

# **blood and chocolate**

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*SEEING IS DECIEVING IS THIS BOOKS SEQUAL! Its really sexual so people under the age of 14 beware!*

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# 1 - The rule

Listen. Can you hear it?

Bull.

I know you can.

That howling song, off in the distance. . .? The cry of the wolves.

The werewolves.

Singing to their shimmering moon in the midnight sky. Barking with joy, fright, hunger-

All to their round, full moon-goddess.

You can almost see them out there- Running, jumping, playing, being.

Being wolves.

But not for long.

No.

When the moon sets on the horizon and the sun begins to rise-

They change.

Change back into humans.

And so, in that way, mortals do not see, do not fear-

Do not know.

And the wolves and humans live together peacefully.

But one rule keeps them eternally apart. For as the law of the wolves states so clearly-

`This rule is our first, and so others it shines above- No matter what, to no human give of your love.'

But, as even the singing wolves know perfectly well- Rules are meant for breaking.

\*

"Damn, why do we have to live so far away from the wilderness?" a brown haired girl growled from behind the wheel of a rusty old pick up truck. "It makes the full moon such a pain in the @\$\$."

"Sango, you know as well as I do that if we lived too close to the woods, people would get suspicious. It's just not done these days," another werewolf yawned, peacefully laying his head against the patched seat of the car, carefully making sure that his pony-tail didn't become ruffled from his movements.

"Bite me, Miroku," Sango snarled, baring the teeth that only a few hours ago were fangs.

"With pleasure," the black haired man smirked, earning a smack in the face from the girl.

"Miroku," growled a voice from the back, "just shut up."

"Gods, Inu-Yasha. You could agree with me for ONCE," Miroku sighed in exasperation, looking back at his friend.

"I will. When you're finally right," Inu-Yasha grinned, flashing his canines. He returned his golden-eyed gaze to the window, watching the other cars-which held the additional members of the pack- trundle along behind them, back to Tokyo.

Silence eventually fell in the vehicle, only broken by the occasional grumble from Sango. Inu-Yasha closed his eyes as they made their way, allowing the rickety car to take them closer and closer to the city. Even without his eyes opened, Inu could tell they were almost there. The smells of downtown Tokyo were strong and unmistakable. Pollution, food, thousands upon thousands of dirty, disgusting humans.

Ah, home sweet home.

"At least we only HAVE to change on the full moon," Sango was still muttering to herself. "Otherwise I think I would just shoot myself. I really would."

"With what? A silver bullet?" Miroku snickered. "Poison yourself, hm?"

"KEEP YOUR frackING MOUTH SHUT," Sango barked, pulling the car into a grimy, 5 level parking lot on the outskirts of the city.

"Please," Inu-Yasha added dryly, his dog ears sore from the yelling.

The three fumbled out of the car, slowly getting used to their human bodies again.

Well, all but Inu-Yasha.

His was an ALMOST human body.

Curse that father of his, falling in love with a human. At least he got what he deserved: Banishment from

the pack- only to be shot down by hunters.

'Still, it leaves me in a shooty mess,' Inu thought darkly, grumbling as he put a baseball cap on over his inhuman ears.

"Ah, is everyone here?" the long-haired pack leader, Kouga, called over the crowd assembled in the garage. "Everyone present? No one left behind?"

"Even if someone was," Kohaku, Sango's younger brother, piped up, "they wouldn't be here to answer, would they?"

A few of the "people" chuckled, but Kouga just glared, adjusting his wolf-like attire. "Shall I do a roll call, then?"

"We're all here," Inu-Yasha's half brother, Sessho-Maru, growled, flicking his long white locks over his shoulder and narrowing his golden eyes. "Just get on with it."

"Right then. Well, it's been another successful full moon. The Moon Goddess is still pleased with us, and has not taken away our beautiful wolf forms."

Kouga ignored the fact that no one was listening, and so everyone else ignored the fact that he knew. They heard this stupid speech after every outing to the national park for their transformations, after all. Having memorized it, it didn't seem particularly important to pay much attention.

"And as always, I remind everyone to be careful so as not to expose yourself to any human. They're still very superstitious, you know."

"You mean those morons still think that if we bite them, they'll take on some hideous beast form?" laughed Inu-Yasha's ex-girlfriend- and pack slut- Kikyo.

A few of the other wolves grinned in amusement.

"Yeah, the idiots just never learn," Kouga shrugged. "But anyway-"

"Could you wrap this up?" Sango asked in irritation, tapping her watch impatiently. "Some of us have school to attend, ya know." Others nodded, and a few mentioning work and chores.

Their leader stared coldly at them, but they continued their whining.

"Oh. . . All right FINE," Kouga replied through gritted teeth. "But make sure not to change too much over the next month. You never know when the Moon Goddess-"

But everyone had already left, shaking their heads and waving their hands in exasperation.

\*

"Kagooooome," a little boy whined as he leaned against the doorway of the library, "can you hurry it up? We're gonna be late for school!"

"Just one second, Sota!" an excited, black haired, blue eyed teen told her brother. She walked to the check-out quickly and handed her books to an old librarian who was wearing a name tag that said 'Kaede.' "I found a few new ones!"

"More books on werewolves?" Sota sighed with a roll of his eyes. "Big sister, everyone thinks your weird enough as it is. . ."

"Oh, shut up," Kagome retaliated through her smile as she slipped the books into her shoulder bag and pushed through the door to the street. "I just happen to be interested in them!"

"You think they're real, don't you?" the black haired boy smirked knowingly as he and Kag walked slowly down the crowded sidewalks of Tokyo, towards their school.

"Yeah, so? Don't you hear them at night?" The older girl shivered. "Spooky."

"Those are just real wolves!"

"I don't think so."

"What don't you think?" asked a wavy locked, brown orbed girl as she and two other teens ran up to Kagome and her brother.

"Oh! Ayumi, Eri, Yuka!" Kagome greeted the three with a nod of her head. "Nothing, it's just-"

"It's juuust," Sota interrupted, "that she found more books on werewolves at the library today."

The three other girls groaned.

"What?!" Kagome cried. "I happen to be-"

"Interested," the four chorused, bored looks on their faces as they turned to enter the large cement school with the hundreds of other talkative teens.

Kag sighed as she silently followed. What was so wrong about having a hobby, anyway?! They didn't even let her talk about it. . .

Didn't they care about what she was interested in? It didn't seem like it. God, if she could just find one person to talk to about things she liked-

She was driven out of her thoughts as she passed a white haired boy, who seemed to be arguing with a teacher about his baseball cap.

"I'm sorry," the teacher was saying, "but you know that hats are not allowed on school property-"

"Must I go through this with ever teacher?!" the boy snarled in frustration. "Look. It's an essential. I'd give you a note from my parents, but seeing as they are both DEAD, that's out of the question. My brother gave a letter explaining to the office at the beginning of the year, which you will find if you drag your lazy @\$@ back there."

And with that, he slung his pack over his shoulder and stomped off, a pissed look on his face.

`What's HIS problem?' Kag thought lightly as she watched him. `It's not- - -'

She nearly jumped out of her skin when he whirled around and glared straight at her, cold furry in his- were those golden eyes?

"What are you staring at, dog?" he growled.

Kagome gaped at him before glaring back. `How rude can one boy be?!' "I wasn't staring!" the girl retorted, her frustration from her friends lacking care eating away at her- pushing her over the edge. "I just happened to glance your way! Is that a crime?!"

"It should be," the boy muttered. "Either way, you're a rude little wench, aren't you?"

"ME?! Who's the one yelling at a teacher, you bastard?! AND DON'T CALL ME NAMES!" she shrieked, smacking him across the face. Something about this idiot really ticked her off!

His eyes widened slightly at being hit.

"You're gonna pay for that one, dog," he hissed as he stalked off down the hall, leaving Kagome in a huff.

\*

`Gods, I hate humans,' Inu-Yasha fumed to himself as he glared at all the teens passing him in the halls. `I can't even stand the smell of them. I think I'm going to be sick from this place. Disgusting, vile creatures. . .'

He wrenched his locker open and dumped his things inside before heading off towards his first class. `Especially that one girl in the hall. What a dog! How \*dare\* she. . ."

The werewolf kicked a locker, causing it to crumple around his foot; leaving a gigantic dent in the door. He stomped off before anyone noticed, however- gliding into his first hour class.

`Well. I told her she was gonna pay, and I never go back on a promise.'

He smirked to himself, already planing how to use the night's moon.

`Congrats, girly. You're on my hit-list.'

\*

"Bye, Kagome!" Ayumi cried happily as the four friends parted. "See you around?"

"Yeah, I guess so!" Kagome smiled as she waved good bye, heading towards the library alone. Sota had been invited to a friend's house, so he was going straight over. Ergo, she was walking all by herself.

Not that she minded.

Being by herself just meant that she could browse the shelves for as long as she wanted without having a whiny brat complain the whole time. So, whistling cheerfully, Kagome made her way down the slowly darkening streets, unaware of a creeping shadow behind her. A shadow watching her every move-

And waiting for the moon to rise.

~\*~

## 2 - serendipity

~\*~

The sun sunk fast on the pearly pink, pumpkin orange, and golden yellow horizon. Twilight had fallen-complete with the shrilling tune of late songbirds and elongated shadows. Thus, as the velvety violet, mythic indigo, and inky black of evening took over, the growing silver orb that was the moon rose.

And Inu-Yasha savored it, drinking in the sweet essence of the night.

Now.

By the time he opened his eyes, he was on all fours, creeping after the dog in his wolf form, his silky silver mane glowing in the iridescent-blue moonlight.

Now- she died.

\*

Though she would probably get reprimanded for coming home so late, Kagome was in a very good mood as she exited the library. She may not have found any new books, but one of her favorites had been back on the shelves, and she had been able to check it out for the first time in ages. Now she was walking slowly home, humming quietly to herself as she flipped through the worn pages of the volume in the soft glow of the moon.

But something was causing the hairs on the back of her neck to prickle.

She couldn't figure out why, but she felt like she was being watched. Or even followed.

Not wanting to look afraid but too anxious to ignore the feeling, Kag glanced over her shoulder. ". . ."

See?



Nothing to worry about. . .

There was nothing there.

But why did she still have the feeling?! Something very weird was going on here. . .

Shaking slightly, she tried to ignore the sensation that screamed that she was not alone. But she couldn't. Fear of what lurked the streets of Tokyo gripped her, and she broke into a run.

And only then was she able to hear the fast pace of the stalker behind her.

"Oh my God. . ." she gasped desperately as she tripped over a ledge and fell to the hard cement streets with winding force. She was bleeding now, the gravel cutting deep into her skin; but she barely noticed

Turning quickly over onto her back, she saw, for the first time, a large- no, huge- dog-like creature silhouetted above her, against the moon.

It was going to kill her.

"No!" she wheezed, trying to scramble away; but fear had paralyzed her legs. Flinching, she turned her face away from the inevitable.

BAM.

". . . Wha. . . ?"

Looking up through teary eyes, she watched blankly as two other dog-like creatures knock the first to the ground, cutting its silver-furred body open slightly near the ear. Red blood trickled down the creature's face as it growled at the charcoal and chestnut dogs, furious. They only snarled back, snapping their powerful jaws as they continued to block Kagome.

And that was all she could take.

She instantly fainted.

\*

`Ugh. . . . Wha. . . .

What happened. . . ?' Why did she feel so heavy? So cottoned? And why did her eardrums hurt so much. . . ?

"Really, Inu-Yasha!" a woman's voice screamed, "I CANNOT BELIEVE YOU!"

Oh. That was why.

"Feh," droned a man's voice. "She's only a stupid dog."

"That's still no right-!" the woman snarled, but stopped as she saw Kagome slowly stirring. Forcing herself to sit up as she rubbed her blurry eyed, Kag tried to comprehend what was going on.

Where was she?

Inside a shabby apartment, it seemed. From the view outside the window, she could tell that she was in the dangerous part of town. Neon lights of strip clubs and pachiko parlors flickered just out of view, and the laughs of gang members echoed through the ally ways just beyond the glass. She shivered subconsciously and averted her gaze to the inside, noting every little thing about the rather grimy room.

It seemed to be in the living room, and it was bedecked with miss-matched, patched couches and peeling red wallpaper. A coffee table rested in the middle of the square made by furniture, and a walk out, rusting patio door was located near that. Over to the right, a broken table was pushed against the wall near a small kitchen; which was dirtied with pizza boxes, take-out containers, and piled dishes in the sink. Over to the left, a small, dark hallway connected with the tiny foyer and led to three rooms that she couldn't see inside.

Only then did Kagome notice a woman- no, a girl just slightly older than she- as she stepped forward and placed a cool hand on Kag's head. She was very pretty. Wearing her glossy brown tresses in a high pony tail, the girl was adorned in tight blue flare jeans and a magenta baby-doll top.

"You feeling okay?" she asked, looking worried. "You didn't get bit or anything, did you?"

"What would it matter if she did?" asked a man on her left, who had also stepped near Kagome without her noticing. He looked very calm and a bit laid back in his black jeans, purple shirt, and short ebony ponytail. Kag noticed the glimmer of a few golden earrings on his ears as he moved.

"Because who knows if In- I mean, that dog that attacked her had rabies!"

"`THAT DOG' didn't have rabies, and you know it," growled the male voice she had heard earlier. She glanced over the girl's shoulder and saw a second guy, this one laying lazily on one of the patched couches, his feet propped up on one edge and his head on the other, his eyes closed in boredom. His silvery hair fell over the edge of the chair and swept the floor lightly as he shifted his position. He was wearing a black cap, black leather, and a small, slightly bloody patch on his temple.

"Who. . . who are you?" Kagome whispered softly, trying not to tremble in fear as she hugged her bag- which had been placed next to her on one of the other couches- close to her chest. `Where am I?'

The girl smiled gently. "Oh yeah, sorry about that. My name's Sango. The perv next to me is Miroku, and the @\$@ on the couch is Inu-Yasha."

Kagome turned towards Inu-Yasha again, her brow furrowed in concentration. "Hey. . .! You're that guy at school today!"

"So what if I am?" he grunted, not even looking at her. It was like he was deliberately trying to ignore her.

The nerve!

Kag growled softly to herself and returned her gaze to Sango, who was holding out her hand. Kagome took it and shook it gently. "Thanks for saving me from. . . what was it again?"

"A giant dog," Miroku informed, pushing Sango out of the way and taking Kagome's hand in his. "My friends and I found you on our way back from the store. We were able to get that beast- and the two other dogs there- to leave and we took you back to our house. It was very lucky that we found you. Serendipity, one could call it. Perhaps even fate. . . ?"

Kag nodded slowly.

That made sense. . . in a slightly disturbing way.

"Now, there's just one more thing," Miroku began seriously.

The girl on the couch raised an eyebrow, silently urging him to continue- despite the expression of warning on Sango's face.

"Would you bare my child?"

"The heck- - - ?!" Kagome ripped her hand away in shock as the other female hit Miroku over the head with a lamp. She was, putting it lightly, livid.

"THAT WASN'T EVEN FUNNY!" she bellowed, face pink with fury. "NOT ONLY IS SHE HURT, BUT THE RULE WOULD-"

But Sango froze in mid-sentence and cleared her throat, placing the lamp back on coffee table so casually it was as if she had only picked it up to dust it. "Never mind."

Kag was slightly afraid now, but they seemed nice enough people. . . in their own odd way.

"Want some dinner?" Sango asked cheerfully, still behaving like this was her usual schedule as she helped Kag to her feet and led her to a grungy refrigerator; taking out a few sodas and a pizza.

"Thank you. . ." the younger girl replied softly, and Sango grinned.

"Don't mention it. Let's go to my room."

And so, carrying the food and drinks, the elder led Kag down the dark hall and through one of the doors.

Sango's room was slightly neater than the living room and kitchen. Painted a royal purple, it had a soft bed in the corner and a few posters of bands and shows hanging on the walls. Chains, beads, talismans,

and chimes hung from the ceiling and bedecked random spots of the enclosed space. It had a very. . . whimsical feel about it. Kagome was intrigued by not only Sango's extensive CD collection, but by the volumes of strange books that lined the walls; all which were about magic, fighting, and other such fantasy.

"What a cool room, Sango!" Kagome exclaimed as she flopped next to the older girl on the bed, slowly relaxing.

Sango laughed, sounding rather pleased and embarrassed. She struck Kagome somewhat as a loner, and Kag had been given the impression that she was the first female to visit for a while. "Glad you like it."

Popping in a CD of a group that she had never heard of, the two girls chatted late into the night. Until-

"Oh my God!" Kagome screamed, finally acknowledging the flashing time on her watch. "My mom is gonna kill me!"

The older girl glanced at the clock. "Why would she do that? It's only 1. . ."

"But not only is it a school night," the black locked girl panicked, chugging down the rest of her pop and began digging around for her bag, "I'm out with someone she's never met before!"

Sango nodded in understanding, though she remained calm. "I see the problem. Well, I'll walk you home and tell your mother about the dog. If she knows what happened and how you were knocked cold, she'll understand."

"But I've been up for a few hours!"

"She'll be okay with it," Sango smiled in assurance.

Kag bit her lip and hoped her new friend was right. "I'll go get the rest of my stuff- living room, right?"

"You do that," the brown haired girl nodded with a grin.

'Don't worry, Kagome,' Sango thought as the teen ran frantically into the living room to grab her pack

and shoes. `Your mom won't mind. I'll make sure of it.'

As her eyes flashed light pink, the older woman couldn't help but let a soft chuckle fall from her lips as she turned off the lights and left her room, ready to follow Kagome to the Higarashi house.

\*

"I'm baaaaack!" Sango sang as she let herself into the apartment and kicked her shoes off her feet. Inu-Yasha looked up from his magazine for half a second.

"You don't say. So how'd the dog's mother take it?"

"Fine. Like I knew she would," Sango winked; taking off her jacket and tossing it into the corner near her school stuff. "If talking it out won't work, a little magic always does."

"You bastard. You're not supposed to use mind control unless it's a life or death situation."

"It was. Kag said, and I quote, `my mom is gonna kill me.' Heh. I bend the rules- not break `em." She then grinned, as if just remembering something. "But like you would care, even if I blew them to pieces. You don't listen to any of them yourself." The girl laughed and flopped back on the couch, picking up her homework.

"Keh. You should have let her die," he muttered under his breath, slowly turning the page of his magazine.

"What do you have against her?" Sango inquired, raising an eyebrow as a faint hint of the emotion called `annoyance' ticked into life inside her. "She's nice, as human's go."

"She smells gross."

"She smells fine, you liar!"

"Look, Sango. You know I hate all humans."

"But why? Your mother was one!" the girl glared, getting pissed off.

But obviously not as pissed as Inu.

With a quiet gasp, the girl leapt out of the way as Inu-Yasha lunged at her, all but knocking the couch she was on over in the process.

"Don't you DARE mention HER," the silver haired werewolf snarled, extracting his claws from the upholstery with a hiss. "I HATE HUMANS."

That said, he got up and stomped to his room, slamming the door shut behind him with a loud bang. Panting slightly, Sango silently watched him leave.

Well, that was a sore spot.

She'd have to remember not to mention that again.

"Don't mind him," Miroku soothed from the corner.

Sango turned and noticed him standing there, eating a slice of pizza, for the first time. He *could* be sneaky if he wanted, couldn't he? "What do you mean by that? He just fracking attacked me!"

"He does that every time you mention his family," the other boy informed, chewing his pizza with a nonchalant expression. "That's why I never mention them. I'm surprised you've only learned this now."

"I guess I'd never felt the need to mention them before," Sango shrugged, slowly calming herself as she slid down in her seat with a sigh.

"Well, now ya know."

She didn't say anything for a moment, instead looking out the window, towards Kagome's house.

Yeah.

She knew.

But a fat lot of good knowing did her.

It didn't keep any of the humans safe, and they couldn't just allow Inu-Yasha to purge the world of mortals.

He had once killed 5 humans that ticked him off. He had been beaten severely by the clan because of the heavy news coverage on the 5's "mysterious" deaths.

He couldn't kill anymore- he'd risk banishment! But if his hatred was that deep- that he'd attack one of his friends- who was going to stop him? Sango and Miroku were not always walking home from the store at night. They couldn't always catch him before. . .

Well.

Now all she could hope for was that Kagome left him alone.

But for some reason, she knew that wasn't going to happen.

\*

Inu-Yasha turned his music up loud enough to drown out the sound of his thoughts, and of the objects he was throwing around. Throwing things always made him feel a little better when he was angry or frustrated.

And, by the condition of his room, anyone could tell that he was angry and frustrated quite often.

Dark clothes and dark trinkets littered the floor and were draped across his bed. The walls were a depressing shade of black-gray and covered with posters; his loud sound system taking up a large amount of the right side of the wall. The other half of the right wall was taken up by CDs.

With a muffled thump, the werewolf flopped onto his bed, snarling at the ceiling.



`Damn it. That fracking dog is still walking this earth.'

He rolled over and looked out the window at the moon while Evanescence pressed hard against his now un-capped ears. Reaching instinctively under his bed, he took out a dusty midnight volume with a silver full moon embossed on the cover. Opening it slowly, a layer of dust was released into the room. Ignoring it, Inu flipped through the Book of the Wolves until he got to the rules.

"YO!" called a werewolf from one room under his, snapping Inu-Yasha out of his thoughts. "TURN THAT MUSIC OFF!"

"UP YOURS, JAKEN!" Inu-Yasha called back, turning the music up.

If he couldn't get rid of Kagome, he could at least piss off Sessho-Maru's little servant creep. Returning his attention to the book, he ran a clawed finger down the page, reading the list of already memorized limitations of being a Wolf.

The first rule had always seemed redundant to him.

What respectable werewolf would allow himself- or herself, whatever- to fall in love with one of those human idiots?

`Your father,' a little voice in Inu-Yasha's head reminded him. The boy glowered as the knowledge returned to his conscious.

Stupid @\$\$.

Forcing himself to read onward, Inu continued to refresh his memory about the rules. The rules of magic- only when a life is threatened-, mind control -once again, only when a life is in jeopardy-, star reading- if you wanted to take the time to learn-, form shifting- you can change any night with a moon, but you only have to on a full moon-, religion- it didn't matter, as long as you paid homage to the Moon Goddess-. . . the list went on and on.

But his mind kept drifting back to rule one.

Why did he suddenly feel so intimidated by it?

He had broken rules, sure- rule 10, killing humans for the fun of it when your life/form exposure was not in question was one that popped instantly to mind- but number one was a limitation that he had no intention of ignoring.

Slamming the book shut and stuffing it under his bed again, he closed his eyes with a sigh-

And cracked them open as he heard an angry knocking on the front door.

Probably Jaken.

Rolling over and heading towards the foyer, Inu-Yasha forced his previous thoughts out of his mind so he could fully concentration on further ticking Jaken off.

## 3 - two ways

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Anime/Manga: InuYasha

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Serendipity ( Chapter 2 ) Poetry ( Chapter 4 )

Disclaimer: Nothing! That is what I own! Not pleasant, but true. . .

Author's Note: The original plan was to just reword a bit of the story- now I seem to be rewriting the whole thing. ^\_^; Ah well. I like it more now, anyway. . .

~\*~

~Chapter Three~

Inu-Yasha sighed as he stared out the large, rectangular window of the library, eyeing the nearby buildings and pedestrians as they passed, their shadows long in the late afternoon sun. He was seated in the far corner of the large white building, completely oblivious to life as his hand ran across his arm, subconsciously touching the bruise that he had received a few nights back from Sessho-Maru when Jaken had tattled about his music.

Actually, he was quite proud of the wound, mostly because he had gotten it for talking back to his elder brother.

Screw him.

But going back to the present. . .

He was now supposed to be doing the homework that had been due a couple of weeks ago, yet it occurred to him that since he had already put it off for so long- what was another day gonna do? Pushing his textbooks away and resting his chin in his hands, he found that he was unable to ignore a small disturbance from one of the closest shelves.

"Kagome, you're insane," sighed a dark haired girl as she strolled out from an aisle of volumes with a bored look on her face. A few moments later, the infamous (in his opinion, anyway) Kagome stepped out from behind her, gesturing to a novel-thick book she had in her hands with a pleading look on her face.

"Eri! It's so interesting! At least listen to this par-"

"Sorry, Kagome-chan. I've got chores," the girl grinned in what she must have thought was an apologetic fashion before starting for the door, not once looking back. A bit rude, wasn't she. . . ?

"But- But. . . I'll talk to you later, I guess. . ." Kagome sighed in defeat as she put the book under her arm and sadly walked back to her table, which was already decorated with a few precariously placed volumes. Inu's ear twitched from underneath his navy blue hat as he soundlessly observed her.

What was her problem?

So her dinky friend wasn't listening, boo hoo. That was hardly worth his time. Still, for some reason that was unknown even to him- he kept one ear trained on her.

"Why doesn't anyone care about what I have to say? What I'm interested in?" Kagome whispered to herself as she leaned her head against a fist and opened the book. "What's so wrong with being interested in werewolves? Does it make me a bad person?"

The werewolf mentally raised an eyebrow as he turned his second capped ear to face the girl, making sure to keep his eyes out the window so that she wouldn't sense him staring.

Werewolves. . .? What about them?

But it was at that time that the girl began grumbling inaudibly to herself, making Inu-Yasha frustrated. Dammit! How could he eavesdrop on her if he couldn't HEAR her?!

That meant. . . if he wanted to know anything- like why in hell would she be reading about werewolves- he'd have to ask her himself.

As in, talk to her.

Great.

But. . . she might have seen something at the apartment. . . What if she had learned something? The

whole clan would be in danger!

Yes, he'd have to talk to her. For the clans sake.

Curses.

Using the stealth of a wolf, Inu-Yasha got up silently and made his way to Kagome's back corner table; sliding gracefully into the seat across from her.

As she slowly glanced up to turn the page, she saw him sitting there and jumped.

"Inu-Yasha?!" she gasped, slamming the book shut on impulse. "What the hell-?"

"Are you reading?" he finished, grabbing the book from her and letting it fall open in his hands. "Looks like a whole lot of-"

"Nonsense, I know," Kagome grumbled, snatching the volume back from him and hugging it close, looking away. "Stupidity, crap, pointlessness. . . throw something new at me."

"Cool information."

She gave a small start as he spoke, looking confused at his words. Kag slowly lifted her gaze again and glanced him up and down. His calm face hid no trace of a lie. . .

"You really think so?" she murmured softly a few moments later, reverting her stare out the window and shifting the book in her arms.

"Sure," Inu shrugged, leaning comfortably back in his chair. "Werewolves, huh? Not a usual topic of interest for a girl like you."

"What do you mean, a girl like me?!" she snapped. "You some sort of expert on teenage girls?"

"No. You just strike me as more of the unicorn and pink fluffy bunnies kinda person."

"And why do you say that?" She arched an eyebrow, looking him- no, glaring at him- squarely in the eye.

He did a small double take.

She was bolder then he had thought. . . Ruder too, to be honest.

But still nice. . . In the idiotic human way, of course.

He regained his momentarily lost composure and shrugged lazily. "You seem so innocent, I suppose. But seriously- what's with the wolf deal?"

The girl sighed and began to drum her fingers quietly on the table as if trying to think of the best way to

word her feelings.

"I guess. . ." she bit her lip and looked down at the book cover, running her fingers over the glossy smooth finish. "I guess when I was younger, I liked the idea of being different. You know? When you're alone or disliked, you'd like to believe it be for a reason. I'm not saying I'm alone or disliked. . . but I just needed- need- someone I can really talk to- someone I really connect with. And so, I guess my little mind came up with all sorts of people who were closer together than just `friends' or even `family.' And one group of those imaginary people were the werewolf clans. Their pack, or whatever. . . They were all so close, and I wanted such closeness. And I guess I still just liked the feeling of being. . . different."

She smiled gently at his face, which was full of slight surprise. "Did that make any sense?"

To his shock. . .

It did.

~ I just needed- need- someone I can really talk to- someone I really connect with.~

Sometimes. . .

He wished the same thing.

But no way in hell would he ever admit that.

To ANYONE.

"So you've been studying them to find a way to become a werewolf?" Inu-Yasha cleared his throat a few moments later.

"Nah. I just like studying them. Besides," Kagome blew out her cheeks, her small smile still evident, "not possible, right? I mean. . . I'd have to be bitten by one. And it's not like you just sit down and chat with one every day."

Inu chose to ignore that last comment.

"Actually, that's wrong," the werewolf replied, slightly confused to find that he was almost enjoying talking about what he knew best with her. Talking to her in general, even.

And- she cared.

Weird.

But that wasn't the weirdest thing.

The weirdest thing was that he actually admitted to himself that Sango was right.

She. . . didn't smell that bad. . .

"Being bitten by a werewolf," he continued, taking the book gingerly from her, "would do nothing to you except cause you pain."

Kagome raised an eyebrow. "Oh?"

"Mhm. Stupid fairy tale that was derived from the thought of blood, which is important in one of the two ways to become a werewolf." He flipped casually through the book, wondering if it had any true information inside it. Doubtful, but entertaining.

"Really?" Kag asked, hungry to continue this conversation.

It was amazing. He didn't think she was weird or insane or crazy- He knew more than she did! She was talking with someone on her favorite subject and not scaring them away! And he was actually listening to her- and almost seemed to care- she'd like to think- about what she had to say.

Could he- Inu-Yasha, of all people- be the person she was looking for her whole life?

That someone to talk to?

Her `soul mate' so to speak?

. . . Maybe she was getting a little ahead of herself.

But either way, she was damn happy.

"Keh! Of course! It's the vampire that bites for any real reason." The boy slapped the volume down on the table with a thump and leaned closer, as if to tell her a secret.

Which, in all honesty, it actually was.

"The two ways," Inu-Yasha continued at a whisper, so no one in the library apart from the girl in front of him could hear, "are as follows. The first, of course, is to simply be born of two werewolves." `Or one and a human,' he thought bitterly, but carried on.

"The second is. . . the Trial."

Kagome looked confused and slightly doubtful. "There's never been anything on something called "the Trial" in my books-"

"Of course not, you idiot! Stupid humans are so superstitious about getting bitten, they don't bother to think that there might be another way!" he barked, causing Kag to jump slightly.

"What exactly. . ." the girl swallowed, slightly nervous from his outburst, "is the Trial?"

Inu-Yasha pursed his lips and leaned back again. "That. . . is a secret."

"Why?"

"It just is!"

Kagome looked down at her feet, which were shuffling slightly. "Oh. . ."

A silence passed between them, and even Inu-Yasha had to admit he had liked talking better than sitting in this enveloping quiet.

"So. . . how do you know all this stuff?" Kag asked a few minutes later, unable to stand the pause any longer.

The boy shrugged boredly. "Oh, here and there."

". . . Would you tell me some more of what you know? It's really cool and interesting and. . ." she muttered, her voice trailing off as she kept her eyes on her feet.

Inu regarded her in mild bewilderment. "You want to talk to me?"

"Sure."

He was surprised, to say the least, at such a forward answer. He acted nothing less than a jackass towards her, yet here she was, basically asking if she could hang out with him.

He wasn't sure whether he should be flattered or disgusted. She was a HUMAN, after all.

But. . . she wasn't bad. . . as humans went.

She listened to him, and didn't shun him. Or pester him about his hat. And she had good taste. Werewolves are damn cool.

Er- not that he liked her or anything.

He still hated her.

Deeply.

Yeah.

Hated.

But if he hated her so much, why didn't he mind sitting there with her?

"Maybe," he grunted, pushing his chair out with a clatter as he stood.



She smiled warmly at him while gathering up her other books. Most of them appeared to be about werewolves, but one seemed to be a poetry book of some kind.

But why did he care?

He didn't. . .

Gods, she had a beautiful smile-

What the hell was he thinking?!

"All right, then," the girl beamed cheerfully, hugging her bag. "Well, say hi to Sango and Miroku for me. I'll talk to you later, okay?"

"Whatever," he grumbled, stuffing his hands in his pockets and quickly walking out of the library, forgetting about his homework as he tried to forget about her. But. . .

He had just reached the door when he chanced a glance back, just to make sure she really was there and he hadn't been spacing out. That had been prone to happen to him. . .

But as it turned out he hadn't. There she was, real- watching him leave with mixed emotions on her pink face. Then a boy from their school- Hobo, or something- walked up behind her and started chatting away. Sorta like what he had been doing with her moments earlier, now that he thought of it.

And as that realization hit him the werewolf felt, from somewhere deep inside, a sharp stab.

Was it jealousy. . .?

`Of course not,' Inu-Yasha reminded himself darkly as he stomped out of the library, `I hate her. Why the frack would I be jealous?!

Why indeed. . .

## 4 - poetry

~\*~

After a good ten minutes of rather blunt indifference, Kagome successfully shook Hojo off without hurting his feelings TOO badly. Just when she had been beginning to think that he'd never go away. . . Heh. If her friends had been there she knew they would have been furious with her- insisting that she pulled her head out of the clouds and dated the rational, polite boy.

And maybe she would have- if she was interested. But she wasn't. Even she was unsure why- he was the most popular "hunk" in school- athletic, smart, kind- but she just wasn't attracted to him. He was a smidgen \*too\* nice in her book- and she could tell he was only listening to her to be polite.

Not like Inu-Yasha.

No, she could tell he was actually paying attention when she spoke. It was reflected in his beautiful, golden eyes. . .

Kag sighed blissfully, closing her own eyes and letting day dreams wash over her- until she realized what she was doing.

Falling out of her chair in shock and embarrassment, Kagome reassured herself that she didn't like him. Not like THAT, anyway. What the hell- she didn't like him at all!

. . .

Did she?

With another -but not-so-happy- sigh, the girl got up to leave the library when her eyes fell on Inu-Yasha's now empty table.

Actually, it was only `almost empty'. There was still something there. It looked like his homework. . .

Kagome bit her lip, trying to decide what to do. Go home like she didn't see it, or return it to him?

She couldn't just let him fail a class. . .

With that excuse- er- reason to visit, Kagome gathered up his things with hers and started on the long walk to Inu-Yasha, Sango, and Miroku's apartment with a song on her lips.

\*

The hairs on the back of Sango's neck prickled in apprehension as she smelt a someone enter the large apartment building and begin up the stairs. It wasn't a wolf- she knew all the wolves scents by heart. It must be a human. . .

But wait. . .

It was only Kagome.

Sighing in relief, Sango opened the door before the girl had even knocked.

"Welcome, Kagome-chan!" Sango beamed, grabbing Kagome's hand and quickly tugging her inside, almost making her trip over the laundry bag as she did so.

Best not let the others do anything but smell her presence. . .

"Hi!" Kag grinned happily, though she looked slightly surprised by the sudden opening of the door.  
"What's up?"

"Not much, not much," Sango smiled back, walking over to the near-empty refrigerator. "Want something to drink?"

"Please," Kagome replied thankfully, taking the soda handed to her and dropping her and Inu-Yasha's things onto the old, patched couch.

"So. . .what brings you here?" the were-woman asked happily, flopping into the chair next to Kagome's

at the breaking table.

"Well, I missed you," Kag began, taking a sip of her pop. It was true; she really had liked talking to Sango and couldn't wait to do it again.

"I'm flattered, but something in your eyes-" "-and your scent-" "tells me that that's not all," the older girl smirked knowingly, winking at her friend and chugging her beverage.

Kag grinned sheepishly in return. "Yeah, you're right. I also came to return some of Inu-Yasha's things."

Sango nearly spat out her mouthful of soda.

"Where did you get them?!" she inquired sharply, dropping her can on the coffee table with an almost suspicious glance. "He wasn't over at your house or anything, was he?! You weren't-"

"No!" Kagome interrupted, a blush quickly creeping up her face. "No no no! We met and talked a bit at the library, and he accidentally left his homework behind and. . . so. . ." her voice trailed off as Sango seemed to relax.

"Oh. . ." The elder female looked very relieved, but wariness still remained in her eyes. "I see. . .Talk, did you? What about?"

Kag's dark red tinge slowly melted away to the slightest pink. "Not much. . . just this and that, you know? Some stuff I'm interested in. . ."

Sango quirked an eyebrow but said nothing.

"And he also said that maybe we could talk again sometime. . ."

The were-woman cringed inside to see her friend's blush return.

shoot. This wasn't good.

"Er- Kagome-chan?" Sango asked slowly, fingering her drink nervously in her hands as she picked it up

again. "What. . . do you think of Inu-Yasha?"

\*

Inu-Yasha had returned to the apartment complex after a long walk around the city, lost in his thoughts. His thoughts mostly about the black haired, blue eyed, worthless, annoying dog named Kagome. The stupid mortal named Kagome. The damn girl he could suddenly not keep out of his head named Kagome!

Growling at himself, he ran his clawed hands against the shabby wall of the hallway as he made his way to his apartment. What was it about her that caused him so much trouble?! Was it her scent? Her voice? Her interest in things he adored as well?

Perhaps. . . just maybe, she was more than just a mortal?

Maybe she was a witch that had cast some sort of dark spell over him?

But no. . .

We would have smelt dark magic in her.

Though now that he thought of it. . . he did remember sensing a little magic from her. . . But it wasn't the witch kind.

Or maybe (most likely, actually) he was just making the whole fracking thing up to try and keep his mind off of the qualities that she possessed that - to his disgust- he actually kinda sorta didn't hate.

He wouldn't say like.

He didn't like her.

No way.

No how.

. . .

Sighing, he put his key in the lock as he reached his apartment. He was about to open the door when his brain finally acknowledged what his senses had been screaming for a long time.

Kagome was in there. . .

And as his hand froze on the doorknob, his ears picked up the tell-tale sound of Sango's voice.

"Er- Kagome-chan?" Sango asked slowly, her voice soft. "What. . . do you think of Inu-Yasha?"

The rest of the werewolf's body froze as he heard his name mentioned.

Not only mentioned-

But mentioned in a question directed towards Kagome.

Oh gods. . .

\*

Kagome's flushed cheeks darkened a little at the question. "Wha. . . what do I think of him?"

"Yeah."

The younger girl leaned back in her chair and chewed her thumb nail for a moment, as if trying to think of how to say whatever she was attempting to express. "I think," she began slowly, straightening up in her seat and subconsciously grabbing one of her books, hugging it to her chest as she often did when worried or embarrassed. "That Inu-Yasha is. . . different."

She didn't notice Sango suck in her cheeks at this.

"Not in a bad way. . . Just different," Kagome continued, looking away from her friend and out the window. The sky was darkening, as it always did at the end of the day, and those neon lights were slowly blinking into life again. They were kind of comforting, now that she gave them a chance. . . "He listens to me. . . when no one else will. He pretends not to care when I think he really does. He. . . means a lot to me, even though I really only just met him. And all though he can be a rude @\$\$ . . . I think he's kind of- - -

Sweet."

The girl smiled at her older friend, who's sucked in cheeks had been loosened.

Sango's magenta orbs softened as they fell on the beaming girl.

`Oh, Kagome-chan. . . you don't know what you're getting yourself into. . .'

"You know what I mean?" Kag giggled, slowly loosening her grasp on the bound volume in her hands.

Sango- almost reluctantly- nodded, her voice failing her. After clearing her throat, she whispered. "Kagome. . . please, be careful around him. I don't want you to get hurt. . ."

The girl cocked her head in confusion, but nodded anyway as Sango, already aware of Inu-Yasha's presence outside the door, stood up.

"I've got a load of laundry I have to do really quick," the older girl grinned weakly at her friend. "Sorry to leave you alone, but the guys'll be furious if I don't get it done. I'll be right back, okay? You make yourself at home."

"You don't need any help?"

"I'll be fine," Sango assured with a smile, slinging a large, smelly, navy blue bag over her shoulder and heading out the door.

As the older female passed Inu-Yasha in the hall, she looked him up and down once, her lips pressed together tightly, before gliding quickly away. He caught the warning, though.

Taking a deep breath, the werewolf walked into his house- trying to ignore the girl's sweet, almost overpowering scent.

\*

Kagome's whipped around at the sudden noise in the tiny foyer.

`Sango couldn't be back already- -?' she thought in surprise as she got off her chair and curiously padded towards the door. `Could she?'

Evidently not. For when she stopped and stared, she found herself face to face with Inu-Yasha- who did nothing but stare right back. The boy did look surprised though, when her face broke into a large smile.

"Inu-Yasha! Just who I was looking for!" she beamed as the werewolf felt himself grow uncomfortable.

"Oh?" he drawled, trying his best not to let her sense his fear- and his sudden wish to be a little closer to her.

"Yeah, you left the library so quickly that you forgo- hey! What are you doi-?" she began, but stopped in confusion as Inu-Yasha pushed rudely past her and quickly stomped to his room, where he then shut the door with a slam.

"What the hell is wrong with him?" she murmured to herself, scooping his and her things off the table. Whether he liked it or not, she needed to return his belongings, after all. So that was what she was going to do. `Well, here we go!' But when it came to barging inside, she paused.

Maybe she should just leave them on the coffee table. . . ?

She hesitated just outside his door for a moment-

And then she entered, just as loud music began pouring out of his stereo.

\* Long lost words whisper slowly



To me \*

"Good song. . . Evanescence, is it not?" she whispered, somehow sure that he would be able to hear her.

He did; jumping slightly as he whirled around

"What the hell do you still want?" he ground out, frustrated that he hadn't been rude enough before to make her go away. Guess he had to turn it up a notch.

"I just wanted to return your things to you. You left them at the library," she informed quietly, holding out a pile of books and spirals. She then took a step a closer.

She was near enough to touch him, now.

He had to move back. . . But why weren't his feet working?! And why was he suddenly not caring that they weren't?! He \*DID\* want to move. . .

Right?

\* Still can't find what keeps me here \*

Kagome swallowed as he gingerly took the books from her, trying and failing not to brush her fingers in the process. Both colored a bit but hid it.

"Um. . . Inu-Yasha?"

"Yeah, what?" he muttered coldly.

"I. . . also wanted to thank you. . . For listening to me and stuff today. . . you know. And . . . um. . . I really did mean it. I'd love to talk to you again sometime. . ."

She looked up at him with such hope he recoiled slightly.

\* When all this time I've been so hollow

Inside \*

"I said maybe, I meant maybe," he snarled, dumping his things on top of his messy bed and keeping his back to the girl, trying to will her to leave him alone.

\* I know you're still there \*

"That's. . . not all I wanted to thank you for," she whispered, stepping even closer to him, so close that her pleated skirt brushed the back of his pants. He slowly turned to face her, swallowing silently as her looked into her azure eyes.

Why did his heart pound so fast when she smiled at him?

Why did he want her to keep smiling?

AND WHY IN HELL DID HE FIND HIMSELF WANTING TO MAKE HER SMILE HIMSELF?!

\* Watching me

Wanting me

I can feel you pull me down!

Fearing you

Loving you

I won't let you pull me down! \*

`What the frack am I thinking?' he screamed at himself. `This is the girl you wanted to kill! The girl you hunted down and tried to destroy- and would have if it wasn't for your pathetic excuse for friends! Why are you suddenly glad you didn't?!

The sad thing was he couldn't answer himself.

Check that.

The sad thing was that he was actually talking to himself.

A silence that seemed to take an eternity passed between the two as they looked into each other's eyes. And as the quiet deepened, only interrupted by the music that seemed so far away, Inu-Yasha's already sharp ears started picking up things that he hadn't been able to hear moments before.

Like Kagome's loudly thumping heart, for instance.

\* Hunting you I can smell you

Alive!

You're heart pounding in my head! \*

Finally, Kagome found her voice.

"I. . . I never really thanked you properly. Hell, I didn't thank you at all. . . for helping to save me from that. . . that dog thing. . ."

As she grinned, he felt a stab of guilt in his heart.

"So. . . thanks," she told him sweetly. And then, in a flash, he felt her warm lips press gently against his cheek before she gathered up her things and ran out of the room in embarrassment.

His eyes widened and he felt paralyzed as a hot flush suddenly crept up his cheeks.

\* Watching me

Wanting me

I can feel you pull me down!

Saving me

Raping me

Watching me! \*

His legs suddenly failing him, the teen boy went instantly from stiffness to jelly as he flopped back against his bed.

She. . .

Had kissed him.

And he. . .

He didn't. . .

He didn't care.

\* Oh oh! Oh oh! Oh oh Oh oh oh Oh!

Oh oh! Oh oh! Oh oh Oh oh oh Oh! \*

Finally noticing many uncomfortable lumps under his person, Inu rolled off the bed and found himself looking at his many text books.

But wait. . .

They weren't all his. . .

Picking up a blue and silver volume that he remembered seeing Kagome carry, he noticed that it was the poetry book he had seen briefly in her arms at the library.

His hands suddenly reaching out for the volume, he found himself flipping through it on the floor.

And then he found himself reading them.

`If you're asking if I love you, the answer is forever.

If you're asking if I'd hurt you, the answer is never.

If you're asking if I want you, the answer is I do.

If you're asking what I value most, the answer is you.'

If he had been reading these any time, any day, and any place except for here, now, and in this room with Kagome's kiss still warm on his cheek- he would have been laughing at these stupid, corny poems.

But now. . .

It was almost scary. . .

Like someone was trying to tell him something. . .

`If water were a kiss, I'd send you the sea.

If a hug were a leaf, I'd send you a tree.

If love was forever, I'd send you eternity!

The poems were all sugary, sappy, and made him nervous- jittery. And then-

He found the poem that made his blood run cold.

`The first time I saw you, I was afraid to touch you.

The first time I touched you, I was afraid to kiss you.

The first time I kissed you, I was afraid to love you.

But now I love you and am afraid to lose you.'

This poem- this poem that so adequately described what he was afraid of- what could happen- being at this place, at this time- and delivered by her-

Was it fate. . . ?

Closing the book shut with so much force that hurt his hand, Inu straightened on the floor in an icy sweat.

Did he love her. . . ?

NO.

He didn't!

He wouldn't!

He couldn't. . . .

\* Watching me!

Wanting me!

I can feel you pull me down!

Fearing you!

Loving you! \*

Inu-Yasha, completely oblivious to his pounding music- only able to hear his pounding heart- threw the accursed poem book at the door and fell onto the bed.

He would NOT love Kagome.

\* I won't let you pull me down! \*

~\*~

## 5 - indecision

~\*~

The minutes turned into hours. The hours into days. The days into weeks.

And Inu-Yasha made sure to avoid Kagome every second.

Because. . .If he saw her- Smelt her- Just once. . .

He might do something he would later regret.

But staying away from her. . .

It was hard.

When he bolted past her in the halls he could feel those piercing blue-gray orbs follow him, and her scent become hopeful- like he might stop and talk to her.

And then he had to endure that same sweet aroma become poisoned with disappointment when he swept past without a word.

Gods, this was driving him crazy!

SHE was driving him crazy!

Each school day passed like a second- time speeding up so that he couldn't spend long near her; and each night took an eternity- dragging on and on until he could again watch her from a far.

At the moment it was night- A new moon night. And, just like on the full moon, he had a transformation.



But Inu-Yasha didn't find this one very pleasant.

"ARGH!" he yelled in frustration, throwing a clock at the wall as his black hair brushed against his shirtless body.

Kicking his way through the junk that littered his floor, the teen plopped down on the windowsill and dangled his feet out the window, letting the autumn air cool him down. As he allowed the breeze calm him, Inu looked up at the star filled sky, and at the spot the Moon Goddess would be if she were out tonight.

"How can one thing. . ." he murmured softly, "affect my life so much?"

When he had first said it, he had been referring to the moon.

But now that he thought about it, it was a good question about Kagome as well.

Frustration welling up inside him again, he got angrily off the windowsill and whipped around-

To see himself in the mirror he kept in the corner.

He deflated slightly at his reflection.

Tonight he was human, as he was every night the moon was new. His usually silver hair was now ebony black, and his golden eyes lavender. His fangs and claws and ears now resembled the kind mortals' had.

Damn his stupid father- mating with a mortal and giving him this form once a month! Not that his half-bred form was much better, but at least it gave him a little more wolfish appearance. . .

There was a knock on the door.

"Go away," the were-human snarled, eyes glancing over the doorknob to make sure it was locked.

Good.

It was.

"But I don't want to," came Miroku's cheery reply from the other side of the barrier. "I'd much prefer to come in and tell you some news. I think you'll find it quiet interesting."

"Bull shoot."

"Trust me, you will."

"How long will this take?" Inu-Yasha sighed in annoyance.

"Not long, I promise."

"Dirt has more worth than a promise from you."

"Inu-Yasha, you hurt me. But I'll give you credit- you're right."

"I know I am."

There was a short silence in which Inu adjusted his baggy, flannel gray pajama pants.

"So can I come in or NOT?!" Miroku whined impatiently, fruitlessly trying the knob one more time.

The boy sighed and unlocked the door, stepping aside so that his friend could enter. Which he did with a flourish. "So what is it?" Inu asked dully, crossing his arms and looking pointedly at Miroku.

"Well," the werewolf grinned slyly, "I've noticed that you have the hots for a certain NAMELESS \*coughKagomecough\* GIRL-"

Inu-Yasha's eyes widened and then narrowed into slits- - -

Before he pounced on the older boy.

Even in his human form, Inu-Yasha was incredibly strong. Ergo, the pair battled and blocked with almost equal might as they rolled down the small hall and into the living room, where Sango happened to be seated, reading a magazine.

With one look at her arguing friends, the girl got up and left the apartment without a word.

"WOULD YOU JUST LET ME FINISH?!" Miroku painfully cried through a bloody lip a few moments later, twisting away from another punch.

"If you DARE say ANYTHING to ANYONE- I don't even like the girl, mind, but-" Inu grunted, putting up a hand to catch the fist Miroku threw at him.

"THAT'S NOT IT!" the older werewolf yelled, rolling over quickly so that he was on top of Inu-Yasha before he flopped off completely- leaving the two, slightly panting boys next to one another on the floor.

"Then what IS it?!" Inu growled, gingerly touching his bleeding cheek.

"In school today, during lunch- you know, when you were in lunch detention?"

"Yeah," Inu-Yasha prompted in annoyance, knowing perfectly well where he had been. He had gotten a detention for not finishing his overdue homework (the stuff that he had coincidentally been working on at the library before he began talking to Kag) again.

"Well, I heard Kagome chatting with her friends at her table, and it turns out that tomorrow- - -

Is her \*birthday\*."

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Sighing, he stuffed his money in his pocket- just in case. Though he probably WASN'T gonna buy her anything. . . He'd think about it some more.

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End of story.

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## 5 - indecision

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But staying away from her. . .

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But Inu-Yasha didn't find this one very pleasant.

"ARGH!" he yelled in frustration, throwing a clock at the wall as his black hair brushed against his shirtless body.

Kicking his way through the junk that littered his floor, the teen plopped down on the windowsill and dangled his feet out the window, letting the autumn air cool him down. As he allowed the breeze calm him, Inu looked up at the star filled sky, and at the spot the Moon Goddess would be if she were out tonight.

"How can one thing. . ." he murmured softly, "affect my life so much?"

When he had first said it, he had been referring to the moon.

But now that he thought about it, it was a good question about Kagome as well.

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To see himself in the mirror he kept in the corner.

He deflated slightly at his reflection.

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Damn his stupid father- mating with a mortal and giving him this form once a month! Not that his half-bred form was much better, but at least it gave him a little more wolfish appearance. . .

There was a knock on the door.

"Go away," the were-human snarled, eyes glancing over the doorknob to make sure it was locked.

Good.

It was.

"But I don't want to," came Miroku's cheery reply from the other side of the barrier. "I'd much prefer to come in and tell you some news. I think you'll find it quiet interesting."

"Bull shoot."

"Trust me, you will."

"How long will this take?" Inu-Yasha sighed in annoyance.

"Not long, I promise."

"Dirt has more worth than a promise from you."

"Inu-Yasha, you hurt me. But I'll give you credit- you're right."

"I know I am."

There was a short silence in which Inu adjusted his baggy, flannel gray pajama pants.

"So can I come in or NOT?!" Miroku whined impatiently, fruitlessly trying the knob one more time.

The boy sighed and unlocked the door, stepping aside so that his friend could enter. Which he did with a flourish. "So what is it?" Inu asked dully, crossing his arms and looking pointedly at Miroku.

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## 6 - deadly sweet

~\*~

Kagome was relaxing in her bedroom, listening to her new Evanescence CD, minding her own business. . . when the door bell suddenly rang. It took her a minute to process this turn of events, seeing as how it was almost 7 at night and all her friends had already come to wish her happy birthday. Even Hojo had made his appearance- presenting her with some weird bamboo thing for her health. So who could it be. . . ? Confused, she crawled off of her bed, stopped her CD, and padded quickly downstairs.

`Who. . . ?'

She had gotten half way down the steps when her mother emerged from the kitchen, heading for the door as she wiped her hands on her apron. Kag noted in amusement that her mom had been eating more of her birthday cake, judging by the frosting on her lips. Rolling her eyes, she put on a bit more speed.

"I'll get it, mom!" Kagome sang cheerfully, hopping down the last of the steps and jumping in front of the door before her mother could reach the handle.

"Oh. . . Well, I'll just go back to- uh- cleaning then," her mother smiled, turning around and heading back into the kitchen to "clean up" the rest of the cake.

Laughing quietly, the girl opened the door. "Hel- - - !"

But any laugh that was still left within her instantly died in her throat as she saw who stood on the shrine's welcome mat.

It was a very red, embarrassed, and slightly pissed off Inu-Yasha, who was self-consciously holding a thin pink box under his arm.

"Inu-Ya-?" she began to whisper in confusion, but cut herself off when the boy thrust the box at her, making sure not to make eye contact.

"Here," he grunted, shaking the gift lightly. "Happy birthday."

She was at a loss for words. How did he know about her birthday?

Gingerly taking the box from him, Inu-Yasha couldn't help but notice that Kagome was still staring at him in shock and disbelief. Red in the face, he turned around to go home when-

"Wait!" Kag cried softly, causing him to turn and face her. "Won't you come in?"

He looked her blankly up and down, still making sure not to lock gazes.

She hugged the box of chocolates gently to her body. So she was nervous, too. . .

"No."

He wanted to kill himself for causing the crushed look now on her face. But instead, he simply turned around again.

"Please?" she asked once more, her voice soft and hurt.

He made the mistake of glancing back, his eyes finally connecting with hers.

Gods, he had to resist! He could NOT say yes! NO, NO, NO. NO SAYING YES.

"I guess. . ." he muttered, head down as he stepped inside her warm foyer.

. . .

At least he hadn't said `yes'. . .

\*

"Who was at the door?" Kagome's mother called from the kitchen, her voice slightly muffled as if her mouth was full. Which it undoubtedly was.

"Just a friend from school," Kagome replied airily, grabbing Inu-Yasha's hand- much to his shock- and pulling him gently upstairs with her.

`What the hell is she doing?!' he thought, fearing that his cheeks were now permanently red as he was tugged through the second floor hallway. He barely had a chance to notice what was going on around him- vaguely taking in the many family pictures on the neatly wallpapered walls as his dirty sneakers stained the vanilla carpet.

After passing a few mahogany doors they emerged in Kagome's room- the one at the very end of the hall- the one which was a soft blue color. With a bed in one corner, pink curtains covering large windows in another, and a desk full of books and papers in a third- it was an average teenager's room.

Except for the fact that one could see the floor.

But credit for that belonged to her mother.

After closing the door behind them, the two stood in the middle of Kag's room for a moment, their hands still clasped.

Until they both realized their hands no longer needed to be, of course.

Jumping apart, Kagome tentatively sat down on her bed again, turning her CD player back on. At least it created a bit of sound. . . White noise, but noise all the same.

Not sure of what to say to each other, the two teens remained silent, Kagome fingering the chocolate box, and Inu-Yasha standing in the middle of the room.

"So. . . you've got the Evanescence CD too, huh?" Inu-Yasha cleared his throat, mentally hitting himself for stating something so obvious.

"Yep. . ." Kagome replied timidly, wetting her parched lips.

"Good group," he nodded, hands in his pockets as he began rocking back and forth on the balls of his feet.

"Mhm," the girl agreed, still too embarrassed to say much else. Maybe she should have just let him go home. . .

But she had wanted so badly to talk to him again. Still wanted to.

Well, here goes nothing.

"Thank you for the present, Inu-Yasha," she said suddenly, her cheeks still pink.

"You're welcome," he grunted, coloring a bit himself.

"You didn't have to do anything for me. . ."

"Would you have preferred it if I didn't?" he snorted, sounding slightly annoyed.

"No! I'm very glad you did. . . This is the best present I've gotten today," she smiled warmly up at him.

"You must have gotten a whole lot of shoot, then," he grumbled, looking away and ignoring the fact that she hadn't even opened it yet. Well, it was probably pretty obvious what it was, since it still had a sticker from the shop on it and all. . .

"No, silly," she giggled, "It's the best because it's from you."

Both flushed dark red when she said this, Kag feeling like hitting her head against the bed stand for saying something so dumb- and so true. Well, she couldn't take it back now. Might as well continue.

"Inu-Yasha?"

"Yeah?"

"I missed you."

She noticed that he bit his lip and flushed a little darker at this, but he didn't seem angry- so she pressed on while she had the courage.

"I like you a lot. I can't talk to anyone else like I can you. You listen, and you don't get all freaked out. I- I'm really glad you came over. And that you came inside."

The boy ceased his rocking and glanced at her from the corner of his eye. "I. . . I am too."

She beamed at him, causing him to look quickly away in embarrassment.

He wished he could keep eye contact with her, but if he did-

Argh! How did she do this to him?!

"Um. . . want to split this with me?" Kagome offered, holding up the box of chocolate and waking Inu-Yasha out of his thoughts.

"Nah," Inu grunted with a shrug.

Kag cocked her head in confusion while she opened up the container. "Why not?" she inquired, popping one of the rich candies into her mouth.

"I'm not big into sweets."

"Really?" the girl blinked, setting the box beside her on the bed. "What kind of candies have you tried?"

"Lollipops. When I was little," the werewolf grunted, instantly appalled at himself for admitting this.

Kagome laughed, but he was surprised to notice that it wasn't \*at\* him. It was just out of amusement.

"Silly, lollipops and chocolate are two entirely different things. I can't believe you've never tried

chocolate!"

Taking his hand again, the girl pulled him gently over to her bed. He instinctively sat down as the back of his knees hit the bedspread, and as he did so, he suddenly felt a little more relaxed.

"Try one!" she smiled, offering the box to him, "You'll like it! I swear!"

He shook his head, keeping his smirking lips glued shut as a bit of playfulness found its way into his heart. Odd. . . he hadn't felt like this in years. How did she do it. . . ?

"I'm going to make you try chocolate, if it's the last thing I do," Kag teased, feeling quite a bit more comfortable as well.

"Well then, you'll die disappointed, `cause I ain't trying them," Inu-Yasha grinned, looking haughtily down his nose at her.

"Yes, you will. Please?" the girl practically cooed; innocently batted her eyelashes as she picked up one of the chocolates. Sitting up on her knees and leaning forward slightly, she instinctively brought the sweet to his lips.

Both were startled by the action, to say the least. But neither cared just then. They were too busy registering how close they had gotten, and how they could feel the other's warm breaths on their faces. .

Slowly opening his mouth, the boy let Kagome place the chocolate inside- just on the tip of his tongue- their eyes forever locked.

Neither could have guessed- or have stopped- what happened next. As suddenly as this whole thing started, the two lunged at the other- pressing their lips together in a needy, almost desperate kiss. Trailing his clawed hands lightly up and down her back, Inu-Yasha felt Kagome attach her hands in his silky hair and pulled him closer, their passionate kiss never ending as she felt him crawl completely onto the bed with her. Both were panting now, through the nose- their overpowering need for each other's soft lips almost ranking over that of needing oxygen.

Soon Kag felt Inu's tongue push a bit roughly against her lips, begging for access into her mouth. She complied with a moan of approval, allowing the taste of chocolate to mix with their kiss as one of her legs found its way around the boy's hip, and said boy pushed her roughly onto her back; straddling her.



All was perfect for a moment- - -

But then it struck Kagome how unfair it was for him to have all the fun. Lightly biting down on his lip, she silently asked for permission to be let inside his mouth in return. He allowed her without a thought, complaint; and so she hungrily explored the caverns of his mouth, every corner and every tooth-

Until she felt her tongue catch on one of his sharp canines, slicing the tip open with a thin, deep incision.

`shoot!' Inu-Yasha's eyes snapped open in concern as he realized what his fangs had done, and he quickly made to pull away- - -

But Kagome only tightened her grip on him in response, pulling him back onto the bed with her.

She liked the taste.

And he found he liked it too.

The exotic taste of blood and chocolate filled their mouths as their heated kiss continued to deepen and their hands roamed the other's body.

Blood and chocolate.

It was the irresistible taste of the richness of life and the essence of death. It was the warm of the warm, and the cold of the cold. And, in Inu-Yasha's mind, it was the perfect way to describe their relationship.

Sweet-

But if the others found out-

Deadly.

"Inu-Yasha," Kagome groaned softly, eventually finding herself on top of the teen; blouse wrinkled and her skirt a mess.

"I lied. I don't like you. I. .

I love you. . ."

He silently gasped, looking up into her wide, honest blue orbs.

Time seemed to stop as the two lay together in each other's arms, eyes locked, and the words of an all-too-familiar poem echoing simultaneously through their minds.

~The first time I saw you, I was afraid to touch you.

The first time I touched you, I was afraid to kiss you.

The first time I kissed you, I was afraid to love you. ~

"I love you, too," Inu-Yasha whispered, claiming her lips again as the two gave into temptation.

~But now I love you and am afraid to lose you.~

~\*~

my personal favorite (hm i wonder why?)

## 7 - Family lunch

~\*~

Days were passing quickly, now- like flashes of warm, bright light- like shooting stars. Shooting stars. . . the kinds that carried his dreams on their shimmering tails. Since he was with Kagome- and was allowing himself touch and smell and love her- life was so much brighter. The stars seemed to be, as well.

Kagome, too, was happier then she had been for a long time. She had found him- the one person she could be herself around. The one person she could truly depend on. The one person she could honestly talk to.

Still, despite this, it was an unspoken rule that they did not allow anyone to know about them. Not friend, not family- no one. They avoided each other at school. They barely gave each other the right of way on the sidewalk. Their dates were secret, meeting "by chance" in crowded malls and movie cinemas.

And when Kagome visited Sango, the lovers pretended to hate each other until Sango and Miroku left-

Before making their way to Inu's room to "Hang out".

Kag used to worry about being caught by someone while they were ma- er- hanging out, but for some reason, Inu-Yasha always seemed to be able to tell when someone was coming. It was odd, but she didn't care- provided that he realized the approaching danger with enough time for them to take opposite sides of the room and come up with an "argument".

Once they pretended to fight about Pocky.

Yes, their relationship was wonderful.

A few flaws and kinks- like the way they had to avoid anything breathing when together- but what relationship was without those? Only once did Kagome try to ask about this limitation- but Inu-Yasha's growl of warning shut her up.

She was treading on sacred, dangerous ground. . .

She just didn't realize it yet.

\*

"Inu-Yasha?" Kagome asked cautiously, her hand intertwined with the silver haired boy's as they made their way through the crowded shopping center. They had deemed it impossible for anyone to find them here, thus allowing the wary pair to show a little affection. (And, quite frankly, if they didn't hold onto one another it was almost guaranteed that one would be swept away by the crowd.)

"Hm?" he responded softly, looking down at her from the corner of his eye.

"Um. . . My mom wants to know if you can come for dinner tomorrow night."

Inu halted and turned to face the girl completely, his eyebrows raised as shoppers pushed rudely past them.

She winced.

She had stepped over the line again, she just knew it.

But then. . .

"Why?" he asked softly, gently tilting the girl's chin so she would look up at him.

"She. . . she saw the picture I have of you and asked if you were the friend that came over on my birthday. I- I figured `what is the harm of telling her yes'? So I told her that you were. . . and then she asked if you would come so that she could meet you."

". . . You have a picture of me?" he exclaimed in bewilderment, totally taken aback.

"Well, yes," Kagome colored in the cheeks as she hurried on. "But that's beside the point. Can you?"

Inu-Yasha sighed, thinking hard.

He didn't want to.

The stench of so many humans would rub off on him, and make the pack curious. (Keh- as if they weren't already. . . He had been going a bit overboard on the cologne as of late, for a couple of obvious reasons- all of which eventually circled back to Kagome. So obviously, he had already received a few odd glances from his clan, and he didn't need to risk anymore.)

And what if someone saw him go over?

But hell. . .

Someone could see him here, too. . .

He was about to answer 'fine' when he caught a glance at the large, glass ceiling of the mall.

The moon was rising lazily in the twilight sky.

It was very, very round. . .

He mentally smacked himself.

frack!

Tomorrow was the full moon. . .

"Please, Inu-Yasha? I- I know you don't want anyone knowing about us, and I'm okay with that. I mean, I'm on the same boat with \*my\* friends. They wouldn't understand either" -They think he's so weird. . . call him names behind his back. . .-' ". . . But God! This is my family, and they've been in the dark so long. . . If they find out, they'll be so hurt. . ." 'I'll be so hurt. . .'

She bit her lip and looked at him hopefully. He sighed.

She would be hurt if he said no, and he couldn't hurt her- not in any way.

Damn the fact that he loved her! Damn the fact that he'd do anything for her! DAMN IT ALL!

"I . . . I can't come for dinner. But. . . I could come for lunch. . ."

Her face broke into the happy smile that he adored.

Gods, he loved it when he made her smile.

"Now just one more question," he said seriously as they began to walk again.

"Yeah?"

"Is it a hot picture of me?" the werewolf waggled his eyebrows with a smirk.

Kag smacked him gently over the head, red in the face. "I hate you."

\*

Kagome yanked outfit after outfit from her large closet, almost in a frenzy. Holding each one up to her slender figure in front of her large, full body mirror, she continually made the same, pissed off face before throwing the cloths in disgust in the corner.

"No, no, no, and NO," the girl sighed as she tossed a few more articles of clothing over her shoulder. "Damn it!"

She just couldn't find the right ensemble. Granted, usually she wouldn't care much about what she wore, but today it had to be perfect! Inu-Yasha had promised to come to a family lunch, after all; and she knew he was doing it especially for her.

And so looking her very best for him was the least that she could do!

After a moment she blew out her cheeks and looked herself up and down in her mirror, tired and exasperated. Wearing nothing but a white bra and panties, she dryly thought about just going in this.

He would like it, she was sure.

Pinking at her own dirty thoughts, the girl sighed and raked her hands through her long, ebony hair, lowering her gaze to her feet in silent embarrassment. It was only then that Kagome realized that she'd need matching footwear as well.

Curses.

Her eyes slowly roaming back up her body, trying her best to decided what would best complement her figure and skin color; her ocean orbs suddenly stopped on her birthmark.

Unlike many kids, she had always liked her birthmark.

In the shape of a sideways crescent moon, it was located right over her heart.

It always made her feel. . .

Special.

Especially when she was younger.

But maybe she was just weird.

Laughing lightly, she traced a finger over the thin mark, thinking about the games she used to play when she was little- all about being a moon goddess. Silly little games, she knew, but sometimes she wished she could go back to them.

Tearing her mind out of her thoughts of childhood and magic, Kagome returned her attention to her calling wardrobe, intent on finding the prefect outfit for her boyfriend.

\*

"I've got it!" Kagome screamed as she heard the door bell ring.

Racing down the stairs, the girl stopped only once- to quickly check her reflection in the mirror. Perfect.

She had decided on a periwinkle, spaghetti strap dress, complete with a shimmering azure pull over that brought out the color of her eyes. Matching perfectly with her slipper-like shoes and eye shadow, Kagome was very proud of her chosen ensemble.

Skidding down the upstairs hall and leaping down the steps in a very un-lady like manner, Kagome bounded for the door-

Only to be beaten to it by Sota.

The boy opened the door so fast that it almost smacked his sister in the face.

Inquisitive eyes met inquisitive eyes as the pair of males blinked at one another.

"Uh. . . hi."

Sota's brow scrunched up as Inu-Yasha spoke, still looking him dramatically up and down. "So. . . you're Inu-Yasha?" the ten year old asked seriously, keeping the door in Kagome's way so that she couldn't get through to the foyer.

"Yep. And you must be her runty little brother, Sota," he returned, smirking down at the boy.

"That's me!" Sota replied proudly, thrilled to be recognized.

"Sota. . ." Kagome growled dangerously from the other side of the door.

"Oops! Sorry, Kagome-nee-chan," the boy grinned innocently as he moved the barrier from his sister's way. `Finally!` Kag couldn't help but think as she instantly stepped into the front hall, smiling at the



bemused Inu.

"Care to come in?"

Smirking and stepping inside, Inu-Yasha looked around the shrine's cozy foyer for the first time. (Seeing as how during his last visit he'd pretty much been yanked up into Kagome's bedroom within the first second of entry.)

"Nice place."

"Thanks," Kag grinned, taking his hand. "Come this way."

"ICK," Sota frowned as the teens' hands locked together.

"Shut up, runt," Inu-Yasha grunted, knuckling Sota over the head- though careful not to hurt him. The boy grinned stupidly in response, evidently ecstatic at the attention.

He liked Inu-Yasha.

"Wait, Inu-Yasha-niichan!" Sota piped up happily as he raced after his sister and his new hero as they made their way into the dining room.

\*

"So," Mrs. Higarashi bubbled happily as Inu-Yasha helped her fix a large bowl of oden in the kitchen a little while later. "Tell me about yourself!"

"Not much to tell," Inu grunted in the most polite way he could manage. "I'm in Kagome's grade. I'm into music and mythological beasts and stuff. . . I like Kagome. . . and ramen. . ."

He added the last bit for lack of anything else slightly intelligent to say. So he was a boring person, big deal. Well, actually- at the moment it was a bit of a big deal, wasn't it?

Mrs. Higarashi's soft smile widened. "Ramen, huh? Well, next time you come over to eat, I'll make you

some."

"Thank you. . ." he replied slowly, unsure of how to act toward this woman. Was she trying to be. . . motherly? He couldn't remember his mother. . .

The pack had killed her right after giving birth to him.

They would have killed her before, if it wasn't for the fact that she was pregnant with him. That, and the fact that she had promised she would. . .

. . .

It was against the rules to kill another werewolf, after all- even if he was only half of one.

Gods, the werewolves had a lot of rules. . . But he supposed he liked that one. After all, it was the only thing that had saved him from premature death.

"You say your into mythological beasts? Like werewolves?" Mrs. Higarashi asked cheerfully, startling Inu-Yasha out of his thoughts.

"Yep. Especially werewolves."

"Well. . . I'm glad that Kagome has someone to talk to. She's been getting teased by a lot of children lately, you know. For her likes and dislikes. Her personality."

She smiled warmly at Inu-Yasha as he snarled to himself.

Who DARE dislike his Kagome?!

If he found anyone who did. . .

He'd kill them.

Though he might not want to mention that to her mother. . . Best keep it to himself.

"But she has you now, so it doesn't really matter, does it?" the woman beamed, oblivious to the teen's thoughts. "You're just what she needs, Inu-Yasha. She's very lucky to have found you."

Inu processed this for a moment, repressing his other musings.

Someone lucky. . .

To have him?

Why?

He had done nothing his whole life except kill and get in the way- make problems for both humans and werewolves.

Yet here was a woman telling him that he was needed.

But she was wrong. Inu-Yasha wasn't needed.

He was needy. He needed Kagome more than anything.

But. . . Perhaps this need. . . Was helping Kagome?

For she had him, and he had her. That was what they both needed.

Each other.

He returned Mrs. Higarashi's smile with a small one of his own.

"No. I'm the one who's lucky."

\*

Kagome's grandfather looked Inu-Yasha suspiciously up and down. Inu-Yasha glared right back. Their sharp stares sparked an electricity that Sota slowly backed away from.

"Are you a demon?" the old man asked in dangerous tones as he began to wave a piece of paper around threateningly. "For if you are, this sutra shall banish you from our shrine in less than a minute if it touches your ski-"

Inu grabbed it and ripped it to pieces.

"Guess he's not," Sota announced dryly as his grandfather went into hysterics about how old that "sacred scroll" was.

"Grandpa, shut up," Kagome sighed as she and her mother entered with dishes and utensils to set the table with.

"Could you help us set the table, Inu-Yasha, dear?" Mrs. Higarashi beamed at him, holding out the forks. "Sorry, but there's so much to do. . ."

"No problem," Inu-Yasha shrugged as he took them without a second thought-

Until a searing pain shot through his hand- and his body- like lightning. The heck- - - ?! Hissing in shock, he heard the forks fall to the floor with a clatter as his knees gave way, cold sweat instantly drenching him.

"What's wrong?!" Kag cried in shock as her boyfriend sank to the floor.

Panting slightly and mopping up his brow, the werewolf took a closer look at the forks. And as he did so, he emitted a small, dark chuckle.

No wonder.

They were made of silver. . .

"What's wrong?" Kagome repeated, kneeling next to Inu-Yasha. She tentatively touched his forehead. "By the gods!" she gasped, pulling back her cool palm. "You're burning! Are you okay!?"

"Um. . . allergic to silver," he lied on the spot, scooting slowly away from the forks.

"I'll say!" Mrs. Higarashi gaped. "Inu-Yasha, honey, I'm so sorry- I had no idea! Talk about an allergic reaction- I'll go get you a compress and get rid of these silver utensils! I guess we can use chopsticks. . . just trying to be special. . ."

"It's okay, I'm fine," Inu grunted, standing up slowly and dusting himself off as the others fussed. "I just can't touch them."

"You should have told me earlier," Kag whispered, picking up the fallen forks. The werewolf just shrugged as if it was nothing, but when no one was looking, he examined his hand.

It was almost charred black.

Ah well.

He'd heal in a few hours.

Besides, how could he continue to feel bad when Kagome was looking so stunning, lunch smelt so good, and he had the old man sobbing over paper?

\*

Inu-Yasha found that- shockingly enough- he was actually enjoying himself with these stupid humans. In fact, he didn't even want to call them `stupid' anymore.

Well, apart from the old geezer.

He was stupid.

Very stupid.

Beyond stupid.

But whatever.

Everyone else was. . . nice.

The little runt was worshipping him, Kagome's mother adored him, and Kagome was. . . well, Kagome. He loved her no matter what. (But he liked her \*especially\* well when she was so close to him on the couch that she was almost in his lap as she shared her ice cream with him. Like she was now, ironically enough.)

In fact, he was having such a good time talking (or grunting, whatever way you wanted to describe his usual form of communication) and making fun of the old man behind everyone else's back that he barely noticed the position of the sun, which was sinking dangerously low in the sky. In fact, he only noticed the time when it was actually announced.

"Wow, it's four already!" Kagome giggled, looking at her watch. "Time sure has been flying by-"

But she was interrupted by Inu-Yasha visibly tensing next to her.

"Four?!"

Four was very late in the day, especially during autumn. So late, he noticed as he looked out the window in shock, that the sun was very, very close to setting. . .

Standing up so quickly that he almost knocked Kagome down in the process, the werewolf raced to the door, quickly announcing that he had to get home.

"What? What's wrong?" Kagome asked hurriedly, bolting after him as he fumbled with the knob.

"I've got stuff I gotta do," he muttered. "I'm sorry. Thanks for lunch, I had a pretty good time, I guess. . . "

Kagome smiled slightly. This was a big complement from Inu-Yasha.

"You look nice, by the way," he chuckled, kissing her quickly on the cheek before opening the door and slipping out of it. She blushed, pleased with herself and happy that he finally noticed. "Sorry I can't stay around and ogle at you some more. I'll see you `round, kay? And I still wanna see that picture you have of me."

"Okay," she whispered, a magenta hue adorning her cheeks as she watched him bolt away into the slowly setting sun.

But she just couldn't help wondering. . .

What was that all about?

## 8 - coincidence

~\*~

Inu-Yasha was mildly surprised when he one morning checked his calendar and realized that he and Kagome had been together for a whole month. It felt like a blissful forever. . . But, nonetheless, it had only been a month- and their anniversary fell upon one of the school's upcoming events, the talent show.

The werewolf was slightly annoyed to find that Kagome insisted on going. He had wanted to go for a walk around the park with her or something like that, but to his misfortune she had already discovered that he'd do anything for her- all she had to do was ask.

Which she did.

She said: "Please, Inu-Yasha? I have to go! Can you come to the talent show with me?"

Thus he found himself being dragged reluctantly along.

Oh well. It couldn't be that bad if Kagome was with him- especially when she was being especially sweet, as if to make up for dragging him here. She had even mentioned that if he didn't want to be seen with her or anything, they didn't have to hang out together. He, though, had quickly stomped on that idea, not wanting to tarnish his reputation by appearing to be there alone.

However, this brought up a whole new problem, the "boy" realized as he sat on his windowsill, dangling his feet into the night that was lit by a moon sliver: What would people say when they saw them together? At least 1/10th - which was actually quite a bit- of the school's population was a werewolf from one clan or another, and no matter what the clan, the rules were the same.

So distracted by his thoughts, Inu-Yasha didn't register how far he had leaned back-

Until he fell off the sill- crashing to the floor of his room with a loud, painful THUMP.

Ow. . .

"Dammit," he cursed; massaging his ringing temples as he slowly collected himself on the ground. But as the flashing stars left his vision, he realized his fall had knocked an insane idea into his head: Why not tell Kagome he was a werewolf, and take it from there? He could be truly honest with her- even show her his ears. Hell- she might not mind. She might even take the Trial!

. . .

What the frack was he thinking?!



Sitting up and crossing his legs and arms, Inu shook his head as if to clear it.

Kagome may love werewolves, but there was no way she'd take the Trial. There would be way too much on the line.

But . . .

Maybe he should still tell her.

She didn't seem to understand the thin line she was threatening to cross. The line between wolf and mortal, safety and danger-

Life and death.

But if he told her. . . Told her about everything- the Rules, the Trial, his ears- maybe she would understand.

But . . .

On the same token. . .

Maybe she would shun him.

Maybe she would hate him.

Maybe she would leave him.

Sighing, Inu-Yasha took off his cap and allowed his drooping ears a little air. This was the hardest decision he had had to make since Kagome's birthday present!

Well, he had made the right choice in that dilemma. . .

Hopefully, he would make the right choice here, too.

\*

"Are you okay, Inu-Yasha?" Kagome asked as the pair walked hand in hand down the crowded streets of Tokyo, basking in the glow of the late evening sun. "You seem a little quiet."

"I'm fine," Inu-Yasha sighed, subconsciously pushing his hat more firmly on his head as they made their way towards the school. "Just thinking. . ."

"About what?" Kag pressed on cheerfully, pushing a lock of her hair behind her ear.

"Just. . . stuff." The werewolf bit his lip and then gently squeezed Kagome's hand. "Kagome?"

"Yeah?"

"Would you hate me if I was. . . different?"

The girl cocked her head in confusion. "How so?"

"Just. . . different."

"Silly," she smiled, poking him gently in the stomach in a playful gesture. "Of course I wouldn't hate you! How could I?"

"But what if I was frighteningly different?" he urged on, feeling butterflies materialize in his stomach.

Kagome just laughed as they walked up the steps of the school. "You're so stupid, Inu-chan," she giggled before kissing him on the cheek. "Now I gotta go for a while. I'll see you in a bit, kay?"

"But-!" he called out helplessly as she ran down the hall, winking at him before she disappeared around the corner. Where was she- - ?! Oh. . .

There was no point in following her, she'd just get mad. Guess he was by himself after all. . .

Sighing, he walked alone towards the packed cafeteria, where the stage and about 3/4ths of the school was located, waiting for the talent show to begin.

\*

Excited teenagers jostled Inu left and right in the cramped, crowded, sweaty cafeteria, hurting Inu-Yasha's body as they slammed into him. The bright, flashing lights that were used for effects flashed all around, hurting Inu-Yasha's eyes. The stench of hundreds of smelly teens hurt Inu-Yasha's sensitive nose. The pounding sound of the loud amplifiers and speakers hurt Inu-Yasha's covered ears. And the internal battle of whether or not to tell Kagome about his true identity was tearing his hurting brain apart.

In short, Inu-Yasha was not a very happy puppy.

'I should probably tell her,' the werewolf told himself as another tone-deaf idiot took the stage and belted out "Beautiful". Which he most definitely was not, but whatever. 'She's smart and well versed in the ways of the wolf. She'd figure it out eventually- even with all the lies she's reading.'

He looked out the small cafeteria window at the rising silver crescent in the sky. The new moon had come and gone a few nights ago, and so there was barely any moon among the bright golden stars. But there was still enough to transform. . .

Perhaps he should transform to show her?

He already knew of her confusion about the last full moon- her scent lingered in their apartment: curious

and disappointed. How he hated to make her anything but happy.

But. . .

Would she be happy if he told her?

Or would she be frightened instead?

'She'd be happier if I told her the truth,' Inu-Yasha reasoned with himself as the 'Beautiful' idiot left the stage to a round of less than enthusiastic applause. 'And she'd understand. If she can get over the fact that I killed five humans, she could get over this. Right?'

Since there was no one in his mind to answer him and his questions, Inu just shrugged and sighed. Yes, it would most likely be in both his and her best interest to get all secrets of out of the way before their relationship went any further-

But the werewolf's thoughts were distracted by someone very familiar taking the stage.

A beautiful, ebony haired girl walked into the pale blue spotlight, dressed in a short, black leather skirt and tank top, tall matching boots adorning her slender legs. Her face and hair sparkled with a touch of glitter, and silver bracelets tinkled softly on her arms. His eyes widened as they fell upon this siren, stunned. Ka. . .

Kagome. . . ?

Inu-Yasha vaguely registered the announcer as he called out his girlfriend's name and the song she was to be singing as she took the mike, looking quite calm. Gazing stonily into the crowd as the hard, heavy beat began to pour from the speakers- swirling around the packed cafeteria and into the night- Kagome opened her frosted pink lips and began to sing.

"Perfect by nature!

Icons of self indulgence!

Just what we all need

More lies about a world that-

Never was and never will be!

Have you now shame, don't you see me?

You know you've got everybody fooled!"

As he watched her sing on stage, everyone screaming happily along, his thoughts once again fell back on his current problem.

Before she had begun to perform, he had just about decided to tell her his secret. But now. . .

Now the look on her face was scaring him. Would that be the way she looked at him if he told?

But no matter how alarming her expression- Her song's lyrics frightened him more.

"Look, here he comes now!

Bow down and stare in wonder!

Oh, how we "love" you!

No flaws when you're pretending-

But now I know he

Never was and never will be!

You don't know how you've betrayed me!

And somehow you've got everybody fooled!"

The already too-bright lights were now burning into Inu's skin, the music grinding into his soul.

This was too much. . .

Blood running cold, the werewolf subconsciously began backing away, running into stupid teen after stupid teen as he tried to get away from Kagome- and the words that were the first thing to truly frighten him for a long time.

"Without the mask

Where will you hide?

Can't find yourself

Lost in your lie!"

Kag's icy glare seemed to fall on Inu-Yasha for a moment as she continued to sing. Too much. . . Finally feeling his back hit cool brick, Inu slid down the wall and squeezed his eyes shut, trying to block out everything around him.

And still, Kagome's song echoed through his mind.

"I know the truth now!

I know who you are!

And I don't love you anymore-

It never was and never will be!

You don't know how you've betrayed me!

And somehow you've got everybody fooled!

It never was and never will be!

You're not real and you can't save me!

Somehow now you're everybody's fool!"

And he was.

\*

"So how'd I do?" Kagome bubbled as the two trailed hand in hand down the dark, deserted streets after the talent show had ended. Kag had noticed how quiet her boyfriend had been, as if he was afraid of something. Was he feeling okay?

"You did great," he murmured, looking up towards the moon.

A silence past where Kagome wondered if he was telling her the truth. What had she done wro- - - ?

"Kag?"

She blinked at him. "Yes?"

" . . . Why did you choose. . . the song you did?"

Kagome cocked her head in confusion. "Because I know you like Evanescence."

Inu was quiet for a moment, and then let out a soft chuckle.

"You got some of the lyrics wrong, in that case," he teased, feeling a bit better- and a bit stupid for not recognizing it earlier.

"I know," the girl blushed. "I realized that when I was finished. All the `he's were supposed to be `she's. My mistake."

Feeling considerably more cheerful, Inu just decided her choosing that song was a mere coincidence and let it slide. But he also decided not to tell her.

Coincidence or not- it had left him pretty shaken.

\*

Breaking off a long, passionate kiss under a street lamp, Kagome giggled and bid Inu-Yasha goodnight after insisting that he go home- he looked kind of pale. Turning around to continue the last part of her journey home by herself, the girl didn't notice the dark shadow of another female watching her from the roof of a nearby building.

Watching and waiting.

Glaring at the girl on the ground, the teen on the roof's mouth pulled into the most frightening sneer one had ever seen.

It was time to separate Inu-Yasha and Kagome.

Once and for all.

\*

Walking home slowly, his hands crammed in his pockets, Inu-Yasha couldn't help but sense something was wrong. He had long since let go of the whole thing at the talent show-

. . .Okay, so he was still recovering, but all the same-

This was something different.

Sure that if he concentrated he'd catch a whiff of something, the werewolf lifted his sensitive nose in the air-

And *\*did\** smell something.

No- not something.

Someone.

Someone that made his stomach turn in fright as he realized that Kagome was their destination.

And that someone-

Was Kikyo.

\*

It didn't take Kagome very long to realize that she was being followed, which was a good and bad thing in itself. Good that she realized it-

Bad that it was actually happening.

An eerie feeling of de ja vu was creeping over her, making her skin tingle and her hair prickle on the back of her neck. She could feel someone watching her. . .

Whipping around in the night, the girl looked hurriedly left and right for her stalker.

There was no one.

Her breath catching in her throat, the teen suddenly wished with all her heart that she had asked Inu-Yasha to walk home with her. What if it was that dog again?!

Suddenly breaking into a run, Kagome's blood turned to ice when she heard her pursuer speed up as well. `Oh, God- Dammit!' Racing down ally after ally, trying to confuse the beast so it lost her trail, Kag soon found herself cornered against a wall. Turning as quickly as she could to escape, she found it was too late.

The beast landed with a graceful thump in front of her, its midnight fur glistening in the star glow and its azure eyes glowing in the dim lights from the far-away street lamps.

Breathing heavily and shaking hard, Kagome fell to her knees, still leaning against the hard brick wall that kept her boxed in with this beast.

This was the end. . .

Rearing up on its hind legs to jump, the creature began to lunge at Kag-

But never hit her.

Looking up quickly through watery eyes, the girl heard the black thing snarl as another dog-like beast attacked it, landing in front of Kagome as if to protect her. `What. . . ?' She sniveled and cautiously began to uncurl her balled up body so as to get a better view of this animal. It looked vaguely familiar- this silver-white creature with bright amber eyes- full of cold fury at the black thing.

Sinking its hard, ivory-like teeth into the ebony dog's neck, the silver beast growled angrily, slicing wildly with its claws as it barked and snapped. Yet for all its threats and attacks the black creature wasn't frightened- for it was a good fighter as well, and quickly threw the silver dog off in order to take up the offence. Soon, blood was flying everywhere- from both creatures. Fur fell, snarls yelled, and anger at its

peak.

Finally- limping slightly and its silver fur streaked red- the second wolf detached itself from the black dog and posed, ready to fight again, in front of Kagome as the sky slowly began to lighten.

Totally beaten, oozing buckets blood, and painfully pulling itself to its feet, the midnight beast staggered off, in obviously searing pain as it disappeared into the shadows as quickly as it had come.

Sniffing the air as if to make sure that the first creature was gone, the silver dog finally allowed itself to release a weak, triumphant bark, and then slid into unconsciousness- falling to the ground with a muffled thump and a squeak. Gasping, Kagome crawled forward, worried about the fate of her savior. "Hey!" she gently tried to rouse him, gingerly touching one of his ears as his unfocused golden eyes attempted to focus. "Are you- are you okay. . .?!" Barely registering that this beast seemed to be wearing the tattered remnants of human clothing, Kagome desperately checked to see if it was still breathing- which- thankfully- it was.

Slowly wrapping her trembling arms around the dog's neck, Kag began to gently run her fingers though the creature's silky, bloody, fur. "You poor thing," she whispered softly, never once noticing the sun as it began its long, uphill climb in the gray sky.

But she did, however, notice when the beast slowly began to change, its head still in her lap.

Yes- as the first rays of sunlight hit its body, the creature's fur began to disappear.

Paws became hands, mane became hair, claws became nails. . .

And the beast became Inu-Yasha.

~\*~



## 9 - Death

As the bright, unforgiving sunrays pierced through his eyelids, Inu-Yasha felt a groan escape him. Gods, he hurt all over. . . And from the puddle he was laying in on the ground, he could tell he was still bleeding.

Damn that dog Kikyo.

He slowly opened his blurry eyes-

To see Kagome leaning over him, shaking. In fact, now that he took the time to notice, he realized his head was in her lap.

"Inu-Yasha. . ."

shoot.

Sitting up so fast that it sent a sharp pain through his back, the werewolf gazed, eye to eye, into the orbs of the trembling girl. Double shoot.

"Inu-Yasha. . . you- you were- you are-" she forced out, tears welling up in the corners of her eye as she shivered.

Inu only looked away, towards the blood covered ground. He should have known this would happen. She would never want to be with him now that she knew.

"I'm sorry," he whispered, feeling a few tears trickle down his own face. With that, he slowly got to his feet, wobbling from the searing pain shooting through his body.

But as he turned around to walk out of the ally, he felt a warm hand suddenly grab his wrist. Looking down in mild surprise, he found Kagome gazing up at him, twin rivers of liquid crystal falling down her face.

"I get it now, Inu-Yasha. . ." she whispered. "How you knew so much, why no one could know about us, why we weren't supposed to fall in love. . . It's against the rules, isn't it? There's a rule against it, isn't there?"

Inu-Yasha found himself nodding dumbly. Well, he had been right. She had put it all together herself.

He was about to turn away again when her grip on his wrist tightened. She swallowed and looked up at Inu-Yasha with eyes full of serious determination as he arched a questioning eyebrow at her.

"Make me a wolf."

\*

The werewolf stared down at the girl in utter shock. She gazed back, her eyes never wavering, and her face set.

"I want to be with you. I want to be a werewolf. Make me one. Bite me- however it works!" Kagome pleaded, tugging on his wrist until he sat down next to her.

"Haven't we already had this conversation?" he growled softly, running a hand over his face. "It's not that simple. I can't just bite you for you to become a wolf!"

"Well, you said that there were two ways. One was being born of two werewolves, and the other was. . ."

"The Trial."

"Yes, that, I'll do that!"

"No fracking way!" Inu-Yasha roared, making Kagome jump slightly. Sure, it was great to imagine that she'd want to- but allowing her to was a whole different story.

"Why not?" Kag glared, taken aback.

"Kagome, you don't seem to understand what's on the line here!" the werewolf whispered, his tone

gentling.

"Then tell me. Tell me everything."

Inu-Yasha sighed and looked up at the slowly rising sun. After a moment or two of contemplation, he found his voice and tried to explain. "Remember when I said that to be a werewolf you could be born of two werewolves?"

"Yes. . .?"

"I lied. Though it is forbidden, you could also be born of a human and a werewolf. Like me. . . Only you get added curses," the wolf chuckled darkly, indicating his now uncapped ears and thinking of the new moon.

"What does that have to do with-?"

"I'm getting to it. So I was born of a forbidden affair. Well, my mother `loved' my father. So much, she decided to take the Trial so she could become a werewolf as well."

"And?"

"She failed."

"Oh. . ."

Inu-Yasha's gaze hardened. "And so, after the Moon Goddess inflicted her punishment, the pack killed her mercilessly. Soon after that, my father was banished and killed by a pack of hunters."

Silence enveloped the pair, only being broken by the occasionally drip, drip, drip of Inu's falling blood.

"And that," the werewolf whispered, "is why you shouldn't take the Trial. You'd die."

"No I wouldn't. What are the chances of survival?"

"One out of one billion."

"Are you exaggerating?"

"No."

The look in Inu-Yasha's serious eyes told her this was the truth. And that sucked. But all the same- - -  
"Then I'll be the first in a billion," she shrugged.

"Kagome, listen to yourself!" the werewolf cried. "You're talking like this is a game! It's not! I don't want to lose you!"

"And I don't want to lose you!" Kagome replied heatedly, tears beginning to fall down her cheeks again as she slammed her fist on the ground to emphasize her words. "I love you too much! I WILL take the Trial, and you can't stop me!"

Inu-Yasha gazed into her determined eyes. There was nothing he could do. . .

He bit his lip as a single tear ran down his cheek.

"I love you too. . ."

Kagome smiled a watery smile before pressing her lips to his, ignoring the blood that stained her clothes as they kissed.

She wouldn't fail.

She would become a werewolf.

She loved him.

\*

In the lobby of the werewolf's apartment complex, Kouga and a few of the other high-ranking wolves in the clan were discussing the next full moon, when they were interrupted by a disturbance outside. Glancing up while getting a cup of water from the cooler, Sessho-Maru was fortunate enough to see a heavily wounded Kikyo wobbling up to the apartment door, but collapse on the ground before she could make it inside.

"God gods," he breathed, making the other wolves jump as he strode quickly for the door, opening it and carrying Kikyo inside, water forgotten.

"Wha- -By the goddess!" Kouga exclaimed as he ran up to Kikyo. "Kikyo! Are you all right?! What happened?!"

Sessho-Maru gently placed Kikyo on a couch in the lobby, ignoring the blood that was already seeping into the upholstery as worthless flaps of her skin revealed damaged organs.

"Inu. . . Yas. . . Sha. . ." Kikyo panted out, wincing in pain as her naked body convulsed.

Kouga growled, pushing a few of her stray, silky tresses behind her ears. "Inu-Yasha?! Did he attack you?! Why tha-"

Sessho-Maru put up a hand. "Let her speak."

Kikyo nodded weakly in thanks and continued as her breathing became more difficult. "Him. . . Him and. . . a human. . . He. . . attacked me. . . because he. . ."

The pack gazed in shock as Kikyo slowly closed her eyes. "Because. . . he loves. . . a human."

With that, her slow, raspy breaths stopped coming all together; her pale skin all but completely bloodless.

"Kikyo? Kikyo!" Kouga screamed in her ear, shaking her body. But. . .

"It's no use," Kaede whispered softly, placing her hand over the leader's.

She was dead.

\*

Breaking the kiss, Inu-Yasha slowly stood.

"Don't leave. . ." Kagome whimpered softly, dying inside as she noted how much pain he was in.

"I'm sorry," he whispered, kissing her forehead. "But. . . I'll need to talk to the clan. If you are to take the Trial. . ." his voice trailed off.

Understanding, the girl nodded and stood herself, silently watching her love limp away, towards the apartments.

\*

Sessho-Maru silently took a blanket from the closet and placed it over the girl, tucking the cloth neatly around her form.

"We can cremate her before the rising of the new moon," Jaken, who always followed Sessho-Maru, put in helpfully.

"She would appreciate that," Kaede nodded mournfully, biting her lip. "Don't you think so, Kouga?"

But Kouga wasn't listening.

Instead, hands clenched, he was glaring out the window, as if daring Inu-Yasha to come home.

"First he kills five humans, then a pack member, and finally. . . He falls in love with a human."

The rest of the members gathered growled in response.

"For this," Kouga continued softly, "for this. . . INU-YASHA WILL DIE."

~\*~

## 10 - fighting the odds

~\*~

Kagome slid down the ally wall as Inu-Yasha disappeared from view, slowly closing her weary eyes. She had never been more afraid in her life.

But not for herself-

For Inu-Yasha.

He was hurt so badly. . .

With a trembling finger she traced her mouth, where she could still feel his warm lips. Though her clothes were now soaked in his blood, there had been no blood in their kiss.

That was good.

At least there was no internal bleeding.

As of now.

`But for how long?' the girl sighed, scrunching into a fetal position. `When his `pack' or whatever finds him. . . they're going to get suspicious. That was another wolf that attacked me, I'm sure of it. What if that other wolf died? Won't Inu-Yasha get in trouble?'

She wiped a tear from her eye before it could fall down her cheek. `Well, he's always in trouble one way or another. . .'

With a small smile, trying to convince herself that he would be okay, Kagome got shakily to her feet and walked home- intent on taking a bath before Inu-Yasha came to get her for the Trial.



\*

"There he is!" someone screamed as Inu-Yasha approached the apartment complex. The werewolf smirked to himself. He had expected a greeting like this, having known that he had given Kikyo a few fatal blows.

However, he hadn't any idea that his secret had been betrayed.

"Murderer!" one of the younger werewolf's cried as Inu stepped into the lobby. He was slightly surprised to find the whole clan waiting.

"So?" Inu-Yasha grunted. "She attacked me, too."

"But you didn't die!" the child squeaked back.

"Well he's gonna," Kouga growled, cracking his knuckles.

The were-teen raised an amused eyebrow, cockiness taking over once again. "For bringing down one slutty dog?"

"No. For falling in love with a human."

Before these words could even register properly, the silver haired werewolf found himself being tackled on all sides by the pack officials.

Quickly dodging every blow, Kouga's words finally took effect.

His eyes widening, Inu-Yasha slammed his fist into one of the attacking wolf's faces, causing them to fall into instant unconsciousness.

"Who told. . .?" Inu ground out carefully, glaring icily at the assembled pack as the attackers took a subconscious step back.

Many of the "people, too, began to back away slightly.

"Kikyo did," Sessho-Maru replied smoothly, directly behind the silver haired teen. Startled by his half brother's sudden presence, Inu-Yasha was barely able to dodge Sessho-Maru's claws.

"Will you let me explain?!" the teen cried as more werewolves pressed in, courage renewed. "She wan-"

But he was cut off by a swift kick in the stomach from Kouga.

Knocked to the ground and panting, the teen wolf glared up at the pack leader, ignoring the blood dripping from his mouth. Running his tongue over his teeth, he tried to remain calm.

Well.

If they wouldn't listen standing up. . .

They'd have to listen from the floor.

They were going down.

\*

Sango and Miroku watched, terrified, as their friend began fighting the twenty-odd werewolves who's intent was to killing him.

"We've got to do something!" Sango whispered frantically from the back of the room, tugging on Miroku's sleeve as she pointed at Inu-Yasha. "He's badly wounded as it is!"

"There's nothing we can do," Miroku replied solemnly, his eyes never leaving his friend. "But he can do it. . ." Taking Sango's hand and squeezing it gently in reassurance, the two watched Inu-Yasha fight the pack- and the odds.

\*

Kagome- washed, dried, and dressed- sat quietly on her window seat, watching and waiting for any sign of Inu-Yasha. Gods, she hoped he was okay. . .

"Whatcha doin'?" Sota chirped happily from her doorway.

"Nothing," Kagome murmured, only half paying attention as she watched a happy couple stroll hand in hand down the street. She shut the blinds for a moment- - - and then reluctantly peered through them.

"I doubt that. Are you okay? You haven't been to the library in ages," her little brother mentioned mildly, crunching on an apple.

"The librarian Kaede closed it for a while. Mentioned some family problems. . ." Kagome replied softly, her gaze still out the window.

"Oh. Well, it's time for lunch. You coming?"

Kagome didn't move.

"Kagome?"

She still made no attempt to get up.

"Kagome, are you hurt?!" Sota gasped, about to rush over to his elder sibling- - -

When the girl finally stood.

Silently and mechanically, she walked over to the boy and stared down at him, unseeingly. He swallowed, nervous. `Is she mad. . . Ack!' Tensing as she gently took hold of his shoulders, Sota blinked in surprise as she carefully wheeled him into the hall and shut the door with a small click, indicating that she'd locked him out.

The little boy stood, confused, staring at the closed door in front of him.

`What's with her? . . . Ah well, more pudding for me, then!' he concluded happily before racing

downstairs to eat.

\*

Panting, bleeding, and barely able to stand, Inu-Yasha balanced himself on his feet, amidst piles of unconscious bodies. The werewolves that had decided not to fight took a second fearful step back.

All, that is, except Miroku and Sango.

They came running up to help their friend.

Coughing up blood, the silver haired teen fell to his knees once more, trying to keep the world from spinning. Too. . . much. . . blood loss. . .

"Stupid. . . puppy," Kouga grunted as he slowly woke up and began crawling towards Inu.

"LISTEN," Inu-Yasha panted roughly before the wolf leader could attack again. "She- she wants to- to take the Trial. . ."

This stopped Kouga in his tracks.

As it did to Sango, Miroku, and all the others there.

"The. . . The Trial?" Sango gasped, her hold on Miroku's hand tightening. "But- but- but she'll be killed!"

"All the better," Kouga chuckled darkly, a small smirk on his face. "For the crime of falling for a werewolf- and of a werewolf falling for a human- it seems only right their "love" be put through this ultimate test. Then she can die the same way your mother did, hmm, Inu-Yasha?" the leader taunted softly, causing a low snarl from the were-teen. "Let the Moon Goddess make her judgment!"

The conscious members of the pack all cried their approval.

"Until the full moon, then," Kouga smirked, nodding at the others.

"I'll go tell her," Inu-Yasha muttered more to himself than anyone else- but was cut off by a heavy blow over the head from Kouga.

"No. You'll stay here until the Trial," the leader said softly as Inu blacked out. "For we can't trust you anymore."

\*

Inu-Yasha awoke to find himself locked in the apartment basement. `Damn!' he cursed mentally, rubbing his sore head. He already knew the door would be bolted- trapping him in this slimy, grimy, pitch-black excuse for a storage room. Not that it mattered- he doubted he could stand anyway. And from the looks of things, he wouldn't be helped out of here until the full moon. But how would Kagome know what was going on if he couldn't tell her? Would she be mad at him for not showing up again until late that month? Would she still want to take the Trial- still love him?

Listing every profanity he knew under his breath, Inu-Yasha allowed himself to slip back into unconsciousness, knowing full well there was nothing that could stop it from happening- and no reason for him to try.

\*

As night fell, Kagome's dull hopes burnt out.

`Where is he?' she thought sadly, choking on tears as she closed her curtains. `Where could he be?! Is he okay?!' He. . . he couldn't have. . . have di- - -

A sudden knocking on the front door caused the girl's eyes to widen.

`Inu-Yasha?!'

Bolting into the hall, the girl raced down the steps at the speed of light, only to throw open the door and find herself face to face with-

"Sango?"

The were-teen nodded, looking grim.

"May I come in, Kagome-chan?"

"Of course," Kagome murmured, slightly disappointed that she wasn't Inu-Yasha, but glad that she wasn't Kikyo. Pulling the wooden barrier open a bit more, Kag watched silently as the second female let herself in. And then the two stood silently in the foyer for a moment, waiting for the other to speak. Finally, Sango rose to the challenge.

"I need to talk to you about Inu-Yasha, Kagome. Perhaps we should talk in your room. . .?" Sango whispered, not wanting to be overheard. Nodding, Kag quietly led Sango to her room, re-locking the door behind them.

"What's going on, Sango?" Kagome whispered, her hands still on the door knob as the other girl flopped unceremoniously onto the bed. "Be honest with me."

Sango bit her lip. "Things are not good."

Not. . . good. . . ?

"No, REALLY?!" the black haired girl couldn't help but snap as she whipped around to glare at her friend. "Tell me another!"

"Calm down," Sango soothed, unaffected by the yelling.

Tears began welling in the corners of Kagome's eyes again as all her angry energy vanished, replaced by a jelly-like nothingness in his knees and her heart. "Will I - - I ever see him again?"

"Of course you will," the brown haired teen whispered, opening her arms for Kagome. Kag paused for a moment, considering- - -

And then threw herself, sobbing, into the hug.

"I'm so worried about him, Sango. . ." she admitted tearfully, snuffling pathetically as her friend ran her

hands through her hair in a sisterly fashion.

"He's worried about you, too. . ."

"Then why isn't he here?!" Kagome glared through her sadness.

The were-girl sighed. "Kouga had him locked in the basement until the full moon. He wants your trust in Inu-Yasha to snap before the Trial takes place. Neither knows I'm here."

Kagome nodded slowly. "How are his injuries. . .?"

Sango's grim look darkened. "Not good. He got beaten up pretty badly in a fight against the pack officials. . . But he's alive. He'll heal. Don't worry."

"How can I not worry?!" Kag practically screamed. "He's hurt! He could be dying!"

"Come the full moon, so could you!" Sango replied, fear in her eyes. "Kagome-chan, are you sure you-"

"I am sure, Sango," Kagome cut off swiftly. "I love him, and for him I'll fight the odds."

". . ."

The werewolf took a deep breath and nodded, slowly getting up. It was no use fighting. . . "If that's what you want. . . then I wish you the best of luck. You know I'll be rooting for you."

The girls smiled at each other before Sango briskly took her leave, exiting without another word. Kagome listened intently until she heard the downstairs door close quietly. She was gone. . .

Flopping back on her bed, the teen carefully picked up her picture of Inu-Yasha and hugged it close to her heart.

'I love you, Inu-Yasha. . .'

\*

The month passed slowly.

Day after day, Kagome tore through books on werewolves, trying to find something about the Trial to help her and Inu-Yasha. Night after night, she watched the moon ever-so-slowly transform into a large, round orb.

The full moon seemed to take an eternity to arrive.

But finally. . .

It did.

\*

Inu-Yasha could sense it, feel it- the full moon was here. His wounds had just about healed- but thanks to the frackin' poison Sessho-Maru had hid in Inu's soup a few days earlier- they hadn't completely shut.

"Damn you, Sessho-Maru," Inu-Yasha hissed into the cold blackness of the cellar. "You and your scentless poison."

"Now, is that anyway to speak of your brother?" a calm voice echoed through the basement.

The teen wolf glared up the steps and at the opened door, where his accursed brother stood calmly, small smirk on his face. "It's time," the older male informed simply. "You coming or not?"

"Of course I am, bastard," Inu snarled, slowly getting to his feet. It took a few moments of wobbling, but eventually the boy found his balance and began heading up the steps.

"When can I go get Kagome?" Inu-Yasha asked quietly, his voice rather raw from its lack of use- excepting the times he had screamed insults at random members of the pack.

"You will not be getting her," Sessho-Maru replied coolly, pushing Inu-Yasha past a mirror and towards



the garage. "Sango will be."

The silver haired teen was able to get a glance of himself as they passed the looking glass- and he had never looked worse. His skin was icy white from lack of sun, and his eyes had gaunt yellow rings around them. Bruises were still adorning his face like purple patches, and his hair was so sooty it took on a gray color. His clothes were messy from mud and blood, and his claws were chipped. He was a mess.

But at least he would get to see Kagome.

As he was pushed into the back of an unfamiliar car, the teen werewolf only had one thought in his mind: He hoped she was all right.

\*

Kagome nearly jumped a foot in the air when she heard the knocking on the door.

"Seriously, Kagome, dear," her mother chided gently, walking in from the kitchen with a laugh. "You're only going to a sleep over- not death row."

Kag gave her mother a weak smile. "Ha ha. I know." If only her mom did. . . As the teen opened the door, Sango entered and gave her and her mother a fake, chipper smile.

"Kagome-chan!" she beamed, grabbing the empty bag that Kagome had near her feet. "Ready to party tonight?"

Kagome grinned. "Heck yeah."

The ebony haired girl turned to her mother, knowing full well that she would probably never see her again. Her heart all but shattered on the spot. "Bye mama," she whispered, trying not to choke on tears as she gave her mother a hug.

"Have a good time sweetie," her mother smiled, kissing her daughter on the head. "I'll see you in the morning."

"Yeah- See ya, Kag!" Sota smiled. "I'm gonna eat all the rest of the pudding, by the way."

"You do that," Kagome smiled softly. "Bye."

And with that, she silently followed Sango to the car.

\*

Twenty minutes later, the pack and Kagome walked into a large, open field; a place where the late afternoon sun had cast long, dark shadows over the ankle high yellow grass. In the middle of the expanse of grass, the pack fanned out into a large circle, Kouga and Kagome in the center. Kag had already looked desperately around for Inu-Yasha, but he was no where to be seen.

"Tonight," Kouga cried into the silent crowd gathered, "this mortal takes the Trial! But first- preparations."

At this the girls of the pack stood up, nodding silently to one another as Kag noticed a sudden flash of white from the corner of her eye.

It was Inu-Yasha.

But before she could do or say anything, the female wolves pushed Kagome away, towards a small trailer at the far edge of the field.

The Trial was growing nearer.

\*

Inu-Yasha watched as Kagome was dragged off with the other dogs, towards the small mobile home where she would be `purified' and all that shoot. She didn't NEED to be purified. . . She was already the purest person he had ever met.

Flopping down in a huff in his place in the circle, the silver hared teen sighed and looked up at the dark blue autumn sky. Usually he would be anxiously waiting for the moon to rise at this time- but tonight, because of the Trial,- no one would be transforming until after Kagome was judged.

Many of the pups were growing bored- taking out dolls and yo-yos and books. One child had a CD player, but Kouga had snatched it away, saying they could have it back later. Inu-Yasha sighed, his worries for Kagome eating away at him from the inside.

So this was hell.

\*

From inside the trailer, Kagome could see the sky was slowly darkening.

"Won't you guys change into wolves when the- ow!- moon rises?" Kagome asked as one of the females ran a brush through her hair.

The girls shook their heads.

"Why?"

They watched her blankly.

"You're not allowed to talk to me, right?" Kag sighed.

The woman brushing Kagome's hair nodded.

"All right then, I'll guess. You're not going to be transforming tonight, will you?"

The females shook their heads no.

"Because I'm taking the trial?"

Unanimous nod yes.

Kag sighed as the girls handed her a silky, white-silver robe.

This was going to be a long night. . .

\*

Kagome examined herself in the mirror, a bit surprised. She had been expecting rags and bruises, not this. . .

She was dressed in the white-silver robe, which flowed around her like water, hugging her in all the right places. On her feet she wore matching slipper-like shoes and pearl anklets. Her wrists were bedecked in pearl bracelets and she wore a pearl circlet over her tumbling ebony hair. Her hair, eyelids, and cheeks sparkled with a dusting of glitter, and her lips were painted with a pale, frosted pink color.

She looked lovely.

'At least I'll die looking nice,' Kag sighed as the females around her bustled about, applying the final touches of makeup and tying a silver-colored sash around her waist. Finally, the were-girls slowly poured out of the trailer, leaving Kag alone.

Well, almost alone.

Kagome was just about to get off of her chair when she felt a hand on her shoulder.

Turning her head, Kag found herself staring into Sango's eyes.

"San-?"

But before the charcoal haired teen could finish, Sango swiftly bent down and began whispering in her ear.

"Don't turn away

Don't give into the pain

Don't try to hide

Though they're screaming your name

Don't close your eyes

God know what lies behind them

Don't turn out the lights

Never sleep- never die."

With that, the woman whirled around and glided out of the trailer, her hair billowing out behind her as she made her swift exit.

Kagome gaped after her friend as she left.

What did she mean?

`Well,' the girl reasoned, sliding off her seat and cautiously opening the door, `I'll think about it later.' With that, Kagome stepped out of the trailer and into the twilight- where the pack was assembled, waiting for her. Swallowing hard, Kag stepped gracefully down the stairs, slowly gliding towards the wolves.

Earlier in the month she had told Sango that for Inu-Yasha, she'd fight the odds.

And that was what she planned to do.

~\*~

## 11 - blood-stained knife

Are you ready?" Kouga's deep, growling voice echoed through the night. Kagome swallowed as the sky painted the world a dark navy blue.

"Yes."

\*

The pack stood in a circle around Kagome and Kouga again- only this time, the wolves were holding hands and wearing circlets of thorns and pearls. All was silent. Not even the wind whispered its usual haunting melodies.

"Kagome Higarashi," Kouga bellowed into the darkness. "Soon the Moon Goddess will rise. Are you ready to be tested by her?"

"Yes," Kag replied, her voice bold in order to hide her fears. She tried not to tremble.

"Then come."

With those simple words, the black locked girl followed the pack leader quietly up to a cliff, the pack trailing dutifully behind them. A slight breeze began blowing as they made their way. It felt almost ominous as it rustled the leafless fall trees.

"It's time," Kouga whispered softly as the pack watched the large, full, silver moon begin to rise on the horizon, reflecting mystically in the ocean.

That said, the clan backed away, disappearing into the darkness.

And Kagome was left alone.

\*

Trying to keep her breaths steady, Kag examined the view from the cliff. It was beautiful. Sea, sky, stars. . . and of course the splendid moon. She watched silently as that orb rose for a few moments, before she realized that she should be doing something.

But what?

Biting her lip, Kag sank slowly to her knees, her gaze still on the moon.

'They continually refer to her as the Moon Goddess. . .' she thought, 'Perhaps. . . I should pray to her. . .?'

It seemed logical enough. . .

Clasping her hands together, Kagome placed them near her heart.

"Moon Goddess. . ." she whispered, feeling incredibly stupid and exceedingly frightened all at once, "p-please help me. . . Help me become a werewolf. . . So that I can live with Inu-Yasha for the rest of my life. . ."

Kag shut her eyes tightly, blocking out tears as she became more engrossed with her prayer.

"I really, really love him, Moon Goddess. And this. . . this is the only way. . . Please, please help. . ."

A soft wind began to swirl around the cliff- a gentle breeze that smelt of roses.

Wait.

Roses. . . ? This late in the year? It was the middle of autumn- no roses could still be alive! Snapping her eyes open, Kagome looked quickly around for the source of the scent.

As first there was nothing but darkness to be seen. But then. . .

Slowly, very slowly, a tangle of rose vines began to grow- spouting and twisting and blooming at an

incredible rate- right before Kag's eyes. Two of the many thick, green vines gently wrapped themselves around Kagome's trembling arms and carefully lifted her to her feet, before uncurling themselves from her limbs. Trembling and gasping for breath, the teen walked cautiously over to examine one of the surrounding entanglements.

Were they roses plants. . . ? Yes. All of the vines were suddenly adorned in the most beautiful roses she had ever seen. Milky white with a silver shine, the flowers felt like silk under Kag's gingerly shaking fingers. Their pollen seemed to ooze from their centers as sparkling glitter, and dewdrops shimmered on their leaves like diamonds.

"These. . . can't be real. . ." the teen whispered breathlessly.

"Oh, but they are," replied a cheerful, echoing voice.

Whirling around, Kagome looked up towards the moon- where it sounded as if the voice was coming from.

And it was.

In a way.

But instead of there being a moon anymore, there was a girl. No, a woman. A young woman that slowly began to descend downwards, gracefully soaring towards the cliff where Kagome stood. Subconsciously taking a frightened step back, Kag tried her best not to faint as the female's dainty feet touched the ground.

"I'm not going to bite," she whispered softly, her gentle, melodic voice echoing mysteriously over the cliff.

The teen glanced fearfully up at the second before gasping.

She was beautiful.

Slightly taller than Kagome, the girl had a pale, slender body of milky white skin. Her eyes were midnight blue, and her hair a silver blonde that faded to the darkest of blacks as it flowed behind her; which it seemed to do without any wind. She wore a billowing silver white robe that flowed like mist around her, and she seemed to give off a soft glow- much like moon light.



But no matter how beautiful and kind she seemed, Kag wanted to act upon her first instincts.

Run.

Hide.

Slam her eyes shut and pray this was all a dream.

But something in the back of her mind commanded that she do none of that.

The woman- no, goddess- took a step forward, her footfalls completely silent- as if she didn't touch the earth at all.

"So, Kagome," the goddess smiled, walking once around the black haired girl as if to examine her. "You want to be a wolf. . ."

"Yes," Kag replied shakily. "I d- Wait. You know my name?!"

She laughed as the roses bent and snapped to move along with her. "Of course I know you're name. I know all my children's names."

"C. . . Children?"

Smiling, the goddess tapped the skin right over the teen's heart. "Is that hard to believe. . . ?" Gasping, Kagome glanced down to find her birthmark glowing through the fabric of her robe.

"I'm. . .?"

The woman walked back over to her original spot on the edge of the cliff, still smiling. "One of my many children. This stems the magic that Inu-Yasha senses from you, and your ability to shake off mind control."

It took a moment for all of this to sink in.

"But what about my mother?" Kag asked silently a moment later. "Isn't she-?"

"She is still your mother, and your father is still your father. You are my child as well, though, because there is a little of me in you. It more like a blessing," the goddess kindly explained to the confused teen. "You felt the need to be special- you are. You felt a connection to the wolves- whom are all my children as well."

"So Inu-Yasha. . . is my sibling?!" the teen gaped, appalled. That would. . . really suck.

The goddess laughed, the sweet sound of her voice reverberating through the night.

"No, none of the wolves are your siblings. This is complicated magic, Kagome. I don't expect you to fully understand it."

Kag nodded slowly. That was good. . . seeing as how she DIDN'T understand.

"So. . .I am your daughter?"

The goddess nodded. "More like an adoptive mother, really. But there is a little of me in you."

"Well," Kagome continued feeling slightly excited. "If I'm more or less your daughter, can you make me a werewolf so I can be with Inu-Yasha?"

The beautiful woman's smile saddened slightly. "Sorry. I don't do favors."

Kag's face fell.

"But I am here to help."

The teen looked up at the goddess. "Really?"

"Yes."

"Then what do I do?"

"It's simple," the Moon Goddess explained, waving her hand in the air.

From out of no where, moon light mist collected and formed a knife. Grasping the off white handle, the goddess handed the weapon to her daughter.

"You must offer yourself to the woods, so that your blood may be filled with the wildness of nature."

". . . What?!" Kagome blinked, grasping the blade in one hand and looking blankly at the goddess. "How am I to do that?"

"However you feel you are supposed to."

This answer didn't help much.

Looking down at the knife in her hands, Kag thought about what she had to do. Offer herself- her blood- to nature. . . Like, cut herself and give it to the woods in buckets?

Somehow, that didn't seem quite right.

Maybe. . .

If she cut herself and pressed it to the forest floor. . .

Determination shining in her eyes, Kagome squeezed the weapon's handle tightly-

Before slitting her wrists.

Letting a hiss of pain escape her lips, the teen sank down to her knees, ignoring the spurting blood that was drenching her robes. `And white is so hard to clean, too,' she couldn't help but muse dryly.

Quickly pressing her bleeding wrists to the forest floor, she gasped as the hurt all but disappeared.

Only to be replaced by a searing pain that was ten times stronger. It felt as if large, twisting vines had crawled into her blood stream, curling and unfurling as they took over her body.

Sweating hard and attempting not to cry, Kagome tried to keep her eyes open as this was all going on, attempting to keep the blackness from swallowing her.

And finally, the pain stopped.

Clammy and cold, Kag slowly pulled her wrists off the ground. They were still bleeding slightly and were caked in dirt, but they didn't hurt.

Was the worst over?

"Am I . . . a wolf now?" Kagome whispered softly, her voice still shaking.

She saw a delicate foot fall in front of her. Looking up, she blearily registered the goddess looking down at her.

"Am I?" Kag repeated, scrabbling to her feet and ignoring the pain that shot through her form from moving too fast.

Her mother made no reply.

And then-

"This is where the mistakes are made."

The teen raised an eyebrow.

What did she mean?

"You have two choices, Kagome. One- believe you are now a wolf, go back, and try to transform to prove it. Two- believe that your judgment is not over yet and figure out what to do next."

"Which is the right thing to do?"

"Decide and then I will tell you which was correct. If you are wrong. . . I have to kill you."

Kag was silent for a moment as she looked down at her wrists.

It had hurt so much. . .

It would be so much easier to believe that was all she had to go through, ignore any future pain further testing could bring.

But what if there was more to becoming a wolf? What if she wasn't one now? She didn't feel any different. . . Wouldn't she feel a bit different if she was now a werewolf? Besides, that test had been rather simple. . . Painful, but rather simple. If that was all one had to do, then why were the chances of survival of this Trial one in one billion?

The teen took a shaky breath, knowing that if she answered wrong both she and Inu-Yasha's fates were decided.

"I. . . I. . . I choose. . . the second choice."

\*

Sango watched the moonless sky silently, fear for her friend making her tremble.

"It'll be okay, Sango," Miroku whispered in her ear, hugging her close in reassurance as they bluntly ignored Kikyo's funeral service- and the crackling burn of the dead wolf's flesh.

The were-girl's eyes filled with tears, but she refused to let them fall. She had to be strong. For Inu-Yasha, for Kagome. Miroku was right, after all. . . `She can do it,' Sango told herself firmly as she

watched Inu-Yasha from the corner of her eye.

He was standing a little ways away, as close to the cliff as was allowed. His eyes never wavered from the trees, where eventually Kag would emerge-

Either as a victor or a failure.

Time passed slowly.

When would she come. . . ?

\*

Kagome took a shaky breath and tightened her grip on the knife. `Did I make the right decision?'

The goddess watched her daughter blankly for a moment and then spoke. "Touch the sharp end of the knife."

Confused but knowing better than to disobey, Kag did as she was told. And nothing happened.

". . . What did I do that for?" the teen asked the deity, slightly annoyed.

"To answer your own question. The blade of that knife is made of silver. Were you burnt?"

Kagome shook her head slowly no, flexing her fingers.

"Then you are not yet a wolf."

Kag released a soft sigh as she let her arm drop to her side. So she wasn't going to die. . .

Yet.

"So I made the right choice?"

The goddess nodded. "Most do not. They are afraid of pain- as if physical pain is worse than emotional."

Kagome was silent for a moment.

"Is that why Inu-Yasha's mother was killed? Did she make the wrong decision?"

Giving her a swift look up and down, the Moon Goddess finally replied. ". . . Yes. And then the wilderness in her blood attacked her, ripping her insides apart before the pack killed her off completely."

Kag bit her lip, deciding that was all she wanted to know. Besides, more pressing matters were now at hand.

"What do I do next?"

"You figure out and compete what this riddle is trying to tell you," the goddess replied solemnly, looking her daughter straight in the eye.

Kagome nodded.

"It's what you taste when you're together

It's what is flowing through you now

You must taste it from each other

And trust you'll make it through somehow.

Literally break it-

The essential symbol of a lover.

Before you inflict the same to you

For then you'll always have the other."

With this said, the rose-smelling wind began to blow once more, swirling around Kagome and the Moon Goddess, making their hair fly in all directions.

"But I don't-!"

"Think, Kagome. Good luck," the goddess smiled, closing her lightly powdered eyes.

And then she was gone.

All that was left of her were a few shimmering rose petals that slowly floated to the ground as the wind died.

Kagome was alone once more.

\*

It all clicked at once.

The knife fell to the ground with a muffled thud.

"No. . ." Kagome whispered softly, slowly sinking to her knees as the riddle made sense. "No. . ."

Tears began to well up in her eyes.

She couldn't do it- But she had to. To be with Inu-Yasha. . .

She had to.



Picking up the knife again with shaking hands, Kagome slowly made her way down the cliff as the moon rose to the middle of the dark sky.

\*

"Hey! There she is!" a random pack member cried, pointing to the dark silhouette of a girl walking through the woods.

"Kagome!" Sango yelled, ripping herself out of Miroku's arms. But the girl did not reply to anyone who called out her name.

She had to ignore them.

She had to complete her task.

"Kagome. . ." Inu-Yasha whispered, rushing up to the girl before she had made it completely to him. "I'm so sorry I wasn't there for you. . . I. . . I. . ."

Kag looked up at him with wide, tear filled eyes. "Inu-Yasha?"

"Yes. . .?"

"Do. . . do you trust me?"

Inu was slightly surprised by this question, but shook it off. "Of course I trust you. I trust you completely."

The girl looked down at the knife still in her hands.

"Then please. . . trust my actions," she whispered, tears falling from her eyes and landing with soft splashes on the knife.

With a trembling hand, Kagome raised the knife and made a small, shallow cut on Inu-Yasha's bottom lip before doing the same thing to herself.

"Kagome. . .?" he cocked his head, bewildered as he instinctively draping his arms around her waist.

"Trust me," she murmured softly- - before pressing her lips to his in a gentle kiss- a kiss sweet with the bitter, metallic taste of their blood. She allowed him to deepen it slightly, savoring the feel of his tongue against her own in overwhelming sadness. But eventually they had to pull apart, and when that happened Kag instantly stepped closer; wrapping her arms tightly around his torso. Somewhere deep inside him, Inu knew what was going on- but he didn't care.

\*Hold on to me love

You know I can't stay long

All I wanted to say was I love you and I'm not afraid

Can you hear me?

Can you feel me in your arms?\*

"I'm so sorry, Inu-Yasha," the girl murmured softly, pulling slightly away.

"It's all right," he whispered back, kissing her tears away.

Staring deep into his eyes, Kag raised the knife and brought it down again-

Right into Inu-Yasha's heart.

\*Holding my last breath

Safe inside myself

Are all my thoughts of you

Sweet raptured light

It ends here tonight\*

The werewolves that had been rushing over to see Kag stopped in their tracks, horrified by the sight before them. As the girl ripped the weapon from his chest, the werewolf fell to his knees- the pain intense as she stood over him; blade still raised as it dripped eerily, droplets of his own essence splattering on top of his head. They stayed like that for an eternity of seconds before time started up again.

"Inu-Yasha," Kagome finally breathed, pathetically sinking to her knees next to him as she helped him lie down. "I'm sorry, so sorry. . ."

Inu was breathing hard, his blood seeping through his clothes and pooling up beside the pair.

\*I'll miss the winter

A world of fragile things

Look for me in the white forest

Hiding in a hollow tree (come and find me)\*

"Kagome. . ." the silver haired werewolf choked hoarsely, looking up at the sobbing girl though half lidded, unfocussed eyes. "I. . . understand. . ."

The girl bit her lip as tears continued to fall down her face.

"I. . .trust you. . . I love you. . ."

\*I know you hear me

I can taste it in your tears!

Holding my last breath

Safe inside myself

Are all my thoughts of you

Sweet raptured light

It ends here tonight\*

"I love you too, Inu-Yasha. . . Forever," Kagome promised forcefully, ignoring the blood that was soaking her clothes. Inu-Yasha smiled slightly through his pain.

"I . . . know. . ."

\*Closing your eyes to disappear

You pray your dreams will leave you here

But still you wake and know the truth

No one's there!\*

"See. . . you soon, Kagome. . ." the werewolf whispered as his eyes fluttered shut.

\*Say goodnight

Don't be afraid

Calling me, calling me as you

Fade to black\*

He was dead.

She had killed him, but he still trusted her- loved her.

Gods, she loved him!

Crying so hard that the ground around her was slowly becoming mud, Kagome raised the knife once more, whole body convulsing with shivers.

Time to complete this stupid Trial!

With one swift movement, Kag pierced the blood stained knife through her own heart.

She was dead in an instant.

\*(Say goodnight)

Holding my last breath

(Don't be afraid)

Safe inside my self

Are all my thoughts of you

Sweet raptured light\*

The werewolves stood, frozen in their spots, as Kagome released her last gasp of air- landing gently on top of Inu-Yasha as her blood mixed with his, her ocean eyes blank; her tears finally dry.

That was it.

The Trial was over.

\*It ends here tonight\*

## 12 - winter's gentle snow

~\*~

The werewolves stood, stock still, as they stared at the dead couple.

"Oh. . . my. . . God. . ." Sango finally choked out, falling to her knees as tears began pouring down her own face. "They. . . they. . ."

"They passed. . ." Kouga whispered breathlessly, his eyes wide in astonishment as he stared at the nightmare before him.

"PASSED?!" the were-girl screeched, having to use all her self control not to attack the pack leader. "WHAT THE FRACKING HELL DO YOU MEAN, PASSED?! THEY'RE \*DEAD\* DAMMIT!"

"They passed," repeated a calm, melodic voice.

`Wha- - -?!

The pack whipped around just in time to see a woman emerging from the woods, a silver glow around her as the trees bent out of her way. Her hair and robes billowed majestically behind her as she walked, fading into the night.

"Moon Goddess. . ." the wolves whispered as one, falling to their knees in an instant.

But the goddess paid them no attention.

Silently gliding past the wolves, the scent of roses following her, she stopped in front of Kagome and Inu-Yasha, dead in each other's arms.

"M-M-Moon Goddess?" Sango asked quietly, positive that she was breaking some kind of rule, but not caring, "Did they. . . did they really. . . pass?"

The goddess said nothing as she silently raised her hands. As she did, the two teens floated a few inches away from each other, landing softly in their mixed blood, straight, still and stiff.

"Inu-Yasha, Kagome. . ." the deity smiled gently, her voice echoing through the field, "your love has passed the test. Kagome, you went through both physical and emotional pain, showing that love is never easy. And Inu-Yasha, you trusted Kagome enough to let her kill you. Love must always be trusting. For without trust, one falls easily to the glamour of lies and deceit."

The goddess lifted her hands again, only this time, the pool of blood underneath the pair rose, twisting and swirling into two small, typhoon-like ribbons; wrapping themselves around the boy and girl before entering their bodies- and their blood stream.

"I get it. . ." Miroku whispered, more to himself than anyone else. "Their blood had to be shed in order for Kagome to become a wolf. . . It needed to combine. . ."

"What?" Sango breathed, nonplussed. "But didn't that already happen when she offered her blood to?"

"No. She'd need the wilderness for the wolf to accept her, and without the wolf, the wilderness would tear her up from inside. But they never mentioned how you received the wolf portion of the blood- this is the way. Their blood mixed when it was spilt, so some of Inu-Yasha's wolf blood now runs in Kagome's veins."

"And vice versa?"

"Yes. But it doesn't matter- Inu-Yasha's already got human in him anyhow."

The couple then observed the goddess in silence with the rest of the kneeling pack; unsure of what to say anymore- or how to feel.

Bringing her arms up a little higher as the astonished clan watched, the goddess raised the wolf and her daughter a few inches off the ground, dangling them like puppets on strings.

Still smiling, the deity then touched her lips to her palm, sending both boy and girl air kisses. When the rose scented breeze touched their bodies, their wounds were instantly healed. The knife still lodged in Kagome's heart disintegrated like mist, and their pale skin became flushed with life- even Inu's bruises disappeared.

"Breathe," the goddess commanded gently, flicking her wrists and causing twin balls of silver light to form in her palm. Flying directly into Inu and Kag's hearts, the pair opened their eyes and gasped for breath as soon as the orbs touched them.

"Wh- what?" Kagome whispered in confusion as both she and Inu-Yasha were gently brought back to earth, their feet touching the ground lightly. "We're. . . alive?"

She turned to face an equally amazed Inu-Yasha, pools of happy, crystal liquid slipping down her cheeks. "Inu-Yasha!" she gasped, twirling around. "We're alive!"

He beamed at her and opened his arms, laughing as she pounced on him, knocking them both to the ground.

They were alive.

They were healed.

They were together.

\*



The pack and the goddess watched the lovers happy reunion in a smiling silence.

"Well, I must go now," the goddess murmured softly, turning to the pack. "Treat my daughter well."

Kouga's eyes widened. "You mean- she- the human- she?"

"One, she's now a wolf. Two, yes. She is my daughter- and I saw how you treated her." The deity narrowed her midnight blue eyes. "So I'd buck up if I were you, Kouga-kun."

Grinning gently at the rest of the wolves, the rose-scented wind blew softly around the goddess, white petals flying into existence as she suddenly disappeared- and the moon returned high in its proper place in the sky.

Kouga stared in blank horror at the spot of earth where the goddess had been-

Until the rest of the clan burst into laughter.

"Shut up!" he snarled, face pinking as he pouted. "Just shut up!"

"You know," Miroku whispered in Sango's ear, making her shiver slightly. "What with Kouga getting his @\$ whooped by the goddess, Inu-Yasha and Kagome being alive and Kag becoming a werewolf- I think there is cause for celebration."

"Oh really?" Sango beamed, turning to face him with a blush on her cheeks as he wrapped an arm around her middle. "And how do you propose we do that?"

"Like this," he murmured, gently pressing his lips to hers.

\*

The pack stood in a circle for the third time, only now- Kagome was included. Standing next to Inu-Yasha, her hand linked in his, the couple glanced at each other from the corners of their eyes as Kouga babbled on about the Moon Goddess.

"Happy to be a wolf?" Inu-Yasha whispered, pride ablaze in his amber orbs.

"Hell yeah," Kagome giggled. "It's amazing, even like this. I can smell things I could never smell before, I can sense things- it's so wonderful!"

"I'm glad you like it," the silver haired teen chuckled, squeezing her hand lightly.

"Are you two paying attention over there?!" a peeved Kouga yelled at the lovers.

"No!" they bellowed back before turning to each other again.

"By the way, Inu-chan," Kag giggled softly, eyeing him playfully. "There's one thing I haven't had a chance to do that needs to be done."

"And what's that?" the werewolf raised an eyebrow.

A smile on her face, Kagome reached over and began rubbing Inu's ears, amused when a soft purr seemed to escape him.

"I thought you were a dog," she joked, kissing his cheek. "I didn't know dogs could purr."

"This is a content growl," Inu-Yasha fought lazily back, nudging his head a bit deeper into her hand.

"Whatever you say, love," Kagome smiled. "Whatever you say."

\*

"It's time to take our true form once more!" Kouga roared. "And-"

"SHUT THE HELL UP, KOUGA!" the pack bellowed as one, already slipping out of their clothes on the cliff.

Kagome was slightly uncomfortable, being so- so- so NAKED in front of everyone, but no one else seemed to mind. They all acted as if it was nothing.

'Which to them,' Kag reminded herself, 'it is.'

As she folded her clothes and hid them next to Inu-Yasha's, she watched Miroku get slapped by Sango with mild interest. 'I bet he's having a hell of a time.'

"All right," Kouga announced once more to the pack of awaiting wolves. "It's time to complete the trial. Kagome, as tradition, you must transform first."

The girl glanced at Inu-Yasha out of the corner of her eye, nervous.

What if she couldn't do it?

"You *can* do it," Inu whispered reassuringly, as if reading her thoughts.

Nodding and taking a deep breath, Kagome took a step in front of everyone else, allowing the cool moon light to wash over her naked body.

'Please,' she thought desperately, her hands clenching into fists, 'change. . .'

And she did.

Gasping in surprise, she felt her body begin to shift and grow and shorten- all at once- her muscles pulled taut, her senses honed, her thoughts animalistic. And then she was suddenly on all fours, inside her new, silky ebony coat of wolf skin.

Turning around with a yelp of joy, she ran over to the transformed Inu-Yasha, Miroku, and Sango, who all barked their happiness. Sango took a moment to flounce around her best friend, yipping about how worried she had been- ignoring Miroku as he obviously stared, but finding herself too distracted to continue when said man began eyeing other females. Seeing his chance, Inu-Yasha nudged Kagome gently in the shoulder, alerting for her to follow.

\*

Leaping through the brambles of the woods, racing and howling, the pair eventually emerged in the flowerless summer field Inu-Yasha had visited before- thinking about Kag. And now she was here with him.

He doubted he had ever been happier.

Kagome sang in merriment as she- quite suddenly- pounced playfully on Inu-Yasha. Unfortunately- or fortunately- however they chose to look at it, he hadn't seen it coming- thus sending them rolling a ways down the gently sloping landscape. As they tumbled together through the grass, they threw their heads back; crying their praise to the Moon Goddess who was by now slowly sinking in the sky.

And though she'd already done so much for them, she did do one thing more.

When the pair began to slowly transform back into their human state, the field burst into bloom with the fabled summer blossoms, carpeting the lovers in sweet smelling flowers.

Laughing from their exploits, Kagome smiled up at Inu-Yasha as the sun slowly began to rise; tracing the boy's face with her fingers as the bright rays made his tanned skin glow. She would have been content to stay like this forever- - but then she remembered something.

"Inu-Yasha?" she asked softly, a question nagging at the back of her mind.

"Yeah?" he replied, flopping next to her in the field and propping his head in his hands as the nightlights of Tokyo slowly began flickering out.

"You knew. . ." she began carefully. "You know. . .I was going to have to kill you. . . didn't you?"

He was silent for a moment. "Not really. At the last few moments, I sensed it, but that's all."

"You would have had time to escape," Kagome murmured softly, plucking a flower and twirling it between her hands.

"Why would I want to escape?"

She treated him to a `duh' expression, tossing the blossom away again. "Because I was going to kill you!"

"But I trusted you. I still trust you," he replied gently, brushing a strand of her hair from her face.

"You trusted me enough to murder you?" she whispered, a blush finding its way to her cheeks again.

"Yes."

She smiled softly. "I love you."

He grinned back. "I love you too. More than life itself."

"Bad pun," Kag glared playfully, laughing as she gently punched his shoulder.

"But true," he growled huskily in her ear as he nuzzled her.

And the two became mates in the field of summer flowers, under the soft glow of the early morning, autumn sun.

\*

\*

\*

One Month Later

\*

\*

\*

"I'm baaaaaack!" Kagome sang cheerfully as she entered the apartment, kicking off her shoes with absolutely no grace. But that was a lot more than could be said for others- A small "eep!" and the loud `thud' of a body hitting the floor was heard as soon as she opened the door, she noted. A body named Miroku, in fact, judging from the voice that said "Ow!"

"Kagome-chan!" Sango squeaked happily, pink in embarrassment as she peaked at Kagome from over the back edge of the couch. "I- er- didn't expect you back so soon!"

"I can see that," Kag smirked as she leaned casually against the door frame, crossing her arms over her

torso as she watched Miroku crawl "stealthily" towards his room.

"So what'd your mom say?" Sango asked, getting off the sofa and fixing her hair.

Kagome smiled. "She said I can stay here!"

"Really?!" Sango gasped, thrilled. "You can live with us?!"

Kag nodded happily, clapping her hands in excitement. "She said it'd be a good experience in preparing for collage dorms."

"This is wonderful!" Sango cried, spinning Kagome around and causing them both to laugh.

"One problem, though," Kag mentioned casually as they calmed down. "Where am I gonna stay?"

Sango waved a hand. "I already took care of it. They're building an extension room in a week. It'll be ready for your use come Christmas!"

"Really?"

"Yep!"

"But where will I sleep until \*then\*?" Kagome then questioned, already sensing Inu-Yasha walking up behind her.

"You can stay with me," he whispered in her ear, nuzzling her neck as he wrapped his arms around her middle.

Kagome giggled and blushed, kissing him on the nose. "Thanks for the offer."

Sango made a gagging noise in the back of her throat, turning away as she threw her arms helplessly into the air.

"Oh, please," Inu-Yasha glared, rolling his eyes. "You think I enjoy hearing your and Miroku's little `sessions' on the couch?"

Flushing dark red, the chestnut haired female shut up and stalked away, muttering about stupid male werewolves under her breath.

"Thanks for letting me stay here with you guys," Kagome beamed as the couple sat down on one of the couches. "It would get kind of difficult to sneak out every full moon, and Grandpa would probably try a few exorcism spells on me or something."

Inu-Yasha chuckled. "Stupid old man."

"Hey, he's still my grandfather," Kag warned.

Oh- crap. "Sorry," Inu pouted cutely, his ears drooping.

"Aww!" the were-girl gushed, rubbing his ears and kissing him on the nose. Bwahaha- one crisis diverted! The silver locked boy mentally congratulated himself as they sat in silence. Then-

"Why don't I have doggy ears like you?"

Inu-Yasha was slightly taken aback, but snickered all the same. "You want them?"

"Well, no. . . it's just, you've got them `cause you're half were-wolf, right?" She shuffled uncomfortably, feeling a bit stupid.

"Yeah. . .?"

"Well, aren't I only half then, too? I mean, it was your blood I took in. . ."

"Nope. You're full werewolf. Halfs only happen when a werewolf and a mortal mate."

"Ooo, luck you, you're special!" Kagome giggled, instantly perking up as she leaned into Inu-Yasha- all but purring as he wrapped his arms around her.

"Not as special as you, mate," he whispered in her ear, making her shiver in delight. But as they brought their lips together in a passionate, hungry kiss, Miroku walked in.

"Oh, get a room," he grumbled, stalking off into the kitchen looking depressed.

"You're just jealous that you're not getting any with Sango!" Inu-Yasha teased, causing Kag to smack him gently over the head.

"I might have if Kagome hadn't walk in right at that moment. . ." the black haired werewolf pouted, before getting knocked out by an embarrassed Sango.

"PERVERT!" the girl screamed, whamming her boyfriend continuously over the head with the plate she had been holding before tossing it aside and grabbing the lamp off of the coffee table. "IS THAT ALL YOU EVER THINK ABOUT?!"

Kagome and Inu-Yasha rolled their eyes and cuddled together, letting the familiar sound of Miroku getting beaten up carry them off to sleep as the first gentle snows of winter began to fall outside the window.

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