

Shusashi

Musashi was bored. The club was dark and hot and smoky, but not smoky enough to satisfy the craving that itched through her chest. The band she had come to see wasn't up for another twenty minutes, and the one on stage now was not any kind of talented.

"If you look any more bored, you'll fall asleep." Kiyoko muttered from behind her drink.

"If I *feel* any more bored, I'll die."

"So go find some guy and dance."

"These guys are wimps. Look at them," Musashi gestured out to the dance floor where the mixture of guys and girls revealed a majority of figures dancing decidedly feminine. "They dance like girls, and I think most of them are drinking cosmos."

She stuck her tongue out at them, and leaned against the bar counter.

Kiyoko shrugged, "I guess I'm just spoiled."

"Then go dance with Daiki. He's out there somewhere, right?"

Kiyoko waved her hand towards the stage. "He's probably backstage talking to some tech guy about what lighting systems they use, or whatever. Man, you're irritable. Do you need a cigarette or something?"

"Ugh, yes, but I forgot my pack at home."

"Want one of mine?" She offered a pink pack to Musashi.

"Do yours even *have* nicotine in them?"

A pout rested on Kiyoko's face and she dropped the pack into her bag. "Fine, then just suffer."

"I'll take one."

Kiyoko smirked, and handed Musashi a cigarette. "Don't take too long." She rose and straightened her skirt, "I'm going to go find Daiki."

Musashi didn't wait around to watch her leave, though. She was heading towards the back door for air. The bouncer situated by the exit, looking surly at best, cocked his head at her.

"Hey, Taka. Can I slip out for a smoke?" She held up the pink cigarette as proof.

"Of course." He eyed the cigarette, "Will that even work on you?"

She sighed, "I have no idea."

The alley outside the club was dark and not a haven for pleasant smells. Musashi pulled out her lighter and flicked the flame to the tip of the cigarette, inhaling the smoke deeply.

The burn took hold and soon she was watching the smoke curl into the darkness.

Her solitude was broken, though, when someone whipped around the corner from the street. He slowed from his running pace and glanced back to the way from which he had come, before he turned and saw her.

"Oh, hey."

Musashi blew a puff of smoke at him, "Hey."

"Mind if I chill with you for a while?"

She shrugged, "Whatever."

He leaned against the wall beside her and pulled out a cigarette of his own. The plain white stick reminded her of the sad excuse for a cigarette she was smoking. The glow from the cigarette revealed a thin face with a bruise clustering around his eye. His hair was black, and he was tall, probably 5 inches or taller than she was.

The smoke drifted lazily out of his mouth and he glanced at her, "What?"

"What happened to your eye?"

"The wrong side of a fist."

"And how did you end up there?"

He shrugged and rolled his eyes, "I only said his sister was real nice, and he assumed I slept with her."

Musashi smirked and flicked her spent cigarette away, "Did you?"

"Well, yeah, but it's not my fault girls find me irresistible." He stuck his tongue out a bit and grinned.

"Oh no, not your fault at all." Musashi puckered up her lips playfully and shook her head.

There was some shouting from the street, and they both turned to look. The stranger looked worried and clenched his jaw.

"I should go."

"I agree." Musashi grabbed his hand and opened the door to the club, pulling him in after her. As she slammed it shut, she turned to Taka.

"He's with me, he's got some jerk after him."

Taka shrugged, "Whatever."

They walked to the bar, and she ordered two drinks. As she handed him one, she said, "I'm Musashi."

He took it and grinned, "Shuya."

As they sipped their drinks, Musashi turned to him, frowning. "Hey, wait, are you even allowed to drink? How old are you?"

Shuya threw back the rest of his drink in a hurry and set the glass on the counter. "18."

"Cheeky brat, you could get in trouble."

"If you didn't notice," he turned to her and pointed at the bruise, "I am a trouble magnet."

She flicked the forming bruise with her finger, making him wince and jump back. "Hm... Yep. You are."

Shuya scowled, but smiled when Musashi stuck her tongue out at him playfully.

Finishing her drink, she ordered another round for them. There was definitely a spark he took the new glass from her, and it had nothing to do with the booze. Shuya was sexy, and it pulled at her.

This time, she finished first and slid the glass away.

"So, do you want to dance, or what?" She started backing away towards the dance floor, inviting him to follow with curling fingers.

"Hell yes," he grinned, leaving the unfinished drink on the counter.

The band she had been waiting for was on stage now, but Musashi was focusing her attentions on Shuya. They danced closer than friends would, and closer than strangers should. What little space there was between them was electric.

He leaned down to her ear and asked, "I never thanked you, did I?"

"For what? My company? The drinks? The rescue?"

His eyes narrowed as he smirked, "I'm behind on my gratitude."

Musashi slipped her thumbs between his jeans and his belt, tugging him closer and pressing up against him.

"Then start showing some appreciation."

His kiss was fresh and strong, and while Musashi was experienced and downright talented in this field, she felt a little dizzy from it. She pressed her hand against his chest, allowing her fingers to trace lightly down his abdomen. When she felt him shiver, she paused the kiss to glance up at him. There was a feverish look in his eyes, that told her what would happen if this went on.

She smirked and tipped her mouth to his.

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The next morning, Musashi awoke in a warm stupor. There had not been nearly enough alcohol in her system to even tempt a hangover, so she was clear headed and... happy. The room was glowing from the sunlight that had pressed her eyes to open, and a string of musical notes chimed from some unseen instrument in another room.

Shuya's bed was large and comfortable, but empty with just one person. Shuya must have slipped out of the room while she was asleep. She glanced around, noting her clothes carefully draped over the back of a chair.

This was usually the point where she would sneak out before the boy of choice returned. But she didn't feel like going anywhere. The music she heard seemed to insist she find it. So she dressed and explored the apartment.

In the main room there was an empty guitar case. A quick glance told her the missing piece was a bass. The music was louder now, and definitely the missing instrument supplying it. She wandered to a backdoor balcony, and found Shuya sitting shirtless, his legs dangling down, playing a low comfortable song she had never heard.

"Hey," She leaned against the doorframe.

Shuya turned slightly, a faint glimmer of surprise on his face. "I thought you'd have left."

"Did you want me to?"

He paused in his playing, "No."

Musashi came over to sit beside him, and he pulled one leg up to turn to face where she sat. She looked at the guitar, resting in silence on his lap. "What song was that?"

"A song my band sings. I was just practicing."

"You're in a band, huh?"

He nodded, picking out notes again.

"What's it called?"

"Orochi."

"What kind of band?"

Shuya leaned forward until he was an inch or so from her face, and a naughty smile dappled his cheeks. "What kind of band do you think we are?"

She could play this game too. Musashi leaned forward and grazed his lips with hers as she spoke, "The sexy kind."

Then she stood up and walked back into the apartment, consciously ensuring her hips swung in the most alluring manner she knew.

He was on his feet and following behind her in seconds.

<A few weeks later>

The brick wall was making her butt numb from sitting on it for too long. Musashi took another drag of her cigarette, and ran her tongue over her lip ring, tasting the cool metallic buzz. She glanced over her shoulder at the school behind her. It was a really big place, and all the kids wandering around looked snobby. She turned back to her notebook where she was scribbling lyrics and humming out a melody.

"Mushi-chan?"

Musashi jumped a little, having been engrossed in her writing, and looked down to who was situated below from her perch on the high wall. It was Shuya.

"Shuya," she sighed to herself, and jumped down. Her bag thumped against her leg, and she flipped her short hair out of her eyes. Before she got a good look at Shuya, he had swooped in and planted a sensual kiss on her. He pulled back instantly and looked down at her mouth, "New piercing?"

She nodded.

"Is that what you wanted to show me?" Shuya leaned down and kissed her again, running his tongue over the cool ring and her bottom lip.

Just as she was getting into the kiss, they were interrupted by a cough.

Glancing over, she saw three other boys and an older (but still young) guy. Shuya nuzzled her neck and peeked around her at them.

"Oh yeah," he pulled back from Musashi's neck reluctantly. "Mushi, this is Miyabi--" he gestured a boy with black hair and an overall angst-ridden expression, "--Akito--" a genki boy with bleach blonde hair and huge eyes, "--and Kazuki." a pleasant boy with lighter dyed hair. "They're in the band with me." Then he noticed the older man and added, "And that's Mitsuzuka-san, our manager."

Musashi untangled herself from Shuya as he attempted to draw her back into his web, and bowed politely.

Akito bounced over to her and exclaimed, "I love your hair! It's like mine! We're twins!"

"Actually, I was thinking of dying it soon." Musashi tugged at a lock of blonde, "And cutting it shorter."

His face fell, "Oh..."

She fumbled for a save, "So, uh, what do you play, Akito?"

"Guitar!" He played air guitar and grinned with glowing cheeks.

Shuya had accepted the fact that the kissing was temporarily halted and took her hand. "Miyabi's our singer, and Kazuki plays the drums."

"Awesome!" Musashi squeezed Shuya's hand, and turned back to him, "We should go, Shu."

"Where?"

"I want you to meet my parents."

Shuya looked a little green suddenly, and looked hesitant and terrified in one messy expression. "Oh..."

She felt guilty in surprising him, but she was surprising her parents too. And their reaction would not be nearly so calm as his...

Kazuki grinned and twirled a drumstick, "Ha ha, Shuya! Not only having to be tied down, but now you're meeting her parents!"

Musashi wrapped an arm around Shuya's waist, and said to Kazuki, "He's got to meet them if he ever wants to come over to my house." She hesitated, "Though I should just get my own place. Even though this one is free..."

Sighing, Shuya tugged at her, "We should get going."

"Bye, it was very nice to meet you guys. Can't wait to hear you play!" Musashi waved as they walked off.

* * *

"I hate meeting parents..." Shuya whined as they stood outside Musashi's house, his hands shaking in hers. She gave them a light squeeze.

"And mine are no picnic. But it's only for a second or two, and then we can escape again."

She turned and opened the front door, hearing Shuya curse quietly, over and over again. She sighed to herself "*you have no idea...*"

Inside, she could hear her mother clattering around the kitchen.

"Don't panic, Shuya. They know I'm not the traditional daughter they wanted, and they've accepted it." *Just recently* she reminded herself guiltily.

"Okaasan, Otousan, I'm home."

She felt herself slipping into the obedient daughter role she generally wore around her parents, in an attempt to keep them mildly happy. But Shuya wouldn't like her that way.

And she didn't like herself that way either. Maybe she could be herself, just for tonight.

Her mother appeared, "Welcome home, Musashi--" she paused when she caught sight of Shuya.

"Okaasan, this is Shuya. My boyfriend."

At the word 'boyfriend,' her mother twitched a little. As if perfectly planned, her father came into the room, still in his power suit and red tie. His critical eye and large stature always made Musashi feel small.

She hated it.

"Who is this."

It was never a question with father. Always a demand.

"Katsumura Shuya," Shuya bowed formally. Musashi was shocked at this previously unseen side of him. She leaned over and whispered, "Where did all the formality come from?"

He shrugged and whispered, "My family is of the traditional variety."

"Musashi."

"Yes, Otousan?"

"Who is this young man."

"Her boyfriend!" Gasp! Her mother, turning to him and looking wispy, "Look at his clothes, Masaru! And his hair!"

"Go back to the kitchen, Junko."

Musashi felt Shuya's hand tighten around hers, and when she glanced at him she saw his face was tight with subtle anger.

"Katsumura, my daughter is not available. You may go."

"Otousan--" Musashi objected, but her father quelled her with a glare. She looked at Shuya and choked on heartbreak.

He was looking at her with confusion and hurt. His eyes seemed to ask, "Are you really going to let go of us?"

She turned back to her father, who was already turned around to leave.

"Otousan."

He stopped mid-step and looked at her incredulously.

"Otousan." Musashi narrowed her eyes at him and dropped Shuya's hand. "You may be an amazing business man, and be the best CEO Tokyo has ever seen, but you are *not* the CEO of me. If I want to be available, I will be. Not that I am, since I am dating Shuya."

"You are not--"

"I am *with Shuya!*"

"With."

"Yes, Otousan. *With Shuya*, and all that implies."

Her father's face had been steadily deepening in shades of red, and he seemed to explode when she said that.

"You will *NOT* be *WITH* anyone until you are married and living out of this house!"

Musashi leaned to one side and folded her arms. Standing up to her father was not as difficult as she had always anticipated, and the power she felt within herself was staggering.

She looked at Shuya, who looked astonished and overwhelmed with affection, and smiled.

"Then I guess I'll be moving out."

The apartment was close to the University, and while still a good distance from Shuya's, it was closer than her parents' home had been.

And it was hers.

Musashi stood outside and stared at the door, swinging the key around one finger. Shuya was parking the moving van with the rest of the band as she prepared to help her move her things in.

"Mushi-chan!"

Akito poked his head between her arm and her ribs and peeked up at her.

"Hi, Aki-chan." She rubbed his head and he purred.

Then he pulled his head free and dashed to the truck, pulling the back open.

Miyabi was sulking and shouting to Shuya about not wanting to move furniture, while Kazuki laughed at them. Shuya flipped Miyabi a double bird and stuck his tongue out until Miyabi threw his hands up and grabbed the opposite end of her couch with Kazuki.

They moved things quickly and without too much damage to her things, some of which were new.

When it was all arranged, and the boxes sat waiting to unpack, Musashi cuddled up in the crook of Shuya's arm.

"Are you going to miss me?"

"Yyyyyess... Why can't you just live with me? I was getting used to your toothbrush in my bathroom and your clothes on my floor." Shuya buried his face in her hair and hugged her head.

She sat up and looked at him, smiling. "We just started dating, and neither of us is very used to commitment. I don't want to kill what I fought off the wolves to save." Turning around and falling into her lap, he peered up at her as she began to play with his hair.

"Maybe one day, then."

"Maybe."

She leaned down and kissed him.

There was a knock at her door, though, which interrupted them. Shuya stroked her cheek in a silent plea for her to ignore it. And she was going to until she heard someone speak.

"Musashi, it's your father."

The deadbolt seemed unusually difficult to unbolt, but soon she had it and was facing her father again. He wore a polo shirt and khaki slacks, but still appeared his usual stern self.

"Hey."

Behind her father, she saw her mother talking nervously to Akito. But he had her laughing within moments, and Musashi smiled.

Her father, typical of himself, entered without a word and stopped to stare at Shuya, who was sitting up from the couch.

"Katsumura."

Shuya stood and reflected a stern expression back at her father. "Natsukawa-san."

"Is this where you live."

"No, I have my own apartment."

"Good. And you have a job."

"I'm in a band."

His eyes narrowed. "And you can afford an apartment."

"Otousan, they are a very good band. They're very successful."

"And you go to school."

"Sort of, but I mostly work with the band."

"I see." He glanced at Musashi and arched an eyebrow, doubting her choice in men. But Musashi stuck up her nose and folded her arms, so he looked at Shuya again. "Musashi seems happy with you."

"It's my goal that she always be happy."

There was a long pause, as Shuya stood with a cool front before her father. Then her father turned and walked to Musashi.

"Come visit soon." He turned to Shuya again, "Katsumura."

After he was gone, Musashi shut the door and looked at her boyfriend.

"Shu?"

He fumbled for a cigarette and dropped a few in his shaky attempts. "Your father is scary as hell!"

She laughed and draped her arms around his neck, pulling him in for a kiss. He paused before their lips met, though, and cradled her face.

"Mushi?"

"Hm?"

"I love you," He didn't wait for her to respond, though. He just kissed her.

I love you too, Shuya, she whispered in her heart.

The end!