and if you don’t look like you spent a fortune on your appearance, you aren’t taken seriously. Of course, achieving the true look of casual disregard takes a great deal of work and the money to back it up. Lucky for you, you have us!”

“And we will make you even more perfect. Give us five minutes. We will have the perfect outfits for both of you.” Hikaru blew a kiss at Kyouya. Together the twins ran up the stairs.

“I really shouldn’t be surprised by them anymore, but I am,” Tamaki said.

“I stopped underestimating them a long time ago. If you think their assistance would add to the likelihood of obtaining the property, I will wear whatever they set out.” Kyouya responded. “We can leave as soon as we change. It is going to take about an hour or so to drive depending on the road conditions.”

“Which reminds me,” Takashi said quietly, “Is there a vehicle that Haruhi and I could use, preferably one with 4 wheel drive as the last couple of miles are gravel and dirt.”

“Of course.” Tamaki got up and went to a locked box on the wall inside the library. Returning he tossed a set of keys at Takashi. “It’s the Land Rover. Should be able to handle anything you need. There is also a house key on it, if you guys get back late and the door is locked.”

“Thanks, Tama.” Haruhi said with a smile. Turning to Takashi she said, “Is there anything specific I need to wear or bring?”

“Bring your yoga mat and something comfortable to work out in. You don’t need your gi since we
won’t be doing any sparring. You may also want to grab a change of clothes for if we stop for dinner on the way back.”

“Casual or formal?”

“Casual.”

“Ok. I will be right back.” She got up from the table and left the room as well. Kyouya, Tamaki and Hani sat in companionable silence for a few more minutes sipping their coffee and letting their minds wander about their planned activities.

A few minutes later Hikaru, Kaoru and Haruhi came back down the stairs. Hikaru was carrying her bag in one hand and he held her hand with the other. Kaoru’s arm was lying across her shoulders and he was whispering something in her ear which made her laugh and Hika turn beet red. Slung across his shoulder was her yoga mat. When they reached the bottom of the stairs, the boys set her stuff down carefully.

“Kyouya, Tamaki, we set stuff out on your beds, so you can change anytime,” Hikaru pulled Haruhi in for a kiss. Haruhi let herself sink into his warmth for a moment before breaking it to wrap her arms around him in a hug. Leaning in, he whispered, “Have fun today. I mean it… and I am totally ok if you sleep with Takashi. You just have to promise to give me all the little details. At least one of the three of us needs to know how good he is in bed.” He gave her his most devilish grin as she laughed.

Still grinning she walked over to say goodbye to Kyouya. She followed the same format of kiss and hug for him, only this time it was she who whispered in his ear, “Don’t be afraid of Tamaki. He loves you and I do too. Do what feels right.”

“Only if you promise to follow your own advice,” Kyouya whispered before giving her another searing kiss.

“I promise,” Grabbing her bag and mat; she waved at the others who pouted. Grinning she walked quickly up to each and laid a kiss on their cheeks, which caused them to smile. “Have fun today! We will see you tonight.”

Together she and Takashi walked out the door toward the Land Rover parked just outside.

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Kyouya watched them go with a half-smile before turning back to Tamaki. “Shall we go change?”

“We can do that.”

When Kyouya got to his bedroom he saw a fitted light grey casual button-up shirt, forest green wool pea coat, the ruby necklace from the night before, and another pair of butter soft black leather pants. *Hikaru are you TRYING to kill me? You want me in leather pants all day alone with Tamaki. I am having a hard enough time trying not to think licentious thoughts about my best friend, when I am wearing dress slacks. Putting me in leather is only going to make the thoughts worse.* Sighing, he put on the clothes trying not to let the sensual slide of the leather up his legs remind him of the night before. Once dressed, he reached in the pocket for the car keys Tamaki had tossed at him earlier. Really looking at them for the first time, he swore softly. *Damn… It’s the Aston again. A car guaranteed to turn me on. Pants that make me semi-hard just by putting them on and a day spent with my gorgeous best friend whom I am having a hard time not fantasizing about. The look in his...*
A knock at the door interrupted his train of thought. Grateful for the distraction, he walked over and opened it. Tamaki stood on the other side looking far better in a pair of tight faded jeans, V-neck sweater and casual loafers, than any human had a right to. He also wore the pendant from the night before and Haruhi’s silver bracelet on his wrist. He grinned as he unabashedly looked Kyoya up and down.

“Damn, the twins DEFINITELY know what they are doing. You look smoking and it is absolutely perfect. No one is going to be able to resist you. Least of all me.”

A faint blush crept up Kyoya’s cheeks until Tamaki’s wink managed to relax him. “You look quite nice yourself. I had no idea that jeans could look so good.”

Tamaki grinned. “Well both of us couldn’t wear leather and I have to say, you pull it off far better than I do. It’s almost like you were made for it. You look so perfect in it. Just as well Ouran had a specific uniform, because if you wore those pants during Host Club, you definitely would have been the most popular even if you were just typing away at your computer. The girls would have set-up a ring around you and just watched, staring and sighing, and hoping to get a glance at your perfect ass as you walked away.”

“You exaggerate.”

“Do I?” Tamaki said with a serious note before linking his arm with Kyoya’s and propelling him toward the stairs.

Wolf-whistles from three different mouths greeted them as they walked down the stairs. Kyoya colored slightly again at the praise while Tamaki just swept into a grand bow, causing the others to laugh. The laughter diffused the last of Kyoya’s embarrassment and it was with a sardonic smile that he approached Hikaru. Leaning over he asked, “You put me in leather deliberately didn’t you?”

“Of course. You are seriously hawt in it and it turns you on. I may or may not be the teensiest bit jealous of Tamaki as he gets to spend the day with all of your sexiness, touring the most romantic parts of France, to buy a freaking winery, in a car that screams fuck-me-please.” The laughter in Hikaru’s voice told Kyoya that he was teasing him. “Seriously though – like I told Haruhi. I am ok with anything that you want to do with Tamaki. Have Fun! It’s only idle curiosity that has me wanting the details. Just as you are mine, Tama is Kao’s… and yours and Haruhi’s and maybe Hani’s and Takashi’s. Oh hell… whatever. Just have fun, do everything that I would do, and enjoy yourself.” Hikaru grabbed Kyoya’s hips and crushed his lips against his. When he pulled back he saw Kaoru was doing something similar to Tamaki.

Kyouya grinned at him and gave Hikaru a smoldering look before turning back to Tamaki. “Are you ready?”

With a final smile at Kaoru, Tamaki answered. “Yes I am. Let’s go get you a winery.”

They laughed as they walked out the door.

“So that leaves just us, Hani…” The twins said in unison as they turned to look at the oldest member of their group. “…and your secret!”

Hani turned a deep scarlet and looked down toward the ground. Shuffling his toe against the floor, he thrust his hands into his pocket, took a deep breath and asked, “You did a lot of make-overs with Haruhi, right?”
“Yes. We did hair, make-up, the works. Why?” Hikaru asked gently when he saw how difficult it was for Hani to say.

“I have a request.”

“Anything we can do for you we will,” Kaoru stepped over to stand next to Hani and put his hand on his shoulder as a sign of support.

The big blue eyes held the shine of tears as he stared into twin golden ones. “I would like to have a make-over done… Make me look like a beautiful woman, please?”
To their credit, the twins did nothing more than glance at each other quickly, before looking back at the blond still shuffling his feet in embarrassment – wide grins on their faces.

“Haruhi’s Room!!” they said in unison as each grabbed one of Hani’s arms and dragged him up the stairs.

Hani had a moment of pure bewilderment, before it finally dawned him that the twins were not only NOT weirded out by the idea but were completely excited about it. *I really should have listened to Takashi and not let my uncertainty get such a tight grip. Hika and Kaoru are nothing if not unconventional.* Still… he was a bit stunned about the reaction.

“What do you think Hika, should we go for the glamorous look or the more natural look?”

“I was thinking a cross of the two actually, kind of the way we softened Ranka’s look.”

“Oh that would be good, but we have to do at least one glamour style, because that cerulean blue shimmer dress would look phenom on Hani.”

“Definitely,” Hikaru glanced at Hani’s feet. “You still wear a size 9, right?” at Hani’s bewildered nod, he continued, “Perfect! I will call and have a few pairs of shoes brought over… Flats, heels, and maybe a casual shoe or boot…”

“Boots. It fits with the winter line and you do know how to make a damn sexy shoe, brother!”

“Will do,” Hikaru whipped out his phone and marched immediately into the bathroom to gather make-up, while Kaoru whipped Hani around and sat him down in a chair, before pulling the sweater Hani was wearing over his head, so he was just in a tee shirt and his jeans.

“Better. Less chance of smearing make-up.” Kaoru said with a wink, before whipping out a stylist cape, “Still better safe than sorry… It’s too bad we can’t trim your hair. Oh well, we can always use extensions.”

“Uh… Kao-chan,” Hani said as something Hikaru had said clicked, “You said you softened Ranka’s look. Do you mean Ranka Fujioka, Haru-chan’s dad?”

“Naturally. With that crazy red hair, the colors he was wearing were slightly gaudy,” Hikaru answered instead coming back with his arms full of cosmetics before dumping them on the end table he dragged over. “By changing the colors slightly, he was able to bring out his natural bone structure more and enhance his feminine persona. Haru says the patrons at the bar are thrilled and Ranka gets a kick out of the increased attention… and tips.” Hikaru grinned.

Kaoru glared at his brother, “Not that he was doing badly off before, but the touch-up makeover did help boost his confidence and it also gave us a chance to teach Haruhi the right way to wear make-up so she could avoid the gaudy pitfalls. The poor girl was terrified of even lipstick before we started working on her.” Kaoru winked before asking Hani. “When did you first start wanting to explore your feminine side?”

“Well,” Hani blushed again, “I guess it started with the idea of the slightly effeminate Lolita-shan
when I started with the Host Club, and then all that cosplay we did for the clients, I almost always had a girly outfit because it fit with the whole cute idea. I guess I just started to really enjoy the dress up part and I started getting secretly excited whenever Tamaki would come up with something new. One evening in the Music Room, all of you had left and Takashi and I were cleaning up, and he caught me twirling around in one of the costumes pretending I was a girl. He asked me about it in his unflappable way and I broke down. Being the incredibly awesome lover that he is, he just held me and said that it didn’t bother him, and he would help me however he could. So every once in a while, I will dress up to the best of my ability and we will go out... usually to a BDSM club, since it isn’t even blinked at there. It’s the only other time besides rope that I will bottom for him.” Hani smiled shyly at the twins, “but I always still look like a boy in drag, which is why I was hoping you could help me.”

The twins grinned back at him, “Of course we can!”

“Takashi won’t know what hit him, when we are done with you.” Hikaru smirked. “You are going to be able to go out with Haru and Renge to the clubs and be hit on by all the straight guys, who will have absolutely no clue. It will be fun to watch.”

“Screw the clubs; I am curious about going to the dungeon.” Kaoru said impishly. “Having you top me in full Fem splendor would be awesome!!”

Kaoru’s comment followed by an eyebrow wiggle made Hani giggle. “I think I could do that Kao-chan. I really think I could do that.”

“Good. I will hold you to that. Now... sit still, hold on, and enjoy the ride.”

The twins bustled into action around their friend.

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The Land Rover pulled out of the gate to the Maison des Roses and was immediately hit with a wave of flashbulbs as the paparazzi angled for any picture they could. With a sigh, Haruhi pushed her sunglasses up her nose in a movement reminiscent of Kyouya, which made Takashi smile. As the second sigh crossed her lips, he felt he needed to ask. “How are you doing with all of this?”

She gestured to the paparazzi now fading in the distance, “You mean all of the cameras and stuff?”

He nodded.

“I am really trying to get used to it. I didn’t realize how invasive it actually feels. I don’t know how you guys handle it in Japan.”

“For one, the press is a bit more polite there and at least gives the appearance of avoiding interference with people while they are still students unless it is a specific public press conference or fundraiser-type event. It also isn’t quite as bad for Mitskune and me as it is for the others. We don’t usually get the paparazzi following us, like Kyouya or Tamaki will, but we do get the sports reporters and fans. I wish I could tell you that it will stop bothering you at some point, but it never really has for me. It does get easier to put on a mask though.”

“Is that why you always appeared so stoic any time we were at Ouran?”

“Yes. It was easier for me to have the quiet mask, just as it was easier for Mitskune to hide behind
the Lolita-shan one. The twins just pretended no one outside of them existed. Tamaki came late to
game since he spent most of his life here in France, but his grandmother drilled into him how to act in
public, so while it was a shock, he knew some of what to expect. Of all of us, the person most used
to the Japanese paparazzi is Kyouya, since he has been exposed to it since he was a child due to his
father’s prominence in business and his brothers’ advantageous marriages.”

She sighed again, “Kyouya tried to warn me a bit, but it was mainly about after I graduated. Then
this week happened and I saw the cameras for the first time as we went into the Fashion Week prep
and it made me nervous…”

At her third sigh, Takashi reached out and took her hand, just letting soothing energy flow to her.
She smiled at him, shakily, “Last night was nerve wracking, though I will never tell Hikaru so. He
needed me to support him. Though I have to admit, I am just as glad he hid the newspaper this
morning. I don’t think I am ready to see the headlines… even if it is going to be worse for Kyouya.
Gods… when his father sees the coverage, he is going to freak out.”

Takashi brought her hand up to his mouth and kissed her palm. “What are you most worried about?”

Forcing herself to say it out loud, she answered, “That his father is going to drag him back to Japan
and I will never see him again.”

“Ahh…,” Takashi gave her palm another kiss as it seemed to soothe her. “Haruhi, you must know
that Kyouya won’t let that happen.”

“I want to believe that it won’t happen.”

“It won’t. For all the power that Yoshio Ootori has, his son has reached his majority and is legally his
own person. The most that he could do is disown Kyouya and disparage him to his business
contacts.”

“Oh, Is that all?!” the sarcasm dripped from her voice.

Takashi chose to ignore it. “Yes that is all. But what Yoshio doesn’t realize yet, is if he tries to do so,
all he will succeed in doing is putting himself up for ridicule. I am not supposed to know this, but my
father is far more frank about business with me than most. Yoshio’s stagnant hierarchical
condescension is starting to rub several upcoming and prominent business leaders the wrong way,
especially where his youngest son is concerned. They have dealt with Kyouya professionally when
his father has deemed it beneath him, and everyone has had nothing but praises for Kyo. If Yoshio
tries to blackball his son professionally, it will appear to be the act of a bitter old man rather than a
savvy businessman and it will backfire on him. Yes, there will be some companies that will stay on
Yoshio’s side, but the majority will look to the son with the better head for business and the pulse on
what is upcoming and trending. I know you don’t care about money, but even if Kyouya is cut off
from the Ootori family fortune, he has been building his own for some time. It was how he was able
to buy the medical company out from the under his father. I also know that is just one venture. This
winery is another. If he partners with Tamaki, the way I think he is intending, they have the potential
to be a very savvy business duo.”

Haruhi really listened to Takashi and let the truth of his words wash over her. *Takashi observes
everything and only tells the truth as he sees it. I know he wouldn’t lie to me which makes me feel a
little less panicky.* She brought his hand to her lips and laid a kiss on the back of it in return. “Thank
you, ashke. I needed to hear that. I can’t promise that I won’t still panic inside at the cameras, but I
can hold steady in them for the ones I love.”

“I know you can… and you have all of our support behind you, no matter what happens,” Takashi
smiled at her. Then changing the subject, he asked curiously, “Ashke? I haven’t heard the word before.”

Haruhi blushed slightly but smiled back at him, “It’s a word from a language made up by one of my favorite authors. I was reading her a while ago and some of it must have slipped into my subconscious. In the stories, the word means ‘beloved’ or ‘beloved friend’.” Her blush deepened. “It must have slipped out, I am sorry.”

“Please don’t be,” Takashi turned and held her eyes for a moment, letting his true feelings for her show, before he had to turn back to the road, “I love it.”

Haruhi’s breath caught at the intensity of Takashi’s eyes. Gods… if I had seen this intensity before I dated Tamaki or played that game with Hika, Kao, and Kyo, my path may have been radically different than the one I am on now…

Takashi heard the catch in her breath and said quietly, “I will never begrudge what we have now and I would not change a single thing in my life or wish that anything would have been different in yours. What could have happened is immaterial… I will forever cherish what has happened. It has led you to being here with me in this moment and that is worth everything. I can share you with all the others, as you can share me, because I have a piece of you that is mine alone… Ashke.”

Haruhi blinked back tears and responded equally as quietly. “You are my foundation Takashi. I think you have unconsciously been that from the start when you would rescue me from the over eager attentions of either the twins or Tamaki. When you and Hani started teaching me martial arts, you became the foundation for a skill and when we started doing yoga, you were my foundation to finding my balance. I am sorry that I missed it until recently, but I won’t take for granted again. I need you in my life as much as I need Kyouya, Hikaru, or Tamaki and the others. I will do whatever is necessary to keep it that way.” She laid her head against his shoulder and let the silence reign in the car for a few more moments. She kept her fingers twined in his and let their combined energy flow back and forth. After a couple of miles she turned the subject to their upcoming destination.

“So tell me a bit about this monastery. You mentioned that it caters to several different types of meditation. Obviously yoga is one way, but what are some of the others.”

Takashi blushed faintly.

*Now that’s interesting.* Haruhi thought before deciding to tease her partner, “Takashi you are turning pink. What are the other types?”

He took a deep breath before answering, “Well, aside from yoga, there are several other different martial art meditation like Tai Chi, guided meditation lotus-style, some close partner dancing and…” Takashi’s voice was barely above a whisper, “tantric sex.”

Haruhi burst out laughing as Takashi blushed almost purple. “Tantric sex, huh? Takashi… I never would have expected it from you. Hikaru or Hani – maybe… “

“It was Mitskune’s suggestion.”

“Ahhh… makes a teeny bit more sense, now.”

“I didn’t… I don’t expect us to use that particular wing of the monastery,” Takashi hurriedly added. “I really just thought the yoga would enhance your focus for tomorrow. Honestly.”

“I know ashke. I am just having a bit of fun with you.” *Though now that you said it, I am not ruling it out… I want you, my partner.* Haruhi grinned. “It does sound like it will help. Since I am also
terrified about tomorrow and the testing, but I trust in you and Hani and if you both say I am ready, I will believe you.”

“You are ready.” Takashi smiled back at her as they pulled up in front of an ancient stone building.

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Kyouya growled under his breath as he saw the line of paparazzi outside the gates. “Damn it, it’s too early for this.”

Tamaki glanced at his friend and then turned back to watch the gate open, “The paparazzi? Well, we kind of knew to expect this, since we announced where the Grand Ball is going to be held and it doesn’t take a genius to figure out that once my name was invoked the likeliest place for the legendary Hitachiian brothers to be staying would be my place, and since you came out as Hika’s boyfriend, it would make sense that you were there too.”

“I know. I was just hoping not to have to deal with this for a few more days.” He glanced over to the side to see Tamaki fiddling with his phone. “What are you doing, Tamaki?”

“Trying to see how widespread the gossip is. I don’t know what happened to the newspaper this morning, but I want to see how much they know, so we can see how much damage control we have to do.”

“I have a feeling Hikaru or Kaoru hid it, probably Hikaru. It’s like him to not want to put a damper on our ‘date days’.” Kyouya sighed. “But I do need to know. Sorry Tama, I know this was supposed to be about me and you.”

“And you are my best friend, so I am doing everything that I can to help,” Tamaki said with genuine affection in his voice. “Ha! Found it… Hmm…”

After hearing Tamaki hmm and ahhh for another thirty seconds, Kyouya was about to flip and he tried to snatch the phone away.

Tamaki was expecting the hand to fly out and try to take the phone, so he made sure he held it out of grabbing distance. With a grin he said, “Nun-hunh. Nope. You are driving and it would be a shame to crash this sexy piece of machinery, so you will have to be content with my telling you what it says, rather than reading it yourself.”

“Well than why don’t you actually read me what it says,” the threatening note in Kyouya’s voice only made Tamaki grin harder.

“The press all agree that Haruhi was smoking…”

“And…”

“You are being described as gorgeous, sexy-as-hell, heartthrob, Mr. Cool, and my favorite Jalapeño stud muffin.”

“TAMAKI!!!”

“Yes, Kyouya,” Tamaki tried to put as much innocence into his voice as he could and still maintain a straight face.

“What did they say about the three of us? Do they know who we are?”
“They are saying that it’s not fair that Hikaru has two such gorgeous creatures in his life, that it’s not surprising that he is bisexual, and they are curious if all three of you are dating or if he is just dating each of you separately… duh… the second set of pictures should have answered that one, it’s pretty obvious that you all are in love with each other… it’s kind of sickening how cute the three of you are together, actually.” He took pity on his best friend as he heard another growl rumble out of Kyoya’s throat. “Right now, you are still a mystery though they do have your names. It wouldn’t be a stretch to guess that you went to the same school as Hikaru and Kaoru and as much as Dad is trying to crack down on leaking information to the public, any student or parent could have confirmed that you went there and showed the press a yearbook with your pictures.”

Kyouya breathed a sigh of relief, “Ok. I can deal with that. Not that they could get much from Ouran beyond our exceptional grades, though they may pull the Host Club into this. Are you ok with that?”

“Well, it hasn’t been made public, but grandmother officially made me her heir last week and my father sneakily forced in a clause that it cannot be revoked unless I choose to deny the position. I am not sure how he got it by the old bat, but it is done.”

“I have a new respect for your father. Congratulations my friend! Why didn’t you say something earlier?”

“Honestly, I forgot. It was such a relief to finally have it done that I must have just pushed it to the back of my mind… besides; I have had MUCH more interesting things happening around me.”

“Well aside from the fact that we are going to have to have a discussion about your putting yourself and your accomplishments behind everyone else…” he glared at Tamaki.

“Yes sir…” Tamaki said meekly.

Kyouya continued, “It is a relief that your grandmother can’t use the situation against you. Not that anything untoward occurred during Host Club hours, since we were very careful about that and we would have been shut down by the school board if even the slightest hint of impropriety occurred, but the idea may be enough to start more gossip and drag you, Hani, and Takashi into the limelight.”

“Too late, honestly. I am in already… An alert just popped up showing you and me in the car as we were leaving the Estate. I am not exactly unknown to the French press… Ugh, what a lousy shot – obviously got me in mid-sentence… but as I was saying. I am already in and as soon as Haruhi shows up at a National Martial Arts tournament tomorrow and does a demonstration with Hani and Takashi, they will be too.”

“Damn. I didn’t think about that.”

“I bet you that they did and used it as some sort of show of solidarity. I am learning that Hani can be more scheming than I ever gave him credit for.”

“Yes he can be,” Kyouya sighed again before saying, “I hate the fact that all of you are in this situation.”

“Damn it Kyouya!! Stop taking on the world by yourself and let us be there with you!” The anger in Tamaki’s voice quickly cooled to something more temperate. “We are a family and we will stand together as one. Period. Now I know that we can’t come out that we are all kind of, sort of, dating each other, but we can come out as fierce friends and let the gossips chew on that. If we come across as an close knit group of friends and keep showing that in the presses collective faces, they will ultimately come to the conclusion that we are… cue dramatic music… a close knit group of friends, which will quickly lead them to noting us as boring and moving on to other exciting gossip on the
latest political scandal.”

“You are right, Tama.” Kyouya said with a smile at the fierceness in his friend’s voice. “If we don’t give them fodder it will fade quickly. I know this…” He turned and looked at Tamaki for a moment before getting a wicked grin that set Tama’s pulse racing. “But even though we are keeping it from the press, don’t think that it means that I don’t want to bend you over the hood of this car and do bad things to you.”

“You better. I want some sort of payment for offering my architectural expertise… and besides it’s all I can do to keep from leaning over and sucking you off while you are driving.” He gave Kyouya a wink.

Kyouya’s breath hitched at the lust in Tamaki’s voice but saw the wink and the grin. “Tease.”

“Always mon ami… With you – Always!!”
Tamaki and Kyouya turned down a gravel road about thirty minutes later after passing through a quaint little town. Both were impressed with the quiet beauty of the town and agreed that they would stop there on their way back. At the moment though, both were focused on the stone building ahead of them and the acres of dormant vineyards around them.

“It looks like a good sized property,” Tamaki said.

“It’s 25 acres,” Kyouya responded. “Small for a winery but I didn’t want to go too big my first time out. They have a bottling plant onsite, and a cave that is built into the hill where the wine can be stored. The entire existing inventory is included and we have the option of keeping the label or going with a new one.”

“Sounds very promising to start.”

“I hope so. The property was suggested to me by the wife of a business contact. It is her cousin’s winery. He is looking to retire and doesn’t have any family to take over the business.”

“Do you trust the source? I know things aren’t exactly smooth with your father right now and I hate to say it, but I wouldn’t put it past him to try and sabotage you after that stunt you pulled buying the medical company out from under him and then handing managerial rights back to him.” Tamaki said quietly.

“I hate to say it, but I agree with you that is something my father would do. I used to think he was completely honorable in all his business dealings, which is what made the Ootori name famous, but I am learning instead that he is ruthless; he just hid it well for many years. He still has the veneer of respectability but I can see the cracks now, where I couldn’t before. Thankfully, the business contact that gave me the suggestion is a minor member of the Morinozouka family and one that I cultivated separately from my father’s influence, so I do trust the source.” Kyouya smiled at his friend. “But just because I trust the source, doesn’t mean I am naïve. That’s why I wanted you with me. You will be able to tell me if this is really worth saving or if it will be a waste of resources.”

“That I can do,” Tamaki smiled back. “Honestly it’s kind of cool that you trust me with this. I mean it’s part of what I am being trained and going to school for since my family specializes in the business of hospitality, but I don’t think we currently have any wineries in our portfolio and I think it would make a smart addition to our hotels, resorts, and event locations. In fact, I may look for one to purchase myself if all goes well with Maison des Roses.”

“Sounds like a sound business idea,” Kyouya said. He turned and smirked at Tamaki one last time before stepping out of the car, “so I am playing the role of the bored and wealthy aristocrat?”

“Yes, to an extent. First impression is this looks like a thriving business, so what I said earlier may not be as apropos here. You can start curiously bored then go into savvy businessman. I still stand be the fact that you look the part better dressed like that than your suit.”

“You just like seeing me in leather pants.”

“That too.” Tamaki grinned as he exited the car.

Together they walked up to the door leading into the stone building. Kyouya glanced upward at the arched interior and wood accents admiring their beauty, while Tamaki muttered about groin vaults, French Romanticism, and the open floor plan. Immediately they were greeted by an older gentleman.
“Bonjour, messieurs. Je suis Armand Greniere propriétaire de cette belle cave. Êtes-vous Kyouya Ootori par hasard?”

Kyouya’s grasp of French was just enough that he was able to understand that the gentleman was greeting them, offering his name, and inquiring if he was Kyouya Ootori. I am going to have to have Tamaki and Hikaru teach me French. If I am going to be doing business here, I need to have more than a basic understanding of the language. To Armand, he replied in halting French, “Good morning, sir. I am Kyouya Ootori, your cousin Reinette spoke highly of you. I apologize, my French is currently limited, but I hope to fix that in the near future. My friend Tamaki will be able to translate anything that I am unable to understand or say properly.”

Armand grinned at Kyouya’s comment and replied, “Perhaps it will be better if I switched to Japanese for the time being.”

Kyouya returned the smile, “Thank you. It is appreciated.”

“You are welcome. My darling cousin spoke highly of you as well, though she didn’t mention that you were such good friends with Tamaki Suoh and the Hitachiin twins.” A sly twinkle shone in the older man’s eyes.

“Ah… I should have known a fellow Frenchman wouldn’t let the latest gossip slip by him.” Tamaki responded with a grin. “Yes. Kyouya Ootori is and has been my best friend for several years. We have been friends with the Hitachiin twins, Takashi Morinouzouka and Mitskune Haninouzouka for nearly as long.”

“And the girl?”

“Haruhi Fujioka has been dating both me and Hikaru Hitachiin for several months. Is this going to be a problem?” Kyouya’s voice could cause ice to freeze. Tamaki’s glare at the man was nearly as cold.

“Mes plus sincères excuses. Il n’en est pas de mes affaires et ne reflète pas sur notre transaction ce matin. C’était simplement la nouveauté de voir quelqu'un d'aussi récemment dans les nouvelles. En tant que fier Français, je t’embrasse amour sous toutes ses formes. Je ne vous ou vos partenaires choisis juge pas et je m’en excuse sincèrement à nouveau pour mes commentaires irréfléchis.” My most sincere apologies. It is none of my business and does not reflect upon our transaction this morning. It was merely the novelty of seeing someone so recently in the news. As a proud Frenchman, I embrace love in its many forms. I do not judge you or your chosen partners and I most sincerely apologize again for my thoughtless comments. Armand hung his head in apology and offered a sincere look to Kyouya.

“He apologizes for his thoughtless comment. He was caught up in the novelty of seeing you on the news last night and then here this morning,” Tamaki translated. “He wants to assure you that as a proud Frenchman he embraces love in its many forms and he does not judge you.”

“I am very sorry for my comments. Please do not let my thoughtlessness dissuade you from viewing the winery. It really is a beautiful property and I would love to see her go into the hands of someone who has as much love to give her as I do.” Armand switched back to Japanese.

Taking a deep breath, Kyouya responded with a slight smile, “It is no consequence. I should be prepared to answer those kinds of questions.” He gestured broadly to the building and the grounds. “Please, lead on and tell me about the estate.”

For the next few hours, Kyouya and Tamaki toured the estate grounds including the tasting rooms, cellars, and bottling facility. They tried several vintages and were soon laughing comfortably with
Armand. As they returned to the area where the car was parked, thunder cracked overhead. Glancing up at the now dark and threatening sky, Kyouya said, “Thank you for the tour Armand. I will think about it this evening and I will call you tomorrow to let you know my decision. Will that be acceptable?”

“Of course, Mr. Ootori. I hope it will be a favorable one for both of us,” Armand shook Kyouya’s hand before doing the same for the Tamaki. “It was a pleasure meeting you as well, Mr. Suoh. Have a safe drive back.”

“We will,” Tamaki replied as the first fat drops began to fall. “Au Revoir.”

As Kyouya turned to drive back down the gravel road, Tamaki pulled out his phone and checked the weather conditions. With a sigh he said, “It looks like the storm sprung out of nowhere and it looks like it will be a nasty one. It isn’t supposed to pass until early tomorrow morning. Are you going to be ok driving back to Paris?”

Kyouya flipped the wiper blades onto high as hail pelted the car, focusing on the road he asked, “What time is it supposed to be over and is it supposed to stay this intense?”

“As to the intensity – yes, unfortunately. The good news is that it is supposed to clear out by 1am and tomorrow should be a beautiful day.”

Kyouya sighed, “Maybe we should plan to stay the night in the town and drive back early tomorrow morning. I don’t want to miss Haruhi’s demonstration and testing but trying to drive all the way back to Paris in this would be dangerous.”

“I don’t want to miss it either,” Tamaki said, laying a hand briefly on Kyouya’s thigh. “But we can set the alarm early enough to be back to the house by 8 or so. She won’t have to leave for the tournament until 10.”

“Let’s do that.” Kyouya sighed again before asking, “Would you please send Haruhi a message and let her know what is going on since I need to focus on getting us to the town?”

Of course, Mon ami,” Tamaki quickly sent a text to both her and Hikaru. Within moments, he received an answering one. With a smile he relayed it to Kyouya, “She and Takashi are caught up in the same storm and just determined that they will need to stay the night at the monastery as well. She says to say she loves you and to have fun.”

Kyouya smiled, “She would say that. At least that is a relief; I was worried about her fear of thunderstorms and having them try to drive back tonight. Takashi will take care of her.”

Tamaki grinned at him, “I really never thought I would hear you say something like that without any jealousy in the tone. You have come a long way my friend.”

“So have you, since you never once showed any jealousy when Hika and I started dating her, even though I knew you still cared about her even though you denied it.”

“I won’t deny it now, though I have to admit that half the time I was picturing you two together and trying not to feel sorry for myself, it was because I wanted to be with you in that way too.” Tamaki smirked. “But now… thanks to the weather and an accommodating girlfriend, I get to find out. Or were you planning on trying to get separate rooms?”

“Separate rooms haven’t worked at all on this trip, so why would I start wanting them now?” Kyouya laughed. “Besides, I have to make you pay for all of your teasing today.”
“Hey! I have been good.” Tamaki pouted.

“Tamaki every fucking move you have made today has reminded me exactly how good you look in those jeans and how I have had to control myself.”

“You’re one to talk…” Tamaki grumbled, but the pleasure was evident in his voice.

A few moments later, Kyoya pulled up in front of a cottage bed and breakfast that had a sign announcing vacancies. Together they got out of the car and ran through the rain to the door. The land lady took one look at their dripping appearance and tsk’d at them. “Boys, you will catch your death of cold. Got caught in the rainstorm, I see. Not safe to drive back down to the city. I only have one room available at the moment, but it has a bed and a pull out if you don’t mind sharing.”

“We don’t mind,” Tamaki said with his 500 watt smile. “I know you don’t normally do dinner, but would it be possible to send up something warm and let us use your dryer for our clothes? We will pay extra for them of course. Right now we just need hot showers and food.”

Of course, young man. I wouldn’t send anyone outside in weather like this. I will have that sent up soon.” She eyed Kyoya’s leather pants, “I don’t think the dryer would do well with those.”

Kyoya’s smile was almost as blinding as Tamaki’s and the older woman felt herself blush. *Goodness gracious me, these boys are something else! If I was 50 years younger or had a granddaughter I would scoop them up in an instant.*

“I know. Fashion has its consequences,” Kyoya flirted lightly. “Thankfully they aren’t too bad and should dry by morning. Speaking of, we will have to check out early so we can make it back in time to see my girlfriend make her next Aikido belt. Could I just pay for everything now and then drop the key in the box on the way out?”

“How sweet you are to support your girlfriend! A girl needs to know how to defend herself in this day and age,” The landlady smiled as Tamaki turned his face away to hide his grin. “Of course you can pay up front.”

They quickly paid for the room and dinner. With a final smile, the kindly woman handed them a key and said, “I will bring food up in an hour. If you want to put your wet things outside your door, I will make sure they are cleaned and pressed for you in a few hours. There are robes in the closet that you can use to relax in and the telly has several movie channels.”

“Thank you ma’am.” Tamaki grinned and led the way up the stairs. He barely had time to glance around the quaint little room with a fireplace, queen sized bed, and a sofa that must have been a pull-out, before he was pushed face first into the wall with a rock hard Kyoya behind him growling in his ear.

“Tamaki. You naked. NOW.” He glanced into the bathroom and was glad to see that the shower was big enough for two. “I want a shower. Correction. I want you in the shower.”

With a devilish grin, Tamaki answered, “Yes sir,” as he reached around to caress the bulge in Kyoya’s pants.

Haruhi stared up at the dark grey sky as she and Takashi got out of the car. *I am not sure what this weather will do. Hopefully, it will just stay gloomy and not progress.* Bags and mats slung over their shoulders Takashi reached out for Haruhi’s hand as they walked into the converted monastery. They were greeted immediately by the desk clerk.
“Namaste,” she said in greeting. “Do you have a reservation?”

“Yes. Under Morinozouka Takashi.”

“Ah yes, Mr. Morinozouka. I have a private room in the yoga wing with an attached hot spring. I have you booked for the day, but based on the most recent weather report, and as a courtesy to all of our patrons, we are allowing for overnight stays if necessary. I am afraid we are not set up as a hotel, so our conditions are relatively primitive, but each room is supplied with a futon, blankets, and sheets and we have a café onsite that will remain open until 11pm this evening. You are also welcome to cancel this reservation at no charge and return on another day.”

Takashi turned to Haruhi and asked, “We can stay for the day and still try to make it home before the storm, but have the overnight option, if necessary, or we can leave now, beat the storm and go back to the house. It is your choice.” He tried not to let any of his desire creep into his tone.

“Honestly, I would prefer to stay and do what we were planning with the option of staying the night rather than going home and interrupting Hani and the twins. If we had to stay, will we still be able to get back in time for the meet tomorrow?”

“We should. We can set an alarm and leave early.”

“It’s a good thing we brought changes of clothes then!” Haruhi smiled. “Let’s do it.”

Takashi turned back to the desk clerk, “We will keep our reservation with the option of staying the night if needed.”

“Very good, sir.” She rang a bell and a man wearing loose pants and a tight long-sleeved shirt approached them. “Salim will take you to your assigned area. Have a pleasant stay. Namaste.”

Haruhi and Takashi echoed, “Namaste” before turning to follow Salim down the hall.

Haruhi looked around eagerly as Salim pointed out the different corridors leading to the various disciplines practiced at the monastery as well as the common areas and café. Craning her neck Haruhi tried to catch a glimpse of one of the rooms in the tantric wing, but Salim walked past them too quickly and Haru was forced to move faster to catch up. Finally he led them down a hallway to the very last room on the end. Opening the door, he ushered them into the room.

Haruhi set her stuff down with a thump and stared around in awe. This room is amazing. True to the desk clerk’s statement, there wasn’t elaborate furniture, but it was beautiful nonetheless. On one wall was the futon, easily large enough for two to sleep comfortably, covered with a mound of pillows. On a recessed shelf there were blankets and large soft towels. Across the room was a door that Haruhi assumed led to the bathroom/changing area. The center of the room was dominated by a large flat mat and at the end of the room was a step down into an open area with a rock lined hot spring. The wall across from it was glass that angled up gently to meet the ceiling, giving the illusion of being outside, while still being completely protected from the elements. That view is breathtaking. Haruhi stepped over to the glass and stared out. Below her was a valley full of trees lightly dusted by snow; ahead of her were snowcapped mountains.

Feeling a warm presence behind her, she turned to Takashi and slipped her arms around his waist, “This is beyond beautiful, ashke. Thank you for this.”

Takashi responded by holding her for a few moments, just breathing her in. “You are welcome. Do you want to get changed?”

“I can do that. It will feel good to stretch out. Do you want me to run through my katas?”
“Yes. We have plenty of time.”

“Ok.” Haruhi stepped away from Takashi and walked across the room to get her workout clothing before going into the bathroom to change.

Takashi tried to ignore how empty his arms felt, instead crossing over to his gear and changing quickly. He went to a thermostat on the wall and set it for a comfortable temperature before turning on the stereo and setting the music softly in the background. He turned off all ambient lighting preferring to let the natural light shine through the glass wall.

He stood in the center of the mat when Haruhi came out of the bathroom in her loose pants and sports bra. Quickly she joined him and they stood facing each other, both slightly afraid to make the first move and both conscious of the fact that this was the first time they had truly been alone. Always before, there had been Hani or Takashi’s sister with them.

Haruhi smiled, “We are being silly aren’t we.”

Takashi smiled back, “Yes.” But with the word he pressed his hand forward to meet Haruhi’s heart while she did the same for him. Within two heartbeats, they were matched again and all the awkwardness melted away.

As they had done several times a week for the last few months, they moved in unison through a sun salutation and warrior poses, into partner poses including those they had so surprised Kyouya and Tamaki several mornings ago.

Haruhi felt like she was flying. She could feel Takashi underneath her holding her in poses that were designed to help the energy flow through her body and she reached out to him offering the energy back to him. His hands were warm on her skin where it touched, but she could feel a growing dissatisfaction with not having the connection where her clothes were. *I wonder if Takashi feels the same.*

Takashi was doing his best to not touch her bare skin unless absolutely necessary. *If I touch her too much, I won’t be able to stop. This is still about her, not me.*

Haruhi was able to shift into a few more positions, but the wrongness kept growing. Finally she could take it no more. As they transitioned into a pose where her chest met his back, she ripped the sports bra off and pressed her bare chest against his naked back. Better.

Takashi felt her nipples press into his back and he instantly got hard. Fisting his hands, he let his nails bite into the skin; to try and distract him, but his voice betrayed him. “Haruhi… ashke,” he breathed.

“Takashi… I need your skin on mine. I need your body moving on me, in me, through me… please.” Haruhi whispered as her arm slid around his back to place her hand on his wildly beating heart.

Pulling her around so she stood in front of him, he wrapped her arms around his neck and relished the feel of her body pressed against his. He spoke against her neck, “I need you, Haruhi. I tried just being what you need but I can’t hide it anymore. I need you.”

“Make love to me, Takashi. Don’t hold back. Don’t try to put my needs first. I need you. You need me. Right now… I am yours.” She arched her neck up and pressed her lips against his.

With a strangled cry, Takashi reacted by lifting her up and wrapping her legs around his waist while he plundered her mouth with his tongue – finding every cranny, tasting her as if she was the sweetest
water. Finally breaking the kiss with a gasp, he dropped slowly to his knees gently letting her down to the mat. He refused to let her arms move from around his neck, so it was he who gently hooked the edge of her yoga pants and her underwear and slid them down her legs to toss them in a pile at the side of the mat. Finally he traced his hands up her arms and pulled them down. Laying her softly down on the mat, he just looked at her, fully naked and on display for him, for a moment before whispering, “You are beautiful.”

Haruhi looked up and saw such deep passion in Takashi’s eyes that she couldn’t feel embarrassed about lying naked in front of him. She shivered as his hands slid into her hair and he leaned down to kiss her again deeply before he slid his lips down her cheek, down her neck and chest until he took one taut nipple into his mouth. As his lips closed around that tight peak and his tongue slid softly across it, Haruhi’s body arched.

Knowing that his need to explore her would also feed her passion, Takashi continued his assault on her nipple, while he slid one hand into her hair and the other down her abdomen into the tangle of tight curls at her core. So Wet. So Ready. Takashi smiled and moved to the other nipple as he slid his fingers down the slick folds and into her, feeling her body buck in hands and under his lips as she moaned out his name.

Her body started arching into his fingers, trying to press her engorged clit against the heel of her hand as she moaned in frustration. Taking that as his cue, he let his mouth leave her nipples, and was rewarded with a moan of disappointment. It was swiftly replaced by a gasp as he kissed his way down her abdomen and a cry as his tongue slid across her bud.

Where the yoga had her flying, Takashi’s tongue and fingers had her on fire during the flight. Her body was burning and she slid her fingers into his hair in a last attempt to stay connected to her body. The building pressure let her know that she was about to fall. But there was no fear as her body finally broke and her orgasm crashed against Takashi’s tongue and fingers… he was there to catch her and bring her back to her center.

Takashi savored the feel of Haruhi’s body clenching against his fingers, her clit throbbing against his tongue, her harsh breathing, her hands tangled in his hair, as her body rode the wave of her orgasm. *She is incomparably beautiful and she is ours.* He knew in that moment that she belonged to all of the Hosts and them to her.

“Mmmm… Takashi,” Haruhi’s voice was lethargic but satisfied.

“Yes ashke?”

“That was incredible.”

He smiled, “Yes it was.”

“But…”

“But?”

“But I still need you in me. I need your release as well.” She smiled at him. “Make love to me. Sink into me.”

“As you wish…” Takashi slipped of his yoga pants and underwear giving her a full view of his naked body.

*Hmmm… he has a tattoo on his hip. I never knew that before. Haruhi stared unabashedly up and down her partner’s toned body to his firm cock. Damn, he has a pretty cock too. I haven’t found*
anything ugly on any of the Host club members so far. It's not fair. With a smile at his faint flush of embarrassment as he stood over her, she said, “Right now, I want you inside me with a desperate need, but later… I want to worship that glorious member the way you did me.”

Haruhi’s words were a trigger and Takashi knelt back down on the mat, slipping on a condom, spreading her legs wide and slowly entering her, relishing the deep tight wetness. In her ear he whispered, “I will let you but right now, move with me…”

She wrapped her legs around his hips and arched into every thrust, meeting him and matching him until it was his turn to be unable to hold out and he let go with a final sharp thrust as his cock throbbed out its release and he tried to remember how to breathe. He collapsed on top of her for a moment before rolling them both over and cradling her against his chest.

Haruhi’s head was on Takashi’s heart and she could feel the frantic beat start to slow. With a smile she propped herself up just a bit and said, “Hi.”

Takashi grinned, “Hi yourself.”

“That was…”

“Yeah… especially as I don’t have much experience with women.”

Takashi’s confession startled her for a moment before she realized that it made sense. As far as she knew, she was the only female that he had shown an interest in. “Then I am honored that you chose me,” Haruhi started to say when a thunder crack echoed through the room. With a startled scream, she curled into Takashi who immediately wrapped her in his arms. Picking her up he grabbed a blanket to wrap around them both and held her for several minutes until her heartbeat slowed and her breathing evened out.

“Better?” Takashi asked as hail pounded against the glass.

“A little bit,” Haruhi said though she still tensed every time a thunder clap hit though she was thankful that they appeared to be moving further away. She heard her phone buzz.

Takashi reached out and handed it to her, pulling the blanket around them again.

“It’s Tamaki. He and Kyouya are caught in the storm and it isn’t safe for them to drive back, so they are going to get a room tonight and meet us back in the morning. He says it is supposed to clear up after midnight.”

“That is a smart idea. We should probably do the same.”

“I agree.” She texted back and sent a message to Hikaru to let him know not to worry. Another thunder clap hit and she shuddered.

“You know ashke, the storm still bothers you but you are able to put it further to the back of your mind. I have an idea, if you are willing to try…”

“What’s that?”

“Run through your katas now. Start slowly from the beginning.”

“Are you serious?”

“Very.” Takashi got up then pulled her to her feet.
“Can I get dressed first Sen-“a thunder clap hit, “sei?” She gasped.
“Yes you may.”

Both of them pulled their clothes back on and Haruhi walked to the center of the mat grumbling about mood killing senseis. She started on her first kata.

Takashi hid a smile behind his hand. As he had expected after a few false starts when a thunder clap hit, Haruhi was soon lost in the rhythm of the movement and was able to tune out everything while she was focusing on her pattern. Seeing that she was completely absorbed, Takashi quickly picked up around them, pulled out the futon for later, then quietly stepped out to run down to the café to get food for the evening.

He slipped back into the room just as quietly as he left and set the fruit, bread, cheeses, pasties, and bottles of water, tea, and wine on an end table. Seeing that she was approaching the start of the last one (her testing one) he stood at a corner of the mat and watched her. She has this nailed. She is going to blow the committee away tomorrow.

With a final spin kick, Haruhi landed, turned to find her sensei and gave him a bow. She saw him walking toward her with a bottle of water in his hand and a towel. Blinking sweat out of her eyes, she really looked around the room and noticed how it had changed and the food that was now waiting in a corner.

“Oh… when did that happen?”

“While you were focused on your katas. You have found your center, ashke. Now tell me, when did you forget there was a storm?”

Shock coursed through her body as she realized she had completely forgotten about the storm while she was caught up in her katas. Even now though she could hear a fain rumble, it didn’t bother her. The adrenaline and ache of good sex followed by a good workout just seemed to override the fear reaction. She grinned.

“Sneaky.”

He grinned back at her, “It worked. Now do you forgive me for killing the mood?”

She walked over and placed a slightly salty kiss on his lips. “Forgiven. Besides, I think you could probably rekindle it pretty quickly. But right now… I want a soak and maybe some of that food. Join me?”

“Of course.”

Haruhi slipped off her clothes again and walked over to the pool. Stepping in, she sank into the hot water in bliss, while Takashi gathered some items to bring over and did the same. Once settled, Haruhi reached for a piece of fruit, letting her hand brush Takashi’s.

“Takashi… Thank you.”

“My pleasure, ashke.”
The dawn sky was just starting to brighten into a glorious display of pink and orange when the Land Rover pulled back into the garage of the Maison des Roses. Takashi appreciated the beauty of the morning as he glanced over at the girl tucked under his jacket on the seat next to him. He smiled in a different kind of appreciation. *Yesterday and last night were both perfect. It was what I needed and I really think that it was what she needed as well.* His mind flashed back to the two of them taking their time and leisurely making love before falling asleep. The alarm he had set came early, so they could make it back in time to meet the others and get to her testing on time. He had expected her to be wide awake with nerves, but less than 15 minutes into the drive, she had pulled his jacket around her and gone back to sleep. *That’s a good sign, actually. It means that she isn’t worried anymore about the demo and testing. Mitskune will be pleased.* A stirring in his groin occurred when he thought of his lover. *He will want to know all the details and he knows I will make him work to pull them out of me. I know that he is planning on taking Haruhi out after the tournament is completed, but I also know them both and he won’t be spending the night with her, at least not tonight. He gets too amped up after a demonstration and will need to dominate since he isn’t actually allowed to fight anymore. Not that I am complaining… Haruhi may be my link to the cool balance of serenity, but Mitskune is my fire and my heat.*

“Mmm… are we home already?” Haruhi asked sleepily.

“Yes.” Takashi brushed a stray hair off her forehead. She stretched, sat upright, and yawned. “I’m sorry I fell back asleep. You should have woken me.”

“You looked so content, I couldn’t. You obviously needed a bit more sleep and I was happy to let you.”

“Thanks.” She laid a kiss in the palm of his hand. She started to hand his jacket back to him.

“Keep it until we get inside. It’s still quite cold out there. I have my sweatshirt.”

Haruhi wrapped the coat around her again and got out of the vehicle. As she turned to the house the sun broke over the horizon and she gasped. “Wow. It’s a beautiful morning.”

“The dawn after a thunderstorm usually is.”

“After last night and seeing this, I may have finally conquered my fear of the storm.” She linked her fingers in his. “Or at least I have enough good memories to outweigh the bad now.”

“I am glad to hear that… and happy to have been of assistance.” Takashi grinned and brought their linked hands up to place a kiss on the back of her palm.

“But now you are desperate to see Hani, aren’t you?” Haruhi teased.

“Maybe a little bit…”

“C’mon, let’s go inside and you can have the joy of waking him up.” Her grin was devilish.

“When did you become evil?” Takashi joked as they walked up to the door and let themselves in.
Kyouya held Tamaki’s hand loosely as he navigated the Paris streets on the way back to the Maison des Roses as the sun crested over the horizon. Unlike his usual overly talkative self, Tamaki was quiet and relaxed as he watched the scenery. His mind drifted through the memories of the night before. Not only had Kyouya fucked him in the shower, but also again in that comfortable bed after he gave a Tamaki a blow job that rivaled the one that Hani had given him in the shower. *I wonder if all Dom’s are that orally talented… though Haru’s are just as good and she isn’t a Top. Maybe I just have friends with oral fixations.*

“What are you thinking about?” Kyouya was the first to break the silence.

“Umm…” Tamaki flushed red before deciding that Kyouya deserved a little teasing. “Well, I was thinking about last night naturally, which got me idly wondering about … things.”

“What kind of things?”

“Blowjobs mostly.”

Kyouya choked as he swallowed and had to take a moment to focus on keeping control of the vehicle as he coughed. When the spasm had calmed, he glared at an unrepentant and grinning Tamaki. “What about them?”

“Weeell… at first I was wondering if there was some reason why you Dommy-types seem to be so good at giving them, ‘cuz the ones I got from both you and Hani were unbelievable. But then I remembered that Haruhi also gives amazing ones and she isn’t a Dom or really even a Top, so then I wondered if instead it was due to the fact that we all may have a bit of an oral fixation.”

“Aside from this being one of the weirder conversations we have had, I have to say it’s more likely the latter because Inegivenonfore,” Kyouya last words were unintelligibly muttered under his breath.

“What was that last bit?”

Kyouya sighed and took a deep breath before responding, eyes firmly kept on the road in front of them. “I said that I have never actually given one before last night.”

“What?!?” Tamaki stared at his lover in shock.

“You heard me,” Kyouya’s lips tightened. “That was my first one.”

“Wow.” Tamaki was speechless for almost a full minute. A huge smile crossed his face. “Well, then. My dear Kyouya let me tell you that you are a natural because that was flat out amazing. I am giddy beyond reason that I was your first.”

“Thanks.” Kyouya’s face was bright red and he couldn’t think of anything else to say and he hoped that Tamaki would change the subject.

Tamaki, however, had no intention of letting something so juicy go. “I would have thought that you would have given one to Hika at least by now, considering the three of you have spent every night together except the last night and last Saturday.”

“We were a bit more focused on the three of us, rather than just the two of us, and let’s just say that it we hadn’t gotten around to that yet. Not that it wouldn’t have eventually, especially since he gave me
one in the limo…”

“I am going to have to have that thing completely and thoroughly cleaned before it gets traded in,” Tamaki grinned. “It’s had almost as much sexual activity as the bedrooms.” Turning back to the topic he continued relentlessly. “So if you haven’t practiced before, how did you know how to do all those freaking amazing things that you did with your tongue?”

“Gods… Tamaki,” his voice wasn’t quite pleading but it came close. He glanced quickly to the blonde who just grinned back at him and made a ‘go on’ gesture. Sighing, he responded, “I combined some of the same movements that I know drive Haruhi crazy as well as some of the ones that you and Hika have done on me.”

“Well it was magical and feel free to do it again any time you like.” Tamaki answered. A shadow crossed his expression and he asked quietly, “What are we going to do about all of us? You all leave in a week and I will be stuck here alone again. It was hard enough before. Now… I don’t know how to define exactly what is happening, but I don’t want to give up you or Haruhi or Kaoru. I know it’s probably not fair for me to say that to you, because I know that you are so far in love with her it’s crazy, but I can’t get her out of my system. I tried. I really did. I swear… and now that I have had you, I am feeling the same way about you. I am in love with you, Kyouya… but I am also falling for Kao. Gods, this is a mess.”

“It is complicated. There is no question of that,” Kyouya sighed. “Hikaru, Kaoru and Haruhi still have to finish the rest of their year at Ouran. I have no idea what is going to happen with my father, but I anticipate that I won’t have a home to go back to. I am really tempted to just move here, but I won’t do that until they graduate and then it would only be if they choose to do so as well.” He took a deep breath before saying the next part, “I care about you Tamaki, and I know I am in lust with you and I may even be a little in love, but I can’t live without Haruhi and Hikaru in my life. I am willing to walk away from my family and all that I ever knew for them.”

“I know mon ami,” Tamaki squeezed his hand. “I know. I really do. I am also content with whatever you are willing to share. I know that the connection the three of you have is beyond anything, even as I want that connection, I know my connection with you isn’t that deep. I am ok with that. At least I think I am. I love Haru and I know she loves me to an extent, but she would never choose me over the two of you.”

“She does love you, you know. You are her first – first love, first lover. There is a part of her that will always be yours,” Kyouya said quietly.

“And there is also a part that belongs to Takashi and to a lesser extent Kao and Hani,” Tamaki smiled. “It’s part of the reason why we all love her so much. She has so much love to give to us. But at the core, she is yours and Hikaru’s. The three of you work together in a way that doesn’t make sense on the surface, but is perfect underneath. Don’t let that go. I am just happy that you are just as willing to share parts of you with us too. Now… I didn’t mean for this to turn deep and melancholy. I am having too much fun with everyone to overanalyze it. So now that the first date day is over – what’s on the agenda… or rather… who’s on the agenda for the day?” He smirked.

Kyouya smiled back, “Well, obviously we have the tournament to go to with all of us, but from there I think it’s up for grabs. I know Hani wanted to take out Haru after and Kao has his date with Renge.” He glanced sideways at Tamaki, “Speaking of which, how do you feel about that?”

It was Tamaki’s turn to sigh, “It doesn’t bother me. It would be hypocritical of me to want him all to myself since I want other people too. I did let him know that I wouldn’t be a guilty secret even if I don’t necessarily need to be a public statement. If he wants to keep our relationship open, I am ok with it, but Renge needs to know about me. If he would rather break it off with me and just pursue
her, I would be hurt but I would understand. Speaking of which, does anyone else find it odd that Renge is turning out to be someone that I could see any of us having a real friendship with? She has really changed since Ouran – for the better, I think.”

“Haruhi has always maintained a friendship with her, but I do agree with you. She has blossomed here in Paris since she started working for Yuzuha.”

The rest of their conversation centered around Renge, Yuzuha, and the rest of Fashion Week as they finished the drive to the Maison des Roses.

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Upon entering the Haruhi had run up to the room that Hikaru and Kaoru shared, while Takashi ran to the one that he shared with Hani. However, both soon stepped out looking puzzled.

“I take it Mitskune is not in there with Hikaru and Kaoru?” Takashi asked.

“No. It doesn’t even look like the bed was made. Want to check the other rooms with me? I don’t remember getting a text that they were going out somewhere last night.”

“I didn’t either and Mitskune would have let me know if the plan changed. They must be here somewhere.”

Together they searched the rest of the bedrooms and went upstairs to the Conservatory, Dojo and Music Room, just in case they might have gone there instead. Still nothing. As they walked back down the stairs to the ground floor, still trying to figure out where they had gone to they ran into Kyouya and Tamaki who had just arrived.

Haruhi grinned at her boyfriend, threw her arms around his neck, and buried her face in his chest, breathing him in for a moment before stretching up to kiss him in greeting.

Kyouya savored the kiss and the feel of the girl in his arms. Smiling he said, “You guys looked puzzled as you were coming down the stairs. What’s up?”

“Mitskune, Hikaru, and Kaoru seem to be missing. We just go there and ran upstairs to wake them. Their rooms hadn’t been slept in. We checked all of the second and third floors but haven’t found them.”

“That’s because they are down here,” Tamaki said quietly with a huge grin on his face. He walked over to the library. “Come, you have to see this. I had no idea.”

Curiosity at the forefront, Kyouya, Takashi, and Haruhi walked over to where Tamaki was standing. Peering into the library, Haruhi could see two red heads curled up on one of the couches with a woman with long blond hair snuggled between them.

WHAT THE-

“Mitskune…” Takashi breathed quietly, which caused Haruhi to take another look. It is Hani. Wow. He looks amazing. I knew my dad took some pointers from the twins, but they have done a full makeover here. I had no idea.

“I take it you knew about this?” Kyuuya asked quietly. His voice held no judgment, just a hint of wonder, which eased Takashi’s mind immediately.

“Yes. We have often gone to clubs with him in drag before, but he never quite pulled off the transformation quite like this. Hikaru and Kaoru should be commended. He looks beautiful.” The softness and love in Takashi’s voice made Haruhi smile and get a little flirty.
“He does make an extraordinarily stunning woman.” She said. “I have to admit that I am just as glad to know that it is Hani, because I was about to turn green with jealousy.” A faint pink dusted across her lips.

“I think that’s the best thing I have ever heard waking up,” Hikaru said quietly as he yawned and opened his eyes. “Haruhi actually jealous…” He grinned. “I would get up and greet you but I am a bit stuck at the moment.”

Kyouya laughed as Haruhi walked quietly over to Hikaru and placed a quick kiss on his lips. “Of course I would be jealous of some strange woman picking up on my boyfriend without my approval. I may share you easily with the other Hosts, but start picking up strangers and we may have to have a discussion.” She smiled to let him know she was (mostly) joking.

“I wouldn’t mess with Haruhi, brother, she will kick your ass,” Kaoru smiled sleepily before tilting his head back. “Wanna morning kiss too…” He yawned.

“I think I can fix that problem,” Tamaki grinned as he walked over and planted a big kiss on Kao’s lips, while the others laughed quietly.

“Tha’s nice…” Another huge yawn racked Kaoru as he shifted to stretch. He looked over at Hani. “Hey Hika, the make-up held all night. We will have to buy stock in the brand. Maybe get a HDG line out of them.”

“Too early for business…” Hani whined still 95% asleep. He snuggled deeper into the two warm bodies before a round of soft laughter woke him completely with a start and panic set in. “Oh! Hi!! Umm… Well… About this…” He gestured to his body.

Haruhi leaned over and kissed him on the cheek. “No judgment from any of us. Least of all me. My dad would be prancing around if he looked as good as you do just waking up. You are beautiful. Either in drag or out of it.”

Hani blushed. “I don’t know why I was worried, really. I guess I have just kept it a secret from everyone but Takashi for so long, I was scared to let it go. I should have trusted you long ago.”

“Yes you should have,” Hikaru teased.

“Makeovers are fun! Think how many years we wasted not doing one with you!” Kaoru continued.

“Tragic.” Both twins chorused while the others laughed.

Takashi walked over and knelt down next to the couch. Surprising them all, he leaned over and claimed Hani’s lips in a kiss that had the twins humming at the heat of it.

“I think Takashi approves,” Kyoyua said as he gave Hikaru his morning kiss. “Though full makeovers are something that once was enough for me.”

“Definitely.” Hikaru replied with a fond smile at his boyfriend. “Awww… you didn’t have fun? You seemed to have a blast at the end of it.”

“After 8 hours of endless changing, pinning, and such, you put me in leather. You put yourself in leather… AND you put Haru in a leather dress that screamed sex. Of course I had a great time.” Kyoyua smirked. “Just next time – skip to the leather clothing.”

“I can do that,” The lust in Hikaru’s eyes made Haruhi grin.
A clock chimed in the background. Looking up at the clock, Tamaki said, “I hate to break this up, but we need to think about getting ready to go and grabbing some breakfast. Hani, Takashi, Haru, what time are you supposed to be at the Center.

“We are supposed to be there at 10:30am, Tama-chan,” Hani stretched. “I should probably get a shower and change. I think the Tournament committee would be a little shocked to see me this way.”

“That’s an understatement,” Takashi smiled at his lover, “considering they still don’t acknowledge our relationship as anything other than distant cousins. Traditional is fine to a point, but there comes a point when you need to adapt to modern life.” A faint warning crossed his eyes as he blinked over to Haruhi and back.

Thanks for the reminder, lover. Haruhi doesn’t need to know how unusual it is for a female to be granted permission to test for her belt at this large of a competition. If she asks, we will tell her, but hopefully she will be too focused on her skills to notice she is the only female in her ranking. The Haninozouka and Morinozouka names still carry enough weight to force the exception, especially as she is both mine and Takashi’s special student, but if those old geezers had their way, women would still be relegated to the kitchen and bedroom to serve their masters and provide children. Thankfully there is a growing movement among the younger generation to change that, which is why we pushed for the demonstration part. We want to open the Master Ranks to everyone regardless of sex or sexual orientation. Out loud he said, “Agreed. Now, if someone will help me get these hair extensions out, I need a shower.”

“Hold still,” Kaoru said and made swift work of the extensions.

Hani shook his head in relief. “Haru-chan, I totally understand now why you like to keep your hair short. I had no idea how heavy hair can be.”

Haruhi laughed, “Tell me about it. I wish I could just keep it short all the time.” Four growls escaped the lips of Hikaru, Kyoya, Tamaki, and Kaoru, which caused her to laugh. “Except I have boyfriends with Neanderthal tendencies who like it longer.”

Hikaru swallowed hard. “If you absolutely hate having long hair… I could, maybe, get used to the idea of it shorter. There are some cute short haired styles for women.”

Haruhi threw her head back in laughter, “All of which require hours to maintain every morning. I am mostly just teasing you guys. I am happy with it at my shoulders. I can put it into a pony tail if needed to get it out of my face or you can add extensions if you need it long for some reason. It works. I am not complaining. Now… I could also use a shower and some breakfast. Anyone else?”

Unanimous agreement met the question.
Revelations

The group reconvened an hour later. After some quick discussion it was decided that Kaoru would take the Porsche to pick up Renge, Tamaki and Hikaru would take the Aston, and Hani, Takashi, Kyouya and Haruhi would ride in the Land Rover. After the tournament they would all stay in those groups except for the group in the Land Rover who would go back to the house and shower before going back out in pairs – Kyouya with Takashi and Haruhi with Hani.

The mood in Land Rover was filled with quiet intensity. Takashi drove while Hani sat in the front seat – their hands linked as their arms rested on the center console. In the back, Kyouya sat on one side but he had pulled Haruhi in to the middle so he could put his arms around her for the drive. He was content to tuck his head on top of hers and let his arms loosely fall around her waist. Haruhi, for her part, was leaning back into him and trying to complete some of her breathing exercises, using his heartbeat as a focus. Her nerves had hit hard the minute that she had walked back downstairs with her bag.

As she shifted minutely again for the tenth time, Kyouya murmured quietly in her ear. “Relax love; you are going to knock their socks off.”

Haruhi sighed. “I am sorry love, I was fine earlier but now the nerves are setting in. I know I can do this, but I can’t stop thinking that I will forget a sequence and dishonor Hani and Takashi.”

Hani looked back over his shoulder at the two of them with a stern look on his face, “We wouldn’t have arranged for this if you weren’t ready. Which makes me wonder if you are questioning our judgment or our abilities as your senseis to properly teach you, since Takashi and I will ultimately be the ones who are judged by your performance, Haruhi.”

*That was really harsh.* Indignant on Haruhi’s behalf, Kyouya arms tensed around her and he opened his mouth to say something, but Takashi caught his eye in the rear view mirror pleading with him to remain silent for the moment.

Hani watched the play of emotions across Haruhi’s face – shock, hurt, and then her almost physical reaction to his use of her name, and not the pet name he had given her. It twisted something painfully inside him to watch it, but it was a cold hard lesson and one that she needed. If she didn’t find her confidence on her own, she would become a self-fulfilling prophecy of failure. As her Sensei, it was his responsibility to make her see it. So he kept his face hard, and let Takashi’s hand absorb the trembling in his fingertips.

Taking a deep breath, Haruhi closed her eyes and found her center. She let go of the self-doubt and focused on the knowledge that they had gifted her with. She let herself be humbled by the trust and respect that they had for her, which gave her the drive to prove that their faith was not misplaced.
Opening her eyes, she said formally, eyes lowered, “I am must humbled by your guidance and wisdom, Sensei. I am honored by your training. I just realized that I bring more dishonor to you by questioning my training than by any mistakes or miscalculations I may make in my performance.” She looked up at him. “I honestly didn’t realize the politics that were in place with this decision to test. I am sorry for my self-doubt and I won’t fail you. I swear.”

Hani’s face relaxed immediately, “I know you won’t Haru-chan.” His smile was brilliant.

The tension in Kyouya’s body melted as Haruhi leaned back into him. Her fidgeting was gone. I didn’t like it, but Hani’s chastisement was exactly what Haruhi needed. He meant every word and the disappointment was real. It made her see beyond herself and challenged her - the sign of a true Master.

Haruhi leaned back into Kyouya, but she kept her next question directed at Hani. “There is more to this tournament than you are telling me, isn’t there?”

Hani glanced over at Takashi who nodded. “Yes... I am sure you would have noticed immediately when you got there, but you deserve to know ahead of time. You will be the only woman testing for your first master rank. Despite the fact we live in a modern world, some of the judging council members ideas on what is proper and who should be allowed to test are at best in the 18th century. They feel any homosexuals, women, and anyone under the age of 40 do not have the proper morality or life wisdom to be allowed to call themselves Masters. A few of those even think that commoners, solely by the virtue of their birth, don’t have the same moral code or intelligence to achieve a true Master rank. Thankfully, they are a small portion of the council so they don’t have the ability to unilaterally block or deny the rankings, and there is a growing movement among younger Masters to eradicate this hidebound way of thinking, while still keeping the spirit of traditional teachings. For all of the civil rights movements of the last 60 or so years globally, there are still pockets of extreme prejudice and the Old Masters are one of them. Change is coming, though, and rather dramatically. It started 25 years ago with several commoners demonstrating their mastery and founding schools that now have an international reputation for excellence. Then the age of people achieving Master ranks started slowly decreasing, and five years ago, the highest Master Rank achievable was bestowed upon a man named Zhi Fujimia who was 28 at the time. He was the sole student of one of the council members and his skill is flawless. I can’t wait for you to meet him, actually.”

“So there are ranks to Mastery?” Kyouya asked.

“Yes,” Takashi replied, “there are five Master ranks possible and all who have achieved the highest ranking are on the Council.”

“What level are you and Hani?”

“We are both level 3 Masters.” Takashi answered.

“And boy does that stick in the craws of the Old Masters,” Hani said with a grin. “We were the youngest to ever achieve a first level Mastery and we are on our way to being fifth level by the time we reach age 26. At the time, there was a lot of dissention on whether we could test for our first level at only sixteen years old. Many on the council felt that we shouldn’t be allowed the privilege of testing until we reached the age of 18, but our families pulled rank. This was one of the times that being of royal descent helped more than hindered. Since then, with Master Zhi’s assistance and the help of several other younger members of the council, we have been shaking up the Aikido and Kendo disciplines.”
“We still have to hide our relationship though,” Takashi said quietly. “Zhi and a few other trusted members know, but until we achieve our fifth level and become part of the council ourselves, if it came out, we would be blackballed and not allowed to test. Even with the influence of our families, it is not certain if it could be overcome.”

“That’s just wrong!” Haruhi’s fury came out in her voice. “Your skill and moral code has absolutely nothing to do with your sexual orientation!”

“Historically, homosexuality was a common practice among both foot soldiers and officers since there were obviously shortages of women in battle and there is never a shortage of the sexual need,” Kyouya said.

“You’re right Kyo-chan, but as western influence has crept in over the last millennia, that fact was swept under the rug and, when it is acknowledged at all, it was twisted to be taught that only commoners practiced it, since officers would satisfy their carnal needs with geishas… and since only aristocracy could be officers, it ties back to the claims for so many years that commoners didn’t have enough of a moral code to achieve mastery.”

“Wow. That is really just … wrong. On so many levels, actually.” Haruhi responded. “How can people remain so willfully deluded? Wait… nevermind, I know the answer to the question and it’s the reason I am studying law in the first place.”

“Which is yet another reason why we love you Haru-chan,” Hani winked at her.

Takashi looked over at Hani and a silent signal passed between them, “there is one more thing that you should know, ashke.” He caught her eyes in the rearview mirror for a brief moment before looking back to the road. “If you achieve your first level mastery rank today, you will be the first woman to do so. If you continue and achieve fifth level you will be the first, if not only, woman on the council.”

Haruhi’s breath caught and she was stunned into silence.

Kyouya tightened his arms around her in support, before asking, “But surely there are other women who have achieved Master ranks? You said there are several international schools. Surely they complete the testing and ranking process for their students. I can’t imagine that there aren’t women who have earned the rank.”

“There are. Master Zhi’s wife is a third level Master in her own right, but she has earned that level through Master Zhi’s school, not through the council. He petitioned for her to be allowed to test for her mastery, but it was rejected. That’s why he is so supportive of this. If Haruhi as both a female and a commoner can prove her mastery, then he will petition the council to allow Sakura to test, since a precedence will have been set.”

“Why was Zhi’s request denied?”

“Politics, mostly,” Hani sighed, “He is of common blood, even though he was ward of an aristocratic family. The family connection was enough to let him test for his Mastery, but the blood impurity meant at the time he didn’t have enough consequence to gain a majority vote of council members.”

“I have to ask, and please know I mean no disrespect, but how much do I owe the Haninouzouka and Morinouzouka families for the honor of being allowed to test?” Haruhi asked.
“I won’t deny that there was some family pull involved, but less than we expected. Our two families make up nearly one quarter of the council, and since you are Takashi’s and my first and chosen student, you were guaranteed support from them. Some of the older uncles were not thrilled that we chose to teach together rather than separately or that the fact that the student we chose was a woman, but they would not show that dissent publically by voting against it, though my dad and Takashi’s dad as heads of the families got an earful. Thankfully, both of them support us and have met and been charmed by you, so they stood fast against the protests. You will see them there today, since they are both on the Council as well.” Hani answered.

“Master Zhi has been gaining a loyal following over the last few years by his devotion to the art and his humble straightforward nature. When he supported it, several other council members did as well,” Takashi continued.

“It still wasn’t quite enough for a majority vote,” Hani hesitated for a moment, “There is no easy way to say this, so I will just say it. The rest of those that voted for your chance did so because they are expecting you to fail. If you test and don’t earn the title, they can continue to push that women don’t have the innate ability to become Masters and to a lesser extent commoners as well.” He paused and took a breath, “It will also cast discredit on Takashi and my teaching ability, which will make it harder for us to achieve our next mastery.”

“Wow.” Haruhi was at a loss for words.

“That’s a lot of pressure,” Kyouya said quietly, a hint of anger in his voice.

“Ashke, do not let this bring you back to fear. Mitskune and I do not doubt your ability or our ability to teach you. If something should happen, you still qualify for Mastery in our school.” Takashi said, then seeing her shaking her head at his statement, realized where her thoughts were, “also do not worry about Mitskune or I not being able to achieve our next mastery. It would delay it a bit, but they cannot deny our skill and will not be able to deny our rank for long.”

“It’s still a lot of pressure,” Kyouya repeated and glared at Hani who managed to look contrite.

Haruhi tilted her head up and gave him a swift kiss. A look of determination was in her eyes. “It is pressure, I won’t deny it. But it’s exactly the kind of challenge that interests me and all three of you know it. I know Hani and Takashi wouldn’t have considered this, if they thought I wasn’t ready to take it on. I admit to nerves this morning and self-doubt, but Hani rightfully chastised me for it. I am ready. Now, I am even more determined to earn this. For them as well as for me.”

“Anyone ever tell you, you’re sexy when you are fierce?” Kyouya grinned at her and pressed a kiss to her forehead.

She smiled up at him, “only the people who know I love them too much to hurt them when they make sexist remarks like that.”

“I think it’s just the Ootori charm.”

Haruhi swatted Kyouya’s arm around her waist. Hani and Takashi grinned at each other and the mood in the Rover lightened considerably.
The Land Rover pulled into the parking lot with the Aston right behind it. Tamaki and Hikaru got out and joined the others, while obviously continuing a conversation that had started in the car.

“I still say the musical is better than the movie adaptation. It’s visceral and pure. The staging is done by professional singers and dancers, not just actors who can carry a tune and movie effects.” Tamaki said.

“But the rough and slightly unpolished nature of the actors’ voices lent an air of credibility to it compared to a more polished stage production. Plus the ability to have the audience see the expressions close up on the characters faces meant the emotion could be more intensely experienced. In a stage production it is harder to see the actors’ expressions, especially if your seats are on an upper balcony. And the costuming was amazing.” Hikaru countered.

“What are they arguing about?” Hani asked curiously to Haruhi.

“Les Miserables. The movie vs. the stage production,” Haruhi responded, stifling a grin. “It’s an argument that Hika and Kao get into all the time. It’s fun to watch it play out when there is time for them to really get into it.” She put two fingers in her mouth and whistled loudly, “Hey boys! Save the rest of the debate for when you are alone. We need to get inside and if you want to find a seat up close, you need to do that soon.”

Hikaru grinned at her, before sweeping her a bow and then pulling her in for a kiss. “Sorry love, you know how I feel on the subject.”

“I do.” She gave him a hug.

“But we can wait.” Tamaki said with a grin and twinkle in his eyes before giving her hand a polite and gallant kiss, since they were out in public. “Now it’s time to support you.” He pulled a banner from behind him. It read - Go HARUHI!! Kick Aikido Ass!!

Haruhi groaned, “Tama… please tell me you aren’t intending to bring that inside?”

“Why not? I made it for you. I thought you would be happy,” He let a sheen of moisture fill his large violet puppy dog eyes.

It was Kyouya who pulled the banner from his hands, and bopped Tamaki over the head with it. “Stop it, Tamaki. You know that Haruhi doesn’t appreciate attention drawn to her like that.”

The moisture dried up immediately, which confirmed Haruhi’s guess that the Host king was faking it. Still he winked at her before turning back to Kyouya and saying in his most dramatic voice. “Our darling princess deserves every show of support we can give her.”

“I guess I should be happy you are referring to her as ‘our darling princess’ rather than ‘my darling daughter’,” Kyouya muttered, while the others tried not to laugh.

“I can’t be his daughter anymore since I slept with him, it would be too wrong even for his twisted mind,” Haruhi giggled, “But he still has to have a way to annoy you, Kyo-love.” She looked at her watch and gave a little eep. “Crap, we need to get in there, NOW, or I won’t have enough time to change and warm up before my testing begins.”

“Go love,” Kyouya kissed her, “Kick ass for us. I want to tell the world I am dating the first female Master.”

Hikaru looked oddly at Kyouya for his comment before shrugging as Kyouya mouthed “Later.” Turning to Haruhi, he pulled her into another hug and gave her a deep kiss before saying, “Rip them
to pieces. I love you.”

Tamaki gave her a hug and a chaste kiss on the cheek before saying, “Good luck, princess.”

She smiled at all of them and said, “I love you all. Thank you for being here with me for this. It’s a good feeling to know I have a cheering section.” Before she could get caught up in any more conversation, she picked up her bag, slung it across her back and marched resolutely towards the building.

Hani and Takashi picked up their bags to follow, but Takashi turned back once more to say, “Thank you for sharing her with us. It means more than you know.”

“You’re welcome. Truly.” Kyouya said and gripped Takashi’s arm at the wrist as he did the same to Kyouya. “She is yours as well. Know that.” He smiled, “Now go change the world!”
Preliminaries

Haruhi pushed open the doors to the Event Center and marveled at the sheer number of people milling about in the lobby. A group of sports photographers caught her eye. There was a media booth off to her left. Here’s hoping that this group of paparazzi doesn’t recognize me. Fashion Week and Martial Arts are distinct enough entities that there shouldn’t be crossover… I hope. So far we have been able to avoid having to talk to the press. I would like to keep it that way. She turned quickly and looked for any signs pointing to the locker room area.

“Is that Haruhi Fujioka? The girl who is dating Hikaru Hitachiin and Kyouya Ootori? What is she doing here at the Masters Competition?”

The question was just loud enough for Haruhi to shrink inside. Damn! They recognized me. She started walking as quickly as possible without running toward the locker area, hoping to make it before the reporter who had recognized her caught up with her.

“IT IS!!! This is going to be the scoop of the year! Quick! Catch her! Haruhi!! Haruhi Fujioka!! A word with you!!” the reporter yelled as he rushed toward her, a cameraman hot on his heels.

Haruhi glanced desperately out the glass windows and saw Takashi and Hani approaching, but they were far enough away that they wouldn’t catch up with her before the reporter caught her. She could see the concern on their faces as they immediately took in the situation. Both threw decorum to the wind and started running towards her.

“Miss Fujioka! How wonderful to see you again. Please, let me escort you to the preparation area.”

A muscular man of average height, in his early thirties, with short black hair, rugged features, wearing a black gi with a tiger embroidered on it, stopped and bowed in front of her. He looked up at her with eyes full of good humor.

Haruhi was surprised not only by his words and his deference since she had never met him before, but his willingness to distract the paparazzi. But it was the humor in his eyes and the Tiger on his sleeve that clued her in and made her relax. She dropped her bag and bowed as well. “Master Fujimia. It is my honor and privilege to accept your escort. My Masters were momentarily delayed… Ah, here they are.”

Takashi and Hani skidded to a stop next to them, slightly out of breath. Takashi glared at the cameraman who was recording every moment of the exchange, the reporter eagerly waiting to jump in.

“Master Mitskuni, Master Takashi, it is a pleasure to see you and your student again,” a warning look crossed Zhi Fujimia’s eyes letting them know not to contradict his familiarity. “I am looking forward to seeing her skill at testing. I was just about to escort her to the preparation area, would you both care to join me?”

“It would be our pleasure, Master Fujimia,” Takashi answered gracefully and gestured for him to lead the way.

“Wait!!,” the reporter cried, “What is this about testing? Is Haruhi Fujioka a student of Takashi Morinozuka? Is that why they drove off together to a retreat yesterday without either of her boyfriends? Are you seeing Takashi Morinozuka as well? How does Hikaru Hitachiin or Kyouya Ootori feel about the situation?”
The last two questions caused the group to pause and Haruhi could see the anger burning on Takashi’s and Hani’s faces at the implication.

Takashi was livid. He was about to turn and give the impudent reporter a piece of his mind when a hand on his arm stopped him.

“Let me,” Zhi said quietly. He turned back to the reporter with a glare. “Mister…” he deliberately glanced down at the reporter’s badge to get his name, hinting that the reporter wasn’t worth remembering, “Charles Blake. Your questions are out of line at this event. This is Masters Tournament not a Tea Party. You will respect our art, the masters, and the students who have earned the right to test before the Masters Council.” He glanced at Hani who gave him a nod, “To answer some of your not so subtle questions. Yes, Miss Fujioka is a student of both Mitskuni Haninozuka and Takashi Morinozuka. She will be testing for her first level Master rank as well as participating in a demonstration with her Senseis. Both of whom are Masters, in their own right as you well know. She has earned the right to test by her skill and a by a majority vote of the Council. I do not know what sordid fantasies you are imagining, but neither she nor her senseis would let their personal life interfere or influence her training. Now please excuse us, we need to prepare for the Testing.”

“What about her staying with Takashi Morinozuka overnight at an exclusive retreat in the French Alps just a day after publically coming out with Hikaru Hitachiin and Kyouya Ootori?” Blake pressed.

A small attractive red-haired woman in a black gi that matched Master Zhi’s stepped up. “It is tradition in the Morinozuka family to spend the night before testing for all Master’s ranks in retreat and reflection. The retreat you keep referring to was inside a converted Monastery, used by several different disciplines for reflection, study, and meditation. It’s not exactly a lover’s retreat.” She gave the reporter a winning smile, before continuing in a much more friendly and slightly cajoling voice, “Charles… you know I trained with the Morinozuka family for years before switching to my husband’s school, so I know about this. Please stop fishing. There is far more here than a silly gossip piece. If Haruhi succeeds in achieving her first level master rank today in front of the Council, she will be the first woman to achieve that rank. If you want a scoop – focus on that. You know what that will mean for females in the Arts.”

Charles Blake melted under Sakura Fujimia’s brilliant smile. “Really?!? Now THAT is a scoop!”

“Thank you, Charles. Now if you will excuse us, we really do need to escort Miss Fujioka and her Sensei’s to the preparation area.” She linked her arm with her Haruhi’s and gave the girl a mischievous smile.

“Oh Course! Good Luck Miss Fujioka!!” Charles Blake yelled.

Haruhi graciously nodded her head in return and responded, “Thank You.”

With that final word, Haruhi held her breath until they were out of the public areas and into the preparation area. Once they crossed the barrier and were out of the public eye, she let it out in a sigh of relief.

“Hi, I’m Sakura Fujimia,” the young red-headed woman said with a huge grin, before thrusting out her hand.

Laughing, Haruhi responded, “Haruhi, Fujioka. Pleased to meet you both.” She bowed to Zhi. “And my eternal thanks for saving me from that reporter. I guess it was too much to ask that I wouldn’t be recognized.”
Zhi smiled back, “It was our pleasure. Glad we could help. I knew after the story hit of you, Hikaru Hitachiin, and Kyoya Ootori on Sunday, there was a chance that it could cross over to here, since I know they are great friends of Mitskuni and Takashi. We were on the look-out for the three of you, just in case.” His voice went serious as he turned to Hani and Takashi. “I also wanted to warn you. The old guard is whispering and politicking behind the scenes. The Testing Council for the first level Mastery has been changed. Your uncles were originally supposed to be two of the five judges for the First Ranks. They have been replaced by members of the Nakashimi and Kazimera families.”

Hani hissed through his teeth, “Both of those families have grudges against our families.”

“I know,” Zhi sounded apologetic, “The good news is the remaining three judges are from the Shingoji, Hanikino, and Sushagi Families. While they aren’t aligned with either of your families, they are respected as neutral and will judge the testing fairly.”

“It was to be expected.” Takashi responded.

“Yes,” Zhi answered, “But that is not all. There was enough debate on the Council about your protégé that the full testing routines are going to be required, rather than just the first level mastery one.”

“What do you mean?” Haruhi asked.

“As you know, for testing you usually only have to perform the next level routine to show your skill. For this testing, the Council is requiring all the students to start at the first belt routine and complete them all before demonstrating the first level Master. It’s an endurance and memory test that many here haven’t prepared for. It will likely knock out half the students.”

“But I have had to do that every time I tested,” Haruhi responded, her voice still puzzled. “How is this time different?”

Zhi whipped his head around to stare at the widely grinning Takashi and Hani. “You have had her working through ALL the routines?”

“Every day and at every belt testing,” Hani answered still grinning. “When Takashi and I first decided that we were going to teach her and what the future impact could be, we started thinking. We had a feeling that if this day ever came, they would throw everything that they could at us to see us fail. So we planned for it. Best case, it wouldn’t happen and Haruhi would sail through the routine, barely breaking a sweat. Worst case, she would have the endurance to perform each move flawlessly.”

Sakura started Laughing at the stunned look on her husband’s face. “I TOLD you they were crafty.”

Zhi grinned as the implications sunk in. “The look on the judges’ faces is going to be priceless.”

Haruhi turned to her senseis and said with mock-seriousness, “You mean to tell me that for years I have been doing more than I needed to earn the belts?”

“Naturally, Haru-chan,” Hani smirked, “We know you love a challenge. Couldn’t have you taking the easy way out, now could we?”

Her mock seriousness broke, and she threw her arms around both Hani and Takashi. “You, my friends are devious beyond measure.” She would have kissed them both, but even though they were away from the general public, they were still in full view of all the other students and masters, many of whom were looking their way with extreme curiosity. A loud tone echoed through the room.
“Crap – that’s the 30 minute warning,” Sakura said. “Let me help get Haruhi changed and then she needs to prepare.” She looked at Haruhi and Takashi. “Your sister has been talking about the partner yoga you do together and how it helps you prepare. I have secured a curtained area, where you can get a quick session in and no one will see you. I would hate for the rumors to start flying again.”

“Thank you,” Haruhi responded gratefully, “Takashi and I were able to do quite a bit last night so I am pretty centered. I didn’t expect the opportunity to occur today, so I was prepared to go without. All it can do will help.” She grinned at Sakura. “If you could show me where I could change, I would appreciate it. I am ready to kick butt, make my senseis proud and shake up the world.”

“Ooo… I LIKE you!!” Sakura laughed.

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Five minutes later, Haruhi walked out of the bathroom dressed in the new gi that Takashi and Hani had given her. I can do this. I WILL succeed. She and Sakura met back up with Hani, Takashi, and Zhi. Hani and Taka having taken a moment to change into their gis. She spared a moment to really look at them. Damn they look good. She gave them a brilliant smile with they answered with a wink.

“Ok, where can we stretch?”

“This way,” Sakura replied. “And if I may say so, the three of you look gorgeous. Gi’s are not usually something that is considered stylish, but the cut of yours is different while still being traditional.”

“It helps that Haru-chan is both best friends with half and dating the other half of an haute couture design team,” Hani grinned. “Kao-chan was more than willing to come up with the design. We just approved the results.”

“It doesn’t surprise me you let Kao talk you into this.” Haruhi shook her head.

“It was the other way around, ashke,” Takashi said. “Kaoru wouldn’t let it go until we relented. I for one am glad we did”.

Sakura and Zhi swiftly looked at each other at Takashi’s slip of the word ashke. Neither knew what it meant, but neither had heard that tone from the normally stoic Takashi Morinozuka.

Hani saw the exchange between them. I will have to explain. He sighed quietly. I know they will understand, but it is going to be a bit of a shock, since they think that Takashi and I are exclusive. Out loud, he said looking at his watch, “You have twenty minutes before Haruhi needs to line up to take her place on the mat. You may want to hurry.”

“Yes Sensei,” Haruhi said formally, as she pushed back the curtain Sakura had led her to. She removed the jacket portion of her gi and stepped into the center of the area in just her sports bra and pants.

Takashi followed suit immediately and removed his jacket as well. Stepping up to her, they immediately placed their palms together and started breathing.

Sakura and Zhi started to turn away and leave the three alone, but Hani’s hand on her arm stopped them. “You will want to watch this,” Hani said quietly.

“Are you sure?” Zhi asked.

“Absolutely.” Hani dropped into a seated position and gestured for them to join him.
Haruhi had felt everything else drop away the moment that she looked up into Takashi’s eyes. Their palms connected, their heartbeats synchronized and they slipped into a routine that had become so familiar they closed their eyes and let their bodies naturally flow into each movement.

“Wow…” Sakura breathed as she watched them.

“They are completely connected aren’t they?” Zhi asked quietly. At Hani’s nod of assent he continued, “But you don’t appear jealous in any way. I know that you and Takashi are together, or at least I thought you were, even if it still must be kept from the Council, but how does she fit in? I thought she was dating Hikaru Hitachiin and Kyouya Ootori?”

“Takashi and I are still together… and you are right. I am not jealous of Haru-chan and my lover.” Hani turned and smiled, so Zhi could see the honesty in his eyes. “If it was anyone else but Haruhi, it would be different… she is different. It’s hard to describe, but it is one of her gifts. She is fierce, passionate, steadfast, honest, intelligent, determined, and a truer friend than many will ever find. She also loves unconditionally without prejudice. It’s the reason all of her friends, myself included, are at least a little in love with her… and she loves us back as well. She is able to find the part of us that needs nurturing and fills it and we do the same for her. I don’t have the patience for yoga – never have, but Takashi loves it. She can give that to him when I can’t.” He waved a hand at them, “You see the results. She gets his calm strength and focus and he gets her passion without prejudice.” He spoke to Sakura, “Thank you for setting up this little space. Haru-chan would have done fine without this chance to connect. With it, she is going to be unstoppable.”

“My pleasure,” Sakura replied. “Both you and Takashi are as close to brothers as I will ever get. I care about both of you and getting the chance to help you makes me happy. I already liked Haruhi from what both of you and Yakini have said about her. Now that I have actually met her and just heard what you said about her, I like her even more… and it has absolutely nothing to do with showing those stubborn, prejudiced, old goats, that a woman is just as capable as a man.” She had a wolfish grin that made Hani laugh.

“Don’t ever let them hear you say that, my love, or no power on earth will be able to convince them to let you test,” Zhi warned before adding with a grin. “Not that I don’t agree with you 100%.”

“You are an incredible Aikido Master and deserve the chance to test, Sakura. I hope this will convince the Council to rethink the petition,” Hani said as another loud tone echoed through the area. Looking up, he saw Haruhi and Takashi shift into their final tree pose with one hand pressed together and the other on the other’s heart.

“It’s time.” Haruhi said looking into Takashi’s eyes.

“Change the World, ashke,” Takashi responded and bent down to kiss her softly on the lips.

“Let’s do this, Haru-chan,” Hani said, walking up to them. Grinning he kissed her just as softly before smacking her on the ass. “It’s time Fujioka. Make us proud.”

“Yes Sensei.” Haruhi grinned and put on the jacket he held out to her.

“Good Luck,” Zhi said, bowing.

“Give ‘em Hell and knock ‘em down with a feather!” Sakura grinned before kissing her cheek.

“Thank you. All of you.” Haruhi replied and taking a deep breath took her place in the line preparing to enter the arena.

I can DO this.
Haruhi was fourth in a line of twenty, a fabric number 93 pinned to her back. She was not only the youngest competitor but also the only female, just as Takashi and Hani had warned her. Thanks to that warning she was half-expecting the comments and the trash talk kept just low enough that the judges couldn’t hear. She tried to ignore it but noted who was making the comments. However, one comment in particular made her clench her fists to keep her calm. It had come from a man in his late 20’s wearing number 142 who was standing a few places behind her. *That would be Hiro Nakashimi if I remember the line-up order correctly.*

“What did I tell ya,” Hiro sneered, “the little slut won’t even speak up for herself. She must be good in bed or something, because it sure ain’t her looks that get her here. Everyone knows women just can’t handle the pressure of true mastery.”

Taking a deep breath and physically relaxing her hands, Haruhi drew on the calm she and Takashi had just worked toward. “Actually it was my skill, as I assume applies to all of you as well. Unless of course, you actually did sleep your way into this testing… it obviously wasn’t your brain.”

Hiro started to rush her, but a couple of the other students held him back. The held him in place while he fumed and glared at her. Haruhi deliberately turned her back on him and faced the front of the line again.

The man wearing number 78 and standing in front of Haruhi gave her a wink. “I’m Kaziki Blake. Nice come back by the way.”

Haruhi smiled, “Thanks.” She noted the British accent and tiger emblem on his gi. “Are you from Master Fujimia’s school?”

“Yes. Sakura is my second cousin on my mother’s side of the family. She can kick my butt up one side and down the other, and she pretty much always could.” He grinned, “Personally, I am thrilled that the Council was persuaded to let you test. I hope it opens the way for her and my youngest sister.”

“I just met Sakura today and if anyone deserves it, it is her. I hope this gamble works.”

“I have only met Takashi Morinozuka and Mitskune Haninozuka a few times, but they are living legends among the younger crowd. I can only imagine that the student they would choose to teach would be someone unusual and extraordinary.” He winked again, “Since despite their family lineage they are rather non-traditional.”

Haruhi laughed, “Non-traditional about sums it up. Though from what I understand about the family lines, their non-tradition seems to be their tradition, if that makes sense.”

“That’s a great way to put it,” Kaziki laughed back.

An announcer’s voice echoed over the PA system - spoken first in Japanese then translated to French and English. It was a greeting to the audience and introduction of the students testing. At its conclusion, the line started moving towards the mats.

“Good luck,” Kaziki whispered as they started to move.
“You too!” Haruhi answered with a smile, before plastering a neutral expression on her face as she stepped out into the arena for the first time. Oh…wow… Haruhi glanced up to see thousands of people packing the grandstands. *I didn’t realize how BIG this actually is.* Panic started to claw its way up her throat until she looked forward and was caught by the sight of all of her friends, yelling and cheering wildly in the front rows, as close as they could get without being in the actual testing area. Without thinking her eyes sought out Kyōuya and Hikaru. Kyōuya’s eyes locked first and she felt the electric connection she always felt across the room and remembered his parting words outside – *Change the World.* It jolted her back into control. She then met Hikaru’s eyes and he blew a kiss at her with a wink. She felt a grin start to form and then had to quickly bite her lip to hide it when she saw Tamaki flash the sign he had made earlier, trying to keep it out of Kyōuya’s line of sight. Renge and Kaoru were also cheering as loudly as they could. *I have awesome friends.* She reached her assigned place on the mats. She was the last person in the front row, but she knew that even if she had been in the middle of the pack, all eyes still would have been on her. Standing at attention, she glanced over to where Takashi and Hani were standing next to Master Zhi. They appeared to be in an intense discussion and neither of her sensei’s looked pleased. *Something else must have come up with the Council and the testing process. I can’t ask, but I have a feeling I will find out soon enough.*

Finally nodding their head in acceptance if not agreement, Hani and Mori took their places in the section reserved for Masters with students testing. Hani was livid and trying hard not to show it while Takashi had retreated into his stoic blank face. Master Zhi looked determined.

In front of Haruhi, five gentlemen ranging in age from mid-sixties to late eighties took their places on a raised platform. All carried themselves with an air that demanded respect. *Those must be the judges.*

The man in the middle spoke into a microphone, “Welcome students. You are here to show your proficiency in the traditional arts of aikido and kendo and to attempt to earn your first level mastery. If you succeed, you will have earned the right to continue with your study and may in time become a member of this Council.” He paused and took a breath, “This year the council has decided to alter the requirements for achieving Mastery. You will be required to show the progression of your skill and your knowledge of its use.”

The crowd erupted into excited whispers and murmuring. Behind her, Haruhi could hear several of the other students inhale quickly in a gasp, though she maintained her blank face at the announcement. *I already knew about the progression of skills and I figured something else was up just by the look on Hani and Takashi’s faces.*

Clearing his throat to demand silence again, the judge continued, “Therefore, first you will need to demonstrate each of the previous testing routines that you have completed. If you pass that portion, you will demonstrate your sparring capability. Each remaining student will be paired with a fifth level Master and will spar against another pairing. Only the winning student from each pairing will achieve their first level mastery at this time.” A chorus of gasps echoed through the arena. “To make the testing fair, no student will be paired with their Sensei.”

*So that’s their plan to knock me out of the competition in a way that appears coincidental.* Haruhi fumed. *They can’t know that I have been practicing the progression every time, but just in case I succeed in their first test, they intend for me to lose when partnered with an unfamiliar partner. I bet they won’t tell us who we will be partnered with until the time comes just to unbalance us further.* Haruhi looked up and met Takashi eyes. She let her determination shine through and was met with an answering nod from him and a grin from Hani.
Very subtly, Hani stared at her before letting his eyes slide over to Master Zhi. He gave her a wink after.

_So that’s what the deep discussion the three of them were in was about. If I pass the first test, Zhi must have requested that he be my partner for the second. That’s a relief. Even though I have never fought with him or seen him in action, I trust him, and that’s going to be the deciding factor._

Snapping back into attention, she heard the judge conclude his speech.

“Those students that are not successful today may petition the council to test again next year. That is all. Good Luck. At the gong you may begin.” With that he placed his hand in his fist and nodded to the students, who automatically bowed in return, and gestured to a man standing near a brass shield to sound the tone.

As the last echoes of the gong faded, Haruhi started the first of her seven katas, letting their rhythm flow into her and shut out the rest of the competitors.

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Kyouya heard the judge’s speech and fury washed over him. “They are trying to make it so Haruhi won’t earn her title. What do you want to bet that if she doesn’t make it today, her petition to the council to retest would never be accepted.”

Hikaru heard the fury in his lover’s voice and covertly slipped his hand down to link with his. Quietly he said, “Look at Hani and Takashi. They are annoyed but still calm. They still think she will succeed. We can’t do anything less.” He squeezed the hand.

Kyouya felt the pressure in his hand and let its support help him calm. After taking a deep breath, he smiled and said, “Who are you and what have you done with Hikaru? Normally, I am the calm one and you are the one ready to blow up.”

Hikaru’s grin held malicious intent behind it. “Oh trust me lover, if I could find a way to get back at those misguided idiots, I would, but I have no influence and no control there. If the Morinozuka and Haninozuka families couldn’t stop this, nothing could. So instead, I will trust Haruhi. You know she will take this as a personal challenge.”

Kyouya actually smiled at that comment. “You are right. She will… and we all know that she will succeed. It’s not in her to fail since she thinks that by doing so she will dishonor her friends.”

“Haruhi will kick ass!” Renge said from a couple of seats over which caused all the guys to grin.

“Something else for the press to chew on…” Kaoru said a hint of worry in his tone.

“I have been wondering about that,” Kyouya said with a sigh. “I am loath to do this, but we may need to break down and do an interview with someone soon. I know we are used to some photographers anywhere we go, but we shouldn’t have gotten much more than a few quick ‘opportunity’ photos at this venue and they are hovering around us nearly as much as the competitors.”

“Yeah that crowd was something else,” Tamaki replied, “but it wasn’t actually surprising considering the social media blast that went out letting the world know we are here and that the mysterious girlfriend of Kyouya Ootori and Hikaru Hitachiin is also a student of the Martial Arts and is the first female allowed to test for her Mastery.” He held up his phone to show the trending topic and a short interview between a reporter and a red-haired woman. Haruhi stood in the background.
“What!” Hikaru cried. “Why didn’t I know about this?”

Kyouya glared at Tamaki. “It just came up on the ride over and I didn’t get a chance to tell you.” He quickly went over everything Takashi and Hani had told him in the car. “So you can see that these last minute changes are just political pressure to keep her from getting it.”

“Which will only make her push harder to succeed,” Tamaki smiled. “We all know she can do the first part with no problem. We have watched her do so. The second part is trickier, but she has teamed up with both Takashi and Hani before so she is familiar with partnering during sparring matches.”

“But that’s been with Taka or Hani – not a stranger,” Kaoru answered.

“Haru wouldn’t let a little thing like an unfamiliar partner stop her. She’s going to be partnered with another Master so she doesn’t have to worry about skill,” Renge responded. “Besides, any active sabotage will be noted and the party will be disqualified, right?”

“That’s the theory at least,” Kyouya replied. “There are still politics behind the scene, but matches are called by completely impartial umpires whose jobs and reputations are on the line if they are ever caught cheating. The biggest obstacle is probably in the Council finding flaws in her routines and using it to disqualify her.”

“Which won’t happen,” Renge gestured at the floor, where Haruhi’s focus and precision could be seen clearly.

“We hope.” Kaoru answered before leaning back to watch the rest of the testing phase.

Sensing the conversation was at an end, the others followed suit.

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Haruhi completed the last complicated maneuver and bowed to the judges before assuming an ‘at rest’ pose, sweat dripping down her forehead and between her shoulder blades. In her mind, she ran through every movement, step, punch and kick. *I don’t think there were any major mistakes. I know I didn’t miss anything. It actually felt good. I feel good. I am a little tired, but not exhausted. She glanced out the corner of her eye and saw several others still finishing their katas. Most were on their last one, but she could see that they were struggling and their form was suffering. We will see what the judges say, but I am pretty confident in this test thanks to Taka and Hani insisting that I run through everything constantly.*

The gong sounded again.

The judge on the end spoke, “Students, you may take your rest. We will reconvene in ten minutes where we will announce those who are moving on to the second test and the Master they will be partnered with. At that time, you will have an additional five minutes to discuss strategy before the matches will begin. Dismissed.”

Haruhi walked off the mat and over to Takashi and Hani. Takashi handed her a towel and water while Hani enveloped her in a hug.

“That was flawless, Haru-chan,” Hani grinned. “You make us proud!”

“Thank you, Sensei!” Haruhi said with a smile. “So based on your expressions, I take it the sparring test was a surprise?”
“Yes,” Takashi said before giving her a quick hug. “They eliminated the demonstration that Mitskune and I were going to do with you and made it so all the students need to demonstrate their sparring skills.”

“And since they want to keep us from showing off, they made it so students cannot partner with their teachers,” Hani continued with a tone of disgust. “Like we would do anything to jeopardize our standings…”

“Master Zhi has claimed you as his partner. This will be a far better thing than I think the judges realize.” Takashi said. “His method of training is similar to the Haninozuka way, since one of the founders of his school once studied with the family for a brief period of time.”

“However, I wouldn’t put it past the Council to try and subtly sabotage you again. Neither you nor Zhi has great height or weight, though Zhi is taller than I am. They will likely put you against the biggest opponents from either the Nakashimi or Kazimera families. Those two families have a long standing grudge against ours,” Hani added with a grin, “We keep beating them in matches and have for the last 200 years.”

“But I am used to partnering with Hani to take you on,” Haruhi responded. “I know size matters some, but ultimately its speed, impact and endurance.”

“Which is exactly why we trained that way, Haru-chan. We wanted to cover all situations.” Hani looked over to see the students lining back up. “Looks like they are ready to announce the next test. Keep your eyes level. Show no emotion. If they don’t pass you, the families will fight it. Your performance was flawless and they know it.”

Straightening, Haruhi took a deep breath, swiped her head once more with a towel and took her place again in line.

Walking back to her place on the mat was easier this time, even though the tension of the crowd was building. She stood at relaxed attention and waited for the judge’s decision.

“Our decision for the first testing is complete. Of the twenty candidates, eight will be given the opportunity to continue the testing process. These numbers are – 26, 78, 57, 93, 103, 110, 127, and 142.”

Haruhi could hear the screaming of her friends as her number was called. Phew! That’s a relief. One stage down… another to go. Though, I am glad that Kaziki also made the cut.

“All other students - please leave the floor now. You will be eligible to test again next year. Thank you,” The judge continued. The four matches will be – Master Aguri Nakashimi and Fumio Chinen against Kaziki Blake and Tadashi Morinozuka, Master Zhi Fujimia and Haruhi Fujioka against Hiro Nakashimi and Master Jun Kazimera, Master Tsuneto Hanikino and Jou Haga against Eiji Maita and Master Ben Haninozuka, and Master Genji Kurata and Niito Okawa and Master Yamato Shinohara. You now have five minutes to meet and prepare. When the next gong sounds you will need to take your place on the mats.”

Zhi immediately came up to Haruhi and handed her the testing sparring gear. “I wanted to come over a bit earlier but didn’t want to give the appearance that I knew something the others didn’t. Your katas were perfect. I wanted to tell you that I was really impressed by that. Mitskune and Takashi really did know what they were doing when they chose you as a student, especially since you came to it much later than some of the others?” He tilted his head toward Hiro Nakashimi.

“Thank you, sir. I know I was extremely fortunate to be chosen by my teachers.”
“Nice, formal answer. I like that,” Zhi grinned. “We have time to get to know each other later as I know my wife is eager to continue the friendship. She keeps muttering about partner yoga, so I may have you and Takashi to thank for getting corralled into learning something new. But as my master once said – knowledge makes you stronger. How are you at partner sparring?”

“I regularly trade off with both Hani and Takashi to take down the other. Occasionally Hani’s younger brother will join us and we will split with Hani and me against Chika and Takashi. We are probably equal in number of matches won.”

“I should have known those two would prepare for this as well. This is really really good. I know that the Nakashimi and Kazimera families focus on the individual not the group, which will mean that there will likely be some strain between the two of them in the beginning. Though watch out. Hiro Nakashimi is incredibly strong and his family creed is that women are meant to serve, not be served. He has no problem hitting a girl.”

“I gathered that from some comments that he made to me earlier before the first test. I am not afraid of being hit and I want to take him down.” The gong sounded.

“Then let’s do this,” Zhi replied with the devil in his smile as he and Haruhi took their places on the mat.

Hikaru watched as his girlfriend and some strange Master took on opponents twice their size. He was fascinated by the way that they worked together to corner and tag the other team. Pride evident in his voice, he leaned over and said to Kyoya, “Do you know who she is paired with for this match? She is working almost as well with him as she does with Hani or Takashi.”

“That is Master Zhi Fujimia. They guys were talking about him on the way over. Both of them have the utmost respect for him. From what I understand he likes to shake things up the way Hani and Takashi do. It wouldn’t surprise me if when the second testing was announced that he requested Haruhi. He would have done so out of respect for his friends as much as making sure that she wasn’t paired with someone who would sabotage her.” Kyoya responded, his eyes never leaving the center of area and the mat containing Haruhi, Master Zhi and her two opponents. He never relinquished Hikaru’s hand from the moment Hika had grabbed it earlier and the constant touch was reassuring. He couldn’t let anyone but Hika know how anxious he was for her, they depended on him to be the strong one, but watching his girlfriend taking punches and kicks that he knew would have dropped any of them made his stomach churn. Yes they are wearing standard protective gear, but gear only minimizes the impact it doesn’t stop it. She can still get seriously hurt.

“WOOT!!! Two points to one!! One more point and Haruhi wins the match!!” Tamaki yelled as he jumped up and down in enthusiasm. Down a few seats from him Renge was chanting, “Go Haruhi, Go Haruhi!! Take him down!”

Hikaru and Kaoru both were leaning as far forward as they could, disregarding their normal carefully cultivated blasé façade in excitement. They clenched when they saw Haruhi get hit with a combination that caused her to drop to the floor and earned the opposing team another point. She came up limping slightly. “Come on, you can do it” they chanted together under their breath, willing her to keep going.

On the mat, Haruhi was focused. She ignored the pain ripping through her shoulder and upper thigh where Hiro had managed to connect that kick-punch combo and did a handspring to get to her feet. Meeting Zhi’s eyes, she nodded when he signaled a move that she had only done a few times in practice and only with Takashi. If this works, we win. If it doesn’t, I am open to the attack and the
In sync, they executed a double punch combo, but when they would have normally turned to kick, Haruhi twisted in front of Zhi, bent deep at the knees, and started to jump upwards. As her feet lifted, Zhi grabbed her hips and pushed her higher, giving her the momentum and height that her jump alone couldn’t achieve. At the apex of her jump, Haruhi kicked out with her right leg as Zhi punched with his right fist. The double impact hit Hiro in both the head and chest and knocked him out cold.

“Point to Fujimia and Fujioka. Match won.” The referee’s voice was barely heard over the screaming as several thousand people jumped to their feet.

Haruhi blinked and saw Hiro Nakashimi struggling to get to his feet. Without a word, she walked over and offered her hand. When he ignored her, she turned back to Master Zhi and bowed. He responded in kind with a twinkle in his eyes. Together they turned and bowed to the judges before stepping off the mat.

“That was a brilliant move!” Sakura Fujimia got to the duo first and threw her arms around both of them. “Completely legal and completely unexpected. I just didn’t know you knew it.”

“I watched Hani and Takashi do it once for a demonstration,” Zhi grinned. “I knew that Haruhi was feeling that last combo and was on her last reserves. It was a gamble.”

“More of a gamble then you know,” Haruhi grinned, “I have only done that move a couple of times, since I don’t get enough air with Hani as a boost and too much with Takashi. We pretty much wrote it out of our practice schedule.”

“I think it’s about time we put it back in,” Takashi said with a grin before wrapping his arms around her.

“Definitely,” Hani responded as he hugged her from the other side. All three knew that they couldn’t do anything more than hug, but the joy and desire flowed through all of them equally. Pulling back he said with a grin, “Now… go kiss Kyouya and let him know you aren’t hurt before he faints. He had a death grip on Hikaru’s hand the entire match.”

“But what about the press?” Sakura asked.

“Screw them for the moment. They already know I am dating them and it will deflect interest off of Hani and Takashi. ” Haruhi said and took off running towards the rest of the Host Club.
Mastery

Haruhi stood on a raised mat in the center of the Arena with three other students. Thousands of fans packed the arena and the paparazzi were going crazy. *This crowd is something else.* On the floor below her, Takashi, Hani, and Sakura stood with huge grins on their faces. Sakura surreptitiously gave her a discreet thumbs-up. In the first row of seats directly behind them, Kaoru, Renge, and Tamaki were cheering so loudly she wouldn’t be surprised if their voices were hoarse by the end of the day. Hikaru and Kyōya were holding hands and their smiles were almost as large as her Senseis’. She could see the love and pride shining out of their eyes... out of all of her friends’ eyes, really. *I am so blessed to have such amazing people in my life.*

To her left, Kazuki Blake careful to minimize the moment of his lips, muttered to her, “That’s one hell of a cheering section, Fujioka.”

“I know,” Haruhi murmured just as carefully back. “I have awesome friends... I hope to count you as one of them, some day.”

“I already am.” Kazuki let a small smile creep up the side of his mouth. “Between my Masters and yours and now our new ranks, we are going to shake up the world. Personally, I can’t wait!”

“Shush!” one of the other students hissed.

Mildly chagrined, they both turned back to the judges who were filing back to their podium. As they took their seats, the one on the end spoke. “We offer our congratulations to the four students who have achieved their first level Mastery today – Niito Okawa, Eiji Maita, Kazuki Blake and Haruhi Fujioka.” If the last name was said with a bit of a bite, Haruhi was determined to ignore it. “You have demonstrated your skill and ability to this Council and now must choose to accept the responsibility of it. Your new rank comes with the privilege of being a voting member of your House and the option to continue on your Mastery path. To achieve your second level Mastery, in addition to what you have learned so far, you must demonstrate your proficiency in the history of your House and honor it according to the traditions it was founded on. To achieve your third level Mastery, you must demonstrate your proficiency in three weapons chosen by the Head of your House. To achieve your fourth level Mastery, you must demonstrate that you have passed on what you have learned – for knowledge is the greatest gift. If you achieve your fourth level Mastery, you will be a full voting member of the Council not just of the House you belong. To achieve your fifth level Mastery, you will be given a test by the Elder Council that will challenge all of the facets of your training. This test is unique to each individual, no two tests will ever be the same, and they must be undertaken alone and without guidance from your House. Many highly skilled Masters have failed at or chosen not to undertake the final test of Mastery. This brings no shame on them or their house. For those that do achieve the final Mastery, they become a member of the Elder Council and Keeper of the Ways. They can choose to remain in their House or a start a new one.” He paused to take a breath, before speaking directly to each of the students. “Do you accept this responsibility?”

“YES MASTER!” all four said in unison.

“The current heads of your House will now present you with your Master sash. Wear it proudly in the name and honor of your House.” The Council member motioned to the man by the gong and the tone echoed through the Arena.

One by one the Heads of the Houses of Okawa, Maita, and Fujimia approached their students and
went through the formal vow to each of the houses. The general pledge to each house as made by the candidate was broadcast to the arena, but the moments immediately after were silenced from the speakers as each House Elder imparted words meant for the ears of the candidate alone. As they finished, the next House stepped up.

Haruhi watched out of the corner of her eye as Master Zhi presented his House sash to Kaziki and then leaned into whisper some words that had the young Brit on the verge of laughter. Finally, he stepped behind Kaziki, signaling the end. He gave Haruhi a wink as he passed her.

At long last, Akira Morinozouka and Yorihisa Haninozouka started to walk forward, a solemn expression on their faces but a twinkle in their eyes. Coming to a stop before Haruhi, she bowed low before them and they returned it with a tandem nod of their heads. Echoing through the arena speakers, in a way that bespoke much practice they said together, “We welcome you Haruhi Zouka Fujioka to the Zouka House. We give you our name, our protection, and our honor. We expect the same in return as well as your loyalty to our House and the two families that make it – Haninozouka and Morinozouka. Do you accept our welcome?”

“With much gladness and honor, I vow to honor, protect, and respect the traditions of House Zouka and its members to my final breath.” Haruhi responded formally.

“We accept your vow.” Together they held out the sash. “You are now part of House Zouka. Wear your sash proudly and honor the House in all you do.”

Haruhi reached out a shaking hand and took the sash as she heard the microphone click off. Her fingers trembled as she tied it around her waist, the significance of the vows and ceremony finally hitting her. Once she was done, she bowed again.

Together they both bowed back, and then with a grin they both pulled her into a hug. “Welcome to family Haruhi,” Akira said and kissed her on the cheek.

“We are counting on you to keep our sons in line,” Yorihisa said with the same bright grin that graced the face of his son. “Know that we know of the relationship between our sons and embrace it even though it must remain confined to our House at the moment.”

“Know that we also know of the relationship you are currently in with young Kyouya Ootori and young Hikaru Hitachiin, as well as the unique partnership you have with my son. We are a House built on the teachings of love in its many forms. You will find no judgment here and we will support you against those who will seek to condemn you.” Akira finished.

“Thank you.” Tears glistened in her eyes as she happily returned the hug both gave.

“Now, I think our sons are chomping at the bit to get to you,” Yorihisa laughed. “Just the final dismissal and you are free to go home and relax. I would also suggest using some of the special salve made by the Zouka healers; you ARE going to be sore later once the adrenaline fades. This was the first time in decades that a Masters candidate has been required to go through such a rigorous testing process.” Anger tinged his tone.

“Peace Yorihisa,” Akira said, “Our sons knew there would be resistance when they made their choice. They chose perfectly. They took the difficult path and succeeded beyond all expectations. Their next Mastery is assured where it was not before… and they are the generation that will be the catalyst for future change. Houses will be allied, stagnation will be eliminated, and the wind of Change will breathe new life. It is a good day.”
“Yes it is.” Together they moved to stand behind Haruhi, one hand on each of her shoulders. Together they nodded to the judging council.

“This Mastery Testing Session is over. Journey in Peace and Enlightenment.” A final bell echoed through the Arena.

The tone of the bell had barely faded before Haruhi was swarmed by Hani and Takashi who pulled her into a hug before placing chaste kisses on her cheek. “More later…” Hani whispered in her ear which caused her to turn a faint pink.

“You did it love,” Kyouya said from behind her.

Startled Haruhi turned around to see Kyouya and Hikaru standing there with open arms, as she launched herself into them she could see the rest of the gang getting escorted onto the central area by members of the Morinozouka and Haninozouka families. Soon she was surrounded in a group hug with all of her friends. This is right where I want to be. I CAN change the world with them beside me.

“Ahem,” a laughter filled voice said. “Can we offer our congratulations to the newest member of house Zouka?”

The group peeled apart and Haruhi peered out to see Master Zhi, Sakura and Kaziki standing there. With a smile, she stepped forward and gave each a hug. Kaziki picked her up and twirled her around which caused Kyouya and Takashi to growl while Hikaru and Tamaki glared and everyone else giggled.

“Cousin, you might want to put her down or you will be inviting the wrath of House Zouka towards House Fujimia…” Sakura said with a smirk.

Looking up, Kaziki blanched as he saw the varied expressions. Immediately he stepped back. “So sorry, mates. I’m a hugger (blame it on Sakura’s side of the family) and I am absolutely thrilled that with Haruhi being granted mastery that Saki and my sister Katie will now be able to test too. I couldn’t help myself. I promise I did not mean any disrespect.”

Hani stepped forward and smiled, “Apology accepted Kaziki-chan. It is a good day for everyone and we do not blame you for getting carried away.” He glanced over at the paparazzi that were starting to push through the barriers and head toward the center mats. “Now, may I suggest a quick retreat? We are about to be ambushed.”

“This way,” Sakura said laughing and rushed them out a side door that lead back into the locker area.

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Haruhi breathed a sigh of relief as they entered the relative calm of the prep area. She could see that sigh echoed on both Kyouya and interestingly on Kaoru’s faces. That’s right; he has his date with Renge this afternoon. I wonder if he is going to tell her about his budding relationship with Tamaki…

“If you want to change Haru-chan, we can head back to the Guest House and get away from the prying eyes of the media,” Hani said.
“We are going to have to do something about them soon, aren’t we?” Haruhi said with another sigh. “They aren’t letting up and it’s only going to get worse until we do.”

“We were actually talking about that before your testing began,” Hikaru said and placed a kiss on her temple. “It might be smart to grant an exclusive interview to one reporter. That way we can control the time, place, and pace of the questions.”

“I agree…but who?”

“If you trust me, I have an idea,” Tamaki said. “An old friend of the Suoh family is a reporter for one of the national French TV networks. She is just starting out and eager to make a name for herself, but she is also in a poly relationship that she has to keep quiet or it would kill any chance for her career. She will be able to ask the right questions and she won’t judge you the way others would.”

“I think that sounds like an excellent idea Tamaki,” Kyoya responded. “When do you suggest?”

“I can send her a message any time. I know she will make the time for this. I went to school with her before transferring to Ouran. She was one of the few I trusted and who didn’t flip out or treat me differently when I became my grandmother’s heir.”

“Why don’t we schedule it for tomorrow afternoon or early evening,” Hikaru replied. “We have mom’s photo shoot in the morning for the Maison de Roses website and we will be spending a good portion of the day doing administrative work to get everything set for Saturday night.”

“Sounds good to me,” Haruhi replied. “It’s kind of funny, I have been so focused on this testing that I almost forgot that we still have a HUGE ball planned at the end of the week.”

“A little taste of Mastery and she forgets all about us brother,” Kaoru said forlornly as he winked at Haruhi to let her know he wasn’t serious.

“We shall have to remind her that Fashion is just as important as Aikido.” Hikaru answered with put upon sigh.

“It’s a good thing I brought this then…” Kaoru reached behind him and pulled out a form fitting silver dress made out of fine wool.

“And these…” Hikaru held up a pair of black suede calf boots that instantly caused drool to form in the corners of the mouths of Sakura and Renge.

“Where the hell did they pull those from??” Sakura asked flabbergasted. “And how do I get a pair of those boots. They are practically sex given form…”

“I have stopped trying to figure that out,” Haruhi grinned then laughed as she heard Zhi mutter “what is it with women and SHOES!!!”

“My dear Master Zhi,” Hikaru turned and replied, “A sexy pair of shoes is the foundation for a woman’s sense of the divine. They mirror the beauty, grace, and sex appeal of the woman wearing them.” He turned to Sakura and said with a grin, “I’ll make sure that we have a pair sent over to you. They are going to hit the runway on Thursday.”

“Oh wow…I couldn’t…” Sakura blinked rapidly as it hit her that she was actually talking to Fashion’s elite up and coming duo.

“Yes you can,” Kaoru laughed. “And there she goes… Haute Couture claims another victim.”
The group giggled as Sakura turned pink.

“Seriously, though, go ahead and change love,” Hikaru said turning back to Haruhi. “You look tired. Go back to the house and relax before going out tonight.”

“I think I will do that,” Haruhi started to undo her new sash.

“Keep that sash handy, I made it so the dress will go with it,” Kaoru said. “I want you to show off your new status, not hide it.”

“Wow… I don’t know what to say,” Haruhi kissed Kaoru on the cheek. “Thank you, my friend.”

“You’re welcome,” Kaoru grinned. “Now go change so we can see how it looks!”

Haruhi entered the women’s restroom with Renge and Sakura hot on her heels. So she wasn’t surprised when they accosted her as soon as they were out of sight of the others.

“Dear gods… I had no idea how attractive the Hitachiin twins really were… And Kyouya Ootori too. Mercy mercy me!” Sakura fanned herself.

“Kaoru is just a friend and I think he has his eye on someone,” she glanced significantly over at Renge who took her turn to blush. “But I admit that I am seriously lucky with Kyouya and Hikaru. They understand me… and they are so incredibly sexy.” She slipped out of the loose pants and jacket of the gi. An involuntary whimper left her lips.

Renge whistled as she got a good look at Haruhi’s body. There were several angry red welts and the deep purple of bruises was starting to appear on her ribcage. “My gods girl… You are going to be HURTING later. Are you going to be ok for the shoot tomorrow?”

“Make-up covers amazing things,” Haruhi replied. “Though Yorihisa was right. Now that the adrenaline is starting to fade, I am starting to hurt.”

“Here, let me help you make it back to your house.” Sakura reached into her locker and pulled out a familiar looking jar.

“Oh bless you…” Haruhi said gratefully, recognizing it instantly as the same salve Hani had used on Kaoru. Sakura scooped out a spoonful and started to spread it on Haruhi’s ribs, abdomen, and thighs, while Haruhi sighed in bliss.

“What is that?” Renge asked curiously.

“House Zouka has legendary healers in its ranks,” Sakura replied. “They make this salve from a secret blend. It is unparalleled at easing muscle and tissue damage.”

“But I thought you were part of House Fujimia,” Renge responded.

“I am. House Fujimia and House Zouka are close allies. Of course, it doesn’t hurt that before I started studying with my husband’s House, I studied with Takashi’s older brother before his tragic accident. Hani and Takashi are like the younger brothers I never had.”

“Why did you change Houses?”

Still working the salve into Haruhi, Sakura answered Renge’s questions. “Simple. I fell in love. Pretty much the first time that I met Zhi… I just knew.”

“Aw,” Renge said with a sincere smile. “Wasn’t Zouka House upset?”
“I can guess the answer this one, now that I understand a bit more,” Haruhi said, while Sakura nodded at her to continue. “House Zouka is founded on the idea that Love brings enlightenment. Love has many forms and the path through Love that each must walk will be different. I have a feeling that when she told Akira that she was in love with Zhi, he petitioned to have her become a student.”

“That’s pretty much it, exactly,” Sakura said with a grin. “This is also why you will never have any issues with House Zouka condemning your relationship with Kyoya, Hikaru, or Takashi…” She looked slyly at Haruhi as she said the last name.

Haruhi turned to look at her sharply while Renge muttered, “I KNEW IT!”

“I’m not-“

“Haruhi, yes you are… It’s obvious in the way he looks at you and the way you interact. When the two of you are doing yoga, the connection is awe-inspiring. You can’t achieve that without a deep bond. Yes, he is in love with Mitskune, but he loves you as well… and I am pretty sure that you love him too. You would be a fool if you didn’t. It may be different from what you have with Kyoya or Hikaru but it is just as real.” Sakura said with an apologetic tone. “There is a reason Hani invited both Zhi and I in to see your warm-up. I promise you that neither I nor Zhi will ever say anything. But I wanted to let you know you have support of BOTH House Zouka and House Fujimia.”

“It’s more complicated than that, Sakura,” Haruhi replied, “but I thank you for your words of support. We have to keep it a secret for now, just like Hani and Takashi’s relationship must be kept a secret. It’s going to be hard enough going public with two boyfriends; we will be ostracized if it was known there are more.”

“I understand. Probably more than you know.” Sakura took a deep breath and said, “In the interest of honesty, I should let you know… I am happily married to Zhi but we are also in a triad with Takashi’s cousin Kusanagi. No one except Akira and Yorihisa knows.” She straightened the fabric of the grey wool over Haruhi’s hips and helped her step into the boots. Another involuntary sigh escaped as she caressed the butter soft leather.

“There is… Please tell me that Hikaru was serious about sending me a pair. I will pay for them, I promise!” Sakura cast one more wistful look at the boots.

“He will and they will be a gift.” Haruhi said with a smile. “If there is one thing I have learned about the Hitachiin twins… they will do anything for those they consider a friend. Right Renge?”

Renge nodded vigorously.

“I’m a friend?”

Haruhi linked her arms with the other two women. “Absolutely. Now let’s get out of here… I’m starving!”

“When aren’t you?” Renge mock sighed. “How do you manage to keep your figure?”

“Martial Arts, Yoga, and sex,” Haruhi answered with a twinkle, startling Renge with her blunt response. “You’d be surprised how many calories each burns.”
“Hmmm…. I may have to try that.”

Renge, Haruhi, and Sakura walked out of the dressing room laughing.
Hani wolf-whistled as Haruhi, Renge, and Sakura walked back out of the restroom, “Haru-chan, you look great. I don’t know which you wear better – the House Zouka sash or those HDG boots!”

She laughed and winked at the group, “Thanks. I am kind of attached to both of them.”

“Ancestors save me from House Zouka’s flirty nature…” Zhi looked up to the sky and said with mock-seriousness.

“Ha! Like you have anything to complain about that!” Sakura poked her husband in the ribs.

“Not a bit,” Zhi grinned at his wife and slipped his arm around her. “I took the liberty of having your cars brought around to a side door to ease your escape, but there are paparazzi stationed at every exit including the roof. There is no clear way out and it looks like they are prepared to wait hours.”

Kyouya stepped forward, “Thank you that was very kind. I am now expecting to be accosted every time we step out until we plan an interview. We will just have to make do and push our way through as quickly as possible.”

“Good Luck!” Zhi said with sympathy as he led the way. “It’s always awkward being the focus of so much attention, especially when you aren’t used to it.”

“Most of us actually are used to some,” Tamaki said, “It’s Haruhi who hasn’t experienced it before and who we are trying to shield. But we know our princess; she won’t let them fluster her.”

“Thanks for the vote of confidence Tama,” Haruhi replied. “I HAVE to get used to it, like it or not. I am not giving up the people in my life just because of a little camera time. I know you and Hika are going to be working on stuff this afternoon and evening for the Ball on Saturday night. If you could also send a message to your reporter friend, sometime today. I want to get the first interview over with, so we can hopefully have a break for a few days.”

“I will do that,” Tamaki answered with a grin in his eyes. What a sneaky way of deflecting the reality that Hikaru and I are supposed to be having a date this evening. Well… it wouldn’t hurt to kill two birds with one stone.

“Since I don’t know what’s waiting on the other side of the door and I know we will have to break for the cars quickly, I am going to say good-bye here,” Hikaru said and pulled Haruhi in for a kiss. He held her tightly, before saying, “I am so proud of you, my love… and so incredibly happy that you are mine. I love you.” He kissed her again quickly before whispering, “Have fun with Hani. Don’t do anything I wouldn’t do… and everything I would! I expect to hear all the juicy details. I will see you later tonight. Also… make sure to tell Kyouya that it’s ok for him to have fun with Takashi. Otherwise I can see their afternoon being a chess match and discussion on the merits of Gothic verses Renaissance art in religious iconography.”

Haruhi giggled as Kyouya responded with a frown, “I happen to like chess and art history.”

Haruhi giggled a bit harder.

“That’s not what I meant and you know it, lover,” Hikaru grinned before pulling Kyouya into a swift
Kiss.

Kyouya smirked as he responded, “Have fun working on ‘things’ with Tamaki. Will we see you back at the house later?”

“Most likely,” Tamaki interjected. “As nice as the Bed & Breakfast was last night, I am looking forward to one of my own beds. I didn’t get much sleep last night.” The gleam in his eyes reminded Kyouya of just what the two of them were doing instead of sleeping. “Still… this afternoon going over ‘things’ (his voice betrayed the same ironic tone Kyouya’s had) with Hika will be interesting. There are definitely some details we need to work out.” Like how my budding relationship with his brother and his two lovers is going to work...

“I know that whatever happens, you will find the best way to deal with it,” Haruhi said with a smile at the thoughts she could read across Tamaki’s face.

“You get the feeling we are missing something here?” Zhi said to Sakura as he watched the conversations pass between the others.

“Just some details that need to be cleared up before the Grand Ball on Saturday,” Kaoru quickly interjected. “Speaking of which, we would love it if you both would be guests of HDG at the event. It’s going to be the event of the year, I promise.”

Sakura’s jaw dropped, “Oh my god… Are you serious?”

“Absolutely,” Hikaru grinned. “We like you both and, honestly, we can use all the allies we have.”

“We would be honored.” Zhi said with a little bow.

Renge whispered something in Kaoru’s ear. He nodded and gestured for her to continue.

“Since you are going, I am hoping you will do something for me…” Renge started to say, hesitation evident in her voice.

“Of course,” Sakura said with a smile. “What is it?”

“Well… Everyone knows HDG designs of course, but Yuzuha has taken me under her wing and with her and Kaoru’s guidance I have designed a couple of dresses. They are still HDG labeled, but I will be wearing one of my designs that night and I would be honored if you would wear another. Most of the models that night will be wearing Kao and Yuzuha’s designs.”

“I would LOVE to,” Sakura said and threw her arms around Renge in a hug. “Oh my… I am so excited!”

“Aaaand the Ouran Host Club gains another couple members,” Hani laughed. “OK… any more goodbyes or are we ready to make a break for it? We need to get Haruhi some real food before she passes out… and if she’s not hungry, she should be after that workout.”

“I’m starving,” Haruhi said with a grin. “Food please!” The rest of the group quickly gave each other hugs and discreet cheek kisses. “Let’s do this…”

Zhi pushed then held open the door with a grin and a wink. “Good Luck!” he murmured as they all rushed out into a sea of flashbulbs.
“Ms. Fujioka how does it feel to be the first female to get your Mastery?”

“Mitskune Haninozouka – How did you and Takashi Morinozouka decide to teach Miss Fujioka?”

“What is the relationship between the three of you and how do Kyouya Ootori and Hikaru Hitachiin fit into the equation?”

“How is your new Master status going to affect HDG? Are you going to become a model for the group?”

“How do you feel about joining House Zouka?”

The questions bombarded Haruhi and the boys as they tried to push through. Latching onto the last one Haruhi paused, took a deep breath and said in perfect French, “I am honored to be a member of the prestigious House Zouka. I hope to do my Masters and my House proud. I cannot speak to your other questions at this time, Kyouya, Hikaru and I will be giving an exclusive interview tomorrow and many of those questions will be answered. Now please, I just finished a rather tiring testing and I am in great need of food and rest. Will you let us through please?” She gave the media a very sweet and innocent smile.

“Who is going to interview you?” a voice shouted from the back.

Kyouya put his hand on Haruhi’s back and said with firmness, “You will find out on Thursday. Now please excuse us.” He took advantage of their confusion and curiosity as the tried to determine who would have gotten access to such an exclusive interview, to quickly push further and open the door to the Land Rover for Haruhi before hurrying across to get in on the other side.

Takashi and Hani also quickly entered the vehicle and watched with a sigh of relief as the rest of the group made it to their vehicles without being further harassed. “That was something else.”

“I’ll say,” Kyouya said as Takashi pulled onto the freeway. Once they were away he pulled Haruhi onto the seat next to him and looped his arms around her. He took a few moments to just breathe her in and let all of the worry from earlier dissipate.

“I need her in my arms for just a bit more… then I can let her go with Hani this evening.”

Haruhi smiled up at Kyouya, “I really am ok, love. Though I should warn you, I have some pretty spectacular bruises. That last combo to the ribs and thigh was a doozy.”

“I am not made of glass, love. I will heal. I gained so much today for such a minimal thing as a few bruises,” she stretched and kissed his chin. “Besides… I am kind of proud of them. Today I felt like for the first time, I really could hold my own in anything the world threw at me. Don’t get me wrong – I know I had help, but that last test where I was partnered with someone I had just met… I was an equal. Maybe not in skill level, but I was just as important to the end result as Master Zhi was. Gods, does that even make any sense at all?”

“Perfectly, Haru-chan,” Hani replied from the front seat, while Takashi nodded. “Though I also understand why Kyo-chan was worried. We were too. It’s not fun watching the people you care about get hurt… at least not in that way.” He finished with a grin. “I can think of plenty of other times though… and let me tell you, sparring IS foreplay with the right partner.” He linked his fingers
through Takashi’s.

Kyouya chuckled. “Um… yeah. I could see that actually. It’s definitely a turn-on to watch you two sparring. Though that may have more to do with bare chests, skin glistening with sweat, and heavy breathing.”

Hani laughed loudly, “It’s all a dominance game in the end. I thought you would appreciate that.” He threw Kyouya a wink. “One that I still want to play with you one of these nights. I honestly don’t know which of us would win. It’s been a long time since I have been able to say that.”

“Please let me watch that!” Haruhi said with a grin. She caught Takashi’s eyes in the rear view mirror as he nodded. “Actually, I can probably vouch for Hika, Tama, and Kao too. I know we all want to see that.”

Both Kyouya and Hani laughed. Kyouya’s arms tightened around her. “Well… there is always tomorrow night. Something tells me that Yuzuha’s idea of a photo shoot will be more intimate than the usual backdrop-pose-click.”

“You are probably right,” Haruhi said with a light laugh, “Yuzuha doesn’t know how to do anything simply. Everything is over the top and we all know she passed that on to Hika and Kao.”

“So where did Tamaki get it from?” Kyouya laughed. “But you are right. I don’t think any of us really understood simplicity when we first met you. Now it’s a luxury we crave even as we make things more complex.” A dark note started to creep into his voice.

Haruhi heard the tone and quickly stretched up to kiss it away. “No darkness here. Just light and love.” She deliberately switched topics. “So what are you and Takashi going to do this afternoon?”

“Well I was going to suggest a Museum and a bite to eat, but now Hika’s words are making me think twice,” Kyouya said with a grimace.

“I would like that actually.” Takashi answered catching Kyouya’s eyes in the rearview mirror. “There is a collection of Raphael’s works at the National Gallery or if you don’t mind doing something a bit more modern, I met an artist who specializes in glass when Haruhi, Mitskune and I went Christmas shopping. He has a gallery showing that ends this weekend.”

“I like that idea even better,” Kyouya responded. “Glass blowing as an art form is fascinating.”

The rest of the ride was spent in comfortable chatter and ideas for the afternoon.

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By the time they reached the house, Haruhi’s stomach was grumbling loudly, much to her embarrassment and the guys’ amusement. So immediately after Kyouya and Takashi dropped them off, Hani asked, “I was thinking about taking a car and finding a restaurant or something, but you really do need to eat. What do you say to raiding the kitchen?”

“I say… I think I love you for suggesting it.” Haruhi laughed. “I was going to sneak in and find something to snack on even if we were going to go out. I can’t ever remember being quite this famished before.”

Hani lead the way into the kitchen as he replied. “There are a few things at work here. You just did a full routine and a full sparring session. Neither of which was easy and which you aren’t really used to doing back to back. Plus I am guessing that you probably didn’t eat much this morning due to nerves and not wanting to feel weighed down.”
“That about sums it up,” Haruhi smiled at him. She grabbed a handful of almonds from a bowl on the counter before ducking her head into the refrigerator. “Hmmm… the kitchen is fully stocked. What are you the mood for? I can make pretty much anything from what’s in here.”

Hani slipped up behind her and wrapped his arms around her waist, holding her tightly for a moment before pulling her back and placing her firmly on a stool next to the large prep table. He took notice of the slight wince she made as her bruised muscles twitched. “You aren’t going to make anything Haru-chan. You have done enough for the day. I may not be as skilled as you in the kitchen, but I know enough, especially about what your body needs to replenish itself right now.”

Haruhi stared at Hani in mild disbelief. This was not a side she had ever seen of either her friend or her Sensei.

“Also, I saw the wince. How bruised are you?” Hani asked as he pulled out several vegetables, noodles, and a couple of strip steaks and proceeded to start chopping them into smaller pieces.

“I am starting to turn colors on my ribs and thigh.” Haruhi responded. “But Sakura had some of the salve with her and gave me a good dose before we left the Arena.”

“Sakura would be prepared and she knows just what that salve can do.” Hani’s voice held approval. “But as hard as you worked your body, it’s going to need reapplying soon. Any other soreness or stiffness?”

“My upper back and neck are starting to feel a little sore and I think I may have pulled a muscle in my left thigh.”

“That sounds about right. Especially with that last combo Hiro Nakashimi threw at you and then that return lift combo you and Zhi did. I know we haven’t practiced it much, so your body wasn’t used to it, though it is flexible enough to adapt.” Hani continued while he tossed the steak and vegetables into a pan for a quick stir-fry and put the noodles into boiling water.

Haruhi’s mouth started to water from the smells and her stomach rumbled again.

Giggling, Hani handed her the bowl of almonds and she grabbed another handful. “Here, have a few more almonds. The stir-fry will be done in a couple more minutes. I have a suggestion if you are amenable to changing our afternoon and evening plans.”

“What is it?”

“Instead of going out somewhere, I think we should stay in.” Hani smiled. “Everyone else is gone so we are still alone…and even better… we have a hot tub and snacks readily available.”

“I like it!”

“Good, because a good soak and a good massage will help with the soreness. The salve will help with the bruising, but we still may have to use some make-up to cover you up for the photo shoot tomorrow.” Hani dished the stir-fry into two bowls, set one in front of her and the other on the place next to her before digging in the fridge for a couple of bottles of sparkling water. Setting those down as well he pulled up another stool and gestured for her to start eating.

“Oh my gods this is wonderful…” Haruhi said between mouthfuls as the tender steak balanced with the crunch of the vegetables and the softness of the noodles. “I had no idea you could cook.”

“I was always trying to sneak into the kitchens as a child to steal sweets. It would drive the head chef crazy. Finally his assistant cornered me one day and made me an offer. I could have a treat if I helped
her prepare whatever meal they were working on.” Hani smiled as he reminisced fondly. “I was never given anything hard to do, but I enjoyed it. The kitchens always smelled wonderful. I was actually a bit disappointed that as I got older and devoted more time to my martial arts, I had less time to visit the kitchens.”

“That is such a great story and I can totally see you charming the assistant chef with your large blue eyes.” Haruhi laughed.

“She is still there, actually.” Hani giggled. “Whenever I visit home, I always sneak into the kitchens at least once. The basic cooking skill has come in handy since Takashi and I started University. We can always go to the dining hall, but our apartment on campus has a small kitchen. So if we are too tired to go out or just don’t want to socialize we can make something. Takashi also is a pretty good baker. For as much as I love cake, every time I try to make one it is always rock hard. Takashi makes one that is so light and fluffy it just melts in your mouth.”

“See… that’s something I never knew about either of you,” Haruhi said. “I am really glad we all decided to do this date night thing. I am learning so many new things about everyone.”

“It has been fun,” Hani smiled. Stacking her now empty plate on his, he took them both over to the sink. “So now that you have been fed… what do you say to relaxing in the Jacuzzi for a bit? It will help your muscles loosen, and then I will rub some more of that salve in.”

“I say that I am a very lucky girl and I feel like I am being spoiled tonight.” She caught Hani’s hand and squeezed.

“Weeeell… you are our princess, but more than that – tonight you are finally and forever a member of my House. I want to welcome you properly. You are already following House Zouka’s tradition and embracing love in its many forms. I want to show you one more…”

The desire lighting up his eyes made the butterflies flutter through Haruhi’s stomach. *I have seen the look before, but there was always someone else around. At the moment it’s just Hani and me.* Hikaru’s earlier command to enjoy herself flitted though her mind. She looked up to see Hani holding out his hand.

Smiling she took it and started laughing as Hani started running up the stairs to the Conservatory.
The Right Kind of Relaxation

Haruhi grabbed a bikini in her size out of the closet of swimsuits across from the Jacuzzi and stepped into the curtain covered alcove to change. Trust Tamaki to think of everything. At least this time there are multiple styles and he is no longer insisting I cover everything up. Granted, at this point, I am pretty sure everyone has seen me naked at least once.

Hani watched her pick a swim suit and step away to change and laughed to himself. It’s funny how she still does some things on auto-pilot like automatically changing into a swim-suit in another room rather than going skinny-dipping. He grabbed a pair of trunks out of the same closet. I should probably do the same, though. Don’t want to freak her out.

Haruhi walked back out of the dressing area with a towel over her shoulder, still lost in thought.

Hani watched her and his eyes grew sympathetic as he saw the deep purple bruises spreading across her left side and thigh. That is really going to hurt if we don’t take care of it. He walked over to her and handed her a tall glass. “Here Haru-chan.”

Haruhi blinked out of her daze and looked at the drink Hani was holding out to her. Unable to help herself her eyes followed the hand up the length of his arm and zeroed in on his exquisitely sculpted chest. He has such an amazing body. I didn’t really realize he has just a tiny bit more definition than Takashi. Must be the different way his muscle mass reacts. He’s just a bit broader for his height that Takashi is. Haruhi realized she was staring as her eyes continued to trace their way up Hani’s body and she saw the smirk cross his lips. Blushing, she grabbed the drink and took a sip as a way to cover. It was cool, fruity, and she could tell it was lightly spiked with some sort of alcohol – enough to help her body relax but not enough to get her drunk. “Wow, this is delicious. What is it?”

“It’s called a coco-loco. Takashi and I discovered them when we took a vacation in the Bahamas a few years ago. Usually they have a lot more rum in them, but I didn’t want you to think I was trying to get you drunk. I put in just a splash for flavor and to help your body relax.” Hani answered, deliberately not saying anything about her staring.

“I appreciate that. It is really good.” Haruhi smiled and set her towel on a chair near the Jacuzzi. “Would you hold it for a minute while I climb in? I have a feeling this is not going to be pleasant.”

Hani took the drink before responding. “It is not going to feel good when you first get in, but the heat will loosen those muscles. He smiled in sympathy as she hissed when the water hit her ribs. “Normally you want to avoid hot tubs with the kind of bruising you have because it opens up the blood flow and they will spread. But in this case it will actually help the salve work because it can penetrate to all the areas it needs.” He handed the drinks back to her and climbed into the hot tub. He sat down across from her before taking his back.

“That makes sense,” Haruhi answered. “And the heated water does feel really good after a workout. There was a hot spring pool in the room Takashi and I stayed in last night. It really helped my muscles relax after the drills he had me running.” Haruhi hoped her face didn’t turn color as she remembered exactly what she and Takashi had done before and after her training.

“The Monastery has pools like that in most of the rooms.”
“I take it you have been there before?”

“Yes. Anytime we are in France, Takashi and I try to get up there for at least a couple of days. It really does help with our training.”

“I could see that. It was beautiful up there.” Haruhi took another sip of her drink then grinned wickedly. “You know I am wondering if you have used the tantric wing.” She splashed a little water at him.

Grinning back, Hani sat his drink down and pushed across the water to pin her in her seat. He kept his body from touching her but he leaned in to whisper softly in her ear. “Hmmm… I don’t think I will answer that. I want you imagining what Takashi and I would be doing all alone up there… are we in the tantric wing? Are we in the martial arts wing? How much clothing are we wearing? What are our bodies doing as we move against each other in practice… or after?” He pressed a small kiss to the side of her neck, teeth lightly scraping over the skin, as he heard her swift intake of breath and felt the water move as she unconsciously shifted position.

Haruhi’s mind went into hyper focus at Hani’s words. The timbre of his voice, so low and seductive, immediately made her breath catch and things low in her stomach tighten as several images of Takashi and Hani, shirtless and glistening with sweat sparring with each other flashed. It was followed up immediately by the image of Takashi naked above her, rolling his hips into hers and Hani naked next to her giving Hikaru a blowjob like none he had ever experienced. The scrape of his teeth on that super sensitive part of her neck made her moan softly.

Hani chuckled and placed a swift kiss to her lips when he heard the moan, before pushing back into his seat – grinning widely.

Haruhi felt almost bereft when Hani’s arms left her and completely unsatisfied at that mere brush of lips. She opened her eyes when she felt the water move, indicating Hani had moved back to his place. She pouted slightly, without realizing she was doing so.

“Something wrong Haru-chan?” Hani’s voice held a teasing note.

“No, I am fine,” Haruhi replied and deliberately closed her eyes so they would stop focusing on the way the water swirled around Hani’s chest. *He’s baiting me… and it’s working. Damn. I can’t stop thinking about watching him and Takashi.*

“How does the water feel?”

“Much better now. I can feel the muscles starting to loosen,” She took another sip of her drink and slipped a little further into the water. Her feet brushed against Hani’s. “Oh Sorry!” She started to pull them back. A hand on her ankle stopped her.

“Don’t worry Haru-chan,” He grasped her foot and started kneading it with strong fingers.

Haruhi almost sighed in bliss. “That feels so good. I didn’t realize how many muscles I really used today.”

“But I do,” Hani winked. “Just sit back and relax. Let the water help.”

“Yes Sensei,” Haruhi answered with a smile.
Hani worked one foot then the other before sliding his hands up to knead the muscles of her calves. She grimaced in pain every time he found a knot, but Hani’s hands knew just how to get it to release before soothing away the pain. After about the fourth time it happened she couldn’t resist asking, “How do you know so much about massage?”

Hani answered her, while continuing to work on her left calf. “Well… Takashi and I have told you that you are the first woman to test for her mastery in the Martial Arts. Obviously there are generations of women in our family and we both have several female cousins. All of us receive the same training until age 16. That training is not only martial arts but also the traditional healing arts. At 16 that training has traditionally split – females to the Healing side, males to the Martial. There were always some exceptions, for example Takashi’s youngest brother has an aptitude for the Healing arts, but those were rare cases each generation. For generations, it was easier for males to openly follow the healing path than for women to follow the martial. A lot of that had to do with Japanese patriarchal tendencies. But the Zouka women especially kept pushing those limits and they were GOOD. I told you about the women who protected the Emperor, right?” Hani paused to watch Haruhi’s reaction. At her nod he continued, “After that, a special group of female warriors was made. It was kept secret because of the need to preserve tradition and the fact that women were still considered property. But it was an option for the women of first House Zouka and then the other Houses. The women who choose that path are highly trained and deadly. They specialize in the protection of high ranking officials. They are the hidden bodyguard. They blend in and their greatest asset beyond their skill is that they are generally dismissed as pretty but brainless trophies. It is not a path chosen lightly. The women who choose the On’na Senshi must master several different weapons as well as all of the traditional skills of the Geisha house. The up side is once you achieve your master status there (it’s the title of Lady to blend in to normal aristocracy) you can choose the clients you wish to protect and you have the choice to choose another if you aren’t compatible. There actually is a very long list of people wanting the services of the On’na Senshi. Far more than there are actual members, so it is considered to be an honor if one chooses you.”

“That is fascinating.” Haruhi said. “What about the women who are interested in the martial arts but don’t want to be On’na Senshi?”

“Many would just continue to study with their husbands to improve their skills and protect their families but would never achieve an official rank. In the last thirty years, since more schools have been established they can get various levels of mastery rank through them. Sakura is a good example of that.”

“But with first Zhi and then you and Takashi pushing the boundaries, that’s changing. It’s starting with me, isn’t it.”

“Exactly. House Zouka has always been progressive and fought for equality, but it’s only been in the last few years that we have had enough influence and allies to push for change. Thank modern society and technology for that final step away from the feudal system. Now that you have officially received the rank of Master you have a choice. You are now a voting member of House Zouka, so anything that happens internally you will help decide. You can choose to continue on your mastery path or stop at any point. One half of the martial wing of House Zouka has chosen to stay at the first or second level of mastery. Another quarter have stopped at the third level after getting their weapons mastery. Only about a tenth will go on to try and teach, and less than that will take the final test.”

“Why so few?” Haruhi asked, genuinely curious.

Hani grabbed her hands and pulled her to sit next to him as he started massaging her hands and forearms. He smiled as she involuntarily moaned in pleasure, before he responded. “Life mostly. Not
everyone really has the desire to continue. They become passionate about something else – science, art, history, business, etc. They use the discipline they have learned and channel it into something that they are interested in. It’s one of the reasons that the Haninozoukas and Morinozoukas aren’t focused on one particular type of business like the Suohs are in Hospitality, the Ootoris are in Medicine, or the Hitachiins are in Fashion. We are a House full of a bit of everything.”

“I can understand that actually, since the heart of the code of the house is following the path of love. Love of science or art or even cooking is just as much a passion as the love of people.”

Hani lifted her hand, flipped it over and laid a kiss in the palm of her hand. “And that’s the reason that Takashi and I chose you Haruhi. You understood even before you knew the details. You accepted without question and defended fiercely anyone you came to care about. Or as in the case of those silly clients that wandered away and almost got attacked by those thugs in Okinawa, you protected them because of your sense of responsibility. Takashi and I decided that night that you were going to be the one we trained together. We knew you belonged in our House. We just didn’t know if you would be interested, so we made the decision to start you on self-defense training. When Tamaki brought it up, it just made convincing you easier.”

“Did anyone ever tell you that you are sneaky and incorrigible?” Haruhi grinned.

Hani threw his head back and laughed, “Of course! I told you I used to sneak sweets.”

“Not what I meant.”

He winked at her, “I know.” He squeezed her fingers before looking down at them. Placing another kiss on the palm of her hand, he changed the subject. “Now, since your fingers are starting to prune, I have hit all the spots I can easily while you are sitting up, and the heat of the water has done about all it can to relax those muscles, it’s time to get out. I’ll grab the salve and get the rest of your body.”

Haruhi’s palm tingled where Hani’s lips had recently been. “I can do that. Where do you want me?”

Hani grinned, “oh the answers I could give to that question.”

Haruhi flushed.

Hani took pity on her. With a wink he said, “Dry off and lay face down on the cabana. You can put a dry towel under you if you want to catch any leftover drips from the dampness of your swim suit.”

Haruhi did as she was bid. As she was stretching out she surreptitiously watched Hani out of the corner of her eye. He went over to the bar area and dumped the contents before filling it back up with some sort of juice. He rummaged in a bag before walking back over to the cabana with the salve in one hand and her drink in the other. Climbing on the bed next to her, he handed it back to her and said, “Drink. No alcohol this time but your body needs the sugars, electrolytes, and vitamins to combat dehydration. Especially after sitting in a hot tub.”

“Thanks,” Haruhi took a long pull of the juice before stretching to set it on an end table.

“Haru-chan, you really do need some of this salve applied and you will feel better if you get the knots in your muscles worked out. Do you want me to do that for you?”

“That would be nice,” Haruhi said immediately before realizing there was more context behind the question. “Wait. There is some meaning here I am missing. It’s almost like you are asking
“In a way I am,” Hani answered honestly. “I know we have flirted, kissed a little, and I have pulled your hair once, but that was always in the presence of the others. It can be different when it is just us two and I know you don’t feel the same for me as you do for Kyouya, Hikaru, or even what you feel for Takashi.”

Haruhi rolled over and sat up. She took Hani’s hands in hers and leaned in slightly to lay a soft kiss on his lips. “You are right that what I feel for you is different than what I feel for them. I won’t try to deny that. What I feel for you is very much like I feel for Kaoru… a very deep friendship and a different sort of love.” She held his eyes for a moment before letting the heat enter them. “But that doesn’t detract from the fact that I have been unable to keep my eyes off of you this week, especially when you were running around shirtless, or that you were right earlier and I have been fantasizing about watching you and Takashi.” She took a deep breath and blurted out, “I have wanted your hands on me since the workshop when you offered to distract me, slid your fingers into my hair, and made me completely wet just by twisting your fingers in it and running your fingers down my neck.”

Hani grinned, “I would hate to leave you wanting.” He kissed her knuckles before pushing her back on the towel. “Stretch your arms above your head. There is a strap you can hold on to. Keep your hands there. It will help lengthen and stretch the muscles in your abdomen, which will make the salve work better.”

“I thought you wanted me face down?” Haruhi asked with a smirk.

“I changed my mind,” Hani answered. “Now… arms. Or would you rather apply this yourself?”

Haruhi responded by promptly putting her arms above her head. She winced as it pulled the bruised muscles on her side and ribcage. OK… so maybe there is a practical reason for this position.

“I know it hurts. That will stop in a few minutes, I promise,” Hani said. Then with a wicked grin he bent down and whispered in her ear. “To be fair, I also tend to think of you more as a friend than a lover… but that doesn’t mean that I don’t want to fuck you senseless.” He pressed his body against hers and smiled as he heard her whimper at his words. Sitting back up, he adjusted himself slightly and said, “Now let’s deal with those bruises and knots shall we?”

Haruhi could only nod.

Hani’s hands slid to the back of her neck. “It appears that your swimsuit is blocking some of the areas I will need to access.” He quickly pulled the ties loose from around her neck and slid one hand down her back to release the knot on her back. However, he made no move to immediately remove it letting it lie loose across her breasts. He did the same with the ties on her bottoms.

Haruhi shuddered in pleasure as Hani’s hands caressed lightly across her skin. A puzzled frown crossed her face when she realized that even though he had untied everything, she was still completely covered. It was an odd feeling – exposed and not at the same time. She tried to wiggle a bit to get the top to slip so the odd feeling would go away but Hani’s held a finger right in the center, so it wouldn’t move. She growled a bit in frustration.

Hani laughed, a deep chuckle edged with something Haruhi had only heard directed toward her the once. “Nice try princess, but I’ll remove it completely when I want it removed. Not before. Of course if you want me to stop at any point all you have to say is red. I will stop and let you apply the salve yourself. Either way you are going to use it – and that’s coming from your Sensei and your House permission.”
not as a Dom. Do you understand?” He looked deeply into her eyes.

“I do.” Haruhi gulped at the intensity before responding. *Kyouya looks at me the same way and I am just as helpless beneath the gaze. But I know he won’t do anything I wouldn’t be comfortable with.*

“Please, I want you to rub it in. You know the best way to apply it.”

“And?” Hani arched an eyebrow.

“If I am ever uncomfortable, I will call red.”

“Good girl,” Hani said before leaning down again to claim her lips in a kiss that left her breathless.

“Since I am here, I may as well start with your arms.”

Hani opened the jar and scooped out some of the salve. Rubbing it between his hands to warm it first, he massaged it into the muscles of her upper arms as they remained over her head. He kept his body barely an inch above hers at all times.

Haruhi could feel the heat from Hani’s body as he slowly and methodically massaged the salve into the overworked muscles. The scent of sandalwood, amber, and a faint bite of eucalyptus drifted down to her nose. It was earthy and created an instant scent memory.

*Whenever, I use this in the future, I am going to think of this moment.*

Methodically, Hani worked down her body – moving from her arms to her shoulders and down her ribs. He captured her lips as he rubbed the salve into the deep bruises on her sides, taking her hiss of pain and turning it into something pleasurable until the salve could penetrate the tissue. When he reached the pulled muscles of her thighs and had to work the muscles deeply, he pushed her swimsuit top off and suckled her breasts to offset the pain he knew his hands were causing.

Haruhi was floating in a haze. She had been feeling the pain from the bruising and torn muscles all night. She had been working on just toughing it out until the salve worked but Hani’s lips on her body were distracting. She couldn’t focus on beating down the pain when he touched her but his kisses seemed to take the pain and lift it away until the blessed relief of the crème set in. It was simultaneously one of the most odd and erotic things she had ever felt. One thing was certain though… her bottoms were getting wetter instead of drier and her body was becoming hypersensitive to the touch even as the pain it had been feeling was diminishing. It craved more.

“There…” Hani said as he put the lid back on the jar and leaned across her to put it on the table next to her juice. “All done. How do you feel?”

“Hmmm…?”

Haruhi’s dreamy response made him smile. He leaned closer and said again in the low tone that seemed to get a reaction out of her. “I said how do you feel?”

Haruhi tried to pull her mind together to form a coherent thought, “Good… no… Amazing.”

“Good. Now what do you want?” He slid a hand into her hair and pulled tight while stroking a finger down her collarbone and across her left nipple. Her low moan and body writhing into his touch making him instantly hard.

“You.” Haruhi moaned. “Please… need you… Hani.”
“Good answer, Haru-chan,” He kept one hand in her hair but slipped the other lower, brushing aside her swim suit bottoms, through the small patch of soft curls and into the very wet heat at her core. The faint residue of the salve causing a tingling sensation everywhere it met the sensitive flesh.

Haruhi’s body arched against his fingers and her core throbbed against him. A wave of pleasure washed over her and she realized that she had come in only a few quick stokes of his fingers. Startled she opened her eyes and stared into Hani’s laughing ones.

“I may have forgotten to mention that one of the side effects of this particular salve is heightened sensitivity and sexual arousal. Don’t get me wrong – it’s still primarily for healing, but I could have used one that didn’t have quite the same stimulating effects.” He pressed a quick kiss to her lips. “It was just the way you kept looking at me… I just couldn’t resist. Forgive me?”

“Gods…” Haruhi breathed out still feeling little tremors echoing through her body. “Nothing to forgive. I have never come that fast before. How long do the effects last?”

“Generally a couple of hours. Why?”

“Because I want to see if you can make good on that promise of fucking me senseless.”

Hani made a noise close to a growl before tightening the hand in her hair again. With one hand he managed to strip out of his shorts, slip on a condom, and straddled her keeping that bare inch above her skin. He whispered in her ear, “Nice attempt to challenge me, princess, but I am in control and I am going to make you beg for more. Do you still want it?” He pressed his hard length into the warmth between her thighs, not entering her, but demonstrating without a shadow of a doubt what she would be getting.

“Yes.”

“Yes… what?”

“Please.”

“Louder…” Hani changed the angle so the tip was just barely pressing against her entrance.

“Please!” Haruhi tried again and tried to angle her hips to take him deeper.

In response to her body movement, Hani pulled back and said, “Louder.”

“Please… PLEASE… Gods… I need you.”

“Much better,” Hani thrust his length into her and felt her body buck around it. He started a rhythm that soon had her screaming in pleasure. Each thrust was a mini orgasm thanks to the crème and Hani took advantage of every one using the tightness to bring him to his own. Finally he gave one last hard thrust and cried out her name as he let go. His cock continued to throb inside of her as he collapsed on top of her.

Haruhi was still breathing heavy and her throat felt almost raw from her screams. It took her three attempts before she was able to get out, “Remind me to make you promise to do that more often… Gods… I can’t move. I am completely exhausted.”

Hani laughed, rolled off her and grabbed her juice. Holding the straw to her lips he said with a smile,
“I will hold you to that. Now drink. You need to replenish the fluid in your body.”

Barely moving her lips, she did as she was told. The juice helped soothe her throat but even that small effort was the last of her strength. Her eyes started to drift closed.

Hani saw Haruhi start to fall asleep as she was drinking, so he gently set the drink back down. Pressing a kiss to her forehead he said, “Sleep my princess. You deserve it. You were unbelievable today.”

“Mmmm…”

Hani watched her for a few more minutes before getting off the bed to find a few blankets for them. He also realized that he should grab a few more snacks to have on hand because he knew from experience how ravenous she would be when she woke. He laid one towel over her as a temporary blanket and wrapped another around his waist. Moving as silently as he could he stepped out of the Conservatory to get the supplies he would need.

Long standing practice kept his footfalls silent, so he did not make a sound as he descended the now dark staircase to the first floor and the kitchens. When he reached the bottom of the staircase a soft light from under the library door caught his eye. Since he was under the impression that he and Haruhi were alone in the mansion he made his was quickly to the door, pushing it open a crack.

Peering through the crack, Hani saw what looked like an incomplete chess game and clothes strewn around the room. He looked over to the couch and saw two dark heads close together in an obviously intimate position. He recognized the soft moans of his lover and quickly shut the door with a huge grin on his face before tip-toeing back towards the kitchens and his original purpose for coming downstairs. *Oh this is quite an interesting night. Kyousa and Takashi… I can’t wait to hear the details of this one.*
A Good Place to Be

Hikaru and Tamaki watched as the reporters pounced, immediately shouting questions at Haruhi, Kyouya, Takashi and Hani. Their faces were grim as they heard some of the extremely personal questions that were being yelled out.

“Can’t they leave her in peace?” Hikaru clenched his fists to keep from flying off the handle.

Tamaki placed a hand on his shoulder and gave it a squeeze before releasing it, “We knew this was going to happen… and look. Haruhi is handling it far better than I think you or I would. Kyouya and Takashi will protect her.”

Hikaru took a deep breath. “I know. I just don’t like anyone harassing her.” They broke away from others and started heading for the Aston. A few reporters started following, but when they heard Kyouya start to speak they ran back, so Hikaru and Tamaki made it to the car unmolested.

Hikaru slipped into the passenger seat and looked sideways at the blond. “You don’t usually either. You used to flip completely out when Kao or I came near her.” Hika grinned at the memory of deliberately baiting their leader.

Tamaki grinned, “I used to flip out because I was terrified that you were going to steal her from me. I could never have predicted what actually happened. We dated, broke up, and then you and Kyouya both started dating her.”

Hikaru bit his lip before responding, “I know you told us that you were ok with that but it had to have been weird. It was weird enough for both of us to agree to try and share her but we quickly realized that if we tried to compete and make her choose, it would have destroyed the group.”

“Yes it would have.” Tamaki replied, seriousness coloring his tone. Flashing his signal he turned onto the highway. He changed the subject briefly, “Do you have any place in particular you want to go or anything you want to do?”

“Honestly, I haven’t even thought about it.” Hikaru answered. “I am getting hungry, so food would be good soon. We do legitimately have some stuff to discuss regarding the Ball on Saturday night but I think you and I need to have another discussion that would probably be better done in a more private location.”

“I agree. There’s a small café just outside of Paris that one of my cousins owns. It’s in a picturesque little part of the old town so it gets some tourist traffic, but there is a private room upstairs where we won’t be disturbed. It also has a solid wi-fi connection if we need it.”

“That sounds perfect.”

Tamaki took an off-ramp and was silent as concentrated on working his way through traffic.

Hikaru was lost in his thoughts. I really do need to know what he felt then and how he feels now about Haruhi. Not just Haru, actually, but Kyouya and Kao as well. I know my brother is starting to fall for him, even though he says it’s just casual. It’s the little side glances Kao does when he thinks no one is watching. The way his body molds itself to Tama’s whenever they touch. It used to mold to me that way... I have been watching Tamaki as well and he does show honest signs of returning his
affection, but I know that he has always been half in love with Kyoya and he loved Haruhi from the moment he met her. I can’t really blame him on any of them actually – Kao, Haruhi, and Kyoya are my life and my heart. I think I would go crazy if I lost any one of them. For Kao it’s not just Tama though. It’s Renge too. I still don’t know what she did that made that hurt/confusion stab just before HDG hit the catwalk on Sunday night, but he seems to be resolved about it. I am sure that whatever it was he will be talking to her today. Hikaru laughed ironically to himself. Gods if I ever thought about it, I would have understood his falling for Tamaki before his falling for Renge. That girl was a menace.

Tamaki turned down a side road. The scenery they passed looked like something straight out of a postcard and it made Hikaru let out a soft “wow.”

“It really is a pretty little town,” Tamaki said as he made another turnoff and headed toward a cluster of buildings. “It’s still close enough to the city that I could easily come out here when I was feeling overwhelmed, feeling alone, or just needed to think. I’ve been out here a lot in the last year since leaving Japan.”

“I can’t imagine how hard that has been for you,” Hikaru replied. “You were the center of so much of our lives, it was really odd to not have you there yelling at us.”

“It was rough… really rough for a while,” Tamaki answered quietly before turning into a parking spot in front of a picturesque cafe. “I knew that I HAD to come out here but my life was really back there. It was the exact reverse of what happened six years ago only it was harder because I had to leave so many people I had come to care about, not just one.”

Hikaru laid a hand on Tamaki’s arm. “You are a lot stronger than I gave you credit for… I am sorry that I ever doubted that.”

Tamaki turned and gave Hikaru a weak smile. “Thank you for that. It really means a lot. I just don’t know what I am going to do in a week when all of you leave again. I have felt more alive in the last week than I have all year.” Visibly taking a moment to compose himself, Tamaki put on his usual bright grin. “Come on, this café has the absolute best crepes.”

“Sounds good to me,” Hikaru replied and let the subject drop since there wasn’t really anything that he could add. He stepped out of the car and quickly wrapped his coat around him. “Brr…”

Together they walked into the café. Tamaki greeted the middle aged woman behind the counter with a warm hug and a kiss on both of her plump cheeks. Slipping an arm around her shoulders, he introduced her to Hikaru. “Hika, this is my cousin Marie-Claire, she owns the café and is the best baker in all of France.”

Hikaru took her hand and kissed the back of it. He infused all of his Host club charm into his response. “Mon plaisir madame. Il sent très bon ici. Je ne peux pas attendre pour essayer toutes les choses délicieuses Tamaki m’a été dit au sujet. My pleasure ma’am. It smells wonderful in here. I can’t wait to try all of the delicious things Tamaki has been telling me about.”

Marie-Claire blushed and responded in halting Japanese. “Thank you. Any friend of Tamaki’s will have a warm welcome here.” She switched back to French. “You must be one of the ‘devil twins’ he likes to brag about. I would recognize that red hair any time.” She mock whispered while two small pink spots appeared on Tamaki’s cheeks. “He has told me all about your days in the Host Club – the devil twins, the two warriors, the shadow prince, and the girl who has captured all of your hearts.”
“Oh really?!” Hikaru turned and gave Tamaki a grin so wicked it set Marie-Claire’s heart pounding.

“Mon Dieu…” She murmured and waved a fan in front of her face. “I can see the tales weren’t exaggerated. That look could make the Devil turn and run – hoping that you would chase him. But I ramble on… Tama – the upstairs room is free. Go and relax. I will bring you both something to eat and warm to drink.”

Tamaki kissed her cheek again, “Thank you, Marie-Claire.”

“Anytime dearest.” She bustled back behind the counter.

“This way,” Tamaki stretched his arm out to lead the way. In the hallway there was a flight of stairs that lead into a moderate sized room equipped with comfortable leather couches, low tables, and a fireplace on one wall. Gesturing for Hika to sit down on one of the couches by the fireplace, Tama quickly set some wood in and lit it to take the faint chill out of the room. Once it was burning cheerfully, he took off his jacket and sat on the other end of the leather couch. “Better.”

They both stared into the flames for a few minutes until Marie-Claire brought up a tray of hot soup, fresh bread, and several fruit crepes. There was also a French press of strong coffee, creamer and sugar. She set the tray on the table between them and with a final “I will make sure that you boys aren’t disturbed” she walked out of the room.

The smell of the food immediately brought both men out of their wandering thoughts and they dove into the food with relish.

“This is amazing,” Hikaru said around a mouthful of crepe.

“I told you.” Tamaki grinned. “Marie-Claire was classically trained and could have gone anywhere, but she fell in love with her husband and decided to start a family and a small business rather than taking on an Executive Chef position. It makes her blissfully happy and she shares that with her patrons. She is an easy woman to talk to. She never judges and she takes pity on a poor lonely boy stuck in France without his friends.”

Hikaru smiled, “We should all be so happy to have that kind of love in our lives.” He looked around. “Wait – you were here when you sent us that first message telling us to come to France for the Holiday. I recognize the background.”

“Yes,” Tamaki answered. “Anytime I was could get out of that cold house, I would come here. I could study, talk to all of you, or just talk and not worry about being chastised or interrupted by my grandmother.”

“How is that situation going?” Hikaru said with genuine interest.

“Better than it was. Grandmother has finally recognized that I may have a brain in my head, even if her wish that I would reconcile with Éclair will never be fulfilled… like it could ever have happened. That woman was everything I hate – cold, manipulative, demanding, and loveless. Thankfully, she found some poor sod that wanted her money enough to put up with her and they were recently married.”

“I am glad Éclair is out of your life. None of us could stand to see you with her.”

“You can’t know how much it meant to me that you, Kao, and Haru came after me. I am just sorry
that you broke your arm in the process.”

“Meh… It healed and we got you back, Boss. That was the important part.” Hikaru took a deep breath and plunged into one of the questions that had been running through his mind on the way over. “Better still it got you and Haruhi together.”

“How was that better?” Tamaki asked curiously. “I know you and Kao were in love with her at the time and I later found out that Kyouya, Takashi, and even Hani felt the same. I could have ruined it for everyone when we broke up.”

“I won’t deny that I was slightly jealous when you started dating, but you made her better. You gave her the confidence to see herself as a real person and that she had her own kind of beauty.”

“And when we broke up?” Tamaki dreaded hearing the answer but knew that he had to.

“If there was ever a time that I hated you, that was the closest to it,” Hikaru said honestly but took Tamaki’s hand when he saw tears start to threaten. “It looked like you had everything all of us ever wanted and just threw it away. The night that you guys broke it off, she came over to the house, didn’t say anything other than you both split, and just cried for hours. The only detail she gave at first was that it was a mutual decision but I could see her heart breaking.”

“Gods… I never knew… I didn’t want to but she made several points in that oh-so-logical way she has and I couldn’t disagree. Neither of us had the spare time to be able to spend together the way we would have liked…the way our relationship would have needed to survive at the time.” Tamaki’s voice got small. “I didn’t want to hold her back.”

“I know. I finally figured that out the next morning when she relayed the entire conversation. She was much calmer. It was almost like she needed the time to let go. When I asked her if she was leaving the Host Club, she was genuinely shocked. It was obvious that the thought hadn’t even crossed her mind. I knew then that no matter what had passed between you, she still cared enough to call you a friend. She also made us promise that neither Kao nor I would ever say anything to you about it. Still… I was angry with you. It wasn’t until I saw the way you interacted with her on the first day of class that I finally let it go. It was obvious that you still cared deeply for her. The fact that you kept all of the Host Club clients at a slightly further distance than you had in the past was also obvious. You still flirted but were VERY careful to keep it friendly rather than intimate.”

“Yes. It was so hard at first, but I knew that it was the right thing for her. She needed to experience more out of life than I could give her… and I realized that I was being selfish in trying to keep her all to myself. You all were my friends too and I knew that you loved her and I wasn’t letting you show her.” He chuckled to himself. “I just had no idea that when all of you finally stepped up it would be so… ummm…?”

“Unusual? Chaotic? Crazy?” Hikaru added with a smile. “I promise you that while I fantasized from a distance over Kyouya, I NEVER expected to be in a relationship with him, let alone one with Haruhi at the same time.”

“Kyouya is worth fantasizing over,” Tamaki grinned. “I pretty much did so on a weekly basis from the moment I met him. Despite the fact that I knew he was straight and not interested in me that way.”

“I understand Kao now that I have seen the Andromeda costumes and heard the back story, but why Haru?”

“Because once she found out that I was crushing on him, she would find little ways to push us together. Nothing overt and nothing that clued us in, though I can look back now and guess. She must have discussed that night with him and something he said must have made her think that he was more open than he let on.”

“I can see that,” Tamaki said. “She always did have a way of seeing something in us that we never realized was there. It made us better.”

“I agree and I am definitely not complaining. The last week has been, hands down, the most intense and exciting week of my life.”

“And unexpected…” Tamaki grinned. “I had absolutely no idea any of this would happen when I invited you all to come here for winter break. It’s been enlightening and I don’t want it to end.”

“That’s one way to put it,” Hikaru answered, “Which leads me to the question I know we both have been tap dancing around… No… the questions that we have been avoiding. What are you wanting with Kao – where do you see that relationship going? And… what kind of relationship do you want with Kyoya and Haruhi? I can see that you want one and I can read Kyo enough to know that he wants you. Haruhi always has and probably always will. Where do you picture me in the equation?”

Tamaki gulped, “Yikes… um which do you want me to answer first? Your brother or your lovers? Gods… that just makes me sound insatiable and a little bit pervy.”

Hikaru laughed. “Well since I am a bit insatiable and more than a little bit pervy when it comes to all of them, I can understand the feeling.”

Cheeks bright red, Tamaki responded maintaining eye contact with Hikaru by sheer force of will. “I think with regards to you, Haru and Kyoya, I will take whatever you are willing to give. The three of you have something that balances each other perfectly and I don’t want to mess that up.” He continued as Hikaru nodded, “I told you that I have always been attracted to Kyoya, but when he slips into Dominant mode, I just want to drop to my knees in front of him and let him do whatever he wants.”

“It is something to see.” Hikaru nodded. “He hasn’t quite topped me that way yet, but I am looking forward to the day he does. I am curious about being topped by Hani too, but that’s a different discussion.”

“Last night… Kyoya was fully in the mindset and it was unlike anything I have ever experienced. I want more, but I also know that I will burn out or burn up if it was a constant kind of thing. I don’t think I could handle a full-time relationship with him the way you do. We seem to have two modes when we are together – best friends and Dom/sub. Sometimes I need a bit more making love and less fucking but I don’t know if I want that with him per se. I know he has that kind of relationship with you and Haru.”

Hikaru laughed, “Well… there is plenty of fucking but I see what you are trying to say. It’s kind of the way Haruhi needs Takashi and vice versa. Different kind of love and attraction.”

“Exactly. Please don’t get upset but I have to say this at least once, because it has crossed my mind several times this last week since I saw them do yoga…” Tamaki started to say.
That if Takashi had approached her before any of us, then we wouldn’t be where we are right now?” Hikaru finished the statement for him as Tamaki nodded. “I have thought the same. It’s kind of scary how compatible they are. I have no doubt that in some alternate world, Takashi and Haruhi are blissfully married completely satisfied in just each other. I was so jealous when I first saw them together practicing for the first time. But just as I was about to turn green and stomp out, Haruhi looked over at me and I could see the love she has for me burning so brightly in her eyes, I lost every trace of jealousy and started feeling guilty instead. It was obvious that while there was undeniably something that was between just them, there was something between us that couldn’t be broken unless I did something stupid like walk away.”

“Like me.” Tamaki said.

“All in the past, boss,” Hikaru gently reminded him. “She loves you too. Always has – probably always will. She is happier with you in her life then without you… Now… about Kaoru…”

Tamaki sighed and rubbed his hands across his face. “Kao… damn… Kaoru was so unexpected. I was always attracted to him, to both of you actually, but again I never really thought any more of it because I thought he was interested in Haruhi and I know the relationship he has with you.”

“Just so you know, while Kao and Haru do love each other, it is more friendly than loverly. The both had to sit down and explain it to me one day, because I kept trying to push us into a triad and couldn’t figure out why it wasn’t working. It was the reason why Kao was able to walk out of the room and leave me and Kyo to Haru when we tried on the Andromeda costumes. It is also the reason why Haruhi teases him so frequently.”

“But I have seen her kissing both of you…”

“Yes… and we have a great time, especially when we were teasing Kyouya, but it doesn’t go beyond the fun of the teasing moment for them.”

“I am still not sure I understand.”

“I have an idea that might explain it, if you trust me to show you.”

“Sure…” Tamaki nodded.

“Close your eyes and keep them closed.”

Tamaki did as he was bid.

Hikaru moved on the couch until he was sitting next to Tamaki. Shifting his weight he leaned forward and took Tamaki’s head in his hands. Slowly, so as not to startle him, Hikaru pressed his lips to Tamaki’s. Sliding them softly over Tamaki’s, he traced his tongue gently against Tamaki’s lower lip, requesting them to open.

Tamaki realized as soon as Hikaru’s weight shifted what he was planning on doing, so the pressure of Hika’s lips wasn’t a surprise. What was – was Tamaki’s response. He opened his mouth and responded to the kiss with his normal skill, even wrapping one hand in Hika’s hair. Their lips teased and tongues danced together. It was nice.

*It was nice.* The words echoed again in Tamaki’s brain, the meaning of what Hikaru was trying to
say becoming crystal clear. Tamaki’s eyes flew open.

Hikaru felt Tamaki’s understanding and pulled back, relaxing back into the seat of the couch. “What are you thinking?”

“That I finally get what you were trying to say. Don’t get me wrong – kissing you is nice and you are obviously good at it, but it’s not the fireworks that I get with Kyo or Kao. Hell, it’s not even the same kind of connection I have when I kiss Haruhi.”

“Bingo… and ditto.” Hikaru grinned. “So I think that answers the question of where I fit in… But back to Kao. I take it from that response that you do get fireworks with him.”

“Huge bursting ones that I never expected,” Tamaki said with a sigh. “I meant to just keep our relationship as friends but in only a week I suddenly want it to be much more. It’s that more making love less fucking thing I mentioned earlier… I just don’t know if he feels the same. I know he is attracted to Renge too.”

“He is (which I still find weird by the way) but there is no question that he is falling hard and fast for you. That morning when I found you two together was eye-opening.”

“I am sorry for that. I had planned on getting up and going to my own bed before everyone woke up.”

“No… it was a good thing, actually,” Hikaru grabbed Tamaki’s arm. “It made me realize that if I was going to be in a relationship with both Kyouya and Haruhi, I needed to let Kao have relationships with people outside of me too. So yes it was a shock, but it was a good one in the end. I can see how you make him happy and comfortable in a way that I never could. He melts into you whenever you touch him… the way Haru melts into Kyo or me. I am happy for him… and you. There is something with Renge that he needs to work out, but if he does then I hope you will be as willing to share him.”

“I told him that I want to be in a relationship with him and that I am ok with him dating Renge as well as long as he doesn’t make me into a dirty little secret. He doesn’t have to tell the world, but she needs to know. It’s what you said. It’s not fair for me to have an outside relationship with Kyo or Haru and not let him have any.”

“Best answer I have heard yet,” Hikaru grinned. “I gave a similar statement to Kyouya the morning that I finally screwed up enough courage to kiss him. When he kissed me back, I saw stars for a good fifteen minutes.”

“I can imagine,” Tamaki gave an answering grin.

“There is no question that man can kiss. You should have seen the first time Haruhi kissed him. The moment his arms wrapped around her and his lips touched hers, she absolutely melted into his arms.”

“Wait… How did you manage to watch Kyouya kiss Haruhi for the first time? He never would tell me when it happened or how.”

Hikaru laughed then gave Tamaki a wicked smile, “You see… one day when you, Hani and Takashi were gone, Kao and I decided that we wanted to play a game…” Hikaru went on to relate the story of the first time that he, Kaoru and Kyouya kissed Haruhi.

Tamaki listened intently to the story, laughing at the appropriate points and humming on the juicy
bits, more relaxed around Hikaru than he had ever been before. *I know where we stand now… and it’s a very good place to be.*
Kaoru started to follow the others out the door when he realized that Renge was still talking to Sakura about Saturday’s Ball. He paused and waited for her to finish. *I am glad that Renge has another person to wear her designs. They are still a bit simple but she has come a long way in her design aspect in the last year. A few more years at HDG and she may be able to strike out on her own.* He smiled as she looked up and caught his eyes.

She smiled back and quickly finished up her conversation with Sakura, promising to send the dress over the next day and scheduling a time to come over on the Friday before to make sure it fit properly.

Sakura threw her arms around her new friend in gratitude and fairly bounced away as she waved goodbye to both of them.

Renge walked back over to Kaoru. “I’m sorry for the delay. Just had to confirm a few details.”

“Not a problem,” Kaoru said with a smile. “Sakura seems thrilled to be invited.”

“Who wouldn’t be?” Renge responded with a laugh. “It is going to be THE EVENT of the year and probably talked about for the next several. I am happy that she was willing to wear one of my designs.”

“Your designs are clean and simple. They have their own kind of elegance and they fit well within the HDG logo.”

Renge blushed, “I think that’s the nicest thing you have ever said to me. I am learning so much from your mother and you. I promise not to waste this opportunity.”

Kaoru grabbed her hand and squeezed. “I can see that you take the design aspect of fashion seriously and that wins you more points with me than all the flattery in the world. Fashion is my life. I love every bit of it from the first initial sketches to the craziness surrounding putting on a show. There is something really rewarding in making people feel sexy and confident.”

“Well your designs definitely do that. The stuff you and Hika have done for this show is amazing. It’s edgy but still something that can be worn relatively comfortably.”

“Relatively?” Kaoru asked with a smile.

“Relatively.” Renge responded emphatically with a grin. “There is no way ANYONE can comfortably wear six inch heels with a mini-skirt without tape or flashing their underwear.”

“That’s what the long leather duster is for…” Kaoru answered. “Though honestly, I don’t think Hika designed that particular set of heels for all day wear. His favorite comment about those more elaborate designs is ‘they only need to go across the bedroom not the boardroom.’ I know some of the models have grumbled about wearing them on the catwalk.”

“According to Mai, no one would dare to seriously complain, because as difficult as the extreme designs are to walk in, they make the model’s legs and ass look fabulous. Plus, aside from the crazy designs, most of his stuff is comfortable AND sexy.”
“I think that’s mostly Haruhi’s influence, though he would never admit to it. She is adamant about only wearing heels where she won’t accidently fall and break her neck.” Kaoru laughed as he remembered witnessing several discussions between his brother and his best friend. “No matter how much Hika tried, Haruhi always won out in the end. So he started making his designs more wearer friendly. It has actually made HDG shoe sales skyrocket. It’s hard to resist sexy shoes to start with, but when you can wear them for more than fifteen minutes without killing your feet they become worth their weight in gold.”

“So that’s why most of the models have a closet full of HDG shoes,” Renge replied. “Makes sense, really. Slightly off topic – I have a question. What did you want to do this afternoon? I know we talked about grabbing a bite to eat so we could get a chance to talk, but is there anything specific you had planned after?”

“Not really. Why?”

“Versace and Chanel are both running their winter line today. I kind of want to check it out but I promised that I would spend the time with you.”

“I think that sounds like a perfect afternoon.” Kaoru grinned. “I want to subtly rub it in to Allegra, that short of her prancing down the catwalk naked leading five naked men on leashes before having sex on the stage, there is really no way she is going to win her bet with mom. Hika, Haruhi and Kyoya are THE buzz around town. Now with Haru getting her Mastery today it’s not just the fashion world buzzing.”

“I am so proud to call her my friend,” Renge said sincerely. “She is taking all the sudden press with a grace that not many could match. It has to be so hard.”

“Me too,” Kaoru said and squeezed her hand again. “I worry about her and Hika, though. Yoshio Ootori is not a man to be crossed lightly and I KNOW he won’t be pleased with Kyoya publically coming out as bi.” He took a deep breath and let it out in a long sigh. “There was a slight chance that he wouldn’t hear about it for a few days when the story was just fashion-linked, but now that it’s crossed genres, there is no way he won’t know by this evening… which means that Kyoya is going to get an earful at best. I don’t even want to know what the worst Yoshio Ootori can come up with is. I just pray that it doesn’t kill the relationship between the three of them.”

Renge wrapped her arms around Kaoru and held him tightly in a hug, “Kyoya knows that he has friends that won’t judge him and it’s obvious he has been distancing himself from his father. I am not supposed to know this, but my father let slip that many of the business leaders in Japan would rather deal with Kyoya Ootori than Yoshio. Yoshio’s cold, calculating, and ruthless business practices are making him enemies. These same business leaders were impressed by the way Kyoya started building his own portfolio while still at Ouran. All of the Host Club knows that it was Kyoya’s attempt to get some sort of recognition from his father, but the business community saw it as something different and impressive. Aside from my family and the families of the Host club members, everyone who has done business with Kyoya Ootori has reported back that he is fair, innovative, and has solid business sense. He carefully weighs each decision based on risk, while still seeing the big picture. In the end, it means that he has more successes and people want to be allied with the man on the upward track. So while some of them may publically reiterate their own ‘wholesome family values’,” she let the sarcasm fill her voice as she said the phrase, “they will still jump in line to do business with Kyoya. If anyone calls them on it, they will say that while they don’t personally agree with Kyoya Ootori’s lifestyle choice, he has the right to live his life as he chooses and his business acumen is not affected by his personal life.”
Kaoru let himself be comforted by her words and the feel of her arms around him. “How did you get to be so savvy to the politics of the business world?”

She huffed before responding with a slight grimace. “I know all of you thought I was nothing but an anime-obsessed twit when we first met, but like Kyoya, I grew up watching my father negotiate his way through years of complex business transactions. While the actual business aspect never interested me – that was my brother’s obsession – I was fascinated by the way each side interacted both publically and behind closed doors. So much posturing, body language, hidden meanings, and unspoken desires. I guess that’s why I was drawn to anime at first. It is all about body language and interaction. Also why I kept pushing ideas during Host Club and probably why I finally got into Fashion. We both know that the right outfit can make or break a deal. When you know you look good it adds a subtle aura of confidence and competence.”

Kaoru pulled back a bit and stared into Renge’s eyes in astonishment.

“What?” Renge asked, confused.

Kaoru framed his hands on her cheeks and pulled her into a soft kiss before saying, “You are amazing… you know that? I feel so dumb for ever believing you to be another annoying idiot. I am sorry.”

Renge’s lips still tingled from the kiss, but she managed to say with a grin, “I take what I said earlier back. That’s the best compliment you have ever given me.”

Kaoru laughed and held out his hand. “It won’t be the last. Now that we are so far behind the others that the media has probably left, let’s get out of here. I know a great restaurant where we shouldn’t be disturbed.” There was a catch in his voice as he continued. “I do have something that I need to talk to you about.”

Renge sighed, “I do too. I just hope it won’t change the way you look at me.”

“Funny, I was thinking the same thing.”

Forty-five minutes later they were seated in the back corner of a restaurant about half a mile from the Carousel de Louvre. They had placed their order and were now sitting across from each other, tongue-tied.

“I want-“ Kaoru started to say at the same time Renge said “There is-“

Both chuckled a bit and lapsed back into silence. Taking a sip of his water, Kaoru said, “Ok this is weird. We were having a great conversation before and now we both are awkward.”

“Je ne sais pas. Je ne sais pas. Je ne sais pas. Je ne sais pas.”

Kaoru’s finger on her lips silenced her frantic rambling. “I do want to let whatever this thing is
between us play out. I like you, too. Much more than I ever thought I would... but there is something
I need to tell you too. You may not wan-

“I’m in a long term relationship with Mai Nakasaki!” Renge blurted against his finger. “I have been
for almost a year and a half. It happened just after I started working for your mom.”

“I saw you kiss her on Sunday night. I admit that I was confused at first because I had kissed you
earlier that night and you had responded to me too.”

“Oh gods,” Renge turned a deep shade of red. “I didn’t know. What you must think of me?!? I
wasn’t trying to lead you on or anything. Our kiss was so hot. I felt dizzy when you stopped. I
wanted it to go on forever... but I feel the same way when I am kissing Mai.”

Kaoru took a deep breath and let it out slowly. “I am really glad to know that I wasn’t the only one
who felt it. Did you talk to Mai about it?”

“I did. We had a short conversation last week and a longer conversation yesterday about it and a few
other things. She said she suspected that I was attracted to you by the way we interacted at the
workshop last Friday.”

“And...”

“And she is quite ok with my having a relationship both her and you, as long we don’t try to push it
to be a triad.” Renge giggled a little. “Unlike me, Mai really isn’t attracted to men. She is an expert at
flirting and making it seem like she is without crossing boundaries. That kind of flirting is a game to
her.”

A thought crossed Kaoru’s mind, “What about the Spin the Bottle game? She kissed both Hani and
Tamaki.”

“That’s just it – it was a game. Tamaki’s kiss was almost chaste, which I totally didn’t expect
knowing how flamboyant he can get. She did play it up a bit with her dramatic flair at kissing Hani,
but it was pretty obvious that neither of them felt anything beyond amusement. After spending time
with you guys this week, I am realizing that Hani has about the same interest in girls that Mai does in
guys.”

“Pretty much... though like most of the group, Haruhi seems to be an exception for him.”

“What about you and Haruhi? The twincest act-thing aside, it was pretty clear that it wasn’t the first
time you had kissed her. I thought you had a crush on her too.”

“Any crush I had on Haru is long gone,” Kaoru smiled as he responded. “Don’t get me wrong, I
love her to pieces. She is probably my best friend outside of Hika and I would do anything for her,
but our relationship is really just based in friendship. When we kiss or flirt, it’s also just a game, and
mostly done to tease Hika, Tamaki, or Kyouya.”

“Really?!?” Renge’s eyebrow arched.

“Yes really,” Kaoru said with a smile. “I know it probably doesn’t look like it to outsiders, but if you
don’t trust me, ask Haruhi. We are friends. If the need ever arose, we could be lovers for an evening,
but we will never be in the kind of long term committed relationship that she has with Hika and Kyo,
or even the kind of relationship between her and Takashi.”

“I believe you,” Renge said then added with a mischievous wink, “and who wouldn’t sleep with
Haruhi for an evening if the need arose. I know I would.” She laughed as Kaoru spit out the water he
was in the process of sipping. “Seriously though, Haru is also my closest friend and she was actually the one that pushed me into the decision to tell you. She knew I liked you before I really realized it.”

“About the same here.”

“So you won’t be bothered or upset that if we start a relationship that I will still be in one with Mai?”

“It would be rather hypocritical of me if I was.”

“You are talking about your relationship with Hika,” Renge said and took his hand across the table.

“I know that you guys share a bond. I want you to know that I am ok with that. It would be wrong to get in the middle of it.”

Kaoru sighed, “Thank you. Honestly, I had forgotten about the bond with Hika. It’s such a part of us and so accepted by our friends and family that I tend to forget that the rest of the world doesn’t accept it. Or rather, I couldn’t care less what the rest of the world thinks about it.”

“Then what did you mean about being a hypocrite?” the confusion was clear in Renge’s voice.

Kaoru ran his hand through his gold tipped red hair. “That’s what I needed to tell you. I have been falling for two people in the last week that I never expected.”

“I hope that I am one of the two or are there two other people you are falling for?”

He smiled slightly, “You are definitely one of the people I am falling for; though I guess technically there is a third I am curious about doing some activities with.”

Renge held up a hand. “Ok, I am officially confused. Let’s break this down. In the last week you started falling for me and who else?” She bit her lip unconsciously.

“Tamaki.” The name came out of Kaoru’s mouth with a whoosh.

“Tamaki,” Renge echoed with a bit of a lilt.

“It started as a way of keeping each other company when Hika, Kyo and Haru slept together, but it’s turning into something more.” He licked his lips before continuing. “I really like him. The same way I really like you. I know that both relationships are new and may or may not work out, but I want to try. I don’t want to give up on either. Are you ok with that?”

“Tamaki…hunh…,” Renge said again. It wasn’t until she saw the apprehensive look on Kaoru’s face that she realized that she still hadn’t responded. “Oh, sorry! I am fine with you dating Tamaki too. I have gotten to know him a bit better since we both have been in Paris this year and he is a really good guy. I just thought he was still pining after Haruhi or secretly in love with Kyouya.”

Kaoru let out the breath he didn’t realize he was holding. “Well... you aren’t far off. He will always be at least a little bit in love with Haruhi (and she with him) and he is more than a little in lust with Kyouya. I am letting those three work out whatever it is they have between them.”

“Generous of you,” Renge answered with a smirk.

Kaoru grinned, “Isn’t it? Though watching Kyouya and Tamaki together is seriously hot.”

“Watching Kyouya and anyone together would probably be pretty hot, I would imagine. That man just oozes this seriously sexy dominance vibe.” Renge laughed. “I don’t know if he realizes it or not but I have no doubt he knows how to use it. How many of you now have fallen for Kyo?”
“Nearly as much as have fallen for Haruhi.” Kaoru replied with a giggle. “Tamaki, Hika, Haru, and I think secretly Takashi wants him too. Hani wants Kyo to dominate him and that’s saying something because Hani doesn’t bottom.”

“Wait… bottom like in BDSM?”

Kaoru slapped his hand over his mouth and muttered, “Damn… that just slipped out. I must be comfortable with you because that would never have crossed my lips otherwise.”

Renge giggled, “So spill… Hani is a Dom? That must make Takashi his sub. Interesting, but I can see it. Who else is in the scene? The Host Club just got even juicier than they were before.”

“Gah… the others will kill me…” Kaoru answered. “But if you still want to be in a relationship with me you need to know. Hika and I have dabbled. We are both Switches but he leans more to the top and I lean more to the bottom. I am also a masochist… ok, I will be honest. I am a pain slut. My body turns the pain to pleasure and this endorphin rush that is incredible. Does that bother you?”

“I have bottomed a few times to Mai and I can understand the pain/pleasure thing, though I can’t take a whole lot of pain.”

“So you and Mai?”

“Mostly for us it’s the kinky sex. She had a previous partner who taught her a few things. I do like the fisting though.”

Again Kaoru spit out his water. Setting his glass down and pushing it away he muttered, “I think I need to just stop drinking.” Louder, he said, “You will never cease to surprise me.”

Renge winked at him. “Good. A girl should be mysterious. So I take it the activities you kind of mentioned being curious about must be more D/s or S/M related?”

“Yes. Last Saturday night the group had a discussion and… experimented. You can say it was eye-opening for a lot of us. All of us are curious about exploring at least a bit more.”

“Together or separately?”

“Separately, mostly. Though with the way this group works, I wouldn’t be surprised if we have another ‘group activity’ night.”

“What do you want to explore and with who?”

“I want to experience more impact play – floggers, canes, hands. Hani may look small and innocent, but I promise you when he is in his Dom role, he has just as much of a control aspect as Kyouya.”

“Can I watch?”

“I don’t have a problem with it; I am a bit of an exhibitionist. It would just depend on if they others were comfortable.”

“That’s fair. Though I have to say after seeing all of you close to naked the other day, I would enjoy watching any of you.”

“Wait… when did you see us close to naked?”

“Sunday. Before the Red Carpet. I got to the house and you all were asleep up in the conservatory. All snuggled together half naked and looking yummy. Though it looked like you were completely
naked, now that I think about it... too bad the way you were cuddled into Hika, I couldn’t see anything.”

A loud laugh burbled up through Kaoru’s throat. “Dear gods... Haruhi was right. You do fit in with us freaks.” He then mock glared at her. “Shame on you for peeking when I didn’t get the opportunity to do the same.”

“Do you want to?”

“Do I want to what?”

“See me naked,” Renge murmured in a delightfully wicked tone.

“I think the answer to that is obvious by this point, don’t you think?”

“You didn’t answer my question.”

Kaoru turned the full wattage of his Host club smile on her, “I have this fantasy where I pull you into the fabric room, lay down a bolt of velvet and silk and fuck you hard until you are screaming my name.” He grinned at her quick intake of breath. “Does that answer your question? Yes Renge. I want to see you naked.”

“Let’s go.” Renge grabbed her bag and dragged him out of the booth.

Laughing Kaoru responded, “What are you doing? We haven’t gotten our food.”

“Later.” Renge grabbed their waiter in passing and said in rapid fire French, “We have had an Emergency. Please pack our food and have it delivered to the Hitachiian Design Group at the Carousel de Louvre. Here is my business card and contact information to give to the guard.”

“Of course, mademoiselle. We have catered for HDG before. I hope that everything is all right and the emergency turns out to be only a small thing.”

Renge kept her voice perfectly normal as she replied, “I have a feeling it will be anything but small, but I am confident that I can work the situation out to a satisfactory conclusion for all.”

Kaoru choked back his laughter at the double entendre.

Grabbing his hand, Renge pulled him out the door to toward the car.
“Are you more worried about Haruhi’s physical state or her being alone with Mitskune?” Takashi asked quietly as he drove back into Paris. The last fifteen minutes since Kyouya and Takashi dropped off Hani and Haruhi had been spent in silence. Normally silence wasn’t something that bothered Takashi, but he sensed an underlying tension in his companion that finally prompted him to ask.

“What? No.” Kyouya shook himself out of his thoughts. “I mean yes, I am worried about how badly bruised Haruhi will be – who wouldn’t be after the beating she took? – But I am not worried or jealous about her being with Hani. If anyone can protect her and guide her through that kind of healing it would be you or Hani. Plus I have seen the effects of that salve your families make and I know that it will help faster than most modern medicine. She just needs to rest and replenish her body.”

“Then if you don’t mind, what has you so tense? Are you concerned about going out or being seen with me in public?” Takashi’s voice held no hint of his emotions.

“Not at all. You are my friend and I would never have a problem being seen with you. I don’t even really care that it the press will wonder if there is some sort of hidden subtext going on between us.” Kyouya’s voice held a slight edge as he discussed the press.

“Why would they assume that we are covering?”

“Because you were seen alone with Haruhi on your way up to the Monastery. The fact that you are her Sensei and it was logical isn’t a good enough reason not to start rumors, even though Sakura tried to deflect them. The fact that there is some truth to the rumors will be hard to hide, even if we never publically acknowledge it.” Kyouya reached out and placed a hand on Takashi’s arm. “Please know that it doesn’t bother me that you two have been together; you both have a connection that it would be foolish to deny; I just worry about my father.”

“Yoshio Ootori is a shrewd businessman.” Takashi carefully kept his voice neutral.

“My father is a ruthless, cold, calculating, bastard who cares only for money and the power that it represents to him,” Kyouya responded heatedly. “He doesn’t think twice about ruining the careers or lives of people that he believes are beneath him. They simply don’t matter to him. If they won’t bring him more wealth or power than they are useless.” He ran his hand through his hair and pushed his glasses up on his nose.

“You are not your father.”

“I once wanted to be,” Kyouya said softly. “Everything I did was to prove myself worthy of him. To show him that even though I was the third son, I would be a capable heir. Then Haruhi stumbled into our world…”

“And changed all of our lives,” Takashi finished the statement.

“She stood up to my father,” Kyouya’s voice still held a hint of wonder as he remembered the day. “It didn’t matter to her that he could have crushed her family without thinking twice. She stood up to him for me – someone she called friend even though I hadn’t done anything to deserve that title. I fell
in love with her that day, though I couldn’t get enough courage to tell her. The funny thing about the whole situation is once Haruhi stood up to him, it was the first time he was impressed by me and it wasn’t really even for anything I did. I thought handing him back his company would impress him. It didn’t really. I got a nod and a pat on the head for it being a good business maneuver. But my friendship with Haruhi… a commoner and someone who wouldn’t even normally be a blip on his radar… he actually talked to Yuzuru Suoh about arranging a marriage between us. Granted it was just about the time that Tamaki and Haruhi started dating so it didn’t go over well, but still. When they broke up, I was told to pursue her but by that time, I was starting to realize that I didn’t want to be known as Yoshio Ootori’s youngest son and his clone. So I held myself back for a long time.”

“What changed?”

“A game the twins decided to play with Haruhi and I was dragged into it. Not that I am complaining, though. When I told my father that we were dating he seemed pleased… until I told him that she was also dating Hikaru and I was ok with it. He flew into a rage and demanded that I secure her for myself alone or be cast out of the Ootori family. He sees her as a moldable and useful tool. He also thinks that if it is shown that he welcomed a commoner into the family that somehow he will be thought to be more compassionate.”

“I don’t think your father could ever be described as compassionate.”

“He can’t but the markets are showing a marked trend in businesses with philanthropic core belief and he needs to make sure he is always on the cutting edge of business. Molding a commoner, and a female one at that, he thinks will be a good public relations move.”

“Perhaps.”

“But it will only work for him if I have the sole claim to her. We all know that that isn’t going to happen. I knew it from the moment I saw the look in Hika’s eyes when he looked at her after kissing her for the first time. Neither of us would give up, but we knew that if we fought over her, we both would lose. So we shared her, and fell in love with each other in the process. That is something my father will not be able to forgive. Since we came out publically on Sunday it is only a matter of time.”

Takashi pulled into the parking lot of the gallery. “What are you going to do?”

Kyouya’s smile was grim. “Right now, I am going to enjoy an art exhibit with a good friend. Dealing with my father can wait.”

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Two hours later when Takashi and Kyouya were sitting in the same quiet Japanese restaurant that Kyouya and Hikaru had tried a few days before, Kyouya’s phone rang. Looking at the screen with a frown he did something that Takashi had never seen him do before – he hit the disregard button and sent it to voicemail. Over the next half hour while they finished up their food, Kyouya did it again three more times. It wasn’t until they were back in the car and heading back to the House and Kyouya did it for the fifth time that Takashi finally asked. “What is it?”

“My father. I don’t feel like talking to him right now.”

“Won’t he be furious that you are ignoring him?”

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“Probably.”

Sure enough within a matter of moments, Kyouya’s phone chirped letting him know he had a text message. Seeing it was from his sister Fuyumi, he opened it.

_Brother! What is going on? A business associate of father’s came to the house earlier and cornered father in his office. When he left, he looked smug. As soon as the front door shut behind him, I heard a loud crashing noise in the Library. He yelled your name and then stomped up to his wing. I peeked into the Library and the prize Ming vase you gave him last year was in pieces. When I went upstairs, I could hear him shouting at his assistant to get his plane ready. He left the house fifteen minutes ago in a rage unlike I have ever seen him in before. I fear for you brother. – FO_

As if Fuyumi’s text was a plug being pulled, all the color drained from Kyouya’s face and he hit his head hard on the back of the seat.

Takashi looked over at his friend, “What is it, Kyouya?”

Taking a deep breath and trying to calm the suddenly sick feeling in his stomach, Kyouya replied. “It’s begun. I have no more time left.” He read aloud Fuyumi’s text. Furiously he began to type back.

_Fear not for me, my sister. I have made a choice that Father will never accept. I knew that there would be consequences for it but you and I both know that I will never have Father’s affection the same way Akito and Yuuichi do. I have long since resigned myself to that fact because I had you. You cared for me in your own way when no one, not even mother would stand against father’s wishes. So I will tell you first. I have publically declared that I am dating both Haruhi Fujioka and Hikaru Hitachiin. – KO_

“What will you do?” Takashi asked before resting his hand on Kyouya’s arm.

Kyouya drew strength from the small contact. “My father will cut me off. I will never be welcome again at the Ootori Family Home. He will have everything in my rooms destroyed on his return. Not that it has ever been home-like, but there are some things that I would like to keep.”

“Would your sister be willing to go against your father and gather them for you? She can bring them to the Morinozuka mansion.”

“She may… if she even responds to my last message.” No sooner had the words left his mouth when his phone beeped again.

_But I already knew that both you and Hikaru Hitachiin were dating Haruhi. Father was upset with it but I thought that had passed. – FO_

Kyouya sighed as he responded.

_No. Father was temporarily placated as long as he thought that I would pursue her and win her over Hikaru in the end. I was given that as an ultimatum. But I wouldn’t make Haruhi choose between us. I love her too much for that. What has sent father over the edge is I realize that it isn’t just that I am in love with Haru. Somewhere in the last few months, I have been falling for Hikaru as well and he for me. I am dating BOTH of them. I walked the red carpet on Sunday for the beginning of Fashion Week with both of them. It was obvious by our actions that I was in a relationship with both. I know Father disdains the idea of the Fashion Community so I figured that I was safe until one of the wives of his business associates found out. Then yesterday something else happened that would have made the situation come to Father’s attention much sooner than I would hope. You know Haruhi has been studying martial arts with Mitskune Haninouzouka and Takashi Morinozuka._
Yesterday she became the first female to test for her Mastery in front of the Council. She was one of only four who passed the test. I am so proud of her. However, it meant that the two Media worlds collided. We have been followed constantly by the paparazzi since Sunday and it has been headline news on every major network. She and Hika still have some immunity since they are still in school, but I am fair game… and they speculating hard on how the infamous Yoshio Ootori will react to the news of his son’s bisexuality. –KO

Kyouya hit send with trepidation. I know how father will react… How will you react to my coming out sister?

“Is there a reason why she wouldn’t help you? Your sister always seemed to care about you more than your other family did. At least, she was the only one you spoke of with fondness.” Takashi asked.

“She is truly the only one that I care about. But I don’t know how she will react to my bisexuality. She adores Haruhi, is always flirting with Tamaki, and thinks the twins are adorable – much to their amusement. She looked at me funny when I told her that Hika was dating Haruhi too, but she never actually commented on it.”

The beep of a response got Kyouya’s attention.

Go Haruhi!! – FO

Kyouya started laughing.

But seriously, brother. WOW! All of this must have happened pretty recently or you are getting better at hiding things from me. I never would have thought that another man would capture your attention (unless it was Tamaki Suoh) but who you love is not as important as the fact that you are actually admitting that you are in love. For what it’s worth you have my support. I will even tell father that if he should deign to ask me. -FO

A weight lifted off of Kyouya’s chest as he read her response. He responded back quickly.

It means more to me than you know that I have your support but I would ask that you remain quiet to Father about it. I do not want your husband’s business to suffer his wrath. But I have a request – There isn’t much in my room that has sentimental value but if you could gather my journals, any photographs of the Host Club members, and the stuffed dragon Haruhi gave me last Valentine’s Day into a box and have it sent over to the Morinozuka Estate, I would be forever grateful. – KO

I can do that. I will send you a message when I am done. You have good friends. – FO

Takashi pulled the Land Rover back into the garage at the Maison de Roses just as Kyouya finished reading. Together the men got out of the vehicle, grabbed all of the bags from earlier in the day and headed toward the house. Using the key that Tamaki had given them earlier they let themselves in. The house was dark but they were still able to navigate the stairs easily from the residual winter light coming through the windows. Dropping the gear bags in the Dojo, they heard the murmur of voices and a faint splash of water coming from the Conservatory. Smiling serenely, Takashi put his finger over his lips and motioned for Kyouya to meet him back downstairs.

Kyouya stopped briefly in his room to change into a more comfortable shirt and use the facilities before meeting Takashi back in the Library.

“It appears Mitskune and Haruhi decided to stay here. Do you wish to leave again to give them more privacy?” Takashi asked.
“Honestly, I would prefer to spend a quiet evening here – at least until the others return. If we stay on this floor then we shouldn’t disturb them. I need something different to distract me from the upcoming conversation with my father and I would really prefer to avoid the paparazzi.” Kyōya answered as he walked over to the shelf and picked up a chess board. Holding it up, he said, “I believe you owe me a rematch as I was rather preoccupied the last time we played.”

“You’re use of the term preoccupied is amusing,” Takashi responded with a grin that on any other face Kyōya would call devilish. He went over to the sideboard and poured them each two fingers of a well-aged scotch. Still smiling, he handed one to Kyōya and said “Cheers” before continuing, “I maintain I am the better strategist. I took advantage of the circumstances.”

Kyōya smiled and tilted his glass toward Takashi before taking a sip, humming in appreciation. “Interesting thought – in its own way. Haruhi was naked in a bubble bath almost directly above our heads that night. I know that image is as tantalizing to you as it was to me. Even now, our lovers are upstairs doing who knows what to each other. I defy you not to think about it.” Kyōya’s grin matched Takashi’s for deviltry. “Care to wager?”

“Of Course. Best two games of three. What are the stakes?”

“To be determined by the winner. Anything you want taken off the table before we begin?” Kyōya smirked.

“I think I have demonstrated in the last week that not there is not much that I will not do,” Takashi said. “Furthermore, in the name of honesty, there is not much I wouldn’t be willing to do with or for you. You are an attractive man Kyōya Ootori.”

“As are you, Takashi Morinozuka,” Kyōya inclined his head and let heat fill his eyes. “Shall we begin? Do you prefer white or black?”

“Black.” Takashi responded as he settled down across from Kyōya.

An hour and a half later and another scotch, they were tied at one match apiece. After the first match they had paused and lit a fire to combat the faint chill in the air but had declined to turn on any other lights, choosing instead to move closer to the light from the fire to illuminate their game. Between the fire and the scotch both were pleasantly warm and all chill had been eliminated from the room.

“You are demonstrating a much better strategy than you were last week,” Takashi remarked.

“I have to redeem my reputation,” Kyōya answered. “You are an excellent opponent. I prefer a good challenge.”

“As do I,” Takashi inclined his head in agreement.

A trick of the light caused red highlights to appear across Takashi’s dark hair and reflect off of his dark eyes. The combination made something tighten in Kyōya’s chest and he felt the first trickle of blood in his groin. It was this tightness that made him suggest, “This match is for the win. Do you wish to up the stakes?”

Kyōya was not the only one affected by the tricks of the firelight. Takashi had been increasingly distracted by the patterns it traced over his friend’s face and shoulders. But despite what he had said earlier, he was unsure of what Kyōya’s comfort level would be with him. So, he hid it as he had done for so many years focusing instead on their mutual friendship. Still… something in the tone of Kyōya’s voice as he asked the last made him respond, “What do you have in mind?”
“I overheard Hikaru and Kaoru joking about playing a game of strip chess. Each time a piece is captured the loser takes off a piece of clothing.”

“I am familiar with the game. Mitskune and I have played it on several occasions. I am willing.”

“Great,” Kyoya smirked. “Winner takes all.”

“That won’t be the only thing I am taking.” Takashi replied with thinly veiled innuendo. His fingers brushed against Kyoya’s as they replaced the pieces on the board causing an electric current to jump between them.

The first capture went to Kyoya and Takashi removed one of his shoes. The next to Takashi as Kyoya did the same. Several moves later, Kyoya captured one of Takashi’s bishops. As Takashi had already removed his socks, shoes, sweater, t-shirt, he stretched his arms behind his head to grab and remove his undershirt. Kyoya’s breath caught as he watched the finely chiseled chest appear – firelight flickering across the hard planes alternating between illumination and deep shadow. Blood rushed lower in his body and he felt himself get hard. *Damn he is beautiful.*

Takashi watched the play of emotions across Kyoya’s face. Intrigued by them, since once upon a time the Shadow King would never let something as trivial as desire show; he stood up and came around to stand in front of him. “I want to kiss you. I know I have no claim to your affections but I desire it nonetheless.”

Kyoya stood up, bumping the chess board and knocking over several pieces. Paying it little attention, he focused on the warrior in front of him. “You are my friend and I respect you. You need no claim but desire. I want this.” Reaching out to slide a hand into hair the same dark shade as his, Kyoya leaned forward and pressed his body against Takashi’s. Their lips crashed into each other’s in the same motion. Mouths opened immediately and wet, hot tongues danced with each other in an elaborate fencing match.

With a sound almost approaching a growl, Takashi bunched his hands in the soft material of Kyoya’s t-shirt, breaking body contact only long enough to roughly pull it over Kyoya’s head, before throwing it unheeded across the room and wrapping his muscular arms around Kyoya’s bare back. His fingers pressing against the dragon inked into Kyoya’s skin, as Kyoya grabbed a handful of Takashi’s hair tightly in one hand and gripped his hip with enough pressure to leave bruises with the other.

The pressure of Takashi’s hands on his back brought an answering growl from Kyoya. Instinct and desire long hidden caused him to tighten his grip in Takashi’s hair and roughly pull his head to the side to bare the long line of his neck. Without hesitation, Kyoya bit down on the muscle hard, the resultant groan causing his already firm cock to harden even more. The hand on Takashi’s hip, slid between them to rub against the bulge barely hidden by the thin material of Takashi’s trousers. With a rough voice, he spoke into Takashi’s ear, “I want to wrap my lips around your cock and hear you beg for more as I make you come. Then while you are still recovering, I want to fuck you senseless. I want you quivering under me when I am done. Are you interested?”

“Yes.” The simple statement held far more in it than just a word.

Needing no further encouragement, Kyoya pushed hard against Takashi’s shoulders, which sent him stumbling backwards and caused him to fall on one of the couches. Eyes holding the glint of command, he said, “Strip, then put your hands above your head. I want to see that glorious chest spread out before me while I suck you.”

Instantly Takashi complied and was rewarded with the sight of a shirtless Kyoya climbing on top of
him. Even as he fought against the sensation that flooded his body as Kyouya took his erect cock in his long fingers, Takashi managed to gasp, “Your pants.”

Smiling evilly in a way that reminded Takashi of Mitskune at his most dominant, Kyouya responded, “I will remove them when I am ready to fuck you. Not before.” Then he leaned further forward and licked one long line up the side of Takashi’s cock, relishing the way Takashi’s body shuddered underneath him.

“Yes sir…” Takashi felt as if every nerve in his body was tied into the movement of Kyouya’s mouth and hands. When Kyouya circled his thumb and forefinger together and slid them down to put pressure on the base before following the motion with his warm wet mouth, Takashi couldn’t help but arch his hips up to meet Kyouya’s lips, a long moan escaping from his throat. “gods…”

Quickly Kyouya slid back up it covering his teeth with his lips, but still using enough pressure to make sure Takashi felt every movement. He quickly built a rhythm of lips, wet swirling tongue, and circling fingers on one hand while the other looped another circle around the top of his balls – fingers lightly playing against the delicate skin.

“Kyouya…” Takashi moaned his name as his body arched and twisted against the others.

Kyouya for his part was hard as a rock as he savored the feel of firm flesh in his mouth. Takashi tasted faintly of salt, sweat, and tang that Kyouya recognized as pure male, having experienced it after kissing Haruhi and Hikaru after they had gone down on him. As he watched Takashi’s normally stoic face twist into uncontrolled desire as his body bucked into his stroking fingers, he moved until he was fully on top, face near Takashi’s. One hand still stroking slowly up and down – tight enough to keep Takashi on the edge but not enough to push him over. Whispering in his ear, he asked, “Do you want to come Takashi?”

“Yes… oh gods, yes.”

“You know what to do then.” Kyouya’s voice held so much control it was nearly enough to send Takashi over alone, but Kyouya had purposely slowed down enough to prevent that from happening.

“Please, Kyouya..” Takashi gasped.

“Pretty… but I know you can do better.” Kyouya nipped at Takashi’s earlobe and squeezed a bit tighter.

“Please… please… I am so close.”

“I can keep you here for another hour… Do better.”

Takashi groaned, “gods… GODS… KYOUYA… Please, please PLEASE!! Let me come. I beg you! PLEASE!!”

Kyouya twisted his fingers and gave three quick hard strokes.

“Arrgghhh…” Takashi cried out as he shot his load halfway up his naked chest; his chest heaved as he labored to draw in breath to calm his wildly beating heart.

“Mmmm… much better.” Kyouya said as he slid his fingers through the cum on Takashi’s chest. “But I am not done yet.” He pressed two cum soaked fingers against the tight ring of Takashi’s ass hole, rubbing gently. “Do you still want this?”
‘YES!’ Takashi gasped out breath still uneven and heartbeat still accelerated. “I don’t need much stretching.” He cried out again when Kyouya slid his cum drenched fingers into the tight hole and started working them around. A few more strokes and he was arching again against Kyouya’s fingers, cock half stirring to attention. “Fuck me… please.”

Kyouya pulled is fingers out and Takashi mourned their loss with a groan. Standing up, he moved his hands to the waistband of his trousers. Unbuckling his belt he asked, “Condom or no? I know you and Mitskune are clean, as am I.”

“I would prefer none but I leave it to your discretion.”

“None it is,” Kyouya dropped his pants and stood naked before Takashi. “But I seem to have left the lube upstairs. Shall I go get it, or can you think of another way to get me slippery enough to fuck you?” Kyouya stroked one hand down his cock as he asked the question. He made no move to walk to the door which told Takashi what the right answer was.

Fluidly in a way only he and Hani were capable of, Takashi rolled off the couch and knelt before Kyouya, looking up at him before taking Kyouya into his mouth.

“Good decision,” Kyouya said as he set his hands on Takashi’s shoulders. “Mmm… wetter.”

Takashi swirled his tongue around and took him deeper.

“Yessss…” Kyouya’s voice hissed as he drew out the final letter. He let Takashi work him for a few moments more before saying, “That should be sufficient. On your knees on the couch - It’s my turn to come.”

Immediately Takashi got back up on the couch, knees bent, ass in the air, and his head pressed into the cushion. He braced his hands against the arm of the chair.

Kyouya knelt behind him, still stroking his own cock firmly. Using a few drops of his own precum, he relubricated the area sliding in first one finger then another. “Still so eager for me, Takashi… Get ready.” With a smooth motion, Kyouya pressed his cock against the tight hole.

As Kyouya pressed forward, Takashi pushed back – impaling himself on Kyouya’s cock. A long moan escaped both of their lips as Kyouya was fully seated. Kyouya breathed, “You are so tight.”

“Fuck me… please.” Takashi managed to get out around the sensations that were flooding his body.

Kyouya began to move, pulling out slow at first just to hear the agonized sounds from Takashi’s throat as he tried not to complain that it was too slow. He shifted his hips and thrust a bit harder – stopping just before brushing against Takashi’s prostrate. A wicked smile crossed his face at the frustrated moan and the shift of Takashi’s hips as he tried to close the distance. He said, “Is there something you want to ask? You begged so prettily before, it would be a shame if I never got to hear it again.”

“Gods DAMN IT KYOUYA, JUST FUCK ME!!! PLEASE!!!”

“Close enough,” Kyouya said as he thrust hard and hit the spot. Unable to hold himself back any longer, he started rocking into Takashi, his body bent forward to press his chest against Takashi’s back. Harder and faster he moved, his moans echoing the ones that Takashi pressed into the cushion. He was so focused on the man beneath him; he never noticed the door to the Library opening the merest fraction or its soft whoosh as it closed solidly after. He just lost himself in the rhythm and the feel of Takashi’s trembling body as it approached another climax. With two more strokes, he felt Takashi’s body clench so tightly around him that it forced him over the edge. With a strangled
scream he lost his control and felt his body release in throbbing waves, echoed by the walls of Takashi’s body as his climax mirrored Kyouya’s and his arms gave out, collapsing him on top of Takashi.

They lay like that for what seemed like an eternity as their hearts slowed. Finally, Kyouya pulled out and rolled over to lie on his side next to his friend.

Takashi opened one very lethargic eye and looked at Kyouya. With a heart-stopping smile he said, “I don’t even care about finishing the game. I forfeit. You absolutely, hands down, won that match.”

Kyouya started laughing. “I’ll make sure to claim my prize as soon as I can feel my body again. Gods damn, Takashi. Hani is a very lucky man. I will make sure to tell him too… as soon as my body starts working again.”

Takashi smiled. “The luck belongs to all of us. We have each other. That is all that will ever matter.”

“Agreed.” Kyoyua looked up and grinned at the state of the room. “However, the others will never let us live it down if they catch us together like this.” He gestured to the room. “We are both known for our fastidiousness… We have managed to make the Library look like the twin’s bedroom. Hikaru would tease us mercilessly.”

Takashi grinned back, “Well then, we will just have to clean it up and make sure they only catch us naked in bed together.”

Kyouya threw his head back and laughed. “Sounds like a fantastic plan.”
The Calm Before the Storm

The filtered light from the Conservatory windows woke Haruhi and she snuggled into the warmth of two bodies. *Wait two? It was just Hani and I up here last night.* Once that thought would have sent her sitting upright to see who it was but all of the revelations and experiences of the last week had made it so her curiosity was peaked but not overwhelming. Instead a new kind of challenge presented itself. *I wonder if I can guess who it is without opening my eyes.* She let her hands slowly wander over the chest of the man who was currently her pillow. She opened her senses and tried to pick up what she was feeling. *Hmmm… chiseled chest, about as long as mine…* Her hand slid up to caress down his face. *Hair is longer than the rest – Hani then. Now to figure out who is spooning me.*

“You can stop playing possum anytime, Haru-chan.” Hani’s voice drawled seductively as he leaned over to press a kiss on her lips. “We are awake.”

Haruhi kept her eyes firmly closed. “I’m not playing possum; I am honing my observation skills by trying to guess who joined us last night. I fell asleep with one and woke up with two.” She could feel the body behind her shake in silent laughter before tightening his grip on her hip.

Hani giggled, “Well then… What are you observing since your eyes are closed?”

She stuck her tongue out at him, knowing that he was teasing her. The laughter that followed confirmed that he knew exactly what she meant. “I know that I am currently lying on you. Your hair is longer than the other guys and your chest is just a bit longer than mine.”

Intrigued by her answer, he said, “Hair I will give you, but how are you determining the length of my chest?”

“Resting my head on your shoulder, means I have to move further down in the bed. My hips are almost directly beneath yours, which means that the person I am on is nearly my height, which also means you, since in this position, on any of the others my hips would be more in-line with theirs.”

“Makes sense. So who joined us then?”

“That is going to be trickier to determine, since it’s a bit more difficult to touch much more than his arm and thigh from this angle.”

“You aren’t going to let something that trivial stop you from trying though, are you?”

“Stop smirking at me,” Haruhi replied with a grin, eyes still firmly closed, “and no.” She ran her fingers over the smooth skin of the thighs and hips that were running parallel to hers, noting the gaps between their bodies, before lacing her fingers with the man behind her and bringing his hand up to her lips. Kissing his fingertips, she smiled before craning her head back for a kiss. “Good morning, Hika-love.”

Hikaru gave into the kiss with a smile. “We are never going to be able to trick you in the Which one is Hikaru game, ever again are we?”

Haruhi laughed as she opened her eyes and stared into warm golden ones, “Nope. Never. I thought you understood that years ago.”
Hikaru laughed.

“Why don’t you explain to Hani how you knew it was Hika using only the faintest of touches before the curiosity get the better of him,” Kyouya’s voice, full of amusement, came from the direction of the Conservatory door.

This time, Haruhi did sit up in a sudden movement, and immediately wished she hadn’t as every part of her body protested the movement and an involuntary whimper escaped from her lips. She saw Kyuuya and Takashi standing in the doorway wearing nothing but pajama bottoms with smiles on their faces which immediately turned to concern at her obvious pain.

Takashi immediately turned and ran down the stairs, while Kyuuya rushed forward and sat on the edge of the cabana. “Are you ok, love?”

Haruhi took a deep breath and lay back slowly, letting her breath out in a hiss. “I am fine. My body is just protesting the abuse it went through yesterday. Dear gods, it’s been a long time since I have been this sore.”

“You put it through much yesterday, ashke,” Takashi said as he returned holding a familiar jar. “Here, use this. It will help.” He approached the bed and handed the jar to Kyuuya, who opened it and immediately started rubbing it into the muscles of her legs.

Hikaru sat up and scooped out another generous amount before starting to rub it into her abdomen and arms.

Deftly extricating himself from under Haruhi, Hani moved to sit by Takashi head on his chest as they let Hika and Kyuuya rub the salve into her this time, knowing both needed the reassurance and the connection.

Haruhi let the coolness of the salve and the warmness of her lovers’ hands sooth her abused muscles. Sighing in relief as the muscles relaxed, she sat up with the blanket around her and cuddled into both their bodies as they took up positions on either side of her, across from Hani and Takashi. The five of them smiled at each other for a moment before Haruhi turned to Hika. “So when did you join us? I didn’t hear you come in at all.”

Hikaru smirked, “Tamaki, Kao and I all got home at the same time. When we got here the house was dark but there was a faint light in the library. Imagine our surprise when we opened the door to find Kyuuya and Takashi, naked and curled around each other on the couch, sound asleep.” He raised an eyebrow at Kyuuya. “I guess they did take my suggestion of having a good time to heart.”

Kyuuya blushed faintly while Takashi leveled a serene gaze at Hikaru.

That serenity was shattered when Hani asked, “So who won the strip chess game?”

Takashi turned a deep red and Kyuuya burst out in laughter. “I should have known that we couldn’t have kept that a secret. When did you see?”

Hani smirked, “I came downstairs to grab blankets and some more snacks and saw the light in the Library. When I peeked through the door you both were… shall we say… completely engrossed and it wasn’t in a game. But there were clothes thrown everywhere and the chess set had fallen off the table, so it wasn’t hard to guess what happened.”
“Damn Kyouya, I never knew you even KNEW about strip chess. I would have challenged you a long time ago.” Hikaru teased his lover.

“I overheard you mention it once to Kaoru and then Takashi said he and Hani played and…”

Hika grinned and reached across Haruhi to take Kyouya’s hand. “Honesty lover – I am glad you had a good time and I really hope to get a chance to play with you soon.”

Kyouya squeezed his hand, “Count on it.”

“So who won?” Haruhi asked curiously. “You both are equally matched.”

“We each won one match each and-“ Takashi started.

“Then we never finished the tie-breaker,” Kyouya grinned and winked at Takashi, “though I can safely say we both were satisfied with the end result.”

“I just bet you were,” Hikaru responded with a leer. “But as I was saying – the three of us came in, saw you both occupied and almost before I could turn around they were running up the stairs to Tamaki’s bedroom. I didn’t want to disturb you, so I just covered you guys with a blanket in case you got cold and went looking for Hani and Haruhi. When I saw them up here asleep on this huge bed, I couldn’t resist crawling in with them. I didn’t think they would mind, since it was late and they both were obviously exhausted.”

“Didn’t mind at all Hika-chan, but that goes back to the question I had earlier Haru-chan. How did you know it was Hika-chan spooning you this morning?”

“The length of his thighs against mine and the gaps between our bodies were consistent with the height of one of the twins. Both tend to snuggle in the same way so that confirmed it for me. Then I just had to determine which. I did that when I kissed his fingers.”

Hikaru looked at his hands, “My fingers? How? I know you can tell us apart by the way we kiss so I purposely didn’t kiss you once I realized what you were doing.”

Haruhi leaned her head against his shoulder, “Your fingertips are more callused than Kao’s. He has softer hands since he works mostly with fabric and yours are a bit rougher because you work with metals, leather, etc.”

“Hey! Are you trying to say I don’t work as hard as my brother?” Kaoru said indignantly from the doorway were he and Tamaki were lounging. “Soft hands…. Hmph… and after I brought you something to wear besides the blanket.” He walked forward and tossed a pair of pajama bottoms at Hikaru and Hani before dangling a satin cami and pants set in front of Haruhi. “I kind of figured that none of you would remember to grab clothing and since we will be invaded in less than an hour by the crew to set up for the photo shoot, I thought you might want to have something on when they get here.”

Haruhi snatched them out of the air and wiggled into them, grinning as she said, “Thanks Kao. You’re an angel.” Even though she knew everyone had seen her naked, she was still most comfortable in some clothing.

Kaoru winked at her, turning to the others he said, “Hear that? It’s confirmed. I’m an angel.”
“The things you did to me last night could hardly be described as angelic,” Tamaki muttered in a voice that he knew everyone could hear which naturally caused the group to break out in laughter resulting in Kaoru to smacking him on the arm. “See!” he said, rubbing his arm where Kao had hit it. “Definitely not an angel.” “Fine.” Kaoru pouted and flopped dramatically onto the cabana near Hikaru. Resting his head in Hika’s lap he said sincerely, “I am sorry for abandoning you so fast last night.”

Hika ran his fingers through his twins gold tipped red locks and responded with a smile. “I understand. Trust me. I have done it often enough to you when Haru or Kyo was around.” Changing the subject he said, “What time are mom and Renge getting here?”

“About 10:30.”

Hikaru glanced around, “Anyone know what time it is?”

Kyouya pulled a phone out of the pocket in his pajamas and looked at it. The screen indicated that he had a message from his sister and another missed call from his father. His voice was odd as he said, “It’s 9am. We have an hour and a half until the photo shoot… Maybe less than that for something else.”

Haruhi immediately noticed the distress on Kyouya’s face. “What is it, love? What could happen before then?”

Kyouya sighed, but at a subtle nod of support from Takashi he took a deep breath and relayed the conversation with his sister last night. He ended with, “My father just called again, so it’s clear he is now in France. It’s only a matter of time before he comes over here to confront me.” Turning to Hikaru and Kaoru he said, “I am so sorry. I had hoped this could wait until after Fashion week was over and we were back home. I know he will make a scene and that’s not fair to either of you. You both have put so much into this.”

Hikaru stretched his hand out and locked it hard onto Kyouya’s before saying, “I’m not worried about us. I am worried about you.” A dangerous glint entered his eyes. “There is nothing that Yoshio Ootori can say or do that will destroy our family. He may think he has the power to do so, but he really doesn’t. Maybe it’s time he learned that lesson.”

Kaoru’s voice was equally as hard as he continued, “Our family now includes both you and Haruhi, Kyouya.” He looked around at the united look in Tamaki’s, Hani’s, and Takashi’s eyes. “And you are protected as well by the Suohs, Morinozukas, and Haninozukas. Your father has less support than he thinks he does.”

Kyouya rubbed a hand through his hair and pushed the glasses up on his nose. “My father will disown and discredit me. The first I no longer care about. It has been a long time since I realized that I don’t need his approval. I have planned for that. I have investments and accounts that he cannot touch, so I am not worried about money, at least in the short term. It’s the discredit part that worries me more. Love him or hate him, my father is a shrewd businessman and he would have no compunctions against smearing my name and yours, Hika, through the mud to destroy any potential business alliances or investments. We all know homosexuality is not generally accepted in the business community. He will use that as wedge. There are still many who follow his lead.”

“Again… less than you may think, Kyouya,” Kaoru answered. “Renge gave me some interesting insight into the general business atmosphere last night and the general consensus is that most of the
up and comers would rather do business with you than your father. You are fair and honest in your dealings. Your father is not. Even coming out as bisexual would only cause a mild stir. The community will publically declare their ‘traditional family values’ while keeping their mistresses and lovers on the side. But they will also say that while they may not condone your personal choice of companion, your business acumen is not affected by it. In the end that is all that really matters in the long run.”

“How would Renge-“ Kyouya started to say, bitterness warring with hope in his voice.

“Don’t discount Renge, love,” Haruhi interjected before Kaoru could. “As much as she played the brainless debutante, she has an extremely sharp mind and she watches people. Her father is nearly as powerful as yours and both she and her brother have been at his side for every business transaction and networking event. Her father once told me that he discusses every transaction with them before he agrees to it. The reason – Darian sees the details of the numbers and Renge sees the details of the people. She learned how to read people as she was learning how to read. It’s why all of her suggestions always seemed to work – no matter how far-fetched they were. If she is convinced that the business community would support you, then I would trust that as truth.”

Kyouya let out the breath he was holding. He looked around into the faces of his friends – the people he cared about more than anything else in the world. He looked at the ring on middle finger of his right hand… a ring that Haruhi had given him several months ago and he had never taken off. He looked over to see the matching rings on their fingers. Then he stared into Haruhi and Hikaru’s eyes. The determination he saw reflected there cemented his own. “I would give anything to keep you in my life. I WILL give up everything for you. You both ARE my life. One I would never have known existed before I met you.” A thought crossed his mind and he gasped. “Oh Haru! You’re father! I can protect you but my father bought the bar where Ranka works a long time ago and the complex where you live. He will use it to retaliate against me. I know it.”

“Well then it’s probably a good thing that Ranka Fujioka no longer works at the bar,” a bright feminine voice echoed through the room followed by one Yuzuha Hitachiin and then surprisingly both Akira Morinozuka and Yorihisa Haninozuka. Both Hani and Takashi scrambled off the bed to bow to their fathers, but they waved them back with a smile.

“Sit sons, we have much to discuss but this issue needs to be addressed first,” Akira said.

“Mom – You’re EARLY!” Kaoru said with such incredulity that it made the others laugh.

Yuzuha chuckled and replied, “It does happen on occasion. When the need is desperate.”

“Yuzuha,” Haruhi said with a tight feeling in her stomach. “What do you mean my father no longer works at the bar?”

“I mean that he no longer works there. Ranka has been such a help with suggestions and ideas for a new line over the last few months that I made him an offer of full-time employment with HDG. He started last week, but wanted to wait until you got back home to surprise you with the news.”

Yuzuha grinned. “I hope he will forgive me for ruining the surprise.”

“What line is that mom?” Hikaru and Kaoru said together, falling back into old speech habits in shock.

“Why a line for the fashion conscious Drag Queen, of course! It’s a whole untapped market… and we all know how flamboyantly gorgeous some gay Queens are. Give them a designer option and
they will eat it up!!” Turning to Haruhi she said, “I know your father isn’t actually a drag queen but his knowledge of the community and contacts have been invaluable. He is a gem.”

Haruhi just stared at Yuzuha for a moment before slowly climbing off the bed and throwing her arms around her in a hug, tears streaming down her face. “Thank you. It is perfect for him.” she said simply.

Yuzuha hugged her hard for a moment before letting go and wiping the tears from her cheeks. “It was my pleasure, truly, and something that I have been thinking about for a long time but the time never seemed right until you came into our lives. I know I am not your mother, but I think of you as my daughter. You broke my sons’ self-imposed solitude, gave them friendship and love. There is NOTHING worth more to me than that.” She leaned into whisper in Haruhi’s ears alone. “I know its wishful thinking but I dearly hope that you will be my daughter in truth someday.”

Haruhi felt her cheeks redden as Yuzuha pushed her back toward the boys.

“What about their apartment?” Kyouya asked. “My father will evict them upon his return to Japan.”

“As Haruhi is now a member of House Zouka, she and her loved ones will always have a place on our Estate,” Yorihisa responded. “That includes you, young Kyouya Ootori. I am aware of your triad with her and Hikaru Hitachiin. However, for appearances sake, you must remain in separate houses until after her, Kaoru and Hikaru have graduated or they will be removed from Ouran.”

Kyouya sat in stunned silence.

“It’s more than I could ever have believed. “I understand. The honor you do me is humbling.”

“You are worth the honor, young Kyouya,” Akira said with a smile. “Besides, we have ulterior motives. Some of our younglings are business minded and are currently building their first portfolios. Having someone their age who has already demonstrated that he is a savvy player in the market will be an invaluable resource for them. They know that you are still attending University and they won’t interfere with that but they may still ask for advice. Please be aware that you are not obligated to help them in exchange for lodging. That offer stands regardless as you are bound to one of our House.”

“I would be honored to assist in any way I can. It is always worthwhile to see a venture through new eyes.”

“Good! Now that that is all settled – Off you all go! Showers please and be back here in 20 minutes for make-up.” Yuzuha clapped her hands and made ‘shoo-ing’ motions. “I will show the photographer up here to set up, since this is a beautiful room, though we will eventually use all of them to get a good range for the website.” She turned to Hani and Takashi. “Your fathers have something they need to discuss with you, so I can wait to use you both when you are done with them. When Yoshio Ootori shows up, we will be a united front against him. NOW GO! Time is wasting and we don’t want to lose the light.”

Seven young adults scrambled to their feet and ran out of the room; choruses of “Yes Ma’am!” fading in the air as they disappeared down the stairs.
Unexpected Control

Twenty minutes later on the dot, all seven Host club members returned upstairs to find the Conservatory had been completely transformed in their brief absence. It was now bustling with people – make-up artists, hair stylists, wardrobe and photographer’s assistants, as well as Yuzuha, Akira, Yorihisa, Renge, and Mai. Upon seeing their sons, Akira and Yorihisa excused themselves and gestured for Hani and Takashi to lead them downstairs.

Yuzuha waived at them airily, “Come on back up when you are done. We will need you both for some group and individual shots.” To the others she gestured to the seven empty chairs. “Boys, Kyouya, Tamaki, Haruhi, Renge, Mai, have a seat. As soon as make-up and hair is done then we will begin. I am going to scout around the building with the photographers to find the right locations. We will do some outside shots as well so we get a good variety of pictures to put on the website. It’s too bad that we don’t have any pictures in seasons other than winter, but that will have to be a work in progress. Normally, of course we would just have one photographer, but since we need to rush this roll out, I have several. After each shoot, they will immediately start editing while we move on to the next scene. Some we will run simultaneously since we don’t need all of you in every shot. Kane will set up here in the Conservatory and start with all of you in swimwear since we can make this look like a tropical get away. From there – Tamaki I want you to go to the Music Room with Kyouya and Haruhi. I want shots of you playing the piano while they dance romantically. Dress is romantic and sensual but not formal. While they are doing the music shoot, Hika, Kao, Renge and Mai I want you guys outside frolicking in the snow. Hopefully Hani and Takashi will be back by the time the 1st shot is finished and they can do a martial arts practice scene in the Dojo. Haruhi – after the Music Room, I want you in the Dojo with them. I want some images of you and Takashi doing yoga together, silhouetted against the windows. Kyouya, I want a picture of you in a suit descending the staircase. In the Library, I want these shots – Hika and Kao playing a video game, Tamaki and Takashi playing chess, Renge curled up in the window seat with a book, Haruhi and Mai laughing over something Hani has said while you all relax on the couches. I want a glam-shot of Mai in one of the bathrooms and a vintage one of Haruhi and Hikaru in one of the bedrooms. We will end with a formal dress scene with everyone in the ballroom. That should give us enough material to work with. We should be able to have the web designers start this afternoon.” Quickly, Yuzuha bustled out of the room with a trail of photographers behind her.

Tamaki stared after her and blinked rapidly a few times before turning to Kao and saying, “Umm… wow. Is your mom usually like that? So commanding and focused?”

The twins laughed, while Kyouya, Haruhi, Renge and Mai smiled. Kao answered with a smile still on his lips, ‘I keep forgetting that this is the first time you have dealt with mom when she is ‘in mode’. There’s a reason she is a premier designer and it’s not just because she can sew pretty designs. She is an artist and she knows exactly how to arrange and manipulate people, scenes, and images to create maximum effect. She may leave the actual process to others, but she is very much in control of what the end result will be.’”

Hikaru continued, “My suggestion is sit down and hang on for the ride. It’s going to be an exhausting day. Hopefully mom remembered to arrange for some food delivered midday.”

“Nope, but I did.” Renge laughed as Kaoru threw her a wink and a kiss.

“How tiring can changing clothes and taking pictures really be?” Tamaki asked curiously.
“Far more tiring than you would ever think it would be,” Kyouya responded seriously. He then related the story of the time that Hika and Kao were preparing the costumes for the Ouran fair where they did the Andromeda myth. “That was just them and we weren’t trying to pose and take pictures in the middle of it. Trust Hika on this – it takes a LOT more than you think it does.”

“But it will be amazing in the end,” Haruhi said before reaching up to kiss his cheek. “When Yuzuha is done and this week is over, Maison de Roses will be THE hot spot for weddings and events. Now, we should probably get started or face Yuzuha’s wrath.” She walked over and sat in one of the chairs. In unspoken accord, the others followed her example.

Three hours later and Tamaki was in full agreement with Kyouya’s assessment. “I had no idea…” he muttered to himself as he flopped into a chair in the Library after his third change of the day. He was sitting idly by watching one photographer work on getting pictures of Renge and the girls with Hani, having just completed his set with Takashi. He was also perfectly angled to see Kane (the photographer who did their first shoot) taking pictures of Kyouya on the grand staircase. Dear gods, Kyouya is attractive. In that suit and his position on the staircase he looks like a powerful man coming down to greet his minions. He can be so commanding when he wants to be. Hell - I wouldn’t mind doing the dishes if he asked me to do so while wearing that suit with THAT look. The thought caused blood to rush to his groin and his pants to tighten as his mind slipped into its theater. Me- shirtless in a pair of faded jeans with a frilly apron, bent over the sink so the jeans frame my ass perfectly, my hands are covered in suds, as Kyouya walks in dressed to perfection in that suit, comes up behind me, grabs a glass and inspects, sets it back down before pulling me back against his chest by the strings of the apron and growling into my ear ‘you missed a spot’. Then he would-

The door to the house crashed open and Yoshio Ootori stepped into the foyer. He spared only the briefest glance around the impressive entrance hall before spotting his son on the staircase. His heels clicked loudly and angrily on the tile floor as he stalked over to Kyouya. Without preamble, he spoke in rapid-fire Japanese. “What the hell are you doing?”

“Hello Father,” Kyouya said coolly as he tried to hide the frantic beating of his heart. “As you can see, I am in the middle of a photo shoot for the Maison de Roses website.”

All activity in the Library had ceased the moment the door had crashed open. Haruhi and Hikaru rushed forward into the hall before the first words left Yoshio Ootori’s mouth. Hani, Tamaki, Takashi and Kaoru were only a heartbeat behind.

The photographer in the process of shooting Renge started to follow, camera surreptitiously held low to capture the scene unfolding in front of him, but a firm grip on his arm stopped him. “Don’t you dare or you will never work in the Industry again.” Renge said with a warning in her voice. She saw his hesitation and said further steel in her tone, “You may not think that I have the power, but Yuzuha does. If we find out that you sold pictures of this to the press, you better find another career or get comfortable as a mall photographer, because you WILL be blackballed.” With that, she stepped forward to stand behind the united front her friends were presenting.

Yoshio Ootori neither heard nor heeded the sudden influx into the hall. His attention was focused on his son and the infuriatingly calm demeanor he was currently presenting. He took several more steps forward, not liking the way Kyouya remained poised above him on the staircase. “You know that I couldn’t care less for whatever (he gestured imperiously to indicate the photography equipment) ridiculous game you think you are playing here. I am concerned that you are making the Ootori name a laughingstock in the business community. I tolerated your desire to allow Haruhi Fujioka to date
Hikaru Hitachiin as long as you were dating her as well, knowing that if she was as smart as you all seem to think she is, she would eventually realizing that aligning with the Ootori family would be in her best interests. Anything else would be foolish.” He threw a sneering glance over his shoulder to the girl who had gone as white as a sheet. Seeing the man standing next to her, gripping her hand tightly, turn red in anger he continued, “Now I find out that instead of making her see sense, you have lost yours. What game are you playing at? This coming out as a faggot with Hikaru Hitachiin. Was your interest in Haruhi only a cover for your base and reckless nature? Does she whore for all of you now? Have you been hiding your perverted tendencies from us for years? You disgrace your name.”

At Yoshio’s words, blackness then red threatened to cover Kyouya’s eyes and each word was a stab in his chest, making it difficult to breathe. He tightened his grip on the rail, willing himself to let the words roll off. A small sound rang in his ears and he looked past his father to where his friends were standing. The unified look of outrage on all of their faces, made the tightness in his chest ease. Making a split second decision, he silently walked down the stairs to stand with them. Deliberately putting his arms around both Hikaru and Haruhi, he responded, “I play no game with you father. I am in love with both Haruhi Fujioka and Hikaru Hitachiin. I simply am no longer willing to hide that from the world. I am choosing to be with both of them as they have chosen to stand with me even when I have not deserved their love.”

“Love is ridiculous sentiment. It has no place in business other than as a marketing tool to play on the sympathies of the uneducated and common.”

“Love is something that a true family shares.”

“A true family of the aristocracy has no need for love. The notion of love is foolish sentimental tripe. A family is made of respect, knowing your place, and adhering to the traditions of the past. Women may be excused from their foolish emotions after childbirth, since it is an ingrained response to protect, but a man should only focus on providing for his heirs. In return for that, it is not unreasonable to demand a certain level of devotion.”

“You have no concept of what devotion means!” Hikaru yelled and started to push forward angrily. Only Kyouya’s arm tightening across his shoulders held him back.

“It certainly isn’t the perverse conduct that you and your brother have.” Yoshio sneered as Hikaru recoiled as if slapped.

Tightly wound anger entered Kyouya’s voice. “Father, you may insult me all you wish but you WILL refrain from insulting my friends.”

“And why would I do that? They are inconsequential.”

Tamaki strode forward, shoulders back and ice in his voice as he replied. “I am sole heir to the Suoh Empire. You may consider me inconsequential now, but I assure you that if you want to retain business relations with my family you will need to cease this scene.”

Yoshio blanched slightly before replying, “Your grandmother and father still retain control. It will be years before you have the infrastructure to take on the Ootori’s.”

“My son may still be young and eager, but he is not wrong Yoshio Ootori.” A new voice echoed through the room as Yuzuru Suoh walked in followed immediately by Yuzuha, Akira, and Yorihisa. All walked over to stand behind the group. “He will be taking over the company when he completes his schooling. He already is a sitting board member. You do him a disservice by discounting him and you insult the Hitachiin, Haninozuka, and Morinozuka families by your disregard for their children.”
Yoshio realized the situation was starting to spiral out of his control and tried a different tack to regain it. “Yuzuru, you know I mean no disrespect to you or your company and I have nothing but the utmost respect for the Haninozuka and Morinozuka families. While I do not have any current business dealings with the Hitachiin Design Group, I respect their skill in their chosen field. This is a private family matter and does not reflect on my business matters.”

“That’s where I would disagree with you, Yoshio,” Yuzuha replied, eyes burning even as she projected a cold professional tone. “You just insulted my son and the woman I consider my adopted daughter. Unlike your cold dismissal of the idea of love, I know what a valuable and lucrative resource it truly is. The fact that you do not see it makes me wonder about your business acumen. We obviously do not see eye to eye on this issue. You may rest assured that HDG will never do business with the Ootori group while it remains in your control. HDG is about innovation, energy, and change not stagnation.”

Yoshio started to reply when Akira cut him off, “Ootori, aside from the fact that you have directly insulted a member of our House, it has come to our attention that your business philosophy no longer is compatible with the traditions of House Zouka. Effective immediately we are terminating all the contracts with the Ootori Group for the training of your private police force and all members of the Morinozuka and Haninozuka household currently employed by your organization will give their notice.”

“As will the employees of our allied houses,” Yorihisa added.

Yoshio went white then red as he realized the implications of both Akira and Yorihisa’s statements. Seventy percent of his private police force and personal security team were made up of members of House Zouka and another 20% were made up of members of their allied houses. Fifty percent of the Ootori medical branch was made up of people who had received healer training from House Zouka. Still reeling from the implications he latched onto something that Akira had said, “Akira Morinozuka, my apologies but I am confused. I have offered no insult to your son Takashi or to young Mitskune.”

Haruhi stepped forward and said quietly, steel in her voice, “I am a full voting member of House Zouka. You insulted me and you insulted the men that I love. I know I am of no consequence to you – my family is neither powerful nor rich and my father lives an alternative lifestyle – but that does not mean that I cannot see the truth… and the truth is you are so blinded by your lust for money and power that you fail to see the things of real value that have been staring you in the face for the last twenty years. You have done nothing but dismiss and criticize the one person who could have secured your legacy. Your other two sons are too cowed by you to have any initiative. They will be clones that will maintain what you have achieved but will never come up with anything new. Your legacy is dying and I pity you.”

Yoshio drew himself up and said coldly, “You are right in only one thing – you are of no consequence. You have been a member of House Zouka for less than 48 hours. I have had a long standing business relationship with them for 20+ years.”

“You are right in only one thing – you are of no consequence. You have been a member of House Zouka for less than 48 hours. I have had a long standing business relationship with them for 20+ years.”

“Yet they are still choosing to support her rather than you, father. If that doesn’t make you understand, then I am afraid nothing will,” Kyouya said quietly.

Yoshio turned to glare at Kyouya, “You call me father, but do you deserve that right? I have challenged you, pushed you, and molded you to become an elite business leader and you throw it all back in my face.” Yoshio softened his tone before continuing, “But I can be forgiving. You have demonstrated that you still have the business sense to succeed. If you leave now and return to Japan with me, we can put this past us and you can take your rightful place as heir to the Ootori Empire.”

Kyouya was stunned as so many thoughts ran through his head. This is what you dreamed of for so
many years... but is it still what I want? Kyouya looked over at Hikaru and Haruhi. They kept their faces carefully neutral, but he could see the faint trembling in their linked fingers. They are trying to let me make this decision on my own... but I already made it. I think I made it almost a year ago, when Hikaru challenged me and I first kissed Haruhi. My life would be empty without them and the others. Yoshio Ootori still thinks that I am the child that is desperate to please. I am not. True pleasure is in both giving and receiving. Business is not life. People are life and I want to be with the people who will share my life with me. Taking a deep breath, he stepped back and wrapped his hand around Haruhi and Hikaru’s linked one. “You are right... but not in the way you seem to think. You don’t deserve the title of father. I am not sure that you ever have. Therefore, I give it back to you and I formally disassociate myself from House Ootori. I am no longer the son of Yoshio Ootori.”
Aftermath

I formally disassociate myself from House Ootori. I am no longer the son of Yoshio Ootori...

The words hung in the air between Kyouya and Yoshio their weight sitting hard on the chests of the assembled group as they waited to see how Yoshio would respond.

Yoshio went ashen before turning a shade of red that Kyouya had only seen once in his life and it wasn’t directed towards him at the time. The world shrank to the two of them and in a voice tightly laced with rage, Yoshio spat, “You have no Respect for the House that raised you. You have no Honor. You choose to give up your name and your heritage for something as worthless and fleeting as love.” His voice sneered on the last word. “By your choice, you are banned from the Ootori estate. Your name will be stricken from the family records and your descendants will be anathema. I have no third son. You are dead to me.”

As the last words Yoshio turned and walked out, slamming the door behind him and never looking back.

As the others watched Yoshio stalk out, Haruhi and Hikaru, immediately wrapped their arms around Kyouya, holding him as tightly as possible while his body trembled in silent emotion, hands balled into tight fists at his side.

“Kyo-love,” Haruhi breathed against his chest. Not saying anything more just holding onto him as tightly as possible while Hikaru did the same.

Silently, Tamaki stepped forward and wrapped his arms around Kyouya’s back.

As if that was a cue, Kaoru, Hani, Takashi, and Renge stepped forward to wrap their arms around Kyouya, lending their silent support and love to their friends, while Yuzuha, Yorihisa, Akira, and Yuzuru stood by watching their children. A single heartbreaking sob originating from the center of the group was quickly choked off, but it echoed off the walls. It was enough to cause tears to stream down Yuzuha’s face and blindly turn into the embrace of Akira Morinozuka who just held her, stroking her hair quietly as Yuzuru and Yorihisa stepped closer to put a hand on each of her shoulders, all faces grim.

“I’m sorry, is this a bad time?” an unfamiliar feminine voice said softly, as an attractive redhead stepped into the area, taking in the two huddled groups and the overwhelming air of tension. Since she had nearly been knocked to the ground by an unheeding Yoshio Ootori on her way to the Guest House, she had a pretty good guess as to the reason for the high emotions. However, having a good guess as to the reason did not stop a faint tremble at being the sudden focus of a dozen pairs of hostile eyes when her question bounced off the marble hall.

“Ms. Bellamy, it is wonderful to see you again, how is your family?” Yuzuru stepped forward immediately to warmly greet the stranger, taking both her hands in his and kissing both her cheeks in a traditional French manner.

At Yuzuru’s greeting the eyes grew less hostile and settled to wary.

“Marika!!” Tamaki disentangled himself from the group and stepped forward sweeping her into a hug, while a sudden giggle erupted out of her throat. “I am so glad that you were willing to come out
and help us!”

Marika watched as most of the eyes went from wary to neutral at Tamaki’s enthusiastic greeting, further indicating that she was not a threat. *Hmm… interesting… there are three pairs that are still quite unconvinced. One belongs to Haruhi Fujioka – no surprise there – she is Tamaki’s ex and still quite good friends with him, if his last conversation with me is any indication. The second is Kyouya Ootori – still no surprise. He just had an obviously painful discussion with his father and I am interrupting what must be a very vulnerable moment for him. Considering what I know of the Ootori family, emotion is not their strong suit. It’s the last pair that has me the most intrigued. A Hitachiin naturally – All of Paris is buzzing about the HDG Twins, so they are hard to miss, and not Hikaru who still has his hand linked with Kyouya’s. Gold tipped red hair means it’s Kaoru Hitachiin then. Marika watched as Hikaru glanced over at his brother concern then amusement fleeting across his face as he watched Kaoru’s expression slowly go carefully blank, though Kao’s eyes never left hers. It’s a different kind of wary then… not only concern about his brother’s boyfriend but something to do with Tamaki… Oh this is going to be an interesting interview!* Out loud, she gave Tamaki a brilliant smile before saying, “Willing?!? This is the story of the year and I am getting an exclusive. I don’t even know how to thank you enough for the opportunity.”

“How honestly, I am just glad that I have the connections to help the people I care about,” Tamaki smiled as he answered.

“You are a good person Tamaki Suoh, I will make sure to be on my best behavior.”

“I was counting you in that statement, Frizzy.” Tamaki laughed. “I was hoping to have a chance to introduce you, Mel, and Jon to everyone while they were here for the break anyway. This just solves two problems at once.”

“You know I hate that nickname, Fuzzy.” Marika laughed.

A spilt second decision made as she watched Tamaki and Marika interact, Haruhi walked slowly toward the laughing friends. Extending her hand in a friendly greeting, she said, “Hello. I am Haruhi Fujioka. I wanted to thank you for taking the time to interview us.” Then with a smirk and an arched eyebrow, she asked, “Frizzy and Fuzzy?”

Marika made a long drawn out sigh, “You know Tama and I went to school together. In the third grade, I had the misfortune of having tightly curled ginger hair. When it got cold, it used to stick out everywhere. The kids used to tease me about it – calling me Frizzy. One day Tama overheard and came to my defense. He happened to be wearing a jacket with a fur-lined hood that day. He said ‘if she is Frizzy because of her hair then I must be Fuzzy because of my jacket.’ Since Tama was always one of the popular kids in the class, the kids stopped teasing me after that.”

“And you and Tamaki have remained friends ever since,” Kyouya said stepping forward. All traces of his earlier tension locked carefully behind his cool façade. “It is a pleasure to meet you. Tamaki has spoken of you often over the years.”

“You as well, Kyouya. I am glad he made such good friends when he left to move to Japan.” Marika replied while offering a solid handshake. “Thank you for entrusting me with your story. I know it is not an easy path you have chosen and to have the fortitude to do it publically is an inspiration. I am sure Tama has told you that I am also in a poly relationship.”

“Yes,” this time it was Hikaru who stepped forward. “I also understand that you must keep it quiet for the sake of your career.”
“Not just mine, but also for my boyfriend’s. He is currently studying Global Politics, in the hopes of working at one of the French Embassies. The French are more forgiving of some romantic quirks, but many countries are not. Our girlfriend Melissa is studying architecture with Tama. Right now, for all appearances we are all just roommates. Even our families do not know of our true relationship. It can be a burden. It is such a relief to know that there are others who won’t judge us.”

“I can promise you that judgment about lifestyle choices are the ABSOLUTE last thing any of us here would do,” Haruhi said with a genuine grin. “It would be a general case of the pot calling the kettle black. I do hope to meet your others before we leave. Any friends of Tamaki’s are worth getting to know.” She changed the topic slightly. “As you can see we are in the middle of a photo shoot for the Maison de Roses website. We are almost done. Do you mind waiting for a bit? I believe we only have one more scene to do.” She looked over at Yuzuha.

“Exactly right, Haru-yoshi. Though….” She gave Marika a full once over before continuing, “We are still short on females for the last picture. Marika, would you be willing to put on a ball gown and join the group for the last scene?”

Marika, stunned beyond comprehension, stared at the famous fashion designer and opened her mouth to respond, but no words came out.

Tamaki seeing his friend floundering, responded for her with a smile, “She would love to.”

Marika nodded her head vigorously and a squeaky, “yes please!” escaped her lips. OH MY GOD, oh my god... first the interview and then being in an HDG original!!! Get it together girl!! She took a shaky breath and replied more firmly trying to sound professional, “It would be my pleasure. Really.”

“Good,” Yuzuha said with a smile and a wink before turning back to the group and gesturing for them to head back upstairs for the final fitting. “Now go. We don’t want to lose this light. Akira, Yorihisa, Yuzuru, would you mind being background for the shoot? We are trying to give the impression of a full ballroom.”

“Of course Yuzuha,” Akira replied warmly as the others nodded.

“Perfect. I believe we have some dinner jackets that will work perfectly. If you will follow me, we can get started.”

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Within a matter of minutes the group had reassembled in the ballroom. Yuzuha had taken control again and in no time, there was music playing, two couples dancing and groups chit-chatting, all giving the appearance enjoying themselves immensely.

Finally Kane determined that he had enough and the group was excused, so the photography team could start to edit their photos. At Tamaki’s suggestion, Marika, Haruhi, Kyouya, and Hikaru agreed to meet back downstairs in the Library to conduct the interview, since the upper floors were still overrun with photography equipment and clothing.

Kyouya felt his nervousness start to creep up as he was changing back into something casual. At Hikaru’s suggestion, he was wearing faded jeans, a silk shirt in silver, and a black blazer. The outfit looked far more relaxed than he felt. And that’s the idea... We are going for the comfortable casual
look rather than the professional. We want to give the impression that we are just three average
crazy kids in love. I just… feel out of my element. Suits and leather pants are their own kind of
protection.

“While you are indescribably sexy in leather pants and suits, you still look amazing in simple stuff,”
Hikaru said quietly from the doorway, “even if you aren’t completely comfortable in it.”

“How did-?”

“I am learning to read you,” Hikaru said and entered the room, capturing Kyouya’s lips for a kiss.

“It is comfortable. It’s just…”

“The suits and leather shout that you have a certain level of confidence,” Hika continued. “But really
in the end, they are just scraps of fabric. The confidence, ability, and intelligence behind them are all
you.” He wrapped his arms around Kyouya’s waist and pressed his head against his chest. “I love
you. I still can’t believe that you chose me in the end. I can’t know completely what you have given
up, but I swear that between Haruhi and me, you won’t regret it.”

Kyouya held tightly to Hikaru for a few moments, calming himself to the beat of Hikaru’s heart.
Pressing a kiss against Hika’s forehead, he said, “I realized when my father was talking that I made
my choice over a year ago. You and Haruhi were the best things to come into my life. The whole
Host Club is more my family than my real family has ever been. In the end, it isn’t hurting as much
as I thought it would.” Hikaru craned his head up to look at his lover. Meeting his eyes, he arched a
brow, which made Kyousya smile. “I didn’t say it was easy. I am saying that it didn’t hurt as much as
I expected it to. My father can do what he chooses and I am now free to live my own life… and I
fully intend to prove that I am the better man – in business, in family, and in love.”

“What about your sister and your mother?”

“My mother was always cowed by my father, so I have very few memories of her where she showed
love or affection to me.” Kyousya sighed. “I am going to miss Fuyumi. She was always the one I
could run to when father was so disappointed in me.”

“I wouldn’t count Fuyumi out,” Haruhi said from the doorway as she entered the room. “If I have
learned anything about your sister in the time that I have known her, her Ootori stubborn streak is as
wide as yours. And she loves you. I have no doubt that she will find a way to work around your
father’s restrictions. It may take a few months, but she will be there for you.” She walked over as
Hika and Kyousya opened their arms to her.

All three just held each other in silence for a few more moments. Finally Kyousya breathed, “Marika
is waiting. Let’s get this over with… Maybe then we can have a few days peace.”

Haruhi chuckled, “I kind of like her. She’s spunky. I can see why she and Tamaki were friends.”

Hikaru added, “My guess is they were something other than friends once. What do you want to bet
that she was his first kiss?”

Haruhi grinned, “He never discussed it with me, so I have no idea. Just don’t tell Kao your theory.
He seemed to be juuuuust a teensy bit jealous at the way Tama greeted her.”

“Oh he was more than a teensy bit jealous,” Hikaru laughed. “I could feel it through the bond. It did
calm a bit when Tamaki mentioned her lovers. Still…”

“Tamaki is falling hard for Kaoru,” Kyousya said. “I’ve watched him and he is doing many of the
same things that he did when he was falling for Haruhi. It’s kind of cute.”

“Or the things that he doesn’t realize he does when he is around you,” Haruhi teased. “He is more than a little in love with you too Kyo.”

“Well, I can definitively say, he isn’t with me, since that would be a bit awkward with the whole Kao thing,” Hika chuckled as he squeezed them both. “But since I already have three people I would die for, I am ok with not having another.”

“And there is always the fact that you could play with Takashi or Hani anytime you wanted without it bothering me, Kyo, or Kao.” Haruhi smirked.

“That too.” Hikaru grinned unrepentantly.

“And this is the family I chose.” Kyouya kept his tone light. He kissed each of them one more time before signaling that they should go downstairs. “I definitely made the right choice.”

“We are unconventional, but the Host club has always been that way. It’s why I chose to stay even after my debt was paid,” Haruhi said with a grin. “Notwithstanding I was half in love with all of you.”

“But that’s what makes it fun!” Hikaru grinned as he started to lead them out of the room. Suddenly a thought crossed his mind and he blanched then frowned.

It was enough of a pause to make the others stop.

“What is it Hika?” Haruhi asked, her voice instantly worried.

“It’s nothing… Just Kyo…”

“Yes.”

“Don’t tell Kaoru that I said clothing is just strips of fabric. He would never forgive me.”

Haruhi and Kyouya’s laughter preceded them down the stairs.
Interview

The laughter faded quickly when Kyoya, Hikaru and Haruhi reached the Library and the reality of what they were about to do crashed down on all of them. Linking hands tightly they pushed open the door to see Marika in front of the fireplace. She had set up a camera off to one side where it would capture all four of them, without being intrusive.

She looked up as they entered, "I hope this is ok. I didn't really want to bring a cameraman with me because I know how sensitive of an issue this is. I thought I would let this just roll while we talk and then I can edit it when I return home." She smiled at them before continuing, "I want set your minds at ease. Yes, this interview will help my career, but I don't make it a habit of stomping on my friends to make my way up the ladder. The finished product will not be something that embarrasses you or tries to exploit the dirt… and you will be able to approve it before it goes live. If for any reason you don't want me to air it, I will make sure that it is destroyed."

"Thank you for that," Haruhi said with a smile. "It makes this situation a bit easier to handle. As you saw when you arrived this has not been an easy day for any of us."

"I can imagine." Marika shuddered. "My family is not anywhere near as influential as the Ootori's or the Hitachiin's and I am still dreading the day when I have to tell them that Mel, Jon and I are more than just roommates. My mother is going to throw a fit."

"I hope that your mother is more forgiving than my father," Kyoya said quietly. "It is not an easy thing to do."

"She will be furious at first, then she will lecture me on my series of bad choices, then she will spend a few months in therapy discussing how bad a mother she is since her daughter did something so controversial, before she will finally accept it. My mom was a debutante and thoroughly sheltered for most of her life. She thrives on social circles, charity work, and drama. She has never quite understood why I wanted an actual career, though she is quite the proud parent when I am doing a story for the evening news."

"You're not worried about your father?" Hikaru asked curiously.

"Not really. He and Jon get along great. Since it's just me and my sister, Jon's very much like the son he never had. For Mel, he caught us once kissing, and all he did was raise an eyebrow and give me the don't-fuck-up-the-good-thing-you-have-for-a-fling look. It helps that he is also a professor of psychology, with a focus on human sexuality. My mom met him while she was in college and he was the teacher's aide. Not sure what they found in common, but they work well together." She smiled as she thought of her parents. "I at least have the fact that both my parents really like both Jon and Mel. I have brought them to several family functions over the years."

"That's really nice," Haruhi said and sat down on the center of the couch, Hikaru and Kyoya on either side of her. Marika sat in the chair directly across from them. "It's just me and my father, but my family has always been a bit unusual. It may be why I tried to play to convention for so long… then I met the Host Club and in two minutes my life was turned completely upside down." She grinned at her lovers. "It was overwhelming at first, but the guys taught me so much about life and friendship, that I can never regret it."

Marika suppressed a huge smile at the looks that they both gave her, saying instead, "Shall we do
"Yes." Kyoya said and took a deep breath before letting it out slowly.

Hikaru nodded and squeezed Haruhi's hand once.

Marika held up the remote and made a show of hitting the record button. Sitting back in her seat she paused a moment before putting on a professional smile and saying, "I wanted to thank all of you tonight for the opportunity to speak with you. All of Paris is buzzing about you and that's saying something when we are in the middle of Fashion Week and there are celebrities everywhere you turn. But the three of you are making waves in several different circles and it's causing a lot of discussion. So I think the first question I have for you is who is dating who?" Marika paused, smiled and winked at them, "Then we can go into the boring details of how you met and fell in love."

Hikaru politely chuckled at her question, firmly entrenched in his role of playboy fashion designer, while Kyoya smiled slightly holding onto his business tycoon role, and Haruhi gave a smile that let some humor slip through. Hikaru took it on himself to answer the question. "Actually we are all dating each other. It started out with both Kyoya and I dating Haruhi separately, then over time, Kyoya and I realized that we were attracted to each other as well and we recently started dating. Of course, all of us have known each other for a few years and we were all in an afterschool club together. That was how we all met incidentally."

"So you all met at school then," Marika responded as Haruhi, Kyoya, and Hikaru nodded. "I know all of you have reached your majority, but the school system in Japan is slightly different than here in France, have all of you graduated?"

"Kyoya graduated last year and is currently in the University equivalent," Haruhi responded. "Hikaru and I are in our last term of secondary school. Or at least we will be when we return to Japan after the winter break. We will graduate in the early summer."

"I see. How big of an issue is it going to be when you return to school after coming out mid-year?"

Kyoya chose to respond to the question. "Ouran Academy is prestigious, expensive, and exclusive. It also has the highest academic rating when compared to other private and public educational institutions. Despite what many think, to remain at the school, you must be dedicated to the pursuit of education and knowledge. I have known several prominent Japanese families whose children have been denied admittance or have been removed from the school when their academic performance did not meet the standards. Because of this, Ouran prides itself on the intelligence and integrity of its students. As long as the students maintain their studies, there is no discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, class, or race."

"You mentioned class," Marika responded. "I know both you, Kyoya, and Hikaru, are part of families that are traditionally part of the ruling class of Japan. But Haruhi is not, correct?"

"You are correct," Haruhi said with a smile. "My family is neither rich nor powerful. I'm part of the common class. I am at Ouran on a scholarship."

"After what Kyoya just said about the school that must mean you are highly intelligent."

"You don't know the half of it," Hikaru joked while Haruhi blushed. He made a show of squeezing her hand. "There is no question of Haruhi's intelligence – she is at the Top of our class, and in a school of high academics, that is saying something. Like Kyoya said – Ouran doesn't discriminate
on the basis of class. When she passed the entrance exam, the Ouran Scholarship fund paid for her education, but she has earned every penny of it over the years. She works harder than anyone I know and she is fierce in her devotion to the school and her friends."

"True friends are worth fighting for," Haruhi said quietly.

"Speaking of fighting- Haruhi, you haven't just shocked the nation by being the girlfriend of one of the heirs to the famous Fashion family, the Hitachiins, but you also recently shocked the Martial Arts world by being the first female to break the barrier into the High Mastery Tradition of Aikido. How on earth did you manage to do that while maintaining your studies at Ouran?"

"I am fortunate that my senseis and masters are two of my closest friends, and that they come from families of the highest traditions. They have been studying the Arts since they could walk and their skill is such that they have actually been banned from competition, because they cannot be beaten. I met both Mitskune Haninozouka and Takashi Morinozouka at Ouran. They were part of the same club as Kyouya, the Hitachiin twins, and Tamaki Suoh. After a particular incident, they decided to teach me martial arts as a self-defense method. Over the years, doing the katas has become a good way for me to focus, which only helps my studies."

"You mentioned Takashi Morinozouka and you were seen driving off alone with him on Monday, which was the day after you publically came out with both Hikaru and Kyouya. Of course, on Tuesday you achieved your Mastery so after what you just said, it makes sense that you would be out with him, since he is one of your teachers. But he is still a very attractive man, has that ever caused worry or jealous feelings? Do either of you ever fear that she will leave you for him,"

"I count both Takashi and Mitskune among my closest friends, as I do Tamaki Suoh," Kyoya replied, "I am not and won't ever be jealous of their friendship with the people I love. Haruhi was always a strong person, but with their influence over the years, she has learned how to be even stronger – both mentally and physically. In fact, it would be safe to say that among our group we have all influenced each other for the better… and Haruhi has been the greatest influence on all of us. She taught me what love really means, and because of that – No. I am not afraid that she would leave me for someone else. I am pretty sure that Hikaru feels the same."

"I do actually." Hikaru continued. "Kyoya's right in that Haruhi had an influence over all of us, but she probably had the most dramatic influence over me and my brother. When we first joined the Host Club we were… well to be frank, we were spoiled bratty punks." Hikaru grinned, while Kyoya and Haruhi chuckled.

"That's the understatement of the year," Haruhi teased before leaning over to kiss his cheek.

"Hey, at least I admit it," Hikaru chuckled back at her. "Both Kao and I were determined to pick on the rest of the world and let no one ever REALLY get close to us, though we had fun in the club and we kind of liked the other guys. We played up the fact that we were twins and that no one ever could tell us apart, often taking each other's place in classes or on dates, just because we could. Then Haruhi walked through the door and within two days of knowing us she could not only tell us apart, but did so even when we were deliberately trying to be the other. It was unnerving at first and a shock to everything we knew. Here was this 'commoner' who could do what no one else outside our mother was ever able to do. It was fascinating and scary, and ultimately led to her being the best friend that either Kaoru or I had outside of each other. To this day, she is and always will be my best friend. The fact that she is also my girlfriend is just a bonus."

"So it was her influence that caused the famous Hitachiin twins to distinguish their looks instead of
continuing to play up their identicalness?"

"I wouldn't say that-" Haruhi started to say while Hikaru said "In a way-" simultaneously.

"Really?" Haruhi turned and asked Hikaru, temporarily forgetting the camera was rolling.

"Well, you will have to ask Kao for certain, but in a way, yes... I think you did. Your influence and unconditional friendship in spite of some rather screwed up pranks we pulled, helped us to see that we can both be individuals without losing the bond of being brothers." Hikaru gave a mischievous grin, "besides, can you imagine how bad the rumor mill would turn if we both still looked the same? Everyone would be wondering if we were swapping places on you, or they would think that you were seeing more than just me and Kyouya." He gave her a saucy wink, carefully placed so the camera couldn't catch it, which caused Kyouya to turn a startled choke into a cough.

Haruhi flushed a bright red and reached for a glass of water, while Hikaru patted Kyouya on the back. Handing it to Kyouya, she caught the twinkle in Hika's eyes and realized what he was doing. Looking to Marika, whose eyes were now brimming with curiosity, she took a breath and said firmly with a glare at Hikaru, "Dear gods, let me set that rumor to rest before it gets a chance to get started. I am NOT seeing Kaoru Hitachiin. I love your brother dearly, but he is my best friend and nothing more. One Hitachiin in my life is quite enough, thank you very much."

Marika gave a delighted laugh at Haruhi's saucy reply as Hikaru grinned at her. "Oh I know, love. I just wanted to make sure the rest of the world knew it as well. There is already far too much gossip centering on us, I just wanted to clear that up."

"And you feed off every bit of it," Kyouya grimaced.

Hikaru grinned to show that he wasn't offended by Kyouya's comment, "Maybe a little... but it's FUN!"

"Drama queen."

"Businessman."

Suddenly, both Kyouya and Hikaru stuck their tongues out at each other, before sliding their arms along the back of the couch to press against the other's behind Haruhi's head.

Haruhi saw Marika's fascinated expression and said with a smile, "See what I have to deal with?"

Marika snapped back to attention and said, "I had to admit, I could see why both of them wanted to date you, but I still wasn't clear on how their relationship with each other worked. I think I get it now."

Haruhi nodded, "Exactly. It was like they mentioned earlier, we all balance each other in some way. Kyouya has made Hikaru more focused and determined to make HDG an even bigger success than it is and Hikaru has shown Kyouya that it is ok to laugh or to have fun on occasion."

"What do they do for you?" Marika asked real curiosity in her tone.

"Kyouya challenges me – to work smarter, broader, and to see opportunities that I would have missed before. Hikaru taught me that the world is far more colorful and bright than I ever gave it credit for. He taught me how to see real beauty and how to recognize it in myself and others."
Hikaru caught her hand and raised it to his lips again forgetting the camera was recording everything they said, "Really? I never knew that. I just figured that I made you laugh and pestered you to the point that you were forced to give in or go crazy."

"Really." Haruhi gave him a smile filled with love. "You and Kao are so good at what you do because you see the world and the people in it as beautiful. You may have thought of me once as a toy, but you always take care to make sure your toys reflect the beauty you see in them. You more than anyone else, made me beautiful… when I never thought or really even cared if it was possible."

"You haven't been a toy for me in a very long time," Hikaru whispered, his eyes glowing with love. "I love you so much more than I ever dreamed I was capable of."

"We both do." Kyouya said leaning forward to press a kiss against her neck and slip his free hand around her waist. "I need your fierce belief in me. I can do anything, conquer anything, as long as you are there with me."

The three of them stayed like for a few moments before a discreet cough from Marika brought them back to their setting. They broke apart and sat back with sheepish smiles.

"Sorry," Haruhi said with a smile.

"I see no reason why you should be," Marika said honestly. "Most people can't find one person they love as deeply as you do, let alone two. It's beautiful and I don't doubt that it's real."

"Thank you." Kyouya said with a smile.

"I have to ask – How did your families take the news?"

Kyouya's face instantly turned back into a cool mask, while Haruhi took a deep breath and Hikaru squeezed her fingers and pressed his arm more firmly against Kyouya's.

Hikaru went first, "My mother has been nothing but supportive of me and she already thinks of Haruhi as the daughter she never had. I know that I am the lucky one in this. I have the support of both my family and friends."

"My dad was a little bit concerned when I told him I was dating both Hikaru and Kyouya, but I think the fact that I was dating at all was such a welcome change for him that he came to terms with it pretty quickly. He was impressed with Kyouya from the moment he met him, and I think he has a soft spot for Hikaru because the mischief he and Kaoru get up to remind him of the pranks that he used to play on others. Add that to the fact my father is rather unconventional anyway and it was far less of a fuss than I was expecting."

Hikaru had to stifle a snort at the thought of Ranka being described as merely unconventional. He will probably pitch a fit about that. It's going to be fun to watch.

Since she suspected the answer that Kyouya was going to give based on the scene she witnessed earlier that afternoon, her eyes held nothing but sympathy as she asked, "What about you, Kyouya? I know your family has a fearsome reputation in business. How did they react when you told them? Were they as supportive as Hikaru or Haruhi's family?"

"Not even remotely," Kyouya replied. "I have been disowned and banned from the Ootori family
"Oh my! That's horrible! What are you going to do?"

"I expected something like this to happen, since my father was distinctly less than pleased when I told him several months ago that both Hikaru and I would be dating Haruhi. When I told him recently that Hikaru and I had also started dating, he became enraged and disowned me. Like I said, it was not unexpected. I have been building my own business portfolio since my first year at Ouran and I have not taken any money from my father to fund any of those projects. I will admit that my original purpose in starting a portfolio independent of my family's was to prove that I was a worthy Ootori heir, but it has proven fortuitous given recent events. I am anticipating that some of my business contacts will choose to disassociate themselves from me, based on my coming out, but I am secure that those that the ones who remain will see that my business skill is not dependent or reflective of my personal life. I welcome the challenge of starting my own legacy."

"That is awful! Where will you live? Are you going to live with Hikaru or Haruhi while you finish University?"

"As both Haruhi and Hikaru are still in their final year at Ouran, I will not compromise their values or interfere with their study requirements with the added distraction of living together, even in separate quarters. The Zouka family has offered me an apartment on their compound, in the same wing as Mitskune and Takashi. I will be residing there for the time being. I cannot say what the future will bring beyond that."

"That was very kind of them."

"Yes it was," Kyoya said with a tight smile. "I may not have my family's support but the overwhelming support of my friends and my friend's families have been a source of comfort for me. I am lucky to have them in my life."

"You will always have it." Hikaru said tightly, fierce protection evident in his voice. "Your father can go-"

"Peace Hika," Haruhi silenced Hikaru by placing a hand on his cheek. "Yoshio Ootori will realize soon enough what he has lost by his actions, and the world will see that Kyouya Ootori is a far better businessman than his father."

"Haruhi, you seem very sure of that," Marika interjected.

"I am." Haruhi simply said. "I told you that Kyouya challenges me to be smarter and see the opportunities that are out there. He couldn't do that if he wasn't an incredibly smart and savvy businessman. Personal life aside, the reason that the Suoh, Haninozouka, Morinozouka, Houshakuji, and Kasanoda families support him, is simply because he WILL be one of the strong voices in the future of Japanese business, and they will be in a much better position to ally with him. They see the quiet strength where his father is blindsided by his rage and lust for power."

"Haruhi," this time it was Kyouya's quiet voice which calmed the fiery waves. "My father is who he is. He has been very successful with his methods. I may not like care for his methods but they are effective. I will continue to choose to build my portfolio a different way – looking to innovation as my focus. But we are digressing... Marika, is there anything else you wish to know about the relationship the three of us are in?"
Marika was enthralled by the discussion that was playing out before her, so it took her a moment to respond. "At the moment, nothing else is coming to mind except that I really hope that you succeed. All of you actually. You made me realize that we are the voices of our generation and it is our responsibility to move forward and break down old stereotypes. Thank you so much for speaking with me this evening. I wish all of you nothing but good fortune and well wishes."

At Marika's final words, all of them stood up and shook hands before Marika clicked the remote in her hand to stop recording. With a huge grin she said, "That was AMAZING! This is going to shake up Paris. Hell… it may shake globally. If I know my producers as well as I think I do, they will send a copy of the story to the affiliates in Japan and probably USA. Just Wow! You do know that based on this the HDG stock is going to soar and there will likely be a rush of people wanting to do business with Kyouya Ootori. Everyone wants to get in on the latest hot trend."

"You should probably count yourself in that hot trend, Fuzzy," Tamaki's lazy drawl came from the doorway where he and Kaoru had been watching the interview unfold. "You scored and now they will know you have access that has been denied to so many. You will be able to hand pick your next assignment."

Marika laughed, "That would be awesome. But seriously, thank all of you. This really was enlightening… and I think I need to have a discussion with my parents."

Haruhi walked over and gave her a hug. "Good luck with that. Everything will be all right in the end." Turning to the others, she said "Are we finally done for the day?"

"Mostly," Tamaki replied. "Renge and Yuzuha went back to their hotel to finalize some things for the Grand Ball. Hani and Takashi left a few minutes ago with their fathers. There is some House business that they apparently need to take care of, though they told me to tell you that you don't need to worry about it and that Takashi will explain later. Kao, Hika, and I still need to sort through the edited photographs and finish working on the website."

"Oh."

Hikaru turned to Kyoyuya and Haruhi, "Why don't you both take off for the evening? I know this was going to be your date night anyway and I know you both need some time together after everything that has happened today."

"Are you sure, lover?" Kyouya asked.

Hikaru stepped over and gave him a kiss, before doing the same to Haruhi. "Positive. Go. Have a good night. I will see you back in the morning." He smiled at them one more time before turning back to his brother and Tamaki. "Ok. Let's give them something that will REALLY blow their minds."
“Do you have anything in mind that you would like to do?” Haruhi asked Kyouya as they went upstairs to grab their coats.

“Honestly, I had several ideas thought out but right now, none of them sound like anything that I really want to do.” Kyouya responded. “I want to be somewhere where we won’t have to deal with paparazzi or random strangers accosting us. I just don’t think there is any place in France where that is likely to happen, right now.”

Haruhi walked over and put her arms around her boyfriend, holding him tightly. “I may have an idea if you are up to it. We may still see a few people, but it’s unlikely that they will recognize either of us. It’s just less on the romantic side and more on the academic end of the spectrum.”

Kyouya held her tight against his chest absorbing her love and using it as the foundation to rebuild his shields against the emotional pain his father continually caused. “Academia instead of emotion sounds about perfect right now. What did you have in mind?”

“I spoke with my physics teacher and I can get a bit of extra credit if I visit the Observatoire de Paris and write a paper on one of the star clusters I observe. There is an exchange program between Ouran and the observatory, so I have an access pass that will let me in to use the large telescope. I just need to sign in and out with my Ouran ID and they will give it to me. I am guessing that it will likely be pretty quiet there mid-week in the middle of winter, but since it is still part of the university, there may be other students roaming around.”

“Essentially what you are saying is you want to do homework, not only on our date, but that you specifically asked for it knowing you would be on vacation,” Kyouya replied, smiling down at her to let her know he was teasing.

Haruhi blushed a faint pink and mumbled, “I happen to really like my physics class and astronomy is one of those things that I loved as a child, but never really pursued.”

“I happen to think it sounds like a perfect evening.” Kyouya brushed a stray hair back and leaned down to kiss her gently. “Let’s get you some extra credit.”

The Observatoire de Paris was located in central Paris but true to Haruhi’s prediction, the parking area near the building had several cars in it but was only half filled. Kyouya parked the Land Rover near the main entrance, having chosen that vehicle rather than the Aston for its ability to better blend in. He jumped out of the car and walked around to open the door for Haruhi.

She smiled at him and hitched her bag higher up her shoulder, as he took her gloved hand in his and they walked up the steps leading into the entrance. A night guard was seated at a large desk as they walked in.

“Can I help you with anything?” He queried politely.

Haruhi stepped forward and replied in French, “I attend a sister school and am in Paris for my winter break. I was hoping to get access to the observatory’s telescope for a bit of extra credit in my physics
class. I brought my student ID and I believe my professor at Ouran Academy made arrangements.” She handed the guard her ID card.

He looked at it for a moment and ran it through an ID reader. Haruhi was unable to see what pulled up on his screen, but he whistled under his breath at something it showed. He handed it back to her with a smile and a touch more deference, “Yes Miss Fujioka. The Director himself has approved your use of any of our telescopes. The main one is in use tonight for a research project by several students, but the secondary is open to the public. It will be much more private and you will have access for a longer period of time. However it is smaller than the main. I am not sure of your needs, will that be a problem?”

“Not at all. It’s been a busy week filled with too many people, so the quieter the location the better in my mind.” Haruhi replied with a smile. “Besides, I know the size of the secondary and it will be more than enough for my needs.”

“Wonderful. The Observatory closes to the public at 10pm but your access will allow you to stay until 1am.” He handed her two access cards. “If we have more visitors, you will need to share the space until we close. The Cafeteria closes at 9pm and the Gift Shop closes at 10pm. Your pass will let you into all public areas of the Observatory as well as the computer lab. It will also give you access to the elevators and room with the telescope after the other areas lock, so please keep it on you at all times. You can turn it in to the night guard when you leave. It is coded to only allow access for this night, though you have unlimited access through the Director. If you come back another day, just check in here and we will issue you another pass.” He smiled at both of them. “Enjoy and welcome to the Observatoire de Paris.”

“Thank you.” Kyouya said with a polite smile. As they walked towards the central hall he glanced at his watch. “It’s 8pm now. Do you want to head directly to the telescope or would you rather wander around for a bit?”

“Actually, if we have private access after 10pm, I think I want to check out the cafeteria first. I am a little hungry.”

Kyouya’s stomach rumbled in agreement which made Haruhi giggle. “Food it is, and then I’d like to check out the Gift Shop. I would like to explore more, but I think we may have to do that on another day. I am impressed that you were able to get such unrestricted access.”

“Frankly, me too.” Haruhi responded. “I just thought that we would just get in line behind several others and wait to get a few minutes to look through the telescope. Three hours of uninterrupted time is far more than I dreamed of… and I am going to take advantage of it.”

“Me too.” Kyouya whispered suggestively in a way that made Haruhi laugh as they turned to follow the signs pointing down a staircase towards the cafeteria.

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“While that was not the finest meal I have ever enjoyed, it was definitely not the worst.” Kyouya stated as they walked back up the stairs toward the main hall and gift shop.

“Snob,” Haruhi said fondly. “It’s a cafeteria. I haven’t found any that are exactly gourmet. I know Ouran comes close, but that’s because the school pays a small fortune in food costs.”

“It is better than the one at the University back home. I ate there once before deciding that I needed to plan for alternate forms of nourishment.” Kyouya made a dramatic shudder. “Thankfully there are several decent restaurants near the campus.”
“You could always pack your lunch,” Haruhi teased then giggled at the look of horror that crossed Kyoya’s face.

“I would burn the fish and the rice would be raw,” Kyouya grimaced. “I have no culinary skills.”

“Hmmm…,” Haruhi said as a thought crossed her mind, “You could always ask Hani to teach you.”

“Hani can cook?” the level of incredulity in Kyoya’s voice made Haruhi smother a smile.

“Yes he can actually. He made me dinner last night.” A faint flush crossed her cheeks as she thought of the other things that Hani did to her the previous night. I am also grateful for the Zouka balm. I should be far sorer after yesterday than I am. “He used to steal into the kitchens of the Zouka Estate and an Undercook took him under her wing.”

“Good to know,” Kyouya responded as they stopped outside the Gift Shop. “I got something for his Christmas gift but it’s pretty generic, so that gives me a few more ideas if I find something else.”

“You know, I had almost forgotten Tamaki’s idea to do a Christmas thing. So much has changed in the last week and a half. We go home in five days. It’s surreal. I don’t know how I am going to be able to go back to the restrictions of Ouran.”

Kyouya pulled her into a hug and tucked his head on top of hers. “We will figure it out. It’s only one more term for you, Hikaru, and Kaoru. Then we can talk about finding an apartment together near the University.” He kissed the top of her head. “Or we can look at moving to Paris and going to school here. I know you have your application packages ready to be submitted when we return. You could always send one to the University here. I know you want to do study law, but you could focus on International law and still keep the focus on equal rights.”

“You sound like you have thought about this,” Haruhi replied.

“I have been actually. I have to admit I really missed Tamaki and I know he is entrenched in a program here. My focus is international business so that can pretty much be studied anywhere. Paris is the Fashion capital, so Hika and Kao could easily set up shop here and it’s a quick hop to Milan and London and only a few hours to New York.”

“What about Takashi and Hani?”

Kyouya sighed. “I don’t know… Would they even want to leave Japan? I know Takashi was thinking about studying Law too but as far as I know Hani hasn’t defined his curriculum. They both have been completing all their general classes first rather than mixing them with a major.”

“Knowing what I do now about their traditions and desire to serve their House, I know they are both determined to reach their fifth level mastery, so they are subject to the whims of the High Council. Based on how fast they have risen and the controversy surrounding them, they could be separated and sent to opposite ends of the earth.” She chewed on her lip before saying. “It’s a bit frightening to have your path decided by someone else that may or may not have your best interests at heart.”

“But that is their choice, is it not? You know you may be subject to it too one day.”

“True,” Haruhi sighed. “But for me, that level of mastery, if I choose to go that far, will come after I graduate, so that will be taken into consideration. They are both deliberately not choosing beyond the broadest generalizations until they know what the council will require of them. I know they are used to it, but that level of calmness in the face of major upheaval is not something I am good at.”

“They will be fine,” Kyouya kissed her forehead and held her for a moment. “Don’t fret for them. If
I have learned anything over the last week, it is they will never fail to surprise everyone and succeed at whatever is thrown at them.” He glanced down at his watch. “Now the Gift Shop closes in a half hour, should we check it out?”

“Yes.” She sighed again and smiled up at him. “You’re right. I am borrowing trouble and worrying over something that may turn out to be nothing. Let’s look around, and then we can go up to the telescope.”

Kyouya leaned in and kissed her softly. “You are more than a little in love with Takashi, so it makes sense that you are worried about what will happen to him. Since I know he loves both you and Hani deeply, he will do what is right to find the balance in that and his House will support him. Trust in him. I do.”

“What did I ever do to deserve you?” Haruhi replied, love shining brightly from her eyes.

“You brought light and love into my life. It would be wrong to keep you from being who you are when you make all of us better. Takashi is a good man and a good friend. He is worth the attention and concern. I want him to be a part of our lives regardless of what happens in the next few months.”

She smiled and wrapped her arms around him again noting his use of the word ‘our’. Then she looked up and grinned mischievously, “Does this mean I get to watch you and Takashi the next time you two get together?”

Kyouya grinned back. “Maybe.”

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“Miss, I am sorry, but we are closing. Is there anything you wanted to purchase?”

Haruhi was startled out of her perusal of a book on galaxies by the voice of the shop attendant. She looked up to see Kyouya at the cash register paying for something which the other attendant quickly wrapped up. Turning to the clerk next to her, she said with a sheepish grin, “I am sorry. I lost track of time. Let me just pay for these and I will be out of your hair.”

The clerk smiled back, “It happens. Thank you for your purchase tonight.”

Haruhi walked up to the counter and set the two books she had been looking through on it. On impulse she also grabbed a bottle of water. Looking over at Kyoya, she asked, “What did you find?”

“Just some Christmas gifts. I can’t tell you more or it would spoil the surprise.”

“So you found something for Hani then! I can’t wait to see.”

Kyouya just gave her a wink.

“Here you are miss.” The clerk handed her a bag with her books.

“What do I owe you?”

“It’s already been taken care of.”

“What? How?”

“I told them to ring up anything that you got on my card.” Kyouya held up a hand to forestall her protests. “Don’t fight me on this please… Don’t think of it as a gift but as a study aid. I really want you to graduate with top honors.”
Haruhi glared at Kyoya for a few minutes more, while the two shop attendants looked at each other warily. Finally to avoid a scene, she just said “fine” with a look that told Kyoya that the discussion wasn’t over.

The clerks thanked them with a sigh of relief then quickly locked the doors behind them.

Haruhi remained silent as they made their way to the telescope. She held the access card against the panel and the door slid open. The light from the hallway was enough to illuminate a panel on the wall to the side, which appeared to control the lights to the room next to a computer to adjust the angle of the telescope. She stepped forward and slid the lights on just enough to make sure they weren’t going to run into anything in the dark.

Recessed in the center of the room was the largest telescope that Kyoya had ever seen. There were several reclining chairs and curved couches around it. Looking up he could see a glass dome which let in the natural starlight. A soft sound escaped his lips as he realized that the whole contraption was on a moving platform. \textit{What an impressive display of machinery.} “This is the small one?”

Kyoya started to step forward to get a better look when both his and her phones beeped indicating they had a text message. He looked at the screen. 

\textit{Don’t know if you guys were planning on coming back to the house tonight or tomorrow morning, but you need to be back here by 8am. Since the Guest House is going to have a ton of people swarming through it tomorrow afternoon and Friday in preparation for the Grand Ball on Saturday, the five of us decided that it would be best if we all just got out of the way. Tamaki made arrangements with one of the Suoh Resorts on Santorini and mom is letting us use the jet. We will fly out at 9 and come back Saturday early afternoon. Almost two days on a private beach away from all the paparazzi… - HH}

Haruhi looked up at Kyoya. “Are we going back to the House tonight?”

“That was my intent. I am sure we could have found something if we were here too late, but I didn’t plan on staying overnight… and I have to admit being out of Paris when Marika’s interview breaks sounds wonderful.”

“I agree.” Haruhi answered and responded back to Hikaru.

\textit{We were planning on coming back to the House tonight so no worries, though it might be late. Thanks to Professor Noguchi, I have an afterhours pass to the Observatoire de Paris. That’s where we are at the moment. I am working on a bit of extra credit for Physics. – HF}

She set her phone down and moved over to the computer. “To answer your earlier question, this is the smaller telescope. The main one is about twice this size.” She glanced up to watch Kyoya’s expression as he absorbed the information. Idly she asked, “Is there anything that you want to see?”

“Can we see the Andromeda Galaxy with this telescope?” Kyoya asked curiously.

“Of course,” Haruhi responded with a smile as she punched some information into the computer then pushed a button to run the program. The center of the room slowly rotated 137 degrees to the right.

Her phone buzzed again and she laughed as she read the message. 

\textit{Seriously!! You are doing HOMEWORK on your date night?? What is wrong with you!? I love your brain but that’s ridiculous… Then again, if I had special permission to be alone in a dark place looking at the majesty of space with you, I would leap at the chance too. Just don’t forget Kyo while you get lost in the in the depth of space. He is hiding it well, but he’s hurting after earlier. Anyway,}
see you back at the House then. We are going to be up for at least a couple more hours finishing up all this stuff, so we may still be up when you get in. You will be seriously impressed at what the photographers and designers came up with. Oh, and Marika sent me the link for the finished interview. I can pass it on if you want to see it, but I gave her tentative approval to air it. She did a great job with the editing. Love you! – HH

“Hikaru sent over Marika’s interview. Do you want to watch it?” Kyouya asked as his phone beeped again. Looking at the screen he suppressed a smile.

I know you both are brainiacs but doing extra credit homework just doesn’t sound like a fun date. LOL. Make sure that you both get in some real conversations not just school stuff. You both need some time to just be without the rest of us. Enjoy it!! Love you and see you when you get back. –HH

Quickly Kyouya typed back.

Haru seems to forget how romantic looking star gazing really is. I will make sure to remind her. I trust your judgment on the interview. If you think she was fair then it is good enough for me. I don’t know if I am ready to sit down and watch myself. Have fun with the rest of the editing. Love to you – KO

“Not particularly. At least, not right now… Do you?”

Kyouya blinked in confusion then realized that Haruhi was answering his earlier question. “Not really. I trust Hika. If he says it’s fine then I am ok with her releasing it.”

Haruhi grinned, “Kind of what I thought, but damn… how the world has changed. You are actually really trusting Hikaru’s judgment on something. If you had told me this day would happen two and a half years ago, I would never have believed it.”

Kyouya grinned as he pushed her toward the center of the room, “Yeah, yeah… now are you going to do your homework or just continue this witty banter?”

“Hmmph.” Haruhi flounced to the center of the room, enjoying the light hearted banter between them. “With that attitude, see if I explain anything to you.” She sat down in an angled chair and put on an optical headset that looked like a set of virtual reality goggles.

Kyouya sat next to her, still grinning. He looked at the headset in his hands and said, “Somehow this was not what I was expecting. I thought there would be an eyepiece.”

Haruhi lifted and set the goggles on her head. “In a way these are. The telescope is so powerful and used for so much research that a single eyepiece is not practical. These goggles are basically the same thing; it shows exactly what the scope is pointed at but enhances color and makes it almost three dimensional. It also allows for several headsets to be attached at once rather than just one.”

“Makes sense… and beats just staring at a computer screen.”

“I thought so,” Haruhi said and pushed the goggles back down.

Kyouya followed suit and reclined back in the chair, his right hand reaching out to grasp Haruhi’s left.

“Are you ready?” She asked as she held the remote in her right hand.

“Completely. This is actually quite fascinating.”
Haruhi grinned as she pressed the start button. Kyoya’s swift intake of breath was worth the annoyance of doing classwork on her vacation. *I just won’t tell him that I planned this out, just so he and I could have this together.*

“It’s breathtaking.” The reverence in Kyoya’s voice was clear. Unconsciously he tightened his grip on her hand tighter.

“Andromeda is a spiral galaxy,” Haruhi pushed a button and the image zoomed in closer. “Can you see the way the stars spiral out from the center?”

“Yes.”

For the next hour or so, Haruhi spoke about the star cluster and Astronomy in general answering Kyoya’s questions as best she could. She was surprised that he hadn’t taken physics at Ouran. He replied that most of his science classes centered on organic chemistry since the Ootori family had interests in the Medical field. It was a good conversation for both of them as they learned a bit more about each other. Finally Haruhi said, “So that was the Andromeda Galaxy. Want to see the Milky Way?”

“Sure. That’s the galaxy our solar system is in, correct?”

“Yes.” She took off the headset and got up to walk back over to the computer terminal. As she was punching in some information the door behind her opened and a security guard walked in.

“Hello. Just checking in. I am Frank. Jay said you have a pass that lets you stay until 1 am. I will come by at that time and escort you out, or if you leave before then, you can leave it on the front desk. I will be walking the halls, so I may not be at the desk. Everything is locked up at this point, so if you leave this room to use the restroom, make sure to take your access card with you. Otherwise, enjoy your night.”

“Thank you Frank, we will do so.” Haruhi said with a polite smile and turned back to the screen to adjust the telescope. A program option caught her eye and she clicked on the button experimentally. Instantly the dome above their head became one big screen, showing the current view of the telescope.

“Wow. That’s cool. What did you do?” Kyouya asked.

“I have no idea, but it looks like a program to turn the dome into a quasi-planetarium. Excellent. I can program it to circle the sky for up to ninety minutes. We can watch the stars without having to be out in the cold.”

“Perfect.”

Haruhi walked over and dimmed the ambient room light down even further until the majority of the light was coming from the stars lighting up the dome. She increased magnification and positioned the telescope to start at Venus and slowly work its way around the night sky. Finally satisfied with the settings, she walked over to Kyoya, took his hand and led him to one of the couches. “I want to lie in your arms and watch the stars.”

Kyouya smiled and pulled her into his arms for a kiss before sitting down, “As you wish.”

Time lost its sense of meaning as Kyouya and Haruhi lay on the couch, staring at the stars, but the events of the day slowly started to slip in. *It’s really done. I really have walked away from my family. I won’t ever be welcomed at the place I used to call home. Kyoya’s arms tightened around Haruhi unconsciously as a tear slid down his cheek. Everything I have done before... gone. Everything I*
A few more tears slid silently down his cheeks.

Haruhi felt his arms tighten around her and immediately understood what was happening. She turned so she could bury her head in his chest and wrap her arms around him. She remained quiet, but held on to him tightly.

Kyouya felt all the overwhelming and conflicting emotions hit him at once, Haruhi’s silent and unconditional support finally giving him a chance to grieve over what he had lost. A sob cracked out in the silence, followed by several more, as he clung to the woman in his arms. The tears poured unheeded down his cheeks and the sobs racked his body as he let it all out.

Through it all, Haruhi just held him and focused all her love toward him. Finally the sobs quieted and the death grip on her eased slightly. She reached up with one hand and stroked down his cheek before stretching up to place a soft kiss on his lips. “Shhhh… It will be all right, my love. The hard part is over.”

“I don’t have a home anymore… or a family.”

“Shhh… not true, my love. Not true. Hikaru and I will be your home. All of us will be your family. We will make the future a beautiful glorious thing… and in time, your father may reconsider.”

“I sincerely doubt that,” a severely self-deprecating laugh accompanied that statement. “I just committed the ultimate sin in Ootori eyes. I chose my own wishes over the good of the family.”

“Maybe, but that’s not the way the rest of the world sees it. You are stepping forward and taking the Ootori family in a new direction. A better direction that will make you an innovator and leader of the community. Yes, right now, it is just you, but mark my words… the rest of the Ootori clan will see what you are doing and understand eventually.”

“I don’t believe in hope.”

“That’s ok. I believe enough in you for both of us.” Haruhi said quietly. “You will succeed where your father has failed and the family will see it. Until then, you have all of us… and we will support you.”

Kyouya felt the fierceness in her voice and held her tight. Voice just barely a whisper as if the thought itself was so faint, he said, “I think I could learn to believe… after all… I have you, when I never thought it would be possible.” He kissed her deeply. “Never leave me… please… I don’t think I could survive the world without you.”

“I am here for you… always.” Haruhi replied and returned his kiss, letting all her passion, love, and desire for him flow.

With a growl at her heated response, Kyouya deepened the kiss, rolling her underneath him, and bracing himself on his arms so he could stare down into her eyes.

Haruhi stared back into the silver eyes made black by the dimness of the room. She wrapped her arms around his neck and arched her head up just enough to be able to breathe against his lips. “Make love to me… please…”

“Always.”

The stars moving slowly overhead cast faint shadows on their skin as they moved together. Slowly. Deeply. Focused solely on the connection between them. Unshakable and unbreakable.
Kyouya looked over at the girl who was sleeping against the door of the Land Rover. Warmth filled his chest as he acknowledged to himself how much he loved her. Not that he really minded sharing her with the others, his natural jealousy long having been dismissed thanks to Hikaru, but it was nice to just have an evening to themselves in the midst of all the chaos this vacation was turning into.

Pulling into the driveway of the Maison de Roses, a stray thought crossed his mind. Hika was right about that too… When did he get so perceptive?

Haruhi was still fast asleep as Kyouya put the land Rover into park. Gently, so as not to wake her, he undid her seat belt, before getting out of the car and coming around to open her door. Gingerly he opened her door and let her fall into his arms, shifting her weight slightly in order to bump the door closed with his hip. The faint noise caused her to snuggle into his chest slightly, but wasn’t enough to wake her up. I don’t think I have ever actually carried Haruhi this way, she look so fragile. He smiled and kissed her softly on her temple as he carried her into the house.

A light and the murmuring of voices in the Library momentarily diverted his attention from the girl in his arms and he walked over to peek in. Kaoru and Tamaki were sitting on the couch with a laptop resting on their knees. Hikaru leaned over the back of the couch and pointed out something on the screen. All appeared to be absorbed in what they were doing, so Kyouya turned to exit.

A faint movement in his peripherals’ made Hikaru look up. Seeing Kyouya standing there with Haruhi asleep in his arms, made a tender smile cross his face. He held Kyo’s eyes for a moment letting the love he felt for him shine through before leaning down to the others and saying, “Ok guys, it’s late and I’m tired. I am heading to bed. The website looks fantastic. Don’t stay up too late!” He leaned in and planted a kiss on Kaoru’s cheek before walking over to his lovers, kissing Kyo, and brushing his lips across Haruhi’s hair.

Kaoru leaned into the kiss and looked up, a yawn breaking its way from his lips. Seeing the others he nodded in greeting before poking Tamaki. “C’mon Tama, we have to be up early tomorrow.”

“But… the website…” His response was lost in a yawn that threatened to crack his jaw.

Kaoru smiled, “The website is done and it looks fabulous. You have all your staff set up to take care of the stuff for the grand ball and answer questions from the press. It’s time to take a vacation from your vacation.”

“Huh?”

“We leave for Santorini in 6 hours. I don’t know about you, but I want to get some sleep know, so I can enjoy the beaches and scenery to its fullest… and I am selfish and I want your naked body next to me as I sleep.”

It was the last part that grabbed Tamaki’s attention fully. He shut the lid on the laptop and set it on the coffee table. He stood and offered Kaoru a hand, linking it in his as they walked over to where Kyouya and Hikaru were standing.

Together all four walked up the staircase to their rooms.
“Isn’t this going to be fun Haru-chan? Soft sandy beaches and warmth for a couple of days.” Hani bounced eagerly on his seat.

“Comparatively warm,” Takashi replied quietly looking out the window at the landscape passing quickly below them. “Daytime highs are around 60 degrees Fahrenheit.”

“Still warmer than France,” Hani replied pointedly with a hint of desperate lightheartedness.

“True.”

Haruhi looked back and forth between her friends. *Something is off. Hani is trying to be too chipper and Takashi is quieter than normal.* “Ok, you two… Spill.”

Takashi turned to look at her, his expression usually so clear to her, was indecipherable, while Hani shifted slightly in his seat. She could see Hani trying to maintain his lighthearted appearance, but neither responded to her question.

“What is going on, guys? You are both acting oddly.” Haruhi tried a different approach. “Did something happen that I missed?”

The two of them exchanged looks and Haruhi could almost see the conversation that passed nonverbally between them. Finally, they turned and looked at her.

“Our fathers were not at the house yesterday for amusement,” Takashi said in his normal quiet voice. A smile peaked through as he said, “They came to let us know that due to your achievement of your first level mastery, we have been awarded by the council the rank of fourth level masters.”

“Oh my Gods!! That’s so exciting!!” Haruhi said and threw herself across the distance to wrap them both in hugs. “You both deserve it. I am so happy for you and thrilled that I could help bring you this!!” She kissed first Takashi then Hani enthusiastically, before a thought wormed its way into her brain and she sat back in her chair across from them. “But there’s something else isn’t there. Something you don’t want to tell me.”

“You are part of our House, so you would have heard about it eventually, Haru-chan but I didn’t want to put a damper on our vacation, when everything has been so interesting and exciting.” Hani leaned across the space between them and took one of her hands in his. “In the long run, everything will be fine.”

“But for now, Mitskune and I have been given our final Mastery quests,” Takashi leaned forward to take her other hand. “The council is separating us.”

“What do you mean separating you?” Haruhi exclaimed. “Is this some sort of punishment for your choosing me as your student?”

They exchanged glances again.

“Yes and no.” Hani replied. “We really should have seen it coming and expected it. Takashi and I have been pushing boundaries since we first tested for our mastery at sixteen, which pissed off a lot of the older council members who are stuck on traditional ways. Add in the rumors that has been spreading like wildfire across the Houses that we are romantically linked as well, and now our decision to flaunt tradition by choosing a female commoner as our student and…” Hani’s voice trailed off.
“We should have expected it,” Takashi said, a hint of sadness in his tone. “But we didn’t. We were given an ultimatum by the high council. We either stop at the level we have achieved, and never become part of the High Council, or are separated during our final quests.”

“How long does the final quest take?” Kyouya asked quietly as he slid into the seat next to Haruhi. The others moved from where they had been milling around the plane to crowd around their seats to hear the answer.

“Until it is complete,” Takashi answered. “The Council will ultimately decide.”

Hani tried to inject a bit more optimism into his response. Turning to Kyouya he said, “On average it takes four to five years to complete the final mastery depending on the details of the quest. It’s not like we can’t speak to each other or even see each other during that time, we just won’t be together every day, like we have been since we could walk.”

Haruhi squeezed their hands, “I can’t imagine how difficult that will be for both of you.”

“There are still breaks, Skype, phone calls and texting,” Hani answered, “Kind of like we have been doing with Tama-chan this year.”

“It’s still not a substitution for actually being there with you,” Tamaki said quietly from over Kyouya’s shoulder. “Don’t get me wrong, it helped being able to communicate with all of you that way, but this week has reminded me that there is no substitution for face to face contact. I’m trying not to think about all of you leaving again in a few days. It’s going to be really difficult.”

Kaoru slid his arm around Tamaki’s waist. “It’s only for the length of the last term. I’m not sure about Hika or the others, but I am applying to the University of Paris to get my Fashion degree while I work out of HDG’s offices here.”

Hikaru touched his brother’s arm. “I had a feeling you were going to do that. I still am not sure, what or where I will be going, but that’s a discussion for another time.”

Kaoru squeezed Hikaru’s hand. “I am sorry I didn’t tell you earlier, but I just made the final decision. You need to be with Kyo and Haru, more than with me. I know it, I am ok with it, and I am happy for you.”

“Don’t count us out yet, Kao. There is much to discuss, but I second Hikaru’s statement that it should be done another time,” Kyouya said as he looked at his two friends. “Can you share the details of your respective quests with us?”

“Yes,” Takashi said. “The fifth level mastery is designed to fine tune the strengths that you have shown in your journey through the arts. For me, I am on the path of the natural healer. Since I continued to show an interest in House Zouka’s healing arts even as I followed the path of the warrior, and then started studying yoga with Haruhi, it makes sense. My University studies will shift towards becoming a Doctor with a specialization in natural medicine.”

“I can see that, ashke.” Haruhi said with a smile. “It does fit perfectly for you.”

“I am glad you think so, since I will continue to need your help with the yoga aspect,” Takashi smiled at her.

“I will do anything, be anything, you need.”

“I know, ashke.” Takashi kissed her knuckles. “Thank you.”
Hani grinned as he watched them, “Me on the other hand… Not so much into the healing stuff. I am going to Brazil to study Capoeira, which is their form of martial arts/dance/music. I will also be going to England to study fencing. Somewhere in between, I will be working towards getting a doctorate in world history with an emphasis on Martial Strategy.”

“That does seem fitting,” Kyoya said with a smile. “The Council did seem to play to your strengths. It is just regrettable that they separated you.”

“Perhaps,” Takashi said, tightly controlled anger creeping into his voice, “But once we complete this, the council will no longer be able to punish us for our rumored relationship. We will be equal members, we will come out publically, and we will fight to eliminate outdated and useless traditions.”

“Good for you,” Hikaru said with a fierce smile. “Let me know if I can help in any way.”

“Let any of us know if we can help.” Tamaki corrected.

“We will Tama-chan,” Hani replied. “Thank you.”

“Miss, Sirs, this is your Captain. Please return to your seats as we will be landing in Santorini shortly. Thank you.”

Hani and Takashi let go of Haruhi’s hands and leaned back into their seats, much more relaxed then when the plane departed. Catching Haruhi’s gaze and still seeing a lingering frown hiding in the creases of her forehead, Hani winked. “It’s time to have fun, Haru-chan. Our greatest worry was telling you since you are so new to our House. Now that everything is out in the open, and we have all of your support, we can accomplish anything.”

“When does the quest start?”

“In five days. Takashi will return to Japan with you and I will stay in Paris a few more days before going to Brazil. My father is arranging for my things to be shipped over and my admission to the University has already been assured.”

“Five days?” Haruhi squeaked.

“I plan to make several new memories in the next five days,” Hani grinned wickedly at her. “I may be leaving the rest of you, but I will take everything I can of you with me. Never Fear.” He linked his hand in Takashi’s as the plane decelerated.
A Day at the Beach

Tamaki threw open the door to the villa with a whoosh. “Check this out. I found this villa as my grandmother and I were scouting out resort opportunities on the island. We determined that an all-inclusive resort was not feasible due to the limited space on the island, so instead we bought several villas throughout the city and are outfitting them with full amenities and transportation. That way it feels like a home away from home, but you still have all the services of a resort. This was my favorite of the properties that we purchased. It has two large bedrooms, a full kitchen, two bathrooms, balcony with a Jacuzzi and access to a private beach. The couch also pulls out to a king-sized bed, so if we decide that two beds aren’t enough for the seven of us, there’s another.”

“The fact that we have gotten to point that I don’t think twice about seven of us trying to squeeze into two beds is probably saying something,” Hikaru said as he walked toward the back windows overlooking the beach. He gave a long low whistle as he looked at the view. “But at this moment, I can’t figure out what that is. Boss, if this is another example of your eye to architecture, I am officially demanding that you do all the scouting for locations for the photo shoots for the HDG Twins fashion line. This is glorious, even in the dead of winter.”

Tamaki flushed in gratification at Hikaru’s compliment. “It would be my pleasure. You both have done so much for me this week, it is the least that I can do.”

Kaoru wrapped his arms around Tamaki from behind and kissed him on the cheek. “Don’t let Hika bully you into something that you don’t want to do. We would appreciate any suggestions you have, since your eye is definitely on point, but I don’t want you feeling that that you HAVE to do this.”

Tamaki put his hands on Kaoru’s arms and held them as he leaned into the hug. “I actually want to. I am already partnering with Kyo on some new opportunities. As part of the direction for where I want to take Suoh Enterprises, I am going to be doing a lot of travelling to find the right locations for our businesses. If I see anything that looks like it would fit into the style of the line that you and Hika are working on, it’s not a hardship at all to let you know. You just need to give me the basic of the overall themes you are going for, since I know those will change with each season.”

“You know, it may make sense to start an investment company that manages all the potential overlaps in our respective portfolios. As Tamaki said, we are already starting to partner in several ways – KO Global and Suoh Enterprises in the wine business, Suoh Enterprises and HDG in fashion, etc. I can also see Tama creating a Spa/Natural therapy company with Takashi or a Training Center for Martial Arts with Hani. Each would only be a small part of each of their respective total portfolios, but there is the potential for overlap.”

“Fantastic idea, love,” Haruhi said with a smile, “and we should absolutely discuss it further. Just not while we are on a gorgeous Greek Island. Personally, I want to check out the beach and maybe explore the shops.”

Kyouya returned her smile, “Of course.”

“There are swimsuits in the closets,” Tamaki said. “We also have access to a boat if anyone wants to try waterskiing or parasailing. We can arrange to have a picnic lunch brought down to us later.”

“Waterskiing sounds like fun.” Hani grinned.
“So does parasailing,” Kaoru added.

“Ok,” Tamaki said with a grin. “You guys get changed and I will make the arrangements. It’s time to relax and have some fun.”

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Some things never change. Haruhi looked up from the sandcastle she and Takashi were building to glance over at Kyoya seated under an umbrella writing furiously in his notebook. Out over the water she could see Tamaki, Hani and the twins in a ski boat, zipping around the waves of the cove. A slow grin spread across her face as she saw her lover easily slip back into a familiar pattern. It’s probably a good thing, if you think about it. Kyoya’s world has been turned completely on its head the last couple of weeks. Some familiar habits will help him work through it all.

“We should give him another half hour or so to make his plans for a new business, then distract him,” Takashi said with the smile that Haruhi loved to see. “It’s a good thing that he is back to planning his future, but we don’t want him forgetting that he is here to have fun.”

“Planning new ventures IS fun for Kyo. But I agree with what you are saying,” Haruhi responded. Smoothing the sand on a tower of their castle, she asked quietly, “I know what you said earlier on the plane, but how do you really feel about being separated from Hani for so long, ashke?”

Takashi looked up at her from where he was carving patterns into their castle with a stick. “It is going to be difficult. Mitskune and I have never been apart for more than a few weeks. I know that we need to do this, but I am having a hard time reconciling myself to the fact that it is less than a week away.”

“I can’t even imagine how you feel.” Haruhi said quietly. “I don’t even know if I could be separated from Kyoya, Hikaru, or you for several months, let alone several years, and I don’t have nearly the same history as you and Hani. I mean it, ashke, when I say that anything that you need, I will do.”

Takashi moved over in the sand to kneel next to her. He took her hand and pressed it to his heart. Automatically, she mirrored his hand action. “That I have your support and the support of the others is the only thing that will get me through this. In the end, though, it will be worth the sacrifice. Mitskune and I will no longer have to hide our relationship from the council. We may become pariahs for a time, but House Zouka is too influential for it to hurt us forever. We and you are the catalysts for change. I hope you realize that you are just as important to the future of House Zouka as Mitskune or me.”

“But I thought that was already happening,” Haruhi looked up into her partner’s dark eyes. “Sakura told me that she and Zhi are in a triad with your cousin Kusanagi.”

A faint expression of surprise flickered across Takashi’s features and Haruhi suddenly remembered that Sakura had told her that the only people who know were Akira and Yorihisa. Crap! I hope Sakura forgives me for telling Taka.

“This is the first I have heard of their relationship, though the three of them have been very close for years, so it shouldn’t surprise me. However, Kusanagi is not a member of the Council. His passion is the theater and he stopped after his second Mastery. Their triad would be supported by our House, but I can see why they are keeping it silent. House Fujimia is small and Zhi is still considered by many on the council to be a radical. House Zouka is allied with House Fujimia, of course, but there would be stigma attached to his House by the High Council based on his being a commoner. History works against him. It is unfortunate.”
“I realized after I said it, that Sakura had mentioned that only your parents knew. Please keep the information to yourself and Hani.”

“I will say nothing unless Sakura, Kusanagi, or Zhi tells me themselves. It is their secret to share. I have enough of my own.”

“I should tell you that Sakura knows of our relationship. Or rather she guessed after seeing us do yoga and decided that I was a fool if I didn’t admit that I was in love with you as well.”

“That is not surprising. Sakura is incredibly observant of people. She was the first one who confronted Mitskune and me on our relationship, and that was before either of us was willing to admit what we felt for each other was more than just friendship. I knew she would see that I am as deeply in love with you as I am Mitskune as soon as she saw us together.”

Haruhi gasped as his words rolled over her.

He pressed his free hand to the one she still had over his heart. “I knew from the moment you joined the Host Club, but I could not say the words… and then I lost my chance… or so I thought. Mitskune knows. He pushed me and I resisted. I didn’t want him to think that I loved him less.” He lifted her hand and placed a kiss on her palm before returning it to his heart. “I should have known better. Our House doctrine is Love. I just needed to be reminded of that.”

“Takashi, I didn’t know.”

“I know. In the end, it worked out better for all of us… and in ways that no one could have predicted. Once you started dating both Hikaru and Kyoya, I realized that I had a chance and I couldn’t hold back anymore. I know you love both of them as deeply as I love Mitskune, I will never interfere with that. I want you to know that. I am content that you love me in your own way.”

“I do ashke, I do.” Haruhi lifted his hand to her lips and repeated his earlier gesture. Something that Kyoya said at the Observatory flashed through her mind. *I want Takashi to be a part of our lives regardless of what happens in the next few months.* It was soon followed by Hani delightedly whispering to her what he saw in the Library the night of her testing. Looking deep into his eyes, she took a deep breath and asked, “But is it just Hani and me that you are attracted to?”

“I am attracted to everyone in the Host club in my own way.” Takashi answered a bit too quickly.

Haruhi bit back a grin, “That’s not what I meant and you know it, ashke. General attraction to everyone, yes, that’s pretty much a given, but there’s another person you are starting to think about more, isn’t there?” Her eyes slid significantly over to the dark haired man still scribbling furiously in his notebook.

“I-I-I-“ Takashi stuttered, turning a becoming shade of pink that had nothing to do with a sunburn.

“It’s new. I know. Even newer than his attraction for Hika, which took him months to acknowledge… but it is returned. He has always respected you, even when he was having a hard time respecting the others due to their various antics. You are his equal in intelligence and you have quietly both challenged and supported him over the years.”

“I don’t know what to say.” Takashi said quietly.

“Are you drawn to him?”

“Yes.”
“Then my suggestion is see what, if anything, develops. Worst case, you have a deep friendship based on mutual support. Personally, I think that you could be another foundation stone for him as he reshapes his life into something of his own choosing.” Haruhi’s smile grew impish. “Plus, it will be beyond hot to watch you two together. I admit that I was kind of jealous that everyone except me got to see you guys naked and wrapped around each other.”

Takashi’s mouth tweaked into a smile. “An oversight that we can easily correct.” He stood up and brushed the sand off his shorts before putting a hand out to help bring her to her feet. “Come, it has to have been at least a half an hour. I think it is time to remind your boyfriend that there are other ways to have fun at the beach than writing in a notebook.”

“Now THAT’s a fantastic idea!”

Kyouya was absorbed in detailing out his thought process, so it took him a few moments to realize that the two shadows that had blocked the sun weren’t moving. In fact, the bodies attached to those two shadows were standing hand in hand, staring down at him with near identical grins on their faces. The laughing look in their eyes made the hand holding his pen pause.

“What?”

“Finish your sentence and then you are needed.” Takashi replied.

“Needed for what?” His interest peaked despite the half-urge to tell them not to bother him.

“Needed to help us explore the tidal pools we found,” Haruhi said with a smile. “Come on, love. I know that you enjoy planning out new ventures, but you have been doing so for the last two hours. Why don’t you take a break?”

Two hands stretched out to him, he took both of them and let Takashi and Haruhi pull him to his feet. “I guess I can do that. The idea will keep, anyway.”

Haruhi rewarded him with a kiss on the cheek. “It’s a good one. But we are on a beautiful secluded white sand beach on a sunny afternoon. The water’s warm. Let’s go swimming and explore the pools.” Haruhi took off running towards a rock outcropping, pulling Kyouya and Takashi with her. Their combined laughter echoed across the waves as they reached the outcropping. It stood about three meters tall and curved around. At the base of it, Haruhi turned to the others. “Tamaki told me that he did a bit of exploring when they were originally looking at this property and the water is deep enough to dive in and there is a sandbar in the cove that keeps the riptides out. There are several species of starfish and anemones.”

“Sounds promising,” Kyouya grinned at her and started climbing to the top of the rock. Within moments, Takashi and Haruhi joined him. Together they stood on the top of it and stared out at the scenery. They saw the twins parasailing as Hani and Tamaki watched and laughed.

“Last on in is a rotten egg,” Haruhi joked. Then with a wicked smile, she reached up and unfastened the top of her bikini. With a whoop she pulled the ties on her bikini bottoms and dove naked into the crystal water below.

“She has been hanging out with the twins for too long,” Kyouya said as he admired her sleek form hit the water in a perfect dive.

“I’m not complaining,” Takashi laughed and shucked his own swim trunks. “Are you coming?” He
challenged before following her into the water.

Kyouya took a moment to appreciate Takashi’s chiseled form before removing his shirt and shorts. He gathered their clothes into a pile on the top of the rock and jumped in after them.

The warm water enveloped him as he emerged laughing. Quickly he swam over to where Haruhi and Takashi were treading water.

“It always amazes me that skinny-dipping feels so different than swimming in a suit. It’s really not much difference in fabric coverage, but…” Haruhi’s voice trailed off.

“It’s a radically different sensation,” Kyouya supplied, “and not one that I am used to.” He moved his body in the water and felt the sensation of it caressing his skin.

“Me neither, but I am definitely enjoying the view,” Haruhi laughed. With a splash at each of them, she darted off, daring them to follow her as she dove down in the water towards some interestingly colored starfish.

Within moments, the two men followed her. They spent almost an hour exploring around the cove before moving into a sheltered area near the rock. Pulling herself part way out of the water, Haruhi leaned back against the rock, closed her eyes, and let the warmth of the sun soak into her skin. A rustle of water and movement on either side of her let her know that Takashi and Kyouya had joined her. They relaxed in companionable silence for a few moments.

Kyouya opened his eyes to see Takashi looking at him with a grin. He unabashedly let his eyes roam over Kyouya’s body and Kyouya felt a different kind of warmth flood him. Two can play at this game. With a challenge in his eyes, he returned the favor, letting Takashi know without words how attractive, Kyouya found him.

Takashi’s answering grin was blinding and with a flick of his head towards Haruhi, he made a suggestion.

Kyouya answered it with a nod and in unison they both reached out and slide one hand down her leg while the other captured her hand and gently pinned it above her head.

Haruhi’s eyes flew open at the sudden movement. Her breath caught at the look the two dark haired men were giving her. Silver and dark eyes pinned her as completely as their hands. Her body arched of its own accord under their curious fingers as they explored her thighs, the slight curve of her hips, and the swell of her breasts. But it was the moment that they leaned across her to lock lips with each other that a moan escaped her lips. Dear gods…

Kyouya deepened the kiss at her moan, letting her see his tongue sliding and twisting around Takashi’s, knowing that she would get wet just by the observation. Her moan turned deeper and her hands flew up to their hips, gripping tightly.

Takashi broke the kiss at the feel of her hand moving from his hip to slide over his cock. His own breath heavy he leaned down and kissed her just as deeply, while Kyouya moved to nuzzle her neck. He slid his free hand up and teased the taut nipple, rolling it between his thumb and forefinger, swallowing her groans of pleasure in his kiss.

Kyouya nipped at her earlobe before murmuring, “you are a nearly as devious as the twins, you know…”

Haruhi broke the kiss with Takashi to force out breathily, “what do you mean?”
“You know exactly what I mean, love,” Kyouya slid his hand into the warmth between her legs as Takashi latched onto one of her breasts with his mouth. Their eyes met in amusement as the joint motion startled a near scream from her lips.

Haruhi had enough presence of mind to move her hands from their rock hard members to their hips before they tightened in a death grip; the combined motion of the two men bringing her quickly to the edge of orgasm.

Kyouya was nearing the edge just by the sounds she was making under their hands, the grip on she had his hip, and the grip that Takashi had on his cock, having moved his hand to Kyouya when he replaced it with his mouth on Haruhi’s breast. He held the pressure back by sheer will for a moment to enjoy the sensation before moving between Haruhi’s legs with a growl. Lifting her hips, he thrust into her with a sigh as Takashi’s hand shifted to tease her clit and stroke his shaft with each thrust.

The dual sensation for both of them was enough to send them over the edge in moments. As her body arched in release under Kyouya’s, Takashi quickly put his other hand behind her head to cushion it from the rock as he watched in fascination at the way they moved together.

With a final sigh Kyouya collapsed against Haruhi’s chest, breathing heavily. He could feel her frantic heartbeat under his cheek. He let his eyes flutter closed as he enjoyed the sensations coursing through his body.

Haruhi slid her one of her hands into his hair, and with the other pulled Takashi down for another kiss. “Thank you,” she murmured against his lips.

“My pleasure, ashke,” he replied with a smile.

Kyouya angled his head and opened his eyes so he could watch the kiss. He enjoyed watching her kiss, nearly as much as she enjoyed watching him and Takashi was definitely worth watching as the slightly older man took his time and demonstrated his obvious skill. Movement out of the corner of his eye, reminded Kyouya that Takashi was still hard, having waited for them to find their release first. An idea formed in his mind and with a grin he rolled off of Haruhi, and took Takashi into his mouth.

A loud groan flew out of Takashi’s throat as he felt Kyouya’s talented tongue twist around his cock. Trying desperately not to buck his hips into that warmth, Takashi grabbed for the rock behind him for support.

Haruhi took in the incredible sight of Kyouya sucking off Takashi. She was nearly ready to come again from the sounds her partner was making. He waited for us, now it’s time to return the favor. Knowing her partner’s love of bondage was nearly equal to her own, she maneuvered herself so she was behind him, her legs pressed against his hips and her hands gripping his wrists, holding him firmly in place.

Kyouya looked up at her as she was moving, but soon saw what she had planned. With a smile, he redoubled his efforts as Takashi moaned under him. Licking his way up Takashi’s cock, he said in the voice that he knew would cause Takashi to shiver, “You waited for us to come first. I think that deserves a reward. Don’t you think so Haruhi?”

The smirk in Haruhi’s voice was evident as she replied, “most definitely.”

Takashi groaned as she sunk her teeth into his neck.

Kyouya stretched up, holding Takashi’s gaze as he slid his body against his before whispering in his
ear, “I want to see you wrecked and know that we caused it. How does that sound?”

“Please…” Takashi moaned.

Kyouya winked at Haruhi. He slid a hand down and gripped Takashi hard before saying, “Oh come on now… I know you can beg more prettily than that. Haruhi hasn’t heard you beg for me yet… and I want to hear it again.”

Takashi shuddered at the command in Kyouya’s tone. He licked his lips and said again, “Please.”

“Better… but still not quite there.” Kyouya slipped two fingers in his mouth as he moved back down to Takashi’s erection. Pulling them out, he kept the grip on Takashi’s shaft, while teasing his puckered hole with his wet fingertips.

Takashi groaned, “Gods… Please… please.”

“One more time,” Kyouya breathed against Takashi’s cock.

Haruhi could feel the tension in Takashi’s body and marveled at his control even as he was being shattered. She looked down at Kyouya and nodded. She licked up the side of his neck and flicked her tongue in his ear. “Once more for me?”

“PLEASE!!!” Takashi nearly screamed as Kyouya simultaneously swallowed him whole, thrust two fingers in deep, and Haruhi started sucking on his neck. He was flying as Kyouya’s fingers brushed across his prostrate; the combination of command, sucking pressure at his neck and cock, tight grip on his wrists, and deep penetration causing his body to jerk hard in release as he cried out their names. He had no idea how long he was flying, but he came back into his body slowly. He could feel that they had shifted positions again and were both softly caressing his body. Blinking his eyes open he just looked at them, unable to say what he was feeling.

Kyouya grinned at the expression on Takashi’s face, while Haruhi quietly chuckled. “Yup, I would definitely say that you looked wrecked.” He bent down and kissed Takashi’s lips again softly. “You are something else.”

“That’s a good thing, I hope.” Takashi managed to find his voice.

“Definitely.” Kyouya responded. “Now do you think you can move? I saw the others heading back in, so they should be back on the beach for lunch in a few minutes.”

The rumbling sound that Takashi’s stomach made at the mention of food was enough to answer the question. Still he replied, “I’ll find a way to manage. Do we still need to get our clothes?”

“I climbed up and got them, while you were out,” Kyouya answered. “We don’t have to walk back naked. Though it wouldn’t take much for the others to guess at what we have been doing.”

“True. But the details at least we can keep to ourselves,” Takashi said and heaved himself up with an effort. He helped them both stand. Quickly they put their swim clothes back on, but before they started walking back, he pulled them in for a hug. “Thank you both… that was far more than anything I ever expected to have… and I hope that we can do it again in the future.”

“Count on it partner,” Haruhi replied with a wicked grin. “Watching you both is seriously sexy.” Without warning her stomach rumbled, causing them both to grin and a wince to cross her face. She grumbled, “Way to kill the mood stomach.”

“Not at all. We know you get hungry after sex. It’s become almost legendary,” Kyouya grinned then
ducked as she swung at him. “Hey!”

“Thanks for bursting that bubble,” she replied sarcastically.

“Exertion requires the body to refuel,” Takashi said seriously. “It is a perfectly normal reaction.”

“See!! Takashi is on my side at least.” Haruhi teased.

Kyouya’s stomach loudly, causing all three to burst into giggles. “Apparently my stomach is voting against my mind. Come on; let’s go see what Tamaki got for lunch.”

Hand in hand, the three of them walked back towards the beach where they could see the others setting out chairs.
Tamaki was the first to notice them. Kaoru was occupied rubbing more sunblock into Hikaru’s fair skin and Hani was digging through the baskets the caterers had dropped off on a search for something sweet. He watched as the three of them emerged from behind a rock far down the beach holding hands, Haruhi seeming so small between her two tall companions. His heart skipped a beat as he watched her point something out to her companions, pulling them towards the shallows as she peered down to watch something skitter across the sand. He imagined he could hear her laughter as the three of them watched a crab scuttle back into the water, Haruhi so focused on the crab that she didn’t see Kyōuya and Takashi exchange glances over her head. He did hear her shriek as Kyōuya pinched her backside, which caused her to jump in surprise, innocentely blaming it on another crab. He watched in amusement as she put her hands on her hips, adopted an exaggerated aggressive stance, and started to tackle Kyōuya to the sand, only to be swept up into Takashi’s arms and pinned tightly to the warrior’s chest. He felt tightness in his groin as he watched a laughing Kyōuya step up to the two of them and kiss her on the nose, before placing a hand on Takashi’s cheek and kissing him quickly. Huh? That’s new. I mean I saw them the other night but thought it was a one-time kind of thing. Our dear Shadow King is in danger of having as many of us fall in love with him as Haruhi. Which is funny if you think about it… He was always the aloof one of the Host Club, admired from a distance but never approached. He cultivated that cold sarcastic demeanor to hide the fact that he is deeply passionate. I could see hints of it so long ago, when his father asked him to befriend me as a good social opportunity, which is why I stubbornly remained his friend when so many others told me that I was wasting my time. Kyōuya was always worth it. It just took Haruhi and Hikaru to make HIM see it.

He’s coming into his own on this trip. He’s finally acknowledging who he wants to be and it’s damn sexy.

A frosted strawberry cookie suddenly appeared in his line of sight, temporarily blocking his view of the trio. Hani looked up at Tamaki and said with a twinkle in his eyes, “Cookie for your thoughts.”

Tamaki took the cookie and took a bite, relishing the tart sweetness. “I was just thinking that Kyōuya is just as dangerous as Haruhi ever was.”

“Dangerous how?”

“Dangerous in the way we are all at risk of falling at least a little bit in love with him.” Tamaki slanted a look sideways at the other blonde. “Don’t tell me you haven’t thought about it.”

“I have always thought he was attractive, but you are right Tama-chan. Until this trip, it wasn’t anything more than attraction and now…”

“He’s finally found his power.”

“Power or Confidence. Either would be a good description,” Hani said and took a bite of his own cookie. “Not that he wasn’t confident before, but this is a new kind of confidence. It’s definitely sexy.”

“It’s rather surreal for me,” Tamaki responded. “It used to be that he would make a suggestion or request that I do something and I would do it if I felt like it. If I didn’t feel like doing it, I would get someone else to do it instead or ignore it completely. Yet, he always kept me grounded when my
ideas got a bit too elaborate while still making me feel like I was the one in charge. Now I want to do anything he asks, simply because he is asking. It makes me happy in an odd way.” A faint pink crept up Tamaki’s cheeks as he saw Hani nodding in understanding. “It also gets me hard.”

“A good Dom can do that. Sometimes with only a look.”

“I never really knew or understood that kind of thing – the BDSM thing – until we went to that Workshop. The whole thing really opened up my eyes to a greater world. I am glad that I talked Haruhi into taking it here in Paris rather than doing it in Japan. I am REALLY glad all of you wanted to join her.”

“Haruhi would do almost anything for you Tama-chan. She always has. Actually, I am pretty sure all of us would. You are our fearless leader.” Hani smirked at the last bit before continuing. “Seriously though, I think you needed to be reminded of that. Yes, she is head over heels in love with Hikaru and Kyouya, and she is pretty close to that with Takashi, but a part of her will always be yours. Don’t forget that.”

Tamaki sighed, “I don’t want to interfere… and then there’s Kaoru.”

“Kao-chan is falling hard and fast for you, but I can see that you are doing the same for him. He is also falling for Renge. The heart is a flexible thing if you are willing to set aside social stereotypes. It’s not easy but it is rewarding. You are also forgetting that we are a really close group of friends. Closer in some ways than most traditional families.”

“But you are in love with Takashi…” Tamaki’s voice trailed off as he tried to figure out exactly what he wanted to say.

“I am,” Hani grinned up at Tamaki. “Because I love him, I love seeing him happy… and Haruhi makes him happy in a way that I can’t. I also know that he has been attracted to Kyouya from the moment that he first met him.” Hani nodded to the trio, still a distance down the beach. “I don’t blame him, because I was too.”

Tamaki grinned at that, “I don’t think there was any of us that weren’t attracted to Kyouya at least a little.” He paused and continued. “But it really doesn’t bother you?”

“Not in the slightest. Takashi’s attraction to Kyouchan doesn’t lessen his love for me. I know this. Besides, like you mentioned earlier there is just something about Kyouya. I am very much a dominant, but I would be willing to bottom to him because like you said earlier, there’s just something about him that makes you want to please him. But I am also intrigued about Topping with him, seeing what the two of us working together could be like.”

A full body shudder ran through Tamaki at the thought of kneeling before both Kyouya and Hani, blue and silver eyes piercing through him as they… Tamaki cleared his throat, “Ok, that would be incredibly hot. Sign me up. Please.”

Hani chuckled, “I will keep that in mind. But back to my original thought… I am in love with Takashi, but I could easily see myself falling for Kyouya, Kaoru, or you for that matter. I am attracted to all of you in different ways. Does that bother you?”

Tamaki thought about it for a moment. “Wait, you didn’t mention Haruhi in there.”

“Haruhi and I talked about this the other evening. We love each other the way she and Kaoru love
each other. A deep and enduring friendship, but nothing more than that.”

“Really? I didn’t understand it at first, but after Hika kissed me, I got it.” Hani smirked when Tamaki flushed. “Wait – that probably came out wrong.”

Hani took pity on his friend and didn’t tease him further, but he still grinned as he said. “I won’t judge, I promise.”

“Thanks,” Tamaki replied before a thought crossed his mind. “You mentioned that Haruhi fills a part of Takashi’s life that you can’t. What did you mean by that?”

Hani sighed, “I can’t turn off being dominant or admittedly being slightly sadistic. I tried it during Host Club, but I always left vaguely unsatisfied. Cute was all well and good, but I need the trust/control. You already know that Takashi is my sub, and he provides a lot of that for me, but he deals with pain, he doesn’t really enjoy it. That’s what was so shocking the other night watching you and Kaoru. He really does love the pain. He has that rare ability to convert it to pleasure. I was thinking about asking him if he wanted to play more with me. Call it odd wiring or whatever, but I LIKE giving pain/pleasure to those who can appreciate it, it makes me hard that someone can trust me so much… and I want to return that gift by taking care of them after.”

“I think that he would really like that.” Tamaki replied. “I will be honest; it scared me when I saw what I did the next day. I don’t know that I could do it again… but Kaoru obviously loved every moment. I want… I want him to be happy and he needs that part too. I guess that’s what you meant about Takashi.”

“Yes. Haruhi is the softness that I can’t be. And for her, Takashi is the quiet strength that no one else can quite be.”

“I can see that.” Tamaki sighed.

“Tama-chan, can I ask you something?”

“Sure.”

“You mentioned kneeling before Kyouya and me earlier. In that scene, who are you more strongly connected to?”

Tamaki turned bright red, “Ummm…”

Hani laughed, “It was Kyouya wasn’t it.”

Tamaki nodded sheepishly.

“Doesn’t surprise me. You have been best friends the longest; it makes sense that he is the one that you picture. I don’t want to tell you what to do, but if you feel content in a more submissive role to Kyo-chan, I would say embrace it. It’s obvious that when he is in that mindset, you are the one he wants. His eyes follow you.”

“Gods this is confusing.” Tamaki sighed.

“Agreed. But it doesn’t have to be… It just needs to be talked about all together. Just because you want to be submissive to Kyouya doesn’t mean that you don’t want something else with the others.
How do you feel when you are with Kaoru?"

“Intrigued.” Tamaki said at once. “He makes me laugh and I am fascinated by the way he takes an abstract idea and turns it into this elaborate and incredibly beautiful piece of clothing. It’s like music with fabric.”

“And Haruhi?”

“Happy.” Tamaki said quietly. “Not that I can’t be happy with everyone else, but she just always somehow manages to make my day a little bit better just with her smile. I don’t know how else to describe it.”

‘She has that effect,” Hani agreed with a smile. “I know how you feel about Kyouya and Hikaru, but what about Takashi and me?” Hani’s voice lilted up in curiosity.

Tamaki fought down a blush as he stammered, “Well… that shower was pretty damn hot. I wouldn’t mind doing that again someday.”

Hani grinned, “Oh I think that can be arranged Tama-chan. I think it can definitely be arranged.”

Tamaki ran a hand through his hair, closed his eyes for a moment, and took a deep breath. “So what do we all do now? How does this even work?”

“How does what work?” a curious and lilting feminine voice queried as Tamaki’s eyes snapped open to see Kyouya, Takashi and Haruhi standing next to Hani and him. They look relaxed. The sound of footsteps in sand alerted him to the fact that the twins were also approaching.

“Hey Boss, you guys going to stand here all day? Food’s getting cold.” Hikaru said before walking over to casually drape an arm around Haruhi and press a kiss to her cheek.

“Food. Right!” Tamaki jumped on the chance to switch topics and started to head back to the tables where their food baskets were sitting, when Kyouya’s hand on his arm stopped him.

“Tamaki,” Kyouya asked again gently, “How does what work?”

“I think the same way we already have been,” Haruhi said with a smile and pulled away from Hikaru and Kyouya to wrap her arms around Tamaki. “We have all just pretty much going with whatever happens the last week. As long as we keep talking to each other, everything will be fine.” A thought crossed her mind which made her pull back and look hard at him. “Unless you are saying that you don’t want to do this anymore…”

“No!” Tamaki yelped and pulled her back into his chest, holding onto her tightly. “That’s not it at all… I want this. I just am not sure about how to do it all…”

Kyouya stepped forward and laid a hand on Tamaki’s shoulder. “I understand, mon ami. I do. It’s been an interesting week. All of you have been wonderfully indulgent in the idea of a date week. But it’s not just about that anymore is it?”

Tamaki sighed, “No it is… but it isn’t… Oh I don’t know what I mean.”
“I think what Tama-chan is trying to say is we are all finding new dynamics and new things about ourselves - stuff we never thought we would find intriguing and who we want to do certain things with.”

“Meaning?” Kaoru asked.

“Meaning…” Hani turned to Kaoru and said, “I would like to know if you would like to join Takashi and me at a private play party tonight. You may remember Dominic, Kara, and David from the class last Saturday. They are teaching another smaller class this weekend, here on the island, since Kara was originally from Santorini. They are having a small gathering and had invited Takashi and me to come but I thought we were still going to be in Paris all week, so I turned them down. I sent them a message earlier and they were excited to know that by coincidence we were also here. They extended the invitation again.”

Kaoru looked stunned. “You are inviting me to a BDSM party?”

Hani laughed, “Basically. I have to admit I was intrigued by the way you responded to Tamaki last Saturday and I would love to see you responding under me.” He gave Kaoru a wink. “But there is no pressure here. If you feel you aren’t ready or don’t want to go, I promise we won’t be disappointed.”

“I… I think I would really like that, actually,” Kaoru swiftly looked between his brother who was grinning and making shoo-ing motions at him, to Tamaki who nodded and gave him a wink.

“Hani and I were talking a bit about it earlier, and I know that I can’t give that part of you the attention it needs and he can,” Tamaki’s voice was quiet. “It’s my turn to be honest, I probably won’t be the best person to Top you, because when I am in that kind of mindset, I really would rather be kneeling beside you - not as much for the pain/pleasure but for the pleasure of service and sensation. It’s not something that I want all the time, but I realized that the sexual commands the other night were making me hornier than I have ever been. I like receiving that kind of command better than I like giving it.” Tamaki paused and slanted a look sideways at Kyouya. “I also realized that I prefer to hear them from you, Kyo.”

Kyouya slid his hand up Tamaki’s arm and locked it into his blond locks. With a feral smile, he said against Tamaki’s ear. “I am glad to hear that. Because I really like the idea of seeing you on your knees sucking me off.”

Tamaki’s body betrayed him by giving a full body shudder, while Kyouya stepped back with a smirk. He laughed as he saw Hani fan a hand in front of his face.

“Kyo-chan, we definitely need to sit down and have a conversation,” Hani grinned.

Haruhi could feel the shudder through the arms that were still holding her, so she giggled quietly when Tamaki bent down and murmured into her ear. “How on earth can you deal with that on a daily basis?”

“I can’t,” she responded simply. “Not that I don’t get completely turned on when either Kyo or Hika does it, but I can’t do it all the time or I will burn out. So… I am finding other just-as-interesting outlets. Which brings me to a question… I know Hikaru and Kyouya were planning a date night with just the two of them, and if Kaoru is going out with Takashi and Hani, want to be my date tonight? No thunderstorm needed.”
It was Tamaki’s turn to look at both Kyouya and Hikaru, who both nodded. Hikaru added, “It would be good for both of you.”

With a little twist, Tamaki twirled Haruhi out of his arms, before bowing to kiss her hand. “In that case, I would be honored to be your date this evening. Do you have anything in mind?”

“I honestly hadn’t planned that far out.” Haruhi looked sheepish.

“Leave it all to me! It shall be perfect!!” Tamaki said in a dramatic voice, which made Haruhi wince.

Smiling to let Tamaki know she was only joking, she responded. “Oh dear, what have I gotten myself into?”

Hikaru responded with a laugh, “Nothing that you won’t be able to handle, my love. Now, I don’t know about all of you, but I am starving. Last one to the food has to wear Haruhi’s bikini on the beach tomorrow!!”

As one, seven friends ran towards the picnic area, their laughter echoing across the beach.
“Here, you will want to wear this tonight,” Kaoru said as he laid a clothing bag on the bed.

“I am going to be your dress up doll for the rest of my life, aren’t I?” Haruhi replied with a grin, as she looked at Kaoru in the reflection of the mirror she was using to put on her make-up.

Kaoru grinned back at her as he walked forward and laid a small kiss on her cheek. “Yup! Though, I prefer to say that I am your personal stylist. All the cool kids have them, after all.” He winked at her. “If it makes you feel any better, I also picked out Tamaki and Kyouya’s clothes for the evening. Hika, naturally already has fabulous taste, so I didn’t worry about him.”

Haruhi chuckled, “what about Hani and Takashi?”

Kaoru’s smile was a bit more sheepish, “When I went to make suggestions, Hani gave me this look and reminded me that he was in control this evening and I would be wearing whatever HE chose for me.”

Haruhi smirked, “Oh really?!? I hope I get a chance to see this. I don’t think I have ever seen you willingly let someone other than your mother pick clothes for you. Even then, that was specifically for modeling shoots.”

“It’s an odd feeling,” Kaoru responded, “but it does help put me in the mindset for this evening.” He sighed. “I am a bit nervous.”

Concerned, Haruhi set down her mascara and turned to face her friend taking his hands in hers. “You know that neither Hani nor Takashi would be offended if you decided that you aren’t ready. You could join Tamaki and me on our date.”

Kaoru squeezed her hand, “Thank you for the offer, but no. You and Tamaki deserve to have fun without me crashing it. I am nervous about going out with Hani and Takashi, but it’s the kind of nervous that I got before I stepped on the catwalk the first time with Mom. More worried that I will fall flat on my face and embarrass her than about the act itself. Does that make sense?”

“I think so. How do you feel about being a submissive for the evening?”

Kaoru could hear the combined worry and curiosity in her tone, so he made sure to maintain eye contact when he responded. “Intrigued, mostly. It’s something that I have always wanted to do, but didn’t know how or where to do so, and I didn’t want to walk into a club by myself not knowing what to expect.”

“It could have gone really really badly, if you didn’t know the crowd or went to the wrong club,” Hani said as he walked into the room. He was wearing a skin tight black latex shirt, with black leather pants, and black leather boots that laced up to his knee. His bright blue eyes were rimmed with black eyeliner, which made them stand out even more. His normally tousled blond locks were slicked back away from his face, and he looked as far from the cute lolitasha Haruhi first met as was possible. He looked dangerous. A soft “Wow!” escaped Haruhi’s lips and Hani gave her a quick wink and grin before turning back to Kaoru. “I am glad that you thought better of it. 90% of the people that you will meet are great, but like in any community there are people who prey on the new and inexperienced. That’s why it is always suggested that you go to general community socials,
which are called munches, because they are usually at a restaurant or coffee shop and are a safe way to meet new people, or if you are going to a club or open play party for the first time, that you go with someone that you trust.”

“I was worried about that, which is why I never even brought up the idea to Hikaru,” Kaoru said. “Well, that and the fact that we were still technically too young to get in without fake ID’s.”

“Knowing you two, I am more surprised that you didn’t already have them,” Hani laughed.

“Mom found them and threatened to ground us and send us to a reform school if we didn’t destroy them in front of her.” Kaoru mumbled, his cheeks a bright pink. “It was the only time we have ever seen her completely furious at us.”

“With good reason,” Hani’s response was gentle. “I think your mom knows far more about alternate lifestyles and the creatures out there that prey in them, then you know or she has admitted. She also knows you two and figured out what kind of trouble or hurt you could get into.”

“That sounds like mom,” Kaoru sighed. “Even when she was away, she still knew everything that we had been up to.”

“I love your mom,” Haruhi replied quietly. “She reminds me a lot of mine.”

Kaoru pulled her into a hug, “She loves you too. She thinks of you like her own daughter. You should have heard the threat Hika got if he hurt you.” He looked down at her muffled giggle and wiped away the tear that had slipped down her cheek. “Shhh… none of that. We are here to have fun, remember?”

“I know,” Haruhi replied and took a deep breath. “Just sometimes I miss her. But I think she would be proud of me, even though most of the rest of society may label me.”

“I am sure of it, Haru-chan.” Hani caressed her hair as Kaoru held her a moment longer.

“Anyway,” Haruhi’s tone turned brisk as she turned to Hani. “Did you need something from me or were you looking for Kao?”

“I was looking for Kaoru,” Hani replied acknowledging the change of topic. “I wanted to make sure he was still comfortable with the idea of going with us.”

“I am,” Kaoru answered. “A bit nervous, because I don’t know what to expect and I don’t want to disappoint you, but more excited and curious than nervous.”

“You won’t disappoint me, Kao-chan that I promise.” Hani smiled. “I wanted to ask if you would be comfortable wearing a collar tonight. It would mean that you are under my care and protection. Basically, it’s an indicator to everyone that if they want to touch or play with you they need to talk to me first. I will talk with you and to see if you really want to do it. This way, you don’t have to worry about saying no to someone you have never met or may be intimidated by. You can also choose to just sit by me and observe for the night. No one will question it.”

“I would like that,” Kaoru nodded. “I have to admit, the idea is a bit of a turn on.” “Good.” Hani smirked. “Then come here and kneel in front of me.”

“Oooh! What’s happening?” Hikaru ran into the room curiously, alerted by a spike in the twin bond.
“I was just about to collar Kaoru for the evening,” Hani replied.

“Cool… I know he was always curious about doing that.” Hikaru gave his brother a wink before flopping on the bed to watch. “He even tried on the dog’s collar once.”

“What a way to spoil the moment, Hika…” Kaoru grumbled as his twin grinned back unrepentantly.

“Kaoru. I requested something of you.” Hani said quietly but firmly.

As if Hani’s words were an electric shock that pierced through his chest, Kaoru’s eyes snapped to the other man and he became the focus of Kaoru’s complete attention, while everyone else including his brother, faded into the background. Without another word, Kaoru walked forward, knelt in front of Hani, and looked up at him.

Hani looked deep into Kaoru’s eyes, searching for something. When he found it he nodded and pulled a black bit of leather from his back pocket. He held it up so Kaoru could look at it.

Kaoru nodded at the question in Hani’s eyes.

“Kaoru, this collar means that you are under my control and my protection. The length of time will be from this moment until I remove it when we return back to the house later this evening. If you wish to be released from it earlier, then say Hyacinth. It will come off and I will no longer be in charge of you, though I will still be your protector. Do you understand and accept these terms?”

Kaoru nodded again before saying, “I understand, Sir.”

Hani smiled at that, “Good. You know basic protocol. What is your safeword for removing the collar?”

“Hyacinth.”

“Yes. Is there a word you would rather use? Keep in mind it shouldn’t be something that would come up in normal conversation.”

“Hyacinth is fine, Sir.”

Kaoru felt his whole body shiver as he watched Hani open the buckle on the leather collar. He bit back a moan as Hani’s warm hands slid around his neck to fasten it in the back.

“Oh, Kao-chan, you are going to be so much fun,” Hani smirked at Kaoru’s reaction to his touch; the laughter in his voice notice that the solemnity of the moment was over.

“I think we both are going to have fun tonight, sir.” Kaoru grinned.

“We can discuss details of things you might want to try later but for now, I need to know what your comfort level is for exhibitionism.”

“Really?? Have you met my brother?” Hikaru laughed from the sideline, ducking as Kaoru threw a pillow at him.

Hani smiled at the exchange but waited for Kaoru to respond.
“All Hika’s teasing aside; I am very much an exhibitionist. I would prefer not to be naked, at least not naked for the whole night, since I don’t know anyone other than you and Takashi, but anything else I am ok with.”

“I know you are ok with leather but are you allergic to latex at all? I was thinking about putting you in that since Takashi will be in leather. You and I are close to the same size, so you can wear a pair of my pants. Would that be ok?”

“Absolutely! After seeing Mistress Raina in it last Saturday, I am curious about it as a material. I was going to ask about your shirt, but it can wait.”

“Wonderful. We are going to turn a lot of heads tonight. It should be fun.” Hani laughed. “If you want to come with me, I can help you into them. They are a bit tricky at first.”

“Yes sir. Would it be ok if after, I returned to help Haruhi finish getting dressed? I need to help her with an updo for her hair.”

“Why are we pulling my hair into an updo? Why can’t I just leave it in a ponytail?” Haruhi grumbled.

“Because it won’t look right with the dress,” Kaoru responded with a grin, his eyes never leaving Hani’s.

“Of course, you can come back and help Haru-chan.”

“Thank you, sir.”

Together Hani and Kaoru left the room.

“Kaoru’s right, you know,” Hikaru said as he stood up and crossed to her. “I know what’s in the bag. Your hair will look better up. You are going to be stunning.” He handed her an eyeliner pencil. “Go for the smoky-eye look that Kao and I taught you, and use the silver shadow for an accent.”

“For most people it would be very weird that my boyfriend knows more about make-up than I do,” Haruhi teased.

Hikaru grinned, “Thank the gods that we aren’t ‘most people’ then. It would be so boring.” He pulled her in for a kiss, smiling as she melted against him.

“If you keep kissing me like that, I am never going to get done,” Haruhi said breathlessly when she urgently had to come up for air.

“I shall endeavor to behave then,” Hikaru winked at her. “At least until I have you in my arms later. Until then, I will practice on Kyouya.”

Haruhi laughed as she turned back to the mirror. She looked at her boyfriend through it. “Oh he is going to be in such trouble tonight. I know what you are like when you are in this mood.”

“And what is this mood, exactly?” Hikaru said and focused on laying little nipping kisses down her neck and shoulder as he silently shook with laughter at her body’s reaction.
“Horny, mischievous, and in full-blown troublemaker mode,” Haruhi answered with a smirk. “What do you boys have planned for the evening anyway?”

“I am taking our dear Shadow King to a dance club I know. It has fantastic music and drinks.”

Haruhi arched an eyebrow at him, “There’s something else you haven’t mentioned, isn’t there?”

Hikaru gave her an innocent look and sat down on the bed. “It may also happen to be a gay bar.”

“HIKARU!”

Hikaru held up his hands and said seriously, “Kyouya’s hot and he’s mine. I want to show that off…I admit it. BUT the club also has an exclusive membership and cameras or other recording devices are not allowed. If you are caught taking pictures of the patrons, you are immediately kicked out and banned. I thought it would give him a chance to cut loose without worrying about it getting back to his father or the press.”

“Does Kyouya know about this?”

“Actually, I do,” Kyouya said from the doorway. He walked over to kiss her before continuing. “It might be fun to be Hikaru’s boy-toy for the evening. At the very least it will be entertaining…and I am thankful for the no press rule.”

“I can see that,” Haruhi said. Then out of curiosity, she asked, “So what did Kaoru pull for you to wear?”

“I came in to get changed now, so you can see for yourself.” Kyouya answered. “We have reservations in an hour for dinner before we go out to the club.”

“Crap! Is it really only an hour until our reservation?” Hikaru bounced off the bed and dove into the closet.

“Perhaps next time, you should leave off teasing Tamaki and get ready.”

“The Boss deserves a little teasing for his date plans… even you have to admit that, Kyo.”

“Perhaps, but I happen to think it is a smart idea.”

“Am I the ONLY one who has no idea what Tamaki and I are doing on our date tonight?” Haruhi pulled the mascara away from her eyes to glare at her boyfriends.

“Yes!” Hikaru grinned at her. “But Kyo is right. You are going to have fun… It’s just… well… You know the Boss…”

“Hikaru!” Kyouya’s sharp tone from the closet didn’t diminish the grin on the redhead.

Without an ounce of remorse, Hikaru pulled on a pair of leather pants and walked over to Haruhi grabbing a fitted silver shirt on the way. Kissing her on the cheek he said, “You are going to love it, I promise.”

Kyouya stepped out of the closet in an outfit reminiscent of that he wore on the red carpet – black leather pants, and a black military cut wool jacket, but the satin shirt was a deep royal blue instead of
black. Hikaru’s low whistle made him spin around slowly.

“Oh you are going to cause such a stir tonight, lover!” Hikaru grinned and pulled him in for a kiss.

“I think we both are,” Kyoya grinned back, eyeing Hikaru appreciatively.

“Part of me wants to skip my date to see you both in action,” Haruhi said with a smile as she turned to watch them.

“Next time, my love, next time,” Hikaru replied. “Besides, I really want to see you in this dress, so we HAVE to do it again sometime soon.”

“I will take pictures,” Kaoru said from the arch of the doorway. He looked over both Hikaru and Kyoya and continued, “I approve. You both are going to break the hearts of all the Santorini boys. Now kiss your girlfriend goodbye, or you are going to miss your reservation time. We all know Christos is a stickler for time at his restaurant.”

Hikaru looked at Kaoru lounging so casually against the doorframe, shirtless, the shiny black latex pants riding low on his hips leaving nothing to the imagination, black low heeled riding boots, and black collar with a silver ring around his neck. He gave another low whistle. “Damn brother, we aren’t the only ones going to be causing a stir!”

Kaoru smirked and walked forward, rolling his hips and giving Haruhi a wink as she stifled a giggle.

“So do I look properly submissive?”

“You would do better if you said that from your knees,” Kyoya growled and Kaoru’s heart fluttered.


Kyoya smiled at him as he responded, “Yes, but try to remember that you are Hani’s tonight. You don’t need to react to anyone but him. He is the one in control of you, not me or anyone else.” He gave Hani a nod through the doorframe, who was smiling at him.

Kaoru looked puzzled and slightly shaken as he stood back up.

Hani came back in and put his hands on Kaoru’s shoulders. “To your unasked question – Yes, I asked Kyoya to test you, if the opportunity came up, because if you were going to react to anyone strongly it would likely be him. I also knew that this lesson would be better learnt here than out in public.”

In a small voice, Kaoru responded, “I had no idea I would react that way until I did. Gods, I am going to mess this up.”

“Hush,” Hani pulled Kaoru into his chest. “You are going to be fine. I’ll be honest – I would be tempted to drop to my knees, if Kyoya growled at me like that. I just know that I don’t HAVE to; it’s a choice that I can make. Do you see the difference? You may be wearing a collar, but you shouldn’t give up your sense of self. There is always a choice and if you don’t like the options you can use the safe word and it will be over.”

“I… I think so,” Kaoru replied. He took a few calming breaths while Hani gently stroked his back. “I
think I would appreciate a way to say No, if it ever happens in the future.”

“Very smart idea, Kao-chan,” Hani smiled and kissed Kaoru’s forehead. “It depends on the situation of course. If someone is being really rude and demanding to you and you do not know them in any way, feel free to be your normal snarky self. Like I said, just because you wear a collar doesn’t mean that you are submissive to everyone. If it is someone that you know or has topped you in the past, it’s up to you and how comfortable you feel with them whether you want to respond or not. You can always say politely – I am sorry, but I am in service to Auriel tonight and I can only answer to him.”

“Auriel?” Kaoru asked.

“I was going to go over this in the car on the way there, but we can do it now. To protect privacy, everyone has a scene name. Most often you will go by it at events and parties, though if you develop strong friendships, naturally you will start to use their given name. I am Auriel. Takashi is Karr. Do you have a preference for a scene name? I was thinking Bowie or Jareth.” Hani grinned. “You have a kind of flair that reminds me of David Bowie.”

Kaoru grinned. “I like Jareth… I used to sketch pictures of ball gowns while watching Labyrinth.”

“Jareth it is. Now, Kyo-chan, I know you and Hika-chan need to get going!”

Kyouya looked at his watch and winced, “Yes we do!” He placed a swift kiss on Haruhi’s lips before giving her to Hikaru to do the same. “Have fun with Tamaki tonight. We will see you when you get back in.”

Haruhi smiled at the two and waved as they walked out the door. “Have fun tonight!! I want to hear all about it tomorrow. Love you!”

Hikaru turned and blew her a kiss, “We love you too!” before running to catch up with Kyouya who was halfway out the door.

Hani snickered before sauntering out the door, “I think we may need to set alarms on everyone’s watches or phones. We always seem to be running late.”

Haruhi looked at Kaoru and grinned. Together they said, “Fashion.”

“All right my princess, let’s get you finished up. Your Prince is waiting and pacing in the other bedroom,” Kaoru laughed.

Haruhi turned and snagged a chair to sit in, having gone through this drill with Kaoru more times than she could count. “So what did Prince Tamaki think of your outfit?”

Kaoru responded through a mouth full of hair pins, “He wants to know when he gets to wear a pair of latex pants… and then he couldn’t stop petting them.”

Curious, Haruhi slip her hand up Kaoru’s thigh, appreciating the incredibly sleek smooth feeling. “I can see why… I could easily spend hours just petting you in them. It’s such a different feeling.”

“You should try it from this end,” Kaoru grinned. With a few more deft twists of her hair and several more pins, Kaoru created a perfect French twist with a few loose strands to frame her face. “There. Perfect.”
“How DO you do that?” Haruhi sighed wistfully. “I have a boyfriend that knows more about make-up than I do and a best friend that knows more about hair… It’s not fair.”

Kaoru kissed her cheek. “Years and years of practice, my princess. Now, let me help you into this dress. I think you are going to love it.”

Haruhi walked over as Kaoru opened the dress bag. He pulled out a handful of material that had a soft lavender sheen to it. It was fluid in his hands.

“Oh what a pretty color!” She cooed and reached out to touch the super soft material before slipping the dressing gown she was wearing off her shoulders.

“I hoped you would like it. It’s more a cocktail dress than a formal dress, but when I saw the material, I couldn’t resist.”

Haruhi took it from him, stepped into it, and slid it over her arms. The fall of the dress came just below her knees, but when she realized it was completely backless except for one small strap that connected across her shoulders, she froze. “Um, Kaoru?”

“I wanted to do something that would show off the amazing ink on your back but still have coverage and elegance. There’s an optional beaded drape that can be put in for effect, but personally, I think it looks better this way. Are you ok with it being backless? I do have a wrap to keep you warm.”

Haruhi took a step towards the mirror and twirled, angling her head so she could see the back. “It really is gorgeous. I think I can get used to it being backless as long as I am not going to fall out of it.”

Kaoru laughed, “That’s what the strap is for, love.” He handed her a pair of four inch lavender heels with silver straps.

“The shoes as always are a perfect fit,” Haruhi sighed appreciating that minor fact, since she knew that she would be in them for several hours.

“You can thank Hika later for that and this…” Kaoru held up a hammered silver necklace with amethysts dangling from it, a matching pair of earrings and bracelet as she ooh’d and aaah’d over them before putting them on.

“I swear, between you both, I am turning into such a girl.” Haruhi grumbled jokingly.

“Nothing wrong with appreciating pretty things - girl or boy,” Kaoru grinned as he fastened the necklace and looked her over from head to toe. “You will definitely knock Tamaki’s socks off.” With a final kiss to her cheek, he said. “I’m going to go grab the camera.”

Haruhi laughed and made a few finishing touches to her make-up before re-applying a shimmery gloss. Satisfied with her appearance, she grabbed the matching wrap from the bag and a small clutch purse and walked out into the living room.

Wolf whistles from Kaoru, Hani and Takashi greeted her, and she turned to smile at them when movement out of the corner of her eye, caught her attention. Turning, she saw Tamaki and the rest of the guys faded into the background.

Tamaki was wearing pressed khaki slacks that were tailored perfectly, a lavender shirt nearly the
same color of her dress which made his eyes stand out, and a cream dinner jacket that accented his shoulders and the pendant he wore on the red carpet. His expression though… it looked as stunned as she felt.

Slowly murmurs of sound filtered in and she realized that the others were talking about them.

“A full minute and counting… my record is getting better. Takashi – you owe me $10.”

“Haru-chan looks amazing Kao-chan. So does Tama-chan.”

“Indeed.”

Finally, Tamaki seemed to snap out of the daze he was in and approached her quickly, holding out a dozen lilac colored roses.

“Lilac?” Haruhi smiled and leaned up to kiss Tamaki on the cheek. “You used to always do red roses.”

He grinned back at her and a thread of something indefinable but enough to cause a flutter in her stomach shot through her. “So much has changed lately; I thought I would do something else a bit differently. I hope you like them.”

“They are beautiful.” Haruhi said shyly.

“They don’t come even close to how radiant you look tonight,” Tamaki replied as he brought her hand to his lips, the compliment sounding completely sincere as tickled across her skin. Haruhi felt a rush of something long forgotten, something that had gone dormant nearly three years prior, start to make itself known. A blush crept across her cheeks.

“Mitskune, you owe me $20. Haruhi blushed first.”

Suddenly the absurdity of the situation came crashing down on both of them and they burst in to laughter. Haruhi turned to the others, “Seriously Takashi? You guys bet on who was going to blush first?”

Her partner’s expression was unrepentant as he sat shirtless on the couch and nodded, while both Kaoru and Hani laughed loudly.

“Well, I am glad we could provide some amusement for you,” she shook her head with a wry smile.

“Let me help you with your wrap,” Tamaki came up and took it from her, caressing her shoulders and causing her to shiver at his touch. “Are you ready to go? Our reservations aren’t quite as strict as the Kyouya and Hikaru’s, but we should leave soon if we want to make them.”

“So what are we doing exactly?” Haruhi asked, unable to keep quiet about her curiosity any longer.

“You’ll see,” Tamaki said with a grin at her small groan. Turning to the others, he said, “Have fun tonight!”

“You too Tama-chan and Haru-chan! See you later!”

Haruhi blew the men on the couch a kiss and turned towards the door, Tamaki’s hand burning on the
bare skin of her back.
Mystery Date

I can’t believe we are doing this. Tamaki’s hand tingled where it lay against Haruhi’s back. It has been so long since I have had Haruhi to myself. Gods, I don’t want to mess this up.

“Penny for your thought Tama,” Haruhi said with a smile and a sideways look at her date.

Tamaki looked down into her chocolate brown eyes and gave her a heart-stopping smile. “I was just thinking that we haven’t done this in a very long time and I don’t want to screw it up.”

Haruhi chuckled, “It does seem odd that we are both a little nervous, doesn’t it. I mean, it’s not like we haven’t done pretty much everything together before.”

They reached a sleek black Jaguar parked off to one side of the long driveway. Tamaki held the door open for her as he replied, “True, but this time there are a lot more people involved than just us. It takes a bit of getting used to.”

“Yes, though it is getting easier,” Haruhi said as she slipped down on the soft leather seats. She waited for Tamaki to shut the door and get in on his side of the car before continuing. “I think this trip was the best idea that you have had in a long time. We needed to get out of Japan and the daily stressors there to determine what we all really want to do. Not just in our relationships but also in our futures.”

Tamaki started the car, the engine purring under the hood, and slipped out the gate of the property before saying, “Have you decided what you, Hikaru, and Kyouya are going to do? What about Takashi? I know the thing with him is new even if you both have been skirting around it for years.”

Haruhi sighed and closed her eyes for a moment. “I don’t know. I have some ideas, but I need to sit down and talk with all of them. We just haven’t really had time here, not that I am complaining.”

“I can see that. Kaoru’s decision to study here in Paris was a surprise to me, but it had to be even more of one to Hikaru, since he didn’t know about it before Kaoru said it.”

“I haven’t had a chance to discuss it with Hika, but it looked like he was going to be ok with it. I am not sure if that because he was expecting it or if he plans on joining him.”

“What about you?” Tamaki glanced sideways at her. “What do you want to do? You know that you need to have all of your applications filled out by the end of next month.”

“I know,” Haruhi sighed, “I had it all worked out – I was going to go to Ouran University or to the University of Tokyo. Now… I think I need to look at other options. My grades and community service should be enough to get me into most universities.”

“You know there’s a University here back in Paris too…” Tamaki let his voice fade out.

Haruhi squeezed his hand, “I know… and it’s sounding more and more appealing. But I need to talk to everyone, including my dad, and get a few different opinions.”

“Fair enough,” Tamaki replied as he pulled into a parking spot in front of a small brick building. “Enough of the uncertain future talk. What do you say to having a little fun?”
Haruhi smiled, “Usually, I am completely up for it, but I never know with you Tama… Some of
your ideas in the past have been… well…”

Tamaki threw a hand across his heart and said with a feigned hurt tone, “Everything I have done was
to impress you and make you smile. Wееееel except maybe for the time with the spider costumes that
was just to get back at the twins, but every other time… or almost every other time… or at least–”

Haruhi leaned over and silenced the blonde with a kiss, “I was joking Tama. You always manage to
make me smile in the end.”

Tamaki winked at her, “Good. Now come on, the event should be starting any minute.” With a
smile, he got out of the car and came around to open her door.

Tamaki kept his hand on the small of her back as he ushered her to an unassuming brown door. The
faintest trickle of music could be heard even through the solid wood. As he opened the door, the
music solidified into a jazzy piano piece. “Take the ‘A’ Train by Billy Stroyhorn,” Tamaki said to
Haruhi as he listened to the lilting tones.

The maître d’ looked up from where he was standing behind a counter and said in Greek, “You
know your American Jazz, young sir! I am impressed!” He gave Haruhi a wink, “You might want to
convince your date to join the contest in progress. It’s Name That Tune night!”

“I thought tonight was dueling pianos,” Tamaki responded in Greek with a slightly worried tone.

“Never fear, young sir, it is both. Did you have a reservation or would you prefer to sit at the bar? I
am afraid the wait for a table is at least an hour.”

“Dueling pianos?” Haruhi looked at Tamaki for clarification having understood only those couple of
words.

“Two pianists who both play at the same time, with the winner scoring more points via audience
applause or enthusiasm. I have heard about it, but never actually seen it in person.” Turning to the
maître d’ he responded, “I have reservations under Suoh.”

The maître d’ looked down at his clip board and smiled, “So you do! And right in the front row!! I
think you will be pleased. If you would follow me…”

Tamaki and Haruhi followed him down a flight of stairs and through a crowded room to a table with
a reserved sign on it just to the left of the center of a raised stage. He held the chair for Haruhi and
dropped her napkin across her lap as she sat down. Handing them their menus, he let them know that
their waitress would be Sarah and she would explain the contest. With a final smile he left them.

Haruhi looked around; the ambiance was reminiscent of the 1940’s with smoked glass, hurricane
lanterns and soft lighting. “This place is cool, Tama. I love it.”

Tamaki smiled and took her hand, “I hoped you would. I have wanted to check it out since I first
heard about it when I was looking at the island, but I ran out of time. I thought it sounded like fun.”

“Oh it’s a rocking good time, sugar,” a pretty brunette woman in her late 20’s wearing a form fitting
dress and perfectly styled hair approached their table. “Hi, I am Sarah and I will be your waitress
tonight. Let me start you both off with something to drink.”

“Thanks,” Tamaki replied and ordered a bottle of wine and a cheese plate. He gave Sarah his best Host Club smile, “I heard there was a contest…”

Two bright spots of color appeared on Sarah’s cheeks as she fanned herself with her pad, glancing quickly at Haruhi, she saw the smirk on the younger girls face and confirmed that while Haruhi didn’t speak Greek, she did speak French before responding. “Oh honey, you’re boyfriend has a smile that could make the devil himself blush!” She schooled her features back into her professional mode and explained the rules of the contest – minimum of 10 correct answers out of 15 songs and the person with the most correct answers would win. At the end, she pointed out the bottle of 1940 Kopke 375 Port that was the prize for the evening and left them to look at the menus a bit longer.

Haruhi had caught the low whistle that Tamaki had unconsciously emitted when Sarah had pointed out the prize and had to ask, “I take it the prize is something of value?”

Tamaki smiled, “You know I have been researching wines and vineyards, not only with Kyouya, but also as part of my family’s business. That particular port comes from a vineyard in Portugal that was established in the 1600’s and was bottled to celebrate the winery’s 375th anniversary. It retails for about $550 Euros. It’s rare… very rare. Now I know why to even be eligible to win the prize you had to get ten correct.”

Haruhi blinked at the bottle, “Over $500 Euros just for a bottle of wine? Who would spend that much on wine?”

Tamaki grinned, “Oh my sweet princess, you have so much to learn…”

Haruhi stuck her tongue out at him, which caused Tamaki to chuckle. He squeezed her hand again. “Do you know what you want to eat?”

Haruhi sighed and looked over the menu, which was naturally printed in Greek. “Honestly, my Greek is really rusty. I don’t know what half this stuff is.”

“If you trust me, I can order for both of us,” Tamaki replied.

Haruhi nodded. “So how many languages do you speak Tama? I don’t think I have ever asked. I know Kyouya speaks Japanese, English, and some basic French. The twins are fluent in Japanese, French, Spanish, English, and Italian. Hani and Takashi both speak Japanese and English.”

Tamaki chuckled, “Well you have to understand that I spent most of my childhood in Europe, so speaking several languages is more of a necessity if you want to go anywhere, than it is in Japan. When I learned that I could potentially be groomed to take over the Suoh family enterprise it made sense to study more languages.”

Haruhi looked closer at her friend, “That makes sense and I never really thought about it that way… but you didn’t answer my question.”

Tamaki licked his lips and said with a wicked smile, “I am fluent in French, Japanese, English, Spanish, Italian, Greek, and German. I can get by in Russian, Portuguese, Austrian, and Danish.”

It was Haruhi’s turn to emit a low whistle. “That’s incredible. I never knew.”

“It has its uses,” Tamaki answered.

“I bet.” Haruhi giggled. “How many girls did you seduce at Ouran by using another language?”
“Before you joined the Host Club?” Tamaki grinned and at Haruhi’s nod continued, “Several. I don’t know the number off the top of my head.”

“And after? It couldn’t have been that obvious because I think I would have seen it.”

Tamaki lifted her hand and placed a kiss on the inside of her wrist before saying in Italian using a low sexy tone, “Solo uno ... e non smetterò mai di volere lei.”

Haruhi shivered at the tone of Tamaki’s voice and the look in his violet eyes. “What does that mean?” she asked breathlessly.

“Just one… and I will never stop wanting her.” He laid another kiss in the palm of her hand before releasing it.

Haruhi’s body was tingling and her breath uneven as she stared at the deep emotion behind Tamaki’s eyes.

Tamaki held her eyes a moment longer before releasing them with a smile. He waved to get Sarah’s attention and when she arrived, ordered for both of them.

With a wink, Sarah grinned and promised to make sure that everything was perfect.

Haruhi watched as two men walked onto the stage to loud applause. Together they met and shook hands, bantering with each other and the crowd before separating to the two baby grand pianos on the stage. Once they started playing she was enthralled.

Tamaki grinned as he covertly watched Haruhi’s fascination in between appreciating the abilities of the performers and noting down the order of the songs that were being played. He was confident that he had most of them by both name and composer and for the couple that he wasn’t, he knew he had at least the name of the song right.

“It’s fascinating how one will be playing and then the other will jump in with a different piece that somehow manages to keep the rhythm of the first piece,” Haruhi finally said as she tore her eyes away from the stage to look down at the dinner that had just been placed in front of her. She sniffed and then smiled in appreciation at the grilled fish, vegetables, and rice. “This looks wonderful. Thanks Tama!”

“I hope it tastes as good as it looks,” Tamaki smiled and took a bite before shifting the topic back to the performance. “They are both excellent pianists. They do American Jazz justice, even though they are both Greek.”

“That’s another thing that I didn’t know,” Haruhi smiled. “Obviously, I knew your love for classical composers, but I thought you mostly ignored contemporary works.”

“I am hit or miss on them, but Jazz is the turning point from traditional classical music to all the different forms of music out there today like Rock, Pop, R & B. It’s fascinating to me how it reshaped everything,” Tamaki answered with a smile.

“Can you play some for me, sometime?” Haruhi asked with a shy smile.

“I would be honored, my princess,” Tamaki replied and went back to his dinner.

Half an hour later, they were finishing up the last bit of their dessert, when Sarah came by to pick up
Tamaki’s answer sheet. “We will announce the results in few minutes but it looks like you are definitely in the running based on the amount you filled out.”

“Thanks.” Tamaki glanced up at her tone. “What happens if there is a tie?”

Sarah grinned, “We don’t call it ‘Dueling’ for nothing. In case of a tie the winners have to convince the audience that they deserve the prize.”

“What if they don’t want to get up in front of everyone?”

“Honey, you don’t strike me as someone who gets stage fright, but if one of the top doesn’t want to duel, then they forfeit and the prize goes to the other person. If they both refuse the big prize isn’t awarded and both go home empty handed.”

Makes sense.”

“Now let me turn in your answers and we will see if we have a winner!”

Tamaki took a deep breath and leaned back in his chair. “It would be nice to win. Though I could always just buy the bottle if I don’t.”

“Then it would lose some of its appeal,” Haruhi said with a knowing grin. “I know you Tama. You might have just bought it on a whim before, but now that it’s a prize you would rather win it. All of you guys are like that to a certain extent. You’re competitive.”

Tamaki winked at her, “Oh are we?? Says the girl who just shook up the Martial Arts world.”

Haruhi chuckled, “I blame all of you for rubbing off on me. All the bets, races, challenges, and such… I had to learn to keep up or get left behind.”

“We would have never left you behind,” Tamaki said earnestly.

“I know,” Haruhi responded and squeezed his hand. “Actually all of you taught me how to be free.”

“Funny, I think we would say the same about you,” Tamaki answered quietly.

The maître d’ made his way to the stage along with both of the dueling performers. Tapping the microphone a few times to get everyone’s attention he spoke, “Ladies and Gentlemen, let’s give a round of applause to our two extremely talented performers tonight!” He paused and waited for the clapping to quiet. “Now for the results that you all have been waiting for… Tonight not only do we have a winner – but we have TWO! You know what that means!!!”

“DUEL!!” The crowd yelled back.

“You have it – it’s time for a Duel. Rules are simple – you can do anything you like and the audience will rate you on your performance. The most applause wins. If you choose not to duel then you forfeit to the other person. Now for our two Duelists this evening – James Anderson and Tamaki Suoh!!”

Haruhi laughed at Tamaki’s stunned expression and pushed at him to make his way to the stage. Once there Tamaki shook hands with the slightly graying middle-aged American man who joined him.

“Now gentlemen, you know the rules of the duel. Do either of you want to forfeit?”

James and Tamaki exchanged smiles and both responded with a “No”, the glint of competition
lighting their eyes.

“Fantastic! I will flip a coin to see who goes first. Mr. Anderson please call it.” The maître d’ tossed the coin into the air as James called “Heads”. The coin landed in his palm face up. “Heads it is, Mr. Anderson you are up first. What are you going to do for us?”

“I will sing, if you don’t mind.”

“Perfect. Mr. Suoh, you may take a seat over there,” he waved to a stool being brought on the stage. “Mr. Anderson do you need accompaniment?”

“That would be welcome. To keep with the theme of the evening, even though it’s was done in the 60’s rather than the 40’s, my song is It’s a Wonderful World.”

“Great Choice and Pete here can help you with that,” he gestured to the one of the house duelists who took his place at a piano. The other brought up a microphone and set it in front of James. “All right – Let the Duel begin!!!”

The audience cheered as James took the stage and began to sing in a husky baritone.

I see trees of green....... red roses too
I see em bloom..... for me and for you
And I think to myself.... what a wonderful world.

I see skies of blue..... clouds of white
Bright blessed days....dark sacred nights
And I think to myself .....what a wonderful world.

The colors of a rainbow.....so pretty ..in the sky
Are also on the faces.....of people ..going by
I see friends shaking hands.....sayin.. how do you do
They're really sayin......i love you.

I hear babies cry...... I watch them grow
They'll learn much more.....than I'll never know
And I think to myself .....what a wonderful world

At the conclusion of the song, the audience cheered loudly for several minutes. Tamaki sat on the stool and applauded with them. He was good. Really good actually. He’s going to be tough to beat.

The maître d’ came back up to the microphone clapping, “Mr. Anderson, that was excellent and the crowd loved it. It’s going to be a tough act to beat but we have to give Mr. Suoh a chance.” He gestured for Tamaki to join him at the mic. “So what are you going to do for us, Mr. Suoh?”

Tamaki responded with a smile, “I thought I would play, since this is a Piano bar.”

“Excellent! What are you going to play for us?”

“It’s just a bit before the 1940’s but I think it will work with the Jazz theme. I am going to do Rhapsody in Blue by Gershwin.”

The maître d’ put on a skeptical look as he addressed the crowd, “Ambitious choice to do without sheet music but we like ambition around here don’t we?!?”

The crowd cheered.
“All right Mr. Suoh, pick a piano and you can begin whenever you are ready.”

“Thanks.” Tamaki gave a little bow to the crowd and went to the piano that Pete had just vacated. Sitting down on the stool, he took a deep breath and tried to focus his thoughts. Unconsciously, he glanced over at Haruhi who mouthed “Go Tama!”

With a smile on his face, he closed his eyes and launched into the complicated music, letting the steely rhythms, sensual undertones, and precise chords drag him into the heart of the music not just its notes.

Haruhi watched Tamaki lose himself in the piece the way he usually only did with his select favorites. *I have never heard him play this before, but it is incredible.*

As the last notes faded, silence echoed through the room for a moment before the audience went wild, jumping to their feet and screaming loudly. Tamaki sat at the piano blinking a few times before the audience applause registered. Once it did though, he grinned and stood up, giving the audience a bow.

James walked over to him and shook his hand. “That was mighty fine playing, son. Mighty fine. You deserve to win and it was an honor to duel with you.” He handed Tamaki a business card. “If you are ever in the States, give me a call. I’d love to sit down and have dinner and discuss music history with you. You don’t see many people your age really appreciating the classics anymore.”

“I would be honored to do so, Sir.” Tamaki said with a smile.

“This duel is going to go down in history here in the Bar,” the maître d’ took the microphone and handed the bottle of Port to Tamaki. Here Mr. Suoh, you definitely deserve this prize. I hope you enjoy it as much as we enjoyed listening to you play.”

Tamaki took the bottle and held it up, winking at Haruhi. “I absolutely intend to.”

The audience laughed and with one last bow, Tamaki left the stage and made his way back to the table and Haruhi.

“That was just incredible Tama. I have never heard that piece before but it was just beautiful.”

“You should hear the opening run when it is played by a clarinet, the way it was originally written,” Tamaki answered with a smile. “It’s incredibly sensual. Almost erotic.”

“You will have to play it for me some time.” Haruhi said with a grin. “Say when we get back to the villa…”

Tamaki caught the hint of passion in her voice and grinned before pulling her hand up to kiss her wrist again. “I think I can manage to find a good version.”

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There were no lights on at the villa, which seemed to imply that they were the first to arrive back, much to Tamaki’s secret delight. *I am not ready for the night to end. There’s so much more that I want to do, now that I have Haruhi alone.*

Unlocking the door, Tamaki again rested his hand on the soft skin of Haruhi’s bare back and ushered her into the villa. Instead of flipping on all the lights, he made his way into the kitchen and turned on the light on the range hood. It offered enough light to see by, but not enough to break the moment. Setting the bottle down on the counter he turned to see Haruhi leaning against the door frame
watching him, her body partly in shadow though her face was lit by the reflected glow of the light.

“So what are you going to do with your prize?” She asked quietly.

Tamaki advanced to her slowly, cautiously, making very sure that he wasn’t about to do anything unwelcome or foolish. When he stood just inches from her, he slid one arm around her back and the other into her hair, cupping her head and pulling her into a kiss. For all that he had kissed her many times before, this kiss felt different and new to him. Her lips felt softer under his, her breathless moans more eager and her tongue dancing next to his in a way that had him trembling. Breaking from her mouth to trail more soft kisses along her jaw, he whispered into her ear, “I have in my arms the only prize I want right now.”

“Tamaki…” Haruhi pulled her head back and looked deep into his eyes, concern flickering across her face.

“Hush princess, I know it can’t be just the two of us anymore,” he said against her lips, “and honestly, I don’t want it to be… I care too much for Kaoru and… Kyouya. I just want to know that I am somewhere in your heart. Some tiny place that is only mine.”

“Oh Tama…,” Haruhi breathed, “It is there. It always has been and even when I tried to bury it, it still would ache and remind me whenever I saw you laugh at another pretty girl’s comment. I can give up the petty jealousy that I have no right to, now that you know. Part of me will always belong to you; it’s just that part of me also belongs to Hikaru, Kyouya, and Takashi…”

“I know,” Tamaki kissed her forehead, “and they all love you back ferociously.” He held her for a moment longer before changing the subject. “Now do you want to see what 70 year old Port tastes like?”

Haruhi smiled, “You should save that for a special occasion.”

Tamaki grinned and stepped back. “This is a special occasion. I have you to myself for an evening. Why don’t you get comfortable while I pour a couple of glasses for us? Then I will see if I can find a version of Rhapsody in Blue with the clarinet solo to start it.”

Haruhi stretched up and placed a kiss on his cheek. “I am just going to slip off my heels and step out on the balcony. The beach should look amazing in the moonlight.”

“I will join you in just a moment.”

True to his word, Haruhi had just enough time to drop her shoes off in the room she was using earlier, drape her wrap around her elbows, and step outside when Tamaki joined her at the rail. He left the sliding door open behind him and it was only a couple of heartbeats before the tune that Tamaki had played earlier came out of the house speakers, only this time it was reedier and more earthy. Haruhi accepted the glass of port and closed her eyes to focus on the music. *Tamaki’s right, the piano was pretty but the clarinet makes it more seductive.* A faint breeze skittered across her skin, leaving a trail of goose bumps.

“You know the port will help warm you, if you actually taste it instead of just holding it,” Tamaki’s voice teased against her ear causing a different kind of shiver.

She turned into the voice and opened her eyes, a smile and a faint challenge in her tone as she replied, “Oh really?”

“Really, though I can think of a few other ways to warm you up if you are feeling chilled,” Tamaki grinned. He held up his glass in a toast, “To new beginnings, old friends, and American Jazz.”
“Cheers!” Haruhi clinked her glass against his before taking a small sip of the amber liquid. As she swallowed a hum of appreciation left her lips. The drink was, as Tamaki promised, warming as it slid smoothly down her throat but it was also sweet without being cloying. “Oh my goodness, that is just fantastic!”

Tamaki chuckled, “I thought you might like it. We will make a foodie out of you yet.” He reached into his pocket and pulled out a small wrapped piece of candy. “Here, try a sip with this dark chocolate.”

“But I don’t usually like…” Haruhi started to say but was interrupted by Tamaki pressing a finger against her lips.

“Trust me?” A challenge gleamed in his eyes.

“Fine,” Haruhi grumbled and broke off the tiniest piece of dark chocolate she could. Popping it in her mouth and chewing quickly she took another sip of the port. This time when the combined flavors hit her tongue, she nearly lost her balance at the pleasure of the sensations flooding her mouth.

Tamaki chuckled as he caught her with a hand around her waist and gave her a wicked grin at the near orgasmic moan that left her lips. “I told you.”

Haruhi grinned as she fed him a piece of chocolate, “I will never doubt you again. But this time I want to taste it from your lips.”

“As you wish, princess,” Tamaki chewed the chocolate, took a sip, set down his glass, swallowed and pulled her roughly into his arms, opening his mouth and letting the flavors on his tongue tease against hers. The kiss started out teasing but turned far more intimate very quickly. As his hands slid up her back, she wound her arms around his neck and pressed her body into his, deepening the kiss. Her moan under him caused him to pull back enough to say, “You look amazing tonight, I want to make love to you so much.”

“Please,” Haruhi sighed as Tamaki nipped at her neck. Her fingers loosened their grip and it was only Tamaki’s quick reflexes that caught the wine glass before it fell.

He chuckled as he set it down, “I love that my kisses make you weak.”

“They always have,” Haruhi said with a smile.

“I intend that they always will,” Tamaki replied with a grin and in one movement scooped her up into his arms, kissing her again as he walked back into the villa and towards the bedroom.
“So tell me how you are really doing,” Hikaru asked gently as the waiter walked away after having taken their order. “I know that you put the situation out of your mind today and seemed to have fun at the beach, but I know the thing with your father has to be eating at you.”

Kyouya looked over at the perceptive redhead and reached across the table to take his hand. “Honestly, I don’t know. Right now I am kind of numb about the whole thing. I lost it completely last night when I was out with Haruhi, but today, I just don’t want to think about it. That will probably come back to bite me eventually, but I know I made the right decision.” He squeezed Hikaru’s hand. “You and Haruhi are worth more than the whole of the Ootori fortune to me.”

Hikaru smiled and squeezed Kyouya’s hand back, “That’s good to know, because we pretty much feel the same way about you.” A teasing glint appeared in his eye as he continued, “Actually, I think most of the Host Club feels that way about you. You rival Haru in how many of us have had wicked thoughts about you, you know. Kyouya – cool, aloof, mysterious, and so very sexy as he pushes up his glasses.”

A faint pink appeared on Kyouya’s cheeks. “I never really saw myself that way. I just wanted to show that I was a worthy player in the game of business.”

“Oh you did that and more, lover,” Hikaru grinned. “No one can doubt your business sense and motivation. But it’s also ok to have a little fun, too.”

“So I am learning.”

“I think we all are,” Hikaru replied a serious tone in his voice despite the lightness of his words. “Not that I have ever been opposed to wild and crazy ideas, but this whole situation is a bit more intense than I think we first expected it to be.”

“I would agree.”

“I want to make it clear that I am not opposed to you or Haruhi dating either Tamaki or Takashi, but…” Hikaru’s voice trailed off as he struggled to find the words to express how he was feeling.

Kyouya stroked his thumb over the back of Hikaru’s hand. With a gentle tone, not often heard out of his mouth, he asked, “But what? Hikaru, please let me know what you are thinking.”

Hikaru took a deep breath and said with a shaky smile, “I really AM ok with both you and Haruhi adding Tamaki and Takashi into the relationship. I know that I don’t have any chemistry beyond friendship with Tamaki and Takashi still scares me a tiny bit, but I see that they make both of you happy in a different way. Plus I still have my relationship with Kao. It’s just that I know eventually that we are all going to have to come to a decision and I don’t know how it is going to work.”

“What decision is that?” He continued to stroke his thumb over Hikaru’s knuckles trying to maintain some sort of soothing contact.

“Which of us Haruhi will marry,” Hikaru said in a quiet tone. “Since polygamy is illegal in Japan and most other countries, eventually we will have to decide whose name she will take. I know it’s really her choice, but I don’t think any of us have not thought of proposing to her at some point. She
can only legally marry one of us, and though it probably sounds really selfish, I want her to have either my name or yours.”

“I never really thought about that,” Kyouya replied with a sigh of frustration. “I have to admit that I have thought about formally proposing after she graduates Ouran, but now with you as such an equal part of our relationship, I am torn. Same sex marriage is illegal in Japan, so there would be no way that you and I could ever legally marry even though I want to be with you as much as I want to be with Haruhi.”

“I feel the same,” Hikaru smiled shyly.

“We will just have to look at other options and see how we can work around it. Perhaps she could remain Fujioka, or she could legally add one of our names as a middle name and the other as a married name.”

“Haruhi Hitachiin Ootori,” Hikaru answered, saying the name slowly. “I think that could work. Now we just have to convince her.”

“True,” Kyouya grinned, “but honestly, that isn’t something that I want to worry about tonight. We still have the rest of your final year to figure out the details. Tonight is about us… and I am looking forward to spending it together.”

“Me too,” Hikaru grinned and released Kyouya’s hand as the waiter returned carrying their food. After the waiter had checked to make sure they were set and walked away, Hikaru looked up to give Kyouya a wicked smile. “You look so good tonight, I am feeling mischievous. What do you say to giving this little island something to talk about?”

Kyouya laughed, “I think that sounds like fun.”

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True to his word about the discreet nature of the club, Hikaru led Kyouya to a nondescript door in the side of an old brick building. The only indication that it was something more was the large man standing out front with a clipboard and a few well-dressed men lounging against a wall, chatting with each other and smoking cigarettes.

“Name please.” The bouncer said politely but firmly as Hikaru and Kyouya approached.

“Hitachiin.”

The bouncer flipped through a couple of pages on his clipboard before locating the name and crossing it off before opening the door and gesturing them through.

Hikaru linked his fingers in Kyouya’s and smiled as they walked through. They could hear the music faintly in the hallway as they entered.

“Hello! Welcome to Diavel,” a good looking man with chiseled abs shown off to perfection in his fishnet shirt and tight leather pants, greeted them. “Before you enter, I need you to sign these release forms. Diavel is an extremely exclusive club for men only. We are gay, leather, and kink friendly and as such you may see activities of a sensual, sexual or uncomfortable nature. Please be aware that everyone in the club is vetted and all activities are entered into with consent of all parties. We have staff monitoring all activities and anything or anyone who is disruptive may be asked to leave, but
otherwise pretty much anything goes. Many of our members and visitors require discretion, so Diavel has a no photography policy. If you are caught taking any photographs of people, furnishings, the bar, or anything else in these walls you will be immediately escorted out and banned. If you publish any photographs on a Social Media website, you will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.” He pushed two forms over to Hikaru and Kyouya. “Please sign these forms if you agree to the terms I have outlined.”

Without hesitation, both signed the forms.

The man grinned and winked as he gave both of them a head to toe look. “Fantastic. Also, we operate on a cashless system for the bar.” He held up a paper bracelet with a microchip in it. You can either prepay here with cash or leave a credit card. You can also determine the amount you want to leave for a tip. When you leave any remaining cash balance will be returned to you or your card will be charged for whatever is consumed. The chip will automatically deactivate when you leave.”

“That’s actually a very interesting way to manage control of a bar,” Kyouya said.

Hikaru just grinned at his boyfriend, “Only you would focus on the business aspect out of everything that this ‘gentleman’ just said.” He gave the guy at the counter a wink before handing over a black card. “Please use that card for all purchases for both of us and set the tip amount at 25%.”

“Hika-” Kyouya started to protest.

“Sorry lover,” Hikaru grinned before stretching up to kiss him on the cheek. “Tonight is my treat. You can catch the next one.”

Kyouya smiled as he took the paper bracelet and attached it around his wrist. “So this is what being a boy-toy is like.”

Hikaru stretched up to whisper wickedly into his ear, “You haven’t seen anything yet.” With a smirk at the faint blush on Kyuoua’s cheeks, he grabbed his hand and pulled him down the hallway to the pulsing beat of the music.

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Kyouya looked around as they walked into the heart of the club. It was smaller than most of the clubs that he was used to in Japan, but it definitely catered to a more exclusive crowd. There was leather couches clustered in groups along three of the walls with a low table in the middle. The fourth wall contained a very well stocked bar, complete with bartenders that could double as Calvin Klein models. The dance floor in the center of the room was multi-level with each section containing a plexiglass block floor. The bottom level had some sort of fog swirling through the blocks and was lit from underneath with blue and purple lights. The middle layer of blocks had green, yellow and orange laser lights cutting through them, while on the top level the blocks were rimmed in red, but otherwise left clear. The design of it took Kyouya a moment to understand, but then he realized it was a play on a rainbow.

Hikaru grinned as he pointed to the top level and said, “You can walk underneath he top level and look up at the dancers or whatever else happens to be occurring on the top level. I have heard stories of guys fucking on that level just so others could stand under and watch.”

Kyouya grinned and pulled Hikaru’s hips against his own. “A month ago that would have shocked me. Now it just sounds interesting.”

Hikaru gave an answering smile as he wound his arms up around Kyuoua’s neck, keeping their hips
solidly together. Finding the beat, he minutely started to rock them together making sure that their leather pants brushed against each other with each beat. “Want to dance with me, or would you rather get a drink and explore the 2nd floor?”

Kyouya tightened his grip on Hikaru’s hips and started minutely thrusting to the counter beat so the hardness that was beginning to stir in both pants were constantly pushed together in a circular motion that only served to tease them both. Bending his head down, he slid his lips down the side of Hikaru’s neck using a deep voice to say “let’s dance for a bit” before he bit gently on the exposed skin of Hikaru’s neck.

Hikaru gasped at the sensation, tightening his arms around Kyouya’s neck and scratching into his shoulders, before releasing his breath in a slow sigh and taking a half-step back. “I thought you were going to be my boy-toy tonight, not the other way around,” he joked.

Kyouya’s smile held mischief. “I tried, but it doesn’t seem to want to work that way. Does that bother you?”

Hikaru grinned, “Not at all,” he laughed as he pulled Kyouya onto the dance floor. “I still get to make everyone else in here jealous that I am with the sexiest guy in the room.”

“You forget Hika, in this world, you are the fashion superstar and I am just an ordinary guy.”

“You are never ordinary, Kyo,” Hikaru said seriously before snapping his fingers and finding the rhythm of the music, his body moving gracefully into the beat.

At least, I never want to be ordinary again. Kyouya found the beat and started moving carefully around Hikaru enjoying the movement as it would occasionally bring them together, bodies pressing and moving together in a slow burn.

They danced together for several songs before Hikaru nodded his head toward the bar. “I want a drink. Are you thirsty?”

“Getting that way,” Kyouya replied as he followed Hikaru off the dance floor. We’ve probably only been dancing for an hour, but the floor has gotten crowded.

“Phew!” Hikaru laughed as they made it clear of the floor and made their way to the bar. “It’s been a while since I have danced that much. I am parched.”

“Me too,” Kyouya responded. Catching the bartender’s attention he ordered a couple of drinks and two bottles of water. Handing one of the bottles to Hikaru, he downed the other one greedily as Hikaru did the same.

“That’s better, now I can sip this instead of gulping it,” Hikaru said.

“I just know that we still have to drive back to the house, so a couple drinks is all I am planning on doing. You can have more if you like though.”

“Nah, I am ok with just a couple. I enjoy the bite of the alcohol, but I don’t need it to have a good time.” Hikaru winked at his lover, “Besides, I want to have a clear head with you tonight.” He gestured toward a staircase spiraling up one wall. “Want to go upstairs and see what it’s like?”

“Sure.” Kyouya tucked his hand in the waistband of Hikaru’s pants and grabbed his drink with the other as they started for the stairs.

The second floor was as impressive as the first, with more spaces for conversation and judging by the
sounds and movement on some of the couches tucked into darker corners, more conducive to other kinds of activities. Kyoya grinned as he recognized a St. Andrews Cross in one corner and a spanking bench against one of the walls, both currently in use. The music was slower and more sensual, and the hidden lighting gave the area an erotic feel.

“Now that I know what those are actually for, it’s a bit more interesting to see them in a club,” Kyoya remarked as they claimed a couch near the railing looking over the dance floor.

“I agree. I knew this was a gay club, but I didn’t realize that they are also kink friendly. We may want to let Hani and Takashi know about this place. It’s just too bad we can’t bring Haru. She would have fun on the dance floor.”

Kyoya removed his jacket and leaned back into the plush leather, sliding his arm along the back to brush against the back of Hikaru’s neck, fingers playing in Hikaru’s hair. “You know, other than at the Ouran formals, I don’t know that I have ever seen Haruhi dance. I never really thought about going to clubs on a date.”

“Probably because you would be hounded by the paparazzi constantly if you did,” Hikaru said with a smile as he turned slightly and cuddled into Kyoya’s chest with a wink. “The Hitachiin twins, however, are known to drag assorted models and their friends to clubs on a whim, so we could sneak Haruhi in without singling her out for notice as long as we went in a group and alternated who we danced with.”

“I bet that she is a great dancer,” Kyoya said and shifted so he could continue to tease his blunt nails against the sensitive skin at Hikaru’s neck.

“The grace she learned from doing Martial Arts with Hani and Takashi definitely made a difference especially when you think of how stiff she was when we all danced after the 1st Ouran fair.” Hikaru hummed in appreciation as Kyoya’s fingers hit a super sensitive spot. To return the favor, Hikaru stretched up and started laying small kisses along Kyoya’s jawline. When he got to Kyoya’s ear, Hikaru whispered. “Did I ever tell you that I thought you were so gods damn sexy twirling her around the room. I couldn’t decide which I wanted to watch more her or you. I know I wanted to dance with you both.”

Kyoya angled his head to capture Hikaru’s lips. Working his own slowly against the younger man in his arms, he murmured against them. “I had no idea. But I am more than willing to make up for lost time.” Slowly he stood pulling Hikaru up with him and against his body, turning him so Hikaru’s back was pressed against Kyoya’s chest. He slid one hand just into the waistband at Hikaru’s hips and the other came up to caress across Hikaru’s neck and shoulders, holding them together, while his body moved to the beat. He could feel Hikaru melt into his body and tightened his hold. Murmuring again in his ear, “I watched you dance like this with Haruhi in that game you played so long ago. I have wanted to try it ever since.”

Hikaru smiled and craned his neck to whisper against Kyoya’s lips, “But you are missing the most important part.” Without another word, he closed the distance, flicked his tongue against Kyoya’s lips and kissed the Shadow King hungrily.

Kyoya growled into the kiss, sweeping his tongue against Hikaru’s and deepening it. His hand made its way inside the waistband to glide over Hikaru’s hard cock, causing his lover to moan at the intensity of the feeling.

“Gods… Kyoya...” Hikaru gasped as he broke the kiss, arm flung up and wrapped tightly around Kyoya’s neck, while the other one came down to fumble at his fly trying to get it open so Kyoya could have better access.
“Hmmm??” Kyouya murmured in a deep tone as he alternated between kissing Hikaru deeply and biting down his neck. With a deep throaty chuckle he asked, “What gets you off more? My doing this…” he took Hikaru’s now exposed cock and gripped it tightly pumping it slowly a few times while sucking a mark into his neck, “Or the fact that anyone looking up from the dance floor at this moment could see exactly what I am doing to you?” He punctuated the last statement with another caress that had Hikaru groaning.

“Both,” Hikaru answered as he ground his hips into Kyouya’s hold. “Make me cum, lover. I want them to see that I am yours.”

“As you wish,” Kyouya flicked his tongue against Hikaru’s ear and continued to pump his hand on Hikaru’s cock, holding it in the firm grip he knew Hikaru liked. With his other hand, he held Hikaru’s neck to one side so he could continue to suck a line of hickeys down it.

Hikaru let himself get lost in the sensation, hands reaching behind him to hold Kyouya’s hips close to his, fingers digging into the leather of the pants. Being on display like this, with Kyouya’s hands expertly jacking him off, was hitting so many of the buttons that he had hidden for years and he felt like he was going to combust from the heat generated by his imagination and Kyouya’s talented hands. *Gods… I am close… so close…* With a choked off scream, Hikaru felt his orgasm hit, rocking his body with the force, and shooting his load onto the glass barrier that held the railing for the top floor.

Kyouya felt the release and smiled into Hikaru’s neck before whispering, “That was fucking hot.” Gently, he tucked Hikaru back into his pants, and held him close as Hikaru’s body continued to tremble with aftershocks.

“Yes it was,” Hikaru grinned as he finally caught his breath and turned his body so he was face to face again. Stretching up, he kissed Kyouya gently before continuing, “you have my permission to do that any time you want.”

Kyouya laughed. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw a guy wearing nothing but a black pair of leather pants and a collar approach, holding a squirt bottle and rag.

The guy came up to them and winked before saying, “that was quite impressive. Not many people can hit the glass from where you were standing.” Then he bent over, sprayed cleaner on the glass and proceeded to wipe away all evidence.

Hikaru felt his whole body flush red and ducked his head into Kyouya’s chest, while Kyouya silently chuckled. He mumbled, “Sorry!! I didn’t exactly mean to do that… I mean I knew what I wanted but I didn’t really think through the whole thing… I…”

The guy in the collar just chuckled, “No worries, pet. It actually happens quite a lot up here, which is why I am stationed as clean-up crew. This must be your first time here. Like Jesse downstairs told you when you came in, pretty much anything goes here as long as it’s consented to… and there was definite and obvious consent happening in that sexy little display. Now don’t worry about me, I think your partner may be the one who needs your attention judging by the rather large bulge in his oh-so-tight leather pants.” He gave them another wink and wave as he walked off, swinging his hips as he went.

“Are you ok?” Kyouya asked gently as he held tight to Hikaru.

“Just slightly embarrassed at confirmation that there was actually other strangers watching the whole thing and then someone else cleaning up the mess.”
“I thought that is what you wanted.” Kyouya was curious and slightly puzzled.

“It was. It is,” Hikaru looked up and grinned. “Just unexpected to have it acknowledged so casually. It was fun though.” Hikaru reached down between them and caressed Kyouya through the leather pants. “He was right about the other thing too…”

“What’s that?” Kyouya said with a wicked smile.

“You need to be taken care of too… and my mouth is willing to take on the task. It’s quite generous an offer don’t you think?”

“Hikaru… always so selfless and accommodating, huh?” Kyouya teased.

“You know it,” Hikaru licked his lips and put his hand on Kyouya’s chest, walking him backward to the relative seclusion of the couch where they had been sitting earlier, knowing that the Shadow King would appreciate the illusion of privacy.

With a slight push, Kyouya fell back into the leather. Hikaru dropped to his knees in front of him and started opening the fly to Kyouya’s leather pants. “Now, this time… I don’t intend for there to be a mess to clean up.”

“Why is that??” Kyouya said around a groan as Hikaru flicked his tongue across the sensitive head.

“Because I intend to swallow every drop.”
Kaoru adjusted his position again, leaning back into the soft leather of the backseat of the Land Rover, and stared out the window into the moonlight Santorini night. *I am really doing this. I am REALLY doing this...* A large hand came down gently on his thigh, holding still the leg that Kaoru didn’t even realize had been bouncing. He looked up into the steel black eyes of Takashi. He mumbled, “Sorry.”

Takashi gave him a gentle smile. “I understand. Just remember what Mitskune told you earlier. You only have to do what you want to do. Nothing more.”

“I know,” Kaoru smiled weakly. “At least in my head, I know. My stomach has other ideas.”

Hani glanced up from driving and caught Kaoru’s eyes in the rearview mirror. “Understandable. Both Takashi and I felt the same at our first party and even now there’s a few since we only know a handful of people at this one.”

Kaoru’s eyes flicked up wildly.

Hani continued, “Yes, we will only know a few people at this party but we know the hosts – Dominic, David and Kara. We also know that they only invite people they have personally vetted and trust to maintain rules and decorum. It’s different than if we were to go to a public dungeon.”

Kaoru inhaled slowly and let the breath out even more slowly. He felt Takashi squeeze his knee in support. “That helps to know, really.”

“I think you will have fun tonight, Kao-chan, or I would not have extended the invitation. I think you and Kara are going to hit it off really well. In her vanilla life, she is a textile designer. Dom is a physical therapist and David is...”

“David is a contractor,” Takashi supplied helpfully with a grin at Hani. “I would think that you would remember that since you comment on his travel suspension rig every time we see them.”

Hani laughed, “That’s right. I always forget. That suspension rig is awesome though. I wonder if he could make us one.”

“It would be easier to travel with; we would not need to find a hard point in whatever hotel we would be using.”

Kaoru heard the faintest trace of emotion in Takashi’s voice, something he wouldn’t have noticed a month ago. *I still can’t believe that the High Council is separating them. I can’t picture Hani without Takashi and vice versa. Another thought crossed his mind. “Wait a moment - is this the last time you guys are going to be able to play like this for a while?”*

Hani sighed, “Barring anything we do in the next few days, yes. This will probably be our last play party until we have completed our Master Quests.”

“Now I feel kind of guilty for tagging along,” Kaoru said sheepishly.

“Stop.” Hani’s voice held a note of command which made Kaoru unconsciously sit up straighter.
Softening his tone he answered, “If we had not wanted you to join us, we simply wouldn’t have asked. We wanted to share this with you, because it MAY be the last time we get to do this for a while. We will still be able to be together when our schedules permit and part of that will be the kind of play that we both need. This evening is just for fun and we want to enjoy it with you.”

“Yes Sir,” Kaoru held Hani’s eyes in the mirror to show his sincerity.

“Good,” Hani smiled and winked. “Now take a deep breath, because here we are.” With a flourish of the wheel, Hani pulled into the driveway of an isolated house on the side of the hill and parked next to several other vehicles.

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Hani knocked on the door and grinned as Kara answered it. She was wearing a rather ordinary wrap dress, though Kaoru admired the print and the way it fit her body. As she led the way into the house, followed closely by the three of them, Kaoru looked around eagerly half expecting to be entering a world of gothic splendor done up in shades of black and read, with screams echoing off the walls. He was slightly disappointed when she led them into a perfectly lovely living room and seating area. Perfectly lovely, but perfectly ordinary. A glimmer of his let down must have shown on his face because he looked up to see Kara grinning at him.

“I know that Auriel and Karr have been to several before, but I am guessing this your first play party,” Kara said with a smile to Kaoru.

Kaoru blushed deeply. “Yes.” Gods, is it that obvious… what must she be thinking?

Kara glanced at Hani who smiled and nodded, before stepping back to link her arm in Kaoru’s. “I remember the first play party I went to with Dom. I was half expecting to walk in to see bodies chained to the walls and everybody in full black latex or leather. So imagine my surprise when we walked into David’s house and it was so… normal. Normal kitchen, normal living room, even normal bathrooms. I had to admit I was slightly disappointed until he laughed at me and took me over to a normal looking bookcase on one wall. Like this one,” She walked Kaoru over to a bookshelf on one wall. With a wink at him, she pressed in on one part of the frame and he heard a click and the case popped open on a hinge. Pulling it open all the way, she led Kaoru through the doorway.

Kaoru’s eyes widened. The room was painted black. A metal framing worked across the ceiling and three walls of the room. Theatrical lights hung from the ceiling aiming a spotlight at several pieces of equipment that Kaoru was familiar with and a few he was not – including a very intriguing looking chair that had two small platforms spread open in a V shape instead of a seat. He whistled under his breath slowly in appreciation before saying, “A secret room. How Cool!”

Dominic laughed as he walked in the room and laid a casual hand on Kara’s hip. “Kara pretty much had the same reaction, her first time.” He held out a hand to Kaoru. “Hi, I am Dominic, though you can call me Dom or sir if you prefer.” He shrugged eloquently. “Ask Kara, I am not heavy on protocol unless we are in scene.” He smiled as Kara nodded. “I understand from Mitskune that you are Kaoru, but your scene name is Jareth and you are going to be his sub for the evening.”

“Yes… sir,” Kaoru said trying the words out.

Dominic smiled. “I am glad all of you were able to join us. We are going to be a pretty small group tonight, there’s only about ten of us, but it’s a very fun group… and a discreet one. I promise that you will not have to worry about any of us leaking to the press about anything you may do here
tonight.”

“And I promise to try REALLY hard not to talk shop at you all night or drag you upstairs to look at my latest designs,” Kara said with a laugh and wink. Then nodded her head to Dominic and David who had just entered the room, “The chance to talk fashion with someone who ACTUALLY appreciates what I am saying is so rare around here.”

Kaoru laughed and immediately felt more comfortable. “I know what you mean; trying to get anyone outside of my brother to really appreciate any new design beyond ‘That’s nice’ is rare. Even my best friend and Hika’s girlfriend, Haruhi, only has a passing interest in fashion and that’s only because we have practically forced it down her throat the last couple of years.”

“Eh, clothes cover the body,” David said with a sly grin as he came around and nibbled on her shoulder, ducking her half-hearted swing at him. “Though I do love seeing YOU both in and out of them. They make interesting shapes when pooled on the floor.”

“See what I mean?” Kara complained good naturedly as the others laughed. She gestured for Hani to lead the way out of the room, but left the door open behind her. “Please help yourself to anything you need. I was just about to set out snacks, and there are drinks in the cooler. Otherwise, just relax. The others will be here soon and then we can really get the party started.”

“Do you need any help?” Kaoru asked with a grin.

“Sure,” Kara answered and led the way into the kitchen, while Dominic, David, and Hani sat down on one of the two plush couches. Takashi sat cross-legged on the floor by Hani’s knees.

“**You know, I thought it would be odd to see Hani and Takashi like that,” he nodded his head towards the grouping on the couch now engaged in conversation, “because they only recently came out about this side of their life to us, but it just looks normal. It’s the way they used to act all the time in the Host Club. Hani was the gregarious outgoing one and Takashi was always the quiet one.”**

Kara smiled at him as she handed him a try to set out on the corner, “It’s funny how that works. People think that this lifestyle is strange and immoral, but the thing is it is usually just a different kind of manifestation of our natural personalities. I have only known Mitskune and Mori for about a year but even when we first met I kind of guessed that would be the case in their normal lives. Or should I say Auriel and Karr, tonight?” She giggled. “All these names to keep straight. It’s a challenge at first but then you get so used to answering to two or three different names that it becomes oddly normal – like having several different nicknames depending on which friends you are hanging out with. Which reminds me – do you prefer Kaoru or Jareth tonight?”

“I am Jareth tonight,” Kaoru answered with a smile. “But I do want to see your work at some point, if there’s time and I would love to stay in contact with you, outside all of this, if that is ok.” He smiled shyly.

“Oh my!! That would be simply fantastic. Like I said, I am unusually short of people to talk industr-,” the doorbell chimed through the house, “Sorry! Be right back I have to grab that!” She set the wine bottle in her hand on the table and walked to the front door.

Kaoru picked up the bottle and was in the process of moving it with the others when he heard a chuckle behind him.

“Kara will naturally talk your ear off, but when she is talking to someone who shares her passion she
gets even more talkative,” David laughed. “But that is so much part of her that both Dom and I love it and seeing her happy.”

“She reminds me of my girlfriend, Renge,” Kaoru said with a smile. “She is the same way. Actually I think they would be pretty good friends if they ever met.” A thought crossed his mind. “You don’t mind that I would like to stay in contact with Kara, do you? I meant it on a professional and personal level not an intimate one. I am always looking for good textile designers to work with.”

“She would love it and I know neither Dom nor I would mind,” David answered with a smile. “But I came in to see if you guys needed help and grab drinks for Dom, Auriel and Karr. Do you mind helping bring them back? I can’t carry them all.”

“Of course,” Kaoru responded.

As the other guests arrived and introductions were made, Kaoru handed a bottle of water to both Hani and Takashi before sitting down on the floor on the other side of Hani’s knees. Unconsciously, Kaoru looked up to Hani for approval and was rewarded by a caress of his hair.

“How are you doing Jareth?” Hani asked, stressing slightly the scene name. He slid his hands down to lie gently across the collar around Kaoru’s neck.

The use of the scene name coupled with the almost caress, made Kaoru shiver as a wave of calm settled over him. Without thinking he closed his eyes and leaned into the caress, rubbing his cheek across the leather of Hani’s pants. It’s hard to explain… but this feels right. I trust Hani and at this moment, I just want to be under his control. He felt a bump against his left hand and he automatically flipped his hand upwards to link with Takashi’s. Opening his eyes slightly, he saw that Takashi was mirroring his movement on Hani’s other knee, Hani gently stroking his hands through their hair and smiling down on them with a look that made him shiver again. A small hum of pleasure left his lips.

At the sound, Hani switched from lightly caressing to lightly scratching his nails against their scalps and the hum turned to a gasp as a bolt of electricity shot straight to Kaoru’s groin and he instantly became half hard.

Hani’s voice was low but seductive as he said, “I take it that is a turn on for you.”

Leaning into it as much as he could, Kaoru whispered, “Yes, sir.”

“What about if I do this,” Hani scratched harder before tightening his fingers around a handful of hair and holding tight.

Kaoru gasped and his erection went from half-mast to raging in a matter of moments. This time the moan was loud enough to make Hani grin. “Ye-es. Auriel. Sir.”

Hani held on for a few more moments before releasing the hair and going back to scratching. Idly, he asked, “So you saw the dungeon, is there anything in there that you want to try – the spanking bench? St. Andrew’s Cross?”

Kaoru replied almost shyly, “What was that thing that kind of looked like a chair?”

Hani giggled, the sound which used to grate on Kaoru’s nerves, now sounding intriguing. “It is a type of bondage chair. You are locked in at the ankles, thighs, upper arms, and wrists. But as you saw there isn’t a real seat. You are spread open and on display for your Top and anyone else watching the scene. At that point you can have almost any kind of implement used on you.”
Kaoru shuddered as he heard the last bit. *On display… everyone could see. Gods. It’s been a fantasy for so long…*

Hani felt the shudder and tilted up Kaoru’s head so he could look into his eyes. “Is that something that interests you? Do you want to be on display for me and Karr?”

Kaoru bit his lip and nodded. “Yes… but can I see someone else in it first?”

“Of course,” Hani said with a smile. “I know it is one of Kara’s favorite devices, and since I just saw her walk into the dungeon a few minutes ago, there’s probably a good chance she will be using it soon. Would you like to go watch? I could play with Karr for a bit so you can watch both of us.”

“Yes please.”

Takashi squeezed Kaoru’s hand once and then gracefully shifted position so he was on his knees before Hani. Looking up into Hani’s eyes he said, “What do you desire?”

“You. Always,” Hani said with a smile, “But for the moment, since you haven’t had one in a while, I thought you could use a good flogging. Then I thought you might be interested in helping Jareth get comfortable in his position tonight.”

A small shiver ran through Takashi’s body. “Yes, Sir.”

Hani stood up, pressing his body against Takashi’s, “And if you are really good, I may even let you come tonight… after I fuck you, of course.”

Kaoru blinked at the crude words coming out of Hani’s mouth even as it made something tighten low in his stomach to hear. *Dirty talk. I never thought I would hear it out of Hani’s mouth but there’s no denying that it turns Takashi on… me too, if I am being honest. I wonder if they would let me watch.*

“Go into the dungeon, underneath the hanging chains, kneel and wait for me.” Hani said with a tone of command in his voice.

Without a word, Takashi stood and went to follow the command.

Hani turned to Kaoru. “I know you expressed an interest in flogging the other night as well as the chair you mentioned tonight. I also know that you like spanking and paddling. Is there anything that you don’t like or don’t want to do?”

Kaoru’s mind went blank. “I am not sure; I don’t know what is out there.”

“Fair enough,” Hani said with a smile. “Let me put it another way. What would you like to experience tonight? I can spank you, flog you, bind you and put you on display.”

Kaoru grinned a bit mischievously, “Can I do them all?”

Hani laughed, “We can probably work that in. I need to be a bit cautious of the bruises you already have from last Saturday night, but there is plenty of other exposed skin and fun bits I can play with. How do you feel about sexual contact? The way I play with Karr usually turns that way, but it doesn’t have to with you.”

Kaoru blushed and looked down, “I would enjoy touching and maybe a little sucking – either to me or having me do it. I don’t think I am ready for full sex in front of an audience, even if that audience was just made of up the Host Club.”
“No worries, I would want to check with Tamaki and possibly Renge if that were the case.”

“Renge wants to watch and Tamaki would be on his knees before Kyoya begging for the same,” Kaoru chuckled.

Hani arched an eyebrow. “So you have talked about it with them… I figured you had with Tamachan but Renge surprises me a little.”

“When I was talking to her about us, I mentioned that there was someone else I wanted to explore something different with and it accidentally slipped out about Kyo being dominant and most of the club wanting to submit to him. She guessed immediately and as it turns out has done quite a bit with Mai,” Kaoru turned a faint pink as he giggled, “apparently she is really into fisting.”

Hani threw his head back and laughed. “So our otaku is a closet kinkster too. Explains so much actually. It’s good that you have had these discussions. So based on everything you said, I have an idea for tonight. Remember if you are uncomfortable in play at any time you can say Red and it will stop. If you want the collar removed you say Hyacinth.”

“Yes Sir, I remember.”

“Good,” Hani held a hand down to help Kaoru up and pulled him in for an almost chaste kiss. “Go watch Kara in the chair for a bit and decide if you want to try it. Dom and David will play with her a bit differently than I will play with you, but you will get an idea if it is something you would like. If you decide not to, then I will use the spanking bench instead. Because my dear sweet Jareth, you have an ass that begs to be spanked.”

Kaoru shivered at the words and immediately walked into the dungeon. To his left he saw Takashi, kneeling silently on the floor underneath a hanging set of chains with a leather wrist cuffs. To his right he saw one of the other couples he was introduced to earlier, Alex and Veronica, using the spanking bench, Alex was bent over it with a plug in his ass and Veronica was in the process of turning it pink with what looked like a fairy wand with a pink sequined heart on the end. He was also wearing pink fishnet thigh-highs and Kaoru could just make out a pink bow tied around his erect cock. An odd sensation flickered in his stomach as he watched Veronica spank him.

“I have never seen anything like it… and it is kind of weirdly sexy.”

Dominic laid a calming hand on his shoulder, “Nothing to be sorry about. Alex loves humiliation play as you can tell by how erect he is. He is also an exhibitionist, so he is getting of being watched.” He chuckled, “I guess we are all on that last one or we wouldn’t be here playing in front of each other. Now please excuse me, I need to strap my girlfriend to a chair and torment her.” With a wink he stepped forward and went to the area directly in front of Kaoru where David was in the process of buckling her in.

Kaoru noticed immediately that she was now naked and she was pierced in both nipples, her belly button and her clit hood. He watched as she smiled at both her lovers as they locked her in place and moved what looked like a small microphone stand in front of her exposed pussy. Then they both kissed her fully before Dominic reached down and flipped a switch. Suddenly it came alive and an intense buzzing could be heard. A vibrator on a stand. Clever. David pushed it so it made direct contact with the piercing and soft lips. A loud moan escaped Kara’s mouth as it made contact and she started trying to wriggle within the confines of the chair to get it to move to a different location.
Turning from the scene in front of him he looked to Hani and Takashi. Takashi was still on his knees, but Hani had raised his hands (now in the cuffs) over his head and was in the process of using a heavy flogger on his back alternating between light and heavy strokes. When the heavier ones impacted, he could hear Takashi groan in pleasure. He watched mesmerized as Hani swung the flogger in an intricate pattern before striking. *It's beautiful to watch.*

Glancing over he saw that David had dropped to his knees in front of Dominic and was in the middle of sucking him off as Kara was panting and squirming harder against the sensations. He could hear her begging and realized that Dominic had purposely set the vibrator at a point that would bring her to and hold her on the edge of orgasm but wouldn’t quite cause her enough sensation to push her over. Dominic leaned over, grabbed her hair and said in a commanding voice, “You can come after I have, not before. Do you understand?”

Tears streamed down her eyes as she nodded and replied, “Yes Dom.”

Kaoru’s cock twitched hard in his latex pants as he imagined the exquisite torture of being held right at that edge of pleasure. *It has to be a torment… I wonder if Hani would do that to me someday.*

The thought of Hani made Kaoru look back to his Top. Hani had stopped flogging Takashi and was in the process of using a tool on Takashi’s back that looked like a pizza cutter covered with spikes. Takashi was struggling against the cuffs as he tried to both get closer and further away from the sharp sensation.

Hani looked up and caught Kaoru’s curiosity, “It’s called a Wartenberg wheel and it can be a bit painful if you do it wrong. Karr doesn’t have the same gift of turning pain into pleasure that you do, so I know he is tolerating it because I want to use it. Would you like to help me make this a bit more bearable for him?”

Kaoru looked at the tall exquisitely chiseled man, held in such a helpless position and licked his lips before nodding.

Hani gave an evil grin and replied, “Good. Do you mind freeing his cock from the tightness of the leather pants? It’s been hard and confined all evening. I think he deserves some relief don’t you?”

Kaoru looked at Takashi and saw the pleading and heat in his eyes, though the older man never said a word. Making a decision, Kaoru got on his hands and knees and crawled over to Takashi, maintaining the eye contact. He could see the heat flare and feel the hardness as he reached to unfasten the leather pants.

Takashi’s cock sprang free, causing him to groan loudly in relief.

Hani winked at Kaoru from behind Takashi’s back. “That’s better, but I will leave it up to you to decide if that is enough relief or he deserves more. Just remember, whatever you do to him, he can do back to you when it is your turn.” He went back to teasing the wheel up and down Takashi’s back.

Kaoru grinned at the non-threat and looked at the warrior before replying with, “He looks so damn sexy like this. I can see what Haruhi and Kyouya see in him. Maybe I could help ease his suffering, just a little… in the name of friendship.”

Hani tossed his head back and laughed loudly, “Oh Jareth, you are going to fit in just fine.”

Kaoru smiled wickedly and caught Takashi’s eyes again before lowering his head to the point where his head was level with Takashi’s cock. Without hesitation, he took the length in his mouth as far as
he was able.

Takashi let out a roar of pleasure as Kaoru’s warm welcoming mouth enclosed his throbbing cock, tongue pressing and moving in long circles while Kaoru alternated the pressure. He suddenly felt pulled in two directions – the bite-sting on his overheated back and the pleasure of his cock in another man’s mouth. His body rocked back and forth between the two, riding the crest and feeling it pulling him under. Unconsciously he started begging for release, “Auriel… Sir… Please… Jareth… Unnngh… Please… oh gods… PLEASE!!”

Hani set the Wartenberg wheel down and pressed his body against Takashi’s back, one hand holding Takashi’s head to one side and the other sliding down around Takashi’s waist to tangle in Kaoru’s hair. He felt Kaoru look up at him, mouth still firmly around Takashi’s cock. “He’s close, go ahead and stroke him off.”

Kaoru nodded and slid his mouth slowly off Takashi’s cock, replacing it with his fingers. With a strong grip, he started stroking slowly. On the third stroke, Hani bent down a bit hard at the corded muscle of Takashi’s neck. Takashi came hard in Kaoru’s hand with a groan that could almost have been a shout, jerking his body against the chains holding him and shooting his load up his chest to dribble down on Kaoru’s fingers. Kaoru smiled as he continued to stroke slowly to extend the orgasm for as long as possible, as Hani looked down at him with a smirk and nodded. With a final deep moan, Takashi sunk back as far as the chains would allow and hung his head in exhaustion.

As Hani stepped up to remove his chains, Kaoru got up, went to the kitchen and dampened some paper towels with cool water. Coming back into the dungeon, he started using them to wipe down Takashi’s sweat and cum drenched chest, which earned him a smile from Hani and a sincere Thank You from Takashi.

Kaoru said shyly, “It is my pleasure. That was unbelievably hot. I am honored that you let me participate.”

Hani laughed, “The pleasure was ours. If you wouldn’t mind grabbing the blanket out of the bag and wrapping it around Karr’s shoulders, we can go out in the living room, sit for a bit and come down a bit before your turn.” He glanced around the room and a scene caught his eye, “Or since I know we all enjoy watching we can sit on that couch over there and watch the rest of Dom, David, and Kara’s scene. It looks like it’s just about to get to the good part.”

Kaoru looked over at their hosts. Dominic had moved and was now standing on a platform next to the chair which brought his cock to the right height to have Kara finish sucking him. David had moved the vibrator away from her clit, but had replaced it with his mouth. Kaoru could also see one of his hands working something between her legs and realized abruptly it was a double ended dildo. Kaoru’s erection which had started to soften slightly in helping with the clean-up sprang back to full attention. *She is getting double penetrated, with a tongue on her clit and a cock in her mouth. Damn!* An idle thought crossed his mind. *I wonder I we could do something like that with Haru…*

“Jareth,” Hani’s voice said quietly so as not to disturb the scene.

Kaoru turned and saw Hani holding out his hand. Quickly Kaoru walked over and sat on the floor by his knees, while Takashi lay on his side on the couch, his head in Hani’s lap. Takashi’s hand draped over the side to rest on Kaoru’s shoulder and Hani’s hand once again started stroking his hair. Leaning back into the caress, Kaoru sighed in small pleasure at the sense of connection as all three of them watched the scene in front of them.

It wasn’t long before Dominic gave a grunt and a hard thrust, cumming deep in Kara’s throat. She swallowed and licked him slowly as he pulled out, a smile on her lips. “Thank you, Sir.” She said
rather haltingly and rather breathlessly as David continued to work her.

“You are beautiful and such a good girl,” Dominic replied as he bent down to kiss her thoroughly. He broke it off slowly and said, “So good in fact that I think you deserve a reward. Cum for us, my love.”

At the words, David twisted his hands slightly working the dildo at a slightly different angle and sucked hard on her clit. Kara came hard, bucking against the restraints and screaming as the orgasm rocked her body.

David slowly removed the toy and with a final kiss to her pussy stood up slowly. He also leaned in to kiss her deeply and whispered. “Dom is right; you are so beautiful when you come for us.”

Kara laughed shakily, still trying to catch her breath. “It’s my pleasure… Literally!”

Dominic and David quickly removed the straps and the three of them stepped into each other, holding tightly for a few moments. Slowly Dominic took a half step back and they broke the hug. With a nod, Dominic sent David and Kara into the other room while he went to get cleaning supplies for the chair. Within a few moments, he had wiped it down and sanitized it. Dropping the supplies into a basket by the door he turned to Hani and winked. “It’s all yours. Have Fun!”

Hani grinned wickedly. “I intend to.” Looking down at Kaoru, he said, “Do you still want the chair or would you prefer the spanking bench?”

Kaoru eyes flicked back to the chair, “I want the chair.”

Hani’s grin widened. “I am glad, because my plan is to put you in it. Bind you so you are completely at my mercy. Take my riding crop and turn the skin of your ass and thighs a lovely stingy shade of red, while Takashi sucks you to the point where you are begging for release. He will then switch to stroking you until you cum screaming. Then I will fuck Takashi while he licks every drop of cum off your body… still unable to move, only watch and feel.” Hani smirked at the involuntary moan that escaped Kaoru’s lips. “How does that sound?”

Kaoru stood up and immediately turned to face both Hani and Takashi. Immediately, his hands moved to the zipper of the latex pants and he stripped naked. Standing completely bare in front of them except for the collar that Hani had placed around his neck earlier that night, cock engorged and fully extended, arms clasped behind his back, he said the only word that crossed his mind through the haze of need - “Please.”
Tamaki wandered through the stalls of the fresh air market a few streets down from the house. The morning was cool and the dark grey clouds promised nourishing rain later in the day, but for the moment everything was tranquil. *Kind of like how I feel at this moment.* Humming quietly to himself, he smiled and nodded at the grannies chatting amiably as they sat in cover of their stalls and winked at the young shop girls who were bustling around refilling the various bins and baskets. In return, the shop girls would squeak and turn bright pink, while the grannies would laugh and threaten to “feed him up and teach him ‘right’ so he would turn into proper husband material.” It was a cheerful game and it fit his contented mood perfectly.

_I woke up this morning with Haruhi naked in my arms, and Kyouya against my back._ A happy grin crept across his face, and just out of sight a middle aged woman, started fanning herself with her hand. He was completely unaware of the effect he was having on the other people wandering and working through the market, lost in his memory of earlier. *Hikaru’s leg was flopped over Haruhi’s thigh… and she was snoring lightly into my chest. It was such a simple thing to wake up to, but it made me feel happy. The only thing that could have made it better was Kaoru being in the mix somewhere, but he was still soundly asleep with Hani and Takashi when I stepped out this morning. From the way they were cuddled around each other they all must have had a good time at their party last night._

A fruit stand caught his attention and he wandered over to see bins of fresh clementines, lemons, apples, and pears. A sensory memory of dinner party where the hostess served an appetizer of grilled pears, goat cheese, walnuts, and a drizzle of local honey caused him to buy a bag of pears and ask the shopkeeper where he could find the other ingredients. *It should be a simple enough dish to make, even with my limited cooking skills… and I think the others would like the flavors. Hmm… I wonder if there’s anything else I can make._ Thanking the shopkeeper, he immediately sought out the other ingredients for the dish he remembered and picked up several other random ingredients that looked interesting.

So lost in the idea of preparing an epic feast for his friends, Tamaki lost track of the time and how much he had purchased until the last shopkeeper asked him, “Would you like me to arrange to have this delivered?”

Tamaki looked at the bags in his hand, now overflowing with fruit, vegetables, snacks, and other assorted items that had caught his eye. Sheepishly, he replied, “I think that may be a good idea. I seem to have gotten a bit carried away.”

The shopkeeper laughed. “I noticed. Still it’s good for business, eh?!” He nudged Tamaki in the elbow. “Give me the address and I will send my son over as soon as he returns from his last delivery. It shouldn’t be any longer than an hour.”

Tamaki grinned. “Thank you, I appreciate it.” Giving him the address, Tamaki hefted the bags in his arms a little higher, turned, and walked back to the villa. _I wonder if the others are up yet. When I left, Haru and Hika were just waking up and Kyo was still out cold. I am not sure about the others. I heard rustling, but that could just have been any of them turning over and going back to sleep. I know Takashi usually gets up early, but Hani and Kaoru tend to sleep a lot longer._

Reaching the door of the villa, Tamaki opened it as quietly as he could, just to make sure he wouldn’t disturb any of his friends that may still have been sleeping. He placed the bags in the
kitchen and seeing a French press full of coffee, poured himself a mug, sweetened it perfectly, and went off to find his friends, eager to tell them about the treat he had planned.

Hikaru felt a rustling in the bed and automatically pulled Haruhi a bit closer. Still three quarters asleep, he nuzzled into her neck, laying a gentle kiss on her shoulder blade. The soft murmur of voices brought his wakefulness up a little bit more.

“Where are you going?” Haruhi’s sleepy but hushed voice asked.

“I thought I would run to the Farmer’s market and pick up some snacks for the day. Anything you want?” Tamaki’s quiet voice responded.

“Whatever you get will be fine.”

Hikaru could hear the smile in her voice as he felt her body stretch against his.

“You look thoroughly debauched, you know,” Tamaki’s teasing tone brought a slight smirk to Hikaru’s face as he purposely kept his eyes closed and pretended to be asleep.

“I feel like it,” Haruhi’s answering tone held just as much amusement. “Last night was wonderful, Tama. The music, the wine, and most of all being with you.” Her skin flushed as she continued, “I missed that.”

“Me too,” Tamaki replied, “The good news is we can now do it more often. Well… when you are visiting France anyway.”

In his sleep, Kyouya turned, flopped on his stomach, and pulled a pillow closer into his head, startling Tamaki and Haruhi.

In an even quieter tone, Tamaki said sheepishly, “I don’t want to wake Kyo. I will be back in a bit.”

Hikaru felt the bed move as Tamaki knelt to kiss Haruhi’s cheek. A sudden nip to his shoulder caused him to squeak involuntarily and his eyes to fly open.

“You can stop faking sleep now, Hika,” Tamaki grinned at him.

Hikaru blushed, “Sorry boss… didn’t want to spoil the moment.”

“You didn’t,” Tamaki replied. “I just wanted to tell you that I am glad that you and Kyouya decided to join us last night, even if all we did was sleep.”

Hikaru grinned, “Me too.”

Haruhi smiled, “Me three.”

All three turned bright red as, Kyouya again moved in his sleep, grumbling incoherently and pulling the pillow over his head.

With an expression of fake panic, Tamaki mouthed the word “Bye!” and rushed out of the room.

Haruhi rolled over to face Hikaru. Looking into his laughing golden eyes, she arched her head up to create a trail of soft kisses up his jawline to his ear, where she barely whispered, “I am ready to get up, are you?”
With a wicked grin, Hikaru took her hand and slid it down his body to his groin before whispering back devilishly, “Well, something definitely is… but I don’t want to risk waking our favorite Shadow King, so I guess it can wait until he can help with it.” Then in an abrupt turn, he gave her his best innocent expression and wheedled, “You make the best coffee… would you make me some?”

Haruhi giggled, “Of course.”

Cautiously, they both left the bed and pulled on comfortable clothing – Hika pulling on a pair of loose cotton pajama bottoms with no shirt, and Haruhi in yoga pants and shirt – before making their way out of the room and closing the door quietly behind them.

Walking past the other room, they could see Kaoru curled around Hani, his head on the blonde’s chest. Takashi lay sleeping to Hani’s left side, but his hand was linked with his lover’s. They both paused for a moment to appreciate the sweet tableau, before Hikaru reached out and pulled the door silently closed. He whispered with a wink, “Hani is nearly as scary as Kyouya. I don’t want to wake him either.”

Haruhi giggled, “You have no idea. On early practice days, I would let Takashi wake him. I was always too scared.”

Hikaru laughed as he pulled her into an embrace in the kitchen area of the villa. “So we finally find something you are scared of besides thunderstorms,” he teased her gently. “Though since I share the fear, I will hide behind you and hope your martial arts training will kick in and protect me.”

Haruhi grinned, “I’ll do my best… Now where would the coffee be hiding?” She turned and started opening up cabinets. It took only a few moments before she was able to locate the coffee and a large French Press.

Hikaru rummaged through the refrigerator and pulled out French Vanilla creamer before opening up the cabinets and taking down several coffee mugs and the sugar. At Haruhi’s curious look, he said, “I figure the others will be up in a bit. This way they can get their own coffee when they do.”

“Makes sense,” Haruhi answered.

A few minutes later, both of them had prepared their coffees the way they liked and by mutual agreement, walked over to sunken social area with couches and two window seats overlooking the ocean. Sitting across from each other, their legs tangled together, they sat for a few minutes in silence, just sipping their coffee, and looking out at the crashing waves.

“It’s really beautiful here,” Haruhi said quietly.

“The boss really does know how to pick a good location,” Hikaru answered with a smile, which quickly turned mischievous, “and apparently he knows how to make good date plans. Sooooo… tell me about your evening… I want all, and I do mean ALL, the juicy details.”

Haruhi turned a faint pink before replying, “Only if I get the same from you. I still can’t picture Kyoya being a boy-toy.”

“Ha! That lasted no more than 30 seconds once we got to the club,” Hikaru grinned. “Not that I was complaining. I am far better suited to being a boy-toy anyway.”

“That’s true enough.”

“Hey!” Hikaru swatted at her ankle. “Be nice or I won’t tell you the REALLY juicy bits… like our
staid, cool, reserved lover comes completely undone in public when you drop to your knees and give him a blow job in a dark corner. Of course that was after he gave me a hand job that nearly the whole club could see…” Hikaru smirked as he relayed the details of his night out with their lover, enjoying every moment of Haruhi’s enraptured expression and accelerated pulse as she listened eagerly.

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The sound of a tree limb, caught by a stray gust of wind, brushing against the window of the bedroom woke Takashi. The filtered gray light coming in the window and the distant crashing of the waves on the beach below immediately letting him know that a storm would be arriving by early afternoon, but the tree, the waves, and even the feel of the air indicated that it was not going to be a violent storm, just a cold damp one. No fear of lightening or thunder then. No chance to see if the conditioning Haruhi and I did earlier in the week is still holding.

He rolled onto his side and looked down at his lover and Kaoru. Kaoru did very well last night for his first time at a party. He waited a moment to see if the thought would bring with it any sense of jealousy or tension. When nothing but fondness appeared, he permitted himself a small smile. Kaoru DID do very well for his first party. Better than either I or Mitskune did at ours, though much of that can be attributed to the comfortableness that Dom, David, and Kara have. Still, I would not have expected him to be willing to suck me off. He was a good submissive and I would be willing to share Mitskune with him, whenever he needs.

The faintest murmur of voices from the other side of the door caught his attention. So at least two others are awake. No doubt one of them is Haruhi. Perhaps we can get some yoga in on the patio before the rain starts. We haven’t been able to do yoga in a couple of days and I am missing it. I am off-balance. Too much has happened this week - the revelation about our final Mastery Quest, the upcoming separation between Mitskune and me, the situation with Kyoya, and the change in my relationship with Haruhi and Kyoya. A slight smile crossed his lips. Though those last ones are changes that I will never challenge or regret. I need Haruhi almost as much as I need Mitskune… but so do the others. It just took these last few days for me to realize that she needs me as much as I do her. Kyoya is a surprise though. While I have always been attracted to him, I never thought we would have anything other than mutual friendship. I don’t know if he feels the same, but even if it never progresses beyond friendship, it is still deeper and richer relationship than I imagined. Once I thought the Host Club would drift apart after we all graduated, now I know we are inextricably bound to each other through many different connected ropes. All of us are stronger because of these bonds… and Haruhi is at the heart of it all.

Still asleep, Hani pulled his hand out of Takashi’s to scratch at the side of his nose. Takashi took that as his cue to let his lover (lovers?) sleep. With minimal motion he slipped out of the bed and pulled on his workout pants. Not bothering with a shirt, he padded silently to the door, exited and shut it behind him. The smell of fresh brewed coffee overwhelmed his senses and he headed straight for the kitchen.

Seeing the press on the counter still had coffee in it, and after testing that it was still warm, Takashi poured himself a cup. With it warming his hand, he stepped out into the dining area area, following the sound of voices around the corner and down to the social area and the two huge window seats. Seated across from each other in one of them, Haruhi and Hikaru were involved in what appeared to be an animated discussion. In the moment that he took trying to decide if he should join them, or go back to the dining area, Haruhi looked up at him and smiled.

“Good Morning, ashke,” the smile went all the way through her eyes and it made Takashi’s heart thump once, hard. “Come join us?”
Hikaru saw the slightly dazed look on Takashi’s face and grinned. “We are discussing our dates last night, and since I am dying to know how the party went, you have to fill us in on all the juicy bits. I was just telling Haru about this club, Kyo and I went to last night where anything and I do mean anything, goes. I mean, Kyo jerked me off as I was bent over the railing. It was intense!! You and Hani need to check this place out when you get a chance, but enough of that, I can’t wait to hear all the details about the play party.”

A faint flush crept over his skin at the graphic image that Hikaru’s words supplied, followed immediately by another memory as he remembered exactly what Hikaru’s twin brother had done to him the night before, and what he had done in return. Blood rushed to both his face and his groin. “Umm… perhaps you should get those from Kaoru.”

Hikaru’s grin turned wicked, “Oh I will, but more doesn’t hurt.” He winked at Takashi, and nodded to the hickeys down his neck. “From the look of it you had a good time.”

Haruhi took pity on him, “You don’t have to indulge Hika’s curiosity, if you don’t want. I was just about to tell him about my date with Tamaki, but you don’t have to sit and listen to us jabber on, if you don’t want to.”

Takashi blinked, “No! … I mean I am interested in your evenings… I would like to stay if you don’t mind.”

“I would like that,” Haruhi stood up and motioned for Takashi to take her spot. “I am going to get another cup of coffee. Do either of you need anything?”

“I am good, love.”

“I think I took the last of the pot that was there, I am so sorry. I didn’t realize,” Takashi replied.

“No problem, I will start another,” Haruhi smiled. “I am sure the rest of the guys will be up in a bit anyway. You two start chatting and I will be back in a few.” With a kiss to both of their cheeks, Haruhi made her way back to the kitchen.

Takashi sat across from Hikaru and his mind went blank. Or rather it started running in circles centered on the three people in Hikaru’s life that meant the most to him – Kaoru, Haruhi, and Kyouya. All of whom Takashi had recently become far more and rather intimately involved with.

Hikaru saw a flicker of something run across Takashi’s face. Conflict? Worry? The fact that I saw it at all means that either he is not nearly as stoic as he used to be… or I am getting better at reading the people I consider friends. Quietly and as gently as he could, he asked, “what is it?”

Takashi took a deep breath and replied, “I just realized I have never asked how you felt about me… and Haruhi. Now there’s Kyouya too and your brother. I don’t know what you must be thinking about me.”

Hikaru leaned forward and placed his hand on Takashi’s knee. “I know that Haruhi loves you and that you fill a part of her that neither Kyo nor I can. Once I would have been jealous, but seeing you two together when you are working as a team is formidable… and beautiful. I just found Kyouya, though I have been attracted to him for a very long time… So I can understand that others may have been attracted to him as well. Kao is… well… Kao is a part of me that will never go away. I am trying to learn to let go and let him choose who he wants to be with. I can’t say that I am not jealous but I want him happy.”

“I see.”
Hikaru smiled, “Do you? What do you want? From them or from me…”

“I want your friendship above all,” Takashi said quietly. “I don’t think anything deeper than friendship will develop with your brother. I respect him, enjoy his company, and feel a kinship to him in our submission, but I don’t want anything beyond that with him.”

“That’s fair,” Hikaru responded. “And Kyouya?”

“Kyouya is a force of nature,” Takashi hedged.

“That he is!” Hikaru laughed.

“I want whatever he is willing to give, but his heart belongs first to Haruhi and you, then to Tamaki. I will be happy with his friendship… if that is all that is left.”

“I am finding hearts are far more flexible things than I ever gave them credit for, but I understand what you are saying,” Hikaru squeezed Takashi’s knee. “But speaking of hearts, I know yours belongs first to Hani and this separation has to be hard on both of you.”

Takashi sighed, “It is. We have four days until our quests begin. I know it is not permanent, but for the first time in my life I won’t have him near me and I am unbalanced. Still having Haruhi near will help, as will all of your friendship, but…” His voice drifted off.

“But he’s still a large part of who you are, as Kaoru is for me.”

“Yes.”

In unspoken agreement, they slipped into silence, eyes drifting out to watch the grey skies and crashing waves. Each lost to their own thoughts.

“Wow, it got quiet in here,” Haruhi said as she returned to see both Hikaru and Takashi silently staring out the window.

Hikaru turned to smile at her, “Sorry love, just lost in thought.”

“Everything ok?” Concern crept into her voice. “Ashke, are you well?”

Hikaru answered before Takashi could, “It’s the weather. The change from warm to stormy overnight has made us a bit melancholy. But now that you are back, you can cheer us up by telling us all about your date with Tamaki.”

Haruhi looked from one to the other and though unconvinced they were telling the whole truth, she said, “Ok, let me just grab a chair.”

“Don’t worry about a chair, we can make room,” Hikaru said and both shifted positions. “Just sit so you can lean back against Takashi and we will all fit.”

Haruhi looked hard at Hikaru for a moment, trying to figure out what the twin was scheming, but as she positioned herself so she was leaning against Takashi’s chest, his arms resting lightly against her thighs, she felt the tension in Takashi’s body. Consciously, she shifted into yoga breathing patterns and was relieved when her partner matched them and started to relax. She looked up and caught Hikaru’s wink. So that’s why he wanted me to sit with Takashi. He knew Taka was unbalanced and needed the extra support.

“So are you going to tell us about this Mystery Date?” Hikaru prompted. “From the little I was able
to glean out of Kaoru and the boss, it sounded like fun.”

Haruhi smiled, “It was.” With a smile on her face, her back pressed against her partner and their heartbeats slowly synchronizing, and her legs tangled with her best friends and lover, she told them all about the piano bar, Tamaki’s performance, Gershwin, and the rest of the evening. Midway through the story, Tamaki joined them, sitting down crossed legged on the floor below and leaning his head against the seat, happily interjecting where he could and blushing slightly when Haruhi winked at him before comparing the 60 year old port to an orgasm in her mouth.
A faint movement to her left woke Haruhi just enough to ascertain that all of the Host Club members had fallen asleep, though someone (probably Takashi) had woken at least enough to turn off the movie.

After Tamaki had returned from the farmer’s market, the rain had begun in earnest. So when Kyoutya and Hani had finally woken and gotten enough coffee in them to make them coherent, the group had decided to spend the day in a relatively quiet manner. Takashi and Haruhi pushed some furniture out of the way to work on a few of the new yoga positions Takashi’s sister had emailed pictures of from her recent retreat. Hikaru and Kaoru had gracefully flopped on opposite ends of one of the couches, mirroring each other, one leg pulled up, sketchbooks propped against a knee, and their free leg pressed against the other’s. When Hani learned of Tamaki’s idea for snacks, he enthusiastically agreed to help Tama figure out what they needed to do, causing Kyoutya to try keep a straight face as he sat at the dining room table in front of his computer creating an expenditures spreadsheet, listening to the two blond men argue good naturedly about proper food preparation technique.

As it turned out, proper technique or not, all the Host Club members agreed that the snacks were delicious, which made Tamaki beam with pride for a full hour. After eating and determining that the rain wasn’t likely to let up for the rest of the afternoon, Kaoru had suggested a movie marathon and Hikaru suggested that they just pull the mattresses and pillows from the other rooms to make one large area where they could all relax.

_It was a brilliant idea actually. We all could stretch out without worrying about kicking someone or falling off the couch._ Haruhi was just about to curl back into Kyoutya who was spooning against her when another movement and a shadow rising from the mattresses woke her up completely. She watched as Hani cautiously made his way around the sleepers and walked over to stare out one of the windows into the night. Having made the identification, she was just about to close her eyes when a trick of the moonlight showed her the expression on Hani’s face. _I have never seen Hani look so sad._ Impulsively, she quietly extricated herself from Kyoutya’s arms and crawled off the mattress. Grabbing a blanket that Hikaru had kicked off sometime in the night, she wound it around her shoulders to ward off the faint chill in the air as she padded silently over to her friend and mentor.

“Hani-sempai, what is the matter,” she asked as quietly and as gently as she could, not wanting to startle him.

Hani swiveled fast at the sound and Haruhi could see him warring with the need to talk and the need to put on a brave face for her. It was the pure concern and care in the honorific she gave him that decided it for him. Turning to look back out the window, he answered, “I don’t know if I can do it.” And then even more quietly, “I don’t know if I can handle being away from him for that long.”

Silently Haruhi stepped up to stand next to him and wrapped one corner of the blanket around his shoulders before reaching out to take his hand. Squeezing gently, she just stood next to him offering her support, sensing that he still had more that he wanted to say.

“I have been trying to figure out why the council suddenly decided this, and the only thing that I can guess is that someone from one of our rival families found out about us and told the Masters. I know it wasn’t someone from House Zouka, we have their support. The council has always been behind us, I don’t know what changed to have them suddenly turn like this. The final Masters Quest has always been difficult, that’s kind of the point, but they have never separated us like this before.
Houses were still able to function as a support structure, even if they were forbidden from actively assisting the initiate. In the case of Takashi and me, we were raised and trained together specifically with the goal of bringing the Art into the modern world. For ages, Samurai were trained to be lone assassins in service of their Master, the Emperor. They may have served in companies or worked with other Samurai as needs required but as so many stories of Ronin have told, they were still essentially lone warriors. This was the structure that our Art is based on. As the world changed and business wealth overrode the feudal system, partnerships and corporations became the most efficient way to achieve power.” Hani glanced over at Haruhi, “you already know how slow the pace is for change in the system. Sixty years is nothing in comparison to centuries of tradition. But there was enough of a realization of the need to change or risk the loss of the entire tradition that when Takashi and I were born, just days apart that the council decided that we would be the first to usher in the new age.” He sighed quietly, “Takashi and I have never been apart for more than a week our entire lives… and now they want us to separate us for what could be years.” A tear slipped down his cheek as his voice cracked on the last word.

Immediately, Haruhi sat down on the window seat and pulled Hani down with her, wrapping her arms around him and holding him as tightly as she could.

It was this last wordless show of support that finally broke Hani’s last bit of control. Tightening his arms around her, he shook with sobs that were all the more heartbreaking in their silence. Finally, the shaking subsided and he said quietly, “We were trained from birth to be the perfect match for the other, so how is it wrong that we are lovers as well as partners? Our House doesn’t see the difference, but someone must. For all that we are in the 21st Century where homosexuality is common and becoming accepted, the Council is stuck in the era of WWII where it was taboo… and now that they know they are trying to destroy what they created.”

“I can’t speak for the close-mindedness of the Council, but I can tell you that there is no doubt in my mind that you and Takashi belong together in a way that most people will never understand. Together you are formidable and that could be the reason for the sudden change of the Council’s plan. They know you respect your heritage and your culture, but it sounds like they underestimated what they thought was going to happen. They wanted perfect obedience and adherence to the old ways while demonstrating a token effort to become more modern. You and Taka push boundaries – you are the youngest ever to test for your final mastery, you ignored tradition and chose me as a student knowing I was both commoner and female, and you are homosexual.”

“That may need to be amended to bi, or at least pansexual, when it comes to you,” Hani made a weak attempt at a smile as he looked up at her.

“Maybe,” Haruhi kissed his head with a slight smirk, “but I have a feeling I am an anomaly. If I hadn’t joined the Host Club, it wouldn’t even be a question. You both knew how to flirt with the clients, but anyone who really knew you, also knew you only had feelings for each other and it would have taken a really extraordinary woman to come between that.”

“Are you calling yourself extraordinary?” Hani teased.

Haruhi blushed a deep red, “No!! That’s not what I meant. I’m not extraordinary at all. I am just me. What I meant to say is I don’t know of any female at Ouran who had enough of a combination of bravery and intelligence to hold either of your interests for long.”

“I can think of one,” Hani kissed her cheek.

Haruhi ignored his teasing in her attempt to get the rest of her thought out. “It was so obvious you
two had a best-friends-cousinly-protector connection, though I don’t think that anyone realized it was deeper than that. It was kind of intimidating even as every girl wanted to have that same level of devotion directed at her.”

Hani sighed, “No one other than you really stood a chance, and even then I would be lying if I said that I anticipated how important you would be to not only Takashi and me, but to everyone in the Host Club. You were an anomaly Haru-chan and one that I know all of us are grateful for.”

Haruhi tightened her arms around him and she mumbled and embarrassed, “Thanks.”

“I mean it. There is every possibility that this situation with the Master Quest would have occurred regardless of you becoming our student and friend. You are right about Takashi and me pushing boundaries. It was not always well received to say the least.” Hani sighed and stifled a yawn as he relaxed a bit more against her. “But as hard as this is going to be, I know, it would be worse without you and the rest of the guys supporting us. It is going to be hell not being with him daily, but we do have technology on our side.”

“Technology and some crafty and influential friends,” Haruhi replied taking her turn to stifle a yawn. “You do know that neither the twins nor Kyoya would let you get to the point that you couldn’t communicate with the other or any of us for that matter, right?”

“I know,” Hani replied. “Honestly, it is the only thing giving me the strength to do this.”

“You and Takashi will do this, we all will support you in any way we can, and then when you have achieved your final Mastery, we will sit back and watch you and the other Masters like Zhi change the martial arts world for the better.”

“You won’t just be watching, Haru-chan… I expect you to be right there at our sides.”

“Yes, Sensei.”

The warmth of a hand on his arm brought Takashi fully awake. Opening his eyes, he saw Kyoya looking at him. Acknowledging the gaze with a nod, he saw Kyoya make a motion towards the window. In the faint glow from the moonlight, he could see a bundle with two heads, curled up in one of the window seats. With a smile he nodded as he read Kyoya’s intent behind the liquid silver eyes.

As silently as Haruhi had moved earlier, they both got up from the mattresses and walked over to the window where Hani and Haruhi had fallen asleep. Gently as possible not so as not to awaken them, Kyoya pulled the blanket slowly back and leaned down to pick up Haruhi, while Takashi did the same for Hani. Incoherent mumblings slipped from Haruhi’s lips as she instinctively curled into the warmth of Kyoya’s arms and he couldn’t resist a soft kiss to her forehead. Looking over, he saw Takashi do the same with Hani and whisper something into his ear.

Still in unspoken accord, they carried their lovers back to the mattresses and the rest of their unconventional chosen family.
Texts
Chapter Summary

RH - Renge Houshakuji
MN - Mai Nakasaki
YH - Yuzuha Hitachiin

6:23 am
To: Kaoru H.
Kaoru – What time are you and the HC getting back this morning? We may have a small problem
with the Ball tonight. Message me back as soon as you get this. – RH
6:24 am
To: Haruhi F.
Haruhi… umm... we have a problem. That interview you guys did is making waves and there is talk
of boycotting the Fashion Week Grand Ball tonight. Kyoya’s jerk dad is leading the opposition
naturally, and he is playing to the uber-conservative business crowd. It’s not pretty. Call me as soon
as you wake up. - RH
6:32 am
To: Kaoru H.
Kaoru!! Ok. You must still be asleep, but seriously. I need you to text me the moment you wake up.
There is a situation brewing. – RH
6:37 am
To: Kaoru H.
KAORU WAKE UP!! I tried calling but you didn’t pick up. You probably turned your ring tone off.
Damn! I NEED you to call me. The interview that your brother, Haruhi, and Kyoya did has set off a
pardon-my-phrase “Shitstorm!” and Yoshio Oortori is at the center of it. CALL MEEEE!!!! – RH
6:40 am
To: Hikaru H.
Hikaru – I tried sending a message to your brother but he is still asleep. You guys need to call me or
your mom as soon as possible. That whole interview-thing you guys did is blowing up the media.
Your lover’s dad is calling for a boycott of the Grand Ball tonight. - RH
6:42 am
To: Haruhi F.
Hi Haruhi – this is Mai Nakasaki . There’s something big happening at HDG and Renge is frantic. I
can’t calm her down. Can you or Kaoru please call her as soon as you get this? I think it may have
something to do with tonight’s ball. Thanks!! - MN
6:49 am
To: Tamaki S.
Tamaki – It’s Renge. I can’t get a hold of Kaoru, Hikaru, or Haruhi. It’s about the Ball tonight. I
know we had arranged for some Security to be in place tonight, but we may need to double it. If you


get this message before the others can you PLEEEEEEERRRBBBBAAAAASSSSSEEEEEE tell them to call me.
It’s really really important. - RH

6:53 am
To: Haruhi F.
Damn it Haru, you are as hard to reach as the damn twins. Will all of you please get the hell out of whatever cuddle pile you find yourselves in and CALL ME!!! – RH

6:54 am
To: Haruhi F.
Sorry- I didn’t mean that the way it came out. I’m happy that you are probably in some cuddle pile with all the guys around you… I just really REALLY need you to call me! - RH

7:02 am
Group Message to: Hikaru H.; Kaoru H.; Haruhi F.; Tamaki S; Renge F.; Kyoya O.
Good morning my dearest children. You may have heard that we have run into a complication with the Grand Ball this evening. There is no need to panic, I promise. It’s just Yoshio stirring the pot. He is trying to call for the “moral” business elite to boycott tonight’s events and all HDG products. I will admit that that he has had some luck among the very conservative business elite. Thankfully they never really have been the demographic of HDG and all they are succeeding in doing is drawing even MORE attention to the company… which is a VERY good thing for us. The tickets for tonight’s event sold out in 15 minutes and the last time I had Renge check the scalper’s price they were running at nearly 5k a ticket. I have had to increase the Security and put out a press release that all bags will be checked before entry, which seems so déclassé, but alas that is a sign of the times. Actually, Yoshio may have done us a favor in that regard, the Suoh Estate is large enough that with the number of security we had before it was possible that a few people might have been able to sneak in. Now that chance will be even slimmer. After all, we want to give the illusion of extreme exclusivity tonight, so it will be talked about for years to come. So be calm, my lovelies, and I will see you all in a few hours. XOXO!! - YH
Thrown Gauntlet

“…and it is with a heavy heart that I am asking for all upstanding business owners and the social elite to boycott the Fashion Week Grand Ball sponsored by Hitachiin Design Group. HDG’s loose and blatantly sexual business practices are an affront to all decent and hardworking people. It ensnares the unwary and turns them from conservative, studious, and principled individuals into debauched, depraved, and loose ones. As you know from recent publicity, my youngest son has recently succumbed to their indoctrination. It is my eternal hope that I will be able to extricate him from the web spun by an unorthodox family and a girl who has no status, questionable parental guidance, and who obviously is looking to better herself by trapping the son of a wealthy and powerful family.”

Kyouya sat in the leather seat of the airplane frozen in shock and anger, which caused to Tamaki to quickly grab the remote and mute the volume on the screen as the news anchor cut to an interview with a reporter claiming to have insider information on the scandal. On either side of him, Haruhi and Hikaru sat equally silent. Haruhi had a death grip on his left hand and only Kyouya’s right hand on Hikaru’s leg and Kaoru kneeling in front of him kept the twin from jumping up and tearing through the cabin in rage.

Not that Kaoru was faring much better in containing the emotions that were stewing, but both Hani’s and Tamaki’s hands on his shoulders calmed him enough to grit his teeth and say, “Forgive me Kyouya, but your father is a deranged egotistical asshole and should be shot.”

“He is not my father,” Kyouya answered immediately with an edge of frost that none of the Host Club members had heard before and which sent shivers down Tamaki’s neck. “A father would never think of making such a public display to humiliate over what should be a private family matter. He is the donor of part of my genetic material, but he lost the right to be my father long ago. It just took me until last week to realize it and today to confirm it.” He took a deep calming breath and turned to look at both of his lovers. “Haru, Hika … I am so very very sorry that that … that… I can’t even think of a word vile enough to describe him.”

“I can think of several ,” Hikaru muttered. He closed his eyes and tried to calm down. Opening them he looked at Kyouya, “it’s not your fault. But if I know mom, your fath- Yoshio is in for far more of a battle than he thinks he is going to get.”

“Mom’s lawyers are formidable and Yoshio just slandered HDG on national TV,” Kaoru said with quiet venom.

“That’s what I don’t understand,” Haruhi said quietly as everyone turned to look at her. “Yoshio is usually far too shrewd of a businessman to do something so overt and public. Kyouya’s disowning him must have rattled him more than we thought.”

“How are you so calm, Haru-chan?” even Hani’s voice held anger.

“I’m not,” Haruhi responded vehemently. “But if I want to be a lawyer and take on clients that are going to be fighting against others as misogynistic, egocentric, and power-hungry as Yoshio Ootori I need to find some way to lock down the anger. I didn’t think I would have to learn so quickly, but that is life.” She reached across to take Hikaru’s hand in her other one, never once relinquishing the hold she had on Kyoyua’s. “Hika, Kao, do you think your mom would let me shadow her legal team? I know I can’t be involved directly, but I would like to observe.”
“If for some reason she doesn’t you can shadow mine,” Kyouya said with steel in his voice. “I will not let Yoshio get away with this. I cut my ties and made my decision because of his egotism. He can try to make me out to be a lost, weak, pitiable boy in the media, but he seems to have forgotten what I can do. Maybe it is time to remind him of that fact.”

“Here, here!” Hani chuckled. “You know that you have the support of House Zouka already, but we may be able to get a few more families on your side. There’s far more politicians that use Zouka security forces than Ootori and we already know that anyone in the Ootori forces that was trained by our House has quit. It may not seem like much, but when your protection detail suddenly disappears, you start to rethink your priorities.”

“Wait a minute,” Tamaki said, “I get that you are all on board with taking Yoshio Ootori down, but what about the things that he said. Don’t they bother you at all?”

Haruhi looked up at the blond Host King. “Tama, I’ve been accused of trying to rise above my station and ‘sink my claws’ into one of you poor rich boys, pretty much from the moment that it came out that I was a girl. I have learned not to let that bother me, since I know that none of you,” she waved her hand to indicate all of the Host Club, “think that of me that way. I am upset about Yoshio indicating that my father is a questionable parent, but again that doesn’t surprise me because we all know my father is non-traditional to say the least.”

“Our family has also always been subject to behind our back whispers about our morals,” Kaoru said quietly, “‘All those half naked women and men in risqué poses for ads or openly dressing and undressing backstage without regard for who might see.’ It was never anything that we paid attention to, because as much as the social elite might gossip and whisper, they were always first in line to buy our latest line. They are generally a bunch of hypocrites… so why pay any attention to what their mouth says, when their actions show they will continue to throw money at us as fast as they can. Actions speak louder than words, and I think Ootori is going to come to regret his… Mom is the absolute best at turning negative press into something positive.”

“He also seems to have forgotten that it was his idea to push for a betrothal between Kyouya and Haruhi while they both were still at Ouran, which Ranka refused to consider,” Takashi stated quietly. “When that bit of information leaks out, his argument that Haruhi is only seeking wealth and her father’s guidance is questionable will be rendered inert.”

“I had forgotten about that,” Tamaki replied. “It also goes to Yoshio’s character that he proposed that arrangement while Haruhi and I were dating. That alone could be used to illustrate his disregard for propriety and custom. I know it really pissed Dad off.”

“Didn’t he also say that I was dead to him,” the thought coming surprisingly neutral from Kyouya’s lips. “If I was to be stricken from the family records, why is he suddenly reversing that statement and playing up the impression that I am a lost child he wants to welcome back into the fold?”

“Because his little scripted press release did not draw him nearly as many sympathizers as he thought it would,” a disembodied voice said over their shoulders.

Everyone looked up to see Yuzuha’s face on the screen they had been watching earlier.

Yuzuha waved away the question that she could see forming on their lips. “My plane. I have the access commands to control the video screen and since you obviously didn’t hear or see the incoming video call message, I assumed that you had the volume down. So I initiated and accepted
the call myself before turning up the volume. But that is neither here nor there, from what I could
catch of your conversation, I take it you saw the press conference.”

“Yes,” Kyouya replied, “I am-“

“Don’t you dare apologize to me Kyo-yoshi for the actions of Yoshio Ootori. They are his alone and
they do not reflect on you at all. You are far more a moral and upstanding member of the community
than your father is… and he is starting to understand that his reputation is less solid than he thought,
thanks to some insider information that was accidently slipped into the hands of the board members
at Ootori Enterprises.” Yuzuha’s bland tone was belied by the smirk hovering around her lips.

“What did you do, mother?” Hikaru asked.

“Nothing yet, my sweet,” Yuzuha replied. “I had absolutely nothing to do with it, honestly! Yuzuru
Suoh might have mentioned to one or two of the board members that are on his board that the
mysterious KO Enterprises that purchased the floundering Ootori stock two years ago, made it
profitable, and gave it back to the company was in fact a side project that Kyouya built in his spare
time while still managing to obtain perfect grades at Ouran. That impressed them far more than the
excuses regarding the mismanagement and misallocation of resources that Yoshio had stated were
the cause of the decline in their stock prices.”

“Trust Dad to slip that into conversation,” Tamaki grinned at Kyouya. “He probably also made it out
to be some kind of extra credit project that highlighted your ambition and drive to succeed. That way
it highlights your qualities while subtly reinforcing that Ouran Academy has the most elite students.”

“You know your Dad well, Tamaki,” Yuzuha grinned.

“What about the allegations that he is throwing out about Haruhi and HDG?”

“We have our lawyers drawing up a slander lawsuit as we speak,” Yuzuha replied. “The plaintiff is
noted as all of HDG including its employees and associates. Which coincidentally includes both
Haruhi and Ranka, since Haruhi has technically been an in-house model for the twins for the last 2
years. Ranka’s official title is Executive Design Consultant and has been for a month prior to these
slanderous allegations.”

“I am confused,” Haruhi replied. “How am I considered an employee of HDG?”

Kaoru looked at Hikaru and they both turned a faint pink. “You know all those make-over sessions
and times we had you try on a bunch of our ideas?” At her nod he continued, “Technically, you
were on HDG payroll all that time. Remember that disclosure agreement we had you sign?”

“Vaguely… I thought it was just my promise that I wouldn’t leak any of the upcoming designs to the
press.” She gave both the twins a concerned look. “You know that I never expected anything from
you both either monetary or clothing-wise out of it, right? I did those sessions because you were my
best friends.”

Hika leaned over and kissed her cheek, “We know. We also know that even though we wanted to
pay you for your time and effort, you wouldn’t have accepted it… So we put it everything you
would have earned at an entry level model’s wages into a savings account with a decent interest
yield. We figured that you could use it to offset any expenses for college and law school that your
scholarships wouldn’t cover. It was going to be a graduation surprise, but this situation kind of
spoiled that.”
Haruhi had tears in her eyes as she pulled the twins into a hug. “Thank you. You don’t know how much that means to me.”

They held her for a few minutes more before Yuzuha caught their attention again. “I don’t want to break this up, but I need to get back to finalizing the schedule for this evening. I just wanted to let you know that Renge and a car will be picking you up directly from the hangar. Airport security has assured me that no unauthorized press will be allowed inside the private hangar area, but they cannot prevent access to anyone who legitimately has a private plane or hangar space, so you may still run into a few people. I know at least one tabloid has a private jet, which means they might be able to ambush you. At this point, I would just respond ‘no comment’ to anything they ask. Renge has also been appointed as spokesperson for HDG and she will let them know that HDG will be holding a press conference with to respond to Yoshio Ootori’s comments tomorrow evening after the close of Fashion Week.” A fiery note crept into her voice, “we are not going to let the vultures affect the event this evening. If anything, they will be chomping at the bit for the press conference tomorrow after the Grand Ball plays out tonight.”

“At least that gives us some time to prepare,” Kaoru commented.

“Do you mind if I join you at the press conference?” Kyouya asked quietly. “I intend to file my own slander suit against my father, but I would like to show that I am united with HDG.”

“I was hoping that you would be willing,” Yuzuha answered. “You may not technically be an employee of HDG but you are definitely a part of it.”

“Thank you.”

“All right, I am signing off. I will see all of you in about an hour. Like I said earlier, try not to fret too much over what Yoshio Ootori said at his press conference. We have far more ammunition than he is aware of and we have no reservations in using it. He seems to have forgotten that Fashion is a multi-trillion dollar business and HDG has a leading role… It is time to remind him.”
The hangar at the airport was eerily silent as the small private jet pulled in and parked. Opening the flight door and lowering the staircase, Kaoru looked around to spot Renge, but his girlfriend (*I kind of like being able to think of her as my girlfriend*) was nowhere in the immediate vicinity. A puzzled, “Huh?!?” slipped from his lips.

“What is it brother?” Hikaru asked as he stepped forward to help secure the staircase.

“Mom said Renge would be here to meet us with the car. I don’t see her and there isn’t a car waiting for us. I wonder what happened to them.”

“Perhaps there was a delay with Security,” Kyouya said from behind them. “We should go into the main hangar and check.”

A beep and a vibration sounded from the phone in Kaoru’s pocket.

*Security is not letting me through and it will take me more time to fight it than it would be if you guys just met me in the lobby. Sorry. I know Yuzuha was trying to avoid this for you, but there are paparazzi everywhere. Be prepared. – RH*

Kaoru sighed as he put away his phone, “It looks like that was exactly it. Renge says there are a lot of paparazzi waiting.”

“At least we know what to expect,” Haruhi said with an answering sigh. “So let me guess – Keep walking though as quickly as we can and avoid answering any questions?”

Hikaru kissed her on the cheek. “Yes. Mom has already arranged for a press conference. Anything they need to know will be discussed then.” He squeezed her fingers and put a hand on Kyouya’s shoulder. “We will get through this.”

“I know,” Kyouya replied with a light touch to Hikaru’s hand, then slinging his bag across his shoulders he continued, “Let’s go.”

With Tamaki, Hani, and Takashi behind them, the twins, Haruhi and Kyouya made their way to the double door that lead to the main lobby of the private airport. Pushing it open, they were greeted by an explosion of flashbulbs and a sudden cacophony of questions. *Kyouya- what is your reaction to your father’s statement this morning? Hikaru/Kaoru- Is HDG worried about the possible boycott of the Grand Ball tonight? What is the sex like between the three of you? Do you include anyone else in your sexcapades? Haruhi – How does your father feel about the idea that you are sleeping with two different men?*

Haruhi bit her lip to avoid blurting out a biting comment to the most blatantly rude questions, knowing they were only asking in an attempt to provoke her. Beside her, she could see Hikaru ball his fist and Kyouya grab the strap of his bag harder. *Twenty more meters to go.* She could see the limo just outside the entry doors and Renge obviously trying to stress the importance of a quick departure to the chauffeur. But it was another auburn colored head with long hair pulled back in a loose ponytail, subtle make-up creating a look of fashionable androgyny, wearing an open-collared white shirt, jeans, and black blazer standing next to the limo that made Haruhi break into a run. “Dad!!!”
Ryoji “Ranka” Fujioka broke into a grin that turned his face from something cool and aloof into something warm and welcome. Stepping forward, he opened his arms as Haruhi ran into them. Holding her tight he whispered. “Hi, babygirl. Shhhh... The worst is almost over. I'll tell you more in the car.” Straightening up, he kept one arm around her shoulder as he then turned to Hikaru and Kyouya who were looking at him warily. With a grin and a mischievous smile that could only have been learned from close contact with a certain Hitachiian family member, he turned to Haruhi’s boyfriends and shook their hands before pulling each into a casual hug. Loudly enough for the paparazzi who had rushed forward at the scene to hear he said. “It’s good to see you boys again. I know we have a lot to discuss, but we have to get back to the estate.” He gestured to the open limo door with a wink, “Shall we go?”

“Of course, sir,” Hikaru said with a smile and an answering wink as he helped Haruhi into the limo before climbing in himself.

After everyone was seated and the limo safely pulled away, leaving the flashbulbs and rude questions behind, Ranka let loose a sigh of relief. Turning to his daughter, he said, “I think that worked out better than we hoped. Sorry, I didn’t let you know that I was going to be in town for the Ball, but we were originally trying to keep it a surprise. Then when everything started to blow up the last couple of days, we thought that an honest surprise reaction from you and a visible show that I support you and your choice of boyfriends would take the paparazzi by surprise and be a counter to the poison Yoshio Ootori is spreading.”

“It was planned?” Haruhi asked, slightly hurt. “There weren’t issues with Security?”

Renge rushed to answer, “Oh there definitely were issues with Security. I think one of the tabloids paid off the Head of Security to try and delay us as much as possible, because I have never had as much trouble picking up visitors before as I did today. Ranka was originally just going to wait in the car and surprise you when you got in, but with the delays, we came up with another plan on the fly.”

“Mom would be proud of your ingenuity,” Kaoru said with a smile as he leaned over to kiss her on the cheek. “I missed you,” he whispered quietly into her ear.

Renge blushed a bright pink at both the compliment and the obvious undertone in Kaoru’s whispered words. “Thanks, I think it worked out ok in the end.” Her tone changed abruptly. “But while that scene will answer the question that Ranka is aware and approves of his daughter’s suitors, there’s still trouble brewing. I know Yuzuha will go over it in more detail with you at the house, but she wanted me to tell you that she has upped the security for tonight and that with my suggestions she has made a few other more discreet arrangements. The media contingent has been reduced and made more exclusive. There will be body guards assigned to Haruhi, Kyouya, Hikaru, and Kaoru.”

“WHAT!” “That’s Ridiculous!” “Can Takashi and I help?” The twins and Hani spoke out in unison.

Renge held up her hand and addressed Hani’s question first. “Yes, actually. I know Yuzuha was hoping that Takashi would protect Kyouya and that you, Hani, would take Hikaru. Since you are already all good friends, it won’t look suspicious if you guys are hanging out together.”

“I guess that makes sense,” Hikaru grumbled. “But what about Haruhi?”

“I can take care of myself or have you forgotten already?” Haruhi replied with a hint of a chuckle.

Ranka smiled at the sally but answered seriously, “Haruhi, that is not going to get you out of having
body guards.” He looked at Renge who nodded her head. “You are actually the target for most of the threats that HDG has been getting. It’s ridiculous that there is still this kind of idea that it’s ok for Hikaru and Kyouya to have multiple partners because that’s what men should do, but as a woman, you are only supposed to have one. It’s the 21st century for gods’ sake not the dark ages. Alternative life choices are going to just get more common from here and people are going to need to start accepting that. It’s-

A discreet cough from Renge stalled him.

“Sorry, I am getting off the topic,” Ranka said sheepishly. “I know that you can protect yourself, but there have been some threats that are serious enough that warrant having the extra protection.”

“Why aren’t Mitskune and I protecting her then?” Takashi asked.

Renge tried to be as tactful as she could, “mostly because you have been linked too closely to Haruhi lately and we don’t want to even hint that there may be something more than just friendship or a teacher/student relationship with you. But I think you both will approve of who I have arranged to be her protection.” She smiled slightly as she saw Takashi nod in understanding. “Since they had already been invited to be a part of the HDG contingent, Zhi and Sakura Fujimia will be Haruhi’s guard detail for the night. Sakura’s cousin Blake has agreed to protect Kaoru.”

“That is acceptable,” Takashi replied as Hani agreed.

“Wait a minute. Don’t I get a say in this at all?” The irritation was clear in Haruhi’s voice.

“Are you opposed to Master Zhi and Sakura protecting you, Haru-chan?” A warning tone was threaded through Hani’s tone.

Haruhi flushed, “No… it’s not that. I am honored by their willingness to protect me. It’s just…”

Kyouya took her hand and rubbed his fingers across her knuckles. “You are just used to taking care of yourself and the idea of someone trying to protect you seems wrong. Please, love, in this instance set aside your stubbornness and look at it from our perspective. It wouldn’t be happening if there weren’t a good reason. I know that Takashi and Mitskune took you as a student because they believed in you and wanted you to have a way to protect yourself. You can do that, but trust me in that most of the rest of us are more familiar with and understand the dark side of being in the spotlight. It takes a different kind of skill. You are learning it, but for now… Please just trust in the arrangements that have been made.”

Haruhi sighed, “Fine. I was hoping to get to know the Fujimias better anyway. I can focus on that.”

“Thank you.”

The limo lapsed into silence as all of the Host Club members got lost in their own thoughts. A landmark passing outside one of the windows had Renge clearing her throat and looking sheepish. As the limo turned around a corner and started down the road to the Suoh Estate, she spoke. “There is one more thing I forgot to mention. While we have been able to counter many of Yoshio Ootori’s threats, there are still some who are on his side… and they are a rather visible nuisance.” She gestured to the window.

As one, the group turned to see a large group of at least 200 people standing outside the entrance gates to the Suoh Estate, holding signs, and shouting loudly in protest. A private security force
wearing the colors of House Zouka was patrolling the area and obviously working to maintain a semblance of peace.

“Thank gods my grandmother is currently in Japan,” Tamaki’s voice broke the stunned silence as the limo passed through the gate.
Preparation for the Ball

As they continued up the driveway to the Maison De Roses, the sheer amount of work that had happened to the estate in the two days the Hosts had been gone was enough to have them staring out the windows and forgetting the picketing crowd at the gates.

“Wow,” breathed Tamaki as Renge sat back against the cushions and looked pleased. “The grounds have always looked good, grandmother wouldn’t have it any other way, but they have never looked this amazing. Are those snow sculptures and fairy lights?”

“Yes,” Renge answered with an excited grin, “We wanted the drive up to immediately take the minds of the attendees off the protesters out front and turn it to wondering what is going to happen when they arrive. Speaking of…” She waived a hand to the Guest House, which was now completely done up with lights, outside decorations, and perfectly manicured trails leading through the snowdrifts.

“It’s beautiful, Renge,” Haruhi said as she stepped out of the limo. “I can’t believe the amount of work that had to have happened in such a short time.”

“It was all worth it darlings,” Yuzuha stepped out the front door and walked down the path to greet the group. “I told you, HDG is going to be the talk of the Fashion World for months!!” She pulled first Haruhi, Hikaru, Kaoru and then Kyoya into a hug, before turning to the others and ushering them inside. “Come on in, we had to make a few adjustments to make room for enough space for all the attendees, so everyone will be getting ready in the dojo. All the bedrooms have been opened up for display and your personal things have been locked away. We will have attendants stationed in each room all night to make sure that the beds aren’t being used for anything inappropriate.” She gave them all a wink and ushered them quickly up the stairs.

Once in the dojo, Yuzuha gestured for everyone to have a seat, while Ranka, Yuzuru Suoh, Akira Morinozuka, Yorihisa Haninozuka, Zhi and Sakura Fujimia came to stand near Yuzuha. “Ok, my darlings, I wanted to give you and update of what is going on. I take it you saw Yoshio’s press statement?” At the nod and grim looks she continued. “We already have the lawyers at HDG working on a slander lawsuit, but that only covers Kaoru, Hikaru, Haruhi, and Ranka. Kyoya, I know you are working to put up your own defense and I have instructed my lawyers to share all information received with whomever you choose.”

Yuzuru waved his hand, “If you haven’t chosen an attorney yet, I would highly recommend the one that is on retainer for Suoh Enterprises. He is familiar with this kind of thing since he has represented me in the past.”

“Thank you, Sir,” Kyoya replied. “I will take his information.”

“Good,” Yuzuha replied. “For the rest of you, there shouldn’t be any legal complications that you need to worry about, but there may be some social stigma that may follow you for a while. Mitskune, Takashi, I know you both are about to undergo your Master’s quests. I really hope that the fallout won’t impact you too much.”

Hani reached out and took Takashi’s hand. “By the look on our father’s faces, we may have our own issues to deal with soon enough.”
Yorihisa came over and put a hand on his son’s shoulder, “I am afraid so. I wanted to wait until the ball was over tonight, but you know that a rumor about the relationship you share with Takashi has reached the High Council. It is the reason you have been separated. There is a small contingent that was against you being allowed to complete the quest at all, but there have been homosexual Masters before, though only the High Council knows who they were, so there is precedence on your side. However, you both will be the first openly gay Masters and that is enough for even some of the more moderate Houses to insist on precise formality.”

Zhi spoke up, “Just know that in addition to House Zouka, you have the full support of Houses Fujimia, Okawa and Shinohara. It’s still not a majority vote, but with the conditional support of a few of the other Houses you will be able to proceed.”

“Thank you,” Takashi clasped his hand around Zhi’s forearm and received the same in return. “Mitskune and I coming out, may deflect some of the rumors around Haruhi and me as well.”

Yuzuha’s mouth had pressed to a thin line, “I hate to admit or even think that, but it is true. I know you have your own relationship with Haruhi, and know that all of us support it, but…”

“If it was discovered, then it could be the tipping point from public support to blackballing,” Hani finished the statement.

“Which I still think is ridiculous,” Ranka muttered.

Haruhi smiled at her dad. “I get it Dad, it sucks and it’s not fair, but I can understand it. Give it time. I am not ashamed of any of the relationships I have with the others, but I do know, probably better than a few of them what it is like to be subject to weird looks because of an alternate lifestyle. It stopped bothering me after Mom died and I realized how much strength it took for you to take care of me and be true to who you are. You never once complained about the looks and comments I knew were being thrown at you, and you never let those hurtful words affect me.” She wrapped her arms around him in a huge hug. “I plan on taking on the issue head-on, Dad. I will be a voice for change and equality, and I will be like you and protect the ones who need it… But I kind of need to finish school first.” She felt Ranka chuckle. “So for the moment, I will play by the rules of the game and learn all I can from it.” She turned her head towards Hikaru and winked. “After all, if I don’t know the rules, how will I know which ones to break?”

Hikaru linked his hand with Kyouya’s before winking back at her and blowing her a kiss. “We will break them all together, love.”

“Yes we will.” Kyouya nodded.

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Renge’s eyes had misted when Haruhi was talking to her dad. She is something else and I am so proud to call her friend. I know I will also do everything I can to help. Not just for her, but also because what she is doing will let me be open about Mai and Kaoru. She reached up to dab at her eyes with the sleeve of her shirt. The movement made her watch slip and when she noticed the time, she let out a small panicked noise.

“What is it?” Kaoru looked over at her at the sound.

“The time,” Renge answered as butterflies started migrating down to her stomach and her mouth went dry. “We have less than 2 hours before the Ball starts.” So much to do!! So much!! Have to get
ready. Have to make sure everyone else is ready... One of my dresses is going to be on display tonight!! And then we have to walk down that staircase in front of all the media and not fall flat on our faces!! EEEP!

Kaoru saw the first stages of panic setting in across his girlfriend’s face and knew exactly what was crossing her mind. Taking her face gently in his hands he kissed her softly and said, “We won’t go down until about a half hour after the start, so while we should start getting ready soon we will be ok for time as long as the army of stylists we employ work their magic.” He grinned at her weak smile. “And you are going to look gorgeous. I think I unconsciously designed it to fit your body type, because it looks better on you than the model who wore it for the photo shoot. The dress you designed is fantastic and Sakura will carry it off beautifully. I promise that I won’t let you trip and fall on the staircase.”

Renge looked into the laughing gold eyes, “How can you promise that one?”

“Because I intend to be the one to escort you down them.”

“I know Hikaru is walking down with Haruhi and Kyouya, but what about your mom? I thought you were going to escort her.”

“Oh I think Akira is up to the task.”

Puzzled Renge looked over to where Akira Morinozuka and Yuzuha were talking to Yuzuru and Yorihisa. She saw Yuzuha lightly touch Akira’s arm in emphasis, but otherwise couldn’t see anything that would cause Kaoru to make that statement. She looked at him in confusion.

Seeing it, Kaoru leaned in to whisper quietly against her ear, so no one else could hear. “Some things Mom has said over the last week and the way she reacted when Yoshio showed up the other day reminded me of a memory that I had when I was a child. I was sneaking candy out of the kitchen to bring back to Hika and I saw my mom kiss someone goodbye. I only caught the profile quickly, but it wasn’t my dad. I had often seen both my parents be casually affectionate with other people so I really didn’t think anything of it. It was a Fashion Thing. By the time I had gotten back to Hika with the candy, I had forgotten about it. It’s been niggling at me for a few days. I just realized earlier after I caught a glance between them, that it was Akira.” He quickly kissed her cover the gasp that left Renge’s lips at the statement.

“But...”

Kaoru glanced sideways to make sure that no one was paying attention to them. “But it makes Mom’s comments so much more clear. I would bet money that Mom and Dad have had an open marriage for years, but are discreet about it, so Hika and I never knew, and more importantly we wouldn’t be taunted any more than we already were by our classmates. Now that we know a bit more about the House Zouka and its values, it makes absolute sense. I have a feeling at one time my mom and Akira Morinozuka were lovers, though it’s obviously been a while.”

Renge stared at Kaoru for a few seconds. “You are ok with that?”

Kaoru laughed. “Renge, love. I am dating both you and Tamaki. I sleep with Hika occasionally. I’ve been bottoming to Hani. I don’t think I have much room to throw stones about someone else’s sex life, especially when she is the reason I can be who I am.”

Renge grinned, “Well... when you put it THAT way. Are you going to tell Hikaru?”

“Maybe after the Ball and everything has calmed down, if he hasn’t figured it out already. He has a
lot to deal with right now.”

“That is definitely the truth. Is it wrong that in a way I am a bit relieved that I am not in the spotlight?”

“Not at all,” Kaoru answered honestly. “I am a bit relieved myself. I’m just glad that the people that I am falling for have much more reasonable parents.” He winked at her.

Renge blushed, “Are you really falling for me?”

“Hard and fast.”

“Me too,” she whispered and leaned in to kiss him again.

A discreet knock at the door was followed by what Kaoru had accurately called a small army of stylists. Within moments they had set up and were looking to Yuzuha for direction.

“Ok, we can get started with Ranka, Renge, Akira, Yuzuru, Yorihisa, Sakura and Zhi since we all showered earlier. The rest of you, please shower quickly and meet us back up here. I know you will have to use the 2nd floor restrooms, but we want to minimize the risk of any early attendees catching sight of you. When you get back we will discuss the other issue for tonight. Bodyguards.”

“How much time do we have to shower?” Haruhi asked Hikaru as they grabbed towels, robes, and headed down the stairs to the bathroom between her and Kyouya’s room.

“Realistically ten minutes. Fifteen if we push it. Mom will send someone if we hit the seventeen minute mark,” Hikaru responded.

“I thought Fashion time always ran late,” Kyouya said with a curious lilt to his voice.

“Fashion does. The prep time you have before your stylist works his or her magic on you is precise. They are the artists, you are just the vessels,” Hikaru chuckled. “All HDG models have had that drilled into them. It has actually made our models sought after, because it helps to keep them humble and aware. Which, in turn, means that they are much easier to work with.”

Haruhi laughed. “So is that ten to twelve minutes each or total?”

“Since Mom knows we are going to be showering together, its total minutes. If we were showering separately, we would have 3-5. It doesn’t take long to soap your body and wash your hair.”

“Why the sudden interest in the time?” Kyouya turned to Haruhi.

She flushed a faint pink but immediately pulled her shirt over her head to expose her breasts before wiggling out of the loose pants she was wearing. “Because all of a sudden, the reality is hitting me of what is going to happen tonight, and I need both of you. I need to feel you in me to give me something good to think about instead of worrying about what may happen.”

Hikaru and Kyouya stripped immediately and came to wrap their arms around her. Their naked bodies pressed against hers echoing their need as well as hers. With only a moment’s hesitation, Hikaru captured her lips in a scorching kiss, while Kyouya kissed down her neck, biting hard enough to make her squirm, but not hard enough to leave a mark.

“Make love to me… please…” Haruhi whispered as they changed positions, so Kyouya could kiss
her and Hikaru could work his way down her body to flick his tongue against her nipples.

“Always,” Kyouya whispered as he slid his hands down to slip between her folds. “Forever.” He slid two fingers deep into her wetness as her body bucked against the sudden intrusion.

“You are ours,” Hikaru answered. “We are yours to command.” Trailing kisses lower down her abdomen, he moved his mouth over her folds and started suckling slowly at first to let her body adjust, before becoming more demanding. He swirled his tongue around her clit and the fingers that Kyouya was moving more rapidly inside her, knowing that the combination was one that would bring her quickly to the edge of orgasm.

“Want… you… in… me…”

The last words came out in a slow rush of air as Hikaru stood up and with a quick look at Kyouya to confirm, he wrapped one of her legs around his waist and slid deep inside her.

Kyouya held the weight of her leg and supported her as he rubbed his cock slowly in the crease between her butt cheeks. With his body pressed so close against hers, he could feel Hikaru pumping inside her and knew that they were both close to climax. Leaning in, he murmured low and seductive against her ear just loud enough for both of them to hear. “One of these nights, I am going to slide inside your tight ass while Hikaru fucks you. I want to feel him moving in you when I do. I want you to be stuffed full of both of us and screaming as we make you cum.”

“Gods, Kyouya…,” Hikaru groaned as Kyouya’s words pushed both him and Haruhi over the edge.

Kyouya held them both through the waves that rocked their body and then with a few more thrusts of his own, he spurted his own release halfway up Haruhi’s back. Resting his head on Haruhi’s neck as he tried to catch his breath, he heard Haruhi laugh as Hikaru slowly withdrew from her and lowered her leg.

“Damn Kyouya, your voice could make a saint cum.” Hikaru said voice still slightly breathy. “All I know, is I want to do exactly that… like right now.”

Kyouya smirked, “Later lovers.” He glanced at the clock. “It looks like we have exactly 3 minutes before someone comes looking for us, if Hika’s earlier timetable is accurate.”

“It is.” Hikaru sighed.

“Since I don’t want to try and explain to your mom, why I smell like sex and not soap, I think I can hurry,” Haruhi said with a mischievous grin.” She flipped on the water and jumped in. “Last one clean has to explain our tardiness.”

In record time, all three had soaped down and washed their hair. Wrapped in their towels, they opened the door to see one of the stylists walking down the hall towards them. “Oh good, you are ready. Yuzuha wanted me to check on the three of you.”

Haruhi glanced at the clock on the wall as she left the room. It was at exactly seventeen minutes from when they got down to the bathroom. She gestured at it with a nod and a look to Kyouya who grinned. Hikaru saw the exchange and gave them both his best I-told-you-so look, which had his partners suppressing laughter as they walked back up the stairs to the dojo.

Entering the room again, Haruhi was astonished at how much had been accomplished in those seventeen minutes. There were mirrors and make-up stations where Yuzuha, Renge, Sakura, Tamaki, Hani, Kaoru, and Takashi were sitting, already deep in the process. Akira, Yuzuru, and Yorihisa stood off to the side talking quietly but it was a tall auburn haired man who caught her
attention.

“Dad, what are you wearing?”
Interlude II

Ranka looked down at the perfectly tailored tuxedo in a navy pinstripe. Suppressing a smile, he replied, “I believe the proper term is ‘a tuxedo.’ You don’t like it?”

Rolling her eyes, Haruhi walked toward him. “The cut suits you well and you look fantastic… but that isn’t what I meant. Why aren’t you wearing a dress?”

Ranka looked up to catch a smirking I-told-you-so look in the mirror from Yuzuha. Turning back to Haruhi, he answered her question with a sigh. “Mostly because I didn’t want to draw any more attention to you than I already have. Tonight has the potential to be difficult enough without having to explain the strutting drag queen on the dance floor.”

Haruhi giggled at the image her dad’s words evoked and wrapped her arms around her father in a hug. Looking up at him, she said earnestly, “Dad, like I said earlier, I am not ashamed of you in any way. I love you equally when you are male and female. I want you to wear whatever you are most comfortable in tonight… because knowing that you are being who you are will give me the strength to be who I am.”

Ranka held tightly to his daughter for a moment and tried to blink back the tears that were threatening to fall. “Did anyone ever tell you how wonderful you are babygirl? Honestly, working with HDG the last month has really made me aware of both the masculine and feminine parts of me. I know I had to look good in drag for the bar, but I thought that also meant that I could look schlubby as a man because on my day off who wanted to go through all that effort. I am fast learning through your boyfriend’s completely breezy-yet intimidating-awe inspiring mother [he mock glared at Yuzuha in the mirror for effect… which was promptly ruined by her blowing a kiss back at him] that masculine can look sexy and be relatively easy to do. Because of that I am enjoying it much more. So to answer your earlier question- I think tonight I want to do both… as long as you won’t mind.”

“I won’t mind, I promise.”

“YES!” Yuzuha clapped her hands once before addressing one of the stylists. “Bring that prototype for the Spring DQC line out. Thankfully we made it in black, so it will fit in with the Winter line. Ranka, you are going to look fabulous in it!”

Ranks gave Haruhi a what-on-Earth-have-I-gotten-myself-into look which made her giggle. With a final hug she mock whispered, “Welcome to MY world, Dad.”

“Ranka – Sit back down. I want Elise to add more shadow to your eyes. We want to emphasize the androgyny aspects. Haruhi – what are you still doing standing around in a robe? Get to Maizie’s station! Time is wasting!!”

Ranka and Haruhi exchanged mock guilty glances with each other, perfectly understanding what the other was thinking in that moment, before moving to their stations.

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One hour later and the entire HDG contingent were prepped, primped, and ready for the red carpet descent. They were all taking the last few moments to relax before the runner arrived to usher in their entrance. Therefore it was a surprise to Haruhi that Akira Morinozouka was the one to gather everyone together and not Yuzuha.

“I know we are about to head down to the Ball, but I wanted to clarify a few things before we do.
House Zouka is providing Security tonight for both the HDG contingent as well as for the general guests. Still we wanted more for Haruhi, Hikaru, Kyouya, and to an extent Kaoru, because they are the target for the most animosity from Yoshio Ootori and his followers. Zhi and Sakura Fujimia have offered to protect Haruhi, Takashi will stick with Kyouya, Mitskune will be with Hikaru, and Sakura’s cousin Kaziki will protect Kaoru. Yorihisa and I will protect Yuzuha. There are also extra bodyguards that will be keeping an eye out for everyone, but who will remain in the shadows unless they are needed. Otherwise, be aware of your surroundings but try to enjoy yourselves. The best way to strike a blow into the heart of a man like Yoshio Ootori is to appear that he does not affect you… If he affects you, he has power over you. We are taking precautions, but we do not want him to realize that we are doing so.”

A discreet knock on the door announced the arrival of the runner. “It’s time. The media are stationed off to one side at the bottom of the staircase and the attendees are on the other. The rest of the first and second floors are open and guests are milling around. We have cordoned off the staircases, so you can make your descent without the others getting in the way. We will open it back up after. Current buzz is extreme excitement with the primary topics being the venue and the exclusivity of the event.”

“Thank you,” Yuzuha responded and turned to the others. “Let’s do this. We will stop at the base of the stairs for a few moments so the media can get their photos. Smile, my darlings!!”

Both Akira and Yorihisa offered their arms. With a practiced smile, she took both, while Yuzuru and Ranka flanked either side. Together the five of them led the way out of the room.

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“We are next,” Kaoru said to a very nervous Renge. He leaned over to kiss her cheek. “I won’t let you fall, I promise.”

“I trust you,” Renge replied and looked over at Mai, who was looked dazzling between Hani and Takashi. When her girlfriend mouthed the words “I love you” and blew her a kiss, she relaxed even more. A few heartbeats later and they walked out the door.

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Hikaru turned and swiftly wrapped his arms around both Haruhi and Kyouya. “I need you both, so much. I am…” He couldn’t finish the sentence put pressed a quick kiss on both their lips.

“Us too,” Haruhi said with a smile and a squeeze of the hands she held.

“I’m not afraid of my father or to show the world I love you both. Let’s do this,” Kyouya stood straighter, pushed his slightly tinted glasses up and stepped forward.

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“My lady,” Hani purposely took a long lingering look up her Mai’s body before teasingly meeting her eyes.

Mai who grinned back at him and did the same in reverse, “You are a heartbreaker, you know that Hani. If I wasn’t a lesbian, I would totally snatch you up in a heartbeat.”

Hani laughed and winked, “If I wasn’t gay - I might let you.”

Takashi rolled his eyes at the flirting between the other two, which caused them to giggle harder until the runner indicated that it was their turn to go.
“That leaves us, love,” Zhi turned to Sakura. One hand came up to caress her cheek. “Are you as overwhelmed by this mad, crazy, incredible world our friends have dragged us into as I am?”

“Absolutely, but Takashi and Hani are like brothers to me and Haruhi is a doll… I wouldn’t have it any other way. Plus there are other definite upsides.” Sakura smirked back at him.

“Like what?”

“LOOK AT THESE AMAZING SHOES!!! AND THIS DRESS!!! EEEEEEEEEEEE!!”

Zhi couldn’t help the snort of laughter that escaped. It turned into a belly laugh before he got out. “I never worry about losing you to another man… unless he happens to be a shoe designer. Thankfully, Hikaru is already taken.”

Sakura grinned at him, “I wonder if he knows any other shoe designers…”

Zhi put on a mock glare, “That’s it. When this Ball-thing is over Kusanagi and I are going to tie you in a chair in a locked room and have our way with you until you forget all about silly things like shoes.”

Ignoring the frantic waving of the runner, trying to get them to move, Sakura stretched up to kiss him and place her hand lightly over his groin. “Promise?” she whispered before turning and sauntering out the door.

“That woman will be the death of me,” Zhi remarked casually to the runner with a wink, before hurrying to catch up to his wife.

“Welcome to HDG,” the runner responded quietly with a smile as he shut the doors to the Dojo and turned to stand guard.
Despite the flashbulbs blinding the HDG contingent, all of them made it to the bottom of the staircase without mishap. Once at the bottom, Yuzuha paused a moment for the cameras before greeting the attendees. “Good Evening and welcome to the Winter Fashion Week Grand Ball sponsored by the Hitachiin Design Group. We are so glad that you could join us for the evening. We have some great things planned for the night in addition to the usual dancing and merriment. We are also going to be teasing two new lines for the Spring Collection – DQC by HDG and Phoenix Collection.”

Hikaru and Kaoru both gasped and Renge squeaked as all three looked at each other in astonishment before their heads swiveled towards Yuzuha. The mirrored looks of astonishment causing a slight smirk to cross the matron of HDG’s face.

She continued, “DQC is a line that will appeal to anyone who appreciates Haute Couture but has a hard time with Fashion sizing. The line was originally inspired by some of the most interesting and gorgeous people I know who also just happen to enjoy cross-dressing. But after watching a couple of absolutely stunning voluptuous women at one of our stores, who wistfully looked at the clothing that was obviously too small for them before passing them by to go to the shoe area, and hearing their frustrated comments about nothing ever being designed to fit them except shoes, I realized that the idea about what is sexy and fashionable has been stuck in rut for several years. Everyone should be able to find clothing that makes them feel powerful, sexy, and alive not just those who happen to be a size 8 or smaller.”

Several wolf whistles and cheers echoed through the hall, accompanied by a noticeable murmur of surprise. Several reporters started shouting questions.

Yuzuha raised her hand for silence. “I am glad you feel that way. I think it is going to open a whole new market and I am excited to be on the forefront of it. I have been talking to several of my fellow designers and they will be joining me on this mission. So by Summer Fashion Week next year, expect to see new lines coming from Versace, DKNY, Gucci, L.A.M.B., and my dear friend Tommy Hilfiger. We hope that by working together we can inspire a new age of designers and bring haute style to anyone who wants it.”

Yuzuha paused to let the cheers pass and watched gleefully as the various design groups she mentioned looked smug, while other designers looked aghast. Serves them right. I approached so many of them and none were willing to accept that the idea of beauty in the mainstream is changing fast and if we don’t get ahead of it, we will be left behind.

“The other line we will be debuting doesn’t have prototypes yet, but we have put up a gallery where you can see the concept designs. Phoenix Collection will be a new branch of HDG that I am forming that will features designs by my two incredibly talented sons Hikaru and Kaoru and by my protégé Renge Houshakuji.” Yuzuha waved her hand to include them and smiled before turning back to the assembled gathering and put a conspiratorial hand near her mouth. “I *may* have forgotten to tell them this week that I was going to do this. It’s so much more fun to surprise those really deserve the recognition, don’t you think? Of course they still have to finish school and University, but that just means that the first few years of the collection will be smaller and have more exclusive offerings. We like exclusive in this industry don’t we?”

The audience laughed while Kaoru put a quick arm around Renge to support her suddenly weak knees. Though I am not sure who needs more support her or me. He looked over at his twin who
had a death grip on his lovers’ hands. I am used to Mom springing things on us, but this is HUGE! Our own line and not just our designs being incorporated into the normal HDG one... This is going to change everything.

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“Did your mom just plan your future?” Kyouya asked in an undertone with a teasing note to help ease the tension he felt in Hikaru’s hand.

“She does that,” Hikaru giggled an edge of hysteria still in the tone as he recovered from the shock. “Not that it wasn’t the future that I was going for anyway… but I wasn’t expecting for Kao and I to get our own line for at least another 5 years.”

“Are you ok with it?” Haruhi asked as she squeezed Hikaru’s hand.

“Definitely,” Hikaru replied with another squeeze. “Mom’s a smart business woman. She would only do this if she felt there was real potential and opportunity in the line. Being her children doesn’t guarantee us free rides. Both Kao and I learned that early on. Just because we are Hitachiin, doesn’t give us any leeway. We have to work as hard or harder than everyone else.”

“Which explains why you are both successful at Ouran,” Kyouya responded. “I know what your grades were, even as you pretended to be the slackers of the Host Club.”

“oh we weren’t pretending,” Hikaru grinned cheekily. “Ouran is a piece of cake compared to HDG. Host Club was the only place we could relax. Plus it gave us an outlet – to torment all of you.”

Kyouya rolled his eyes, then with a wicked grin leaned in close and whispered, “I will show you torment later. You will be begging me for release.”

Hikaru grinned, “Promise?”

“Always.”

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Yuzuha raised her hand again for silence. “With that exciting bit of news, I officially open the Ball. Soyez les bienvenus et profiter de la soirée!”

“Un momento per favore...” a stunning woman in a form hugging strapless dress that started in a bright peacock blue and transitioned down to a royal purple stepped forward, arms linked with two equally gorgeous men. A long slit ran up the thigh of the dress reveling closed toe stilettos that curved around her feet and ankles in the shape of a feather also in the same color gradient.

“Allegra!! Darling!!” Yuzuha smiled at her friend. “You look fantastic.”

“Allegra Versace slowly made a circle revealing the open plunging back held together only with a diamond studded pin in the shape of a firebird. She subtly winked at the group as she completed the turn, which alerted them to the fact that there was more up Yuzuha’s crafty sleeve.

“What do you mean that is not a Versace!” One of the media reporters jumped on the comment.

“Who are you wearing?”

“Well hopefully these two charming escorts, but that will be later,” Allegra smirked as she stepped
forward. “If my darling Yuzuha has told me the truth, I am wearing the first and only actual prototype of the Phoenix Collection.”

“I never lie, darling.”

Allegra stepped over to the group and with a wink at Haruhi and Kyouya, she linked her arm in Hikaru’s before stepping forward to do the same with Kaoru’s. “These two charming young men are the masterminds behind this look. The dress designer is Kaoru (she squeezed his arm before placing a kiss on his cheek) and these fantastic shoes were created by Hikaru (she kissed Hikaru’s cheek as well). I hear there’s a story behind the Phoenix name, but it is not my story to tell.” She turned to Hikaru and said seriously. “What is mine to tell is that I and all of Versace support you, your lovers, and all of your friends. Your decision to love openly and honestly took such amazing courage to go public with. We at Versace will never judge your lifestyle choices... after all, many of us share them... just not publically.”

A roar of questions erupted from the media, but Allegra waved them off. “Not going to tell you who or why, my little media bloodhounds. Just know that the courage it took for these young people to come out of the closet should be an inspiration for many. There are many ways to love. Fashion is just one of them.”

With that she let go of the twins’ arms, blowing a kiss to Haruhi and Kyouya as she walked back to Yuzuha. Linking arms again, they led the way into the Ball with the full contingent of both HDG and Versace behind them.
At the Ball

Hikaru nodded in agreement to a comment made by a blonde woman in the group of attendees who had surrounded him. Glancing discreetly around while still giving the impression that he was focused on the conversation; he saw that Kaoru was similarly mobbed by another group off to his left, Kaziki casually leaning against a pole as he kept an eye on the group. Renge was chatting with Mai and a group of models in the corner, and his mother was holding court at the front of the room – Allegra Versace and a couple other designers at her side as they presumably discussed the bombshells that Yuzuha had dropped so casually in her welcome speech. Akira and Yorihisa blended seamlessly into that group with them, giving the appearance of just two more interested, attractive, and wealthy men. *But where are Kyouya and Haruhi?*

Murmuring another non-committal sound of agreement to a conversation he was only paying half attention too, he started to look around again, only to catch Hani’s eyes. Hikaru could read the amusement in them as Hani glanced over to Hikaru’s right with a slight tilt of his head before turning back to the conversation the blonde woman seemed intent on monopolizing – something about how cow prints should be the next big thing. Following the lead Hani gave him; Hikaru shifted his stance slightly and breathed a quiet sigh of relief as he spotted Haruhi, Kyoya, Takashi, Zhi, and Sakura all dancing together in a group. There was a crowd of people around them, but it seemed that for the moment at least his lovers weren’t being bombarded with questions or unwanted attention.

“So what do you think,” the blonde asked him directly and laid a flirty hand on his arm.

Hikaru suppressed his natural reaction to shudder at her not-so-subtle attempt at flirtation. “It’s definitely a different idea, but I will need to discuss it with my brother and Renge. The idea of Phoenix Collection is about pushing boundaries and finding a new definition of sexy, but we are still focused on finishing school, so the concept designs HDG has posted are just the first ideas. There will be more in the future.” Hikaru gave her a dazzling smile before addressing the group. “Please excuse me.”

He could see the disappointment in their faces as he turned and walked away, but he knew from experience that if he didn’t get out of there, the group would monopolize him for the entire evening. *And really – Cow prints?! Ugh! Definitely NOT something that is going to go into Phoenix Collection, unless we suddenly decide to do cowboy chic.*

“I take it you aren’t interested in doing a cow themed line,” Hani asked with a laugh as he stepped in line with Hikaru.

“Ugh! Gods no,” Hikaru glanced around quickly before responding. “I mean, can you really see it?”

“Not at all,” Hani giggled. “It sounds like a one of those horrid themes that Tamaki would come up with during Host Club.”

Hikaru groaned as he thought back to some of the truly wretched ideas that the Host Club King had come up with over the years. “He did have some doozies. Speaking of the boss, do you know where he’s at? I haven’t seen him in a while.”

“He went to go find his friend Marika. She was going to bring her girlfriend and boyfriend tonight so they could meet everyone.”
“Marika… Marika… Oh! The friend of Tamaki’s that did the interview.” Hikaru sighed. “Gods it was only a couple of days ago, but it feels like a lifetime. I think I may be happy to go back to school next week, if only to have a break from the craziness of this vacation.”

Hani’s lips pressed together in a thin line. “It is definitely going to be quieter.”

Hikaru saw the gesture, stopped in his tracks, and laid a hand on Hani’s arm. “I’m sorry. I forgot that the end of this trip isn’t going to be an easy one for you and Takashi.”

Hani briefly put his hand on top of Hikaru’s before replying. “Thanks, we will make it work somehow. But you are right; this trip has turned into something radically different than what I expected.”

“You can say that again,” Kaoru sighed as he stepped up and linked his arm with his brother’s. “Have we done enough schmoozing yet? I just want to hang out with our friends and maybe do a little dancing.”

“Mom will be on our case if we don’t do at least another round of mingling later, but I think she will forgive us for taking a little break now,” Hikaru responded.

A few steps later and they joined the group, just as the music turned a bit slower and more sensual. With a wicked grin, Hikaru reached out pulled Haruhi in close, while Kyouya followed behind her. As they started dancing Hani just rolled his eyes and stepped off to the side to talk quietly with Takashi, while Kaoru walked over to rescue Renge from her group. Off to the side, Zhi and Sakura were dancing together, giving the appearance of being completely absorbed in each other, while still managing to keep an eye on everything in the immediate area.

Pressed between her lovers, Haruhi let the beat of the music flow through her. Without thinking she raised her left arm and twisted it so it would wrap around Kyouya as he pressed against her back, while wrapping the other around Hikaru’s hip and tucking her hand into his waistband at his back. Together the three of them silently let the music dictate how their bodies moved and together found a rhythm that was both sensual and simple.

Relaxing now that he was back where he wanted to be, Hikaru settled into the rhythm for a few minutes before leaning in to say, “I have to say, this has been the most eventful build-up to this Ball and the first time I have actually really enjoyed myself at it. Usually Kao and I are bored beyond belief with all the schmoozing and networking that has to happen. I mean, I know why it has to happen, but that doesn’t stop it from being a drag.”

“Networking is a necessary evil,” Kyouya replied. “It serves a purpose, but I never really enjoy it. Though I do enjoy observing those who consume too much alcohol, those who agree with everything that is being said in the group they happen to be in, and those who think that they are better than their peers. It gives me insight into who I may end up working with.”

“What kind of insight?” Haruhi asked curiously.

“Well, the group that drinks too much, usually is either trying to cover boredom, stress at the job, or is a lower level staffer who is out on their own for the first time and is going to take advantage of everything available,” Kyouya responded with a nibble to her neck that caused a little hum to escape her lips.

“Kao and I call the second group the yes-men,” Hikaru answered. “They are so eager to be accepted
by others that they agree to everything, even if it contradicts their own belief or even something that they agreed to five minutes earlier. They have no opinions other than whatever the biggest player in the room is saying. The sad part is they often don’t even realize that they are doing it.”

“The third group usually included my father,” Kyouya finished. “Old men that don’t see that the world is changing under their noses. They lost their innovation and are now clinging to the past.”

“So why even bother going?”

“Because every once in a while, there is someone with an interesting idea,” Hikaru answered.

“And it reminds me of who I don’t want to be,” Kyouya confirmed.

“Sounds like High School,” Haruhi muttered.

“In so many ways,” Hikaru laughed. “Some people never outgrow it.”

“True,” Kyouya sighed.

“Excuse me, what are you doing with my daughter,” a mock serious tone was replaced by a look of fondness, as the three startled and looked around quickly to see Ranka standing next to them tapping his foot.

“It’s called dancing, dad,” Haruhi responded cheekily.

“That’s not how your mom and I did it,” Ranka replied with a grin. “I remember there being more space in between the bodies.”

Haruhi laughed, “I’ve seen the acts at your old bar, Dad. We weren’t even coming close to some of the things I saw your staff do.”

Ranka tossed his head back and laughed. “Fair enough. Though I still retain my right as a father to be at least mildly disapproving when I see my baby girl squished between two unruly boys.” He winked at Hikaru and Kyouya who grinned and gave a slight bow. “Even if I happen to actually like both of said boys.”

“Is this where I complain loudly that you are being unfair?” Haruhi joined in the easy banter. “That I am eighteen and I can make my own decisions…”

“Ugh, do we have to?” Ranka’s voice held a melodramatic tone. “I got too much of that at the bar. Drag Queens are far worse than unappreciative teenagers.”

All three burst into giggles, before Haruhi said more conversationally, “Was there something that you wanted or needed, Dad? The last time I saw you tonight you were in the group with Yuzuha.”

“I was but she gestured that it was time I changed. I just wanted to double check with you again to make sure that you are really ok with it. I promise I won’t be mad if you want me to stay male tonight.”

Haruhi stood on tiptoes and kissed her father’s cheek. “I won’t be mad at all. In fact, I am really looking forward to seeing the dress that Yuzuha designed for you. Go. Get changed. We will see you in a few.”
“Has anyone told you lately you are the best daughter in the world?” Ranka held back a sniffle.

“I love you, Dad. All of you. I am proud to be your daughter in any form.”

Ranka kissed the top of her head. “I love you, baby girl.”

Haruhi laughed. “Dad. GO!”

“That’s the Haruhi I know,” Ranka grinned. “Ok. See you all in a few.”

“Your dad has changed so much in the time that we have known him,” Kyouya remarked as they watched Ranka exit the room to head back upstairs.

“For the better, I think,” Hikaru agreed.

“I haven’t really thought about it now that you mention it,” Haruhi responded, head cocked slightly to the right. “I mean I knew how much of an impact the Host Club had on me, it changed my life, but I didn’t really realize how much it changed my father’s as well. Without you guys, I would still likely be buried in my books and my father would be stuck at the bar without a way to advance. I am so appreciative of everything that has happened.”

Kyouya pulled her close and kissed her cheek, “You changed our world… it’s only fair we return the favor.”

Hikaru stepped into wrap his arms around both, “changed for the better.”

“Hey you guys!! This is a party!! Look like you are having fun!!” Renge’s voice carried into their space. “Sheesh!”

Haruhi giggled. “I think that’s our cue to dance again.” She saw Renge beckoning her to join the group on the dance floor.”

Kyouya grinned and gestured for them to join her. “Go. I am going to go find us something to drink. I’ll be right back.”

“Haruhi all to myself?? Let’s do this!” Hikaru grinned as he pulled her back onto the floor.

Kyouya chuckled at the kiss Haruhi threw his way before turning and walking towards the area serving food and drinks.

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Ranka looked at himself in the mirror and did a slow twirl, feeling the silky material slide around his body. The dress was a relatively simple black sheath with rhinestone straps and a sequined rose pattern along the slit that ran up one thigh, but the silicone breast enhancers and corseted waist gave him curves that weren’t normally there. It’s beautiful and feminine and I am so nervous…

Delaying the inevitable for one minute more, he fussed with the clip that turned his ponytail into an updo and checked to see if the makeup applied earlier was still in place. It’s all in place… Ranka girl, you can do this!
Giving himself a sassy wink and blown kiss in the mirror, he turned and walked out of the room.

Descending the staircase slowly, he looked out at the crowds wandering through all the rooms. None turned to whisper or stare and his confidence started to increase. *I’m just another girl in the room...*

When he reached the landing leading to the bottom floor, he saw a handsome brown haired man in fitted designer suit, looking intently up him. Putting on coy smile, Ranka descended the stairs slowly, putting a little extra sway into his hips.

“Are you Ranka?” the man asked with a dazzling grin and a thick Italian accent.

“Why yes, I am,” Ranka’s voice naturally slipped into the higher breathy tone that he used when in drag. “Who are you, you sexy thing?”

The man took his hand and kissed the top of it before giving Ranka a wicked grin. “I’m Gio. I am your escort for the evening.”

Ranka’s heart started beating a touch faster at the devilish look in Gio’s eyes. *It’s been a while since I have had this level of attraction for someone. I wonder what Yuzuha is planning.* He took Gio’s proffered arm and started walking towards the front of the house, a smile on his face and a light flirtation already planned in his mind.

When they reached the entrance to the Ballroom, instead of going in, Gio steered them to the left towards the exit to the outside.

“Aren’t we going into the Ball?”

“Not quite yet, bella. I am waiting for a signal.”

Butterflies danced in Ranka’s stomach at the caress Gio’s tone made of the endearment. He stopped them just outside the door to the outside, maneuvering his body so that Ranka was pressed up against the wall of the hallway.

Breathless at the nearness of the gorgeous warm body nearly pressing him into the wall, Ranka managed to whisper, “What does Yuzuha have planned?”

A dark chuckle left Gio’s lips as he bent in close to whisper, “Oh bella… this has nothing to do with that tramp Yuzuha Hitachiin’s little fashion empire.”

Ranka froze.

“Yoshio Ootori sends his regards. He would like to speak with you.”

Before Ranka could move, he felt a sharp prick in his neck. Slipping into unconsciousness fast, the last thing he felt Gio kissing him on the cheek and whispering “*Sei così bello. Io amo gli uomini trans.*”

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“Sei così bello. Io amo gli uomini trans.” – “You are beautiful. I love tranny men.”
Tamaki leaned up against the wall leading to the dining room, body naturally striking a casually sexy pose in his perfectly tailored tux. An amethyst pin in the neck rather than a bow tie was the only break from the classic tuxedo style, and even that only served to accent his violet eyes. Yet, while he was definitely gathering some appreciative glances from the females entering the Ball (and the occasional male), they didn’t register. He was closely watching the expressions of the guests as they arrived and was trying to interpret their reactions to the entrance hall, the decorations, and the entire venue. This is the first real test of my skill. Talking grandmother into letting me redesign the Guest house was difficult enough. I know her… if I can’t prove that this idea can be successful, then she will order it back to the way it was – a shrine to our long dead Suoh ancestors who thought that displays of wealth and prestige should be visible and gaudy… “the better to impress people.” Ugh. I respect the lineage of my family and what it has accomplished, but people like grandmother and Kyouya’s father seem to have forgotten that the only way our houses were able to maintain their wealth over the decades was through innovation and change. New ideas. New Opportunities. Not clinging to the past in a vain attempt to hold on to remembered glory. Tamaki sighed. Kyouya’s father… gods. I know how much time and effort to Kyoya put into trying to please his father all those years. Trying to win his father’s respect. All the while just watching Yoshio take it as his due, without giving any sort of affection or respect back. It shouldn’t be surprising that once he understood someone truly loved, valued, and respected him for the person he is and not as a tool to be used, that he would willingly give up the cold affection of his family. I was lucky. For all that grandmother is cold; I had maman… and later my father. I know what it is like to have love around me… and why it is worth fighting for. I will be there to support Kyoya any way that I can.

“Earth to Fuzzy!”

Two fingers snapping in front of his face shook Tamaki from his thoughts. Startled, his eyes flew to the laughing ones of his friend Marika. With a grin, he lifted her hand and placed a kiss on the back. “Bon jour, mademoiselle. May I say you look decidedly not frizzy tonight?”

Marika laughed, “A good stylist can work wonders.” A hint of concern crept into her tone. “So what had you so lost in thought, Tama? I have been trying to get your attention for the last five minutes.”

“Trying to read the expressions of people as they see the house. Grandmother. Dynasties. Fear of innovation. Love. Kyouya.”

“It’s good to know that some things never change. Love and Kyouya, huh?” Marika smirked as a blush crept up Tamaki’s cheeks.

“That’s not what I meant,” Tamaki sputtered. “I meant… Kyouya is going through a… Love is worth fighting for.”

Marika laid her hand on his arm, “I know, Fuzzy. I was just teasing you a bit. But don’t fool yourself. It’s been obvious for years that you are more than a little bit in love with Kyouya. Then you fell hard for Haruhi. Which is why I was a bit nervous when you asked me to do an interview with them and the other person they are dating… not because of the poly thing, but because you weren’t that person. I care about you too much as a friend to see you hurting because you want something that is unattainable.” She pulled back and searched his face, noting as something flickered behind the violet eyes. “But it isn’t unattainable for you, is it? What aren’t you telling me?”
“Damn you and your perception,” Tamaki sighed. “I know it is what makes you a great reporter, but I wish that, just this once, you weren’t quite so insightful.”

“Tell me. Please? I swear it will be kept in confidence.”

“I know you can be trusted,” Tamaki replied, before taking a deep breath. “Yes. I am also in a relationship with Kyouya and Haruhi that is separate from theirs with Hikaru. Incidentally, I am also dating Kaoru.” He glanced up swiftly, but seeing no judgment in her eyes, he continued. “Haruhi and Kyouya are also dating Takashi, Kaoru is also dating Renge, and there are some other dynamics between Hikaru, Kaoru, Hani, and Takashi… all of which needs to be kept a secret. It’s hard enough for Hika, Kyo, and Haru to go public with their relationship, but thanks to you, they can do it in a way that just makes them seem a bit more on the leading edge of a possible upcoming trend. If the rest of the relationships were made known, all of us would be completely blackballed.”

Marika sighed, “I know that only too well. I am actually a little jealous of them with even being in a place where they can go public. God knows that Mel, Jon and I can’t.” She glanced over at her lovers who were standing discreetly off to the side, giving the friends a moment of privacy. With a smile and a hand wave, she gestured for them to join.

“Hi Melissa. Hi Jon,” Tamaki said warmly as he gave Melissa a hug and Jon a friendly handshake. “It’s been a long time. Thanks for joining us tonight.”

“Wouldn’t miss it for the world! Thank you for giving Mari the story of the year,” Jon replied with a smile. “She has already had several calls from major media outlets offering her positions.”

Marika blushed, “Hush, this isn’t really about me.”

Melissa (Mel to her friends) smiled fondly. “But it is a definite perk.”

Tamaki smiled, “I am really happy that it is turning out as well as it is for you. I am just glad I could help out a couple of different friends. Sometimes it really is about who you know.” He caught a glimpse of a tall statuesque auburn haired figure in a stunning dress descending the staircase out of the corner of his eye. Turning more fully, he caught a glimpse of Ranka laughing and smiling at a man in a stylish suit. “Speaking of who you know, there is one more thing that you may want to know ahead of time, since it looks like Yuzuha Hitachiin is about to spring another surprise tonight.”

“What’s that?” Marika turned to follow Tamaki’s gaze. “Who is that woman? She is stunning!”

“That my dear Frizzy… is Haruhi’s father.”

Three heads whipped around to stare at him in shock.

“Did you say father?” Jon asked.

Tamaki gave them a teasing grin. “Yes. That is Ryouji Fujioka, known to most of his friends and family as Ranka. He is a cross-dresser. He used to bartend at a Bar that featured a Drag Queen Show. Now he works for Yuzuha Hitachiin. That job change is really recent and was a kept a surprise until yesterday, so I am not exactly sure what he does with her, but from what I have been able to gather it is some kind of consultant/liaison. Haruhi’s mother died when she was still quite young, so Ranka has literally been both father and mother to Haruhi. Growing up in a single parent family and one with an alternative lifestyle shaped Haruhi into the woman she is… and when she stumbled into all of our lives, she opened up a world that none of us knew existed. We haven’t
looked back since.”

“That’s just… unbelievable… and incredibly impressive, considering,” Melissa said as she continued to watch Ranka flirt with the unknown man.

“The whole Fujioka family is pretty impressive once you get to know them,” Tamaki said quietly. “Those of us born into wealth with both parents and nannies to care for us have no idea what it is to really grow up struggling to make ends meet or going without luxuries.” He watched as the gentleman offered Ranka his arm and they turned to head toward the ballroom. On an impulse he said, “Come on, I will introduce you to Ranka before we go in and meet the others.”

“That would be cool,” Marika responded and linked her arm with Tamaki’s, while giving her partners a wink.

Together they all started to follow the couple in front of them.

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When Ranka and his unknown escort made a slight detour and avoided the ballroom, turning instead down a side hall, Tamaki’s first thought was that maybe Ranka knew her escort, and they should give them some privacy, but just as he was about to turn to Marika and suggest they go back to the ballroom, a glimmer of something in the man’s hand and a sudden unpleasant look on his face made him pause. Stepping into the shadow of the hallway he pulled Marika close to him. Knowing that Jon and Mel were only a few steps behind them, he made a stopping hand motion to keep them from coming around the corner.

“Wha-“ Marika started to say.

Tamaki clapped a hand over her mouth before whispering in her ear. “I have a really bad feeling all of a sudden.”

Together they watched in horror as the man plunged something into Ranka’s neck and she slumped unconscious against him. They could hear him say something sinister in Italian but were unable to make out the words. Shifting Ranka further in his arms to make it look like Ranka had just a bit too much to drink and was requiring assistance, he then moved closer to the door leading out to the back gardens. Pausing he waited for a few moments, obviously waiting for some kind of sign or signal.

Slipping silently back around the corner, Tamaki whispered furiously, “Go let Kyouya know something has happening with Ranka. I am going to follow them and find out where they are going. I will leave the GPS locator turned on my phone. Kyouya or Hani should know how to track it.”

“I’m going with you,” Marika said firmly. She put a finger on Tamaki’s lips. “No arguments. We will blend in more and may go unnoticed for longer if we just look like two more people looking for a bit of privacy at the Ball.” She turned to Jon. “Do you remember what Kyouya looks like from the interview?”

At Jon’s nod, Tamaki slipped a silver bracelet off his wrist. Handing it to Jon he said, “Give him this, that way he knows that you are telling the truth.” He ducked his head back around the corner just in time to see the man push the door open to leave. “We have to go.”

“Be careful!” Jon said before pulling Marika to him for a quick crushing kiss. “I love you.”

“Get Kyouya!” Tamaki whispered urgently, before grabbing Marika’s hand and pulling her around
the corner.

An icy blast of cold night air hit them as they stepped outside and without a word; Tamaki took off his jacket and put it around Marika’s shoulders. He could just make out the shadowy shape of Ranka and his abductor in front of him. It looks like they are heading towards the garages. Makes sense. This whole area is off-limits to attendees of the Grand Ball, though I have a feeling that is where all the service staff for the Ball are parked. There’s a dirt road that leads to a small side gate that grandmother often uses for deliveries. Akira said there would be patrols across the property… Let’s hope someone is watching that gate.

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Jon and Melissa ran back towards the ballroom and slammed to a stop at the crowd in front of them. Looking at each other, they linked hands and started moving through, staring intently at the groups of people who danced in the center of the floor and milled around the edges, looking at the concept drawings, and gathered around the bar at the far end of the room.

“There!!” Jon yelled as he spotted a tall dark haired man with glasses standing in line to get a drink. Rushing up to him, he asked breathlessly, “Are you Kyouya Ootori?”

“Who?”

“Sorry,” Jon said crestfallen. “I thought you were someone else.”

“Is that O-tor-whatever guy the one who is dating Hikaru Hitachiin?”

“Yes! Have you seen him recently?”

“He was just here…” he looked around and focused on something down the side of the room and pointed. “Is that him over there?”

Turning Jon saw the person who he pointed to and rushed off, leaving Mel to say a hurried “Thanks.”

This time Jon could see the lights from the dance floor bouncing off his face and knew it was Kyouya. He approached rapidly. “Kyouya? Kyouya Ootori?”

Kyouya froze before schooling his face into a politely indifferent expression as he turned to face the two strangers staring at him. “Yes. Can I help you?”

“We are friends of Tamaki. Melissa and Jon – Marika’s partners. Something has happened,” Jon rushed out.

“What do you mean something has happened?” Kyouya asked still suspicious.

Melissa held out something silver. “Tamaki gave this to us and told us to find you… Ranka has been kidnapped.”

All the color drained from Kyouya’s face as he recognized the bracelet that Haruhi had given to Tamaki… the bracelet that rarely left his wrist for any reason. The words suddenly echoed in his head. Ranka kidnapped. Oh gods… We didn’t think to protect Ranka… A note of cold determination settled into his voice. “Tell me everything you know.”
Jon opened his mouth to start to tell the story, but Kyouya held up a hand. “Wait. The others will want to hear this and it will save time if you don’t have to repeat it twice. Follow me.” Without looking back he strode purposefully to the group surrounding Yuzuha Hitachiin. Approaching Akira Morinozuka he whispered urgently into his ear. Akira’s face tightened as he glanced across the group to Yorihisa Haninozuka and gave him a hand signal. Without another word, they slipped off and four men dressed like guests but with the unmistakable bearing of professional bodyguards, took their place.

“Gather your friends and meet Yorihisa and me in the Dojo. Do NOT rush out. I know this is time sensitive, but we do not want to attract any undue attention if we can help it. I am going to see what I can find out from the security patrols,” Akira said urgently.

“Yes Sir,” Kyosya tried to look casual as he walked back to where Haruhi and the rest of the group were dancing, but the churning bitter feeling must have shown through, because the moment he got close to his lovers, they immediately knew something had gone wrong.

“What is it?” Haruhi asked immediately before her gaze flicked over the couple standing awkwardly behind Kyosya. “Who are they?”

“This is Melissa and Jon, Tamaki’s friend Marika’s partners,” Kyosya said. “We need to get up to the dojo as soon as possible. Something has happened. But we can’t just rush out.”

“Kyosya, tell us what happened,” Hikaru demanded as he grabbed Haruhi’s hand and immediately glanced around the room, instinctively seeking out his friends and the people that he cared about.

Kaoru immediately appeared on Hikaru’s left, still holding Renge’s hand, drawn by the spike of fear that shot through their twin bond. “What’s going on? Where’s Tamaki?!”

Kyosya glanced up to see that a small group was now forming around them as Hani, Takashi, Zhi, Sakura, and Kaziki all approached rapidly.

“We need to get all of you out of here, right now,” Zhi’s voice was businesslike and brisk. Turning to Melissa and Jon, he said loudly enough to be heard by some of the other guests who had started to notice that there was something juicy happening. “You must be Tamaki’s friends. He got something on his jacket and ran upstairs to change, but I know he wanted to greet you. Why don’t you follow me and I will give you a tour on the way?”

“Thanks,” Jon replied with a sense of relief in his voice. “I was hoping to get to see more of the building.”

With a smile that never quite met his eyes, Zhi replied, “Follow me.”

Haruhi could feel the urgency in Kyosya’s hand as it lay on her lower back. Has something happened to Tamaki? The tension in her neck and shoulders grew as the group reached the door to the dojo. Upon entering, she was approached by a grim-faced Akira Morinozuka.
“Haruhi-chan,” Akira took her hand and held it as he spoke the words that had her heart sinking, “It
appears that your father has been kidnapped by Yoshio Ootori’s men. They were clever in their
attempt. We are trying to determine what happened.” He turned to Jon and Melissa. “Perhaps now
that we are in a private place you can tell us what you know.”

Jon stepped forward, “When Marika, Mel and I got here, Tamaki was waiting for us. We were
talking for a bit when he saw your dad [he looked at Haruhi] coming down the stairs. Your father
was stopped at the bottom by a handsome man in a suit. It looked like they were flirting, though we
were too far away to hear their conversation. Tamaki explained a bit about your family and then
thought it might be nice to introduce us to Ranka. When we started to follow them, we saw the guy
pull Ranka around a corner and inject him with something that made him pliable and look drunk.
Tamaki and Marika decided to follow them, but told us to warn you. He gave me that bracelet to
vouch for us, since you hadn’t met us yet.”

Haruhi hand shook as she reached out and took the silver bracelet she had given Tamaki a year
earlier. Tears started streaming down her face and both Kyouya and Hikaru pulled her closer.
“Where are they now?”

Akira put his hand to his ear, touching the ear bud communication devices all on guard duty were
wearing, and spoke a few rapid-fire sentences outlining what he knew. He jaw visibly clenched as he
listened closely to the conversation on the wire among his security staff. “Ok it appears that two
vehicles have left out the small gate being used for deliveries. The first was from a catering vendor
that had previously been cleared and the second was young master Suoh. Now might be a good time
for someone to call young Tamaki.”

All the host club members ran to the dressing stations they had been using earlier. Kyouya was the
first to reach his phone and without looking at the keyboard called Tamaki, automatically putting it
on speakerphone so everyone in the room could hear.

“Tired you long enough,” Tamaki’s voice was tense as he answered the phone, skipping the
formality of a greeting. “I take it Jon and Melissa were able to find you and gave you the run down
on what is going on?”

“Yes,” Kyouya answered. “Where are you at?”

“Following a van from La Patisserie Boulange and trying to stay inconspicuous. The way all the
vendors were parked blocking the garage, the only vehicle I could get out was the Aston.
Unfortunately it is a bit too high profile to blend in easily with the traffic in this part of town. I don’t
think they have seen us yet, since they aren’t trying to make any evasive moves, but I don’t want to
alert them unnecessarily. It looks like we are heading South into the industrial area outside Paris, but
I am not certain. Can you track my phone?”

“We are working on that as we speak,” Yorihisa cut in as he typed away on a tablet that had
appeared in his hand. “Ok we have a fix on your location and are alerting the Parisian police now. I
am also sending a few specialized units from House Zuka. It would be better if we can get the police
to be the rescuing party, but I will not leave Ranka Fujioka in the clutches of Yoshio Ootori for long.
If they are unable to cooperate, we will take matters into our own hands.”

“You might want to hurry, they just turned down a road that leads to an area of abandoned
warehouses,” Marika’s voice came over the speaker. “I did a story on them a while ago. Most of
them were torched in a drug bust, but there is one or two that may still be standing. The whole area
though is condemned and littered with debris. There’s no way we are going to be able to get the
Aston in there without alerting them to our presence.”
“We don’t want you getting hurt. Park somewhere and get out of the way,” Akira responded. “We have your location and if the police aren’t there in 15 minutes, my staff will be.”

“We will do so,” Tamaki’s voice confirmed. “Hey Kyo, is there any chance that your father has holdings out here? I thought Ootori Group’s holding were mainly in Japan and Asia, but there is something not quite right about this. I know your dad is a cutthroat businessman, but kidnapping? That seems out of character.”

“I stopped underestimating my father a long time ago,” Kyoya replied. “I don’t know of any hold-.” A sudden thought hit him with such ferocity he staggered a few step and gripped the back of a chair. A chain of seemingly unrelated events clicking into place.

“What is it, love,” Haruhi rushed over to put her arms around him as his visage went pale.

“I don’t want to belie…,”

“What is it Kyo?” Tamaki interjected, concern for his best friend coming through the phone line.

Kyoya took a deep breath and asked tonelessly, “Marika, when did you do the story on the drug bust? And what was the name of the company who owned the buildings?” He held Haruhi’s hand in a death grip as he waited for the response.

“It had to have been May or June of last year. The police did the drug bust and some minor players were sent to prison for a few years, but they were never able to tie it to a higher cartel. There was some speculation that it might be tied to organized crime, but again there was nothing that they could pin down. The company who owned the buildings Dashart, Inc turned out to be a shell company under another series of shells. I tried to dig deeper, but was never able to find the actual parent company.”

“No… oh gods… nonononononononononoo,” Kyoya crumpled into the chair.

“What is it lover?” Hikaru put his hands on Kyoya’s shoulders as he glanced worriedly at Haruhi.

“I never thought he…,”

Akira stepped into view, “Kyoya-chan, you are an honorary member of my House. Whatever protection House Zuka can provide for you it is yours. But if you know something that may impact this rescue, I need to alert both my team and the police.”

“I was doing some research through the Ootori Group computers a few months ago, when I came across an email that mentioned the destruction by fire of a few minor holdings last May. It never mentioned the location of those holdings, which I thought odd, but before I could ask my father about it, the entire email train was wiped from the servers. While that seemed slightly odd at the time, it has been a routine practice to purge the email system every few months to maintain efficiency and storage space. I then forgot about it. About month later, my father came downstairs one morning in a foul mood yelling into his phone. I only caught parts of the conversation but from what I could figure some minor Ootori cousin was convicted of a drug charge. I only caught parts of the conversation but from what I could figure some minor Ootori cousin was convicted of a drug charge. I remember hearing the name Dashart and my father say something about having to clean up the mess before they found out about it.” Kyoya took a deep breath. “I thought at the time he meant the board and stakeholders, but now I wonder if he meant something else.”

“What else?” Hikaru asked.

“Contrary to what the business world thinks, Ootori Group has been struggling to stay afloat for the last few years. It’s part of why I started my own company to start with, to show that even as the third
son, I had a head for business that my brothers did not and that I would be a worthy successor to turn the company around. You all know the rest of that... but what you don’t know is that I still get the financials. It is probably an oversite on my father’s part, but in the last two years there have been unexplained increases of cash flow that don’t correspond to anything.” He paused a moment and gripped Haruhi’s hand before asking, “Marika – What type of drugs were confiscated in the drug bust?”

Marika’s voice came on the line, “high-grade narcotics mostly from what I remember.”

Kyouya’s nod was grim. “Ootori Group owns a few small pharmaceutical companies as well as hospitals. But their profits have officially remained flat or had only modest increases in the last couple of years. It’s not enough to explain sudden influxes of cash unless the cash is to allow production off the books.”

“What are you saying, love?” Haruhi said quietly as the rest of the group all turned to look at him.

“There’s only one entity I can think of who would be able to front that much cash and have the ability to cause Yoshio Ootori to sign a deal with the devil so he wouldn’t lose face in the business community.” Kyouya looked directly at Akira Morinozuka.

“Yakuza.” Akira responded, making the word a statement not a question.

“Yakuza,” Kyouya agreed.
A long low whistle from the speakerphone echoed in the suddenly silent room. “Kyouya are you absolutely sure?” Tamaki’s voice overflowed with concern. “I know your father has done some shady things in the past, but getting actively involved with the Yakuza? That seems kind of extreme even for Yoshio. The business community would freak out.”

“Actually, it is more common than is widely known,” the voice of Yuzuru Suoh came from behind the group, as he shut the door to the dojo behind him. “My apologies, I was just able to get away and Yuzuha is demanding to know what is going on.” He stepped closer to the group before continuing his earlier statement, “It’s a dirty secret that no one in the upper echelons of the business elite dares talk about, but the Yakuza is still an organized crime syndicate that has its tendrils into some of the most powerful conglomerates. I would estimate that nearly half, if not more, of the top companies have at least some Yakuza ties.”

“And Suoh Enterprises?” The group could hear Tamaki’s voice shaking as he processed the information his father had bluntly laid out.

“Your grandmother has worked tirelessly to keep the Yakuza out of her company. For all that my mother has her faults, she can be remarkably stubborn. It may have kept our profits at a slow to moderate increase rather than a fast pace, but as far as I know we are free from the influence… though I am approached at least once a year. So far they are still trying to court us rather than force us, since our business practices are remarkably transparent and they haven’t found anything they can blackmail us with yet.” Yuzuru sighed. “I am sorry, my son, this was something that I have been delaying telling you about. I was hoping to wait until you graduated and took over the reins of the company, but since the recent formal announcement of the intent to name you successor to Suoh Enterprises instead of me, you will undoubtable start getting approached soon, if you haven’t already.”

“I don’t think I have been,” Tamaki’s voice was uncertain.

“They may be waiting until you are officially in position and make a mistake that they can use to their advantage,” Akira responded. “Or hoping you will be caught in a compromising position that has the potential to disgrace your family. Even House Zouka has been approached, though they were unsuccessful. We have the martial skills to counteract their thugs and it is known that our position on circumstances that may be considered compromising to others, are either accepted or if illegal are turned over to the authorities. I do know that some of the other Martial Houses have ties.”

“My House is clean, though I too have been approached,” Zhi added quietly. “For now, I am too small of a player to have amassed enough potential influence, so they have mostly left me alone.”
Hikaru and Kaoru looked at each other in distress and fear. One word was said in unison, “Mom?”

Akira reached out and laid a hand on each of their shoulders. “HDG is free from Yakuza influence. Your mother had a situation occur many years ago, but I was able to step in and make clear that the Yuzuha Hitachiin and her children are under the protection of House Zouka.”

Hikaru was visibly taken aback by the revelation. Instinctively he turned to Kaoru, and was surprised to see acknowledgement in his face instead of the shock he was expecting. Anger started to overcome the surprise. “What-“

Akira cut him off, compassion in his voice, “That is a story for another day… and one both your mother and I must tell together.”

“Guys, I hate to interrupt this, but the van just pulled inside a fenced off parking lot, I can’t follow anymore without getting caught,” Tamaki’s voice was sharp as he cut in.

“We have your location,” Yorihisa replied. “You aren’t trained to be of further assistance. Please return to the Guest House. The authorities and our team are on the way.”

“Ok. See you soon.” The team heard an audible click as Tamaki hung up the phone.

“Now we wait,” Akira Morinozuka said quietly into the silence.

Tamaki hung up the phone and took a deep breath. Reaching out he turned the knobs into the off position for all the interior and exterior lights, before making a sharp right hand turn and winding his way back to the warehouse where the van had pulled in.

“We aren’t really just going to head back to the Guest House are we?” Marika asked making the question more of a statement.

“No,” Tamaki answered with determination in his voice. “Ranka has come to mean a lot to me and I won’t leave him out here alone. I may not be able to drive in, but I think I can park a few buildings over and sneak in.”

“We.”

“Huh?”

“We. You said I. I’m not letting you go in there by yourself. We are going in there.”

“Mari, it could be danger-“

“Don’t even finish that sentence Tamaki Suoh. We have been friends for too long. For that alone, I would go with you, but if we can also gather some information, it may help Kyouya and Haruhi.”

“Ever the reporter?” Tamaki asked with a flash of humor.

“Always, though this isn’t about me. Your friends impressed me and you know that is hard to do. If there is anything that I can do to help, I will.”
Tamaki reached out and took her hand. Lifting it to his lips, he kissed the back before responding, “Thank you Frizzy.”

“Anytime, Fuzzy.” Marika answered with a smile.

Tamaki pulled the Aston to a stop behind a building two properties from the one the van turned in to. Glancing down at Marika, he took in her black dress, her tuxedo jacket, and the 4 inch spike heels she was wearing which he hadn’t really noticed before. “Umm… are you going to be able to move in those?” He asked pointing at her shoes.

“I’ve kept up with you so far haven’t I?” Marika grinned as a blush crept up Tamaki’s cheeks. With one hand down she reached down between her legs and pulled a small clutch purse from the floor. Flipping it open she pulled out a small black folded bundle. “Though in the interest of being a bit stealthier, I think these will be better.” She unfolded the packet to show a pair of thin flats.

“You had a spare pair of shoes in your purse?”

“Reporters and Boy Scouts are always prepared,” she smirked. “Though truthfully, I thought I would be using them much later tonight after the Ball. You have no idea how much dancing in heels hurts after a few hours.”

“I can imagine,” Tamaki answered the smirk with a smile of his own. With a wink, he leaned forward and turned to reach behind her seat, pulling out a black hooded sweatshirt. “See, I’m prepared. There’s a blanket back there too.”

“Good to know.” She watched as he pulled the sweatshirt over his head, covering the white tuxedo shirt and the hood hiding his distinctive blond hair. “Ready?”

“Let’s do this,” Tamaki replied. “Yorihsa Haninozouka may right in that we aren’t trained for this, but we can at least look around and see if we can get some information to the team when they get here.”

“Agreed,” Marika confirmed as she opened the door to the car.

Closing the doors as quietly as they could, Tamaki looked around once more to make sure that they were out of sight as much as possible. With a nod, he held out his hand. “Come on.”

Together, they made their way across the deserted parking lots, ducking through holes in fencing, and keeping to the shadows.

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Once they got to the building they though Ranka was being held in, Tamaki and Marika snuck around looking in at every window and trying every door. On a side annex, they spotted a faint glow coming from a window. Creeping closer, they were able to peek in. They could see Ranka sitting in a chair in the middle of the room, his hands tied behind his back, two obvious thug-types standing to either side, while the kidnapper ran his hands slowly over Ranka’s semi-conscious form in a disturbingly sexual way.

“Ranka…” Tamaki whispered helplessly as he watched. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw a shadow move and turned his head to see Marika pull he phone out of the top of her dress before pressing it to the glass.

“Video Camera,” Marika whispered to his unspoken question. “I added a microphone that amplifies and sorts ambient and background sounds so I could record conversations in busy locations with my
contacts. It isn’t 100% effective but if we are lucky we may be able to hear what is happening on the video playback, even if we can’t hear now.”

“Good thinking,” Tamaki chewed on his lip as he turned back to the scene in front of him – watching as Yoshio Ootori and another unknown Japanese man in a designer suit approached the tattoos peeking out of his suit jacket clearly indicating that high level Yakuza. He could see them arguing.

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On the other side of the wall, Yoshio Ootori could barely contain his rage. Striding up to Ranka, Yoshio slapped the drag queen hard across the face, the pain of the impact visibly rousing Ranka from the last fogginess of the drugs used to subdue him.

“YOU!!! This is all your fault. You and that ungrateful tramp you call a daughter. I offered your family the highest honor – marriage into an old distinguished family so far above your commoner status as to be laughable and you threw it back in my face. Then your daughter brainwashed my son into disavowing his heritage, going against his familial duty, and entering into a filthy immoral liaison with not only her but another man. It is the epitome of shame and humiliation. I was temporarily blinded by what I thought was initiative in the girl. I thought she could be molded into a proper wife for a third son. I should have realized that blood always holds true. How could the daughter of a transsexual freak ever really be worthy of the Ootori name?”

“you… proof… it doesn’t…” Ranka mumbled as he slid his tongue over his teeth to make sure that none of them were loose.

Yoshio grabbed a handful of Ranka’s hair and pulled up sharply eliciting a gasp of pain from the bound man. “You admit that your daughter would never be worthy of the Ootori name?”

Fire flashed in Ranka’s eyes, as he replied, “No. I said proof that it doesn’t always hold true. Kyouya is a far better man – in honor, in respect, and in all ways - than you are. The fact that he has become this way despite having your blood flow though his veins means that blood doesn’t always hold true.”

Yoshio backhanded Ranka across the other cheek. “You DARE tell me that my upstart son is a better man than me. I have been respected and feared for decades. I am the head of a bloodline that can trace its lineage back centuries. I am descendent from the blood of emperors and kings, not peasants.”

“Yet you have none of the noblesse oblige that your heritage should dictate,” Ranka responded and spat a mouthful of blood onto the floor, before tonguing the cut on the inside of his mouth the last slap had caused.

“Why should I be obliged to cater to the whims of a class that is as debased as dogs in heat rutting with anything that offers itself,” Yoshio responded. “I know my duty and responsibility to my familial name. Can you say the same?”

“Probably better than you,” Ranka responded with steel. “I may not have been able to give my child many material goods, but I have worked as hard as or harder than many in the upper class to provide her with love, teach her respect for both others and herself, and shape her to be a valuable and productive member of society. A society that deals with reality rather than this delusional fantasy that you seem to live in.”

“You have no idea of the concept of reality,” Yoshio replied with cold venom in his voice. “The
reality is I have an image to maintain and you and your daughter are dragging down my good name.
This is unacceptable. If I have any chance at restoring my honor and my son to his rightful place, you need to be removed from his sphere of influence. My associates here are very good at what they do. You will disappear. A note will be sent to my wayward son requiring him to break off all contact with your daughter and the rest of his misfit friends, if he wants to have you returned to her alive. Kyouya’s heart may have been perverted by your association, but the Ootori duty runs deep. He will do it, out of misplaced honor, and once he was been returned to our family home, a suitable bride will be found for him and he will take his rightful place as heir to my empire.”

“I thought you had disregarded him as heir, since he is the 3rd son,” Ranka replied.

“He has proven that he has a good head for the business and it will be his reward for leaving your daughter and that Hitachiin brat,” Yoshio strode forward, grabbing a roll of duct tape on the way. Tearing off a piece, he held it above Ranka’s lips. “You should be grateful. I could do so much worse and no one would ever know. This way I get my son back and your daughter can still have that closet faggot she calls a boyfriend.”

“Hikaru is-“ Ranka was cut off in midsentence as Yoshio pressed the tape to his lips.

“Better,” Yoshio responded with a cold grin. “Still so much more than you deserve. I could destroy you completely and no one would ever know. But, I know my son and as soft hearted as he is, any visible damage to you would cause him to rebel again.” He bent down and whispered nastily into Ranka’s ear. “It’s a good thing then isn’t it, that our friend Gio here knows how to enjoy himself and not leave visible marks… though you may be a bit uncomfortable sitting for a while.” He grabbed Ranka’s hair again and pulled hard, stepping back slightly and grimacing. “Though you may actually like that part, won’t you. Getting fucked by such a prime specimen of masculine beauty. You are probably depraved enough to beg for more.”

Yoshio stepped away, roughly pushing Ranka’s head back. Turning to the Yakuza leader, he motioned for him to join, before throwing a final reminder over his shoulder to Gio. “Remember. No physical damage this time. If my fool son refuses to cooperate, you can have free rein. “

“Yes Sir,” Gio bowed and kept his glance lowered as he watched Yoshio and the others walk toward the exit.

With an evil smile, he turned around, focusing his attention on Ranka. Caressing a hand down Ranka’s auburn hair, Gio said with a twisted amount of delight, “I am so going to enjoy you, pretty tranny.” With a sharp tug he pulled Ranka up from the chair and threw him face down across the table, arms still cuffed behind his back. He slid his hand up Ranka’s thigh. “If you relax you might just enjoy it too.”

Ranka struggled against the cuffs, face pressed flat into the table. Breath heavy.

“Or not.” Gio responded cruelly. “Doesn’t really matter to me either way. I am going to enjoy it.”

On the other side of the window, Tamaki and Marika watched the scene unfold in silence. They couldn’t hear what was being said but they were able to guess from the ugly expressions on Yoshio and Ranka’s faces and harsh tones that some threats were happening. A look of terror flying across Ranka’s face was their first clue that something awful was about to happen. When Yoshio turned and walked away leaving Ranka with just the man in the tuxedo, Marika unconsciously grabbed Tamaki’s hand. When that man threw Ranka across a table and started fondling him she gasped in horror. “We have to do something. We have to get in there and stop it!!”
Tamaki squeezed her hand tighter in agreement and turned to race toward the door that they had seen earlier, not sure how they were going to get in but determined to stop the scene from happening. Only as soon as he took two steps, five men with guns stepped out of the shadows, pointed it at them and yelled, “Freeze!”

Chapter End Notes

Author's Note:

I always feel like I need a shower, a solid disinfectant, and to curl up in a blanket with a teddy bear after I write Yoshio's dialogue. It physically makes me ill to write it, even as I know it is necessary. I know some authors like to write of Yoshio's redemption as he comes around to the idea of Kyouya and Haruhi being together. But that isn't my Yoshio. In this story he is the cold hearted bastard who slapped his son and sent him sprawling to the floor in front of his friends and all the rest of Ouran, without a thought. He is the kind of person who would do ANYTHING including entering into agreements with the mob to maintain what he feels is his rightful due. Power is EVERYTHING to this Yoshio and little things like duty, family, and honor are only valuable as tools to help him acheive that power. People are pawns to him and he will use them as he sees fit... basically everything that Kyouya has learned to rebel against through his interactions with the Haruhi and the Host Club.

But first and foremost, I am a romantic comedy writer, not an angsty one. So I promise you that the evil villan will fall and be smashed to pieces on the rocks below, and my characters WILL get their happily (smutty) ever after.

...and if I ever hear someone actually call someone a faggot to someone else or threaten to rape someone... I will be up in their face so fast they will not know what hit them!!! I'm 5'9" and pushing over 200lbs on near solid muscle. They WILL be down for the count. Period.
Rescue

“Freeze!”

The one word said in an authoritative tone was enough to make both Tamaki and Marika follow it without thought. Slowly they raised their hands in front of them, Marika still holding the phone.

A man in black body armor approached carefully and pulled back the hood of Tamaki’s sweatshirt. Upon seeing the golden hair, the man relaxed slightly. “Tamaki Suoh? Marika Bellamy?”

“Yes?” Tamaki replied cautiously as Marika nodded.

“You were supposed to leave the premises,” the man nodded to the others and they relaxed the grip on their guns. “But Akira had a feeling you wouldn’t so we used the GPS on your phone to lock in your location. I’m Agent Noguchi, and I work for Akira Morinozuka’s private security force. The Parisian police are about five minutes out. What’s the situation?”

“You have to get in there NOW!!” Marika gripped Noguchi’s arm. “He’s going to rape Ranka!!”

At the words, Noguchi immediately started issuing orders. “Mr. Suoh, Ms. Bellamy, get out of sight and away from the building. When the police arrive, let them know that we have entered the premises. Alphas one and two with me, three and four cover our positions.”

“But-“

“Now!! Let us do our job.” The command was unmistakable in Agent Noguchi’s voice.

Tamaki nodded, grabbed Marika’s hand and started pulling her to the road. Looking over his shoulder, he could see the Alpha team positioning themselves to enter the building.

“But what about Ranka?” Marika asked and started to turn to go back to the building.

“If there is one thing that I have learned after being around Takashi and Hani for so long, is to let the professionals take care of it if possible. If we go back we will only be a liability and could be taken hostage. We are of more use letting the police know what is happening so they don’t go in blind.”

A muffled boom echoed across the empty parking lot, followed by scattered gunfire.

Immediately Tamaki turned back to the building and was poised to start running back, disregarding everything he had said the moment before, when the flashing lights of the several police cars pulled into the parking lot. In mid-stride, Tamaki changed direction and started running for the lead car which screeched to a stop in front of him. Before the officer could even get out of the car Tamaki started bombarding him with information.

“I’m Tamaki Suoh. This is Marika Bellamy. My friend’s dad was kidnapped and is being held in that warehouse. A security team from Zouka, Inc. has infiltrated the building. We heard a boom and some gunfire. You have to help them!”

The officer nodded. Yelling over his shoulder to the rest of the officers, “Durand, take their statements. Rest with me. Now!”
Tamaki and Marika watched as four officers pulled their guns and started towards the warehouse. A fifth approached them and said, “Messier, Mademoiselle, please come with me.” He led them back to his patrol car. Pulling out a notepad he continued. “Start at the beginning and tell me everything that you know.”

Ranka squirmed on the table, trying to find any sort of position that would make him less vulnerable to Gio’s advances, but the cuffs held him fast and the lingering effects of the drug in his system, made the movements sluggish. He tried to suppress the shudder as Gio slid his hand down Ranka’s leg.

“Oh that’s it baby, wiggle for me,” the lewd tone in Gio’s voice gave Ranka the creeps. With an unsubtle moan and a grind of his erection against Ranka’s ass cheeks, Gio pushed the hemline of the dress up so it pooled around Ranka’s waist. “Don’t worry, I won’t ruin the dress. That would be a shame. Good Fashion is hard to come by.”

Ranka wiggled harder automatically as the cold night air hit his bare ass. No No No nonononononono! This isn’t happening. I can get out of this. Fear thundered through his body causing his pulse to race and breathing to increase, the harsh sound coming out of his nose.

“Look your body is already reacting to me,” Gio replied as he bit hard into the fleshy mound of Ranka’s ass.

Ranka screamed behind the tape across his lips at the pain.

“I promised Ootori I wouldn’t leave any permanent marks. Good thing I know exactly how much I can do.” Gio smacked Ranka’s other ass cheek hard, groaning obscenely as it left a perfect red imprint on the pale cheek. “Oh baby, I am so hard looking at your perfect ass. My handprint on one cheek, an imprint of my teeth on the other… mmmmmm… I think it’s time to fuck that tight hole, don’t you?”

Ranka’s eyes were wild as he screamed again, trying valiantly to find any way to fight back. He managed to land a kick to Gio’s knee.

Gio swore as he grabbed a handful of hair, and pulled hard, forcing Ranka to arch his back, before saying, “None of that, baby… you know you like this. I bet it is getting you hard too.” Still keeping a firm grip on Ranka’s hair, he bent down and started licking a stripe of wetness in the crack between Ranka’s cheeks before sliding his hand around Ranka’s hip, intent on touching Ranka’s dick through the thin fabric of the jock strap holding it close to his body so it wouldn’t show under the dress.

A loud boom echoed through the warehouse just as Gio skimmed the surface of the slick material.

“EVERYONE DOWN ON THE FLOOR!! NOW!!!”

With a curse Gio stumbled back and started to make a move towards his jacket and the gun in the pocket. The sound of a gunshot and the flash of burning agony in his shoulder as a bullet ripped its way through made him fall to the ground a few feet from it, clutching the wound. Muffled cries from the other two bodyguards let him know that they were out of commission as well, so when a figure loomed over him, holding a gun pointed directly at his head, he kept his mouth shut and glared.
The boom was the sweetest sound that Ranka could imagine and in the space of a few heartbeats, he went from completely terrified, to sobbing in relief. A gentle hand smoothed the dress down from around his waist and the hair from out of his eyes. He looked up into a pair of concerned, but warm brown eyes.

“I’m Agent Noguchi. I’m from the Zouka Security Force. Are you injured?”

Ranka shook his head.

“My men are doing a sweep of the building and the police are on the way. I know you are uncomfortable, but I need to get you out of here. I promise I will remove the gag when we get outside. Try not to squirm.”

In one motion, Ranka felt his world shift and he was over Noguchi’s shoulder in a fireman’s carry, and the agent was running toward the exit door. Once outside he stopped short as the police lights started flashing. Holding out his hands, he yelled, “I’m Agent Noguchi from the Zouka Private Security Force. I have Ranka Fujioka with me. My men are inside and have subdued three others. At least two have gunshot wounds, but none are fatal.”

“Put the woman down and walk forward slowly,” the officer responded.

“Can you stand?” Noguchi asked Ranka.

Ranka nodded and with another stomach clenching sensation, felt himself righted. A moment of dizziness washed over him and he was thankful for the grip that Agent Noguchi kept on his arms.

“Ma’am, can you walk toward us please?”

Ranka nearly giggled at the formality, the relief of being rescued making him light-headed. Wonder what the officer will think when he realizes I’m male.

All of the officers lowered their weapons and holstered them as Ranka and Agent Noguchi walked forward, his ID badge open in one hand.


Ranka, mouth and hands still bound, quirked an eye at the girl next to Tamaki who looked vaguely familiar.

With a grin she said, “Fuzzy, you might want to let Ranka breathe… or at least let him get the tape and cuffs off.”

Tamaki immediately dropped his hands and turned bright red.

“I’m going to remove the tape, while my babbling friend finds a handcuff key,” Marika nodded her head towards the closest officer and Tamaki rushed over. Slowly she peeled the sticky tape off wincing in sympathy as it pulled across the sensitive skin of the lips. “I’m Marika, Tamaki’s friend. He was waiting for me and my partners when he saw you come back down and decided that he
wanted to introduce us. I think you can figure the rest.”

Ranka looked closely at Marika, “You are the reporter that interviewed my daughter, Kyouya, and Hikaru.”

“Yes,” Marika responded immediately. “Tama knew that I am in a poly relationship too and that might help make it easier for them. Though because of our careers we have to keep it quiet.”

“And the Melissa and Jon that Tamaki mentioned?”

“My partners,” Marika gave a genuine smile. “I know this isn’t the best of timing to meet you, but I am honored to make your acquaintance. I liked your daughter and her partners immensely on meeting them and even though I have only known them a short time, I would really like to consider them friends.”

“The fact that they were comfortable with you to open up, tells me a lot about you,” Ranka smiled and then winced as it split open his lip again.

Tamaki and an officer came up with a handcuff key, “Here ma’am,” he looked more closely at Ranka, “Uh, Sir … um… which would you prefer to be called?”

Ranka gave a small smile at the awkward question. “Thank you for asking. I still prefer the male pronouns even when I am in drag.”

“Yes Sir,” the officer responded and with a quick turn removed the cuffs. “We have your attacker in custody. Are you willing to press charges?”

Fire entered Ranka’s eyes, “Absolutely. On him and on Yoshio Ootori. Ootori was the one who had me kidnapped and arranged for that man to…” the remainder of the sentence refused to come out.

“Um, we were unable to locate Mr. Ootori. We can put a bolo out and stop his passport temporarily, but his lawyers will have a field day without definitive proof.”

“Here’s your proof,” Marika said and held out her phone. “I was able to video everything that occurred. It may need some audio enhancement, but there should be enough to arrest Yoshio Ootori.”

“You got video?” Ranka turned to Marika in amazement before self-consciousness crept in.

Marika took one of Ranka’s hands, “Yes. I know that I am a reporter and this is the story of a lifetime, but I swear to you that I will not release a single drop of information that you don’t want me to. Your dignity is worth more than my career.”

With a sudden movement, Ranka pulled Marika into a tight hug, the emotional rollercoaster of the night catching up with him as tears streamed down his face. “Bless you, my child. Bless you and bless that overly hyperactive puppy [Marika hear a muffled Hey! from Tamaki] for rescuing me.” He looked up and reached out to pull Tamaki into the hug. “Thank you both for saving me. I don’t know how to repay any of this.”

Tamaki squeezed Ranka tightly, “By being the one who finally takes down Yoshio Ootori. Don’t worry about the costs or the connections. If you are willing to expose who he is, you have the full support of the Suoh, Zouka, and Hitachiin families. Your daughter may have originally been the connection, but do not doubt that you have become important to us. We have learned so much from you too, after all, everything we love about Haruhi, she got from you.”
At Tamaki’s words, Ranka started crying even harder.

Tamaki just held Ranka for a few moments before freeing a hand to reach into his pocket. Pulling out his phone, he dialed a number by memory.

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Haruhi sat on the floor, holding tightly to both Hikaru’s and Kyouya’s hands. Around the dojo, the rest of the contingent stood quietly discussing what the next options would be. The ring of Kyouya’s phone shattered the calm as he looked down to see Tamaki’s face staring back at him.

Without preamble, Haruhi grabbed the phone and answered it, automatically flipping it to speaker mode. “Tamaki, what is happening? Tell me that my dad is going to be ok?”

“Hi babygirl,” Ranka’s voice responded, “I’m fine. Thanks to Mr. Suoh and Ms. Bellamy.”

“Daddy…” the rest of Haruhi’s response became lost in a flood of hysterical sobs and tears as Kyouya and Hikaru wrapped her in their arms.
Hearing the broken way that his daughter called for him, sent a knife through Ranka’s heart, “Shhhh… honey, I am ok. Really. I’ve had worse happen at the bar. I’m going to be ok and I am going to be heading back to the House as soon as I can. Be strong, sweetheart. I love you so much.”

“Ranka?” Akira’s voice cut gently in on the line. “I don’t want to interrupt, but we need to know what is happening. I have a report from one of my Agents but what is the next step. Do we need to get you? Do we need to meet you at the police station?”

“That gentlemanly and sexy agent of yours, Noguchi, offered to give me a ride to the police station,” Ranka forced himself to reply with his usual casually flirty tone, which made Haruhi giggle and hiccup. “I AM pressing charges, so I hope someone can get a call into the lawyer and have him meet me there. The police have three of Yoshio’s men in custody.”

“What about my father?” Kyoya asked hesitantly.

Ranka sighed quietly, “I’m sorry, Kyo-chan but your father is really not a nice man. He left the scene before Akira’s team and the police arrived, but thanks to Ms. Bellamy and Tamaki, we may have enough proof to charge him as well and it won’t just be our word against his.”

“Thank gods,” Kyoya replied with relief. “I know how slippery he can be. You have my full support, Sir. He needs to be held accountable for his actions.”

“I’m really glad to hear that, Kyo-chan,” Ranka replied with honest relief. “You are like a son to me and have been for a long time, but I know the power of blood.”

“I have formally disassociated myself from the Ootori family. Aside from my sister, there is no one that I care enough about to remain where there is no respect or affection. I have everything I need in your daughter and my friends.”

A muffled sound off the speakerphone drew their attention.

“Ok – We are heading down to the police station. Someone please tell Yuzuha what is going on. It looks like we won’t make it back to the Ball. I’ll meet you all at the hotel.”

“Dad, I want to come down to the police station,” Haruhi interjected.

“It may be a good idea if both you and Kyoya both go,” Akira responded. Nodding at Hikaru, he continued, “I know you want to go with them, but I also know that for appearances sake, you need to stay here for a bit longer. Are you ok with that?”

“No,” Hikaru sighed. “I am not ok with it, but I understand. I’m not staying longer than another 30 minutes for appearances and then I am leaving to join Kyo and Haru. Mom will just have to accept it.”

“I know she will, Hika,” Kaoru replied to his twin. He glanced at the clock on the wall. “We are only supposed to be here for another hour anyway. We can meet you back at the hotel when you guys are done. We will make a grand enough absence that you won’t be missed and it will buy you guys a bit more time before the story breaks.”
“Leaving now,” Ranka cut in. “I will see you at the station.”

“Love you, Dad.”

“Love you too, babygirl. Bye.”

Yorihisa stepped forward, “I will take you both down to the station and get the car from Tamaki. You can have the limo take all of you to the hotel when you are done with processing. That way Akira can continue protection for Yuzuha. I don’t think anything more will happen tonight, but it doesn’t hurt to be prepared.”

“What should the rest of us do, Dad?” Hani asked Yorihisa.

“At this point it would be better if all of you went back down to the Ball until the HDG contingent leaves. I know it will be difficult, but try to at least look like you are having fun. The quieter we can make this now, the more it will impact it will have when it comes to light.”

“Yes Sir,” Hani replied. He looked over at a sudden sound and saw Haruhi partially undressed as she changed quickly, completely disregarding everyone else in the room. “We will head back downstairs now. See all of you soon.”

Haruhi clutched the bag containing a change of clothes for her father tightly. She stared out the window of the town car driving her, Kyouya, and Yorihisa to the police station, her mind a whirl of emotion and worried thoughts. Is Dad really ok? I know he would say that he is ok to keep me from worrying, but what really happened? It had to have been bad if he has enough evidence to press charges against Yoshio. I know Yuzuha said we were covered for legal fees by HDG, but it is going to be a long drawn out battle. Can we afford the cost if something happens? I am covered for the rest of the tuition to Ouran this year and I can always delay college if I need to for a couple of years. But is he really ok?

“Stop love,” Kyouya said gently and laid his hand on her knee.

“Huh?” Haruhi replied shaken out of her thoughts.

“You are thinking too hard,” Kyouya answered as he entwined his fingers in hers. “I am glad your father is pressing charges. My father needs to answer for his actions.” He brought her hand up to his lips and kissed the back of it. “Please don’t worry about legal fees or anything either. You are covered, my love… no matter what happens.” He gave a quiet sigh. “I am more worried about the press hounding you even more than they already are when this comes to light. It’s no fun being in the spotlight for something like this and you have already had to deal with so much.”

Haruhi squeezed his fingers. “I can handle anything as long as I have you and Hika by my side.”

“Always,” Kyouya breathed as he bent forward to place a soft kiss on her lips.

A soft clearing of the throat from Yorihisa kept the kiss from turning more intense, though with the conflicting emotions racing through his body, Kyouya would have welcomed the moment to lose himself in the one thing he was absolutely sure of – his love for the woman next to him.

“As young master Ootori stated, any legal fees accrued by either you or your father will be taken...
care of. Monday morning, the solicitor for House Zouka has a meeting with the lawyer from HDG to create a trust that will cover any fees and expenses.” Yorihisa gave Haruhi a gentle smile. “You are now a child of many families, not just your own. I know it will take some getting used to, but in our world, family will support you.”

“I am honored to be a part of House Zouka,” Haruhi replied with respect, “and even more honored to be considered a daughter of the House. I will strive to prove that I am worthy.”

“You already are,” Yorihisa said with a smile, “but that does not mean there aren’t responsibilities as privileges. Fortunately you have never failed in the challenges that have been placed before you, so I do not foresee any issues.” He looked out the window. “It appears that we are approaching the station. I do not see any paparazzi, so we may still be in the clear.”

Haruhi held her breath as the car pulled up to the curb in front of a solidly gray stone building. Her heart started racing as she stepped out of the car, Kyouya’s hand on the small of her back the only thing keeping her from bolting up the steps.

Entering the building, Haruhi and Kyouya were immediately ushered to a conference room where Tamaki, Marika, Ranka, and three other gentlemen were located (one obviously an Officer and the other equally obviously a lawyer, which left the 3rd man dressed all in black as the Agent that rescued Ranka). As she was walking in the room Haruhi saw through the glass the Agent put a solicitous hand on her father’s shoulder and her father look up and smile at him, but the exchange was quickly broken as Ranka saw his daughter.

Standing up quickly and heedless of the dress he still wore, Ranka engulfed Haruhi in his arms and held her tight as she started sobbing. “I’m sorry, Dad. I’m so so so sorry!! This is all my fault. If I hadn’t come out with Hika and Kyo, Yoshio would never have targeted you.”

“Hush, hush babygirl,” Ranka soothed as he stroked her hair. “This is most definitely not your fault. It’s purely on Yoshio’s head. He can’t accept that what you and Kyoya and Hikaru have is something that is beautiful and real. He will never understand that people are more valuable for their differences. He is so intent in his quest for power, he doesn’t even realize he has already lost.”

Haruhi held her father tightly for a few more minutes before Ranka gently disentangled himself and pulled a startled Kyouya into an equally tight hug. “This isn’t your fault either Kyo-chan. So please don’t think it. Your father is a cruel man who is trying to manipulate the people around him into doing what he wants. I am not going to stand for it and I hope you won’t either.”

“He’s not my father,” Kyoya’s voice was muffled as his face was pressed into Ranka’s shoulder. He held his body stiffly at first, not wanting to believe Ranka’s words, but the soft touch of Haruhi’s hand against his, made a dam break inside him and with a single sob, he squeezed Ranka hard before controlling himself and stepping back. “I am not going to let him get away with what he did to you… what he is trying to do to Haruhi, Hikaru, and me. What can I do to help?”

“Actually, the first thing I really want to do is change,” Ranka eyed the bag that Haruhi was holding hopefully. When she handed it to him with a smile he continued, “Not that Yuzuha’s creations aren’t amazing, but I kind of need to be myself right now. After that we can continue what we were doing before you got here – planning the next step.” He grabbed the bag and stepped out of the room in search of a bathroom.

“We have a BOLO out on Yoshio Ootori,” the Agent spoke up. At Haruhi’s inquiring look, he introduced himself. “I’m Jun Noguchi. I work for House Zouka.”

“More specifically, Agent Noguchi is in charge of our private security team,” Yorihisa spoke from
the back of the room. “He has proven his dedication and loyalty to House Zouka since he was a child.”

Agent Noguchi bowed to Yorihisa, “I could do no less for the House that took an orphaned boy into their home and gave him a chance at a life.” He turned back to Haruhi and gave her a genuine smile which immediately put her at ease. “I know the overwhelming sensation of being suddenly a part of something much bigger than you. Rest assured, we will find Ootori and bring him to justice… Thanks in big part to Mr. Suoh and Ms. Bellamy”

Tamaki stood up as Haruhi threw her arms around him. He held her nearly as tight as Ranka had, she breathed into him. “Thank you Tama…I don’t know what I would have done if you hadn’t been there.”

Tamaki gave her a kiss that appeared chaste but seared into the skin of her cheek as he whispered, “My princess, I will do anything for you. Always. You and Kyo more than anyone else have loved me for who I am, not who they wanted me to be. You are my chosen family; however it works out in the end. I love you.” He looked at Kyouya. “Both of you,” he whispered.

“Love you too Tama,” Haruhi whispered back. She looked up to see Marika smirking at her before giving her a wink.

Haruhi stepped out of Tamaki’s arms and gave Marika a hug as well to thank her. “I really appreciate all you have done for us.”

“I am glad I could help,” Marika replied honestly. “Tamaki has been my friend for so long and has told me so much about you all that I feel like you have been my friends for years, not just a few days. Let’s just hope that the video I took will be enough in court. It was enough for the police to issue a warrant for Ootori’s arrest, so I am keeping my fingers crossed.”

At that moment Ranka and another police officer entered the room talking animatedly. “The police have just learned that the pilot for Yoshio just filed a flight plan to return to Japan. The plane is scheduled to depart in two hours. We are assembling a team to apprehend him at the airport.”

“As a member of the Press I would like to accompany the police team,” Marika spoke up. The officer turned to glare at her. She fished her press credentials out of her purse. “I will stay the requisite 20 yards back and I will not interfere, but I have a right to document breaking news and the arrest of a very prominent business man is definitely considered breaking news.”

“Marika,” the lawyer spoke up from where he was observing everything. “I’m sorry, but you are now a material witness in this case. You would put the case in jeopardy if you accompany the police.”

“Damn,” Marika muttered. “Would it compromise the case if another news anchor captured the arrest on film?”

“Depends,” the lawyer continued. “If the arrest warrant information was made public via the normal channels, then any news station could pick up the information if they are so inclined. But you cannot provide any insider information to anyone. As tempting as it may be to reach for your phone and text one of your colleagues at the moment, Ms. Bellamy, if you did so, Yoshio Ootori could sue you for harassment.

“Do it the normal way then,” Kyouya said quietly. “There should still be enough buzz surrounding HDG, the Master testing, and our recent interview that anything with the words Hitachiin, Ootori, or Fujioka will be flagged.”
“We hope.” Tamaki said.

“And we wait…” the lawyer replied.

11:07pm

BREAKING NEWS!! Prominent Japanese businessman Yoshio Ootori has been arrested for kidnapping, assault, and battery of a fellow Japanese citizen and high ranking employee of Hitachiin Design Group Ryouji Ranka Fujioka. Mr. Fujioka is the father of Haruhi Fujioka who along with her boyfriends Hikaru Hitachiin and Kyouya Ootori came out as a triad at the start of the Paris Winter Fashion week. It is unclear at the moment how Kyouya Ootori feels about his father’s arrest, but sources close to HDG say that an altercation happened between son and father earlier this week after the very public and now infamous red carpet entrance and interview. Yoshio Ootori is the President and CEO of Ootori Enterprise Group, a global company based in Japan that has interests in medicine, security, and pharmaceuticals. Kyouya Ootori is currently in his first year at the University of Tokyo and is a successful businessman in his own right, as President and CEO of KO Global, an emerging markets investment company. Haruhi Fujioka and Hikaru Hitachiin are currently students in their final year at Ouran Academy in Tokyo, Japan. Hikaru is the son of legendary fashion designer Yuzuha Hitachiin and along with his twin brother debuted a new line at the Parisian Fashion Week. Haruhi Fujioka recently took the martial arts world by storm as the first female granted Mastery status in traditional Japanese Aikido. None of the above people were available for comment. We have footage of the arrest of Mr. Ootori as he was attempting to depart the country to return to Japan. Parisian Police have taken him into custody and a court hearing regarding bail will be arranged for next Tuesday.

Now onto the weather…
A rustle of blankets and the squeak of a mattress spring woke Haruhi. The night previous - when she, Kyoya, Tamaki, and Marika had arrived back at the Hotel late the night before they discovered that the others had pulled the mattresses, pillows and blankets from the various beds in the suite and made a large nest in the middle of the room. All of the other hosts, as well as Renge, Mai, and Marika’s partners Jon and Mel, were all sleeping in various positions on the mattresses. As exhausted and emotionally drained as she was, Haruhi still had cracked a smile at the way her friends had solved the sleeping issues of separate rooms or trying to find extra rooms in a Hotel that was completely full. When she looked at the others who had entered with her, they all nodded to each other in shared amusement before slipping off their shoes, loosening their clothing, and sliding into any available space. As Haruhi stepped forward, she saw Hikaru lift his head and reach out his hand to her silently. Without a word Haruhi and Kyoya slid into the space next to him, while Tamaki slid in next to Kaoru and Marika next to her partners. “I love you both” were the only words that Hikaru had whispered before holding them tight. Within moments, all had fallen asleep still wearing their clothes.

But the sun creeping through the curtains, the rustle of so many people sleeping in the same room, and an urgent need to pee, finally motivated Haruhi to leave the warmth of the nest to use the facilities and see if there was any coffee that could be made in the suite. I could probably order it from room service, but I don’t want to wake the others if I can help it. Spying a full sized coffee pot in one corner of the small kitchen in the suite, she opened the provided coffee packet and started a pot. While waiting for it to brew, she made her way silently to the window, drawing back the curtain slightly. A casual glance down at the street had her backing away from the window as fast as she could. The window looked out over the front of the hotel, and she could see at least twenty-five different news agencies, countless paparazzi, and hundreds of gawking onlookers in the park across the street from the hotel. It was clear that only a police presence kept them from swarming the hotel and blocking traffic. “Oh my gods!” Haruhi whispered as she stared blankly at the curtain which had fallen across the window again.

“What is it, ashke?” Takashi’s voice was barely above a whisper as he stepped quietly up to her and put his hand on her shoulder.

“There are reporters everywhere,” Haruhi responded as she turned in to put her arms around his waist. “I have never seen so many in one place. The police are keeping them from the hotel, but there is no way that we are getting out of here without going past them.” She mumbled against his chest. “I just want to go back to the house and spend the last two days we all have together, just hanging out and doing nothing. The last week has been incredible, but it has been so busy.”

Takashi held her tightly, “I am so very sorry ashke, so much has happened that it has been overwhelming for all of us. But you, Kyoya, and to a lesser extent Hikaru have been in the center of a hurricane of activity. I understand your need for quiet and calmer activity. I have not had to deal with nearly as many obstacles, and I am also feeling the pressure.” He took her hand and led her into another room. Lifting the exposed box spring, he set it at an angle, with the frame next to it to clear a space in the middle of the room before turning back to her. “Do yoga with me? I feel the need to calm my mind before we have to deal with the day.”

“Please,” Haruhi answered simply and stripped off the shirt she was still wearing from the night before down to the camisole underneath, silently grateful that the pants she had thrown on the previous night before going to the police station were loose. It wasn’t her usual practice gear, but it
would allow her to move relatively freely into most of the positions.

Takashi stripped off his shirt and removed his belt, pants riding low on his hips without the belt to hold them in place. He stepped to the center of the room.

Despite the emotional exhaustion of the previous night, Haruhi felt a quick flash of lust and heat in her cheeks as she watched Takashi remove his shirt; his body sculpted perfection that always managed to make her heart flutter even before she was able to acknowledge it openly. Out of reflex, she tried to squelch it as she joined him in the center of the room.

Takashi smiled as he took one of her hands and laid a kiss on the palm before setting it on his heart. He bent down and kissed her softly, before murmuring in her ear, “I love that you flush every time I remove my shirt. Even back when I thought there would be no place for me in your life, I cherished each look and expression. If I could have nothing else of you, at least I knew that your reaction was all for me.”

Haruhi flushed even brighter before a stray thought crossed her mind. “Wait… if you knew I was checking you out every time… How many times did you deliberately wait? Now that I think about it, Hani was always in a full gi, or already shirtless when I arrived at the dojo. But you always took a moment to get ready once I was there.”

It was Takashi’s turn to flush, “Do you want to begin with breathing exercises?”

“Don’t change the subject, ashke,” Haruhi teased.

Takashi sighed and mumbled. “Catching the first look was an accident. After that, I may have deliberately done it a few more times. Hani would tease me mercilessly about it once he caught on to it.”

“I bet he did,” Haruhi laughed at her partner’s discomfort. Standing on her toes, she stretched up and placed a kiss on his lips. “But as sexy as you are shirtless, now that I know what is underneath everything and not just physically, you are insanely gorgeous. I am beyond fortunate to have you in my life.” She nipped at his neck before sliding her body down his slowly, knowing the tease would be appreciated by both of them. When she was flat-footed again, she took a tiny step backwards. Not enough to break their connection, but enough to say, “Breathing exercises?”

Takashi smiled at the woman he loved. “Begin on three…”

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Still mostly asleep, Hikaru stretched an arm out and found an empty space where Haruhi had been the night before. He could feel the residual warmth from where her body had been, and if he stretched further, he could touch Kyouya’s chest, since his other lover had fallen asleep on the other side of her. Lifting his head he caught a glimpse of her in one of the bedrooms, obviously in the middle of a yoga pose transition. A quick look around confirmed that Takashi was no longer in the nest, so it didn’t take much of a leap to let him know what the pair were up to. Moving into the spot she had vacated, he took the rare opportunity to cuddle into Kyouya, sighing in gratification when Kyouya pulled him against his body even as he still slept. Within moments, he had drifted back into a light sleep.

The sound of a shower running woke him about an hour later. Yawning he stretched and felt
Kyouya move behind him.

“Good morning, Hika,” Kyouya murmured quietly as laid a gentle kiss on Hikaru’s neck. “Is everyone still asleep?”

Hikaru rolled over and placed his hand on Kyouya’s hip. “I think Haruhi and Takashi are in the shower. I woke up earlier and they were doing yoga.” A hint of anger crept into his voice. “What happened at the police station last night? I tried to go down there, but Takashi’s father teamed up with my mom and wouldn’t let me. I tried to sneek off but one or the other was always with me. I’m sorry I wasn’t there, love.”

“There wasn’t much that you could have done,” Kyouya replied. “Once we got there, Ranka, Tamaki, and Marika had already given their statements and shown the evidence to the police. I guess that Marika was able to get video footage of what happened. Neither Haruhi nor I were allowed to see it, but Tama said that he felt desperate and helpless as he was watched. Even he won’t give me details.”

“It must have been bad then,” Hikaru shuddered. “How is Ranka?”

“He is definitely shaken up, but he is hiding, or at least trying to hide it from Haru. There was enough evidence to charge the man caught on the tape with sexual assault, battery and a few other charges.” Kyoya’s hand unconsciously tightened on Hikaru’s hip. “There was also enough evidence to bring charges of kidnapping, premeditated assault, and assisted sexual assault against my father.”

“I’m so sorry, Kyo,” Hikaru wrapped his arms around Kyouya and held him tight for a moment. “How are you doing?”

“Honestly, I am just glad they caught him and arrested him,” Kyouya held tight to Hikaru, “He had chartered a flight back to Japan tonight. If he had made it back, the chances of the arrest actually happening and the charges sticking dropped dramatically.”

“Did you see him?”

“No,” Kyouya said sharply, his mouth in a tight line. “As soon as they police left to make the arrest, the 4 of us – Haruhi, Tamaki, Marika, and I were ushered out of the station and told to come here to the hotel. Just before we arrived here, we saw a news bulletin come across the TV in the limo showing footage of my father’s arrest. That’s the only reason how I know that my father was actually arrested. The lawyer for Ranka said that they are arranging for a press conference later today to address everything.”

“I know mom is highly protective of Haruhi and Ranka, so that doesn’t surprise me. I just wish there was something I could do to help you through this.”

“You already are,” Kyouya replied. “Just by being here. It’s more than I have ever had from my own family.”

Dual buzzes made them look over and grab their phones. Looking down, they said at the same time.

“Mom.”

“Akira.”

At that moment, Haruhi walked into the room, hair wet from the shower, wrapped in a white bathrobe, and holding her phone to her ear. “…mmmmhmmm… okay Dad. We will see you in a few
minutes. I will order breakfast for everyone. I love you.”

She clicked off the phone and looked over to see Hikaru and Kyouya sitting up and looking at their phones. “I take it you just got the same message?”

“Yes,” Hikaru got up and wrapped his arms around her. “How are you doing, love?”

“I’m ok. Worried about my dad, but he seems to be doing ok this morning. He won’t tell me everything that happened, but that is to be expected. He, Yuzuha, Akira, Yorihisa, and the lawyer are on their way over. I guess there is going to be a press conference to address the vultures outside later today, but first they want to talk to us about how we want to handle everything.”

“I guess we better wake everyone up then,” Hikaru looked at the rest of their sleeping friends. “Did your dad say how long before they would get here?”

“About an hour,” Haruhi replied. “I’ll start some more coffee and order breakfast if you want to start waking the others up. I really like Marika and her partners seem nice, and I adore Renge and Mai, but I think for this first meeting, I need a bit more privacy.”

“Hani and I will go with them and meet you back at the house,” Takashi entered wearing his pants from the night before and towel drying his hair.

Kyouya laid his hand on Takashi’s shoulder, “I don’t have a problem with you staying and I know Haruhi doesn’t either.”

Takashi returned the gesture, “I know, my friend. But for appearances sake, if nothing else, it would not be right for us to remain. We will return to the house.”

“You guys can help me with the decorations,” Tamaki piped up from bed. The friends turned and looked at him. “Sorry, I know you guys were trying to talk quietly but it was enough to wake me… plus I smelled coffee.” He stretched and got up from the bed to join the discussion, still managing to look casually sexy in his rumpled tuxedo pants and undershirt. “That was kind of the plan for today anyway.” When the other’s looked blank, he continued. “Remember the whole Christmas thing? I know that we used the Maison de Roses for the Ball, but Yuzuha assured me that everything would be cleaned up and we would be able to have our Christmas celebration tonight. That is if you guys still want to do it…”

Haruhi gave Tamaki a hug, “that sounds great Tama. I think we can all use a bit of cheer after last night. Are you going to have enough time to get everything done though?”

“Well, I am going to use some of the stuff from the Ball, but there are a few specific things that I wanted to get. I was going to send you all off somewhere today, regardless, so I could get everything ready, but I admit I could use a bit of help decorating.”

“We can definitely do that Tama-chan,” Hani piped up as he sat up on the mattress before poking Kaoru, who nodded. Clearly indicating that they had overheard the conversation.

Haruhi smiled, “Is there anyone who is still asleep?”

“I don’t think so,” Marika said with a grin as she opened her eyes. “Don’t worry. We aren’t offended that you need to have a discussion without us. Honestly, it has been a kind of crazy night and I would love to have a bit of quiet time with my partners.”

“You are welcome to come back to the Guest House tonight for the festivities, Frizz,” Tamaki said. “It’s going to be fun. I planned games, food, caroling, and even a Santa Claus.”
“Sounds like fun. We will be there. Just send me a text and let me know what time.” She got up and stretched, while Jon and Mel sat up and started to make their way to the edge of the mattresses.

“We can help too,” Renge added as Mai grinned. “We used to have great Holiday parties at my parent’s house and I know how to put together a fantastic scavenger hunt!”

“It’s settled then,” Tamaki grinned. “Haru, Hika, and Kyo will stay here and take care of the hard stuff while the rest of us go have fun.” He winked at Haruhi to let her know he was teasing before kissing her cheek, “Seriously though, let us know if you need anything. We will be running around and have everything ready by the time you guys get back.”

“Thank you, Tama,” Haruhi kissed him back. “I appreciate your understanding… and I have a feeling that we are going to need some of that Christmas fun after this discussion.”

“That’s what friends are for, princess.”
The knock at the door signaling that room service had arrived was followed just a few minutes later by the arrival of Ranka, Akira, Yuzuha, and the lawyer from the previous evening.

The lawyer held out his hand, “I don’t think we were formally introduced last night. I am Jean-Claude Remy. I am representing your father and House Hitachiin.”

After politely shaking his hand, Haruhi gestured for him to enter the suite. “Breakfast is on the counter, please help yourself.”

“Thank you, but I have already eaten. Please don’t hesitate though on my account. I know it has been a long night for all of you.”

“That it has,” Ranka replied as he made a plate. “I’m actually starving. I didn’t eat much yesterday before the Ball and I couldn’t eat last night. But something about knowing Yoshio Ootori is behind bars at the moment has brought back my appetite.”

Remy nodded and cleared his throat before taking a seat on one of the couches. “Yes he is, for now. That is one of the major things that we need to discuss. I received word from his lawyer this morning that since all parties are Japanese citizens, they are going to push to move the case and charges back to Japan. Because of the status Yoshio Ootori holds and in the interest of political relations between Japan and France, there is a very good chance that the government will agree.”

“No…” the color drained from Ranka’s face.

“We have to find a way to prevent that from happening,” Kyouya jumped up from his seat and started pacing. “You don’t know my father. If this goes back to Japan, there is no way the charges will stick. He has too many connections to see jail time.”

“That is what I am afraid of and please rest assured that I and my team are doing everything in our power to make sure it doesn’t happen, but we have to resign ourselves to the possibility. We can still press charges in Japan and Ootori isn’t the only one who is well connected,” Remy replied. “We will see him held responsible for his part in this.”

“It's not going to be enough,” Kyouya responded, anger and frustration coloring his tone. “My father will find a way to get out of it. He has done it countless times before. Someone else will take the fall for him again. WHY DOES THIS ALWAYS HAPPEN?? WHY?!” He slammed a hand down on the counter causing the dishes to rattle and the others to look at him sharply. “Sorry.” He mumbled as he rubbed the side of his hand and turned away breathing heavily.

Haruhi immediately stood and started to walk over to him, but her father put a hand on her wrist and stopped her. Instead Ranka stood, went to Kyouya and laid a hand on his shoulder turning him gently back to face the others. Speaking gently he asked, “How many times have you watched your father get out of the consequences? How many times have you had to bear the burden of his actions?”
“I have lost count,” Kyoya said bitterly. He took a deep breath. Looking Ranka in the eye he continued, “I’m sorry. This really isn’t about me. What he did to you was beyond the pale and I want you to see justice for that. You have been more of a father figure to me in the last two years than Yoshio Ootori has been for most of my life. You deserve to see him held accountable for everything he put you through. I am just afraid that if this goes back to Japan, then it won’t happen.”

Ranka pulled him into a hug. “You are very much the son, I wish I could have had, never doubt that. The way you care for my daughter speaks volumes about you, despite the man who had a hand in your creation.” Looking over at Remy after releasing Kyoya, he asked, “Is the main argument for moving the case and jurisdiction back to Japan the fact that both Yoshio and I are Japanese citizens? Or is it something else?”

“That is it,” Remy replied. “Ootori’s lawyers are arguing that it is a personal issue between two visitors from another country even though it happened in France. They acknowledge that it is a high profile case because of the connections, which is why they are assuring that it would still go to trial in Japan, but like I said for political reasons, there is a very good chance they may succeed in the argument.”

“Would the same argument be made if it was a French citizen that Yoshio attacked?”

“Not at all. The police and the government would actively fight to keep it here if that were the case. There is too much chance of publicity and politics.” Remy looked suspicious. “Why? Is there something that you haven’t mentioned?”

“I have dual citizenship in Japan and France,” Ranka replied. At the shocked looks, he continued. “At least I think I do. We may need to check.”

“Dad?” Haruhi asked as Ranka and Kyoya walked back to the couch.

Ranka scratched at his head. “Sorry babygirl, this is one of those things that I kept meaning to tell you someday, but it was never really important enough, so I kept forgetting about it.” Turning to the others he said. “Technically, I was born in France. My mother was French-Japanese living in a little town outside Avignon. Her family hosted a Japanese exchange student while she was finishing up school. They had a fling and my mom ended up pregnant with me. Of course, at the time it was a huge scandal and they were forced to get married. But my father only had a student visa, so he had to return to Japan. My mom had me here, and then joined him in Japan with me when I was three months old. My grandparents died when I was an early teenager, but because of the distance and financial constraints, I never really knew them. Japan was my home. I never thought of myself as French. I think they tried to be good parents, but the attraction they had for each other had faded by the time I was a teenager. Then they caught me trying on one of my mom’s dresses and I was kicked out of the house. I stayed with my best friend Ako and her parents. Then I met your mom and the rest is history. My mom died when I was in college and my dad had a heart attack a couple of years later. I don’t think they ever really forgave me for being born and forcing them to change their lives. I didn’t have much contact with them after I married Kotoko.”

Haruhi got up and hugged her father. “I didn’t know. I always wondered about your parents, but I knew that they had disowned you, so I didn’t ask.”

Ranka hugged her back. Turning to Remy, he asked, “So does that information help in any way?”

Remy smiled, sympathy in his eyes, “It does. I will have someone look up the records tomorrow. Do you happen to know what hospital you were born at?”
“I do. I was going through my parent’s things after my father died and I found a box with my birth certificate in it. Unfortunately, I think it got lost in one of the many moves that Kotoko and I did in the early years of our marriage.”

“Even the knowledge alone is enough for us to put a wrench in Ootori’s plans,” Remy answered. “Well... that just made some things a hell of a lot easier and more complicated at the same time. We definitely now have the grounds to keep the trial here, assuming of course that Ootori doesn’t take some kind of plea.”

“It would be unlikely,” Kyoya responded. “My father never sees his actions as mistakes and accepting a plea bargain would be admitting that he made one. No. He is far more likely to try and spin this as a miscommunication or that one of his underlings took his instructions too far.”

“Thanks to Ms. Bellamy’s foresight in video recording everything that is going to be hard to prove,” Remy replied before changing the subject. “But we will deal with that when it comes up. We need to address the vultures outside the building.” He gestured toward the window. “We have called for a press conference this afternoon but we should discuss what we are going to say and who will be talking.”

“I thought I would start,” Yuzuha spoke for the first time since coming into the suite. “I was going to make a statement that one of my staff was abducted from the Ball and that on his behalf, we are pressing charges.”

“Are you ok with that Ranka?” Remy asked. “If this were a normal situation either you or I would be the one who would be the center of attention.”

“I am not used to being in front of the press. I am perfectly ok with Yuzuha taking point. I am probably going to have to answer questions anyway. Am I correct?”

“Well, that is up to you,” Remy answered. “We can play this as a straight informational gathering and refuse to comment, but it will lead to a lot of speculation and the press will continue to hound you and your daughter. Of course, that will probably happen any way just based on the circumstances around her coming out with Hikaru and Kyoya.”

“We addressed that issue already with the interview we did with Marika last week,” Hikaru interjected.

“Yes you did, but the fact that it looks like Ootori may have retaliated to that interview by kidnapping her father means that the focus is squarely back on the three of you.”

“What do you think we should do,” Kyoya asked.

“I think that Yuzuha should start the conference off, but that you, Haruhi, Ranka, and Hikaru should be open to answering a few questions. We can make clear beforehand that any questions relating to the relationship that you have that are digging for salacious details will be ignored. It won’t stop them completely, unfortunately, but it will help us weed out the respectable news agencies from the tabloids. It’s the best we can hope for in this situation.”

“I hate that my personal relationship is being brought up as an excuse for my father’s behavior,” Kyoya replied, incensed. “The fact that there are people out there who will approve of and justify his actions, sickens me and the media feeding that opinion is worse.”
Hikaru laid a hand on Kyouya’s arm. “You and I both know that there are people who thrive on that kind of tabloid gossip. We both have had to deal with it often enough in the past. Granted that was just in Japan and not on a global stage, but we can do this. I am not ashamed of my relationship with both of you and I don’t want to try and hide it. I do want to protect Haru from it, just as much as you do.”

Haruhi sighed, “I appreciate the knight in shining armor chivalry crap you are spouting, but I am not exactly a fragile flower. Do I want this level of intrusiveness in my life? No. Obviously. But I can and will deal with it. I am not ashamed of my relationships either. I know that we are going to be judged by small minded people. I know that it is going to be hell for a few months…and I also know that something else will come along and grab the media’s attention. If I can just keep reminding myself of that, I will be fine.”

Akira beamed and muttered under his breath about the fighting spirit of House Zouka, before giving Haruhi a wink.

Hikaru grabbed her hand, “I know you think you can handle this, love, but it is going to be constant for several weeks now and then will pick back up again when Yoshio goes to trial. You and I can hide from it a bit when we are back at school, but even then there will be a lot of gossiping in the hallways. There’s a strong possibility we will even be blackballed for the rest of the year.”

Haruhi leaned in and kissed him on the cheek, “I was expecting that anyway once we got back. A poly triad is not exactly a common thing in Japan.” She sighed. “It may be a good thing that we decided not to do the Host Club this year. There is a good chance that we would have been disbanded over this, despite Tama’s father’s influence.”

“I didn’t think about this before, but it could very well impact your admission into some of the most prestigious universities,” Kyouya looked torn.

“Then I will apply abroad.” Haruhi responded. “I am kind of enjoying France. England could be interesting as could the United States. Would you be ok with that though, Kyo-love? Your businesses are mostly based in Japan and I know that you really enjoy Tokyo University.”

“I mostly enjoy it because it is close to you and Hika,” Kyouya responded as a faint blush crept into his cheeks. “I could easily transfer anywhere as needed. KO Enterprises is already registered as a global group and I can communicate to the stakeholders through video conference as needed.”

“Good,” Remy interrupted. “There’s a pretty good chance that question will come up and if you guys have a solid answer it will help cement the idea that you three aren’t just doing the relationship thing as a publicity stunt for HDG.” He held up his hand in apology as Haruhi sputtered in indignation and Hikaru looked about to jump off the couch in protest. “I am sorry for phrasing it like that, but you needed to hear it from someone else before the press hit you with it. Unfortunately, there will always be a population that will think that way, especially as Haruhi and Ranka do not come from wealthy backgrounds.”

“That at least I am used to dealing with,” Haruhi smiled grimly. “I was called a fortune hunter and worse, so many times after I started dating Tamaki that I lost count. It stopped bothering me, when I realized that it really didn’t matter what petty minded people thought. I knew that I wasn’t, especially since in the beginning the luxuries that Tama and you guys take for granted just made me uncomfortable.” She squeezed Hikaru’s hand. “I have since learned to appreciate some of them, but I can just as easily do without. Though it is nice to know that I won’t have to work while going to
college to pay for it. I knew scholarships would cover a lot, but I thought I would still have to supplement it in some way.”

“And the fact that you earned it in a legitimate way, by being a model for HDG (even if you didn’t realize that is what you were doing at the time), will go a long way to dispel any additional gossip. We can even make your portfolio public if we need to.” Yuzuha inserted.

“Wait,” Haruhi said, “I have a portfolio?”

“Of course, yoshi,” Yuzuha grinned. “Nothing was shown in magazines, of course, because you weren’t a runway model for us, but as an R&D model we needed to have photographs so we could figure out what worked and what needed to be changed for the runway. And as this started long before you started dating my son, there is no question of the legitimacy.”

“And Dad?”

“I started with HDG a few months ago. I thought it was just a casual brain-picking thing, but it was legitimately on the books as meeting with a consultant so I have technically been on contract to HDG before this week and the blow up with Ootori. I know it seems a bit surreal, but on the employee front everything is legitimate and time-lined in a way that is irrefutable. This will also allow HDG to sue Yoshio Ootori for libel and slander against the company… eventually.”

“Haruhi, Kyouya, I don’t want it to seem like we are jumping on an opportunity or making what happened any less atrocious, but from a strictly business point of view, we would have brought charges regardless. I hope you understand,” Yuzuha looked apologetic.

“From a business perspective – I understand completely, Yuzuha. From a personal one too, actually,” Kyouya replied. “I would do the same if our positions were reversed.”

“Thank you, Kyouya,” Yuzuha acknowledged, relief evident in her voice.

“That is probably how we should end the information part of the press conference,” Remy said. “That will bring it full-circle to Yuzuha and HDG. That should also bring the attention off of Haruhi, Hikaru, and Kyouya.” He looked at his watch. “Is there anything else we should discuss at the moment?”

“I think we are all aware of what has to be done,” Ranka replied.

“I am going to leave then and start the preparation. We will start the press conference in 3 hours. Until then, I would strongly recommend staying in this room.”

“I have stylists and wardrobe coming in an hour and a half,” Yuzuha responded. “We should be fine in the meantime. After all, we need to discuss how the Ball went last night and get some regular HDG business completed. Thank you, Jean-Claude.”

He bent and kissed her hand, “Always a pleasure, Yuzuha. I will come back up and get you when it is time.” He turned to the hosts and Ranka. “Until then, try to relax as much as you can.” With a nod, Jean-Claude Remy left the suite.

As soon as the door had shut behind him, Yuzuha smoothed her hands down her lap and started issuing orders. “Hika, please get your brother and Renge on the phone then start reviewing the usual social media sites. Ranka, can you please call for notepads and writing instruments. Haruhi and
Kyouya, loves, I would really appreciate it if you made a list of everything that you felt went right and wrong from a participant’s point of view. Ranka, you saw it from the industry side. I need the same from you on that perspective. We need to debrief, so we can start thinking about what we will have to do differently for Spring Fashion Week.”

“On it, mom,” Hikaru replied and then subtly turned and rolled his eyes at his lovers in a way that made them stifle giggles.

“Yes Yuzuha,” Haruhi laughed and got up to start another pot of coffee, while she waited for the notepads to be brought up. Looking out over the sudden flurry of activity, her heart felt lighter than it had in several hours. *For all that she is a wonderful supportive presence to all of us; it’s moments like this that remind me why she is the head of a multi-million dollar company. Yuzuha Hitachiin may have a huge heart, but she is also one smart and savvy businesswoman. Mom would have really liked her.*

At that moment, Ranka looked up and caught his daughter’s eye. As if he could read her thoughts, he smiled and nodded.

Chapter End Notes

Happy Holidays, Blessed Solstice, and a very Merry Christmas to everyone! May your New Year be very merry and bright!

On a personal note - I am ready to see 2015 go, but that is mainly because much of my life has imploded in the last several weeks and my goal of trying to get a few chapters completed by Xmas became impossible due to a roller-coaster of life events (work, home, family, and friends). I wish I could promise that in the new year, I will be awesome at getting chapters out every couple of weeks, but honestly, I am hanging by a thread as it is. So my resolution is to not give up. It may be slow and there may be days that seem dark, but there is always something better that comes out in the end... and if it isn't getting better, then it isn't the end. So I humbly ask that you forgive me when these updates are coming out much slower than I would want (and from an avid reader's perspective while following WIP's I ABSOLUTELY understand the eager anticipation/frustration of waiting for the next installment). As I have said before - I will not abandon our little poly band of misfits. It just may take a bit longer than I hoped to tell their story.

But in the meantime - I wish every one of you love, light, laughter and fun in the next year!
Tamaki unlocked the door to the Maison de Roses and held his breath as he pushed the door open. *I know Yuzuha said she was going to have staff working overnight to return it back to the way it was before the Ball last night, but it took them 2 full days to set up, can they really pull it down in 8 hours?*

“Wow, the staff Yuzuha hired really did a great job,” Renge said.

Tamaki breathed a sigh of relief. “I am really grateful for that. Not that it didn’t look fantastic last night, but I wanted this party to feel homey and not elegant. If that makes sense?”

“Totally,” Kaoru responded with a smile, “I know that mom goes over the top with HDG events, but that is not everyone’s style.”

Tamaki laughed at Kaoru’s response and arched an eyebrow, “Didn’t all of you tease me constantly about not going overboard with Host Club events? That my ideas were too flamboyant…”

“Nope,” Kaoru smirked, “That was ALL Kyouya. If you left it up to Hika and me, then most of our themed events would have been even more extravagant.”

“And with less actual clothing being worn,” Hani grinned as Kaoru pretended to be offended.

“Don’t tell me that you wouldn’t have wanted to see Haruhi in a bikini top and mermaid tail for our last underwater themed tea party,” Kaoru retorted.

“Considering we were still trying to pass her off as a boy at the time of that particular party that would have been disastrous,” Takashi replied.

“Details, details,” Kaoru waved his hand nonchalantly before switching topics, “So Tama, what do you want us to do?”

“My first thought is I want a shower and to change out of this tux, but after that I have a list.” He looked at his watch. “I have some staff from the main estate coming over in two hours to bring a Christmas tree and all the decorations that I bought for the party. The caterer’s will be here about 6pm, the carolers around 8pm, and Santa around 9pm. I didn’t really think about games, but Renge mentioned something about a scavenger hunt and I think that sounds like a really fun idea.” He turned to Renge. “How much time do you think you will need to plan it?”

“If you don’t mind me going through the house and hiding things, then I can get the actual bulk of the work done in about an hour. It will take me longer to scout out good places to hide things and come up with the clues for them. How many people do we have coming tonight?”

Tamaki did a quick count, “Well there is the 8 of us Hosts, plus Mai, Marika, Jon, and Mel. When I told them about it, Zhi and Sakura mentioned that they had other plans, but would try to drop by around 9, so we can probably leave them out of that game. So I think that is 12 people you can figure on.”
“Ten actually – Five teams of two,” Renge answered. “I can’t play since I will know where everything is and I am going to need an assistant to help me hide things, if we are going to be done in time.”

Kaoru started to raise his hand but Tamaki interrupted, “I can help you with that. I know every nook and cranny in this place, so I would be an unfair advantage on a team.”

“Perfect!” Renge clapped her hands. “Then we will need 25 things to hide. It doesn’t have to be decorations, but we should make any other objects festive enough that if someone finds them, they will know that they are part of the hunt.

“We can go through what the staff brings over and decide then,” Tamaki ran a hand through his hair and grimaced. “I really need a shower. You are all welcome to use the bathrooms if you want to clean up as well.”

Renge and Mai exchanged looks and hesitated.

Kaoru saw the look and answered before they could, “We can call mom to have some clothes brought over for later, but in the meantime, I know Hika and I packed enough clothing for Haruhi that we can find something that you could borrow.”

Mai arched an eyebrow, “Renge is closer to Haruhi’s height, but I’m almost 7 inches taller than Haruhi. Somehow I don’t think anything will fit.”

Kaoru grinned, “Oh ye of little faith. This is an official HDG designer you are talking to. I can make it work. We are going to need to be casual anyway if we are climbing around putting up decorations and such.”

“Whatever you say, meta,” Mai sassed.

Kaoru looked puzzled, “Meta?”

Mai grinned, “Metamour. Partner of my partner. I figure that since you and Renge are officially bumping uglies, then that makes you her partner as well as my partner, which makes you my metamour.”

“MAI!!!” Renge cried as both she and Kaoru turned a glowing shade of red while Hani, Takashi, and Tamaki burst out laughing.

“What?” Mai smirked.

“Oh you are pure mischief, Lady.” Hani giggled. “I hope we get more chances to hang out in the future. You are something else!”

“I will take that as a compliment,” Mai grinned before turning to Kaoru, who was still a little pink. “And I do trust you, you know. All teasing aside, I have always loved working with you and your brother. You are a formidable team but you bring out the best in your models. For those of us smart enough to see it, we really appreciate it.”

“Thank you?” Kaoru responded, still a bit sheepish.
“You’re welcome,” Mai responded sincerely. “Now which shower do you want Renge and I to use?”

“Why don’t you use the one that is between Kyouya and Haruhi’s room?” Tamaki replied. “That way Kao can grab stuff from her closet for you.”

“Works for me,” Mai replied as she linked her hand with Renge’s. “Lead on lover!”

The guys stood for a minute watching Renge lead the way to the upstairs bedrooms.

“Mai really is something,” Hani laughed, “I thought Kao and Hika knew how to cause a scene, but that one takes the cake.”

Kaoru smiled. “She has a reputation for being blunt that can and does cause some friction with the other models, but honestly, I appreciate it most of the time. She has a wicked sense of humor and intelligence in a field that is dominated by women who are pretty but very superficial. I’m really glad that she and Renge found each other. I can see the influence of each of them on the other and it makes them both stronger.”

“She fits in well,” Takashi said quietly.

“Yes she does,” Hani replied. “Come on Takashi, I want a shower nearly as much as Tama-chan.”

Turning together they walked up the stairs toward their room.

“Do you mind if I share your shower?” Kaoru asked Tamaki.

“Not at all,” Tamaki replied with a smile. “I just didn’t know how it was all going to work with Renge here too. I mean… I know she is kind of your girlfriend and all now…”

Kaoru stepped forward and took Tamaki’s hand before stretching up and placing a kiss on his cheek.

“I guess she kind of is my girlfriend now, but I also kind of hope that I am also considered your boyfriend.” He blushed faintly again.

Tamaki smiled and pulled Kaoru in for a hug. “I would like that.”

“Good.”

They stayed like that for a minute before Tamaki said, “I hate to break this up but I REALLY need a shower.”

“Go on. I will find some clothes for the girls and then join you in a few.”

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Tamaki let the water flow over his head as he let his mind drift. His plans for setting up for the party that evening drifted into the change in the house from the night before, which led him to think about the Ball and Ranka’s kidnapping. All of a sudden, the terror he had suppressed the night before in the adrenaline surge to find and rescue Haruhi’s father came rushing back, flooding his body and causing his knees to buckle. He slid to the floor of the shower and started shaking uncontrollably. The nightmare scene of Ranka bound, helpless, and about to be raped played over and over in his mind as he stood outside the window unable to do anything to stop it.
“Tama, I set out clothing but is there anyth-“ Kaoru said as he walked into the bathroom, his voice cutting off abruptly as he saw Tamaki on the floor crying with sobs racking his body. Without thinking Kaoru ripped off his clothes and ran to kneel next to his friend. Pulling Tamaki into his arms, he stroked the wet hair back from his face and asked quietly, “Tama, love, what is it?”

Instinctively, Tamaki wrapped his arms around Kaoru and held on as tightly as he could. He fought to get the words out of his mouth, “I.. It’s… keep seeing… I couldn’t help… couldn’t do anything… Ranka… nearly… gods… I couldn’t stop him…”

“Shhhh…,” Kaoru held Tamaki as tightly as possible and crooned soft noises at him until he could feel Tamaki relax the grip he had. Shifting his body slightly, he moved both of them so the spray of the water wasn’t directly in their faces. Quietly, he asked again, “What happened, love?”

Tamaki took a long deep shuddering breath. Then he took another, before being able to pull his head back and look at Kaoru. “Everything from last night just hit me. Gods… what that man nearly did to Haruhi’s father was horrible. And Marika and I were outside unable to stop any of it. All we could do was watch and record it, like some twisted reality show. Ranka was nearly beaten and raped in front of us, and there was nothing I could do to stop it.” Bitterness dripped from his voice.

“Gods… Tamaki. I didn’t know.”

“Only Marika and I know. Plus I guess the agent who was able to rescue him. Haru and Kyo don’t even know the full extent of it. We gave the video to the police before they got to the station and Ranka made it very clear that he did not want either of them to see the video.” Tamaki gave another bitter laugh, “Ranka is so strong. He wants to protect them from the horror of the situation for as long as he can… It happened to him. I will respect that decision, but I don’t know if I can face Haru again knowing she thinks something awful happened and that I was unable to save her dad. I don’t know if I can ever forgive myself for not being able to stop it.”

“Oh Tama,” Kaoru held him tighter, “You did save Ranka. The only reason we knew where to find him was because of you. You said nearly… does that mean that the police were able to rescue Ranka before he was actually… assaulted?”

“Yes… but it was so close… even a minute more…”

“Shhhh… It was a horrible experience. Not just for Haruhi’s dad, but for you too.” Kaoru tilted Tamaki’s face up and gently kissed his lips. “I know Ranka. He’s so much stronger than the world generally gives him credit for. He may be bruised by this experience, but he isn’t broken. It will take time, but he will heal.” Kaoru kissed him again. “And so will you. Tama, love, you did so much… but you are hurting for things you had no control over. Let’s just say you could have tried to rescue Ranka. How many people were in the room besides Ranka and his attacker? If I know Yoshio Ootori, there were probably at least a couple armed guards in there as well. Am I right?”

Tamaki nodded, “There were two other bodyguards.”

“Armed?”

Tamaki nodded again.

“So what would have happened if you and Marika rushed in? They had weapons. You didn’t. They probably have experience fighting. You don’t. If you had tried to go in, you would have been captured or worse.”

Tamaki pressed his head back against the tile, “I know that logically. Fuck – I even said nearly the
same thing to Mari.” He laughed bitterly. “So why can’t I get my heart to believe it? Why am I sitting
her in the shower shaking like a leaf?”

“Because you have been through an incredibly traumatic event and you haven’t had time to process
anything,” Kaoru said. “You have been running on adrenaline and you are finally coming down
from it. It’s all perfectly normal, love. Trust me, Haruhi and Kyo, and even Hika to a lesser extent are
doing the same. They are also going to crash soon and they are going to need our help. I want to help
you now, so you can help them when they need it.”

“Kao… what if I could have done something?”

“You still can,” Kaoru replied gently. “You can’t change the past, but you can choose how to face
the future. You can choose to stand by Ranka as he faces his kidnapper in court. You can choose to
stand by Kyousa as he faces his father. You can choose to defend Haruhi against the inevitable
backlash in the media and among the social elite at Ouran.”

“Not that she needs my help,” Tamaki answered with a weak smile.

“True, but we both know that while Haruhi doesn’t need us to defend her, she still needs us to
support her as she blazes forward on her own. Otherwise, she gets lost in the causes she champions
and will lose herself eventually.”

Tamaki pulled Kaoru in close and kissed him. “When did you get so smart?”

Kaoru pretended to be offended, “What?! I’ll have you know I was always this smart. I just never
bothered to show it to all you unworthy imbeciles.”

Tamaki laughed, the genuine sound bringing a real smile to Kaoru’s face. “Well, this imbecile is
realizing that he really was an idiot for taking you for granted for so long.” He stood up, offering a
hand to Kaoru. Adjusting the water flow, he said with a grimace, “We probably have about two
minutes of hot water left, how fast can you get clean?”

“It will be hard, but I like a challenge,” Kaoru grinned.

“Good, because that is not the only thing getting hard at the moment,” Tamaki winked as he traced
his hand down to his erect cock. “Get clean, so I can get you all dirty again. I’m not going to take
anything for granted anymore.”

Kaoru grabbed a pouf off the wall, squirted a dollop of shower gel into it, lathered it up and ran it
over his body, making sure that Tamaki was watching as he stroked himself with the suds it left
behind, before laughing, throwing the pouf at Tamaki’s chest and jumping under the rapidly fading
heat of the shower spray. “Your turn!”

Tamaki was equally as fast as he ran the soapy pouf over his body, but the few seconds he spent in
admiration of the soap rinsing down Kaoru’s lithe body, cost him the last heat of the water. He
shivered as he rinsed off in the tepid water.

Kaoru laughed as he handed Tamaki a big fluffy towel the moment he turned off the tap. “Don’t
worry my prince, I can think of a few ways to warm you back up.”

“Oh really?” Tamaki grinned as the last of his traumatic thoughts faded in the present as he wrapped
the towel around his waist and faced a very naked Kaoru.

With a mischievous smile, Kaoru stalked him across the room, a wrapped towel coiled and ready to
strike in his hand.
“What do you think you are going to do with that, huh?”

Kaoru tried to whip the towel out to crack at Tamaki’s legs, but misjudged the bulky weight of it and Tamaki caught it easily.

Wrapping it around his hand, Tamaki pulled Kaoru in closer until he was able to drop the towel and reach for Kaoru’s hips. Bringing the naked man sharply up to his chest, Tamaki claimed Kaoru’s lips while Kaoru wrapped his arms around Tamaki’s neck with a moan.

Still kissing him, Tamaki slowly walked Kaoru backward to the bed in his room, while Kaoru worked at undoing the towel around Tamaki’s waist. Feeling it fall to the floor, Kaoru wrapped his hands around the rapidly hardening member.

At the bed, Kaoru turned them sideways and fell onto it, finding Tamaki’s mouth again as soon as they had settled. Shifting his weight, without ending the kiss, Kaoru straddled the other man. Finally breaking the kiss and breathing heavily, Kaoru murmured, “I told you I would warm you up.”

“MMMMMmmmm…,” Kaoru ground their hips together as the dirty words made him even harder. A few more thrusts and he shifted position again, flipping himself around and swallowing Tamaki’s cock in a single motion.

Tamaki screamed as he felt Kaoru’s cock brush up against his as the other man straddled his hips. Lifting his hips slightly he pushed into it, causing more friction as the two cocks glided against each other. Gasping against the moan that fought to escape, Tamaki answered, “I’m beyond warm… fuck Kao, I want you so much right now. I want to feel your cock in my mouth. I want to suck you off until you scream my name, I want to swallow you.”

Tamaki sighed as he felt Kaoru’s cock brush up against his as the other man straddled his hips. Lifting his hips slightly he pushed into it, causing more friction as the two cocks glided against each other. Gasping against the moan that fought to escape, Tamaki answered, “I’m beyond warm… fuck Kao, I want you so much right now. I want to feel your cock in my mouth. I want to suck you off until you scream my name, I want to swallow you.”

“MMMMMmmmm…,” Kaoru ground their hips together as the dirty words made him even harder. A few more thrusts and he shifted position again, flipping himself around and swallowing Tamaki’s cock in a single motion.

Tamaki screamed as the wet heat engulfed him, but it only took a moment before he realized that Kaoru’s cock was only inches from his mouth. With a smile, he reached up and guided the slim member into his mouth, feeling Kaoru shudder as he returned the favor.

Together they set up a rhythm that rocked them back and forth, Tamaki’s grip on Kaoru’s hips tightening and keeping him upright as Kao felt his knees get weak the closer he got to the edge. With a cry, Kaoru pulled off the other man’s cock and yelled, “Tama!” as he shot his load deep into Tamaki’s throat. Breathing heavily, he collapsed against Tamaki as the other man continued to suck on his softening cock. Finally, with a heave, he lifted and turned himself so he could see the blonde.

Kaoru looked at the smile on Tamaki’s face and grinned. On impulse, he bent down and gave Tamaki another deep wet kiss, tasting the lingering flavor of his cum on Tamaki’s tongue. “Mmmm… I don’t think I could ever get tired of that glorious mouth.”

Tamaki laughed. “Good. Because I think I could suck you for years and never get tired of it.”

“I’ll hold you to that,” Kaoru responded. Then reaching back he wrapped his hand around Tamaki’s still hard cock. “But I think at the moment, it’s only fair if I return the favor.”

“You don’t hav- … unnngh,” the rest of Tamaki’s sentence was lost in a groan as Kaoru shifted down to where he could suck Tamaki off, while still watching his expressions.

“I like watching you cum,” Kaoru replied as he put one finger in his mouth and sucked, before sliding it behind the blonde’s cock, teasing across the balls and perineum and teasing at the tight puckered hole. “You are so wet here, must have been from me sucking earlier… but that’s good. Your turn to scream my name.” With a single motion, he swallowed Tamaki’s cock and slid the finger inside him, gliding perfectly over Tamaki’s prostate.
Tamaki’s body jerked at the sudden motion, but it was only a matter of seconds before the pleasure took hold and he was panting out Kaoru’s name in a litany. The motions of Kaoru’s tongue and mouth on his cock and the finger slowly fucking him brought him to the edge in moments. When Kaoru added a second finger, while still maintaining eye contact, Tamaki couldn’t take it anymore and threw his head back and granted the return favor as he yelled “Kaoru!” and came hard.

Still breathing hard, he pulled Kaoru on top of him, the golden redhead snagging a towel and wiping his hands on it on the way. Wrapping his arms around Kaoru, he held him close as he whispered “Thank you.”

Kaoru hummed in contentment as he snuggled into Tamaki’s chest. “You are very welcome, lover.”

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One room over, Hani was lying naked across Takashi’s chest in a similar manner, idly tracing circles across his chest. After hearing Kaoru yell out Tamaki’s name, they turned to each other and smiled.

“I am glad that they are exploring each other,” Hani said. “They make a cute couple.”

“Yes, they do. They complement each other very well.”

“I hope that it lasts.”

“I have no doubt. Our group is strong and our relationships with each other only make it stronger.”

They listened to the increased moans from the other room.

“$10 says Tamaki comes in less than a minute,” Hani grinned impishly.

“I think he can hold out for another two minutes at least… you are on.”

Two minutes and 15 seconds later, Tamaki yelled out Kaoru’s name.

Chapter End Notes

Look! Humor, angst, smut, and more humor in one update! =P

Unfortunately, I still can't promise regular updates, but my life is now only on a mid-sized roller-coaster rather than the jumbo amusement park ones. So much has happened in the last few months and I am basically starting a new life. But this story is still important and it will be told - come Hell or high water (which with the amount of insane flooding that is happening recently, that may be more true than I want to say at the moment!). One thing I can say though is this will be my last Ouran fic. I have other ideas that have been floating around in my head and it is time to start thinking about putting them into words... BUT... if there is a scene in this story (or any of my other stories for that matter) that you want to elaborate on and write, please feel free! I will link them to this one and make sure that you get credit. After all, inspiration for some of the pairings and ideas for this story have come from my other favorite Ouran authors. It's a great big poly Ouran World! LOL!

Much love and as always, I am so incredibly grateful for all of the love, support, fantastic reviews and encouragement you all have given me over the last couple of
years. I really REALLY couldn't have done this without you.
Renge and Mai walked back into the library only to discover that they were the first of the Host Club to arrive.

“And they say that girls are the ones to take forever to get ready,” Mai grumbled.

“This is the Host Club we are talking about,” Renge replied with a smile. “Haruhi and I were ALWAYS ready before the boys were.”

“I wish I could have met everyone back when you all were in school together. I bet you guys were a riot. Just some of the stories you have told me are insane and I know you haven’t even come close to telling me everything,” Mai responded as she headed over to the pile of boxes that had been delivered. “I still can’t believe that you obsessed over Kyouya. He is seriously intense and sooo not your usual style.”

“My usual style being female and flamboyant, not male and serious?” Renge teased.

“I prefer the term stylistic trendsetter on the edge of the mainstream.” Mai pouted.

Renge laughed. “Oh you are on the edge of something, all right.” She grabbed a Styrofoam pine cone and tossed it at her girlfriend.

“Hey!” Mai tried to dodge but the pine cone bounced off her shoulder. She picked it up and tossed it back.

“You are right though,” Renge answered as she easily caught the cone and continued rummaging through the boxes, pulling stuff out at random. “I had this fantasy of Kyouya that only lasted about a week before I realized that there was no way that I could actually have a relationship with him. Notwithstanding the fact that at the time I thought he was gay, because he was obviously attracted to one of the other Hosts.”

“Tamaki?”

“Haruhi,” Renge smirked. “Haruhi was still masquerading as a boy when I met her and Kyouya would be constantly watching her when he thought that no one else was looking. It was pretty clear that he was the sarcastic straight man to Tamaki’s outrageousness, but Haru is who he would watch. Of course, once I started paying attention it was pretty clear that most of Host Club were watching her. She on the other hand, seemed completely oblivious to it all until the end of the year.”

“So Tamaki was the flamboyant one, not Kaoru?”

“Definitely. The twins obviously had style and were the brains behind the costumes, but the ideas and the over the top antics were ALL Tamaki.”

“I’m kind of surprised that you didn’t have a crush on him. He’s definitely attractive for a male and he is much more your type.”
Renge pretended to think about it, “Tamaki? Nah, he was a bit too much like an overeager puppy. All bounce, cuteness, and about as much sense.”

“HEY!!” Tamaki cried as he entered the room with Kaoru snickering silently beside him. It was clear that they had been listening behind the door.

Renge turned dark red as the blush took over her whole body. “Errrrr… ummmm.”

“Overeager puppy sounds like a good description of the boss at the time,” Kaoru teased as Renge threw the pine cone at him this time, bouncing it squarely off his forehead. “Ow!”

“Some people just don’t appreciate imagination, and romance,” Tamaki huffed as he caught the pine cone on the bounce.

“Is that what you are calling it, Tama-chan?” Hani said with a lilt in his voice as he and Takashi entered the room.

“The girls never seemed to mind my romantic nature,” Tamaki grumbled.

“Because they were even more silly than you,” Kaoru laughed, “Right Renge? I seem to remember the first day you arrived at Ouran – hearts in your eyes and fluff in your head.” Kaoru ducked as both his lovers grabbed items and stalked toward him. He stepped back quickly and began back-pedaling furiously, “but both of you came to your sense eventually.”

Hani and Takashi watched as both Renge and Tamaki backed Kaoru into a couch. As Kaoru’s knees hit, he overbalanced and fell backwards on it sprawling across it. As they reached the couch, Tamaki and Renge looked at each other, dropped the decorations they had been holding, grabbed the closest throw pillows, and started whacking Kaoru with them.

Kaoru laughed as he wiggled and tried to avoid them, but soon gave up the fight. “Ok. I surrender. You both are the most intelligent and non-fluff filled people I know.”

“Better.” Tamaki grinned.

“And don’t you forget it,” Renge smirked while giving one final whack before tossing the pillow to Hani and linking her arms with Tamaki. “Now, what do you need us to do for the party tonight? I started sorting a few things out that I can use for the scavenger hunt, but I know there is a lot more that you need to do. How can we help?”

Tamaki put on his best Host King smile and pulled out a notebook. “I planned everything out with diagrams and notes. If you look closely, all the boxes are organized by room.”

“Great organization Tama-chan.”

“Thanks,” Tamaki answered Hani. “I originally was going to have all the staff do this while we went somewhere, but with us helping them, it will go even more quickly. The only thing I didn’t plan was the Christmas tree. I thought it would be fun if we decorated that ourselves.”

“Sounds good, boss.” Kaoru sat up and smoothed out his clothing. He felt a buzzing and pulled his phone out of his pocket. “Hika just sent a message that the press conference will be in a couple of hours, so it will be at least another 3 hours before he, Haru, and Kyouya join us.”
“Got it.” Tamaki nodded. “That should be the perfect amount of time to get this done, then we all can relax a bit before the party.”

“Please ask Hikaru to let us know when the press conference starts,” Takashi added.

“I will,” Kaoru replied and sent a quick response. His face tightened as he read more of the message. “It sounds like it is going to be a tough one for Haru and Kyouya. Hika just told me that there seems to be a rumor going around that everything that has happened is just a publicity stunt for HDG.”

“It is not surprising,” Tamaki sighed. “Yoshio’s attorneys have to be scrambling at this point to misdirect his actions and trying to discredit your mom is the most obvious route. The truth will come out though eventually.”

“I know it will,” Kaoru sighed. “I just hope that we can keep it contained. There still are a lot of things that we don’t want the public to know, and it is not just about Haruhi and Kyouya’s other relationships. Gods, if the public knew the truth about Hika and I, mom would be screwed. It’s just a danger- FUCK!” Kaoru looked up and saw Mai staring at him in interest. Panicked, he realized that Mai wasn’t aware of the intimate details of the group and he had completely forgotten that she was there. “Oh fuck, Mai. I… uh…”

Mai crossed the room, sat down next to him on the couch and took Kaoru’s hand. “Kaoru, please. Please don’t think that I would say anything to put your family or your friends at risk. I respect you, your brother, and especially your mother too much to spread gossip. I love Renge. I know that you are falling in love with her too. I know that she loves both of us. Your mother has been my mentor and idol since I was a little girl and she has been such a support for me in my career. I NEVER want to put that in jeopardy. Honestly, after spending the time with you guys this last week, it doesn’t surprise me that Haruhi has relationships with the others. It is pretty obvious when you let your guards down that you all really care about each other. That spin-the-bottle game was unlike anything I had ever played and I’m sorry, but the sexual tension among ALL of you was pretty obvious.”

“Obvious, huh,” Hani came and stood next to the couch.

“Very.” Mai smiled. “But I know a bit of what it is like to have to hide things from the world, so I may be a bit more observant of others who have to do so. But, just to even the scale of secrets…” Mai looked at Renge who nodded and came back over to hold her other hand. “I’m transgender.”

Kaoru looked at her in shock.

Mai smiled a little in response. “I know I don’t look it. I was born biologically a boy, but I was blessed to have a family that loved me for who I was and I was able to start getting hormone therapy as soon as I hit puberty. I was always slender and androgynous to start so the therapy was able to slowly enhance those features that make me a good model. I had the reconstructive surgery done for my 18th birthday and I have had a little bit of plastic surgery after that to help enhance the feminine shape. To all outward appearances - I am a woman. Actually, in all reality I am fully a woman. I just don’t have a uterus and I happen to have a y chromosome floating around in my DNA.” Mai laughed. “The only people who know are Renge, my immediate family, your mom Yuzuha, and now you guys. Even my pet pony doesn’t know. So… I promise you that I can keep a secret.” She squeezed Kaoru’s hand.

“Mai, wow,” Hani said as he gave her a genuine smile.
“Thank you for trusting us,” Kaoru said as he squeezed her hand back. “I appreciate that you shared your secret with us when I accidently blurted out ours. I promise you that I will also keep your secret, even from Hika if you want.”

“Thank you, but that isn’t necessary,” Mai responded. “I trust Hikaru and Haruhi. Even though I don’t know Kyouya very well, I know enough to not question his discretion.”

“I know they will respect that,” Takashi said quietly.

“They will and we will,” Tamaki said before stepping in front of her and bowing in front of her. As he stood up he handed her a long stemmed poinsettia. “Normally I would use a rose, but they are a bit out of season at the moment. I welcome you as an official Host in the Ouran High School Host Club. We may be technically defunct since more than half of our Hosts have graduated and dispersed across the globe, but we will always be a part of each other, and now you are a part of us.”

Mai accepted the flower as a tear slipped down her cheek. “Thank you. I don’t know what to say.”

Tamaki took her other hand and kissed it. “Say that you are happy to be a part of our crazy little world.”

“I am so very very happy to be a part of this crazy little world.”

“Good!” Tamaki clapped his hands, “Now let’s step to, Hosts. This party isn’t going to set itself up!”

“Yes Boss!!”

******************************************

“So Renge, I have a question…” Tamaki said about half an hour after he and Renge had separated from the group to hide the items they had selected for the scavenger hunt.

“Sure.”

“Are you really ok with my dating Kaoru?” Tamaki blurted. “I mean I know he really likes you, and it is pretty clear that you really like him, and I know there is this whole idea of poly that we are getting used to and everything, but I think you are pretty cool as a person and I don’t want to make our friendship really complicated and…”

Renge turned and looked at the now brightly blushing host. “I know my attraction for Kaoru kind of hit me out of the blue and I kind of get the impression that yours did as well at about the same time. When I talked to Mai about my sudden attraction to Kao, she told me to go for it. She has another partner and occasional lovers (though not since she and I started dating), but I had pretty much been monogamous on my side, mostly because no one else had seemed more interesting than working with Yuzuha. She was always open with me about her other partner and I have met her several times. She is pretty cool and really devoted to Mai, but their relationship is a bit different. I knew from talking to Haruhi that poly relationships could be a thing, so I learned how to communicate better and Mai and I have been really good ever since. Honestly, I kind of labeled myself as a lesbian once I started dating Mai, because I really only had a casual interest in guys and most didn’t seem worth the trouble. Somehow Kaoru managed to change that.”

“I understand that,” Tamaki said. “I have mostly been attracted to girls, but every once in a while I would find myself fantasizing about a guy.”
“Kyouya!”

Tamaki blushed again. “Well… yeah, mostly, but on rare occasions it would be one of the other guys. Then this vacation started and I found myself falling hard for not only Kyouya, but Kaoru too, and then the feelings that I thought I had pushed into platonic friendship about Haruhi came rushing back. It was confusing.”

“For all of us, I think,” Renge nodded. “I don’t mean your confusion, but that these last two weeks have opened up a lot of feelings for everyone. Maybe it was due to the separation of you and I from the rest of the group, or that Hani and Mori have been out of Ouran for more than 2 years now and are more focused on their futures, or heck it could be that we are all now technically adults, even though Haru and the twins have to finish up the rest of the year. I don’t think it’s a bad thing. We are just starting to become the people that we want to be.”

“And we are learning to trust other people outside of the little group like Mai and the Fujimias,” Tamaki added.

“And your friend Marika and her partners,” Renge smiled. “We have a lot of really good people around us if we just look. People that don’t judge us for who we are attracted to.”

“It’s nice. This party is going to be bigger tonight than I planned, but I can’t see having it without having all the people we call our friends here.”

“You can always have the bigger party tonight and then just do something small tomorrow morning for your original group. I know that Mai and I leave tomorrow afternoon, and everyone else leaves the day after tomorrow, so you should have some time, unless you planned something big for the final day.”

“I had an idea, but I am thinking about changing it. I want to talk to everyone though first.”

“Smart idea.”

“Thanks.” Tamaki smiled and handed her an ornament. “I really am glad that I got a chance to talk to you. I was a bit worried.”

“No need to be. Kaoru likes you differently than he likes me. Being with Mai taught me that we get different things from different people. One is not better than the other,” Renge giggled. “She definitely gets something different from being with her partner who is a pony than she does with me. I just don’t have that mentality.”

“Um… pony?” Tamaki asked. “I know that she mentioned a pony when she was talking about how her pet didn’t know that she was transgender, but I didn’t think it mattered to animals, so that kind of confused me.”

Renge tossed her head back and laughed. At Tamaki’s continued puzzled look she licked her lips and smiled as she said, “Mai has a kink. I told Kao that I was familiar with some types of BDSM and kink when he told me about your spanking him.” Renge grabbed his hand as Tamaki turned the deepest shade of red she had ever seen and he tried to slink away, “Sorry. I don’t mean to embarrass you. Kao told me only because of the whole soreness and wanting to date you thing. He also mentioned that he might be exploring more with Hani, since you weren’t quite as into it as he is.”

“I think I should hide now…” Tamaki muttered.

Renge pulled him in for a hug, “Oh Tama!! I really really didn’t mean to embarrass you. I was just trying to explain the pony thing for Mai.”
“What does Mai having pet pony have to do with Kaoru’s spanking fetish?” Tamaki asked, still clearly confused.

“Because Mai’s pet pony is her human girlfriend Samantha.”

“Oh. OH!”

Renge nodded as the light bulb started to flicker on over Tamaki’s head. “There’s a kind of kink called pet play where some people identify as animals really strongly. When they are in a scene, they become that animal and it is up to their owners to take care of them the way they would any other normal pet. Some people are puppies and kittens, some are foxes. Sam is a pony-girl. She has a latex outfit, bridle, and special shoes. Sometimes when they scene, she will pull Mai around in a little cart, just like a pony would. It’s kind of cool to watch, actually.”

“But not something that you want to do?”

“Exactly. It’s not something I really want to do, but both Mai and Sam love it, so I let them do their thing together, and they let me design cute outfits that they can wear while doing it.”

Tamaki grinned. “Sounds like it all works out. I don’t want to pry too much, but does that mean that they don’t… that they aren’t… ummmm… intimate?”

Renge laughed. “Without going into too much detail, Mai has a certain toy that she and Sam use for sex. It’s different than with Mai and me.”

Tamaki turned pink. “Aaah… got it, I think.”

“So to answer your original question, way back in the beginning of this conversation, I am perfectly ok with you dating Kaoru as long as you don’t mind that I am too.”

“I don’t mind.” Tamaki smiled and pulled her in for a hug before kissing her cheek. “In fact, I think you will be really good for him.”

It was Renge’s turn to turn pink at the praise. “Thank you. I hope we can become better friends – you and I. I think you are a pretty cool for a guy, Tamaki Suoh.”

Tamaki laughed and offered her his arm. “Thank you. Now that my mind is reeling from more new information, shall we finish hiding these trinkets for the game.”

“Let’s.” Renge grinned as she took it and they made their way into the next room.

Chapter End Notes

*peeks around corner in hopes of dodging any flying vegetables for the delay in posting anything related to the story.*

I know it has been awhile... and I cannot express how much it means to me to still get comments and reviews on this story. I know I have neglected it for a time. I don't really want to go into too much personal info, but let's just say that in the last 8 months, I have been trying to work through the break up of my triad, the separation/divorce from my husband RIGHT before the Holidays, both my boss and my co-manager at work being out on medical leave for several months, so I was doing their workload on top of my
own, the almost reconciliation of my marriage only to realize that it really IS better if we separate, and now the uber-fun process of trying to sell a bunch of stuff so we can put our house up for sale and maybe actually get on with our lives. Writing was nearly impossible as I saw so much of my triad and the experiences that we had together in the characters and situations that I had the Ouran gang in. Frankly, it just hurt too much. It still does a bit, but having more distance (even as I am still in the middle of some of it) really helps. I wish I could say that work has lightened up, but even though my boss is back, somehow the work load hasn't lessened. Ugh! Still... I am trying to make myself take the time to write. It is its own type of catharsis, and knowing that there are people out there still reading, still enjoying my little interpretation of the Ouran world, has provided me with so much support and love when I was at some of my darkest points. Every like, review, and PM pushed this story forward and gave me the strength to not give up on it. It still may be slow, but it will get finished.. because of YOU!

I *heart* ALL of you! Thank You Thank YOU!

~Shay
Press Conference

The phone buzzing at his waist startled Kaoru and he dropped the ribbon wrapped bundle of mistletoe with a curse. Trying not to overbalance and fall off the ladder as he put the finishing touches on the decorations in the main Library, Kaoru fumbled to grab the phone before it went off again. The message had him scrambling to get down.

_We are going down now. They had to open up all the Ballrooms of the Hotel in order to accommodate the number of press. Wish us luck brother – we need it. HH_

“Guys!! Renge! Mai! Get in here, the Press conference is about to start,” Kaoru ran to the foot of the stairs and yelled. Waiting for the others he grabbed the remote and put on the local news channel. Falling back on the couch, he sent a response.

_You have it. Now kick ass and get back here as soon as you can. KH_

Tamaki and Renge ran into the room, Tamaki’s fingers flying as he typed on his phone. “Kyo just sent me a text. They are starting.”

“Already on it,” Kaoru said as he grabbed a pillow and wrapped his arms around it, eyes never leaving the screen.

The rest of the group made their way into the room and took up seats around the TV. Tamaki and Renge taking either side of Kaoru, while Mai sat on the floor next to Renge and Hani and Takashi sat on the armrests. In unspoken understanding, none of them spoke as the breaking news logo flashed on the screen. Tamaki grabbed the remote and turned it up.

“… We are waiting for the HDC contingent to enter the room. We were informed that both Kyoya Ootori and Haruhi Fujioka will be speaking as well as Yuzuha Hitachiin. As you know there was an uproar in the conservative community earlier this week when Ms. Fujioka and Mr. Ootori came out on the red carpet as both being in a relationship with Hikaru Hitachiin. Kyoya Ootori’s father Yoshio Ootori publically made a statement that has caused controversy and either enraged or enflamed people on either side of the political spectrum. Now we have received word that Yoshio Ootori has been arrested and charged with kidnapping, battery and being an accessory to sexual assault. For those of you who are wondering why the French media is making such a big deal over some Japanese businessman and his family, let me remind you that HDG Design Group, led by Yuzuha Hitachiin, has their global offices based in Paris and currently employs over 2500 people across the European Union. Ootori Global Enterprises owns several hospitals across the world including one in Paris and one in Lyon. Aside from their respective businesses this situation has also sparked intense debate among the LGBT and conservative communities who feel that the relationship among Hikaru Hitachiin, Haruhi Fujioka, and Kyoya Ootori opens a door to a wider discussion on marriage and equality rights.

_They are entering the room…_”

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Haruhi felt like her heart was going to burst out of her chest. The flashing of the cameras and the murmur of the crowd echoed in her ears along with the tympani of her heartbeat. Making her way across the stage, she felt Kyouya’s hand brush lightly against her back. Pulling as much strength from the contact as she could, she sat down in her assigned seat between her boyfriends, and looked
up into the wall to wall crowd. On either side of her, Kyoya and Hikaru did the same. Risking a glance, she saw the same bored expression that Kyoya had frequently worn at Ouran - an expression that she later learned was his way of hiding his emotions. Hikaru had his face turned away from her, but she felt his hand brush against her and give a quick squeeze. On the other side of the podium holding all of the microphones, Ranka, Remy, and Akira took their seats. Haruhi’s heart settled a tiny bit as Akira caught her eyes and gave a small smile.

All attention focused immediately on the center of the room as Yuzuha stepped up to the podium. In a clear voice she greeted the crowd. “Hello and thank you for coming. As you well know, this week there has been a bit of an uproar that has centered around Yoshio Ootori, his son Kyoya, my son Hikaru, and a friend of theirs Haruhi Fujioka. Some of you may wonder why I am leading this press conference as at first appearance HDG is only nominally involved. Aside from the fact that both Hikaru and Ms. Fujioka are both employees of HDG, an instance occurred last night at the Fashion Week Grand Ball hosted by HDG that necessitates the direct involvement of myself and the legal team at HDG. Last night one of my employees, Ryouiji Fujioka, known to his friends as Ranka, was kidnapped from the Ball, sexually assaulted, and beaten. Ranka Fujioka is also the father of Haruhi Fujioka. The person who arranged for the kidnapping, assault, and battery was Yoshio Ootori.”

A hand shot up and a voice shouted out, “How do you know that Yoshio Ootori was directly involved with the kidnapping attempt?”

“Because we have video of him talking to Ranka while Ranka was bound and tied in an unused warehouse.”

The room erupted. So many voices shouted questions at once that made them all unintelligible. Yuzuha held up her hand for silence and called on another reporter once the din had settled.

“How can you be sure that the video wasn’t doctored?”

“The video was taken by a well-respected member of the press, who happened to see the kidnapping as it happened. This person and another attendee followed the perpetrators, while sending the information to the Morinozouka Security team. Akira Morinozouka to my left was in charge of security for the Ball that night, and by working with the Police, they were able to rescue Ranka.”

“Mr. Morinozouka, what security measures did you have in place at the Ball?”

Akira bent forward to speak into the microphone, “We had over 50 security officers patrolling the estate. Going into the Ball, we were aware that threats had been made regarding certain members of the HDG contingent, so in addition to the security patrol, Mr. Hitachiin, Ms. Fujioka, Mr. Ootori, and Ms. Hitachiin also had undercover bodyguards assigned to them. It is my biggest regret that we did not have additional security assigned to Mr. Fujioka. At the time, we were not aware that he would be targeted.”

“How were the perpetrators able to kidnap Mr. Fujioka if there were security patrols everywhere?”

“They used a catering van. We are still trying to determine at this time if the van was stolen or there was a deeper plot that we missed. All of the catering was done by a very well-respected, vetted, and bonded company that has been used before so there was no reason to suspect prior to the incident.”

“But how was the perpetrator able to get Mr. Fujioka into the van?”

Ranka took a deep breath. Leaning into the microphone he spoke, “I was drugged. The drugs used made it look like I was drunk. My attacker used that to his advantage as we just looked like any other couple that had over-indulged.”
“Mr. Fujioka, you say you looked like any other couple, could you clarify what you mean by that?”

“My attacker was in a very high-end tuxedo and looked like any of the other 500 male guests at the party.” Ranka’s knuckles were white as he gripped the edge of the table. *I know what the next question is going to be… Please don’t ask.*

From the other side of the table Haruhi could see her father struggling and knew what was going on on his mind. Meeting his eyes, she nodded to show her support.

The reporter was undeterred, “and you, Mr. Fujioka?”

“I was in drag, so while a male/male couple might have caught a security patrol attention for a brief moment, the appearance of a female who had too much to drink and was being escorted out was not. I could make a comment here about harmful assumptions, but this is not the time or place.”

“Could you please clarify? You were in Drag – meaning you were dressed as a female?”

Yuzuha put her hand on Ranka’s shoulder. “For the last six months Mr. Fujioka has been under contract with HDG as a consultant for a new line of designer clothing that will cater to the emerging population that enjoys alternative expressions of beauty. He is a well-known Drag Queen in Tokyo and as such was an extremely valuable resource. On the night of the Ball, he was preparing to debut the first item in the collection.”

“Does that mean you are gay? Is that why your daughter is ok with sleeping with two men?”

The room erupted again as everyone at the tables except Haruhi jumped to their feet.

Yuzuha slammed her hands on the podium and said forcefully, “Enough!! This press conference is about the attack on Mr. Fujioka and the actions that he and others will be taking. It is not a forum to indulge your need for prurient gossip.”

“Yuzuha, please. I would like to respond,” Haruhi said into her microphone. “Aside from my father’s drag persona, which is his artistic expression and something that have always fully supported, and there is no need for him to justify it, I want to address the underlying intent behind the way you phrased your question. You are implying that my father’s alternative lifestyle in some way has made me a, pardon the phrase, Slut, and therefore anything bad that happens is either his or my fault rather than the fault of the person who committed the crime. Aside from blaming the victim here, and make no doubt, my father was definitely the victim of a horrific crime, you are insinuating that my relationship with Hikaru and Kyouya is something that is wrong. It may be currently outside the main stream views of society, but the love I feel for both of these men is very real. I am honored that they love me as well.”

“A marriage should be between a man and a woman!” a reporter shouted from the back.

Hikaru glared out into the audience, “I don’t know who said that, but even if it was true considering same-sex marriage is legal in France, it’s not the point. None of us are talking about marriage. We are still young and while we are happy in our relationship, marriage is a long way off. Seriously, how exactly does our relationship affect you?”

Several hands shot in the air. Yuzuha picked one that she knew was from a reporter who worked for a LGBT rights paper.

“First let me say, that I support you. To answer your question, though, you are high profile enough that while you may not directly effect day to day interactions with people, you are a symbol that opens up a conversation and we all know that the far right conservative party does not want to talk...
about equality or the right to love who we want. But my actual question is for Mr. Ootori. Your father has been very vocal to the media that he feels that you have been conned and trapped in a situation that you cannot get out of. How do you respond to that?"

“I have separated myself from Yoshio Ootori and all of his holdings. My choice to love whomever I want aside, having worked in his company for several years, I do not respect his business practices or his unethical scheming to intimidate or blackmail those that oppose his views. I have been financially independent from Yoshio Ootori for two years. His blatant disrespect for my girlfriend and her family has been the final straw. I disassociated myself formally from him last week and no longer consider him my father. He has no rights or responsibilities with the title. I am keeping the Ootori name as an honor to my ancestors, but I have no kinship with Yoshio Ootori.”

The room sat in silence for a moment at the end of Kyouya’s speech. Tentatively another hand raised.

“So what is going to happen now?”

Yuzuha stepped back up to the podium, “As you know, at this point Yoshio Ootori has been charged with several crimes against Ranka Fujioka. While lawyers from HDG will be representing Mr. Fujioka, his case is separate. HDG will also be bringing slander charges against Mr. Ootori and from what I understand Kyouya Ootori may be bringing a civil suit as well. We are working to keep the trials in France as we feel there will be more impartiality here. We will keep you informed if anything else changes. Thank You.”

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“…and there you have it, a stunning amount of information that will be the discussion for many in the weeks to come. We will keep you informed of any new circumstances as they develop. We now return you to your regularly scheduled program.”

Kaoru let out a long sigh of breath. “That went better than I thought it would. Hopefully that will keep the vultures at bay for a bit.”

“It gives them something to chew on,” Mai said. “I was worried for a minute there, but Haruhi handled that beautifully and Kyouya – wow!”

“That’s why we love them,” Hani grinned. “Now we show them when they get here.”

“Yes,” Takashi said quietly.

Tamaki reached out and shut off the TV, before turning it on the stereo and setting the channel to a Holiday station. “We have maybe an hour before they get here. Let’s finish the decorations, so when they get here, they can just relax.”

“Sounds good Tama-chan.”

As one, the Hosts moved towards the last of the boxes holding the decorations. With a festive spirit and the upbeat music in the background they moved toward the fresh fir tree that stood in the far corner of the Library.
Haruhi stared out the window of the limo. The passing scenery wasn’t particularly interesting, but it was something relatively normal. Hikaru had his head on her lap with his eyes closed, napping, and Kyouya sat next to her scrolling through the news websites on his phone with one hand while he held tightly to her hand with the other. It was a rare moment of extended silence and cherished after the bluster of the press conference.

“You both know that I love you, right?” Hikaru broke the quiet as the driver made the turn into the driveway of the Maison de Roses. Eyes open, he looked up at his lovers.

“Of course, love,” Haruhi replied and caressed her free hand down his cheek. “Why the question?”

“BecauseikindaneedKaorightnowandidontwantyoutobemad…” Hikaru turned his head and mumbled into Haruhi’s stomach.

“All I caught of that was the word Kao, love,” Haruhi said gently.

Hikaru sighed and turned his head back. “I don’t want you guys to be mad or think that I don’t love you, but when we get back to the house, I kind of need to be with Kao for a bit. I mean, I want to be there if you need me, but…”

“The last few hours have been intense and this was your first press conference without your brother there beside you,” Kyouya said quietly as he set down his phone and cupped his lover’s cheek.

“Yeah…” Hikaru sighed again.

“No worries love,” Haruhi smiled and bent down to lay a soft kiss against his lips. “I’m a bit strung out myself and I know I need a bit of quiet before the party tonight. I was thinking about working through my katas when we got back. I need the movement and yoga is too slow to burn off this energy.”

“There’s a few things I want to work on as well. I have neglected work emails this last week and I need to let my Board and Management teams know what is going on,” Kyouya nodded. “Work will be the best distraction for me, anyway. I think better when I am working.”

“We all have our coping methods,” Haruhi smiled. “and Tamaki’s is throwing a huge party.” The others laughed and nodded. “I wonder what he has in store for us?”

“Well, we are about to find out,” Kyouya replied as the limo came to a stop.

“Ten dollars says there is mistletoe everywhere,” Hikaru said as he sat up and slid over to the door.

“No bet on something that is pretty much guaranteed,” Kyouya replied as the driver opened the door.

‘Ah, you’re no fun,” Hikaru grumbled as he stepped out and held an hand ready to assist Haruhi, “Watch out it’s slippery here.”

“Thanks,” Haruhi replied as she took Hikaru’s hand. She could hear faint music from the house. Recognizing a famous Christmas carol, she started humming along. “He definitely set the music up
to be festive.”

“Ten dollars that we can sneak into the house without them realizing we got here,” Kyouya said with a smirk.

“Double or nothing if they catch us within 30 seconds,” Hikaru countered.

“Done.”

“You guys are hopeless,” Haruhi laughed. “Can we go in now or is there another wager you want to make?”

“Nah, we’re good,” Hikaru responded taking her hand in his and motioning for Kyouya to lead the way.

With as much stealth as he could Kyouya turned the knob slowly and pushed open the door. The music blared and echoed through the entrance hall, but he could hear the chatter of voices in the Library.

“Wow!” Haruhi breathed out the word as she looked around. While the room had been decorated elegantly for the Ball the night before, now it was transformed into a Christmas wonderland with evergreen boughs winding down the staircases, trimming the doors, and red and gold ribbons everywhere. Like Kyouya had predicted, mistletoe hung prominently in every doorway.

“… 25, 26, 27,” Hikaru was slowly counting as Tamaki came around a corner with an arm full of tinsel.

“You guys are back! What do you think?” Tamaki asked excitedly, dropping his load on the floor and rushing over to them as Hikaru said the number 29.

Kyouya groaned good-naturedly conceding defeat, while Hikaru smirked. “You have done some serious work in here since yesterday. It’s impressive.”

“It’s really beautiful, Tama,” Haruhi replied as she took off her jacket. Hanging it on the coat rack, she walked into Tamaki’s arms. Wrapping her arms around his waist, she mumbled against his chest, “Mmm sorry, it looks great, I just needed to feel you.”

“Never feel sorry about that,” Tamaki said fiercely as he hugged her back tightly. Looking at the others, he saw the weariness in their eyes. “That was brutal just watching it here. How are you guys doing?”

“Better that it is over but still on edge,” Kyouya replied as Hikaru nodded.

“I’m hoping that is buys us at least a day of quiet,” Hikaru added.

Haruhi sighed and slowly let go of Tamaki. “I’m not holding my breath.”

“Well, I can guarantee at least 36 hours of paparazzi free goodniss. This is still a private residence, so they have to stay outside the gates. Other than our friends who are coming over later tonight, we don’t have to leave the grounds until you head back to the airport.”

“Quiet sounds heavenly,” Haruhi said with a smile.
“Good,” Tamaki smiled, kissed her cheek, and led them towards the Library. “We have snacks in the Library if you are hungry. We all kind of figured that you guys would want a bit of quiet before the party later.”

“We were discuss-“ Haruhi started to say when she was grabbing, twirled, around and kissed quite thoroughly by an armful of Hani, who had launched himself at her as they entered the room.

Hani giggled, as he held his slightly dazed friend and pointed up to the mistletoe above their heads. “I wanted to be the first to kiss you under the mistletoe Haru-chan.” Still smiling, but letting the Lolita-shan personality slip away, he looked at her critically tightening his arms around her. “How are you holding up?”

“A bit battered,” Haruhi answered honestly as the rest of the group came forward. “But nothing being with my friends won’t fix.”

“What do you need, ashke?” Takashi asked as he pulled her into his arms, as the rest of the group offered hugs and greetings to the newcomers. “What do all of you need?”

Haruhi held her head against Takashi’s chest and let the rhythmic beating of his heart center her for a moment. “I need to burn off some of this restless energy and stress, so I was going to go up to the Dojo and work through my katas. Yoga is too slow for me right now. Hika needs to be with Kao for a bit and Kyo wants to work on a few business related things.”

“Mai and I were actually just about to take off and go back to the hotel to relax and then get ready for the party tonight,” Renge said as she also pulled Haruhi into a hug. “We just wanted to be here when you arrived so we could tell you that you kicked ass at the press conference. You made us really proud.”

“Thanks, it didn’t feel like we kicked ass, so I am glad at least someone thinks so.”

“You really did do great, and as someone who lives outside the mainstream box, I thank you for standing up for us publically,” Mai said and gave Haruhi a quick hug. At Haruhi’s puzzled look regarding Mai’s somewhat cryptic statement, Hani mouthed the word “Later” at her and nodded to Mai. Haruhi, understanding there was more to the story that she didn’t know yet, replied by saying, “You are welcome.”

“Please forgive me for interrupting, but the work all of you have done on the House is amazing,” Kyoya said to the group. “I also don’t want to appear rude, but I need to work on a few things, so please excuse me for a while.”

“No problem, Kyo-chan,” Hani replied. “Since the girls are leaving, we can finish up the rest of the decorations. Do what you need to do.”

“We are going to go up to our room for a bit and debrief. There’s some HDG stuff that we need to go over,” Hikaru said, nodding toward Kaoru. “We will see you guys a bit later.”

Kaoru stepped forward and gave Renge a kiss before whispering in her ear, “Don’t worry, if there is anything really important I will let you know later.”

Renge gave him a grateful smile and nodded that she understood, “Take care of your brother.”
“Thank you,” Kaoru kissed her again grateful for her understanding.

“I’m heading upstairs too. See all of you a bit later!” Haruhi said and turned to leave the room, knowing if someone didn’t actually start the goodbyes, they would be there for at least another fifteen minutes just talking.

Taking Haruhi’s leaving for the signal it was, the others quickly dispersed.

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Kyouya sat alone at the desk in the quiet of his room and stared at the computer screen in front of him. His intention of throwing himself into his work was not happening as he stared mindlessly at the same email he had tried to read four times already. What is wrong with me? Why can’t I focus? A stray sound of Tamaki’s laughter echoed up the stairs and into his room.

Suddenly realizing what the problem was, he grabbed his laptop and headed down the stairs.

As he walked into the Library, Hani was genially arguing with Tamaki about where to put the ornaments on the tree, while Takashi quietly put the finishing touches on the tinsel that Tamaki had dropped earlier. Without a word to the others Kyouya entered the room quietly, set his computer up at the desk at the other end of the room and opened up his laptop, the familiarity of the background bickering of his friends slowly loosening the knots in his shoulders as he slid into his work.

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Across the room, Tamaki nodded his head towards Kyouya and smiled at Hani and Takashi. Seeing that Kyouya was engrossed in his work, he said quietly, “I’m glad he came down.”

“Me too, Tama-chan. It didn’t feel right that he was upstairs by himself.”

“I was trying to think of a good excuse to bring him down, but nothing came to mind. Last resort, I was just going to drag him down here. He needs to be with friends right now and not alone.”

“Speaking of alone,” Hani said as Takashi paused in his decorating, “Why are you still down here, lover?”

“Haruhi said she wanted to work through katas instead of doing yoga to calm down,” Takashi replied, a faint unhappiness in his tone.

“Are you not still her Sensei? Shouldn’t you watch to make sure she is true to form?” Hani countered.

“Mitskuni, you know as well as I that her form is flawless,” Takashi answered.

“Yes it is, but she still needs you,” Hani said with a smile. “Go. Tamaki and I can finish up here and keep an eye on Kyouya. Help her work off that stressful energy that she is clearly carrying. I know you want to be there with her and she shouldn’t be alone right now either.”

Takashi nodded and brushed a hand down Hani’s cheek, before turning and leaving the room.

“Now Tama-chan, where do you think the best place to hang these icicles would be?”
Haruhi was in the middle of her 3rd kata yet the motions were doing little to reduce the restless feeling that was crawling over her skin. She kept pushing harder and while she could start to feel the sweat slide down the back of her neck and into her sports bra, her mind kept going over all the rude comments from the reporters earlier that day and the paparazzi that had been hounding her all week.

Why can’t they just leave us alone? My relationships have nothing to do with my being at Ouran. Why does it matter to them if I have two boyfriends? It’s not like who I sleep with has any bearing on their daily lives. I’m sick of the questions. I’m sick of the snarky comments. I’m so over all of this!

Still fuming, Haruhi put too much force into a spin-kick and lost her balance when the kick was suddenly deflected by an elbow. Snapping out of her thoughts she looked into the eyes of her Sensei.

“You are uncontrolled. Too much energy use and you aren’t paying attention to your surroundings,” Takashi chided.

Breathing heavily at the rush of adrenaline that flooded her system at the deflection of her kick, Haruhi looked at her teacher. Aggression still flooding her body she said coolly, “I thought you were the one who told me to never interrupt someone when they were in the middle of a kata, sir.”

“What you were doing was not the kata that you were taught,” Takashi responded mildly. “It was sloppy, overbalanced, and unfocused. If you had been doing it properly and your mind was focused, you would have shattered my forearm. As it stands you barely bruised it.”

“Perhaps you picked the wrong girl to be your student.”

“Perhaps my student needs to learn how to respect the craft that was taught her.”

Haruhi took three deeps breaths trying to calm herself as she reeled from the hardness in Takashi’s tone.

Eyes downcast, she mumbled a half-hearted apology and waited. When no response came, she risked raising her eyes to see what her Sensei was doing. She lowered them quickly as she saw that he was just standing there appraising her. After what seemed like an eternity, in reality was only a minute she heard Takashi move. Raising her eyes again, she saw him walk across the room and remove his gi top before grabbing the mitts and walking back toward her.

Tossing a pair at her, which she caught by reflex, he spoke quietly. “Your katas won’t burn of the aggression and frustration you are feeling. We are going to work on your sparring. Prepare yourself.”

Takashi stepped to one corner of the mat and stood in a neutral pose while Haruhi put on the protective mitts and stepped to the opposite corner. Stepping forward, she bowed, and went into an aggressive stance.

Takashi saw the stubbornness cross her face along with the mild resentment at the way he chastised her a few moments before. Retaining his neutral position he lured her into attacking him.

Her earlier fury returning in force, Haruhi attacked with a fast and relentless punch and kick combo
that should have sent Takashi sprawling, instead none of the attacks connected – Takashi having pulled out of the way of each. With a small smile, he attacked in return, deliberately choosing to not hold himself back.

Haruhi was quickly forced into defense as she barely managed to deflect and slide away from the attacks. Anger turned into panic then fear as she returned the volley furiously but unsteadily and with little regard for the voice in her head that warned that she wasn’t thinking. At the end of an awkward combo, Haruhi overbalanced and was pulled up hard against Takashi’s chest, his hands pinning her arms to her side.

“You are reacting to everything. You aren’t observing. You aren’t reading your opponent. You are letting your rage at everything take control. Remember, you control the rage, it doesn’t control you. Use the anger you feel at your father’s kidnapping. Use the fear that you feel knowing that the people that you love aren’t safe. Use the disdain and revulsion you feel for the small minded idiots like Yoshio Ootori and the paparazzi, who wouldn’t understand real emotion if it they were drowning in it. Use your emotions, use your love, they are your strengths.” Takashi pushed her away from him and went to the corner of the practice mat again to start over.

Haruhi stumbled to the opposite corner. Only this time she stood there with her eyes closed for a few moments and acknowledged all the feelings that were coursing through her body. As she identified each one she took a breath and let the harmful energy release with her exhale. Feeling calm for the first time since she started arrived up at the dojo, she finally stepped into the center of the mat and bowed to her teacher.

A knot around Takashi’s heart loosened as he saw Haruhi finally gain a good measure of control over the emotions that had be riding her. Finally. Nodding to her, he also stepped forward and bowed before moving into a neutral position.

This time, Haruhi could feel her body reacting the way it was trained. Like a rubber band that suddenly snapped into a groove, her movements felt more solid and they connected against Takashi as they were supposed to do. Back and forth they volleyed, a smooth dance that was much more familiar. She could feel the sweat running down her forehead and neck and as the sweat left her body, all the accumulated stress and tension did as well. Feeling her body tire, Haruhi swept her leg out in a move that sent Takashi tumbling to the floor. Immediately she jumped on top of him pinning his legs down and holding his arms in place as she tried to catch her breath and her wildly beating heart from the exertion.

Takashi let her pin him for a full thirty seconds, before tightening his abs and in a fluid movement that she was not familiar with, flipped them, so she was pinned underneath the weight of his body. He could feel his heart beating fast as well, and his breath was nearly as labored. Closing his eyes, he pressed his forehead to hers and whispered, “Breathe, ashke.”

A very different emotion filled Haruhi as she heard the quiet words and felt her teacher/partner/lover/friend’s bare skin pressed against her own. She still felt restless, but there was a measure of control over it now. Realizing the way she really wanted to let the energy go, she slowly rolled her body underneath his in a way that had nothing to do with the martial arts he had taught her and everything to do with the way they had come together at the Monastery without the quiet. Ripping the mitts off her hands, she buried them in Takashi’s hair and pulled his mouth down to hers.

Balanced on his forearms above her, Takashi let her control the kiss, his lips moving softly over hers at first, but quickly moving towards firm as her speed and aggression intensified. He felt himself
growing hard as he felt the warmth of her body underneath him, rolling his hips he heard her gasp underneath him as his erection made contact with her heat.

“Fuck me, ashke,” Haruhi said and bit his lip gently. “I need to burn off the last of these emotions. I don’t want sweet or gentle. I just want you in me now.”

Takashi growled low in his throat before reaching down and wrapping Haruhi’s legs around his waist. “Hold on.” In a fluid movement he lifted her up. Bracing an arm underneath her butt to help support her weight, he pulled her closer into him, as he continued to kiss her hungrily. Walking slowly towards the area of the room that had the free weights, his knee buckled a bit as he hit the bench where he had left his bag. Still not letting her go or stopping the kissing, he fumbled around in the bag until he found a condom. Finding what he was looking for, he put the edge of the packet in his teeth. Trying to speak around it, he said, “Loosen your legs.”

Haruhi whimpered at the thought of losing the body contact but tightened her arms around his neck, loosened her legs and tried not to shudder as his hands made quick work of her loose gi pants. Once her legs were free she wrapped them tightly around his waist again, this time feeling the silkiness of his pants against the hot wetness of her pussy. Moaning, she rubbed her pussy against his erection and was rewarded with another growl. Unhooking her arms from around his neck, she ripped off her sports bra.

Takashi shifted her higher up his chest, ripped the condom packet out of his mouth and took one of her breasts in. Sucking and flicking it hard with his tongue he relished the whimper that came out of her mouth as her hands slid with a death grip into his hair. Taking a few steps more he backed her into the wall of mirrors. Still teasing her breasts with his tongue and supporting her weight with one hand, he used the other to loosen his pants and drop them to the floor, freeing his cock. Pausing only to rip the packet open with his teeth and roll the latex down his sheath with one quick motion, he let her slide down a bit further until she was perfectly aligned with his cock.

“Takashi, please,” Haruhi whimpered as she felt him press against her entrance. When he thrust into her in one smooth movement, she cried out in pleasure. “Yesss… more! Please harder. I can take it. Ashke… please…”

“Haruhi… I…,” Takashi words were cut off as she thrust her tongue in his mouth aggressively. Taking back control of the kiss he slid his hands down her body, gripping her ass tightly, and angled her body against the glass, her back pressed up against it and his hands holding her weight. A groan slipped out of his mouth as her arms slipped back around his neck to scratch at his back and play in his hair. “Hold on…” he grunted as he started pounding into her hard, fast, and without mercy.

The sound of their bodies slapping together mixed with their moans and grunts of pleasure as they echoed around the room. It didn’t take long before Haruhi screamed out her orgasm; Takashi following only a few moments after, his knees buckling slightly at the sudden release.

Feeling the slight movement, Haruhi laughed, the endorphins still flooding her system. “You can put me down, ashke.”

“Don’t want to,” Takashi replied with a slightly sheepish smile.

Haruhi giggled and wriggled a bit which let Takashi’s soften cock slip out of her. Both shuddered at the sensation. Shifting her body weight around, she laid her head on Takashi’s shoulder. “I love you Takashi Morinozouka.”
Takashi’s arms tightened around her and he craned his neck to lay a soft kiss on her forehead. “I love you too, Haruhi Fujioka. You are my passion and my fire. I am so lucky to be a part of your life and one of your lovers.”

“And that’s the part that people don’t understand. I don’t know… maybe I am weird. Maybe what the nasty things the papers are writing about me are true. Maybe I am just an …” she took a deep breath, “immoral slut.”

Takashi pulled off the condom, tossed it into the trash bin, and walked them quickly over to one of the couches, settling her in his lap. “Am I immoral for loving both you and Mitskuni? Or for the fact that I am starting to also fall for Kyouya?”

“Guys are supposed to have lots of lovers.”

Takashi gave her the ‘you-know-you-are-full-of-bullshit’ look. “Female lovers, maybe. Aside from you, all of my lovers have been male. I’m a homosexual loving demon to most of the world.”

“Never!! You are incredible. You are intelligent, kind, generous, dedicated and so incredibly skilled at your craft. The rest of the world can screw itself, you deserve to be with the people you love. I hate that the Council is separating you and Hani.”

“What the Council does reflects the same small-minded misogynistic views that you are exposed to, asheke,” Takashi said with a kiss to her forehead. “Are you willing to defend your friends and lovers, many of whom have preferences that are generally considered outside the norm? Both as a lawyer and as a member of House Zouka?”

“Always.”

“Then think about this – is it worth being an immoral slut to people who don’t matter to you and who never will, if you are also surrounded by people who know you, love you, support you, and who will fiercely defend you as you do them?”

Haruhi sighed, “You are not going to let me wallow in my self-pity, are you?” She gave a small smile to indicate that she understood the point that Takashi was making.

“Never.”

A yawn snuck out of her mouth as she reached out and did a full body stretch against him. “Okay then. Now that I am back to thinking again thanks to getting some sense beaten into me – literally, I might add,” she said with a wink as Takashi smiled. “I need a good soak and a nap before the party tonight.”

“I was thinking about making use of the Jacuzzi in the Conservatory. Want to join me, or would you prefer solitude?”

“The Jacuzzi sounds wonderful. The scenery will help get rid of the last little bits of the stress… though nothing will be quite as magical as that hot spring at the Monastery.”

“That night will forever be one of my most cherished.” Takashi said quietly his forehead pressed against hers.

“Mine too, love.” Haruhi smiled and pressed a kiss against his cheek. “What did I ever do to deserve
love like this? To have the love and friendship of six amazing men who are so far out of my league, it’s ridiculous? To be able to share my love for them without boundaries?”

“You were the catalyst of change that brought in a new perspective.” Takashi gave a small side smile. “Besides how could a group of wealthy aristocratic teenage boys let a small, common girl upstage them? We had to adapt and change if we wanted to *cough* take credit for *cough* your brilliance. There was no way any of us were ready to believe at the time that you would actually make us into better human beings.”

“Take credit for, eh?” Haruhi responded with a smirk.

“I give you all the credit for turning me into someone who is no longer afraid to speak what is in his heart. For teaching me that there are many different ways to love and be loved in return.” Takashi said seriously.

Haruhi blushed at the sincere compliment. “I am not sure how to respond.”

“You don’t have to. The fact that you love me, honestly and openly (well at least among our friends), is all the response I need. That you have chosen to join my and Mitskuni’s House which means becoming a formal part of our lives for the rest of yours, humbles me and makes me incredibly proud.”

“I want you always in my life, ashke. In whatever way I can.”

“You will be.” Takashi kissed her softly. “Now shall we go soak off the last of this stressful week?”

“Yes please.”

He laughed and scooped her up in his arms and started walking naked towards the door, carrying her in his arms.

“What if someone sees us?”

“Everyone currently in this house has seen everyone else naked.”

“What about our clothes?” She asked as she watched the door to the dojo grow more distant.

“I’ll get them later,” He pushed open the door to the Conservatory.

Haruhi could hear faint splashing and the murmur of voices. She buried her face in Takashi chest as she recognized Hani’s giggle, Tamaki’s laugh, and Kyouya’s deep voice. She blushed deep red and hid her head in Takashi chest. “The guys are here.”

Takashi grinned, “Yes they are.”

“We just had sex.”

“Yes we did. I would be willing to bet there was a bit of fun happening with them too before they came up. Does it bother you?”

“No… but”
“But?”

“But I don’t have a swimsuit on? … I’m being ridiculous again aren’t I?”

Takashi nodded.

Haruhi sighed, then smiled as Hani’s laughter became infectious. “All right. Lead on, oh wise Master.”

Takashi took a few running steps and then much to Haruhi’s chagrin as a small squeal escaped her lips, he tossed her into the middle of the Jacuzzi with a splash.

Chapter End Notes

WHAAAA??? Two chapters in one day!! After a drought of months!! What is that silly author thinking??!!

LOL. What can I say, the muse hit and at nearly 5k words it made much more sense to split it into two chapters. Besides now I can leave you on the mental image of a naked Takashi. =D Happy Thanksgiving!! =D

Seriously though, I am so very very thankful for all of the support and kind words you all have sent me, both in reviews and in private messages. This Thanksgiving, I have much to be thankful for (despite the current political climate in the US which dear gods is going to make for a few sleepless years for those of us of an Alt bent... but this is not the time nor place for political forums other than those that directly relate to the story). My life may still be in flux, but I am so thankful for all of the beautiful, energetic, curious, passionate, intelligent, proudly different, kind, noble, and creative people that are in my life. They have taught me that I am stronger than I knew, braver than I gave myself credit for, and that curiosity is a gift that should be embraced rather than hidden. I am beyond thankful and humbled that my words have given strength to others, that they have opened up others minds to a different perspective, and opened their hearts to embracing a world where it is ok that Love looks a bit different.

Much love and a very Blessed Thanksgiving to all of you!!
Sputtering as she came up from the water, Haruhi mock glared at Takashi as he walked back out the door to go get their clothes.

“Oooh… It’s a good thing you have a nice naked ass Takashi, or you might be in trouble for that one,” Hani laughed as he saw Haruhi’s annoyed expression. “Haru-chan looks pissed. Better wiggle it, so she calms down.”

Haruhi’s expression lightened immediately at the absurdity of the comment and she broke into a giggle when Takashi did just that right before he stepped out of the room. Sliding her hands through her hair to slick it back off her face, she asked with a grin, “How exactly do you know how to diffuse the tension?”

“It’s a natural gift – being the cute one,” Hani grinned. “It helps that I know Takashi will also pretty much do as I request under most circumstances.”

“He’s as much of a flirt in his own way as you are,” Kyouya said and reached out a hand to Haruhi. When she took it, he pulled her in to sit between him and Tamaki.

“That’s why he was the Wild One,” Tamaki answered as he slid an arm around her waist. “Are you feeling any better?”

Haruhi sighed deeply, “Yeah. Mostly just trying not to think about it anymore.” She turned to Kyouya. “How about you, love? I know I kind of just disappeared.” Her movement caused the light to shift interestingly over her lover. “Wait. Is that a-“

“I’m ok,” Kyouya interrupted, a faint pink brushing across his cheeks. “Tamaki and Hani were able to help me work through the frustration.”

“Looks like they did it in a MOST interesting way,” Haruhi smirked. “You’ve never even let me give you a single tiny hickey and you currently have a chain of them down your ne-“

Tamaki slapped a hand over her mouth as Kyouya’s blush deepened to bright red. He could feel the movement of Haruhi’s body as she giggled uncontrollably. “Shush princess, we don’t want to annoy the dragon, after we finally got him tamed.”

“Tamed?!,” Kyouya said in an arch voice as he mock glared at Tamaki.

Tamaki grinned, “Would you prefer soothed? Given metaphorical belly rubs? Or would you prefer the truth that you were thoroughly fucked into a better moo-“ The rest of the statement was cut off as Kyouya lunged at Tamaki with a growl and dunked him underwater with a splash.

“Hey! That’s it. It’s on!”

“You think you’re kingly ass can dunk me?”
“I think the King always manages to slay the dragon.”

“Prove it.”

“I already have, which is why you are sporting a line of hickies. They aren’t going to fade for daaaaaays.”

“I’ll give you something that won’t fade.”

“Bring it on, Shadow King.”

Haruhi threw up her arms to protect her face from the splashing as she and Hani broke into laughter at the antics of their friends. As Kyouya and Tamaki wrestled with each other, each trying to push the other under water, Haruhi wiggled around them and sat next to Hani. “I take it you all had a good time?”

Hani smiled, “We did the best we could to help draw him out and keep him from shutting down. I think it worked.”

“Like a charm,” Haruhi smiled as she closed her eyes and leaned her head back against the edge of the spa.

“Here, let me help you get more comfortable,” Hani said and shifted their positions so she was leaning up against his chest, his arms loosely around her belly.

Haruhi sighed and relaxed into the welcoming arms of her friend. “This feels nice, thank you.”

“Any time, Haru-chan.”

She could hear the smile and the deep friendship in his voice. The water shifted around her and she felt someone grab her foot and start kneading out the tension.

“How long do you think they will be at it?” Takashi said as he put a bit more pressure on a knot near the arch of her foot and shaking the water out of his face as a vigorous splash from the two battling hosts hit him.

“I give it another 5 minutes,” Haruhi hummed as the knot released.

“I give them both props for still having that much energy,” Hani said. “I’m totally relaxed at the moment.”

“Me too,” Haruhi smiled as she heard Takashi grunt in agreement.

Four minutes and thirty six seconds later, Tamaki and Kyouya pulled apart from each other and flopped back against the sides of the spa both breathing heavily. Haruhi cracked open an eye. “Who won?”

“The Dragon can live peacefully in the Kingdom and can admit to enjoying a bit of taming on rare occasions,” Kyouya replied, still a bit breathless.

“Also the King knows that the Dragon is really the Boss, he just likes to pretend that he’s in charge. It’s fun to keep the Dragon on his toes,” Tamaki said leaning in to place a kiss on Kyouya’s cheek.
before settling back down.

“And all is right in the kingdom again,” Haruhi intoned.

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Two hours later, rested and much more relaxed, Haruhi descended the staircase into the glittering holiday wonderland. Pausing a moment near the door and taking a moment to really look around, she could feel the smile growing across her face and the warmth in her heart increasing as she took in the bright red bows, deep green boughs, glittering silver decorations, and brightly colored ornaments on a giant Christmas tree. “Wow!” she breathed as a pair of warm arms wrapped themselves around her waist from behind.

“The group did an amazing job,” Hikaru said as he laid a kiss gently against her neck.

“How are you doing, love?” Haruhi tilted her head back so she could kiss his cheek.

“Better. You?”

“The same.” They stood there in silence for a few moments, looking at the tree.

“We have pretty awesome friends, don’t we?”

“Yes we do.”

“Think the backlash at school is going to suck?”

“Probably, but we can handle it for a few months. I’m used to ignoring the other students’ rude comments. I’m more worried about the teachers. They are the ones with direct influence over our grades.”

“Damn. I didn’t think about that.”

“My Dad will make sure that doesn’t happen,” Tamaki voice came from behind them. They turned as he walked towards them, holding two silver filigree rose ornaments. “Or at least he can reign most of it in. If you feel that you are being retaliated against, let him know. You both are at the top of your class, if your grades suddenly plummet, it will reflect just as badly on them. Still, it might be wise to try to fly under the radar as much as possible.”

“I was mostly approved for independent study and only have a couple of core classes,” Haruhi said. “Before I met you guys, I was working towards trying to graduate early.”

“I’m stuck until normal graduation, but at least I have my status to protect me,” Hikaru replied with a grim voice. “It’s the one thing that I wish I could give you.”

“It’s ok, love,” Haruhi kissed Hikaru’s cheek. “I’ll be ok. Remember, most of the students will now know that I am a black belt. It should be enough to keep the comments to just rude or inappropriate and not completely offensive.”

“Have I ever mentioned that it is kind of hot knowing that my girlfriend could totally kick my ass?” Hikaru winked.
Haruhi laughed while Tamaki nodded in agreement. “Changing the subject, for a moment. What are you holding Tama?”

Tamaki held out one of the roses to each of them. “I had a silver rose made for everyone with their name on it.”

“It’s beautiful,” Haruhi examined the delicate filigree and smithwork, seeing her named engraved down the stem of the rose.

“It’s tradition for everyone in a family to help decorate the tree. Everyone else has placed their ornaments. You two are the last.”

“Well we can’t break tradition,” Hikaru smiled and they moved forward to place their ornaments. Finding a clear spot took a few moments, but soon both roses were on display with the other glittering ornaments.

“I can give them back to you when we break down the tree later this week, if you want,” Tamaki smiled.

“I kind of like the idea of you holding on to them,” Haruhi replied. “That way next year, when we do this again, they will be here waiting for us.”

“So you want to do this again?”

“Tamaki, I would love for this week to be a Holiday tradition that we do every year.”

“The whole week, huh?”

“Well, maybe minus the drama that has plagued us this week.” Haruhi stuck out her tongue.

“You are serious? You really want to do this again?” Haruhi could hear the hint of vulnerability in Tamaki’s voice.

Haruhi stepped forward and took both of his hands in hers. “Tamaki, I want to do this, with all of you, every year for as long as we all have. I want all of our future children and grandchildren to have this celebration of love and joy to look forward to every year. All of the Host Club, Mai, Sakura, Zhi, Marika and her partners, all of our parents – everyone. We are all family now… and Family needs to celebrate together.”

“But I didn’t invite our parents to the festivities tonight! Oh no! Should I have invited them?”

Both Haruhi and Hikaru giggled at Tamaki’s immediate distress. Hikaru placed a hand on Tamaki’s shoulder and Haruhi squeezed his hands. Biting his lip, Hikaru managed, “It’s ok boss. This year they kind of have a bit much on their plates, so I think they will forgive us. Next year we can plan a real family get together with everyone.”

“Are you sure?”

“Positive.” Hikaru said seriously.

Tamaki took a deep breath and held it for a moment before letting it go slowly. “Thank you.”

“Anytime, mon ami.” Hikaru squeezed his shoulder.

Haruhi let go of Tamaki’s hands and turned to face the room. A flash of pink on a silver tray immediately grabbed her attention. “Oh! Is that smoked salmon!!” Without a glance at the others, she
made a beeline for the food table.

Tamaki and Hikaru burst out laughing as their girlfriend grabbed a plate, oohing and aahing over the selection of delicacies spread out for the party.

“Now I know that everything will work out,” Tamaki said with a grin.

“Why’s that,” Hikaru asked curiously.

“Because if all it takes to make everything right again is some smoked fish and a few snacks, life just can’t be that bad.”

“Nope. Not when she is there in it with us.”

“Us?”

Hikaru nodded. “Us. She belongs to all of us. Even better – we all belong to her.”

“I couldn’t want it any other way.” Tamaki agreed. “Now we might want to grab a plate before the salmon disappears.”

“You read my mind, boss.”

Chapter End Notes

*****Author's Note*****

Just call me Rip. You know - Rip Van Winkle - the guy that slept for 20 years... =P I know it hasn't been quite that long, but it feels like it sometimes. I know this is short and fluffy, and mostly a transitional chapter, but I finished it earlier and it seemed like a good breaking point before we got to the actual party, so I thought I would post it as is, rather than holding on to it longer. Enjoy!

Dare I say it, preliminary outlook is I *may* actually have a bit of extra time in the next couple of weeks, so I am keeping my fingers crossed that the next update won't be 6 months from now. I will try my darndest to make it within 3 weeks. (please don't let me have just jinxed myself!). As always, so much love, respect and affection for everyone who has read (or is currently reading) my stories. I still can't do this without you.

xoxoxo

~Shay

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