

# The Dragon Saga

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## ***Dragon's Teeth***

**Warnings:** non-con (not Gackt/Hyde), vampires

**Summary:** While filming Moon Child Hyde finds out that not everything the papers say about Gackt is hype and his life changes far more than just adding acting to his repertoire.

**Author's Notes:** Well I was trying to write part two of "You want to what?", but this happened instead. Be warned, this definitely isn't humour, and I have most of three sequels written too, so you could say this ate my brain :). Thanks, as ever, to Soph for the beta. Thanks, as ever, to Soph for the beta. Oh and for those who read my LJ, no, this isn't the fic I was ranting about the other day; this one rather took over from it.

**Word count:** 16,728

Hyde knocked on Gackt's hotel room door with his schedule in his hand; they weren't filming until the next evening, having just flown in, but he wanted to clear up a few details. He did not mind admitting that he was nervous about the whole acting thing and he hoped his friend wouldn't mind going over a couple of things. The arrival in the city had not been without incident which had not done a lot to settle his nerves; half the crew had been delayed and wouldn't be in until the next lunch time at the earliest and he'd seen Gackt going mental at more than one official.

Gackt had been irritable ever since he'd found out about the crew delay and Hyde hoped his friend had calmed down since he'd last seen him. The last thing he needed was for Gackt to go off on one. When the door opened, however, all thoughts of Gackt being temperamental fled as he took in the state of his friend. Gackt was incredibly pale and the other singer was wearing dark glasses that were barely hiding grey around his eyes, so much so that Hyde was instantly worried.

"Hyde-kun," Gackt greeted, sounding surprised, "what can I do for you?"

"I just wanted to speak to you about tomorrow," Hyde replied automatically, but his anxiety did not go away even though Gackt sounded perfectly normal.

"Come in," Gackt said as if there was nothing wrong, walking back from the door to let Hyde through, "what did you wish to discuss?"

There was something tired about Gackt's stance that niggled at Hyde as he kept a careful eye on his friend while he closed the door. Usually Gackt had more energy than anyone else Hyde knew, but this evening his friend seemed almost slow.

"Gatchan, are you feeling all right?" he could not help himself, he had to ask.

Gackt turned back, expression unreadable behind the dark glasses that were worrying Hyde.

"I'm fine," the taller man replied, tone completely calm. "Was there something specific you wished to know about tomorrow's shoot?"

Hyde knew that was his cue to set the conversation back on its original course, but he just couldn't bring himself to do it. No matter what Gackt said, everything could simply not be perfect.

"Forgive me, Gatchan," he said, knowing he was possibly pushing too hard, "but you don't look fine."

Gackt turned away then and Hyde could not help wondering if he had offended his friend. Challenging Gackt was not a way to get on the singer's good side.

"I am a little tired from all the travelling today," Gackt said after a moment, tone so pleasant that Hyde almost gave a sigh of relief, "it's nothing more, honestly."

It looked like more to Hyde, but he was relieved to see Gackt reach up and take off the dark glasses he was wearing. When his friend turned back he was surprised to see that Gackt did not look as bad as he had feared. The grey around Gackt's eyes must have been a reflection from the dark lenses because without the glasses Gackt looked surprisingly healthy.

Hyde found himself checking carefully, as if he might be able to pick out something that was wrong and it wasn't until he reached Gackt's eyes that he realised his friend was not wearing his habitual blue lenses. It was strange but he felt his pulse speed up as he looked into dark eyes that seemed almost black in the low light in the room. The stab of attraction he felt shocked him out of the moment as he realised he was staring and he could not quite fathom where the feeling had come from. He'd always known his friend was a handsome man, but the momentary feeling rather took him by surprise since he had never experienced it before.

It wasn't that he'd never been attracted to a man before, since before Megumi he'd been quite willing to experiment, but since he'd been with his wife he hadn't so much as looked at anyone else. The fact that it had happened just then was odd as well since only a moment before he had been more worried than anything else.

He was confused and something felt off about the entire situation, so much so that he took a step towards Gackt. Gackt's expression was startled and Hyde was positive his friend would have stepped back had Gackt not been standing just in front of one of the chairs in the room. The moment Hyde moved within three feet of Gackt he felt as if a pleasant fog had come down over his senses and the only thing that wasn't obscured by it was Gackt. A small voice at the back of his mind tried to call the rest of his thoughts' attention to the fact that this was not right, but most of his focus was on Gackt.

For a moment his friend looked as if he was fighting with himself and Hyde felt the fog recede a little, but his eyes locked with the dark ones looking at him and the battle in Gackt's features faded. Hyde felt almost drunk as he stared into Gackt's eyes and this time the stab of arousal lanced through his whole body and made him feel weak at the knees. The paleness that had made him comment in the first place, but that seemed to have been his imagination after Gackt took off his glasses, faded back into his friend's features, but it did nothing to break the fascination Gackt seemed to hold for him.

The dark eyes he was gazing into changed even as he watched them, going from almost black, fading to brown and continuing until they were a golden yellow. Hyde felt as if he was being swallowed by those eyes and his reality narrowed down to that glowing colour. His mind seemed to be slowing down second by second and his eyes felt incredibly heavy, fluttering shut once and then twice until his senses were swamped in warm blackness and all he could see in his mind's eye were those yellow eyes.

When a hand touched his shoulder he could not stop the small moan that escaped his mouth as he literally shivered at the contact. It was as if every nerve was waiting for any touch and his body was ready to respond, in the extreme, to anything. His reactions were completely out of his control and only a tiny part of his mind was even remotely alarmed by this.

Arms snaked around him from behind and he leaned back into the embrace without even thinking about it. Nothing impinged on his mind except the presence behind him that he could literally feel with every fibre of his being. It did not matter that the arms around him belonged to a man who was not more than his friend; it did not matter why those arms had pulled him close; all that counted was that they had and at that moment he never wanted them to let go.

His whole nervous system was poised for whatever would happen next and he was shaking so hard that he was sure he would have fallen if Gackt had not been holding him. When breath ghosted against his neck he moved his head to the side instinctively and the tiniest of sighs fell from his lips. Everything was poised at that moment; nothing else existed and it was as if the whole universe was waiting.

Hyde felt lips touch his neck first and a shudder ran from his head to his feet, but he knew instinctively that something else was coming. When two sharp points lanced into his flesh he whimpered in pain as his hypersensitive nerves relayed every moment in excruciating detail, but the waves of arousal, due to the intimacy of the act, flooding through him dwarfed any discomfort into insignificance in little more than a second.

He could hear his heartbeat thudding in his chest and his blood rushing in his veins as the mouth at his neck latched on with bruising force. His whole body surrendered as he literally felt his life being drawn from him and it was one of the most intoxicating feelings of his entire life. Every nerve and fibre of his being was alive and with every draw of his blood he felt his arousal build. It was incredible and mind blowing and so intense that even as it was happening he knew it could not last. There was only so much stimulation the human body could take and Hyde could feel himself being pushed past what he would have thought was his limit.

It felt as if his heart might explode in his chest as that mouth sucked and sucked on his neck. He could feel his erection straining against the confines of his jeans, the sensation competing with the lips on his flesh for his attention and he was desperate for release. It was too much and he strained away from the arms holding him, wanting to escape and wanting to stay exactly where he was with almost equal fervour. The grip that held him was firm and he could not get away as the sensations in his body continued to rise.

What happened then was inevitable, but when it finally occurred, it still took him by surprise. His orgasm hit with such force that it literally took away his mind and he heard himself scream as his whole body reacted with uncontrollable shudders. There was a moment of complete and total ecstasy and then everything vanished in the searing heat of release and faded to blackness.

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Hyde opened his eyes slowly and blinked up at the pink light dappling the ceiling as it came through the curtains. His mind felt foggy and for a while he just gazed upwards as the signs of dawn entertained his bemused mind. Only when he moved his head to the side and his neck twinged did his thoughts wake up enough to feed him the memory of the previous evening. As the recollection of

glowing yellow eyes entered his head, he sat up rapidly and then flopped back down again almost as quickly as the room span madly.

His head started thudding and he threw his hands over his eyes as all thoughts vanished in the pain of what felt like a hangover from hell. It took him long minutes to bring the jack hammer in his brain and the crazy tendency of the room to do the loop the loop under control and by then the panic at what he remembered had passed. He was still nervous and very much confused, but the momentary fear had faded, after all he was alive, whole and in his own room.

That brought up the question of how he had been returned to his room, undressed and placed in bed, since he was naked and clean and if there was one thing he remembered very clearly it was coming in his pants. It had to have been Gackt, which just threw up a whole host of questions that Hyde simply didn't have the answers to. He sat up again, slowly this time, and that was when he noticed the paper sitting on the table next to the bed.

Reaching over carefully he picked it up and unfolded what turned out to be a note; he recognised Gackt's handwriting immediately, but it took him longer to decipher what it said.

"I'm sorry, I'm so very sorry," he read slowly. "Stay in bed, drink plenty of fluids and eat as much as you can and you will be fine. Room service have instructions to bring you supplies once an hour and the filming is cancelled for today."

There was nothing else, no explanation and no signature and Hyde found himself irritated. The note said everything and nothing and that annoyed him just enough to push him into motion. This time he moved very carefully, well aware that if he pushed himself too fast he was liable to end up on the floor, and he climbed off the bed slowly. He had to hold himself up with one hand on the table as he stood up for the first time, but the room only span for a moment and with a few deep breaths he had it under control.

Walking to the bathroom was a bit like trying to put one foot in front of another after having been on a merry-go-round, but he made it without too much incident and splashing cold water on his face helped take away the flip flops his stomach was doing. Only once he had this under control did he have the nerve to look at himself in the mirror and he was quite pleased that he didn't look as awful as he felt. He was pale and he looked as tired as he felt, but there was nothing terrible.

The slightly aching bite on his neck was visible against his almost white skin, but it was not quite what he'd been expecting. He knew he'd been bitten, he remembered it with vivid detail, but what he could see on his neck looked more like a mutant hickey than a bite. There were two dark spots and a vaguely circular bruise, but no wound to speak of and it looked days rather than hours old. Touching it gingerly he found that it was still tender and the sensation sent weird impulses flowing through him so he decided to leave well enough alone.

It took him a long time to go through his usual routine, but when he walked back into the bedroom he felt a little better, although not particularly steady on his feet. Climbing into his clothes was an interesting affair and when it came to trying to pull on shoes and socks he just gave it up as a bad lot and decided that he could do without since he had no intention of going outside. Pulling up his hoody to hide the large bruise on his neck he checked himself in the mirror just to make sure he hadn't done anything stupid like put his t-shirt on backwards and then he squared himself for his mission: Gackt was going to talk to him if he had to bash his friend's door in.

On the way to Gackt's room he had to spend a good five minutes leaning against a wall as he set off too fast, and he was beginning to feel like he'd run a marathon by the time he finally reached his destination, but he did make it. It only took him another minute or two to work up the courage to actually knock on the door and then he waited, chewing nervously on the edge of his finger as he worried that this was the wrong thing to do.

It wasn't even six yet, but he did not think Gackt would be asleep since his friend was famous for how few hours a night he needed. Hyde had never expected the reason for that to be that Gackt really was a vampire, but he was having surprisingly little trouble accepting that fact. When the door finally opened he stood up quickly from where he had started to lean against the frame.

"Good morning," he said, politeness making it to the forefront of his brain first, "I think you..."

But that was as far as he managed as the world decided that silver and white were really good colours and everything should be various shades of them before flicking to complete black. When reality reasserted itself again he found that there was a strong arm around his waist, one of his arms had been pulled over Gackt's shoulders and he was being half walked, half carried across the room. Since walking was more effort than he cared to admit he let Gackt keep all of the control although he did manage to get his feet under him properly.

"Idoit," was Gackt's succinct opinion as the taller singer helped him sit down and Hyde did not resist as he was urged into a position with his head between his knees. "You were supposed to stay in bed."

That irritated Hyde, but he only tried to look up for a moment before he decided it was a bad idea.

"You owe me an explanation," he half said, half mumbled as he kept his head low and hoped the pounding and nauseating swaying would stop soon.

"And I would have given you one," Gackt said, and it was more annoying not to be able to see his friend's face, "but after you recovered."

That mollified Hyde a little, but not completely.

"I find out you really are a vampire in the most direct way and you expected me to wait?" he replied, daring a slow look up before letting his head drop again. "I need to know what happened, Gackt; I couldn't just lie there."

There was silence for a while, but Hyde did not dare try and sit up yet and he was secretly glad that he had an excuse not to be looking at Gackt for a while. He was not sure what he would see and he did not want to destroy their friendship over something stupid. Gackt had not changed in all the time he had known him, so he could only assume this was not a new thing.

"I'm sorry," were the words that did make him finally try and sit up properly, "I lost control."

Gackt was standing a few feet away, looking down at him in a worried and very apologetic manner.

"If you tell me why I'll probably forgive you," Hyde replied, blinking rapidly to clear the spots dancing in front of his eyes; he really hated not being at full speed.

His friend looked quite surprised at his statement and he watched Gackt carefully.

"I take it you don't normally bite random people," he said, unsettled by Gackt's reticence.

"No," Gackt replied after a moment, "I have regular donors, but both of them happen to be with the delayed party. I've been so busy preparing for this trip that I have had no chance to feed in the last week and you found me right on my limit."

"You were using some sort of power to look healthy when I started asking questions weren't you?" Hyde voiced his suppositions as he replayed the events of the previous evening over in his head.

Gackt nodded.

"You are far too perceptive, most people would not have noticed anything in the first place," Gackt replied, obviously very tense. "I was about to go out and meet with a representative from one of the local vampire clans to negotiate for a temporary donor when you knocked on my door. No offence, Hyde-kun, but I was trying to get rid of you as fast as possible, but when you stepped towards me we started interacting. You're quite fascinating on a psychic level."

It was Hyde's turn to be surprised.

"Me?" he asked, not sure what Gackt could be talking about.

"Yes," Gackt said, appearing completely sincere, "it was one of the things that drew me to you in the first place. I'm not sure what it is, but you are much more there than most mortals."

"And this 'interaction' is why you bit me?" Hyde asked, wanting to understand what had happened.

He was not sure what motivated vampires, but he was pretty sure that if this hadn't been a complete accident he would have noticed something about Gackt before.

"Your uniqueness coupled with my hunger combined in a way that caused me to lose control," Gackt said, voice full of remorse, "I am so very sorry."

"You said that already," Hyde replied, not really enjoying the guilt he could see in his friend, "I forgive you, just please help me to understand. Is the hangover from hell a normal side effect?"

Gackt looked even guiltier.

"No," was the quiet response, "I took too much. I became intoxicated, I'm sorry."

"Stop apologising," Hyde said, letting his head drop down again as he felt faint, "it sounds like it's partially my fault anyway. If I'd been able to take a hint nothing would have happened."

"There is no excuse," Gackt began to say.

Hyde brought his head up rapidly, regretting it even as he did so, but needing to make sure Gackt could see his face.

"Just stop," he said, refusing to allow his friend to wallow in guilt for something that he had already forgiven him for, "it's done and we'll deal with it. You lost control, I get it, apology accepted."

Gackt just looked at him for a while, eyes eerily blue thanks to the lenses and Hyde took the time to bring the room back to stillness in his vision. When his friend finally gave an almost imperceptible nod Hyde breathed a sigh of relief. He could not help blushing as he played events over in his head again and the ending to his evening ran through his thoughts. It was awkward and embarrassing, but he had to know why he had reacted that way.

"And," he tried to find the right words, "my ... um ... reaction, was that normal or different too?"

"Normal, under the circumstances," Gackt replied, a little too fast for Hyde's peace of mind.

"What circumstances?" he asked, biting his lip and not really sure he was ready for the answer.

Gackt's expression was about as awkward as he felt which at least made it a bit easier; if he had been the only one feeling this way he might have fled the room, or at least tried to, and probably fallen on his face.

"Mutual attraction," Gackt eventually said in a short clipped tone.

Hyde opened his mouth to deny that and then shut it again; it would have been a lie. He was attracted to Gackt, not that he would have acted on it, but it was a fact that he could no longer deny. The fact that Gackt seemed to be equally drawn to him made him feel a little hot under the collar, but they were adults, they could deal with this without having to give in to hormonal instincts.

"You do realise that I would never..." he said hesitantly.

"Completely," Gackt replied with a nod before he could finish, "and I never would have mentioned it, but..."

"Yes," he finished without making his friend go into detail; it seemed they understood each other at least.

The silence that followed was even more awkward than the one before until Hyde was desperate for any kind of conversation since he couldn't just escape.

"So were you really born in 1540 or is that just hype?" he asked, willing to pick the first question that came into his head.

"Hype," Gackt admitted, seemingly as keen to leap on the conversation as Hyde was to begin it, "it was more like 1450, but I didn't want anyone looking to be able to find anything."

Hyde had to take a deep breath to steady himself before he said something stupid at that revelation; knowing something and then having it confirmed with



such stark honesty were two different things it seemed and his mind rebelled. It took him a second to accept what he had heard.

"So you're over five hundred years old?" Hyde was having trouble with the concept.

Gackt nodded, moving over to the chair and slowly sinking into it. Feeling as if he had just about sorted out his equilibrium Hyde took the opportunity to sit up properly, being very careful not to move too fast. He winced as his head thudded at the movement and began to wish that he had done as the note said. Closing his eyes for a moment he did his best to push the headache away and then looked back at Gackt; his friend was looking at the clock on the bedside table.

"Room service wasn't going to start until six thirty," Gackt said turning back, "you didn't even eat anything before you came here, did you?"

Gackt sounded a little exasperated and Hyde had to nod; he had come straight here without stopping for anything else.

"Don't move," Gackt said in a tone that begged no argument, "I'm going to have the room service diverted here. Once you have a meal inside of you I'll answer any questions you have."

Hyde chose not to argue.

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Waking up Hyde found that he felt much better than he had before, and then it occurred to him that he didn't remember going back to his room or, for that matter, going to sleep. It was shortly after this he realised that he was not in fact in his own room and that he was lying on Gackt's bed. Rather embarrassed he looked around the room and found that his friend was sitting at the desk on the other side of the bed, writing something.

"Feeling better?" Gackt asked, looking up before Hyde even had a chance to sit up.

"Yes, thank you," he said without having to think too hard about it; the headache he remembered very clearly was little more than a dull ache now and, as he slowly levered himself up, the room did not spin at all; he was rather pleased. "Sorry for falling asleep on you."

That earned him a smile.

"No problem," Gackt replied, putting whatever he was working on aside, "it was the best thing for you. You've been sleeping for about an hour and a half. Do you think you can eat again?"

Hyde might have been small but he had a metabolism from hell that demanded food as often as he could find it, so he nodded as he carefully swung his legs off the bed. He felt a lot more with it now than he had first thing that morning and he found his curiosity piqued much more now that his mind was working again. He found himself watching carefully as Gackt picked up the internal phone and rang down to room service. He had always thought that the way Gackt moved was graceful, but now that he wasn't ignoring it he could see there was something otherworldly as well. As Gackt put the phone down and turned back towards him, it occurred to Hyde that maybe his friend had just stopped hiding.

"You act all the time, don't you," he said in a moment of clarity and then wondered if he should have been less direct.

"With most people, yes," Gackt replied, seemingly quite happy to talk about it, "but you play a role most of the time as well, mine is just a little more complete."

"And practiced," Hyde replied with a smile, "half the time I forget who I'm supposed to be."

Gackt acknowledged that with a tilt of his head, he seemed to find it amusing as well.

"So do you mind if we have that conversation now?" Hyde asked since he seemed to have fallen asleep before they had had a chance to talk before.

"Not at all," his friend said, turning around properly so that they were face to face, "what would you like to know?"

That was a question and a half and Hyde took a moment to think about what he wanted to ask first. He found himself fascinated by the whole idea of vampires and what little information he had gleaned from their previous discourse made him all the more interested.

"Are there many vampires out there?" he asked eventually. "You made it sound very organised when you spoke about clans."

"A fair number," Gackt replied after a moment's thought, "I suppose you could think of us as a very small minority group. Certain areas of the world have higher populations than others and we keep our numbers in check. Killing mortals has been outlawed in most places for centuries and most cities with populations are controlled by clans or families. I belong to the Kyoto Dragon clan. No vampire can change clan affiliation, it is settled by who created him or her, but the clans rarely call on their members."

It sounded to Hyde almost like Yakuza which rather explained Gackt's fascination with gangsters.

"Sounds complicated," he commented, wondering what happened if the clans did call on their people.

"Not really," his friend replied with a shrug, "mostly we just continue with our lives. In Japan there are five large clans and each has a leader, mostly a figure head who is only there as the final settlement to any situation that cannot be solved by other means. Then there are the law givers; they run the clan making sure that no members are running wild. All new vampires have to be approved by them; being an island nation we have always kept our numbers carefully under control."

"Didn't your clan mind you telling everyone you're a vampire?" Hyde asked, not clear on how an organisation like the one Gackt had described would see such things.

Gackt smiled at that, clearly amused again.

"I think they would have been worried if I had begun telling our secrets to the world," Gackt said and Hyde was sure his friend was remembering something, "but it's more a matter of disinformation. There are so many legends out there

and I have picked bits from my favourite ones to create an image so most of my clan find it more amusing than anything. One day I will have to bow out gracefully, but until then I'm rather enjoying myself."

"So you're not a law giver or anything grand like that?" Hyde asked, intrigued by the whole idea.

He never would have expected that there was a subculture of vampires living in the world under the noses of mortals, but now that he knew he wanted details.

"Not a law giver, no," Gackt replied and just for a second looked away.

If Hyde had not been paying attention quite so closely he would have missed the significance of the movement, but his mind was moving very fast at that moment and he saw.

"But you are something else," he said and found himself the focus of Gackt's blue-eyed stare.

"Far too perceptive," Gackt said with a shake of his head, but there was a small smile playing at his friend's face that made Hyde glad. "Yes I am something."

Hyde wanted to ask what, but the enigmatic answer had him wondering if Gackt wanted to keep this to himself. Feeling that maybe he was being nosy he pushed himself off the bed, working the kinks out of his body with a slow stretch and tried to think of something else to ask.

"I am head of the Dragon clan."

Gackt's words took him by surprise and he almost had to sit down again rather rapidly as he turned his head too fast to look at his friend.

"Vampires are immortal in the sense that we do not age, but it is the will to live that keeps us alive," Gackt said and Hyde just listened rather than voiced any of the questions that piled up in his head. "There can come a time when that will is gone. My creator was the head of our clan, but he became tired of living after three thousand years and he passed the mantel to me nearly a century ago. I keep in close contact with our law givers, but I am only ever needed if disputes require life and death decisions."

Hyde wasn't quite sure how to react.

"Is that why you had to be so careful about a donor?" he finally asked, wondering why someone so powerful in another clan would have to worry about something so fundamental in another city.

"No," Gackt replied openly, "I have not revealed who I am, but when entering another clan or family's territory all vampires will make themselves known. Donors can be acquired, but not without going through the correct channels. The local clan is the Serpent clan and they are aware that I am a master vampire from the Dragon clan, but I do not advertise my status."

"Too much baggage?" Hyde asked, realising that Gackt was putting a lot of faith in him by telling him all this.

"Exactly," was the short response.

It was rapidly becoming clear to Hyde that there was a huge amount he didn't know and the world was more complicated than he had ever given it credit for. His view on the universe had changed, but he found that he was excited in a way he hadn't been since he'd started in the music business.

He was about to launch into another question when there was a knock on the door.

"Don't over exert yourself," Gackt said as Hyde found himself wobbling again when he turned to look at the entrance too fast, "that will be room service."

Since his stomach growled in anticipation Hyde did not argue and as Gackt headed for the door he sat down and waited like a good little musician.

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They talked for what had to have been hours, interspersed by Gackt forcing Hyde to consume more food than should have been humanly possible, but by about lunch time he was feeling a lot better. There had been some explanation about how vampire feeding caused a reaction in the human body and blood was replaced very quickly, but that it required lots of fuel. Hyde had not taken in all the details, but it made a weird kind of sense, so he had behaved and not balked every time Gackt had placed another bowl of noodles or rice in front of him. At least the last time Gackt had had some as well.

Hyde was beginning to think that it might be time to return to his own room when there was another knock at the door, and it couldn't have been room service because they had just sent the last lot of empty dishes back. He watched Gackt walk towards the door and saw his friend stiffen just before he got there and the tension in the room went up a notch. Whoever was at the door they didn't stay long and when Gackt spoke he spoke in a language Hyde did not understand, so by the time his friend walked back into the room carrying a letter, Hyde was completely confused and more than a little worried.

He sat still and just waited, since he was sure Gackt would tell him if this concerned him, but he prepared to leave if Gackt needed time to himself. The last thing he wanted to do was cause problems now that he and Gackt seemed to be almost back to normal.

"Fuck," was Gackt's heartfelt reaction as Hyde watched him finish reading the letter before balling it up and throwing it into a corner.

"Something wrong?" he asked, not wanting to pry, but feeling the need to express his concern for his friend.

"A complication," Gackt said shortly, clearly annoyed, "nothing for you to worry about."

That sounded like his out of the problem, but Hyde could see that Gackt was suddenly very tense and that was not good.

"Something from the local vampires?" he asked, hoping that he was not stepping over a line.

For a moment Hyde thought Gackt might not tell him, but then he saw his friend's expression change.

"I was negotiating for a donor when our encounter occurred," Gackt reiterated what Hyde already knew, "and I did not hide my immediate need. Since I did not contact them again they wish to know how I satisfied that need and their law givers have requested my presence this evening to explain."

"And if you tell them about me they'll just believe you?" Hyde asked, not sure what was making Gackt so on edge.

"Possibly," Gackt said, clearly reluctant about his answer.

It dawned on Hyde why his friend was tense.

"They'll want you to prove who your donor was won't they," he said slowly, "and that means meeting me."

"Not necessarily," Gackt replied, but his tone was not convincing.

The idea of meeting other vampires filled Hyde with anxiety that finding out about Gackt never really had, but he was not about to abandon his friend.

"I could come with you," he said, gathering up all his courage before voicing his solution, "and that would settle everything wouldn't it?"

Gackt was frowning.

"I don't want to drag you into this," his friend said, clearly uncomfortable, "not unless I have to. Vampire politics can be bothersome."

"Then wouldn't it be better to sort this out straight away so we can get on with making the movie?" Hyde asked, wondering what details Gackt was not telling him. "If you turn up alone won't you just have to go back with me anyway? I honestly don't mind going with you if it will help get us back on track."

Gackt looked pensive for a few minutes until finally he nodded, tension easing a little bit, but not disappearing. Hyde knew there was something he wasn't being told, but he trusted Gackt enough to let his friend handle it.

"Okay," Gackt said without a trace of emotion in his voice, "our appointment is at ten."

Hyde just accepted the information with a nod and all thoughts of returning to his room fled; now he had a hundred new questions. One thing he definitely didn't want to do was insult anyone.

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Climbing out of the car behind Gackt, Hyde smoothed down the smart jacket he had decided to wear, and hoped that his nervousness was not too obvious. His instructions were basically to stay with Gackt and keep his mouth shut unless asked direct questions, which niggled a little, but made sense since he was dealing with an environment with which he had no experience. He could be shy at the best of times so this was probably the better course of action anyway; he really didn't want to come over as an idiot.

There were two large looking men on the door of what was an impressive, modern building and the way they were looking at him made Hyde feel even more nervous. Gackt didn't seem to like it either if the set of his shoulders was anything to go by and Hyde had to wonder what was going on.

"If I flirt," Gackt whispered, turning back to him and leaning in close, "flirt back. I fear we may have to give the impression we are closer than friends."

"Why?" Hyde asked, wanting to understand even though he trusted Gackt's judgement.

"I believe I may have underestimated your impact," Gackt replied, straightening his collar for him even though it was quite straight to begin with. "I do not wish any of those here to get ideas about pursuing you, and a deeper connection between us will prevent that. I apologise in advance for anything inappropriate I may do or say."

"I'm a big boy," Hyde replied, "I can cope. Let's just pretend we're on stage at one of your concerts."

That made Gackt crack the tiniest of smiles, but it was gone as soon as his friend turned back towards the building. As soon as Gackt began to walk, Hyde followed and they entered the building with him only slightly behind his friend. In the hotel Hyde had kept the residual marks of Gackt's feeding well hidden, but now they were on display, almost as if they were a badge of honour. They were almost gone, but Hyde saw several pair of eyes flick to them and away again; he hoped this would not take long.

They spoke to a receptionist who directed them to an elevator and, once they were inside, Gackt reached up to remove the coloured glasses he was wearing. It didn't really surprise Hyde to see that his companion was not wearing his blue lenses to this meeting and it did explain why Gackt had been wearing sunglasses after dark, which was eccentric even for him.

They were met on the ninth floor by a woman in a long black dress who looked to Hyde like she'd been sewn into the garment. How she moved was a mystery to him, but at the same time she had an air about her that told him she could rip his head off and suck out the insides without so much as breaking a nail. He was not embarrassed to admit that she intimidated him even as she greeted them politely and led them towards another room.

She threw open a set of oak double doors and revealed a plush, modern office that was arranged around a very large, impressive wooden desk, behind which was sat a man who barely looked thirty. He was flanked on one side by an older looking man who, as far as Hyde was concerned, was the size of a house, and as he followed Gackt into the room he spotted another man lounging against the wall to the right.

"Ah, good evening," the man behind the desk greeted as if he hadn't known who was about the walk in, "thank you for being so punctual."

"It was the least I could do," Gackt said, turning on the charm and sounding anything but annoyed to have answered what was basically a summons, "I must apologise for the confusion."

"It was unfortunate that we had to request your presence, Gackt-san, but we have had a little trouble with some of our younger residents and visitors and we felt it better to be safe than sorry," the man behind the desk said and it was clear to Hyde that Gackt and the other vampire had met before. "I do hope you understand."

"Of course, Sato-san," Gackt replied with a polite bow of his head. "it is my fault for not contacting you today to explain, but I must admit that last night's events were rather surprising and took my entire attention. This is Hyde, he has become the solution to my problem and unfortunately my distraction as well."

Hyde stepped up beside Gackt when he was mentioned and did not resist as Gackt reach out, snaking an arm around his shoulders to pull him close. He stayed put as Gackt's fingers ran leisurely down his neck and danced lightly over what was left of the bite mark. The shiver that ran through him was completely unintentional, but he couldn't help it.

"Isn't it rather a dangerous game to reveal your nature to such a high profile acquaintance?" it was the vampire lounging against the wall who had spoken and something about the man's tone annoyed Hyde.

It was clear the others in the room knew who he was, but he still had the feeling that most of them were looking down their noses at him.

"I am a little more than an acquaintance," he said, unable to stop his annoyance showing through.

He was quite surprised to see the vampire he had challenged grin at that.

"And fiery too," was the offhand comment that came back and made Hyde bristle even more, but Gackt's hand on his shoulder tightened just slightly and kept him silent.

"I must apologise for Lee Seung-Jin," Sato said and looked at the still lounging vampire sharply, "he is visiting from Korea and their methods are less civilised than ours."

That made the aforementioned Lee Seung-Jin laugh and Hyde decided that he definitely didn't like the man.

"I'm sure you will civilise me in the end, Sato-san," the vampire said without even bothering to stand up. "I still think it was a valid question."

"It was not a conscious decision," Gackt said, fingers gently running up and down Hyde's neck again; "I'm sure you have noticed that there is something unique about Hyde. We have been dancing around each other for some time and last night we intersected at the wrong moment, or right one, depending on how you look at it."

"Are you psychic, Hyde-san," Sato asked politely.

"Not that I know of," Hyde replied with complete honesty; he had no idea why he seemed to be so attractive to vampires and he never would have known if it hadn't been for the previous evening.

It was a rather uncomfortable few seconds as he realised that he was the centre of attention in the room and he found Gackt's touch very comforting as four vampires studied him.

"Don't suppose you feel like sharing?" it was Lee who spoke again and just proved to Hyde that his opinion of the vampire was correct.

What surprised him was the growl that came from Gackt and the way the arm holding him close tightened so that he couldn't have stepped away if he wanted to.

"If you cannot be polite you will leave," Sato said with a crack of authority in his voice that made Hyde glad that he was not the focus of the vampire's attention.

When he glanced over at Lee the Korean simply appeared bored, but it was telling that there was no retort. Hyde suddenly wanted to be out of the building as soon as possible; he did not like the atmosphere in the room.

"With respect, Sato-san," Gackt brought the attention back to himself and Hyde just did his best to be as inconspicuous as possible, "I became somewhat carried away last night and Hyde came this evening against my better judgement because he wished to make sure this situation was resolved. If you are satisfied I would like to take him back to our hotel so that he may rest."

For once Hyde did not mind being the weak little human and he gave Sato a small smile when the law giver looked at him again. He could do innocent and vulnerable with the best of them and he employed the fact that he could look feminine and helpless to its utmost. Sometimes it was a pain in the arse, but just about then it was very useful.

"Thank you, Gackt-san, Hyde-san," Sato said after a moment, "I believe we have all the information we require. If you wish for any assistance during your stay, please do not hesitate to contact us, Gackt-san."

"Thank you for your hospitality, Sato-san," Gackt replied, "perhaps you or yours will visit Kyoto one day and I will be able to return it."

Hyde bowed his head in respect and then was very glad as Gackt took him by the hand and led him to the door. If he never saw another vampire it would be too soon.

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Everything was going well on the film and Hyde was in a good mood as he left his room to take a cab to their current shooting site. It had been three weeks since they had arrived and not a sign of the supernatural, which made Hyde all the happier. Some of the others had been at the current location for a couple of hours shooting scenes that he was not required for, but they only had this site for a short time so they were fitting everything in and hence he was required for later scenes. It was going to be a busy evening, but he was enjoying the whole acting thing so he was looking forward to it.

Hyde was walking down one of the corridors towards the elevator when he had the strangest feeling that something was wrong and then he saw Lee Seung-Jin step out from the shadows in the hallway and he immediately stopped walking. The Korean vampire had given him the creeps when they had met in the law giver's office and Hyde wanted absolutely nothing to do with him. He'd just about managed to forget about the vampire population and Lee was not really the reminder he wanted.

"Good evening," Lee said politely, but with a smile that set off every alarm in Hyde's head, "I have a message for Gackt; would you happen to know where he is?"



"Filming," Hyde replied, wanting to back away as the vampire calmly walked towards him, but also not wishing to be openly rude and giving Lee an excuse to become annoyed, "he'll be on shoot until early tomorrow morning."

He did not add that he was going to join the shoot as well, but he had a nasty suspicion Lee probably already knew that. Something about the way the vampire was carrying himself set Hyde completely on edge, but he didn't know what to do about it. He began praying that someone would come round the corner or Gackt's influence with the local vampires would mean that Lee was just messing with him.

"Are you going to see him this evening?" Lee asked conversationally. "I would consider it a great favour if you would deliver this for me. My hosts have requested that I deliver it and I would not like to cause any disruption to the filming with my presence."

Everything in Hyde said not to let the vampire close, but what was he supposed to do? Without being extremely rude he could not exactly refuse to deliver a simple letter. It was possible that Lee really was here on an errand and it was just the vampire's overall demeanour that made him nervous, but he couldn't be sure one way or another.

"Yes," he finally said, his polite upbringing overcoming his instincts for while, "I'll give it to him later."

Lee smiled broadly then and came forward faster which meant Hyde had to force himself not to step back. The smile did not reach the vampire's eyes and even as he held out his hand for the letter Hyde felt something. It was as if a force was pressing against his thoughts and he made the mistake of looking into Lee's eyes. The vampire's eyes were glowing a soft green and it was like a knife in his brain as Hyde felt his will being completely disconnected from his body. He felt his body beginning to slump and there was nothing he could do about it as he fell into Lee's waiting arms.

"Come, My Little Angel," Lee whispered as his mind began to shut down, "I have plans for you."

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Gackt paced around the filming site snapping at anyone who came within arm's reach. Hyde was over an hour late and he'd sent someone back to the hotel to find the smaller singer twenty minutes previously. Hyde was not usually late and he knew that they only had this location for one night so Gackt was more than a little annoyed. When his phone went off he snapped it open viciously and put it to his ear.

"Yes?" he asked shortly.

"No one had seen Hyde-san at the hotel," the voice on the other end told him, "and he is not in his room, Gackt-san. Reception say that he called down for a taxi, but that he never appeared to take it."

Gackt's annoyance immediately switched to worry since it was very much not like Hyde to play disappearing games. There were some musicians that he knew who were known to be temperamental and might have just wandered off for the hell of it, but Hyde was very serious about projects that he chose to do and vanishing was not on the agenda.

"Stay there," Gackt said as he decided what to do; "if Hyde shows up then call me, I'm coming back as well."

He spent the next fifteen minutes making his way back to the hotel and he felt it the moment he stepped into the corridor near Hyde's room; the residue of vampire power and a lot of it. It took him another second to track down where he had felt it before and he went cold all over; he knew without a doubt that Lee Seung-Jin had been at his current location.

With cold certainty that this was going to be ugly he opened his phone and dialled Sato's number. The pit of fear in his stomach that he was feeling for Hyde's safety made him want to lash out and destroy something and he barely kept himself in check.

"Sato," the voice on the other end answered.

"Sato-san," Gackt said, not bothering with pleasantries, "it is Gackt. Lee has taken Hyde."

There was silence from the other end of the line for a moment; Sato had clearly not expected his statement.

"Are you sure?" was the reasonable question, at least Gackt logical mind told him it was reasonable; his instincts wanted to shout and scream.

"Hyde is missing, Lee has been at the hotel," Gackt was not about to pussyfoot around, "I want Lee found and what is mine returned."

"We will handle this, Gackt-san," Sato said without a moment's hesitation, "do not worry yourself."

Gackt almost laughed.

"No you will not," he said in a tone that begged no argument, "I will handle this once you find Lee. If one hair on Hyde's head has been hurt I will have Lee's blood."

There was an awkward silence from the other end of the line.

"We are civilised beings, Gackt-san," Sato said eventually, clearly trying to placate him, "it must be seen that we do not take barbaric revenge. Lee is a diplomat from his clan however uncivilised he may be and any dispute will be brought before the High Serpent. If you wish to bring to bare the strength of your own clan then I suggest you contact them now. We would be happy to house any representative of the High Dragon to see this matter resolved."

"I am the High Dragon," Gackt almost snarled down the phone.

There was silence again, but Gackt could hear people moving and there was at least one whispered conversation going on that he could not hear.

"Our people are at your disposal, Gackt-san," Sato said as soon as the vampire came back on the line, "we will send a car to pick you up in fifteen minutes if you are agreeable."

"That will be fine, thank you, Sato-san," Gackt replied and gave a polite goodbye before closing the phone.

He did not like having his real identity connected to his pop career, but this was an emergency, and rank had its privileges. If this is what it took to find Hyde, so be it and he stalked towards the lobby at least happy with the local's reaction to him.

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It was not really a matter of waking up, but rather slipping from one reality into another that made about as much sense as Hyde blearily opened his eyes and tried to figure out what was going on. His mind was full of cotton wool and there was something wrong about the current situation that he could not quite remember. Part of his mind was perfectly content exactly where he was; he felt as if he was supposed to be here, but there was a small voice at the back of his mind that knew something was wrong.

"Welcome back," said a very familiar voice, drawing his attention to a familiar face, "I thought you might sleep forever."

He blinked, not quite taking in what was going on as Gackt smiled down at him; a very naked Gackt. An idea sparked in his head causing alarm, but it was gone as fast as it had appeared and he just lay there staring at Gackt in what he knew had to be a stupid manner. His mind was so slow that it was only as he saw that Gackt was naked that he noticed any clothes he might have had had been removed too.

He watched, somewhere between aroused and fascinated as Gackt ran hands up his legs and he moaned, unable to stop the physical reaction to the sensation. He felt drunk and for a while he knew nothing except the physical feelings running through his body. He reacted and moved and simply experienced what was happening to him rather than thinking at all and he felt more desire by the moment. Most of him wanted every touch; he liked what he was experiencing, but something niggled at the back of his mind.

"That's it, My Little Angel," Gackt said in a seductive whisper, "show me what you like."

There were lips on his neck and hands all over his body and it felt wonderful and yet as Gackt moved further down his torso, kissing along his breast bone, the feeling of wrongness increased. He placed his hands on Gackt's shoulders trying to push his friend away, but Gackt just continued going.

"Now none of that," Gackt said, smiling up at him, "you'll like this."

Hyde was fighting with himself now as Gackt moved that little bit lower and that sinful mouth fastened over his aching cock and it felt delicious, but it was not right. He tried to push Gackt away again, but his friend just sucked harder and he collapsed back on the bed as his muscles reacted and he momentarily lost comprehensive motor control. Something inside him knew that this was wrong.

"Stop," he whispered, his voice tentative but there.

"Oh, I don't think so," Gackt said, lifting his head and grinning like a cat that had the cream, "you're mine, My Little Angel, and I intend to have you."

Hyde felt the first stirrings of fear and he tried to move away, but Gackt was holding his hips firmly, only Gackt would never do this, Hyde knew that with every fibre of his being and he knew there was something he did not remember.

As he looked into the dark eyes watching him he felt the panic rising before his mind began to fog again and then there was a talented tongue working on the head of his cock and all thought fled.

He was being urged onto his front by the time he could even put a thought together again. When he felt something probing his arse he felt the panic rising again. This should not be happening, he did not want this and he tried to pull away, but he was held firm. Something slick and thin was pushed into his arse and he whimpered and tried to get away.

"Just relax, Little Angel," Gackt's voice said, but it could not be Gackt; his friend would never do this to him.

His mind began to fight harder than his body could and he pushed at the fog clouding his thoughts. Not Gackt, deep down inside he knew that it could not be Gackt and he fought, fought to remember, to find something that made sense even as he was violated against his will. He was held in place as he writhed on the intrusion in his arse and he knew he was helpless. The person touching him, taking from him, was bigger than he was and stronger, but he could destroy the game being played.

He struggled with everything in him to clear the fog in his mind and then one image flashed into his mind; he remembered a smile, a smile that had frightened him and then he knew.

"Lee," he choked out even as his body was covered by another.

"Oh, such a shame," the voice was no longer Gackt's and Hyde sobbed as the fog began to fall away, "you ruined my little game, but never mind I shall have you anyway."

And then he was screaming as Lee forced into him, and it hurt and it was wrong and he couldn't get away.

"Such a pretty, effeminate thing," Lee whispered in his ear as the vampire pulled out and pushed back in again, "and you will be mine."

He clawed at the silk sheets, but there was nothing he could do except let himself be taken. He was trapped and he let his body relax because it hurt more to resist and Lee used him as if he was nothing more than a toy. He could not even stop it when he was pulled from the mattress and Lee held him close and he knew what was coming next. When fangs entered his neck he felt the pain and he welcomed the power that flooded him and took away his mind again. It was not like Gackt's power, it did not intoxicate him and make his head spin with wonder; it forced his thoughts down and ravaged him with energy, but it was better than knowing.

Dimly he was aware that Lee was not stopping and he knew he was dying and if it meant an end to the pain and humiliation he welcomed it. He felt Lee shuddering and somewhere in a corner of his mind he knew that the vampire was in ecstasy, but he didn't care anymore. Only when something wet was pressed against his mouth did the spark of defiance return and he tried to turn his head away, but his jaw was forced open and the liquid hit the back of his throat.

"Drink, Little Angel," Lee said, a laugh in his voice as Hyde struggled, "you can't die on me now."

Suddenly he was overwhelmed by the knowledge of sadistic pleasure and heartless gratification and it was that which broke his mind, that which caused anything he had left to withdraw; the fact that this was not over.

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He had known there had been something wrong about Lee the moment Gackt had laid eyes on him, but the other vampire had been a guest of the Serpent clan so he had ignored his instincts. He should have known better. Korea was one of the few places in the world where the hunting and killing of humans was not outlawed by the vampire ruling body. Over a millennium and a half ago a warlord leader had risen among the vampires and his legacy was a far less civilised society than most other places in the world. Strength was everything in Korean vampire society and keeping humans and weaker vampires as slaves was common.

Gackt had hoped that Lee's presence in Taiwan was a signal that at last the Korean's intended joining the majority of the rest of the vampire world in the twenty first century. Breaking the laws of his hosts' was an almost insane thing to do and Gackt could only assume that Lee believed his diplomatic status would save him.

It had taken the law givers more than two hours to track down where they believed Lee was hiding and Gackt was praying that Hyde was still alive. He could only imagine what Lee had planned for his friend and he was out of the car before it stopped completely as they pulled up outside the old house. He dimly heard someone calling to him as he ran across the road up through the front door without stopping to bother to open it, but he cared about only one thing and that was Hyde.

The moment he entered the building he could smell blood and it was an all too familiar scent that came with it; Hyde was here and he was hurt. The smell of sex hit him hard as he ran for the stairs, but he did not slow down and the door behind which he knew he would find Hyde almost slammed off its hinges as he charged it.

Other vampires had followed him into the house and he felt them enter the room behind him, but he could see nothing except what was in front of him. Hyde was sprawled naked on a low bed among silken cushions. The small singer's skin was ghostly pale and the bite mark on Hyde's neck was obvious as were the semen stains on the sheets, but what had Gackt's complete attention was the blood on Hyde's lips.

It made him feel ill as he took in the signs of struggle and he realised he was too late to save Hyde. He had no doubt that his friend had been raped and then forcibly turned; he'd seen it before and dealt with the perpetrators then as well and a fiery anger began to curl around his belly. When Hyde whimpered quietly as if dreaming he almost snapped and lost all composure.

"He was worth all the effort," Lee said, from where he was lounging on the bed not more than half a metre away from Hyde, seemingly without a care in the world; "there's fire in this one and I've made it mine."

Gackt growled as rage lanced through every fibre of his being and then he moved before he even thought about it. He grabbed Lee by the hair and literally threw the other vampire across the room. That animal had no right to be anywhere near Hyde, and he felt such guilt and pain as he slowly sank to his knees next to his friend. He could fix this; he had to.

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He could not move; his body and mind seemed to be still and he could not force them into motion. He could feel hands touching him and arms holding him, but it meant very little to him as his mind seemed to exist at each moment in time without past or future. There was the taste of blood in his mouth and it consumed him, taking all his awareness from anything else in his reality.

Suddenly he felt something else as different hands connected to him, shattering his catatonia in one terrifying touch and he screamed as fear and knowledge swamped him with painful clarity. His little bubble of nothing was broken and he was thrown back into the hell of reality that he did not want to face. He would have tried to escape the arms holding him, but there was no strength left in his body with which to fight and he was helpless.

"Hyde-kun," a gentle voice called to him and it was a voice he had been praying for, but he did not believe Gackt had really come for him.

Lee had played with his mind too much for him to just accept that voice.

"I've got you, Hyde-kun," the image of Gackt said as Hyde stared upwards, not really seeing.

"He's mine now, Gackt," Lee's voice made him tremble, but it also brought him the faintest glimmer of hope as he realised this might not be another trick; "that is my blood on his lips and he is already turning. Nothing you can do will change that."

Hyde felt cold all over even as he sensed the fires in his blood and with the last of his strength he grasped at Gackt in desperation. What he had heard could not be true and he whimpered in his need.

"Ssh, Hyde-kun," Gackt said, stroking his face gently as if he was nothing more than a child, "I will save you."

And looking into his friend's eyes, Hyde believed and even as Gackt began to lower him onto the silk sheet and cushions that had been his prison he did not panic. He fixed his eyes on Gackt and he put all his faith in his friend as Gackt moved back and slowly stood.

"You have desecrated what is mine," Gackt said, voice icy and dangerously low, "I demand retribution and I invoke the right of challenge."

There were gasps from around the room, but Hyde kept his eyes only on Gackt.

"You are far from home, Little Dragon," Lee said, voice disparaging, "by the time this dispute is arbitrated the Little Angel will be mine anyway or he will be dead; withdraw so I don't have to bother to kill you."

The smile on Gackt's face would have filled most hearts with fear, but it filled Hyde with hope.

"You are mistaken, foolish barbarian," Gackt's voice was tinged with power and even as his friend spoke, Hyde watched Gackt begin to change, "I am High Dragon of Kyoto and I will see you dead."

Gackt's eyes paled to glowing gold, the pupils becoming vertical and slit like and the vampire's skin paled to complete white as his hair changed to black, growing and shaking free the extensions at the back until Gackt had a mane of waist length glossy hair that moved as if it had a mind of its own. Now Gackt looked every inch the supernatural creature that he claimed to be and Hyde found his mind completely captivated as Gackt snarled at his enemy.

With long talon-tipped fingers, Gackt took hold of his shirt and calmly split it in two, revealing the most magnificent, iridescent dragon tattoo all over his upper body and at that moment Hyde had no doubt that Gackt was the leader of his clan. Power radiated off his friend in waves that held him completely spell bound and he could barely remember to breathe.

As Gackt held out his hand, someone placed a sword in his palm and there was the sound of metal singing in the air as Gackt cut an arc in front of him.

"Put some clothes on, barbarian," Gackt said, baring his fangs in a snarl of challenge, "and come and meet your end."

"I didn't know," Lee's voice was desperate and Hyde felt just a moment of satisfaction, but his focus was completely on Gackt.

"Too late, despoiler," Gackt's voice was icy and his expression held no mercy, "you have tried to take what is mine and now I will take your blood to reclaim him. Vermin like you must be destroyed."

"You have no authority here," Lee sounded like he was terrified.

"We recognise the authority of the High Dragon," Hyde thought it was Sato's voice, but he was far too far gone to remember properly.

There was silence for a moment and for just a second Hyde felt terror, but not his own, and he pushed it away ruthlessly.

"Will you die on your knees," Gackt asked, holding the sword out straight, "or will you at least die as a warrior?"

"I will kill you and send your head back to your civilised clan," Lee hissed, desperation replaced by fury, "and then I shall use your little whore to my heart's content."

Gackt did not even so much as twitch at that statement, he just stood perfectly still as Hyde watched him. The sound of material moving and another blade being drawn tried to tempt Hyde's eyes away from Gackt in curiosity, but he kept his gaze rooted on his saviour. There was no doubt in his mind that Gackt would carry through on his threat against Lee and he just waited.

When Gackt finally moved it was the most graceful thing Hyde had ever seen and Lee's first attack was forced away with almost effortless ease. The clang of metal on metal rang in his ears as he watched Lee move forward and Gackt side step and then it became a sort of dance. His mind was not fast enough to follow every move as vampire fought vampire, but the sound of the blades was almost like music.

It wasn't until Gackt drew first blood that it became real in his mind, but as the scent hit him and something alien inside him stirred, Hyde knew that this was reality. This was not a movie where all the red was just cleverly placed blood

packs; this was real life and as Gackt took a second slice out of Lee, Hyde felt it all too clearly. All at once it terrified him as everything that had happened that night tried to come back to him at the same time. His eyes followed the battle before him, but he cringed away and, even as Gackt threw his sword aside and almost insultingly slowly stepped towards Lee, catching the other vampire's sword arm in one hand and snapping it in a ridiculously casual manner, he dreaded what was about to happen.

When Gackt brought Lee towards himself and savagely bit at the other vampire's neck, Hyde wanted to scream, but the sound seemed lodged in his throat. This was too much; it was too horrific for his shattered mind and he closed his eyes, begging everything to go away.

There was the smell of blood everywhere and Hyde curled in on himself, trying to block it out. It hurt as his senses were overwhelmed and he wanted to return to his protective bubble where nothing mattered, but Gackt's presence would not let him. He could feel Gackt's power so clearly and it held him even though he could no longer see his friend. When hands touched him again and an arm snaked under him he could not stop a mew of fear and pain.

"I have you, Hyde-kun," Gackt's voice was quiet and gentle, but Hyde was far too traumatised to be soothed, "no one will hurt you now. You must drink and then I will take you somewhere safe."

Hyde remembered another voice telling him to drink and he whimpered as terror rose up again, but he could not escape as something warm and wet was forced against his mouth. He tasted blood and was repelled, but something in him already craved it and he drank despite himself as the liquid dripped into his throat. It burned all the way down and he knew the moment it hit his system for real because it was like an inferno sparking inside him. He screamed writhing in the arms that held him as the blood seemed to attack him.

"I'm sorry," Gackt's voice spoke to him through the tumult, giving him the smallest of lifelines to hang on to, "it will be over soon. You will be free of Lee's corruption."

The purifying fire tried to take away his mind, but Gackt held him in reality until finally it began to fade. He sagged in the embrace of his vampire friend and finally he was allowed to slip away. No enchantment held him in consciousness any longer and it was empty blackness that welcomed him rather than some construct of his mind. With the smallest sigh, he passed into unconsciousness.

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Nothing made much sense when Hyde slowly opened his eyes and about all he really knew was that he was warm and comfortable, but incredibly hungry. He tried to move, but he felt as weak as a kitten and all he managed was a small shift within his warm cocoon. When an arm snaked under his body and began lifting him he had no choice but to comply and he could barely keep his head from flopping completely forward as he was pulled against a warm chest.

A gentle hand stroked his back and cupped the back of his neck, guiding his face towards the crook of the owner's neck. It was then that he smelt the most delicious smell and all his senses homed in on the source. His gums began to ache and the hunger reached up to almost blast away all reason. It was as if his body was one step ahead of his mind as his mouth clamped on to the bloody scratch in the otherwise perfect flesh under his nose and he bit down without thinking.



The arms holding him stiffened for a moment and then relaxed again, holding him firmly but gently as he suckled at the wound he had caused like a new born babe, and like a baby he took his fill and then allowed sleep to take him back with its soft darkness.

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Voices pulled him back from deep slumber the next time he woke, but he was so tired he could barely make sense of them.

"Will ... well again?"

"... vampire ... still Hyde-kun."

"... sleeping ... wake up?"

One of the voices was male, the other female and he recognised both. Each gave him a different warm feeling that he did not want to lose and he tried to hang on to consciousness for as long as he could.

"He's awake now," the male voice was clearer now, but his mind was not working in specifics, only abstracts, and he could not quite grasp who was speaking, "but he's delirious. He'll come back to us when he's ready."

Small hands took hold of his face and he looked up into a woman's features he knew he should recognise, but his mind would not produce anything out of the fog of his memories.

"My poor darling," the woman said, leaning down and kissing him gently on the forehead.

He was not hungry and his strength was minimal so he could not keep his eyes open for long and he found himself slipping back into sleep, but he felt far more peaceful as he let go this time.

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Hands were touching him, violating him and he was helpless. He wanted to get away, but he did not have the strength and all he could do was endure. No matter how hard he tried, he could not free himself and he knew what was coming; knew that he could not escape it and, as he was taken by man and vampire both, he screamed.

He was flung from the nightmare into reality and almost panicked as he found himself held by strong arms that refused to move. He tried to struggle, but he was held firm and he was terrified as the dream overlaid on reality.

"Ssh, you're safe," a gentle voice whispered in his ear, "no one is going to hurt you."

Hands gently stroked through his hair as the words finally made sense in his brain and he sagged back against the person holding him as he sobbed out his distress. He felt so ashamed and so violated at the same time and he did not know what hurt more, so much so that he could not fight free of the well of despair he felt to notice anything else. It was only when he felt a slender body lean into him from in front that he realised there were two people with him.

His mind had just about grasped that Gackt was holding him from behind, cushioned on his chest and it took him a long time to gather the courage to open his eyes and accept who the other person was. Only as his second companion pulled away a little did he manage to convince himself to confirm what he both dreaded and wanted more desperately than he could ever explain. He blinked away the tears to bring into focus the person looking at him with concern and love and it almost made his heart break.

"Megumi," he whispered and then lost any control he had left.

The arms from behind released him into his wife's embrace and he clung to her as if his life depended on it, and quite possibly his sanity did. Megumi spoke to him and held him and rocked him as he cried away all the hurt and pain.

It was a long time before Hyde let himself think again as he drifted in Megumi's arms, but eventually he could not fight reality any more. The first question that floated into his mind was so absurd that he voiced it before he really considered it.

"Why are we all in bed together?" he asked, well aware that Gackt was still touching him from behind even as he sheltered in Megumi's embrace.

After the horror of his dream he had expected to find Gackt's proximity threatening, but he found himself feeling strangely safe now that he knew who he was with. Both Megumi and Gackt were wearing clothes, as was he if a pair of pyjama bottoms counted, but it was still odd to be in bed with both of them.

"You were having fever dreams," Gackt's voice was calm and gentle, "and the only way to soothe you has been to hold you and you seemed to need both of us."

"How long?" he asked quietly, needing to know how much time he had lost even if it brought with it frightening memories.

"It has been three days since the night Lee took you," Gackt replied in a matter of fact tone for which Hyde was grateful; he did not think he would have been able to handle Gackt's true feelings about the other vampire at the moment, "and Megumi has been here for two."

"I came as soon as Gatchan called me," Megumi said, still holding him tight.

It was clear she wanted to say more, but was holding back for his sake and Hyde remained still in her arms. Horrible images lurked in the dark corners of his mind and he did not want to stumble on them if he let his thoughts go. He could feel Gackt behind him, really feel his friend as the power of the vampire called to him and he wasn't sure how to react. It was an unavoidable truth; he was a vampire now, he could feel it, an immortal like Gackt and it was a difficult concept to come to terms with.

Finally he gathered enough courage to pull back a little and he looked up at the beautiful face of his wife. Megumi had tears in her eyes, but she gave him a small smile.

"I love you," she said simply and clearly as if she could read his mind and those three words explained everything.

In that moment he thought his heart might burst and he lowered his head again, needing the comfort of her closeness as she held him.

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Hyde managed to stop himself scrubbing at his skin as if he could remove it after half an hour in the shower, but his body was still pink and blotchy where he had tried. Nothing could wash the feeling of those hands from his flesh and he could only pray that one day he would be able to forget. He had not spoken much since he had woken and Megumi had been reluctant to let him out of her sight, but Gackt had convinced her to let him come into the bathroom alone.

He felt like he had aged a lifetime in a few days, which was rather funny considering he would never age again, and he could barely bring himself to look at his reflection in the mirror. What gazed back looked like Hyde, even still moved like Hyde since he did not seem to possess the effortless grace that Gackt had, but he did not feel like himself. It was like he was living in a stranger's skin and he didn't know how to deal with that.

Wrapping himself in the huge fluffy robe on the back of the door, he knew he had to go back into the other room where Gackt and Megumi were waiting, but he wasn't sure if he could. They were giving him space, but he did not think his period of grace would last much longer and he suspected it would be Megumi that came looking for him. He did not want her to have to put him back together again, because his wife was strong, but she was not invincible and eventually his pain would break her too and he could never allow that. He had to get through this for her if nothing else and, pulling the collar of the robe up so that he was almost hiding in it, he stepped up to the door.

The moment he exited the bathroom Megumi stood up from where she was sitting demurely on the now made bed and walked towards him. She took his hand and gave him a small supportive smile, leading him over to one of the two chairs in the room and urging him to sit down. He sank into the relatively large chair and before he realised what he was doing he had pulled his legs up so that they were almost a shield. It occurred to him that this was probably not the best signal to be giving out, but, once he was in the strangely comforting position, he could not seem to make himself give it up.

"How do you feel," Gackt asked from where his friend was standing in the corner, "physically," Gackt clarified, for which Hyde was inordinately grateful; the last thing he wanted to do was try and talk about his feelings.

"Tired," he admitted, since he did think he could sleep for quite a long time, "and I think I'm hungry."

It was a strange feeling, not quite what he had come to expect from hunger, but never the less, almost the same.

"Not really surprising; your body is using a great deal of energy changing your metabolism," Gackt said, and Hyde tried not to react to the outside confirmation of what he now was.

It was one thing to know, but it was another for Gackt to say it so plainly and Hyde did his best to remain calm.

"The conversion normally takes a few days," Gackt continued to speak as if everything was perfectly normal, "but, because of the complications, yours is taking a little longer. Another day and you should be feeling more active again."

The last thing Hyde wanted to talk about was the complication whose name he refused to even think, so he desperately tried to make sure it was not mentioned.

"Any trouble from revealing your status?" he asked, doing his best to think about anything but swords and blood and screams and ... he stopped his thoughts before they could run away with him.

"None," Gackt replied as if it didn't matter anyway; "I have spoken to their clan head once and she was very sympathetic to my position. No one from the Serpent Clan will reveal my identity to the wider vampire population."

"That's good," Hyde said, but he was perilously close to thinking about what he really didn't want to be thinking about.

Needing a distraction, any distraction, he stood up rapidly and walked to the window at which point his body objected. He felt momentarily weak and his stomach stabbed with pain making him wince and bend over slightly.

"You need to feed," Gackt said and his voice was much closer than Hyde remembered it.

He turned to find that his friend was only a few feet away now. He knew without having to ask that Gackt was talking about blood and that idea filled him with dread.

"Can't I just have some food?" he asked, hoping that he didn't sound like a petulant child.

Gackt gave him a small smile, obviously he did sound like a big baby.

"You will not be able to eat food for a while yet," his friend told him calmly, "not until your body has adjusted at least a little further. Until then you require blood."

"Where from," Hyde so did not wish to talk about this, but he was not a fool and he could not ignore what Gackt was telling him.

"Me," Gackt replied.

Hyde felt cold and anxiety filled him, as the thought of having to bite his friend brought up all sorts of connotations.

"It will be at least a month before you can feed from anyone else," Gackt said calmly, obviously being as gentle as he knew how. "Your body is still adjusting and until all the changes are complete you will have to feed from me at least once every two days."

Hyde wasn't sure if he could, not now that he knew what he was doing. He remembered all too clearly what had happened when Gackt had fed from him and the mutual attraction was still there, worryingly stronger thanks to the bond they now shared in fact, and the ramifications of this frightened Hyde more than a little. He was not sure he could handle anything sexual at the moment, let alone something that intense, especially not with Megumi there.

He did not realise he was moving until his back hit the wall and it shocked him from his own little world back into reality. His gums were throbbing, which told him his body wanted to feed even if his mind didn't, and he slowly slid down the

wall, putting his head on his knees and wishing that this was happening to someone else.

In under a month he had gone from blissfully unaware mortal to vampire child of the High Dragon of Kyoto, which had enough baggage as it was, but no he had to have been kidnapped and raped as well. He wondered briefly if he gave up would it all just end, but, even as he considered it, he knew he could not do that to Megumi or to Gackt. If nothing else he could live for them.

"Hyde-kun," Gackt gently touched his arm and his slowly looked up, "I'm sorry, but you must feed. If you leave it, you will lose all control."

Hyde was vaguely aware of the tears that were running down his face again, but it was almost as if it was someone else who was crying. He inclined his head slightly, acknowledging that he knew Gackt was right, but he could not bring himself to move. Only as Gackt slowly urged him to his feet did he begin to uncurl and he allowed himself to be pulled to a standing position.

His eyes flicked over Megumi, who was watching him with worry in her features, and he felt guilt as well as fear. He did not know how much she knew, how much Gackt had told her, and he did not know how to explain this to her. What would she think if she knew the truth? The last thing he wanted to do was cause her pain.

"Gatchan," Megumi said quietly as Hyde tried to quell the panic in his heart, "please would you leave us alone for a moment."

Gackt looked surprised and momentarily unsure, but as blue eyes flicked between him and Megumi, Hyde saw realisation dawn. Without further comment, Gackt nodded and quickly walked to the door. As soon as Gackt was gone Megumi walked towards him and reached out and took his hand, leading him towards the bed and pulling him down so they were sitting side by side.

"I know everything," she said quietly, stroking his hand with a constant rhythm, "Gackt explained what happened between you that started all this. I don't blame you, my love; he is a difficult man not to be attracted to. I know you would never have acted on it, I trust you, and I know you are likely to react if you have to feed. You do not have to be ashamed; I know it will be hard enough for you anyway. I will not stop loving you because of things you cannot control."

Hyde wiped his face on the sleeve of his robe and could not help wondering what he had done to deserve such a wonderful wife. He was a vampire and yet she still loved him; he was uncontrollably attracted to the vampire who had made him and yet she still loved him; he did not understand how Megumi could forgive him these things. When he had come away it had just been to make a film and so much had happened that he felt like he was living in a different world, but still Megumi was there for him.

"I gave you my heart," she said, wiping the last of his tears off his cheeks, "I love you, my darling; all I ask is that you do not stop loving me."

Not knowing what else to do he reached out to her, pulling her close, as she wound her arms around him as well and they remained like that, totally still for a long time. Only when Hyde felt his teeth begin to ache again did he finally move away. He could see a great strength in Megumi's eyes and he took courage in that, glancing at the door; it was time to start living again.

Very slowly he stood up, releasing Megumi's hand only reluctantly and then he made his way to the door. He opened it, knowing Gackt would hear it and then he walked back the way he had come; he could not bring himself to call to his friend, but he was sure Gackt would return anyway.

He felt Gackt come up behind him rather than heard his maker and he turned slowly to find Gackt giving him a small smile.

"You are one of the bravest men I know," Gackt told him and reached out to rest a hand on his shoulder. "You have faced the worst; this is nothing in comparison."

Hyde gave a derisive laugh.

"It doesn't feel like it," he replied, trying to bring his heart rate under control from where it was thumping like the whole percussion section of an orchestra.

"That's because you over dramatise everything," Gackt told him and Hyde appreciated the effort to lighten the situation.

"I think that's you," Hyde replied in kind.

Gackt tilted his head in acknowledgement as Hyde did his best not to let his nervousness get the better of him. He could feel his need for blood and he felt the craving begin to overpower his anxiety as he deliberately reached for it. His eyes flicked to the pulse he could see beating in Gackt's neck and he felt his gums begin to ache before his fangs began to move downwards. It was the strangest sensation now that he was completely aware of it and he let himself concentrate on it rather than worrying about what was to happen next.

Every smell in the room was clear to him now that his vampire was in the open and part of his mind even wondered what he looked like, but most of his focus was on the delicious scent directly in front of him. There was something about Gackt that sung in his senses and he leant forward before he really thought about it. He had to rise on his toes to reach properly, but Gackt helped by pulling him close and gently cradling his head as he dimly remembered his maker doing when he had been barely able to move.

He opened his mouth on instinct and bit down as soon as he was in reach and he could not help the moan of pleasure as the most wonderful flavour burst into his mouth. The rest of his body began to respond almost instantly and the little groan from Gackt sent shivers of excitement through him as well as the vampire power that circled through his body. For a moment he felt pleasure that was not his own and it was wonderful, but it frightened him and he forced it away, instead concentrating on his own experiences.

Drinking deeply, he rested his hands against Gackt's chest, feeling the life pumping through it under his fingers as he drew the source into his mouth. It was the most incredible feeling and he let himself become lost in it as he took in the essence of Gackt. It was heady and incredibly intoxicating and it was not long before he felt himself about to go over the edge and, with every ounce of will he had left, he pulled back. The wound was still bleeding slowly and he could not take his eyes off it as it gradually began to close.

It was quite an amazing sight and he kept his attention for a good few seconds until his eyes just happened to descend towards the floor and he couldn't help seeing that Gackt trousers were looking rather tight. Hyde could not help blushing

as he realised that he had had the same effect on his friend as Gackt had had on him and he stepped back quickly trying to regain his composure.

He was surprised that he felt no revulsion at the thought of anything sexual; he was not comfortable, but he was not repelled either. That idea, however, brought him back to the ones he was trying to avoid and that was very quick at destroying any arousal he had felt. He nodded his thanks to Gackt and then headed for the bed where he sat down, curled into a protective ball and used one of the pillows as shelter. His world seemed to be an up and down rollercoaster at the moment, but he did his best to appear calm when Megumi sat down next to him. He prayed silently that everything would become easier as time passed.

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He had been a vampire for five days and fourteen hours as Hyde sat looking out the window at the lit up city; it seemed so much more vibrant now in the dark. The new lenses Gackt had given him that afternoon meant that he had no trouble with daylight anymore, but he was still getting used to them and he preferred being without. He had tried to eat real food for the first time since his conversion earlier as well and he had only managed some soup with a few light noodles, but it had given him a sense of normality he had been missing. Gackt had promised him that his appetite would return much faster than his dependency on Gackt's blood would reduce and he was looking forward to a proper meal.

Megumi had gone out with some of the female members of the crew at his insistence since she had been by his side for days without a break. He was almost ready to face the world outside Gackt's hotel room, but he wasn't quite there yet. Gackt himself had never been far away and was sitting at his desk now writing furiously in a journal.

Curious and feeling a need to be closer for a while, Hyde stood up and wandered over.

"Writing?" he asked, hoping that he wasn't prying.

"No," Gackt replied, looking up from what he was doing, "just trying to decide how best to close down the shoot. This is the first chance I've had to deal with it. We have a lot of footage now and I think if we close down we might be able to finish at a later date."

"No," Hyde said, surprising even himself with his vehemence, "don't close it down. We should finish the film."

Gackt looked surprised and then grateful, but reserved.

"Thank you, Hyde-kun," he said with a smile, "but we should get you home. The film can wait."

It was clear that Gackt thought he had objected out of some sense of loyalty, but that was only half it and, as his friend went back to writing in his journal, Hyde reached out and put his hand on Gackt's shoulder.

"I think I need to finish the film with you," he said sincerely; knowing that he had to be very clear; "I don't think I can go home without doing what we came here to do."

Gackt looked at him steadily then, eyes boring into his soul, and he held his friend's gaze.

"Are you sure you can do this?" Gackt asked very seriously.

Hyde did not reply immediately and gave the question the thought it deserved, but then he nodded.

"I have to," he replied and then it was Gackt who nodded.

"We have to start filming again tomorrow to make the schedule," the older vampire said simply.

That sent a shot of fear through Hyde, but he swallowed it quickly; he had no choice, it was this or spend the rest of his life afraid.

"Just tell me where and when," he said with all the courage he could muster.

Gackt smiled at him then and there was a proud look in his maker's eyes. It comforted him in a way he had never expected it to.

**The End**



## ***Dragon's Touch***

**Rating:** R (for subject matter)

**Warnings:** mention of non-con, vamps

**Summary:** Hyde is recovering from his experiences in Taiwan, but he's a long way from over them and going out with the other guys from L'Arc turns out to be a mistake.

**Author's Notes:** Thanks to Soph for the beta. I went with Gackt being an acquaintance with the rest of L'Arc in this fic, rather than good friends because when I asked no one seemed clear on the truth and so I went with what worked better for the plot :).

**Word count:** 4,380

It had been some time since Moon Child had wrapped and Hyde had been doing his best to adjust back to life at home. Megumi had insisted on being one of his blood donors and Gackt had taken him to a small club downtown and introduced him around to give him alternative sources so that he was not solely reliant on his wife. There were a total of three people who could get close to him without him feeling uncomfortable, two of which were Megumi and Gackt, and the other was an American exchange student called Michael, who frequented the club and seemed to understand that Hyde had a problem with people being too close without needing a detailed explanation.

He was slowly learning a great deal about the vampires in Tokyo and it seemed that everyone knew Gackt in the vampire community, but very few knew who the musician really was when it came to the Dragon clan. Hyde had yet to visit Kyoto to meet the elders of his new clan, but he knew he was going to have to sooner or later.

When working, he had perfected what he mentally referred to as 'normal Hyde', at least he thought he must have, because no one seemed to have noticed anything, but on a personal level it was much more difficult. Tetsu had been trying to get him to go out with the rest of L'Arc almost since he came home, but he had been resisting. He'd been doing everything he needed to for his career, pretending everything was fine, but he had been hanging back when it came to any socialising. He was sure that when they had been together for various things the rest of the band had noticed that he had changed a bit, but so far no one had called him on it.

His period of grace was, however, up, since Megumi had gone to visit her mother and Tetsu had turned up earlier that evening and literally dragged him out of the house. They'd met the other two guys in a restaurant, which had been fun, but then they had gone on to a club and Hyde had spent a rather tense couple of hours trying to look as if he was enjoying himself. These days he seemed overly sensitive to people and the hyper atmosphere had driven him just about mad along with trying to avoid people touching him, but he had managed to keep it together long enough to convince the others that it might be nice to just have a quiet drink at home. Since they'd been spotted by some fans and only just made it out of the club before there was a scene, the others had been happy enough to agree.

It was when he led them all back into his home that the problems started. Tetsu always became touchy feely when tipsy, since his friend did not drink all that much or often, and Tetsu was well on his way to being very merry. The moment they made it through the door Tetsu threw his arm around Hyde and dragged him towards the drinks area. It took every ounce of will Hyde had not to push his

friend away with more force than would have been good for either of them, but he managed to twist away from the oblivious Tetsu before he panicked too much.

"Sodas and beer are in the refrigerator in the kitchen," he said, doing his best to keep his voice even and disappearing behind the small bar to begin noisily moving bottles to cover the fact that he was on the verge of hyperventilating.

It had just been a playful hug and yet he was freaking out, which made him feel angry and vulnerable at the same time. Up until that point he had been doing so well. He had made the decision to keep everything that had happened in Taiwan a secret, but he was beginning to think that might not work.

"You get lost among all the tall bottles?" Tetsu said with a laugh from the other side of the bar and Hyde realised he had been sorting for rather a long time.

Doing his best to pull himself together he grabbed a bottle of single malt from the back of the cupboard and a few other things before standing up.

"Just looking for the good stuff," he said with a smile that he prayed no one would realise did not reach his eyes.

"You weren't kidding," Tetsu said, looking at the bottle of scotch.

Hyde had chosen a bottle of eighteen year old Scottish single malt that he'd been given as a birthday present that year; if he was going to get smashed, he might as well do it in style.

The next problem reared its head as he and Tetsu returned to the main sitting area; Yukki and Ken had already taken up residence in the two chairs, both sprawled across them like they owned the place. That left Hyde and Tetsu with the couch and it took a lot of effort for Hyde to sit down. On an intellectual level he knew none of his friends would ever hurt him, but it wasn't his intellect that was always in control these days.

"You okay, Hyde-kun," Ken asked as Hyde did his best to pour the drinks without shaking; "you look pale?"

"You would not believe the size of the spider I just found in that cupboard," he joked back, hoping that a quick grin would get him off the hook.

Ken was still watching him more closely than usual as he handed the guitarist a drink, but he made an effort to throw himself back on the couch as if nothing was wrong and Ken seemed to be satisfied. He was not sure why he could not put a mask on like he had been doing every time he stepped out of the house these days, but when it came to friends he just couldn't do it.

The members of the band all had so much going on now that Hyde knew he could deflect any attention from himself so he launched into a whole bunch of questions about the other's solo projects. It worked wonderfully since Tetsu sat forward and began talking animatedly about his solo stuff; that was until Yukki took over after a question from Ken, and Tetsu sat back again.

When they had first sat down, Hyde had managed to maintain quite a lot of personal space, but Tetsu didn't seem bothered about letting him keep it and they ended up sitting shoulder to shoulder. They'd done the same many times before, but Hyde felt himself tensing up and there was nothing he could do about it.

"What do you think, Hyde-kun?" Yukki's question caught him off guard, since he'd been concentrating so hard on not reacting to Tetsu's proximity that he hadn't been paying attention.

"Um," he just about managed, but he was sure the two on the chairs at least had noticed that something was wrong, "sorry I wasn't listening, what do I think about what?"

He couldn't help noticing that the liquid in his glass was moving and he put it down rapidly to hide the tremble in his hands, but he knew he'd been a few seconds too late. The only one who hadn't seemed to have noticed anything was Tetsu and that was mainly because his other friend was facing the wrong way.

"What do you think of those new guys, umm ..?" Tetsu asked, reiterating what had to have been the question and apparently forgetting a significant part of it himself.

Seemingly completely oblivious to the tension in the room Tetsu then proceeded to throw an arm around Hyde, drag him close and kiss the top of his head. He panicked, there was no other word for it and he all but climbed over the side of the couch trying to get away. His heart was beating so fast that it was like a constant thunder in his ears and he had to fight down the urge to let all his defences out. He was so close to releasing the vampire and scaring the crap out of his friends that it wasn't funny and he literally scrambled to get away, not coming to a halt until he was a good few feet clear.

All of his friends were looking at him shocked and worried, but all he could hear in his head was Lee's voice taunting him.

"I'm sorry," he tried to bring himself back under control, but he could feel any composure he had left breaking and he knew it was too late, "I ... I'm sorry."

Then he fled, running straight for his bedroom before he could fold completely in front of his friends. He slammed the door and moved to the far corner between the bed and the wall, sinking down and dragging the cover from the bed with him. The tears would not stay away any longer and he could not hold back the sob that caused his whole body to shake as it broke free. The rest of L'Arc had to think he was a head case and he didn't know if he could fix it.

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Tetsu watched Hyde run from the room in complete shock, rapidly sobering up as he watched his friend implode. He had known something wasn't right all evening, but he had thought it would have turned out to be something stupid and this definitely wasn't. Climbing off the couch he followed Hyde's trail to the closed bedroom door and put his ear to it, hearing the crying coming from inside immediately.

"What..?" he turned and silenced Ken with one look, directing the other two who had accompanied him back to the main room.

"What's going on?" Ken finally asked his question in little more than a whisper when they were far enough away so Tetsu thought Hyde wouldn't hear them.

"I don't know," Tetsu admitted, not bothering to hide his worry.

"But Hyde-kun's has been on edge all evening," Yukki pointed out quietly; "he hated the club."

"He hasn't been the same since he came back from Taiwan," Ken agreed with a nod, "but I thought he was just working too hard."

Tetsu looked at his companions bewildered faces and came to a decision, pulling out his mobile phone as he did so.

"Megumi-san told me something before she went away," he said as the other two looked at him questioningly, "and I thought it was rather odd, but now I know why."

"What?" Ken asked, clearly agitated.

"She said if anything strange happened to call Gackt," Tetsu replied and pressed the call button as he found the number Megumi had given him.

"Gackt?" Yukihero asked with a frown. "Why Gackt?"

"Because he obviously knows what happened to Hyde-kun," Ken said as Tetsu waited for an answer.

It took a couple of seconds for anyone to answer and Tetsu was beginning to think no one was going to when the line clicked into operation.

"Moshi, moshi," said the voice from the other end.

It was Hyde who was good friends with Gackt, but Tetsu knew the other singer in passing so he hoped it wouldn't be too awkward.

"Gackt-san, it's Tetsu," he said, praying that he was not about to make a huge mistake, "something's wrong with Hyde-kun; Megumi-san gave me your number if anything happened."

"Where are you?" was the instant response.

"Hyde-kun's house," Tetsu replied without even thinking about it.

"I'll be there in half an hour," Gackt said without the slightest hesitation. "What happened?"

Tetsu could hear that Gackt was already moving and suddenly he didn't feel as ridiculous anymore.

"We were having a drink just like we used to, I grabbed him because he was zoning on us and he freaked," Tetsu was beginning to feel like it was his fault. "He's shut himself in his bedroom."

There was silence from the other end of the line for a moment.

"Don't leave," Gackt said eventually, "but don't try and approach him either. I'll be there soon."

And with that the line went dead. Tetsu was left feeling rather shocked and not sure what his role was in all this.

"He said don't leave, but don't try and get Hyde-kun out either," he relayed the instructions; "he'll be here as quickly as he can."

"What the hell happened in Taiwan?" Ken sounded confused and protective at the same time; none of them liked it when one of their number was hurt in some way.

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Tetsu had been the one to open the door when Gackt had arrived and they had exchanged no more than four words before Gackt had walked straight to the bedroom, opened the door and walked in, closing it firmly behind him. Since then Tetsu had been sitting on the couch waiting for any sign that there was life in the other room. Ken had poured him a large whiskey, but it went a long way to show how worried they all were that not one of them had touched anything since Hyde had fled.

As soon as Gackt reappeared in the doorway, Tetsu was on his feet; he needed to know what was going on. Hyde was a very good friend and he had never seen him like this before. Even though he dreaded knowing the truth he had to understand.

"How is he?" he asked when Gackt came to a halt a few feet away.

"Not good," the other musician replied with stark honesty, "but I've seen him worse. He would like to talk to you, Tetsu-san, if you wouldn't mind."

"Of course," Tetsu replied, filled with trepidation, but heartened that Hyde actually wanted to see him.

Gackt caught his arm as he went to walk past.

"Don't push him," Gackt said quite seriously, "and don't touch him unless he initiates it, please."

It sounded like he was going to be dealing with a skittish animal rather than one of his best friends, but Tetsu nodded his consent; the last thing he wanted to do was make this worse. He walked into the dimly lit room and closed the door which meant he had to stand still for a moment as his eyes adjusted.

"Over here, Tet-chan," a far weaker voice than he was expecting called to him and he turned to the far corner.

He could just about make out a small figure huddled down beside the bed and for a moment he just stood there not sure what to do, but then he shook himself and began to walk over. Remembering Gackt's words he moved to a point where he could see Hyde properly even in the low light, which was just about at the end of the bed and then he sat down. Hyde was hugging his knees and peering out over the top of them at Tetsu and he had to resist the urge to reach out and try and comfort his friend.

"I'm sorry," Hyde said quietly, "I didn't mean to freak out."

"That's not important, Hyde-kun," Tetsu said immediately, since he didn't care about that at all, "Just tell me what I did so I don't do it again."

The sound that Hyde made at that could have been a laugh, but Tetsu did not like the tone of it at all; Hyde was clearly deriding himself.

"It wasn't you," Hyde said as if he was annoyed, but Tetsu was very sure that his friend's tone was not aimed at him, "it was my fault."

"You were terrified," Tetsu said, not happy with how Hyde was running himself down, "and I know I caused that. Something's wrong, Hyde-kun, and I don't care if you don't want to tell us what it is, but the least we can do is make sure we don't do anything again."

He could just about see the whites of Hyde's eyes as his friend watched him from under his bangs.

"I can't bear to be touched," Hyde said eventually in little more than a whisper.

That confused Tetsu, because what he had seen of Hyde lately had not indicated anything of the sort. Thinking about it, Hyde had seemed normal when in front of the camera or with strangers most of the time and it began to dawn on Tetsu that maybe his friend was a better actor than he had ever given him credit for.

"You've been hiding it very well," Tetsu said, wondering how much will power Hyde actually had.

He had always known Hyde was very serious about his career, but to be able to conceal something like this must have taken incredible effort.

"Normal Hyde," he heard his friend mutter, but chose not to comment on it.

"Is there anything we can do to help?" he decided that being proactive was better than just sitting there wondering. "If you need us we can get between you and everyone else."

There was silence for a while and Tetsu knew he was being watched again.

"Thank you," Hyde said eventually, "but it's not 'them' who are a problem. I can cope with people who aren't real to me; it's friends I can't shut out."

Tetsu so wanted to ask why; he felt a great need to know, but he held his tongue. Something terrible had to have happened to Hyde and he had no intention of forcing what out of his friend.

"It's getting better," Hyde said before an awkward silence could fall, "slowly; I'm so sorry."

"I'm your friend, Hyde-kun," Tetsu said sitting on his desire to reach out, "if you need someone to freak out at I'm here. Ken and Yukki are here for you too; we don't care what you have to do as long as you let us help."

For a moment he thought that Hyde's eyes were actually slightly luminous, but he blinked and it was gone so he turned slightly and watch Hyde out of the corner of his eye so it didn't look like he was staring. He had never seen Hyde so cowed, no even after Sakura was forced out of the band, and he prayed hard that there was something he could actually do.

"Something happened," Hyde said hesitantly, "while we were filming."

Tetsu turned his face back, but refrained from commenting; Hyde would tell him what he wanted to in his own time.

"There was this," it was clear that Hyde wasn't sure what he was saying until it came out of his mouth and Tetsu found himself sitting very still in case he hurt his friend more, "psycho who had a problem with Gatchan. He thought me and Gatchan were..." Hyde's voice petered out so Tetsu waited, "were involved. He took an interest in me, but he only showed up the once so we thought he was gone. We didn't see anything for weeks and then one day everyone else was on shoot and I was just going down to join them and I saw him in the hotel."

Tetsu could feel that something terrible was coming the way Hyde's voice seemed to run out and it was so difficult to remain passive.

"He... um... he got me with something," Hyde eventually continued, "and when I... when I woke up he had me naked."

A coldness took hold of Tetsu and he dreaded it, but he knew what was coming.

"He raped me," it was obviously so hard for Hyde to say those words and Tetsu felt like he had let his friend down in some way. "Gatchan arrived with help, don't ask what kind of help, but it's over and done. That's why Mei-chan came over," at least it seemed easier for Hyde to talk about this bit, "and she and Gatchan put me back together. Gatchan wanted to close down the filming, but I asked him to keep going. It helped to be working."

"And you didn't think a break would have been a good idea?" Tetsu could not believe that Hyde had just tried to continue as if everything was normal.

"Being busy is better," Hyde said in very small voice, and Tetsu realised he probably sounded aggressive to his abused friend.

He took a deep breath and put aside anything he was feeling; this was about Hyde not him.

"Is there anything I can do to help?" he asked, realising that if nothing else he could offer his support.

"Just put up with me being an idiot," Hyde said, voice a little stronger at last.

"I've been doing that for ten years," Tetsu said as his mouth engaged before his brain, "so I think I can carry on."

Just as he realised what he'd said he heard the most amazing sound and it took him a second to comprehend that Hyde was laughing, and not the derisive laugh of earlier, but a really amused sound. He was shocked when he realised that he had done something right.

"When I get my head stuck too far up my arse remind me to talk to you, Tet-chan," Hyde said with the most life in his voice that Tetsu had heard since he walked into the room.

"Will you be okay?" he asked, finally giving in to the need to ask a direct question.

"Eventually," Hyde replied and for the first time Tetsu could see the bottom of his friend's face as Hyde appeared from behind his knees.

"Are you coming out?" he asked, almost sure he knew the answer.

Hyde shook his head and began to lower his chin again, which Tetsu decided was a bad idea.

"That's okay," he said quickly, hoping to cut Hyde off before his friend disappeared back into the huddle Hyde had been in most of the time, "I'll get the guys home, unless you want us to stay."

Another shake of the head and a rather guilty expression, but the fact that Hyde was still looking at him seemed to be a positive sign.

"Gatchan said he would stay," Hyde admitted as if it was the worst thing in the world.

"Hey," Tetsu said before Hyde could get any guiltier, "whatever you need, Hyde-kun."

He knew it was almost time to leave, but there was one question that he had to ask. He wasn't quite sure if he should be asking it, but he needed to.

"Should I tell the guys?" he said eventually.

Hyde looked startled for a moment and then appeared very unsure.

"I won't if you don't want me to," Tetsu clarified quickly, "but I will if it will help."

There was silence for a long time and Tetsu thought Hyde would say no, but eventually there was almost an imperceptible nod.

"I'll make sure they understand," he said in what he hoped was a reassuring manner.

"Thank you," Hyde said quietly.

Tetsu slowly stood up, now it was time to go.

"Call if you want to talk or you just want to see my ugly face," he said and he meant it.

Hyde nodded and Tetsu took that as his cue to exit. He walked slowly back into the other room, closing the door behind him. Ken and Yukki both looked up as he walked towards them, worry in their eyes; Gackt appeared to be his usual stoic self.

"He's not coming out," Tetsu said as he tried to assimilate everything he had heard, "but I think he's holding it together."

"Is he okay?" Ken asked.

"What's going on?" Yukki asked at exactly the same time.

Tetsu looked to Gackt, but the man could have been made of stone for all the expression there was on his face and Tetsu knew he was on his own for this. He knew what he had to say, but no words would form in his mind.

"Um," was the best he could manage to begin with, "I don't think he's going to be really okay for a while, but he's coping."



Both of the other members of L'Arc appeared worried by that statement and both sat forward as they realised information was forthcoming.

"I think I need that drink now," Tetsu said and reached down for his glass and he took a swig before he tried to decide what to say next.

Gackt was watching him dispassionately, but there was the knowledge in the other musician's eyes that Tetsu was now carrying around as well. For a moment he didn't want to tell the other two, almost to protect them, but he had told Hyde that he would.

"Tell us, Tet-chan," Ken said in a very serious tone.

"He was raped," Tetsu decided that blunt was the best approach.

Yukki looked completely stunned and Ken's face went stormy in a second, both looked over at Gackt almost as if it was the singer's fault.

"The man who did it has been dealt with," Gackt said in an even tone, "and the information will never reach the press."

Then Gackt stood up and walked away from the group and Tetsu was kind of glad. This was difficult enough to talk about with people he had known very well for years let alone with Gackt there.

"We should go," Tetsu said as the other two did the whole assimilation thing, "Gackt-san is going to stay. The best thing we can do right now is give Hyde-kun some space."

"We can't just go," Ken protested, but Tetsu stopped him by holding up his hands.

"We have to," he said firmly; "it took a hell of a lot of courage for Hyde-kun to tell me, and then he let me tell you. He does not need us hanging around; he'll talk to us when he can. Now, we're leaving."

Gackt was looking at him when he turned to glance at the man and he received the only acknowledgement that he and Gackt were on the same page; the other singer nodded. With that, Tetsu began very efficiently herding his friends towards the exit. They would take this one day at a time and he was sure as hell making sure that Hyde had all the support he needed.

**The End**

## ***Dragon's Heart***

**Pairing:** Gackt/Hyde/Megumi (various combinations)

**Rating:** NC17/18

**Warnings:** mentions of past non-con, threesome, vampires

**Summary:** Megumi has an announcement that means Gackt finally takes her and Hyde to Kyoto to meet the elders of the clan. Hyde finds out that his vampire status is not so much an accident as it is destiny and the relationship between the three changes significantly because of it.

**Author's Notes:** Thanks to Soph for the beta. This took me a lot longer to write than I expected, but it is finally done. You have to have read the rest of the Dragon Saga to understand this one.

**Word count:** 24,364

### Chapter 1 Kyoto Bound

Hyde walked through the front door and threw his keys onto the hall table before walking into the main living area with an eye on falling onto the couch and not moving for a good few minutes. It had been a very long, hard day doing interviews at the end of a long hard week doing other promotional things and he was more than glad that for once he had the weekend off. Life had been so hectic lately that he'd almost felt normal, but he was looking forward to a short break anyway. Sometimes things still caught him off guard, but he was sure he was on his way to putting the events of the previous year behind him. He was certainly writing well so maybe there was truth in the whole tortured soul bit.

What he hadn't expected to find as he walked in was Megumi sitting on the edge of the couch looking very worried.

"Is everything all right?" he asked, immediately anxious at his wife's pale face.

He walked over and reached out to her and she took his hand.

"I'm not sure," she replied, eyes lifting off the floor and looking at him, clearly unsettled.

"What is it?" he said, wondering what could have upset Megumi so much.

There was silence for a while and Megumi was watching her hands when she finally spoke.

"Gatchan said vampires cannot have children," she said quietly and Hyde felt his heart begin to beat faster.

They had had this conversation once, but it had been short and at the time he had been in no state to really discuss it properly. He knew Megumi had wanted children, so had he and they had talked about having a family before Taiwan and it made him go cold to realise that his wife seemed so upset now; he had ruined yet another aspect of their lives.

"Yes," he said quietly, but trying not to sound as worried as he felt.

Vampires were a hybrid race, part human and part demon, passed on in the blood, Gackt had explained it all, and like all hybrids they were infertile.

"So we stopped worrying about prevention," Megumi's voice was small and would have been difficult for him to make out had his hearing not been so acute now.

That had not been what he expected to hear next, but he squeezed Megumi's hand anyway in an effort to reassure her.

"Yes," he confirmed since it seemed his wife needed him to.

"Then how can you explain this?" Megumi asked and reached down beside her and produced what at first looked like a white stick.

It took him a moment to realise that there was a small window in the stick and inside it was a blue stripe, and then it hit him what he was looking at. Megumi was holding a home pregnancy test and it was positive.

"You ... how ... that's not possible," he really didn't know what to say.

It had been one of those facts Gackt had been very clear on, along with decapitation being the only way to be sure of killing a vampire and sunbathing would be a really bad idea unless he wanted to look like a tomato after about ten minutes. Vampires could not father or conceive children; the only way for them to increase in number was to turn a mortal.

"I know," Megumi said, looking up at him with afraid eyes, "but I just knew so I checked."

It was beginning to dawn on him what this meant and slowly he felt his face break into a smile.

"We're going to have a baby," he said as he felt a bubble of joy burst into warmth inside him.

Without thinking about it, he gathered his wife into a heartfelt embrace and kissed her. When he pulled back she was looking at him with a rather shocked expression on her face.

"Sorry," he apologised and tried to get the excited giggly feeling in his chest under control. "Don't worry, I'll call Gatchan; it's probably that it's just rare or something and we're the odd couple out. Everything will be fine."

Megumi's eyes looked suspiciously wet and he wrapped her in another embrace about a second before she started crying. He knew that pregnant women were supposed to be hormonal and emotional so he just did his best to be supportive as Megumi released whatever pent up feelings she needed to. They were having a baby; it really was the most amazing thought.

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The first thing Gackt did after Hyde rang him was cancel all his appointments for the evening and then he climbed in the car and headed over to his friend's house. The next thing he did was send Hyde out on an errand to buy something completely irrelevant, but that sounded important when it came to pregnant women. That left him alone with Megumi, which was exactly what he needed. Hyde might have been oblivious to his manipulations, but it was clear, once her husband was gone, that Megumi knew exactly what was going on.

"I am sorry, Mei-chan," Gackt said, politely but firmly, "but I have to ask; is it his?"

He was surprised when Megumi laughed and it was an almost hysterical sound.

"It never even occurred to him to ask," she replied, sounding on the verge of some sort of breakdown. "I was terrified he'd think I'd been unfaithful, but he didn't so much as think it. Yes, Gackt," Megumi told him, looking him straight in the eye, "the baby is his; I have been with no other man."

It would have made the situation so much easier if she had just confessed to straying, but Gackt knew Megumi was telling him the truth. He was very skilled at reading people, especially mortals and the woman in front of him believed every word she had said. That meant that Hyde and Megumi had managed the impossible and, even though he was over half a millennium old, Gackt had no idea what was going on.

"We're going to Kyoto," he decided firmly; "there are people there who might be able to explain this."

Megumi just nodded and Gackt opened his cell phone to reserve them all tickets on the next shinkansen to Kyoto. It was going to be a much more interesting weekend than he had thought.

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Hyde had been a little surprised to find that they were all booked on the train to Kyoto when he returned to the house, but when Gackt was in a mood like his friend had been he was well aware that there was no arguing. That was why he found himself pulling up in a Taxi outside an ornate set of buildings which just screamed history at him. Kyoto was full of historical architecture, but he was happy to admit that the one he was looking at impressed him.

"Wow," was Megumi's comment as they all climbed out of their transportation.

Hyde would have given his own response as well, but he was distracted by the two people who appeared out of the gates of the residence before them and after bowing quickly to Gackt moved to pick up the bags from the trunk of the cab. Both the man and the woman were vampires, he knew it instinctively and something in him said 'kin'. Gackt was the only other member of the Dragon clan he had met so far since most of the vampires in Tokyo were from the local Lion clan and it felt strange to almost recognise people he had never met before.

He took his lead from Gackt, however, and did not interrupt the pair as they retrieved the things from the taxi. There were guards on the gate dressed in smart black suits, but they opened up without a word as Gackt approached. It was definitely an efficient organisation if nothing else. Inside was a small courtyard before what had to be the main house and waiting for them as they entered were two people. The first was a woman dressed in a sharp business suit and the first thing that Hyde noticed about her was that she was not Japanese; her features were Western and her hair was dark blond. Behind the woman was a man wearing a robe and hood that completely hid any identifying features, but Gackt did not seem to find this odd at all so Hyde took it in his stride.

"Dragon-sama," the woman said, bowing low, "it is an honour to welcome you home."

"Tanaka-san," Gackt replied formally, "it makes my heart glad to be welcomed."

Something in the atmosphere of the courtyard changed at that moment and Hyde could not suppress the shiver it sent up his spine. It was not a bad shiver at all, in fact quite the opposite and he felt as if he had come home as well.

"It's good to see you, Sarah-kun," Gackt greeted in an entirely different tone, "I have been remiss in not coming home more often."

Gackt then walked up to her and embraced her warmly. It appeared that things were only formal on the surface, which made Hyde very glad: he had had no wish to make a fool of himself because he didn't know the protocol.

"We miss you when you leave us, but we enjoy reading about your exploits in the magazines," Tanaka replied, seemingly just as pleased to see Gackt as he was to see her. "You have been very busy lately."

"The mortal world is very frenetic," Gackt replied before turning slightly. "Let me introduce you to our guests, Sarah-kun may I present Hyde and his lovely wife Megumi, Hyde-kun, Mei-chan, this is Sarah Tanaka the head of the law givers of the Dragon clan."

"How do you do," Hyde said politely and gave a small bow as Megumi followed suit.

"It is a pleasure to meet you, Hyde-san, Megumi-san," Tanaka said warmly, "I have heard much about both of you from Dragon-sama. Welcome to Kyoto. A meal is being prepared for you all, but please, forgive me for a moment, I must speak to Dragon-sama about a small matter before I take you through."

Hyde smiled and nodded as the woman drew Gackt away. It was then that he found himself looking at the other figure in the courtyard and he realised that, while he had been occupied, the male vampire had pushed his hood back.

Staring was rude, but Hyde couldn't help it as he studied the young looking vampire with pure white hair and white eyes. As Gackt talked quietly with Tanaka, Hyde found his whole attention taken by the only person in the courtyard who was not wearing modern clothes. The white-haired vampire had a small smile on his face and seemed to be waiting patiently for Gackt to finish whatever business was going on. The sense of familiarity Hyde had felt with the other vampires seemed to be doubled with the pale eyed man and when the individual actually looked at him it was like a jolt ran through him.

He had known that there would be some interest in him since he was Gackt's vampire child, but he wasn't expecting the bright smile that the white haired stranger gave him as soon as their eyes met.

"Kado-kun," Gackt's voice broke through the momentary connection and the other vampire looked away to his leader, "I am very glad you are here."

"I would not have missed this, Dragon-sama," the white haired vampire said with a small bow.

As Hyde tried to drag his attention away from the strange vampire, Gackt turned back to him and Megumi and Hyde was surprised to see a cheerful smile on his usually stoic friend's face.

"Hyde-kun, Mei-chan," Gackt introduced quickly, "this is Kado, Kado-kun, Hyde and Megumi."

"Very pleased to meet you," Kado said, walking forward and giving a formal bow.

Hyde found himself bowing back without thinking as politeness kicked in, but he found himself unnerved to find that those pale eyes were looking at him when he straightened back up. There was something about the colourless gaze that made him feel as if the other vampire could see straight into his head and he shifted awkwardly under the scrutiny.

"Kado has that effect on everybody," Gackt whispered in his ear as Hyde found himself looking away from the white-haired vampire.

"I heard that," Kado said with a good natured laugh that did a lot to dispel the unease Hyde was feeling, "and it is part of my job description. It takes a great deal of effort to be enigmatic and otherworldly."

Hyde found himself laughing along as Gackt chuckled at that.

"Kado-kun is our Guardian Seer," Gackt said with clear fondness in his voice, "and he seems to feel he must maintain the image of eccentric mystic when meeting new people."

"And whenever else he feels like it," Tanaka said from where she was standing off to one side.

"Age has its privileges," Kado replied in kind, "but enough about me, we have such exciting guests."

Hyde wanted to ask what being a Guardian Seer actually meant, but he couldn't really do so now without being rude. He didn't think that he or Megumi could really be 'exciting' on a vampire scale of things, but it was an interesting expression. Kado walked straight up to Megumi and looked down at her midriff with a small smile.

"Quite astonishing," the white haired vampire said, "may I?"

When Kado held out his hand Megumi looked rather surprised, but nodded anyway and Hyde found himself looking at Gackt for an explanation. He hadn't been aware that his friend had sent on word ahead about exactly why they were coming; he'd heard Gackt on the phone letting his people know they were on their way, but there had been no mention of why.

"I didn't tell him," Gackt said simply, which made Hyde want to ask a whole lot more questions even as he looked back at Kado who had his hand on Megumi's stomach and looked as if he was listening to something no one else could hear.

"Delightful," Kado said after a moment and pulled back, "thank you for allowing me to meet your child; such strength already."

Megumi just bobbed her head in response, obviously not sure how to take the rather strange individual.

"Boy or a girl," Gackt asked in a teasing tone, "or is that too easy a question for the Guardian Seer?"

"It hasn't decided yet," Kado replied with a smile like the cat with the cream.

It took a moment for Hyde to catch up since he was having trouble assimilating everything that was going on.

"I'm pretty sure biology doesn't work that way," he said as he thought about it.

It occurred to him that it might have been the wrong thing to say to someone of Kado's obvious importance and age, but the older vampire just grinned at him. Hyde was not sure what atmosphere he had expected, but everything seemed to be much less formal than he would have thought.

"I have not had much requirement to find out," Kado said cheerfully, "but never the less I stand by my statement. Certain pieces are not in place on the Shogi board yet for your little one to decide which way its destiny lies."

The way Kado's eyes flicked over to Gackt as he spoke made Hyde wonder what the white eyed vampire was thinking about his friend, but he thought he'd been rude enough. Kado could be as eccentric as he liked and Hyde decided to just accept it. Hyde had never been a big believer in the supernatural until it had been thrown in his face as being very real, so he wasn't too sure what he believed was and was not possible anymore and he was going through life with an open mind. Kado might be insane or might actually know what he was talking about and, until he was given a definitive as to which, Hyde decided to keep his mouth shut.

"And you, my dear child," Kado said and normally Hyde would have balked at being called a child, but it was as if he could see the age within the young looking body when he looked in Kado's eyes, "it is wonderful to finally meet you. Welcome to the Dragon clan."

"Thank you," he replied, feeling as if he had just passed a significant hurdle.

Kado held his gaze again for what seemed like a long time and Hyde almost felt as if the vampire's power was reaching into his mind, but it was so subtle that he could not be sure.

"Let's get everyone settled in," Gackt said and broke his train of thought.

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Gackt was rather enjoying Hyde's wide eyed stare as his friend came across new thing after new thing and it was no different when Hyde was shown into his suite after he had sent Hyde and Megumi to freshen up before dinner. He knew Hyde had a curious streak a mile wide and he was sure his friend would have been into everything given the chance.

He had had a traditional low dining table in his rooms up until very recently, but he had opted for the high western design when he had last had the rooms redone, so the beginnings of dinner were set out on it. Talking with Sarah he had sorted out some of the small details he had needed to deal with now he was back and she had gently reminded him it was about time Hyde was presented to the ancestors. Gackt would have come round to the idea eventually, but Sarah had a way of pointing out when he was avoiding things.

"This place is incredible," Hyde said as Gackt made sure his guests were sitting comfortably; "I never imagined anything like this. You said it was old, but it's amazing."

"This was one of the first structures in the area," Gackt explained, serving the drinks as he spoke. "It has been extended many times since, but it was here

before Kyoto was more than a village. The Dragons came here a very long time ago, although our origins are further south."

"So much history in one place," Megumi said with awe in her voice.

"You have no idea how hard it is to make some of our clan leave the past behind," he said, choosing to lighten the atmosphere. "I think it is one of the reasons Kado-kun all but kicked me out into the world the first time I expressed an interest in something other than the clan. If you let us, vampires can become very stuck in our ways."

Megumi laughed at that which had been his attention.

"Is Kado-san very old?" Hyde asked and Gackt wasn't surprised.

Kado had an effect on everyone who met him and Gackt had not missed how fascinating his friend had found the white haired vampire.

"Yes," he replied, "although I am not sure exactly how old. It is in the records, but Kado likes to be mysterious and we allow it by not looking. He is well over two thousand years old, that much I do know."

"How did he know about the baby?" Megumi asked almost immediately.

Gackt indicated that they should start eating before he decided to answer that question.

"I assume he foresaw it," he explained as he handed round one of the plates, "Kado's title is not ceremonial, he can see the future."

The slightly stunned look on Hyde's face made him smile, but he did notice that where once Hyde would have scoffed at such a thing his friend believed him without question this time.

"Is that common in vampires?" Hyde asked when the smaller man recovered from his shock.

"Highly unusual," Gackt replied, choosing some of the wonderful looking food for himself; "our clan is blessed in that respect."

"And Tanaka-san," Hyde seemed to be brimming over with questions, "has she been with the clan long?"

It was becoming obvious that he was not going to have much chance to eat anything until all the questions had been answered so Gackt put his chopsticks down to concentrate on the more important things.

"Not relatively speaking, no," he explained fondly, "Sarah-kun was made a vampire a little over three hundred years ago. She was the slave of a visitor to our city, the result of a shipwreck, I believe, although she does not speak of that time much, and she escaped onto our lands. The High Dragon appreciated her spirit and offered her the option of joining our clan, which she accepted. She became a law giver after only fifty years and the chief law giver when our last one was killed one hundred and twenty years ago in an unfortunate skirmish with some renegades. She is a very capable woman."



"It surprises me that a woman would hold such a role so long ago," was Megumi's comment on that.

He nodded; it was not an unusual thought for a mortal.

"Many vampire clans discovered equality of the sexes long before mortals," he told both his companions who seemed far more interested in what he had to say than the food. "Female vampires are little different from male since we do not have children and strength is more a matter of the mind than physical size. Age brings certain advantages, but it depends on the individual what those advantages are. Some maintained the traditional divide between male and female, but it is far more practical to utilise all your resources rather than excluding half for no reason."

Megumi appeared to find that very interesting and by the looks of things Hyde was assimilating the information ravenously.

"We have many traditions that might seem a little unusual," Gackt decided it was time to broach the subject of the ancestors.

"Like what?" Hyde asked, walking straight into the opening he had made.

"We have a shrine to the ancestors," he replied and saw the confusion on his companions' faces since this was not all that unusual, "where we can actually commune with those who have passed on, or at least some of us can."

That had Hyde's attention.

"Ghosts?" the smaller man asked.

"Spirits," Gackt explained with a small smile, "and most simply feel that the ancestors are there. It is traditional to present new vampires when they first visit the clan home."

Hyde didn't miss that and put the chopsticks, which the smaller singer had so far failed to use, down.

"That would include me?" Hyde said, but it wasn't really a question.

Gackt nodded.

"Normally there is little ceremony about it," he admitted, "but because you are my vampire child we will have to be a little more formal about it if you are willing."

There was a dubious expression on Hyde's face, but his friend nodded anyway.

"Formal how?"

"I will have to present you and there are traditional costumes for us both to wear," he said, hoping that Hyde would not mind. "Sarah-kun was kind enough to remind me when we arrived and if you are agreeable I would suggest we present you once we have finished dinner. It should not take long and it will please the clan."

It was not as if they were not used to costumes in their line of work and Hyde just nodded.

"I would be honoured to be presented to the ancestors," the smaller singer said.

Gackt smiled; that had been easier than he had thought.

"Thank you, Hyde-kun," he said, pleased, "the ceremonial costume will be in your room after dinner. For now I suggest we eat, Mei-chan needs to maintain her strength after all."

That earned him a smile from the young woman and finally they focused on the meal. Once the formalities were over they would have to broach the subject which had brought them here, but he had been put far more at ease when he had seen Kado's reaction to the baby. So far he was very glad he had brought Hyde and Megumi to Kyoto.

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Gackt ran his eyes over Hyde and did his best not to be too obvious. There was something inordinately sexy about the smaller man and always had been, and the fact that his friend was standing beside him in nothing more than a pair of white cotton pants, looking bewildered, did nothing to counter this innate effect Hyde always had on him. He'd given up trying to ignore it and so these days he just enjoyed it and tried to conceal what Hyde did to him from his friend.

The way Hyde's breathing had sped up when he had walked out of the shadows dressed in his ceremonial regalia confirmed to Gackt that he had a similar effect on Hyde as well and the smaller man was also doing his best to screen it. Sometimes it made Gackt wish he'd met Hyde before his young friend had fallen in love with Megumi, but then he watched them together and he could never in a million years wish to have deprived Hyde of that.

"I feel ridiculous," Hyde whispered as they stood shoulder to shoulder, or rather shoulder to ear since Hyde was significantly shorter than Gackt, waiting for the shrine doors to be opened.

"It is just tradition," Gackt replied, keeping his face towards the doors, but watching Hyde out of the corner of his vision. "Whether you like it or not the fact that I made you gives you certain rank in the clan and so you have to be presented to the ancestors. Just bow when I do and it'll be over before you know it."

The noise Hyde made in response was noncommittal.

"When you told me about this you didn't mention that the ceremonial clothes consisted of one garment," the smaller man replied. "I am freezing."

"It's all in your mind," Gackt replied smiling slightly, because if Hyde was complaining then his friend wasn't that worried; "vampires can't get frostbite."

The weather was not the best for standing outside in nothing but a pair of pants even though the courtyard had under floor heating, but Gackt could not help enjoying the view. His own robes were more substantial than Hyde's simple pants, but the over robe was still open all the way down the front to display his rank symbol. This was the only place he could be himself and he was not going to let a little cold worry him; at least it wasn't raining or snowing.

The doors finally began to swing open and Gackt put all other thoughts out of his mind. The High Dragon and the ancestors had a unique relationship in that they

deigned to speak to him and unless he concentrated the shrine could be a little overwhelming. Gackt was aware of spirits all the time; it was one of the reasons he had been chosen for his role, but the ancestors were far more insistent than most ghosts. He nodded to Kado as he took his first step forward and then he focused only on the dimly lit shrine.

There was always an amazing air of peace within the doors of the Dragon Clan's most special place and Gackt stopped just inside and let himself soak it in. He could feel Hyde close by his side and he remembered how disorientating the atmosphere could be to someone who had never felt it before, so he gave his friend time to adjust as the doors behind them closed again. Once inside the circle of candles and incense he knew he would start to hear the ancestors clearly and he wanted to make sure Hyde was settled before he was distracted.

Bowing to the heart of the shrine, he pulled around him the mental attitude of the High Dragon completely and then he began to walk forward. The moment he crossed into the circle he heard the whispering, as the lines between this world and the next thinned, and those beyond noticed him, but it was as Hyde stepped into the sacred space behind him that he heard the murmurs go up a level, becoming excited.

He heard Hyde gasp and momentarily wondered how much of the ancestors his friend was experiencing, but he kept his eyes on the shrine and just waited. It was not usually long before his predecessors would make themselves known, pass on any words of wisdom they felt necessary and then let him leave, but leaving before he was dismissed would be unforgivably rude. It was not that his clan worshiped the ancestors so much as they knew they were there and had experience and knowledge to offer their descendents, so they were honoured. It was all perfectly logical really, but the dead tended to become very eccentric with age, especially considering that many of them had been at hundreds of years old when they died to begin with, and so they were treated with the greatest respect.

The voices were becoming louder and more excited as he waited, but he could not make anything specific out, so he remained still, head slightly bowed. It was almost as if he was listening to a conversation that was not directed at him, since the ancestors were quite capable of making themselves only understood to one individual at a time if they so chose, but he could not think of why they would be excluding him.

It was not until fingers tugged rather erratically at the sleeve of his robe that he realised anything unusual was going on. He looked round sharply to find that Hyde was white as a sheet and swaying gently and, even as Gackt reacted, his friend's eyes rolled up into the back of his head and Hyde began to fall forward. Gackt caught Hyde without thinking about it and scooped him into his arms so that he was standing in the middle of the shrine with Hyde cradled to his chest.

"We approve," were the only words that came out of the whispering clearly and it took him a few moments to realise that the sounds were dying away.

He had been dismissed and he had very little idea of what had just happened. Being a vampire, he was used to strange and supernatural things, but for the life of him he could not explain what had just happened. He had expected a little excitement on the presentation of a vampire child of his making, but nothing like this. Holding Hyde close he turned fully and walked back towards the doors which opened at his approach.

Kado was waiting for him outside and the smile on the man's face was beaming and Gackt realised that at least one person in the clan had expected this outcome. Once he had put Hyde safely to bed, he and Kado were going to have a talk.

## End of Chapter 1

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### Chapter 2 Secrets Revealed

"What's going on, Kado-kun?" Gackt asked the moment the doors to his office closed behind them both as they walked in. "You lit up the moment you saw Hyde with me and when we came out of the shrine you were positively glowing. You know why Hyde passed out, don't you."

"Of course," Kado replied with his usual enigmatic smile, "but I must say I hadn't expected to see him so soon. A child of chaos must have crossed your paths because I did not believe I would be meeting your Hyde for several years yet."

Gackt frowned; the number of times Kado had been wrong in a prediction could be counted on one hand, and the children of chaos as Kado called those individuals who were capable of circumventing what he saw, were always trouble. There was no doubt in Gackt's mind who their trouble had been.

"Lee," he said without any doubt, "it must have been Lee. I would never have turned Hyde except to save him."

"Yes you would have," Kado said placidly, sitting down on one of the ornate chairs, "but that is a tale that will no longer be told."

The desire to ask about that comment almost had the better of Gackt then, but he knew from experience that if Kado said he would not talk about something his companion would stand firm. What would have happened to him and Hyde in the future had Lee not interfered was not a subject he was going to find out about no matter what he asked.

"What happened to Hyde?" he turned his curiosity back on to the present.

"He was overwhelmed," Kado told him and he could not help feeling momentarily irritated when that was all Kado said.

It seemed to be a general methodology for Kado to make those around him work for any information, and just occasionally Gackt wanted to strangle the ancient vampire.

"Why?" he asked, trying to keep his voice even and pointedly ignoring the partial smile on his companion's face.

"Because he is a seer," Kado said with such little fanfare that Gackt almost didn't take it in, "or he will be, given a century or two."

Gackt sat down as the implications of Kado's words settled in his mind; this was big, far bigger than he had ever expected.

"Your Hyde is my great, great, add many more greats in here, grandson," Kado said with a broad smile this time, "and he will eventually take my place. I've been seeing his face for about fifty years now, but I had believed he would come to us somewhat later than this."

"You knew he was coming and you didn't tell me?" Gackt was incredulous; something this important to the clan was not something that was ever kept secret.

There were two roles in the clan which were sacrosanct, that of High Dragon and the role of Guardian Seer, both of which were closely linked. No other clan in Japan could claim to have a seer and fate always brought the next one back to the Dragons, always from the same line and always destined to take the place of their ancestor. At least it explained why Hyde had been so interesting to him even as a mortal; it was destiny.

"Had I told you, you would never have gone into the world again," Kado said without the slightest trace of remorse, "and since you became High Dragon you have given far too much of yourself to the clan. You needed to let go for a while and it is not as if we do not have time. Your Hyde will not begin to come into his full powers for several decades yet and you both seem to be enjoying what you are doing."

"But he's a seer," Gackt protested; seers were so rare that they were a treasure and just letting Hyde wander around for years without having him brought to the safety of the clan seemed like madness.

"And his destiny is with us," Kado said simply; "nothing could have stopped that, not even an army of chaos."

"He was almost taken by another clan," Gackt said as his mind showed him images of how he had found Hyde that night.

"But you were there to bring him to us," Kado pointed out. "Destiny cannot be avoided, my young friend, and I have learned to trust in such things over my long life. We are often too cautious."

Gackt wasn't sure if he wanted to rant and rave or just accept what his friend said; he had never been a big believer in destiny.

"The baby," he said as it occurred to him why this could be happening.

"Quite unprecedented," Kado said with a nod, seemingly pleased that he had brought it up, "but necessary. The line cannot be broken and so the seemingly impossible has occurred; Hyde must pass on his legacy and so he has fathered a child. Had this Lee not interfered I believe Hyde would have come to us after having had a family."

Gackt decided he needed a drink.

"Sake?" he asked Kado and waited for a nod before standing to retrieve the set he always had sitting on his book shelf.

The whole ritual of filling their cups for each other for the first round gave him time to think and the burn of the liquid down his throat was a welcome distraction. Things were becoming far too complicated too fast for his liking.

"You must bond with Hyde as quickly as possible, of course," Kado said just as Gackt took a second sip of sake.

He was almost sure his friend had timed that deliberately as he choked on the rice wine.

"You said we had time," he said, as he brought his spluttering under control, "why do we have to bond so soon?"

"Because his full power may take time to develop, but parts are already beginning to manifest," was the calm response. "Surely you have noticed he is empathic and is blocking it. It will drive him mad if he does not accept it soon and his connection to the ancestors is already open and the only way to stabilise it is for you to bond with him. He must be bound to the clan through you."

As soon as Kado had announced that Hyde was a seer, Gackt had known that this was inevitable, but the fact that Kado had been talking in decades and centuries meant he had been sure that it was not an issue yet. The problem was that bonding involved a very intimate ritual that basically came down to blood and sex and he could just see Hyde reaction to that.

"He's happily married and not interested," Gackt pointed out, thinking of what a hideous mess this was all turning out to be.

Surprisingly Kado laughed at that.

"You can lie to yourself, Little Dragon," Kado said, using the nickname Gackt had not heard since before he took the mantel of High Dragon, "but you cannot lie to me, and I was not suggesting you take him from his wife; she will need your strength as well. If this child is to survive the beautiful flower must also be bound to our clan."

Gackt's sake cup bounced onto the rug as his fingers failed to hold it. His mind filled with every denial, but there was one thing he knew without a shadow of a doubt; Kado had never, ever been wrong.

"She's mortal," he grasped the one flaw he could see in Kado's plan.

"And will remain so for some time yet," Kado replied, sipping his sake elegantly, "but either you or Hyde will turn her eventually; it is unclear which. Hyde has already prepared whether he realises it or not; he has carried part of her essence with him since the first time he tasted her blood and should he turn her she will return to that moment in age. I would suggest you do the same when you bond with her. She will make a very fine law giver one day."

There was news and then there was the sort of news Kado delivered; Gackt really didn't know what to think.

"I could bond with them and then leave them be," he said eventually, looking at Kado very carefully.

"You could," the other vampire acknowledged, sipping more of his drink.

"But I shouldn't," Gackt did not need to ask a question, he knew from the way his companion had spoken that his suggestion was wrong.

"It is your choice, my friend," Kado told him, white eyes seeming to look directly into his soul, "destiny cannot control your heart, but a difficult path now will see you at the top of the mountain later."

Gackt sat silently in his chair for a while, looking at his hands and contemplating the situation. There were so many factors and one of them was quite obvious to him.

"He was hurt," he said eventually, feeling the guilt well up inside of him, "I did not arrive in time to save him. I cannot ask this of Hyde so soon."

"You must," Kado said simply; "it is the only way to heal him."

Now Gackt looked up again, straight at his companion.

"I know what happened, Little Dragon," Kado told him openly, "I have seen his heart. He is of my line and his mind is open to me. He hides from his gifts because they came to be in that moment when he was most broken and it is this which will destroy him unless you help him to heal. For a mortal there are other ways and ironically more time, for your Hyde you are the only solution."

"But the idea will horrify him for so many reasons," Gackt could not see how any of this would help Hyde at all.

Hyde seemed to just about be putting what happened in Taiwan behind him and this would open up that wound all over again. He knew for a fact that Hyde had only begun having sex with Megumi again recently and he could only imagine what the idea of having a man in his bed would do to his friend.

"He loves you, although he refuses to admit the whole of his feelings even to himself," Kado told him with a certainty that had all of Gackt's attention. "This will not be easy for either of you, but your Hyde denies what he is to himself and it is destroying him. Only this will bring him any peace."

Gackt did not know what to say to that; it appeared he had no choice.

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Hyde was really getting fed up of surprises and he was not in the greatest mood when he woke up and realised he'd made an idiot out of himself again. The shrine had been interesting to say the least and he sat up, rather annoyed that he seemed to have overreacted.

"Feeling better?"

He almost jumped out of his skin as he looked over to see Kado standing quietly by the wall.

"Yes," he said, his tone sharper than he intended because of his annoyance, "thank you," he tacked on the end.

He had to be the laughing stock of the clan by now; his first bit of proper vampire tradition and he had wimped out.

"You have nothing to be ashamed of, Hyde-san," Kado said as Hyde continued to berate himself mentally.

When he looked up from where he had started glaring at the bed, Hyde realised Kado was much closer than the other vampire had been before and to his surprise he didn't feel in the slightest bit on edge. He appeared to be alone in his bedroom; sitting on the bed half naked with a strange male vampire not more

than three feet from him and it sparked no trepidation in him at all. He was so amazed by this that he almost forgot his irritation completely.

"You are wondering why my presence does not alarm you," Kado said with a small smile.

It occurred to Hyde that he had no idea what Gackt had told the elders of his clan and he could feel the edges of shame creeping back into his thoughts as he realised they might know everything. He looked away from his companion again, hoping that his lack of composure was not being noted.

"When I spoke of shame, my child," Kado said in an almost serene tone, "I was speaking of everything."

Hyde definitely did not want to have this conversation, but it wasn't as if he could just run away. He and Megumi needed the clan's help to figure out what was best for their baby and if what Gackt had told him earlier was true then their best bet was Kado.

"How many people has Gatchan told?" he asked, hoping to at least be prepared for it in the future.

"No one," Kado said and Hyde looked up to see a sad smile on his companion's face, "I can read your mind, my child, and I see your pain."

He did not know how to respond to that; he felt exposed and vulnerable and yet it was easier as well. Part of him realised that he did not have to try and explain anything to Kado; the older vampire simply understood.

"We are kin, Hyde-san," Kado continued to speak and Hyde chose to just listen, "you are of my line. The clan has been expecting you since the last Dragon chose to continue his journey on another plane and I have seen your face in my dreams for longer than your lifetime."

"Why?" was the only sensible question that Hyde could think to ask.

Kado sank down onto the bed to sit next to him.

"Let me tell you a little about your life," the white haired vampire said and patted him lightly on the arm. "Since you were very small you have always known your own mind; when offered a choice, many times you instinctively know which is the right decision; you can read a crowd of people and know almost exactly what to do to enflame them, but you do not make friends easily because it takes you a long time to become comfortable around new people; sometimes life saddens you because you know that there is positively no way to fix certain things. These things have always been aspects of you and it took you a long time to realise that not everyone else was the same."

Hyde just sat there, almost dreading what was coming next.

"All your ancestors have these traits to some degree, Hyde-san," Kado continued, "it is our gift and to a few, a curse. Once, so long ago that it is lost in the mists of time, one of our ancestors was saved by a vampire prince and in gratitude he swore fealty to his new lord. His thanks were so sincere that his oath bound our family to the clan of his lord for eternity. He became the first Guardian Seer and, when his life came to an end, one of his descendants took his place, and so it has been down the generations. I am the fifth and you will be the sixth."



Too many thoughts seemed to be trying to gain access to Hyde's brain as he stared at Kado in disbelief.

"I'm not a seer," he said with all the confidence he could gather, since this was that one step too far from what he had always thought was reality.

"But you are, my child," Kado said in a kindly, grandfatherly way that really did not match the young face looking at Hyde, "and you will come into your gifts as I did and as those before me did. Do not worry, I will be here to guide you; I have no intention of giving up on life just yet and it will be centuries before you are ready to take my place, but you must accept who you are. This is why you and your lovely wife have achieved the impossible; our line cannot be broken and you were taken by a child of chaos before your time so fate has changed the rules."

This was just too bizarre; Hyde had expected to come to Kyoto, meet a few people and find out that by some quirk of genetics he and Megumi had managed something very rare, but not impossible. He had never expected to hear anything about psychics or being singled out even more than he seemed to have been already.

"Why me?" was the question he finally settled on.

"It is time," Kado replied simply, "and you are the product of the generations at this moment. You have already felt the beginning of the awakening of your powers, Hyde-san, and you must accept them. Your reaction to the ancestors was an example of what will continue to happen unless you choose to understand what you are."

"But that was just in the shrine," Hyde said, not understanding the connection to anything from the rest of his life.

Kado gave him another sympathetic smile and he knew some other revelation was on the way. He really didn't need this now, but the very frustrating thing with Kado was that he knew instinctively that what the vampire told him was true.

"And your sensitivity to the dead will only develop slowly," Kado reassured him kindly, "but you will begin to notice them at times. What is already affecting you is your empathy."

An instant denial leapt into Hyde's mind, but he did not voice it as a memory swamped him. His mind filled with the recollection of evil and for a moment he could no longer see Kado, all that his thoughts would show him was Lee's mocking face. It took him what seemed like an eternity to banish the image and he lost all track of the world around him, only slowly coming back as he felt calm caring seeping into him.

When he finally knew where he was again he found that he was no longer simply sitting up in bed; Kado was gently cradling him in his arms, rocking him and talking to him quietly. He had not had a flashback this bad in a long time and he was shaking as he struggled to push it away. Only when he had himself more or less back under control did Kado finally release him, helping him to sit up and gather himself together as well as possible.

"Yes," Kado said gently as Hyde did his best to put his composure back together, "that was when it first broke free. You have been repressing it since, but it has broken free on more than one occasion. When our line become vampires we are

erratic creatures and we need a ground for our powers or they begin to drive us mad."

Hyde looked up at that, shocked by Kado's words, but at least it gave him something else on which to focus.

"Ground?" he asked, using the need to know to banish the last of his flashback.

"The Guardian Seer is always bound to the clan," Kado told him with simple honesty, "specifically to the High Dragon."

That confused Hyde somewhat.

"But I am bound to Gatchan," he said, not sure what Kado meant; "he made me."

Kado inclined his head in acknowledgement of the statement.

"I was also made by my Dragon," Kado explained calmly, "but that bond is between child and maker, not clan and individual. There is a far more intimate bond that will tie the power of the clan to you through Dragon-sama."

"Intimate?" Hyde did not like where the conversation was going.

"It is a ritual of sex and blood," Kado said with stark honesty.

"Why?" asking a question was the only way Hyde could stop himself rejecting everything out of hand.

"Because vampires are base creatures and those are the things which rule us," Kado was clearly not trying to avoid the fundamentals of the subject.

For a few moments Hyde sat in silence looking at his ancestor and let his mind mull over what he was being told.

"And when is this supposed to happen?" he asked, uncomfortably suspicious that he already knew the answer.

"As soon as possible," Kado told him in a no nonsense tone.

"I'm married with a child on the way," Hyde pointed out, feeling vaguely angry now; he had come here to protect his wife and baby and the first thing that was being suggested was that he be unfaithful.

Kado did not seem to care about his tone and continued to look at him with complete calm.

"I have already spoken to your delightful wife," the white haired vampire said eventually, "while we waited for you to wake up. It is not just you who must be bound to the clan; for your child to survive she must bind herself to the Dragons as well."

Hyde forgot his own anger and was instantly outraged for Megumi; she wasn't even a vampire and Kado had dared suggest this.

"Peace, Hyde-san," Kado said and Hyde felt a wave of calm float down over him, "I speak only of that which must be done. If there was another way I would give it to you, but this is how it must be."

"And what did the High Dragon have to say about this?" he asked, still annoyed, but no longer irrational.

Hyde wanted someone to blame and at that moment Gackt felt like a very good target.

"This is not his doing, Hyde-san," Kado said with a completely serious expression on his face, "and he was as distressed by the necessity as you are. He loves you a great deal and he would never have asked this of you. He holds the power of the clan within him and this power must be accessed to save you and your child."

It was not that easy to placate Hyde's anger and he continued glaring; he needed something tangible to be the cause of this, the answer that it was his lot in life did not sit well with him. He would have said that man was firmly in charge of his own destiny, but he had learned too many things lately for that to be completely true.

"Why isn't he here explaining this?" he asked, wanting at least some valid reason to be annoyed with Gackt.

"Because I told him I had to do it," Kado said in what seemed to be his normal reasonable tone. "You would have reacted even more badly to him telling you the truth and neither you nor he need more stress in this situation. Do you have even the first idea how much he cares for you?"

That brought Hyde up short because he had to shake his head. He knew intimately what Lee had thought of him and yet he didn't have anywhere near the same knowledge about Gackt, the man who had saved him. It was obvious Gackt cared, but exactly how much the older vampire had never revealed.

"When he has told people he loves you it has not been the joke the media believe it to be," Kado said, revealing that he knew a great deal about Gackt's career as well as his clan position. "You have felt the attraction between you many times, but this runs far deeper than that. He would have let you live your life never giving him more than friendship; that is how much he loves you, child. I am not often permitted to see into the heart of our Dragon-sama, but I have seen this; this is why I knew I had to be the one to speak with you."

Hyde sat silently after Kado had told him everything in such stark truth and his anger slowly melted away. There was no one to be angry with; this was no more Gackt's fault for saving his life and making him a vampire than it was his fault for not running in the other direction when Lee had approached him.

"And Megumi?" he asked, needing to know everything before he could think about the situation properly.

"Is a most open minded young woman," Kado said with a small smile. "You bond your wife and your maker together, Hyde-san, it is that simple, and they share the love of friends, but nothing more."

That at least made sense.

"And after?" he wanted to understand what this would really mean.

"With others I would say that once the bond is secure they could return to what they had been, but you will not be able to," Kado said completely honestly. "I

believe that Megumi and even our Dragon-sama could put what you must do behind them, but you cannot."

That wasn't really what Hyde wanted to hear.

"You are an empath, child," Kado told him gently, "and once you have felt the truth you will not be able to go back. The strength of your soul amazes me, but once you have touched the beauty the three of you will produce you will not be able to give it up. Let me show you what I see."

When Kado reached towards him Hyde did not shy away and he looked deep into the white eyes staring in him as Kado placed finger tips on each of his temples. For a moment it was like vertigo as if he was spinning out of control and then he was watching a scene play out in front of him:

He was sitting with Megumi in a place he did not recognise and they were laughing about something on a screen built into the table behind which they were seated. His hair was almost completely white, only streaked with dark lines here and there and when he looked up towards the door his eyes were pale, but not yet white like Kado's.

"Gatchan," he heard himself greet warmly, "we have a new message from our trouble maker; it seems it is far more exciting away from here."

"I would have said it was more peaceful here without the young to run under our feet," Gackt replied, but, as Hyde watched, his friend walked behind his future self and Megumi.

He could not take his eyes off the three as they exchanged warm kisses of greeting before bending over the screen again. It was clear even to Hyde that all three were very much devoted to each other. He did not think this was the near future either, but he did not know when it was and the scene began to fade before he could see anything that would tell him.

"When is that?" he asked as soon as Kado's face swam back into view.

"Approximately two hundred years from now," Kado replied openly. "It is one of two futures I see and now is the pivotal moment. I told our Dragon-sama this and I will tell you as well, a difficult path now will see you at the top of the mountain later."

Hyde stared at his hands for a while, worrying on his lip with his teeth as he tried to think this through. It seemed so fantastic, so completely out there and crazy, but it was clear what Kado thought.

"I need to speak to Megumi," he said eventually; this was not something he could decide on his own.

"Of course," Kado said as if that was the exact response he had expected, "when you have made your choice ask your attendant to bring you to the Dragon-sama's rooms."

Hyde was nodding and Kado was leaving before the underlying implication of those instructions made it through to his muddled brain. It was very clear what Kado thought was going to happen next.

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When Kado had spoken to him, Hyde had felt many things, but afraid was not one of them. When the seer spoke of things they seemed so logical and reasonable, but he had had longer to think about it now and he could not shake the real fear which had taken hold of him. He had never told Gackt what Lee had done to his mind, pretending to be him; he had only admitted that Lee had confounded his mind before simply raping him and Hyde was terrified that he would freak the moment Gackt tried to touch him in any sexual way at all. Yet here he was outside Gackt's rooms with Megumi at his side.

They had talked for a good hour and come to the only sensible conclusion; they had to do this. Hyde had no idea how they were going to do it, but he could be very pragmatic when he had to be and he definitely didn't want to go insane. Kado opened the door just as he raised his hand to knock.

"Welcome," Kado said with a smile and vacated the doorway to let them in.

Hyde let Megumi go first and then followed his wife into the room. He made himself walk into the room without hesitating, but it took more effort than he wanted to admit. The simple idea of sex had him terrified. Even Gackt looked awkward, standing on the other side of the room. The only person who appeared remotely relaxed was Kado and Hyde was pretty sure his ancestor had looking calm in every situation down to an art form.

"Hyde-kun, Mei-chan," Gackt greeted politely and Megumi smiled back at their friend, but Hyde just did his best not to bolt.

"This is ridiculous," he decided loudly as an awkward silence threatened to engulf them and he became exasperated with his own psyche.

Willing himself into motion he stopped hovering just inside the doorway, took Megumi's hand and led her to an ornate looking couch and sat down. If he was going to panic he was going to do it in comfort at least.

"Quite," Kado said with a smile, "this awkwardness serves no purpose. You all know what must be done and as friends I am sure you will find a way for it to happen."

As Hyde watched, Gackt actually closed his eyes as if the singer was having a quiet talk with himself and when his friend looked back at him again most of the tension was gone. Gackt even managed a pleasant smile.

"I apologise for my behaviour," Gackt said and Hyde couldn't help but feel his friend was perfectly sincere about that; "you are both very welcome here."

He nodded an acknowledgement and Megumi gave a quiet, "Thank you."

"What are we going to do?" Hyde asked what he knew was on all their minds.

It wasn't that he was feeling suddenly brave; he just needed to know what to expect.

"If I may," Kado said in a tone Hyde was sure was meant to be calming, but which didn't seem to be working too well on him, "all three of you must become comfortable with each other."

It sounded so obvious, but Hyde didn't see how that was going to be possible as he tried not to become too worked up. When Kado walked over to him and

placed a hand on his shoulder he accepted the feeling of calm that flowed over him from the ancient vampire; it helped, although it didn't solve the underlying problem.

"How?" he asked, willing to take any advice.

His logical side told him that they needed to solve this dilemma, but he could not think how.

"There must be no barriers between you all," Kado said when Gackt nodded at the seer to go on. "When you finally come together there must be as little transition as possible; it must be a natural progression."

It all sounded reasonable.

"But how would you suggest we accomplish this, Kado-kun?" Gackt asked and Hyde was glad that he was not the only one who did not see how to reach their goal.

Kado gave a small smile at that.

"I would suggest you spend time together as nature intended," Kado said and Hyde wasn't much clearer.

"I don't understand," he admitted and looked to Megumi and Gackt.

Megumi at least was looking confused, but Gackt seemed to have caught on.

"I believe that Kado-kun is implying we should be naked," Gackt said without seemingly remotely embarrassed by the suggestion.

Hyde felt his face heating up just at the idea.

"You're kidding," he said, trying to get his head around the suggestion.

Megumi appeared to be reserving judgement.

"Actually, it is a sensible suggestion," Gackt replied, causing Hyde's heart to beat a little faster. "Familiarity leads to comfort and if we were to spend time together without clothes the move to eventual intimacy will be less traumatic."

Hyde looked to his wife to see if she had anything to say since his instincts were rebelling loudly, but his logical mind could not find any objection to the theory.

"It sounds like it might work," Megumi said, although she sounded somewhat unsure.

"These rooms have everything we may need," Gackt said and Hyde was sure his friend was seriously considering their options, "and if we sequester ourselves in here we could attempt what Kado-kun is suggesting."

It was one of those moments where Hyde had no idea what to say; the whole idea had a strange kind of logic and yet was ringing every alarm bell in his head. The main question in his thoughts was could he do it anyway? He was having enough trouble just being there fully clothed and removing his last line of defence was not an idea he relished. Of course they had to do something and everyone was looking at him expectantly to see what he was going to say.

"Okay," he eventually said, reluctant, but seeing no other solution.

Kado gave him a smile for trying.

"Then I shall leave you, my friends," the ancient vampire said, sounding pleased. "Do not worry, Hyde-san," Kado told him in a quieter tone as the vampire went to leave, "you will be fine. Just remember that the best lovers are always friends first."

He nodded and watched his ancestor leave, but he could not help feeling incredibly nervous when he turned back to Gackt and Megumi.

"I believe this will only become more awkward the longer we think about it," Gackt said with the stark honesty Hyde had begun to value from his friend. "I think it would be better to act immediately."

Megumi nodded her agreement and Hyde gave his consent as well; if he was going to do this he knew it had to be before his insecurities had the better of him. He was not surprised when Gackt was the first to move, after all it was Gackt who had told the world that he liked to wander around hotel rooms naked.

Hyde just stood there staring as Gackt slowly began to strip off his clothes; he couldn't quite make himself believe they were going to do this and Gackt was almost naked before he felt hands on his shirt. He turned to find Megumi carefully undoing his buttons and he blinked as he realised his wife was already completely naked. How he'd missed that he would never know.

"I will be here for you," she said quietly as she continued to undress him and he was so dazed that he let her.

Only as she pushed his shirt off his shoulders did his mind kick back into gear as he felt eyes on him and his instinctive reaction was to grab on to the material and keep it. It took a lot of effort to look up and see Gackt watching and allow Megumi to remove his shirt completely. When she returned after folding and placing it on the side and reached for his belt he caught her hand; he had to be part of this or it was useless. His fingers were shaking as he pulled the buckle free, but he followed through with the button and fly and pushed his remaining clothes off at the same time.

Begin naked and vulnerable made him want to run and hide somewhere safe and he had to keep reminding himself that here was safe. Neither Megumi or Gackt would ever hurt him and he did his best to gather himself and stop the threatening panic attack.

"Would anyone like a drink?" Gackt asked, striding across the room with complete confidence. "I have a very old cognac that was a gift from a visiting member of a European family; I think both of you might like it."

"Thank you," Megumi replied for them both since Hyde was having enough trouble just standing there.

He had no idea how Gackt could just act as if nothing had changed and prayed that he would begin to settle down soon.

End of Chapter 2

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### Chapter 3 Clan Bonds

There were many things Hyde could have expected from an evening in Gackt's company, especially when they were both naked, but playing video games was not one of them. Gackt had had some things to do with the clan that needed taking care of, some paper work or something and after a little bolstering alcohol he had simply given Hyde and Megumi the run of his rooms while he worked at the desk. Hyde had been in no state for anything sensible so Megumi had turned on the PS2 and handed him a controller.

It was as he died spectacularly for what had to be the fifteenth time at the same obstacle that he heard a deep chuckle behind him.

"You're zigging when you should be zagging," Gackt said from what couldn't have been more than a couple of feet behind him.

"I tried zagging," Hyde replied with shake of his head, "it doesn't work either. I supposed you've finished the entire game?"

"It's new, I haven't played it yet," Gackt said as Hyde looked over his shoulder at him, "perhaps Mei-chan could show us how it is done."

"I prefer to watch," Megumi replied and the grin that brought to Gackt's face was priceless.

Megumi realised what she had said almost instantly and blushed beautifully, and even Hyde found himself grinning at the whole idea.

"Well we could try that later," Gackt said in an amused tone, "but for now I believe we should retire for the night. It is almost three and although the clan is semi-nocturnal I know how much Hyde likes his sleep."

Hyde looked at the simple digital clock on the table next to the PS2 and found that it was indeed nearly three in the morning. He hadn't even noticed the time passing, but then ever since he had been turned he had become more of a voluntary night-owl himself, going to bed late and sleeping in when possible rather than being forced into it by his life style. Gackt had told him that vampires tended to need less sleep the older they became, but Hyde had seen nothing of that so far and he still liked a good night's sleep as much as he ever had.

"The bathroom is just through there," Gackt said and indicated another beautifully carved door. "I have already used the facilities and you should find all your toiletries inside."

Switching off the game, Hyde refused to think about one fact that had been preying on his mind before he had become engrossed in the PS2 and he headed for the bathroom with Megumi. He managed to avoid the whole subject in his mind until he returned to the bedroom and then it was rather obvious: there was only one bed. It was large and low, but there was definitely only the one and Gackt was already in it.

Gackt looked at him expectantly as he just stood there; clearly he was supposed to get in, after all the whole idea was to get close to each other so that when they finally decided to bond he wouldn't completely freak. It wasn't even as if he hadn't slept in the same bed as Gackt before, because in Taiwan he literally hadn't been able to sleep without Gackt and Megumi there for several weeks, but there had been no sexual overtones then and they definitely hadn't been naked.



The attraction between them was still very much there, but they had successfully been ignoring the issue since Hyde's need to feed from Gackt had passed.

"I do not bite unless invited," Gackt was obviously trying to lighten the mood with his comment, but Hyde still couldn't bring himself to move and the smile on Gackt's face faded quickly. "What is it, Hyde-kun?"

What Lee had done was not something he wanted to share and he felt like such an idiot, but Hyde simply couldn't make himself climb onto the bed. Every time he thought he might have conquered the problem, he went to move and Lee with Gackt's face flashed into his head. When he had realised what was happening to him that night it had been one of the most terrifying experiences of his life and he was beginning to realise quite how far he had to go before he could leave it behind. If he wasn't careful he was going to panic.

"Hyde-kun," Gackt said gently as if speaking to a small child as he very slowly climbed out from under the covers, "please tell me what is the matter."

The familiar feeling of power and warmth filled Hyde as his maker moved closer to him, but this time it was not enough to chase away his demons. They were not just interacting as maker and child now and he could not simply fall back on the comfort that having Gackt close usually gave him. When Gackt carefully placed a hand on his shoulder he almost flinched away, but he managed to just about hold still.

"I will never hurt you," Gackt said quietly and in a tone that begged no argument, "and I will do everything in my power to make sure no one else can either."

Hyde didn't know whether to laugh or cry; how could he tell Gackt that although it hadn't really been the older vampire, as far as his instincts were concerned Gackt had already hurt him? Logic and reason told him that it had all been Lee, but that didn't stop the images from showing him Gackt.

"He made me think it was you," he said before he could run away from that hardship too, "when I first woke up he made me think he was you."

Gackt's expression went from calm and careful to horrified in a second and Hyde knew he had hurt his friend. It was the pain he saw in Gackt's face that spurred him into action and as his friend and maker went to remove his hand Hyde caught it and held it on his shoulder.

"I know it wasn't you," he said fiercely as he tried to burn the image from his mind, "I knew then as well; I knew you would never hurt me. I refuse to be a slave to an illusion any more."

And with that he turned to Gackt, reached up and pulled his companion's face down to his and kissed Gackt as passionately as he knew how. It was probably not the most sensible move in the world given his current mental state, but it was all he could think of. Gackt was clearly startled by the move, but warmed to the idea very quickly and Hyde felt himself pulled close to another warm body as he danced his tongue across Gackt's lips. He was desperate to remove the taint from his memory; to drive Gackt's face from overlaying Lee's actions and to do that he needed Gackt now.

In his desperation he reached out with everything he had and it was like something opened inside him. As he pushed himself against Gackt it was as if floodgates opened in his mind and body and he was swamped by the most

wonderful feelings. Love, desire and caring flooded through him and his own thought processes dissolved under the onslaught, melting into the beautiful confusion as if he was being absorbed.

"Hyde-kun," a voice called to him from what seemed like a long way away, but he was too busy basking in the glory of what he was feeling to answer. "Hyde-kun," the voice was more insistent the second time and for the briefest moment he felt something that was physical not mental.

Almost as if that one glimpse was enough to bring back reality the wonderful world he had found slowly faded until he came back to himself and realised that Gackt was holding him up. Blinking up at Gackt in what he was sure looked to be a very stupid manner he did his best to reassert some semblance of sense and it slowly dawned on him whose emotions he had become lost in.

"Hyde-kun," Gackt was speaking very slowly, "are you all right?"

He would have replied, but as he went to speak he found himself taken by the most almighty yawn so he nodded instead. His whole body felt warm and tingly, but his wits were still a little scrambled.

"Empathy," was about the most sensible thing he could think of to say, "sleep now."

Gackt didn't seem to know how to take this revelation, but when Hyde turned towards the bed and almost fell over his own feet his friend moved to help. Whatever had happened had blown his mind and wiped him out and he decided that it made life a damn sight easier as he climbed into bed with Gackt's help. He was falling asleep as his head hit the pillow, even before Megumi had reappeared from the bathroom.

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Gackt carefully pulled away from where he had been partially curled around Hyde and pushed himself up on one arm so he could see his bed companions properly. How someone as small as Hyde could take up so much of the bed, Gackt was at a loss to explain, but the other vampire seemed to have half the bed where he was snoring quietly on his front with one arm thrown haphazardly over Megumi. It really was an adorable picture and for a moment he did consider picking up his mobile from the table beside the bed and taking a shot, but it was possible Hyde might then try and kill him so he decided against it.

When Hyde had admitted the whole truth about what Lee had done to him, Gackt had been almost sure they were headed for disaster, but the kiss afterwards had been, quite frankly, amazing. He was pretty sure he knew why Hyde had all but passed out afterwards, because he'd quizzed Kado about everything to do with empathy to make sure of what he was up against and Kado had said that the most complex thing an empath could do was give back some of what they were feeling. When Hyde had kissed him, Gackt had definitely felt something coming from the smaller vampire; not amazingly strong, but something nevertheless, and he was almost positive Hyde shouldn't have been able to do that yet. Of course, compared to fathering a child, displaying more advanced empathy than he should have been capable of was a trifle, but Gackt was putting nothing past Hyde anymore.

His eyes travelled over to the beauty lying next to her husband and Gackt could not help the small smile that played at his mouth as he looked at Megumi. She was definitely a stunning woman, but Gackt knew that Hyde would never have

fallen for her without the passionate person behind the beautiful face. He considered himself lucky to be one of the people who knew her; they had become close friends since Taiwan, but he had never expected this development in their relationship. Necessity made strange bedfellows, this time literally.

It had occurred to him that one day Megumi might want to join her husband as a vampire and he had been prepared to grant the request, but he had never considered this kind of scenario. He still wasn't sure that Kado was right and completing the bonding and leaving Hyde and Megumi to their lives was still an idea that lurked at the back of his mind, but he didn't quite understand what he had felt coming from Hyde when they had kissed.

For all he knew it was a reflection of what Hyde must have been experiencing from him, but it hadn't really felt like that to him. However, he had never felt anything from an empath before, only when a blood link had been established had he sensed anything from someone else and so he knew he might have been reading more into this than there was. He had always told himself that the only thing between him and Hyde from Hyde's side was friendship with a good side of lust, but what he had felt hadn't been that and he was beginning to believe Kado was right about Hyde.

He glanced at the clock and was not surprised to find that it was only a little after seven in the morning. His internal clock was very good at waking him and he carefully climbed from the bed. It was unlikely either of his companions would be awake for some time and so he walked to the bathroom silently; there were many things he could do without waking his guests.

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It was about noon and Hyde was of the opinion that this was one of the strangest days he had ever lived so far. When he'd woken up, he had discovered that both Gackt and Megumi had been awake before him, although Megumi was still in bed with him and it had taken a vigorous shower to chase the last sleep away from his dozey mind. Then they had all had breakfast, or rather brunch, which they had taken their time on, and then they'd just started doing normal things; all naked. Hyde had borrowed Gackt's laptop and was currently surfing the internet and Megumi had started reading a book, but was now playing Go with Gackt.

It would all have been perfectly civilised except for the fact that none of them had any clothes, and it hadn't taken Hyde long to realise that his clothes had actually been removed from the room. The most frustrating thing was that Gackt really didn't seem to care about being naked and wandered around as if it was the most natural thing in the world, but Hyde couldn't help feeling a little self conscious. Megumi had looked a little awkward when she had first climbed out from under the covers, but even she seemed to have settled much better than he had.

It was very annoying to be the only one still feeling silly and he was lying on the bed, randomly looking at websites trying to gather the courage to do something else. He felt more than a little ridiculous and every few seconds he would glance up at where Megumi and Gackt were sitting. Megumi had a little crease between her eyebrows as she looked at the game board, a clear sign she was concentrating hard and an expression which Hyde had always found adorable. He smiled slightly; he really was the luckiest man in the world.

From his wife his eyes flicked to Gackt who appeared as serene as usual. At the moment his friend was in his completely human form with perfectly styled light coloured hair and pale, but not white skin and the ethereal being Hyde had only met on a few occasions was buried, but Hyde could still sense what was below the

surface. Vampires had two faces with variations in between and Hyde could not help wondering if his faces would become more dissimilar with time. When he allowed his full vampire side to surface, unless he bared his fangs or stared at a person with glowing eyes no one would really know the difference, but in his full vampire form Gackt was a supernatural warrior. It never ceased to amaze Hyde how Gackt's hair could change from short and brown to long and black and he made a mental note to ask if it was his position that gave Gackt such a drastically different look.

Both the people sitting across the room loved him; Hyde knew that without a shadow of a doubt, something not many others could claim and he let himself ponder both of them silently. The previous night he had opened part of himself he did not fully understand and he had seen the truth of Gackt's heart and he knew why Kado had warned him that this could not be for just now. It had been the most wonderful feeling, but it was not only that; he knew without a doubt that knowing what he knew he could never break Gackt's heart anymore than he could break Megumi's. His feelings for Gackt had been confused for some time, but he wasn't being allowed to run from them anymore. If he looked at his reactions honestly then the only reason his feelings for Gackt had ever been platonic was Megumi.

Not sure quite what he was doing he reached down into himself to try and find that feeling of openness he had experienced the night before. Without the desperation, it was not easy to do, but eventually he thought he found what he mentally visualised as a door and he pushed against it, opening it just slightly. What assailed him was not quite what he was expecting and he barely stifled the gasp that threatened as he mentally slammed the door again. Megumi might have looked as if she was concentrating on the game, but from the desire that was pouring off her, Hyde had to admit his wife was a very good actor. Her eyes flicked his way and she gave him a small smile before looking back at the game board.

Hyde was laying flat on the bed and he realised with a sinking feeling that he was beginning to feel rather uncomfortable in the groin area. He had been so careful to keep his thoughts as platonic as possible and to jump on every possibly arousing idea with merciless determination to annihilate it, but he had been undone by his lovely wife. Now he definitely couldn't stand up, not unless he managed to find something very unattractive to will away his growing erection; looking at Megumi and Gackt really wasn't helping now that his brain was on that track.

He pushed the laptop to the side and let his head fall forward with a groan; who was he kidding? Now that he knew what Megumi was suppressing he was sunk.

"Hyde-kun is everything all right?" Gackt's calm tones asked and made him want to vanish into the bed.

"Fine," he said without looking up and hoping that the blush he had to be sporting was not visible at all.

He heard Gackt speaking to Megumi in a very quiet tone that even with his now sensitive hearing he couldn't make out and he just kept his head down. The first thing he knew about anything that was going on, on the other side of the room was a touch on his shoulder. He looked up automatically to find Megumi looking down at him with a small smile.

"I know that groan, My Love," she said with a mischievous twinkle in her eyes, "I was beginning to think you would never crack."

Hyde's eyes flicked towards where Gackt was still sitting across the room, but Megumi took hold of his chin and dragged his attention back to her.

"Forget about everything but me," she said, looking him straight in the eye and, as he stared up at her, he found that he could.

His wife really was an incredibly beautiful woman with smooth curves and pale perfect skin and he let his eyes roam over her form as he hadn't been letting himself do all morning. Just looking at her made him want to touch and he slowly lifted himself off the bed, kneeling up and doing his best not to be self conscious of the burgeoning erection he was sporting. Reaching out he let his fingers slide lightly down the side of her neck in a way he knew she loved and then he moved closer.

When their lips met it was a familiar, mutual move and Hyde closed his eyes to finally lose himself in the sensation and forget about where he was or why he was there. Megumi's lips were soft and warm against his own and he let himself taste them for a while until she opened her mouth just slightly and he took the opportunity for what it was and darted his tongue through the space.

He slipped his arms around Megumi, pulling her close as they kissed passionately and their bodies moulded together as only those very familiar with each other could. Hyde knew his wife intimately and when he broke away and began kissing down her neck he knew just where to linger to make her moan and throw her head back. Running his nails down her back made her arch against him and brought them into even more delightfully close contact and he moaned quietly as well, enjoying the friction. When he moved on from her neck, he had every intention of exploring every erogenous zone he had ever discovered on his wife's body.

Hyde was so engrossed in trailing kisses all over Megumi's lovely breasts and encouraging her to make the prettiest sounds, that he did not notice that Gackt had moved, not until a body brushed up behind him and the softest of kisses was placed on the back of his neck. He tensed immediately, he couldn't help it, but it seemed both Gackt and Megumi were ready for it and Megumi turned his face to her, caught his mouth with a kiss and ran her fingers over his aching erection. For his part Gackt continued to rain kisses onto his shoulders and used skilful fingers to remove the knots from his back before they could properly begin.

In his mind Hyde knew he was being played and deliberately distracted, but his mind did not have a lot to say in how his body responded as the fear was cut off before it could blossom. When Gackt did no more than kiss and caress him, not pushing for anything else, he began to relax properly again and he could focus again on Megumi. Gackt remained behind him, a warm presence with the lightest of touches and Hyde put his concentration into kissing his wife properly.

Before he realised how far he was going, he found himself lowering Megumi to the bed, touching her as he would have at home, instinctively knowing what she would like. Only part of his mind was even aware that Gackt was there as he caressed his wife and gently urged her legs apart.

Vampire senses were far sharper than a mortal's, since they were night hunters at their core and Hyde closed his eyes for a moment as the scent of Megumi flowed over him. When Kado had told him vampires were base creatures it had

not been a surprise, he had already experienced the effect sex had on him. Once he had conquered the fear that had surrounded him for so long and finally gone to Megumi, he had found that he could be as consumed by his wife as by the intoxication that was feeding on blood. After the first time they had slept together after Taiwan, he had been worried that he might back away again, but he was addicted to Megumi almost as much as he loved her.

Leaning over her, he kissed his way over her flat stomach as he stroked the inside of her thigh with his finger tips. It did not matter to him that Gackt's hands were gently moving over his own body, even as they made him shiver and he was aware of them, but his focus was Megumi. He wanted to give his wife pleasure and he let the idea fill his mind, chasing away the last of the doubt that lurked in the corners of his thoughts.

He stroked his fingers over the warm mound between her legs, enjoying the way Megumi moaned and let her legs fall further apart. Knowing that she wanted this as much as he did was important to him, because it was a strange situation for both of them. When he gently opened her slightly he found just how much Megumi did want this as his fingers slid into wet heat. Spurred on and knowing what she liked, he immediately slipped two fingers into her and pushed his thumb lightly over the nub of her clitoris.

The resultant gasp and the way Megumi raised her hips was very much gratifying and he watched her face, eyes closed in pleasure as he moved his fingers slowly. He loved to see her in this state, coming undone because of what he was doing. His own body responded with shots of hot arousal as Megumi pushed against his hand, wanting more. He could make her come from this if he wanted to, when Megumi was in this state it didn't often take long, but he wanted it to last longer than that so he moved his thumb for now and went back to kissing her stomach.

When a face pressed against the crack of his arse and a tongue swiped over his entrance, Hyde almost collapsed on top of Megumi as shock and the most unbelievable shot of arousal lanced through him. He had literally never felt anything like it and it had not been what he was expecting at all. There was no way he could continue what he had been doing as all thought scattered from his mind, but it appeared Megumi was ahead of him again. She took hold of his hand, that had been sliding into her, and brought it up to cup one of her breasts and she then replaced it with her own hand. Hyde was assaulted from behind by the sensations of Gackt's wicked tongue as it probed him agonisingly slowly and in front by the sight of his wife pleasuring herself; it was almost enough to send him over the edge and only dragging up the memory of a guitar rift he was having the most amazing difficulty mastering saved him from that embarrassment.

They tortured him for what seemed like hours, but could only have been minutes in reality and he had no choice but to lose himself in the sex. The heady scents of it filled his mouth and nose and he wanted nothing more than to bury himself in Megumi, but that would have meant giving up the wonderful sensations from Gackt and he wanted those as well.

"I want you," Megumi said, lifting his chin and making him look into her eyes again, "as much as Gatchan wants you."

When Gackt pulled away he couldn't help the little moan that escaped him, which earned him a laugh from Gackt, but Megumi pulled him forward and he moved above her. Sliding into his wife, he had to move very slowly and then stop when he was fully seated in her, or it would have been over before it had begun. He was so aroused that he had to concentrate on not coming.

After a few moments of being enveloped in the soft heat he had himself under enough control to being to move and Megumi moved her hips in a gentle rhythm, bringing them closer together on his every thrust. He didn't need his empathy to know that Megumi was as close to the edge as he was and that spurred him on and perversely gave him more control. He wanted to see his beautiful wife in the throws of ecstasy and he changed his angle, thrusting into her hard as he knew she liked it.

Megumi's breathing was hard and she was making the most delightful moaning noises. It was all about her now as his focus narrowed down to giving her as much pleasure as he could, but it took him by surprise when Megumi reared up under him, shuddering and by the look on her face she hadn't been expecting it either. Possibly Megumi had been closer to the edge than him.

"Beautiful," he heard Gackt whisper as he pulled away from Megumi slowly and he realised Gackt was still touching him.

Soft touches here and there and he could feel his own arousal taking control again as he knelt up closer to Gackt. Megumi watched him from under heavy lidded eyes as he let Gackt kiss his neck and run clever fingers over his torso.

"Lean back over Mei-chan," Gackt whispered in his ear, "on your hands and knees."

That was the moment Hyde first felt the faintest touch of fear again, but he pushed it aside and did as he was asked. He smiled down at Megumi as he reached over her and tried to lose himself in his wife and forget what was coming. Gackt would never hurt him, he knew this without question and he kept telling himself he could do this. Megumi reached up to him, stroking his face, seemingly knowing how hard this was for him, but he could not help tensing slightly as he felt Gackt move in closer and run hands over his behind.

Gackt must have brought whatever they might need to the bed when he had walked over, because Hyde felt a slick finger gently touching him and his lover had not been anywhere. He felt Gackt lean over him and kiss his back, running the other hand over his spine in gentle circles and he managed to forget the slow caressing in the other sensation, until the touching became a little more insistent.

Gackt was touching him gently, probing ever so slowly with soft fingers, barely breaching him and yet that's not what part of him was feeling. The haze of sex and desire was being slowly eaten away by the memory of insistent fingers that had forced their way into his body, an experience that filled him with fear and shame. He was becoming more and more tense and not even Megumi could distract him as he warred with himself.

"Please stop," he finally whispered, ashamed and unable to prevent the tremors of fear throughout his body.

He could not help sagging with relief as Gackt did as he was asked instantly; he felt so stupid and cowardly, but he just couldn't do it. Crawling away and hiding in his shame seemed like the only option, but before he could move strong arms wrapped around him, pulling him from his knees, turning him and drawing him into a close embrace. He buried his face in Gackt's chest without question.

"I'm sorry," he said, trying not to lose it completely as the memories washed over him.

"Ssh," Gackt said, running fingers gently through his hair and cradling him as if he might break, "there is nothing to be sorry for."

Hyde did not know how long Gackt simply held him, but the other vampire did not even slightly release the gentle hold until his trembling had almost completely stopped. He had taken comfort from Gackt like this many times after the attack, but it had been months since he had needed it and he felt weak. It was as if all the work he had done to try and put Taiwan behind him was for nothing.

"Can you open your empathy," Gackt asked in a slow and gentle tone, "like you did last night?"

Pulling his face away from Gackt's chest Hyde looked into the other vampire's dark eyes; there was nothing between them here, not coloured lenses, not clothes and he couldn't quite believe it, but could see it as he looked; no blame either.

"I'll try," he said, not sure he knew how, but not wanting this to be a total failure.

"That is all anyone can ever ask of another," Gackt replied with a kind, supportive smile.

Hyde did not understand his empathy; he accepted it existed, but it still did not make much sense to him. His mind shied away from showing him when it had broken free the first time as he tried to banish those memories, but it was like reaching for smoke. He was afraid and no where near as desperate as he had been the previous evening, or as calm as he had been only a few minutes previously, but he did his best to find the feeling inside himself, the feeling of opening to what was around him.

It was frustratingly difficult as part of him continually shied away from the experience, not wanting to remember the thoughts that sex with Gackt suggested to him, but eventually he managed to bring his will to bear. It was no where near as overwhelming as it had been the previous night and his visualisation of a door didn't seem to apply anymore either, but he finally sensed something. It was warm and gentle and wonderful as it trickled into his awareness and he could not help gasping at the depth of the love Gackt was sending to him. He felt like melting into it and wrapping himself in it and never letting the feeling go and he leant against Gackt's chest with a tiny moan.

He did not deserve love like this, he was a flawed, broken thing and this was pure, but he could not reject it. It was like balm to his soul and he felt himself relaxing into Gackt's embrace.

As he knelt there just soaking in the feelings from Gackt, they began to slowly change. The deep, warm feeling started to gain something else, something far hotter that drew Hyde on like a moth to a flame until he realised what it was; Gackt was aroused. His reaction to Gackt's advances had all but killed the arousal he had been feeling and it seemed to have had a similar effect on Gackt, but Hyde could feel it building again and what shocked him most was that by the time he realised what was happening he was aroused as well.

Slowly he pulled himself slightly away from Gackt and he lifted his head again to look into his lover's face. They gazed at each other for a few moments as Hyde let himself give in to the feelings and then he nodded, just slightly. Gackt did not



move fast after that, but the older vampire did shift slightly, moving them away from Megumi and began to lower Hyde to the bed.

When Gackt had him lying on his back his lover moved back to kneel up once again and as Hyde watched Gackt's hair began to change, darkening and growing into the long flowing locks of the High Dragon. Power flowed over Hyde like a warm blanket; not demanding power, but power that spoke of maker and friend and lover and it chased his fears away. The iridescent dragon on Gackt's chest was still one of the most beautiful things he had ever seen and part of him expected to see it move.

As Gackt moved to touch him this time, he did not tense and he did not try and shift away. He was captivated and aroused and he closed his eyes and moaned as Gackt slipped one finger into him. His mind was free of other images as he was probed ever so gently and he let his legs fall wider apart as he accepted the sensation. For the first time since the course of action had been decided, he actually wanted it and his body relaxed to allow the intrusion.

"You have no idea how long I have dream of seeing you like this," Gackt whispered to him, working him looser and carefully adding a second finger.

Hyde wanted to sink into the feel of the love surrounding him and the fingers opening him, but he held himself in the present, wanting to be an active part of this rather than just a placid participant. He moved his hips, pushing himself against Gackt's hand, demanding more. It had been a long time since he had done this as a willing participant, but he remembered it now that the memory of what had been done to him in Taiwan had been pushed back. He knew how to relax and the heady pleasure-pain mix could make him forget his name and he wanted Gackt.

"Now," he said almost as soon as his lover had three fingers in him, "take me now."

When he opened his eyes and looked at Gackt, his lover appeared unsure, but Hyde knew what he wanted and he rarely backed down. He continued to look straight into Gackt's eyes and eventually Gackt removed his hand and slipped his hands under Hyde's knees. Gackt arranged them carefully and Hyde let his ankles be lifted to his lover's shoulders until Gackt was nudging against his entrance. Applying the lubricant to his cock in generous measure, Gackt finished preparing them both as Hyde waited.

It was going to hurt; that much Hyde was well aware of, but it was all a matter of balance and he had no doubt the wonderful sensations that came with it would take his breath away. They did not need words, they both knew they were ready and Hyde did his best to keep breathing as Gackt slowly pushed into him. The burn was bad, but Gackt did not stop until Hyde could feel all of his lover inside him and it was incredible.

Breathing hard, he lay there forcing his body to relax into the sensation of being filled and eventually he gave a small nod. When Gackt pulled out it still hurt, but nowhere near as much and the thrust back in was the same. It wasn't long before Gackt's slow, smooth thrusts had him panting in ecstasy rather than discomfort.

When Gackt stopped moving while fully seated in him, he found himself blinking up in surprise, a little disgruntled that his rise to orgasm had been interrupted.

"I think Mei-chan is feeling neglected," Gackt said, leaning over him and Hyde could not help flushing as he remembered his wife. "I believe you should take her as I take you."

Hyde was not given the option to protest as Gackt pulled out of him, leaving him wanting and he found himself scrabbling to obey just to get that sensation back. Megumi was quite willing it seemed as she wrapped her legs around his waist as he moved over to her and slid into her soft folds. As Gackt pushed slowly back into him his muscles wanted to turn to water and his bones to jelly, but he just about managed to hold himself in place. He had never experienced anything like it and the sensations from his cock and ass threatened to take away all thought.

Moving together was awkward at first, but it did not take them long to find a rhythm that worked and Hyde lost track of who was doing what to whom as his empathy relayed how much they were all enjoying this. When Gackt changed angle and began to brush against his prostate with every thrust, Hyde did lose sense completely for a while and he knew he was ready to explode. He did his best to let Gackt know, but he wasn't sure he said anything useful. This was one encounter he didn't want to end, but he knew it was going to soon.

When Gackt finally pulled him away from Megumi, up into a kneeling position, they were still deeply joined and the change in angle had Hyde whimpering.

"Give yourself to the clan, Hideto Takari, my Hyde-kun," his lover whispered in his ear, "let go and give yourself to us, to me."

Hyde had never felt so exposed, so open to any experience and when Gackt's fangs sank into his neck as they hadn't done since the night he was changed, he finally released the last resistance within him. At that moment he belonged to his Dragon-sama, body and soul, and all barriers within him fell. Power rushed into him to fill a hole he had not known was there and emotion so strong followed it that it literally blew his mind. He felt his body respond, completing the rise to orgasm that he had been struggling to hold off for so long, but it was as if it was not quite his body as his mind disconnected from reality. He could feel Gackt, he could feel Megumi and he could feel hundreds of others like a remote crowd spread out around him. It was incredible.

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Hyde was limp in his arms as Gackt slowly disentangled himself from his smaller lover and gently placed Hyde down on the bed. Hyde's eyes were open and staring, seemingly at nothing and everything at the same time, and the smaller vampire was breathing hard through an open mouth that revealed descended fangs. However, most striking of all was the pale, iridescent sign of the dragon across Hyde's chest. It was not as large as Gackt's rank mark, but it was just as beautiful.

Gackt let his own vampire fade, pulling his power back inside and feeling the familiar shift from Dragon Lord to just Gackt. He was never sure which skin he felt most comfortable in.

"Is he all right, Gatchan?" Megumi distracted him from his thoughts with her slightly worried question.

"He will be fine," Gackt replied, leaning over Hyde to look in his lover's eyes, just to be sure himself, "Kado warned me this could happen. His empathy is searching out the clan as the clan's power balances him; he may be like this for some time. We should stay with him until he returns to us."

Hyde's harsh breathing had slowed, but the small vampire showed no signs of sentience as yet, so Gackt resigned himself to the fact that what he had just told Megumi was true. He sat back slightly, reassured that Hyde would be fine and allowed Megumi closer to her husband. The way the young woman tenderly smoothed Hyde's hair back from his face and then lay down beside her husband touched Gackt's heart and he could not help the small smile that played at his lips. That he was being allowed to be part of this was more than he had ever imagined.

Settling himself down on Hyde's other side he watched his two companions and let himself enjoy the welcome company.

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### End of Chapter 3

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### Chapter 4 Awake

When Hyde had not begun responding after ten minutes, Gackt had decided that he needed to clean up himself and Hyde before the other man woke. The results of their exertions had been becoming uncomfortably sticky so he had excused himself to the bathroom and brought back a warm, wet wash cloth when he had returned. He and Megumi had then proceeded to clean Hyde very carefully and had placed him in the bed rather than on it before Gackt had climbed in and Megumi had gone to use the bathroom herself. Retiring to bed in the middle of the day was not something Gackt normally did, but he was quite happy to snuggle up to Hyde and relax as he waited for his friend to return.

In the end it was almost an hour before Hyde finally shifted in the double embrace of his and Megumi's arms. At first it was just a small movement, but it was the only voluntary movement Hyde had made the entire time, so Gackt reacted immediately, sitting up slightly so he could see Hyde properly and Megumi mirrored him. Hyde was still staring ahead, but then Hyde finally blinked and his eyes moved as if trying to focus.

It took a while even after Hyde seemed to see them for him to appear to comprehend what he was looking at. Gackt smiled at Hyde as his lover finally looked up with understanding in his eyes.

"Welcome back," Gackt said in a gentle tone, "how are you feeling?"

"Um," was not the most sensible of replies as Hyde looked from him to Megumi and back again, but at least it was a reply, "fine ... that was ..."

Hyde really did appear lost for words, but Megumi gave her husband a peck on the cheek for trying.

"How long this time?" Hyde asked, seeming to wake up to the fact that everything was not how he remembered it.

"About an hour," Megumi provided the answer.

"Felt like no time at all," Hyde admitted and rubbed his face with one hand.

Gackt moved away slightly when Hyde went to sit up and was rewarded by a most alluring eyeful when Hyde gave a strange little wiggle and then grinned in the most impish way.

"I like being a vampire," was Hyde's suggestive comment and Gackt could not help grinning as well as he realised what Hyde had been doing.

It had been so long since he was mortal that Gackt did not personally remember sex before he had had the gift of vampire regeneration, but he had had enough male lovers in his time to know that mortals tended to be sore a lot longer than vampires were. Hyde looked incredibly relaxed for someone who had been so tense earlier and, watching his friend carefully, Gackt realised that the bonding had done more than link Hyde to the clan. The fear that had been hanging over Hyde since the bonding had been first mentioned was gone completely, almost as if it had never been and they were back to the comfortable, trusting relationship which was now underlain by a sensuality both of them had hidden before.

Megumi was blushing a beautiful rosy red; she had obviously also figured out what Hyde was taking about. It was endearing considering how forward Megumi had been willing to be in their joint seduction of her husband.

"I just need to go and use the bathroom," Hyde said cheerfully and the only way Gackt could describe his companion was 'positively glowing' as the small vampire climbed out from between them.

Hyde gave both he and Megumi a quick kiss on the way past and then he was gone at full speed, which wasn't as fast as Gackt could move, but it was pretty quick. Megumi did not seem to know quite how to react to her completely relaxed husband.

"I haven't seen him like this since before Taiwan," Megumi said quietly, eyes still looking at the door through which Hyde had just exited.

"I think Kado was right," Gackt agreed in an equally hushed tone; "Hyde needed this to begin to heal properly. He has been hiding from himself."

He looked back to Megumi from where his eyes had also strayed to follow Hyde's trail and found that she was looking at him with a very thoughtful gaze.

"You are very attractive," she said after a few moments, "and I would be lying if I said I did not find you appealing, but I have to tell you that I only agreed to this because it was going to save my child and my husband."

Gackt went to reply, to tell her he understood completely, but Megumi held up her hand to stop him.

"But that was before," she said firmly. "I think part of me believed that no matter what Kado-san said we would do this and then go back to what we were, but I can see the truth now. From now on we will share Hyde; it is the only way, but I think I would like to try for more than that. Do you think you can come to love me as well, Gatchan?"

For a moment Gackt was stunned; he had never expected this. He was friends with Megumi and in love with Hyde; that was how he had come to accept his life, one fact barring him from the other. It was still difficult for him to believe that he had what he had dreamed of since the moment he had met the frenetic bundle of life that was Hyde and Megumi's proposition caught his already reeling mind by surprise.

It was a serious question and hence required serious thought. He had never considered Megumi in such terms before; she was Hyde's wife and as such was

off limits. She was a beautiful woman and he had appreciated that, but had not allowed himself to think of her in other terms. Even the necessity of the bonding was parcelled in his mind as something that had to happen, which he intended to make as enjoyable for Megumi as possible, but which was unlikely to be repeated for a long while.

"Yes," he said eventually as he analysed his own thinking, "I could easily come to love you, Mei-chan."

Kneeling up Megumi leant towards him, placing her lips on his in the lightest of kisses. For once Gackt allowed himself to simply react and he moved into the touch, kissing back and bringing his arms up and around Megumi. It was clear Megumi had not quite known what would result, but she melted into his embrace, opening her mouth and inviting him to taste more than her lips. Gackt let himself sink into the kiss and pulled the soft female body against him and let everything else fade from his mind.

The sound of the bathroom door clicking shut was what snapped him back to reality and he broke the kiss, turning to find Hyde standing just into the room, eyes riveted on them. Gackt did not know how Hyde would react and he froze as he realised there was the distinct possibility jealousy would raise its ugly head. However, Hyde appeared surprised, but not angry and any tension Gackt could perceive was gone in a moment.

"Don't stop," were the quiet words from the other vampire and they were tinged with desire, not jealousy.

Megumi appeared to accept the request from her husband faster than Gackt was able to and he found himself being urged backwards onto the bed. It was quite a change, but he let himself be guided where he would normally lead; if Megumi wanted it this way he was not about to object. Kissing him Megumi climbed over him to straddle his hips and he raised his body to her touch, hardening rapidly as Megumi pushed against him.

He was ready for whatever she wanted and shifted himself into position as Megumi lifted her hips so that when Megumi pushed down again he slid into her. Warm, wet heat enveloped him and he let his eyes close as Megumi pushed down onto him hard, taking him completely in one movement. Not as tight as Hyde had been, but strong muscles clamped around him as Megumi moved and it was just as heavenly. No matter what he told the press he had never been strictly straight and he definitely wasn't just gay which as far as he was concerned gave him the best of both worlds.

If he admitted the truth to himself, he had been obsessed with Hyde over the last few years, but that did not mean he would ever not appreciate the female form. Megumi was a very beautiful woman and from the way she began moving above him she knew very well how to use her perfect body. Putting his hands on Megumi's waist he supported her as she sat up shifting against him and then pulling away in a slow rhythm.

Moving in a counter rhythm he used his hips to thrust up as Megumi came down and both of their movements slowly began to become more insistent. Megumi leant over him placing her hands either side of his head as she started to grind against him, moving her hips in a circular motion. It was wonderful and Gackt released her waist letting Megumi move as she wanted without any confines, spreading his arms over the sheets in surrender.

As his passion built he let his wilder nature free and he closed his eyes so that he could feel every moment as his body changed. He had had only a few partners over the years that he had been able to show his vampire side to and he revelled in being able to now.

"Come to me," he said, opening his eyes and looking up at Megumi with the complete clarity he only experienced in his full vampire form.

Megumi reacted instantly, leaning forward until they were pressed together and Gackt wound his arms around her.

"Are you mine," he whispered in her ear, "are you ours?"

"Yes," Megumi all but whimpered back.

That was all the permission he needed as he tied the power of the clan to his arousal, lifted his head and sank his fangs into Megumi's neck as he released the incredible energy he always held at his core. He felt Megumi tense around him as she cried out in shock and pleasure as her orgasm cascaded over her with the vampire power and he shuddered himself, holding her close in a firm but gentle embrace as his own climax took away his mind for a moment.

He did not feel individuals when he allowed the power of the Dragons to roam free of his being, but he did feel the presence of the group and it always awed him. As his body surrendered so did his mind for a few moments and then he came back to himself to find Megumi lying across his chest, breathing hard. Instinct had led him to close the wound on her neck without even realising it, but there was still a little blood around the wound that he wiped off with his finger.

"Are you all right, Mei-chan?" he asked, maintaining his vampire form for now in case it was needed.

Very slowly Megumi pushed herself away from him, sitting up and looking down at herself as if she did not quite believe what she was feeling. With wide eyes she gazed at her stomach and brought her hands to settle over it.

"My son and I are fine," she said eventually, just as Gackt was about to become worried.

"Son?"

Hyde spoke for the first time and Gackt turned to find that his other lover was far closer than he remembered and was looking as dazed as he felt. Megumi carefully climbed off him and then turned to her husband, reaching out and pulling one of Hyde's hands to rest on her belly as well. Then to his shock, Gackt found one of his hands also taken and placed next to Hyde's.

"Son," she said with a little laugh.

The tableau of ecstatic woman and two stunned men lasted for a few seconds and then, just as he'd managed to sit up, Gackt found himself on the end of a three way hug. That was Hyde's doing and when the smaller singer pulled back Hyde was grinning like a loon. Gackt let his vampire fade and couldn't help wondering what deity he had been blessed by as he watched Hyde give Megumi a long passionate kiss.

It occurred to him that they needed to eat and they really should do some talking, but, from the look on Hyde's face as he pulled away from his wife, Gackt doubted any of them would be leaving the bed soon. Hyde seemed to have enjoyed the show quite a lot: Gackt knew what a vampire libido was like once it really started going.

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When Gackt woke at his usual time on Sunday morning, he found that Hyde was once again sprawled across the bed and this time across him as well. Megumi was curled into the sheets in a manner that suggested to him she was used to her husband's obvious propensity for taking up any and all available space and he couldn't help smiling. How Hyde had ended up using him as a pillow Gackt wasn't sure; such things usually woke him up, but somehow they had become entangled. It was as he tried to carefully extricate himself that he realised that it wasn't going to be as easy as the previous morning; the moment he tried to move Hyde's arm curled round his side and held on.

Saturday had been a very long day with a great deal of tension as well as sex and he did not want to wake Hyde from what appeared to be a restful sleep, so Gackt relaxed for a little while before trying again. Even though Hyde had also relaxed his hold, as soon as Gackt moved, his lover tightened it again and he was once again stuck.

It was a most consternating situation, but Gackt was not known for giving up and he lay there thinking for a while before coming up with another plan. This time he did not move his torso but reached for Hyde's hand instead, intent on moving it out of the way so his bed companion couldn't hold onto him when he chose to slip out. It was a good plan too, except to Gackt's growing frustration Hyde reacted to his hand being taken by mumbling quietly and pulling Gackt's hand to him like a prize. Now Gackt was even more stuck because Hyde was laying on him and clutching his limb like a teddy bear.

This time it took him a good ten minutes to convince Hyde to give him his hand back while Hyde muttered quietly in his sleep the whole time. When he was finally free of the very strong grip, he was back to square one since Hyde went back to sprawling and he was beginning to think that maybe Hyde was a limpet.

He tried two more ways to extract himself, but all this resulted in was Hyde hooking a leg over one of his and him being pinned down even more firmly. It was finally a quiet laugh that distracted him from his predicament and he looked over to see Megumi smiling at him.

"You won't be able to get away without waking him," she said, clearly amused; "sometimes he just gets clingy. The first time I woke up in a Hyde blanket I tried for twenty minutes and in the end we both fell out of bed. Now that I know, I think his empathy tells him you're trying to leave and, since he doesn't want you to, he hangs on."

Gackt let himself relax back into place on the bed with a sigh; so much for his usual routine.

"Then I guess I am staying," he said with a slight smile; it seemed Hyde was bossy even when he was asleep.

"He won't mind if you wake him," Megumi said quietly, "he knows he does this. He'll probably just roll over and go back to sleep."

Gackt looked down at the dark head resting on his chest and the angel wings poking out of the sheets and considered the offer, but Hyde looked so peaceful that he just couldn't bring himself to do it.

"I could do with a lie in," he said with a small smile and looked back over to Megumi, "my apologies for waking you."

"I wouldn't have missed it for the world," Megumi replied with another quiet laugh and then moved a little closer into the space Hyde had vacated when almost climbing onto Gackt.

She gave him a final smile before closing her eyes and drifting back to sleep. Gackt lay there for a while just enjoying the feeling of not being alone and eventually let his eyes flutter shut. He wasn't tired, but he felt warm and content and it wasn't difficult to let himself return to the rest of slumber.

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Even though Hyde felt comfortable around Gackt and Megumi now, he would not have denied that he was very glad to get his clothes back; he just wasn't someone who was comfortable naked, unless it involved sex in some sort of immediate form; then he was quite happy. He'd been a little surprised to find Gackt still in bed when he woke up until he realised that he seemed to have been doing what Megumi had once nicknamed his "octopus" impression. When he'd tried to apologise Gackt had shut him up with a long, passionate kiss and none of them had fallen out of bed for another hour and a half after that.

Sitting on the edge of the bed he stared at one of the pieces of art Gackt had on the walls, but he wasn't really seeing it, it just happened to be a convenient thing to look at. His mind was elsewhere as he went over the events of the last few days. It was amazing really how much had changed in such a short time. He felt whole again for the first time in months as if Lee's actions had ripped part of him away and he'd patched the hole, but what had happened over the weekend had given back the missing piece. There were still scars, as with any wound, but where some things had seemed impossible before, he felt capable of just about anything now.

Megumi had been wonderful and patient with him since Taiwan, understanding when he could not look at her or spent hours in the shower and eventually he had been able to rekindle his desire for touch, but it had been difficult. It had taken getting drunk at New Year for him to remember that part of him was a sexual being. The attraction he had felt for Gackt had haunted him when he had not been able to summon up the same thing for his wife, but Megumi had held him and told him it wasn't his fault until she had gladly welcomed him back to her when he had been ready. That he had gone from so confused that he had been barely able to sleep with his wife to comfortable with close contact with two people rather amazed him.

Something had shifted within him yesterday, something profound and although the echoes of the trauma of Lee remained within him, they no longer consumed him; Megumi and Gackt did that now. Kado had been right; he could not imagine going back to what had been. He could feel his empathy now as well, sense that the ability was there even if it was going to take practice to understand it fully.

Standing up he walked to the bathroom door and knocked. Megumi answered from within where she was having a shower and he opened the door and put his head round it.



"I'm going for a little walk," he said as Megumi looked at him through the shower stall. "Gatchan should be back soon and I won't be long."

"I'll see you when you get back," Megumi responded with a smile, "just don't get lost."

"My sense of direction isn't that bad," he said with just a little hint of indignation, but Megumi just raised her eyebrows at him.

Okay, so his sense of direction was that bad and he smiled ruefully.

"I'll get someone to show me back here when I can't find it," he said and grinned when Megumi laughed at him.

Happy that his wife would be okay while he was away, he left Gackt's rooms and simply began to follow his nose. He wanted to speak to Kado and, although he had no idea where to find his ancestor, he had a niggling suspicion that he wouldn't have too much trouble. Letting his feet wander where they would, he found himself walking into a tiny courtyard garden that was surprisingly warm. When he looked up he could see a glass roof letting in the heat of the winter sun, but keeping out the cold.

"Hello, Hyde-san," Kado's voice greeted him as the man in question stepped out from behind one of the larger plants, "I have been expecting you."

"Hyde-kun, or Hyde," he replied, perfectly at ease with the strange vampire, "I feel like I have known you for years, Kado-san."

Kado gave him a cheerful smile for that.

"Then it is Kado-kun or Kado," the white haired vampire replied. "I am very glad to see you are in much better spirits today."

Kado indicated a bench in the centre of the garden and Hyde followed his ancestor to it.

"You were right," he said as they sat down next to each other, "it was hard, but everything is better now."

"That much, my young friend, is very obvious," Kado said warmly, "and yet you are still not at ease."

Hyde wasn't even remotely surprised that Kado could tell.

"I feel strange," he admitted, perfectly comfortable with telling Kado everything, "and part of me thinks I'm going to wake up and it'll all be a dream. It's like there's this huge thing just out of my reach that I know is there, but I can't touch it."

"The world and the future," Kado said simply.

Hyde was not quite sure how to take that.

"It must be more difficult for you," Kado continued, patting him on the knee in a comforting manner; "you are an empath and your abilities were forced into being because of what happened to you. My own abilities developed over many, many years, but yours just suddenly switched on like a light. Your control will continue

to grow, but I cannot imagine how unsettling it must be to sense what is out there around you so instantly. With the power of the clan within you, however, you have nothing to fear."

That at least was settling news. It was not that Hyde was afraid of his abilities, but he was not completely comfortable with them yet.

"And as for the seer in you," Kado told him, "he will emerge gradually. One day it will no longer be simple instincts, you will have a vision and you will know it without a doubt. They will be few and far between for a long time, but never forget you have them for a reason and never doubt yourself. Some come as guides and some are warnings to help you change things and it is up to you to decide what to do about them. That is the art of the seer."

Hyde nodded; it was quite a daunting thing to think about, but he did not regret it, not now he had gained so much.

"How will I know though?" he asked, not sure he was up to the task.

"You just will, Hyde-kun," Kado said with a smile; "it is within you. I still remember asking the same question myself and having my first vision. You just will."

There wasn't much Hyde could say to that, all he could do was trust that Kado was right.

"Thank you, Kado-kun," he said in a sincere tone, "I think I needed to hear that."

Kado smiled at him and then to his surprise slipped an arm around his and drew him into a conspiratorial huddle as if they were a couple of school girls talking about a crush.

"Now," Kado said with a wiggle of his eyebrows, "let me regale you with tales of our Dragon-sama that will give you plenty of ammunition should he decide he needs to go all high and mighty on you at any time."

A big grin spread across Hyde's face and he leant in willingly; he was beginning to like Kado even more.

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Gackt stood in the corner silently observing his two companions as they playfully fought over the packing. Megumi had started doing it and even though they had barely taken anything out of their suitcase all weekend Hyde had insisted on helping. That had led to Megumi repacking everything Hyde was being helpful with until she had figured out that he had noticed what she was doing and was hence doing things wrong deliberately.

At that moment Hyde was standing in the middle of the bed holding a very pretty lacy bra that he had stolen from the case and Megumi was standing beside the bed with her hands on her hips glaring at him. Even after everything they had been doing it appeared Megumi could still blush when her underwear was on show, even though she wasn't in it.

The change in Hyde really amazed Gackt. There had been glimpses of the old playful Hyde since Taiwan, but there had always been a shadow in Hyde's eyes. The small singer was not the same now as he had been before the whole Lee incident, but much more of the man Gackt remembered was visible now.

"Give it back, Hideto," Megumi said in a dangerous tone as Hyde teased her by dangling the offending garment at arms length.

"But it's so pretty," Hyde replied and draped it across himself with a mock flick of his hair.

Gackt laughed quietly to himself at that, but obviously not quietly enough because Megumi turned her glare on him. There was amusement somewhere in there, but it was still disconcerting to be the centre of Megumi's attention.

"Well aren't you going to save a lady's honour?" she asked pointedly.

"Which one?" Gackt asked without hesitating.

"Hey!" was Hyde's response.

"You are the one wearing a bra," Gackt pointed out helpfully at which point Hyde looked down at where the offending article was draped across his chest.

"Point," the small singer said and shrugged, which made Megumi laugh at last, "but then I claim the spoils of war."

It was difficult to keep a straight face when Hyde did his diva impression, but Gackt managed it.

"Then I'm afraid I will have to save you from yourself," he said in as gallant tone as he could manage.

Hyde's eyes flicked to the bathroom door, but Gackt moved sooner and faster than Hyde could possibly hope to yet and reached the edge of the bed before Hyde could step off. He grabbed the bra and then tossed Hyde over his shoulder and held on with one arm.

"Gatchan!" Hyde all but shrieked.

Megumi found the whole thing hysterical as she covered her face, laughing hard and Gackt returned the bra to her with a flourish.

"Put me down, Gatchan," Hyde said in as dangerous a tone as his wife had been using only moments before, but it wasn't as if his captive was struggling.

"Or what?" he asked, still holding on with little trouble.

He was answered by a resounding thwack as Hyde's hand hit his behind.

"Ow," he complained, even though it had been nothing but a playful tap as far as vampires were concerned, "try that again and I'll have to take revenge."

Thwack!

He crossed the room in a couple of stride, pulled a chair out with his spare hand and was sitting down with Hyde across his knee in little more than a couple of seconds. He took his time so that Megumi could see. It was his turn to give Hyde's ass a hearty slap.

"Ooh," was Hyde's response as the smaller singer looked over his shoulder up at Gackt, "do that again."

Gackt couldn't help it, he burst out laughing.

"Pervert," was all he could come up with to say.

"But you still love me," Hyde replied and batted his eyelashes.

For a moment Gackt thought his heart might explode; that was so very, very true.

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The first time Hyde had entered the shrine it had been like being hit by a wall of power with whispering voices all trying to get a word in at the same time. Supposedly that was because his innate connection to them via Kado's line had woken up and been completely uncontrolled, but he still felt nervous walking back into the building. They had two hours before they were supposed to be on the train back to Tokyo and Hyde had been feeling that there was something he had to do all afternoon. It was as he had walked passed the entrance to the shrine on the way to find where Gackt had disappeared to that he had realised what was niggling at him.

He was in normal clothes this time as he opened the door himself and slipped inside. The serenity of the place filled him with peace this time and he slipped his shoes off, leaving them at the door. Moving slowly he walked towards the circle of candles and before stepping in bowed to the centre piece of the shrine. He kept his eyes on the floor as he moved into the circle of incense and candle light and the whispering immediately filled his ears, but this time it did not seem to be pushing in on him as it had last time.

"Welcome back, young seer," a deep voice spoke clearly to him this time.

"Thank you," he said quietly, "I apologise for my inattention last time."

He heard a disembodied laugh at that.

"It is we who should apologise," a female voice spoke this time; "some of us have forgotten how to curb out enthusiasm. Our attentions must have been unpleasant for you."

"I would not have said 'unpleasant'," Hyde replied and found himself being laughed at again.

"I like this one," said yet another voice, "diplomatic, but not obsequious. You will look after our Dragon well."

Hyde risked a look up to find that there were indistinct shapes hovering around him, surprisingly he found this did not make him in the slightest uncomfortable.

"I think perhaps it is he who is looking after me," he said, feeling the need to be honest with the presences around him.

"For now, little one," another female voice, this time with a very motherly tone, "but the High Dragon and his Guardian Seer exist in perfect symbiosis. When Kado-chan chooses to join us, you will be ready."

Hyde really did hope so.

"I will do my best," he said sincerely.

"We know you will, child," it was the first female voice again, "or we would not have accepted you."

He felt something brush along the back of his neck and it made him shiver even though it felt like a gentle touch.

"Thank you for coming to visit us again," the deep male voice he had heard first seemed to speak right next to his ear, "but I believe it is time for you to leave. Several of those outside are looking for you."

Hyde glanced at the door.

"Thank you for speaking with me," he said, turning back and bowing again, he felt a lot better after the short conversation.

"Come again, little one," the motherly voice told him as he backed out of the circle.

He was feeling rather light-headed as he reached for his shoes, but he felt elated as well. The whole weekend had been an incredibly eye-opening experience and he felt far more settled than he had done in quite a while. As he slipped out of the shrine he found Gackt waiting for him and he gave his lover a broad smile.

"Ready to go home?" Gackt asked, smiling slightly in return.

"I am home," Hyde said without feeling remotely strange about it, "but, yes, I'm ready to go back to Tokyo now."

His response seemed to please Gackt very much and that made him happy. At that moment he felt as if he could face anything that life might throw at him.

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Tetsu looked like he was going to have a heart attack when Hyde bounced into the last meeting for the release of their best of albums and threw his arms around his friend. It only occurred to Hyde after he had done it that he hadn't done anything of the sort since Taiwan and he'd just scared the hell out of Tetsu. He didn't have to guess about this because he could feel the shock lancing through his friend and he felt momentary guilt, but he was on far too much of a high to let it get to him.

"Hyde-kun," Tetsu said, obviously doing his best to recover from the shock, "you're cheerful this morning."

Hyde couldn't help himself he grinned broadly and from the expression on Tetsu's face he had to conclude that he looked like he was on happy pills or something. The worried look Tetsu gave him and the underlying anxiety he could feel from his friend since he didn't have his empathy clamped down actually made him laugh; Tetsu could be very mother hen-ish at times.

"Mei-chan's pregnant," he said brightly, before Tetsu could worry too much.

For a moment his friend's expression was blank, as if Tetsu hadn't quite understood, but then the most radiant smile graced Tetsu's face.

"Congratulations," Tetsu said and Hyde found himself being wrapped in a hug.

Rather than making him uncomfortable, as it would have done before the weekend, all it did was make him happy as Tetsu's genuine joy at the news flooded over him. He hugged back, only just remembering his own strength. They were still hugging when the other two members of Laruku came barrelling through the door. Hyde broke away from Tetsu to find the others both looking rather unsure, so he beamed at them.

"Have you had too much caffeine?" Yukki asked dubiously.

"No," Tetsu answered for him as he just laughed, "he's just found out he's going to be a daddy."

Yukki's face broke into a huge grin almost instantly and Hyde found himself on the end of another hug.

"God, scary thought," was Ken's comment, but the guitarist's actions spoke louder than his words as he too congratulated Hyde with a hearty slap on the back.

Hyde didn't think he could possibly be happier as he accepted the congratulation and happiness from his friends. Life had gone from bearable with a few highs to wonderful in a few short days and for the first time he was truly looking forward to anything the year might bring.

**The End**