

Full Course

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Hatori comes over for dinner... Hatori x Toru

1. Chapter 1

Disclai

Full Course: Chapter One

The phone rang and Hatori sighed. There were a very limited amount of people who could be calling, and he didn't feel like talking to any of them. The day had been long and whoever was on the other end of the line was just going to prolong it. He massaged his temples and tried to decide whom he'd least like to deal with. Aya? He certainly didn't feel like being kept on the phone for the next couple of hours. He hadn't eaten yet. One of the Honke nurses with another so-called emergency? A summons from Akito? It rang a third time and he gave in and picked up the receiver.

"Ha-san?"

Hatori considered hanging up the phone. His hand was halfway to the placing the receiver back in the cradle when he realized that Shigure was still talking, and indeed hadn't paused for any sort of confirmation that it was Hatori who'd picked up the phone.

"...little flower was wondering what you'd like for dinner..."

Hatori looked at the speaker in consternation. Flower? Dinner? He placed it back up to his ear and sighed. "Hmnmn?"

"I said, Tooru-kun wants to know what meal you would like." Shigure's voice was playful and eager. Hatori immediately suspected he was up to something.

Well, he was always up to something.

"Meal?" Hatori's voice was deadpan.

"Mmm! Mmm!" You could practically hear the dog's ingratiating smile over the line. "As a thank you for taking care of her while she was ill, and for taking a special trip to look at her hand, Tooru-kun wishes to invite you to dinner."

Hatori was silent on the other end. He blinked at the blotter on his desk a few times. Tooru wanted him to come to dinner. A 'thank you'. It felt a bit strange knowing that someone was thinking of him. "When?"

"Ha-san agrees so quickly? I'm shocked! Has Ha-san fallen in love with our bride? We won't let you kidnap her!"

Hatori placed the receiver firmly in the cradle, lit a cigarette and started to count to five. He got to three when the phone rang again.

"Yes." He took an extended drag of cigarette.

"Ha-san is so meaaaaaan!" Shigure sobbed. "I just called to ask you to dinner tonight-"

"Tonight?" Hatori looked at the clock. This late? If he left now he'd arrive at the time most people would be thinking of settling down for the night.

"Yes. I told Tooru-kun how busy things have been for you at the clinic and she thought it might be a nice surprise....you haven't eaten yet have you?" Shigure let a note of concern wriggle in under his words. "She'll be so disappointed. But I suppose we could set another time..."

"I haven't eaten yet." Hatori said. He was in the habit of eating late in the evening. With the nature of his practice it was easier to leave the time most people were free open and adjust his own schedule to suit. He wasn't aware that anyone had noticed.

"Good, good." Shigure had to be smiling. "What should I tell her to make?"

Hatori considered the cup of instant ramen he'd been about to make for dinner. A home-cooked meal, cooked by Tooru-kun..."Anything is fine."

"Okay then! I'll tell her you're on your way. See you soon!"

"Yes." Hatori said and hung up the phone.

He stood and looked at himself in the mirror. He threaded his hand through his hair and decided to take off his slack tie. He ran a hand over his shirt to smooth out wrinkles and considered changing into a fresh shirt. But if he changed into a fresh shirt, it would just make his rumpled suit look worse. He looked at his watch and decided he didn't have time to change. He picked up his keys and jacket, flipped the lights off and walked out the door.

It was a strangely elating feeling knowing someone had been thinking about you he reflected as he drove through the quiet streets. He was surprised at how pleased he felt to be invited over to Shigure's house. He was used to being the person called on when needed, not 'just because.' He wondered what Tooru-kun would make for dinner.

He pulled into the drive and looked at the well-lit house. It looked very inviting after a very long day. For a moment he felt a pang jealousy because Shigure had been able to make his home such an oasis away from the Honke. He stepped out of the car and reflected that was mostly due to the happy accident that was Honda Tooru. He stepped up to the door and raised a hand to knock.

"I'm NOT GOING!"

"Baka Neko! We can't back out now!"

"There's no reason both of us have to go!"

"You're right. You can go alone."

"Me? Why should I go?"

"You were elected."

"So were you!"

Hatori regarded the door in consternation. This wasn't the homey environment he'd been imagining. He realized he'd dropped his hand without noticing. He raised it back up to the door.

"SENSE!!"

Hatori's knuckle paused a hairsbreadth from the door.

"Come out now! Really! We can't wait much longer!"

His brow wrinkled at the anguish in Shigure's editor's voice. Something was not right here. He considered turning around and getting back in the car. But they were expecting him weren't they? Tooru-kun had made dinner...

He knocked on the door.

"Yes!" He heard a patter of footsteps towards the door. "Just a minute please!" The door slid open and Tooru looked up at him in surprise.

"Hatori-san!"

"Ha-san!" Shigure burst into the room. "You're here!"

"Eh? Hatori?" Kyou poked his head around the corner. Yuki looked over his shoulder; both were plainly surprised to see him.

Hatori stood on the doorstep and felt his mood darken. He'd known that Shigure was up to something. He felt foolish and at a loss. Everyone was staring at him. He looked at Shigure who looked absurdly pleased with himself.

Shigure opened his mouth to say something when a flying blue shape launched itself at him. "Sensei! The train leaves in 30 minutes! It's the last train! WE HAVE TO BE ON THAT TRAIN!" Mit-chan shook Shigure back and forth as tears ran down her face.

"Yes, yes, yes." Shigure agreed genially. "We'll leave in a minute."

Tooru turned from the door and ran into the other room. She returned carrying an overnight bag and a small wrapped bento. "I think everything you need is in here Shigure-san." She said worriedly. "I wish I'd known about Shigure-san's writer's conference earlier."

Hatori looked at Shigure. Conference?

"It was last minute. I wasn't going to go but Mit-chan insisted." Shigure smiled as he accepted his bag and bento. He sniffed at the bento. "Mmm-mmm. Tooru-kun's handmade cooking!"

"You shouldn't have bothered making that pest anything!" Kyou sniffed.

"Ah!" Tooru smiled and ran back to the kitchen. She came out holding two more wrapped bentos. "I made some for Kyou-kun and Yuki-kun's overnight stay at school." The boys accepted them without hesitation.

"Ah...Honda-san shouldn't have bothered. I'm not going after all." Yuki smiled gently.

"You're not going?" Kyou snarled, "Why should you go get to stay home and I have to go?"

"Because you were elected by the students to protect our festival project." Yuki said calmly.

"But the teachers said that students could only stay over if the class representative stayed to chaperone!" Kyou pointed out in triumph. "So you have to go!"

Yuki shot Kyou a dark look of pure ice.

"But, but...It's such an honor that the class trusts you both so much." Tooru looked back and forth between them. "It-it would be rude not to go!"

"But...Honda-san..." Yuki said trying to think of some way to placate her. "With Shigure's conference...You'll be all alone here if we go."

"But you promised the teachers you would be there." She turned to Kyou, "And the students put their trust in you." She put on a brave face. "I don't mind being here by myself! I'll be fine! You can trust me!"

"It's not a matter of trust..." Yuki trailed off helplessly.

"Tooru-kun won't be alone." Shigure said happily. He stepped over the sobbing Mit-chan who had fallen to his feet in supplication, counting down the minutes till the train left the station. "Ha-san has come over to house-sit. Haven't you, Ha-san?"

Everyone turned to look at the doorway where Hatori still stood. Now was his chance, he could leave with some shreds of his dignity intact and unmask Shigure for the manipulator he was. Though his face was still the same calm mask it always was he was absolutely furious inside. That damn dog!

"Oh, but..." Tooru took a step forward and clasped her hands together worriedly, "We can't ask Hatori-san to do that." She looked back and forth between the others in the hall, then back at the tall man in the doorway. "Hatori-san is so busy with his work. We can't inconvenience you that way."

"It's no trouble." The words left his lips before his mind had formed the thought.

"Fine then!" Shigure said cheerily. "Let's go Mit-chan. Don't dawdle, we don't want to miss the train." He shouldered his bag and sailed out the door.

Hatori stepped out of his way and inside the doorway automatically.

"Sseeennssseeeiiiiii...." Mit-chan sobbed following him out the door.

"Well..." Kyou said reluctantly. "If Hatori is going to be here..."

Tooru went into the other room and produced two knapsacks. "The others will be expecting you."

"Thank you Honda-san." Yuki took both bags and tossed one without looking at Kyou. The cat narrowly avoided it striking him in the face by grabbing it out of the air. "We'd best get going." He shouldered his bag, nodded to Hatori and left.

"Kuso Nezumi." Kyou muttered, "Why do I have to spend the night with you?" He shot Hatori a warning look, and then looked at Tooru. "Night." He said and followed Yuki into the night. He paused on the doorstep and gave Hatori a hard look. His narrowed eyes slid back to Tooru's smiling face and he relaxed a bit. "See you tomorrow."

Tooru waved to them in the doorway. As they finally faded from sight she slid the door closed and turned around to face Hatori. She felt a bit odd about being all alone with him under such unexpected circumstances.

"Ah...Won't you come in?" She gestured to the living room.

Hatori realized he'd been standing and staring like a fool. Shigure was always putting him in such awkward positions. "Ah...Un." He took off his shoes and went to sit at the table.

"I'll get some tea." Tooru said and hurried into the kitchen.

* * *

Hatori sat at the table with a steaming cup of tea in front of him and something light and classical sounding playing on the radio. He took a sip of his tea and berated himself for being an idiot. As expected he had just been a convenient person to call when needed. He tried to stop himself from slipping into self-pity. This was just his role in the family. He should be used to it by now.

Tooru stepped into the doorway and looked at the stern man sitting at the table. His head was bowed as he looked into his teacup, his long bangs falling over his face. The slope of his shoulders was bent and his mouth was turned down. She bit her lip. The tall doctor was always hard to read but he didn't look happy. He looked tired and worn down. Shigure had said that his clinic had been busy lately, and he didn't have much help. She felt terrible for taking him out of his home and his well-earned rest.

"Ano...Hatori-san...." She said hesitantly. "Have you eaten yet?"

Hatori looked up and measured his words carefully. She didn't know that Shigure had promised a home cooked meal. She hadn't been the one to invite him over under false pretenses. "I had a late lunch."

Tooru clapped her hands delightedly. Here was something she could do for him for kindly staying over. She ducked back into the kitchen and came back out with a platter of onigiri. "I...I know it's not much...with everyone going to be out for the night I thought I'd make myself something light for dinner...but please have some." She smiled warmly. Hatori felt something loosen in his chest. As always she looked so eager. "Thank you Tooru-kun." She set the platter down and sat on the other side of the table. They sat and ate in silence for a bit.

Tooru refilled Hatori's teacup without needing to be asked. "Is this enough, Hatori-san?" The onigiri had disappeared between them more quickly than she had expected.

"It's plenty, thank you." Hatori assured her. It had been better than the instant ramen he'd been planning to have.

The sound of a growling stomach filled the space between them.

Tooru bit the inside of her cheek to keep from smiling at the light flush that chased over Hatori's features.

"Hatori-san has been working so hard lately, you should eat more to keep your strength up." Tooru smiled as she stood. "Please wait just a moment."

Hatori followed her with his eyes then went to massage his temples. He supposed it was somewhat funny for a doctor to get health advice from a high schooler. It was a rather nice

feeling however.

Tooru returned in moments setting a crock of stew in front of him. She sat down kitty corner to him and gave a small smile. "I'm sorry its just leftovers, but I hope you enjoy it."

Hatori nodded in thanks and sampled a bit. "It's very good." He said and meant it. Shigure was always rhapsodizing about Tooru's home cooking. He'd taken much of what he said as exaggeration...but if this was what 'leftovers' tasted like he'd have to revise his opinion.

Tooru watched Hatori eat and smiled. It was such a nice feeling to be useful, even if it was just providing leftovers. Shigure was always talking about how hard Hatori worked. He did look tired, and by the way he was quietly attacking his dinner he obviously hadn't been eating regularly.

Hatori sat back from the table with a satisfied sigh. He took a sip from his cooling tea and came back to reality slowly. Tooru's head was bent over some industriously over some sewing. Feeling his eyes on her she looked up with a smile.

"Are you finished?" She asked and put the sewing to the side.

"Yes, thank you." She stood and started to gather up the dishes. "Ah...Let me help." Hatori started to rise from the table.

"Oh no!" Tooru said firmly. "There are only a couple, and Hatori-san has had a long day. This will only take me a minute." She sailed into the kitchen. "Would you like some more tea?"

Hatori assured her he wouldn't and found himself with suddenly with nothing to do. He wasn't used to being idle. He closed his eyes and leaned back against the wall. At home he'd be going over his reports from the day, and planning what he'd do with his next. He sighed, ran a hand through his hair and felt comfortably full. He listened to Tooru's rattling in the kitchen over the soft music playing on the radio. Shigure was a lucky dog if he got to have this kind of atmosphere every day.

Tooru came in from the kitchen with a slice of cake. She stopped in the doorway. Hatori leaned up against the wall, sound asleep. She went back into the kitchen and put the cake into the fridge. She went to the linen closet and pulled out a blanket. She carefully tiptoed into the living room and looked at the sleeping dragon.

His face was slack and peaceful. Hatori was never very animated but in sleep he was his stern face was softened. His hair fell over his face and he breathed in and out deeply. She kneeled next to him and just looked at him for a bit. There were hollows beneath his eyes. Even while he was sleeping he looked tired.

Tooru's heart went out to him. It didn't seem anyone was looking after him. She bit her lip and looked around the room. She wondered if she should wake him. Deciding against it, she carefully wrapped the blanket around him instead. Unable to fight her maternal instinct, she smoothed his hair back away from his face.

Hatori, like most of his family, was very attractive she thought. It wasn't always obvious when he was next to the flashy beauty of Ayame or Shigure's playful handsomeness...but Hatori's attractiveness was one of quiet strength. She smiled and sat back on her knees. She could see

why everyone was so willing to leave things to him. There was just something about him that told you that you could depend on him.

"It must be hard being so dependable." She thought. She looked back at the mound of aprons she was sewing. The class was going to wear them for the cafe they'd created for the festival. She sighed and got back to work. They weren't going to sew themselves.

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Hatori stirred. He had a crick in his neck from falling asleep sitting up. He massaged it and sighed. Had he fallen asleep at his desk again? The blanket slid down as he moved. He blinked at it sleepily. Who had covered him in a blanket? He sat up and remembered where he was.

He looked around him in consternation. He'd fallen asleep at the table? How embarrassing. Tooru must have covered him with the blanket. She was so considerate, but he wished she had woken him instead. He looked at his watch sleepily. What time was it?

A soft sound caught his attention. Tooru had her head nestled in a fall of snowy fabric. On one side a large pile of folded aprons sat, on the other a few un-hemmed aprons that were obviously waiting for her ready needle. She'd fallen sound asleep in the midst of her work. He looked at his watch again. It was past 3 in the morning. How late had she planned to work on those? And what in the world did she need with so many aprons? He shook his head and stood.

Carefully so that he wouldn't wake her he collected the teacups and kettle and brought them into the kitchen. He washed them out trying to make as little noise as possible. He placed them

on the drying rack and walked back into the living room.

He paused a moment and studied the girl sleeping on the table, her hair spread about her like a veil. He was surprised at how plain she seemed. He'd always thought Tooru a pretty girl, but now lacking her usual smile and animation she seemed much more...ordinary. She sighed deeply in her sleep. It's amazing how much difference a person's spirit can make he reflected. It was Tooru's personality and concern for others that really made her shine.

Hatori was tempted to cover her with the blanket she'd used on him so that he wouldn't have to disturb her. She looked very peaceful. But she'd regret sleeping in that position come morning. Her back would be in a mess of knots. He kneeled down and shook her shoulder lightly.

"Ha-ha-ha!" She laughed in her sleep and slid off the table. "ha." She whispered softly and curled into a ball.

His hand still in the air as if reaching out for Tooru's phantom shoulder Hatori looked at her with a sweat dotted brow. What the heck was that? Laughing in your sleep? Who actually did that?

He sat back on his knees and looked at the girl again. She was so soundly asleep. He wished he didn't have to wake her, but he couldn't just leave her there. He reached out to shake her again.

"Tooru-kun." He whispered, his deep voice more a rumble than actual words. "It's time to go to bed. You shouldn't sleep here, you'll get a cold." He was amused to hear the old adage from his own lips. But it wasn't as if it wasn't true. The floor was drafty.

Tooru's only response was to make a little noise and to drift deeper into sleep. Hatori sighed and contemplated his options. He could leave her here, and just make sure to cover her well. He looked at her again. She looked so small.

Well, if he was careful....he should be able to...

Making his decision, he shifted his legs underneath him and put his arms beneath her. Making sure of his grip he stood with her in his arms. He was surprised at how light she was. He looked down at her head nestled in his elbow. She hardly stirred. Holding her carefully away from his body he carried her upstairs.

He laid her out on her bed and looked at her in consternation. Should he let her sleep in her housedress like that? He didn't think it would harm anything to leave her that way. He did take a moment to remove her socks, laying them carefully over the back of her chair.

He looked at the bed Shigure had bought her and sighed. What had he been thinking? The thing was huge, it wasn't made for a single girl, it was made for two people. He sighed. He *knew* what Shigure had thought when he'd bought that bed. 'A pretty high school girl sleeping in my house.' She was lucky Yuki and Kyou were in the house or who knew what he would have tried.

He shook his head and cautiously pulled the bedcover and blankets down beneath her. He had them down to her feet when she startled him by moving. She rolled to her side, and curled up muttering in her sleep. He made to pull the blankets up and paused to look at her again. He

was struck by the sudden urge to crawl into bed with her.

It wasn't that he desired her...or to be honest with himself, there may have been some of that deep down...but it was just the sudden want to be close to someone again. That wonderful casual feeling of waking next to someone, he missed it. It had been a long time since he'd had it. He closed his eyes and waited for the familiar pain to strike in his chest. He opened his eyes and looked at the young woman in the bed.

Feeling an uncharacteristic tenderness, he gently pulled the coverlet and blankets up to her chin. He tucked and smoothed the blankets around her. She sighed happily in her sleep. Feeling more than a little like a mother hen, he pulled her hair out of her face and lay it back across the pillow. His knuckle brushed against her cheek and she made a little noise. He hurriedly pulled his hand away and wondered what he was doing.

He turned away from the bed quickly walked to the doorway. It wasn't until he hit the hallway that he paused to wonder where he was intended to sleep tonight. He was completely unprepared to stay the night. He hadn't even brought his toothbrush.

2. Chapter 2

Disclaimer: I do not own Fruits Basket or any of the Characters

Full Course: Chapter Two Something clattered downstairs and Hatori woke with a start. He blinked blearily at an unfamiliar wall. He lay still for a minute trying to figure out where he was. His mind was sluggish and slow moving first thing in the morning. Slowly the facts floated up through the morning murk. It was Shigure's house, he'd been tricked into coming. He was in Yuki's room, the only clean room with a real bed. He sighed and rolled onto his back running a weary hand down his face.

He didn't feel as if he had slept all that long. There was another clatter downstairs. Tooru had obviously risen already. What time was it? Had he overslept? Thank goodness he didn't have any morning appointments today. He reached for the watch he'd left on the desk and brought it up to his face. 5 AM? What in the world...?

He dressed quickly in yesterday's clothes and made his way downstairs. It had been a long time since he'd attended high school, but surely it didn't start this early? Why in the world was Tooru up now, especially after being up so late?

He walked into the hallway and almost collided with a harried Tooru. She gave a little 'eep!' and dropped the full laundry basket she was carrying. The clothes, a mixture of Kyou, Yuki and Shigure's things, spread across the floor between them.

"Ah! Hatori-san!" Tooru flushed, "I'm so sorry!" She bent to start picking up the clothes. "I wasn't expecting to see anyone and got startled, I'm so clumsy. Sorry!"

Hatori bent to help, his brow furrowing, "It was as much my fault as yours. Isn't it a little early for doing laundry?" He held the basket out for her to put the dirty clothes in.

"Oh!" Tooru's panicked expression shifted to concern, "Did I wake you? I'm so sorry!"

"No, I usually rise about this time." It was a lie, but not too much of one. Hatori rarely slept well or completely through a night. He rose early as often as he did any other time. Sometimes he didn't sleep at all. He rose to his feet and Tooru automatically followed suit.

There was an immediate lessening of the tension in the slight girl's shoulders, but it didn't go away completely. One less thing to worry about, but there were still worries. "Would Hatori-san like breakfast? Just give me a minute to put these things in and I'll make something..." She held her hands out for the laundry basket. He noticed she hadn't answered his question.

"Why are you up so early?" Hatori deliberately moved the basket to his hip and out of the girl's grasp. The girl couldn't have slept for more than a few hours. Surely laundry couldn't be so

urgent? The clothing wasn't even her own.

Tooru dropped her hands awkwardly and fidgeted uncomfortably. Was Hatori mad at her? His expression never changed much, but he didn't look happy. "Ah... well...I have my part time after school today... and I have to get the laundry done. Shigure-san's things take such a long time to dry." She said as if this explained why she had to do it at five in the morning. "And I have to make dinner for later... Oh! And the aprons!" Her hands flew to her mouth, "I didn't finish the aprons!"

Completely forgetting about the laundry, Tooru ran into the living room. She dropped to the table and counted out the waiting aprons. "Aaah... How could I have slept when they weren't finished yet?"

"Those things?" Hatori asked trailing after her wondering how a few aprons could cause so much panic. "Why do you need so many?"

"The aprons for the class caf today." Tooru sighed helplessly there were still three aprons left to finish. "Ah! Hatori-san!" Tooru jumped up as if bitten, "Your breakfast! I'll get it started right away." She turned to go to the kitchen, "Oh! But the laundry!" She turned back to Hatori, then spun towards the waiting aprons, "The aprons!"

The dragon watched as the girl spun in a circle trying to decide which task was most important. If she went on this way she'd make herself ill. He was beginning to get ill just watching her. He was suddenly reminded of Aya back when they were in middle school. He'd always wait until last minute to work on his school projects and then become hysterical when he realized there wasn't enough time. Hatori had always ended up helping out, pulling an all-nighter to finish this or that project. He didn't know how he'd gotten sucked in time after time, but it looked like it was going to happen again.

"Calm down." He commanded in his deadpan way. Toru stopped dead and looked at him with big eyes. He immediately regretted his tone. This girl wasn't Aya, she didn't need such forcefulness to get her attention. "I don't eat breakfast so work on your aprons."

"But... the laundry." She said in a small voice. Hatori looked so stern.

"Do the others have clothes for tomorrow?" The girl nodded at him. "Then it can wait."

The girl seemed to take a moment to process this before her brow cleared. "Then I have time to make Hatori-san breakfast before I finish the aprons!"

"Don't bother. I don't eat breakfast." He reminded her.

"Oh, but that's not healthy!" Toru's eyebrows made an urgent v over her eyes as she scolded. "Shigure-san said that you work very long hours! You need to start the day off right, with lots of energy. A good breakfast is essential. Mother always said-"

Hatori frowned, "Fine then." He interrupted. "I'll just have whatever you're having. But you'd better hurry if you're going to have time to finish the aprons."

"Yes!" Tooru replied and scampered off to the kitchen. She paused once she got past the threshold and her happy expression slipped. She wasn't used to being alone with Hatori, it was more stressful than she'd thought. Usually Shigure was around to tease and lighten the atmosphere.

She'd never realized how nervous the doctor made her feel she thought as she began to pull out fixings for both breakfast and the dinner she'd prepare for later. He always looked at her so directly. His green eyes were intimidating when they studied you so close. She felt like he could see right through her. Her brow wrinkled as she set up the rice in the rice cooker. She certainly hadn't shown him a very good face today, running around like a chicken with its head cut off.

She blushed as she remembered waking up tucked in bed still fully dressed. She hadn't done too well last night either. Hatori must think she was so irresponsible! She slept so easily even though her work wasn't done. From the stories Momiji had told her about Hatori's practice she knew he'd never do anything so negligent. Hatori often forgot to eat and sleep when things got busy Momiji had said.

She looked at the food she laid out in determination. Well, today at least he'd get a good meal. She might not be able to do much, but that she could do! She rolled up her sleeves in resolve. She was going to make a grand breakfast for Hatori.

The teakettle whistled and Tooru decided to start him off with a cup of tea. She set up the tray and walked into the living room.

Hatori didn't even look up, his attention focused on the fall of snowy fabric cascading over his lap. He held the fabric close to his face as he worked the needle up and down the hem.

When Hatori had picked up aprons he'd only intended to see what was needed to finish them up. Why in the world was Tooru responsible for making them all? Ideally each student should have made his or her own apron to spread the work out. There hadn't been much left to do on them, and Hatori was not used to being idle.

Before he'd even realized what he'd done he'd picked up Tooru's waiting needle and had begun sewing. Living on his own, and being semi-responsible for looking after the rambunctious Momiji, he'd had his share of tears to mend. This was much easier; he simply had to follow the line of neat stitches Tooru had made. Soon he was completely absorbed in his work.

"Hatori-san is amazing!" The doctor looked up to see Tooru looking over his shoulder with a tray of tea. Her eyes were sparkling with genuine surprise and wonder. He felt a long forgotten flip in his stomach. Was it really so easy to make her happy?

"Sewing isn't so amazing." He demurred putting down the apron and taking the tea tray from her. He kept his head down and let his hair fall over both his eyes to mask his confusion. Why was this little slip of a girl affecting him so strongly? He shouldn't be so pleased at being able to make her smile.

"But your stitches are so tiny and even!" Tooru said admiringly. She picked up the apron and studied his handiwork. They blended in seamlessly with her stitches. You'd never know they were done by two different people.

"Why are you making all of these? Why didn't everyone make their own?" Tooru's face fell at

his sharp tone and he added quickly, "It doesn't seem fair to make one person do all the work."

"Oh, well," Tooru folded the now finished apron nervously. "Most of the boys in the class don't really know how to sew... and not all the girls are very good... It was decided that the person who sews the best should make them... Really, it was an honor to be chosen." She kept her eyes down and focused on smoothing out the creases on the apron as she put it on the finished pile.

She was sure that Hatori was going to scold her. She'd already had lectures from Hana-chan, Uo-chan and Kyou about the aprons. Yuki hadn't said anything directly, but he'd made comments to some of the other girls in class, which had been even worse. Really, she didn't mind helping out. Simple sewing like this was something she could do well, and it felt good to be appreciated.

Hatori pulled out the next apron. "They must have thought highly of you if they thought you could finish all these on your own. I'm sure they'll be pleased with how they turned out." He bit back anything he wanted to say about the aprons. Tooru looked too much like she was expecting a reprimand.

Besides, if Yuki's fanclub was anything like Aya's "protection squad" had been like she'd probably been in a "damned if you do, damned if you don't" situation. If she'd refused to make the aprons the girls would have said she was stuck up and thought she was above helping out the class when it needed it. If she agreed yet failed to make the aprons, as most people with her schedule would, they'd be able to say she was unreliable and untrustworthy.

No, the only way to solve the problem would be to complete the aprons. To really put them in their place she'd have to do such a good job on them that they had nothing to complain about. Nothing would bother them more.

Of course that probably had never crossed her mind. They'd asked and she said yes because she was happy to help. That was just the way she thought. She really did think it was an honor to be asked.

Hatori sighed. "I'll finish these while you make breakfast," he said finally.

Though his tone implied a dismissal Tooru couldn't help but protest. "Oh, no! Hatori-san doesn't have to!" She exclaimed waving her hands frantically.

"I need something to do while I wait." Hatori shrugged, using the most likely excuse the girl would be willing to accept.

As expected she thanked him profusely as she returned to the kitchen. It wasn't until he'd finished the second apron that he realized that she'd taken the laundry basket with her. Hatori sighed again. Did the girl ever stop?

Apparently not, he reflected. By the time Hatori had finished the third apron he'd seen Tooru bustle by with another load of laundry, pass back with the vacuum cleaner, and then back to the table with a complete breakfast table setting. Throughout it all she managed to keep a smile on her face, even humming or singing occasionally. As he folded the third apron up and placed it on the top of the pile she came out of the kitchen bearing breakfast.

Placing a couple of covered dishes out on the table she deftly dished him out a heaping bowl of rice and placed it before him. Hatori watched her with thinly masked awe. This was a side of Tooru that he didn't get to see often. She smiled gently, her eyes practically closed, as she set out with practiced ease a traditional Japanese breakfast. She set out a grilled fish in front of him and a bowl of miso soup in easy reach. She set out a small flat plate of nori to roll the rice in and other smaller dishes of natto, pickles and soy sauce. She sat back and surveyed the table to see if she had forgotten anything. Seemingly satisfied she rose again and returned this time with a tea set. She poured him a cup and then picked up her own utensils.

She was just about to pick up a pickle with her chopsticks when she realized that Hatori hadn't moved. Had she forgotten something? Her eyes darted around the table. For a moment she thought she'd forgotten something basic... like his chopsticks. Everything looked like it was in place, so why was he so still?

"Ano... Hatori-san..." she began uncertainly, her stomach clenching. She'd wanted so badly to make him a grand breakfast. But maybe he didn't like a traditional Japanese breakfast. Perhaps a western style one would have been better. Shigure preferred traditional breakfasts to western, but Hatori couldn't be more opposite from the author. That must be the problem. "If this isn't to your liking... I can make something else." She stood and began to reach for his fish. "Do you like eggs? Think we have some sausage..." She babbled frantically, "Or cereal, I know we have milk...and yogurt..."

Hatori quickly placed a hand over her reaching hand. "This is fine." He could kick himself for making her worry. He'd just been so amazed at how put together and adult Tooru had looked as she'd laid out the breakfast. There had been a practiced and quiet beauty in her movements, the kind you expected to see in a woman performing a tea service or arranging flowers. It had been like a dance. He'd gotten lost in it, and in the amazement that this was the usually clumsy and fumbling Tooru.

He realized he still had his hand over Tooru's. He drew it back hurriedly. "I'm sorry, I just..." he couldn't really tell her what he was just thinking, "didn't know where to start first. Tooru-kun made so much." He finished lamely.

Tooru sat back with a blush and picked up her chopsticks again. She was so relieved that he was happy with his breakfast. There was so little she could do for him, it would be horrible if she couldn't at least provide a breakfast he liked. The knot in her stomach loosened along with her tongue. "I'm sorry, please don't feel obligated to eat it all. I'm just so used to cooking for everyone that it's hard to remember to make a small meal."

"Do you make this every morning?" Hatori asked as he picked up his bowl of rice and started in on the fish. "It must be a lot of work." No wonder she rose so early.

"Well, Mother always said that breakfast was very important." Tooru said happily as she picked up a pickled radish.

Hatori nodded absently as he ate his breakfast. He wondered if Shigure and the others had any idea the amount of work the girl was doing for them. It was unlikely. Before Tooru had come chores like cleaning, cooking and laundry had simply not gotten done. It was doubtful that Shigure or Yuki even knew how much time it took to get a house in good order. Kyou, amazing as it sounded, was a bit more disciplined. Since he'd lived alone with his Shishou for much of his life he was used to doing things on his own. But it was doubtful that two males had ever attempted the level of cooking that Tooru pulled off every day or tried to maintain as high level of cleanliness.

After they finished their companionable breakfast, Hatori had to insist quite firmly with helping her clean up the breakfast dishes. As he helped clear the table he found himself amazed all over again as he entered the kitchen. Laid out on the counter were a complete dinner of fish stew, some covered side dishes and a stack of box lunches. Apparently she'd made all three meals of the day while she'd made breakfast. Noticing his glance at the counter Tooru smiled and explained.

"I have my part time job after school today." She handed Hatori a dish to dry. Her hands went to work on the next dish as she looked up at him and continued, "But Yuki-kun and Kyou-kun should be home for dinner. I didn't want them to have to wait." She paused as Hatori put away the plate he had dried and handed him another. "And I'm sure they'll both be tired after staying at school, so I thought they might like a homemade lunch today." She smiled brightly and handed him another plate.

"Mmm." Hatori made a non-committal noise. It seemed a silly way to spend your time, he thought as he dried the dishes and put them away. Didn't she say that today was the day of the school festival? If Yuki and Kyou were unsatisfied with the school lunch, with all the cafs and stands the classes would be running there should be plenty of other options. He also didn't follow exactly how being tired would make them want a homemade lunch, trying to follow Tooru's logic gave him a headache. He supposed she was the type who thought good food fixed everything.

A glance at the clock sent Tooru into another tizzy as she realized how late it had gotten. She still had to finish getting ready for school and it was almost time to leave. She'd been having such a nice time talking with Hatori she hadn't been paying attention to the time. Hatori had sent her from the kitchen to get her things together as he finished up the kitchen clean up.

While she was grateful for his help, she couldn't help feeling disappointed in herself once again. Was she ever going to show Hatori a responsible face? First she slept while she hadn't finished her work, then she ran around like a loon because she couldn't decide what to do first, now she'd lost track of time and hadn't finished her chores. And even worse, Hatori had ended up finishing both her aprons and her chores! He must think she was so immature and thoughtless!

She felt even more embarrassed as she stood in the doorway looking at the pile of things she had to bring with her. She had to figure out how to carry over twenty aprons, a stack of box lunches as well as her school bag and regular school things. Originally she thought that Yuki

and Kyou would be there to help her carry the aprons. If she'd thought ahead, she realized, she could have sent the finished ones a head with them last night. It was too late for that now. She'd just have to manage.

Perhaps if she held her bag in one hand...and stacked the lunches on top of the aprons she could handle it all, she thought. "I'm going!" she called, as she took her bag in hand and reached down to lift the apron and box lunch stack at her feet.

She had them precariously piled in her arms and was trying to open the sliding door with her foot when Hatori came out of the kitchen. Only his long swift strides were able to get him there in time to keep the lunches from toppling to the floor as the aprons began to slide.

He took them in one hand and used the other to steady the girl. His hand splayed across her back as she wobbled on one foot. She got her balance, muttering a breathless "eep!" as she almost dropped the snowy aprons.

"Isn't anyone coming to help you with all this?" Hatori scolded. Tooru kept her head down and shook her head desolately.

"Hana-chan and Uo-chan offered, but I thought that Yuki-kun and Kyou-kun would be here. After they were elected to stay over... I guess I just forgot that I would need help..." Tooru felt like she was going to cry. Hatori must think that she was such an idiot.

"You should have said something." Hatori said, "I have my car, I can easily drive you to school."

Tooru's shoulders hunched even more miserably. Now she was even further inconveniencing Hatori! She managed a sincere thank you, but felt like she should be apologizing. Hatori must regret ever having agreeing to housesit for Shigure.

She followed him out to the car and allowed him to take the aprons and set them in the back seat. He politely opened the passenger side door for her. He waited for her to settle in and fasten her seat belt before he handed her the lunches. Tooru kept her eyes on her hands gripping the boxes tightly and tried not to let the tears she felt behind her eyes flow free. The last thing she needed to burden Hatori with was her tears.

She tried to take a calming breath, and to think of something cheerful as Hatori settled himself into the drivers seat and started down the road. She wasn't usually this emotional.

It must be because I'm tired, she thought and then berated herself. Just think about how tired Hatori-san must be! He'd worked a long day yesterday and then come over to Shigure's house. Then he'd been up late putting her to bed and had been rudely awakened by her noisy self early the next morning. Then he'd had to do delicate sewing and the cleaning that she was supposed to do. Tooru wanted to crawl into a little black hole and just disappear she was so embarrassed.

Hatori tried to figure out exactly how the mood had gotten so strained. Tooru had been happy while they were chatting over the dishes. Now she huddled in the seat next to him like a kicked dog. He frowned. Perhaps she was just tired. She'd been up who knew how late working on those damn aprons, and he had no idea how early she'd risen before he'd awoken. Then to do so much in the few hours before school; she'd done not only the laundry and cleaning but made three complete meals as well. She must be exhausted, and her day had barely begun. He drove up to the school grounds and into the parking lot his brow furrowing. He'd have to talk to Shigure about the amount of work he was having the girl do.

Tooru glanced at Hatori as the car pulled to a stop. His face was dark and he was frowning. She knew it! He was upset with her. Well, at least they were finally at school and she could get out of his hair. She quickly jumped out of the car before he could come around and open the door for her. She began to babble thanks and tried to gather all her things together so she could run into the school and finally stop being such a pest to him. But it was the same problem all over again, how to carry all her things?

Hatori walked around the side of the car and took the aprons from Tooru's hands as she pulled them from the back seat. "I'll carry these into the classroom for you." She looked uncertainly up at him, "You wouldn't want to drop them." He said, hoping to prod her forward. It worked a little too well.

"Thank you Hatori-san." She said softly into the lunches she was carrying. "It's this way." He must think she was useless she thought as they walked down the corridors.

They reached the room and Tooru open the door. "Good Morning." She called, completely devoid of her usual pep and cheer. It had been a good morning, before she'd completely ruined it.

Hatori followed her into the classroom, starting to become seriously worried. Perhaps the girl was becoming ill? It could be that with all the extra work and excitement that she had been developing a fever and not realized it. She was susceptible to fevers. All the energy and vigor from this morning could have just been adrenaline.

"Honda-san," Yuki said warmly as he stepped around the teacher's desk where he'd been

writing the menu for the caf on the blackboard, "Good morning." He hardly looked as if he'd spent the night here in the classroom. As usual he was impeccably groomed, every hair in place. "We were a little worried."

"Worried?" Tooru blinked at him. What was there to worry about?

"You're late," growled Kyou. He was sitting backwards on a chair and was halfway sprawled across a desk. He looked like he'd hardly slept at all and had dressed in the dark. His uniform top was unbuttoned and the shirt underneath half tucked in half tucked out. His hair was a bristly mess. "Did you forget you had morning duties? Just because it's festival day doesn't mean you don't have to follow the schedule." Kyou closed his eyes.

Tooru's eyes flew to the schedule board where the student's duties were posted. There plain as day was her name next to Kyou's for morning duties. How could she have possibly forgotten?

"I had to do it all myself because this guy," Kyou emphasized his disgust by rudely gesturing with a thumb at Yuki, "was too lazy to help."

Completely mortified Tooru began to apologize. Could nothing else go wrong? She babbled out broken apologies and explanations to a wide-eyed Kyou. She'd gone scarlet and hung her head low as the words spewed out. "I'm so sorry! I forgot... I'm sorry! ...and the aprons... I..." The words tumbled out in a mish-mash of nonsense. She couldn't seem to get out that she'd been so focused on getting the aprons done that she'd completely forgotten to keep track of the classroom schedule.

Yuki and Kyou stared at her in shock. Tooru was red as a tomato and talking complete nonsense. Kyou hadn't meant to make her this upset. He had just wanted to bluster a bit; he certainly hadn't meant to put her in this state. Both boys advanced on her warily, their eyes darting around the classroom.

Focused on the finishing touches to their booth, most of the other students didn't seem to realize that Tooru seemed to be having a break down in the middle of the classroom.

"Tooru-kun." Hatori interrupted, hoping to stem the tide of apologies. "Where should I put these?"

Tooru turned to him with watery eyes and burst into tears. She'd completely forgotten that Hatori was standing behind her. Besides the problems she'd caused for Kyou this morning she'd been keeping Hatori waiting with an armful of aprons. As if she hadn't been enough of a nuisance to him this morning!

Yuki took the box lunches out of her hands and put them on a desk. He steered the sobbing Tooru out of the classroom door, Kyou trailing in their wake. People were starting to notice and neither boy wanted Tooru to be embarrassed any further. Hatori placed the aprons on a convenient desk and followed. There was definitely something wrong with the girl.

Tooru stood facing the wall with her face hidden in her hands as she cried. Yuki was hovering helplessly at her side looking thoroughly confused. Every once and a while he'd hold up a hand like he was going to pat her back but then would think better of it and drop it back to his side. Kyou stood staring at Tooru with his hands on his hips, glaring as if he thought the force of his stare could stem her tears.

"What are you crying for?! You don't make any sense!" he scolded.

"Shush!" Hatori commanded him placing a heavy hand on his shoulder. Kyou bristled but fell silent. The dour doctor walked over to the girl, ignoring the accusing glare that Yuki leveled at him. He placed his hands on the girl's shoulder firmly and turned her towards him. "Tooru-kun, look at me." He commanded softly. He took and put a knuckle under her chin and lifted her reluctant face to look into his. His murky green eyes darted over her face. Reddened eyes, flushed cheeks, and her nose was running. He placed a hand along the side of her face, cupping it gently.

Tooru's eyes closed as Hatori's cool hand cupped against the side of her face. His hand felt soothing to her heated skin. She didn't want to meet his gaze, she felt worthless, stupid and foolish. First she caused all sorts of problems for everyone, and then she burdened them all with her making herself a crying mess. Mother would be so ashamed of her. Unconsciously she leaned into the comforting hand of Hatori's along her face.

The girl sagged against his hand, confirming his conclusions. She'd worked herself to exhaustion, and gotten herself so wrought up that she was beginning to make herself ill. He pulled his hand away and rested it briefly against her forehead. She was a little warm, but it was probably due to her crying rather than an actual fever. Thankfully though her tears had turned from sobs to sniffles and she seemed to be calming down a bit.

Sensing this, Yuki ventured a comment, "Honda-san... It really wasn't a problem that you missed morning duties."

"Stupid, with the festival and everything there wasn't much for one person to do." Kyou blustered, not caring that he was contradicting himself from before. "It's nothing to cry over."

Tooru sniffled and looked at them both, "But...it was my responsibility."

"With the extra work Honda-san put in with the aprons and onigiri booth, I'm sure everyone will understand." Yuki said gently. "I don't think anyone but us noticed it."

"Tooru-kun was up very late finishing the aprons." Hatori commented, more to the boys than to Tooru. Both got the impression that he was displeased that they had allowed her to even attempt such a large project on her own. "I fear she may have made herself ill. I think it would be best if she returned home to rest."

"Perhaps that would be best." Yuki said delicately. Kyou gave a curt nod.

"Oh, no! But I couldn't!" Tooru stepped back from the boys and the doctor waving her hands frantically. "I'm supposed to help with the caf, and I don't want to be marked absent! I promised Mother-"

"I'm sure Honda-san's Mother would understand-" Yuki began, gently trying to placate her.

"But to miss today, I'd be letting everyone down!" Tooru's eyes began to fill with tears.

This was no good, Hatori thought. Even if he could get Tooru to return home she'd fret the whole time and probably make herself even worse off.

"Tooru-kun." He said, stemming off another round of protests and tears from the girl. "You can stay. But you must remember to take it easy today, otherwise you'll really make yourself seriously ill." He finished his statement with a level stare at the boys, who took the hint. They would be sure to keep Tooru from doing too much today.

"Tooru?" Arisa advanced quickly through the hallway towards them, Hana-chan trailing in her wake. "What's going on?" she demanded her quick eyes taking in Tooru's reddened eyes and the three men hovering around her.

"I...uh..." Tooru's face reddened and she tried to stammer out some explanation. She didn't even know herself why she was getting so upset. Her eyes darted to Hatori's and then back to her friends. Uo-chan wrapped a comforting arm around her shoulders waiting for her to spit out some reason for her current state.

"Your denpa are clashing." Hatori turned to see Hana-chan leveling him a dangerous stare. "You should leave."

"What?" Arisa looked between Hatori and Saki. Hana-chan was gathering a dark cloud of electricity around her, sparks chasing themselves angrily down her braid. Uo-chan turned back to Tooru, "Did this guy do something to you?" She leveled a dangerous glare at Hatori through her hair.

"What? No!" Tooru's face flamed. "Hatori-san hasn't done anything!" She stepped back and out of Uo-chan's comforting embrace, flailing her hands wildly. Her eyes darted back and forth between her friends frantically. "It's all my fault! First I fell asleep before my aprons were finished, and Hatori even had to carry me to bed!" It wasn't enough that she caused all sorts of problems for Hatori, now she gets him accused of hurting her! "Even though I work him up early he kindly helped me finish the aprons, and even finished my chores so I could get ready for school!" Tooru couldn't keep the tears from resurfacing. "Even though I've been such a pest, he drove me to school and helped me to carry the aprons and worried about me and-"

"Enough." Hatori said firmly. Is that what had gotten her so upset? She was this frantic because she thought he was upset or annoyed with her? "I wasn't bothered at all this morning. You have nothing to be concerned about."

Tooru bit her lip and looked unconvinced.

Hatori sighed, "I'm sorry if I gave you that impression." He weighted his next words carefully. He wanted to say that he had only been concerned that she seemed overworked. In the state she was in she would just take it as another accusation that she was unable to handle her responsibilities. "She does too much, takes on too much." Hatori thought to himself.

Aloud he said, "I'm not very good in the morning, I'm sorry if you thought my bad mood was a reflection on anything you had done. I had a very pleasant morning." Tooru looked at him soulfully, her wet lashes blinking rapidly against her cheek. He wasn't used to having such an effect on people. "Any help I gave you can think of as merely a thank you for the meals you made for me last night and this morning."

"It...It wasn't a bother?" Tooru hiccupped.

"No. Your school is on my way back to the Honke, it wasn't out of my way at all." Hatori assured her.

Tooru ducked her head and let Arisa wrap her arms around her again, "I'm being silly." She whispered and wiped at her cheek. "I'm sorry to cause everyone to worry about me."

"Lets go get cleaned up," suggested Uo-chan as she gently herded the sniffing girl towards the girl's washroom. "The caf will be opening soon."

Hatori looked back at Yuki and Kyou, "When is Shigure returning from his conference?" He would definitely have to talk to him about the amount of work he allowed the girl to take on.

"Tomorrow morning." Yuki said reluctantly. What had Tooru meant by 'Hatori had carried her to bed'?

Tomorrow morning? Had Shigure planned to leave three teenagers home alone? "I'll be back later tonight then."

"You don't have to!" Kyou protested. What had Hatori been doing carrying Tooru to bed?!

Hatori just leveled an impassive look at the two and turned on his heel. He found himself staring into the impassive eyes of Tooru's friend Hanajima.

Her eyes never left his as she spoke to Yuki and Kyou. "You're needed in the classroom. Someone just broke one of the booth supports and the girls are arguing about who gets to work as the greeting hostess."

They didn't ask how she knew they just gave one last glare at Hatori and made their way back to the classroom.

Hatori and Hanajima stood staring at each other unblinking. Shigure had told Hatori about her supposed 'denpa' gifts. If things had been different he would have liked to ask her about them. The whys and wherefores of his own memory erasing 'gift' were mostly a mystery even to him. Denpa were supposedly magnetic waves given off by people. There were experiments where magnetic waves were able to effect portions of people's brains, including the centers that controlled memory. Perhaps his own gift was a controlled act of denpa? He shook off his woolgathering when the girl finally spoke.

"Your denpa is very much like hers, too much like hers." She seemed calmer now. Her eyes drifted slightly to the side, her gaze turning inward. "There is still that strangeness...it's not like other people's denpa... the Soumas." Her eyes snapped back to his, "You must be careful."

Hatori understood why this girl intimidated so many. He sensed that the girl wasn't finished

speaking and he felt disinclined against interrupting her. He was caught in the glints of electrical power chasing behind her eyes.

"Because your denpa are so similar a small imbalance between you two will disrupt Tooru-kun greatly." Hanajima explained. "She is not as developed as you. She is strong, but she is still just a girl. Take care to remember that." With that she turned and walked into the washroom to join Arisa in comforting Tooru.

Hatori stood staring after her a moment, feeling chilled. The dark girl was unnerving with that direct stare and alien gliding movements. And she was insightful, perhaps too insightful. He felt laid bare and uncomfortable. Of course knew Tooru-kun was just a girl. What did she think of him?

And why was he so bothered by the comment? He pondered it as he made his way out of the school and back towards his car. He'd reached down to unlock it when he heard his name being called.

"Hatori-san! Wait please!" Tooru came flying out of the school door and running down the steps a small package in her hands.

Hatori stood by the car patiently wondering what was next. Had she forgotten something in the car perhaps?

"Hatori-san, I'm sorry to keep you, but I almost forgot!" Tooru looked up at him with a smile, "Your bento!" She held out one of the box lunches from her earlier stack.

"For me?" Hatori said, taking it in his hands. Now that he thought about it, there had been four in the stack.

"Yes!" Tooru smiled happily. She had almost forgotten about it in all the confusion. "I know Hatori-san will be busy later today. And I'm sorry I took up so much of your time this morning. I hope that having this pre-made will help you catch up a little time this afternoon."

"Tooru-kun shouldn't have gone to the trouble." Hatori said feeling oddly touched. Despite all the things she'd had to deal with this morning, she still had found the time to think about what his day would be like? And she even took the time to try to make it easier?

Even though his face and voice hardly changed Tooru could tell that Hatori was pleased with the lunch. Finally she had managed to do something for him! "It was no trouble, I usually make one for Shigure to have while I'm away at school so it wasn't any extra work." She assured him, which was true. Usually though she didn't have to make four lunches, breakfast and dinner all at once... but Hatori didn't have to know that.

Hatori looked at the young woman glowing up at him and felt his own mouth trying to tug into an answering smile. "Thank you for this." He opened the car door and set the lunch on the passenger seat before he turned back to her. His normal impassive look was gentled in some imperceptible way. "I'll be seeing you later tonight."

Tooru blinked, "Is Hatori-san coming over to housesit again?" He nodded. Her brow crinkled, she wished she didn't have her job tonight so that she could at least make him dinner for taking

the trouble. She looked back up at him apologetically. "I have my part-time tonight but I made plenty of stew. If Hatori-san wishes to come over for dinner, please feel welcome."

Hatori nodded, thinking that he just might. "Remember to take it easy today," he reminded her and settled his long frame into the car. She took it as the dismissal it was intended as.

"Okay!" She bowed to the doctor. "I hope Hatori-san's day goes well!" She smiled, waved and ran back towards the school.

His eyes followed her as she ran up the steps. The bounce was back in her step, and she seemed recovered from her earlier anxiety. Her brown hair swished back and forth over her back as she hurried through the door.

Hatori felt eyes on him and looked up. Hanajima considered him solemnly from a hallway window. It was time to go, he decided.