

thinking like a novelist.

“Oh. I heard about that. That yakuza politician was here, wasn’t he? You interviewed him, right? I read it in the paper!”

“Yakuza politician?” Shimada thought, but he was distracted by Yoshi’s lips on his chin.

“Does this hurt?” he asked, gently kissing along Shimada’s jaw and under his ear.

“I’m not sure,” Shimada said trying very hard to keep his cool. “You better keep doing it until I know.” He snuggled the giggling, half-naked kid against his shoulder. “Now, look, Yoshi, it’s been a long day for me. In fact a day that started yesterday, so we’re not going to do much tonight—no, no pouting.”

“I can do everything!”

Shimada sat back on the futon. “Like what?”

The edges of a frown crept into Yoshi’s really adorable pout. “Um...”

“Just how much experience with men do you have?” Shimada asked.

“Um...”

“Mr. Watanabe doesn’t count.”

“Of course not!” Yoshi yelped.

“But that’s not a bad way to start,” Shimada said thoughtfully. “I mean without the extortion aspect of it. Hey, get under the covers.” He rose to remove his clothes. “Lights on or off?”

“Can we have this little one on?” Yoshi pointed at a tiny goose-neck lamp by the futon.

“Sure.” Shimada rose and went into the main room. He turned off the lights, but not before the cat sneered at him from the couch, and headed into the bathroom to grab a towel. Back in the bedroom, he turned off the overhead light and tossed the towel on the futon. He smiled at Yoshi, who was leaning back against the pillows wearing nothing but his wary kitten look. The kid must be completely unaware of how sexy that was; it certainly wasn’t lost on Shimada’s dick. “Don’t you have homework?” he asked, trying to break the spell a little.

“I did it at school,” Yoshi yawned, politely covering his mouth. “There were books I needed in the library to write a paper.” And then his eyes got big as Shimada took off his shirt. Shimada’s body was lithe, if somewhat rangy due to being tall. Nevertheless, the muscles in his chest, arms and shoulders were well defined without being bulky.

“On what?” Shimada asked, stepping out of his trousers and shorts.

“Um, it was, um.” Yoshi stumbled verbally trying to process

Shimada and his long legs and tumescent rosy cock coming toward him, sliding into bed next to him. “A history paper!” He jumped as Shimada drew his entire naked body against him, his own cock leaping to attention.

Shimada chuckled. “What kind of history?” he asked to slow the kid down a little.

“Oh, let’s see, Edo,” Yoshi sighed, melting into Shimada’s arms. “Textiles in the Edo period,” he added, pawing softly at his chest.

“How interesting,” Shimada said, nudging Yoshi’s hand toward his hardening cock.

“It was either that or coal mining in the Meiji period,” Yoshi said, distracted by the heat and softness under his hand. “Oh...”

“Oh what?” Shimada asked, kissing his neck.

“It’s just...different, y’know...from...” Yoshi fumbled with Shimada’s cock as he fumbled with his words.

“I know.” Shimada pulled him closer and kissed him softly. “We don’t have to rush,” he said, wishing he was less tired. He gently pinched one of Yoshi’s nipples. Yoshi gasped and clutched at him, pressing his hard, leaking erection against Shimada’s hip.

“Sorry,” Yoshi said. He was still exploring Shimada’s rapidly hardening penis and experimenting with grips. “Is this okay?”

“It’s effective,” Shimada said dryly.

Yoshi paused. “Do you like it?” He seemed a little startled when his partner’s member twitched in his hand.

“I do,” Shimada said. He reached for Yoshi’s hand and showed him a few strokes he liked, mainly so he could get completely hard. He felt guilty that he was ignoring the kid’s erection, but he was afraid to touch it lest it explode before Shimada was ready to come.

Having reached a state of arousal acceptable to him at the moment, Shimada gently shoved Yoshi onto his back and pushed his knees apart. Or tried to, the kid tensed up on him.

“Are you going to fuck me?” Yoshi asked, sounding a little panicky.

“Not tonight,” Shimada said, panting a little. “But you’ll like this, it’s called frottage.” He lowered his hips to Yoshi’s and slid his cock along the younger guy’s cock. “See?” Shimada said, playfully pressing their erections together. “Frrrr-oooo-tttt-aaaa-gggggg.” After oral sex, he’d always liked this kind of sex play. He found it relaxing when done right.

Yoshi laughed, involuntarily undulating against Shimada’s belly. He added his hand, mimicking the way Shimada caressed them both, mixing their pre-cum so their cocks were hot and slippery against each

other. “Oh...Ryuu...oh!”

Shimada held him still and kissed him deeply, calming him enough so he could catch up. When he left off Yoshi’s mouth to bury his face in his neck, they were only a few strokes away from climax. “Oh God..oh Yoshi...oh fuck!” Shimada groaned hard against the kid’s shoulder as he came hard against his belly. He was dimly aware of Yoshi’s muffled shriek and shuddering orgasm beneath him.

The kid was still shaking when Shimada propped himself up on his elbows. “Okay?” he asked, looked down at him in the dim bedside lamplight.

Eyes shining, chest softly heaving, flushed and adorable, Yoshi looked up at him and nodded. “Oh, more than okay,” he breathed into Shimada’s chest.

Shimada kissed him, but since he didn’t have another orgasm in him that night, he didn’t get too involved in it. “There was a towel here...ah, here it is.” Feeling slightly more energetic, he wiped them both down and tossed the towel to the end of the futon. Yoshi lay floppy and boneless watching him through hooded eyes. “What?” Shimada asked.

“I love you.”

“If you say that in six months when we’re not in bed, I might believe you,” Shimada said, equal parts amused and touched. And then regretted it.

“But I do!” Yoshi sat up violently, ready for a fight.

“Okay, you do, and if you love me, you’ll let me sleep now.” Shimada tugged Yoshi down into his arms.

“I’m kind of awake now,” Yoshi said a few moments later.

“Then stay up,” Shimada mumbled. “But quietly. I must sleep...or die...” He felt a soft kiss on his lips before the gentle blackness of sleep rolled softly over him.

Shimada woke up with Yoshi and the cat sleeping on his chest and the sun pouring in the big window across from their bed. He felt crushed and his left arm was numb, but Yoshi was such a pretty sight, Shimada figured he could lie there a little longer. The cat opened one sleepy green eye and glared at him. “I’ll fix you, kitty-cat,” he thought. “Maybe literally, too, if you’re not already nipped. But first, I will think up a stupid name for you and mock you with it.” Oblivious to the danger he was in, the cat with no name re-closed its eye and went back to sleep.

But sleep was not on the agenda for that morning. Nor sex. Shimada took a few seconds to mentally prepare evasive maneuvers if Yoshi happened to be feeling amorous. The kid’s erection pressing

against his leg wasn't much of an indicator that he'd want to get frisky, but it was an undeniable fact nonetheless. "Okay, it's morning," Shimada said, hoping it sounded like leadership and not just lame. He jostled his bedmates and got sleepy feline and human whines. "And I don't know about you, Yoshi, but I have to go to work, sooo..." Shimada wrestled his way out of the futon and looked down at the cat and the boy. The cat was curling into the warm place and Yoshi was trying to focus on the clock.

"Oh, damn, I have to go to school," Yoshi said, flinging himself back on the futon. He looked up smolderingly at Shimada. "Don't I?"

"Yeah, you do." Shimada picked up the towel and the yukata from the floor on his way into the bathroom. He was only mildly startled when Yoshi joined him in the shower.

"This is okay, Shim-, I mean, Ryou? Isn't it?" he asked shyly, half way in and half way out of the shower.

"Sure. Just come in already, you're letting all the steam out," Shimada said, drawing Yoshi's scrawny, but leggy, form into his arms. He tasted like minty toothpaste, but so did Shimada, and their erections didn't last long under their soapy hands. "Aaah, that was nice," he thought, holding the very floppy, post-climax Yoshi up against him. "That's a nice way to start the day, hm?" he asked, leaning down for a smooch, but not letting it get too serious.

"Yeah." Yoshi beamed up at him. "I guess that'll keep me going until I get home tonight." He used the hand-held shower to rinse off.

"Are you working tonight?" Shimada asked over instant coffee. He hated instant coffee and made a mental note to buy some real coffee. He watched Yoshi open a can and dump the vile looking contents in a bowl for the cat, who stared at it for a moment and then walked away.

"Oh, you stupid cat!" Yoshi glared at the cat's retreating form.

"Maybe he doesn't like to eat in front of an audience," Shimada suggested. Finickiness was one of the things he liked about cats, so he never took it personally.

"Well, maybe...but don't feed him again if it's still there when you get back," Yoshi said sternly, still glaring at the cat. "What?"

"I said, how late are you working?" Shimada repeated.

"Nine or ten, depends on how busy the café is," he said, gathering up his backpack and coat. "It's usually quiet on a Tuesday night, so I might be back earlier than that. See ya!" Yoshi gave him a peck on the cheek and was gone before Shimada could think of anything witty to say.

Washing up gave Shimada a chance to look around the kitchen and determine that some serious food shopping was in order if they didn't

want to end up sharing the cat's leftovers. Which would be few since the cat had come back and was plowing into his breakfast. "You swine-kitty, teasing that poor boy by acting like you don't like the food he gives you," Shimada thought sternly at the cat, who was either unaware of or blithely ignoring his mental scolding. "For shame, for shame," he thought, but he was smiling as he tidied up the bedroom and called Ikoma for that day's marching orders. "An art gallery?" he asked.

"Yup, our Style readers want to know what artists they can't afford are showing on Gallery Row, where they never go. And as long as you're in that part of town, have lunch at that new bistro," Ikoma said, rattling off a fashionable address. "Pay attention and keep your receipts so you can write a review of it for tomorrow's edition."

"Just lunch, not dinner?" Shimada asked, thinking that if it was nice enough, he'd take Yoshi there.

"Well, if you like it enough for lunch, maybe you should try it for dinner and write them both up for the Sunday edition," Ikoma said.

"I'll let you know," Shimada said. They said minimal goodbyes and Shimada figured he'd have lunch at the swanky bistro first and look at the gallery afterwards. "How elegant," he thought, putting on his one nice business suit. "I've been wasting my time on hard news, I could have been eating my way through high culture all this time."

He found his lunch overpriced and mediocre, but the gallery was large, well-lit and showing good work by a local artist. Shimada didn't consider himself an art critic, so he confined his observations to the location and ambience of the gallery space and the neighborhood. He did mention that the art was something one could look at for a long time, like a lifetime and never get tired of. It wasn't decorative, but it wasn't combative either. He didn't have words for it, which was why he wasn't an art expert. The gallery owner seemed to him to be a gallerist in the truest sense of the word in that she was protective of the artist she was showing and very interested in what Shimada could do for that artist (as well as the gallery). It was her lucky day because Shimada was genuinely moved by the paintings, enough to consider getting the paper to send an interviewer to the gallery. He might even do it himself, if he was in the right frame of mind. He parted from the gallerista in a high good humor and headed for the newspaper office to write up his reviews: thumbs down on the bistro and thumbs up on the gallery.

"Well, you're in a goddamn good mood," Ikoma growled at Shimada as the reporter was cheerfully typing up his stories.

"Isn't it a fine day to be in a goddamn good mood?" Shimada